

Men abuse more but women more likely to be arrested

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(PhysOrg.com) -- New research into domestic violence shows that men abuse more than women do but women are three times more likely to be arrested; men inflict more violence than women do and are more likely to instill fear in their victims; women are more likely to use weapons, often in order to protect themselves; the largest number of repeat incidents occur when both men and women inflict violence; the majority of cases involve alcohol abuse; and children are present in the majority of cases, with some incidents related to child contact.

These are some of the key findings of a new report into gender and [domestic violence](#) conducted by Professor Marianne Hester of the University of Bristol's School for Policy Studies on behalf of the

Northern Rock Foundation.

Previous research has shown that the vast majority of domestic-violence perpetrators recorded by the police are men (92 per cent) and their victims mainly female (91 per cent), with many more repeat incidents recorded for male than female perpetrators. While the majority of incidents of domestic violence recorded by the police involve male-to-female abuse, little is known about the nature of incidents where men are recorded as victims and women as perpetrators, nor about the circumstances where both partners are recorded as perpetrators.

This research fills this gap and is the first study in the UK to examine the issue of gender and domestic violence in any detail and over time. For the study, 96 cases were developed from 692 perpetrator profiles and tracked from 2001 to 2007. Of the 692 profiles, only 32 were female perpetrators in heterosexual relationships so, from the 692 profiles, a random sample of 32 sole male perpetrators were selected to allow direct comparison with the sole female perpetrator sample and a further 32 cases randomly selected from cases where both men and women had at some time been recorded as perpetrator and as victim ('dual-perpetrator cases').

Forty-eight per cent of cases related to couples still together in a relationship, 27 per cent involved violence after separation and the remaining cases involved couples in the process of separation with incidents recorded both during and after the relationship.

Individuals were recorded as having been perpetrators in 1-52 incidents, with men significantly more likely to be repeat perpetrators. Eighty-three per cent of men had at least two incidents recorded, and one man had 52 incidents recorded. In contrast, 62 per cent of women recorded as perpetrators had only one incident recorded and the highest number of repeat incidents for any woman was eight.

Men were significantly more likely than women to use physical violence, threats, harassment and to damage the women's property, while the women were more likely to damage their own. Men's violence tended to create a context of fear and control, whereas women were more likely to use verbal abuse or some physical violence. However, women were more likely to use a weapon, although this was at times in order to stop further violence from their partners.

In terms of arrests, there were more arrests overall of men than of women. All cases with seven or more incidents, most of which involved men, led to arrest although women were three times more likely to be arrested. During the six-year period men were arrested once in every ten incidents and women arrested once in every three incidents.

Cases involving men as sole perpetrators were those most likely to result in intense fear and control of partners, while many cases where women were recorded as sole perpetrators were characterised by the police as the women being alcoholic or possibly as mentally ill.

Women were recorded as more frequently using a weapon and did so primarily in cases where the man was also recorded as perpetrator while men were more likely to use a weapon when they were the sole perpetrator.

In cases where both men and women were identified as perpetrators, there were more than four times as many repeat incidents compared to those involving sole perpetrators. A total of 400 incidents were recorded across the 32 dual-perpetrator cases compared to 181 across the 64 sole-perpetrator cases. Almost three-quarters of dual-perpetration cases had more than one incident recorded, and 46 per cent had 3-52 incidents recorded.

Issues of divorce and child contact were common in dual-perpetrator

cases and also included the greatest number of instances where both partners were heavy drinkers or alcoholics and where the circumstances appeared quite chaotic. [Alcohol abuse](#) by partners in some instances made it unclear who the perpetrator was.

Children were present in 55 per cent of cases when the violence or other abuse took place. In cases involving post-separation violence, issues related to child contact were cited in 30 per cent of cases.

Speaking about the findings, Professor Hester said:

‘Both men and women can be violent, but there are significant differences in the way men and women use [violence](#) and abuse against their partners and also the impact of such behaviour. This needs to be taken into account if we want to ensure greater safety for individuals. The research has crucial lessons for the criminal justice system in this respect.’

Provided by University of Bristol ([news](#) : [web](#))

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