

Proceeding Paper

Intimate Partner Violence Risk Assessment in Victims Information and Assistance Office [†]

Iris Almeida ^{1,2,3,4,*} , Ana Rita Pires ¹, Carolina Nobre ⁴, Joana Marques ⁴ and Patrícia Oliveira ¹ 

¹ Instituto Universitário Egas Moniz (IUEM), Egas Moniz-Cooperativa de Ensino Superior, Crl., 2829-511 Almada, Portugal; anarita_f_pires@hotmail.com (A.R.P.); patriciasofia_27@hotmail.com (P.O.)

² Laboratório de Psicologia (LabPSI), Centro de Investigação Interdisciplinar Egas Moniz (CiiEM), 2829-511 Almada, Portugal

³ Laboratório de Ciências Forenses e Psicológicas Egas Moniz (LCFPem), 2829-511 Almada, Portugal

⁴ Gabinete de Informação e Atendimento à Vítima, 1990-097 Lisboa, Portugal; carolinanobrepsic@gmail.com (C.N.); joanaromba@hotmail.com (J.M.)

* Correspondence: ialmeida@egasmoniz.edu.pt

[†] Presented at the 5th International Congress of CiiEM—Reducing inequalities in Health and Society, Online, 16–18 June 2021.

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the work developed by the Victims Information and Assistance Office (GIAV), and its role as technical advisor to the Lisbon Public Prosecutor's Office, specifically about Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) risk assessment. GIAV plays a key role in assisting the Public Prosecutor's Office as the main response to cases with higher complexity and it provides support about measures to protect victims. The sample ($n = 258$) is derived from the IPV risk assessments of GIAV. Results show us that moderate and higher risk are the most common levels in IPV risk assessment and main risk factors. Defendants had more beliefs about IPV than victims.

Keywords: Intimate Partner Violence; risk assessment; public prosecutor's office



Citation: Almeida, I.; Pires, A.R.; Nobre, C.; Marques, J.; Oliveira, P. Intimate Partner Violence Risk Assessment in Victims Information and Assistance Office. *Med. Sci. Forum* **2021**, *5*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/msf2021005012>

Academic Editors: Helena Barroso and Cidália Castro

Published: 20 July 2021

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Forensic psychological assessment, specifically violence risk assessment, is an essential element in the practice of forensic psychology [1] and plays a crucial role in criminal justice system, helping it to make decisions [2]. IPV risk assessment is an essential element in offender's evaluation. Consequently, it is possible to apply the most appropriate intervention to prevent violence, protecting victims, and re-socializing offenders [3]. This assessment identifies risk factors such as criminal history, social and situational factors, and psychological variables [3]. IPV risk assessment includes semi-structured interviews and forensic psychological assessment tools which allows the identification of risk factors [4].

2. Materials and Methods

The sample ($n = 258$) is derived from the IPV risk assessments of GIAV (2011–2020). We evaluate 115 victims: 107 women and 8 men, aged between 17 and 73 years old ($M = 44.68$, $sd = 12.50$); 106 defendants: 100 men and 6 women, aged between 17 and 81 years old ($M = 46.33$, $sd = 12.74$); and 36 victims and defendants simultaneously: 19 men and 17 women, aged between 23 and 58 years old ($M = 41.75$, $sd = 10.47$). The relationship between victims and defendants are: 85 married; 61 ex-boyfriend/girlfriend; 36 ex-spouses; 31 ex-partners; 31 partners; 10 boyfriend/girlfriend; 2 lovers. Data was collected from lawsuits, semi-structured interviews, collateral information, and clinical and forensic assessment tools (e.g., SARA; ECVC; AQ).

3. Results and Discussion

In the risk assessments, most of the cases presented a moderate risk (39.5%), followed by high risk (21.7%) and low risk (17.4%). IPV risk factors are associated with extreme

minimization or denial of spousal assault history (72.5%); recent relationship problems (71.4%); former physical assault (64.8%); severe and/or sexual assault (54.7%); past sexual assault/sexual jealousy (50%); personality disorder with anger, impulsivity or behavioural instability (47.7%); attitudes that support or condone spousal assault (47.7%); recent escalation in frequency or severity of assault (46.1%). Defendants had more beliefs about IPV than victims, especially in: Legitimization and trivialization of minor violence (e.g., insulting, slapping) ($M = 28.02$; $sd = 11.30$), legitimization of violence by the preservation of family privacy (e.g., what goes on between a couple only concerns the couple) ($M = 14.03$; $sd = 5.79$) and global beliefs ($M = 77.09$; $sd = 29.02$). Table 1 shows the correlations between individuals' legitimization beliefs (ECVC) and aggression (AQ). The results show us that legitimizing beliefs are associated with IPV.

Table 1. Correlations between legitimizing beliefs of violence and type of aggression.

	Legitimization of Minor Violence	Legitimization by Women's Conduct	Legitimization by External Causes	Legitimization by the Preservation of Family Privacy	Total BELIEFS
Physical aggression	0.248 **	0.214 *	0.281 **	0.185 *	0.250 **
Anger	0.261 **	0.218 *	0.256 **	0.187 *	0.251 **
Hostility	0.412 **	0.370 **	0.383 **	0.453 **	0.430 **
Total AQ score	0.405 **	0.346 **	0.383 **	0.349 **	0.400 **

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

The work developed by GIAV allows the understanding of IPV risk assessment, through the articulation between Forensic Psychology and Law for a more informed decision making. The main goal of IPV risk assessment is the prevention and development of management strategies to minimize risk and try to identify factors that may contribute to the violent behavior supporting the criminal justice system in allocating more appropriate measures (e.g., sentence, intervention).

Institutional Review Board Statement: This study is part of a protocol established among the Portuguese Public Prosecutor's Office and Egas Moniz—Higher Education School to assess and analyze the characteristics of victims and offenders in the field of Violence. The strictness of ethical and deontological principles is safeguarded once criminal records have been restricted access by law (including judicial secrecy). Therefore, all assessed subjects gave their informed consent, and their data were processed anonymously.

Informed Consent Statement: All ethical issues were considered due to the sensitive nature of the detailed data, the respective informed consent, confidentiality limits, and information about the ethics and technician's impartiality.

Data Availability Statement: Data sharing not applicable because part of information derives from criminal records.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Simões, M.R. Potencialidades e limites do uso de instrumentos no processo de avaliação psicológica. *Psicol. Educ. Cult.* **2005**, *9*, 237–264.
2. Laboratório de Ciências Forenses e Psicológicas Egas Moniz—Gabinete de Psicologia Forense. *Manual Para Agentes Qualificados/As de Atendimento à Vítima*. Available online: <https://www.egasmoniz.com.pt/media/119234/Maria-Manual.pdf> (accessed on 29 April 2021).
3. Almeida, I.; Soeiro, C. Avaliação de risco de violência conjugal: Versão para polícias (SARA: PV). *Anál. Psicol.* **2010**, *1*, 179–192. [[CrossRef](#)]
4. Gonçalves, R.A.; Cunha, O.; Dias, A.R.C. Avaliação Psicológica de Agressores Conjugais. In *Manual de Psicologia Forense: Contextos, Práticas e Desafios*; Matos, M., Gonçalves, R.A., Machado, C., Eds.; Psiquilíbrios: Braga, Portugal, 2011; pp. 70–71.