Position Statement on Assessing the Risk for Violence

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Issue:

Through clinical assessment and the use of structured risk assessments, psychiatrists can identify risk factors that may contribute to violence. However, it is difficult to predict definitively who will act violently.

APA Position:

During their careers, most psychiatrists will assess the risk of violence to others. While psychiatrists can often identify circumstances associated with an increased likelihood of violent behavior, they cannot predict dangerousness with definitive accuracy. Over any given period, some individuals assessed as at low risk will act violently, while others assessed as at high risk will not.

Author: Council on Psychiatry and Law: Ashley MacLean, MD; Alec Buchanan, MD; Michael A Norko, MD; Renee L Binder, MD; Marvin Swartz, MD