



# Cruelty to animals and Antisocial Personality Disorder. Criminological and forensic correlations

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“We must accept finite disappointment, but  
never lose infinite hope.”  
**Martin Luther King, Jr.**





# ° PREVIOUS STUDIES ON VIOLENT CRIMES AND ANIMAL ABUSE



## Ressler, Douglas, Burgess

Ressler, R.K., Burgess, A.W., & Douglas, J.E. (1988). *Sexual Homicide: Patterns and Motives*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Study based on male homicide perpetrators whose offenses also included some form of sexual crime, 36% of offenders were violent to animals in childhood, **46% in adolescence**, and 36% in adulthood based on self-report measures

# CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND OTHER CRIMES

A study by the MSPCA and Northeastern University

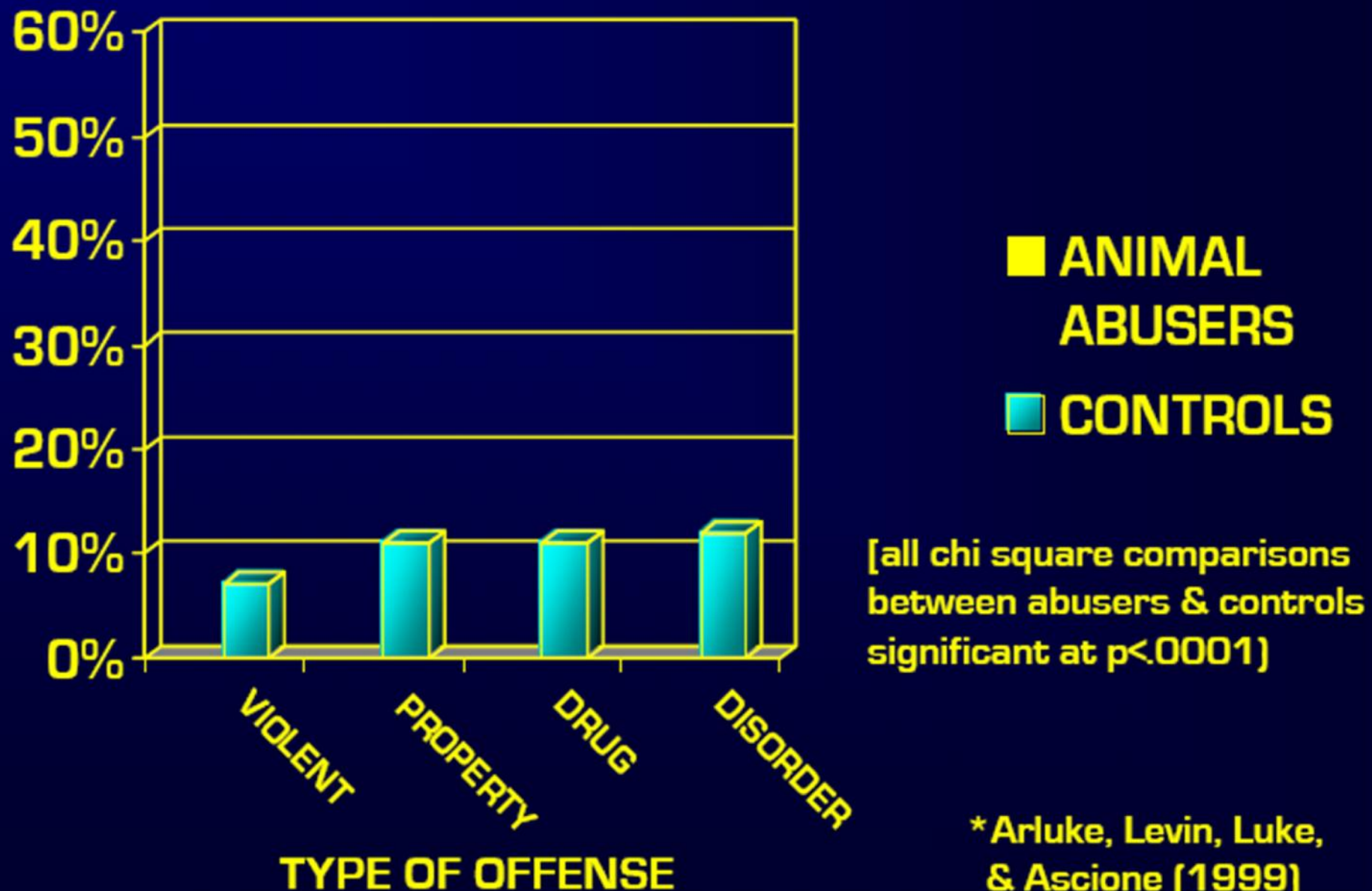


December 1997

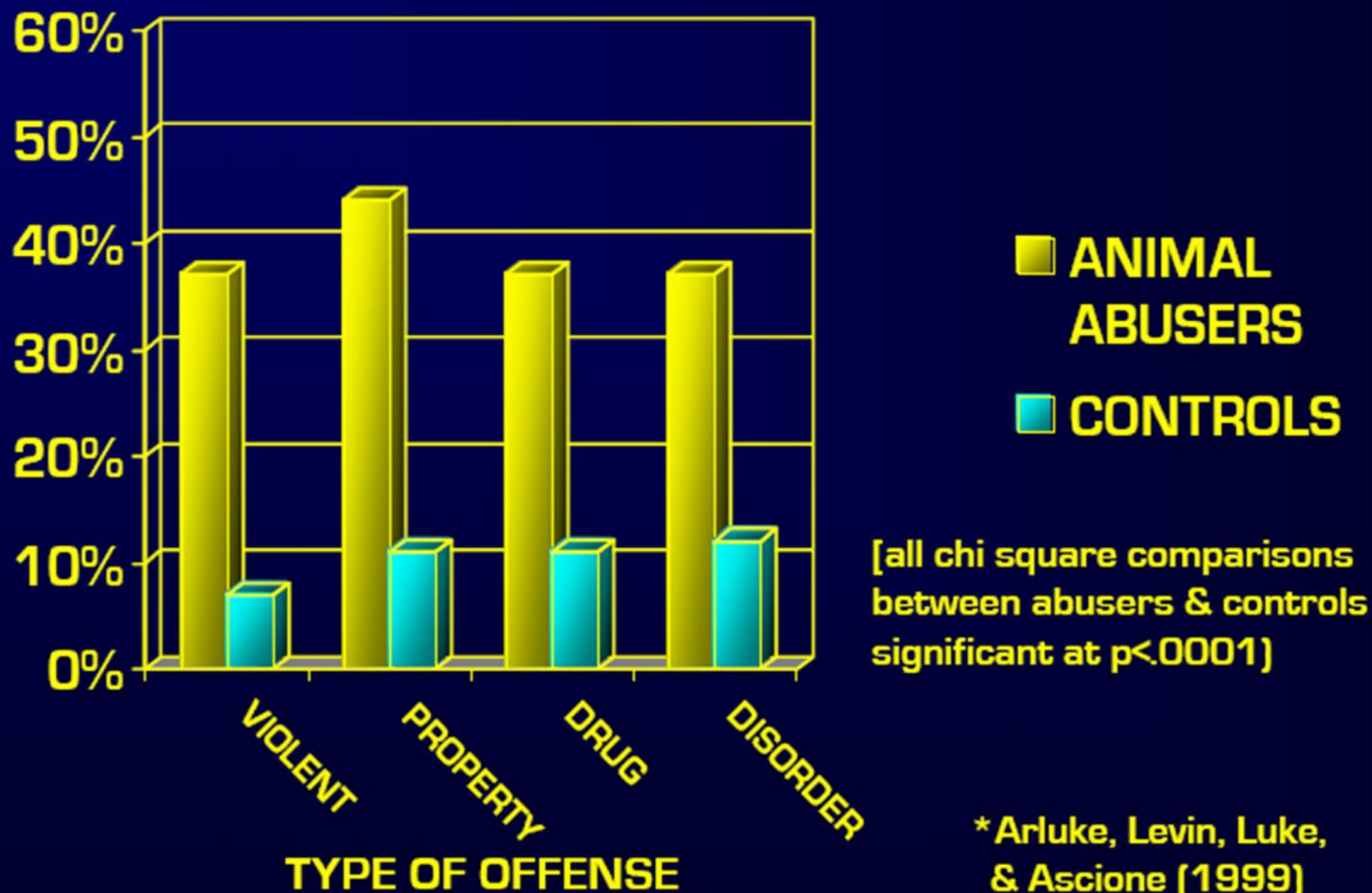
Principal Investigators: Carter Luke, MSPCA  
Arnold Arluke, Northeastern University  
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**MSPCA**  
MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE  
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

## PERCENT WITH OTHER OFFENSES NOTED IN STATE CRIMINAL RECORDS \*



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## ANIMAL ABUSERS' CRIMINAL RECORDS

CRIME	ABUSERS	CONTROLS
Violent Crime	38%	7%
Property Crime	44%	11%
Drug Crime	37%	11%
Disorder Crime	37%	12%
Any of the 4 types of crime	70%	22%

Seventy percent of the people who committed violent crimes against animals also had criminal records for violent, property, drug, or disorder crimes. When compared to their next-door neighbors, people who abused animals were five times more likely to commit violent crimes against people, four times more likely to commit property crimes, and three times more likely to have a record for drug or disorderly conduct offenses.

# Animal Cruelty and Psychiatric Disorders

Roman Gleyzer, MD, Alan R. Felthous, MD, and Charles E. Holzer III, PhD


Animal cruelty in childhood, although generally viewed as abnormal or deviant, for years was not considered symptomatic of any particular psychiatric disorder. Although animal cruelty is currently used as a diagnostic criterion for conduct disorder, research establishing the diagnostic significance of this behavior is essentially nonexistent. In the current study, investigators tested the hypothesis that a history of substantial animal cruelty is associated with a diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder (APD) and looked for associations with other disorders commonly diagnosed in a population of criminal defendants. Forty-eight subjects, criminal defendants who had histories of substantial animal cruelty, were matched with defendants without this history. Data were systematically obtained from the files by using four specifically designed data retrieval outlines. A history of animal cruelty during childhood was significantly associated with APD, antisocial personality traits, and polysubstance use. Mental retardation, psychotic disorders, and alcohol abuse showed no such association.

Am Acad Psychiatry Law 30:257-65, 2002

**98 criminal defendants [mean age 31 years], half with a history of "substantial animal cruelty" [AC] and half without such a history [NO-AC]**

**Polysubstance abuse > for AC than NO-AC,  $p < .0016$**

**APD diagnosis > for AC (37.5%) than NO-AC (8.3%),  $p < .0016$**

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- One study using a sample of 64 men revealed that **46% of convicted rapists** and **30% of convicted child molesters** admitted to being cruel to animals during their childhood or adolescence
  - Tingle, Barnard, Robbins, Newman, & Hutchinson. (1986). Childhood and adolescent characteristics of pedophiles and rapists. *International Journal L. & Psychiatry* 9, 103-116.

## Police



*Violence and other criminality* With regard to criminal behavior, a study by the Chicago Police Department analyzed the arrest data for persons charged with crimes against animals for the period of July 2001 to July 2004. The study revealed an extremely high likelihood that animal cruelty was related to other offenses, both violent and nonviolent. Eighty-six percent of animal offenders had multiple arrests in their past, 70% had been arrested for felonies, and 70% had narcotics charges. Approximately two-thirds had been arrested for battery-related violent offense charges—i.e., aggravated domestic battery, domestic battery, aggravated battery, and simple battery—and over half were alleged to be members of gangs [40].



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## Journal of Psychiatric Research

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jpsychires](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jpsychires)

### Correlates of cruelty to animals in the United States: Results from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions

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- **The prevalence of all antisocial behaviors was higher among persons with a lifetime history of animal cruelty** compared to persons without a lifetime history of animal cruelty.
  - The most common behavior for persons with a history of animal cruelty was doing something that one could be arrested for irrespective of whether they were caught or not (61.70%, CI = 57.31–65.92%).
  - The least prevalent behavior was forcing someone to have sex (1.20%, CI = 0.59–2.41%). The strongest associations between antisocial behaviors and animal cruelty were found for robbing or mugging another person (OR = 17.93, 95% CI = 11.49–27.97), fire setting (OR = 12.79, 95% CI = 8.85–18.49), and harassing and threatening someone (OR = 12.64, 95% CI = 9.90–16.14).

Psychiatric comorbidities of individuals with and without a lifetime history of cruelty to animals.

Comorbid psychiatric disorder	History of cruelty to animals (N = 728) % (95% CI <sup>a</sup> )	No history of cruelty to animals (N = 41,203) % (95% CI)	Sociodemographic characteristics and other psychiatric disorders AOR <sup>b</sup> (95% CI)
<i>Mood disorders</i>			
Major depressive disorder	32.77 (28.38–37.48)	16.58 (15.89–17.29)	1.27 (0.75–1.69)
Bipolar disorder	19.57 (15.80–23.98)	5.50 (5.18–5.84)	0.99 (0.70–1.39)
Dysthymia	11.71 (9.40–14.49)	4.23 (3.95–4.53)	1.17 (0.81–1.70)
<i>Anxiety disorders</i>			
Panic disorder	7.49 (5.46–10.21)	4.03 (3.77–4.32)	0.89 (0.59–1.34)
Social phobia	13.84 (11.07–17.16)	4.93 (4.55–5.35)	1.13 (0.82–1.55)
Specific phobia	16.81 (13.88–20.22)	9.49 (8.89–10.13)	1.03 (0.76–1.38)
Generalized anxiety disorder	10.75 (8.29–13.83)	4.12 (3.79–4.48)	1.14 (0.75–1.72)
<i>Substance use disorders</i>			
Alcohol use disorder	63.69 (58.71–68.38)	29.77 (28.28–31.30)	<b>1.56 (1.20–2.03)</b>
Nicotine dependence	36.16 (31.39–41.21)	17.56 (16.63–18.54)	0.93 (0.71–1.22)
Marijuana use disorder	27.90 (23.87–32.32)	8.15 (7.62–8.71)	1.05 (0.77–1.44)
Other illicit drug use disorder	19.92 (16.38–24.01)	5.02 (4.63–5.44)	1.05 (0.77–1.43)
Psychotic disorder	3.63 (2.19–5.95)	0.74 (0.64–0.86)	1.14 (0.59–2.22)
Conduct disorder	8.29 (5.66–11.98)	0.94 (0.83–1.08)	<b>9.53 (6.07–14.97)</b>
<i>Personality disorders</i>			
Avoidant	9.89 (7.26–13.33)	2.27 (2.06–2.51)	1.50 (0.97–2.30)
Dependent	2.66 (1.39–5.01)	0.46 (0.38–0.57)	0.76 (0.33–1.71)
Obsessive–compulsive	26.56 (22.53–31.01)	7.74 (7.30–8.21)	<b>1.65 (1.24–2.20)</b>
Paranoid	18.09 (14.79–21.93)	4.27 (3.98–4.58)	1.34 (0.93–1.94)
Schizoid	9.54 (7.17–12.59)	3.09 (2.85–3.35)	0.70 (0.44–1.12)
Antisocial	35.84 (31.53–40.40)	3.13 (2.88–3.40)	<b>6.68 (5.05–8.85)</b>
Histrionic	10.69 (8.12–13.94)	1.72 (1.56–1.90)	<b>1.62 (1.14–2.31)</b>
Pathological gambling	3.02 (1.56–5.75)	0.39 (0.32–0.47)	<b>2.23 (1.04–4.78)</b>
Family history of antisocial behavior	53.87 (49.40–58.28)	22.49 (21.45–23.56)	<b>2.12 (1.73–2.58)</b>

Note: AOR values in bold are statistically significant ( $p$ -value < .05).

<sup>a</sup> CI: confidence interval.

<sup>b</sup> AOR: odds ratio adjusted for sociodemographic variables, lifetime psychiatric disorders, and a family history of antisocial behavior.



# Research on the Link in Spain



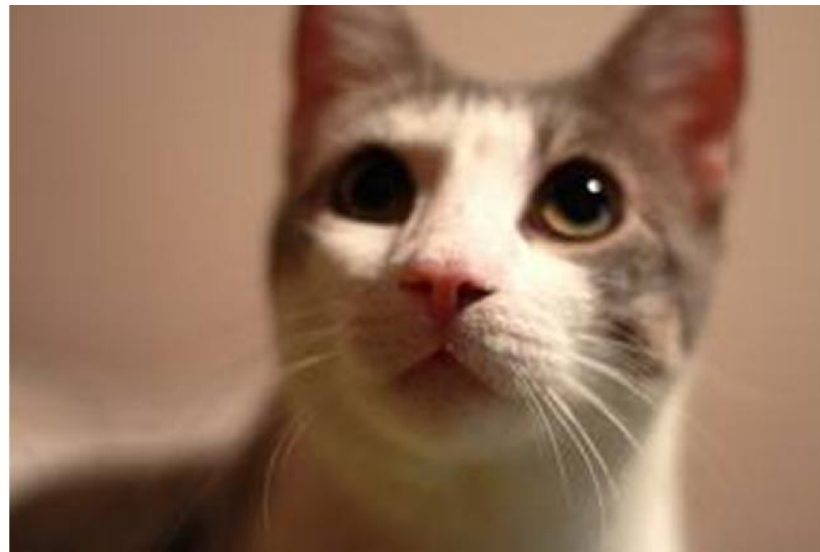
## Spanish Penal Code: Art. 337

"Those who maltreat pets and **unjustifiably** causing death or injuries that occur causing a serious physical impairment, will be punished with imprisonment of three months to one year and disqualification special one to three years for the exercise of profession, trade or commerce which has a connection with animals."



# DEFINITION OF ANIMAL ABUSE

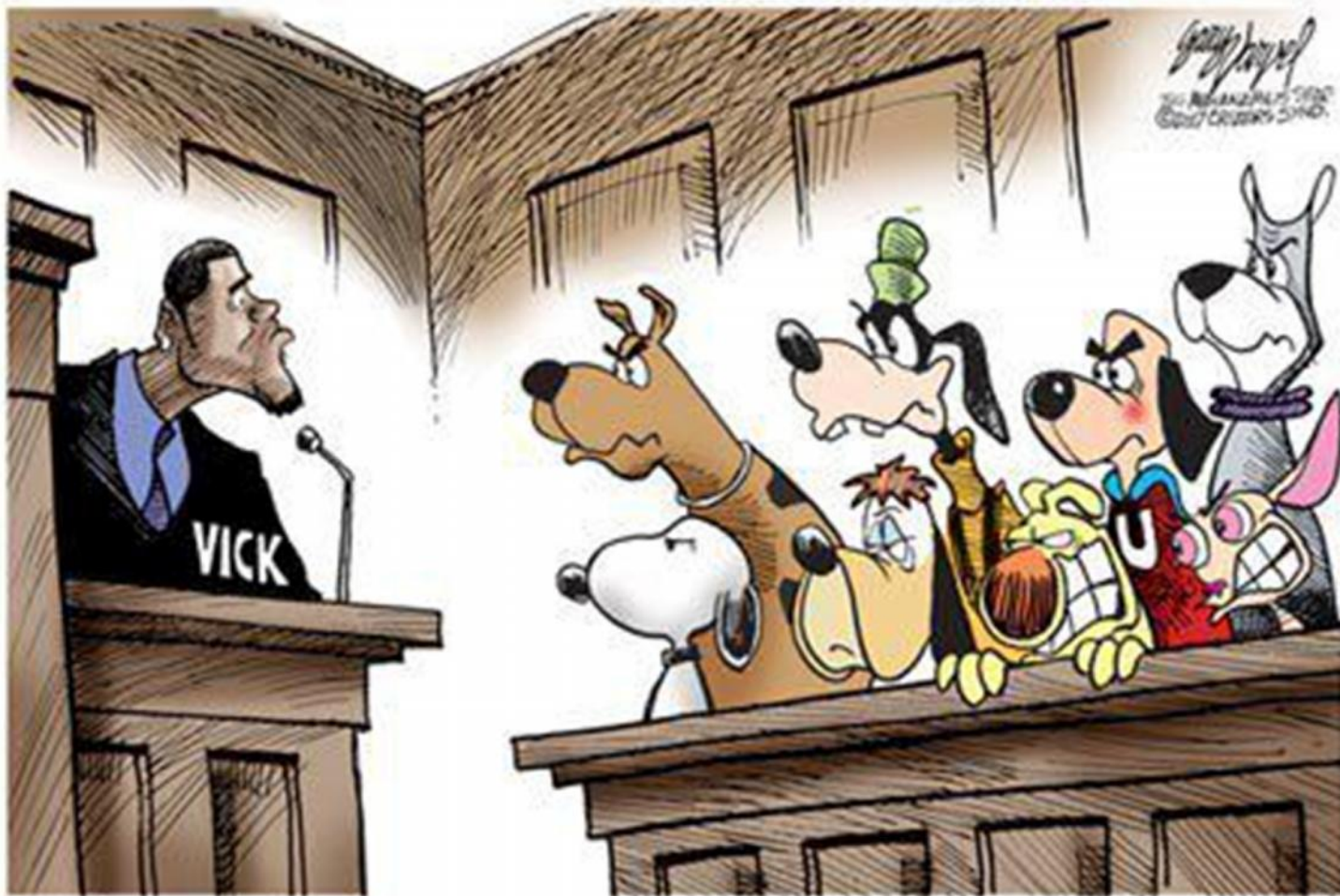
“Socially unacceptable behavior that intentionally causes unnecessary pain, suffering, or distress to and/or death of an animal” (Ascione, 1993)



# Hoarding



# Dog/cock fighting



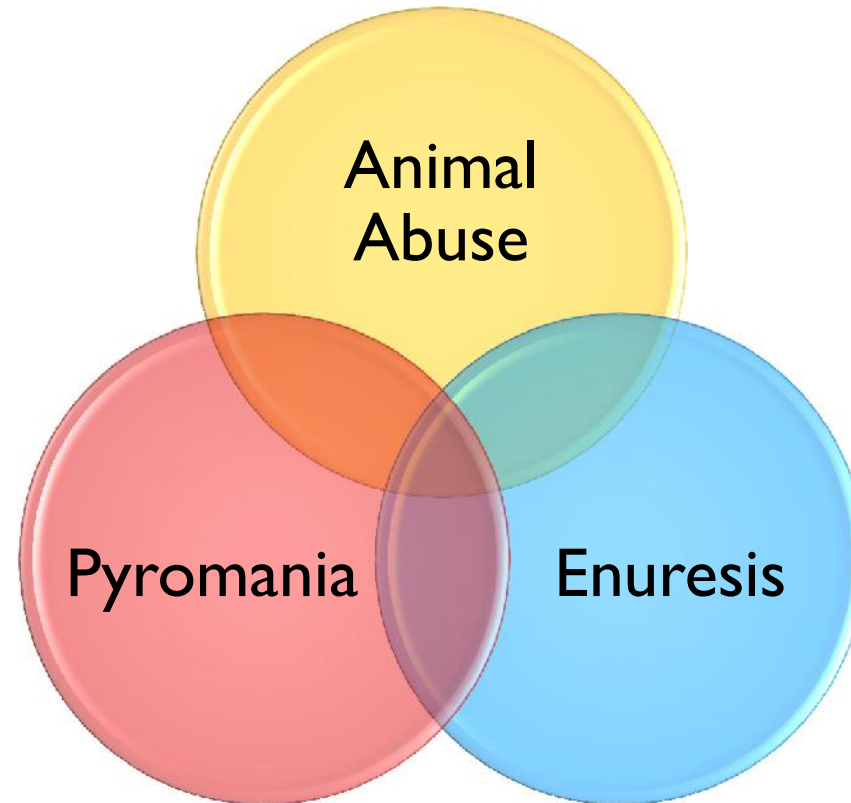
- Cuquerella Fuentes, A. Subirana Domènech, M. , Querol i Viñas, N., Ascione, Frank R. (2003), Publicacions del Centre d'Estudis Jurídics: Avaluació del maltractament als animals i la violència domèstica mitjançant els qüestionaris RACA en població medicoforense amb diagnòstic de psicopatia

**Sample:** 24 inmates (forensic) diagnosed with ASPD

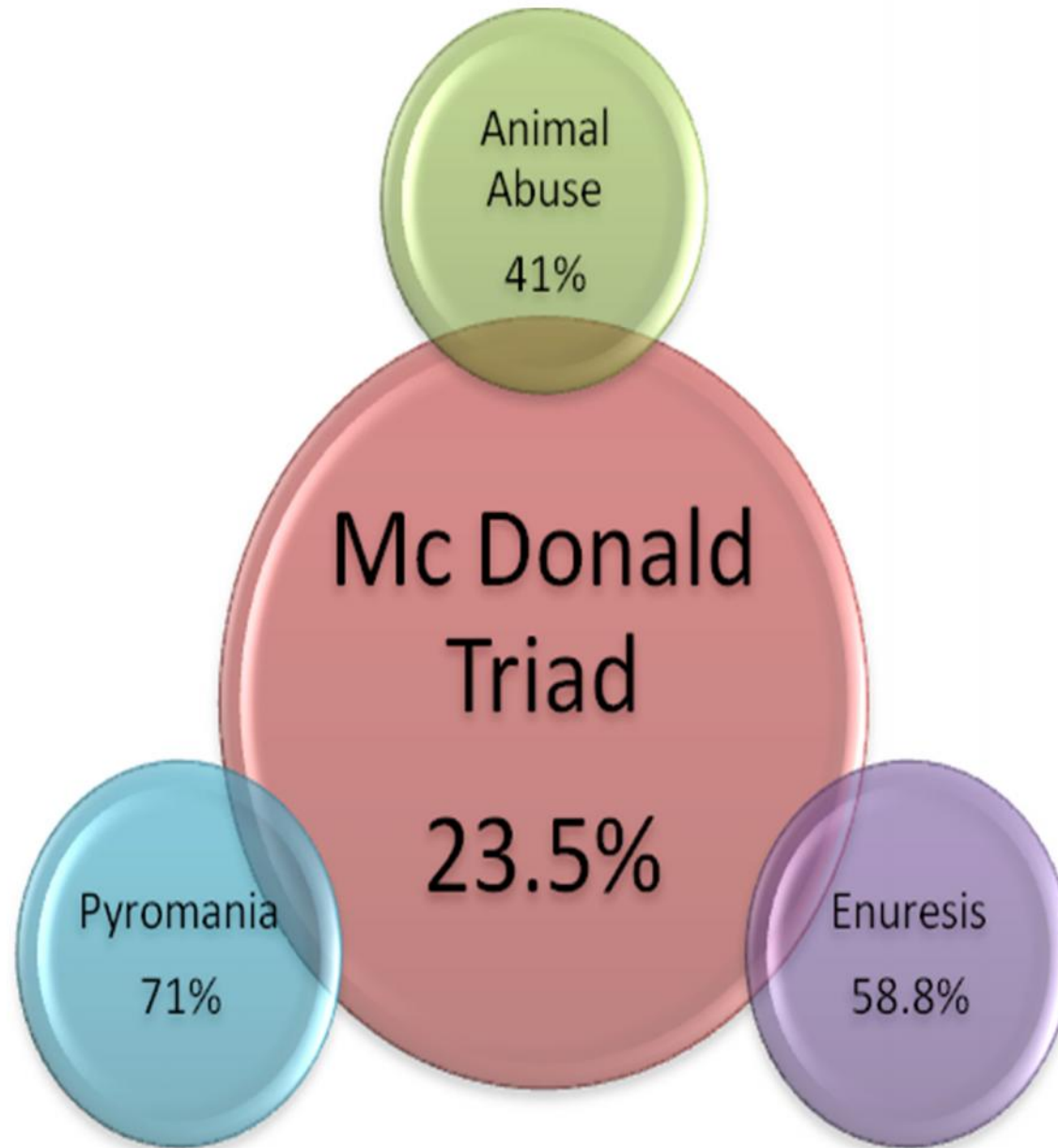
**Characteristics:**

- 14% sentenced for violent felonies (homicide, murder, murder attempt)
- 69% committed rape (in 4 cases, # of victims 5-23)

# McDonald Triad



**MacDonald (1963), Hellman & Blackman, 1966, Tapia (1971)**





# SAMPLE (2011)

- 52 forensic cases

51 men

average age 33, 26 years

With a history of animal abuse



# Dependent variables

- (a) crime committed (violent/non-violent)
- (b) presence or not of two dimensional psychopathy factors (PCL:SV; Hare 1985), and ASPD (DSM-IV-TR)
- (c) McDonald triad (cruelty to animals, pyromania, enuresis) and Pincus triad (child abuse, brain injury, paranoia)



## Status

Jail (77%)

Parole (15%)

Security measures (psychiatric) (8%)



## Previous History:

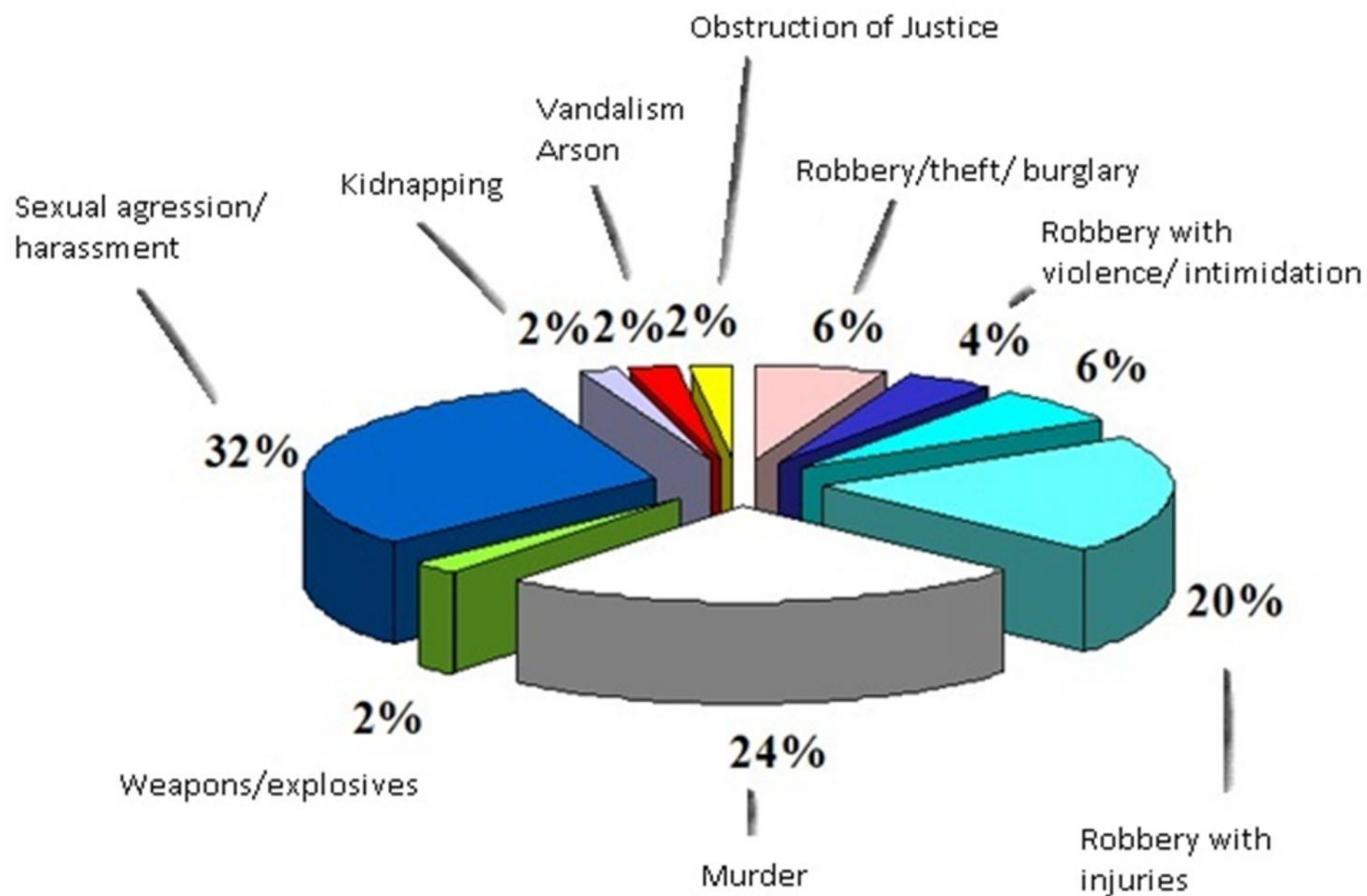
Violent crime 77%

Alcohol abuse 35.8%

Drug abuse 83%



Antisocial Personality Disorder  
**85%**



## Pshychopathy (PCL: sv Hart, Cox & Hare)

High 20%

Moderate 36%

Low 40%

- Of the sample of 52 cases with a history of animal abuse, the cause for their prosecution is a violent crime (**89%**)
- They have a previous history of violent offending (**77%**)



- High scores in psychopathy and ASPD related to more sadistic animal abuse and more sadistic interpersonal violence.





# CONCLUSIONS





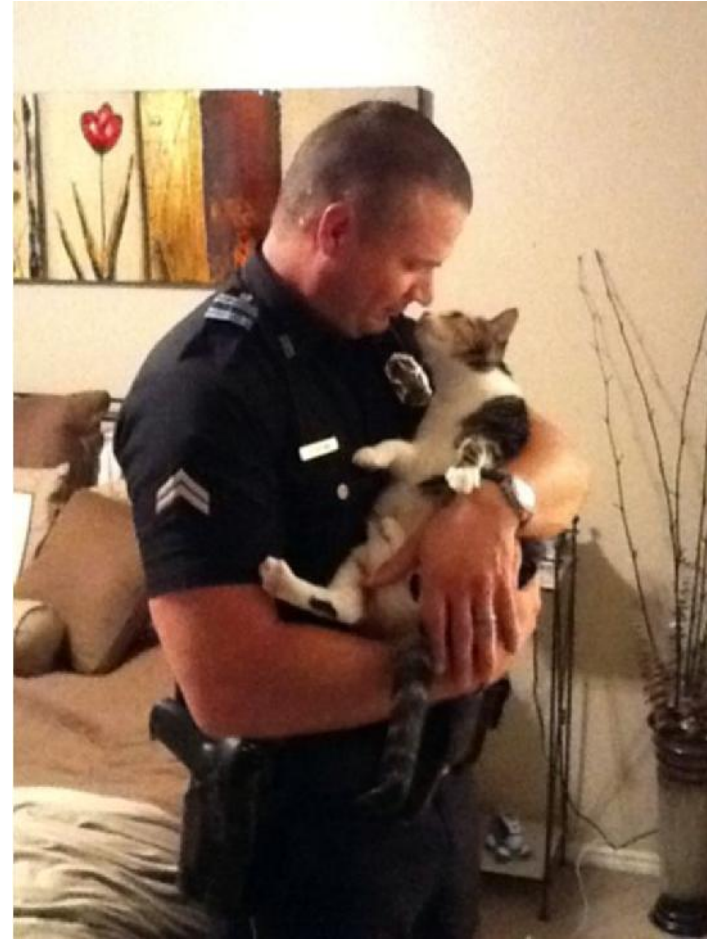


## The Link: IPV and cruelty to animals

- There is a growing body of evidence that indicates further examination may be warranted.
- The task for the mental health community /criminologists is to place greater emphasis on this element of offending behaviour in their examination and diagnostic procedures

# The Link: IPV and cruelty to animals

- Law-enforcement agents should be trained specifically.



**Thank you!!!!**

