



*...from the Director*

In 2007 the Crime Victims' Institute conducted a statewide survey that inquired about intimate partner violence among Texas citizens (Kercher, Johnson & Yun, 2008). This kind of violence occurs in dating relationships and cohabitation as well as in marriages. This report is based on the 2007 dataset and is the second of two reports published by the Crime Victims' Institute on the intergenerational transmission of intimate partner violence. The report focuses on factors that either increase or mediate the risk of intimate partner violence among those who were corporally punished and/or witnessed inter-parental violence as children. It is our hope that the findings reported here will increase understanding of the conditions and situations that lead to intimate partner violence and lead to constructive ways to both prevent it and assist those persons who are victimized.



**Glen Kercher**  
**Crime Victims' Institute**



## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Crime Victims' Institute is to

- conduct research to examine the impact of crime on victims of all ages in order to promote a better understanding of victimization
- improve services to victims
- assist victims of crime by giving them a voice
- inform victim-related policymaking at the state and local levels.



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## **Executive Summary**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant public health issue. Estimates suggest that as many as 22.1 percent of women and 7.4 percent of men have been victimized in their primary adult relationships.<sup>1</sup> Scholars have highlighted the importance of family-of-origin characteristics as contributing to emotional and physical conflict in relationships. Specifically, the intergenerational transmission of violence theory proposes that individuals learn techniques and behaviors for interacting with others in their families-of-origin.<sup>2</sup> When children witness violence between their parents or are the recipients of abuse and/or corporal forms of punishment, they may grow up to believe that these strategies are appropriate for conflict resolution and problem solving and may be more likely to use violence as adults. Many children grow up in families where parents behave aggressively and/or violently toward one another or they may be the recipients of corporal punishment during childhood, but they do not grow up to use violence in their adult relationships.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this report is to present findings that answer two research questions: 1) among those adults who witnessed inter-parental violence or experienced corporal punishment during childhood, what factors mediate the effect of family-of-origin violence on adult IPV, and 2) do multiple experiences of violence in the family-of-origin produce a cumulative effect so that antisocial behavior is transmitted intergenerationally when individuals are subjected to more than one form of violence?

# The Effects of Family-of-Origin Violence on Intimate Partner Violence

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Few studies have addressed the intergenerational transmission of violence by looking at family-of-origin violence subsamples. Collectively, these studies lend credence to the notion that violence is learned through parents during the early socialization process.<sup>4,5</sup> This body of research highlights the role of particular risk factors that interact with family-of-origin violence to increase the likelihood of adult partner conflict. In particular, low socioeconomic status, decreases in self-esteem, exposure to community and school violence, experiencing child abuse, poor school performance, alcohol dependence, post traumatic stress disorder, and mood instability have been identified as differentiating factors that increase intimate partner violence (IPV) among individuals who grow up in aggressive homes.<sup>6,7,8</sup> While these studies help to clarify some of the mechanisms by which violence may be transmitted, they leave out important risk/resiliency factors including religiosity, adhering to a stringent or masculine gender ideology, and relationship-specific decision-making. Additionally, only O'Keefe (1998) examined the cumulative effect of witnessing violence between parents and experiencing corporal punishment during childhood as producing negative outcomes in adolescent dating relationships.<sup>9</sup> While instructive for understanding the nuances of violence transmission among adolescent dating populations, her findings raise important questions for adult marital and intimate partnerships. This report presents the results of a study that 1) assessed the effect of several risk and resiliency factors on adult IPV perpetration and victimization, and 2) accounted for the potentially cumulative effects of multiple forms of family-of-origin violence on later IPV victimization and perpetration.

Risk and resiliency factors have long been acknowledged as integral to understanding the development and prevention of diverse cognitive and behavioral outcomes, including mental illness, criminal offending behavior, and victimization.<sup>10,11</sup> Risk factors are variables with predictive value for these negative outcomes, whereas resiliency factors protect against the development of aversive cognitions or behaviors in spite of the presence of risk.<sup>12</sup> Identifying such factors are important to understanding violence and victimization, and are instructive in the prevention and treatment of negative physical and mental health outcomes caused by violent behavior and domestic abuse. In examining the relationship between intergenerational transmission of violence and intimate partner abuse, several studies have identified risk and resiliency factors related to both IPV victimization and perpetration.<sup>13,14,15</sup> The most commonly included variables are socio-demographic in nature, such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, employment, and relationship status.<sup>16,17,18,19</sup> Fewer studies have looked at more specific factors such as the acceptance of IPV, general alcohol consumption patterns, gender role orientation, religiosity, and decision-making agreement among couples.<sup>20,21,22,23</sup>

Several studies have examined the link between witnessing interparental violence and/or experiencing physical punishment (i.e., spanking, hitting, or slapping) in the family-of-origin, and later perpetration of domestic abuse and victimization by an intimate partner.<sup>24,25,26,27,28</sup> Results indicate that witnessing parental violence is associated with a number of negative outcomes including: intimate partner victimization among both men and women,<sup>29,30,31,32,33</sup> perpetration of dating violence and IPV,<sup>34,35,36,37,38</sup> symptoms of post-traumatic stress among women,<sup>39</sup> and greater stress and less marital satisfaction.<sup>40</sup> Although there is a positive relation-

ship between witnessing parental aggression and later IPV, some studies are inconsistent.<sup>41, 42</sup> Similarly, experiencing corporal punishment has been associated with psychological and physical aggression and victimization among intimate partners.<sup>43, 44, 45, 46, 47</sup> Some data suggests, however, that no significant relationship exists between physical punishment and IPV or, at least, that the effects of corporal punishment are not entirely clear.<sup>48, 49, 50, 51</sup> In short, witnessing and/or experiencing parental violence is a risk factor for adult domestic abuse and victimization; however, not all children exposed to family-of-origin violence later inflict or tolerate intimate partner aggression. These results indicate a need to refine predictive models of IPV among individuals who have been exposed to family-of-origin violence.

Research has considered factors that may more thoroughly explain the relationship between childhood family-of-origin and adult IPV like gender, age, and race/ethnicity. For example, Alexander et al. (1991)<sup>52</sup> found that childhood physical abuse was predictive of IPV victimization and perpetration among males, but not females. Conversely, Magdol and colleagues (1998)<sup>53</sup> and Fang and Corso (2008)<sup>54</sup> found this association to be stronger among the women included in their respective analyses. With regard to witnessing parental violence, most studies indicate a stronger relationship between family-of-origin violence and adult IPV for males than females.<sup>55, 56</sup>

It is often hypothesized that the occurrence of IPV decreases with age. Research findings suggest that younger individuals of either gender are more likely to inflict intimate partner harm,<sup>57, 58, 59</sup> younger women are more at risk for domestic abuse victimization,<sup>60, 61</sup> and older age is a protective factor for perpetration among both genders, and for victimization among females in particular.<sup>62, 63, 64</sup>

Research on race/ethnicity and IPV has been mixed.<sup>65</sup> It is clear that race/ethnicity must be a consideration when examining the link between family-of-origin violence and domestic abuse. While many studies have indicated that minority status, particularly African-American or Hispanic ethnicity, is associated with increased perpetration,<sup>66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71</sup> few studies have considered the link between race/ethnicity and victimization. Among those that have, Coker and colleagues (2000)<sup>72</sup> disclosed findings contrary to those reported above. Specifically, Coker et al.'s (2000)<sup>73</sup> results suggested that being White was associated with intimate partner victimization among women and perpetration among men. Results presented by Markowitz (2001)<sup>74</sup> supported these conclusions, finding that people of color were less likely to commit spousal abuse when compared to their white counterparts.

Additionally, research has demonstrated that educational and employment status are significant predictors of intimate partner abuse. Specifically, individuals with greater education and those that are employed are less likely to be victims or perpetrators of IPV, thus positioning educational attainment/achievement and wage-earning employment as protective or resiliency factors when considering IPV.<sup>75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80</sup> For example, studies have found that men who are unemployed are more likely to engage in spousal violence.<sup>81</sup> In particular, O'Keefe (1998)<sup>82</sup> found school-related success to be a protective factor against IPV victimization and perpetration among adolescent girls. Several studies have also identified relationship status as important in considering the etiology of IPV.<sup>83, 84, 85, 86</sup> Being married, as opposed to cohabiting only, may serve as a protective factor for victimization by a significant other.<sup>87</sup> Several studies have, however, reported no significant differences in IPV between married respondents and their counterparts.<sup>88, 89</sup>

Recently, risk factors that may strengthen or mediate the relationship between childhood exposure to parental violence and future intimate partner victimization/abuse have become an issue of concern.<sup>90, 91, 92, 93</sup> The general assumption is that certain characteristics, such as acceptance of the use of violence in relationships, alcohol consumption, and hypermascul-

linity or a more masculine gender orientation, increase the likelihood of violent offending in intimate relationships.<sup>94</sup> In fact, studies show that family-of-origin violence increases the likelihood that men will condone violent perpetration against partners and tolerate intimate partner victimization.<sup>95, 96, 97, 98</sup>

Additionally, research demonstrates a correlation between alcohol consumption and intimate partner abuse.<sup>99, 100, 101, 102</sup> Specifically, recurrent drinking among respondents has been associated with higher rates of IPV victimization and perpetration for men and women,<sup>103, 104</sup> and frequent drinking by partners puts respondents of both genders at increased risk for victimization.<sup>105</sup> Caetano et al. (2000)<sup>106</sup> suggests that less frequent alcohol consumption is a protective factor for IPV victimization and perpetration for both sexes. When considering victims of familial violence, evidence suggests that substance abuse problems are more common among those who inflict or receive harm in intimate relationships.<sup>107, 108</sup> Attempts to disentangle these relationships have suggested that substance abuse problems may be the result of repeated victimization (e.g., as coping strategies) or may be antecedents to perpetration of IPV (as a result of aggression, reduced inhibitions, etc.).<sup>109, 110, 111</sup>

While gender role expectations aid in understanding violence against women generally,<sup>112</sup> adherence to a more masculine identity contributes specifically to IPV. Reitzel-Jaffe and Wolfe (2001)<sup>113</sup> argued that negative gender beliefs are associated with the perpetration of domestic violence, and additional findings have confirmed that belief in gender inequality predict increased and severe spousal abuse.<sup>114, 115</sup> Similarly, Alexander et al. (1991)<sup>116</sup> indicated that discrepant perceptions of gender roles between partners (i.e., conservative versus liberal) are directly related to IPV victimization and abuse, particularly of the less traditional partner by the more traditional one. Upon considering the additional contribution of familial exposure to violence, research has demonstrated increases in respondents' endorsements of negative beliefs about gender, as well as more traditional views of women among men.<sup>117, 118</sup> Alexander and colleagues (1991)<sup>119</sup> further suggested that witnessing parental violence in the family-of-origin is associated with conservative attitudes among males, egalitarian gender beliefs in women, and the perpetration and receipt of IPV among females who perceive their partner to have conservative views. Data indicates that exposure to family violence is an important consideration in the development of gender role beliefs and adult IPV.

The influence of religiosity as a protective factor for IPV is underinvestigated, particularly among individuals exposed to interfamilial fighting and abuse. That said, however, scholars have proposed that increased religious commitment and involvement in faith communities should decrease the occurrence of IPV. While some studies have found religiosity to be unrelated to IPV,<sup>120, 121</sup> others have found it to be a significant protective factor among females for violent behavior toward their partner.<sup>122</sup> Related, Dudley and Kosinski (1990)<sup>123</sup> and Filsinger et al. (1987)<sup>124</sup> reported increases in marital happiness, relationship duration, satisfaction, and adjustment—all of which may decrease the occurrence of IPV—among those who report more frequent church attendance. Indeed, increased church attendance has significantly reduced violence in dating relationships<sup>125, 126</sup> and marital unions,<sup>127, 128</sup> underscoring the potential contribution of the faith community in protecting intimate partnerships. Incongruent religious beliefs within a relationship, however, are associated with increased violence between partners.<sup>129</sup> Although religiosity is commonly identified as a resiliency factor for domestic abuse,<sup>130, 131</sup> the impact of faith commitment among victims of family-of-origin violence is currently unclear.

A small body of studies have investigated relationship-related cognitions and power differences in decision making as predictors of IPV. Even so, examination of decision-making agreement in relationships is scarce.<sup>132, 133</sup> It is reasonable to assume that disagreement among couples will increase conflict and strengthen the likelihood of violence. Indeed, disagreement

in relationship-related spheres was, in one study, indirectly related to both witnessing parental violence and intimate partner abuse by men.<sup>134</sup> Specifically, Choice et al. (1995)<sup>135</sup> found that, via ineffective conflict strategies, witnessing parental violence indirectly predicted disagreement in relationship-related areas, which were termed “marital distress” (p. 110). These factors, in turn, predicted the use of physical violence by males against their partners (Choice et al., 1995).<sup>136</sup> These findings suggest that decision-making disagreement does have a role in intimate partner perpetration, at least among males.

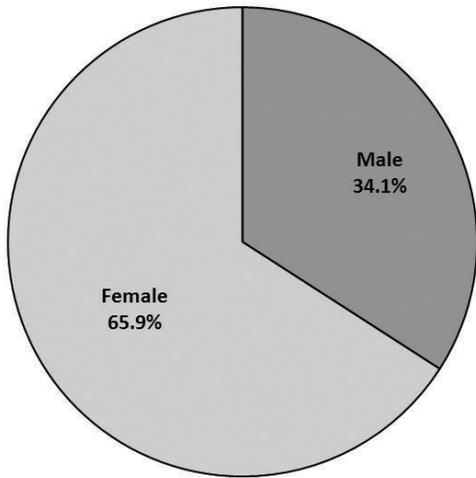
## **Methodology**

The purpose of the study presented in this report was to investigate the effect of risk and resiliency factors in a sample of 439 adult respondents, all of whom reported either a history of being corporally punished, interparental violence exposure, or both. This research tested the following two questions: first, what risk and resiliency factors mediated the effect of family-of-origin violence on adult IPV victimization and perpetration? Second, did multiple experiences of violence in the family-of-origin produce a cumulative effect so that antisocial behavior was transmitted intergenerationally when individuals were subjected to more than one form of violence?

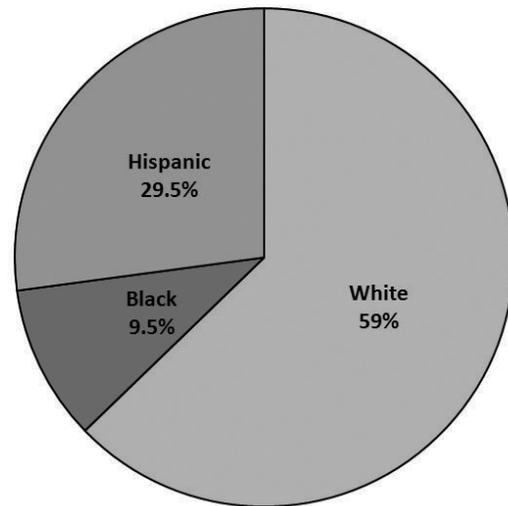
Data were derived from the Fourth Annual Texas Crime Victimization Survey.<sup>137</sup> This particular data was collected in 2007 by the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University. Using a computer-assisted digitized dialing system, 700 citizens were randomly selected from the state of Texas and contacted over the telephone for interviews. Individuals were retained for analysis if they met the following two criteria: 1) subjects who were either currently in a serious romantic relationship (defined as married, cohabitating, or dating) or had been in a serious romantic relationship in the previous twenty-four months, and 2) subjects who reported having experienced family-of-origin violence as either witnessing violence between parents during childhood and/or being corporally punished as children. The final sample for the analysis was 439 cases.

## **Sample Characteristics**

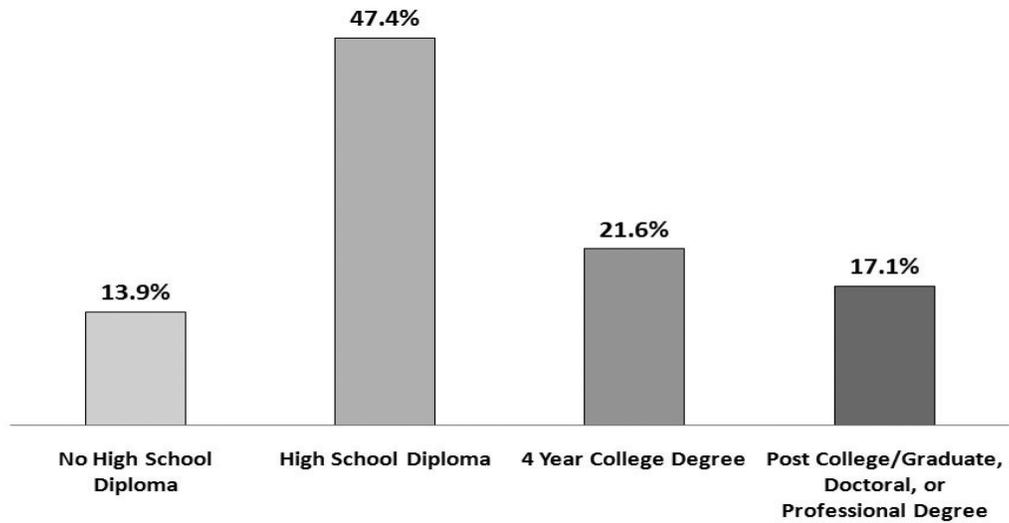
Figure 1 shows that 65.9 percent of the sample was made up of female respondents and 34.1 percent of the sample was male. Age of respondents ranged from 18 to 91 years with an overall average age of 46.6 years (Figure 2). The racial and ethnic composition of the sample shows that the majority were White (59.0%), followed by Hispanic (25.5%) and Black (9.5%). Additionally, nearly 14 percent of the sample did not have a high school diploma (Figure 3). Of the remaining participants, 47.4 percent reported having graduated from high school, 21.6 percent earned a 4-year college degree, and 17.1 percent completed some type of post-college education, including a graduate (M.A., M.S., or J.D.), doctoral (Ph.D.), or professional degree (M.D., D.D.S.). Just under half of the respondents reported annual earnings of \$30,000 or less (45.9%), with 24.8 percent earning between \$30,001 to \$60,000, and 18.5 percent earning \$60,001 or more (Figure 4). A majority of the respondents indicated full or part time wage-earned labor (64.6%) and the remaining 35.4 percent were not currently employed. Upon consideration of participants’ religious service attendance, 16.4 percent reported “never” or “rarely” attending religious services, followed by 13.9 percent who indicated attending “once a year or more,” 19.2% reporting monthly religious service attendance and just over half of the sample said they attended church on a weekly basis (Figure 5). Finally, of those individuals currently in an exclusive relationship, the majority were married (75.5%), with 7.0 percent cohabitating, and 5.7 percent in a dating relationship (Figure 6).



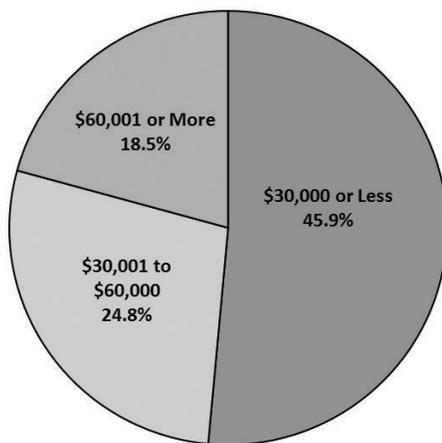
**Figure 1. Sex of Respondents**



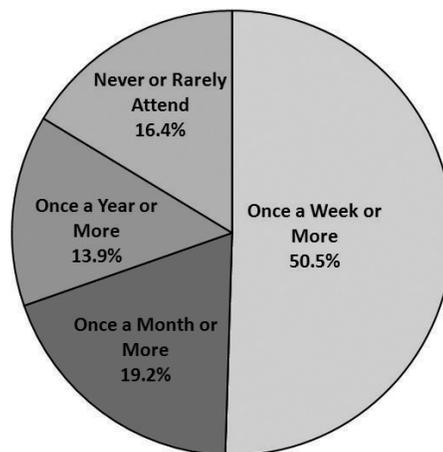
**Figure 2. Race/Ethnicity of Respondents**



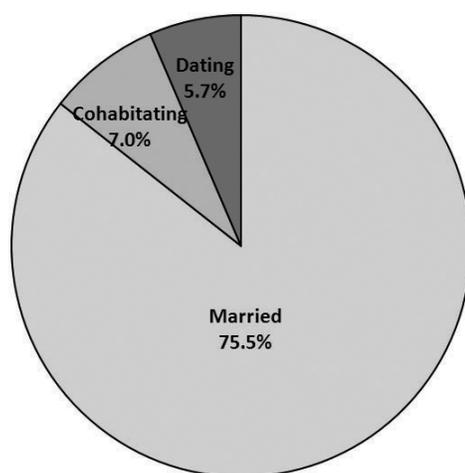
**Figure 3. Educational Status of Respondents**



**Figure 4. Income of Respondents**



**Figure 5. Religiosity of Respondents**



**Figure 6. Marital Status of Respondents**

### **Intimate Partner Violence Measures**

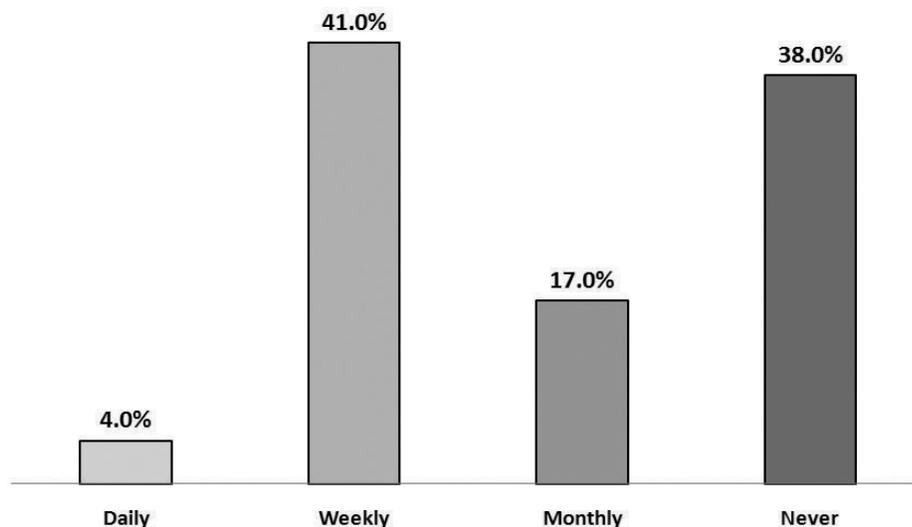
This study included two dependent variables: *IPV Perpetration* and *IPV Victimization*. A modified version of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2)<sup>138</sup> was administered to the sample during the telephone interview. The CTS2 includes a series of questions pertaining to conflict resolution tactics in relationships and captures healthy prosocial conflict resolution (e.g., “discussed an issue calmly”), psychological abuse tactics (e.g., “insulted or swore,” “did or said something to spite him/her,” “threatened to hit or throw something”), and more serious physical abuse tactics (e.g., “pushed, grabbed or shoved,” “beat up,” “choked,” “used a knife or fired a gun”). Thirteen questions pertaining to psychological and physical forms of violence were used to form the dependent variables, respectively.

### **Independent Variables**

*Family-of-origin Violence.* To capture receipt of violence in the family-of-origin, respondents were asked if they had ever been physically punished (e.g., “spanking, hitting, slapping”) as children. Additionally, exposure to violence in the family-of-origin was captured by asking respondents if, during their childhood, they witnessed one parent “hit or throw something” at the other parent. Respondents were selected for inclusion in the sample if they answered “yes” to either receiving or witnessing family-of-origin violence. In order to assess the possibility that receiving *and* witnessing violence in the family-of-origin may have had cumulative effects, a dummy variable identified those respondents who reported both corporal punishment receipt and witnessing interparental violence.

*Acceptance of the Use of Violence in Relationships.* Subjects were asked, “Generally speaking, are there situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a man slapping his wife’s/girlfriend’s/partner’s face?” Similarly, subjects were asked, “Generally speaking, are there situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a woman slapping her husband’s/boyfriend’s/partner’s face?”

*General Alcohol Consumption.* Alcohol consumption frequency was captured by asking subjects, “In general, how often do you consume alcoholic beverages (e.g., wine, beer, or liquor)?” (Figure 7).



**Figure 7. Alcohol Consumption of Respondents**

*Masculine Gender Orientation.* To capture a masculine gender orientation, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with statements about male control in a relationship as it refers to sexual intercourse and decisions about working outside the home. Specifically, statements were phrased, “A man has the right to decide whether his wife/partner should work outside the home” and “A man has the right to have sex with his wife/partner when he wants, even though she may not want to.” Their responses were summed to create a scale with higher numbers indicating a greater degree of masculine gender orientation.

*Religiosity.* To capture faith commitment, subjects were asked to report the frequency of their religious service attendance.

*Decision-Making Agreement.* A series of four questions were posed to subjects regarding agreement with their intimate partners on relationship-related issues. Specifically, subjects were asked to indicate how often they agreed about “managing the money,” “cooking, cleaning, or house repair,” “social activities and entertaining,” and affection and sexual relations” over a two year time period. These four separate items were used to identify level of agreement on decision-making so that separate sources of potential contention could be identified (Table 1).

Six demographic variables were included in the analysis: sex, age, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, employment status, and relationship status.

## **Results**

Multivariate statistical models were run separately for IPV victimization and IPV perpetration. The first model examined the effect of risk and resiliency factors of IPV victimization and the findings reveal several significant relationships. Specifically, three of the four relationship-related decision making items were significantly correlated with IPV victimization. For each one-unit decrease in the level of agreement between partners on issues related to money management, the odds of IPV victimization increased by 1.41 times. Similarly, each one-unit decrease the level of agreement on cooking, cleaning, and household duties significantly increased the odds of IPV victimization by 1.35 times. Finally, each one-unit decrease

**Table 1. Decision Making Variables and Statistics**

<b>Decision Making Agreement</b>	
<b>Agreement on Money Management</b>	
Never	4.4%
Sometimes	15.1%
Usually	12.9%
Almost Always	27.4%
Always	40.2%
<b>Agreement on Cooking, Cleaning and House Repairs</b>	
Never	4.5%
Sometimes	10.3%
Usually	16.0%
Almost Always	26.3%
Always	42.9%
<b>Agreement on Social Activities and Entertaining</b>	
Never	4.2%
Sometimes	14.5%
Usually	17.3%
Almost Always	31.8%
Always	32.2%
<b>Agreement on Affection and Sexual Relations</b>	
Never	2.9%
Sometimes	9.9%
Usually	14.6%
Almost Always	29.4%
Always	43.3%

**Table 2. Significant Correlates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Victimization**

<b>IPV Victimization</b>	<b>Odds Ratio</b>
Money Management	1.41
Cooking, Cleaning and Household	1.35
Sex and Affection	1.36
Gender	1.63
Age	1.03
Employment Status	1.74

in agreement on issues related to sex and affection among romantic partners translated to a 1.36 increase in the odds of IPV victimization. Results also demonstrated that gender and employment status were significantly related to the dependent variable, so that respondents who were male and those who were unemployed were significantly more likely to report IPV victimization as compared to women and those with steady employment. Finally, age emerged as a significant correlate of IPV victimization so that for each one-unit decrease in age, the odds of victimization increased by 1.03 times. Table 2 presents the significant correlates of IPV victimization and their corresponding odds ratios.

The second model investigated the effect of risk and resiliency factors on IPV perpetration. First, the results demonstrate a cumulative effect for multiple forms of family-of-origin violence on adult IPV perpetration. Specifically, findings indicate that experiencing both forms of family-of-origin violence increased the odds of perpetrating adult IPV by 1.73 times. Additionally, disagreement on issues related to money management and sex/affection increased the odds of perpetrating violence in adult relationships. In particular, a one-unit decrease in the level of agreement on money management significantly increased the odds of perpetration by 1.31 times. Similarly, for each one-unit decrease in agreement related to sex/affection, the odds of IPV perpetration increased by 1.40 times. Unlike IPV victimization, gender did not produce significant effects for perpetration. Upon consideration of race/ethnicity, however, Hispanic ethnicity significantly decreased the odds of IPV perpetration, while Black respondents were not significantly different when compared to White respondents on reports of perpetration. In particular, Hispanic respondents were 1.96 times less likely to report IPV perpetration in this sample of community members. Finally, age emerged as a risk factor for perpetration so that for each one-unit decrease in age, the odds of IPV perpetration increased by 1.03 times. Table 3 presents the significant correlates of IPV perpetration and their corresponding odds ratios.

**Table 3. Significant Correlates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Perpetration**

IPV Perpetration	Odds Ratio
Both forms of Family-of -origin Violence	1.73
Money Management	1.31
Sex and Affection	1.40
Hispanic	1.96
Age	1.03

## Conclusions

Existing research on intimate partner aggression has highlighted the importance of family-of-origin violence as a contributor to later adult relationship conflict, particularly as it pertains to the social learning of interpersonal behavior. While important in understanding the etiology of domestic abuse, not every child who witnesses interparental aggression or receives corporal punishment grows up to participate in interpersonal relationships that are characterized by violence. This study examined the mediating role of risk and resiliency factors, including demographic, lifestyle, and relationship characteristics, among a sample of adults with family-of-origin violence histories to determine their ability to differentiate between adults who were involved in IPV from those who were not.

Results presented in this study lead to two important conclusions. First, several risk and resiliency factors emerged as significant mediators of family-of-origin violence on adult intimate partner victimization and perpetration. Generally, the risk and resiliency variables that

emerged as significant for both outcomes pertained to relationship-related decision making and demographic characteristics. Indeed, victimization was a likely outcome when relationship partners disagreed on issues related to money management, cooking, cleaning, and household duties, and sex/affection. Similarly, being older, male, and employed protected against intimate partner victimization.

Upon considering perpetration, findings demonstrated that perpetration was a likely outcome when partners disagreed on money management and sex/affection—two substantive issues consistently identified as creating relationship problems, but that, according to this study, are particularly important among individuals with childhood histories of family aggression and violence. These results reiterate the general findings presented in Choice et al. (1995)<sup>139</sup> as related to the perpetration of domestic abuse. Further, Hispanic ethnicity and being older protected against IPV perpetration among this sample of adults. It is surprising to note that none of the other relevant risk or resiliency factors demonstrated significant effects. In particular, the acceptance of interpersonal violence, adhering to a masculine gender ideology, general alcohol consumption frequency, and religiosity have all been identified as either promoting or protecting against violence in relationships. Similarly, relationship type and educational attainment had no effect on victimization or perpetration among this sample.

Second, the potentially cumulative effect of family-of-origin violence on adult relationship aggression was investigated. In particular, the current analysis was able to assess if a history of *both* being corporally punished and witnessing interparental violence significantly affected adult IPV. Results indicated that this cumulative effect was present, but only for perpetration of domestic abuse. In other words, corporal punishment produced adverse effects only when coupled with witnessing inter-parental violence and only as it was related to the perpetration of violence in adult intimate relationships. This finding is substantively important when considering the intergenerational transmission of IPV as it is able to inform those factors most relevant to preventing and containing the perpetration of domestic abuse.

## Study Limitations

Despite the importance of the findings presented here, this study is not without limitations. First, this analysis was cross-sectional in nature, making it impossible to imply causation. Consequently, any significant and substantive relationships uncovered in this analysis must be interpreted accordingly. Second, the questionnaire employed in this study relied on retrospective recall among an adult sample. Adult participants were asked to report their childhood experiences of physical punishment and whether or not they witnessed their parents aggress against (or “hit”) one another. This presents the potential for memory decay and recall bias. Several scholars have highlighted the value in asking respondents to remember *if* something significant happened during childhood as compared to asking *how many times* something significant happened during childhood.<sup>140, 141</sup> Research has supported the validity of reports of parental aggression and/or the experience of corporal punishment during childhood. The phrasing of the questions in this survey and the coding of the items in the analysis reflected this strategy. Third, the reports of current IPV perpetration and victimization were derived from one member of the two-person partnership. Studies have discussed the importance of involving both partners in capturing data on violence in relationships, yet, despite this, research continues to query one member of the partnership with success in terms of identifying violent and aggressive relational behavior.<sup>142, 143</sup> Finally, while this study employed a community sample of adults, these participants were residentially located within the state of Texas—a large southern geographic region that may have presented important cultural considerations when interpreting and generalizing the results of the analysis. Future research

should attempt to replicate the findings presented here by randomly sampling larger adult populations from different geographic regions.

## **Clinical and Policy Implications**

These findings also have implications for clinical practice and research on the etiology of IPV as it is influenced by family-of-origin contributions. Identifying risk and resiliency factors that impact the relationship between family-of-origin violence and intimate partner abuse is particularly relevant to intervention and prevention initiatives. The present study examined variables that potentially develop throughout adolescence (e.g., acceptance of the use of violence), and that affect current individual functioning (e.g., alcohol consumption), in addition to interpersonal relationship factors (decision-making agreement). In this study, however, only relationship-related *disagreement* and family-of-origin violence significantly impacted IPV. As noted by Delsole & Margolin (2004),<sup>144</sup> a continued understanding of these processes as occurring in developmental stages and as unique contributors to IPV allows for more precise intervention and preventative techniques in relevant phases of a victim's lifespan. These may include the increase of community resources and psycho-education on the negative effects of interparental violence and physical punishment of children, adaptive problem-solving and conflict resolution seminars for parents and intimate partners, and violence prevention-focused programs for children who may be exposed to family-of-origin aggression. Future research may focus on further clarifying the mechanisms that augment or diminish the link between family-of-origin violence and domestic abuse, as well as further evaluation of effective methods of intervention and prevention among families and intimate partners.

## ENDNOTES

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