

Why Are Crime Victims at Risk of Being Victimized Again? Substance Use, Depression, and Offending as Mediators of the Victimization-Revictimization Link.

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Abstract

Using three waves of data from 5,165 male and 5,924 female teenagers surveyed in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, this study tested whether drug use, alcohol use, depression, and offending mediate the link between a serious violent criminal victimization and a subsequent serious violent revictimization. Results indicated that victimization at Wave 1 significantly predicted changes in violent offending, delinquency, and drug use at Wave 2, even controlling for all other lagged mediators. Violent offending emerged as a robust and consistent mediator of the victimization-revictimization link for males. For females, all the mediators together produced a significant and large indirect effect that reduced the direct effect of prior victimization to nonsignificance, but no one single mediator was significant. This study demonstrates that revictimization is partially the result of behavioral changes following victimization. The fact that mediation between victimization and revictimization occurred through a cluster of changed behaviors and moods suggests that the impact of victimization is greater for females than males. This evidence that victimization changes behavior and increases risks and that these risks differ by gender has implications for both mental health care and law enforcement.

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