

Nunes, K. L., Hermann, C. A., Maimone, S., Atlas, M., & Grant, B. A. (2018, March). *The Violence Propensity Vignette Questionnaire (VPVQ): A measure of violent behavior for research in forensic and non-forensic settings and populations*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Psychology-Law Society, Memphis, Tennessee.

The Violence Propensity Vignette Questionnaire (VPVQ): A Measure of Violent Behavior for Research in Lab and Forensic Settings and Populations

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Violence Propensity Vignette Questionnaire (VPVQ)

- 10 vignettes
- Say what you really would do if you were actually in that situation right now
 - Initial scenario
 - First response
 - Reaction from antagonist
 - Second response

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Response Options: "What do you do?"

- **Report it to someone** – report what he’s doing (or what he did) to someone like the manager, police, or security, and ask them to deal with the problem
- **Talk it out** – without insulting him, say something to let him know you’re not okay with what he’s doing (or what he did) and to try to work things out peacefully
- **Insult him** – say something insulting to him, like swearing at him or calling him a name
- **Joke about it** – joke about it to yourself or other people around you
- **Shove him**
- **Hit, punch, kick, or tackle him**
- **Threaten to hurt him**
- **Ignore it** – don’t do or say anything about it
- **Leave** – go somewhere else to get away from the person or situation

Illustration of Procedure with Vignette 9

- You’re at a bar standing beside your girlfriend/wife when a guy strolls up to her, puts his arm around her, and starts trying to pick her up. He acts like you aren’t even there.
- What do you do?
 - Report it to someone
 - Hit, punch, kick, or tackle him
 - **Talk it out**
 - Threaten to hurt him
 - Insult him
 - Ignore it
 - Joke about it
 - Leave
 - Shove him

- You say to him, “Buddy, what are you doing? You know she’s with me. Go talk to someone else.”
- He ignores you, steps between you and your girlfriend/wife, turns his back to you, tells her that you’re a loser, and asks her to dance.
- What do you do?

Non-violent	• Report it to someone	• Hit, punch, kick, or tackle him	Violent
	• Talk it out	• Threaten to hurt him	
Violent	• Insult him	• Ignore it	Non-violent
	• Joke about it	• Leave	
	• Shove him		


Validation

- If the VPVQ really does measure current propensity for violent behavior, then responses should be associated with independent indicators of violent behavior
 - Past violent behavior
 - Physical aggressiveness
 - Risk of violent re-offending

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Samples


- 471 adult male community participants in US and Canada via online survey
 - Median age was 35 years old (range 18-81 years old)
- 52 adult male offenders in medium- and maximum-security prisons in Canada
 - Mean age was 31.04 years old ($SD = 8.59$)
 - Most had at least one violent offence on record



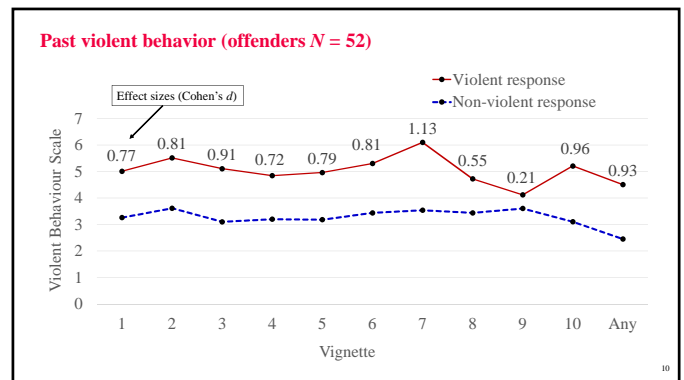
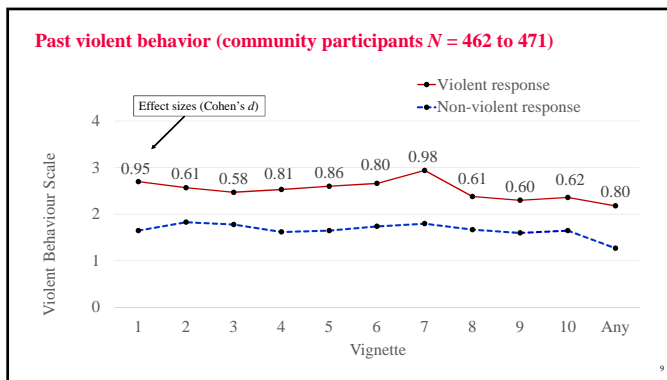
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Violent Behaviour Scale

- From when you were 16 years old to today, how many times have you
 - Started a physical fight with someone?
 - Threatened to physically hurt someone?
 - etc.




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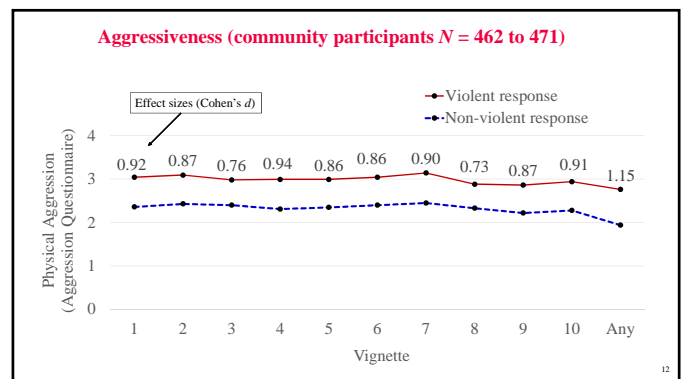


Physical Aggression scale of the Aggression Questionnaire

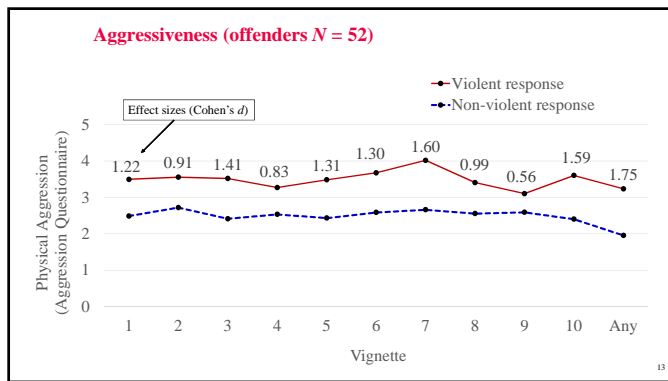
- Once in a while I can't control the urge to strike another person
- Given enough provocation, I may hit another person
- etc.



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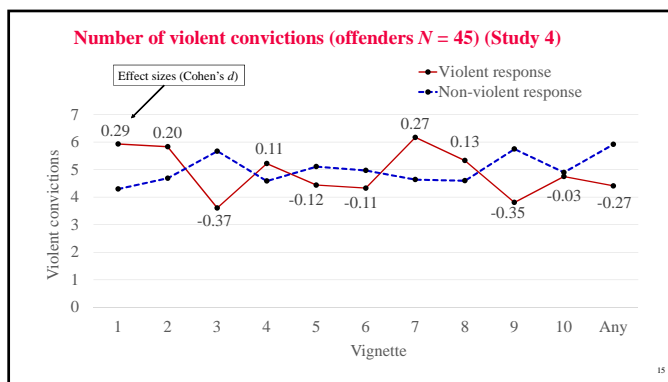
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Number of violent convictions (Offenders only)

- Number of violent offence convictions (e.g., uttering threats, assault, robbery, murder)
- Coded from criminal records

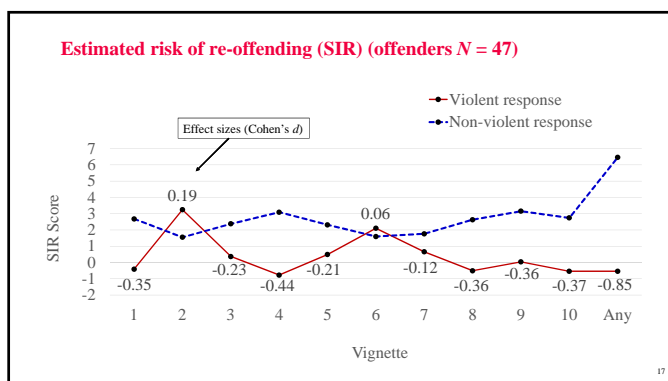
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Statistical Information on Recidivism (SIR) Scale (Offenders only)

- Actuarial risk assessment instrument for general re-offending, but also predicts violent re-offending
- Higher scores indicate *lower* risk

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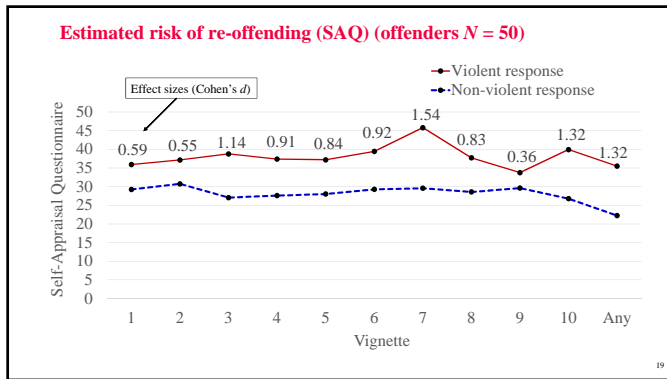


Self-Appraisal Questionnaire (SAQ) (Offenders only)

- Self-report risk assessment instrument for general and violent re-offending

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VPVQ was associated...

- ✓ strongly with more self-reported violence and more physical aggressiveness
- ✓ with higher risk of violent recidivism
 - Strongly for the SAQ
 - Slightly for the SIR
- ✗ weakly and inconsistently with number of violent convictions

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Limitations and Next Steps

- Unsupportive findings with number of violent convictions
 - Method bias?
 - Or just poor criterion for current propensity for violence?
- Replicate and extend to indicators of violent behaviour beyond self-report (e.g., VRAG-R, violent re-offending, peer-reports)

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Conclusion

- Findings suggest that the VPVQ is a useful measure of violent behavior
- VPVQ may facilitate greater symmetry and consistency between the forensic and non-forensic literatures
- VPVQ may facilitate research on the causes and reduction of violence

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