

Introduction

Why a focus on perpetrators of intimate partner sexual violence is essential

*Louise McOrmond-Plummer, Patricia Easteal,
and Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck*

The burgeoning literature of the past several decades about perpetrators of rape and sexual assault has focused mostly on convicted stranger rapists and those who sexually abuse children (Greathouse, Saunders, Matthews, Keller, & Miller, 2015). Most discourse on perpetrators of sexual assault excludes men who rape and sexually assault their intimate partners. This contributes to widely held beliefs that only stranger rapists are *real* rapists, while at the same time those beliefs shape research topics. Social awareness campaigns instruct girls and women to beware the stranger, and how to avoid sexual assault by watching how much or with whom they drink (see, for example, Baty, 2014). The reality, however, is that intimate partner sexual assault (IPSV) has been established as a prevalent crime since the 1980s. Intimate relationships in fact comprise a far greater danger of sexual assault to women (Black et al., 2011; Finkelhor & Yllo, 1990; Myhill & Allen, 2002; Price, 2013; Russell, 1985). Limited focus on these perpetrators ensures a persistent avoidance of detection and accountability, and ongoing danger to women.

Therefore, the partner rapist is seldom recognized as a rapist or sexual offender in the same sense as a stranger rapist or pedophile, even though the rape of a spouse has been a criminal act in the Western world for a number of decades. Further, the majority of partner rapists do not see their behavior as criminal (Parkinson & Cowan, 2008). The same view is upheld by many in the criminal justice system, with particularly low levels of prosecution and conviction (see Chapter 14).

Yet IPSV may result in longer term effects than stranger rape (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Russell, 1990). IPSV perpetrators frequently inflict higher levels of physical violence than perpetrators of rape in other contexts (Myhill & Allen, 2002). Further, it is vital to learn more about perpetrators of IPSV because batterers who also rape are more likely to kill, as discussed in the following chapter. While IPSV is a common behavior of perpetrators of physical violence (Black et al., 2011), it is also committed by men who do not necessarily batter their partners. They may not even use physical force to negate consent, instead using a range of coercive tactics such as withdrawing affection or withholding housekeeping money, not allowing their partner to sleep, or repeatedly

badgering her to engage in acts she has stated she does not like (Easteal & McOrmond-Plummer, 2006). Sexual activity enacted with this sort of duress is rape/sexual assault.

It is important that people who work in relevant occupations learn more about these types of IPSV perpetrators. This includes but is not limited to counselors, police, batterer group facilitators, and youth workers. People in the community, including students (both undergraduate and graduate), survivors, and others could benefit from learning more about these hidden offenders. However, this book is not enough. More research is needed on IPSV.

We hope that the current work provides direction for further investigation and intervention. For instance, the focus of this volume is male-on-female perpetration of IPSV. Our language will reflect this, with female pronouns for victims, and male pronouns for perpetrators, although we recognize that victims and offenders may be of other genders. Readers should also be aware, though, that this form of victimization may occur in same-sex relationships (Ristock, 2014). Even less is known about this group of perpetrators, and we hope to see further research in this direction. Another group not included in this book but certainly deserving of inquiry are older perpetrators of IPSV. Their victims may be especially vulnerable if the perpetrator is their caregiver, or because of cognitive impairments that impact on the perception of their credibility (Ramsey-Klawnsnik & Brandl, 2009).

What this book contains

Part 1: Moving the focus to perpetrators and their impact

Much of the literature on gender-based violence focuses on survivors, because they are more likely than perpetrators to be cooperative research subjects. In Part 1, we shift the focus to perpetrators and, beginning with the current chapter, explain why it is so important to understand who they are and what they do. David Adams is an expert who has interviewed men who murdered their partners. He gives valuable insight into why batterers who rape, kill their partners more frequently than batterers who do not rape, and why it is important to identify IPSV in danger assessments in order to keep women safe. In examining what perpetrators do to those closest to them, we wanted to ensure that the impact of IPSV on children was clearly highlighted. Kathryn Ford discusses the effect of children's exposure to IPSV and their increased risk of direct sexual assault by these offenders.

Part 2: Who are the perpetrators of intimate partner sexual violence?

Many people still confuse IPSV with sex, rather than the act of violence or control that it is. Patricia Easteal and Louise McOrmond-Plummer provide a

look into the mindset of IPSV perpetrators, discussing their motivations, the myths that they may subscribe to in order to justify sexual violence, and the ways that they may avoid taking responsibility.

When men go through batterer treatment, discussing sexual violence could be a key trigger point for them to understand their behaviors as violent and abusive. Nicole Westmarland and Liz Kelly draw on interviews with men who have attended domestic violence perpetrator programs and look at the ways in which they talk about their use of sexual violence. Deb Parkinson also seeks to identify perpetrators' perceptions. In her 2008 study of IPSV, none of the perpetrators viewed acts of sexual assault as criminal – or indeed as rape. In her chapter, she looks at the deeply entrenched sense of entitlement that underpins perpetrators' lack of recognition, and how it may be challenged.

Joseph Camilleri and Melissa Miele explain that understanding the characteristics, conditions, typology, and motivations of IPSV perpetrators can guide those who are designing intervention programs. They believe in the value of accurate categorization and exploration of individual differences in psychological profiles. They argue that IPSV perpetrators constitute a diverse group whose treatment needs are distinct from those of other domestic abusers or sexual offenders.

Louise McOrmond-Plummer explores and challenges stereotypes of men who rape and the women who are raped, and how these preconceived notions can create barriers when working with perpetrators or their victims. Because IPSV takes place within a relationship, understanding relationship dynamics may be quite useful. This chapter explores additional factors that may bind women to perpetrators (Holmes & Holmes, 2009), without detracting from the seriousness of the crime.

Part 3: Perpetrators' strategies for control

We believe it is important to look at IPSV, like other forms of partner violence, as a mechanism for coercive control (Stark, 2007). In Part 3, we describe the specific means that IPSV perpetrators use to maintain that control. Louise McOrmond-Plummer explores the various strategies that perpetrators of IPSV may use to force or coerce their partners into sexual activity. This chapter will aid practitioners in understanding both the physically violent and nonviolent forms of IPSV, and sets the stage for the next two chapters, which look more in depth at these different types of IPSV perpetrating.

Indeed, although IPSV is committed most often by perpetrators who also use physical violence, there are partner rapists who do not batter. This is important for professionals to know about; many continue to see rape as necessarily involving additional physical violence. Survivor and domestic violence activist Lindsey Mason draws a picture of her victimization by a perpetrator who, though he did not beat her, raped her so frequently that she experienced medical problems as a result. Then Louise McOrmond-Plummer discusses her

experience of a battering partner rapist: the characteristics, potential lethality, and the situations that tended to fuel sexually violent behavior.

Perpetrators may further exert control by limiting their partners' reproductive choices or interfering with their reproductive health. Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck describes how various forms of reproductive coercion fit into the spectrum of abusive behaviors, including interference with birth control and other childbearing decisions.

Part 4: How perpetrators are condoned: the social context of intimate partner sexual violence

The harms of IPSV and the criminality of its perpetrators are so often minimized. This does not take place in a vacuum. Part 4 looks at the contributory role of cultural factors and attitudes which make the degradation of women acceptable. And, holistically, social institutions such as the law and religion may support the perpetrator of IPSV.

Walter S. DeKeseredy has studied the phenomenon of male support of perpetrators as an important factor in IPSV. He explores themes such as what peer compliance looks like, and how it can be challenged socially and professionally. Following that chapter, he and Rus Ervin Funk discuss the degradation of women via pornography and how this may translate into degradation of women in intimate relationships by male pornography consumers. They present data from interviews with IPSV survivors who have experienced that direct link to pornography.

The response of the criminal justice system is an important component in the social context of IPSV. Anna Carline and Patricia Easteal examine ways in which police, prosecutors, and the courts continue to fail to see IPSV as "real rape." They provide recommendations for how the criminal justice system can improve the response to IPSV perpetrators. While most IPSV cases are not prosecuted in criminal court (as indeed, very few sexual assaults make it through the court system), family courts are more likely to become involved. The chapter on family law, co-authored by two lawyers and a survivor, highlights how family courts are not designed to ensure the safety of victims. Indeed, other research has found that judges often see sexual assault as immaterial when granting visitation or custody to abusers (Schafran, 2014). Angela Lynch, Janet Loughman, and survivor "Eleanor" show how IPSV perpetrators are able to manipulate the family court system and be supported by that system. Tom Alongi's commentary within this chapter expands the scope to family law in the U.S., and the chapter contains recommendations for change.

Religious communities provide another type of institutional response to IPSV. Marie Fortune discusses IPSV perpetrators in communities of faith, and ways of ensuring that faith communities hold perpetrators responsible. This chapter also describes how the three major faith traditions – Islam, Judaism, and Christianity – expressly forbid sexual abuse of partners.

Part 5: Community prevention and intervention with perpetrators

This section of the book focuses on remedies. These chapters provide ways for social institutions and individuals to intervene with and work more effectively with perpetrators, and also to help decrease IPSV. Rus Ervin Funk and Lundy Bancroft, who work with violent men, give strategies for addressing IPSV as part of the treatment of batterers. They describe methods for breaking down abuser denial and fostering a sense of responsibility.

As noted above, very few IPSV perpetrators face the criminal justice system. In the next chapter, police sergeant Mike Davis offers practical guidance for better identification of sexual crimes in domestic violence scenarios, dealing with IPSV suspects during the investigation and arrest process, and improving outcomes with respect to the victims.

Different paths to prevention are examined in the next chapters. For instance, can prevention be facilitated through education or awareness campaigns? Traditional sexual assault prevention has focused on teaching girls and women to keep themselves safe, yet effective prevention must begin with fundamental changes in community and societal attitudes, clear education about the nature of consent, and strategies for bystander involvement. Kat Monusky and Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck focus on true primary prevention of IPSV with young people, discussing effective ways of conceptualizing and addressing the roots of IPSV, and offering suggested best practices for prevention.

Turning to the classroom, Bruce Taylor, Elizabeth Mumford, Weiwei Lu, and Nan Stein share the results of a follow-up study on *Shifting Boundaries*, the evidence-based primary prevention program for middle-school students on sexual harassment and precursors to teen dating violence. This program has been recognized by the White House and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In the Conclusion, the editors extract and distill recommendations from the multidisciplinary, international experts who have contributed to this volume. The authors are a diverse group. Each has distinct viewpoints, which are not necessarily shared by other contributors or the editors. We do hope that the issues they raise will engender vital conversations among our readers. This book – a compilation of the scholarly and the experiential with a broader focus on violence against women juxtaposed with more narrow focus on IPSV – advances our knowledge of IPSV perpetration and how we, as professionals and members of our communities, can work to end this form of sexual violence.

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Talking to killers

What can they tell us about sexual assault as a risk factor for homicide?

David Adams

Sexual dynamics and lethality

Belying their minimizing and braggadocio, perpetrators of intimate partner homicides unwittingly provide useful information about the interconnections between sex and violence within the context of an abusive relationship. Their expectations about sex, and how they go about meeting these, provide retrospective insight into when and why sexual assaults unfold over time, and how they contribute to homicide. Sexual assault is a known risk factor for intimate partner homicide, but little is known about the specific ways that it intermeshes with other risk factors – such as threats to kill, estrangement, stalking, and extreme jealousy – that would appear to provide more straightforward pathways to murder (Campbell, Webster, Koziol-McLain, & McFarlane, 2003; Dobash & Dobash, 2015). Do sexual assaults provide a motive for killing? Or are they simply one additional element of the abuser's repertoire of abuse? Are sexual assaults more about sexual obsession or possession? What role do sexual assaults play in the abuser's attempts to control his partner? Moreover, *how specifically* do sexual assaults work as tactics of control? And are they effective?

To address these questions, I asked victims of attempted homicide and men who had killed their intimate partners to recount any instances of sexual assault that had occurred leading up to the killings and near-killings, and how these related to other events in the relationship. I was hoping that my questions about when and how sexual assaults occurred would help to clarify *why* they occurred. These questions were asked as part of a larger study about intimate partner homicides and attempted homicides that included in-depth interviews of 31 men who killed their partners as well as 20 women whose partners had tried to kill them (Adams, 2007).

Extensive semi-structured interviews of four to five hours' duration were conducted with the men who had killed. These interviews included taking a history of their relationship with the women they killed and also of their relationships with prior intimate partners. As part of this history, the men were asked to detail any abusive or controlling behavior they had committed, including what led up to it and its aftermath. Several measures were used to