

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TODAY

PART 1: DEFINITIONS, DATA SOURCES & PREVALENCE RATES

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TWO ABUSE SCENARIOS

She was annoyed that he got off on what she considered to be female exploitation. Here she was, making his dinner in the kitchen, acting like the housewife that she had never pictured herself as, and George was sitting there “watching these women walk around like a dog show in bathing suits.” Vicky found the whole situation insulting...“How can you watch that stuff while I’m in here cooking. If find it so degrading!”

George calmed down internally, but you never would have known it: “You just can’t fit into one of them bathing suits anymore, that’s why you can’t stand me watching them. Even if you could, you’re too ugly to walk around in one...”

Vicky was angry now, so angry that she temporarily forgot what a dangerous man George could be. She charged into the living room and turned off the TV. George’s response was quick, and it was ferocious. He broke the glass coffee table by smashing it with his fist...She tried to walk out of the living room back into the kitchen, but George followed her. He threw a beer can at her. He was yelling at her, calling her a “stupid bitch.” Their daughter, a toddler, was in the kitchen, watching all of this. She witnessed George grab Vicky by the neck, slam her against the window, and start throwing kitchen utensils at her (Jacobsen & Gottman, 1998, pp.59-60)

* * *

“A lot of times, I would be working on some papers and there would be a coffee cup there, and she would intentionally spill the coffee; she went from that to throwing the coffee, and then throwing the cup and the coffee. She would throw hot scalding coffee in my face. It was a gradual thing that built over a three-year period, until it got to the point where she would physically strike me

I had never seen physical abuse between my parents, I had never had physical abuse by my parents, and to be marrying into something with the same socioeconomic status and finding out that...whoa, I had a wolverine here that would go out of control...that’s why it was so hard for me...”

“She would reach up and grab my glasses (these were the old wire-rim days), and she could twist these into a pretzel. I got into the habit of keeping a spare pair in the car. She would hit me with things. One time we had an argument, and I decided to let her go into the bedroom and let her settle down, so I went to sleep on the couch. About an hour later, I was awakened with a terrible pain on my forehead. She had taken one of my cowboy boots and, with the heel, whacked me in the forehead” (Cook, 1997, p. 39)

VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

1. LEGAL DEFINITIONS, UNDER CALIFORNIA LAW

“Domestic Violence” is abuse committed against an adult or a fully emancipated minor who is a spouse, former spouse, cohabitant, former cohabitant, a person with whom the suspect has had a child or is having or has had a dating or engagement relationship. Same sex relationships are included

(PC 13700) defines “abuse” as “intentionally or recklessly causing, or attempting to cause bodily injury, or placing another person in fear of injury to self or another”

Under PC243(e), a person can be charged with a misdemeanor, for perpetrating domestic violence, even if there is no visible injury. Under PC273.5, a person can be charged with a felony, for perpetrating domestic violence involving a “traumatic condition,” usually visible

A 52-week batterer intervention program is mandated for individuals convicted of PC243(e), PC273.5, or for 273.6 (violation of a protective order)

2. GENERAL DEFINITIONS

Domestic Violence - Has two meanings. The general sense is of any kind of violence within the family. The more specific meaning is violence between intimate partners

Family Violence - Refers to any type of violence within the family, including:

- Violence by the parents on one another (partner violence)
- Violence by parents upon the children (child abuse)
- Sibling on sibling violence
- Child on parent violence
- Physical assaults on elderly or disabled family members (elder abuse)

Partner Violence - Specifically refers to violence among intimate partners, both opposite-sex and same-sex

Abuse - Abuse can be physical, verbal, sexual, or emotional (e.g. diminishment of self-esteem.) Attempts to dominate and control can also be considered abusive.

<u>Abuse and Control Tactics</u>	
Threats and intimidation	Obsessive relational intrusion
Isolation and jealousy	Passive-aggressiveness/withdrawal
Economic abuse	Using children
Diminishment of self-esteem	Legal system abuse
General control	Sexual coercion

FIVE POSSIBLE WAYS OF DEFINING “BATTERING”

1. Perpetration of *any* physical assault, including “minor” assaults such as twisting an arm or hair, pushing, shoving, grabbing or slapping
2. Perpetration of a *serious* physical assault (kicking, punching, biting, hitting with something that could hurt, choking, biting, slamming partner against a wall, beating up, purposely burning or scalding, using a knife or a gun)
3. Perpetration of any assault that leads to physical injury
4. Use of any physical violence as a function of power and control
5. Use of verbal or emotional abuse or control tactics, even in the absence of physical violence, by a dominant aggressor

SOURCES OF DATA ON PARTNER VIOLENCE

1. Agency/archival
 - a. Includes: reports from battered women shelters, mental health clinics, police statistics, and hospitalization records
 - b. Advantages: give us more specific information about a particular population, for purposes of research and treatment
 - c. Disadvantages: cannot easily be generalized to the general population. When unwarranted generalizations are made, this is know as the *clinical fallacy*

2. Survey
 - a. Crime surveys: National Crime Survey (NCS) and National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), conducted by U.S. Department of Justice
 - 1) Advantages: give data about many different types of crime; and about the most severe domestic violence assaults, for better intervention responses
 - 2) Disadvantages: asking about partner violence in a crime context inhibits full disclosure, for perpetration and victimization, especially by men

 - b. “Family conflict” type
 - 1) Small community samples (e.g., college students)
 - 2) National samples: 1976 and 1985 National Family Violence Surveys (NFVS), National Youth Survey
 - 3) Most of these use the Conflict Tactics Scale (see next page)
 - a) Advantages: provide a more scientifically-sound, representative picture of partner violence
 - b) Disadvantages: Contain relatively few cases of severe violence (*representative sample fallacy*);
 - c) Refusal rate of 18% for NFVS (or more)

 - c. Hybrids: E.g., National Violence Against Women Survey

CTS 1 - ORAL INTERVIEW*

Name _____ Partner _____ Yrs. together _____ Date _____

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I am going to read to you a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please tell me how many times you did each of these things in the past year, and how many times your partner did them in the past year. Then state the total number of times each of you did these things during the entire relationship.

PAST 12 MONTHS TOTAL RELATIONSHIP
(Total, or average/year)

Behavior	me	partner	me	Partner
1. Discussed an issue calmly.....				
2. Got information to back up your side of things...				
3. Brought in, or tried to bring in, someone to help settle things.....				
4. Yelled at, insulted or swore at partner.....				
5. Sulked or refused to talk about an issue.....				
6. Stomped out of the room or house or yard.....				
7. Cried (this item <i>not</i> scored).....				
8. Did or said something to spite him/her.....				
9. Threatened to hit or throw something at him/her				
10. Threw or smashed or hit or kicked something ...				
11. Threw something at him/her.....				
12. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved him/her.....				
13. Slapped him or her.....				
14. Kicked, scratched, bit or hit him/her with a fist...				
15. Hit or tried to hit him/her with something.....				
16. Beat him/her up.....				
17. Chocked him/her.....				
18. Threatened him/her with a knife or gun.....				
19. Used a knife or fired a gun.....				
20. Other (e.g., burned, bit).....				
21. SEXUAL COERCION (used force, threat of force)				

CONTEXT (injuries, who initiated, etc.)

*The newer CTS-2 is a more lengthy, self-administered questionnaire, that asks about emotional and sexual abuse and physical injuries. It is a copyrighted instrument. It is a copyrighted instrument, which can be obtained at Western Psychological Services, 12031 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025, (800) 648-8857. Journal articles on the CTS-2 can be obtained from the author, Murray Straus. He can be reached at the Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824; by calling (603) 862-2594, by faxing a request to (603) 862-1122, or through e-mail correspondence at: <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2>. (No permission necessary for use of original CTS, reprinted on this page.)

SELF-REPORTS: HOW RELIABLE?

PROS AND CONS OF THE CTS AND CTS2

- CTS questions framed in terms of everyday conflict, to lessen resistance and encourage honest responses. Original CTS items were also presented in order of increasing severity
- CTS has been criticized for failing to provide sufficient information about *context* - e.g., who strikes first, self-defense, physical injuries, and psychological impact on victim
- CTS2 includes contextual items, and expands number of assault questions in original

THE PROBLEM OF UNDER-REPORTING

- Meta-analysis by Archer (1999) provides us with the best indications of its reliability
- Individuals of both sexes tend to under-report their own assaults, compared to what their partners report
- Studies in which *individuals* were asked to report assault rates both for themselves and their partners, indicate that men tend to under-report somewhat more than women
- Studies that questioned *couples* about their assault rates show that men and women under-report at about the same rate, but that men tend to under-report assaults perpetrated against them

PHYSICAL ASSAULT RATES: COMPARING SURVEY DIFFERENCES

(From "Violent Touch," by David Fontes, PsyD. Available at Safe4all.org)

1996 National Crime Victimization Survey		1998 National Violence Against Women Survey (includes rape)		Most Other Surveys Including the 1985 NFVS	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
85%	15%	61%	39%	40% - 60%	40% - 60%
840,000 (0.8% of population)	150,000 (0.2% of population)	1.5 million (1.5% of population)	835,000 (0.9% of population)	4- 6 million (7-12% of population)	4- 6 million (7-12% of population)

- NCVS reports the lowest overall rates of assaults
- The NFVS and most other general surveys report the highest overall rates of assaults
- Low overall assault rates are correlated with high percentage differences between male and female assaults
- High overall assault rates are correlated with low percentage differences between male and female assaults

PHYSICAL ASSAULT RATES BY SEVERITY AND GENDER

According to the National Family Violence Survey, the annual rate of couples who experience at least one incidence of violence is 16.1%. Overall physical assault rates between men and women are roughly equal, according to general surveys such as the NFVS (Straus, et al, 1990), Archer's (2000) meta-analysis, and the annotated bibliography by Fiebert (1996). The table below, by Archer (2002), specifies the prevalence of each type and the proportion perpetrated by gender, and compares the rates reported by perpetrators with those of their partners:

	Male-Perpetrated Assaults			Female-Perpetrated Assaults		
	Self report	Partner report	% diff.	Self Report	Partner report	% diff.
Throw something at	.075	.100	33.3	.129	.125	-3.2
Push, grab, shove	.213	.232	8.9	.224	.194	-13.4
Slap	.086	.124	44.2	.177	.176	-0.6
Kick, bite, punch	.070	.098	40.0	.130	.125	-3.8
Hit with object	.048	.068	41.7	.086	.088	-2.3
Beat up	.021	.043	104.8	.017	.020	17.6
Choke or strangle	.042	.052	23.8	.016	.026	62.5
Threaten w/knife or gun	.012	.016	33.3	.013	.022	69.2
Use knife or gun	.011	.018	63.6	.010	.016	60.0

- Note that both male and female perpetrators underestimate their own violence, compared to their partner's report. Also note that males underestimate the violence perpetrated upon them
- To avoid under-reporting, Straus (1993) recomputed the annual assault rates from the 1985 NFVS to reflect only the *women's* reports. This information is presented below, according to seriousness of assault, gender, and percentage of total:

Very Serious Violence
(Beat up, use knife or firearm)
H- .86 per 100(63%) W- .52 per 100(37%)
5.6% of total violence

Serious violence
(Punch, kick, bite, choke,
hit with object, threat of weapon)
H- 4.1 per 100 (50%) W- 4.1 per 100 (50%)
33.3% of total violence

Minor violence
(Throw something, push, grab, shove, slap)
H- 7.2 per 100 (48%) W - 7.8 per 100 (52%)
61% of total violence

< Total: Husband on Wife: 12.0 per 100 couples (49.0%); wife on husband:
12.4 per hundred couples (50.5%)

< Husbands averaged 7.2 assaults per year, and wives 6.0/yr. Husbands
averaged 6.1 *severe* assaults, and the wives 4.28

< Government surveys (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994) indicate that 72% of
intimate partner homicides are committed by men. But female-perpetrated
homicides may in fact be higher. Farrell (1999) points out that gender rates
provided by the Bureau of Justice Statistics are limited to cases where there
the assailant, and the cause of death, are known. Women use poison, and
other hard-to-detect methods, far more often than do men. They are also far
more likely to enlist the services of a third party to carry out the killing. In
such cases, the female is *not* identified as having perpetrated the crime

GAY AND LESBIAN VIOLENCE

PREVALENCE RATES

- There has been scant research on gay and lesbian violence, compared to research conducted on heterosexual violence (almost exclusively focused on male-perpetrated battering)
- The few studies on gay/lesbian violence have primarily relied on self-selecting samples. From a review of the literature, West (1998) determined that victimization rates among lesbians in committed relationships range from 25% to 48% (compared to a 28% rate in heterosexual relationships, according to the NFVS)
- One major survey, the NVAWS (Tjaden, et al, 1998), did inquire into same-sex violence. Lifetime rates for total victimization (physical assaults, rape and stalking), by victim gender and history of same-sex or opposite-sex cohabitation are as follows:

	History of Same-Sex Cohabitation	History of Opposite-Sex Cohabitation
Women	35.4 39.2 (n = 79)	20.4 21.7 (n = 7,193)
Men	21.5 23.1 (n = 65)	7.1 7.4 (n = 6,879)

Female same-sex intimate cohabitants report 75% more assaults than females living with an opposite-sex partner; Male same-sex intimates report 3 times more assaults than males living with an opposite-sex partner

When victimization rates are compared for same-sex and opposite-sex partners according to perpetrator gender, 30.4% of same-sex cohabitating women report having been victimized by a male partner, whereas 11.4% report having been victimized by a female partner. 15.4% of same-sex cohabitating men reported having been victimized by a male partner, and 10.8% reported such abuse by a female partner

Of the 136 lesbians in a self-selective community sample (Lie, et al., 1991) who had been in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships, 32% reported physical assaults by male partners and 45% by female partners

OTHER FEATURES OF GAY AND LESBIAN VIOLENCE

Letellier (1994) argues that society has not provided an adequate response to the problem of gay and lesbian violence:

Intervention programs are “heterosexist.” They are based largely on feminist, male-perpetrator/female-victim sociopolitical theories of patriarchy, which render gay and lesbian violence “invisible” by precluding the possibility of such violence

Alternative models of power/control, as well as personality factors, are either not considered or downplayed

Homophobia adds added stress to gay and lesbian relationships, by failing to provide healthy gay/lesbian role models, and by fostering guilt and “self-hating”

Gay/lesbian victims are reluctant to call the police, who are often unsympathetic, and even hostile, to their plight

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