



Hidden Victims: Men and their Experience of Domestic Violence

Dr Elizabeth A. Bates

Elizabeth.Bates@cumbria.ac.uk

Overview

- Highlight the issue of male victims of IPV
- Briefly discuss the research that helped identify this hidden group
- Explore the impact IPV has on men

Traditional Models of Domestic Violence

- Feminist models
- Male perpetrators driven by patriarchal values and control – tolerated by a Patriarchal society
- IPV male perpetrators are different from other offenders
- Feminist researchers (e.g. Dobash & Dobash, 1979) believe that the cause of IPV is gender
- The liken marital relationship to that between a parent and child; there are inequalities in power, authority and status

Emergence of Male Victims

- “Battered Husband Syndrome” (Steinmetz, 1978)
- “Riding the donkey backwards” (George, 2002)
- Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS: Straus, 1979).
- Gender symmetry in perpetration
- Large scale frequency based studies
- Archer’s (2000) - 82 studies and a total of over 64,000 participants.
- Bates, Graham-Kevan & Archer (2014)

Men as Victims

- Males 16-25 most at risk of being involved in aggression
- Male victimisation has remained heavily under-researched across a variety of crimes e.g.
 - Male rape
 - Male victimisation of stalking behaviour
- Male victims of IPV is receiving more research attention

Statistics

- You've heard today crime statistics highlighting men as victims
- This is still believed to be an underestimate – men are underreporting
- Socialisation - men are more reluctant to talk about their suffering, preferring to resolve their problems alone, see help-seeking as weakness
- Perceptions of risk and aggression - not identifying as IPV

Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men

- “ ...in addition, male victims have unique experiences in that their female abusers are able to use a system that is designed to aide female victims of domestic violence. Thus, some female perpetrators of IPV manipulate their husbands because they know that the system is designed without the abused male’s experiences in mind, and that more often than not people will not believe or take seriously these men’s victimisation.”

Hines et al., (2007)

Perceptions of Victims

- Attitude studies (e.g. Harris & Cook, 1994)
- Media – e.g. recent Jeremy Kyle clip
- Impact?
 - Reporting
 - Help-seeking
- Issue here is often due to the comparison of abused men to abused women, rather than non abused men (e.g. Herzberger, 1996).
- Perception that women can't hurt men due to difference in physical strength

Table 2 Physically aggressive and controlling behaviors experienced by the abused male callers to the DAHM

	% Who experienced it (<i>n</i>)
<hr/>	
Type of physical aggression (<i>n</i> = 158 men who were asked this series of questions)	
Slapped/hit	43.7% (69)
Pushed	41.8% (66)
Kicked	39.2% (62)
Grabbed	31.0% (49)
Punched	24.7% (39)
Choked	22.2% (35)
Spit on	9.5% (15)
Stabbed	1.9% (3)
Scratched	1.3% (2)

Examples from Callers

- “I tried to call the cops but she wouldn’t let me . . . She beat me up, punched me . . . She raped me . . . I tried to fight her off, but she was too strong. . . . I was bleeding and she wouldn’t let me get to the doctor’s.”
- “G reports that his estranged wife frequently targeted his genitals in her attacks, which included head butting and choking. Police were called to his home six times; one call resulted in the wife’s arrest.”
- “I was writhing, crying in the corner . . . I couldn’t get up for two hours . . . she kicked me in the groin at least 12 times.”
- “She held a knife to my genitals and threatened to cut them off.”

Control

- Foundation of feminist theory – posited to be a male phenomenon.
- Emotional abuse, controlling behaviour, psychological aggression – big overlap
- Includes financial control, humiliation, trying to control their behaviour, restrict time with family and friends
- Studies have found control is associated with higher levels of aggression (e.g. Bates et al., 2014)
- Predicts worse health outcomes (e.g. Leone et al., 2004)
- Acknowledged now as a crime

Table 2 Physically aggressive and controlling behaviors experienced by the abused male callers to the DAHM

	% Who experienced it (<i>n</i>)
<hr/>	
Type of Controlling Behaviors (<i>n</i> = 155 men who were asked this series of questions)	
Does your partner try to control you?	94.8% (147)
Of those who were controlled, how were they controlled?	
Through coercion and threats	77.6% (114)
Through emotional abuse	74.1% (109)
Through intimidation	63.3% (93)
Through blaming, minimizing, and denying	59.9% (88)
Through manipulating the system	50.3% (74)
Through isolation	41.5% (61)
Through economic abuse	38.1% (56)
Through the children (<i>n</i> = 107)	64.5% (69)

Examples of women's use of control

- “I don't know our phone number here because she changed it and it's unlisted. I have tried to get it but I haven't been able to She checks the caller ID to see who has called when she comes home from work and she locks up my sneakers in the daytime.”
- “She convinces me that I am wrong all the time. She came at me flailing her arms hitting me and I went outside to get away from her and she locked me out...but she wouldn't let me back in.”
- “Yelling, screaming at me that if I don't shut up, I won't live to see tomorrow.”
- “I started the car and she stood behind the car with the baby... Then she put the baby on the ground behind the car where I couldn't see her so I wouldn't leave.”

Felson (e.g. 2002) and Chivalry

- Society doesn't tolerate it, quite the opposite
- Originating at early age where boys don't hit girls
- Suggests norms of chivalry cause men to inhibit their aggression towards women
- Women have no such inhibitions as there are few social sanctions to their aggression
- Eagly and Crowley (1986) found that women were consistently more likely to receive help from male participants, - this was more pronounced when there were audiences present, suggesting that this chivalrous effect is normative.
- Studies (e.g. Harris & Cook, 1994) suggest men's violence is condemned much more

Alternative Approaches

- Alternative way of studying IPV
- Valois, et al. (2002) - review of risk factors associated with aggression in adolescents revealed they could be grouped:
 - individual factors (e.g., age, psychological characteristics),
 - family factors (e.g., family structure and teen pregnancy),
 - school factors (e.g., school suspension and expulsion),
 - peer influences (e.g., delinquent siblings/peers, gangs)
 - community and neighbourhood factors (e.g., poverty)
 - situational factors (e.g., the presence of a weapon, alcohol consumption, bystander presence).

Developmental Trajectory

- Intervention can be successful if it is matched (in terms of time) with the development of the behaviour
- Risk factors in adolescents - importance of intervening whilst behaviours are in their developmental stage (e.g., van der Merwe & Dawes, 2007)
- Huesmann, Eron & Dubow (2002) preventative action needs to target the risk factors that appear to have an effect on the development of early aggression.
- Kokko & Pulkkinen (2005) also found significant stability in aggression from child to adulthood.

Effects of IPV

- Physical and mental health issues associated with IPV
- Many believe this only affects women
 - Tjaden & Thoennes (2000) reported that women experience significantly more partner physical assaults and also report injuries and use of medical and justice system services
- But there is evidence that it is the same for men
 - E.g. Hines & Douglas (2011) mental health
- Both when the violence is mutual
 - Próspero & Kim (2009) studied the experience of IPV perpetration and victimisation, coercion and mental health problems, among students.

Perpetrator Interventions

- Current IPV interventions in UK, US and Canada, roots in feminist research and theory
- The Duluth Model (Pence & Paymar, 1993) designed to protect women from controlling and abusive men – curriculum based on power and control, perceived to be male problem
- This model not only excludes the possibility of female perpetrators, but also many male perpetrators who are not controlling and whose aggression could be attributed to other variables, such as personality disorders or a lack of self-control.
- It doesn't accommodate IPV within same-sex relationships

Conclusion

- There is parity in experiences of IPV for both men and women
- There is still no equality in:
 - Research
 - Attitudes
 - Resources
- Perceptions are changing as more people talk about male victims

- Thank you for listening!
- Any questions?