For more than 15 years, researchers in the Division of Law and Ethics Research at the Treatment Research Institute have been conducting a systemic program of experimental research investigating the critical elements of specialized programs for drug offenders, and determining which types of drug offenders are best suited for which types of programs. One of the most important products emanating from this work is an evidence-based framework for matching drug offenders to community correctional programs. The Risk and Needs Triage (RANT®) tool yields an immediate and easily understandable report that classifies offenders into one of four risk/needs quadrants, each with different implications for selecting suitable correctional decisions by judges, probation and parole officers, attorneys, and other decision-makers.

RANT can be administered rapidly and easily:

- The 19-item instrument can be completed in less than fifteen (15) minutes;
- It can be completed by non-clinically trained probation officers or case managers with relatively minimal training;
- The user-interface consists of simple-to-read input screens that present each item one at a time;
- Clearly worded help menus describe the intent of each item.

RANT provides immediate scoring and recommendations:

- Reports are generated immediately and enable real-time placement and dispositions;
- Reports can be easily and quickly read and understood by non-clinicians; and
- Output provides immediate guidance to criminal justice stakeholders.

According to the RANT classification system: individuals who score:

- high risk/high need may be best suited for intensive supervision and clinical services;
- low risk/high need may be best suited for a lower level of criminal justice supervision, but more intensive clinical services;
- high risk/low need may require more intensive supervision and less intensive clinical services; and
- low risk/low need may be best suited to a less intensive supervision, less intensive clinical prevention-based intervention.

RANT risk/need domains measured include:

- Age of onset of criminal activity and substance use;
- Deviant peer affiliations;
- Prior failure in drug/alcohol rehabilitation and diversion programs;
- Prior felony or serious misdemeanors;
- Unstable living arrangements;
- Unemployment;
- Physical addiction to drugs/alcohol; and
- Chronic medical and mental health conditions.

TRI | science addiction

RANT items are empirically derived:

- Reliable and valid scientific evidence supports each variable as being significantly predictive of outcomes in corrections-based programs and drug abuse treatment;
- Each item is objectively measurable and verifiable, and does not rely solely on clinical judgment or unbiased self-reporting by offenders; and
- No items implicate protected classes or suspect classes, such as racial minorities.

A 2011 article written by TRI scientists and Minnesota Fourth Judicial District Research Division staff members Anne Caron and Dr. Marcy Podkopacz was published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Criminal Justice* titled "Targeting Dispositions for Drug-Involved Offenders: A Field Trial of the Risk and Needs Triage (RANT)™". The article described the results of RANT being administered to 627 felony drug and property offenders charged with or convicted of a felony drug offense or property offense in Hennepin County, Minnesota between March 2007 and February 2008. Outcomes data (one year re-arrest and re-conviction rates) were obtained for a subsample of the offenders (n=459).

The study found that RANT significantly predicted re-arrest and re-conviction rates for a new offense within 12 months of the case disposition. As hypothesized, offenders who were classified as High Risk were significantly more likely to recidivate than those who were classified as Low Risk. The odds of a High-Risk offender being re-arrested and re-convicted were more than twice that of a Low-Risk offender. Offenders classified as High Risk/High Need had the highest re-arrest (44%) and re-conviction (31%) rates. In addition, those participants who were assigned to the RANT-indicated disposition had lower re-arrest rates and re-conviction rates. High Risk/High Needs offenders who were assigned to drug court had lower re-arrest (41%) and re-conviction (24%) rates, then High Risk/High Needs offenders assigned to traditional probation or neighborhood probation (56% re-arrest rate; 44% re-conviction rate). These differences were not statistically significant, however this may be due to the relatively small sample sizes in these analyzes.

This field trial supports the use of RANT as a triage tool for drug-involved offenders at or near the point of arrest. RANT significantly predicted re-arrest and re-conviction rates and did not reveal evidence of gender or racial bias in the prediction of recidivism. The results also provide support for the hypothesis that drug-involved offenders may achieve better outcomes if matched to dispositions based on risk and need. Further information is available in the article: Marlowe, Festinger, Dugosh, Caron, Podkopacz & Clements (2011). Targeting Dispositions for Drug-Involved Offenders: A field Trial of the Risk and Needs Triage (RANT™). *Journal of Criminal Justice. 39(3),* 253-260.

Additional analysis indicated that the RANT has:

- Good internal consistency;
- Exploratory factor analysis yielded two factors representing risks and needs;
- Good predictive validity; and
- Good clinical utility.

Additional validated Risk & Needs tools are available on NADCP's website listed in Appendix A of the *Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards: Volume I* at http://www.nadcp.org/sites/default/files/nadcp/AdultDrugCourtBestPracticeStandards.pdf.