

Weapons tied to repeat domestic abuse

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Amy Bonomi is chairperson and professor in Michigan State University's Department of Human Development and Family Studies. Photo by G.L. Kohuth

Women are up to 83 percent more likely to experience repeat abuse by their male partners if a weapon is used in the initial abuse incident, according to a new study that has implications for victims, counselors and police.

Michigan State University researcher Amy Bonomi and colleagues studied the [domestic abuse](#) police reports of nearly 6,000 couples in

Seattle during a two-year period. An estimated one in four women in the United States experience [domestic violence](#) at least once in their lifetime.

Because previous research showed that domestic abuse is more common in poor urban neighborhoods, the researchers expected to find that repeat violence could be predicted by where the couple lived.

But that wasn't the case. Instead, the main predictor of ongoing domestic violence was the use of a knife, gun or even a vehicle in the first incident. In those cases, women were 72 percent more likely to make follow-up calls to police for [physical abuse](#) and 83 percent more likely to call for nonphysical abuse – such as a partner threatening to kill them.

"What this is telling police is that they are likely to be called back to this particular residence if a weapon is involved the first time they are called out," said Bonomi, chairperson and professor in MSU's Department of Human Development and Family Studies. "It's an indication of the danger and severity of [abuse](#) over time."

"The presence of weapons in the home," she added, "is also a red flag for the women themselves and the counselors who deal with domestic violence."

Provided by Michigan State University

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