Role Of Trauma And Child Development

Abstract

Multiple past studies were done in relation to childhood maltreatment or violence and then looked at the relationship they hold to the adolescent or adult-aged individual. By looking into the lives of certain individuals, and comparing them with possible violence that occurred in their childhood, a relationship was predicted to how they got to where they are today. Although the topics varied slightly, the results came back with consistent views that show how neglect to a child will have serious effects on how they grow up.

Background

In a previous study conducted, Sevecke et al. (2016) examined the associations between both male and female adolescent detainees, and their personality pathology and early childhood traumatic experiences, in relation to their dimension of psychopathy. Psychopathy is any form of mental disease or psychological disorder. Any childhood trauma can be an experience that puts a child in pain or emotional distress, and most often results in lasting effects, both physically and mentally. Sevecke et al. (2016) hypothesized that the relationship between trauma, emotional dysregulation, and the individual’s psychopathy level would be stronger for antisocial personalities, and also that emotional dysregulation and sexual and/or physical traumatic experiences would be related to present psychopathic traits. The results concluded that relationships between physical abuse, emotional dysregulation and psychopathic traits, are present in adolescent boys, but not girls.

There are multiple different types of abuse; emotional, physical, and sexual. Emotional abuse is nonphysical abuse where one person purposely and repeatedly puts another person in harm's way of nonphysical acts such as verbal abuse, harassment, rejection, etc. Physical abuse is deliberate violent behavior by one person to another, that results in bodily injuries, such as, punching, kicking, biting, choking, etc. And sexual abuse is a violation by sexual means that can occur in any type of relationship of trust. A work done by Wang et al. in 2019 studied participants of adult male offenders with childhood maltreatment history. This study aimed to predict the kind of path juveniles can go down, in relation to their childhood trauma and emotional intelligence, and how they might end up involved with the law. Emotional intelligence is a type of intelligence involving the ability to process emotional information and to use it with reasoning. This was measured from a version of the self-report WLEI scale, and childhood trauma was measured by the childhood trauma questionnaire (CTQ). By examining the effects of childhood trauma and emotional intelligence on recidivism with these males, Wang et al. (2019) applied a model to examine the mediation between the three factors. There was a significant effect of childhood trauma on recidivism, and a lower one involved with emotional intelligence. However, with a full mediating effect of the trauma and emotional intelligence on recidivism.

Another study that goes into looking at temperament styles aims to look at the relative effect of temperament along with psychopathic traits and trauma in relation to violent and non-violent delinquent juvenile offenders (DeLisi et al. 2018). The theory of DeLisi and Vaughn suggest that

core self-regulation capacity and negative emotionality are the most salient temperament features for understanding the importance of antisocial behavior, and violent behavior. Going off of that first theory, this study wanted to go further into looking at other associations such as effortful control, negative emotionality, and the different forms of delinquency among the sample. The different measures being used consisted of temperament style, psychopathy level of the juvenile, types of childhood trauma, and demographics. Results showed that temperament is a very strong predictor of delinquency and resulted in a stronger effect size on both delinquent and violent behavior.

Similar to DeLisi et al. (2018), a study conducted by McGuigan et al. (2018) also found factors related to an increased risk of acting in violence. McGuigan et al. (2018) was set up to look at the relationship between childhood physical neglect and violent behavior in the future, and see if the neglect will cause an increased likelihood on violence for that individual. With males between 12-19 years of age held at a long-term detention facility, results showed that with a history of childhood physical neglect, there was an increased likelihood of adolescent violent behavior. Physical neglect in childhood years significantly raised an explained variance of violent behavior after factors were controlled such as age, self-esteem, depression, drug use, etc. that have been previously identified relationships with adolescent violence.

Kingree et al. (2003) also looks at different types of abuse and neglect being involved with juveniles growing up into crime, and recidivism, like the multiple other studies had. This study thought that recidivism would be strongly related to and predicted by the level of neglect than by abuse, and also that neglect would predict recidivism even after controlling for other variables. By targeting a population of juveniles in a holding facility for status offenses or delinquent offenses, the adolescents were asked to enroll in the study. Multiple variables were looked at through the study; demographics, prior detention, substance use consequences, maltreatment, self-restraint and emotional distress, and recidivism. This study found that higher levels of emotional neglect were associated with recidivism within a six-month period.

Conclusion

Collectively, studies have found that if there was any kind of abuse, neglect, or maltreatment in the childhood of an individual, then as they grow up, multiple effects can come into play including violence towards others, psychopathic traits, and recidivism in the future. The high rate of recidivism is a growing concern, and a chronic issue all over the world. Multiple studies have looked to investigate the relationship between results from being neglected as a child, and violence may be an answer for them. Although these studies gathered their participants in facilities such as detention centers, they relied on self-reported data from the individuals childhood, and the maltreatment they had received. Researchers knew of the outcome for the individual, and how they were in trouble with being violent or the certain traits they had, but they had to trust the participants with the amount of maltreatment they were given. A longitudinal study would offer much more information, and accuracy with children who experience maltreatment, abuse, or neglect in their young ages, and how they develop over time. Possible future research can conduct a longitudinal design, possibly starting with children already in the system from reported abuse in their home, and see if a hypothesis would be supported with the child growing up, and becoming violent more than usual individuals and if they keep up the violent traits. This type of research would be difficult to conduct and very long-lasting. However, based on these few studies, it would be easy to conclude that such maltreatment, whichever

type, in someone’s childhood will leave them with an increased risk of becoming violent as they grow older, more likely getting involved in criminal activity.

References

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