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Browne, Kevin; Dixon, Louise

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The Importance of Offender type for Intervention with Domestic Violent Men

By Kevin Browne & Louise Dixon

The Nature of Spouse Abuse

Definition

- ❖ Any violence between current or former partners in an intimate relationship
- ❖ The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or financial abuse

Are Domestic Violent Offenders the Same?

- ❖ Researchers have studied male spouse abusers in comparison to non abusive males

Table 1: Summary of the characteristics which researchers have associated with domestic violent men in comparison to non-violent men

- ❖ Low assertiveness
- ❖ Low self-esteem
- ❖ Poor social skills
- ❖ Alcohol and drug misuse
- ❖ Poor impulse control
- ❖ Inappropriate dependencies
- ❖ Violent backgrounds
- ❖ History of violent behaviour
- ❖ Antisocial personality

The Application of Typologies

- ❖ There is no reason to suggest that all spouse abusing men are alike
- ❖ Offenders behaviour is best described by subcategories - increase understanding
- ❖ **Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) Hypothetical Typology**
 Family Only (50%), Generally Violent/ Antisocial (25%), Dysphoric/ Borderline (25%)

Results

Dixon, L & Browne, K. (2001). *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*. (in press)

	Family Only(50%)	Generally Violent(25%)	Borderline(25%)
COURT (mean %)	**37.7%	* 36.3%	23.7%
VOLUNTEER (mean %)	**59.3	*22.9%	15.5%
Total Mean %	49.7%	29.6%	20%

* $p < 0.01$, $df = 1$, chi-square test
 ** $p < 0.05$, $df = 1$, chi-square test

Summary of Results

Dixon, L & Browne, K. (2001). *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*. (in press)

- ❖ The type of offender in the majority varied depending on the referral process by which the offenders were sampled (ie. Court or Volunteer)
- ❖ Less representation of Family Only group in court referred sample, and less representation of Generally Violent men in volunteer group

Conclusion of Review

Dixon, L & Browne, K. (2001). *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*. (in review)

- ❖ Research into typologies of domestic violence need to sample a broad section of the population
- ❖ The research review suggests there are varying treatment needs for court and volunteer referral groups
 - a) Court referrals; more generally violent, antisocial personalities
 - b) Volunteer Referrals; family violence only, less frequent and less severe.

Towards a Holistic Family Focused Typology

Dixon, L & Browne, K. (2001). *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*. (in review)

- Previous research has a narrow focus on the offender - does not consider factors such as context and behavioural actions/ reactions of the victim
- Aggression in the family is a product of context and the person - environment interaction
- More holistic family focused typology, based on interpersonal characteristics of the offender and victim, together with situational factors that trigger the violent act, may be a more fruitful approach to classification of treatment needs of offenders and their victims

