
DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION BETWEEN IMPULSIVITY AND AGGRESSION AMONG OFFENDERS

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Introduction: In spite of some adverse opinions (Bushman & Anderson, 2001), at the state of the art pathological aggression is typically depicted as affective/impulsive or predatory (Fonagy, 2004; Meloy, 2006). More recently, some authors argued that different specific facets of impulsivity may predict different types of aggression (Derefinko et al., 2011).

Objectives: In this study, we focus on three different kinds of impulsivity, namely motor, attention, and non-planning impulsiveness. On the other hand, we consider aggression through four components: verbal aggression, physical aggression, anger, and hostility.

Aims: We try to highlight if various kinds of aggressiveness may be better understood through different precursor in impulsivity domains.

Methods: The Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-11; Patton et al., 1995) encompasses the three types of impulsivity sketched above; the Aggression Questionnaire (AQ; Buss & Perry, 1992) assesses aggression as the sum of the four features before depicted. This preliminary sample consists of 50 incarcerated violent offenders (all males; mean age=41.04).

Results: The two measures appear to be positively related ($r=0.525$; $p<0.01$) and differential relations are significant. Motor and non-planning impulsiveness are strongly linked with physical aggression (respectively: $r=0.478$ and $r=0.433$; $p<0.05$); instead, the attention component of impulsivity appears associated with hostility ($r=0.548$; $p<0.01$). Finally, the higher correlation has been found between dispositional anger and motor impulsiveness ($r=0.597$; $p<0.01$).

Conclusions: In line with our preliminary results, a proper examination of the different aspects of impulsiveness would be helpful in both the care and the custody of violent offenders.