



Predicting Intimate Partner Violence Injuries Based on Police Reports

Presenter: Marie Karlsson, Murray State University
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Battered Women's Justice Project
Violence Against Women, Improving Criminal Justice Responses



Disclaimer

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- Special thanks to Dr. Alyssa Rheingold at the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Medical University of South Carolina
- Aim: Use information from police reports to predict visible injury in victims of intimate partner violence

Outline

- Scope of the problem
 - Intimate partner violence as a social and criminal issue
 - Predictors of reporting intimate partner violence to the police
 - Characteristics of police reports on intimate partner violence
 - Predictors of victim injury from intimate partner violence
- Current study
 - Aim
 - Methods
 - Results
- Discussion

The scope of the problem: Intimate partner violence as a social problem

- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men are abused by an intimate partner (National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey; Black et al., 2011)
- A range of negative psychosocial outcomes (Black et al., 2011)
- Costly for society (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003; Max, Rice, Finkelstein, Bardwell, & Leadbetter, 2004)

The scope of the problem: Intimate partner violence as a crime

- National Crime Victimization Survey (Truman & Morgan, 2014)
 - Domestic violence accounts for 1 in 5 nonfatal crime victimizations
 - Intimate partner violence most common
 - 55% of intimate partner violence incidents are reported to police
 - 45% of victims have injuries
 - Most common injuries are "minor" like "bruises or cuts"
 - 1 in 3 receive medical care

Reporting intimate partner violence to the police: Sociodemographic and incident factors

- Female victims (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009; Ackerman & Love, 2014)
 - More likely to report if:
 - Racial/ethnic minority....mediated by socio-economic status
 - Living separately (not sharing household)
 - Unmarried
 - Older
 - Perpetrator had been drinking alcohol
 - Weapon was involved
 - Victim was injured
 - Children present
 - Property damage
 - No history of intimate partner violence in the relationship

Reporting intimate partner violence to the police: ER visits

- Close to 1,000 female victims followed for 4 years (Rhodes et al., 2011)
 - Police called 3,426 times (most frequent answer per victim was 3)
 - Victim visits to the ER
 - More likely if:
 - African American
 - Unmarried
 - No children
 - Uninsured
 - More severe injuries
 - History of contact with the police
 - Greater chance of additional incidents of intimate partner violence

The scope of the problem: Demographic variables from police reports

- Police reports of domestic violence (Melton & Sillito, 2012; Truman & Morgan, 2014)
 - Perpetrator demographics
 - Men
 - Intimate partners
 - Victim demographics
 - Women
 - Non-Hispanic African American or biracial
 - Younger

The scope of the problem: Incident variables from police reports

- Police reports of domestic violence (Foran & O'Leary, 2008; Truman & Morgan, 2014)
 - Situation-specific variables
 - At home
 - Separated couples
 - 1 in 5 cases involve a weapon
 - Use of any weapon = more severe violence and repeated incidents
 - Firearms in the house increased use of a weapon
 - Substance use

The scope of the problem: Victim injuries from police reports, part 1

- Police reports of domestic violence (Black et al., 2011; Kyriacou et al., 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Thompson, et al., 2003, Walton-Moss, et al., 2005)
 - Female victims more likely to be injured than male victims
 - Female victims more likely to be killed than male victims
 - Predictors of injury for all victims
 - Threats from the perpetrator
 - Perpetrator under the influence of any substances
 - History of intimate partner violence
 - Weapon was involved
 - Children present

The scope of the problem: Victim injuries from police reports, part 2

- Police reports of domestic violence (Black et al., 2011; Kyriacou et al., 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Thompson, et al., 2003, Walton-Moss, et al., 2005)
 - Predictors for female victims
 - Perpetrator is former or current intimate partner
 - Longer relationship
 - Perpetrator has unstable employment, lower education, and poor mental health
 - History of intimate partner violence
 - Predictors for male victims
 - Weapon was involved
 - Victim was under the influence of any substances

The current study: Aim and hypotheses

- Aim: Use information from police reports to predict visible injury in victims of intimate partner violence
- Police reports of intimate partner violence incidents
 - Victims with visible injuries would differ from those without

The current study: Variables

- Demographic variables that would predict visible victim injury
 - Gender (e.g., female)
 - Ethnicity/race (e.g., minority)
 - Age (e.g., younger)
- Incident variables that would predict visible victim injury
 - Relationship status (current vs. former relationship)
 - Perpetrator's alcohol use
 - Use of an object
 - Presence of the suspect when law enforcement arrive to the scene

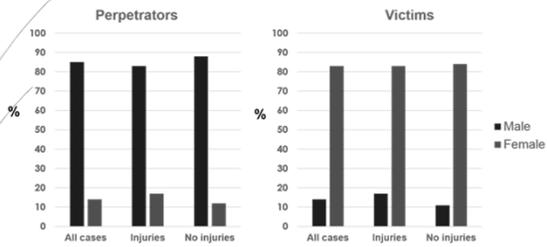
The current study: Police reports

- Police reports of intimate partner violence incidents
 - Legal definition of criminal domestic violence in SC at the time of data collection
 - July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010
 - Includes:
 - Inflicting physical harm or attempt to cause injury under circumstances to create fear or imminent peril to a household member
 - A household member includes a spouse, former spouse, persons who have a child in common, or male and female who are cohabitating or formerly have cohabited
 - Excludes:
 - Same-sex relationship intimate partner violence incidents

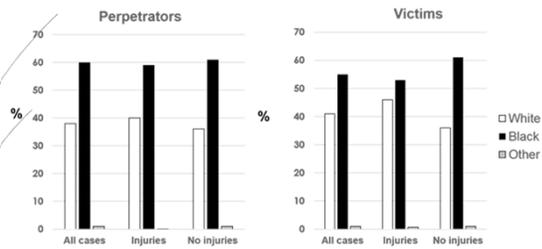
The current study: Participants

- Police reports of intimate partner violence incidents
 - During a 1 year period
 - July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010
 - 7 police districts in South Carolina
 - N = 1,451 police reports
- For the current study:
 - Adult opposite-sex intimate partner violence cases with single arrests (n = 1,292)
 - Mean age was 33 for perpetrators and 32 for victims
 - 50% had visible injuries (n = 649)

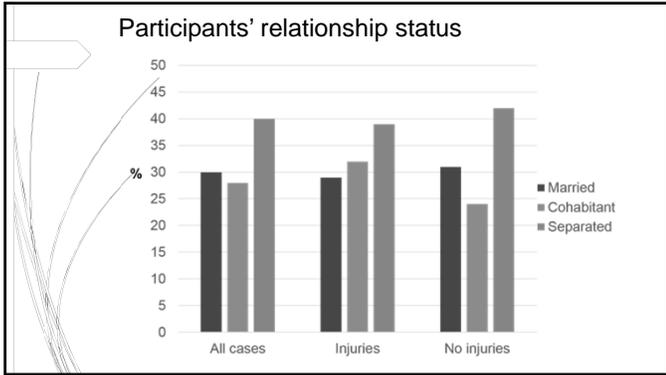
Participant demographics: Gender

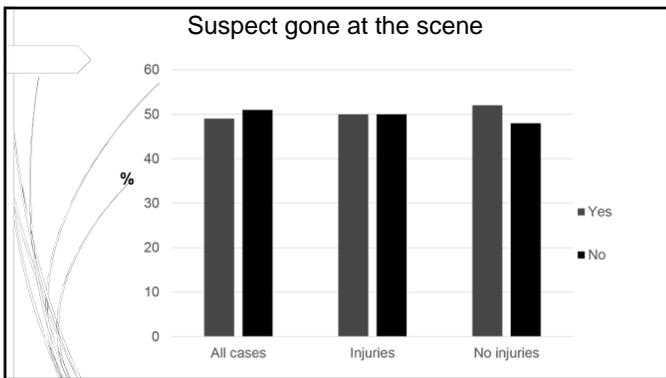


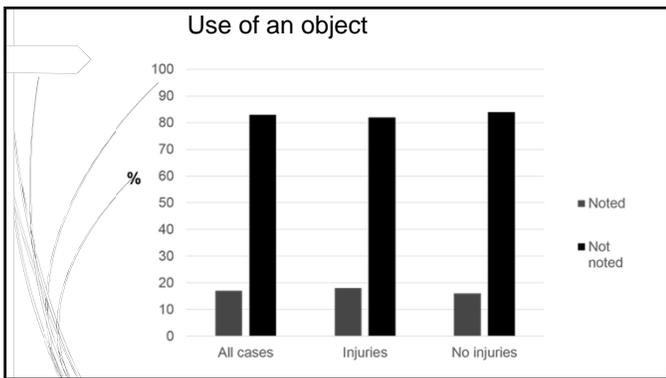
Participant demographics: Race and ethnicity



6 out of 10 police reports were from an area with 47% of the population being Black and 42% White





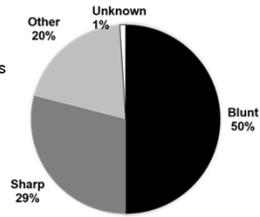


Use of an object

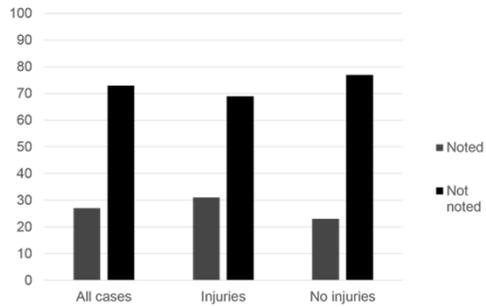
- Definition: an object that could cause someone pain
 - Not including body parts like fists and hands
- 17% of the cases (n = 220)

Use of an object

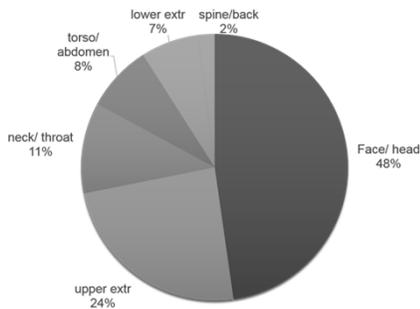
- Blunt: baseball bat, pipe, hammer, bottles
 - 39% highly lethal
 - 41% moderately lethal
 - 20% minimally lethal
- Sharp: knife, scissors, broken glass
 - 95% highly lethal
 - 4% minimally lethal
- Other: belt, shoe, pepper spray
 - 100% minimally lethal



Perpetrator alcohol use

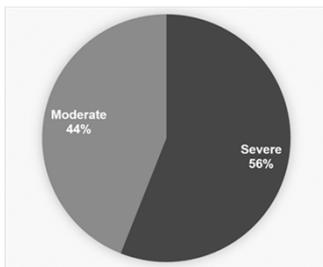


Visible Injuries: Outcome of interest



- 649 victims had injuries
- Total of 894 recorded injuries
- 1-5 injuries per victim
- 7 out of 10 times only one injury noted

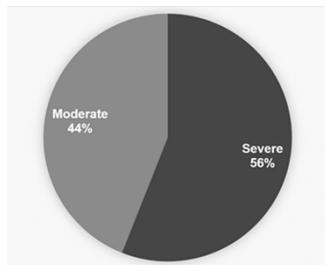
Visible Injuries: Outcome of interest



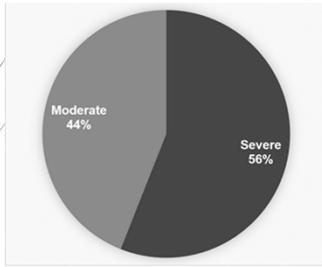
Visible Injuries: Outcome of interest

Moderate

- Slapped
- Grabbed
- Pushed
- Shoved
- Scratched
- Bit
- Cut
- Threats
- Thrown an object



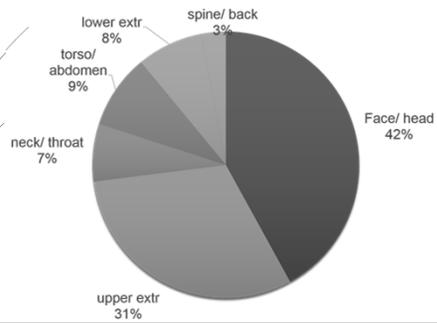
Visible Injuries: Outcome of interest



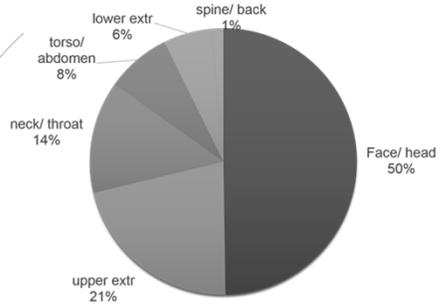
Severe

- Dragged
- Hit with an object
- Hit with a fist
- Slammed against wall
- Shot
- Stabbed
- Beaten
- Burned
- Kicked

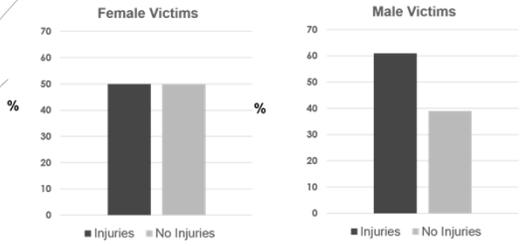
Visible injuries: Moderate severity



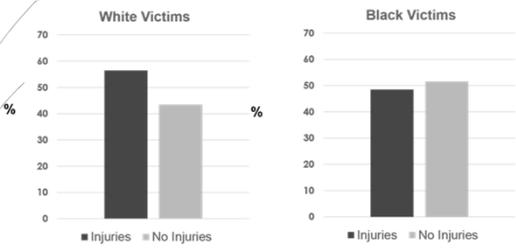
Visible Injuries: Severe



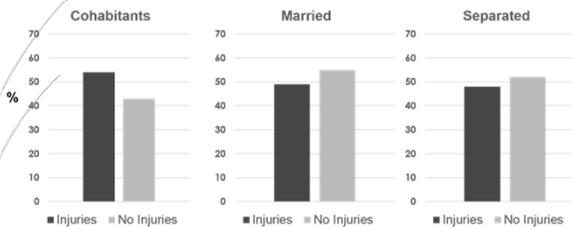
Visible injuries: Gender



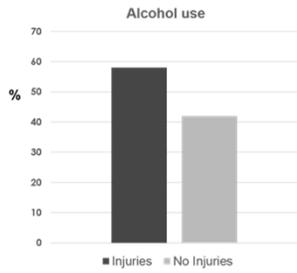
Visible injuries: Race and ethnicity



Visible injuries: Relationship status



Visible injuries: Perpetrator alcohol use



Predicting visible victim injuries

- **Step 1:** Victim demographic variables
 - Gender
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Age
- **Step 2:** Relationship type
- **Step 3:** Perpetrator behaviors
 - Alcohol use
 - Use of an object
 - Presence when law enforcement arrive to the scene

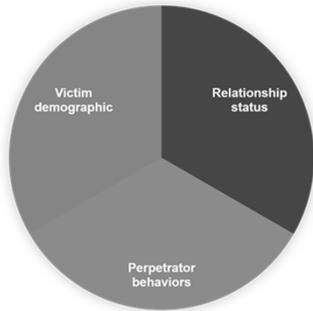
Predicting visible victim injuries



Predicting visible victim injuries

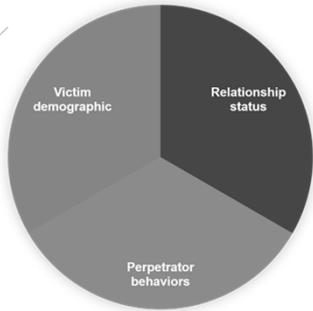
Male victims were 1.5 times more likely to have visible injuries compared to female victims

White victims were 1.4 times more likely to have visible injuries compared to Black victims



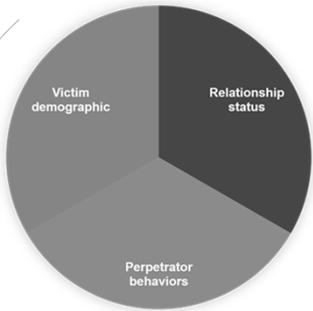
Predicting visible victim injuries

Perpetrator-victim pairs who **cohabitate** were 1.4 times more likely to have visible injuries compared to those who were married



Predicting visible victim injuries

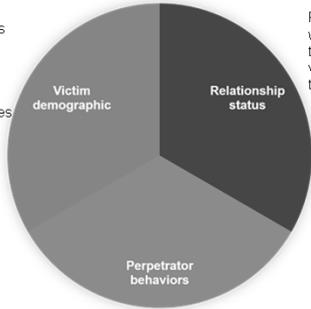
Victims were 1.3 times more likely to have visible injuries when the **perpetrator had used alcohol** compared to when they had not



Predicting visible victim injuries

Male victims were 1.5 times more likely to have visible injuries compared to female victims

White victims were 1.4 times more likely to have visible injuries compared to Black victims



Perpetrator-victim pairs who **cohabitate** were 1.4 times more likely to have visible injuries compared to those who were married

Victims were 1.3 times more likely to have visible injuries when the **perpetrator had used alcohol** compared to when they had not

Discussion: Gender

- All police reports
 - Majority of victims were women
 - Majority of perpetrators were men
- Among the victims with visible injuries
 - Majority of victims were women
 - Majority of perpetrators were men
- Among the male victims
 - Male victims more likely to have injuries than not
- Among the female victims
 - Equal distribution between injured and non-injured

- Male victims
- When does it get reported to the police?
 - When do police "believe" male victims?

- Visible injury
- Use of an object

Discussion: Race/ethnicity

- All police reports
 - Majority of victims and perpetrators were Black
- Among the victims with visible injuries
 - Majority of victims and perpetrators were Black
- Among the White victims
 - White victims more likely to have injuries than not
- Among the Black victims
 - Equal distribution between injured and non-injured

- Black victims
- SES
 - Missing injury?

Discussion: Relationship status

- All police reports
 - More likely to be separated than married or cohabitating
 - Among the victims with visible injuries
 - More likely to be separated than married or cohabitating
 - Among the cohabitants
 - More likely to have visible injuries than not
 - Among the married couples
 - Equal distribution between injured and non-injured
 - Among the separated pairs
 - Equal distribution between injured and non-injured
- Limited research

Discussion: Alcohol use

- All police reports
 - 27% of cases noted by officer
- Among the victims with visible injuries
 - Perpetrator's alcohol use was a risk factor
- No information about victims' use of alcohol
- Police reports: check box for alcohol use

Discussion: Suspect at the scene

- Not a significant variable in this study
- Less likely to be arrested if not at the scene (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2013)
- Standardized procedures for how to locate suspects who are not at the scene?

Discussion: Use of an object

- Not a significant variable in this study
- Police reports: check box for use of objects

Limitations

- Police report data
 - Lack of standardization of information recorded
 - Missing data
 - Variables based on what was in the reports
- Participants/sample/region
- Missing SES information
- Limited information about children

Recommendations, part 1

- Systematic data gathering in police reports
 - Determine future risk for victims
 - Aid in the prosecution process
 - Improve research on these topics

Recommendations, part 2

- Specific police reports for intimate partner violence incidents
- Check boxes for important variables
 - Use of an object/weapon
 - Alcohol use by suspect
 - Alcohol use by victim
 - Children present
 - Visible injuries
 - Strangulation

Recommendations, part 3

- Systematic data gathering in police reports
 - Children – detect at risk kids; referrals
 - Victims – law enforcement’s training and response
 - Inclusive standards
- Most cases unreported

Contact: mkarlsson@murraystate.edu

Thank you!

- Co-authors
 - Kathryn Reid Quiñones, Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center
 - Cristina López, Medical University of South Carolina
 - Arthur Andrews III, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
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