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CEO's foreword

Children are on my mind at the moment. Though, thankfully my own children are at school and nursery so I can actually concentrate on what I'm doing.

Children are on my mind, because we spent a whole day last week having safeguarding training for the entire organisation – including helpline staff, managers and even two of our trustees. This has made us focus particularly on the way our helplines operate and what more we can do to protect children – which is tricky on an anonymous line.

Children are on my mind, because they're in the news, being murdered and abused. Nothing, sadly, unusual there. 1-2 children die as a result of cruelty in England and Wales every week - see, I was paying attention during the safeguarding training, though that is a statistic I'd rather forget. But people are beginning to make the links. Links between domestic violence and child abuse, links that might actually make a difference, might even save lives. Well, people in our sector have known this for a while. But when the Home Secretary makes the links you know something is shifting.

Following a serious case review report, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, said this month that "the death of Daniel Pelka indicates that more attention needs to be given to the impact of domestic violence on children."

Children are on my mind because in our sector we know that they are the most vulnerable – and often invisible – victims and that even 'minor' levels of violence and conflict can have profound, detrimental effects. Calvin Bell reminds us that researchers and practitioners can be so focused on arguing about gender (and other things) that they overlook the needs of children. Making our work genuinely child-centred is a real challenge.

But Nicole Westmarland and the project Mirabal team give some hope that Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes' (DVPPs) sessions on both the impact of domestic violence on children and on fathering are linked to men's motivation to change.

So the challenge, as always is to translate what we know (through research and experience) into meaningful practice which actually brings about positive change. Thangam Debbonaire describes what we at Respect are doing to make the links between research and practice, to the benefit of both.

Finally, happily, children are on my mind because I've finished work for the day and am about to go and pick my own children up. (Veggie) bangers and mash for tea anyone?

Jo Todd
Respect CEO

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Respect and Research – where are we now?

Thangam Debbonaire, Respect Research manager

Respect has always had a close and constructive relationship with researchers, to foster collaboration between those involved in practice and those involved in developing the evidence base for what we do. This article describes where we are with this relationship in summer 2013.

Our three key strands of work are: work with perpetrators (male and female, heterosexual and in same-sex relationships), support for male victims (again, both heterosexual and in same-sex relationships), interventions with young people using violence and aggression (against partners and parents). All these strands are the subject of research and we attempt to engage with a range of researchers to ensure our work is evidence based and also that research benefits from the experience of practitioners. Our over-riding concern is that the support and help that clients get is as good and useful as possible.

Work with male perpetrators

The Mirabal project is one of two national multi-site research projects attempting to measure the impact of domestic violence intervention programmes. Mirabal is examining the impact of those working with men not in the criminal justice system at the time. The impact of the probation-based programmes is being evaluated by the National Offender Management System (NOMS).

Mirabal began life on a paper handkerchief in a hotel in Shannon, Ireland. Two Respect staff and one of our key funders met with Ed Gondolf for the afternoon six years ago, as the accreditation system was in the final stages of piloting and revisions. We were very well aware of the gaps in rigorous, academically accepted research on the impact of UK programmes and wanted to benefit from the experience Ed had had of setting up and carrying out his multi-site programme in the US. Six years on, the Mirabal project is now just over a year from completion. It started through a Respect initiated pilot project, funded by Lankelly Chase and Northern Rock Foundations and moved into an independent research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the original two funders. The researchers Professor Liz Kelly and Professor Nicole Westmarland report on progress in this newsletter here. The Mirabal project has been a strong and challenging process for us all. We've valued the paper the researchers produced from the first stage of the project (Westmarland et al, 2010, available on our website) and look forward to more. During the last few months we have been delighted to hear that Nicole has now become Professor Westmarland and we wish to extend our congratulations to her here – well done Nicole, it's great that your skills and understanding have been recognised.

As well as the update on the Mirabal project, Nicole and her colleagues have contributed an article on domestic violence and smart phones – looking both at ways the technology of apps on smart phones can be used to abuse and how it might be used to intervene.

Work with female perpetrators

This is a newer area of work in the UK and knowledge about what to do and how to do it is still developing. We are currently sharing information with researchers at Manchester University, combining information from calls to the Respect Phoneline from women using Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) with further research from a PhD student there, supervised by Professor David Gadd, who replaced our colleagues Russell and Rebecca Dobash when they retired a few years ago. Professor Gadd is also working with us in other ways – see below.

Helping male victims

Our Men's Advice Line has taken thousands of calls from male victims since it started. For the last three years we have been documenting each call in real time using an online database we developed as a team, combining the experience of the helpline workers and manager with my experience of setting up and maintaining the REDAMOS purpose built database for DVPPs (if you are interested in REDAMOS get in touch).

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We use the data for monitoring of course but also analyse it to form part of the basis for the knowledge underpinning our toolkit for work with male victims. Practitioners using the toolkit have reported that they find this information really helpful. We have recently updated this to include more analysis of what help callers ask for (Respect, 2013) but we know there is still a great deal to learn from our data and from male victims. We are exploring this with Dave Gadd and colleagues at Manchester University – Dave wrote one of the earliest papers in the UK on male victimisation (Gadd, 2002) and has continued to help us with our developing understanding of men's needs. We want to find out what male victims want, what helps them to be safe, what help they prefer and so on. We will report back as this work develops.

Our partnership with Bristol University has developed significantly partly as a result of our strong involvement in the PROVIDE research led by Professor Gene Feder at the School of Social and Community Medicine and involving Professor Marianne Hester and Dr Emma Williamson in the Centre for Gender and Violence Research, both at Bristol University.

Interventions for young people

The development of evidence for work with young people using violence is still in its infancy. Tracking people who have been through an adult programme is tricky enough – tracking young people even trickier, as researchers have already found. However, the Manchester University research on young men and their understanding of domestic violence is helpful and the Boys To Men project participated in our recent Young people's work event in London, bringing researchers and practitioners to together on this important work. I will be speaking at the launch of Boys to Men research report in November in Manchester (contact me if you would like information about this event or research) and also exploring with Dave and his team other ways of us combining the knowledge and experience of practitioners and researchers on how best to respond to women who use IPV.

Practitioners and research

Understandably, practitioners often get frustrated at what they see as a lack of understanding of the detail and the complex impact of what we do. Nina George, an experienced practitioner with men and women, has reflected on this for us. In these tough times it is also hard for programmes to contemplate commissioning or paying for their own research and in any case, small scale research usually has too few participants to come to any firm conclusions. Furthermore, it appears to me that funders are often asking for monitoring on impacts which are tangential or additional potential benefits, rather than our core aims. For example, improved communication skills for men who have participated in programmes is nice, but is rarely a core aim of the work, nor is it sufficient for or equivalent to cessation of violence and abuse. Reductions in levels of risk can be tricky to measure, particularly with men referred by Cafcass who haven't been in contact with their ex-partner for some time and therefore frequently score low on the CAADA-DASH risk identification checklist at start and finish.

However, our exciting DAPHNE project working with our European partners in Germany, Spain and Austria aims to help with these problems! The team is reviewing a wide range of research, including the qualitative and small scale research as well as larger pieces of work – Dr Katarzyna Wojnicka reports here. We are also reviewing how programmes currently carry out internal evaluations and the capability to develop this. This includes me reviewing our REDAMOS database with the projects who use this purpose built client information and outcome system we developed for UK services. Finally, we are using this and our experience of research and practice (we are a mixed group of researchers, men's and women's workers) to develop a rigorous and (hopefully!) easy to use DIY evaluation toolkit. This toolkit will allow programmes to use a straightforward system for data entry and assistance with analysis, plus to upload data to a shared EU wide database of different programmes so we can all learn more about the impact of different approaches as well as combine findings.

Gender and intimate partner violence

Since the start of the domestic violence movement in the 1970s there has been controversy and often deeply felt debate about the connections between gender and intimate partner violence. This has often led to accusations of bias, misunderstanding about the nature of evidence, and misleading information about domestic violence interventions. In a recent exchange in an academic journal for psychologists, Jo Todd and I have been trying to correct

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some of these, by making it clear, for example, that we do (and always have) responded appropriately to female perpetrators on our Respect Phoneline and to male victims on our Men's Advice Line. If you want to read the series of articles in this exchange, contact me on Thangam.debbonaire@respect.uk.net. Our colleague Calvin Bell from Ahimsa Safer Families risk assessment project has written a review of research about gender and intimate partner violence for this newsletter.

I have collected many articles on this topic which you are welcome to request (try to ask for a specific topic or question if you can).

Conclusion

The gender debate rages as does the debate about so-called "evidence-based practice" (contact me if you want more on either topic). These will probably continue to rage for some time, whether or not we engage in this directly.

However, what matters most to us at Respect is not whether or not there are male victims and female perpetrators – clearly there are – nor do we consider it our role to engage endlessly in debates about the extent to which the proportions are, or are not, equal. We are glad that other researchers are doing this and we continue to work with researchers who want to discuss this with us or use our data from our advice lines to explore what this looks like in reality. Researchers please contact me if you want to discuss this. We most want to be part of developing good and useful evidence on what helps to change the situation – how do we best help male victims? What's different about responding to men compared to responding to women? What works best for helping male and female perpetrators to stop being abusive? How far do our training courses reflect current knowledge? How can practitioners make use of research and how can researchers work more collaboratively with practitioners? What impact does all of this have on policy making and funding for domestic violence interventions?

These are the questions which occupy us most. Over the next 15 months I aim to have completed our DAPHNE project DIY evaluation toolkit, established or consolidated productive collaborations with various academic institutions, supported the Mirabal project to completion and updated all our training courses and briefing papers to reflect current knowledge on our core topics. I am delighted that so many practitioners and researchers are taking part in these processes – if you want to be more involved, get in touch.

As always, we welcome feedback and debate. If you are on twitter, please make sure you are following us on @RespectUK and encourage others to do so – it's becoming a good way of keeping in touch with the latest developments in research, our training and events. Email me with any requests for copies of specific research papers or on particular topics and do let me know what you think of the inclusion of research papers in the resources packs you will be getting for our training courses from this Autumn onwards (book now to avoid disappointment – places filling up fast for all courses!).

Thangam Debbonaire, Respect Research Manager

Thangam.debbonaire@respect.uk.net

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Update from Project Mirabal

Research looking at what domestic violence perpetrator programmes add to coordinated community responses

Nicole Westmarland and the project Mirabal team

For those who have not met us yet, we are a research team based at London Metropolitan University, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Durham University (led by Professors Liz Kelly, Charlotte Watts, and Nicole Westmarland correspondingly). A few years ago we were funded by the Northern Rock Foundation and the Economic and Social Research Council to conduct research on the above topic. There are several strands to our research and we have been publishing work as we have gone along. So far we have published a paper in SAFE about women's workers views on DVPPs; an article in the British Journal of Social Work about the need to broaden understandings of 'success'; and an article in Child Abuse Review about the need for services for, and accountability to, the children of men on domestic violence perpetrator programmes. We have a paper forthcoming about the ethics of doing research in the area of domestic violence, where we argue that research ethics should be considered as a process not as a one off event. If you would like access to any of these articles please email our project secretary Pauline.harrison@durham.ac.uk who will be happy to send you hard or electronic versions.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of longitudinal research and the ongoing nature of the qualitative elements of the research, we will have few findings until later in the research process (all research will be completed and reported on by end of 2014).

For now, we are able to share an excerpt from the forthcoming briefing note on domestic violence perpetrator programmes and children and young people. It is linked to a finding that has been known by many individual workers 'on the ground' for a long time, but that we feel is important to properly document as it came through so strongly in the research interviews with the 13 DVPP staff conducted by Sue Alderson.

The sessions on the impact of domestic violence on children and fathering were linked to men's motivation to change.

The work currently undertaken by non-criminal justice DVPPs include specific modules promoting safe and child focused parenting. This work is informed by an understanding that firstly, it is not possible to be a 'good' parent whilst perpetrating domestic violence. Secondly, women's abilities to mother their children are undermined by ongoing abuse (Respect 2012). The interviews with DVPP staff showed enthusiasm about the huge impact that these specific sessions can have on men's motivation to change. Specifically they were thought to:

- increase men's awareness of child centred fathering;
- help to improve parenting skills;
- develop men's capacity to understand the impact of their violence on their children.

DVPP staff reported that the sessions on the impact of domestic violence on children appear to have a profound effect on many men.

> **They [sessions on children] have a massive impact on the men, and they are shocked at what they have done to their children.**
>
> **DVPP children's support worker**

Staff reported that many men start off under the illusion that their children are somehow 'protected' from the impact of their violence. A common strategy within these programme sessions is to ask men to reflect on their own childhoods and any experiences of domestic violence within this.

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> I think they get an awakening when they do the [children's] module on the programme. When they can see themselves as they were as children or see what they are doing to their children, then that is a wakeup call… It does reduce some of the men to tears. It gets them to think 'That was me as a child'. It's not in their consciousness and it's shocked the back of the mind. It's a trigger to memory and it gets them to realise.
>
> DVPP women's worker

This was not only the case in relation to young children, but also for adult children in some cases.

> One man has started talking to his grown up son about the violence and now they have a much better relationship. This guy is in his 50s and he has been a domestic abuse perpetrator all those years. He knows now what he's done to his child.
>
> DVPP men's worker

Within the groupwork, men are often encouraged to talk about their children, in particular how they feel each child has been affected by the violence. Workers considered that talking about each child in turn, and the effects of domestic violence on them specifically, was a catalyst to reflect on range and depth of impacts of their behaviour.

> Children often look up to their dad and often he is their role model. One man told us that his child just used to smash everything to bits. While he had never admitted it to himself before, he knew deep down that it was because of him.
>
> DVPP children's support worker

One groupwork session involved the men's worker working together with the children's support worker by asking the children in the children's support group 'What would you say to a person who was abusive to you?'

> There were responses like 'Why did you do it?', 'Go away you shit', 'I don't want to ever see you again', 'Are you going to change?', 'Why should I believe you, because you said it before?', 'Don't make promises you can't keep, don't say you are going to visit unless you mean it', 'Don't blame mum, it's your fault'.
> These are statements from kids who are supposed to know nothing about the domestic abuse going on in their home! The children also say things like 'when you visit don't ask us questions about mum'. These are all real statements from children and we use these in our sessions with the men. Real is much better than anything that is made up and they have an impact.
>
> DVPP men's worker

Workers noted that while men's initial motivation to attend was often due to pressure from children's social services/partners', as the programme progressed to the specific sessions on children, men seemed more intrinsically motivated to engage. They argued that the new found awareness functioned as a means for men to improve their relationship with their children and to generally become a 'better father'. These sessions were understood as simultaneously addressing child-centred parenting and men's use of violence.

The full briefing note will be published Autumn 2013

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The From Boys to Men Project Roadshow comes to the Respect Young People's Service Annual Conference

Dave Gadd

Over the last three years the ESRC funded Boys to Men Project has been looking at the question of why some young men become domestic abuse perpetrators. The study has involved: a survey of 1200 13-14 year olds in schools; 13 focus groups with 69 young people addressed in part to the Home Office This is Abuse Campaign film; and in-depth biographical interviews with 30 young men who have direct experiences of domestic abuse as perpetrators, victims and/or as witnesses to violence between adult carers. The project has found surprisingly high rates of domestic abuse victimization and perpetration among young teenagers, amidst quite contradictory attitudes towards it.

Professor David Gadd, who has led the project, has been sharing the findings with key stakeholders to ascertain what recommendations should follow from the research. Over the last three months findings have been shared with the Home Office and in the Scottish and Welsh Governments. Over the summer the project's findings have also been shared with the NSPCC, Ending Violence Against Women Coalition and at the Respect Young People's Service Annual Conference. They will also be presented at the conference on Domestic Violence and Intersectionality being hosted at the University of Onati in the Basque Country. Three sets of findings from the project can be downloaded for free on the From Boys to Men website www.boystomenproject.com or are available in hardcopy from joanna.bragg@manchester.ac.uk. The presentation of the project's findings will also be available as a video on the website shortly Professor Gadd would very much welcome responses from the RESPECT Network if members wish to comment on the findings or input into its recommendations.

Lies, damn lies, oh and then there's the statistics....

A Personal View by Nina George

I have a love/hate relationship with clichés. Sorry I mean research.

Of course I use research and experience it as incredibly valuable at times. Statistical research can be vital when making the case for just how widespread violence against women is - which, for some strange reason, appears to still be needed. It can also be massively useful when those who you need to influence are not impressed by anything other than shiny numbers. More experience-led research can be great at moving all of our understandings forward and for use in practice. The most recent concept I am in love with is 'space for action' (a term developed by the Mirabal research project – see Westmarland and co, 2010) which is a concept I am embracing in terms of thinking about how to evaluate our domestic violence prevention programme for abusive/violent men (DVPP) against the improvements it makes to women's abilities to make their own decisions about how they live.

On the other hand, research on experience can sometimes feel like nothing more than logic and only really tell us what we already know. And yes, I will admit to some frustration at having someone listen to a researcher because of their supposed 'authority' whereas they'll dismiss people's experiences as being too emotionally biased and practitioner's views as not being 'relevant enough' somehow. And if another PhD student speaks to me about wanting to research the 'hidden' face of domestic violence, I might very well scream.

Then there's the numbers issue. Numbers are often treated as somehow 'clean', 'pure' and 'truthful' and definitely not tainted by the subject misleading the researcher. My main worry about this is that I feel that we have to be so careful when we talk to people about the subject of interpersonal violence. Research often appears to assume that we have to take on board whatever the interview subject tells us.

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Now, this is a great idea when listening to individuals who have been on the receiving end of abuse and who are or have been under-represented, unheard or undervalued. It gives great information, helps us see how widespread a problem may be and (if done right) can even be empowering to the participants. However, can we extend this courtesy when asking people if they've been violent?

I remember overhearing Ellen Pence answer someone's question to her about identifying the predominant aggressor in a same sex relationship, which was 'usually the one who says they didn't do it'. Now this, as well as being a fabulous example of her wit, is also significant in terms of us understanding what happens when we get accused of or are caught out doing something we know we shouldn't be doing. Even if this knowledge is on a subconscious level.

A bit like me when, a lot younger I hasten to add, I advised my brother of three that it would be a great idea for him to draw some figures on the hallway wall, and helpfully handed him some crayons. Obviously when tackled about this by my mum, I could, again helpfully I imagine, point to him as the culprit. Not an example that compares to the seriousness of violence, but if I could work that one out and set it up at the age of seven, then adults are going to have no trouble with similar or more complex mental processes of avoidance of blame – maybe because they are entrenched cultural ways of being that start at that age or younger.

Many a man will tell me that he only acted in self-defence or to protect 'his' children in some way.

Many of the men I see for DVPP assessments are fixated on denying or justifying to avoid the glare of shame (amongst other things). Many a man will tell me that he only acted in self-defence or to protect 'his' children in some way. And younger women are often saying that they 'give as good as they get'. When you look into this, most times what they give is far from 'as good as they get' but, such is the stigma of being a 'victim', some women will tell themselves and others this line. Of course, denial and justification play out very different roles in the victimised and the victimiser.

Shame (and its stigma) is a very different thing for those who abuse rather than those who are abused. They can also be expressed differently depending on your cultural background. I rarely hear about self-defence from black men I've spoken to (although they have been fewer in numbers). Also, what becomes acceptable to say changes over time as culture changes. I used to hear many more women using the coping mechanisms of flat out denial rather than saying 'I do it too'.

What I feel that we need to remember is that everything in this arena is value-laden. Those responsible often take no responsibility and those on the receiving end take it all. This is seriously going to mess up your research if you're not careful.

I have been wondering lately if we have had as much from the numbers as we're going to get. Although I'm not predicting any great love-ins between the 'family violence' and 'violence against women' agendas anytime soon, what I would like to see a lot more of is researchers exploring more than the numbers. I want more on the ins and outs of not only what people are doing to each other and how they present it to themselves and us, but what it means to our practice. What do we do? How do we help people sort this out? Especially how do we help them to move beyond the shame and take the appropriate amount of responsibility?

So, what are my suggestions for a way forward? Well, maybe us practitioners could give up thinking about researchers as only ever being in their ivory towers and offer up our programmes as places where research can take place... and maybe researchers could come and ask us what focus of enquiry would be useful to our work.... I would love to see some action research or some institutional ethnography (exploring the social relations of our lives) based projects – although you would have thought they could have come up with a snappier title for something that is about including people.

What I would love to see is research that involves us all – the researcher, the practitioner and the people on our programmes. And this may not be as equals but at least as acknowledged partners.

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European work to support domestic violence perpetrator programmes

Katarzyna Wojnicka, Dissens, Berlin

In 2013 RESPECT's partner organisation from Berlin (Germany), Dissens – Institut für Bildung und Forschung e.V. (https://www.facebook.com/dissens.de?fref=ts) is conducting two European projects with the focus on reducing domestic violence against women and children mainly through work with male perpetrators.

The aim of the first project, research project EVALUATION OF EUROPEAN PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES – IMPACT (Daphne III), is to enhance and harmonize the outcome monitoring of European programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence. As the knowledge about the evaluation of perpetrator programmes in Europe is not deep enough, IMPACT project's team strives to fill this knowledge gap and offer solutions towards a harmonisation of outcome monitoring. Among the project's activities: conducting online quantitative survey (online questionnaire link https://www.soscisurvey.de/impact/index.php?l=eng&q=IMP) as well as preparation of evaluation toolkit for perpetrator programmes and manual. Hopefully you havc all completed the survey by now! The project's results will be disseminated by a website, specialised European and national networks, workshops and the final conference in Barcelona in October 2014.

For more information contact the project manager: Dr Katarzyna Wojnicka (katarzyna.wojnicka@dissens.de)

The second project is connected to management of the WORK WITH PERPETRATORS – EUROPEAN NETWORK. With support from the European Commission funding (Operating Grant) the network has been recently reactivated. The WWP – EN is a network of people whose aim is to prevent and to reduce the impact of male violence mainly through work with perpetrators. One of the most important activities is the organisation of Annual Network Workshop. From 29 November until 1 December 2013 participants from nearly all Member States of the European Union will meet and discuss in Berlin/Erkner, Germany. The main topic of the meeting will be concentrated on the question of violence roots. Another activities are to maintain Social Media activities and discussions (eg. https://www.facebook.com/WwpEuropeanNetwork) as well as relaunching of the network's website (http://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu) in Autumn 2013 where detailed information about the Network's activities will be provided.

For more information or to book a place on the workshop contact Project Manager: David Nax (david.nax@dissens.de)

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What are the gender differences, if any, in domestic violence?

Calvin Bell, Ahimsa (Safer Families) Ltd

Despite over 40 years of intense research by academics and passionate debate among practitioners, the field still has a long way to go before arriving at a consensus on even some of the most basic facts to do with domestic violence/abuse; a causal theory providing sufficient explanatory power remains as elusive as ever; politicisation of the debate and polarisation of positions continue to hamper progress; and empirical studies often produce inconsistent and apparently contradictory results.[1] One of the most controversial issues is whether or not domestic violence in heterosexual couples is a fundamentally gendered phenomenon. The 'gender-neutral' and 'power, control and patriarchy' narratives of opposing camps have led to vitriolic exchanges (and an anti-feminist backlash). To argue their case, each side marshals evidence to support their position, dismisses data that do not, enlists others who support their cause, publishes in sympathetic journals, and fails to acknowledge the motives and ideology that underpin their work.

Do women enact and initiate violence and verbal aggression as often as men?

The dominant feminist discourse holds that sexual inequality at a personal and societal level and unequal gender roles within the nuclear family are the best organising variables for understanding domestic violence/abuse, and that most violence in intimate heterosexual relationships is committed by men.[2] On the other hand, so-called 'gender-neutral' commentators reject the proposition that domestic violence/abuse is fundamentally gendered, arguing that it occurs not primarily because of sexism, if at all, but because of other extrinsic factors such as stress resulting from poverty, poor housing, racism and social class inequalities (which means that multiply disadvantaged women are particularly vulnerable), and intrinsic factors such as substance abuse, skills deficits, innate aggression, attachment problems and personality disorders.[3] Some authors go so far as to claim that the male dominance theory for domestic violence has persisted and women's violence been marginalised for so long because feminist campaigners have conspired to conceal, deny and distort the empirical evidence.[4] Others posit that women's advocates have denied or minimised the existence of women's violence to men for fear of fuelling a backlash and undermining the hard-won gains of getting men's violence against women to be taken seriously.[5]

As early as the 1950s, claims were made in the literature about the extent of women's violence to men,[6] although Steinmetz's small-scale study of 1978 is usually attributed with the first 'discovery' of the so-called 'battered husband' syndrome. Since then, hundreds of epidemiological surveys and large-scale studies by well-respected researchers from the fields of sociology, criminology, forensic, clinical and family psychology, psychiatry, social work, family therapy, public health and medicine have provided compelling evidence that in the general population of westernised countries at least, adult and teenage women enact and initiate partner-directed violence and abuse at rates that are equivalent to, or even higher than, men's.[7]

For example, though criticised for not examining sexual assault, stalking and coercive control, after analysing extensive data from 52 nations, and using several different analytic methods, Archer concluded that women's violence in relationships was highly correlated with the degree of sexual equality in each country. As equality increased, there was less female victimisation and more male victimisation. In western nations, where women's emancipation tends to be more advanced, women were slightly more likely to use violence against their male partners than the converse (although women were injured more often).[8] This is consistent with other research that shows a substantial rise in the level of general violence by western women, especially young women.[9]

Women's violence overstated?

However, feminist scholars and practitioners assert that the extent of heterosexual women's violence and abuse has been grossly exaggerated, and prevalence findings have been poorly understood, and misrepresented, especially by the media and 'men's rights' activists, whose portrayal of women as just as violent as men seems to have more to do with contesting feminist analyses of power and gender than understanding the issue.[10] It has also been argued that the 'women-do-it-too' statistics have been exploited to

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suggest that female abusers are somehow more responsible for their crimes than their male counterparts, and that it is somehow worse for a woman to be violent than a man.[11]

Moreover, the methodologies employed in much of the research suggesting gender parity in violence perpetration have been hotly contested by feminist commentators. In particular, the quantitative approaches relied upon in so many prevalence studies have been criticised for ignoring women's experiences and obscuring meaning.[12] There has also been widespread criticism of the original and revised versions of the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS),[13] which have been used in most of the large-scale incidence and prevalence studies; the CTS exclude measures to evaluate the meaning, motive, context, pattern and history of aggressive acts; the CTS concentrate on the perpetrator's actions at the expense of their impact and consequences; the default referent period of the CTS is 12 months (which makes it hard to detect patterns of abuse over time); the CTS omit financial control, isolating behaviours, stalking, homicide and others acts that are known to affect women far more than men; the CTS fail to tap acts of aggression that occur after separation (a time of particular vulnerability for many women); inter-respondent reliability is poor, with members of the same couple rarely giving concordant responses.[14]

However, criticisms of the CTS have been fervently rebutted by their supporters, who acknowledge some of their weaknesses but claim that the CTS remain the best instrument available and that no other measure meets their standards of validity and reliability.[15] Not all the studies that indicate similar levels of violent and aggressive acts for men and women have employed the CTS: some have used face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, crime survey and case file analyses, and sophisticated study designs.[16] When alternative measures are employed in representative samples, findings parallel those produced with the CTS.[17] Other authors assert that feminist researchers have themselves relied upon studies employing the CTS or similar scales when investigating women's victimisation, and accuse them of using the CTS when it suits them and criticising it when it does not.[18]

Of course, methodological criticism is not a one-way street, and feminist research has been censured for over-reliance on women's self-report (much as men do, women tend to under-report their own violence),[19] the use of small and highly selected (ie, non-representative) samples (therefore producing biased results, which cannot be generalised to the population as a whole), and collecting data about both men's and women's violence, but reporting only the former.[20]

Johnson suggests that the sampling designs from both sides of the gender debate are "seriously flawed".[21] For her part, Oakley also stresses the need to close and move beyond the "paradigm war" that has existed between quantitative and qualitative approaches, and she argues for adopting the most appropriate method for the study in hand.[22] It is clear that, as yet, there is no gold standard for measuring domestic violence. When examining domestic violence, it is also worth remembering that many couples affected simply do not fit the binary perpetrator/victim construction adopted by most practitioners. (The limitations of such an approach have been demonstrated by empirical and theoretical research into the 'victim-offender overlap' in other fields, as well as in domestic violence.[23])

Motives

Feminist scholars maintain that important distinctions need to be made between heterosexual men's and women's violence, and the latter needs to be understood in the wider context of sexual inequality and women's victimisation by their partners. Much research into women's partner-directed violence concludes that it is either self-defensive (or defensive of their children), retaliatory or pre-emptive: a reaction to their partner's violence, abuse or control and an active effort to resist domination attempts - the so-called violence of resistance, rather than an attempt to exert control, as exhibited by violent men in attempts to fulfil their patriarchal expectations of entitlement to domestic, sexual and emotional services from women.[24] However, Dasgupta (2001) reminds us that to compartmentalise women's motives for engaging in violent behaviour towards a partner as either self-defensive or retaliatory is to disregard the complexities of women's lives. Some commentators do acknowledge large variations in women's motives but still conceptualise women's violence as reactive/expressive, a response

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to dependence, frustration, fear or stress, rather than instrumental, and an attempt to control or dominate their partner.[25]

However, claims of self-defence and reactive aggression have in turn been rebutted by others in the field who point to numerous studies in which women self-report initiating unprovoked assaults against their male partners, and many others in which women outnumber men among those who report being the sole perpetrator of partner-directed violence, which cannot by definition be self-defensive.[26] For example, in a study of 11,370 young adults aged 18-28 in the US, Whitaker's team found that of the non-reciprocally violent relationships, women reported being the sole perpetrators in more than 70% of the cases.[27]

In an earlier study, rates of domestic violence were examined from interviews with 2,143 nationally representative, 'intact' families in the US; of the couples reporting any violence, approximately half involved violent acts by both partners; there was little difference between men and women in the rates of unilateral violence (ie, where only one partner was violent).[28] Anderson studied 7,395 married and cohabiting heterosexual couples in the US; in cases that involved violence by only one partner, more women than men were perpetrators.[29] In a general population study of British adults, a cross-sectional sample of 2,027 adults was interviewed regarding their experience with partner aggression: 24% reported being the sole perpetrator; women were more likely to report this than men.[30]

In another UK study comprising women residing at Women's Aid refuges and their partners, male and female students, men attending male treatment programmes for domestic violence and their partners, and male prisoners and their partners, in one-sided assaults, women were more likely to be the sole perpetrator than men.[31] In a later analysis of the same data set, the authors also emphasise that a significant minority of the women involved met Johnson's criteria for 'intimate terrorist'.[32]

Unsurprisingly in view of these results, many researchers have found proactive/instrumental as well as reactive/expressive motives for women's, although Bushman et al caution that the distinction between instrumental and reactive violence is a false one.[33] Women's motives commonly cited include: not being able to get their partner's attention, jealousy, anger, retribution ("getting even"), "proving" their love, wanting to feel empowered and to adopt a "tough guise", control (making their partner do things they wanted), trying to frighten their partner, and not knowing what else to do with their feelings.[34] Some commentators cite this as evidence that women's motives for using violence and abuse are very similar to men's.[35]

Impact

Feminist scholars posit that large-scale prevalence studies commonly treat data out of context by failing to consider the meaning and impact of the behaviour being measured, factors that are crucial when theorising domestic violence among different populations. Whatever the extent and motives of violent women, Williamson maintains that the impact of domestic abuse within heterosexual relationships varies with the research method employed; she demonstrates how methodologically rigorous and representative prevalence research that also measures the impact and duration of domestic abuse can produce significant gender differences,[36] men's violence typically having a far greater capacity to induce fear, and being far more severe and more often lethal.[37] A woman's use of violence is also predictive of injurious violence perpetration on the part of her partner (which is not the same for men).[38]

However, even this is contested by some gender-neutral commentators, who claim that women inflict high levels of unilateral violence on male partners, and that the physical and psychological ill effects of women's violence have been greatly underestimated and should not be viewed as trivial, humorous or merely annoying, as suggested by some feminist authors and in popular culture.[39] For example, in a huge Canadian study, more men than women reported fearing for their lives and being unilaterally terrorised by their partners.[40] The first study to provide a systematic, quantitative description of the experiences of a large sample of men who had sought help because of domestic violence victimisation also found that their female abusers matched Johnson's description of the 'intimate partner terrorist', having reportedly employed extensive controlling behaviours, severe physical violence (often resulting in injury to the man) and sexual aggression.[41]

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Others argue that any variation in injury between men and women is better explained by size and strength differences than gender per se; at least in incidents in which weapons are not involved, the person with superior physical power (especially upper body strength) is much more likely to be the one who intimidates and controls the other during heated conflict, and to cause injury if violence occurs.[42]

Nevertheless, even among those who claim that men and women use violence and abuse against each with equal frequency and for similar reasons, many acknowledge that women are more likely than men to suffer serious physical harm.[43]

When women are reciprocally violent or they are the primary aggressors within a heterosexual relationship, their role does not neatly reflect that of violent men. For a substantial minority of women, their partner's violence and abuse continue after the relationship has ended,[44] and it is the very period during and following a couple's separation that poses the greatest threat of physical harm to such women (especially when it is the woman who has initiated the end of the relationship, and she is a younger woman with children who has left her violent partner for another man).[45] Women also face sexual discrimination not experienced by men, and women's violence is not underpinned by traditional power relationships within the family or supported by institutional structures.[46]

Same-sex domestic violence

Thinking about the gendered dimensions of domestic violence is also confounded by the high levels of interpersonal violence and abuse reported within the relationships of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans-gender (LGBT) people, an issue which some commentators posit has been neglected in both policy and practice). Of course, the LGBT population is not homogeneous,[47] which means that LGBT communities need to be studied and assessed differently;[48] definitional thresholds for domestic violence also differ, and incidence and prevalence rates vary considerably across studies.[49] Some authors impugn the validity of prevalence extrapolations for same sex couples, arguing that researchers are forced to draw upon small, self-selected samples in a culture where homophobia compels many same-sex couples to conceal their identities; the homophobic climate has also tended to deter the LGBT communities from examining domestic violence, fearing that recognition of the problem would be used to validate stereotypes about LGBT relationships.[50] Nevertheless, the preponderance of the research suggests that the frequency and severity of domestic violence among LGBT couples are as high as within heterosexual couples; some say even higher.[51]

Some commentators have appealed for the work already undertaken with heterosexual domestic violence to be used as a starting point in studying domestic violence in the LGBT communities, but warned that uncritical comparisons to heterosexual experience are misleading; they say that trying to fit analyses from LGBT relationships into the heterosexual male/female dyad only serves only to mystify the issue further.[52] Others have challenged the gendered (and allegedly heterosexist) assumptions of popular (white) feminist theory, arguing that domestic violence is not a gendered issue at all.[53]

On the gender debate, the jury is likely to stay out for some time to come. However, although there are risks associated with reducing the issue to one of yes or no, there are powerful arguments that when the following factors are taken into account, if gender symmetry exists at all, it is only in the narrowest sense, and if women are said to be just as violent as men, it is at best an oversimplification:[54]

- size and strength differences (which favour men)
- pregnancy, childbirth, gender roles and the division of labour (in which women continue to bear most child care responsibility)
- financial and other structural inequalities (which make it hard for women to impose the comprehensive regime of domination enforced by some men)
- variation in motives
- the co-occurrence of other forms of aggression (eg, sexual abuse and financial control)

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- coercive control and proprietorial behaviour
- prolonged beatings and repeated assaults by the same partner
- the greater capacity of men's violence to elicit fear
- the severity of physical and emotional/psychological injury inflicted
- separation and post-separation violence, harassment and stalking
- the use of medical, mental health and other support services, and time lost from work
- the loss of trust in a relationship
- forced marriage and so-called 'honour-based' violence
- repeat victimisation by different partners
- homicide and familicide.

Typologies

One source that holds promise for making sense of the competing data and for developing a gender-inclusive theory of domestic violence is typology research and the now considerable body of literature on the huge variability in the profiles of domestic violence 'perpetrators' and 'victims' and of violent/abusive relationships themselves.[55] There is strong evidence to suggest that opposing researchers and activists have often been studying different populations.[56]

The issue of typology research remains controversial (but much less contentious than the issue of gender); findings are not always replicated; some commentators argue that it might be better to describe domestic violence using multiple dimensions rather than constructing discrete categories; there are fears that findings will be misused (with opposing sides of the gender debate drawing from them to support their cause).[57] There is also only limited consensus on distinct categories of partner-violent men. Typology research may also have to grapple with the instability of some sub-types – for example, longitudinal data from the seminal study undertaken by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart in 2004 suggest that the level and type of 'husband violence' may differ over time.[58] Nevertheless, most studies lend support for the prototypical cluster types proposed by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart, and there is a compelling case for the existence of different types of partner-violent men and women, and of violent relationships themselves. There is therefore emerging consensus that domestic violence is not a unitary phenomenon,[59] and even some of the most devout feminist commentators recognise that 'not all violence is the same'.[60]

For example, although most of the cases they saw fell within the first two categories, Pence and Dasgupta (2006) proposed five different categories of domestic violence:

- Battery: an ongoing pattern of abuse, intimidation, control, coercion and violence to establish and maintain dominance over a partner.
- Resistive/reactive violence: the use of self-defensive, retaliatory or pre-emptive violence in response to battery.
- Situational violence: the use of violence by one or both partners in the context of isolated power struggles, jealousy or other incidents of conflict.
- Pathological violence: the use of violence in the context of problems to do with mental health, substance use or neurological impairment.
- Anti-social violence: violence that is generalised and not targeted at a particular partner or gender - usually a product of adversity in childhood.

In an attempt to develop a typology of violent women, Swan and Snow (2002) recruited a sample of 108 women who reported using violence against their male partners within the preceding six months. Reportedly, almost all the women committed high levels of emotional abuse and moderate physical violence, 57% committed severe violence, 54% injured their partners, 28%

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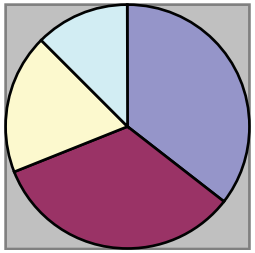
used sexual coercion, and 86% used some form of coercive control. All the women nevertheless reported that they had experienced at least one act of physical aggression by their partners during the referent period, and many of the men had used significantly more sexual coercion, coercive control, injurious and severe physical violence. Based on information provided by the women, their relationships were classified as 'victim type', 'aggressor type' or 'mixed type' – see the diagram below. The 'victim' group (34%) comprised women whose partners had committed more of every type of violence than they had, and who reported employing equal or greater moderate violence and emotional abuse, but whose partners had reportedly committed more severe violence and coercion (suggesting 'violent resistance').

The next, 'mixed' group (32%) comprised women who reported being equally or more violent than their partners, but whose partners were more coercive. The other 'mixed' group (18%) comprised women who were more coercive than their partners (who were reportedly equally or more violent). The final group (12%) comprised women who reported committing more of every type of violence than their partners, and women who committed more severe violence and coercion with partners who committed just as much moderate violence and emotional abuse. These results highlight the complexity of many violent relationships, the need to examine women's violence and abuse in the context of their partner's behaviour, and the implications for children living in such households.

For their part, Kelly and Johnson (2008) recognised five types of domestic violence based on the motivation of the perpetrator, the pattern of violence, and the power dynamic within the relationship:



- Coercive-controlling violence: (the type described in most of the feminist literature) previously described by Johnson in 2006 as 'intimate terrorism'; it involves the use (in heterosexual relationships, usually by men) of multiple tactics of coercion such as emotional abuse, financial control, isolation/confinement, threats, intimidation, sexual aggression and (usually, but not always) physical violence, in an attempt to achieve and maintain general control over a partner and access to domestic, emotional and sexual services.

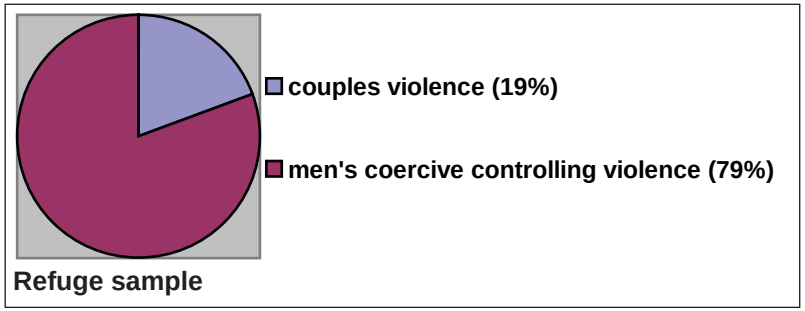
- Violent resistance involves a woman employing self-defensive, retaliatory or pre-emptive violence in response to 'battery' by her partner.

- Situational couple violence shows huge variability; it occurs in the context of isolated power struggles, jealousy or other incidents of conflict; it involves one or both parties using verbal aggression and/or violence, usually (but by no means always) of a minor nature. Women initiate violence and are the sole or primary perpetrator as often as men.

- Separation-instigated violence occurs for the first time in the context of relationship breakdown and separation; the violence is usually, but by no means always, of a minor nature, and is perpetrated by men and women.

- Mutual violent control occurs when both partners employ coercive controlling violence (only found in a small minority of couples).

In Johnson's earlier work drawing on data sets from different samples, he found the following:[61]



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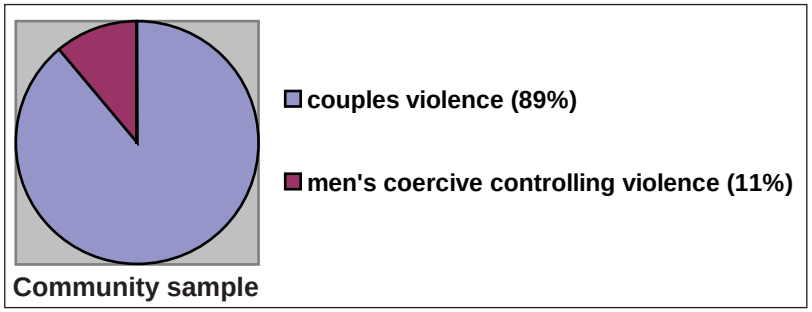


Johnson's findings lend support to the claims of feminist scholars (who have often been studying women from refuge and court samples), but also to social scientists (who have concentrated more on wider community samples).

In their review of the literature, Nicholls and Dutton (2001) concluded that the vast majority of domestic violence is 'minor', with extensive reciprocal violence, and roughly equivalent rates of men and women enacting violence in couples where the violence is unilateral. However, Johnson cautions against assuming that all 'situational couple violence' is minor, and therefore not serious, and he maintains that, although 'coercive controlling violence' is generally the most brutal and severe form, all types of domestic violence can range from intermittent minor acts of violence to a pattern of escalating violent conflict that results in homicidal attacks (especially if substance abuse is involved), so we should not assume that couples violence is not necessarily serious. Of course, if we put children's welfare at the heart of our concerns, their exposure to any form of violence or high-intensity conflict between their carers can have an insidious, damaging and inter-generational effect.

In a more recent research study of 965 US divorcing couples entering court-mandated mediation to resolve disputes over contact/residence, Beck and colleagues (2011) found high levels of self-reported domestic violence. They arrived at somewhat different categories to the types proposed by Kelly and Johnson (2008) above, but there is much overlap. After 'reconceptualising' some of the data in 2012, the team arrived at the following:[62]

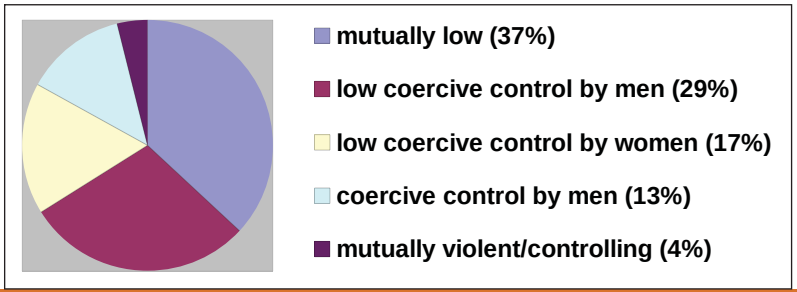
- Mutually low (or none at all in a few cases) (37%) - both mothers' and fathers' self-reported violence and abuse was below the mean on all dimensions: *psychological/emotional abuse, coercive behaviour, physical abuse (ie, minor violence), threatened and escalated (ie, severe) violence, and sexual coercion/assault*.

- Low level coercive controlling violence by men (29%) - according to the mothers' reports: elevated levels of psychological/emotional abuse and coercion by their male partners, and some threatened and escalated (severe) violence and sexual assault; but no elevation on the physical aggression (minor violence) dimension.[63]

- Low level coercive controlling violence by women (17%) - elevations on all dimensions for both men and women, but women's levels were much higher (except for sexual coercion/assault).

- Coercive controlling violence by men (13%) - very high elevations on all dimensions reported by women of their male partners - also elevated physical aggression (minor violence) by the women.

- Mutually violent control (4%) - extremely high elevations on all dimensions reported by both men and women.



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Using computer-assisted telephone interviews in a large-scale, nationally representative study of Canadian heterosexual couples, Ansara and Hindin revealed substantial differences in the subtypes of those who reported domestic violence victimisation by a partner or ex-partner over the preceding five years. Lending further support to both gender-specific and gender-neutral proponents, their study found that men and women were equally likely to experience less severe acts of controlling behaviour, abuse and violence (although women were more likely to suffer injury), but women were far more likely to suffer the most chronic pattern of severe violence, control and sexual coercion.[64]

The need to discriminate

The majority of women subjected to coercive controlling violence by men sooner or later enact violence themselves.[65] Many more women use unilateral or collateral aggression and violence in relationships that are not characterised by huge power differentials. Confusing the former with the latter could be a deadly mistake for the woman and children involved; mistaking the latter for the former risks exculpating the mother, not meeting the needs of the children involved, and intervening ineffectively.[66] It is crucial to avoid falling into the traps of believing that the gender-symmetric pattern of domestic violence found among so many heterosexual couples in the general population applies to all cases, and conversely that the rarer, but typically brutal and very gendered nature of 'coercive-controlling violence' applies to all couples affected by domestic violence; we must discriminate.[67]

Johnson asserts that many academics now consider it no longer scientifically or ethically acceptable to refer to domestic violence without making its type clear. To assess effectively and respond appropriately, especially with children's welfare in mind, we therefore need to establish the type of domestic violence that applies – this means examining the role played by both partners.[68] In the words of Michael Johnson: "We make big mistakes if we don't make big distinctions."[69]

Conclusions

Complexity inevitably permits different interpretations, but my conclusions are that:

1. There are different forms of domestic violence/abuse; these are best understood by examining context and patterns of behaviour, rather than isolated incidents. Examining the relationship dynamic is a better starting point than focusing on the sex of those involved.

2. Many couples affected by domestic violence simply do not fit the binary 'perpetrator/victim' construction adopted by many practitioners, which entails placing men and women into one of only two boxes, and which is often unhelpful as a paradigm for understanding domestic violence (and also tends to exacerbate the polarisation of the gender debate).

3. The major types of domestic violence/abuse differ dramatically in almost all respects; they also have different causal and developmental pathways (community services should be developed that reflect this); knowledge of the structural inequalities of gender and power is essential but not sufficient for understanding these.

4. There is greater similarity in men's and women's motives for acting aggressively against a partner than the dominant feminist discourse acknowledges.

5. In western countries, the majority of violence and abuse between partners is non-gendered, bi-directional and usually (but by no means always) minor, and does not fit the 'power and control' model (but is nonetheless harmful to the children exposed to it).

6. The least prevalent but generally most serious form of domestic violence is 'coercive, controlling violence', which is perpetrated mainly by men.

7. Women are more likely than men to suffer serious ill-effects from domestic violence (of whatever type), including injury and death, both during a relationship and after its dissolution. However, the most vulnerable victims of domestic violence are children (whose needs are often overlooked in the gender debate).

8. Where there is bi-directional violence/abuse (of whatever type), children are especially at risk of harm because of both exposure to violent conflict and subjection to direct maltreatment.[70]

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The type of domestic violence that practitioners are likely to come across will depend heavily on the context in which they work; refuge, criminal justice and men's programme workers are more likely to encounter the most serious form of domestic violence; those working with young adults, college students and in relationship counselling, for example, are more likely to be dealing with couples where the domestic violence is minor (although incidents can escalate, particularly if substance abuse is involved) and reciprocal.

We run big risks by failing to discriminate between the different forms of domestic violence/abuse – women and children will be put at risk if we mistake 'battery' for violent couples conflict, but assuming that all domestic violence conforms to the former will restrict professionals' capacity to recognise other forms of domestic violence that can be at least as damaging for children, and hinder the development of services (which are overwhelmingly directed at the problem of men's violence to women) that meet the needs of all those affected.

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67 The growing publicity about 'victimised husbands' has promoted a climate in which partner-violent men find it all too easy to present themselves as victims. Self-defending and retaliatory victims can sometimes display behaviours which are confusing to the police when called out to intervene. Often a woman feels safe enough to express her anger only once the police are present (by which time her abuser may well appear calm) or she may even express her frustration at the establishment's inability to protect her. Other women resort to the use of weapons to afford protection for themselves or their children, yet are portrayed as the primary aggressor by their abusive partner when the police arrive. In such cases, with pro-arrest policies being increasingly adopted by police authorities and with many male perpetrators petitioning themselves as victims, it is not at all uncommon for the woman (or both parties) to be arrested and charged (see Dasgupta 2001). Dasgupta also points out that such arrests may implicitly impose a distinction between the 'good' victim (passive, helpless, grateful etc) who deserves compassion and protection and the 'bad' victim (angry, aggressive, resistant etc) who deserves punishment. Women arrested in such circumstances may well be reluctant to report their subsequent victimisation to the police. However, women too are increasingly able to exploit the readiness by the police to take cases of domestic violence seriously, and in our practice, many women acknowledge that they make false allegations against their partners, in the knowledge that they are more likely to be believed than the men.
68 Capaldi and Kim 2007, Farmer and Callan 2012, Beck et al 2011, Johnson 2005, 2011, 2008, Graham-Kevan and Archer 2008, Ver Steegh 2005, Jaffe et al 2008, Humphreys et al 2008.
69 Johnson 2011.
70 See, for example, Slep and O'Leary 2005, and Dixon et al 2007.

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Men who use violence and abuse within relationships and smart phones

Nicole Westmarland, Mariann Hardey, Hannah Bows, Dawn Branley, Mehzeb Chowdury, Katie Wheatley and Richard Wistow

Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA)

Professor Westmarland and Dr Mariann Hardey are currently leading a team of researchers exploring the use of smartphone applications ('apps') in relation to domestic and sexual violence. The increase of interactive apps, across international borders, for domestic and sexual violence is a relatively new area, with limited research conducted so far. We are investigating some of the claims made about apps, and considering their use as a method for prevention and protection, and/or misuse and abuse. This is a small scale research study at present and does not claim to be comprehensive, but we felt it was important to start somewhere and hope to conduct a larger programme of research on this topic. This short article describes what an app is, outlines some of the relevant background, and reports the findings as they relate specifically to domestic violence perpetrators.

What exactly is an 'app' anyway?

An 'app', or 'application' is another name for software that is developed to run on smartphones and tablet devices. They are available as software download from an application distribution platform that are operated by the commercial operator of the mobile operating system, the most popular being Apple App Store by Apple, Google Play for Android, Windows Phone Store for Nokia and Blackberry App World for Blackberry. The appeal of apps is that they allow the user to pick and choose additional software they wish to have on their mobile devices, which are designed to be easily accessible at the push of a button.

Before mobile apps, the development of software around domestic and sexual violence was static – for example spoon-feeding information to the user, or completing a quiz to discover whether their current relationship is a healthy or an abusive one. Mobile apps allows for information to be user-specific, based on personal data and interactive. Such apps are designed with claims that they prevent violence occurring before it happens; mainly through secret actions by the user, such as sending group text messages to designated friends, or to be able to call the emergency services or a helpline, if a user feels they are in a vulnerable situation.

Background

There are a number of apps currently available or in development to protect victims or potential victims of sexual and domestic violence. Two of the most well-known ones internationally are called: Circle of 6 (originating in USA) and Aurora (originating in Australia).

In 2011, The White House Office of Science and Technology devised a competition to try and encourage developers to build a mobile app to help stop sexual violence. The winner of the competition, and subsequent other awards, was the Circleof6, with the website strapline of "a free app that prevents violence before it happens". Circleof6 was primarily designed for college students, to be used on campus, and is described as an emergency 'notifier' that allows any user to choose six friends or family members to be able to send a series of pre-entered texts about when and where the user is and to notify their 'circleof6' if they feel that they are in an 'uncomfortable' or 'critical' situation. The app also has pre-programmed information for example, to help users identify what a healthy relationship is, as well as numbers of national response lines and emergency numbers.

In May 2013, a free app designed for domestic violence victims was launched in New South Wales, Australia, called 'Aurora'. Aurora was designed by police and the New South Wales (NSW) Government in response to evidence that the majority of violence was against women and girls in their own home, and victims had fled with only immediate personal belongings such as their mobile phone. The developers of Aurora believe that the app will dramatically reduce incidents of domestic violence in the NSW area, but also enable victims

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that are experiencing domestic violence to make informed and empowered choices. The idea of the app is a multi-layered response for the user that includes, information about the characteristics of abuse that can be obtained anonymously by the user, a messaging tool to enable victims to call for help, again claimed to be private and safe if the user is in a dangerous situation, and a 'message friends' section that allows users to quickly send a text message to a trusted designated friend or family member with a choice of three inbuilt text messages: 'Call me', 'Come and pick me up' and 'Call the police for me'.

Our research

The research consisted of three stages:

1. A systematic search for smartphone applications through website search engines and mobile phone app stores. These included, Google, Apple app store, Google Play for Android and Blackberry World.

2. Ten interviews were conducted with smartphone app developers involved in the development of relevant apps. The interviews centred on the developers' motivation and concept of their smartphone app to protect potential victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, as well as the context for the features, capabilities and potential limitations. Interviews were held with companies that were originally developed in Australia, India, United Kingdom and USA.

3. Eighteen interviews were conducted with practitioners dealing with domestic and sexual violence (including police, women's support organisations, victim support organisations, perpetrator organisations, and women's campaign and coordination groups) from England, Scotland, Canada, New Zealand and Iceland. Each interview lasted around forty minutes and covered interviewees awareness and ideas in relation to domestic and sexual violence victim survivors, perpetrators and campaigning.

Domestic violence perpetrators and apps – use or abuse?

Our research found that the majority of apps currently available are based on 'stranger danger' and panic that is specific to women being left vulnerable in public spaces, rather than being based on what researchers and professional practitioners know about domestic and sexual violence. Unfortunately, we found that advances in mobile technology were also used as weapons of abuse, rather than of transforming the crime prevention landscape. In other words, the majority of apps were more useful for those perpetrating abuse than those experiencing it. We did find some interesting possibilities at the primary prevention and post separation periods, which were innovative in nature and potentially useful, but they had not yet been fully tested and evaluated. In this article we simply report some of these findings as they relate to domestic violence perpetrators.

There are a range of apps being used by domestic violence perpetrators to extend their net of power and control. The app we had most concerns about was one called 'Track Your Wife'. Track Your Wife is a discreet application, which means that it covertly runs in the background of the mobile device that it is installed on. As of August 2013 the app had been downloaded over 10,000 times. The app frequently sends geo-location and time data from Google Maps to the website https://www.trackyourwife.org via Global Positioning System (GPS), wireless internet networks or mobile antennas to a personal account on the main server website, whereby account holders can access information to locate a phone that has the app installed.

Examples were also given of ways that more generic apps, or those that were developed for very different purposes, being adapted by perpetrators to extend their power and control. For example:

- A programme called 'bluebook' available on O2 that copies all text messages onto a server was being used by the perpetrator to increase surveillance on a woman's mobile phone messages.

- A few examples of where perpetrators had offered to make a woman's

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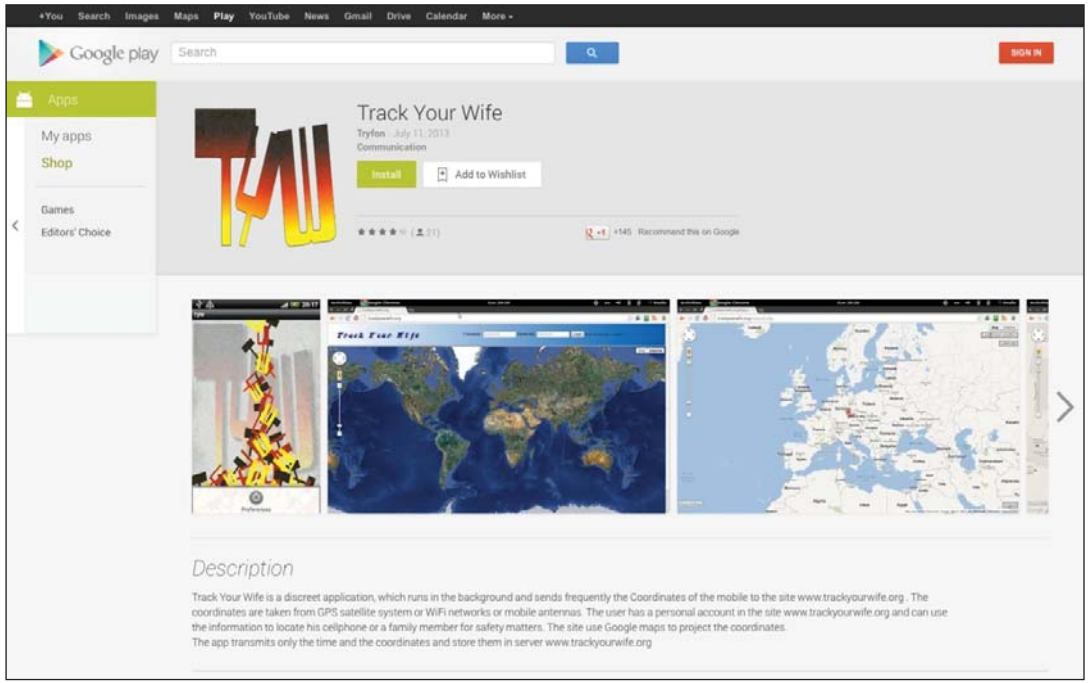

phone better, to put on games etc. for them, but then used iPhone 'jailbreak' to add tracking technologies at the same time.

- Facebook and other social media being used to track and continuing abuse of women post-separation, as well as being used as an additional tool of power and control within relationships.
- A range of recording apps, for example apps that are designed to monitor sleep talking and only start recording with sound being left under the couch all day to record conversations without the perpetrator having to listen through hours of recordings.
- Location apps to track the movements of people to see where they have been.

In relation to our research question to practitioners about what sort of apps might be useful and in what ways, some were reluctant to name any ideas and were against there being any services/support for perpetrators generally. For example, one interviewee said: "I don't believe apps are the way we should be dealing with sexual violence or domestic violence; using apps to minimise behaviour may perpetuate the myth that it's the women's responsibility to stay safe.' One joked 'You could get an app that yells 'fucking stop it' at them every half hour.' Others suggested apps that could be developed to work alongside perpetrator programmes. For example an app that could help men identify early warning signs, a time out app that delivered motivational messages, a perpetrator programme top-up app with motivational tools, or something that highlighted the impact of their behaviour on victims. All were clear that these should not be standalone and should simply be 'add-ons' to existing services, one respondent specified:

'I think the key for me is they're just a tool - they don't replace the work. The idea of replacing this with an app - it requires them recognising and making a decision that they would like to stop, and using an app. I think the key thing is we need decent interventions for men, and apps might be one way that they could be used … I think it's got to link in with what's happening on the programmes.'

Interviewees also raised concerns about the accessibility of apps, in that they require perpetrators to have an expensive smartphone, and that limitations would also exist around age, language (where English was not a first language or where literacy levels were low) and disability.

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Research Summary

To summarise in relation to domestic violence perpetrators, we heard about some innovative and interesting ideas about how apps could be used, but concerns about safety, as well as support seemed to over-ride any potential benefits. There was some agreement that the apps that were being developed should only supplement rather than replace direct service provision. Looking forward, there needs to be more awareness about the range of ways (often hidden) in which perpetrators can track and further abuse women through their smartphones.

Invitation to join our new research centre!

In June 2013, Durham University launched a new research centre which is co-directed by Professor Simon Hackett and Professor Nicole Westmarland. The Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA) recognises that violence and abuse remains a significant and entrenched social problem across all sectors of society, and that academic research has a vital role to play in advancing knowledge and understanding to move towards a world free from violence and abuse. CRiVA is leading and developing exciting new research agendas in this area in collaboration with other academics, policy makers, practitioners, activists, students, and victim-survivors.

Join us!

Email durham.criva@durham.ac.uk to become a member and make sure you get the full findings of this and other ongoing research studies.

Respect training

Respect provides a full range of training on our core subjects of work with domestic violence perpetrators, work with young people using violence or aggression, support for male victims of domestic violence. Our Research Manager coordinates the programme and can provide more information about content, packages, cost etc. Thangam.debbonaire@respect.uk.net

All our training courses are specifically commissioned or created by Respect by experts in their subject. Content draws on current research and best practice. Training is delivered by highly skilled, knowledgeable practitioner-trainers from across the UK with a range of areas of expertise.

All our courses are available as **open courses**, where participants book onto a course we are currently advertising, or as **on-site, closed courses**, where an organisation books us to deliver the course directly to them. The latter allows a larger group from an organisation to benefit from the training and to be more responsive to their specific role.

We offer discounts for Respect members. All course participants are **provided with a toolkit of resources, further reading and supporting materials.** All courses are continuously evaluated and updated annually and trainers observed and provided with support to develop their knowledge and skills.

We work in partnership with our sister organisation AVA (Against Violence and Abuse) and in consultation with other domestic violence organisations, especially our members.

Our longer courses to equip participants to deliver either a group work programme for adult perpetrators or an intervention with young people **are part of a package** of support and technical assistance from Respect specialist staff.

Our course list is below – for current dates on offer as open courses or for more information about course content, click on the link. To book a course or discuss your requirements contact Thangam.debbonaire@respect.uk.net or follow and contact us on twitter @RespectUK.

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Respect training - course list

Better engagement with domestic violence perpetrators (one day): for frontline practitioners who want to improve how they communicate with and motivate perpetrators and make effective referrals to specialist intervention programmes. *Next open course: 28 November, Bristol.*

Group work with domestic violence perpetrators (six days, delivered in smaller blocks): for specialists and new staff who are or intend to deliver group work programmes for domestic violence perpetrators. The course gives participants a solid theoretical and practical basis for delivering interventions, exposure to and practice using different models of work and a full toolkit of resources equipping them to run an intervention programme or make an informed choice about a particular model of work to follow.
Next open course: November/December, London.

Supporting male victims of domestic violence (one day): for frontline practitioners who want to improve how they recognise, assess and support men experiencing domestic abuse, using the Respect toolkit for work with male victims. *Next open course: 13 November, Manchester.*

Interventions with young people who use violence or aggression (five days): this course trains practitioners to run specialist services to address young people's use of violence and abuse against a partner or parent. It is accompanied by the Respect toolkit on work with young people.
Next course w.b. 7 October, London.

Cross cultural working with domestic violence (one day): this course helps any frontline practitioners who want to understand the links and tensions between culture and domestic violence and how to work cross culturally with men or women experiencing or using domestic violence. The course works experientially, developing participants' understanding of their own cultural values and how to work across difference.
Next open course 30 October, Nottingham.

Risk assessment for domestic violence interventions working with perpetrators (two days): this course helps any practitioner involved in assessing or managing the risk from or by a domestic violence perpetrator by increasing understanding of the evidence base for risk assessment, how to understand the different aspects and how this links to risk and safety management in domestic violence perpetrator programmes. The key tool is a version of the CAADA-DASH Risk identification checklist specially adapted for perpetrator work. *Next open course 5 and 6 November, London.*

DIY evaluation for domestic violence interventions (one day, particularly aimed at managers): This course helps managers to understand the different criteria for and methods of evaluating programme impact. Course covers negotiating expected outputs and outcomes with funders, implementing rigorous internal evaluation without undue additional work and analysing and presenting data in ways which help develop best practice as well as fulfilling funder requirements.
Next open course: 14 November, York. FREE for Respect members!

Adolescent to parent violence (one day, course also available from AVA): for frontline practitioners who are in contact with young people using violence or abuse against a parent. Incorporates understanding of the behaviour, links to adult domestic violence, how to engage with the young person and refer to specialist services (course can then lead onto the longer training course on work with young people).

REDAMOS client data management: this training is for programmes using or wanting to set up use of the Respect purpose built client information, risk and outcome record system and is usually delivered on site on request as part of a package of support for programmes investing in this cost-effective system. Contact us for more information.

Women who use intimate partner violence (one day – course currently being updated and available again in early 2014): for frontline practitioners to develop awareness of the specific experiences, behaviour and needs of female perpetrators and to develop best practice in responses.

Equation (formerly Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum) has been working for over 20 years to challenge and reduce the impact of domestic abuse. www.equation.org.uk

SPECIALIST DOMESTIC ABUSE TRAINING

We have an excellent reputation for delivering specialist domestic violence training to frontline community professionals across the county. Our training is nationally relevant, so please take a look at the range of specialist courses available.

If you'd like to attend, please download the booking form for Specialist courses from our website http://www.equation.org.uk/professionals/training and return to admin@equation.org.uk. Call 01159 623 237 for any queries. All courses run from 9.15 – 4.30.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Awareness (DVAA)

Central Nottingham

26 September, 23 October, 26 November and 4 December 2013

Nottinghamshire

19 September 2013: Retford, 1 Oct 13: King's Mill Hospital, 24 Oct 13: King's Mill, 5 Nov 13: Beeston, 19 Nov 13: Rushcliffe, 3 Dec 13: Worksop Town Hall

Challenging Domestic Violence: Good Practice Guidelines for Work with Male Perpetrators (CDV)

Designed for delegates who have taken basic domestic abuse awareness training)

Central Nottingham

10 October, 28 November, 2 December, 6 February 2014

Nottingham County

19 September: Rushcliffe, 14 Nov 13: Worksop, 23 Jan 14: Beeston, 6 March 14: Retford

equation
equipping • enabling • empowering

experts in equipping, enabling and empowering communities
to build equal relationships free from abuse

Working With Children and Young People Impacted by DV and Abuse

(Designed for delegates who have taken basic domestic abuse awareness training)

Tuesday 3 September 2013

Addressing Young People's Abuse of Their Parents

(Designed for delegates who have taken basic domestic abuse awareness training)

Thursday 5 September 2013

Women Using Violence in Intimate Relationships

(Designed for delegates who have taken basic domestic abuse awareness training)

This is a one-day course, developed and delivered by RESPECT.

Date to be confirmed

Working with Men Experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse

(Designed for delegates who have taken basic domestic abuse awareness training)

Tuesday 3 December 2013

RESOURCES FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Equation produce a range of high-quality, stylish resources for children and young people that can be used by professionals as tools to engage them on the topics of healthy relationships and domestic abuse in a positive and non-threatening way.

All Equation's resources for children and young people have been designed based upon the knowledge that young people respond to information presented in a modern, bright and creative way. The content and style of our booklets have been designed with the input of young people. Each of our booklets is an activity-based tool that aims to keep young people engaged, allowing personalisation and using different presentation styles such as images, diagrams, keywords, and activities.

You can order a sample pack of all 5 booklets for only £2.95 (collection) or £6.50 (delivery). Further information on pricing and how to order is available in the price list on our website at http://www.equation.org.uk/resources/

Self-Esteem: A Positive Guide for All Young Women

Moving Forwards: Helping Young Women Explore Their Experience of Abuse

Choose Your Life: A Positive Guide for All Young Men

A Booklet for Me: Helping Children Explore Their Experience of Domestic Abuse

My Book: Helping Young People Explore Their Experience of Domestic Abuse

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The Respect newsletter is sent out to Respect members and subscribers on a quarterly basis. If you are reading a friend or colleague's copy and want to receive your own in future then please consider joining Respect today.

Subscriptions start from just £50 per annum.

Respect membership starts from £90.90 per annum.

Click here for details and further information

Call for articles and contributions

We are now seeking contributions to the next Respect newsletter.

If you've got news and views that you want to share with Respect members and subscribers then please email the editor today.

RESPECT

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