# Police Science

Australia & New Zealand Journal of Evidence Based Policing

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# Contents

During the Covid-19 pandemic a need to collaborate and share information about what works in policing globally became extremely important. Police staff, researchers and supporters of Evidence Based Policing from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, America and Canada came together to look at policing challenges impacting across the globe in a Covid-19 environment. Now more than ever before, policing needs to be evidence based to make strategic policy and operational decisions that are informed and underpinned by the best available evidence.

The aim of this first collaboration was to share a selection of robust evidence to inform a conversation across countries on the impact of family harm in the context of Covid-19. An overarching document outlining key evidence and insights was produced, which was central to an online panel discussion with senior Police leaders and academics across the five countries involved. Participants talked through the biggest challenges and operational changes in police practice as a result of Covid-19, and what police might consider taking from the evidence base to inform strategy in a post Covid-19 environment.

This edition of Police Science presents the written product of this joined up work, to watch a recording of the conversation please visit **www.anzsebp.com.**

# Foreword

**Alex Murray OBE MSt (Cantab)**
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What unites everyone in law enforcement is the desire to make a difference, to protect those in need and to obtain justice and there are different ways of doing that. Traditionally, we have relied on hunches, experience or even common sense. Many of these practices have served us well, but sometimes our hunches turn out to be wrong. The only real way of finding out whether our practices are effective is by testing them with rigorous scientific methodology. That simply means understanding how to answer the question you are posing using the best research design possible. If the question is, does this tactic work in reducing domestic violence? The answer should come from an empirical analysis of the data in a manner that can link the cause to the effect. Police want to know if our actions (arrest, citation, warnings, mediation) cause the effect (reduced crime, calls for service and recidivism). Using the scientific method to answering policing questions can help us be more effective and efficient, and more evidence-based. If the question is, what is occurring or why is this taking place? Then other methods like interviews are effective.

The Societies of Evidence Based Policing (SEBP) are committed to advancing the police profession through the use of the scientific method. We are officers, staff and researchers from Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada and the United States who are committed to improving policing by implementing the best evidence in the field, communicating it to others in policing and producing new evidence of what works, what doesn't and what looks promising to keep our communities safe.

SEBPs around the world have been formed with similar objectives, and this is our first formal global collaboration on a policing issue. The community safety impacts of COVID have yet to be fully understood but we know that although it may not be reported as frequently family abuse is still going on. This means we must ask ourselves, what should be the law enforcement approach to this now? How does COVID and the resulting social restrictions change our approach? When we are making organizational decisions are we relying on the latest evidence based findings? In times of disruption and crisis, we should turn to the evidence to help guide us through the uncertainty and there has never been a better time to be evidence based. And with this collaboration between societies this is what we aim to do.

Being evidence based around family harm is not without challenge.

Views on interventions are strongly held and for good reason – but it doesn't mean they are right. History is littered with good intentions gone bad. At a time when our most vulnerable population may be shuttered inside with a volatile environment, now more than ever we should understand and apply the evidence to the problem. We should always challenge our conventional thinking and understand we may not know best. The data should make us think again and when we come up with good ideas we should test them rigorously. The harm associated with domestic abuse on both victims and their families is too serious for evidence to be disregarded or sacrificed for well-meaning ideology. However, family harm is also complicated. There is no brilliant randomised controlled trial that has conclusively proven what works and what does not for abuse.

Sherman and Harris (2015) found an increase in the victim's mortality when an offender was arrested as opposed to warned for a less serious domestic abuse. This finding poses multiple moral hazards and difficulties in the construction of a policy response. Crime is a complicated issue that requires a complex response. There is no evidence-based panacea. We must be thoughtful about our approach to family harm. Research serves to inform our decisions, not to make them for us. We cannot shy away from the evidence and return to intuition-built policing. It does not feel wise and does not serve victims of crime.

The purpose of this paper is to present a selection of robust evidence for consideration as a response to family harm, and to provoke reflection across police agencies on current practice. The podcast that accompanies this paper has brought together prominent thinkers and practitioners in this area. It should make us all ask, what next and provide the foundations for action.

This global collaboration of societies of evidence based policing has been a huge team effort. We want to thank Simon WILLIAMS (acting Director of the Evidence Based Policing Centre in New Zealand and Secretary of Australia and New Zealand SEBP) and his team for summarising papers and facilitating the podcast. A huge thank you also to Stef Bradley for ongoing support of evidence based policing and her team whose contribution made this a reality.

# Executive Summary

This document summarises a selection of the most robust published evidence relating to reducing family harm, divided in three sections. The first section describes current trends for family harm in Europe, North America, and Oceania. Overall, trends suggest family harm may be occurring more frequently during the COVID-19 outbreak and since self-isolation measures were put in place by different countries. However, victims may not be able to seek help using regular channels.

The second section includes summaries of relevant literature. Research papers from a number of international journals as well as review articles and reports by evidence based policing experts published between 2013 and 2020. The literature summarise a range of family harm instances - domestic violence, family violence, intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, intimate partner homicide, domestic assault, domestic homicide, and serious domestic violence.

Key findings from the literature summarised show that:

• Focused deterrence approach might be a valid strategy in decreasing repeat domestic violence victimisation;

• Different factors such as higher Police staffing levels are associated to a decrease in domestic and family violence harm;

• Most family harm instances within specific dyads (victim-offender) do not escalate in frequency and severity over time;

• Most of the dyads involved in high-harm family violence episodes come to Police attention for the first time in a high-harm occurrence;

• Domestic abuse instances prior to high-harm family violence occurrences are sometimes known to other organisations and persons other than Police;

• A limited number of offenders are responsible for the majority of cumulative crime-harm in reported family harm incidents;

• Offender self-harm and suicidal tendency are associated with intimate partner homicide, domestic homicide, domestic murder, domestic murder attempt, high-harm family violence, and serious domestic violence;

• In follow-up studies, victims show higher mortality rates from all causes if a domestic violence suspect is arrested for low-level offences (compared to when the suspect is warned); domestic violence suspects are more likely to die by homicide if they are arrested following a domestic violence episode (compared to when they are warned), and;

• Evidence-based programmes to prevent domestic abuse repeat victimisation can be effective.

The third section of the document introduces strategies, proposed by Professor Larry Sherman, which could be put in place by different Police Departments to decrease domestic abuse. These include targeting the most harmful domestic abusers, using self-harm flags to target offenders in proactive safeguarding visits, and testing new strategies to decrease domestic abuse.

Together, these three sections raise important issues for Police in terms of resourcing (i.e. should police attend all calls for service, or those caused by the fewer high-harm offenders?); risk assessment (i.e. should family harm risk assessment tools based on seriousness and frequency escalation be reviewed?); monitoring of at-risk individuals (i.e. should offenders with self-harm and suicidal tendency markers be more closely monitored by police?); data sharing and policy (i.e. should policies emphasise data sharing partnerships with organisations which could be aware of prior family harm instances?); efforts to increase reporting (i.e. should the public be prompted more strongly to report family harm instances and be reminded of the relevance of reporting?); how outcomes of interventions are measured (i.e. should other outcomes for family harm suspects and victims be considered aside from reoffending rates?); and strategies put in place to reduce family harm (i.e. What strategies are more effective in reducing family harm?). This document could be used to inform evidence-based policy, including new prevention strategies and interventions that could be trialled in new contexts, and new ways of thinking about the serious harm of family harm and domestic violence.

**Societies of Evidence Based Policing**
Global Collaboration
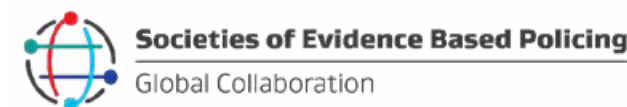
**Partners**

# International Settings – What is happening now?

Crime definitions are different across jurisdictions, as are the lockdown/social distancing rules in each of these locations. Law enforcement agencies may have different levels of communication to the public in regard to reporting of specific crimes (such as domestic or family violence campaigns), or crime in general over the pandemic period. Citizen's trust and confidence in police and willingness to report crime may also differ by location as well as perceived and actual discrimination. Therefore, it is important to consider the 'where' and 'under what circumstance' when reading reported crime numbers.

Most of the sources in this section are not from peer reviewed journal articles given the infancy of policing COVID-19. Any mention of crime increases or decreases do not come from official statistical sources unless otherwise stated. Therefore, all findings should be treated with caution. We were only able to find limited statistics related to offending in the year 2020 and it is still too early to attribute causes of change

There has been widespread concern internationally over the impact of COVID-19 on family violence, particularly where finances are now stressed, and women and children are isolated from friends and familyi. Media reports suggest domestic violence reporting increases across numerous countriesii.

In a recent press release, UN Secretary-General António Guterres appealed for peace in people's homes during the pandemic. He claimed "we have seen a horrifying global surge in domestic violence". Guterres has called on governments to protect women by:

• increasing investment in online services

• setting up emergency systems in groceries and pharmacies

• declaring shelters as essential services

• creating ways for women to get support without alerting their abusersiii

While the key concern of most authorities may be reducing the spread of the virus, this comes with a risk of increasing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Commentators in The Lancet call for health care workers and first responders to be aware of increased risk of IPV during quarantine, as well as the need for traditional and social media advertising of general awareness and support services.iv Researchers also suggest that lockdowns may be making it harder for victims to report their own victimisation, but that opportunities exist to identify those at risk through other agencies (e.g. links between animal abuse, primarily reported by neighbours, and violence in the home could mean that animal control officers are in a good place to look out for potential domestic violence).v

Police and other authorities across jurisdictions are reporting a range of impacts on demand and resources, and in many cases have introduced new (and continued existing) initiatives to counteract both actual and reported changes in demand. There are outlined below

## Europe

Domestic violence services across the UK and Europe have reported increases in demand throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

A range of agencies are reporting increases in demand for services including:

• Refuge UK has reported a 25% increase in calls and online requests for help since lockdown, with visits to their helpline website 150% higher than in the last week of February.vi Other UK phone lines have also reported increases in calls.

• The Respect phone line, which provides perpetrators with advice, had a 26.86% increase in calls and a 125% increase in hits to their website in week starting 30 March, compared to the previous week.

• Men's Advice Line, for male victims of abuse, had a call increase of 16.6%, and increased web traffic of 42% in that same week. Refuge, also reported 120% increase in calls, in the 24 hour period following a fresh round of publicity.vii

• UK project 'Counting Dead Women', which records the number of women killed by men, has recorded 16 deaths of women and children between 23rd March and 12th April. The average for this time period over the last ten years is 5.viii

• In France, there has been a reported 30% increase in reported domestic violence since the country went into lockdown on 17th March.

• In Spain, a mother of two was killed by her husband. In the first two weeks after the State of Alert was announced, the Spanish helpline received 18% more calls compared to the previous month. Email contact increased 286% over the same period. In its first 9 days, a new WhatsApp based psychological support messaging service received 168 enquiries.ix

• NGO's in the Balkans have also reported increasing numbers of domestic violence calls since the lockdown. However, there is also concern that this increase is only for women who were able to get away from their abuser and make the call, and that there could be many more cases they do not know about.x

More than 25 organisations helping domestic violence victims in the UK have reported an increase in caseload since start of pandemic. Some charities can no longer effectively support women because of lockdown and staff sickness. Three-quarters of support charities questioned reported that they had to reduce service delivery to victims.xi There is also concern in the UK that there is no longer enough space at refuges to house victims of domestic violence. While there are examples of some areas of the UK trying new ideas, such as housing some victims and perpetrators in university halls of residence, there is, as of yet, no systematic approach to the problem.xii

West Midlands Police have arrested around 400 domestic abuse suspects in last two weeks and recorded an average of 119 domestic abuse crimes since the government's order restricting outdoor activity on March 23. However, this is only slightly up on average, and they are concerned victims might not be finding the opportunity to report. xiii Avon and Somerset Police have also seen a 12% drop in domestic violence, however, they too believe this is due to limited opportunities to report to police.xiv

A number of new and existing initiatives are in place to try and manage the increasing demand within the context of the lockdowns. In the UK Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences continue to run, albeit by video/telephone conferencexv, and Women's Refuge also continues to operate. Women are also allowed to leave quarantine for the purpose of going to a Refuge facilityxvi.

Merseyside police have a system where callers to 999 can either press 55 or make a noise (cough, tapping the phone, talking to the offender), and the BT operator will send the call to police. The idea is that people might not always be able to talk to the operator especially in cases of domestic violence.xvii This system (called the Silent Solution System) is part of the 'Make Yourself Heard' campaign which launched in 2019. However, there is concern that not everyone is aware of the system, and that continual promotion is needed to increase awareness.xviii French authorities have also introduced new reporting mechanisms where women can seek help at pharmacies who provide phones with which to call services; pharmacies where chosen as they are an essential services where women might go without their partnersxix. This initiative has also been introduced in Spain, Germany, Italy, and Norway.

The Home Office (UK) has also launched a new domestic violence campaign called 'You Are Not Alone'. On social media the advertisements will highlight where people can find help. Domestic violence services will also receive an additional £2 million in funding. xx In Gloucester, a new Vulnerability Safeguarding Team has been put together. The team will visit locations and people known to be at high risk, and follow up reports from concerned family, friends and neighbours.xxi

## North America

Across the United States and Canada, there has been more varied impacts of the pandemic on reported domestic violence.

• Kingston Police in Canada have reported an increase in domestic violence calls in the week (March 16 -22)

• An unpublished paper examining calls for service in Indianapolis found a significant increase in domestic violence calls, after both partial (schools and restaurants close) and full (shelter in place) social distancing measures where bought in compared to baseline.xxii

• Many US cities reported an increase of domestic violence in March, raising concerns about families' safety while they isolate at home. 18 of the 22 agencies that responded to requests for data on domestic violence calls reported they saw a rise.

• Conversely, in York County (USA), so far arrest rates are remaining stable with no significant increase in domestic assaults or child abuse reported by local police chiefs; however, this varies by location. There has also been a decrease in routine service calls.xxiii

• Domestic violence reports are down in New York City. Calls fell 15% for March of this year compared to March 2019. However, police and social workers have suspended home visits, which were a source of reporting.xxiv

• A 'Marshal project' paper examined domestic violence across three US states and noted that in these cities domestic violence appears to be dropping, however, not to the same extent as other crime types. It is suggested there are a number of reasons for under-reporting of domestic violence, which are further compounded by the Coronavirus Pandemic. They also note that Chicago PD has seen an increase in domestic violence related service calls, however, fewer victims are actually filing a complaint.xxv

• The Edmonton Police Service in Alberta, Canada, report that domestic violence incidents do not appear to be showing a consistent trend. This is despite calls to abuse organisations increase, and it seems that while people to continue to contact social services, they may not be reaching out to police.xxvi

During this period, the National Domestic Violence Hotline's (US) call volume remained average., However, according to qualitative reports, during the second half of March hotline callers reported their abusive partner was capitalising on COVID-19 to 'further isolate, coerce, or increase fear in relationship'. There is increased concern that those who have been abused will be unable to seek help due to the monitoring of their behaviour by an abusive partner while in isolation. Shelters are also concerned about limited funding and resources, while other shelters are trying to develop an action plan in case a client shows symptoms of the virus.xxvii

## Oceania

Similar concerns are being raised across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

• Victoria Police have identified increases in family violence reporting specifically mentioning COVID (e.g. there was a doubling of family violence report over a 7 day period mentioning the term 'COVID'xxviii) and (as at April 21, 2020) 14% of 7,00 family violence calls over the previous month related to COVID. In these cases victims or perpetrators have said that lockdown conditions had inflamed problems.

• Queensland Police have also raised concerns over a decreases in reporting of 5.6% between 6-27 March and a 20% decrease in court applications, and the effects of victims being unable to take out orders or report breaches.

• New Zealand reports have also identified increases in family violence in some regions, with practical concerns raised around how Police Safety Orders operate during the lockdown including finding emergency housing for individuals issued with the PSOxxix

• Reports from Tonga also suggest the national lockdown and closing borders has added stress to many households, particularly due to households typically including large numbers of family members and the pressure, stress and tension that can bring in meeting all family members' basic needs.

In response, Victoria Police have launched Operation Ribbon which keeps police in contact with high risk victims and perpetrators.xxx Queensland Police will also soon be introducing online reporting of domestic violence. xxxi Tonga's Women and Children Crisis Centre has launched online portal via social media, noting that 62% of population of Tonga use Facebook.xxxii

## Summary

Jurisdictions across the world are reporting changes in domestic violence demand as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Common themes involve concern around increases in family stress and opportunity for abusive control, as well as reduced reporting due to the removal of usual reporting channels (e.g. schools and workplaces). Support agencies in particular may be struggling to provide their usual services due to lockdown restrictions and staffing availability. However, there are a number of interventions being implemented to provide additional support and reporting channels to victims and support to high risk families who may be experiencing additional stress at this time. The next chapters outline the evidence base for further interventions and investigations to address the changing patterns of demand being seen internationally.

# 1

## Policing repeat domestic violence:

*Would focused deterrence work in Australia?*

### What is focused deterrence?

• Focused deterrence has been implemented in dozens of US cities and several other countries to respond to a wide range of violence problems.

• It involves targeting specific violent behaviour by a small number of chronic offenders, informed by detailed analysis of the crime problem. Targeted individuals and groups are told that they are being closely monitored, informed of the consequences of their behaviour and action taken against other offenders. They are offered access to support services to help them change their behaviour. Law enforcement and other agencies reinforce these deterrence messages by drawing on the full suite of legal actions available to stop the offending behaviour of the most prolific and serious offenders (the 'pulling levers' component).

• A recent systematic review of focused deterrence approaches observed a positive result in 19 out of 24 included studies, while the meta-analysis, which pooled the results from multiple studies, revealed a statistically significant, moderate effect on crime.

### How does it work with domestic violence?

• The Intimate Partner Violence Intervention (IPVI) has applied a focused deterrence approach in several US communities to address domestic violence. Focused deterrence approaches to domestic violence increase offender accountability and ensure appropriately targeted responses to victims.

• The IPVI involves the highly structured delivery of intervention and support services for both the offender and the victim, prioritising the most at-risk victims and the most dangerous offenders according to an offender hierarchy, mobilising the moral voice of communities and communicating the consequences of violent behaviour to offenders and responding quickly when violence occurs.

• Early results from a trial of the IPVI in High Point, North Carolina observed a 20 percent reduction in calls to police for domestic violence, a 20 percent decrease in arrests, and a 20 percentage point decrease in the proportion of incidents that resulted in injury.

• More robust evaluation of the IPVI model is required; however, the IPVI has been identified as a promising approach to reducing domestic violence offending and related harms, and the US Office on Violence Against Women has provided funding to replicate the model in other locations.

### What are the arguments in favour of trialling the focused deterrence approach in Australia?

• The same patterns of violence and offender characteristics that motivated the development of the IPVI exist within Australian communities and offender populations:

    o Repeat domestic violence offending is concentrated among a relatively small group of offenders.

    o The risk of repeat domestic violence in highest in the weeks and months following a domestic violence incident.

    o The risk of short-term repeat domestic violence offending increases with every offence. This is true for both adult and juvenile offenders.

    o Prior violence, and past compliance with protection orders, are strong predictors of future violence.

    o Domestic violence offenders are often generalist offenders, which is the rationale for the pulling levers component of the strategy.

• Australian evidence therefore shows the importance of ensuring responses to domestic violence are timely, targeted at individuals at the greatest risk of further violence, and graduated, meaning they increase in intensity when the risk of harm to the victim increases:

• Similar responses have been implemented in Australia with promising results. However, there are distinctive features of the focused deterrence approach that can help improve the effectiveness of traditional criminal justice sanctions.

### What issues need to be considered before implementing the model?

• Context is important and a model that works in the US may not work in Australia without being modified to suit the local context.

• The highly structured approach needs to consider the risk that violence will escalate, not just whether it is likely to reoccur. There are tools that can inform this from Australia and overseas.

• There may be challenges associated with communicating deterrence messages to certain high-risk groups with negative perceptions of police.

• There is a need to manage the risks associated with the use of incarceration, and the potential for 'net-widening'. Strict enforcement of community-based sentences and other violations may also work effectively.

• There is a need to think about how to take coercive controlling behaviour into account when the offender hierarchy is applied and the level of intervention determined, particularly in light of recent evidence regarding the history of coercive controlling behaviour in cases of femicide.

• No intervention can reduce all forms of violence. Focused deterrence is not an alternative to other methods of reducing violence. It does fulfil an important role in preventing the recurrence of violence in the highest risk period following a report to police.

### What do we recommend?

• By reducing repeat offending and shifting the burden of preventing violence away from the victim, the focused deterrence approach can deliver additional benefits to those provided by existing criminal justice responses.

• This paper recommends trialling focused deterrence to reduce domestic violence reoffending in an Australian pilot site. The model should be developed with the local community, supported by willing partners and subject to rigorous evaluation and monitoring.

### Further Information

Available for download from the Australian Institute of Criminology website:

• https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi593.

Further information on the focused deterrence approach:

• Braga AA, Weisburd D & Turchan B 2018. Focused deterrence and crime control: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis of the empirical evidence. Criminology and Public Policy 17(1): 205–250

• Sechrist SM & Weil JD 2018. Assessing the impact of a focused deterrence strategy to combat intimate partner domestic violence. Violence Against Women 24(3): 243–265

Further information on policing and domestic violence available from the AIC website

• Protection orders for domestic violence: A systematic review

• Targeting repeat domestic violence: Assessing short term risk of reoffending

• Predicting repeat domestic violence: Improving police risk assessment

• Repeat domestic and family violence among young people

• Who reports domestic violence to police? A review of the evidence

• Domestic violence offenders, prior offending and reoffending in Australia

• Policing domestic violence: A review of the evidence

# 2

## Police Responses to Domestic and Family Violence:

*A Rapid Review of the Evaluation Literature*

*Summary provided by Lorraine Mazerolle, Elizabeth Eggins, Michelle Sydes and Lorelei Hine*

### Summary Report

*Background*

This report provides a comprehensive and systematic review of the impact evaluation evidence base of police responses to domestic and family violence (DFV). The review provides an audit of evaluation evidence that addresses police responses to DFV victims and identifies the best practice approaches to improve the identification of, and responses to, high-risk recidivist perpetrators of DFV.

*Search Methods*

Systematic review methodologies were used to identify eligible studies. To be included, the study had to meet the following criteria. The study needed to be conducted or published between 1997 and 2017 and report on a quantitative impact evaluation of a police response to DFV. Eligible study designs included high quality quasi-experimental studies, randomised control trials and systematic reviews. Intervention effectiveness could be evaluated using any type of outcome variable, with no limitations placed upon this. To be included, the study also needed to take place in a high income country and be focused on a population of victims, offenders or staff working within the criminal justice system; Lastly, an eligible study had to be written in English.

The initial search of all criminal justice responses (see Mazerolle et. Al., 2018) produced 13,383 records. 10, 846 records were eliminated in the first stage title and abstract screening due to there being duplicate records (n = 4,517), non-criminal justice system responses to DFV (n = 5,311),, and for other reasons outside of our eligibility criteria (e.g., prior to 1997, not from a high income country,). 2,537 records were then run through the second stage full-text systematic screening and coding process. This produced a population of 193 studies (122 quasi-experiments, 30 RCTs and 41 systematic reviews,) that met the inclusion criteria, plus an additional four systematic reviews that brought together a range of criminal justice interventions targeting DFV.

A total of 26 police-focused studies are included in the review and an additional 69 police-led or police involved interventions are included as multi-/inter-agency responses. Priority was given to meta-analyses (the most robust forms of evidence) and/or systematic reviews in the written syntheses of evidence.

## Results

The following results represent a snapshot of the evidence-base. The summary points need to be interpreted in light of study methodologies (see Mazerolle et al., 2018) and limited number of studies from which to draw conclusions.

*Police-Focused Responses*

• Higher staffing levels are linked to a lower risk of DFV homicide.

• Court outcomes are positively impacted by the use of body worn cameras during DFV incidents and the collection of photographic evidence.

• Proactive policing practices showed promising results in relation to the victims' understanding of violent behaviours, understanding of no-contact orders, and help-seeking behaviours.

• Specialised domestic violence units produced mixed support.

• The severity of subsequent crimes for offenders was reduced by conditional cautioning practices.

• Mandatory arrest policies are not associated with reductions in repeat victimisation or homicide, and, particularly for racial minorities, can create further harm to victims.

• Police training in evidence-based practices does not improve conviction rates or increase the length of time officers spend with victims at DFV incidents.

*Multi-agency/Inter-agency Responses with Police*

• Initiatives that pair victim advocates (other than second responder programs) and police were associated with lower homicide rates, increased service uptake, and greater police contact.

• Second responder programs appear to improve victim confidence in disclosing incidents to police. However, they were not associated with a reduction in repeat victimisation. .

• Multi-agency centres for victim support are shown to increase conviction rates and effectively assist victims of DFV.

• GPS monitoring of DFV offenders while on bail shows some promise in reducing the likelihood that offenders will enter exclusion zones of victim contact.

## Evidence and Gap Map

From this review of police responses to DFV, there is robust evidence for the backfire effects of mandatory arrest. This review highlighted how little is known about the impacts of risk assessment, conditional cautioning, proactive policing, police contact, quality of police investigative methods, and sole versus dual arrest strategies in relation to DFV. Some promising emerging evidence was found around the use of body worn cameras. Most of the policing impact evaluations used official recidivism as the primary outcome measure. Very few studies with used outcome measures of official victimisation, self-reported recidivism, perpetrator psychosocial indicators and practitioner outcomes.

## Conclusions

Police interventions which warrant further consideration and a priority for evaluation include: proactive policing interventions that increase victim understanding of violent behaviours; programs that explicitly include follow up with DFV victims; no-contact orders and help-seeking options; and police use of body worn cameras during attendance at DFV incidents.
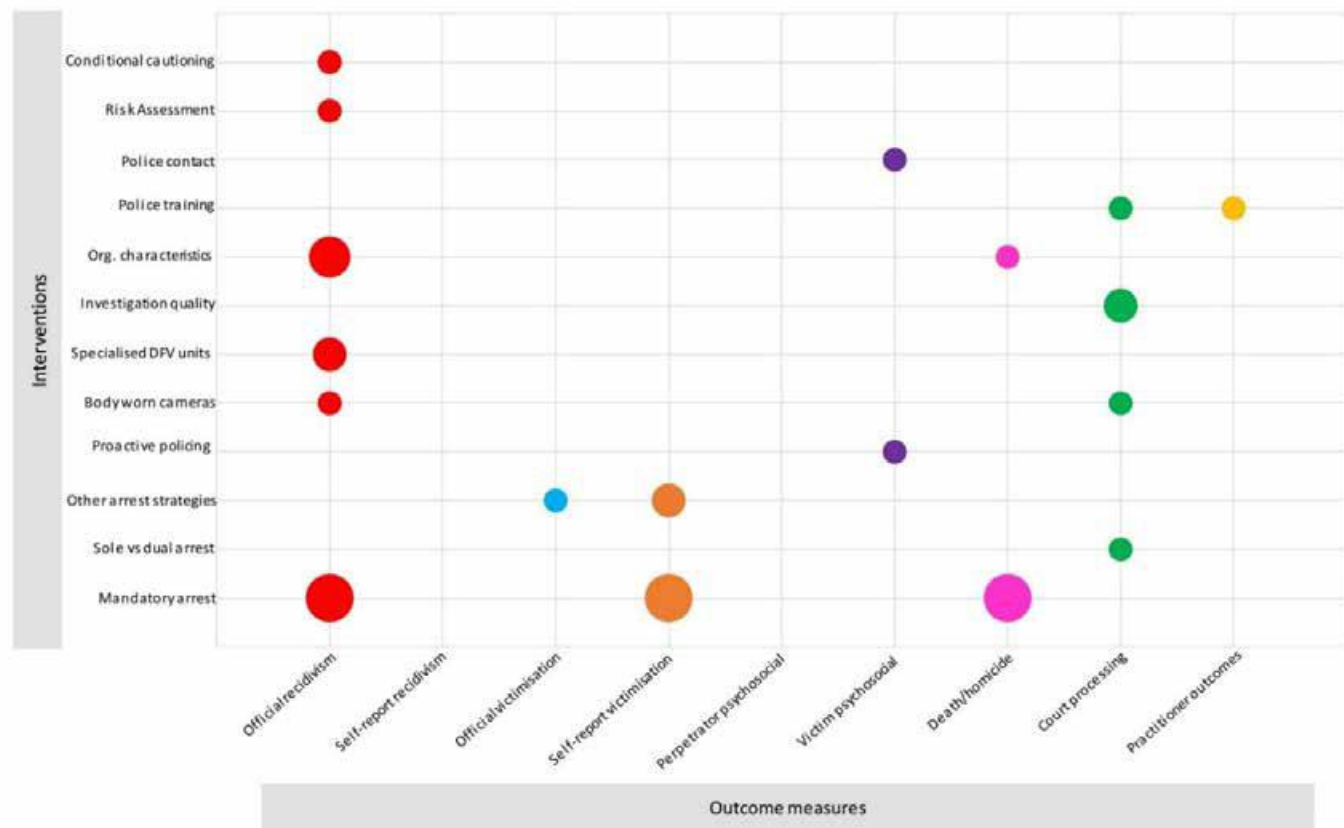


### Evidence and Gap Map for Policing-Focused Responses

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**Table 1** - Studies evaluating police-focused interventions for domestic and family violence (n = 26)

*Study Design*

• Systematic Review and/or Meta-Analysis

**Reference**

• None

*Study Design*

• Randomised Experiment

**Reference**

• Maxwell, C. D., Garner, J. H., & Fagan, J. A. (2002). The preventive effects of arrest on intimate partner violence: Research, policy and theory. Criminology & Public Policy, 2(1), 51–80.

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• Sherman, L. W., & Harris, H. M. (2015). Increased death rates of domestic violence victims from arresting vs. warning suspects in the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment (MilDVE). Journal of Experimental Criminology, 11(1), 1–20. doi: 10.1007/s11292-014-9203-x

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*Study Design*

• Strong Quasi- Experiment

**Reference**

• Cho, H., & Wilke, D. J. (2010). Does police intervention in intimate partner violence work? Estimating the impact of batterer arrest in reducing revictimization. Advances in Social Work, 11(2), 283–302.

• Dayan, K., Fox, S., & Morag, M. (2013). Validation of a spouse violence risk assessment inventory for police purposes. Journal of Family Violence, 28, 811–821.

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• Exum, M. L., Hartman, J. L., Friday, P. C., & Lord, V. B. (2014). Policing domestic violence in the post-SARP Era: The impact of a domestic violence police unit. Crime & Delinquency, 60(7), 999–1032. doi: 10.1177/0011128710382345

• Felson, R. B., Ackerman, J. M., & Gallagher, C. A. (2005). Police intervention and the repeat of domestic assault. Criminology, 43(3), 563–588. doi: 10.1111/j.0011-1348.2005.00017.x

• Fraehlich, C., & Ursel, J. (2014). Arresting women: Pro-arrest policies, debates, and developments. Journal of Family Violence, 29, 507–518.

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# 3

## Targeting Escalation of Intimate Partner Violence:

*Evidence from 52,000 Offenders*

**Barnham, L., & Barnes, G. C., & Sherman, L. W. (2017).** *Targeting escalation of intimate partner violence: Evidence from 52,000 offenders. Cambridge Journal of Evidence-Based Policing, 1, 116-142.* **https://doi.org/10.1007/s41887-017-0008-9**

The below summary of this original paper has been prepared by the New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre. It aims to express the ideas, opinions and judgements of the original authors for the purpose of summarising evidence relating to Family Harm.

## Objective

To identify if the severity or frequency of intimate partner violence or abuse increases over time once an initial incident is reported to Police.

## Introduction

Domestic abuse has been acknowledged as a serious and recurrent issue in the United Kingdom, although, at times, the relevance of the distinction between frequency and seriousness of abuse is not clear to those discussing the problem. Additionally, previous theoretical work in the field states that intimate partner abuse tends to escalate in both frequency and seriousness over time, although current research questions this assumption. More recent research in the field has suggested that:

• Most victims suffer just one instance of intimate partner abuse (instead of several instances) over time (Bland & Ariel, 2015; ONS, 2016);

• Perpetrators differ in incident frequency and seriousness escalation, with some perpetrators just staying stable over time (Piquero, 2006);

• Perpetrators associated to incidents with greater harm might not present consistent harm increase in incidents over time (Bland & Ariel, 2015); and

• The Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CHI) can be used to measure and distinguish harm caused in different offences (Sherman et al., 2014; Sherman et al., 2016). The index assigns a value to each offence according to number of days of imprisonment imposed on offenders (sentencing starting point), without considering prior criminal history nor mitigating or aggravating circumstances connected to the offence. The index can be used to evaluate the 'seriousness' of the crime at hand.

## Method

Data included 52,296 perpetrators connected to 140,998 incidents of intimate partner violence reported between 2010 and 2015 to Thames Valley Police (UK).

Partner abuse was defined in the study as "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 18 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional." (Home Office definition [adapted], 2013).

Severity of the incident was measured using the CHI. Besides considering the frequency of new incidents connected to family violence after the first initial incident reported to Police, the article also presented the conditional probability of new offences considering prior ones.

Each of these perpetrators were evaluated in relation to the severity and frequency of intimate partner violence repeat incidence for 731 days after they first came into contact with Police. Analyses were also conducted in separate for the top 50, 100, and 500 perpetrators (defined by adding the crime harm score of all incidents committed by a given perpetrator in 2010) in order to examine any frequency or harm effect relevant for these groups in the five years following the initial intimate partner abuse incident.

## Key findings

Analyses showed that non-crime incidents accounted for 57% of the incidents in the dataset, while violent crimes accounted for 25% of these. Findings also showed that the CHI was higher over the years for sexual crimes - which represented a smaller percentage (1%) of the incidents in the dataset - than for violent crimes.

Considering the analyses focusing on all the perpetrators in the dataset and offences/incidents committed in the following 731 days after the initial incident:

• 41.5% of the perpetrators were not connected to any repeat incident or offence;

• 77.6% of the perpetrators did not commit a following criminal offence;

• 21.2% of the perpetrators were recommended to spend less than or ten days in prison;

• 1.7% of the perpetrators were recommended to spend more than ten days in prison;

• Only 3% of the perpetrators ('power few') were responsible for the greater majority of total intimate partner abuse crime harm (90%);

• These 'power few' were connected to a higher frequency of incidents over time, but not to increased incident severity over time;

• When the first instance of contact between perpetrator and Police was coded as a crime, it was more likely that a crime would be committed in the future;

• The average time between repeat incidents tended to decrease as the repeat incidents progressed; and

• Harm did not escalate in a clear pattern over time after each repeat incident.

Among the top 50 and top 100 most harmful offenders, the frequency of incidents tended to decrease over time.

## Key insights

Consistent with other crime types, analyses showed that there were 'power few' perpetrators (3%) who were responsible for the majority of intimate partner abuse crime harm.

Targeting these 'power few' perpetrators might be more effective in preventing intimate partner abuse harm than focusing on all the perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Future forecasting models could take this into consideration, identifying high risk perpetrators.

Finally, there is no evidence of escalating harm when considering intimate partner abuse over time.

The authors point out that most domestic abuse cases are not reported to Police. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that findings relate just to reported domestic abuse incidents.

Another limitation of the study, as per authors' comments, is that the CHI is a measure based on the number of imprisonment days recommended for each offence. Thus, although it enables to consistently distinguish the harm between perpetrators and incidents, it does not include other dimensions of the harm suffered by victims.

The study used secondary data (i.e. collected from Police Systems) to draw valid conclusions about intimate partner abuse and repeat incidence and offending. As required when analysing data from other sources, the authors deleted cases based on missing information, keeping findings reliable.

It is important to mention that confidentiality is extremely important when conducting this type of research as the files analysed originally include personal information about victims and perpetrators. Thus, it is of prime importance to delete any non-essential personal information from cases in the dataset whenever possible, and to protect and limit access to

# 4

## Targeting Escalation in Reported Domestic Abuse: Evidence from 36,000 Callouts

**Bland, M., & Ariel, B. (2015).** *Targeting escalation in reported domestic abuse: Evidence from 36,000 callouts. International Criminal Justice Review, 25(1), 30-53.* **https://doi.org/10.1177/1057567715574382**

The below summary of this original paper has been prepared by the New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre. It aims to express the ideas, opinions and judgements of the original authors for the purpose of summarising evidence relating to Family Harm.

## Objective

To assess if the seriousness and frequency of domestic abuse escalates over time, looking also into different seriousness and frequency patterns among dyads (victim-offender).

## Introduction

There are few research studies about the patterns of violence between couples. Previous work in the field not supported by evidence has also stated that violent episodes within a domestic context tend to escalate over time in both frequency and severity, what led to Police forces in the United Kingdom building domestic abuse risk assessments based on the escalation principle. Recent studies in the field, however, have suggested that the escalation of domestic abuse events is not an ultimate truth (Bland, 2015).

The Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CHI) can be used to classify the severity of harm caused by offences (Sherman, 2007; Sherman, 2011; Sherman, 2013). The index multiplies each offence by the number of days of imprisonment the offence could attract considering sentencing guidelines. The index is robust and transferrable to different contexts. To the date in which the study was published, no domestic abuse study had used it as the primary harm severity measure.

## Method

Analyses included 36,742 police records of domestic abuse reported between 2009 and 2014 to Suffolk Constabulary (UK). The records included both domestic abuse crimes and domestic abuse 'non crimes' (i.e. not a criminal offence).

Domestic abuse did not refer to a specific crime code in England and Wales at the time of the study, which led researchers to include in the study any event connected to domestic dispute, safeguarding the national definition of domestic abuse. The study also included dyads (victim-offender), and not just victims or offenders, in the analyses.

Harm severity of the event was measured using the CHI. Analyses focused on the frequency of repeat victimisation, the likelihood of repeat offending in the future considering the number of callouts for domestic abuse for each dyad, and harm severity escalation over time. Analyses focusing on harm severity and frequency escalation included only dyads with a minimum of five events and events which had happened within the three years after the first domestic abuse event for the dyad was recorded in the dataset. Analyses of Variance were used to investigate differences in severity of harm and frequency between events.

Four different types of dyads were compared in terms of severity of domestic abuse escalation. The first type of dyad included those with most cumulative harm; the second type included those in which an arrest was made in the first event; the third included dyads with domestic abuse events in areas classified in the highest quintile of deprivation; and the fourth included dyads which had less than 60 days between the first and second event in the dataset.

Further two different types of dyads were compared in terms of latency of domestic abuse (i.e. days between events) – the first including chronic high-harm cases (which accounted for 80% of the harm in the study); and the second including cases with events which took place in the 20% most deprived wards.

## Key findings

Analyses showed that non-crime events accounted for 58% of the events in the dataset, and 82% of the crimes within the dataset included some sort of violence. In 77% of the cases victims were female and over a third of the victims were between 18 and 29

years. Offenders also tended to be related in the dataset to multiple victims to a larger extent than victims tended to be related to different offenders.

By analysing the severity of harm and latency between incidents among dyads (victim-offender), the study found that:

• Most of the dyads (76%) did not include repeat victimisation;

• The probability that a given dyad reported a new event increased with the report of each new event;

• There was no significant evidence of consistent harm escalation over time in chronic high-harm dyads and dyads in which the offender was arrested at the time of the first event;

• There was some support for the decrease in the latency between events (i.e. time between repeat victimisations), especially from event eight onward when considering all dyads and from event seven onward when considering only dyads connected to events which happened in the 20% most deprived wards;

• There was no significant evidence of latency decrease between events when considering only the chronic high-harm dyads;

• Only 2% of the dyads ('power few') accounted for 80% of all harm. In more than half of these cases, there was no previous contact with Police regarding domestic abuse;

• Dyads among the 'power few' with no previous contact with Police tended to include less frequently members who were unemployed, female and White British victims, and also less likely to have children present than the original dataset; and

• By contrast, dyads among the 'power few' who were connected to five or more callouts to Police were more likely to include unemployed, female and White British victims, and also being more likely to have children present than the original dataset.

## Key insights

Overall, the study showed that there was some evidence for the decrease in latency between domestic abuse events once the event series is long enough; no evidence for harm severity escalation over time; and evidence that a 'power few' domestic abuse dyads encompass the majority of the harm caused to victims.

Given that more than half of the dyads who accounted for 80% of the domestic abuse harm in the study had not contacted Police about domestic abuse previously, the authors suggest that non-Police agencies could be a port of call, helping to predict serious harm before it happens. In this sense, it would be important for Police to strengthen partnerships with non-Police organisations.

It is also important to consider that this study has revealed lack of harm escalation in domestic abuse events over time. Thus, domestic abuse risk assessments which rely on harm escalation should be questioned and redesigned.

The authors also mention that results could be relevant to different Police forces in England and Wales, but that if the study is repeated, findings might not be replicable given differences between forces and how events are recorded.

Further studies could focus both on cases which are classified as high-harm cases, but never came to Police attention and on cases which repeatedly came to Police attention time after time.

Some of the limitations of the study relate to not including unreported cases in the analyses, not controlling variables in the analyses, and using linear tests (instead of tests which could measure non-linear variation). Still, the study presents strong, reliable and valid results.

The study included secondary data (i.e. collected from Police Systems). The authors explained in depth in the article how the data was collected, matched, coded, and cleaned. If a similar study is carried out by other Police jurisdiction, time will need to be invested in preparing the dataset for analyses. Missing information was also a reality in the current study which highlights how important it is to fill out case information not only for operational decision making, but also for evidence-based decision making.

It is important to mention that this type of research generally includes files with personal information about victims and perpetrators. Thus, it is of prime importance to delete non-essential personal information from cases in the dataset when this is not needed, and to protect and limit access to files

# 5

## Intimate Partner Homicide in Denmark 2007-2017:

*Tracking Potential Predictors*

The below summary of this original paper has been prepared by the New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre. It aims to express the ideas, opinions and judgements of the original authors for the purpose of summarising evidence relating to Family Harm.

## Objective

To assess what intimate partner homicide characteristics can predict and be used to prevent such crimes in Denmark and to determine the parties which detain knowledge about these characteristics prior to the crime.

## Introduction

There are around ten intimate partner homicides every year in Denmark. Even though a growing body of research has tried to address predictors of intimate partner homicide in other countries, no research focusing on these has been produced in Denmark.

Intimate partner homicide risk assessment tools generally rely on the assumption that offending will escalate in seriousness, although this assumption has not been supported by recent evidence (Bland & Ariel, 2015; Barnham, Barnes, & Sherman, 2017; Dagenbrink, 2017).

Suicidal thoughts, suicide threats, suicide attempts, having a

psychiatric diagnosis, and substance abuse in offenders have been connected to intimate partner homicide and serious violence in studies abroad (Bridger, 2015; Chalkey, 2015; Chalkey & Strang, 2017; Thornton, 2011; Thornton, 2017).

In a previous study in Denmark, Rasmussen, Norregard-Nielsen, and Westermann-Brandgaard (2016) found that couples connected to intimate partner homicide cases were more likely to report psychological violence episodes than physical violence episodes prior to the crime. The authors also identified that prior couple separation was likely to be present in intimate partner homicide cases in Denmark.

## Method

A qualitative analysis of cases stored in the main Danish Police systems and case paper files enabled the authors to include 77 intimate partner homicide cases committed between 2007 and 2017 in the study.

The study included cases in which the intent to commit homicide against an intimate partner was proven or suggested to a degree in which there was a charge, indictment, or conviction with homicide. To be considered an intimate partnership, offender and victim had to be romantically involved at the time of the crime or previously, and the relationship had to be mutual. The study did not include homosexual intimate partnerships.

The study replicated work by Bridger, Strang, Parkinson, and Sherman (2017) conducted in the United Kingdom by including similar predictive variables whenever applicable to the Danish context.

The researchers emphasised the inclusion of predictors which had been known by other organisations or person before the homicide, but only came to Police attention after the crime.

Information about criminality, victimisation, mental health, suicide indicators, isolation, victim and offender demographics from different sources (e.g. Police investigation, General Practitioners, family, friends) were retrieved from Police records.

## Key findings

In 84% of the 77 cases, offenders were males. Among these, most were aged between 25 and 49 years, 65% were not in employment, and 75% were North Europeans, with 42% abusing one or more substances, 60% being assigned one or more psychiatric diagnoses, and 52% thinking, threatening or attempting suicide prior to the crime.

Among female offenders, 83% had been diagnosed as having a psychiatric disorder and 58% had thought, threatened or attempted suicide prior to the crime.

Additionally, Police reports suggested that 35% of offenders were intoxicated when they committed the crime, 54% had a psychiatric diagnosis and 53% had thought, threatened or attempted suicide prior to the crime. In 71% of the intimate partner homicide cases, couples had not been in contact with Police in relation to domestic disputes prior to the crime.

Further comparison analyses between the data obtained in the study and a study conducted in the United Kingdom showed that:

• More male offenders in Denmark (52%) had discussed, threatened

or attempted suicide than in England (40%); and

• Couples involved in intimate partner homicide cases in Denmark (71%) were more likely to have had no previous contact with Police than couples involved in cases approached by Thames Valley Police (54%).

Findings also suggested that in 47% of the cases included in the study, other parties than Police had knowledge about prior domestic abuse instances (which was not shared with Police) – with 22% of these other parties with prior knowledge referring to public agencies.

## Key insights

The article investigated descriptive characteristics associated to intimate partner homicide cases in Denmark.

A large percentage of the intimate partner homicide cases in Denmark occurred between couples who had not been in contact with Police regarding domestic disputes before the crime. However, in almost half of these cases, the couple had been in contact with other organisations or persons who were aware of domestic abuse episodes taking place prior to the crime. Thus, strong information sharing partnerships between Police, organisations, and the public could lead to more effective intimate partner violence prevention strategies.

Additionally, suicidal tendencies seem to be prevalent among intimate partner homicide offenders. Therefore, it would be desirable for relevant organisations to share this information more broadly so cases can be more closely monitored and supported, both by Police and relevant organisations.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that the article did not compare the descriptive characteristics of intimate partner homicide cases, offenders and victims to those present in a comparison group also from Denmark (e.g. remaining crimes committed in Denmark during the same time window). In this sense, it could be, for instance, that more offenders with prior psychiatric diagnosis were associated to both intimate partner homicide crimes and other crimes committed in Denmark. Further studies could match characteristics present in intimate partner homicides to characteristics found in other types of crimes to evaluate if the same characteristics are relevant to predict all types of crimes and, therefore, cannot be used to suggest the likelihood of a specific type of crime.

The authors also pointed out that two Police Districts within Denmark refused access to intimate partner homicide cases. Thus, the study did not include cases from these two districts.

A limitation of the study is that information about variables included in the study such as mental health was not always registered in Police records or was available to researchers. This emphasises the importance of registering all the relevant information in Police records not only for operational decision-making, but also for evidence-based decision making.

The study included secondary data (i.e. collected from Police Systems). It is important to mention that this type of research generally includes files with personal information about offenders and victims. Thus, it is of prime importance to delete non-essential personal information from cases in the dataset when this is not needed, and to protect and limit access to files.

# 6

## Increased Death Rates of Domestic Violence Victims from Arresting vs. Warning Suspects

The below summary of this original paper has been prepared by the New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre. It aims to express the ideas, opinions and judgements of the original authors for the purpose of summarising evidence relating to Family Harm.

## Objective

This paper is a follow-up analysis to the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment (MilDVE) conducted in 1987 and 1988. It examines mortality data for domestic violence victims who were part of that initial study over the 23 years following to determine any long-term effects of the random assignment of suspects in these cases to arrest or warning.

## Introduction

At the time of the MilDVE many jurisdictions had mandatory arrest laws for misdemeanour domestic violence. This policy was based on research (Sherman & Berk 1984) that suggested positive impacts of arrest on reoffending. However further replications of the experiment suggested a more complicated relationship.

As part of the MilDVE, suspects were randomly assigned into conditions where they were given warnings or arrested for low-level domestic violence cases.

The current study revisited the victims of these cases to examine if there were differences in their death rates in the period since the experiment (from all causes, including but not limited to, homicide). Initially the authors had planned to examine links to homicide, but were open to examining links to other mortality.

## Method

The original MilDVE study was a randomised control trial comparing short (mean = 4.5 hours after booking) and long (mean = 11.1 hours after booking) arrests with warnings in Milwaukee (USA)1. In total 2,054 cases were screened by police staff, from which 1,200 cases (with 1,125 victims) were accepted into the experiment. An independent statistician assigned the cases to each condition; police officers opened masked envelopes once cases were confirmed as eligible to determine their treatment condition. 98.5% of cases were delivered the treatment they were assigned. The figure below explains the assignment to groups.

In total, the sample included 1,125 victims with the following characteristics:

• 89% female;

• 70% African-American; and

• Mean age = 30 years.

For this study, the researchers used names from the original MilDVE study, and purchased mortality data from the Wisconsin Office of Vital Statistics supplemented by searches of the Social Security Death Index (SSDI).

Relative risk ratios (including confidence intervals) were calculated between mortality of those whose partners were arrested and those who were warned, as well as main effects and subgroup effects conditional on theoretically relevant moderator factors.
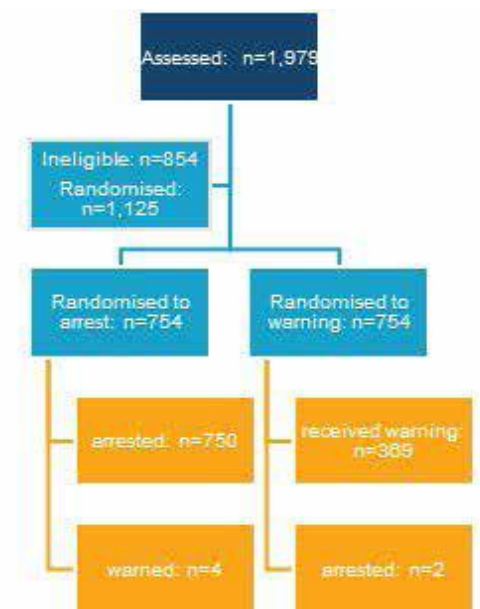


*1 The type of arrest (long or short) is collapsed in most of the analyses. Comparisons are between any type of arrest versus warning unless otherwise stated.*

## Key findings - SUSPECT ARRESTED v SUSPECT WARNED

*Overall mortality rate*

• The death rate was higher for victims connected to cases in which the suspect was arrested (92.8 deaths per 1,000 victims) than for victims connected to cases in which the suspect was warned (56.6 deaths per 1,000 victims);

• Victims connected to cases in which the offender was arrested were 64% more likely to die of all causes than victims connected to cases in which the offender was warned; and

• In first 5 years, victim deaths were 3 times higher1 if the suspect was arrested than if the suspect was warned.

*Specific causes of mortality*

• Heart disease was 2 times more likely in victims connected to cases in which suspects were arrested;

• In cases in which the suspect was arrested, "Other" internal causes risk of death raised by 183%;

• Homicide rates were identical for both treatment groups at 2.7 per 1,000 victims; and

• No difference between treatment groups for victim cancer, alcohol or drug related deaths was found.

*Effects by ethnicity*

• For African-American victims, mortality increased by 98% if the suspect was arrested (in comparison to if the suspect was warned); and

• For White victims, mortality increased by 9% if the suspect was arrested (in comparison to if the suspect was warned).

*Employment effects*

• For victims holding jobs and African-American, 11% of victims connected to cases in which the suspect was arrested died, while 0% of the victims connected to cases in which the suspect was warned died; and

• No effect of employment was seen for white victims.

*Arrest history*

• The risk of death was 129% higher if the partner was arrested and had not been previously arrested.

While the effect of arrest is largely aggregated in the study, an analysis comparing the effects of long and short arrests was also conducted. Victims whose partners were arrested for the longer time period showed a higher mortality rate (relative risk ratio of 1:1.87 to 1:1.40 for short).

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1 Difference not statistically significant
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## Key insights

This study includes only exploratory analyses. The authors did not control for variables that could impact results of the analyses (e.g. smoking, obesity). Thus, there is the possibility that while the statistical analyses show a relationship between variables, it may be that there were unmeasured factors at play that affected mortality. There is also the possibility that there are differences between the population of Milwaukee and other locations; the authors therefore propose to replicate this study in three other cities in the United States.

The authors also suggest that while there are other factors that were not examined (e.g. smoking or obesity), differences between the two groups on these factors are still part of the outcome of the experimental conditions they were assigned to.

The authors suggest differences between cases in which the suspect was warned and cases in which the suspect was arrested may be due to differential post-traumatic stress manifestations between the groups. Given psychosocial causes are often given as an explanation for mortality variations not explained by obvious causes such as smoking, alcohol or biological risk factors, increased stress from arrest of a partner may affect mortality.

For this explanation to be supported, it would be expected that black victims would have higher levels of post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS); this is not known for this sample, but previous research would suggest the opposite, or at least no difference. However, these previous studies also had higher rates of unemployed African-American victims. It is therefore suggested future studies like the MilDVE should include a measure of PTSS.

One possible explanation for differences

in this study is that the employed black victims were more likely to be the sole earner in the household, while employed white victims were more often secondary earners; therefore, the psychosocial meaning of their employment was different.

The results do appear to support a race-employment paradox in that employment affects resilience of different ethnicities differently. While not perfectly symmetrical, death rates per 1,000 follow the generally expected pattern if that was the case.

These results form part of an argument against mandatory arrest laws as they have a disproportionate impact based on ethnicity; 40% of black victim deaths could have been avoided by a warning rather than arrest (as well as 6% for white victims).

While differential effects based on race were not (and rarely are) intended, this research suggests that some well-intentioned laws may have unintended consequences that are harmful to some groups.

# 7

## Increased Homicide Victimisation of Suspects Arrested for Domestic Assault

The below summary of this original paper has been prepared by the New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre. It aims to express the ideas, opinions and judgements of the original authors for the purpose of summarising evidence relating to Family Harm.

## Objective

This paper is a follow-up analysis to the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment (MilDVE) conducted in 1987 and 1988. It examines mortality data for domestic violence suspects who were part of that initial study over the 23 years following to determine any long term effects of the random assignment of suspects in these

cases to arrest or warning. In particular, effects on homicide victimisation are examined.

## Introduction

At the time of the MilDVE many jurisdictions had mandatory arrest laws for misdemeanour domestic violence. This policy was based on research (Sherman & Berk 1984) that suggested positive impacts on reoffending. However, further replications of the experiment suggested a more complicated relationship.

As part of the MilDVE, suspects were randomly assigned into conditions where they were given warnings or arrested for low-level domestic violence cases. This paper forms part of a series of follow up analyses that were initially examining repeat domestic violence offending. The authors suggest longer term follow ups can determine if any intervention effects have persisted or disappeared, and also to examine outcomes that are more rare (e.g. death) as they are more likely to occur over a longer time period.

The current study revisited the suspects of the cases included in the MilDVE study to examine if there were differences between treatment groups in suspect death rates in the period since the experiment. This includes death from all causes, but the focus of this paper is primarily homicide. The key research questions were:

• What was the effect of arrest on the death rates of suspects?

• How long did it take before there was adequate power to discern differences arrest may have caused in suspect mortality?

## Method

The original MilDVE study was a randomised control trial comparing short (mean = 4.5 hours after booking) and long (mean = 11.1 hours after booking) arrests with warnings in Milwaukee (USA). In total, 1,982 cases were screened by police staff, from which 1,200 cases (with 1128 suspects) were accepted into the experiment1. An independent statistician assigned the cases to each condition; police officers opened masked envelopes once cases were confirmed as eligible to determine their treatment condition. The figure below explains the assignment to groups. 98.5% of cases were delivered the treatment they were assigned.

In total, the sample included 1,128 suspects with the following characteristics:

• 90% female;

• 75% African-American;

• 44% were employed; and

• Mean age = 32 years.

A total of 26 suspects were also victims in another case within the sample pool. The arrested group were shown to be more likely to be employed and to have graduated high school so these imbalances were controlled for through the analyses.

For the current study, cause of death was provided by the Wisconsin Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) and supplemented where needed from the Social Security Death Index (SSDI). Short narrative summaries of homicides were provided by the Police Department.

The researchers calculated relative risk ratios (including confidence intervals) between mortality of those who were arrested and those who were warned, as well as main effects and subgroup effects conditional on theoretically relevant moderator factors.

*1 The type of arrest (long or short) is collapsed in most of the analyses. Comparisons are between any type of arrest versus warning unless otherwise stated.*

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## Key findings

The study found no difference in overall death rates between the two groups (those arrested and those warned). However those arrested were almost 3 times more likely to die by homicide than those warned 2. A consistently higher number of homicides were seen for the arrest group over the first 20 years post the experiment, with a significant difference found at 22 years. No other causes of death showed differences between groups.

The homicide rate was high across all the suspects in the study; see the table below for comparisons. The death rate for those included in the MilDVE study was 77 per 100,000 suspects, while the death rate for the general population of Milwaukee was 38 per 100,000 people.

The only group that had no homicides
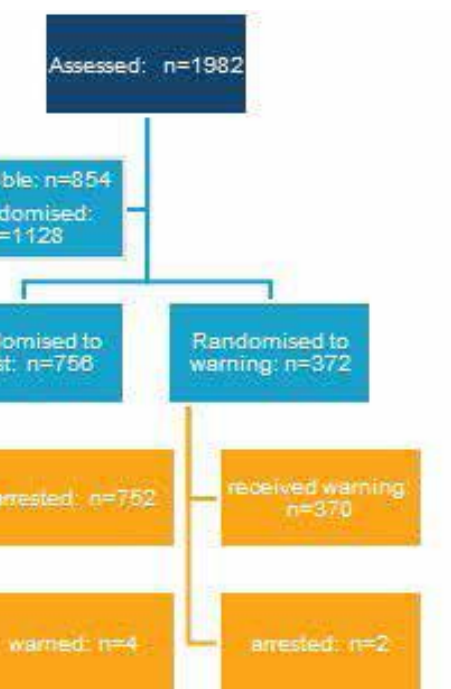


were those warned and either employed or married.

Where there was information on the nature of the homicide, it fitted the description of victim-precipitated: heavy drinking, arguments with friends, fights, sudden rage. Unfortunately, information on the domestic nature of relationships was rare.

In an additional analysis, race and prior arrest history were found to be better predictors of homicide victimisation than arrest in the MilDVE experiment. However, the authors point out that arrest is the only factor that can be affected by policy

*2 Note this study uses a significance level of p<.1, rather than the generally preferred p<.05.*

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## Key insights

The authors acknowledge there will be debate among researchers around how much weight can be put on the findings of the study given that results are not significant at the preferred p<.05 threshold, but at the less commonly used p<.10. However the authors suggest that given the effect size is large, and that the trend continues to some extent through the whole 23 year follow-up period, it should be considered in discussions of policy around mandatory arrest for low level domestic violence cases.

There are two general frameworks that could explain how arrest in the MilDVE could affect death rates; these are biological (which would predict death by cardiovascular/stress related causes) and criminological (which would predict increase in homicide but

not other causes). The results of the study suggest a criminological theory to explain greater likelihood of victim-precipitated homicide. Given employment and/or marriage affected the likelihood of death by homicide for those suspects arrested, the authors suggest stakes in conformity may protect some suspects from heading down a less ideal pathway of offending and aggression.

When the nature of the homicide was known, most could have reasonably involved some aggression from the victim; the authors therefore suggest General Strain Theory (GST) in which frustration accumulates from perceived humiliation over a lifetime and causes increased aggression (and often offending) is a good theoretical explanation of how arrest affects homicide risk. The moderator effect of prior arrest records (prior to the MilDVE experiment) seems to be stronger evidence for the GST. Conversely, stakes in conformity (such as employment or marriage) may have a protective effect against developing provocative behaviour.

Replications of this study are needed to be more certain of any long term effects of arrest policies on mortality. There are also questions about the application of findings to other contexts, as factors such as high levels of gun ownership in the United States could impact results and not be seen in other contexts.

The focus of this study is the lower level, but higher volume of domestic violence cases that policy deals with. There remains debate of how to consider macro-level or individual effects of policies such as mandatory arrest for this lower harm domestic violence. This study would suggest mandatory arrest policies are harmful at the individual level, but may still have beneficial effects across society. In making these decisions however, the authors suggest that research shows that a two year evaluation is not long enough to evaluate the effect of the policy and a longer-term view is needed to assess the impacts of policy decisions.

# 8

## Predicting Domestic Homicide and Serious Violence in Leicestershire

The below summary of this original paper has been prepared by the New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre. It aims to express the ideas, opinions and judgements of the original authors for the purpose of summarising evidence relating to Family Harm.

### Objective

To evaluate if information available in Police intelligence records about offenders' suicidal tendencies can predict domestic homicide and attempted homicide.

### Introduction

The Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment tool has been used by Police organisations across the United Kingdom to predict high-harm domestic violence cases based on past occurrences. However, research has shown that this tool is inaccurate and other factors could be more useful in predicting high-harm.

Recent research has suggested that offender suicidal and self-harm markers can be used to predict high-harm *(Bridger, 2015; Bridger, 2017; Chalkey, 2015; Chalkey, 2017; Thornton, 2011; Thornton, 2017).*

In this sense, at times, non-police organisations might have records on offenders which could be relevant for Police in preventing high-harm domestic violence.

### Method

Analyses included 158,379 police records of offenders arrested between 1997 and 2015 by Leicestershire Police (UK) for different crimes. These records were evaluated for suicidal or self-harm tendencies and compared to the records of 620 offenders

connected to domestic homicide and serious violence cases.

Analyses focused on evaluating if the percentage of offenders with suicidal or self-harm tendencies was higher for offenders connected to domestic homicide and serious violence cases than for offenders connected to other crimes.

Serious domestic violence was categorised in the study as murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, and grievously bodily harm with intent.

### Key findings

Analyses identified that among the domestic violence cases, 87% included grievously bodily harm and 9% included murders.

Among the 620 offenders connected to domestic homicide and serious violence cases, findings depicted that:

- 20.2% of the offenders had a marker for suicidal or self-harm tendencies;

- 5.6% of the offenders had these tendencies recorded in Police systems before they committed the crime; and

- Considering only the 80 homicide cases, 8.75% of the offenders had suicidal and self-harm tendencies recorded in Police systems before they committed the crime.

On the other hand, only 5% of the 158,379 offenders connected to other types of crime had been identified as having suicidal or self-harm tendencies (in comparison to the 20% of the offenders connected to domestic homicide and serious violence).

A percentage of 1.7% of the offenders who committed other crimes had been assigned suicidal and self-harm tendencies in Police systems before the crime (in comparison to 5.6% of the offenders connected to domestic homicide and serious violence).

### Key insights

This study showed that a larger percentage of offenders connected to high-harm domestic violence cases were identified by Police as having suicidal and self-harm tendencies when compared to offenders connected to other crimes. The study also identified that in part of these cases, Police had already registered suicidal and self-harm

tendencies before the crime. In this sense, making sure individuals with suicidal and self-harm tendencies who live with significant others have access to pastoral care services and counselling might be a valuable strategy in preventing high-harm domestic violence.

The study advanced the field by using larger samples than previous studies and using Police data which enabled the authors to evaluate if suicidal and self-harm tendencies had come to Police attention before the crime. It is important to point out though that the assignment of suicidal or self-harm tendencies to offenders in the study was subjective based on what the offender disclosed during the event and how the officer responsible for the event evaluated offender's disclosure.

The authors describe in depth how the data was acquired and manipulated to draw insights. Given the procedures used, the data analysed in the article is reliable. As limitations of the data included in this piece of research, the authors point out that offenders could have not disclosed suicidal or self-harm tendencies (even though they had them) or might use more than one name when in contact with Police (which may generate duplicate files which are not entirely reliable). Whenever it was discovered by researchers that an offender was connected to more than one name in Police systems, files were merged in the analyses.

The authors also stimulate others to replicate the study. One thing to consider if replicating the study is if the organisation stores all the information (e.g. self-harm offender markers) necessary to run the study and how accurately this information is recorded by the organisation. According to the authors, cross-agency research (with partnering Police agencies) could also be relevant.

The study included secondary data (i.e. collected from Police Systems). It is important to mention that this type of research generally includes files with personal information about offenders. Thus, it is of prime importance to delete non-essential personal information from cases in the dataset when this is not needed, and to protect and limit access to files.

# 9

## Targeting Family Violence: The Felonious Few vs. The Miscreant Many

The below summary of this original paper has been prepared by the New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre. It aims to express the ideas, opinions and judgements of the original authors for the purpose of summarising evidence relating to Family Harm.

### Objective

To evaluate how Police in Western Australia can best target the reduction of harm from family violence. The authors focused on assessing if family violence escalates over time in both frequency and seriousness; if every family violence case can lead to a homicide; if serious harm is best predicted by prior harm; and if offenders with prior suicidal tendencies are more likely to commit murder during family violence instances.

### Introduction

Family violence policies tend to generalise how overarching the prevalence of serious harm across family violence cases is. Additionally, Police systems do not seem to differentiate between different types of violence in the domestic context (e.g. intimate partner violence, domestic violence, family violence).

Recent research conducted in the United Kingdom suggests that offender self-harm and suicidal threat, attempt or ideation are associated to partner homicide or attempted homicide (Bridger, 2015; Chalkey, 2015; Thornton, 2011). However, prior suicidal ideation, threat or attempts made by offenders involved in intimate partner homicide seem to be many times known to others, but not to Police (Bridger, 2015).

Recent research has also shown that the seriousness of family violence episodes varies across couples, with a few offenders being connected to the majority of family harm in different studies. In this sense, although the frequency and seriousness of violence episodes might escalate, this might be applicable to only a small subset of cases (Bland & Ariel, 2015).

Additionally, the study relied on the notion that the level of harm varies between family violence cases, using the Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CHI) to measure and distinguish harm caused in different offences (Sherman, 2007; Sherman, 2010; Sherman, 2013; Sherman et al., 2016). The CHI assigns a value to each offence according to the number of days of imprisonment imposed on offenders.

### Method

Data included 36,228 offenders, 53,901 victims, and 50,094 dyads (victim-offender) connected to 214,814 crimes and incidents of family violence and 76,878 unique cases which took place between 2010 and 2015 in Western Australia (AU).

The family violence cases included in the study refer both to intimate partner violence and to broader family violence (e.g. including others than the intimate partner). These cases were analysed together. The authors also included cases which were characterised by physical and psychological abuse. Analyses considered victims, offenders, and dyads (victim-offender).

The harm of the family violence instance was measured using the CHI. However, as it was difficult to use an Australian legal framework to calibrate harm level across different family violence incidents, the authors applied English sentencing guidelines to the Western Australian offence categories, judging that they correspond to each other well enough.

### Key findings

Overall, 66% of the victims were female and 56% were 20 to 49 years old.

Regarding the overall group of family violence cases, results showed that most offenders did not cause physical injury to the victim and seriousness of family violence instances did not escalate when considered for most couples. In this sense, attempted murder or murder were rarely related to family violence seriousness escalation. Similarly to other studies conducted abroad, the authors found that prior suicide threats by the offender were associated to a higher risk of family homicide.

Findings also showed that 2% (707 out of 36,228) of the offenders in family violence cases were responsible for over half of the harm in family violence cases. The researchers named this group the 'felonious few'. Further analyses focusing on this group showed that:

- Only 4% of these offenders were in prison in the beginning of 2016, with 93% residing in Western Australia;

- A total of 43% of the 707 had more than one victim during the study time window;

- In total, 11% had attempted or committed murder;

- A total of 17% of the 707 'felonious few' went on to commit 542 crimes in the 17 months after the study finished. Among these offenders, 4% committed family violence crimes;

- In 80% of these cases, the harm caused happened in one instance of family violence, when they first came in contact with Police (considering the five-year window included in the study and only family violence instances); and

- A total of 10% were known to have attempted or threatened to commit suicide before the family violence episode, with 22% of these going on to attempt or commit an intimate partner homicide.

On the other hand, 75% of the remaining family violence offenders

were associated to only 9% of the overall family violence harm. The authors named these offenders the 'miscreant many'. The authors did not find a consistent harm escalation pattern in family violence instances among these offenders when considered the same victim.

## Key insights

The authors pointed out that, given that prior suicide threats by offenders are connected to a higher risk of family homicide, data sharing initiatives between organisations targeting mental health might be an important strategy in reducing family homicide. It would be also important for Police to establish partnerships with mental health and community organisations in order to provide care and assistance to members of the community living with a mental health disorder in a family context. It might seem at first that these members of society are well supported by the family around them, but they might feel otherwise, feeling the pressure of having to care for their family or significant others. This strategy would foster the prevention of high-harm family violence offending.

The authors also recommend that further family violence prevention strategies should target the 'felonious few' offenders responsible for most of the harm in family violence cases, instead of targeting all the offenders at once.

As strategies to target this group the authors recommend the Police Department to:

• Keep an updated list of 'felonious few' comprising a five-year rolling window which could be used to test evidence-based preventative strategies such as inviting some of the offenders to take part in behaviour change programmes or tracking their location;

• Update monthly the 'felonious few' list so Police know which offenders are part of the list when they come in contact with them;

• Provide monthly 'felonious few' lists also to Police Districts as they will be in closer contact with some of the offenders;

• Track continuously 'felonious few' locations, also enlisting their household arrangements;

• Plan ahead of time how to test preventative measures across Districts, according to the characteristics of the 'felonious few' list and the feasibility of each strategy in each District;

• Review annually prevention strategies, considering which strategies could stay in place and which could be improved further;

• Start data-sharing initiatives with other organisations and people (e.g. families) in order to improve information about 'felonious few' offender suicidal tendencies;

• Test evidence-based strategies to prevent suicide among offenders using randomised control trials;

• Test the effect of individual and group cognitive behavioural therapy programmes on offenders regarding the likelihood to participate in family violence episodes using randomised control trials;

• Test the effect in harm reduction of programmes targeting the enhanced investigation of family violence cases connected to 'felonious few' offenders using randomised control trials; and

• Provide a copy of the report also to the judiciary so they are

aware of the findings and the 'felonious few' group, and further legal discussion can take place.

As limitations of the study, the authors pointed out that: All analyses including dyads (victim-offender) did not include enough offender information to relate offenders to other dyads; CHI scores included in the study were based on English sentencing guidelines given the difficulty to use the Australian legal framework to calibrate harm levels across offences; At times, multiple crimes were recorded at the same time which might inflate the frequency of family violence episodes. In these cases, the authors just included in the escalation analysis the highest CHI scoring crime; and Post-hoc tests were not conducted to substantiate ANOVA tests, what did not enable authors to look into more granular differences between groups and family violence episodes.

Finally, the authors discussed that Police systems tend to not differentiate intimate partner violence from broader family violence (i.e. to other than the intimate partner), calling on Police Departments to make this distinction clearer so analyses can be more fine-tuned.

# 10

## Key Facts about Domestic Abuse: Lessons from Eight Studies

The below summary of this original paper has been prepared by the New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre. It aims to express the ideas, opinions and judgements of the original authors for the purpose of summarising evidence relating to Family Harm.

## Objective

To summarise eight studies from a special issue on domestic abuse. All research was undertaken by "pracademics"; practitioners undertaking research of a high academic standard and with academic supervision.

The eight studies fall into three general categories:

• predicting domestic homicide;

• escalation of offending; and

• preventing reoffending and reducing harm.

## Predicting domestic homicide (4 studies)

These four studies are made up of an initial study (Thornton, 2017) and three similar replications with different data sets.

*Key findings*

• Prior suicidal behaviour (including attempts, threats, ideation or self-harm) by offenders is the best predictor of domestic murder, and attempted murder;

• Police rarely have contact with couples prior to a domestic homicide;

• Police therefore have little opportunity to prevent domestic homicide through attendance at domestic abuse call outs;

• Proactive identification of high risk couples through predictors such as suicidal behaviour are likely to be more successful, however linking this information within current systems is difficult; and

• Research suggests that offender suicidal behaviour information is known by other organisations, but not shared with Police.

## Escalation of offending (2 studies)

It is a common misconception that domestic abuse escalates in seriousness and frequency over time. These two studies build on an earlier study (Bland & Ariel, 2015) to examine a further 110,000 cases.

*Key findings*

• When examined over time, most intimate partner violence reported to police has no subsequent reports;

• Even repeat offences show no escalation in seriousness 1;

• However, as where offenders do become chronic (e.g. three or more cases), frequency does increase:

"The more incidents each offender had, the more likely they were to have another one, and the sooner they were to have it"; and

• There remains no relationship between frequency and seriousness of offending.

*1 One exception was a small group of chronic Australian Aboriginal offenders who showed increasing frequency and seriousness.*

## Prevention of reoffending and reducing harm (2 studies)

The final two studies in the review present randomised control trials of two police programmes for preventing repeat abuse; the Cautioning and Relationship Abuse (CARA) Project and Bracknell Forest Council's Integrated Case Management Programme (ICMP).

*Key findings*

• CARA: For first-time offenders, randomly assigned to almost 300 offenders;

• Those who completed the programme had substantially less frequent incidents and less legal seriousness of harm over one-year follow up; and

• ICMP: For couples with repeat violence, randomly assigned to 90 out of 180 couples who took part;

• Comparing 2 years post to 2 years prior to participation, showed reduction in harm to victims and in police visits to couples' homes.

## Key insights

• Research suggests prevention of domestic homicide may be more successful if focus is shifted towards identifying hidden risks and predictors such as suicidal behaviour, rather than focusing on the domestic abuse;

• Evidence suggests resources are not be being allocated in the best way to reduce harm. For example, investing in response to low-level offending based on the assumption cases will escalate in seriousness does not fit with existing evidence; and

• The authors emphasise the importance of using an evidence-based model for testing new innovations and the replication of research in different contexts.

*For more information regarding Predicting domestic homicide (4 studies), see:*

• Thornton, S. (2017). Police attempts to predict domestic murder and serious assaults: Is early warning possible yet? Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing, 1(2-3), 64-80

• Chalkey, R., & Strang, H. (2017). Predicting domestic homicides and serious violence in Dorset: a replication of Thornton's Thames Valley analysis. Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing, 1(2-3), 81-92.

• Bridger, E., Strang, H., Parkinson, J., & Sherman, L.W. (2017). Intimate partner homicide in England and Wales 2011-2013: Pathways to prediction from multi-agency domestic homicide reviews. Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing, 1(2-3), 93-104.

• Button, I.M.D., Angel, C., & Sherman, L.W. (2017). Predicting domestic homicide and serious violence in Leicestershire with intelligence records of suicidal ideation or self-harm warnings: a retrospective analysis. Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing, 1(2-3), 105-115.

For more information regarding Escalation of offending (2 studies), see:

• Barnham, L., Barnes, G.C., & Sherman, L.W. (2017). Targeting escalation of intimate partner violence: Evidence from 52,000 offenders. Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing, 1(2-3), 116-142.

• Kerr, J., Whyte, C., & Strang, H. (2017). Targeting escalation and harm in intimate partner violence: Evidence from Northern Territory Police, Australia. Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing, 1(2-3), 143-159.

For more information regarding Prevention of reoffending and reducing harm (2 studies), see:

• Strang, H., Sherman, L., Ariel, B., Chilton, S., Braddock, R., Rowlinson, T., Cornelius, N., Jarman, R., & Weinborn, C. (2017). Reducing the harm of intimate partner violence: Randomized controlled trial of the Hampshire Constabulary CARA Experiment. Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing, 1(2-3), 160-173.

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# iSEBP Evidence Based Strategies: What Police could do now.

## Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing

*Policing Domestic Abuse in the Pandemic: A Pyramid Peak Strategy*

*Authorship:* **Professor Lawrence Sherman,** *Director Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing, Salisbury House, Cambridge, CB1 2LA, UK*

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### From Reactive to Proactive: Pandemic Policing of Domestic Abuse

This strategy paper uses decades of strong evidence to craft a three-point strategy for democratic police agencies with digital data support. The three parts of the strategy are as follows:

1. Identify the most harmful domestic abusers in the jurisdiction, including those most likely to commit domestic homicide, using evidence-based targeting.

2. Assign units of two constables with Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to visit the last known residence of the most harmful abusers, testing a variety of tactics depending on the circumstances, from focused deterrence for ex-prisoners to cognitive behavioural therapy referrals for depressed persons suffering suicidal ideation or making suicidal threats.

3. Test a diversion program for a sample of most emergency calls requesting police to attend domestic abuse incidents, by which the caller is instantly linked to a uniformed officer by video screen with audio—after which the officer could decide if dispatching a car is necessary. If the test is successful in managing domestic issues with no more injury than would normally occur while awaiting a police response, it could be adopted as a standard policy. That decision would create time for officers to undertake targeted visits, delivering tactics described at point 2.
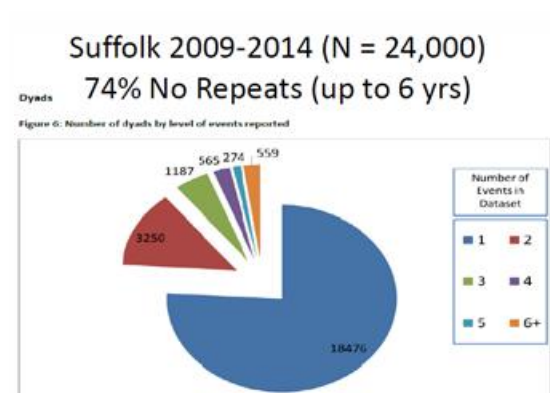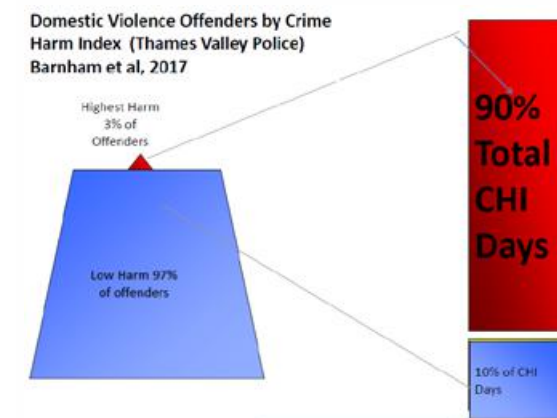


Suffolk 2009-2014 (N = 24,000)
74% No Repeats (up to 6 yrs)

*Figure 1 (From Bland & Ariel 2015)*

*Figure 2 (From Barnham, Barnes & Sherman 2017)*



### I. Target & Visit Most Harmful Domestic Abusers

1. Most reported domestic abusers never come back to police attention after first incident (Figure 1).

2. Most repeat domestic abuse offenders commit very minor offences.

3. But just 3% of known abusers cause 90% of the crime harm from reported abuse (Fig. 2).

4. These "severe" abusers are readily identified from existing police records (with consistent findings of studies in Kent, Suffolk, Thames Valley, W. Australia) over multi-year records.

5. Most DA homicide is committed by first offenders, but many murders done by severe repeaters.

6. Most domestic incidents can be screened by 999 staff to identify immediate danger.

7. Pandemic policing can prioritise serious crime harm by giving most 999 calls to R-TREC officers.

8. PROACTIVE pandemic policing can do home visits to all known severe repeat offenders.

9. Police visits to repeat DA offenders in Thames Valley reduced crime harm in a randomised trial.

10. Further RCTs could be rolled out with quick results to test both reactive & proactive strategies:

R-TREC (or IRCs = Investigative Resolution Centres) for most DA calls, home visits to all severe offenders, and a public strategy of targeting unreported high harm rather than stay-home compliance.

**THREE-POINT SUMMARY**

A. TRIAGE: identify highest-risk offenders by 5 years of criminal

records, with separate analyses for potential domestic homicide based on suicide risk factors (see part 2).

B. TELEPHONE: using the list of severe offenders to screen 999 and 101 calls about domestic abuse, prioritise responses to those calls; transfer most calls to self-isolated constables working at home, or based in control rooms, who can send a car as needed (See Part 3).

C. TRACK: 2-constable teams proactively visit severe offenders' homes to check welfare

### II. Prevent Domestic Homicide

1. 1. The best predictor of domestic homicide is prior suicide attempts or self-harm by the killer (Thames Valley, Leicestershire, All-England, Denmark, W. Australia).

2. 2. Most prior suicide threats or attempts by domestic killers were never reported to police.

3. 3. Mental health trusts do not share that information with police, despite repeated requests (Kent)

4. 3. But police do have records of some suicide attempts, and of all self-harm risks in custody suites.

5. 4. In Leicestershire, across 158,379 arrestees in 1997–2015, those charged in 620 cases of domestic murder or attempted murder were three times more likely than other arrestees to have had a self-harm marker in police records. For completed murders, the ratio was five times higher.

6. 5. If all arrestees with self-harm markers or prior suicide attempts were identified by each police force, the names could be cross-referenced against either incoming calls, or a list of highest-harm DA offenders in the past 5 years.

7. 6. If the highest-harm DA offenders were all visited by 2-constable teams to check welfare, prior RCT evidence (Thames Valley) shows the visits would reduce crime harm from domestic abuse.

8. 7. If the highest harm offenders with any self-harm flags were prioritised for proactive safeguarding visits, there could be cases of severe mental health problems identified that could justify further police and social services action, especially protection of children.

9. 8. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has been found in two US studies to reduce repeat suicide attempts by over 60%. If police recommended CBT provision by psychologists, a national service could be mobilized by #10 to provide immediate video consultation or a course of CBT therapy.

10. 9. About half of UK domestic homicide is committed by repeat DA offenders, but that risk could rise under lockdown conditions, with no prior warnings to police.

11. 10. Police visits to families at high risk of domestic homicides would be a welcome contrast to talk of police checking shopping trolleys, with police focusing on known offenders rather than the public.

**THREE-POINT SUMMARY**

A. TRIAGE: identify highest-risk offenders by analysis of 5-10 years of custody records and attempted suicide incidents (including BTP's national data base).

B. VISIT: two-constable teams (in Protective Masks) visit homes of persons at highest risk of committing domestic homicide, assessing possible courses of action, separating partners for private conversations to allow potential victims to express concerns, offering to provide access to cognitive behavioural therapy if needed.

C. ACTION: Constables consult with safeguarding teams on appropriate options if needed, such as CBT or referral of children to social services or request for mental health services. with telephone checks or repeat visits to selected homes to check welfare

### III. Testing: to Divert Vehicle Responses to Video Consultations

1. Screening by call takers of incoming requests for policing domestic incidents by name of accused offender; digital support for a list with daily updates of most previously harmful or currently suicidal persons in policing area.

2. Establishing clear protocols for automatic dispatch of constables in cars.

3. Where criteria are not met for automatic dispatch, use lottery method to choose which calls on wait-list should receive a dispatched car, which ones not.

4. All those assigned to await an available car offered opportunity to consult an officer immediately by video link.

5. Train and staff a video link team for handling domestic calls based on extensive experience in field settings.

6. Compare outcomes (injury, caller satisfaction, repeat call rates) between cases assigned to a dispatched police team vs cases handled instantly by video response.

*Evidence Base for the Strategy*

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**INTERNATIONAL SETTINGS – ENDNOTES:**

i https://lens.monash.edu/2020/03/18/1379841/coronavirus-fear-of-family-violence-spike-as-covid-19-impact-hits-households

ii https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/28/lockdowns-world-rise-domestic-violence

iii https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/make-prevention-and-redress-violence-against-women-key-part

iv https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(20)30092-4/fulltext

v https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2665910720300384?via%3Dihub

vi https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52157620

vii https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/09/uk-domestic-abuse-helplines-report-surge-in-calls-during-lockdown

viii https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/15/domestic-abuse-killings-more-than-double-amid-covid-19-lockdown

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Anxiety turns a thought like
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# United Kingdom Society of Evidence Based Policing (UKSEBP)

*Alex Murray* *Commander, Metropolitan Police, Specialist Crime*

Commander Alex Murray graduated from Birmingham University in 1996 and joined West Midlands Police where he worked in CID and uniform roles in the cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton. In 2008, he graduated from Cambridge University, with a Masters degree in Criminology. His thesis developed the understanding of police legitimacy within Muslim communities. He is passionate about involving the community in reducing crime and has led West Midlands Police on preventing violent extremism.

He is the founder, and currently Vice Chair, of the Society of Evidence Based Policing and has introduced randomised control trials into West Midlands Police as a means of understanding what works in reducing harm and providing value for money. In 2014, he received the Superintendents award for Excellence in Policing and has been recognised by George Mason University's Centre for Evidence Based Policing. He is a visiting scholar at Cambridge University, has been associate director of the Cambridge Indian Police Service Training Programme and was part of the UK National Disaster Victim Identification Team. Alex now serves with the Metropolitan Police following a transfer there in 2019.

## Evidence Based Policing is becoming more and more engrained into the fabric of everyday policing in the UK.

The idea of testing interventions with strong evaluations is fast becoming normal and there have been some great examples of trials indicating what works and what does not. SEBP this year focussed on *guns and knives: an evidence based approach.* As the pandemic hit, all conferences were cancelled which meant we switched online, and many of the presentations can be seen here:

https://www.sebp.police.uk/2020-virtual-conference



Is it more accurate than current practice?

If we look at the triple T definition of policing *(Sherman 2013, https://cebcp.org/wp-content/evidence-based-policing/Sherman-TripleT.pdf)* it indicates we should TARGET, TEST and TRACK. This means that we **understand** where are problems are and focus there, we **test** to see whether we are making a difference and we **track** our effort to see if we are really delivering what we say we are. We often find that the last T, tracking, is the one that is overlooked but is probably the most important.

However I would like to point to one of the presentations from this year's EBP conference in the UK. It is by an analyst from Essex Police, Iain AGAR, or how to forecast who will carry a knife. This is relevant from so many points of view. Firstly data science and police capability has improved to the point where current ways of identifying future offenders are beginning to look clumsy. The conventional method of prospective offender management is to list previous convictions and intelligence – score the police data and give out a risk rating. This gives a false impression of being empirical and we should ask; who decides the scoring? Who puts in the intelligence? We can see that in essence this is just slightly better than asking a seasoned officer who a future offender may be (and evidence has shown time and time again that this is a crazy approach to take. For the baseball equivalent watch Moneyball). Iain shows that taking a more statistical approach (often referred to as actuarial) the predictive power moves from 20% to 70%.

In how many other areas should we use machine learning to identify the patterns that forecast future harm? Certainly violence, certainly hot spots, in fact it is hard to argue that this actuarial approach should not be used in any form of policing other than responding to calls for service. For example, scroll down the above SEBP page and you will see a talk by Larry Sherman entitled 'Heroes and Heartaches in evidence based policing; policing rogue cops'. Here Sherman uses data to assist in preventing fatalities by police officers.

This data driven approach is interesting in that it creates a backlash. Bias in algorithms are used as a justification for not doing the analysis. For a great book on this see 'Weapons of Math Destruction' by Cathy O'Neil. The ethical question to answer is surely:

1. Do we need the police to prioritise how they spend their time

2. If so, where do you draw the line on false positives and false negatives.

To argue in this arena we need to be equipped with how much more effective an actuarial approach is compared to the current approach – and we need to involve human decision makers at the end point. For an insight into the thinking around this see this recent RUSI publication by BABUTA et al 2018 *https://rusi.org/publication/whitehall-reports/machine-learning-algorithms-and-police-decision-making-legal-ethical.* It rightly highlights that all efforts should be made to remove as much bias as possible in the data and the nomenclature should move away from 'predicting' to 'prioritising'. Similarly, if we are to take an evidence based approach to identification, we should also take an evidence based approach to treatment – and much of that is in the preventative space, how we better protect a victim or divert an offender.

# Fast policework and slow research – a personal reflection

*Authored by* **Ross Hendy**

I read the 'Routine arming in response to terror attack' (New Zealand Police, 2019) in last year's winter issue of *Police Science* with surprise. The article presented summarised research in the form of an 'initial evidence scan' that had been prepared for the New Zealand Police Executive.

As a policing scholar, it was rewarding to see both my masters and doctoral research cited in the narrative. The Christchurch shooting occurred one week after I had resigned from New Zealand Police to take up an academic position. I reflected, at the time of the event, that had I still been in the employ of the police I would have been applying insights from my research into the discourse. But after the first read, I discovered several passages that seemed to be remarkably similar to those in my own research and a check of my own doctoral dissertation revealed that small portions of my text had been reproduced in the article without an appropriate citation.

After raising this issue with the editors of this journal, I began to reflect on the causal factors that might explain the error. As a pracademic I have experienced the competing customs and practices of policework and academic writing. A practitioner writes on behalf of their parent agency—officers are *agents* of a policing body where written reports represent an official perspective. When investigating we collect and assemble information on behalf of the agency to be presented as an objective factual account of events; the assemblage becomes a reliable *authoritative* narrative that may then be used to guide decision makers *(Hendy, 2018b; Rowe, 2014).*

Practitioners write with authority and certainty, but often within short timeframes—the imminent court appearance, the end of a shift, or the tasking from command. The production of this policework requires speed and 'fast' thinking *(system 1 thinking that is reliant on instinct and prior learning (Kahneman, 2011)).*

In some respects, formal academic writing (at student and professional levels) is not too dissimilar to policework—academic researchers *investigate* phenomena by collecting *evidence* to generate or test a hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). When compared with policework, academic writing occurs in a non-operational environment with less time pressures *(system 2* thinking).

But for practitioners, the most foreign difference is the use of citations and referencing systems to acknowledge ideas and findings not those of the author(s). Together with the explicit authorship in academic writing, the academic is the 'author' and 'owner' of the ideas contained within the narrative—not the institution nor employer as is the case with policework. Academics are valued and measured through their research outputs; citations and publications are used to measure how an academic contributes to knowledge.

The bind for pracademics, then, is ensuring a successful journey between the dualities of policework and academic work. The operational necessities and cultural practices of policework rely on a 'cut-and-paste' assemblage of information *(Hendy, 2018a).* Indeed, the rapid assemblage of disparate and cognate research into an objective, meaningful narrative mirrors the intellectual challenge of interpreting disparate and cognate crime scene evidence. In an evidence-based aligned policing agency, such as New Zealand Police, police executives should rightly expect to be influenced by research evidence. The challenge for pracademics—aspiring and established—is to travel between the two worlds and ensure to abide by the customs of each.

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Dear Dr Hendy,

On behalf of both the ANZ SEBP and New Zealand Police you have our sincere apologies for the errors you quite rightly brought to our attention. The article 'Routine arming in response to terror' (New Zealand Police, 2019) published in Police Science (Winter 2019) was written in good faith and I can provide you with assurance that these mistakes were honestly made. The aim of publishing these briefs was to demonstrate the value that evidence based policing can add in terms of contributing to modern day critical command information at a time where the response needed to be both swiftly executed and evidence informed. The Society has reviewed it's publishing process and for the forthcoming Summer Edition will have a wider editorial team supporting production of this publication.

Yours Sincerely,
Managing Editor, Police Science
On behalf of the Executive Committee, ANZ SEBP

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# Evidence-based policing trial: Sherwood Division

*Authored by* **Dr Renee Zahnow (University of Queensland); Senior Sargeant Michael Coulson (Queensland Police Service) and Inspector Paul Hart (Queensland Police Service).**

Hotspots policing is an evidence-based strategy that aims to deploy limited police resources more effectively for greater crime prevention (Sherman and Weisburd 1995).

Figure 1 Sherwood Police Division



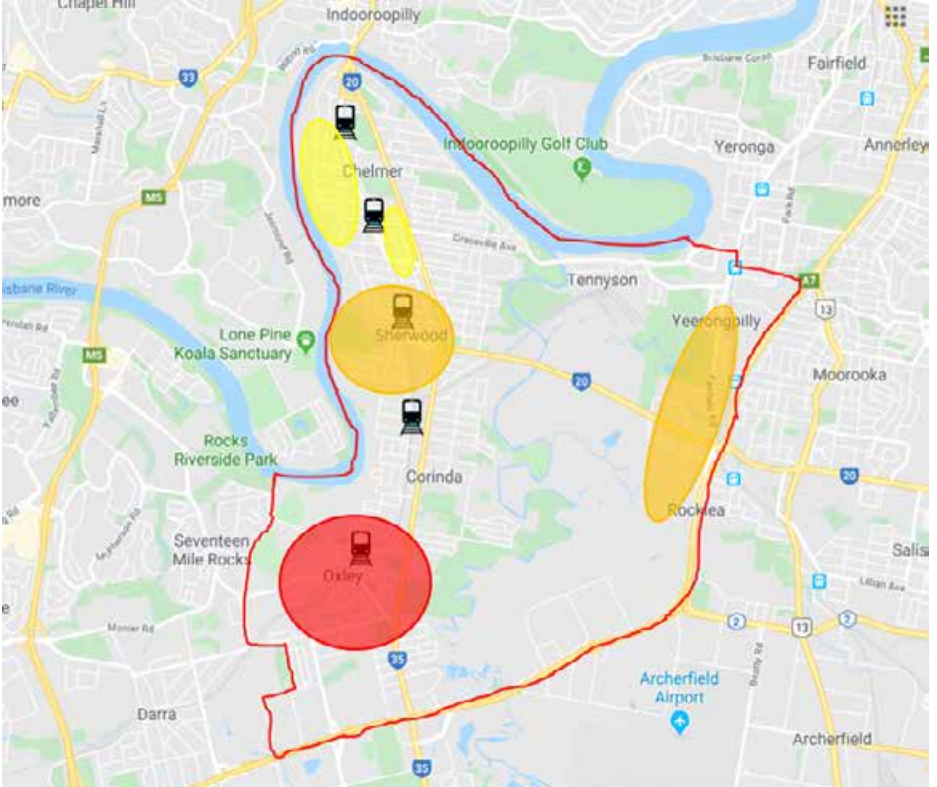| Colour | Crime Concentration |
|--------|---------------------|
| Yellow | 1 – 3 recorded crimes |
| Orange | 4 – 8 recorded crimes |
| Red | 9+ recorded crimes |

Evidence supporting hotspots policing as a successful crime prevention and response strategy is well established. For the most part, hotspots policing involves scheduling patrols of increased duration or frequency at micro-places identified as key crime locales. By targeting places that generate the greatest amount of crime police can prevent crime more effectively and efficiently. This is particularly important when resources are limited which is often the case in small police departments.

Sherwood police division is a small police department located south-west of the central business district of Brisbane City, Australia. Sherwood has a population of approximately 28,380 people. The division is made up predominately of middle to high-income households; over half the division's property values exceed $1 million AUD. According to ABS census victim surveys, residents in the Sherwood Division experienced 1170 offences against property in 2017-2018 financial year.

Sherwood is situated in the transitional zone and a highly patronized commuter rail line and several major roads dominate its landscape. Due to large residential developments to the west of the city, the Sherwood commuter corridor has experienced an exponential increase in patronage over the last five years. During this time, Sherwood has also experienced increases in rates of Unlawful Entry of a Motor Vehicle (UEMV), Unlawful Use of a Motor Vehicle (UUMV) and Burglary.

Sherwood is a relatively small police division with a total staff of 18 officers. Thus, to address the issue of increasing UEMV, UUMV and burglary it was important to identify an efficient patrol strategy. Assessment of spatial-temporal patterns of offences occurring in Sherwood identified several key hotspots all located within close proximity to the division's five train stations. Thus, the Sherwood Police conducted a small pilot project targeting train stations as a key access point for potential UEMV, UUMV and burglary offenders. The experiment consisted of three phases.

## Phase one: Visible presence

This phase ran for two weeks between 19th August 2019 and the 1st September 2019. During this phase general duties officers attended railway stations on the Ipswich Line within the Sherwood Police Division for a five-minute period, parked in a highly visible position to the inbound trains, with rotating lights activated. Officers were instructed to conduct two station attendances per shift. Shifts operated predominately 6am-2pm, 2pm-10pm and 10pm-6am. The aim was to achieve 30 minutes at stations per day. The rationale behind this was to maintain a highly visible presence at the train stations, at random time periods, to deter potential offenders from exiting the train in the Sherwood Division. The railway stations included were the Oxley, Corinda, Sherwood and Graceville Railway Station, all of which are co-located with risky facilities including shops, restaurants.

## Phase Two: Control

The next two week period was treated as a control period. During this time officers conducted business as usual and did not undertake any focused patrols around train stations.

## Phase Three: Proactive Policing

Phase three of the trial took place between the 16th September 2019 and the 29th September 2019. It involved more intense patrol activity at train stations. Throughout this period general duties officers conducted patrols of 15 minutes in duration. Officers were required to park the police vehicle and attend the platform of a randomly selected railway station prior to the arrival of an inbound train at least twice per shift. While at the station police were required to hand out crime prevention information on vehicle and home security. Shifts operated predominately 6am-2pm, 2pm-10pm and 10pm-6am.

## Methods

Given that this is a small pilot project the methods are limited to descriptive statistics.

## Results

The first two weeks of the trial saw no reduction in the number of UEMV, UUMV or burglary within close proximity to train stations in the Sherwood division. Sixteen offences occurred during the two week period compared to 14 offences during the same two week period in 2018. During the two week 'control period' between the 2nd and 15th of September the number of offences of the targeted crime types in close proximity to the train stations was similar to 2018.

During the intense patrol period, the third two-week segment of the trial, there was some evidence that compared to the same period in 2018 there were fewer counts of the targeted offences in close proximity to the train stations. During in the intense patrol period only three offences (1 burglary and 2 UUMV) were recorded within close proximity of the train stations when compared to nine within the same two week period in 2018. While the numbers are small this is a

promising result, especially when considering there appeared to be a temporal diffusion of benefits over the following two week period (see Table 1).

Notably, there was also some evidence to suggest spatial displacement occurred during the two week period that Sherwood Division conducted the intense patrol intervention at train stations in their division. During this time burglary, UEMV, UUMV occurring in close proximity to the Indooroopilly train station- the station adjacent to the Sherwood division- increased compared to the same two week period in 2018. In 2018, between the 16th of September and the 29th of September

twelve of the targeted offences were recorded compared to 25 in the same week in 2019.

## Conclusion

Despite the small scale of this trial, it provides promising insights into the value of a) hotspots policing and b) proactive prevention strategies for reducing crime. It also demonstrates that small police divisions can run small scale trials without external resources when there is a culture that supports evidence based policing methods.

*Table 1. Crime 2018 compared to 2019*

|  | Offences 400m from train station 2018 | Offences 400m from train station 2019 |
|---|---|---|
| **Phase one:** Minor intervention 19/08-01/09 | 14 | 16 |
| **Phase Two:** Control 02/09-15/09 | 10 | 12 |
| **Phase Three:** Intense intervention 16/09-29/09 | 9 | 3 |
| **Post intervention:** 30/09 | 18 | 6 |

*By Dr. Susanne Knabe-Nicol*

**"EBP Doctor was created by Dr Susanne Knabe-Nicol, an investigative psychologist.**

*EBP Doctor is an educational resource with a mission to ensure that investigative practitioners around the world have access to research and information that could help enhance their investigative potential. To bring evidence-based policing to forces all around the world. To bridge the gap between academics and practitioners. EBP Doctor publishes video, audio and written content that relays relevant information in 1 such a way that practitioners can actually put it to use in their own investigations.*

*It was previously called Dr IPIP (IPIP stood for Investigative Psychology for Investigative Practitioners), but there is a much stronger need for support with EBP than with investigative psychology, so the focus turned to helping police agencies with EBP."*

## What is the problem with evidence-based policing?

There are certainly a whole lot of obstacles to be overcome. I refer to obstacles and problems implementing evidence-based policing (EBP) rather than problems with EBP per se. EBP is definitely the way to go in my opinion.

Ideally, we'd like the research and the practical side of policing to flow in the same way that pharmaceuticals and medicine work together: where research is done on proposed new treatments, vaccines and drugs, and once properly tested, they are authorised for use by practitioners, who actually deal with the public. Whereas currently, in policing it tends to be that each force or country does what they're used to, often never having tested what they are doing for its effectiveness. Whilst there is a research side, their products are relatively few and far-between, compared to what we'd like to see. And even when something is shown to have a great effect, it is not straightaway rolled out and replicated and tested elsewhere, as it should be. Communication of police-relevant research to police practitioners is less than ideal. Most research is published in academic journals, which are read by almost exclusively academics. And even if a police practitioner here or there were to have access to a journal, they often don't have the time to read very lengthy and dry articles. The truth is, there is no functioning, established pathway yet for new knowledge to be generated on a regular basis and to then be passed on to the front line. We still need to work on establishing that pathway.

However, more and more people are recognising that police forces are using processes and tactics that have not been tested. Those of

you who know what EBP is, know that we should be doing it in every single police agency, department and service. We need to know what works and what doesn't. But what is the best way to go about it?

## How do you actually get any EBP off the ground in your police agency? There are several options of how to do it:

1. External Partnering. You partner up with a university that works with you on putting a project together that evaluates / tests / pilots an alternative, new process to the one you are currently using. The upside to that is that you get highly qualified academics to apply their expertise to this particular project, they will perform solid research and might publish the outcomes in academic journals, giving your project great exposure and standing. The downside is that your academic partner will probably stop the collaboration once data collection has finished, there will be no-one left to oversee ongoing up-keep and the running of the new process and everyone's practices might just go back to normal. In short, unless someone internal takes real ownership of it, the advantages of the research are likely to be short-lived: your staff are still not able to integrate EBP into their every-day policing processes.

2. Top-down direction. A second option is that you select a few members of your police department to become qualified in a related field, for example by sending them on a university course in policing, criminology, investigative psychology, or evidence-based policing. The upside is that they will gain knowledge, understanding and experience to carry out and delegate EBP within your organisation, which is just what you want. The downside is that these university courses take years to complete, they cost thousands, and if these

persons decide to leave your organisation, you have heavily invested in a very few people who take all those expensive skills with them. More commonly though, whilst they may remain with your force, they get promoted and are simply unable to actually do any EBP. Their role is too demanding on their attention from too many different directions, and they have no staff working with them who could take their direction and be skilled enough to carry out EBP research under their guidance. These graduates are leaders, not implementers.

3. Building from the bottom-up. You educate a lot of your staff in basic evidence-based policing principles, and equip a smaller but still sizeable number in solid EBP skills with online courses designed specifically for that purpose. That way, you can upskill a larger number of your staff in a much shorter amount of time, for a fraction of the cost of even one university course. These skilled staff can then design, run and oversee a number of EBP projects on an ongoing basis – independently of one collaboration or one decision-maker. These EBP implementers would be a sustainable and growing presence in police forces that can test one process after the other, share findings with other forces (!), rather than only academics, and learn from each other. This is a sustainable, long-term way of embedding and strengthening EBP within policing.

I recommend that police adopt all options, however, I have created an introductory course called 'How to do Evidence-Based Policing

in 4 Steps' for all police practitioners to take as part of building from the bottom-up. It's free. Start with that, get as many of your staff as you think might be suitable onto it, they get a certificate of completion at the end. Then, see who might be a good candidate to become a fully-fledged EBP-implementer. You can pre-register them on the comprehensive 'Evidence-Based Policing Implementer' course. That one is not free, but heavily discounted at the moment. It will equip learners with the skills they need to carry out EBP from within their force.

**Note to editors:**

*Dr. Susanne Knabe-Nicol is an investigative psychologist with over a decade's worth of experience in a variety of roles working for British police forces. She created **www.EBPDoctor.com** which translates research findings into videos that are easily consumed by police practitioners and has released a free introductory course on EBP called 'How to do Evidence-Based Policing in 4 Steps'. A comprehensive course on EBP is available for pre-registration, called 'Evidence-Based Policing Implementer'.*