Link between child maltreatment and offending behaviour

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Aims

Provide an understanding of the victim to offender concept and those factors that perpetuate the cycle of violence
This theory proposes that anyone who is going to have a criminal career will develop one over time through delinquent behaviour - becoming a delinquent - moving on to criminal behaviour (often escalating in seriousness over time).
Deprivation and Delinquency

- History of abuse, neglect & deprivation is linked to delinquency and criminal convictions.
- Kolvin et al (1988) - positive correlation between the number of criminal convictions and individuals with multiple deprivation.
  1. Low SES, poor housing and poverty.
  2. Parents unemployed, unskilled with many jobs
  3. No family support & poor family interactions.
  4. Social isolation with frequent moves.
  5. Poor educational attainment and deviant peers.
  6. Institutional care background
  7. Teenage pregnancy and marriage
Links with Other Causal Factors

- Farrington (1995) suggested childhood abuse is merely an indirect causal factor in the victim-offender link.

- Predictors of criminality:
  - SE Deprivation
  - Poor parent child rearing
  - Family distance (family criminality)
  - School problems
  - Hyperactivity
  - Antisocial child behaviour
Specialising

- Young offenders are eclectic in their forms of crimes. Influenced by media violence.
- Serious violent crimes are typically committed by offenders who are older than those involved in minor theft. Theft, robbery and prostitution is linked to drug addiction and leaving institutional care without support.
- High probability of rapists having a history of theft and burglary offences.
Process of Change

- The actions and the characteristics evolve throughout the criminal career - they are part of some unfolding process (development).
New relationships are created in light of internal working model, defined from previous relationships.
Cycle of violence (Patterson et al, 1989)

Early childhood

- Poor parental discipline and violence

Middle childhood

- Child conduct problems
- Rejection by normal peers
- Commitment to deviant peer group
- Academic failure

Late childhood and adolescence

- Delinquency and crime
Victim to Offender: previous research

- Concept of victim to offender well researched (Burton et al, 2002; Falshaw et al, 1996; Ireland et al, 2002)

- Victim - Offender link examined in terms of:
  - whether type of maltreatment will result in same offending behaviour (e.g., Dutton & Hart, 1992; Ford & Linney, 1995)
  - Whether propensity to crime differs depending on type of maltreatment experienced

    (Zingraff et al, 1994 – victims of neglect have a 1 in 10 probability of involvement in crime; physical is 1 in 11)
Delinquency - Child Abuse…..
Child Abuse - Delinquency

Delinquent and disturbed children are significantly more likely to have been referred for child abuse and neglect than non delinquents. (Scudder et al 1993).

Similarly, children in public care or on the Child Protection Register are more likely to have involvement in delinquency and crime than those children not at risk (Falshaw, Browne and Hollin, 1996)
### Forms of abuse and neglect
(from Browne and Herbert, 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Physical violence</th>
<th>Psychological violence</th>
<th>Sexual violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active abuse</strong></td>
<td>Non-accidental</td>
<td>Intimidation.</td>
<td>Incest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>injury</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual assault and rape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forced coercion</td>
<td>Emotional abuse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and restraint.</td>
<td>Material abuse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passive neglect</strong></td>
<td>Poor health care.</td>
<td>Lack of affection.</td>
<td>Failure to protect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical neglect.</td>
<td>Emotional neglect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Material neglect.</td>
<td>Prostitution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consequences of maltreatment

Death / injury
Physical and mental disability
Low self-esteem / poor self-worth / educational failure
Mental health problems / sleep disorders / PTSD
Substance misuse
Stress and physical health problems
Emotional and behavioral problems
Eating disorders and self-injury
Increased vulnerability to further victimisation,
Antisocial and criminal acts (Victim to offender)
## Consequences of Child Maltreatment: Summary of Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prospective Studies*</th>
<th>Retrospective Studies*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education and employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low educational achievement</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low skilled employment</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Lacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental health</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior problems (child/adolescent)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post traumatic stress disorder</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-injurious behavior</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol problems</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse/dependence</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Refers to ascertainment of maltreatment.
## Consequences of Child Maltreatment: Summary of Findings (cont’d).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prospective Studies*</th>
<th>Retrospective Studies*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical health and sexual behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution/sex trading</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage pregnancy</td>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promiscuity</td>
<td>No effect</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General adult health</td>
<td>Lacking</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic pain in adulthood</td>
<td>No effect</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare use/costs</td>
<td>Lacking</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>Lacking</td>
<td>Lacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression, violence, criminality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal behaviour</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Refers to ascertainment of maltreatment
Costs of Going into Care

- Stigmatisation
- Lack of continuity (1/10 children have 10 or more placements)
- Bewilderment and abandonment
- Distance from family (physical and emotional)
- Change of school?
- Change of family
- Change of social and cultural class
- Foster home breakdown (40% Berridge and Gleaver 1987)
- Contact with natural parents diminishes
- Few foster parents receive training or preparation
- Risk of further abuse
Sample of 77 young people (58 male/19 female)
  - antisocial youths & young offenders (aged 11 -18)
  - Information from social service files

Four out of five delinquent children had suffered some form of maltreatment in their childhood.
Young Offenders in Secure Settings 2
Falshaw & Browne (1997)

- 91% - history of placement in care (average 8 placements each). Having been placed in 6 or more placements was significantly related to having committed the first offence at age 12 or before.

- The high levels of family violence reported in the backgrounds of antisocial children and disturbed adolescents in secure settings suggest that exposure to parental violence in the family is linked to violence outside the family home.
Just under half had witnessed violence within the family home.

Children were not only witnesses but also victims. Father also abused the child in 44% and mother in 28% of these spouse abusing families.
The Victim’s Potential for Violence

- Negative effects of childhood maltreatment are not inevitable with later childhood experience of positive relationships.


- Protective factors, such as positive school experiences, may reduce propensity toward delinquency and antisocial behaviour.

- Pattern of abusive experiences important.
Limitations of Research

- Difficult to isolate the effects of abuse/neglect, as types of maltreatment rarely occur in isolation

- Most victims of maltreatment do not go on to criminal activity

- Prospective research:
  - 1 in 6 physically abused young people go on to commit a violent offence (Widom, 1989)
  - 1 in 5 sexually abused males go on to commit sexual crime (Watkins & Bentovim, 1992); 1 in 10 (Skuse et al, 1999)
Possible pathways

- Perpetrator relationship and method of victimisation (use of force or coercion).
- Type, frequency, duration and severity of abuse.
- Effect of recurrent abuse - if the child abused by more than one person.
- Effects of responses to disclosure
- Gender Differences
Developmental Perspective of the Victimisation of Children (Finkelhor, 1995)

**DEVELOPMENTAL VICTIMOLOGY**

**FURTHER VICTIMISATION?**

- **a) Developmental factors affecting risk of victimisation**
  - i) suitability as targets
  - ii) ability to protect self
  - iii) social and physical environments

- **b) Processes affecting childrens’ reactions to victimisation**
  - i) developmental stages & tasks
  - ii) critical periods
  - iii) cognitive appraisal
  - iv) symptom expression

**EFFECTS OF VICTIMISATION (DEPENDS ON:)**
Terminology to Study Patterns of Abuse and Neglect

(Hamilton and Browne, 1998; Aggression and Violent Behavior, 3(1), 47-60)

- SINGLE VICTIMISATION
  1 incident and 1 perpetrator

- MULTIPLE VICTIMISATION
  1 incident and n perpetrators

- REPEAT VICTIMISATION
  n incidents by same perpetrator(s)

- REVICTIMISATION
  n incidents by different perpetrator(s)
Patterns of Recurrent Maltreatment and Offending Behaviour

- Hamilton, Falshaw and Browne (2002) carried out the retrospective study of patterns of abuse in 77 young offenders, with an average age of 14.5 years.

- Those individuals abused in and out of the family home were found to be more likely to commit violent offences and sexual assaults than those victimised only within the family or not at all.
Sample & hypothesis

Sample

- 58 males, 19 females
- 11-18 years of age
- Resident in secure accommodation

Hypothesis

- Young people who have experienced revictimisation will be more likely to have committed violent and/or sexual crimes than those not revictimised
Method

■ Information from admission file
  - offence history, childhood referrals, self-harming, maltreatment history, medical, education, family

■ Additional sources
  - keyworkers, Social Workers

■ Statistics
  - descriptive, chi-squared
Patterns of Victimisation in Young Offenders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victimisation type</th>
<th>% male (n=58)</th>
<th>% female (n=19)</th>
<th>% Total (n=77)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No victimisation</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single victimisation</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple victimisation</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat victimisation only</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revictimisation only</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both repeat and revictimisation</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Mean Age = 14.5 years
## Number of perpetrators of abuse (N=66)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of perpetrators</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Types of offending behaviour (N=77)

*(p<0.01, df=1, chi-square test)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence type</th>
<th>% Males (n=58)</th>
<th>% Females (n=19)</th>
<th>% Total (n=77)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent offence</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal damage</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex offence*</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>75.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary*</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car crime*</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other offences (e.g., drugs.)</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data on Recurrent Maltreatment and Offending Behaviour (N = 74)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim type</th>
<th>Violent/Sex Offence</th>
<th>Non Violent Offence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No abuse</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repeat Abuse</strong></td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repeat &amp; Reabuse</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inside family only</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inside and Outside family</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outside family only</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Patterns of maltreatment: statistical significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Violent/sexual offences (n=62)</th>
<th>Non-violent offences (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No revictimisation</td>
<td>25.8% 16</td>
<td>66.6% 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revictimisation</td>
<td>74.2% 46</td>
<td>33.3% 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0.05, df=1, chi-square
Conclusions from Hamilton et al (2000) Study

- Revictimisation is more likely to be associated with violent and/or sexual crimes than either repeat victimisation or no victimisation.

- Implications for identification of young offenders who may commit serious violent and sex crime.

- Overall, 78% of young offenders had been maltreated by an adult during their childhood and nine out of ten were violent.
Interventions

- Responsibility for offending before or at same time as their own victimisation (factor, not an ‘excuse’) - see Bentovim (2002)

- Repeat victimisation: self-blame & specificity of victimisation; familial: betrayal of trust, work with family (offender, non-abusing parent, victim work to reduce vulnerability)

- Revictimisation: feeling of general vulnerability / inability to prevent victimisation; self-esteem, strategies for protection
A study by Dorr and Kovanic (1981) found that more aggressive youth are more likely to be influenced by exposure to screen violence.
Bailey (1993) investigated 40 adolescent murderers and 200 young sex offenders and claimed that repeated exposure to violent pornographic videos was a significant factor in these crimes including in some cases actual imitation of the screen image.
HEAVENLY BODIES

The universal art of Terry O'Neill
How to teach your children to love and care
CARMAGEDDON II

“BIGGER, BADDER AND BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL IN ALL RESPECTS”
92% Ultimate PC

“ABSOLUTELY BLOODY MARVELLOUS”
95% PC Zone

Carpocalypse Now

NOVEMBER

www.sci.co.uk
Males’ Violent Crimes by Age 30 Relate To Their Age 8 TV Viol Viewing (Columbia County Study, Huesmann, J Social Issues, 1987)
THE EFFECTS OF VIDEO VIOLENCE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS

Kevin Browne and Amanda Pennell

In 1995, the Home Office commissioned a study of the effects of video violence on young offenders. Groups of offenders and non-offenders were shown a violent video film. Immediate reactions were monitored, as well as impressions and memories of the film some while later. They were also psychologically assessed and asked about film preferences.

KEY POINTS

► More differences were found between offenders and non-offenders than between violent offenders and non-violent offenders in terms of film viewing preferences and reactions to violent films.

► Offenders spent longer watching video films than non-offenders. Violent offenders were more likely than non-violent offenders to prefer violent films.

► Ten months after viewing a violent video, twice as many offenders as non-offenders recalled and identified with vindictively violent characters.

► Offenders had a lower level of moral development than non-offenders, were less able to appreciate the viewpoints of, or empathise with, others, and were more likely to have aggressive temperaments and distorted perceptions about violence.

► The findings suggest that individuals from violent families are more prone to offending behaviour and having a preference for violent films, but this may be modified by personality and moral values.

BACKGROUND

There have been recent assertions that violent films and videos may influence young people who commit violent acts. Some people have linked overexposure to television violence in childhood with later involvement in violent crime; others have emphasised that experiencing ‘real’ violence as a child has a greater impact. Ways in which screen violence may be thought to affect behaviour include:

• imitation of violent roles and aggressive acts
• triggering aggressive impulses in predisposed individuals
• desensitising feelings of sympathy towards victims.

A study by the Policy Studies Institute found little difference in young offenders’ and school children’s viewing habits (Hagell and Newburn, 1994). This suggests that to understand how violent videos influence violent behaviour, it is essential to determine what meanings and importance people ascribe to violent scenes and characters seen on film. Individual differences may reflect not what is watched but rather what is remembered.

AIMS AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

The research was concerned with whether violent young offenders do view violent videos differently from (a) non-violent offenders and (b) non-offenders. Four specific questions were addressed.

Do violent young offenders:

► view video films more often than the other two groups?
► identify more often with violent scenes and characteristics?
► remember more from violent videos?
► have more violent childhood experiences which influence their video film preferences?
Figure 1  Preference for violent films

Prefer violent films

- No
- Yes

Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-offender</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-violent offender</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violent offender</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64%
Figure 2  Victims of family violence by groups

Violence by a parent

- No
- Yes

Percentage:

- Non-offender: 70%
- Non-violent offender: 24%
- Violent offender: 53%
Table 1 Characteristics which discriminated offenders from non-offenders ranked in decreasing order of importance

- Physical confrontational thoughts
- Stepfather present (previous family breakdown)
- Angry temperament
- Low level of moral development
- Low empathy score
- Parental violence to young person
- Low intellectual ability
- Preference for violent films
- Young person violent to parents
- Young person witness to spouse violence
- Favourite actor plays violent roles
- Identification with ‘bad guy’ in film
- Film lacks violent action
- Poor reading ability
- Violent reason for remembering actor in film
Degree of Media Influence

- Screen violence account for up to 10-12% of an individuals predisposition for violence.
- Young offenders may like violent videos because of their aggressive tendencies.
- Such tastes reinforce violent behaviour so that the chance of exhibiting violent behaviour become higher in aggressively orientated individuals.
Figure 3  A tentative model for the development of preferences for violent films

Growing up in a violent family ➔ Distorted ideas about physical confrontation and provocation ➔ Low empathy and moral values ➔ Offending behaviour ➔ Preference for violent film

Feedback of positive reinforcements for violence

Highly significant association

 Significant association

Postulated association

Aggressive temperament
CONCLUSIONS

1. Victims of family violence are more likely to be involved in criminal activity.

2. Offenders show a greater preference and memory for violent film.

3. Hence, the chances of committing a violent act may increase in those predisposed to violence.

4. Violent images may therefore, increase the frequency of violent crime (among offenders), but not the number of people who commit violent assault.
IMPLICATIONS

1. Exercise greater control over access to inappropriate violent media entertainment for those young people in secure institutions.

2. Educate all young people in critical film appraisal, in terms of realism, justification and consequences.

3. Use violent film material in anger management programmes under guidance.
References


