

# Violence, Risk Assessment, and Public Safety

**Baha'í Medical Association  
of Canada**

**Balancing the Social and  
Spiritual Determinants of Health  
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# Violence, Risk Assessment, and Public Safety

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Port Coquitlam, BC, Canada

# What is the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital?

- Inpatient arm of Forensic Psychiatric Services (FPS)
- A secure 190-bed inpatient facility located in Port Coquitam, BC
- Serves individuals referred by the Courts for treatment and assessment
- Provides support for individuals deemed to require a secure inpatient facility because of risk of harm to self and/or others
- A designated mental health facility under the Mental Health Act, which provides for involuntary admissions for treatment purposes



FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC  
SERVICES COMMISSION



“Human happiness is founded  
upon spiritual behaviour.”

Abdu'l-Baha

# Violence

- Definition
  - Any actual, attempted, or threatened harm to self or others.
- Dangerousness to self or others
  - Deinstitutionalization, voluntary hospitalization, and the civil rights movement
- Prediction of violence
  - Certification
- Assessment of risk
  - Evolution of the field

# Sherlock Holmes

- “While the individual man is an insoluble puzzle, in the aggregate he becomes a mathematical certainty. You can, for example, never foretell what any man will do, but you can say with precision what an average number will be up to. Individuals vary, but percentages remain constant.”
  - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. 1890.

# Risk Assessment

- Definition
  - ‘Risk assessment is a method of calculating the relative value and likelihood of different possible outcomes.’
- Early research
  - Epidemiology
- Psychosis and violence
  - Threat/Control/Override
  - Birth cohort studies
  - Substance abuse

# Risk Assessment

- Substance abuse and violence
  - Significant correlation
- Sociodemographic factors and violence
  - Homelessness
  - Witnessing or experiencing violence
  - Mood disorder
  - PTSD
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Socioeconomic level
  - Education level

# Risk Assessment

- The Present
  - “more than chance validity.”
- The Dichotomy
  - Clinical prediction of violence
  - Actuarial prediction of violence
- Structured professional judgment

# Public Safety

- Acting on the risk assessment
  - Tarasoff
  - Duty to protect
    - Notify potential victim
    - Notify the police or a crown attorney
  - THREAT
    - Threats of Harm that are Real, Enactable, Acute, and Targeted

# Risk Management and Reduction

- Risk management
  - Is the patient treated?
  - What is the discharge plan?
  - What is the system for early detection of problems?
  - Is all this enough?
- Risk assessment identifies the treatable factors
  - Antipsychotics
  - CBT
  - Anger management programs
  - Outpatient commitment

# The Factors

- **Social skills**
  - **Occupational**
  - **Self-care**
  - **Emotional state**
  - **Impulse control**
  - **Social support**
  - **Attitudes**
  - **Rule adherence**
  - **Insight**
  - **Coping**
- Relationships**
  - Recreational**
  - Mental state**
  - Substance use**
  - External triggers**
  - Material resources**
  - Medical adherence**
  - Conduct**
  - Plans**
  - Treatability**

*“...that which hath streamed forth from the Most Exalted Pen is conducive to the glory, the advancement and education of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. It is indeed the sovereign remedy for every disease, could they but comprehend and perceive it.”*

**Baha'u'llah**

# References

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