



Relationships Among Women's Victimization, Their Aggression and Substance Use Problems: A Test of the Moderating Effects of Race/Ethnicity

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BACKGROUND

- Intimate partner violence (IPV) is most often bidirectional, such that women both experience victimization and act aggressively toward their partners (see meta-analyses by Archer 2000, 2002).
- Few studies have examined women's IPV victimization and IPV aggression simultaneously.
- Analyzing victimization and aggression separately in relation to their precursors and correlates, such as women's substance use, may lead to erroneous conclusions about their relative associations (see Anderson, 2002; Sullivan, Meese, Swan, Mazure and Snow, 2005).
- Extant literature suggests:
 - Women use aggression in the context of their victimization in intimate relationships.
 - Victimized women are more likely to use alcohol and drugs and develop substance-related problems compared to women who have not been victimized.
 - Women's substance use is a risk factor for their use of aggression.
 - Relationships among women's victimization, aggression, and substance use problems vary by racial/ethnic group (Field & Caetano, 2004; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

METHOD

Inclusion Criteria

Women who were aged 18-64, currently in a heterosexual relationship and had used physical aggression against their partners within the previous six months, and had a household income less than \$50,000.

Community Sample of 412 women

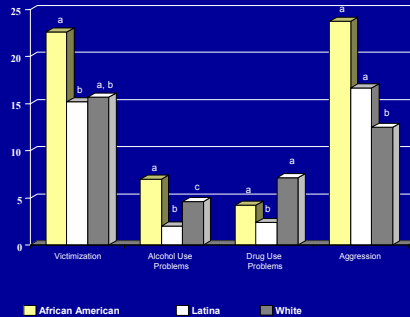
150 African American, 150 Latina, 112 White women; Mean age = 36.61; Modal income = < \$10,000/yr; Modal time in relationship = 5 to 10 years

Variable creation

Physical Victimization and Physical Aggression are sum scores based on the Conflict Tactics Scale- 2; Drug use problems is the sum score of Drug Abuse Screening Test items; Alcohol use problems is the sum score of the items from the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test.

ANOVA RESULTS

Note. Bars with the same superscripts denote that means between the two groups for each variable are not significantly different according to Tukey HSD or Games-Howell PostHoc tests



AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN

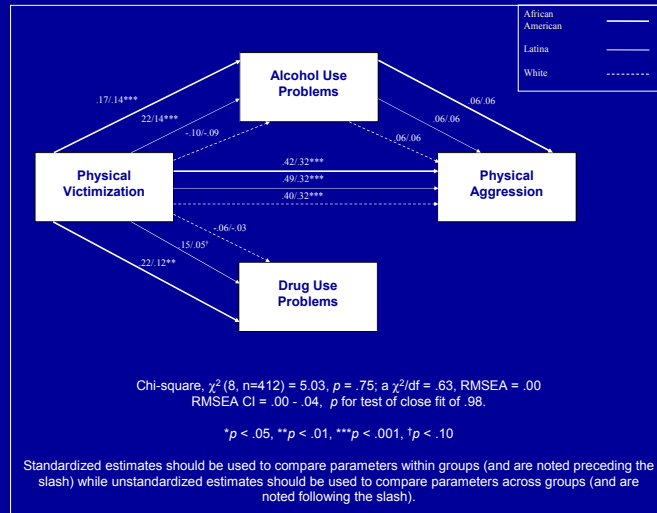
Physical victimization \bar{x} = 22.63, SD = 26.40
 Alcohol use problems \bar{x} = 6.98, SD = 7.78
 Drug use problems \bar{x} = 4.26, SD = 3.84
 Physical aggression \bar{x} = 23.75, SD = 22.08

LATINAS

Physical victimization \bar{x} = 15.20, SD = 20.42
 Alcohol use problems \bar{x} = 2.01, SD = 3.83
 Drug use problems \bar{x} = 2.36, SD = 2.20
 Physical aggression \bar{x} = 16.67, SD = 16.96

WHITE WOMEN

Physical victimization \bar{x} = 15.68, SD = 20.34
 Alcohol use problems \bar{x} = 4.58, SD = 7.13
 Drug use problems \bar{x} = 4.05, SD = 4.20
 Physical aggression \bar{x} = 12.50, SD = 15.65



PATH MODEL RESULTS

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN (19% of variance explained)

Victimization was related to greater levels of aggression ($\beta = .42, p < .001$) and to substance use problems such that higher levels of victimization were related to greater alcohol use problems ($\beta = .17, p < .001$) and drug use problems ($\beta = .22, p < .01$).

LATINAS (25% of variance explained)

Victimization was related to greater levels of aggression ($\beta = .49, p < .001$) and to substance use problems such that higher levels of victimization were related to greater alcohol use problems ($\beta = .22, p < .001$) and drug use problems ($\beta = .15, p < .10$), although the latter only approached significance.

WHITE WOMEN (16% of variance explained)

Victimization was strongly related to aggression ($\beta = .40, p < .001$).

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

- African American women were more victimized than Latina women.
- African American and Latina women were more aggressive than White women.
- Differences were evident regarding substance use problems:
 - African American women had the greatest number of alcohol use problems
 - White and African American women had comparable and higher numbers of drug use problems than Latinas.
- Path analysis showed strong relationships between victimization and aggression for all women.
- Race/ethnicity moderated the relationships between victimization and substance use problems:
 - African American women's victimization was related to both their alcohol and drug use problems.
 - Latina women's victimization was related only to their alcohol use problems (although the relationship to drug use problems approached significance).
 - White women's victimization was unrelated to both alcohol and drug use problems. Contrary to expectations, tension reduction theory and the self-medication hypothesis do not seem to apply unilaterally.
- No groups evidenced a relationship between substance use problems and aggression.
- Findings support the need for culturally specific domestic violence and substance use interventions.

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