Intimate Partner Homicide: Types of Cases & Risk Factors

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Multi City Intimate Partner Femicide Study
Funded by: NIDA/NIAA, NIMH, CDC, NIJ VAWA R01 DA/AA1156
TYPES of DV HOMICIDE – often not accurately counted (exception – Websdale ’99)

- Multiple homicides - Children killed at scene – usually with homicide-suicides – mother sometimes not killed – either lives through an attempt or somehow escapes but she is the primary target
- Other victims – woman’s parents, other family, friends – “in the way”
- Male partner kills ex-intimate’s new partner
- Male partner kills police officers as part of a DV incident
DV Related Homicides

- Female suicide subsequent to DV – known that DV increases risk of female suicide – unknown how many female suicides after DV
- Female homelessness, drug abuse deaths – after DV – known that DV increases risk for homelessness & drug abuse – known that these deaths occur – but number of deaths attributable unknown
PRIOR DV - #1 RISK FACTOR FOR INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE

- 40 - 50% OF US WOMEN KILLED BY HUSBAND, BF OR EX (vs. 5-8% of men)
- 40-50% of US femicides by an intimate partner or ex. (30% according to SHR but misclassifies many – Langford, ’98)
- 7th leading cause of premature death for women in US
- US – At least 2/3 of women killed – battered prior – if male killed – prior wife abuse in 75% of cases (Campbell, ‘92; Morocco et al, ‘98)
- More at risk when leaving or left (Wilson & Daly, ‘93; Campbell et. al. ‘01)
- Women far more likely to be victims of homicide-suicide (29% vs. .1% in US)
PERCENT OF U.S. MURDER VICTIMS KILLED BY INTIMATES ‘00 (SHR)
INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE BY PERPETRATOR IN TEN CITIES (N= 311)

- SPOUSE: 40.5%
- BOYFRIEND: 29.6%
- EX-SPOUSE: 8.0%
- EX-BF: 19.3%
- OTHER: 2.6%
Risk Factors for IP Homicide – male victim

- Prior DV of woman – 75% of cases
- Immediate self-defense – male first to show weapon, strike blow
- Estrangement – woman trying to leave an abusive relationship
Decline in Intimate Partner Homicide and Femicide

- Decline in male victimization in states where improved DV laws and services - resource availability (Browne & Williams ’89; ‘98)
- Exposure reduction - increased female earnings, lower marriage rate, higher divorce rate (Dugan, Nagin & Rosenfeld ‘97)
- Gun availability decline (Wilt ‘97; Block ‘95; Kellerman ‘93, ‘97- gun increases risk X3)
U.S. INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE RATES & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES 1976-9
(Resources per 50 million - Dugan, Nagin & Rosenfeld ‘03)
Number of Female Homicide Victims

- All Victims
- Victims of Intimate Violence
Intimate Partner Homicides, by Offender Relationship

- Spouse
- Ex-spouse
- Boy/girlfriend

Graph showing trends from 1976 to 2000.
INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE: WEAPON USE in U.S. ‘76-'95 (SHR)
Femicide Risk Study

**Purpose:** Identify and establish risk factors for IP femicide – (over and above domestic violence)

**Significance:** Determine strategies to prevent IP femicide – especially amongst battered women – Approximately half of victims (54% of actual femicides; 45% of attempteds) did not accurately perceive their risk – that perpetrator was capable of killing her &/or would kill her
RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE: RESEARCH TEAM
(Funded by: NIDA/NIAA, NIMH, CDC, NIJ VAWA R01 DA/AA1156)

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C. Sachs MD, MPH (UCLA)
P. Sharps, PhD, RN (GWU)
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S. Wilt, PhD (NYC DOH)
F. Gary, PhD, RN (UFl)
M.A. Curry PhD, RN (OHSU)
N. Glass, PhD, RN (OHSU)
J. Koziol-McLain, PhD, RN (JHU)
J. Schollengerber MPH (JHU)
A. Kellerman, MD, MPH (Emory)
X. Xu, MSN (JHU)
Kathryn Chouaf, MSN (JHU)
RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE: CITIES AND CO-INVESTIGATORS
(Funded by: NIDA/NIAA, NIMH, CDC, NIJ VAWA R01 DA/AA1156)

- Baltimore
- Chicago
- Houston
- Kansas City, KA&MO
- Los Angelos
- New York
- Portland, OR
- Seattle, WA
- Tampa/St. Pete

- P. Sharps (GWU)
- B. Block (ICJA)
- J. McFarlane (TWU)
- Y. Ulrich (UW)
- C. Sachs (UCLA)
- S. Wilt (NYDOH)
- M. A. Curry (OHSU)
- Y. Ulrich (UW)
- D. Campbell (FSU)
RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE: 11 CITIES
(Funded by: NIDA/NIAAA, NIMH, CDC, NIJ VAWA R01 DA/AA1156)
## Case Control Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASES</th>
<th>CONTROLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>women who are killed by their intimate partners</td>
<td>women who are physically abused by their intimate partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(second set of nonabused controls – for later analysis)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police Homicide Files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proxy informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Addition of Attempted Femicides

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<td><strong>CONTROLS</strong> - women who are physically abused by their intimate partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proxy informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASES</strong> - women who are <strong>ALMOST</strong> killed by their intimate partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women themselves – to address issue of validity of proxy information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Definition: Attempted Femicide

- GSW or SW to the head, neck or torso.
- Strangulation or near drowning with loss of consciousness.
- Severe injuries inflicted that easily could have led to death.
- GSW or SW to other body part with unambiguous intent to kill.
- If none of above, unambiguous intent to kill.
Recruitment of Attempted Femicides

- From police assault files – difficult to impossible in many jurisdictions
- From shelters, trauma hospital data bases, DA offices – attempted to contact consecutive cases wherever located – many victims move
- Failure to locate rates high – but refusals low (less than 10%)
- Telephone interviews – subsample of 30 in depth
- Safety protocols carefully followed
In Depth Interviews (N = 30) (Nicolaidis et. al. 2003, J of General Internal Medicine)

- Interviews conducted on phone or anywhere woman wished
- Baltimore, Houston, Kansas City, Portland, Tampa, & Wichita – approximately 15% from each city
- Age 17-34 – 40% African American, 40% Anglo, 20% Hispanic; across income categories
- 10 (67%) had history of escalating physical &/or sexual assault; 5 (17%) with minor violence and controlling behavior, 2 with controlling behavior only; 2 with NO history of violence OR controlling behavior – similar to larger study
In Depth Interviews (N = 30)

- Even so, 14 women (almost half) said they had NO clue how dangerous he was – but with DA, all but 3 could have been identified.
- 73% of cases – significant relationship change – majority – she was leaving him but in 4 cases he had left her but got enraged when she started seeing someone else or wouldn’t take him back when he changed his mind.
- About 30% – clearly at risk – she was scared & we would have been scared for her – about 55% could have been identified with skilled risk assessment – but 15% almost totally out of the blue.
PRIOR PHYSICAL ABUSE & STALKING EXPERIENCED ONR YEAR PRIOR TO FEMICIDE (N=311) & ATTEMPTED FEMICIDE (N=182)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Femicide</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior physical abuse</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased in frequency</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased in severity</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalked</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No prior physical abuse</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalked</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSED CONTROLS (N = 356)

- Random sample selected from same cities as femicide and attempted femicide cases
- Telephone survey conducted 11/98 - 9/99 using random digit dialing
- Women in household 18-50 years old & most recently celebrated a birthday
- Women abused (including sexual assault & threats) by an intimate partner w/in 2 years prior – modified CTS
- Safety protocols followed
Sample – (only those cases with prior physical abuse or threats)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Femicide Cases</strong></td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attempted Femicide Cases</strong></td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abused Controls</strong></td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sociodemographic comparisons

- Fem/Att. Perp: 36
- Abuse Perp: 31
- Fem/Att Victim: 34
- Abuse Victim: 29
### Danger Assessment Items Comparing Actual & Attempted Femicide Survivors (N=493) & Abused (Within Past 24 Months) Controls (N=427) (*p < .05*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Att/Actual</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence increased in frequency</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence increased in severity</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner tried to choke victim</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gun is present in the house</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner forced victim to have sex</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner used street drugs</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner threatened to kill victim</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim believes partner is capable of killing her</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator AD Military History (ns.)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking score</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VICTIM & PERPETRATOR OWNERSHIP OF WEAPON IN FEMICIDE (N = 311), ATTEMPTED FEMICIDE (N = 182), ABUSED CONTROL (N=427) & NON-ABUSED CONTROL (N=418) CASES

χ² = 125.6, P < .0001
DANGER ASSESSMENT ITEMS COMPARING ACTUAL & ATTEMPTED FEMICIDE SURVIVORS (N=493) & ABUSED (WITHIN PAST 24 MONTHS) CONTROLS (N=427) (*p < .05)

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Att/Actual</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner is drunk every day</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner controls all victim’s activities</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner beat victim while pregnant</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner is violently jealous of victim (says things like “If I can’t have you, no one can”)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim threatened/attempted to commit suicide</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner threatened/attempted to commit suicide</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner is violent toward victim’s children</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner is violent outside house</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner arrested for DV* (not criminality)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner hurt a pet on purpose</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nonsignificant Variables of note

- Hurting a pet on purpose - 10% of attempteds/actual victims vs. 8.5% of controls
  - BUT – a few clear cases of using cruelty to a pet as a symbolic threat to kill
  - WAS a risk for women to be abused (compared to nonabused controls)
  - AND more risk in attempted femicide sample – perhaps proxies not as knowledgeable about pets – warrants further investigation
- Perpetrator military history – 16% actual/attempteds vs. 22% of controls
Risk Models

- Femicides with abuse history only (violence & threats) compared to abused controls (*N=181 femicides; 319 abused controls – total = 500 (18-50 yo only)
- Missing variables
  - Variables had to be excluded from femicide model due to missing responses – if don’t know – no – therefore underestimate risk
- Logistic Regression Plan – comparing cases & controls
  - Model variable in blocks – background characteristics – individual & couple, general violence related variables, violent relationship characteristics – then incident level
  - Interaction terms entered – theoretically derived
Significant (p<.05) Variables (Entered into Blocks) before Incident (overall fit = 85% correct classification)

- Perpetrator unemployed  OR = 4.4
- Perpetrator gun access  OR = 5.4
- Perpetrator Stepchild  OR = 2.4
- Couple Never Lived Together  OR = 0.34
- Highly controlling perpetrator  OR = 2.1
- Estranged X Low control (interaction)  OR = 3.6
- Estranged X Control (interaction)  OR = 5.5
- Threatened to kill her  OR = 3.2
- Threatened w/weapon prior  OR = 3.8
- Forced sex  OR = 1.9
- Prior Arrest for DV  OR = 0.34
Significant (p<.05) Variables at Incident Level

- Perpetrator unemployed: OR = 4.4
- Perpetrator Stepchild: OR = 2.4
- Couple Never Lived Together: OR = 0.31
- Threatened w/weapon prior: OR = 4.1
- Highly controlling perpetrator: OR = 2.4
- Estranged X Low control (interaction): OR = 3.1
- Estranged X Control (interaction): OR = 3.4
- Perpetrator Used Gun: OR = 24.4
- Prior Arrest for DV: OR = 0.31
- Trigger - Victim Leaving (33%): OR = 4.1
- Trigger – Jealousy/she has new relationship: OR = 4.9
Femicide – Suicide Cases (32% of femicide cases in study – 29% US)

- Significant explanatory power for same femicide – suicide risk factors.
  - Partner access to gun
  - Threats with a weapon
  - Step child in the home
  - Estrangement

- Unique to femicide – suicide:
  - Partner suicide threats – history of poor mental health
  - Married
  - Somewhat higher education levels (unemployment still a risk factor), more likely to be white
  - May have been treated as a “mercy killing” but her family may not agree
Conclusions – Advice for DoD Fatality Reviews

- Vital to get information from family members of victims – sisters, brothers, best friends, parents – most knowledgeable about circumstances – otherwise will miss true dynamics
  - Family members want to contribute to process
  - DV vastly underreported in military – even more than civilian
- May be an active duty military female – civilian or retired military perpetrator (Campbell et. al. ’02) – 21.6% prevalence of DV during service for active duty military women
- More sources of information the better
Conclusions – More Advice for DoD Fatality Reviews

- Be careful to remember that cases that close quickly are often homicide-suicides – those are not the only dynamics – keep track of other cases not closed yet
- Importance of comparisons – e.g. issue of deployment – will look common but most couples with deployment don’t kill
- Importance of own biases – knowledge you bring is valuable but also can be misleading
- Getting cases – review newspapers close to major bases – use state DV Coalitions & Cities & States with Fatality Reviews
Implications for Policy & Safety Planning

- Clinical assessment (psychiatry, psychology) needs specific DV training
- Batterer intervention - she needs to stay gone until he completes & his attendance monitored
- Employment issues – especially for African American men
- Protective order for stalking - or use stalking laws
- Issues with various “risk” lists included in safety planning
- Importance of getting the gun’s out – Brady Bill – in Military – Lautenberg Amendment
Implications for Policy & Safety Planning

- Engage women’s mothering concerns & skills (Henderson & Erikson ’97 ‘93; Humphreys ‘93; Sullivan et. al.’00)
- If she says she’s going to leave, cannot leave face to face
- Importance of forced sex & stepchild variables – not on most risk assessment instruments
- Make sure she knows entire range of shelter services
- Be alert for depressed/suicidal batterer
- Batterer intervention programs working with partners
“He Killed My Mommy” – kids in the homes
59% of Actual Femicides; 74% of Attempteds

- 32% Witnessed Femicide; 58% Witnessed Attempts
- 43% & 37% Found Mother
- Received Counseling
  - 60% - all children of actuals; only 28% of attempteds
  - 56% & 40% of children who witnessed femicide & attempts
  - 57% & 54% of children who found the body

- 71% & 76% of mothers abused
- 22% & 27% threats to take children if she left
- 20% & 13% threats to harm children if she left
- 8% fathers reported for child abuse – both actuals & attempteds
Summary Victim & Perpetrator Alcohol Use

- Problem Drinker
- >4 per wk
- 7+/episode 5-7 for women

- Femicide Victim
- Fem. Perpetrator
- Abuse Victim
- Abuse Perpetrator
- Non abused
- Non abused partner
Final Results of Substance Abuse Multiple Logistic Regression (controlling for demographic differences)

- Perpetrator problem drinking increased risk of IPV (OR = 6.6 p = .001) & femicide/attempted femicide (OR = 2.01, p = .014)
- Both frequency of drinking & drinking >5 drinks per episode increased risk of abuse (OR=3.08 p = .001; 3.53 p = .004).
- Perpetrator problem drinking & frequency (not binge) increased risk for femicide/attempted femicide (OR = 2.01, p = .004 & OR = 2.08, p = .039) vs. Abused Controls
- But not as strong as other risk factors in multivariate analysis
- Adjusted relative risk - controlling for demographics - all victim associations disappear
Use of Alcohol &/or Drugs - Time of (n=456)
Homicide/Attempt or Worst Abuse (n=427)
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES:
ATTEMPTED & ACTUAL VICTIMS SEEN IN SYSTEM ONE YEAR PRIOR TO INCIDENT

- 47% went to a medical care provider for physical/injuries
  - 35% of them went to ED
- 25% went to mental health professional
- Called police - 29% overall - 38% of abused
- Called or went to a shelter - 4% overall
- Alcohol or Drug Treatment - 7% overall
  - 24% of alcohol abuse had alcohol treatment
  - 18% of those with drug abuse problems had drug treatment
ATTEMPTED & ACTUAL VICTIMS SEEN IN SYSTEM

- Called Police
- Called/Stayed Shelter
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Drug/Alc Tx

Abuse
No Abuse
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES:
ACTUAL & ATTEMPTED PERPETRATORS

Characteristics of Perpetrators:

- More abusive perpetrators described with poor mental health
  - Abusive = 38%
  - Non Abusive = 30%

- However, significantly more non-abusive perpetrators saw MH professionals (p=0.001)
  - Abusive = 15%
  - Non Abusive = 37%
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: PERPETRATORS

- Alc. Ab.
- Drug Use
- Alc/Drug Tx
- Prior Arrest
- Child Ab.
- Physical/mental care

- Abusive
- Non Abusive
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES:
PREVENTION - 83% of Cases

VICTIMS
- Police Contacts - 66% of stalked & battered women
- Any Medical Visit - 56% (27% ED visits only)
- Shelter Contacts - 4% of battered women
- Substance abuse Tx - 6%

PERPETRATORS
- Prior Arrest - 56% of batterers (32% of non)
- Mental Health System - 12%
- Substance Abuse Tx - 6%
- Child Abuse - 11% of batterers; 6% of non
Never forget who it’s for -

“please don’t let her death be for nothing – please get her story told”

(one of the Moms)