LOCALLY INITIATED RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP: THE FRAMINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS POLICE DEPARTMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND EVALUATION, INC.

Robert Apsler, Ph.D.
Captain Steven Carl
Michele R. Cummins

Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.
21-C Cambridge Street
Burlington, MA 01803
(781)-270-6613

Framingham Police Department
1 William Welch Way
Framingham, MA 01702

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Robert Apsler, Ph.D., is Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School and President of Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc. He has served as Principal or Co-Principal Investigator on numerous grants and contracts from many federal, state, and local agencies. The bulk of his work over the last 25 years has been in the highway safety and substance abuse areas. Other research projects have focused on policing and domestic violence.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Locally Initiated Research Partnership: The Framingham, M.A. Police Department and Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc. began on January 1, 1997 with the following goal:

- *To develop and establish a collaborative research program between the Framingham Police Department and Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.*

While working with the police, SSRE learned about an innovative domestic violence intervention that had been implemented by the police. Discussions between the police and SSRE led to the current project, which highlighted an evaluation of that domestic violence intervention. From the very beginning, both the Framingham Police Department and SSRE committed themselves to a true collaborative effort in which both partners were equals and fully involved in the research process.

Even before reaching the half-way point in the project, the Partnership had targeted several critical areas for research and began the work of creating research programs to pursue them. Literature reviews were conducted, pilot studies designed, and proposals written to obtain further funding.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESEARCH

AN EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION OF THE USE OF CELLULAR PHONES TO ENFORCE RESTRAINING ORDERS

In August 1995, the Framingham Police Department began distributing cellular telephones to victims of domestic violence who had taken out restraining orders and were judged to be at high risk for further violence. The rationale behind the program was that cellular phones could provide an immediate connection between victim and police when a threat was detected. The phones were expected to be effective even if they failed to deter perpetrators. By calling the

police as soon as they detected a threat, victims would be able to minimize the extent of the abuse and simplify police efforts to apprehend perpetrators.

An evaluation of the program was designed in which female victims of domestic violence would be randomly assigned to one of two groups. Victims in the *experimental* group would be given a cellular phone with which they could call the police in an emergency. Victims in the *control* group would not receive phones.

The initial results were completely unexpected. First, there were not as many adult female victims of domestic partner abuse as anticipated. Second, almost none of the adult female victims of violence from their domestic partners met all the criteria for selection into the study. Some women wanted to get back together with the offender either immediately or sooner than our six-month criterion. Others did not expect to be abused again, and some did not want a cellular phone. Responses to other items on the pretest showed that most women felt that they could easily call the police if necessary – they did not need a cellular phone.

The results were exciting because of their counterintuitive nature. Both the police and SSRE researchers expected that most victims of domestic violence would fit the stereotypic profile of a severely abused woman desperate to escape her abuser. In fact, the results showed that few women fit that profile. Instead, most victims were victims of less severe abuse. Consequently, it was decided to continue collecting information in order to learn more about the different types of victims. The information provided by these women resulted in the three reports that follow.

The research was conducted in Framingham, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb of roughly 65,000 citizens with a police department of 111 officers (including the chief and all supervisors).

Framingham, well-known because of the long-standing *Framingham Heart Study,* closely represents the United States in its demographic composition.

Subjects for the three reports consisted of consecutive female victims who came to the attention of the police because of a telephone call requesting police intervention in a domestic violence incident involving a partner over the course of one year. These women were subsequently interviewed by members of the Department's domestic violence unit as soon as was practical following the initial incident – usually within a day or two. When possible, officers interviewed the victims in person

Three members of the police department's domestic violence unit interviewed 100 adult female victims. Most of the victims (72%) called for police help themselves, while in the other 28% of the cases, someone other than the victim called the police. Half (53%) of the victims were living with the abuser at the time of the incident and half (47%) were not. Just over half (58%) of the victims reported that children under the age of 18 were living with them.

DIFFERENCES AMONG FEMALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WHO COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE POLICE

This study was an exploratory effort to fill in the gaps of current knowledge about female victims of domestic partner violence who come to the attention of the police. Unlike previous research, this study sought to describe the entire population of domestic victims seen by the police. Subjects were identified on the basis of their having been in contact with the police rather than indirectly through some other means of recruitment.

It was expected that women who come to the attention of police would expect further abuse, be frightened, have experienced previous abuse, and want to separate from their abuser. Some subjects in the current study did indeed match this description. A quarter of the sample reported that it was either *Somewhat Likely* or *Very Likely* that their assailant would abuse them

again in the future. These victims expected that they would be seriously injured as a result of this future abuse, and they wanted a permanent separation from the offender. Many other victims in the study differed markedly from expectations. Over half of the sample believed that future abuse was unlikely; were not at all or only slightly afraid of the offender; expected that if they were abused again, they would not be harmed seriously. A fifth of the victims wanted to return immediately to the offender.

One of the questions raised by this study is whether greater efforts should be directed at tailoring the police response to the nature of the domestic violence incident. If police interaction precedes victims accessing shelters or the judicial system, are there steps that the police can initiate to prevent the escalation of violence? It may be unreasonable to expect a universal strategy, such as mandatory arrest, to be effective when applied to fundamentally different types of domestic violence incidents. Another fundamental question is whether the first-time incidents of domestic violence encountered in this study were isolated events, or the beginning of a cycle of abuse.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE BY VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SEEN AT A SUBURBAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Existing research about the perceptions domestic violence victims hold of police is limited. It generally includes only those victims who have accessed shelters as a result of their situations; only one, to our knowledge, studies victims who came in contact with the police. Other research is limited in its small sample size. Nevertheless, the research does suggest that victims' perceptions of the police can have an important impact on their behavior. Overall, battered women tend to view the police as somewhat helpful. But differences in findings among populations studied suggest that victims' perceptions may vary depending on the severity of

abuse the victims suffered. Those who access the police by calling 911 reported more favorable opinions than victims who accessed a victim assistance program.

The goal of this study was to add to the sparse body of knowledge about domestic violence victims' perceptions of the police. The research addresses what victims wanted from the police, the extent to which they perceived that they obtained what they wanted, and how satisfied they were with the actions of the police. Specifically, the study asked victims if they were satisfied in the assistance provided by the police in obtaining restraining orders, counseling, and arrest of the batterer.

Taken together, the victims' responses to several items provide surprisingly strong support for police actions across the wide range of women who came to the attention of a suburban police department as a result of domestic violence calls. Victims' direct ratings of the helpfulness of the police were very positive. Even stronger support for the police resulted from a question asking if the victims would be willing to call for police help with a similar incident if it should arise in the future.

Questions about specific types of assistance produced mixed results. The police were seen as very helpful by those who wanted help obtaining or enforcing a restraining order. On the other hand, many victims who wanted help finding counseling faulted the police for failing to provide that help.

Victims' willingness to be open and honest with a police officer interviewing them about their reactions to other police officers remains a nagging issue. A few victims presented very negative reactions to the police, demonstrating that they, at least, felt free to state their opinions. A pair of items asking about previous involvement with the police provides more evidence, albeit indirect, that many victims gave honest responses to these interviewers. When victims

were asked if the police had ever been called before due to a domestic violence incident involving the current offender, 29 said that they had. Twenty-eight of these victims then answered a follow-up question asking how helpful the police had been during that incident. While generally positive, the responses were considerably less enthusiastic about the police performance than those given to the question about the police actions in the current incident. Fifty-four percent of these victims said that the police had been *Very Helpful*, compared to 75% who gave this response to the current incident. Eighteen percent rated the police as *Not Helpful* in the previous incident, compared to 6% for the current incident.

SOCIAL SUPPORTS CAN BE HELPFUL BUT MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The purpose of the present study was to begin exploring social supports in relationship to domestic violence in the lives of victims at the time they came to the attention of the police. These women represent a broad population in that they did not necessarily suffer severe abuse, as did the usual subjects of studies on social supports. The most basic questions posed by this study were whether these victims had social supports and, if so, whether they perceived these social supports as being helpful. Another fundamental question explored similarities and differences between victims with and without social supports and how these victims compared to those in previous studies.

Perceived helpful social supports may be far more common among victims of domestic violence than generally appreciated. Some previous studies found few social supports available to victims of domestic violence. Typically, these studies interviewed victims who had made use of domestic violence shelters after experiencing severe levels of violence. Subjects in the present study represent a much broader range of incidents with a greater range of levels of

violence. Not only did most of the victims seen by the police have social supports available to them, but in many cases, they perceived those supports to be very helpful.

The presence of helpful social supports was associated with several positive factors. Victims who possessed helpful social supports were more likely than those without to have called the police themselves than to have had someone else call the police. Overall, victims with helpful social supports appeared to be at less risk for future violence from their assailant. They believed that future violence was less likely than did victims without helpful social supports, and they were less likely to expect future injuries to be severe.

Unfortunately, the existence of helpful social supports is not enough to resolve victims' problems with domestic violence. Even with the assistance of helpful social supports, some victims remained very afraid of their assailant and expected to be seriously harmed in the future. More of the victims without helpful social supports expected that the injury would be *Very Serious*, but there were still many victims with helpful social supports who also expected to be seriously injured in the future. Over a quarter of the victims who had helpful social supports reported that they were *Very Afraid* of the assailant.

These findings further document the well-known fact that domestic violence can be an extraordinarily difficult situation from which to escape. Resources, such as helpful social supports, that might be very useful in many other situations can prove inadequate when it comes to escaping a committed assailant.

OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Partnership developed the following research projects and sought funding for their implementation.

OFFICER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The Partnership designed an evaluation of an officer exchange program that was being planned by the Framingham and Chelsea Police Departments. The exchange program was similar to common private industry training. The premise was that exposing officers to other progressive departments could instill creativity and insight with respect to delivery of police services.

THE BROKEN WINDOWS THEORY APPLIED TO HIGHWAY SAFETY

The Partnership is currently negotiating with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration/U.S. Department of Transportation to test one of their long-standing, fundamental assumptions. NHTSA has assumed that vigorous enforcement of traffic violations will result in an overall reduction of all types of crime - not just traffic offenses.

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF NON-EMERGENCY 911 CALLS

Reducing the impact of non-emergency 911 calls is one of the Framingham Police Department's top priorities. Consequently, the Partnership is pursuing two approaches to dealing with the problem. The first is a variation of what other cities are implementing as an attempt to encourage the public to use 911 only for life-threatening emergencies. Framingham's approach differs from those on which NIJ is currently focusing in that it will educate the public to use an existing police business line for non-emergencies, rather than creating a 311 system or a new non-emergency seven-digit number.

The second approach that the Partnership will pursue recognizes that many non-emergency calls will continue to be made to 911, even if an education program aimed at diverting these calls to a different number is relatively successful. Therefore, the Partnership also seeks to improve the ways in which 911 dispatchers deal with non-emergency calls.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS IN POLICE DEPARTMENTS

The overall goal of this research project is to learn about the relationship between organizational factors and police stress. Specific objectives include learning:

- What are the primary sources of organizational stress?
- What is the relative importance of organizational and operational factors as they relate to stress for the police?
- How does organizational stress in police departments differ from that in other organizations?
- How do officers differ in their reactions to organizational stress?
- What is the relationship between subjective stress and overt symptoms?
- What types of interventions can most effectively deal with organizational stress?

BACKGROUND

The *Locally Initiated Research Partnership: The Framingham, M.A. Police Department and Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.* began on January 1, 1997 with the following goal:

- *To develop and establish a collaborative research program between the Framingham Police Department and Social Science Research and Evaluation,Inc.*

Collaboration between the Framingham Police Department and Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc. (SSRE) first began several years earlier as a result of SSRE's role as the evaluator of the Framingham Prevention Coalition. This coalition was a partnership funded by the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention that included the Framingham Police Department, the public school system in Framingham, the local hospital, many Framingham social service agencies, and interested individuals. The Framingham police helped SSRE interpret and present the findings from annual surveys of Framingham high school students. Chief Brent Larrabee participated in several presentations of the student survey findings.

While working with the police on the student surveys, SSRE learned about an innovative domestic violence intervention that had been implemented by the police. Discussions between the police and SSRE led to the current project, which highlighted an evaluation of that domestic violence intervention.

The announcement of NIJ funding possibilities for a partnership led to further discussion of other research needs within the police department with which SSRE could help. Both the police department and SSRE quickly realized that circumstances were nearly ideal for a successful research partnership. These circumstances included:

- The police department expressed a great need for conducting research. It had conducted almost no research or evaluation studies and had only recently obtained funds to begin analyzing its crime reports.

- The Police Chief and one of his lieutenants strongly supported research and evaluation and were committed to the development and implementation of a long-term research program.

- The demographics and other characteristics of Framingham were representative of many U.S. cities. Thus the results of the research Partnership would have broad applicability to other police departments.

- The department's highest research priorities involved issues that affect virtually all other police departments and also many areas of the criminal justice system.

From the very beginning, both the Framingham Police Department and SSRE committed themselves to a true collaborative effort in which both partners were equals and fully involved in the research process.

DEVELOPMENT OF A RESEARCH AGENDA

The Partnership set two goals related to the development of a research agenda:

- *To identify and prioritize the Department's research needs.*

- *To create a research plan that spells out specific steps for implementing a research program that addresses the Department's research needs.*

SSRE mistakenly anticipated the need for a long, involved process during which SSRE researchers would help the police begin thinking about their research needs. In actuality, the police were well ahead of SSRE in having already identified many pressing research issues. Discussions between SSRE and the police quickly elicited even more research needs. In fact, progress in this area far exceeded everyone's most ambitious wishes. Even before reaching the half-way point in the project, the Partnership had targeted several critical areas for research and began the work of creating research programs to pursue them. Literature reviews were conducted, pilot studies designed, and proposals written to obtain further funding.

It is reasonable to expect serious problems in a partnership between a police department and research organization. The two parties, after all, have very different training and experience. In

this case, however, the working relationship between the Partners was excellent. Two major reasons for the absence of problems were:

- All aspects of the project were jointly developed by the Partners. Researchers avoided, for example, presenting a detailed research plan for approval by the Police and opted instead for full participation in its development by all parties.

- A variety of efforts were made by both Partners to familiarize one another with their work and points of view. For example, project meetings were held both at the research offices and at the Police Department. Also, SSRE staff participated in several ride-alongs with police officers on patrol.

So many research needs were identified that the related goal of prioritizing the research needs became paramount. A three-part strategy was identified consisting of the following:

- Implementation of the domestic violence study proposed as the centerpiece of the NIJ proposal.

- The design of several other research studies with implementation dependent on a multitude of circumstances that would dictate the feasibility of each study.

- The pursuit of additional funding that would allow the continuation of the Partnership after NIJ funding ended.

Each of these three areas of activity is described in detail below.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESEARCH

AN EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION OF THE USE OF CELLULAR PHONES TO ENFORCE RESTRAINING ORDERS

Background

In August 1995, the Framingham Police Department began distributing cellular telephones to victims of domestic violence who had taken out restraining orders and were judged to be at high risk for further violence. The cellular phones were programmed so they only allowed calls to be made either to the Framingham Police Department or to the State Police.

The rationale behind the program was that cellular phones could provide an immediate connection between victim and police when a threat was detected. If the perpetrator knew of the

phone's existence and capability, then one of Cohen and Felson's (1979) three conditions conducive to predatory criminal acts would be eliminated – "the absence of capable guardians against crime." In essence, the police would always be present if the victim could summon them in an instant. However, the phones were expected to be effective even if they failed to deter perpetrators. By calling the police as soon as they detected a threat, victims would be able to minimize the extent of the abuse and simplify police efforts to apprehend perpetrators.

Early indications were that the cellular phone program was extremely successful. Police management believed that it increased victims' level of perceived safety and also led to increased numbers of arrests of violators of restraining orders. Initially, patrol officers resisted the program, fearing an increase in paperwork and an overload of calls from panicky women. With experience, the officers found the increased paperwork was negligible, and the new calls led to increased arrests. Callers were able to pinpoint the whereabouts of offenders who were otherwise difficult to locate. The end result was an apparent increase in officer job satisfaction deriving directly from information provided over the cellular phones.

Because of these positive anecdotes, the Partnership decided to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the cellular phone intervention. It was predicted that:

- Women with phone would feel safer than women without phones
- Women with phones would travel from their residences more frequently than women without phones.
- Women with phones would experience fewer instances of threats and violence than women without phones.
- Arrest rates of offenders in the group with phones would be higher than those in the group without phones.

Methods

The study design involved randomly assigning female victims of domestic violence to one of two groups. Victims in the *experimental* group would be given a cellular phone with which they could call the police in an emergency. Victims in the *control* group would not receive phones.

Women came to the attention of the Framingham Police Department when they were a victim of a reported domestic assault or a violation of a restraining order. Because of a mandatory arrest policy governing domestic violence incidents, offenders were arrested and a case number assigned. Women judged to be at high risk for further violence were given a cellular phone and not consider for the research study. Women at less risk were considered as potential subjects and then reviewed against the following selection criteria. The women had to:

- Live in Framingham and be 21 years old or older.
- Have a traditional telephone but not a cellular phone.
- Have a history of abuse by the offender and expect to be abused again.
- Expect to be contacted by the offender.
- Have or plan to get a restraining order.
- State that they did not want to live with the offender in the foreseeable future – for a period of at least six months.
- Have an interest in traveling away from their residence.
- Be willing to accept a cellular phone.

After every reported domestic violence incident, a member of the Framingham Police Department Domestic Violence Unit followed up with the victim either in-person or via the telephone. During this contact, the officer administered a questionnaire that served both as a screening instrument for the study and also as a pretest. It was expected that pairs of women would be matched on the basis of their responses to the screening items. One member of each

pair would then be randomly assigned to the experimental condition and the other to the control condition. Follow-up questionnaires administered one, three, and six months after women entered the study were expected to provide the necessary information for determining the effectiveness of the cellular phones.

Results

The initial results were completely unexpected. First, there were not as many adult female victims of domestic partner abuse as anticipated. Domestic violence incidents often involved other types of relationships among family members. Second, almost none of the adult female victims of violence from their domestic partners met all the criteria for selection into the study. Some women wanted to get back together with the offender either immediately or sooner than our six-month criterion. Others did not expect to be abused again, and some did not want a cellular phone. Responses to other items on the pretest showed that most women felt that they could easily call the police if necessary – they did not need a cellular phone.

The bottom line was that we could not conduct the planned study due to an insufficient number of subjects. One alternative was to make the selection criteria less strict. This option was rejected because the basic point of the study was to help women who were terrified of further violence and wanted to escape from the offender.

Conclusion

The results of the study were both disappointing and exciting. They were disappointing because of the impossibility of conducting the intended study. The Partnership was eager to learn the results of an evaluation of the cellular phone intervention, but now this was impossible.

On the other hand, the results were exciting because of their counterintuitive nature. Both the police and SSRE researchers expected that most victims of domestic violence would fit the

stereotypic profile of a severely abused woman desperate to escape her abuser. In fact, the results showed that few women fit that profile. Instead, most victims were victims of less severe abuse. Consequently, it was decided to continue collecting information from female victims of domestic violence in order to learn more about the different types of victims. The information provided by these women resulted in the three reports that follow.

DIFFERENCES AMONG FEMALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WHO COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE POLICE

A fundamental role of our police system is to halt violence and initiate long-term resolution through the criminal justice system that will prevent future occurrences and punish perpetrators. For the police to fulfill this role, the crime must necessarily be reported to them. Yet, several studies have estimated that only small percentages of domestic violence assaults, one of the most common acts of violence against women, are reported to the police. Using the National Crime Victimization Survey data, Bachman and Coker (1995) estimated that 56% of battering incidents are reported to police. Kantor and Straus's (1990) figures are much lower. They estimate that as few as 7% to 14% of intimate partner assaults are reported to the police.

Who are these female victims of domestic partner violence who come to the attention of the police? Existing information is sparse and indirect. Berk et al. (1984) explored some of the factors that influence the decision of both victims and bystanders to call the police, and several studies have documented overrepresentation by lower socioeconomic groups among victims seen by the police (Black, 1980; Hamberger and Hastings, 1993). Victims obtained from other settings - not from the police - have been asked about their use of the police. For example, Pagelow (1981) interviewed women in shelters and Gondolf and Fisher (1988) and Bowker (1983) located victims through newspapers. Roughly half of the victims in these studies had contacted the police, and these women tended to be the more severely abused victims. Recently,

Wiist and McFarlane (1998) also found a direct relationship between severity of violence and utilization of the police. They studied abused, pregnant, Hispanic patients receiving care in urban public health clinics and found that those who had used the police had experienced more severe abuse during the past year than those who had not. Together, results from these studies suggest that it is the most seriously abused victims of domestic violence who are most likely to come to the attention of the police.

But none of these studies drew their subject samples from the population of *all* domestic violence victims who come to the attention of the police. One study obtained subjects from a population of the most desperate victims, victims who sought safety in shelters. Other studies relied on those victims who saw and responded to newspaper advertisements. Another focused on a specific ethnic group obtaining prenatal care.

Do existing studies provide an accurate description of *all* the victims seen by the police? Do some of these victims experience less severe violence than those who have already been studied? Do they not access shelters or the criminal justice system because they have different expectations of future violence? And how do these women compare to each other?

This study was an exploratory effort to fill in the gaps of current knowledge about female victims of domestic partner violence who come to the attention of the police. Unlike previous research, this study sought to describe the entire population of domestic victims seen by the police. Subjects were identified on the basis of their having been in contact with the police rather than indirectly through some other means of recruitment.

Methods

The study was conducted in Framingham, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb of roughly 65,000 citizens with a police department of 111 officers (including the chief and all supervisors).

Framingham, well-known because of the long-standing *Framingham Heart Study,* closely represents the United States in its demographic composition.

Subjects for the study consisted of consecutive female victims who came to the attention of the police because of a telephone call requesting police intervention in a domestic violence incident involving a partner over the course of one year. These women were subsequently interviewed by members of the Department's domestic violence unit as soon as was practical following the initial incident – usually within a day or two. When possible, officers interviewed the victims in person. If the victim was not readily available for an in-person interview, officers conducted the interview over the telephone.

The interview protocol included multiple-choice questions asking victims about past incidents involving the abuser, the severity of the abuse, their level of fear, and expectations regarding the future.

Several questions were added to the interview protocol after roughly one quarter of the interviews had been completed. Consequently, the number of responses varies from item to item. Finally, the interview protocol was kept quite short in order to obtain the cooperation of both the police officer interviewers and the subjects.

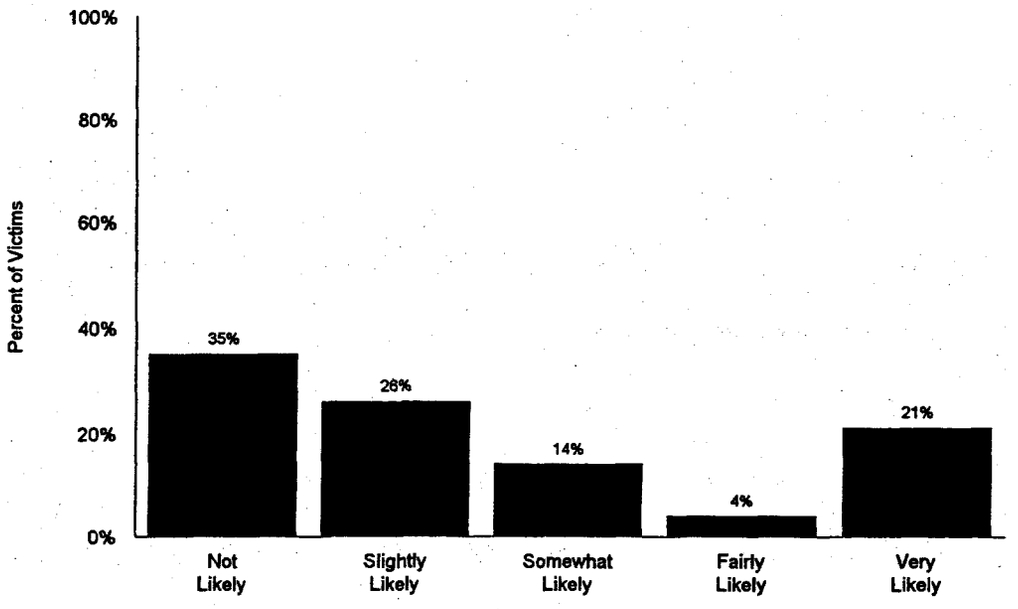
Results

Three members of the police department's domestic violence unit interviewed 100 adult female victims of domestic violence over the course of a year beginning in September 1997. Five of these victims were interviewed on more than one occasion. Only the first interview is included in this report. One-third of the interviews were conducted in-person, while the other two-thirds were conducted over the telephone. Most of the victims (72%) called for police help themselves, while in the other 28% of the cases, someone other than the victim called the police.

Half (53%) of the victims were living with the abuser at the time of the incident and half (47%) were not. Just over half (58%) of the victims reported that children under the age of 18 were living with them.

Expectations of future abuse. Exhibit 1 shows that a fourth of the sample believed that future abuse by the offender was either *fairly likely* or *very likely*. These women constitute the victims on which most research concentrates. They are generally the focus of legislation and regulations aimed at protecting victims of domestic violence and at helping them escape from situations of chronic, severe violence.

Exhibit 1:
Victims' Expectations of Future Abuse by the Offender



However, the most striking result in Exhibit 1 is the number of women at the opposite end of the continuum. Over one-third of the victims stated that future abuse by the offender was *Not Likely*. Another quarter of the victims reported that future violence was only *Slightly Likely*. Combining these two groups shows that fully 61% of the women who answered this item stated

that there was little or no prospect of future violence. This seems to defy the current stereotype of the domestic violence victim as a woman caught in an unending cycle of violence and certainly contradicts the profiles of women who have been the subjects of previous research studies

The unexpected existence of these victims who do not expect future violence challenged our views of who comes to the attention of the police and raised questions about the nature of the police response and the services that would be most useful for them. In order to learn more about these victims, we compared their responses on other interview items with those of victims who expected future violence. We wanted to determine whether answers to other items fit a consistent pattern, or whether expectations of future violence were an aberration. For example, do expectations of future violence correspond with levels of fear and reports of previous abuse in sensible ways.

Fear of the offender. Any victim of violence expecting future violence from the offender would be expected to fear that offender. The situation is less clear for victims not expecting future violence. While they probably were frightened during the violent incident, fear seems inconsistent with a belief that the offender will not harm them in the future. As expected, Exhibit 2 shows that, in general, victims expecting further abuse tended to express fear of the offender, while those believing further abuse was unlikely were unafraid ($X^2=75.8$, $p<.05$). Over three-quarters (78%) of women believing that future abuse was *Fairly* or *Very likely* were *Very afraid* of the offender, and just one of these women was *Not afraid*. The pattern was reversed for women who thought that future abuse was *Not likely*. Only one was *Very afraid*, and 78% were *Not afraid*.

Exhibit 2:
Fear of the Offender by Victims' Expectations of Future Abuse

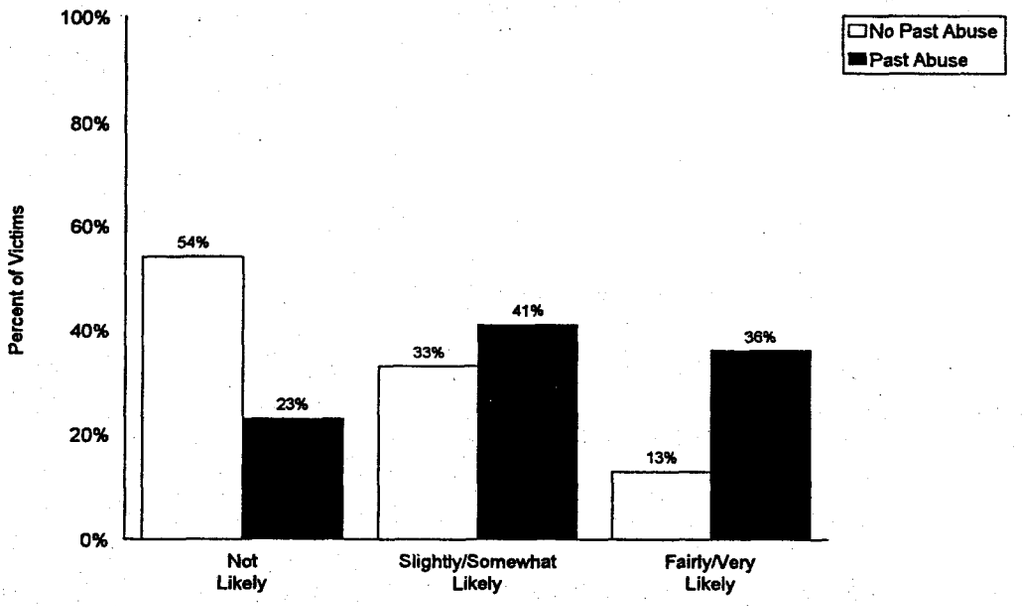
	Likelihood of Future Abuse		
Fear of the Offender	Not Likely	Slightly/Somewhat Likely	Fairly/Very Likely
Not Afraid	78%	22%	4%
Slightly Afraid	6%	24%	0%
Somewhat Afraid	9%	35%	9%
Fairly Afraid	3%	8%	9%
Very Afraid	3%	11%	78%
TOTAL	N = 32	N = 37	N = 23

A similar, strong association exists between expectations of future abuse and estimates of the severity of the future abuse (X^2 =63.2, p<.05). Three-quarters of those victims who believed that future abuse was *Fairly* or *Very likely* also believed that they would be seriously injured by the offender. Conversely, three-quarters of the victims who believed that future abuse was *Not likely* expected that if there were another incident of abuse, it would not injure them seriously.

Previous abuse. How is it possible, when we have come to expect the opposite, that a large number of victims seen by the police do not expect further violence from the perpetrator? The most likely explanation is that they viewed the violence as an isolated incident in contrast to victims of numerous assaults from the same offender who probably realize that violence is likely to happen again. Exhibit 3 shows the relationship between victims' reports of past abuse by the offender and their expectations of future abuse from the same individual. The five response options to the question asking about future abuse are collapsed into three categories: (1) *Not likely*, (2) *Slightly or somewhat likely*, and (3) *Fairly or very likely*. Expectations of future abuse are significantly associated with reports of past abuse by the offender (X^2=7.9, p<.05). Victims who had not previously been abused tended to believe that future abuse was unlikely, while victims with a history of abuse tended to expect that the offender would abuse them again. More

specifically, over half (54%) of the victims who had not been previously abused believed that future abuse was *Not likely*. Only 13% of these victims expected that future abuse was *Fairly* or *Very likely*. Conversely, 23% of previously abused victims stated that future abuse was *Not likely*, while 36% expected that future abuse was *Fairly* or *Very likely* to recur.

Exhibit 3:
Reports of Past Abuse by Victims' Expectations of Future Abuse



The least clear responses in Exhibit 3 are those ten victims of previous abuse who reported that future abuse was *Not likely*. Closer inspection, however, shows that eight of the ten were planning a change in their relationship with the offender that they believed would prevent future occurrences of abuse. Five of the ten planned to obtain a restraining order, and three of the victims not intending to obtain a restraining order indicated that they wanted a permanent separation from the offender.

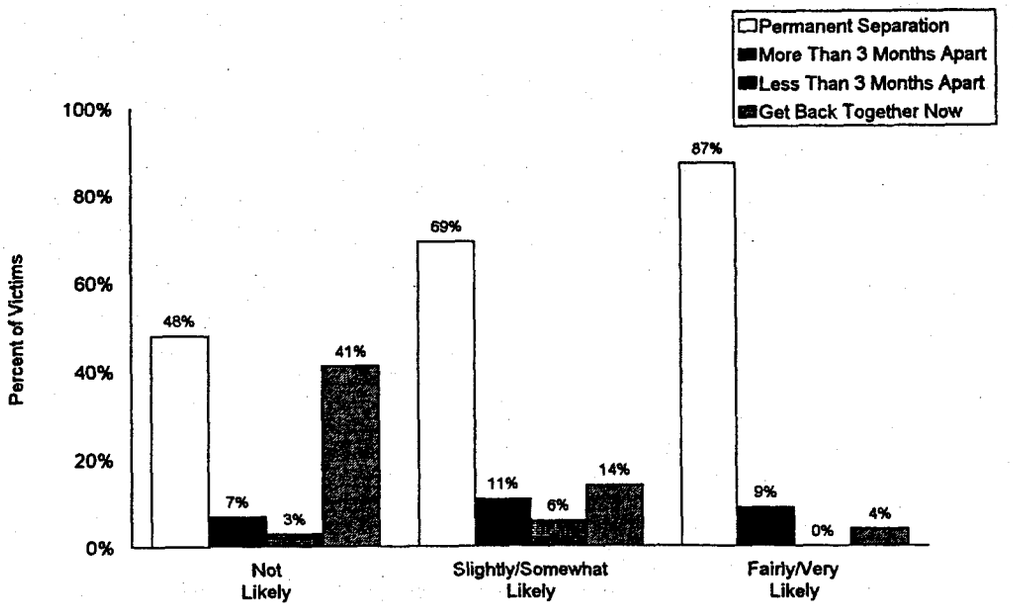
Another question about previous abuse asked if the victim had ever obtained a restraining order against this offender. The results showed a parallel association between expectations of future abuse and previous abuse (X^2=6.3, $p<.05$). Women who had ever obtained a restraining

order against this offender tended to expect future abuse, while those who had not obtained a restraining order thought that future abuse was less likely.

Victims were asked if a restraining order was in effect at the time of the incident. Not surprisingly, the pattern of results is nearly the same as for the question asking whether the victim had ever obtained a restraining order, though the Chi-square value of 5.2 was not significant. Unfortunately, 41% of the victims who had already obtained a restraining order at the time of the incident still expected that future abuse was *Fairly* or *Very likely*. Apparently, they realize that the restraining order will not protect them.

Desired future relationship with the offender. One of the most dramatic disparities among victims differing in expectations of repeated abuse is their desired future relationship with the offender (X^2=14.3, $p<.05$). As Exhibit 4, and not surprisingly, nearly all (87%) of the 23 women who believed that further abuse was *Fairly* or *Very likely* desired a permanent separation from the offender. For women who felt that future abuse was *Not likely*, only half (48%) wanted a permanent separation. The discrepancy between the numbers of victims wanting to get right back together with the offender is even more striking. Just one (4%) of the victims who felt that continuing abuse was *Fairly* or *Very likely* wanted to get together right away with the offender, while 12 (41%) of those believing further abuse was *Not likely* wanted to get back together. Thus, the higher the expectation of future violence, the lower the victim's desire to return to the abuser.

Exhibit 4:
Desired Future Relationship with the Offender by
Victims' Expectations of Future Abuse



Demographic variables. There were no significant associations between victims' expectations of future violence and two demographic variables. Whether or not the offender lived with the victim was unrelated to victims' expectations of future violence. Nor was the presence of children under the age of 18 related to expectations of future violence.

While the victims' ability to support themselves was not statistically associated with their expectations of future violence, the pattern of responses suggests a commonsense connection. Victims who were able to support themselves generally rated the prospects of future abuse as *Not at all likely*. Financial independence provides these women with options not available to those who could not support themselves and, therefore, offenders may be less likely to risk alienating them through violence

Discussion

As public awareness about domestic violence builds, and more calls to end the violence are made, the police are gradually becoming more involved in responding to domestic violence.

expect no future abuse, believe that they will not be harmed seriously if abused again, and want to get back together with the offender immediately or after a brief separation.

Given what we know about the nature of domestic violence, can we hypothesize that some of the women in this latter group will not only be abused again, but be abused again so severely they flee the situation? If so, this would suggest that police intervention represents an ideal opportunity to try to prevent future violence, perhaps the last opportunity for such an intervention. Conversely, for those women who expect little future violence, and ultimately experience little violence, how should police action differ?

Therefore, one of the most immediate questions raised by this study is whether greater efforts should be directed at tailoring the police response to the nature of the domestic violence incident. If police interaction precedes victims accessing shelters or the judicial system, are there steps that the police can initiate to prevent the escalation of violence? It may be unreasonable to expect a universal strategy, such as mandatory arrest, to be effective when applied to fundamentally different types of domestic violence incidents. So what are the different types of domestic violence and what responses work best for each?

Another fundamental question is whether the first-time incidents of domestic violence encountered in this study were isolated events, or the beginning of a cycle of abuse. Longitudinal research is necessary to track these cases and learn how many repeat and how many escalate in severity of violence.

This study helps fill in the gaps in our existing knowledge of victims of domestic violence who come to the attention of the police. But perhaps more profoundly, this study indicates that more extensive research is needed to better understand the extent of the differences among victims of domestic violence and the responses that can best help them.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE BY VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SEEN AT A SUBURBAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

For victims of domestic violence, the police typically serve as their initial point of contact with the criminal justice system. And yet, surprisingly little is known about battered women's perceptions of the police. The sparse information available on this topic is further limited by the sources of the data. As Erez and Belknap (1998) note, most reports of battered women's interactions with the police and other authorities have been based on information provided either directly by the authorities or indirectly through records created by the authorities. Those studies that question victims about the police tend to ask only women who have sought help in battered women's shelters. This therefore leaves unexplored the perceptions of the police by the much larger number of victims who have contact with the police but do not seek help from shelters.

While research into battered women's perceptions of the police is scarce, the few existing studies suggest that victims' perceptions can have an important impact on their behavior. Fischer and Rose (1995) found that victims' willingness to seek a restraining order was heavily influenced by police encouragement. Conversely, Brown (1998) showed that victims were more likely to report feelings of self-blame when they experienced negative treatment from the police.

Early research indicates that, overall, battered women tend to view the police as somewhat helpful. Kennedy and Homant (1983) asked women from three Detroit-area shelter homes about their satisfaction with the police response to their family disturbance. Twenty-eight percent reported that the police were very helpful, while 30% rated the police as not helpful or as having made things worse. The remaining 42% of the women saw the police as having been a little helpful.

A more recent report by Erez and Belknap (1998) suggests that little has changed for victims, despite dramatic changes in police arrest policies and an increasing public awareness of the domestic violence problem. Erez and Belknap conducted a mail survey with battered women who had been involved with a victim assistance program affiliated with the prosecutor's office in two counties. Unfortunately, only 10% of the victims responded to the survey. These respondents reported a wide range of police reactions, from understanding and assistance to efforts aimed at discouraging efforts to prosecute the batterer. When asked about their level of satisfaction with the authorities they encountered, victims ranked the police lowest. The authors summarize their findings along with the reviewed research: "Criminal processing authorities (e.g., police, prosecutors, and judges) who offer appropriate responses are rare, and receiving meaningful assistance is generally a random event." [p.252]

One generally more positive view of police treatment of battered women was obtained by Taylor (1995) as reported by Crowell and "Burgess (1996). Taylor surveyed 250 New York City victims of battering who called 911 for help and asked what type of help they wanted from the police and whether they received that help. Large percentages of victims wanted help with an order of protection (59%), counseling (43%), and discussion of troubling feelings (42%). Seventy-nine percent of the victims who wanted help with an order of protection received that service. The comparable figures for counseling and discussion of troubling feelings were 65% and 68%, respectively. But these results, more favorable than those found by Erez and Belknap are from victims who may have suffered less than those who accessed a victim assistance program, as studied by Erez and Belknap Finally, Miller and Krull (1997) interviewed many victims who were eligible for three of the National Institute of Justice-funded replications Sherman and Berk's (1984) domestic violence study of mandatory arrest. They catalog the types

of help victims reported receiving from the police and the problems that victims felt the police caused. However, the authors do not discuss the impact of the police actions on victims' perceptions of the police or on their intentions to use or not use the police in the future.

Therefore, the existing research about the perceptions domestic violence victims hold of police is limited. It generally includes only those victims who have accessed shelters as a result of their situations; only one, to our knowledge, studies victims who come in contact with the police. Other research is limited in its small sample size. Nevertheless, the research does suggest that victims' perceptions of the police can have an important impact on their behavior. Overall, battered women tend to view the police as somewhat helpful. But differences in findings among populations studied suggest that victims' perceptions may vary depending on the severity of abuse the victims suffered. Those who access the police by calling 911 reported more favorable opinions than victims who accessed a victim assistance program.

The goal of the present study was therefore to add to this sparse body of knowledge about domestic violence victims' perceptions of the police. The primary objective was to learn what victims wanted from the police, the extent to which they perceived that they obtained what they wanted, and how satisfied they were with the actions of the police.

The present study differs in three important ways from previous research: by its subject sample, by the policing environment, and by the interviewers. First, the sample consisted of all domestic violence victims who came to the attention of the police either because they or someone else called for assistance (not necessarily using 911). While the subject population is similar to Taylor's (1995) population of women who dialed 911, it differs from previous studies where subjects had accessed shelters and victim assistance programs.

Second, the police department involved in the study had recently instituted a mandatory arrest policy and had established a domestic violence unit headed by a lieutenant sympathetic to the plight of battered women. Thus, the policing environment at the time of this study may have been more favorable toward domestic violence victims than in earlier studies of victims' perceptions of the police.

A third difference between the present and previous studies of victim perceptions of the police was the use of police officers as interviewers. Contacting victims of domestic violence and obtaining frank opinions from them about their experience is a daunting task under any circumstances. The difficulties are compounded when victims present themselves at unpredictable times over a period of many months. The solution chosen for this study was to use police officers assigned to a domestic violence unit for interviewing victims. There were many advantages to this approach. These officers contacted victims of domestic violence following an incident as part of the their normal duties. Officers assigned to the domestic violence unit were judged to be interested in and sensitive to the plight of female victims. These officers also worked closely with victim advocates from other organizations. Of great importance, most victims were willing to speak with police officers about the extremely sensitive issues regarding their abuse.

The main argument against using police officers to interview victims about their perceptions of the police is, of course, the possibility that victims feel intimidated by the police and respond favorably to please the interviewer. In the present study, the officers conducting the interviews were not those who responded to domestic violence calls and, in fact, had never responded – their job was to follow-up with victims after other officers responded to a call for assistance. In order to standardize the interview, the officers were given a protocol to follow

consisting almost entirely of multiple-choice questions. In addition, the interview protocol asked victims to rate several aspects of police actions during the present incident and also a past incident. Uniformly positive ratings on all these items would suggest that victims were afraid to express their true opinions of the police.

Methods

The study was conducted in Framingham, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb of roughly 65,000 citizens with a police department of 111 officers (including the chief and all supervisors). Framingham, well-known because of the long-standing *Framingham Heart Study,* closely represents the United States in its demographic composition.

Subjects for the study consisted of consecutive female victims who came to the attention of the police because of a telephone call requesting police intervention in a domestic violence incident involving a partner over the course of one year. These women were subsequently interviewed by members of the Department's domestic violence unit as soon as was practical following the initial incident – usually within a day or two. When possible, officers interviewed the victims in person. If the victim was not readily available for an in-person interview, officers conducted the interview over the telephone.

The interview protocol included questions asking victims to rate their satisfaction with the officers who responded to the most recent call for assistance using a five-point Likert scale. Victims who had been involved in an earlier domestic violence incident where the police had been called were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the officers who responded at that time. Another question asked specifically whether the police officers informed the victim about options regarding restraining orders. In addition, victims were asked what they had wanted from

the police at the time of the incident and the extent to which they did or did not receive that specific assistance.

Several questions were added to the interview protocol after roughly one quarter of the interviews had been completed. Consequently, the number of responses varies from item to item. Finally, the interview protocol was kept quite short in order to obtain the cooperation of both the police officer interviewers and the subjects.

Results

Three members of the police department's domestic violence unit interviewed 100 adult female victims of domestic violence over the course of a year beginning in September 1997. Five of these victims were interviewed on more than one occasion. Only the first interview is included in this report. One-third of the interviews were conducted in-person, while the other two-thirds were conducted over the telephone. Most of the victims (72%) called for police help themselves, while in the other 28% of the cases, someone other than the victim called the police.

Half (53%) of the victims were living with the abuser at the time of the incident and half (47%) were not. Just over half (58%) of the victims reported that children under the age of 18 were living with them.

Victims' answers to questions about their level of fear and restraining orders reflect the broad range of violence involved in these cases. When asked whether they were frightened by the offender, 25% of the sample stated that they were *Very Afraid.* At the other extreme, 36% of the victims reported that they were *Not Afraid* of their assailant. The remaining respondents reported that they were *Slightly Afraid* (12%), *Somewhat Afraid* (21%), or *Fairly Afraid* (6%). A restraining order was in effect at the time of the interview for one quarter of the sample.

Types of assistance provided by the police. All police officers responding to domestic violence calls were expected by their superiors to inform victims of their options regarding restraining orders. To test whether officers fulfilled this requirement, victims were asked if they knew what a restraining order was and if they knew how to obtain one. Virtually all victims knew what a restraining order was (only one did not know) and knew how to get one (just two said they did not know how to obtain a restraining order). While some of the victims must have already known about restraining orders, the police officers responding to the domestic violence calls appear to have made sure that all victims were aware of restraining orders.

A series of paired items asked victims whether they wanted particular types of assistance from the police and whether or not they received that type of assistance. Exhibit 6 presents the results from these pairs of items. Row 1 shows that 33 of the 36 victims who wanted help getting or enforcing a restraining order felt that the police provided them with that type of assistance. Three other victims indicated that the police did not help them get or enforce a restraining order.

The second row in Exhibit 5 shows that the police were much less successful in helping victims obtain counseling. Only nine of the 26 (35%) women who wanted help accessing counseling felt that the police aided them. Thirteen of the 26 (50%) responded that the police did not help them find counseling, and the remaining four subjects did not respond to the item.

Exhibit 5:
Percent of Victims Who Received the Help They Requested From the Police

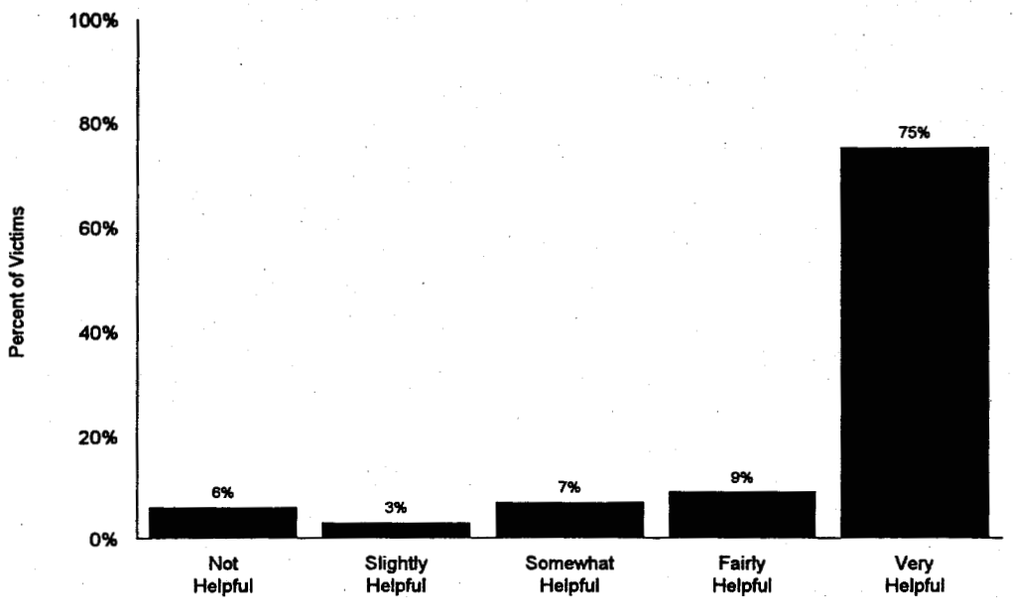
	No	Yes	N
Did the police help you get or enforce a restraining order?	8%	92%	36
Did the police help you find counseling?	59%	41%	22
Did the police arrest the offender?	13%	88%	32

Police department policy required officers to arrest batterers, whether or not the victim made a request. Roughly the first third of the subjects were asked if the police did indeed make an arrest. They did. In 28 out of 31 instances, the police arrested the offender. Because of the high police compliance with the requirement for arrest, this question was dropped from subsequent interviews in order to include other questions.

Ratings of police assistance. An item asking about reasons for not seeking a restraining order provides indirect evidence of victims' views of police responsiveness to their plight. Victims who had not already obtained a restraining order and also said they were not planning to seek one were read a list of possible reasons and asked to indicate which, if any, applied. One of these possible reasons was that *The police won't do anything if he violates the Restraining Order*. None of the 28 victims for whom the question was asked noted this option as a reason for not seeking a restraining order. This suggests a strongly positive view among victims that police would assist them if needed in enforcing a restraining order.

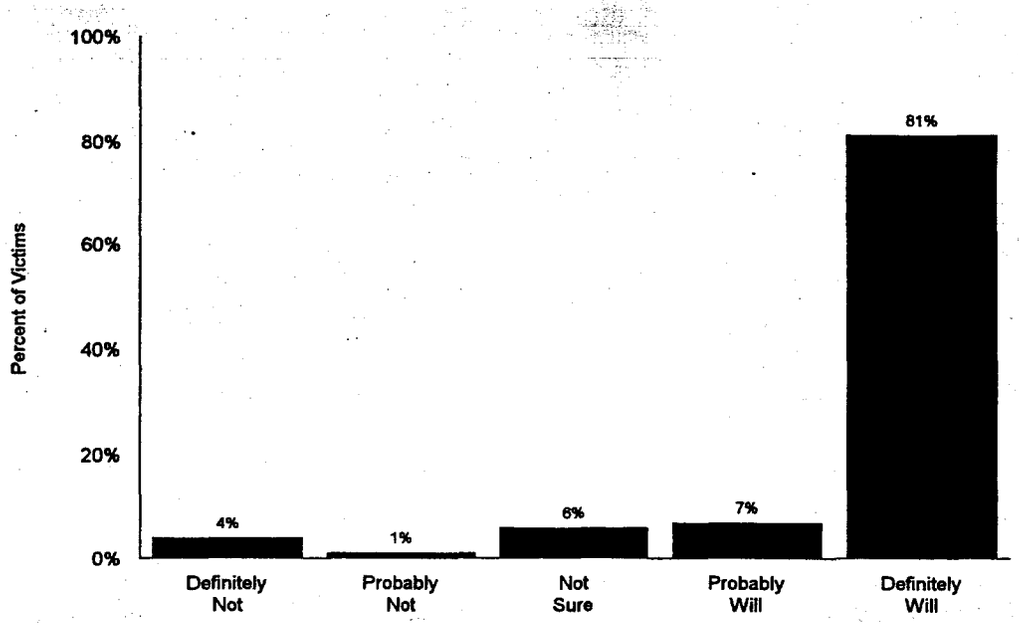
Victims were also directly asked how helpful they felt the police were when responding to the current domestic violence incident. Exhibit 6 shows that 75% of the victims who were asked this question responded with the highest rating of *Very Helpful*. Only nine percent of the victims gave police either the lowest rating of *Not Helpful* or the next-to-lowest rating of *Slightly Helpful*. The remaining 16% of the victims rated the police response as *Somewhat Helpful*.

Exhibit 6:
Helpfulness of the Police During the Current Incident



Victims' reactions to the police were also assessed in another way with a question asking if the victim would call the police in the future for a similar incident. Here, an even larger percentage (81%) gave the most positive response of *Definitely Will*. Another seven percent reported that they *Probably Will* call the police in the future for a similar incident. Only six percent of the respondents said that they would *Definitely Not* or *Probably Not* call the police for a similar incident (see Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7:
Likelihood of Calling the Police
During a Similar Incident in the Future



Even these smaller negative responses may not reflect a failure of the police to act appropriately. The eight victims who indicated either a reluctance to call the police in the future or said they were *Not Sure* were asked for their reasons. Two explained that they feared the offender would harm them if the police were called in the future. Thus their desire to avoid police involvement may stem from characteristics of the abuser rather than from actions of the police. Five of the eight victims reported that the presence of the police made the situation worse. Without additional information, it is impossible to know whether matters worsened due to ineffective police actions or because of the abusers' reactions to the police.

Two other items in this series of questions about victims' perceptions of the police handling of their domestic violence incident produced clear, negative reactions to the police. One victim would not call the police in the future because *The police treated you badly*. Two other victims reported that the police were not helpful in the situation.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to add to the sparse body of knowledge about domestic violence victims' perceptions of the police. The research addresses what victims wanted from the police, the extent to which they perceived that they obtained what they wanted, and how satisfied they were with the actions of the police. Specifically, the study asked victims if they were satisfied in the assistance provided by the police in obtaining restraining orders, counseling, and arrest of the batterer.

Taken together, the victims' responses to several items provide surprisingly strong support for police actions across the wide range of women who came to the attention of a suburban police department as a result of domestic violence calls. Victims' direct ratings of the helpfulness of the police were very positive. Even stronger support for the police resulted from a question asking if the victims would be willing to call for police help with a similar incident if it should arise in the future.

Questions about specific types of assistance produced mixed results. The police were seen as very helpful by those who wanted help obtaining or enforcing a restraining order. On the other hand, many victims who wanted help finding counseling faulted the police for failing to provide that help. Given that the studied community requires officers to arrest batterers, whether or not the victim made a request, compliance by the police was so high that the research team decided to remove the question from the protocol.

Victims' willingness to be open and honest with a police officer interviewing them about their reactions to other police officers remains a nagging issue. A few victims presented very negative reactions to the police, demonstrating that they, at least, felt free to state their opinions. What about the others? A pair of items asking about previous involvement with the police

provides more evidence, albeit indirect, that many victims gave honest responses to these interviewers.

When victims were asked if the police had ever been called before due to a domestic violence incident involving the current offender, 29 said that they had. Twenty-eight of these victims then answered a follow-up question asking how helpful the police had been during that incident. While generally positive, the responses were considerably less enthusiastic about the police performance than those given to the question about the police actions in the current incident. Fifty-four percent of these victims said that the police had been *Very Helpful*, compared to 75% who gave this response to the current incident. Eighteen percent rated the police as *Not Helpful* in the previous incident, compared to 6% for the current incident.

Comparison of the helpfulness ratings of the previous and the current domestic violence incidents helps validate the results of this study in two ways. First, the greater negativity expressed toward the police regarding the previous incident suggests that a substantial number of the victims were comfortable expressing honest opinions with the police interviewer. Second, the increase in positive reactions to the police is consistent with a recent, concerted effort made by the police department to improve police response to domestic violence incidents.

Nevertheless, ultimately, the study should be replicated using non-police personnel as interviewers in order to further and substantially validate the findings. However, if we accept these results as valid, this research suggests that these women were generally more satisfied with the police than those examined in previous research by Kennedy & Homant (1983) and Erez & Belknap (1998). However, Taylor found results similar to this study in a survey of a more comparable population. Of the 250 New York City victims of battering who called 911 for help, large percentages of victims wanted help with an order of protection (59%), counseling (43%),

and discussion of troubling feelings (42%). Seventy-nine percent of the victims who wanted help with an order of protection received that service; 65% received counseling assistance and 68% discussion of troubling feelings.

And yet, it remains to be more fully examined how much effect the environment has on victims' reactions, given that the police department involved in this study had recently instituted a mandatory arrest policy and had established a domestic violence unit headed by a lieutenant sympathetic to the plight of battered women. Thus, the victims' generally positive reaction to the police may reflect a policing environment that was unusually favorable toward domestic violence victims.

At the same time, more research is needed on what is reasonable for victims of domestic violence to expect from police officers and therefore what role, if any, beyond law enforcement police officers can fulfill. Are police only expected to address the immediate concerns of arresting the batterer and assisting victims with obtaining or enforcing restraining orders, given that these actions relate to law enforcement? Or are police officers the last best opportunity to prevent future abuse by aiding victims in obtaining other types of assistance, such as counseling, that fall outside traditional policework?

What is clear is that, as communities become more and more aware of the complexities of domestic violence, additional research is needed to identify the most effective role for the police.

SOCIAL SUPPORTS CAN BE HELPFUL BUT MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

As the public's awareness of domestic violence has grown in the past several years and calls for measures to end domestic violence have increased, gaps in existing social science research have been exposed. Many observers wonder how women become victims of abuse and

why their friends and family, their "social supports," do not intervene to help them extricate themselves from a violent situation.

Surprisingly little research has examined the role social supports play for victims of domestic violence. The main finding has been that victims of domestic violence perceive themselves as having less support from formal and informal networks of family and friends than non-battered women (Mitchell and Hodson, 1983; Barnett, Martinez, and Keyson, 1996). A perceived paucity of support is further associated with high levels of self-blame (Barnett, Martinez, and Keyson, 1996) and poorer psychological health (Mitchell and Hodson, 1983). Barriers to support can exist both because few sources of social support exist and/or because available social supports are ineffective. Hilberman and Munson (1977-1978) suggest that abusive men tend to isolate their partners from potential supports. Even when informal networks of family and friends do exist, victims may feel uncomfortable reaching out, or these individuals may be reluctant to interfere in the victims' private lives (Mitchell and Hodson, 1983).

When battered women do seek support, the support they receive is often insufficient (Hoff, 1990). Tan et al. (1995) asked women who had been in domestic violence shelters about their social supports. The women reported having, on average, over seven individuals in various areas of social support, but their level of satisfaction with these supports was only slightly positive, on average (4.7 on a 1 to 7 scale where 1 was *terrible* and 7 was *extremely pleased*). Overall, women who were more satisfied with their social supports reported being more pleased with the quality of their lives and less depressed. On the other hand, satisfaction with social supports was not related either to the number of social supports or to continued involvement with assailants.

Most research on domestic violence and social supports has investigated victims of severe abuse. Typically, subjects for these studies were in or had been in domestic violence shelters.

The purpose of the present study was to begin exploring social supports in relationship to domestic violence in the lives of victims at the time they came to the attention of the police. These women represent a broad population in that they did not necessarily suffer severe abuse, as did the usual subjects of studies on social supports. The most basic questions posed by this study were whether these victims had social supports and, if so, whether they perceived these social supports as being helpful. Another fundamental question explored similarities and differences between victims with and without social supports and how these victims compared to those in previous studies.

It was anticipated that women suffering from domestic violence, but not so severely they were yet in shelters, would in fact have some access to social supports, but that these social supports were obviously not enough to end the violence.

Methods

The study was conducted in Framingham, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb of roughly 65,000 citizens with a police department of 111 officers (including the chief and all supervisors). Framingham, well-known because of the long-standing *Framingham Heart Study,* closely represents the United States in its demographic composition.

Subjects for the study consisted of consecutive female victims who came to the attention of the police because of a telephone call requesting police intervention in a domestic violence incident over the course of a year. These women were subsequently interviewed by members of the Department's domestic violence unit as soon as was practical following the initial incident –

usually within a day or two. When possible, officers interviewed the victims in person. If the victim was not readily available for an in-person interview, officers conducted the interview over the telephone.

The availability of social supports was ascertained with a question that asked, *Is there anyone nearby to whom you can turn for support in dealing with your domestic violence problems?* Victims' level of satisfaction with these social supports was measured with an item that asked, *How helpful will they be if you ask for help?*

The interview protocol was kept quite short in order to obtain the cooperation of both the police officer interviewers and the subjects.

Results

Three members of the police department's domestic violence unit interviewed 100 adult female victims of domestic violence over the course of a year beginning in September 1997. Five of these victims were interviewed on more than one occasion. Only the first interview is included in this report. One-third of the interviews were conducted in-person, while the other two-thirds were conducted over the telephone. Most of the victims (72%) called for police help themselves, while in the other 28% of the cases, someone other than the victim called the police. This suggests that most victims felt empowered enough to request assistance for themselves.

Half (53%) of the victims were living with the abuser at the time of the incident and half (47%) were not. Just over half (58%) of the victims reported that children under the age of 18 were living with them.

Victims' answers to questions about their level of fear and restraining orders reflect the broad range of violence involved in these cases. When asked whether they were frightened by the offender, 25% of the sample stated that they were *Very Afraid.* At the other extreme, 36% of

the victims reported that they were *Not Afraid* of their assailant. The remaining respondents reported that they were *Slightly Afraid* (12%), *Somewhat Afraid* (21%), or *Fairly Afraid* (6%). A restraining order was in effect at the time of the interview for one quarter of the sample.

The existence of social supports. Nearly all the victims of domestic violence seen by the Framingham police reported having social supports. Ninety-one percent of all victims answered that there was someone nearby to whom they could turn for support in dealing with their domestic violence problem. Furthermore, many victims noted that several social supports were available to them - the number ranged from one to 20. Half of the sample reported having access to four or more social supports.

Sixty-four of the 86 (74%) victims who indicated that they had social supports rated the helpfulness of their social supports. Almost all (88%) of these victims of domestic violence gave their social supports the highest possible rating of *Very Helpful*. None of the women used the lowest of five options, *Not at all Helpful*, to describe their social supports.

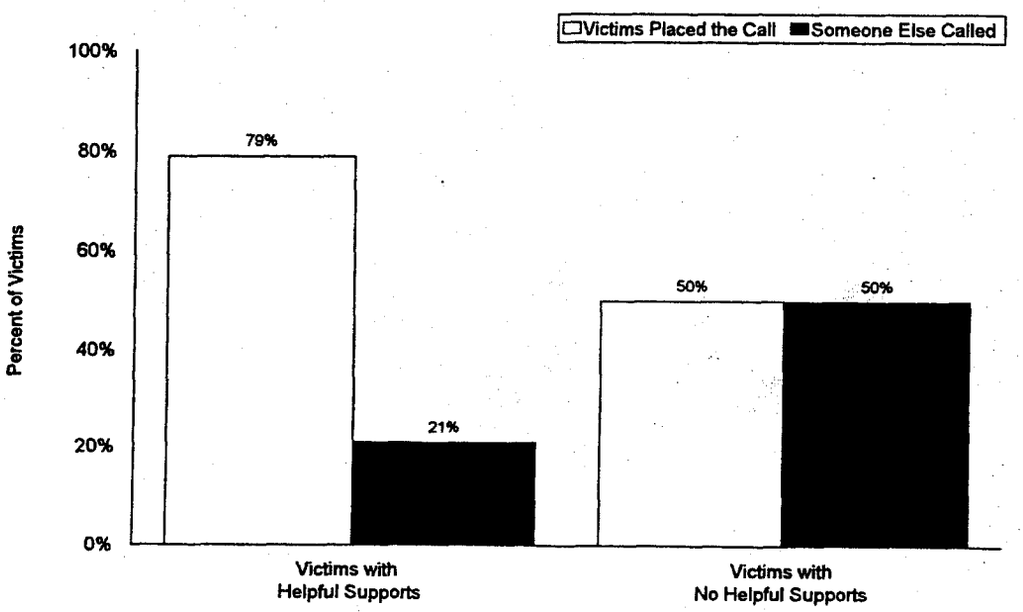
Social supports are helpful. Victims included in the study were divided into two groups in order to explore the role of social supports. One group consisted of victims who both had social supports and rated those social supports as *Very Helpful*. The comparison group combined those victims who had no social supports with other victims who had social supports but rated those supports as less than *Very Helpful*.

Responses to questions asking victims about their ability to support themselves financially show a clear distinction between social and financial support. There was no difference between the two groups with regard to their ability to support themselves financially. In both groups, about 60% reported being able to support themselves financially, while about

40% could not. Thus, the existence of social supports does not correspond to a victim's financial status.

Victims with helpful social supports were significantly more likely than those without to have called the police themselves, as opposed to someone else calling on their behalf (X^2=4.6, p<.05). Most (79%) of the victims with helpful social supports called the police themselves. Victims without helpful social supports were evenly split – in half the cases the victim called the police and in half someone else called (see Exhibit 8). The possible reasons for this are many: victims with social supports may perceive themselves as more empowered to call for assistance, those without may feel more isolated and less willing to seek help; those with social support may be more willing to bring the authorities into the situation because they feel they have the support to change their situation if need be, those without may not be willing to jeopardize the situation, violent though it may be; and/or those with social support may be stronger psychologically.

Exhbit 8:
Percent of Calls to the Police by Victims Versus Someone Else:
Comparison of Victims With and Without Helpful Social Supports



Several questions asked victims about their expectations for the future. While none of the comparisons between the two groups of victims was significant, the pattern of answers is consistent and suggests important differences. For example, nearly half (47%) of the victims without helpful supports believed that it was *Very Likely* that their assailant would harm them again, while just 19% of those with helpful social supports shared this belief (see Exhibit 9). A similar item asked subjects to estimate how willing the offender was to leave them alone in the future. As with the previous item, 46% of victims without helpful social supports believed that their assailant was *Not Willing* to leave them alone, while just 14% of those with helpful social supports had the same reaction (see Exhibit 10). Therefore, the existence of social supports suggests a more positive outlook.

Exhibit 9:
Victims' Expectations of Future Abuse:
Comparison of Victims With and Without Helpful Social Supports

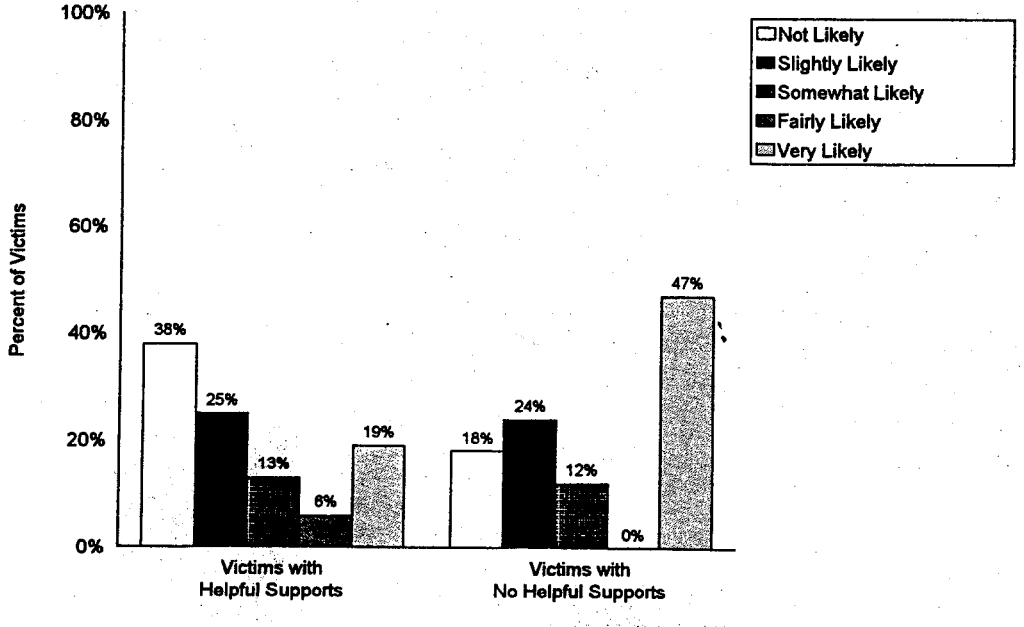
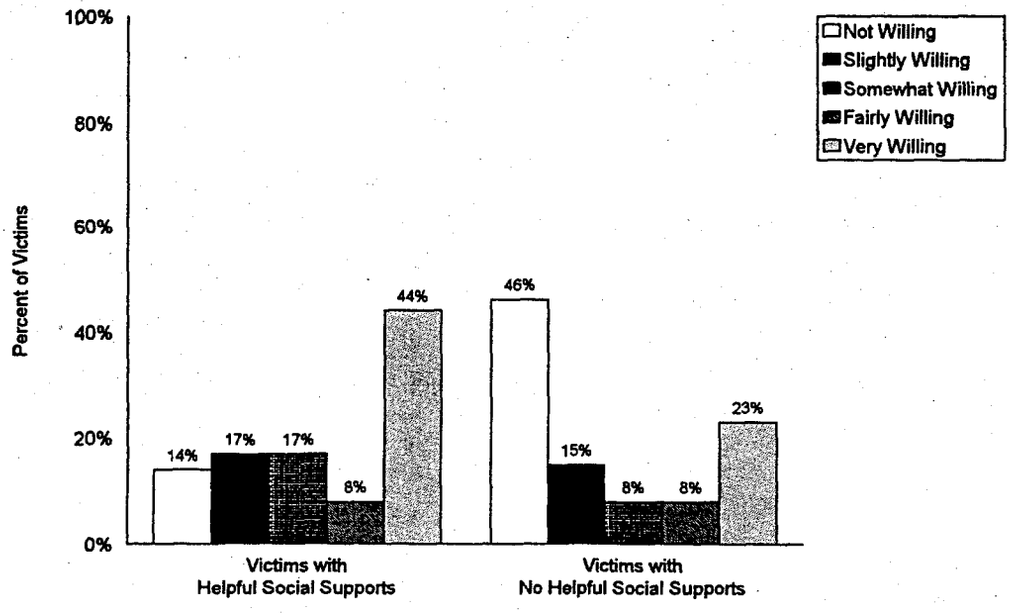


Exhibit 10:
Victims' Beliefs About the Offender's Willingness to Leave Them Alone:
Comparison of Victims With and Without Helpful Social Supports



Social supports may not be sufficient. The existence of perceived helpful social supports is associated with several positive circumstances, as noted above. However, the availability of helpful social supports is clearly not sufficient for victims of domestic violence to end the abuse. Subjects' responses to questions about the expected severity of future abuse and their level of fear clearly show that having helpful social supports does not mitigate victims' expectations of future abuse.

For example, there was no significant difference between the two groups with respect to how seriously they expected to be injured in future assaults. More of the victims without helpful social supports (47%) expected that the injury would be *Very Serious*, but there were still many victims with helpful social supports (35%) who also expected to be seriously injured in the future (see Exhibit 11). In a similar pattern, nearly half (47%) of the victims without helpful social supports were *Very Afraid* of their assailant. Yet over a quarter (27%) of the victims who had helpful social supports also reported that they were *Very Afraid* of the assailant (see Exhibit 12).

Thus, despite whatever assistance they provided, the helpful social supports were not sufficient for aiding all victims in effectively dealing with their assailants. Perhaps they were successful in some instances. Perhaps the degree of helpfulness was therefore more one of perception than reality.

Exhibit 11:
Victims' Expectations of the Seriousness of Future Abuse:
Comparison of Victims With and Without Helpful Social Supports

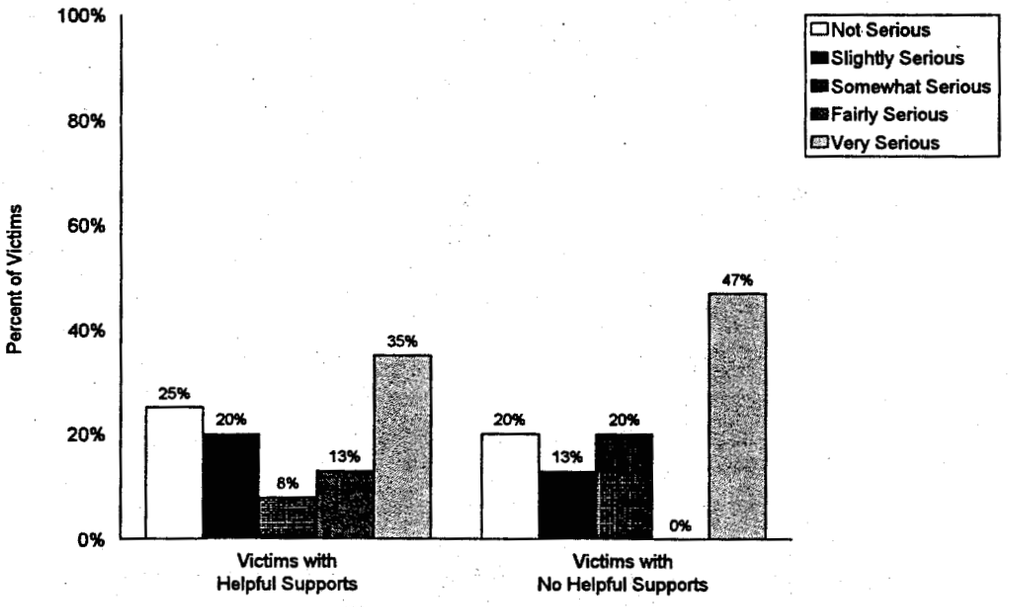
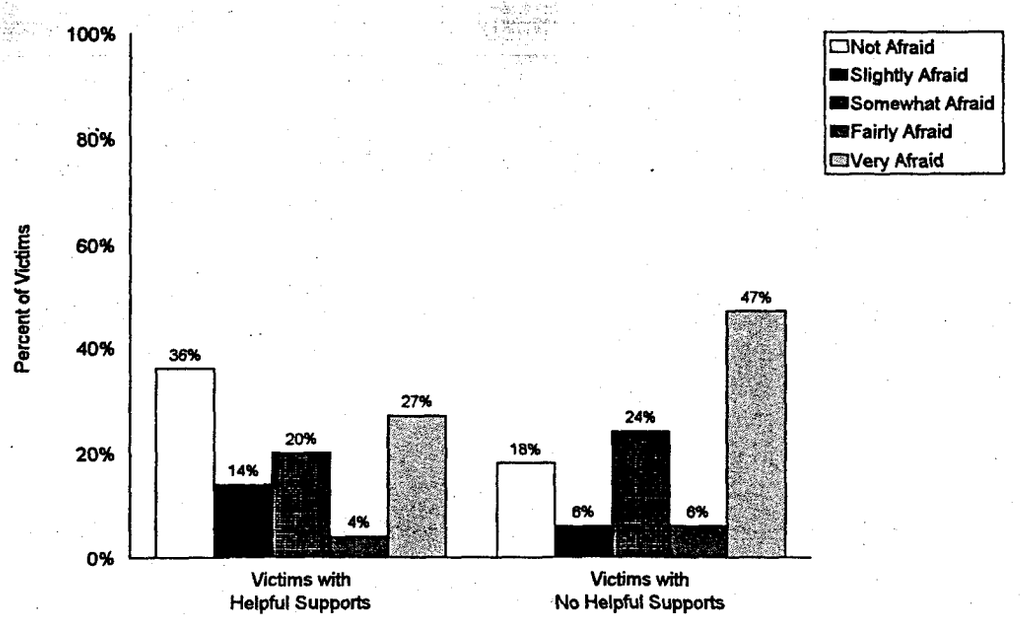


Exhibit 12:
Victims' Fear of the Offender:
Comparison of Victims With and Without Helpful Social Supports



Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to begin an exploration of the relationship between social supports in the lives of victims of domestic violence who suffered a broad range of violent incidents at the time they came to the attention of the police. The most basic questions posed by this study were whether these victims had social supports and, if so, whether they perceived these social supports as being helpful. Another fundamental question explored similarities and differences between victims with and without social supports.

Perceived helpful social supports may be far more common among victims of domestic violence than generally appreciated. Some previous studies found few social supports available to victims of domestic violence. Typically, these studies interviewed victims who had made use of domestic violence shelters after experiencing severe levels of violence. Subjects in the present study represent a much broader range of incidents with a greater range of levels of

violence. Not only did most of the victims seen by the police have social supports available to them, but in many cases, they perceived those supports to be very helpful.

The presence of helpful social supports was associated with several positive factors. Victims who possessed helpful social supports were more likely than those without to have called the police themselves than to have had someone else call the police. Overall, victims with helpful social supports appeared to be at less risk for future violence from their assailant. They believed that future violence was less likely than did victims without helpful social supports, and they were less likely to expect future injuries to be severe.

Unfortunately, the existence of helpful social supports is not enough to resolve victims' problems with domestic violence. Even with the assistance of helpful social supports, some victims remained very afraid of their assailant and expected to be seriously harmed in the future. More of the victims without helpful social supports expected that the injury would be *Very Serious*, but there were still many victims with helpful social supports who also expected to be seriously injured in the future. Over a quarter of the victims who had helpful social supports reported that they were *Very Afraid* of the assailant.

These findings further document the well-known fact that domestic violence can be an extraordinarily difficult situation from which to escape. Resources, such as helpful social supports, that might be very useful in many other situations can prove inadequate when it comes to escaping a committed assailant.

The mechanisms responsible for the associations seen with social supports are beyond the scope of this paper. For example, the availability and effectiveness of social supports may depend heavily on whether the victim developed those contacts on her own or through her abuser (Herman, 1994).

Finally, the causal role of social supports is not yet documented. For instance, helpful social supports may aid victims in dealing with their assailants, or victims who can effectively deal with their assailants may be more likely to develop social supports that they believe to be helpful.

Future research is needed in how the existence of perceived social supports impacts a victim's risk and resiliency. The research undertaken here suggests that the existence of social supports increases a victim's perception of her resiliency, but does not necessarily decrease her perception of her risk. That is, victims with helpful social supports were significantly more likely than those without to have called the police themselves, as opposed to someone else calling on their behalf. Though it is speculative, this may suggest a greater sense of resiliency, a greater sense of willingness to call for assistance, to have the authorities intervene, and to act on their own behalf. Further, victims with perceived helpful social supports may hold a more positive outlook, anticipating less violence than those victims without helpful social supports.

OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Partnership developed several research projects and sought funding for their implementation. Each of the projects is described below.

OFFICER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The Partnership designed an evaluation of an officer exchange program that was being planned by the Framingham and Chelsea Police Departments. The exchange program was similar to common private industry training. The premise was that exposing officers to other progressive departments could instill creativity and insight with respect to delivery of police services. The program objectives were as follows.

- Framingham officers are untrained in policing the urban environment that is quickly developing in South Framingham. The exchange program will expose them to an urban and diverse environment reflective of South Framingham's future. Officers will have unique opportunities to identify the types of problems associated with an urban environment and will develop insight into strategies to combat those problems.

- Presently, Framingham Police have no minority or female mid and upper level command officers. The Department has actively and successfully recruited minority and female officers and expects promotions to occur in the future. Chelsea has numerous minority and female mid and upper level command staff. Framingham officers involved in the exchange program will have the opportunity to work with minority and female command, which will instill confidence and respect for what will soon become a new aspect of police management in Framingham.

- Both Chelsea and Framingham have well-developed community policing initiatives, including use of decentralized sub stations. Officers will experience similar philosophies and programs being delivered in different environments.

- Chelsea officers will be exposed to a more formal administrative structure based on a strong, progressive, and successful infrastructure.

- Chelsea officers will have the opportunity to assist Framingham officers identify solutions to problems that have already been addressed in Chelsea but are just starting in Framingham.

The officer exchange program was planned to involve six Framingham and six Chelsea police officers working on six-week rotations. Authority to act as officers in the exchange community would come from a mutual aid agreement.

The primary goal of the proposed research was to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the exchange program. Secondary goals would be pursued as the evaluation results became available. These secondary goals were to (1) develop a theoretical understanding of the program's effects, and (2) devise and test mechanisms for taking full advantage of the officers' experiences.

A subject pool of Framingham police officers was to be created by inviting officers to sign up for the program. On the basis of the level of interest expressed in the pilot program, a large number of officers was expected to apply. If too few applied, incentives would be added in order

to attract additional officers (overtime opportunities and a flexible schedule). Six Framingham officers would then be randomly selected to participate in the next wave of the exchange program, while another six would be assigned to a control condition. These control condition officers would participate in a later offering of the exchange program.

Officers in both conditions would be pretested before assignments are made. Officers would be tested at the conclusion of the program and then every two months for at least six months.

The pretest questionnaire was designed to gather information about:

- Demographics, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, rank, and number of years as an officer.
- Level of satisfaction with the job as police officer in general and specific aspects of the job, such as relationships with fellow officers and superiors, opportunities to advance within the department, and perception of the police by citizens in the community.
- The importance of specific tasks (e.g., vehicle and foot patrolling, communicating with citizens to create a relationship, finding alternative activities for juveniles, writing citations for minor street and motor vehicle violations, etc.) in relation to being a good police officer.
- Self-evaluation of performance of the above tasks.
- Expectations concerning the exchange program.

This draft was to be pilot tested and then revised. In addition, the first group of officers who participate as part of the piloting phase of the exchange program would be interviewed extensively concerning their experiences and suggestions. This information would help us modify the test instruments.

The officer exchange program was postponed due to the departure of the Chelsea Chief of Police.

IMPROVED UTILIZATION OF CRIME DATA

The Framingham Police Department wants to begin using crime data to guide the deployment of officers. The present system of deploying patrol officers supplanted an outmoded procedure that restricted officers to small areas of the town. Even the present system, which assigns officer teams into larger areas of the city, does not take into account patterns of criminal activity. Data necessary for studying crime patterns in the town exists in the Department's computer files but has not been used to describe trends and patterns of crimes.

Steps taken to improve the utilization of data include the following.

- Initial attempts to learn from the experiences of others turned up little information from a search of the criminal justice literature. The next step will be to contact other departments that are already analyzing their crime data in order to learn what techniques have worked and which have been unsuccessful.

- Accessing the data should have been the simplest and most straightforward portion of the enterprise. However, that was not the case. Problems stemmed from the use of proprietary software, a complex database, the absence of in-house computer experts, and a vendor with an uneven record of support.

- Data problems often do not become apparent until attempts are made to use the data. Thus, the Partnership has begun outlining reports needed by the Department in order to force an examination of the availability of the necessary data. Preliminary reports will be produced in order to check for the extent of missing and erroneous data. At the same time, the bugs associated with downloading the data are being worked out.

- The Partnership has begun identifying the Department's specific needs for data. Once the needs are clear, reports will be designed to meet them. Equally important, the format in which the information is presented is being developed so that crime patterns can be readily viewed and easily interpreted. For example, plotting the type and frequency of crimes and police calls would likely be a useful tool for deploying officers.

Initial analysis of the Department's crime data will involve a focus on simple associations, attempting to identify locations and time periods where criminal activity is concentrated. Later, the Partnership will begin exploring the use of more sophisticated statistical procedures for identifying patterns and trends in criminal activities. For example, time series analysis will be

used to search for trends over time. Multiple regression analysis will be used to search for predictor variables that can account for rates of different types of crimes. Finally, we will employ mathematical modeling techniques used in other areas in order to simulate patterns of criminal activity in Framingham.

THE BROKEN WINDOWS THEORY APPLIED TO HIGHWAY SAFETY

The Partnership is currently negotiating with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration/U.S. Department of Transportation to test one of their long-standing, fundamental assumptions. NHTSA has assumed that vigorous enforcement of traffic violations will result in an overall reduction of all types of crime - not just traffic offenses.

NHTSA is interested in Framingham as a test site because of the Partnership's willingness and ability to provide a rigorous experimental investigation of the assumption. The preliminary plan is to identify pairs of small areas within Framingham such that the two areas in each pair are very similar. One member of each pair will be randomly selected as the intervention site, while the other constitutes a control site. The intervention will consist of highly visible and vigorous enforcement of all traffic violations. The control sites will receive a comparable level of additional police presence without including unusual enforcement of traffic violations. The main dependent variable will be crime rates. Mediating variables will include arrests of drivers or passengers for other crimes (e.g., outstanding warrants) during traffic stops for enforcement of traffic laws, and whether the driver/passenger lives or works in Framingham.

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF NON-EMERGENCY 911 CALLS

Reducing the impact of non-emergency 911 calls is one of the Framingham Police Department's top priorities. Consequently, the Partnership is pursuing two approaches to dealing with the problem. The first approach is a variation of what other cities are implementing as an

attempt to encourage the public to use 911 only for life-threatening emergencies. Framingham's approach differs from those on which NIJ is currently focusing in that it will educate the public to use an existing police business line for non-emergencies, rather than creating a 311 system or a new non-emergency seven-digit number.

There are two main advantages in using the existing police business number for non-emergency calls. First, there is no need for the expense of setting up a new phone system or at least new phone lines. Second, the police business telephone number is already listed in all phone books and in many other locations, such as stickers with important phone numbers that are distributed to clients or to the general public by many organizations.

The second approach that the Partnership will pursue recognizes that many non-emergency calls will continue to be made to 911, even if an education program aimed at diverting these calls to a different number is relatively successful. Therefore, the Partnership also seeks to improve the ways in which 911 dispatchers deal with non-emergency calls.

Oddly, there seems to be virtually no research on the process of responding to calls made to 911. While a few efforts are underway to better automate the process of taking 911 calls (Peterson, 1996; Poultney, 1997), investigators have not examined the decision-making process of 911 operators. The most positive development in this area is that Franklin and Hunt (1993) have created a situation that simulates public safety dispatching. The purpose is to duplicate the stressful circumstances faced by emergency dispatchers so that their decision making can be studied in the laboratory.

As mentioned above, the Partnership will study two strategies for reducing non-emergency calls to 911. Process and outcome evaluations will be conducted on each strategy so that we will know what works and so that other departments can learn from our experiences.

The Partnership believes there are three conditions that must be met in order to shift many non-emergency calls from 911 to the regular police business line.

- Citizens need ready access to the non-emergency phone number. The ease of retrieving a seven-digit number can never be as easy as remembering 911, but various aides can be provided to simplify obtaining the number for most people.
- Citizens must understand the difference between life-threatening emergencies that are appropriate for 911 and non-emergency situations that are appropriate for the standard phone number.
- Citizens must be taught the negative consequences of making non-emergency calls to 911 and shown the advantages of using the business phone number except in emergencies.

In order to educate the public, the Partnership will design and implement a community-wide information campaign that combines the distribution of items containing the police non-emergency number with educational materials. Items containing the non-emergency number will include stickers that can be applied to phones and phone book covers, bookmarks, refrigerator door magnets, and table tents for setting on counters where phones are located. These items will include a section of emergency numbers, a section of numbers for other types of services, such as police, highway department, and other town services, and a section for frequently called numbers, such as those of friends. These promotional items will be distributed at local fairs, provided to organizations and businesses willing to distribute them to their clients and/or employees, and placed in public locations such as Town Hall and the library. The Partnership will also disseminate information through local print and electronic media. We propose using no-cost media outlets such as: PSAs; information posted on cable television bulletin boards; and, news stories about the project in newspapers, newsletters by local organizations, and on radio and television. In addition, the Partnership will rent two prominent billboards for one month to display a message about the proper use of 911.

Individuals calling 911 with a *non*-emergency will be politely switched to an educational recording followed by a menu of choices. The recording will explain the purpose of 911 and consequences of inappropriate non-emergency calls. It will then provide the Department's phone number for regular police business and explain that the caller can reach a live operator by calling the number, instead of recorded menu options that will follow. Thus, individuals who call the regular business line will be positively reinforced by contacting a human being and receiving a quick response to their query. Individuals who call 911 inappropriately will be negatively reinforced by having to wait through the educational message and then listen to an automated voice messaging system. A third, existing phone number will be dedicated to an automated voice messaging system for callers who prefer that system to a live operator.

The 911 number will always be presented in informational materials with instructions emphasizing its role as an emergency number. At the same time, the regular business police number will be displayed prominently and will be accompanied by a message indicating that it is for all non-emergency police matters.

In order for these materials to be effective, they must be distributed to nearly every Framingham household and must be displayed prominently at every pay phone. To accomplish this, the Partnership will enlist the aid of NYNEX, the local telephone company. By including these materials in telephone bills, the Partnership can easily reach nearly every home and business serviced by the Framingham Police Department. Educational materials will be printed in several languages and distributed in the respective enclaves were foreign-speaking residents tend to live.

If analysis of calls preceding the intervention indicates that some individuals repeatedly call 911 for non-emergencies, we will employ another strategy for such "repeaters." Repeaters (who

will be operationally defined once the call data have been analyzed) will be mailed a courteous personal letter from the Department. The letter will remind them that 911 is for emergency use and that other calls should be placed to the non-emergency number. When appropriate, the letter may include information about other organizations/agencies to contact for specific problems. If, for example, citizens call the police repeatedly about problems with their trash collection, the letter may include information about who to contact in the Department of Public Works to obtain help.

The number of non-emergency calls placed to both the 911 and regular business number will be monitored on a weekly basis beginning three months before the 911 educational campaign begins and will continue through the end of the project. The educational campaign should result in an increase in the percentage of non-emergency calls that are placed to the regular business line. However, the effects of educational campaign may wear off over time. By plotting the weekly trends in non-emergency calls, the Partnership will be able to:

- Verify the effectiveness of the educational campaign and determine the magnitude of the effect.
- Assess the effectiveness of different components of the campaign by staggering their implementation.
- Identify and track changes in the types of non-emergency calls to 911. This information may help develop more effective and well-targeted publicity to discourage specific types of inappropriate calls.
- Measure any increase in non-emergency calls placed to 911 as the effects of the educational campaign wear off. This will enable the Partnership to determine how often the educational campaign must be repeated.

911 dispatchers will continue to receive non-emergency calls despite efforts to educate the public and to provide well-publicized alternative phone numbers. Therefore, the Partnership

proposes developing guidelines to aid dispatchers in distinguishing among types of calls and in making decisions about an appropriate response to calls.

At present, dispatchers rely on their experience and intuition in deciding whether a 911 call is a true emergency and whether an officer should be sent immediately in response to the call. This situation results in the following:

- Decisions about what is and what is not an emergency varies from dispatcher to dispatcher.
- Scarce resources are spent in responding to calls which are not emergencies.
- There is a risk that dispatchers will mistakenly dismiss a call that turns out to be a true emergency.

The Partnership intends to develop decision-making guidelines that will enable dispatchers to (1) quickly transfer non-emergency 911 calls to an appropriate, alternative telephone line, and (2) rate the degree of urgency and determine the appropriate type of response. The response in some cases could be a phone call from the police or a visit at some later time, instead of an immediate in-person response.

To achieve these aims, the Partnership has conducted a literature search of police dispatching and begun outlining possible strategies. The next step is to study other situations in which individuals must make decisions about emergencies. For example, literature has been obtained on medical triage (Baxt, 1990) and the decision-making process by which mental health professionals decide whether to hospitalize individuals seen in emergency rooms (Apsler and Bassuk, 1983; McNiel et al. 1992; Turner and Turner, 1991; Thienhaus, 1992; Way, Evans, and Banks, 1992; Coontz, Lidz, and Mulvey, 1994; Rabinowitz, Mark, and Slyuzberg, 1994; Rabinowitz, Massad, and Fennig, 1995).

The most important decision the dispatcher must make is whether or not a call represents an emergency. Initial guidelines will consist of a checklist. If one or more of the criteria on the checklist are met, the call is an emergency and warrants and immediate response from police and/or other emergency services. Criteria will deal with the following issues:

- The need for medical or mental health services.
- The potential for future violence, property damage, or other serious problems.
- The opportunity for apprehending perpetrators.

Difficult situations will occur when the dispatcher determines that a call is not an emergency, but the caller demands immediate action. This becomes a public relations issue, and the Partnership plans to study options for responding in these situations.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS IN POLICE DEPARTMENTS

The overall goal of this research project is:

- *To learn about the relationship between organizational factors and police stress.*

Specific objectives include learning:

- What are the primary sources of organizational stress?
- What is the relative importance of organizational and operational factors as they relate to stress for the police?
- How does organizational stress in police departments differ from that in other organizations?
- How do officers differ in their reactions to organizational stress?
- What is the relationship between subjective stress and overt symptoms?
- What types of interventions can most effectively deal with organizational stress?

There is little agreement among investigators studying stress regarding (1) which concepts are important, (2) how the concepts should be defined, or (3) what the relationships are among

the concepts. Many variables, such as length of service, rank, and gender appear to influence how individuals experience stress. We will label these *moderator variables*, since they moderate how sources of stress impact different individuals.

The project will employ a preliminary three-part model for organizing concepts. This model consists of *stressful incidents or situations*, that produce in officers a *subjective experience of stress*, which, in turn, can sometimes cause *objective effects of stress*. Brown and Campbell (1990) use a similar three-part conceptual model. They distinguish among stressors (i.e., potential external sources of adverse reactions); felt stress (i.e., self-perceived negative impact); and distress (i.e., self-reported symptoms of anxiety, depression, social dysfunction, and somatic disturbance).

Violent incidents are usually the first examples that come to mind when people think of police stress. Our focus on organizational stress adds circumstances that are part of the police department organization, such as limited opportunities for advancement, a poor fit between work and the individual's education and/or experience, shiftwork, restrictions on officer decision-making, unreasonable expectations by superiors, and so on. Some of these circumstances or incidents may be stressful for most officers, while others might only affect a few or affect different officers in different ways.

Many of these sources of stress can be defined in concrete terms that allow for clear-cut measurement. Stressful job duties could be defined as those incidents in which officers are physically attacked or simply those involving a chase. Lack of advancement opportunities in the organization could be defined as existing where 50% or more of patrol officers did not advance in rank by the time they had served ten years on the force.

Not all potential sources of stress are easy to define. *Poor communication between patrol officers and superiors*, for example, might require comparing patrol officers' and their superior's explanations of an instruction given by the superior. The interviews that we will conduct with officers will help us find clear ways of defining sources of stress so they can be measured.

Shiftwork can cause the same types of health problems in police officers that are also assumed to result from other types of stress (Nachreiner et al. 1995). Yet shiftwork is typically treated as a topic separate from police stress. An important conceptual issue for this project will be to determine whether shiftwork should be classified as a form of stress or as some other type of influence that can cause similar problems. Research by Spelten, Barton, and Folkard (1993) suggests that many police might reject the notion that shiftwork is a legitimate source of stress. They found a tendency for police to mistakenly underestimate the negative effects of shiftwork, apparently because officers are so used to shiftwork that they become unaware of the resulting problems.

The subjective experience of stress will be the most problematic component of the conceptual model in terms of both definition and measurement. One difficulty is the proliferation of closely related concepts. These include: felt stress, strain, depression, anxiety, low job satisfaction, and others. Another difficulty is that most of these terms are poorly defined. All of these concepts involve a negative emotional state assumed to be caused by one's work. They may well have different meanings for different people, and there are no instruments available that can distinguish among them. In order to move forward, the project will select the definition of subjective stress with the strongest empirical support in terms of its reliability and validity.

Concern about police stress usually results from the high incidence of alcoholism, domestic violence, divorce, and suicide among officers. These effects are objective in the sense that they are readily observable and measurable by others and do not depend on the individual officer to report internal feelings. The project will also examine other possible objective effects of stress. These include high blood pressure, absenteeism, permanent work disability, hostile outbursts, involvement in car crashes, inappropriate use of force, changes in personal behavior, such as eating habits, exercising, and so on. Many of these variables can be measured accurately with little difficulty. The tough question with which the project will deal is which ones are indeed effects of stress and, if so, under what circumstances and for whom?

Stressful situations affect different people in different ways (Broadbent, 1985; Frankenhaeuser, 1986; Hockey, 1986; Tattersall and Farmer, 1995). The project will study many other variables that moderate, or influence, the effect of stressful circumstances on individuals. Previous research has identified the following examples of moderator variables that influence police stress: rank (Brown and Campbell, 1990; Brown and Fielding, 1993), length of time on the force, race/ethnicity (Morris, 1996), gender (Brown and Fielding, 1993; Beermann and Nachreiner, 1995; Morris, 1996), marital status, and presence of children at home. Other investigators have also examined personality variables but have not yet produced solid evidence supporting particular dimensions (Hart, Wearing, and Headey, 1995; Wearing and Hart, 1996)

In the past, there appeared to be no need for anything as elaborate as a *conceptual model* for explaining police stress. It was simply common sense that police experienced life-threatening situations that necessarily resulted in stress which, in turn, negatively affected them and their families. It now appears that police stress is much more complicated. For example, as discussed earlier, it increasingly seems that organizational sources are bigger

contributors to stress than job duties. Thus, a conceptual model is necessary to account for factors such as the following. First, what exactly is it about the organization that causes stress. Second, why are the effects of stress more severe among police officers than in other occupations? Is the stress greater, and if so, what is different about police organizations? Another possibility is that stress is no greater in police organizations than in others, but some characteristic of the police culture renders officers less able to cope with stress.

One source of conceptual models for our work is the body of research on organizational health and stress (most of which does not deal with police organizations). Even here, the shift in emphasis from focusing on the individual employee to a search for characteristics of the organization that affect employees is quite recent, and relatively little solid research exists (Jaffe, 1995). Some of the investigators in this area are well aware of the definitional problems. As Jones, Flynn, and Kelloway (1995) and Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning (1986) observe, even the notion of *stress* is difficult to specify. One definition proposed by Houtman and Kompier (1995) is that stress is the state of individuals when they cannot or feel unable to cope with the psychological load imposed on them. Radmacher and Sheridan (1995) recognized that a wide range of operational definitions of job strain exist in the literature. Furthermore, they found that the concept of *control*, as used in some models of organizational stress, is actually composed of several independent dimensions. This finding is consistent with Ganster's (1989) argument that *control* is intertwined with job complexity and job challenge.

Several explanations have been presented by investigators attempting to understand the mechanisms through which organizations cause stress. For example, Jones, Flynn, and Kelloway (1995) believe that *organizational support* plays a major role in organizational behavior and influences both the organization's productivity and employees' health. Others have taken a

similar approach by examining employees' perceptions of the organization's commitment to them. Van der Velde and Class (1995) contend that it is often the organizational culture that creates stress by fostering expectations for behavior that conflict with employees' preferences. Organizational cultures can be inherently oriented toward conflict or can induce stress by being proscriptive and ambiguous.

The conceptual model that has recently received the most attention involves conflict between the demands made on employees and their capacity to satisfy those demands (Radmacher and Sheridan, 1995). Wall (1996) further refined this general notion by distinguishing between *decision latitude* and *control* in an effort to account for *work strain* observed in manufacturing employees. Marshall (1997) also refined the original theory and distinguished between two models. A *job demand-control* model from which it is hypothesized that jobs that are both high in job demands and low in decision latitude are associated with greater psychological distress. His other model, a *job demand-service* model, results in the hypothesis that jobs high in job demands and low in service to others are associated with greater psychological stress. Tests of these models showed that the job demand-control model was a significant predictor of psychological distress among employees in the manufacturing industry, whereas the job demand-service model was a significant predictor of psychological distress among employees in the services industries.

When possible, the project will make use of existing measurement instruments. The instruments that appear to be supported by positive assessments of their reliability and validity include:

- Human Factors Inventory (St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Companies, 1985).
- Daily Interaction Record in Organizations (Buunk and Verhoeven, 1991).

- Police Daily Hassles and Uplifts Scales (Hart, Wearing, and Headey, 1994).
- State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Brown and Campbell, 1990).
- Eysenck Personality Questionnaire.
- Organizational Culture Inventory (Cooke and Lafferty, 1986).
- Quick-Scan Stress Scale (Radmacher and Sheridan, 1995).

New measures will be developed only as a last resort when an instrument is urgently needed but either none exists or those that do exist have not been assessed. Final selection of instruments will not occur until the state-of-the-art report is prepared, since it will include a careful review of available instruments.

Most research on police stress is heavily dependent on self-reports simply because there are no practical alternatives. Typically, self-reports are used both to assess the incidence of stressful events and also officers' subjective reactions to those events. While this project will make use of self-reports, several steps will be taken to maximize their accuracy. The reliability of some self-reports will be assessed by repeating items from a baseline questionnaire on the two follow-up questionnaires. The answers to some items should be the same on all three tests, thereby providing the opportunity to test whether officers do in fact give the same answer each time.

The validity of some self-reports will be assessed by comparing responses with department records. Officers' reports dealing with certain types of events can be verified from department incident reports. Conversely, we will determine whether events appearing in incident reports are also mentioned in officers' responses to our questionnaires.

The most important assessment of self-reports will be the extent to which findings based on self-reports are consistent with other findings based only on objective measures. Where possible, models and hypotheses will be tested with measures that do not depend on self-reports.

The bulk of the project will be devoted to testing conceptual models and hypotheses of police stress. Longitudinal research in which observations are made at different times is necessary to adequately test models and hypotheses which postulate specific sources as the *causes* of felt stress (Zapf, 1996; Schonfeld, Rhee, and Xia, 1995; Chen, Spector, and Jex, 1995). Cross-sectional studies consisting of observations made at a single point in time are useful for identifying associations among variables but are limited in their ability to test causal relationships among variables.

Therefore, two methodologies will be employed in this project for testing hypotheses. The first is a 12-month longitudinal study in which measures of potential sources of stress and the subjective and objective effects are first made early in the project and then again two more times at six-month intervals. The strength of some sources of stress will vary during the year, new sources of stress will emerge, and some old sources will disappear. Longitudinal data will allow us to show how changes in these sources of stress are causally related to the stress that police officers feel and to the resulting symptoms.

The second methodology involves the application of time series analysis to observations made over many, regular intervals. Daily observations will be made for one, small group of officers, and weekly observations will be made for another small group. Time series analyses will examine trends in the experience of stress and enable us to relate these trends to the ebb and flow of sources of stress.

Another important aspect of our methodological approach involves comparisons among three very different police departments. The opportunity to compare results among the three departments will be a major asset in reaching conclusions that are generalizable to police throughout the country.

In order to make certain that this project proceeds on the basis of the most current information available, two steps will be taken immediately after startup. First, databases will be searched electronically to ensure that we know about information that appeared after the searches conducted for the proposal. In addition, we will contact the most active investigators in the area of police stress to learn about new developments that have not yet been published.

Insights from police officers are essential in order for this project to be successful. Therefore, we will conduct a series of interviews designed to systematically explore police stress from the officer's point of view. A stratified random sample representing the Framingham police department will be drawn. Two lieutenants, three sergeants, and 20 patrol officers will be interviewed, one at a time. A protocol will be used to guide a relatively open-ended discussion. Topics for the discussion include:

- Examination of different types of negative feelings dealing with stress, anger, depression, and frustration. How does the officer define these and other feelings?
- What are the sources of stress, frustration, and so on, and what are some personal examples?
- What, if anything, has worked to relieve stress, and what more could be done?

A qualitative analysis will be conducted on the officers' comments. Qualitative data will be processed by identifying key themes (two or more staff will review the interview notes, identify themes, and extract data to provide inter-rater reliability), coding by theme, tabulating, and excerpting to illustrate key themes. Results of the analysis will be presented in an interim report.

The main study for this project is the collection of data on potential sources of stress and on their subjective and objective effects on officers at three points in time spaced six months apart. Initial data collection for the longitudinal study will occur no later than the fourth month of the project. This first point of data collection will serve as the baseline against which later data will be compared and will also serve as a platform for exploring associations among many variables.

Longitudinal data is necessary for rigorously testing many of the models and hypotheses that will have been identified by the state-of-the-art review and by analysis of the baseline survey. Therefore, data collection will be repeated six and then twelve months after the baseline data is gathered.

All police officers, except the Chiefs, in three very different police departments in Massachusetts will be asked to participate in the study. Given the strong support for the study from the Chiefs and command staff, we expect that nearly all officers will agree to take part.

There are several reasons for including three police departments in the study. The most important reason is that each department provides the opportunity to replicate the findings from the other departments. In order to draw conclusions about police stress that can be generalized to most police, it is necessary to show that the results from this study are not unique to a particular police department. For example, results from this research would be challenged immediately if they showed that organizational factors are bigger sources of stress than job duties, but data was obtained entirely from a community where little violence occurs.

While we expect to identify sources of stress common to most police departments, there will also be differences among departments with respect to both the sources and effects of stress. Thus, a second reason for including three departments in the study is that they will help us begin studying stress-related factors that vary among departments.

Finally, additional departments increase the number of police officers participating in the study. In research, such as the proposed project, that is designed to sort out the effects of several variables, most statistical procedures require that there be many more subjects than variables. Similarly, it will be possible to develop measurement instruments on one group of officers and still have other groups available for assessing the reliability and validity of the instruments.

The three Massachusetts police departments taking part in the research are located in Framingham, Chelsea, and Harvard. Chelsea is a densely populated, urban, working class city with numerous language challenges, active gangs, and other problems typical of major cities. The Chelsea Police Department, although presently very progressive and professional, suffered from a past involving corruption, misuse of authority, and lack of leadership. Harvard, at the other extreme, is a predominantly white, well-to-do community with little criminal activity. The Harvard Police Department, under a new Chief, is regarded as quite progressive and professional. Framingham falls neatly between the two extremes with respect to both demographics and the amount of criminal activity and violence encountered by the police. Framingham is also important for the study because its citizens provide a remarkably effective representation of the entire United States. That is one of the main reasons Framingham was chosen for the influential Framingham heart study and why businesses frequently test market their products in the town. The Framingham Police Department enjoys a reputation of exceptional service, professional personnel, and high integrity.

The study will be presented to officers in each police department during roll call by a team consisting of one lieutenant, one sergeant, one patrol officer, and two Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc. researchers. Although participation is voluntary, the use of the cross-section

of police staff will promote a sense of fairness and demonstrate that all ranks have equal status in the project.

Most of the data concerning potential sources of stress and the objective effects of stress will be collected by the research staff working closely with the appropriate officers in each department. Questionnaires will be administered to all officers to obtain their estimates of the sources of stress and their reports of the subjective effects of stress. Administration of questionnaires will take place in small groups. The groups will be supervised so as to prevent interaction among the officers during testing and to enable officers to keep their responses private.

One of the biggest unknowns involving police stress is how it changes over time. At one extreme, some stress could be fairly constant. At the other extreme, some stress could vary greatly in its intensity. Its strength could vary throughout a shift, from day-to-day, from week-to-week, and so on. One of the best ways to study this issue is to take frequent observations of police so that the observations capture whatever variation occurs.

Since we do not yet know the optimal interval for making observations of police stress, we will experiment with two mini-studies. For one randomly selected sample of five Framingham police officers, data will be collected daily to track potential sources of stress and their effects. Data will be collected weekly for another randomly selected five Framingham officers.

Analysis of the first point of data collection will be largely exploratory. That is, it will search for relationships among variables that warrant further testing. Later, much more powerful analyses will be conducted on the longitudinal data provided by the follow-up data collections.

The first step in the analysis will be to examine the distributions of all variables using Tukey's (1977) exploratory data analysis techniques. Next, bivariate associations among many

pairs of variables will be tested. Because of the many associations that will be tested, some are bound to be significant just by chance. Consequently, findings from these analyses will be treated as tentative. Finally, multivariate analyses will be used to conduct preliminary tests of the hypotheses developed while writing the state-of-the-art report on police stress. For example, hierarchical multiple regression analysis will be used to compare the contributions of different groupings of predictor variables (demographics, exposure to risks, and organizational climate) to a dependent measure of subjectively felt stress.

Multivariate analyses will be conducted to test two types of relationships among (1) sources of stress, (2) subjectively felt stress, and (3) objective effects of stress. The first relationship to be tested is the temporal order of the variables. Longitudinal data will enable us to test whether specific incidents or situations do in fact cause the police to feel stress which, in turn, then leads to objective symptoms. The second relationship involves comparing the magnitude of potential stressors with the magnitude of the subjective and objective consequences.

Initially, each of the ten officers in the two mini-studies involving daily or weekly data collection will be treated as a separate case study. Data will be plotted for each officer in order to study the individual's reaction to potentially stressful circumstances. If the results appear promising, data collection will continue throughout the project so that time series analyses can be conducted. Time series analysis will enable us to identify trends in the data, such as changes in subjective stress that increase during periods of intense police activity, such as on weekends, or when a particular commanding officer is supervising. In addition, interrupted time series analysis can isolate the impact of new, relatively sudden stressful events, such as a change in assignment from one partner to another.

The final step in the project will be the development of strategies for reducing police stress caused by organizational factors. First, results of the research will be used to identify the organizational factors that contribute the most to police stress. Then, researchers and police officers will work together to devise strategies to modify the targeted organizational factors. Special attention will be devoted to insuring that the proposed strategies are politically, economically, and logistically feasible.

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