

RISK PREDICTION INDEX

PREDICTS PERFORMANCE AND ABSENTEEISM OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

An Australian Law Enforcement Agency using the SafeSelect Risk Prediction Index (RPI) to recruit Law Enforcement Officers has assessed more than 2,000 candidates in the past 20+ years. The role is high risk, involving: managing heightened emotions; responding to the threat of violence; potential use of weapons and force; and working with vulnerable people.

SafeSelect partnered with the Agency to analyse the relationship between psychological risk (as measured on the RPI) and the following job-related outcomes:

- Performance (good and poor performance)
- Sick leave

The research also involved analysing which psychological risk factors are most predictive of performance and sick leave.

SAFESELECT RISK PREDICTION INDEX (RPI)

The RPI is a personality and behaviour assessment measuring psychological risk across:

- Working with others
- Work style
- Psychological adjustment
- Self-control

Based on the results of the above scales individuals are assigned an overall psychological risk rating ranging from low risk to high risk.

RESULTS

Analyses of RPI profiles and performance indicators revealed:

- A significant relationship between psychological risk and performance
- Specifically, employees rated as good performers had a lower level of psychological risk as measured by the RPI than poor performers. This was evidenced as 40% of good performers had psychological risk ratings in either the Low Risk, or Below Average Risk categories, compared to only 27% of poor performers who had psychological risk ratings in these ranges.



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PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS PREDICTING POOR PERFORMANCE

- Arrogance: Poor performers had significantly higher risks on the Arrogance Scale than good performers. These individuals were likely to describe themselves as more intelligent or superior to others and may be openly critical of others. Research shows arrogant individuals tend to have lower performance ratings due to a reluctance to seek feedback or advice, poorer relationships with others and self-perceptions of personal inadequacy (using arrogance as a defensive compensation).
- Depression: Poor performers had greater risks in characteristics of depression such as a tendency to often feel sad, easily irritated and have difficulty concentrating. Characteristics of depression have been shown to impair multiple aspects of job performance such as time taken to do tasks, concentration, and quality and quantity of work. Furthermore, characteristics of depression are often misinterpreted at work as a bad attitude or poor work ethic and hence lower performance ratings are given.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS PREDICTING INCREASED SICK LEAVE

- Willingness to accept responsibility: Individuals who had risks in their willingness to accept responsibility were more likely to take increased sick leave. It's likely these individuals take less personal accountability for their work and the outcomes they do or do not achieve, and therefore are more likely to take increased sick leave.
- Mental Health Risks (characteristics of depression and anxiety, mental health treatment): Substantial research has demonstrated the relationship between mental health issues and absenteeism in the workplace, with 1 in 5 Australian employees reporting they have taken time off work due to feeling mentally unwell in the past 12 months. It's also likely the nature of law enforcement work may exacerbate mental health vulnerabilities employees have when beginning their service.

AVERAGE PROFILES AND STRENGTHS AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

As part of our research we developed average RPI Risk Profiles for both good and poor performers. This allowed us to identify key areas of risk in poor performers which would be considered areas for development, plus key areas of strength for good performers.

Based on the average profiles, good performers tended to have strengths in areas such as:

- Interpersonal relations (emotional intelligence, self-awareness, interpersonal sensitivity)
- Patience and persistence
- Conscientiousness and tendency to follow rules

In contrast, poor performers tended to have risks in:

- Anger management
- Alcohol use
- Mental health treatment

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research demonstrated a direct relationship between psychological risk and job-related outcomes. Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations:

- Results showed that employees who were classified as good performers tended to have a lower level of psychological risk as measured by the RPI. We recommend preference be given to candidates who fall in the Low Risk to Below Average Risk categories when deciding which candidates to progress to interview.
- The most significant predictors of performance were Arrogance and Depression. Given this, it's important to be aware that if a candidate has significant risks in these areas they are more likely to have performance problems. We recommend further exploration of these risks at interview.
- The most significant predictors of increased sick leave were Willingness to Accept Responsibility and Psychological Adjustment. It's important to be aware that if candidates have risks in these areas they are more likely to take increased sick leave. We recommend further exploration of these risks at interview.

CONTACT US

To learn more about how SafeSelect can help your organisation, call **1300 777 233** or email safeselect@convergeintl.com.au

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