

Examining Intimate Partner Homicide: A Qualitative Synthesis

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ABSTRACT

Intimate Partner Homicide (IPH) is one of the leading causes of death for women in the U.S. (CDC, 2017). Recent research has identified the strongest risk markers for IPH from quantitative studies (author et al., 2018), but no research has synthesized the current knowledge gained about risk factors and motivations for IPH from qualitative studies. Few studies have examined perpetrator-reported motivations for IPH, along with victim's and co-victims experiences of attempted or completed IPH. In order to synthesize the current qualitative literature surrounding motivations and risk factors for IPH, a thematic qualitative synthesis was conducted.



METHOD

Using a thematic analysis framework, we conducted a qualitative synthesis on motivations and risk factors for IPH. A total of 186 articles were identified through database searches (ProQuest and PsycINFO). Researchers identified 20 articles that met inclusion criteria and were used in the qualitative synthesis. Studies focused on victims, perpetrators, or both. Studies that looked at both male and/or female perpetrators and opposite-sex and/or same-sex couples were all included in an effort to increase the diversity of the sample. Two separate researchers coded each study to insure accuracy of coding. Using Thomas & Harden's (2008) outline for conducting a thematic synthesis, themes related to the motivations and risk factors for IPH perpetration were identified from the included studies.

RESULTS: RISK FACTORS AND MOTIVATIONS

Previous IPV

"...I had two miscarriages and it was as a result of the abuse. He abused me, very, very much: sexual, physical, verbal... all in one" (Pretorius & Bester, p. 373, 2009).

Strangulation

"See what most people, what most females think [is that] when you are being choked that you, your body, is free, but by the person choking you, all you think about is the pressure of his hands, trying to catch your breath, release his hand, you aren't thinking about hitting him because like, with mine, when I fought back, the grip got tighter, so I stopped" (Thomas, Joshi, & Sorenson, p. 130, 2014).

Relationship Change

"The moment she wanted to end the relationship I felt like the air was being taken away from me. I was so dependent that I just couldn't live without her. That's how I felt. A mistaken and incorrect feeling, but..." (Goussinsky & Yassour-Borochowitz, p. 557, 2012).

Jealousy

"Mmm ... I became jealous... I just wanted her to myself; I became possessive over her and I cut her braids, and after cutting her braids I told her now I know the guys will not worry her anymore ..." (Mathews, Jewkes & Abrahams, p. 114, 2014).

Underestimating Lethality

"I didn't really realize what big trouble I was in until I was to the point of where I thought I was going to die" (Nicolaidis, Curry, Ulrich, Sharps, McFarlane, Campbell, ... & Campbell, p. 791, 2003).

Control

"Look, I was a big ruler at home... I would rule and she'd comply. There were no confrontations at all, life was great. Then suddenly she started interfering, saying this yes and that no, and why... It completely freaked me out every time she undermined me and I'd hit her" (Goussinsky & Yassour-Borochowitz, p. 558, 2012).

Patriarchal Views about Women

"He now recognizes that he needs to look at his attitude to women. There are many issues in his treatment of his wife prior to her death that need addressing. She was a tiny, frail young woman, who was oppressed. His almost total omission of thoughts on his feelings for his wife and daughter may reflect the degree of regard he had or has for them [near zero]" (Emerson Dobash & Dobash, p. 123, 2011).

ADDITIONAL THEMES

Help-Seeking & Potential Barriers

"They pass a lot of laws, but they can't enforce them. How are you going to stop someone? A piece of paper in her hand [restraining order] isn't going to stop anyone" (Sheehan, Murphy, Moynihan, Dudley-Fennessey, & Stapleton, p. 280, 2015).

Firearms

"Guns were used to murder three of five (60%) of the femicide victims, although a gun was not used in any of the attempted femicide cases" (Glass, Koziol-McLain, Campbell, & Block, p. 615, 2004).

Same-Sex Relationships → Additional Barriers to Help-Seeking

"May be at additional risk because of the fear of disclosing their homosexual relationship to family, friends, health care professionals or law enforcement officers because of the stigma attached by society and a lack of community and advocacy services specific to women in same-sex relationships" (Glass, Koziol-McLain, Campbell, & Block, p. 621, 2004).



IMPLICATIONS

Increase Awareness

"We must help women understand that their own perceptions of risk are extremely important, and if they are frightened for their lives and safety for whatever reason, they should pay attention to that fear" (Campbell, p. 1474, 2000).

Address Barriers

- Male victims
- Queer victims
- Appropriate services



"Since research has shown that same-sex victims may be less likely to report crimes when there is the possibility of anti-LGBT bias, future efforts should be aimed at continuing to reduce police bias" (Loveland & Raghavan, p. 58, 2014).

QUESTIONS?

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