

## **Violent crime in older adults: Population studies of risk factors and secular trends**

DPhil project for October 2008 entry. Supervisor: Dr Seena Fazel (with additional supervision from Dr Niklas Långström, Karolinska Institute, and Professor Martin Grann, Swedish Prison Service and Stockholm University)

Increasing interest has been directed towards older offenders over the last decade. Demographic trends rising numbers of older people in Western countries have partly driven this, as have the large numbers of older men who have accumulated in jails and prisons in many countries.

A number of issues remain uncertain in the field. The evidence on risk factors for offending and repeat offending in this group is limited. There are no population studies on first time offending in older adults, and the limited work on repeat offending has been focused on sexual offenders. A second area of uncertainty is whether there are increasing rates of offending in older psychiatric patients and if the types of offending are changing. It has been hypothesised that there will be a trend towards more violent offences as older people are physically fitter than they used to be.

This project will use national Swedish databases for crime and hospital discharge diagnoses from 1973 onwards. These are merged using personal identification numbers. The hospital discharge database is the largest of its sort in the world. Socio-demographic and psychiatric risk factors for first time and repeat offending will be examined. Trends in offending rates will also be investigated, and we will explore possible associations with time-dependent phenomena (including an ecological study of associations with antidepressant use). Ethics approval has already been granted for this study.

### *References:*

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