Intimate Partner Violence and Economic Well-Being: A Brief Research Review

Richard M. Tolman, Ph.D.
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IPV and economic status

- Income-IPV gradient
- IPV as cause
- IPV as a result
IPV & economic well-being

• Economic Abuse
  – abuse that directly impacts economic spheres

• Traumatic impact of IPV
  – Health and mental health effects that diminish economic well-being

• Other Economic impacts
  – associated with IPV and its aftermath
Economic Abuse

- Form of psychological maltreatment-inclusion in Power and Control Wheel
- Expanded conceptualizations and measures developed more recently
- Behaviors that control a woman’s ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources, thus threatening her economic security and potential for self-sufficiency (Adams et al, 2008).
Direct Interference with Employment

- Block employment
  - Threats to harm if working
- Interfere with employment
  - E.g. harassed at work
  - Sabotage work efforts-e.g. hiding keys
- Interfere with other employment-related activities
Traumatic Effects

- Health and mental health outcomes clearly linked to IPV
- These can diminish the ability to work and to perform other important life roles.
- May limit actual ability or victim’s perceptions of ability
Other economic impacts

- relationship dissolution and associated economic challenges
- housing displacement
- credit problems
- increased child care costs
- health and mental health care costs
Welfare Status - Background

• Much work began during debate about PRWORA
  – Concerns for well-being of battered women in era of demands to work and loss of entitlement
  – Trapped by Poverty/Trapped by Abuse
  – Family Violence Option
Welfare Status - Research

- High rates of IPV among women on welfare caseloads
- Association with reliance on welfare and cycling
- Some ethnic variation e.g. Honeycutt et al
  - Physical IPV
  - Psychological
- Welfare as gateway to needed services
IPV and Employment

• Results vary by type of employment measure
• Vary by how IPV is measured
  – Recency
  – Cumulative
  – Severity
  – Type i.e. physical, psychological, etc.
Unemployment

- IPV not clearly linked to current employment status i.e. has or doesn’t have a job in welfare samples
- Kimmerling et al (2009) found psychological but not physical IPV related to unemployment of women in general population
Other employment measures

• Several studies in welfare samples link diminished employment effort or hours worked over time to IPV

• Tolman & Wang, 2005
  – IPV diminished work effort on average 137 hours per year (about 10% of total work effort)
  – This eliminated much of the benefit other welfare recipients experienced in period of economic growth
Recency

• Overall, recent IPV associated with employment stability rather than IPV in more distal time periods

• E.g. Adams, Tolman, Bybee, Sullivan & Kennedy (in press)
  – IPV measures
    • Past year, 1-3 years, more than 3 years
  – Results
    • Past year, 1-3 years predicted employment stability

• More distal abuse may continue to impact
Material Hardship

• IPV linked to multiple forms of hardship
  – Food insufficiency
  – Homelessness and other housing related problems
  – Utility shutoffs

• Adams et al (in press)
  – IPV in past year, 1-3 years associated with objective hardship
Subjective Hardship

- Subjective rating of current or anticipated level of hardship
- Can be seen both as an alternative measure of hardship but also as a distinct psychological impact
- Adams et al (in press)
  - Past year IPV predicted anticipated hardship but not IPV that occurred more distally
Job performance

• IPV linked to absenteeism and distraction (Reeves et. al 2007)
  – Lifetime measure, not current IPV linked
  – Perhaps chronic health issues that don’t remit when IPV ends
  – Concentration and distraction issues linked to current IPV

• Consistent with other studies reporting similar findings
  – Both “direct” i.e. abuser interference and “indirect” via stress, health, mental health
Health

• Strong relationship of IPV to acute and chronic health problems (Campell et al, 2002)
  – higher levels of gynecological, chronic stress-related, central nervous system, and total health problems
  – More of the following symptoms: abdominal, pelvic, and back pain, appetite loss, urinary tract infections, vaginal bleeding and infections, painful intercourse, and digestive problems
Mental health

• Mental Health disorders and IPV
  – Depression and suicidal ideation, posttraumatic stress disorder, and alcohol and drug abuse

• Tolman & Rosen, 2001
  – Measured depression, alcohol dependence, drug dependence, generalized anxiety disorder, PTSD
  – 62% of recent victims had at least one of five disorders measured
  – compared to 34% of past victims, and 23% of those who never experienced severe abuse.
Costs related to traumatic effects

- Beyond employment impact, other economic costs of traumatic effects of IPV
- Increased health and mental health costs (Ulrich et al 2003).
- Concern but not conclusive evidence IPV might diminish obtaining jobs with good benefits, including health insurance.
- IPV predicted employment stability, material hardship, but not job benefits (Adams et al, in press).
Pathway to Job Instability

• Tolman & Wang, 2005- demonstrated that health and mental health problems associated with IPV
• Health partially mediated impact of IPV on employment, when controlling for other factors
• Mental health disorders or measures have generally not been significant mediators of IPV-employment.
Job instability as pathway to mental health problems

- Adams (2009) – Michigan welfare sample
- Job instability for IPV victims linked to increased mental health problems
- When considering interventions needed to address economic stability, mental health issues important
Characterizing the Research

- Relatively few studies especially outside of TANF system
- Need for continued research, expanded measures and samples
- Subsequent presentations will deal with needed emphasis on how best to address IPV survivors economic-well-being