Intimate Partner Offenders and Prevalent Affective-Cognitive Functioning: A Study with Inmates

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Abstract : The present study aimed to evaluate the incidence and the prevalence of domestic violence legitimatory beliefs, emotional regulation difficulties and, early maladaptive schemas regarding intimidate partner violence in a sample of 50 Portuguese inmates. As expected, results show high levels of legitimatory beliefs, significant difficulties of emotional regulation and a set of high levels of early maladaptive schemas that clearly compromise the inmates affective-cognitive functioning. The most prevalent set of maladaptive schemas are associated with depression, anxiety, hostility, reduced ability to empathize and, dependence on the approval of others, which, combined, may trigger aggressive responses towards the intimate's partner. Being victimized in their childhood and having committing murder are not differentiating factors on the measures we analyzed, but alcohol consumption may be associated with an intensification of domestic violence legitimatory beliefs. In the discussion of our findings, we compare the pattern of the psychosocial measures we used with the equivalent results obtained with convicted individuals that attend a community compulsory program, specifically designed for domestic violence perpetrators. We also highlight the importance of implementing specialized interventions in prison settings focusing on an evidence-based-practice.
Keywords : affective-cognitive functioning, intimate partner offenders, psychological research with inmates
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