

# Risk Factors for Male Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence

## **Intention of This Document:**

This document is intended to provide additional information on the risk factors for male perpetration of intimate partner violence. The risk factors discussed in this document were identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Injury Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as was the supporting research. This document is not intended to provide a comprehensive review or guide of the literature on men's perpetration of intimate partner violence against women.

## **Definition of Risk Factor:**

Both CDC and WHO define risk factors for perpetration as “factors that increase the likelihood of perpetration.” Other public health researchers have utilized definitions and criteria that acknowledge the unclear nature of risk factors and causality. Fris and Sellers, in *Epidemiology for Public Health Practice* (2003), define a risk factor as “an exposure that is associated with a disease, morbidity, mortality, or adverse health impact.” It may be helpful to keep in mind the concept of association while reviewing this document, since some the relationships between particular risk factors and intimate partner violence remain unclear.

## **Points of Consideration:**

- **These factors are specific to males.** Both the CDC and WHO have focused their attention on males as perpetrators because, statistically, males perpetrate the majority of intimate partner violence (IPV). This is particularly true when a subset of intimate partner violence known as battering (referring to the pattern of abusive behaviors based on power and control verses “one-time” incidents or responsive violence) is examined. Males also constitute the majority of perpetrators of more generalized violence, such as homicide and battery, regardless of the sex of the victim. Additionally, as is evident in reviewing the literature, many of these risks factors are tied specifically to social constructions of masculinity and the socialization of men. As such, utilizing them as the basis of programs aimed at preventing women's use of violence would be counterproductive.

- **Not all males perpetrate violence against women.** While men perpetrate the majority of intimate partner violence, this does not mean that the majority of males perpetrate intimate partner violence. Given that many men are exposed to similar attitudes and beliefs that support intimate partner violence but do not ever perpetrate intimate partner violence, a better understanding of the complex interrelationship of risk factors at various levels of the social ecology is necessary to develop effective prevention programming. Many of the risk factors articulated here reinforce each other, creating a synergistic effect.
- **The factors are specific to perpetration.** Factors that increase the likelihood of victimization differ from those that increase the likelihood of perpetration. Focusing on perpetration increases the likelihood of preventing first-time perpetration and places accountability on the appropriate group, perpetrators.
- **Risk factors may be causal or correlative.** Due to limitations in the research, it is important to bear in mind that the relationship between many risk factors and the causes of intimate partner violence is unclear. In some cases, it is difficult to determine if the risk factor occurred prior to the intimate partner violence or as a result of the intimate partner violence or, in fact, if both the risk factor and the violence are the result of an unknown additional factor.

### **Caveats:**

- **The current research base is limited.** Only recently have researchers begun to look at the question of how settings and factors across the social ecology lead some individuals to perpetrate intimate partner violence. Much of the data comes from North America and it is unclear if the information will apply beyond North America. Additionally, many of the studies are limited in their methodology and insufficient evidence exists to indicate if these initially identified risk factors are causative or correlations. As the research expands, additional factors may be added.
- **This document is not a comprehensive review of the literature related to men's perpetration of intimate partner violence.** Rather, it seeks only to briefly explain risk factors identified by the CDC and the WHO for intimate partner violence. In identifying these risk factors, the CDC draws heavily on WHO's *World report*

*on violence and health*, edited by Etienne G. Krug, Linda L. Dahlberg, James A. Mercy, Anthony B. Zwi and Rafael Lozano (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002) (cited in this document as WHO, 2002, for ease of reading). Given this intent, there are numerous additional citations supporting these risk factors that have not been included in this document.

### Level of the Social Ecology: Individual

Risk Factor	Explanation	Selected Supporting Literature
Desire for Power and Control (Power and Control Problems)	Power is defined as the need to influence and control others. Control acts as a mechanism to retain power. Power and control are often defined for men within the context of the construction of masculinity. For example, "being a real man" may include the ability to assert power and control over others and a man's value may be tied to the amount of power and control he has. A man who internalizes this notion of masculinity, linking his own value as a man to the amount of power and control he has, and who experiences a perceived loss of power and control may use violence against his partner to re-establish his power and control and thus reinforce his masculinity. Male assertions of power and control may go beyond physical violence, including the psychological, emotional, spiritual, sexual, economic and other realms, as evidenced in the experiences of many victims of intimate partner violence.	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.

Lack of Empathy Toward Women	A lack of empathy toward women in general and a female victim in particular is associated with perpetration of both sexual and domestic violence. Traditional constructions of masculinity discourage males from feeling emotional connections and males may develop emotional detachment as a coping mechanism, thus reducing their engagement in empathy. Lack of empathy also assists in rationalizing behaviors or minimizing the impact of the behavior on the victim.	<p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p> <p>Stith, SM et al. Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimization risk factors: a meta-analytic review. <i>Aggression and Violent Behavior</i>, 2004, 10: 65-98.</p>
Belief in Strict Gender Roles (Gender-role Conflict)	While sex is a biological characteristic, concepts of gender and the appropriate role of a given gender are socially constructed, and transmitted to individuals beginning at the time of birth. Gender socialization occurs through a number of everyday mechanisms. Gender-role conflict is created when the individual perceives himself or someone else as violating his or her gender-appropriate expectations. Gender-role conflict may result in the "need" for the individual experiencing the conflict to assert his membership in that gender group by displaying exaggerated examples of gender-appropriate behavior. The ways in which masculinity is typically understood may predispose men to intimate partner violence against women. Some of the traditional aspects of the construction of masculinity include dominating and aggressive play in the family of origin, stereotypic and sexist gender-role attitudes and behaviors toward women, and fear of femininity and emasculation. Men may see asserting	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.



	dominance over a partner through the use of violence as a way of demonstrating their masculinity and/or reinforcing the femininity of their partner.	
Homophobia and Heterosexism	<p>Within United States culture, gay men are often depicted as less masculine and more feminine than heterosexual men. Lesbian women are frequently depicted as more masculine and less feminine than their heterosexual counterparts. When a strong sense of gender appropriate roles is present, fear of this perceived blurring of gender-roles might result in homophobia and heterosexism. Men who are homophobic and heterosexist may feel a need to assert their masculinity by using violence against their partner.</p> <p>Larger oppressions based on homophobia and heterosexism may also play a part. Since homosexual individuals are devalued, accusations of homosexuality may also be used as a mechanism of control against a partner. Additionally, since violence against homosexuals is often seen as more permissible, accusations of another person as a homosexual may help to shield the perpetrator of violence from consequences. Finally, since members of the oppressed group may internalize oppressions, homophobia may also be significant in the perpetration of same-sex intimate partner violence.</p>	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.
Being a Victim of Physical or Psychological	Studies in Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Spain,	Ellsberg MC et al. Wife abuse among women of childbearing age

<p>Abuse (Witnessing or Experiencing Violence as a Child)</p>	<p>the United States and Venezuela found strong associations between violence in the family of origin and perpetration of partner violence by men. Men who had been beaten as children or had witnessed their mothers being beaten demonstrated higher rates of abuse against their partners. (WHO, 2002)</p> <p>Studies have also found, however, that not all boys who witness or experience abuse grow up to be abusers. More research is needed to explain these differences. (WHO, 2002)</p>	<p>in Nicaragua. <i>American Journal of Public Health</i>, 1999, 89:241–244.</p> <p>Johnson H. <i>Dangerous domains: violence against Women in Canada</i>. Ontario, International Thomson Publishing, 1996.</p> <p>Black DA et al. <i>Partner, child abuse risk factors literature review</i>. National Network of Family Resiliency, National Network for Health, 1999.</p> <p>Larain SH. <i>Violencia puertas adentro: la mujer golpeada. [Violence behind closed doors: the battered women.]</i>Santiago, Editorial Universitaria, 1994.</p> <p>Nelson E, Zimmerman C. <i>Household survey on domestic violence in Cambodia</i>. Phnom Penh, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Project Against Domestic Violence, 1996.</p> <p>Hakimi M et al. <i>Silence for the sake of harmony: domestic violence and</i></p>
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Perpetrating Psychological Aggression (Psychological Violence)	Psychological violence occurs when power is used and abused by one individual to dehumanize and treat another person as an object. Psychological violence is grouped into three primary categories: devaluations, restrictions and violations. Within the context of men's perpetration of intimate partner violence against women, psychological violence is seen as resulting from unresolved gender-role conflict, in which masculinity is perceived as being threatened, to recover from perceived or real losses of power and control, or from fears of emasculation. The cumulative effect of continued use of psychological violence may predispose men for perpetrating physical intimate	<p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p>

	partner violence.	
Low Academic Achievement	One of the few longitudinal, birth cohort studies to explore partner violence found that family poverty in childhood and adolescence, low academic achievement and aggressive delinquency at the age of 15 years all strongly predicted physical abuse of partners by men at the age of 21 years. This study was also one of the few that compared these factors to female perpetration and found them to be associated with male perpetration. There is some inconsistency in the data. (WHO, 2002).	Moffit TE, Caspi A. <i>Findings about partner violence from the Dunedin multi-disciplinary health and development study, New Zealand</i> . Washington, DC, National Institutes of Justice, 1999.
Heavy Alcohol or Drug Use (Heavy Drinking)	<p>Alcohol use by men who perpetrate partner violence appears consistently across numerous studies in multiple countries. Studies also suggest that men who have been drinking inflict more serious violence during an assault. A Canadian study found that women who lived with heavy drinkers were 5 times more likely to be assaulted than women who lived with non-drinkers. (WHO, 2002).</p> <p>The relationship between alcohol use and partner violence is more contentious in the research. Some studies suggest that alcohol operates as a situational factor, clouding judgment and diminishing the ability to interpret cues. Other studies suggest that excessive drinking relates to abuse because it provides fodder for arguments between couples. Additional studies argue that the relationship between alcohol and violence is culturally dependent and is present only in cultures or societies where there is a collective expectation that</p>	<p>Moreno Martin F. La violencia en la pareja. [Intimate partner violence.] <i>Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica</i>, 1999, 5:245–258. Research Council, 1999.</p> <p>Parry C et al. <i>Alcohol attributable fractions for trauma in South Africa</i>. Curationis, 1996, 19:2–5.</p> <p>Kyriacou DN et al. Emergency department-based study of risk factors for acute injury from domestic violence against women. <i>Annals of Emergency Medicine</i>, 1998, 31:502–506.</p> <p>McCauley J et al. The "battering syndrome": prevalence and clinical</p>



	<p>drinking causes or excuses certain behaviors. (WHO, 2002)</p>	<p>characteristics of domestic violence in primary health care internal medicine practices. <i>Annals of Internal Medicine</i>, 1995, 123:737–746.</p> <p>Ellsberg MC et al. Candies in hell: women's experience of violence in Nicaragua. <i>Social Science and Medicine</i>, 2000, 51:1595–1610.</p> <p>Rodgers K. Wife assault: the findings of a national survey. <i>Juristat Service Bulletin</i>, 1994, 14:1–22.</p> <p>Nelson E, Zimmerman C. <i>Household survey on domestic violence in Cambodia</i>. Phnom Penh, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Project Against Domestic Violence, 1996.</p> <p>Hakimi M et al. <i>Silence for the sake of harmony: domestic violence and women's health in Central Java, Indonesia</i>. Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University, 2001.</p>
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Low Self-Esteem	Canadian and American studies indicate that men who perpetrate domestic violence are more likely to be emotionally dependent, insecure, and low in self-esteem, with more difficulty in controlling their impulses. (WHO, 2002).	Kantor GK, Jasinski JL. Dynamics and risk factors in partner violence. In: Jasinski JL, Williams LM, eds. <i>Partner violence: a comprehensive review of 20 years of research</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1998.
Young Age	Based on a review of studies the authors considered to be methodologically sound and that employed either a representative community sample or a clinical sample	Black DA et al. <i>Partner, child abuse risk factors literature review</i> . National Network of Family

	with an appropriate control group, young age was consistently found to be linked to a man's likelihood of perpetrating physical violence against a partner (WHO, 2002).	Resiliency, National Network for Health, 1999.
Depression	<p>Men who abuse their partners are more likely than their non-violent peers to exhibit greater anger and hostility and to be depressed. (WHO, 2002)</p> <p>Since the majority of the studies supporting this risk factor have utilized perpetrators who have received criminal sanctions or are in treatment for intimate partner violence, it is unclear if the depression results in the violence or is the result of the consequences of the violence.</p>	<p>Black DA et al. <i>Partner, child abuse risk factors literature review</i>. National Network of Family Resiliency, National Network for Health, 1999.</p> <p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p>
Antisocial Personality Traits Borderline Personality Traits (Personality Disorders/ Psychopathology)	Studies suggest that perpetrators of partner violence are more likely to score high on certain scales of personality disorder, including antisocial, aggressive and borderline personality disorders. While rates of psychopathology generally appear to be higher among abusers, a significant number of abusive men do not show psychological disorders and the proportion of partner violence tied to psychopathology is likely to be relatively low where partner violence is common. (WHO, 2002)	Black DA et al. <i>Partner, child abuse risk factors literature review</i> . National Network of Family Resiliency, National Network for Health, 1999.
Emotional Intimacy Problems	Men's socialization within the limitations of traditional constructions of masculinity (with its association of emotionality with femininity and corresponding fears that develop related to the possibility of being labeled	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.

	feminine) may result in the development of restrictive emotionality as a defensive mechanism. Restrictive emotionality indicates that men have difficulty in verbalizing feelings, giving up emotional control or being vulnerable. Restrictive emotionality may create difficulties in men's development of emotional bonds and may result in abuse.	
Low Income	<p>Based on a review of studies they considered to be methodologically sound and that employed either a representative community sample or a clinical sample with an appropriate control group, low income was consistently found to be linked to a man's likelihood of perpetrating physical violence against a partner (WHO, 2002).</p> <p>One of the few longitudinal, birth cohort studies to explore partner violence found that family poverty in childhood and adolescence, low academic achievement and aggressive delinquency at the age of 15 years all strongly predicted physical abuse of partners by men at the age of 21 years. This study was also one of the few that compared these factors to female perpetration and found them to be associated with male perpetration. There is some inconsistency in the data. (WHO, 2002).</p>	<p>Black DA et al. <i>Partner, child abuse risk factors literature review</i>. National Network of Family Resiliency, National Network for Health, 1999.</p> <p>Moffit TE, Caspi A. <i>Findings about partner violence from the Dunedin multi-disciplinary health and development study, New Zealand</i>. Washington, DC, National Institutes of Justice, 1999.</p>



### Level of the Social Ecology: Relationship

Risk Factor	Explanation	Selected Supporting Literature
Gender-Specific Patterns of Interpersonal Communication	Gender-specific socialization creates differing communication styles between men and women. Some individuals are effective in moving beyond the limitations of the patterns of communication specific to their gender. Men unable or unwilling to work across gender-specific patterns of interpersonal communication may resort to methods of control or dominance, particularly when operating within a larger traditional construct of masculinity and male domination.	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.
Strong Patriarchal Relationship or Familial Environment (Male Dominance in the Family)	While sex is a biological characteristic, concepts of gender and the appropriate role of a given gender are socially constructed, and transmitted to individuals beginning at the time of birth. Gender socialization occurs through a number of everyday mechanisms. Although gender-role socialization is not inherently problematic, the ways in which masculinity is typically understood may predispose men to sexual violence against women. Some of the traditional aspects of the construction of masculinity include dominating and aggressive play in the family of origin, stereotypic and sexist gender-role attitudes and behaviors toward women, fear of femininity and emasculation, and patterns of gender-role conflict (i.e. power, control, homophobia, heterosexism). These traditional	Crowell NA, Burgess AW, eds. <i>Understanding violence against women</i> . Washington, DC, National Academy Press, 1996.  Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.

	constructs of masculinity are modeled and reinforced when the family of origin is characterized by a strong patriarchal relationship.	
Perpetrating Psychological Aggression (Psychological Violence)	Psychological violence occurs when power is used and abused by one individual to dehumanize and treat another person as an object. Psychological violence is grouped into three primary categories: devaluations, restrictions and violations. Within the context of men's perpetration of intimate partner violence against women, psychological violence is seen as resulting from unresolved gender-role conflict, in which masculinity is perceived as being threatened, to recover from perceived or real losses of power and control, or from fears of emasculation. The cumulative effect of continued perpetration of psychological violence may predispose men for perpetrating intimate partner violence.	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.
Unhealthy Family Relationships and Interactions (Poor Family Functioning)	The dynamics and tactics of men perpetrating intimate partner violence often extend to their relationships with other members of the family, such as problems with interpersonal communication, psychological violence or emotional distance. Conflict or abuse within their own family of origin (including controlling parenting behavior) may also influence current relationships due to the modeling effect.	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.
Marital Conflict	Marital conflict is moderately to strongly associated with partner assault in every study reviewed by Black et al. Studies in Thailand and South Africa found	Black DA et al. <i>Partner, child abuse risk factors literature review</i> . National Network of Family

	<p>marital conflict to be predictive of physical violence. In the Thai study, marital conflict remained strongly related, even after controlling for socioeconomic status, husband's stress level and other aspects such as stability. (WHO, 2002)</p>	<p>Resiliency, National Network for Health, 1999.</p> <p>Jewkes R et al. The prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional violence against women in three South African Provinces. <i>South African Medical Journal</i>, 2001, 91: 421-428.</p> <p>Hoffman KL, Demo DH, Edwards JN. Physical wife abuse in a non-Western society: an integrated theoretical approach. <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i>, 1994, 56:131-146.</p>
<p>Dominance and Control of the Relationship by One Partner Over the Other (Fear of Losses of Power and Control)</p>	<p>Power is defined as the need to influence and control others. Control acts as a mechanism to retain power. Power and control are often defined for men within the context of the construction of masculinity. For example, "being a real man" may include the ability to assert power and control over others and a man's perceived value may be tied to the amount of power and control he has over others. A man who internalizes this notion of masculinity, linking his own value as a man to the amount of power and control he has, and who experiences a threat or perception of a loss of power and control may use violence against his partner to re-establish his power and control and thus reinforce his</p>	<p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p>





	<p>masculinity. Males' assertions of power and control may go beyond physical violence, including the psychological, emotional, spiritual, sexual, economic and other realms, as evidenced in the experiences of many victims of intimate partner violence.</p>	
Abuses of Power	<p>Power conflicts occur regularly among individuals. Resolution can occur in positive or negative ways. One type of negative resolution occurs through abuses of power, or situations where power is used to devalue, restrict or violate another person. Within the context of intimate partner violence, the abuser may use abuses of power to "get his own way" or to validate himself. Abuse of power has been hypothesized as resulting from unresolved masculine gender-role conflicts. Abuses of power sometimes take the form of psychological violence.</p>	<p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p>
Marital Instability	<p>High levels of marital conflict and distress often lead to higher levels of stress and couples may blame each other for the issues in the relationship. Marital instability, such as divorces or separations, is often associated with marital conflict. Not all abusive relationships display marital instability nor do all conflictual intimate relationships result in violence. Thus, marital instability does not cause intimate partner violence but, rather, to make men's use of violence against their partner more likely.</p>	<p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p>
Stressful Events	<p>Stressful events are not believed to cause male perpetration of violence against an intimate partner. Rather, stressful events may lead to an increase in</p>	<p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p>

	marital conflict. Marital conflict has been linked to an increased likelihood that violence will occur in the relationship.	
Economic Stress	Stressful events are not believed to cause male perpetration of violence against an intimate partner. Rather, stressful events may lead to an increase in marital conflict. Economic stresses may also be exacerbated when the male partner perceives his economic or educational status as less than that of his partner. Economic stress may create a sense of failure in men, since masculinity is often linked to the male role of "family provider." Marital conflict in general has also been linked to an increased likelihood that male violence will occur in the relationship. Economic stress may act as a "triggering" event but does not independently fully explain intimate partner violence.	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.

## Level of the Social Ecology: Community

Risk Factor	Explanation	Selected Supporting Literature
Weak Community Sanctions Against Domestic Violence Perpetrators	A cross-cultural study of 16 societies with either high or low rates of partner violence led to the development of the "sanctions and sanctuary" framework. The lowest levels of partner abuse were found to exist in societies that had strong community sanctions against partner violence and where abused women had access to sanctuary, either in the form of shelters or family. Sanctions occurred in the form of either formal legal sanctions or where there was strong moral pressure for community members to intervene when a woman was beaten. This framework also suggests that rates of intimate partner violence are highest when women's status is in transition and they are beginning to move toward a higher status. In places where women have low status, there is no need to use violence to reinforce male domination. In areas where women have high status, they have sufficient power to change the social norms that support intimate partner violence. (WHO, 2002)	Counts DA, Brown J, Campbell J. <i>Sanctions and sanctuary: cultural perspectives on the beating of wives</i> . Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1992.
Negative Portrayal of Women in the Media	Numerous studies have documented the ways in which media serves to objectify women, suggesting that women's bodies are for the enjoyment and use of men. Media portrayals of women also reinforce concepts of female inferiority in terms of intelligence, skills, physical ability, emotional temperament and other	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.



	capabilities. The social construction of women as “other” or “less than” assists in dehumanizing women and justifying male violence against women. Harway and O’Neil suggest that this social construct may predispose men for violence against women.	
Poverty	While intimate partner violence occurs across all levels of socioeconomic status, studies conducted in a wide variety of settings show that women living in poverty are disproportionately impacted. The relationship between poverty and intimate partner violence is unclear and it is likely that poverty acts as a “marker” for intimate partner violence. Theories regarding the relationship between poverty and intimate partner violence include poverty providing a source of marital discord, poverty decreasing options for women leaving an abusive relationship, or the other factors that may accompany poverty, such as overcrowding or hopelessness. It has also been suggested that poverty may create a sense of failure in men for having not met their culturally appropriated role of provider for the family. (WHO, 2002)	<p>Ellsberg MC et al. Wife abuse among women of childbearing age in Nicaragua. <i>American Journal of Public Health</i>, 1999, 89:241–244.</p> <p>Rodgers K. Wife assault: the findings of a national survey. <i>Juristat Service Bulletin</i>, 1994, 14:1–22.</p> <p>Schuler SR et al. Credit programs, patriarchy and men’s violence against women in rural Bangladesh. <i>Social Science and Medicine</i>, 1996, 43:1729–1742.</p> <p>Rosales J et al. <i>Encuesta Nicaraguen se de demografia ysalud, 1998. [1998 Nicaraguan demographic and health survey.]</i> Managua, Instituto Nacional de Estadisticas y Censos, 1999.</p> <p>Heise L. Violence against women:</p>

		<p>an integrated ecological framework. <i>Violence Against Women</i> 1998, 4:262–290.</p> <p>Larrain SH. <i>Violencia puertas adentro: la mujer golpeada. [Violence behind closed doors: the battered women.]</i> Santiago, Editorial Universitaria, 1994.</p> <p>Nelson E, Zimmerman C. <i>Household survey on domestic violence in Cambodia</i>. Phnom Penh, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Project Against Domestic Violence, 1996.</p> <p>Hakimi M et al. <i>Silence for the sake of harmony: domestic violence and women's health in Central Java, Indonesia</i>. Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University, 2001.</p> <p>Moreno Martin F. La violencia en la pareja. [Intimate partner violence.] <i>Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica</i>, 1999, 5:245–258.</p> <p>Hoffman KL, Demo DH, Edwards JN. Physical wife abuse in a non-</p>
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		<p>Western society: an integrated theoretical approach. <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i>, 1994, 56:131–146.</p> <p>Martin SL et al. Domestic violence in northern India. <i>American Journal of Epidemiology</i>, 1999, 150:417–426.</p> <p>Gonzales de Olarte E, Gavilano Llosa P. Does poverty cause domestic violence? Some answers from Lima. In: Morrison AR, Biehl ML, eds. <i>Too close to home: domestic violence in the Americas</i>. Washington, DC, Inter-American Development Bank, 1999:35– 49.</p> <p>Straus M et al. Societal change and change in family violence from 1975 to 1985 as revealed by two national surveys. <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i>, 1986, 48:465–479.</p> <p>Byrne CA et al. The socioeconomic impact of interpersonal violence on women. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i>, 1999, 67:362–366.</p>
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Low Social Capital	Social capital refers to the degree of integration within the community, such as the rules norms and obligations that exist in social relations and institutions. A lack of social capital tends to correlate with increased levels of other types of violence, as well. Low social capital tends to vary based on other related risk factors for intimate partner violence. (WHO, 2002)	Lederman D, Loayza N, Menendez AM. <i>Violent crime: does social capital matter?</i> Washington, DC, World Bank, 1999.



### Level of the Social Ecology: Societal

Risk Factors	Explanation	Selected Supporting Literature
Social Norms Supportive of Violence	Within most societies, some forms of violence are more permissible than others, meaning there are fewer consequences attached to certain types of violence. Additionally, there are numerous places of overlap in the risk factors for more generalized violence and intimate partner violence. Given these two propositions, tolerance within society for various types of violence supports and reinforces the use of violence in intimate partner relationships. Since consequences for violence are often tied to the status of the group being victimized, other risk factors (such as traditional gender norms, male dominance, etc.) may act in conjunction to create reduced consequences for male violence against women.	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.
Traditional Gender Norms	Traditional gender norms set out expectations for appropriate behavior based on culturally constructed concepts of masculinity and femininity. These norms are communicated and reinforced through numerous social practices and in the majority of settings (i.e. classrooms, sports, media, interpersonal relationships). Traditional gender norms typically devalue the feminine while glorifying the masculine and attach social "penalties" for violating these norms. Given that traditional definitions of masculinity generally include the use of physical force, aggressiveness, power and	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.





	control and abhorrence of the feminine, traditional gender norms may predispose men for intimate partner violence against women.	
Men's Gender-role Socialization Processes	While sex is a biological characteristic, concepts of gender and the appropriate role of a given gender are socially constructed, and transmitted to individuals beginning at the time of birth. Gender socialization occurs through a number of everyday mechanisms. Although gender-role socialization is not inherently problematic, the ways in which masculinity is typically understood may predispose men to intimate partner violence against women. Some of the traditional aspects of the construction of masculinity include dominating and aggressive play in the family of origin, stereotypic and sexist gender-role attitudes and behaviors toward women, fear of femininity and emasculation, and patterns of gender-role conflict (i.e. power, control, homophobia, heterosexism).	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.
Women's Gender-role Socialization Processes	As a counterpart to masculine socialization, female socialization includes the notion of women as less valuable than men. Women are given gender-role expectations that discourage achievement, restricted identity development, depression and low self-esteem, overemphasis on appearance and beauty, dependency and submissiveness, caretaking and nurturing of others, emphasis on and overvaluation of relationships, feelings of inferiority, learned helplessness, pressure toward motherhood and marriage, and exaggerated femininity. These may result in attitudes, beliefs and	Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.



	behaviors that support male perpetration of intimate partner violence against women.	
Institutional Structures that Promote Unequal Power Between Men and Women	<p>A study of ethnographic data from 90 societies suggests that intimate partner violence is higher in societies where many of the markers of women's status indicate women have lower status and power, such as access to economic resources, divorce and decision-making power. (WHO, 2002)</p> <p>Other studies reinforce this, suggesting that structural inequalities between men and women, rigid gender roles and notions of manhood linked to dominance, male honor and aggression increase the risk of partner violence. (WHO, 2002)</p>	<p>Levinson D. <i>Family violence in cross-cultural perspective</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1989.</p> <p>Heise L. Violence against women: an integrated ecological framework. <i>Violence Against Women</i> 1998, 4:262–290.</p> <p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p>
Historical and Societal Patterns that Glorify Violence Against Women	<p>Given the broad nature of this factor, the lack of resources for such a large research undertaking and the almost "invisible" ways in which the glorification of violence against women has become embedded in American culture, it is difficult to untangle the impact of these patterns on intimate partner violence. However, Harway and O'Neil suggest that the ways in which our culture reinforces and values violence against women by men (for example, through media depictions of violence against women) have helped to construct a concept of masculinity that rewards or romanticizes violence against women and serves to normalize such violence so that society fails to recognize violence against women as problematic and, in certain contexts, as even occurring. The impact of</p>	<p>Harway H, O'Neil JM. <i>What causes men's violence against women?</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1999.</p>

	<p>this larger cultural context is often unnoticed by individuals, for both many men and women, but this does not deny its significance in shaping intimate partner violence. Glorification and normalization of violence against women through historical and societal patterns may act as a predisposing factor for intimate partner violence perpetrated by men.</p> <p>Additionally, some researchers suggest that historical patterns of oppression against particular groups, which include acts of violence, may then be internalized by the group subjected to the oppression and acted out against other members of the oppressed group, perpetuating the pattern. For example, it has been suggested that in the United States, the history of slavery has led some African-American men to internalize racism and to act this out by perpetrating violence against other African-Americans, particularly those who are further devalued by other oppressions, such as African-American women who experience the intersection of both racism and sexism.</p>	
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