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**EVALUATION OF A COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: THE ALEXANDRIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
INTERVENTION PROJECT**

FINAL REPORT

September, 1999

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The problem of violence against women, and especially domestic violence, has received increasing attention over the last 15 years. The U.S. Congress underscored the importance of this problem when, in 1994, it passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and appropriated \$1.3 billion to address violence against women in its various forms. Woman battering, couple violence, and abusive family patterns reached the national agenda because of the high prevalence of this form of violence and because of a recognition that the consequences go far beyond the individual female victims.

The 1984 Minneapolis warrantless arrest study by Sherman and Berk found that arresting domestic violence offenders resulted in fewer incidents of subsequent violence. These findings led to widespread adoption of mandatory arrest policies by police departments. Subsequent replication studies failed to find support for the general policy of mandatory arrest.

Investigators have noted that police do not operate independently of other elements of the justice system. Moreover, in the case of domestic violence, community advocacy organizations play an important role in service provision. Thus communities have sought to develop coordinated responses to domestic violence, involving police, prosecutors, judges and community advocates. Projects typically have developed pro-arrest policies, prosecution and sentencing guidelines, and counseling and education programs for court-mandated batterers. One popular method for implementing comprehensive coordinated approaches has been the formation of community intervention projects that are primarily staffed by battered women's advocates. These programs have several elements in common: the provision of services to victims, the provision of services to batterers, including court-ordered treatment, and the presence of active coordination between the local police department and prosecutor's office. There has been relatively little research on these coordinated programs, but what has been done suggests that they hold some promise as a domestic violence intervention.

The purpose of the current study is to examine the Alexandria, Virginia Domestic

Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), a coordinated community response to domestic violence. To determine program effectiveness, the study conducted multiple interviews with female victims of domestic violence perpetrated by male intimate partners. Program satisfaction, recidivism and other elements were compared with the responses of a sample of domestic violence victims in the City of Virginia Beach. In addition, 3½ years of data on domestic violence offenses was used to examine factors related to recidivism of domestic violence offenders in Alexandria. The study also reports the findings of attitudinal surveys of Alexandria police officers regarding the Department's mandatory arrest policy.

Alexandria's Domestic Violence Intervention Program

Alexandria's Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) consists of several components located in various city agencies, including the Alexandria Police Department, the Victim-Witness Program located in the Commonwealth Attorney's office, and the Domestic Violence Program of the Office on Women. For the majority of abusers, monitoring and services are provided by the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Service Unit and the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services. While these agencies, along with the judges, magistrates, and adult probation and parole officers, form the DVIP, it is the police department, the Victim-Witness Assistance Program, and the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program that are the primary focus of the present study. The police department implemented a mandatory arrest policy for domestic violence cases in 1988. The policy requires officers to make warrantless arrests when they can establish probable cause that a domestic assault has taken place.

The Alexandria Victim-Witness Assistance program screens all police incident reports daily, and reviews each for evidence of domestic involvement. The Victim Services Coordinator completes a Victim Referral Sheet on all of these cases. These referral sheets are then forwarded to the Office on Women for follow-up contact.

The Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program provides counseling, referral and

court advocacy services for victims of domestic violence. Referrals received from the Victim-Witness Assistance Program are contacted within 24-48 hours of the incident. The program provides information to the women about the court process, and gathers information from them about the circumstances surrounding the abuse. Volunteers from the Court Advocacy Program are in court every day that domestic violence cases are heard, so that all domestic violence victims have an advocate available for their court appearance.

Calls to victims are also used to obtain additional information which might be useful to the prosecutor, such as history of abuse and whether there are any witnesses who might testify. The Domestic Violence Program records any additional information collected on the Victim Referral Sheet, a copy of which is returned to the Victim-Witness Assistance Program for use in prosecuting the case.

In addition to court advocacy, the Office on Women also operates the Alexandria Women's Shelter, staffs the domestic violence hotline, provides individual counseling, and runs women's support groups, partners groups, and anger management groups. Alexandria is unique among Virginia localities in having a single office which provides all of these services.

The Alexandria Commonwealth Attorney's Office has adopted a no-drop policy for prosecuting domestic violence offenders. Under this policy, charges are brought against the abuser regardless of whether the victim seeks prosecution. Victims who indicate a desire to drop charges are told that this can only happen on the day of the trial when, if they are unwilling to testify, they must provide an explanation to the judge. All domestic violence cases are prosecuted by a member of the Commonwealth's Attorney's office.

Virginia Beach's Domestic Violence Services

The City of Virginia Beach served as the comparison site for the study. Domestic violence services are provided by a number of agencies in Virginia Beach, as they are in most of Virginia's localities. The main agencies involved in domestic violence cases are the Virginia Beach Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit, which follows up on all domestic violence

cases, the Family Advocacy Network Services (FANS) program, which provides court accompaniment and support groups, and Samaritan House, which runs the shelter and staffs the hotline. Other agencies which provide services include the Department of Social Services, which provides support groups for domestic violence victims, and the YWCA program in the neighboring city of Norfolk, which provides batterer treatment.

The Virginia Beach Police Department maintains a Domestic Violence Unit which follows up on all domestic violence calls received. One of the detectives in the Unit contacts victims of domestic violence incidents and explains the resources available, even in cases where no arrest has been made. The Department employs a "pro-arrest" policy; officers are encouraged to make warrantless arrests in domestic violence calls where they have probable cause to believe that an offense took place.

Methodology

A total of 106 women in Alexandria and 64 women in Virginia Beach participated in a series of interviews designed to determine the services they had received, their satisfaction with those services, and their experiences with subsequent abuse. The women had all experienced abusive incidents by an intimate male partner prior to their participation in the study. Interviews were conducted by phone, with four rounds conducted in Alexandria and three in Virginia Beach. The length of time from the initial incident to each of the interview rounds in Alexandria was as follows: 2 months for Round 1, 3 months for Round 2, 6½ months for Round 3, and 15 months for Round 4. For Virginia Beach, the intervals were 1 month for Round 1, 2½ months for Round 2, and 5 months for Round 3.

Client Interview Results

A total of 62% of the Alexandria women interviewed received some type of services aside from court accompaniment. By contrast, 27% of the women interviewed in Virginia Beach

received some type of services other than a brochure from the police. The Alexandria women rated the services they received very positively: 68-73% indicated that the various component agencies were "very helpful." These ratings were much higher than those in Virginia Beach, where police and FANS staff were rated as "very helpful" by just over half of the women, and prosecutors and the hotline were rated as "very helpful" by just over one-third. The only statistically significant difference between the ratings of the women in the two samples was for the helpfulness of the prosecutors, which is probably best explained by the relatively recent involvement of the Virginia Beach Commonwealth Attorney's Office in prosecuting domestic violence cases.

A significantly lower proportion of the Alexandria women (27.4%) reported an abusive incident of any kind during the first three interviews than the women in Virginia Beach (45.3%). A greater proportion of the women in Alexandria experienced physical violence sometime between the first and third interviews, although the difference, expressed as percentages of the number interviewed (6.3% in Alexandria vs. 3.5% in Virginia Beach) was not statistically significant. For non-physical abuse, 24.1% of Alexandria women interviewed at Interviews 2 or 3 reported this type of abuse, versus 38.6% of the Virginia Beach women.

Alexandria women who received counseling services or attended support groups rated DVIP program components more positively than those who received other services or no services. There was no relationship between services received and revictimization, nor between services received and the likelihood of leaving the abuser or ratings of overall life situation.

Alexandria Offender Recidivism Analysis

In order to examine the factors related to abusers who repeatedly abuse their victims, the DVIP program's offender database was examined. A total of 2,623 domestic violence incidents that occurred during the 3½ year period from January 1993 to June 1996 were examined, along with the remaining offenses (other than domestic violence) committed by these 1,910 domestic violence defendants from January 1, 1990 through June of 1996.

Comparison of the characteristics of one-time (n=1,508) and repeat (n=402) offenders showed seven variables that were significant in bivariate analyses. These analyses showed that repeat domestic violence offenders, as compared to one-time offenders, were more likely to: be African-American; be unemployed; have been using drugs at the time the abusive incident took place; have received an incarcerative sentence for the domestic violence offense; have been arrested for at least one previous non-domestic violence offense, especially a violent offense; and to have been non-compliant with court-mandated treatment.

These factors, along with interaction effects suggested by previous studies, were examined in a series of logistic regression analyses. The final model showed three factors that significantly distinguished between one-time and repeat offenders: having a prior non-domestic violence offense, having received an incarcerative sentence, being African-American, and the interaction between the first two factors. The interaction suggested that domestic violence offenders who had a prior non-domestic violence arrest and who were given a sentence other than incarceration for the domestic violence offense were more likely to be repeat offenders.

Alexandria Police Officer Attitudes

do not add

In order to assess police officers' attitudes regarding the domestic violence arrest policy in Alexandria, a brief survey was developed and distributed to the officers. The survey was administered during roll calls in the Fall of 1996 by the sergeant in charge of the domestic violence unit. A total of 133 officers and detectives completed the survey. However, since not all of these individuals were directly involved in policing domestic violence, the analysis was restricted to those officers who indicated that they had made a domestic violence arrest in the prior 12 months. This reduced the total number of cases to 95.

Overall, officers expressed very positive attitudes toward the domestic violence policy. The vast majority of officers agreed that they understood what constituted a domestic violence

incident, that they received appropriate support from magistrates regarding their arrest decisions, and that they favored the domestic violence policy. The majority of officers agreed that the policy was an effective deterrent to domestic violence. However, the majority of officers thought that whether or not to make an arrest should be left to the discretion of the officer, and 60% felt that they had “not much” or “very little” discretion in handling domestic violence calls.

To further explore this last point, officers were asked what percentage of the domestic violence calls they responded to in the last year had resulted in an arrest, and in what percentage they would have made an arrest had they had complete discretion. Just over one-third of the respondents reported making arrests in over 90% of the domestic violence cases to which they responded, while about one in five made arrests in half or fewer of the cases. According to the officers, if they had complete discretion, many fewer arrests would have been made. Just over half of the officers would have made arrests in 50% or fewer of the calls to which they responded, and only about 14% would have made arrests in 90% or more of the calls to which they responded.

None of the attitudinal questions was significantly related to percentage of arrests made. Gender was not significantly related to percentage of arrests made, although female officers (n=18) reported making a slightly greater proportion of arrests (75.4%) than male officers (70.7%). The only variables that were significantly related to reported percentage of arrests were age and length of time that the officer has worked for the Alexandria Police Department. Both of these variables were positively related to percentage of arrests: that is, older officers and those who had been on the force longer reported a greater percentage of arrests than younger officers and those who had not been on the force as long.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the data collected and analyzed in the present study, conclusions and recommendations for the Alexandria DVIP program are listed below.

- **The DVIP program is doing a good job in providing services to domestic violence victims in Alexandria.**

Victims in Alexandria reported receiving more services than those in Virginia Beach, and rated the various DVIP program components as being more helpful than those in Virginia Beach. Victims who received counseling or attended support groups rated the program more positively than those who received other types of services or no services. About 38% of victims sampled reported receiving no services other than court accompaniment. Only about 22% of women experiencing a subsequent incident of physical abuse thought about contacting the DVIP program to talk about the incident.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) The program should consider maintaining contact with victims or emphasizing other forms of outreach to increase the likelihood of women who continue to experience abuse contacting the program.

(2) The program should attempt to increase the numbers of women receiving such services.

(3) The program should take steps to provide services to a greater proportion of the women with whom the various agencies come into contact.

- **The Police Department's mandatory arrest policy received positive ratings from the officers, and appears to result in arrests in a greater proportion of domestic violence calls than would otherwise be the case.**

Officer responses to the questions about the arrest policy were generally positive. Despite this, the majority of officers agreed that arrests in domestic violence calls should be left to their discretion. The results of the police officers' self-reports showed that they made arrests in an average of 75% of the calls to which they responded. Their guess was that if they had complete

discretion, this proportion would have been only 56%.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) Further analysis of the proportion of domestic violence calls resulting in arrest should be undertaken by the program to determine whether 75% is an accurate estimate and, if so, a satisfactory response.

(2) The program should consider training, focus groups, or other activities to explore officers' feelings that they would like more discretion, and that they would make fewer arrests if they had that discretion, in handling domestic violence calls.

- **The DVIP program should take steps to reduce the number of nolle-prossed and dismissed cases.**

Between January 1993 and June 1996, over one-third of the domestic violence cases were nolle-processed, mostly because victims failed to appear in court. About 47% of cases were either dismissed or nolle-processed during that time period.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) The DVIP program should increase efforts to contact victims and convince them to appear in court.

(2) The program should study in greater detail cases that are nolle-prossed and dismissed, with the goal of seeking information to assist in developing policies and procedures to reduce the number of these cases.

- **Recidivism among domestic violence offenders appears to be related to both prior offense history and sentencing for the domestic violence offense.**

The analysis of the CJIS data presented here suggests that repeat offenders are more likely to have at least one prior non-domestic violence offense and to have received a non-incarcerative sentence for the current domestic violence offense.

RECOMMENDATION:

The program should seek to confirm the findings presented here through further study. If confirmed, the program should consider imposing a jail sentence on domestic violence offenders who have a prior offense history.

- **DVIP participants experienced less non-physical revictimization than those in the comparison site, although the reason for this could not be determined.**

While instances of subsequent physical abuse were greater in Alexandria, instances of emotional abuse, including threats of physical abuse, were greater in Virginia Beach. The analyses presented here could not find any relationship between DVIP program activities and outcomes. The present study suffered from a number of limitations, and these may explain why there was no rationale for the observed recidivism differences.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) The program should develop a “logic model” which specifies the program goals, objectives, and expected outcomes, and shows how particular program activities are expected to result in specified outcomes.

(2) The program should continue to explore the question of how its clients benefit from the services provided by the program.

Implications for Coordinated Responses to Domestic Violence

The findings of this study have implications for other programs which seek to provide coordinated responses to domestic violence in their communities. First, a coordinated approach does seem to result in domestic violence victims receiving more services that they view

positively. However, programs need to be aggressive in reaching out to battered women and providing more one-on-one services, rather than just general information and court accompaniment. This would not only result in more positive feelings about the services received (and potentially the justice system as a whole), but would also increase the chances of women contacting the program should subsequent instances of battering occur.

Our findings show that mandatory arrest policies clearly affect the behavior of police who would otherwise use arrest less frequently if left to their discretion. However, the results of our recidivism analysis support the findings of others that arrest is less likely to change the subsequent behavior of batterers who are only marginally attached to society.

Over one-third of domestic violence arrests in Alexandria in a 3 ½ year period were not prosecuted, usually because the victims failed to appear in court. Previous research has shown that domestic violence victims are often reluctant to appear in court to testify against their abusers. However, the willingness of domestic violence victims to cooperate with prosecutors despite being given the choice not to proceed with the case against their abusers may be related to less subsequent abuse. It is therefore important that intervention programs seek to maximize the likelihood that domestic violence victims will appear in court. This may involve enhancing efforts to contact victims after an arrest has been made and convincing them of the importance of participating in the prosecution of their abusers. It may also involve better communication between domestic violence service providers and prosecutors, in order to ensure that victims understand their options and the potential consequences of their choices. Prosecutors should also weigh the merits of issuing subpoenas to domestic violence victims as a way of bringing them into court.

BACKGROUND

The problem of violence against women, and especially domestic violence, has received increasing attention over the last 15 years. The U.S. Congress underscored the importance of this problem when, in 1994, it passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and appropriated \$1.3 billion to address violence against women in its various forms. Woman battering, couple violence, and abusive family patterns reached the national agenda because of the high prevalence of this form of violence and because of a recognition that the consequences go far beyond the individual female victims.

The prevalence of intimate partner violence is well documented in both health studies and in crime statistics. Over two-thirds of violent offenses against women were committed by someone known to them, and 28% of these were committed by husbands or boyfriends (Bachman, 1994). According to the 1992 National Crime Victimization Survey, 51 percent of domestic violence victims were attacked by a boyfriend or girlfriend, 34 percent by a spouse, and 15 percent by a former spouse (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994).

Bachman and Saltzman (1995) reported that attacks by intimates are more dangerous to women than attacks by strangers because over half of the women victimized by an intimate sustain injuries, compared with a fifth of those victimized by a stranger. The 50 percent injury rate resulting from physical violence against women is consistent with findings reported by other investigators (Hale-Carlsson, Hutton, Fuhrman, McNutt, & Morse, 1996). However, Hale-Carlsson et al. (1996) found that only 20% of women who are injured seek medical attention for their injuries. This suggests that the overall detection of intimate violence and the acute traumatic injuries associated with it may extend well beyond what has been reported in research studies to date. In 1994, 250,000 people were treated in emergency rooms for injuries inflicted by an intimate partner (Healey & Smith, 1998). Pregnancy is a risk factor for battering; as many as 37% of obstetrics patients are physically abused during pregnancy (Council on Scientific Affairs, 1992).

More recent national surveys estimate that each year at least 2 million women are battered by an intimate partner (Crowell & Burgess, 1996), and over the course of their lifetimes, about 25 million women will be raped or physically assaulted by an intimate partner (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998a). Less conservative estimates indicate that each year, 4 million married or cohabiting women are physically assaulted by a male partner (Plichta, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1990). In addition, over 1 million women are stalked each year (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998b).

It is widely perceived that domestic violence is classless and that victimization by intimates does not vary significantly by race, ethnicity, or geography. However, age, economic, educational, and marital status each contribute to the vulnerability of some domestic violence victims (Healey & Smith, 1998). The most likely victims of domestic violence are black, between 20 and 24 years of age, and have annual household incomes under \$7,500 (Greenfeld et al., 1998).

Although family and intimate violence occurs in all strata of society, poverty constitutes a serious risk factor for violence by male partners, particularly for severe and life threatening attacks (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1990; Straus & Gelles, 1990; Wolfner & Gelles, 1993). In the 1985 National Family Violence Survey, although women of higher socioeconomic status experienced similar levels of minor violence (slapping) or verbal abuse, women married to men with lower occupational status or men who were unemployed were at greater risk of severe violence (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1990). Lifetime prevalence rates of physical and sexual assault in studies of homeless women are particularly high. For example, in a small sample of homeless women, Redmond and Brackman (1990) found that 50 percent had been physically abused as children, 33 percent reported child sexual molestation, and 33 percent reported experiencing violence from an adult partner. In-depth interviews with 141 women at a Manhattan shelter yielded prevalence estimates of 31 percent for child sexual molestation and 63 percent for violence by an adult partner (D'Ercole & Struening, 1990). Browne and Bassuk (1997) found that homeless women (87.8%) were more likely than housed women (78.6%) to have been victims of violence by intimates.

The Effects of Mandatory Arrest

The increased use of mandatory arrest as a sanction for domestic violence can be traced to research findings related to the Minneapolis warrantless arrest statute (Sherman & Berk, 1984). The Minneapolis findings suggested that the tactic of arrest reduced the rate of intimate partner violence. The Sherman and Berk (1984) experiment had a major impact on policing policies with regard to domestic violence. Police departments around the country began to implement pro-arrest and mandatory arrest policies.

Critics of mandatory arrest argued that the policy has the potential for negative consequences. These consequences include: the victim's fear of retaliation; the victim becoming less likely to report abuse if she perceives that arrest of the abuser is not in her best economic interest; and the fact that arrest and physical force may be disproportionately used against marginal groups of males (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996; Forell, 1990-1991; Zorza & Woods, 1994).

Concurrent with the widespread implementation of mandatory arrest and general criticism of the policy, there was a growing debate about methodological problems with the Minneapolis study (Binder & Meeker, 1992; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1993). To clarify the findings, the National Institute of Justice sponsored six studies designed to replicate the Minneapolis findings. Each of the urban sites was granted latitude to improve on the methodology used for the Minneapolis study. The replications, known collectively as the Spouse Assault Replication Program (SARP), were controlled experiments that used large samples to permit testing of various treatments. Dade County compared arrest to no arrest, both with and without follow-up counseling by a specially trained police unit (Pate & Hamilton, 1992). Colorado Springs contrasted arrest and non-arrest with immediate professional counseling at police headquarters or the issuance of an emergency protection order (Berk, Campbell, Klap & Western, 1992). Milwaukee tested the length of time in custody: a short 2-hour arrest versus arrest with an overnight stay in jail, compared to no arrest (Sherman, 1992a, 1992b; Sherman et al., 1991, 1992). Charlotte included a citation response along with arrest, mediation, or separation treatments (Hirschel & Hutchison, 1992, 1996).

Omaha followed the Minneapolis design but added an offender-absent condition to test the effect of having police pursue an arrest warrant (Dunford, Huizinga, & Elliott, 1990).

Schmidt and Sherman (1996) summarized the major findings of the SARP studies. The first finding was that arrest reduces domestic violence among employed people but increases it among unemployed people. Mandatory arrest policies may thus protect working-class women but cause greater harm to those who are poor. The second finding was that arrest reduces domestic violence in the short run but may increase it in the long run. No arrest means more danger to the victim now, whereas making an arrest may mean more danger of violence later for the same victim or for someone else. The third finding was that arrest reduces domestic violence in some cities but increases it in others. Specifically, arrest increased domestic violence recidivism among suspects in Omaha, Charlotte, and Milwaukee. However, it is not clear how to generalize this finding to other localities.

The implications of the SARP findings remain unclear. Garner, Fagan and Maxwell (1995) compared the results of the various replications and concluded that there is not sufficient information to determine the generalizability of the original Minneapolis study. Chalk and King (1998) conclude that the SARP studies show that arrest of all misdemeanor cases will not, on average, result in an impact on recidivism.

One problem in determining the effect of mandatory arrest policies on rates of abuse is that change must occur in police practices after enactment of the policy, which does not always happen. The disparity between the policy and the actual domestic violence arrest rates has been attributed to the tendency of officers to fail to find "reasonable and probable grounds" for an arrest (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996). Prior to the implementation of mandatory arrest policies, police departments often justified inaction by arguing that domestic abuse is a private matter (Langan & Innes, 1986). Additionally, it was widely perceived that arresting suspects invited more violence, and that victims would not help prosecutors who often based decisions to prosecute on victim cooperation. These attitudes may still have an impact on pro-arrest police departments.

Mignon and Holmes (1995) used a stratified random sample of 24 police departments across Massachusetts to study outcomes of police interventions, correlates of arrest, and the relationship to police training and experience. They found that the majority of offenders were not charged with a crime. Of the 861 cases, two thirds (66.8%) of the reports showed that the alleged offender was not arrested. Physical assaults were the most likely to result in an arrest. Injury to the victim, violation of restraining orders, and use of a weapon explained arrest decisions.

The Minneapolis Police Department, an enthusiastic supporter of the use of arrests, provided evidence of the disparity in arrest rates. In 1986, despite a mandatory arrest policy, less than 20 percent of the 24,948 domestic assault calls resulted in an arrest (Balos & Trotzky, 1988).

Feder (1997) examined factors affecting the likelihood of police arrest in the largest police agencies in south Florida where pro-arrest legislation is fully supported by departmental policy. Police self-reported their likelihood to arrest when responding to a domestic violence call. Results indicated that belief in the utility of police involvement, knowledge of the department's policy, and attitudes towards women were all significant and accounted for most of the variation in likelihood of arrest.

An increase in dual arrests may be one of the unexpected consequences of mandatory arrest policies. Martin (1997) examined the characteristics of arrestees and the nature of the domestic violence incidents that resulted in dual arrest in Connecticut. Martin found that dual arrests comprised 33 percent of the arrests, and that there were significant differences between the offender, offense, and court outcome characteristics of persons charged with dual and single arrests. Dual arrest defendants were more likely to be women, Caucasian (75%), and younger (average age of 29.7 year) than their single arrest counterparts. Dual arrest defendants were also more likely than other domestic violence defendants to live with the victim or codefendant and to be unmarried (68%). The most common (76%) of the dual arrests involved physical violence rather than verbal abuse or property damage. Nine percent involved use of guns, knives, or other weapons. In over half (53%) the cases one or both parties used drugs or alcohol at the time of the

offense. Court outcomes differed in that fewer dual arrest cases resulted in conviction and more were nolle-prossed than the single arrest group.

No-Drop Prosecution Policies

Some researchers have noted that impact evaluations of mandatory arrest policies have largely been conducted without monitoring the domestic violence prosecution processes and their outcomes. Evaluation of the impact of arrest alone can lead to invalid conclusions about the effectiveness of the criminal justice response because these evaluations look at only one piece of the system's overall response to a domestic violence incident (Bowman, 1992; Cahn & Lerman, 1991; Frisch, 1992; Waits, 1985; Zorza, 1992).

A “no-drop” prosecution policy prevents victims from freely dropping charges and requires that prosecutors pursue the case against the abuser (Lerman, 1981). This policy is seen as reducing the burden placed on women who may be intimidated by the abuser into not cooperating with the prosecutor. The policy also sends the message that the community considers domestic violence to be not a personal matter but a criminal one, to be handled the same as any other criminal behavior (Cahn, 1992; Cahn & Lerman, 1991; Goolkasian, 1986).

No-drop prosecutorial strategies have been criticized for disempowering women, wasting valuable court resources when women ultimately fail to show up for hearings and charges must be nolle-prossed, and for setting up a potential conflict between victims and the professionals (such as victim advocates) whose role is to provide support and assistance (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990). One study showed that large city prosecutors did indeed have problems with uncooperative victims. Over a third of the prosecutors reported that 55 percent of their cases involved uncooperative witnesses. Ninety-two percent of prosecutors used their subpoena power to require victim testimony (Rebovich, 1996). Buzawa and Buzawa (1996) attribute victims' failure to appear in court to a mistrust of prosecutors and to a sense of being “steamrolled” by the system.

An experimental assessment of several prosecution strategies was conducted in the Indianapolis Prosecution Experiment (Ford & Regoli, 1992). A total of 678 cases of domestic violence were randomly assigned to one of several "prosecutorial tracks," under both no-drop and drop-permitted policies. The study showed that regardless of the disposition, abusers who were brought before the court were less likely to re-offend after prosecution than they were prior to the court hearing. An additional finding was that women who were permitted to drop charges but chose not to were less likely to be victimized again than those who could not drop charges. The authors argued that it is the combination of the women's ability to choose to drop charges, along with the criminal justice system's willingness to prosecute the charges should she decide not to drop them, that produced positive outcomes (Ford & Regoli, 1992).

Other evidence suggests that allowing victim-initiated complaints serves a protective function for the victim. Ford (1993) evaluated victims' interview reports of incidents before and after prosecution and found that victim-initiated complaint policies resulted in a decrease in violence of at least 47 percent. Ford also found that victims who were permitted to drop charges and whose defendant had been arrested on a warrant had the lowest chance of suffering new violence within 6 months of the case being settled. Additionally, it was found that women who were permitted to drop charges and did so were no better off than those whose cases were prosecuted under a no-drop policy.

Some localities have instituted less rigid versions of the no-drop policy in which the victim may drop charges after speaking with a counselor or court advocate and appearing in front of the judge to explain why she is dropping the charges (Cahn, 1992). Strategies for prosecuting domestic violence cases have also included the use of probation and diversion into counseling programs. These diversions can take place prior to the trial or after the offender has entered a guilty plea; in the latter case, the sentence is suspended conditional upon the successful completion of treatment (Cahn, 1992). Another prosecutorial strategy is to offer the offender a probationary sentence in exchange for a guilty plea and completion of a court-ordered treatment program for batterers.

Batterer Intervention Programs

A number of studies have examined the impact of batterer intervention programs on recidivism. Batterer intervention evaluations have suffered from some of the same methodological problems as mandatory arrest outcome evaluations (Davis & Taylor, 1997). The evaluations that have withstood scrutiny have found modest but statistically significant reductions in recidivism among men participating in batterer interventions (Chen, Bersani, Myers & Denton, 1989; Davis & Taylor, 1997; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh & Lewis, 1996; Dutton, 1986). A notable exception is the Baltimore batterer intervention program evaluation. Harrell (1992) found that participants in all three batterer interventions recidivated at a higher rate than those in the control group.

A number of studies have examined the effects of court-mandated treatment on batterer recidivism rates. In general, these studies have found that men who were mandated to treatment were as responsive to treatment as men who were referred through other means. Also, court-mandated participants who complete treatment are less likely to re-offend during follow-up than those who do not participate or who drop out of treatment (Edleson, 1991; Edleson & Syers, 1991).

Just as mandatory arrest may have differential impacts on different subgroups of batterers, batterer intervention programs may be more or less effective for different batterers (Fagan, 1996). Chalk and King (1998) note that there is little research that examines the comparative effects of different types of treatment and different treatment settings with different types of batterers.

Comprehensive Community Programs

A comprehensive program consists of a set of resources that are organized to perform designated functions in order to achieve desired results. The desired outcome for coordinated comprehensive community interventions against domestic violence is to deliver clear and consistent sanctions that reduce the likelihood that women will be revictimized. Community intervention projects to address the widespread problem of wife abuse were initiated in the

1980's. Projects typically have developed pro-arrest policies, prosecution and sentencing guidelines, and counseling and education programs for court-mandated batterers. One popular method for implementing comprehensive coordinated approaches has been the formation of community intervention projects that are primarily staffed by battered women's advocates. These programs have several elements in common: the provision of services to victims, the provision of services to batterers, including court-ordered treatment, and the presence of active coordination between the local police department and prosecutor's office (Edleson, 1991).

Early studies of "system-wide" responses tended to focus on arrest and prosecution strategies. Steinman (1988), for example, compared the effects on recidivism of arrest and post-arrest legal sanctions among men accused of domestic abuse. He found no evidence that post-arrest sanctions influenced recidivism independently of arrest, and that correlates of abuse, such as the race of the victim and offender, were more likely to explain recidivism. In a follow-up study, Steinman (1990, 1991) compared cases occurring prior to the implementation of the coordinated community response to those that occurred after the response. He found that police actions in conjunction with other criminal justice efforts were a significant deterrent to subsequent abuse.

Gamache, Edleson and Schock (1988) examined three community intervention projects in Minnesota to determine their effects on the response of the criminal justice system. Their findings showed that the intervention projects did indeed result in increases in the number of arrests, successful prosecutions, and court orders for treatment (Edleson, 1991).

Shepard (1992) evaluated batterer recidivism rates five years after community intervention. The sample for her study was drawn from the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP), which was one of the first community intervention programs in the country. The results of her analysis indicated that characteristics of the batterer were more important in predicting recidivism than was the form of intervention. Variables relating to intervention, such as the number of counseling and education sessions attended, completion of the program, and the type of court intervention (criminal, civil or both) did not predict recidivism.

Syers and Edleson (1992) examined the Minnesota Intervention Project to determine what factors were associated with repeat violence. Their findings suggested that police making arrests on first visits accompanied by court-mandated treatment was associated with lower incidence of repeated abuse.

Tolman and Weisz (1995) studied the effectiveness of a coordinated community intervention designed to reduce domestic violence in DuPage County, Illinois. The study examined the effects of arrest and prosecution on subsequent police calls and arrest within an 18-month period following the initial incident. They found that arrest significantly deterred subsequent domestic violence incidents, and that this effect was particularly important for those offenders who had a previous history of police involvement for domestic violence.

Davis and Taylor (1995) examined what they term a "proactive response" to domestic violence in New York. Households reporting domestic violence were randomly assigned to receive or not receive a follow-up to the initial police response by a police officer and a social worker. Their results showed that neither approach produced a reduction in subsequent abusive incidents, although households that received the follow-up visits were more likely to report new incidents to the police.

Finally, a number of studies of community intervention projects have implicated alcohol and drug abuse as important contributing factors to recidivism. Eberle (1982) found some evidence that batterers who abused alcohol were more violent. DeMaris and Jackson (1987) also found that alcohol problems were related to recidivism. Gondolf and Fisher (1988) found that severe substance abuse characterized highly abusive batterers.

Summary

In summarizing the research on legal interventions in domestic violence for the National Research Council, Chalk and King (1998) offer what they refer to as "tentative conclusions." These may be summarized as follows:

- there is no evidence that arrest, in the absence of other sanctions, reduces subsequent violence by the offender;
- specialized units and comprehensive reforms in police departments and prosecutors' offices have improved the experiences of abused women with the criminal justice system;
- while court-mandated treatment of domestic violence offenders is becoming more prevalent, there is little evidence that it is effective. Programs need to establish appropriate penalties for failure to comply with treatment, and to develop program components that are responsive to the needs of different types of batterers;
- some studies suggest that court-mandated treatment and supervision leads to increased treatment completion rates, which may enhance victim safety, although there is no evidence that it results in lower recidivism rates in general.

Overview of the Current Study

As the review of previous research shows, there is some evidence that coordinated responses to domestic violence are effective in producing positive outcomes for victims. The purpose of the current study is to examine the Alexandria, Virginia Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), a coordinated community response to domestic violence. To determine program effectiveness, the study conducted multiple interviews with female victims of domestic violence perpetrated by male intimate partners. Program satisfaction, recidivism and other elements were compared with the responses of a sample of domestic violence victims in the City of Virginia Beach. In addition, 3½ years of data on domestic violence offenses were used to examine factors related to recidivism of domestic violence offenders in Alexandria. The study also reports the findings of attitudinal surveys of Alexandria police officers regarding the Department's mandatory arrest policy.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Overview of Domestic Violence in Virginia

The Code of Virginia recognizes “assault and battery of a family or household member” as being a Class 1 misdemeanor, punishable by up to 12 months in jail. On a third conviction for this offense within a 10-year period, the individual can be charged with a Class 6 felony, punishable by up to 5 years in prison. Virginia’s Code also specifies punishments for stalking, marital sexual assault, and marital rape.

Virginia uses a magistrate system as part of its judicial functioning. Magistrates perform such duties as issuing search warrants, subpoenas, arrest warrants, summonses, and emergency protective orders. Chief circuit court judges are responsible for appointing magistrates and supervising the magistrates in their jurisdictions. Large urban areas generally maintain an open magistrate’s office twenty-four hours a day.

Magistrates issue arrest warrants based upon sworn complaints made by citizens or by police officers. Once the magistrate decides that probable cause exists, an arrest warrant is issued.

In Virginia, a law enforcement officer has the authority to arrest, without a warrant, in misdemeanor assault and battery cases where there is probable cause to believe that the offense has occurred. Once the arrest is made, the officer takes the perpetrator to the magistrate, who issues the arrest warrant if (s)he agrees with the officer that there is probable cause for the arrest. Victims may obtain arrest warrants on their own by contacting a magistrate themselves.

Depending on the charge, domestic violence cases may be heard in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, General District Court, or Circuit Court. The vast majority of domestic violence cases in Virginia (which are cases of simple assault involving family members) are heard in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, which has jurisdiction over cases involving juveniles and cases involving adults related to one another. Incidents serious enough to be charged as felonies are heard in Circuit Court, while incidents involving individuals in

intimate relationships who are not related or living together (such as boyfriend/girlfriend) are heard in General District Court.

Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts in Virginia work in conjunction with Court Service Units, while General District and Circuit Courts work with Probation and Parole Departments. Most Court Service Units are run by the state, and serve the same function for juveniles that probation and parole agencies serve for adults. Most domestic violence abusers, therefore, are supervised by Court Service Units, which provide a wide array of services.

Alexandria's Domestic Violence Intervention Program

Alexandria's Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) consists of several components located in various agencies, including the Alexandria Police Department, the Victim-Witness Program located in the Commonwealth Attorney's office, and the Domestic Violence Program of the Office on Women. For the majority of abusers, monitoring and services are provided by the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Service Unit and the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services. While these agencies, along with the judges, magistrates, and adult probation and parole officers, form the DVIP, it is the police department, the Victim-Witness Assistance Program, and the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program that are the primary focus of the present study.

Police Department

In February 1988, the police department implemented a mandatory arrest policy in domestic violence cases. When the police respond to a domestic violence call, they are mandated to make an arrest if they can establish "probable cause." In domestic violence cases, probable cause is established if the police officer witnesses the assault, sees bruises or marks on the victim, sees evidence of disruption in the house, such as broken furniture or objects, or believes one of the parties involved when they tell the officer that an assault has occurred.

Once probable cause has been established, the police officer can make a "warrantless arrest," which means that a magistrate issues a warrant when the abuser is brought before him or her. Because of the mandatory arrest policy, the victim does not have to be involved in the arrest process. In cases where the police officer does not find probable cause to make an arrest, an incident report is still completed, and the officer may provide information to the alleged victim of the incident.

Police officers in Alexandria also can provide information on services to domestic violence victims, photograph injuries, issue an Emergency Protective Order which is in effect for 24 hours (at the time the study was conducted), and can transport the victim to a shelter or to a magistrate to swear out an arrest warrant in cases where probable cause has not been established.

Victim-Witness Assistance Program

The Alexandria Victim-Witness Assistance program provides services to crime victims in the city. The program, which is part of the Commonwealth Attorney's office, works with victims to assist them with any needs associated with their victimization. Services provided by the program include court accompaniment, victim compensation, and referral to other agencies and services as appropriate.

Many of the functions normally carried out by the Victim-Witness Assistance program fall under the purview of the Office on Women when the cases are domestic in nature. The role of the victim-witness program is to identify domestic violence cases and refer them to the Office on Women. The Victim Services Coordinator receives police incident reports daily, and reviews each for evidence of domestic involvement. The Coordinator completes a Victim Referral Sheet on all of these cases. These referral sheets are then forwarded to the Office on Women for follow-up contact.

Office on Women Domestic Violence Program

The Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program provides counseling, referral and court advocacy services for victims of domestic violence. Referrals received from the Victim-

Witness Assistance Program are contacted within 24-48 hours of the incident. The program provides information to the women about the court process, and gathers information from them about the circumstances surrounding the abuse. Volunteers from the Court Advocacy Program are in court every day that domestic violence cases are heard, so that all domestic violence victims have an advocate available for their court appearance.

Calls to victims are also used to obtain additional information which might be useful to the prosecutor, such as history of abuse, and whether there are any witnesses who might testify. The Domestic Violence Program records any additional information collected on the Victim Referral Sheet, a copy of which is returned to the Victim-Witness Assistance Program for use in prosecuting the case.

In addition to court advocacy, the Office on Women also operates the Alexandria Women's Shelter, staffs the domestic violence hotline, provides individual counseling, and runs women's support groups, partners groups, and anger management groups. Alexandria is unique among Virginia localities in having a single office which provides all of these services.

Other DVIP Agencies

A number of other Alexandria agencies play key roles in the DVIP program. The Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Services Unit is responsible for monitoring and providing services to most domestic violence offenders who do not receive incarceration sentences, and the Adult Probation and Parole Office provides supervision for the remainder. The Court Service Unit, the Office on Women, and the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services are the main treatment service providers for domestic violence victims and offenders. These various agencies provide counseling and mental health services, including support groups, anger management groups, family therapy and substance abuse treatment services.

The various agencies involved in the DVIP program, along with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court judges, form the DVIP Coordinating Council. The Council meets regularly to discuss and resolve issues related to program policy and operation.

Arrest and Prosecution Policy

Alexandria was one of the first localities in Virginia to implement a formal mandatory arrest policy in domestic violence cases. In 1988, the police department implemented a policy requiring police officers to make an arrest in domestic violence calls when they can establish probable cause that the abuse took place. Specifically, officers are required to make an arrest when they have probable cause to believe a felony was committed; when a misdemeanor is committed in the officer's presence; when the officer has probable cause that an assault and battery has taken place, based on the complaint of the victim or any witness; when conditions of a protective order have been violated for trespassing; or when there are valid warrants on file for either party. Indicators of probable cause include witnessing the assault, seeing physical signs of the assault on the victim, seeing property destroyed as a result of the assault, or having one of the parties involved state that the assault occurred. The abuser is then brought to the magistrate's office, where an arrest warrant is issued if the magistrate agrees that there is probable cause that the assault took place. Victims do not have to appear before the magistrate, and victims cannot prevent the arrest.

The Alexandria Commonwealth Attorney's Office has adopted a no-drop policy for prosecuting domestic violence offenders. Under this policy, charges are brought against the abuser regardless of whether the victim seeks prosecution. Victims who indicate that they would not like to see the case against their abuser go forward are told that this can only happen on the day of the trial, when, if they are unwilling to testify, they must provide an explanation to the judge. All domestic violence cases are prosecuted by a member of the Commonwealth's Attorney's office.

Virginia Beach's Domestic Violence Services

Domestic violence services are provided by a number of agencies in Virginia Beach, as they are in most of Virginia's localities. The main agencies involved in domestic violence cases are the Virginia Beach Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit, which follows up on all domestic violence cases, the Family Advocacy Network Services (FANS) program, which provides court accompaniment and support groups, and Samaritan House, which runs the shelter and staffs the hotline. Other agencies which provide services include the Department of Social Services, which provides support groups for domestic violence victims, and the YWCA program in the neighboring city of Norfolk, which provides batterer treatment. Since the Tidewater area of Virginia has a large naval base, domestic violence services for Navy families are provided by the Navy Family Services and the Navy Victim Services program.¹

Police Department

The Virginia Beach Police Department maintains a Domestic Violence Unit which follows up on all domestic violence calls received. The Unit, formed in 1993, fulfills some of the same functions in Virginia Beach as the Office on Women's program in Alexandria with regard to follow-up contact with the victim. One of the detectives in the Unit contacts victims of domestic violence incidents and explains the resources available, even in cases where no arrest has been made. These calls are usually made within one week of the date of the domestic violence incident. At the time of the study, a victim's advocate from Samaritan House was assigned to the police department's Domestic Violence Unit to provide additional services to domestic violence victims.

Family Advocacy Network Services (FANS) Program

The FANS program is comprised of volunteers who provide court assistance to domestic violence victims. These services are similar to those provided by volunteers in the Office on Women's Court Advocacy Program in Alexandria. FANS volunteers contact domestic violence

victims prior to their court appearance and explain the court process and offer to provide support in court. The program also offers support groups for domestic violence victims.

Samaritan House

Samaritan House is a non-profit organization that operates the emergency shelter in Virginia Beach and staffs the domestic violence hotline. Samaritan House also offers support groups for victims of domestic violence.

Arrest and Prosecution Policy

At the time of the study, the Virginia Beach Police Department employed what they termed a “pro-arrest” policy. Much like the Alexandria policy, officers are encouraged to make warrantless arrests in domestic violence calls where they have probable cause to believe that an offense took place. The arrest policy is not mandatory, however, in that officers are not required to make an arrest.²

At the time of the study, the Virginia Beach Commonwealth Attorney’s Office had just dedicated an Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney to the prosecution of domestic violence cases. Prior to that time, the Office did not have the resources to prosecute these cases, and thus did not go to court with domestic violence victims. As a result, there were cases in which the alleged abuser was represented by a public defender, but the victim had no representation.

Even with the dedication of a prosecutor, the Commonwealth Attorney’s office still could not go to court with all domestic violence victims. Thus the Office prioritized cases, prosecuting all felony charges and misdemeanor charges which involved the use of a weapon, the threat of harm, where the defendant had a public defender, or where the defendant had a previous conviction for a domestic assault.

The policy with regard to dropping cases in Virginia Beach is similar to Alexandria’s policy in that victims cannot drop charges once the Commonwealth Attorney’s Office proceeds with the case. Due to the resource issue discussed above, however, relatively few cases were prosecuted in Virginia Beach as compared with Alexandria.

METHODOLOGY

Study Participants

Study participants were women recruited from two Virginia cities: Alexandria, located in northern Virginia, and Virginia Beach, located in southeastern Virginia. A total of 170 women participated in the study: 106 from Alexandria and 64 from Virginia Beach. Many more women were contacted than these 170; a summary of these figures is provided in the Results section of the report.

Candidates for the study included female victims of domestic violence assault incidents in which the police had been contacted. All alleged perpetrators of the abuse were men who were involved in intimate relationships with the victims. This included the following relationship categories: spouse, former spouse, boyfriend, former boyfriend, and child-in-common.

A total of 354 women in Alexandria and 169 in Virginia Beach met the criteria for inclusion in the study during the time period in which the data were collected. Although attempts were made to contact all of these women, only 167 of the Alexandria women (47%) and 101 of the Virginia Beach women (60%) were successfully contacted. The most frequent reason for failure to contact the others were invalid phone numbers, including phones which had been disconnected with no new number available. The proportion of unsuccessful contacts was lower in Virginia Beach because these women had recently been contacted by the police, and so the interviewers were more likely to have accurate phone numbers for these women.

Of the 167 Alexandria women contacted, 61 refused to participate in the study (a 36% refusal rate), resulting in a total of 106 first interviews successfully completed. Of the 101 Virginia Beach women contacted, 37 refused to participate in the study (37%), resulting in a total of 64 first interviews successfully completed³. Many of the women who refused to participate would not give a reason when asked (47% in Alexandria and 28% in Virginia Beach). The most common reasons for not wanting to participate in Alexandria included: the victim was too busy (18%), the incident was not that serious, and the police were mistaken about the circumstances

(10%), and the victim wanted to put the incident behind her (8%). One victim indicated that she had never heard of the Alexandria Domestic Violence program, and another indicated that she had not received any help from the program.

In Virginia Beach, the most common reasons for refusing to participate were: the incident was not that serious (18%), the victim wanted to put the incident behind her (10%), the victim was afraid of police repercussions if she participated in the study (10%), and the victim was too busy (8%).

Procedure

Due to differences between the two localities and the way in which the researchers were allowed access to potential participants, recruitment procedures were different in the two localities.

Alexandria

In Alexandria, a letter was prepared by the researchers under the signature of the Coordinator of the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program. The letter introduced the study and indicated that the woman would be contacted by the researchers (see Appendix A for a copy of this letter). The letter was given to female domestic violence victims by DVIP volunteers at the time their cases were heard in court.

Once the women's court hearings were completed, DVIP volunteers returned the Domestic Violence Incident Reports to the Office on Women. These reports were copied every few weeks, depending on the caseload for that particular time period. These forms were then used by the interviewers to contact the victims to inquire about participation in the study.

Initial contact with the women was made by telephone, generally 1-3 weeks after their court appearance. Despite having received the introductory letter, most of the women contacted were not familiar with the study. Once contact was established, the interviewers read from a script which explained the purpose of the study and requested the victim's participation (see

for the first interview. Following the interview, the researcher indicated that she would be calling back in a month to conduct the first follow-up interview. The women were asked about the best time and place to call, and were asked for the names and phone numbers of other individuals who might know how best to contact them.

Interview schedules were tracked in a database file. Subsequent interviews were scheduled to allow for follow-up periods of three and six months after the incident for which they were included in the study (referred to here as the "study incident"). Contacts for the second interview were initiated one month after the first interviews were completed⁴. Contacts for the third interview were initiated three months after the second interviews. Although not in the original research design, a fourth interview was conducted with the Alexandria participants. Contacts for these interviews were initiated in October of 1997, regardless of when the third interview had been completed.

Virginia Beach

The procedures followed in Virginia Beach were different from those in Alexandria for several reasons. First, the researchers were not allowed to contact victims directly to solicit their participation in the study, since the City Attorney's office felt that releasing the names and phone numbers of the victims would violate their confidentiality. In addition, the length of time between the abusive incident and the victim's court appearance was much longer in Virginia Beach than in Alexandria, and there was no systematic volunteer court accompaniment program in Virginia Beach as there was in Alexandria. Thus there was no way to inform potential participants that the study was proceeding. These constraints resulted in several difficulties with collecting data in Virginia Beach, which are discussed in the section on limitations of the study later in this report.

Since detectives from the police department's domestic violence unit regularly contacted all domestic violence victims who had called police, it was decided that they would introduce the study to the victims and solicit their participation. A script was prepared for the detectives to read

to the victims (see Appendix C). If the victim agreed to participate in the study, the detective recorded the victim's name and phone number on a list of potential study participants. These forms were faxed to the interviewers, who then contacted the victims again. After confirming their verbal consent to participate in the study, the interviewer proceeded with the first interview.

Because of the potential differences in the timing of the first interview, and because information on victim volunteers was not being received in a timely matter from the Virginia Beach detectives, it was decided to space the Virginia Beach interviews according to the average time between interviews observed in Alexandria. Thus contacts for the second and third interviews in Virginia Beach were initiated according to the schedule noted above for the Alexandria interviews.

Interview Instruments

The interview forms used in the two localities were essentially the same, with some minor differences necessitated by the differences between the two programs. The first interview was an abbreviated one which was conducted at the time the victims agreed to participate in the study. This interview elicited information on services received to that point in time and satisfaction with these services (see Appendix D). The women were asked some questions about the nature of the abusive incident, including information about court outcomes. Finally, the interview asked about abusive incidents which occurred after the incident for which the victim was included in the study.

Subsequent interviews were all conducted with the same form (see Appendix E). The form asked about services received since the previous interview and satisfaction with those services. The interview also elicited information about incidents of physical or emotional abuse that had occurred since the previous interview. Interviewers explicitly asked about abusive incidents of the following types: physical violence, direct threats of physical abuse, threatening or harming children or family members or friends of the victim, yelling or cursing, destruction of the victim's property, incidents of any nature in which the victim felt threatened or frightened,

and incidents in which the abuser tried to control or limit the woman's behavior. Detailed information was elicited about any incidents of this type which had occurred since the previous interview.

There was only one major difference between the interview forms used for the two localities. Since there was no domestic violence "program" in Virginia Beach that could easily be identified, the women there were asked about the helpfulness of the police department's domestic violence unit, rather than the domestic violence program (question #8).

Early on in the study, it became apparent that a method was needed for the participants to be able to return messages left by the interviewers. In order to safeguard the anonymity of the subjects and the interviewers, a toll-free (1-800) number was established. When interviewers left messages, they provided this number, indicating that the call was free. An answering machine answered all calls to this number with a message requesting that the participant leave her name and a phone number and best time for her to be reached, along with the first name of the interviewer by whom she had been contacted. These messages were then passed on to the appropriate interviewer.

Interviewers

Three female research assistants initially served as interviewers for the study. Two of these interviewers were located in Alexandria and were recommended by the DVIP program. The third interviewer was located in Richmond and was known to the study director. One of the interviewers was Hispanic and was fluent in Spanish.

The interviewers received training on the interview instruments in a day-long training session. The interviewers practiced conducting the interviews and filling out the interview forms. Interviewers were coached to ask questions in a manner designed to elicit information without making the women feel defensive or that their privacy was being violated. Much time was spent on how to make initial contacts with the women, and in discussing issues such as whether to

leave messages (only on answering machines at work), whether to contact the women at work (whenever possible), and when the best contact times were (evenings and weekends).

As the interviewing process stretched beyond the time period that was initially anticipated, the two Alexandria interviewers were forced to end their participation in the study. As a result, the Richmond interviewer ended up conducting most of the third and fourth interviews in Alexandria, and all of the interviews in Virginia Beach. In addition, it was necessary to recruit an additional interviewer to administer follow-up interviews to the Spanish-speaking participants in Alexandria. This other interviewer also received training in interviewing procedures, although it was not as extensive as that provided to the initial interviewers.

Interviewers were instructed not to deviate from the interview form, and particularly not to comment on the women's situation or attempt to provide any sort of feedback in any fashion. Women who indicated continuing abuse were offered the number for the domestic violence hotline in the respective localities; otherwise, no assistance or intervention was offered.

Confidentiality of Information

All potential subjects were assured that their responses to the interview questions would remain confidential. No information about individuals was given to any of the local agencies involved in providing services to the women. Once interviews were completed, the data was entered into a database, which did not include names or other identifiers. The interview forms were then maintained by the study director in a locked cabinet.

RESULTS OF CLIENT INTERVIEWS

Alexandria

A total of 354 women met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Although attempts were made to contact all 354, only 167 were successfully contacted. The most frequent reasons for failure to contact the others were invalid phone numbers, including phones which had been disconnected with no new number available. Of the 167 contacted, 61 women refused to participate in the study, resulting in a total of 106 first interviews successfully completed.

Table 1 shows the number of interviews conducted for the 106 women. A total of 26 women received the first interview only, then either refused or could not be contacted for subsequent interviews. Thus, a total of 80 of the 106 women were interviewed more than once. Twenty-four of the women were reached for all four interviews. Appendix F presents the results of an attrition analysis comparing selected characteristics of women who dropped out versus those who completed the interviews.

Table 1. Number of Interviews of Alexandria Victims

Number of Interviews	Number	Percentage
One	26	24.6
Two	21	19.8
Three	35	33.0
Four	24	22.6

The initial interview schedule was established based on the length of time from the date of the domestic violence incident. We had intended to conduct Interview 2 one month after Interview 1, and Interview 3 three months after Interview 1; the fourth interview was not planned as part of the original study. However, due to difficulties in contacting the women in the study, we ended up with varying lengths of time between interviews. To simplify the presentation of findings, we will refer to rounds of interviews, not the actual interview number. For example, of

the 21 women who were interviewed twice. 14 were interviewed in Rounds 1 and 2, but the second interview for six others actually occurred during Round 3 of the interviewing, and the last woman's interview occurred during Round 4.

The initial interviews with the 106 women were conducted between May 1996 and February 1997. The dates of the initial domestic violence incidents of these women ranged from February 1996 through January of 1997. Table 2 shows the number of women interviewed in each round, and the actual length of time between the rounds of interviews and the date of the initial domestic violence incident. On average, the first round of interviews was conducted about 2 months after the incident. Round 2 was conducted about one month after Round 1, Round 3 about three months after Round 2, and Round 4 about nine months after Round 3.

Table 2. Time from Incident to Interview (in Days) for Alexandria

Time From Incident To:	Range	Mean	Median
Round 1 (n=106)	16 - 273	62.7	49
Round 2 (n=61)	57 - 301	94.8	84
Round 3 (n=62)	118 - 410	195.4	179
Round 4 (n=40)	165 - 663	446.8	449

As the table shows, the range of times between the incident and the first interview varied widely. The reason for this difference was the fact that some of the cases included in the study were in court as a result of postponements of previous hearings. Thus in some cases, the original incident may have been long before the most recent court date for which the women were included in the study. Table 2 therefore includes medians as well as means; the former represent more accurate measures of the intervals shown.⁵

Satisfaction with Services Received

Of the total 106 women interviewed, only 5 (4.7%) had stayed at the women's shelter during the time of the study. A total of 32 of the women (30.2%) had called the domestic

violence hotline at some point during the study. Of these, 22 (69%) reported having called the hotline at the time of the first interview, and did not call the hotline again during the study.

The women were asked about the kinds of services they had received from the DVIP program. Table 3 shows the most frequent types of services received by the women for all interview rounds. Court accompaniment was the most frequent response, mentioned by over 60% of the women. About 39% of the women reported receiving counseling services, and 18% reported attending support groups. Overall, about 62% of the women reported receiving some type of service during the study period other than court accompaniment.⁶

Table 3. Types of Services Received by Alexandria Victims

Type of Service	Number of times mentioned	Percent of women
Court Accompaniment	64	62.1
Counseling	40	38.8
Support Groups	19	18.4
Legal Assistance	16	5.9
Referrals to Other Agencies	9	8.7
Any Service*	-	62.3

*other than court accompaniment

The women were asked to rate the helpfulness of the various components of the DVIP. The combined responses of the women from all four interview rounds are shown in Table 4. Staff at the Office on Women and the hotline were most likely to be rated as being “very helpful.”

Protection Orders and Mandatory Arrest

Of the 106 women, 29 (27%) had obtained protective orders against their abusers. Of these 29, all but two (7%) indicated that they knew what to do to be sure the abuser followed the protective order. When asked their opinions regarding the helpfulness of the protective order,

Table 4. Alexandria Victims' Helpfulness Ratings of Program Components

	Number of Respondents	Helpfulness Ratings		
		Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful
Police	106	68.0%	19.2%	12.8%
Prosecutors	106	67.2	23.0	9.8
Office on Women	96	70.4	15.7	13.9
Hotline	32	73.5	20.6	5.9

68% of the women rated it as “very helpful”; only 3 (11%) indicated that the protective order had not been very helpful.

The 106 women were also asked whether they believed that their abusers should have been arrested. About three-quarters (76%) of the women agreed that their abusers should have been arrested, while 15% said that the abuser should not have been arrested (the remaining 9% were not sure).

Subsequent Abusive Incidents

In the follow-up interviews, the women were questioned regarding whether additional incidents of an abusive nature had occurred since the last interview. Seven different types of incidents were assessed: physical abuse; threatened physical abuse; physical abuse of children, friends or relatives; yelling, cursing or name calling; destroying or threatening to destroy personal property; intentionally frightening the woman; and controlling the woman’s behavior.

Of the 106 women interviewed, 24 (22.6%) indicated that one or more of these types of abuse had taken place some time after the first interview. Nine women reported incidents of abuse at the first interview; that is, incidents which occurred between the time of the initial incident and the first interview. Only one of these nine reported an abusive incident after the first interview. Adding these eight women to the other 24 results in a total of 32, or 30.2% of the sample of 106,

who experienced some kind of abuse subsequent to the incident for which they were included in the study.⁷

Table 5 shows the most serious incident type for each of the women who reported subsequent abuse in responding to Interviews 2, 3 or 4.

Table 5. Types of Subsequent Abuse Experienced by Alexandria Victims

Type of Abuse	Number of Incidents	Percent of Incidents	Percent of Sample
Physical abuse	10	41.6	9.4
Threatened abuse	1	4.2	0.9
Physical abuse to other	1	4.2	0.9
Yelling cursing	9	37.5	8.5
Destroying property	1	4.2	0.9
Controlling	2	8.3	1.9
Total	24	100.0%	22.6%

Physical violence was the most serious type of abuse experienced by almost 10% of the women in the sample. Yelling, cursing and name-calling was the most serious type of abuse for just under 9% of the women in the sample.

When examining all types of abuse experienced (not just the most serious type), it becomes apparent that women who were physically abused were much more likely to report having experienced the other types of abuse listed in Table 5 than those whose abuse was not physical in nature. Physically-abused women reported an average of 3.7 types of abuse, compared to an average of 1.4 types for women who were not physically abused. In many cases, these other types of abuse occurred during the same incident as the physical abuse; for example, women who were hit were also threatened, yelled at, and so on.

The women were also asked about the specific abusive behavior that occurred during these incidents. Up to three different behaviors were recorded for each incident. A total of 68 abusive behaviors were reported by these 24 women; these behaviors are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Types of Subsequent Abusive Behavior Experienced by Alexandria Victims

Type of Abusive Behavior	Number of Instances
hit with object	2
kicked	4
punched or hit	5
choked or smothered	4
slapped	5
pinched	1
pushed, pulled, threw	4
threatened with a weapon	1
threatened to shoot or stab (no weapon present)	6
threatened to hit	3
yelled or cursed	20
frightened or humiliated	4
destroyed personal possessions	5
threatened to destroy possessions	1
limited contact with others	3

As the table shows, the 10 women who experienced physical violence reported 25 incidents of physical abuse, including being hit, slapped, kicked, choked or smothered, pushed, pulled or thrown, hit with an object, and pinched.

Appendix G summarizes the characteristics of the most serious abusive incident experienced by the 24 women. The characteristics are presented separately for the 10 women whose most serious abusive incident involved physical violence, and the remaining 14 whose most serious incident did not involve physical violence. Some of the key characteristics of the abusive incidents are listed below.

- In most cases, the original abuser committed the subsequent abuse. This was more likely to be true in instances of physical abuse.
- For about half the victims, the abuse occurred once during the time period since the last interview. Non-physical forms of abuse were more likely to have occurred weekly or more frequently.

- Most abusive incidents occurred in the victims' homes.
- Seven out of the 10 victims of physical abuse were injured as a result of the abuse. Three of the seven women received treatment for their injuries.
- About one-third of the victims reported that their abusers had been drinking or on drugs at the time of the abusive incident.
- Police were summoned in 70% of the cases of physical abuse, but only 21% of the cases involving other types of abuse.
- Ninety percent of the victims of physical abuse had told someone about the incident, whereas 57% of the victims of non-physical abuse had told someone.
- Only 22% of physical abuse victims and 8% of other victims thought about calling someone from DVIP after the incident occurred.
- Twenty percent of the physical abuse victims reported that their situation had improved since the last interview, while 40% reported that it had worsened (the other four women thought it had remained unchanged). None of the women who were victims of non-physical abuse thought their situation had worsened.

Relationships Between Variables

Services Received

The data collected here allow for an examination of the relationships between variables that may shed some light on the efficacy of the DVIP. The first of these is the relationship between the type of services received and the various outcome indicators. For purposes of these analyses, services were divided into three categories: counseling or support groups (n = 37), other types of services (n=54), and women who reported that they received no services (n = 15).

The first set of relationships examined relates to the women's satisfaction with the various components of DVIP. These relationships are shown in Table 7. Generally, women who received counseling and other kinds of services viewed all components of DVIP more positively

Table 7. Victims' Program Helpfulness Ratings By Type of Services Received

Services Received	Helpfulness Ratings		
	very helpful	somewhat helpful	not very helpful
helpfulness of hotline (n = 32)			
counseling	82%	12%	6%
other services	63	31	6
no services	100	0	0
helpfulness of program staff (n = 96)			
counseling	84	10	6
other services	60	22	18
no services	64	9	27
helpfulness of police (n = 106)			
counseling	64	18	18
other services	72	22	6
no services	65	12	23
helpfulness of prosecutor (n = 93)			
counseling	55	30	15
other services	54	30	16
no services	73	0	27

than those who did not receive services. This was especially true for ratings of domestic violence program staff, which were higher for women who received counseling than for the other two groups. Thus there is some evidence to suggest that the more victims interact with program staff in a meaningful way (for counseling as opposed to court accompaniment, for example), the more positively they view the program.

It may be the case that women in counseling or support groups would be more likely to make changes in their living status, particularly leaving the abuser. At the time of the first interview, 30 of the 106 women interviewed (28.3%) indicated that their living situation had changed (all but two of these women had gone from living with their abusers to not living with their abusers). There was no significant difference between the proportion of women who

received counseling services and changed their living situations (31%) and those who did not receive counseling services and changed their living situations (28%; $\chi^2 < 1$, ns).

Over the entire course of the study, 34% of the sample made a change in living situation. There was no significant difference between the proportion of women who changed their living situation at any time during the study who received counseling services (36%), and those who did not receive counseling services ($\chi^2 < 1$, ns). Thus there is no evidence that receiving counseling services increased the likelihood of leaving the abuser.

Also of interest is whether women who received counseling services were more likely to report improvements in their home situations. The women were asked whether their home situation had improved, gotten worse or stayed the same since the previous interview. There appeared to be no relationship between receiving services and reports of changes in life situations. Combining responses for all interviews showed that 54% of the women who received counseling services or attended support groups reported that their situations had improved, while 57% of the remaining women reported that their situations had improved. Examining these relationships for each interview period separately, however, shows some differences, as depicted in Table 8.

Table 8. Percentage of Victims Reporting Improvement

	Counseling	No Counseling	χ^2
Interview 2	80	53	1.39
Interview 3	83	48	2.68
Interview 4	33	71	5.13

At the second and third interviews, a much greater percentage of the women who received counseling services or attended support groups reported that their situations had improved as compared with those who did not receive these services. On the last interview,

however, this was reversed, with a greater proportion of the women who did not receive counseling services reporting that their situation had improved.⁸

The relationship between services received and subsequent abusive incidents was also examined. Women who reporting receiving counseling services during the first or second interviews were compared with all other women in terms of subsequent instances of abuse after the second interview. The results of this comparison showed no significant difference between the proportion of women who received counseling services who were subsequently abused (13%) and those who did not receive such services and were subsequently abused (20%; $\chi^2 < 1$, ns).

Court-Ordered Services

Another set of relationships of interest are those between court-ordered treatment for the offender and subsequent outcomes. The women were asked, at the time of the second interview, whether the judge had ordered services for the abuser, and if so, whether the abuser had attended. Outcomes, in terms of subsequent recidivism for any abuse and for physical abuse, are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Relationship Between Court-Ordered Services and Subsequent Abuse

	Any Subsequent Abuse	Physical Abuse
Services Court-Ordered	19%	16%
No Services Ordered	18	7
Attended Most or All Sessions	17%	11%
Did Not Attend Sessions	18	9

As the table shows, there was essentially no difference between subsequent abuse by batterers ordered to receive services and those not ordered to receive services. In terms of physical abuse, being court-ordered to receive services was associated with greater subsequent

physical abuse. This latter difference is likely due to the fact that offenders who are more likely to re-abuse their victims are also those more likely to be ordered to receive services. As the table shows, there were no differences in subsequent re-offending between offenders who were compliant with treatment and those who were not. Thus based on victim self-reports, there is no evidence that receiving court-ordered services reduces subsequent recidivism among these domestic violence offenders.

Virginia Beach

The City of Virginia Beach served as the comparison site for the study. Over the time period for which data were collected, a total of 169 Virginia Beach women met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Although attempts were made to contact all 169, only 101 were successfully contacted. The reasons for failure to contact the others were the same as those mentioned in the Alexandria site: invalid phone numbers, including phones which had been disconnected with no new number available. Of the 101 women contacted, 37 women refused to participate in the study, resulting in a total of 64 first interviews successfully completed⁹.

Table 10 shows the number of interviews conducted for the 64 women. Seven women received the first interview only, then either refused or could not be contacted for subsequent interviews. Thus, a total of 57 of the 64 women were interviewed more than once, and almost three-quarters received three interviews.

Table 10. Number of Interviews of Virginia Beach Victims

Number of Interviews	Number	Percentage
One	7	10.9
Two	11	17.2
Three	46	71.9

The initial interviews with the 64 women were conducted between March 1997 and February 1998. The dates of the initial domestic violence incidents of these women ranged from January 1997 through February 1998. Table 11 shows the number of women interviewed in each round, and the actual length of time between the rounds of interviews and the date of the initial domestic violence incident. On average, the first round of interviews was conducted about one month after the incident. Round 2 was conducted about one month after Round 1, and Round 3 about 2-3 months after Round 2. The time interval between Rounds 1 and 2 was comparable to the interval in Alexandria; however, the interval between Rounds 2 and 3 was, on average, 23 days longer in Alexandria than in Virginia Beach. Round 1 in Virginia Beach was about one month closer to the incident date than it was in Alexandria.

As was seen with the Alexandria interviews, the range of times between the incident and the first interview in Virginia Beach varied widely. The variability in these times was less in Virginia Beach than in Alexandria, however; in Virginia Beach, only three cases accounted for the large mean values shown in the table. In Virginia Beach, 87% of the interviews were held within two months of the incident date, and 95% were held within three months.

Table 11. Time from Incident to Interview (in Days) for Virginia Beach

Time From Incident To:	Range	Mean	Median
Round 1 (n=64)	4 - 316	38.7	27.5
Round 2 (n=57)	35 - 294	72.7	65.0
Round 3 (n=46)	87 - 330	150.4	148.0

Satisfaction with Services Received

Of the total 64 women interviewed, only one (1.6%) had stayed at the women's shelter during the time of the study, a somewhat smaller percentage than that observed in Alexandria. Only six of the women interviewed (9.4%) had called the domestic violence hotline at some

point during the study. This is a much lower percentage than the 30% of women in the Alexandria sample who called the hotline.

The women were asked about the kinds of services they had received from the various agencies in Virginia Beach. Table 12 shows the most frequent types of services received by the women for all interview rounds. As the table shows, the Virginia Beach victims sampled for this study received very few services. The vast majority of victims reported receiving a brochure from the police regarding domestic violence and services available in the city. Aside from this, only about 27% of victims received any type of services. This is in stark contrast to the situation in Alexandria, where about 62% received some type of services.

Table 12. Types of Services Received by Virginia Beach Victims

Type of Service	Number of times mentioned	Percent of women
Court Accompaniment	7	10.9
Counseling	2	3.1
Support Groups	5	7.8
Legal Assistance	3	4.7
Referrals to Other Agencies	2	3.1
DV Information	56	87.5
Any Services*	-	26.6

* other than receiving an informational brochure.

Subsequent Abusive Incidents

Of the 64 women interviewed, 21 (32.8%) reported that at least one incident of physical or emotional abuse had taken place some time after the first interview. In addition, a total of 16 women reported incidents of abuse that occurred subsequent to the study incident but prior to the first interview. Of these 16, 8 reported no other abuse during the study period. Adding these 8 women to the other 21 results in a total of 29, or 45.3% of the sample, who experienced some kind of abuse subsequent to the incident for which they were included in the study.

Table 13 shows the most serious incident type for each of the 21 women who reported subsequent abusive incidents during the second and third interviews.

Table 13. Types of Subsequent Abuse Experienced by Virginia Beach Victims

Type of Abuse	Number of Incidents	Percent of Incidents	Percent of Sample
Physical abuse	2	9.5	3.1
Threatened abuse	3	14.3	4.7
Physical abuse to other	2	9.5	3.1
Yelling, cursing	13	61.9	20.3
Destroying property	0	0.0	0.0
Controlling	1	4.8	1.6
Total	21	100.0%	32.8%

Yelling, cursing and name-calling was the most serious type of abuse for about 20% of the women in the sample. Only two of the women in the sample experienced physical violence during the study period.

The women were also asked about the specific abusive behavior that occurred during these incidents. Up to three different behaviors were recorded for each incident. A total of 46 abusive behaviors were reported by these 20 women; these behaviors are summarized in Table 14.

The two women who experienced physical violence reported one instance each of this behavior, as contrasted with the Alexandria victims of physical violence, who reported an average of 2.5 incidents of abusive behavior. The other types of non-physical abusive behaviors are similar for both localities.

Table 14. Types of Subsequent Abusive Behavior Experienced by Virginia Beach Victims

Type of Abusive Behavior	Number of Instances
hit with object	1
kicked	1
threatened with a weapon	2
threatened to hit	2
threatened to hurt children	3
yelled or cursed	20
frightened or humiliated	4
stalked victim	2
destroyed personal possessions	5
limited contact with others	6

Comparisons Between Localities

Repeated Victimization

As noted previously, the women in Alexandria and Virginia Beach were asked about repeated incidents of physical and other forms of violence subsequent to the study incident. Table 15 summarizes the rates of repeated victimization in terms of both physical abuse and other kinds of abuse in the two localities at each interview. For each interview, two percentages are provided: the percentage of the overall sample (106 in Alexandria and 64 in Virginia Beach) who experienced subsequent abuse, and the percentage of only those women interviewed at that particular time period who reported an abusive incident.

Interviews 2 and 3 were conducted in both localities and obtained detailed information about the nature of the abuse. As the table shows, a greater proportion of the women in Alexandria experienced physical violence sometime between the first and third interviews, although the difference, expressed as percentages of the number interviewed (6.3% in Alexandria vs. 3.5% in Virginia Beach) was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 < 1$, ns). For non-physical abuse, 24.1% of Alexandria women interviewed at Interviews 2 or 3 reported this type of abuse, versus 38.6% of the Virginia Beach women. This difference approached, but failed to reach, statistical

Table 15. Repeated Physical and Other Abuse in Alexandria and Virginia Beach

	Alexandria		Virginia Beach	
	Physical	Other	Physical	Other
Interview 2				
Percent of Total Sample	0	9.4	1.6	32.8
Percent of Victims Interviewed	0	16.4	1.8	36.8
Interview 3				
Percent of Total Sample	4.7	10.4	1.6	10.9
Percent of Victims Interviewed	8.2	17.7	2.2	15.2
Interview 4				
Percent of Total Sample	5.7	6.6	-	-
Percent of Victims Interviewed	15.0	17.5	-	-
Interviews 2 and 3				
Percent of Total Sample	4.7	17.9	3.1	34.4
Percent of Victims Interviewed	6.3	24.1	3.5	38.6
Interviews 2, 3 and 4				
Percent of Total Sample	9.4	27.8	-	-
Percent of Victims Interviewed	12.7	35.5	-	-

significance ($\chi^2 = 3.33$, $p = .07$), although the proportions are significant when based on the entire samples rather than just those interviewed ($\chi^2 = 5.90$, $p < .05$).

Comparison of the total number of abusive incidents (physical plus other) reported in Interviews 2 and 3 (not shown in Table 15) showed that women in Alexandria were less likely to report being abused than women in Virginia Beach. This difference is not statistically significant when the proportion is based on the number of women interviewed ($\chi^2 = 2.21$, ns), but is significant when based on the total sample size ($\chi^2 = 4.48$, $p < .05$).

As noted previously, information on whether or not an abusive incident of any kind had occurred after the study incident was collected at the first interview (not shown in Table 15). A significantly greater proportion of Virginia Beach women (25%) reported some type of abuse between the time of the study incident and the first interview than Alexandria women (8.5%), a difference that was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.67$, $p < .01$). When the reported abusive

incidents at Interview 1 are added to those reported in the second and third interviews, the result is that a significantly lower proportion of the Alexandria women (27.4%) reported an abusive incident of any kind during the first three interviews than the women in Virginia Beach (45.3%; $\chi^2 = 5.72, p < .05$).

Helpfulness Ratings

Table 16 compares the helpfulness ratings of police, prosecutors, program staff (or detectives in the case of Virginia Beach) and hotline staff given by the women in the two localities. All of these agencies were rated more positively in Alexandria than in Virginia Beach. These differences were especially pronounced for prosecutors and the hotline staff, who were much more likely to be rated “very helpful,” and much less likely to be rated “not very helpful,” in Alexandria than in Virginia Beach.

Table 16. Alexandria and Virginia Beach Victims’ Ratings of Helpfulness

	Very Helpful		Not Very Helpful	
	AL	VB	AL	VB
Police	68.0%	56.9%	12.8%	10.8%
Prosecutors	67.2	34.6	9.8	32.7
Program Staff	70.4	54.5	13.9	15.2
Hotline	73.5	37.5	5.9	25.0

These differences were tested for statistical significance by assigning each rating a score on a 3-point scale, with the lowest score indicating the greatest satisfaction. These scores were then averaged across all interview periods. Table 17 shows the resulting average scores. These differences were then tested for statistical significance by comparing mean ranks using Mann-Whitney U-tests (the non-parametric equivalent of t-tests). These ranking scores are shown in

parentheses in the table after the mean scores. The difference in ratings of the helpfulness of the prosecutors was the only comparison that reached statistical significance.

Table 17. Mean Helpfulness Ratings of Alexandria and Virginia Beach Victims

	Alexandria	Virginia Beach
Police	1.43 (80.3)	1.52 (87.9)
prosecutors	1.64 (61.3)	2.06 (80.1)*
program staff	1.48 (60.6)	1.59 (66.4)
hotline	1.36 (16.7)	1.77 (22.1)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are mean ranks.

* $p < .01$.

Changes in Life Situation

Table 18 shows the comparison of the responses of the Virginia Beach and Alexandria women to the question of whether their overall situation had improved.

Table 18. Changes in Life Situation for Alexandria and Virginia Beach Victims

	Life Situation		
	Improved	Worsened	Stayed the Same
	Both Time Periods		
Alexandria	53%	7%	40%
Virginia Beach	54	10	36
	Interview 2		
Alexandria	55	5	40
Virginia Beach	47	12	41
	Interview 3		
Alexandria	52	8	40
Virginia Beach	63	7	30

As the table shows, there was no difference between the women in the two localities in terms of whether their situations had improved. At Interview 2, a greater proportion of Alexandria women reported improvement, and a greater proportion of Virginia Beach women reported that their situations had gotten worse ($\chi^2 = 2.28$, ns). At Interview 3, a greater proportion of Virginia Beach women reported that their situation had improved than Alexandria women ($\chi^2 = 1.41$, ns).

ALEXANDRIA OFFENDER RECIDIVISM ANALYSIS

In order to identify the factors related to abusers who repeatedly abuse their victims, the DVIP program's offender database was examined. In 1993, the tracking of domestic violence cases was incorporated into the Alexandria Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). Alexandria's CJIS is an offender-based system used by the courts to track defendants. Once domestic violence cases are identified by the victim-witness office, they are entered into the system with a code indicating that they are domestic violence cases. The relational database consists of a series of files which are linked by a defendant identifier.

Study staff met with the Victim Services Coordinator and the CJIS Administrator to determine the cases and variables needed for purposes of the study. The city then enlisted the consultants who program the CJIS database to strip off the required data elements and place them into files that could be used by project staff for analysis.

The procedure used to obtain cases for this part of the study was two-fold: first, we selected all domestic violence incidents that occurred during the 3½ year period from January 1993 to June 1996. Then, we obtained all of the remaining offenses (other than domestic violence) committed by the domestic violence defendants from January 1, 1990 through June of 1996. The 1990-1993 offense data were obtained to provide information on the offense histories of domestic violence defendants. These cases were then further screened so that the final dataset included only those cases involving males abusing females, and only those with the following relationships: married, divorced, separated, living together, boyfriend-girlfriend, former boyfriend-girlfriend, and child in common. Throughout the discussion presented here, the term "domestic violence" refers only to those cases which met this relationship criterion.

The procedure detailed above resulted in a total of 2,623 cases of domestic violence (meeting the gender and relationship requirements noted above) perpetrated by 1,910 offenders. These offenders had been arrested for an additional 2,853 offenses over the 6½ year period, resulting in a total of 5,476 offenses for these 1,910 offenders.¹⁰

Characteristics of Victims/Offenses

Since the CJIS system is defendant-based, it is not possible to reliably identify individual victims associated with offenders. For example, if an offender was arrested five times on domestic violence charges, it is not possible to determine accurately if the five instances involved the same victim. It is possible, however, to identify which of the 2,623 domestic violence incidents involved a single offender who never appeared in the database a second time for a domestic violence offense, versus repeat offenders who were arrested multiple times for domestic violence incidents. We can then compare the characteristics of all of the victims/incidents, although we do not know which of the repeat offenders' victims are the same individual.

Of the total 2,623 domestic violence incidents, 1,508 (57.5%) were committed by offenders who appeared only once in the database for a domestic violence offense. Thus there were 1,508 offenders (79% of all domestic violence offenders) who accounted for a single domestic violence offense each, and an additional 402 domestic violence offenders who accounted for the remaining 1,115 domestic violence incidents.

Table 19 shows the results of the comparisons of the characteristics of cases involving "one-time" offenders with those involving repeat offenders.¹¹ While blacks comprised the majority of both groups of women, a greater proportion of the repeat offenders' victims were black as compared with the victims of single offenders, suggesting that black women are more likely to be re-victimized than white, Hispanic or Asian women.

Wives and live-in girlfriends comprised a greater proportion of one-time offenders' victims than those of repeat offenders, while former wives and girlfriends were more likely to be repeat offenders' victims. This difference may illustrate the increased danger facing women trying to leave abusive situations.

While the vast majority of both sets of offenses were for misdemeanor assault, a greater proportion of repeat offenders' offenses were serious ones. Repeat offenders were more likely to commit felonies (9.6% of incidents) than one-time offenders (6.8% of incidents), including

Table 19. Characteristics of Repeat and One-Time Offender Incidents

	Victims of One-Time Offenders (1,508)	Victims of Repeat Offenders (1,115)
Race/Ethnic Origin		
Black	57.5%	70.6%
White	23.5	17.1
Hispanic	16.3	10.9
Asian	2.1	0.7
Other/Unknown	0.6	0.6
Relationship of Victim to Offender		
Wife	31.7%	21.8%
Live-in Girlfriend	31.2	27.6
Ex-(Wife, Girlfriend, Live-in Girlfriend)	18.5	27.4
Child in Common	13.7	19.4
Girlfriend	4.9	3.8
Victim Age		
Mean	29.7	29.8
Offense Type		
Felony Assault	1.9%	2.4%
Other Felony Person	1.1	1.8
Felony Non-Person	3.8	5.4
Misdemeanor Assault	86.5	73.7
Other Misdemeanor Person	4.4	5.6
Misdemeanor Non-Person	2.3	11.1
Extent of Injuries (Assault Cases Only)		
No Visible Injury	49.9%	54.5%
Bruises/Cuts	45.7	41.2
Serious Injury	3.1	2.5
Unknown	1.3	1.8
Alcohol Use		
Offender Only	20.5%	20.2%
Victim Only	1.5	1.1
Both Offender and Victim	5.1	6.5
Neither Offender Nor Victim	58.8	56.1
Unknown	14.1	16.2

Table 19

	Victims of One-Time Offenders (1,508)	Victims of Repeat Offenders (1,115)
Case Disposition (General)		
Convicted	43.0%	40.5%
Not Convicted	46.7	50.5
Unknown	10.3	9.0
Case Disposition (Specific)		
Guilty Plea	35.8%	32.2%
Trial Conviction	7.2	8.3
Nolle-Prossed (victim-related reasons)	23.8	27.3
Nolle-Prossed (other reasons)	5.2	9.2
Dismissed	10.7	5.1
Not Guilty	7.0	9.0
Other	10.3	9.0

felony assaults and other felony person offenses.¹² Repeat offenders were also more likely to be charged with misdemeanor non-person crimes, such as larceny and vandalism.¹³

Victims of repeat offenders were somewhat more likely to have no visible injuries, while those of one-time offenders were more likely to have bruises and cuts or more serious injuries. This might be explained by the fact that abusers who inflict more serious injuries are more likely to receive more severe sanctions that prevent them from repeating the abuse.

There were no major differences between the two types of offenders' incidents in terms of alcohol use. Offenders had been drinking in about 1 in 5 incidents, and both offender and victim had been drinking in an additional 5-6% of cases.

Finally, one-time offenders were somewhat more likely to have been convicted than repeat offenders, as would be expected if they were more likely to receive sanctions which would discourage them from repeating the abuse. Examination of the specific dispositions shown in the table shows that repeat offenders' incidents were more likely to be nolle-prossed, both for victim-related reasons (such as failure of the victim to appear in court) and other reasons. It should be

noted that 37.6% of the 2,623 domestic violence incidents committed by these offenders were nolle-prossed, and 8.9% more were dismissed.¹⁴

Characteristics of One-Time Vs. Repeat Offenders

Table 20 shows selected characteristics for the 1,508 offenders who appeared only one time for a domestic violence offense in the database and the 402 offenders who appeared multiple times (characteristics for this latter group are for their first domestic violence offense). The first statistically significant factor was race/ethnic origin. Repeat offenders were more likely to be black, and somewhat less likely to be white or Hispanic, than one-time offenders. The offenders also differed significantly on employment status: repeat offenders were more likely to be unemployed than one-time offenders.

The two groups of offenders did not differ significantly in terms of age. There was a significant difference between the offenders' use of drugs at the time of the incident. Repeat offenders were more likely to have been using drugs during their first domestic violence incident than were one-time offenders. Repeat offenders were also slightly more likely to have been using alcohol during the incident, although this difference was not statistically significant.

There were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of the type of charge (felony vs. misdemeanor offense) and the disposition of the case. There was a significant difference, however, in whether or not they received an incarcerative sentence (jail, prison, or boot camp). A greater proportion of repeat offenders received an incarcerative sentence for their first offense than did one-time offenders.¹⁵

The two groups of offenders also differed significantly in their prior offense histories. Almost twice as many repeat as single offenders had been arrested for a non-domestic violence offense prior to the domestic violence offense for which they were included in the database. The two groups did not differ significantly in the proportion of prior offenses that were felonies, but they did differ in the nature of their prior offenses. Repeat offenders were more likely to have committed a prior person offense (mostly assault) than one-time offenders.

Table 20. Characteristics of One-Time and Repeat Offenders (at First Offense)

	One-Time Offenders (n=1,508)	Repeat Offenders (n=402)
Marital Status^a (n = 1,910)		
Married	31.8%	22.9%
Other	68.2	77.1
Race/Ethnic Origin^b (n=1,896)		
Black	61.0%	74.3%
White	27.9	19.8
Hispanic	9.7	5.3
Asian	1.5	0.8
Employment Status^c (n=1,541)		
Employed	76.3%	67.8%
Unemployed	23.7	32.2
Age (n=1,886)		
Mean	31.9	31.2
Range	18-90	18-66
Using Drugs During Incident^d (n=1,407)		
Yes	1.6%	3.5%
No	98.4	96.5
Using Alcohol During Incident (n=1,607)		
Yes	29.9%	33.8%
No	70.1	66.2
Current Charge Type (n=1,910)		
Felony	6.7%	5.5%
Misdemeanor	93.3	94.5
Case Disposition (n = 1,910)		
Dismissed/Nolle-Prossed	42.3%	44.3%
Pled/Found Guilty	41.0	41.8
Other	16.7	13.9
Sentence Type^e (n=1,910)		
Incarceration	10.9%	18.4%
Non-Incarceration	89.1	81.6

Table 20

	One-Time Offenders (n=1,508)	Repeat Offenders (n=402)
Prior Non-DV Offense^f (n=1,910)		
Yes	25.3%	46.0%
No	74.7	54.0
Prior Non-DV Felony Offense (n=1,910)		
Yes	2.4%	4.0%
No	97.6	96.0
Prior Non-DV Person Offense^g (n=1,910)		
Yes	9.2%	16.4%
No	90.8	83.6
Ordered to Counseling/Treatment (n=1,891)		
Yes	26.1%	24.1%
No	73.9	75.9
Compliant with Treatment^h (n=454)		
Yes	75.1%	53.1%
No	24.9	46.9

^a $\chi^2 = 11.9, p < .001.$

^b $\chi^2 = 25.1, p < .001.$

^c $\chi^2 = 9.7, p < .01.$

^d $\chi^2 = 4.2, p < .05.$

^e $\chi^2 = 16.2, p < .001.$

^f $\chi^2 = 65.1, p < .001.$

^g $\chi^2 = 17.2, p < .001.$

^h $\chi^2 = 17.6, p < .001.$

Finally, there was no significant difference between one-time and repeat offenders' being ordered into counseling or a treatment program (such as anger management or substance abuse treatment). The two groups did differ, however, in their compliance with treatment. A much lower percentage of the repeat offenders ordered to treatment actually attended than did the one-time offenders.

In order to examine the relationship between these factors and recidivism further, the eight variables which were statistically significant in these comparisons were entered into a logistic regression analysis with the status of the offender (repeat vs. one-time offender) as the

dependent variable. The variable coding and the results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 21. As the table shows, three variables were statistically significant: having a prior non-domestic violence offense, receiving a jail or other incarcerative sentence for the first domestic violence offense, and the offender's race being African-American. As the last column of Table 21 shows, having a prior non-domestic violence offense doubled the odds of being a repeat domestic violence offender. Similarly, having received an incarceration sentence for the first domestic violence offense increased the odds of being a repeat domestic violence offender by a factor of 1.75, while being black increased the odds by a factor of 1.38.

Table 21. Logistic Regression Results for Individual Variables

Variable	Coding	Wald Value	Odds Change (Exp(B))
Marital Status	Married vs. all others	2.37	0.78
Prior Offense	Any prior non-DV offense vs. no prior offenses	25.4**	2.00
Incarceration Sentence	Incarceration sentence for DV offense vs. other sentence, not guilty or nolle-prossed	13.4**	1.75
Race - Black	Black vs. all others	4.2*	1.38
Race - Hispanic	Hispanic vs. all others	3.6	0.55
Employed	Employed vs. unemployed	2.0	0.81
Drugs	Using drugs vs. not using	1.0	1.56
Compliance	Compliance with treatment vs. non-compliance or no treatment	0.1	1.03

-2LL = 1499.4, $\chi^2 = 74.97$, $p < .001$.

** $p < .001$.

* $p < .05$.

To further examine these relationships, a second model was fit to the data which included (1) the three statistically significant variables shown in Table 21; (2) the three two-way interactions between these three variables (i.e., prior offense by incarceration sentence, prior offense by race, and incarceration sentence by race); and (3) additional interactions which might

prove to have explanatory power based on previous research on domestic violence recidivism. These latter interactions included: drug use by compliance with treatment, employment status by incarceration sentence, race by employment status, and marital status by employment status. Only one of these interactions, prior offense by incarceration sentence, was statistically significant in the model (Wald = 10.7, $p < .01$). A third regression analysis using the three significant variables from the first model and the significant interaction term from the second model was then run. The results of this final model are shown in Table 22. As the table shows, the effects for the individual variables are stronger than they were in the previous model, and stronger than the effect for the interaction term.

Table 22. Logistic Regression Results for Final Model

Variable	Wald Value	Odds Change (Exp(B))
Prior Offense (A)	54.7**	2.75
Incarceration Sentence (B)	23.8**	2.39
Race - Black	11.0**	1.53
A x B	9.8*	0.42

-2LL = 1868.0, $\chi^2 = 97.66$, $p < .001$.

* $p < .005$.

** $p < .001$.

The interpretation of the interaction term can best be understood by calculating a single variable combining the values of the prior offense and incarceration sentence variables, and then examining the relationship of this new variable to the recidivism variable. Table 23 shows the comparison between the four levels of the combination of the prior offense and current incarceration sentence variables and the recidivism variable. The entries in the table are column percentages; so, for example, about 65% of one-time offenders had no prior offenses and no incarceration sentence, whereas only about 40% of repeat offenders fell into this category. Thus

Table 23. Relationship Between Prior Offense, Incarceration Sentence and Recidivism

	One-time Offenders	Repeat Offenders
No prior offense/No incarceration sentence	65.2%	39.6%
No prior offense/incarceration sentence	9.5	14.4
Prior offense/no incarceration sentence	18.8	33.8
Prior offense/incarceration sentence	6.6	12.2

$\chi^2 = 88.0, p < .001.$

one-time offenders were much more likely than others to have no prior offenses and not have received an incarceration sentence. Repeat offenders were much more likely than one-time offenders to have had a prior non-domestic violence offense and to have received a sentence other than incarceration for their first domestic violence offense.

ALEXANDRIA POLICE OFFICER ATTITUDES

In order to assess police officers' attitudes regarding the domestic violence arrest policy in Alexandria, a brief survey was developed and distributed to the officers. The survey was designed to be compatible with one conducted in Alexandria in 1991 so that changes in responses over time could be assessed (see Appendix H for a copy of the survey).

The survey was administered during roll calls in the fall of 1996 by the sergeant in charge of the domestic violence unit. A total of 133 officers and detectives completed the survey. However, since not all of these individuals were directly involved in policing domestic violence, the analysis was restricted to those officers who indicated that they had made a domestic violence arrest in the prior 12 months. This reduced the total number of cases to 95.

The results of the officer survey are shown in Table 24. Overall, officers expressed very positive attitudes toward the domestic violence policy. The vast majority of officers agreed that they understood what constituted a domestic violence incident, that they received appropriate support from magistrates regarding their arrest decisions, and that they favored the domestic violence policy. The majority of officers agreed that the policy was an effective deterrent to domestic violence. However, the majority of officers thought that whether or not to make an arrest should be left to the discretion of the officer, and 60% felt that they had "not much" or "very little" discretion in handling domestic violence calls.

To further explore this last point, officers were asked what percentage of the domestic violence calls they responded to in the last year had resulted in an arrest, and in what percentage they would have made an arrest had they had complete discretion. Table 25 summarizes the responses to this question. Just over one-third of the officers reported making arrests in over 90% of the domestic violence calls to which they responded, while about one in five made arrests in half or fewer of the cases. According to the officers, if they had complete discretion, many fewer arrests would have been made. Just over half of the officers would have made arrests in 50% or

Table 24. Officer Responses to Domestic Violence Policy Survey (n = 95)

	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
I clearly understand what constitutes a domestic violence incident according to the Department's policy	94.7%	4.2%	1.1%
Arresting without a warrant, even if the victim does not want to prosecute, is good policy	72.6	20.0	7.4
I receive appropriate support from magistrates in my decisions to arrest	89.5	6.3	4.2
Whether or not to make an arrest in a domestic violence call should be left to the discretion of the officer	57.9	32.6	9.5
Overall, I am in favor of the domestic violence policy as a police response	82.1	11.6	6.3
Overall, the domestic violence policy is an effective deterrent to domestic violence in Alexandria	56.3	27.7	16.0
How much discretion do you feel you have in responding to a domestic violence call?*	37.9	60.0	2.1

* response alternatives for this question are: "a great deal/some", "not much/very little", and "no opinion".

fewer of the calls to which they responded, and only about 14% would have made arrests in 90% or more of the calls to which they responded.

As indicated earlier, several of the questions asked on the current survey were the same as those asked in a previous survey of Alexandria police officers conducted by the Victims Services Section of Virginia's Department of Criminal Justice Services (Department of Criminal Justice Services, 1993). Table 26 shows the comparison of the responses to the five questions common to the original survey of 92 officers, conducted in 1991, and the current survey. As the table shows, the responses of the officers were generally the same in the two time periods, with the exception of the question concerning magistrates. In 1991, just over half of the officers surveyed

Table 25. Percentage of Calls in Which Arrests Were Made and Discretionary Arrests Would Have Been Made (n = 87)

Percent of Calls	Arrests Actually Made	Arrests Would Have Made
50% or less	20.7%	51.7%
51 - 89%	44.8	34.5
90% or more	34.5	13.8
Mean	73.7	56.3
Median	80.0	50.0
Mode	90.0	50.0

Table 26. Comparison of Police Officer Responses to Current and 1991 Surveys

	Current Survey		1991 Survey	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
I clearly understand what constitutes a domestic violence incident according to the Department's policy	94.7%	4.2%	90.0%	6.7%
Arresting without a warrant, even if the victim does not want to prosecute, is good policy	72.6	20.0	72.8	22.8
I receive appropriate support from magistrates in my decisions to arrest	89.5	6.3	54.3	20.7
Overall, I am in favor of the domestic violence policy as a police response	82.1	11.6	79.3	16.3
Overall, the domestic violence policy is an effective deterrent to domestic violence in Alexandria	56.3	27.7	56.0	22.0

indicated that they received appropriate support from magistrates in their arrest decisions. while in the current survey, about 90% agreed with this statement. Since this was one of the questions with which the fewest percentage of officers agreed in 1991, this is clearly an area in which improvement has taken place.

Finally, we examined factors that might be related to the reported percentage of domestic violence calls for which arrests were made last year. None of the attitudinal questions was significantly related to percentage of arrests made. Gender was not significantly related to percentage of arrests made, although female officers (n=18) reported making a slightly greater proportion of arrests (75.4%) than male officers (70.7%). The only variables that were significantly related to reported percentage of arrests were age ($r=.42, p < .01$) and length of time that the officer has worked for the Alexandria Police Department ($r=.30, p < .01$). Both of these variables were positively related to percentage of arrests: that is, older officers and those who had been on the force longer reported a greater percentage of arrests than younger officers and those who had not been on the force as long.

DISCUSSION

Four sets of information and analyses were employed in the present study to determine the effectiveness of Alexandria's Domestic Violence Intervention Project. These four sets of information are: (1) assessments of DVIP program components and outcomes as assessed by victim self-reports; (2) comparisons of outcomes for the DVIP program with those of the Virginia Beach comparison site, again assessed through victim self-reports in the two sites; (3) factors related to recidivism of domestic violence offenders in Alexandria, as assessed by court data maintained in the City's Criminal Justice Information System; and (4) assessments of Alexandria's police officers regarding the effectiveness of the mandatory arrest policy for domestic violence cases. The implications of these findings are discussed below.

Services Received

The results of the Alexandria victims' interviews suggest that the program is successful in delivering services to most domestic violence victims. Although few women in our sample stayed in the shelter, about 30% had contacted the domestic violence hotline, about 40% indicated that they had received counseling, and 18% indicated that they had participated in support groups. Overall, 62% indicated receiving some kind of service from the DVIP program other than court accompaniment. By comparison, only about 27% of the women in Virginia Beach received some type of services other than an informational brochure from the police.

The Alexandria women also rated the services they received very positively: 68-73% indicated that the various component agencies were "very helpful." These ratings were much higher than those in Virginia Beach, where police and FANS staff were rated as "very helpful" by just over half of the women, and prosecutors and the hotline were rated as "very helpful" by just over one-third. The only statistically significant difference between the ratings of the women in the two samples was for the helpfulness of the prosecutors, which is probably best explained by the relatively recent involvement of the Virginia Beach Commonwealth Attorney's Office in prosecuting domestic violence cases.

Based on victims' ratings, the DVIP program appears to be providing quality services to the majority of domestic violence victims. There are probably many reasons for the differences between the two localities, including Alexandria having greater resources to devote and more experience in providing services to domestic violence victims. It is equally likely that the DVIP's coordinated response to domestic violence does in fact result in better service delivery to clients. Studies are just now being done that define the elements of such responses and assess the impact of various coordination approaches on victims' safety, perceptions of system effectiveness, revictimization, and satisfaction with responses (Worden, 1996).

Our findings also suggest that the more involved the women become in the program, the more likely they are to view it positively. Women who received counseling services or attended support groups, which are the most intensive and interactive forms of assistance, tended to rate the DVIP program staff as being more helpful than other groups. This relationship did not necessarily apply to ratings of police and prosecutors, but perhaps since these agencies perform law enforcement functions, they do not benefit from this effect. This finding suggests that exposing more women to the meaningful services offered by the program will result in more positive feelings about the program.

The present study did not find evidence for the benefits of receiving program services such as counseling and attending support groups. Women who received these services were not more likely to leave their abusers, for example, than other women in the sample. While it is certainly possible that leaving the abuser does not represent the best possible outcome in all cases, it seems reasonable to assume that this would be a likely positive outcome of program involvement.

The evidence regarding the relationship between attending counseling and support groups and self-reports of improved life situations was mixed. At both the second and third interviews, a much greater proportion of the Alexandria women who were receiving these services reported that their home situations had improved, although this relationship failed to reach statistical significance. There were also no significant differences when comparing services received at the

time of the first interview with subsequent reports of changes in life situation. Moreover, comparison of the ratings of the Alexandria and Virginia Beach women showed no difference in the life situation changes reported by the women in the two localities.

It is the case that regardless of time period or group, relatively few women reported that their situations had worsened. It may be that one's home situation staying the same is a positive response for many women, and thus differences would not have been apparent with the analyses conducted here. Moreover, the reasons that women gave for their responses varied considerably, and were not necessarily the ones that would be expected. For example, some women who reported that their situation had changed for the worse indicated that they had left their abusers and were now living on their own or with relatives, where they had less money or privacy. Thus while they perceived their current home situation to be worse, they had made a positive change in leaving their abusers.

There was also no relationship observed between receiving counseling or attending support groups and subsequent abusive incidents. It is true that there should not necessarily be a relationship between these two factors, since subsequent abusive incidents are the result of the abuser's behavior and not the victim's. On the other hand, the education and support received in such groups may in fact help to deter violence. Dutton-Douglas and Dionne (1991) suggest, for example, that learning about the "cycle of violence," with its tension-building, acute battering, and contrite loving phases, may help the battered woman predict her batterer's behavior better and thus avoid or escape future violence.¹⁶

It was also the case that although women rated the DVIP program components positively, few of the women who were revictimized considered contacting the program. The police were called in 7 out of 10 cases of subsequent physical abuse, but in only about 2 in 10 cases of other kinds of abuse. Although the majority of women who experienced subsequent abuse reported that they had told someone about the abuse, only about 1 out of 5 victims of physical abuse and fewer than 1 out of 10 victims of other abuse thought about contacting someone from the DVIP program.

Overall, then, although the DVIP program seemed to provide more services that were more positively received than the programs in Virginia Beach, the current study found little evidence that this translated into more positive outcomes for domestic violence victims. The study was restricted, however, in the number and nature of the positive outcomes examined, as well as in the definition of service delivery in terms of victims' self-reports. It may be that a more careful assessment of both factors would have produced different findings. Crowell and Burgess (1996), for example, suggest that receiving counseling and attending support groups increases women's access to the criminal justice system, which in turn benefits women by increasing their safety and improving their sense of self-efficacy. A study by Sullivan and Davidson (1991) showed that women who had access to advocacy services over a 10-week period resulting in their being more effective in obtaining desired resources, although the study could not offer any conclusions about the long-term benefits of obtaining these resources. These findings suggest that had other outcome measures been utilized, the benefits of providing services might have been more apparent.

Subsequent Abuse

When all interviews and all types of abuse were considered, the Alexandria women in our sample were less likely to be re-abused than the Virginia Beach women. There are many potential explanations for this difference, including factors related to differences between the samples in the two localities (see "Limitations of the Present Study"). One possible explanation is the difference between the arrest policies of the two police departments. Put simply, perhaps Alexandria's mandatory arrest policy is a more effective deterrent of future abusive behavior than Virginia Beach's pro-arrest policy.

Since all of the incidents included in the study involved arrests, it was not possible to examine the differences in outcomes between offenders who were arrested and those who were not. However, the data from the Alexandria police officer surveys suggest that the Department's arrest policy does not produce an arrest in all cases. The majority of officers indicated that they

had made an arrest in 4 out of 5 domestic violence calls to which they responded in the last year, and the average reported arrest rate was closer to 3 out of 4 calls. Although comparable figures are not available for Virginia Beach police officers, it is clear that not all cases produce an arrest. It is also true, however, that Alexandria police officers make more arrests in domestic violence cases as a result of the Department's policy than they would if they were given total discretion. Although the figure is based on their speculation only, the officers reported that they would have made arrests in only half the calls they had responded to in the last year. This finding is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the mandatory arrest policy has been in existence for 10 years and is viewed favorably by the majority of the officers.

It is interesting to note with regard to the police officer survey responses that none of the items assessing attitudes toward the mandatory arrest policy was related to the self-reported percentage of arrests made in the last year. Feder (1997), in her study of police officers' arrest decisions in response to hypothetical scenarios with which they were presented, found three factors that influenced officers' arrest responses: understanding their Department's domestic violence policy, their belief that intervening in domestic violence calls was an effective deterrent, and their own attitudes towards women's roles in society. Our study shows clearly that officers do exercise some discretion in domestic violence arrest decisions. More research concerning factors that influence this decision would seem to be in order.

Law enforcement policies seems to be an unlikely explanation for the differences in subsequent abuse observed given the nature of those differences between the two localities. Subsequent instances of physical abuse were actually slightly higher in Alexandria than in Virginia Beach, whereas instances of other kinds of abuse, such as threats, verbal intimidation and abuse, and destruction of property, were higher in Virginia Beach. One could argue that the observed recidivism difference is no difference at all, since it is physical, and not emotional, abuse that is of concern. Tolman and Edleson (1995), however, note that among batterers, psychological maltreatment often accompanies physical maltreatment, and that the two are functionally equivalent, in that both function to establish dominance and control over another

person. It is therefore likely that some of the same factors that are related to physical abuse are also related to emotional abuse. Moreover, once the threat of physical harm has been established through physical abuse, threats or other forms of emotional abuse may be all that is needed for the abuser to dominate and control his victim. This being the case, emotional abuse may be just as important a factor in determining program efficacy as physical abuse.

Another possible explanation for the observed difference in recidivism relates to the differences in service delivery between the two localities. Alexandria's DVIP program provided more services to more of the victims than did Virginia Beach, and the women in Alexandria rated the various components of the system as more helpful than did the women in Virginia Beach. Perhaps it is this enhanced service delivery that accounts for the observed differences in revictimization.¹⁷

One might reasonably expect that differences in recidivism related to service delivery would be due to services received by batterers rather than victims. The present study looked at the women's self-reports of whether treatment was court-ordered for their batterers, and how compliant the abusers were with that treatment. There was no relationship between either of these factors and physical or non-physical abuse, suggesting that this is not the best explanation for the observed differences between the localities. There is some evidence from our analysis of Alexandria's domestic violence database that repeat offenders are less likely to be compliant with treatment than one-time offenders, but this difference is limited to abusers rearrested for criminal behavior, not emotional or other forms of abuse.

In fact, the analysis of repeat offenders referred to above suggests that the observed differences in reports of subsequent abuse may be attributable to non-programmatic factors. The results of this analysis showed that factors such as the abuser's history of other offenses are related to subsequent arrest for domestic abuse. These findings support previous studies of factors related to recidivism in domestic violence offenders. Shepard (1992) found that recidivism over a five-year period was related to, among other factors, previous convictions for offenses other than assault. Goldkamp's (1996) predictive classification scheme for domestic

violence offenders in Dade County, Florida uses prior convictions, prior arrests for assault and battery, and indications of drug involvement as predictors of reoffending.

Despite the caveats and alternative explanations presented above, previous studies have found that police efforts such as mandatory arrest, when accompanied by coordinated responses from other components of the community, result in increased numbers of arrests and prosecutions, and are an effective deterrent to subsequent abuse (Gamache, Edleson & Schock, 1988; Steinman, 1988; Steinman, 1990; Syers & Edleson, 1992; Tolman & Weisz, 1995). This coordinated response is what the Alexandria DVIP delivers, and this may indeed be the explanation for the differences observed here.

The Role of Prosecution in DVIP

Although the present study did not specifically examine the effects of prosecution strategies, analysis of the DVIP's offender database revealed that, of 2,623 domestic violence incidents that occurred between January 1993 and June 1996, almost half (46.5%) were not prosecuted or were dismissed. The most common reason (recorded in more than half the cases) for not prosecuting offenders was the failure of the victims to appear in court.

Rebovich's (1996) survey of prosecutors demonstrated that victims failing to appear at court hearings is a common circumstance in the prosecution of domestic violence cases. Most of the prosecutors surveyed had worked with domestic violence victims who would testify only if subpoenaed, and the most common method for dealing with uncooperative victims of domestic violence was to issue a subpoena. This is a strategy that did not appear to be used in the DVIP program, at least not during the time period examined.¹⁸

There are undoubtedly a variety of reasons why domestic violence victims fail to appear in court, including fear of retaliation by the abuser and a genuine belief that the abuser should not be punished too severely for his offense. From the program's perspective, there may be few strategies to pursue in changing this situation. DVIP staff already try to contact the victim to

encourage her to appear in court. Prosecutors can issue subpoenas, but these may be ignored, and may also serve to add an additional coercive element to the victim's circumstances.

As noted previously, the Indianapolis Domestic Violence Prosecution Experiment found that when domestic violence victims were allowed to drop complaints that they had filed, those who proceeded with the prosecution were significantly less likely to be revictimized than those who did not (Ford & Regoli, 1992). This suggests that persuading victims to appear in court and cooperate with the prosecution of their abusers may decrease their chances of experiencing subsequent violence.

Limitations of the Study

As with most research projects, several factors limit the ability of the present study to draw firm conclusions about the effectiveness of the DVIP program, and to generalize its findings beyond those of the Alexandria program. These various factors are discussed below.

Sampling Bias

This study was designed to examine domestic violence in a sample of women who were abused by male partners with whom they were in intimate relations, and who contacted the police as a result of the abusive incident. The findings are therefore not generalizable to other types of victims and relationships, such as male victims, females abused by other females, or females abused by other family members. The findings also do not necessarily apply to abusive situations which do not result in police contact and arrest.

As noted in the "Study Participants" section of this report, a total of 354 women in Alexandria and 169 in Virginia Beach met the eligibility criteria for inclusion in this study during the time period for which data were collected. These 523 women, while not selected randomly from a larger pool, would still have comprised a reasonably representative sample of the female victims of intimate domestic violence who called the police as a result of an abusive incident in the two localities. However, most of these women could not be reached to solicit their participation in the study. It is safe to assume that the women who were contacted were different

in at least some ways from those who could not be contacted. Women who could not be contacted may, for example, have experienced greater degrees of violence, and perhaps their abusers had initiated a move to avoid further contact with the police. Perhaps these women were poorer, and could not afford to maintain phone service. Thus the pool of “women who could be contacted” is probably not representative of all women eligible for the study.

This sampling bias is further compounded by the fact that just over one-third of the women contacted in each site refused to participate in the study. Again, it seems reasonable to assume that women who refused to participate are different from those who agreed. Perhaps those women who would not participate were experiencing ongoing abuse to a greater degree than women who did participate in the study. The reasons offered by the women for refusing to participate suggest that at least some of the women downplayed the significance of the incident, reporting that it was “no big deal,” and that the police had over-reacted. Although most of the women who would not participate refused to give a reason, there are likely many differences between these women and the study participants.

Differential dropout is also a factor affecting the representativeness of the sample in the study. Women who dropped out from one time to the next were perhaps more likely to continue to be in abusive situations than those who participated in all interview rounds. Examination of the data for these women suggests that they tended to be less satisfied with the various components of the programs than women who were retained in the study. In Virginia Beach, women who dropped out were more likely to report a subsequent incident of non-physical abuse than those who continued on with the study.

These sampling issues affect both the internal and external validity of the study. Since women interviewed for the study may not be representative of all women whose circumstances are similar, any conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the DVIP program must be taken with caution. Similarly, care must be taken in generalizing these findings to other domestic violence programs.

Comparison Group

The use of a comparison group, even one which is not a control group (due to nonrandom assignment of participants) is helpful in a study such as this. However, it is difficult to find an entire city or county which is similar enough to the target locality (in this case Alexandria) to serve as a valid comparison. In the present study, the initial plan was to use a locality situated in the same part of the state as the target locality. Although permission from this locality was obtained initially, the locality subsequently withdrew from the study. This left the principal investigator to search for an appropriate comparison locality well into the data collection process. Localities are understandably reluctant to serve as the standard against which another program will be measured, and the staff in Virginia Beach were kind enough to serve in this capacity. However, there were several obvious differences between the two cities and their populations that made Virginia Beach a less than ideal comparison locality.

First, the two cities are located in very different parts of the state. Alexandria is located close to Washington, DC, and many of its residents work in the District. Virginia Beach is located in the southeastern part of the state, in what is essentially a tourist and recreational area. Because of its proximity to Norfolk, Virginia Beach tends to have many military personnel, which has implications for how domestic violence cases are handled (if they involve abusers or victims in the military), and for the nature of the communities (the Virginia Beach population tends to be more transient, for example).

The populations of the two cities also vary in their racial makeup, particularly in their Hispanic populations. Northern Virginia localities tend to have large Hispanic populations relative to other parts of the state, which have relatively few Hispanics. Figures from the 1990 Census show that about 9% of Alexandria's population is Hispanic, compared to about 3% of Virginia Beach's population. This difference was apparent in study samples from the two localities. About 45% of the women in the Alexandria sample whose race/ethnic origin was available were Hispanic, and many of them spoke little or no English. By contrast, there was only one woman who identified herself as Hispanic in the Virginia Beach sample. Forell (1990-91),

among others, has pointed out that the impact of police responses to domestic violence such as mandatory arrest laws may be different for women of color, immigrant women, and poor women than for white middle class women. Given these various factors, it is possible that some of the differences between the two localities were due to differences between the two sites, and not differences between the services provided.

Finally, it is also the case that while the Virginia Beach program may not be coordinated to the same degree as the Alexandria DVIP, the two programs do contain many similar elements, including a pro-arrest policy, follow-up with victims, and counseling services for both victims and offenders. These similarities may have decreased the likelihood of finding significant differences between the interview responses of the Alexandria and Virginia Beach women. On the other hand, differences between the programs necessitated asking some questions differently in the two localities. Thus in some cases questions which were designed to obtain information about equivalent program elements may have actually produced responses regarding different elements (e.g., Alexandria's Office on Women vs. Virginia Beach's police department).

Data Collection Procedures

Due to confidentiality requirements imposed by Virginia Beach, it was not possible to recruit study participants in the same manner in both sites. Aside from the fact that different procedures were employed, a potential bias was introduced by the fact that it was the police in Virginia Beach who initially informed victims of the study. This fact raised the possibility of reactive bias on the part of potential participants, who might either feel obligated to participate in the study to receive better treatment by the police, or might be less willing to participate because of police involvement. Some evidence for this effect may be found in the fact that a number of women agreed to participate in the study when asked by the police, then later refused when contacted by the researchers. While it is possible that these women simply changed their minds, it is also possible that the fact that it was the police who asked the first time may have influenced their responses. Additional support for this idea may be found in the reasons provided by the

Virginia Beach women for refusing to participate in the study. About 10% of the Virginia Beach women who refused to participate cited “fear of police repercussions” as their reason for not wanting to participate. None of the women contacted in Alexandria gave this as a reason for not wanting to participate in the study. In addition, despite the fact that a script was provided, the Virginia Beach detectives may have been more likely to deviate from the script or may have shown less enthusiasm in their description of the study and solicitation of volunteers than the interviewers who contacted the Alexandria women. Finally, this difference in recruitment procedures might have affected Virginia Beach victims’ responses to the interview items; for example, they might have been less likely to criticize the police if they thought the police would be privy to the interview information.

Control Variables

The present study was limited in the information that could be collected from the women. It is therefore possible that factors other than those examined played a role in the observed relationships in the two sites. One of the most obvious factors that was not controlled in the present study was the degree and nature of the victims’ previous abusive incidents. The study included all victims who met the criteria, regardless of whether this was the first time they had called police or the fifth time. Given the difficulties in obtaining study participants, limiting the study to first-time victims was not a viable option. However, obtaining detailed information about domestic violence incidents prior to the study incident would have been useful in helping to control for this factor. It may have been, for example, that the women in the two localities differed in the extent to which they had suffered previous incidents of violence, and it was this difference, rather than any differences between the programs, that may have affected comparisons between the two samples.

Another factor that may have been related to study outcomes was the specific nature and extent of the interventions for the women in the two localities. Detailed information was not available on the nature of the services received, such as the type and length of counseling. While

the limited information available suggested that outcomes were not directly related to the services received, perhaps more detailed information is required in order to accurately identify these relationships.

Data Collection Difficulties

The study described here was not implemented as originally planned. This was due in large part to the fact that the difficulties associated with contacting women for participation in the study were much more severe than had initially been expected. While we anticipated having a difficult time making contact, we did not anticipate just how difficult this would be. This is not just a research problem, but a service provision problem as well. In Alexandria, for example, the Office on Women attempts to contact all victims within 24 to 48 hours of the abusive incident. Even in this short time period, a number of the women already cannot be contacted by phone. In Virginia Beach, women who had been contacted by the police and agreed to participate in the study just weeks earlier could not be contacted by the researchers.

The present project tried a number of different methods to facilitate the collection of data. Interviewers called repeatedly, at night and on weekends, at home and at work. The women were asked for the phone numbers of friends and relatives who might know how to contact them when the interviewer called again. A toll-free number was established for women to return the calls of interviewers. Letters were sent out to women who could not be contacted by phone after repeated attempts. At one point, interviewers were stationed at the courthouse in Alexandria to try to conduct initial interviews at the time the victims' cases were heard in court. This last approach was abandoned after several weeks when it became apparent that victims were not willing to talk with researchers at that particular time and location.

As a result of these difficulties, the data collection phase of the study continued for much longer than originally anticipated. It often took weeks of calling before interviews could be successfully completed, resulting in variations in the follow-up periods for subsequent interviews. Long-term follow-up interviews, which were part of the initial study design, could

not be implemented as originally planned due to the difficulties of contacting victims. Research by Rumptz and her colleagues has shown that sending interviewers out to visit victims' and other contacts' houses significantly decreased drop-out rates at 6 and 12 months (Rumptz, Sullivan, Davidson, & Basta, 1991). Future research should consider these strategies, since the present study confirms that phone calling alone is not an effective way of contacting domestic violence victims.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data collected and analyzed in the present study, conclusions and recommendations for the Alexandria DVIP program are listed below.

- **The DVIP program has been successful in providing services to domestic violence victims in Alexandria.**

Victims in Alexandria reported receiving more services than those in Virginia Beach, and rated the various DVIP program components as being more helpful than those in Virginia Beach. Victims who received counseling or attended support groups rated the program more positively than those who received other types of services or no services. About 38% of victims sampled reported receiving no services other than court accompaniment. Only about 22% of women experiencing a subsequent incident of physical abuse thought about contacting the DVIP program to talk about the incident.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) The program should consider maintaining contact with victims or emphasizing other forms of outreach to increase the likelihood of women who continue to experience abuse contacting the program.

(2) The program should attempt to increase the numbers of women receiving such services.

(3) The program should take steps to provide services to a greater proportion of the women with whom the various agencies come into contact.

- **The Police Department's mandatory arrest policy received positive ratings from the officers, and appears to result in arrests in a greater proportion of domestic violence calls than would otherwise be the case.**

Officer responses to the questions about the arrest policy were generally positive. Despite this, the majority of officers agreed that arrests in domestic violence calls should be left to their

discretion. The results of the police officers' self-reports showed that they made arrests in an average of 75% of the calls to which they responded. Their guess was that if they had complete discretion, this proportion would have been only 56%.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) Further analysis of the proportion of domestic violence calls resulting in arrest should be undertaken by the program to determine whether 75% is an accurate estimate and, if so, a satisfactory response.

(2) The program should consider training, focus groups, or other activities to explore officers' feelings that they would like more discretion, and that they would make fewer arrests if they had that discretion, in handling domestic violence calls.

- **The DVIP program should take steps to reduce the number of nolle-prossed and dismissed cases.**

Between January 1993 and June 1996, over one-third of the domestic violence cases were nolle-prossed, mostly because victims failed to appear in court. About 47% of cases were either dismissed or nolle-prossed during that time period.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) The DVIP program should increase efforts to contact victims and convince them to appear in court.

(2) The program should study in greater detail cases that are nolle-prossed and dismissed, with the goal of seeking information to assist in developing policies and procedures to reduce the number of these cases.

- **Recidivism among domestic violence offenders appears to be related to both prior offense history and sentencing for the domestic violence offense.**

The analysis of the CJIS data presented here suggests that repeat offenders are more likely to have at least one prior non-domestic violence offense and to have received a non-incarcerative

sentence for the current domestic violence offense.

RECOMMENDATION:

The program should seek to confirm the findings presented here through further study. If confirmed, the program should consider imposing a jail sentence on domestic violence offenders who have a prior offense history.

- **DVIP participants experienced less non-physical revictimization than those in the comparison site, although the reason for this could not be determined.**

While instances of subsequent physical abuse were greater in Alexandria, instances of emotional abuse, including threats of physical abuse, were greater in Virginia Beach. The analyses presented here could not find any relationship between DVIP program activities and outcomes. The present study suffered from a number of limitations, and these may explain why there was no rationale for the observed recidivism differences.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) The program should develop a "logic model" which specifies the program goals, objectives, and expected outcomes, and shows how particular program activities are expected to result in specified outcomes.

(2) The program should continue to explore the question of how its clients benefit from the services provided by the program.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS FOR COORDINATED RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The findings of this study have implications for other programs which seek to provide coordinated responses to domestic violence in their communities. First, a coordinated approach does seem to result in domestic violence victims receiving more services that they view positively. However, programs need to be aggressive in reaching out to battered women and providing more one-on-one services, rather than just general information and court accompaniment. This would not only result in more positive feelings about the services received (and potentially the justice system as a whole), but would also increase the chances of women contacting the program should subsequent instances of battering occur.

Our findings show that mandatory arrest policies clearly affect the behavior of police who would otherwise use arrest less frequently if left to their discretion. However, the results of our recidivism analysis support the findings of others that arrest is less likely to change the subsequent behavior of batterers who are only marginally attached to society.

Over one-third of domestic violence arrests in Alexandria in a 3 ½ year period were not prosecuted, usually because the victims failed to appear in court. Previous research has shown that domestic violence victims are often reluctant to appear in court to testify against their abusers. However, the willingness of domestic violence victims to cooperate with prosecutors despite being given the choice not to proceed with the case against their abusers may be related to less subsequent abuse. It is therefore important that intervention programs seek to maximize the likelihood that domestic violence victims will appear in court. This may involve enhancing efforts to contact victims after an arrest has been made and convincing them of the importance of

participating in the prosecution of their abusers. It may also involve better communication between domestic violence service providers and prosecutors, to ensure that victims understand their options and the potential consequences of their choices. Prosecutors should also weigh the merits of issuing subpoenas to domestic violence victims as a way of bringing them into court. Finally, coordinated intervention programs should consider innovative (and less coercive) methods of dealing with reluctant victims, such as changing charging policies and establishing domestic violence courts (Davis, Smith & Nickles, 1997).

It is interesting that in the present study: (1) a large number of domestic violence cases were not prosecuted; and (2) police officers reported that they would make far fewer arrests given greater discretion. It is possible that the cases that are not prosecuted are also those in which the officers would not have made an arrest. This suggests that once officers understand the importance of intervening in domestic violence cases, it may be desirable to allow them greater discretion in making arrests in those cases.

Finally, our findings suggest that intervention programs should be able to clearly state the relationship between program activities and expected outcomes. Programs should be evaluated using outcome measures specific to each program's activities. Also, programs should maintain records on victims and abusers that will allow them to identify the specific factors in their programs that appear to be related to repeated abuse. Factors which can be addressed by the program, such as prosecution and sentencing policies, can then be altered to produce more positive outcomes.

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**APPENDIX A. STUDY INTRODUCTION
LETTER TO ALEXANDRIA VICTIMS**



City of Alexandria, Virginia

Office on Women

110 N. Royal Street, Room 201

Alexandria, Virginia 22314



Telephone: (703) 838-5030

Fax: (703) 838-4976

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Alexandria, as part of its ongoing effort to provide the highest quality services to all victims, is seeking information on how we can improve our services to women in domestic violence situations. I am requesting your assistance in this effort. This would involve your answering some questions over the telephone about the services you received and about any repeat incidents of violence. There would be three phone calls: one to obtain your agreement and ask a few initial questions; a second about a month from now; and a third about six months from now. The questions will take about 30 minutes for you to answer.

This information is being gathered for us by Applied Research Associates, a private research company in Richmond. All of the information you provide will be strictly confidential. Your answers will be combined with those of other women who will be participating. No one will be able to identify you from your answers, nor will anyone from my office, the court, or any other City agency see or know about your answers.

A researcher from Applied Research Associates will be calling you within the next few days. She will ask if you would be willing to participate in this project. If you prefer not to, tell the researcher when she calls. Your decision will in no way affect the services you receive in the future, nor will it affect any legal action in which you may be involved.

We hope that by your providing us with this information, we can improve the services the City of Alexandria provides to women such as yourself. I thank you in advance for your help in this important effort.

Sincerely,

Claire Dunn

Claire Dunn
Coordinator
Domestic Violence Program

Domestic Violence
Office/Crisis Line
(703) 838-4911 (V/TTY)
Fax (703) 838-6427

Sexual Assault Crisis Line
(703) 683-7273 (V/TTY)

Employment Services
Health/Community Education
(703) 838-5030 (V/TTY)

APPENDIX B. CONTACT SCRIPT FOR ALEXANDRIA INTERVIEWS

Alexandria Phone Contact Script

Ms. _____, my name is _____ and I'm working with Applied Research Associates. We're a private company working with the Alexandria Domestic Violence Program doing a study of their services. Ms. _____ should have given you a letter about us when you were in court. Do you recall seeing that letter?

The reason I'm calling today is to get your agreement to participate in the study. This involves answering some questions about your situation at home, and about how satisfied you are with the services you received from the City. I would be calling you twice: once about a month from now, and again in six months. Each phone call will take about a half hour, and we can arrange a time and place that is convenient for you. All of the information you give me will be confidential - no one else will find out about your individual answers to the questions. Can we include you in our study, Ms. _____?

IF YES:

Thanks you. I do have a few questions I would like to ask you today, Ms. _____; do you have a few minutes right now?

[ASK FIRST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS]

Those are all the questions for right now, Ms. _____. Thank you for your help. I will be calling you again about a month from now. Is there a particular day or time that you would like me to call?

Is there a different phone number you would prefer that I contact you at?

In case I can't reach you when I call back, could I please have the names and phone numbers of anyone who might know how to get in touch with you?

IF NO:

May I ask is there any particular reason you would prefer not to participate in the study?

**APPENDIX C. CONTACT SCRIPT
FOR VIRGINIA BEACH INTERVIEWS**

ARA

**Applied Research Associates
Richmond, Virginia**



VIRGINIA BEACH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STUDY

SCRIPT FOR OBTAINING CONSENT FOR STUDY PARTICIPATION

We are working with a private research company in Richmond to try to improve the services we provide to domestic violence victims. We would like you to help in this effort by agreeing to answer some questions over the phone with someone from the research company. There would be 3 phone calls: one about a month from today, one about 2 months from today, and one about 6 months from today. The questions will take about 30 minutes for you to answer, and will ask about the services you received and about any repeat incidents of violence.

All of the information you provide will be strictly confidential. Your answers will be combined with those of many other women who will be providing information. No one will be able to identify you from your answers. No one in the Police Department or any other City agency will see or know about your answers.

If you would prefer not to participate, this will in no way affect the services you receive in the future, or any legal actions in which you may be involved. However, your participation would be greatly appreciated. I would like your permission to pass your name and phone number on to the researchers. Would that be okay?

APPENDIX D. FIRST INTERVIEW FORM



**Applied Research Associates
Richmond, Virginia**

ALEXANDRIA FIRST INTERVIEW

Victim's Name: _____

Police Case #: _____ Date of Incident: ____/____/____

Date of Interview: ____/____/____ Location of Interviewee: _____

Time of Interview: Start _____ Finish _____

Interviewer Initials: _____

Many different agencies in Alexandria work with victims of domestic violence. I'd like to ask you briefly about the kinds of help you received from any of these agencies in connection with the incident that occurred on _____.

1. Did you stay at the Women's Shelter?

- 1 _____ yes
- 2 _____ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION #4**

2. When did you enter the Shelter? ____/____/____ comment: _____

3. How long did you stay at the Shelter (in days)? _____ comment: _____

4. Did you call the Domestic Violence Hotline?

- 1 _____ yes
- 2 _____ no

5. What kinds of help/information did you receive from the Domestic Violence Program?
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 _____ counseling | 6 _____ finding housing |
| 2 _____ attend support groups | 7 _____ legal information or assistance |
| 3 _____ help for children/parenting info. | 8 _____ referrals to other agencies/people |
| 4 _____ job counseling/advice | 9 _____ other assistance: |
| 5 _____ court accompaniment | _____ |

If you received referrals to other agencies or groups, what type were they: _____

Now I'd like to ask you how helpful each of the people and offices you came into contact with were to you. For each one, I'd like you to tell me if they were "very helpful," "somewhat helpful," or "not very helpful." How would you rate:

6. The helpfulness of the police officers who responded to the incident:

1 _____ very helpful 2 _____ somewhat helpful 3 _____ not very helpful

7. The helpfulness of the Prosecutor (Commonwealth's Attorney's office, Victim-Witness Assistance Program):

1 _____ very helpful 2 _____ somewhat helpful 3 _____ not very helpful 4 _____ no contact

8. The helpfulness of the staff at the Domestic Violence Program:

1 _____ very helpful 2 _____ somewhat helpful 3 _____ not very helpful

9. The helpfulness of the staff at the Domestic Violence Hotline:

1 _____ very helpful 2 _____ somewhat helpful 3 _____ not very helpful 4 _____ did not call

10. The helpfulness of the staff at the Shelter:

1 _____ very helpful 2 _____ somewhat helpful 3 _____ not very helpful 4 _____ did not go

11. Has anyone else that you have come into contact with been helpful or not so helpful?
(comments concerning who that person is and what type of services they provided. etc.):

12. When the arrest occurred, was the abuser your current or former husband or boyfriend?

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 ___ current husband | 4 ___ former boyfriend |
| 2 ___ former husband | 5 ___ other, specify _____ |
| 3 ___ current boyfriend | _____ |
| | _____ |

13. When the arrest occurred, were the two of you living together, and were you married, separated (legally?) or divorced ?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 ___ living together, married | 4 ___ not living together, <i>legally</i> separated |
| 2 ___ living together, unmarried | 5 ___ not living together, divorced |
| 3 ___ not living together, separated | |

14. Has the status of the relationship with the abuser changed since the arrest occurred?

- 1 ___ yes
2 ___ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION # 16**

15. How has that relationship now changed (now not living together, separated, etc.)?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 ___ living together, married | 4 ___ not living together, <i>legally</i> separated |
| 2 ___ living together, unmarried | 5 ___ not living together, divorced |
| 3 ___ not living together, separated | |

16. Did you go to court and obtain a protective order against your abuser?

- 1 ___ yes
2 ___ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION # 19**

17. Do you know what to do to make sure the abuser follows the protective order?

- 1 ___ yes 2 ___ no

18. How helpful would you say the protective order has been?

1 ___ very helpful 2 ___ somewhat helpful 3 ___ not very helpful

19. Have you had any contact with your abuser since the arrest?

___ yes

___ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION # 21**

If yes, what type of contact and why: _____

20. Did you agree to have that contact?

1 ___ yes 2 ___ no

comments: _____

21. Now that it has been awhile since the incident occurred, do you feel the abuser should have been arrested?

1 ___ yes 2 ___ no 3 ___ not sure _____

22. Have there been any other incidents of physical, sexual or emotional abuse since the abuser was arrested?

1 ___ yes 2 ___ no

If yes, please explain:

Those are all the questions I have right now, Ms. _____. I will be calling back in about a month to see how you are doing. Can you tell me:

is there a different phone number you would prefer that I contact you at?

APPENDIX E. SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW FORM



**Applied Research Associates
Richmond, Virginia**



ALEXANDRIA SECOND INTERVIEW

Victim's Name: _____

Police Case #: _____ Date of Incident: ____/____/____

Date of Interview: ____/____/____ Location of Interviewee: _____

Time of Interview: Start _____ Finish _____

Interviewer Initials: _____

I'd like to ask you some questions about what has been happening since we last talked on _____ (date). Some of the questions are the same types of things we talked about before (for example, services you received from the various agencies that assist women in domestic violence situations) and some are different.

1. Did you stay at the Women's Shelter since we last talked?

- 1 _____ yes
- 2 _____ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION #4**

2. When did you enter the Shelter? ____/____/____ comment: _____

3. How long did you stay at the Shelter (in days)? _____ comment: _____

4. Did you call the Domestic Violence Hotline since we last talked?

- 1 _____ yes
- 2 _____ no

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5. Have you received any help or information from the Domestic Violence Program since we last talked? **IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION #12.**

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 ___ counseling | 6 ___ finding housing |
| 2 ___ attend support groups | 7 ___ legal information or assistance |
| 3 ___ help for children/parenting info. | 8 ___ referrals to other agencies/groups |
| 4 ___ job counseling/advice | 9 ___ other assistance |
| 5 ___ court accompaniment | 10 ___ none (have not contacted anyone) |

(explain specific information or referrals received below):

Now I'd like to ask you how helpful each of the people and offices you came into contact with since we last talked were to you. For each one, I'd like you to tell me if they were "very helpful," "somewhat helpful," or "not very helpful." How would you rate:

6. The helpfulness of police officers who you had contact with since the last time we spoke:

- 1 ___ very helpful 2 ___ somewhat helpful 3 ___ not very helpful 4 ___ no contact

7. The helpfulness of the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office (prosecutor, Victim-Witness Assistance Program):

- 1 ___ very helpful 2 ___ somewhat helpful 3 ___ not very helpful 4 ___ no contact

8. The helpfulness of the staff at the Domestic Violence Program:

- 1 ___ very helpful 2 ___ somewhat helpful 3 ___ not very helpful 4 ___ no contact

9. The helpfulness of the staff at the Domestic Violence Hotline:

1 ___ very helpful 2 ___ somewhat helpful 3 ___ not very helpful 4 ___ did not call

10. The helpfulness of the staff at the Shelter:

1 ___ very helpful 2 ___ somewhat helpful 3 ___ not very helpful 4 ___ did not go

11. Have you come into contact with anyone else? ___yes ___no

(If yes, who were they, and what kind of services did they provide?)

How helpful would you say _____ was?
(name, position, agency, etc.)

1 ___ very helpful 2 ___ somewhat helpful 3 ___ not very helpful 4 ___ did not go

12. Is there any kind of assistance that you could have received since the last time we talked which would have been helpful to you in trying to deal with your situation?

13. Have you or your abuser been ordered by a judge to receive services, such as counseling or anger management?

- 1 ___ yes, for the abuser only
- 2 ___ yes, for me (victim) only
- 3 ___ yes, for both of us
- 4 ___ no - SKIP TO QUESTION #17
- 5 ___ never went to Court - SKIP TO QUESTION #16

14. What was ordered? _____

15. Did you or your abuser attend? (check one or two responses as appropriate)

- 1 _____ the abuser attended most or all scheduled sessions (so far)
- 2 _____ the abuser attended some or a few scheduled sessions (so far)
- 3 _____ the abuser did not attend any scheduled sessions (so far)
- 4 _____ the victim attended most or all scheduled sessions (so far)
- 5 _____ the victim attended some or a few scheduled sessions (so far)
- 6 _____ the victim did not attend any sessions (so far)

SKIP TO QUESTION #17

16. What was the reason that you did not see the judge after your abuser was arrested? **(Probe to determine whether the case was not prosecuted by the CA or whether the woman dropped the charges against the abuser. If she did drop charges or fail to appear, probe to find out why):**

17. *Now I'd like to ask you about your home situation and your relationship.*

The last time we talked, you told me that you and your abuser were no longer/still living together. Is this still the case?

- 1 _____ yes - **SKIP TO QUESTION #21**
- 2 _____ no

18. What is your current living situation?

- 1 _____ living with abuser
- 2 _____ no longer living with abuser
 - a _____ living with a different man in a relationship
 - b _____ living with a relative
 - c _____ living alone (with children)
 - d _____ other _____

19. When did your living situation change? _____

20. What was the reason for the change in your living situation? _____

IF THE VICTIM AND ABUSER HAVE NOT BEEN LIVING TOGETHER SINCE THE LAST CONTACT, ASK QUESTION #s 21 - 23. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO # 24.

21. Have you had any contact with your abuser since we last spoke?

1 _____ yes

2 _____ no - SKIP TO QUESTION #24

22. What kind of contact did you have? _____

23. Was a no-contact or protective order in place when the contact occurred?

1 _____ yes

2 _____ no

If a protective order was issued, probe to determine whether or not the victim agreed to the contact. If she did, probe to find out why: _____

24. Since we last spoke, has the abuser or any other person (choose as many as apply):

1 ___ **Physically abused you?** *By physical abuse I mean: assaulted you with a weapon, punched, slapped, kicked, pushed, or shaken you, bit, burned, or choked you, raped or forced you take part in any other unwanted sexual activity.*

(brief description of incident):

2 ___ **Threatened you with physical harm?** *By this I mean threatened you with a weapon, or threatened to do any of the abusive behaviors listed in the last question.*

(brief description of incident):

3 ___ **Physically abused or threatened your children, your friends, or your relatives?**

(brief description of incident):

4 ___ **Yelled at you, or cursed at you or called you names?** (except as part of an argument in which both partners yelled, cursed, etc.)

(brief description of incident):

5 ___ **Destroyed or harmed (or threatened to destroy or harm) something of personal importance or value?** (e.g., took a diary or keepsake, killed or injured a pet, destroyed photos)

(brief description of incident):

6 ___ **Made you feel unsafe or frightened by something he said or did?**

(brief description of incident):

7 ___ **Tried to control where you went, what you did or who you saw?** (e.g., limited victim's driving, controlled access to phone or who she could call, forbid her to see someone).

(brief description of incident):

8 ___ **No, nothing like the above has happened - SKIP TO QUESTION #64**

The following questions refer to the most serious incident mentioned above (lowest number).

I'd like to ask you some more questions about the incident in which _____ (description from question #24). Please answer these questions only with regard to this particular incident.

25. Who was it who did this to you ?

- 1 _____ original abuser
- 2 _____ current live-in spouse/boyfriend
- 3 _____ current boyfriend
- 4 _____ other _____

26. How often has this occurred since we last spoke?

- 1 _____ once
- 2 _____ twice
- 3 _____ three times
- 4 _____ once a week
- 5 _____ two or three times a week
- 6 _____ almost every day or every day

27. When did this incident occur/When was the most recent time one of these incidents occurred?

if multiple incidents of this type of abuse have occurred, continue with question #s 28 and 29. otherwise, skip to question #30.

28. Have these threats or types of injuries been getting more frequent or more serious since the last time we spoke?

- 1 _____ yes, more frequent
- 2 _____ yes, more serious
- 3 _____ yes, both
- 4 _____ no

29. Which of the incidents that occurred would you consider to be the most serious; that is, the one in which you were hurt the most or felt the most frightened or upset? _____

30. Where did this incident occur?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 ___ in the woman's home | 4 ___ on the street at the woman's home |
| 2 ___ in the abuser's home | 5 ___ on the street at a friend or relative's home |
| 3 ___ in a friend/relative's home | 6 ___ over the phone |
| | 7 ___ other _____ |

31. How did the person abuse/threaten you? (check all that apply and explain below):

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 ___ shot | 2 ___ stabbed |
| 3 ___ beat or hit with weapon (or any object) | 4 ___ kicked |
| 5 ___ punched | 6 ___ burned |
| 7 ___ choked or smothered | 8 ___ slapped |
| 9 ___ raped | 10 ___ spanked |
| 11 ___ bit | 12 ___ pinched |
| 13 ___ pushed or threw victim | 14 ___ shook |
| 15 ___ threatened with a weapon (gun, knife, etc.) | 16 ___ threatened to shoot, stab, kill (no weapon) |
| 17 ___ threatened to punch, slap or kick | 18 ___ threatened with sexual assault |
| 19 ___ hit, etc. children, friends or relatives | 20 ___ threatened to kill or hurt children, friends or relatives |
| 21 ___ yelled or cursed at victim | 22 ___ frightened, degraded/humiliated victim |
| 23 ___ stalked victim | 24 ___ destroyed or harmed personal possessions or pets |
| 25 ___ threatened to destroy or harm personal possessions or pets | 26 ___ limited victim's access to car |
| 27 ___ limited victim's access to phone | 28 ___ limited who victim could call or visit |
| 29 ___ other (explain below) | |

(Explain all items checked above - if a weapon was used or brandished, note the type of weapon and how it was involved in the incident):

32. What was going on before the abuse occurred? _____

33. Were you injured as a result of the abuse - for example, did you have any broken bones or teeth, black eye, bleeding, bruises, swelling, or burns?

- 1 ___ yes 2 ___ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION #40**

34. What kind of injuries did you receive? _____

35. Did you go to someone to get your injuries taken care of?
1 _____ yes
2 _____ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION #40**

36. Where did you go?
1 _____ hospital emergency room 3 _____ friend or relative
2 _____ doctor's office or clinic 4 _____ other _____

37. What treatment did you receive for your injuries?

38. Did the person who treated you ask you how you were injured?
1 _____ yes 2 _____ no

39. Did you tell the person who treated you how you were injured?
1 _____ yes 2 _____ no
If no, why not? _____

40. Had you or your abuser been drinking or taking drugs when the abuse occurred?
1 _____ abuser drinking or on drugs
2 _____ victim drinking or on drugs
3 _____ both drinking or on drugs

41. Did the police become involved as a result of the incident?
1 _____ yes
2 _____ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION #45**

42. Who called the police? _____

43. What did the police do?

44. Is that what you wanted the police to do? 1 ___ yes 2 ___ no
If no, what did you want the police to do? _____

skip to question #46

45. Was there any reason you decided not to call the police? _____

46. Did anyone else see or hear the abusive incident? _____

if the incident occurred in or outside a house, ask question #47. otherwise, skip to question #50.

47. In addition to whoever saw or heard the incident, was anyone in the house at the time of the incident?
1 ___ yes
2 ___ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION #50**

48. Who was in the house?
1 ___ child(ren) 3 ___ friend of victim 5 ___ relative of abuser
2 ___ relative of victim 4 ___ friend of abuser 6 ___ other _____

49. Where were they? _____

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50. Have you told or talked to anyone about the incident since it occurred?

- 1 yes
- 2 no - **SKI™ TO QUESTION #53**

51. Who did you talk to about the incident? _____

if a program staff person is mentioned in question #51, question # 52 refers to that staff person. otherwise, it refers to everyone collectively that the victim told.

52. Why did you contact *this person/these people*? (**PROBE TO DETERMINE WHAT THE VICTIM WAS SEEKING WHEN SHE CONTACTED THE PERSON: SAFETY, SHELTER, MONEY, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, ETC. EXPLAIN BELOW**):

If the victim did not call a program staff person, ask question #53. Otherwise, skip to question #55.

53. Did you think about calling the Domestic Violence Program, the Shelter, or the Commonwealth Attorney's office after the incident?

- 1 yes
- 2 no

54. Was there any particular reason you did not call? _____

The following questions refer to the next most serious incident mentioned in Question #24 (next lowest number).

55. Now I'd like to ask you just a few questions about the other incident you described earlier in which _____ (description from question #24). Please answer these questions only with regard to this particular incident.

Who did this to you ?

- 1 original abuser
- 2 current live-in spouse/boyfriend

- 3 ___ current boyfriend
- 4 ___ other _____

56. How often has this occurred since we last spoke?

- 1 ___ once
- 2 ___ twice
- 3 ___ three times
- 4 ___ once a week
- 5 ___ two or three times a week
- 6 ___ almost every day or every day

57. How did the person abuse/threaten you? (check all that apply and explain below):

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 ___ shot | 2 ___ stabbed |
| 3 ___ beat or hit with weapon (or any object) | 4 ___ kicked |
| 5 ___ punched | 6 ___ burned |
| 7 ___ choked or smothered | 8 ___ slapped |
| 9 ___ raped | 10 ___ spanked |
| 11 ___ bit | 12 ___ pinched |
| 13 ___ pushed or threw victim | 14 ___ shook |
| 15 ___ threatened with a weapon (gun, knife, etc.) | 16 ___ threatened to shoot, stab, kill (no weapon) |
| 17 ___ threatened to punch, slap or kick | 18 ___ threatened with sexual assault |
| 19 ___ hit, etc. children, friends or relatives | 20 ___ threatened to kill or hurt children, friends or relatives |
| 21 ___ yelled or cursed at victim | 22 ___ frightened, degraded/humiliated victim |
| 23 ___ stalked victim | 24 ___ destroyed or harmed personal possessions or pets |
| 25 ___ threatened to destroy or harm personal possessions or pets | 26 ___ limited victim's access to car |
| 27 ___ limited victim's access to phone | 28 ___ limited who victim could call or visit |
| 29 ___ other (explain below) | |

(Explain all items checked above - if a weapon was used or brandished, note the type of weapon and how it was involved in the incident):

58. Were you injured as a result of the abuse - for example, did you have any broken bones or teeth, black eye, bleeding, bruises, swelling, or burns?

- 1 ___ yes
- 2 ___ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION #60**

59. What kind of injuries did you receive? _____

60. Did you tell or talk to anyone about the incident since it occurred?

- 1 _____ yes
- 2 _____ no - **SKIP TO QUESTION #62**

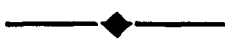
61. Who did you talk to about the incident? _____

If the victim did not call a program staff person, ask question #62 and #63. Otherwise, skip to question #64.

62. Did you think about calling the Domestic Violence Program, the Shelter, or the Commonwealth Attorney's office after the incident?

- 1 _____ yes
- 2 _____ no

63. Was there any particular reason you did not call? _____



64. Aside from your relationship, have any major changes occurred in your life since we last spoke? For example, has your work situation changed, have you moved, have you gotten pregnant, have any close relatives been ill or died - has anything like this happened since we last spoke?

65. Since we last spoke, would you say your home situation has improved, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?

- 1 _____ improved
- 2 _____ gotten worse
- 3 _____ stayed about the same - END OF INTERVIEW

66. In what way has your situation improved/gotten worse? _____

67. Do you have any ideas about why the situation has improved/gotten worse? _____

Those are all the questions I have right now, Ms. _____. Thank you very much for your help. I will be calling back in a few months to see how you are doing.

BEFORE YOU HANG UP, CHECK TO BE SURE THAT YOU CONFIRM:

ARE THERE ANY OTHER PHONE #s AT WHICH SHE MIGHT PREFER TO BE CONTACTED?

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME AND PLACE TO CONTACT HER?

CAN YOU HAVE THE NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OF SOMEONE WHO WOULD KNOW HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HER?

APPENDIX F. ATTRITION ANALYSIS

Alexandria Attrition Analysis

A total of 44 women participated in the first interview and not in subsequent interviews. an attrition rate of 42%. The table below shows a comparison of the responses of these two groups of women at the first interview.

	<u>Dropped Out</u> <u>(n = 44)</u>	<u>Retained</u> <u>(n = 62)</u>
Called hotline?		
Yes	23%	24%
No	67	76
Type of services received		
Counseling	8%	7%
Other	21	19
None	71	74
Helpfulness of police		
Very helpful	66%	72%
Somewhat helpful	18	21
Not very helpful	16	7
Helpfulness of prosecutor		
Very helpful	47%	64%
Somewhat helpful	29	18
Not very helpful	24	18

Helpfulness of DV program staff		
Very helpful	58%	70%
Somewhat helpful	27	15
Not very helpful	15	15
Helpfulness of hotline staff		
Very helpful	70%	76%
Somewhat helpful	30	12
Not very helpful	0	12
Has living situation changed?		
Yes	30%	21
No	70	79
Should abuser have been arrested?		
Yes	73%	77
No	9	18
Not sure	18	3
Subsequent Abusive Incident?		
Yes	11%	7
No	89	93

The women who dropped out after the first interview were more likely to rate all DVIP components as being less helpful than those who were retained for subsequent interviews. Women who dropped out were more likely to be undecided about whether their abusers should have been arrested. There was no difference between the two groups in the

proportion who experienced an abusive incident after the study incident.

Virginia Beach Attrition Analysis

A total of 18 women participated in the first interview and not in subsequent interviews. an attrition rate of 28%. The table below shows a comparison of the responses of these two groups of women at the first interview.

	<u>Dropped Out</u> <u>(n = 18)</u>	<u>Retained</u> <u>(n = 46)</u>
Called hotline?		
Yes	0%	9%
No	100	76
Type of services received		
Counseling	1%	1%
Other	14	16
None	85	83
Helpfulness of police		
Very helpful	67%	57%
Somewhat helpful	20	34
Not very helpful	13	9
Helpfulness of prosecutor		
Very helpful	0%	50%
Somewhat helpful	33	40
Not very helpful	67	10

Helpfulness of police department DV unit		
Very helpful	40%	68%
Somewhat helpful	60	16
Not very helpful	0	16
Helpfulness of hotline staff		
Very helpful	0%	50%
Somewhat helpful	0	0
Not very helpful	100	50
Has living situation changed?		
Yes	22%	38%
No	78	62
Should abuser have been arrested?		
Yes	61%	78%
No	28	11
Not sure	11	11
Subsequent Abusive Incident?		
Yes	44%	17%
No	56	83

The women who dropped out after the first interview were more likely to rate the police as “very helpful” than those who stayed in the study. Prosecutors, the police department’s domestic violence unit, and the hotline staff were all rated as being less helpful by women who dropped out of the study than by those who were retained for subsequent interviews.

Women who dropped out were less likely to indicate that their abusers should have been arrested.

Also, women who dropped out were more likely to indicate that there had been another abusive incident after the study incident than women who were retained in the study.

**APPENDIX G. INTERVIEW RESPONSES OF
ALEXANDRIA VICTIMS OF SUBSEQUENT ABUSE**

Physical abuse Other abuse

Who committed abuse?

Original abuser	80%	64%
New spouse/boyfriend	10	14
Other	10	22

How often did abuse occur?

Once	50%	57%
2-3 times	40	14
Weekly or more often	10	29

Where did the abuse occur?

Victim's home	70%	57%
Abuser's home		7
Friend or relative's home		7
Street	10	
Phone		21
Other	20	8

Was the victim injured?

Yes	70%	0%
No	30	100

Type of injury

Bruises	4	n/a
Cuts	2	
Black eye	1	
Other	1	

Did victim receive treatment?

Yes	38%	n/a
No	62	

Physical abuse Other abuse

Was victim or abuser on drugs or alcohol?

Abuser only	33%	29%
Abuser and victim both	11	7
Victim no, abuser unknown	23	57
Neither	33	7

Did police become involved?

Yes	70%	21%
No	30	79

What did the police do?

Arrest abuser at scene	57%	50%
Arrest abuser later	14	0
No arrest	29	50

Did police do what victim wanted?

Yes, arrested abuser	71%	50%
No, wanted abuser arrested	29	0
No	0	50

Why didn't victim call police (percent of total responses)

Didn't think about it	25%	0%
Felt embarrassed	25	0
Didn't want to make things worse	25	0
Was going to handle on her own	25	0
Didn't think anything could be done	0	38
Abuse was not serious enough	0	62

Physical abuse Other abuse

Has victim told anyone about incident?

Yes	90%	57%
No	10	43

Whom did the victim tell? (percent of total responses)

Friend	25%	45%
Family member	25	33
DVIP staff member	25	11
DV support group	17	0
Other professional	8	0
Co-worker	0	11

Did victim think of calling DVIP after incident?

Yes	22%	8%
No	67	92
Police called DVIP	11	0

Why didn't victim call DVIP?

Abuser arrested, victim felt safe	1	0
Victim moved out, felt safe	1	0
Didn't have phone number	1	0
Didn't think of it	1	1
Thought getting P.O. would help	1	0
Police called DVIP	1	0
Didn't think they could/would help	0	4
Incident wasn't serious enough	0	3
Didn't feel threatened	0	1
Didn't want kids taken away	0	1
DVIP already involved	0	1
Is going to call	0	1

Has victim's situation changed since previous interview?

Improved	20%	21%
Worsened	40	0
Stayed the same	40	79

How has victim's situation improved/worsened?

Feels safer	2	3
Can handle abuser better	0	1
Feels less safe	1	0
Has less money	1	1
New living situation is worse	1	0

Why has victim's situation improved/worsened?

Abuser is incarcerated	1	0
Protection order in place	2	0
Victim's address is unknown	1	0
Abuser no longer around	0	2
Victim in counseling	0	1

How has victim's life changed since last interview (percent of responses)?

Got a new job	28%	37%
Lost job	9	0
Moved	18	37
Gave birth/is expecting	18	0
Had a miscarriage	0	13
Got married	0	13
Got divorced	9	0
Developed mental health problem	9	0
Child now living elsewhere	9	0

APPENDIX H. ALEXANDRIA POLICE OFFICER SURVEY



Applied Research Associates



We are conducting a study of the domestic violence program in Alexandria. We would greatly appreciate your taking a few minutes to answer these questions about the Department's domestic violence policy and your experience with domestic violence situations. YOUR RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM.

FOR EACH STATEMENT, CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE CHOICE.

1. I clearly understand what constitutes a domestic violence incident according to the Department's domestic violence policy.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

2. Arresting without a warrant, whether or not the victim wants to prosecute, is good policy.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

3. I receive appropriate support from magistrates in my decisions to arrest.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

4. Whether or not to make an arrest in a domestic violence call should be left solely to the discretion of the officer.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

5. Overall, I am in favor of the domestic violence policy as a police response.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

6. Overall, the domestic violence policy is an effective deterrent to domestic violence in Alexandria.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

7. How much discretion do you feel you have in domestic violence calls?

a great deal some no opinion not much very little

8. Have you ever been assaulted while responding to a domestic violence call?

yes no

OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CALLS YOU RESPONDED TO IN THE LAST YEAR:

9. in what percentage did you make an arrest?

_____ %

10. in what percentage would you have made an arrest had you had complete discretion?

_____ %

11. what percentage involved mutual combat?

_____ %

12. When did you begin working for the Alexandria Police Department?

___/___/___

Your age: _____

Your gender: _____

PLEASE USE THE BACK OF THIS FORM FOR ANY COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ALEXANDRIA.

END NOTES

¹ The Commonwealth Attorney's Office's Victim-Witness Program was beginning to increase their involvement with victims of domestic violence at the time of the study.

² The distinction between a "pro-arrest" policy and a "mandatory arrest" policy is not a clear one. The Virginia Beach Police Department maintains that their policy is essentially the same as that of Alexandria, since both ultimately rely on the officers' discretion in determining probable cause.

³ It is interesting to note that the refusal rates in the two localities were the same despite the fact that the Virginia Beach women had already agreed to participate in the study when contacted by police detectives.

⁴ Due to difficulties in contacting victims, in many cases there was a substantial period of time between when contact for subsequent interviews was initiated and when the interview was actually conducted. The "Results" section reports the actual time between interviews.

⁵ About 71% of the women were interviewed within two months of the domestic violence incident, and 88% were interviewed within three months of the incident.

⁶ Theoretically, all victims should have reported receiving court accompaniment services, since volunteers from the Office on Women program are present at the court for all domestic violence proceedings.

⁷ The women were not asked detailed information about the nature of the abusive incident during the first interview; this information is available only for Interviews 2, 3 and 4.

⁸ Most of the women who reported receiving counseling services did so at the first interview. For all subsequent interviews, the number of women who received counseling services was small: five for Interviews 2 and 3, six for Interview 4. When the analyses were run comparing reports of services received at the time of the first interview and changes in living situation at subsequent interviews, the results were the same.

⁹ These refusals were despite the fact that the women had previously provided verbal agreement to participate in the study to the Virginia Beach police detective who contacted them.

¹⁰ Sixty of the 2,853 additional offenses were domestic violence offenses that were not against wives, girlfriends, etc. These 60 offenses were committed by 51 offenders (2.7% of the total domestic violence offenders). The majority of these 60 offenses (73%) were committed against women. The most frequent victims were sisters (17%), followed by brothers (10%), mothers (8.3%), and fathers (6.7%).

¹¹ Since the same victim may be included multiple times, these comparisons were not subjected to tests of statistical significance.

¹² In addition to felony assaults, there were 36 felony person offenses (out of the total 2,623 incidents), including 1 murder, 11 rapes, 16 kidnappings, and 8 robberies.

¹³ The term “non-person” is used to identify offenses, such as assault and rape, that are not committed directly against individuals. In this context, however, the term is misleading in that all of these offenses are directed against a particular individual, the abuser’s victim. In that sense, all of these crimes are “person” crimes.

¹⁴ Of the nolle-processed cases, the majority (54.2%) were nolle-processed because the victim failed to appear in court.

¹⁵ The majority of these offenders received jail sentences of 10 days or less.

¹⁶ The same argument can be made for the use of women’s experience of violence as an outcome measure for women’s services.

¹⁷ Since this study focused on services to victims, caution must be exercised when attempting to tie these services to repeat victimization. It is reasonable to question whether social services that work solely with victims should be expected to reduce perpetrator violence.

¹⁸ Recent interviews with the DVIP staff indicate that the city’s prosecutors have been working to reduce the number of domestic violence cases that are nolle-processed.