



How can the police assess risk of future intimate partner violence?

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Importance of risk assessment

- Intimate partner violence is a persistent problem all around the world that accounts for a great deal of police work (Devries et al., 2013).
- Intimate partner violence can have a variety of trajectories (Hilton & Eke, 2016; Robinson, Myhill, Wire, Tilley, & Roberts, 2016).
- Two percent of offenders were responsible for 50% of the harm caused by intimate partner violence in Western Australia (Sherman, Bland, House, & Strang, 2016).
- This is consistent with Risk-Needs-Responsivity theory (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990)

Reliability, Validity and Norms

- Reliability – scored consistently.
- Validity – predicts what it is supposed to predict.
- Norms - ODARA 6% of intimate partner violence offenders scored between 7 and 13 on the ODARA and their recidivism rate was 70% over the next 4.79 years. In contrast, 11% of people scored zero on the ODARA and their recidivism rate was 5% over 4.79 years.

Risk Assessment Tools: Shared between the Ontario Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (ODARA) and the Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk (B-SAFER)

- Previous incidents/contraventions
- Frequency of domestic violence
- Respondent history of violence
- Alcohol/drug misuse
- Threats to kill

Additional ODARA items AUC = .67 (Wheeler & Wire, 2014)

- Prior sentence for jail
- Prior fail of conditional release
- Unlawful confinement
- Victim faces at least one barrier to support
- Fear level
- Victim/offender have children together
- Offender is in stepfather role in this relationship

Additional B-SAFER items AUC = .65 (Storey et al., 2014)

- Mental health issues
- Negative Attitudes toward domestic violence
- Separation
- Employment problems
- Suicidal (aggrieved and/or respondent)
- Violent threats

Victims acting as their own risk assessors

- Wheller and Wire (2014) state that the general predictive validity as indicated by AUC is .62.
- Messing et al. (2014) found that high risk victims engaged in more protective behaviours, such as asking neighbours to ring police if violence starts or packing a bag with extra clothing.
- Gonzalez-Mendez and Santana-Hernandez (2014) found that those women who felt they were most at risk took more steps to avoid their former partners than those who felt they were of lower risk.
- Campbell (2004) found that only approximately one-half of the 456 women who were killed or almost killed by a husband, boyfriend, ex-husband or ex-boyfriend, accurately perceived their risk of being killed by their abusive partner.

Are they violent generally?

- Andrews and Bonta (2017) argue that many intimate partner violence offenders share the same characteristics as violent offenders more generally.
- Hanson, Helmus, and Borugon (2007) showed that risk assessment for violence generally showed similar levels of prediction to those developed for intimate partner violence.
- Research by Richards, Jennings, Tomsich, and Gover (2013) followed up 317 domestically violent men over a ten-year period. They found that more of the high-rate domestically violent men were also committing high numbers of other offences as well (7.3%) than were high-rate intimate partner violence offenders exclusively but not committing many other offences (5.4%).

Intimate Partner Homicide

- There are only two studies, both unpublished, that have looked at police officers' ability to predict homicide in ahead of the attack (Chalkley, 2015; Thornton, 2011).
- One hundred and seven serious cases were identified and of these 47 perpetrators had no contact with police concerning intimate partner violence in the previous seven years - although it appears many perpetrators had been in contact with police for other crimes.
- 67 had previous contact with police, with regards intimate partner violence, only 22 had been previously risk assessed as being high risk.
- 12,301 identified as high risk, only 22 went on to commit serious violence.

Police perceptions

- CYA
- Most difficulty with low risk offenders.
- Anchoring effects
- Improve investigations and knowledge (Myhill & Hohl, 2016: Robinson, Pinchevsky, & Guthrie, 2016b; Robinson, Myhill, & Wire, 2017).

Ways forward

- Risk assessment is effective and will improve
- Automation – New Zealand Police
- Interactions with victims – victim vulnerability as a risk factor
- Considering the ‘whole’ offender rather than just the intimate partner violence



THANK YOU

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