

Application Process for Accessing VRAG-R Datasets

Preamble

Datasets for the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide – Revised (2013) and related projects are stored in the Scholars Portal Dataverse (see <https://dataverse.scholarsportal.info/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:10864/12053&version=6.2>). The website has many coding manuals and variable guides to help understand the data that are available. However, given that combinations of variables could be used to identify participants, access to the actual datasets is restricted, and will be granted only after review and approval of applications requesting access to research, and completion of data sharing agreements. Review and consideration of such proposals will be informed by the Principles and Considerations for Data Sharing developed by the Data Sharing Working Group of the American Psychological Association (APA; see <https://www.apa.org/science/leadership/bsa/data-sharing-report.pdf>), with particular attention paid to Consideration 5, which notes that data sharing policies/agreements must be sensitive to the conditions and regulations of the setting in which the data were collected (i.e., in Canada). Data sharing agreements will generally not be granted for proposals to conduct research considered redundant with existing/planned projects of the VRAG-R development team, although in these cases, depending on the proposed research, it may be preferable to propose a collaborative research project that benefits all parties and that may result in a better quality (or more timely) product.

Process

Requests for access to the datasets will be reviewed by some combination of members from the VRAG-R development team (currently: Vernon Quinsey, Brian Judd, Maaïke Helmus, and Martin Lalumière).

To request access to the datasets, please submit an application which includes the sections and attachments specified below. If an application is complete and thoroughly detailed, we will endeavour to make a decision within one month of receipt of application. Smooth processing of an application is facilitated by proposals that are as specific as possible in specifying the information that will be used, the research questions to be addressed, and the analytic approaches that will be taken. If it is not sufficiently detailed, we will ask for revisions, or may decline to approve a data sharing agreement.

Application

Please email a copy of your completed application to Martin Lalumière (martin.lalumiere@uottawa.ca)

The application must include:

- 1) An overview of the project for which you are requesting data – This should ideally be no more than 1-2 pages, but be as specific as possible. It must specify:
 - The title of the project
 - The research question(s) you plan to address
 - A short description of why this research is important and what gap it fills in existing research (this does not necessitate a literature review, although sometimes a paragraph or so may be helpful).

- The specific information that will be used for this project. To increase clarity, it may be helpful to attach an Appendix that specifies the variables that will be used. In some situations, however, specifying the constructs that will be analysed (without identifying the specific variables in the dataset) will be sufficient.
- The analytic approach that will be used to address the research question
- The proposed outlet for disseminating research findings (e.g., conference presentations, book chapters, journal articles). You do not need to specify which journals you will submit to or which conferences you plan to attend, but some idea of your intended product(s) is necessary.
- Outline the procedures that will be used to keep the data secure (e.g., data will be stored on a password protected computer or encrypted USB device). Specify who could potentially access the data. Note that storing data in an online system (e.g., dropbox) is not sufficiently secure, unless it is a specialized system governed by specific privacy protections typical for safe storage of confidential health care information. If so, please specify.
- If applicable, state when the data will be destroyed (e.g., five years after publication of the specified article).

2) A list of all individuals involved in this project who will have access to their data, including a one-page bio that lists their affiliations and qualifications related to the proposed research. In some cases, we will also accept a phrasing along the following lines: "And 1-2 research assistants hired from the University of XXX – these individuals are not yet specified, but they will also adhere to the conditions of this data sharing agreement."

3) Documentation demonstrating that the research project has been approved by an Institutional Review Board (ideally a University's Ethics Committee). In rare circumstances, we will consider exemptions from this requirement for requests originating from a well-established and highly respected research organization (e.g., a Government Research Agency, such as a research unit from the U.S. Department of Justice), where ethics review is not possible, and the project is deemed to be in the public's interest, with no potential for meaningful conflicts of interest (e.g., potential financial or partisan benefit of any individual conducting the research).

4) A Word or PDF attachment of a draft data sharing agreement, signed and dated by each member of the research team (as specified in Requirement 2, above). This data sharing agreement will not be considered to be in force until it is signed by at least one member of the VRAG-R development team, in addition to each member of the proposed research project. The Research Agreement must contain the following text:

Each Member of the Research Team agrees to the following conditions:

a) That the data will be used for research purposes only.

b) We will use the data only for the purposes of the project specified in this application, titled:

c) Research findings and data analyses will be disseminated only through the outlets specified in the application. They will not be used for additional purposes, such as specific comments in case reports, including supplementary or supporting documentation (e.g., any private practice work). Note that *published* findings can be

referred to in any private practice work – just not new analyses conducted solely for inclusion in reports for private work.

d) Secondary analyses for any subsequent projects/articles/research questions will require submitting a new request for data sharing permission. Depending on the scope of the first research request, we may or may not require a new ethics approval.

e) I will follow all necessary steps (e.g., adherence to ethical principles for research involving human participants in the country in which the research is conducted, as well as in Canada, where the data were collected – for the latter, see http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/archives/tcps-eptc/docs/TCPS%20October%202005_E.pdf) to protect the confidentiality of the data. This involves:

- Ensuring that no participant could reasonably be identified in any dissemination of the research (note that even without including a name, a combination of variables could be used to identify a participant, such as date of birth and date of conviction. Additionally, reporting of rarely endorsed variables along with other information could also identify a participant).
- The data will be kept secure, following the procedures outlined in our application. No deviation of these procedures will occur without a written request to modify the data sharing agreement.

f) If any modification of this agreement is necessary (e.g., adding a new member of the research team), I will request the modification from the VRAG-R development team in writing, before any such change occurs.

g) If the VRAG-R development team determines that I have breached the conditions of this agreement, I agree to destroy all copies of the data upon their request and immediately halt all use of the data.

5) Any additional appendices that may be helpful in considering the request (not necessary, but could be included in some applications).