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Articles

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

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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

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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.

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