

SOCIALIZATION AND STRESS EXPLANATIONS FOR SPOUSE ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

Childhood socialization and stressful life conditions like unemployment or a loved one's severe illness are among the more prominent explanations for family violence. Little is known, however, about the relative importance of these factors for predicting violent behavior. This paper proposes a general scheme for studying family violence, taking into account early childhood as well as adult family socialization and stressful life events. Using data from a nationally representative sample of married adults, we investigate the relative importance of early socialization and life strain for predicting spouse abuse. We find that childhood experiences of family violence have a greater impact than stressful circumstances on whether or not individuals perpetrate spouse abuse. The paper considers the implications of these findings for understanding family violence and alternative responses to the strains in modern family life. The paper also recommends new strategies for future research on sources of family violence and the circumvention of the intragenerational cycle of violence.

Introduction

The public focus on violence between family members reflects increasing concern with the physical and emotional quality of family life for children and adults. Although family violence occurs in a private setting, one traditionally shielded from the eyes of the community, television and the other media have made child abuse and wife battering increasingly visible phenomena. In addition, recent social and economic trends may have altered the proportions of "violence prone" families in the U. S. population. The growth of single parent households along with high rates of unemployment increase the number of families whose members live highly stressful lives. One way of responding to this stress is with physical aggression; often it is directed toward family members.

Public concern about family violence as a social problem points to the need for better understanding the origins of violence between intimates. In this paper, we propose a way to view the social bases of family violence. We use data from a national survey to test preliminary hypotheses about the relative importance of two sources of violence between husbands and wives -- stressful life circumstances and childhood socialization. This research also contributes to knowledge about family violence by explicitly testing the hypothesis, implicit in other research on stress and violence, that the effects of stress depend on prior learning.

Identifying whether early socialization or current stress is the more important predictor of spouse abuse has implications for the design of family violence programs. A finding that stress is the more

potent predictor would argue for programs that could teach abusive couples nonviolent alternatives for coping with stress. On the other hand, if early socialization is a more important predictor, then preventive programs focused on individuals exposed to violence during childhood are indicated. These programs would provide alternative messages about the legitimacy of violence within the family.

The Social Origins of Family Violence

Experiences throughout life influence individuals' propensity to engage in violent family interactions. It is useful to think of three sources of violence: childhood socialization, previous experiences in couple relationships during adolescence and adulthood, and levels of strain in a person's current life. People may first learn that physical aggression between family members is acceptable through their family experiences in childhood. Individuals who observe their parents hitting each other and/or were themselves victims of abuse, may incorporate abuse into the behavioral repertoires they bring to intimate relationships they establish in adulthood (Steinmetz, 1977; Straus et al., 1980; Kalmuss, 1984). [1]

In addition to early exposure to models of family violence, individuals may develop a behavioral repertoire including violence between intimates later in life while dating, cohabiting, or in a prior marriage (Makepeace, 1981; Cate et al., 1982; Lane and Gwartney-Gibbs, 1986; Kalmuss and Seltzer, 1986). While researchers typically focus on how children learn about marital roles and behavior from observing their parents, recent literature on courtship violence suggests that people also learn violent behaviors while dating. The

source of couple violence may rest in the dynamics of the particular premarital or marital relationship or in the fact that one or both individuals entered the relationship with a previously acquired model for couple violence. The violent behaviors practiced in previous relationships may, in turn, color individuals' current marital behavior.

Finally, marital violence may be a response to stress associated with chronic and acute strain (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978). Negative life events or general strains may precipitate a psychological response (stress), which is manifested, in turn, as physical aggression (Farrington, 1986). Previous research on family violence points to stress as a major factor precipitating family violence (Parke and Collmer, 1975; Gelles, 1980; Straus, 1980). Examples of chronic strains causing stress include conditions of "hard living" like poverty, long-term unemployment and alcoholism (Howell, 1973; Rubin, 1976). Acute strains may be associated with short-term events such as serious illness or being fired.

Although previous studies document an effect of stress on violent behavior, researchers have not addressed questions about why stress is articulated as violent behavior rather than in some other way. Violence is only one of many possible responses to stress. For instance, many respond to stress by withdrawing from others' company or turning to alcohol or drugs. We know relatively little about why some people react to stress with physical aggression while others do not. Implicit in much of the research on coping with stress is the assumption that specific reactions to stress are learned. In the case of spouse abuse, childhood experiences with family violence (either

observed or directly experienced) may explain why some people respond to stress with violence while others respond by withdrawing from social contact. Those who learn by observing others that physical aggression against a loved one is a possible response to stress are more likely to perpetrate spouse abuse than those who have not been exposed to family violence. The latter have not incorporated violence into their behavioral repertoire and so "select" their responses to stress from an alternate set of possible behaviors. Thus, early exposure to family violence affects the relationship between stress and subsequent spouse abuse.

The relationships among early socialization, later socialization, life strain and marital violence cannot be captured in a simple deterministic model. Not all individuals who were exposed to physical aggression in their childhood families go on to reproduce this behavior in their marital relationships. Similarly, not all adults who experience high levels of strain in their everyday lives respond with physical aggression toward their spouses. The occurrence of violence within marriage depends on a variety of circumstances that intervene between individuals' childhood and subsequent marital experiences.

Predicting spouse abuse is complicated further because the three causal factors considered above are not independent, but rather are likely to operate jointly to increase the probability of marital aggression. For example, individuals exposed to marital violence in early childhood are more likely to be involved in violent courtship relationships, which reinforces the model for violence that they bring to marriage. And, individuals who experienced long-term strain, such

as poverty, are also more likely to have seen and experienced family violence as children than those whose early years were less filled with economic strain. The combination of chronic strain, in this case poverty, and early exposure may lead to the establishment of relationships in adulthood that repeat childhood patterns of violence. Finally, growing up under conditions of chronic strain may make it more likely that individuals will experience acutely stressful events as adults, which in turn lead to violence. For example, childhood poverty is likely to be associated with poor employment outcomes and acute economic stress later in life.

Despite the complex set of relationships among early socialization, previous couple experiences, and life strain, specific combinations of factors are more likely to be associated with marital violence. Drawing on prior work on socialization and stress, we make the following predictions:

(1) Early socialization has a stronger effect on marital violence than life strain. We believe this to be true because the socialization effect involves a relatively direct connection between the stimulus (observed or experienced family violence) and the response (marital aggression). The connection between stimulus and response is much less clear for the life strain effect. Individuals can respond to strain and perceived stress in a variety of ways, only some of which include physical aggression.

Another reason we expect early socialization to have a strong effect is that the environments in which individuals are likely to encounter family violence (i.e., in their childhood families or in subsequent intimate relationships) provide particularly strong models for learning marital behavior. Thus, although prior socialization occurs well prior to marriage and life strains occur within marriage, early exposure to family violence may have a greater effect on the likelihood of perpetrating spouse abuse.

(2) Exposure to life strain leads to spouse abuse only when individuals already have a childhood model for family violence. This hypothesis posits a particular form of interaction between stress and early socialization. The hypothesis formalizes suggestions in previous work that the stress effect on violence does not occur unless the individual(s) have already established behavioral repertoires including violence between intimates (Straus, 1980; Straus et al., 1980; Farrington, 1986).

To develop more sophisticated hypotheses about the social origins of family violence requires more detailed data than currently exist. One would need individuals' family histories, experiences with violence in their childhood families and later couple relationships, as well as a history of the occurrence of stressful events in their lives. Because marital violence is an interpersonal phenomenon, one would also like to know about partners' family experiences and history of life strains.

While the ideal data are not to be found, a national survey enables us to take an initial step in understanding the more complex processes leading to family violence. The data are particularly suited to this undertaking because they include both violent and nonviolent adults. This improves on much previous research on the associations among socialization, strain, and violence, because many of the early studies use data from special populations, usually abusers or victims sampled through contact with social service organizations. The use of a nationally representative sample enables a more general test of the relative importance of socialization and stressful experiences in precipitating spouse abuse.

The next section of the paper describes the data in more detail and addresses other issues of measurement. In the third section we report the results of our analysis. We conclude with a discussion of the joint effects of early socialization and stress on spouse abuse.

DATA AND METHODS

Sample

Data for this analysis come from the 1976 National Survey of Family Violence. The study used a multi-stage probability sample of individuals who identified themselves as currently married. Slightly over half of the respondents were female. Interviewers asked each respondent a series of questions about the occurrence of various types of family interaction during the previous year, including separate items for the respondent's actions and the actions of other family members. In addition, respondents provided basic demographic

information and a checklist of potentially stressful events they had experienced in the past year. The analysis reported here uses data from 1436 individuals, the subset of cases with nonmissing information on the items of interest. [2] For further information about the study design and data quality see Straus et al. (1980).

Measures

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analysis.

(INSERT TABLE 1)

Early Childhood Exposure. We distinguish between two types of early exposure to family violence. The first is observing physical aggression between parents. The second type of early exposure refers to whether or not respondents were victims of physical aggression perpetrated by their parents. Each type of early exposure to violence is measured as a dichotomy. The first dichotomous variable differentiates individuals who observed one or both parents hit the other. Observations of parents' marital aggression were sufficiently rare (only 17 percent of respondents reported seeing one parent hit the other) that this variable was categorized: zero versus one or more observations.

The second type of early socialization, respondents reporting that when they were teenagers they were hit by at least one parent, was more common than reports of parents' marital aggression. Sixty-three percent of the respondents reported that when they were teenagers their parents hit them at least once, and 50 percent

reported being hit more than once. We used a cut point of three occurrences to dichotomize this variable to allow for the greater prevalence of parent-child hitting. As indicated in Table 1, 38 percent of the respondents reported that during their teenage years, one or both of their parents hit them at least three times. [3]

Stress. This is operationalized as the number of negative, potentially stressful, events that the individual reported experiencing during the past twelve months. The events are a subset of those included in an eighteen item checklist adapted from the Holmes and Rahe Stressful Life Events Scale (1967). The subset includes: troubles with the boss, troubles with people at work, got laid off or fired, got arrested or convicted of something serious, death of someone close, foreclosure of a mortgage or loan, a lot worse off financially, separated or divorced, serious sickness or injury, child kicked out of school or suspended, child caught doing something illegal. Values of the variable specified in this way range from 0 to 8. [4]

Family Income. Total family income for the previous calendar year is coded to the midpoints of response categories and treated as thousands of dollars. This variable is entered in all models as a control for respondents' socioeconomic status. Family income may also measure exposure to chronically stressful conditions, particularly poverty. However, because the data only include family income for the past year, the same period covered by the acute stress checklist, we do not interpret the results for income as reflecting an association between chronic stress and spouse abuse.

Note that because of the small number of cases in which respondents perpetrated abuse, we are limited in the number of control variables we can include in the analysis. Detailed preliminary analyses indicate that the results reported below are the same for male and female respondents. To the extent that other omitted variables are correlated with the primary variables of interest, early socialization and stressful experiences, estimates of the effects of these variables on spouse abuse may be biased.

Marital Aggression. This is a dichotomous variable differentiating respondents who perpetrated severe acts of physical aggression toward their spouses during the past year from those who did not. Severe aggression includes those acts of physical aggression that carry a high likelihood of seriously injuring the victim. The dichotomy is constructed as a summary of Straus's Conflict Tactics Scales (Straus, 1979) in which respondents were asked which in a list of items describing physically aggressive acts they had used against their spouse. The items included as severe aggression are: kicked, bit, hit with fist, hit or tried to hit spouse with something, beat up spouse, threatened or used a knife or gun. Replications of the analysis reported below in which marital aggression was not restricted to severe aggression, but was allowed to include any acts of physical aggression, produced virtually identical results.

Here again we restrict our attention to whether or not spouse abuse has occurred at all during the past year, not the frequency with which it has occurred. We use a dichotomous measure of abuse because the hypotheses that we propose address questions about the presence or absence of abuse, not the frequency of abuse. In addition to this

theoretical concern, we treat the dependent variable as a dichotomy because there are too few cases of abuse to distinguish meaningfully among numbers of incidents. Table 1 shows that only about 4 percent of the sample report any severe aggression during the past year. Finally, among those with multiple incidents of abuse, the frequencies are not normally distributed.

Methods

We estimate logistic regression models to investigate the relative effects of early socialization and situational stress on marital aggression. The dependent variable is treated as the log odds of perpetrating physical aggression against a spouse. Results are interpreted based on the comparison of log likelihood values for nested models, evaluations of the statistical significance of the logit coefficients, and calculations of expected probabilities of aggression under varying circumstances (i.e., values of the independent variables).

Our hypotheses imply the following model:

$$\log_e [p_i / (1-p_i)] = \lambda_0 + \lambda_1 \text{PARM}_i + \lambda_2 \text{PARC}_i + \lambda_3 \text{STRS}_i + \lambda_4 \text{INCM}_i \\ + \gamma_1 (\text{PARM} * \text{STRS})_i + \gamma_2 (\text{PARC} * \text{STRS})_i ,$$

where p_i is the probability that the i th individual has perpetrated spouse abuse during the past year; PARM_i and PARC_i are dummy variables indicating whether or not the i th individual reported observing parents' marital aggression or experienced child abuse, respectively;

$STRS_i$ is the number of negative stressful events experienced by individual i during the last year; $INCM_i$ is the i th individual's annual family income; $PARM*STRS_i$ and $PARC*STRS_i$ are the interactions of the early exposure to family violence and stress. Coefficients for the effects of these variables on the log odds of perpetrating abuse are indicated by $\lambda_1 \dots \lambda_4$ and $\gamma_1 \dots \gamma_2$, and λ_0 is the constant term.

RESULTS

The logistic regressions in Table 2 indicate that stress and exposure to physical aggression in the individual's childhood family are both significantly related to perpetrating spouse abuse. Using the criterion that a coefficient approximately twice the value of its standard error is statistically significant, the data show that the main effects for both types of childhood exposure and stress are significant. However, the interactions between childhood exposure and stress are not statistically significant. Thus, individuals who either observed their parents' marital aggression or experienced physical aggression themselves are more likely to perpetrate spouse abuse than those not exposed to aggression as children. Moreover, individuals with more stressful lives are more likely to perpetrate abuse.

(INSERT TABLE 2)

The logistic regression estimates in Table 2 also address the question: Does acute stress have an effect on spouse abuse when respondents have not been exposed to violence during childhood? The results show that neither of the stress by early exposure interaction terms have a statistically significant effect on spouse abuse. The

effect of stress on abuse does not depend on whether or not individuals were socialized to violence in their families of origin.

The information in Table 2 does not indicate the relative importance of stress and early exposure in predicting the likelihood of marital aggression. However, the expected probabilities of acting abusively presented in Table 3 provide some insight into the relative magnitude of stress and socialization effects on abuse. The table shows the expected probabilities of abuse under the various combinations of early exposure and low/intermediate/high stress. Low stress is defined as the absence of any stressful events, intermediate stress is one event, and high stress is three events. Ninety-four percent of the sample reported three or fewer stressful negative events in the past year. The expected probabilities are calculated at the sample mean for income, just over \$18,000.

(INSERT TABLE 3)

Table 3 shows that the probability of spouse abuse increases in the presence of either form of childhood exposure, and that higher levels of stress are associated with higher probabilities of abuse. The cumulative effects of the three predictor variables are dramatic. The probability of abusing a spouse is over ten times greater in the presence of high stress and both types of childhood exposure than in the absence of these three conditions (.119 versus .011). Because the model is additive, the stress effect remains stable across conditions of childhood exposure, just as the childhood exposure effects remain stable across levels of stress.

Two results emerge from the expected probabilities in Table 3 to further clarify the relationships among childhood socialization, stress, and spouse abuse. First, while childhood socialization and stress are both related to the probability of perpetrating spouse abuse, as we hypothesized the childhood socialization effect is stronger. Although childhood family experiences clearly are not as proximate or immediate as current life strains, they nonetheless have a more potent effect on the likelihood of violence in adults' current marital relationships. This is reasonable given the direct connection between stimulus and response in the childhood exposure-marital aggression link. The stimulus-response connection is much less direct in the case of stress and marital aggression. Physical aggression toward a spouse is only one of a multitude of potential behavioral responses to stress.

The relatively greater impact of childhood socialization is reflected in several ways in Table 3. The probability of spouse abuse given no current stress and both types of early childhood exposure (.060) is almost three times as great as the probability of abuse in the presence of high stress and no childhood exposure (.023). Moreover, within each of the four early childhood exposure categories, individuals with highly stressful lives are about twice as likely to perpetrate spouse abuse as individuals whose current lives are not stressful (compare the first and last rows within each column). On the other hand, individuals who observed parents' marital aggression are more than three times as likely to perpetrate spouse abuse as those who did not, regardless of how stressful their lives are now (compare column 1 with 3, and column 2 with 4, within each row).

While comparing the relative effects of childhood exposure and current stress on abuse depends on the accuracy with which each component is measured, the results in Table 3 suggest that childhood experiences have a greater effect on spouse abuse than does current life stress.

The other interesting pattern that emerges from Table 3 involves the relative effects of the two childhood exposure variables. At each level of stress, the parent-parent hitting measure of childhood exposure has a stronger effect on subsequent spouse abuse than the parent-child hitting measure of early exposure. Those who observed their parents strike each other are approximately three times as likely to perpetrate abuse in their own marriages as those who did not observe parent-parent hitting, controlling for parent-child aggression (compare column 1 with 3, and column 2 with 4). However, when parents' marital aggression is held constant, the probabilities of perpetrating spouse abuse are less than twice as high among individuals who were victims of parental aggression than among those whose parents did not hit them.

Consistent with previous research, this suggests that the modeling of family violence tends to be relationship-specific (Kalmuss, 1984). Childhood family experiences may teach individuals that certain behaviors are appropriate either in all family relationships, or only in specific family relationships. That is, individuals who observe physical violence between any members of their childhood families may learn that it is acceptable to be physically aggressive toward loved ones. Alternatively, individuals observing unpunished violence between particular family members may learn that violence between actors in those specific family roles is appropriate.

Learning that violence between specific family actors is acceptable does not mean that individuals also adopt the more general rule that violence between any pair of family actors is legitimate. Our finding that observing parents' marital aggression has a greater effect than being the victim of parental violence supports the notion that family violence is learned from role-specific models.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Results

This study was designed to examine the relationships among early exposure to family violence, recent stressful experiences, and spouse abuse. The results indicate that the joint effect of these two variables on spouse abuse is additive rather than interactive. Adults exposed to violence in their childhood families as well as adults exposed to recent stressful experiences are more likely to have perpetrated spouse abuse in their current marriages than adults exposed to only one or neither of these factors. While both effects are significant, the early childhood exposure to family violence has a substantially greater effect on spouse abuse than does exposure to recent stressful experiences. Our findings support the view that the family is a critical context for the socialization of violence.

The results also indicate that the effects on spouse abuse of early childhood exposure to violence differ depending on the nature of individuals' early family experiences. Both observing parents' marital aggression and experiencing parental aggression as a teenager are important predictors of abuse. The relationship specific example

provided by observing parents' marital aggression is more strongly related to the perpetration of spouse abuse than is the general model for family violence provided by parent-child hitting.

Measurement problems make us somewhat cautious about concluding that early exposure to family violence is a more important predictor of abusive behavior than is current life stress. Several of the commonly cited problems endemic to the operationalization of stress plague our measure as well. These include the possibility that the list of negative events is not exhaustive, and that the events are not equally psychologically stressful for all respondents. In addition, because the National Survey of Family Violence was not designed primarily to assess the stress-violence relationship, the study does not provide information on several key variables that intervene in this relationship. Intervening variables omitted from the study include the emotional and social resources available to help individuals cope with potentially stressful events.

Discussion

Our findings point to the strong importance of early socialization for adults' marital behavior. In particular, early family experiences appear to have a greater impact on spouse abuse than (at least some) negative events thought to be associated with stress in individuals' current lives. The effects of early exposure to violence on subsequent aggressive behavior suggest that children's early family experiences have enduring effects. The long-term effects of individuals' childhood socialization exceed the short-term impact

of strain caused by employment problems and other stress-producing events.

Acknowledging the significance of childhood exposure to violence for subsequent marital aggression is a first step toward understanding the ways in which individuals create or become involved in violent relationships. However, the association between childhood exposure and the subsequent reenactment of violence is far from perfect. Many adults who perpetrate spouse abuse come from childhood families that were not violent, and other adults from violent families do not carry the behavior into the relationships that they form later in life. This argues for the importance of influences outside of as well as within the family for the socialization to violence. These extrafamilial influences include television, movies, magazines, dating partners, and peer groups.

On one hand, individuals who were exposed to violence at home may receive messages from sources outside the family that positively or negatively reinforce their perception of whether physical aggression is appropriate between intimates. On the other hand, individuals who were not exposed to violence at home may develop behavioral repertoires including physically aggressive behavior as children when they hear about violence between their friends' parents, as teenagers when they observe violent patterns in their own or their peers' couple relationships, and as adults when they become aware of violence in their friends' marriages. Socialization outside of the family is particularly important for the learning of family violence because

socialization occurs throughout life, and not just while individuals live in their childhood family units.

Our inability to include other sources of learning in our model of spouse abuse may help explain the insignificant interaction of childhood exposure, current stress and marital violence. We found that high levels of stress were associated with the perpetration of spouse abuse even in the absence of childhood exposure to such behavior. Why would individuals who did not observe their parents responding to stress with physical aggression exhibit this response to stress in their own marriages? A possible reason is that they learned about spouse abuse outside of their childhood families. To model more adequately the relationships among socialization, stress, and spouse abuse, requires data on socialization to violence that occurs in a variety of familial and extrafamilial contexts.

Another complication associated with disentangling the effects of socialization and stress on marital violence is the relationship between economic strain and family violence. We know that families who are violent are also more likely to be poor. Thus, individuals raised in violent families are likely to have experienced childhood poverty. These individuals probably also experienced a range of other strains in childhood commonly associated with poverty including overcrowded housing and unsafe neighborhood conditions. Therefore, at least some portion of what we have identified as the effect of socialization or early exposure to family violence on later marital aggression actually may be due to the chronic strains associated with childhood economic deprivation. A more complete model of the way childhood family experiences contribute to the incorporation of

violence into an individual's repertoire of family behavior requires data on individuals' exposure to other childhood strains in addition to family violence.

Our results showing the effects of acute stress on marital aggression need further elaboration as well. As noted, the finding that early family experiences have a greater effect on spouse abuse than does current stress may be attributable to measurement problems. Our measures of childhood exposure to family violence have greater validity and reliability than the measures of current life stress. Nevertheless, even an improved operationalization of stress may yield the same results. There are many potential responses to stress that do not involve physical aggression, including alcoholism, depression, withdrawing from contact with others, perpetrating emotional abuse, and marital separation. Specific patterns of response to stress depend on individuals' genetic predisposition, temperament, learning experiences, and support systems. Given the wide range of coping strategies and resources available, it is not surprising that only a subset of individuals experiencing high levels of stress respond to that experience with family violence.

A fruitful approach for future studies of stress and socialization as factors contributing to family violence might involve deviant case analysis. For example, it would be instructive to study a group of individuals who were exposed to physical aggression in their childhood families but did not carry that behavior into their family relationships later in life. Similarly, researchers might want to identify a sample of individuals who were not exposed to violence during childhood, but who perpetrate physically aggressive behavior in

their own marriages. Researchers also should make more systematic attempts to investigate the social and psychological characteristics that predict nonviolent responses to stress. These targeted studies could increase our understanding of how a variety of socialization contexts and experiences of stress operate together throughout a lifetime to influence the likelihood of family violence.

NOTES

1. Contemporary American society provides many settings in addition to family experiences where children and adolescents can observe violent behavior. Peer group playground interaction and television programs, for example, also provide models of physical aggression as unsanctioned behavior.

2. Individuals who grew up in single parent households have been excluded from this analysis. The implications of early family transitions for later family relationships, particularly physical aggression, are an important area for future research.

3. We replicated all analyses with alternate specifications of the early exposure measures and obtained similar results. Note that early exposure to family violence is treated as two dichotomies to identify individuals with meaningful childhood experiences of abuse. We do not expect the absolute number of abusive incidents in childhood to affect individuals' subsequent involvement in spouse abuse. When we test the assumption that the significant factor predicting spouse abuse is whether or not the respondent observed or experienced any violence, rather than the number of such experiences, the results support this analytic strategy.

4. Although under certain circumstances the events included in this summary measure of acute stress might occur as a result rather than cause of spouse abuse, we have restricted the index to those items on the checklist that are least likely to be outcomes of spouse

abuse. For example, even though individuals may obtain a divorce to escape spouse abuse, the divorce in the event checklist is considerably more likely to refer to a previous marriage than the respondent's current relationship because the sample is restricted to individuals married at the time of interview. When we use alternate operationalizations of the stress index incorporating different subsets of stressful events, the results are consistent with those we report.

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Table 1. Bivariate Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations, National Survey of Family Violence, 1976

Perpetrated Spouse Abuse in Past year, 1=yes	----				
Early Exposure: Parent-Parent Aggression, 1=yes	.142	----			
Parent-Child Aggression, 1=yes	.089	.175	----		
Stress	.097	.079	.139	----	
Income (thousands)	-.108	-.038	-.069	-.060	----
	Spouse Abuse	Parent- Parent	Parent- Child	Stress	Income
Mean	.039	.166	.375	1.27	18.3
Standard Deviation	.194	.373	.484	1.26	12.6

TABLE 2. Coefficients Representing the Effects of Childhood Exposure to Family Violence and Recent Stressful Events on the Log Odds of Perpetrating Spouse Abuse.

	Model 1	Model 2
Childhood Exposure		
Parent-Parent	1.35 (.462) ^a	1.18 (.291)
Parent-Child	.907 (.460)	.574 (.289)
Stress	.402 (.149)	.254 (.094)
Income (thousands)	-.078 (.020)	-.079 (.020)
Exposure*Stress		
Parent-Parent	-.103 (.196)	----
Parent-Child	-.187 (.192)	----
Constant	-3.33	-3.07
-2*log likelihood	414.1	415.6

^a Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

Table 3. Expected Probabilities of Perpetrating Spouse Abuse

NUMBER OF STRESSFUL EVENTS	CHILDHOOD EXPOSURE			
	(1) Parent-parent=yes; Parent-child=yes	(2) Parent-parent=yes; Parent-child=no	(3) Parent-parent=no; Parent-child=yes	(4) Parent-parent=no; Parent-child=no
0	.060 ^a	.034	.019	.011
1	.075	.044	.025	.014
3	.119	.071	.040	.023

^aExpected probabilities are calculated at the sample mean for family income.