2017

Editorial

Jane L. Ireland

Robert J. Cramer
Old Dominion University, rcramer@odu.edu

Editorial

Jane L. Ireland and Robert J. Cramer

We commence this edition with an invited paper by David DeMatteo, Suraji Wagage, and Jaymes Fairfax-Columbo on cyberstalking. Their paper considers the role of law and public opinion in this rapidly evolving area of study. One of the most interesting findings represents the difference between public opinion and the legal concept of cyberstalking; public opinion does not support the (legal) suggestion that cyberstalking should be considered alongside more general stalking. This reflects a move in the literature more generally that considers cybercrime distinct in many ways from contact offending. Indeed, it parallels considerably with the cyberbullying literature, which some would argue is simply another term for cyberstalking. What DeMatteo and colleagues present, however, is an interesting outline of current opinion in this area of work. The term "cyber action" is also used on occasion and this appears a far less emotive term to use than stalking. The lack of alignment between legal and public opinion provides a marked indication that this is perhaps the next area to focus on.

This is then followed by another novel paper on "negging" by Ruth Tully, Kathleen Green, and Zoe Kukan. This relatively new concept has evolved academically over recent years, moving from what was once described as courting-like behaviours to more advanced and explicit manipulation that could precede abusive intimate relationships. What is particularly useful about the contribution of the current paper is its focus on the range of different forms of "negging"; it moves readers from considering it purely as a dichotomous concept to one that has a range of variations. Questions that are unanswered are the role of men as potential victims of this behaviour and the existence of such behaviours in communities such as LGBTI. The paper does focus on women as victims, which is perhaps characteristic of the majority of research addressing abuse in interpersonal relationships. It is, nevertheless, thought provoking and aims to encourage future research into this important and novel area of study.

Continuing with the concept of victims and capturing men specifically, the edition moves to exploring a surprisingly under-researched area, namely that of male rape victims. It is surprising as there has been research for some time on this topic but it is sporadic in nature and limited in scope. The current paper offered by Aliraza Javaid makes a valuable contribution by examining the role of the voluntary sector in responding to the needs of victims. It is useful since the research has applied value and is not just an academic exercise focussing on the nature and extent of the abuse; rather it provides an in-depth qualitative analysis of the areas that are perhaps neglected and highlights a set of training needs for providing agencies. Findings regarding some discrimination in relation to age and a failure of some services to allow victims to choose the sex of their therapist are perhaps among the most startling results. A need to review this area more broadly across services is certainly indicated.

Expanding further on the importance of service development is the paper by Patrick Rockett, Susan K. Fan, Rocky Dwyer and Tommy Foy on the management of workplace bullying through an examination of a human resource management perspective. The authors adopt a multiple-case study approach to examine management understanding of bullying, including an analysis of policies and procedures. It demonstrates the importance of well-informed leadership, further highlighting not just the effect on victims but also organisational impacts, which include cost implications. The cost in terms of human capital is clear, as is the need to manage workplace bullying as a specific form of occupational stress. Addressing the social system is identified as important, with the harvesting of positive relationships between workers a key aspect. As an area of study, workplace incivility has seen significant development in academic interest over the past decade. The next application arguably should represent an increased focus on how positive social systems can impact.

Examining intervention using a single case study design is the focus of the next paper by Ruth Tully and Alex Barrow, capturing the use of Cognitive Analytic Therapy and its application to intimate partner violence. The paper represents a good example of a case study since it incorporates theory and some measurement of single case evaluation beyond therapist report. Such papers can often serve as the grounding for wider evaluations and thus are best described as feasibility studies. Indeed, the combination of psychometric evaluation with observational methods and descriptive data provides a sound outline for a more refined treatment design with control and treatment groups. The paper is also helpful in highlighting some of the challenges with psychometric reporting and the value of this specific therapy with a forensic group.

The edition then concludes with two papers on sentencing, one by Bryn Bandt-Law and Daniel Krauss on mortality salience on death penalty sentencing and one by Megan Kopkin, Stanley Brodsky, and David DeMatteo on risk assessment on sentencing decisions. Each provides a valuable contribution into how we conceptualise sentencing. Bandt-Law *et al.* demonstrate via experimental design the differing role that defendant mental illness can play in decisions concerning capital sentencing. Mental illness was only viewed as a mitigating factor when participants were induced to consider their own mortality, whereas those who were only exposed to death references during trial saw it as an aggravating feature. Thus, inducing an empathic response through an ability to relate to the consequences (i.e. through consideration of one's own mortality and creating salience) was impacting. This demonstrates a lack of reliability regarding jury process. The paper is a strong contribution that benefits from excellent theoretical handling to demonstrate some obvious potential implications for legal policy. This paper is then built on by the contribution by Kopkin *et al.* that considers sentencing not through jury process but via a review of how risk assessments are used by the legal system through a lens of moral and legal acceptability. It examines an instrument currently under construction in the state of Pennsylvania, USA, to illustrate the challenges and areas where improvement is required. The inclusion of protective factors as a suggestion is a particularly welcome one considering how the forensic field in particular is moving towards such factors as essential to incorporate alongside risk factors. There is also reflection by the authors on the false positive rate and the need to ensure measures have a "reasonable" rate, although clearly there could be a debate on the ethical issues of "reasonable" in high stake decisions concerning liberty. Both papers share themes of proposing reform in sentencing and critically evaluating how current sentencing systems are operating. In doing so they appear to promote the importance of academically informed change.