Although men and women can both be perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV), the majority of long-term IPV with severe health consequences is perpetrated by men against women (Dobash & Dobash, 2004):

– Women are twice as likely to be victims (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000, p. 5)
– Men are 285 times as likely as women to murder their partners (Hamby, 2005)
Sexism and IPV

• Many explanations for why men are the more common perpetrators of IPV include men’s desire for dominance over women and sexist attitudes.

• Hostile sexism is associated with disdain for women’s progress towards equality with men (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

(Whitaker, 2013)
Desire for control is central in fueling IPV perpetration (Dobash & Dobash, 1992)

Control-seeking is not unique to men, but the meaning of controlling behaviors may differ between men and women (Stets & Hammons, 2002)

(Whitaker, 2013)
Research Questions

• Does control-seeking mediate the relationship between attitudes about male dominance or hostile sexism and men’s IPV perpetration?
  – Hypothesis 1: Once level of control-seeking is taken into account, there will no longer be an increased likelihood of psychological or physical IPV perpetration associated with higher levels of male dominance
  – Hypothesis 2: Once level of control-seeking is taken into account, there will no longer be an increased likelihood of psychological or physical IPV perpetration associated with higher levels of hostile sexism

(Whitaker, 2013)
Measures

- Male Role Norms Inventory-Revised dominance subscale (Levant et al., 2007)
  - Measured degree of agreement with traditional male role norms
- Hostile Sexism scale (Glick & Fiske, 1996)
  - Measured attitudes towards women’s authority and complaints
- Dominance Scale restrictive subscale (Hamby, 1996)
  - Used 5 items focusing on desire for control
- Relationship status
  - Retained respondents with only female partners in last year
- IPV perpetration
  - Psychological and physical abuse perpetrated against intimate partner in past year

(Whitaker, 2013)
Results

• Attitudes supporting male dominance were less prevalent than hostile sexism and control-seeking

• Mixed support for control-seeking mediating relationship between male dominance and IPV perpetration
  – mediates relationship with physical IPV
  – no significant relationship between male dominance and psychological IPV

• Support for control-seeking mediating relationship between hostile sexism and IPV perpetration

(Whitaker, 2013)
Implications for Practice

- IPV prevention programs should consider increased attention to control-seeking
  - If this is at the expense of other content, male dominance content should be reduced rather than hostile sexism content

- Gendered differences in IPV perpetration
  - Content on control-seeking among men would include sexism in the discussion, but the content for women would include different influential factors

(Whitaker, 2013)
References


Prepared by H Goldstein (2014)