

Folk Intuitions Regarding Psychiatric Diagnosis, Responsibility, and Punishment (#123729)

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1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

Does a diagnosis of a specific mental illness affect how an individual is perceived as being blameworthy and/or responsible for a crime as well as the type of punishment received? We hypothesize that both experimental conditions (the schizophrenia diagnosis and the autism diagnosis) will be significantly different from the control condition, as in, participants will see the diagnosis as a factor of wanting to reduce responsibility and subsequent punishment.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

Responsibility: Following the initial vignette describing an individual, Sally, committing an act of aggravated assault, participants will be asked 5 questions regarding their beliefs about moral and legal responsibility pertaining to the situation that they were introduced to. All questions will be ranked on a Likert scale; for example, question 3 asks "Should Sally be held morally responsible for what she did?" and the participant will choose one of the 7 options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Punishment: Participants will then be asked 7 questions regarding their attitudes about punishment, both specific to the vignette they were provided, as well as more general questions to gauge their intuitions regarding how people ought to be punished. 5 questions offer multiple choice answers, such as "what kind of sentence should Sally receive?" with the option to choose on a 7-point scale (1=the most lenient, 7= the most severe). One question asks the participant to rank 4 statements in order from 1 to 4, 1 being the statement they agree with the most and 4 being the statement they agree with the least, where each statement reflects the general ideology for different aims of punishment (choice a pertains to retributive justice, choice b pertains to protection, choice c pertains to rehabilitation, and choice d pertains to deterrence). The final question is an open-ended question that for the control condition, asks is there is any further information the participant would need that may change their previous responses, and for the experimental conditions if the diagnosis of her condition (either autism or schizophrenia) impacted their previous responses. The researchers will read through and aggregate the data on the open-ended responses.

Attitudes about Mental Illness: Participants are asked 5 statements regarding attitudes about mental illness based on characterizations of mental illness as being linked to violent behavior, and are asked on a 6-point Likert scale to rank how much they agree with the statement, wherein 0=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

There will be 3 conditions (one control, two experimental) that participants will be randomly assigned to. Each condition consists of a vignette describing an individual committing an act of aggravated assault. The control condition will not provide any further information, whereas the experimental conditions will include a statement about the individual's diagnosis (1) autism and 2) schizophrenia), as well as related symptoms from the DSM-5 for the relevant diagnosis.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

We will compare open-ended responses to one another. We will use ANOVAs and T-tests to examine differences between experimental conditions on our 3 dependent variables.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

We will exclude participants who did not correctly answer the attention check question.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

Between the control trial, the autism condition, and the schizophrenia condition, this will total 300 participants; 100 participants per condition.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

As an exploratory second analysis, we are going to explore differences in responses between the autism and schizophrenia conditions, though, have no specific hypothesis regarding this.