



ALASKA JUSTICE FORUM

REPRINTS

February 2009

JUSTICE CENTER ♦ UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

No. 4

Assaults in Domestic Violence Incidents Reported to Alaska State Troopers

Marny Rivera, André B. Rosay, Darryl S. Wood, Greg Postle, and Katherine TePas

Researchers, criminal justice system professionals, victim advocates, and policymakers agree that domestic violence is an undeniable urban and rural problem in Alaska and the nation. Detailed data on domestic violence incidents in the state are sparse, except for ongoing data collection by the Municipality of Anchorage. Now, a recent joint study by the Justice Center, the Alaska State Troopers, and the Alaska Department of Law looks for the first time at reports of assaults in domestic violence incidents made to Troopers for populations outside of Anchorage. Focusing on reports made in 2004 from communities served primarily by the Troopers, the study reviews a final sample of 1,281 cases with an assault charge involving domestic violence. Only reports to the Troopers were included in this study; reports to local or municipal police were not reviewed.

Some preliminary findings mirror national and Anchorage statistics: the majority of domestic violence assault incidents occur between victims and suspects of the same race, and the victim's home is the most common location of the domestic violence incident. On the other hand, both Anchorage data and the data from this study show a much higher use of alcohol by suspects and victims in Alaska than is reported nationally.

Report Characteristics

The majority of reports to Troopers (82%) were handled by three detachment areas: C—Western Alaska (32%), D—Interior Alaska (29%), and B—Southcentral Alaska (22%) (Table 1). While fifty-eight units received at least one report in 2004, over 90 percent of reports came from roughly 18 units or geographic areas (Table 2). Fairbanks Alaska State Trooper (AST)

Originally published in the *Alaska Justice Forum* 25(3): 1, 7–12 (Fall 2008).
http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/forum/25/3fall2008/a_dvassaults.html

For other articles and publications related to domestic violence and violence against women, see:
<http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/vaw/index.html>

Abstract: This study examined 1,281 cases with an assault charge involving domestic violence reported to Alaska State Troopers in 2004, and excluded any cases reported to local or municipal departments.

- Eighty-two percent of reports were handled by three detachment areas: 32% in C – Western Alaska, 29% in D – Interior Alaska, and 22% in B – Southcentral Alaska. Troopers received 80% of the reports, while 20% were received by Village Police Officers, Village Public Safety Officers, or Tribal Police Officers. Eighty-one percent of the assault charges were in the fourth degree. Eighty-four percent of assaults were reported within 24 hours, and 89% of victims and 81% of suspects were interviewed on the day of the report.
- Seventy-six percent of suspects were male and 24% were female. On average, suspects were 33 years old and victims were 32 years old. The majority of assaults in domestic violence incidents (86%) were intra-racial. Fifty-seven percent of suspects and 32% of victims used alcohol. Overall, alcohol was involved in 59% of domestic violence incidents reported to Troopers.
- Most assaults in domestic violence incidents (75%) occurred between victims and suspects who were staying or living together. The most common forms of violence (disclosed by victims and documented by officers) included pushing, grabbing, or shoving the victim (in 48% of incidents), punching the victim (in 29%), and slapping or hitting the victim (in 28%). Weapons such as knives or guns were rarely used. The most common injuries included bruising (for 38% of victims), lacerations or bite marks (for 27%), bloody nose or lips (for 10%), and black or swollen eyes (for 10%). Forty-three percent of incidents occurred in the presence of children.
- Eighty percent of cases were referred to the Alaska Department of Law for prosecution, 68% were accepted for prosecution, and 54% resulted in a conviction. Overall conviction rates were slightly lower for female suspects, but conviction rates were generally not affected by victim gender or victim-suspect relationship.

Enforcement and Investigation Units received the highest number of reports (23%) with Palmer AST Enforcement and Investigation Units and Soldotna AST Enforcement and Investigation Units having the second and third highest percentage of reports (19% and 9% respectively). Units in Nome received seven percent of reports while units in Bethel, Aniak, Kotzebue, and Kodiak each received four or five percent of all reports.

Troopers received 80 percent of reports while the remaining 20 percent were received by Village Police Officers, Village Public Safety Officers, or Tribal Police Officers. Reports of assaults in domestic violence incidents were most likely to come from victims (57%), though third parties, including family members, friends, officials,

strangers and others, initiated 43 percent of reports.

The 1,281 cases in this study included a total of 1,803 assault charges and 604 other

Table 1. Total Number of Reports by Detachment

Detachment	Reports	
	N	%
C	409	31.9 %
D	367	28.6
B	275	21.5
E	171	13.3
A	49	3.8
ABI	10	0.8
Total	1,281	

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

Table 2. Total Number of Reports by Unit for Units with at Least One Percent of all Reports

Detachment	Reports	
	N	%
Fairbanks AST Enforcement and Investigation	295	23.0 %
Palmer/Wasilla AST Enforcement and Investigation	237	18.5
Soldotna AST Enforcement and Investigation	117	9.1
Nome AST Enforcement, VPSO. and WAANT	88	6.9
Bethel AST Enforcement and VPSO	60	4.7
Aniak AST Enforcement	58	4.5
Kotzebue AST Enforcement and VPSO	56	4.4
Kodiak AST Enforcement , VPSO and ABWE	55	4.3
St. Marys AST Enforcement	33	2.6
Ketchikan AST Enforcement	28	2.2
Glennallen AST Enforcement	24	1.9
Homer AST Enforcement	23	1.8
Galena AST Enforcement	19	1.5
King Salmon AST Enforcement	17	1.3
Northway AST Enforcement	17	1.3
Tok AST Enforcement	15	1.2
Juneau AST Enforcement	13	1.0
Talkeetna AST Enforcement	13	1.0
Total	1,168	91.2 %

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

charges. The most common assault charges (81%) were for fourth degree assaults and fewer charges were leveled for third through first degree felony assaults. Thirty-one percent of cases involved other charges. The most common other charges included interfering with a report of a crime involving domestic violence, criminal mischief, reckless endangerment, misconduct involving a weapon, DUI/reckless driving, resisting arrest, misconduct involving a controlled substance, and criminal trespass.

The time interval between the incident, the report to Troopers, and the Troopers'

response was short, even with transportation and distance issues. The majority of reports (84%) were made the day of the domestic violence assault incident and 97 percent of reports were made within one week.

Suspect and Victim Characteristics

From the 1,281 cases included in this study, we gathered information on 1,356 suspects and 1,523 victims, though information was not always available for every suspect or every victim. Over three-quarters of the suspects were male while only 24 percent

were female. Victim ages ranged from under one year to eighty-four years old. Most victims were in the following age groups: 21–30 years (26%), 31–40 years (22%), and 41–50 years (19%). Suspect ages ranged from 10 years old to eighty-eight years old. The majority of suspects were adults (94%). Starting with the group of suspects 21 or older, the number of suspects in each age group decreased as age increased. More specifically, 21–30 year olds made up 31 percent of suspects, 31–40 year olds made up 28 percent of suspects, 41–50 year olds made up 19 percent of suspects, and suspects 51 years or older made up 7 percent of suspects. Most suspects were White (50%) or Native (47%) and most victims were also White (51%) or Native (47%) (Table 3).

The average age of suspects (33) was quite similar to the average age of victims (32). Thirty-nine percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents took place between suspects and victims in the same age group while 61 percent took place between suspects and victims in different age groups. The age groups most commonly shared by suspects and victims involved in assaults in domestic violence incidents included 21 to 30 year olds (38%), 31 to 40 year olds (27%) and 41 to 50 year olds (19%).

In contrast to the age groups of suspects and victims, the majority of assaults in domestic violence incidents (86%) were intraracial (occurring between suspects and victims of the same race). Of all intraracial assaults in domestic violence, 51 percent occurred between White suspects and White victims and 48 percent occurred between Native suspects and Native victims.

We examined alcohol and substance use among victims. Over a third of female victims (35%) and 27 percent of male victims used alcohol prior to the assault in domestic violence incident, but only two percent of female victims used illicit drugs (Table 4). We also examined alcohol and substance use among suspects. Fifty-eight percent of male suspects and 54 percent of female suspects used alcohol prior to the assault. Only three percent of male suspects and two percent of female suspects used an illicit drug prior to the assault. Overall, alcohol was involved in 59 percent of domestic violence incidents reported to Troopers. Nationally, for the period 2001–2005, 42 percent of victims reported the presence of alcohol or drugs during a domestic violence incident, while in Anchorage for the period 1989–2002 there was documented involvement of alcohol in 49 percent of the reported cases.

Many of the suspects (79%) remained at the location of the assault. Specifically, 76 percent of male suspects and 86 percent

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Suspects and Victims

	Column percentages.					
	Suspects		Victims		Intragroup	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Age group						
1 to 10	3	0.2 %	54	3.6 %	2	0.3 %
11 to 17	94	6.1	174	11.5	23	3.9
18 to 20	122	8.0	131	8.6	32	5.5
21 to 30	477	31.2	397	26.2	225	38.3
31 to 40	433	28.3	326	21.5	160	27.3
41 to 50	288	18.8	284	18.7	114	19.4
51 or over	113	7.4	151	10.0	31	5.3
Total	1,530		1,517		587	
Race						
Native	722	46.9 %	720	47.3 %	628	48.1 %
White	767	49.8	770	50.6	667	51.1
Black	38	2.5	26	1.7	10	0.8
Other	12	0.8	6	0.4	—	—
Total	1,539		1,522		1,305	

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

Table 4. Male and Female Victim and Suspect Characteristics

Row percentages.

Characteristic	Female			Male		
	N	%	Total	N	%	Total
Victims						
Gender	1,047	69.6 %	1,047	458	30.4 %	458
Used alcohol	347	34.7	1,001	118	26.9	438
Used drugs	16	1.6	1,021	2	0.4	451
Present when AST arrived	998	96.9	1,030	424	95.1	446
Interviewed	985	94.1	1,047	416	93.3	446
Suspects						
Gender	319	23.6 %	319	1,034	76.4 %	1,353
Used alcohol	159	53.7	296	553	58.0	953
Used drugs	7	2.3	299	26	2.7	970
Present when AST arrived	259	86.0	301	775	76.2	1,017
Interviewed	269	88.8	303	775	75.8	1,023

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

of female suspects were still at the scene of the assault when Troopers arrived. Troopers were able to interview 76 percent of male suspects and 89 percent of female suspects.

Eighty-one percent of suspects were interviewed on the day of report. Ninety-six percent of all suspect interviews occurred within one week of the report. Troopers interviewed 95 percent of the victims, with 89 percent being interviewed on the day of the report, and 98 percent of the interviews being completed within one week.

The total number of charges per suspect

(including both assault and other charges), the number of assault charges, and the number of other charges are summarized in Table 5. On average, each suspect received a total of 1.78 charges, including an average of 1.33 assault charges and 0.45 other charges. Of the 1,356 suspects, 200 (15%) had multiple assault charges and 401 (29%) had at least one other charge. As a result, 580 (43%) of the suspects therefore had a total number of charges greater than one. Overall, the 1,356 suspects generated a total of 2,407 charges, including 1,803 assault charges and 604 other charges.

Table 5. Number of Total, Assault, and Other Charges per Suspect

Column percentages.

Number	Total charges		Assault charges		Other charges	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	955	70.4 %
1	776	57.2	1,055	77.8	274	20.2
2	344	25.4	216	15.9	82	6.0
3	121	8.9	54	4.0	25	1.8
4	63	4.6	18	1.3	16	1.2
5	26	1.9	7	0.5	3	0.2
6 or more	26	1.9	6	0.4	1	0.1
Total	1,356		1,356		1,356	

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

Table 6. Suspects with Domestic Violence Protection Orders or who Violated Conditions of Release or Probation

Row percentages.

Characteristic	No		Yes		Total
	N	%	N	%	
DVPO for this victim	1,330	98.7 %	17	1.3 %	1,347
Violated conditions of release	1,320	97.9	28	2.1	1,348
Violated conditions of probation	1,280	95.6	59	4.4	1,339

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

Despite the number and types of offenses suspects were charged with as a result of the assaults in domestic violence incidents, few suspects (just over 1%) had an existing domestic violence protection order filed against them by the victim at the time of the offense (Table 6). Likewise, few suspects were violating conditions of release or probation. Specifically, two percent of suspects were documented as violating a condition of release with their current charges. Another four percent of suspects violated documented conditions of their probation with the current charges. It is important to note that the percentage of suspects violating conditions of release may be greater than those reported here, because these conditions are not always documented in APSIN (Alaska Public Safety Information Network) and are not readily available to Troopers, or for our analysis.

Incident Characteristics

The presence of children during a domestic violence incident continues to be a serious concern. In this study, the victim's or suspect's children under the age of 18 were witnesses to 43 percent of the incidents (Table 7). In Anchorage during 1999–2002, 42 percent of domestic violence incidents occurred with children under the age of 18 present. Nationwide, in 43 percent of the incidents with female victims during 2001–2005, children under the age of 12 were residing in the household where the incident took place. Studies discussed by John L. Worrall in *Crime Control in America: An Assessment of the Evidence* highlight concern regarding children who are present during domestic violence. Exposure to such violence is associated with both child abuse and later delinquency.

Most assaults in domestic violence incidents (75%) occurred between victims and suspects who were staying or living together at the time of the incident. For the remaining quarter of incidents that occurred between suspects and victims who did not stay or live together, 34 percent occurred between victims and suspects who met in a

Table 7. Presence of Children During Assault

Victim and/or suspect's child present	N		%	
	N	%	N	%
No	654	57.0 %		
Yes	493	43.0		
Total	1,147			

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004)

public place, and 32 percent resulted from invitation by the suspect or victim. In 25 percent of incidents (where suspects and victims were not living together) the suspect was uninvited or forced entry, and in nine percent of these incidents the suspect entered through an open window or unlocked door.

The use of a traditional weapon such as a knife or a gun was extremely rare; each weapon was used in fewer than four percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents. While still fairly infrequent, suspects were more likely to throw something at the victim (9% of incidents) or hit the victim with an object (10%) rather than use a traditional weapon. Nationwide in 2001–2005, 19 percent of domestic violence incidents with a female victim reported a traditional weapon present, while 31 percent of incidents with a male victim reported a weapon.

We also gathered information about the presence of nine specific violent acts and seven types of threats in the assaults in

domestic violence incidents. Only forms of violence that were documented as a result of victim disclosure or officer inquiry, rather than all forms of violence that occurred, were included for analysis. The three most common forms of violence disclosed by victims or documented as a result of officer inquiry included pushing, grabbing or shoving the victim (48%), punching the victim (29%), and slapping or hitting the victim (28%). Documented sexual assault of the victim occurred in only one percent of the cases.

Documented injuries to victims and emergency medical treatment data were also collected and analyzed. The percentage of victims who sustained the most common types of documented injuries included the following: bruising (38%), lacerations or bite marks (27%), bloody nose or lips (10%) and black or swollen eyes (10%). Overall, few victims (12%) received any type of emergency medical treatment for their injuries.

Legal Resolutions

Mandatory arrest in domestic violence cases has been in effect in Alaska since 1996. This law places additional requirements on law enforcement when investigating a domestic violence report and provides criteria for assessing whom to arrest if there are cross complaints “arising from the same incident.” (See “Mandatory Arrest in Domestic Violence Cases” accompanying this article.)

Most of the cases (96%) were closed and referred for prosecution including cases that were closed by arrest (79%), and those closed and referred (13%). The remaining cases were closed after investigation (2%) or closed as unfounded (2%) in cases where a suspect was not arrested. On average, it took 6.30 weeks to close a case after it was reported, and 87 percent of cases were closed within 90 days.

An important component of this study involved tracking assaults in domestic

Mandatory Arrest in Domestic Violence Cases

Alaska’s mandatory arrest statute was passed as part of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Victim Protection Act of 1996 with the support of prosecutors, law enforcement, and advocates for domestic violence victims in the state. Alaska Statute 18.65.530, “Mandatory arrest for crimes involving domestic violence, violation of protective orders, and violation of conditions of release,” sets out conditions for arrest and minimum sentencing requirements. A law enforcement officer is required to make an arrest with or without a warrant:

if the officer has probable cause to believe the person has, either in or outside the presence of the officer, within the previous 12 hours, (1) committed domestic violence, except an offense under AS 11.41.100-11.41.130, whether the crime is a felony or misdemeanor; (2) committed the crime of violating a protective order in violation of AS 11.56.740; (3) violated a condition of release imposed under AS 12.30.025, 12.30.027, 12.30.029....

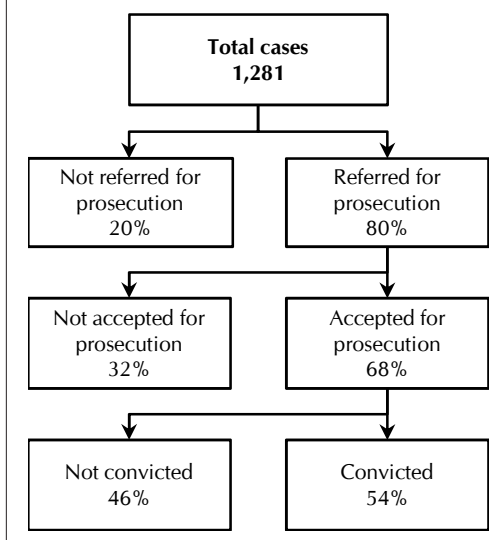
The statute provides criteria for an officer to use when determining who is the “principal physical aggressor.” A “principal physical aggressor” evaluation must be made in domestic violence cases if there are cross complaints “arising from the same incident.” In rare circumstances, an officer may determine that no arrest should be made. An “authorization not to arrest” must first be granted by a prosecutor from “the jurisdiction in which the offense under investigation arose,” and the officer must later report in writing why an arrest was not made. A prosecuting attorney is on call and available by phone to law enforcement in all parts of the state to provide an officer with an authorization, if needed.

Under Alaska law, there is a 20-day minimum sentence if the defendant is in violation of a domestic violence protection order, a 30-day minimum sentence if the defendant has a prior conviction for assault or domestic violence assault, and a 60-day minimum

sentence if the defendant “has been previously convicted two or more times of a crime against a person or a crime involving domestic violence, or a combination of those crimes.” Aggravating factors that can increase the length of the normal minimum sentence required by the statute include the presence of a child under the age of 16 during a felony crime involving domestic violence, as well as a domestic violence offense committed at a shelter or facility providing services to domestic violence and sexual assault victims. In addition, recent legislative changes have upgraded certain misdemeanor assaults to a Class C felony and have added a new provision to the animal cruelty statute dealing with “intent to intimidate, threaten or terrorize another person.” Some domestic violence convictions also carry federal legal consequences. Under federal law it is “unlawful to sell or dispose of a firearm” to a person convicted of a qualifying domestic violence misdemeanor.

The terms “domestic violence” and “crime involving domestic violence” have a broad meaning under AS 18.66.990(3) & (5). “Acts of domestic violence” as defined under the statute go beyond physical assault; acts of domestic violence also include burglary, criminal trespass, arson or criminally negligent burning, criminal mischief, terrorist threatening, violating a protective order, and harassment. In addition, the statute defines domestic violence as an offense committed “by [one] household member against another household member.” The definition of household member encompasses more than persons living in the same residence. It includes many people who do not live together: “adults or minors who are current or former spouses, adults or minors...who have lived together, adults or minors who are dating or have dated, adults or minors who are engaged in or who have engaged in a sexual relationship, adults or minors who are related to each other up to the fourth degree of consanguinity..., adults or minors who are related or formerly related by marriage, persons who have a child of [their] relationship, and minor children in a relationship that is described [in the statute].”

Figure 1. Processing of Domestic Violence Cases Reported to Alaska State Troopers, 2004



violence incidents from reports to Troopers through case resolution by the Department of Law. Because we only examined referrals to the Department of Law (and excluded, for example, referrals to the Division of Juvenile Justice), the following statistics are not directly comparable to the ones reported in the previous paragraph.

When examining case processing with Department of Law data, we find that after Troopers close a case, the next decision is whether to refer the case for prosecution. Results show that 80 percent of the 1,281 cases reported to Troopers were referred for prosecution, 68 percent were accepted for prosecution, and 54 percent resulted in a conviction (Figure 1). Once cases were referred for prosecution, they had a high likelihood of being accepted for prosecution. Specifically, 84 percent of referred cases (N=1,030) were accepted for prosecution, and 67 percent resulted in a conviction (Table 8). Cases accepted for prosecution (N=869) had an 80 percent conviction rate.

In addition to examining case resolution rates for all assaults in domestic violence incidents reported to Troopers, we reviewed case resolution rates separately for male and female suspects comparing cases that had at least one male suspect to cases that had at least one female suspect. In our sample of 1,281 cases, 974 cases included at least one male suspect and 259 included at least one female suspect. Cases with at least one female suspect were slightly less likely to be referred for prosecution, to be accepted for prosecution, and to result in a conviction than cases with at least one male suspect. Of the 259 reported cases with at least one female suspect, 75 percent were

referred for prosecution (versus 82% with a male suspect), 56 percent were accepted for prosecution (versus 73% with a male suspect), and 44 percent resulted in a conviction (versus 58% with a male suspect) (Figure 2).

Once referred for prosecution, 89 percent of cases with at least one male suspect (N=707) and 76 percent of cases with at least one female suspect (N=146) were accepted for prosecution. Once accepted for prosecution, the likelihood of cases resulting in a conviction did not vary greatly by suspect gender. Upon acceptance for prosecution, 80 percent of cases with at least one male suspect (N=568) and 78 percent of cases with at least one female suspect (N=114) resulted in a conviction (Table 9).

In addition to examining case resolution rates separately for male and female suspects, we examined case resolution rates separately for male and female victims. In our sample of 1,281 cases, 352 cases included at least one male victim and 925 included at least one female victim. Cases with at least one female victim were as likely to be referred for prosecution, as likely to be accepted for prosecution, and as likely to result in a conviction as cases with at least one male victim. Of the 925 reported cases with at least one female victim, 80 percent were referred for prosecution (versus 81% with a male victim), 59 percent were accepted for prosecution (versus 65% with a male victim), and 54 percent resulted in a conviction for both female and male victims (Figure 3 and Table 10). Although cases involving male suspects had higher case processing and conviction rates, case processing rates were quite similar for victims of both genders. No discernable pattern was found in case processing rates for domestic violence victims based on their gender.

Another variable examined in relation to case processing of assaults in domestic violence incidents was the relationship between the victim and the suspect. We examined

Table 8. Number of Cases by Stage

Column percentages.

Stage	N	% of reported	% of referred	% of accepted
Reported	1,281	100.0 %	—	—
Referred	1,030	80.4	100.0 %	—
Accepted	869	67.8	84.4	100.0 %
Convicted	692	54.0	67.2	79.6

Source of data: Alaska Department of Law

the relationship between the victim and suspect separately for male and female victims. Most of the assaults in domestic violence incidents occurred between intimate partners. The most likely relationship identified was current or former intimate partner as seen in 67 percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents with female victims and 38 percent with male victims. The next most likely relationship was parents or children comprising 16 percent of the assaults in domestic violence incidents with female victims and 25 percent with male victims. Another 12 percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents with female victims and 22 percent with male victims took place between other

Figure 2. Processing of Domestic Violence Cases Reported to Alaska State Troopers, 2004: Male/Female Suspects

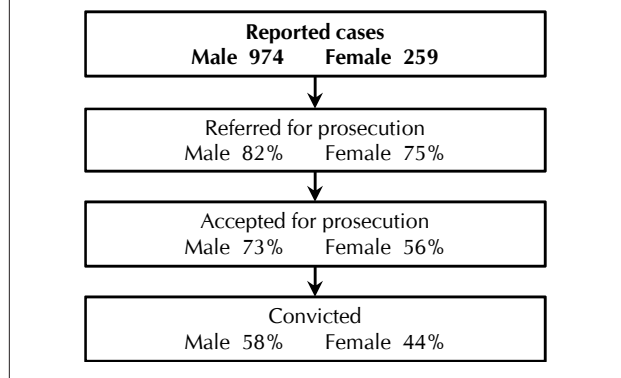


Figure 3. Processing of Domestic Violence Cases Reported to Alaska State Troopers, 2004: Male/Female Victims

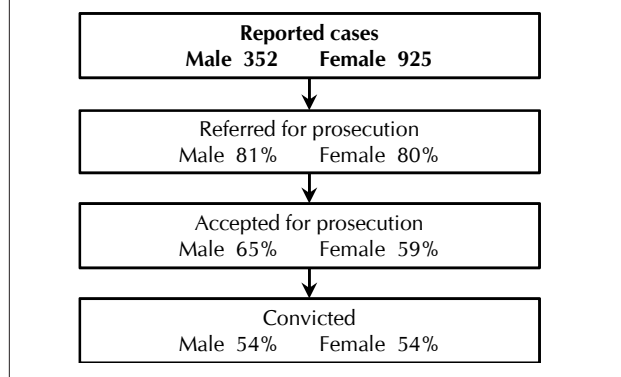


Table 9. Number of Cases by Stage for Cases with Male or Female Suspects

Column percentages.

	N	% of reported	% of referred	% of accepted
Male suspects				
Reported	974	100.0 %	—	—
Referred	798	81.9	100.0 %	—
Accepted	707	72.6	88.6	100.0 %
Convicted	568	58.3	71.2	80.3
Female suspects				
Reported	259	100.0 %	—	—
Referred	193	74.5	100.0 %	—
Accepted	146	56.4	75.6	100.0 %
Convicted	114	44.0	59.1	78.1

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004) and Alaska Department of Law

Table 10. Number of Cases by Stage for Cases with Male or Female Victims

Column percentages.

	N	% of reported	% of referred	% of accepted
Male victims				
Reported	352	100.0 %	—	—
Referred	284	80.7	100.0 %	—
Accepted	228	64.8	80.3	100.0 %
Convicted	191	54.3	67.3	83.8
Female victims				
Reported	925	100.0 %	—	—
Referred	743	80.3	100.0 %	—
Accepted	639	59.1	86.0	100.0 %
Convicted	500	54.1	67.3	78.2

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004) and Alaska Department of Law

family members (including siblings and extended family). Six percent of assaults in domestic violence incidents with female victims and 13 percent with male victims took place between roommates. Overall, most assaults occurred between intimate partners, and this was particularly true for female victims.

An examination of case processing for the different relationship types revealed some differences in the earlier stages of case processing. Regarding referral rates for assaults in domestic violence incidents, 88 percent of cases involving roommates, 86 percent of cases involving intimate partners, 72 percent of cases involving other family members, and 63 percent of cases involving parents or children were referred for prosecution (Table 11). Cases involving victims and suspects who were roommates or intimate partners were more likely to be referred for prosecution than cases involving other family members or parents and children. Of all referred cases, 87 percent of cases involving intimate partners, 82 percent of cases involving parents or children, 81 percent of cases involving other family members, and 74 percent of cases involving roommates were accepted for prosecution. Referred cases involving intimate partners were most likely to be accepted for prosecution, and cases involving roommates were least likely to be accepted for prosecution. Although some differences were found in referral and acceptance rates for different relationship types in assaults in domestic violence incidents, conviction rates for accepted cases were remarkably similar. Eighty-one percent of cases involving intimate partners, 81 percent of cases involving other family members, 80 percent of cases involving parents or children, and 77 percent of cases involving roommates resulted in a conviction, once accepted for prosecution. Despite differences in referral and accep-

tion rates for assaults in domestic violence incidents involving various relationships between victims and suspects, conviction rates for accepted cases were similar across the different relationship types.

In another examination of assaults in domestic violence incidents, we assessed the combined influence of gender and relationship on case processing. In this examination, cases were classified as intimate partner violence or non-intimate partner violence incidents. Incidents of intimate partner violence were defined as taking place between intimate partners and involving a male suspect and a female victim. Non-intimate partner violence incidents included all other combinations of suspect and victim gender and the various relationship types.

(Few cases—1.5%—involved same-sex intimate partner violence. The characteristics of these cases will be included in a future study.) Results showed higher case processing rates for intimate partner violence incidents in the earlier stages of case processing. Specifically, 85 percent of

intimate partner violence incidents and 75 percent of non-intimate partner violence incidents were referred for prosecution (Table 12). Once referred, 90 percent of intimate partner violence incidents and 79 percent of non-intimate partner violence incidents were accepted for prosecution. Again, no discernable differences were found in conviction rates for intimate partner and non-intimate partner violence incidents once they were accepted for prosecution. Eighty-one percent of accepted cases involving intimate partner violence incidents resulted in a conviction, and 79 percent of accepted non-intimate partner violence incidents resulted in a conviction. Conviction rates based on the total number of reports to Troopers of intimate partner violence incidents were

Table 11. Nature of Victim and Suspect Relationships and Legal Resolutions

Column percentages.

	N	Intimate partner	Parents or children	Other family	Roommates
Referred	1,029	86.1 %	63.4 %	71.8 %	87.9 %
Accepted	869	86.5	81.5	81.1	74.1
Convicted	692	80.5	80.0	80.8	76.7

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004) and Alaska Department of Law

Table 12. Legal Resolutions for Intimate Partner and Non-Intimate Partner Violence

Column percentages.

	N	% of reported		% of referred		% of accepted	
		Intimate partner	Non-intimate partner	Intimate partner	Non-intimate partner	Intimate partner	Non-intimate partner
Reported	1,279	100 %	100 %	—	—	—	—
Referred	1,028	85	75	100 %	100 %	—	—
Accepted	862	76	59	90	79	100 %	100 %
Convicted	692	62	47	72	62	81	79

Source of data: Alaska SANE data and Alaska Department of Law

higher (62%) than for all reported cases to Troopers of non-intimate partner violence incidents (47%).

A more detailed examination of legal resolutions explored differences in case processing rates for male and female victims in various relationships with suspects. Just as cases with male suspects tended to have higher case processing rates at each stage of prosecution, male victims tended to experience higher case processing rates across different relationship types. One exception to this trend was higher rates of acceptance for referred cases involving intimate partners with female victims (76%) relative to male victims (67%). Similarly, cases involving intimate partners with female victims had higher conviction rates (61% of accepted cases) than cases with male victims (53% of accepted cases) (Table 13). In sum, cases of assaults in domestic violence incidents investigated by Troopers had relatively high referral, acceptance and conviction rates overall, despite variation in rates by gender of the suspects and victims and relationships between them.

The findings presented in this article provide an initial description of case processing and conviction rates for assaults in domestic violence incidents in smaller communities across the state of Alaska. The full report containing more detailed descriptive analyses is published on the Justice Center

website. Future studies may focus on comparisons of the data from the Anchorage analysis, this study, and nationwide reports. An important area to examine in more depth is factors affecting legal resolutions. More complex analyses involving multiple predictor variables are required to understand the many influential factors in case processing and conviction of assaults in domestic violence incidents. A growing body of data about domestic violence incidents will enable policymakers to focus on improving ways to deal with this critical issue.

Figures for national and Anchorage domestic violence incidents are from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2007) and the Municipality of Anchorage (2006).

Marny Rivera is an Assistant Professor of the Justice Center. André B. Rosay is an Associate Professor and the Interim Director of the Justice Center. Darryl Wood is an Assistant Professor at Washington State University Vancouver. Greg Postle is a doc-

Table 13. Nature of Victim and Suspect Relationships and Legal Resolutions for Female and Male Victims

Column percentages.

	N	Intimate partner	Parents or children	Other family	Room-mates
Female victim					
Referred	663	85.3 %	60.8 %	69.6 %	88.2 %
Accepted	580	76.2	44.6	57.6	55.9
Convicted	454	60.6	34.6	41.3	35.3
Male victim					
Referred	229	89.4 %	67.1 %	74.4 %	87.5 %
Accepted	177	66.9	61.0	59.0	75.0
Convicted	148	53.1	51.2	53.8	65.6

Source of data: Alaska State Troopers (2004) and Alaska Department of Law

toral student at the University of Delaware. Katherine TePas is a Program Coordinator with the Alaska State Troopers. This project was supported by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (Grant No. 2005-WG-BX-0011) and by the Violence Against Women Office, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice through the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Grant Numbers 2003-WF-BX-0201 and 2004-WF-AX-0033). Points of view in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.