

Forensic risk assessments of juvenile fire setters based on parental endorsement responses

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Juvenile Fire Setters/Youthful misuse of fire (YMF) is a chronic international problem that has garnered increased research attention. For example, in the United States the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicated that between 2005 and 2009 there was an average of 56,300 child-playing fires reported to U.S. municipal fire departments per year (2012). These fires caused annual averages of 110 civilian deaths, 880 civilian injuries, and \$286 million in property damage. Structure fires accounted for 22% of fires, but 98% of civilian deaths, and 93% of property damage. Outside or unclassified fires accounted for 76% of the fires, and vehicle fires for 2% (FEMA, 2012). Most loss of life and damage occur in structure fires, specifically home fires (Evarts, 2012). Forensically, the risk assessment process is complicated because of the clinical heterogeneity of psychological factors and wide geographic dispersion of juvenile fire setters. In addition, the available of data has been limited to small subject groups. Currently, there is no national database to share or compare existing information about Youthful Misuse of Fire (YMF). This presentation presents the results of a Kuder-Richardson formula 20 (KR-20) and a Coefficient Alpha (Chronbach's Alpha) conducted on a convenience sample of 14 unrelated parents with children ages eight or older to determine the publically perceived homogeneity of meaning for the eight overlapping items on various YMF measures. Data is also reported on a sample of 83 YMF/JFS males who completed the Fineman Parent Questionnaire (FPQ).

Biography

Ronn Johnson is licensed and board certified Clinical Psychologist with extensive experience in academic and clinical settings. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology. He has served as a staff psychologist in community mental health clinics, hospitals, schools and university counselling centers. The University of Iowa, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Central Oklahoma, and San Diego State University are among the sites of his previous academic appointments. His forensic, scholarship, and teaching interests include: ethical-legal issues, police psychology, women death penalty, and contra terrorism.

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