

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - SEXUAL ASSAULT REPLICATION PROGRAM**

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In an effort to replicate the findings from the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment, the National Institute of Justice founded the Spouse Assault Replication Program, also known as SARP. These field experiments were carried out by five police departments and research teams. The five sites included Charlotte, North Carolina; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Dade County, Florida; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Omaha, Nebraska. Each site received approximately \$750,000 for the replication projects. The local police departments also contribute substantial resources these efforts over a multi-year period.

However, rather than providing results that were consistent with the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment, the published results from the five replication experiments produced inconsistent findings about whether arrest deters intimate partner violence. Because of the inconsistent findings generated by the five replication experiments, policymakers working to reduce intimate partner violence became less confident about relying on arrest as the primary response to violence between intimate partners.

Ultimately, the development of a coherent evaluation of the effectiveness of arrest based on the five experiments, with published results, was complicated, given the differences across the experimental sites with regard to case selection, incident eligibility requirements, statistical analyses, and even the types of outcome measures that were used, in the sense some used official, some use unofficial measures.

Ultimately, the results were reported in "The Re-Analysis of SARP," which relies on Maxwell et. al.'s article entitled, "Effects of arrests on intimate partner violence: New evidence from the Spouse Assault Replication Program." This research pooled the incidents, combined the incidents, from the five replication experiments, computed comparable independent and outcome measures from common data intentionally embedded in each experiment, and standardized the experimental designs and statistical models. Using the increased statistical power provided by the, quote, "pooled data"-- in the sense, making it a larger sample size-- the re-analysis provided a more consistent, more precise, and less ambiguous estimation of the impact of arrest on intimate partner violence.

Specifically, Maxwell et. al.'s study examined two outcome measures, one from the criminal history database and one from the victim interviews. They also looked at two other aggregation measures. These captured incidents involving damage of property owned by the victim or the common household and verbal threats of physical or property damage made by the batterer against the victim. They also collapsed the assigned intervention categories into two groups, non-arrest group and an arrest group. So the non-arrest group included were those who received mediation and those who were sent away, rather than being arrested.

The results from the victim interview data suggested that about 40% of the interviewed victims reported subsequent victimization. During a six-month follow-up period, the 3,147 interviewed

victims reported more than 9,000 incidents of aggression by the suspects since their initial domestic violence incident. Regardless of group, arrest or no-arrest, there was a high concentration of repeat aggression among a small number of batterers. So while most victims reported no incidents of aggression, about 8% of the victims reported a total number of incidents that represented more than 82% of all the reported incidents-- in the sense, there were a small sample of chronic repeat aggressors, offenders.

When the likelihood of failure-- in the sense, re-offending-- was estimated for the typical domestic violence case, the results showed that about 36% of suspects in the arrest group reoffended, compared with 48% of suspects in the non-arrest group-- once again showing support for an arrest policy. According to the official data, less than 30% of the suspects, arrested or not, aggressed against the same victim during the follow-up period. Overall, the results based on the police data regarding the effectiveness of arrest are consistent in direction with those based on the victim interview data. Or in other words, a consistent deterrent relationship exists between arrest of a suspect and later aggression, while controlling for the differences across the sites, the victim interview process, and suspect characteristics.

So let's recap what we've learned so far. The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiments said that arrest works. Subsequent replication experiments from the SARP program said that maybe it works, maybe it doesn't. The pooled analysis from Maxwell et. al.'s study said that it does work. So should we believe the findings from the pooled analysis? In order to understand why different studies are giving different results, we need to understand the methodology used.

In sum, what did these studies have, as far as contributing to the change in law enforcement response? Contributions to the change in law enforcement response were the women's movement, which called attention to the prevalence of domestic violence, the adequacy of law enforcement responses, and the plights of battered women. Decisions by more domestic violence victims to sue police agencies for failing to provide protection under the law. The impact of research in the 1980s that suggested that arresting offenders would better deter them from further battering. And the national move towards more punitive measures in dealing with social problems, such as child abuse and support.