Lethal and Nonlethal Violence Against an Intimate Female Partner

Comparing Male Murderers to Nonlethal Abusers

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Men’s lethal and nonlethal violence against an intimate female partner are compared. Various risk factors are examined to compare men’s lethal and nonlethal violence against an intimate woman partner. Relative to abusers, men who kill are generally more conventional with respect to childhood backgrounds, education, employment, and criminal careers, are more likely to be possessive and jealous, and are more likely to be separated from their partner at the time of the event. Men who kill are more likely to have used violence against a previous partner, to have sexually assaulted and strangled the victim, and to have used a weapon or instrument. However, they were less likely to have been drunk at the time of the event and/or to have previously used violence against the woman they killed. Overall, the findings do not support the notion of a simple progression from nonlethal to lethal violence and raise some dilemmas for the growing area of risk assessment.

Keywords: intimate partner murder; nonlethal partner violence

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When considering intimate partner violence, it is often asked why men use physical force against the women with whom they live. And for intimate partner murder, it is similarly asked why men go to the extreme of killing their woman partner rather than stopping short of such action. For both questions, it may be asked if it is something to do with the man: his biology, his psychology, his early childhood and/or personal circumstances at the time of the violence. Or is it something to do with the woman, her behavior with respect to the man, their relationship or contested domestic tasks? Or is it something to do with the particular situation or circumstances in which the couple find themselves, such as the pressures brought on by limited resources, the demands of children, household tasks, fidelity, and the like?

To date, the search for answers is ongoing and has variously touched on all of these issues, although some have been the subject of far more study, theorizing, and speculation. Social, psychological, and biological factors have all been seen as candidates that might provide insight into when and why violence is used in intimate relationships and what, if anything, might distinguish violent events that become lethal from those that do not. Although the tendency is to search for explanations within a single arena, such as the social or psychological, a synthetic approach may be more fruitful as it encompasses more of the factors that make up the complexity of intimate relationships, conflict, and violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1998).

The primary focus of this article is the killing of an intimate female partner. In an effort to better understand this extreme form of violence and the factors associated with its risk, we compare men’s use of nonlethal and lethal violence against an intimate female partner. Data from two distinct studies are compared, one focusing on nonlethal intimate partner violence and the other on murder. The Violent Men Study (completed in 1996) contains a sample of men convicted of nonlethal abuse \(n = 122\), and the Murder in Britain study (completed in 2002) contains a subsample of men who murdered an intimate female partner \(n = 106\). Initially, we examine the extant literature on intimate partner violence to identify factors associated with nonlethal violence, and then we examine the literature on intimate partner killing to identify factors associated with lethal violence. Using the findings from the two studies, we compare nonlethal and lethal violence on a number of factors clustered around childhood and adult circumstances of the men who use violence and the context and circumstances of violent events.

Nonlethal Violence Against Women in Intimate Relationships

At the outset, it may be reasonable to begin with the assumption that lethal violence occurs in the context of nonlethal violence, albeit with some form of elevated risk. However, it is also important to scrutinize this assumption by asking if nonlethal violence is always or usually a precursor to lethal violence and if the same factors are associated with both. We shall return to this, but first let us reiterate some of the risk...
factors found to be associated with nonlethal violence and consider to what extent they might also relate to lethal violence.

A brief overview of knowledge about nonlethal violence against an intimate woman partner serves as a point of departure for comparisons with lethal violence. Since the 1970s, a vast amount has been written about nonlethal violence against women in the field generally referred to as domestic violence. A myriad of topics has been explored, and a wide range of research methods has been used as the field has exponentially grown. National and local surveys have charted the extent of the violence in various populations, whereas intensive studies, usually involving in-depth interviews with victims and perpetrators, have developed descriptions and explanations of the violence, the predicament of victims, and the orientations and behavior of male perpetrators. Within this vast body of research, studies have examined the sociodemographic correlates of victims and abusers, the contexts and situations in which violence occurs, the motivations and psychological characteristics of offenders, relevant policies and services, the nature and effectiveness of various interventions, and many other topics. From this extensive literature, we shall draw only on findings regarding correlates of lethal and nonlethal violence, specifically childhood backgrounds, adult circumstances, and the violent event itself.

National surveys in Canada, the United States, and Britain show that about one fourth of adult women will at some time in their lives experience at least one act of violence from a male intimate partner (Bachman & Saltzman 1995; Greenfeld et al., 1998; Mirrlees-Black, 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Walby & Allen, 2004; Wilson, Johnson, & Daly, 1995). Although the violence can occur across all social classes, research from several countries suggests that it is more likely among the young, poor, and disadvantaged (Johnson, 1996), and research from the United States also reveals a higher rate among African Americans (Hampton & Gelles, 1994). Although intensive studies and local and national surveys have mostly concentrated on the women who have been victimized, some have focused on the men who abuse. Various individual characteristics of male abusers have been identified as potential risk factors, including a childhood marked by family violence and/or child abuse, personality traits, alcohol abuse, chronic unemployment, and general criminality (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Jasinski & Williams, 1998; Moffitt, Krueger, Caspi, & Fagan, 2000).

Both intensive studies and surveys provide information about the specific nature of the violence, with greater detail in the former and less in the latter. Physical acts of violence are wide ranging, and specific incidents often include pushing and shoving, slapping, punching, and kicking (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, 1984; Johnson, 1996; Tjadene & Thoennes, 1998). Violent events may also include sexual assault, and studies suggest that between 10% and 15% of married women have been raped by an intimate male partner, about one third of all sexual assaults involve intimate partners, and many abused women have also been sexually assaulted by their partner (Campbell, 1999; Randall & Haskell, 1995; Russell, 1990; Ullman & Siegel, 1993).
Other intimidating and coercive acts have been linked to the violence. The initial results of intensive and historical studies that revealed an important link between violence and other forms of intimidation (Dobash & Dobash, 1979) have been corroborated in subsequent survey research (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Walby & Allen, 2004; Wilson et al., 1995). Elsewhere, we have described this combination of violence and controlling or intimidating behavior as a “constellation of abuse” (Dobash & Dobash, 1986; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 2000). For some men, the constellation of abuse extends beyond the “end” of a relationship, as they attempt to control the woman and/or punish her for leaving. A representative sample survey of 8,000 women in the United States revealed that 81% of the respondents who reported having been stalked (continued harassment and intimidation) by a former partner indicated that their partner had previously assaulted them. In addition, 31% reported a previous incident of sexual assault (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). Such coercive and/or intimidating acts constitute the wider context in which violence recurs in intimate relationships and may extend beyond the life of an intact relationship.

The violence may lead to physical injury and/or emotional distress. Research on injuries suggests that the most common injury is bruising of the face and body. In addition, fractures, concussions, miscarriages, and internal injuries may occur (Campbell, 1998; Dobash et al., 2000; Stark & Flitcraft, 1992). Medical research indicates that permanent disfigurement, physical disability, and damage to hearing and vision sometimes occur among women who are physically abused and that abused women are 6 to 8 times more likely to use health services than are nonabused women (Campbell, 1998). In addition, abuse during pregnancy threatens the health of the woman and the fetus (Aston, 2003; Campbell, 1998). Although the focus here is not on injuries, it is nonetheless important that the nature and seriousness of non-lethal violence not be overlooked in a consideration of lethal violence.

Attention has also been given to the sources of conflict leading to violence and the situations and circumstances in which it occurs. Some form of conflict usually precedes violent events. Conflicts in intimate relations revolve around a number of recurring issues associated with daily life, including money, children, housekeeping, sex, fidelity, jealousy, possessiveness, and authority (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Dobash et al., 2000). Such conflicts may characterize the relationship itself and provide the precursor of a specific violent event.

The nature of the relationship itself has been deemed to be important in several respects. The “status” of the relationship (married, cohabiting, or dating) and the “state” of the relationship (intact or separated) have both been viewed as important factors in the perpetration of nonlethal violence (Walby & Allen, 2004; Wilson et al., 1995). Briefly, cohabitation and separation are associated with an elevated risk of violence. In some relationships, separation is the point where nonlethal violence may increase in frequency and/or severity, whereas in others violence may begin after separation where none had existed before (Walby & Allen, 2004). For men who refuse to allow the women to leave the relationship, stalking and various forms of
harassment may begin with separation. For others, it may begin before separation and accompany fears about the relationship.

In summary, existing evidence about nonlethal violence draws attention to factors at various levels. At the individual, factors include sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., young, poor, disadvantaged, unemployed), personal characteristics (e.g., personality, alcohol abuse, criminality), and family background (e.g., family violence, abuse as a child). Factors at the situational and circumstantial levels include the nature of the relationship, separation, jealousy, possessiveness, and others. Other factors concern the nature of the violence itself and the sources of conflict leading to it. We now turn to extant empirical literature about lethal violence against intimate female partners.

**Lethal Violence Against Women in Intimate Relationships**

Evidence from many countries reveals that women victims of homicide are most likely to be killed by a male intimate partner or ex-partner, and this pattern has persisted over time (Browne, 1987; Campbell, 1986; Daly & Wilson, 1988; Dobash et al., 2000; Gibson & Klein, 1969; MacDonald, 1911; Wilson & Daly, 1992; Wolfgang, 1958). Evidence also confirms that women are often killed in the context of ongoing violence against them by the perpetrator and/or when they attempt to leave the relationship (Block & Christakos, 1995; Browne & Williams, 1993; Browne, Williams, & Dutton, 1999; Cerezo Dominguez, 1998; Greefeld et al., 1998; McFarlane et al., 1999; Mercy & Saltzman, 1989; Moracco, Runyan, & Butts, 1998; Sev’er & Yurdalkul, 2001; Wilson & Daly, 1993, 1998). As with nonlethal violence, findings suggest that lethal violence against women is associated with various factors, including sociodemographic and personal characteristics of offenders, situational contexts, and cultural patterns.

Sociodemographic factors associated with lethal violence against women include age of offender and victim, poverty, socioeconomic status, prior offending, and ethnicity. Women’s risk of intimate partner homicide and violence is greater among the young and those with low household income (Browne et al., 1999; Campbell et al., 2003; Mercy & Saltzman, 1989; Wilson et al., 1995). Risk is increased when offenders are unemployed and have a history of convictions for violence and other offenses and problems with alcohol. In the United States, ethnicity has also been found to be associated with elevated rates of intimate partner killing among African American women and men (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 1998), which may be linked to longstanding exclusion and disadvantage (Wilson & Daly, 1992).

The nature of the relationship between perpetrator and victim (married, cohabiting, serious dating or engaged) appears to be important for both nonlethal and lethal violence. Early research on intimate partner homicide that considered the status of the relationship included only those who were married or cohabiting and found that...
cohabitation constituted a greater risk of lethality (Daly & Wilson, 1988). The analysis of intimate partner homicides throughout Canada from 1974 to 1992 revealed that the rate of homicide was 8 times higher for women in cohabiting relationships than for women living in marital relationships (Wilson et al., 1995), and this has been confirmed in data from the United States (Miethe & Regoeczi, 2004; Shackelford, 2001). In a study of intimate femicides in Ontario, Canada, from 1974 to 1994, Dawson and Gartner (1998) added “boyfriend/girlfriend” to the category of status of the relationship and found this to be an important risk factor. The elevated risk of homicide among those who were cohabiting or in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship was confirmed in the national Canadian data from 1991 to 2000 (Johnson & Hotton, 2003). An analysis of homicide during the past three decades in the United States revealed a “shift in dominate profiles” of intimate partner killings of women from the killing of wives by husbands to the killing of girlfriends by boyfriends, although this could be an artifact of changes in recording (Miethe & Regoeczi, 2004, p. 241). In short, cohabitation and serious dating or engaged relationships appear to have a higher risk of lethality than state sanctioned marriage. It may be that such relationships are more tenuous, involve less commitment, have fewer outside supports in the form of relatives or the state, and, as such, leave the couple with fewer resources to deal with conflicts.

However, it may be that any observed difference in the risk of lethality relating to the status of the relationship is not because of the relationship per se but because of the fact that those who cohabit or are in a boyfriend or girlfriend relationship are likely to be younger, poorer, and in other ways categorically different than those who are married. Brownridge and Halli’s (2002) examination of nonlethal violence suggests that the different rates of violence associated with the status of the relationship (married and cohabitating) may be explained in terms of the characteristics of the individuals in each type of relationship, such as age and poverty, rather than the nature of the relationship itself. In this analysis, the inclusion of serious dating or engaged relationships expands the types of relationships examined and allows for reflection on these other issues.

**Contexts and Situations**

Contextual and situational factors include a history of violence by the perpetrator against the victim, recurring conflict especially involving jealousy and/or infidelity, separation and attempts to leave the relationship, substance abuse, threats to kill, and the use of firearms.

As stated earlier, the source of conflicts in nonlethal violent events includes issues such as domestic work, resources, alcohol, children, authority, jealousy, and possessiveness, whereas the study of lethal violent events has concentrated almost solely on conflicts relating to jealousy and possessiveness (Campbell et al., 2003; Chimbos, 1978; Daly & Wilson, 1988; Polk, 1994). This factor has dominated thinking about
the rationale for lethal violence almost to the exclusion of all others. Although jealousy and possessiveness are obviously important factors in the killing of an intimate partner, the almost exclusive focus on them has left us with little or no information about other sources of conflict involved in lethal events. These warrant additional study. There is also a need to further examine “circumstantial” risks, such as previous violence to the victim, alcohol and/or drug use by the perpetrator, and the presence and use of weapons (Campbell et al., 2003; Kellerman, Rivara, & Rushforth, 1993; Mercy & Saltzman, 1989; Smith, Moracco, & Butts, 1998).

Women’s attempts to end the relationship are strongly related to intimate partner homicide (Campbell, 1986; Campbell et al., 2003; Daly & Wilson, 1988; Dawson & Gartner, 1998; Goetting, 1995; Johnson & Hotton, 2003; Wilson & Daly, 1993; Wilson et al., 1995). In several countries, from one third to one half of all women killed by partners had left or were trying to leave at the time of the murder. Early stages of estrangement, particularly the first 3 months, are exceptionally risky (Dawson & Gartner, 1998; Wallace, 1986; Wilson & Daly, 1993). There is some evidence that men who kill in the context of estrangement are likely to be younger, to have a criminal record, and to be an ex-dating partner (Dawson & Gartner, 1998). Thus, both the status of the relationship (married, cohabiting, and serious dating) and the state of the relationship (intact or separated) are important factors in understanding this violence.

The point here is to consider if there are distinct factors associated with lethal rather than nonlethal violence against a woman partner. To what extent can we identify risk factors that differentiate one form of violence from the other? Given the numerous and overlapping factors identified in research about lethal and nonlethal violence, what can be known about those that may be more likely, more intense, more frequent, more severe, or in some way provide insight into what, if anything, differentiates lethal from nonlethal violence. To date, there has been little research directly comparing lethal and nonlethal violence against female intimate partners (cf. Campbell et al., 2003). As such work develops, it is important to continue to explore the sociodemographic, individual, contextual, and situational factors discussed above but also to expand the focus to include others not yet examined. In the following analysis, we examine some of the risk factors identified above and explore some that have not yet been considered.

**Method: Two Studies**

The comparisons of nonlethal and lethal violence are based on data from two distinct studies, the Violent Men Study of 122 men convicted of an offense involving nonlethal violence against a female partner and the Murder in Britain study that included a subsample of 106 men convicted of murdering a woman with whom they had an intimate relationship. Both studies were designed by the same principal
investigators and, as such, contain a great deal of comparable data that facilitated the comparisons between nonlethal and lethal violence.

**Nonlethal Violence: The Violent Men Study**

The Violent Men Study was a 3-year investigation of criminal justice responses to intimate partner violence (Dobash et al., 2000). The purpose of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of various forms of criminal justice intervention for men convicted of violence against an intimate female partner. Data were gathered from 122 men convicted of an offense relating to domestic violence, including those receiving the usual sanctions of fines and warnings and those sentenced to abuser programs. In addition, 134 women partners were studied. The sample was drawn from all cases involving intimate partner violence in two court jurisdictions and included 95 couples. Data were gathered over three periods (at intervention and two follow-ups during a 1-year period). In-depth interviews were conducted at Time 1, and postal questionnaires were used at Times 2 and 3. For this analysis, we focus on the data from the 122 systematic, in-depth interviews with men. In-depth interviews with the men systematically explored a wide range of issues focusing on their life histories, including childhood and adult circumstances, the history and nature of the relationship, the constellation of abuse including detailed assessments of the occurrence and frequency of specific acts of violence throughout the entire relationship, during the 12-month period prior to the interview, and during two specific violent events, the first one in the relationship and the specific event that led to a prosecution (Dobash et al., 2000). The data used for the comparisons conducted here are primarily associated with the backgrounds of the men, the state and status of the relationship, and the circumstances associated with the specific violent event that led to prosecution. Data about the violence and the circumstances in which it was used were gathered using a checklist of different types of violence and explicit questions concerning the man’s orientations and interpretations of it.

**Lethal Violence: Murder in Britain Study**

The Murder in Britain study was a 3-year investigation of all types of murder. The purpose was to conduct an intensive study of murder to provide detailed information regarding a range of theoretically derived constellations of factors linked to lethal violence. These included childhood and adult backgrounds, criminal careers, and the nature and contexts of lethal acts. The intention was to extend empirical knowledge and explanatory accounts of different types of murder. The study included three sources of data. The Homicide Indexes for England or Wales and Scotland were used to provide summary knowledge of the existing patterns of homicide in Britain. To expand knowledge beyond the limited information available in the Homicide Indexes, two original databases were constructed. Quantitative and qualitative data
were gathered from the case files of 786 men and 80 women convicted of murder in England or Wales and Scotland from the late 1980s through the 1990s. All were currently serving a mandatory “life” sentence for this murder. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of 200 men and women currently in prison for murder in England and Scotland. For the case file data set, a sample was selected from all cases of those currently serving a sentence for murder in England or Wales and Scotland. For the interview data set, strategic sites (prisons) were selected and interviews were conducted with men and women who had committed different types of murder. For both the case file and interview data sets, information was gathered about childhood, adulthood, criminal career, and the murder event (for details, see Dobash et al., 2000). The case file data set includes only those convicted of murder and excludes manslaughter and those who also committed suicide. Here, we use data from the case files only and focus on the subset of 106 men convicted of murdering an intimate female partner. The 106 men in the lethal group included those who killed a current or former partner in a marital, cohabiting (defined as unmarried couples in coresidence), or serious dating or engaged relationship (a relationship that never involved coresidence).

**Case Files**

Extensive information is held in the case file of every person serving a life sentence for murder. These include reports and assessments from a number of professionals working within and outside the criminal justice system. The information is used for presentence and postsentence reports and to follow progress in prison. Case files are often 100 or more pages in length and contain information about the murder provided by the offender, witnesses, forensic experts, police, solicitors, trial judges, psychiatrists, social workers, and probation officers. In addition, information about childhood and family circumstances is contained in reports of teachers, school psychologists, and probation officers. Once in prison, those convicted of murder are assessed and interviewed at frequent intervals by a range of prison staff (governors, psychologists, probation officers, and prison officers), and summaries of these and other reports provide information to assist with education and rehabilitation. For the purposes of the Murder in Britain Study, this extraordinary amount of information was used to construct the original data set of case files that included 425 quantitative variables and extensive qualitative data.

**Comparing Nonlethal and Lethal Violence**

The comparisons of nonlethal and lethal violence include clusters of factors about childhood, adulthood, and the context and circumstances associated with the violent event. Each cluster contains factors that have been either theoretically or empirically identified as relevant to an explanation of violence and/or violent offenders. The
analysis is restricted to issues assessed in both studies and includes a range of relevant factors. In childhood, issues relating to the parents include broken relationships, alcohol abuse by father, and a history of father’s violence to mother. Issues relating to the childhood of the offender include physical or sexual abuse, stability of caretaking, institutional care, and criminal behavior before the age of 16. In adulthood, we examine educational achievement and employment and problems such as substance abuse and criminal activity. Concerning intimate relationships, issues include the number of previous relationships, violence to previous intimate partners, and the nature of the relationship in which the violence occurred. Circumstances prior to and at the time of the violent event are examined in terms of previous violence to the victim, whether they were separated at the time of the event, whether the conflict involved possessiveness, and if the perpetrator was drunk at the time. In addition, we consider factors that might be associated with an elevated risk of a lethal outcome, including sexual assault, strangling, and the use of an instrument, knife, or gun.

This analysis compares two groups of perpetrators, nonlethal abusers and intimate partner murderers, with the aim of identifying relevant differences that may help us to understand the risk of lethal intimate partner violence. To ensure that those included in each of the two studies in fact had committed violence, both samples were drawn from known populations of violent offenders. However, this approach has some limitations. The study of lethal violence provides a fairly representative sample of those convicted of murdering an intimate partner given its geographical and sampling approach and the fact that perpetrators of this sort of homicide are unlikely to escape the attention of the criminal justice system and avoid prosecution. However, those included in the nonlethal group cannot be taken as a representative sample of intimate partner abusers because it only includes those who have been found guilty and received a formal sanction. It might be argued that this group is a fairly representative sample of serious abusers, but it could also be argued that it is unrepresentative because the processing of the criminal justice system introduces biases. It has long been known that extralegal characteristics such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status play a role in arrest, processing, and sentencing, and evidence suggests that this may also occur in cases of intimate partner violence (Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998; Wooldredge & Thistletwaite, 2004). As such, the sample of nonlethal abusers may overrepresent the poor and working classes, but, as noted by Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1988), the criminal justice system is not totally arbitrary. Their review of the literature on police discretion reflects the dominant view that “the role played by suspect characteristics and suspect demeanor . . . is smaller in its influence . . . than the seriousness of behavior” (p. 60). Although data from victim surveys provide information about nonlethal abuse, they also have limitations as they grossly underrepresent the sort of violence serious enough to require criminal justice intervention and provide very limited information about offenders (Straus, 1992).

For this analysis, the cases of nonlethal violence contain information about violence that is sufficiently serious to pose a threat of lethality and detailed information
about the offender and the circumstances of violent events. In addition, the cases of lethal violence include those with no prior history of violence against the victim before the murder and, as such, unknown to the criminal justice system. This contrasts with the study of Campbell and colleagues (2003), whose comparison of lethal and nonlethal violence against women in intimate relationships included only those murders where there had been a prior history of domestic violence and excluded all cases without a prior history of abuse. In this study, the inclusion of cases with no known history of domestic abuse prior to the murder provides insight into a “pathway” to intimate partner murder about which little is known. By including an examination of cases of lethal abuse that were not preceded by nonlethal abuse, we move beyond the common assumption of a progression from one to the other and consider when nonlethal violence does not appear to be the “route” to lethal violence. Finally, with the inclusion of serious dating relationships, we are able to extend current knowledge about the killing of intimate partners.

Data Analysis

Assessments of factors in the two studies involved various levels of measurement. In the comparisons presented here, all variables are translated into nominal categories and set at either 1, indicating the presence of an attribute, or 0, indicating the absence of an attribute. Chi-square is used as a goodness-of-fit test to assess the level of statistical significance of specific comparisons. A significant chi-square result indicates that the observed difference was unlikely to have occurred by chance. The odds ratio (OR) is used to assess the strength of specific comparisons. It is a measure of association that “approximates how much more likely (or unlikely) it is for an outcome to be present among those respondents with certain characteristics [e.g., previous convictions] than among those without such characteristics” (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 1989, p. 41). Although the large number of variables being compared would suggest the use of some form of multivariate analysis to assess the relative significance of each, the relatively small number of cases would threaten the utility of this approach. As such, only bivariate analysis is used in the following comparison.

Findings: Comparisons of Nonlethal and Lethal Violence Against an Intimate Partner

Within the two studies, the offenders and the victims were very similar in terms of age, and there were no statistically significant differences between them. At the time of the violent event, the average age of the men in the nonlethal group was 31.9 years (range = 17-56 years), and the average age of the lethal group was 34.1 years (range = 17-54 years). At the time of the event, the average age of the women in the nonlethal group was 30.8 years (range = 16-56 years), and the average age of the lethal group.
was 31.2 years (range = 15-56 years). As such, the average ages and the range of ages for both offenders and victims had a similar profile in both samples and did not appear to differentiate the two groups. With respect to the nature of the relationship between the offender and the victim, the characteristics of the two groups showed both similarities and differences. Relationships in the nonlethal group were as follows: married, 48.4% \( (n = 59) \); cohabiting, 47.5% \( (n = 58) \); dating or engaged, 4.1% \( (n = 5) \). Relationships in the lethal group are as follows: married, 42.5% \( (n = 45) \); cohabiting, 32.1% \( (n = 34) \); dating or engaged, 25.5% \( (n = 27) \). The majority of the men in both samples were White, and therefore ethnicity is not considered separately. The comparisons between the nonlethal and lethal groups focus on a number of factors about childhood, adulthood, intimate relationships, and the violent event (see Tables 1-3).

**Childhood and Family Background**

Developmental criminologists have established the importance of early onset of offending behavior and negative experiences in the family and childhood in the life course of persistent offenders, including those who commit violent offenses (Farrington, 1994; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998). Within the area of domestic violence, the negative impact of children observing their father using violence against their mother has long been suggested as a factor in the repetition of similar behavior as an adult. It has also been suggested that the physical and/or sexual abuse of children may result in abusive behavior as an adult.

In Table 1, nonlethal (IPViolence) and lethal offenders (IPMurder) are compared on two clusters of factors relating to parents or family and their own problems as children. Of the 5 comparisons concerning parents and family, 4 showed statistically significant differences between the two groups. Specifically, the nonlethal abusers were significantly more likely to come from families in which their father used physical violence against their mother (48.3% vs. 11.7%, OR = 0.141) and had a problem with alcohol abuse (36.1% vs. 11.5%, OR = 0.230). Men who killed were more likely to have grown up in a family where their father had a skilled or white-collar job (43.8% vs. 63.2%, OR = 1.623) and their mother was a full-time homemaker (31.0% vs. 70.9%, OR = 5.411). There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of the breakdown of parental relationships. Of the 5 comparisons concerning problems of the child, only 1 (physically abused by father) yielded a significant difference between nonlethal and lethal offenders (33.6% vs. 14.8%, OR = 0.344). There were no significant differences between the groups in terms of sexual abuse as a child, three or more caretakers, having been placed in institutional care, and being arrested before the age of 16. Overall, members of the lethal group were less likely than those in the nonlethal group to have grown up in a family with problems of the parents and/or the child himself.
### Table 1
**Childhood (Pre-16): Caretaking, Abuse, and Personal Problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IPViolence (%)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>IPMurder (%)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parents and family</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Father, skilled + white-collar</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>5.481*</td>
<td>1.623</td>
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<td>Mother, homemaker</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>28.371***</td>
<td>5.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken relationship</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>0.653</td>
<td>1.353</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol abuse by father</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.705***</td>
<td>0.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence (father to mother)</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>26.455***</td>
<td>0.141</td>
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<td><strong>Problems of the child</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physically abused by father</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>7.963**</td>
<td>0.344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually abused</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>0.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+ changes in caretakers</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>1.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In care as child</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>1.432</td>
<td>0.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest pre-16</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>1.698</td>
<td>1.639</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Chi-square values not marked with an asterisk are not significant.

<sup>a</sup> n = 122.

<sup>b</sup> n = 106.

<sup>*</sup>p < .05. <sup>**</sup>p < .01. <sup>***</sup>p < .001.

### Table 2
**Adulthood: Education and Employment, Problems and Intimate Relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IPViolence (%)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>IPMurder (%)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education and employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left school before 16</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE or above&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>2.923</td>
<td>1.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually unemployed</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>4.926*</td>
<td>0.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled or white-collar job</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>4.258*</td>
<td>0.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems as adult</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol abuse</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>5.009*</td>
<td>0.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>0.434</td>
<td>1.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 1 previous conviction</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>20.655***</td>
<td>0.465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous violent conviction</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>13.952***</td>
<td>0.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+ convictions</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>1.044</td>
<td>0.733</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Previous intimate relationships</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+ previous relationships</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>1.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence to previous partner</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>11.835***</td>
<td>3.412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Chi-square values not marked with an asterisk are not significant.

<sup>a</sup> n = 122.

<sup>b</sup> n = 106.

<sup>c</sup> GCSE, General Certificate of Standard Education, is the national examination at age 16.

<sup>*</sup>p < .05. <sup>**</sup>p < .01. <sup>***</sup>p < .001.
Adulthood

Of the four comparisons regarding education and employment, there were no statistically significant differences between the nonlethal and lethal groups in terms of educational achievement or the age of leaving school, but there were differences in terms of employment (Table 2). Although the majority of men in both groups were usually unemployed, men in the nonlethal group were significantly more likely to experience long-term unemployment (66.9% vs. 51.5%, OR = 0.523). Of those who were employed, most had unskilled jobs, although men in the lethal group (49.0%) were significantly more likely to be working in skilled or white-collar jobs than men in the nonlethal group (27.5%). It should be emphasized that persistent unemployment characterized both groups.

Overall, men in the nonlethal group were more likely to experience a variety of problems as adults. Nonlethal abusers were significantly more likely to have a problem with alcohol. More than half of the nonlethal group and more than one third of the lethal group had serious problems with alcohol abuse as an adult (66.9% vs. 51.5%, OR = 0.523). Of those who were employed, most had unskilled jobs, although men in the lethal group (49.0%) were significantly more likely to be working in skilled or white-collar jobs than men in the nonlethal group (27.5%). It should be emphasized that persistent unemployment characterized both groups.

Of the three comparisons relating to previous convictions, 2 revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups: at least one previous conviction
(96.7% vs. 75.2%, OR = 0.465) and a previous conviction for violence (64.8% vs. 39.0%, OR = 0.349). The groups were fairly similar in terms of those with six or more convictions. Of particular note is the large proportion of men in the nonlethal group with a previous conviction for violence.

Finally, five comparisons were made regarding previous and current intimate relationships. There was no significant difference between the two groups for those who had more than two or more previous relationships, but the lethal group was significantly more likely to have used violence against a previous intimate partner (27.9% vs. 56.9%, OR = 3.412).

The Context and Circumstances of the Violent Event

Examination of the context and circumstances at the time of the violent event (Table 3) focused on issues relating to the relationship itself, sobriety, and factors within the event that might increase the risk of a lethal outcome. Concerning the nature of the current relationship, marriage did not differentiate between the two groups, but cohabitation (47.5% vs. 32.1%, OR = 0.521) and serious dating or engaged did reveal statistically significant differences (4.1% vs. 25.5%, OR = 7.997). Cohabiting relationships are more likely to be associated with nonlethal violence, whereas serious dating or engaged relationships are more likely to be associated with lethal violence. Comparatively speaking, the most tenuous of the intimate relationships and the one in which the couple had never lived together (serious dating or engaged) appears to be more associated with lethal violence than the other types of relationships. Clearly, this is a complex issue and warrants more study to explore what might be contributing to these differences.

Contrary to what might be expected, previous violence against the victim was less likely in the lethal than the nonlethal group (100.0% vs. 59.0%, OR = 0.013). The fact that all of the nonlethal cases involved previous violence is an artifact of a criminal justice sample. It is surprising, however, that 41% of the cases of lethal violence did not involve previous violence to the victim. The extant literature suggests a progression from nonlethal to lethal violence in most intimate partner killings, but these findings reveal a sizeable minority for whom this may not be so and suggests the importance of further examination of such cases.

Separation has repeatedly been found to be an important risk factor in research on nonlethal and lethal violence against women, and this is confirmed by these results. Comparison of the state of the relationship (intact vs. separated) at the time of the violent event indicates that the nonlethal group was less likely to be separated than the lethal group (19.7% vs. 36.8%, OR = 2.377). Separation included those who had formally divorced or separated (n = 30) and those for whom the evidence indicated that the woman was either threatening to leave the relationship or in the process of doing so at the time of the event (n = 9). Of the 30 women who had actually separated, 13 (43.0%) were killed within the first 3 months after separation. Among the
nonlethal group, 24 cases involved violence at or after separation, and in 16 (67.0%) of those cases, abuse occurred within 6 months of the separation. Although the period differed in the two studies, the general pattern indicates that violence often occurs within a fairly short period after separation.

However, recent findings suggest that the apparently straightforward relationship between separation and violence may be more complex and relate to other factors such as the type of individuals who are separated (e.g., younger) and/or the type of relationship from which they are separating (i.e., married, cohabiting, serious dating). Focusing only on those cases involving separation at the time of the event, we compared the nonlethal and lethal groups on all of the childhood, adulthood, and circumstantial factors presented in Tables 1 to 3 and found no significant differences in these personal characteristics (results not presented here because there were no significant differences). Furthermore, there was no relationship between the type of relationship and murder after separation. Separation and a lethal outcome were not significantly more likely to have occurred in marital, cohabiting, or dating relationships. The point here is that the relationship between separation and murder remains resolute when individual characteristics, circumstances, and type of relationship are added to the equation. However, this conclusion is based on small numbers and thus requires additional investigation.

The source of conflict at the time of the event was examined in terms of issues such as domestic work, children, money, drinking, and possessiveness, but because of the current emphasis on male possessiveness, we have focused only on this issue. In cases where the nature of the conflict could be determined, the comparison reveals that male possessiveness and jealousy were significantly more likely in cases of murder than in cases of nonlethal violence (9.5% vs. 34.8%, OR = 5.078). For nonlethal violence, possessiveness was the specific source of conflict in very few of the violent events, although it was an ongoing aspect of many of those relationships. Possessiveness was an important source of conflict for lethal violence, but it did not constitute the source of conflict in a considerable proportion of the murders. This raises two issues. With respect to the study of sources of conflict associated with intimate partner murder, it challenges the almost singular focus on possessiveness and suggests the need to investigate other sources of conflict.

The findings about drunkenness reveal another exception to the notion that a given risk factor for nonlethal violence might be expected to be elevated when lethal violence occurs. Instead, 20.4% of those who committed murder were drunk at the time, whereas 46.7% of those who committed nonlethal violence were drunk at the time (OR = 0.292). Thus, drunkenness appears to be an important risk factor for nonlethal violence but is less important for lethal violence because the vast majority of the men who murdered were not drunk at the time.

The particular form of attack used during a violent incident has implications for a lethal outcome, and the type of violence used in lethal and nonlethal attacks differed in significant ways. Although many different acts might result in death, attacks
including strangling, choking, smothering, and the use of instruments, knives, and guns, on the face of them, would seem to embody a greater risk of lethality. Indeed, strangulation was significantly more likely to have been used in the lethal events (15.6% vs. 37.7%, OR = 3.285). Of the 106 men who killed an intimate partner, 40 strangled the woman (most using their hands and some using a ligature), and 31 of the women died as a direct result of asphyxiation. The use of an instrument, knife, or gun during the attack is a risk factor for lethal violence not only because it increases the likelihood of serious injury but also because it may indicate a heightened estrangement from the relationship and/or an increasing objectification of the victim. The comparison revealed a very significant difference between the two groups, with instruments and knives used in only a few of the nonlethal events but used in the vast majority of lethal events (8.2% vs. 75.5%, OR = 34.462). For the most part, the weapons used in the murders were knives or sharp objects (35.9%), blunt instruments such as household items, wooden bats, and hammers (16.6%), ligatures (16.4%), and guns (4.9%). In addition, sexual violence may be another indicator of further estrangement and/or objectification of the woman and, in this sense, may indicate an increased risk of lethality. Sexual violence did not occur in the specific nonlethal events examined in this study but did occur in the lethal events (0.0% vs. 16.0%, OR = 23.11).5

Summary and Discussion

This analysis compared men convicted of nonlethal violence against an intimate partner with those convicted of murdering an intimate partner to consider similarities and differences. Both individual and situational factors were examined. The findings focus on several constellations of factors that may contribute to a risk of nonlethal and/or lethal violence, including childhood, adulthood, and intimate relationships and various aspects of the violent event, particularly whether the perpetrator was drunk, whether possessiveness was involved, whether the violence included instruments or knives, and whether a sexual attack was also included in the event.

The findings confirm certain aspects of existing research conducted in North America but also present puzzles and challenges regarding established assumptions. The straightforward notion of an elevated risk of lethality with an increase in the incidence and/or severity of factors commonly associated with nonlethal violence was only partially supported. This suggests the importance of continued concern about risk factors usually associated with nonlethal abuse but also underlines the importance of examining those that might be specific to lethal violence.

Comparisons were made of the individual characteristics and circumstances of nonlethal and lethal offenders in childhood and adulthood. The childhood of those who killed was relatively more “conventional” compared to that of abusers. Abusers were more likely to come from homes where their father had an alcohol problem and
physically abused them and their mother. Those who killed were more likely to have grown up in households where their mother was a homemaker and their father had a skilled or white-collar job. As adults, the backgrounds of abusers were more likely to resemble those of offenders, characterized by unemployment, unskilled jobs when working, at least one previous conviction, a previous conviction for violence, and abuse of alcohol. With respect to previous intimate relationships, a considerable proportion of both groups had previously had two or more cohabiting or marital relationships. Men who murdered a partner were much more likely to have used violence against a previous intimate partner. Although there were significant differences between nonlethal and lethal offenders, it should be noted that for many of the factors both groups had backgrounds that were more problematic than would be expected in the general population. Although the backgrounds of men in the lethal group appear to be relatively more conventional than those of men in the nonlethal group, this group, in fact, may be bimodal and contain men who more closely resemble the characteristics of abusers and those who do not (Dobash et al., 2000). This suggests the need for further exploration of this group.

Circumstances at the time of the violent event were examined to consider possible elevation of the risk of lethal violence. The age of offenders and victims in the two comparison groups did not significantly differ at the time of the violent events or murder. Those who murdered were less likely than abusers to be drunk at the time, the conflict was more likely to involve possessiveness, and the couple were more likely to be separated or separating. Lethal violence was more likely to include a sexual assault, strangling, and the use of an instrument or knife. Despite the level of violence in the murder itself, 41% of the men had not previously used violence against the woman they killed. This suggests the importance of not restricting the study of intimate partner lethal violence to cases where there has been a prior history of nonlethal abuse and suggests the need for further study of those who kill but had not previously used violence against the victim. The lower incidence of drunkenness and of previous violence to the victim among men who murder an intimate partner runs counter to the notion of progression of risk from nonlethal to lethal violence and to evidence from the United States (Campbell et al., 2003).

These and other findings suggest that the use of an instrument or weapon and sexual assault may be associated with an increased risk of serious violence or lethality. Although the use of a club, knife, or gun bears the obvious risk of increased lethality, the decision to use such instruments may represent an important change in the offender’s orientation to the victim. Similarly, the element of sexual assault may signal a further stage in the objectification of the woman and/or alienation from her and the relationship. It may also reflect an elevation in the nature of nonlethal violence and thus serve as a warning sign of increasing severity. This is in line with knowledge about other forms of violence, such as war and genocide, in which objectification of the “other” places them outside the universe of moral obligation and is often a precursor to killing or inflicting violence on them. In this respect, the use of instruments or
weapons and the act of strangling not only represent an increased risk of serious violence or death per se but may also suggest further alienation from the relationship and/or objectification of the victim, which may represent an elevation of risk.

The type, status, of the intimate relationship has been found in these and other results to be associated with the risk of lethality. Comparisons of the status of relationships revealed that the nonresidential, serious dating or engaged relationships were significantly more likely among the lethal group. This suggests that more tenuous relationships may involve less commitment between partners, greater conflict, and fewer external supports and thus be more vulnerable. In addition, such relationships may be more likely to be contested with the man believing that there is a relationship while the woman does not. Here, the man’s sense of possessiveness is a crucial issue. However, the effects of relationship status may be mediated by individual characteristics, and this needs further examination.

Separation or breaking up was found to be an important factor in differentiating between nonlethal and lethal violence despite all other conditions. Comparisons of separated and intact relationships for lethal and nonlethal groups on all factors regarding childhood, adulthood, and context and circumstances revealed no significant differences between them. These results are in line with research from the United States and Canada that indicates that separation is an important risk factor for lethality. The Canada research found differences in the characteristics of individuals in intact versus separated relationships (Dawson & Gartner 1998; Johnson & Hotton, 2003), but no such differences were found in this study.

As shown in this and other studies, women who have been subjected to physical violence in an intimate relationship identify separation, or even a temporary departure from the relationship, as a time when they feel particularly at risk of further assault. Yet separation on its own cannot be considered a sole predictor of homicide, as two thirds of the men in the Violent Men Study had also experienced at least one period of separation from their partner yet did not resort to killing her (Dobash et al., 2000). It would appear that the risk is not simply associated with the rather static nature of the status of the relationship (i.e., married, separated, divorced) but on the more dynamic elements associated with those circumstances relating to the man’s sense of possessiveness and jealousy and his interpretation of his partner’s intentions to truly end the relationship and/or to start a new one. Based on the data from the murder case files and interviews with the men who killed an intimate partner, this constellation of factors seems to be important.

Men in both the lethal and nonlethal groups pursued their partners, sometimes with violence and menaces, when she severed the relationship. For most couples who separate, including those in the Violent Men Study and other studies of domestic violence and divorce, women, for a variety of reasons, may return after a period of separation or the relationship may finally end and the man may “allow” the woman to leave without further violence, harassment, or stalking. By contrast, many of the men in the Murder Study killed their partner at the point of separation.
or soon thereafter. The dynamic of this process may be one in which the man comes to define this particular separation as different from others that may have occurred in the past in the sense that he believes this separation will become permanent. This may be signaled by unequivocal statements or actions from the woman, such as filing for divorce or legal separation or by beginning a relationship with a new partner. Whatever the reason, it may be that the man believes that the relationship is truly over and, therefore, becomes estranged from the woman. At this point, he may “change the project” from attempting to persuade, coerce, control, and punish her to “eliminating” her. This may be captured by the common phrase, “If I can’t have you, no one can.” Killing the woman at the point when the relation is deemed to be lost is probably an important dynamic in familicides in which a man kills his woman partner and their children and, sometimes, himself. At the base of all this is an extreme sense of possessiveness and a perceived grievance that is translated into lethal intent (Felson & Messner, 1996).

Conflicts occur in all intimate relationships but are often endemic in those in which violence occurs. The sources of conflict range across the vast field of issues that may be contested in daily life, but some may be more associated with the extreme response of violence. Money, children, alcohol, domestic work, authority, possessiveness, jealousy, and infidelity are all issues of contention (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Although possessiveness was the largest single category in cases of lethal violence, about one third, it was much less likely to be associated with non-lethal violence. For nonlethal violence, the conflicts were more likely to be associated with money, children, and alcohol abuse of the man. Although this is in accordance with Daly and Wilson’s (1993) foundational study of homicide in which they established the importance of possessiveness, these findings raise the question about other factors that may also be associated with homicide. In this study, a wide spectrum of issues was identified as potential sources of conflict in the majority of cases of lethal violence.

Assessing Risk

In the area of intimate partner violence, risk assessment instruments are now used to assess the potential of nonlethal and lethal violence. In Canada and the United States, the most widely used risk assessment tools include the Danger Assessment (DA) instrument initially designed to assist women in assessing future risk, the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) to aide structured professional judgments about levels of dangerousness among men, MOSAIC 20, and the Domestic Violence Inventory (DVI) used by criminal justice agencies to assess risk among offenders (Campbell, Sharps, & Glass, 2001; Kropp, Hart, Webster, & Eaves, 1999; Sonkin, 1997). In Britain, the SARA is increasingly being used, particularly within probation.
(Kropp, 2004). These instruments are based on existing knowledge about risk factors associated with intimate partner violence, and the findings presented here add to and extend that base of knowledge.

For lethal violence, these findings reconfirm the importance of assessing previous violence to the victim, the nature of the relationship, separation, and levels of possessiveness as risk factors. The majority of men who killed had previously used violence against the victim, but a substantial minority had not. For the type of relationship, the findings suggest the need for further attention to the dating or engaged relationship. Separation may constitute either a “solution” to the problem when a violent relationship is ended or result in an escalation of the violence when the man refuses to “allow” the woman to leave. The level and intensity of possessiveness may be a central factor in this dynamic process. Men who will not allow the woman to leave the relationship would appear to “change the project” from one of attempting to retain her within the relationship to one of seeking to punish her for leaving it by escalating the violence even to the point of lethality. Findings regarding possessiveness, particularly, although not exclusively, linked to separation, reinforce the current emphasis on assessing cognitive factors regarding men’s perceptions of their partner and the relationship. Elevated risk also appears to be associated with certain circumstantial factors such as the use of sexual violence, strangling, or choking and the use of instruments and/or weapons. These have an elevated risk for lethality and/or may suggest further estrangement from the victim.

The findings also present some puzzles. Although many of these findings confirm conventional knowledge and views embodied in risk assessment instruments, others present challenges. Some of the men who killed did not have problematic lives as children or adults, had no history of using violence to the victim or to others, and were not drunk at the time. Men with these characteristics would be unlikely to be assessed as at risk of committing lethal violence and, as such, present a challenge to those who assess and manage risk. Conflict appears to be endemic in relationships characterized by violence. Previous research has emphasized possessiveness above all other sources of conflict. The results of this study reconfirm the importance of possessiveness but suggest that other sources of conflict, such as children and resources, should also be included in risk assessment.

Notes

1. Conviction for murder carries a mandatory “life” sentence with a tariff suggesting the period to be served in prison, which is usually 10 to 20 years, although a few receive a “full” life tariff. At the time of the fieldwork, about 3,000 men in England and Wales and 500 men in Scotland were in prison for murder.
2. Whenever a $2 \times 2$ comparison is made (usually when the odds ratio is employed), the Yates correction for chi-square is used.
3. Odds ratios can be read as probabilities. For example, looking at “violence to a previous partner” as presented in Table 2, the odds ratio of 3.412 suggests that the murder group is about 3 times more likely than the nonlethal group to have been violent to a previous intimate partner.
4. It should be noted that this refers to a state of drunkenness and not simply to having been drinking at the time.

5. As there were no reported incidents of sexual violence by men, we sought to validate a considerable proportion of their reports by comparing them to those of women partners among the 95 couples included in the Violent Men Study. Considering the specific event analyzed here, the 95 women confirmed their partners’ accounts that no sexual assault had occurred during the specific violent event that led to arrest and prosecution. It should be noted, however, that among the 95 couples, 9 of the women and 5 of the men reported that sexual violence had occurred at least once during the relationship.

6. Results of the 2001 British Crime Survey reveal that 88% of women who had previously experienced violence from their partner indicated that it ceased when the relationship ended (Walby & Allen, 2004).

References


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