

Profiles of Recent vs. Non-Recent Immigrant Perpetrators of Domestic Homicide: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

There have been a number of studies that have explored victims' immigrant status and length of residence in relationship to domestic violence in Canada (Daoud et al., 2012; Hyman et al., 2006; Du Mont et al., 2012). Unfortunately, there have not been any Canadian studies examining the status or length of residence of perpetrators. The present study seeks to examine the profiles of recent immigrants (0-5 years in Canada) versus non-recent (5+ years in Canada) immigrant perpetrators of domestic homicide and risk factors present and system/agency involvement.

Introduction

- Immigration status is emerging as one of the most significant factors in determining how or if domestic violence is addressed in immigrant families (Earner, 2010).
- Country of origin is also relevant, with research suggesting that immigrant women from non-Western and developing countries are at an increased risk of violence compared to immigrant women from Western and developed countries (Hassan et al., 2011)
- In Canada, immigrant populations may be further categorized as 'recent' immigrants (e.g., 0-5 years in host country) and non-recent immigrants (e.g., 5+ years in host country), with recent immigrants commonly referred to as 'newcomers'.
- Risk for intimate partner violence was significantly lower among recent immigrant women compared with non-recent immigrant women in Canada (Hyman et al., 2006).
- Research from the United States examining risk factors among immigrant perpetrators found that men who resided for greater than six years and had poor English proficiency were at the highest risk of intimate partner violence perpetration (Gupta et al., 2010).
- Acculturation does not always lead to positive outcomes for newcomers integrating into society. Specifically, alcohol use by men can increase post-migration, placing victims at greater vulnerability for intimate partner violence (Guruge, 2014)
- Immigrant battered women note that their partner's drinking behaviour would change post-migration; they partly attributed their abusive behaviour to this (Erez et al., 2009).

Methods

Design

- This study utilized a retrospective case analysis design using quantitative data made available from the 2015 Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee (DVDRC), exploring cases reviewed from 2003-2015.

Sample

- This study utilized 66 cases where the perpetrator was identified as an individual not born in Canada and was residing in Canada immigrant.
- There were 9 cases identified as Newcomers (0-5 years in Canada) and 57 cases identified as Non-recent immigrants (5+ years in Canada)
- 10 cases were omitted from final analyses as it could not be determined how long the perpetrator had resided in Canada.

Procedure

- Cases with immigrant perpetrators who resided have spent 0-5 years in Canada were grouped as newcomers (recent immigrants) and perpetrators who have resided for 5+ years were grouped as non-recent immigrants
- (1) Frequencies were utilized to obtain demographic information; (2) Chi-square analyses were conducted for discrete variables (e.g. risk factors); (3) T-tests were conducted for continuous variables (e.g. number of agencies involved); (4) Frequencies were also utilized to further examine the data through a different lens

Results

Demographic Info of Immigrant Perpetrators

Country of Origin

Region	%(n) (N = 75)
South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iran)	20% (15)
Caribbean (Jamaica, Trinidad, Grenada, Guyana, Dominican Republic, St. Lucia)	16% (12)
Eastern Europe (Poland, Moldavia, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia)	15% (11)
Southern Europe (Portugal, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Italy)	12% (9)
Southeastern & Eastern Asia (Vietnam, Philippines, China, South Korea)	12% (9)
North & East Africa (Sudan, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Kenya)	9% (7)
North/Central/South America (United States, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, Uruguay)	8% (6)
Northern & Western Europe (England, Scotland, Germany)	5% (4)
Western Asia (Lebanon, Turkey)	3% (2)

Age of Arrival

Age at Arrival	%(n) (N = 56)
0-17 years	9% (7)
18-24 years	20% (15)
25-54 years	45% (34)

Residency Status at Homicide

Residency Status	%(n) (N = 69)
Canadian Citizen	33% (25)
No Canadian Citizenship	57% (43)
American Citizen	1% (1)

Newcomer (0-5 years) vs. Non-recent immigrant (5+ years)

Risk Factors:

	Newcomers (0-5 years)			Non-recent immigrants (5+ years)			χ^2 <i>t</i>
	n	%	N	n	%	N	
DVDRC Risk Factors							
Excessive Alcohol/Drug Use by Perpetrator	0	0%	8	20	46%	44	5.91*
History of Domestic Violence	4	57%	7	44	88%	50	4.40*
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	
Total Number of Risk Factors	9	7.11	3.62	57	10.14	5.44	-1.61

*p < 0.05

A significantly greater proportion of cases involving non-recent immigrants had identified excessive alcohol/drug use and a history of domestic violence as a risk factor compared to newcomers.

There were no significant differences in the total number of risk factors between newcomers and non-recent immigrants. However, further examination revealed different top risk factors between newcomers and non-recent immigrants:

Newcomers	Non-Recent Immigrants	DVDRC
Perpetrator was Violently & Constantly Jealous (80%)	History of Domestic Violence in Current Relationship (88%)	History of Domestic Violence in Current Relationship (74%)
Obsessive Behaviour Displayed by Perpetrator (71%)	Actual or Pending Separation (74%)	Actual or Pending Separation (68%)

Actual or Pending Separation (71%)	Obsessive Behaviour Displayed by Perpetrator (71%)	Perpetrator Depressed (50%)
Other Risk Factors (63%)	Perpetrator Depressed (66%)	Obsessive Behaviour Displayed by Perpetrator (48%)
Perpetrator Depressed (57%)	Victim's Intuitive Sense of Fear (64%)	Prior Threats/Attempts to Commit Suicide (44%)

“Other Risk Factors” in particular were common for newcomers, which included:

- Fear of deportation (P)
- Social isolation (P)
- Non-recognition of educational qualifications (P)
- Frustration with immigration process (P)
- Was in refugee camp (P)
- Unaware of resources and legal rights in Canada (V)

Agency Involvement

	Newcomers (0-5 years)			Non-recent immigrants (5+ years)			<i>t</i>
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	
Total Agencies Involved for Case	9	1.33	1.23	56	5.20	4.23	-5.54***
Total Agencies Involved for Perpetrator	9	1.00	1.32	57	3.53	3.27	-4.09***

***p <0.001

Results indicate that newcomers were involved in significantly fewer agencies compared to non-recent immigrants. Agencies involved between groups were as follows:

Newcomers

- Police (33%)
- Immigrant Advocacy (14%)
- Mental Health Provider (11%)
- Health Care Provider (11%)
- Local Hospital (11%)
- Child Protection (11%)

Non-Recent Immigrants

- Police (57%)
- Mental Health Provider (33%)
- Health Care Provider (32%)
- Court Contact (29%)
- Religious Community (19%)
- Probation (18%)

Reports of Domestic Violence:

	Newcomers (0-5 years)			Non-recent immigrants (5+ years)			χ^2
	n	%	N	n	%	N	
Police	1	11%	9	31	56%	55	6.34*
Court	0	0%	9	17	31%	55	3.79*

*p < 0.05

A significantly greater proportion of cases involving non-recent immigrants had reports of domestic violence documented by the police and the courts compared to newcomers.

Perpetrator Profile:

	Newcomers (0-5 years)			Non-recent immigrants (5+ years)			χ^2
	n	%	N	n	%	N	
Criminal History	1	13%	8	34	60%	57	6.28*
Prior Mental Health & Counselling	1	14%	7	25	57%	44	4.37*

*p < 0.05

A significantly greater proportion of cases involving non-recent immigrants had a criminal history and had received mental health and counselling compared to newcomers.

Summary

- Immigrants perpetrators come from various regions in the world, but mostly from developing countries and over half did not have citizenship
- Newcomers are less likely to have history of domestic violence and substance use as identified risk factors compared to non-recent immigrants; “other risk factors” was identified in more than half the cases
- Newcomers are involved with significantly fewer agencies, less likely to have reports of domestic violence from courts & police, and less likely to have a criminal history or prior mental health/counselling compared to non-recent immigrants

Limitations

- Small sample size of recent immigrants, therefore it is difficult to generalize to all newcomers
- Secondary data set to gain information on homicide cases

- Many cases had missing information
- Other variables may have impacted results (e.g. country of origin, children, city of settlement, pre-migration trauma)

Implications/Future Directions

- Newcomer immigrant perpetrators of domestic homicide have different profiles than non-recent immigrants
- Further research is needed to better understand the needs and challenges of newcomers
- Investigating perpetrators' through a pre- and post-migration context is necessary
- Mainstream services (police, health care) are the services that newcomers are primarily involved with
 - Screening tools that capture the unique factors that may put couples at risk for domestic violence are needed

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