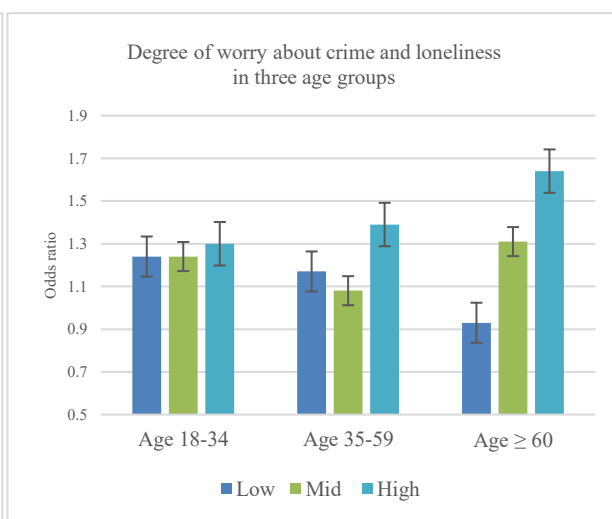
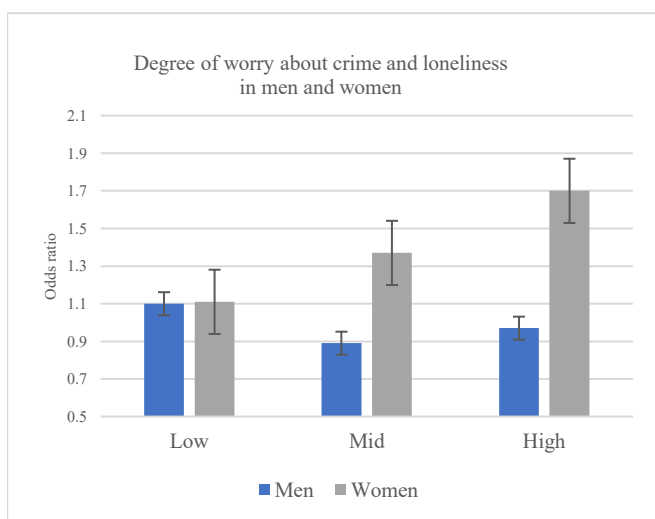




Worry about Crime and Loneliness Examining the association in nine former Soviet countries

Summary

Worry about crime is widespread in many societies. Previous research has linked worry about crime to several negative outcomes including reduced quality of life, lower happiness and poorer physical and mental health. However, there has been little research on the association between worry about crime and loneliness – even though loneliness is increasingly being recognised as an important public health issue that can negatively affect health and wellbeing. To address this deficit researchers from the Department of Social Epidemiology at Kyoto University (Dr Andrew Stickley, Professor Naoki Kondo, Dr Mariko Kanamori, Dr Shiho Kino, Doctoral Student Yuki Arakawa) worked together with colleagues from the National Centre for Global Health and Medicine (Dr Yosuke Inoue) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (Professor Martin McKee). To examine the association between worry about crime and loneliness data were analysed from 18,000 adults aged 18 and above that were collected during the Health in Times of Transition (HITT) survey that was carried out in nine countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine) in 2010/11. Results from a pooled logistic regression analysis showed that compared to individuals who had no worry about crime, those who had a high level of worry were significantly more likely to be lonely. We also found that there were sex and age differences in this association. Specifically, a high level of worry among women but not men was linked to loneliness, while high worry about crime was linked to loneliness in middle-aged and older adults but not in younger adults. Further analyses showed that across different types of crime (e.g. being robbed on the street, threatened/harassed on the street, having things stolen from one’s home) a high level of worry was associated with loneliness. The results of this research highlight the close link between crime-related factors and health and wellbeing and lend support to the recent call for public health and law enforcement to work more closely together. In terms of the specific association between worry about crime and loneliness, more research is needed in other locations to see if the relation is observed elsewhere. In addition, research needs to be carried out over time (longitudinal research) to determine the directionality of the association between worry about crime and loneliness and whether specific factors are important for this association.



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■ Abstract

Worry about crime has been linked to several detrimental outcomes including worse mental health. However, there has been little research on the association between worry about crime and loneliness, even though loneliness is increasingly being recognised as a serious public health issue. To address this deficit, this study examined the association between worry about crime and loneliness in nine countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine), using data from 18,000 respondents aged 18 and above that were collected during the Health in Times of Transition (HITT) survey in 2010/11. Results from a pooled logistic regression analysis showed that compared to those who reported no worry about crime, individuals with a high level of worry had significantly higher odds of loneliness (odds ratio [OR]: 1.43, 95% confidence interval [CI]: 1.17–1.75). Sex- and age-stratified analyses further showed that the association was observed in women with a mid (OR: 1.37, 95%CI: 1.10–1.71) and a high level (OR: 1.70, 95%CI: 1.33–2.17) of worry about crime but not in men, and that a high level of worry about crime was linked to loneliness in adults aged 35–59 (OR: 1.39, 95%CI: 1.02–1.91) and 60 and above (OR: 1.64, 95%CI: 1.12–2.40) but not in those aged 18–34. High levels of worry about crime are associated with loneliness in the FSU countries. Reducing crime and its associated worries may have important public health benefits in these countries.

Bibliographic information

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