

# **Studying the Relationship between Prison Effect on Personality Disorders and Mental Health of Women imprisoned in Tehran Province (Case Study: Evin Prison of Iran)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Crime issue has always concerned human being's mind. People have reacted to crime in form of tough unconscionable punishment. Responsibility has also been a collective social matter. After centuries, the classical school of criminal's free will has led to his antisocial behavior. According to this theory, the criminal commits crime because his will makes him do so. This study examines personal disorders in prisoners. It measures the relationship between personality disorders and the imprisonment of female criminals with their crime commitment. Study sample consisted of women imprisoned in Evin Prison, Tehran Province that selected by accessible sampling. Sample size was first 100 reduced to 84 after being screened based on validity. Data collection was carried out using Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI-III). Results indicated that significant evident personality disorders are seen in Evin female prisoners. Results demonstrated high scores in personality disorders especially antisocial, pseudo-physical, depressed, Paranoid and dysthymia.

**KEYWORDS:** Personality Disorders, Imprisoned Women, Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI-III), Schizotypal Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

One of the ways to examine relationship between personality disorders and crimes is to determine the frequency of these disorders in criminals. Regarding the point that dense frequency of crimes during life is over %40 in men and %14 in women [1] and since over %10 of total population refer or are referred to specialized centers during their life, the presence of both issues in some people can be observed even without a causal relationship. Hence, the lack of relationship at general level does not prevent from the existence of significant relationships at personal level. And, with respect to heterogeneity between mental disorders as well as crimes heterogeneity, it is likely that some disorders be related to some forms of crimes. At the same time, presence of some mental disorders enhances the commitment of crime. Character disorders mostly appearing by failure in socialization or impulse control are taken to be among personality disorders class [2].

In a national survey of over 500 adults, personality disorders were diagnosed in youth, students, and unemployed households [3].

Guze [4] held interview with 223 men and 66 women based on DSM III regulations before they were released. All women and %90 men received psychiatrist diagnosis. Frequency of mental dissociation and rational delay was low among them. Yet, about %78 men and 565 women, a suffering community was diagnosed. Recently, Gunne [5] has also adjusted information from a semi-structured interview and contents of 1365 adult men and 404 young adult males' cases in 16 prisons of the U.K. to ISD diagnostic regulations. They concluded that %40 of the sample correlated with the requirements of a personality category like drug abuse (%23), personality disorder (%10), neuroticism (%6), mental dissociation (%2), and physical disorders (%0.8). In another proposal, 1195 defendants with a variety of crimes were examined referred from St. Luis Court, Missouri for mental evaluation during a 10-year period. Results indicated that personality disorder with high frequency covered %40 of diagnoses. And, %2.3 of those received diagnosis were placed in antisocial personality disorder group [6]. In all other diagnoses, except mental dissociation, alcohol addiction and drug addiction as the second diagnosis were almost common among individuals placed in antisocial group. In their study on 7 school and university students, Rushton and Christjahn [7] demonstrated that self-report-based crime has positive correlation with E and P, and negative correlation with L (polygraph). It seems that these results based on which self-report-based crime scores are saturated with three personality factors (extraversion, tough mindedness, and psychosis) are other causes against interpretation based on response bias.

• Regarding the fact that %13 criminals in Iran are women. Studies demonstrated that over %75 of these criminals suffer from personality disorders. Yet, no serious studies are done in this regard in Tehran. There is no statistical data on this subject. Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between the effect of prison on women prisoners' personality disorders and mental health in Tehran Province. We will answer the following questions, in this study:

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- Is there any relationship between crime type and type of personality disorder in women prisoners of Tehran Province? Is there any relationship between stay length and personality disorders women prisoners of Tehran Province? Do women prisoners in Tehran Province have suitable mental health?

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Current research is a correlational study. In the correlational studies, relationship between variables are examined. Statistical population consisted of women prisoners in Tehran Province. Among them, 100 women prisoners over 18 years of age were selected by accessible sampling. Data collection was carried out using Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI-III). This scale is a psychological assessment instrument proposed to provide information on psychopathology, including particular disorders mentioned in the DSM-IV. It is intended for adults (18 and over) with at least an 8th grade reading level who are currently seeking mental health services. The MCMI was established and standardized specifically on clinical populations (i.e. patients in psychiatric hospitals or people with existing mental health problems), and the authors are very specific that it should not be used with the general population or adolescents. This scale validity and reliability were assess above 0.7 and approved based on Sharifi's study [8].

## 3. RESULTS

After conduction test and data analysis by SPSS, following results were obtained. According obtained results, its observed that subjects have these disorders: Schizoid %69.74, avoidant %76.76, depressed %83.54, histrionic %67, narcissistic %48, antisocial %67.87, sadistic %58.8, negative %66.35, masochistic %78.22, schizotypal %69.59, borderline %68.85, paranoid %64.59, anxious %86.67, pseudo-physical %89.59, manic %89.24, dysthymia %83.11, alcohol dependent %78.42, drug dependent %84.63, post-trauma stress %79.98, thinking disorder %78.3, major depression %72, and delusional disorder %86.48. In the table 1, mean and standard deviation of variables presented.

As seen in Table 2, women prisoners have higher score compare general average in Antisocial, pseudo-physical, depressed, Paranoid and dysthymia scales.

**Table 1.** Mean and standard deviation of study variables

| Variable             | N  | Mean  | SD     | Max. | Min. |
|----------------------|----|-------|--------|------|------|
| Desirability         | 54 | 76.13 | 4.918  | 83   | 17   |
| Depressed            | 54 | 67.72 | 24.659 | 100  | 15   |
| Histrionic           | 54 | 63.93 | 9.471  | 74   | 34   |
| Antisocial           | 54 | 69.74 | 21.455 | 109  | 16   |
| Negative             | 54 | 76.76 | 17.235 | 109  | 40   |
| Schizotypal          | 54 | 83.54 | 20.756 | 121  | 40   |
| Paranoid             | 54 | 67.04 | 27.522 | 109  | 11   |
| Pseudo-Physical      | 54 | 70.07 | 25.697 | 109  | 14   |
| Dysthymia            | 54 | 48.06 | 19.248 | 77   | 9    |
| Post-Trauma Disorder | 54 | 67.87 | 19.919 | 103  | 17   |

**Table 2.** Compare women prisoner's scores with general average

| Variable             | N  | Mean  | DF | T Value | Sig.  |
|----------------------|----|-------|----|---------|-------|
| Desirability         | 54 | 76.13 | 53 | 1.21    | 0.11  |
| Depressed            | 54 | 67.72 | 53 | 2.88    | 0.018 |
| Histrionic           | 54 | 63.93 | 53 | 1.23    | 0.21  |
| Antisocial           | 54 | 69.74 | 53 | 2.91    | 0.011 |
| Negative             | 54 | 76.76 | 53 | 1.02    | 0.21  |
| Schizotypal          | 54 | 83.54 | 53 | 1.44    | 0.44  |
| Paranoid             | 54 | 67.04 | 53 | 2.83    | 0.01  |
| Pseudo-Physical      | 54 | 70.07 | 53 | 3.21    | 0.018 |
| Dysthymia            | 54 | 48.06 | 53 | 3.06    | 0.010 |
| Post-Trauma Disorder | 54 | 67.87 | 53 | 1.07    | 0.078 |

## 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on results, there are significant personality disorders in women prisoners. Among personality disorders, followings had higher frequency, respectively: Antisocial, pseudo-physical, depressed, Paranoid and dysthymia. They have serious personality disorders syndrome. Yet, these individuals were scored high in serious syndromes and clinical syndromes. This demonstrates that these individuals have high emotional sensitivity. As seen in the table, first, results indicate evident and significant personality disorders. These results are in accordance with results reported by Fazl and Danesh [9], Neefarman [10], Timmerman and Emmelkamp [12]. Results also correlate with Kerenberg's [12] view who considers the core of personality disorders in two dissociation and absurdness. And, it is evident among women prisoners [9-12].

Based on results, there are significant personality disorders in women prisoners. Findings indicate that these individuals were scored high in pseudo-physical personality disorder. They have sustainable relationships. They are dependent on others. The second significant scale is manic personality. This is evident in false self-esteem or dignity syndrome and excessive wordiness and fight of idea and extravagant aggressiveness in joyful activities bringing about painful consequences. Anxiety disorder is the third scale scored higher. Its prominent symptoms include distrust in society. This limits their relationships with other individuals. To break the fence and show off, they commit crime. True fear or phobia of rejection is seen in numerous prisoners' reports. It must be mentioned that it plays a major role in aggression toward the rejection source and committing crime. The fourth scale is delusional disorders scale. Its prominent syndrome is that these individuals strongly believe in odd ideas. They have integrated opinions. Delusions such as envy, magnificence, lust, and detriment are evident among them. In sum, it can be concluded that we face with the general manifestations of personality disorders. Usually, most crimes are due to disability in controlling aggressive or sexual excitements which is among important actions [13-15]. These individuals easily direct their excitements outward (toward people and objects). Results indicate that the more serious the personality disorders including schizotypal, borderline, and antisocial) were, the heavier the crimes committed would be. There is evident relationship between the type of crime and personality disorder type. Staying in prison with its conditions and limitations accompanies the prominent increase of personality disorders. High level of personality disorders in these women shows the lack of mental health in these prisoners.

This study also implies that prisoners with antisocial personality cannot control and organize excitements. Violating rules and social norms are high in these individuals. These findings correspond to results reported by Marzili et al. [16] and Gunne et al. [5]. Results also show that, in borderline personality disorder, they got high scores. They get unstable easily and have variable relationships. In severe damages, schizotypal (high stress) personality disorder was scored the highest. These results correlate with results reported by Fazl and Danesh [9], Newfarman [10], and Timmerman and Emmelkamp [11]. They consider the core of personality disorders in schizotypal character (dissociation). And, it is also evident among women prisoners in our study. In clinical syndromes, pseudo-physical, manic, and anxiety disorders were scored the highest. This correlates with results reported by Loevinger and Wessler [14]. In sever syndromes, delusional disorders were scored the highest. Results show that Evin women prisoners apparently suffer from personality disorders. The mental status of these personality disorders highly correlates with similar studies. Perhaps, the major limitation of this study is its limited sample. Here, only Evin women prisoners were examined and sample volume was only limited to them.

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