

The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology

Departmental Seminar

***Delinquency in Adolescents with Attention Deficit
Hyperactivity Disorder and/or Reading Disability***

Date: April 11, 2014 (Friday)
Time: 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Venue: Room 813, 8/F, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU
Speaker: Ms. Poon Kei Yan Kean
Ph.D Candidate
Department of Psychology
The University of Hong Kong

Despite many studies report a high prevalence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and reading disability (RD) among young delinquents, it is still not clear how the two disorders connect with delinquency. The main aim of this thesis was to understand the origin and progression of juvenile delinquency in groups of Chinese adolescents with ADHD, RD or comorbidity ADHD+RD. Three studies were conducted and reported in this thesis. Study 1 and Study 2 investigated executive functions (EF) and psychosocial characteristics of Chinese juvenile delinquents with ADHD, RD and their comorbidity. Results of Study 1 showed that participants with ADHD and RD showed distinct EF deficits. Participants in the comorbid condition shared the additive deficits of the pure groups and exhibited an additional deficit in interference control. Importantly, the comorbid group had the highest severity of delinquency, and interference control was

found to be a significant predictor of the severity of delinquency. Results of Study 2 suggested that participants with RD were associated with negative effect across all psychosocial domains whereas participants with ADHD were mainly associated with poor academic orientation. Moreover, the comorbid group report having similar psychosocial outcomes than the pure groups. In Study 3, the role of decision making at risk-taking events was investigated among non-delinquent with ADHD, RD and their comorbidity using Balloon Analogue Risk Task (BART). Results of Study 3 showed that participants with ADHD was associated with great risk-taking propensity whereas participants with RD were found to display insensitivity to punishment. Again, the comorbid group had the highest teacher-reported delinquency score, and exhibited the greatest risk taking and least sensitivity to punishment which further supported the impact of comorbidity to delinquency. The present study increased knowledge about the unique delinquency pathways and important correlates associated with ADHD, RD and their comorbidity. The practical implications for intervention measures and early identification of at-risk adolescents with ADHD, RD and comorbidity were discussed.