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## Measurement of risk of sexual violence through phallometric testing

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The use of phallometric testing to determine risk of sexual violence is becoming more widely recognized throughout the world. This technique involves the precise measurement of circumferential change in the penis from flaccidity to erection in response to both 'normal' and deviant sexual stimuli. Phallometric testing is the only pure measure of sexual arousal, and unlike other physiological measures such as heart rate and GSR it is not influenced by arousal states such as fear and anger. The current published research compares the phallometric testing profiles of incarcerated sexual offenders with those of incarcerated nonsexual offenders. Specifically, the sexual arousal of 100 convicted rapists, pedophiles, and nonsexual offenders is examined. This research identifies what differentiates these groups and what best predicts risk of sexual aggression. Implications of these results include the possibility of using phallometric testing as a screening tool for those who work with vulnerable populations (e.g., child care workers, teachers). The principal benefit of phallometric testing, however, lies in the identification of those incarcerated men who are at greatest risk to sexually reoffend and who should thus be denied release from jail.

### Biography

Richard J Howes is a licensed forensic psychologist and a Fellow of the International Society for Research on Aggression who has specialized in the assessment of sexual offenders. He has published principally on his research using phallometric assessment to provide an empirical basis for predictions of risk to sexually reoffend and he has presented his research at conferences all over the world from Japan to England and from Portugal to India. He currently works at a federal penitentiary in Canada and has been awarded the exemplary service medal by the Correctional Service of Canada.

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