

1: No Significant Relationship Between Violent Crime and Mental Illness

Borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, conduct disorder, and other personality disorders often manifest in aggression or violence. When a personality disorder occurs in conjunction with another psychiatric disorder, the combination may also increase risk of violent behavior (as suggested by the CATIE study, above).

February Historically, society this means you! People have this image of someone who is "crazy" as being more inclined to acting on those thoughts and causing mayhem and destruction. This has always been a part of the stigma associated with the mentally ill, and one which has been especially difficult to successfully deal with. A study published in May, in the Archives of General Psychiatry found that: Substance abuse raised the rate of violence both among discharged psychiatric patients and among non-patients. However, a higher portion of discharged patients than of others in their neighborhoods reported having symptoms of substance abuse, and -- at least when they first got out of the hospital -- substance abuse was more likely to lead to violence among discharged patients than among non-patients. Significantly, this contradicts one of central perceptions of mental illness within society today. Unless drugs or alcohol are involved, people with mental disorders do not pose any more threat to the community than anyone else. This finding cannot be emphasized enough. In the commentary accompanying the study, Bruce Link, Ph. Public fears that patients with mental illness will attack them are sharply contradicted by such findings. This is something to note, but not to blow out of proportion. The violence that does occur in those individuals who have a co-existing substance abuse problem is focused on family members and others known to the individual. It does mean, however, that you need to be wary of someone you know who has a substance abuse problem and a mental disorder. Statistically, they are more prone to violence. Taking reasonable precautions to reduce that violent potential may be prudent if you find yourself in such a situation. A good predictor of future behavior is past behavior. If the person has acted violently toward you in the past, they are likely to do so again in the future, regardless of their mental health status. The authors themselves warn of drawing conclusions from the data in this manner: Our most unexpected finding is the decline in the proportion of subjects engaging in violence over time. Substantive hypotheses to account for this decline are legion. Patients may become more engaged in treatment over time or social support from family members may increase. Rates of violence may peak around the time of hospital admission, when patients are in acute crisis, and remain high for a period of time after discharge because many patients still have active mental disorders after they leave the hospital. Caution should be exercised before using the rates reported here as summary statistics to characterize violence by discharged patients. We found that the rate of patient violence varied during the course of the 1-year follow-up for the 2 groups with co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses. The effects of hospitalization and treatment on these rates are unknown. In addition, for all 3 patient diagnostic groups, the highest rate of reported violence did not occur during the follow-up year at all, but rather during the 10 weeks prior to the hospitalization during which the patients were enrolled in the study. The prehospitalization rates are likely to be artificially high due to ascertainment bias ie, violence may have precipitated hospitalization. In addition, an inevitable limitation of research in this area is that patient refusal or attrition can compromise the representativeness of the sample studied. Significantly, NAMI used some creative statistical methods to obtain its claims that violence is reduced by half by treatment. Prevalence of Violence and Other Aggressive Acts clearly shows, violence is reduced significantly over time. When patients first come out of treatment, note that violence is still significantly higher than by Follow-Up 5. Also note that the pre-hospital admission violence rate is self-reported only. The authors warn about drawing conclusions based upon only one source of data, "Our data suggest that it is crucial for [

2: Violence and Mental Disorder: Developments in Risk Assessment, Monahan, Steadman

And I think it depends on your definition of "mentally ill." Alcoholism is considered a mental disorder and drunken alcoholics do engage in a lot of domestic violence, rage driving, and public.

Most individuals with serious mental illness are not dangerous. Most acts of violence are committed by individuals who are not mentally ill. Individuals with serious mental illness are victimized by violent acts more often than they commit violent acts. Being a young male or a substance abuser alcohol or drugs is a greater risk factor for violent behavior than being mentally ill. No evidence suggests that people with serious mental illness receiving effective treatment are more dangerous than individuals in the general population. That being said, a small number of individuals with serious mental illnesses commit acts of violence. Individuals who are not being treated commit almost all of these acts; many of them also abusing alcohol or drugs. At least 20 studies have examined violence in patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders in various clinical and community settings. A meta-analysis of this literature found a reported risk of violence that was, on average, 3 to 5 times greater for men with schizophrenia, and 4 to 13 times greater for women with schizophrenia, compared with their counterparts without schizophrenia in the general population. The risk factor was higher for homicide as the violence outcome and for any violence when comparing patients with first-episode psychosis to population controls. The overall risk increase for violence was similar in bipolar disorder, where a recent meta-analysis synthesized nine studies and reported increased odd of violent outcomes in bipolar patients in the range of 3: A study by Fazel and colleagues examined 24, patients with schizophrenia and related psychoses in Sweden over 38 years discharged from hospitals between and Within five years of first being diagnosed, The rate of violent offense by the patients with psychotic disorders was 4. Most strikingly, over the 38 years, the incidence of violent behavior increased in direct proportion to the decrease in hospitalization time i. Among 3, individuals with bipolar disorder, 8. Of 8, individuals with schizophrenia in Sweden, Concurrent abuse of alcohol or drugs accounted for much of the increased rate. A study in Israel identified 3, patients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. They committed four times more violent crimes compared to the general population, and this difference was even more pronounced among women. Data on mental disorders and violence were collected on 34, individuals as part of the US National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions. When all individuals with comorbid substance abuse were removed from the schizophrenia sample, those without substance abuse still were more than twice as likely to be guilty of a violent offense compared to the matched community sample. The violent patients had significantly more prominent symptoms and significantly less awareness of their illness. A study of young adults in New Zealand reported that individuals with schizophrenia and associated disorders were 2. If the person was also a substance abuser, the incidence of violent behavior was even higher. A study of 63 inpatients with schizophrenia in Spain reported that the best predictors of violent behavior were being sicker i. Men with schizophrenia without alcoholism were 3. Men with both schizophrenia and alcoholism were Limited data are available that can be used to estimate the percentage of severely mentally ill individuals who become violent. The best study used the Danish psychiatric case register, covering the whole country, and convictions for criminal offenses. Between and , 6. This analysis only used convictions; thus it can be assumed that another unknown percentage committed a violent act for which they were not charged or convicted. A study in Switzerland compared men with schizophrenia with a matched control group in the general population. The patients were found five times more likely to have been convicted of violent crimes, mostly "assaults resulting in bodily harm. A study of individuals with schizophrenia living in London reported the risk of conviction for assault and serious violence was 3. A Swedish study examined the criminal records of all individuals born in Stockholm in and still living in the city 30 years later. Men and women with severe mental illness were 4. In a follow-up of patients released from a psychiatric hospital, Dr. Henry Steadman and Dr. In reviewing many of these studies, in Dr. John Monahan, PhD concluded: The data that have recently become available, fairly read, suggest the one conclusion I did not want to reach: Whether the measure is the prevalence of violence among the disordered or the prevalence of disorder among the violent, whether the

sample is people who are selected for treatment as inmates or patients in institutions or people randomly chosen from the open community, and no matter how many social and demographic factors are statistically taken into account, there appears to be a relationship between mental disorder and violent behavior. A study investigated violent behavior among severely mentally ill individuals in 1, randomly selected families who were members of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill NAMI. The ECA surveys carried out from to reported much higher rates of violent behavior among individuals with severe mental illness living in the community compared to other community residents. For example, individuals with schizophrenia were 21 times more likely to have used a weapon in a fight. A Swedish study of individuals with schizophrenia followed for 15 years reported they committed violent offenses at a rate four times greater than the general population. In reviewing early studies on discharged psychiatric patients, Dr. Judith Rabkin, PhD, concluded: A study in Sweden linked the psychiatric and criminal national registers. It included 82, patients who were prescribed antipsychotic or mood-stabilizing medication. It thus could track when patients were and were not taking their medication. Researchers in Turkey examined 49 individuals with schizophrenia who had committed homicide. A study in New York assessed 60 severely mentally ill men who had been charged with violent crimes. Those who had been violent were also 1. In a three-site MacArthur Foundation study of violence and mental illness, In the week periods following discharge from hospitalization, a period when most of them were being treated, an average of 8. A study of inpatients diagnosed with schizophrenia reported an inverse correlation between their propensity to violence and their blood level of antipsychotic medication.

3: Violence and Mental Illness - National Empowerment Center

Violence and Mental Illness: The Facts The discrimination and stigma associated with mental illnesses largely stem from the link between mental illness and violence in the minds of the general public, according to the U.

The following review of carefully conducted studies shows that persons with mental illness are no more likely than the general public to commit a violent crime. Most studies of the possible relationship between violence and mental illness are flawed: As summarized by Dr. For example, violence has been difficult to measure directly, so that researchers have often relied on official documentation or uncorroborated self-reports. The prevalence of violence has been demonstrated to differ dramatically depending on the source 2. Most samples have not been representative of all mentally ill individuals, but only of those with the highest risk of becoming dangerous, such as those who are hospitalized or arrested. Study designs 3 have not always eliminated individuals with a prior history of violence a major predictor of future violence , controlled for co-morbid substance abuse, or clearly determined the sequencing of events, thereby weakening any causal arguments that might be made. Because they used multiple measures of violence, including patient self-report, they have minimized the information bias characterizing past work. The innovative use of same-neighbor comparison subjects eliminates confounding from broad environmental influences such as socio-demographic or economic factors that may have exaggerated differences in past research. In this study, the prevalence of violence among those with a major mental disorder who did not abuse substances was indistinguishable from their non-substance abusing neighborhood controls. Attributable risk refers to the overall effect a factor has on the level of violence in the population. For those with a major mental disorder, the population attributable risk was 4. This is much lower than would be predicted from the prevalence of major mental illness in the US population, which is However, violence could be reduced by over a third if substance abuse disorders were eliminated. Using a similar approach, a Canadian study 10 asked what proportion of violent crimes involving a police arrest and detention could be attributed to people with a mental disorder. They surveyed 1, newly detained criminal offenders, representing all individuals incarcerated in a geographically defined area in a given time period. A pooled estimate of 1 stranger homicide per Moreover, the extreme rarity of stranger homicides among untreated patients who are in contact with health services and by previously treated patients means that there is little prospect of developing a risk assessment instrument that is sufficiently sensitive or specific to be of any use in predicting which patient might commit this kind of offence. The very low incidence of these events also means that any measure designed simply to prevent stranger homicide is likely to be disproportionate to the actual number of deaths. For example, in NSW, the region in this study with the highest rate of stranger homicides, deaths in motor vehicle accidents and by suicide were times more common than stranger homicide by the mentally ill Violent behavior preceding hospitalization among persons with severe mental illness. Law and Human Behavior. Basic and Clinical Science. A classification tree approach to the development of actuarial violence risk assessment tools. Violence by people discharged from acute psychiatric inpatient facilities and by others in the same neighborhoods. Oxford University Press; Mental disorder, substance abuse, and community violence: Violence and mental disorder: University of Chicago Press. Archives of General Psychiatry. A public health perspective on violent offenses among persons with mental illness. Homicide by strangers with psychotic illness. Schizophrenia Bulletin, published online, October 12, , www.

4: References for "Mental illness and violence" - Harvard Health

One confounding problem is the incomplete understanding of temporary mental instability of otherwise "normal persons", mental illness in general, severe mental illness, and effective treatment.

January, Multiple interacting factors contribute to violent behavior. Public opinion surveys suggest that many people think mental illness and violence go hand in hand. In fact, research suggests that this public perception does not reflect reality. Most individuals with psychiatric disorders are not violent. Although a subset of people with psychiatric disorders commit assaults and violent crimes, findings have been inconsistent about how much mental illness contributes to this behavior and how much substance abuse and other factors do. An ongoing problem in the scientific literature is that studies have used different methods to assess rates of violence – both in people with mental illness and in control groups used for comparison. Such studies may underestimate rates of violence for several reasons. Participants may forget what they did in the past, or may be embarrassed about or unwilling to admit to violent behavior. Other studies have compared data from the criminal justice system, such as arrest rates among people with mental illness and those without. But these studies, by definition involving a subset of people, may also misstate rates of violence in the community. Finally, some studies have not controlled for the multiple variables beyond substance abuse that contribute to violent behavior whether an individual is mentally ill or not, such as poverty, family history, personal adversity or stress, and so on. The MacArthur Violence Risk Assessment Study was one of the first to address the design flaws of earlier research by using three sources of information to assess rates of violence. The investigators interviewed participants multiple times, to assess self-reported violence on an ongoing basis. Finally, the researchers also checked arrest and hospitalization records. This confirmed other research that substance abuse is a key contributor to violent behavior. But when the investigators probed further, comparing rates of violence in one area in Pittsburgh in order to control for environmental factors as well as substance use, they found no significant difference in the rates of violence among people with mental illness and other people living in the same neighborhood. In other words, after controlling for substance use, rates of violence reported in the study may reflect factors common to a particular neighborhood rather than the symptoms of a psychiatric disorder. Several studies that have compared large numbers of people with psychiatric disorders with peers in the general population have added to the literature by carefully controlling for multiple factors that contribute to violence. In two of the best designed studies, investigators from the University of Oxford analyzed data from a Swedish registry of hospital admissions and criminal convictions. In Sweden, every individual has a unique personal identification number that allowed the investigators to determine how many people with mental illness were convicted of crimes and then compare them with a matched group of controls. In separate studies, the investigators found that people with bipolar disorder or schizophrenia were more likely – to a modest but statistically significant degree – to commit assaults or other violent crimes when compared with people in the general population. Differences in the rates of violence narrowed, however, when the researchers compared patients with bipolar disorder or schizophrenia with their unaffected siblings. This suggested that shared genetic vulnerability or common elements of social environment, such as poverty and early exposure to violence, were at least partially responsible for violent behavior. However, rates of violence increased dramatically in those with a dual diagnosis see "Rates of violence compared". Taken together with the MacArthur study, these papers have painted a more complex picture about mental illness and violence. They suggest that violence by people with mental illness – like aggression in the general population – stems from multiple overlapping factors interacting in complex ways. These include family history, personal stressors such as divorce or bereavement, and socioeconomic factors such as poverty and homelessness. Substance abuse is often tightly woven into this fabric, making it hard to tease apart the influence of other less obvious factors. Rates of violence compared Percentage of people convicted of at least one violent crime, – Source: Fazel S, et al. Journal of the American Medical Association. Percentage of people convicted of at least one violent crime, – Source: Archives of General Psychiatry. Assessing risk of violence Highly publicized acts of violence by people with mental illness affect more than public perception. Clinicians are under pressure

to assess their patients for potential to act in a violent way. Although it is possible to make a general assessment of relative risk, it is impossible to predict an individual, specific act of violence, given that such acts tend to occur when the perpetrator is highly emotional. During a clinical session, the same person may be guarded, less emotional, and even thoughtful, thereby masking any signs of violent intent. And even when the patient explicitly expresses intent to harm someone else, the relative risk for acting on that plan is still significantly influenced by the following life circumstances and clinical factors. Individuals who have been arrested or acted violently in the past are more likely than others to become violent again. Much of the research suggests that this factor may be the largest single predictor of future violence. What these studies cannot reveal, however, is whether past violence was due to mental illness or some of the other factors explored below. Patients with a dual diagnosis are more likely than patients with a psychiatric disorder alone to become violent, so a comprehensive assessment includes questions about substance use in addition to asking about symptoms of a psychiatric disorder. In people with psychiatric disorders, substance abuse may exacerbate symptoms such as paranoia, grandiosity, or hostility. Patients who abuse drugs or alcohol are also less likely to adhere to treatment for a mental illness, and that can worsen psychiatric symptoms. Another theory, however, is that substance abuse may be masking, or entwined with, other risk factors for violence. A survey of 1, patients with schizophrenia participating in the Clinical Antipsychotic Trials of Intervention Effectiveness CATIE study, for example, found that substance abuse and dependence increased risk of self-reported violent behavior fourfold. But when the researchers adjusted for other factors, such as psychotic symptoms and conduct disorder during childhood, the impact of substance use was no longer significant. Borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, conduct disorder, and other personality disorders often manifest in aggression or violence. When a personality disorder occurs in conjunction with another psychiatric disorder, the combination may also increase risk of violent behavior as suggested by the CATIE study, above. Patients with paranoid delusions, command hallucinations, and florid psychotic thoughts may be more likely to become violent than other patients. Young people are more likely than older adults to act violently. In addition, men are more likely than women to act violently. People who are poor or homeless, or otherwise have a low socioeconomic status, are more likely than others to become violent. Personal stress, crisis, or loss. People who were victims of violent crime in the past year are also more likely to assault someone. The risk of violence rises with exposure to aggressive family fights during childhood, physical abuse by a parent, or having a parent with a criminal record. Preventing violence The research suggests that adequate treatment of mental illness and substance abuse may help reduce rates of violence. For example, in one study, the CATIE investigators analyzed rates of violence in patients who had earlier been randomly assigned to antipsychotic treatment. This study found that most patients with schizophrenia who took antipsychotics as prescribed were less likely to be violent than those who did not. An exception to this general trend occurred in participants who were diagnosed with a conduct disorder during childhood. No medication proved better than the others in reducing rates of violence, but this study excluded clozapine Clozaril. This is important because both the CATIE investigators and other researchers cite evidence that clozapine appears more effective than other psychotics in reducing aggressive behavior in patients with schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. One study found, for example, that patients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or another psychotic disorder who were treated with clozapine had significantly lower arrest rates than those taking other drugs. The study was not designed to determine whether this was due to the drug itself or the fact that clozapine treatment requires frequent follow-ups that might encourage patients to continue taking it as prescribed. Indeed, as with psychiatric treatment in general, medication treatment alone is unlikely to reduce risk of violence in people with mental illness. Interventions ideally should be long-term and include a range of psychosocial approaches, including cognitive behavioral therapy, conflict management, and substance abuse treatment. Of course, this sort of ideal treatment may be increasingly difficult to achieve in the real world, given reductions in reimbursements for mental health services, ever-shorter hospital stays, poor discharge planning, fragmented care in the community, and lack of options for patients with a dual diagnosis. The Schizophrenia Patient Outcomes Research Team PORT guidelines, for example, outlined the type of multimodal treatment necessary to increase chances of full recovery. Most patients with schizophrenia do not

receive the kind of care outlined in the PORT recommendations. Solutions to these challenges will arise not from clinicians, but from policy makers. Volavka J, et al. For more references, please see [www](#).

5: Psych Central - Dispelling the Myth of Violence and Mental Illness

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE. In , Swanson and colleagues published a summary of studies on serious mental illness and violent behavior.

6: Risk Factors for Violence in Serious Mental Illness - Treatment Advocacy Center

Violence and Mental Illness The recent tragedy in Arizona has prompted the media to once again falsely equate mental illness with violence. The following review of carefully conducted studies shows that persons with mental illness are no more likely than the general public to commit a violent crime.

7: Mental illness and violence - Harvard Health

Violence and people with mental illness. Recent studies have established that being severely mentally ill and not taking medication is one of the major clinical predictors of violent behavior.

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