

Domestic Violence Offender Intervention Program in Hillsborough County: An Analysis

*The James and Jennifer Harrell Center
for the Study of Domestic Violence*

University of South Florida

Authors

Martha L. Coulter, Dr. P.H.

Robert W. Byers, Ph.D.

Lynette Menezes, M.S.W.

Ashok Jayakumar, B.S.

This report was funded by the Children's Board of Hillsborough County and published July 2001.



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	5
Methodology	6
Findings	6
Recommendations	7
Introduction	8
Background	8
Factors Contributing to Partner Violence	8
Offender Intervention Programs	10
Purpose of the research	10
Research Questions	11
Methodology	12
Study Design	12
Measures	12
Analysis	15
Results	17
Demographics and Background Characteristics	17
Mental Health	19
Offender's Behavior and Current Situation	21
Multivariate Analyses	22
Rearrest	22
Demographics and Background Characteristics Relative to the Likelihood of not Being Rearrested	22
Mental Health Relative to the Likelihood of not Being Rearrested	23
Offender's Behavior and Current Situation Relative to the Likelihood of not Being Rearrested	24
Program Completion	25
Demographics and Background Characteristics Relative to Program Completion	25
Mental Health Relative to Program Completion	25
Offender's Behavior and Current Situation Relative to Program Completion	26
Conclusions	28
Discussion	28
Summary	30
Recommendations	32
Funding Identification Plan	33
References	34

List of Tables & Figures

Table 1: Average and number of demographic characteristics	17
Table 2: Offender's factors of violence	19
Table 3: Offender's family stability	21
Table 4: Association of demographics and background characteristics with the likelihood of not being rearrested	23
Table 5: Association of mental health with the likelihood of not being rearrested	24
Table 6: Association of offenders' behavior and current situation with the likelihood of not being rearrested	24
Table 7: Association of demographics and background characteristics with program completion	25
Table 8: Association of mental health with program completion	26
Table 9: Association of offenders' behavior and current situation with program completion	26
Figure 1: Offenders' reported gender	18
Figure 2: Offenders' race/ethnicity	18
Figure 3: Ever had fears of hurting your children	20
Figure 4: Ever admitted to a psychiatric hospital	20
Figure 5: Is alcohol perceived to be a problem	21
Figure 6: Levels assigned to offenders	22

Executive Summary

Introduction

Offender intervention programs were established as a result of an increasing recognition of the deleterious effects of partner violence and the extensive advocacy efforts of domestic violence grass root activists. Recent studies indicate that between one and four million women are abused each year. In addition, based on national survey results, annually between 3 and 10 million children may be exposed to partner violence. As such, evaluating the effectiveness of offender intervention programs becomes a critical issue.

The domestic violence literature shows great variation in the efficacy of offender intervention programs. Despite a reduction in repeated arrests, the benefits of these intervention programs may not be sustained. Furthermore, these programs may be less effective in reducing psychological threats and verbal abuse. Attrition is another major drawback in offender intervention programs, with Hillsborough County data indicating that almost one third of offenders do not complete their intervention programs. These data also indicate that offenders who do not complete these programs are more likely to be rearrested. Research evidence on factors contributing to attrition is limited and varies based on the study. While one study shows that demographics are poor predictors of attrition, other research found that non-completers were more likely to be young, not legally married, reported low incomes, low education, unstable work histories, and insecure housing arrangements. There has been scarce attention directed to research on the role of family risk variables in program completion and rearrests. This study provides valuable insight into the underlying relationships between family risk variables such as family stability, employment, anxiety, and program completion and rearrests among offenders.

The James and Jennifer Harrell Center for the Study of Domestic Violence has been evaluating the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Offender Intervention Program (coordinated through the 13th Judicial Court System) in Hillsborough County for the past four years. As an expansion of this ongoing evaluation, the present study was designed to assess three specific research questions derived from an analysis of general family risk variables:

1. Do offender demographic or background characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?
2. Do offender mental health characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?
3. Does the offender's current situation or behavior predict rearrest or program completion?

In addition, data from the analysis will be used to calculate the probable number of children exposed to violence in Hillsborough County each year.

Methodology

This is a non-experimental explanatory study using longitudinal follow up data from the Family Violence Intervention Program in Hillsborough County. Domestic violence offenders are referred to a community assessment agency and were administered a screening protocol to determine the type and level of the intervention program they receive. A total of 13, 903 offenders entered the intervention program from January 1995 to November 1999. Data on all offenders from the court, the community assessment agency and from six of the eight intervention providers is forwarded to the Harrell Center. All data in this study were derived from information in the screening protocol. The intervention providers provided completion rates. Rearrest rates were derived from data provided by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).

Based on the domestic violence and substance abuse literature, the following six composite variables were created: education, violence, depression, anxiety, suicide, and family stability. The two outcome variables utilized for these analyses were program completion and rearrest after completion of intervention. Using SAS 8.0 statistical software, frequency distributions, correlations and logistic regression analyses were conducted.

Findings

The offenders were mostly male with an average age of 33 years. The majority of offenders were White (58%), nearly 30% were Black, 9.8% Hispanic and 3.4% belonged to the Other category. Almost one third of the offenders reported an exposure to parental violence or a history of physical abuse in childhood. One in ten offenders reported at least

one suicidal symptom and a similar number reported a past history of psychiatric hospitalization. A little over one third of the offenders reported fears of hurting their children. Based on our results of an average of one child per offender and approximately 3000 cases per year, nearly 30,000 children in Hillsborough County are likely to be exposed to interparental violence.

The data available proved to be a better predictor of program completion than of rearrests. Multivariate analyses using the logistic regression procedure revealed that only sex (males more likely to be rearrested), and being currently employed are predictors of rearrest. Race, age, and other mental health variables were poor predictors of rearrest. In the case of program non-completion, however, the responses to research question three were significant. The offenders' current situation and behavior was the most predictive of program completion. Offenders are more likely to be males, not employed, with a less stable family situation and with a designation of Level III in the program, representing those offenders who are more violent and who may have additional serious mental health problems. In addition, offenders who perceived alcohol to be a problem were more likely to drop out of the program. Race and most mental health variables were not found to predict attrition.

Recommendations

The specific recommendations from this analysis are:

1. The assessment, probation, and provider network should assist offenders with employment procurement and maintenance.
2. Level III offenders should be closely monitored and supervised by the courts to assist in prevention of program dropout.
3. Offenders should be provided with resources to assist their children who are exposed to violence.

Introduction

Background

In the past two decades intimate partner violence has been recognized as a serious social and public health problem. The growing literature on domestic violence indicates that between one and four million women are abused each year (Holden & Ritchie, 1991; The Commonwealth fund, 1999; United States Department of Justice, 1998). A recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institute of Justice revealed that nearly one in four women reported being physically and/or sexually abused at some point in her life by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner or date (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Furthermore, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), women constituted approximately 75% of homicide victims due to intimate partner violence (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). In addition, national survey estimates suggest that between 3 and 10 million children are exposed to violence each year (Carlson, 1984; Straus, 1992).

Historically, domestic violence services focused mainly on victims of violence. Services for offenders were restricted to individual and couples counseling. An increasing interest in partner violence and the dedicated advocacy efforts of domestic violence grass root activists led to the establishment of offender intervention programs nationwide (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). The continued high rates of victimization due to domestic violence necessitate an evaluation of offender intervention programs to determine their effectiveness. The main purpose of this study is to reduce the exposure of families and children to domestic violence through identification of family risk variables that predict efficacy of offender intervention.

Factors Contributing to Partner Violence

Partner violence is multidimensional in nature. O'Neil and Harway (1999) discuss seven factors that have an impact on male violence against women. These factors

include (1) macrosocietal, (2) biological, (3) psychological, (4) socialization, (5) relational, (6) psychosocial, and (7) interacting (See O'Neil & Harway, 1999 for a more detailed discussion). A review of past and current research on batterers lends support to this model. For example, many of the batterer characteristics associated with violent acts can be included under the realm of psychosocial factors. Participants in intervention programs are typically men in their late twenties to early 30s, underemployed, history of abusing alcohol, exhibiting personality disorders and previous arrest records (Eisikovits & Edleson, 1989; Tolman & Bennett, 1990). Likewise, a recent multi-site study of offender intervention programs showed that men were in their early 30s and from a lower socioeconomic status (Gondolf, 1999b).

There is much support in the literature that domestic violence offenders are a heterogeneous group. For instance, in one study, 25% of the batterers were diagnosed with severe personality disorders or severe clinical syndromes using the Millon Clinical Multi-axial Inventory-III (MCMI-III) (Gondolf, 1999b). Additionally, 38% of the men displayed narcissistic tendencies and greater than 50% of the men scored high on the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (MAST) for alcohol abuse. In terms of self-concept, men who perpetrated violence against their partners displayed elevated levels of negativity in their self-conceptions than men who did not batter (Ragg, 1999). Previous researchers described batterers as exhibiting both negative self-concept and low self-esteem (Goldstein & Rosenbaum, 1985; Murphy et al., 1994).

With respect to aggression, one study found that men who abuse their partners exhibited increased levels of interpersonal dependency, and significantly increased levels of general aggression compared to men on a football team and men volunteering for community service (Kane, Staiger, & Ricciardelli, 2000). The development of aggression can be linked to socialization within the family and other institutions, which perpetuate sexist attitudes and male dominance. Sex-role egalitarianism and attitudes approving violence were found to be strong predictors of severe physical violence in a study of men participating in an offender intervention program and alcohol treatment programs (Stith & Farley, 1993). Felson and Messner (2000) conducted a unique study to assess control motive among batterers. Analyzing data from the NCVS survey, the authors found that men who abuse their female partners were more likely to issue threats beforehand than a control group of offenders involved in other relationships or gender combinations.

Risk factors associated with future violence are previous history of domestic violence and sharing biological children (Harrell & Smith, 1999). In addition, women from a lower socioeconomic status were more likely to report abuse (Carlson, Harris & Holden, 1999; US department of Justice, 2000). In terms of ethnicity, recent studies have demonstrated that black women are at a higher risk for victimization as compared to white or Hispanic women (Carlson, Harris & Holden; US Department of Justice). Although the domestic violence literature is replete with research studies that have focused on factors contributing to partner violence, there has been little attention directed to research on whether these variables might be associated with program completion and reassaults by offenders in intervention programs.

Offender Intervention Programs

Whether offender intervention programs are really effective is a dilemma facing many domestic violence researchers and activists. The published literature shows great variation in the effectiveness of batterer intervention programs (Gondolf, 1997). Although intervention programs have been found to reduce repeat violence substantially (53 to 85%), they have been less effective in reducing verbal abuse and threats (Edleson, 1999; Gondolf, 1991; Gondolf, 1997). Furthermore, the benefits of intervention programs may not be sustained. For instance, in one study of batterers in four cities, almost half the men reassaulted within 3 months after intake (Gondolf, 1997b). A multi-site study of interventions in four cities revealed that length of the program and comprehensive services were not significantly associated with decreased reassault rates at 15 month follow-up (Gondolf, 1999c). Most of these findings should be interpreted with caution because of methodological difficulties in evaluating these programs. Gondolf (1997) cites several methodological flaws which may compromise the validity of outcomes including low responses rates, absence of control groups, short-term follow-up, failure to consider non-completers, self-report measures and failure to examine intervening variables.

Furthermore, attrition in intervention programs is a major shortcoming making it difficult to assess if program outcomes would be different for non-completers. Some research studies indicate that a large proportion of men drop out after intake and over half of those enrolled failed to complete the program (Gondolf & Foster, 1991; Pirog-Good & Stets-Kealey, 1986). Longitudinal follow up of data from offender intervention programs in Hillsborough County indicate that rearrest rates for domestic violence crimes are higher for non-completers (12.5%) as compared to completers (6.4%) (Coulter, Byers, Menezes & Jayakumar, 2001). In fact, completers had 49% fewer rearrests than non-completers for domestic violence crimes. Research evidence on factors associated with program completion is conflicting and limited. In one study, demographic characteristics such as age, race, employment status, relationship status and socioeconomic status were poor predictors of attrition. Distance traveled and monitored attendance were the only predictors of attrition (DeHart, Kennerly, Burke & Follingstad, 1999). Other research shows that lifestyle instability was closely associated with program non-completion (Cadsky, Hanson, Crawford & Lalonde, 1996). The authors found that dropouts in this study were more likely to be young, not legally married, reported low incomes, low education, unstable work histories, and insecure housing arrangements.

Purpose of the research

In summary it is evident that partner violence is a multifaceted problem. Reassaults by offenders and program completion are serious issues that need to be dealt with to decrease domestic violence. Few research studies have examined the association between family risk variables and program completion and reassaults among offenders. This study will try to fill this gap by providing valuable insight into the underlying relationships

between family risk variables such as family stability; depression; anxiety; abuse of alcohol; childhood victimization and exposure to violence; and program completion and reassaults among offenders. The James and Jennifer Harrell Center for the Study of Domestic Violence has been evaluating the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Offender Intervention Program in Hillsborough County for the past four years. As part of the ongoing evaluation, this study was designed to:

1. Identify family risk variables that predict efficacy of offender program completion and rearrest.
2. Investigate the association of factors such as family stability, childhood victimization of the offender/ exposure to interparental violence, anxiety, abuse of alcohol, and depression with program completion and rearrest.
3. Estimate the number of children in Hillsborough County who are likely to be exposed to partner violence.

Research Questions

Based on domestic violence literature, the present study will address the following research questions:

Research Question #1

Do offender demographic or background characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?

Research Question #2

Do offender mental health characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?

Research Question #3

Does the offender's current situation or behavior predict rearrest or program completion?

*M*ethodology

Study Design

This is a non-experimental explanatory study using longitudinal follow up data from the Family Violence Intervention Program in Hillsborough County. Domestic violence offenders are referred to a community assessment agency through legal conviction and sentencing or through a court diversion program. The offenders were administered a screening protocol to determine the type and level of the intervention program they receive. Eight providers, private for profit or nonprofit, operate under the supervision of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court System and provide intervention and other services. All data in this study were derived from information in the screening protocol. The intervention providers provided completion rates, and rearrest rates were derived from data provided by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).

Population and Sample

Data on all offenders from the court, the community assessment agency and from six of the eight intervention providers is forwarded to the Harrell Center. Two of the providers, MacDill Air Force Base and James Haley Veteran's Administration Hospital, handle the data analysis internally. The sampling frame consists of the entire population of convicted misdemeanor offenders living in Hillsborough County, served by the six providers, and sentenced to the Offender Intervention Program. A total of 13, 903 offenders entered the intervention program from January 1995 to November 1999.

Measures

Based on the literature the current study examined the influence of three major factors: (1) demographics and background characteristics; (2) mental health; and (3) offender's behavior and current situation on program completion and recidivism. Pro-

gram staff from the community assessment agency administered an extensive structured screening protocol to all offenders who entered the intervention program. The screening protocol includes questions related to offender demographics, mental health, behavior, and current situation.

Composite Variables

Composite variables are usually created from two or more variables and are often considered to be more accurate measures of the underlying concept than the individual variables that were used to create them. Based on the domestic violence and substance abuse literature, the following six composite variables were created: education, violence, depression, anxiety, suicide, and family stability.

Education

This composite variable measured educational status and comprised three questions: (1) What was the highest grade you completed; (2) Can you read; and (3) Can you write? Scoring for the highest grade completed was as follows: 0 for less than a high school graduate, 1 for a high school graduate or a GED, and 2 for greater than a high school graduate, i.e. some college or greater. For the questions regarding reading and writing the scores ranged from 0 to 2 based on responses of (0) not at all, (1) not very well, and (2) very well.

History of Violence

The history of violence composite variable considered three factors past history of victimization/exposure to violence and affection between parents. Offenders received a score of 1 for each of the three factors: not witnessed violence, not been physically abused and witnessed affection. Offenders were given a score of 0 for each of the factors: witnessed violence, been physically abused, and witnessed no affection. These scores were added together and a high score indicated less factors of violence.

Depression

This construct measuring depression was instituted by the screening agency by borrowing questions from the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1961; Beck, 1987). The composite variable comprises only eight questions, which are insufficient for any diagnostic value. However, for research purposes it may give a possible indication of depressive tendencies in the offender. Offenders received a score of 0 for an affirmative response and a score of 1 for a negative response on each question. The high scores indicate less tendency to be depressed.

Anxiety

This composite variable was comprised of two questions: (1) Have you ever felt worried or nervous in the past month, and (2) Have you had any recent spells of terror or panic? A negative response was scored 1 and a positive response was scored 0. Therefore, the higher the score on this composite variable the less anxious an offender had been.

Suicide

This composite variable comprised two questions: (1) Have you ever been troubled by thoughts of hurting yourself, and (2) Have you recently attempted suicide. A negative response was scored 1 and a positive response was scored 0. Therefore, the higher the score on this composite variable the less suicidal ideation an offender had.

Family Stability

This construct was used to assess stable relationships among offender families that was hypothesized to have an influence on program completion and rearrest. This composite variable was developed from four questions: (1) With whom are you currently living?, (2) Do you have a support system in place?, (3) Are you separated from the family?, and (4) Do you see your children? For the living with question, a score of 0 was given if the offender lived alone or with a person that was not a partner or relative, 1 for living with a relative, and 2 for living with a partner or children. For the second and fourth question a positive response was scored 1 and a negative response was scored 0. For the third question, a negative response was scored 1 and a positive response was scored 0. Thus, the higher the score on this composite variable the more stable the offenders current family situation was.

Outcome Variables

An outcome variable is one that is of interest to the researcher. An outcome variable may also be considered an endpoint. The first outcome indicator utilized for this analysis was rearrest after completion of intervention. A second outcome indicator utilized was completion of the intervention program. Program completion data were obtained from six service providers in Hillsborough County and rearrest data were obtained from the FDLE.

Explanatory Variables

Explanatory variables are those variables whose relationship to outcome variables you are trying to understand. Statistical data analysis seeks to reveal the effect of the explanatory variable on the outcome variable. These explanatory variables were grouped for analysis into three models based solely on which variables pertained to each of the research questions.

Research Question #1 - Do offender demographic or background characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?

Demographics and background characteristics

Based on the research question the explanatory variables included in this category or model for analysis were: age of the offender; gender; race; composite variables

educational status and violence; times in jail/prison and times in jail/prison for domestic violence. Times in jail and times in prison were collapsed together to form times in jail/prison and times in jail for domestic violence and times in prison for domestic violence were collapsed to form times in jail/prison for domestic violence.

Research Question #2 - Do offender mental health characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?

Mental Health

Based on the research question the variables included in this category or analysis model were: the composite variables of anxiety, depression, and suicide; and the other explanatory variables: ever had fears of hurting your children, ever admitted to a psychiatric hospital and was alcohol perceived to be problem.

Research Question #3 - Does the offender's current situation or behavior predict rearrest or program completion?

Offender's behavior and current situation

This construct based on the research question comprised variables such as level of violence as determined by the level assigned to the offender (Level I, II or III); current employment status, and the composite variable family stability. Offenders are assigned a level I, II, or III based on responses to questions on the screening protocol. These levels determined the type of intervention program offenders were referred to. Offenders assigned Level I are the least violent. Level II, the majority of offenders, are offenders who exhibit increased levels of intrafamilial violence and have issues of power and control with their partners. Level III offenders exhibit chronic violence both intrafamilial and extrafamilial and may have a history of program failures. Level III offenders are also likely to exhibit co-occurring disorders such as substance abuse/dependency and other psychiatric problems.

Analysis

Data were analyzed utilizing SAS 8.0, a computer program used specifically for doing statistical analysis. The first phase of the analysis looked at the number of offenders responding to a variable and the average response. For instance, the average age of the offender at program entry was calculated and the number of offenders that answered this particular question was determined to calculate the average. Other analyses and correlations, looked at relationships between two particular variables to determine the strength

of the relationship or correlation. To analyze or look at more than two variables at a time, multivariate analyses were conducted using a procedure called logistic regression.

Logistic regression

Logistic regression enables the investigator to explore the relationship between a categorical outcome variable and a set of explanatory variables (Stevens, 1996; Stokes, David & Koch, 1995). The outcome, or response, can be dichotomous (yes, no) or polytomous (responses with more than two categories). Logistic regression can be used with any combination of explanatory variables, that include numerical, categorical, or a combination of both types. Since the outcome variables of rearrest and program completion are dichotomous, logistic regression analyses were used to determine the relationship between the outcome variables (program completion and recidivism) and the explanatory factors (demographics and background characteristics; mental health; offender's behavior and current situation). Logistic regression analyses were performed for each of the three factors separately. Variables selected under each of the three research question models were drawn from available information from the screening instrument and were based on domestic violence theory and the published literature.

Results

Demographics And Background Characteristics

The average age of the offenders was 33.35 years. Offenders reported that their ages ranged from 18 years to 97 years. The number of children in the offenders' homes ranged from 0 to 15 with an average of 1 child per offender. However, this included 52% of the offenders that reported they did not have any children in their current home. The average number of children living in offender's homes with children was 2.1 children. The number of biological children (not necessarily living at home) varied from 0 to 19 with an average of 1.8 children. However, this also included 20% of the offenders that reported they did not have any biological children. The average number of biological children of offenders who had children was 2.3 children. Offenders' reports of times in jail/prison for all crimes ranged from 0 to 180 times with an average of 2.1 times. Times in jail/ prison specifically for domestic violence were fewer and varied from 0 to 90 times with an average of 0.2 times (see Table 1). The varied number (sample size) is due to missing responses for each of the variables.

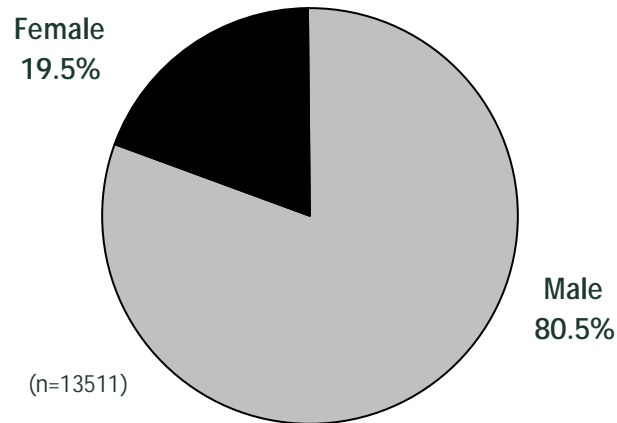
Table 1
Average and Number of Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Number	Average
Offender's age at program entry	13511	33.35
Number of children living in the home (includes all offenders)	7806	1
Number of children living in a home where there are children present	3776	2.1
Number of biological children of all offenders	7967	1.8
Number of biological children of those offenders that have children	6365	2.3
Times in jail/prison	8820	2.1
Times in jail/prison for domestic violence	6689	0.2

Gender

As shown in figure 1, approximately 80.5% of offenders were male and 19.5% were female.

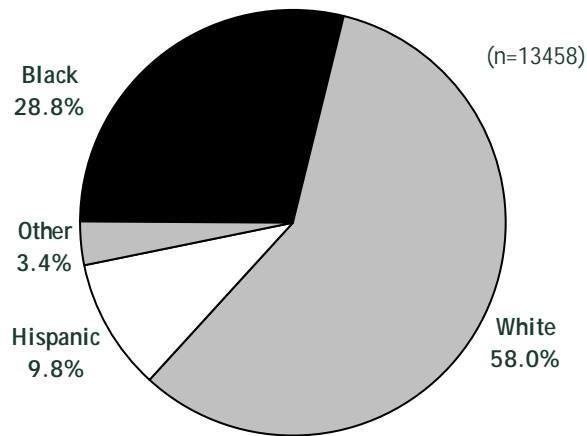
Figure 1
Offenders' Reported Gender



Race/Ethnicity

Greater than one half of the offenders were White (58%), 28.8% were Black, 9.8% were Hispanic and 3.4% were categorized as "Other" (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Offenders' Race/Ethnicity



History of Violence

The history of violence consisted of three factors: (1) a past history of childhood victimization, (2) exposure to violence, and (3) witnessed no affection between parents. These are the factors that made up the composite variable relative to violence. Almost 57% of offenders reported no past history of childhood victimization or exposure to violence and had witnessed affection between their parents. The more factors an offender had the more violent the offender's past experience had been. Approximately 27% of the offenders had two of the factors, and one in nine offenders had only one factor. Nearly 5% of offenders had all of the factors of violence, therefore having the most violent past experience that included a past history of childhood victimization, exposure to violence, and witnessed no affection between parents (See Table 2).

Table 2
Offenders' Factors of Violence

Factors of Violence *	Number of Offenders	Percent
All	356	4.8%
2 of 3	2024	27.1%
1 of 3	862	11.5%
None	4225	56.6%

- *(1) Past history of childhood victimization
- (2) Past history of exposure to violence
- (3) Witnessed no affection between parents

Education

Only 23 offenders (0.3%) were able to read very well, write very well and had a college education. The majority (7500) of offenders (89.8%) had moderate scores indicating they had the ability to read and write and had at least a GED.

Mental Health

Based on the research question the items selected for this category or analysis model were those that were used for screening. They should not be construed as diagnostic, as further evaluation data were not available.

Anxiety

A majority of the offenders had felt neither worried nor nervous in the month before assessment nor had reported any spells of terror or panic. About 20% of the offenders reported that they felt worried or nervous or had spells of terror or panic. Five percent reported both that they were worried or nervous and had spells of terror or panic.

Depression

About one in eight offenders reported scores indicating the need for further evaluation of depression. Fifty-three percent of the offenders reported no depressive symptoms.

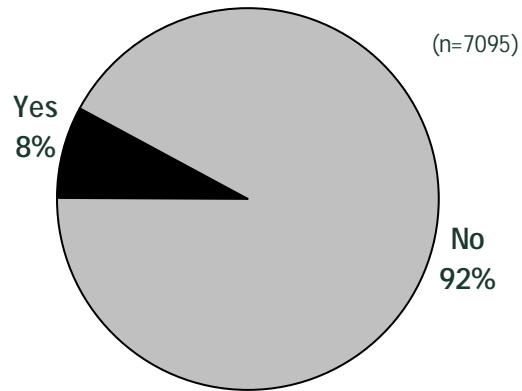
Suicide

The majority of offenders (90%) did not admit to any suicidal attempts or suicidal thoughts. A small number of offenders (6%) reported one suicidal symptom and only 4% reported serious suicidal symptoms. (It should be noted that while only 4% reported serious suicidal symptoms this represented 263 individuals).

Fears of Hurting Your Children

Thirty-five percent of offenders reported fears of hurting their children (See Figure 3).

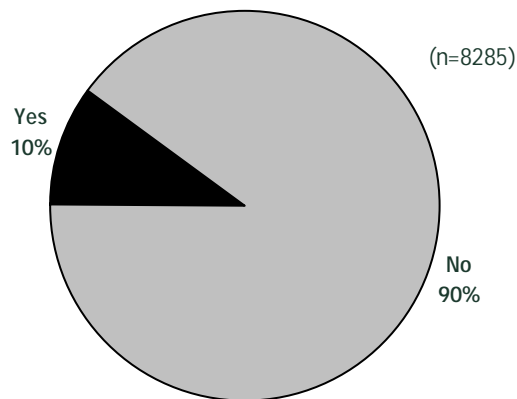
Figure 3
Ever had fears of hurting your children?



Psychiatric Hospital Admission

As depicted in Figure 4 approximately one in ten offenders had prior histories of admission to a psychiatric hospital.

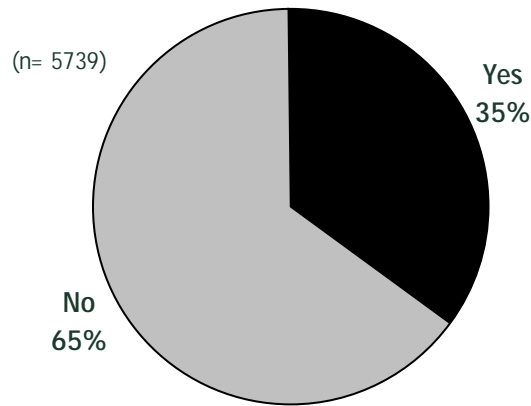
Figure 4
Ever Admitted to a Psychiatric Hospital



Alcohol Perceived to be a Problem

The vast majority of offenders (92%) indicated that they did not perceive alcohol (use) to be a problem (See Figure 5). (Alcohol problems in general were lower than expected and probably represent an underreport.)

Figure 5
Is Alcohol Perceived to be a Problem?



Offenders' Behavior and Current Situation

Employment

A large number of offenders (91%) were employed at the time of assessment. Only 9% of offenders admitted to being unemployed.

Family Stability

This construct was used to assess stable relationships among offender families. The majority (84.2%) of offenders were in a moderately stable family, 4.5% had a stable family and 11.3% had an unstable family situation (See Table 3).

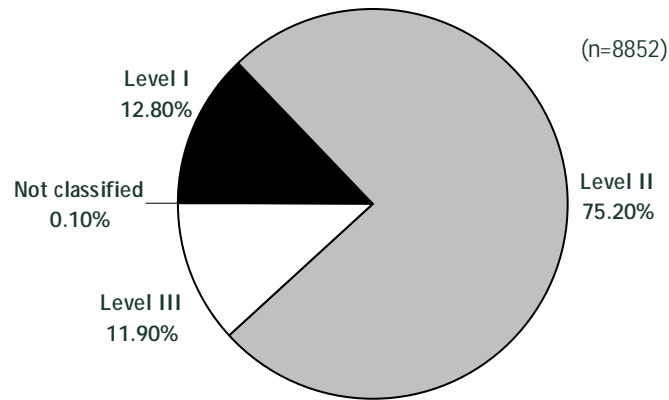
Table 3
Offenders' Family Stability

Family Stability	Frequency	Percent
Unstable	934	11.3%
Moderately Stable	6983	84.2%
Stable	369	4.5%

Level of Violence

Approximately 8852 offenders received services from 6 providers in Hillsborough County. Of these, the majority (75.2%) of offenders was designated as Level II or a moderate level of violence, 12.8% were designated as Level I or a low level of violence, and 11.9% were designated as Level III, a high level of violence (See Figure 6 and page 6).

Figure 6
Levels Assigned to offenders.



Correlations

The correlational analysis showed that a few of the variables were related to each other. The correlation of most interest was that the history of violence related to the other variables of: times in jail or prison for domestic violence, admission to a psychiatric hospital, fears of hurting your child, anxiety, depression, and weapon (having a gun). These correlations were all statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). There was a relationship between reported anxiety and admission to a psychiatric hospital. Finally, employment was highly correlated with family stability.

Multivariate Analyses

For clarity and as a reference point an odds ratio equal to one ($O.R=1.0$) shows no effect. These are presented in order to clarify the size of the effect of the statistically significant variables.

Rearrest

Research Question #1 - Do offender demographic or background characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?

Demographics Characteristics Relative to the Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested

Based on the research question as all the models are, this logistic regression model was used to determine the relationship between demographics and background characteristics of the offender and rearrest for domestic violence. Gender was negatively associated with no rearrest. This signifies that female offenders were less likely to be

rearrested than male offenders for domestic violence after program completion (OR=0.49). The number of times an offender was in jail and prison for all crimes was mildly associated with not being rearrested for domestic violence (OR=1.08). Race, education, factors of violence, and times in jail/prison for domestic violence were not significantly associated with rearrest (See Table 4).

Table 4
Association of Demographics and Background Characteristics with the Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested

Demographics and Background Variables	Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested (n=2268)	
	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Sex	-0.49*	0.29--0.82
Offenders age	1.02*	0.99--1.03
Race		
White ^a	1.00	
Black	1.13	0.78--1.65
Hispanic	-0.86	0.50--1.50
Other	-0.84	0.38--1.90
Education	-0.90	0.68--1.17
Violence	-0.78	0.60--1.02
Times in jail/prison	1.08*	1.00--1.15
Times in jail/prison for DV	1.01	0.87--1.17

^a is reference group * indicates that p=.05

Research Question #2 - Do offender mental health characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?

Mental Health Relative to the Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested

This second logistic regression model was used to determine the relationship between mental health characteristics of the offenders and rearrest. Logistic regression analysis revealed a significant association between the composite variable anxiety and rearrest (OR=1.39). Offenders who were more anxious were more likely to be rearrested for domestic violence crimes. Alcohol problems, being admitted to a psychiatric hospital, fears of hurting children, depression and suicidal symptoms were not significantly associated with rearrest (See Table 5).

Table 5

Association of Mental Health with the Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested

Mental Health	Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested (n=2841)	
Variables	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Alcohol problem	1.48	0.92--2.40
Psychiatric hospital	1.06	0.61--1.86
Hurting children	-0.95	0.66--1.37
Anxiety	1.39*	1.03--1.88
Depression	-0.99	0.91--1.10
Suicide	-0.85	0.56--1.30

* indicates that p=.05

Research Question #3 - Does the offender's current situation or behavior predict rearrest or program completion?

Offender's Behavior and Current Situation Relative to the Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested

This logistic regression model was used to predict the relationship between offender's behavior and current situation and rearrest. Current employment was positively associated with not being rearrested for domestic violence (OR=1.72). The level assigned to an offender and the composite variable family stability was not significantly associated with rearrest (See Table 6).

Table 6

Association of Offender's Behavior and Current Situation with the Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested

Offender's Behavior and Current Situation	Likelihood of Not Being Rearrested (n=5289)	
Variables	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Level of violence		
Level II ^a	1.00	
Level I	1.33	0.91--1.93
Level III	1.38	0.98--1.95
Currently employed	1.72*	1.39--2.14
Family stability	-0.98	0.86--1.11

^a is reference group * indicates that p=.05

Program Completion

Research Question #1 - Do offender demographic or background characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?

Demographics and Background Characteristics Relative to Program Completion

This logistic regression model was used to investigate the relationship between demographics and background characteristics of the offender and program completion. Logistic regression analysis showed that gender was negatively associated with program completion (OR=0.64). Female offenders were more likely to complete the intervention program as compared to male offenders. Offenders' age was mildly associated with program completion (OR=1.02). Race, times in jail/prison for all crimes, times in jail/prison for domestic violence, education, and childhood history of victimization/exposure to violence were not significant predictors of program completion (See Table 7).

Table 7
Association of Demographics and Background with Program Completion

Demographics and Background	Program Completion (n=2268)	
	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Sex	-0.64*	0.50--0.83
Offenders age	1.02*	1.01--1.03
Race		
White	1.00	
Black	-0.91	0.74--1.12
Hispanic	1.40	0.99--1.97
Other	1.41	0.83--2.41
Education	1.13	0.99--1.29
Violence	-0.98	0.86--1.12
Times in jail/prison	-0.99	0.98--1.01
Times in jail/prison for DV	1.02	0.94--1.11

^a is reference group * indicates that $p=.05$

Research Question #2 - Do offender mental health characteristics predict rearrest or program completion?

Mental Health Relative to Program Completion

This second logistic regression model was based on the research question and used to determine the relationship between mental health of the offenders and program

completion. In this analysis, not perceiving alcohol (use) to be a problem was significantly associated with program completion (OR=1.76). Being admitted to a psychiatric hospital, fears of hurting children, anxiety, depression and suicidal symptoms were not significantly associated with program completion (See Table 8).

Table 8
Association of Mental Health with Program Completion

Mental Health	Program Completion (n=2841)	
Variables	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Alcohol problem	1.76*	1.34--2.32
Psychiatric hospital	-0.94	0.69--1.29
Hurting children	1.13	0.92--1.37
Anxiety	1.08	0.91--1.29
Depression	1.02	0.97--1.08
Suicide	1.02	0.82--1.27

* indicates that $p=.05$

Research Question #3 - Does the offender's current situation or behavior predict rearrest or program completion?

Offender's Behavior and Current Situation Relative to Program Completion

The third model was used to predict the relationship between offender's behavior and current situation with program completion. All three variables in this model were significantly associated with program completion. Level I offenders (OR=2.84) had higher odds of completing the intervention program than Level II offenders and Level III had lower odds of completing the intervention as compared to Level II offenders (OR=0.69). Current employment (OR=1.37) and family stability were also significantly associated with program completion (See Table 9).

Table 9
Association of Offender's Behavior and Current Situation with Program Completion

Offender's Behavior and Current Situation	Program Completion (n=5289)	
Variables	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Level of violence		
Level II ^a	1.00	
Level I	2.84*	2.17--3.70
Level III	-0.69*	0.58--0.82
Currently employed	1.37*	1.20--1.56
Family stability	1.13*	1.05--1.22

^a is reference group * indicates that $p=.05$

Although the logistic regression model included a wide range of theoretically pertinent explanatory variables, there are limitations in the prediction of rearrest and program completion in this study. First, a limitation in this study was the variation in sample size due to missing data. Missing responses prevent the accurate and valid estimation of any association between explanatory and outcome variables. Second, this data is based on self-disclosure at the time of assessment. Offenders in this system are legally required to attend these intervention programs and may not be truthful regarding their current situation, mental health, and behavior. Third, the assessment is composed of items intended only to be a screen and are not diagnostic in nature.

Conclusions

Discussion

This study assumes that completion of intervention programs and a reduction in rearrests indicates a reduction in violence among domestic violence offenders. It further assumes that this reduction will have a significant positive effect on the children. This study is distinct from the majority of prior domestic violence research, which has generally examined the effect of family risk variables, offender characteristics, and behavior on violence perpetration. Our analysis expands on earlier research to identify pertinent family risk variables and investigate their influence on rearrest for domestic violence and program completion. Logistic regression analysis of demographic characteristics strongly indicates that female offenders are both, more likely to complete the program and less likely to be rearrested after completion of intervention. Anecdotal evidence indicates that women entering offender intervention programs may be victims who have used violence in self-defense in their relationships and thus are less likely to reoffend. One cannot wholly exclude the influence of sample size on the relationship between gender and the outcome variables. Women offenders constituted less than one fifth of the sample and this could have an impact on the effect of gender on rearrest. This issue should be explored further.

Only half of the offenders indicated that they had children in their current home, however those that did had an average of two children in the home. Eighty percent of the offenders reported that they did have biological children not necessarily living in their home, and they had an average of slightly more than two children. If we assume that violent behavior definitely affects children living with the offender the potential negative impact of domestic violence on children is great. If we also assume the violent behavior may affect children not currently living with the offender, the potential negative impact of domestic violence on children is even greater. Since half of the offenders had two children in the home, the minimal number of children affected by the violence is the same as the number of offenders. This is without including children not currently living in the home but exposed to violence by the offender.

Consistent with previous research on violence perpetration (Eisikovits & Edleson, 1989; Gondolf, 1999b; Tolman & Bennett, 1990), the offenders in this population were relatively younger (mean age 33). Our finding of a relationship between age and program completion indicates older participants are more likely to complete the program. Perhaps younger participants may require greater supervision. DeHart and colleagues (1999) noted that external monitoring of program attendance was most likely to result in domestic violence offenders continuing the intervention.

Among the mental health variables in our analysis, only anxiety was significantly associated with rearrest. In other words, offenders who were more anxious were more likely to be rearrested for domestic violence crimes. Offenders who reported that they did not have an alcohol problem were more likely to complete the program. Although theoretically, one might expect to find an association between the mental health characteristics and rearrest or program completion, it is important to note that the majority of the offenders scored high on all of the mental health variables. This indicated they reported few symptoms of anxiety, suicidal ideation, and depression. The screening questions included in the composite mental health variables may not be an adequate measure of these constructs. In addition, these mental health measures were based on self-reports by the offenders, and the accuracy of these responses may be suspect. A better measure of the relationship of behavioral characteristics to outcomes appears to be batterer typology as measured by assignment of levels.

A noteworthy finding was that current employment had a statistically significant relationship with both rearrest and program completion. Employed offenders were more likely to complete the program and less likely to be rearrested for domestic violence. These results are not consistent with previous findings of employment as a poor predictor of attrition (DeHart et al., 1999). However, Cadsky and colleagues (1996) found unstable work histories among non-completers in their study. Also, the present study was unique in that it had a large sample size and represented the entire population of offenders in a sizeable county.

Although conceptually relevant, family stability was not found to be a good predictor of rearrest. Nevertheless, it was a moderate indicator of program completion. It should be noted, however, that family stability was highly correlated with education, also a good predictor of program completion. Past research has not explored the contribution of family stability to program completion and rearrest. Living with the family, continued contact with children and having a support system can be motivating factors for offenders to complete the program. Focusing on factors that motivate offenders to complete intervention programs as well as those factors contributing to attrition appears to be a beneficial approach for gathering information leading to improved intervention programs and better outcomes for offenders.

The model which looked at the offender's behavior and current situation was the most successful in predicting rearrest and program completion. The Hillsborough County Intervention Program is unique in that it provides interventions based on batterer typologies. These typologies (called levels I, II, III) reflect the level of violence perpetrated by the offenders and their personality characteristics. Consistent with our previous research, Level I offenders (the least violent) had a greater odds of completing the program

than Level II and Level III offenders. In addition, the most chronically and severely violent offenders often with additional mental health problems (Level III) were the least likely to complete the intervention program. Level assignments were a strong predictor of program completion.

Summary

In response to the original intent of the study (from which the more detailed research questions were derived), the summary findings of the study were:

The variables that were investigated in this study were better predictors of program completion than rearrest rates. However, earlier analyses of these data indicate that completers are less likely to be rearrested than non-completers (Coulter, Byers, Menezes & Jayakumar, 2001). While further analysis of these relationships will continue, it is reasonable to anticipate that an increase in program completion will result in fewer rearrests.

The most noteworthy findings of this study include the finding that it is the offenders' behavior and current living situation that is the best predictor of program completion. The specific findings are as follows:

1. Being currently employed significantly reduces the likelihood that offenders would drop out of intervention and that they would be rearrested.
2. Women are less likely than men both to drop out of offender intervention and to be rearrested.
3. Having a stable family situation results in higher levels of program completion.
4. The offenders' behavior as measured at intake is a significant indicator of the likelihood of program completion. The results of this study directly track the assignment of levels used by the court system. Level I offenders (least serious) were most likely to complete the program and Level III offenders (most serious) were least likely to complete the program. It will be noted that this designation results from a combination of variables, including history of violence, use of weapons, and serious mental health problems. This designation is reached through a combination of screening data and the judgment of experienced assessors.

Children

Half of the offenders in the sample indicated that they had children living in their home. Those that so indicated said that the average number of children in their home was about 2. (This does not include biological children of the offender that were not living in the home, but could conceivably be affected by the violence of their parent). A conservative estimate, therefore, of the number of children affected by domestic violence is that it is the same as the number of offenders. In this data set there were 13,908 offenders over

nearly a four-year period. This is a very low estimate of the number of children affected since the likelihood that an offender will be reported, arrested, indicted, convicted, and sentenced to intervention is very low, probably less than 10% of cases. If that 10% represents 3000 cases per year, then the overall number of cases could be estimated at 30,000 children exposed to violence a year. This includes only those children exposed to the violence in the home of the offender.

Recommendations

The non-completion rate for domestic violence offenders in Hillsborough County is nearly one third. From 1/95 to 11/99 completion rates for intervention were 72% of offenders. Twenty-eight percent of offenders did not complete intervention. (These data do not include offenders served at McDill AFB or the James Haley VA Hospital). These rates are similar to those experienced in other parts of the country. Since the characteristics identified in this study predicted program completion it is logical to focus recommendations on efforts to improve program completion, thus enhancing the likelihood of reduction of rearrests. The specific recommendations from this analysis are:

1. The assessment, probation, and provider network should assist offenders with employment procurement and maintenance.
2. Level III offenders should be closely monitored and supervised by the courts to assist in prevention of program dropout.
3. Offenders should be provided with resources to assist their children who are exposed to violence.

The prototypical dropout from the programs is a level III offender who is unemployed, probably has a low educational level, and may have alcohol problems. While this group would appear to be the most difficult to assist in program maintenance and completion, the high violence levels of these offenders makes increased attention worthwhile. The provision of support services has not been a traditional part of offender intervention and this intervention aspect should be expanded, either in collaboration with other county programs or independently.

It has likewise not been traditional to approach children exposed to violence through the avenue of the offender. Nevertheless this avenue is available and is a direct route to intervention for those situations where the children continue to live with the offender or where the victim wishes intervention of this kind. It should not be assumed that offenders are unconcerned about the welfare of their children, as anecdotal information has indicated that they are indeed concerned. While services of this type may not be widely available in the county, a mechanism for sufficient delivery of these services should be developed.

Funding Identification Plan

This study involved an expanded analysis of data collected for the annual evaluation of the Hillsborough County Domestic Violence Offender Intervention Program. The evaluation is ongoing and funded each year. Additional analyses to update the present study will be possible through continued funding from the 13th Judicial Circuit Court of Hillsborough County.

References

- Adams, D. (1988). Treatment models of men who batter: A profeminist analysis. In K. Yllo & M. Bograd (Eds.). *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse*. (pp.176-199). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Austin, J. B. & Dankworth, J. (1999). Standards for batterer programs. A review and analysis. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14, 152-168.
- Beck, A. T. (1987). *Beck depression inventory: Manual*. San Antonio, Texas: Psychological Corporation.
- Beck, A. T. & Ward, C. H., Mendelson, M., Mock, J. & Erbaugh, J. (1961). An inventory for measuring depression. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 4, 561-571.
- Cadsky, O., Hanson, R. K., Crawford, M. & Lalonde, C. Attrition from a male batterer treatment program: Client-treatment congruence and lifestyle instability. *Violence & Victims*, 11, 51-64.
- Carlson, B. E. (1984). Children's observations of interpersonal violence. In A. R. Roberts (Ed.), *Battered women and their families* (pp.147-167). New York: Springer.
- Coulter, M., Byers, R., Menezes, L. & Jayakumar, A. (2001). An evaluation of the Hillsborough County Domestic Violence Intervention Program of the 13th Judicial Court. Technical Report.
- DeHart, D. D., Kennerly, R. J., Burke, L. K. & Follingstad, D. R. (1999). Predictors of attrition in a treatment program for battering men. *Journal of Family Violence*, 14, 19-34.
- Eisikovits, Z. C. & Edleson, J. L. (1989). Intervening with men who batter: A critical review of the literature. *Social Science Review*, 63, 384-414.
- Edleson, J. L. (1999). Controversy and change in batterers programs. In J. L. Edleson & Z. C. Eisikovits (Eds.) *Future interventions with battered women and their families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Felson, R. B. & Messner, S. F. (2000). The control motive in intimate partner violence. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63, 86-94.
- Goldstein, D. & Rosenbaum, A. (1985). An evaluation of the self-esteem of martially violent men. *Family Relations*, 34, 425-428.
- Gondolf, E. W. (1990). An exploratory survey of court-mandated batterer programs. *Response to the Victimization of Women and Children*, 13, 7-11.
- Gondolf, E. W. & Foster, R. A. (1991). Pre-program attrition in batterer programs. *Journal of Family Violence*, 6, 337-349.
- Gondolf, E. W. (1997). Batterer programs. What we know and need to know. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 12, 83-98.
- Gondolf, E. W. (1999a). A comparison of four batterer intervention systems: Do court referrals, program length & services matter? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14, 41-61.
- Gondolf, E. W. (1999b). Characteristics of court-mandated batterers in four cities. *Diversities & dichotomies. Violence Against Women*, 5, 1277-1293.
- Gondolf, E. W. (1999c). MCMI-III results for batterer program participants in four cities: Less "pathological" than expected. *Journal of Family Violence*, 14, 1-17.

- Gondolf, E. W. (2000). Mandatory court review and batterer program compliance. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15, 428-437.
- Holden, G.W., & Ritchie, K.L. (1991). Linking extreme marital discord, child rearing, and child behavior problems: Evidence from battered women. *Child Development*, 62, 311-327.
- Holtzworth-Munroe, A. & Stuart, G. L. (1994). Typologies of male batterers: Three subtypes and the differences among them. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116, 476-497.
- Kane T. A. Staiger, P. K. & Ricciardelli, L. A. (2000). Male domestic violence: Attitudes, aggression and interpersonal dependency, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15, 16-29.
- Marin, A. J. & Russo, N. F. (1999). Feminist perspectives on male violence against women: Critiquing O'Neil & Harway's model. In M. Harway & J. M. O'Neil (Eds.), *What causes men's violence against women?* (pp. 18-35). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Murphy, C. M., Meyer, S. & O'Leary, K. D. (1994). Dependency characteristics of partner assaultive men. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 103, 729-735.
- O'Neil, J. M. & Harway, M. (1999). Revised multivariate model. Examining men's risk factors for violence against women. Theoretical propositions, new hypotheses, and proactive Recommendations. In M. Harway & J. M. O'Neil (Eds.), *What causes men's violence against women?* (pp. 18-35). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ragg, D. M. (1999). Dimensions of self-concept as predictors of men who assault their female partners. *Journal of Family Violence*, 14, 315-329.
- Stith, S. M. & Farley, S. C. (1993). A predictive model of male spousal violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 8, 183-201.
- Stevens, J. *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences*. (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Stokes, M.E., Davis, C. S. & Koch, G. G. (1995). *Categorical data analysis using the SAS system*. Cary, NC: SAS Institute, Inc.
- Straus, M. A. (1992). Children as witnesses to marital violence: A risk factor for lifelong problems among a nationally representative sample of American men and women. *Children and Violence Report of the Twenty-Third Ross Roundtable on Critical Approaches to common Pediatric Problems*, 98-104.
- The Commonwealth Fund. (1999, May, 1999). *Violence and abuse: Fact sheet from the Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Women's Health*. Retrieved on March 25, 2000 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.cmwf.org/programs/ksc%5Fwhsurvey99%5Ffact4%5F332.asp>
- Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (1998). *Prevalence, incidence and consequences of violence against women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey (NCJ 172837)*: National Institute of Justice & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Tolman, R. M. & Bennett, L. W. (1990). A review of quantitative research on men who batter. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 5, 87-118.
- United States Department of Justice. (1998). *Bureau of Justice Statistics Factbook. Violence by Intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (NCJ-167237). Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

- United States Department of Justice. (1998). Research in Action. Batterer programs: What Criminal justice agencies need to know. (NCJ-171683). Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- United States Department of Justice. (2000). Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Intimate partner violence (NCJ-178247). Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Waltz, J., Babcock, J. C., Jacobson, N. S. & Gottman, J. M. (2000). Testing a typology of batterers. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 68, 658-669.
- Yllo, K. (1993). Through a feminist lens: Gender power and violence. In R. Gelles & D. Loseke (Eds.), *Current controversies on family violence* (p.47-62). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.