

Research Question: Are Individuals with ASPD (antisocial personality disorder) More Likely to Participate in Criminal Activities Impacting the Stability of Different Communities?

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Introduction/Importance

Antisocial personality disorder is a series of patterns that are socially irresponsible, impulsive and remorseless behavior. I chose this topic because it is in my field of interest. When I first brought up the topic, I was very surprised that many of my classmates did not know that the term "sociopathy" means ASPD (antisocial personality disorder). This is a very misunderstood topic and I hope my report can shed some light on it. I believe that if we approach this topic with an open mind we can learn more information about ASPD and sociopaths in general. And if we find the root of this illness, and potentially find a way to help individuals cope with ASPD. This could help the general public and stabilize communities. I believe that this needs immediate attention because the longer we continue to ignore individuals showing symptoms of ASPD the longer more lives will be lost by easily preventable crimes.

Keywords: ASPD, Sociopathy, Stabilize communities, Crime

Research Aims

I don't just only want to raise awareness on this topic, but to educate the uneducated on ASPD. As I've said before, I want to help people clear up any misconceptions on this very misunderstood topic. Mental illness in general is a very misconstrued subject, on top of that ASPD is even more misconstrued. Another aim I have is to educate the public on how we can help individuals with ASPD to function and stay out of prison. Now it is important to remember that not all individuals affected with ASPD are criminals, it's just that the majority of them are.

Methodology

I will be covering both the primary and secondary methods of research using my own surveys, observations and other people's websites and articles.

Issue; Causes of ASPD

It's generally normal to have a lack of empathy, as humans our moods change all of the time, but when do we cross the line of being borderline sociopathic? There are multiple reasons why an individual may have ASPD. It's an age old matter of the great debate; nature vs nurture. Are we predispositioned to get ASPD through a specific gene or hereditary factor? or is it because of environmental factors like how we were raised, our childhood etc. Well, here's the answer for it; No. You cannot be born with ASPD. The most-important reasons for ASPD is physical abuse, emotional abuse or even severe trauma experienced during childhood. To put it in a simplified manner; sociopaths are made. This means that any of us could have gotten ASPD if we were not treated properly as children or that if we didn't develop a proper sense of empathy in our earlier years.

Consequences Of ASPD

There are numerous bad consequences that come with being an individual with ASPD. People with ASPD have a higher frequency of both violent crimes than people without ASPD. Addiction to harmful substances is also more common in individuals with ASPD. Sociopaths are much more likely to abuse their own partners, spouses, children and other members of their family. Since they are more likely to engage in

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criminal activities, they are more likely to spend time in prison or jail. Their aggressive behavior can put them at risk of harm, which causes them to be beaten up in jail by other inmates. Decreasing their lifespan. They may have other mental health disorders, like depression and anxiety. Individuals afflicted with this disorder often violate the law and become criminals. They may compulsively lie and act in a violent and impulsive manner. They usually have problems with addiction. Because of these traits, people with this disorder typically can't live normal lives. They find it hard to complete responsibilities related to things like work, their education or their family.

Local Perspective

I questioned some adults and some of my fellow peers in a survey I conducted by myself. And the results were interesting. The first question I had asked was "Are you familiar with the term Antisocial Personality Disorder?" And most of the results were no, the next being that they kind of heard of it. While 5 people knew what it was. I was astonished, I had thought that the majority would have been a yes, but I was gravely mistaken. The next question I had asked was "Do you know what Sociopaths are?" The results were that they knew or had heard of the term before. The last few select people didn't know what sociopaths were. This told me that people didn't know what the actual definition of sociopathy was. I then asked what their stance on criminals is in general. Their replies were split, with one side hating them thinking that they are human scum, and the other having some sympathy and thinking that they were not in the best of situations. I asked them if they would be surprised if they knew that 47% of formerly incarcerated adult men exhibited traits of sociopathy and the majority believed that they always had a feeling. Lastly, I asked them if they thought that ASPD was treatable and I was pleasantly surprised with the answer. Over 35% thought that ASPD was treatable, with the minority of 7% thinking that it wasn't.

Global Perspective

In this global perspective, I would like to talk about the USA's view on this topic. Representing the US is M.E. Thomas, author of the bestselling book "Confessions Of a Sociopath." She's a lawyer, musician, and among the first psychopaths or sociopaths to come out of the closet, and share her life and experience. M.E Thomas says most that sociopaths are not in prisons, and the majority of them live without hindrance and anonymously. "They're your neighbors, colleagues, maybe even family members and lovers." (quote from the interview.) She admits that individuals with ASPD can be dangerous. "They are seeking out power, and don't feel much empathy or guilt." Thomas said. But not all of them actually have malicious intentions, and most of them are high functioning, proper participants of society. The author herself is a lawyer and Sunday school teacher.

National Perspective

My homeland Pakistan is a severely underdeveloped country. It does not have its priorities straight. Pakistan has a large population but has less authorized medical professionals to help treat its people. The scarcity of psychiatrists in Pakistan creates a massive treatment gap, leaving more than 99% of its population with common and easily treatable mental disorders untreated. This is a huge problem. 10% of the country's population suffer from some form of psychological problem. Mental health issues in Pakistan for the last few decades have reached a dangerously high level, linked to both the high crime rate in the country and the political unrest. Pakistan can't even treat the most common of mental disorders, how can you expect it to treat ASPD? Most people with ASPD don't seek out help because they think that there is nothing wrong with them, so it is basically impossible to treat them in Pakistan.

Course Of Action

Before starting let me get one thing straight, there is no definitive cure for sociopathy, there are some therapies and treatments which can help an individual cope with the disorder and make day to day life easier. People with ASPD are unlikely to think they need help. However, they may try to look for help because of symptoms of their disorder such as depression, anxiety, angry outbursts or for treatment of substance misuse. ASPD is very difficult to treat, since every case of ASPD is different it is not certain that if one thing works for one person, it will work for the other. But in special cases, treatment and a series of

frequent close follow-ups over the long term may produce a satisfactory result. There are two main ways that we can treat ASPD; 1. Psychotherapy and 2. Medications. Psychotherapy is sometimes used to treat ASPD. This particular type of therapy may include; anger management and addiction therapy. Medications are rarely used to treat ASPD but doctors may prescribe them for conditions that are caused or made worse because of ASPD, such as aggression, anxiety or depression. Certain medications are prescribed cautiously because they have potential for substance abuse. I personally think that there should be a mixture of both psychotherapy and medication to help an individual with ASPD with day to day life and to keep them out of prison.

Evaluation Of Sources

I will be evaluating three sources. The first one is from the website; National Library of Medicine. It was written by Kristy A. Fisher and Manassa Hany. Their affiliations are the Aventura Medical Center and Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinar, respectively. The website was last updated on August 15th of 2022. I used this website in this Individual Report to support my claims and give evidence to them. The second source I used was my own survey that I conducted through google forms. I sent the form digitally to my fellow students and adults like my parents. I have already documented my results in the local perspective part of my Individual Report. In my survey, I started with asking my participants if they knew what a sociopath was, then I asked them if they thought that all sociopaths were criminals, and so on. The third source I used was another website, It was an interview with an actual sociopath; M.E. Thomas. The website is titled "Inside The Mind Of a Sociopath." The website that made this interview is a non-profit membership media organization called NPR (acronym for National Public Radio.) The Interview took place on June 19th, 2013. The interview was also promoting M.E Thomas's book, "Confessions of a Sociopath." I used this site for the global perspective part for this individual report. It was very hard to find a sociopath that was willing to share their experience and life story. I applaud M.E Thomas for her bravery. I scoured the whole internet for other people's opinions on sociopaths before I came across this interview.

Conclusion

My research question was "Are Individuals with ASPD (Antisocial Personality Disorder) more likely to participate in criminal activities impacting the stability of different communities?" And the answer is yes, according to my research there is a huge trend between individuals with ASPD and crime rate. Since, increased aggression is a symptom of sociopathy, it makes them more likely to participate in criminal activities and land in prison for things like theft, domestic abuse and in severe cases, murder. This can impact the stability of a community by causing mass panic or hysteria leading to people doing drastic things to protect themselves from sociopaths.

Personal Reflection

I have grown academically and personally throughout writing this individual report. Academically, I have learned time management skills and to not let procrastination get the better of me. I have learned to divide work into equal portions so I don't spend late nights trying to meet a deadline. Personally, I have learned to broaden my horizons and realize that there are bigger problems in this world than my own. I have learned to be kinder and more selfless to people as I don't know what they are going through, there are some people in this world that won't feel a mother's love or have anything to live for. Their lives are diluted from any color and see no point in living. I am thankful for my empathy, ability to love and the fact that I can genuinely care for others.

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