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Profile of partner aggressors as a function of risk of recidivism



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Abstract Partner aggressors present psychopathological, criminal, and sociodemographic characteristics that have been used for classification in typologies. The goal of the present work was to identify profile of aggressors as a function of the risk of recidivism, and assess whether there correspondence with type of offenders proposed by Holtzworth–Munroe and Stuart. The sample was made up of 90 men condemned for partner violence, of whom 50 were serving a prison sentence, and 40 mandatory community intervention/programs. The risk of recidivism was assessed with the SARA - Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide, completed with information obtained from prison records, clinical interviews for the assessment of personality disorders, and self-reports. The results reveal three profile of aggressors according to their risk of recidivism, related to the above-mentioned classification: high-risk aggressors coincide with the Dysphoric/Borderline (DB) type, medium-risk aggressors with the low-level antisocial type (LLA), and the low-risk group with the type of aggressors family only (FO). The implications are discussed in the penitentiary intervention of these results.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Violencia contra la pareja;
tipología de agresores;
riesgo de reincidencia;

Perfil de agresores contra la pareja según el riesgo de reincidencia

Resumen Los agresores contra la pareja presentan características psicopatológicas, delictivas y sociodemográficas que han sido utilizadas para su clasificación en tipologías. El objetivo del presente trabajo ha sido identificar el perfil de estos agresores según el riesgo de reincidencia, y valorar si existe coincidencia con la tipología de agresores propuesta por Holtzworth–Munroe y Stuart. La muestra fue de 90 hombres condenados por violencia contra la pareja, de los que 50 cumplían pena de prisión y 40 una medida alternativa: intervención/programa. El riesgo de reincidencia se evaluó con la guía SARA-Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide, cumplimentada

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trastorno de personalidad;
estudio ex post facto

con la información obtenida de los expedientes penitenciarios, entrevistas clínicas para la evaluación de trastornos de personalidad y autoinformes. Los resultados muestran tres perfiles de agresores según su riesgo de reincidencia que se relacionan con la mencionada clasificación, ya que los agresores de alto riesgo coinciden con el tipo disfóricos/borderline (DB), los agresores de riesgo medio con el tipo antisocial de bajo nivel (LLA) y el grupo de menor riesgo con el tipo de agresores limitados al ámbito familiar (FO). Se discuten las implicaciones en la intervención penitenciaria de estos resultados.

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most common types of aggression suffered by women, and worldwide, 38% of homicides of women and 42% of physical and/or sexual aggressions were perpetrated by their partners or ex-partners (World Health Organization, 2013). The figures for this type of violence in Europe are also alarming, as 22% of the women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence, 43% psychological violence, and 55% sexual harassment (European Union Agency of Fundamental Rights, 2014). Knowing the risk factors present in each aggressor facilitates decision making by all the professionals working to prevent new violent acts, for example, members of the police force, judges, forensic teams, penitentiary professionals, and therapists, among others, who must adapt their interventions to the profile of the aggressor (Andrés-Pueyo & Echeburúa, 2010). To facilitate this decision making, various guidelines have been developed to rate the risk, depending on the type of professional who uses it, or the type of violence they need to appraise (Belfrage et al., 2012). Accordingly, one of the most widely used guides worldwide is the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide, or SARA (Kropp, Hart, Webster y Eaves, 1999), considered one of the most complete tools due to the number of items it appraises, the clinical-actuarial method employed, and the contexts in which it can be applied (Storey, Kropp, Hart, Belfrage, & Strand, 2014).

The characteristics considered as IPV risk factors associated with the aggressor have allowed the establishment of diverse typologies, underscoring the one by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994). This classification is based on psychopathological and criminal characteristics, and type of violence employed, as a function of its extension and severity, defining three types of aggressors: (a) Family only (FO): aggressors of low-intensity and severity, presenting scarce psychopathology, without a personality disorder, although with passive-aggressive and obsessive traits, abusive alcohol consumption, low level of depression, and moderate level of anger, and no criminal antecedents; (b) Dysphoric/Borderline aggressors (DB): they employ violence more frequently and intensely than the former group, both against family members and unfamiliar, they have penal antecedents, present higher incidence of borderline personality disorder with emotional instability, they are dependent, jealous and controlling, generating cyclical violence with phases of aggression and repentance, also presenting moderate alcohol consumption and high levels of

depression and anger; and (c) Generally violent/antisocial (GVA): this is the type of aggressor who generates more severe violence, with the greatest number of penal and criminal antecedents, a typical anti-social profile with an instrumental use of violence, scarce empathy, low levels of depression and moderate levels of anger, and abusive alcohol consumption. In general, this typology has been replicated in different studies (Amor, Echeburúa, & Loinaz, 2009), and in others like that carried out by Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, Rehman, and Stuart (2000), who expanded it with a fourth subtype, called low-level antisocial (LLA), with characteristics of the FO and GVA type; that is, this type presents antisocial characteristics, although they do not perpetrate such intense and generalized violence as the antisocial subtype.

Diverse longitudinal studies assess the recidivism of previously differentiated aggressors according to different typologies. One of them identified the GVA aggressor as having the highest recidivism, followed by the DB type, and lastly, the FO type of aggressor (Thijssen & de Ruiter, 2011). Other studies identified two types of aggressors, Antisocial/pathological and Non-pathological (Loinaz, 2014), or three types Non-pathological, Antisocial/violent and Disturbed batterers (Cunha & Abrunhosa, 2013).

The present study has the goal of identifying the different profiles of aggressors based on the risk of recidivism, using the factors from the SARA guide, and to study their relationship with the typology of aggressors proposed by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994), confirming the above-mentioned studies.

Method

Participants

The sample is made up of 90 men condemned for IPV, serving two different types of sentence: 50 are sentenced to prison in the Penitentiary Center of Alicante-II (Spain), and 40 comply with a Mandatory Community Intervention/Program in the Management Service of Penalties and Alternative Measures of Murcia (Spain). The main sociodemographic characteristics of the sample are: mean age 35.6 years ($SD=8.62$), 46.7% ($n=42$) are Spanish and 20% ($n=18$) are Latin American, 70% ($n=66$) have only primary studies,

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