

Nonfatal intimate partner violence: The special role of firearms

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Battered Women's Justice Project



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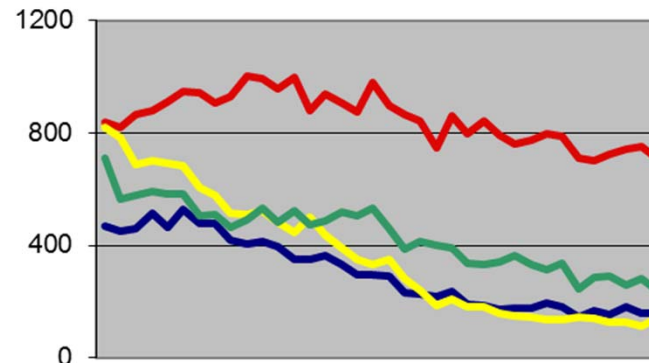
Key points

More than survival: the “real world” for women

1. Quick review of IPH (homicide) & guns
2. What's new: nonfatal IPV & guns
3. Information & action take-aways

Quick review of IPH (homicide)

- Good news: general downward trend



- Bad news: still many deaths and mostly women

FBI, UCR Supplemental Homicide Reports

- Homicide risk highest when ending the relationship

Wilson & Daly, Violence & Victims, 1993

Quick review of IPH & guns

- Women are ~2.5 times as likely to be shot and killed by a male intimate as shot, stabbed, strangled, beaten to death or killed in any other way by a stranger

Kellermann & Mercy, Journal of Trauma, 1992; Sorenson, 2006

- Handguns are weapon of choice

Kellermann & Mercy, Journal of Trauma, 1992; Sorenson, 2006

- Guns are risk factor for IPH for abused women

Campbell et al., AJPH, 2003

What's new / next

- Expand focus to include nonfatal use
 - Victim reports
 - Batterer reports
 - Population & service implications

Victim reports: Some previous research

- Shelters

- 39% of partners had a firearm
 - Firearm was used against the woman: 65%

Sorenson & Wiebe, 2004

- DVROs

- Firearm used against the woman: 16-24%

Moracco et al., 2006; Sorenson & Vittes, 2006;

Sullivan & Weiss, 2017

Victim reports: Philadelphia DV calls



Domestic Violence Agencies (DV-4)
District Attorney's Office
Women's Law Project



ORTNER CENTER on
Violence & Abuse
in Relationships



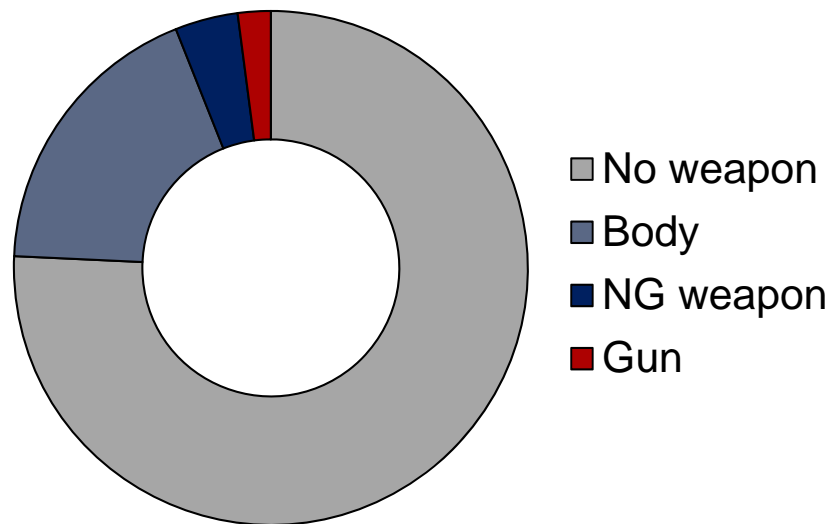
John & Laura Arnold Foundation

New Venture Fund

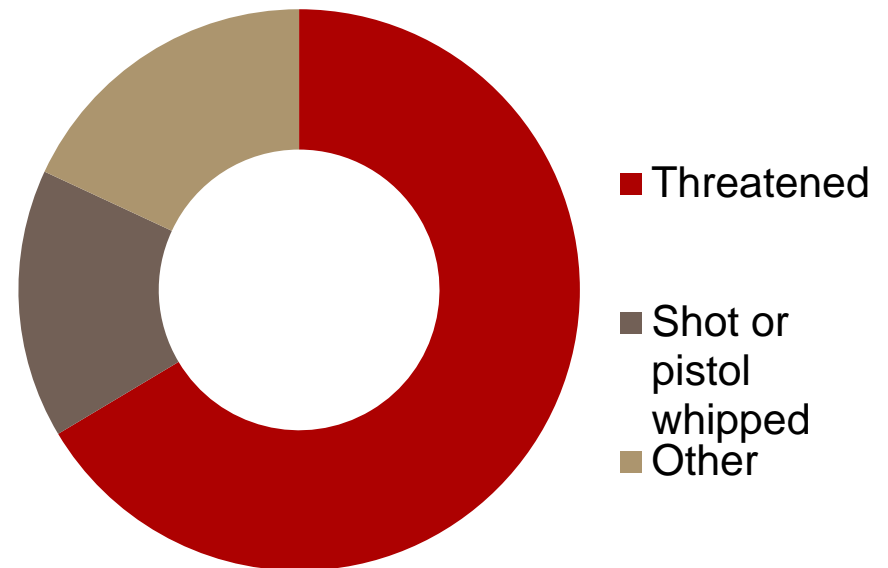
IPV in Philadelphia, 2013

35,413 police-responded nonfatal incidents

Weapon use

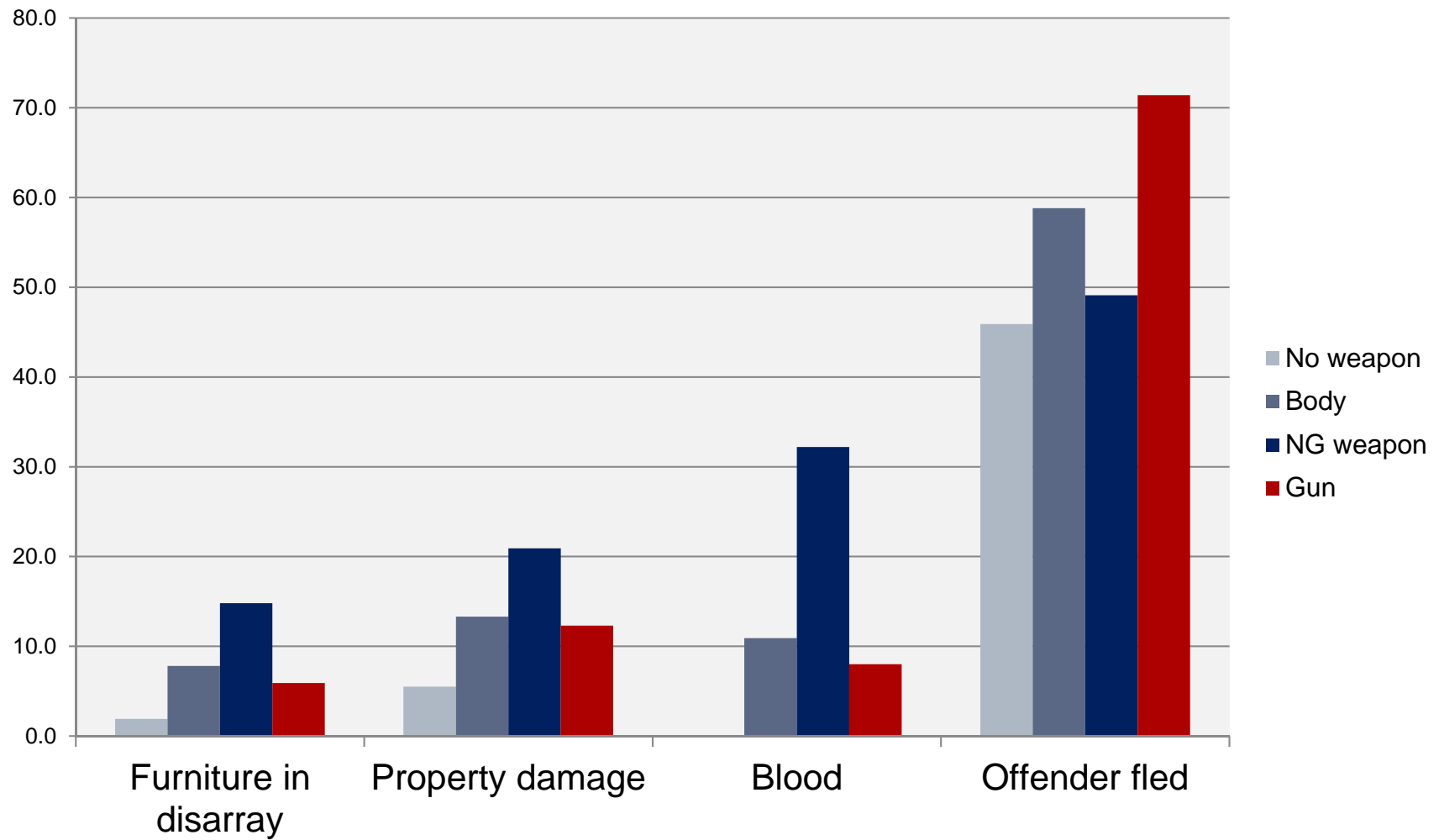


How gun was used

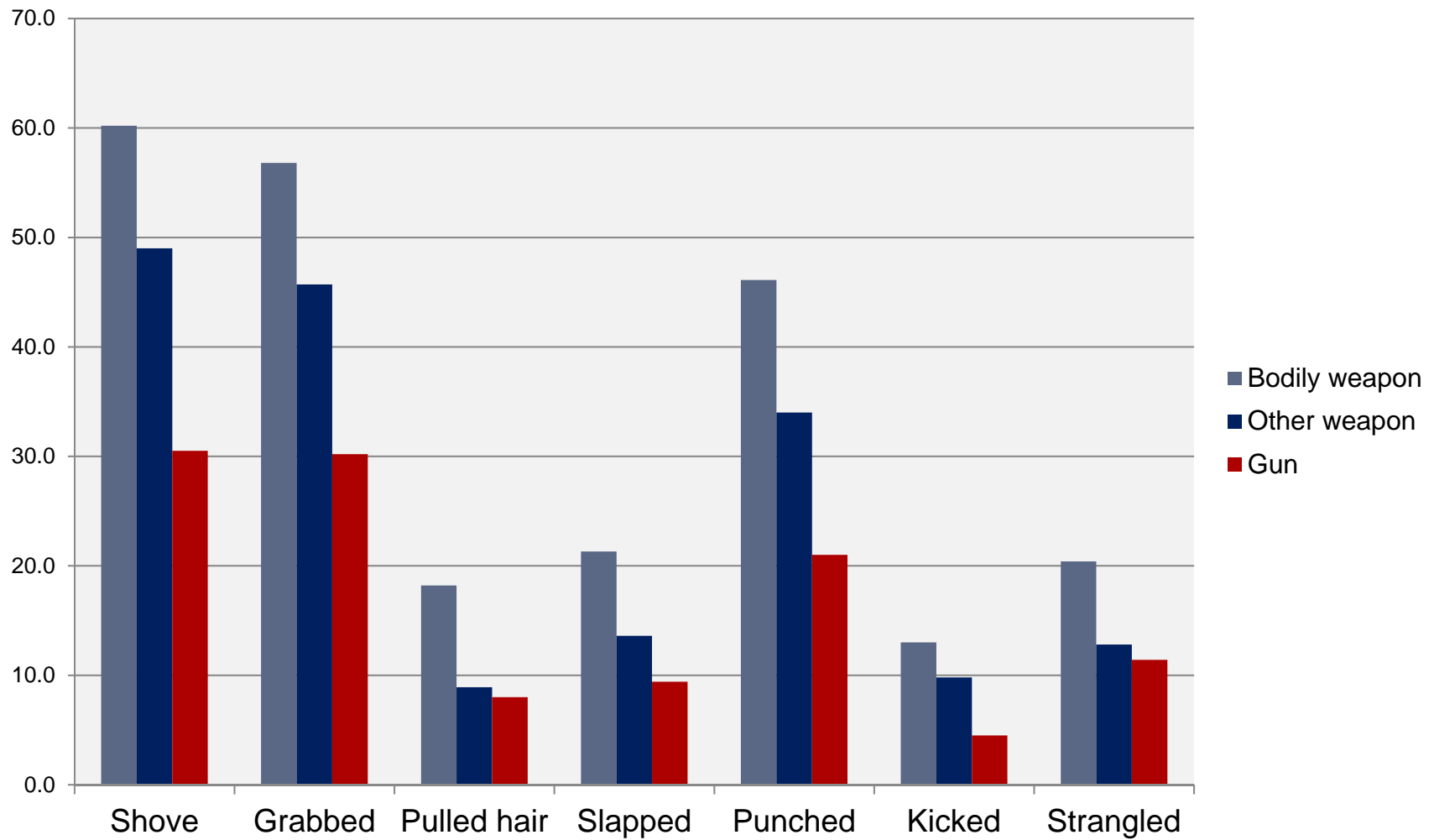


Sorenson, Journal of Women's Health, 2017

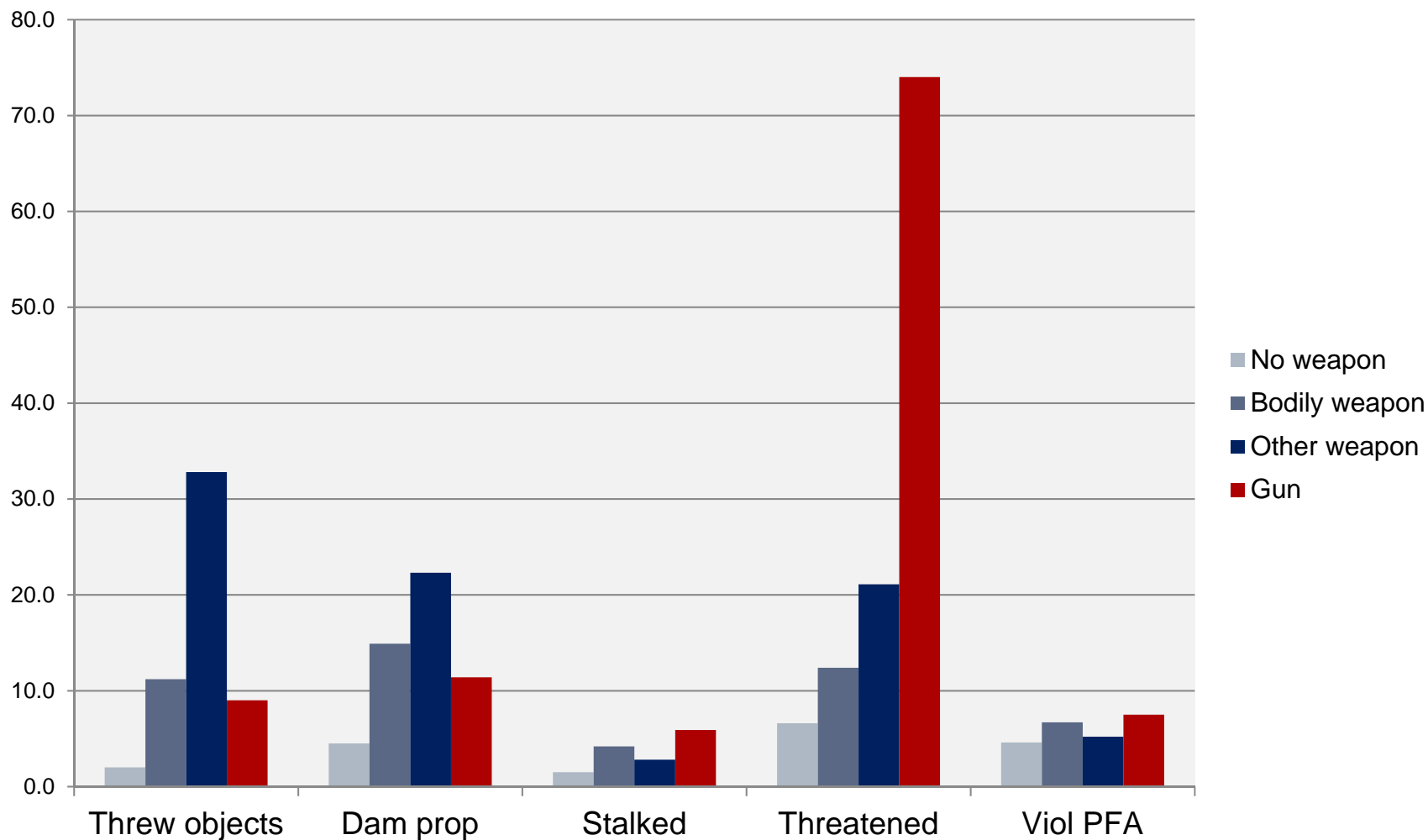
Scene, %



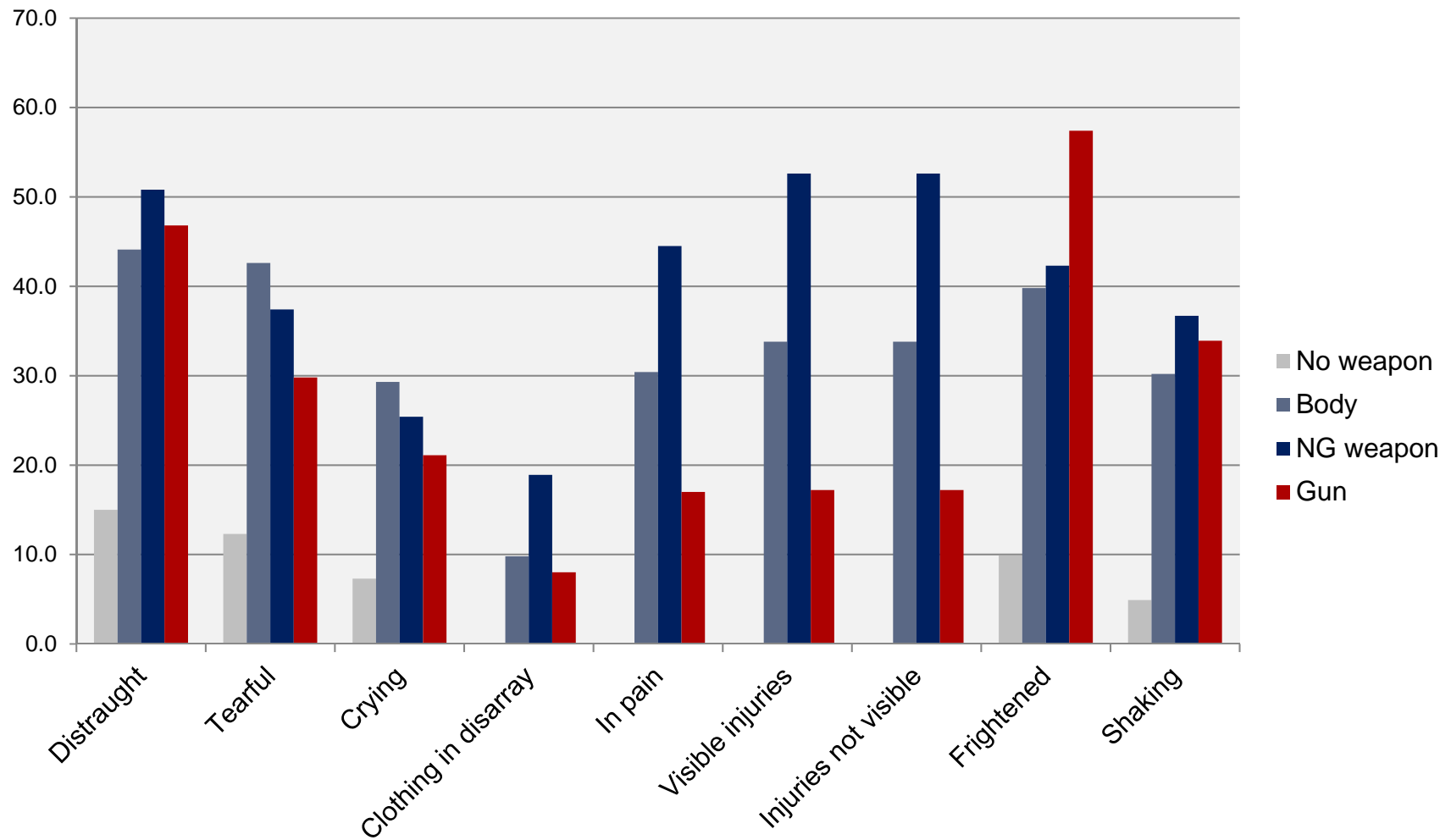
Offender behavior, %



Offender behavior, %



Victim presentation, %



Responses to coercion

- Cognitive appraisal of threat signaling credible risk
- Compliance or resistance
- Fear arousal

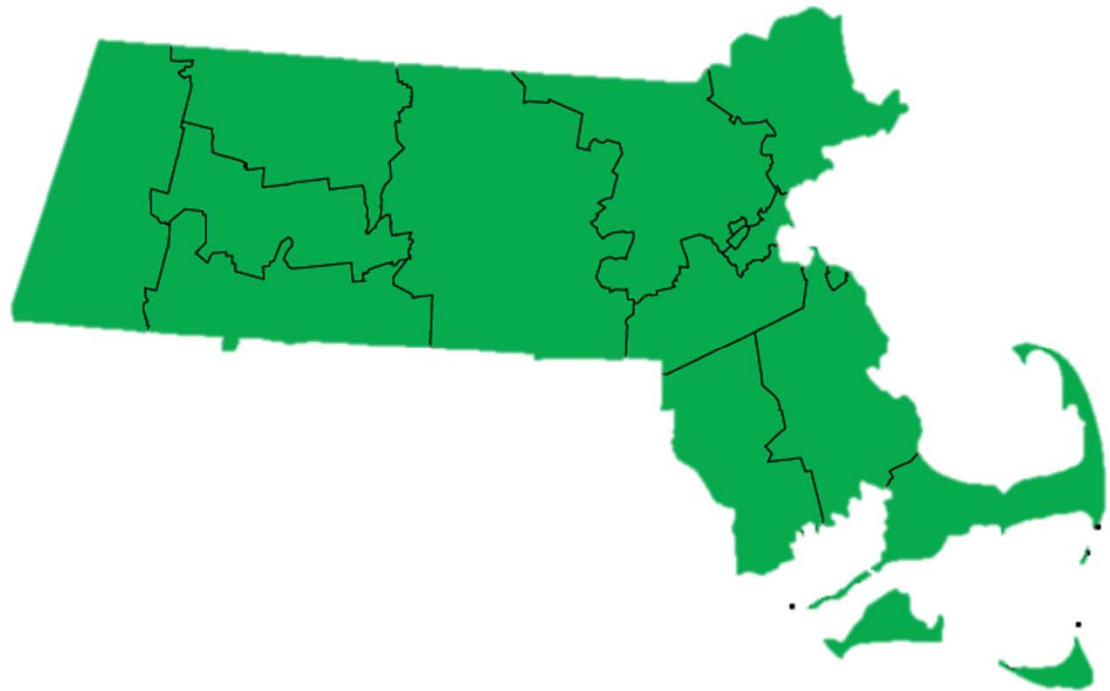
“The moment he put it to my head, my whole life changed.”

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4g4z041GhI>

Use of Guns to Threaten Intimate Partners by Men Enrolled in Batterer Intervention

Rothman, Hemenway, Miller, & Azrael, *JAMWA*, (2005)

N=8,529 male clients
of MA programs



The many ways to threaten with a gun

- Talking about the fact that they own a gun
- Threatening to shoot the gun
- Showing the gun to the victim
- Pistol-whipping
- Shooting at something other than the victim, or the victim
- Target practice in the backyard
- Taking a child to target practice
- Keeping posters or other gun-related memorabilia visible throughout the house

Threat questions asked

- Have you ever threatened to use a firearm against an intimate partner without actually displaying the firearm?
- Have you ever handled, cleaned, loaded, or displayed a firearm during an argument with a partner or ex-partner?
- Have you ever threatened to use a firearm against a person or thing an intimate partner cared about (family member, pet, friend, or object) without actually displaying a firearm?
- Have you ever shot a gun during an argument with a partner or ex-partner?

Results

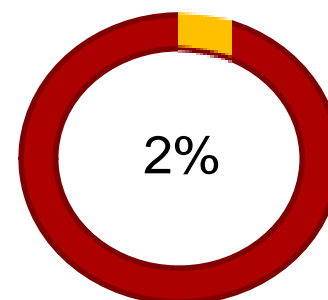
Gun-ownership past 3 years:	7%
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Results

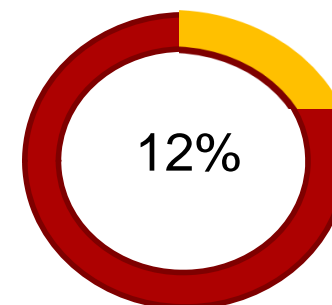
Gun-ownership past 3 years: 7%

Made a gun-threat:

non-gun-owners



gun-owners



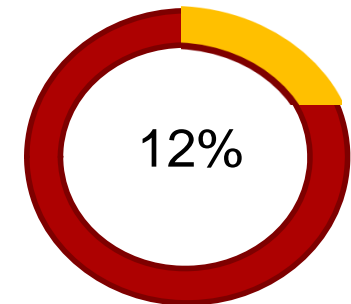
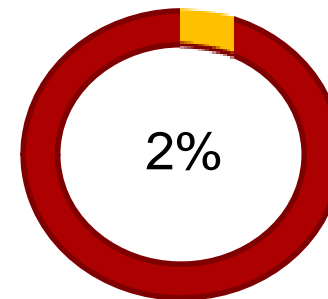
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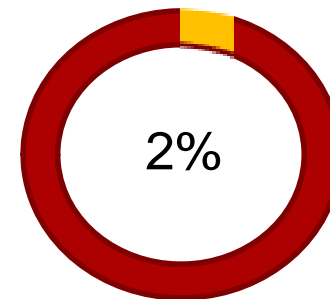
Made multiple gun-threats: 46%

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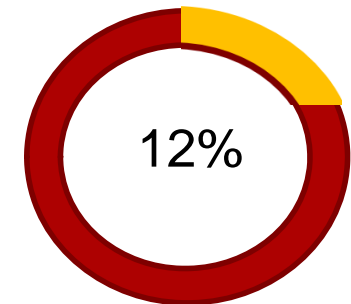
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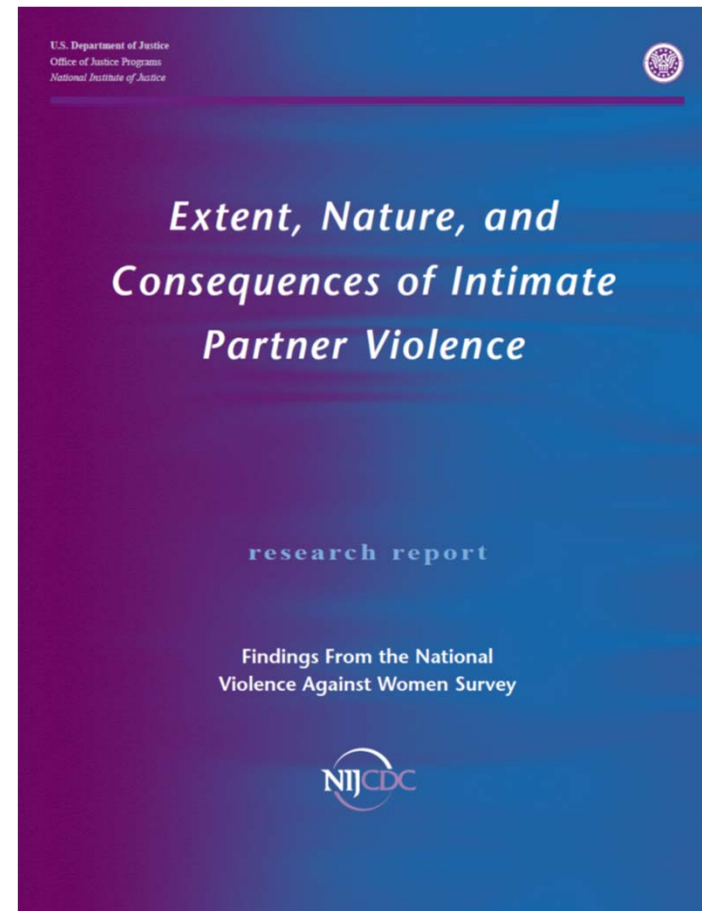
Knife threats were also more common among gun-owners as compared to non-gun owners

Implications

- **Abusers and guns are a bad combination**
 - Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
 - Lautenberg Amendment
- **Policy evaluation**
 - Some assessment of implementation and enforcement necessary
- **Future**
 - Boyfriend loophole
 - “Smart” guns

Thinking beyond service populations

Tjaden P, Thoennes N.
Findings from National
Violence Against Women
Survey.
NIJ & CDC, 2000.



Weapon use in nonfatal IPV, U.S., lifetime, %

	Women	Men
<u>Gun</u>		
•threatened with	3.5	0.4
•used against	0.7	0.1

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<u>Knife</u>		
•threatened with	2.8	1.6
•used against	0.9	0.8

If those numbers hold

- ~4.5M women alive today have had an intimate partner threaten them with a gun
- ~1M have been shot or shot at by a partner



Women who purchase guns

Are at increased risk of suicide and homicide.

- Risk for both is greater for women than for men.
- Lasts for at least 6 years.

Wintemute et al. NEJM, 1999.

No evidence that gun owners are more distressed or disturbed than non-owners; but alcohol misuse higher.

Sorenson & Vittes, Evaluation Review, 2008;
Wintemute , Preventive Medicine, 2015;
Ladapo et al., Academic Pediatrics, 2016.

Information takeaways



What was new to you?

Action takeaways



What to do?

Conclusion

Must address the role of guns in women's lives as well as their deaths.