Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
RISK FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE:
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE
SPOUSAL ASSAULT RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDE IN A NEW ZEALAND
POPULATION

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctorate of Clinical Psychology

at Massey University
Wellington, New Zealand

Uvonne Callan-Bartkiw

2012
ABSTRACT

International and national studies have consistently shown intimate partner violence is a common phenomenon that cuts across all societies, education and socioeconomic levels, and ethnic and cultural groups. The impact of which includes negative physical and mental health consequences for the victims. Risk assessments may play a role in assisting the management and/or prevention of harm. Assessment of an offender’s risk of future violence play a central role in decision making pertaining to that person’s sentencing, community release, case management, and public safety concerns. Yet the assessments also need to ensure that the rights of the individual being assessed are not violated by misclassification. One method for addressing this issue is to ensure that risk assessment measures are accurate, that is, the measure is reliable and valid. In New Zealand to date, no intimate partner violence risk assessment tools have been evaluated. The current study, therefore, aims to fill this void by investigating the reliability and validity of the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) guide. This was achieved in three parts, using a sample of 43 men recruited from community based stopping violence programmes. Part One evaluated the internal consistency and interrater reliability of the SARA, Part Two evaluated the convergent and discriminant validities, and Part Three, which employed a prospective design with 36 participants from the total sample, evaluated the predictive validity and incremental validity of the dynamic risk factors. The findings indicated that while the internal consistency, and convergent, discriminant, and predictive validates were adequate, the dynamic risk factors did not evidence incremental validity over the static risk factors, and the interrater reliability was variable. In addition, it was found that the source of information provided to the observers impacted on the resulting agreement coefficients. Therefore, before the SARA is implemented as a risk assessment measure in New Zealand methods for improving the interrater reliability and exploration of the usefulness of the dynamic risk factors in reducing risk should be explored.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people who I would like to thank. First, my sincere thanks go to my supervisors. To my primary supervisor Dr Mei Wah Williams, this thesis would not be what it is today without your wonderful enthusiasm, encouragement and advice. To Associate Professor Douglas Boer, your expertise in violence risk assessment was invaluable. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and being patient with me as I developed mine. To Dr Duncan Babbage, your generosity of your time and zest towards this research was greatly valued. Thank you all for agreeing to supervise this research and for your guidance throughout.

Second, my gratitude goes to a number of people who made this study possible. To the staff of the stopping violence programmes, namely the managers and the intake assessors, thank you for both granting me permission to recruit participants at your sites and introducing the research to potential participants with such vigour and enthusiasm that the recruitment process ran more smoothly than it could otherwise have been. To the New Zealand police, especially the steering committee members, thank you for supporting this research and for your guidance, patience, and encouragement. To my research assistant, Morgan, and the independent raters, thank you for the support, time, and effort you gave to this research. To Ken McMaster, I am grateful for the time you gave to guide and support this research. Lastly, to the participants of this research, your willingness, effort, and time given was greatly appreciated, thank you.

Finally, a very special thank you to my partner, Matt, and my family, Tony, Annette, Charmiane and Brooke, this could not have been completed without your unconditional support and encouragement. Thank you for assuring me of my potential throughout this research (and the clinical components of this degree) and for assisting me in fulfilling this goal.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Overview ........................................................................................................... 1

Chapter One: Intimate Partner Violence .................................................................................... 3
The Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence ........................................................................ 4
The Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence ...................................................... 6
Etiological Frameworks .............................................................................................................. 9
    Feminist theory.................................................................................................................. 7
    Family systems theory ....................................................................................................... 8
    Intergenerational transmission theories ........................................................................ 9
    The psychology of criminal conduct ............................................................................. 10
    Typologies of people who engage in intimate partner violence .................................. 11
Current Responses to Intimate Partner Violence .................................................................... 13
    Mandatory arrest and risk assessment police policies ................................................. 14
    Stopping violence programmes ..................................................................................... 16
Chapter Summary ...................................................................................................................... 20

Chapter Two: The Assessment of Risk for Violence ................................................................. 21
Risk Factors .............................................................................................................................. 21
    Static risk factors ............................................................................................................. 21
    Dynamic risk factors ....................................................................................................... 24
Risk Management ...................................................................................................................... 27
Chapter Summary ...................................................................................................................... 28

Chapter Three: Considerations in Violence Risk Assessment ................................................... 29
Reliability ..................................................................................................................................... 29
    Internal consistency ......................................................................................................... 29
    Interrater reliability .......................................................................................................... 30
Validity ...................................................................................................................................... 32
    Convergent and discriminant validity ........................................................................... 32
    Predictive validity ............................................................................................................ 33
    Incremental validity ......................................................................................................... 34
    Population validity .......................................................................................................... 34
Chapter Summary ...................................................................................................................... 36

Chapter Four: The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide .................................................... 39
The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide ........................................................................ 39
    Description of the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment guide risk factors ....................... 40
    Psychometric properties of the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment guide ........................ 46
The Current Study ..................................................................................................................... 52
    Part one: Interrater reliability ......................................................................................... 52
    Part two: Convergent and discriminant validity ............................................................ 52
    Part three: Predictive and incremental validity ............................................................... 53
Chapter Summary ...................................................................................................................... 55

Chapter Five: Method ................................................................................................................. 56
Participants ................................................................................................................................. 56
    Follow up subsample ........................................................................................................ 56
Interviewers and observers ...................................................................................................... 59
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1  Male and female victims of self-reported intimate partner violence, by different types of violence ................................................................. 5
Figure 2  Sample size at each time point in the selection process ...................... 57
Figure 3  Distribution of the distance from the interviewer’s intimate partner violence subscale score for the observer’s using the audio recording alone method ................................................................. 76
Figure 4  Distribution of the distance from the interview’s total score for the three interrater reliability methods .............................................. 78
Figure 5  Distribution of the distance from the interview’s general violence subscale score for the three interrater reliability methods .......... 78
Figure 6  Distribution of the distance from the interview’s intimate partner Violence subscale score for the three interrater reliability methods ...... 79
Figure 7  Distribution of the distance from the interview’s risk rating for the three interrater reliability methods .............................................. 79
Figure 8  ROC curve of the sensitivity and specificity for the SARA total score and summary risk rating ...................................................... 88
Figure 9  Group comparison of the cumulative proportion with no police contact at 270 days, based on the total score (cut off=13) ...................... 90
Figure 10 Group comparison of the cumulative proportion with no police contact at 270 days, based on summary risk rating .............................. 91

LIST OF FIGURES IN APPENDICES

Figure A1  Power and control wheel .............................................................. 132
Figure A2  Equality wheel ........................................................................... 133
Figure E1  Normal probability plot for the SARA total score ......................... 146
Figure E2  Normal probability plot for the SARA risk rating ............................ 146
Figure E3  Normal probability plot for the SARA general violence subscale .... 147
Figure E4  Normal probability plot for the SARA intimate partner violence subscale ................................................................. 147
Figure E5  Normal probability plot for the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide ...... 148
Figure E6  Normal probability plot for the Domestic Violence Screening Instrument ......................................................................................... 148
Figure E7  Normal probability plot for the Violent Offender Treatment Programme-Risk Assessment Scale ...................................................... 149
Figure E8  Normal probability plot for the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale physical assault subscale ................................................................. 149
Figure E9  Normal probability plot for the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale psychological aggression subscale ..................................................... 150
Figure E10 Normal probability plot for the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale sexual coercion subscale ................................................................. 150
Figure E11 Normal probability plot for the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale injury subscale ................................................................................. 151
Figure E12 Normal probability plot for the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale negotiation subscale ................................................................. 151
Figure F1  Normal probability plot for the SARA total score ............................ 152
Figure F2  Normal probability plot for the SARA risk rating ............................ 152
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Proposed subtypes of male intimate partner violence perpetrators: How they differ on descriptive dimensions ................................................................. 12
Table 2 SARA predictive validity studies .............................................................. 50
Table 3 Summary of demographic characteristics for the total and follow-up participants ........................................................................................................ 58
Table 4 Reliability analyses for the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale subscales ...... 64
Table 5 Descriptive statistics for the measures in the total sample (N=43).......... 74
Table 6 Intraclass correlation coefficients between the SARA scores using different methods of agreement assessment ................................................. 76
Table 7 Differences in the mean discrepancies of rater 1, rater 2, and rater 3, for the SARA total and subscale score ......................................................... 80
Table 8 Differences in the mean discrepancies of rater 1, rater 2, and rater 3, for the SARA risk ratings .................................................................................. 81
Table 9 Bivariate correlations between SARA scores ............................................ 82
Table 10 Bivariate correlations between SARA scores and Domestic Violence Screening Instrument .......................................................... 82
Table 11 Bivariate correlations between SARA subscales, Violence Risk Appraisal Guide and Violent Offender Treatment Programme-Risk Assessment Scale .......................................................... 83
Table 12 Bivariate correlations between SARA total, SARA intimate partner violence subscale, SARA risk rating, and Revised Conflict Tactics Scale violent resolution subscales ..................................................... 84
Table 13 Bivariate correlations between SARA scores and Revised Conflict Tactics Scale negotiation subscale ....................................................... 85
Table 14 Descriptive statistics for the SARA total, risk rating, static factors, and dynamic factors in the follow-up subsample (n=36) .......................... 87

LIST OF TABLES IN APPENDICES

Table D1 Participant assignment for each rater .................................................. 145