

# Schizophrenia, substance abuse, and violent crime by fazel

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The paper "Schizophrenia, Substance Abuse, and Violent Crime by Fazel" is a great example of a psychology article review.

Schizophrenia Is there a link between schizophrenia, substance abuse, and violent crime? Many researchers have felt that there is and that those who suffer from schizophrenia are at an increased risk for violent crime and substance abuse. Fazel et. Al states: "Persons with schizophrenia are thought to be at increased risk of committing violent crime 4 to 6 times the level of general population individuals without this disorder. However, risk estimates vary substantially across studies, and considerable uncertainty exists as to what mediates this elevated risk. Despite this uncertainty, current guidelines recommend that violence risk assessment should be conducted for all patients with schizophrenia" (2009, para 1). Several longitudinal studies have been completed about this topic, and it is important to take a closer look at this issue in order to better understand the topic.

Most longitudinal studies demonstrate that this risk is increased for persons with schizophrenia. Fazel argues that violent crime was certainly increased, and defines violent crime as: "Violent crime (any criminal conviction for homicide, assault, robbery, arson, any sexual offense, illegal threats, or intimidation)" (2009, para 5). In Fazel's study (2009, para 6), the results are as follows:

In patients with schizophrenia, 1054 (13. 2%) had at least 1 violent offense compared with 4276 (5. 3%) of general population controls (adjusted odds ratio [OR], 2. 0; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1. 8-2. 2). The risk was mostly

confined to patients with substance abuse comorbidity (of whom 27.6% committed an offense), yielding an increased risk of violent crime among such patients (adjusted OR, 4.4; 95% CI, 3.9-5.0), whereas the risk increase was small in schizophrenia patients without substance abuse comorbidity (8.5% of whom had at least 1 violent offense; adjusted OR, 1.2; 95% CI, 1.1-1.4;  $P < .001$  for interaction). The risk increase among those with substance abuse comorbidity was significantly less pronounced when unaffected siblings were used as controls (28.3% of those with schizophrenia had a violent offense compared with 17.9% of their unaffected siblings; adjusted OR, 1.8; 95% CI, 1.4-2.4;  $P < .001$  for interaction), suggesting significant familial (genetic or early environmental) confounding of the association between schizophrenia and violence.

Thus, Fazel's study demonstrates that, as most scientists and psychologists have expected, there is an increased chance of violent crimes and substance abuse in individuals with schizophrenia. An interesting outcome to note is the genetic factor, as genetics does seem to contribute to violent crime, substance abuse, and schizophrenia.