

Arrest History and Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration in a Sample of Men and Women Arrested for Domestic Violence

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Abstract: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious and prevalent problem throughout the United States. Currently, individuals arrested for domestic violence are often court mandated to batterer intervention programs (BIPs). However, little is known about the arrest histories of these individuals, especially women. The current study

perpetrate aggression, efforts aimed at reducing IPV have had challenges in terms of reducing recidivism (Stuart *et al.* 2007). Men and women who are arrested for domestic violence in the United States are often court-mandated to attend BIPs. While it is the aim of these programs to prevent violence recidivism, research on their effectiveness at achieving this aim is questionable. Two recent meta-analyses on the effectiveness of BIPs have been conducted, with both demonstrating only small improvements in violence recidivism (Babcock *et al.* 2004; Feder and Wilson 2005). The meta-analysis that included the 10 most methodologically rigorous studies found that the effect size for BIPs, depending on the source of outcome data, ranged from $d = 0.00 - 0.26$ (Feder and Wilson 2005). Thus, it is clear that BIPs have substantial room for improvement.

Criminal Behavior among Perpetrators of IPV

men and women arrested for domestic violence. We hypothesized that a large percentage of our sample (i.e., > 30%) would have histories of non-domestic violence related arrests. We also hypothesized that those with more previous arrests would report more frequent aggression perpetration. Due to the limited research on the criminal histories of women arrested for domestic violence, we did not have any a priori hypotheses regarding gender differences in arrest histories.

METHOD

Participants

A sample of men ($n = 303$) and women ($n = 82$) arrested for domestic violence and court-referred to BIPs in the state of Rhode Island participated in the current study. This sample of men and women represent a subsample of men and women reported on previously (Shorey et al. 2011; Stuart et al. 2006; Stuart et al. 2008). The state of Rhode Island requires mandatory

history. The questions included: (1) Did you have at least one drink of alcohol prior to or during the event that led you to the BIP? (2) Did you have four (for women)/six (for men) or more drinks prior to or during the incident that led you to the BIP? (four drinks for women and six drinks for men correspond to binge levels of alcohol consumption for each gender) (3) Did you feel intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol prior to or during the incident that led you to the BIP? (4) Did you use drugs prior to or during the incident that led you to the BIP? (5) How many times have you been arrested for or charged with an alcohol-related offense? (6) How many times have you been arrested for or charged with a drug-related offense? (7) How many times have you been arrested for or charged with domestic battery, spouse assault, or any other offense against a relationship partner? (8) How many times have you been arrested for or charged with a violence-related offense against someone other than a partner? (9) How many times have you been arrested or charged with any other offense? The first four questions were rated using a yes/no format. Questions 5-9 were rated using a 0-10 or more scale. Examples

not associated with psychological aggression ($r = .13, p > .05$) or physical aggression perpetration ($r = .16, p > .05$). Similarly, a history of prior arrest for non-domestic violence offenses was not associated with psychological aggression ($r = .13, p > .05$) or physical aggression perpetration ($r = .16, p > .05$).

Finally, we examined whether there were differences in the frequency of psychological and physical aggression perpetration between (1) individuals who consumed substances prior to or during the arrest that led them to the BIP, relative to those with no substance use at the time of the arrest (2) individuals with any prior arrests, relative to those with no arrests, and (3) individuals with any non-domestic violence prior arrests, relative to those with

Table 2: Differences between Arrest Groups on Frequency of Violence Perpetration

	Men		<i>t, p</i>
	Substance Use Group (<i>n</i> = 142) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	No-Substance Use Group (<i>n</i> = 161) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	
Psychological Aggression	35.48 (31.32)	25.44 (28.97)	3.58, < .001
Physical Aggression	11.18 (19.50)	5.31 (12.61)	4.

low levels of various indicators of self-control (Shorey et al. 2011; Stuart and Holtzworth-Munroe 2005; Tager, Good, and Brammer 2010), and high levels of problematic substance use (Moore et al. 2008; Stuart et al. 2007). Thus, BIPs may be more successful at reducing violence recidivism if they focus on self-control, which may in turn serve to reduce a number of related problematic behaviors (e.g., substance use, general aggression, and criminal behavior). Although it is likely that many programs do, indeed, focus on these associated behaviors, especially substance use, it is possible that these programs may need to focus more heavily on ways to reduce general delinquent behavior in general.

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