

Psychopathic traits and onset of violent and non-violent offending in high-risk adolescents

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Conduct disordered youth

- Reducing heterogeneity
 - Early onset of antisocial behavior associated with more frequent, serious, and persistent delinquency (Moffitt, 1993)
 - Psychopathic traits have been linked to several negative outcomes, such as violence and recidivism (Edens et al., 2001)

Psychopathy and early onset of behavior problems

- PCL:YV/PCL-R Item 12: Early Behavioral Problems
 - Serious behavior problems before age 11/13
 - Persistent lying, cheating, theft, robbery, fire-setting, truancy, classroom disruption, substance abuse, vandalism, violence, bullying, running away, precocious sexual activities
- High levels of psychopathic traits in youth linked to earlier age of:
 - First arrest/conviction from official records
(Brandt et al., 1997; Forth, 1995; Forth et al., 1990)
 - Drug and alcohol use, school behavior problems
(Campbell et al., 2004; Corrado et al., 2004; Vincent et al., 2003)

Three-factor model of psychopathy

(Cooke & Michie, 2001)

<u>Factor 1</u> Arrogant / Deceitful Interpersonal Style	<u>Factor 2</u> Deficient Affective Experience	<u>Factor 3</u> Impulsive / Irresponsible Behavioral Style
■ Impression Management ■ Grandiose ■ Pathological Lying ■ Manipulative	■ Lacks Remorse ■ Shallow Affect ■ Callous / Lacks Empathy ■ Failure to Accept Responsibility	■ Stimulation Seeking ■ Parasitic Orientation ■ Lacks Goals ■ Impulsivity ■ Irresponsibility

The Current Study

- An investigation of the relationship between:
 - Interpersonal, affective and behavioral traits of psychopathy
 - Self-reported onset of violent and non-violent offending behaviors

Participants and Measures

- 95 adolescents (40 male, 55 female)
 - Mean age 15.4 ($SD = 1.5$)
 - 53% Incarcerated, 47% Provincial assessment center
 - 63% Caucasian, 25% Aboriginal, 12% Other
- Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (Forth et al., 2003)
- Self-Report of Offending (Huizinga et al., 1991)
 - Engagement in and first age of 13 behaviors
 - Violent: encouraging others to harm disliked person, carrying a gun, robbery with weapon, fighting with weapon, gang activity, fistfights, attack wanting to seriously hurt/kill, shot at someone
 - Nonviolent: driving while drunk or high, selling marijuana, selling hard drugs, breaking into house/car, auto theft

Psychopathic traits

	Mean (<i>SD</i>)	<i>ICC</i> ₂ (<i>n</i> = 28)
PCL:YV Total	21.0 (6.81)	0.96
Factor 1 (Interpersonal)	3.24 (1.74)	0.93
Factor 2 (Affective)	4.04 (1.99)	0.90
Factor 3 (Behavioral)	6.13 (1.92)	0.85

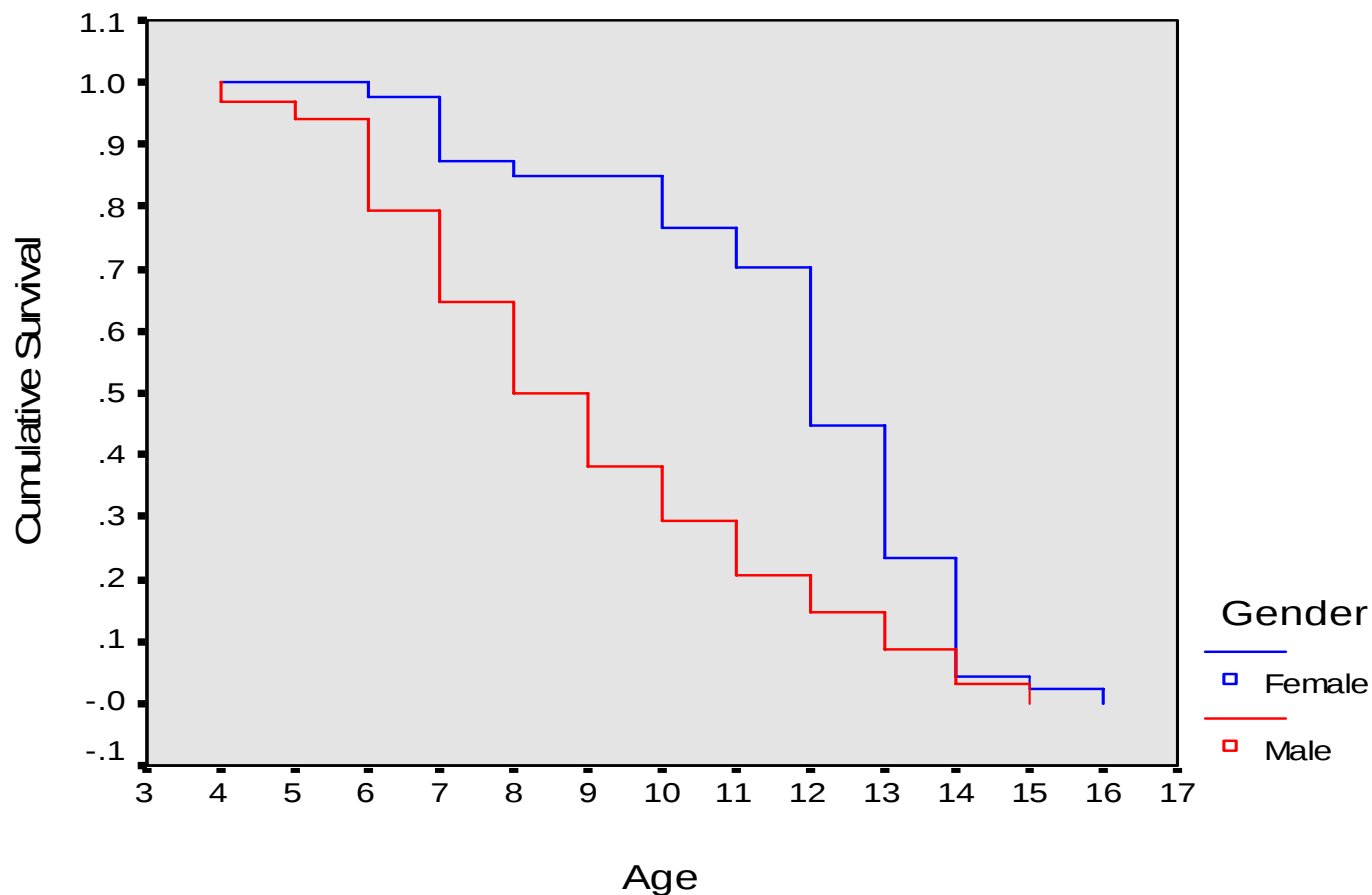
- PCL:YV Total scores higher in:
 - Males (22.9) vs. females (19.8), $p = 0.028$
 - Older youth, $r = 0.31$, $p = 0.002$
 - Incarcerated (24.2) vs. Assessment (16.8), $p < 0.001$

Prevalence and age onset

	<u>% (N)</u>	<u>Median age onset</u>
Impaired driving	47.5 (48)	14
Selling marijuana	55.4 (56)	13
Selling hard drugs	36.6 (37)	14
Break into house or car	55.0 (55)	13
Auto theft	42.6 (43)	13
Encourage others to harm disliked person	50.5 (51)	12
Carrying a gun	27.7 (28)	14
Using a weapon to get something like \$	32.7 (33)	14
Weapon use during fight	48.5 (49)	13
Gang activity	44.6 (45)	13
Attack wanting to seriously hurt or kill	38.6 (39)	13
Shot at someone	15.8 (16)	14

Survival function: Gender and age onset of fistfights

	<u>%</u>	<u>Median onset</u>
Male	95.2	8
Female	93.2	12



Predictors of increased likelihood of youth engagement in offending behavior

■ Higher PCL:YV Total scores

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| ■ Selling marijuana | OR = 1.16 |
| ■ Selling hard drugs | OR = 1.12 |
| ■ Auto theft (assessment) | OR = 1.36 |
| ■ Encouraging harm | OR = 1.10 |
| ■ Carrying a gun | OR = 1.21 |
| ■ Robbery with weapon | OR = 1.16 |
| ■ Fighting with weapon | OR = 1.31 |
| ■ Gang activity | OR = 1.11 |
| ■ Serious physical attack | OR = 1.23 |
| ■ Shot at someone (male) | OR = 1.13 |

■ Higher Factor 3 (Behavioral) scores

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| ■ Impaired driving (assessment) | OR = 2.19 |
| ■ Selling hard drugs | OR = 1.54 |
| ■ Auto theft (assessment) | OR = 3.28 |
| ■ Gang activity | OR = 1.78 |
| ■ Serious physical attack | OR = 1.47 |

Predictors of earlier age of onset of offending behavior

■ Higher PCL:YV Total scores

- Impaired driving $B = -0.075, p = 0.034$
- Selling marijuana $B = -0.147, p = 0.002$
- Fistfights (males) $B = -0.279, p = 0.001$

■ Higher Factor 2 (Affective) scores

- Encouraging harm $B = -0.582, p = 0.001$
- Fistfights (males) $B = -0.741, p = 0.002$

Conclusions

- Psychopathic traits in high-risk adolescents associated with higher likelihood of occurrence and earlier onset of self-reported violent and non-violent offending behaviors
- Differential relationships with symptom domains of psychopathy
 - Impulsive/irresponsible behavioral style → Higher likelihood of engagement
 - Deficient affective experience → Earlier age onset
 - Violence and instrumental aggression

Future Directions

- Importance of affective deficits
 - Empathy and aggression
 - Callous/unemotional traits
 - Targeted intervention
- Etiology and development of psychopathy
 - Onset of psychopathic traits
 - Developmental pathways
 - Mechanisms of onset

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