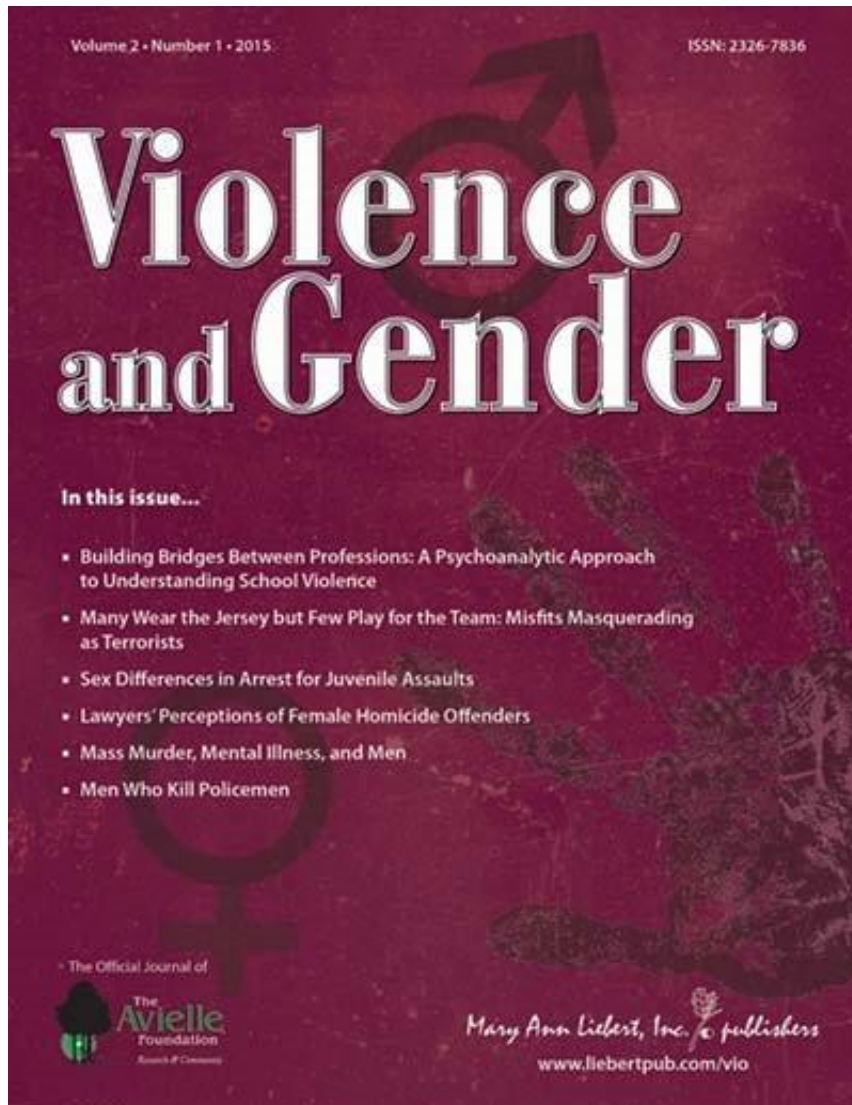


Mass murder, mental illness, and men

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Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

Mass murders in the United States are rare, but they receive a lot of media attention and are the focus of an ongoing controversy regarding the link between mass murder and mental illness among the perpetrators of these heinous acts, almost always men. The mental health problems most common in mass murderers and why men at risk are so difficult to identify before they can carry out mass killings are discussed in the compelling article "[Mass Murder, Mental Illness, and Men](#)" in the peer-reviewed journal *Violence and Gender*.

Author Michael Stone, MD, Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons and Mid-Hudson Forensic Psychiatric Hospital, New York, NY, provides an in-depth look at the scope of mass murders committed in the U.S. during recent decades, describing the crime as "an almost exclusively male phenomenon." Most mass murderers have a [mental illness](#) characterized by a paranoid personality disorder that includes a deep sense of unfairness and a skewed version of reality. Unfortunately, this profile of the men who have committed mass murders has often led to the unwarranted stigmatization of the mentally ill as a group as being inherently dangerous, which is not the case.

Dr. Stone points in particular to the growing availability of semiautomatic weapons as a key factor contributing to the increasing rate of random mass shootings in the U.S. during the past 65 years. The number of events nearly doubles in the 1990s compared to the 1980s, for example.

"This article by Dr. Stone goes right to the issue of mental health and its role in [mass murder](#)," says *Violence and Gender* Editor-in-Chief Mary Ellen O'Toole, PhD, Forensic Behavioral Consultant and Senior FBI Profiler/Criminal Investigative Analyst (ret.) and Director of the Forensic Sciences Program, George Mason University. "Too often there is an assumption that this behavior can be explained or even 'excused' because of a preexisting [mental health](#) problem. Dr. Stone, an

international expert in this field, provides insights into this behavior based on his very comprehensive and timely research on mass murders, which every professional working in the field must read."

More information: The article is available free on the *Violence and Gender* website until June 11, 2015.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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