

Psychopathy increases risk of violence in romantic relationships

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UBC Associate Professor Zach Walsh. Credit: UBC

People with higher levels of psychopathic tendencies are more likely to assault their romantic partners. They are also more likely to drink alcohol, a UBC study has found.

The study, which was conducted at UBC's Okanagan campus, involved

looking at data and police reports involving 700 US civil psychiatric patients in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as well as 870 students at UBC's campus in Kelowna, BC.

"In this research, we noted that having [higher levels](#) of psychopathic personality traits is an important predictor of how likely someone is to engage in [intimate partner violence](#)," says Zach Walsh, an associate professor of psychology and the study's principal investigator. "While we also found that people with [psychopathic tendencies](#) tended to drink more alcohol, the data tells us it is their personality traits more than substance use that is associated with violence.

"With further investigation, this research may be able to assist policy makers and service providers in their efforts to both predict and reduce violence among couples."

The research also found that association between psychopathic personality traits and violence was consistent across both students and [psychiatric patients](#).

Walsh's study, conducted with Jenifer Langille of UBC and Marisa Okano of McGill University, was recently published in the journal *Law and Human Behaviour*.

Provided by University of British Columbia

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