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Violence Against Women: An Examination of Developmental
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Final Report For Grant #2000-WT-VX-0002

March 21, 2001

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FINAL REPORT

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Caucasian, and Hispanic women

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jana L. Jasinski

Department of Sociology & Anthropology

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Project Description

The aim of this study was to examine the factors related to different patterns of male violence against women. To accomplish this goal, information from the National Survey of Families and Households Waves 1 and 2 (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988) was used to examine both situational and individual characteristics associated with moving into and out of violent relationships.

Much of the research on violence against women uses a unidimensional theoretical framework. In contrast, the current study used a multidimensional framework encompassing both intra-individual and sociocultural perspectives. Guided by these theoretical frameworks, this project focused on the relationship between previously established risk factors for intimate partner violence including stressors related to work, economic status, and role transitions (e.g. pregnancy), as well as family power dynamics,

status discrepancies, and alcohol use and violence against women. Many of these areas have been previously examined using cross sectional data. Using the two waves of the NSFH, however, made it possible to examine these areas as they are related to different patterns of male violence. This project addressed the following specific research questions:

1. To what extent do Caucasian, Black, and Hispanic individuals engage in physical violence with their partner? How do these relationships change over time?
2. How are socioeconomic stressors associated with violent relationships among Caucasian, Black, and Hispanic couples? How do these relationships change over time?
3. To what extent are changes in patterns of physical violence against women associated with different stages of a relationship (e.g. cohabitation, early marriage, pregnancy, marriage)?
4. To what extent do culturally linked attitudes about family structure (family power dynamics) predict violence among Caucasian, Black, and Hispanic couples? Do these attitudes change over time? What influences the change? How is this related to violence against women?
5. To what extent do family strengths and support systems contribute to the cessation of violence among Caucasian, Black, and Hispanic couples?
6. What is the role of alcohol use in violent relationships among Caucasian, Black, and Hispanic couples?

Scope and methodology

Data Source. The data used for this project come from the first and second Wave of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) conducted by members of the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Sweet et al., 1988; Sweet & Bumpass, 1996). The files and all documentation for the data were obtained from the web site for the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cde/nsfhw/home.htm>) (Supporting documentation is located in Appendix A).

NSFH Wave 1. The NSFH represents a very unique source of data about American families. It was designed to cover a broad range of family structures, processes, and relationships with a large enough sample to permit subgroup analysis (Sweet et al., 1988; Sweet & Bumpass, 1996). The first Wave of the NSFH (NSFH1) was conducted in 1988 and included a national probability sample of 13,017 respondents. Interviews were conducted with a cross sectional sample of households and an oversample of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, single parent families, families with stepchildren, cohabiting couples and recently married persons. One adult in each household was randomly selected as the primary respondent. Eligible respondents included persons age 19 and older, living in households, and able to be interviewed in either English or Spanish. The interview consisted of both self-administered instruments and interviewer administered questions. A shorter self-administered questionnaire was also given to the spouse or cohabiting partner of the primary respondent. Information

was collected regarding the respondent's family living arrangements in childhood, marital and cohabiting experiences, education, fertility, alcohol use, employment histories, kin contact, and economic and psychological well being.

NSFH Wave 2. Five years after the original interview, the sample from the first Wave (NSFH1) was reinterviewed (NSFH2). The second Wave consisted of face to face interviews with surviving members of the original sample, a personal interview with the current spouse or partner, a personal interview with the original spouse or partner in situations where the relationship had ended, phone interviews with children who were age 5-18 in the original interview who were now age 10-23, proxy interviews with a surviving spouse or relative in situations where the original respondent had died or was too ill to be interviewed, and a telephone interview with a randomly selected parent of the main respondent. For the purposes of this study, the analytical sample focused on only those couples that were cohabiting or married at the Time of the first Wave of the study and still with the same person at the Time of the second Wave (N=3,584). To address some of the specific research questions, further reductions were made in the sample (Please refer to the detailed discussions below of each research question for more specific information regarding the analytical sample for that question).

In both Waves of the NSFH several identical questions were asked regarding marital conflicts. Both married and cohabiting respondents were asked how often they used various tactics including heated arguments and hitting or throwing things at each other to resolve their conflicts. In addition, respondents were asked if any of their arguments became physical, how many of their fights resulted in either the respondent or their partner hitting, shoving, or throwing things, and if any injuries resulted as a

consequence of these fights. These data, obtained from both the respondent and the partner, provided the information with which to classify respondents into one of four groups (Appendix B Exhibit 2):

- **Non- Violent** (Men who never use violence against their female partners)
(N=3133, 87.4%)
- **New Violent** (Men who are not violent in Wave 1 but are violent in Wave 2)
(N=138, 3.9%)
- **Persistent Abusers** (Men who are violent in both Wave 1 and 2 (N=95, 2.6%)
- **Violence Cessation** (Men who were violent in Wave 1 but stopped their violence by Wave 2) (N=217, 6.1%)

Limitations of previous research

Although the research on violence against women has developed tremendously over the past twenty years, there are still many areas in which research is needed (Cromwell & Burgess, 1996; Jasinski & Williams, 1998). There is, for example, relatively little empirical information regarding the cessation and persistence of intimate violence against women, as much of the research has focused on identifying risk factors that predict male violence (Aldarondo, 1996; Aldarondo & Sugarman, 1996). In particular, there is very little empirical information regarding violence among minority groups, especially Hispanic individuals (West, 1998). Much of the research specifically focused on violence against women also uses cross sectional research designs usually with information from only one person in the couple (Kaufman Kantor, Jasinski, &

Aldarondo, 1994; Straus, 1990; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). Longitudinal studies would be most appropriate for examinations of patterns of violent relationships, however, high attrition rates pose a serious challenge to the generalizability of findings. Moreover, some researchers suggest that attrition rates are higher among more violent individuals (Feld & Straus, 1990).

The NSFH provides a valuable resource with which to address these gaps in the literature. Since the study design included oversamples of previously understudied groups (i.e. Blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans) racial and ethnic comparisons are possible. The research design also included the use of both English and Spanish versions of the questionnaire allowing less acculturated Hispanic individuals to participate in the study. In addition, the inclusion of individuals at different stages of their intimate relationships (cohabiting, newly married, married) allows examination of the continuity of violence in intimate relationships. Finally couple data provides more reliable information about the relationship characteristics (Bohannon, Dosser, & Lindley, 1995; Szinovacz, 1983; Szinovacz & Egley, 1995). The longitudinal nature of the NSFH makes it possible to look at transitions in and out of violent relationships. By classifying relationships into one of four different groups it will be possible to distinguish factors that determine group membership and how these factors change over time. Moreover, information about the presence of violence in relationships was obtained from both individuals in the relationship, making the data much more reliable.

Because of the size of the project, it was broken down into separate, more manageable projects modeled after the original research questions. Each of these separate projects is summarized below.

Detailed Findings

Racial and Ethnic Differences in Cessation and Persistence of Male Violence Against Women

The concepts of persistence and desistance have played an integral part in research on criminal careers, however, research on these patterns of behavior has been somewhat limited with regard to intimate partner violence (Fagan, 1989). Although more and more researchers are beginning to focus on the possibility and importance of different patterns of intimate partner violence, the literature in this area is still lacking. For example relatively few of the studies have used large samples (e.g. (Wofford, Mihalic, & Menard, 1994)). In fact, many of what can be considered landmark studies in this area have relied on relatively small samples (Aldarondo & Kaufman Kantor, 1997; Aldarondo & Sugarman, 1996). Moreover prior research has relied on information from only one of the individuals in the intimate relationship. A growing body of research suggests that more complete data can be obtained when information on violent behavior comes from both individuals in the relationship (Bohannon et al., 1995; Szinovacz, 1983; Szinovacz & Egley, 1995). Existing research on patterns of intimate partner violence has also all but ignored the issue of race/ethnicity. However, prior work finding increased incidence rates of partner violence among minority families (e.g. (Gelles & Straus, 1988)) suggests that race and ethnicity are important factors to include in intimate partner violence research. Most likely the failure to consider race and ethnicity in this

type of research is the result of already small sample sizes that would make analyses by racial or ethnic group impossible.

In contrast, the present study is able to add to the literature in a number of ways. First, the sample size is larger than those from previous studies. Not only did this make more complicated analyses possible, but the larger sample size, together with a deliberate sampling design allowed for analyses focused on racial and ethnic differences in violent behavior. Additionally, information in the present study could be considered more reliable as information was collected from both members of the couple. Finally, the collection of data at two points in time makes it possible to conduct longitudinal analyses. With this improved source of data, the present study addressed the following two questions: 1. Are there racial/ethnic differences in patterns of violent behavior? 2. Do these differences remain when other theoretically relevant variables, such as socioeconomic status, age, and marital status are introduced into the model? The results are summarized below:

- After taking into account demographic factors race/ethnicity was associated with violence cessation and initiation only. Specifically, African American men were more likely to have stopped their violence compared to white and Hispanic men. African American men were also more likely to have initiated violence between the first and second survey wave.
- Among Hispanic couples, increased employment at the second wave and cohabitation were related to persistent violence and decreased employment at the second wave was associated with violence initiation.

- Among African American couples, youth was related to persistent violence, youth and decreased employment levels were related to new violence, and lower employment levels were associated with violence cessation.
- Among white couples, youth was associated with persistent violence, violence initiation, and violence cessation. Lower levels of employment at the time of the second survey administration were associated with new violence.

Although this study does improve upon existing research, it is not without limitations. Although the sample could be broken down by racial and ethnic grouping, the sample sizes of the African American and Hispanic samples were very small relative to the Caucasian sample and the cell sizes were too small to consider Hispanic national origin groups, the importance of which has been demonstrated by prior research (Kaufman Kantor et al., 1994). Information was also only available regarding two points in time separated by five years. Although behaviors may have changed from the first to the second wave, we don't really know what happened during that five-year period to understand the factors that may have influenced changes in behavior.

Despite these limitations, however, the current study does address the multidimensional nature of violent behavior suggesting that not only are there different types of batterers, but also that there may be different mechanisms that lead to particular types of behaviors. In addition, the larger sample size may it possible to consider racial and ethnic differences, something that has been addressed in a limited manner in other research of this type. Finally, the ability to use information obtained from both members

of a couple is of vital importance for more reliable and valid research and contributes to the strength of the present study.

Pregnancy and violence against women

Although much of the existing research suggests that pregnancy may be a time of increased risk for violence, at least for some women, (Berenson, Stiglich, Wilkinson, & Anderson, 1991; Gelles, 1974; Smikle, Sorem, Stain, & Hankins, 1996; Webster, Sweett, & Stolz, 1994) these same studies have often relied on anecdotal reports from pregnant women, or hospital samples of pregnant women for their information. Although this research is able to effectively assess the dynamics of violence against pregnant women, without a comparison group of women of the same age who are not pregnant, it is unable to determine if pregnant women are at a greater risk of assault by their male partners compared to women who are not pregnant (Bullock & McFarlane, 1989; Campbell, Poland, Waller, & Ager, 1992; Stark & Flitcraft, 1995; Stewart, 1994). Additionally, this body of research is primarily focused on examining the consequences of violent behavior for the infant (e.g. preterm labor, fetal death, low birth weight) (Parker, McFarlane, & Soeken, 1994; Webster, Chandler, & Battistutta, 1996). At the same time, research utilizing national probability samples, although able to investigate whether or not pregnancy puts women at risk for violence by their intimate partner, has generally lacked information on the context of the violence (Gelles, 1990; Jasinski & Kaufman Kantor, In press). The present study addresses these issues by using a large nationally representative sample containing detailed information on pregnancy status as well as other pregnancy

related issues. Specifically the following research questions were addressed: Is pregnancy itself, or are other pregnancy related issues associated with violence against women? Do these relationships remain when theoretically relevant control variables, such as race, age, and socioeconomic status are included? The sample for this part of the project was slightly different than other parts of the project as it only included individuals of childbearing age (Please see full text of paper in the Appendix for more details). The results for this part of the project are summarized below:

- Once other variables, such as age, were taken into account, pregnancy itself was not significantly associated with any of the violence patterns. However, other important risk factors remained significant. Couples who were cohabiting at the time of both the first and the second wave of the survey were at a significantly greater risk for persistent violence. In addition, they were also at a greater risk for new violence. Younger men were more likely to have started violent behavior by Wave 2.
- Several other pregnancy related factors, however, were related to specific patterns of violence.
 - Specifically, having a first child during the second wave of the survey was significantly associated with a greater chance of violence cessation. In this same model, couples who were cohabiting at both waves were significantly more likely to experience persistent violence. In addition, youth was significantly associated with all violence categories.

- Couples in which the male partner perceived that the pregnancy that occurred during the second wave of the survey happened sooner than intended were at four times the risk of experiencing persistent violence. In addition, couples that were cohabiting during both waves of the survey year were more than five times more likely to experience persistent violence. Youth was the only factor significantly associated with violence cessation. Furthermore, youth was also significantly associated with new violence.

Similar to previous research using national samples (Gelles, 1990; Jasinski & Kaufman Kantor, In press), multivariate analyses in the current study revealed that many of the pregnancy related factors were no longer significantly associated with any of the violence categories once control variables were introduced into the models. The current study did find, however, several significant pregnancy related factors. For example, having a first child was associated with violence cessation. The implications of this finding, however, are somewhat double sided. On the one hand, this is consistent with prior work suggesting that the birth of a child may provide a time of respite for previously abused women (Campbell, Harris, & Lee, 1995; Campbell, Oliver, & Bullock, 1993). At the same time, it would be inappropriate to suggest that women victims actively try to get pregnant as a strategy to stop violence. In addition to factors related to violence cessation, the present study found that persistent violence was more likely to occur among couples in which the male partner perceived that the pregnancy of his female partner occurred sooner than intended. Possible explanations for this pattern of

behavior include jealousy of the unborn child and the perception that the pregnancy would interfere with the woman's role as caretaker for her partner (Campbell et al., 1995; Campbell et al., 1993). It is also possible that a pregnancy not planned by the male partner might represent something that he could not control and therefore increase the risk for violence.

Unfortunately, although several of the pregnancy related factors were significantly associated with one or more of the violence patterns, there is no way to determine actual causal order, as the questions relating to both violence and pregnancy use a reference period of the previous year. In other words, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not physical fight or pregnancy occurred sometime in the year prior to the survey rather than on a specific date. This made it impossible to determine if the violence occurred before pregnancy, during pregnancy or both. Gazamarian and associates (1995) have suggested that violence and pregnancy may be related in a number of ways. For example, violence may increase the chances for an unintended pregnancy. At the same time, unwanted pregnancies may increase stress, and result in a greater level of violence. Moreover, although pregnancy related factors were significant in several of the multivariate models, the explained variance for these models was very small (3-5%). Nevertheless, this study offers important information regarding the relationship between pregnancy and intimate partner violence.

Personality and Violence: Inside the mind of violent men

Increasingly, attention is being drawn to variations in psychological pathology among batterers (Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, & Bartholemew, 1994; Gondolf, 1988; Holtzworth Munroe & Stuart, 1994) as one possible risk marker for intimate partner violence. Profiles of violent men suggest that they are extremely jealous (Bowker, 1983; Holtzworth Munroe, Stuart, & Hutchinson, 1997; Saunders, 1992), have low self esteem (Goldsmith, 1990; Gondolf, 1988; Neidig, Friedman, & Collins, 1986; Pagelow, 1984), and exhibit poor communication and social skills (Browning & Dutton, 1986; Holtzworth Munroe, 1992; Murphy, Meyer, & O'Leary, 1994; Rounsaville, 1978). A number of researchers have also found that violent men often have aggressive or hostile personality styles (Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Dutton & Starzomski, 1993; Heyman, O'Leary, & Jouriles, 1995; Maiuro, Cahn, & Vitaliano, 1986). Although this body of research suggests the importance of psychological characteristics as potential risk factors for intimate partner violence, it is far from definitive. Much of this research, for example, uses small samples of men in some kind of treatment program, consequently limiting the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, psychological factors are often considered independent of social structural factors and relationship characteristics that may also be associated with violent behavior. In contrast, the current study uses a large, national sample of couples to investigate personality, structural, and relationship characteristics as risk markers for intimate partner violence. Because the questions regarding personality characteristics were self-assessments, the sample for this part of the project was limited to men only reporting on their own characteristics and behavior. Details regarding the

specific sample and measures used can be found in the full text of the paper in the Appendix. The results of this part of the project are listed below.

- After taking into account a number of demographic factors personality characteristics seemed to be related to patterns of male violence against women.
 - Higher levels of hostility, greater relationship conflict, and cohabitation were associated with persistent violence.
 - Men with higher hostility scores, African American men, and men who experienced greater relationship conflict during the first wave of the survey were likely to have stopped using violence against their female partner by the second wave of the survey.
 - Men who began to use violence by the time of the second wave of the survey had lower mastery scores, were younger, were cohabitating, and had greater levels of relationship conflict at the second survey administration.

In order to develop prevention and intervention programs the results of empirical research need to be generalizable. Furthermore, to be successful, programs may need to address the influence of both individual and social structural factors on the propensity to engage in violent behavior. The current study moves the body of literature one step closer to this goal by examining the relationships among personality characteristics, relationship factors, socio-demographic variables, and patterns of violent behavior in a large national sample of men. The results suggest that, in fact, it is important to consider a variety of different factors in addition to personality as risk markers for patterns of violent behavior.

Alcohol and patterns of male violence against women

Alcohol is the drug most commonly associated with violence (Fagan, 1990, 1993), and substance abuse is a consistent finding in many of the profiles of abusive men. However, physical violence is not an inevitable consequence of any intoxicant usage. Alcohol-related family assaults have been explained in many ways pointing to the importance of social context, (e.g., fights over a spouse's drunkenness which lead to violence). In addition, other research has revealed significant effects of a family history of violence and current alcohol use on the incidence of violence against women (Kaufman Kantor, 1990, 1993). The results of the part of the project looking at the relationship between alcohol and patterns of male violence are summarized below:

- Men who had a problem with alcohol at Time 1 and who were heavy drinkers at Time 2 were more likely to be persistently violent.
- Women who lived with problem drinking partners (not necessarily their current partner) were more likely to be in a persistently violent relationship.
- Couples who were cohabiting at both Wave 1 and Wave 2, and in which the male partner was young were also at a greater risk of persistent violence.

- The only alcohol related variable significantly associated with violence cessation was whether or not the female partner lived with an alcoholic partner. Youth was also associated with violence cessation.
- Younger men were more likely to have initiated new violence against their partner.

The findings regarding the relationship between alcohol use and violence perpetrated against women is consistent with prior research. Alcohol use is associated with male violence against women. The current study, however, was able to provide more details about the relationship between alcohol use and different patterns of male violence. One of the most interesting findings, for example, was that none of the alcohol variables were significantly associated with violence initiation, however, heavy and problematic drinking were related to persistent violence. In addition, persistently violent men, compared with non-violent men were more likely to have grown up with a problem drinker. It is possible that as an adult these men were modeling the drinking behavior, and perhaps violence as well, that they witnessed in their family of origin. Unfortunately, this part of the project is the most severely limited and should be considered exploratory in nature. The rates of alcohol use and abuse are extremely low and the measures used during the second wave are different from those used at the first wave making comparisons about the changes in drinking behavior impossible. Nevertheless, the results do support prior work in this area.

Gender Role Ideology and Male Violence Against Women

A number of explanations have been offered to explain male violence against women. Cultural norms supporting unequal family power structures or traditional gender roles play a key role in many of these explanations and may help explain some of the variation in patterns of male violence. The results summarizing the relationship between sex role ideology and male violence patterns are listed below:

- Couples in which the female partner held more egalitarian attitudes at Time 1 and the male partner held less egalitarian attitudes at Time 1 were more likely to be persistently violent.
- Couples who continued to cohabit and in which the male partner was young were more likely to be persistent.
- Egalitarian attitudes of the female partner and youthfulness of the male partner were predictive of new violence.

The findings regarding the relationship between gender role ideology and patterns of male violence are consistent with prior research in this area. One of the unique contributions of this part of the project, however, is that rather than simply looking at the presence or absence of violent behavior, four different patterns, persistence, initiation, cessation, and non-violence, were examined. Gender role ideology, particularly men's traditional ideas about gender were associated with persistent violence, but not violence initiation. This kind of information suggests that continually violent men have very traditional ideas about the roles of women, whereas men who are newly violent do not.

Social Support and Violent Behavior

Family stress has been viewed as a significant etiological factor in the onset of marital conflict and violence (Farrington, 1986; Gelles & Straus, 1979; Straus, 1980), but such investigations have relied mainly on cross sectional data, limited the measurement of stress to a summative index of recent life events, and paid little attention to moderating effects. A large literature indicates that social support is generally found to buffer the effects of stress (Thoits, 1983; Turner, 1983). There is some prior evidence based on comparisons of African American and Anglo families that families embedded in strong social support networks perceived as supportive may also be more able to withstand stresses, and consequently experience less family violence (Cazenave & Straus, 1979). However, there are also problems inferring causality from cross sectional data since severely violent families may physically isolate family members to prevent public awareness of the abusive behavior. It may also be difficult to assess social supports if measurement is limited to the frequency of contacts, as distressed individuals will be most likely to make more help-seeking attempts. The results of the analysis looking at social support, measured in terms of different types of help received and the availability of someone to call for help, are summarized below:

- The amount of help actually received is not related to violent behavior.
- Women who reported they had no one to ask for financial help at the Time of the first Wave (the only Wave the questions were asked) were more likely to experience violence cessation by the Time of the second Wave.

- A lack of transportation help and a lack of repair help at Time 1 were related to violence cessation.

The results of the analyses looking at one form of social support, help received, suggest that women in violent relationships may be extremely isolated from outside contacts. It may also indicate that non-specific help in areas unrelated to violence, do not result in changes in that violent behavior. For example, the data collected for the NSFH did not include information on violence specific help, such as help from police, shelter advocate, hotline, or criminal justice system. This type of assistance is likely to be of more use in altering patterns of violent behavior. It is also possible that women who did receive help left the violent relationship, and as this part of the project only included individuals who were involved with the same partner at the time of both the first and second wave, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the effect of social support on all individuals in violent relationships.

Conclusions and Implications

Over twenty years of research, together with media attention has created an image of intimate violence against women as one pattern of violence escalation and persistence, until stopped by the termination of the relationship or some outside intervention. Recent research, however, suggests that this is only one of several different patterns of violence against women (Aldarondo, 1996; Aldarondo & Kaufman Kantor, 1997; Aldarondo & Sugarman, 1996). For example, men may begin to use violence in their relationship, persist in their use of physical violence, stop their violence, or never use violence at all.

The small amount of research that considers the possibility of multiple types of relationships, however, is limited by a lack of developmental data with which to effectively evaluate changes in the occurrence of violence over time, a reliance on information provided by only one partner in the couple, and small sample sizes. The current project was able to address each of these issues.

This secondary data analysis study has contributed to both practice and policy in a number of ways. By using an integrated theoretical framework, this research was able to examine an improved multidimensional model of violence against women. It also added to the literature by identifying risk factors for intimate violence against women and evaluating the relationship between these risk factors and different patterns of male violence. The impact of research demonstrating both different patterns of violent behavior and different risk markers for each violence type is an important area for consideration that can provide a more focused approach for prevention and intervention efforts. Acknowledging the existence of multiple courses of violence is an important step in understanding the relationships among etiological variables for each relationship pattern. What is important for one pattern of violence against women may not be relevant for another pattern. This is especially important for the enhancement of treatment programs and better targeting of intervention efforts.

The results from this study, for example, suggest that level of employment is related in different ways to different patterns of violence for different racial/ethnic groups. It is imperative, therefore, that individuals who design and implement prevention and intervention efforts are aware of these differences and respond accordingly. This may entail stress reduction programs offered through employers for individuals working

overtime, or perhaps lobbying for better paying jobs or more full time employment for individuals who are underemployed. Regardless of the specific prevention or intervention effort, the results from the current study suggest that the same factors that might increase the initial risk for violent behavior may not affect whether or not this behavior continues. Therefore it may be most important to target efforts specifically toward those factors that are most applicable to the behavior that is being addressed.

The results from this project also suggest that thorough assessments of pregnancy related stressors, including areas such as mistimed or unplanned pregnancies should be part of every prenatal care program. This should also include information from both members of the couple, as this study has demonstrated the importance of both individuals wanting the pregnancy. This study also found that for some couples, physical violence stopped at the time of the birth of the first child. Although this is a positive sign, it does not tell us whether or not the violence continues after the child is born. It is imperative, therefore, that pregnant women also be screened for previous violence in their relationship, and be provided with information about available services if they should need them either during or after the child is born. Health care providers should also provide follow-up services to women postpartum in order to prevent any re-occurrence of violent behavior.

Part of the project focused on personality characteristics of men. The results of analyses finding a relationship between relationship conflict, a hostile personality styles and violence suggest that that one part of a treatment program may need to include activities designed to assist men in their interactions with their intimate partner. This is not to suggest that marriage counseling is the way to stop violent behavior. Instead,

similar to dating violence prevention programs aimed at young adults, it suggests that individuals should be taught ways to manage the conflict that might occur in their relationships.

The results of this study also suggest that any examination of patterns of violent behavior needs to consider risk markers representing different levels of analysis including both individual and social structural in order to arrive at a more complete picture. Effectively stopping violence against women must include efficient and appropriate ways of preventing reoccurrence. Increasing knowledge about the persistence and cessation of violence will provide the necessary foundation for developing more effective prevention measures. In addition, a greater awareness of the complexities of the patterns of violent relationships will also improve targeting of intervention programs and thus, improve allocation of funding and other resources

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Technical Procedures Used

Data

The data used for this project come from the first and second Wave of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) conducted by members of the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988; Sweet & Bumpass, 1996). The files and all documentation for the data were obtained from the web site for the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cde/nsfhw/home.htm>) (Supporting documentation is located in Appendix A). Fifteen different data files were merged to create one data file for Wave 2 of the NSFH which was then merged with the Wave 1 data file to create one master file (See Appendix C for the SPSS syntax). Identical variables from Wave 1 and Wave 2 were identified and then examined to see if the variables contained information from both respondent and partner (Appendix D). New variables, including both composite variables (e.g. self esteem, hostility, depression), and husband and wife versions of the variables (using information from both respondent and partner) (See Appendix E for syntax for computed variables) were then constructed. Once the new variables were constructed they were grouped into 6 categories: Demographic, Personality, Alcohol and Drug Use, Relationship Stages, Gender Role Attitudes, Division of Labor, Fairness in Household Chores, Social Support, and Isolation. Husband to wife violence variables were also created for each Wave of the survey (see Appendix F for descriptives of SPSS system file).

All analyses were weighted using a relative weight created by dividing the weight by the mean of the weight.

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