



Male Help-Seekers for Partner Violence Victimization: A Descriptive Analysis

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Background: Prevalence of Male Victims of Partner Violence

- Nat'l Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS): in 2004, 1.3 per 1,000 men.
- NFVS: 12.4% of women used some type of violence against their male partners, and 4.8% used severe violence in previous year.
- Nat'l Violence Against Women Survey: 0.8% of men in the previous year.



Background: Consequences of Controversy

- We do not know much about men who sustain IPV.
- Qualitative accounts show that men who sustain IPV:
 - May not be believed
 - May be ashamed to come forward
 - May be accused of being a batterer when they do come forward



Purpose of Present Study

- Provide empirical descriptive data on men who sustain PV and seek help
 - What abusive behaviors occur in their relationships and how frequently?
 - Why don't they just leave?
 - What help-seeking efforts have they engaged in?
 - What responses did they get when seeking help?



Sample

- Criteria:
 - Heterosexual men
 - Ages 18-59
 - In a relationship lasting at least one month in the previous year
 - Physically assaulted by female partner within previous year
 - Called the Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men and Women to get help
- **N = 52** [Data collection ongoing thru Dec 2008]



Survey

- If eligible, men referred to Internet survey
 - Demographics
 - Conflict Tactics Scales
 - Closed-ended and open-ended questions on:
 - Last physical argument
 - Why man has not left
 - Help-seeking efforts

Demographics ($n = 52$)

	Mean	SD
Male Helpseekers's Age	40.63 years	9.36
Female Partner's Age	36.65 years	8.30
Male Helpseeker's Approximate Income	\$54.5K	\$32K
Female Partner's Approximate Income	\$34.5K	\$30K

Demographics ($n = 52$)

Race/Ethnicity	Male Helpseeker	Female Partner
White	92.3%	90.4%
Hispanic	7.7%	5.8%
African American	3.8%	1.9%
Asian American	1.9%	0%
Native American	1.9%	1.9%
Other	1.9%	1.9%



Relationship Characteristics

	Mean	SD
Relationship Length	93.20 months (7.7 years)	71.87
Time Since Relationship Ended (n = 16)	4.00 months	3.22

% of relationships with minor children: 75% ($n = 39$)



Relationship Characteristics

Relationship Status	Percent
Married	50%
Separated	19%
Divorced	7%
Ex-dating	7%
Cohabiting	6%
Dating	4%
Ex-cohabiting	4%
Ex-engaged	2%

Psychological Aggression

	% Female Partners Who Perpetrated	% Male Helpseekers Who Perpetrated
Controlling Behaviors	100.0	48.1
Revenge	92.3	42.3
Name-Calling	86.5	30.8
Threats	67.3	15.4
Insisting on Sexual Intercourse	40.4	11.5

Psychological Aggression

	Female Partners: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year		Male Helpseekers: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year	
	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>
Controlling	39.94 (52)	32.18	7.20 (25)	7.19
Revenge	10.82 (48)	9.00	3.91 (22)	4.23
Name-Calling	11.76 (45)	12.03	3.88 (16)	4.30
Threats	15.37 (35)	14.92	2.00 (8)	1.31
Insisting on Sexual Intercourse	10.43 (21)	7.90	7.83 (6)	10.23

Physical Aggression

	% Female Partners Who Perpetrated	% Male Helpseekers Who Perpetrated
Minor	98.1	51.9
Severe	88.5	13.5
Very Severe	51.9	5.8
Any	100.0	55.8

Physical Aggression

	Female Partners: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year		Male Helpseekers: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year	
	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>
Minor	28.29 (51)	30.20	4.52 (27)	4.85
Severe	15.15 (46)	16.26	3.29 (7)	3.15
Very Severe	5.56 (27)	6.68	4.67 (3)	3.06
Any	41.15 (52)	44.62	5.00 (29)	5.60

Injuries

	% of Females Who Were Injured	% of Males Who Were Injured
Minor	26.9	80.8
Severe	7.7	34.6
Any	26.9	84.6

Injuries

	Mean # of Female Injuries		Mean # of Male Injuries	
	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>
Minor	2.21 (14)	1.42	9.26 (42)	10.51
Severe	1.75 (4)	1.50	5.67 (18)	6.77
Any	2.71 (14)	2.01	11.16 (44)	13.30



Other Forms of Abuse

Partner falsely accused helpseeker of hitting or beating her	69.2%
Partner falsely accused helpseeker of physically abusing children	56.4%
Partner filed restraining order against helpseeker under false pretenses	46.2%
Partner falsely accused helpseeker of sexually abusing children	12.8%



Description of Last Physical Argument

- “[I] did not want her to get out on the road with the children due to habitual overusage of drugs and alcohol. For the children's and her safety. I broke my hand while she tried to run me over when I tried to stop her from exiting the driveway.”

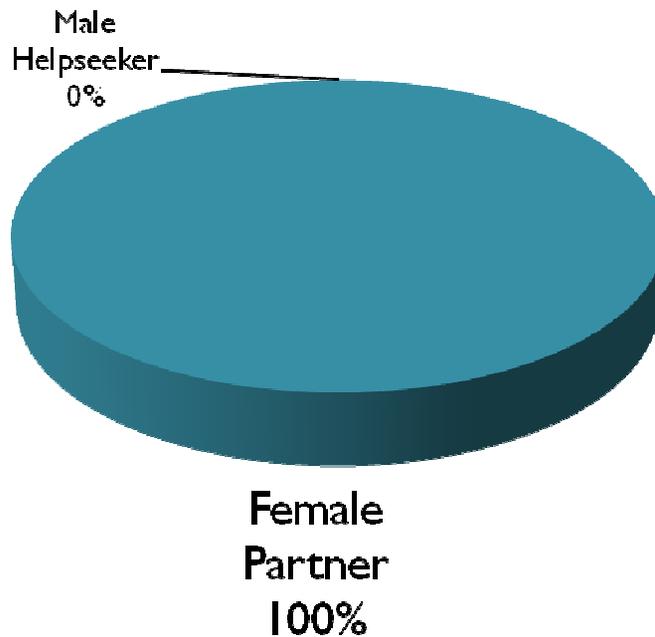


Description of Last Physical Argument

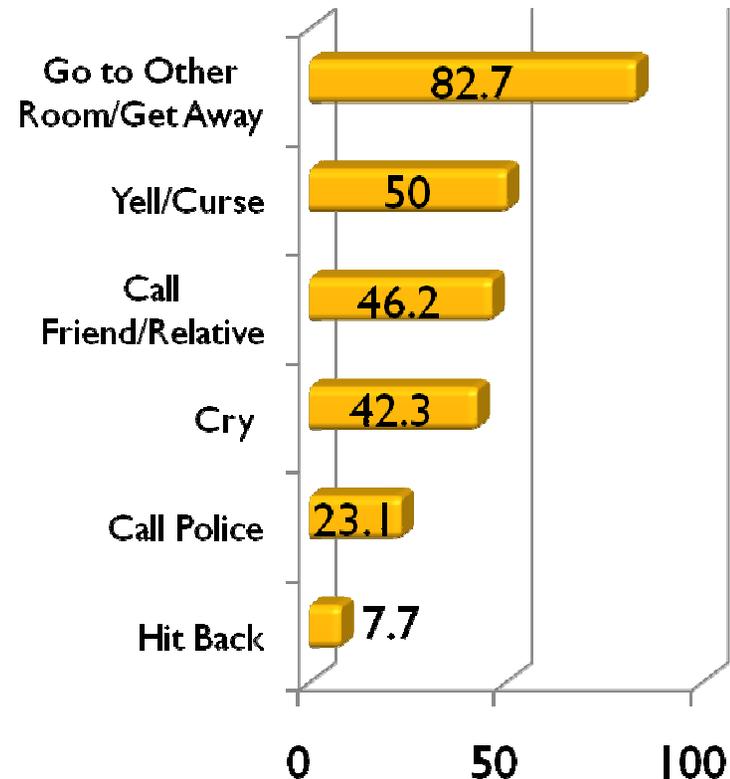
- *“I was trying to go through the door to my room while she was shouting in my ear, so she grabbed the door from me and slammed it on me repeatedly, trying to keep me from entering my room while I was trying to get away from her. The door is made of planks and it's now broken again (the last time it broke was similar). I am disabled with fibromyalgia and arthritis and I don't want to get banged up--it really hurts--or to punch out my wife, which many men probably would have done by now. I called my teenaged boys to get her off me; I hate to get them involved but it beats mayhem.”*

Description of Last Physical Argument

Who Was the First to Use Physical Aggression in Last Physical Argument?



What did the Male Partner Do As a Result?





Description of Last Physical Argument: Examples of Other Responses

- **Restrain/Self-Defense:**
 - *“...struggled to take a pair of scissors away from her.”*
- **Take it:**
 - *“I shut down or closed off and just took it. This is my most common method of dealing with it.”*
- **Get others involved:**
 - *“Called her therapists, anger management specialists and psychiatrists and crisis intervention unit for her going off her medications and hurting me and the kids.”*
- **Try to reason with her:**
 - *“Tried to talk to her about it calmly, saying "now, if I did that to you, you'd call it 'abuse.'" She answered that she was defending her honor.”*
- **Leave house:**
 - *“Left the house. Slept in car.”*



Description of Last Physical Argument: Alcohol and Drug Use

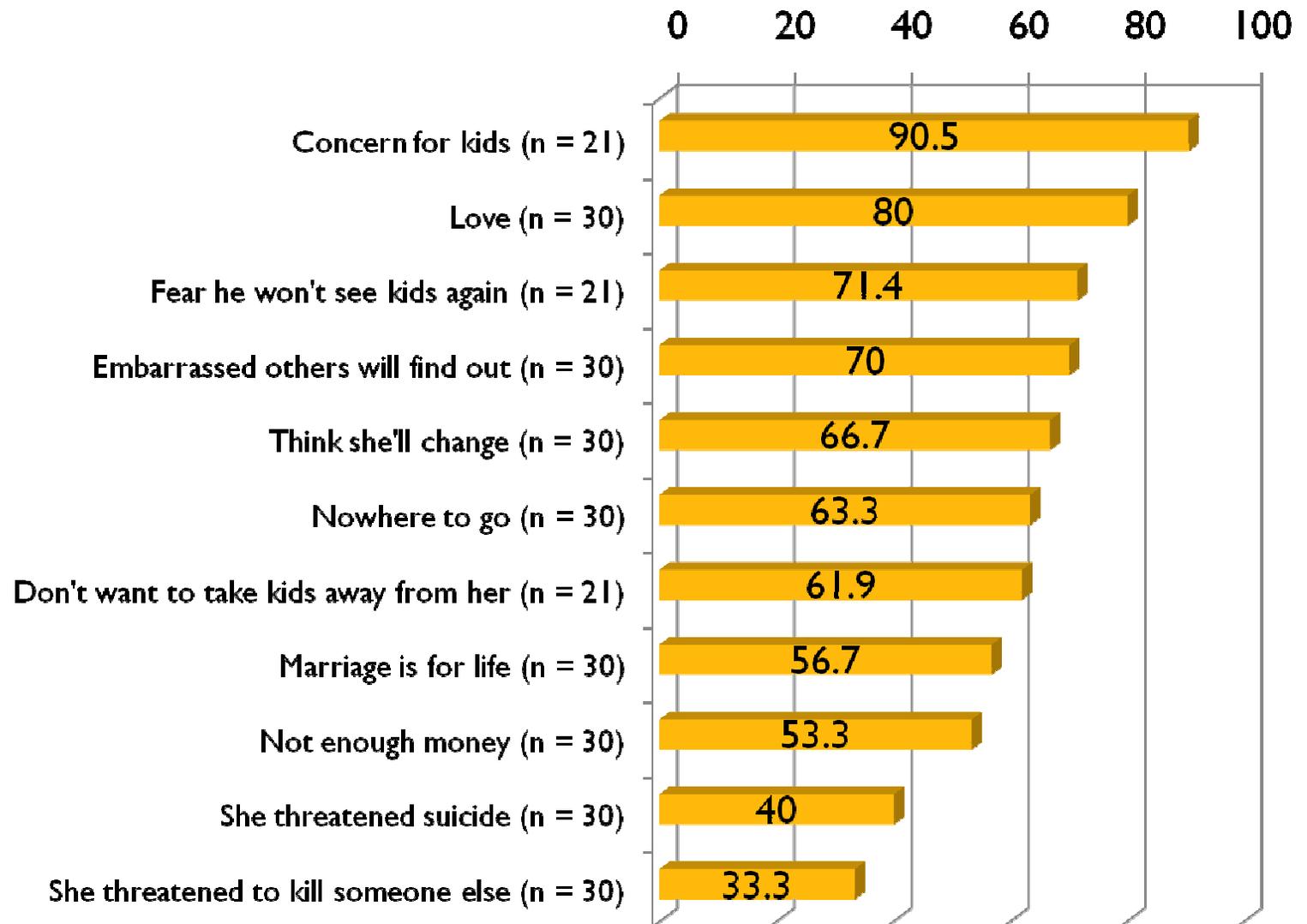
Partner drinking	30.8%
Respondent drinking	9.6%
Partner using drugs	23.1%
Respondent using drugs	1.9%



Why Not Leave Her?

- 93.8% of men who are still with their partners (30 out of 32) have seriously considered leaving, but haven't yet.
- Why not?

Why Not Leave Her?





Why Not Leave Her?

- *“She spends every penny that comes in and has racked up thousands in debt. I would lose everything I've tried to save.”*
- *“I fear for my children’s lives. I have to protect them and I can’t take them away.”*
- *“She threatened to ruin me financially, ruin my professional reputation (we work together), lock me out of the house, and tell the police anything she wants to tell them.”*
- *“I'm disabled and dependent on her.”*
- *“I was advised that if I leave, I would hurt my chances of gaining custody of the children in the long run.”*
- *“She has promised to lie and accuse me of physical abuse against her, sexual abuse of our daughter if that helps her win custody, etc.”*

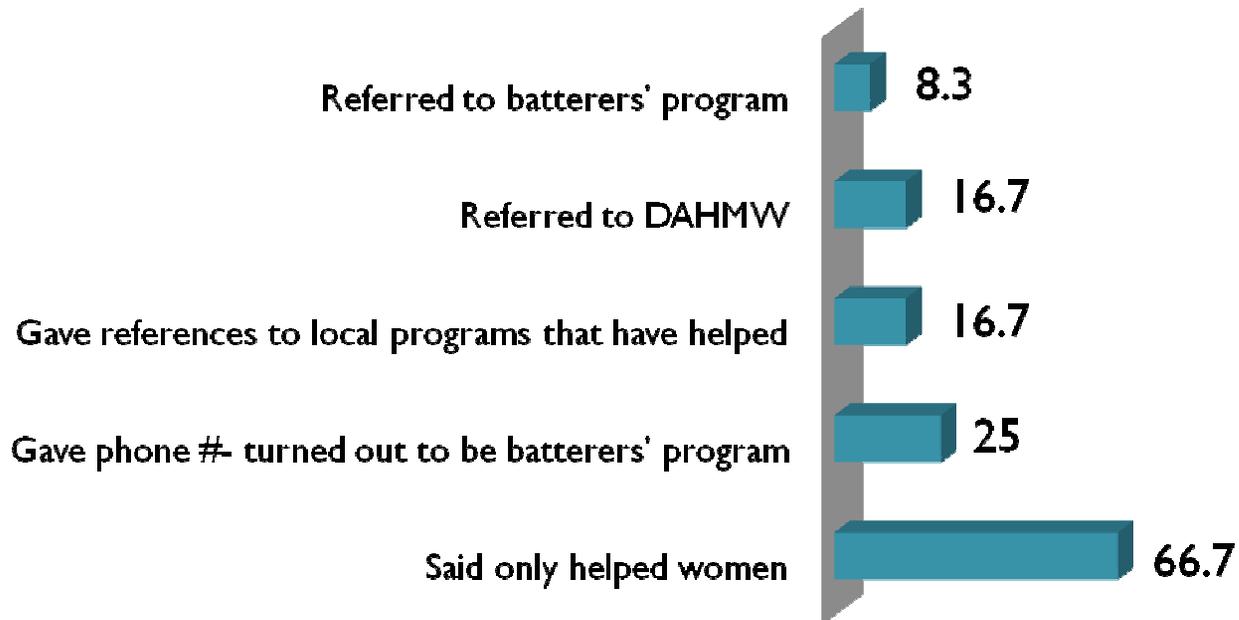
Help-seeking: Contacting Other Hotlines

% Who Called Another Hotline



Helpfulness of those hotlines (n = 12)

Very helpful	0%
Somewhat helpful	25%
Not at all helpful	75%



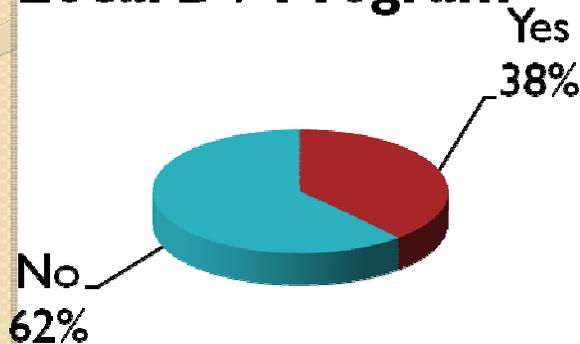


Help-seeking: Other Hotlines

- *“...they treated me like I was a criminal... The...hotline refused to answer any questions or provide me the free shelter that was stated on the domestic violence help referral services that was handed to my by the San Diego Police. None of the services would help me because I was a man.”*
- *“They asked how much I weighed and how much she weighed and hung up on me....I was told by this agency I was full of BS.”*

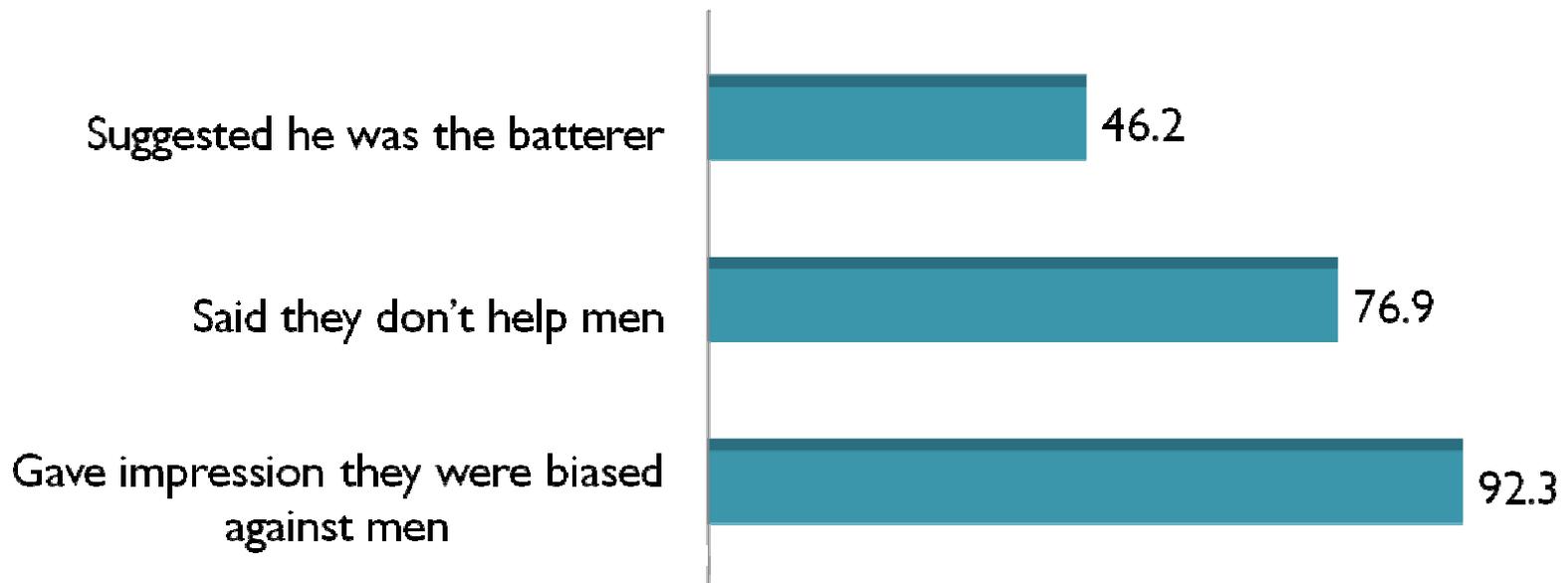
Help-seeking: Local DV Programs

% Who Contacted a Local DV Program



Helpfulness of those Programs (n = 20)

Very helpful	5%
Somewhat helpful	30%
Not at all helpful	65%



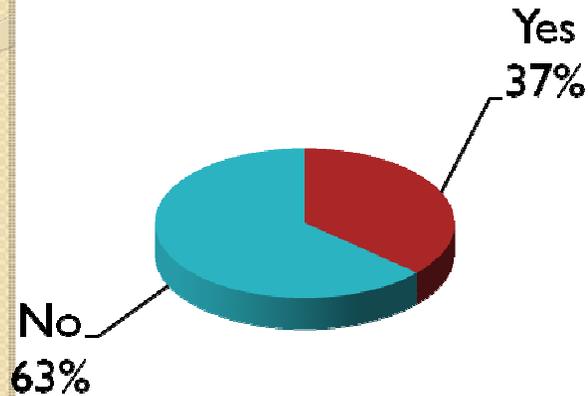


Help-seeking: Local DV Programs

- *“Just didn’t care, I was a male, they didn't cater to males. I called many places for two weeks straight. NOTHING.”*
- *“I had to go to a place called "A Woman's Place." It was very embarrassing. I went to them for help with getting the kids away from her....I went to [XXX] County Children and Youth services: they said she is aware of her problem and getting help for it... They even suggested that I was still in love with her and that this is my way of getting back at her or staying in contact.”*
- *“They tried to talk me into admitting I was the problem in the relationship. They told me it was not relevant that our Pediatrician accused my wife of abuse and that the Pediatrician wanted to refer my wife to a Psychiatrist. They refused to contact our child's Pediatrician.”*

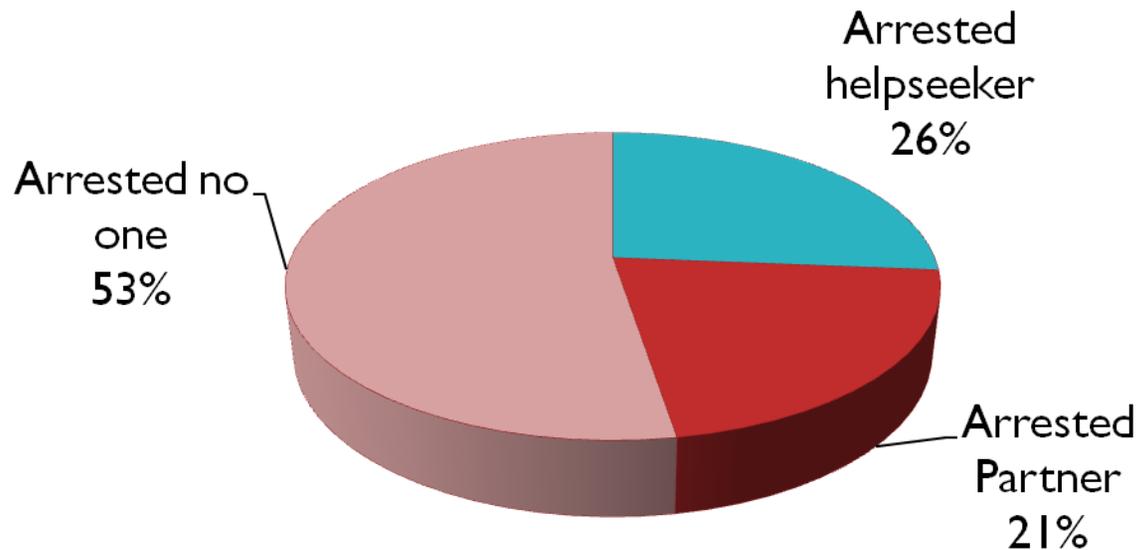
Help-seeking: Police

% Who Contacted the Police



Helpfulness of the Police (n = 19)

Very helpful	15.8%
Somewhat helpful	21.1%
Not at all helpful	63.2%



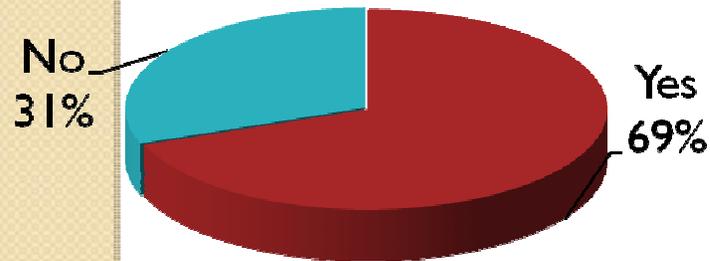


Help-seeking: Police

- *“Always determined that I was a big man and strong enough to take her physical abuse. Would insinuate that I was a wimp, made humiliating comments.”*
- *“They told her to stay downstairs for the night, and suggested I stay upstairs or even find another place to stay.”*

Help-seeking: Mental Health Professionals

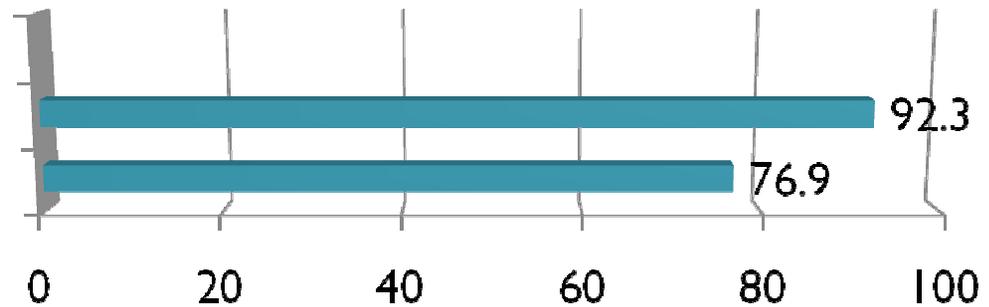
% Who Saw a Mental Health Professional



Helpfulness of the MH Professional (n = 36)

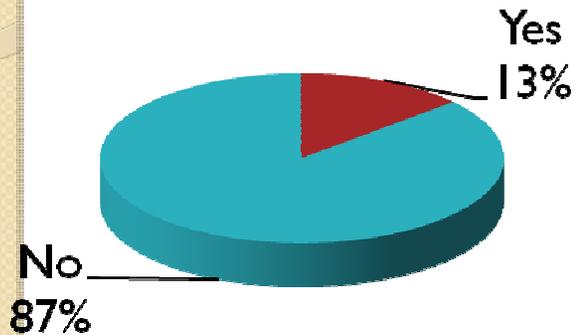
Very helpful	27.8%
Somewhat helpful	44.4%
Not at all helpful	27.8%

Took DV Concerns Seriously
Gave Information about DV



Help-seeking: Doctors and ER

% Who Went to Doctor or ER for DV Injuries



Helpfulness of the Doctor or ER (n = 7)

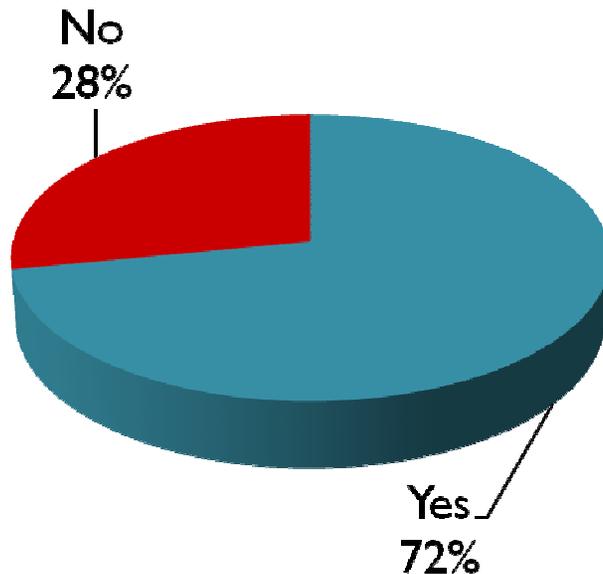
Very helpful	14.3%
Somewhat helpful	71.4%
Not at all helpful	14.3%

MD asked how you got your injuries
Told MD that partner hurt you
MD provided DV Information

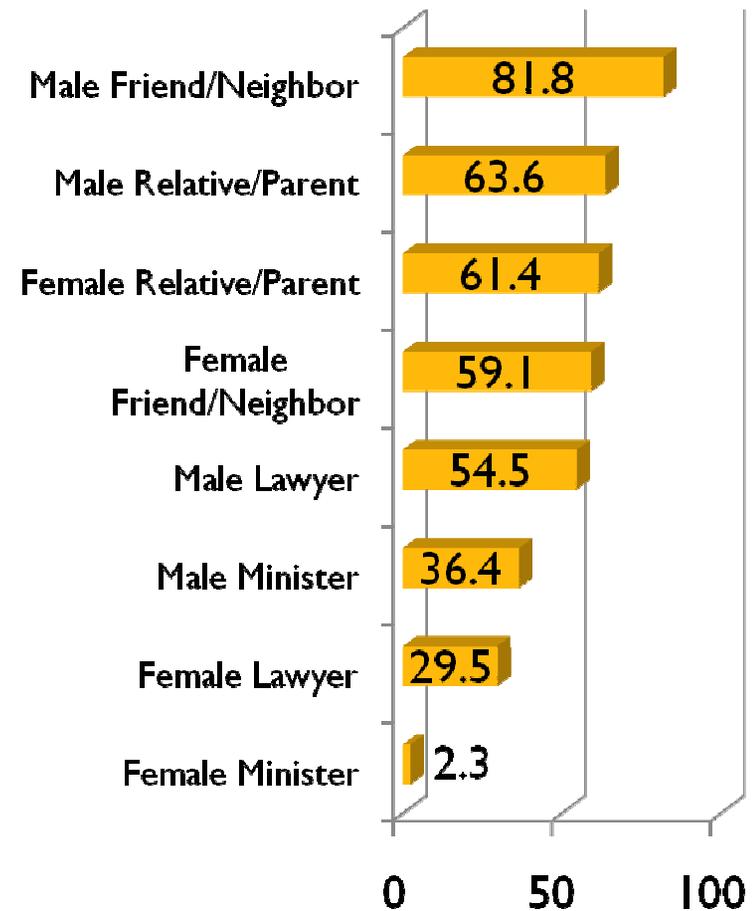


Help-seeking: Other

Talked with Some Other Person About Partner's Behavior

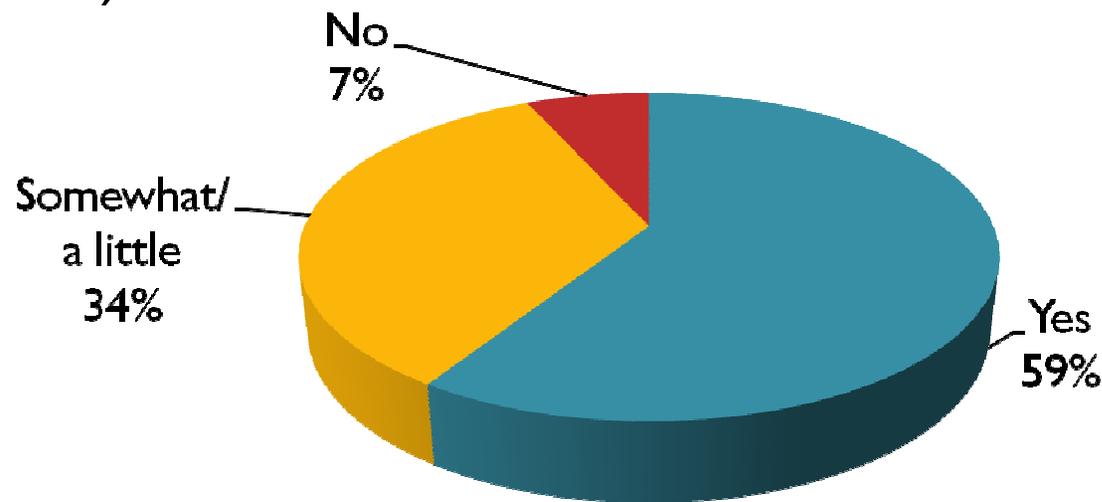


% Who talked to...



Help-seeking: Other

- Others: coworkers, military family advocacy, ex-husbands/boyfriends of wife, online group for battered husbands
- Were any of these people supportive ($n = 44$)?



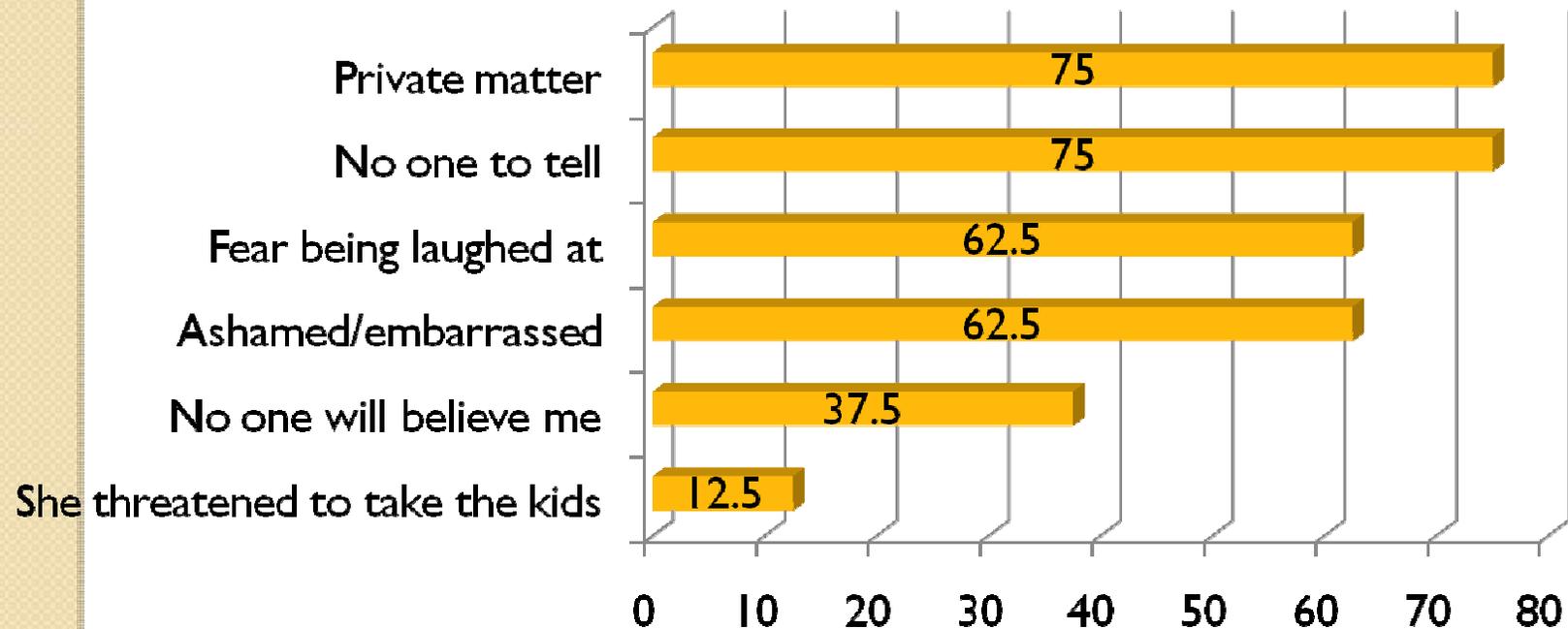


Help-seeking: Other

- *“I never spoke of the violence until I filed for a divorce. No one had any idea it was going on. I kept it all inside. Everyone was in shock.”*
- *“Whilst I was in the relationship I didn't tell anyone, because I thought I would be letting my partner down, betraying her. I didn't want people to judge her and think badly of her. I hoped that she would change and we could make the relationship work, so I didn't want her to be judged. When I left the relationship, I started to tell people.”*

Help-seeking: Other

- Of the 15.4% who have not told any informal sources about their partner's violence, their reasons include:





Help-seeking: Other

- *“My mother used to give herself bruises and call the cops on men she didn't like and claim that they hit her, so I am very aware of what happens when anything is mentioned of a female abusing a male.”*
- *“My oldest son is a deputy sheriff. I don't want to embarrass him by having to book his own mother into the jail.”*
- *“It would be too embarrassing to have my business associates know about my personal problems.”*



Conclusions: Experiences of Abuse

- Men who sustain IPV and seek help experience much psychological and physical abuse and injuries.
- Their female partners initiated the aggression in the relationship and in the last confrontation.
- Most common responses to partner's physical aggression: Get away or yell.
- Drinking/drug use was quite common among female partners during last argument.



Conclusions: Experiences of Abuse

- The majority of men who haven't left, have thought of leaving but don't because of:
 - Concern for kids
 - Love
 - Fear they won't see kids again
 - Embarrassment



Conclusions: Help-seeking

- Most common type of help-seeking: informal sources of support, followed by seeking mental health services
 - Also the two most helpful
- Seeking help through the domestic violence service system (i.e., community programs, hotlines, police) were used by 23-38% of men.
 - Not very helpful



Conclusions: Help-seeking

- According to the helpseekers, the traditional domestic violence service system:
 - Say they help only women
 - Were perceived as biased against men
 - Insinuated he was the batterer
 - Arrested him slightly more often than his partner