

Does AI help humans make better decisions?

A methodological framework for experimental evaluation

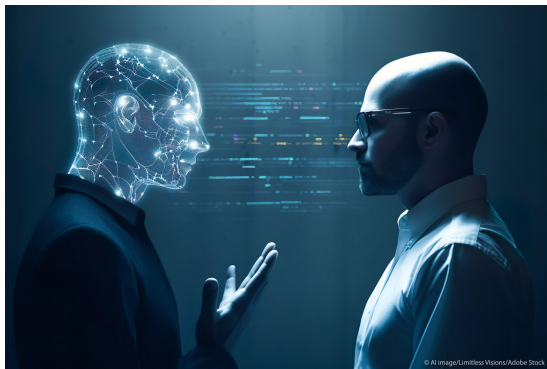
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IQSS Coffee Hour
Harvard University
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Joint work with Eli Ben-Michael, D. James Greiner, Melody Huang,
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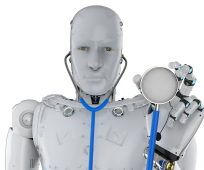
Rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI)



- Massive technological advances in recent years
- Data-driven algorithms are everywhere in our daily lives
- Generative algorithms may soon replace simple human tasks

AI-Assisted (Algorithm-Assisted) Human Decision Making

- But, humans still make many consequential decisions
- We have not yet outsourced high-stakes decisions to AI



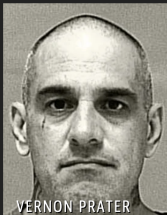
- this is true even when human decisions can be suboptimal
- we may want to hold *someone*, rather than *something*, accountable
- Most prevalent system is **AI-assisted human decision making**
 - humans make decisions with the aid of AI recommendations
 - routine decisions made by individuals in daily lives
 - consequential decisions made by doctors, judges, etc.

Questions and Contributions

- How do AI recommendations influence human decisions?
 - Does AI help humans make more accurate decisions?
 - Does AI help humans improve the fairness of their decisions?
- Many have studied the accuracy and fairness of AI recommendations
 - Relatively few have researched their impacts on human decisions
 - Little is known about how AI's bias interacts with human bias
- Methodological framework for experimental evaluation
 - ① **experimental design**: randomize human-alone vs. human+AI decisions
 - ② **methodology**: comparison between human-alone, human+AI, AI-alone
 - ③ **first ever field experiment**: evaluating pretrial public safety assessment

Controversy over the COMPAS Score (Propublica)

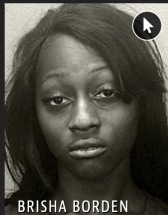
Two Petty Theft Arrests



VERNON PRATER

LOW RISK

3



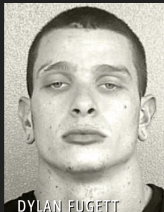
BRISHA BORDEN

HIGH RISK

8

Borden was rated high risk for future crime after she and a friend took a kid's bike and scooter that were sitting outside. She did not reoffend.

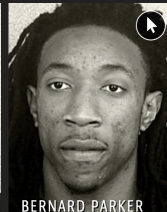
Two Drug Possession Arrests



DYLAN FUGETT

LOW RISK

3



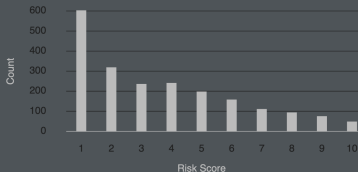
BERNARD PARKER

HIGH RISK

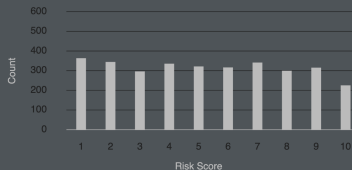
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Fugett was rated low risk after being arrested with cocaine and marijuana. He was arrested three times on drug charges after that.

White Defendants' Risk Scores



Black Defendants' Risk Scores



Pretrial Public Safety Assessment (PSA)

- AI recommendations often used in US criminal justice system
- At the **first appearance hearing**, judges primarily make two decisions
 - ① whether to release an arrestee pending disposition of criminal charges
 - ② what conditions (e.g., bail and monitoring) to impose if released
- Goal: avoid predispositional incarceration while preserving public safety
- Judges are required to consider three risk factors along with others
 - ① arrestee may fail to appear in court (FTA)
 - ② arrestee may engage in new criminal activity (NCA)
 - ③ arrestee may engage in new violent criminal activity (NVCA)
- **PSA** as an AI recommendation to judges
 - classifying arrestees according to FTA and NCA/NVCA risks
 - derived from an application of a machine learning algorithm to a training data set based on past observations
 - AZ, KY, NJ, UT implement PSA statewide
 - many cities and counties across 26 states use PSA

A Field Experiment for Evaluating the PSA

- Dane County, Wisconsin
- PSA = weighted indices of ten factors
 - age as the single demographic factor: no gender or race
 - nine factors drawn from criminal history (prior convictions and FTA)
- PSA scores and recommendation
 - 1 two separate ordinal six-point risk scores for FTA and NCA
 - 2 one binary risk score for new violent criminal activity (NVCA)
 - 3 aggregate recommendation: signature bond, small and large cash bail
- Judges may have other information about an arrestee
 - affidavit by a police officer about the arrest
 - defense attorney may inform about the arrestee's connections to the community (e.g., family, employment)
- Field experiment: randomization of PSA provision
- The results are based on the interim data



DANE COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS

Public Safety Assessment – Report

215 S Hamilton St #1000
Madison, WI 53703
Phone: (608) 266-4311

Name: [REDACTED]

Spillman Name Number: [REDACTED]

DOB: [REDACTED]

Gender: Male

Arrest Date: 03/25/2017

PSA Completion Date: 03/27/2017

New Violent Criminal Activity Flag

No

New Criminal Activity Scale

1	2	3	4	5	6
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Failure to Appear Scale

1	2	3	4	5	6
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Charge(s):

961.41(1)(D)(1) MFC DELIVER HEROIN <3 GMS F 3

Risk Factors:

Responses:

1. Age at Current Arrest	23 or Older
2. Current Violent Offense	No
a. Current Violent Offense & 20 Years Old or Younger	No
3. Pending Charge at the Time of the Offense	No
4. Prior Misdemeanor Conviction	Yes
5. Prior Felony Conviction	Yes
a. Prior Conviction	Yes
6. Prior Violent Conviction	2
7. Prior Failure to Appear Pretrial in Past 2 Years	0
8. Prior Failure to Appear Pretrial Older than 2 Years	Yes
9. Prior Sentence to Incarceration	Yes

Recommendations:

Release Recommendation - Signature bond

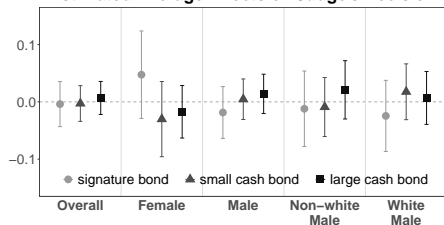
Conditions - Report to and comply with pretrial supervision

PSA Provision, Demographics, and Outcomes

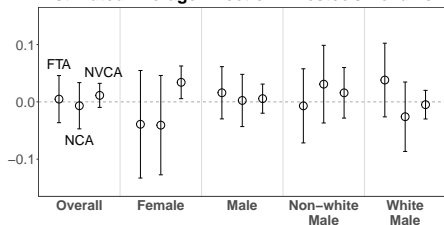
	no PSA			PSA			Total (%)
	Signature bond	Cash bail <i>small</i> <i>large</i>		Signature bond	Cash bail <i>small</i> <i>large</i>		
Non-white female	64	11	6	67	6	0	154 (8)
White female	91	17	7	104	17	10	246 (13)
Non-white male	261	56	49	258	53	57	734 (39)
White male	289	48	44	276	54	46	757 (40)
FTA committed	218	42	16	221	45	16	558 (29)
<i>not</i> committed	487	90	90	484	85	97	1333 (71)
NCA committed	211	39	14	202	40	17	523 (28)
<i>not</i> committed	494	93	92	503	90	96	1368 (72)
NVCA committed	36	10	3	44	10	6	109 (6)
<i>not</i> committed	669	122	103	661	120	107	1782 (94)
Total (%)	705 (37)	132 (7)	106 (6)	705 (37)	130 (7)	113 (6)	1891 (100)

Intention-to-Treat (ITT) Analysis of PSA Provision

Estimated Average Effects on Judge's Decision



Estimated Average Effect on Arrestee's Behavior



- Mostly insignificant effects on judge's decisions (on average)
- Similar results for arrestee's behavior
- But, ITT analysis cannot answer the key question:
Does PSA provision help judges make "better" decisions?
- Instead, ITT analysis asks:
Does PSA provision influence judge's decisions?

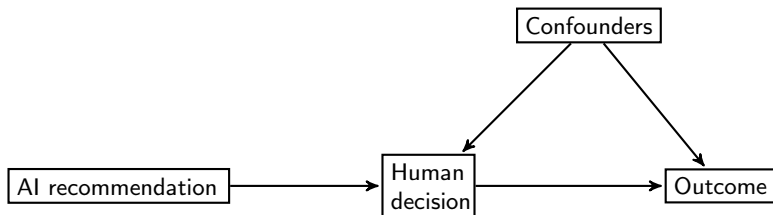
Does the Judge Agree with AI?

		AI	
Human		Signature bond	Cash bail
	Signature bond	54.1% (510)	20.7 (195)
	Cash bail	9.4 (89)	15.8 (149)

		AI	
Human+AI		Signature bond	Cash bail
	Signature bond	57.3% (543)	17.1 (162)
	Cash bail	7.4 (70)	18.2 (173)

Experimental Design

- Two key design features about treatment assignment:
 - 1 **randomization**: human-alone vs. human+AI
 - 2 **single blindedness**: AI recommendations affect the outcome only through human decisions
- The proposed design is widely applicable even when stakes are high



Classification Ability of Decision-making System

		Decision	
		Negative ($D = 0$)	Positive ($D = 1$)
Outcome	Negative ($Y(0) = 0$)	True Negative (TN)	False Positive (FP)
	Positive ($Y(0) = 1$)	False Negative (FN)	True Positive (TP)

- Decision
 - Positive: cash bail
 - Negative: signature bond
- Outcome
 - Positive: NCA
 - Negative: no NCA
- Classification ability measures
 - False Positive (FP): unnecessary cash bail
 - False Negative (FN): signature bond followed by NCA

Classification Risk

		Decision	
		Negative ($D = 0$)	Positive ($D = 1$)
Outcome	Negative ($Y(0) = 0$)	True Negative (TN) ℓ_{00}	False Positive (FP) ℓ_{01}
	Positive ($Y(0) = 1$)	False Negative (FN) $\ell_{10} = 1$	True Positive (TP) ℓ_{11}

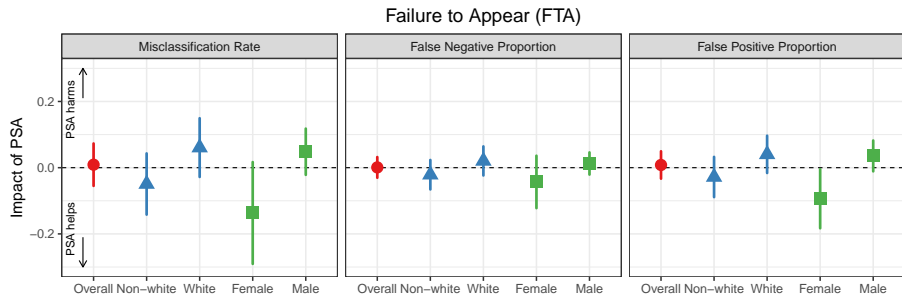
- Assign a 'loss' to each classification outcome
- Classification risk:

$$R(\ell_{01}) = \underbrace{\ell_{10}}_{=1} \cdot \text{FNP} + \ell_{01} \cdot \text{FPP}.$$

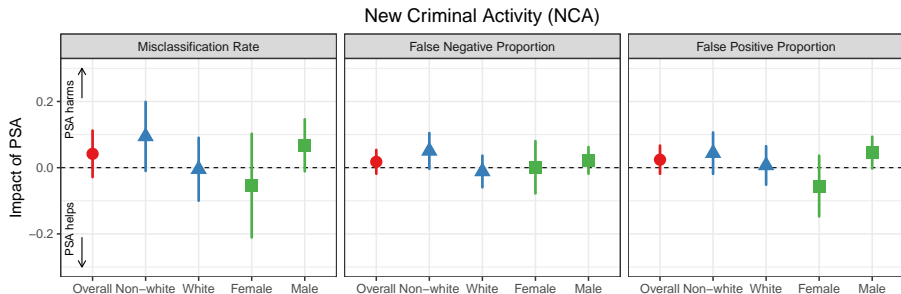
where **misclassification rate** is $R(1) = \text{FNP} + \text{FPP}$

- We can identify the risk *difference* between Human vs. Human+AI
- We can bound the risk difference between Human vs. AI-alone

PSA Recommendations Do Not Improve Human Decisions

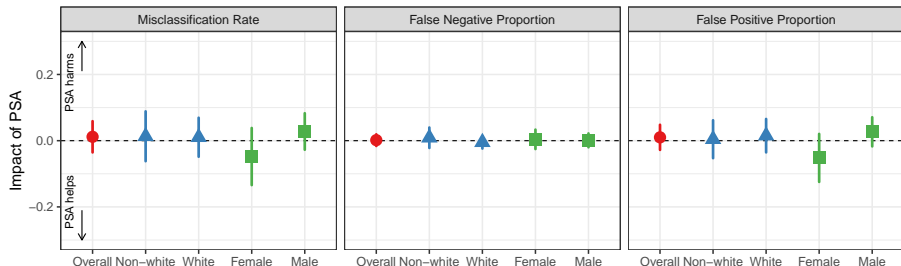


PSA Recommendations Do Not Improve Human Decisions

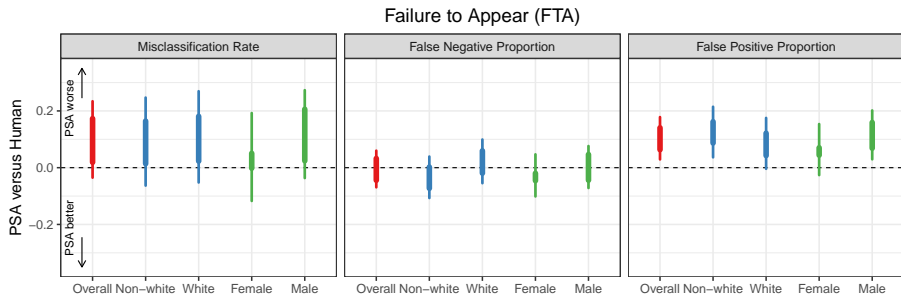


PSA Recommendations Do Not Improve Human Decisions

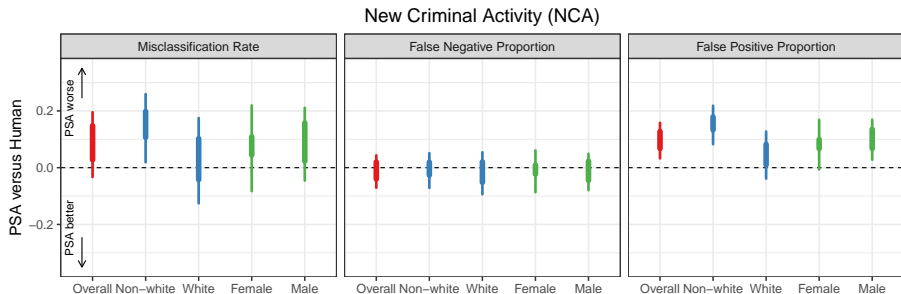
New Violent Criminal Activity (NVCA)



PSA-Alone Decisions Perform Worse than Human Decisions

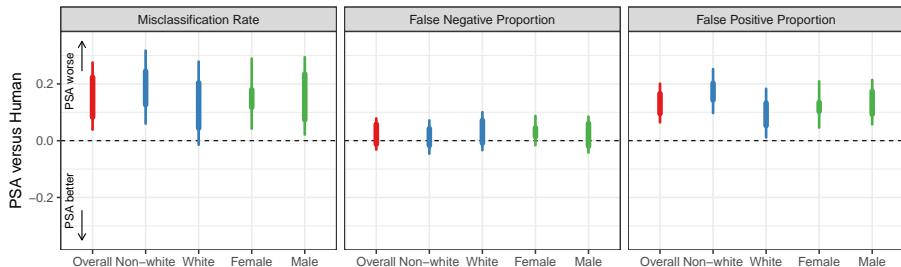


PSA-Alone Decisions Perform Worse than Human Decisions

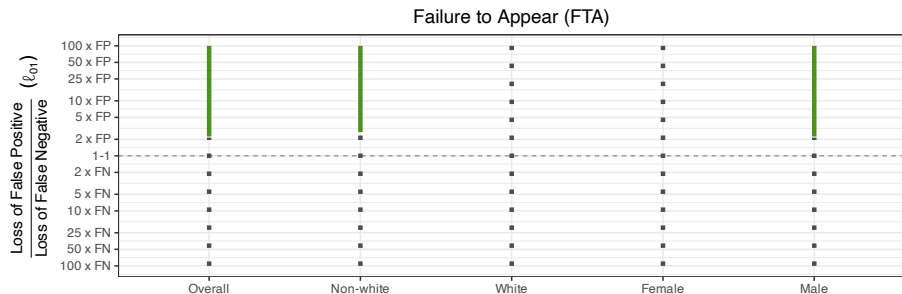


PSA-Alone Decisions Perform Worse than Human Decisions

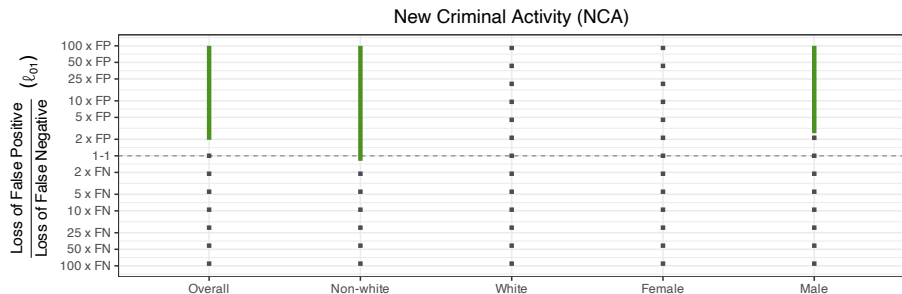
New Violent Criminal Activity (NVCA)



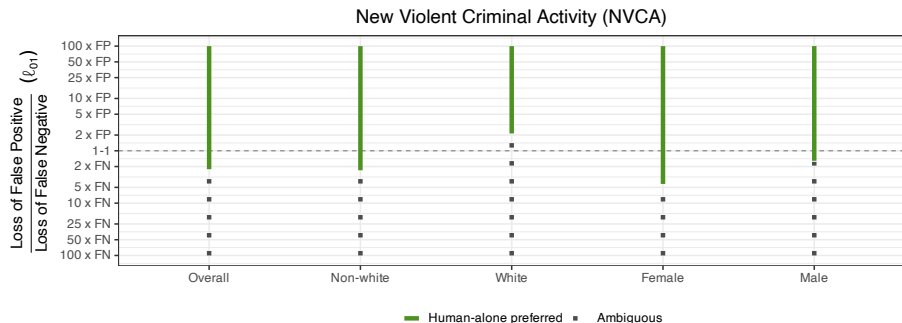
Human Decisions are Preferred over PSA-alone System when the Cost of False Positives is High



Human Decisions are Preferred over PSA-alone System when the Cost of False Positives is High

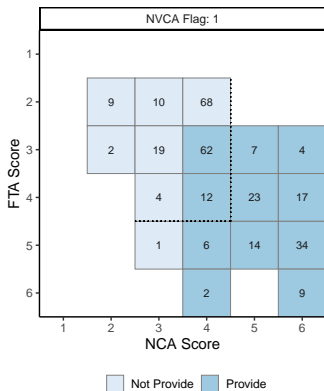


Human Decisions are Preferred over PSA-alone System when the Cost of False Positives is High

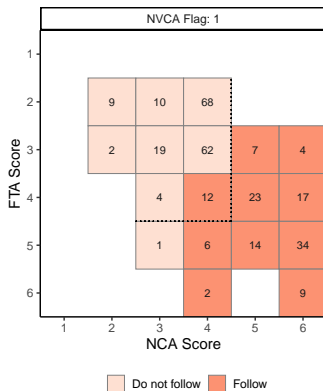


Combining PSA Recommendations and Human Decisions

Whether to provide PSA recommendations



Whether to follow PSA recommendations



- We should provide PSA recommendations only in extreme cases
- Judge should follow PSA recommendations only in extreme cases

Concluding Remarks

- Humans (still) make most high-stakes decisions
 - need to examine how AI affects human decisions
 - accurate/fair AI does not imply accurate/fair human decisions
- We propose a methodological framework for experimentally evaluating the three decision-making systems:
 - 1 human-alone
 - 2 human+AI
 - 3 AI-alone
- We conducted and analyzed an RCT that evaluates the pretrial risk assessment instrument (PSA-DMF system):
 - 1 PSA recommendations have little impacts on human decisions
 - 2 PSA decisions perform worse than human decisions