

10.1136/ip.2010.029215.989

The relationship between age and crime is well known and has been documented throughout history. Although different types of offenses tend to peak at different ages, violent and delinquent behaviour typically increase during adolescence and the early years of adulthood, and taper off with advancing age. There also appears to be little specialisation in the types of offenses committed by young people. Young people generally commit a variety of violent and non-violent offenses. In recent years, researchers have begun to explore whether violent and delinquent behaviour in adolescence and young adulthood is part of a general pattern of antisocial and aggressive behaviour that emerges during childhood or whether it is the result of certain personal, situational and environmental factors. Some children, for example, exhibit stubborn, defiant, and disobedient behaviour at very young ages, and progress to mild and eventually more severe forms of aggressive and delinquent behaviour by adolescence and young adulthood. Other children either do not exhibit serious problem behaviour until they reach adolescence or seem to outgrow aggressive behaviour by the time they enter primary school. For violence prevention purposes, it is important to know the extent to which patterns of aggressive and antisocial behaviour in childhood are predictive of violent and delinquent behaviour at later ages and also to know which factors increase or buffer the risk for violent and delinquent behaviours at different ages. Understanding this continuity or change in behaviour during different developmental periods is important for identifying appropriate points for intervention. The purpose of this presentation is, thus, threefold: (1) to describe the developmental pathways of aggressive, violent and delinquent behaviour, (2) to describe the factors that increase or buffer against the risk for violent and delinquent behaviour at different ages and across developmental periods and (3) to discuss the implications of the different patterns of behaviour and risk for designing preventive interventions.

0989

**PREDICTING AND PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE:  
UNDERSTANDING AND DISRUPTING DEVELOPMENTAL  
TRAJECTORIES AND RISK**

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