

Effects of serious mental illness and substance abuse on criminal offenses: artic...

[Health & Medicine](#), [Bad Habit](#)



Abuse on Criminal Offenses was a very interesting article and it also brought up some interesting facts. It talks about people who have a mental illness are overrepresented in jails and prisons. In the article it says that these people with these mental illnesses need treatment and not punishment and I think that is so true (4). I work in a prison and most of the prison population is mentally ill. I feel that if they would have given these guys some treatment when they were out on the streets, they wouldn't be in prison.

There was a study done to determine the effects of serious mental illness and substance abuse on the criminal offenses of a group of community residents with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse disorders. The researchers used community residents that had already been part of a research done in the Hawaii Jail Diversion Project. That research compared the functional outcomes of persons diverted out of jail and into mental health and substance abuse services with the outcomes of a control group of persons arrested and jailed (7). For their research they got their information “ by asking participants three or four probe questions during the project's intake interview, which occurred within seven days of their arrest: Why did you [offense]? Is there anything else you can tell me about [offense]? Do I know everything I need to know to understand why you [offense]? If not, what else do I need to know” (psychiatryonline)? The conclusions from the research didn't show that mental illness was the cause of their criminal acts but substance abuse was responsible for most of their criminal acts or other risk factors such as unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse (10).