

SPANISH AND LATIN-AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE OFFENDERS: IS THERE A DIFFERENTIAL PROFILE?

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EXTENDED SUMMARY

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) against women is a global social and public health problem (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014; Organización Mundial de la Salud, 2013). In Spain, 12.5% women over 16 years have been experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their current or former partners in their lifetime (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2015; Novo, Herbón, & Amado, 2016). Official data show that a third of all IPV reported cases and deaths are immigrant women (Instituto para la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades, 2015a). Also, around 25% of men convicted for intimate partner violence are immigrants (Carbajosa, Lila, Negredo, & Pérez, 2011; Instituto para la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades, 2015b). Batterer Intervention Programs (BIPs) are among the key measures to prevent this type of violence. However, although there is a widespread use of these intervention programs, reviews and meta-analyses have found that the effect sizes of these interventions are small and, therefore, evidence available on the efficacy of these programs is still limited (e.g., Arias, Arce, & Vilariño, 2013; Babcock et al., 2004; Eckhardt, Murphy, Whitaker, Sprunger, Dykstra, & Woodard, 2013). In this regard, a number of scholars have suggested that the limited effectiveness of BIPs could be related to cultural factors. For example, some research shows higher rates of drop-outs from BIPs and recidivism among Afro-American and Latin-American immigrants (Aldarondo, Kaufman, &

Jasinski, 2002; Gondolf, 2004; Taft, Murphy, Elliott, & Keaser, 2011; Waller, 2016). Despite the high number of immigrants participating in BIPs (Carbajosa et al., 2011; Fernández-Montalvo, Echaury, Martínez, Azcárate, & López-Goñi, 2015), research on immigrant offenders in this type of intervention programs is still very limited. Furthermore, most of the available research on immigration and IPV has been conducted in USA and other Anglo-Saxon speaking countries, and therefore, generalization of the results of this research to Spanish speaking countries should be taken with caution (Carbajosa et al., 2011). This study aims to analyze whether there are differences between Latin-American immigrants and native Spanish offenders, in three sets of psychosocial variables (individual, relational and contextual variables).

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants consisted of 517 male IPV offenders who were court-mandated to a community-based BIP (Lila, Oliver, Catalá-Miñana, & Conchell, 2014). The age range was 18-78 years ($M = 39.57$, $SD = 11.91$). The sample was divided into two groups according to the country of origin: Spanish ($n = 400$) and Latin-American immigrants ($n = 117$). The most representative nationalities in the Latin-American sample were Ecuadorians (45.3 %; $n = 53$), Bolivians (19.7 %; $n = 23$) and Colombians (14.5%; $n = 14.5\%$). Data were recruited during the program first assessment session.

Instruments

A survey was developed through a review of the CPV literature, containing 28 factors (Table 1), grouped into four dimensions: 1) characteristics of violence; 2) characteristics of the offender; 3) family characteristics; and 4) protective factors. Respondents were asked with closed-ended questions about the adequacy of these factors to assess the risk of CPV (adequate, don't know, inadequate), as well as opinion regarding the proposal of a tool to assess risk in these cases (Table 2).

Individual variables

Socio-demographic variables (age, educational level, income level, marital status, employment status and nationality); self-esteem and impulsivity were assessed using the *Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale* (Rosenberg, 1989) and the *Plutchik's Impulsivity Scale* (Spanish version by Rubio et al., 1998), respectively. Alcohol abuse was assessed with the *CAGE Questionnaire* (CAGE; Mayfield, McLeod & Hall, 1974). Drug abuse was assessed by the *Substance Dependence Scale* from the *Millon Clinical Inventory III* (T Scale. MCMI III; Spanish version by Cardenal & Sánchez, 2007). Attitudes toward intimate-partner violence were evaluated with the *Perceived severity of intimate-partner violence Scale* (Gracia, García & Lila, 2011) and, the following single items: *Perceived frequency of intimate partner violence* ("As far as you know, what is the frequency of domestic violence against women within Spanish society?"), *Victim blaming* ("A cause of intimate partner violence is the provocative behavior of women"), *Acceptability of intimate-partner violence* ("In your opinion, is intimate partner violence" 1) *Unacceptable in all circumstances and always punishable*; 2) *Unacceptable in all circumstances and not always punishable*; 3) *Acceptable in certain circumstances* and 4) *Acceptable in all circumstances*), *Public tolerance of intimate partner violence* ("Under what circumstances do you think a female victim of violence from her partner should report it to the legal authorities?") and *Attitudes toward reporting partner violence against women* ("What would you do if, while at home, you hear a neighbor is beating his wife?") (Gracia & Herrero, 2006a).

Relational variables

Couple conflict level and violence were assessed using the *Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2)*; Spanish version by Loinaz, 2009).

Contextual variables

Contextual factors were assessed with the *Community Social Support Scale* including the following factors: community integration, community participation, and perceived social support from formal and informal community organizations (Gracia & Herrero, 2006b), and a single item tapping *Perceived neighborhood social disorder* ("How do you feel when you walk around your neighborhood at night?") (Gracia, Herrero, & Lila, 2009).

Data Analysis

Analyses were carried out by grouping the variables according to ecological level. ANOVAs, MANOVAs and Chi-square tests were used to compare variables between Spanish and Latin-American immigrant batterers.

Results

Regarding individual variables, ANOVAs (univariate analysis) and Chi-square tests showed significant differences between Spanish and Latin-American immigrant batterers in the following socio-demographic variables: age, income level, educational level and employment status. Spanish batterers compared to Latin-American immigrant batterers were older ($F(1, 515) = 36.154, p < .05$) and had higher income levels ($F(1,510) = 11.598, p < .05$). In terms of educational level and employment status, Chi-square tests showed significant differences between groups: Spanish batterers had lower educational levels and higher unemployment rates. No significant differences were found for marital status. In addition, MANOVAs did not show significant differences between groups in the psychological characteristics analyzed: impulsivity and self-esteem

(Pillai's trace = .013, $F(1,204) = 1.328$, $p > .05$). Likewise, ANOVAs for each dependent variable showed no significant differences. Regarding substance abuse, MANOVA showed significant differences between nationality groups in alcohol and drug abuse (Pillai's trace = .113, $F(2,98) = 6.259$, $p < .01$). However, univariate analyses indicated significant differences only for alcohol abuse: Latin-American immigrant batterers showed more alcohol consumption. Regarding attitudes toward intimate partner violence, MANOVA analyses showed significant differences (Pillai's trace = .100, $F(1,164) = 2.961$, $p < .01$). ANOVA analyses showed significant differences only for victim blaming and acceptability of intimate partner violence. Latin-American batterers showed higher levels of victim blaming and acceptability of intimate partner violence.

Regarding relational variables, MANOVA analyses did not show significant differences in psychological, physical and sexual violence between Latin American and Spanish batterers (Pillai's trace = .140, $F(6,65) = 1.767$, $p > .05$).

Finally, regarding contextual variables, MANOVA analyses showed significant multivariate effect for nationality group (Pillai's trace = .146, $F(1,212) = 7.124$, $p < .001$). There were significant differences on community integration, and perceived social support from informal and formal community organizations. Latin-American batterers showed lower community integration and higher perceived social support from formal and informal community organizations compared to Spanish batterers.

Discussion

In this study, we analyzed whether there were differences between Latin-American immigrants and native Spanish offenders participating in a BIP, in three sets of psychosocial variables (individual, relational and contextual variables). Regarding individual characteristics, results showed significant differences in socio-demographic variables as age, educational level, income level and employment status. Latin-American immigrant

batterers were younger, had higher educational level, lower income and higher employability than Spanish batterers. These results confirm previous research findings (e.g., Fernández-Montalvo et al., 2011; Yépez, 2014). In this regard, some studies have showed that youth, low educational levels, lower income levels, unemployment and lack of opportunities related to belonging to an ethnic minority are associated with higher risk of IPV (González-Guarda, Ortega, Vásquez, & De Santis, 2010; Jasinski, 2001; Vives-Cases et al., 2014; West, 2005). No difference in self-esteem and impulsivity were found between Latin American immigrants and Spanish batterers. Regarding substance abuse, Latin-American batterers showed higher levels of alcohol abuse than Spanish batterers. This finding is similar to results from previous studies (Aldarondo et al., 2002; Catalá et al., 2013; Catalá-Miñana et al., 2017; Lila et al., 2016; Lila et al., in press; Murphy, Winters, O'Farrel, Fals-Stewart, & Murphy, 2005). Finally, Latin-American batterers showed greater victim blaming and acceptability of intimate partner violence compared to Spanish batterers. These results are consistent with previous studies with Latin-American immigrants from the general population (Gracia et al., 2009).

Regarding relational characteristics, this study did not find significant differences between Latin American and Spanish batterers related to psychological, physical and sexual IPV.

Regarding contextual variables, results showed differences between groups in community integration and perceived social support from formal and informal community organizations. Latin-American batterers showed lower community integration and higher perceived social support from formal and informal community organizations than Spanish batterers. Regarding perceived neighborhood social disorder, some studies propose a link between impoverished and disorganized neighborhoods, immigration and intimate partner violence (Cummings et al., 2013; Gracia et al. 2015). However, results did not find differences in perceived neighborhood social disorder between Latin-American immigrant batterers and Spanish batterers.

Finally, this study suggests that Latin-American immigrants in Spain have some psychosocial differential characteristics compared to Spanish batterers. BIPs could take into account these differences for possible program adaptations aiming to increase their effectiveness (Carbajosa & Boira, 2013; Expósito & Ruiz, 2010; Lila, 2013). Future studies should analyze whether including these adaptations can help to improve BIPs results for different cultural groups.