



Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

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Advancing knowledge of the causes of delinquency: Within-individual and quasi-experimental evidence across multiple cohort studies

Effective prevention and intervention programs aimed at reducing violence and delinquency require a deep understanding of the causal factors behind such behaviors. However, limited knowledge exists about the true causes of delinquent conduct. Recent advances in data analysis and research methodology emphasize within-individual and quasi-experimental approaches as optimal for identifying these causes. By distinguishing causal risk factors from mere correlational markers, this research seeks to clarify the relationship between delinquent peers and delinquent behavior.

Previous studies comparing risk factors

based on between- and within-individual analyses have raised questions about whether peer influence truly leads to delinquency. For instance, within-individual analysis found no association between delinquent peers and future delinquent behavior, casting doubt on the causal nature of this relationship. This project aims to further this line of inquiry by providing rigorous within-individual and quasi-experimental evidence to answer the critical question: does associating with delinquent peers cause future delinquent behavior?

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