
Symposium TA-1
Thursday, July 27, 2006

The Bimodal Classification of Aggression: Developmental Implications and Clinical Efficacy



Aggressive behavior has traditionally been classified into two distinct subtypes; 1) an emotionally charged, uncontrolled type of aggressive display (reactive, impulsive, hostile, affective) or 2) a planned, controlled, unemotional aggressive act (proactive, premeditated, instrumental, predatory). While a number of research criteria, semi-structured interviews, and self-report scales have been proposed to classify violent individuals or the aggressive acts they display, the clinical usefulness of these classification techniques has been questioned. The present symposium presents data showing the presence of aggressive subtypes across the lifespan. Using data from both clinical and non-clinical samples a wide range of physiological, cognitive and behavioral differences between the aggressive subtypes will be discussed. Taken together these data suggest that the bimodal classification (reactive/impulsive vs. proactive/premeditated) of aggression is developmentally important, clinically useful and linked to treatment/intervention outcome.