



From Animal Cruelty to Human Violence: A Mini Review

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Abstract

For many years, animals have been abused for a variety of purposes, including experimentation, hunting, and entertainment. Aside from that, there is evidence of cruelty against animals. Apart from these, the existence of violent acts against animals is also known. For many years, researchers have been investigating whether animal cruelty is linked to violence against humans. Despite this, investigations into animal abuse as a criminal have been ignored. Signs of violence against animals also show themselves in childhood. Several researchers have linked this issue to people's mental health, suggesting that many serial killers have a past of cruelty to animals. The purpose of this research is to investigate the association between animal cruelty and childhood and mental health, as well as to look into serial killers' animal cruelty backgrounds.

Keywords: Animal Cruelty; Violence; Abuse; Serial Killers

Introduction

Animals with emotions and the ability to feel pain have been harmed for many years for various causes, including experiments, hunting, entertainment (such as circuses), and industrial use. For many years, researchers have been working to determine whether cruelty to animals is linked to the violence of people. However, these studies failed to look into cruelty to animals as a crime [1]. However, cruelty to animals is frequently a rehearsal for violence [2].

Several philosophers throughout history, including Pythagoras, Kant, and Gandhi, have established a link between human violence and animal cruelty [3]. For many years, criminal profiling research has looked into why and how people start committing crimes. A significant part of these studies argue that animal cruelty may be the beginning of various actions that will later be defined as crimes against humans. Beginning with the concept that "violence begets

violence", researchers, some of whom are criminologists and psychiatrists, have focused attention to animal cruelty as a sign of extreme violence [4-7].

Different terms such as "torment, abuse, neglect, violence" are used in studies on actions that are considered crimes against animals. Rowan (1999) distinguishes between these concepts. In the act of torture, the person usually observes the animal's pain and enjoys it. For example, a person who burns a cat's tail enjoys watching it run away in pain. Abuse involves a person using high levels of force against animals. For example, kicking a cat that rubs against one's leg [8].

According to Ascione (1993), animal cruelty is socially undesirable behavior that specifically causes an animal unnecessary pain, suffering, or discomfort, as well as death [9]. Some researchers have described animal abuse as a sign of moral issues in some persons [10]. It is thought that people who harm animals pose a danger to humans. It

has been stated that those who commit animal cruelty on a regular basis [11] are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior towards their partners and children [12,13], that those who have been victims of violence are more likely to harm animals, and that these people are more likely to be aggressive toward humans in the future [14,15].

McDonald's found that attacking tiny animals was one of the origins of high violence toward humans [16].

It is stated that the rates of animal cruelty are surprisingly similar between criminals who commit violent acts and those who engage in non-violent crimes [17].

Many research carried out over many years in the literature have concluded that violence against animals is a precursor to violence against humans. The aim of this study is to examine the animal cruelty history of serial killers by touching on the relationship between animal cruelty and childhood and mental health.

The Relationship Between Childhood and Animal Cruelty

It is thought that the basis of animal cruelty is lack of empathy [18]. Children may learn to abuse animals partly because their socialization experiences include domestic violence [19]. It has been suggested that children raised in abusive circumstances who experience animal cruelty and violence in general are more likely to abuse animals in the future [20,21]. It has also been stated that the prevalence of animal cruelty in children who are victims of sexual abuse is six times higher than in children who have not been abused [22]. According to research, children learn and practice animal cruelty and develop hardened to consequences of violent behavior before moving to violence against humans [23].

While it is stated that preschool children torture animals because they are not adequately supervised and school-age children are exposed to abuse and violence, it is thought that adolescent torture animals as a symptom of antisocial personality [24].

Some murderers violated many animals in their childhood before killing their friends and parents [25], enjoyed keeping cats and dogs in boxes and watching them hurt each other [26,27], also they dismembered cats, hide their pieces, buried them alive, unearthed them, and displayed them in chamber [27].

In a study where Ressler et al. (1983) examined 36 sadistic murderers, they found out that nearly half of these murderers had tortured animals in their past [28]. Langevin

R, et al. [29] reported that some child murderers abused animals [29]. Another study, which considered every kind of animal abuse, found that approximately 90% of sadistic serial killers perpetrated animal abuse more often [30].

Dadds MR, et al. [31] differentiate between developmental immaturity and malevolence in motivation to abuse animals. The immature children may never be involved with human violence. However, malicious teenagers practice their cruel attacks. They choose socially important or culturally humanized animals (cats and dogs) in their attacks [31].

The violence previously applied to animals can be expressed as a rehearsal for the violence that will be applied to humans later. It is thought that such people try to control their victims with sadistic actions performed in order to feel powerful over the victim [7]. One study discovered that violent convicts were substantially more likely to practice animal cruelty as children than nonviolent inmates and non-inmates. As a result, animal cruelty during childhood not only provides information about different sorts of violence that may occur inside a troubled person or family, but it may also predict persons who are already or may be violent toward others [32].

According to research, the links between animal abuse, violent events, and behavioral health disorders in childhood are complex and multifaceted. As a result, it is important for clinicians working with children who display this behavior to understand and deal with these disorders [33].

The Relationship Between Mental Health and Animal Cruelty

Little attention has been paid to persons' mental health problems and behavioral relationships in cases of animal cruelty, which occur in many ways [34,35]. Identifying these characteristics is especially crucial considering the limited number of empirically supported methods for animal cruelty offenders [35].

In general, animal abuse is seen as a precursor to mental illness, defective personality, and/or criminality in later periods [32].

If a patient has recently killed an animal due to psychotic delusions or perceptions of animals, this may indicate that he or she is ready to act on such delusions. When conducting a forensic investigation of a person who has committed a violent crime, it is important to consider the likelihood of psychotic animal killing [36].

Although no official diagnosis has been made, it has been proposed that people with conduct disorder in childhood

have antisocial personality disorder in adulthood [37]. Animal cruelty at high levels indicates abnormal aggression, which, among other antisocial behaviors, might represent a behavioral disorder with serious implications for mental health [36]. It has been stated that sexual sadism and psychopathy are significantly related to sexual murders [38]. Thus, sadistic behavior towards animals is consistent with serial sexual murders, which are the most common example of serial murders [36].

Animal abuse, which has been associated with antisocial behavior in adulthood [37], is identified as a component of conduct disorder [39]. Many violent behaviors, including animal abuse, have been associated with psychopathy [40-42]. Likewise, it has been suggested that there are strong relationships between alcohol use disorder, family history of antisocial behavior, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and histrionic personality disorder and animal cruelty [43].

Serial Killers With a Past of Animal Cruelty

Psychopathy, whose features become evident in childhood, is a neurological disease characterized by a lack of remorse and empathy, a decreased emotional response to the environment, a callous use of others for one's own benefit, and a tendency to develop criminal behavior [44-47]. Cruelty to animals, which is one of the first symptoms of conduct disorder, may be one of these behaviors [48].

A serial killer's behavioral style and psychological characteristics develop over time, not all at once. Some childhood behaviors (such as animal cruelty) may suggest these abuses. These behaviors may occur when the individual uses force. In most cases, the individual shows his authority over others [49,50].

Serial killers are typically described as "calm" by their intimate associates. It is known that they often tortured animals in their childhood [51]. Regarding the violent acts of some serial killers towards animals in their youth [23];

- They kill up to 10 animals per day, including birds, rabbits, cats, and dogs, using methods such as shooting, strangling, stabbing, and starting fires.
- They stole a pig fetus from biology class and dissected it themselves.
- They tasted animal tissues, experienced sexual excitement during dissection, exhibited skulls, and masturbated with animal parts [23].

Animal cruelty is a characteristic of serial killers [52]. It has been proposed that there is a link between animal cruelty and serial killers [4], and that animal cruelty is a component of the behavioral history of psychopaths and serial killers who began with acts of animal abuse in childhood or adolescence

[53]. The most important way to address this dangerous relationship between animal cruelty and violence against humans is through early intervention [23]. It is suggested that the common denominator of serial killers who torture animals is the desire to inflict pain for pleasure [54].

Serial killers' cruelty of animals as children is explained by their need to balance their horrible childhood memories. They transfer their feelings of anger and revenge to animals and take pleasure in these actions. After a while, this feeling and behavior turns from a defenseless and tortured puppy to a defenseless and tortured human. It evolves into uncontrollable serial murder cycles that mask abnormal behaviors, perversions, emotions of weakness, and inadequacy [55]. Even among serial killers, there has been a distinction established regarding animal cruelty. When serial killers who tortured their victims for a long time were compared to serial killers who did not torture, it was discovered that those who tortured for a long time were more likely to torture animals in their early years [56].

Researchers have tried to understand how cruelty emerges in serial murders. Therefore, it was thought that it could be a sign of animal cruelty [57]. A significant number of serial killers practice animal abuse [6,52]. The most well-known examples of serial killers (such as Ted Bundy, Albert DeSalvo, Edmund Kemper) abuse animals include torturing animals, putting cats and dogs in boxes and shooting arrows at them, setting pregnant cats on fire, and throwing hot water on them [36,58]. Serial killers, also known as pathological and destructive narcissists, express their anger and jealousy toward the world by attacking and torturing others. It is incorrect to believe that childhood maltreatment and its psychodynamic consequences alone may explain serial murders. Many people experience abuse during childhood, yet not all of them become serial killers [55].

Conclusion

Animals have long been abused in various ways across the world. The most serious form of animal abuse involves cruelty to them in various ways and for a long amount of time. Torturing a living creature should be considered an inhumane act in itself. Especially when this creature is a defenseless species, this picture takes on a much more brutal appearance. Many researchers argue that violent acts against animals will evolve into acts of violence against humans in the future. Animal cruelty, seen as a 'rehearsal for human violence', is far more dangerous than it looks. For this reason, laws need to look at this issue from a broader perspective when evaluating criminal acts against animals. Based on the findings of numerous research, it is not realistic to expect an adult who lacks empathy and compassion to show empathy and compassion for people.

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