Psychological Disorders Are Not a Main Driver of Crime

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Less than 10 percent of crimes committed by mentally ill people in the United States are actually linked to their disorders, according to a new study in the journal Law and Human Behavior reported by HealthDay News.

For the study, researchers at Normandale Community College in Minnesota analyzed 429 crimes committed by 143 people in the state who said they had depression, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Investigators then compared their mental illness symptoms over the past 15 years with the nature of their crimes.

Only 7.5 percent of their criminal activities were directly linked to their altered mental state, with 3 percent linked to symptoms of depression, 4 percent to schizophrenia and 10 percent with bipolar disorder symptoms.

Two-thirds of the people who did break the law because of their mental illness also admitted to committing other crimes for unrelated reasons. Substance abuse, poverty, unemployment and homelessness were found to be the primary drivers for their criminal behavior.

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