



# Intimate Partner Violence and Financial Stress in Newlywed Couples



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## Introduction

- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) includes physical violence, emotional abuse, and sexual coercion (CDC, 2014).
- IPV will affect one in three women and one in four men (NCADV, 2016).
- Some studies indicate that IPV is interspersed throughout the population, regardless of income. Others indicate that poverty is a risk factor (Jewkes, 2002; Rennison & Welchans, 2000).
- High perceived financial strain (e.g., feeling significant financial hardships, unable to support yourself) is correlated with higher levels of IPV victimization (Fox et al., 2004).

This study:

- Examined if perceived financial stress, type of employment, and unemployment explained discrepancies.
- Did not include psychological aggression.

## Method

### Participants

114 Newlywed Heterosexual Couples (Married <1 year)

Age in years:

•Husbands:  $M = 30.51$ ;  $SD = 6.17$

•Wives:  $M = 28.37$ ,  $SD = 5.07$

### Demographics

Ethnicity	Husbands	Wives
Caucasian	47.37%	46.49%
African American	36.84%	41.23%
Hispanic	2.63%	2.63%
Asian	4.39%	0.00%
Other	8.77%	9.65%

### Measures

**Conflict Tactics Scale- Short (Straus & Douglas, 2004)**

- Measures IPV perpetration and victimization in the past 6 months

**Chronic Strains Inventory (Hamen et al., 1987; Karney et al., 2005; Brock & Lawrence, 2008)**

- Measures areas of chronic strain or deprivation in the past 6 months

### Procedure

- Husbands and wives completed self-report questionnaires in separate rooms in the laboratory
- Results were analyzed using Actor-Partner Interdependence Modeling (APIM)

## Results

### IPV Perpetration

	Husbands	Wives
	26.3%	31.6%

Note: Above data represents individual's report of his or her own IPV perpetration. It does not include psychological aggression.

### Employment Status

	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed
Wife	59.6%	17.5%	20.2%
Husband	72.8%	9.6%	13.2%

### Annual Personal Income

Income (USD)	Husbands	Wives
0 - 20,000	15.8%	24.6%
20,000- 40,000	19.3%	23.6%
40,000 - 60,000	24.6%	29.8%
60,000 - 80,000	14.9%	7.9%
80,000+	9.7%	8.0%

### Average Perceived Financial Strain

	M	SD
Wife	5.78	1.59
Husband	5.85	1.52

Note: PFS is measured on a scale from 2 to 9

### Bivariate Correlations Among Predictors

	Employment	Financial Strain
Employment	.18	-.177
Financial Strain	-.098	.53**

Note: Diagonal correlations are between husbands and wives. Correlations above diagonal are husbands and below are wives. \*\* $p < .01$

## Results

### Unique Effects

- One's employment status uniquely predicted partner's injury perpetration,  $t(107.11) = -2.015$ ,  $p = .046$
- One's experience of higher financial strain uniquely predicted their partner's injury perpetration,  $t = (107.496) = -2.620$ ,  $p = .010$

### Actor Variables Predicting Partner IPV Perpetration

	b	SE
Actor Employment	-.029*	.014
Actor Financial Strain	-.015*	.006

Note: \* $p < .05$

## Discussion

- Findings are consistent with past research, and suggest that those who have greater perceived financial strain in their marriages are also more likely to be victims of IPV.
- We also found that individuals who are unemployed or underemployed are more likely to be victimized by their partners.

### Strengths/Limitations

- This study used a large community sample of newlywed adults of varying ages and socioeconomic statuses. The individuals were generally satisfied in their relationships, which controlled for severe physical abuse or marital dissatisfaction.
- The study did not use a longitudinal design, and the couples were only interviewed during their first year of marriage, which may not generalize to long-term relationship satisfaction.

- Only newly married heterosexual couples were surveyed, so other types of relationships were not included in the sample.

### Future Research

- Future research should use a longitudinal design to test whether or not IPV and perceived financial strain are related over time, or if the link may be due to preexisting factors in the relationship.
- Other types of relationships, such as cohabiting couples, should be examined to see if this relationship between IPV and perceived financial strain is limited to marriages, or if it generalizes to other types of lifestyles.