

Poster presentation

## Primary versus secondary psychopaths

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### Background

Blackburn's theory of psychopathy is based on the premise that there are two types of psychopath, primary and secondary, who might have different prognoses. The purpose of this study was to test the validity of his theory by examining the relationships between these two types of psychopathy and variables that should discriminate between them.

### Material and Methods

Eighty-three incarcerated offenders were administered the Primary Psychopathy Scale, the Secondary Psychopathy Scale, the Personal Feelings Questionnaire, Hogan's Empathy Scale, the Curious Experiences Scale, the Defining Issues Test, and the Mach V.

### Results

The results showed that the two types of psychopathy were not independent of each other ( $r = 0.45$ ). The only variable that significantly differentiated one type of psychopathy from the other was empathy, which was unexpectedly higher in secondary psychopaths.

### Discussion

Blackburn's theory proposing two distinct types of psychopathy received virtually no support from this study.