Psychopathy, Intellectual Humility, and Social Media: A Strategy to Prevent School Shootings?

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Throughout the country, school shootings have disrupted harmony and injected fear into the lives of students and the community. The trait Psychopathy has been clearly linked to gun violence in adolescents and adults. (1,2) Social media has also been linked to youth violence. (9) My study aimed to determine whether Psychopathy is related to levels of social media use and Intellectual Humility (IH). IH is defined as recognizing that one's beliefs and opinions might be incorrect. (4) Its subsets were: Separation of Ego from Intellect, Changing Your Viewpoint based on Others' Viewpoints, Lack of Overconfidence, and Respecting Others' Viewpoints. (4) Psychopathy is a multifaceted trait made up of the affective, interpersonal, and behavioral subsets. Gun violence is mainly related to the affective facet. (2) My hypothesis was that people with Psychopathy, who are predisposed to acts of gun violence, would have low Intellectual Humility and high social media usage. Overall, Psychopathy was inversely correlated to IH. I found that there was no relationship between Psychopathy and social media ($p = 0.277$). However, the IH subscale "openness to revising viewpoints" is found in people that tend to score high on psychopathic traits ($p = <0.001$). The ability to respect others' viewpoints, even when they differ from one's own, is also a quality that individuals with psychopathic traits had in my cohort (linear relationship & $p = <0.01$). This shows the potential for people with psychopathy to be reasoned with and that society can lessen tendencies toward violence through counseling rather than social media. This promising discovery could be used to counsel people with psychopathic tendencies and intervene against aggressive behaviors such as gun violence in schools.

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