

Precursors for criminal activity in women essay



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The article that I am discussing in this paper is “ Precursors and correlates of criminal behavior in women”.

It was the research was done by Julie Messer, Barbara Maughan, David Quinton, and Alan Taylor. There were several colleges, and research facilities that they used but they did not specify whether they provided funding or facilities. They used the Genetic and Developmental Psychiatry Centre, the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College, MRC Social, Centre for Family Policy and Child Welfare, School for Policy Studies, and the University of Bristol. This studies goal was to find the precursors that would increase specific criminal activities in women.

One would think that there are already many studies that have been done to determine what precursors affect criminal activity. And there is a plethora of research on criminal determinates. The only problem is that the majority of them focus on men. According to the study they would even say that in most studies just “ being male” is considered to be a determinate.

Because of this women in the criminal precursor studies are almost never considered. This study suggested that although women and men’s precursors may have links there are many differences. When planning the groups for the study they used looked at the female’s family situation as the independent variable. The first sample consists of women who had to be put in an institutional care because of family breakdown (Messer 2004: p 87).

The second sample was women that lived in the same area and economic situation, but remained with the same family throughout there childhood (Messer 2004: p 87). It was a longitudinal study that looked at several

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measures throughout the women's lives, at specified intervals (Messer 2004: p 87). These measures were looked for in the interviews. Several of the topics that were talked about in the interviews were: marriage situations, demography, parenting, relationships, and mental health (Messer 2004: p 87).

All of these topics were put into categories and given points so that they could measure how much criminal activity each women had. The most obvious way to analyze their criminal activity is to look at their criminal record. 43 from the 183 women had been convicted of a crime at least once through age 35 (Messer 2004: p 91). This is almost 25% of the sample groups.

The majority of the convictions were for either theft or fraud (Messer 2004: p 91). There were also convictions of assault, sex offences, and substance abuse. They then looked at the women who had committed these crimes and made percentages of how many of them came from broken homes. The results were as they would have predicted.

Out of all the offenders 83% of them had broken families and had to be brought up in institutional care(Messer 2004: p 92). They also looked at the percentage of offenders who had criminal parents. 50% of them had criminal fathers and 30% had criminal mothers (Messer 2004: p 92). There were several additional factors that they considered when analyzing the criminals. They looked at whether they had employment difficulties in their late teen years (15 - 21) (Messer 2004: p 93). They also looked to see if they became

involved with deviant friends when they left their homes (Messer 2004: p 93).

Almost half of the offenders had employment difficulties in their teen years (Messer 2004: p 93). And 59% of them had deviant friends in these late teen years (Messer 2004: p 93). One of the results that surprised me is that the number of teen pregnancies 58% (Messer 2004: p 93). It was not the fact that there were so many that surprised me but the fact that the number is very close to the percentage of deviant friends. Although it may not be very strong there is at least some correlation between the percentage of deviant friends and percentage of teen pregnancies. They also considered the offenders mental health.

This was analyzed by looking at the percentage of substance abuse and the percentage of psychiatric episodes (Messer 2004: p 96). They split both of these percentages into teens to mid-twenties and twenties to thirties. In the teens to mid-twenties 23% of the offenders were recorded for substance abuse; the percentage remained the same to their thirties (Messer 2004: p 96). In the teens to mid-twenties 43% of the offenders had a psychiatric episode (Messer 2004: p 96). The amount of offenders that had a psychiatric episode did increase in the second measuring to 51% (Messer 2004: p 96).

This shows that the majority of the offenses could have been done either while they were under the influence of drugs, or while having a psychiatric episode. Although many of these precursors are the same as they would be for men that have been convicted for some crime, there are several differences. One difference is that there is never any record of rage of anger

in the adolescence. This is one factor that is often looked at in younger boys to determine if they are likely to become criminals. Using these precursors school officials can predict with much better accuracy whether a girl may be likely to become a criminal.

They can then try to prevent these girls from becoming criminals.