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## Attention Problems and Learning Disabilities in Young Offenders in Detention in Greece

PDF (Size: 78KB) PP. 53-59 DOI: 10.4236/psych.2011.21009

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### ABSTRACT

Background: The relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency is widely established. However, the nature of learning disabilities and the pathway through which they are linked to delinquency are not well understood yet. The contribution of third variables, such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) seems as a promising field of research. The primary aim of this study was to investigate the schooling history of young offenders detained in Greek Correctional Centers in order to examine the extent to which learning disabilities may co-exist with psychosocial adversity and/or specific learning disabilities, in particular, attention problems. Method: The Greek version of the Youth Self Report (YSR), the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) and a questionnaire constructed by the authors were used in the study. Results: Schooling history of the young offenders was characterized by low attendance, high levels of dropouts, grade retention and academic failure. High co-existence of both psychosocial adversity and attention problems, indicating possible presence of ADHD, was found as well. Conclusions: These findings underline the need for routine ADHD screening at schools for the identification and treatment of those children who are at particular risk to get involved in criminal activities. Moreover, the need for the identification of incarcerated youth with ADHD and/or learning disabilities as well as prison staff training are discussed.

### KEYWORDS

Juvenile Offenders, ADHD, Juvenile Delinquency, Learning Disabilities, Greece

### Cite this paper

Maniadaki, K. & Kakouros, E. (2011). Attention Problems and Learning Disabilities in Young Offenders in Detention in Greece. *Psychology*, 2, 53-59. doi: 10.4236/psych.2011.21009.

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