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Differentiating patterns of violence in the family and the effects on children

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Differentiating patterns of violence in the family

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Background

The Co-occurrence of partner and child maltreatment

- Researchers have highlighted co-occurrence rates of 30-60% (Edleson, 1999; Browne & Hamilton, 1999; Appel and Holden, 1998)
- The majority of studies examine the aetiology, maintenance and intervention of partner and child maltreatment separately, treating them as discrete entities

Patterns of family violence

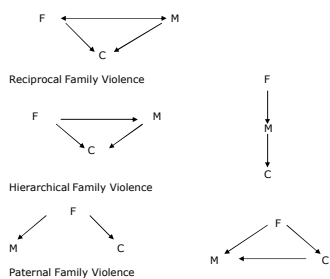
- Typologies of men who abuse their female partner (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994)
- Adopting an interactionist approach to family violence, researchers have suggested that aggression is a product of the person-environment interaction (Frude, 1991)



Cont'd

Background

Dixon, L., & Browne, K. (2003). *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*.



Aim

- To examine the feasibility and prevalence of the Paternal, Reciprocal and Hierarchical patterns of family violence proposed by Dixon & Browne (2003) within a sample of maltreating families

Research Questions

- Examine the prevalence of patterns of family violence in the present sample
- Examine the type of child maltreatment perpetrated by mothers and fathers in each pattern
- Examine the extent to which parenting couples (dyads) who both maltreat their child use the same form of child maltreatment

Method

Sample

- Examinated psychological reports of 162 parents who had been assessed by a Forensic Psychology consulting service for their suitability to parent their child/ren, following allegations of child maltreatment
- Parents from the English Midlands and South Wales
- Parents assessed by the practice between June 1996 and June 2003 were investigated
- Parent ages ranged from 17 – 56 years (mean age 30; SD = 8.14)
- The age of the index child ranged from 1 month to 15 years (mean age = 4.6, SD = 4.26)
- 91.4% parents were classified as white UK



Results

- Of the total sample of 162 parents:
 - 104 (64.2%) resided in a family in which physical partner abuse and child maltreatment co-occurred
 - 66 (40.7%) perpetrated both partner and child abuse (43 (65%) fathers and 23 (35%) mothers)
 - Fifty-eight (35.8%) parents resided in a family where only child maltreatment occurred
- 1. Examine the prevalence of patterns of family violence in the present sample (n=104)**
 - Paternal (n = 14; 13.5%)
 - Reciprocal (n = 43; 41.3%)
 - Hierarchical (n = 47; 45.2%)

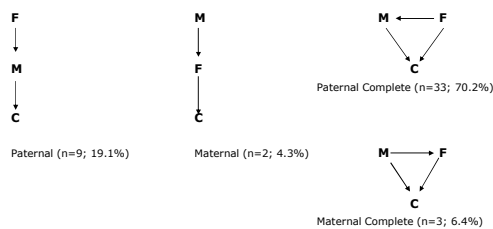


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Results

1. Examine the prevalence of patterns of family violence in the present sample

HIERARCHICAL

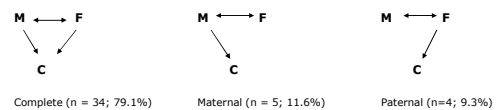


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Results

1. Examine the prevalence of patterns of family violence in the present sample

RECIPROCAL



Cont'd

Results

2. Examine the type of child maltreatment perpetrated by mothers and fathers in each pattern

Pattern	MOTHERS			FATHERS		
	Physical and/or sexual n %	neglect n %	mother subtotal n %	Physical and/or sexual n %	neglect n %	father sub-total n %
Paternal (n = 8)				8 (100)	0 (0)	8 (100)
Hierarchical (n = 43)	8 (32)	17 (68)	25 (58.1)	16 (88.9)	2 (11.1)	18 (41.9)
Reciprocal (n = 40)	10 (47.6)	11 (52.4)	21 (52.5)	10 (52.6)	9 (47.4)	19 (47.5)



Cont'd

Results

3. Examine the extent to which parenting couples (dyads) who both maltreat their child use the same form of child maltreatment

Pattern of Family Violence	PARENTS ADOPTING SAME FORM OF CHILD MALTREATMENT	PARENTS ADOPTING DIFFERENT FORMS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT
	Both parents physically and/or sexually abuse or neglect their child n %	One parent physically and/or sexually abuses the child and the other parent neglects the child. n %
Hierarchical Complete (n = 14)	8 (57.1)	6 (42.9)
Reciprocal Complete (n = 13)	11 (84.6)	2 (15.4)

Summary & Conclusions

- The 3 hypothesised patterns of family violence, proposed by Dixon and Browne (2003), exist in this sample
- It is important for professionals to consider how each person in the family is influenced and affected by every other member in that unit, rather than examining only the adult male aggressor within the family
- Verifies the need for service provision and professionals to recognise the coexistence of different forms of violence within the family unit



Key References

- Dixon, L. & Browne, K.D. (2003). Heterogeneity of spouse abuse: a review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior: A Review Journal*, 8, 107-130
- Holtzworth-Munroe, A. & Stuart, G.L. (1994). Typologies of male Batterers: Three Subtypes and the Differences Among Them. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116, 476-497

