

GLEPHA NEURODISABILITY SIG

Welcome to our December newsletter! At our next meeting on Friday 01 December at 4pm (UK time) we will hear from Alyson Norman. Alyson is an Associate Professor in the school of Psychology at University of Plymouth, and will present on her work with her colleague Dr Mark Holloway looking at the themes from safeguarding adults reviews involving adults with brain injuries.

Trauma Informed Policing and Law Enforcement (TIPLE) Conference 2024

Join global experts in Melbourne for the TIPLE Conference: Share insights, collaborate, and explore trauma informed practices' impact on law enforcement, justice and communities. Call for abstracts for this conference closed on the 20th of November. Information about other key dates and the conference proceedings can be found on this link: <https://lnkd.in/gBZrdhYt>

Seven-part report series: Envisaging the Future of Policing and Public Health

The Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association (GLEPHA) is excited to announce the launch of seven-part report series 'Envisaging the Future of Policing and Public Health'. This series is a significant undertaking, showcasing effective collaborations between police agencies, public health services, and community partners across different regions and countries. Can be accessed here : <https://glepha.com/envisaging-the-future-project/>

Our first report, focusing on innovative diversion and deflection programs, will be released shortly. We invite you to stay informed and we look forward to sharing our insights with you.

We express our sincere gratitude for funding support from the [UNODC](#) (UN Office on Drugs and Crime), [Open Society Foundations](#), and [Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne](#)

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Boards Elections and AGM

The election for vacated GLEPHA Board positions took place virtually during the GLEPHA Annual General Meeting, on November 21st, 2023. The following GLEPHA Board positions were open for nominations:

- Vice President
- 3 Ordinary Members

The results were released on the 23rd of November 2023 and the following GLEPHA members were elected to the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting held November 21st, 2023:

Vice President:

Isabelle Bartkowiak-Théron (Australia)

Ordinary Members:

Rachel Forbes (UK)

Flora Matheson (Canada)

Ingrid Nyborg (Norway)

They were elected to their positions for the two-year term – 2023-2025.

SIG MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

DECEMBER'S SIG MEMBER SPOTLIGHT IS: MEGAN PARRY

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

I am an associate professor in the Criminology and Criminal Justice department at the University of Rhode Island. I teach and conduct research.

What project are you working on at the moment?

I am just wrapping up a US based survey project examining autistic adults' perceptions of the police, police led awareness campaigns, and measures designed to alert the police to a person's diagnosis (e.g., databases, ID cards, car decals, etc.). I'm hoping to have the final paper from the project out and under review by the beginning of the year.

I have just begun a new project examining the intersection of disability, policing, and the geography of police contact with my colleague Dr. Danielle Wallace out of Arizona State University. For the police to best serve disabled communities, there are simple—but pressing—questions about disability and police contact that must first be answered. Do the police disproportionately contact individuals with disabilities?

Do the police treat people with disabilities differently? What are the themes of encounters with the police? How do these encounters shape individuals' perceptions of police? These questions provide the groundwork for our project, building the foundational evidence needed to create evidence-based policy and training for the police and disabled communities about police contact. While I have been primarily interested in issues of Neurodiversity, this project allows for a broader examination of police-citizen contacts and disability. The first paper from this project is currently under review.



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

From both researchers and practitioners, I would like to see a focused effort to center the voices and experiences of neurodiverse individuals in research. I would like the phrase “Nothing about us without us.” to be taken to heart. I would like to see researchers and practitioners alike directly involving member of the community they are examining or serving before any new training, outreach, measure, or focused research effort is made.

What are the biggest barriers of implementing support and/or diversion for people with Neurodisabilities in the Justice System in your opinion?

One of the biggest barriers for support and/or diversion for people with Neurodisabilities is ableism. Barring the work produced by members of groups such as this SiG, a lot of theoretical and general scholarly understanding of policing springs from the assumption that non-disabled/neurotypical individuals are the societal standard. The result of this means that individuals with Neurodisabilities are largely absent from not just research but policy and practice as well. Until they (and all individuals with disabilities) are part of the conversation they will continue to be underserved and overlooked by both academia and the Justice System at large.

If you weren't working in this area, what would you do instead?

Likely, I would be working in theatre design/management or somewhere else in the arts. Working with and around the Justice System was a bit of a pragmatic decision if I am honest, but I got a taste for research and ended up staying. At first blush, criminological research and theatre design feel fairly disconnected, but looking back, I can see the influence that theatre has had on my approach to my research, particularly the power of perceptions and how media of all sorts can inform them.

SIG RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Our research spotlight this month is a paper focusing on Adults with autism spectrum disorder and the criminal justice system

**Adults with autism spectrum disorder and the criminal justice system:
An investigation of prevalence of contact with the criminal justice system, risk factors and sex differences in a specialist assessment service**

Charlotte E Blackmore¹, Emma L Woodhouse, Nicola Gillan, Ellie Wilson, Karen L Ashwood, Vladimira Stoencheva, Alexandra Nolan, Grainne M McAlonan, Dene M Robertson, Susannah Whitwell, Quinton Deeley, Michael C Craig, Janneke Zinkstok, Rob Wichers, Debbie Spain, Ged Roberts, Declan GM Murphy, Clodagh M Murphy and Eileen Daly

Abstract

The behavioural and cognitive difficulties of some adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may increase their risk of contact with the criminal justice system (CJS) as a potential suspect. There has been limited investigation of ASD and offending and available evidence is mixed. A retrospective review was completed of medical records of 1570 adults (17–75 years old) who were referred for an ASD assessment over a 17-year period (April 2003 to February 2020). Of the adults diagnosed with ASD, 23% had previous contact with the CJS. Being male or diagnosed with co-occurring attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and/or psychotic disorder were risk factors for CJS contact. However, the rates of contact with the CJS or for specific offences in the ASD group were never higher than adults referred to our service but not diagnosed with ASD. We did not include a general population comparison group, therefore cannot say how rates of CJS contact in ASD compare with the general population. Further health services research for adults with ASD is warranted, as modifying the treatable risk factors (i.e. ADHD) could reduce contact with the CJS. In addition, joint working between CJS and mental health services could reduce the risk of adults with ASD having CJS contact.

Lay abstract

There has been growing interest in offending and contact with the criminal justice system (CJS) by people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). However, it is not clear whether people with ASD offend more than those without ASD. Studies have started to look at whether there are particular offences people with ASD are more likely to commit and whether there are any factors that can affect whether someone comes into contact with the CJS as a potential suspect. This study looked at the patients who attended an ASD diagnostic service over a 17-year period to see the rate of contact with the CJS of those who were diagnosed with ASD and whether there were any particular factors that might increase the risk of CJS contact. Nearly a quarter of the ASD group had some contact with the CJS as a potential suspect. Factors that seemed to increase whether someone with ASD was more likely to have contact with the CJS were being male, being diagnosed with ADHD, and being diagnosed with psychosis. This study is one of the largest studies to investigate the rate of CJS

**YOU CAN READ THE PAPER HERE:
[HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1177/13623613221081343](https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613221081343)**

Have any news for the next SIG newsletter? Want to be the next spotlight member? Interested in presenting at the next meeting?
Please email Winnie: nkoanasamantha@gmail.com

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