Psychological and Biological Early Risk Factors

of Violence

by

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Predicting violent crime is becoming more sophisticated and perhaps more accurate. The general public and victims could reduce fear levels, improve public safety, and increase understanding relative to early risk factors if they know what to look for. With increased understanding of psychological factors along with implementing creative new approaches to deal with sudden danger concerns everyone.

Psychological predictors of Violent Crime

Assessing psychological problems as they relate to criminal justice is difficult. The current political climate simply demands equitable assessments when dealing with citizens. With respect to current politics, one should not abdicate personal safety for the sake of political correctness. The pressing question is-*where is the balance*? The natural response to this is individual constitution. Individual constitutions might include those

basic desires to live in harmony and living without fear. Therefore, individual constitutions should be affixed in ones mind long before potentially harmful events surface. Most people fully understand that it is extremely difficult to predict when a mentally unstable person might threaten lives. The *Sandy Hook Shootings* in New Jersey proves that unpredictability is a reality.

According to Moore & Hogue (2000) the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) are well-respected tools for classifying maladaptive behavior. Unfortunately, the average citizen will not learn the DSM-IV or the ICD-10. Furthermore, those with maladaptive disorder or mental disorder are usually identified during incarceration (Moore & Hogue, 2000). Reality teaches that the mentally ill are not relegated to prisons or mental institutions. According to the Alabama Department of Mental Health, many of these state-run facilities are closing because of budgetary issues. That's right, those suffering with mental illness are being transferred to community-based treatment facilities. That means they could be living next door, attending local churches, walking through local parks, or attending local schools.

Biological Risk Factors

Human emotion must be included with risk factors associated with sudden public violence. Emotions affect behavior-and for most, they are difficult to hide. Bartol & Bartol (2012) cited (Tengstom, Hodgins, Grann, Langstrom, & Kullgren, 2004). The authors propose that 11.3 % of men and 2.3 % of women that develop schizophrenia become violent; however; schizophrenics that commits violent crime constitute a very heterogeneous group (Bartol & Bartol, 2012). There is a stigma associated with people

who develop schizophrenia; however, most people with schizophrenia are not violent toward others, but are withdrawn and prefer to be left alone (Bartol & Bartol, 2012). Furthermore, research has shown that those with paranoid and psychotic symptoms are more violent if medications are discontinued (Bartol & Bartol, 2012). Applying this information along with other quantifiable facts relative to mental disorders could lower risk factors associated with sudden public violence.

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) has been collecting data on personal and household victimization since 1973. Research has revealed that women report being victimized more frequently than men. Bartol & Bartol (2012) said men encounter stranger offending more often than women, which might explain why those exchanges are more aggressive and potentially harmful.

Analysis and Suggestions

Upon examining the aforementioned information, one could correctly assume that women are victimized within an intimate partner relationship. Therefore, predictions relative to victimization should focus on issues having to do with domestic relationships (Koenen et al., 2003). Most would agree that one behavioral pattern does not satisfy the scientific definition for mental illness; but, active observation over time is the about the best one can do. Dr. Lou Harris suggests that humans can detect behavioral anomalies if one pays attention to *"behavioral cues"*.

It is important for citizens to leave law enforcement in the hands of peace officers; however, personal safety is-*"personal safety*!" Schools, churches, and businesses should select several people for training in how to actively listen to conversation, observe behavioral patterns, and the utilization of Internet searches on those who demonstrate

abnormal behavior. Finally, churches, schools, and businesses should know if an employee or church member is going through a nasty divorce, because domestic violence could spills over into public facilities.

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