

DECEMBER 2021

NEWS & UPDATES



GLEPHA NEURODISABILITY SIG

Welcome to December's newsletter! This month we look forward to a presentation from Lesslie Young - Epilepsy Scotland - on the topic of people with Epilepsy in contact with the justice system - thank you Lesslie! If anyone has ideas for future presentations, please do be in touch.



Acquired Brain Injury Bill in Parliament in the UK

Chris Bryant MP has tabled a Private Member's Bill in the UK. The Bill commits the government to prepare and publish a strategy to meet the needs of children and adults with an ABI. The second reading of the bill is due to take place on Friday 3rd December. To support the bill and for more information, see the website here:

<https://www.chrisbryant.org.uk/acquired-brain-injury-bill/>



24 hour conference on Global Organised Crime

1st and 2nd December 2021

Hosted online with a range of discussions addressing global issues in organised crime.

More information and registration at:
<https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/oc24-2021/>



SIG MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

DECEMBER'S SIG MEMBER SPOTLIGHT IS: NICK SMITH

Where are you currently working, and what is your role?

I am currently a PhD Researcher funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) at the University of Exeter.

What project are you working on at the moment?

My research project involves applying mixed methods including thematic analysis, structural equation modelling and machine learning to investigate trauma-related stress in police officers. The aim of this is to better understand, predict and reduce risk of psychological distress in the UK police population. I am particularly interested in the presence of traumatic brain injury, comorbid mental health issues and substance use and how this may compound post-traumatic stress.



What research or work would you like to see in the future?

I would like to see more research assessing/acknowledging traumatic brain injury and other forms of neurodisability in frontline services. My MSc research highlighted that 39% of a sample of police officers suffered from historical TBI with loss of consciousness, which was significantly associated with increased ongoing post-concussion symptoms (Smith et al., 2020). Similarly, a recent research study reported a historic head injury rate of 76% in a small sample of US firefighters, which was associated with PTSD and depression (Torres et al., 2021). This is really important given the links between TBI, mental ill health (PTSD, depression and anxiety) and suicide, which is particularly relevant in frontline services that can be highly dynamic and stressful environments. More research needs to be done to protect frontline staff and to ensure that they remain operationally effective.

What motivates your work in Neurodisability/Law Enforcement?

Police forces are currently seeking to change their practices and policies to be more aligned with principles of trauma informed and public health approaches. This means that they want to acknowledge the level of trauma, neurodisability and vulnerability in populations that they police. However, if the police don't acknowledge that these issues are also present in the organisation, then it is harder to remain compassionate and develop the capacity to deal with the general population's issues appropriately. I am motivated by knowing that my work will have real-world impact by helping the police to better understand their own trauma, contributing to a trauma informed police force and encouraging compassion towards vulnerable members of the public.

Tell us about your hobbies?

I'm very outgoing and love sports such as snowboarding and mountain biking. I've recently got a working cocker spaniel puppy called Sully and I enjoy taking him on walks to the beach.

Neurodisability among children at the nexus of child welfare and child justice systems

Dr Susan Baidawi & Dr Alex Piquero

Abstract

Although neurodisability features significantly across child welfare and youth justice cohorts, little research investigates neurodisability among crossover children with dual systems involvement. This study examined differences in childhood adversity, child protection involvement, and offending among crossover children by neurodisability status.

Data were from a sample of 300 children (68% male, 31% female, 1% transgender; mean age = 16.2 years, range 10–21) who were charged and appeared in three Australian children's courts, and who also had statutory child protection involvement in the study jurisdiction.

The results indicated that nearly one-half of crossover children had a neurodisability (48%) and this group experienced greater cumulative maltreatment and adversity, earlier out-of-home care entry and offending onset, more caregiver relinquishment and residential care placement, and a greater volume of charges. While substantial differences between specific neurodisabilities were evident, crossover children with any neurodisability had greater odds of having charges related to criminal damage and motor vehicle theft, however they were no more likely to have violent charges relative to other crossover children. The study's findings demonstrated that the prevalence of neurodisability, and child welfare system responses to this phenomenon, contributes to several offending-related trends observed among crossover children.

Full article is available at:

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10964-020-01234-w.pdf>

Have any news for the next SIG newsletter? Conferences to promote?
Collaborative research opportunities? New papers published? Want to be the
next spotlight member?

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