Psychology, Crime & Law ›

Volume 18, 2012 - Issue 4

Articles

Partner similarity for self-reported antisocial behaviour among married, cohabiting and dating couples: the Generation R Study

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Pages 335-349 | Received 03 Nov 2009, Accepted 11 May 2010, Published online: 19 Jan 2011

Cite this article https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2010.493888

Abstract

From a criminological perspective, romantic relationships are supposed to decrease the risk of antisocial behaviour (Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, American Sociological Review, 63, 225–238, 1998). However, the effects of these relationships probably depend on the romantic partner's behaviour. In the current study we examined partner similarity for antisocial behaviour in an ethnically heterogeneous community sample of 4135 married, cohabiting and dating couples from Rotterdam, the Netherlands, using self-reports. Spousal correlations were consistently positive for antisocial behaviour but differed in strength according to the type of antisocial behaviour. Associations between spouses remained strong after adjusting for age and educational level depending on

the type of antisocial behaviour. In addition, antisocial behaviour was positively associated between partners across marital status and ethnicity, but the strength of this association varied to some extent. Results are discussed in light of the phenotypic assortment, the socialization and the social homogamy hypotheses.

Keywords:

criminal behaviour | criminal careers | ethnic background | delinquency | socio-economics

Acknowledgements

The Generation R Study is conducted by the Erasmus Medical Center in close collaboration with the School of Law and Faculty of Social Sciences of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Municipal Health Service Rotterdam area, Rotterdam, the Rotterdam Homecare Foundation, Rotterdam and the Stichting Trombosedienst & Artsenlaboratiorium Rijnmond (STAR), Rotterdam. The first phase of the Generation R Study is made possible by financial support from the Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam, the Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development (ZonMw 10.000.1003). We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of general practitioners, hospitals, midwives and pharmacies in Rotterdam. The authors thank Marvin van der Krogt for his assistance in data analysis.

Notes

1. ‘Non-responding couples’ refers to couples of a responding mother and a non-responding partner. ‘Responding couples’ refers to couples of a responding mother and partner.

2. ‘Variety refers to the number of different types of delinquency reported by the (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000; 42–43)

3. The choice of antisocial behaviour among men and among women as an independent and dependent variable, respectively, was arbitrarily.

4. Under the assumption that the relationships for dating couples are less stable than for married and/or cohabiting couples and are thus more likely to end when partners grow older.