



Intelligence

state of the art threat assessment

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Upcoming Events

How to...Manage Fear

Assessing and Managing Risk for Violence Using the HCR-20 V3

Violence Risk Triage

Foundational Violence Risk Assessment and Management Workshop

CATAP Conference

How to...Prevent Violence

AfATAP Conference

Learn more...

Editor's Note



are done in accordance with best practices and supported by the law. I will also provide a practice update about the official launches of the newest version of the Guidelines for Stalking Assessment and Management (SAM-V2) in 2023 in person in Johannesburg and virtually from Vancouver.

As always, Intelligence will keep you up to date with recent advances in threat assessment from around the globe through knowledge and experiences shared by world-leading experts.

Our team hopes this newsletter finds you adjusting to post pandemic as well as possible and that you are having a chance to connect with family, friends, and colleagues.

In this issue, Ms. Ida Ghaemmaghfarahani will provide a practice update about artificial intelligence and threat assessment to encourage us to consider possible implications of this emerging issue and some of the pros and cons for threat assessment professionals.

Ms. Nicole Russell is providing a practice update about misconduct investigations, with an emphasis on ensuring they

We also have several special announcements! The CATAP conference and workshops will be held once again in Whistler between 15-19 October 2023. The AfATAP will be holding its second conference and workshops in Johannesburg between 13-17 November 2023. Protect International will also be announcing all of the in-person and live virtual workshops in 2024 very soon!

We hope Intelligence will continue to provide a forum for you to share and develop your expertise in threat assessment.

Sincerely,
Kelly A. Watt, PhD
Director and Threat Assessment Specialist at Protect International

Balancing Innovation and Ethics: The Role of AI in Threat Assessment

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning revolutionized industries by enabling intelligent machines for problem-solving, decision-making, and data-driven predictions. As these cutting-edge technologies develop, questions have arisen about whether they can be safely applied to threat assessment when assessing risk for self- or other-directed violence.

The integration of AI into threat assessment empowers professionals to analyze written communications with greater speed and efficiency than can be accomplished by the human eye. AI algorithms can analyze large amounts of data and may reveal patterns in communication that human evaluators may overlook. [Menger et al. \(2019\)](#), demonstrated successful

machine learning prediction of aggressive behavior among psychiatric inpatients, and tools such as [eHARM](#) have been reported to assist in monitoring warning signs for violence risk. Further, platforms like Facebook have implemented machine learning tools for suicide prevention, utilizing user data to evaluate suicide risk. Zuckerberg claims this approach has helped 3,500 people worldwide ([Singer, 2018](#)).

Arguments for the adoption of AI within threat assessment have included the potential for AI to mitigate bias associated with human judgment and to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of threat assessment. Indeed, AI algorithms can monitor platforms around the clock to detect potential threats and warning signs for self- or other-directed violence risk allowing threat assessment teams to take prompt preventive measures. Arguments against the adoption of AI in threat assessment center around ethical challenges like privacy concerns and false positive reports. AI algorithms identify words and patterns devoid of context and, as such, cases of false positive identification in US schools, for example, have led to privacy breaches and possible litigation ([Keierleber, 2021](#)). There have also been instances of suicide resulting from interactions with AI chatbots ([Atillah, 2023](#)).

To navigate these challenges and ensure ethical usage of AI in threat assessment, transparency and user education play vital roles. It is important to communicate

the limitations and risks of AI systems, allowing stakeholders to make informed decisions. A conservative approach to the use of AI in threat assessment would be to use algorithms to detect warning signs in written communications, with final reviews conducted by humans to ensure communications are considered in context, and that all identified instances of concern are consistent with research, practice, and the law regarding definitions of warning signs for self- and other-directed violence. This approach would be consistent with other legally embedded processes where machines assist with identification (e.g., identifying fingerprint patterns) but humans make final determinations. Finally, users should consider developing sound ethical guidelines, policies, and protocols before adopting AI programs within a threat assessment process to avoid unintended harm. Collaboration with violence risk assessment experts and privacy officers can assist with establishing guidelines and ethical frameworks that prioritize user safety and privacy. These guidelines, policies and protocols should also address the role (if any) and limitations to using AI in the development of management recommendations—after all, threat management is the primary goal of threat assessment.

Ms. Ida Ghaemmaghamfarahani
*Research Assistant, Columbia
University Irving Medical Center*

Upcoming Events

**Advanced Violence
Risk Assessment and
Management Workshop**

**Official Launch of the
SAM-V2**

**Assessing and
Managing Risk for
Intimate Partner
Violence: Using the
SARA-V3 and B-SAFER**

**How to...Assess and
Manage Risk for
Cyberviolence**

Learn more...

We Can Support You with Misconduct Investigations!

Did you know that Protect International offers external misconduct investigations and support services for internal misconduct investigations? It was in the course of conducting threat assessments and related support services that we saw the need to expand our services to include misconduct investigations because of the challenges our clients were facing. We wanted to provide our clients with misconduct investigations which were done in accordance with best practices and supported by law. To help us to accomplish this, in 2019, Mrs. Nicole Russell, a lawyer in private practice, joined the team at Protect International.

When allegations of misconduct are reported or suspected in your workplace, your organization has legal duties to investigate and respond to these allegations. Misconduct investigations must reflect the principals of natural justice and be done in a fair, timely,

thorough manner which preserves confidentiality to the fullest extent possible in accordance with the law. It is critical to ensure that misconduct investigations are carefully planned and conducted in order to limit your organization's exposure to liabilities and reputational harm.

If your organization is conducting an internal misconduct investigation, Protect International can provide support services by assisting and advising regarding any step of the investigative process: planning; triaging; advising on interim measures; reviewing relevant legislation, regulations, policies and procedures; communicating allegations to parties; conducting interviews with relevant parties; fact-finding; analyzing substantiated allegations in light of legislation, regulations, policies and procedures; or making recommendations on how to respond to the substantiated

allegations.

Protect International can also undertake an external misconduct investigation on behalf of your organization. Retaining our trained and experienced team at Protect International is invaluable in situations involving serious and/or complex investigations, investigations where litigation is contemplated, where investigative resources within an organization are limited or where an internal investigation may result in the perception of bias.

If your organization needs to undertake a misconduct investigation or requires related support services, Protect International is here to help and we welcome you to reach out to us!

Ms. Nicole Russel
*Conduct Investigation Specialist,
Protect International*

Announcing the Official Launches of the SAM-V2

Stalking includes incredibly diverse behaviour, can be challenging to identify, and has a tremendous impact on victims. Protect International will be launching the newest version of the Guidelines for Stalking Assessment and Management (SAM-V2) in 2023. The launches will be held in person in Johannesburg, South Africa, between 16-17 November 2023 (as part of the annual AfATAP Conference) and virtually from Vancouver, Canada, between

21-22 November 2023 (as part of our open events in 2023). Significant updates have been made to the guidelines, reflecting advances related to research, practice and the law and incorporating feedback from diverse professionals around the world. The workshop will be an opportunity to receive training on the most recent version of the SAM. Participants will be provided with a flipping book of the drafted version of the SAM-V2 manual for use during

the workshop. Participants will also be given the opportunity to provide feedback about the SAM-V2 and will receive a final version of the SAM-V2 manual within 12 months of the launches to allow time to incorporate user feedback.

Kelly A. Watt, PhD
*Director and Threat Assessment
Specialist, Protect International*



Annual CATAP Conference 15-19 October, 2023 Whistler, Canada

The Canadian Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (CATAP) welcomes you back to beautiful Whistler, British Columbia, this October for the 2023 Annual CATAP Workshop & Conference. Leading figures in behavioural threat assessment from around the globe will come together over five days of knowledge exchange and experiential learning. This year's programme features workshops, case studies, and thought-leadership sessions intentionally selected for their translational strength and direct applicability to your work protecting people, organizations, and communities. Attendees benefit from the choice of a 2-day Forensic and Tactical Linguistics 101 Workshop with Linguist Julia Kupper, or a 2-day Interactive Operational Interviewing with Mentally Disordered Individuals Workshop facilitated by Dr. Russ Palarea and Tonya Quillen, LMHC, TEP. CATAP is honoured to open the conference with a keynote address from Tsuut'ina Nation Police Service Chief of Police, Keith Blake. Other highlights include applied content related to AI in Threat Assessment, countering extremism, trauma, open-source intelligence, navigating multiple risks, exploration of cultural considerations and biases, adolescent risk, as well as several networking opportunities. To learn more and to register visit catap.ca/event/!



Annual AfATAP Conference 13-17 November 2023 Johannesburg, South Africa

AfATAP was established in 2019 which was only a few months before Covid-19 became a pandemic. Our membership has steadily grown with over 80 members currently. Due to the pandemic, we started providing webinars to our members and others on a regular basis and have become the largest content producer in the webinar sphere of the various TAP associations. We hosted 12 webinars in 2022, and have hosted 6 webinars in 2023, with a range of international experts sharing their experiences. To date 37 of these webinars have been recorded and added to the AfATAP webinar library which you can view when you become a member. AfATAP's first in person conference was held in 2022 with 60 attendees from 5 countries. We are proud to announce our 2023 conference to be held in Johannesburg on 13 and 14 November, with a core competencies workshop to be presented by Mr Bram van der Meer (Netherlands) on 15 November, and globally the first workshop on the SAM-V2 (the Guidelines for Stalking Assessment and Management, Version 2) to be presented on 16 and 17 November by Dr. Stephen Hart (Canada). We hope to see some of you at this year's conference and please note that attendance is going to be capped at 80 people.



Announcing Soon: Upcoming Events in 2024