



Childhood maltreatment and post-traumatic stress disorder among incarcerated young offenders[☆]



Elizabeth Moore^{a,b,*}, Claire Gaskin^{c,d}, Devon Indig^{a,e}

^a Centre for Health Research in Criminal Justice, Justice Health and the Forensic Mental Health Network, Sydney, Australia

^b National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

^c Adolescent Mental Health, and Consultant Child & Adolescent Forensic Psychiatrist, Justice Health & The Forensic Mental Health Network, Sydney, Australia

^d University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

^e School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 April 2013

Received in revised form 17 July 2013

Accepted 24 July 2013

Available online 23 August 2013

Keywords:

Offender

Adolescents

Child abuse

Posttraumatic stress disorder

Custody

ABSTRACT

Young offenders have a high prevalence of mental illness and a large proportion report experiencing a number of traumatic events during childhood, but there is little research exploring this association. This study describes the prevalence of, and association between, child maltreatment and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among young offenders. The study uses data collected as part of the 2009 NSW Young People in Custody Health Survey which was conducted in nine juvenile detention centers. This paper reports on findings from the baseline questionnaires and 18-months of re-offending data. The analysis included 291 participants who were assessed for PTSD and child maltreatment. The sample was 88% male, 48% Aboriginal, with an average age of 17 years (range 13–21 years). One in five (20%) participants were diagnosed with PTSD, with females significantly more likely to have PTSD than males (40% vs. 17%, $p < 0.05$). Over half (60%) of young offenders reported any child abuse or neglect, with females nearly 10 times more likely to report three or more kinds of severe child maltreatment than males. The main correlate for a diagnosis of PTSD was having three or more kinds of severe child maltreatment (OR = 6.73, 95% CI: 1.06–42.92). This study provides evidence for the need to comprehensively assess child abuse and neglect among young offenders in order to provide appropriate treatment in custody and post-release.

Crown Copyright © 2013 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

The prevalence of mental health concerns and disorders among young offenders has been extensively documented in studies from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. These studies suggest a significant majority (70%–90%) of incarcerated young people have mental health or substance use problems (Kenny et al., 2006; Lader, Singleton, & Meltzer, 2000; Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002). This is at least three times higher than the rate of psychiatric disorder in the general adolescent population (Desai et al., 2006; Meltzer, 2000). There is also significant comorbidity in the young offender population, with over 60% presenting with two or more disorders (Ulzen & Hamilton, 1998).

A number of international studies have found that the overwhelming majority of young offenders (90%) report a history of at least one traumatic event over their lifetime (Ford, Chapman, Connor, & Cruise, 2012). Furthermore, young offenders

[☆] The study was funded by Juvenile Justice, Justice Health and Centre for Aboriginal Health in the NSW Ministry of Health (Australia).

* Corresponding author address: Suite 302, Level 2, 152 Bunnerong Road, Pagewood, NSW 2035, Australia.

typically report multiple ($Mdn = 6$) incidents of trauma over their lifetime (Abram et al., 2004). A substantial proportion of detained youth also report the experience of specific types of childhood maltreatment, including physical (65%–75%) and sexual abuse (10%–40%; King et al., 2011).

Studies also consistently report childhood maltreatment to be more prevalent among incarcerated young women compared to incarcerated young men (Jasper, Smith, & Bailey, 1998; King et al., 2011). In Australia in 2010–2011, young women were five times less likely than young men to be in juvenile detention (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare [AIHW], 2012a). In addition, young women spend less time in detention, but are generally younger compared to males (AIHW, 2012a). This suggests young women in custody may have a less serious offending history but are likely to represent a particularly vulnerable group with respect to age. Interestingly, recent research (Fitzgerald, Mazerolle, Piquero, & Ansara, 2012) suggests female offenders are not a homogenous group and that childhood experiences of maltreatment are associated with more serious offending for both females and males.

Repeat trauma exposure is thought to disrupt adolescent affective and cognitive development, with research among young offenders (particularly females) suggesting that PTSD mediates the relationship between experiencing trauma and the development of other psychiatric concerns (Kerig, Ward, Vanderzee, & Moeddel, 2009). Numerous studies have highlighted the relationship between exposure to trauma and development of various psychiatric disorders among young offenders including externalizing symptoms, antisocial behavior, suicidal behaviors, self-injury, and severity of depression (Arig et al., 2008; Chapman & Ford, 2008; McReynolds & Wasserman, 2011; Wasserman & McReynolds, 2011; Wilson, Stover, & Berkowitz, 2009).

Despite the self-reported high rates of maltreatment amongst incarcerated youth, research assessing specific subtypes of childhood maltreatment among young offenders remains scant. Studies that have looked at this population utilizing the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein & Fink, 1998), have reported elevated rates across all domains (abuse and neglect) compared to adolescent controls (Krischer & Sevecke, 2008). A review found elevated levels of aggression and antisocial behavior in sexually abused young females compared to matched controls, with differences discernible for up to seven years after the abuse, although offending behaviors were not specifically examined (Trickett & Gordis, 2004).

A recent Australian report found that Aboriginal children were the subject of substantiated reports of child maltreatment at almost eight times the rate of non-Aboriginal children (35 and 5 per 1000 children, respectively; AIHW, 2012b). These findings have been echoed in retrospective cohort studies using population-level data from Western Australia (O'Donnell et al., 2010). Moreover, Aboriginal young people are 18 times more likely to be held in custody in Australia, compared to non-Aboriginal young people (AIHW, 2012c). Despite this overrepresentation, little research has examined the different experiences of childhood maltreatment among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young offenders.

Estimates of the prevalence of lifetime PTSD among young offenders range from 10% to 37% (Abram et al., 2004; Becker & Kerig, 2011; Colins et al., 2010; Dixon, Howie, & Starling, 2005). Moreover, research has found the rate of PTSD among female juvenile offenders exceeds the rate seen in male juvenile offenders (Cauffman, Feldman, Waterman, & Steiner, 1998). Research also suggests that although PTSD is more common following a trauma which is associated with more shame (e.g., sexual abuse vs. a natural disaster), the likelihood of developing PTSD is higher following repeated trauma, regardless of the type (Nooner et al., 2012).

Although experiencing maltreatment is an established risk factor for offending, a thorough understanding of the maltreatment–offending link is incomplete (Bender, 2010). Re-traumatization through offending and stress responses (dissociation and fear based aggression, for example) complicate research in the area and relatively few research studies have explored the association with offending characteristics. Recently, Becker and Kerig (2011) identified, among young offenders, a positive relationship between the severity of PTSD symptoms and the degree of offending (i.e., number of lifetime and past year arrests). Importantly, the relationship between PTSD symptom severity and past year offending remained significant even after accounting for the total number of traumas experienced (Becker & Kerig, 2011).

The current paper builds on the existing research by exploring, among young people in custody in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, childhood maltreatment across multiple domains and the presence of PTSD. To our knowledge, this is one of the first Australian studies to explore trauma and PTSD among young offenders. Specifically, the study aims to: (a) document the prevalence (cross-sectionally) of childhood maltreatment and PTSD among young people in custody in NSW, (b) explore the relationship between the reported experience of childhood maltreatment and PTSD amongst the study group, and (c) examine the psychosocial correlates (including socio-demographics, mental health, substance use, and offending behaviors) associated with a diagnosis of PTSD in young offenders.

Method

Study design

The data for this study was derived from the 2009 Young People in Custody Health Survey (YPiCHS). The YPiCHS was conducted between August and October 2009 in NSW, Australia, at eight Juvenile Justice Centers and one Juvenile Correctional Center. NSW has the highest youth incarceration rates and the highest numbers of Aboriginal young people of any state in Australia (Richards & Lyneham, 2010). The study comprised a number of components (administered face-to-face) as part of the baseline assessment including a health questionnaire, psychometric testing for psychiatric disorders and intelligence

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات