



The role of psychiatric diagnoses among youth offenders

An investigation of crime and later adverse outcomes

av

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Abstract

There is a strong tradition in criminological research to uncover risk factors for crime in youth and, more recently, to examine risk factors for subsequent adverse outcomes among youth offenders. This knowledge serves not only for crime prevention but also to mitigate future harm resulting from youth crime. Psychiatric diagnoses are recognized as important risk factors for youth crime, yet questions persist regarding their extent and nature of association with crime and later adverse outcomes in youth offenders.

In this dissertation, the overarching aim was to expand the knowledge about the role of psychiatric diagnoses in the risk of crime in youth and later injuries, mortality, and reoffending among youth offenders. Study I examined the association between psychiatric diagnoses, including comorbidities, and risk of criminal conviction in youth. Study II examined the association between psychiatric diagnoses and risk of unintentional injuries and premature death among non-imprisoned and imprisoned youth offenders. Lastly, study III examined the role of psychiatric diagnoses in the association between violent victimization and reoffending among youth offenders.

The overall findings of the present dissertation suggest that psychiatric diagnoses are important risk factors for crime in youth and later adverse outcomes, but their significance and magnitude vary depending on type of diagnosis, presence of comorbidities, type of crime committed, sex, crime history, and presence of other important risk factors such as violent victimization. This dissertation highlights the heterogeneity in risk patterns among youth offenders, which is highly important to consider in both risk assessments and prevention strategies to better target youth at risk of these outcomes.

Keywords: Crime, Psychiatric Diagnoses, Comorbidities, Youth Offenders, Violent Victimization, Family History, Reoffending, Unintentional Injuries, Premature Death.