Dyadic Concordance and Discordance In Family Violence:  
A Powerful and Practical Approach to Research And Practice*

Murray A. Straus
Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire  
Durham, NH 03824.  603-862-2594 murray.straus@unh.edu  
Website: http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................................. 2
Questions Addressed ....................................................................................................................2
THEORETICAL BASIS OF Dyadic Concordance TypeS.................................................................3
   Variations In The Concept of Victim ..................................................................................3
PREVALENCE OF DYADIC CONCORDANCE TYPES FOR PARTNER ASSAULT ...................... 4
   Applicability Of DCTs Across Types Of Samples and Relationships ...................................5
   Two Multi-Nation Studies .......................................................................................................6
   Severe Assaults ......................................................................................................................8
METHOD OF IDENTIFYING DYADIC CONCORDANCE TYPES ......................................................8
COMPARISON WITH OTHER PARTNER VIOLENCE TYPOLOGIES ......................................... 9
BROAD APPLICABILITY OF DYADIC CONCORDANCE TYPES .....................................................10
   Behavioral, Official Record, And Phenomenological Based DCTs .......................................10
   Application To Other Aggressive Behaviors .......................................................................11
   Aspects Of Pro-Social Behaviors ......................................................................................11
   Application To Other Family Relationships ....................................................................11
DO DCTS ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF INTRA-FAMILY AGGRESSION? ............................................................................................................ 11
DISCUSSION ............................................................................................................................................. 12
   Summary ...............................................................................................................................12
   Limitations ............................................................................................................................12
   What Explains The Predominance Of Bidirectional Assault? .............................................13
   Perpetration and Effects Of Perpetration ............................................................................14
   Research Implications .......................................................................................................14
   Theoretical Implications .................................................................................................16
   Treatment Implications .....................................................................................................16
   Services For Victims And Offenders ..................................................................................17
   Prevention Implications ....................................................................................................18
   Conclusions ........................................................................................................................18

* It is a pleasure to express my appreciation to David Finkelhor, Kirstie Kemmer, Yahayra Michel-Smith, Kei Saito, and Zeev Winstok for many suggestions which greatly improved the paper. Other publications on this and related issues can be downloaded from http://www.pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2. Earlier phases of the work was partly supported by National Institute of Mental Health grant T32MH15161.
ABSTRACT

This article describes a simple and powerful conceptual perspective and methodological approach to understanding aggression in family relationships and for developing violence prevention programs and helping victims: The core element is Dyadic Concordance Types (DCTs). Because of the importance of gender in such relationships, the DCTs used for this article identify Female-Only, Male-Only, and Both perpetrated aggression, plus a reference category of Neither. Evidence from more than 30 nations is summarized on the percent of couples in each of the DCTs for physical assault and other types of aggression. It indicates that across all nations, sample types, and gender of respondent, about half of couples in which there was violence or other abusive behavior, it was bi-directional, about one quarter were Female-Only perpetrator and one quarter Male-Only perpetrator. These results are consistent with the pattern found by 80 other studies. DCTs have also been used for research on aggressive behaviors in other family relationships, including parent-child and sibling relationships.

Research shows that each DCT tends to have unique characteristics and consequences. The Discussion suggests that identifying DCTs can help understand the effects of partner violence, theories on these issues, services for victims and offenders, and provide a more scientifically complete basis for prevention of intra-family aggression. Taking into account the DCTs of the cases at hand should be the default starting point for research and practice concerned with intra-family aggression.

Key words: family, dating, gender, victim, offender, crime, intimate partner violence, types, international, measure,
3. How can almost every researcher and case worker easily identify the DCTs of the cases they are working with?

4. How consistent are DCT’s across reports by men and women, married and dating couples, and nations.

5. Do DCTs enhance understanding of the causes and effects of intra-family aggression?

6. What are the implications for research, prevention and treatment of intra-family aggression?

THEORETICAL BASIS OF DYADIC CONCORDANCE TYPES

The most general theoretical basis for DCTs is the assumption that violent relationships are not a homogeneous phenomenon (Cantos & O’Leary, 2014; Dutton, 2010; Felson, 2002; Hamel, 2014; Straus, 1990; Stuart, 2005). Therefore, it is therefore necessary to identify ways in which PV differs in ways that are theoretically and practically salient. The second theoretical assumption is that aggression in a relationship is a dyadic phenomenon. Therefore, what each partner in a couple relationship (or in a parent-child relationship, what child does as well as what the parent does) is crucial for understanding, preventing, and treating aggression in relationships. These are long-standing theoretical principles. Most social scientists and human service providers probably agree on them. Despite that, research and treatment based on recognizing the dyadic nature of PV seems to be rare. Instead the focus tends to be on an identified aggressor, with little or no attention to the behavior of the other member of the dyad. DCTs provide a mode of conceptualizing and analyzing aggression and violence in family relationships that incorporates the dyadic nature of family violence.

VARIATIONS IN THE CONCEPT OF VICTIM

Because DCT are intended to be useful for research on victimization as well as perpetration, variations in the concept of victim needs to be described. A victim can be identified on the basis of whether a person was the target of a noxious behavior or event, and/or whether the person was harmed by that behavior or event. Other criteria include cultural norms and beliefs which define a party as a victim; for example, if a toddler repeatedly hits a parent, the parent is not usually seen as a victim, but if done by a teenager, the parent is likely to be seen as a victim. There are also legal and moral criteria of victimization, such as whether the person attacked acted or failed to act in a way that might have caused or prevented the attack (Walklate, 2007).

When being a victim of partner violence is defined by being physically attacked, almost 300 studies found about the same percent of male and female victims (Archer, 2002; Desmarais, Reeves, Nicholls, Telford, & Fiebert, 2012). However, when victimization is defined as being injured or killed by a partner, studies have typically found many more women victims. Both aspects need to be addressed.
Figure 1 shows the percent in each DCT for physical assault among participants in the World Mental Health Survey in eleven nations (Miller et al., 2011). The “Prevalence” box in the upper right gives the percent of couples who experienced an assault in the previous 12 months. The bars give the percent in each DCT among the subgroup of couples where a physical assault occurred. Perhaps the most notable result is the predominance of couples in which the aggression was bi-directional. According to both the men and women, the Both assaulted DCT was almost half of all couples in which violence had occurred. There are an increasing number of studies which show the predominance of Both or so-called mutual PV. DCTs are not necessary to identify those couples. A key feature of DCTs is that they give equal attention to relationships in which there is only one perpetrator (or one victim), namely the Male-Only and Female-Only types. Thus Figure 1 shows that when there was only one perpetrator, it was about equally likely to be cases in the Female-Only and Male-Only perpetration. Those are important types of couples which are brought into focus by DCTs.

The studies summarized in the following sections show that similar percentages in each DCT have been found by many other studies in the US and many other nations, and among many types of samples. These percentages contradict the belief expressed in Auchter (2013), Saunders (2002), the Violence Against Women Act in the USA and similar legislation in many other nations, that men are the main perpetrators of partner assault. This belief was incorporated in the California Health and Safety Code, § 124250 which stipulates that “Domestic violence
means the infliction or threat of physical harm against past or present adult or adolescent female intimate partner” (emphasis added).

**Applicability Of DCTs Across Types Of Samples and Relationships**

The example of DCTs for physical assault in Figure 1 is for married and cohabiting couples in a multi-nation study. To what extent do the percent in each DCT follows a similar pattern in other types of samples, such as student surveys, different socioeconomic status, and clinical and legal samples? The results described earlier from the systemic analysis of 48 studies by (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Selwyn, & Rohling, 2012) found that this pattern for all. A study of university student couples in 32 nations (Straus, 2008) found this pattern in both western and non-western societies.

**Gender Of Respondent.** Does it makes a difference if the data to create the DCTs were obtained from men or from women? The answer depends on the type of aggressive behavior. If the behavior is physical assault, the answer is that the percent in each DCT when women and men are the informants is very similar. This has been found by studies such as the World Mental Survey (Miller et al., 2011), the US National Comorbidity Study (Kessler et al., 2001), the National Family Violence Survey (Straus, 1980), and the International Dating Violence study (Straus & Fauchier, 2008; Straus & Michel-Smith, In preparation). Specifically, according to both women and men, and in most of the nations in the cross-national studies, about half of the relationships in which there was an assault, both partners assaulted. In the other half, the Female-Only perpetrator and the Male-Only perpetrator tended to occur in a similar percent of relationships. However, there are exceptions. As will be shown in a later section on the dating relationships of university students in the 32 nation International Dating Violence Study (Table 4), when the aggressive behavior was sexual coercion or physical injury, substantial differences were found in the reports of men and women in the percentages in the Female-Only perpetrator and Male-Only perpetrator types, even though reports by men and women agreed on the percent in the Both category.

**Population Studied.** Does the type of population studied make a difference in the percent of violent couples in each DCT? Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Selwyn, and Rohling (2012) conducted a systematic analysis of 48 studies, which they classified into five sample types: general population samples, smaller community samples, university and school samples, samples involved with the legal or female-oriented services, and samples of gay, lesbian, and bisexual couples. In all five types of samples, the Both perpetrators of assault were half or more of the cases of partner assault, the percentages ranged from 52% for university and school samples, to 72% among samples of cases involved with legal actions or female-oriented services. An important issue is why the percent in the Both assaulted DCT is so high, even among women seeking help for partner violence. One explanation is that it includes women acting in self-defense. Self-defense and other explanations are examined in the Discussion section on **What Explains The Predominance Of Bidirectional Assault?**

The percentages in the Male-Only and Female-Only perpetrator types found by the 48 studies similar are similar cross four different types of population: Large general population samples 14% Male-Only, 28% Female-Only; smaller community samples 18% and 23%; university and school samples 16% and 32%; and legal and female-oriented clinical treatment samples 14% and 13%. Thus, the Female-Only DCT has been found to be as prevalent or more prevalent as the Male-Only. DCT’s can also be used to analyze violence between same-sex couples, as in studies by Kelly (2011) and Stanley (2006). For same-sex relationships the actors can be identified as partners A and B, or if there is a role or status that is salient for the relationship by terms specifying that, such as older partner and younger partner.
A final example of broad applicability is a study which used Johnson’s method of identifying Intimate terrorists to the female as well as the male partner (Straus & Gozjolko, 2014). It found that, when there was Intimate Terrorism in the relationship, 17% of the couples were Male-Only, 30% were Female-Only intimate terrorists, and 53% of the couples, Both met Johnson’s criteria for Intimate Terrorists. Although I used the label “Intimate Terrorist” was used because the classification was operationalized using Johnson’s criteria, a main conclusion of the Straus and Gozjolko analysis was that that Johnson’s measures rarely identifies the extreme behavior suggested by the label Intimate Terrorism.

Two Multi-Nation Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1, Prevalence Of Assault And Dyadic Types Of Assault Victimization Of 14,242 University Students in 32 Nations (in rank order of assault rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median:</strong> Assault =31%; Dyadic Types: Female-Only= 10%, Male-only= 21%, Both=69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Assault Half Of Nations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TZA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victimization And Perpetration In Dating Relationships. Table 1 presents the percentage who experienced an assault between partners in the previously mentioned study of University students in 32 nations, and among those who did, the percent in each DCT. The top row of data shows results for students in all 32 nations, as measured by the median. It shows that almost a third of the students experienced an assault in their dating relationship. This is an extremely high rate of assault, but it corresponds to what has been found in studies of violence among student couples by many other studies over the past 30 years (Archer, 2000; Moffitt & Caspi, 1999). As for DCTs among the sub-group in which an assault occurred, the top row of Table 1 shows that the Male-Only perpetrator type was least frequent (10%). The Female-Only perpetrator type was 21%. The largest percent of cases were in the Both assaulted DCT.
These DCTs reveal the theoretically important results: that women were not the predominant victims of partner assault as is generally thought to be the case. Rather there were more male victims, and the predominant pattern among university student couples, as among married and cohabiting couples in the US and other nations, was bidirectional aggression. Also of great theoretical and practical importance is that the rows for each nation in Table 1 show that this also applies in male–dominant nations such as Iran. More students in the Iran sample experience partner violence than in any of other 31 nation. In addition, among the 77% of couples in the Iran sample who reported an assault, almost all (95%) were in the Both assaulted DCT. Part of the explanation for this seeming anomaly is presented and tested in what is called in that paper the “Violent Society Theory” of partner violence (Straus, 2012b). Another part of the explanation is described briefly in the Discussion section of this article which suggests what might explain the predominance of the Both DCT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Prevalence %</th>
<th>Female-Only</th>
<th>Male-Only</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid East</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. America</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Violence in Relationship Between Parents. Students in the 15 nation International Parenting Study were asked about the relationships of their parents with each other using the short form of the CTS (Straus & Douglas, 2004). This provided data to determine the DCTs of parents in Table 2.
The top row in Table 2 shows that a median of 14% of the parents experienced an assault the child knew about when the child was ten years old. As for DCTs, the right side of the top row of Table 2 shows that the Father-Only type occurred in 25% of the cases and the Mother-Only type was 22% of the cases where an assault between the parents had occurred. These results for the sample of parents of students are consistent with those for the International Mental Health survey in Figure 1 and with the percentages in each DCT in the 32 nation sample of dating couples in Table 1: All found that, when there is violence in a relationship, in the majority of cases both partners have assaulted. The other rows of Table 2 show these statistics for the parents of student in each of the 15 nations.

**Severe Assaults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Severe Assaults Dyadic Types in Nine General Population Studies</th>
<th>Female-Only</th>
<th>Male-Only</th>
<th>Both Victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study and Sample</td>
<td>Female Only</td>
<td>Male Only</td>
<td>Both Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Survey Families and Households (Anderson, 2000)</td>
<td>Female report 22%</td>
<td>Male report 22%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-section of Manitoba couples, 1981 (Merlin B. Brinkerhoff, Grandin, &amp; Lupri, 1992)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand Birth Cohort (Magdol, et al., 1997)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Comorbidity Survey (Kessler, et al., 2001)</td>
<td>Female Report 24%</td>
<td>Male Report 20%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean National survey (Kim &amp; Emery, 2003)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonybrook NY Representative Sample (Slep &amp; O’Leary, 2005)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Family Violence Survey (Straus, 2005)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (at age 18-28) (Whitaker, et al., 2007)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative community sample (Kar &amp; O’Leary, 2010)</td>
<td>Overall 19</td>
<td>Severe 23</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall 21</td>
<td>Severe 50</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N is for subset of cases in which severe physical assault occurred, which is frequently a small percent of the study N

The DCTs presented up to this point are for any assault regardless of severity. They do not directly address the important fraction of cases when there were severe assaults. Table 3 summarizes nine studies which did measure DCTs for severe assaults. These studies, found that among the minority of couples where there was a severe assault, the median percent in the Male-Only category was 22%, and also for and Female-Only type, and 44% for the Both type. Thus, even when there was severe violence, bidirectional assault was the most prevalent. However, there is more variation around these medians than occurred for any assault.

**METHOD OF IDENTIFYING DYADIC CONCORDANCE TYPES**

In addition to being theoretically important, DCTs provide a practical approach to describing and analyzing intra-family aggression at the dyadic level because they are easily identified in both research and clinical work. If necessary, DCTs can be identified with a single
question, provided the question is asked twice. For example, to identify the DCTs for physical violence in a couple relationship, a partner can be asked if they had hit their partner in the past year, and then asked if their partner had hit them in that period. The four cells resulting from cross tabulating these two questions identify the three DCTs (Male-Only, Female-Only, or Both) (and the reference category of Neither assaulted. Moreover, this can be accomplished when only one of the partners is available because both were present during the abusive interaction and therefore each can report on what they did and what the partner did. An empirical study using data provided by both partners concluded that either abuser reports or victim reports provide suitable data (Moffitt et al., 1997). In clinical work, by asking these two questions the DCT of the relationship can instantly identified. In research, DCTs are identified by a simple cross-tabulation.

Although use of a single question is sometimes necessary because of time and other situational requirements, when possible, it is best to obtain more in-depth data, such as is provided by the Conflict Tactics Scales or CTS. The short-form of the CTS (Straus & Douglas, 2004) takes only 3 to 5 minutes. In addition to providing the data on prevalence, frequency, and severity of physical assaults, the CTS has the advantage of also providing that information for four other aspects of partner abuse: injury, psychological aggression, sexual coercion, and intransigence by the partner. These are some of the most frequently mentioned aspects of “context” (Capaldi & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2012; Krahé, Bieneck, & Möller, 2005), in the sense of circumstances which should be taken into account to understand the situation of women who are victims of physical assault by a partner.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER PARTNER VIOLENCE TYPOLOGIES

Because reviews of partner violence typologies are available elsewhere (Capaldi & Kim, 2007; Cavanaugh & Gelles, 2005), only two widely used typologies will be briefly identified to illustrate the ways in which DCTs differ from other partner violence types.

Johnson’s (1995) Common Couple versus Intimate Terrorism is currently the most frequently cited typology. It is based on the assumption that Intimate Terrorism is perpetrated almost exclusively by men (Johnson, 2006). That assumption may be correct, but it cannot be investigated using Johnson’s typology because it has no category for Intimate Terrorism solely by women, (Straus & Gozjolko, 2014).

The Holtzworth-Munroe (2000) typology of Generally Violent/Antisocial, Dysphoric/Borderline, Family Only was developed to classify male offenders using data on men, although it can also be used to classify female offenders, as was done by Monson and Langhinrichsen (2002).

Characteristics That Differentiate DCTs From Other Typologies

First, in contrast to the Johnson and the Holtzworth-Munroe typologies, DCTs are gender-inclusive in the sense that this typology inherently applies to male and female partners. Second, as noted previously, DCTs also inherently take into account both victimization and perpetration. No other typology does that. Third, as explained in the section on Broad Applicability of Dyadic Concordance Type, DCTs are applicable to almost any aggressive behavior, and to almost all family relationships, including so-called “Intimate Terrorists” (Straus & Gozjolko, 2013). Again, no other typology has this inclusive applicability. Finally, DCTs are theoretically open. They are not linked to, nor do they assume any specific etiological theory of aggression. DCTs are simply intended to identify cases in order to be able to proceed with testing hypotheses based on whatever theory or treatment modality is appropriate for a study or orientation of an agency. At the same time, DCTs open the way for those who wish to develop
more theoretically infused DCTs to do so, as in the work of Winstok (2014) on partner violence and depression.

**BROAD APPLICABILITY OF DYADIC CONCORDANCE TYPES**

The focus up to this point has been on physical assault in married and dating relationships, with an emphasis on the gender of the victim and offender. However, DCTs can be used to describe and analyze almost any type of aggressive behavior in almost all family relationships. Moreover, the utility of DCTs also applies to pro-social behaviors that are important in efforts to treat family violence. Finally, DCTs can be identified using phenomenological as well as behavioral data.

**Behavioral, Official Record, And Phenomenological Based DCTs**

The examples in this article use behavioral data to identify DCTs. This is because analysis of that type of data is the author’s mode of research, not because DCTs are restricted to them. The beliefs, perceptions, feelings, emotions, and evaluations of each partner about the other partner are critically important aspects of a relationship, and provide a basis for identifying important DCTs. For example, if the focus of the study is on distrusting a partner, whether the distrust is Male-Only distrusts, Female-Only, or Both distrust provides an important description of the relationships and then permits analysis of the degree to which each of these types is related to partner violence.

Official records can also be used to identify DCTs; for example, DCTs for criminality can be created from arrest data. Finally, observed behavior data can be used, as was done by Capaldi (2009) who observed couples interacting in a standardized stressful situation and classified them into DCTs.

| Table 4. Dyadic Victimization Types For Ten Aspects Of Victimization Of Dating Partners Of Students In 32 Nations, As Reported By Men And Women |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dyadic Type | Order of Respondent | Prevalence % | Dyadic Victimization Type |
| | | | % Male Only | % Female Only | % Both |
| Assault – Any | Male | 29 | 11 | 16 | 73 |
| | Female | 34 | 9 | 25 | 67 |
| Assault - Severe | Male | 11 | 14 | 26 | 60 |
| | Female | 13 | 16 | 31 | 53 |
| Injury – Any | Male | 8 | 11 | 17 | 72 |
| | Female | 9 | 21 | 14 | 65 |
| Injury – Severe | Male | 2 | 12 | 28 | 60 |
| | Female | 2 | 39 | 10 | 51 |
| Psych Aggression - Any | Male | 40 | 10 | 20 | 71 |
| | Female | 46 | 9 | 17 | 74 |
| Psych Aggression –Severe | Male | 25 | 19 | 17 | 64 |
| | Female | 29 | 14 | 31 | 65 |
| Sexual Coercion – Any | Male | 33 | 21 | 11 | 68 |
| | Female | 32 | 33 | 10 | 57 |
| Sexual Coercion – Verbal | Male | 32 | 22 | 11 | 67 |
| | Female | 31 | 34 | 10 | 57 |
| Sexual Coercion - Physical | Male | 3 | 27 | 19 | 55 |
| | Female | 3 | 43 | 15 | 43 |
| Intransigent | Male | 24 | 9 | 13 | 79 |
| | Female | 21 | 13 | 9 | 78 |
Application To Other Partner Abuse Behaviors

Table 4 provides examples for aggressive behaviors in addition to physical assault which occurred in the dating relationships of university students in 32 nations who participated in the International Dating Violence Study (Straus, 2008). It shows that the Both DCT was most frequently occurring type for all five forms of partner abuse, including when the abuse was severe. For all 20 DCT distributions in the table, the highest percent of violent couples were in the Both DCT.

Table 4 also addresses the question of the extent to which the percent in each DCT differs when based on reports of women as compared to men. The percentages in the Male-Only and Female-Only DCTs provided by men and women did differ somewhat, but tended to be in the same rank order relative to the each other. However, there are important exceptions for injury and sexual coercion. For example, even though according to both men and women the largest sexual coercion DCT is Both, the percent of Male-Only sexual coercion is much higher when based on reports by women than when based on male respondent reports. This and other aspects of sexual coercion are analyzed in a paper in preparation.

Aspects Of Pro-Social Behaviors

Although this article is about aggressive behavior, somewhat ironically, DCTs for positive behaviors can also identify victimization. Take for example, helpfulness or affection. These are beneficial behaviors but the DCT of Female-Only helpful identifies couples in which women are partnered with men who are low in helpful behavior, and therefore are victims of deprivation of something that is important for a satisfactory relationship.

Application To Other Family Relationships

In addition to being applicable to almost all types of behavior between marital and dating partners, DCTs are also useful in investigating and treating aggression in other family relationships such as sibling and parent-child relationships. The basic conceptual approach and methodological approach of cross-classifying the behavior of the members of the dyad is the same, but the labels will differ. For example, one of the studies in the section on the Utility of DCTs for Understanding the Causes and Effects of Problematic Behavior use DCTs to investigate differences in the effects on children of being spanked by parents. In this case, the types are labeled Father-Only, Mother-Only, and Both-spanked.

DO DCTS ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF INTRA-FAMILY AGGRESSION?

Below are examples of empirical study results that probably would not have been revealed without using DCTs.

Adverse Effects Of Partner Violence For Partners. A study of the relation of partner violence to depression, not surprisingly, found the Both assaulted DCT was associated with the highest level of depression for both male and female partners (Straus & Winstok, 2013). In addition, use of DCTs revealed information that helps understand the process which results in finding that women in violent relationships have high rates of depression. The prevailing interpretation is that this is a result of their victimization. The findings for women in the Male-Only perpetrator type are consistent with that. At the same time, the findings for women in the Female-Only perpetrator type show that women who are the sole-perpetrators also have higher levels depression than women in non-violent relationships.

Even more interesting is that, for the men in this study, the level of depressive symptoms was higher when they were the sole perpetrators rather than when they were the sole victims. A similar gender difference in the relative effect of being a perpetrator or a victim of PV was also found for couples in a Canadian national survey (Graham, Bernard, Flynn, Tremblay, & Wells,
A plausible explanation, and one that we suggested is likely to apply to other aspects of gender differences in the adverse psychological effects of partner aggression, is suggested in Winstok (2013).

**Effects For Children Of DCTs For Violence Between Their Parents.** A study of the effects on children growing up with violent parents (Straus & Michel-Smith, 2012) found that children were most victimized when the parents were in the *Both* DCT. Although this may seem obvious, it tends to be ignored by the prevailing focus on the adverse effects for children of assaults by the father. Very few studies even obtain data on violence against the father by the mother. Moreover, among the few studies which have obtained this information and reported effects, even when the inter-parental violence was unidirectional, the most adverse effect for children tended to be among those who grew up a household in the *Mother-Only* DCT (Straus, 1992; Straus & Michel-Smith, 2012).

**Intergenerational Transmission Of Partner Violence.** A longitudinal study in the Philippines found that children who grew up in families in which the *Mother-Only* perpetrator assault were 2.5 times more likely to assault a partner when they were adults than children from *Father-Only* perpetrator households. Children who grew up in *Both* violent households were five times more likely to assault a partner than those from *Male-Only* DCT households (Fehringer & Hindin, 2008).

A recent study found that some risk factors are more likely to increases the probability of a specific DCT more than the other two DCTs. For example, relationships in which the female partner is dominant tend to increase the risk of a *Female-Only* DCT the most. Residence in a highly male-dominant *nation*, although associated with high rate of all three DCTs, was most closely associated with the *Male-Only* type. Chronic psychological aggression by either partner was associated with a greater risk of a couple being in the *Both* assaulted DCT (Straus & Saito, 2014).

**DISCUSSION**

**Summary**

This article presents information suggesting that when aggression between couples or in other family relationships such as siblings or parent-child, it can aid in understanding and in research if the cases are classified into three simple and mutually exclusive *Dyadic Concordance Types* (DCTs): *Female-Only, Male-Only,* and *Both* perpetrated the aggression. This crucial aspect of aggression tends to be missed because researchers and service providers do not usually obtain the readily available information on the behavior of both members of a relationship. Therefor a starting objective of the article was to indicate ways in which almost all clinicians and researchers can easily identify the DCTs of the cases they work with.

A second objective was to summarize research on the percent of couples in each DCT for physical assault. Those studies have consistently found that most partner violence is bidirectional, i.e., when there is violence in a relationship, both the male and the female partner have assaulted. They also found that among the half of couples where the violence was unidirectional women were the sole perpetrators as often as men. Because DCTs inherently identify victims as well as perpetrators, it also means that there are about as many men as women who are the sole victims of assault by a partner. However, as pointed out in the discussion of victimization early in this article, if victimization is measured by injury rather than by being physically attacked, most studies have found higher rates for women.

A third objective was to summarize the results of studies of differences in the degree to which each DCT has harmful effects for offenders as well as victims, and for their children. The research so far available found that the *Both* assault DCT is associated with the highest probability of both physical injury and psychological harm such as depression. Research
comparing the effects of being a Male-Only and Female-Only DCT are more variable, but tend to have found a similar probability of physical injury and psychological problems for the partners and also for their children.

**What Explains The Predominance Of Bidirectional Assault?**

Because the predominance of bi-directional aggression contradicts the prevailing beliefs that Male-Only is predominant, and also seems to be inconsistent with some key statistical data such as police statistics from many nations and the US National Crime Victimization Survey, explanations need to be considered. Below are four of many possible explanations.

**Self-Defense.** No doubt some of the assaults by the women in this and the over 200 other studies which found that about the same percent of women as men assaulted a partner (Archer, 2000; Fiebert, 2004; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012; Straus, 1999; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989) were acts of self-defense. However, that does not explain the cases of partner violence in which the female is the only perpetrator. More direct evidence on self-defense is provided by a review of 17 empirical studies (Straus, 2012a).

Nine of the 17 studies were classified as using a self-labeling method. These studies asked women and men if they had acted in self-defense. Eight of the 17 studies used a behavioral-report method. These studies asked women and men who was the first to hit. The nine self-labeling studies found that the percent of women who identified themselves as having acted in self-defense ranged from 5% to 47% with a median of 19%. None of the nine studies found that a majority of women acted in self-defense. Almost half found a higher percent of men than women labeled their behavior as self-defense. The eight behavioral-report studies found that the percent of women who said they were the first to hit ranged from 25% to 61%, with a median of 46%.

**Fundamental Aspects of Dyadic Behavior.** Partner violence is a dyadic relationship and is subject to aspects of behavior that tend to characterize all dyadic relationships. Five that will be mentioned here are: **Reciprocity.** Behavior in relationship tends to be characterized by reciprocity: generosity begets generosity and aggression begets aggression. **Escalation.** Reciprocity is one basis for escalation, i.e., even more generosity and even more aggression in response. **Modeling.** Each member of a dyad enacts behavior that provide a script for the behavior of the other member. **Exposure to similar risk and protective factors.** This is especially likely in the case of marital dyads who live in the same neighborhood including violent neighborhoods (Winstok & Straus, 2011) and share many life experiences including stressors such as unemployment.

**Assortative Pairing.** The tendency to select marital partners with similar characteristics such as education, religion, and race, is well documented. There is also considerable evidence of assortative mating based on socially undesirable characteristics such aggressiveness and criminal propensity (Boutwell, Beaver, & Barnes, 2012; Kim & Capaldi, 2004; Krueger, Moffitt, Caspi, Bleske, & Silva, 1998). These almost inherent characteristics of dyads often override cultural norms specifying gender roles.

**Violent Society.** A fourth explanation for the seeming anomaly of the high percentage in the Both assaulted category, even in male-dominant nations (Straus, 2008, 2012b). The explanation starts with overwhelming evidence that male-dominant nations have much higher rates of all types of violence than do more gender equal nations. In those nations, violence tends to pervade all institutions of society: government, religion, criminal justice, and of course the family. It pervades the lives of women as well as men. Girls are socialized violently, not just boys. Consequently, women as well as men are likely to be more violent than in more gender-equal nations.
Limitations

One respondent. With only rare exceptions, the literature on family violence is based on data provided by only one informant. However, reports from each partner have been used in some studies to identify DCT’s. When one partner provides information on both their own behavior and that of the partner, because both partners experienced the events, they are equally able to report. Both may also be biased but for different reasons. We know of no study which directly investigated which partner provides a more valid account, there is evidence (some in this article) that research results are parallel regardless of whether the data is obtained from male or female study participants, for example, (Straus & Mickey, 2012).

Convenience Samples. Some of the results summarized are based on convenience samples: The 32 nation International Dating Violence Study provided data on DCTs among dating couples and the 15 nation International Parenting Study data on DCTs among the parents of students. Although these studies are based on convenience samples, they have the important advantage of enabling DCTs to be investigated in all major regions of the world using comparable standardized measures. Moreover, despite the limitations of their samples, there is strong evidence that the data in these two studies are valid indicators of national differences in partner violence and other variables (Straus, 2009a).

Broader conceptualization Needed. The use of DCTs as conceptualized and measured in this article assess an extremely important aspect of aggressive and violent behavior, but it is only one aspect. However, it does open the way to investigate many other aspects. For example, the characteristics of the partners in each of the three DCTs can provide information on etiology of each of the three types (Straus & Saito, 2014).

Within-Type Variations Are Missed. This applies to all typologies. However, with simple additional steps, within-type variation can be examined using techniques such as analysis of variance. For example, the study of the exposure of university students to violence between their parents when they were children (Straus & Michel-Smith, 2014) used analysis of variance to determine the degree to which parents in the Both parents assaulted type. By definition, both assaulted, but one might have done it a lot more than the other. The results showed a similar frequency, but will not always be the case and needs to be determined empirically.

Perpetration and Effects Of Perpetration

Many readers of this article are likely to find the predominance of the Both type and that the Male-Only DCT occurs about as often as the Female-Only surprising, and some may find it not believable. There are many reasons why these results, and the results of more than 200 studies which found high rates of female assaults on partners have been ignored or denied. They are presented elsewhere (Straus, 2009b; Straus, 2010). Because of space limitations only one will be mentioned here. It is that the studies showing similar rates for men and women measure physically attacks, not resulting injuries. If injury, not assault, is the criterion for aggression, there are far more female than male victims. Therefore, as my colleagues and I have stated in many publications for far more than 30 years (for example, Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980), when the issue is services, primary attention needs to be given to aiding female victims. However, it also needs to be kept in mind that being physically attacked is inherently a victimization experience and a crime. Imagine a case in which a woman swings a steel rod at her partner, misses, and he gets away untouched. That is still both morally wrong and a prosecutable crime. Consequently, as will be argued below, primary prevention of partner aggression requires addressing the half of assaults perpetrated by women.

Research Implications
Descriptive Statistics. The most basic implication of DCTs for research and treatment of family violence is that the default starting point should be information on the behavior of both parties so that it can be cross-classified to identify the DCTs of the cases in the study. As a descriptive statistic, the percent in each DCT helps understand the situation of both victims and offenders and should be part of the descriptive statistics in all articles. This is fundamental because it needs to be taken into account when developing the data analysis or treatment plan.

As explained in the introduction to this article, obtaining the data to report the percent in each DCT is simple. However, most research on partner violence has not obtained that data. An important example is the Demographic and Health Surveys sponsored by the World Health Organization and conducted in many nations. These surveys measured domestic violence using the Conflict Tactics Scales, but used a truncated version which omits the questions on female perpetration. Thus, there are no Both assaulted or Female-Only couples available for analysis, even though the evidence in this article suggests that together these two DCTs are about three quarters of all cases of partner violence worldwide.

DCTs and Other Methods Of Dyadic Analysis. An important advance in the last few years of family research is dyadic analysis though such techniques as the APIM (Eichelsheim, Deković, Buist, & Cook, 2009; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). DCTs and the APIM are complementary procedures. APIM uses dyadic data and controls for the interdependencies of the behavior of the partners through use of procedures such as structural equation modeling and multi-level modeling.

DCTs and APIM each contributes something to understanding a relationship that the other does not. For example, readers of the article on “Demand-Withdrawal (King & DeLongis, 2013) will find that the mean Withdrawal score of the female partners in the cases studied was higher than the score of the male partner and the correlation between withdrawal scores of the partners. But it is not possible to deduce from the information in the article what percent of couples were in the Male-Only, Female-Only, and Both high in demand-withdrawal. Not determining and presenting this crucial information seems to be the pattern of research using APIM. A search of Google Scholar to locate studies which used the APIM published in the first six months of 2013 identified 112 articles. None of the first 30 provided information on the percent Female-Only, Male-Only or Both engaging in the focal behavior. This suggested a low probability of finding any that did and time constraints and no others were checked.

Use of DCTs does not mean not using APIM. Almost the opposite should be the default. The percent in each DCT can first be determined, and then be taken into account when planning the next data analyses steps, including APIM. Presenting the DCT percentages in articles reporting APIM results is likely to provide readers with additional understanding of the relationship.

Research on dyadic characteristics of relationships is rapidly increasing but most of that research can be described as “near misses” in the sense that they do not provide information the percent in each DCT, much less differences in the effects of being in one of the three DCTs compared to the others. For example, McCarroll (2009) and others provide rich information on couples with mutual and non-mutual violence, but when it is non-mutual, no information on which partner engaged in the behavior. There is a similar lack of information on all three categories in a number of other studies such as (Marcus, 2012; Swan & Snow, 2002).

Other near-misses include studies which provide information on sole-perpetrator, sole-victim and both perpetrator and victims. However, those categories lack the vital specification provided by DCTs indicating if the sole-perpetrator or sole victim was the male or female partner, or for studies of parent-child dyads, if it was the parent or the child. Consequently,
unlike DCTs they fail to identify the role in the relationship that DCTs assume is crucial in order to understand what is happening, what to investigate further, and what to do to help a relationship.

Data Analysis. Once the DCTs have been coded as a four category variable (the three DCTs and the reference category of Neither), hypotheses about the antecedents and/or the effects can be tested provided the variables are in the specified causal order. Hypothesized independent variables can be examined using the DCT categories as the dependent variable in multinomial logistic regression analyses (Straus & Saito, 2014). Hypotheses about the effect of being in each DCT can be tested with widely used methods as analysis of variance, using the DCTs as a fixed factor. Other variables can be in the model to test for interaction with the DCTs and as controls, as in (Straus, 2013; Straus & Winstok, 2013). The output provides the significance of the difference of each DCT from the reference category and from each of the other DCTs.

Many studies have dyadic data on assault because of use of the CTS but the dependent variable is available only for the respondent. The relation of each DCT can still be determined for men and women if the “Partner-version” of DCTs is used instead of the “gender version.” The Partner-version codes the report of the respondent about their own and their partner’s behavior into the categories self-only and partner-only instead of coding them into male and female only. Figure 3 from Straus (2013) is an example using depression as the dependent variable when it was measured only for the respondent.

Theoretical Implications

Perhaps the most general theoretical implication of finding that Male-Only is that, contrary to prevailing theory, the Both DCT is by far the most prevalent, and Female-Only is about as prevalent as Male-Only for most types of intra-family aggression. For this and other reasons, theories of family violence which assume and seek to explain male perpetration need to be replaced by a family system theoretical framework which recognizes that most partner violence involves bi-directional aggression and that it occurs in response to multiple causes, not just male-dominance in society or in the relationship. The multiple causes is recognized in the list of 18 empirically established risk factors published by the World Health Organization (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002) and the list of 31 published by the US Centers For Disease Control (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007). Both indicate male-dominance as only one of many causes. Moreover, it needs to be addressed, not only as a risk factor for partner violence, but also as a form of social organization that is inherently victimizing. However, the focus on that one risk factor has led to ignoring and sometimes even rejecting most of the multitude of other causes such as cultural acceptance of violence by women as well as men, stress, and mental health problems such as borderline personality, most of which have been known for more than 30 years.

Treatment Implications

To be consistent with the results summarized in this article and the theoretical implications just stated, aid for victims and treatment for offenders needs to start with an initial screening to identify the DCT of the case at hand. As pointed out early in this article, that can be accomplished in three to five minutes through use of the short-form of the Conflict Tactics Scales. That instrument also provides measures of the prevalence, frequency, and severity of four other aspects of partner violence (often identified as “context” variables) that need attention: injury, psychological aggression, sexual coercion, and intransigence by the partner. Such a change would mark a revolution from present practice, which is to assume that the DCT is Male-Only perpetrator rather than empirically determine the DCT before developing the treatment plan.
That implication, if followed, would help address a fundamental problem with the prevalent treatment approach, exemplified by “Duluth Model” (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The Duluth approach, which is predominant in the US and influential in many other nations (Hamilton, 2013), assumes the cause is misogyny and patriarchy. Instead, there needs to be screening to determine the extent to which that is actually an important problem in the case at hand. In practice, the Duluth Model also rejects as excuses rather than real causes almost all the many other risk factors identified by hundreds of studies and summarized in the World Health Organization report cited in the previous section. Many of these risk factors can be identified using the Personal and Relationships Profile (Chan & Straus, 2008; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 2010). This instrument measures 25 variables that have been demonstrated in research to be associated with an increased probability of partner violence, including of course dominance by one partner. The initial diagnoses of DCTs and of risk factors that need to be addressed, rather than assuming and privileging one of them, is so crucial that this diagnosis should be regarded as second only to determining safety before intervening in cases of partner violence.

**Services For Victims And Offenders**

A recent study of the effectiveness of four “batter intervention program” (Straus, 2014) adds to the empirical evidence indicating the importance of taking into account the frequent overlap of victimization and offending. This study examined recidivism by 563 men. It found that 60% of the female partners had previously assaulted, and 22% during the 15 months subsequent to the program. Of the women who did not assault in those 15 months, 19% were victims of assault by their partner during this period. Thus, when the women refrained from violence, it did not guarantee safety. On the other hand, when the women did assault, it almost guaranteed they would be attacked: 82% of their male partners assaulted. These results, along with a longitudinal study by Feld and Straus (1989) indicate that a woman’s perpetration of violence is a strong predictor of her being a victim of partner violence. This includes longitudinal studies, by Feld and Straus (1989), Kuijpers, van der Knaap, and Winkel (2011), and Lorber and O’Leary (2011), and cross-sectional studies by O’Keefe (1997), Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, and Saltzman (2007). Still other studies are reviewed in the meta-analysis by Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, and Tritt (2004), which concluded that violence by the female partner is the largest single risk factor for victimization of women. Thus, protecting women can be aided by determining and taking into account the DCT of each case as part of the intake process, regardless of whether the presenting case is a female victim or a male perpetrator.

Although the Female-Only perpetrator may occur as often as the Male-Only, and the Both type is the most frequent DCT, that should not obscure attention to the finding of many studies noted previously which found that women suffer about two thirds of the injuries, including two thirds of the deaths at the hands of a partner. For psychological injury from partner violence, most studies provide empirical results only on psychological harm to female victims, and therefore do not address the question of gender differences in the “resulting harm” aspect of victimization. The study of depression experienced by partners in violent relationships summarized in the section on utility of DCTs for understanding the causes and effects of family victimization is one of the exceptions, and illustrates use of DCTs to identify the service needs of both partners.

More generally, the Both DCT is important for victim services because, in addition to being the most frequent pattern of intra-family aggression, is also more closely linked to other life problems of both partners than either the Female-Only or the Male-Only DCT (Charles, Whitaker, Le, Swahn, & DiClemente, 2011; Chiodo et al., 2012), and is probably the most
difficult DCT to remediate. Similarly, Moffitt, and colleagues (2001) study of a representative sample of 360 young-adult couples found that abuse was a dyadic process, particularly in clinical abusive couples having injury and/or official agency intervention. They concluded that treatment of both partners is usually necessary.

**Child Welfare Services.** One of the concerns of child welfare is to help children victimized by exposure to violence between parents. We suggest this effort is handicapped because, with rare exception, research and theory on this problem focuses only children in situations in which the father attacked the mother. A recent example of such research is Schnurr (2013). In respect to child welfare services, workers are directed to “identify evidence of woman-battering” [emphasis added] (National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect, No Date). In contrast, the research summarized in this article and in Straus and Michel-Smith (Straus & Michel-Smith, 2014), found about half the children are in families where both parents assault. An additional quarter are in families where only the mother assaulted. Therefore, it seems likely that this aspect of child victimization will be better understood by researchers, and more effectively prevented and treated, if DCTs are used as part of the standard case assessment to determine the actual situation for the cases at hand.

**Restorative justice.** DCTs share with restorative justice the assumption that a long term resolution can be aided by attending to both the victim and the offender and their interrelationship. Restorative justice is applicable to all three DCTs. There are many difficulties in actually applying these sound principles (Shapland, Gwen, & Angela, 2011). The results of a randomized trial by Mills and colleagues (2013) did find that restorative justice participants had less recidivism than those in batterer intervention programs but the comparisons were significant for only one of the post-treatment time periods. However, even the non-significant differences at least showed that restorative justice is just as effective as other approaches and, did not endanger female victims, and has the advantage of being a more humane mode of dealing with this type of crime.

**Prevention Implications**

With rare exception primary prevention efforts are directed only to men and boys. Even the exceptions do not meet the need to also address the prevention message to women and girls because they tend to be “gender neutral,” whereas what is needed is gender-specificity. That is, the program needs to include examples that specifically identify men and boys as victims, not just women and girls as victims. The same gender specificity is needed for examples of offenders. Ironically, the need for gender-specific examples arises partly because of the success of the women’s movement in bringing world-wide attention to against women and steps to combat it. This was a remarkable and much needed accomplishment. The ironic aspect is that it has led to public perception of “domestic violence” and “family violence” as almost exclusively “violence against women,” whereas, as the evidence summarized in this article indicates, the percent of men who have been physically attacked by a female partner is as high as the percent of women attacked by men. At the same time, the greater injury suffered by women must be addressed as part of a prevention effort. This is because the prevalence of injury is needed to accurately describe partner violence and because the greater injury sustained by women difference is widely perceived. Therefore, failure to acknowledge it will discredit the prevention message.

**Conclusions**

The evidence summarized in this article suggests that taking into account the DCTs of the cases at hand, i.e., whether the couple is Female-Only, Male-Only, or Both violent should be the default first step in research and in clinical practice on intra-family violence. That simple step
can help researchers and service providers take into account the crucial evidence that victims may also be perpetrators and often are, that perpetrators may also be victims and often are, and that each type shares risk factors and harmful effects with the other types, but also has distinctive characteristics that need to be part of the research or service plan.

Whether there is concordance or discordance in respect to a behavior or characteristic of interest is a crucial starting point for understanding a couple, but much more is needed. To take one simple example, two of the three DCTs identify discordance. Understanding those couples requires investigating the behaviors they use to deal with the discordance. When there is concordance in a maladaptive behavior such as physical aggression, the research or treatment must examine the processes used by each partner to cope with that situation. In short, important as making DCTs a default starting point, it is just that – a starting point. Nevertheless, making DCTs the default starting point for almost all research and interventions focused on intra-family aggression could make an important contribution to criminology, victimology, and human well-being.
REFERENCES


Straus, M. A. (2009b). Why the overwhelming evidence on partner physical violence by women has not been perceived and is often denied. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 18*(6), 552-571. doi: 10.1891/09267709051 05081


