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The Psychometric Properties of the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool (CPORT) in Different Subgroups of Individuals Convicted of Offenses Related to Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM)

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Objective: Despite the increasing number of individuals convicted of offenses related to child sexual exploitation material (CSEM), empirical research on the psychometric properties of actuarial risk assessment instruments for this population is limited. ***Research Question:*** Does the German version of the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool (CPORT) demonstrate predictive validity in an Austrian sample of individuals incarcerated for CSEM offenses? ***Method:*** Using an exploratory, retrospective, file-based research design, we calculated effect sizes for the total sample ($N = 128$; follow-up period: $M = 8.5$ years, $SD = 3.68$), a subsample with fixed 5-year follow-up periods ($n = 104$), and subgroups of individuals convicted of either CSEM offenses only or both CSEM and sexual contact offenses. The study was exploratory in nature, evaluating the discriminatory power of a German CPORT and a shortened version (CPORT-SV), with scoring rules adapted for correctional settings. ***Results:*** The German CPORT validly classified CSEM recidivism in the total sample (Harrell's $C = 0.72$, 95% confidence interval [CI] [0.62, 0.82]), the subsample with fixed 5-year follow-up periods ($n = 104$, area under the curve [AUC] = .73, 95% CI [0.60, 0.86]), individuals with additional sexual contact offenses ($n = 57$, AUC = .82, 95% CI [0.69, 0.94]), and individuals convicted of CSEM offenses only ($n = 47$, AUC = .70, 95% CI [0.55, 0.86]). The CPORT-SV performed comparably with the CPORT full version. Furthermore, in a subsample of individuals with additional sexual contact offenses, the CPORT (AUC = .84, 95% CI [0.70, 0.97]) and the CPORT-SV (AUC = .82, 95% CI [0.67, 0.97]) yielded effect sizes that were comparable with those of the Static-99 (AUC = .81, 95% CI [0.64, 0.97]). ***Conclusion:*** Our findings suggest that the German version of the CPORT has potential as a risk assessment tool for professionals working in correctional settings, but further validation is needed before it can be fully implemented.

Public Significance Statement
Prison professionals must be able to reliably assess an individual's risk of reoffending to accurately plan interventions or make reasonable release decisions. Therefore, they need reliable risk assessment tools. Currently, the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool is the only actuarial risk assessment tool specifically designed for individuals with child sexual exploitation material offending offenses. The aim of this study was to assess the psychometric properties of the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool in an Austrian sample of persons released after serving a prison sentence for child sexual exploitation material offending offenses to determine whether it is suitable for its use in clinical practice.

Keywords: child sexual exploitation material offending, Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool, actuarial risk assessment, recidivism, validity

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The authors of this article are clearly committed to open scientific practices and reproducible research. The data set used in this study was reviewed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice with regard to the national data protection regulations for incarcerated persons and approved for publication in January 2025. Researchers interested in the data from this study can access it at https://osf.io/fwz4r/?view_only=5f506cd3392a4448b6a3b92b2b607de2. We have no known conflicts of interest to disclose. We have no financial or other support to report.

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continued

The prevalence of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) is strongly linked to technological progress. Whereas in the predigital age, CSEM was physically exchanged between individuals, the Internet, with its unique characteristics of accessibility, affordability, and anonymity, has dramatically extended opportunities to disseminate CSEM (Cooper, 1998). Hence, with the availability of recent technologies, new opportunities for the sexual exploitation of children were created, particularly regarding the production and distribution of CSEM (Kloess et al., 2014). Consequently, with growing digitalization, the mid-1990s saw a rapid increase in charges and convictions of CSEM-related crimes in the United States (Motivans & Kyckelhahn, 2007) and European countries (Middleton et al., 2009). Regarding the growing number of individuals charged with, convicted of, and incarcerated for CSEM-related offenses, the scientific debate has focused on two central questions: What characterizes these individuals from a psychological perspective and what risk do they pose?

The research findings to date suggest that persons who have committed CSEM offenses form a distinct group and should be differentiated from individuals convicted of sexual contact offenses. Probably the most important distinguishing characteristic is related to the degree of sexually deviant interests. Although there are multiple trajectories leading to CSEM offending behavior (Babchishin et al., 2018), including nonsexual interests (Steel et al., 2021), previous research findings suggested that sexual interest in children and a high level of sexual preoccupation may play an even more important role in CSEM-related offenses compared with other sexually motivated (contact) offenses (Babchishin et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2015; Kuhle et al., 2017; Seto et al., 2006).

Recidivism Research on Individuals With CSEM Offenses

Research on the recidivism risk of individuals convicted of CSEM offenses suggests that CSEM convictions alone are not associated with an increased risk of future sexual contact offenses. However, it is important to distinguish between individuals with CSEM offenses who also have a history of sexual contact offenses and those who do not. First and foremost, individuals involved solely in CSEM offenses rarely reoffend with sexual contact offenses: Offense rates range from 0.2% (Goller et al., 2016) to 0.5% (Babchishin et al., 2023) for 3-year follow-up periods and from 2.7% (Elliott et al., 2019) to 3.0% (Faust et al., 2015) for longer follow-up periods of up to 13 years. These rates are meaningfully lower than the recidivism rates reported for individuals with a history of sexual contact offenses, which range from 6.0% (Rettenberger et al., 2015) to 10.0% (Hanson et al., 2016) at 5-year follow-up periods. In contrast, individuals with a history of both CSEM-related offenses and sexual contact offenses exhibit a substantially higher risk of committing new sexual contact offenses. Previous studies reported recidivism rates 3–10 times higher than those observed among individuals with only CSEM-related offenses (4.0%, Babchishin et al., 2023; 9.4%, Elliott et al., 2019; 2.6%, Goller et al., 2016).

Available studies on CSEM recidivism vary considerably in terms of follow-up periods, sample sizes, and recidivism criteria. In summary, current research indicates that individuals with both CSEM and sexual contact offenses are more likely to reoffend with sexual contact offenses than individuals with only CSEM offenses. The latter are more likely to reoffend with new CSEM offenses (Babchishin et al., 2023; Savoie et al., 2022; Soldino et al., 2021), which has led to the interpretation that individuals with only CSEM offenses show a high degree of offense specialization. Babchishin, Eke, et al. (2022) examined the offense trajectories of a sample of 387 individuals with CSEM-related offenses across a 20-year period and found that most of their sample (about 98.0%) did not commit sexually motivated offenses other than CSEM offenses during this period. Generally, the sample consisted predominantly of so-called late offending persons with no criminal justice system involvement until their 30s, with CSEM offenses usually being their first sexual offense. A much smaller proportion (2.0%) were identified as an early onset group, beginning with criminal behaviors from the age of 18 years and the first CSEM offense in their 20s. Their criminal records included more violent and sexual offenses than those of the majority of the earlier sample, showed a more pronounced sexual interest in children, and had more indicators of personality disorders. However, by their mid-30s, their sexual offending behavior decreased and was similar to that of the late-onset group. Using the same sample, Babchishin, Lee, et al. (2022) examined whether the temporal order of sexual offending behaviors is risk relevant for individuals with CSEM-related offenses. Their results indicated that in most cases, CSEM offenses are not a precursor to sexual contact offenses. Only a small proportion—10 out of 255 individuals included in this study—showed an escalating pattern of offending by having a CSEM offense prior to the first sexual contact offense. This aspect in their criminal history was associated with a higher likelihood of sexual contact recidivism.

Differences in recidivism risk between individuals who committed only CSEM offenses and those who committed both CSEM and sexual contact offenses can be explained using the motivation-facilitation model (Seto, 2019). This model suggests that individuals in the first group may be primarily affected by motivational factors, particularly by a strong sexual interest in children, but are largely unaffected by facilitation factors, such as antisocial behavior or impulsivity, because of intact psychological barriers including self-management skills and empathy. In contrast, individuals in the second group could be characterized by a combination of sexual

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deviance and antisociality and thus are more affected by motivators and facilitators (Babchishin et al., 2015; Henshaw et al., 2018).

Risk Assessment and CSEM

It is a widely accepted fact, based on the pioneering research regarding the risk-need-responsivity model, that the reliable and valid assessment of recidivism risk is a precondition of effective and successful treatment programs (Bonta & Andrews, 2023). In the case of individuals who have committed CSEM offenses exclusively, however, this precondition is difficult to fulfill. For individuals who have committed sexual contact offenses against children, there are generally well-validated risk assessment instruments available to determine the (relative and absolute) recidivism risk of an individual (Rettenberger & Craig, 2016). Among these, the Static-99 (Hanson & Thornton, 2000) and the Static-99 R (Helmus et al., 2012) are widely used tools for assessing recidivism risk in individuals involved in sexual contact offenses against children (Helmus et al., 2022; Rettenberger & Craig, 2016). Furthermore, the Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide (Quinsey et al., 2006) has demonstrated strong discriminatory power, particularly for individuals involved in sexual offenses against child victims outside the family context (Bartosh et al., 2003; Rettenberger et al., 2017). However, most of the available risk assessment instruments are not appropriate for individuals involved in CSEM-related offenses only because they are usually based on developmental and (cross-)validation samples of individuals who have committed non-CSEM sexual offenses. With regard to sexual recidivism risk assessment, the existing evidence suggests that the uncritical use of these instruments for individuals with offenses involving CSEM alone may result in an overestimation of risk, as their recidivism rates for sexually motivated offenses are significantly lower compared with those of individuals involved in sexual contact offenses (Seto, 2013). There is a dearth of knowledge and research, based on these findings, regarding the application of standardized risk assessment tools for individuals involved in CSEM-related offenses.

Currently, two different approaches of risk assessment for individuals using CSEM can be identified (Brown, 2022): The first one was to modify established risk assessment instruments to make them applicable to individuals with CSEM offenses. For example, Wakeling et al. (2011) used a modified version of the Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000/s; Thornton, 2007; Thornton et al., 2003) to predict sexual recidivism in a mixed sample of 994 individuals with CSEM-related offenses within a 2-year follow-up period (area under the curve [AUC] = .67, 95% confidence interval [CI] [0.57, 0.77]). Subsequently, the coding rules for the RM2000/s have been modified to allow its application to individuals with CSEM offenses (Thornton et al., 2023). More recently, a meta-analysis (k = 2; Helmus, Eke, Farmus, & Seto, 2024) found that the RM2000/s predicted sexual recidivism in individuals with a history of CSEM offending with a moderate effect size (AUC = .66, 95% CI [0.59, 0.74]). Babchishin et al. (2023) examined the predictive validity of dynamic risk instruments (ACUTE-2007, STABLE-2007) for predicting sexual recidivism in a group of 222 individuals with only CSEM offenses and showed that both the ACUTE-2007 (hazard ratio [*HR*] = 1.42, 95% CI [1.15, 1.76]) and the STABLE-2007 (*HR* = 1.24, 95% CI [1.10, 1.41]) yielded good effect sizes and were higher than the accuracy found for individuals with sexual contact offenses against children (*HR* = 1.10 and 1.09 for ACUTE-2007 and STABLE-2007, respectively).

The second approach was to develop a risk assessment tool specifically designed to assess the sexual recidivism risk of individuals with CSEM offenses, which led to the development of the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool (CPORT; Seto & Eke, 2015). The CPORT is an actuarial risk assessment tool that was constructed on the basis of a development sample of 266 individuals convicted of a CSEM-related offense between 1996 and 2006. At a fixed 5-year follow-up period, the sexual recidivism rate was 11%, with 3% committing a sexual contact offense and 9% reoffending with a new CSEM offense. The database consisted of investigation files from various Canadian police agencies, which included sociodemographic information, criminal history, investigation reports, and results of forensic analysis of seized data containing CSEM and other child images. In the development sample, the mean CPORT total score was 1.94 (*SD* = 1.57, 95% CI [1.74, 2.12]) out of a maximum possible score of 7. The total score significantly discriminated between individuals who reoffended and those who did not (AUC = .66, 95% CI [0.59, 0.73]) in the total sample. On the assumption that information about sexual preferences and depictions of children that do not qualify as CSEM are likely to be missing, the authors also examined a shortened version of the CPORT that excluded two of the seven items. It was still possible to classify CSEM recidivism in the developmental sample using this shortened version (AUC = .73, 95% CI [0.63, 0.83]).

In a follow-up CPORT validation study, Eke et al. (2019) combined the development sample with an independent validation sample of 80 individuals with CSEM-related offenses, resulting in a total sample of 346. The sexual recidivism rate was 11.0%, with a CSEM recidivism rate of 8.4% within a fixed 5-year follow-up period. In this study, the CPORT significantly classified sexual recidivism not only for the total sample (AUC = .76, 95% CI [0.64, 0.88]) but also for the two subgroups: individuals with only CSEM offenses (AUC = .68, 95% CI [0.53, 0.83]) and individuals with CSEM and sexual contact offenses (AUC = .76, 95% CI [0.59, 0.94]). However, the instrument did not significantly classify sexual contact recidivism among individuals with only CSEM offenses, likely because of the low base rate of sexual contact recidivism. In a recently published study on the construct validity of the CPORT, Azizian et al. (2025) showed that CPORT scores correlated significantly, moderately, and positively with scores on another sexual offense risk assessment instrument (RM2000/s) but not with scores on a general offense risk assessment instrument, the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (Andrews et al., 2008). For their analyses, the authors used data from a field sample of 224 individuals convicted of CSEM-related offenses and released on parole, collected at various clinical sites in the United States.

CPORT Validation Studies

Since its development, the CPORT has been translated into French, Portuguese, and Spanish. Validation studies of the CPORT have been conducted in Spain (Soldino et al., 2021), Scotland (Savoie et al., 2022), New Zealand (Black, 2018), Iceland (Gunnarsdóttir, 2019), and Canada (Pilon, 2016), although small sample sizes, missing information, and low base rates of recidivism were common issues. The issue of missing information was addressed in some validation studies by using shortened versions of the CPORT, omitting two

(Pilon, 2016; Savoie et al., 2022) or three (Black, 2018) of the seven total items. In addition, two of the validation studies assessed the discriminatory properties of the CPORT using forensic samples from individuals convicted of CSEM offenses and subsequently released on parole (Black, 2018; Pilon, 2016), rather than using police data as was done by Seto and Eke (2015). Recently, Helmus, Eke, Farmus, and Seto (2024) meta-analyzed the available research on the CPORT and found that it validly classified any sexual recidivism (AUC = .75, $k = 5$, $N = 1{,}411$) as well as any CSEM recidivism (AUC = .66 for fixed-effects analyses and AUC = .65 for random-effects analyses, $k = 5$, $N = 1{,}376$) among individuals with CSEM-related offenses. After this meta-analysis was accepted for publication, a new and considerably large study was published. Cohen (2023) first conducted a pilot test of the CPORT using data from 195 individuals under supervision after CSEM convictions, which yielded an AUC of .54. The author then examined a modified version of the CPORT applied to file data from 5,768 individuals convicted of CSEM offenses, with the data approximated through natural language processing and machine learning. This approach made it necessary to adapt three of the seven CPORT items: Item 5 was split into two, so that pedophilic and hebephilic sexual interests were coded separately; Items 6 and 7 were combined into a single item that covered whether someone had a sexual preference for male or female children. Even though this adapted version of the CPORT correctly classified sexual recidivism after 5 years (4.5% recidivism rate; AUC = .62, 95% CI [0.58, 0.65]), the reported effect sizes were substantially smaller than those in the earlier-mentioned findings. In another recently published article, Helmus, Eke, and Seto (2024) integrated the results reported by Cohen into their prior meta-analysis (Helmus, Eke, Farmus, & Seto, 2024) and recognized it as a statistical outlier, potentially because of some combination of its unique data mining techniques, reliance on self-report information for approximating some CPORT items, and restriction of range issues due to the unusually low modified CPORT scores. They reported the meta-analytic results both with and without Cohen's research. Whereas the previous meta-analytic results had an AUC of .75 for sexual recidivism, the inclusion of this latter-mentioned U.S. study reduced the average weighted AUC to .68 in fixed-effects analyses (95% CI [0.65, 0.70]) and .71 in random-effects analyses (95% CI [0.63, 0.79]; $k = 6$, $N = 7{,}179$; Helmus, Eke, & Seto, 2024).

Purpose of This Study

In summary of the existing state of research, the CPORT can be regarded as a promising approach for assessing the recidivism risk of individuals who have committed CSEM-related offenses. However, further independent cross-validation studies are needed, particularly for new translations of the scale. Furthermore, because the research on the CPORT so far has been limited by small sample sizes and relatively low recidivism rates, there is a broad consensus that more empirical studies on its psychometric properties in different subgroups of individuals with CSEM offenses are strongly recommended (Scurich & Krauss, 2023). To address this gap, we translated the CPORT into German and adapted the scoring rules for each item in a way that data available in the prison system could be used. Our rationale was that in the future, the CPORT could potentially be used as a risk assessment tool in risk management within the prison system. In addition, to maintain comparability with the English version of the CPORT, we also calculated results for a shortened version of our German translation, which consists of five out of seven items and is less affected by the adaptation of the scoring rules. The purpose of the present study was to explore the discriminatory power of the German CPORT and its shortened version in classifying new convictions in different (sub)samples of individuals convicted of CSEM offenses and subsequently released from the Austrian prison system.

Method

Sample

The data for this study were obtained from the Federal Evaluation Center for Violent and Sexual Offenders (FECVSO; Eher et al., 2012), a scientific institution within the Austrian Ministry of Justice specialized in the clinical, forensic, and risk assessment of individuals convicted of sexual offenses. Data were collected for scientific purposes and were completely anonymized; no personal information was included. The present study was conducted with the permission of the Federal Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Austria and in accordance with the legal and ethical standards of the Austrian Ministry of Justice as well as the National Data Protection Act. It is also in line with the recommendations of the Council of Europe on persons considered high risk, detained in the prisons of its member states (Council of Europe Member States, 2014), and the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children (European Parliament, 2011).

For this study, only data from individuals who were sentenced to and served time in prison were considered. Data from persons who were admitted to a psychiatric hospital were not included, as this was considered to be a particularly high-risk subgroup. Data from individuals sentenced to conditional sentences could also not be included because these are not reported to the FECVSO. Recidivism data were available for 130 of the original 155 cases assessed. In two cases, it was unclear whether a sexual contact offense had occurred in the past, leading to their exclusion. Therefore, the final data set for this study included 128 released persons who served a prison sentence for a CSEM-related offense between 2002 and 2019. According to the Austrian Criminal Code, these offenses include the production, possession, distribution, or offering of CSEM. Production in this context does not necessarily mean sexual assault of a child, which is a distinct offense. The digital dissemination and modification of CSEM is considered production.

Table 1 contains descriptive information for the total sample. The sample consisted of exclusively male individuals and predominantly Austrian citizens. According to criminal records, 35 individuals (27.3%) had at least one prior conviction of any type. Twenty-one individuals (20.2%) had been convicted of a nonsexual violent offense—namely, assault or threat—and 16 individuals (12.5%) had been previously convicted of a sexual offense. Of the latter, eight individuals (6.2%) had committed a sexual contact offense, and 12 individuals (9.4%) a CSEM offense. For group analyses, each individual was assigned to one of two subgroups on the basis of their official criminal history and the index offense: Sixty-seven persons were classified as individuals who had committed both sexual contact offenses and CSEM offenses. Within this group, the sexual contact offense was most often part of the index offense. The second group comprised 61 individuals who had committed only CSEM

Table 1
Characteristics and Recidivism Rates of the Total Sample and Subgroups With Unequal Follow-Up Periods

Sample characteristics and recidivism rate	Total (N = 128)	Subgroup		t/χ^2
		CSEM-c (n = 67)	CSEM-o (n = 61)	
Convictions prior to index				
Any prior conviction	35 (27.3%)	16 (23.9%)	19 (31.1%)	0.522[a]
Any prior violent offense	21 (20.2%)	11 (16.4%)	10 (16.4%)	0.000[a]
Any prior sexual offense	16 (12.5%)	10 (14.9%)	6 (9.8%)	0.362[a]
Any prior sexual contact offense	8 (6.2%)	8 (11.9%)		
Any prior CSEM offense	12 (9.4%)	6 (9.0%)	6 (9.8%)	0.000[a]
Age at release	43.25 (SD = 11.51)	45.2 (SD = 11.20)	42.0 (SD = 11.10)	1.636[a]
Average follow-up time, in years	8.46 (SD = 3.68)	8.88 (SD = 3.88)	8.0 (SD = 3.43)	1.363[a]
New convictions				
Any new conviction	46 (35.9%)	24 (35.8%)	22 (36.1%)	0.000[a]
Any new violent offense	12 (9.4%)	7 (10.4%)	5 (8.2%)	0.018[a]
Any new sexual offense	24 (18.8%)	14 (20.9%)	10 (16.4%)	0.181[a]
Any new sexual contact offense	6 (4.7%)	3 (4.5%)	3 (4.9%)	0.000[a]
Any new CSEM offense	24 (18.8%)	14 (20.9%)	10 (16.4%)	0.181[a]

Note. Individuals can have multiple entries. CSEM-c = individuals convicted of child sexual exploitation material and sexual contact offenses; CSEM-o = individuals convicted of child sexual exploitation material offenses only.
[a] Nonsignificant.

offenses without additional sexual contact offenses. Individuals in the second group may have had other convictions, such as convictions for violent offenses, but not convictions for sexual offenses involving physical contact.

In the total sample, the mean age at the time of release was 43.25 years (SD = 11.51), with a range of 20–70 years. For this study, the follow-up period was calculated starting from the date of release from prison, with a mean of 8.46 years (SD = 3.68) and a range of 2.12–19.34 years (2 years was defined as the minimum follow-up period). According to official criminal records (see the Recidivism section), about one third of the present sample (n = 46, 35.9%) was convicted of a new offense during the follow-up period, including sexual and nonsexual offenses. The overall sexual recidivism rate for the total sample was 18.8% (n = 24); six individuals (4.7%) were reconvicted for a new sexual contact offense, and 24 individuals (18.8%) were reconvicted for a new CSEM offense. It should be noted that all persons who committed a new sexual contact offense were also reconvicted for a new CSEM offense. Twelve individuals (9.4%) were reconvicted for a nonsexual violent offense.

For a subsample of 104 persons, it was possible to calculate fixed 5-year follow-up periods. Within this subsample, one fourth had a new general conviction, with eight individuals (7.7%) reconvicted for a new nonsexual violent offense and 11 persons (10.6%) reconvicted for a new sexual offense. Only one person (1.0%) had a new sexual contact offense, whereas 11 persons (10.6%) had a new CSEM offense. Again, the person who reoffended with a sexual contact offense also committed a new CSEM offense.

Part of the FECVSO's routine risk assessment procedures is the application of standardized risk assessment tools, such as the Static-99 (Rettenberger & Eher, 2006), which is routinely used for risk assessment of individuals with a history of sexual contact offenses (for more information, see the Procedure section). Static-99 total scores were available for 53 individuals convicted of both CSEM and sexual contact offenses, who therefore met the inclusion criteria of the instrument. For the present study, a subsample was created to compare the psychometric properties of the Static-99, the German CPORT, and a shortened version of the German CPORT in cases in which both instruments are applicable.

Measures

CPORT

The CPORT (Seto & Eke, 2015) is the first actuarial risk assessment instrument developed specifically for use with adult male individuals who have committed CSEM offenses to assess the risk of recidivism for new sexual offenses. The CPORT consists of seven items reflecting the individual's age, criminal history, and sexual interests. Each item is scored as either not present (0) or present (1) for a maximum total score of 7 points. The current second version of the CPORT coding manual (Eke et al., 2018) provides observed and predicted 5-year recidivism probabilities for the CPORT scores. This study used a German version of the CPORT, which is described in detail below.

Static-99

The Static-99 is one of the most commonly used risk assessment instruments internationally for assessing sexual recidivism risk in individuals convicted of at least one sexually motivated offense (Helmus et al., 2022). The instrument can be used with adult male individuals convicted of sexual offenses and contains the following 10 static risk factors: (a) age when exposed to risk, (b) ever lived with an intimate partner for 2 or more years, (c) any index offense of nonsexual violence, (d) prior offenses of nonsexual violence, (e) prior charges or convictions for sexual offenses, (f) prior offenses in general, (g) any convictions for noncontact sexual offenses, (h) any unrelated victims, (i) any stranger victim, and (j) any male victim. Several years ago, Helmus et al. (2012) developed a revised version of the Static-99 with new age weights, the Static-99R. However, for the present analyses, the original version of the Static-99 was used because the original Static-99 outperformed the Static-99R in a population-based sample (N = 1,077; Rettenberger et al., 2013).

Recidivism

Recidivism data were obtained from official criminal records of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior. These records contain all legally binding convictions but do not provide information on charges. Therefore, in the present study, recidivism was defined as any new conviction. Four recidivism categories were analyzed: (a) any new conviction, (b) new conviction for a nonsexual violent offense, (c) new conviction for a sexual contact offense, and (d) new conviction for a CSEM offense.

Procedure

All individuals serving a prison sentence for a sexual offense must be reported to the FECVSO because of legal requirements in the Austrian prison system. The report is submitted by the correctional facility in which the person is detained. At the FECVSO, each case undergoes a risk-related, file-based screening process conducted by specially trained clinical psychologists using prison and court records, official criminal records, and expert reports, when available. One of the FECVSO's responsibilities, in addition to conducting individual risk assessments, is to collect forensic data and continually evaluate the accuracy of the forensic, diagnostic, and risk assessment tools used. The CPORT is one of several standardized risk assessment instruments tested in this context. It was translated into German for this purpose, and its scoring rules were adapted to the specific context of the Austrian prison system. The German CPORT has been routinely applied to cases involving individuals convicted of CSEM offenses at the FECVSO since 2018 and is the focus of the present study.

Adaptations of the Scoring Rules

The CPORT in its original version was developed to be used by the police force and was therefore exclusively based on data obtained from police investigations (Seto & Eke, 2015). Because practitioners typically do not have access to police records, the applicability and utility of the CPORT for field use have been questioned (Brown, 2022). In the present study, we used information that can be found in court records of a legally convicted person or that can be obtained by prison professionals. This allowed us to avoid a frequent criticism, namely, that in CPORT validation studies, many of the items could not be rated because of missing information (Scurich & Krauss, 2023).

In contrast to the English version (Eke et al., 2018), the age of the individual (Item 1) was recorded at the time of the legally binding conviction and not at the time of the police index investigation. The assessment of previous convictions (Items 2 and 4) and previous or current parole violations (Item 3) relied exclusively on the official criminal record; supplementary sources from police forces were not used. A notable difference concerns the reporting of pedophilic or hebephilic sexual interests (Item 5): Assessment results obtained during or after sentencing were used in addition to the individual's disclosures. Therefore, Item 5 could be completed for all cases in the sample. This item has been particularly problematic in previous validation studies, as statements about an individual's sexuality are rarely collected by the police (Eke et al., 2019; Soldino et al., 2021). As reported by Azizian et al. (2025), Savoie et al. (2022), and Soldino et al. (2021), the most difficult items to score were those related to the content of CSEM (Item 6) and other nonprohibited depictions of children (Item 7). The problem was that images of children that do not meet the legal definition of CSEM are not included in court records because their possession and distribution are not a criminal offense. Therefore, the following substitute scoring rules were defined and used: As in the English version, Item 6 was scored as present if the available CSEM contains more depictions of boys than girls. Item 7 was scored by default in the same way as Item 6, unless there was clearly conflicting information. Our rationale for adapting Items 6 and 7 was that we expected congruent results in most cases, as these items are intended to capture a person's gender preference.

German CPORT Short Version

To ensure better comparability with previous CPORT validation studies, we calculated the total score of a shortened version of the German version of the CPORT (CPORT-SV) without Items 6 and 7 for this study. This approach is consistent with that of Pilon (2016) and is comparable with other CPORT validation studies that have also used shortened versions of the CPORT (Black, 2018; Savoie et al., 2022).

Scoring Procedure

Although the German version of the CPORT has been routinely tested at the FECVSO since March 2018, the present study primarily included individuals reported before this date to obtain longer follow-up periods based on available recidivism data. The CPORT was applied by one of the authors or by trained psychologists at the FECVSO with the sample described earlier. This was done retrospectively or as part of the work routine at the FECVSO for cases reported between 2018 and 2019, with each case being assessed by only one evaluator. The standard procedure was for evaluators to receive all available case information along with the German translation of the CPORT manual, including the adapted scoring rules. They then completed the coding sheet for the German version of the CPORT on the basis of prison and court records, official criminal records, and expert reports, when available. The results were collected and stored in a database by an individual not involved in casework. It is important to note, however, that information on new convictions was not available at the time of the assessment—that is, all CPORT users were completely blind to the outcome. Conversely, the persons who entered the recidivism data in the FECVSO database were blinded to all other variables, including the CPORT scorings. The research design of the present study could be regarded as a prospective-longitudinal field study.

Data Analysis

Fleiss's kappa was calculated to examine the interrater reliability. This measure is used to assess the degree of agreement between at least three independent raters. According to Landis and Koch (1977, p. 165), a Fleiss's κ value of less than .2 is considered "slight," .21–.40 is "fair," .41–.60 is "moderate," .61–.80 is "substantial," and greater than .81 is "almost perfect" in terms of agreement between raters. Three cases were randomly selected from the total sample and then independently rated by six clinical psychologists from the FECVSO. Each evaluator used the German version of the CPORT

along with a translated manual containing detailed item descriptions and information on the adapted scoring rules described earlier.

Within assessment research, the term *discrimination* refers to the ability of a test to discriminate between individuals with and without the outcome of interest. In the forensic context, this means whether the risk assessment tool can be used to make a valid distinction between individuals who reoffend and those who do not. To assess the discriminatory power of the German version of the CPORT and the CPORT-SV, we used Cox and logistic regression analysis in recidivism categories with at least 10 cases of recidivism. However, we were aware that small sample sizes reduce statistical power and increase the risk of bias because of the small number of observations. This makes regression estimates and conclusions relatively unstable and limits the generalizability of the results. Nevertheless, we decided to perform Cox regression analysis when the earlier-mentioned minimum number of individuals who reoffended was obtained. This kind of regression analysis uses survival analysis information about the relationship between the predictor variable(s) and the outcome. The main output of Cox regression is the hazard ratio (*HR*). In a risk assessment tool with ordered scores, the hazard ratio would describe the extent to which the risk of recidivism increases as the score of the instrument increases, averaged across the follow-up period. The advantage of Cox regression is that it can be used in a sample with varying follow-up periods (Hanson, 2022). To allow comparison between different tools, we also calculated Harrell's *C*, which is an effect size derived from Cox regression analyses. It is similar to the AUC and can be interpreted as the probability that a case with a higher score has the outcome compared with a case with a lower score (Hanson, 2022).

In addition, we calculated odds ratios (*OR*s) for the subsample with fixed 5-year follow-up periods and estimated the likelihood of recidivism associated with different CPORT scores using logistic regression analyses. In addition, observed and estimated recidivism rates were calculated for each CPORT total score to improve the clinical applicability of the German version of the instrument.

To further evaluate the discriminative power, we calculated receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves within the subsample with fixed 5-year follow-up periods. The ROC is one of the most widely used statistical methods in risk assessment research (Hanson, 2022; Helmus & Babchishin, 2017). The effect size of the ROC is the AUC, which is interpreted as the probability that, given a random selection of two individuals, the individual with the target condition will have a higher score than the individual without the target condition (Nakas et al., 2023). AUC values can vary between 0 and 1, with only values above .5 indicating that a test or an instrument is better than chance; a value of 1 would indicate perfect discrimination. In the field of psychological assessment, it is widely accepted that an AUC value of .56 indicates a small effect, .64 indicates a moderate effect, and .71 or higher indicates a large effect (Hanson, 2022).

A further step in examining the discriminatory power of the CPORT was to compare the instrument with another risk assessment tool in a subsample of 53 individuals who had committed both CSEM and sexual contact offenses. For the Static-99, the CPORT, and the CPORT-SV subsample, we calculated the AUC values for the three instruments. We based our analysis and interpretation on the practical examples given by Hanson (2022).

To examine calibration, which is the correspondence between predicted and observed recidivism rates, we used the Expected/Observed (E/O) index (Hanson, 2022). Specifically, we compared the predicted sexual recidivism rates from the CPORT coding manual (Eke et al., 2018) with the rates observed in the current sample after 5 years of follow-up. We used the rates of any sexual recidivism from the CPORT. Given that all sexual reoffending individuals had a CSEM offense (in addition to a possible sexual contact offense), the rates of any sexual recidivism and any CSEM recidivism were the same in the current sample. Given the low statistical power of the E/O index (Hanson, 2022), we reported it for the total sample with fixed 5-year follow-up data, as opposed to for each score. The E/O index is a ratio of the expected to observed number of reconvicted individuals. If the 95% CI does not include 1.0, it means that the scale significantly overestimated (E/O index > 1) or underestimated (E/O index < 1) recidivism.

All statistical analyses were performed in the R software environment (R Core Team, 2022), using the packages "survival" (Version 3.5.7; Therneau, 2023), "ROCit" (Version 2.1.1; Khan & Brandenburger, 2020), and "reportROC" (Version 3.6; Du & Hao, 2022).

We are clearly committed to open scientific practices and reproducible research. The data set used in this study was reviewed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice with regard to national data protection regulations for incarcerated persons and was approved for publication in January 2025. Researchers may access the data from this study at https://osf.io/fwz4r/?view_only=5f506cd3392a4448b6a3b92b2b607de2.

Results

The interrater reliability (κ) of the German CPORT was .83 (95% CI [0.72, 0.94]), indicating almost perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). The discriminatory power was examined in the total sample ($N = 128$) with unequal follow-up periods (see Table 2). The German CPORT was completed for all individuals, with no missing items. The instrument correctly classified CSEM recidivism within the total sample, on the basis of CPORT total scores (Harrell's $C = 0.72$). Comparable effect sizes were also observed for classifying new CSEM offenses among individuals with both CSEM and sexual contact offenses ($n = 67$) and individuals with only CSEM offenses ($n = 61$; Harrell's $C = 0.76$ and 0.75, respectively). Note that all sexual recidivism incidents in this sample included CSEM (either on its own or in addition to a contact offense); therefore, this effect size can also be interpreted as discriminative power for any sexual recidivism. Neither the German CPORT nor the CPORT-SV demonstrated the ability to classify (nonsexual) violent recidivism in the total sample (Harrell's $C = 0.62$ and 0.68, respectively). The Harrell's *C* results for other recidivism outcomes (any recidivism) are also provided in Table 2.

Because no fixed follow-up periods were available for the total sample, relative risk estimates were calculated using Cox regression (see Table 2). Here, for the total sample ($N = 128$), the prediction of new CSEM offenses showed an effect size (*HR*) of 1.384, indicating that with each point increase in the total CPORT score, the likelihood of recidivism increases by 38%, averaged across the follow-up period. The CPORT-SV showed larger effect sizes than the CPORT for the total sample ($HR = 2.135$), for individuals convicted of CSEM and sexual contact offenses ($HR = 3.285$), and for individuals convicted only of CSEM offenses ($HR = 2.785$). However, the large CIs indicate low precision, presumably due to the small sample size. For the outcomes of any violent recidivism and any recidivism,

Table 2
Discriminatory Power of the CPORT and CPORT-SV for the Total Sample With Unequal Follow-Up Periods

			Subgroup			
	Total (n = 128)		CSEM-c (n = 67)		CSEM-o (n = 61)	
Recidivism criteria	HR/Harrell's *C*	95% CI	HR/Harrell's *C*	95% CI	HR/Harrell's *C*	95% CI
Any new conviction						
CPORT	1.066	[0.886, 1.283]	1.134	[0.877, 1.466]	1.092	[0.815, 1.461]
	0.571	[0.476, 0.665]	0.571	[0.434, 0.708]	0.601	[0.455, 0.745]
CPORT-SV	1.257	[0.957, 1.649]	1.464	[0.947, 2.262]	1.437	[0.950, 2.173]
	0.593	[0.495, 0.691]	0.606	[0.457, 0.755]	0.621	[0.481, 0.760]
Any new violent offense						
CPORT	1.089	[0.766, 1.548]				
	0.617	[0.426, 0.807]				
CPORT-SV	1.445	[0.818, 2.551]				
	0.681	[0.461, 0.901]				
Any new CSEM offense						
CPORT	1.384	[1.079, 1.776]	1.521	[1.067, 2.169]	1.480	[0.989, 2.215]
	0.718	[0.616, 0.820]	0.766	[0.662, 0.870]	0.757	[0.612, 0.902]
CPORT-SV	2.135	[1.361, 3.349]	3.285	[1.454, 7.425]	2.785	[1.296, 5.981]
	0.727	[0.623, 0.831]	0.775	[0.653, 0.897]	0.771	[0.634, 0.908]

Note. The discriminatory power of the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool total score and CPORT-SV for the total sample, both subgroups (unequal follow-up periods) and different recidivism criteria using Cox regression analyses. Harrell's *C*s of 0.56, 0.64, and 0.71 reflect small, medium, and large values, respectively. The analysis was conducted on recidivism categories with at least 10 recidivism cases. CPORT = Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool; CPORT-SV = CPORT Short Version; CSEM-c = individuals convicted of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) and sexual contact offenses; CSEM-o = individuals convicted of CSEM offenses only; *HR* = hazard ratio derived from Cox regression analyses; CI = confidence interval.

neither the German CPORT nor the CPORT-SV demonstrated discriminatory power in the total sample or any subgroup (see Table 2).

Tables 3 and 4 present analogous descriptive and discriminatory power results for the subsample of 104 individuals with fixed 5-year follow-up periods. Specifically, Table 3 reports AUC values for the fixed 5-year follow-up, and Table 4 provides odds ratios from logistic regression for the 5-year follow-up. However, the prediction analysis was limited because of the small number of recidivism events. In this subsample, the German CPORT (AUC = .67) and CPORT-SV (AUC = .72) correctly classified general recidivism only within the subgroup of individuals convicted of CSEM and sexual contact offenses. However, nonsexual recidivism could be correctly classified only with the CPORT-SV and only within the same subgroup (AUC = .72). In contrast, CSEM recidivism was

Table 3
Discriminatory Power of the CPORT and CPORT-SV for the Subsample With Fixed 5-Year Follow-Up Periods

			Subgroup				
CPORT (SV) total score	Total (N = 104)		CSEM-c (n = 57)		CSEM-o (n = 47)		t
CPORT total score	2.89 (*SD* = 1.53)		3.40 (*SD* = 1.56)		2.28 (*SD* = 1.26)		4.075*
CPORT SV total score	2.54 (*SD* = 1.12)		2.93 (*SD* = 1.05)		2.06 (*SD* = 1.03)		4.230*
Recidivism criteria	AUC	95% CI	AUC	95% CI	AUC	95% CI	
Any new conviction							
CPORT	.574	[.454, .692]	.687	[.534, .841]	.572	[.413, .730]	
CPORT SV	.611	[.495, .727]	.734	[.589, .879]	.613	[.458, .768]	
Any new violent offense							
CPORT	.618	[.452, .783]	.599	[.426, .772]	.686	[.463, .908]	
CPORT SV	.664	[.496, .832]	.719	[.589, .879]	.712	[.497, .927]	
Any new CSEM offense							
CPORT	.734	[.604, .863]	.822	[.696, .948]	.702	[.545, .860]	
CPORT SV	.757	[.636, .878]	.820	[.690, .950]	.745	[.590, .927]	

Note. The discriminatory power of the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool total score and CPORT-SV total score for the subsample, both subgroups (fixed 5-year follow-up periods) and different recidivism criteria using receiver operating characteristics (ROC). CPORT = Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool; CPORT-SV = CPORT Short Version; AUC = area under the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve; CI = confidence interval; CSEM-c = individuals convicted of CSEM and sexual contact offenses; CSEM-o = individuals convicted of CSEM offenses only; CSEM = child sexual exploitation material.
* $p < .01$.

Table 4
The Predictive Accuracy of the CPORT and CPORT-SV for the Subsample With Fixed 5-Year Follow-Up Periods

	Total (N = 104)		Subgroup			
			CSEM-c (n = 57)		CSEM-o (n = 47)	
Recidivism criteria	*OR*	95% CI	*OR*	95% CI	*OR*	95% CI
Any new conviction						
CPORT	1.180	[0.887, 1.572]	1.494	[0.976, 2.381]	1.241	[0.764, 2.073]
CPORT-SV	1.491	[0.992, 2.316]	2.643	[1.257, 6.737]	1.631	[0.877, 3.312]
Any new CSEM offense						
CPORT	1.641	[1.107, 2.506]				
CPORT-SV	2.731	[1.395, 6.182]				

Note. The predictive accuracy of the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool total score and CPORT-SV total score for the subsample, both subgroups (fixed 5-year follow-up periods) and different recidivism criteria using logistic regression analyses. The analysis was conducted on recidivism categories with at least 10 recidivism cases. CPORT = Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool; CPORT-SV = CPORT Short Version; *OR* = odds ratios derived from logistic regression analyses; CI = confidence interval; CSEM-c = individuals convicted of CSEM and sexual contact offenses; CSEM-o = individuals convicted of CSEM offenses only; CSEM = child sexual exploitation material.

correctly classified by both the German CPORT (AUC = .73) and the CPORT-SV (AUC = .75) in the subsample with fixed 5-year follow-up periods. Furthermore, both tools demonstrated discriminatory power across all subgroups, with AUC values ranging from .70 to .82. Similarly, the odds ratio from logistic regression indicated that the German CPORT was able to predict CSEM reoffending (*OR* = 1.641 for the total sample). The CPORT-SV demonstrated a comparable effect size, although with relatively low precision, as reflected by the width of the CIs. For the subsample with additional Static-99 scoring (n = 53 individuals with CSEM and sexual contact offenses), the CPORT (AUC = .83), the CPORT-SV (AUC = .82), and the Static-99 (AUC = .81) yielded comparable and large effect sizes (see Table 5). The CPORT and CPORT-SV also classified general recidivism, but with small effect sizes.

Table 6 presents the observed number of reconvicted individuals at fixed 5-year follow-ups for each CPORT score, as well as the predicted recidivism rates and CIs from logistic regression. The predicted recidivism rates ranged from 2.1% for a score of 0 to 41.9% for a score of 7. However, given small sample sizes for lower and higher scores, these estimates may not be stable. The predicted sexual recidivism rates from the CPORT coding manual (Eke et al., 2018) were used to estimate the predicted number of individuals with new convictions at each score based on the current sample size (rounded to one decimal). Overall, 11 of 104 individuals sexually reoffended in the current sample (all of them with CSEM offenses, and one with CSEM and a sexual contact offense), compared with a predicted number of 18.2 reoffending individuals from the CPORT coding manual. The German CPORT predicted 1.65 times as many individuals with a new sexual offense as were observed in the current sample; however, this overestimation was not statistically significant (E/O index = 1.65, 95% CI [0.92, 2.99]).

Discussion

The present study is the first cross-validation of the CPORT in the German-speaking area, using a sample of individuals who were convicted of CSEM offenses, incarcerated, and subsequently released from the Austrian prison system. The study is exploratory in nature, as we examined the discriminative power of a German version of the CPORT that was adapted in its item scoring rules to make it applicable in correctional settings.

Our findings indicate that the German CPORT can validly discriminate between individuals with and without new convictions for CSEM offenses. In the fixed 5-year follow-up subsample, ROC analyses revealed large effect sizes. Taken together, the German CPORT demonstrated effect sizes comparable with those of the CPORT validation studies by Eke et al. (2019) and Savoie et al. (2022) and slightly larger than those reported in a recently published

Table 5
Comparison of Discriminatory Power of Static-99, CPORT, and CPORT-SV in a Fixed 5-Year Subsample With Both Offense Types

Score or creteria	Static-99	CPORT	CPORT-SV
Mean score	3.94 (*SD* = 2.36)	3.40 (*SD* = 1.61)	2.89 (*SD* = 1.07)
Recidivism criteria (AUC, 95% CI)			
Any new conviction	.636, [.407, .865]	.679, [.505, .853]	.708, [.670, .967]
Any new CSEM offense	.806, [.641, .971]	.837, [.701, .974]	.818, [.670, .967]

Note. No individual in this subsample reoffended with a sexual contact offense; only one individual in this subsample reoffended with a (nonsexual) violent offense. CPORT = Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool; CPORT-SV = CPORT Short Version; CSEM = child sexual exploitation material; AUC = area under the receiver operating characteristic curve; CI = confidence interval.

Table 6

Observed and Predicted CSEM Recidivism Rates per CPORT Total Score of the Subsample With Fixed 5-Year Follow-Up Periods

CPORT score and recidivism rate			Logistic regression estimate	
CPORT score	Observed CSEM recidivism rate (%)[a]	*n*/*N* (%)[b]	Predicted CSEM recidivism rate (%)[c]	95% CI
0		0/3 (0)	2.1	[0.425, 10.536]
1		0/14 (0)	3.5	[0.995, 11.877]
2	1.0	1/30 (3.4)	5.7	[2.238, 13.751]
3	3.8	4/27 (14.8)	9.0	[4.592, 16.961]
4	2.9	3/14 (21.4)	13.9	[7.811, 23.814]
5	1.0	1/7 (14.3)	21.1	[10.640, 37.472]
6	1.0	1/8 (12.5)	30.5	[12.771, 56.767]
7	1.0	1/1 (100)	41.9	[14.554, 75.250]
Total	10.6	11/104 (10.6)		

Note. $N = 104$. CSEM = child sexual exploitation material; CPORT = Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool; CI = confidence interval.
[a] Percentage of 104 (total sample). [b] Of the total number of individuals with this score, *n* reoffended. [c] Hosmer–Lemeshow test: $\chi^2(4) = 3.21$, $p = .52$.

meta-analysis (Helmus, Eke, Farmus, & Seto, 2024). The discriminatory power of the German CPORT was further demonstrated by the results of the relative risk data. For both the total sample and the subsample with fixed 5-year follow-up periods, higher CPORT scores were associated with an increased risk of CSEM reoffending. However, the discriminative performance was not observed with the same stability in all subgroups of the present sample. Whereas the German CPORT consistently demonstrated large effect sizes in discriminating CSEM recidivism in the total sample (in both random- and fixed-effects analyses), the accuracy of this performance decreased in the subgroups. One possible explanation for this finding is the relatively low rate of CSEM reoffending and the small sample sizes in the subgroups, which reduce the robustness of the findings. The problem of low recidivism rates was also evident in the construction of the CPORT (Seto & Eke, 2015) and in subsequent validation studies (Savoie et al., 2022; Soldino et al., 2021). This is why knowledge aggregation through meta-analysis is so important. Aggregating the results of smaller studies improves statistical power. Helmus, Eke, and Farmus's (2024) recent meta-analysis found that the CPORT had a large weighted effect size in classifying any sexual recidivism, which was consistent with the findings of the present study.

To ensure comparability with previous CPORT research, we additionally examined the discriminative power of a shortened version of the German CPORT without Items 6 and 7, which refer to CSEM content and nonprohibited depictions of children. The CPORT-SV yielded similar and, in some cases, better effect sizes compared with the full seven-item version. This was particularly evident in the analysis with fixed 5-year follow-up periods. The CPORT-SV demonstrated the ability to reliably classify new CSEM convictions in the subsample and both subgroups. When these results are considered, the question arises whether Items 6 and 7 are essential for predicting the risk of CSEM recidivism. It is important to note, however, that neither the German CPORT nor the CPORT-SV was able to reliably classify individuals with regard to new convictions other than those for CSEM offenses. This result was to be expected for convictions involving (sexually motivated) physical violence, such as new convictions for a nonsexual violent offense or a sexual contact offense, given the very low recidivism rates observed in our study. However, the German CPORT and CPORT-SV failed to reliably discriminate individuals in terms of general recidivism (except within the subgroup of those convicted of both CSEM and sexual contact offenses with fixed 5-year follow-up periods). Thus, the discriminative power of the German CPORT and its shortened version could be robustly demonstrated for only one of the recidivism categories analyzed. These findings are not consistent with the results of previous validation studies (Black, 2018; Pilon, 2016; Savoie et al., 2022).

The German version of the CPORT and the CPORT-SV were examined in a subset of individuals convicted of both CSEM and sexual contact offenses, alongside the German version of the Static-99, to compare the discriminatory power of these instruments. Although the CPORT and CPORT-SV had slightly better effect sizes in classifying general recidivism, all three instruments demonstrated good effect sizes in classifying CSEM reoffending. However, an unexpected finding was that the Static-99 identified this specific recidivism criterion in this sample with a comparable effect size, which warrants further investigation. This result may suggest that an adapted version of the Static-99 could potentially be used to assess the risk in this population. However, it is not possible to generalize this finding because of the small sample size and the low recidivism rates. Nevertheless, our results, together with other recently published data indicating moderate to good predictive accuracy of risk assessment instruments originally developed for sexual contact offenses (Babchishin et al., 2023), suggest that further research on the applicability of well-established instruments in individuals with CSEM offenses is warranted.

In contrast to the samples in the work by Eke et al. (2019) and other CPORT validation studies (Savoie et al., 2022; Soldino et al., 2021), the sample of the present study consists exclusively of individuals who have been legally convicted of at least one CSEM offense and who have been sentenced to a prison term. Differences in sample composition are reflected in the mean total CPORT score, which was substantially higher in the present study compared with

the Eke et al. study and more than twice as high compared with the Soldino et al. (2021) study. When an individual with no prior convictions faces trial for the first time in Austria, that person is much more likely to receive a conditional sentence. The court may, for example, order them to undergo therapy instead of serving a prison sentence. This is especially true if the charge is based solely on the possession of CSEM, which carries a shorter sentence than other sexual offenses. Conversely, individuals with prior convictions are more likely to receive unconditional sentences. This is likely the reason that almost half of the individuals with only CSEM offenses in our sample (in the fixed 5-year follow-up subgroup) have a criminal history. Furthermore, individuals with both CSEM and sexual contact offenses had significantly higher CPORT scores than those with only CSEM offenses. This difference is due to prior or current sexual contact offenses, which are recorded in a separate CPORT item. However, we did not find significant differences between the groups of individuals with both CSEM and sexual contact offenses and those with only CSEM offenses in terms of any new offenses or any new sexual offenses. The criminal histories in our sample suggested that persons from the prison population convicted of CSEM offenses belong to a group with a higher degree of antisociality in their biographies, which was also described by Babchishin, Eke, et al. (2022) in their study of CSEM offending trajectories. This group of individuals frequently committed violent and sexual offenses prior to their first CSEM offense and maintained a pattern of delinquency even into their 40s and 50s.

Despite the earlier-mentioned differences between the samples, the recidivism rates reported in the present study were comparable with those found in previous studies. As in the studies by Cohen (2023), Savoie et al. (2022), and Soldino et al. (2021), only one individual reoffended with a sexual contact offense during the fixed 5-year follow-up period. The CSEM recidivism rate of 10.6%, however, was higher than that reported in previous CPORT validation studies (8.4%, Eke et al., 2019; 7.8%, Savoie et al., 2022; 2.04%, Soldino et al., 2021). Also, upon closer inspection of the sexual recidivism rates, we found that individuals with CSEM offenses in our sample reoffended almost exclusively with CSEM offenses. Thus, our results support the hypothesis that individuals with CSEM-related offenses are predominantly specialized in their sexual offending behavior; that is, sexual recidivism among individuals with CSEM offenses refers in most cases to new CSEM offenses (Babchishin, Eke, et al., 2022; Babchishin, Lee, et al., 2022; Helmus, Eke, Farmus, & Seto, 2024).

Limitations

In summary, although the results of the present study are promising, several important limitations must be acknowledged. First, the relatively small sample size and low recidivism rates reduce statistical power. This limitation reduces the precision and reliability of the analyses, increases the risk of exaggerated results, and thus limits the generalizability of the findings. This problem is particularly evident in the two subgroups: individuals convicted of only CSEM offenses and those convicted of both CSEM and sexual contact offenses. As a result, the reported effect sizes are specific to individuals who were convicted and incarcerated for CSEM offenses and subsequently released from the Austrian prison system. Any conclusions regarding the psychometric properties of the CPORT for other populations of individuals with CSEM-related offenses should be made with caution. Furthermore, although the CPORT and CPORT-SV demonstrated good discriminatory power in identifying individuals with new CSEM convictions, our findings do not provide evidence that the CPORT can effectively discriminate individuals with respect to new convictions for (sexually motivated) violent offenses and general recidivism.

Another limitation is that the information on the criminal history of each individual in the present sample was obtained from official criminal records only. This is generally a reliable source of information, maintained by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior. These records include all convictions for which an individual was sentenced, the length of the sentence, and whether the sentence was conditional or unconditional. If someone had been convicted by a court of a physical assault or threat in the past, this was coded as a prior violent offense in this study. However, as the criminal record does not describe the details of the offense, it is not possible to obtain detailed information about the victim, nor can it be ruled out that offenses classified as nonsexual violence may have sexual components. Nevertheless, it should be noted that only nine individuals in the subgroup with only CSEM offenses had a previous conviction for a violent offense. Furthermore, recidivism was measured by new convictions based on official criminal records. Although this can be considered a reliable source of data, it does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about (sexual) recidivism that was not reported and did not result in a new conviction. In fact, a conservative definition of recidivism, limited to legally binding convictions, may underestimate the true recidivism rate.

In this study, we tested the discriminatory power of the German version of the CPORT in an Austrian sample of individuals convicted of CSEM offenses who were released after serving an unconditional prison term. Because the CPORT was originally developed for use by police forces, we adapted the CPORT scoring rules for use in correctional settings. However, we are aware that these adaptations may present a challenge in terms of comparability with previous CPORT studies and should therefore be carefully considered when the findings are interpreted in a broader context. This is particularly the case with the procedure we chose for scoring the items related to gender preference (Items 6 and 7). To allow for the integration of the present study findings within the general state of knowledge about the psychometric properties of the CPORT, we additionally examined the discriminative power of the CPORT without these two items (CPORT-SV).

Future Directions

The recidivism patterns of individuals convicted only of CSEM offenses are notably different from those of individuals who have committed sexual contact offenses. For example, there appears to be a specialization in CSEM offending. This divergence underscores the need for specialized risk assessment tools tailored to this population. Further research on the discriminatory and calibration characteristics of the CPORT is needed to reliably assess recidivism risk in this population. In addition, combining data from existing validation studies could help create larger samples with sufficiently high recidivism rates, thereby improving the robustness of future analyses. Furthermore, future studies should prioritize the validation of the CPORT-SV, as this shortened version is more practical and may yield equally robust results. The applicability of established actuarial risk assessment tools to this population should also be

further investigated. In particular, our findings suggest that the Static-99 may be a promising tool for assessing CSEM recidivism risk among individuals involved in CSEM offenses.

Conclusion

From a practical perspective, the most important finding is that the German CPORT and its shortened version, the CPORT-SV, effectively identify new CSEM convictions in our national forensic sample of individuals with a history of CSEM offenses. Our findings are consistent with current CPORT validation studies and support the position that the CPORT is defensible for use in assessing CSEM recidivism risk among individuals convicted of CSEM offenses; however, further research is needed. We consider the findings of the present study to be a relevant contribution to the cumulative knowledge about the psychometric properties of the CPORT and the Static-99 for their use in this population. We believe that underpowered studies can still be of great use when combined in meta-analytic research. Also, we believe, on the basis of the experience and results of the present study, that the use of the CPORT in correctional settings may be of practical relevance, provided that the scoring rules are modified to include information beyond what was available at the time of the police investigation.

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