Guest editorial

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Pathology, psychopathology, and pathological offending

In terms of scholarly mission, focus on more forensic-related topics, and fascination factor, few journals rival the *Journal of Criminal Psychology*. For these reasons, I am thrilled to serve as Guest Editor of this special issue on "Pathological offending" which contains six outstanding papers. Although each paper is distinct, there are common themes that emerge in understanding the etiology and course of severe antisocial conduct and pathological offending. It is clear that temperamental deficits particularly low effortful control and high negative emotionality are potent distal predictors of antisociality. Various adverse childhood experiences, particularly sexual abuse, is also recurrent in the lives of serious offenders and appears to inform the sequela associated with severe sexual violence. And the studies show the heterogeneity of the criminal population even within relatively enriched samples of the most serious, chronic, and violent persons.

In "The interplay between early language and temperamental deficits in the prediction of severe antisocial behavior among males," Jackson analyzed data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort and found that males with various language deficits had more frequent and severe externalizing behaviors, however the effect was only found for those negative affective temperamental features. In "Distinguishing homicide, violent sexual, and violent juvenile offending" using data from over 30,000 violent juvenile offenders including nearly 400 juvenile homicide offenders, Baglivio and colleagues found that temperamental constructs such as effortful control and negative emotionality were important in distinguishing subtypes among violent youth.

In their study "Recidivism of juvenile homicide offenders," Trulson and Caudill examined the recidivism outcomes of 247 juvenile homicide offenders and found evidence that pre-confinement neglect and assaultive misconduct during confinement increased the likelihood of post-release recidivism. Using data from federal sex offenders in "Adverse childhood experiences, paraphilias, and serious criminal violence among federal sex offenders," Drury and colleagues examined adverse childhood experiences, paraphilias, and involvement in serious violence, such as murder, rape, and kidnaping. Sexual sadism emerged as a strong predictor of serious violence along with criminal career dimensions, such as early arrest onset. In "Sadism in sexual homicide offenders: identifying distinct groups," Beauregard and colleagues studied 350 cases of sexual homicide from Canada and found differential evidence of sexual sadism among the offenders including a severe subgroup that was highly sadistic and severe in offending frequency. In "What makes a difference? Evaluating the key distinctions and predictors of sexual and non-sexual offending among male and female juvenile offenders," Fox studied more than 64,000 juvenile offenders and found that several forms of psychopathology and sexual abuse victimization were associated with subsequent sexual offending.

I have previously implored criminology to devote more scholarly attention to the most severe, violent offenders (DeLisi, 2015) and am proud of the fascinating, empirically rigorous, and important papers in this special issue. They have found a perfect home in the *Journal of Criminal Psychology*!

Reference

DeLisi, M. (2015), "Rape, murder! It's just a shot away", *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 2 No. 43, pp. 152-3.

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