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# EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF A SPECIALIZED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICE UNIT

## FINAL REPORT

Award # 2004-WG-BX-0004

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## Executive Summary

Domestic violence cases place a substantial burden on the criminal justice system. In Charlotte, North Carolina the police respond to around 30,000 calls a year and the District Attorney handles at least 5,000 cases. Twelve of the 66 homicides in 2003 were domestic violence related (18%). In an effort to reduce the number of repeat calls, break the cycle of violence, and reduce future harm, Charlotte established a specialized Domestic Violence Unit. The goals of the unit are to decrease the chances of repeat victimization and, if future incidences occur, reduce the number and severity of harm perpetrated.

The specialized unit is designed to handle the most serious cases, defined in terms of event lethality, while all other cases are returned to the patrol units for routine handling. Cases in the DV Unit are assigned to specially trained detectives and some victims are assigned counselors. This study reports on the effectiveness of such a specialized unit.

A process evaluation was completed on the Domestic Violence Unit and an empirical assessment of a randomized, stratified sample (stratified by month) of both unit and patrol cases was conducted. Only cases involving a single suspect and single victim were included. 891 incidents were analyzed, 25% from the DV Unit. 83.7% of the victims were female. Of these, 97.4% were victimized by males. Both suspects and victims were traced through official records for previous and subsequent domestic violence incidents.

Comparing the Domestic Violence Unit cases with cases handled by routine patrol:

- The DV Unit is selecting the most serious and severe cases as designed.
- The DV Unit significantly impacts whether suspects have new domestic violence incidents as reported to the police. Despite being a greater risk for recidivism because of the seriousness of the initial incident and prior domestic violence charges, DV Unit suspects had lower offending prevalence in the future. 29% versus 37%. There were no differences by patrol units despite the variance in the use of liaison officers.
- Suspects processed through the DV Unit have fewer future incidents than suspects processed through regular patrol procedures.
  - However, if a DV Unit suspect recidivates, being processed by the unit has no impact on incidence or severity.

The Domestic Violence Unit's impact on victims shows a somewhat different pattern.

- There is no significant difference in the prevalence or incidence of future domestic violence incidents for victims processed by the unit or assigned counselors by the unit and victims processed by patrol.
  - Re-victimization is significantly related to the severity of the case - victims kidnapped or held hostage are *less likely* to be involved in a future reported incident.

- Victims who are female and who have more prior involvement with the police and who have been domestic violence victims in the past are *more likely* to be victimized in the future.
- If re-victimization occurs, DV Unit victims, compared with patrol case victims, report more future victimizations. Those with counselors assigned report fewer.
- Assignment to the DV Unit significantly reduces the level of personal harm in future domestic violence incidents for all victims; there is no significant difference for non-personal harm, e.g. property damage etc.

The data revealed that there were a number of situations where the suspect in the study became the victim in a future domestic violence incident and some victims became suspects. This phenomenon of role reversal was found for about 20 percent of the cases.

- Male victims were more likely than female victims to reverse roles and become suspects in future incidents.

The follow-up window was two years from the incident selected for study. Some serious criminal justice system issues arose:

- Only 85% of the cases had actually been cleared and only 60% of them by arrest. Most of them, however, were cases assigned to patrol. The DV Unit has a higher rate of clearance.
- The DV Unit had, however, twice the rate of cases declined for prosecution by the District Attorney. (More serious cases require higher levels of evidence)
  - Of cases adjudicated, approximately 60% were dismissed by the DA's office; there was no difference by unit or patrol.
- Suspects from the DV Unit spent nearly four times as many days in jail as suspects from patrol units but regardless, about 1/3 of each had future incidents.

In short, of all factors considered, we found that the best predictor of future domestic violence prevalence and incidence is a prior record of domestic violence.

These research findings suggest that the presence of a Domestic Violence Unit can and does affect suspect prevalence but not incidence if he/she repeats the offense. It also shows that a DV Unit reduces the severity of future incidents for victims but not the prevalence or incidence. The significance of this is that victims assigned to the DV Unit are taught how to develop safety plans, which call for the recognition of early-warning signs and early calls to the police. Suspects in those cases are also referred to resources for batterers.

The role of the rest of the criminal justice system – prosecution and courts – appears to undermine or counter-act the effects or potential positive effects of the police unit. This requires a separate study to determine why the unit's cases have a lower rate of prosecution and why the DA voluntarily dismisses most cases.

Domestic violence is a community problem that requires a community solution. The police domestic violence unit makes a contribution to reducing prevalence and

severity but a number of policy issues need to be addressed if such units are to be significantly effective.

- The services provided by the unit – detective and counselor – need to be provided earlier in the cycle of violence rather than wait until a given level of lethality is reached.
- Patrol officers need to be trained and motivated to provide more detailed and accurate reports, and taught a clearer understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and criteria of lethality. They need to fully complete the domestic violence section of the field report so that the DV detectives and counselors have a more complete picture of the crime and the state of the victim.
- Each patrol division needs officers who are dedicated to working domestic violence cases. These officers would respond initially and be extensively trained to conduct thorough preliminary investigations and then would be responsible for follow-up of those cases that remain in their division.
- While the current revised policies have included pertinent and thorough information, to assist officers to determine the lethality of the suspect’s behavior, it needs to also include indications of kidnapping, which this study found to be a significant predictor of future violence.
- Criteria for assignment to the specialized unit should include:
  1. Serious assaults requiring long-term medical treatment,
  2. Domestic violence rapes,
  3. Kidnappings,
  4. Stalking,
  5. Repeat violations of restraining orders,
  6. Officer-involved cases and
  7. Other cases that are complex in nature
- The safety plan approach within the DV Unit should be made more available to other domestic violence victims
- Domestic Violence Unit detectives and counselors need to be made aware of cases that reflect role reversal and to deal effectively with the dynamics of such situations. This means that prior record information and the roles played by each party need to be made available.
- Better coordination and communication needs to occur between the District Attorney’s Office and the police so that the evidence required for successful prosecution is routinely collected and provided. The number of warrants issued and the number of prosecutions would be improved if:
  - The current inclusion of mandatory notification of a supervisor if the officer believes dual arrests are required is retained
  - Supplemental reports detailing circumstances in which an officer does not arrest a suspect on the scene when probable cause exists need to be filed
  - Criteria for personally requesting a warrant from the Magistrate need to be clarified
- Investigation is needed into the significantly large number of voluntary dismissals by the DA’s Office to determine ways the police can assist in decreasing this number or ways the court system and process needs to be altered to make

defendants accountable. Officers need either more training in or increased sensitivity to evidence-based prosecution standards. The physical evidence required for post-incident arrests with a warrant is too often lacking and warrants are not being issued.

- **Reporting Data:** The continuous problem that was revealed during both the process and outcome evaluation was the need for more information. The number of cases lacking documented evidence for both units was very high and this clearly plays a role in the ability of the DV Unit to get warrants. The DV unit staff needs more information to assess the lethality of situation, the characteristics of the offender, and the victim/offender relationship. There is too much missing data in the official files.

This study was designed to review the relative effectiveness of a specialized domestic violence unit. It is evident from our data that the unit is functioning in Charlotte as it was designed to function but the results are not as significant as one might have expected. The research is limited in that it did not include any qualitative data that might better reflect the experiences of the police, prosecution, victims, and suspects.

What appears to be an important intervening variable is the impact and follow-through of other parts of the system, prosecution and court. A police unit in and of itself cannot break the cycle of violence; it needs to be able to work in union with the rest of the criminal justice system to have its greatest impact.

## Primary Report

### ***Introduction***

After decades of neglect, it is now generally accepted that domestic violence has become a prominent research and policy issue (Chalk and King 1998). The Violence Against Women Office reports that federal funds for domestic violence programs have dramatically increased to \$1.6 billion in the 5 years since the passage of the VAWA (Clark, Biddle and Martin 2002). Moreover, national surveys have consistently estimated that domestic violence is the leading cause of injuries in women aged 15 to 44 (Bachman & Saltzman 1995; Tjaden & Thoennes 2000). Research has repeatedly reported that men tend to batter women in approximately 95 percent of the battering incidents<sup>1</sup> (Bachman 1994; Belknap 1996; Dobash, Dobash, Wilson & Daly 1992). Specifically, according to The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), women are 10 times more likely than men to be victims of violence inflicted by their intimate partners (Zawitz 1994).

While the pervasiveness of domestic assault as well as the seriousness of individual acts warrant attention from scholars and policy makers, crimes of violence among intimates, more than other forms of violent instances, are under-reported and underestimated (Gelles & Cornell 1985; Lagan & Innes 1986). Indeed, Bachman (1994) estimates that almost half of all incidents of violence against women by intimates are never reported to the police. Further, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence claims that only one in one hundred incidents of domestic violence is reported (Welch 1994). Even with a majority of the abuse incidents not being reported, woman-battering incidents constitute the largest category of calls screened by police officers each year (Cornell and Langley 1985; see also Hendricks 1991 who reports family disturbance calls account for between 15 and 40 percent of all calls received by police departments nationwide).

The consequence of all the recent research initiatives suggest that while this crime is still underreported, there has been a notable increase in victims' reports to law enforcement. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000), reporting increased from 48% in 1993 to 59% in 1998. A plausible explanation to the increased reporting comes from the proliferation of pro-arrest mandates across the country. Variations of mandatory arrest policies have been established for some time, however, their central concept, that arrest deters, is currently a debated topic. Initial research suggested that arrest and incarceration were effective ways to deter domestic violence (Sherman and Berk 1984),<sup>2</sup> however, subsequent studies questioned their effectiveness (Schmidt and Sherman 1993; Berk et al., 1992)<sup>3</sup> as well as thwarting victims discretion (Hirschel &

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<sup>1</sup>Thus, this research focuses on women as victims in light of the fact that women are most often the victims of domestic violence. The pronoun "she" will therefore be used to refer to the abuse individuals, and the term "woman battering" will be used interchangeably with "domestic violence" "domestic assault" "intimate partner abuse" and "domestic abuse."

<sup>2</sup> The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment tested three different police officer response conditions with randomization to groups: (1) arrest of the suspect; (2) separation of the victim and offender; and (3) mediation or crisis intervention.

<sup>3</sup> According to Sherman (1992), arrest of the suspect was found to yield fewer repeat incidents of violence within 6 months after the initial police intervention.

Hutchinson, 2003; Romkens, 2006). To further examine this issue, The Spouse Assault Replication Program (i.e., SARP) was intended to replicate the seminal Minneapolis domestic violence experiment conducted by Sherman and Berk (1984). While there were a number of important differences across the replication sites, overall the SARP data reported mixed results on the effectiveness of arrest in domestic violence cases (Garner, Fagan, and Maxwell 1995; Maxwell, Garner and Fagan 2002). In Michigan, Friday, Metzgar and Walters (1991) found that arrest had the greatest impact in instances where there had been no previous domestic violence response by the police and least effective in those instances where the pattern of violence was well established. Clearly, although the results of pro-arrest policies have been inconclusive, there has been an increase in arresting suspected batterers and an increase in the availability of victim services (Cho and Wilke 2005).

## **Criminal Justice System Handling of DV cases as Inefficient/ Ineffective**

Although the police exert numerous resources in these cases, historically, the criminal justice system's response to battered women has often been superficial, inefficient and left victims confused and discouraged (Waits 1985). In general, opposition leveled at the criminal justice system has emphasized the comparative lack of serious consequences accorded acts of domestic assaults, even with the knowledge that the attacks reoccur and escalate in severity and that the attacks may potentially effect the children as severely as the mother (Zorza 1992). In response to previous criticisms, and in an attempt to increase victim safety and offender accountability, some jurisdictions have created specialized domestic violence units and courts to address the unique features of these cases.

The current research undertaken in Mecklenburg County (which encompasses the city of Charlotte) has tried like a number of other communities to respond to the problem and the needs of victims by creating a specialized domestic violence unit. The efficiency and effectiveness of how the cases are handled so as to reduce the burden on the system and protect victims is critical.

## **Use of Specialized DV Law Enforcement Units**

Law enforcement agencies for decades have recognized the overwhelming number of domestic violence calls they receive, most of the calls from repeat victims. In response, larger police and sheriff agencies have formed specialized units, often consisting of detectives and counselors/social workers. With goals of breaking cycles of family violence, it is recognized that domestic violence cases require more than just effective investigation. The roles of these units include investigating serious domestic violence cases, interacting with service and treatment agencies to prevent further violence and to assist victims, training officers, victims and community members, and acting as a liaison for officers.

It is not clear how many agencies have implemented specialized DV law enforcement units. A web search revealed approximately 10 police agencies<sup>4</sup>. The literature is sparse (Dotremon, 2003; Pennell & Burke, 2002; Krumholz, 2002; Uekert, Miller, Dupree, Spence, & Archer, 2001; Farrell & Buckley, 1999), not only on the evaluation of their effectiveness, but even how they operate. In fact, a recommendation presented in the San Diego County study (Pennell & Burke, 2002) emphasized the need for outcome studies. Farrell and Buckley (1999) conducted one of the few outcome evaluations on police DV Units in the literature. Using the level of repeat victimization, which is operationalized as repeat calls for service for domestic violence, the researchers compared repeat victimization over just one year in the police district with a DV Unit with the seven police districts that did not have a DV Unit. After one year, the repeat calls in the district with a DV Unit actually increased rather than decreased. The authors speculate that the increase is due to an increase in awareness by victims of the additional support of the DV Unit and the officers' increased awareness and willingness to refer victims to the DV Unit. As noted by Weiss (2002), evaluations should be conducted when programs have stabilized. Although considerable effort has been devoted to domestic violence research in recent years, knowledge about the usefulness of specialized police units remains largely unexplored.

## **Use of Specialized DV Courts**

As gatekeepers to the criminal justice system, police officers are typically the most critical *initial* point of contact for victims of domestic violence (Belknap & Hartman 2000), however, it is the prosecutor who has “unfettered discretion” and who’s power permeates every aspect beyond arrest (e.g., charging, sentencing, etc) (Hartman & Belknap 2003). Previously prosecutors, similar to police, were hesitant to pursue prosecution in domestic violence cases, due to reluctant victims and difficulty in proving cases (Henning & Feder, 2005). Programmatically, specialized DV courts are to provide a more comprehensive experience for the victim that is separate from general criminal courts (Gover, MacDonald, & Alpert 2003). In theory, specialized courts offer connections to liaisons from social organizations in the community, offer resources such as shelters, counselors, victim’s assistance office, and an overall environment that is sensitive to this issue of domestic violence.

Initiated by the pro-arrest policies, domestic violence filings in state courts have increased an estimated 178 percent between 1989 and 1998 and now account for the fastest growing portion of domestic relations caseloads. DV courts typically incorporate differentiated case management techniques that encourage the use of early screening of cases and a classification typology that schedules cases according to their complexity and priority (Tsai 2000). More than 300 courts now have specialized structures, processes, and practices to address the distinct nature of domestic violence cases. The most common reasons courts cite for implementing specialized domestic violence courts include improved assistance to victims, enhanced victim safety and increased batterer accountability. Proponents of domestic violence courts recognize that effective responses

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<sup>4</sup> Noted DV law enforcement units include: San Diego; Denver; Broward, Florida; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Chatham County, North Carolina; Durham, North Carolina; Toledo, Ohio; and Clackamas County, Oregon.

to domestic violence requires a more integrated systems approach than is available in traditional court structures (Keilitz 2000). Experiences with community policing and community prosecution programs indicate that the criminal justice system is often more effective when it is able to foster more of a problem-solving approach to settling disputes (Hartman & Belknap 2003). Specialized domestic violence courts have the potential to better address victim needs and enhance treatment opportunities for offenders, while simultaneously enhancing the effective management of crowded court dockets.

## **Preliminary Studies**

Domestic violence is of particular interest to the police in Charlotte, North Carolina who respond to around 30,000 calls a year and to the District Attorney who handles at least 5,000 cases. As early as 1987, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) has been interested and willing to support research in domestic research (Hirschel & Hutchison, 1996). Using an experimental design, Hirschel and Hutchison investigated the effectiveness of three CMPD police responses to spousal abuse; (1) advising and possibly separating the couple, (2) issuing a citation (an order to appear in court to answer specific charges) to the offender, and (3) arresting the offender. Cases were randomly assigned to one of the three treatments and were followed for at least six months to determine whether recidivism occurred. Contrary to the Minneapolis domestic violence experiment (Sherman & Berk 1984), arrests were not found to be an effective deterrent to subsequent abuse.

The Charlotte Police Department and the District Attorney's Office have recently re-focused attention on the impact of domestic violence on the community and on the system. It is for this reason that the specialized unit was established, but that unit has not been evaluated. The police are especially keen to have such an evaluation completed so that they can make whatever adaptation that might be revealed in the evaluation in order to improve the system.

Preliminary CMPD data indicate that in 2003, 56.5% of all calls for assistance were domestic violence calls. Nearly 67% were from minorities, 67% were female victims and 39% involved injury. In both 2000 and 2001 there were 16 domestic related homicides (21.3% and 25.8% respectively). While in 2003, twelve of the 66 homicides (18%) in were domestic violence related. Injury and lethality are central issues faced by the police. The dynamics of the violence goes beyond the husband/wife dyad. In 2001 only six of the 16 homicides were husband/wife, four were boyfriend or girlfriend scenarios and six involved other family members. Of the 16 domestic violence related homicides, there were no previous police reports for 11 (68.7%), while 4 (25%) had been processed by the DV Unit and the remaining case had previous disputes reported to the police, but the suspect was not part of the DV Unit.

In a previous NIJ grant, Parnell and Burke (2002) evaluated the centralized unit in San Diego. This was primarily a process evaluation that, while having positive implications for training and awareness of issues for detectives and even victims, the value and utility of a specialized unit *per se* was not addressed. In fact, many critical factors involving intense follow-up of case dispositions were left unanswered.

What is critical to law enforcement and to victims is how such a unit functions within the possible range of responses and how might the efficiency be improved in terms

of how the police respond and how prosecution and the courts also respond. This project evaluated the efficiency and effectiveness of a specialized domestic violence response unit in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and established a standardized and objective set of screening criteria to be used to assign cases to the specialized unit with the goal of decreasing future violence. Noting the need for program stability (Weiss 2002), the purpose of the unit, established in 1995 and fully operational in 1997, is to review all incident reports of domestic violence and select the most serious and potentially lethal situations and assign them to intensive intervention in order to reduce re-victimization.

## **Project Goals**

The specific goals of this project are:

- Assess the selection criteria used to determine the domestic violence cases for intensive intervention: what criteria are used, and what differentiates how cases are handled?
- Track the outcomes through CMPD, Mecklenburg domestic violence court, and the Mecklenburg jail for the different methods of dealing with the cases.
- Provide an assessment of the relative effectiveness of a specialized domestic violence unit vis-à-vis normal patrol unit responses in terms of repeat calls, court processing, victim harm and repeat arrests.

## **Organization and Structure of the Charlotte Domestic Violence Response**

All domestic violence cases are initially answered by patrol officers, who conduct the preliminary investigation. All cases that are designated as domestic violence cases are forwarded to the DV Unit. The Sergeant of the DV Unit reviews the cases and makes the decision to return the case to patrol or assign it to a detective in the DV Unit. According to the unit, the primary criterion for case selection is lethality. They consider cases that show the potential for escalating violence, where there has been a serious assault, or if the victim was admitted into the hospital. There is no clear-cut template to select cases for the DV Unit. As part of this research, one of our objectives is to determine what criteria are in fact determining the selection. A separate decision is made to whether a DV counselor will be assigned to the victim of the case. The criteria for this assignment are not articulated. The descriptions of the different personnel involved in the handling of domestic violence cases are described in the following section.

According to CMPD directives, the following are the procedures *followed by patrol officers* when responding to domestic violence calls:

1. Request medical response for injured victims or those who request medical assistance.
2. Take detailed notes and collect evidence at the scene.

3. Interview the victim and offender separately and prepare a written statement from the victim, including any history of domestic violence with the offender.
4. Attempt to interview the offender and prepare a written statement.
5. Collect any physical evidence to corroborate the physical harm to the victim or the condition of the premises where the acts of violence have occurred. Evidence should include: (1) copy of any 911 calls relating to the incident and place it in property control to use as evidence in court; (2) color photographs of any injuries sustained as well as photographs of premises to corroborate allegations of domestic violence; (3) any weapons or other articles which corroborate the occurrence of violence such as broken glass, torn clothing, blood stained articles, damaged property.
6. Prepare a written supplement of the officer's observations of the victim or offender noting any visible injuries, presence of weapons, verbal statements made by the victim and offender upon the officer's arrival, the presence of children or other potential witnesses and all other circumstances and facts pertinent to the incident.
7. Where probable cause exists to believe the victim has suffered injury as a result of a domestic violence offense, but the suspect is not on the scene for an immediate, warrantless arrest, seek an arrest warrant relating reasonably credible hearsay information from witnesses and evidence on the scene. If the victim consents, assist the victim to the magistrate's office and prove the necessary assistance to obtain the warrant.
8. Advise the victim of the availability of shelter, medical care, counseling and other services. Provide assistance or referral that is necessary to provide the victim relief from the current situation. Advise about the availability of a 50B order and the procedure for filing a motion without a lawyer. Officers may take whatever steps reasonably necessary to protect the victim from harm including transporting victims to a shelter or magistrate's office.
9. When feasible, accompany the victim into the victim's residence so the victim can remove food, clothing, medicine and other personal property as is necessary to enable the victim and children to stay elsewhere.

## **Description and responsibilities of patrol**

Each division is comprised of a captain, an investigative technician, nine or ten sergeants and 71 to 94 officers. The number of square miles patrolled by each division varies greatly from 5.8 square miles in the Central Division to 146 square miles in the North Division. A breakdown of the number of officers and the number of square miles patrolled for each division can be seen in the chart below (Table 1).

*Liaison officers* Each division has one or more designated liaison officers who have received additional training in domestic violence. Ideally it is these officers who conduct the necessary follow-up on domestic violence cases that are returned to the division rather than remaining with the DV Unit. These officers are the link pins between the detectives and counselors in the DV Unit and the patrol division and/or domestic violence victims. There is some variation among the districts on how liaison officers carry out their responsibilities. In general, these officers are expected to assume other responsibilities besides domestic violence cases and follow-up, so there is little opportunity to provide victim assistance and support. There are no “full-time” liaison officers.

**Table 1 Division Information Chart**

	Former Division Name	Number of Sergeants	Number of Patrol Officers	Square Miles of Patrol Area
Steel Creek Division	Adam 1	9	84	100
Westover Division	Adam 2	9	71	12.2
Freedom Division	Adam 3	9	88	73.8
Providence Division	Baker 1	9	77	15.7
South Division	Baker 2	9	94	62.8
Independence Division	Baker 3	9	85	59
North Division	Charlie 1	10	93	146
Eastway Division	Charlie 2	9	85	8.8
Hickory Grove Division	Charlie 3	9	86	44.4
Central Division	David 1	9	71	5.8
Metro Division	David 2	9	77	7.7
North Tryon Division	David 3	9	79	6.5

The service divisions in Baker and Charlie Districts made the most use of liaison officers while Adam and David had liaison officers in name only.

## Description of the domestic violence unit

In July 1995, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department established a DV Unit, which has eleven members: one sergeant, one administrative office assistant, five detectives, and four counselors. There are also approximately seventy volunteers working with counselors and detectives to assist the victims. The mission of the DV Unit is to provide protection through aggressive prosecution and to support and help victims. Detectives are trained and expected to investigate domestic violence as a crime and charge a suspect based on the evidence, not only the wishes of the victim. Counselors invest time and effort with the victims to break the domestic violence cycle and also educate the community to prevent domestic violence.

*Sergeant* All cases in which patrol identifies and completes the domestic violence section of the incident report are referred to the DV Unit. The Sergeant reviews all the cases and then decides which will remain with the DV Unit to investigate and/or receive counselor support, and which will be returned to the patrol division from which it originated. Currently the primary criterion for case selection is lethality; however, there is no clear-cut template she can use to select cases. The unit automatically takes the cases in which there has been a serious assault; the victim has been admitted into the hospital; or the case involves a police officer.

*Detectives* All cases that remain with the DV Unit are assigned to detectives. They investigate between 12 and 25 active cases at a time. They are expected to follow-up and investigate the offense as any other crime is investigated. The expectation is that all cases will be cleared with an arrest if there is probable cause; the victim's preference for or against arrest is not a factor.

*Counselors* The cases are assigned to counselors by area. Not all cases are assigned a counselor, but only those cases in which the sergeant interprets that the victims need help in "going forward;" their lives are in such turmoil that they can't figure out how to protect themselves and need support to go to court. There are no objective criteria for making this assignment. The counselors carry an average caseload of 15 to 20 cases a month. The counselors' basic job function is to follow-up on police reports. The counselors make three attempts to contact victims. Counselors will sometimes go beyond the mandatory protocol when victims demand more attention. The counselors give the same information to each victim, which consists of intervention information, referrals to various help agencies, a safety plan if needed, and criminal information (i.e. how to take out a warrant and obtain a restraining order). The only variation noted in this process was with the Hispanic population, in which the counselor would not give information about English-speaking only agencies. Counselors can give victims money, food and gas cards, crisis intervention, and transportation.

Counselors do not deal with offenders on a regular basis because their focus is on the victims; however, they may deal with the offenders at the home when visiting the victims. The counselors explain why they are there, and that the victim did not call or request them to be there. The often, however, provide information on services that offenders can access.

The DV Unit works closely with other governmental agencies and non-profit organizations to provide victim assistance. These agencies include the Shelter for Battered Women, Victim Assistance, the Domestic Violence Advocacy Council, Woman Reach, the Women's Commission, the District Attorney's Office, and Department of Social Services.

*Volunteers* Volunteers are allowed to listen to victims' complaints, give victims' assistance in filling out restraining order and warrant paperwork, get copies of their police reports, and give victims resource information. Their duties do not consist of transporting or chaperoning victims, but they can call an officer to escort victims who are being stalked. Otherwise a volunteer can walk victims to the magistrate's office to activate their paperwork. Unlike the counselors, volunteers do not generally follow-up with victims, they are not permitted to give money, food or gas cards, or to provide crisis intervention. Overall, DV volunteers help disperse the counselors' workload and improve the counselors' efficiency and productivity.

While there are about 70 DV Unit volunteers, only 20 of them are regularly active and available. Ideally there are at least two volunteers on duty during a shift, and shifts are Fridays from 5-9pm and 9-12 midnight, and Saturdays and Sundays 1-5pm, 5-9pm, and 9-12midnight. The scheduling of the DV volunteers is decided by volunteers calling the volunteer coordinator, notifying what day they would like to work and which shift. The fact that only 30% of the volunteers were available often made these services limited.

The number of calls or walk-ins vary, but there are usually two to three calls or walk-ins per weekend. Ideally, patrol officers would refer victims who needed to file a complaint or restraining order.

There are about eight volunteers who are bilingual; their secondary languages are Spanish and French. At least two bilingual volunteers are regularly available each weekend. The resource media center is also stocked with instructional guides in both Spanish and English.

All volunteers go through the regular police department application process of filling out an application, having their criminal records and references checked, drug tested, and fingerprinted. Once they are accepted, the volunteers can choose between the various volunteer programs. For DV volunteers specifically, training classes consist of domestic violence education, available resources for the victim, and safety planning. DV volunteers sign a confidentiality form once they have been accepted into the DV volunteer program.

## ***Research Design***

The population from which the sample was selected consists of all police complaint numbers for cases involving domestic violence in 2003. The population was limited to only the 2003 calendar year for both practical and methodological reasons. From a practical standpoint, in 2003 the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department upgraded their computer management database for police complaints. Whereas data prior to 2003 was still available, extracting it into a format that is compatible with statistical software packages was not easily done. We therefore choose to focus our evaluation on only those data in the newer (and more "user friendly") database. From a methodological

standpoint, we limited our population to only the 2003 data to allow for an ample and meaningful follow-up period with which to document repeat offending and repeat victimization. These follow-up data were collected in 2005, thereby establishing a follow-up period of as much as 24-months. A total of 6,892 domestic violence complaint numbers were included in the population.

The preliminary sample used in this evaluation consisted of 1000 cases. The unit of analysis is therefore the domestic violence incident. These cases were selected using a randomized stratified sample (stratifying by month) that also triple-sampled DV Unit cases. The decision to over-sample these cases was based on the low base-rate of DV Unit cases in the population (approximately 8%). Whereas a proportional stratified sample would have theoretically included just 80 DV Unit cases, the disproportionate stratified sampling technique generated 255 DV Unit cases for inclusion.

During the course of collecting and coding data for the preliminary sample of 1000 cases, many were found to be either cases with multiple victims, cases with multiple suspects, and/or dual assault cases in which both parties were determined to be aggressors against one another. These cases presented unique challenges. First, the information in police records was not always sufficient in determining which of the assaultive behaviors could be attributed to which of the multiple suspects. Similarly, determining the level of harm each of the multiple victims may have experienced was not always sufficiently explained. As a result, coding the suspect's role in the assault and the victim's injury in these cases could not be completed with a high degree of confidence.

Furthermore, these cases presented statistical concerns. For example, in cases with multiple suspects, the processing of these offenders would likely be very similar (e.g., if the victim chooses to testify against one suspect, he/she will likely testify against the second, etc; if the case is determined to be unfounded for one suspect, it will likely be unfounded for the other, etc). This inherent correlation in outcomes violates the assumption of independent observations that is made when using the domestic violence incident as the unit of analysis.

As a result of these methodological and statistical concerns, all cases involving multiple victims, multiple suspects and/or dual aggressors were dropped from the preliminary sample of 1000 cases. The final sample therefore consists of 891 domestic violence cases, each involving one victim and one suspect. Within this final sample of cases, 25% were processed by the DV Unit.

## **Data**

The data used for this evaluation come from multiple sources. While the DV Unit is largely a police-based program, police departments do not operate independently from the remainder of the criminal justice system. Therefore, our study utilized police, court, and correctional data. The reliance on data from these multiple criminal justice agencies allows us to conduct a more thorough and comprehensive evaluation of the DV Unit. It also affords us additional control variables that cannot be found in any single database, thereby increasing the internal validity of the planned analyses. Each data source is described below.

*KBCOPS Data:* Data from police incident reports and case follow-up records were extracted from the police department's computerized database (KBCOPS). The

KBCOPS database includes fields pertaining to the nature of the crime, victim information and suspect information. KBCOPS is designed to capture a wealth of information; unfortunately, many of the fields are left blank by the reporting officers. We therefore focus our attention on those variables that are not plagued by high-levels of missing data. These include suspect and victim demographic information, victim/offender relationship, highest offense category, weapon usage, victim injury and case disposition status.

*Police Narratives Data:* Each KBCOPS file included a narrative account of the incident, written by the reporting officer. These narratives commonly contained information that had failed to be recorded in the KBCOPS data fields, or contained qualitative information that was not easily captured by these existing data fields. A standardized “coding sheet” was developed to record this supplemental data. A research assistant was trained in the use of this coding sheet and subsequently collected information on such variables as victim/offender relationship, weapon use (more refined than what is included in KBCOPS data), victim injury (also a more refined measure), and evidence collected.

*Tracking Data:* The KBCOPS data management system was used to identify future domestic violence cases involving the offenders who were included in the sample. Domestic violence cases involving the offender that occurred prior to the incident in the sample were also reviewed. The electronic files of these past- and future-cases were reviewed by research assistants, who coded detailed information regarding the nature of the offense, the level/type of harm inflicted, and if the assault involved the same victim in the sample. The future-cases will be used to determine recidivism. The inclusion of past-cases permits us to control for prior domestic violence history in our recidivism analyses.

In a similar manner, past- and future-cases of domestic violence involving the victim in our sample were reviewed and coded. This information will allow us to conduct an analysis predicting future victimizations while controlling for past assaults. Finally, given the 891 suspects and 891 victims included in the sample, a decision was made not to attempt to code *all* past- and future-cases. Instead, the research assistant was instructed to review and record as many as two prior assault and as many as three future assaults.

While these were the only cases that were coded for detail, the research assistant was able to determine the total number of times the suspect appeared in a police incident report in KBCOPS. Likewise, the research assistant was able to determine the total number of times the victim’s name appeared in a police incident report. Unfortunately, these data do not specify if the names appeared as a suspect in a case or a victim; however, these totals do speak to the differing lifestyles of the individuals in the sample, with some having greater exposure to crime (as either suspect or victim) than others.

*Court/Jail Data:* For each person arrested, jail records were checked to determine the amount of jail time a suspect may have had. This includes both the time once spent in arrest processing if not immediately released and any time spent pre or post adjudication. All arrestees go through arrest processing at the jail (finger prints, mug shots and criminal

history check - a process that takes from four to six hours) but not all are technically “booked” unless assigned a cell until release. Court records were also reviewed and coded for all cases in the sample for which records could be found. This process yielded information pertaining to the court charges (as opposed to the charges at arrest) and case disposition status (e.g., guilty, not guilty, voluntarily dismissed, etc).

The following is a schematic showing the variables used in this research. Interviews with officers in both patrol and the DV Unit were conducted as part of the process evaluation but, because of time and the unpredictable effect of evaluator interference did not include interviews victims regarding their experiences with the police or the system.

## VARIABLE FLOW CHART

### PRIOR LEGAL

Suspect- Total number of records prior  
Suspect -Any prior record  
Suspect- Any DV prior  
Suspect- Number of days last incident BEFORE IR  
Suspect -First Prior was DV  
Suspect- Ever known to police from past calls  
Suspect- Was a victim in prior DV incident  
Suspect- Was a suspect in prior DV incident

Victim -Any prior record  
Victim -Total number of prior records  
Victim- Any prior DV  
Victim - Ever known to police from past calls  
Victim had previous restraining order  
Victim- Was a Victim in a prior DV incident  
Victim- Was a Suspect in a prior DV Incident

### SUSPECT DEMOGRAPHICS

Suspect's age at time of incident  
Suspect's gender  
Suspect Male  
Suspect Black  
Suspect Hispanic  
Suspect White  
Suspect's race  
Suspect's ethnicity  
Suspect married  
Suspect's alcohol use  
Suspect is repeat DV offender  
Suspect ever assaultive  
Suspect mental health problem

### NATURE OF THE INCIDENT

Dual disputer (primary aggressor unknown))  
NIBRS offense category  
Incident in Victim & Suspect's Home  
Incident in Victim's Home  
Incident was in a residence  
Narcotics related crime?  
Did a juvenile witness the crime?  
Suspect intoxicated  
Victim intoxicated  
Victim Injured  
Victim Reported Incident  
Victim has a love interest  
Victim is same sex as suspect  
Victim relationship is child/sibling/parent  
Victim ever known to police from past calls  
Children ever present (from narratives)  
Child in common  
Victim or suspect non-English speaking  
Victim pregnant  
Dual disputer (primary aggressor unknown))  
Weapon threatened/used  
Stalking involved  
Victim/offender relationship  
victim filed the report

### VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS

Victim's age  
Victim's sex  
Interpreter needed for victim  
Victim Married  
Victim Male  
Victim White  
Victim Injured  
Victim's Injury  
Victim injury type  
Victim received personal harm  
Victim medical treatment  
Victim Reported Incident  
Victim reporting person  
Victim Intoxicated  
Suspect Intoxicated  
Victim Pregnant  
Victim Black  
Victim Hispanic  
Victim's legal intent  
Victim obtained restraining order (50B)

**POLICE ACTIONS**

Assigned to DV Unit  
Time to Arrest  
Police provide 50B info

Assigned to DV Unit

**ARRESTED**

Arrested  
Clearance status  
Clearance reason

Not assigned to DV Unit

**JAIL TIME/ COURT ACTIONS**

Court data, Most serious charge  
Court data, Misdemeanor or felony  
Court data, Disposition date  
Court data, Disposition  
Court data, Sentence  
Court data, Probation given  
Court data, Supervised probation given  
Court data, Probation sentence length (months)  
Court data, Other conditions of probation ordered?  
Court data, Other conditions: Ordered to NOVA?  
Court data, Other conditions: Abide 50B?  
Court data, Other conditions: Drug assessment  
Jail data, booking start date  
Jail data, booking end date  
Time spent in jail

**RECIDIVISM**

Suspect-total records after  
Suspect in system after (Yes/No)  
Suspect-any Domestic Violence complaints after  
Suspect -First record after is a DV  
Suspect - Days to next offense after Incident  
Victim- Any DV Case after  
Victim in System after  
Victim -Total number of records AFTER original

**DYNAMICS OF REPEAT DV INCIDENTS – SUSPECT**

Suspect- Days To First DV After  
Suspect is Suspect in next DV incident

**DYNAMICS OF REPEAT INCIDENTS - VICTIM**

Victim -Days to 1st DV case after  
Victim- Days to second DV after  
Victim- Days to third DV after  
Victim-Days to 4th DV after  
Victim- Days to 5th DV after

## Research Questions

Neither the efficiency nor the effectiveness of the DV Unit has been determined. Among the questions regarding the unit that have yet to be examined are the following:

- Is the centralized screening process an effective procedure in which to direct the cases for intervention?
- What are the specific criteria being used to classify and refer the cases?
- What differences, if any, can be found in the rates of repeat offending and repeat victimization across the two tracks?
- What are the implications of these findings on the selection criteria?

To evaluate the effectiveness of the specialized unit our specific research questions are as follows:

- 1a: How does the *prevalence* of repeat domestic violence offending by perpetrators compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 1b: How does the *incidence* of repeat domestic violence offending by perpetrators compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 1c: How does the *severity* of repeat domestic violence offending by perpetrators compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 2a: How does the *prevalence* of repeat domestic violence victimization of victims compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 2b: How does the *incidence* of repeat domestic violence victimization of victims compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 2c: How does the *severity* of repeat domestic violence victimization of victims compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 3: Within each processing track, what are the victim, offender, and case characteristics that best predict lower prevalence, incidence and/or severity of repeat domestic violence assaults?
4. What are the legal outcomes for suspects who are arrested and does this vary by DV Unit and patrol assignment?
5. Does court outcomes affect suspect future prevalence?

## Process Evaluation Findings

A process evaluation examines the actual operations of an organization; it is the foundation that must be laid before an outcome evaluation that measures results can be conducted. A process evaluation was conducted on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg DV Unit and domestic violence incidence response process. In general, the patrol and specialized domestic violence unit operate as stated in the CMPD policies and procedures. Cooperation between DV personnel and patrol is good. It is easy to access information, and its personnel are accessible. Patrol usually agrees with the domestic violence cases that are returned to them. The few times they are not in agreement, they are comfortable communicating with the DV Unit personnel. The DV Unit detectives and counselors carry out their functions as described by the DV sergeant. The DV Unit has built community partnerships to put victims in touch with appropriate referral services. In addition, the DV Unit is conducting a great deal of training for officers and the community.

The process evaluation revealed a few weak areas that the Department may want to assess further. Effective communication and consistent, working relationships need to be strengthened in a few key areas. The working relationship between the counselors and the detectives is considered the most important relationship by most of the detectives, but there is a great deal of variation. Some detectives work with their counselors, on a daily basis, while others may not work with their counselors at all. Lack of working relationships often translates into lack of shared information. The role of the domestic violence liaison is drastically different in every district. Some of the liaisons are full-time domestic violence liaison officers but in some districts, they are patrol officers, who handle domestic violence matters when they can. The role of the domestic violence liaison is vital to the domestic violence unit when the liaison officer is performing effectively. There is no system in place to facilitate effective communication or any communication between the liaisons and the detectives; however, DV counselors appear to work more closely with the liaison officers than DV detectives.

The DV detectives and counselors do not receive adequate information from patrol for their investigations or victim services. The current domestic violence template is outdated and not used by the supervisors, detectives or counselors.

Volunteers are allowed to listen to victims, assist in filling out restraining orders and warrant paperwork, get copies of police reports, and give resource information. They can call an officer to transport a victim, and they can walk the victim to the magistrate. However, the DV volunteers are rarely utilized by patrol. The volunteers don't seem readily accessible because of their central location, and/or they are not on duty when needed. However, when they are available, the officers who have used them have found them helpful by freeing the officers to focus on the offender and the case, answering the victims' questions, and supporting the victim.

The DV detectives' current caseload is far too high to allow them to thoroughly investigate each case. They can only perform "triage" on many cases so that they can concentrate on the more serious cases. This overload contributes to cases not properly prepared for court. Patrol continues to be irritated by the courts' response to domestic violence cases. Patrol feels that DV cases are not taken as seriously as they should.

## Empirical Assessment Findings

### **Basic Statistics**

The final sample used in this analysis consists of 891 domestic violence cases, each involving one victim and one suspect. 671 (75.3%) were handled by regular patrol and 220 (24.7%) were assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit.

Overall, victims were:	Over all, suspects were
66.6% Black	71.2% Black
83.7% female	85.7% male
59.6% single	54.3% single
Mean age: 31.9	Mean age: 33.4

#### Prior Legal Factors: Suspect

Prior criminal justice contact (Victim witness, or offender)	67.7% (n=581)
Mean number of prior contacts	2.2
Range	0-41
Prior domestic violence record	48.3% (n=277)

#### Prior Legal Factors: Victim

Prior criminal justice contact (victim, witness, or offender)	57.3% (n=419)
Mean number of prior contact	1.6
Range	0-51
Involvement in prior domestic violence calls	64.1 (n=571)

#### Incidence Dynamics

78.8% of the highest NIBRS (National Incident Based Reporting System) charges were for misdemeanors or civil violations

96.2% of the time the officer took the report at the scene of the incident

86.2% of the incidents were at a residential location

50.2% of the residences were shared by the victim and suspect while 37.1% were at the home of the victim and 6.5% were at the home of the suspect.

92.9% of the time, the report was made by the victim.

In only 9.7% of the time did officers denote a juvenile witnessed the event.

Suspect and victim intoxication, an important variable, was missing from about 85% of the cases. In the instances where it was reported, 45% of the suspects were identified as being intoxicated.

Victim was noted as being pregnant in 25 cases (2.8% of all cases).

9.3% (83) of victims were known to the police on the scene as having been involved in previous domestic violence instances.

13.7% (121) of suspects were known to the police on the scene for having been involved in previous domestic violence incidents.

4.0% (35) of the cases involved a non-English speaking victim. In 30 of these 35 cases, 85.7%, a translator was called.

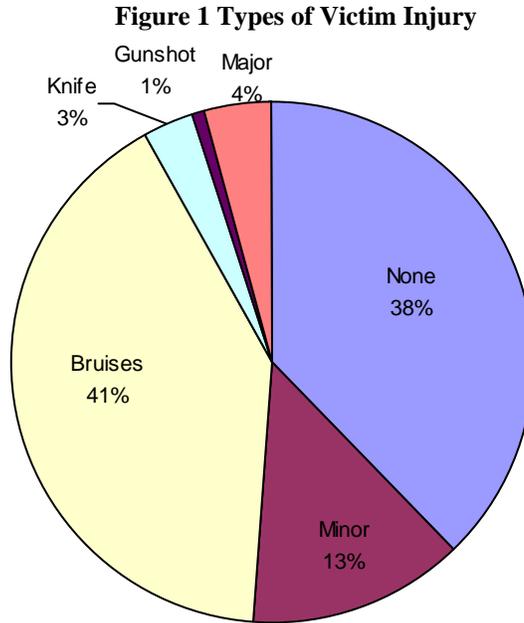
In 6.6% (58) the victim had a standing restraining order.

62.1% of the victims received some physical injury

**Table 2 Victim Injuries (Reported in KBCOPS)**

<b>Injury</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
None or non-apparent minor	293	37.9
Apparent Minor Injuries	102	13.2
Bruises/ Scratches	317	41.0
Forced Immersion Burns	2	0.3
Pattern Burns	1	0.1
Loss of Teeth	1	0.1
Apparent Broken Bones	5	0.6
Knife Wound(s)	24	3.1
Severe Lacerations	8	1.0
Gunshot Wounds	6	0.8
Possible Internal Injuries	7	0.9
Loss of Consciousness	2	0.3
Other Major Injuries	6	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the 774 victims from whom injury data were recorded information on treatment was available for 484. Of these: 41.7% were not treated; 31.9% refused treatment; 26.4% were treated.



### Victim Offender Relationship

67.2% of the domestic violence incidents involved boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife dyads, including estranged dyads.

**Table 3 Victim-Suspect Relationship**

<b>Victim- Offender Relationship</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	272	30.7
Estranged Boyfriend/Girlfriend	135	15.3
Spouse	123	13.9
Estranged/Divorced Spouse	65	7.3
Other	123	13.9
Unknown	167	18.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Other relationships included

- 4.5% (40) parent child
- 3.3% (29) child in common
- 2.4% (21) siblings
- 1.2% (11) step parent/child
- 0.4% (4) Same sex

### Police Actions

50.3% (448) of the suspects were eventually arrested

Of these, 211 (47.2%) were arrested at the scene

Charges

56.0% of the charges were for simple assault

13.7% aggravated assault

28.9% all other charges

1.5% Forcible rape/sodomy

In 1% (9) of the cases, the charges were determined to be unfounded.

## **Domestic Violence Unit Selection Criteria**

Goal 1 of the project was to assess the selection criteria used to determine the domestic violence cases for intensive intervention. Specifically, what criteria are used and what differentiates how cases are handled?

To determine (empirically) the factors that are associated with DV Unit case assignment, we compared victim characteristics, suspect characteristics and offense characteristics of the cases handled by the DV Unit and those assigned back to patrol. These findings are discussed below in Table 4.

**Table 4 Victim Characteristics by Assigned Unit**

	<b>Standard Police Unit</b>	<b>Specialized DV Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Mean Age at Incident</b>	31.6	32.7	31.9
(SD)	(10.6)	(10.0)	(10.5)
<b>Any prior DV</b>			
<b>% Yes – as Victim*</b>	38.7	47.3	40.9
(N)	260	104	364
<b>% Yes – as Suspect</b>	14.6	14.1	14.5
(N)	98	31	129
<b>Race</b>			
% White	26.6	21.9	26.5
(N)	(179)	(48)	(191)
% Black	64.5	73.1	66.6
(N)	(433)	(160)	(593)
% Hispanic	8.0	4.6	7.2
(N)	(54)	(10)	(64)
% Other	0.7	0.5	0.6
(N)	(5)	(1)	(6)
<b>Percent Female</b>	83.5	84.5	83.7
(N)	(560)	(185)	(745)
<b>Marital Status</b>			
% Married	22.9	27.5	24.1
(N)	(106)	(41)	(147)
% Separated	7.1	4.7	6.5
(N)	(33)	(7)	(40)
% Divorced	3.2	4.0	3.4
(N)	(15)	(6)	(21)
% Single	59.3	60.4	59.6
(N)	(274)	(90)	(364)
% Other/Unknown	7.4	3.4	6.4
(N)	(34)	(5)	(39)

\*Differences across patrol and DV units significant at  $p < .05$ ;

In general, victim characteristics such as age, sex, race and marital status do not predict whether the case will be assigned to the DV Unit or handled by patrol. If the victim has been a domestic violence victim in the past, he/she is more likely to be assigned to the DV Unit.

**Table 5 Suspect Characteristics by Assigned Unit**

	<b>Standard Police Unit</b>	<b>Specialized DV Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Mean Age at Incident</b> (SD)	33.1 (10.6)	34.1 (8.9)	33.4 (10.2)
<b>Mean number of priors*</b> (SD)	2.1 2.9	2.65 3.9	2.22 3.2
<b>Any prior DV</b>			
<b>% Yes – as Suspect</b> (N)	23.7 (159)	27.3 (60)	24.6 (219)
<b>% Yes – as Victim</b> (N)	11.2 (75)	13.6 (30)	11.8 (105)
<b>Race*</b>			
% White (N)	23.3 (156)	15.9 (35)	21.5 (191)
% Black (N)	68.8 (460)	78.6 (173)	71.2 (633)
% Hispanic (N)	6.9 (46)	5.0 (11)	6.4 (57)
% Other (N)	1.0 (7)	0.5 (1)	0.2 (8)
<b>Percent Male</b> %	85.6 (N) (571)	86.2 (187)	85.7 (758)
<b>Marital Status</b>			
% Married (N)	23.8 (89)	32.8 (41)	26.1 (130)
% Separated (N)	5.6 (21)	7.2 (9)	6.0 (30)
% Divorced (N)	2.9 (11)	4.8 (6)	3.4 (17)
% Single (N)	56.7 (212)	47.2 (59)	54.3 (271)
% Other/Unknown (N)	11.0 (41)	8.0 (10)	10.2 (51)

\*Differences across Patrol and DV Units significant at p<.05; \*\*Significant at p<.01; \*\*\*Significant at p<.001

As with victim characteristics, suspect characteristics generally do not predict DV Unit assignment. Age, sex and marital status categories are equally represented across unit, as is the suspect's prior involvement in domestic violence (see Table 5). Suspects who have a greater number of priors and who are black are more likely to be assigned to the DV Unit. The higher proportion of African American suspects in the DV Unit does not necessarily suggest that assignment is a function of race. Instead, this higher percentage may be a function of the correlation between the total number of priors and race. That is, the DV Unit may be assigned cases with higher-offending suspects, who also happen to be African American.

**Table 6 Case Characteristics by Assigned Unit**

	Standard Police Unit	Specialized DV Unit	Total
<b>Percent Occurring at Residential Location</b>	86.7	84.4	86.2
(N)	(582)	(184)	(766)
<b>Victim/Offender Relationship<sup>1***</sup></b>			
% Boyfriend/Girlfriend	30.9	30.1	30.7
(N)	(207)	(65)	(272)
% Estranged Boyfriend/Girlfriend	12.4	24.1	15.3
(N)	(83)	(52)	(135)
% Spouse	12.7	17.6	13.9
(N)	(85)	(38)	(123)
% Estranged/Divorced Spouse	6.7	9.3	7.3
(N)	(45)	(20)	(65)
% Other	15.1	10.2	13.9
(N)	(101)	(22)	(123)
% Unknown	22.1	8.8	18.9
(N)	(148)	(19)	(167)
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification***</b>			
% Intimidation (Misdemeanor)	11.0	12.3	11.3
(N)	(74)	(27)	(101)
% Simple Assault (Misdemeanor)	67.4	21.0	56.0
(N)	(452)	(46)	(498)
% Aggravated Assault (Felony)	6.9	34.7	13.7
(N)	(46)	(76)	(122)
% Forcible Rape/Sodomy (Felony)	0.0	5.9	1.5
(N)	(0)	(13)	(13)
% Other	25.8	38.4	28.9
(N)	(173)	(84)	(257)
<b>Percent of Cases Known to Involve<sup>1+</sup>:</b>			
Trespassing***	0.9	5.1	1.9
(N)	(6)	(11)	(17)
Property Damage	13.0	15.7	13.7
(N)	(87)	(34)	(121)
Larceny/Burglary**	4.3	9.2	5.5
(N)	(29)	(20)	(49)
Nonverbal Threats/Telephone Hang-Ups***	5.1	12.9	7.0
(N)	(34)	(28)	(62)
Verbal Threats***	18.4	36.9	22.9
(N)	(123)	(80)	(203)
Pushing/Shoving/Pulling Hair	34.4	27.6	32.8
(N)	(230)	(60)	(290)
Hitting/Slapping/Biting/Choking	56.1	49.8	54.6
(N)	(375)	(108)	(483)
Actions Resulting in an Open Wound***	2.1	13.8	5.0
(N)	(14)	(30)	(44)

Kidnapping/Hostage*** (N)	0.4 (3)	9.2 (20)	2.6 (23)
Actions Resulting in Hospital Transport*** (N)	4.8 (32)	25.3 (55)	9.8 (87)
Sexual Assault/Rape*** (N)	0.1 (1)	8.8 (19)	2.3 (20)

\*Differences across Patrol and DV Units significant at p<.05; \*\*Significant at p<.01; \*\*\*Significant at p<.001

<sup>1</sup>Indicates data collected from police narratives.

<sup>+</sup> Types of offenses are not mutually exclusive

Case characteristics appear to be important predictors of DV Unit assignment (note Table 6). For example, there is a significant relationship between the highest NIBRS classification for the assault and DV Unit assignment, with DV Unit cases more likely to be classified as aggravated assault and rape/sodomy. Information in police narratives also revealed that while DV Unit cases were more likely to contain some less serious offenses such as trespassing, burglary and telephone hang-ups, these cases were also significantly more likely to involve more serious actions such as actions resulting in an open wound, kidnapping, actions requiring hospital transport and sexual assault/rape.

**Table 7 Weapon Use by Unit**

<b>Percent of Cases Known to Involve:</b>	<b>Standard Police Unit</b>	<b>Specialized DV Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
A Weapon (Any Type)*** (N)	16.9 (113)	37.8 (82)	22.0 (195)
A Blunt Object that was Threatened/Used (N)	7.0 (47)	8.3 (18)	7.3 (65)
A Knife that was Threatened/Used*** (N)	3.9 (26)	13.8 (30)	6.3 (56)
A Gun that was Threatened/Used*** (N)	1.9 (13)	9.2 (20)	3.7 (33)
Some Other Weapon that was Threatened/Used (N)	5.2 (35)	8.8 (19)	6.1 (54)

\*Differences across Patrol and DV Units significant at p<.05; \*\*Significant at p<.01; \*\*\*Significant at p<.001

<sup>+</sup> Types of offenses are not mutually exclusive

Table 7 reveals that DV Unit cases are significantly more likely to involve a weapon of any type, more likely to involve a knife threat/attack, and more likely to involve a gun threat/attack.

Table 8 Victim Injury Level and Type by Assigned Unit<sup>+</sup>

	Standard Police Unit	Specialized DV Unit	Total
<b>Injury Level***</b>			
% No Injury or Threat (N)	25.0 (164)	11.2 (24)	21.6 (188)
% Threatened – Not gun-related (N)	13.6 (89)	18.2 (39)	14.7 (128)
% Gun Threat (N)	0.6 (4)	6.1 (13)	2.0 (17)
% Minor Injury (N)	60.1 (394)	50.0 (107)	57.6 (501)
% Serious Injury (N)	0.8 (5)	14.5 (31)	4.1 (36)
<b>Injury Type***</b>			
None or non-apparent minor (N)	41.0 (240)	28.0 (53)	37.9 (293)
Apparent Minor Injuries (N)	13.0 (76)	13.8 (26)	13.2 (102)
Bruises/Scratches (N)	43.1 (252)	34.4 (65)	41.0 (317)
Other ‘More Serious’ Injuries <sup>1</sup> (N)	2.9 (17)	24.8 (25)	8.0 (62)

\*Differences across Patrol and DV Units significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\*Significant at  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*Significant at  $p < .001$

<sup>1</sup>Other ‘More Serious’ Injuries include: Forced immersion burns, pattern burns, loss of teeth, apparent broken bones, knife wounds, severe lacerations, gunshot wounds, possible internal injuries, loss of consciousness and an “other” category no specified in KBCOPS. The percentage for each of these ten categories was higher among the DV Unit cases than the Standard Police Unit cases.

<sup>+</sup>The differences in numbers between these two categories lies in the assessment of apparent and non-apparent injury and consideration of threat. Injury type reflects observed physical harm while injury level considers the situational dynamics.

Table 8 shows a significant relationship between injury level and DV Unit assignment, with DV Unit cases being more likely to involve threat, gun threat and serious injury. Additionally, the type of injury is significantly related to DV Unit assignment, with DV Unit cases less likely to involve “no injury/non-apparent minor injury” but more likely to involve “other more serious injuries” such as broken bones, knife wounds, internal injuries and loss of consciousness.

Findings from Tables 6, 7 and 8 all suggest that case characteristics such as the level/type of harm are determining factors of DV Unit assignment. In a final effort to document this relationship between harm level and unit assignment, we created a severity index to measure the degree of personal and non-personal harm associated with the assault. These scores were based on information coded from the police narratives. A rank-order of different types of harm was developed, and codes (or weights) assigned to each one. Granted, the ranking of these categories is arbitrary; at the same time, there is little guidance in the literature to help us determine if kidnapping (for example) is more or less harmful than actions resulting in hospital transport. With no such guidance available, we established a ranking system that we hope readers will find reasonable.

For Personal Harm, the categories and their assigned values are listed in Table 9.

**Table 9 Categories of Personal Harm and Score Value**

Value	Category
0	None
1	Nonverbal threats
2	Verbal threats
3	Pushing, shoving, pulling hair
4	Punching, hitting, slapping, biting, choking, bruising
5	Actions resulting in an open wound
6	Kidnapping/hostage taking
7	Actions resulting in hospital transport
8	Sexual assault/rape

For Non-personal Harm, the categories and their assigned values were:

**Table 10 Categories of Non-Personal Harm and Score Value**

Value	Category
0	None
1	Trespassing
2	Property damage
3	Larceny/theft/breaking and entering
4	Violation of temporary restraining order

Each assault can include more than one type of harm. For example, a case may include verbal threats, actions resulting in an open wound, and actions resulting in hospital transport. To fully capture the range of behaviors included in the attack and to acknowledge the differences in their level of severity, the Personal Harm Score was computed as the sum of the weights assigned to each type of harm identified. Therefore, an assault involving verbal threats, open wounds and hospital transport would yield a personal harm score of (2+5+7)=14. A Non-personal Harm Score was computed in a similar manner.

Consistent with the earlier results, these findings indicate that level/type of victim harm is a significant predictor of unit assignment. While the DV Unit is more likely to accept cases with higher levels of non-personal injury, the more important factor appears to be the level of personal harm the victim experiences.

**Table 11 Victimization/Injury Severity Scores and Assigned Unit**

Percent of Cases Known to Involve:	Standard Police Unit	Specialized DV Unit	Total
Non-Personal Injury Index Score* (SD)	0.40 (0.94)	0.64 (1.29)	0.46 (1.04)
Personal Injury Index Score*** (SD)	4.18 (2.84)	7.41 (5.34)	4.97 (3.87)

\*Differences across Patrol and DV Units significant at p<.05; \*\*Significant at p<.01; \*\*\*Significant at p<.001

## Outcomes

Goal 2 of the project was to tack the outcomes through CMPD, Mecklenburg domestic violence court, and the Mecklenburg jail.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the specialized unit our specific research questions are as follows:

- 1a: How does the *prevalence* of repeat domestic violence offending by perpetrators compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 1b: How does the *incidence* of repeat domestic violence offending by perpetrators compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 1c: How does the *severity* of repeat domestic violence offending by perpetrators compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 2a: How does the *prevalence* of repeat domestic violence victimization of victims compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 2b: How does the *incidence* of repeat domestic violence victimization of victims compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 2c: How does the *severity* of repeat domestic violence victimization of victims compare across the DV Unit and officer tracks?
- 3: Within each processing track, what are the victim, offender, and case characteristics that best predict lower prevalence, incidence and/or severity of repeat domestic violence assaults?
4. What are the legal outcomes for suspects who are arrested and does this vary by DV Unit and patrol assignment?
5. Does court outcomes affect suspect future prevalence?

The most basic and simple question is whether persons processed through the DV Unit repeat domestic assaults less frequently than those processed through regular patrol. However, it is important to remember that cases are assigned to the DV Unit not at random, but based on the police department's assessment of risk. As a result, cases assigned to the DV Unit are placed there because they are deemed more likely to result in repeated and serious offenses/victimizations. Therefore, when evaluating the impact of the DV Unit on subsequent recidivism, one must take into account this anticipated correlation between the unit assignment and any future offenses/victimizations (i.e., the "selection artifact").

There are several methodological and statistical strategies available for controlling for the selection artifact. Randomly assigning cases to processing tracks is perhaps the best method, though not possible in our study because the cases have already been assigned to tracks. Matching cases on selected criteria, such as sex, race, age, and prior offenses, offers another possible alternative. However, as the number of criteria on which cases are matched increases, the more difficult matching becomes. Furthermore, matching would be able to control for the selection artifact only if cases with similar risk levels are assigned to different tracks. This method of assigning cases to tracks would appear to be in stark contrast to the DV Unit's mission, and as a result, an unlikely possibility. Another strategy involves the use of multivariate statistical models that regressed recidivism onto DV Unit assignment while controlling for case severity/lethality. Unfortunately, the inherent multicollinearity between case severity/lethality

and DV Unit assignment would affect the estimates in the model, making them difficult to interpret and increasing error rates.

Given the limitations of the above strategies, we adopt an alternative approach to control for the selection artifact. In our view, assignment to the DV Unit is an endogenous variable influenced by both observed and unobserved factors, and is represented by the following equation:

$$\text{Equation 1} \quad D = \theta_1 X_1 + u_1,$$

where  $D$  is a dummy coded variable for assignment to the DV Unit,  $X_1$  is a vector of variables associated with track assignment (i.e., case severity/lethality),  $\theta_1$  is its coefficient vector, and  $u_1$  is the disturbance term.

We will estimate Equation 1 and save the residuals of this model ( $d'$ ). The residuals will capture assignment to the Domestic Violence Unit above-and-beyond the influence of case severity/lethality. We will then use  $d'$  in the following equation.

$$\text{Equation 2} \quad R = \theta_2 X_2 + \beta d' + u_1,$$

where  $R$  is a measure of repeat offending/victimization,  $X_2$  is a vector of variables associated with repeat offending/victimization (including the initial assault severity/lethality),  $\theta_2$  is its coefficient vector,  $d'$  is a dummy coded variable for assignment to the DVU track,  $\beta$  is the effect of the DVU track on repeat offending/victimization, and  $u_1$  is the disturbance term. Because we use  $d'$  rather than  $D$  in this equation, we are able to include measures of case severity/lethality as control measures while avoiding multicollinearity with DV Unit assignment. In short, Equation 2 allows us to examine the effect of DV Unit assignment on recidivism absent the selection artifact.

When estimating DV Unit assignment (Equation 1), we used the following variables: highest NIBRS classification, victim injury level, types of non-personal harm included in the assault, and types of personal harm included in the assault. The former two variables are measures from the KBCOPS database, whereas the latter two reflect information uncovered during the coding of the police narratives.

There is some overlap across these two sources of data, especially regarding the presence of rape (e.g., rape could be the highest NIBRS classification, and rape could have been mentioned—and coded—in the police narratives). Our review of police narratives uncovered seven more accounts of rape than what is captured in the NIBRS variable. This discrepancy may be attributed to the fact that the NIBRS variable captures the *highest level of harm* while the police narratives were coded to capture all levels of harm. If rape occurred but was not classified as the highest level of harm, the police narratives would document the sexual assault but the NIBRS variable may not. These discrepancies are few, however, which means that the two measures of rape are highly correlated with one another. Despite this multicollinearity, we decided to include both measures of rape when estimating Equation 1. Our decision was twofold. First, our objective in Equation 1 is to explain as much variance as possible in DV Unit assignment through case severity/lethality so that we can adequately determine  $d'$ . The two measures of rape—while correlated—are not perfectly correlated and are therefore able to explain independent amounts of variance. Second, the coefficients for rape are not our primary concern in this analysis; as such, it is of little concern that the estimates and their significance

levels may be influenced by multicollinearity. (Note that the multicollinearity for the two rape measures should not affect the other estimates in the model.)

**Table 12 Logistic Regression Predicting Assignment to DV Unit using Case Severity Characteristics (N=865)**

Variables	B	SE	Exp(B)
Intercept	-4.32***	0.42	0.01
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>			
Intimidation	1.05*	0.49	2.86
Aggravated assault	1.85***	0.34	6.36
Rape	18.80	10813.44	0.00
Other	1.96***	0.34	7.12
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>			
Threatened (not gun related)	0.77 <sup>†</sup>	0.43	2.17
Gun threat	2.52***	0.72	12.42
Minor injuries	1.24**	0.39	3.46
Serious injuries	2.55***	0.71	12.81
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>			
Trespassing	1.92**	0.59	0.68
Property damage	0.40	0.29	1.50
Larceny/Burglary	0.08	0.43	1.08
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>			
Nonverbal threats/Telephone Hang-ups	1.32***	0.36	3.74
Verbal threats	1.09***	0.29	2.98
Pushing/Shoving/Pulling Hair	0.27	0.26	1.31
Punching/Slapping/Hitting/Bruising	0.46	0.29	1.59
Actions resulting in open wound	0.69	0.51	2.00
Kidnapping/Hostage	2.15*	0.75	8.55
Actions resulting in hospital transport	1.27***	0.35	3.56
Sexual assault/Rape	4.22**	1.26	68.16

-2Log likelihood = 638.46  
 $\chi^2 = 324.93***$ , df = 19  
 Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = 0.47

<sup>1</sup>Reference category is “Simple assault”

<sup>2</sup>Reference category is “No injury”

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

The results of this multivariate model mirror those reported in the earlier bivariate analyses; that is, DV Unit assignment is largely a function of case severity/lethality. DV Unit cases are more likely to be classified as aggravated assault (as opposed to simple assault), more likely to gun threat, minor injuries and major injures (as opposed to no injury), more likely to involve several personal harm measures including verbal threats, kidnapping/hostage taking and actions requiring hospital transport.

The measure of  $d'$  determined by this model will be used in all multivariate analyses of suspect recidivism and repeat victimizations.

## Suspect Recidivism

Recidivism is measured by three separate variables that measure prevalence, incidence and severity. Prevalence is defined as whether the suspect has any future domestic violence offenses during the follow-up period. Incidence refers to the number of future domestic violence offenses that occurred during the follow-up period. Severity reflects the level of personal and non-personal harm the suspects inflicted on their victims during their future domestic violence offenses.

Prevalence: Among those suspects in our sample whose case was assigned to the DV Unit, 29% had at least one future domestic violence offense during the follow-up period. Among those suspects whose case was handled by the patrol unit, 37% had at least one future domestic violence offense. This difference in offending prevalence at the bivariate level is statistically significant ( $\chi^2=4.51$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.03$ ), suggesting that despite being a greater risk for recidivism, the more severe/lethal offenders had a lower offending prevalence in the future.

To examine this relationship between DV Unit processing and recidivism prevalence further, a logistic regression was conducted. In this analysis, prevalence was regressed onto measures of the initial case severity/lethality (the same measures used to determine  $d'$  above), along with several suspect characteristics and criminal justice variables. In doing so, we examine the relationship between DV Unit processing and recidivism prevalence while controlling for such factors as: suspect's age, sex, race, marital status, prior police involvement, prior involvement as a domestic violence offender, victim/offender relationship, victim involvement in reporting the assault, suspect being arrested and the number of days suspect spent in jail. The latter measures (arrested and jail) help to control for the suspect's time "on the street", which would influence his/her opportunity to re-offend. Note that these variables pertain to the suspect's initial domestic violence case only; we do not have data on future jail time the suspect may have had during the follow-up period. As such, we recognize that these measures do not perfectly reflect a suspect's opportunity to offend, but should speak (at least in part) to this opportunity. The findings from this regression are shown below.

**Table 13 Logistic Regression Predicting Prevalence of (i.e., Any Future) Domestic Violence Offenses by Suspect (N=790)**

Variables	B	SE	Exp(B)
Intercept	-2.40****	0.54	0.09
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>			
Intimidation	-0.02	0.45	0.99
Aggravated assault	-0.61 <sup>†</sup>	0.34	0.54
Rape	20.64	16029.15	0.00
Other	0.10	0.29	1.10
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>			
Threatened (not gun related)	0.02	0.36	1.02
Gun threat	0.08	0.70	1.08
Minor injuries	-0.13	0.24	0.88
Serious injuries	-0.75	0.59	0.47
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>			
Trespassing	-0.01	0.67	0.99
Property damage	-0.11	0.25	0.90
Larceny/Burglary	-0.19	0.24	0.83

<b>Personal Harm Types</b>			
Nonverbal threats/Telephone Hang-ups	-0.36	0.37	0.70
Verbal threats	0.34	0.26	1.41
Pushing/Shoving/Pulling Hair	0.11	0.31	1.11
Punching/Slapping/Hitting/Bruising	0.06	0.22	1.06
Actions resulting in open wound	1.08	0.49	2.94
Kidnapping/Hostage	-0.91	0.64	0.40
Actions resulting in hospital transport	0.04	0.36	1.04
Sexual assault/Rape	-20.16	16029.15	0.00
<b>Suspect Characteristics</b>			
Age	0.00	0.01	1.00
Sex	0.49 <sup>†</sup>	0.26	1.63
Non-white	0.59**	0.20	1.80
Married	-0.02	0.25	0.99
Total prior police involvement	0.10**	0.03	1.10
Prior DV offender	0.87***	0.19	2.39
Romantically involved with victim	-0.28	0.17	0.76
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>			
Victim reported assault	0.38	0.35	1.47
Suspect arrested	0.28	0.18	1.33
Days in jail	0.00	0.00	1.00
DV Unit ( <i>d</i> )	-0.56*	0.24	0.57

-2Log likelihood = 920.99  
 $\chi^2 = 118.77^{***}$ , df = 30  
Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.19$

<sup>1</sup>Reference category is “Simple assault”

<sup>2</sup>Reference category is “No injury”

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

Interestingly, none of the initial case severity/lethality measures significantly predict recidivism prevalence. Among the suspect characteristics, however, being non-white, having higher past involvement with the police and having committed a DV assault in the past was positively and significantly related to prevalence. Of primary interest is the coefficient for the DV Unit assignment; that coefficient is negative and significant, suggesting that offenders whose cases were processed by the DV Unit are less likely to recidivate in the future. The odds ratio for this effect is 0.57, suggesting that the probability of DV Unit suspects re-offending is nearly half of that for the non-DV Unit suspects.

Incidence: While prevalence refers to the percentage of suspects who re-offended, incidence refers to the frequency of future domestic violence offenses committed by suspects. In determining the number of future domestic violence assaults, our coding scheme generally allowed a maximum of three assaults to be recorded, although some offenders had as many as five future assaults to be recorded. Because this variable was capped at three (or five), it is not considered a true continuous count of cases as some offenders may have had future assaults that went unrecorded. Nevertheless, in our bivariate analysis we proceed liberally and treat this variable as if it captures all future assaults. We feel comfortable treating this incidence measure as a raw count of future assaults in our bivariate analyses for several reasons. First, very few suspects reached the maximum value, so our censoring procedures probably did not exclude very many future arrests. Second, because the bivariate analyses do not control for other variables, these analyses are not a very stringent test of the impact of the DV Unit. This would not change

if we adopted a more conservative measure. Finally, treating this measure as a raw-count make the results more easily interpreted.

Among all suspects in the sample, those whose cases were processed through the DV Unit committed an average of 0.46 domestic violence assaults during the follow-up window. Those whose cases were not processed through the DV Unit committed an average of 0.62 domestic violence assaults during this same time. This difference in incidence is statistically significant ( $t=2.20, p=0.03$ ).

These figures reflect the incidence levels of *all* suspects in our sample. Given that a lower percentage of DV Unit suspects were found to recidivate (as discussed in the prevalence section above), this means there is a higher percentage of DV Unit suspects with a score of “0” in the incidence computation and therefore affect these mean number of incidents. We therefore re-examined these incidence levels but focused on *only those suspects who recidivated*. This analysis is not designed to be a “better” comparison of incidence levels, but instead, a different comparison based on a different group of suspects (i.e., only those who recidivated vs. all suspects). Our findings reveal that DV Unit recidivists committed an average of 1.59 future domestic assaults, compared to 1.67 assaults committed by non-DV Unit recidivists. This difference is not statistically significant ( $t=0.56, p>.05$ ).

Finally, we examined incidence levels of all suspects and only recidivists using a more conservative multivariate model. In this more stringent test, we treat the incidence measure as an ordinal-level variable, with categories of “0”, “1 future arrest” or “2+ future arrests”. We include as control variables our measures of the original case severity/lethality, characteristics of the suspect and criminal justice characteristics. We computed this model for all suspects, and for only those who recidivated. The findings are shown below.

**Table 14 Ordinal Regression Predicting Frequency of Future Domestic Violence Offenses by All Suspects and by Only Those Suspects Who Recidivated**

Variables	Model 1 Predicting 0, 1 or 2+ Offenses (N=790; All Suspects)		Model 2 Predicting 1 or 2+ Offenses (N=291; Recidivists)	
	B	SE	B	SE
	Intercept (0 future offenses)	2.25***	0.52	--
Intercept (1 future offenses)	3.56***	0.53	0.89	1.00
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>				
Intimidation	-0.23	0.42	-0.92	0.71
Aggravated assault	-0.56 <sup>†</sup>	0.33	-0.27	0.60
Rape	19.48***	0.71	-0.89	1.39
Other	0.24	0.27	0.72	0.50
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>				
Threatened (non-gun)	0.18	0.34	0.77	0.56
Gun threat	0.04	0.66	0.18	1.13
Minor injuries	-0.12	0.23	0.10	0.41
Serious injuries	-0.67	0.57	-0.53	1.09
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>				
Trespassing	-0.17	0.62	-0.19	1.04
Property damage	-0.07	0.24	0.41	0.42
Larceny/Burglary	-0.26	0.37	-0.40	0.62
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>				
Nonverbal threats...	-0.14	0.34	0.57	0.59
Verbal threats	0.29	0.25	0.03	0.41
Pushing/Shoving...	0.03	0.19	-0.41	0.32

Punching/Slapping...	0.10	0.21	0.16	0.39
Open wound	0.80 <sup>†</sup>	0.47	-0.75	0.95
Kidnapping/Hostage	-1.01	0.64	-1.05	1.31
Hospital transport	0.12	0.34	0.21	0.63
Sexual assault/Rape	-19.19	0.00	--	--
<b>Suspect Characteristics</b>				
Age	-0.00	0.01	0.13	0.29
Sex	0.61*	0.26	-0.03*	0.02
Non-white	0.64**	0.19	1.01*	0.51
Married	0.07	0.24	0.60	0.36
Total prior police involvement	0.10***	0.03	0.60	0.44
Prior DV offender	0.85***	0.18	0.07	0.05
Romantically involved with victim	-0.24	0.16	0.31	0.32
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>				
Victim reported assault	0.26	0.33	-0.25	0.63
Suspect arrested	0.21	0.17	-0.22	0.30
Days in jail	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01
DV Unit ( <i>d</i> )	-0.50*	0.23	0.38	0.42
		-2Log likelihood = 1436.79	-2Log likelihood = 397.03	
		$\chi^2 = 133.37^{***}$ , df = 30	$\chi^2 = 51.04^{**}$ , df = 29	
		Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> = 0.19	Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> = 0.22	

<sup>†</sup>Reference category is "Simple assault" <sup>2</sup>Reference category is "No injury" <sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

As seen in Model 1, rape (highest NIBRS code) is a significant predictor for future assaults; however, recall that there are two measures of rape in the model in order to maximize the explanatory power of case severity/lethality. These two measures are highly multicollinear and their estimates should be viewed with caution. Similar to the prevalence findings, being male, non-white, and being a prior domestic violence offender is positively and significantly related to incidence. Those suspects with more prior contacts with police also have higher incidence levels. Among all suspects, those whose case was processed through the DV Unit have a lower recidivism level. Among only those suspects who recidivated, however, this DV Unit effect disappears (Model 2).

Severity: To determine severity of future domestic violence assaults, we again used the rank-ordered categories of personal and non-personal harm as outlined in earlier in Tables 9 and 10.

#### Personal Harm:

Value	Category
0	None
1	Nonverbal threats
2	Verbal threats
3	Pushing, shoving, pulling hair
4	Punching, hitting, slapping, biting, choking, bruising
5	Actions resulting in an open wound
6	Kidnapping/hostage taking
7	Actions resulting in hospital transport
8	Sexual assault/rape

Non-personal Harm:

Value	Category
0	None
1	Trespassing
2	Property damage
3	Larceny/theft/breaking and entering
4	Violation of temporary restraining order

Each future domestic violence case was assigned a Personal Harm Score, which is the value corresponding with the *highest* degree of personal harm. Similarly, each future domestic violence case was assigned a Non-personal Harm Score, which is the value corresponding to the *highest* degree of non-personal harm. The average of the Personal Harm Scores for future domestic violence cases was computed for each suspect. Likewise, the average Non-personal Harm Score was computed. These scores are used in our analysis of future severity.

The average Personal Harm Score for DV Unit and Non-DV Unit suspects is 0.95 and 1.17, respectively. This difference is not statistically significant ( $t=1.51, p>.05$ ). The average Non-personal Harm Score for DV Unit and Non-DV Unit suspects is 0.34 and 0.33, respectively. This difference also is not statistically significant. Note that these values are computed on the entire sample of suspects.

Among only those who recidivated, the average Personal Harm Score for DV Unit and Non-DV Unit suspects is 3.26 and 3.16, respectively. The average Non-personal Harm Score for DV Unit and Non-DV Unit suspects is 1.17 and 0.91, respectively. Whereas DV Unit suspects are found to inflict a higher level of personal and non-personal harm in their subsequent domestic assaults, these differences are not statistically significant.

Finally, we conducted a multivariate analysis in which we regressed these harm scores onto initial case severity/lethality, suspect characteristics and criminal justice characteristics. We computed these results for the entire sample of suspects and for only those who recidivated. The findings for Personal Harm are shown below.

**Table 15 OLS Regression Predicting Average Personal Harm Severity of Future Domestic Violence Offenses by All Suspects and by Only Those Suspects Who Recidivated**

Variables	Model 1 (N=790; All Suspects)		Model 2 (N=291; Recidivists)	
	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	0.01	0.43	2.44**	0.83
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>				
Intimidation	-0.40	0.38	-0.72	0.59
Aggravated assault	-0.51 <sup>†</sup>	0.27	-0.31	0.50
Rape	2.23*	1.00	--	--
Other	-0.19	0.25	-0.59	0.42
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>				
Threatened (non-gun)	-0.08	0.30	-0.37	0.46
Gun threat	0.02	0.57	-0.22	0.93
Minor injuries	-0.04	0.20	0.12	0.35
Serious injuries	-0.38	0.46	-0.05	0.80
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>				
Trespassing	0.02	0.57	0.34	0.84
Property damage	-0.02	0.21	0.30	0.35
Larceny/Burglary	-0.08	0.33	0.11	0.51
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>				

Nonverbal threats...	-0.47	0.31	-0.54	0.48
Verbal threats	0.33	0.22	0.26	0.34
Pushing/Shoving...	-0.01	0.16	-0.60	0.28
Punching/Slapping...	-0.05	0.18	-0.11	0.32
Open wound	0.70 <sup>†</sup>	0.40	0.34	0.67
Kidnapping/Hostage	-0.62	0.49	-1.00	1.03
Hospital transport	0.21	0.29	0.30	0.49
Sexual assault/Rape	-0.85	0.78	2.75*	1.06
<b>Suspect Characteristics</b>				
Age	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01
Sex	0.54**	0.20	0.95*	0.39
Non-white	0.35*	0.16	-0.10	0.30
Married	-0.01	0.20	-0.07	0.37
Total prior police involvement	0.07**	0.02	0.02	0.03
Prior DV offender	0.59***	0.16	-0.22	0.26
Romantically involved with victim	-0.15	0.14	0.19	0.25
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>				
Victim reported assault	0.31	0.27	0.48	0.53
Suspect arrested	0.10	0.15	-0.24	0.25
Days in jail	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01
DV Unit ( <i>d'</i> )	-0.33	0.20	0.17	0.34
		F (30, 759) = 2.85***	F (29, 261) = 1.19	
		R <sup>2</sup> = 0.10	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.12	

<sup>1</sup>Reference category is "Simple assault"

<sup>2</sup>Reference category is "No injury"

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

Among the pool of all suspects as well as among only those who recidivated, very few variables are significantly related to future harm severity. In Model 1, race, prior police involvement and prior domestic assaults predict future harm. In Model 2, only being male predicts future harm. Most importantly, in neither model does the DV Unit appear to impact recidivism severity significantly.

The findings for Non-personal Harm are shown below.

**Table 16 OLS Regression Predicting Average Non-Personal Harm Severity of Future Domestic Violence Offenses by All Suspects and by Only Those Suspects Who Recidivated**

Variables	Model 1 (N=790; All Suspects)		Model 2 (N=291; Recidivists)	
	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	-0.26	0.20	0.11	0.56
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>				
Intimidation	0.05	0.18	0.17	0.40
Aggravated assault	-0.08	0.13	0.07	0.33
Rape	0.54	0.47	--	--
Other	0.08	0.12	0.13	0.28
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>				
Threatened (non-gun)	0.02	0.14	0.08	0.31
Gun threat	-0.06	0.27	0.27	0.63
Minor injuries	-0.03	0.09	0.15	0.24
Serious injuries	-0.19	0.22	-0.12	0.54
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>				
Trespassing	0.33	0.27	0.41	0.56

Property damage	-0.05	0.10	-0.02	0.24
Larceny/Burglary	-0.12	0.16	-0.27	0.35
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>				
Nonverbal threats...	0.27	0.14	0.76*	0.33
Verbal threats	-0.03	0.10	-0.20	0.23
Pushing/Shoving...	0.09	0.08	0.16	0.19
Punching/Slapping...	-0.03	0.08	-0.08	0.21
Open wound	0.07	0.19	-0.28	0.45
Kidnapping/Hostage	-0.01	0.23	0.77	0.70
Hospital transport	0.07	0.14	0.12	0.33
Sexual assault/Rape	-0.29	0.36	0.17	0.72
<b>Suspect Characteristics</b>				
Age	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
Sex	0.12	0.10	0.70	0.27
Non-white	0.18*	0.07	0.31	0.20
Married	0.08	0.09	0.30	0.25
Total prior police involvement	0.03*	0.01	0.01	0.02
Prior DV offender	0.18*	0.08	0.05	0.18
Romantically involved with victim	-0.10	0.07	-0.12	0.17
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>				
Victim reported assault	0.12	0.13	0.15	0.36
Suspect arrested	0.13 <sup>†</sup>	0.07	0.20	0.17
Days in jail	0.002*	0.00	0.01**	0.00
DV Unit ( <i>d</i> )	-0.10	0.10	0.00	0.23
	F (30, 759) = 2.04***		F (29, 261) = 1.24	
	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.10		R <sup>2</sup> = 0.12	

<sup>1</sup>Reference category is “Simple assault”

<sup>2</sup>Reference category is “No injury”

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

In Model 1, race, prior police involvement and prior domestic assaults predict future non-personal harm. In Model 2, the presence of non-verbal threats and the number of days in jail predict future harm. These findings are virtually identical to those for personal harm, and indicate that assignment to the DV Unit does not lower future non-personal harm severity.

### Non-DV Unit Differences

It was noted that there was variance between the patrol districts in how they utilized domestic violence liaison officers. There are, however, no significant differences in re-offending by district patrols or by the larger service areas.

**Table 17 Recidivism Data (Suspect) among Non-DV Unit Cases, by Police District**

Police District	Number of Cases	Percent Re-offending	Mean Number of Repeated Offenses	Mean Severity Score Personal Harm	Mean Severity Score Non-Personal Harm
Central	23	21.7	0.39	0.59	0.29
Metro	49	51.0	0.96	1.64	0.46
Eastway	55	38.2	0.53	1.37	0.27
N. Tryon	67	35.8	0.58	1.20	0.23
North	69	42.0	0.65	1.22	0.45
Hickory Grove	85	35.3	0.56	0.99	0.37
Providence	40	35.0	0.65	1.03	0.37
Independence	41	39.0	0.61	1.24	0.26
Steele Creek	61	31.1	0.54	0.82	0.34
South	50	40.0	0.60	1.39	0.29
Westover	67	28.4	0.51	1.12	0.22
Freedom	64	40.6	0.75	1.22	0.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>0.33</b>

**Table 18 Recidivism Data (Suspect) among Non-DV Unit Cases, by Aggregated Police District**

Police District	Number of Cases	Percent Re-offending	Mean Number of Repeated Offenses	Mean Severity Score Personal Harm	Mean Severity Score Non-Personal Harm
Adam	192	33.3	0.60	1.06	0.33
Baker	131	38.2	0.62	1.23	0.30
Charlie	209	38.3	0.58	1.17	0.37
David	139	38.8	0.68	1.25	0.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>0.33</b>

## Repeat Victimization

We examined the relationship between assignment to the DV Unit and repeat victimization (of victims) in much the same way as we examined the recidivism of suspects. For example, we measured repeat victimization using three separate variables to capture prevalence, incidence and severity. Prevalence is defined as whether the victim has any future domestic violence victimizations during the follow-up period. Incidence refers to the number of future assaults on the victim. Severity reflects the level of personal and non-personal harm the victims experienced as part of their future victimizations.

Prevalence: Among the DV Unit victims in our sample, 31% had at least one future domestic violence victimization during the follow-up period. Among the non-DV Unit victims, 38% had at least one future victimization. This difference in re-victimization prevalence at the bivariate level is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2=2.89$ ,  $p=0.09$ ).

The prevalence of re-victimization was examined further using a logistic regression. The predictors in this model included the initial case severity/lethality characteristics, victim characteristics, and criminal justice characteristics. Unlike the models predicting suspect recidivism, our list of criminal justice characteristics includes whether or not the victim was assigned a counselor from the DV Unit. The findings from this regression are shown below.

**Table 19 Logistic Regression Predicting Prevalence of (i.e., Any Future) Domestic Violence Assaults on Victim (N=704)**

Variables	B	SE	Exp(B)
Intercept	-1.57**	0.52	0.21
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>			
Intimidation	-0.70	0.46	0.50
Aggravated assault	-0.34	0.37	0.71
Rape	19.80	16097.54	0.00
Other	-0.39	0.24	0.68
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>			
Threatened (not gun related)	0.49	0.39	1.63
Gun threat	0.13	0.81	1.14
Minor injuries	-0.12	0.25	0.98
Serious injuries	-0.30	0.62	0.74
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>			
Trespassing	0.18	0.72	1.20
Property damage	0.00	0.27	1.00
Larceny/Burglary	0.36	0.39	1.44
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>			
Nonverbal threats/Telephone Hang-ups	-0.67	0.41	0.51
Verbal threats	0.40	0.29	1.49
Pushing/Shoving/Pulling Hair	0.32	0.20	1.37
Punching/Slapping/Hitting/Bruising	0.00	0.22	1.00
Actions resulting in open wound	0.97 <sup>†</sup>	0.56	2.63
Kidnapping/Hostage	-2.35*	1.07	0.10
Actions resulting in hospital transport	0.13	0.10	1.14
Sexual assault/Rape	-19.93	16097.54	0.00
<b>Victim Characteristics</b>			
Age	0.01	.001	1.01
Sex	-0.85**	0.29	0.43
Non-white	0.17	.019	0.85
Married	-0.47 <sup>†</sup>	0.26	0.62
Total prior police involvement	0.10*	0.04	1.10
Prior DV victim	0.54**	0.21	1.72
Romantically involved with suspect	-0.05	0.19	0.95
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>			
Victim reported assault	0.31	0.37	1.37
Suspect arrested	0.15	0.19	1.17
Days in jail	0.00	0.00	1.00
DV Unit ( <i>d</i> )	-0.37	0.28	0.69
DV Unit Counselor Assigned	-0.74	0.66	0.48

-2Log likelihood = 803.86

$\chi^2 = 87.18^{***}$ , df = 31

Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = 0.16

<sup>1</sup>Reference category is "Simple assault"

<sup>2</sup>Reference category is "No injury"

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

Re-victimization prevalence is significantly related to a limited number of variables. If the victim was kidnapped or held hostage during the initial case, he/she is *less* likely to be victimized during the follow-up period. Victims who are female, who have more prior involvement with the police and who have been a domestic violence victim in the past are *more*

likely to be victimized in the future. However, being assigned to the DV Unit or having a DV Unit counselor does not significantly reduce the prevalence of repeat victimization.

Incidence: As with suspects' repeat offending, our coding scheme for tracking repeat victimization generally allowed a maximum of three future assaults to be recorded, although some victims may have had as many of five future assaults recorded. In our bivariate analysis (below), we treat the number of future assaults as a continuous measure. In the multivariate analysis that follows, we proceed more conservatively and treat the variable as an ordinal measure (either 0, 1 or 2+ future victimizations).

Among all victims in the sample, the DV Unit victims had an average of 0.54 future domestic violence victimizations during the follow-up window. The non-DV Unit victims experienced an average of 0.61 future domestic violence assaults. While encouraging, this lower rate of repeat victimization among DV Unit victims was not statistically significant ( $t=1.05$ ,  $p=0.29$ ). Among only those victims who were in fact re-victimized in the future, those who went through the DV Unit experienced a slightly higher rate of repeat victimization than those who did not (means=1.71 vs. 1.63, respectively). However, this difference was not statistically significant ( $t=-0.68$ ,  $p=0.49$ ).

We turn now to a multivariate model to predict repeat victimization incidence. This model contains the same predictive variables as in our model estimating re-victimization prevalence. In addition, we present the results for the entire sample and for only those victims who were re-victimized in the future. The findings are shown below.

**Table 20 Ordinal Regression Predicting Frequency of Future Domestic Violence Assaults on All Victims and on Only Those Who Were Subsequently Assaulted**

Variables	Model 1 Predicting 0, 1 or 2+ Assaults (N=704; All Victims)		Model 2 Predicting 1 or 2+ Assaults (N=231; Repeat Victims)	
	B	SE	B	SE
	Intercept (0 future offenses)	1.85***	0.53	--
Intercept (1 future offenses)	3.13***	0.54	3.35*	1.50
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>				
Intimidation	-0.86 <sup>†</sup>	0.36	-1.13	0.78
Aggravated assault	-0.37	0.36	-0.69	0.78
Rape	18.77***	0.91	-19.53	0.00
Other	-0.37	0.24	0.26	0.50
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>				
Threatened (non-gun)	0.50	0.38	-0.32	0.68
Gun threat	0.07	0.78	-0.35	1.76
Minor injuries	-0.01	0.24	0.13	0.46
Serious injuries	-0.24	0.60	0.71	1.31
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>				
Trespassing	0.52	0.66	1.81	1.52
Property damage	0.41	0.26	0.06	0.49
Larceny/Burglary	0.40	0.36	0.16	0.65
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>				
Nonverbal threats...	-0.51	0.39	1.13	0.83
Verbal threats	0.48 <sup>†</sup>	0.27	0.92 <sup>†</sup>	0.51
Pushing/Shoving...	0.34 <sup>†</sup>	0.19	0.20	0.36
Punching/Slapping...	0.03	0.21	-0.18	0.39
Open wound	0.72	0.53	-2.42*	1.20
Kidnapping/Hostage	-2.47*	1.08	-20.69	0.00

Hospital transport	0.23	0.38	1.49 <sup>†</sup>	0.81
Sexual assault/Rape	-19.006	0.00	--	--
<b>Victim Characteristics</b>				
Age	0.01	0.01	-0.03 <sup>†</sup>	0.12
Sex	-0.83**	0.29	-0.45	0.69
Non-white	0.21	0.19	0.69 <sup>†</sup>	0.38
Married	-0.41 <sup>†</sup>	0.25	0.43	0.71
Total prior police involvement	0.09**	0.03	-0.01	0.07
Prior DV victim	0.68***	0.19	0.96*	0.39
Romantically involved with suspect	-0.03	0.18	0.37	0.35
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>				
Victim reported assault	0.45	0.38	2.65*	1.27
Suspect arrested	0.16	0.18	0.12	0.34
Days in jail	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
DV Unit ( <i>d</i> )	-0.30	0.26	1.11*	0.50
DV Unit Counselor Assigned	-0.92	0.66	-3.28*	1.58
-2Log likelihood = 1203.96			-2Log likelihood = 254.084	
$\chi^2 = 1101.60^{***}$ , df = 31			$\chi^2 = 58.84^{**}$ , df = 30**	
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> = 0.17			Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> = 0.30	

<sup>1</sup>Reference category is “Simple assault”

<sup>2</sup>Reference category is “No injury”

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

Among all victims, the variable rape (highest NIBRS category) is positively and significantly related to repeat victimizations. Recall, however, that this model includes two multicollinear measures of rape, making their estimates unstable; one should view the rape findings cautiously. (In a separate model predicting repeat victimization incidence that excluded the rape measure from police narratives, the coefficient for the NIBRS rape variable became negative and not significant (B=-0.23, p=0.80).)

The remaining estimates in the model do not suffer from multicollinearity problems, and can therefore be interpreted more readily. The presence of kidnapping/hostage taking in the initial assault negatively predicts repeat victimizations, as does being a male victim. Victims with greater prior police involvement and who have been domestic violence victims in the past were significantly more likely to be re-victimized. Neither the DV Unit nor the presence of a DV Unit counselor was significantly related to repeat victimization, although the signs for these coefficients were negative, as predicted.

Among only those victims who were re-victimized, having an open wound in the initial assault was negatively related to repeat reporting of victimization. Victims who had experienced a prior domestic violence attack or who, themselves, reported the initial assault to the police were more likely to be report a re-victimization. Interestingly—and unexpectedly—DV Unit victims were more likely to be report being victimized again in the future. These results reveal an increase in reporting by DV Unit victims. To speculate, it is likely that the safety plan devised for these victims include signs for predicting violence and encouragement to call police early.

Severity: Severity of future attacks on victims was measured in the same manner as the severity of future assaults committed by suspects. That is, a rank-ordering of different levels of personal and non-personal harm was established. The severity rankings for repeat victimizations were the same as those used to measure harm inflicted by suspects who recidivated. Personal

Harm and Non-personal Harm Scores were computed as the average of these ranking across all future domestic violence victimizations. Higher scores reflect higher levels of harm.

Across all victims, the average future Personal Harm Score for DV Unit and patrol victims is 0.99 and 1.23, respectively. This difference is statistically significant ( $t=1.73$ , one-tailed  $p=.04$ ). The average Non-personal Harm Score for DV Unit and patrol suspects is 0.26 and 0.27, respectively. This difference is not statistically significant ( $t=0.17$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Among only those who were repeat victims, the average Personal Harm Score for DV Unit and patrol victims is 3.14 and 3.26, respectively. The average Non-personal Harm Score for DV Unit and patrol suspects is 0.83 and 0.72, respectively. Although DV Unit repeat victims experience less personal harm but more non-personal harm in their future assaults, none of these differences are statistically significant.

We next conducted a multivariate analysis in which we regressed these harm scores onto initial case severity/lethality, victim characteristics and criminal justice characteristics. We computed these results for the entire sample of victims and for only those who were re-victimimized. The findings for Personal Harm are shown below.

**Table 21 OLS Regression Predicting Average Personal Harm Severity of Future Domestic Violence Assaults on All Victims and on Only Those Who Were Subsequently Assaulted**

Variables	Model 1 (N=704; All Victims)		Model 2 (N=231; Repeat Victims)	
	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	0.67 <sup>†</sup>	0.39	4.39***	0.82
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>				
Intimidation	-0.57	0.36	-0.18	0.60
Aggravated assault	-0.21	0.29	-0.14	0.57
Rape	-0.18	1.00	--	--
Other	-0.28	0.18	-0.10	0.39
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>				
Threatened (non-gun)	0.08	0.30	-0.84	0.53
Gun threat	0.26	0.60	0.34	1.17
Minor injuries	0.14	0.20	-0.04	0.37
Serious injuries	0.16	0.48	1.31	0.88
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>				
Trespassing	0.17	0.58	-0.29	0.91
Property damage	-0.40	0.22	-0.20	0.39
Larceny/Burglary	0.24	0.31	0.29	0.51
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>				
Nonverbal threats...	-0.70*	0.31	-1.46*	0.61
Verbal threats	0.55*	0.23	0.67 <sup>†</sup>	0.40
Pushing/Shoving...	0.129	0.16	-0.22	0.29
Punching/Slapping...	0.70	0.18	0.30	0.31
Open wound	0.67	0.43	0.03	0.78
Kidnapping/Hostage	-0.95*	0.47	0.48	1.90
Hospital transport	-0.18	0.31	-0.31	0.59
Sexual assault/Rape	-0.52	0.75	-1.29	1.44
<b>Victim Characteristics</b>				
Age	0.00	0.01	-0.02 <sup>†</sup>	0.01
Sex	-0.54**	0.20	-0.10	0.47
Non-white	0.23	0.15	-0.46	0.29
Married	-0.36 <sup>†</sup>	0.19	-0.29	0.40
Total prior police involvement	0.10***	0.03	0.07	0.05
Prior DV victim	0.59***	0.16	0.58 <sup>†</sup>	0.32

Romantically involved with suspect	0.10	0.15	0.48 <sup>†</sup>	0.28
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>				
Victim reported assault	0.09	0.27	-0.54	.058
Suspect arrested	0.00	0.15	-0.39	0.28
Days in jail	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DV Unit ( <i>d</i> )	-0.46*	0.22	-0.39	0.39
DV Unit Counselor Assigned	-0.26	0.44	-0.83	1.15
	F (31, 672) = 3.08***		F (30, 200) = 1.36	
	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.12		R <sup>2</sup> = 0.17	

<sup>1</sup>Reference category is “Simple assault”

<sup>2</sup>Reference category is “No injury”

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

Among all victims, the factors that are associated with an increase in future personal harm include: verbal threats during the initial assault, the victim having greater prior involvement with the police, and the victim being a previous domestic violence victim. Factors associated with a decrease in future personal harm include: nonverbal threats during the initial assault, kidnapping/hostage taking during the initial assault, being a male victim, and being assigned to the DV Unit. Having a DV Unit counselor was also associated with lower personal harm in the future, although this finding was not significant.

Among only those victims who were re-victimized, only the presence of non-verbal threats was significantly (p<.05) related to future harm; yet, several other variables were significant at p<.10 (e.g., presence of verbal threats, prior domestic violence victim, etc). Being assigned to the DV Unit or having a DV Unit counselor was not significant at either level, however.

Few variables were able to predict the severity of non-personal harm, as shown below.

**Table 22 OLS Regression Predicting Average Non-Personal Harm Severity of Future Domestic Violence Assaults on All Victims and on Only Those Who Were Subsequently Assaulted**

Variables	Model 1 (N=704; All Victims)		Model 2 (N=231; Repeat Victims)	
	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	0.00	0.17	0.10	0.53
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>				
Intimidation	-0.24	0.16	-0.21	0.39
Aggravated assault	-0.19	0.12	-0.31	0.36
Rape	0.37	0.43	--	--
Other	-0.07	0.80	-0.19	0.25
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>				
Threatened (non-gun)	0.16	0.13	0.14	0.34
Gun threat	-0.18	0.26	-0.45	0.75
Minor injuries	0.00	0.08	-0.01	0.24
Serious injuries	0.11	0.21	0.19	0.57
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>				
Trespassing	0.18	0.25	0.35	0.59
Property damage	0.04	0.09	0.15	0.25
Larceny/Burglary	0.14	0.13	0.09	0.33
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>				
Nonverbal threats...	0.04	0.13	0.66 <sup>†</sup>	0.39
Verbal threats	0.03	0.10	-0.08	0.26
Pushing/Shoving...	0.07	0.07	0.13	0.19

Punching/Slapping...	-0.03	0.08	-0.10	0.20
Open wound	0.15	0.19	0.26	0.50
Kidnapping/Hostage	-0.19	0.20	1.24	1.22
Hospital transport	-0.04	0.13	-0.31	0.38
Sexual assault/Rape	-0.18	0.32	0.31	0.93
<b>Victim Characteristics</b>				
Age	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01
Sex	-0.13	0.09	-0.18	0.30
Non-white	0.11	0.07	0.41 *	0.19
Married	0.08	0.08	0.58 *	0.26
Total prior police involvement	0.01	0.01	-0.02	0.03
Prior DV victim	0.08	0.07	-0.10	0.21
Romantically involved with suspect	-0.12 <sup>†</sup>	0.06	-0.41 *	0.18
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>				
Victim reported assault	0.11	0.11	0.26	0.37
Suspect arrested	0.08	0.07	0.21	0.18
Days in jail	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DV Unit ( <i>d</i> )	0.01	0.09	0.14	0.25
DV Unit Counselor Assigned	-0.22	0.18	0.19	0.74
F (31, 672) = 1.25 R <sup>2</sup> = 0.06			F (30, 200) = 1.00 R <sup>2</sup> = 0.13	

<sup>1</sup>Reference category is "Simple assault"

<sup>2</sup>Reference category is "No injury"

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

For all victims, virtually none of the variables in the model predict non-personal harm in the future, and the model's R<sup>2</sup> is just 0.06. Among those who were re-victimized, being non-white and being married increases non-personal harm severity in the future, while having no romantic relationship with the offender decreases it. In either case, neither assignment to the DV Unit nor to a DV Unit counselor has a significant effect on future non-personal harm.

Collectively, these findings suggest that the DV Unit has an effect on lowering suspect recidivism (prevalence and incidence), and lowering the personal harm that victims experience in the future.

### Additional Factors

The data suggest that there is less likelihood of a subsequent domestic violence report being made if there is a spousal relationship, even if estranged. Our data are unable to explain this.

**Table 23 Victim Offender Relationship and Repeat Victimization**

<b>Victim/Offender Relationship</b>	<b>No Record</b>	<b>Record</b>	<b>Total</b>
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	43.0%	57.0%	100%
Estranged Boyfriend/Girlfriend	40.7%	59.3%	100%
Spouse	58.5%	41.5%	100%
Estranged Spouse	61.5%	38.5%	100%
Other	56.1%	43.9%	100%
Total	41.3%	58.7%	100%

X<sup>2</sup>=22.0, p<.001; phi=.158

However, 72.7% (N=245) of the victims involved in at least one future DV case are *involved with the same partner*. In addition, in the next case after the sample incident, 77 (22.8%) of the 338 victims reversed roles, that is, were recorded as victims in the incident in this study but listed as suspects in the next incident; 250 (74.0%) were victims again while in 3 instances the role in the subsequent incident was not clear and in 8 cases the original victim was only a witness to domestic violence.

- If the victim or offender is known by the police and/or the suspect has a record with the police, (based on the knowledge of the arresting officer as reported in narrative from the scene), a greater proportion of those cases will result in a future domestic violence record of response.

**Table 24 Victim Known to Police and Subsequent Record of a Domestic Violence Incident**

<b>Victim known to police</b>	<b>No Future Record</b>	<b>Future Record</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	75.0%	25.0%	100%
Yes	34.9%	65.1%	100%
Unknown	48.8%	51.2%	100%
Total	47.6%	52.4%	100%

$X^2=7.01, p<.03; \phi=.089$

**Table 25 Suspect Known to the Police and Subsequent Record of a Domestic Violence Incident**

<b>Offender known to police</b>	<b>No Future Record</b>	<b>Future Record</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	100%	0	100%
Yes	35.5%	64.5%	100%
Unknown	49.4%	50.6%	100%
Total	47.6%	52.4%	100%

$X^2=10.27, p<.006; \phi=.108$

In short, these data suggest that the best predictor of future DV incidents is the record of previous instances for both the victim and the suspect. 64.5% of suspects with prior officially known incidents of domestic violence have future incidents. 65.1% of victims with known prior incidents of domestic violence have future incidents. What is especially notable is that of the 320 victims with no prior incidents, none were in the records as having any future incidents.

## **Sequence of Subsequent Events**

This research included all cases of domestic violence regardless of offender or victim relationship. In this section, we are interested in the interaction between victims and suspects in the future course of their interactions.

When tracking both the victim and suspect we were interested in their role relationship and the extent to which the domestic violence behavior shifted roles between the same or different partners.

## Victim as Aggressor and Aggressor as Victim

Looking at the records of both victims and aggressors prior to and after the incident of record used for this research revealed a small but unique dynamic. Of course the caveat to be noted is that we only tracked cases for a specific window of time. Some victims have prior domestic violence records as suspects, and some suspects have prior records as victims. This is also true for future events: some suspects are later victims of domestic violence, and some victims are subsequently suspects.

Victims who were suspects in prior domestic violence incidents: 129 (14.5%)  
 Suspects who were victims in prior domestic violence incidents: 105 (11.8%)

NOTE: 51 (39.5% of victims with previous records as suspects and 46.6% of suspects with previous records as victims) are the same persons.

The DV Unit and patrol handle approximately the same proportion of those who have a history of switching roles.

Victims with prior domestic violence incidents recorded at least once *as suspects* (N=129)

- 67.8% of the first prior incident of DV was with the same partner
- 57.1% of the second prior incident of DV was with the same partner
- 60.0% of the third prior incident of DV was with the same partner

Suspects with prior domestic violence incidents recorded at least once *as victims* (N=105)

- 70.5% of the first prior incident of DV was with the same partner
- 72.2% of the second prior incident of DV was with the same partner
- 71.9% of the third prior incident of DV was with the same partner

We call this phenomenon role-reversal and the same situation occurs in future events as well. There are some suspects in our sample who are recorded in future events as victims (N=176, 19.8%), and some victims who are later seen as suspects in future incidents (N=159, 17.8%). The total number of individual persons in the total sample reversing future roles is 255 (28.6%).

This finding reaffirms the complexity of domestic violence cases and the difficulties police have in clearly identifying the aggressors.

**Table 26 Current Victim or Suspect by Future Role**

Role Reversal	Victim's Gender*		Suspect's Gender**	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Percent No (N=636)	73.7 (549)	59.3 (86)	55.6 (70)	74.1 (562)
Percent Yes (N=255)	26.3 (196)	40.7 (59)	44.4 (56)	25.9 (196)
	745	145	126	758

\*1 missing; \*\*7 missing

$X^2=12.28, p<.001$

$X^2=18.31, p<.000$

Looking at future victimization, based on the role played in the incident of record, male victims are more likely than female victims to have reverse roles and become suspects in the future while female suspects are more likely than male suspects to become victims in future incidents. 41% of male victims in our sample are suspects in the next subsequent incident while 26% of the female victims are subsequently reported as suspects. The proportions are nearly the reverse when the suspect is female, 44% subsequently become victims while only 26% of male suspects become victims in the next incident.

## ***Intervening Legal Actions***

A victim's initial contact with the criminal justice system is usually with the police. It is the next stage, the prosecutor's office that is responsible for pursuing any further criminal action against the defendant (e.g., charging, processing, convicting and sentencing). It is well known that the police are the gate-keepers for the justice system. It is the prosecutors, however, who control the doors to the courthouse; without their opening of the doors and prosecuting a case--the case does not proceed (Hartman & Belknap 2003). Regardless of whether a police officer or victim initiates the complaint, a prosecutor's decision not to file is virtually immune to review.

At the time of this research, 85% (N=756) of all cases had been cleared by the police, 59.4% (N=448) of them by arrest. The DV Unit has a higher rate of clearance but this is probably an artifact of having detectives assigned to each case they accept. If an arrest is not made at the scene, patrol is not likely to have the time or resources to follow through. For the DV Unit, only a third of the instances involved suspects arrested at the scene compared with over 50% for the patrol units. For the patrol units, 115 (17.1%) of the cases from 2003 were still open in 2005; 1.3% were considered to be unfounded. The DV Unit had only 4.1% of its cases still open at the time of the research.

Cases "Cleared by other means" requires (1) The suspect must be clearly identified through investigation; (2) The investigation has determined and documented enough information/probable cause to support an arrest; (3) There must be a specific and valid address for the suspect; and (4) There is a clear reason outside law enforcement actions that will preclude any arrest and prosecution of the suspect. We do not know what these are for the 43 cases in our study.

**Table 27: Police Disposition and Clearance**

	<b>Standard Police Unit</b>	<b>Specialized DV Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Dispositional Status***</b>			
% Cleared	81.5	95.9	85.0
(N)	(547)	(209)	(756)
% Open	17.1	4.1	13.9
(N)	(115)	(9)	(124)
% Unfounded	1.3	0.0	1.0
(N)	(9)	(0)	(9)
<b>Reason for Clearance***</b>			
% Cleared by Arrest of Suspect	53.7	73.7	59.3
(N)	(294)	(154)	(448)
% Cleared by Other Means	7.1	2.4	5.8

	(N)	(39)	(5)	(44)
	% Prosecution Declined	8.8	16.3	10.8
	(N)	(48)	(34)	(82)
	% Victim Declined to Prosecute	30.0	7.7	23.8
	(N)	(164)	(16)	(180)
	% Other	0.4	0.0	0.3
	(N)	(2)	(0)	(2)
On Scene arrest				
	%	54.4	33.1	47.1
	(N)	(160)	(51)	(211)

It is important to note that in Table 29 the DV Unit has a higher proportion of cases where the prosecutor declines to prosecute. This is a significant finding but is explained by legal procedures in North Carolina. If patrol officers make an arrest at the scene on probable cause, they do not need to seek a warrant and prosecution is initiated even if it may later be voluntarily dismissed at the court stage. For the DV Unit, two-thirds of their cases were “made” only after investigation and therefore required a warrant. Since the DV Unit takes more serious cases, more likely to be felonies, they must seek warrants through the prosecutor. The level of evidence required is greater and the amount of evidence, post-facto, is often more than when an officer sees any minor physical harm and arrests at the scene.

The DV Unit cases actually have more evidence than patrol cases, but the proportion of declined prosecution cases is twice as high. These data show, at least from the information recorded on the narrative police reports, that physical evidence is rarely collected. Photo evidence was noted on patrol cases in only 102 of the 671 cases (15.2%) and noted in 67 of 220 DV Unit cases (30.5%). Admissible medical evidence was noted for 7.7% of patrol cases while 34% of the DV Unit cases had medical evidence. Witness evidence was noted for 15.8% of patrol cases and 19.1% of DV Unit cases. None-the-less, of the DV Unit cases, 61.8% had some type of evidence compared with only 12.5% of the patrol cases declined by the prosecutor. One can only assume that the evidence did not meet the prosecution’s requirement to proceed with the case.

**Table 28 Prosecution Decision to Decline Prosecution, by Unit and Evidence**

	Declined Prosecution		Total
	With Evidence	Without Evidence	
Patrol	6 (12.5%)	42 (87.5%)	48
DV Unit	21 (61.8%)	13 (38.2%)	34

Attempts were made to track all arrested persons through the jail arrest processing files and through the court records. Data were available on 407 (90.8%) of the cases. The inability to track the remaining 81 cases was due to the incompatibility of police, Sheriff, and court computers where complaint numbers were incorrectly keyed-in one or another computer system.

The following charges were filed in the Mecklenburg County Domestic Violence Court (MCDVC). The MCDVC was established in January 1995 as a specialized domestic violence court. The MCDVC is one of four District Courts. Prosecutors received training on strategies for prosecuting cases when victims were uncooperative, and learned how to build a case when the primary evidence involved officer testimony, an “excited utterance,” or other circumstantial evidence. The creation of the specialized court led to a shift in guiding philosophies in which more of a “no tolerance” perspective was utilized. Prosecutors were more likely to encourage

prosecution, even if the victim requested to have the charges dropped. Thus, the decision to proceed with prosecution rests with the courts assessment of the merits and seriousness of the offense and not necessarily with the wishes of the victim.

When the court was created the District Attorney’s Office dedicated two prosecutors to be assigned to the courtroom at all times, with three judges on a rotational basis presiding over these cases. Today, there are currently still two dedicated prosecutors, while 12 judges rotate presiding over these cases.

### Most Serious Charge

Table 31 reports the most serious charge for those arrested. Over half of the cases were cleared by arrest (50.3%). The charge “assault on a female (AOF)” is somewhat unique for North Carolina and is filed instead of a domestic violence charge and is, unless identified as a felony, always a misdemeanor and recorded in NIBRS as simple assault. It is, however, treated by the court as more serious than simple assault. As can be seen from the table below, cases processed by the domestic violence unit, which we have found to handle the more serious cases, are as likely to charge AOF as the regular patrol units. Reaffirming that the DV Unit handles the more serious cases, assault with a deadly weapon is much more likely to be processed by the DV unit (16% of cases charged) than by the standard police unit (3%) and simple assault is charged by the DV Unit in 4% of the cases compared with 19% from patrol. The DV Unit is also more likely to charge for violation of a temporary protective order (8% vs. 4% respectively). It is of interest to note, however, that when the police report the most serious crime for official statistical purposes, they use simple assault since NIBRS does not code for assault on a female.

**Table 29 Most Serious Court Charge for Those Arrested\***

	<b>Standard Police Unit</b>	<b>Specialized DV Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
Most Serious Charge***			
% Assault on a Female	58.8	54.7	57.4
(N)	(171)	(81)	(252)
% Assault with a deadly weapon	3.4	16.2	7.7
(N)	(10)	(24)	(34)
% Simple Assault	19.2	4.1	14.1
(N)	(56)	(6)	(62)
% Property Crime	4.8	2.0	3.9
(N)	(14)	(3)	(17)
% Phone calls/ communicating threats	8.2	11.5	9.3
(N)	(24)	(17)	(41)
% Temporary Protective Order	4.1	8.1	5.5
(N)	(12)	(12)	(24)
% Other	1.4	2.0	1.6
(N)	(4)	(3)	(7)
	291	148	439

\* 448 were arrested but court records verifying charge were available for only 409

\*\*\* p<.000

## Final Disposition

Overall, of the cases that came to a final disposition, there was no statistically significant difference between the DV Unit and patrol. In other words, regardless of the actions and types of cases handled by the different units, when it comes to court and prosecution, the results are nearly the same. 59.9% of patrol cases are voluntarily dismissed by the prosecutor and 62.3% of the DV Unit cases are voluntarily dismissed. This occurs despite the fact that Charlotte has a specialized domestic violence court. Although rates of non-prosecution (e.g., voluntarily dismissed) vary, the national rates for domestic assault are consistently above the 60 percent mark (see Hartman & Blowers 2006; Hartman & Belknap 2003; Martin 1994; Mignon & Holmes 1995; and Quarm & Schwartz 1985). Thus, the rates for these cases being voluntarily dismissed are similar to the national average.

**Table 30 Disposition in Court for Those Arrested**

	<b>Standard Police Unit</b>	<b>Specialized DV Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
Court disposition			
% Voluntarily Dismissed	59.9	62.3	60.7
(N)	(176)	(96)	(272)
% Not guilty	2.4	0.0	1.6
(N)	(7)	(0)	(7)
% Guilty	37.8	37.7	37.7
(N)	(111)	(58)	(169)
	294	154	448

For those cases defined as cases of role reversal from the first previous case to the case in the sample, 64.5% of the patrol cases were voluntarily dismissed and 82.0% of the DV Unit cases were voluntarily dismissed.

## Jail Time

Arrestees are considered booked in the jail if they are given a classification status and are “dressed-out”, i.e. have their clothes and possession taken, given showers and searched and are assigned to a cell pod. This process could take place within a single 24 hour period and then they could be released. Those dressed-out and spending less than 24 hours would be considered to have zero jail days. However, some may bond-out before being technically “booked.”

Of all the individuals who were arrested, almost two-thirds of them (65.8%) spent some time in jail either pre or post-adjudication. Overall, the average for time in jail was 22 days, with the range going from 0 to 474 days. In comparing the two units, more than one-third of individuals from the standard police unit spent at least one day in jail (35%), versus just under one-fourth of the individuals from the DV Unit (21%). In contrast, of the individuals who spent more than 10 days in jail, 15% of those were in the DV Unit, compared to 10% of those assigned to patrol. DV Unit suspects spent nearly 4 times as many days in jail as the patrol unit suspects with an average of 40.6 days compared with 10.8 days for patrol unit suspects.

**Table 31 Jail Days Spent for Suspects Arrested**

	<b>Patrol</b> $\chi^2 = 10.8$	<b>DV Unit</b> $\chi^2 = 40.6$	<b>Total</b> $\chi^2 = 21.6$
Days in Jail***			
% zero days	10.1	9.2	9.8
(N)	(21)	(11)	(32)
% spent 1 day in jail	34.6	21.0	29.7
(N)	(72)	(25)	(97)
% spent 2 days in jail	22.1	14.3	19.3
(N)	(46)	(17)	(63)
% spent 3 to 10 days in jail	17.3	16.0	16.8
(N)	(36)	(19)	(55)
% spent more than 10 days in jail	10.1	14.4	24.5
(N)	(33)	(47)	(80)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>327</b>

\*\*\*p<.001; range was from 0-474 days.

Of those who were found guilty, there was a statistically significant difference between the average number of days spent in jail between the two groups at the .008 level. Specifically, those found guilty from patrol spent an average of 24.2 days in jail; those found guilty from the DV Unit spent an average of 67.5 days in jail.

### Probation Terms

To further determine what type of sentences were meted out, probation data were collected on those individuals who had a final disposition of guilty. While there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups, both groups reported high rates of probation terms. Specifically, well over four-fifths of both groups, 90% for patrol and 94% of the DV Unit, were given some type of probation term.

### Arrest and Recidivism

In considering one's original disposition, we explored how likely individuals were to have at least one recorded future domestic violence incident. Just over one-third of the entire arrested sample (36%) was likely to have at least one recorded domestic violence incident. Although other studies have used different follow-up periods, the prevalence rates in these studies are generally comparable (Sherman, Smith, Schmidt & Rogan 1992; Sherman, Schmidt & Rogan 1992). Of the cases voluntarily dismissed, 36.4% had at least one future domestic violence incident; if the defendant was found guilty, 37.3% had a future DV charge. Of note, there was no statistically significant difference in comparing between the units.

We ran a logistic regression analysis on all cases where the suspect was arrested to determine if prosecution had an impact on future prevalence of domestic violence charges against the suspect. The results, shown in Table 33, show that ultimately neither assignment to the DV Unit or whether the case was voluntarily dismissed or not played any significant role in future domestic violence incidents. The most predictive variables for future incidents remain being non-white, male and having previous domestic violence charges, and actions resulting in an open wound.

**Table 32 Logistic Regression Predicting Prevalence of (i.e., Any Future) Domestic Violence Offenses by Arrested Suspects (N=405)**

Variables	B	SE	Exp(B)
Intercept			
<b>Highest NIBRS Classification<sup>1</sup></b>			
Intimidation	0.41	0.65	1.5
Aggravated assault	-0.38	0.41	0.68
Rape	21.25	19786.99	1705858733.0
Other	0.25	0.39	1.29
<b>Victim Injury Level<sup>2</sup></b>			
Threatened (not gun related)	-0.10	0.55	0.90
Gun threat	.11	0.82	1.11
Minor injuries	.08	0.39	1.08
Serious injuries	-0.43	0.69	0.64
<b>Non-Personal Harm Types</b>			
Trespassing	0.67	0.93	1.97
Property damage	-0.20	0.33	0.81
Larceny/Burglary	0.14	0.49	1.15
<b>Personal Harm Types</b>			
Nonverbal threats/Telephone Hang-ups	-0.04	.54	0.95
Verbal threats	0.45	0.32	1.57
Pushing/Shoving/Pulling Hair	0.24	0.25	1.27
Punching/Slapping/Hitting/Bruising	0.11	0.30	1.12
Actions resulting in open wound	1.24*	0.56	3.48
Kidnapping/Hostage	-0.95	0.66	0.38
Actions resulting in hospital transport	0.07	0.40	1.07
Sexual assault/Rape	-20.63	19789.99	0.0
<b>Suspect Characteristics</b>			
Age	0.00	0.01	1.00
Male	0.78*	0.38	2.18
Non-white	0.50 <sup>†</sup>	0.26	1.65
Married	0.04	0.33	1.04
Total prior police involvement	0.03	0.03	1.04
Prior DV offender	0.76**	0.25	2.14
Romantically involved with victim	-0.15	0.23	0.86
<b>CJ Characteristics</b>			
Victim reported assault	0.73	0.47	2.07
Suspect's case dismissed	-0.43	0.99	0.64
Suspect found guilty	-0.43	1.00	0.65
Days in jail	-0.00	0.00	0.99
DV Unit	-0.39	0.28	0.67
-2Log likelihood = 488.78 $\chi^2 = 52.03^{**}$ df = 31 Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> = 0.16			

In considering one's original disposition, we explored how likely individuals were to have at least one recorded future domestic violence incident. Just over one-third of the entire arrested sample (36%) was likely to have at least one recorded domestic violence incident. Although other studies have used different follow-up periods, the prevalence rates in these studies are generally comparable (Sherman, Smith, Schmidt & Rogan 1992; Sherman, Schmidt

& Rogan 1992). Of the cases voluntarily dismissed, 36.4% had at least one future domestic violence incident; if the defendant was found guilty, 37.3% had a future DV charge. Of note, there was no statistically significant difference in comparing between the units.

## Recommendations

It is important to note, first that the CMPD administration supported this study because it recognized the need for change in their policies and procedures as they impacted domestic violence cases. Their changes, already in progress of revision, incorporate the findings from both the process and outcome evaluations. The current revisions include, as recommended, detailed responsibilities of patrol and their initial investigation.

Although these revisions emphasize the need for signed statements of victims, suspects, and witnesses and the importance of photographs of injuries, damaged property, weapons used, and the condition of the crime scene and confiscated items, some additional changes are recommended:

- The services provided by the unit – detective and counselor – need to be provided earlier in the cycle of violence rather than wait until a given level of lethality is reached.
- Patrol officers need to be trained and motivated to provide more detailed and accurate reports, and taught a clearer understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and criteria of lethality. They need to fully complete the domestic violence section of the field report so that the DV detectives and counselors have a more complete picture of the crime and the state of the victim.
- Each patrol division needs officers who are dedicated to working domestic violence cases. These officers would respond initially and be extensively trained to conduct thorough preliminary investigations and then would be responsible for follow-up of those cases that remain in their division.
- While the current revised policies have included pertinent and thorough information, to assist officers to determine the lethality of the suspect’s behavior, it needs to also include indications of kidnapping, which this study found to be a significant predictor of future violence.
- Criteria for assignment to the specialized unit should include:
  - Serious assaults requiring long-term medical treatment,
  - Domestic violence rapes,
  - Kidnappings,
  - Stalking,
  - Repeat violations of restraining orders,
  - Officer-involved cases and
  - Other cases that are complex in nature
- The safety plan approach within the DV Unit should be made more available to other domestic violence victims
- Domestic Violence Unit detectives and counselors need to be made aware of cases that reflect role reversal and to deal effectively with the dynamics of such situations. This means that prior record information and the roles played by each party need to be made available.
- Better coordination and communication needs to occur between the District Attorney’s Office and the police so that the evidence required for successful prosecution is routinely

collected and provided. The number of warrants issued and the number of prosecutions would be improved if:

- The current inclusion of mandatory notification of a supervisor if the officer believes dual arrests are required is retained
- Supplemental reports detailing circumstances in which an officer does not arrest a suspect on the scene if probable cause exists need to be filed
- Criteria for personally requesting a warrant from the Magistrate need to be clarified, and
- Investigation is needed into the significantly large number of voluntary dismissals by the DA's Office to determine ways the police can assist in decreasing this number or ways the court system and process needs to be altered to make defendants accountable. Officers need either more training in or increased sensitivity to evidence-based prosecution standards. The physical evidence required for post-incident arrests with a warrant is too often lacking and warrants are not being issued.
- **Reporting Data:** The continuous problem that was revealed during both the process and outcome evaluation was the need for more information. The number of cases lacking documented evidence for both units was very high and this clearly plays a role in the ability of the DV Unit to get warrants. The DV unit staff needs more information to assess the lethality of situation, the characteristics of the offender, and the victim/offender relationship. There is too much missing data in the official files.

More information is needed about the victim including possible substance use history and the emotional impact of events. Information on role reversal from previous instances can help in the decision tree for both police and prosecution. Without these data, accurate assessments about the cases cannot be made and a thorough investigation cannot be conducted. It is evident by the number of cases dismissed by the prosecutor's office for lack of probable cause that more information possibly could lead to more arrests by the DV Unit detectives. As noted earlier, the DV procedures that detail investigation by patrol should emphasize the importance of gathering information critical for prosecution and support to the victim. In addition, patrol officers need to be trained on techniques to gather more detail, accurate reports, clearer understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and criteria of lethality.

### **Domestic violence case referral:**

Since the report of the current study's findings, CMPD is in the process of changing its procedures in referring domestic violence cases to the DV Unit. Rather than the DV Sergeant reviewing all domestic violence cases and making the decision of which cases will be returned to patrol and which will remain with the DV Unit, the patrol division supervisors will be trained to select those cases for referral that meet the DV Unit criteria and will have a set of lethality questions. Waiting final approval, the questions include: history and escalation of violence, threats of homicide/suicide, threat and access to weapons, abuse of alcohol/drugs by either disputant, escalation of mental health problems, obsessive behavior/stalking, and/or threatened or actual separation by the victim.

This study has found that the DV Unit is selecting the more serious cases involving aggravated assault, cases with more serious injury to the victim and in which weapons are involved. Although injury to victims does not seem to be a predictor of future domestic violence

reports, victims who have been recorded in the police files as having previously been a victim of domestic violence are more likely to be assigned to the DV Unit. CMPD has incorporated in their lethality questions previous domestic violence. Also since assignment to the DV Unit appears to have a significant impact on the severity of future domestic violence injury, training patrol officers to detect escalation of violence in domestic violence cases known to them could be a useful determination.

A positive impact on future prevalence of domestic violence was found for assignment to the DV Unit. Regardless of court outcome, the unit attempts to provide both suspect and victim with coping resources and referrals. Therefore, in cases where there is re-victimization and/or re-offending, especially when there is an escalation of violence, referral to the DV Unit should be made. CMPD has included escalation of violence in their set of lethality questions for patrol.

### **Liaison Officers:**

The process evaluation discovered differences in the DV liaison officers among the patrol districts; however, these differences do not appear to influence reported re-offending or re-victimization. The need for consistent operation of DV liaison officers among the districts appears to be more of an organizational need rather than one that impacts the outcome of DV cases. The general theme is that domestic violence victims and the investigation of all the domestic violence cases are time-consuming. Each patrol division needs officers who are dedicated to working domestic violence cases. These officers would respond initially and be extensively trained to conduct thorough preliminary investigations and then would be responsible for follow-up of those cases that remain in their division. They would be in continual communications with the detectives and counselors of the DV unit so that critical information would be provided. In addition well-trained and equipped liaison officers on duty during each shift might reduce the need now felt for DV counselors to be on call or on duty 24 hours a day. In follow-up conversations with the DV Unit Sergeant, the DV liaison officers have become consistently more active among all the districts. A number of problem-oriented projects that have been submitted have dealt with domestic violence and primarily are addressed with more emphasis placed on the DV liaison officer's role. The DV Unit Sergeant noted that the most observable difference has been the improved, more complete reports by the patrol officers.

### **Volunteers:**

CMPD has found volunteers to be useful in a number of capacities, and domestic violence is one of those areas. Currently, inconsistent staffing that is restricted to the central office has hampered greatly their use. Perhaps not the first priority, but investing resources in careful selection and training of more domestic violence volunteers who are staffed consistently in the district offices, as well as the central office, would provide an important service to the restricted service now available to domestic violence.

## **Conclusion**

Law enforcement agencies for decades have recognized the overwhelming number of domestic violence calls they receive, most of the calls from repeat victims. In response, larger police and sheriff agencies have formed specialized units, often consisting of detectives and counselors/social workers. With goals of breaking cycles of family violence, it is recognized that

domestic violence cases require more than just effective investigation. The roles of these units include investigating serious domestic violence cases, interacting with service and treatment agencies to prevent further violence and to assist victims, training officers, victims and community members, and acting as a liaison for officers. Charlotte, like a number of other communities has tried to respond to the problem and the needs of victims by creating a specialized domestic violence unit.

This project evaluated the efficiency and effectiveness of a specialized domestic violence response unit in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and established a standardized and objective set of screening criteria to be used to assign cases to the specialized unit with the goal of decreasing future violence.

It is evident from our data that the unit is functioning as it is designed to function but the results are not as significant as one might have expected. What appears to be an important intervening variable is the impact of other parts of the system, prosecution and court, to follow-through. A police unit in and of itself cannot break the cycle of violence; it needs to be able to work in union with the rest of the criminal justice system to have its greatest impact.

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