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Association of Demographic Factors and Comorbid Diagnoses with Crime Type in an Arrest Cohort with Schizophrenia and/or Related Psychosis

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Association of Demographic Factors and Comorbid Diagnoses with Crime Type in an Arrest Cohort with Schizophrenia and/or Related Psychosis

Authors

Comments
Presented at Psychiatry Research Day at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, 2009.
**Association of Demographic Factors and Comorbid Diagnoses with Crime Type in an Arrest Cohort with Schizophrenia and/or Related Psychosis**


**Background**

The implications of the interface between the criminal justice system and individuals with schizophrenia persist despite decades of research on criminalization and risk of arrest. Research exploring the broader construct of criminality has predominantly focused on individuals with severe mental illness as a collective. This study diverges from others by examining diagnoses correlated with schizophrenia and related psychoses and their relationships with risk of arrest across a spectrum of criminal categories ranging in severity.

**Methods**

Demographic and comorbid diagnoses were collected from a 10-year arrest cohort of 1,536 clients of a public mental health system who had received an initial diagnosis of schizophrenia or related psychosis. The likelihood of arrest across six broadly defined criminal change categories was analyzed using Pearson χ² tests in separate logistic regression models.

**Results**

Across our cohort, 63% experienced an arrest for a non-low-level offense, 95% were arrested for serious violent crimes, and 96% were charged with property crimes over the 10-year period. Comorbid antisocial personality disorder produced the strongest relationship with arrest, in contrast to substance abuse or alcohol use disorders, prevalent among 49% of our cohort, elevated risk of arrest across all criminal categories.

**Conclusion**

Diagnoses correlated with schizophrenia carry implications for risk of arrest across a spectrum of offenses categories. Risk assessment and interventions aimed at reducing offending and re-offending should identify and target comorbid psychiatric and substance abuse disorders in their efforts to reduce the likelihood of justice involvement among persons with schizophrenia.

**Offense Categories**

- Serious Violent Crime
- Property Crime
- Crimes Against Public Order
- Misdemeanors
- Crimes Against Public Decency
- Delinquency

**Logistic Regression Tables**

**Table 1: Characteristics of Arrest Cohort with Schizophrenia or Related Psychoses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Type</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious Violent Crime</td>
<td>767 (49.9)</td>
<td>616 (52.0)</td>
<td>151 (42.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime</td>
<td>36-45 525 (34.1)</td>
<td>412 (34.8)</td>
<td>113 (31.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes Against Public Order</td>
<td>85 (5.5)</td>
<td>28 (2.4)</td>
<td>57 (16.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanors</td>
<td>136 (8.8)</td>
<td>90 (7.6)</td>
<td>46 (13.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes Against Public Decency</td>
<td>150 (9.8)</td>
<td>112 (9.5)</td>
<td>38 (10.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquency</td>
<td>470 (30.6)</td>
<td>394 (33.3)</td>
<td>76 (21.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Characteristics of Arrest Cohort with Schizophrenia or Related Psychoses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Type</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious Violent Crime</td>
<td>1.04 (0.80-1.34)</td>
<td>1.31 (0.90-1.92)</td>
<td>0.78 (0.53-1.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime</td>
<td>1.10 (0.82-1.49)</td>
<td>1.30 (0.99-1.70)</td>
<td>1.05 (0.46-2.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes Against Public Order</td>
<td>1.12 (0.69-1.82)</td>
<td>1.36 (0.80-2.32)</td>
<td>0.84 (0.51-1.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanors</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PTSD and Serious Violent Crime**

We dichotomized comorbid anxiety disorders into two variables, those with PTSD and those without. Replacing the anxiety disorder indicator with these two variables in the full cohort Serious Violent Crime model revealed that comorbid PTSD was associated with Serious Violent Crime arrest (OR = 2.35, 95% CI 1.20-4.63 p = 0.013) and non-PTSD anxiety disorders were not (OR = 0.97, 95% CI 0.54-1.75 p = 0.90). This finding was similar for males and females and consistent with observations made about violent behavior and a history of trauma in similar populations.

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