

Men who Sustain Partner Violence and Seek Help: Abuse Experiences, Injuries, PTSD, and Helpseeking Experiences

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Background: Male Victims of Partner Violence



- Best population-based studies show that 25%-50% of all PV victims in a given year are men.
- Existence of male victims has been source of much controversy.
- We do not know much about men who sustain PV.

Purpose of Present Study



- Provide empirical descriptive data on men who sustain PV and seek help
 1. What abusive behaviors occur in their relationships and how frequently?
 2. What are the possible physical and psychological consequences of being in such a relationship for the men?
 3. What are their helpseeking experiences with health professionals?

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
 - Sought outside assistance or support
 - Lived in the U.S.
- **N = 229**

Survey



- If eligible, men referred to Internet survey
 - Demographics
 - Conflict Tactics Scales
 - PTSD Checklist
 - Closed-ended and open-ended questions on:
 - ✦ Last physical argument
 - ✦ Help-seeking efforts

Demographics: *Age & Income*



| | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Male Helpseekers's Age | 40.23 years | 9.01 |
| Female Partner's Age | 38.00 years | 8.74 |
| Male Helpseeker's Approximate Income | \$48.4K | \$29K |
| Female Partner's Approximate Income | \$25.7K | \$27K |

Demographics: *Education*



| | Male Helpseeker | Female Partner |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| % with 2-year degree or more | 62.9% | 47.2% |
| % with graduate degree | 14.0% | 14.4% |

Demographics: *Race/Ethnicity*



| | Male Helpseeker | Female Partner |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| White | 85.2% | 69.4% |
| African American | 6.1% | 7.9% |
| Hispanic | 5.2% | 8.7% |
| Asian American | 4.8% | 11.8% |
| Native American | 1.7% | 3.1% |

Demographics: *Relationship Characteristics*



| | Mean | SD |
|--|------------------------------|-------|
| Relationship Length | 95.89 months (7.99 years) | 81.04 |
| Time Since Relationship Ended (n = 87) | 6.65 months | 8.44 |

% of relationships with minor children: 73.5% (n = 166)

Demographics: *Relationship Characteristics*



| Relationship Status | Percent |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Married | 48.0% |
| Separated | 14.4% |
| Ex-dating | 7.0% |
| Ex-cohabiting | 7.0% |
| Divorced | 6.6% |
| Cohabiting | 5.2% |
| Ex-engaged | 4.8% |
| Dating | 4.4% |
| Engaged | 2.2% |

Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Psychological Aggression

| | % of Female Partners Who Perpetrated | % of Male Helpseekers Who Perpetrated |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Minor Psychological Aggression | 100.0 | 95.6 |
| Name-Calling | 75.5 | 25.8 |
| Isolation/Monitoring | 87.8 | 32.8 |
| Severe Psychological Aggression | 94.3 | 40.2 |
| Insisting on Sexual Intercourse | 41.0 | 14.0 |

Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Psychological Aggression

| | Female Partners: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year | | Male Helpseekers: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year | |
|---------------------------------|---|-------|--|-------|
| | M (n) | SD | M (n) | SD |
| Minor Psychological | 65.65 (229) | 25.01 | 26.49 (219) | 22.57 |
| Name-Calling | 19.61 (173) | 16.37 | 4.64 (59) | 6.09 |
| Isolation/ Monitoring | 27.32 (201) | 19.83 | 4.87 (75) | 5.98 |
| Severe Psychological | 31.84 (216) | 30.20 | 5.36 (92) | 8.07 |
| Insisting on Sexual Intercourse | 9.71 (94) | 8.83 | 4.72 (32) | 6.14 |

Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Psychological Aggression



| Partner falsely accused helpseeker of hitting or beating her | 69.0% |
|--|-------|
| Partner filed restraining order against helpseeker under false pretenses | 37.6% |
| Partner falsely accused helpseeker of physically abusing children | 34.5% |
| Partner falsely accused helpseeker of sexually abusing children | 11.8% |

Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Physical Aggression



| | % of Female Partners Who Perpetrated | % of Male Helpseekers Who Perpetrated |
|-------------|---|--|
| Minor | 99.6 | 53.7 |
| Severe | 92.1 | 19.7 |
| Very Severe | 54.6 | 7.0 |
| Any | 100.0 | 54.1 |

Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Physical Aggression



| | Female Partners: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year | | Male Helpseekers: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year | |
|-------------|--|-------|---|-------|
| | M (n) | SD | M (n) | SD |
| Minor | 33.93 (228) | 35.63 | 6.52 (123) | 13.22 |
| Severe | 17.09 (211) | 23.21 | 5.01 (45) | 6.62 |
| Very Severe | 7.63 (125) | 11.28 | 2.90 (16) | 4.10 |
| Any | 49.53 (229) | 56.07 | 8.29 (124) | 16.01 |

Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Description of Last Physical Argument



- *“I am in the middle of it right now and have contacted a national abuse hotline via email. I have never hit my wife, but today I came close to doing this. It should be noted she has hit me more times than I can remember and kicked me. I grabbed her arms in self defense and held her to the floor. I am a very big and strong man, my wife is tall but thin, not strong at all. I know I will be the one who goes to jail even though she is the one hitting and kicking.”*
- *“I went to sleep. She said she was calling police. I said fine. She did. They arrested me with no proof or evidence of me doing anything....They dropped charges but not before a 6 month restraining order on me which destroyed my family and business, all based on her false allegations.”*

Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Description of Last Physical Argument

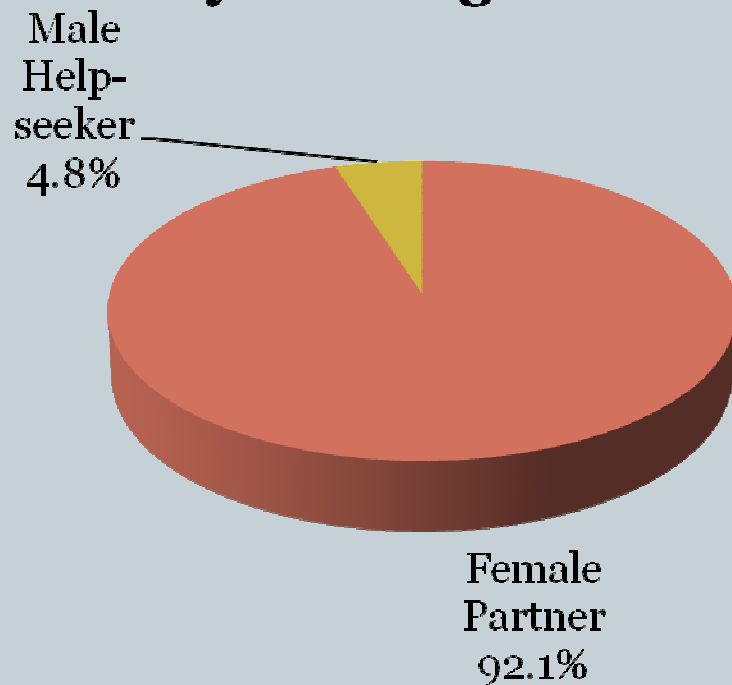


- *“Grabbed her to stop her from assaulting me again. Asked her to stop. She called the police. (I think she was sleep deprived also - and very angry and aggressive and was not thinking clearly.). I spent 7 days in jail for stopping her throwing things in my face. Lost all faith in the legal system for men.”*
- *“I had been holding the baby during the argument, when she threw the TV remote control towards my head just missing the baby. The control is still missing the battery cover due to impact. I treated my facial, chest, arm scratches with ointment.. got stressed, cried at night as I've often done.”*

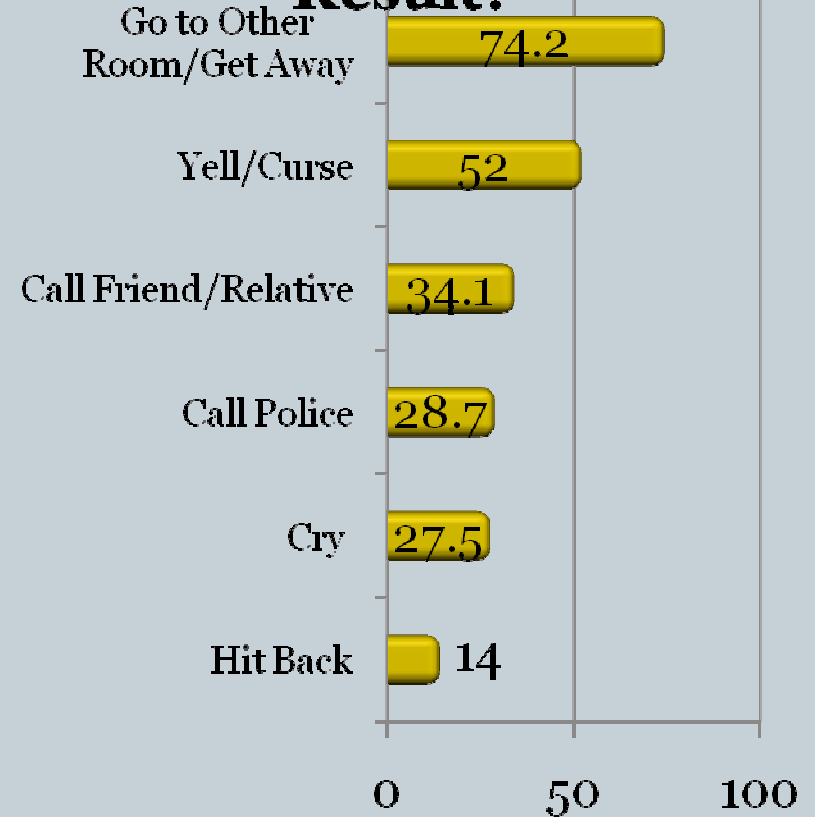
Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

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?



Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Description of Last Physical Argument:

Examples of Other Responses

- **Restrain/Self-Defense/Struggle:**
 - *After she hit me, I wrestled her to the floor, and tried to restrain her without hurting her. She bit me.*
 - *Defended myself by grabbing her arms then pushed her back away (she was kicking). Called police after she tried to run me over 4 times with her car. Police never came. Had 2 witnesses to event.*
- **Take it:**
 - *entered fetal position, waited for her to stop*
 - *just stood there and took it*
- **Get others involved:**
 - *Had her son (my stepson) call 911 and report she was assaulting me*
 - *I called her mom*
- **Try to reason with her:**
 - *I tell her that it is not acceptable for her to hit me, or yell at me, especially in front of the children. I also ask her to apologize.*
 - *I would try to talk to her to calm her down and let her know that I love her and wanted to work things out, but she would escalate and keep making false accusations, accuse me of cheating on her, saying no you don't love me*

Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Description of Last Physical Argument:

Examples of Other Responses

- Leave house:
 - *I go and stay at my father's house until she is better.*
 - *I ran out , locked myself in the car, drove to the woods and slept in my car.*
- Failed attempts to leave
 - *I tried to leave and she hit me in the head with a flower pot, then took the phone from me to prevent me from calling anyone.*
 - *I yelled at her to stay away from me and I attempted to leave my house but she took my car keys from me and said I would have to take them from her to get them back.*
 - *She refused to give me my cell phone and car keys and wouldn't let me leave the house. When I took the car keys from her she called the cops and I was arrested and convicted.*

Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

Physical Injuries



| | % of Females Who Were Injured | % of Males Who Were Injured |
|--------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Minor | 24.9 | 76.4 |
| Severe | 6.1 | 37.1 |
| Any | 25.8 | 77.7 |

Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

Physical Injuries



| | Mean # of Female Injuries | | Mean # of Male Injuries | |
|--------|---------------------------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| | M (n) | SD | M (n) | SD |
| Minor | 5.19 (57) | 6.98 | 9.68 (175) | 12.92 |
| Severe | 3.50 (14) | 4.07 | 4.66 (85) | 7.85 |
| Any | 5.85 (59) | 7.12 | 11.74 (178) | 16.02 |

Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

PTSD

| | Mean (SD) |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Total PCL Score | 46.92 (14.59) |
| Re-Experiencing | 14.81 (5.35) |
| Avoidance/Numbness | 17.51 (6.04) |
| Hyperarousal | 14.60 (5.02) |

- % Scoring Above Clinical Cut-Off for PTSD: 59%

Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

Correlations between Sustained Psychological Aggression and PCL Scores

| | Total | Avoidance/ Numbness | Re-Experiencing | Hyperarousal |
|----------------------|--------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Minor Psychological | .14* | .15* | .08 | .15* |
| Name-Calling | .19** | .19** | .12 | .21** |
| Isolation/Monitoring | .27*** | .24*** | .23*** | .26*** |
| Severe Psychological | .22*** | .18** | .21** | .21** |
| Insisting on Sex | .05 | .06 | .01 | .06 |

* p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001

Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

Correlations between Sustained Physical Aggression and PCL Scores



| | Total | Avoidance/ Numbness | Re-Experiencing | Hyper-arousal |
|----------------------|--------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Minor Physical | .26*** | .25*** | .22*** | .22*** |
| Severe Physical | .25*** | .25*** | .21** | .20** |
| Very Severe Physical | .17* | .14* | .17* | .13* |
| Total Physical | .26*** | .26*** | .23*** | .22*** |

* p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001

Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

Correlations between Sustained Injuries and PCL Scores

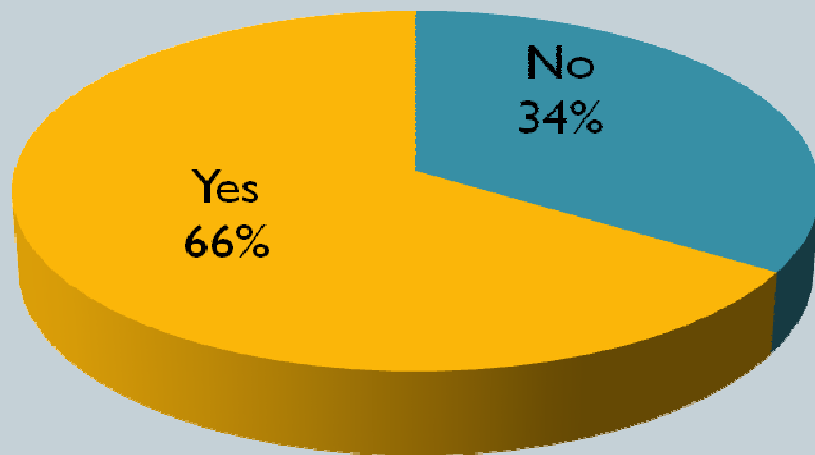


| | Total | Avoidance/ Numbness | Re-Experiencing | Hyperarousal |
|-----------------|-------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Minor Injuries | .18** | .20** | .13* | .15* |
| Severe Injuries | .17** | .14* | .21*** | .10 |
| Total Injuries | .21** | .21*** | .18** | .16* |

* p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001

Q3: Helpseeking from Mental Health Professionals

Ever Sought Help from MH Professional?



What predicts seeking help?

Demographics:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Being Asian | -.14* |
| Being White | .15* |
| Having Minor Children | .20** |
| Education | .17** |

Aggression Variables:

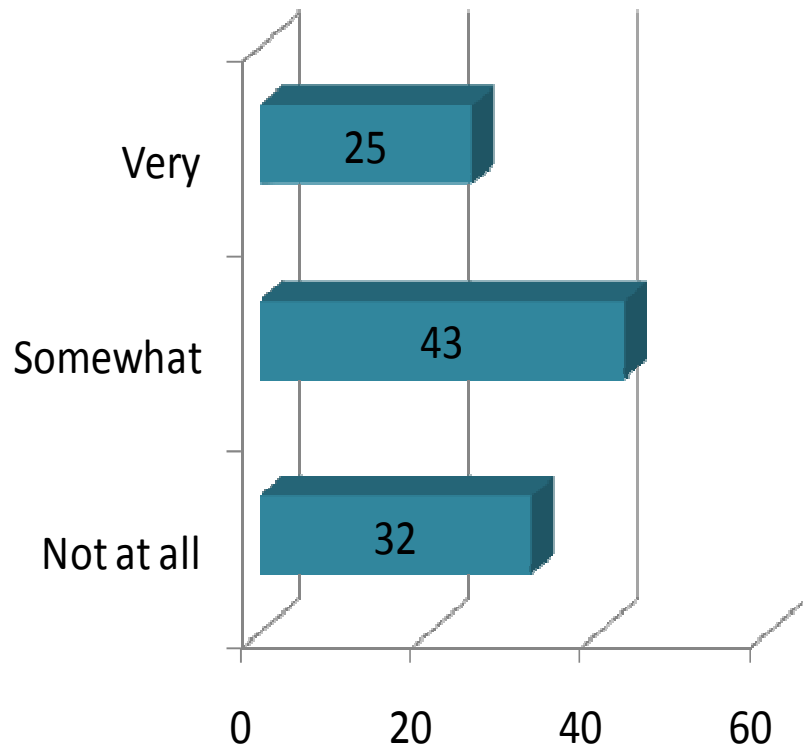
| | |
|---|------|
| Being falsely accused of hitting children | .19* |
|---|------|

PTSD Variables: None

* p<.05, ** p<.01

Q3: Helpseeking from Mental Health Professionals

How Helpful was this Experience?



What predicts higher ratings of helpfulness?

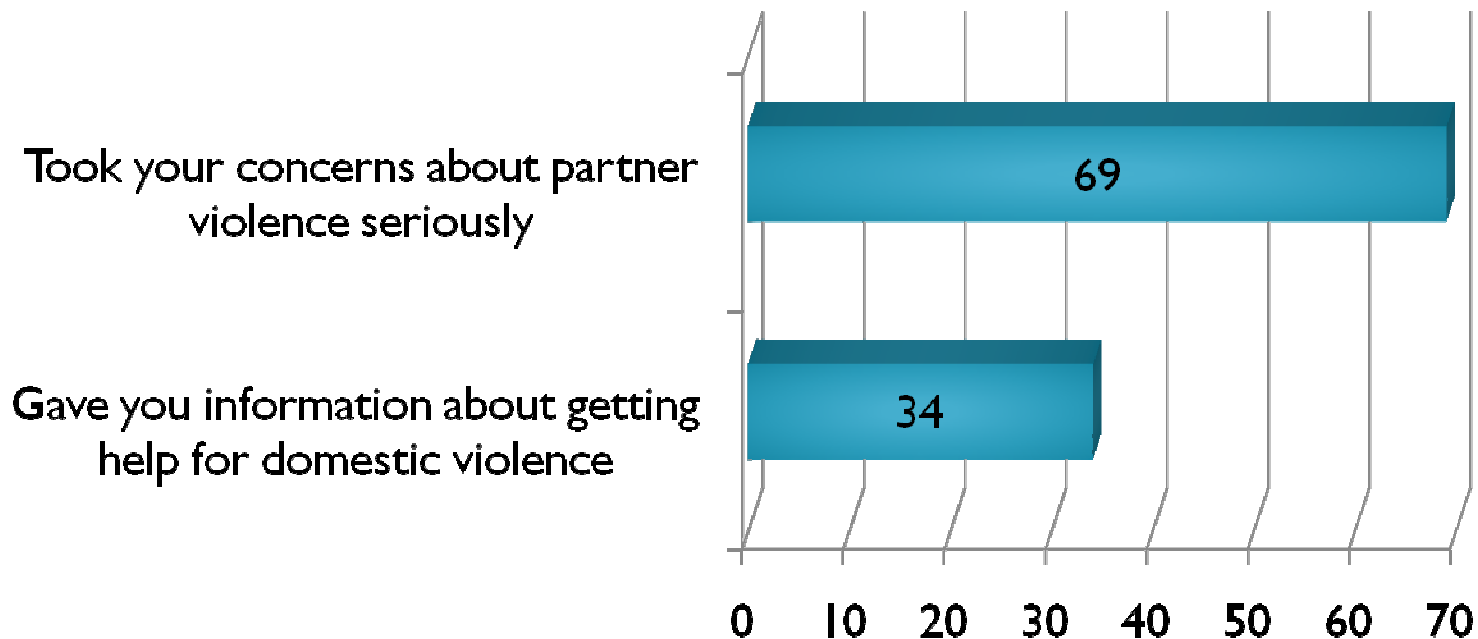
| | |
|---|--------|
| Being taken seriously by the mental health professional | .60*** |
| Being given information about domestic violence | .44*** |

***p<.001

Q3: Experiences with Mental Health Professionals



Additional Experiences with Helpseeking from Mental Health Providers



Q3: Experiences with Mental Health Professionals



Associations between providing information about domestic violence and PCL scores

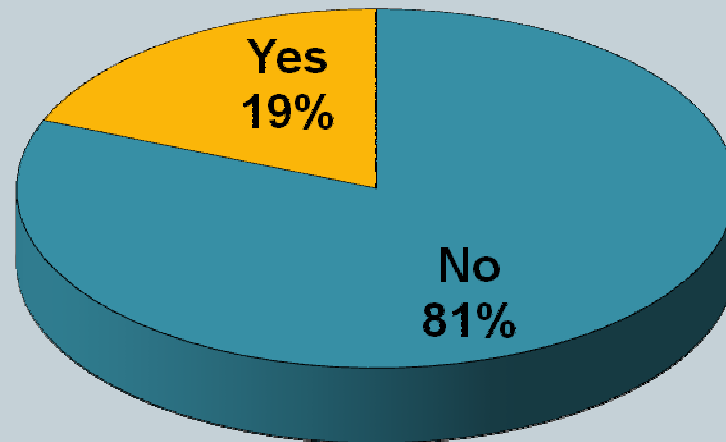
| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| PCL Total | -.19* |
| PCL Avoidance/Numbness | -.12 |
| PCL Re-experiencing | -.17 |
| PCL Hyperarousal | -.22** |
| Over the Clinical Cut-off on the PCL | -.23** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Q3: Helpseeking from Medical Professionals



**Ever go to Doctor/ER
Because Partner Injured
You?**



Q3: Helpseeking from Medical Professionals



What predicts seeking help?

Demographics: None

Aggression Variables:

Psychological Aggression Sustained:

Isolation/Monitoring .14*

Severe Psychological .18**

False Restraining Order .24***

Falsely Accused of Beating Her .18*

Falsely Accused of Hitting Kids .18*

Aggression Variables (cont'd):

Physical Aggression Sustained:

Severe Physical .14*

Very Severe Physical .18**

Consequences of IPV:

Severe Physical Injuries .38***

PCL Total Score .15*

PCL Re-Experience .16*

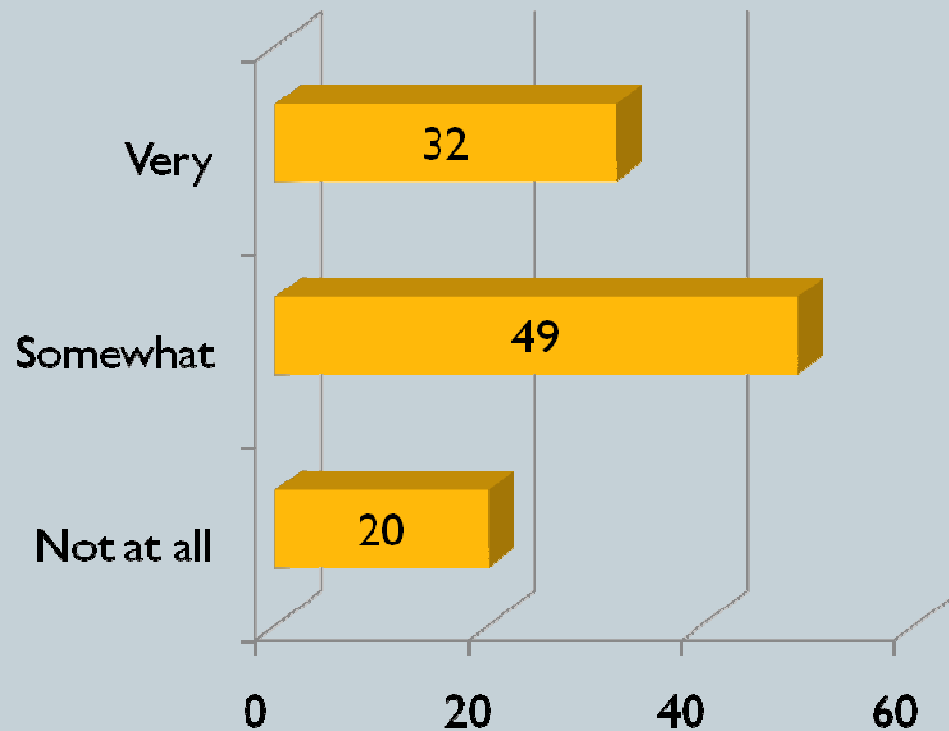
PCL Hyperarousal .14*

* p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001

Q3: Helpseeking from Medical Professionals



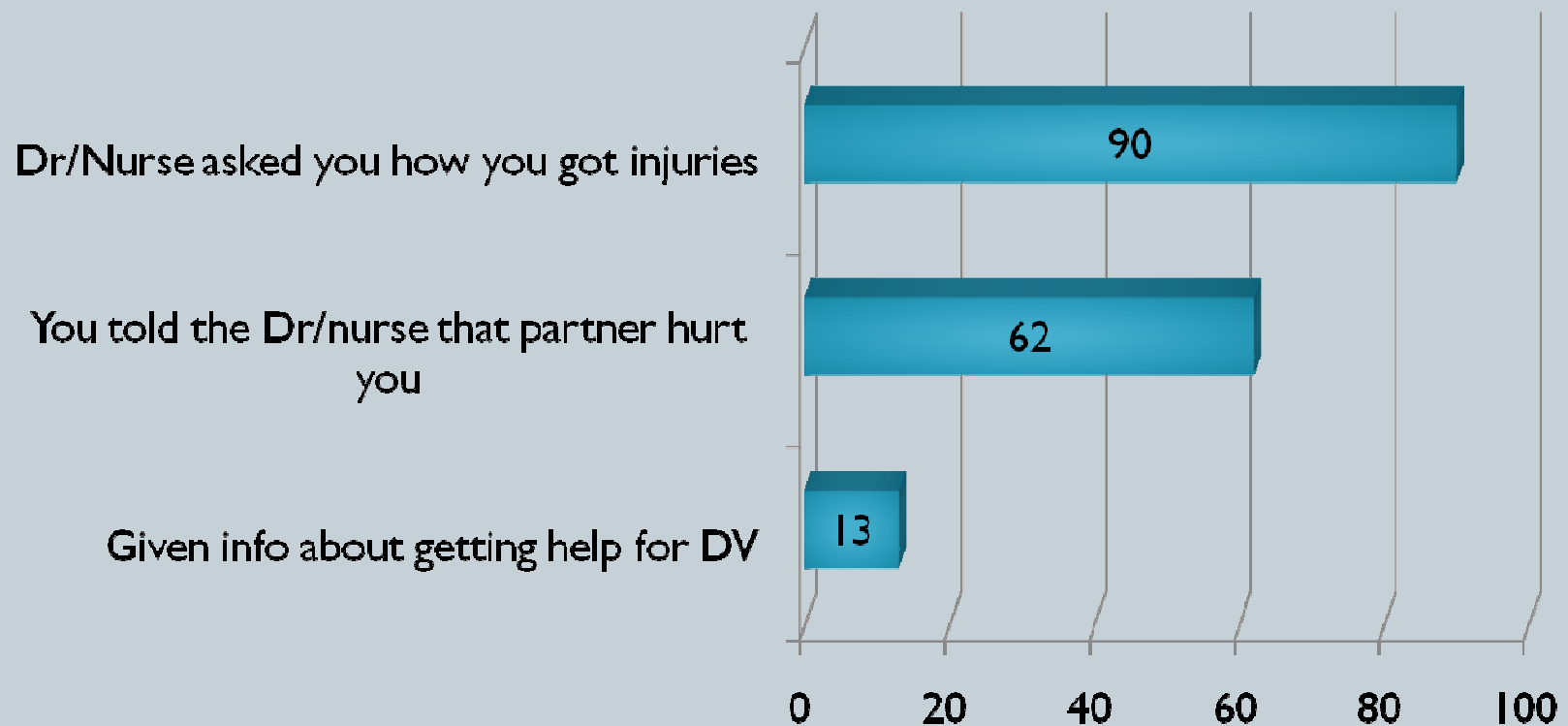
How Helpful was the Doctor or Nurse who Treated you?



Q3: Experiences with Medical Providers



Additional Experiences with Helpseeking from Medical Providers



Q3: Experiences with Medical Providers



What Predicts these Experiences?

| <i>Medical Professional Asking About Injuries</i> | | <i>Male Helpseeker Being Truthful About Injuries</i> | | <i>Receiving Domestic Violence Information</i> | |
|---|------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| Female Partner's Minor Physical Aggression | .31* | # of Minor Injuries | -.29 [†] | PCL Total Score | -.30 [†] |
| Female Partner's Total Physical Aggression | .29 [†] | # of Severe Injuries | -.31* | PCL Avoidance | -.32* |
| | | Total # of Injuries | -.32* | PCL Hyperarousal | -.28 [†] |
| | | Female Partner's Severe Physical Aggression | -.30 [†] | | |

[†]p<.10* p<.05

Summary



- Male helpseekers sustained substantial levels of physical and psychological PV from female partners.
- Physical and mental health ramifications

Summary



- Majority sought assistance from mental health professionals
 - At least somewhat helpful
- Minority sought assistance from a medical professional
 - More severe cases
 - At least somewhat helpful
 - Large minority were not truthful about injuries
 - Minority were given PV information

Implications for Intervention



- Educate health professionals about men who sustain PV
- Importance of screening men for PV victimization