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Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version and Youth Psychopathic trait Inventory: A comparison study

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Abstract

There have been a number of developments in the assessment of juvenile psychopathy using self-report and interview based measures, but few studies have looked at their validity outside the respective development sites. We examined the convergent and predictive validity of the Youth Psychopathy traits Inventory (YPI) and the Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL: YV) in 115 male adolescents with DSM-IV conduct disorder. The measures assess moderately overlapping constructs in the lifestyle/social deviance domain but do not correlate on the affective domain. Both measures showed predictive accuracy for subsequent institutional infractions and violence with the lifestyle/antisocial elements showing most promise, however the PCL: YV showed better predictive accuracy. The YPI may be useful as an adjunctive dimensional assessment of the psychopathy construct but does not map onto the affective components of the PCL: YV. This limits the use of the YPI as an alternative mode of assessing psychopathy in forensic samples.

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1. Introduction

In recent years there have been a number of developments in the assessment of psychopathy in children and adolescents using interview-based methods or self-report screening measures. To date, much of the literature focuses on concerns about the stability of the construct and the reliability/validity of current assessment tools. Some researchers (e.g., Frick, 2002; Frick, Kimonis, Dandreaux, & Farrell, 2003; Lynam, 2002) argue that psychopathy is a relatively stable construct with similar external correlates across cultures and across the lifespan. Others (e.g., Edens, Skeem, Cruise, & Cauffman, 2001; Seagrave & Grisso, 2002; Spain, Douglas, Poythress, & Epstein, 2004; Vincent & Hart, 2002) suggest that psychopathy scores may be inflated in adolescence as sensation seeking and impulsivity are highest at this lifestage.

There has been a growth in the number of studies examining the file/interview-based Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL: YV; Forth, Kosson, & Hare, 2003); many of which suggest evidence of reasonable reliability and validity (Campbell, Porter, & Santor, 2004; Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Corrado, Vincent, Hart, & Cohen, 2004; Dolan & Rennie, 2006; Gretton, Hare, & Catchpole, 2003; Gretton, McBride, Hare, O'Shaughnessy, & Kumka, 2001; Kosson, Cyterski, Steuerwald, Neumann, & Walker-Matthews, 2002; Murrie, Cornell, Kaplan, McConville, & Levy-Elkon, 2004; Skeem & Cauffman, 2003; Spain et al., 2004).

By contrast, there have also been important advances in the development of self-report measures of juvenile psychopathy yet there are relatively few studies reporting on their relationship to the PCL: YV in a range of juvenile samples. Examples of published self-report measures include the Youth Psychopathic traits Inventory (YPI; Andershed, Kerr, Stattin, & Levander, 2002), the Antisocial Process Screening Device (APSD; Caputo, Frick, & Brodsky, 1999; Frick & Hare, 2001), the Child Psychopathy Scale (CPS; Lynam, 1997), the Psychopathy Content Scale on the Millon Adolescent Inventory (MACI; Millon, 1993) and the Survey of Attitudes and Life Experiences (SALE; Rogers, Vitacco, Cruise, Sewell, & Neuman, 2002). Available studies in both adult and juvenile samples tend to suggest that there are low to moderate correlations between the self-report APSD and the PCL: YV (e.g., Lee, Vincent, Hart, & Corrado, 2003; Murrie & Cornell, 2002; Spain et al., 2004). There are few published studies on the relationship between the PCL: YV and other self-report measures although Skeem and Cauffman (2003) in the US focus on the YPI in incarcerated offenders. We have previously reported on the reliability and predictive validity of the PCL: YV for short term (3 months) infractions (Dolan & Rennie, 2006). This study tests the hypothesis that the YPI and PCL: YV measures assess overlapping constructs and that both measures show reasonable predictive validity for institutional infractions at 12 months follow-up post baseline assessment.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample included in this report were originally selected for a study of neuropsychological function in conduct disorder. Participants were recruited from secure care or prison in the North West Region of England. Case files were screened to exclude those with co-morbid Axis 1. We

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