

Does IQ moderate the relation between psychopathy and juvenile offending?

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Although evidence indicates that both psychopathy and intelligence independently predict juvenile offending, relations among IQ, psychopathy, and offending are inconsistent. We investigated whether intelligence moderates the relation between psychopathy and both income and aggressive offending concurrently and over time among 1,354 juvenile offenders enrolled in Pathways to Desistance, a prospective study of serious juvenile offenders in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Phoenix, Arizona. Participants were assessed on intelligence, psychopathy, and self-reported offending at their initial interview (age range: 14–18 years old), and at 36 and 84 months later. Results indicate that intelligence moderates the concurrent relation between both income and aggressive offending and total psychopathy, as well as scores on Factor 1 (interpersonal/affective) and Factor 2 (social deviance); the 36-month prospective relation between all aspects of psychopathy and income offending; and the 84-month prospective relation between Factor 2 psychopathy and aggressive offending. As expected, higher levels of psychopathy are associated with higher levels of offending, but the highest levels of offending are evinced among youth with relatively higher levels of psychopathy and relatively higher IQ.