

————— Research Report —————

**A Profile of Female  
Perpetrators of Intimate Partner  
Violence: Implications for Treatment**

Ce rapport est également disponible en français. This report is also available in French. Pour obtenir des exemplaires supplémentaires, veuillez vous adresser à la Direction de la recherche, Service correctionnel du Canada, 340, avenue Laurier ouest, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0P9. Should additional copies be required, they can be obtained from the Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, 340 Laurier Ave., West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.

**2008 N° R-175**

**A Profile of Female Perpetrators of Intimate Partner  
Violence: Implications for Treatment**

Natalie Gabora, Lynn Stewart, Kelly Lilley

&

Nicole Allegri

Correctional Operations and Programs  
Correctional Service Canada

November 2007

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Depending on the methodology, some studies have found that the incidence of female-to-male intimate partner violence in the general population is as high as that of male-to-female intimate violence. To date, however, scant attention has been devoted to understanding women who are violent towards their partners. An emerging body of research suggests that several contextual factors and motives may distinguish female and male perpetrators of domestic violence, and that the consequence of this violence may differ between the genders. This study sought to explore the characteristics of female perpetrators of intimate partner violence, and examined the context, consequences, and motives for their aggression.

Data were obtained from the Offender Management System, a database managed by the Correctional Service of Canada which contains all offender file information. In September 2002, a total of 897 women were serving a federal sentence, 15% of whom ( $N = 135$ ) had a history of intimate partner violence. A profile of domestic violence offenders was obtained using this population. A random sample ( $n = 58$ ) of these offenders was then used for a more in-depth examination of the context, motives, and consequences of female-to-male violence.

Women with a history of intimate partner violence tended to be in their late thirties and single or in common-law relationships. Nearly 45% of this population was Aboriginal, with the remainder self-identifying as Caucasian. Most of the women were serving determinate sentences in institutions, and were classified as moderate risk, high need offenders.

An in-depth file review of 58 of the women offenders with histories of domestic violence revealed that they were often the victims of abuse, both during their youth and in adult relationships. As perpetrators, women's most likely victims were men and, in almost all cases, the violence was physical. Nearly 70% of the women had committed at least one violent act in which there was mild injury and 30% had caused moderate injury that required medical attention. Limited analyses performed comparing generally violent and partner-only violent women suggest that the generally violent group tends to exhibit more extreme forms of violence and to have greater difficulty reintegrating back into society.

Women's motives for violence were diverse. Although the majority of women had a history of mutual violence with their partner, 64% were the primary perpetrators in at least one incident. Violence in self-defence or in defence of their children, were reported less frequently.

Using the *Spousal Assault Risk Assessment* guide, most women were classified as low risk for intimate partner violence (64%), though a sizeable proportion (29%) was considered moderate risk. The most potent risk factors for women's domestic violence drawn from this assessment, included past physical assault against intimate partners, substance abuse, and employment problems. These factors are also prevalent among male perpetrators.

Together, these findings reinforce the need for a violence prevention program targeting the unique circumstances surrounding women who behave violently in the domestic sphere. Such a program has the potential to contribute to the Service's objective of fostering offenders' safe return to the community, as well as the broader government-wide priority of protecting the public from further harm.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
The Context of Women’s Violence Against Intimate Partners.....	1
Characteristics of Women Offenders of Domestic Violence.....	3
<b>CURRENT STUDY</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Research Questions .....	5
<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Population .....	5
Data Extraction.....	5
<b>RESULTS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Profile of Female Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence .....	7
<i>Demographics</i> .....	7
<i>Current Offence</i> .....	7
<i>Risk/Need</i> .....	7
Context Surrounding Women’s Violence.....	8
<i>Childhood Victimization</i> .....	8
<i>Intimate Relationships</i> .....	8
<i>Offenders’ Violence</i> .....	9
Consequences of Violence.....	9
Motives for the Violence .....	9
<i>Contributing Factors</i> .....	10
Indicators of Risk of Intimate Partner Violence .....	11
<i>Typology of Women Offenders</i> .....	12
<b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Incidence.....	14
Demographic and Personal Characteristics .....	14
Past Victimization .....	16
Context, Dynamics and Motives of Women’s Violence .....	16
Risk.....	18

Treatment Targets .....	18
Limitations/Future Directions .....	21
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>23</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Assessment of Perpetrators' Needs at Intake ( $N = 134$ ) .....	7
Table 2. Violence Perpetrated by the Women and by their Partners.....	8
Table 3. Frequency of Offenders' Violence.....	9
Table 4. Motives for Offenders' Relationship Violence .....	10
Table 5. Factors Contributing to the Offenders' Intimate Partner Violence.....	10
Table 6. Percentage of Offenders who Demonstrated SARA Risk Factors .....	12
Table 7. Treatment Targets and Treatment Options.....	20

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, domestic violence has been conceptualized as male violence against female partners, and social, political and research attention on the perpetration of domestic violence has focused on male offenders. There has been a strong social and political bias against viewing females as perpetrators of abuse and violence, based on concern that attention would be diverted from the more serious problem of male-to-female violence (Koonin, Cabarcas & Geffner, 2002; Mills, 2003). Accordingly, there has been very little discussion about women perpetrators of intimate partner violence and very little attention on developing effective interventions for these women offenders. Despite high prevalence rates, violence in lesbian relationships in particular has received very little consideration (Mills, 2003; Worcester, 2002).

Over the years, more than 30 surveys have found approximately equal rates of intimate violence perpetrated by men and women (Currie, 1998). A recent large-scale Canadian survey supports these findings, with 8% of women and 7% of men reporting having been victimized in the previous five-year period by their partner (Johnson & Hotton, 2001). In contrast, a second set of researchers has provided evidence to suggest that while female-to-male intimate violence exists, it only represents about 5% of all domestic violence cases (Dobash & Dobash, 2000; Pagelow, 1992).

Johnson (1995) argues that the different rates of violence described by these two research traditions arise because they are sampling different, largely non-overlapping populations, experiencing distinct forms of violence. *Common couple violence*, which is relatively gender balanced, is tapped by the survey research methodology, while *patriarchal terrorism*, which involves men's terroristic attacks on their female partners, is tapped by research from the criminal justice system or other social agencies such as shelters. A recent meta-analysis (Archer, 2000) found gender differences in the severity of violence and supported the view that studies examining *acts* of violence will get different results than those investigating *consequences* of violence. In this meta-analysis, Archer (2000) found that women were slightly more likely than men to report using physical aggression in intimate relationships and to use such aggression more frequently. However, men were more likely to inflict an injury than women.

### **The Context of Women's Violence Against Intimate Partners**

The interpersonal context and motives of women who use violence against their partners are not particularly well understood. Many studies indicate that the majority of women are

violent in the context of violence against them by their male partners. For instance, Saunders (1986) determined the vast majority of violence used by battered women against their partners was motivated by self-defence or fighting back when their partners were abusing them. Similar findings were obtained even with women who had been arrested for intimate partner violence (Hamberger & Polente, 1994; Henning, Jones & Holdford, 2003). These researchers concluded that women perpetrators of domestic violence differ from male offenders, whose violence is more often related to power and control issues or concerns about abandonment.

Nevertheless, the finding that women are more likely to use physical violence exclusively out of retaliation or self-defence has not been supported by all research studies. For example, some research has found that women initiate violence as often as men (Stets & Straus, 1990), and that their violence is not predominately a response to violence by male partners, at least not in the case of minor assaults (Morse, 1995).

Hamberger and Guse (2002) found that both women court-ordered to attend counselling for domestic violence and women in a shelter were more likely to report feeling intense fear and to call the police when their partners initiated violence than men who were court-ordered to attend counselling; in comparison, men more often laughed at their partner's violence. Court-ordered men and women appeared similar in the expressed violence, violence frequency and injurious outcome. However, the men exhibited more dominating and controlling behaviours than court-ordered women or women seeking shelter services, suggesting that even when women use violence, men are more likely to initiate and control the dynamics of violence. Similarly, Swan and Snow (2002) found that male aggressors were more coercively controlling than female aggressors. In comparison to the women, the male partners committed more of the following classic battering behaviours: sexual coercion, coercive control, injury, and severe physical violence.

Harned (2001) found that women and men reported comparable amounts of violence from heterosexual and homosexual dating partners, although the type of violence was different. Women were more likely to experience sexual victimization, whereas men were more often the victims of psychological aggression. Rates of physical violence were similar across genders, although the impact of such violence was more severe for women. Interestingly, the study indicated that men and women were equally likely to use physical violence for self-defensive purposes.



In summary, women may use violence as often as men do, but their motives for it and the effects of their violence appear to be quite different than for men. Even in relationships in which women were the aggressors, the women usually experienced significant violence from their partners and were likely to be more negatively affected by their partner's violence.

### **Characteristics of Women Offenders of Domestic Violence**

A significant body of research exists on the life histories and psychological characteristics of male perpetrators of domestic violence and this literature has guided the development of theoretical models and intervention strategies. In comparison, literature on women offenders of domestic violence is just starting to emerge. A large-scale study found that male and female domestic violence offenders shared similar childhood family experiences (Henning, Jones & Holdford, 2003). One out of four women had witnessed parental violence, a third had been physically abused by a caregiver, and most (81.5%) reported that their parents had used corporal punishment. Relationship distress was also similar between men and women; however, compared to male offenders, women were much more likely to be considering leaving their partners. Differences emerged in mental health functioning between men and women offenders. Women were three times more likely than the men to have attempted suicide, and use of psychotropic medication was more common among the women. Fewer women than men had substance abuse problems and histories of serious conduct problems during childhood. Females, as compared to males, were more likely to evidence symptoms of compulsive, histrionic and borderline personality disorders, although there appear to be discrepancies in the literature with respect to gender differences in personality disorders (Magdol et al., 1997; Smith-Acuna, Henderson Metzger & Watson, 2004).

Henning and Feder (2004) compared demographic characteristics, criminal history variables, and past history of domestic violence for 5,578 men and 1,126 women arrested for assault against a heterosexual intimate partner. Overall, the results indicated that men ranked higher than women on risk factors for recidivism (including general, violent and domestic-violent recidivism). Out of 20 commonly cited risk factors, women ranked higher than men on just three of the risk items: severity of index offence, employment problems, and younger age. Compared to male offenders, the women posed less of a concern and their partners were less likely to feel seriously threatened. Women offenders were also less likely to have prior criminal charges than the men. Men were more likely to have alcohol and/or drug problems.

While some studies suggest that violence in lesbian relationships shares many of the same risk factors and correlates of male-to-female intimate violence (Glass, Koziol-McLain, Campbell and Block, 2004; Renzetti, 1992), there is an absence of literature comparing women who are violent against female partners with women who are violent against male partners. It is recognized that perpetrators of domestic violence are not a homogeneous group and several typologies of women offenders have been proposed recently (Johnson, 2000; Swan & Snow, 2002). Babcock, Miller and Siard (2003) offered a typology based on the breadth of perpetrators' use of violence: *partner-only* violent women are exclusively violent to their intimate partner, while *generally violent* women use violence both within and outside of intimate relationships. Half of the 52 women perpetrators of heterosexual and lesbian-partner violence in their study were classified as *partner-only* violent and half were classified as *generally violent*. In comparison to the *partner-only* women, *generally violent* women were more violent toward their partner, were motivated by a desire to control their partner, were more emotionally abusive, and externalized more blame for their violence. Further, their violence was more instrumental and used in a greater variety of situations. *Generally violent* women reported more trauma symptoms (e.g., nightmares, dissociation) than *partner-only* violent women, but they did not report a more severe abuse history, neither in childhood nor in their relationships with their partners. *Generally violent* women reported more psychological problems and more extensive criminal histories. Developmentally, *generally violent* women were more likely than *partner-only* violent women to witness their mother being violent toward their father, suggesting that they were socialized that it is acceptable for women to use violence against intimates.

## CURRENT STUDY

Research to date has provided a preliminary insight into the issue of female relationship violence. Our review of the literature revealed a paucity of programs for women offenders of domestic violence that are based on theoretical and treatment models developed specifically for women offenders taking into account the unique motives and dynamics of women's violence (for an exception, see Koonin, Cabarcas & Geffner, 2002). The current study aims to investigate the existence and nature of relationship violence by federally sentenced women offenders in Canada and to suggest appropriate areas for intervention.

### Research Questions

1. *What demographic, offence-related, and risk/need characteristics describe women who are perpetrators of intimate partner violence?*
2. *What is the context surrounding women's use of violence in intimate relationships?*
3. *What are the consequences of women's acts of violence for the victim?*
4. *What are women's motives for behaving violently towards a partner?*
5. *What are indicators of risk for intimate partner violence among women offenders and do they differ from indicators for such violence reported by male offenders?*

## METHODOLOGY

### Population

The population under study included all women offenders under federal supervision in September 2002 who had a history of violence in intimate relationships during a current and/or prior sentence. This group was used to generate a descriptive profile of women who were violent against intimate partners. From this population, a random sample of 58 women was selected to examine the contextual factors, motives, and consequences of their violence. The sample was representative of the population of federally sentenced women who had a history of violence against an intimate partner on such variables as age, sentence length, and overall risk.

### Data Extraction

Within the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), offenders are assessed through an Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process during the first weeks of their incarceration to identify static and dynamic factors that affect their criminal behaviour and subsequently their

safe and timely reintegration into the community. Numerous indicators are assessed for each of seven domains (community functioning, attitude, employment, social interaction, personal/emotional orientation, substance abuse, and marital/family). This information, along with other documentation related to the correctional planning of offenders, is electronically managed by the Offender Management System (OMS) database. The OIA indicator “*spousal assault perpetration*” was used to identify the study population. A subsequent query into the OMS database was performed to obtain information on the demographic characteristics, current offence, and risk and need profiles of these women. For the more in-depth reviews of the subsample selected for investigation, each of the offender’s OMS files was reviewed by one of two researchers and the variables of interest were coded using a standardized template. Inter-rater reliability was assessed on a small sample ( $n=5$ ); the coders’ responses agreed 80 - 100% of the time for 75% of the variables, and 40 - 60% of the time for 25% of the variables.

*Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA)*. This checklist consists of 20 risk factors for spousal assault (Kropp, Hart, Webster & Eaves, 1995). Based on an evaluation of the indicators, an overall risk rating is completed. At present, the SARA is only validated for male offenders (Kropp & Hart, 2000) and, accordingly, the instrument is not currently used in CSC for assessing risk for women offenders. An objective of the current study was to determine whether women offenders’ risk for intimate partner violence is indicated by similar variables as those for men, as outlined by the SARA. Researchers were formally trained on the administration, scoring and interpretation of the SARA. The SARA was coded based on available OMS file material.

## RESULTS

### Profile of Female Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence

#### *Demographics*

In September 2002, 897 women were serving a federal sentence in Canada. Of these, 15.1% ( $N=135$ ) had a history of violence against an intimate partner(s). Their ages ranged from 20 to 71, with a mean age of 37 years. Seventy percent had completed at least a grade 10 level of education. The most common current marital status was single (38.3%), followed by common law (33.6%). A large percentage of the women in the sample (43.6%) was Aboriginal; 48.9% were Caucasian.

#### *Current Offence*

Sixteen of the 135 women (11.9%) were serving life sentences; for those serving determinate sentences the mean sentence length was 3.29 years. Over half of the women (58.5%) were convicted of at least one violent offence. The most common offence category was homicide (27.4%), followed by traffic/import drugs (24.4%) and robbery (19.3%). The majority (60.7%) were incarcerated, while the remainder was being supervised in the community.

#### *Risk/Need*

A majority of the women were identified at intake as posing a moderate risk (56.0%), showing moderate motivation to address the factors associated with their criminal pattern (51.1%), and as having high needs related to their criminal behaviour (52.2%). The women were most commonly rated at intake as having a high reintegration potential (38.3%). As shown in Table 1, a majority of the women were assessed at intake as not having a problem in the community functioning and attitude domains. Most frequently, the women were assessed as having some /considerable difficulty with employment, associates/social interaction, marital/family background, personal/emotional orientation, and substance abuse.

**Table 1. Assessment of Perpetrators' Needs at Intake ( $N = 134$ )**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Asset/ No difficulty</b>	<b>Some / Considerable Difficulty</b>
Community Functioning	69.4%	30.6%
Attitude	67.9%	32.1%
Employment	26.9%	73.1%
Social Interaction	35.8%	64.2%
Marital / Family	19.4%	80.6%
Personal/ Emotional	5.2%	94.8%
Substance Abuse	11.2%	88.8%

## Context Surrounding Women’s Violence

### *Childhood Victimization*

An in-depth review of the files for 58 women identified as perpetrators of intimate partner violence revealed considerable abuse during their childhood/adolescence: 76% had experienced emotional abuse and 77.2% had experienced physical abuse. The abuse was most often committed by someone other than a family member (64.1%), although 50% had been abused by their mothers, 31% by their fathers, and 44.4% by another family member(s). Most (70.6%) experienced their first episode of abuse between the ages of 5 and 15 years, although about 20% were under 5 years of age when they were first assaulted. The abuse was considered long-term or severe for more than three quarters of the women (78.4%).

### *Intimate Relationships*

Most of the women (70.8%) had only been involved in heterosexual intimate relationships, while 6.9% had only been involved in same-sex relationships; almost one-quarter (22.4%) had been involved in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The average length of intimate relationships was more than five years for half of the women.

Violence perpetrated by the women offenders and their partners is profiled in Table 2. Most of the women (72.5%) were violent in *some* of their intimate relationships. The women perpetrators were most likely to have also been victims in *some* of their intimate relationships (59.6%); only 5.3% of the women had never experienced violence by an intimate partner. For 63% of the women, the violence was reported to be long-term or severe.

**Table 2. Violence Perpetrated by the Women and by their Partners**

<b>Proportion of Intimate Relationships</b>	<b>Percentage of Perpetrators</b>	<b>Percentage of Perpetrators Who Were Also Victims</b>
None		5.3%
Some (a minority)	72.5%	59.6%
Most (a majority)	13.7%	17.5%
All	13.7%	17.5%

*Note.*  $n = 58$ .

### ***Offenders' Violence***

The offender's index offence was related to intimate violence for 22.4% of the women. As was shown in Table 2, most of the women had been violent in *some* of their intimate relationships, although 13.7% had been violent in *most* and another 13.7% in *all* of their intimate relationships. The victim was male in 82.5% of the cases and female in 10.5%; 7% of the women reported that they had been violent towards both women and men partners. As shown in Table 3, the violence was most often committed on an *occasional* basis (i.e., 2-3 episodes over period of relationship).

The violence was physical in almost all cases; sexual violence (with or without physical violence) was reported for 11.1% of the women. At some time, 64.3% had used a weapon during an incident of violence. Poisoning and stalking the victim were rare; 2.8% and 2.4% of women respectively, had perpetrated these forms of abuse.

**Table 3. Frequency of Offenders' Violence**

<b>Frequency of Violence</b>	<b>Percentage of Offenders</b>
1 incident over period of relationship	18.9%
2-3 incidents over period of relationship	48.6%
4-5 incidents over period of relationship	29.7%
More than 5 incidents during relationship	2.7%

*Note. n = 37.*

### **Consequences of Violence**

Overall in most of the incidents of intimate partner violence, there was no injury to the victim. Nevertheless, 68.8% of the 58 women had perpetrated *at least one* violent act in which there was mild injury, 30.0% had caused moderate injury at some point (i.e., required medical attention), 18.2% had at some point caused injury requiring hospitalization, and 11.8% had perpetrated at least one act which resulted in the death of their intimate partner.

### **Motives for the Violence**

Motives for the offenders' violence are provided in Table 4. The majority of the women had a history of mutual violence/combats with their intimate partner, although 63.9% of the women were the primary perpetrators in at least one incident. Fear of further control/abuse by their partner, self-defence, and especially defence of children were relatively infrequent motives. Of the six incidents examined that resulted in the death of the partner, two were related to

revenge/retaliation, two were related to instrumental violence, one was related to self-defence, and the motive was unknown for one case.

**Table 4. Motives for Offenders' Relationship Violence<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Motive</b>	<b>Most Incidents (n = 39)</b>	<b>At Least One Incident</b>
Mutual violence/combat <sup>2</sup>	59.0%	81.6% (n=49)
Primary perpetration <sup>3</sup>	15.4%	63.9% (n=36)
Revenge/retaliation <sup>4</sup>	7.7%	37.9% (n=29)
Instrumental purposes <sup>5</sup>	7.7%	31.6% (n=38)
Fear of further control/abuse by partner <sup>6</sup>	5.1%	19.4% (n=31)
Self-defence <sup>7</sup>	5.1%	18.2% (n=33)
Defence of children <sup>8</sup>	0%	2.4% (n=42)

### ***Contributing Factors***

Factors contributing to the offenders' perpetration of intimate partner violence in at least one incident are listed in Table 5. As shown, physical/sexual victimization and emotional abuse by the victim contributed to at least one incident of violence for the overwhelming majority of offenders.

**Table 5. Factors Contributing to the Offenders' Intimate Partner Violence**

<b>Contributing Factors</b>	<b>Percentage of Offenders</b>
Physically/sexually abused by victim	84.3% (n=51)
Emotionally abused by victim	84.3% (n=51)
Alcohol abuse	66.7% (n=39)
Drug abuse	54.3% (n=35)
Financial issues	31.4% (n=35)
Jealousy	26.9% (n=26)
Child discipline/custody	2.5% (n=40)

<sup>1</sup> The motive for the violence could not be determined from file documentation for a number of the cases.

<sup>2</sup> Both partners have been violent.

<sup>3</sup> No evidence that her intimate partner perpetrated violence towards her.

<sup>4</sup> Offender was violent to punish partner or gain revenge for a perceived or actual wrong.

<sup>5</sup> Violence was instrumental in achieving some other goal (e.g., insurance, desire to establish relationship with new partner, robbery).

<sup>6</sup> Fear not of immediate harm, but of future continuation of harm.

<sup>7</sup> Offender believed that if she did not defend herself she would become a victim of immediate harm.

<sup>8</sup> Belief that if she did not defend her child(ren), they would become the victim(s) of immediate harm.



## **Indicators of Risk of Intimate Partner Violence**

Results of the SARA for the sample of 58 women offenders are presented in Table 6. For comparison purposes, data for male federal offenders of domestic violence are presented as well. Six of the 20 risk factors are evident for a majority of the women (i.e., for more than two thirds of the women). These items are: past physical assault of an intimate partner; recent substance abuse/dependence; recent employment problems; severe violence and/or sexual assault in index offence; past violation of conditional release or community supervision; and victim of and/or witness to family violence as a child or adolescent. An additional seven indicators of risk were found to be reasonably evident for the women (i.e., common to between one third and two thirds of the women). The six SARA items that were absent for a large majority of the women (i.e., found among less than one third of women offenders) were: minimization of spousal assault history; attitudes supporting spousal assault; past assault of family members; recent psychotic/manic symptoms; past sexual assault/jealousy; and violations of “no contact” orders.

The SARA summary risk rating provides an overall rating of risk for intimate partner violence. It is based on the evaluator’s consideration of the 20 risk factors. According to this, only 6.9% of the women were classified as high risk; 29.3% were classified as moderate risk; and 63.8% were classified as low risk. The corresponding percentages for male offenders with histories of domestic violence are 28.5% for high risk, 39.9% for moderate risk, and 31.6% for low risk (Correctional Service of Canada, 2005).

**Table 6. Percentage of Offenders who Demonstrated SARA Risk Factors<sup>9</sup>**

SARA Item	Women Offenders	Male Offenders (N=4137)
#11. Past physical assault against intimate partner	94.5% (n=55)	89.1%
#7. Recent substance abuse/dependence	87.9% (n=58)	80.9%
#5. Recent employment problems	87.7% (n=57)	67.2%
#18. Severe violence and/or sexual assault in index offence <sup>10</sup>	84.6% (n=26) <sup>11</sup>	
#3. Past violations of conditional release/community supervision	75.0% (n=56)	73.6%
#6. Victim and/or witness to family violence as a child or adolescent	75.0% (n=56)	57.7%
#2. Past assault of strangers or acquaintances	63.1% (n=57)	69.0%
#19. Use of weapons or credible threats of death in index offence <sup>11</sup>	62.5% (n=24) <sup>12</sup>	
#10. Personality disorder with anger, impulsivity or behavioural instability	46.3% (n=54)	35.6%
#13. Past use of weapons or credible threats of death against partner	42.2% (n=45)	47.2%
#4. Recent relationship problems	40.8% (n=54)	66.4%
#8. Recent suicidal/homicidal ideation or intent	35.7% (n=56)	22.9%
#14. Recent escalation in frequency or severity of assault against partner	35.2% (n=54)	34.5%
#16. Extreme minimization or denial of spousal assault history	29.1% (n=55)	64.6%
#17. Attitudes that support or condone spousal assault	27.6% (n=58)	57.1%
#1. Past assault of family members	26.9% (n=52)	42.9%
#9. Recent psychotic/manic symptoms	21.6% (n=51)	8.7%
#12. Past sexual assault/jealousy against intimate partner	19.1% (n=47)	29.2%
#20. Violation of a “no contact” order in index offence <sup>11</sup>	6.9% (n=29) <sup>12</sup>	
#15. Past violations of “no contact” orders	5.7% (n=53)	30.2%

### ***Typology of Women Offenders***

Evidence of either past assault of family members (SARA item #1) or past assault of strangers or acquaintances (SARA item #2) was present for two thirds of the 58 women (66.7%). These women were coded as *generally violent*. In comparison, one third of the sample (33.3%) were identified as *partner-only* violent (i.e., no evidence of either SARA items 1 or 2). The two groups were compared on variables of interest, and while trends were observed showing more serious violence for *generally violent* women, small sample sizes limited the number of analyses that could be performed. The results suggested that *generally violent* women were more likely than the *partner-only* violent women to have past violations of conditional release or community

<sup>9</sup> Risk indicators coded as “present” or “somewhat present”.

<sup>10</sup> Items pertaining to index offence could not be coded for male offenders.

<sup>11</sup> Item was not coded if there was insufficient information or the item was not applicable (i.e., index offence).

supervision (86.5% and 50% respectively),  $\chi(1) = 8.5, p < .01$ .<sup>12</sup> Further, *generally violent* women were more likely than *partner-only* violent women to have used weapons or made credible threats of death against their intimate partner during past incidents (58.6% versus 13.3%),  $\chi(1) = 8.26, p < .01$ .

---

<sup>12</sup> One cell with expected count less than 5.

## DISCUSSION

### **Incidence**

At least 15% of federally sentenced women offenders have perpetrated intimate partner violence. While this rate is roughly consistent with large-scale surveys of Canadian (Johnson & Hotton, 2001) and American (Straus & Gelles, 1986) populations, it may well be an underestimate of the magnitude of intimate partner violence among federally sentenced women. The study employed a file review methodology, and relied on a few existing indicators to identify perpetrators of intimate partner violence. An alternative methodology, such as a confidential survey, may have identified a greater proportion of women who perpetrated violence towards their intimate partners.

The present results suggest that the incidence of intimate partner violence among federally sentenced women offenders is about half that for male offenders. Earlier research within the Correctional Service of Canada using a similar file review methodology determined that 29% of male offenders had been violent toward a female partner (Robinson & Taylor, 1995). While survey research has consistently found relatively balanced rates of intimate partner violence among the genders, research with shelter and criminal justice populations has identified a distinct form of partner violence, termed patriarchal terrorism, which is perpetrated primarily by men (Johnson, 1995). Given the risk profiles of offenders who receive federal sentences (i.e., with criminal profiles that warrant a minimum of two-year term of imprisonment), it is likely that their violence is this more serious form.

### **Demographic and Personal Characteristics**

The present results suggest that the perpetration of violence against intimate partners is a particularly serious problem for Aboriginal women. Aboriginal people comprise less than three percent of the Canadian population and over 22% of women inmates (Fortin, 2004). In the present study, over 40% of the women identified as perpetrators of intimate violence were Aboriginal. Rates of men's violence against women, including lethal violence, are particularly high in Aboriginal communities (Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning, 2003). The absence of literature examining the issue of Aboriginal women's violence is perhaps not surprising given the relative magnitude of the problem of violence against Aboriginal women. Factors such as financial issues and, in particular, substance abuse contribute to the intimate partner violence by female offenders currently serving a federal sentence in Canada. About 89%

of the women were assessed at intake as having some/considerable difficulty with substance abuse, and alcohol abuse and drug abuse were identified as contributing factors to their violence for two thirds and one half of the women, respectively. This rate is even higher than that reported for federally sentenced women with any kind of violent histories (not just intimate partner violence). Bell (2004) found that 79% of violent women had some to considerable need in the substance abuse domain.<sup>13</sup> The association between substance abuse and the perpetration of partner abuse generally, and lethal violence, specifically, has been reported in the literature for both female-to-male violence (Kruttschnitt, Gartner & Ferraro, 2002) and female-to-female violence (Renzetti, 1992).

Using the framework provided by the SARA, the following three risk factors were most common among federally sentenced women perpetrators of domestic violence: past physical assault against an intimate partner (95%), recent substance abuse (88%), and recent employment problems (88%). In comparison to a recent large-scale study, the percentage of women meeting the criteria for each of these factors in the present study is very high. Henning and Feder (2004) found that only 15% of the women arrested (not necessarily convicted) for domestic violence in their study had a prior arrest for domestic violence, 28% had problems with alcohol/drugs, and 43% were currently unemployed. Therefore, while the risk factors for the federally sentenced women offenders appear similar to those arrested for domestic violence, the federally sentenced women clearly demonstrate heightened risk and criminogenic need profiles.

A majority of the women in the present study were also assessed as having considerable marital/family problems (81%) and personal/emotional deficits (95%). Interestingly, only 41% reported having had substantial conflict or separation in the year preceding the violence. Henning, Jones and Holdford (2003) speculate that for some violent women (i.e., those who are primarily victims) their dissatisfaction/distress may be largely influenced by their partners' abusive behaviour.

In contrast to the other factors studied, child discipline/custody issues were documented as a contributing factor in only one case. Also, the majority of women had no difficulty in the community functioning and attitude domains. Only 28% of the women perpetrators of intimate violence in the current study demonstrated attitudes that support or condone domestic violence, even though most of the women were exposed to abusive models while growing up.

---

<sup>13</sup> The population of violent women offenders would have included women perpetrators of intimate violence.

## **Past Victimization**

The current findings indicate shockingly high rates of past victimization for women offenders who have been violent against intimate partners. Over three quarters of the women in the present study had been a victim of family violence as a child or adolescent, most often by individuals other than family members but also commonly by their mothers, fathers and step-parents. The extent of victimization was substantial; for about three quarters of the women, the abuse was long-term or severe, including multiple perpetrators or serious injuries requiring medical attention. While a large majority of the women in the sample experienced their first episode of abuse between the ages of five and fifteen, there was still a significant minority that experienced their first episode before the age of five. Exposure to parental domestic violence was also considerable for the federally sentenced women.

The rate of victimization in their adult intimate relationships was also extensive for these women; only three of the women (5%) had never experienced violence by a past or present intimate partner. The largest group of women (60%) had experienced abuse in some of their intimate relationships, although about a third had been abused in most or all of their relationships. For 63% of the women, the violence was reported to be long-term or severe abuse. These findings are consistent with research highlighting the multi-abuse experiences of women who perpetrate domestic violence, both while they were growing up and in their adult intimate relationships (Hamberger & Polente, 1994; Henning, Jones & Holdford, 2003). It is likely that women who have suffered serious trauma and victimization experience a heightened response to threat, and react with heightened levels of aggression when faced with a threat (Hammock and O'Hearn, 2002). Violence in the family of origin and past abuse by a male have also been established as correlates for lesbian perpetrators (Renzetti, 1992). This level of abuse from an early age and in adult relationships points to a need to look at the impact on the children of these women and has implications for treatment targets that will be discussed below.

## **Context, Dynamics and Motives of Women's Violence**

Most of the women (73%) had been violent in *some* (a minority) of their intimate relationships, although about a quarter of the sample had been violent in *most* or *all* of their intimate relationships. About half of the women were occasionally violent (i.e., two to three incidents of violence throughout the relationship), although about a third of the women were violent on a much more frequent basis. The violence was mostly directed at male partners,

although about 10% of the women reported that they had been violent against females and 7% had been violent towards both women and men partners.

The women's violence was physical in almost all cases. In comparison to high rates of sexual violence for male perpetrators, sexual violence was reported for only 11% of the women. Over 60% had used a weapon during at least one incident of violence. Poisoning and stalking the victim were rare. In most incidents of violence, there was no injury to the victim. Nevertheless, most of the women had caused injury during at least one violent act, with 18% causing injury that required hospitalization and 12% killing their intimate partner. Canadian research has shown that knives are most often used in spousal homicides by women (Dawson, 2001), although this was not assessed in the present study. The majority of the women were not currently serving time for domestic violence; only 22% of the women's index offences were related to domestic violence.

Using the typology identified for abusive women in previous research (Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003), two thirds of the women in the current study were classified as *generally violent* while one third of the sample were classified as *partner-only* violent. In comparison, in the Babcock study half of women arrested for domestic violence but living in the community were classified as *generally violent* and half were classified as *partner-only* violent. The current study provides support for the notion that women who are exclusively violent toward an intimate partner differ from women who are also violent toward others. In comparison to *partner-only* violent women, *generally violent* women were more likely have past violations of conditional release or community supervision, and to have used weapons or made credible threats of death against their intimate partner during past incidents. The finding that a high percentage of both *generally violent* and *partner-only* violent women were victims of, or witnessed, family violence as a child or adolescent is consistent with past research findings.

Results of the current study found that female violence in intimate relationships was rarely motivated by a principle need for protection from either immediate harm (i.e., self-defence) or fear of further control or abuse. This is in contrast to the studies indicating that many, if not most, of the women arrested for intimate partner violence are victims who may have been acting in self-defence (Hamberger & Polente, 1994; Saunders, 1986). In the majority of cases, federally sentenced women offenders were violent in the context of mutual violence/combat. In this form of violence, both of the partners support and use violence as a normative response to

conflicts experienced in their relationship. Although only about 15% of the women were primary perpetrators during most of the violent incidents, file material indicated that over 60% were primary perpetrators during at least one incident. Nevertheless, this may not portray the violence accurately, as coercive control as a form of violence was not examined in the present study, and there is evidence to suggest that even when women initiate and use violence, they do not control the dynamics of the relationship (Hamberger & Guse, 2002). About a third of the women had been motivated by revenge/retaliation and instrumental purposes during at least one incident. Of the incidents that resulted in the death of the partner, two were related to revenge/retaliation, two were instrumental violence, and one was self-defence.

### **Risk**

According to the current results, the majority of the women represent a moderate to high risk to re-offend generally, and almost all of the women were assessed at intake as having moderate to high criminogenic needs. However, their specific risk for future intimate partner violence appears substantially lower than their general risk. According to the SARA, 64% of the women perpetrators of domestic violence represent a low risk to be violent towards an intimate partner, 29% of the women are moderate risk, and only 7% are high risk. This profile is considerably different from that obtained for federally sentenced male perpetrators of domestic violence where only 32% represent a low risk, 40% are moderate risk and 28% are high risk for intimate partner violence (Correctional Service of Canada, 2005). According to the risk principle of effective correctional intervention (Andrew and Bonta, 1994) and the risk factors established by Kropp et al. (1995), 36% of the federally sentenced women perpetrators of intimate violence should receive either moderate or high intensity intervention to target and reduce their risk for intimate partner violence. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the SARA has not been validated for women offenders and, as the literature and the present study suggest, some of the SARA risk indicators such as *violation of a "no contact" order* may not be relevant for women offenders and would thus lead to an underestimate of risk.

### **Treatment Targets**

Development of domestic violence interventions for women offenders should be guided by theoretical and treatment models identifying factors that are specifically relevant for the women. Dutton's (1994) Nested Ecological Model of relationship violence provides a broad framework for understanding the factors, and the interactions between the factors, that contribute



to intimate violence although the model has yet to be fully developed for women's intimate violence. Factors associated with women's intimate violence that were identified in the present study fit well within the model at either the macrosystem level (i.e., broader culture, including societal attitudes and beliefs regarding domestic violence), the exosystem level (i.e., the social structures that influence the violence), the microsystem level (i.e., the couple's relationship) and/or the perpetrator's individual history and characteristics. Table 8 below provides a broad outline of proposed components of treatment approaches that could address factors associated with patterns of women's relationship violence.

Interventions need to take into account the pattern and contextual factors of the violence and be tailored according to whether the woman is primarily a victim or an aggressor, or involved in a relationship where she is both a victim and a perpetrator. The literature suggests that coercive control is a critical component that is often overlooked (Swan and Snow, 2002); accordingly, this should be assessed and considered within the intervention. Differences between women who are violent exclusively within intimate relationships and those who are more generally violent both within and outside of intimate relationships should be used to modify programming. The violence and emotional abuse of *generally violent* women may be more instrumental and related to power and control issues than *partner-only* violence.

It should be noted that more than half of the women in this sample were non-Caucasian; most of these were Aboriginal. CSC is required by law to provide culturally appropriate programming for Aboriginal offenders. The treatment of these women should consider culture-specific factors, including the unique context of the communities Aboriginal women return to on release.

The characteristics of women in abusive lesbian relationships and the context of lesbian women's violence are understudied in the literature. At this stage, there is little empirical evidence to guide the development of interventions for lesbian women, although some clinicians have offered general treatment guidelines (e.g., Margolies & Leeder, 1995). The small number of women who were violent towards female partners in the current study did not allow for a close examination of these women.

**Table 7. Treatment Targets and Treatment Options**

<b>Factors Associated with Relationship Violence (Treatment Targets)</b>	<b>Possible Treatment Options</b>
Violence in the family of origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop an understanding of the role of early modeling in establishing adult relationship patterns.</li> <li>➤ Skills development on parenting without abuse.</li> </ul>
Victim of violence in intimate relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Safety planning.</li> <li>➤ Training in problem solving to develop a sense of self-control rather than external control.</li> <li>➤ Positive goal setting, including alternatives to remaining in, or continuing to contribute to, violence in relationships.</li> <li>➤ Understanding of how previous victimization can heighten the response to threats.</li> </ul>
Relationship distress/marital discord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interpersonal skills (communication skills; negotiation; assertion).</li> <li>➤ Establishing networks of support.</li> </ul>
Mutual conflict/general aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Self-monitoring and other arousal reduction techniques.</li> <li>➤ Training to anticipate consequences of aggressive acts on self, partner and others (children in particular).</li> <li>➤ Using verbal self-regulation and other cognitive techniques to replace thinking related to violence and aggression.</li> <li>➤ Development of behavioural rules or strategies to approach interpersonal problems.</li> <li>➤ Identifying the "behavioural chains" so that the sequence involved in the output behaviour (violence) is clarified (identify, avoid or manage high-risk situations for assault).</li> </ul>
Power and control issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Education and awareness regarding the range of controlling and abusive behaviour and training in prosocial alternatives.</li> <li>➤ Cultural exploration and identification of systemic forms of violence.</li> </ul>
Problems in emotional self-control (depression, anxiety)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Training in cognitive techniques to manage thinking related to emotional mismanagement.</li> <li>➤ Training in behavioural techniques to manage distress.</li> </ul>
Substance abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Substance abuse should be addressed for women whose relationship violence is related to misuse of drugs and alcohol.</li> </ul>

### **Limitations/Future Directions**

The present study has several limitations. Information from OMS reports may be unreliable due to offender self-reporting and bias by those documenting offender information. In addition, in many cases there was incomplete information within OMS that resulted in coding many variables as “unknown.”

The present study provides insight into the characteristics of women perpetrators and the dynamics of their intimate violence; however, the profile of women perpetrators of intimate partner violence serving a federal sentence may be unrepresentative of women arrested for partner assault and especially women sampled outside the criminal justice system. Further research on the treatment needs and associated interventions for female perpetrators of intimate partner violence is clearly needed, particularly for women offenders in lesbian relationships.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present investigation shows that a substantial proportion of the women offender population are perpetrators of violence in intimate relationships. The results underscore that a gender-responsive program targeting this group will need to be cognizant of the unique contextual factors and motives that contribute to female violence, and that it will also need to consider women's role in the violence itself. Since many of the female perpetrators were Aboriginal offenders, the development of culturally sensitive programs will be a critical step toward achieving maximum therapeutic gain, a sentiment consistent with the Service's National Action Plan on Aboriginal Corrections and the Aboriginal High Intensity Family Violence Prevention Program for male offenders. Such considerations will assist the Service in achieving its strategic priority of offenders' safe transition back into society.

## REFERENCES

- Andrews, D. & Bonta, J. (1994). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Press.
- Archer, J. (2000). Sex Differences in Aggression Between Heterosexual Partners: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, 5, 651-680.
- Babcock, J.C., Miller, S.A. & Siard, C. (2003). Towards a Typology of Abusive Women: Differences Between Partner-only and Generally Violent Women in the Use of Violence. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 27, 153-161.
- Bell, A. (2004). Women with Violent Offence Histories: A Comparison. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 16, 21-23.
- Correctional Service of Canada (2005). Unpublished raw data. Reintegration Programs Division.
- Currie, D.H. (1998). Violent Men or Violent Women? Whose Definition Counts? in R. Kennedy Bergen (ed.), *Issues in Intimate Violence*, 97-111. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Dawson, M. (2001). *Examination of Declining Intimate Partner Homicide Rates: A Literature Review*. Ottawa, ON: Department of Justice.
- Dobash, R.E. & Dobash, R.P. (2000). Evaluating Criminal Justice Intervention for Domestic Violence. *Crime and Delinquency*, 46, 2, 252-270.
- Dutton, D.G. (1994). Patriarchy and Wife Assault: The Ecological Fallacy. *Violence and Victims*, 9, 167-182.
- Fortin, Doris. (2004). *Program Strategy for Women Offenders* (page 25). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service Canada.
- Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning. (2003). *Aboriginal Domestic Violence in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.
- Gelles, R.J. (1974). *The Violent Home: A Study of Physical Aggression between Husbands and Wives*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Glass, N., Koziol-McLain, J., Campbell, J. & Block, C. (2004). Female-Perpetrated Femicide and Attempted Femicide. *Violence Against Women*, 10, 6, 606-625.
- Hamberger, L.K. & Polente, T. (1994). Counseling Heterosexual Women Arrested for Domestic Violence: Implications for Theory and Practice. *Violence and Victims*, 9, 2, 125-137.

- Hamberger, L.K. & Guse, C.E. (2002). Men's and Women's Use of Intimate Partner Violence in Clinical Samples. *Violence Against Women*, 8, 11, 1301-1331.
- Hammock, G. & O'Hearn R. (2002). Psychological Aggression in Dating Relationships: Predictive Models for Males and Females. *Violence and Victims*, 17, 5, 525-540.
- Harned, M.S. (2001). Abused Women or Abused Men? An Examination of the Context and Outcomes of Dating Violence. *Violence and Victims*, 16, 3, 269-285.
- Henning, K. & Feder, L. (2004). A Comparison of Men and Women Arrested for Domestic Violence: Who Presents the Greater Threat? *Journal of Family Violence*, 19, 2, 69-80.
- Henning, K., Jones, A. & Holdford, R. (2003). Treatment Needs of Women Arrested for Domestic Violence: A Comparison with Male Offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18, 8, 839-856.
- Johnson, H. & Hotton, T. (2001). Spousal Violence. In C. Trainor & K. Milorean (Eds.), *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2001* (pp. 26 - 43). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.
- Johnson, M.P. (1995). Patriarchal Terrorism and Common Couple Violence: Two Forms of Violence Against Women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57, 283-294.
- Johnson, M.P. (2000, November). *Conflict and Control: Images of Symmetry and Asymmetry in Domestic Violence*. Paper presented at the meeting of the National Institute of Justice's Gender Symmetry Workshop, Washington, D.C.
- Koonin, M., Cabarcas, A., Geffner, R. (2002). *Treatment of Women Arrested for Domestic Violence: Women Ending Abusive/Violent Episodes Respectfully*. (Weaver) Manual. San Diego, CA: Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute.
- Kropp, P. R. & Hart, S. D. (2000). The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) Guide: Reliability and Validity in Adult Male Offenders. *Law and Human Behavior*, 24, 101-118.
- Kropp, P.R., Hart, S.D., Webster, C.D. & Eaves, D. (1995). *Manual for the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide 2nd Edition*. Vancouver, BC: The British Columbia Institute of Family Violence.
- Kruttschnitt, C., Gartner, R. & Ferraro, K. (2002). Women's Involvement in Serious Interpersonal Violence. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 7, 529-565.
- Magdol, L., Moffit, T.E., Caspi, A., Newman, D.L., Fagan, J. & Silva, P. (1997). Gender Differences in Partner Violence in a Birth Cohort of 21-Year-Olds: Bridging the Gap Between Clinical and Epidemiological Approaches. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 65,1, 68-78.

- Margolies, L. & Leeder, E. (1995). Violence at the Door: Treatment of Lesbian Batterers. *Violence Against Women*, 1, 2, 139-157.
- Markowitz, F. E. (2001). Attitudes and Family Violence: Linking Intergenerational and Cultural Theories. *Journal of Family Violence*, 16, 2, 205-218.
- Mills, L.G. (2003). *Insult to Injury: Rethinking our Response to Intimate Abuse (pp.19-100)*. Princeton Oxford, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Morse, B.J. (1995). Beyond the Conflict Tactics Scale: Assessing Gender Differences in Partner Violence. *Violence and Victims*, 10, 4, 251-272.
- Pagelow, M.D. (1992). Adult Victims of Domestic Violence: Battered Women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 7, 87-120.
- Renzetti, C.M. (1992). *Violent Betrayal: Partner Abuse in Lesbian Relationships*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Robinson, D. & Taylor, J. (1995). *The Incidence of Family Violence Perpetrated by Federal Offenders: A File Review Study. Research Report FV-03*. Ottawa, ON: Research Division, Correctional Service of Canada.
- Saunders, D.G. (1986). When Battered Women Use Violence: Husband-Abuse or Self Defence? *Violence and Victims*, 1, 1, 47-60.
- Smith-Acuna, S., Henderson Metzger, L. & Watson, M. (2004). The Paradox of the Female Batterer: Exploring the Link Between Gender, Personality, and Intimate Violence. *FVSAB*, 20, 1, 5-10.
- Statistics Canada: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (2002). *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2002*. Cat. no. 85-224-XIE. Ottawa: Minister of Industry.
- Stets, J.E. & Straus, M.A. (1990). Gender Differences in Reporting of Marital Violence and its Medical and Psychological Consequences. In M.A. Straus & R.J. Gelles (eds.), *Physical Violence in American Families, Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families* (pp.151-165). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Straus, M.A. & Gelles, R.J. (1986). Societal Change and Change in Family Violence from 1975 to 1985 as Revealed by Two National Surveys. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48, 465-479.
- Straus, M.A. (1999). The Controversy Over Domestic Violence by Women: A Methodological, Theoretical, and Sociology of Science Analysis. In X. Ariaga & S. Oskamp (eds.), *Violence in Intimate Relationships* (pp. 17-44). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Straus, M.A., Gelles, R.J.& Steinmetz, S.K. (1980). *Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the American Family*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Anchor Press.

Swan, S.C.& Snow, D.L. (2002). A Typology of Women's Use of Violence in Intimate Relationships. *Violence Against Women*, 8, 3, 286-319.

Worcester, N. (2002). Women's Use of Force: Complexities and Challenges of Taking the Issue Seriously. *Violence Against Women*, 8, 11, 1390-1.