

The implications of psychopathic moral deficit for therapy: towards a theoretical model

Sarah, J.H. Coldwell, David A.L. Coldwell

1. The Dickson Poon School of Law Kings College, United Kingdom
2. University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa



Abstract

Statement of the problem: Measures taken to address psychopathy may have been ineffective because the individual psychopath's degree of 'moral deficit' is not accounted for in the application of therapy.

Purpose of the study: The paper develops a theoretical model of 'moral deficit' that is aligned with the appropriateness of therapy ranging from the extreme 'classical approach' of total confinement to the modern therapy that aims to reintegrate the psychopath with society with 'moralizing therapy'.

Methodology: Analysis of secondary data from extant literature is used to develop the theoretical model of 'moral deficit'.

Findings: Secondary data analysis suggests that the extent of psychopathic 'moral deficit' is an important factor in the selection of appropriate therapeutic measures for psychopathy treatment.

Conclusion & Significance: Degrees of psychopathic moral deficit have an important bearing on the appropriateness of therapeutic treatment.

Recommendations: It is recommended that therapeutic treatment of psychopathy makes greater provision for the extent of psychopathic 'moral deficit' in assessing the most appropriate applications.

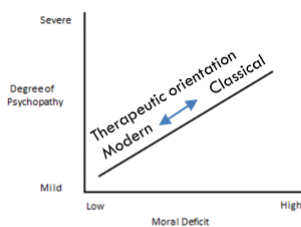


Figure 1: A heuristic model of degree psychopathy, moral deficit and appropriate therapeutic orientation interrelations.



Biography:

Sarah Coldwell, M.Sc., graduated from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience and The Dickson Poon School of Law Kings College, London and currently works as a Mental Health adviser and trainer for the Electrical Industries Charity in London, England. David Coldwell D.Litt et Phil, FCIPD, is a Professor in Management at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He is interested in employee behavior, mental health and organizational entropy and has recently published in Entropy and the Journal of Environmental and Public Health.

Speaker Publications:

1. Aaltola, E. (2013) Affective empathy as core moral agency: psychopathy, autism and reason revisited. *Philosophical Explorations*. [Online] 17 (1), 76-92.
2. Aharoni, E. et al. (2012) Can psychopathic offenders discern moral wrongs? A new look at the moral/conventional distinction. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. [Online] 121 (2), 484-497.
3. Edens, J.F., Petrila, J., & Kelley, S.E. (2018). Legal and also ethical issues in the assessment and treatment of psychopathy. In C. Patrick (Ed.). *Handbook of Psychopathy* (2nd ed.). New York. Guilford.
4. Glenn, A. et al. (2008) The neural correlates of moral decision-making in psychopathy. *Molecular Psychiatry*. [Online] 14 (1), 5-6.

[7th World Congress on Mental Health, Psychiatry and Wellbeing](#); March 27-28, 2020 Barcelona, Spain | Webinar.

Abstract Citation:

Sarah, J.H. Coldwell, The implications of psychopathic moral deficit for therapy: towards a theoretical model, Annual Mental Health 2020, 7th world congress on mental health, psychiatry and wellbeing; March 27-28, 2020 Barcelona, Spain | Webinar.

(<https://annualmentalhealth.psychiatryconferences.com/abstract/2020/the-implications-of-psychopathic-moral-deficit-for-therapy-towards-a-theoretical-model>)