



## **NEWSLETTER**



***Summer 2017***



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Dear members,

AETAP is now officially a decade old association, and it is all thanks to you, our members. The association grows and expands with a steady pace and slowly we are getting more interest and members from countries that have previously been very quiet. Also, our cooperation with other TAPs from USA, Canada and Asia-Pacific is very active. Often this cooperation is not immediately visible to our members, but a lot of work is done behind the scenes to make sure all associations share information and ideas. At the moment ATAP is looking into expanding to Latin-America with the help of American corporations working in the region and all TAPs are supporting a few active individuals to start an association in the African continent.

Accreditation has now been officially started and we are seeing a growing interest from both individuals as well as organisations.

Our Dublin conference is now in the past. Dublin received high remarks and many thanks from our participants, but if there is anything that you think we should do differently, please give us feedback and we will do our best to make our 2018 conference even a better one. Our 11th conference will take place in April of 2018 in Helsinki, Finland. Our experts day speaker has been confirmed and Professor Paul Gill will be lecturing about the terrorism risk assessment tools. If you are interested of becoming a speaker or you can think of someone that would be a good fit for the conference, the deadline for abstracts is on 18th of September.

And finally, after many years of talking about this, we are starting with regional seminars. Our first one will take place on 1st of December in The Netherlands. More information about this one day conference will be on our website shortly.

I hope to see all of you in Helsinki next year.

**Totti Karpela, President**

*The AETAP Newsletter is published twice a year*

*Editors: Lieke Bootsma, Bram Van der Meer*



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**CERTIFICATION**

The start of the AETAP certification program went well. Our certification program has two legs and there are high standards regarding professional knowledge and practical experience. There is one track for individual threat assessment professionals who can be certified and another one for organisations like universities, companies and others.

In a pilot phase two organisations already obtained a certification fulfilling AETAP standards. One is the University Hospital Zurich, the other - German Telekom. Also the first threat assessment professionals went through the pilot program and are now certified.

Soon more details about the certification program will be published on the AETAP homepage.

**RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

**Call for papers: Social Media and Violence**

The journal 'Violence and Gender' (Editor-in-Chief: Mary Ellen O'Toole, PhD.) has sent out a call for papers on Social media and Violence. Today social media platforms provide us with the ability to communicate with virtually anyone in the world. We can influence, motivate, insult, enrage, and incite complete strangers across the globe to engage in random, specific, and even targeted violence.

From cyberbullying to ISIS recruitment, social media has been used to normalise behaviours that would have shocked our collective consciences even a decade ago.

We are seeking high-quality review articles and original articles on the following topics related to social media and violence:

- Role of social media in violence targeting adolescents and young adults
- Social media and intimate partner violence
- Social media as a tool to prevent violence
- Social media as a catalyst for violence
- Social media and terrorism

If you have any questions, please contact [Karen Cloud-Hansen](#)

**Deadline** for manuscript submission: September 30, 2017



## **PUBLISHED RESEARCH**

### **Assessing threats of violence: Professional skill or common sense? (2017)**

In April 2016, several members of AETAP and CATAP took part in a study that examined whether or not risk assessments made by threat assessments professionals were of higher quality than those made by non-professionals. The results of this study are presented in this article. Threat assessment professionals (N = 44), university students (N = 44), and laypersons (N = 45) assessed the risk for violence in three fictitious cases. The assessments (i.e., assigning risk values to different pieces of information) were found to be strikingly similar across the three groups. Yet, professionals were more consistent with one another in their assessments, and professionals selected more relevant (evidence based) information when given the opportunity to request additional facts. The findings imply that threat assessment professionals may contribute most during the process of information gathering. For instance, professionals may advance the information search by setting the right scope, filtering diagnostic cues from less relevant information, and recognising what intelligence is still missing. This suggestion fits well with research in other domains, where experts typically excel at cue selection (i.e., what information should be looked for), but not necessarily at cue weighting (i.e., how the information should be interpreted). The field of threat assessment can benefit from such knowledge in three important ways. First, those who consult threat assessment professionals can make more deliberate decisions when allocating responsibilities and resources. Second, the professionals can better explain to their clients what may be expected of them. Third, and most important, having the right person on the right job improves the quality of threat assessments, which should ultimately result in a safer society.

#### **Renate Geurts**

Geurts, R., Granhag, P. A., Ask, K., & Vrij, A. Reference: doi: 10.1002/jip.1486. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jip.1486/abstract>

### **Lone-actor terrorism and impulsivity (2017)**

Reid Meloy and Jeffrey Pollard (both Ph. D) have published a technical note in the Journal of Forensic science on lone-actor terrorism and impulsivity. In some recent cases of lone-actor terrorism, there is evidence the subject acted impulsively, often in response to a triggering event which contained a loss and humiliation.



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Two cases are described in the article to illustrate the above. Evidence suggests the subjects acted precipitously, despite planning and preparation carried out in the preceding weeks or months, and their attacks failed to include the often considerable preparation that had been done. The pathway became a runway. There is increasing concern among analysts and investigators that pathways to lone-actor violence may be much shorter – making the task of interdiction much more difficult. The authors recommend the traditional assessment of impulsivity in persons of concern for lone acts of terrorism, as well as other proximal warning behaviours for targeted violence. Both indirect and direct assessment guidelines are proposed, with an emphasis upon self-report, psychological testing, collateral data gathering, and historical records.

Cited from **J. Reid Meloy and Jeffrey W. Pollard.**

Reference: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1556-4029.13500/abstract;jsessionid=88B276547AA5FE47E072BD5AED0478B5.f02t02>

**Gender differences in the Relationship Between Self-esteem and Aggression in Young People leaving Care (2017)**

Clinicians from the UK carried out specific research on the relationship between aggression and different forms of self-esteem. They could draw some interesting conclusions about gender differences in this respect. This may have implications for threat assessments and especially threat management.

For men, high levels of social rank and high levels of attractiveness were predictive of aggression, whereas for women low levels of perceived social inclusion and low levels of attractiveness were predictive of aggression. Interesting is also that this study differentiates between proactive and reactive aggression. Men reported significantly higher proactive aggression scores than women. The findings suggest that the relationship between self-esteem and aggression is complex, and that clinical interventions for the treatment of aggression may need to be gender specific.

Cited from **Canning et. Al.**

Reference: <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/10.1089/vio.2017.0002>

**“Jihad Against the Enemies of Allah”: The Berlin Christmas Market Attack from a Threat Assessment Perspective (2017)**

Our German colleagues have recently published an interesting case study on Anis A. who committed the attack on the Berlin Christmas Market. The authors also address the influence of internet as well as ISIS's strategy of “leaderless resistance” on potential attackers.

The study is based on a qualitative analysis of investigative reports and open source media data. It traces the perpetrator's psychological and social history of radicalisation, as well as the role of five proximal warning behaviours correlating with the attack: leakage, fixation, identification, last resort behaviour and the 'pathway'.

Data shows that security authorities already possessed large quantities of information about the perpetrator, prior to the attack. Eventually, security agencies presumed that no acute threat from Anis A. existed. This was a month before the attack.

In the future it will become increasingly important for officials to fall back on evidence-based and validated evaluation criteria. It is for this reason that both the development and implementation of structured risk and threat assessment instruments, as well as the scientific debate about them, are highly desirable.

Moreover this case study makes clear how important it is to analyse dynamic patterns of behaviour by critically following the behaviour of potential attackers, compared to a stringent focus on isolated (suspicious) acts.

Cited from **Nils Böckler et al.**

Reference: <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/10.1089/vio.2017.0040>

**Journal of Threat Assessment and Management**  
***Special Section Part III: Campus Threat Management***

**The Virginia Tech Massacre as a Starting Point for Threat Assessment Programs in European Universities (2017)**

After reflections from the United States, Australia and Canada, Europe has been brought into the spotlight through the lens of campus threat management.



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Especially in Germany and Switzerland, practices have been influenced by the reviews and outcomes of the Virginia tech mass shooting. Germany has the second highest number of victims worldwide of targeted lethal violence in secondary schools, followed in Europe by Finland. However, in contrast to the United States, there have been no reports of mass murder cases in Central European universities. Therefore, most threat assessment programs do not focus on the prevention of lethal violence as their main activity. Instead, they primarily address incidents of stalking, threatening communications, and other forms of behaviour of concern that are identified and managed by local threat assessment teams. The approach is increasingly accepted in Europe as a way to identify, assess, and manage less dramatic forms of possible pre-incident behaviours, some of which may escalate into more severe forms of violence if not managed properly. This reflects practices in Australia and Canada.

Cited from **Lisa Warren and Jens Hoffmann**

Reference: <http://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Ftam0000083>.

## **INSTRUMENTS & TOOLS**

### **The TRAP-18 manual**

The manual for the TRAP-18 (Terrorist Radicalisation Assessment Protocol) has recently been published. Here is the link:

<https://www.giffrinc.com/trap-18-manual/>

The author offers a three hour online training on using the TRAP-18.

The TRAP code sheets are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Swedish;. Translation to Norwegian, Danish, and Arabic is in progress.

### **New guide on preventing targeted violence from the FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit**

Our colleagues from the FBI Behavioural Analysis Unit are pleased to announce publication of a new guide on preventing targeted violence, entitled "Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks," this publication originated from a 2015 BAU symposium on targeted violence prevention, at which a number of highly respected ATAP members contributed.

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Download: [www.fbi.gov/PreventingTargetedViolence\\_View](http://www.fbi.gov/PreventingTargetedViolence_View) page with multiple publications at the bottom: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cirg>

**MEDIA**

**“A prescription for murder” - Case James Holmes on BBC 3**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2012, James Holmes walked into a cinema in Aurora (US) and shot 12 strangers. Twelve were killed and seventy people injured. Holmes survived and this gave the unusual opportunity to learn more from him after this violent criminal act.

BBC 3 recently broadcasted this interesting case study. The main question the documentary is addressing is the possible link between anti-depressive medication and the massacre. Therefore this British journalist interviewed several people - psychiatrists, the parents of the perpetrator, his friends and also studied self-reports written by Holmes himself, communications with his ex-girlfriend, and multiple hours video recording in which Holmes is interviewed by behavioural experts.

Psychiatrists and prosecutors are having a continuing debate about the link between anti-depressants, psychosis and violence. One of the experts commented about the detachment from people which can present more strongly when using anti-depressants.

It is told that Holmes since he was a teenager had been imagining people dead as a strategy to help him cope with social anxiety. He did not seem to have the intention to actually kill though. However, it is argued that this could have changed due to use of the prescribed medicine.

Rarely SSRI antidepressants can cause withdrawal symptoms resulting in suicidal behaviour or other forms of violence. Professor Healy from the UK was sceptical prior to his meeting with Holmes, but now comes with the controversial and strong opinion that if he hadn't taken any medicines he wouldn't have murdered. Another expert explains that the reduction of anxiety in combination with his homicidal desires may have facilitated other forces.



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Irrespective of what has caused his intention to kill, this documentary is especially relevant from a threat assessment perspective because it shows the presence of a several so called 'warning behaviours'. This case study provides an insightful timeline of Holmes' thoughts, actions and contacts leading to the attack.

Holmes childhood was apparently normal; his parents never identified any signs of violence, he was never interested in guns. He was bright, but shy. He had his first girlfriend at university. Since she broke up, Holmes went downwards. He was seeking help at the university for his social anxiety, where he speaks to psychiatrists about intrusive thoughts of killing. He apparently never told any family member about this.. Also the psychiatrist decides to not share these concerning signs with others, also not with his parents.

Holmes communicates to his ex-girlfriend that 'he feels like doing something evil, kill people'. In this period his thinking seems to become delusional. He talks about a new theory of 'Human Capital', which was about earning points and increasing self-worth by killing people.

With this increase of obsessive homicidal thoughts, more active planning starts. 'The mission got real' and he decided to buy a shotgun. Totally focused on his mission, nothing else mattered. He realises that he would be locked up or killed. He drops out of university and treatment then. His therapist checks his criminal history, weapon availability (his recent purchases were unknown) and contacts his parents. Evidence was insufficient to apprehend Holmes and protect society from him. He painted his hair, starts drawing plans of the cinema, is stockpiling bomb making equipment and is having dry runs with his gun at a shooting range. Since he decided that he was going to be a murderer he isolates himself from his social contacts, including his parents.

Again, like in all pathways to violence, reality is much more complicated. We see multiple risk factors interacting with each other. This case is just another example of how important it is to have a balanced review of a case - thoroughly carrying out a structured professional judgment, also retrospectively. In this case we are confronted with the disastrous effects of not sharing information with the right people.

The documentary can be viewed on Youtube: [https://youtu.be/InTukPOs\\_JE](https://youtu.be/InTukPOs_JE)

**Lieke Bootsma**

### **Communicating about Brussels attacks in public**

Our board received an email from the European Corporate Security Association (ECSA) after another incident in Belgium. On 20 June 2017, an explosion occurred at [Brussels Central Station](#) in [Brussels](#), causing no casualties. Soldiers patrolling the station killed the suspect soon afterwards with 3 to 4 shots, according to eyewitnesses. Let us cite some relevant points from this important message.

The essence of terrorism is « to kill a few in order to frighten a lot ». As security professionals we do not only have to contribute to limiting the number of people injured or killed in an attack but also to break the mechanism that allows to frighten a lot. Unfortunately, we have to acknowledge that this type of incidents are and will be part of our « new normal ».

These incidents should therefore be treated as « business as usual » and we may want to change our reaction from « massive police response » to just a professional team able to deal with the problem. To lower public commotion and publicity, the aftermaths may also be dealt with on a lower and more operational than ministerial level.

The judicial, together with the private operators should best agree on procedures to limit the disturbance to the absolute minimum and to return to normal operations as quickly as possible.

Both above measures would limit the sensational aspect, so much sought after by the perpetrators. With a little help from responsible journalists who understand that media are instrumental in the malicious intent to « frighten a lot », the negative impact of such incidents could not only be much better contained but even turned into a positive message by emphasising the efficient response of the authorities and the remarkable resilience of our communities.

### **Parliamentary enquiry on the Brussels attacks**

Belgium has finished their parliamentary enquiry towards the terrorist attacks at March 22, 2016. They have examined the circumstances that have led to the attacks, including the present counter measures to manage the threat of terrorism.



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Though Europe is one of the attacked continents, we shouldn't forget that many victims fall elsewhere in a relatively small geographic area: Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria and Iraq.

Topics like 'info obese', 'need to share' information between different professionals and departments, the interpretation of relevant information, the information position on social media, the specific expertise in order to identify and judge drivers of radicalisation, and the communication about the assessed risk level are described extensively. It is impossible to give a complete summary of more than 500 pages.

Our French and Dutch speaking members can download and read the full report at: <http://www.dekamer.be/FLWB/PDF/54/1752/54K1752008.pdf>

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS & EDUCATION**

**AETAP Conference**, 23 - 26 April 2018, Helsinki (Finland)

Proposals for presentations at our annual conference in Helsinki are still very welcome: <http://www.aetap.eu/images/AETAP-Abstract-call-Helsinki.pdf>

Deadline for abstract submission is Sep. 17<sup>th</sup>

**ATAP Conference, Anaheim, California USA**

Just recently our American colleagues held their annual conference, which was again a successful event. Also from a networking perspective ATAP is a wonderful event, because so many experts from all over the United States are attending

This was ATAP's current president, mr. Chuck Tobin, last conference as the president of the organisation. Soon dr. Russel Palarea will take that position. We want to thank Chuck for his hard work through the years, especially for his fine contribution to the international cooperation. Chuck took an active and enthusiastic position in building bridges between organisations. From an international threat assessment perspective, we have made great progress in the time that Chuck was president of ATAP. Also this year we had an international meeting where global topics were discussed, including certification, and new developing threat assessment associations - Africa and Latin America. During the CATAP conference in Quebec the international team will get together again, and next year in Helsinki they will spend a full day together.



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**CATAP Conference, Quebec, October 23-27, 2017**

CATAP is pleased to announce the 2017 CATAP Workshop (October 23rd – 24th) and Conference (October 25th – 27th) at the Fairmont Manoir Richelieu in La Malbaie, Quebec! They have been working hard behind the scenes to create another top-notch professional threat assessment and management conference. Please find their exciting workshop and conference schedule here (in [English](#) and [French](#)) and for more details, including speaker bios and presentation summaries at [www.catap.org/Quebec2017](http://www.catap.org/Quebec2017). Early Bird registration prices in effect! [So, Register Now!](#) CATAP is looking forward to seeing all dedicated members again this year and welcome new colleagues from all over Canada and the world.

**APATAP**

Wellington, New Zealand, 5 - 7 March 2018

The APATAP committee is still accepting submissions for presentations. Please note the deadline for abstract submission is 17 September 2017. The theme for the upcoming conference is:

*“Alert but not Alarmed: Threat Management in the Everyday Context”.*

For more information on the conference, including suggested topics, how to submit an abstract and information about the pre-conference Expert Seminars, please go to the following link: <http://www.apatap.org/call-for-presentations>