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Effects of intimate partner violence among Seventh-Day Adventist church attendees

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Abstract

This analysis examines the effects of spouse abuse among a group of conservative Christians, specifically Seventh-day Adventists. The results highlight four broad types of effects associated with abusive behaviors in this sample: emotional disturbance, parental abuse or neglect, suicidal ideation, and spiritual disengagement. The analysis investigates risk factors associated with these effects and finds two primary risk factors – experiencing recent intimate partner violence and having a difficult economic situation. By identifying spiritual disengagement and its related factors, this analysis adds a significant dimension to the literature on the effects of intimate partner violence among religiously affiliated people.

Introduction

The serious and lasting effects of intimate partner violence are well-documented in the research literature. Research indicates that intimate partner violence contributes negatively to a range of women's health issues (Sutherland, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2001) that are often long-lasting and extend beyond the time of the abusive incident (Campbell & Lewandowski, 1997).

Women who were physically abused experience more headaches, muscle aches, back pain, sexually transmitted diseases, vaginal bleeding, vaginal infections, pelvic pain, painful intercourse, urinary tract infections, appetite loss, abdominal pain, digestive problems, skin disturbances, respiratory illness, chronic stress-related central nervous system ailments, and total health problems than their non-abused counterparts (Champion & Shain, 1998; Campbell et al., 2002; Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Silvia, McFarlane, Soeken, Parker, & Reel, 1997; Letourneau, Holmes, & Chasedunn-Roark, 1999; Leserman, Li, Drossman, & Hu, 1998). The negative effects of physical abuse have an even greater impact on the physical health of poor women (Sutherland et al., 2001).

Intimate partner violence may have an extreme impact on women's health, leading to chronic illness and disability. Women who had experienced intimate partner violence were more than twice as likely to report a disability as those who had never experienced intimate partner

violence (Coker, Smith, & Fadden, 2005). The effects of intimate partner violence are similarly negative across all age groups; however, older women who have histories of abuse experience more health and mental health problems than younger women (Wilke & Vinton, 2005). As with physical health problems, emotional health appears equally vulnerable among abuse survivors. Researchers examining emotional health problems associated with intimate partner violence report a range of negative impacts including panic, depression, sleep difficulty (Humphreys, Lee, Neylan, & Marmar, 1999), loss of appetite, (Leserman et al., 1998), posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms including intrusion and avoidance (Silvia et al., 1997), and depression and anxiety (Campbell, Kub, Belknap, & Templin, 1997; Carlson, McNutt, & Choi, 2003).

Researchers note that included among the more serious emotional effects for abuse victims is the consequence of engaging in suicidal ideation and actions (Coker et al., 2002; Huth-Bocks, Levendosky, & Semel, 2001; Frank & Dingle, 1999; Krishnan, Hilbert, & VanLeeuwen, 2001). Bergman and Brismar (1991) report a suicide incidence among intimate partner violence victims of more than eight times that of a comparable sample of non-victims. In terms of social effects, victims of intimate partner violence frequently experience difficulties in relationships with their children. Intimate partner violence negatively impacts parenting behaviors including maternal warmth, psychological functioning, and the quality of the caregiver's interaction with the child (Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2000; Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2001; English, Marshall, & Stewart, 2003).

While researchers work to understand the physical and emotional effects of intimate partner violence, an area of examination that appears nearly absent from the research literature is the spiritual effects of intimate partner violence. Qualitative research documents women's experiences following an abusive relationship and notes that they perceive stronger faith and religious beliefs (Senter & Caldwell, 2002). Just how that faith and the attending religious beliefs had been affected during the abusive relationship is not addressed.

Protective Effects of Religion

In contrast to the extremely harmful effects of intimate partner violence in physical and emotional health in general populations, religion appears to be a protective factor for physical and emotional health. A number of studies support the notion that religion offers certain protective benefits to its adherents for an array of issues from stress to drug use. For example, examining multiple stressors, researchers note that engagement in formal religion buffered cumulative stress, work stress, and the experience of racism on physical health (Copeland-Linder, 2006).

Looking at high-risk behaviors such as drug use, church attendance is related to an overall reduction in use (Richard, Bell, & Carlson, 2000). In an extensive review of the literature, researchers conclude that religious activity among adolescents and college students helps predict less substance abuse for up to fifteen years (Booth & Martin, 1998). Similarly, among active drug users research documents an inverse relationship with church attendance and engaging in drug-related HIV risk behaviors such as using dirty cookers and dirty works (Drumm, McBride, Allen, Baltazar, & McCoy, 2001). Several other studies note that religious beliefs offer a

moderate deterrent effect on criminal behavior (Baier & Wright, 2001; Johnson, Li, Larson, & McCullough, 2000).

Spirituality and Intimate Partner Violence

While religion appears protective in several areas of emotional and physical health, what does research demonstrate in terms of intimate partner violence? Is religion protective for domestic violence? Research findings examining the intersection of domestic violence and religion are disparate. For example, researchers often disagree about the role of religion and how it is associated with rates of intimate partner violence. Researchers note that weekly church attendance for men is associated with lower rates of perpetrating intimate partner violence (Ellison & Anderson, 2001; Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002). In looking at victimization, both men and women who attended services weekly had lower rates than those who attended less frequently (Cunradi et al., 2002).

Overall, when examining religion while controlling for other demographic variables, religion does not appear to have a strong or direct influence on the perpetration of intimate partner violence (Cunradi et al., 2002; Battaglia, 2001; Brinkerhoff, Grandin, & Lupri, 1992). These studies generally focus on domestic violence perpetration rather than victimization. This leaves the question as to how religious affiliation might be associated with victimization and its effects. Research on intimate partner violence among religiously affiliated individuals is scant. There were no studies that have examined spiritual effects of intimate partner violence. However in one study examining women's experiences after leaving an abusive relationship, researchers found that all participants perceived stronger faith and religious beliefs and that their understandings of God were enhanced (Senter & Caldwell, 2002).

No studies were found that used religiosity or spirituality as a variable to understand the effects of intimate partner violence. This article, therefore, fills an important gap in the research literature by examining the relationship between violence and religiosity, and the effects of IPV on religious practices and spiritual wellbeing among a church-attending population.

Methods

Sample and Data Collection

Researchers used stratified random sampling techniques to generate the study sample, which consisted of 100 churches stratified by geographic areas and church size. After receiving prior approval from the highest regional authority for the denomination to conduct the study, researchers contacted the pastors of the targeted churches to confirm church participation and arrange for data collection which occurred over a period of several months. Forty-nine of the selected churches accepted the invitation to participate resulting in 1431 individual responses. This study was conducted under the auspices of the Andrews University Institutional Review Board and received approval prior to data collection. As part of the informed consent process, all congregants were reminded prior to data collection that their participation was voluntary. Because the study focused on adult intimate partner violence, only people over the age of 18 were included. The family life professional administering the survey stated the study's purpose –

to assess intimate partner violence in Adventist congregations. Prior to filling out the survey, women church members were asked to sit on one side of the church and men on the other. This precaution provided further safety for any potential victims. As people moved from one side of the church to the other, the movement allowed those who chose to self-select out of the process a convenient opportunity to do so. In addition, participants were cautioned to stop taking the survey if they felt uncomfortable at any time. A family-life professional was available after the service to provide as-needed supportive listening and referral to a prearranged list of counselors.

Measures

Dependent Variables

Effects of abuse were measured by 19 survey items addressing physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The survey instrument asked, "How often in the past month have you..." with the following items: (1) felt your life was out of control, (2) felt very nervous, (3) felt so sad, blue, down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up, (4) felt worn out or tired, (5) experienced unwanted dreams or thoughts about an abusive episode in your past, (6) avoided thinking about the difficulties in your life, (7) been unable to prepare meals or keep normal routines for your children, (8) taken your anger out on your children, (9) parented your children less consistently because of marital difficulties, (10) arrived late or missed days of work because of difficulties with your partner, (11) wished you could die, (12) thought about taking your own life. "How often would you say that your relationship issues...": (13) led you to distrust God, (14) took away time from your personal devotions, (15) discouraged you from going to church, (16) kept you from giving tithe or offering, (17) held you back from your Christian witness, (18) decreased your church activities, (19) led you to feel betrayed by the church and/or a pastor. For items 1 through 12, the answer categories included: never, once or twice a month, about once per week, a couple times a week, or daily. For items 13 to 19, the answer categories included: never, rarely, sometimes, often, or always.

Independent Variables

Abusive behaviors were measured by 30 survey items adapted from the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) and from the National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). These items are listed in Appendix A. Recent intimate partner violence (IPV) is a cumulative variable of all victimization variables from the questions "How often in the last 12 months has X happened to you?"

A single item indicator measured subjects' educational level. The answer categories included: eighth grade or less, some high school (did not finish), high school graduate, some college (did not finish), college graduate, master's degree, post-master's degree. The variable, family economic picture, gives an overall self-report measure of the family's economic situation. Family economic picture is measured by the item, "Your family economic picture over the past year?" with the answer categories: very difficult and stressful, difficult but manageable, adequate, better than average, or very comfortable. For analysis, the lowest score corresponds to having a more difficult family economic situation. The self anchored item was included in the regression as an interval variable. As with any Likert type item, there is a less than perfect

assumption regarding equal intervals. In the same time, this is a common assumption in regression analysis for many social science variables (all Likert type items), which determined its use in the regression model as an interval variable.

Church attendance was measured by the survey question, “Which most closely describes your church attendance in the past twelve months?” The answer categories included: once per year or less (including never), several times per year, one to three times per month, at least once per week. These variables were coded so that a low score on the variable would indicate infrequent attendance.

The survey question, “How closely do you practice the doctrines of your church?” measured religious conservatism. The answer categories included: very conservatively (closely or traditionally), conservatively, liberally (interpret doctrines more non-traditionally), or non-practicing. These variables were coded so that a low score on the variable indicates a more conservative response.

Childhood abuse was measured by the survey question about child abuse experiences. The question states, “Looking back, how severe do you see your childhood punishments today?” The answer categories include: definitely abusive, probably abusive, possibly abusive, and not abusive.

Results

The sample was 61% female, primarily Caucasian, primarily married, and had a wide distribution of ages. A similar broad distribution is also seen for the economic situation of the family. A summary of the sample demographics can be found in Table 1. The rates of victimization in this sample include 65% were subjected to controlling and demeaning behavior, 46% experienced abuse such as being insulted, being threatened, having something thrown at them, or being pushed, grabbed, or shoved, 29% endured sexual victimization, and 10% suffered severe physical abuse (Drumm, et al., 2006).

Table 1: Demographics

Demographics	Type	Percent	Type	Percent
Sex	Female	61%	Male	39 %
Ethnicity	African American	7%	Asian	7%
	Caucasian	81%	Hispanic	2%
	Other	3%		
Age	18 to 35	21%	56 to 75	27%
	36 to 45	21%	76 and over	6%
	46 to 55	26%		
Marital Status	Married	68%	Widowed	4%
	Separated/divorced	13%	Living with a partner	3%

	Single	12%		
Education	Less than HS	4%	College graduate	37%
	High school	12%	Masters degree	10%
	Some college	31%	Post-masters	7%
Economic Situation	Very Difficult	10.3%	Difficult	27.7%
	Adequate	25.3%	Better than average	23.4%
	Very comfortable	12.4%		
Church Attendance	Once a week	70%	Several times a year	4%
	1-3 times a month	25%	Once per year or less	1%
Practice Church Doctrines	Very conservatively	15.4%	Liberally	27.7%
	Conservatively	54.4%	Not practicing	2.6%

Sample n = 1431

The impact of intimate partner violence was measured by its identified effects (see Table 2). All respondents answered these questions, regardless of whether or not they were victims of intimate partner violence.

Table 2: Effects of relationship difficulties among church attendees

Effects	Never	Once a month to more than weekly	Daily
Emotional Disturbance			
Felt your life was out of control	57.9%	37.1%	4.6%
Felt very nervous	47.5%	48.4%	4.1%
Felt so sad, blue, down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up	58.6%	38.5%	2.9%
Felt worn out or tired	14.7%	69.6%	15.7%
Experienced unwanted dreams or thoughts about an abusive episode in your past	79.7%	29.3%	1.0%
Avoided thinking about the difficulties in your life	51.6%	40.8%	7.6%
Parental Neglect or Abuse			
Been unable to prepare meals or keep normal routines for your children	80.0%	16.5%	3.5%
Taken your anger out on your children	82.0%	17.3%	0.7%
Parented your children less consistently because of marital difficulties	84.6%	14.0%	1.4%

Arrived late or missed days of work because of difficulties with your partner	92.0%	7.8%	0.2%
Suicidal Ideation			
Wished you could die	86.7%	12.0%	1.3%
Thought about taking your own life	92.1%	7.2%	0.7%
Spiritual Disengagement	Never	Rarely to Sometimes	Often
Led you to distrust God	62.0%	36.6%	1.4%
Took away time from your personal devotions	30.7%	67.1%	2.2%
Discouraged you from going to church	54.1%	44.5%	1.4%
Kept you from giving tithes or offerings	74.2%	24.0%	1.8%
Held you back from your Christian witness	47.8%	50.7%	1.5%
Decreased your church activities	45.2%	52.7%	2.1%
Led you to feel betrayed by the church and/or a pastor	72.5%	26.2%	1.3%

Factor analysis using the principal components factor method with Varimax rotation was used to explore the relationships between the emotional health and relationship effects items. This analysis yielded three clear and logical factors. The factors were named Emotional Disturbance, Parental Neglect or Abuse, and Suicidal Ideation. As noted in Table 3, the individual factor loadings indicate how well the variable fits with or is related to the overall factor. A separate factor analysis was performed on the spiritual disengagement items that yield only one factor with all items loading highly in that factor (see Table 4).

Table 3: Factor Analysis of Emotional Health and Relationship Effects Items

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1: Emotional Disturbance	0.797		
Felt your life was out of control	0.791		
Felt very nervous	0.738		
Felt so sad, blue, down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up	0.742		
Felt worn out or tired	0.442		
*Experienced unwanted dreams or thoughts about an abusive episode in your past	0.627		
Avoided thinking about the difficulties in your life			
Factor 2: Parental Neglect or Abuse			
Been unable to prepare meals or keep normal routines for your children		0.681	
Taken your anger out on your children		0.718	

Parented your children less consistently because of marital difficulties		0.751	
*Arrived late or missed days of work because of difficulties with your partner		0.455	
Factor 3: Suicidal Ideation			
Wished you could die			0.812
Thought about taking your own life			0.860

Table 4: Factor Analysis of Spiritual Disengagement Items

	Factor 1
Led you to distrust God	0.629
Took away time from your personal devotions	0.767
Discouraged you from going to church	0.847
Kept you from giving tithes or offerings	0.698
Held you back from your Christian witness	0.847
Decreased your church activities	0.857
Led you to feel betrayed by the church and/or a pastor	0.659

To examine what predicts the severity of the emotional health and relationship effects and of spiritual disengagement, the first step was to create indexes for each of the factors found in the factor analysis: Emotional Disturbance ($\alpha=0.835$), Parental Neglect or Abuse ($\alpha=0.678$), Suicidal Ideation ($\alpha=0.785$), and Spiritual Disengagement ($\alpha=0.879$). After creating simple unweighted indexes, Ordinary Least Squares Regression analysis was used to examine predictors of these outcomes. Each regression analysis included the same predictor variables: education level, family economic picture, gender, age, church attendance, severity of childhood abuse, religious conservatism, and race. Race was estimated by including four dummy variables (African American, Hispanic, Asian, and other) and creating the reference group as Caucasian. The variables chosen are supported by prior research studies exploring socio-demographic risk factors for intimate partner violence (Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Vaeth, 2008; Cunradi et al., 2002; Fang & Corso, 2008; Jewkes, 2002; Rotunda, Williamson, & Penfold, 2004). Only the significant variables are reported in the tables below. The B value provides the actual average effect for an increase of 1 on the dependent variable. The inclusion of the standard error of the B allows one to see the size of the confidence interval of the B value. The standardized B adds the ability to compare the size of the effects between the variables in the equation.

The magnitudes and 95% confidence intervals of the regression coefficients of several predictors indicate a strong association with emotional disturbance: feeling that life is out of control, feeling anxious, feeling depressed, feeling worn out and tired, experiencing unwanted dreams, or avoiding thinking about life's difficulties (see Table 5). Of these predictors, some appear protective while others serve as risk markers. Risk factors for increased emotional disturbance include experiencing recent IPV, being female, having a difficult family economic situation, and

having a history of severe childhood punishment. Protective factors include religious conservatism, church attendance, and ethnicity (being Asian compared to Caucasian, Hispanic, or African American). While religiosity in this sample does not protect against victimization in general (Drumm, et al., 2006), it appears to ameliorate the effects of emotional disturbance as shown by the inverse relationship between measures of religiosity and emotional disturbance associated with abuse (In the regression model, the higher number on the measure of conservatism, actually indicates lower levels of conservatism. Thus, lower conservatism is associated with higher levels of emotional disturbance. We can then conclude that religiosity [as expressed by an adherence to conservative practices] ameliorates the extent of emotional disturbance).

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Emotional Disturbance

Variable	Regression Estimator B	Standard Error of B	Standardized Value of B	t-statistic	p of t
(Constant)	11.513	1.392		8.272	.000
Recent IPV	0.204	0.024	0.255	8.376	.000
Sex	-0.797	0.293	-0.079	-2.718	.007
Family Economics	-1.01	0.124	-0.245	-8.113	.000
Religious Conservatism	0.626	0.225	0.09	2.786	.005
Severity of Childhood Punishment	0.401	0.14	0.085	2.863	.004
Asian	-1.448	0.598	-0.07	-2.423	.016
Church Attendance	-1.15	0.249	-0.144	-4.61	.000

$r^2 = 0.268$; Adjusted $r^2 = 0.259$; $N = 1431$

Risk factors for parental abuse or neglect include having experienced recent IPV, being younger in age, and experiencing a difficult family economic picture. A low score on family economics (difficult situation) corresponds with a high score on Parental Abuse or Neglect. That is, there is an association between people with difficult economic situations and those parents who abuse or neglect their children.

No protective factors emerged for parental abuse or neglect in this analysis (see Table 6). Although in a sense, age appears as a protective factor (the more people age the less likely they are to report current parental abuse or neglect), it is likely that this is more of a natural consequence of the fact that, as people age, they don't have minor children in the household to abuse and neglect.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Parental Abuse or Neglect

Variable	Regression Estimator B	Standard Error of B	Standardized Value of B	t-statistic	p of t
(Constant)	1.828	0.597		3.064	.002
Recent IPV	0.092	0.011	0.273	8.328	.000
Age	-0.104	0.044	-0.079	-2.331	.020
Family Economics	-0.282	0.055	-0.17	-5.174	.000

$r^2 = 0.160$; Adjusted $r^2 = 0.149$; $N = 1431$

Researchers noted a similar pattern of risk factors without protective factors for suicidal ideation. The risk factors associated with suicidal ideation included recent IPV, experiencing difficulty with family economics, and having a history of severe childhood punishment (see Table 7). The inverse relationship represented with family economics notes that a difficult economic situation associated with an increase in suicidal ideation. Although the r^2 in this regression model is very small, accounting for about 8% of the variance, this finding raises important issues in terms of prevention and understanding of risk factors in planning intervention models.

Table 7: Regression Analysis of Suicidal Ideation

Variable	Regression Estimator B	Standard Error of B	Standardized Value of B	t-statistic	p of t
(Constant)	0.266	0.301		0.883	.377
Recent IPV	0.036	0.005	0.227	6.871	.000
Family Economics	-0.071	0.027	-0.086	-2.606	.009
Severity of Childhood Punishment	0.064	0.03	0.068	2.117	.035

$r^2 = 0.087$; Adjusted $r^2 = 0.075$; $N = 1431$

In reviewing the factors associated with spiritual disengagement, researchers noted both protective and risk patterns (see Table 8). Factors associated with greater spiritual disengagement include recent IPV, having a higher education level, and experiencing a more difficult family economic situation. Factors with an inverse relationship for spiritual disengagement include being more religiously conservative, attending church more frequently, and being Asian. Religiosity thus appears to be a protective factor, preventing against spiritual disengagement.

Table 8: Regression Analysis of Spiritual Disengagement

Variable	Regression Estimator B	Standard Error of B	Standardized Value of B	t-statistic	p of t
(Constant)	6.981	1.541		4.529	.000
Recent IPV	0.394	0.027	0.437	14.707	.000
Education Level	0.344	0.138	0.071	2.487	.013
Family Economics	-0.647	0.138	-0.139	-4.692	.000
Religious Conservatism	0.916	0.246	0.116	3.716	.000
Asian	-1.441	0.651	-0.063	-2.214	.027
Church Attendance	-1.006	0.283	-0.108	-3.559	0

$r^2 = 0.327$; Adjusted $r^2 = 0.317$; $N = 1431$

Discussion

The analysis supports other research that highlighted negative effects in several life domains (Sutherland et al., 2001; Leserman et al., 1998; Carlson et al., 2003; English et al., 2003). Specifically, the results emphasize four broad types of effects associated with abusive behaviors in this sample of conservative Christians: emotional disturbance, parental abuse or neglect, suicidal ideation, and spiritual disengagement. By identifying spiritual disengagement and factors that are related to these effects among members of a conservative Christian denomination, this analysis adds a significant dimension to the literature on the effects of intimate partner violence among religiously affiliated people.

The two primary risk factors noted in this analysis include experiencing recent IPV and facing a difficult economic situation. Our analysis indicates that having a difficult economic situation plays a significant role for emotional, parental, suicidal, and spiritual effects. In addition, having recently experienced some form of IPV is significantly related to the effects of each area we examined.

Another risk factor of note is having a history of severe childhood punishment. Supporting other research that highlights the association between severe punishment and later victimization (Straus & Kantor, 1994), our findings serve as a continued call for non-violent parenting approaches.

Church attendance and religious conservatism offered a protective association with two of the four factors: emotional disturbance and spiritual disengagement. Subjects who reported attending church more frequently and practicing the doctrines of the church more conservatively noted less emotional disturbance and spiritual disengagement than those who attended less frequently or were more liberal in their approach to following church doctrines. While further research is needed to understand how these factors are protective, it may be that church attendance increases social support, decreasing emotional isolation. People who see themselves as more religiously conservative (more closely following the doctrines of the church) may have added structure to

the daily life or assurance that they are doing what is “right” and therefore experience less emotional disturbance and spiritual disengagement. An alternative explanation is that people who see themselves as more conservative may have some investment in portraying themselves as not being emotionally burdened or spiritually disengaged.

In contrast to negative emotional disturbance and spiritual disengagement, religious practice did not emerge as significantly associated with and therefore protective of either suicidal ideation or parental abuse or neglect.

This still leaves the question of why religion is not protective regarding parental abuse or neglect. Based on our findings, people dealing with recent abuse are at risk for neglectful or abusive behaviors toward their children whether or not they attend church regularly or closely practice the doctrines of their church. This finding may serve as a call for churches to increase outreach to parents in an effort to protect the children in their congregations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study documents the harmful effects of abusive relationships on various domains of well-being. While helping validate some previous findings on the aggravating, cumulative effects of a low economic status and a history of child abuse on IPV victims, the study adds to the existing literature. One new and notable finding centers on the impact of abuse on people’s spiritual and religious experience and practice. The new finding has important implications for faith leaders, faith communities, and mental health professionals since spiritual health is an important component of emotional and mental health (Shelly, & John, 1983). With IPV leading to spiritual disengagement, and therefore a loss of the faith community as a support group, mental health issues such as depression as well as suicidal ideations are aggravated. It is clear from our study that religious practices or church attendance do not act as a protective factor in preventing suicidal ideations, but further research is needed to understand the relationship between the loss of a support system (the faith community) and aggravated impact of IPV on mental health. In addition, the role of religion in preventing or enabling abuse needs to be expanded and clarified. Questions such as “How does participating in organized religion protect against emotional disturbance?” and “Why does religion not appear protective with parental abusive or neglectful effects?” must be addressed. As the literature indicates a strong relationship between child abuse and IPV, it is important to understand how the cycle can be broken, and what positive impact religiosity and the support provided by faith communities can have in preventing child abuse. It is through education of clergy, community leaders, and faith communities in general that we can start addressing these issues. To better address coping and healing for victims of IPV, and further empower them to use spirituality as a healing tool, we need to further research the empowering potential of spirituality in the lives of IPV victims. At a community level, further research is needed to explore the elements of a healing community, and the role played by spirituality in creating healing communities.

This study begins to fill some of the knowledge gap and demonstrates the important impact of abuse on several measures of well-being. Future research must continue investigating these needed areas.

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APPENDIX A

1. Told you what to do and expected obedience
2. Made big family and household decisions without consulting you (move residence, job change, children's education, large purchases, vacation, financial)
3. Limited your involvement with others (friends, family, coworkers)
4. Did not let you have access to family/personal income
5. Restricted your use of the car (checked mileage, needed to get permission to use, didn't allow you to get a license)
6. Prevented you from getting or keeping a job/education
7. Monitored your daily activities
8. Stalked or followed you
9. Ignored or discounted your accomplishments or activities
10. Was extremely jealous or accused you of having an affair
11. Threatened to take the children away from you
12. Insulted, swore at you, or called you names
13. Tried to convince you that you were crazy
14. Threatened you with suicide
15. Destroyed property or cherished possessions
16. Threatened to abuse your children
17. Abused your children or pets to punish you
18. Exhibited a general contempt for your gender
19. Used pornographic materials
20. Used sexually degrading language towards or about you
21. Used you sexually against your will
22. Persuaded you to do something sexually that you consider a perversion
23. Raped you
24. Deprived you of heat, food, or sleep
25. Threatened to hit or throw something at you
26. Threw, smashed, hit, or kicked something to frighten you
27. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved you
28. Beat you up
29. Threatened to use a knife or gun on you
30. Used a knife or gun on you