

Psychiatrists developing model to identify which mentally ill patients likely to become violent

It is certainly true that rates of violent crime are higher among the severely mentally ill than among the general population, with approximately 5 to 10% committing an act of violence within 5 years of diagnosis. Still, the vast majority of them never do so. The question, then, is how psychiatrists can identify the subset of patients who are most likely to become violent....Now, a team of researchers led by Dr. Seena Fazel, has developed a model that accurately predicts which patients are *unlikely* to become violent.

Dr. Fazel's team found that two factors greatly increased the likelihood that a severely mentally ill person would commit a violent crime: A history of violent crime (which increased the risk five times) and being male (which more than doubled the risk). On the flip side, the older a patient is, the less likely he or she is to commit a violent crime. (See chart.)

Other factors that were statistically significant but had a smaller impact on the risk of violence included prior alcohol or drug use, previous episodes of self-harm, and being an in-patient. It should be kept in mind, however, that these factors may not cause violence but rather serve as proxies for the severity of mental illness.

	Adjusted odds ratio (95% CI)	p value
Male sex	2.32 (1.91–2.81)	<0.0001
Age at hospital discharge (per 10 years)	0.63 (0.58–0.67)	<0.0001
Previous violent crime*	5.03 (4.23–5.98)	<0.0001
Previous drug use†	1.45 (1.23–1.72)	<0.0001
Previous alcohol use†	1.75 (1.47–2.09)	<0.0001
Previous self-harm†	1.23 (1.04–1.45)	0.02
Educational level	..	0.31
Lower secondary (<16 years of age)	1 (reference)	..
Upper secondary (16–18 years of age)	0.88 (0.75–1.04)	..
Postsecondary (>18 years of age)	0.93 (0.69–1.26)	..
Parental drug or alcohol use†	1.11 (0.91–1.35)	0.30
Parental violent crime*	1.16 (0.92–1.46)	0.21
Sibling violent crime*	0.90 (0.71–1.13)	0.35
Recent treatment‡—antipsychotic	0.62 (0.51–0.77)	<0.0001
Recent treatment‡—antidepressant	0.80 (0.65–0.99)	0.04
Recent treatment‡—dependence§	1.78 (1.22–2.60)	0.003
Inpatient at time of episode	1.37 (1.18–1.59)	<0.0001
Received benefits¶	1.42 (1.17–1.72)	0.0003
Personal income	..	0.046
Fifth decile	0.84 (0.65–1.10)	..
Tenth decile (highest)	0.88 (0.50–1.57)	..

[Read full study [here](#).]

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [New Model Predicts Which Mentally Ill Patients Are Unlikely To Be Violent](#)