


The Missing Piece of the Puzzle  
 Understanding Immigrant  
 Women's Responses to Risk  
 Assessment and Safety Planning:  
 A transnational perspective



A Conference for Practitioners, Re  
 Policy Makers, Advocates, Corone  
 Health & Justice Professionals

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**CDHPC**  
 CANADIAN DOMESTIC HOMICIDE  
 PREVENTION CONFERENCE

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## Intimate Partner Femicide

Femicide is 'the intentional killing of women because they are women' (World Health Organization, 2013). Intimate partner femicide refers to the killing of women by current or former partners (Lerning Network)

World Health Organization (2013). Understanding and addressing violence against women: Femicide. Learning Network Brief 29. <http://www.womenlearningnetwork.ca/files/femicide.pdf>

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**Domestic Violence Death Review Committee**

2002 – 2008: 152 women were murdered by their current or former intimate partners in Ontario

The causes of death: stabbing, shooting, strangulation, or assault  
 Mostly in their own homes

Number of immigrant women? Unknown  
 Number of newcomer women? Unknown

<https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca>

Intimate Partner Femicides

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Questions

Why do women stay in abusive relationships, even when their lives are at risk?

When do women leave abusive relationships?

**More complex questions**

Why do **immigrant** women stay in abusive relationships, even when their lives are at risk?

When do **immigrant** women leave abusive relationships?

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On July 24, Raja Ghazi, eight months pregnant, was stabbed in her home in Montreal.

Her partner, Sofiane Ghazi, 37, allegedly stabbed Ghazi multiple times.

Raja survived the attack, but her baby, delivered by emergency C-section, died in hospital a few hours after birth.

Montreal police had been called to her home a few hours before the incident, and the officers said that even though they had urged her to leave at that time, the woman didn't want to leave the home.



From The Star, Com  
<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/07/25/suspect-in-montreal-stabbing-of-pregnant-woman-whose-baby-died-faces-4-charges.html>

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What are the risk factors for Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence ?

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### What are the risk factors?

"Ghazi moved to Montreal from Oran, Algeria, in 2012. It says he works at clothing retailer Lacooste and formerly worked at Stelpro, a heating, ventilating and air conditioning service located in Saint-Bruno.

"His online interests show he's a fan of the soccer team Manchester United, as well as a number of Algerian sports teams. In one picture, he's wearing a skull mask — in another, he's posing with a young boy.

"In June, Ghazi was arrested and charged with assaulting his wife. Around the same time, he was arrested for allegedly stealing perfume from a Jean Coutu pharmacy.

- Immigration
- Precarious work
- Previous contact with service providers
- Other crimes
- Prior risk assessment?
- Safety planning?

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/07/24/montreal-newborn-dies-after-mother-was-stabbed-several-times.html>

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### Risk Factors?

"Neighbours say the June incident was not the first time police had been called to the fourth-floor apartment."

"Ghazi was arrested in June, [...] he was released on conditions.

"He was ordered to attend either Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous twice a week, in addition to therapy. He was living across town, away from his family, and was only allowed to be in the presence of his wife with her consent.

"Court documents from 2011 show the couple started divorce proceedings, but abandoned them."

- Failed risk assessment ?
- What could have been done differently ?
- Alcohol and drug abuse as potential risk factors
- Stigma of divorce

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/07/24/montreal-newborn-dies-after-mother-was-stabbed-several-times.html>

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DV Risk Assessment\* – which of the following applied in this case?

- Witness of Family Violence and/or Victim of Family Violence
- Married vs. de facto relationships
- Age disparity
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Sexual jealousy
- Separation/threat of separation
- Stalking
- Personality disorder
- Previous domestic violence

Any other factors not included here ?

\*The Center for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children  
Domestic Violence Risk Assessment and Management Curriculum

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Risk of Femicide – which of the following applies here?

- Increased severity or frequency of domestic violence
- Death threats, attempted strangulation (choking)
- Forced sexual acts
- Victim fear of being killed
- Controlling, obsessive forms of psychological bond (coercive control, possessive jealousy)
- Threat(s) with weapons
- Violence during pregnancy
- Significant perpetrator life changes
- Suicidal tendencies
- Threats or attempts to commit suicide by the perpetrator
- Unemployment
- Presence of children in the home, particularly children not biologically related to the perpetrator

The Center for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children  
Domestic Violence Risk Assessment and Management Curriculum

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- Kamala (34 years) married to her husband (42 years) for five years.
- She moved to Canada 5 years ago with him and have two children, now 4 and 2 years. She was a lawyer in her home country, now working as an assistant at a local clinic, mostly doing part-time administrative work.
- Her husband, an engineer back home, has found more stable work at a restaurant, he drinks alcohol and according to Kamala 'when drunk, becomes physically abusive.'
- He does not like her talking to her parents back home, or when she talks about the qualifying exams to be able to pursue a career in law in Canada.

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Questions

What are the potential risk factors for DV?

Are there any risk factors for femicide ?

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Risk factors

- Kamala (34 years) married to her husband (42 years) for five years. **She moved to Canada 5 years ago** with him and have two children, now 4 and 2 years. She was a lawyer in her home country, now working as a assistant at a local clinic, mostly doing **part-time** administrative work.
- Her husband, an engineer back home **has better income** at a restaurant, **he drinks alcohol**, and according to Kamala 'gives little money expenses, and when drunk, becomes physically abusive.'
- He does not like her talking to her parents back home or when she talks about **the qualifying exams** to be able to pursue a career in medicine in Canada.

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DV Risk Assessment

- Witness of Family Violence and/or Victim of Family Violence
  - Married vs. de facto relationships
  - Age disparity
  - Drug and alcohol abuse
  - Sexual jealousy
  - Separation/threat of separation
  - Stalking
  - Personality disorder
  - Previous domestic violence
- Conditions not on this list**
- Migration
  - Social isolation
  - Lack of social capital
  - Dependency
  - Immigration status, sponsorship

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### Risk of femicide

- Increased severity or frequency of domestic violence
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### When do women seek help for DV/IPV ?

- When she feels her life is at risk
  - When she has options – a place to leave her children
  - She has had time to think about the options, or have experience of taking some of those steps before
  - When she has supportive family including extended family
  - When she is economically and emotionally independent
  - When she feels her children are at risk of abuse and would be safe elsewhere than at home
- To better understand when and how do immigrant women seek help, we may have to first understand
- a) what help seeking looks like in the countries that they come from
  - b) What connections and ties do they maintain with family in that country

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### What are the sources of support?

- Informal networks of family and friends – to leave children with, to find temporary accommodation, help through the medico-legal system
- Religious leaders and community leaders
- Health care providers – female, community/field workers such as midwives
- Trusted social workers and legal aid

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### Transnational perspectives in DV/IPV service provision

Includes understanding:

- Where do people (immigrants/refugees/newcomers) come from?
- How do they understand or talk about IPV in different settings?
- What would have helped them leave abusive relationships in that context?
- What social, economic, and legal ties do they maintain with their home countries?
- How do these ties influence and shape immigrant/refugee women's responses to DV/intimate partner violence?

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Thank you



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