

# **GENERAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS PACKET**

**Using Statistics and Evaluating Research**

**An Information Packet**  
developed by  
**National Resource Center on Domestic Violence**

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## **Attachments**

- *Evaluating Violence Against Women Research Reports* by **Sandra K. Beeman** for the Applied Research Forum of the National Electronic Network on Violence Against Women (VAWnet).
- *Incidence Rates of Violence Against Women: A Comparison of the Redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey and the 1985 National Family Violence Survey* by **Ronet Bachman** for the VAWnet Applied Research Forum.
- *Measuring the Extent of Woman Abuse in Intimate Heterosexual Relationships: A Critique of the Conflict Tactics Scales* by **Walter DeKeseredy and Martin Schwartz** for the VAWnet Applied Research Forum.

# PACKET OVERVIEW

Statistics, when presented accurately, can be useful tools for domestic violence advocacy and activism: they can be used to mount convincing campaigns for systems and community-wide change; they can offer evidence that informs and supports efforts to educate the public about the extent of domestic violence within a community; they can reveal the number of victims of domestic violence impacted by policy, funding, and other systemic decisions; they can illustrate and underscore the need for services when writing proposals and reports to funders; and the information they convey can strengthen and support information presented in newsletters, brochures, and presentations.

Given the quantity, quality, and intent of statistics available, it is sometimes difficult to identify which ones are appropriate to use and how best to present them. In order to select current statistics to convey accurate information, one must report and apply the statistics selected in the way they were intended.

Although there is a high demand for statistics that claim to illustrate the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence in terms of battery occurring every few seconds or to a certain percentage of all women, most of these statistics are unsubstantiated by credible research. For this packet, the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRC) has chosen to include only statistics derived from credible research and for which a complete citation is available. Statistics were taken from government-sponsored research on intimate partner violence in the United States and pertain only to incidences of physical violence. Information was retrieved from the following four data sets:

- ***Uniform Crime Reporting System (UCRS)***, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Justice;
- ***National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAW)***, National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC);
- ***National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)***, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Department of Justice; and
- ***National Family Violence Survey (NFVS)***, Academic research project coordinated by R. Gelles, Ph.D and M. Strauss, Ph.D. Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH.

For information on locating studies conducted by universities, private researchers and research centers, see the website resource list beginning on page 26. Please contact the National Resource Center for additional statistical information on:

- ❖ *Batterer Intervention*
- ❖ *Children*
- ❖ *Communities of Color*
- ❖ *Dating Violence*
- ❖ *Elder Abuse*
- ❖ *Emotional Abuse*
- ❖ *Financial Abuse*
- ❖ *Housing/ Homelessness*
- ❖ *Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual/Trans Communities*
- ❖ *Male Victims*
- ❖ *Separation Violence*
- ❖ *Stalking*
- ❖ *Substance Abuse*
- ❖ *Workplace Violence*

## **SELECTING STATISTICS**

The quality of statistics is only as good as the quality of the process used to collect them. While there are standards guiding research practice, methodology, participant selection, and/or data collection, methods are not always consistent, clear, or appropriate. In addition, the methodology, participants, researchers, and data collection methods may not reflect or be inclusive of a diverse population. Therefore, conclusions drawn from any set of statistics should be framed within the context of these limitations.

In addition,

- The original source is the best source for statistics. Statistics are often incorrectly credited to secondary sources, such as court testimonies or newspaper articles, rather than to the researcher who conducted the study. To reduce the chance of perpetuating misapplied or inaccurately cited data use only the original study and cite it fully in the reference.
- If there is uncertainty as to the origins of the statistic, it is best not to use it. If the statistic appears unclear, incomplete, or contradictory, consult the source for clarification before using the statistic.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK**

When reviewing a data set or research study, the following questions can be helpful in ascertaining the credibility of the research and the extent to which the information truly represents the population it claims. (This list is not exhaustive.)

**● STUDY PURPOSES AND PARAMETERS**

- Is the purpose of the study clear and well defined?
  
- Does the study have a broad definition of domestic violence that includes emotional, economic, sexual and physical abuse, or does the study explore a specific type of incident, such as physical abuse that resulted in medical treatment?
  
- Is the study local, statewide, regional, national or multinational in scope?

**● TIMEFRAME**

- What is the time span covered by the study?
  
- Are findings based on subjects' current relationships only or do findings include past relationships?
  
- When was the data collected?

**● METHOD**

- How was the data collected and analyzed?
  
- What type of data was collected for the study? Is the study based on quantitative data or qualitative interviews? Quantitative methods simply try to quantify information numerically, e.g., number of items, events, times of day, etc. This type of data often comes from police or hospital reports, surveys, etc. It can then be further refined through rating, averaging, or other numerical manipulations to provide additional information, trends, etc. to the researcher. Qualitative research is typically more open-ended, such as in-person interviews with study participants that allow them to report freely on an event or idea. Answers to qualitative questions can be coded or analyzed for trends, unique situations or commonalities and generally result in an interpretation of the information. (For a thorough discussion on quantitative versus qualitative research, see the attached report *Evaluating Violence Against Women Research Reports* by Sarah Beeman.)

- ***SAMPLE (SUBJECTS OF THE STUDY)***
  - Who are the study participants?
  - Are individuals from underserved populations represented in the study?
  - How are participants selected?
  - How many people are represented in the sample study, i.e., is it truly a representative sample?
  - Is the study based on a random sampling or is the sample of a specific population?
  
- ***RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING/ OTHER STATISTICS***
  - Does the data support or contradict other studies done on the same topic?
  - Does the data expand on frequently cited statistics or conventional wisdom?
  
- ***RESULTS***
  - Are study results fully and accurately disclosed?
  - Do the results corroborate the study methodology and participant responses?
  
- ***CONCLUSIONS/ DISCUSSION***
  - Are conclusions logical and complete?
  - Are the study limitations incorporated?
  - What are the future research needs?

## GENERAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS

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### Prevalence of Intimate Partner Non-lethal Violence

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- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that violence against women is primarily intimate partner violence: 64.0 percent of the women who reported being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked since age 18 were victimized by a current or former husband, cohabiting partner, boyfriend, or date. In comparison, only 16.2 percent of the men who reported being raped and/or physically assaulted since age 18 were victimized by such a perpetrator. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. (Publication #NCJ83781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that women experience more intimate partner violence than do men: 22.1 percent of surveyed women, compared with 7.4 percent of surveyed men, reported they were physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, or date in their lifetime; 1.3 percent of surveyed women and 0.9 percent of surveyed men reported experiencing such violence in the previous 12 months. Approximately 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. (Publication #NCJ83781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that intimate partner violence is pervasive in U.S. society. Nearly 25 percent of surveyed women and 7.5 percent of surveyed men said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time in their lifetime; 1.5 percent of surveyed women and 0.9 percent of surveyed men said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a partner in the previous 12 months. According to these estimates, approximately 1.5 million women and 834,732 men are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States. Because many victims are victimized more than once, the number of intimate partner victimizations exceeds the number of intimate partner victims annually. Thus, approximately 4.9 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults are perpetrated against U.S. women annually, and approximately 2.9 million intimate partner physical assaults are committed against U.S. men annually. [Tjaden, P., & Thonnes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence*

*against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]

- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey found that women are significantly more likely than men to report being victims of intimate partner violence whether it is rape, physical assault, or stalking and whether the timeframe is the person's lifetime or the previous 12 months. These findings support data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey, which consistently show women are at significantly greater risk of intimate partner violence than are men. However, they contradict data from the National Family Violence Survey, which consistently show men and women are equally likely to be physically assaulted by an intimate partner. [Tjaden, P., & Thonnes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that the number of female victims of intimate violence declined from 1993 to 1998. In 1998 women experienced about 900,000 violent offenses at the hands of an intimate, down from 1.1 million in 1993. [Rennison, C.M. (May 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>]
  
- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that the number of female victims of intimate violence has been declining. In 1996 women experienced an estimated 840,000 rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault victimizations at the hands of an intimate, down from 1.1 million in 1993. [Chaiken, J. (March 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that intimate violence against men did not vary significantly from 1992 to 1996. In 1996 men were victims of about 150,000 violent crimes committed by an intimate. [Chaiken, J.

(March 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

- ❖ Research from the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that in 1998 women experienced an estimated 876,340 rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault victimizations at the hands of an intimate, down from 1.1 million in 1993. [Henneburg, M. (August, 2000). *Bureau of justice statistics: At a glance*. (Publication #NCJ183014). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Research from the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that between 1976 and 1998, the number of male victims of intimate partner homicide fell an average 4 percent per year and the number of female victims fell an average 1 percent. [Henneburg, M. (August, 2000). *Bureau of justice statistics: At a glance*. (Publication #NCJ183014). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Research from the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that intimate violence is primarily a crime against women. In 1998 females were 75 percent of the victims of intimate murders and about 85 percent of the victims of nonlethal intimate violence. [Henneburg, M. (August, 2000). *Bureau of justice statistics: At a glance*. (Publication #NCJ183014). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that from 1992-1998 while a majority of males who were injured from violence reported that the offender was a stranger (56 percent), a far smaller percentage of injured females were victimized by a stranger (24 percent). Females who were injured in a violent crime were more likely to have been victimized by an intimate (37 percent) than by a stranger. The opposite is true for injured males (only 4 percent of the injuries were perpetrated by an intimate). [Simon, T., Mercy, J., & Perkins, C. (June 2001). *Injuries from violent crime, 1992-1998*. (NCJ 168633). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that from 1993-1999 women accounted for 85 percent of the victims from among the more than 790,000 victims of intimate violence in 1999. [Rennison, C.M. (October,

2001). *Intimate partner violence and age of victim, 1993-1999*. (Publication #NCJ187635). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that physical assault is widespread among adults in the United States: 51.9 percent of surveyed women and 66.4 percent of surveyed men said they were physically assaulted as a child by an adult caretaker and/or as an adult by any type of attacker. An estimated 1.9 million women and 3.2 million men are physically assaulted annually in the United States. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. (Publication #NCJ83781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

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### Communities of Color

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- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that American Indian/Alaska Native women and men report more violent victimization than do women and men of other racial backgrounds. American Indian/Alaska Native women were significantly more likely than white women, African-American women or mixed-race women to report they were raped. They also were significantly more likely than white women or African-American women to report they were stalked. American Indian/Alaska Native men were significantly more likely than Asian men to report they were physically assaulted. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. (Publication #NCJ83781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that rates of intimate partner violence vary significantly among women and men of diverse racial backgrounds. The survey found that Asian/Pacific Islander women and men tend to report lower rates of intimate partner violence than do women and men from other minority backgrounds, and African-American and American Indian/Alaska Native women and men report higher rates. However, differences among minority groups diminish when other sociodemographic and relationship variables are controlled. More research is needed to determine how much of the difference in intimate partner prevalence rates among women and men of different racial and ethnic backgrounds can be explained by the respondent's willingness to disclose intimate partner violence and how much by social, demographic, and environmental factors. Research is also needed to determine how prevalence rates vary among women and men of diverse American

Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander groups. [Tjaden, P., & Thonnes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]

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## Stalking

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- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that stalking by intimates is more prevalent than previously thought. Almost 5 percent of surveyed women and 0.6 percent of surveyed men reported being stalked by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time in their lifetime; 0.5 percent of surveyed women and 0.2 percent of surveyed men reported being stalked by such a partner in the previous 12 months. According to these estimates, 503,485 women and 185,496 men are stalked by an intimate partner annually in the United States. These estimates exceed previous nonscientific "guesstimates" of stalking prevalence in the general population. [Tjaden, P., & Thonnes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]
  
- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that though stalking is a gender-neutral crime, women are the primary victims of stalking and men are the primary perpetrators. Seventy-eight percent of the stalking victims identified by the survey were women, and 22 percent were men. Thus, four out of five stalking victims are women. By comparison, 94 percent of the stalkers identified by female victims and 60 percent of the stalkers identified by male victims were male. Overall, 87 percent of the stalkers identified by victims were male. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (April, 1998). *Stalking in America: Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers from Disease Control. Available from <http://www.ncjrs.org> ]
  
- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that young adults are also the primary targets of stalkers. Fifty-two percent of stalking victims were 18-29 years old and 22 percent were 30-39 years old when the stalking started. On average, victims were 28 years old when the stalking started. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (April, 1998). *Stalking in America: Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department

of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers from Disease Control.  
Available from <http://www.ncjrs.org> ]

- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey confirm previous reports stating that most victims know their stalker. Only 23 percent of female stalking victims and 36 percent of male stalking victims were stalked by strangers. The survey also shows that women tend to be stalked by intimate partners, defined as current or former spouses, current or former cohabitants (of the same or opposite sex), or current or former boyfriends or girlfriends. Thirty-eight percent of female stalking victims were stalked by current or former husbands, 10 percent by current or former cohabiting partners, and 14 percent by current or former dates or boyfriends. Overall, 59 percent of female victims, compared with 30 percent of male victims, were stalked by some type of intimate partner. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (April, 1998). *Stalking in America: Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers from Disease Control. Available from <http://www.ncjrs.org> ]
  
- ❖ The National Violence Against Women Survey asked women who had been stalked by former husbands or partners when in the relationship the stalking occurred. Twenty-one percent of these victims said the stalking occurred before the relationship ended, 43 percent said it occurred after the relationship ended, and 36 percent said it occurred both before and after the relationship ended. Thus, contrary to popular opinion, women are often stalked by intimate partners while the relationship is still intact. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (April, 1998). *Stalking in America: Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers from Disease Control. Available from <http://www.ncjrs.org> ]
  
- ❖ The National Violence Against Women survey found that men tend to be stalked by strangers and acquaintances, 90 percent of whom are male. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (April, 1998). *Stalking in America: Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers from Disease Control. Available from <http://www.ncjrs.org> ]
  
- ❖ Data from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that although men tend to be stalked by strangers and acquaintances, women are at significantly greater risk of being stalked by strangers and acquaintances than are men. A comparison of stalking prevalence among women and men by victim-offender relationship shows that 1.8 percent of all U.S. women, compared with 0.8 percent of all U.S. men, have been stalked by strangers; and 1.6 percent of all U.S.

women, compared with 0.8 percent of all U.S. men, have been stalked by acquaintances. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (April, 1998). *Stalking in America: Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control. Available from <http://www.ncjrs.org> ]

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### Emotional Abuse

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- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that violence perpetrated against women by intimates is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior. The survey found that women whose partners were jealous, controlling, or verbally abusive were significantly more likely to report being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked by their partners, even when other sociodemographic and relationship characteristics were controlled. Indeed, having a verbally abusive partner was the variable most likely to predict that a woman would be victimized by an intimate partner. These findings support the theory that violence perpetrated against women by intimates is often part of a systematic pattern of dominance and control. [Tjaden, P., & Thonnes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]

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### Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Trans

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- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that women living with female intimate partners experience less intimate partner violence than women living with male intimate partners. Slightly more than 11 percent of the women who had lived with a woman as part of a couple reported being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked by a female cohabitant, but 21.7 percent of the women who had married or lived with a man as part of a couple reported such violence by a husband or male cohabitant. These findings suggest that lesbian couples experience less intimate partner violence than do heterosexual couples; however, more research is needed to support or refute this conclusion. [Tjaden, P., & Thonnes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]

- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that men living with male intimate partners experience more intimate partner violence than do men who live with female intimate partners. Approximately 23 percent of the men who had lived with a man as a couple reported being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked by a male cohabitant, while 7.4 percent of the men who had married or lived with a woman as a couple reported such violence by a wife or female cohabitant. These findings provide further evidence that intimate partner violence is perpetrated primarily by men, whether against male or female intimates. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]

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### Child Victimization and Adult Domestic Violence

- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that there is a relationship between victimization as a minor and subsequent victimization: Women who reported they were raped before age 18 were twice as likely to report being raped as an adult. Women who reported they were physically assaulted as a child by an adult caretaker were twice as likely to report being physically assaulted as an adult. Women who reported they were stalked before age 18 were seven times more likely to report being stalked as an adult. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. (Publication #NCJ83781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

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### Reported Physical Injuries

- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that women are significantly more likely than men to be injured during an assault: 31.5 percent of female rape victims, compared with 16.1 percent of male rape victims, reported being injured during their most recent rape; 39.0 percent of female physical assault victims, compared with 24.8 percent of male physical assault victims, reported being injured during their most recent physical assault. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. (Publication #NCJ83781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that the risk of injury increases among female rape and physical assault victims when their assailant is a current or former intimate: Women who were raped or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend, or date were significantly more likely than women who were raped or physically assaulted by other types of perpetrators to report being injured during their most recent rape or physical assault. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. (Publication #NCJ83781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that approximately one-third of injured female rape and physical assault victims receive medical treatment: 35.6 percent of the women injured during their most recent rape and 30.2 percent of the women injured during their most recent physical assault received medical treatment. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women*. (Publication #NCJ83781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that women experience more chronic and injurious physical assaults at the hands of intimate partners than do men. The survey found that women who were physically assaulted by an intimate partner averaged 6.9 physical assaults by the same partner, but men averaged 4.4 assaults. The survey also found that 41.5 percent of the women who were physically assaulted by an intimate partner were injured during their most recent assault, compared with 19.9 percent of the men. These findings suggest that research aimed at understanding and preventing intimate partner violence against women should be stressed. [Tjaden, P., & Thonnes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]
  
- ❖ Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that half of female victims of intimate partner violence reported a physical injury. About 4 in 10 of these victims sought professional medical treatment. [Rennison, C.M. (May, 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

- ❖ Data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that from 1992-1998 a higher percentage of violent crimes involved injury when committed by an intimate partner (48%) or a family member (32%) than when committed by a stranger. [ Simon, T., Mercy, J., & Perkins, C. (June, 2001) *Injuries from violent crime, 1992-1998*. (Publication #NCJ168633). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs) ]

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### Treatment For Injuries

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- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women survey indicate that the U.S. medical community treats millions of intimate partner rapes and physical assaults annually. Of the estimated 4.9 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults perpetrated against women annually, approximately 2 million will result in an injury to the victim, and 570,457 will result in some type of medical treatment to the victim. Of the estimated 2.9 million intimate partner physical assaults perpetrated against men annually, 581,391 will result in an injury to the victim, and 124,999 will result in some type of medical treatment to the victim. Because many medically treated victims receive multiple forms of care (e.g., ambulance services, emergency room care, or physical therapy) and multiple treatments (e.g., several days in the hospital) for the same victimization, medical personnel in the United States treat millions of intimate partner victimizations annually. To better meet the needs of intimate partner violence victims, it is suggested that medical professionals receive training on the physical consequences of intimate partner violence and appropriate medical intervention strategies. [Tjaden, P., & Thonnes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]
- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that about 1 in 10 women victimized by a violent intimate sought professional medical treatment. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that about half of

victims of intimate violence report a physical injury; about 1 in 5 injured female victims of intimate violence sought professional medical treatment. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that hospital emergency department data show women are about 84 percent of those seeking hospital treatment for an intentional injury caused by an intimate assailant. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>]

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### Reporting To Police

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- ❖ Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that most intimate partner victimizations are not reported to the police. Only approximately one-fifth of all rapes, one-quarter of all physical assaults, and one-half of all stalkings perpetrated against female respondents by intimates were reported to the police. Even fewer rapes, physical assaults, and stalkings perpetrated against male respondents by intimates were reported. The majority of victims who did not report their victimization to the police thought the police would not or could not do anything on their behalf. These findings suggest that most victims of intimate partner violence do not consider the justice system an appropriate vehicle for resolving conflicts with intimates. [Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – Findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij> ]
- ❖ Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that about half the intimate partner violence against women that occurred between 1993-1998 was reported to the police; black women were more likely than other women to report such violence. [Rennison, C.M. (May, 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that about half of the incidents of intimate violence experienced by women are reported to the police; black women are more likely than women of other races to report such victimizations to the police. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Results from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that the most common reasons given by victims for not contacting the police were that they considered the incident a private or personal matter, they feared retaliation, or they felt the police would not be able to do anything about the incident. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

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### Homicide

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- ❖ Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that intimate partners committed fewer murders in each of the 3 years —1996, 1997, 1998 — than in any other year since 1976. [Rennison, C.M. (May, 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that between 1976 and 1998, the number of male victims of intimate partner homicide fell an average 4 percent per year and the number of female victims fell an average 1 percent. [Rennison, C.M. (May, 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that in 1998 women were nearly 3 out of 4 victims of the 1,830 murders attributable to intimate partners. In 1976 women were just over half the approximate 3,000 victims. [Rennison, C.M. (May, 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication

- #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
- ❖ Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that the percentage of female murder victims killed by intimate partners has remained at about 30 percent since 1976. [Rennison, C.M. (May, 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  - ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that in 1996 just over 1,800 murders were attributable to intimates; nearly 3 out of 4 of these had a female victim. In 1976 there were nearly 3,000 victims of intimate murder. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  - ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that the decline over the past two decades was larger for spouse killings, compared to the killings of other intimates. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  - ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that the percentage of female murder victims killed by intimates has remained at about 30 percent since 1976. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  - ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that there has been a

sharp decrease in the rate of intimate murder of men, especially black men. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that the number of intimate murders with guns has declined. However, in 1996, 65 percent of all intimate murders were committed with a firearm. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ During the years of 1981-1998, intimate partner homicides decreased by 47 percent in the United States. Although no causal relationship has been established, decreases are temporarily associated with the introduction of social programs and legal measures to curb intimate partner violence. [Paulozzi, L., Saltzman, L. Thompson, M. & Holmgreen, P. (October, 2001). *Surveillance for homicide among intimate partners – United States, 1981-1998*. GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Surveillance Summaries, MMWR October 12, 2001: 50, (No. SS-3). Available from <http://www.cdc.gov> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from the Supplemental Homicide Reports collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicate that between 1981-1998 approximately one in three of all homicides of females are committed by a current or former spouse or current boyfriend/ girlfriend. [Paulozzi, L., Saltzman, L. Thompson, M. & Holmgreen, P. (October, 2001). *Surveillance for homicide among intimate partners – United States, 1981-1998*. GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Surveillance Summaries, MMWR October 12, 2001: 50, (No. SS-3). Available from <http://www.cdc.gov> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from the Supplemental Homicide Reports collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicate that between 1981-1998 among all homicides of males, current or former spouses or current boyfriends/ girlfriends commit only 5%. [ Paulozzi, L., Saltzman, L. Thompson, M. & Holmgreen, P. (October, 2001). *Surveillance for homicide among intimate partners – United States, 1981-1998*. GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Surveillance Summaries, MMWR October 12, 2001: 50, (No. SS-3). Available from <http://www.cdc.gov> ]

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## Age Of Victim

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- ❖ Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that considered by age category, from 1993-98, women ages 16 to 24 experienced the highest per capita rates of intimate violence (19.6 per 1,000 women). [Rennison, C.M. (May, 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.] [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Both available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that from 1993-1999 intimate partner violence rates differed greatly based on the age of the victim. While the overall per capita rate of intimate partner violence against women was 5.8 victimizations per 1,000 in 1999, among females age 16-24, it was 15.6 per 1,000. [Rennison, C.M. (October, 2001). *Intimate partner violence and age of victim, 1993-1999*. (Publication #NCJ187635). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that from 1993-1999 women age 35-49 were the most vulnerable to intimate murder. [Rennison, C.M. (October, 2001). *Intimate partner violence and age of victim, 1993-1999*. (Publication #NCJ187635). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

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## Presence Of Children

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- ❖ Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that about 4 of 10 female victims of intimate partner violence lived in households with children under age 12. Population estimates suggest that 27 percent of U.S. households were home to children under 12. [Rennison, C.M. (May, 2000). *Intimate partner violence*. (Publication #NCJ178247). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that slightly more than

half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under the age of 12. About 40 percent of imprisoned intimate offenders report that one or more children under age 18 resided with them at some time before the offenders entered prison. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Both available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

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### Incarcerated Offenders

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- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that those who committed a violent crime against an intimate represent about 25 percent of convicted violent offenders in local jails and about 7 percent of violent offenders in state prisons. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Both available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that 3 in 4 offenders serving time in local jails for intimate violence had been convicted of assault; just over 40 percent of such offenders in state prisons had been convicted of murder. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Both available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that the criminal justice system has extensive prior contact with those convicted of intimate violence. Among those in jail 78 percent have a prior conviction history, though not necessarily for intimate violence. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Both available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that 4 in 10 jail inmates convicted of a violent crime against an intimate had a criminal justice status at the time of the crime: about 20 percent were on probation, 9 percent were under a restraining order, and just under 10 percent were on parole, pretrial release, or other status. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Both available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]
  
- ❖ Estimates from a compilation of statistical data maintained by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on violence between people who have an intimate relationship indicate that more than half of both prison and jail inmates serving time for violence against an intimate had been using drugs or alcohol or both at the time of the incident for which they were incarcerated. [Chaiken, J. (March, 1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. (Publication #NCJ167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Both available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs> ]

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### Marital Status

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- ❖ Data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey indicate that from 1993-1999, women separated from their husbands were victimized by an intimate at rates higher than married, divorced, widowed, or never married women. [Rennison, C.M. (October, 2001). *Intimate partner violence and age of victim, 1993-1999*. (Publication #NCJ187635). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>]

## NATIONAL DATA SETS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Compiled by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

<b>Uniform Crime Reporting System (UCRS)</b>	<b>National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAW)</b>	<b>National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)</b>	<b>National Family Violence Survey (NFVS)</b>
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) [Dept. of Justice]	National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	Bureau of Justice Statistics [Dept. of Justice]	Academic research project coordinated by R. Gelles, Ph.D. and M. Straus, PhD, Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH
1929 - ongoing	Survey conducted from November 1995 to May 1996 * one-time funded survey	Initiated in 1972 & redesigned in 1992; data is obtained during 6-month intervals during a collection year	Survey was first conducted in 1975 and repeated in 1985
Voluntary reports submitted by local law enforcement	Telephone interviews regarding personal experiences	Telephone interviews on the impact, frequency, and consequences of criminal victimization in the United States and reports to law enforcement	1975 - Face-to-face interviews regarding personal experiences 1985 – Telephone interviews regarding personal experiences
Uniform Crime Report Form - same reporting form used 1981-1998	Survey form	Survey form	1975 & 1985 – Conflict Tactic Scale
Entire U.S. Population; during 1999, law enforcement agencies active in the UCR Program represented 260 million people (95% of total population)	8,000 women and 8,000 men who owned telephones	A nationally representative sample of roughly 50,000 households, representing nearly 100,000 persons	1975 – 2,143 households 1985 – 4,032 households with telephones
All ages	Individual adults 18 years and older	Households with persons 12 yrs of age or older	Households with individuals 18 – 70 yrs of age
Relationship types are spouses, ex-spouses, common-law spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, and same sex relationships. Ex-boyfriends /girlfriends are NOT included.	Relationships could be heterosexual or homosexual	Relationships could be heterosexual or homosexual	A male & female at least 18 years old who were married or cohabiting; no homosexual relationships. Households could also consist of one adult 18 years of age or older who was either divorced or separated within the last two years or a single parent living with a child under the age of 18.
Terms: Uses “Intimate Partner Violence”	Terms: Uses “Intimate Partner Violence”	Terms: Uses “Intimate Partner Violence”	Terms: Uses “Family Violence”

<b>Uniform Crime Reporting System (UCRS)</b>	<b>National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAW)</b>	<b>National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)</b>	<b>National Family Violence Survey (NFVS)</b>
<p>Crime categories: homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson</p>	<p>“Physical assault”: behaviors that threaten, attempt, or actually inflict physical harm. The definition includes a wide range of behaviors, from slapping, pushing, and shoving to using a gun.</p> <p>Survey generated information on both the prevalence and incidence of intimate partner violence.</p> <p>“Prevalence” refers to the percentage of persons within a demographic group (e.g., female or male) who are victimized during a specific period, such as the person’s lifetime or the previous 12 months.</p> <p>“Incidence” refers to the number of separate victimizations or incidents of violence committed against persons within a demographic group during a specific period.</p>	<p>Crime categories in the 1985 redesigned survey: rape, sexual assault, personal robbery, aggravated and simple assault, household burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft; did not include homicides</p> <p>Data categories: victim age, sex, race, ethnicity, marital status, income and educational level; offender sex, race, approximate age and victim-offender relationship; crime time and place; use of weapons; nature of injury; economic consequences; victims’ experiences with criminal justice system, self-protective measures used by victim; and substance abuse by offenders.</p> <p>Note: This is the only national forum for victims to describe the consequences of crime and the characteristics of violent offenders.</p>	
<p>Federal Bureau of Investigation (2000). <i>Crime in the United States 1999</i>. Section VII – Appendix III Uniform Crime Reporting Area Definitions, p. 405. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. ISBN 0-16-048756-0.</p>	<p>Tjaden, P. &amp; Thoennes, N. (July 2000). <i>Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey</i>. (Publication #NCJ181867). National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs.</p>	<p>Henneberg, M. (August 2000). <i>Bureau of Justice Statistics 2000: At a glance</i>. (Publication #NCJ183014). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.</p>	<p>Straus, M. &amp; Gelles, R. (1990). <i>Physical violence in American families – risk factors and adaptations to violence in 8,145 families</i>. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.</p>

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## **Website Reference List**

### **National Statistical Information**

#### **Federal Government Websites**

##### **Bureau of Justice Statistics**

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. These data are critical to federal, state, and local policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded. The BJS website offers copies of BJS reports and BJS mailing list information, criminal justice statistics and data assistance and referrals to other sources of crime data. Address: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 810 Seventh Street, NW, Washington, DC 20531. Phone (202) 307-0765, TTY available through NCJRS at (877) 712-9279.

##### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<http://www.cdc.gov>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) develops and applies disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States. Address: 1600 Clifton Rd., Atlanta, GA 30333. Phone (800) 311-3435, TTY (800)255-0135.

##### **National Center for Victims of Crime**

<http://www.ncvc.org>

The National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) provides on-line bulletins that cover a wide-range of victim-related topics, including domestic violence, elder abuse, homicide, identity fraud, sexual assault, stalking, workplace violence, victims' rights and a host of legal issues. The website also has detailed description of NCVC's toll-free helpline service; safety strategies for victims of stalking and domestic violence; comprehensive information banks for the issues of hate crime, stalking, and school violence; and an on-line service referral questionnaire for victim service providers. Address: 2000 M Street, Suite 480, Washington DC, 20036. Phone (800) FYI-CALL, TTY (800) 211-7996.

##### **National Criminal Justice Reference Service**

<http://virlib.ncjrs.org>

The National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) is a federally sponsored information clearinghouse for people around the country and the world involved with research, policy, and practice related to criminal and juvenile justice and drug control.

The NCJRS partner agencies publish hundreds of reports and other information products each year designed to meet the broad range of interests in the field and the audiences who use them. Most of the titles are available online through the NCJRS website. Address: P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000. Phone (800) 851-3420, TTY (877) 712-9279.

### **National Institute of Justice**

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice and is the only federal agency solely dedicated to researching crime control and justice issues. NIJ provides objective, independent, non-partisan, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and justice, particularly at the state and local levels. Address: 810 Seventh St., NW, Washington, DC 20531. Contact NCJRS(see above) at Phone (800) 851-3240, TTY (877) 712-9279.

### **Violence Against Women Office**

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo>

Since its inception in 1995, the Violence Against Women Office (VAWO) has handled the Justice Department's legal and policy issues regarding violence against women, coordinated departmental efforts, provided national and international leadership, received international visitors interested in learning about the federal government's role in addressing violence against women, and responded to requests for information regarding violence against women. Address: 810 7th Street NW, Washington, DC 20531. Phone (202) 307-6026, TTY (202) 307-2277.

## **RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**

### **Center for Violence Prevention and Control, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota**

<http://www1.umn.edu/cvpc/>

The Center for Violence Prevention and Control (CVPC) is an academic research center dedicated to the development and facilitation of interdisciplinary collaboration in research and graduate education efforts that can ultimately affect the prevention and control of violence. The purpose of the CVPC is to generate knowledge through research in violence prevention and control, to disseminate this knowledge to use as the basis for development of prevention and control efforts, and to provide a comprehensive violence prevention and control graduate education curriculum. Address: University of Minnesota, Mayo Mail Code 197, 420 Delaware Street SE, Minneapolis MN 55455. Phone (612) 624-6669.

### **Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire**

<http://www.unh.edu/frl/index.html>

Since 1975, the Family Research Laboratory (FRL) at the University of New Hampshire researches family violence and the impact of violence in families. This includes all aspects of the family, violence and abuse, including: physical abuse of children; corporal punishment of children; sexual abuse of children; physical abuse of spouses; dating violence; abuse of the elderly; intra-family homicide; rape and marital rape; violence between siblings; pornography; parental abductions; missing and abducted children. Address: 126 Horton Social Science Center, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824-3586. Phone (603) 862-1888.

### **Institute for Family Violence Studies, School of Social Work, Florida State University**

<http://familyvio.ssw.fsu.edu>

The Institute for Family Violence Studies researches family violence as it occurs in all age groups, including children, adults and the elderly, and distributes the findings of this research at the local, state, national, and international levels. The Institute seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of family violence interventions, such as programs for batterers and family preservation programs as well as develop innovative programs for reducing family violence. The Institute's researchers analyze legislation addressing family violence issues, develop curricula that strengthen social work studies on family violence, and provide in-service training to those working in agencies providing interventions to individuals, couples, and families experiencing family violence. The Institute also serves as a regional clearinghouse on resources related to family violence. Address: Institute of Family Violence Studies, School of Social Work, Florida State University, C3405 University Center, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2570. Phone (850) 644-6303.

### **Minnesota Center Against Violence & Abuse**

<http://www.mincava.umn.edu>

The mission of the Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse (MINCAVA) is to support research, education, and access to information related to violence. MINCAVA is directed by Jeffrey L. Edleson, PhD and coordinates the following projects: MINCAVA Electronic Clearinghouse website, The Link Research Project, Child Abuse Prevention Studies (CAPS) program, Violence Against Women Online Resources website, and the applied research section of the VAWnet website. MINCAVA is housed at the School of Social Work, University of Minnesota. Address: MINCAVA - Minnesota Center Against Violence & Abuse, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota, 105 Peters Hall, 1404 Gortner Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108-6142. Phone (612) 624-0721, toll free in Minnesota at (800) 646-2282.

## **National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center**

<http://www.nvaw.org/>

The National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center (NVAWPRC) seeks to advance knowledge about prevention research and fostering collaboration among advocates, practitioners, policy makers, and researchers. The NVAWPRC is made up of faculty and students at three academic institutions: the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, SC; the Center for Trauma Recovery at the University of Missouri, St. Louis; and the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA. Each of these three academic parts of the NVAWPRC has a long and distinguished history addressing various aspects of violence against women. Address: PO Box 250852 Charleston, SC, 29425. Phone (843) 792-2954.



## Evaluating Violence Against Women Research Reports

Sandra K. Beeman, Ph.D.

March 2002

### Introduction

Over the past 15 years, the number of journal articles, books, and reports presenting the results of research on violence against women has grown dramatically. Academic journals such as *Violence Against Women* are devoted specifically to publishing such research. This research potentially provides individuals and organizations working to end violence against women with information that can help improve services to battered women and their families; better understand the lives of battered women and their families; develop programs based on sound research knowledge; and contribute to the development of public policies that support battered women and their families.

This document provides introductory guidelines for the use and evaluation of research reports. The purpose of this document is to help advocates become more skilled and more confident about reading and understanding research reports. What are the different forms of research reports and where can they be found? Can we believe what we read? How can a non-researcher critically read and analyze research reports? How can we judge the quality of research? What can be done with the results of research?

### What to read and where to find it

Findings of research on violence against women are available in a variety of forms and from a variety of places. Professional journals such as *Violence Against Women*, *the Journal of Interpersonal*

*Violence, Aggression & Violence Behavior*, *Violence & Victims*, and *the Journal of Family Violence* include research conducted by psychologists, social workers, sociologists, advocates, and others. In addition to professional journals, findings of research are presented at domestic violence conferences, described in the popular press, found on websites devoted to ending violence against women, and are available as publications from government agencies or private research organizations. With so many research reports available, how do we know what to read? After we locate a research report, how do we know whether it's worth reading?

Not all research is created equal – either in its scientific quality or its practical value. There are several questions to consider when deciding whether or not to read a research report, and if we do choose to read it, whether or not to trust what we read. These questions include: Who is the researcher? What is their professional background? Do they represent a particular ideological perspective? Who funded the research? Who published the research? Although we often like to think of science as objective, most researchers now recognize that everyone brings values, beliefs, and prejudices to their research. This doesn't mean these values and beliefs *necessarily* bias their research, but the informed consumer of research needs to ask these questions to determine if the findings can be trusted or if there is reason to be skeptical.

Research reports published in scientific journals are subject to peer review. That is, these reports are read and reviewed by independent reviewers or referees who help the editor of the journal decide

whether or not to publish the research. These referees often conduct “blind” reviews – in other words, they are not aware of the identity of the author or authors. Research published in scientific journals thus gives the reader some confidence in the *scientific* credibility of the research findings. Scientific credibility, however, does not necessarily mean that the findings represent “the truth.” There is an extensive literature on the philosophical and methodological disagreements about the ability of different types of research methods to generate “truths”, a discussion of which is beyond the scope of this paper. It is important, however, for readers of research to not confuse scientific credibility with truth.

Research released directly from an organization sponsoring the research does not usually go through the peer review process. If the report contains enough information about how the study was done, it may still be possible to judge the credibility of the research. The next sections provide guidance for our own critical analysis of research – whether or not the research report has been subjected to the peer review process.

### **Can we believe what we read?**

No research is perfect. The key to making maximum use of research findings is knowing enough about research to critically read and understand the findings. Research can be categorized in a variety of ways: by purpose (exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory); by design and method (experimental, field, survey); or by underlying philosophy (feminist, phenomenological, positivist). One simple and straightforward way of categorizing research is often labeled quantitative and qualitative. This distinction will be used in this article because the two categories of research have broadly different implications for judging the “truth value” and generalizability of the findings.

### ***Quantitative and Qualitative Research***

Quantitative research will be used in this article to refer to research conducted in a *positivist* tradition. Research conducted in this tradition generally includes experiments, quasi-experiments, and surveys,

and uses statistical manipulations of numbers to process data and summarize results. Two important concerns in quantitative research have to do with its internal and external validity. Validity refers to the “truth” of the research findings - was the study designed and data collected and analyzed in a way such that we have confidence about its conclusions? And even if we have this confidence is there any reason to believe that the findings are also true beyond this particular study? These questions must be answered in quantitative research because the goals are generally to determine answers to questions about the relationship between some variables in a way that we have confidence in the findings beyond the study at hand (i.e. they are representative of some larger truth.)

Qualitative research will be used in this article to refer to research conducted in an *interpretive* or *critical* tradition. Research conducted in this tradition generally includes ethnographies, naturalistic observation or intensive interviewing studies, and uses some type of content analysis of words or texts to generate themes, which summarize the results of the study. Qualitative research has the same concerns as quantitative research about the truth value of its findings but it is often referred to as trustworthiness or credibility. The goals of qualitative research are not usually to generalize from the findings to some larger truth, but rather to explore or generate truths for the particular sample of individuals studied or to generate new theories. There is often an emphasis in qualitative research on perception or lived experience.

It is important to keep these distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research in mind when using the following questions to guide our critical analysis of research.

### **Being a critical consumer of research: Five basic questions**

In their guide to reading and understanding research, Locke, Silverman, and Spirduso (1998) recommend using the following five basic questions to guide the critical analysis of research reports. Those questions are:

1. What is the report about?
2. How does the study fit into what is already known?
3. How was the study done?
4. What was found?
5. What do the results mean?

### *What is the report about?*

The statement of purpose and abstract should provide us with enough information to know if we are interested in reading the entire study. It should indicate if the study was exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, or if it was an evaluation of a program. The purpose of the study is usually found in the abstract and in the first part of the report or article. An example of a statement of purpose from a quantitative study is: “The purpose of the present investigation was to empirically evaluate the effectiveness of a sexual assault education program” (Breitenbecher & Scarce, 1999, p. 459). The statement of purpose of a qualitative study may read something like the following: “This study identified variables related to change in abusive behavior through qualitative analyses of interviews with nine reformed batterers” (Scott & Wolfe, 2000, p. 827).

### *How does the study fit into what is already known?*

The answer to this question is generally found in the review of the literature and rationale of the study. The literature review should describe studies relevant to the issue at hand and include recently published studies on the topic. Authors of research reports often provide their own analysis of the relevance of a study. For example, literature review often ends with a statement such as “This study contributes to the existing literature in the following manner: by choosing to study a real life sexual assault education program that was designed and implemented by specialists in rape education – a program that is currently in use on a large university campus, by focusing on the incidence of sexual assault among program participants as an outcome variable, by using a 7-month follow-up period within which to assess program effectiveness – a follow-up period that is longer than in any of the published literature to date, and by evaluating the relation

between participants’ histories of sexual victimization and program effectiveness” (p. 462, Breitenbecher & Scarce, 1999). The literature review may also provide rationale for the use of particular methods. For example, “A review of published quantitative studies emphasizes both the paucity of research on variables related to change in abusive men and the lack of compelling results” (p. 828, Scott & Wolfe, 2000). In this example, these authors go on to describe the use of qualitative methods to “clarify or elaborate quantitative theories” (p. 829.).

In evaluating the value of a particular study in terms of contributing to a larger knowledge base, we should ask: Does the study provide new knowledge? Does it test a new program? Does it contribute to what we know and don’t know?

### *How was the study done?*

This is the methods section. The methods section of a research report should describe how the sample was selected, how key concepts were defined, the design that was used, and the methods of data collection and analysis that were used. Information in this section helps us decide whether or not we have confidence in the “truth value” and generalizability of the findings to people other than those studied.

*Sample:* Whether quantitative or qualitative, the research report should clearly describe the “subjects” of the research and how they were selected for study. This description may include information about the age, race, and other demographic characteristics of the research subjects along with their geographical location – urban, rural, Midwestern, Southern, etc. It is important to know whether or not the researcher hoped to generalize the findings of the research beyond this sample. If they did, did they provide us with enough of a description of the sample to determine to whom the findings can be generalized? For example, when reading the results of a program evaluation, we should ask how the individuals in the sample are the same or different from individuals served by our own programs.

Research reports should also describe the size of the sample and how the researcher arrived at that number of subjects. Quantitative studies generally have

larger samples than qualitative studies. This is true for several reasons. In quantitative research, the researcher will usually conduct statistical analyses of their findings. The ability to use certain statistical tests depends on having a sample of a certain size. In addition, the quantitative researcher usually hopes to generalize, and can generalize the study findings with more confidence with larger samples. This is not the case in qualitative research where the purpose is usually not to generalize, but to generate theories, explore, or better understand something in depth. In addition, sample sizes are usually small in qualitative research because of the type of data collection and data analysis procedures used, which limit the number of individuals from whom we may collect the data. Finally, the researcher should describe the limitations of their sample or their sampling procedure.

In the Breitenbecher and Scarce (1999) study, the sample was described in this way: “Participants in this investigation were 275 women recruited from a large Midwestern university community. These women were recruited through advertisements in the university newspaper and flyers posted at various locations on campus describing a research project investigating sexual experiences among women” (p. 462). The sample is further described as “the majority of the participants were single (94%), heterosexual (92%), Caucasian (84%), 18 – 21 year old (72%) undergraduate students (84%)” (p. 462). If we were trying to decide whether the results of this study might apply to women in our own programs, we would need to ask whether the women in the sample are similar or different to those served by our programs.

In Scott and Wolfe’s (2000) study, the sample is described as “all men (N=9) who were deemed by themselves, their counselors, and their partners as having been successful at changing their abusive behavior” (p. 830). The article also indicates that the study was conducted as part of ongoing longitudinal research at a community agency in London, Ontario that provides a “feminist oriented group treatment program for voluntary and court-ordered men who are abusive toward their intimate partners” (p. 830). Although it was not the goal of this qualitative study to generalize the findings beyond the study participants, additional

information about the age, race, socio-economic status of these men and whether or not they had been court-ordered or were voluntary involved in the program would allow the reader to better understand the sample from whom the data were generated.

*Key Concepts:* How were key concepts such as domestic violence or sexual assault, defined? For example, how was “domestic violence” defined? This is a particularly important issue because often the definitions are different for legal, social services, clinical, and scientific purposes. Readers of research reports describing adult domestic violence should carefully consider whether the author’s definition is the same or different from the definition they hold, and its implications for interpreting the results of a study. In the Scott and Wolfe (2000) study mentioned earlier, the authors were interested in interviewing “reformed batterers.” This definition is very important – in this case, “men who were deemed by themselves, their counselors, and their partners as having been successful at changing their abusive behavior though treatment” (p. 830).

If we are reading the report of an evaluation, the definition of the intervention should be very clear as well. For example, in the evaluation of the sexual assault education program described in Breitenbecher and Scarce (1999), the program was defined as follows: “The program . . . highlighted such issues as the following: the prevalence of sexual assault among college populations; the existence of rape myths; the existence of sex role socialization practices that promote a rape-supportive environment; and a six-point redefinition of rape that emphasizes rape as an act of violence and power, as humiliating and degrading, and as a community issue affecting all men and women. . . The education program incorporated both lecture-style presentation and solicitation of group discussion” (p. 463). The reader must decide if the definitions used in the study align with their own.

*Research Design:* How does the author describe the design? If it was experimental, was there random assignment to groups? Random assignment to groups – in other words, one group of individual receives the

experimental intervention, one does not – helps guard against systematic sources of error. In an experiment, the researcher hopes to demonstrate that the intervention resulted in a change in the group of subjects. For example, a batterer’s treatment program hopes to reduce the use of violence. By randomly assigning some individuals to receive the experimental intervention and some to not receive it, the researchers strengthen their case that the intervention, rather than some other systematic difference between groups, is the cause of the reduction in use of violence. In the Breitenbecher and Scarce (1999) study, the 275 women in the sample were randomly assigned to either the treatment (the sexual assault education program) or control (no program) condition.

Sometimes researchers cannot or will not randomly assign subjects to groups. Either the groups already exist (for example comparing two different existing interventions) or the researcher is unable to randomly assign because of ethical or practical reasons. In these cases, the researcher should discuss the equivalence or nonequivalence of groups. In other words, the researcher should provide information describing the groups of individual to convince us that the groups were very similar before receiving the interventions.

Another important question to ask is: does the design fit the question and purpose? If the researcher hopes to demonstrate the causal effects of an intervention, then an experimental or quasi-experimental design is appropriate. If the purpose of the research is to measure attitudes, a survey design is usually appropriate. If the researcher hopes to develop theory, or explore an issue in depth, a qualitative design is appropriate. The researcher should provide a rationale for the selection of the design based on the purpose of their study.

*Data Collection:* This section of the report describes the methods and procedures used to collect data about the variables of interest. Measurement will be based on the definition of the study’s key concepts (discussed above.) The authors may describe the use of existing measuring instruments, e.g. the Conflict Tactics Scale (Strauss, 1979). When existing instruments or stan-

dardized instruments are used, the authors should provide some information about the validity (whether the instrument measures what was intended to be measured) and reliability (whether the instrument measures consistently when used repeatedly.) The authors may also describe measuring instruments designed by them for the study. For example, Breitenbecher and Scarce (1999) describe the Sexual Assault Knowledge Survey (SAKS) designed for use in their study. In this case, the authors provide examples of the questions and report on their own assessment of the reliability of the scale.

In a qualitative study, the authors are likely to describe the use of repeated, in-depth, or unstructured interviewing. This type of data collection generally requires the development of rapport with the research subjects, and often includes multiple interviews with the same individual. Scott and Wolfe (2000) describe the use of semi-structured hour-long interviews “conducted in a quiet, private room by a skilled clinical interviewer” (p. 831). The authors also provide examples of the questions asked in the interviews, and techniques used by the interviewers to elicit answers.

No matter the type of data collection used, the authors should provide us with some sample questions or interview topics. The authors should also describe who collected the data, where it was collected, and how data was recorded. The importance of this section is knowing the extent to which the data collection methods allowed the authors to collect data to answer the research question(s).

*Data Analysis:* In the methods section of a research report, the authors describe the data analysis procedures used. It is often very difficult for a reader not trained in the use of statistical methods – and sometimes even readers who are trained – to determine if the researchers used the appropriate data analysis techniques. If the results of the research report are very important, consider consulting a researcher to help determine if the data analysis methods used were appropriate for the type of data collected.

Generally, in quantitative studies, the researcher will describe the use of statistical software to analyze

data. The purpose of data analysis in quantitative research is to descriptively summarize the findings of their study and to determine if there are relationships between variables in their study. Thus the authors should describe the use of univariate (one variable) descriptive statistics and bivariate (relationships between two variables) statistics. Most often, the researchers will also use some type of multivariate (more than two variables) analyses. This type of analysis allows the researchers to analyze the relationship between multiple variables. If the researchers hope to generalize beyond their own sample, and this is usually the case in quantitative research, they will also use inferential statistics to help them determine if the relationships found between variables is simply due to chance.

In qualitative research, the approach to data analysis is very different. Qualitative researchers often use software to analyze data, but in this case the software does not summarize the data numerically, but rather helps the researcher sort and group data. While most data from qualitative studies are words, qualitative researchers often count or summarize data numerically. Qualitative researchers usually develop coding categories – either developed before the data are collected based on theory or past knowledge, or developed during the data collection and data analysis stage.

### ***What was found?***

This is the results section of a research report. This section of the research report summarizes the data that were collected and how the research questions were answered with those data. In quantitative studies, the results section tells us whether or not the data supported their original hypothesis. For example, was the sexual assault education program effective in increasing participants/ knowledge about sexual assault? In quantitative studies, the findings are usually reported in the form of numbers and statistics, and they are often presented in tables or on graphs. Findings generally include descriptive statistics that describe one variable (e.g. frequencies or counts, means or medians, standard deviations or ranges); statistics that describe the relationship between two or more variables (e.g. chi-square, correlation statistics, results of multiple

regression or logistic regression); and statistics that analyze the difference in means between two groups (e.g. results of t-tests or ANOVA.) If the authors used inferential statistics, they will report a “p-value.” The p-value represents the probability that the finding reported occurred by chance rather than because there is a “true” relationship between variables or a “true” difference between experimental and control groups on some measured variable. For example, if a research report indicates a significant difference ( $p=.01$  or  $p<.01$ ) between experimental and control groups, it means that 1 time in 100 or less than 1 time in 100, a difference that large will occur by chance. It is important to remember that significance, when used to refer to statistical significance, does not necessarily mean the findings have practical significance or importance.

In qualitative studies, the findings are usually reported in the form of words – quotes from interviews or samples of text that represent other similar findings from the study. The quotes from interviews are organized around themes identified by the researcher. Some qualitative researchers will include a respondent identification or code number next to quotes. These are included to demonstrate to the reader that not all quotes were taken from one or two interview respondents but rather represent a range of respondents.

### ***What does it mean?***

This content is often found in the discussion or conclusion section of the research report and is the researcher’s interpretation of the meaning of the results. In this section, the author steps back from the reporting of data and tries to “make sense” of their findings. Locke, Silverman, and Spriduso (1998) suggest four major things to look for in the discussion and implications section of their research report: 1) The author’s take on the meaning of the data just reported (what is most important, what might have been unexpected, what is the importance of the findings); 2) any difficulties encountered by the researcher in the conduct of the study and their implications (e.g. a low response rate, difficulty recruiting subjects); 3) the contribution of the study to the larger literature; and 4)

the conclusions should match the findings reported in the previous section.

Questions to ask about the results section include: Did their data answer their question? Did the data support their hypothesis? Are the conclusions grounded in the findings or do they speculate? Did the researchers discuss the limitations of their study? Are the implications of the research findings clear? What can we learn from the findings that may help us to improve services, to better understand the lives of battered women and their families, to develop programs, or to impact public policy?

Many research reports include a section titled “implications for practice or policy.” Other research reports provide very little information about the author’s perspective on such implications. For example, the Breitenbecher and Scarce study (1999) included just two sentences about such implications: “Researchers are encouraged to include incidence of sexual assault in future outcome studies. In addition, rape education organizations are encouraged to conduct empirical evaluations of their programs in order to add to the knowledge base in this area.” (p. 475)

### **Conclusion**

The results of research on violence against women provide individuals and organizations working to end violence against women with information that can help improve services, better understand the lives of battered women and their families, develop programs based on sound research knowledge, and provide information to influence public policies that support victims of violence. Other online documents emphasize the important contributions to research made by individuals and organizations working to end violence against women – including collaboration between researchers and practitioners, and evaluating the outcome of domestic violence service programs. Being a knowledgeable consumer of research is an equally important contribution to research on violence against women. Research reports often contain language and concepts that are unfamiliar to their readers, and often generate as many questions as answers. Although we may wish for a research “travel guide” that provides

us with absolute answers on the “best of” research designs, methods, types of sample, definitions of concepts, and the like, it is hopefully clear from this article that these answers are instead based on informed and critical judgement. It is hoped that this article provides some beginning guidance in how to make these judgments.

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***In Brief:***

**Evaluating Violence Against Women Research Reports**

Research on violence against women can provide individuals and organizations working to end violence against women with information that helps improve services to battered women and their families; develop programs based on sound research knowledge; and contribute to the development of public policies that support battered women and their families. Being a knowledgeable, critical consumer of research is important.

- **What to read and where to find it:** Not all research is created equal – either in its scientific quality or its practical value. The informed consumer of research should pay attention to the professional background and ideological perspective of the researcher, the funder or sponsor of the research, and the publisher of the research to help determine the credibility of the findings.
- **Quantitative and qualitative research:** Quantitative research usually seeks to generalize findings beyond the study at hand. Qualitative research usually seeks to understand a particular sample of individuals or to generate new theories.
- **Five basic questions guide the critical analysis of research reports:**

***What is the study about?*** The statement of purpose should provide enough information to help us determine if we are interested in reading the entire study.

***How does the study fit into what is already known?*** The literature review should help us determine the relevance of the study, whether it provides new knowledge and how it contributes to what we know and don't know about the topic.

***How was the study done?*** Who were the sample participants and how were they selected for the study? How are they the same or different than individuals served by our programs? How were key study concepts defined? Do they fit with our program's definition of those concepts? Does the study design fit the purpose of the study? Do the data collection methods used allow the researcher(s) to answer their research question(s)? Were appropriate data analysis procedures used?

***What was found?*** Were the research questions answered with the data? If inferential statistics were used, were the findings significant? Does the qualitative data provide credible answers to the research questions?

***What does it mean?*** In this section, the researcher "makes sense" of their findings and present their interpretation of the results. Are the conclusions grounded in the data presented? Are the limitations of the study discussed? Do the findings have practical application?



## Measuring the Extent of Woman Abuse in Intimate Heterosexual Relationships: A Critique of the Conflict Tactics Scales

Walter S. DeKeseredy, Ph.D. and Martin D. Schwartz, Ph.D.

February 1998

Large-scale survey data have played an important role in sensitizing the media, government officials, and members of the general public to the shocking extent of woman abuse in intimate, heterosexual relationships. Today, many North Americans view male-to-female violence in marriage, dating, and cohabitation as a major social problem (Kline, Campbell, Soler & Ghez, 1997). In fact, there have been calls for the end to statistical surveys. Some have argued that the battle for recognition has been won, while others question whether quantitative techniques can ever adequately capture the complex experience of being battered.

Much of the support for continued quantitative research comes from those who contend that accurate statistics are essential to motivate government agencies to devote more resources to the development of prevention and control strategies. Of course, statistics are never sufficient to accomplish this end. However, as feminist scholars Bart, Miller, Moran, and Stanko (1989) point out: "The principal questions that organize policy efforts are ultimately quantitative -- how many are there, who are they, where are they, how bad are the consequences, how much will it cost?" (p. 433). Those who fund programs tend to respond better to empirical data. Dealing with these data, however, has led politicians, journalists and scholars to a series of questions on who is at fault in battering, and how much battering actually takes place in society.

Although the academic and feminist literature is filled with debates on whether these

instruments are flawed, the best-known and most often used quantitative technique designed to obtain estimates of the extent of physical woman abuse has been the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), and more recently the CTS2. Certainly qualitative methodologists and feminist researchers have employed a wide variety of other techniques and measures, but no other measure has approached the widespread use of the CTS. The main objectives of this brief document are to: (1) critique these two measures; and (2) provide suggestions for enhancing the quality of survey data on woman abuse in intimate heterosexual relationships, the focus of the CTS measurement.

### The CTS and CTS2

The CTS was developed originally in the 1970s by University of New Hampshire sociologist Murray Straus to study violence within families. By now the original or a modified CTS appears at the core of research reported in over 100 scientific journal articles and at least 10 North American books. Although the CTS may in various studies be given only to men or only to women, the most widely cited work involves administering the survey to both men and women in intact heterosexual family units (married or cohabitants). The instrument solicits information from both men and women about the "conflict tactics" used by both men and women. The CTS consists of eighteen items that measure three different ways of handling interpersonal conflict in intimate relationships: reasoning, verbal aggression (referred

to by some researchers as psychological abuse), and physical violence. These items are ranked on a continuum from least to most severe, with the first ten describing tactics that are not physically violent and the last eight describing violent acts. The last five items, from “kicked, etc.” to “used a knife or a gun,” make up the “severe violence index.”

The type of “conflict tactic” used to measure violence that occurred in the past year (incidence) is generally introduced to the respondent with the following preamble. Note the ideological and factual assumptions embedded in this introduction, such as the notion that battery is the result of an “argument.”

*No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I'm going to read some things that you and your (spouse/partner) might do when you have an argument. I would like you to tell me how many times ... in the past 12 months [Read item] (Straus, 1990, p. 33).*

Research has suggested that the CTS seems to be a reliable method of eliciting highly sensitive data on the least known sides of intimate heterosexual relationships. For example, in both Canada and the U.S., city-wide, provincial/state, and national representative sample surveys that have used the CTS show that annually at least 11 percent of North American women in marital or cohabiting relationships are physically abused by their male partners. Many social scientists consider CTS data “probably the best available when it comes to estimating the incidence and prevalence of woman abuse in the population at large” (Smith, 1987, p. 177). Yet, quite a large number of researchers have criticized the CTS for the following reasons:

- The CTS rank orders behaviors in a linear fashion, from least serious to most serious. In doing so, it incorrectly assumes that psychological abuse and the first three violence items (e.g., slaps) are automatically less injurious than the items in the severe violence index. Many strongly object to creating what Liz Kelly (1987) calls a “hierarchy of abuse based on seriousness” because emotional abuse is often experienced as more harmful than physical violence (Chang, 1996; Kirkwood, 1993), and a slap can often draw blood or break teeth.
- The CTS works from an ideological base that presumes that violence is family-based, rather seeing the issue as one of male violence directed toward women.
- The CTS only asks about several specific types of abuse, but does not ask about many others. Many researchers fear that respondents will not report abuse that is not asked about, such as scratches, burns, and sexual assault.
- The methodology of the CTS is simply to count the raw number of violent acts committed. What it cannot tell us is why people use violence. Thus, CTS data almost always report men and women as equally violent, and thereby miss the fact they use violence for different reasons. Women use violence for a variety of reasons, but a common one is to defend themselves. Men typically use violence to control their female partners (DeKeseredy, Saunders, Schwartz, & Alvi, 1997; Ellis & Stuckless, 1996).
- The CTS only situates violence and verbal aggression/psychological abuse in the context of settling conflicts or disputes (note again the preamble above). In doing this, it ignores a large number of control-instigated assaults that do not have their root in conflicts or disputes. Even

worse, it may miss attacks that “come out of the blue” with no external reason or dispute to mediate. These attacks, whether physical or verbal violence, may be as or more highly injurious as those that stem from conflicts or disputes. The CTS, although it may accurately count numbers of blows struck, overlooks the broader social psychological and social forces (e.g., patriarchy) that motivate men to abuse their female partners.

## THE CTS2

Although many of these critiques have been widely voiced for more than a decade, few researchers who use the CTS seem aware of them. However, Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman (1995) recently developed the CTS2 to address some of these criticisms. To meet the concern that the CTS may not elicit responses on a variety of injurious behaviors, it includes more physical and psychological abuse items (e.g., “I called my partner fat or ugly”). To deal with the strong attack that the CTS does not measure sexual violence, the CTS2 measures seven types of sexual assault. Finally, to allow researchers to tell the difference between events that cause physical injury and those that do not (e.g., slaps that break teeth, and those that might not cause physical injury), the CTS2 includes several injury or physical outcome measures, such as “I needed to see a doctor because of a fight with my partner.” All of these are positive revisions that speak directly to some of the earlier criticisms.

Still, the CTS2 does not resolve all of the problems with the CTS. The most important place where the CTS2 does not improve on the CTS is that it continues to only situate abuse in the context of settling disputes or conflicts (the preamble remains the same). As suggested above, this limitation in effect tells the respondent to exclude reporting on abuse that is control-instigated or which does not arise from a known cause. It also does not allow the researcher to separate out ag-

gressive abuse, whether physical or psychological, from those assaults used in self-defense.

## Context, Meanings, and Motives Measures

Why do men and women use physical violence in marriage, dating, and other intimate, heterosexual relationships? As suggested above, the CTS does not provide adequate answers to this question. Much worse is that many people think that the answers the CTS provides do in fact deal with this question. The data that arise from the use of the CTS are commonly, and problematically, used to show that violence in relationships is “sexually symmetrical” (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). In other words, by simply counting the number of blows struck, the data appear to show that women are just as, if not more, violent than men. Unfortunately, this crude methodology can hide as much or more than it can illuminate (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1993).

These problems can be avoided by including questions about motives, meanings, and contexts in different sections of the CTS or CTS2. For example, DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993) placed the following three questions after both the first three and the last six violence items in the CTS, as part of a national study to measure the prevalence of violence in Canadian university and college dating:

*On (the following) items, what percentage of these times overall do you estimate that in doing these actions you were primarily motivated by acting in self-defense, that is protecting yourself from immediate physical harm?*

*On (the following) items, what percentage of these times overall do you estimate that in doing these actions you were trying to fight back in a situation where you were not the first to use these or similar tactics?*

*On (the following) items, what percentage of these times overall do you estimate that you used these actions on your dating partners before they*

*actually attacked you or threatened to attack you?*

In analyzing the data generated by these questions, DeKeseredy et al. (1997) did not find support for the sexual symmetry thesis. Rather, a substantial number of women reported that their violence was in self-defense or “fighting back.” These findings are consistent with Saunders’ (1986) study of battered women. Thus far, the sexual symmetry thesis has only been supported by those using crude measures, such as the CTS with no further questioning.

The most important point of this paper is that the bulk of the research in this field has simply counted blows (who hit whom, and how often). The CTS2 speaks to one context issue (but only one) by asking about injury. A light slap may be different than one that jars loose several teeth. A push out of the way is different than a push down a flight of stairs. However, the survey still does not easily differentiate between a victim fighting back for her life, a survivor retaliating, and an instigator of violence without cause. All are considered violent. Even the more recent strategy of asking who struck the first blow (purportedly to tell who is the aggressor and who is fighting in self-defense) can be hard to place in context. When a woman has been beaten 30 times in the past and knows from her husband’s behavior that a beating is coming within minutes, and further knows that if she strikes first she will end up being hurt less, does that mean that the violence is the woman’s fault?

Thus, both versions of the CTS have serious limitations. However, this does not mean that researchers should not use them, only that their studies will be flawed if they use the CTS or CTS2 as the sole measure of abuse. What are required, then, are multiple measures of abuse.

### **The Need for Multiple Measures of Woman Abuse**

Although the use of multiple measures is a technique long recommended to enhance the reliability and validity in the measurement of social variables, most surveys of male-to-female abuse

ignore this recommendation in favor of the simple use of some version or modification of the CTS. Unfortunately, regardless of how many abuse items respondents can choose from in either the CTS or CTS2, this unidimensional method of generating data does not provide respondents with sufficient opportunities to disclose abusive experiences. One method of gaining information is simply to ask for it. DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993), in their national survey on Canadian post-secondary dating, first asked:

*Thinking about your entire university and/college career, have you ever been upset by dating partners and/or boyfriends trying to get you to do what they had seen in pornographic picture, movies, or books?*

Those who answered “yes” were then asked to respond to the following supplementary question:

*If you were upset, can you tell us what happened? Please provide this information in the space below.*

This can be done for most questions. Leggett and Schwartz (1996), for example, asked a variety of questions that invited the respondent to go into more detail to explain her answer to multiple choice questions, or else to explain why she did not fit into any of their categories.

A different sort of multiple measure deals with the problem that in going through such a survey, people may not report incidents for several reasons, such as embarrassment, fear of reprisal, shame, or a reluctance to recall traumatic memories. However, several studies have shown that if respondents are asked again later by an interviewer or asked to complete self-reported, supplementary open- and closed-ended questions, some silent or forgetful participants will reveal in this second round having been victimized or abusive (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 1998; Junger, 1990; Kelly, 1988). For example, Smith (1987) found that a substantial number of respondents changed their answers when asked the questions again in different words by a telephone interviewer. Belated responses increased the overall violence prevalence rate by approxi-

mately 10%. However, for the narrower set of question about *severe* violence, the prevalence rate increased by close to 60%, from 7.1% to 11.3%. It should also be noted that in addition to giving respondents more opportunities to disclose events, supplementary open-ended questions (where the respondent is given the opportunity to use her own words) build researcher-respondent rapport, allow respondents to qualify their responses, and overcome or minimize the hierarchical nature of traditional or mainstream survey research (Smith, 1994).

## Conclusions

The CTS and CTS2, like other measures of woman abuse, have several strengths and limitations, and researchers have devoted substantial energy to either attacking or defending the empirical value of these techniques. Based on our own research experience and our review of the path-breaking research done by Smith, we contend that the CTS and CTS2 can contribute to the development of a rich data base on non-lethal forms of male-to-female assault. However, survey research that relies solely upon the CTS or only on one alternative measure tells just a part of the story. Such an approach contributes to massive underreporting and ignores the contexts, meanings, and motives of abuse.

Woman abuse is a multidimensional, complex problem. It warrants the use of multiple measures, in addition to measures asking about the specific context, meanings, and motives of respondents. Unfortunately, regardless of the methods used to generate woman abuse data, researchers will always have to face the fact that some respondents simply exercise their right to withhold information on abusive experiences. If there is a chance that abusers would overhear them or find out about disclosure, silence might be their best course of action, although that doesn't (from the researcher point of view) make for "good data." Indeed, perfect surveys on violence against women are not possible, but good ones can and should be done.

The use of the CTS or CTS2 and supplementary open- and closed-ended questions can be a useful part of this process.

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## ***In Brief: Measuring the Extent of Woman Abuse in Intimate Heterosexual Relationships: A Critique of the Conflict Tactics Scales***

The Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (CTS2) are the most widely used and cited quantitative measures of victimization in North American intimate heterosexual relationships. Despite this wide use, many researchers and practitioners contend that several major limitations with these measures hinder or even preclude the development of accurate data. This is not to say that they should never be used. Rather, they should be combined with other measures that provide information directly in their areas of weakness.

### **MAJOR PROBLEMS**

- ***Underreporting.*** All victim surveys suffer from an unknown amount of underreporting, but this has generally been assumed to be a particular problem with surveys of intimate violence, such as the CTS and the CTS2. To minimize this problem, researchers need to use more than one simple measure of one type of abuse. The CTS or CTS2 should only be used with supplementary short questions or requests for additional explanations. Further, any survey will get more accurate data when attention is paid to a safe environment, trained interviewers, etc.
- ***Lack of Context and Motive Information.*** The CTS and CTS2 mainly provide simple counts of violent events. This makes it easy to develop erroneous theoretical, empirical, and political interpretations of these events. For example, by using only CTS information, many researchers and commentators have contended that women are just as, if not more, violent than male partners. Clearly, the CTS shows that women strike as many blows as men. However, context, meaning, and motive measures added to the CTS clarify for us that violence is not sexually symmetrical. When asked, a substantial number of women state that their violence was in self-defense or “fighting back.” Further, most of the injuries in intimate violence is to women. Thus, researchers should include questions about context, meaning and motives for the use of violence with the CTS or CTS2.
- ***Lack of “Non-Dispute” Information.*** The CTS only situates abuse in the context of spats, disputes or “differences.” We know that much violence either stems from attempts by one partner to control the behavior of the other, or else does not stem from any single identifiable cause (dispute, difference or spat).
- ***Rank Ordering of Violence.*** Many object to the “rank order” concept that some events (e.g., kicked) are automatically worse than others (e.g., slapped). Although the CTS2 speaks to part of this problem by including some measures of injury, many battered women claim that psychological and emotional terror is worse than much of the physical violence in some relationships.

In sum, researchers should move beyond only using unidimensional measures of woman abuse, such as the CTS or CTS2. Male-to-female assault is a complex, multidimensional problem that warrants the development and use of several well-crafted measures. Such an approach constitutes an important step toward eliciting more reliable data on one of North America’s most pressing social problems.



## Incidence Rates of Violence Against Women: A Comparison of the Redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey and the 1985 National Family Violence Survey

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For many reasons, including the historical stigma attached to rape and intimate-perpetrated violence, fear of retaliation from their perpetrators, and other safety concerns, estimating incidence rates of these victimizations has always been a difficult task. Research employing diverse methodologies and definitions of these victimizations has yielded different estimates. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the methodological differences which may account for the differences in results between two of the largest survey attempts to measure this violence against women: the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey and National Family Violence Survey. Before comparing and contrasting the rate differentials estimated by each survey, an outline of their unique methodologies will be provided.

### The 1985 National Family Violence Survey

The National Family Violence Survey, conducted in 1976 and in 1985 was sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health. For simplicity of presentation, this survey will be referred to as the "Family Violence Survey" in this essay. The primary investigators for this study were Murray Straus, from the University of New Hampshire, and Richard Gelles, from the University of Rhode Island. The most recent 1985 survey was done by telephone with a nationally representative sample of 6,002 persons age 18 and over who were married or cohabiting with a person of the opposite sex

Violence, as defined by Gelles & Straus

(1990), is an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of physically hurting another person. This hurt can range from the slight pain caused by a slap or spanking, to harm that results in severe injury or even death. To obtain incidents of violence from respondents, the survey utilized what is known as the **Conflict Tactics Scale** (CTS) (Gelles & Straus, 1990). The introduction to the CTS asks respondents to think of situations in the past year when they had a disagreement or were angry with a specified family member and to indicate how often they engaged in each of the acts included in the CTS. The list of acts covered in the CTS spans many tactics, including reasoning, verbal aggression, and physical aggression or violence. Physical violence by the CTS index is often subdivided into two categories: 1) minor violence, and 2) severe violence. These categories consist of the following acts: *Minor Violence*: a) Threw something, b) Pushed, grabbed, or shoved and c) Slapped; *Severe Violence*: a) Kicked, bit, or hit with a fist, b) Hit or tried to hit with something, c) Beat up, d) Choked, e) Threatened with a knife or gun, and f) Used a knife or fired a gun. Annual incidence rates for violence perpetrated by both men and women against their partners obtained from the 1985 Family Violence Survey are indicated in Table 1 (see page 2).

As Table 1 indicates, the rate of 116 per 1,000 couples shows that almost 1 out of 8 husbands carried out 1 or more violent acts during the year of this study. Further, the rate of severe violence perpetrated by husbands indicates that about 1.8 million women were beaten by their partner that year.

Notice that rates of violence perpetrated by

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**Table 1. Percent of Women and Men who had experienced violence perpetrated by a partner as operationalized by the CTS. Any violence includes both minor and severe items while Severe violence includes only those items specified as severe, National Family Violence Survey, 1985.**

	<u>Acts of Violence Committed Annually</u>		
	Percent of Couples	Annual Rate per 1,000	Number Assaulted*
<b>Any Violence Perpetrated By Husband</b>	11%	116	6,250,000
<b>Severe Violence Perpetrated By Husband</b>	3%	34	1,800,000
<b>Any Violence Perpetrated By Wife</b>	12%	124	6,800,000
<b>Severe Violence Perpetrated By Wife</b>	4%	48	2,600,000

Note: Adapted from Straus & Gelles (1990), Table 6.1, p.97. These violence rates were computed by reclassifying the violence subscales into violent and nonviolent categories, scored 0 and 1. As such, any act of minor violence by the husband would result in the “Any Violence” scale to be coded as 1. Similarly, any act of severe violence by the husband would result in the “Severe Violence” scale to be coded as 1.

\* The number assaulted was computed by multiplying the rates in this table by the 1984 population figures as given by the 1986 Statistical Abstract of the United States. The population figure (rounded to millions) was 54 million couples.

wives against husbands are very similar to rates of violence perpetrated by husbands against wives. Herein lies one of the most frequent criticisms of the CTS methodology, that it measures acts of violence in isolation from the circumstances under which the acts were committed. As critics point out, the CTS ignores who initiates the violence, the relative size and strength of the persons involved, and the nature of the participant’s relationship (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Saunders, 1986). Straus and Gelles (1990) themselves, however, are quick to point out that the meaning behind these estimates are often misunderstood. They acknowledge that, “To understand the high rate of intrafamily violence by women, it is also important to realize that many of the assaults by women against their husbands are acts of retaliation or self-defense. One of the most fundamental reasons why women are violent within the family (but rarely outside the family) is that for a typical American women, her home is the location where there is the most serious risk of assault (p.98).” This, of course, remains only

conjecture since the CTS does not account for the sequence of events which precipitate and act of violence. (For a more detailed discussion of the CTS methodology and corresponding criticisms see the VAWnet essay written by Walter DeKeseredy and Martin Schwartz).

## **The Redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey**

Before reviewing the rates of intimate-perpetrated assault obtained by the National Crime Victimization Survey, a brief description of the survey’s methodology will first be provided. Again, for ease of interpretation, this survey will be referred to as the “Victimization Survey.” Sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the Victimization Survey is the second largest ongoing survey sponsored by the U.S. Government. In the sample design used for the survey, housing units (e.g., addresses) are selected from a stratified, multistage cluster sample. When a sample unit is selected for the survey, all current

residents of that unit are interviewed by an interviewer from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Those eligible for inclusion in the sample include individuals 12 years of age or older living in the United States, including persons living in group quarters such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious dwellings, but excluding correctional quarters such as prisons. The current sample consists of approximately 50,000 housing units and 101,000 persons. These households are interviewed every six months for three years; the first and fifth interviews are conducted in person, and the remainder are held by telephone whenever possible. The Victimization Survey obtains an average annual response rate of over 96 percent.

Since its inception in 1972, the Victimization Survey has collected information about the following types of crimes including attempts: rape, robbery, assault, larceny, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. Detailed information about each victimization is recorded; so are the characteristics of the offender, insofar as the victim can report them. Beginning in 1979, BJS began an extensive 10-year redesign project of the Victimization Survey. An important goal of the redesign was to estimate more accurately the incidents of rape and violence perpetrated by intimates and other family members. The new survey screening instrument began a phase-in process in 1989 and was incorporated into the entire Victimization Survey sample by 1993.

Before the redesign, no specific questions asked respondents directly about attacks that were perpetrated by relatives or offenders known to them. If a respondent revealed, however, that he or she had been attacked or otherwise victimized by someone who was known, the incident was recorded as such. The relationship of the victim to the offender then would have been placed in one of the following categories: known by sight only, casual acquaintance, spouse at time of incident, ex-spouse at time of incident, parent or stepparent, own child or stepchild, brother/sister, other relative, boy/girlfriend, ex-boy/girlfriend, friend or

ex-friend, roommate or boarder, schoolmate, neighbor, someone at work, or other nonrelative.

After extensive deliberations, it was decided that although it would not be feasible to change the focus of the Victimization Survey to include a section on tactics of conflict resolution between spouses or partners, the current instrument could incorporate questions that would estimate more accurately the incidents of violence by relatives and intimates.

Accordingly, after the general questions about acts of violence or theft, the screener instrument for uncovering victimizations now includes the following questions:

*Other than any incidents already mentioned, has anyone attacked or threatened you in any of these ways:*

- a. *With any weapon, for instance, a gun or knife -*
- b. *With anything like a baseball bat, frying pan, scissors, or a stick --*
- c. *By something thrown, such as a rock or bottle -*
- d. *Include any grabbing, punching, or choking,*
- e. *Any rape, attempted rape or other type of sexual attack --*
- f. *Any face to face threats --*

**OR**

- g. *Any attack or threat or use of force by anyone at all?*

***Please mention it even if you are not certain it was a crime.***

*2) Incidents involving forced or unwanted sexual acts are often difficult to talk about. Have you been forced or coerced to engage in unwanted sexual activity by --*

- a. *Someone you didn't know before --*
- b. *A casual acquaintance OR --*
- c. *Someone you know well --*

If respondents reply affirmatively to one of

these questions, interviewers next ask “*Do you mean forced or coerced sexual intercourse?*” to determine whether the incident should be recorded as rape or as another type of sexual attack. The definition from the Victimization Survey interviewer’s manual for rape is as follows: “Rape is forced sexual intercourse and includes both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category also includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object such as a bottle.”

To further cue respondents about incidents of victimization which are not committed by strangers, they are then asked:

*3) People often don’t think of incidents committed by someone they know. Did you have something stolen from you OR were you attacked or threatened by --*

- a. Someone at work or school --*
- b. A neighbor or friend --*
- c. A relative or family member --*
- d. Any other person you’ve met or known?*

Not surprisingly, estimates of violence against women using this new screening instrument

almost doubled the rates of intimate-perpetrated violence (by husband, ex-husband, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend) against women estimated by the Victimization Survey. Using the redesigned Survey screening instrument, estimates reveal that nearly 5 million violent victimizations are experienced by females over the age of 12 every year. Of those victimizations involving lone-offenders, the Victimization estimates that 29% are perpetrated by intimates, 9% are perpetrated by other relatives such as siblings, parents, and children, 40% are committed by other known offenders, and only 23% are perpetrated by strangers. The rates of lone-offender victimization per 1,000 females aged 12 and over are listed below in Table 2.

### Comparing the Victimization and Family Violence Surveys

From this table, it can be seen that rates of intimate-perpetrated violence estimated using the Victimization Survey are lower than those obtained from the Family Violence Survey. Also notice, however, that unlike estimates from the Family Violence Survey, the Victimization Survey indicates that women are much more likely to experience an act of intimate-perpetrated violence than are men (9.3 per 1,000 versus 1.4 per 1,000).

**Table 2: Average annual rate and number of violent victimizations committed by lone offenders by sex of victim and victim/offender relationship, National Crime Victimization Survey 1992-94.**

	<b>Intimate</b>	<b>Other Relative</b>	<b>Acquaintance/ Friend</b>	<b>Stranger</b>
<b>FEMALE VICTIMS</b>				
Average annual rate per 1,000 females age 12 or older	9.3	2.8	12.9	7.4
Average annual number of victimizations against females	1,008,000	304,500	1,402,500	802,300
<b>MALE VICTIMS</b>				
Average annual rate per 1,000 males age 12 or older	1.4	1.2	17.2	19.0
Average annual number of victimizations against males	143,400	122,000	1,754,000	1,933,100

In addition, unlike the Family Violence Survey, the sample for the Victimization Survey includes all persons, regardless of their marital or living status. Thus, the Victimization Survey can also estimate rates of intimate-perpetrated violence for single, divorced, and never married women. This is important because rates of intimate-perpetrated violence for these women have been found to be significantly higher than those for married women. For example, rates of intimate-perpetrated violence for separated women are over 8 times higher than rates for married women: a rate of 2.7 per 1,000 married women versus a rate of 82.2 per 1,000 separated women (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995).

### **Why Are the Incidence Estimates So Different?**

The most obvious explanation for the rate differentials across surveys pertains to the manner in which information about these victimizations was solicited. The Family Violence Survey is guised as a survey interested in a number of family-related issues including tactics used in “conflict resolution.” The National Crime Victimization Survey, as the name clearly conveys, is a survey interested in obtaining information about “crimes.” Unfortunately, some survey participants still may not view assaults by intimates and other family members as criminal acts. Even though many of the behaviors conveyed in the screening instruments (e.g. kicking, punching, etc.) are the same for both surveys, the context in which these questions are asked must inevitably play a role in the extent of disclosure respondents are willing to provide.

Related to the issue of disclosure is the fact that, for the Victimization Survey, all respondents within a selected household are interviewed. Thus, all family members are asked the same set of screening questions regarding their victimization experiences with both known and unknown offenders. Even though respondents are instructed that they can reschedule a telephone or personal interview for a more “convenient” time (e.g. when

the respondent can be interviewed when others are not present, etc.), this situation may nevertheless prevent some respondents from disclosing incidents of violence to interviewers, particularly those incidents perpetrated by intimate partners within the same household.

Another difference has to do with the universe from which the samples of each survey are taken. The Family Violence Survey, as stated earlier, interviewed married or cohabiting heterosexual couples over the age of 18 only. The Victimization Survey includes *all* individuals age 12 and over in its sample. Since rates of intimate-perpetrated violence are highest for those between the ages of 19-29 (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995), the inclusion of those aged 12-18 in the Victimization Survey sample may serve to deflate overall rates of violence generated by this survey relative to the Family Violence Survey. In addition, widowed women who are typically over the age of 65 are also included in the Victimization Survey sample. These women are the least likely to experience intimate-perpetrated violence, yet because they are also included in the sample, this also serves to deflate the overall rates of intimate-perpetrated violence produced by the Victimization Survey compared to the Family Violence Survey.

A more fundamental reason why estimates may vary, which is rarely acknowledged, has to do with the way in which incidents of violence are counted by the Victimization Survey. This issue is related to “bounding,” that is, placing the incident within a particular time frame, and is best explained through example. During each interview, respondents are asked about any victimization they may have experienced within the last six months. Interviews then focus on the specific period in which the incident occurred. Incidents reported in that interview are compared with incidents reported in a previous interview. When a report appears to be a duplicate of an earlier reported incident, respondents are reminded of the earlier report and are asked whether the new report

represents the incident mentioned previously or a different incident. The sole purpose of the first interview, then, is to set an initial time reference (bounding). Data collected at the first interview are not included in Victimization Survey estimates. Since respondents in the Family Violence Survey sample were interviewed only once, incidents were not bounded. Because tests have found unbounded interviews to produce significantly higher victimization rates than bounded interviews (Bachman & Taylor, 1994), this is another likely reason why Family Violence Survey estimates are higher compared to Victimization Survey estimates.

### Men's and Women's Use of Violence

A more perplexing issue concerning rate differentials between the Family Violence Survey and the Victimization Survey has to do with the extent of gender "symmetry" in male-to-female violence versus female-to-male violence as indicated by estimates from the Family Violence Survey. That is, rates of victimization from the Family Violence Survey indicate that women use violence against men as much as men use violence against women. Since this issue comes up again and again in critiques among advocates and researchers, the methodological foundations for this perplexing finding are worth reiterating. Recall that the basic methodology of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) used in the Family Violence Survey is to simply count the raw number of violent acts committed by individuals. It does not provide us with any information on why these acts of violence took place. For example, it does not tell us how many of these acts took place because a woman was using physical violence in self-defense against her attacker. In general, research demonstrates that estimates using the CTS methodology will usually find gender symmetry, that is, men and women engaging in similar rates of violence. Because the context of the violence is not taken into account, however, this symmetry is somewhat erroneous primarily because women commonly

use violence to defend themselves. Research employing the CTS, *but* including qualifying questions after each act (e.g. "What percentage of these times do you estimate that in doing these actions you were primarily motivated by acting in self-defense, that is, protecting yourself from immediate physical harm?") has shown that a substantial number of women reported that their violence was in self-defense or fighting back (DeKeseredy et al., 1997, Saunders, 1986).

In contrast to this gender-symmetry, the Victimization Survey clearly demonstrates that women are more often the victims of intimate-perpetrated violence compared to men. In fact, the Victimization Survey estimates that rates of intimate violence against women perpetrated by men are almost 8 times higher than rates of intimate violence against men perpetrated by women. These differential patterns of intimate-perpetration are also found when homicide statistics from the Supplementary Homicide Reports compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation are analyzed. From homicide data, for example, we know that women are significantly more likely to be killed by intimates such as husbands and boyfriends compared to men (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995). Thus, other data and research findings lend no support for the gender symmetry thesis.

### Conclusion

In sum, it will probably always remain difficult to estimate incidence rates of violence against women that occurs "behind closed doors" at the hands of an intimate. Different research designs and samples will continue to produce disparate findings. In fact, the field is currently awaiting findings from another nationally representative survey investigating violence against women and men which was funded by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1996). This survey, which was conducted in 1994 through 1995, utilized somewhat different

questioning techniques to estimate rates of violence perpetrated by both known and unknown offenders.

Unfortunately, many factors inhibit women from reporting their victimizations not only to police, but to researchers as well, including the private nature of the event, the perceived stigma associated with one's victimization, the belief that no purpose may be served in reporting it, and even fear of retaliation from the offender. Obviously, increased efforts should be directed at eradicating stereotypical notions and antiquated myths regarding these acts of violence which linger in our society. Our understanding of the nature and magnitude of this violence and our ultimate attempts to prevent it depend, in part, on such enlightened awareness.

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**Table 3: Factors that may contribute to different incidence rates of violence against women**

Methodology	National Family Violence Survey	National Crime Victimization Survey
Sample population	Including married or cohabiting heterosexual couples over age 18 may result in higher estimates	Including all individuals over age 12 in sample may result in lower estimates because of decreased violence against women between 12-18 and over 65 years
Number of times interviewed	Inviewed respondents once, which may produce higher victimization rates	Interviewed respondents multiple times to eliminate duplicate reports
Context of the survey	Violence is considered "marital conflict"	Violence is considered a crime; some respondents may not view assaults by intimates a crime
Number of household members interviewed	Interviewed one member of the married or cohabiting couple	Interviewed all family members; may prevent some respondents from disclosing incidents of violence
Context of violence	Does not distinguish acts of self-defense	Asks questions to distinguish acts of self-defense