

RISK ASSESSMENT BY POLICE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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LIST OF RISK FACTORS ON INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

STRUCTURE

- Comparative review of risk factors in risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence;
- Challenges in prevalent risk factors for intimate partner violence, supported by empirical evidence;
- Key issues emerging for the development of new risk factors for the assessment of risk of intimate partner violence.



REVIEW OF RISK FACTORS IN RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Literature examining risk factors associated with intimate partner violence in the EU and EU Member States is limited with the majority being in countries with a longer tradition of risk assessment practices and procedures.



Prospective evidence for perpetrator and context-related risk and protective factors for women's experiences of intimate partner violence outside the United States of America is lacking.



REVIEW OF RISK FACTORS IN RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

According to the literature reviewed, risk factors may be related to:

- the victim (such as pregnancy/new birth, depression/mental health issue, isolation);
- the perpetrator (such as history of violence, access to weapons, previous or current breach of protection order);
- the relationship (such as separation, escalation of violence, financial difficulties);
- the community (poverty, lack of institutional support).

and



REVIEW OF RISK FACTORS IN RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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Risks associated with the wider social context, referred to as social risks.

Social risks may include external conditions, pressures, norms and practices that may exacerbate the level of risk for a victim of intimate partner violence.

Examples are traditional gender norms and normalised or institutionalised gender inequality.



COMPARISON OF RISK FACTORS

OVERLAP BETWEEN INSTRUMENTS

Most prevalent risk factors

- drug abuse/alcohol abuse,
- threats to kill,
- recent escalation in intimate partner violence,
- use of a weapon to threaten,
- prior intimate partner violence incident,
- prior non-intimate partner violence assault,
- past physical/sexual assault

DIVERGENCES REFLECTING

- differences in intended purpose of the tool (victim safety, criminal justice decisions, prevention etc.),
- type of prediction sought (re-assault, recidivism, lethality etc.),
- intended users of the risk assessment tool (police, victim support services, health professionals etc.).



CHALLENGES IN RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Predictive validity of risk factors associated with intimate partner violence

The evidence base for many of the most prevalent factors included in risk assessment tools is outdated. Emerging evidence supporting new risk factors for intimate partner violence that more accurately reflect the patterns of abuse experiences by women (coercive control and psychological abuse)

The evidence does not support as predictors of re-abuse demographic variables.

Need for risk factors to reflect new and emerging research on intimate partner violence in order to increase predictive validity, as well as to better reflect patterns of abuse experienced by women and develop effective responses to such abuse



CHALLENGES IN RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Psychological abuse/coercive control

Risk factors for intimate partner violence should include items that may represent an underlying pattern of abusive behaviour consistent with coercive control.

Strong association between male perpetration of violence and emotional/verbal abuse.

No evidence that EU MSs are using or developing assessments that reflect risk for psychological violence
Forced sex, a risk factor associated with coercive control, has a strong association with male perpetration of intimate partner violence.

The reframing of risk assessment and its tools to reflect coercive control should allow practitioners to 'identify the dangerous patterns of behaviour that precede domestic homicide'



CHALLENGES IN RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Victim's perception of risk of harm

Female victims of intimate partner violence are able to predict their risk of revictimisation with moderate accuracy

Women's perception of risk is an important element in assessing risk of intimate partner violence and can add to the predictive accuracy of standard risk assessment tools



CHALLENGES IN RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Risk factors associated with vulnerable groups

Gender intersects and interacts with other multiple vulnerabilities that may increase susceptibility to violence by increasing the number of risk factors related to intimate partner violence and reducing possible protective factors

However no evidence was found of validation of risk assessment tools for marginalised groups, nor was any evidence found that evaluation of risk management strategies was disaggregated using intersectional categories

No studies were identified examining risk factors associated with specific groups of women in the EU.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS



- Risk assessment and its tools should include risk factors that better reflect patterns of abuse and behaviour, including psychological abuse and coercive/forced sex, which have been shown to precede domestic homicide.
- Women's perception of risk is an important element in assessing risk of intimate partner violence and can add to the predictive accuracy of standard risk assessment tools.
- There is no evidence that existing risk assessment tools have been validated or tested on marginalised population groups, nor was any evidence found that evaluation of risk management strategies is disaggregated using intersectional categories. The challenge remains on how risk assessment and risk management strategies can reflect behaviour and circumstances of perpetrators and/or victims from diverse cultures and backgrounds and with varying statuses and identities.