The Relationship of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Juvenile Delinquency

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Background
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) one of the most common psychiatric disorders with childhood onset (von Polier, Vloet, & Herpertz-Dahlmann, 2012)
- Defined as persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity (DSM-IV, 2000)
- Center for Disease Control reports 5.2 million (8.2%) children age 3-17 currently diagnosed (CDC, 2012)
- ADHD connected with conduct issues, social mal-adaptation and delinquent behavior (Retz et al., 2004)
- ADHD boys significantly more noncompliant, higher rates of antisocial behavior and aggression than those without ADHD (Lee & Hinshaw, 2004)
- Preventative measures can curb juvenile delinquency recidivism (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, & Buehler, 2005).

Participants
- 100 Adolescent boys ages 12-17
- DSM-IV diagnosis of ADHD with no comorbidity
- TOVA Test Reflect diagnosis
- Reside in US Juvenile Correction Facilities
- 1 year sentence minimum

Methods
- Group A
  - Scared Straight program
  - Hour, 1 time a month
  - Interaction with prisoners
- Group B
  - Family skill building therapy
  - 1 hour, 1 time a month
  - With parents/guardians
- Group C
  - No program
  - 1 year sentence

Variables to be Examined
- Test of Variables of Attention (TOVA) used as ADHD diagnostic tool (Silver, 1992)
- Scared Straight programs expose kids to life in prison (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, & Buehler, 2005)
- Family skill building therapy enhances parent knowledge of ADHD and helps families work together (Walther et al., 2012)

My Prediction
- Group B will show a lower rate of delinquency amongst the three data groups

Limitations
- Male participants only
- Results cannot be generalized
- Excludes those who fall outside of 12-17 years old
- United States citizens only

Significance
- Expand knowledge of ADHD
- Identify preventative measures of recidivism
- Help correctional facilities identify useful programs
- Lower participants’ likelihood to reoffend

References

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