

Macdonald triad



McDonald Triad (Add (Add (Add MacDonald Triad The MacDonald Triad or the triad of sociopathy refers to a set of three behavioral traits related to violent tendencies in individuals. It was put forward by J. M MacDonald. In this triad, Macdonald connects animal cruelty, obsessions with fire setting, and enuresis in the childhood age to violent behavioral traits, particularly homicidal tendency. MacDonald Triad has many potential strengths as well as weaknesses.

Strengths

The concept of MacDonald Triad has been supported by numerous case evidences. To illustrate, serial killers Dennis Rader and Gary Ridgway and the contract killer Richard Kuklinski had exhibited animal cruelty during childhood. Research evidences suggest that fire setting behaviour in childhood can be linked to release of frustration or anger, which has well been recognized as potential reasons of homicidal tendency. Criminal psychologists point out that many murderers engage in animal cruelty to get courage for harming their human rivals. Like the case of fire setting in childhood, children use to engage in animal cruelty as a way of expressing their anger and or frustration. Children consider animals as weaker and vulnerable segments and hence they enjoy a wild pleasure by torturing animals. Later, those children gain power over humans and gradually this behaviour turns to violent offenses. This theoretical concept has been supported by many scholars. “ Studies have found that those who engaged in childhood acts of animal cruelty used the same method of killing on their human victims as they did on their animal victims” (RTBot, 2012). In a study conducted among 45 violent offenders by McClellan (2008), it was found that nearly 56% of them had engaged in animal cruelty during childhood. It

clearly indicates the notable relationship between animal cruelty and late violent behaviors. Similarly, some scholars are of the view that a child may develop frustration if he/she was punished for unintentional bedwetting during sleep and this mental state would eventually lead to violent behavior. An additional strength is that many studies could prove a close link between fire setting and animal cruelty in childhood. According to these findings, there are many common causes for obsession with fire setting, animal cruelty, and violent behaviors.

Weaknesses

The major weakness of this model is that statistical studies do not indicate a strong link between the triad and violent offenders. Some researchers argue that the three behaviors linked to violent tendencies by MacDonald may be simply resulted from parental neglect and therefore it is less likely to develop to violent behaviour in future. Hence, criminal psychology has not approved the MacDonald Triad. Some studies argue that fire setting in childhood is just an antisocial behaviour and therefore it cannot be predicted as an indication of later violence. Although the current literature greatly supports the link between animal cruelty and violence against humans, some authors still argue that animal cruelty is only a particular mental abnormality and it may not have any other future consequences. Likewise, crime researchers strongly argue whether enuresis is essentially associated with distress is still not proved. Under such a condition, it is meaningless to connect enuresis with sociopathic behavior. Many scholars also criticize the view that enuresis may be an indication of late anti social behaviors. In short, no study has established a link between enuresis and antisocial behavior yet. Even though there is a link between fire setting and animal cruelty, none of

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these behaviors has been proved to be connected to enuresis. Hence, it is never possible to establish a strong link between these three behaviors.

References

McClellan, J. (2008). Animal cruelty and violent behavior. *Journal of Security Education*, 2(4), 29-45.

RTBot. (2012). Macdonald triad. Retrieved from [http://www. rtbot. net/Macdonald_triad](http://www.rtbot.net/Macdonald_triad)