



**A control group comparison of a community based cognitive behavioural treatment program for adults with an intellectual disability perpetrating sexually abusive behaviours**

Lars Madsen (Forensic Psychology Centre), Luke Hatzipetrou (Forensic Psychology Centre) and Shay Addison

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Rainforest Room)**

Over the last decade there has been a shift towards the use of Cognitive Behavioural approaches with individuals with an intellectual disability (ID) for a range of problems and concerns, including sexual offending. The research to date is tentatively optimistic, and suggests that individuals with ID can benefit from group based CBT interventions. However, the current data is limited and complicated by a range of methodological problems, including small numbers, a lack of 'true' control groups and confounding contextual variables. This study represents the first attempt in Queensland to evaluate a community based CBT sex offender treatment for adults with ID. Thirty offenders were matched and randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions. Participants were compared pre and post on the Victim Empathy Scale, Sexual Attitudes and Knowledge Scale (SAKS), Questionnaire on Attitudes consistent with Sexual Offending (QACSO), and Sexual Offenders Self Appraisal Scale (SOSAS). The impact of a range of participant variables including intelligence and adaptive functioning, psychopathy, personality disorder, and mental health problems, are discussed.



### **A proposed model for community alcohol, and other drug treatment to forensic clients in the community**

Jacinta Pollard, Matthew Berry and Stuart Ross (Caraniche)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 3.40 – 4.10pm (Ocean Room)**

Caraniche is a forensic psychology firm that specialises in the psychological treatment of alcohol and other drug problems. In 2010 Caraniche, was contracted by the Victorian Department of Health to provide a report on potential models for future community based forensic AOD services in Victoria. A review of current practices revealed that there was no overarching clinical model in place to guide forensic AOD service delivery and that expectations, goals and outcomes of treatment were highly variable. A new model for working with forensic AOD clients was developed through a review of the AOD and offender literature, examination of service models in other jurisdictions and a stakeholder consultation process. This model looks at four key factors when determining what intervention and in which treatment setting a forensic client with drug or alcohol issues is best serviced. These factors include: the severity of dependence, the nature of offending, the degree of antisocial personality and the relationship between offending and substance use. This paper outlines the key findings from the initial review and consultation process and the proposed model for future community based AOD service delivery in Victoria.



### **A sign of mental illness or criminality? Sentencing drug addicted offenders in Victoria**

Sarah Krasnostein (University of Melbourne)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Ocean Room)**

In a narrow range of circumstances, a sentencing judge will treat drug addiction as a mitigating factor that reduces an offender's moral culpability for an offence. One relevant consideration in that assessment will be whether the drug addiction started in circumstances beyond the offender's control. This involves addictions which had their genesis in medical treatment or in youth as a result of childhood trauma or social disadvantage. However, at the level of policy, the legitimacy of drug addiction as a mitigating factor in sentencing is always already controversial. It is especially so in the context of repeat offending as well as violent and property offending (as opposed to lower level drug trafficking offences). Psychological reports provide the court with crucial connections between an addict's personal history, their initial drug use and their offending which enables a judge to place the addiction in context. Other relevant circumstances permitting, the judge can moderate punishment to be proportionate to any reduced moral culpability. However, for a number of reasons, these connections cannot always be drawn out and the relevant material concerning the initial decision to use drugs cannot be placed before the court. In our discretionary sentencing framework, this may leave the judge to find that an offender freely chose his or her initial drug use and therefore its foreseeable criminal consequences. My research looks at drug addicted offenders sentenced for armed robbery. I ask whether pleas which emphasized underlying mental health issues instead of the addiction per se were routinely more effective in achieving sentencing outcomes based on rehabilitation over denunciation than those which did not. The results yield advice for practitioners hoping to achieve the most appropriate outcome for their client/patient in the current policy climate.



### **A structural summary approach to assessment and treatment of forensic cases**

Jack White (White & Associates Psychologists)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Aqua Room)**

The paper will outline an empirical model using measures of intelligence, personality and psychopathology to explain the relationship between an individual's psychological profile, his or her offending behavior and treatment planning. It will propose a new direction for maximizing treatment outcome success based around client selection and recommend more effective interventions by fitting the treatment approach to the profile. The paper will aim to extend Morey & Hopwood's "structural summary approach" to assessment and treatment of forensic cases. A number of significant criminal cases utilizing this approach will be discussed.



### **Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young offenders: Social disadvantage or antisocial personality?**

Natalie Mamone and Monique Murray (Department of Human Services - Juvenile Justice NSW)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 10.30 – 12pm (Rainforest Room)**

This study compares predictors of offending behaviour among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people in juvenile detention centres in NSW. A high proportion (48% in this study) of these young people are of Aboriginal origin. Analysis of the 2009 Young People in Custody Health Survey (N=363 for full survey; 94% response rate). The survey included criminal history, self-reported offending behaviour, social demographics, psychometric testing for IQ, antisocial traits and a diagnostic mental health interview. Data include a breakdown by gender and Aboriginality. Variables known to be linked to re-offending were correlated with known criminal history and with self-reported offending behaviour. This information informed a logistic regression analysis and a multiple regression analysis. The dependent variable in the first analysis was a binary variable measuring convictions prior to current detention. The dependent variable in the second analysis was a variable measuring self-reported offending behaviour. Both the logistic and multiple regression models included being placed in care prior to age 16, school exclusion, antisocial traits and alcohol dependence. Once these factors were included, the addition of Aboriginality failed to add further predictive value to the models. Whilst approximately half of young people in detention in NSW are of Aboriginal origin, this characteristic in itself does not add explanatory value for offending behaviour. Predictors of offending behaviour for Aboriginal young people are similar to predictors for non-Aboriginal young people, with the strongest of these being social disadvantage and antisocial characteristics.



**An evaluation of the Justice Health Connections Project for prisoner reintegration: Analysis of program effects on recidivism**

Rebecca Medlock, Kristy Martire and Richard Kemp (University of New South Wales)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Aqua Room)**

Each year approximately 50,000 prisoners will be released back into the community in Australia. On release prisoners are characterised by chronic social disadvantage, high rates of substance use and poor physical and mental health, which is often a reflection of problems experienced prior to their imprisonment. The Justice Health Connections Project is an initiative in New South Wales, Australia that has been established to aid prisoner's transition back into the community with a focus on those with problematic substance use. The current research extended a preliminary evaluation of the project by examining differences in rates of reoffending between those who complete the program and those who do not. Overall, after controlling for pre-existing between group differences, the results indicated a significant treatment effect such that non-completers both reoffended and returned to prison significantly quicker than those who had completed the program. This research has significant implications for evidence-based practices and, international policies, as well as individual participants, their family and the community as a whole.



### **An evaluation of the 'Think First' program**

Karen Burgoyne and Graham Tyson (Charles Sturt University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Aqua Room)**

The Think First program was implemented in five NSW correctional centres between 2003 and 2007. This study is a longitudinal evaluation of Think First using the pre- and post-test scores of four questionnaire measures (the Social Problem Solving Inventory – Revised (SPSI-R); Barratt Impulsivity Scale, version 11 (BIS-11); Locus of Control Behaviour (LCB); and the Crime PICS, version II), in a sample of 135 male participants. Significant change in a pro-social direction was found on the LCB, all of the BIS-II and Crime PICS II subscales and two of the SPSI-R subscales. Completion of Think First improves impulsivity levels, criminal thinking styles and some aspects of social problem solving ability. There appears to be particularly positive effects on Aboriginal locus of control scores post-program.\



### **Assessing risk of violence in offenders: The normative practices of Australian mental health practitioners**

Diane Barber and Greg Dear (Edith Cowan University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Leighton's Theatre)**

In this series of studies, we surveyed the violence risk-assessment practices and experiences of Australian psychologists and psychiatrists who routinely assess offenders' risk of violence for courts or parole boards. In study 1 (n=86), we used a mixed-method survey to obtain information about the methods participants used in their most recent assessment of violence risk for pre- or post-sentencing matters and evaluated those methods against the Scottish Risk Management Authority's (RMA) risk-assessment guidelines. In study 2 (n=49), we asked participants to rate the importance of meeting the standards prescribed by the RMA, using a Likert survey. And, in study 3 (n=21), we used a qualitative survey to identify factors that preclude practitioners from meeting the RMA's standards. Preliminary analyses of our data suggest that practitioners' are largely aware of best practice methods, but that local violence risk assessment practices fall short of international standards, especially with regards to formulating a defensible opinion of risk and communicating risk to the decision-maker. Explanations for the gaps between knowledge and practice include limitations in using actuarial tools with Australian offenders; organisational barriers to obtaining valid information; lack of specific training; and limited provision of time or remuneration. Conclusions from this study will contribute to recommendations for improving violence risk assessments, such as the development of best practice guidelines for the Australian context and the establishment of specialised training and accreditation programs to standardise the quality of violence risk-evaluations in offenders.





**Attitudes towards sentencing goals: The influence of attributions and implicit theories of personality**

Graham Tyson and Florence Gray-Weale (Charles Sturt University)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 8.30 – 10am (*Ocean Room*)**

The connection between public attitudes towards crime and the implementation of criminal justice policy makes the study of public opinions about the punishment and rehabilitation of offenders essential. Two influential perceptual frameworks that have been found to influence sentencing goals are implicit theory of personality (ITP) and attribution theory. ITP describes opinions about the nature of personality – whether it is stable and trait-based or fluid and malleable, while attribution theory provides a framework through which individuals can explore crime causality and then arrive at decisions about sentencing goals. Some researchers, however, have queried whether ITPs are theoretically distinct from the stability dimension of attribution. The current study explores the links between ITP, attributions (on the dimensions of locus and stability) and sentencing goals (punishment and rehabilitation). A sample of 186 individuals (138 females and 48 males), most of whom were residing in Australia at the time of the study, took part. ITP and attributions were found to uniquely contribute to the variance of both sentencing goals, and results suggest that ITP and attributions are distinct but related constructs. Little support was found for the mediation models, with results indicating that the direct effect of ITP on sentencing goals is stronger than the indirect effect via attributions.



**Autism spectrum disorders in the criminal justice system: Identification, offence profile and personnel knowledge**

Lauren Gook and Jane McGillivray (Deakin University)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 10.30 – 12pm (Rainforest Room)**

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are characterised by a triad of impairments in communication, reciprocal social interaction and restrictive, often repetitive behaviours and interests. Little is known about the specific relationship between ASD and offending. However, core characteristics such as a lack of empathy and insight, social naiveté, and preoccupations with interests and routines, have been identified as potential precipitants to aggressive outbursts and socially inappropriate behaviour in this population. Findings regarding the prevalence of ASD in offenders are inconsistent and limited due to diagnostic and methodological challenges. It is likely that ASD may go unrecognized in forensic populations. Individuals with ASD who become involved with the criminal justice system (CJS) are at particular risk for adverse affects on their mental health and wellbeing. Given the specific treatment and management needs of individuals with ASD, it is important that CJS staff have an understanding of the disorder to enable identification of individuals who require further assessment. This paper describes the knowledge and understanding of ASDs amongst forensic personnel, specifically their understanding of the needs and the challenges faced by people with ASDs in the CJS. Further to this, the methodology and findings from a trial ASD screening protocol will be presented. The trial involved the administration of a brief ASD screening tool by assessment officers to all prisoners entering the Victorian prison system. This was followed by a clinical interview of those prisoners who were identified in the initial screen. Findings will be discussed in terms of characteristics and recommendations for practice.



**Children's eyewitness testimony: A comparison of mainstream children and children with an intellectual disability**

Rachel Parsons and Belinda Guadagno (Deakin University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 2.40 – 4.10pm (Aqua Room)**

Most prior research that has examined children's responses in forensic interviews has shown that children with an intellectual disability are more suggestible than children matched for chronological-age. However, recent research has challenged the simplicity of the argument that children with an intellectual disability are more suggestible to all types of interviewer suggestions, rather contending that the relationship between suggestibility and intellectual disability is complex. The aim of this research was to; (i) investigate how children respond to different types of leading questions that an interviewer might ask when questioning a child, and (ii) examine whether children's responses to various types of questions differ as a function of intellectual ability. The method of this study involved a three group design including children with an intellectual disability and mainstream children matched for both chronological- and mental-age. A mock event was staged in the children's classroom and involved a series of educational activities. After the event, the children participated in two interviews. The first interview contained a variety of questions (including leading questions) and the second interview was designed to assess the impact of earlier questions on the detail and accuracy of children's free-narrative recall. The preliminary findings, as well as their implications for investigative interviewers, and directions for future research will be presented.



**Drawing context reinstatement versus mental context reinstatement: which better enhances memory in child witnesses?**

Mia Gentle, Martine Powell and Stefanie Sharman (Deakin University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 2.40 – 4.10pm (Aqua Room)**

In this study we examined whether context reinstatement self-generated by witness drawing would better enhance the memory of child witnesses than context reinstatement implemented by verbal prompts (as in the traditional manner). Children aged 5-6 years and 8-9 years participated in a magic show. Seven to ten days later they were interviewed by a Drawing Context Reinstatement (DCR), a Verbal Context Reinstatement (VCR), or a No Context Reinstatement (NCR) interview, and at the end were presented with a pre-set list of suggestive questions. There was no difference in memory performance across interview conditions for both age groups. Further, there was no effect of interview condition on memory performance depending on whether it was recalled during the free-narrative or extended open-ended prompted phase. However, results indicated that younger children's recall remained similar across the free-narrative and open-ended prompted phase, while older children's recall dropped in the open-ended questions. Partial support was found for the protective effect DCR, with children in the DCR interview making significantly less errors in response to suggestive questions than children in the NCR interview. The MCR was not significantly different from a DCR or NCR interview. Power issues and the promising prophylactic effect of drawing against suggestive questions are discussed.



**Drink driving after the first offence: Characteristics of offenders who continue to drink and drive**

Hollie Wilson and Gavan Palk (Centre for Accident Research & Road Safety – Queensland – CARRS-Q)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Ocean Room)**

Drink driving remains a significant problem on Australian roads, with about a quarter to a third of fatal crashes involving drivers or riders who have a BAC of 0.05 or greater. Last available data in the state of Queensland (2003) of the major factors involved in road fatalities and injuries indicated that alcohol and drugs were noted as one of the contributing factors in 38% of fatalities and 11% of all crashes, making it the highest single contributing factor to road fatalities. Until this point, there has been little information about first time offenders as a group, but it is known that offenders typically are not first time drink drivers but rather ‘first time apprehended’, in that most have engaged in drink driving in the years leading to the first offence. This paper follows 89 first time drink driving offenders who were interviewed at the time of court mention and followed up around 6 months following the court hearing. Of the offenders, 27% reported to have driven over the limit in the time between initial contact and follow up. The paper demonstrates the characteristics and offending patterns of first offenders who engaged in drink driving following conviction and those who didn’t, providing suggestions on how to target those at high risk for the behaviour and subsequent offending.



### **Evidence in child sexual abuse cases: Factors influencing judicial decision making**

Tiffany Lewis and Bianca Klettke (Deakin University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Rainforest Room)**

Child sexual abuse (CSA) cases have one of the lowest conviction rates across all criminal charges. Figures suggest that approximately 61% of alleged offenders pleading not guilty are acquitted on all charges in the higher courts. While some research has investigated attitudes and beliefs contributing to these low conviction rates, little is known about the role evidence plays in conviction and sentencing. The aim of this study was to determine what type of evidence is being presented in CSA cases, and how the presence or absence of evidence impacts on both conviction and sentence type/length. A sample of 113 child sexual abuse cases from the County Court of Victoria in the last 20 years was investigated. These cases were coded for type of evidence as well as other relevant descriptive data, such as the age of the child, type of assault and relationship to the victim. Both quantitative and qualitative data were generated, and results suggest that the most significant predictor of verdict was the type of behavioural indicator of abuse present in the child. In regards to length of sentencing, the most significant predictors were the number of alleged offences, the age of the victim at the time of offence, and the perceived credibility of the child during court proceedings. This suggests that, rather than evidence, the behaviour of the child is the most significant predictor of guilt in the accused. The legal implications will be discussed.



**Examining the recidivism rates for child pornography-only offenders in Victoria, Australia: Implications for risk assessment and intervention pathways**

Simon Candlish (Corrections Victoria)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Rainforest Room)**

Over the last ten years, our understanding and capacity to assess the risk of recidivism for child pornography-only (CP-only) offenders has been the subject of considerable research. There appear to be some consistent themes emerging in the literature that are helpful in decision-making about risk and intervention type for these offenders. To date, however, there is limited research regarding the actual recidivism rate of this offender population. Sex Offender Programs, Corrections Victoria has conducted a recidivism study on all CP-only offenders referred between 2000 and 2005 representing a 6-11 year follow up period. The recidivism rates for this population were examined. Preliminary findings indicate that approximately 8% of the total sample re-offended with further child pornography-only offending. Approximately 2% were found to re-offend with a contact sexual offence. An actuarial risk assessment tool, the Static-99, is not designed for CP-only offenders, however, for demonstrative purposes, it was administered in all cases. The Risk Matrix 2000 Revised (RM2000R) was also administered. Both tools were applied to examine the usefulness of the RM2000R for assessing risk for these offenders given the tendency for the Static-99 to over-inflate risk for this cohort. Implications for assessment processes, intervention pathways and risk management strategies are discussed.



### **Fitness to plead: Development of a test for Australian jurisdictions**

Sam Van Der Wijngaart (James Cook University) and Peter Golus (Queensland Health)

#### **Saturday 6 August 2011, 8.30 – 10am (*Ocean Room*)**

Australia lags behind the rest of the world in the movement towards incorporating objective tools in the assessment of fitness to plead, known in the US as competency. Unlike many other psychometric tools, differences between legal entities require that competency tests are unable to be employed without significant modification to suit local needs. It follows then that extensive changes are required to convert an English or American tool to meet Australian needs. Tests of fitness to plead have not been developed for, nor are routinely used nor accepted in Australian jurisdictions. The British face similar hurdles, although the US MacArthur Competence Assessment Test – Criminal Adjudication (MacCAT-CA) has been adapted for the UK. Since Australia shares a strong history with the UK, and has very similar legal proceedings, it is believed that the English adaptation of the MacCAT-CA can be converted for use in an Australia. Recent judgments highlight the necessity for a local test addressing relevant Australian common law precedents and legislation. In a recent South Australian case, psychologists were criticised for not addressing common law criteria, and use of a test designed for the United States was rebuked as inappropriate. This paper presents a review of the current literature relating to competence assessment and its relevance to Australia, and presents a proposed Australian adaption of the MacCAT-CA. This Australian version of the MacCAT-CA will provide a competency assessment instrument that fulfils a need within Australia legal jurisdictions and in particular, the practice of Forensic Psychology within Australia.





### **Forensic psychologists in prisons: A normative framework to ensure ethical offender rehabilitation**

Astrid Birgden (Deakin University)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 8.30 – 10am (Rainforest Room)**

The roles of forensic psychologists in coercive environments include that of treatment provider (in the interest of the offender) and that of organizational consultant (in the interest of the community). This dual role raises ethical issues between offender rights and community rights; an imbalance results in the violation of human rights. A timely reminder of a slippery ethical slope that can arise was the failure of psychologists to manage this balance in the interrogation and torture of detainees under the Bush administration. To establish a “bright-line position” regarding ethical practice, forensic psychologists need to be cognizant of international human rights law. In this endeavor, international covenants and a universal psychological ethical code ought to guide practice, although conflicts between the law and ethics codes are still likely. A solution to this problem is to devise a normative framework that is based on human rights values. Human rights are based on legal, social, and moral rules. Human rights literature generally considers legal and social rights but do not provide principles to guide forensic psychologists in addressing moral rights. Ward and Birgden have proposed a human rights model for offender rehabilitation. Meeting offender rights includes ensuring core values of well-being and freedom. Well-being is the right to physical, social and psychological health. Freedom (albeit restricted) is the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to be afforded the opportunity and capacity to make autonomous decisions about how to live a life. A normative framework based on human rights will be proposed. The aim is to guide psychologists in the assessment of risk, the treatment of need, and the management of treatment readiness, particularly of high risk, serious offenders.



### **Forensic psychology and managing prisons**

Marlene Morison (Queensland Corrective Services)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 8.30 – 10am (Rainforest Room)**

Recently I was reminded that I used to be a forensic psychologist. The tone of the speaker was quizzical – assuming an impossible gulf between the practice and science of forensic psychology and of prisons and corrections. Research forensic psychology and Australian social policy identifies prisons as institutions, as shapers of behaviour and as specific constructs in law. Science and policy and law now challenges the embedded culture and history of individual prisons. It flies in the face of many of the assumptions of the community and, to some extent, the corrections workforce around the core task and nature of prisons. The conversation arose at the same time as I was reading through drafts of a research paper that looked at a couple of prisons and their social milieu – their delivery of a rehabilitative environment. It was juxtaposed in my working week with response to media on Conviction Kitchen - a reality TV show set here in Queensland that focuses on parolees and offenders under community supervision, and coincided with my preparation for a QCS's business improvement forum to refresh our rehabilitation and reintegration direction and capability. This paper examines a system in renewal - QCS Corrections - as a work in progress working with law, social policy, community interests, media and the developing research of correctional practice.



**Genocidal perpetrators, 'ordinary' men or 'evil monsters': Assessing the relationships between the motives and characteristics of perpetrators and individual criminal actions**

Kerrilee Hollows and Katarina Fritzon (Bond University)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 10.30 – 12pm (Rainforest Room)**

Over the past few centuries, genocides have occurred with such velocity and cruelty that they have been attributed to the actions of extraordinary 'evil' men. However, recent advancements in theoretical understandings have revealed that genocidal perpetrators more often resemble 'ordinary' citizens, who have committed crimes of genocide as a result of extraordinary circumstances. Despite growing support for the latter, few studies have attempted to test this. The current study aimed to do so through the development of an empirically based classification system that could account for the unique variations in types of genocidal perpetrators, but that also reflected the actions of 'ordinary' criminals. Using Shye's Action Systems Model, it was hypothesised that four types of perpetrators would exist, and would be distinguishable by differences in the source and target of individual criminal actions. A smallest space analysis using a Jaccard coefficient of association was conducted on the offence variables, which were drawn from the court transcripts of 80 perpetrators sentenced by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The results of that confirmed the study's hypothesis and revealed that the four groups were not only distinguishable by their criminal actions but by their motives and background characteristics also. Interestingly, the study was also able to identify two overarching perpetrator groups that included those who gave orders and those who carried the orders out. The implications of these findings are important in that they have the potential to aid international bodies in the pursuit of war criminals, and assist with the development of more accurate strategies for both predicting and preventing future genocides.



**Good athletes/bad decisions: Examining the cognitive and social factors related to offending behaviours**

Jeffrey Pfeifer

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 10.30 – 11.30pm (Ocean Room)**

During the past 10 years there has been a significant increase in the number of male elite athletes who engage in, or are accused of engaging in, illegal activity. These activities include a variety of offending behaviours including drug use, drink driving, theft, and assault. Although there is a significant amount of research on offenders, there are very few empirical studies specifically examining the offending behaviours of male elite athletes. The present study examines the offending behaviours of male elite athletes from a decision-making perspective. It was hypothesized that athletes who had committed offences would score differentially on a number of cognitive and social factors when compared to athletes who had not committed offences. In order to test this hypothesis, interviews were conducted with 60 male athletes (30 who had committed an offence and 30 who had not). Subjects were asked to complete an extensive questionnaire that contained questions relating to a variety of cognitive and social factors. Significant differences were identified between the two groups on a number of factors including self-esteem, thrill-seeking, self-control, strength of cognitive biases, and level of perceived supervision. The findings are discussed in terms of their utility for the creation of proactive programs for elite athletes.



### **Homeless justice: The role of psychology within the special circumstances court**

Melanie Mitchell (Queensland Forensic Mental Health Service)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 2.40 – 4.10pm (Aqua Room)**

There has been an increase in speciality courts within Australia in the last 10 years. Speciality courts have court procedures to “deal with specific offender populations where it is recognised that traditional criminal justice procedures have not been effective”. In 2010, the Special Circumstances Court was the first speciality court in Queensland to employ a psychologist from a forensic service. The Special Circumstances Court is available for defendants charged with minor offences who are homeless. This Court recognises that there is an over-representation of homeless people within the Queensland legal system and aims to; i) provide an avenue for access into appropriate treatment services with a view to reduce offending and ii) provide appropriate sentencing options which do not lead to further marginalisation of an already vulnerable client group. This paper provides an overview of the Court, outlines the psychological treatment needs of defendants appearing before the Court, and evaluates the role of a psychologist working within the Special Circumstances Court. Data relating to client demographics, treatment needs, and referrals made was collected over a 10 month period in 2010. Psychotic illness was the most common primary problem faced by defendants however most defendants were faced with numerous stressors which impacted on their criminal behaviour. While the role of a psychologist within the Special Circumstances Court has been beneficial for the accurate identification of defendant needs and appropriate referral into treatment, there is the potential to enhance the provision of psychological services within the Special Circumstances Court.



### **How do suspected sex offenders behave during police interviews?**

Mark Kebbell (Griffith University), Martine Powell (Deakin University) and Steven Sellers

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Rainforest Room)**

Sex offences are difficult to investigate and prosecute because they typically rely on a victim's word against the perpetrator and there is rarely independent evidence to corroborate guilt. For this reason it is important for investigators to interview individuals suspected of sex offences in the most effective manner possible to maximize the likelihood of an admission from a guilty offender, whilst being ethical and fair to both the innocent and the guilty suspects. A dataset was collected that comprised of 96 interviews with suspected sex offenders that were coded for potentially problematic suspect behaviours. These behaviours are described in terms of: 1) suspects' behaviors that potentially cause conflict with interviewing officers; 2) potential strategies for officers that may be effective with problematic suspect behavior; 3) identifying typologies of problematic behavior and drawing out implications for police training.



# APS Forensic Psychology National Conference

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## **Internet child pornography: An examination of attachment and intimacy deficits**

Janelle Armstrong and David Mellor (Deakin University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Rainforest Room)**

In recent years a new cohort of sexual offenders has emerged, those who use the Internet to access child pornography for the purpose of sexual gratification. This study investigated attachment, intimacy and anxiety related to interpersonal interactions amongst Internet Child Pornography (ICP) offenders. The sample of 162 male participants comprised 32 ICP offenders, 32 matched child sex offenders, 31 matched adult sex offenders, 20 offenders convicted of both ICP offences and interpersonal sex offences, and 47 community controls who indicated that they had not been convicted of any sex offences. The ICP group reported significantly less secure attachment than non-offenders and both the matched child and adult sexual offenders. Both the ICP group and the group convicted of both ICP and a contact offence reported a significantly more fearful attachment style than non-offenders and a more negative view of themselves. The ICP group also reported a more negative view of self than the non-offenders and both the matched sexual offender groups. Finally, the ICP group reported more social avoidance and distress than non-offenders. In sum, the current study illustrated that while models of the etiology of hands-on sexual offending may provide understanding of ICP offending, such offenders are distinct from other sexual offenders, in terms of their deficits. Despite a small sample size, these findings are considered to provide insights into the etiological pathway of ICP offending, and the treatment of ICP offenders.



### **Mental health and criminal justice outcomes of patients released from a high security forensic hospital**

Murray Ferguson and James Ogloff (Monash University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Aqua Room)**

There is little research internationally, and in particular in Australia, assessing the community outcomes of offenders with a major mental disorder released from prison or a secure forensic psychiatric hospital. Of particular interests is the rates of rehospitalisation and recidivism in this population, and whether or not community based mental health care following release may serve as a protective factor in reducing the rates of recidivism. Evidence suggests that carefully planned and high intensity programs may have some efficacy at least in the short term and whilst patients remain within such programs. However, the few studies conducted on simple general or forensic community follow up suggest that such unstructured treatment has little efficacy. This project sought enhance the literature in the area by assessing, in the Australian context, the role of general and community based follow up, over a 6 period, in reducing recidivism of patients with major mental illness released from a secure forensic psychiatric hospital. Results showed that neither general nor forensic community follow up reduced the risk of recidivism in the sample. This lends further support to previous literature, and suggests that, in light of literature on assertive community treatment programs, intensive mental health and psychosocial treatment may be required to have a positive effect on reducing rates of recidivism in offenders with a major mental illness.





### **Mental illness: Behavioural patterns and outcomes for homicide cases**

Nathan Brooks

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 10 – 12pm (*Leighton's Theatre*)**

Debate has arisen about the policies and processes of Mental Health Courts; however, limited attention has been given to the behavioural characteristics of offenders appearing before the Court and the influence of this on decision making. With the introduction of specialised Mental Health Courts, efforts to better understand the relationship between mental illness and homicide are now possible. This paper will present the results of stranger, acquaintance and intra-familial homicide for cases heard in the Queensland Mental Health Court between the years of 2002 and 2010. Results will be presented pertaining to crime scene patterns and behaviour, offender characteristics, associated mental health symptoms and the implications of these on court findings. Reference to the current international models for classifying offender behaviour will be examined, in particular specific approaches to profiling singular acts of homicide. A proposed model to understand the relationships between murder and attempted murder for this population will be presented based on evidence currently available. The paper will also present the results of relationships between offence and offender characteristics and decision outcomes, in terms of four possible categories of outcome of the Mental Health Court, these being: Fit to Stand Trial, and of Unsound Mind; Fit to Stand Trial, not of Unsound Mind; Not Fit for Trial, and Unsound Mind, and Not Fit for Trial and of sound Mind. Implications of the possibility of an empirical basis for decision making are discussed.



### **Neuropsychological assessment and fitness to stand trial in Australia: A preliminary analysis**

Amanda White, Jennifer Batchelor (Macquarie University) and Susan Pulman

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 8.30 – 10am (*Ocean Room*)**

Neuropsychologists are increasingly being asked to provide expert opinion in criminal matters. The role of neuropsychological assessments in fitness to stand trial cases is controversial, with some arguing that these assessments provide important insight into the cognitive processes that underlie functional aspects of fitness and others being of the opinion that at least some aspects of these assessments are irrelevant. There is limited neuropsychological based research in this area and no known published research within Australia. The aim of this research was to investigate the role of neuropsychological assessment in fitness to stand trial cases within an Australian context. Over 100 expert reports for individuals deemed unfit between the period of 2005 and 2010 in the state of NSW were examined. Analysis of the areas of cognition assessed, assessment techniques used and reference to legal criteria was conducted. Results are discussed in relation to the Presser criteria and past literature. Implications for fitness assessments and future research aims will be discussed.



**Delusions of child sexual molestation: A new risk factor for violence among forensic mental health patients?**

Bruce Watt (Community Forensic Outreach Service), Boyce Susan (Community Forensic Outreach Service), Deana Erskine (Community Forensic Outreach Service) and Tim Lowry

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Rainforest Room)**

Delusions are common symptoms among individuals experiencing psychosis and schizophrenia, but also evident among individuals with delusional disorder, schizoaffective disorder, mood disorders and some neurological disorders. The potential role of delusions in violent behaviour has been mixed. Large scale studies of forensic patients and a recent meta-analytic review highlight the potential contribution of delusions to violent behaviour. Conversely the prospective study of over 1000 civil psychiatric patients in the MacArthur Violence Risk Assessment study identified no association between delusional content or form and future acts of physical violence. Delusions may have greater association with violence when involving threat/control override symptoms or misidentification delusions, and when associated with negative affect, male gender, and substance misuse. We have identified a number of patients referred to the Community Forensic Mental Health Service, whom experienced delusions that another individual was a paedophile, despite evidence that this was not the case. In some cases, patients had taken steps toward enacting violence toward the target of such paedophilic delusion. We present three cases involving paedophilic delusions, highlighting the diversity of their presentation and potential association with violent behaviour. We conclude highlighting avenues for future research regarding paedophilic delusions.



### **Parenting capacity assessment for the courts: An empirical analysis**

Susan Blacker (NSW Children's Court Clinic)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 2.40 – 4.10pm (Aqua Room)**

Parenting capacity assessments are among the most difficult of assessments for psychologists to carry out due to a poorly defined theoretical construct and the absence of agreement on a definition of parenting capacity. NSW Children's Courts are increasingly relying on parenting capacity assessments, conducted by independent expert clinicians, to make difficult legal decisions in child protection cases. Whilst the literature recommends a multiple session, multiple source and multiple method assessment model and recommends evaluation of parental functioning, there is little by way of research to guide psychologists in their evidence based practice in this jurisdiction. The primary aim of this study is to empirically examine the characteristics of a large, random sample of 190 court ordered, parenting capacity assessment reports, in child protection cases, using a structured and reliability tested, qualitative coding system. Results are consistent with the empirical study conducted by Budd et al., and reflect the broad application of a multiple session, multiple method and multiple source assessment model. Less than half of psychologists, in the sample, administered standardised psychological tests as part of the assessment and third party, collateral sources were used in some assessments. Implications for practice and research include identification of report elements, drawn from forensic psychology standards, which increase necessary legal and clinical validity for assessment reports submitted to court.



### **Pathologising relationship crisis: The Hostile Alienation Syndrome**

Owen Pershouse

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Ocean Room)**

Longitudinal research confirmed that compared to ex-partners, men fare poorly in several measurable areas after a relationship breakdown and take longer to reconstitute healthy and productive lifestyles. Subsequent Australian suicide research identified the need for a pro-social initiative to assist high numbers of men who were suiciding in the midst of relationship crises. Such informed core components of the MENDS (Men Exploring New Directional Strategies) program; and the utility of what has been identified as the Hostile Alienation Syndrome. This paper reports on outcomes of the first 10 years of operation of MENDS to assist men (N> 1100) in significant relationship crisis; with particular emphasis on problematic assessment and engagement approaches. MENDS utilised an AB design for assessment of key high risk functioning (e.g. suicidality, depression, anxiety, social support etc). Comparisons of before and after PAI measures have statistically corroborated client and facilitator reports of notable participant improvements over the program period. The 12 x 2 hours/ week program focused on client self-auditing in order to address issues identified by John Gottman and responded to specific client needs such as physical and emotional health risks, personal and social skills, legal issues, as well as parenting and relationship training. Targeted assessment confirmed the value of the program for up-skilling in areas of emotional processing; particularly self-management of anger and risks of acting out. Latest research demonstrated positive treatment effects with depression, anxiety, suicidality, self-medicating with alcohol/drugs and general stress levels.



**Polygamy and consent: Ethical challenges within international practice**

Stephen Morgan (International Criminal Court)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 11.30 – 12pm (*Ocean Room*)**

Psychologists most commonly work within clearly defined legislative, ethical and practice parameters. But Australian-registered (for that matter any psychologist potentially) may be drawn to work within international contexts – where cultural norms vary and legislative parameters may be less clear. Ethical guidelines will still be relevant in a practice-sense, but may have lesser contextual resonance. The author wishes to review complex ethical situations. The aim is to illuminate challenges in the way that we conceptually frame the culture of and ethics of forensic psychology. The clash of moral relativism and moral objectivity persists.



### **Responding to personality disordered clients in offending behaviour programs**

Christina Kozar and Andrew Day (Deakin University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Aqua Room)**

Correctional treatment providers have started to turn their attention to process issues in the delivery of offending behaviour programs. When dealing with clients who demonstrate severe personality disorder (PD) traits, the manner in which therapists respond to therapeutic ruptures in group programs can have important consequences for therapeutic outcomes. Two qualitative studies were conducted in which therapists and clients were asked about their experiences of ruptures and how therapists had responded to these. Therapists reported experiencing difficulties in responding to clients with a range of PD characteristics that included Antisocial, Histrionic, Borderline, Schizoid and Narcissistic traits. Responses to ruptures included attempts by therapists to manage client behaviour (which at times threatened the therapeutic alliance) as well as to engage clients and to respond therapeutically (both of which had positive impacts on the alliance). Attention should be paid by correctional providers to supporting less experienced clinicians in working with PD clients by providing appropriate training and supervision that promotes the use of a variety of responses to therapeutic ruptures in ways that enhance treatment outcomes.



### **Sociopathic attitudes to road safety**

Alec Jones and Gavan Palk

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 10.30 – 12pm (*Leighton's Theatre*)**

Injuries and deaths due to unsafe driving practices are a substantial health and socioeconomic burden to the community. Young socially disadvantaged males who are involved in a lifestyle of risky behaviour, crime and motor vehicle accidents seem unaffected by educational campaigns to improve safer driving. The aim is to develop a driving and social behavioural profile that may explain the lack of effectiveness of road safety advertising and suggest ways to refine educational strategies to reduce the risky lifestyle and associated harms among those most vulnerable, the 15-25 year olds. The procedure involved a quantitative and qualitative analysis through questionnaires, surveys and focus groups involving a comparison of populations (n = 668) by age, gender and socioeconomic status in three discrete Australian sites. Information gathered included issues related to road safety awareness, knowledge of advertising, personal and peer group attitudes as well as driving and life style history. The results indicate that within the community a highly visible profile of strong anti-social road safety activities by an educationally and economically disadvantaged sub-culture exists and this group seem impervious to road safety advertising and education initiatives. As the overall unsafe driving and risky antisocial behaviour is significant among 15-25 year olds within the community the solution is seen to be community based. A long-term (five to ten year) program has been posited; promoting community partnerships through consultative and local action committees at all levels creating locally designed formal and informal educational and mutual support programs





**Substance use, mental health, and involvement with the criminal justice system in men who are homeless in Sydney**

Bridget Spicer (University of New South Wales), Elizabeth Controy (University of New South Wales) and Lucy Burns

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 8.30 – 10am (Rainforest Room)**

The Michael Project was a three-year initiative (2007 – 2010) working with homeless men in the Sydney region. It combined existing accommodation support services with assertive case management and access to a suite of additional specialist allied health and support services such as alcohol and drug counselling, mental health treatment, primary health care and occupational therapy. The key objectives of the project were to improve the housing, economic, health, and psychosocial situation of homeless men and to provide an evidence base for policy and program development in the delivery of homeless services. An evaluation of the Michael Project, undertaken by Mission Australia in collaboration with Murdoch University and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, included a longitudinal study of 253 homeless men sampled from two types of services: outreach/emergency and medium/long-term accommodation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and included measures on demographics, homelessness and social exclusion, physical health and disability, service utilisation, mental health and substance use. This paper will examine the relationship between homelessness, mental health, substance use, and contact with the justice system and will discuss results from a baseline and 12-month follow-up survey. Preliminary findings from the baseline survey suggest that: 1) homeless persons have a high rate of contact with the justice system and a high prevalence of substance use; 2) younger homeless persons are more likely to have a range of different contacts with the justice system; 3) a longer duration of sleeping rough is associated, in particular, with being stopped on the streets; and 4) recent substance use but not poor mental health appears to be associated with justice system contacts more generally.



### **The impact of coaching on faking-good/under-reporting on the PAI**

Lisa Chantler and Kurt Lushington (University of South Australia)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Leighton's Theatrette)**

Self-report inventories such as the PAI yield more useful information when they are completed honestly. Existing evidence suggests that clients routinely and deliberately under-report (fake-good) their symptoms when motivated to do so by circumstances such as court evaluations or mental health assessments. In addition, lawyers and psychologists have been found to coach their clients on how to under-report in order to minimise existing psychological disorders. There is very limited empirical evidence examining faking-good on the PAI which is becoming more popular in clinical settings. Only one study to date has examined the impact of coaching on PAI results and that study used university students. The current study examined the effect of coaching on participants' ability to fake-good on the PAI. Participants were drawn from a local school and were asked to fake-good in either a coaching or no-coaching setting when given a custody scenario. Based on previous research, it was predicted that the results of the coached group would be indistinguishable from the control group and that the results of the group that was asked to fake-good but who were not coached would be significantly elevated. Results supported the first hypothesis. The findings are discussed in terms of the sample, the nature of the task, level of coaching and most importantly, the implications for clinical assessments where faking-good may be a concern.



**The impact of interpersonal style on aggression, therapeutic alliance and treatment non-completion in patients admitted to hospital for psychiatric treatment**

Michael Daffern (Monash University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Aqua Room)**

Recent research on aggressive behaviour in psychiatric hospitals has emphasised the importance of the interaction between characteristics of patients and aspects of the hospital environment. Interpersonal style, a key component of personality and personality disorder that characterises the way individuals relate to others, influences how patients respond to the demands of involuntary inpatient treatment. The aim of this presentation is to explore the value of interpersonal theory as a parsimonious and unifying theory to understand the reactions of psychiatric patients to involuntary confinement. A program of research describing the relationship between interpersonal style and aggression, therapeutic alliance and treatment non-completion in patients admitted to civil and forensic psychiatric hospitals will be presented. The results of these studies reveal a consistent relationship between a hostile-dominant interpersonal style and aggression, impaired therapeutic alliance and treatment non-completion. The implications of research based on interpersonal theory that has been drawn upon to enhance patient satisfaction and compliance will be presented, and opportunities for preventing aggression will be described.



### **The perpetration of violent crime among substance users with PTSD: A longitudinal investigation**

Emma Barrett (University of New South Wales), Katherine Mills (University of New South Wales) and Maree Teesson

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Ocean Room)**

Both substance use disorder (SUD) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are risk factors for the perpetration of violence. It is possible that the combination of symptoms associated with both SUD and PTSD can increase the risk of violence among those with this comorbidity, however limited research has been conducted to examine the validity of this claim. This is of significant concern given that PTSD is highly prevalent among individuals with SUD. To investigate the relationship between substance use, PTSD symptoms and the perpetration of violence over time. Baseline data was collected via interview from 102 participants recruited into a randomised controlled trial of a treatment for comorbid SUD and PTSD. Participants were also interviewed at 6-week, 3-month and 9-month follow-up. Information pertaining to substance use, PTSD symptomatology and violence perpetration was collected at each interview. Analysis of baseline data revealed that almost half of the sample had committed violence in their lifetime and one in six participants committed violence during the month preceding baseline interview. Those who were violent during the months prior to baseline and follow-up interviews used substances more often and in larger quantities and reported greater severity of PTSD symptoms compared to those who had not committed violence. These findings indicate an elevated risk of violence perpetration among individuals with comorbid SUD and PTSD. The identification of factors that predispose individuals to violent offending is critical for the development of effective risk assessment and intervention aimed at reducing violent crime.



**The relationship between general, specific and other risks as assessed by the LSI\_R with a psychopathological and a psychopathic sample of NGRI murderers**

Chris Lennings and Derek Gilligan (LSC Psychology)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Leighton's Theatre)**

The Social Learning theory underlying Bonta and Andrews PCP model has generally been seen as guiding risk assessment with good relevance to both mentally ill as well as non-mentally ill offenders. The current study reports a novel approach to qualitative assessment of 26 murders, divided into two groups – neuropathic offenders characterised by frontal lobe deficits and psychosis, and psychopathic murderers characterised by high scores on psychopathy and an absence of neuropathic factors. The findings of the present research support the notion that the two pathways are embedded in two diverging theoretical frameworks of psychopathology and social learning theory with each corresponding to the neuropathic and psychopathic pathways respectively. Models of social learning theory may have limited utility to the total mentally disordered offender population overall as they apply more specifically to offenders within special offenders groups or perhaps more specifically offenders with psychopathic characteristic. However the significantly greater association of the other social, physical, and mental health risk/needs with the neuropathic pathway suggests pathological models would seem important for the understanding of the neuropathic pathway in relation to a homicide offence and risk of future violence.



### **The social climate of Australian prisons**

Andrew Day (Deakin University), Sharon Casey and James Vess

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 8.30 – 10am (Rainforest Room)**

It is commonly believed that the social climate of a prison institution can act in ways that counteract rehabilitative change. In this study, a brief measure of social climate (the Essen Climate Evaluation Schema scale, EssenCES) is used to assess prisoner and staff perceptions from two prisons in one Australian jurisdiction. The factor structure of the measure was confirmed and scores of social climate were related to a range of organisationally important variables, including the nature and frequency of disciplinary problems, and treatment readiness (how motivated and able prisoners are to engage with rehabilitative efforts). In addition, one of the prisons which specialises in the delivery of rehabilitation programs was rated by staff as providing a more rehabilitative social climate than the other prison, a mainstream prison. This study provides further support for the idea that the social climate of a prison can influence rehabilitative outcomes and identifies the means by which a prison social climate can be assessed. It is recommended that the EssenCES measure is routinely used to audit the social climate of a prison or prison unit on an annual basis, such that changes over time can be assessed, standards and targets set, and the need for additional resources or interventions identified and responded to. Further research is required to establish how a social climate might be modified or changed in ways that enhance rehabilitative outcomes.



### **The Static-99R: A case of actuarial confusion**

Michael Davis (Monash University)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Leighton's Theatrette)**

The Static-99 is an actuarial instrument for assessing sexual recidivism risk. It is the most validated actuarial tool for this purpose with more than 60 empirical replications across a range of populations. Recently some of the authors of this instrument have proposed a revision known as the Static-99R. This alters one of the risk factors to take into consideration age-related reductions in sexual recidivism. The proposed revision also includes a range of new interpretation tables that focus upon relative risk ratios and percentiles rather than recidivism rates alone. Despite the fact that there is currently no peer reviewed literature to support its use, the Static-99R has been accepted with uncritical zeal by some practitioners. Indeed, some court reports are already describing the results of the Static-99R. However, this paper argues that the proposed revision has some serious psychometric and conceptual problems that currently preclude its use in applied risk assessment. While the focus upon relative risk is clearly welcome, an analysis of the new interpretation material indicates that the risk categories themselves have not been re-calibrated despite new score ranges and normative data. Accordingly, the Static-99R provides nonsensical and misleading results. Examples of these nonsensical results are provided as well as a number of questions regarding the statistical techniques used to develop the revised instrument. It is concluded that the Static-99R is not appropriate for applied use and will not be until these serious psychometric problems are addressed. Recommendations for clinical practice in the meantime are also provided.



### **The stats reveal all - getting a handle on forensic AOD service delivery in Victoria**

Matthew Berry (Caraniche)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 3.40 – 4.10pm (Ocean Room)**

Caraniche is a forensic psychology firm that specialises in the psychological treatment of alcohol and other drug problems. In 2010 Caraniche was contracted by the Victorian Department of Health to provide a report on potential models for future community based forensic AOD services in Victoria. As part of the report Caraniche was required to analyse service data collected by the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) to provide a picture of the types of clients accessing forensic AOD treatment, their level of engagement and the nature of the treatment being provided. This paper reviews the ACSO data which demonstrated a significant increase in referrals to the forensic AOD sector from 6,000 in 2000 to over 15,000 in 2009. It also showed that while the gender balance has remained constant, the age distribution has moved considerably with greater proportion of client in the 36-45 age group, and a lesser proportion in the under 25s. Over this time the main drug used by the client group has shifted from heroin to alcohol. The data suggests that the clients accessing forensic AOD treatment are highly variable and are likely to have diverse treatment needs. Approximately 50% of clients were referred to the forensic AOD sector just once from 2003 – 2010 while the other half had multiple referrals with approximately 10% referred 5 or more times. While the number of non-violent offenders has remained steady, the number of violent offenders has doubled and represents 50% of all referrals. There is some evidence to suggest that the current forensic AOD treatment system has not responded to the changing profile and needs of the client group. Counselling is the most common treatment provided, however, less than half the clients complete an episode of care and the average completed episode of care consists of just four counselling sessions.





**Toward a clinically meaningful taxonomy of violent offenders: The role of anger-types and thinking styles**

Kyra Low and Terry Bartholomew (Deakin University)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 10.30 – 12pm (Leighton's Theatrette)**

The Risk-Need-Responsivity model emphasises the importance of identifying and responding to the specific criminogenic needs of offender sub-groups. Our understanding of the criminogenic needs of violent offender subgroups, however, is incomplete. Rehabilitation programmes addressing violent offenders' cognitions and/or anger management strategies have been proven effective in reducing recidivism for some offenders. This suggests that some components of violent offenders' thinking styles and anger types are criminogenic for at least some, but not all, violent offenders. The aims of this project are to investigate whether particular cognitive distortions, modes of anger expression and anger experience are more evident for some types of violent offenders. The sample consists of over 250 male violent offenders participating in a Violence Intervention Program in a Victorian prison. Measures employed include the State Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2; Spielberger, 1999), Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles (PICTS; Walters, 1995) and Violence Risk Scale (VRS; Wong & Gordon, 1999). The results of this project have implications for rehabilitation programmes that address criminogenic needs of violent offenders.



### **Treatment responsivity in violent offenders**

Kate O'Brien and Michael Daffern (Monash University)

**Saturday 6 August 2011, 10.30 – 12pm (*Leighton's Theatre*)**

Decades of research evaluating offender treatment and rehabilitation programs have produced evidence demonstrating that correctional programs can be effective at reducing recidivism in violent and sexual offenders. However, treatment programs rarely work for all offenders, suggesting the need to investigate the particular qualities of individuals that make them more or less amenable to treatment. Responsivity factors affect an individual's ability to benefit from interventions and although they tend not to be directly related to recidivism, they are thought to moderate the efficacy of treatment. This study aims to investigate whether internal responsivity factors (such as psychopathy, empathy, and cognitive distortions) influence engagement in treatment, and successful completion of a violent offender treatment program, and aims to extend prior research by investigating the link between responsivity factors and recidivism. The research involves a retrospective archival study of 70 moderate to high risk violent offenders who completed the Corrections Victoria Violent Offenders Treatment Program. Case files for each participant were systematically reviewed and audited, and information about treatment responsivity and therapeutic change was gathered. Reoffending data was collected from Victoria Police. The study explores the moderating influence of internal responsivity factors on performance in and completion of treatment, including an analysis of the subsequent influence of these variables on reoffending. The results of this research will provide valuable information for use in treatment decisions for violent offenders, and will provide information about whether responsivity factors should be considered in treatment planning and release decisions.



### **What can accountants teach clinicians? Corporate risk assessment applied to the clinical context**

Linda Bennett

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Leighton's Theatrette)**

Risk prediction is a predominant aspect of contemporary forensic psychology and psychiatry. Risk assessment has gone through a number of iterations from the initial reliance on clinical judgement to the use of actuarial tools and instruments incorporating both static and dynamic variables. A fourth generation of risk assessment tools consider static and dynamic risk and incorporate treatment needs and treatment readiness. However, the prediction of antisocial behaviours is not the province of the clinical professions alone. Risk assessment is a significant consideration for the corporate world and big business. This presentation discusses the risk assessment methodology used by forensic accountants to calculate fraud risk. An applied corporate risk management approach commences with a pre-planning stage where clients and assessors develop a shared understanding of the risk assessment methodology. The second step involves establishing the context for the assessment, including both internal and external features, and identifying and evaluating the relevant risk factors. The third step involves identifying risks, scenarios and schemes. The fourth step involves analysing risks, through constructing a risk matrix specifying the type, probability and consequences of possible risk scenarios and evaluating them against mitigating controls. The fifth step involves evaluating risks against established criteria and calculating a residual risk rating to prioritise risks for action planning and further treatment. The final step involves developing an action plan for treating the identified risks and consideration of the risk tolerance for identified risk scenarios. This risk assessment methodology is illustrated through constructing risk profiles for three sexual offenders.



**Women, drinking and aggression on a night out: Do girls just wanna have fun?**

Gavan Palk (Queensland University of Technology), Trista Cocker and James Freeman (Queensland University of Technology)

**Friday 5 August 2011, 4.40 – 6.40pm (Ocean Room)**

Alcohol misuse and violence is a major public safety concern. Although the extent and nature of alcohol-related violence has been examined there is a paucity of research surrounding the ongoing construction and re-construction of gender identity and its relationship to aggression and alcohol consumption. A social constructionist perspective was used to explore women's perceptions and experiences of drinking alcohol and incidents of public violence and aggression. Two methods were used. Firstly, an exploratory study consisting of three in-depth interviews and three focus groups to examine the ideas women constructed in relation to their experiences; and further, an online survey to explore self-reported drinking patterns among men and women. The main themes emerging from the qualitative material were 'planned drinking to excess' (incorporating the rituals of a 'pre-drink' routine), and perceptions of appropriate feminine behaviour (particularly in relation to excessive drinking and alcohol related aggression in and around licensed venues). The survey data indicated that men continue to consume more alcohol and at higher levels than women, while women's involvement in aggressive incidents on a night out being similar to that of men. Both genders considered that women's involvement in aggressive incidents in and around licensed venues as 'unfeminine'. Understanding drinking as a socially constructed activity adds to our understanding of the meaning of drinking for women, and in particular, young women. This perspective may allow more focussed initiatives to address the social and health related harms associated with drinking in and around licensed venues.