

Poster presentation

Mental state and criminal behavior

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Background

The positive symptoms of psychiatric patients are a common cause of aggressiveness and violent behavior, which some times lead them to commit crimes. So far, there are controversial data concerning the mental state of the patients at the time they commit the crime. However, the majority of the investigators suggest that, especially for the schizophrenic patients, at that time they do manifest active psychotic symptomatology.

Materials and methods

50 patients, 47 males and 3 females, who have committed crimes, were found irresponsible due to mental illness and are now hospitalized in the Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki, were studied. They were divided in two groups by the existence of delusions or not in their clinical state at the time of the crime.

Results

In the first group of 38 patients who presented with positive symptoms at the time of the perpetration of the crime, 35 suffered from schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, 1 from depression, 1 from substance related disorders and 1 from mental disorder due to general medical condition. From them 21(55%) committed homicide, 7(18%) attempted homicide, 6(16%) physical assault and 4(11%) arson and damages alter menses. Between them, 16 patients had also acoustical and/or optical hallucinations: 10 committed homicide, 1 attempted homicide, 3 physical assault and 2 arson and damages alter menses. In the second group of 12 patients without active symptomatology, 6 suffered from schizophrenia and

other psychotic disorders, 3 from substance related disorders and 3 from mental disorder due to general medical condition. From them 7(58%) committed homicide, 2(17%) attempted homicide, and 3(25%) arson and damages alter menses.

Conclusions

The majority of the patients (76%) had delusions with or without hallucinations, which related to members of their families, mostly mothers and wives. Taking into consideration that most of the times the victims were from their family environment, the violent acts probably depend on the relationships between them.

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