

A prospective study of psychiatric comorbidity and recidivism among repeat DUI offenders

Impaired driving remains a major public health concern with significant and far-reaching harms. Repeat DUI offenders disproportionately contribute to these harms.

Repeat DUI offenders have high rates of mental health disorders, but it is unclear whether there is a direct causal link between these disorders and re-offense.

The Study

Explored whether mental health disorders predict future re-offense among repeat DUI offenders.

Recruited a sample of 743 repeat DUI offenders from a court-mandated inpatient treatment program.

These participants:

Completed a comprehensive mental health and substance use assessment.

Consented to share their criminal records with the research team five years later.

Key Findings



In the 5 years after their assessment:

One third of the sample were arraigned for an additional criminal offense



15% had another motor vehicle related offense

7.5% had another DUI offense

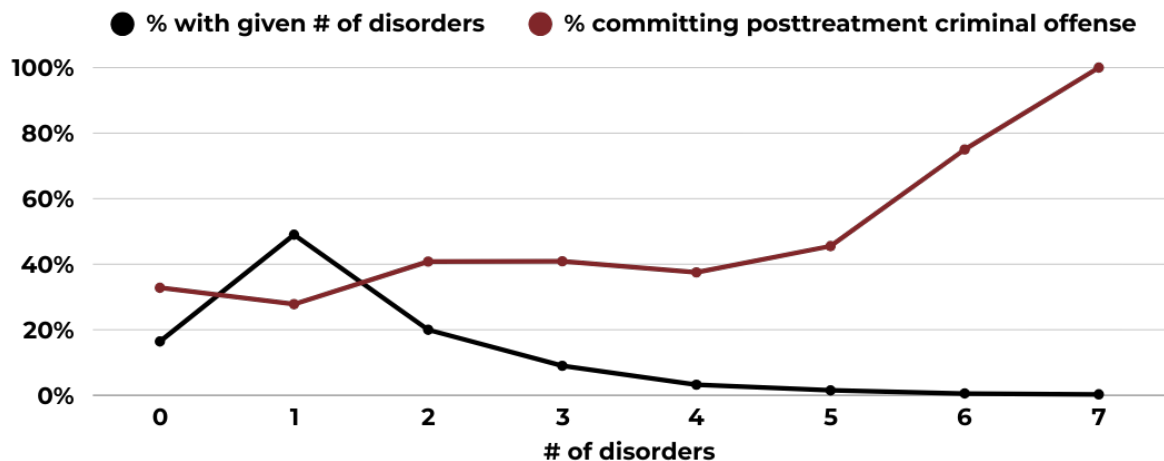


A history of **alcohol use or drug use disorder** or **conduct disorder** predicted criminal re-offense, and **ADHD** specifically predicted a motor vehicle related re-offense.



More severe comorbidity* predicted general criminal offense posttreatment.

*Comorbidity:
The co-occurrence of multiple disorders within an individual.



Key Takeaways

Although the presence of specific mental health disorders did not predict DUI re-offense, possibly due to low DUI offense rates, some do signal risk for criminal re-offense more broadly.

Importantly, mental health disorders had a clear cumulative effect on risk for criminal re-offense; experiencing more disorders translated directly to increasing the likelihood of re-offense.