



Psychopathic offenders VS Sociopathic offenders

Manorama Sharma^{1*} Student

Department of Forensic Science, School of Paramedical Sciences, A P Goyal Shimla University

Abstract

We live in a society where the usual offenders, psychopathic offenders, sociopathic offenders as well as offenders with various mental disorders make it hard to differentiate unless the unique traits of each are focused on because humans are very complex beings. It is impossible to completely get to know about any person as the human brain is tricky enough to decode even after we have a lot of clues to reach a near to perfect definition. Some articles even link 'psychopath' to 'sociopath' as synonyms to each other. The most basic point to differentiate both the terms is 'conscience'. Psychopaths are believed to have no conscience whereas sociopaths are believed to have one but way weaker than the standard set by the society. Psychopaths are believed to be born with destructive tendencies while sociopaths are believed to have acquired the tendencies and get shaped depending on the environment around them. Psychopaths are most probably immune to not feeling guilty of their acts while sociopaths might feel bad after committing a crime.

But it would not be accurate to say that psychopaths don't feel guilt or any feelings in general. Being a human there is a possibility that if not deep but slight feelings can be felt by them in some cases just like sociopaths and other average humans as it's a human tendency to be able to feel emotions; even other animals do possess this trait. In this review paper we are discussing the traits of both psychopathic as well as sociopathic offenders and comparing them.

Keywords: psychopaths, sociopaths, offenders, forensic, psychology, anti-social, mental disorders

Introduction

Psychopath is a person who is considered to be anti-social in nature, with egoistic personality, violent in nature and specifically lacking conscience which can predict that these individuals most probably are not able to learn from the punishment received for the offences they commit.

Even though the general analysis depicts the result that these individuals are born with violent instincts to harm other individuals in the society there is a part where not much research is done. These individuals often feel repulsed to social interaction but inside them a part does crave for love, care, attention and affection from others [1]. Their trait repulsing the

need to interact creates a big confusion causing frustration. They feel stigmatized by the way society has labelled them- maniac and heartless beings. This result in self-hatred and often the anger and frustration can come up into violent actions as it is hard for them to fit in the society which accepts a certain set behaviour rules and rejects the ones they inhibit. The mental pain these individuals go through should be also discussed instead of only focusing on the fact that they are a major threat to the other individuals in the society.

Sociopath is a person similar to a psychopath displaying anti-social behaviour and not following the general norms of the society [2]. But instead of no conscience like that in a psychopath, sociopath

will have one but way weaker than the average. Sociopaths are believed to be charming on the surface level at some point due to their tendencies of not following the rules but similar to a psychopath they find it highly difficult to maintain any kind of relationships in their life. Their controlling behaviour may not be highly visible like in the case of psychopaths as they tend to use manipulation in a much better way than a psychopath does.

Unlike psychopaths who are born, sociopaths are built over time according to the environment they live in. Harsh environments including abuse/trauma at an early age alongside permissive style of parenting involving restrictions to basic stuff or even being totally neglected throughout the early phase of life can lead to a sociopathic behaviour.

The “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders” (DSM-5) which mental health professional use to give diagnosis of mental disorders don't really have a separation between sociopaths, psychopaths as well as people with Antisocial Personality Disorder or any of its sub-type [3].

The common behaviour observed by the psychopathic as well as sociopathic offenders is not following the norms in general, not learning from the mistakes even after serving punishments for the same as the sense of guilt is absent most of the time. The disregard towards people's feelings and their well being makes them control people by the ways of either manipulation or intimidation or both. They do go for violent methods to assert their dominance over people but their usual way is using people by tricking their mind. Even with all these similarities there is a set of different characteristics that distinguish the two from each other.

Although both psychopaths and sociopaths do take advantage of others but they don't really use violence which is why it is concluded that both of are not always physically or sexually violent in nature. It is also stated that just like psychopaths, sociopaths also possess neurological abnormalities but at a very low level than them which gets triggered more by a bad environment around them resulting in an increase in the abnormalities. The standards set by the society results in people becoming insane as it refuses to accept the difference and thus out casting these people which leaves them with loneliness and self doubt which then converts into the aggression of not being accepted in the group only because one has a

different way of acting. Criminals are not always born; they are made by the society as it can't stand the thought of any neurodivergent entering the neurotypical setup. If given a chance to be accepted by the society and not seen as any monster these sociopathic as well as psychopathic traits can turn totally harmless to a greater extent.

Sociopaths are more likely to run away from the treatment and not compromise throughout the process where psychopaths will most likely act like they know more than the officials displaying their narcissistic behaviour but mostly will not try to run away from the treatment rather fool the system into making it believe that they are completely treated but in real they aren't.

Psychopathic offenders and offences

There is no study that suggests that every crime that is committed is done by an offender suffering from mental illness. And if we take psychopaths in account we see that psychopathic offenders only constitute roughly 1% of the total crimes committed and account for about 25% of the prison population [4].

It is also very rare to see psychopathic offenders committing a non-violent crime because according to the general conception psychopaths interest in sadistic demeanour which is most likely to be linked with violent offences.

When we talk about sexual offenders especially related to children we categorise them into two types: child molesters and paedophiles. These terms might seem very similar to each other but there is a clear line of division between them. In both the cases the child (below the age of 13) is being sexually abused but the child molesters don't really have sexual attraction or interest towards children whereas paedophiles have sexual attraction towards children as their primary interest [5].

It was found that sex offenders or non-sex offenders both who had high psychopathy score were found to be repeating the offences.

When we discuss about juvenile offenders the studies gave us a conclusion that juvenile sex offenders has at least twice or maybe even twice the psychopathy score than that of juvenile non-sex offenders [6].

Also the aggression and antisocial conduct was also found out to be worse in the juvenile sex offenders than juvenile non-sex offenders.

Punishment or Therapy for psychopathic offenders

Punishment by law is induced to create a fear among the offender or people who might be planning to be one so that the offence is not repeated again.

The way neurotypical people experience and feel about the punishment is far from how a psychopathic offender does. Their different brain structure than that of the neurotypicals make them feel overly positive about their actions.

Along with the lack of any conscience they believe no difference between any right or wrong stuff. And all this concludes that if punishment is induced to teach these psychopathic offenders to not repeat the offences it won't have any effect.

Instead psychotherapy is a better solution to help neurotypicals to change for the better [7]. But these neuroatypicals are very hard to handle as they resist change and most of the time are really good at fooling the system by acting overly cooperative with the therapy. By law in most of the nations rehabilitation centres are made for these neurotypicals.

Sociopathic Offenders and offences

Sociopathic offenders account for about 80-90% of total crimes committed & 35% prison population altogether [8].

Unlike the psychopathic offenders who are interested in sadistic behaviour the sociopathic offenders just feel to challenge the norms of the society. Similar to the psychopathic offenders these neuroatypicals have a chronic tendency to commit offences repeatedly.

These neuroatypicals do have a bit of conscience which is completely missing in psychopathic offenders due to which the crimes done by sociopathic offenders are most likely to be non-violent in nature; even if they commit sex offences those are mostly not violent in nature but that doesn't conclude that these neuroatypicals are incapable of committing crimes that include violence [9].

They do feel a bit of guilt for their actions but still continue to express their antisocial behaviour.

They have less control over their expressions and behaviour than psychopathic offenders which results in getting caught up easily due to acting up without thinking or calculating about the pros and cons- in short an impulsive decision. Just like the psychopathic offenders their ego is what drives their actions and breaking the general norms is what boosts their ego.

Punishment or therapy for sociopathic offenders

Punishments served to neurotypicals might be only suitable to a very minute extent in case of sociopathic offenders.

Similar to the psychopathic offenders therapy comes into play while treating these neuroatypicals as their conscience is also near to non-existent in nature while results in minute guilt sometimes but usually no remorse towards their wrong actions at all.

Their inability to cooperate for the therapy makes it difficult as their narcissistic self doesn't want to follow or cooperate with anyone or anything.

CBT and psychotherapy can only change the offenders for good but only if they cooperate instead of rebelling against the system [10].

Conclusion

The neuroatypicals- psychopaths and sociopaths are individuals with no remorse and conscience for their actions and highly anti-social in nature resulting in challenging the norms for boosting their ego and as a form of rebel due to being an outcast.

Both sociopathic as well as psychopathic offenders are likely to repeat the offences mostly violent in nature. The only method to teach these neuroatypicals is not any punishment but use of cognitive behaviour therapy and psychotherapy alongside medication to change them for better and creating a much safer environment in society.

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