A Relationship Between Traumatic Brain Injury and Female Homicide Offenders

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Abstract

- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a significant problem in the general population, but even more in the prison population.
- Little research has been conducted on female offenders, and almost no research has been conducted on female homicide offenders.
- Research is needed in this area.
- The assertion of this poster is that there is a relationship between TBI and homicide in female offenders.
- Treatment for TBI and its negative outcomes (e.g., aggression) should be given to female homicide offenders.

Introduction

- TBI is a significant public health problem.
- According to Wall and colleagues (2018), an estimated 1.4 million TBIIs occur each year.
- The prevalence of TBI in the general population is 8.5%; however, in the prison population it is estimated to range from 41% to 60% (Wall et al., 2018).
- In recent decades, incarceration rates for women have risen dramatically (Woolhouse et al., 2018).
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- The relationship between TBI and homicide in female offenders is limited (see column to the right).
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- According to Woolhouse et al. (2018), TBI can be linked to increased mental health problems.
- Female offenders with TBI were more likely to have behavioral issues while incarcerated and treatment of TBI could reduce these negative behaviors (Colantonio et al., 2014).
- In conclusion, female homicide offenders are underrepresented possibly due to the low rates of homicide by females compared to those by males; however, 30% of female violent offenders are incarcerated for homicide compared to only 23% of men (Fox et al., 2019).
- Homicide represents a relatively large percentage of female violent crime.
- There are high rates of TBI in the female offender population.
- TBI has been associated with negative outcomes including increased aggression, reduced impulse control, and violence.

Discussion

- Even though men are twice as likely as women to have a TBI, the rate of TBI in female offenders is 5% to 7% higher than in male offenders (Wall et al., 2018).
- In recent decades, incarceration rates for women have risen dramatically (Woolhouse et al., 2018).
- It is also important for female offenders to receive treatment for TBI to reduce the likelihood or magnitude of negative outcomes.
- Negative outcomes of TBI include increased aggression, hypersexual behavior, a lack of impulse control, violence, and involvement in the criminal justice system (Ray & Richardson, 2017).
- Symptoms of a TBI could include impairment in executive functioning, such as the ability to plan, organize, and consider consequences (McQuaid & Bankman, 2013).
- According to Woodhouse et al. (2018), TBI can be linked to increased mental health problems.
- Female offenders with TBI were more likely to have behavioral issues while incarcerated and treatment of TBI could reduce these negative behaviors (Colantonio et al., 2014).
- Some of the treatments for TBI include medications, cognitive rehabilitation, cognitive behavioral therapy and skills training (Ross & Hoaken, 2010).
- Medications are often used to treat negative effects of TBI including headaches, sleep problems, aggressive or violent behavior, self-injurious behavior, inattention, distractibility, depressed mood, impulsivity, and hypoarousal (Aaronson & Lloyd, 2015; Sudarsanan et al., 2007).
- It is useful to teach skills such as vocational, behavioral, and social skills to individuals with TBI.
- In addition, female homicide offenders have been shown to have an increased rate of substance use and trauma history which leads to increased impulsivity and difficulty regulating emotions (Fox et al., 2019).
- An individual who sustained a TBI may have a more difficult time functioning in the community.
- Treatment of TBI is important for female offenders to assist them in learning to function in the community to improve personal and social outcomes.

Future Directions

- More research needs to be conducted on female offenders in general.
- In particular, more research is needed to determine whether there is a relationship between TBI and homicide in women.
- Research is also needed to determine the type of treatment that would be most beneficial for female homicide offenders with TBI.

Summary

- More research needs to be conducted on female offenders in general.
- In particular, more research is needed to determine whether there is a relationship between TBI and homicide in women.
- Research is also needed to determine the type of treatment that would be most beneficial for female homicide offenders with TBI.

References