Halvtidskontroll

För doktorsexamen i medicinsk vetenskap

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Johan Berlin
Enheten för klinisk forskning om utagerande beteenden och utvecklingsrelaterad psykopatologi,
Institutionen för Kliniska Vetenskaper Lund, Lunds universitet

Aggression in forensic settings:
*Elucidating its measurement and enhancing its management through patient collaboration*

Handledare
Märta Wallinius, docent, Lunds universitet

Biträdande handledare
Malin Hildebrand Karlén, docent, Göteborgs universitet
Thomas Nilsson, docent, Göteborgs universitet

Halvtidsgranskare
Björn Axel Johansson, docent, Lunds universitet
Sara Levin, medicine doktor, Rättssykiatriska regionkliniken Vadstena

Lokal: Rättssykiatriska regionkliniken, Johan Allgullins väg 1, Växjö
Zoom: Passcode 458446; [https://luse.zoom.us/j/68894983155?pwd=NEErNjNQTVRzMGxmVHZ3SnI0QlBSdz09](https://luse.zoom.us/j/68894983155?pwd=NEErNjNQTVRzMGxmVHZ3SnI0QlBSdz09)
Abstract

Aggression in forensic settings: Elucidating its measurement and enhancing its management through patient collaboration

Background
The purpose of the project is to investigate how aggressive and externalizing behaviors can be measured in forensic settings and to evaluate, quantitatively and qualitatively, a method for enhancing the collaborative management of such behaviors.

Research questions & Methods
Study I
In this study, the concordance of self-report and clinician-ratings of aggression in young violent offenders ($n=266$) was investigated. Concordance was investigated using Kendall's $W$ and convergent and discriminant validity using Spearman’s rho correlation analyses.

Study II
In study II, we investigated the validity of the Externalizing Spectrum Inventory-Brief Form (ESI-BF) in Swedish forensic psychiatric patients ($n=77$). Psychometric properties were assessed, structural models were investigated using confirmatory factor analyses, and criterion-related validity in relation to lifetime externalizing behaviors was determined.

Study III
In study III, we will analyse data from a collaborative violence risk management intervention to determine its impact on treatment content and prevalence of violence. Forensic psychiatric in-patients ($n=100$) taking part in the intervention will be compared to patients ($n=100$) following standard risk management practices.

Study IV
Following up on Study III, a qualitative evaluation of the risk management intervention will be performed, comparing results from interviews with staff and patients applying the intervention to those of staff and patients following standard risk management practices.

Preliminary results
Study I
Self-reports and clinician-ratings of aggression were highly concordant and convergent, although not strongly enough to serve as adequate proxies for each other. Correlations between aggression and criminal convictions were mostly weak and, in the case of sexual convictions, negative.
Study II
The ESI-BF exhibited good reliability and internal consistency. The structural models however, demonstrated poor or mediocre fit. Regarding criterion-related validity, ESI-BF was robustly associated with externalizing outcomes e.g. truancy, age at onset of criminality, and criminal convictions overall.

Significance
Study I underscored the value of multi-method aggression assessment in offenders and suggested that relying on conviction data only when evaluating interventions might be inadequate. Study II yielded validity evidence on ESI-BF in a hitherto understudied population, suggesting that ESI-BF captures relevant domains of externalizing behaviors in forensic psychiatric patients. However, questions concerning model fit of ESI-BF remain.

Publications
Study I