



A trait-interpersonal perspective on suicide risk in Australian criminal offenders

Robert Cramer (Sam Houston State University), M. Garza (Legacy Community Health Centre) and Ribiero (Florida State University)

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Integration of two theories holds promise for understanding increased suicide risk among offenders. The Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicide) states that development of three characteristics leads to suicide: Thwarted Belongingness (TB), Perceived Burdensomeness (PB), and Acquired Capability (AC). Moreover, two Five-Factor Model personality traits, namely neuroticism and extraversion, show robust relations with suicide. We postulate that personality traits predict the development of IPTS cognitions, which subsequently lead to increased suicide risk. Archival data were drawn from 307 forensic evaluations including the Personality Assessment Inventory and NEO Personality Inventory-Revised. Evaluations took place in the context of court-referred evaluations in a private practice in Adelaide, Australia. Personality traits were measured with the NEO-PI-R, and IPTS and suicide domains were evaluated with the PAI. Structural equation modeling was used to evaluate a framework in which neuroticism predicts two IPTS facets (i.e., PB and AC), and extraversion predicts two IPTS components (i.e., PB and AC). IPTS-suicide paths in the model included PB and TB predicting suicidal ideation, AC predicting suicide risk, and suicidal ideation predicting suicide risk. The model yielded good fit ($\chi^2 [131, n = 306] = 284.43, p < .001, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .06$), with expected significant pathways emerging. The integrated personality-interpersonal theory of suicide was supported. Personality traits and suicide-related cognitions show promise for suicide risk assessment of offenders. This integrated model should be extended to additional clinical and forensic samples.



Adolescent sexual behaviour in a non-clinical sample

Brandie Sanders and Bruce Watt (Bond University)

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Adolescent sexual behaviour and sexual offending has been prevalent in current research. However, previous research has explored clinical samples of adolescents displaying high risk sexual behaviour or those involved in the legal system. The aim of the presented research was to explore adolescent sexual behaviour in relation to adult psychopathology in a non-clinical sample of individuals ranging in age from 18 to 25 years. The participants completed the Adolescent Clinical Sexual Behaviour Inventory-Self Report (ACSBI-S) and the ASEBA Adult Self Report (ASR). The ACSBI-S is a 65 item self report questionnaire pertaining to adolescent sexual behaviours, which is comprised of 5 subscales: sexual knowledge/interest, divergent sexual interests, sexual risk/misuse, sexual fear/discomfort and concerns about appearance. The ASR is a self report measure for assessing adaptive functioning and problems in areas such as substance use and empirically based syndromes. Preliminary statistics revealed that sexual risk appears to support the expected hypotheses. For example positive correlations were revealed between individuals reported sexual risk and behavioural problems in adulthood. Furthermore, there appears to be negative correlations when comparing sexual risk and divergent sexual interest to adaptive functioning specifically in education and employment. A positive correlation was revealed whilst exploring sexual risk and previous offence history. Exploring these aspects may assist in determining relationships between high risk adolescent sexual behaviour and adult behavioural problems. The review of a non-clinical sample may also allow for further research to determine whether certain behaviours and sexual behavioural problems may lead to criminal sexual acts. Furthermore, the research may also provide assistance in early intervention regarding risky sexual behaviour and divergent sexual interest.



Allegations of childhood sexual abuse (CSA): The effects of delay on complainant credibility and verdict in a mock trial

Alana Johnston and Don Thomson (Deakin University)

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The present study investigated laypersons' perceptions of memory evidence in a childhood sexual abuse (CSA) trial. Utilising a written mock trial methodology, the effects of a delay of 15 years between an alleged assault and reporting on perceptions of complainant credibility and juror verdict were investigated. Additionally, whether the type of memory reported (continuous versus recovered) and the nature of the alleged sexual assault (penetration versus fondling) influenced participants' perceptions and verdict decision-making were examined. Complainants reporting assaults soon after they allegedly occurred were generally perceived as being more credible than complainants who delayed reporting. However, this was not the case when the delayed report was associated with a recovered memory of a penetrative assault, with complainants in this condition being perceived to be relatively credible. In relation to assault type, reports of sexual penetration were perceived as being more credible than reports of fondling. No significant differences were found between perceptions of recovered and continuous memories and participant gender did not appear to significantly influence credibility ratings. With respect to verdict, convictions were more likely when the allegation was made soon after the assault and high ratings of complainant credibility were generally associated with an increase in guilty verdicts. However, despite complainants who reported a recovered memory of a penetrative assault being perceived as credible, the percentage of guilty verdicts in this condition was small. In fact, convictions were very unlikely when the complainant reported a recovered memory irrespective of the type of sexual assault alleged.



Assessing the risks and rewards of crime: decision making and deterrence in drug trafficking offences

David Bright (University of New South Wales)

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The primary tenet of deterrence theory is that an increase in the certainty or severity of punishment for a crime reduces the incidence of that crime. Rational choice theory as applied to drug traffickers, suggests that traffickers will weigh the risks and rewards of criminal behaviour, and will engage in trafficking after carefully and rationally comparing risk and rewards, and only when the potential rewards are perceived to be sufficiently greater than the potential risks. However, a number of factors speak against the predictions of rational choice theory, including: (1) bounded rationality (e.g., judgment heuristics), (2) personality factors (e.g., impulsivity), (3) criminal thinking styles, and (4) the impact of drug use and dependence (e.g., temporal discounting by drug users. Research in this field is beset by methodological and ethical problems (e.g., ethical and practical problems with interviewing active drug traffickers, ethical and legal issues of interviewing offenders about serious crimes that are undetected or unadjudicated.) In this presentation, I will review the extant literature on the balancing of risks and rewards by offenders and outline a methodological approach which has the dual aim of improving on previous research and avoiding some of the ethical and legal barriers to research in this field. The planned project will examine how offenders make decisions to engage in drug trafficking using hypothetical scenarios in which the probabilities and magnitudes of risks and rewards are systematically varied.



Asperger's syndrome and autism in forensic contexts: Truth and myth

Kathleen Davey (Minds and Hearts)

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The controversial topic of ASD in forensic settings is a much needed yet under researched area effecting individuals and families with ASD as well as our justice systems. This presentation will share a review of research and case experiences of ASD in forensic contexts. It will explore practical implications and ideas for future assessment, treatment, and prevention to help individuals with ASD and our society. Kathleen has collated relevant research, reviewed selected cases and consulted with corrections staff, families, and other experts to provide a practical summary on this difficult area. There are various myths and truths out there around ASD and offending. Kathleen will explore some of these and provide what we know about the reality of these. For example, truth or myth; People with an ASD have a high likelihood of criminal behavior, there is a high rate of ASD in our correctional facilities and people with ASD cope really well in prison. Exploring the known prevalence rates of ASD in incarceration, criminal responsibility questions, and offending pathways of people with ASD, provide clues for how we can prevent these heartbreaking outcomes.



Breaking the cycle: Treating substance use and trauma among prisoners

Katherine Mills, Emma Barrett , Devon Indig and Claudia Sannibale

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Substance use disorder (SUD) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are the most prevalent mental health disorders among prisoners. These are extremely disabling disorders which frequently co-occur. Among prison samples, co-occurring SUD and PTSD (SUD+PTSD) has been linked to relapse and criminal recidivism post-release. There is limited research, however, evaluating treatment options for this population. To date, only one integrated treatment for SUD+PTSD (Seeking Safety) has been trialed in prison samples. This therapy has evidenced promising results, however, has only been evaluated among female offenders in the US. The feasibility of this treatment in male prison populations is therefore unclear. To present preliminary findings of a study evaluating the efficacy of an integrated treatment for SUD+PTSD among male prisoners. Thirty male prisoners with SUD+ PTSD will be recruited from an adult metropolitan correctional centre. Participants will be randomly assigned to either the intervention or treatment as usual. The intervention consists of eight 60 minute sessions, delivered weekly by a psychologist. All participants will be interviewed at baseline, 8 weeks, and 6 months follow-up. Baseline characteristics of the sample will be presented, including demographics, criminal involvement, substance use, PTSD, and other mental health. In addition, the feasibility of the treatment will be discussed, including implementation issues, treatment retention and client satisfaction. The findings from this study will provide guidance on appropriate treatment options for prisoners who suffer from SUD and PTSD. Such treatments have the potential to improve psychosocial and criminogenic outcomes for these marginalised individuals.



Bringing the scientist-practitioner model to life - A training paradigm for forensic psychologists

Sarah Goodsell, Kirin Hilliar and Anita McGregor (University of New South Wales)

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The Masters of Psychology (Forensic) Program at UNSW has recently begun providing a psycho-educational group program at Killara Refuge in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. Killara Refuge is a shelter for women and their children who have experienced Domestic Violence. The program was designed as a nine module, continuous entry, open group structure that accommodated the short-term stays of the women at Killara Refuge, and its sister house, Dolores Single Women's Refuge. It was researched, designed and implemented by Masters students of the Forensic Psychology program under the supervision of a registered psychologist (Anita McGregor). This paper will outline how the Scientist – Practitioner model was utilized to aid the students in learning about program development, implementation, presentation and evaluation. APAC (Australian Psychology Accreditation Council) requires that students learn about these issues; this project makes the learning come alive and is a unique feature of the Forensic Masters Program at UNSW. The presentation will outline the process that students undertook and will continue to undertake in the development, evaluation and refinement of the psycho-educational program. The experiences and perspective of both the supervisor (Anita McGregor) and a student (Kirin Hilliar) are offered in this presentation.



Complaining to the police: A social-psychological analysis

Jane Goodman-Delahunty (Charles Sturt University)

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The NSW Police Force is guided by a Customer Service Charter, which defines police customers as “victims of and witnesses to crimes, members of the community and our own internal colleagues and stakeholders”. Suspects and arrestees do not fall within this definition and are not therefore entitled to customer service. Data gathered from the police citizen complaints database indicates a significant minority (around 30%) of complainants are non-customers, i.e. suspects or arrestees. The distinction between customer and non-customers is problematic for both complainants, who often do not understand the distinction, and the police, who themselves do not always use the definition consistently. This paper questions this exclusionary definition of the customer based on procedural justice research on policing. This indicates that public confidence in (and compliance with) the police has been linked to wider public perceptions of the four dimensions of procedural justice: trust in police, respectful treatment by police, police neutrality and opportunities provided by police for citizens to voice their concerns. While the Customer Service Charter is a positive development in bringing procedural justice principles to police practice, the complaints database analysis casts doubt over the decision to exclude suspects and arrestees.



Criminality, intellectual functioning and mental health among juvenile detainees: Findings from the 2009 NSW Young People in Custody Health Survey

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

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Juvenile Justice and Justice Health, in partnership, conducted a survey of juvenile detainees in late 2009 to research the prevalence/type of psychological issues, intellectual functioning and criminality; detailing any differences according to gender and Aboriginality. Analysis of the relevant sections from the 2009 NSW Young People in Custody Health Survey ($N=293$), including a breakdown by gender and Aboriginality. Robust results were obtained using the K-SADS 2009 screen diagnostic interview and WAIS-IV / WISC-IV assessment. Criminality was explored using the Antisocial Process Screening Device and self-reported criminal behaviour. Findings are presented such as: juvenile detainees have an average of 3.3 disorders, with a higher mean among females and Aboriginal youth. 77% scored in the low-average IQ range or below. The first crime committed on average was graffiti at 12.1 years, with types of crimes showing differences by gender and Aboriginality. The three antisocial traits (narcissism, impulsivity and callous/unemotional) showed neither gender is more likely to behave in an antisocial manner, nor were there differences according to Aboriginality. The presence of psychological disorder is high among juvenile detainees. Similarly, a lower range of intellectual functioning, including intellectual disability, is evident amongst this population. The prevalence of these factors is higher amongst Aboriginal and female youth. A range of antisocial traits do not show differences by gender or Aboriginality. However, differences do appear for types of crimes reported. This research will help identify emerging antisocial traits, as well as the nature of psychological disorders and intellectual functioning amongst juvenile detainee.



Delineating the threshold between challenging behaviour and criminal offending in people with intellectual disability

Fiona Addicott , Stuart Thomas and Michael Daffern (Monash University)

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Over recent years there has been increased interest in both the research and clinical aspects relating to people with an intellectual disability (PWID) who become involved with the criminal justice system. Recent studies overseas indicate that there may be a high level of tolerance to potential criminal behaviour by PWID and a reluctance by carers to report such behaviours to the police. This reluctance to report possible criminal behaviour appears to result in less serious crimes rarely being reported and, in some cases, more serious crimes also going unreported. This project will explore the experiences of residential support workers, in relation to PWID who engage in challenging and/or offending behaviour and the conditions under which the criminal justice system is involved. The study aims to capture the extent to which PWID engage in challenging behaviour and/or criminal offending in residential services and the characteristics of behavioural incidents and secondly, to explore the attitudes, experiences and perceptions of support workers regarding challenging behaviour and criminal offending amongst the client group. The poster describes a series of three studies designed to investigate the research area. The first study will include a review of incident reports submitted from residential services. This information will be used to develop study two which will involve focus group discussions with support workers and members of Victoria Police. Information from the focus groups will be used to develop vignettes and a questionnaire to further explore support workers attitudes and experiences relating to offending behaviour.



Effect of children's intellectual ability on investigative interviewers' questioning about a repeated event

Belinda Guadagno (Deakin University)

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Interviewing children about abuse for investigative purposes is a challenging task. It is particularly challenging in cases of repeated abuse because the law requires that each separate act of alleged abuse be identified and distinguished from all others. A further complexity for interviewers arises because children with intellectual disabilities make up a large proportion of all child abuse victims. While there is growing literature to indicate how investigative interviewers question (a) children in general about repeated abuse, and (b) children with an intellectual disability about one-time abuse, prior research has not isolated those techniques that are particular to interviewing children with an intellectual disability about repeated abuse. The aims of this research were to; (i) provide a qualitative examination of the way in which investigators assist children to identify and distinguish between occurrences of a repeated event, and (ii) to examine whether interview performance differed when questioning children with and without an intellectual disability. Mock interviews (about an innocuous staged event) were examined, with child witnesses' recruited from mainstream primary schools and special schools throughout Australia. Overall, several problems in questioning were highlighted, and clear differences in interview practice were observed across the child witness groups. The findings, as well as their implications for investigative interviewers, and directions for future research are discussed.



Evaluating police interviewing practices with suspects in child sexual abuse cases

Julianne Read and Martine Powell

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Research on the topic of investigative interviewing of suspected sex offenders is still in its infancy, with the majority of work to date focusing on developing theories underlying confessions, and reflecting on the value of specific interview techniques that have been observed in the field. Prior research evaluating police interviews indicates that there are limitations in the questioning skills of police officers who interview suspects across a range of offence types. This study aims to build on these studies by addressing two broad questions: (a) how well do interviewers adhere to the recommended guidelines for best-practice in interviewing child-sex offender suspects, and (b) what are the areas, if any, that require further improvement? This paper outlines the findings of an analysis of 81 police records of interviews (electronically recorded and then transcribed) with individuals suspected of committing child sexual offences in England and Australia. In particular, this paper examines adherence to current best-practice recommendations and highlights examples of skilled practice as well as areas that require improvement.



Financial sanctions and the Justice System: Fine debts among New South Wales prisoners with a history of problematic substance use

Kristy Martire (University of New South Wales), Sandra Sunjic (Justice Health, NSW), Libby Topp (National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research) and Devon Indig (Centre for Health Research in Criminal Justice)

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Financial sanctions are considered a cost-beneficial alternative to incarceration for lesser offences, but their use has limitations. This study documents the debt burdens of a group of offenders incarcerated in NSW, Australia, and investigates associations with health and social functioning. Between October 2008 and June 2009, 156 participants of a reintegration program operating in NSW prisons (the Justice Health Connections Project) completed face-to-face structured interviews concerning the nature, amount and impact of their debts. Copies of participants' NSW State Debt Recovery Office (SDRO) records were also obtained. Ninety-five per cent of participants reported debt to the SDRO. Participants who provided an estimate of their debt reported an average of \$12,161 owed to SDRO, compared to their verifiable average of \$8,854. Eighteen percent of participants with SDRO debt had incurred their earliest outstanding fine when they were younger than 18 years old. Sixty-four per cent perceived their SDRO debt as stressful; and 94% reported that their debt was made worse by drugs (92%) and/or fine enforcement actions (50%). Based on the average Australian pension income and repayments of \$15 per week, the average SDRO debt would take an ex-inmate 11 years to repay. Given the many challenges faced by these individuals upon re-entry to the community the additional strain imposed by unmanageable financial penalties should not be ignored. Steps are required to ensure that the criminal justice need for retribution is balanced against the benefit of having ex-prisoner re/join and contribute to a safe and law-abiding society.



Fitness to stand trial assessment: Increasing engagement using a visually based test

Sam Van Der Wijngaart (James Cook University) and Jack White (White & Associates Psychologists)

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The MacArthur Competence Assessment Test (MacCAT) family of competence assessment tools all ask structured questions crucial to determine competency across different domains, such as criminal adjudication (-CA), treatment related decision making (-T), and participation in clinical research (-CR). All these competency assessments have in common the aural presentation of information with potential legal implications. The form of competency assessed in the MacCAT-CA test is known in Australia as Fitness to Stand Trial or Fitness to Plead. In a forensic psychology setting, many clients are of low intelligence with low attention spans, and poor motivation. These factors limit their ability to adequately engage with this type of assessment. It is hypothesised that 'Fitness to Stand Trial' assessments will be more effective when presented in a modality that can be most engaging to the client. A computer based visual system is proposed, whereby a variation of the MacCAT-CA is supported by a series of computer images, about which the examiner is able to pose the MacCAT-CA questions. It is suggested that the availability of this alternative modality will assist clients engage with the testing process and provide better insight into their true abilities in the courtroom. This approach will also provide forensic practitioners with a more user-friendly assessment structure for determining a client's fitness to stand trial.



Identifying the Presence and Extent of Psychopathy in a Community Sample: A Study into Social Functioning

James Freeman, Freya Samson and Gavan Palk

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Researchers have suggested that approximately 1% of individuals with psychopathic tendencies can successfully function within the community, although there has been a lack of research to support this claim. The current study aimed to identify individuals with psychopathic tendencies within a community sample and furthermore the socio-demographic correlates of this community integrated psychopath (e.g. relationship stability, substance use, and employment status). 300 participants completed the Self-Reported Psychopathy scale – version 3 which contains four core psychopathy subfactors: (a) Interpersonal Manipulation, (b) Callous Affect, (c) Erratic Lifestyle and (d) Criminal Tendencies as well as the Paulhus Deception Scales to explore the effect of impression management and self-deception on the identification of psychopathy. Results indicated that at least 1% of the current community displayed characteristics consistent with psychopathic tendencies. A series of bivariate and multivariate statistical analyses were conducted which indicated that gender, age and alcohol misuse were predictive of psychopathy scores for this sample. More specifically, younger males who tend to misuse alcohol were found to be most likely to have psychopathic tendencies. Interestingly, impression management and self-deception was not associated with such tendencies. The results provide some support for the assertion that individuals with psychopathic tendencies can be identified within the community (regardless of impression management techniques) and that such tendencies are associated with



Olfactory predictors of aggression in first-episode psychosis: Implications for orbitofrontal neural compromise

Warrick Brewer, Claire Dickson, John Gleeson and Patrick McGorry (Orygen Youth Health Research Centre: Centre for Youth Mental Health – The University of Melbourne)

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Dysfunction of the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) has been implicated in the pathophysiology of first episode psychosis (FEP) and also in disinhibited aggressive behavior. Olfactory identification (OI) is highly associated with age during adolescent prefrontal development. We have used OI tasks to systematically investigate the integrity of the OFC within neurodevelopmental disorders and specifically have demonstrated relationships between the more debilitating aspects of psychosis and OI deficits. The current study aimed to identify a subgroup of FEP clients who are characterised with significant antisocial personality traits and to investigate the relationship between OI deficits and aggression and impulsivity. Thirty FEP clients (Mean age:22.71 [SD:3.5] years) recruited from an Intensive Case Management Team at Orygen Youth Health. The team was designed to target high risk for aggression. FEP clients were assessed with the University of Pennsylvania Smell Identification Test (UPSIT), the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) and the Barrett Impulsiveness Scale-II (BIS). Exclusion criteria included a history of head injury and compromised olfactory sensitivity. Confounds were addressed with measures of anxiety, depression and premorbid IQ. Consistent with previous findings, FEP had OI deficits (M:31.03 [SD:4.90]) compared to age and gender matched Australian normative data (M:34.0 [SD:0.7]). A higher prevalence of reactive (M: 50.20[SD:19.42]) compared to proactive aggression (M:37.30 [SD:23.25]) was found ($t(29) = -2.62, p = .014$). After accounting for confounds, reactive aggression was a significant predictor of degree of OI deficits ($\beta = -.54, p = .002, R^2 = 0.26$). Impulsivity was not associated with OIDs. This is the first study to examine the relationship between OI and aggression in a high-risk FEP cohort. Once the integrity of lower order olfactory processing pathways has been established, our findings implicate the role for reduced OFC functioning in reactive aggression in FEP. Clinical implications are discussed.



Public views toward sex offender reintegration: Offender, offence and respondent related factors

Matea Doroc

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Rising incarceration rates both nationally and internationally have contributed to an unprecedented number of prisoners returning to the community. Currently, punishment and rehabilitation are the preferred approaches in reducing recidivism. However, it is clear from the prison statistics that these methods are not doing enough with up to 50% of offenders returning to prison. This may be indicative of the need for a broader approach to address recidivism, one that also encompasses psycho-social factors, such as the process of reintegration. However, due to a number of barriers, including labelling and stigmatisation, the process of successful reintegration can be difficult to achieve, especially for those offenders who elicit a high level of community concern, such as sex offenders. As such, community understanding, support and participation are central for reintegration to become a success. Thus, this paper details a Victoria wide study where the authors have begun the process of investigating types of reintegrative initiatives the community would support, ascertaining the (ex)prisoner sub-groups the public feel such programs should be aimed at (and not aimed at), profiling the sub-sections of the community that are most amenable to such initiatives, and identifying the factors that predict positive and negative attitudes to the reintegration of (ex)prisoners. Preliminary results indicate that the community is least supportive of reintegrative strategies for sex offenders, with offence, offender and respondent variables found to influence such views. Patterns in the findings have implications for theory building, policy development and program targeting.



Problem drinking and adolescent delinquency: common risk factors? A literature review

Angela Curcio, Anita Mak and Amanda George (University of Canberra)

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Australian mental health research among adolescents has traditionally focused on internalising affective and anxiety disorders, although there is evidence to suggest that externalising behavioural problems are similarly prevalent. Mak and Kinsella found that conduct problems such as delinquent behaviour (e.g., lying, stealing, and property destruction) were common among Australia's youth, with delinquency associated with increased alcohol use. Etiological theories of problem behaviour endorse a social-psychological framework, involving an interaction of certain personality dispositions and environmental factors. Although there is extensive research on delinquency and alcohol use separately, there is a paucity of literature examining their common risk factors. For the purpose of the current article, only etiological research that investigated both adolescent delinquency and alcohol use were used. A systematic keyword search was performed of psychology, sociology, and criminology electronic databases. Studies included in this article must have been published within the last two decades, and have examined at least one of the following constructs in order to be considered: adolescent delinquency, deviance, and alcohol use. Fifteen articles met the criteria for the purpose of this paper. The preliminary conclusion is that there are common risk factors for delinquency and alcohol use, the most prominent being impulsivity, association with deviant peers and parental neglect. Research limitations and recommendations for future investigations are discussed.



Reducing alcohol-related violence in paradise

Shane Pointing (James Cook University), Charmaine Hayes-Jonkers (James Cook University) and Alan Clough (James Cook University)

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Alcohol-related violence is a major community concern, however the effectiveness of interventions require accurate data. Service agencies routinely capture relevant information concerning alcohol-related violence, however no single agency captures every incident. The Cairns Model explored community willingness to collaborate in order to collect relevant alcohol-related assault data through four key service agencies. This comprehensive approach to data collection builds a strong evidence base to inform prevention. The Cairns Model includes: Semi-structured interviews with all key Safe Communities stakeholders; Establishing broad agreement about the Cairns CBD locations where alcohol-related violence 'hot spots' frequently occur; A collaborative arrangement for data collection was established across Queensland Police Service, the Cairns Base Hospital's Emergency Department, Security Providers at licensed venues and Cairns Inner-city Facilities Closed Circuit TV system to provide a prospective count of assault episodes, trialled between April and July 2010, in the areas defined, Feedback to stakeholder groups to consolidate communication flow, strengthen partnership ties and inform interventions; Involvement in and/or monitoring of agency-based interventions by the researchers as part of the action-research model and repeating the methodology between April and July 2011, and documenting the process around agencies implementing interventions to prevent alcohol-related violence. This trial demonstrates the feasibility of a cross-agency, multiple-action collaboration to obtain an accurate count of alcohol-related assaults in a specified precinct in a way which protects privacy and is ethically sound, with little or no resource impost on relevant agencies. The process has also resulted in several community-inspired interventions across agencies using the data generated. Collecting data to inform interventions to reduce alcohol-related violence is the core business of all agencies in the service network, but also the core business of no single agency. This evidence-based model has led to enhanced data collection to direct interventions. The process of implementing interventions by networked agencies will be documented.



Speech, language and communication therapy within forensic and forensic mental health settings

Laura Caire (Early in Life Mental Health Service)

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Consistent with the responsivity principle of offender rehabilitation it is essential to consider the speech, language and communication needs of forensic clients to improve effectiveness of interventions. High rates of speech, language and communication impairment are found in both mental health and forensic populations. Despite speech-language pathologists specialising in assessing and treating these difficulties, they are not yet employed in the justice system. In contrast, speech-language pathologists are actively involved in forensic and forensic mental health service provision within the UK. The aim of this study was to gain knowledge, experience and practical ideas from the UK to help improve forensic services in Australia to young people with speech, language and communication difficulties. At the beginning of 2011, Laura undertook the Creswick Foundation Fellowship in Child and Adolescent Development, spending 3 months in the UK with specialists working in the field of speech-language pathology and criminal offending. Speech-language pathologists work with a variety of forensic and forensic mental health clients across the UK in custodial and non-custodial settings. Speech, language and communication needs of forensic clients are acknowledged at a parliamentary level. Speech-language pathologists make a significant contribution to forensic services and improve client outcomes. In order to increase effectiveness of forensic interventions, speech, language and communication needs of clients must be considered and appropriate treatment provided.



Substance use among sexual offenders and their victims

Kristy Martire(University of New South Wales), David Bright (University of New South Wales), Heather Hayes (University of New South Wales) and Wing Yau (Univeristy of New South Wales)

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Sexual offending treatment programs in custodial settings have a limited capacity to integrate individual drug and alcohol treatment into interventions targeting sexual offending. Instead, the emphasis is largely placed on cognitive-behavioural therapy, likely reflecting the limited empirical consideration given to the role of drug and alcohol use in sexual offending. This study attempts to contribute to this literature through a case-file review of 232 participants in the NSW Corrective Services Custody Based Intensive Treatment (CUBIT) program for sexual offenders. Data was collected relating to drug and/or alcohol use for offenders and victims based on treatment reports, relapse prevention plans and offender disclosures. 'Problematic' alcohol or illicit drug use was evident for 66.8% and 49.2% of offenders respectively, with 42.7% of the sample reporting problematic use of both illicit drugs and alcohol. Of the 72 participants in the 'high' risk band for the Static99, 18.1% reported no history of problematic substance use, 31.9% reported either problematic alcohol or illicit drug use, and 50% reported both. Of the 200 cases providing information regarding victim substance use, it was found that alcohol and/or drugs were used by victims at the time of the offence in 29% of cases. These results highlight the high rates of substance use in sexual offending and emphasise the relevance of drug and alcohol treatment as a target for both therapeutic and rehabilitative interventions for sexual offender.



Treatment changes in self esteem and coping styles in sexual offenders

Joanne Senior

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Although not a dynamic risk factor, poor self esteem can be a barrier to treatment engagement and treatment completion. Previous research has suggested that by improving self esteem, an offender will be more motivated, engaged and committed to change. Research has also demonstrated that sexual offenders utilise ineffective coping strategies, including sexual coping, avoidant coping and emotion-oriented coping styles. Sexual coping and poor emotional regulation are considered dynamic or changeable risk factors. Therefore, interventions designed to enhance self esteem, reduce ineffective coping, and increase problem oriented coping are a feature of the Custody Based Intensive Treatment Programme (CUBIT) in Australia. Interventions which target self esteem are designed to increase offender's self esteem, while interventions targeting coping are expected to improve an offender's repertoire of effective coping strategies. In the current study, self esteem and coping styles were assessed both before and after a custody-based intensive treatment programme for sexual offenders to determine whether treatment was having the desired impact in these areas. Treatment was found to be effective at increasing self esteem and improving coping styles in sexual offenders. Offenders who showed most improvements in self esteem also showed most improvements in coping styles. Findings are discussed in terms of the importance of incorporating self esteem tasks early on in treatment, the influence of self esteem on coping styles, and the role of ineffective coping as a dynamic risk factor for sexual offending.



The impact of institutional aggression on parole decision making in Victoria

Jessica Mooney(Monash University) and Michael Daffern (Monash University & ForensicCare)

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There is a paucity of research concerning the factors that impact on parole decision making in Australia. Among the factors shown to influence parole decision making is institutional aggression, which may be viewed by members of the board as an indicator of an offender's risk for future violence. However, research has produced varied results regarding the strength of the relationship between institutional aggression and violence following release. Moreover, several factors complicate the use of institutional aggression as a proxy for violent behaviour following release, including the process of adaptation characteristic of long-term incarcerated offenders and environmental influences which may promote or suppress aggression. The aims of this study were (1) to explore which factors significantly influence the parole release decisions made by the Adult Parole Board of Victoria, and (2) to investigate whether aggressive institutional behaviour is significantly related to the outcome of the parole decision. A retrospective file review was conducted utilising case files for a sample of 100 offenders incarcerated for violent offences at Marngoneet and Loddon Correctional Centres, who were considered for release on parole by the Adult Parole Board of Victoria. The results reveal which factors significantly predicted the outcome of the parole decision, and whether institutional aggression provides a unique contribution, whilst controlling for an offender's risk for violence as measured by the Violence Risk Scale (VRS). These findings provide important information regarding which factors significantly influence parole decisions in Victoria, an area lacking in empirical research.



The role of psychologists and psychological process in working effectively within a prison based TC at Marngoneet Correctional Centre

Frank Borg and Samantha Beeken (Caraniche Pty Ltd)

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Marngoneet is a 304 bed medium security correctional facility located in Lara, west of Melbourne. The facility is unique in Victoria as it utilises Therapeutic Community (TC) principles to provide a positive environment supporting change for the prisoner population. The Station Peak neighbourhood houses 102 men and is a dedicated drug and alcohol treatment neighbourhood where all therapeutic intervention is provided by Caraniche, a specialist forensic psychology company on behalf of Justice Health. Caraniche programs apply psychological understanding of addiction and best practices in treatment to provide participants with a unique opportunity to address their substance use and offending behaviour. This paper will outline the assessment pathways and treatment framework in place at Marngoneet and how this is supported by, and supports, the TC as a whole. Post program psychometric data will also be presented to demonstrate treatment efficacy. The approach utilized within the TC is based upon Caraniche's experience of providing holistic treatment opportunities which address an individual's presentation and underlying issues as well as supporting any co-occurring conditions. This is successfully achieved through collaborative and supportive working relationships with custodial staff which respect the differing roles whilst embracing joint case management within both treatment and the community.



The Alcohol Driven Aggression Psycho-educational Treatment (ADAPT) program: A good beginning

Frank Borg, Heather Young and Alana Johnson (Caraniche Pty Ltd)

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The Alcohol Driven Aggression Psycho-educational Treatment (ADAPT) program targets male offenders on community-based orders for violent offences committed under the influence of alcohol. This is an initiative funded by the Victorian Alcohol Action Plan 2008-13, with Caraniche Pty Ltd contracted by Justice Health to deliver 37 programs across metropolitan and regional Victoria over a three year period. ADAPT is a 40-hour group program that aims to encourage participants to explore, understand and better manage their alcohol fuelled aggressive behaviours. This presentation will focus on some of the initial findings and impressions that have arisen during the development and implementation of ADAPT. To date, 12 programs have been delivered with 104 offenders commencing the program and 75% successfully completing it. Some of the key achievements of the programs thus far have been; dealing with participant resistance to engaging in a mandated program, collaboration between key stakeholders (Justice Health, Caraniche, CCS and Clinical services), a review of the available psychometric assessment tools to evaluate ADAPT and a very flexible and responsive approach to program scheduling. Although specific treatment outcomes are difficult to determine at this early stage of program implementation, preliminary feedback is encouraging and indicates that the key objectives of ADAPT are being achieved with a significant proportion of participants reporting an increase in their understanding of the link between alcohol and violence and increased confidence in their ability to better manage their alcohol use and anger at program completion



Treating high risk and complex needs sex offenders: The development of an evaluation framework

Christina Kozar and Alana Harridge (Corrections Victoria)

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Victorian Sex Offender Programs has recently introduced a service to deliver individual treatment to high risk and complex needs clients. This group of clients pose significant challenges to the justice system as they often do not see change as desirable or possible, and demonstrate a range of pervasive psychological deficits resulting in concomitant difficulties (such as substance abuse and neurological problems). A literature review was conducted to develop an evaluation framework to determine the treatment effectiveness of this service that considered both client and treatment delivery characteristics. A hierarchy of treatment targets are to be considered for evaluation based on this review: 1) offending and offence-paralleling behaviour, 2) motivation to change and psychological-mindedness, 3) issues relating to identity, such as denial and shame, 4) personality disorder traits including impulsivity, affect regulation, rigid thinking and poor interpersonal skills and 5) adequacy of support mechanisms. Organisational challenges, such as treatment saturation and the potential iatrogenic effects of treatment, are discussed.



The parents of sex offenders: What are their experiences?

Ron Frey(Queensland University of Technology) and Julie-Anne Bennett (Queensland Health)

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Whilst it is commonly expected that parents will play a role in the rehabilitation of sex offenders, for example, as part of a community monitoring team assembled to support the offender, little is known about the experience of having a child or step-child arrested for a sexual offence. In an attempt to address this situation, Bennett and Frey developed and conducted structured interviews with a small group of parents of sex offenders (n=4) recruited from various sources to determine both the overall experience of having a child charged with a sexual offence and the types of supports which might help them cope with the situation more effectively. A small n is typical of current research into this group, and into parents of serious offenders generally. The transcripts of these interviews were analysed by Bennett using grounded theory, a qualitative methodology, with some references to larger societal discourse around sex offenders. This paper will present the major conclusions from this analysis, including a discussion of the parental emotional experience, impact of the offender's behaviour on the parent, parental needs and parental coping strategies. These findings will be linked to the extant literature on the parents of serious offenders with further suggestions about meeting the needs of these parents more effectively.



The efficacy of a 40 hour substance misuse program for prisoners with a moderate versus high risk of reoffending

Sarah Schluter, Ben Hyman, Lina Jvirblis and Leontina Biro (Fulham Correctional Centre)

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Clinicians at Fulham Correctional Centre in Victoria piloted a new 40 hour alcohol and other drug therapeutic program based on the concepts of Motivational Interviewing and primarily involves group discussions about motivation and change related to substance misuse. Previous researchers have evaluated the impact of interventions on offenders assessed as being at Low and High risk of recidivism, however the current study was interested in program efficacy rather than the likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to assess the efficacy of the program for offenders who were considered to be at either Moderate or High risk of recidivism. The researchers administered psychometric tests and a short, subjective program evaluation form, both pre- and post-program, to assess the participants' motivation and stage of change. The researchers' hypotheses were that the treatment program would effectively increase the motivation for change of the participants, and that offenders considered to be at Moderate risk of recidivism would benefit significantly more from the new therapeutic program than those considered to be at High risk. Results indicate that a 40 hour alcohol and other drug therapeutic program based on the concepts of Motivational Interviewing, was beneficial to offenders by increasing their motivation to change. The possible implications of which are that an increase in an individual's motivation to change may then go on to affect their later substance use, with the potential follow on effect of reducing recidivism.



Youth violence: Occurrence, epidemiology and function

Hannah Ching (Monash University), Michael Daffern (Monash University & ForensicCare) and Stuart Thomas (Monash University & ForensicCare)

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The violent behaviour of youth is often identified as generating heightened community concern and media “outrage”. Most recently, the popular press has shown particular interest in the seemingly escalating trend of frenzied attacks by groups of young people or gang affiliated young adults. Acts which have been described by the media as racially motivated, occurring consequent to inter-gang rivalries, peer pressure or intoxication and as being associated with moral deficiency. However, it is increasingly being suggested that some of these violent incidents are perpetrated by a ‘thrill seeking’ youth whose motivation is simply to enjoy their own violent behaviour and the suffering of random individuals or groups. This new and disturbing form of violence, termed appetitive violence, is similar to instrumental violence, in that it is proactive; it differs because it is associated with a positive emotional state and has social (to boost status and to consolidate friendships) and emotional (e.g., excitement) rather than tangible (e.g., money) objectives. While media reports suggest appetitive violence is alarmingly common, no empirical scrutiny of this type of violence exists. This study will explore the psychological characteristics of a group of “at risk” youth (aged 15-25) to identify the prevalence of appetitive violence and to compare the associated psychological characteristics of those who use violence for this reason, with those who use violence purely as an expression of anger or to obtain tangibles. Key outcomes will include the identification of treatment needs necessary for effective programming and enhanced risk assessment for statutory releasing authorities.