

## **Investigation of learning disabilities in a sample of male juvenile offenders in Greece**

*Katerina Maniadaki & Efthymios Kakouros*

Although the relationship between learning disabilities and conduct problems is well-established in the literature, no systematic effort has been done in Greece to investigate the prevalence of learning disabilities among incarcerated youth and to shed light to the nature of the relationship between these two phenomena. The present study aims to examine the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency in a sample of 100 males aged 13-23 (mean age=19.8) recruited from 4 reformatory schools and prisons for minors. Participants completed: a) the *Youth Self Report* (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) for the investigation of signs of psychopathology, b) the *Self-Perception Profile for Children* (Harter, 1985) for the investigation of participants' perceived competence in several domains and c) a questionnaire constructed by the investigators exploring the academic and the offensive history of the participants. Analysis revealed that the majority of the participants had a history of learning difficulties as shown by the high percentages of those who had abandoned school (54%), had repeated class (42,5%) and had a mean grade under 12/20 before leaving school (41,5%). Moreover, 24% presented clinical and 19% borderline symptoms of Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The results provide evidence that untreated learning disabilities may, among other factors, greatly contribute to the development of juvenile delinquency. A theoretical model explaining the nature of this relationship is presented. Finally, implications of these findings for the direction that prevention efforts should follow are discussed.