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**The Influence of Alcohol and Drugs on Women's Utilization
of the Police for Domestic Violence**

Ira W. Hutchison

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

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**The Influence of Alcohol and Drugs on Women's Utilization
of the Police for Domestic Violence**

Ira W. Hutchison*

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to determine if calling the police for incidents of domestic abuse is influenced by substance use of either the abusers or victims. The primary data source was interview data from 419 women involved in a misdemeanor level incident of domestic violence, and who had either called the police themselves or had a call made on their behalf. A secondary and minor data source was police reports completed on these incidents. Calling the police was analyzed for three time periods: total calls to the police over the course of the relationship, the frequency of calls made in the six-month period prior to the presenting incident (the abusive episode which entered the case into the study), and the presenting incident itself. Substance use was measured in multiple ways: the general pattern of alcohol consumption in terms of both quantity and frequency, frequency drunk, subjective perceptions of the offender having a problem with alcohol or drugs, frequency and type of drug use. Results indicate that substance use by male abusers, but not by female victims, is related to police utilization. Offender drunkenness, rather than the absolute quantity-frequency of alcohol consumption, escalates police utilization by abused women. This is the most consistent predictor of calling the police among the substance use measures. Frequency of calling the police over the length of the relationship is significantly associated with offender drunkenness, marijuana use, frequency of threats to the victim and hitting the victim, and race. A majority of women reported that their partners were either drinking or drunk at the time of the presenting incident, and offender drinking was the modal cause of the conflict which led to the abuse. Most women called the police themselves, or asked a child, neighbor or friend to do so; one-third wanted the offender arrested at the time they made the call. Substance use at the presenting incident was less predictive of police utilization than it was for the longer relationship history.

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FIGURE 1

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Executive Summary

The Influence of Alcohol and Drugs on Women's Utilization of the Police for Domestic Violence

Ira W. Hutchison

Issues and Findings

Discussed in This Summary

Relatively little research has examined the association between alcohol and drug abuse and abused women's police utilization. This study examines the factors associated with women calling the police during incidents of domestic violence, and focuses on the role of substance use in escalating police utilization.

Key Issues

- ◆ How frequently do women call the police for incidents of domestic violence compared to how often they are abused?
- ◆ Does drinking contribute to women's use of the police for domestic violence?
- ◆ Does alcohol or drug use by spouse abusers increase the frequency of women calling the police for assistance?
- ◆ Does alcohol or drug use by victims of abuse make it more or less likely that they will call the police for spouse abuse?
- ◆ What do women want of the police when they call during an incident of domestic violence?

Key Findings

Substance Use

◆ Men in the battered women sample drink far more than their women partners: over one half (52.8%) were high or binge drinkers, compared to 18.4% of women. Distinguishing the men was not only their relatively high frequency of drinking, but the quantity of alcohol

consumed; among the "high" drinkers, over three in four (78.4%) had six or more drinks per day, and slightly over one-third (37.0%) consumed 10 or more drinks daily.

◆ Almost one-fourth (23.0%) of the women interviewed indicated that their partners "very often" or "almost always" got drunk when they drank. According to over one-fourth of victims (29.3%), their partners used cocaine at least once a month, and over one-third (39.0%) indicated a similar frequency for marijuana use.

◆ Among women, only one in five (18.8%) was a high/binge drinker (compared to 55% of the men). However, 72% of high/binge drinking women were in relationships with men who were high or binge drinkers.

◆ Among offenders, almost two-thirds (60.4%) were drinking at the presenting incident; they had consumed, on average, 6.7 drinks. Among those drinking, over half were drunk (57.9%).

Relationship Abuse

◆ Women reported being threatened, on average, 4.4 times in a six-month period and 22.5 times over the course of the relationship. They reported being hit by the offender an average of 3.5 times in six months, and 10.4 times over the course of the relationship.

◆ The modal form of abuse at the presenting incident was the offender hitting the victim (86.8%); threats against the victim were also very common (63.2%). However, unlike the pattern seen in the overall abuse history, offender aggression toward other family members and against property was also quite high at the presenting incident.

◆ Based on the Conflict Tactics Scale, three-fourths of the abusers used severe violence at the presenting incident.

◆ Minor children were often witness to the abusive incidents. In cases where there were children living in the home, women reported that one or more children had seen the fight --

which led to the call to the police -- in a majority of cases (59.2%). In addition, two-thirds of women with children at home reported that children had seen the police when they arrived.

◆ In one-fifth of the presenting incidents, the abusers had threatened or hit another family member; in over one half of the case they had threatened to damage property or damaged property.

Calling the Police

◆ Victims in this sample had called the police 1.8 times in the six months preceding the presenting incident, and called 3.3 times over the course of the relationship.

◆ Women who perceive that their partners were often drunk called the police far more often than do those women who said that their partners were not often drunk: in a six month time period they called 60% more often, and 40% more often over the length of the relationship.

◆ Some variables were consistently associated with the frequency of victims calling the police at both the six month time period and for the total relationship; these were: abuser frequency drunk, abuser pot use, and frequency of hitting the victim.

◆ Other variables were generally associated with the frequency of calling the police, but there were occasional differences between the bivariate and regression analysis, or differences between the six month and total relationship analysis. These variables included: victim race; threats against the victim, other family members, or property; damaging property; and social class/income.

◆ A majority of women reported that their partners were drinking or drunk at the time of the abusive incident, and his drinking was the most common cause of the conflict which led to the violence which resulted in a call to the police.

- ◆ Women's alcohol and drug usage was not related to police utilization.

- ◆ In approximately two-thirds of the cases (62.6%) women called the police themselves.

When the victim herself did not make the call, she asked someone to do this in slightly less than half (45.4%) of the cases. Thus, women initiated the call themselves or via another person in a total of 77.1% of the sample.

- ◆ Victim injury was associated with a greater likelihood that someone other than the victim called the police for assistance. Based on both victim interview data and police reports, a greater proportion of calls to the police were made by someone else when the victim was injured.

- ◆ Most women who called the police did so for a combination of reasons: punitive -- because of what her partner had already done; and preventive -- fear of what he might do if the police were not called. Women were more likely to call the police out of fear when their partners were drinking at the incident, or under the influence, when they were using drugs, and using a combination of both alcohol and drugs.

- ◆ Almost one third of the women wanted the offenders arrested at the scene; in particular, this police action was wanted by Blacks, younger women, those at the poverty level, and for incidents involving more severe assaults.

What Is Known from Previous Studies

Calling the Police

Among the studies investigating the factors which influence the probability of police utilization, four variables emerge with some consistency: previous history of abuse/violence, abuse severity, the use of weapons, and alcohol consumption by the offender at the incident. While these variables were operationalized differently across the studies cited, the general consistency of the results lends some confidence to the conclusion that these factors are relatively important predictors. A major work which examines this issue is Johnson's (1990) research among 426 abused women in shelters. The results of her investigation show that calling the police is positively associated with severity and frequency of violence, the presence of minor children, alcohol use by the abuser, and length of time in the relationship (with those in the relationship less than 10 years more likely to call).

In general, research has found little relationship between demographic factors (race, age, income, employment, education, marital status) and calling the police. There are exceptions: Bachman and Coker (1995) reported that Blacks were more likely to utilize the police; Conaway and Lohr (1994) found that calling the police increased with age; some association with employment/occupational status was found by Bowker (1984), as well as by Kantor and Straus (1990). Although Hutchison and Hirschel (1996) found that children had no impact on abused women calling the police, other research indicates that the presence of children increases the likelihood that the police will be utilized (Johnson, 1990; and Jones & Belknap, 1996).

Alcohol and Domestic Violence

Alcohol Use by Abusers. The role of alcohol in contributing to domestic violence has been investigated from numerous perspectives, including frequency, incidence, severity, and

injury. Assessing the relationship between alcohol and domestic violence is complex due to various ways of operationalizing alcohol use. Kantor and Straus (1990) employed a drinking index (a modified quantity- frequency index) in their analysis of national survey data. Violence rates for drinkers who were "high moderates" were twice as high, and the rates for binge drinkers three times as high, as for alcohol abstainers (Kantor and Straus, 1990). However, even among the men who scored the highest on the drinking index, less than 20% had been violent. At the time of the incident, alcohol was not involved in the overwhelming majority (76%) of abusive cases.

Alcohol Use by Victims. A comprehensive review by Kantor and Asdigian (1997) investigates various avenues of explanation: women's intoxication provokes male violence; women's intoxication is a reaction to/ coping mechanism for being abused; women's intoxication is related to victimization through men's drinking behavior; and women's intoxication is related to victimization because of childhood abuse experiences. Their review suggests that there is a strong association; however, no direct causal mechanism has been clearly established between women's drinking and abuse by males partners.

The Present Study

Participants in the Study

The data for this analysis were collected as part of a spouse assault study in Charlotte, North Carolina, one of the sites for the National Institute of Justice Spouse Assault Replication projects. This study focused on misdemeanor-level spouse abuse, and cases entered the experiment after a call to the police during a domestic violence incident. A total of 419 women were extensively interviewed after the incident. Interviews were a combination of both structured and unstructured items, consisting of 546 variables including childhood abuse

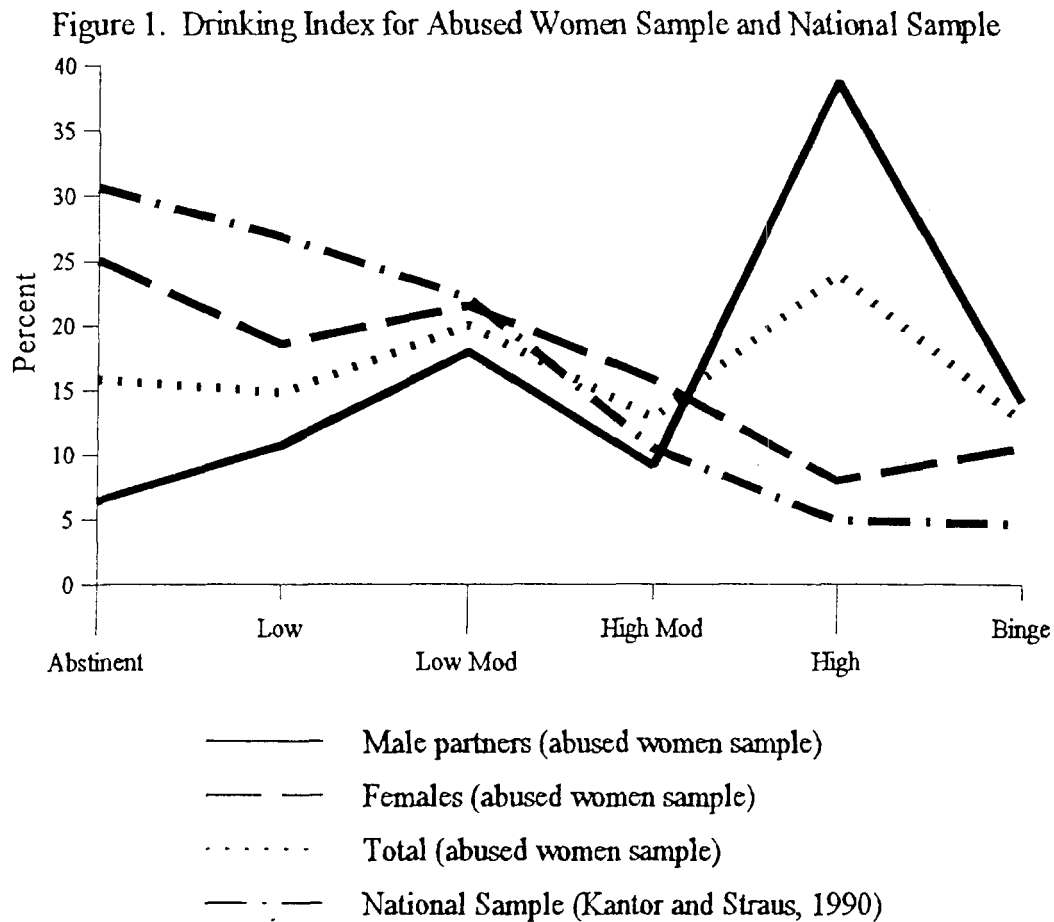
history, relationship abuse history, alcohol and drug usage patterns, measures of fear and help-seeking. Women who were interviewed were demographically similar (e.g., age, race, marital status, employment) to those who were part of the study but were not interviewed (Hirschel, Hutchison, Dean, Kelley, & Pesackis, 1991).

Demographic Characteristics

Women in this study were primarily married (48.9%) or cohabiting (40.6%), with smaller numbers either divorced, separated, or ex-cohabitants. The mean age of the women was 30.5 years, with a range of 17-82. One third of the sample (33.5%) had not completed high school, 29.4% were high school graduates, 31.6% had at least some college education and 5.4% had completed college or postgraduate work. Slightly over half of the women were employed full-time (54.1%), with another 11.1% employed part-time. As would be expected for a sample drawn from calls to the police, this sample is skewed toward the lower SES levels: over one-third of the families were at the poverty level (39.1%), a similar proportion at the working-class level (39.6%), 11.9% were borderline working class-middle class, and only 9.5% of couples were middle class or higher.

Patterns of Alcohol and Drug Consumption

The unusually high rate of alcohol consumption in this sample is seen in a comparison with a national sample. As shown in Figure 1, only half as many men and women in this sample as the national sample were abstinent (15.8 vs. 30.6%), and far higher percentages were



either high drinkers (23.9 vs 4.9%) or binge drinkers (12.6 vs. 4.6%). Only the categories of “low moderate” and “high moderate” drinkers were comparable. Men represented in the battered women sample drink far more than their women partners: over one half (52.8%) are high or binge drinkers, compared to 18.4% of women. What distinguishes the men is not only their relatively high frequency of drinking, but the quantity of alcohol consumed; among the “high” drinkers, over three in four (78.4%) consumed six or more drinks per day, and slightly over one-third (37.0%) consumed 10 or more drinks daily. Drug use is also relatively common. Over one-fourth of victims (29.3%) reported that their partners used cocaine at least once/month, and over one-third (39.0%) indicated a similar frequency for marijuana use by the offender. As expected, drug use by women was much lower. Approximately one woman in

six (16.1%) had used drugs in the six month period preceding the presenting incident.

Calling the Police - The General Relationship History

Women reported the frequencies of different types of abuse, as well as how often they had called the police in the six months preceding the abusive incident, and how often they had called over the length of the relationship with the offender. The most common forms of abuse represented in this sample are the offender threatening the victim, and hitting the victim; verbal or physical aggression against other family members or toward property was much less common (Table A). Women reported being threatened, on average, 4.4 times in a six-month

Table A. Incidence Summary of Abuse for Six Months and Total Relationship

| | Preceding 6 months incidence | | Total relationship incidence | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|
| | μ | S.D. | μ | S.D. |
| Threaten to hurt victim | 4.4 | 6.8 | 22.5 | 32.5 |
| Hit victim | 3.5 | 4.8 | 10.4 | 13.9 |
| Threaten to hurt family member | 0.6 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 3.7 |
| Hit family member | 0.1 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 1.2 |
| Threaten property damage | 1.3 | 3.3 | 4.0 | 9.2 |
| Damage property | 1.0 | 1.9 | 2.9 | 5.4 |

period and 22.5 times over the course of the relationship. They reported being hit by the offender an average of 3.5 times in six months, and 10.4 times over the entire relationship.

Considering the high incidence of abuse experienced by the victims in this sample, it is evident that most of the violence was never reported to the police. Women in this sample had called the police twice (1.8 times) in the preceding six months, and only 3.3 times over the

entire relationship; these data are shown in Table B.

Overall, three variables were the most predictive of how often a woman would call the police for incidents of domestic violence: how often the abuser was drunk, if the abuser used marijuana, and the frequency of hitting the victim. Other variables also predicted police

Table B. Frequency of Calling the Police for Abusive Incidents*

| | Preceding 6 months | | Total relationship | |
|-----------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| 0-1 | 57.5 | (223) | 32.6 | (125) |
| 2-3 | 26.3 | (102) | 29.8 | (114) |
| 4-5 | 7.5 | (29) | 12.8 | (49) |
| 6 or more | 8.8 | (34) | 24.8 | (95) |
| $\mu =$ | 1.8 | | 3.3 | |

*Some victims who reported "0" frequency indicated that they had asked someone to call for them.

utilization, but these were less consistent: victim race (Blacks call more frequently than Whites); threats by the offender -- against the victim, other family members or property; actually damaging property; and social class/income.

Cause of the Conflict. Drinking was the single most common cause of the conflict, as identified both by victims and in police reports. While this "cause" represents less than one-third of the cases (based on victim reports), it is more than three times as common as the next most frequent cause (offender jealousy); this is seen in Table C. When drinking was identified by victims as the cause of the conflict, compared to other causes, the offender was significantly more likely to have been drinking at the incident, to have consumed more alcohol, to be drunk, and to be using drugs.

Table C. Primary Causes of the Conflict Which Precipitated the Abusive Incident, by Victim Data and Police Reports

| | % | (N) |
|------------------------------|------|-------|
| <u>Victim interviews</u> | | |
| Offender drinking | 29.6 | (123) |
| Jealousy | 8.2 | (34) |
| Victim extramarital | 6.5 | (27) |
| Offender extramarital | 5.3 | (22) |
| Offender treatment of kids | 4.8 | (20) |
| Other (90 different reasons) | 45.6 | (189) |
| <u>Police reports</u> | | |
| Drinking* | 43.0 | (180) |
| Money | 15.8 | (66) |
| Extramarital | 15.0 | (63) |
| Children | 13.6 | (57) |
| Friends | 7.1 | (30) |

*The apparent "cause of the conflict" on police reports does not distinguish between offender/victim drinking; more than one reason could be identified.

Alcohol Consumption at the Presenting Incident

Almost two-thirds (60.4%) of the offenders were drinking at the presenting incident. They had consumed, on average, 6.7 drinks. Among those drinking, over half were drunk (57.9%). This represents 40.3% of the total sample where sufficient information was provided. Almost half of the men (43.4%) were drinking more than their usual consumption pattern. Additionally, approximately one-fifth (21.8%) of the abusers were using drugs before or during the presenting incident. Offenders were significantly more likely than the victims to be using drugs or alcohol at the presenting incident on four of the variables examined: drinking at

incident, amount of alcohol consumed, drunkenness, and drug use.

Calling the Police. In approximately two-thirds of the cases (62.6%) women called the police themselves. In other cases, the call was made by a neighbor or friend (13.8%), a child (8.9%), another family member (3.9%), someone else (6.4%) or the caller was unknown to the victim (4.3%). When the victim herself did not make the call, she asked someone to do this in slightly less than half (45.4%) of the cases. Thus, women initiated the call themselves or through another person in a total of 77.1% of the sample. Victim injury is associated with a greater likelihood that someone other than the victim will call the police for assistance, although no causality may be implied here. Based on both victim interview data and police reports, a greater proportion of calls to the police are made by someone else when the victim is injured. However, it is important to note that this sample, confined to the misdemeanor range of domestic violence, largely excludes serious injury.

Victim Fear. Alcohol use by offenders is related to fear in victims. That is, women whose partners drink are much more likely to be afraid than women whose partners seldom drink. As seen in Table D, women who report that they are very often fearful when their partners are drinking have understandable cause: they have a higher incidence of being threatened and of being hit, for both the six month and total relationship time periods. These data show that women who are "very often" afraid of their partners when the partners are drinking have rates of being threatened, and of being hit, which are 2-3 times greater than women who say that they are never afraid when their partners are drinking.

Considering the high rates of drinking among men in this sample, one could argue that the

Table D. Victim Fear When Offender is Using Alcohol, by Frequency of Threats and Physical Abuse

| | Threats μ | | Physical Abuse μ | |
|--|------------------|---------|-------------------------|----------|
| | 6 months | Total | 6 months | Total |
| Frequency of victim fearfulness when offender is using alcohol | | | | |
| Very often | 10.4 | 32.7 | 7.6 | 26.9 |
| Often | 6.3 | 22.6 | 4.3 | 15.6 |
| Occasionally | 4.9 | 17.5 | 2.0 | 9.0 |
| Never | 4.3 | 15.8 | 1.9 | 10.2 |
| F= | 3.92** | 5.75*** | 13.65*** | 11.42*** |

p \leq .01, *p \leq .001

probability of battering in a given drinking episode is relatively low; everyday drinking does not translate into everyday abuse. Thus, a woman who often has been beaten by her partner would have logical reason to believe that his drinking would not lead to battering in any given incident simply based on probability. However, drunken behavior is almost by definition more unpredictable. Battering is also very unpredictable -- with or without alcohol -- and the inability to control or predict one's physical security is in itself a major contributor to fear.

What Victims Want the Police To Do. Almost one-third of the women in this sample wanted the police to arrest the offender at the time they made the call (29.7%). The modal response was by women who wanted the police to remove the offender from the scene ("take him away," N= 145, 41.0% of the sample). When combined, over two-thirds of the women in this sample (70.7%) wanted the police to physically remove the offender from the home.

Implications for Police Practice

Drinking and drug use by abusers is related to the violence which women experience, to

their level of fear, and to women's use of the police. In the long run, male substance abuse escalates police utilization by abused women. As this research has documented, substance use is often present in those incidents which result in a call to the police. Even though offender drinking is the most common cause of the conflict, this precipitating factor still accounts for less than half of the incidents reported to the police. Assuming that many relationships are characterized by periodic stress (and some by chronic volatility), then the combination with unpredictability that accompanies drunkenness may significantly escalate victim's fears. Seen in this light, drunkenness is a strong weapon in inducing fear in women and, thus, an advantage to men who seek dominance over their partners.

These findings suggest that the police response to spouse abuse should be strengthened in several ways: (a) through examination and review of current policies which define the police response to abusive incidents, particularly when substance abuse is evident; (b) through formal cooperation with community service agencies which deal with substance abuse, and (c) through appropriate involvement with the judicial system in the processing of substance-abusing batterers. Police are in an unenviable position. All other community agencies have some choice in dealing with alcohol related spouse abuse. Treatment centers usually have waiting lists and can insist that a person be detoxed before admission. Shelters may have policies which prohibit inebriated women from being admitted. Unofficial evidence in this locale suggests that magistrates may deny warrants to women seeking them if they have been drinking. However, police have the responsibility to enforce the law and to offer protection to women in danger. In addition, any progress made on reducing substance-related spouse abuse could also have positive consequences for children. Analysis presented here finds that children are present during a majority of incidents, but that their presence has remarkably little impact on the characteristics of police utilization.

The Influence of Alcohol and Drugs on Women's Utilization of the Police for Domestic Violence

1. Introduction

The considerable body of research on police response to domestic violence is not matched by comparable investigation of the factors which are associated with women calling the police for assistance during domestic disputes. While it is generally accepted that many abused women never call the police, and those who ever-call do so for a minority of violent incidents, relatively little is known about the characteristics of women who call the police, and what they expect when they make the call. This analysis examines the influence of alcohol and drugs on women's use of the police for domestic violence.¹

Extensive research has investigated connections between alcohol use and spouse abuse.² In general, research has concluded that alcohol is a contributor to a variety of forms of domestic violence (cf. comprehensive reviews by Hayes and Emshoff, 1993; Martin, 1993; Permanen, 1991; and Reiss and Roth, 1993). Alcohol is occasionally seen as a direct cause (Bushman and Cooper, 1990; Flanzer, 1993), although far less often than as a contributor. Alcohol has been shown to be implicated in different forms of aggression (Leonard and Jacob, 1988) and sexual assault (Russell, 1984). One study of men incarcerated for a violent offense

¹ For purposes of this report, "drug" use will refer to illicit drugs only (e.g. marijuana, cocaine, heroin) and, unless otherwise noted, does not refer to alcohol. The phrase "substance use" encompasses both alcohol and illicit drug use.

² The focus of this report is exclusively on the abuse of women by their intimate partners. While acknowledging the evidence that women hit their partners with some degree of frequency (cf. e.g., Straus and Gelles, 1990), there is near unanimity that women are far more likely to (a) experience chronic battering, (b) be injured or killed, (c) call the police and (d) have difficulty in escaping the relationship. This is underscored by Bennett (1995, p. 760) in a trenchant comment about working with abusive men; he notes that abusive men may insist that their female partners were equally violent, "but none were afraid to go home at night."

found that chronic alcohol patterns had little predictive value, but that acute episodes (drinking immediately before the offense) were significant (Collins and Schlenger, 1988). The literature on spouse abuse frequently includes attention to the role of alcohol; for example, alcohol use has been shown to be strongly associated with violence among newlyweds (Heyman, O'Leary, and Jouriles, 1995; Leonard and Senchak, 1993; Leonard and Senchak, 1996).

Whatever the strength of the connection, it is helpful to not overstate the role of alcohol. Cautioning against the 20th century proliferation of blaming alcohol for domestic violence, Gordon states: "Associating wife-beating with drinking placed it in a male culture of recreation -- or depravity, depending on the perspective -- and kept it defined in trivial and fatalistic terms. It was a male foible, not a crime against women" (Gordon, 1988: 264).

In this study, patterns of police utilization are examined for three time periods: a specific abusive incident -- the "presenting" incident -- which resulted in a call to the police and which entered the case into the Charlotte Spouse Assault Replication Project (SARP); the six-month period preceding this incident; and lifetime police utilization for problems in that relationship. The analysis reported here is based primarily on the initial interview data obtained from 419 female victims of male-perpetrated abuse who were part of the Charlotte SARP.³ Police reports on these abusive incidents constitute an additional, although minor, data source.

³ The Charlotte SARP included couples in the following categories: married, divorced, separated, cohabiting and ex-cohabitants; c.f. Hirschel, Hutchison, Dean, Kelley, & Pesackis, 1991, for additional details.

2. Background

2.1 Alcohol and Domestic violence

Assessing the relationship between alcohol and domestic violence is complex due to various ways of operationalizing alcohol use. There is wide variation in the research literature between ever-use of alcohol, frequent abuse, and alcoholism. In addition, some research has included the temporal factor of alcohol use; for example the influence of chronic alcohol use over a period of time versus episodes of acute drinking immediately preceding a violent event. Moreover, abusive men do not fit a solitary profile. Gondolf (1988) proposed a threefold typology: sociopathic batterers, antisocial batterers, and typical batterers. The first two types were found to be particularly abusive, with the sociopathic batterer distinguished by both greater alcohol abuse and higher frequency of arrests. The sociopathic group's use of alcohol is comparable to the "generally violent" category of men identified by Shields, McCall and Hanneke (1983). In other research, Saunders (1992) derived roughly comparable categories of batterers, who also reflected varying degrees of alcohol use. Type I men were identifiable as "family-only" aggressors whose violence was associated with alcohol half of the time. The most severely violent men (Type II) were "generally violent" and had the most rigid attitudes about the role of women; their alcohol use was also significantly higher than either of the other types. Type III is what Saunders (1992) identified as "emotionally volatile aggressors;" these men had lower levels of violence and used alcohol less often than Type II.

2.1.1. Frequency/Incidence. There is considerable variation in the frequency with which alcohol is associated with spouse abuse; Kantor and Straus' (1990) review of 15 empirical

studies identified a range of 6 to 85% alcohol involvement in spouse domestic violence. Gelles (1972) reported that almost one half of batterers were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident, a frequency consistent with Permanen (1991). Higher rates are reported by others: three-fourths (72%) of the 512 physically battered women in Labell's (1979) study reported "alcohol problems" in their husbands. A comparative study of abusive couples, maritally discordant but not abusive couples, and maritally satisfied couples (Van Hasselt, Morrison, and Bellack, 1985) reported significantly higher MAST (Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test; cf. Selzer, 1971, for MAST information). However, the QFI (Quantity - Frequency Index) did not significantly differentiate the batterers from the non-abusive groups. The researchers suggest that the failure of the QFI to distinguish the groups may have been due to the fact that this assessment instrument focuses only on drinking during the preceding month and that the abusive men, recruited from mental health clinics, may have curbed their normal drinking during their treatment (Van Hasselt et al., 1985). Julian and McKenry (1993), using a relatively small sample, concluded that alcohol's contribution to marital violence washed out when adjusted for race, depression and the quality of the relationship.

Kantor and Straus (1990) employed a drinking index (a modified quantity- frequency index) in their analysis of national survey data. Their findings revealed a direct linear relationship between spouse abuse rates and usual drinking patterns, as measured by their drinking index. Violence rates for "high moderates" were twice as high, and the rates for binge drinkers three times as high as for abstainers (Kantor and Straus, 1990).⁴ However, even among the men who scored the highest on the drinking index (usual pattern), less than 20% had been violent. At the time of the incident, alcohol was not involved in the great majority

⁴ More detailed data on the Drinking Index may be found below, page 39, fn. 13.

(76%) of abusive cases. Cascardi and Vivian's (1995) found comparable drinking rates in their study of psychological coercion and aggression in 62 couples. Focusing on the most severe incident of violence in the year preceding their study, they found that approximately one-fifth of husbands had been drinking prior to the abusive incident. The probability of drinking at the time of the incident would be expected to increase as the frequency of usual drinking increased, and this is generally supported by Kantor and Straus' data. Among high and binge drinkers, the rate of drinking at the time of the incident was almost one-half (48%).

In a sample of blue collar workers in Pennsylvania, researchers found that physical marital conflict was related to a pathological pattern of alcohol consumption, but not to the usual total amount of alcohol consumed (Leonard, Bromet, Parkinson, Day and Ryan, 1985). Rates for physical abuse were twice as high for those men who had a pathological drinking pattern as those who did not (25% vs. 13%). This research suggests that "normal" drinking patterns -- even if large quantities are consumed -- are a less important predictor of marital violence than is excessive consumption in one episode (i.e., drinking significantly more than the usual pattern; Leonard et al., 1985). In studying young married men, Leonard and Blane (1992) found a significant relationship between alcohol and aggression which remained after taking into account levels of hostility and marital satisfaction. They state: "Among men who scored high on hostility, there was a strong relationship between ADS scores and marital aggression, irrespective of the subject's level of marital satisfaction" (Leonard and Blane, 1992:27).⁵ In a study of almost 1,800 Anglos, Blacks and Mexican Americans, the quantity of alcohol consumed in a typical drinking episode, rather than frequency or total consumption over a one week period, predicted violence (Neff, Holamon and Schluter, 1995).

⁵ADS is the Alcohol Dependence Scale, a 25-item instrument which includes measures of loss of behavioral control, obsessive-compulsive drinking patterns, and psychophysical withdrawal

2.1.2. Severity. Empirical research has not consistently established a connection between alcohol use and severity of domestic violence. While several studies have found that alcohol is associated with more severe spouse abuse (Browne, 1987; Pernanen, 1991; Walker, 1984), others have found no relationships (Gondolf and Foster, 1991; Roberts, 1987, 1988). Although Pernanen's study of alcohol and violence in a Canadian community led to the finding that injury levels from "general" violence were no higher with drinking, marital violence showed some differences. In incidents of spouse abuse, drinking doubled the rate of injury: 13% of victims were injured in sober marital violence, while 26% of women were injured when the batterers had been drinking (Pernanen, 1991).

Use of weapons also seems to be related to alcohol use, although the findings are inconsistent. In a study of 1,200 residents of Edmonton, Canada, Bland and Orn (1986) concluded that weapons use in marital violence was higher among alcohol users than non-users. Stith, Crossman, and Bischof (1991) compared men in an alcohol treatment program and in a batterers program and found markedly higher rates of weapons threats and actual use (knife or gun) among the former than the latter, although the small samples (N= 55 and 36, respectively) suggest caution in interpretation. Stith and Farley (1993) conclude that the path between alcoholism and severe domestic violence is indirect -- operating through approval of marital violence -- rather than direct. It is likely that such approval is linked to personality characteristics which, in turn, are linked among some men to alcohol. Recent research confirms a strong association between alcohol problems and antisocial characteristics in men (Finn, Sharkansky, Viken, West, Sandy, and Bufferd, 1997; Morgenstern, Langenbucher, Labouvie, and Miller, 1997).

Others have reported mixed or no support for the alcohol-severity relationship. Gondolf

and Foster's (1991) study of military veterans found no correlation relationship between alcohol abuse and severity of abuse among 218 men in an alcohol rehabilitation program. A study of men admitted for alcohol treatment and their female partners concluded that spouse assault was not related to severity of alcohol abuse, but was correlated with drug usage (Bennett, Tolman, Rogalski, and Srinivasaraghavan, 1994). Similar results are reported by Roberts (1987, 1988). Based on a study of over 200 male batterers, he found high usage rates of alcohol and drugs but no difference for severity of abuse between alcohol users and non-users. Among the men in his sample, 60% were under the influence of alcohol (according to their partners) at the time of the incident; 32% were reported to have a drug problem, and another 22% to have a dual alcohol-drug problem. However, he did find that severity of domestic violence was associated with drug use, and a dual alcohol-drug usage.

2.2. Women's Alcohol Use

Two lines of investigation have emerged in the investigation of women's alcohol use. The first focuses on the role of violence in the family of origin and its influence on a woman's subsequent alcohol use, and second, the degree to which adult drinking patterns are correlated with marital violence experiences.

2.2.1. Childhood Victimization. Browne's review of trauma among homeless women documents the high incidence of childhood victimization, the subsequent high probability of developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and the corresponding higher incidence of substance abuse among these women (1993). Here, the development of alcohol and other substance abuse is seen as a reaction to early experience, a mechanism for coping with multiple traumas. Other research has reached similar conclusions. For example, a comparison of

shelter victims, alcoholics in outpatient treatment, and a random sample of women revealed significant parental gender differences in influencing subsequent alcohol problems or spouse abuse (Downs, Miller, Testa and Panek, 1992). This research, noteworthy for its focus on both physical and verbal aggression by parents, found that childhood violence by the mother was a somewhat better predictor of severe marital violence than was childhood violence by fathers. However, father violence was a better predictor of alcohol problems in adult women. Their research consistently demonstrated that childhood experiences had long term effects on the development of alcohol problems in women (cf. also Downs, Miller and Gondoli, 1987; Miller, Downs, and Testa, 1993). In contrast, a major longitudinal cohort study (Ireland and Widom, 1994; Widom, 1989; and Widom, Ireland and Glynn, 1995) concludes that neglect - but not physical or sexual abuse - increases the probability of women developing alcohol problems.

2.2.2. Wives' Current Alcohol Use. Research has produced mixed results on the consequences of wives' alcohol use. While some studies suggest that this factor is associated with abuse (Miller, Nochajski, Leonard, Blane, Gondoli and Bowers, 1990; Telch and Lindquist, 1984), other research argues that wives' alcohol use is not a significant risk factor (Van Hasselt, Morrison and Bellack, 1985). In the review by Hotaling and Sugarman (1990), this was an inconsistent risk marker.

Kantor and Straus (1989) found that the wife's drunkenness, along with several other factors, contributed to minor violence against her. However, neither wives' drunkenness nor drug use contributed to severe violence by the husband. Another study showed that alcoholic women experienced higher levels of battering than did a community sample of women, but lower levels than did a sample of battered -- but not alcoholic -- women (Downs, Miller and

Panek, 1993. See also, Miller, Downs and Gondoli, 1989). They provide two explanations: first, a man may excuse his own violence because she is drinking, and second, drinking may be her mechanism for coping with his abuse. The coping hypothesis finds support in the work of Barnett and Fagan (1993). In their study of 181 violent and nonviolent couples, they find little difference in the frequency of drinking between battered and non-abused women. However, the quantity of drinking was significantly higher among battered women. Especially noteworthy was the timing of drinking: men's drinking is approximately twice as common as women's during an incident (30.0% vs. 17.8%), women's drinking is twice as common as men's after the abusive incident (48.1% vs. 24.2%; Barnett and Fagan, 1993).

A comprehensive review by Kantor and Asdigian (1997) examines four types of association between women's alcohol use and their victimization by males: (1) women's intoxication provokes male violence; (2) women's intoxication is a reaction to/ coping mechanism for being abused, (3) women's intoxication is related to victimization through men's drinking behavior, and (4) women's intoxication is related to victimization because of childhood abuse experiences. Their careful review suggests that there is an association, but no direct causal mechanism which has been clearly established between women's drinking and abuse by males partners. They conclude: "Despite the strength of alcohol's association with wife assaults, intoxications' centrality and temporal relationship to specific wife assault episodes is highly variable, regardless of whether it is a component of the husband's or wife's behaviors" (Kantor and Asdigian, 1997: 331).

2.3. Theoretical Explanations

Available theoretical explanations for connections between alcohol use and domestic

violence can be roughly divided into two categories, the psycho-pharmacological (cognitive impairment, dis-inhibition) and the social-psychological (deviance disavowal/expectancy, and power). The psycho-pharmacological theories address the mental-physiological change induced by alcohol consumption. Social-psychological theories exclude mental (physical) impairment and focus more on the social and psychological attributes of drinking behavior. Included in the latter orientation is a focus on interpersonal power. The power framework has particular relevance because of its linkage to the larger body of literature which examines woman abuse as a direct reflection of patriarchal social structures (cf. Martin, 1976; Dobash and Dobash, 1980,1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Yllo, 1984). Feminist researchers suggest that battering may be more than an outgrowth of structural inequality; it may be a deliberate effort to perpetuate gender inequality (Kurz, 1989). The abuse of women is a manifestation of institutional oppression as women "are systematically and structurally controlled by men within a culture that is designed to meet the needs of and benefit men" (Kirkwood, 1993: 21). Lending some support to the power hypothesis is McCloskey's (1996) study of 365 women showing that income disparity between spouses, rather than total family income, predicted both frequency and severity of spouse abuse.

2.3.1. Psycho-Pharmacological Theories There is some evidence that alcohol abuse leads to mental and cognitive distortions (Dutton, 1988; Hayashino et. al., 1995; Leonard and Jacob, 1988; Segal and Stermac, 1990; Pernanen, 1991). In this view, alcohol is seen as chemically altering the individual's ability to accurately process stimuli. The interpretation of cues is an important aspect of normal interaction. Inebriated individuals are more likely to have an impaired ability to interpret cues. If cues are incorrectly perceived as hostile, they are

more likely to be met with hostility (Leonard and Jacob, 1988). This interpretation fits very closely with the classic "definition of the situation."

A related theory focuses on alcohol as a disinhibitor of normative self control; i.e., alcohol temporarily removes the internalized norms which would ordinarily block a person from acting on inappropriate or dangerous impulses (Jacob, Favonoi, Meisel, and Anderson, 1978). Kantor and Straus (1990) found higher rates of spouse abuse by men who approved of slapping one's wife than those who disapproved. However, even among those who disapproved a minority of men still hit their wives, and the probability of spouse abuse showed a linear increase with drinking (1990: 214). Thus, while beliefs can override the effects of alcohol, alcohol sometimes still has an effect on behavior -- despite beliefs.

An "alcohol myopia" model was first proposed by Steele and Josephs (1990), and advanced by Barnett and Fagan (1993). This model focuses on "attention allocation," and combines elements of both cognitive impairment and disinhibition. In alcohol "myopia," the individual's response to cues is distorted because of cognitive impairment. Distorted perceptions give rise to a reaction, such as aggression or violence. Inhibitions, which would be operative if sober, are not accessed when inebriated so aggression may escalate more than it normally would

2.3.2. Social-Psychological Theories. The social-psychological theoretical approaches are different from the preceding only in their relative emphasis on social learning. Deviance disavowal and expectancy theory are particularly close to each other in conceptualization. While deviance disavowal emphasizes the role of alcohol in providing a socially acceptable excuse, or time-out, from normatively prescribed behavior, expectancy theory suggests that

alcohol-influenced behavior is learned. If hitting a woman is generally perceived as deviant, then it helps to have an excuse, as in "I didn't know what I was doing." Being drunk is viewed as providing an excuse for errant behavior (Gelles, 1993; MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969). Ironically, it is not only men who will use alcohol as an excuse for their behavior, but some women as well (Bernard, 1990). In one small study, shelter residents reacted to hypothetical scenarios and blamed the alcohol for the batterer's actions - particularly when the scenario couple was "in love" (Bernard, 1990: 81). Browne (1987) makes the important point that women may have the hope, at least early in the assaultive relationship, that the battering would cease if only he would stop drinking.

This traditional pattern of attribution or blaming is not entirely consistent. In their community study, Senchak and Leonard (1994) report the unanticipated finding that drinking husbands accepted responsibility for severe aggression, although non-drinking men blamed their wives. If men had been drinking, women were less likely to blame the relationship (for abuse) regardless of the level of aggression. Some attribution studies are showing that drunkenness may increase the perceived responsibility and blame. Aramburu and Leigh (1991) suggest that tolerance for alcohol-excused behavior has decreased in the last decade. Based on a study of college students (involving hypothetical vignettes between a male aggressor and a male or female victim), they concluded that aggression is more acceptable from a sober perpetrator than a drunk one but alcohol use by the victim plays an important role. They state: "The victim of a drunken aggressor is seen as less blameworthy - since drinking made the aggressor violent - but a drunken victim is more blameworthy, since drinking made him/her obnoxious or provocative" (Aramburu and Leigh, 1991: 37). A similar study conducted among college undergraduates reported mixed results in the attribution of responsibility (Dent

and Arias, 1990). They found that drinking by the perpetrator was not seen as negatively as was the victim's alcohol use. However, men and women did show marked differences. Men responding to hypothetical situations were more critical of female victims who had been drinking than they were of women perpetrators who had not been drinking. Women's evaluations of the same situations were exactly the opposite; women were more critical of non-drinking perpetrators than they were of drinking victims (Dent and Arias, 1990).

Another variation of social-psychological theories involves a focus on interpersonal power. This framework suggests that an underlying drive for power among men is at the root of domestic violence, particularly in patriarchal social structures. Some researchers have concluded that power is at the root of both alcohol abuse and domestic violence (Gondolf, 1995). While the juxtaposition of alcohol with aggression and power could be gender-free, it is usually associated with men and, specifically, men in patriarchal cultures. He states: "Alcohol abuse and wife assault are not causally linked, but the manifestations of an underlying set of socially induced issues. Alcohol abuse, in this light, emerges as another weapon in a larger battle for control and dominance in an intimate male-female relationship" (Gondolf, 1995: 276). Additional evidence for the power construct is found in the work of Hyden (1995), Leonard (1990) and Campbell (1993). Hyden (1995) focused on verbal aggression as a precursor to spouse abuse. She describes the verbal conflict as involving a statement about an ordinary issue - such as her request for him to modify his drinking - which is construed as opposition. Rejection of the request for change of behavior is then viewed as provocative and unreasonable, leading to an escalation of conflict (Hyden, 1995). Campbell (1993) notes that a great deal of men's drinking is done in bars in the predominant company of other men: sub-cultural reinforcement for masculinity, combined with alcohol, may lead men to be unusually

sensitive to perceived challenges, and more than ready to engage in a conflict at home.

Leonard (1990) found that a shift in the power relations occurred during drinking, particularly among episodic drinkers. Alcohol abuse does not create a distorted preoccupation with power among males, but may exacerbate the orientation that already exists.

2.4. Calling the Police for Domestic Violence

Considering the extensive research on the police response to domestic violence, there has been surprisingly little investigation of the factors associated with women calling the police during an abusive incident. Many women never call the police and among those who do, most do not call for every abusive incident (Hutchison and Hirschel, 1998), even though the police are utilized more than any other community resource or agency.⁶ Among the studies which have examined this, there is not a little incongruence in findings. Langan and Innes' (1986) study found that 52% of abusive incidents were reported to the police, a conclusion based on data from the 1978-1982 National Crime Survey (NCS). However, this reporting frequency is open to criticism since it is so much higher other than other estimates. Schulman's study of 1,000 women in Kentucky found a rate of 9% of incidents reported to the police; a rate roughly comparable to Kantor and Straus (1990) overall rate of 6.7% (14% for severe violence), based on the National Family Violence Survey (NFVS).

⁶ Hutchison and Hirschel (1998) examined help-seeking efforts by 419 abused women. They found that "... women in this study have been relatively active in attempting to secure help; only a very small proportion (1.3%) reported no personal effort to secure help from any of the eleven sources identified. Although partly an artifact of the study design, the most common help-seeking strategy employed by these women has been to call the police..... some help-seeking efforts are very common (e.g. calling the police or signing warrants for a partner's arrest) while others are employed infrequently. Despite the widespread attention which shelters have received, fewer than one woman in ten in the sample had visited or stayed overnight at the shelter." Almost half (47.9%) of the women had called the police three or more times, a high rate of help-seeking compared to the next most frequent form of (talking to a counselor three or more times, 16.4%; Hutchison and Hirschel, 1998, p. 446, Table 1).

Perhaps the seminal work which examines this issue is Johnson's (1990) research among 426 abused women in shelters. The results of her investigation show that calling the police is positively associated with severity and frequency of violence, the presence of minor children, alcohol use by the abuser, and length of time in the relationship (with those in the relationship less than 10 years more likely to call). Based on this sample, Johnson (1990) reports that police utilization was not associated with marital status, age, race, victim's family or personal income, abuser's personal income, victims' occupation, education or employment of the victim or offender, weapons use, or pregnancy. Calling the police was not associated with the victim's support system, history of involvement with social service agencies, nor with the occurrence or type of abuse of dependent children (Johnson, 1990). Based on a large scale study (N=1,516) of police reports of alleged abuse in intimate relationship, Jones and Belknap (1996) found that calling the police was positively associated with alcohol and drug involvement, weapons use and the presence of children; there was no relationship with offender race, or prior contact with the police. Some of these findings were confirmed in an on-site study of abuse in which interviews were conducted at the scene after the police had been called. Brookoff, O'Brien, Cook, Thompson, and Williams (1997) report that calling the police was associated with weapons use (or display), alcohol or drug use the day of the assault, a history of previous assault, and previous arrest or convictions, including arrests on alcohol or drug related charges.⁷ An analysis of NCVS data (1987-1992) found that the police were more likely to be called when the victim had sustained an injury, when the offender did not have a previous history of hitting the victim (i.e., first time victimization), and when the victims were Black (Bachman & Coker, 1995). Bachman and Coker (1995) found no relationship

⁷The Brookoff et al. (1997) data are not accompanied by tests of statistical significance; caution in interpreting the conclusions is necessary.

between calling the police and family income, marital status, age, or private residence. Kantor and Straus (1990) report that the probability of calling the police was associated with severity of the assault and (for severe but not minor violence), drinking by either offender or victim, and offender unemployment; police utilization did not vary by race nor by size of city. In the NCVS survey of 1023 households, Conaway and Lohr (1994) found a greater likelihood of police calls associated with weapons use, injury, among older victims, and when previous reporting had positive results; race was not associated with calling the police. Bowker (1982, 1984) examined this issue in two studies: the first, in a sample of 146 battered women who had been violence-free for at least one year; and second, through a national sample of battered wives (N=1,000) obtained through a questionnaire in a popular magazine.⁸ Among the currently violence-free women, Bower (1982) reported that police use was correlated with the frequency of violence, severity (in the worst incident), marital rape, violence during pregnancy, and with women's earlier experience of witnessing violence between her parents; there was no association with the total years of violence, and negative correlations with the educational level of the offender and victim. The national sample (Bowker, 1984) results indicated that calling the police was associated with the level of violence, drinking by the offender at the time of the incident, region of the country (Northeast highest), and lower occupational status of the offender and victim. Police utilization was also associated with the wife's satisfaction with the relationship and with marital stability (less satisfied wives were more likely to call the police); there was no association with race, education or religiosity (Bowker, 1984). In a sample of 300 battered women admitted to a shelter, Abel and Suh

⁸The number of cases in the "national sample" is somewhat confusing. Bowker took the first 854 usable questionnaires from the Women's Day survey and combined these, after recoding, with the 146 cases from the earlier study of violence-free women in southeastern Wisconsin (Bowker, 1982) in order to produce the total N of 1000 (Bowker, 1984, p. 85).

(1987) found that calling the police was associated with women's emotional reactions to the abuse (e.g. feelings of anger, shame fear), and with a previous history of violence in the relationship; there was no correlation with offender's previous arrest record, the employment status of either, the degree of injury, or the number of children. Berk, Berk, Newton, and Loseke (1984) found that situational factors were predictive of police utilization, including the presence of children, previous assaults and previous police utilization; race and severity of violence were not predictive.

In general, research has found little relationship between demographic factors (race, age, income, employment, education, marital status) and calling the police. There are some exceptions, but these almost prove the generalization: Bachman and Coker (1995), and Gondolf, Fisher and McFerron (1991) reported that Blacks were more likely to utilize the police; Conaway and Lohr (1994) found that calling the police increased with age; some association with employment/occupational status was found by Bowker (1984), and by Kantor and Straus (1990). Some research indicates that the presence of children increases the likelihood that the police will be utilized (Berk, Berk, Newton, and Loseke, 1984; Johnson, 1990; Jones & Belknap, 1996) for an incident while others have found the opposite (Abel and Suh, 1987).

Among the studies investigating the factors which influence the probability of police utilization, four variables emerge with some consistency: previous history of abuse/violence, abuse severity, the use of weapons, and alcohol consumption by the offender at the incident. While these variables were operationalized differently across the studies cited, the general consistency of the results lends some confidence to the conclusion that these factors are among the more consistent predictors.

2.5 Summary

The role of alcohol in contributing to domestic violence has been investigated from numerous perspectives, including prevalence, incidence, severity, and injury. The lack of direct causality suggests that the relationships between alcohol and abuse are complex and not necessarily consistent. While there is considerable empirical support for an association between alcohol and an increased prevalence, incidence and severity of assaults on women, other research has not found such connections. Some of the disparity in research conclusions may be attributed to different methodologies including variation in operationalizing key variables, clinical vs. survey samples, and chronic patterns of alcohol consumption versus acute drinking episodes immediately prior to the abuse. In addition, the majority of research has focused on the contribution of drinking by the male batterers, with relatively less attention to drinking by victims, and even less to the abuse in relationships where both partners are using/abusing alcohol. Theoretical explanations developed to explain the association include psycho-pharmacological theories which emphasize the capacity of alcohol to produce cognitive alteration, and the social-psychological theories which focus on the learned aspects of alcohol-related behavior. The latter theories include emphases on deviance disavowal, expectancy and power. Power theory, in particular, suggests that the quest for power underlies both alcohol abuse and domestic violence. Relatively little research has examined the factors associated with women calling the police for domestic violence. Most investigations conclude that the majority of incidents are never reported to the police, even for the most severe episodes of violence. Calling the police is more often associated with a previous history of violence, incident severity, use of weapons, and alcohol use. In general, there is little consistent relationship between demographic factors and calling the police for domestic assaults.

3. Method

3.1. Sample and Interviews

These data were collected as part of a spouse assault study in Charlotte, North Carolina, one of the sites for the National Institute of Justice Spouse Assault Replication projects.⁹ These projects were designed to determine if arrest was a more effective deterrent to spouse abuse than other police responses, and focused on the misdemeanor range of spouse abuse. Police responding to domestic calls must determine first whether "probable cause" exists to believe that a crime had been committed. If probable cause does exist they must determine whether a misdemeanor or felony has been committed. If police determine that probable cause does not exist they are not empowered to take any formal action because no law has been broken. If the situation involves a misdemeanor, police generally have the authority to make an on-the-scene arrest. If a felony has been committed, police always possess the authority, and most often do arrest. On occasion, arrest is mandatory even if the domestic incident itself is not a felony; e.g., if there were an outstanding warrant. A total of 646 eligible cases entered the study during the data collection phase all of which were initiated by a call to the police for an abusive incident.¹⁰

About 82% of the calls to which the police responded during the 99 week study period were determined to involve situations in which there was no probable cause to believe that a

⁹ In this locale police had an informal proarrest policy which provided for the option of making warrantless arrests of misdemeanor spouse batterers who were still on the scene when the police arrived (cf. Hirschel and Hutchison, 1992; Hirschel, Hutchison, Dean, Kelley and Pesackis, 1991). This policy was very similar to policies in other jurisdictions. However, polices may vary considerably on the specific criteria required for a warrantless arrest; e.g. not all departments will make arrests in the case of verbal threats (Hirschel and Hutchison, 1991).

¹⁰ While all cases were initiated by a call for police assistance, not all calls were made by the victims themselves. See section 4.3.4 for additional information.

crime had been committed. Of the remaining 3,380 cases, a total of 682 cases involving 646 different couples met the above criteria.

Victims in these 646 cases were scheduled for face-to-face interviews conducted by female interviewers, and a total of 419 women were interviewed. Of the 227 cases where interviews were not obtained, 108 were not obtained as a result of the case being dropped (generally as a result of inability to locate the victim, though a few cases were dropped because the victim's alcohol/drug problem made her answers incoherent), and 119 were not obtained because of the victim's refusal to participate (generally as a result of fear of retaliation by the offender if he found out about the interview). Women who were interviewed were very similar to those who were not. Analysis of the interviewed with non-interviewed cases on 26 relevant demographic characteristics of the victim and abuser, as well as offense/case characteristics (e.g., injury, medical treatment, prior record, location, time of day) produced no significant differences in 24 of the 26 comparisons. Cases that produced interviews were less likely to have victims who were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the presenting incident (based on police reports), and were more likely to have offenders who had prior state felony (but not local) arrest records.

The interviews were extensive, with detailed questions on the nature of the victim-offender relationship; the composition of the household; victim-offender abuse history; victim and offender alcohol use; the victim's family background and early abuse history; the victim's help seeking actions; the events that led to the police being called to the incident that brought the victim into the study; the police actions at the scene; the events that occurred after the police left the scene; subsequent re-victimization; demographic information on the victim and offender; and interviewer observations. In addition, some information was collected on the

victim attributions about the effects of alcohol on aggression.¹¹

While the interviews do not represent all women who call the police, they approximate those who do call the police in situations where police have the discretionary power to make warrantless arrests. The interviews contained a total of 543 potential questions and lasted from little more than half an hour up to two and one half hours, with a mean of 72.9 minutes. The range in the interview length was due to the structure of the interviews. That is, due to follow up questions the interviews were considerably longer when there was a wider range of types and targets of abuse (e.g. threats only toward the victim vs. both threats and physical abuse of the victim vs. physical abuse of the victim and threats toward other family members).

The interviews were conducted as soon as possible after the presenting incident, although many of the participants were difficult to locate. One-fourth of the women were interviewed within two weeks of the incident, and one half within 25 days; the mean amount of time between the presenting incident and the interview was 41 days. There is no way to determine if faulty recall increased with lengthier time intervals before the interview.

The data on substance use were collected from female victims of abuse, for themselves

¹¹ One of the initial objectives in this analysis was to determine if a victim's beliefs about alcohol (i.e. attributions about effects) played a significant role in her pattern of police utilization. The Charlotte SARP interview schedule contained fourteen agree-disagree type statements; e.g. "Wives should not hold alcoholic husbands responsible for what they do" and, "It's a wife's obligation to forgive her husband if he slapped her while under the influence of alcohol." The items were tested on 419 victims. Because of missing data, 12 respondents were deleted from the analysis. The scale utilized was a 1-4 scale, with 5 constituting the no response or neutral category. If 5 was treated as missing, only 116 respondents remained for the analysis. Two analyses were conducted -- one with the 116 respondents and one replacing 5 by 2.5, so that a no response was viewed as neutral. In both cases the analysis revealed that the scale did not provide a viable measure of attitudes. Using the 2.5 replacement for neutral gave the best results, but even those were not acceptable by psychometric standards. With the 407 responses (419 - 12 missing) the factor analysis gave four factors, using a cutoff for the eigenvalue of 1. Among the four factors all items were included in one of the factors; the criterion was an absolute value of at least 0.4 for the factor loadings in the varimax rotation. All measures of sampling adequacy were within an acceptable range. Following the factor analysis, a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was computed for items for each of the four factors. A generally accepted criterion for Cronbach's alpha is 0.65; for this scale the alpha's were between 0.25 and 0.50. Although the questions in their present form do not warrant using them as a scale, there is evidence that with further work such a scale could be developed to assess victim attribution.

and for their partners. Many researchers believe that data provided by partners has ample validity (Leonard, Dunn and Jacob, 1983; Maisto and O'Farrell, 1985; Midanik, 1988; Van Hasselt, Morrison, and Bellack, 1985). Using both the MAST and QFI, Van Hasselt, Morrison and Bellack (1985) found high correlations between wives' reports of their husbands drinking and the husbands' self-reports of their drinking (QFI $r = .41$, $p < .01$; MAST $r = .88$, $p < .001$). However, others have disputed the validity of the individual's report of their partners drinking (Watson, Tilleskjoer, Hoodecheck-Schow, Pucel, & Jacobs, 1984; Watson, 1985).

3. 2. Limitations

There are a number of other limitations to these data. First, the sample was drawn from women who had called the police (or, for whom a call was made on their behalf) during a misdemeanor-level domestic assault, and such incidents do not represent the entire range of incidents of spouse abuse. Cases included in this study were those which fell within the misdemeanor range of domestic violence, and excluded were the relatively small proportion of cases which would occur at the felony level. The consequence of this restriction is that the most serious violence, involving greater use of weapons and often more serious injury, is not represented by this sample. Second, many women had been in an abusive relationship for several years; currently married women (48.9% of the sample) had been in the marriage an average of 7.6 years. Certainly some women both exit an abusive relationship early, and thus would be less likely to appear in a research investigation. In other words, the sampling process has partially selected out those women most likely to leave abusive relationships. Third, the sample is skewed toward the lower socioeconomic level. This is not surprising since families at higher SES levels are less likely to utilize the police for domestic violence. Fourth, this research

relies on the victim's report of her own and her partner's drinking. While research generally concludes that such reports are valid, one could argue that an angry spouse is likely to overstate their partner's drinking and underestimate their own. If mis-reported, the potential consequence is that the role of drinking by the male batterers would appear exaggerated and the drinking by victims less significant than is actually the case.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Profile of Sample

4.1.1. Demographics. Women in this sample were primarily married (48.9%) or cohabiting (40.6%), with smaller numbers either divorced (0.5%), separated (1.9%), or ex-cohabitants (8.1%). The mean age of the women was 30.5 years, with a range of 17-82. These data are shown in Table 1, following page. One third of the sample (33.5%) had not completed high school, 29.4% were high school graduates, 31.6% had at least some college education and 5.4% had completed college or postgraduate work. Slightly over half of the women were employed full-time (54.1%), with another 11.1% employed part-time. As would be expected for a sample drawn from calls to the police, this sample is skewed toward the lower SES levels: over one-third of the families were at the poverty level (39.1%), a similar proportion at the working-class level (39.6%), 11.9% borderline working class-middle class, and only 9.5% of couples were middle class or higher.

4.1.2. Drinking and Drug Use Patterns. Drinking is typically assessed through questions on the amount of alcohol consumed and the frequency of consumption. In some quantity-frequency measures, the type of alcohol is also used. For purposes of this research a drinking index was used, as constructed by Kantor and Straus (1990). This is a modification of the quantity-frequency index which excludes type of alcohol being consumed;¹² cf. Table 2.

¹² The drinking index was used to analyze data from over 5,000 couples, and is based on frequency of consumption (ranging from never to daily) and amount (the number of drinks: 1½ ounces of hard liquor or 12 ounces of beer or 5 ounces of wine); it is calculated as (Kantor and Straus, 1990:207-208): "Abstinent: never drinks; Low: drinks on infrequent occasions, ranging from less than once a month up to 1-2 times a week; never more than 1 drink at a time. Drinks less than once a month and no more than 2 drinks at a time; Low Moderate: drinks from 1 to 3 times a month up to daily; never more than 2 drinks; High Moderate: drinks less than once a month up to 1 to 2 times a week; 3-4 drinks a day; High: drinks 3-4 times a week up to daily; 3 or more drinks a day; Binge: drinks on infrequent occasions -- once a month up to 1 to 2 times a week; 5 or more drinks a day."

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample

| | % | (N) |
|----------------------------------|------|-------|
| | | (419) |
| Marital status | | |
| Married | 48.9 | (205) |
| Separated | 1.9 | (8) |
| Divorced | 0.5 | (2) |
| Cohabitant | 40.6 | (170) |
| Ex-cohabitant | 8.1 | (34) |
| Race | | |
| Black | 70.3 | (293) |
| White | 29.0 | (121) |
| Other | .7 | (3) |
| Social class | | |
| Poverty | 39.1 | (161) |
| Working class | 39.6 | (163) |
| Borderline middle class or above | 21.4 | (88) |
| Education | | |
| Less than high school | 33.5 | (140) |
| High school graduate | 29.4 | (123) |
| Some college | 31.6 | (132) |
| College grad + | 5.5 | (23) |
| Age | | |
| <20 | 3.9 | (16) |
| 20-24 | 24.5 | (101) |
| 25-29 | 25.2 | (104) |
| 30-34 | 20.6 | (85) |
| 35-44 | 18.0 | (74) |
| 45-54 | 5.3 | (22) |
| 55+ | 2.4 | (10) |
| $\mu=30.5$ | | |

Ns may not sum to 419 due to missing data

Table 2. Drinking Index for Offenders and Victims

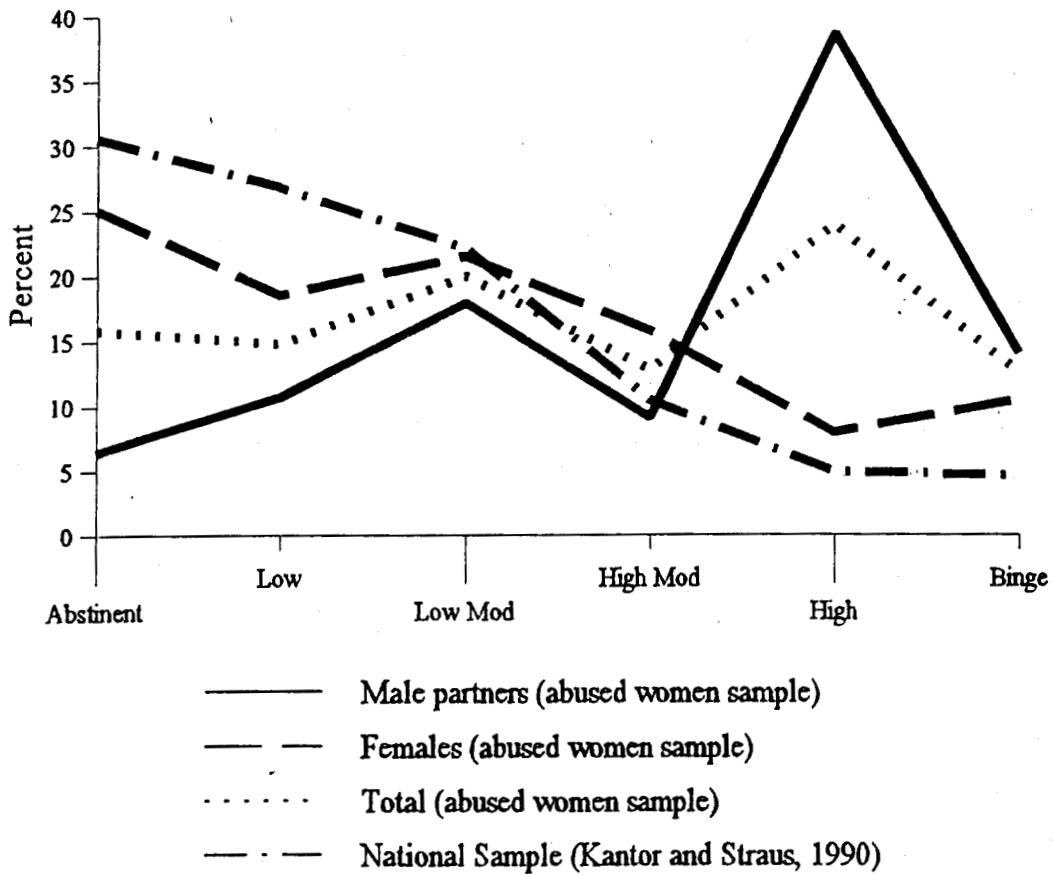
| | Offenders | | Victims | |
|---------------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| Abstinent | 6.4 | (26) | 25.1 | (103) |
| Low | 11.1 | (45) | 18.5 | (76) |
| Low Moderate | 18.5 | (75) | 21.5 | (88) |
| High Moderate | 9.4 | (38) | 16.1 | (66) |
| High | 40.0 | (162) | 8.0 | (33) |
| Binge | 14.6 | (59) | 10.7 | (44) |

$$\chi^2 = 68.14, p \leq .00001$$

While not identical to some definitions of quantity-frequency (by excluding type of alcohol), the advantage of the Drinking Index is that it permits a comparison of the data in the present research with national use patterns. The unusually high rate of alcohol consumption in this sample is shown in a comparison with a national sample. As shown in Figure 1, following page, only half as many men and women in the abused women sample as the national sample were abstinent (15.8 vs. 30.6%), and far higher percentages were either high (23.9 vs 4.9%) or binge (12.6 vs. 4.6%) drinkers; only the "low moderate" and "high moderate" categories of drinkers were comparable.

Not surprisingly, men in the battered women sample drink far more than their women partners: over one half (52.8%) are high or binge drinkers, compared to 18.4% of women. What distinguishes the men is not only their relatively high frequency of drinking, but the quantity of alcohol consumed; among the "high" drinkers, over three in four (78.4%) had six or more drinks per day; slightly over one-third (37.0%) consumed 10 or more drinks daily.

Figure 1. Drinking Index for Abused Women Sample and National Sample



Other substance use measures indicate high consumption patterns among offenders and much lower consumption patterns by victims. As shown in Table 3, fewer than one-third (28.9%) of the victims reported that their partners had no problem with either alcohol or drugs. Alcohol was most likely to be the reported problem (37.6%), followed by a combination of both alcohol and drugs (21.1%). Almost one-fourth (23.0%) of the women interviewed indicated that their partners “very often” or “almost always” got drunk when they drank. According to over one-fourth of victims (29.3%), their partners used cocaine at least once a

Table 3. Alcohol and Drug Indicators for Offenders and Victims

| | % | (N) |
|---|------|-------|
| Victim believes offender has a problem | | |
| with alcohol only | 37.6 | (155) |
| with drugs only | 12.4 | (51) |
| with both | 21.1 | (87) |
| with neither | 28.9 | (119) |
| Victim reports offender is drunk | | |
| never | 18.2 | (72) |
| rarely | 19.7 | (78) |
| occasionally | 21.3 | (84) |
| often | 17.7 | (70) |
| very often | 11.4 | (45) |
| almost always | 11.6 | (46) |
| Victim reports offender uses cocaine | | |
| never | 61.7 | (213) |
| unknown frequency -1day/month | 9.0 | (31) |
| 1day/month - 2 days/month | 16.5 | (57) |
| 3-7days/week | 12.8 | (44) |
| Victim reports offender uses marijuana | | |
| never | 52.4 | (184) |
| unknown frequency -1day/month | 8.5 | (30) |
| 1day/month - 2 days/week | 16.5 | (58) |
| 3-7days/week | 22.5 | (79) |
| Victim frequently drunk | | |
| never | 50.8 | (184) |
| rarely | 26.8 | (97) |
| occasionally | 18.2 | (66) |
| often | 2.8 | (10) |
| very often | 0.8 | (3) |
| almost always | 0.6 | (2) |
| Victim used drugs in preceding 6 months | | |
| never | 77.3 | (293) |
| <1day/month | 6.6 | (25) |
| 1day/month - 2 days/week | 12.1 | (46) |
| 3-7days/week | 4.0 | (15) |

month, and over one-third (39.0%) indicated a similar frequency for marijuana use. Self-reported rates of drunkenness and drug usage were much lower. Over half of the victims reported that they never got drunk and fewer than 2% indicated that they were "very often" or "almost always" drunk when they did drink. Approximately one woman in six (16.1%) had used drugs in the six month period preceding the presenting incident.

While offender substance use is markedly higher than for victims, there is a significant correlation between the drinking patterns of both. As see in Table 4, among abstinent offenders, 60% of victims are also abstinent; among high/binge drinking men, 24.7% of the victims are also high/binge drinkers. Among women, only one in five (18.8%) is a high/binge

Table 4. Cross-tabulated Drinking Index for Offenders and Victims

| Victim drinking index | Offender drinking index | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------|------------------|------|------------|------|
| | Abstinent/Low | | Low mod/High/mod | | High/Binge | |
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| Abstinent/Low | 60.0 | (42) | 48.6 | (53) | 34.2 | (75) |
| Low mod/High mod | 30.0 | (21) | 38.5 | (42) | 41.1 | (90) |
| High/Binge | 10.0 | (7) | 12.8 | (14) | 24.7 | (54) |

$$\chi^2=68.14, p \leq .00001$$

drinker (compared to 55% of the men). However, 72% of high/binge drinking women are in relationships with men who high/binge drinkers.

4.1.3. Substance Use at the Presenting Incident. The preceding analysis has identified the overall substance use patterns of the offenders and victims. These patterns are not necessarily reflected in substance use at the presenting incident, although it would be expected that such use would be high considering the overall consumption patterns, particularly among offenders.

The data in Table 5, following page, indicate high levels of alcohol and drug use by the abusers, and relatively high levels of alcohol use by the victims, at the presenting incident. Among offenders, almost two-thirds (60.4%) were drinking at the incident; they had consumed, on average, 6.7 drinks. Among those drinking, over half were drunk (57.9%; this represents 40.3% of the total sample where sufficient information was provided); almost half (43.4%) were drinking more than their usual consumption patterns. Approximately one-fifth (21.8%) of the abusers were using drugs before or during the presenting incident. Victim substance use rates at the presenting incident are considerably lower than for offenders: approximately one-third (30.8%) were drinking at the incident, one-fourth (23.4%) were drinking more than usual, and fewer than one in ten (8.9%) considered themselves drunk; women consumed an average of 3.3 drinks. The proportion of victims using drugs at the presenting incident was very small (2.4%). Offenders were significantly more likely to be using drugs or alcohol at the presenting incident on four of the variables examined: drinking at incident, amount of alcohol consumed (number of drinks), drunkenness, and drug use.

Table 5. Substance Use Profile at Presenting Incident

| | Offender | | Victim | |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| Drinking at incident | | | | |
| Yes | 60.4 | (253) | 30.8 | (129) |
| No | 33.2 | (139) | 69.2 | (290) |
| $\chi^2=$ | 51.74**** | | | |
| Estimated no. of drinks | | | | |
| μ | 6.7 | | 3.3 | |
| $r =$ | .305** | | | |
| Drinking as usual | | | | |
| More | 43.4 | (99) | 23.4 | (29) |
| Usual | 46.5 | (106) | 51.6 | (64) |
| Less | 5.5 | (23) | 25.0 | (31) |
| $\chi^2=$ | .96 | | | |
| Drunk? | | | | |
| Yes | 57.9 | (158) | 8.9 | (17) |
| No | 42.1 | (115) | 91.9 | (175) |
| $\chi^2=$ | 4.76* | | | |
| Using Drugs | | | | |
| Yes | 21.8 | (73) | 2.4 | (10) |
| No | 78.2 | (262) | 97.6 | (401) |
| $\chi^2=$ | 36.71**** | | | |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .0001$

4.1.4. Relationship History of Abuse. Abuse history was determined through a series of questions about how often the offender had (a) threatened to hurt the victim, (b) hit, slapped, or hurt the victim, (c) threatened to hurt another family member, (d) hit, slapped or hurt another family member, (e) threatened to damage property, or (f) damaged property. The frequency for each question was asked relative to the preceding six months, and relative to the total time in the relationship.¹³ Data are shown in Table 6.

These data indicate that the most common forms of abuse in this sample are threats against the victim and hitting the victim. Verbal or physical aggression against other family members or toward property was much less common. Women reported being threatened, on

Table 6. Incidence Summary of Abuse for Six Months and Total Relationship

| | Preceding 6 months incidence | | Total relationship incidence | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|
| | μ | S.D. | μ | S.D. |
| Threaten to hurt victim | 4.4 | 6.8 | 22.5 | 32.5 |
| Hit victim | 3.5 | 4.8 | 10.4 | 13.9 |
| Threaten to hurt family member | 0.6 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 3.7 |
| Hit family member | 0.1 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 1.2 |
| Threaten property damage | 1.3 | 3.3 | 4.0 | 9.2 |
| Damage property | 1.0 | 1.9 | 2.9 | 5.4 |

average, 4.4 times in a six-month period and 22.5 times over the course of the relationship. They reported being hit by the offender an average of 3.5 times in six months, and 10.4 times over the course of the relationship.

4.1.5. Presenting Incident Abuse. A somewhat different picture emerges when the

¹³ Mean length of relationship was 7.6 years for married couples and approximately 1.6 years for cohabiting couples; range = 1-42 years for married couples, less than one month - 7 years for cohabitants.

4.1.5. Presenting Incident Abuse. A somewhat different picture emerges when the nature of abuse is examined for the presenting incident; this is investigated through two avenues: (a) questions which duplicate the abuse history variables, and (b) the Conflict Tactics Scale. As shown in Table 7, the modal form of abuse at the presenting incident was the offender hitting the victim (86.8%); not surprisingly, threats against the victim were also very common (63.2%). However, unlike the pattern seen in the overall abuse history, offender aggression toward other family members and against property is also quite high. Considering the low rates of threats/actual property damage reported in the abuse history, the much higher rates reported for the presenting incident are unexpected. Property damage was reported by victims in over one-third of the cases (37.0); and another 21.8% threatened to damage property.

Table 7. Presenting Incident Abuse Indicators for Offenders and Victims

| | Offender | | Victim | |
|---------------------------|----------|-------|--------|-------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| Threaten partner | 63.2 | (261) | 25.7 | (106) |
| Hits/slaps partner | 86.8 | (361) | 38.2 | (158) |
| Threatens family member | 14.9 | (62) | 0.7 | (3) |
| Hits/slaps family member | 6.7 | (28) | 0.7 | (3) |
| Threatens property damage | 21.8 | (90) | 2.7 | (11) |
| Damages property | 37.0 | (154) | 7.5 | (31) |

While actually hitting another family member was relatively uncommon (6.7%), threats against another family member occurred about twice as often (14.9%).¹⁴

The second approach to assess abuse at the presenting incident was through the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1990).¹⁵ Based on the CTS, Table 8, three-fourths of the abusers

Table 8. Conflict Tactics Scale for Offenders and Victims at Presenting Incident.

| | Offender | | Victim | |
|--------|----------|-------|--------|-------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| None | 2.2 | (9) | 39.6 | (159) |
| Minor | 23.5 | (98) | 22.6 | (91) |
| Severe | 74.3 | (310) | 37.8 | (152) |

$\chi^2 = 18.28, p < .001$

(74.3%) are considered to have employed severe violence, compared to about one-third of the victims (37.8%). While approximately twice as many offenders as victims were classified as using severe violence, this comparison understates the difference. Due to the range of

¹⁴ It is not possible to specify who the "other family members" were who were the targets of aggression; however, it is reasonable to conclude that children were involved. The majority of the women interviewed (66.8%) had at least one of their own children living in the home. This percentage increased to 71.1% if step-children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, brothers and sisters were included, and increased to 75.6% if children were included who "live here often, but not full-time." In addition, almost half of the women in the sample (45.1%) had a second child living at home. Among women with any children, two-thirds (67.5%) had two or more children living at home. Reflecting the age distribution of the sample, the majority of children are young. Among women who had any of their own children living at home, almost half (42.2%) had at least one child who was six years old or younger. Minor children were often witness to the abusive incidents; in cases where there were children living in the home, women reported that one or more children "had seen the fight" -- which led to the call to the police -- in a majority of cases (59.2%). In addition, two-thirds of women with children at home (66.7%) reported that children had seen the police when they arrived. These victim data were strongly correlated with police reports which asked if there were children present when they responded to the call for assistance ($\chi^2 = 72.8, p < .0001$). Logistic regression on predictors of children present included demographic variables of race, age, education, relationship, and social class. Only age emerged as a significant predictor of children being present at the abusive incident. As might be expected, somewhat older male batterers and victims were more likely to have children present.

¹⁵ Items K-S of the CTS were used in this research, and coded as follows: Minor = threw something; pushed, grabbed or shoved; slapped. Severe = kicked, bit or hit with fist; choked; beat up; threatened with a knife or gun; used a knife or gun (Straus, 1990, p. 33).

aggression which is encompassed by the "severe" classification, the degree of difference between offenders and victims is somewhat masked. For example, over one-third (39.9%) of the offenders beat up the victim, but only a small minority of victims (3.1%) reported beating up the offender. Analysis of the CTS for demographic variation showed no significant differences; these data are shown in Table 9, following page.

4.1.6 History of Calling the Police. Victims reported how often they had called the police "because of problems with him" in the six months preceding the abusive incident, and how

Table 10. Frequency of Calling the Police for Abusive Incidents*

| | Preceding 6 months | | Total relationship | |
|-----------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| 0-1 | 57.5 | (223) | 32.6 | (125) |
| 2-3 | 26.3 | (102) | 29.8 | (114) |
| 4-5 | 7.5 | (29) | 12.8 | (49) |
| 6 or more | 8.8 | (34) | 24.8 | (95) |
| $\mu =$ | 1.8 | | 3.3 | |

*Some victims who reported "0" frequency indicated that they had asked someone to call for them.

often they had called over the length of the relationship with the offender.¹⁶ As indicated in Table 10, women in this sample had called the police twice (1.8 times) in the preceding six months, and 3.3 times over the course of the relationship. Considering the high incidence of

¹⁶ Interviewers coded exact frequencies from 0-5, and coded 6 for responses of 6 or more. This procedure was adequate for the 6-month time period, but it probably unnecessarily compressed the frequencies for the total relationship history by treating very unequal frequencies as the same; e.g. a frequency of 10 calls and a frequency of 50 calls would both be coded as a 6. While one could argue that high frequencies over a period of several years would be an approximation at best, it still would have been more accurate to have recorded exact frequencies.

Table 9. Conflict Tactics Scale, by Offender and Victim, and by Demographic Characteristics

| Conflict tactics scale | Offender | | | | | | | | Victim | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|----------|-------|-------|------|------------|-------|-------|------|---------|-------|-------|------|------------|-------|-------|------|
| | Married | | | | Cohabitant | | | | Married | | | | Cohabitant | | | |
| | Black | | White | | Black | | White | | Black | | White | | Black | | White | |
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| None | 1.5 | (2) | 1.6 | (1) | 2.3 | (3) | 2.6 | (1) | 37.9 | (47) | 41.8 | (28) | 42.9 | (51) | 31.1 | (4) |
| Minor | 21.6 | (29) | 27.0 | (17) | 21.1 | (27) | 23.1 | (9) | 22.6 | (28) | 32.8 | (22) | 15.1 | (18) | 28.9 | (13) |
| Severe | 76.9 | (103) | 71.4 | (45) | 76.6 | (98) | 74.4 | (29) | 39.5 | (49) | 25.4 | (17) | 42.0 | (50) | 40.0 | (18) |
| Total | 68.0 | (134) | 32.0 | (63) | 76.6 | (128) | 23.4 | (39) | 64.9 | (124) | 35.1 | (67) | 72.6 | (119) | 27.4 | (45) |
| $\chi^2=$ | 0.69 | | | | 0.08 | | | | 4.43 | | | | 4.44 | | | |

No statistically significant differences

abuse reported by the victims in this sample, it is evident that most of violence experienced was never reported to the police.

Table 11. Analysis of Variance of History of Calling the Police, by Race, Relationship and Social Class

| | 6 month frequency | | | | Total relationship frequency | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------|------|----------|------------------------------|-------|------|-----------|
| | N | μ | SD | F | N | μ | SD | F |
| Race | | | | | | | | |
| Black | 270 | 1.92 | 1.82 | | 265 | 3.34 | 2.13 | |
| White | 112 | 1.44 | 1.56 | 5.84* | 113 | 2.17 | 1.93 | 25.31**** |
| Relationship | | | | | | | | |
| Cohabiting | 154 | 1.81 | 1.76 | | 154 | 2.70 | 2.13 | |
| Married | 192 | 1.68 | 1.72 | 0.47 | 192 | 3.11 | 2.13 | 3.29 |
| Social class | | | | | | | | |
| Poverty | 148 | 2.22 | 1.95 | | 144 | 3.52 | 2.13 | |
| Working class | 152 | 1.63 | 1.60 | | 153 | 2.73 | 2.07 | |
| Borderline/ middle class | 80 | 1.28 | 1.46 | 9.08**** | 79 | 2.37 | 1.99 | 9.21**** |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .0001$

4.2. Factors Associated with the Frequency of Calling the Police

4.2.1. Demographic Variation. The first approach to investigating police utilization frequencies was an examination of demographic variation. Frequency of calling the police is examined using analysis of variance for race, marital status, and social class. As shown in Table 11, there is significant variation for both race and social class characteristics, for both time periods. Black victims called the police more often than Whites at both the six-month time frame and over the course of the relationship. The race difference is particularly pronounced over the longer time period, where calls to the police by Black victims are approximately 50% more frequent than for Whites. There are relatively few differences between Black and White victims in the six item abuse history. White offenders were more likely to damage property than Blacks at both the six month time period ($\mu = 1.67$ vs. 0.67 , $t = -4.66$, $p \leq .0001$) and for the total relationship ($\mu = 4.09$ vs. 2.45 , $t = -2.64$, $p \leq .01$). Over the length of the relationship, Black offenders threatened their partners more often than did Whites ($\mu = 25.02$ vs. 16.75 , $t = 2.29$, $p \leq .05$). Social class differences occur at both time periods (six months: $F = 9.08$, $p \leq .0001$; total relationship: $F = 9.21$, $p \leq .0001$) with victims at the poverty level significantly more likely to call the police than working class victims, or those who are borderline/middle class (Scheffe pairwise comparison test, $p \leq .05$ for both time periods). Police utilization was examined for age and educational variation. There was no significant correlation between age and frequency of calls to the police. Educational level was negatively and minimally correlated with police utilization for both the six month time period ($r = -.15$, $p \leq .01$) and for the total relationship ($r = -.10$, $p \leq .05$).

4.2.2. Substance Use. Frequency of calling the police was also investigated for select substance use variables; these data are shown in Table 12 (below and following page).

Table 12. Analysis of Variance of Calling the Police, by Substance Use Variables

| | 6 month frequency | | | | Total relationship frequency | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------|------|--------|------------------------------|-------|------|------|
| | N | μ | SD | F | N | μ | SD | F |
| <u>Offender drinking index</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Abstinent | 23 | 1.57 | 1.78 | | 22 | 2.50 | 2.22 | |
| Low | 42 | 1.62 | 1.83 | | 42 | 2.50 | 2.20 | |
| Low moderate | 69 | 1.68 | 1.64 | | 67 | 2.28 | 2.11 | |
| High moderate | 31 | 1.94 | 1.79 | | 30 | 2.60 | 2.08 | |
| High | 156 | 2.00 | 1.87 | | 155 | 3.30 | 2.06 | |
| Binge | 54 | 1.52 | 1.44 | 0.98 | 55 | 3.15 | 2.17 | 1.74 |
| <u>Victim drinking index</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Abstinent | 97 | 1.60 | 1.71 | | 96 | 3.05 | 2.15 | |
| Low | 72 | 1.68 | 1.68 | | 72 | 2.94 | 2.13 | |
| Low moderate | 80 | 1.98 | 1.85 | | 78 | 3.00 | 2.20 | |
| High moderate | 59 | 1.27 | 1.32 | | 58 | 2.45 | 1.87 | |
| High | 28 | 1.75 | 1.55 | | 28 | 3.03 | 2.15 | |
| Binge | 44 | 2.69 | 2.08 | 3.94** | 44 | 3.54 | 2.16 | 1.39 |

Table 12 (continued). Analysis of Variance of Calling the Police, by Substance Use Variables

| | 6 month frequency | | | | Total relationship frequency | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------|------|-----------|------------------------------|-------|------|-----------|
| | N | μ | SD | F | N | μ | SD | F |
| <u>Offender drunk</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Never/rarely/occ | 211 | 1.43 | 1.43 | | 211 | 2.55 | 2.04 | |
| Often/very often/ almost always | 157 | 2.30 | 2.01 | 23.21**** | 155 | 3.56 | 2.09 | 21.52**** |
| <u>Offender drug use</u> | | | | | | | | |
| No drugs | 154 | 1.51 | 1.69 | | 155 | 2.74 | 2.12 | |
| Cocaine or pot | 60 | 2.00 | 1.76 | | 59 | 3.32 | 2.15 | |
| Cocaine and pot | 93 | 2.29 | 1.83 | 6.04** | 90 | 3.16 | 2.14 | 2.03 |
| <u>Victim believes offender has substance abuse problem</u> | | | | | | | | |
| No problem | 106 | 1.28 | 1.34 | | 107 | 2.38 | 1.99 | |
| Alcohol only | 144 | 1.88 | 1.85 | | 145 | 3.26 | 2.09 | |
| Drugs only | 47 | 1.87 | 1.84 | | 43 | 2.81 | 2.14 | |
| Both | 84 | 2.26 | 1.84 | 5.24** | 82 | 3.37 | 2.18 | 4.82** |

** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .0001$

These data indicate that the frequency of calling the police for abusive incidents is related to several substance use variables. At both time periods (six month and total relationship) women call the police more frequently when their partners are often drunk, and when they believe that their partners have a problem with both alcohol and drugs. In addition, for the six month time frame, women called the police more often when their partners used both cocaine and pot, and when they themselves were binge drinkers.

The quantity and frequency of offenders' alcohol consumption (as measured by the Drinking Index) does not influence the frequency of calls to the police. However, the victims' perception of abusers' drunkenness appears to have a major influence on police utilization. At both time periods, women who perceive that their partners are often (often, very often, almost always) drunk call the police far more often than do those women who say that their partners are not often drunk (never, rarely, occasionally): in the six month time period they call 60% more often, and 40% more often over the course of the relationship.

4.2.3. Abuse History. Finally, the relationships between abuse frequencies and the frequencies of calling the police were examined for the six month period preceding the presenting incident and for the overall relationship. As seen in Table 13, the frequency of

Table 13. Bivariate Correlations for Calling Police and Abuse Experiences, Six Month Frequencies

| Six Month Frequency | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------|---------|
| (1) Call police | | | | | | |
| (2) Victim threatened | .276*** | | | | | |
| (3) Victim hit | .389*** | .483*** | | | | |
| (4) Other family threatened | .117* | .315*** | .092 | | | |
| (5) Other family hit | .028 | .054 | .047 | .195*** | | |
| (6) Property damage threats | .191*** | .254*** | .166** | .152** | .045 | |
| (7) Property damaged | .192*** | .257*** | .292*** | .264*** | .039 | .351*** |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

police utilization is correlated at statistically significant levels for all of the abuse history items except one, the frequency of other family members being hit by the offender (most likely due to the small N on this item). The strongest correlations are with the two items directly relating to the victim: the frequency of being threatened ($r = .276$, $p \leq .001$) and the frequency of being

hit ($r = .389, p \leq .001$). Similar results are found in the correlations between these variables over the total length of the relationship; these data are presented in Table 14. With the exception of other family members being hit, all of the abuse history items are significantly correlated with the frequency of police utilization by victims; as in the six month analysis,

Table 14. Bivariate Correlations for Calling Police and Abuse Experiences, Total Relationship Frequencies

| Total Relationship Freq. | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| (1) Call police | | | | | | |
| (2) Victim threatened | .309*** | | | | | |
| (3) Victim hit | .273*** | .479*** | | | | |
| (4) Other family threatened | .132* | .299*** | .261*** | | | |
| (5) Other family hit | .097 | .221*** | .275*** | .397*** | | |
| (6) Property damage threats | .193*** | .415*** | .221*** | .211*** | .164** | |
| (7) Property damaged | .204*** | .212*** | .328*** | .201*** | .179*** | .496*** |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

the strongest correlations with police utilization are with threats to the victim and hitting the victim.

The data in Tables 13 and 14 also indicate relatively high correlations between the six abuse history variables. In general, different types of threats are correlated, different types of behavior are correlated, and threats and behavior are correlated. Particularly in the total relationship history, threats toward the victim are associated with similar threats toward other family members and with threats to damage property. Physical aggression toward the victim is correlated with other family members being hit, and with actual property damage. The offenders represented in this sample did not make idle threats; in each of the three

comparisons, threats are significantly correlated with physical aggression: threatening the victim and hitting the victim $R^2 = .479, p \leq .001$); threatening another family member and hitting another family member $R^2 = .397, p \leq .001$); and, threatening property damage and actually damaging property $R^2 = .496, p \leq .001$).

4.2.4. Linear Regression on Frequency of Calling the Police. In order to determine the contribution of the preceding variables to the frequency of calling the police, three linear regression models were employed:¹⁷

Model 1 - Demographic: Relationship (cohabiting or married), race (Black or White), income, age, and education.

Model 2 - Substance Use: Abuser Drinking Index, abuser frequency drunk, abuser has drug/alcohol problem, abuser uses cocaine, abuser uses pot, victim Drinking Index, victim frequency drunk, and victim uses drugs.

Model 3- Abuse History (six month, and total relationship): Victim threatened, victim hit, other family member threatened, other family member hit, threat of property damage, and property damaged.

Six Month. These analyses were conducted for the six month time period and for the total relationship. As seen in Table 15, following page, the Demographic model produces the lowest R^2 , and the Abuse History model the highest; the contribution of substance use is in the middle. In Model 1, the Demographic model ($R^2 = .04, F = 2.59, p = .026$), only one factor – race – emerges as statistically significant, with Blacks utilizing the police more often than

¹⁷ Unfortunately, "calling the police" was measured with frequencies ranging from 0 to "6 or more." The relatively small number (8.8%) who had called police six or more times during the 6 month period is less of a problem than the 24.8% who called 6 or more times over the course of the relationship (data from Table 10, above). The potential consequence of the latter is that the right censored data underutilizes cases in the regression analysis where women had called the police far in excess of the six times permitted by this variable limitation.

Table 15. Linear Regression on Six Month Frequency of Calling the Police, Three Models

| | B | S.E. | t | p |
|--|------|------|-------|------|
| Model 1: Victim Demographic^a | | | | |
| Relationship | -.01 | .20 | -.04 | .964 |
| Race | -.44 | .21 | -2.10 | .037 |
| Income | -.00 | -.00 | -1.13 | .266 |
| Age | -.00 | .01 | -.17 | .865 |
| Education | -.18 | .10 | -1.88 | .062 |
| Model 2: Substance Use^b | | | | |
| Abuser drinking index | -.20 | .09 | -2.25 | .026 |
| Abuser frequency drunk | .24 | .09 | 2.62 | .009 |
| Abuser drug/alcohol problem | .20 | .33 | .62 | .533 |
| Abuser used cocaine | .12 | .32 | .36 | .716 |
| Abuser used pot | .79 | .27 | 2.90 | .004 |
| Victim drinking index | .13 | .09 | 1.45 | .148 |
| Victim frequently drunk | -.14 | .15 | -.94 | .349 |
| Victim used drugs | -.07 | .11 | -.63 | .527 |
| Model 3: 6 Months Abuse Frequency^c | | | | |
| Threatened victim | .00 | .02 | .16 | .874 |
| Hit victim | .12 | .02 | 5.63 | .000 |
| Threatened other family | .09 | .06 | 1.53 | .127 |
| Hit other family | .14 | .24 | .58 | .560 |
| Threatened property damage | .09 | .04 | 2.45 | .015 |
| Damaged property | .05 | .05 | .97 | .331 |

^aR² = .04, F = 2.59, p = .026

^bR² = .13, F = 4.13, p = .0001

^cR² = .19, F = 12.50, p = .0001

Whites for domestic violence. The Substance Use model, Model 2 ($R^2 = .13$, $F = 4.13$, $p = .0001$) produces three statistically significant variables: the abuser's Drinking Index, abuser's frequency drunk, and the abuser's use of marijuana. In the third model employed, Abuse History ($R^2 = .19$, $F = 12.50$, $p = .0001$), two variables are statistically significant: the frequency the victim was hit by the abuser, and the frequency of threatened property damage.

A Combined model was constructed from the six variables which were significant in Models 1, 2, and 3. When the preceding predictor variables were combined into a single model ($R^2 = .20$, $F = 11.61$, $p \leq .00001$), as seen in Table 16, only three of the factors remained

Table 16. Linear Regression on Six Month Frequency of Calling the Police, Combined Model

| | B | S.E. | t | p |
|-----------------------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Combined model ^a | | | | |
| Victim race | -.30 | .20 | -1.48 | .141 |
| Abuser drinking index | -.02 | .07 | -.34 | .738 |
| Abuser frequency drunk | .14 | .07 | 2.12 | .035 |
| Abuser used pot | .43 | .19 | 2.29 | .023 |
| Abuser hit victim | .12 | .02 | 6.39 | .0001 |
| Abuser threatened property | .03 | .03 | 1.05 | .293 |

^a $R^2 = .20$, $F = 11.61$, $p \leq .00001$

significant predictors. Victims' frequency of calling the police in a six month time period were significantly related to the abuser's frequency of being drunk, his use of marijuana, and the frequency of hitting the victim.

Total Relationship. The same models were used for analysis of the total frequency of calling the police. These analyses produced similar though not identical results. In the

Demographic model ($R^2 = .12$, $F = 7.53$, $p \leq .0001$), victim race again emerges as the only significant predictor. Model 2, Substance Use ($R^2 = .09$, $F = 2.74$, $p \leq .01$), finds that two of the variables remain significant -- abuser frequency drunk, and abuser's pot use -- but that the Drinking Index of the abuser is no longer significant. The Abuse History model ($R^2 = .12$, $F = 7.24$, $p \leq .0001$) for the total frequency of calling the police retains the frequency of hitting the victim as a significant predictor, and also includes the frequency of threatening the victim. The "threaten to damage property" variable which was significant in the six month model is no longer significant in the total relationship model. These data are seen in Table 17, following page.

The Combined model for the total frequency of calling the police includes the five variables identified in Models 1, 2 and 3. As seen in Table 18, following, all five of these variables remain significant in the combined model: victim race, abuser frequency drunk, abuser uses pot, threats to hurt the victim, and hitting the victim. This model has moderate explanatory power ($R^2 = .23$, $F = 16.89$, $p \leq .0001$), very similar to the six month combined model ($R^2 = .20$, $F = 11.61$, $p \leq .0001$). This model suggests that the frequency of police utilization over the length of the relationship is greater among victims who are Black, in relationships with men who are frequently drunk and who use marijuana, and who threaten and hit them often.

Table 17. Linear Regression on Total Frequency of Calling the Police, Three Models

| | B | S.E. | t | p |
|--|-------|------|-------|------|
| <u>Model 1: Victim Demographic^a</u> | | | | |
| Relationship | .47 | .25 | 1.94 | .054 |
| Race | -1.24 | .25 | -4.86 | .000 |
| Income | -.00 | .00 | -1.65 | .099 |
| Age | .02 | .01 | 1.08 | .283 |
| Education | -.13 | .12 | -1.11 | .270 |
| <u>Model 2: Substance Use^b</u> | | | | |
| Abuser drinking index | -.10 | .11 | -.95 | .344 |
| Abuser frequency drunk | .35 | .11 | 3.05 | .003 |
| Abuser drug/alcohol problem | .08 | .41 | .20 | .843 |
| Abuser used cocaine | -.37 | .39 | -.95 | .345 |
| Abuser used pot | .80 | .34 | 2.37 | .019 |
| Victim drinking index | -.05 | .11 | -.45 | .654 |
| Victim frequently drunk | .08 | .19 | .44 | .659 |
| Victim used drugs | -.03 | .15 | -.20 | .844 |
| <u>Model 3: 6 Months Abuse Frequency^c</u> | | | | |
| Threatened victim | .01 | .01 | 2.89 | .004 |
| Hit victim | .02 | .01 | 2.16 | .032 |
| Threatened other family | .01 | .04 | .16 | .875 |
| Hit other family | -.09 | .16 | -.59 | .557 |
| Threatened property damage | .01 | .02 | .58 | .562 |
| Damaged property | .04 | .03 | 1.63 | .104 |

^aR² = .12, F = 7.53, p ≤ .0001

^bR² = .09, F = 2.74, p ≤ .01

^cR² = .12, F = 7.24, p ≤ .0001

**Table 18. Linear Regression on Total Frequency of Calling the Police,
Combined Model**

| | B | S.E. | t | p |
|----------------------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| <hr/> Combined model <hr/> | | | | |
| Victim race | -.87 | .24 | -3.64 | .0003 |
| Abuser frequency drunk | .29 | .07 | 3.95 | .0001 |
| Abuser used pot | .50 | .22 | 2.22 | .0269 |
| Total threats to victim | .01 | .00 | 3.32 | .0010 |
| Total hit victim | .02 | .01 | 2.11 | .0360 |

$R^2 = .23, F = 16.89, p \leq .00001$

4.2.5. Summary of Factors Associated with Frequency of Calling the Police. The preceding analysis, both bivariate and linear regression, suggests a number of conclusions:

First, some variables are consistently associated, without exception, with the frequency of victims calling the police at both the six month time period and for the total relationship; these are: abuser frequency drunk, abuser pot use, and frequency of hitting the victim.

Second, some variables are generally associated with the frequency of calling the police, but there are occasional differences between the bivariate and regression analysis, or differences between the six month and total relationship analysis. These variables include: victim race; threats against the victim, other family members, or property; damaging property; and social class/income.

Third, some variables are rarely associated with frequency of calling the police. These include age, victim-offender relationship, the abuser's Drinking Index (the measure of quantity-frequency of alcohol consumption) and the variables related to the victim's alcohol or drug use.

4.3 Presenting Incident Analysis

The preceding analysis has focused on the longer term patterns of police utilization -- six months and over the total length of the relationship -- by abused women. This section addresses in detail the characteristics of the presenting incident and focuses on (1) the cause of the conflict (which led to a call to the police), (2) who called the police for assistance, (3) how long the conflict had been going on before calling the police, (4) victims who asked someone else to call the police, (5) difficulty of the decision to call the police, (6) why the police were called, (7) victim wishes for police action - what she wanted the police to do, and (8) whether the victim argued against the police arresting the offender.¹⁸

Unless otherwise noted, each of the above issues is addressed for:

1. Demographic variation - race, relationship, SES, education, age
2. Substance use - offender and victim drinking at the presenting incident, drinking more or less than usual, number of drinks consumed, if drunk, if under the influence, and, for offenders only, drug usage and combined alcohol/drugs usage. Victim drug usage at the presenting incident was too infrequent to justify additional analysis.
3. Conflict level - Conflict Tactics Scale score; offender or victim threatens or hits other family member; offender or victim threaten property damage or actually damage property.
4. Victim injury - victim injury, based on victim interviews and police reports.
5. Children - children present at the incident

¹⁸The Charlotte SARP provided for the random treatment assignment of three police options -- advising/separating the couple, issuing a citation to the offender or arresting the offender. There were too few cases in which the victim argued against the offender receiving a citation. N = 9, to permit analysis.

In light of the large number of bivariate analyses developed for the presenting incident, only those providing differences which are statistically significant are reported in detail.

4.3.1 Cause of the Conflict. As part of the interview about the events surrounding the presenting incident, victims were asked:

"Were you and (partner) having an argument, or fight or just what was it all about? Just tell me in your own words what was going on?" From these descriptions interviewers selected a primary reason and clarified:

"So, would you say that the main cause was _____?"

A total of 95 reasons were identified through this process. Despite the large number of reasons identified for the precipitating conflict, just five of these were mentioned by 20 or more women and these five reasons accounted for slightly over one half (54.4%) of the total sample: drinking by the offender, jealousy, victims' extramarital relationships, offender's extramarital relationships, and offenders' treatment of the kids. The other 90 reasons mentioned accounted for less than half of the total (45.6%). (Note: the category of "extramarital" also encompasses cohabiting couples).¹⁹ As seen in Table 19, drinking by the offender is clearly the most frequent cause of the conflict, far eclipsing all other identified reasons.

¹⁹ Most researchers would agree that power, control, and dominance needs constitute the foundation for family violence; such needs are expressed in a broad range of topics which produce conflict. In addition to the modal reasons, women within this sample reported that the "main cause" of the fight involved a multitude of issues; these include, to name just a few: his/her household tasks; his/her use of money; his/her friends; his/her nagging; paternity questions; playing music too loudly; offenders wanting sex; which TV show to watch; temper; telephone use; use of the car; working hours; shoplifting/stealing; PMS; waking someone up; wanting to spend more time together; possible Alzheimer's disease; how to spend an inheritance; "disrespectfulness;" leaving someone stranded; locking someone out of the house; lack of education; discussing family business in front of others; lying and dishonesty; offender hurting child while "horsing around;" and "offender no longer wanted to be married to the victim but still wanted to date her." It remains for future analysis to determine if these occasional reasons can be reasonably clustered in order to determine if specific themes emerge beyond the ones discussed in this section and presented in Table 19.

Drinking as the primary cause of the conflict is confirmed by police reports completed by the responding officers at the scene of the incident. Based on these reports, drinking as one

Table 19. Primary Causes of the Conflict Which Precipitated the Abusive Incident, by Victim Data and Police Reports

| | % | (N) |
|------------------------------|------|-------|
| <u>Victim interviews</u> | | |
| Offender drinking | 29.6 | (123) |
| Jealousy | 8.2 | (34) |
| Victim extramarital | 6.5 | (27) |
| Offender extramarital | 5.3 | (22) |
| Offender treatment of kids | 4.8 | (20) |
| Other (90 different reasons) | 45.6 | (189) |
| <u>Police reports</u> | | |
| Drinking* | 43.0 | (180) |
| Money | 15.8 | (66) |
| Extramarital | 15.0 | (63) |
| Children | 13.6 | (57) |
| Friends | 7.1 | (30) |

*The apparent "cause of the conflict" on police reports does not distinguish between offender/victim; more than one reason could be identified.

of the apparent causes was identified almost three times more often (43.0% of the cases) than any other cause. When victims identified the offender's drinking as the primary cause of the conflict, there was strong agreement with police reports that drinking was one of the "apparent" causes ($X^2 = 26.47, p \leq .00001$), although the police forms do not indicate for this particular item if this was the offender's or victim's drinking.

4.3.1.1. Demographic variation. There were no statistically significant differences when drinking as the primary cause of the conflict was analyzed for the demographic variables.

4.3.1.2. Substance Use. Drinking as the primary cause of the conflict is associated with several of the offender substance use variables. When drinking was identified by victims as the cause of the conflict, compared to other causes, the offender was significantly more likely to have been drinking at the incident, to have consumed more alcohol, to be drunk, and to be using alcohol or drugs; these data are shown in Table 20. Drinking as the primary cause was not associated with the offender's drinking more than usual, nor with any of the victims substance use variables. Victims who were drinking at the incident were more likely to say that offenders' drinking was the main cause of the conflict compared to victims who were not, although this difference was not statistically significant (41.5% vs. 29.1%, $X^2 = 3.71$, $p = .054$).

4.3.1.3. Conflict Level. Drinking as the primary cause of the conflict was not associated with the Conflict Tactics Scale score for either offenders or victims, nor was this associated with threats or aggression toward other family members. However, when drinking was the cause of the conflict, victims were much more likely to report that the offender had threatened property damage (but not actually damaged property) than when there was some other cause. In cases where property damage was threatened, drinking was identified as the primary cause of the conflict by 75.0% of the victims; when property damage was not threatened drinking was less likely to be identified as the cause of the conflict (47.6%; $X^2 = 12.69$, $p \leq .001$).

Table 20. Cause of the Presenting Incident Conflict, by Select Substance Use Variables

| | Cause of conflict | | | | χ^2 | t |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|------|-----------|---------|
| | Drinking | | Other | | | |
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | | |
| Offender | | | | | | |
| Drinking at incident | 88.5 | (108) | 57.7 | (56) | 27.24**** | |
| Drinking more than usual | 48.5 | (50) | 37.3 | (19) | 1.76 | |
| Drunk | 80.0 | (88) | 35.5 | (22) | 34.08**** | |
| Under the influence | 90.9 | (20) | 72.5 | (29) | 2.90 | |
| Number of drinks | $\mu =$ 7.6 | (72) | 5.9 | (35) | | 3.29*** |
| Combined substance use | | | | | 32.67**** | |
| None | 5.0 | (6) | 35.2 | (32) | | |
| Alcohol or drugs | 76.9 | (93) | 49.5 | (45) | | |
| Alcohol and drugs | 18.2 | (22) | 15.4 | (14) | | |
| Victim | | | | | | |
| Drinking at incident | 41.5 | (51) | 29.1 | (30) | 3.71 | |
| Drinking more than usual | 19.6 | (10) | 20.7 | (6) | 0.01 | |
| Drunk | 10.0 | (7) | 11.5 | (6) | 0.07 | |
| Under the influence | 34.1 | (15) | 38.2 | (13) | 0.14 | |

p \leq .001, *p \leq .0001

4.3.1.4. Victim Injury. Drinking as the primary cause of the conflict was not associated with victim injury, based on either interview data or police reports.

4.3.1.5. Children. Children's presence was not associated with drinking as the primary cause of the conflict.

4.3.2. Who Called the Police. In approximately two-thirds of the cases (62.6%) women called the police themselves. In other cases, the call was made by a neighbor or friend (13.8%), a child (8.9%), another family member (3.9%), someone else (6.4%) or the caller was unknown to the victim (4.3%). When the victim herself did not make the call, she asked someone to do this in slightly less than half (45.4%) of the cases. Thus, women initiated the call themselves or via another person in a total of 77.1% of the sample.

4.3.2.1. Demographic variation. There was no statistically significant demographic variation for the variable "who called the police."

4.3.2.2. Substance use. The variable "who called the police" did not significantly vary by substance use of either the offender or the victim.

4.3.2.3. Conflict level. This variable was not associated with the level of conflict, as measured by the Conflict Tactics Scale, for either the offender or victim. This variable was not associated with threats or aggression toward other family members, nor with threatened or actual property damage.

4.3.2.4. Victim Injury. Victim injury is associated with a greater likelihood that someone other than the victim will call the police for assistance, although no causality may be implied here. Based on both victim interview data and police reports, a greater proportion of calls to the police are made by someone else when the victim is injured. (Note: it should be recalled that this sample, confined to the misdemeanor range, largely excludes serious injury).

As shown in Table 21, following page, victims are less likely to call the police, and someone else (a neighbor, friend, child) more likely to call when the victim has been injured. While these differences are not large, (e.g. among injured victims, 57.6% called the police themselves, compared to 67.5% among non-injured victims) they are statistically significant,

Table 21. Victim Injury and Calling The Police

| | Victim data | | | | Police data | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|------|
| | Injured | | Not injured | | Injured | | Not injured | |
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| Victim called | 57.6 | (121) | 67.5 | (135) | 59.6 | (198) | 75.3 | (55) |
| Other called | 42.4 | (89) | 32.5 | (65) | 40.4 | (134) | 24.7 | (18) |
| | $\chi^2 =$ | | 4.26* | | | | 6.29* | |

* $p \leq .05$; victim data \times police data $\chi^2 = 11.36$, $p \leq .0001$

and consistent between victim and police reports. Police data are more likely to report that women have experienced an injury than is indicated in the victim interviews (82.0% vs. 51.2%), a difference which might be explained by somewhat different questions.

4.3.2.5. Children. Children's presence at the incident was not significantly associated with someone other than the victim calling the police for assistance.

4.3.3. Length of Conflict Before Calling the Police. In principle, the longer a woman waits to call the police during a confrontation the greater is her time at risk for being abused. Analysis presented earlier has demonstrated that most of the women in this sample have been abused and/or threatened far more often than they have actually called the police. Perhaps, for some, calling the police is delayed until a certain level of conflict is reached while for others the call is made more immediately. Victims were asked, "*About how long had the fight/problem or incident been going on before the police were called?*" Some women in this sample called the police relatively early in the conflict, within the first 15 minutes (20.0%), others called in

on for at least half an hour, but less than one hour (27.5%); proportionately fewer victims waited either one hour (13.1%), or two or more hours (15.6%) before calling the police. In retrospect it would have been useful to ask specific questions about exactly what had transpired before the call was made (and after, while waiting for the police to arrive); however, this was not done in this research.

4.3.3.1. Demographic Variation. Immediately calling the police for assistance did not vary demographically.

4.3.3.2. Substance Use. Abuser substance use was not significantly related to how quickly women called the police for assistance. Overall, there was no difference in how fast the police were called by women who were drinking at the incident and those who were not (30.8% vs.69.2%, $X^2 = 3.28$, $p = 0.51$). However, among those who were drinking, victims who reported themselves to be “under the influence” at the time of the incident did not call the police as quickly as did those who were not so affected. Among women who were drinking -- but not under the influence of alcohol -- almost half (47.6%) had called the police in less than half an hour; among those women who were drinking and “under the influence,” only one-fourth (27.3%) had called the police this quickly. Similarly, the proportion of women waiting one hour or more to call the police is considerably higher among those who were under the influence of alcohol (43.2%) than those who were not (18.8%). See Table 23.

Two caveats are important. First, although women “under the influence” represent slightly over one third (35.5%) of those who were drinking, they represent barely one-tenth ($N = 44$, 10.5%) of the total sample. The relatively small number of women in this subset make conclusions somewhat tentative. Second, men’s drinking patterns at the incident are not

Table 22. Length of Conflict Before Calling the Police, by Victim Under the Influence*

| Conflict length before calling the police | Victim under the influence | | | |
|---|----------------------------|------|------|------|
| | Yes | | No | |
| | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| Less than 15 minutes | 15.9 | (7) | 18.8 | (15) |
| 15-29 minutes | 11.4 | (5) | 28.8 | (23) |
| 30-59 minutes | 29.5 | (13) | 33.8 | (27) |
| 60-119 minutes | 18.2 | (8) | 8.8 | (7) |
| 2 hours or more | 25.0 | (11) | 10.0 | (8) |

*Includes only women who were drinking at the presenting incident; $\chi^2 = 10.34, p \leq .05$

comparable with women's. Among men, 37.7% were drunk at the incident (57.9% of those who were drinking); another 20.5% were under the influence (78.2% of those who were drinking, but not drunk). Among women only 4.1% were drunk (8.9% of those who were drinking) and 10.5% were under the influence (34.1% of those who were drinking but not drunk).

4.3.3.3. Conflict Level. Speed of calling the police for assistance did not vary by Conflict Tactics Scale score for either offenders or victims. The length of time it took a woman to call the police was not significantly associated with threats or aggression toward other family members. However, this variable was associated with offender threats to damage property. Property damage threats appears to be associated with waiting longer to call the police. In cases where this was one of the offender's threats, 44.0% of women waited an hour or more to call the police, compared to one-fourth of victims (24.4%) who waited this long when property damage was not threatened ($X^2 = 18.64, p \leq .001$).

4.3.3.4. Victim Injury. Speed of calling the police for assistance did not vary by victim injury, based on both victim data and police data.

4.3.3.5. Children. The presence of children in the home during the abusive incident did not affect the time it took victims to call the police.

4.3.4. Victims Who Asked Someone to Call the Police. As noted above, in most cases victims called the police themselves during the incident. However, in a significant minority of cases (N= 155, 37.4%) someone other than the victim called the police for assistance. In somewhat less than half (45.7%) of the cases -- where someone other than the victim called the police -- the victim herself asked that this call be made. Typically, women asked a neighbor or friend (39.1% of those who asked), a child (32.8%), or another family member (10.9%).

In 76 cases (18.1% of the total sample) women neither called the police nor requested that a call be made for them. Nonetheless, most of these victims were glad that a call had been made. Un-asked for calls were made (when known) by friends or neighbors (42.1%), children (19.7%) or other family members (11.8%). The person calling the police did not differ significantly between requested and non-requested calls ($X^2 = 4.78$, $p = 0.31$). In only 7 cases (out of 419) did women not make the call themselves, not ask that the call be made, and were unhappy that someone had called on their behalf. The remainder of this subsection focuses on only those women who did not call the police themselves.

4.3.4.1. Demographic Variation. There was no significant demographic variation among women asking someone else to call the police.

4.3.4.2. Substance Use. In general, substance use did not affect whether a woman asked someone else to call the police. However, women whose partners were drinking more

than usual were less likely to ask someone to call the police than were women whose partners were drinking the same or less than usual (34.4% vs. 59.6%, $X^2 = 4.84$, $p \leq .05$). However, since this is based on a subset ($N=79$, women who did not call the police themselves and asked someone else to call) of the sample, some caution in interpretation is appropriate.

4.3.4.3. Conflict Level. Level of conflict, as measured by the Conflict Tactics Scale, did not affect whether or not a woman asked someone else to call the police. This variable was not associated with threats or aggression toward other family members, nor with threatened or actual property damage.

4.3.4.4. Victim Injury. Victims asking someone to call the police for assistance did not vary by victim injury, based on either victim data or police data.

4.3.4.5. Children. The presence of children did not affect a woman's asking someone else to call the police.

4.3.5. Deciding to Call the Police. Women were asked if the decision to call the police had been "very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult." For the great majority of the women in this sample, this decision was either very easy (43.3%) or easy (37.1%); for a minority of the victims this decision was difficult (15.6%) and only a small proportion of the sample said that it had been a "very difficult" decision (4.0%).

4.3.5.1. Demographic Variation. There was no significant demographic variation in the ease or difficulty of the decision to call the police.

4.3.5.2. Substance Use. Substance use did not affect the ease of deciding to call the police.

4.3.5.3. Conflict Level. Level of conflict, as measured by the CTS, did not significantly affect the ease of deciding to call the police. This variable was not associated with threats or

aggression toward other family members, nor with threatened or actual property damage.

4.3.5.4. Victim Injury. Victim injury, as identified in the interviews and in the police reports, had no influence on how easy or difficult it was for a woman to call the police.

4.3.5.5. Children. The presence of children did not affect, at statistically significant levels, a woman's ease of deciding to call the police.

4.3.6. Why Police Were Called. Considering the relatively low frequency with which women call the police for assistance during domestic disputes, it is useful to try to determine the circumstances which prompt a call to be made.

A small step in this direction was made by asking the question:

"Would you say you called the police (or asked someone to call) mainly because of what he had already done, or were you afraid of what he might do if the police were not called.....or a mixture of both?"

motivation, while the second (fear of what the offender might do) could be viewed more as a preventive strategy.²⁰ Women in this sample were most likely to say that they called the police for a mixture of both preventive and punitive reasons (65.6%), rather than fear alone (20.8%) or because of what the offender had already done (13.6%).

4.3.6.1. Demographic Variation. In general, there was no significant demographic variation in this measure of a woman's motivation (punitive, preventive or both) to call the police. The exception to this pattern is that victim age is modestly associated with why a woman calls the police: women who call the police primarily for punitive reasons (what he has

²⁰ Punitive is used here for lack of a better word, and in the most general sense possible to designate a victim's response to what has already occurred. This does not imply that the victim believes that the abuser will feel punished by calling the police.

done only) are markedly younger (by an average of 3 years) than women who call the police for both reasons, or for fear alone. As seen in Table 23, women who say that they called the police because of what he had already done have a mean age of 27.4 years old, compared to those women who say they called because of what he might do or for a combination of both reasons (30.7 and 31.1 years old respectively; $F = 3.51$, $p \leq .05$; Student-Newman-Keuls test indicates youngest age group different than the other two groups at $p \leq .05$).

Table 23. Why Police Were Called, by Victim Age*

| Why victim called police | N | μ Age | S.D. |
|---|-----|-----------|------|
| Punitive (what offender had already done) | 46 | 27.4 | 6.80 |
| Preventive (fear of what the offender might do) | 70 | 30.7 | 8.23 |
| Both | 220 | 31.1 | 9.05 |

*ANOVA. $F = 3.51$, $p \leq .05$

4.3.6.2. Substance Use. Alcohol use by offenders is related to fear in victims, i.e. women whose partners are drinking are much more likely to be afraid than women whose partners are not. As seen in Table 24, women who report that they are very often fearful when their partners are drinking have understandable cause: they have a higher incidence of being threatened and of being hit, for both the six month and total relationship time periods.

Table 24. Victim Fear When Offender is Using Alcohol, by Frequency of Threats and Physical Abuse

| | Threats μ | | Physical Abuse μ | |
|--|------------------|---------|-------------------------|----------|
| | 6 months | Total | 6 months | Total |
| Frequency of victim fearfulness when offender is using alcohol | | | | |
| Very often | 10.4 | 32.7 | 7.6 | 26.9 |
| Often | 6.3 | 22.6 | 4.3 | 15.6 |
| Occasionally | 4.9 | 17.5 | 2.0 | 9.0 |
| Never | 4.3 | 15.8 | 1.9 | 10.2 |
| F= | 3.92** | 5.75*** | 13.65*** | 11.42*** |

** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

These data show that women who are "very often" afraid of their partners when the partners are drinking have rates of being threatened and assaulted 2-3 times greater than women who say that they are never afraid when their partners are drinking. Women are more likely to report they have called the police out of fear when their partners are drinking at the incident, when they are under the influence, when they are using drugs, and when they are using a combination of both alcohol and drugs. Quite unexpectedly, offender drunkenness and drinking more than usual are not significantly related to victims calling the police for reasons of fear (although the direction of the data is as would be predicted). These data are shown in Table 25 (following two pages).

For each of the six substance-use items reported, the patterns are generally very similar: approximately two-thirds of the women in the sample have called the police for a combination

of both punitive and preventive reasons, and this proportion does not differ much by the substance use variables (with the exception of the variable "offender under the influence"). However, it is with the other two options that the differences appear when analyzed for substance use. In general, substance use by the offender makes it less likely that a woman calls the police for punitive reasons (what he has already done) and more likely that she is calling the police for preventive reasons (fear of what he might do). As seen in Table 25 A, D, E and F (following pages) the proportion of victims calling the police out of "fear of what the offender might do" is considerably higher when the offender has been drinking or using drugs than when he has not; each of these differences are statistically significant. A similar pattern is seen in Table 25 B and C (drinking more than usual, and drunk) but these differences are not statistically significant.

Table 25. Reasons Why Victims Called the Police, by Offender Substance Use

| A. Offender drinking at incident | No | | Yes | | χ^2 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|-------|----------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | |
| Reason police were called | | | | | |
| What offender had done | 21.3 | (23) | 9.7 | (20) | |
| Fear of what offender might do | 12.2 | (13) | 26.2 | (54) | |
| Both reasons | 66.7 | (72) | 64.1 | (132) | 13.69*** |

| B. Offender drinking the usual amount | Less or same | | More | | χ^2 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|------|------|------|----------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | |
| Reason police were called | | | | | |
| What offender had done | 13.1 | (14) | 6.3 | (5) | |
| Fear of what offender might do | 19.6 | (21) | 32.5 | (26) | |
| Both reasons | 67.3 | (72) | 61.3 | (49) | 5.39 |

| C. Offender drunk at incident | No | | Yes | | χ^2 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | |
| Reason police were called | | | | | |
| What offender had done | 13.5 | (13) | 7.0 | (9) | |
| Fear of what offender might do | 18.8 | (18) | 29.5 | (38) | |
| Both reasons | 67.7 | (65) | 63.6 | (82) | 5.11 |

| D. Offender under the influence | No | | Yes | | χ^2 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | |
| Reason police were called | | | | | |
| What offender had done | — | (0) | 15.5 | (11) | |
| Fear of what offender might do | 5.0 | (1) | 26.8 | (19) | |
| Both reasons | 95.0 | (19) | 57.7 | (41) | 9.74** |

Table 25 continued on following page

Table 25 (Continued). Reasons Why Victims Called the Police, by Offender Substance Use

| E. Offender using drugs | No | | Yes | | χ^2 |
|--------------------------------|------|-------|------|------|----------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | |
| Reason police were called | | | | | |
| What offender had done | 15.6 | (33) | 3.4 | (2) | |
| Fear of what offender might do | 18.9 | (40) | 30.5 | (18) | |
| Both reasons | 65.6 | (139) | 66.1 | (39) | 8.22* |

| F. Offender using alcohol or drugs | Neither | | Alcohol or Drugs | | Both | | χ^2 |
|------------------------------------|---------|------|------------------|-------|------|------|----------|
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | |
| Reason police were called | | | | | | | |
| What offender had done | 20.7 | (17) | 11.2 | (20) | 2.2 | (1) | |
| Fear of what offender might do | 12.2 | (10) | 22.9 | (41) | 35.6 | (16) | |
| Both reasons | 67.1 | (55) | 65.9 | (118) | 62.2 | (28) | 16.10** |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

The final part of this table, 25 F, compares offenders who were not using any substances at the incident with those who were using alcohol or drugs, and with those who were using both.²¹

As seen in the data within this table, when offenders are using neither drugs nor alcohol, one in five victims (20.7%) calls the police for punitive reasons – for what the offender has already done, compared to only 2.2% among those whose partners are using both alcohol and drugs. However, when the offender is using both substances, over one-third of the women (35.6%) report calling the police for fear of what he might do (plus those who call for a combination of

²¹ Among offenders who were using any drugs (N = 87, 20.8% of the partners), the primary drug was cocaine (56.3% of those using drugs), followed by marijuana (27.6%). Other drugs (e.g. heroin) or combinations (e.g. cocaine and pot) accounted for the remainder (16.1%) of the drug use at the presenting incident. Offender drug use at the incident was not related to offender drunkenness ($X^2 = 0.52$, $p = .47$).

reasons), compared to 12.2% of the women who call out of fear alone when the offender is using neither alcohol nor drugs.

4.3.6.3. Conflict Level. The level of conflict at the presenting incident was significantly associated with the victim's reasons for calling the police. As seen in the data in Table 26, there was no difference in the CTS categories in women calling the police because of what the offender had already done (12.6% vs. 14.1%). However, in cases of severe violence -- as measured by the CTS -- women are more likely to call the police for a combination of both punitive and preventive reasons (70.6%) compared to women whose partners were less aggressive (51.7%).²² These data are shown in Table 26.

4.3.6.4. Victim Injury. Victim injury did not significantly influence the reason why women called the police.

4.3.6.5. Children. The presence of children did not affect the reason why women called the police.

4.3.7. Victim Wishes for Police Action. Abuse victims were asked to describe what they hoped the police would do when they responded to the call for assistance:

"When you called the police, do you remember what you wanted to happen? Just tell me in your own words."

²² Similarly, when the offender had threatened property damage women were more likely to report that they called the police for a combination of both punitive and preventive reasons than when this was not a threat (80.0% vs. 61.7%, $X^2 = 9.73$, $p \leq .01$). Actual property damage also made a difference, although the relationship is not as strong as it was for threatened damage (71.3% vs. 62.3%, $X^2 = 6.71$, $p \leq .05$). These data are not presented here in detail.

The modal response was by women who wanted the police to remove the offender from the scene (“take him away,” N= 145, 41.0% of the sample), followed by a large number who wanted the offender arrested (N= 105, 29.7%). When these two reasons were combined, over two-thirds of the women in this sample (70.7%) wanted the police to physically remove the offender from the home. Others wanted the police to “warn him” (12.1%), “make him leave her alone” (5.9%), enable her to leave herself (4.5%) in addition to a small range of other reasons (6.8%).

4.3.7.1. Demographic Variation. Unlike much of the preceding analyses, there was significant demographic variation in what victims wanted the police to do, with Blacks, poverty level, and younger women most likely to want the police to make an arrest. As shown in

Table 26. Reasons Why Police Were Called, by CTS Scores

| Reasons police were called | Conflict Tactics Scale scores | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|----------|-------|
| | None/Minor | | Severe | |
| | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| What offender had done | 12.6 | (11) | 14.1 | (35) |
| Fear of what offender might do | 35.6 | (31) | 15.3 | (38) |
| Both reasons | 51.7 | (45) | 70.6 | (175) |
| | $\chi^2 =$ | | 16.48*** | |

***p<.001

Table 27, Blacks and Whites were very similar in the proportion who wanted the police to remove the offender from the home, approximately 40% of each. However, Black women

were twice as likely to want the offender arrested as were White victims (35.5% vs.15.2%; $X^2 = 16.69, p \leq .0001$). Social class was also significantly related to what victims wanted the police to do, with lower SES victims more likely to want arrest than working class or borderline/middle class women (40.7%, 23.3% and 18.4% respectively, $X^2 = 18.06, p \leq .01$).

Additionally, younger victims were more likely to want offenders arrested than were older victims. Comparisons across the three groups using ANOVA did not produce statistically significant results (victim wanted miscellaneous μ age = 31.7 years old, victim wanted offender taken away μ age = 30.8, victim wanted offender arrested μ age = 28.9, $F = 2.83, p = .06$). However, when the first two categories were combined and the variable dichotomized on arrest, younger victims were more likely to prefer arrest at statistically significant levels (arrest μ age= 28.9, non-arrest $\mu = 31.2, t = 2.22, p \leq .05$).

Table 27. Victim Desires for Police Action, by Race and SES

| What victim wanted | Race | | | | SES | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|------|--------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|
| | Black | | White | | Poverty | | Working Cl | | Borderline | |
| | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) | % | (N) |
| Miscellaneous | 23.5 | (59) | 42.4 | (42) | 22.9 | (32) | 30.1 | (40) | 40.8 | (31) |
| Take offender away | 41.0 | (103) | 42.4 | (42) | 36.4 | (51) | 46.6 | (62) | 40.8 | (31) |
| Arrest offender | 35.5 | (89) | 15.2 | (15) | 40.7 | (57) | 23.3 | (31) | 18.4 | (14) |
| | $\chi^2 = 18.69^{****}$ | | | | 18.06^{**} | | | | | |

** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .0001$

4.3.7.2. Substance Use. Substance use variables did not significantly influence whether the victim wanted the offender arrested.

4.3.7.3. Conflict Level. Severity of the incident, as measured by the CTS, was

associated with a higher probability that victims wanted the police to arrest their partners.

However, even in the relatively more severe incidents, only a minority of women wanted their partners arrested (32.8%); this compares to approximately one woman in five (20.4%) who wanted this police action when the violence was less severe (none or minor on the CTS; $X^2 = 5.05$, $p \leq .05$). When compared to the overall proportion of the sample who wanted arrest (as indicated above, 29.7%), this suggests that more severe aggression only slightly increases the probability of the victim wanting arrest. This variable was not associated with threats or aggression toward other family members, nor with threatened or actual property damage.

4.3.7.4 Victim Injury. There was no significant association between victim injury and wanting the police to arrest, based on either victim or police data. (Note: these data do not include cases of very severe injury, which would have been more likely at the felony level).

4.3.7.5 Children. The presence of children at the incident did not affect the likelihood that a victim would want the offender arrested.

Women were not asked during the interview if the offender hit a child during the course of the presenting incident. However, victims were asked if the offender had "hit/slapped/hurt or tried to hurt another member of the family," or if the offender had "threatened another member of the family," and also asked subsequently if there were any children present during the incident. Analysis of these data show that offenders were somewhat more likely to have threatened another family member when children were present than when they were not (20.8% vs. 11.9%, $X^2 = 4.12$, $p \leq .05$) and, to a lesser degree, to also have hit another family member when children were present (11.5% vs. 3.2%, $X^2 = 6.91$, $p \leq .01$). These data imply, but do not demonstrate, that children (as opposed to some other family member) were being threatened or hit by the offender. Nonetheless, victims were no more likely to want the

offender arrested when children were present and when another family member had been threatened or hit.

4.3.8. Victims Argue Against Offender Arrest As noted above, police response in the Charlotte SARP provided for three police responses, or "treatments:" advising/separating the couple, issuing a citation to the offender, or arresting the offender. In the experiment itself 271 cases (39.5% of the total) resulted in arrest of the offender; among those interviewed, 41.3% of the cases had the offender arrested. Victims could argue against the arrest -- the focus of this section. However, according to the experimental design, it should not have made any difference in the application of this treatment.²³

In cases where the offender was arrested, only a minority (20.4%) of women argued against this. Since this analysis is based on a subset of the sample, caution in interpretation is advisable. Arguing against arrest was not significantly associated with any of the variables investigated: demographic, substance use, conflict level, victim injury or children present.

4.3.9. Synthesis of Characteristics Related to Calling the Police at the Presenting Incident. The preceding sections on the presenting incident provide a diversity of factors associated with calling the police. Specific call-related variables were selected for additional analysis using logistic regression in order to produce an overall assessment of (a) who called the police, (b) whether the police were called immediately, and (c) whether the victim wanted the offender arrested. For each regression analysis, a combination of *demographic* (relationship, race, age, education, and income), *substance use* (offender drinking, offender

²³On the other hand, if a case had been randomly assigned for some other treatment, but the victim demanded that the offender be arrested, then in most cases he was arrested in interest of the victim's safety; that case was then no longer part of the experiment since the assigned treatment could not be followed.

drunk, offender number of drinks consumed, offender using drugs, victim drinking), and *incident characteristic* variables (offender CTS, victim injury, child present) were utilized.

4.3.9.1. Logistic Regression on Who Called the Police. Logistic regression on the variable “who called the police” did not yield any statistically significant models for demographic variables, substance use, incident characteristics, or a combination of these.

4.3.9.2. Calling the Police Immediately During the Abusive Incident. Logistic regression on this variables produced no models which were statistically significant, either individually or in combination.

4.3.9.3. Victim Wanted Offender Arrested. In the bivariate analysis presented above, victims who wanted the police to arrest the offender were more likely to be Black, poverty level, young, and to have experienced more severe violence (as measured by the CTS). Substance use by offender or victim, victim injury, and the presence of children did not significantly influence the desire for offender arrest. These findings are generally supported by logistic regression analysis.

As seen in Table 28, following page, the demographic model indicates that both race and age are significant predictors of victims wanting offenders arrested; neither substance use (Model 2) nor incident characteristics (Model 3) are significantly associated with this variable.²⁴ When all of the variables from the three models are combined into a single model, race remains a significant predictor, and the offender’s quantity of alcohol consumed at the incident (as measured by number of drinks) becomes a significant predictor. However, it is necessary to interpret the combined model with considerable caution since it is based on a small

²⁴ The offender’s level of violence as measured by the CTS (Conflict Tactics Scale) is close to being significant ($p = .0517$). When the CTS was dichotomized into nonc/minor vs. severe, the p value was significant, but there was no improvement in the significance of the overall model.

Table 28. Logistic Regression on Victims Who Want Offenders Arrested, Three Models

| | <u>B</u> | S.E. | p | Exp(B) |
|---|----------|-------|-------|--------|
| Model 1: Victim Demographic ^a | | | | |
| Marital status | .4272 | .2955 | .1483 | 1.5329 |
| Race | -.8344 | .3398 | .0141 | .4341 |
| Age | -.0541 | .0181 | .0126 | .9559 |
| Education | -.1489 | .1485 | .3159 | .8616 |
| Income | -.0008 | .0005 | .1061 | .9992 |
| Model 2: Substance Use ^b | | | | |
| Offender # of drinks | .1437 | .1146 | .2097 | 1.1546 |
| Offender drunk | -.2557 | .5767 | .6574 | .7744 |
| Offender using drugs | -.3780 | .5033 | .4527 | .6852 |
| Victim drinking | -.3685 | .4325 | .3943 | .6918 |
| Model 3: Incident Characteristic ^c | | | | |
| Offender CTS | .6147 | .3160 | .0517 | 1.8491 |
| Children present | .2448 | .2783 | .3789 | 1.2774 |
| Victim injury | .0883 | .2797 | .7524 | 1.0923 |

^aLog likelihood = 298.87, $\chi^2 = 20.20$, $p \leq .01$

^bLog likelihood = 130.04, $\chi^2 = 3.78$, $p \leq .50$

^cLog likelihood = 321.81, $\chi^2 = 5.91$, $p \leq .12$

number of cases (N=57, since the regression analysis allows for no missing information in the cases selected). In sum, based on logistic regression analysis, the likelihood of a victim wanting the offender arrested is increased when the victim is Black and, perhaps, when the offender has multiple drinks.

4.3.10. Summary of Presenting Incident Characteristics. Among the dominant characteristics of the presenting incident is the role played by the offender's drinking. A majority of women reported that their partners were drinking or drunk at the time of the abusive incident, and his drinking was the most common cause of the conflict which led to the violence which resulted in a call to the police. Most of these calls were made by the victims themselves, but about one third were made by someone else – often, but not always, at the victim's request. When victims asked someone else to call the police on their behalf, it was almost as likely to be a child as a neighbor or friend. The modal amount of time women waited before calling the police was between half an hour and an hour and, for most, calling the police was an easy decision. Women tended to call the police both because of what the offender had already done, and out of fear of what he might do if the police were not called. Slightly over two-thirds of the victims wanted the police to remove the offender from the home, including almost one-third of the sample who wanted him arrested at the time they called the police. Very few women argued against the arrest of the offender when this was the action taken.

5. Summary, Discussion, and Implications

The focus of this research has been the role of substance use in affecting police utilization by abused women.

5.1. Summary

Police, more than any other community resource or agency, are virtually always available and used by women for intervention in domestic violence; law enforcement personnel respond to abusive situations far in excess of any other social agency. Although there is an extensive body of research focused on the police response to spouse abuse, there has been little empirical investigation of the factors associated with abused women calling the police for assistance. A conservative estimate is that half of abused women never call the police for help for domestic assaults; among those who do call the police, most do not call for every incident. Based on previous research, four factors generally appear to increase the probability of a woman calling the police for assistance during a domestic assault: (a) a previous history of violence, (b) the severity of the assault, (c) the use of weapons, and (d) alcohol consumption. This research finds considerable support for the influence of alcohol, particularly offender drunkenness in escalating the frequency of calls to the police, and some support for an association between abuse severity and police utilization.²⁵ In general, demographic characteristics are not associated with an increased frequency of police utilization. There is mixed evidence on whether children's presence increases the likelihood of women calling the police.

²⁵ Since this research was limited to misdemeanor spouse abuse, most incidents involving weapons would not have been captured within the sample; these cases were more likely to have been classified as felonies.

The extensive body of empirical research investigating the association between substance use and domestic violence has generally found a contributory rather than a directly causal connection. Various investigations of this connection have produced mixed and often conflicting results on the relationships between substance use and the frequency, incidence and severity of spouse abuse. Some of the inconsistencies can be attributed to sample differences (e.g. clinical versus national surveys), while others are more directly related to different procedures in operationalizing substance use. The majority of the research on substance use has focused on alcohol rather than illicit drug use and, within the alcohol-related research, there is wide variation in definitions (e.g. use, abuse, alcoholism). Despite very different methodological procedures across studies, there is general consensus that the majority of abusive incidents are not caused by alcohol, nor are most alcoholics spouse abusers; at best, some studies indicate that some aspects of alcohol consumption (e.g. drunkenness, excessive consumption) may be related to a higher incidence or severity of abusive incidents. Some evidence suggests that women who are heavy drinkers are at increased risk of spouse abuse, but direct causal connections are unclear since the male partners of women who drink heavily are usually very heavy drinkers themselves.

The focus of this report has been on substance use characteristics of spouse abusers and their victims, using data obtained from 419 women involved in misdemeanor-level incidents of spouse abuse. Women in this sample were almost equally likely to be married or cohabiting, and had a mean age of 30.5 years old. One third of the sample had not completed high school, approximately half were employed full time and over one-third were at the poverty level. The mean length of relationship was 7.6 years for married couples and approximately 1.6 years for cohabiting couples. The data cannot be generalized to the entire range of spouse abuse

because very serious incidents – e.g. those at the felony level – were not included. Moreover, all cases in this study involved a call to the police, usually made by the victim herself but occasionally by someone else on the victim's behalf. Occasionally, but not often, the call to the police was made by someone independent of the victim's request.

Abused women in this study reported very heavy alcohol use by their partners, and relatively heavy use for themselves, compared to national patterns. Over half of the men, and about one-fifth of the women could be classified as "high" or "binge" drinkers. Almost three-fourths of the women who are high/binge drinkers were with men who are high/ binge drinkers. Slightly over one-fourth of the men used cocaine at least once a month, with a similar frequency of marijuana use reported for over one-third of the abusers. Less than one-third of the victims believed that their partners did not have a problem with alcohol or drugs (compared to about one-fifth who believed they had a problem with both). At the time of the presenting incident, almost two-thirds of the offenders were drinking; among those who were drinking, over half were drunk. Alcohol consumption at the presenting incident averaged 6.7 drinks. One-fifth of the abusers were using drugs (primarily cocaine or marijuana) before or during the presenting incident. Among victims, approximately one-third were drinking at the presenting incident; fewer than one in ten women said they were drunk.

The fact that women do not call the police for every incident of abuse is highlighted in a comparison of the history of abuse frequencies, and the frequency with which women have called the police. Women reported being threatened, on average, 4.4 times in a six-month period and 22.5 times over the course of the relationship. They reported being hit by the offender an average of 3.5 times in the six months which preceded the presenting incident, and 10.4 times over the length of the relationship. On the other hand, women have called the

police, on average, only 1.8 times in the six month period and 3.3 times over the entire length of the relationship.

This analysis investigated police utilization in three time periods: the total length of the relationship, the six months prior to the presenting incident, and at the time of the presenting incident. For the six month time period, and for the total relationship, a number of conclusions are supported by both bivariate and linear regression analysis. Three variables, combining substance use and abuse history, are consistently associated with the frequency of victims calling the police at both the six month time period and for the total relationship: abuser frequency drunk, abuser pot use, and frequency of hitting the victim. Some variables are generally associated with the frequency of calling the police, but there are occasional differences between the bivariate and regression analysis, or differences between the six month and total relationship analysis. These variables include: victim race; threats against the victim, other family members or property; damaging property; and social class/income. Some variables are rarely associated with frequency of calling the police. These include age, victim-offender relationship, the abuser's Drinking Index (the measure of quantity-frequency of alcohol consumption) and any of the variables related to the victim's alcohol or drug use.

Multiple characteristics relevant to the presenting incident were investigated. Drinking was identified, both in victim interviews and in police reports, as the most common cause of the conflict -- which led to the violence which led to the call to the police, far exceeding any other identified cause. Women were more afraid of their partners when the men were drinking: women who were most afraid of their partners, when drinking, were those who had been threatened and hit the most often. In general, most women who called the police did so for a combination of reasons: punitive, because of what he had already done; and preventive, fear of

what he might do if the police were not called. Victims reported that they had called the police out of fear of what he might do (vs. because of what he had already done) when their partners were drinking at the incident, when they were under the influence of alcohol, when they were using drugs, and when they were using both alcohol and drugs. Substance use by either the offender or the victim at the presenting incident was not related to who called the police, how rapidly the police were called, whether the decision to call the police was an easy or difficult one, whether the victim wanted the offender arrested, or whether the victim argued against the offender's arrest.

Data analysis presented here supports and extends previous research which has found relationships between alcohol use, spouse abuse and police utilization. These data indicate that male drunkenness and marijuana use are statistically significant predictors of how frequently women will call the police for assistance for incidents of domestic violence. Substance use by victims has virtually no impact on police utilization, but alcohol and drug use by male offenders is related to police usage in multiple ways.

In the analyses for the six month and total relationship frequencies of calling the police, offender drunkenness was a consistent predictor variable, but it was not predictive for the presenting incident. There are two primary explanations for this apparent inconsistency. First, since the sample includes only cases where the police were called for an abusive incident a control group (i.e. cases in which the police were not called) is not available, and any given independent variable is less predictive. Second, simple probability suggests that in the most cases offender drunkenness during an abusive incident does not result in a call to the police; it is only in the long run that offender drunkenness increases the overall probability that a woman will call the police for abusive incidents. That is, many women have been abused multiple

times by male offenders who drink almost every day and who are drunk most of the time they are drinking; it is only minority of the time that women will call the police for help.

5.2. Discussion and Implications

Drinking and drug use by abusers is related to the violence which women experience, to their level of fear, and to women's use of the police. In the long run, male substance abuse escalates police utilization by abused women. The fact that alcohol and violence are often related would come as no surprise to any police officer who has responded to domestic violence calls. While the extent of current training of police which examines the multiple and complex relationships between alcohol and violence is unknown, it is reasonable to speculate that police training in most jurisdictions would be enhanced by greater attention to this issue. Moreover, it is important to accurately describe the significant relationships without becoming enmeshed in overly broad generalizations. Even though offender drinking is the most common cause of the conflict (in this research), this precipitating factor still accounts for less than half of the incidents reported to the police.

These findings suggest that the police response to spouse abuse could be strengthened in a number of ways: (a) through examination and review of current policies which define the police response to abusive incidents, (b) through close cooperation with community service agencies which deal with substance abuse, and (c) through appropriate involvement with the judicial system in the processing of substance-abusing batterers. It is not the legal role of police to promote reduction in substance use, abuse, or how such use is woven into the dynamics of family violence. Nonetheless, there are small but perhaps significant steps which police might take to have an impact on these problems. For example, if police currently

distribute an information card to victims (e.g. with phone numbers for shelters, victim assistance, legal aid and similar programs), it would be a step forward to also include information on substance abuse agencies in the area (e.g. AA, Al-Anon, treatment centers). There is no reason to think that most offenders or victims would benefit from such information; most alcoholics never get help for their addiction, nor do most partners of alcoholics ever get help for themselves. However, some would. Another possible strategy for police is to determine if conflict over the offender's drinking was the precipitating incident for the abuse, and then suggesting to the victim that immediate confrontation -- while the offender is under the influence of alcohol -- is potentially dangerous.

Closer cooperation with community substance abuse agencies would be invaluable. Ideally, police training should include substance abuse personnel who could address the best ways to deal with intoxicated abusers and with their victims. Such training might focus as much on learning ways to educate female victims to refrain from pointless confrontation, as on ways to encourage a reduction in male abusers' substance-related violent behavior. This suggestion may imply that the problem of substance-related domestic violence is the equal responsibility of both parties. It is not. Much more needs to be learned about the how and why conflicts over drinking are such frequent precipitants of abuse.²⁶ However, in the meantime, it is a very simple matter to suggest to victims that they are safer in not arguing over their partners' drinking; the advisability of this strategy would require assessment by substance use professionals. Similarly, greater interaction between the police and substance use agencies could produce a variety of training scenarios which incorporate single vs. multi-substance use

²⁶ Although a very plausible explanation is that challenges to male drinking are perceived as challenges to his power. Even among non-abusive males, there is no evidence that requests or suggestions or demands to "not drink so much" are very effective and, in fact, may often stimulate defiance and conflicts. This, however, is speculation.

(by offenders, victims, and both) and how such use influences both aggressive behavior and the response to authority. Police training might include better preparation for how to respond to male abusers who blame their violence on alcohol, or to victims who excuse the violence because "he had too much to drink."

There is a paucity of research which addresses the degree to which judicial processing of batterers is influenced by substance use variables.²⁷ Within the constraints of state law, magistrates and judges have some leeway in the disposition of domestic violence cases. Police data, however imperfect, may be far more comprehensive in identifying the frequency of calls to a particular address, the severity of the incidents which they investigate, and related variables of alcohol and drug use. Police departments, armed with the best local data available, may be in a position to influence the courts to treat substance-related spouse abuse differently than cases where this is not a problem. As the analysis in this report has demonstrated, police observation and questioning at the scene of the domestic assault is highly correlated with victims' reports of alcohol and substance use. Such data can and should be routinely available to the courts for consideration. However, based on earlier discussion, courts should consider the chronic/long-term patterns of substance use and spouse abuse for a particular case rather than relying on the characteristics of a single incident.

In this locale, spouse abuse cases are processed through a domestic violence court where offenders are often assigned to a batterers' treatment program (NOVA, New Options

²⁷ The Charlotte SARP (Hirschel et al., 1991) collected some data on the processing of citation and arrest cases through the judicial system. Among the victims interviewed, only one-third (35.4%) of the citation or arrest cases were prosecuted. Police reports, available to the court, indicated substance use by both offender and victim at the presenting incident in one of three categories: "no apparent use," "apparent use," "and under the influence." While the judicial processing of spouse abuse cases is beyond the scope of this report, initial analysis finds that substance use by males is not related to whether the case is prosecuted. In contrast, victim substance use at the presenting incident is significantly correlated with a diminished probability of prosecution (39.7% prosecution among non-substance using women, 23.8% among women reported by police indicating either "apparent use" or "under the influence" ($X^2 = 6.32, p < .05$).

for Violent Action) or, on occasion, directly to substance abuse treatment. The batterers' treatment program has the option of making their own referrals of abusers for substance abuse treatment, with the stipulation that completion of this treatment is required before the court-ordered batterer's treatment program may be started. In theory, failure to complete either program -- once ordered -- is grounds for sending the case back to the court for disposition. While tracking data (from the domestic violence court to NOVA and/or to substance treatment and then back to NOVA) are not available, the general consensus is that such referrals often "fall through the cracks" -- with abusers completing neither substance abuse treatment nor batterers program treatment -- with few, if any, consequences.²⁸

Finally, any progress made on reducing substance-related spouse abuse could have enormous impact on children. As these data have shown, children are present in the home during the majority of incidents which police have investigated; they have been witness to the incident and have often seen alcohol and other drugs being used and abused. Other analysis has shown that the presence of children has no impact on the incidence or the severity of abuse, nor on the alcohol consumption patterns at the abusive incident.²⁹ Analysis presented here finds that the presence of children has remarkably little impact on the characteristics of police utilization; children simply do not make a difference.

It is critical to carefully assess what police can reasonably do to diminish the problem of substance-related spouse abuse. On the one hand, it is important to not place law enforcement

²⁸ Substance abuse agencies and spouse abuse agencies often do not work in concert with each other due in part to philosophical differences, issues of confidentiality, and basic problems of tracking. Cf. Collins et al. (1997) for a careful review and discussion, as well as current research by Collins, supported by NIJ.

²⁹ Data in the original Charlotte SARP, and in this analysis, are not able to address the question of whether children are harmed by witnessing parental violence, although there is a growing body of literature which suggests that this is the case. Data analysis from this sample does find that the presence of children has little impact on the frequency, incidence, or severity of spouse abuse incidents, nor on the alcohol consumption patterns during the incident. Cf. Hutchison, I. W. (1999); and Hutchison & Hirschel (1996).

officers into the role of substance abuse counselors or social workers. On the other hand, the police have greater opportunity than any other community agency to intervene in incidents -- as they are occurring -- which involve both spouse abuse and substance use.

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