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### Abstract

Sexual violence is prevalent in abusive relationships and yet, has received substantially less attention than physical violence in relationships or sexual violence, in general. The present study compared intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV) with non-sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence against other non-intimate partner victims on demographic data of perpetrators and victims, offence and police reporting features, and the perpetrators' criminal history and recidivism. Sexual and violent assaults reported to local law enforcement that led to an arrest were randomly selected. Analyses revealed that IPSV occurrences took longer to report compared to the other violent occurrences. However, IPSV was similar to IPV occurrences in that weapons were rarely involved, occurrences were more likely outside of the downtown area, and perpetrators were younger. These findings contribute to our limited knowledge about IPSV perpetration and highlight avenues for future exploration in the literature.

**Keywords:** intimate partner violence, sexual violence, police-reported, spousal assault, intimate partner sexual violence

### A Comparative Profile of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence

Sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship has received less attention than physical violence in relationships or sexual violence, in general. Some reports indicate that at least 7% of women in the U.S. have been raped by an intimate partner, with higher estimates in marital relationships (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV) is prevalent in abusive relationships, with sexual violence estimates ranging from 28% to 68% (Eby, Campbell, Sullivan, & Davidson, 1995; McFarlane et al., 2005; Rotenberg, 2017) and over half of domestic abusers self-reporting that they sexually assaulted their partners (Bergen & Bukovec, 2006). This exploratory study examined cases of police-reported sexual assaults against intimate partners in order to gain a better understanding of IPSV by comparing and contrasting with other domestic violence and sexual violence perpetration.

IPSV is either generically grouped into perpetrations of intimate partner violence (IPV) or treated as general sexual violence, and with that, several issues arise. For example, there is often already the stigma that characterizes domestic abuse as a “private matter” rather than criminal behaviour that should receive the attention of law enforcement, and therefore grouping IPSV with non-sexual IPV cases with IPV and IPSV often diminishes the intrusive nature of IPSV (Spohn & Tellis, 2012). Similarly, when IPSV is enveloped with other sexual assaults perpetrated by non-partners, there is the reality that IPSV is treated less seriously. The concern with partner abuse that involves sexual violence is that there seems to be consistent findings suggesting incidents of IPSV involve more severe violence causing injury than non-partner sexual

assaults (Bergen & Bukovec, 2006; Stermac, Del Bove, Brazeau, and Bainbridge, 2006). The lack of seriousness attributed to IPSV can be related to the fact that it was as recent as 1994 when *Assize Courts* in the country of France began adjudicating rape between partners and only in exceptional circumstances was this deemed criminal in nature (Seyller et al., 2016). North America was not much further ahead. It was not until 1993 when marital rape was deemed a crime in all 50 U.S. states (i.e., previously there were provisions that exempted husbands from being prosecuted; Seyller et al., 2016). In Canada, rape was considered an offence only when perpetrated outside of the marriage until 1983 when there were reforms to the rape law, enacting Bill C-127, which replaced the term “rape” with sexual assault and made sexual assault against one’s spouse a criminal offence (Tang, 1998). As a result, the change in the way we should look at IPSV has only been enacted within the last four decades.

Unfortunately, a possible reason for our lack of understanding IPSV is that there is limited literature and inconsistencies in how IPSV is defined and measured (Bagwell-Gray, Messing, & Baldwin-White, 2015). The existing literature has used various terms to describe sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship, which includes but is not limited to marital rape, date rape, dual perpetration, forced sex in marriage, and partner sexual violence. These terms seem to suggest a narrow view of what encompasses sexual violence in a relationship, and yet varying degrees of coercion, degradation, and manipulation play a role in many of these occurrences. Bagwell-Gray et al. (2015) comprehensively combed through the literature to develop a consistent definition of IPSV and proposed a four-part taxonomy (intimate partner sexual coercion, intimate partner sexual abuse, intimate partner sexual assault, and physically forced sexual activity) that represent the quadrants, each which falls on a horizontal axis and

vertical axis: Level of forcefulness and level of invasiveness. Various studies have utilized different inclusion criteria, hence providing divergent IPSV definitions, which complicates merging the literature and challenges efforts to examine IPSV more consistently.

Without clarity in what IPSV looks like within a relationship, it is common that IPSV is enveloped among other types of interpersonal violence, and this means the unique issues faced by IPSV victims are not addressed. For instance, some studies have shown that IPSV has a greater impact on the victims in terms of psychosocial functioning and physical trauma (Temple, Weston, Rodriguez, & Marshall, 2007). Yet despite the greater psychological harm, they are less likely to make a report to the authorities (Martin, Taft, & Resick, 2007; Tellis & Spohn, 2008). Victims report that they did not think police could do anything if the offender was a partner, as opposed to a stranger, and they “wouldn’t be believed” if the offender was a family member (Felson & Pare, 2005). These perceptions are backed up by research indicating sexual assaults perpetrated by strangers were more likely to be investigated thoroughly and less likely to be unfounded by police compared to assaults perpetrated by known assailants or intimate partners (Spohn & Tellis, 2012), and stranger-perpetrated assaults were more likely to lead to an arrest and more severe sentencing (McCormick, Maric, Seto, & Barbaree, 1998; Spohn & Tellis, 2012).

Social psychological research supports the notion that complex issues affect intervention decisions and these decisions are similar to the ones that victims make about their own situations. An early study by Shotland and Shaw (1976) demonstrated that victims in domestic disputes are seen less in danger and less likely to want help and the perpetrator is more likely to have an altercation with those who do intervene.

Given this perceived cost to intervening in domestic disputes, it is likely these get reported less and take longer to report. Not surprising then, IPSV has seldom been assessed separately from IPV (Krienert & Walsh, 2018; Proulx & Beauregard, 2014).

The few studies that have dichotomized intimate partner violence into physical only and physical involving sexual assault have shown IPSV victims are likely to experience more severe psychological and physical injuries, including strangulation (Messing, Thaller, & Bagwell, 2014), and this is most severe with marital (vs. dating) relationships (Krienert & Walsh, 2018). Perpetrators of intimate partner violence often use various tactics to increase fear in their partners, such as threats and stalking behaviour, and in one study, these were more likely among relationships with IPSV than IPV perpetration (Messing et al., 2014).

Several studies have compared IPSV with other sexual violence perpetrations by by strangers or non-intimate partners who were known to the victim. IPSV perpetration involved greater non-genital traumatic injury and genital traumatic injury when compared to stranger- and known, non-intimate partner-perpetration (Murphy et al., 2011). Similarly, more IPSV cases involved vaginal penetration, ejaculation, and physical violence or force than non-IPSV cases (Seyller et al., 2016; Stermac et al., 2006). Perhaps, not surprising, IPSV used more coercive methods, such as verbal threats and psychoactive substances, than sexual violence perpetrated by non-intimate partners (Stermac et al., 2006). In addition to the violence severity, intrusiveness, and coercion used, compared to sexual violence by others, IPSV victims were less likely to be examined within 24 hours by nurse examiners after the assault (Murphy et al., 2011).

IPSV is diverse in nature, prevalent among IPV incidents, impactful on the victims who endure the violence, and more violent than other incidents of sexual and

non-sexual violence. The limited research to date has primarily compared IPSV either with IPV perpetration or with sexual assault perpetration. The conclusions that we draw are primarily from this dichotomous comparison rather than an explicit comparison among IPSV with IPV *and* other sexual assaults perpetrated by non-partners. In light of the lack of empirical examination profiling IPSV in the context of non-sexual and sexual violence cases, the objective of the current study was to obtain a profile of men who sexually assaulted their intimate partners and compare them with those who perpetrated other forms of violence.

The present study includes police-reported occurrences of sexual and violent assaults to local law enforcement from 2010 to 2014. One hundred and forty-five cases of IPSV (group 1) were identified compared to an additional 435 cases, which were randomly drawn to represent three other forms of assault: Perpetrators who physically, but not sexually, assault their partners (IPV; group 2), sexual assault by a known, non-intimate, assailant (SV against known; group 3), and sexual assault by a stranger (SV against stranger; group 4). Data was archivally coded from police documentation. Specifically, characteristics of the perpetrator and the victim, the reporting details of the occurrence, and the recidivism information on the perpetrators were examined. The goal of this research was to explore whether there were attributes where IPSV perpetrators, victims, and offence attributes differed from other cases of violence.

## **Method**

### **Sample**

The current sample was extracted from a database that included all consecutive occurrences of domestic violence and sexual assaults reported to local police in a medium-sized city in mid-western Canada over a 5-year period (from 2010 to 2014).



This Canadian region is ethnically diverse (e.g., Caucasian, Aboriginal, Asian, etc), but is predominantly Caucasian (Statistics Canada, 2011), and police services is primarily provided in smaller municipalities by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police while larger cities are serviced by local police agencies.

Four groups of police-reported interpersonal violence were included in the final sample with 145 cases in each group. The groups were categorized based on the type of violence and the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim in the index occurrence (i.e., most recent offence reported) and included intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV; group 1), intimate partner non-sexual violence (IPV; group 2), sexual violence against a known, non-intimate partner victim (SV against known; group 3), and sexual violence against a stranger victim (SV against stranger; group 4). The final sample included 580 cases. All of the occurrences were perpetrated by males against females. The perpetrators in the complete sample had an average age of 35.7 ( $SD = 11.24$ ; range from 18 to 79) and majority were Caucasian or white ( $n = 227$ ; 44.4%), followed by Aboriginal or Metis ( $n = 129$ ; 25.2%). The following ethnicities were also included in the analysis: South East Asian ( $n = 57$ ; 15.1%), Asian or Asian American ( $n = 20$ ; 3.9%), African, Caribbean, or Black ( $n = 51$ ; 10.0%), and Latino or Hispanic ( $n = 17$ ; 3.3%). With regards to victims in the sample, they had an average age of 30.3 years ( $SD = 11.58$ ; range from 16 to 92) and a majority were Caucasian ( $n = 186$ ; 32.1% of entire sample), followed by Aboriginal or Metis ( $n = 121$ ; 20.9% of entire sample).

### **Study Variables**

Study variables extracted for this study included (a) demographic variables for perpetrators and victims including age, gender, and ethnicity, (b) offence attributes,

such as weapon use, location of the assault, date of reporting, date of offence (start and end dates), and (c) listing of all occurrences pertaining to each perpetrator, using the perpetrator identifying number. Given that meaningful variables needed to be created using the raw variables provided in the extraction, the following variables were created for the purpose of this study:

- Latency of reporting the offence was computed using the start date of the offence and the date of report;
- Using locations where assaults were reported, a variable for downtown area was created;
- Ages of the perpetrator and victims were created using the start date of the offence and the date of birth;
- Age difference between the victim and perpetrator was computed using the calculated ages of the perpetrator and victim;

In addition to these created variables, perpetrator characteristics also included criminal history and recidivism, which were broken down into 4 categories including: any offences, any offences excluding supervision related offences, violent offences, and sexual offences. Criminal history and recidivism were new variables created through the conversion from raw data of past and subsequent occurrences involving the perpetrator. The list of all relevant variables in this study are provided in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

### **Procedure**

The present research was approved by an institutional research ethics board and the research and evaluation unit of the police service. Analysts at the police service extracted two databases of police-reported occurrences between the years 2010 and

2014 in April 2016. The end date of extraction was 2014 to allow for at least a one-year follow-up period to examine potential recidivism. A broad extraction was undertaken using uniform crime report (UCR) codes, which are commonly used by law enforcement and created by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. UCRs, such as aggravated sexual assault, anal intercourse, sexual assault involving a weapon, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and sexual exploitation of a person with a disability were included (for a complete list, please contact the first author).

The first database included 10,515 occurrences of domestic violence that led to a criminal charge, and of those occurrences, 145 cases where the index offence involved an assault against an intimate partner were identified and extracted (group 1). To create the comparison samples, a random selection of cases was conducted. Given that typically the larger a sample size then the more likely it is that a finding may emerge, we chose a random selection (rather than the entire sample) to provide a control group that may differ in the matched variables (e.g. offender age and sex) but was consistent in select variables (i.e., perpetrators were criminally charged, were male, and had female victims). From the same database, 145 cases that involved non-sexual assaults against intimate partners were randomly selected (group 2). The second database included 865 occurrences of sexual assault against victims who were 16 or older that led to a criminal charge (note: in Canada, 16 years old is considered the age of consent). Any historical cases (i.e., offences that occurred several years prior to reporting) were excluded. One hundred and forty-five occurrences that involved a sexual assault charge against a perpetrator known to the victim, but was not an intimate partner, were randomly selected (group 3). Another sample of 145 sexual assault occurrences that involved a stranger perpetrator were randomly selected (group 4). These latter three groups (2, 3,

and 4) were produced as comparison samples. Given that all of the IPSV (group 1) occurrences were perpetrated by males against females, the comparison samples of IPV (group 2), SV against known (group 3), and SV against stranger (group 4) occurrences were selected among all occurrences with male perpetrators against female victims.

For both extractions, specific variables were included in the resulting databases, such as demographic information on the perpetrators and victims (i.e., dates of birth, ethnicity, gender), UCR for the most serious offence (e.g., assault, aggravated assault), dates of reporting and offence, and location of offence. The variables used in the current study were extracted from the police database, which included information the responding officer documented at the time of the occurrence. In addition to the basic police-documented information for each occurrence, it was important to include variables that would allow the researchers to codify criminal history and recidivism for each perpetrator. Therefore, for each perpetrator, all past and future occurrences (i.e., calls that came in and the clearance status of those calls, e.g., whether a charge was laid) were provided as a separate database. These databases were merged to document any criminal history (including the type of charge laid; i.e., any, supervision/technical breaches, violent, sexual) for each perpetrator.

### **Data Analysis**

Statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS version 20. Continuous variables were analyzed with analyses of variance (ANOVAs) and a Bonferroni correction was used for post-hoc analyses. Categorical variables were analyzed using Pearson chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests for comparison of the four groups. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine significance.

## Results

The following sections compare cases of IPSV (group 1) with IPV (group 2), SV against known (group 3), and SV against stranger (group 4) on perpetrator characteristics (e.g., age, criminal history, recidivism), victim characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity), and offence variables (e.g., weapon use, location). Descriptive information regarding each variable in the comparison of the four groups and for the entire sample are listed in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

### Perpetrator Characteristics

The age, ethnicity, criminal history, and reoffending rates of the perpetrators from each of the four groups were compared, and descriptive and inferential statistics are provided in Table 1. Few differences among the groups emerged. The age of the perpetrator significantly differed among groups,  $F(3) = 4.46$ ,  $p = .004$ ; however, only the perpetrators of SV against known victims (group 3; 38.4 years, on average) were significantly older than the intimate partner groups, IPSV (group 1; 34.1 years),  $t(288) = 4.32$ ,  $p = .006$ , and IPV (group 2; 34.5 years),  $t(288) = 3.92$ ,  $p = .017$ , while the age of the perpetrators of SV against strangers (group 4; 35.8 years) did not differ from the other groups.

Three comparisons were made with regards to race of the perpetrator. Because Caucasians made up of the majority of the sample (44.4%) and the second largest grouping was Aboriginal or Metis (25.2%), we used two dichotomies: Caucasian versus non-Caucasian and Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal. However, chi-square analyses were not significant for any of the comparisons (see Table 1).

When the criminal history of perpetrators was examined, separate chi-square analyses were conducted on each type of criminal history, any, any excluding technical

and supervision violations, violent, and sexual crimes. A significant difference emerged with any criminal history including supervision violations (e.g., breach, failure to attend),  $\chi^2(3) = 46.48, p < .001$ . A larger proportion of the IPV group (group 2) had a prior criminal record (63.4%) compared to the other three groups, IPSV (group 1; 44.8%), SV against known victims (group 3; 24.1%), and SV against strangers (group 4; 40.0%). The groups did not differ in their criminal histories for any crimes when breaches were excluded, or for violent or sexual prior offences.

When recidivism rates were examined, the groups differed significantly on any recidivism post-index arrest,  $\chi^2(3) = 27.67, p = .000$ . A similar trend to the criminal history findings emerged. More IPV perpetrators had subsequent arrests (group 2; 60.7%) compared to perpetrators of IPSV (group 1; 53.8%), SV against known victims (group 3; 31.7%), and SV against strangers (group 4; 53.8%). Perpetrators of SV against a known victim (group 3) had the least criminal involvement compared to all other groups. None of the groups differed on recidivism for offences that excluded breaches, violent offences, and sexual offences.

### **Victim Characteristics**

Only two characteristics of victims were examined, age and ethnicity. Descriptive and inferential statistics for victim variables are listed in Table 2. Age was significantly different among the groups,  $F(3) = 6.28, p < .001$ . Only known (non-intimate partner) victims (group 3) significantly differed from the other groups as shown in post hoc pairwise comparisons using a Bonferroni correction. Victims (group 3; 26.8 years, on average) were younger than IPSV (group 1; 31.5 years),  $t(288) = 4.68, p = .003$ ; IPV (group 2; 32.1 years),  $t(288) = 5.26, p = .001$ ; and stranger victims (group 4; 30.8 years),  $t(288) = 3.97, p = .019$ . Similar to perpetrators' ethnicity, three dichotomous

comparisons were made since victims were predominantly Caucasian (50.1%) and Aboriginal or Metis (32.3%) in the sample. None of the comparisons varied significantly between Caucasian and Aboriginal, Caucasian and non-Caucasian, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups based on the type of index violence.

### **Offence Attributes**

Attributes of the violent offence were examined and included how long it took for the offence to be reported to police, whether a weapon was used, location and time of the year that the offence took place, and the age difference between the perpetrator and victim. Descriptive information for each perpetrator group and inferential statistics are listed in Table 3. An ANOVA revealed that the groups differed in the latency of reporting the incident to police,  $F(3, 577) = 6.37, p < .001$ . Post hoc pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction showed that the reporting of IPSV occurrences was significantly more delayed (group 1; 19.1 days on average) than IPV occurrences (group 2; 1.8 days),  $t(286) = 17.31, p = .002$ , and SV against by strangers (group 4; less than a day),  $t(286) = 18.68, p = .001$ .

Significant differences were found among the groups regarding the use of a weapon, location of the occurrence, and time of the year. Overall, it was rare when weapons were used (4.3% of the whole sample), but it appeared that more sexual assaults against strangers (group 4; 9.0%) and known victims (group 3; 4.8%) were perpetrated using a weapon than offences against an intimate partner with (group 1; 1.4%) or without (group 2; 2.1%) sexual violence,  $\chi^2(3) = 12.50, p = .006$ . Nearly a quarter of all occurrences were reported downtown, as opposed to other less populated city neighborhoods, and there was a significant difference among the groups,  $\chi^2(3) = 21.84, p < .001$ , where a larger proportion of stranger-perpetrated sexual assaults

occurred (group 4; 35.4%) compared to the other groups (groups 1, 2, and 3; 14.7 to 22.7%). In addition to weapon use and location, we examined the time of the year, specifically whether there were differences during warm weather months given the past research indicating greater violent crime during such seasons (see Rotton & Frey, 1985). Because the location is in a higher latitude than most populated areas in Canada and therefore experiences colder weather for larger portion of the year, the summers are relatively short and warmer months range from May to September, at best. When the proportion of occurrences in the warmer months was examined, we found that group differences emerged,  $\chi^2(3) = 25.46, p < .001$ , showing that more than half of SV against strangers (group 4; 53.8%) occurred in warmer months compared to IPSV (group 1; 40.0%) and SV against known occurrences (group 3; 40.7%), which was more than IPV (group 2; 24.8%).

Lastly, the age differences between the perpetrator and the victim at the time of the index offence was examined and a significant difference was found among the groups,  $F(3) = 20.06, p < .001$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni correction showed that IPSV (group 1) and IPV groups (group 2) differed from the two other sexual assault groups. Specifically, the age difference was less than one year for IPSV (group 1; 0.15 year, on average) compared to SV against known (group 3; 11.61 years),  $t(219) = 11.46, p < .001$ , and perpetrators of SV against strangers (group 4; 5.06 years),  $t(219) = 4.91, p = .049$ . Similarly, IPV cases (group 2) had less than one year difference between the perpetrator and the victim (0.16 year, on average), which was significantly less than SV against known victims (group 3),  $t(236) = 11.44, p = .000$ , and SV against strangers (group 4),  $t(236) = 4.89, p = .030$  (for the two latter groups, SV against known/group 3 and SV against strangers/group 4, the perpetrators were older than



victims).

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this research was to directly compare police-reported IPSV occurrences with non-sexual IPV cases and other sexual assault cases that did not involve intimate partners. The existing published literature often uses a piecemeal approach to examine IPSV, cobbling together several separately published comparisons from various geographical locations and concluding with global statements on the differences and similarities of IPSV with these contrasting incidents of interpersonal violence. The findings in the current study, although exploratory, provide an opportunity to produce conclusions based on a single sampling from a single region without the influence of cohort (i.e., generational differences) or geography (i.e., comparing samples from various regions).

Our results show that IPSV contrasts from both IPV and sexual assaults, in some meaningful ways. Somewhat surprising, delayed reporting of IPSV was much longer than other forms of interpersonal violence. On average, IPSV was reported to police nearly 3 weeks following the offence compared to stranger-perpetrated sexual violence and IPV, which were reported in under 2 days, and sexual violence perpetrated by a known assailant, which was reported under 10 days. Our findings were consistent with Bicanic, Hehenkamp, van de Putte, van Wijk, and de Jongh's study (2015), showing that delayed disclosures were associated with closeness to the assailant. However, the current literature has not examined the delay in reporting between IPSV and IPV offending, and our findings demonstrate that IPV was more quickly reported than IPSV. Much of the existing research has focused on *whether or not* the crime is reported, and indicated that reporting is most likely among stranger-perpetrated sexual violence cases

(e.g., Tellis & Spohn, 2008). Perhaps what may provide insight into our findings on the delay of reporting is the reasons given by intimate partners who experience sexual violence as examined in Felson and Pare's study (2005). They found that victims more likely thought police could not do anything if the offender was a partner as opposed to a stranger. There seemed to be a fear that they "wouldn't be believed" (p. 606), if the offender was a family member.

Another way that IPSV occurrences were similar to sexual assaults by known perpetrators was *when* the occurrence happened; more of the stranger-perpetrated sexual assaults occurred in the warmer months, followed by IPSV and sexual assaults by known assailants, and then IPV occurrences. Violence perpetrated by known perpetrators, whether sexual or partner-perpetrated, were less likely occurring in the more populated downtown area or involved weapons than compared to stranger-perpetrated sexual assaults. Not surprising is that assaults involving victims known to the perpetrator occurred more often in private settings located in less populous areas of the city. Further, it is known that stranger-perpetrated sexual assaults more often involve serious violence and force, hence the use of weapons is consistent with that reality (Stermac, Du Mont, & Kalemba, 1995). Where IPSV contrasted from sexual assaults by known assailants was in the ages of perpetrators and victims. IPSV and IPV perpetrators were very close in age with their victims and the perpetrators who sexually assaulted a stranger victim tended to be older, although the age differences seen among these three groups did not differ. In contrast, the age difference was largest between sexual assault perpetrators and their known victims (who were not intimate partners), despite excluding child victim (i.e., < 16 years).

A characteristic that differentiated perpetrators known to their sexual assault

victims was their criminal behaviors. They were less likely to have criminal histories and less likely to recidivate than the other three groups. What was surprising was that IPSV perpetrators were most similar to the stranger-perpetrators in terms of criminal history and reoffending rates. Criminal backgrounds between these groups have not been closely examined in the literature. However, the degree of violence in their index offences were investigated by Stermac, Du Mont, and Dunn (1998) and they found that these two groups of sexual assault perpetrators (intimate partners and strangers) were similar in terms of the significant degree of violence and physical trauma inflicted upon their victims when compared to assailants who were known to, but not partners of, the victims.

So what have we learned from this comparison? We have merely skimmed the surface, but in this exploration we have found that IPSV offending is not merely a category of crime that should be enveloped by any one of these groups of perpetrators. It was expected that they would be most similar to IPV perpetrators by the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, but they contrasted in various ways, including the delay in reporting and their criminal history. They also contrasted from perpetrators known to their victims in terms of their criminal history and likelihood to reoffend, as well as the delay in reporting the offence. These similarities and dissimilarities are meaningful and introduce various ways where public intervention may be beneficial in the reporting of sexual violence by an intimate partner. Delays in reporting, for example, may be entangled with victims' perceptions that they will not be believed or that what they had experienced was not actually sexual assault. Since marital rape was deemed illegal only within the recent decades, the public perceptions of such violence usually does not follow suit for some time. Since marital rape was

legitimized prior to changes to law, it may be necessary to engage the public by debunking this legitimacy, and perhaps expanding our knowledge of what entails IPSV, such as the work offered by Bagwell-Gray et al. (2015) expanding on what encompasses violence in terms of the level of forcefulness and level of invasiveness.

A reason why IPSV should be examined relative to non-sexual IPV and sexual violence cases is the implications on how we should engage this particular type of violence. For identified perpetrators, how should these cases be investigated? For example, if IPSV is treated as a domestic violence situation, then domestic violence coordinators should become involved and a victim safety plan should be put into place. On the other hand, if the perpetrator is treated as a sexual violence case, then typically a sexual assault response team may conduct a medical exam and complete a rape kit for investigative purposes. Perhaps, law enforcement should carry out both of these sets of actions in succession, and of key importance, a designated investigator should be equipped with the appropriate training and experience in both types of investigations.

Furthermore, how should management and treatment be considered for IPSV perpetrators? It is important, according to the risk, need, and responsivity principles for effective rehabilitation, that risk is assessed to determine the level of supervision and intensity of treatment needed, criminogenic needs are identified to target areas where intervention would be most effective, and responsivity factors that would facilitate more effective change (Bonta & Andrews, 2017; Jung, 2017). However, risk evaluation measures are varied and used to identify specific risks, such as sexual violence reoffending (e.g., Static-99R; Hanson & Thornton, 1999) or IPV recurrences (e.g., Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment; Hilton, Harris, & Rice, 2010). Moreover, the criminogenic needs of domestic abusers and sexually violent offenders also differ. It

may be monotonous to engage assessment, management, and treatment from both areas of violence to engage IPSV offenders. What may be useful is an amalgamation of these fields to address the complexity of IPV that is entangled with sexual coercion and/or violence.

Our study was limited in several ways and these are important to highlight here. First, the data was sample from a single region and this is limiting. Although sampling from one location removes other barriers seen in the extant literature where variances in the types of data (e.g., police reported, victim services) or regional differences preclude direct comparisons, generalization of the findings must be considered with caution. Second, the range of variables examined was restricted, compared to the varied and expansive analyses in the existing literature. Regarding the variables measuring criminal history and reoffending, only local police data was used and therefore criminal history and recidivism was conservatively defined. As with most police data, it is also important to note that IPSV cases only included assaults that were reported to police and it is well-established that many incidents of domestic abuse and sexual assault go unreported. Finally, the data used to form the four groups were identified using two different means. Group 1, which included IPSV cases, were convenience sampled (all of the IPSV cases that involved a sexual assault against an intimate partner were identified and placed in group 1); in contrast, the three comparison groups were randomly selected to form the other three groups of IPV (group 2), sexual violence against a victim known to the perpetrator (group 3), and sexual violence against a stranger (group 4).

## **Conclusion**

The objective of the current study was to obtain a profile of men who sexually

assault their intimate partners. This profile of IPSV cases provides a meticulous and concurrent comparison with other non-sexual and sexual violence cases from the same time cohort and geographical region. Consistent with existing literature, data was archival and incident-based (i.e., cases were grouped by the index offence reported to the police). The present findings contribute to our limited knowledge about IPSV perpetration, and further, this research highlights avenues for future exploration in the prevention and the management of IPSV perpetrators.

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Table 1

Perpetrator characteristics compared by the type of violence at the index occurrence and for entire sample

Perpetrator variables	Total sample (N = 580)	IPSV (n = 145)	IPV (n = 145)	SV against known (n = 145)	SV against stranger (n = 145)	$\chi^2$ or F (p-value)
Age (in years)	35.7 (11.24)	34.1 (8.76)	34.5 (9.13)	38.4 (13.96)	35.8 (11.88)	<b>4.46 (.004)</b>
Ethnicity <sup>1</sup> (n = 502)						
Caucasian/White	227 (44.4%)	51 (44.0%)	62 (52.1%)	55 (40.1%)	59 (42.4%)	4.09 (.252)
Aboriginal/Metis	129 (25.2%)	23 (19.8%)	33 (27.7%)	33 (24.1%)	40 (28.8%)	3.21 (.360)
African/Caribbean/Black	52 (10.2%)	16 (13.8%)	11 (9.2%)	11 (8.0%)	14 (10.1%)	-
Asian/Asian American	20 (3.9%)	6 (5.2%)	3 (2.5%)	9 (6.6%)	2 (1.4%)	-
Indian/Middle Eastern	58 (11.4%)	13 (11.2%)	6 (5.0%)	19 (13.9%)	20 (14.4%)	-
Latino/Hispanic	16 (3.1%)	3 (2.6%)	3 (2.5%)	8 (5.8%)	2 (1.4%)	-
Criminal history						
Any offences	250 (43.1%)	65 (44.8%)	92 (63.4%)	35 (24.1%)	58 (40.0%)	<b>46.48 (p &lt; .001)</b>
Any offences (excl. breaches)	133 (22.9%)	31 (21.4%)	37 (25.5%)	24 (16.6%)	41 (28.3%)	6.43 (.092)
Violent offences	31 (5.3%)	11 (7.6%)	5 (3.4%)	6 (4.1%)	9 (6.2%)	3.10 (.376)

Sexual offences	7 (1.2%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)	5 (3.4%)	-
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Recidivism <sup>2</sup>						
Any offences	290 (50.0%)	78 (53.8%)	88 (60.7%)	46 (31.7%)	78 (53.8%)	<b>27.67</b> <b>(p &lt; .001)</b>
Any offences (excl. breaches)	132 (22.8%)	34 (23.4%)	31 (21.4%)	25 (17.2%)	42 (29.0%)	5.89 (.117)
Violent offences	33 (5.7%)	10 (6.9%)	7 (4.8%)	9 (6.2%)	7 (4.8%)	0.87 (.833)
Sexual offences	18 (3.1%)	4 (2.8%)	1 (0.7%)	8 (5.5%)	5 (3.4%)	-

Note: For continuous variables, means and standard deviations (in parentheses) are reported and results from analyses of variance are provided. For categorical variables, percentages and frequencies (in parentheses) are reported, and Pearson chi-square test values are provided. Analyses where assumptions were not met for the inferential statistic are omitted (e.g., for chi-square, expected frequencies were less than 5 per cell).

<sup>1</sup>Inferential analyses of ethnicity examined whether the perpetrator was Caucasian vs. Aboriginal, Caucasian (vs. not Caucasian), and Aboriginal or Metis (vs. not Aboriginal or Metis), listed in this order.

<sup>2</sup>Average recidivism follow-up was 2.97 years (*SD* = 1.45).

Table 2

Victim characteristics compared by the type of violence at the index occurrence and for entire sample

Victim variables	Total sample ( <i>N</i> = 580)	IPSV ( <i>n</i> = 145)	IPV ( <i>n</i> = 145)	SV against known ( <i>n</i> = 145)	SV against stranger ( <i>n</i> = 145)	$\chi^2$ or <i>F</i> ( <i>p</i> -value)
Age (in years)	30.3 (11.58)	31.5 (9.75)	32.1 (9.97)	26.8 (10.60)	30.8 (14.68)	<b>6.28 (<i>p</i> &lt;.001)</b>
Ethnicity <sup>1</sup> ( <i>n</i> = 364)						
Caucasian/White <sup>2</sup>	186 (50.1%)	51 (50.0%)	51 (44.3%)	44 (57.1%)	40 (51.9%)	3.16 (.368)
Aboriginal/Metis <sup>2</sup>	120 (32.3%)	33 (32.4%)	45 (39.1%)	19 (24.7%)	23 (29.9%)	4.71 (.195)

*Note:* For continuous variables, means and standard deviations (in parentheses) are reported and results from analyses of variance are provided. For categorical variables, percentages and frequencies (in parentheses) are reported, and Pearson chi-square test values are provided.

<sup>1</sup>Inferential analyses of ethnicity examined whether the victim was Caucasian vs. Aboriginal, Caucasian (vs. not Caucasian), and Aboriginal or Metis (vs. not Aboriginal or Metis), listed in this order.

<sup>2</sup>Ethnicity of the victim was not always available and therefore the group sizes for groups 1 to 4 were 102, 115, 77, and 77.

Table 3

Offence characteristics compared by the type of violence at the index occurrence and for entire sample

Offence variables	Total sample (N = 580)	IPSV (n = 145)	IPV (n = 145)	SV against known (n = 145)	SV against stranger (n = 145)	$\chi^2$ or F (p-value)
Reporting latency (days) <sup>1</sup>	7.6 (41.20)	19.1 (68.77)	1.8 (15.94)	9.1 (40.76)	0.46 (1.68)	<b>6.37</b> <b>(p &lt;.001)</b>
Weapon Used	25 (4.3%)	2 (1.4%)	3 (2.1%)	7 (4.8%)	13 (9.0%)	<b>12.50</b> <b>(p &lt;.001)</b>
Occurred in downtown	128 (22.3%)	21 (14.7%)	24 (16.6%)	32 (22.7%)	51 (35.4%)	<b>21.84</b> <b>(p &lt;.001)</b>
Warmer months <sup>2</sup>	231 (39.8%)	58 (40.0%)	36 (24.8%)	59 (40.7%)	78 (53.8%)	<b>25.46</b> <b>(p &lt;.001)</b>
Age difference (in years) <sup>3</sup>	5.32 (13.84)	0.15 (0.09)	0.16 (0.12)	11.61 (14.58)	5.06 (18.04)	<b>20.06</b> <b>(p &lt;.001)</b>

*Note:* For continuous variables, means and standard deviations (in parentheses) are reported and results from analyses of variance are provided. For categorical variables, percentages and frequencies (in parentheses) are reported, and Pearson chi-square test values are provided.

<sup>1</sup>Analyses excluded 2 outliers where latency in reporting exceeded 500 days (i.e., 1644 and 1928 days).

<sup>2</sup>Warmer months include May to August, given the geographical location where the incidents were reported.

<sup>3</sup>Age difference refers to how much older is the perpetrator than the victim in years (n = 459).