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**Characteristics of Treatment  
Completers and Non-Completers in a  
Residential Programme for  
Severe Conduct Disorder**

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## ABSTRACT

The study centres on a long-term residential programme for the treatment of severe conduct disorder. A number of young people leave the programme before completion of treatment. The focus of the study is to examine existing data from psychometric tests to determine whether the data can provide material which delineates a completer profile and a non-completer profile. The data was originally collected as part of the assessment and diagnostic process for entry to the programme. All of the young people met criteria for a diagnosis of severe conduct disorder with early onset.

Secondary data analysis was used, to delineate a profile of each group. Differences between the two groups were found in the areas of resilience factors, internalising and externalising characteristics, and comorbidity with a range of disorders. Comorbidity with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder was particularly prevalent.

As the data samples were small the current study is exploratory and descriptive, rather than predictive or inferential. Gender and ethnicity affect both the manifestation of conduct disorder and response to treatment. However, the small sample size did not allow separate analysis along gender or ethnic lines. Both of these areas warrant further research.

Conduct disorder is a complex disorder, which affects every domain of the young person's life including family, individual development, educational achievement, peer relations, social relations, criminal history, and physical and mental health. Ecological models have explanatory utility in terms of aetiology, symptomatology, and treatment rationale covering all domains and are used as a framework for this study.

This study reviews relevant literature, gives a brief outline of the specific programme, describes the method and results of the secondary analysis of the test data, and concludes with a discussion about the implications of the findings, and some suggestions for the design of further programmes and for future research in this area.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Conduct Disorder	
1.1 Symptomatology or Behaviour	2
1.2 Diagnosis	4
1.3 Aetiology	<b>5</b>
1.3.1 Biological Factors	7
1.3.2 Social Learning Factors	8
1.3.3 Developmental Factors	9
1.4 Epidemiology	<b>10</b>
1.4.1 Persistence	13
1.5 Subtypes of Conduct Disorder	<b>13</b>
1.5.1 Early Onset	14
1.5.2 Later or Adolescent Onset	15
1.5.3 Anti-social Personality Disorder Trajectory	16
1.5.4 Gender as Subtype	18
1.6 Comorbidity	<b>20</b>
1.6.1 Comorbidity with ADHD	21
1.6.2 Anxiety Disorders	22
1.6.3 Mood Disorders	23
1.6.4 Substance Abuse	23
1.6.5 Learning Disorder	24
1.6.6 Neurological Deficits	24
1.6.7 Findings From Examination of Selected Psychometric Tests	25
1.7 Treatment	<b>27</b>
1.7.1 Treatment Principles	28
1.7.2 Community Based Treatments	30
1.7.3 Residential Treatments	31
1.7.4 Treatment Foster Care	31
1.7.5 Early Intervention/Prevention	32
1.8 General Factors Influencing Early Termination of Treatment for Children With Behaviour Problems	<b>33</b>

1.9	The Severe Conduct Disorder Programme		<b>34</b>
1.9.1	Programme Design	35	
1.9.2	Target Group	35	
1.9.3	Residential Needs	35	
1.9.4	Exit From The Programme	37	
1.9.5	Demographics	37	
1.9.6	Gender	37	
1.9.7	Education	38	
1.9.8	Leisure	38	
1.9.9	Mentors	38	
1.9.10	Family	38	
1.9.11	Other Components of the Programme	39	
1.9.12	Monitoring of the Programme: Funding & Reporting	40	
1.10	Summary and Reasons For This Study		<b>40</b>
<b>Chapter 2. Method</b>			
2.0	Method		<b>42</b>
2.1	Ethics Approval		<b>42</b>
2.2	Profiling		<b>42</b>
2.3	Defining the Groups		<b>43</b>
2.4	Data		<b>43</b>
2.4.1	Data Selection	43	
2.4.2	Psychometric Test Information	44	
2.4.3	Data From Other Sources	44	
2.4.4	Accessing the Data	44	
2.4.5	Missing or Incomplete Data	44	
2.4.6	Quality of Data	45	
2.4.7	Data Analysis	45	
2.4.8	Limitations of Data Sets	47	
<b>Chapter 3. Results</b>			
3.0	Results		<b>48</b>
3.1	Results Comparing Groups on the Level of Severity of Symptoms		<b>48</b>
3.1.1	Conners' Rating Scales: CPRS: Atypical Type G & Type P Profiles	48	
3.2	Results Comparing Groups on Means and SDs for CPRS, CDI, STAI, SIQ and Piers-Harris		<b>49</b>
3.2.1	Conners' Rating Scales	49	
3.2.2	Children's Depression Inventory	51	
3.2.3	State-Trait Anxiety Inventory	53	
3.2.4	Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire	54	
3.3	Results Comparing Group Means and SDs on Clusters of Subscales Providing Specific Information from Conners' Rating Scales		<b>56</b>
3.3.1	Conners' Rating Scales	56	

3.3.2	CPRS Internalising Subscales	57
3.3.3	CPRS Externalising Subscales	59
3.3.4	CPRS Global Index	60
3.3.5	CPRS DSM-IV Index	61
3.4	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III) Results	62
<b>Chapter 4. Discussion</b>		
4.0	Discussion	66
4.1	Conners' Rating Scales	66
4.2	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children	68
4.3	Children's Depression Inventory	70
4.4	State-Trait Anxiety Inventory	70
4.5	Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire	70
4.6	Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale	70
4.7	Characteristics of Young People in the Severe Conduct Disorder Programme	71
4.7.1	Social and Emotional Factors	71
4.7.2	Physical and Emotional Health Factors	71
4.7.3	Psychological Factors	71
4.8	Profiles	72
4.8.1	Non-completer Profile	72
4.8.2	Completer Profile	72
4.9	Other Factors Which May Have Contributed to Non-completion of Treatment	73
4.10	Summary and Limitations	74
<b>Chapter 5. Conclusion</b>		
5.0	Conclusion	75
5.1	Implications for this Programme	76
5.2	Interagency Co-operation	77
5.3	Research Implications	77
<b>References</b>		
	Appendix A. Summary of Psychometric Test Properties	79
	Appendix B. Glossary of Abbreviations	103
	Appendix C. Ethical Issues Raised in this Study	107
		109

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Correlates of antisocial behaviour in adolescence (Borduin, 1999)	7
Table 2. Risk and resilience factors considered to be influential in the development of Conduct Disorder (Steiner & Wilson, 1999)	10
Table 3. Sets of data available for completers and non-completers for each assessment	45
Table 4. Comparison of completers and non-completers who match Type G and Type P profiles on Conners' Parent Rating Scale (CPRS)	48
Table 5. CPRS-Individual T-scores above 70: percentage of each group falling in the markedly atypical range	49
Table 6. CPRS subscales: summary scores comparing completers and non-completers on median, mean and SD	50
Table 7. Comparison of group mean scores and SDs on subtests of Children's Depression Inventory (CDI)	52
Table 8. Above average scores on each subtest of the CDI: groups compared	53
Table 9. Comparison of group means and SDs on State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)	53
Table 10. Comparison of group means and SDs on Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (SIQ)	54
Table 11. Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale: comparative group means and SDs on Piers-Harris subscales	55
Table 12. Conners' Rating Scales: comparison across rating scales on common subscales, of completers' and non-completers' means	56
Table 13. Comparison of completers' and non-completers' mean T-scores on internalising subscales of CPRS	57
Table 14. Comparison of completers' and non-completers' mean T-scores on externalising subscales of CPRS	59
Table 15. CPRS comparison of group mean T-scores and SDs on Conners' Global Index	60
Table 16. CPRS comparison of group mean T-scores on DSM-IV Index	61
Table 17. Summary of comparison of WISC-III results on all subscales and summary scores	62

Table 18. Psychometric Tests: standardisation, reliability, and validity information

106

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Graph of CPRS Subscales comparing completers' and non-completers' means as in Table 6.	51
Figure 2. Graph of the comparative means for the completers and non-completers for CDI subscales as in Table 7.	52
Figure 3. Graph of comparative means on Piers-Harris Subscales	55
Figure 4. Graph of comparative group means on CPRS internalising items as in Table 13.	58
Figure 5. Comparative group means on CPRS externalising items, as in Table 14.	59
Figure 6. Graph of comparative group means on CPRS Global Index as in Table 15.	60
Figure 7. Graph of comparative group means on CPRS DSM-IV Index as in Table 16.	61
Figure 8. WISC-III Results Verbal Subtests: Comparative group means	64
Figure 9. WISC-III Results Performance Subtests: Comparative group means	64
Figure 10. WISC-III Summary Scores: Comparative group means	65
Figure 11. WISC-III Index Scores: Comparative group means	65

## FOREWORD

Of all the boys on the beach batto was the biggest brave. best swimmer best diver best floater he was the shark of the sea-egg season and he ducked every boy he was sure he could beat any time any place without reason.

he was the shake of their cake the stone of their bush. he was the boast of the beach-boys gang

batto came from the tumbledown village of low wooden houses overlooking the bay which stood on their stilts like a crab on its claws. where they nevvah had bottles rounn their garden beds

cause they nevvah had gardens an bottles were fuh fights an they was plenty fights in de hickey. They could curse yuh mudder and ax fuh yuh faddah cause they didnt have mothers like the land-boys had an you couldnt curse they fathers who were fishermen

batto never had a mother like the land-boys had and hed never even had to go to school. but hed been to dodds and hoped one day to go to a proper prison for the man who would cross his path so the beach-boys said

dodds was the place with the high barbed wire and the cat-o-nine tails far far away in the country. but your parents were vague if you asked where it was what it meant. you were told it was the place where the bad boys went

ii

when he was he didnt know how much then, batto had burss another boy eye in a fight

it was so:

Sun Poem III, 8 i Edward Kamau Braithwaite 1982. (African/Caribbean Poet).

Conduct disorder is associated with bad boys. This overlooks a significant number of girls with conduct disorder. The bad boy epithet takes a moral stance in relation to what will be discussed here as a mental health disorder, with attempts to provide appropriate treatment for that disorder.

Like batto, many conduct disordered youth have low socioeconomic status, and the disadvantages which attend that status. Like batto, many have divided and conflicted families. Like batto, their horizons may be restricted to a future behind barbed wire where the bad boys go.