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Domestic Violence at the Top of New England

Law Enforcement Incident Reports from Aroostook County, Maine

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Although domestic violence is an issue regularly discussed in magazines, newspapers, and elsewhere, many law enforcement agencies including many in New England do not have the capacity to track these incidents and the relationship between the victim and the offender. Through an analysis of law enforcement data from Maine's Aroostook County, in 1997 and 1998, this article analyzes the problem of domestic violence in rural, northern Maine from a law enforcement perspective. Among the findings are the following:

- the reported severity of physical injury is low,*
- the victim's contact with the police is unlikely to be the first incident of domestic violence,*
- the number of male victims of domestic abuse is higher than in self-reported data, and*
- intoxication (alcohol/drugs) on the part of one or both parties stands higher than intoxication in the general population.*

After data analysis, training and policy implications are then discussed.

Domestic violence is no longer a taboo subject but is now discussed at conferences and at dinner tables, in popular magazines and newspapers, on radio and television talk shows, and is portrayed in docudramas and soap operas across America. Internet sites are devoted to it and, especially, to its diminution.¹ We now have community shelters and support groups in many places to help victims of domestic violence.

But how domestic violence is identified and is handled varies substantially among New England's hundreds of law enforcement agencies that help keep our cities,

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highways, streets, and neighborhoods wholesome places in which to live, work, and travel. The State of Maine and, especially, Aroostook County, a region known as the rooftop of Maine or, simply, “The County” — is an area with far fewer travelers and inhabitants than is typical of most of the United States. Moose seemingly outnumber people, potatoes outnumber moose, and pine trees outnumber everything, perhaps, except the snowflakes of winter.² This rugged, pristine area, has a quality reminiscent of the idyllic American frontier, yet it is by no means immune to social ills found anywhere else in society: poverty, substance abuse, and domestic violence have their scars in this rustic region as they do in urban settings. This article looks at the social lesion of domestic violence in this rooftop of Maine from the vantage point of recent, frontline law enforcement data that differs in meaningful ways from survey data gleaned directly from victims (who may or may not report incidents to law enforcement authorities). That is because the kind of incident and victims law enforcement officials encounter often differ from those of battered women’s shelters and health care providers.

Study Approach

Maine is among 14 states that have a mandatory arrest law for domestic violence. As a result, a victim in Maine does not have to press charges against a suspect. An officer does not have to obtain a warrant for an arrest if there is probable cause that a crime has taken place. Most Maine law enforcement agencies, however, do not have the capacity to track domestic violence incidents except in the most rudimentary way. Consequently, quantitative data in many parts of Maine has been scarce or superficial or both. To combat the paucity of data and to better understand rural domestic violence, the Aroostook County Sheriff’s Department and the Aroostook County District Attorney’s Office competed successfully for a problem-solving grant from the United States Department of Justice.³

This grant enabled all law enforcement agencies of Aroostook County to capture detailed domestic violence information throughout a 15-month period in 1997 and 1998. Incidents involving adults numbered 135 and were reported in 20 communities and two unorganized territories, jurisdictions comprising roughly one third of the County’s area but home to almost all of its inhabitants. Nearly all suspects were arrested or were summonsed.⁴ A warrant was issued for those who fled prior to the officer arriving. This article analyzes that data.

The Context: A Patchwork of Law Enforcement Statistics on Domestic Violence

The legal definitions of domestic violence or domestic abuse differ from state to state; each term connotes actions where the two parties have a familial or otherwise close relationship.⁵ Maine public law defines these relationships as between those who are (or were formerly) married, who have a child in common, are relatives (including parent and adult child), are cohabitants, or are dating. In Maine, domestic violence is considered to have occurred if any of the following types of crime occurs: assaulting; intimidating; restraining, confining, restricting movements; moving a person involuntarily; attempting to cause bodily injury; threatening; attempting rape; stalking; violating a protection order; reckless conduct; sexual assault.⁶

Estimates of domestic violence incidents most often come from National Crime Victimization Surveys (NCVS) and not from actual law enforcement data.⁷ The

NCVS data indicate that the rate of violent victimization (sexual assaults, robberies, aggravated and simple assaults) is lower in rural areas than in urban and suburban areas.⁸ The average annual rate of violent victimization in urban areas is 45.4 persons per 1,000 females age 12 and older. This contrasts with a rate of 33.6 per 1,000 in suburban areas and 29.5 per 1,000 in rural areas. No figures are reported about lesser offenses potentially involving domestic violence. For Aroostook County, the incidence rate reported by law enforcement officers is about four per 1,000, creating a distinctly different view through the lens of law enforcement personnel.

Law enforcement agencies collect and report data through Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). The UCR aggregates incidents by type of crime, not by the relationship between the suspect and victim, and thus there is no easy way to know whether a crime of, say, stalking, is a domestic violence incident or not. In the future, all states are expected to contribute to a new federal database known as NIBRS, the National Incident Based Reporting System, which will be incident based and provide the relationship between the suspect and the victim. It will, however, cover only violent crimes. Massachusetts has already begun the process of switching to NIBRS and has 130 communities reporting on domestic violence. Vermont is doing so as well. Maine and many other states presently do not have the computer availability and capacity for each agency to track this information and transmit it to a central repository.

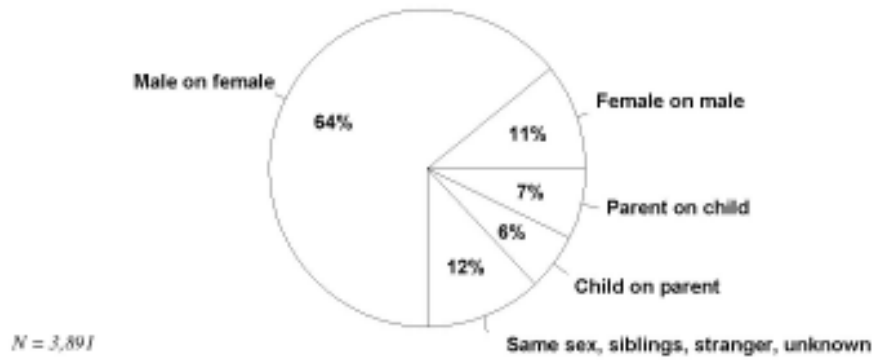
Some states record law enforcement data on domestic violence as supplementary data, but most do not. At one end of the spectrum in New England is New Hampshire where no statewide data on domestic violence exists. On the other end are such states as Connecticut and Rhode Island that compile data centrally and use the same domestic violence incident form statewide. Connecticut reports these data in an annual report, and Rhode Island has recently begun to post data on the web.⁹ Maine's law mandates data collection; but, thus far, the data collected are minimal. Agencies tally the number of violent assaults and the type of weapon used (that is, firearm, knife, hand and fist). Of course, what distinguishes domestic violence from other forms of crime is the relationship between the victim and the offender; otherwise, the crime is no different from any other crime. Yet Maine collects incidence data on only one kind of domestic relationship, that between parent and child. Parent on child crime is actually child abuse and not domestic abuse in the most common sense of the word. Relatives are a completely missing category and we do not know the relationship between the men and women. Figure 1 (which is drawn from summary data rather than incident-based data) shows the limitations of such an approach to data collection — that is, incidence data are captured on only a portion of the domestic violence spectrum.

Identifying those involved in domestic violence incidents requires the use of other law enforcement data. Figure 2 shows relationship information collected by New England law enforcement agencies. Each state defines and collects relationship data by different categories.¹⁰ For example, Massachusetts does not use “cohabitant,” and Connecticut does not use “dating” as data categories. Consequently, the categories do not fully align. Data are at risk of being “spun” for specific interests and data analysis.

No matter what the relationship of victim to suspect, victims are primarily women. In Maine, women constitute 85 percent of the victims. Elsewhere in New England, the percentage of female victims is lower: In Rhode Island and Vermont,

Figure 1

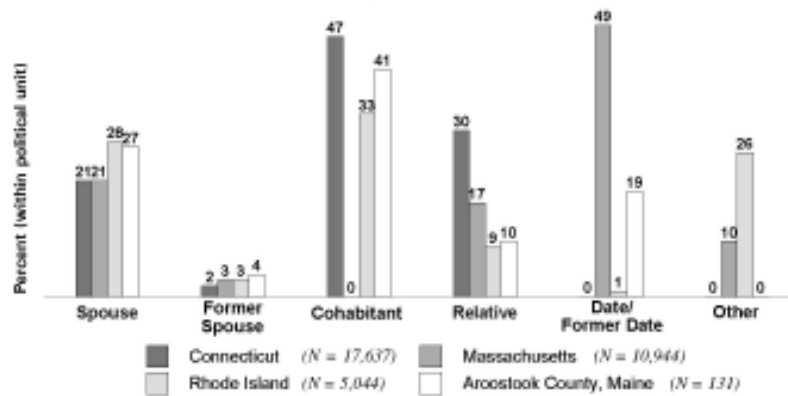
**Relationship of Suspect & Victim
in Reported Domestic Violence Incidents
Maine, 1997**



Source: Maine Dept. of Public Safety, UCR Supplement for 1997

Figure 2

**Suspect-Victim Relationships:
New England Domestic Violence Incidents
Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, 1998
Aroostook County, Maine, 1997-1998**



Notes: Massachusetts data exclude nonviolent crimes and the largest cities (Boston, Worcester, Springfield).

Other = same sex, intimate partner, former intimate partner, child in common.

Sources: Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management. *Summary of Family Violence Arrest Incidents in Connecticut 1987-1997* (September 1998); Massachusetts: State Police, Uniform Crime Reporting Unit; Rhode Island: Domestic Violence Reporting Unit

81 percent; in Connecticut, 79 percent; and in Massachusetts, 77 percent.¹¹ Historically, NCVS self-reports surveys indicate that at least 90 percent of victims of domestic violence are women.

Profile of Domestic Violence Incidents

The Aroostook data provide more depth to these broader statistics to develop a profile of incidents from a law enforcement perspective. Law enforcement officers filled out a supplemental form about each domestic violence incident, usually while investigating the scene. The form includes information about the relationship between the victim and the suspect, the location of the incident, the actions taken by both parties, their emotional state and self-described psychological background, injuries to property and persons, and demographic information (income, education, employment). Even in the future, most of this information will not be available through NIBRS; thus, the Aroostook data present a finer level of detail than is generally available.

Research in the 1980s, affirmed by the data in Figure 2, put to rest the notion of the marriage license as a “license for violence.”¹² The Aroostook County data agree — a plurality of cases involve cohabitants (41 percent) rather than married partners (31 percent). Men cohabiting were more apt to be victims than were cohabiting women. One of the cohabiting relationships was a same-sex relationship. The remainder were categorized as formerly married (4%), formerly cohabiting (2 percent), dating (16 percent), formerly dating (2 percent), and relatives (7 percent). In only 12 percent of all Aroostook cases within the study period did the victim and suspect have a child in common.

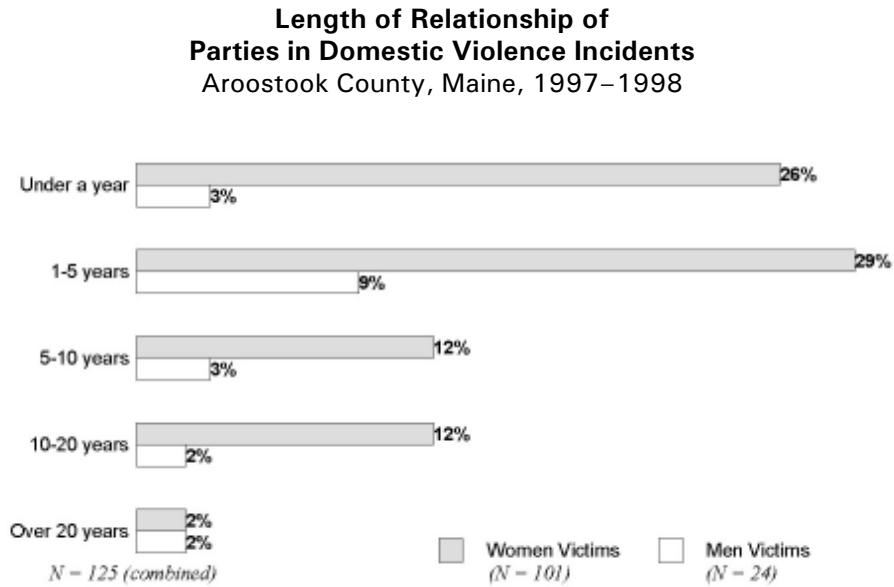
The “relationship” data show that domestic violence incidents are more common for those in new relationships than in long-term relationships (Figure 3). For relationships of longer than twenty years, the victim was as likely to be the man as it was to be the woman.

With the lengthening relationships, many victims are no longer too afraid of the suspect to call the police. The victim reported a majority (55 percent) of incidents, children reported 10 percent of the incidents, and, in a few cases, the suspect (4 percent) was even the one to call. Domestic violence can take place in any location, but individuals are most at risk in their own dwellings (Figure 4). Fifty percent of incidents took place in the victim’s dwelling, another 22 percent in a shared dwelling, and nine percent in the suspect’s dwelling. The remainder took place in either’s workplace (3 percent) or in locations such as parking lots, a relative’s house, or a vehicle (16 percent). As might be expected, a larger percentage of incidents occurred in public places for those dating than for those married or cohabiting.

Level of Violence

One concern for officers responding to a domestic call is whether they will confront individuals intoxicated by drugs or alcohol, which may affect the officer’s ability to handle the situation.¹³ In rural areas such as Aroostook County, one officer (not two officers) responds, making the situation potentially more difficult for the responding officer. As Figure 5 illustrates, both victim and suspect were intoxicated by drugs or alcohol in 13 percent of the incidents, only the suspect was intoxicated in 23 percent of the incidents, and only the victim was intoxicated in seven percent of the

Figure 3

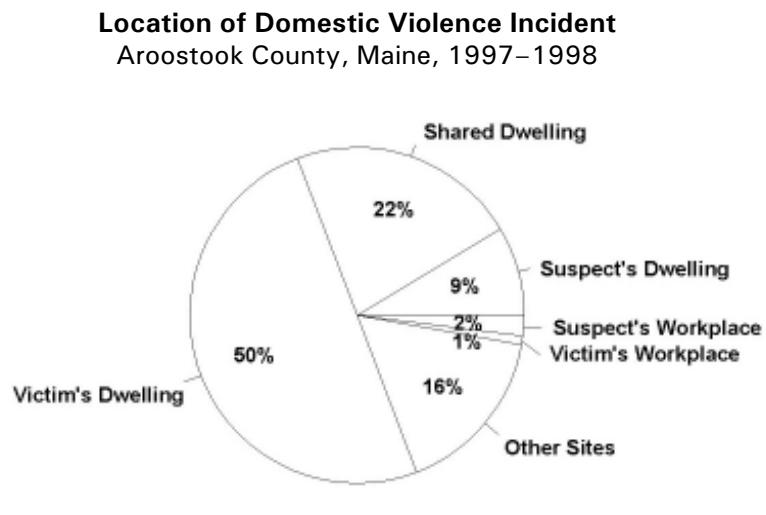


Notes: $\chi^2 = .0004$

Data are shown in terms of all victims (women + men)

Source: Office of the District Attorney, Aroostook county, Maine

Figure 4



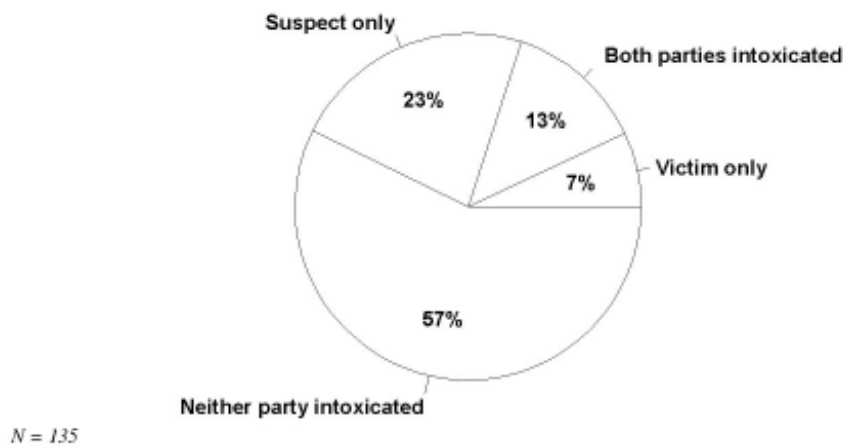
Note: Other sites = business locations such as motels, convenience stores, parking lots, and non-business locations such as a relative's house or a vehicle

Source: Office of the District Attorney, Aroostook County, Maine

incidents observed by law enforcement officers. Taking the overlap into account, one in three incidents involved an intoxicated suspect, one in five incidents involved an intoxicated victim, and, overall, nearly half of the reported domestic violence incidents in Aroostook County involved intoxication by one or both parties. The use of drugs or alcohol by the suspect did not vary statistically whether the suspect was cohabiting with, married to, or dating the victim.

Figure 5

**Parties Intoxicated During Domestic Violence Incidents
Aroostook County, Maine, 1997–1998**



Note: Incident form did not clearly distinguish between alcohol and drug use.
Source: Office of the District Attorney, Aroostook County, Maine

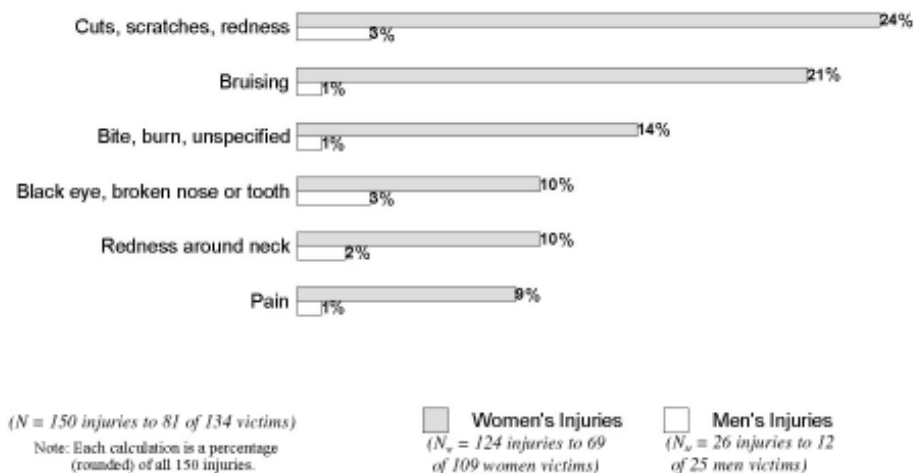
Another indication of the level of violence, of course, are the injuries sustained by victims. Some scholars find that the proclivity to violence is symmetrical (that is, both parties tend to resort to violence in an incident),¹⁴ but the Aroostook data show that hitting, grabbing, and slapping were actions of the suspect not of the victim and that the injury from violence is not symmetrical. The Aroostook data show that women victims are more likely to sustain injuries than are men victims (Figure 6). For example, 24 percent of all cuts, scratches, and redness observed or reported were on women while only 3 percent were on men for a total of 27 percent having cuts, scratches or redness. Twenty-one percent of all injuries were bruises to women and another one percent were to men. (Seven out of 25 and 10 out of 109 women reported no injury.)

But the degree of seriousness is more difficult to categorize in the Aroostook study because officers were not consistent with injury descriptions. Often they characterized the injury as an action, such as slapping. In 15 cases, where no injury was listed, the officer indicated the victim was slapped or struck. Research shows that, in most cases, injury is not necessarily serious.¹⁵ Rather, the issue of domestic violence is one of intent and not actual injury. In this regard, law enforcement data and

Figure 6

**Injuries Observed/Reported by Victims of Domestic Violence
Aroostook County, Maine, 1997–1998**

(Data reflect injuries observed by the responding officer and/or reported by the victim)



Source: Office of the District Attorney, Aroostook County, Maine

victim-reported data are in accord: Aroostook County officers reported few major injuries leading to medical attention on the scene or a hospital visit; only in one case was an individual hospitalized, and this was a suspect who inflicted the injury upon himself. But, even in the rooftop, the extreme can and did occur during the time frame of the study: A husband killed his wife and two children and then killed himself.

The type of force or action taken by suspect, whether verbal or physical, is an additional indicator of the level of violence. The Aroostook data showed the following:

- 53 percent used only physical force
- 18 percent used both physical force and verbal threats
- 8 percent used only verbal threat
- 24 percent no action reported

Of the 53 percent of suspects who used physical force, the most common type of force was hitting the victim with a hand or fist (43 percent). In another 9 percent of the cases, the victim was struck with an object, and, in the remainder, the victim was shoved, pushed, or restrained.

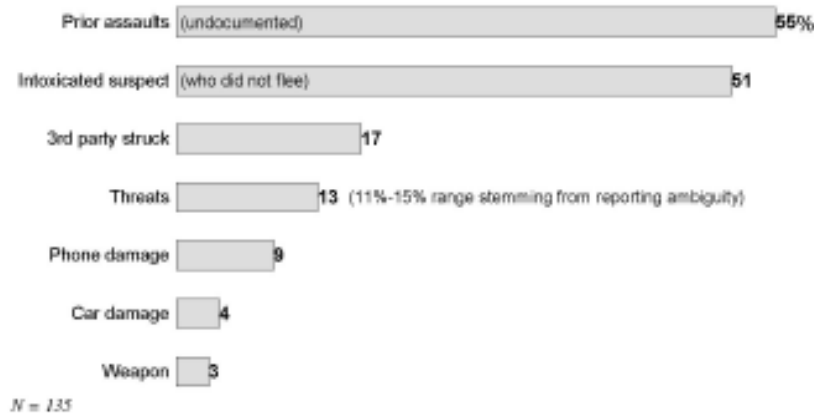
The study database includes additional yes/no indicators, shown in Figure 7, to help measure the seriousness of the event. These indicators were chosen by representatives of the Battered Women's Shelter of Aroostook County, the District Attorney's

office, the Sheriff, and other law enforcement agencies.¹⁶ Of these indicators, the most frequently occurring was prior assault(s) on the victim by the suspect. The officer arriving on the scene typically learned that this was not the first time the suspect had assaulted that victim. The prior assaults, however, had more than likely gone unreported given that only seven of the women (and no men) had protection orders in effect. Moreover, in four to nine percent of the incidents, the suspect had damaged telephones or vehicles in an attempt to prevent the victim from securing assistance.

The number of these indicators can serve as a simple measure of the likely seriousness of an incident. Among the 135 cases in the study, no incident had more than four indicators. The degree of seriousness measured by the number of indicators differed significantly depending upon whether the suspect was male or female ($\chi^2 = .02$). There were no violence indicators in 28 percent of incidents when the suspect was a woman and in six percent of the cases when the suspect was a man.

Figure 7

Types of Violence in Domestic Violence Incidents
Aroostook County, Maine, 1997–1998



Notes: Officers could record threatening action in three locations on form, leading to varying percentages reported.
 Prior assaults, as reported by the victim, were categorized as from 1-to-5 or as 5-or-more on incident form.
Source: Office of the District Attorney, Aroostook County, Maine

Profile of Victims and Suspects

The Aroostook data allow us to sketch a simple profile of domestic abusers and their victims in terms of their demographic characteristics, personal histories, and connections to the community.

Characteristics

In 85 percent of the Aroostook County cases, the victim was female; in 15 percent, the victim was male. This ratio corresponds to the New England state comparisons

discussed earlier. The average age of the victims was 33 (age range 18-75) and of the suspects, 34 (age range 16-66). By and large, victims and suspects involved in domestic violence situations are less well off than the norm, with 60 percent of victims and suspects reporting annual incomes below \$10,000.¹⁷ Sixty percent of the victims and 49 percent of the suspects were employed. Fifteen percent of the victims and 25 percent of the suspects had less than a high school education.

The greater the stake (measured by employment and marital status) offenders have in the community, the greater the likelihood that arrest will deter another incident of domestic violence.¹⁸ Individuals who are married and employed are less likely to commit an act of violence again after once being arrested. To the extent that this theory is accurate, arrest will deter only a small number in Aroostook County because more than a third (34 percent) of the suspects arrested in Aroostook County were neither married nor employed. Forty-nine percent of the suspects (53 and 30 percent of men and women, respectively) were employed. Fewer were married (29 and 26 percent of men and women, respectively). Fewer still (only 12 percent) had the strongest stake in the community (being both employed and married).

Patterns of Abuse

Advocates for victims are concerned about ending a stream of violence; consequently, the ability to discern, document, and disrupt patterns of abuse is crucial. Patterns of abuse can center on the victim and also on the suspect. Looking first at the victim, a prime factor is repeat assaults. Enlarging upon the first indicator in Figure 7, more women than men victims reported past abuse; moreover, 35 percent of women victims and 22 percent of men victims identified themselves as past victims of violence. Another three percent, all women, identified themselves as past victims of parental abuse, and 4 percent as having suffered from past mental illness. Substance abuse played a role in the psychological background with 31 percent of the victims admitting to past or present use/abuse of alcohol, though only 2 percent admitted past drug abuse.¹⁹

Moving to the suspect's background, mental health varied by gender. Building on Figure 5, about 67 percent of the suspects were reported to have been present or past abusers of alcohol.²⁰ (Officers alleged 67 percent of the suspects were intoxicated at the scene.) Men suspects were statistically far more likely to be past or present users of alcohol: 72 percent of the men suspects and 42 percent of the women suspects were identified as past or present users. Women suspects were more likely to have been abused by their parents and victims of past violence than were men. Twelve percent of suspects had suffered from mental illness or had threatened suicide, with women suspects more likely to have suffered than men suspects. The only similarity was that few men or women suspects were described as past drug abusers.

Policy Implications

A number of the study's findings may have potential policy implications:

- *Injury Severity:* The reported severity of physical injury is slight. Only six individuals received some form of medical attention.
- *Prior Abuse:* The victim's contact with the police is not likely to be her or his first experience of domestic violence.

- *Victim Gender*: Male victims of domestic abuse are a higher percentage of all reports than is the case in self-reports.
- *Community Connectedness*: Offenders are not as likely as the general population to hold a job and to be married. Those who are less connected to the community are more likely to re-offend.
- *Intoxication Propensity*: Intoxication on the part of one or both parties in reported domestic abuse incidents stands higher than rates of drinking in the general population.

Injury Severity, Prior Abuse

According to NCVS self-report data, 39 percent of women and 25 percent of men who were assaulted (ranging from slapping and hitting to using a gun) received injuries, though not necessarily medical care.²¹ These assaults were by any type of perpetrator, not necessarily domestic in nature. Another NCVS self-report survey indicates that 55 percent of women who reported domestic violence incidents to the police sustained an injury.²² The Aroostook law enforcement data complete this picture. First, concurring with self-report data, women are more likely to be injured and have multiple injuries. Approximately 60 percent of women compared with 38 percent of men had some injury. Women were more apt than men were to have multiple injuries such as bruises to the head and arms, cuts, and scratches. Second, the frequency of reported serious physical injury, however, is low. Victims were not likely to request or receive medical care immediately. Three people received medical care on the scene and two were taken to the emergency room for care. Five individuals refused medical care, while two indicated they would seek their own doctor. Only one person was hospitalized, and this person was a suspect whose injuries were self-inflicted.

The low incidence of medical care may, in part, stem from particulars of a reporting process that does not take into account instances of medical attention after an incident report has been filed.²³ However, rural socioeconomic factors and cultural norms characteristic of Northern New England may contribute to the tendency to seek treatment only for serious injuries. Residents of The County and other communities in the region traditionally value their independence, self-reliance, and autonomy, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, they emphasize close-knit families, cultural bonds, and a degree of suspicion of outside influences. Consequently, policies, programs, and practices that foster combinations of these values — especially in conjunction with domestic abuse awareness programs — hold out possibilities of being more effective at curtailing abuse than do more narrowly focused programs targeting domestic violence.

Another pattern evident from the database is that the victim's contact with the police is not likely to be the first incident of domestic violence, and this is consistent with self-reported data. In Aroostook County, 55 percent of the victims acknowledged to the responding officer that they had been assaulted previously, and 39 percent of the victims described themselves as past victims of violence. In no case in the year and a half were there repeat incidents with the same victim and suspect. A solid record of prosecution and conviction did occur.²⁴ This suggests that police should not treat even first-time incidents as an isolated offense.

Victim Gender

Another pattern is that a significant minority of men (15 percent) are victims of police-reported domestic violence. Historically across the nation, the percentage of self-

reported male victims is substantially smaller (10 percent), but there is scant research to explain the pattern.²⁵ To the extent that men may be more ashamed than women that they have been victims of domestic violence, police reports may be more credible than statistics relying on voluntary reports from victims.

Police reports generally have shortcomings and depend greatly upon interpretation of the law. Advocates of women's rights find that the number of men victims is often inflated due to dual or sequential arrests. A dual arrest is when both parties are arrested in the same incident; a sequential arrest is when one party is arrested one time and the next time the other party is arrested. Neither type of arrest, however, was evident in Aroostook County, Maine. Officers are trained to consider the actions of both parties when determining wrongdoing. Maine law states that a victim has a right to employ reasonable force in response to abuse and that defensive action does not nullify the victim's rights. Larger numbers of men victims can occur if there is "strict enforcement of the law" against anyone who commits an act of violence. Accordingly, officers arrest a woman if she is the first to commit an act of violence — even if the arrest will not hold. This action, though contrary to training received by Maine officers, appears to increase the number of male victims in Aroostook County. These observations suggest a need for on-going training, closer administrative control, or both. It also raises questions about what arrest policies have the best long-term impact.

Community Connectedness

The overriding tool officers have to prevent or reduce domestic violence is *arrest*. Research cited earlier has shown that connectedness to the community is important to reduce domestic violence and repeated offenses. Those arrested who are married and employed are least likely to be involved in repeat offenses of domestic violence. In Aroostook County, only 12 percent of suspects were married *and* employed. In the general population for Aroostook County, the average 1998 unemployment rate was seven percent, and 63 percent of households were married couples.²⁶ The law enforcement community cannot, of course, recommend that a person get married or even get a job (though the latter can be a condition set by subsequent action in the courts). But legislation and law enforcement policies can support and work with programs and nonprofit groups that help individuals find training and jobs.

Intoxication Propensity

The data also show parties were intoxicated in not quite half (43 percent) of all reported incidents, a relatively strong correlation between drinking/drug use and a propensity toward violence. According to the Center for Disease Control, in Maine's general population age 18 and over, the percentage who have five or more drinks during one occasion during a month is 52 percent for those age 18–24, 34 percent for those age 25–34, declining with age.²⁷ Recall that the average age of the suspect was 34. Therefore, just as training and employment programs may be helpful to reduce domestic violence, so, too, may be programs that work to reduce alcohol and drug consumption.

Missing Pieces, Open Questions

Even with the sources available for studying domestic violence statistics and with richer sources planned for the future, the range of available data is likely to remain

spotty. NCVS is self-reported nationwide data, not yearly data by state. In terms of law enforcement actions, no dedicated database records domestic violence arrests. The UCR supplement is of little value without clear categories of victims. NIBRS will be limited to criminal arrests with minimal supporting explanatory data. Domestic violence involves misdemeanors as well as criminal offenses. Even in locations where domestic-violence-related law enforcement actions are captured, the variation is wide regarding how much information is recorded and how it is coded. Extremely serious incidents — particularly those involving deaths — tend, ironically, not to be included in routine reporting systems; instead, those cases must be added in manually. When overlooked, they create substantial data analysis flaws. Finally, just as consistent law enforcement data are not readily available, court data are not easily accessible to provide comparisons with the incident data — in Maine or in any other state.

Until more comprehensive tracking is available, ad hoc data capture and analysis projects offer the best means for gleaning comparisons and insights about interfaces between the criminal justice system and domestic violence activity. The underlying questions for policy analysts as well as for program managers then become these: How can parties work together so that victims feel more comfortable reporting abuse to law enforcement authorities, so that front-line reports are routinely recorded and captured, and so that prevention tools are better integrated into the law enforcement process? To the extent those objectives can happen, how can we distinguish between changes in reporting habits versus actual changes in the rate and nature of domestic violence?

Law enforcement aspects of domestic violence deserve more extensive study than is available in today's literature. At this point, most available information comes through anecdotal reports, surveys, inferences from non-law-enforcement data, and unchallenged assumptions. Cross-sectional studies such as this one only begin to fill in, confirm, and sometimes call into question our body of knowledge. Using the Aroostook data, the next priority of our research agenda is to develop a comparison of the extant law enforcement data on domestic violence across several New England states. With the findings of these projects as foundation, another step is to compare these data with court data. How many of these cases are dropped and why? How many cases eventually lead to jail sentences? What is the range and nature of sentences when imposed, and how do those sentences relate to factors captured in the Aroostook database?

Reported domestic abuse incidents in the rooftop of New England seem to be no more heinous, deadly, commonplace, or oddly motivated than are similar crimes in other parts of New England — or, indeed, than elsewhere in the country. Predominantly, they are male on female, involve cohabitants or spouses who have been together no longer than five years, take place where the victim lives, involve alcohol and physical violence but do not result in serious injury, and occur as part of a pattern of abuse. That is not a pretty picture; in fact, for the people involved and those close to them, the incidents recorded by Aroostook County law enforcement officials reflect ongoing personal tragedies.

Two positive aspects nevertheless emerge from viewing this unique set of data: On the human level, a positive finding it is that deaths or injuries resulting in hospitalization are rare outcomes in this part of Maine, even though each of the recorded situations has required police intervention. On the clinical level, a positive aspect for

professionals focusing on domestic abuse is that this database provides a tangible, in-depth source of analysis about what rural law enforcement agents encounter and deal with on a routine basis. Such information is potentially useful for examining sociological aspects of domestic violence; for related policy evaluation, discussion, and development; and, not least, for providing material that helps prepare law enforcement personnel for domestic conflict circumstances they encounter when on the job.✂

Notes

1. One such federal government Internet site is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/domesticviolence.html>. The Crisis Support Network's Domestic Violence Help web site, <http://crisis-support.org> and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, <http://www.ncadv.org>, are two examples of nationwide nonprofit groups offering information, counseling, and other assistance to offenders as well as to those who are victims of domestic abuse.
2. Actually, people in Aroostook are substantially more populous than moose. Maine has approximately 1.25 million human residents, of whom about 76,000 live in Aroostook County. (Estimate for 1999 based on the 1990 U.S. Census.) By contrast, Maine is home to only about 30,000 moose, a good portion of which range the rooftop rather than southern and coastal areas of the state.
3. The research presented here would not have been possible without the special efforts of District Attorney Neale Adams, Sheriff Ted St. Pierre, and Donna Baietti, Executive Director of the Battered Women's Project. Sincere thanks also to Janice Dubois of the Domestic Violence Unit of Rhode Island, Dan Bibbel of the Massachusetts State Police who provided domestic violence data for their states; and Gary Lopez of the Connecticut State Police.
4. In a preliminary study of court outcomes, 77 cases were investigated. Sixty-two (81%) were found guilty (seven of whom were women), 13 cases were dismissed, and two were found not guilty.
5. This article uses the term *domestic violence*, although other terms are equally appropriate; for example, Connecticut's law uses the term family violence. Some parts of Maine's code use the term *domestic violence* while other parts refer to *domestic abuse*. See Neal Miller, "Domestic Violence Legislation Affecting Police and Prosecutor Responsibilities in the United States: Inferences from a 50 State Review of State Statutory Codes," presented to the Fifth International Family Violence Conference, University of New Hampshire, June 30, 1997, updated August 1998, <http://www.ilj.org/dv/dvvaw.htm>.
6. Maine PL 1995, c 694, Pt. B, §2.
7. The United States Department of Justice has published numerous reports using NCVS data. See, for example, *Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey* (August 1995), *Violence Between Intimates* (November 1994), *Violence by Intimates* (March 1998), *Domestic and Sexual Violence Data Collection: A Report to Congress under the Violence Against Women Act* (July 1996).
8. *Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*.
9. Office of Policy and Management, Statistical Analysis Center, State of Connecticut, "Summary of Family Violence Arrest Incidents in Connecticut 1987-1997" (September 1998); Rhode Island Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit, <http://www.ri-domesticviolence.org>.
10. Massachusetts uses the 26 categories that will be used in NIBRS, Rhode Island uses 12, Connecticut uses 5, and Aroostook County, Maine uses 9. The Rhode Island data allow for multiple codes for relationships. The authors coded spouse, former spouse, cohabitant as primary the primary relationships and reduces the number coded as dating, intimate partners, former and intimate partner, dating, child-in-common.

- New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine have no statewide comparable data. Vermont is in the process of developing a NIBRS database.
11. Vermont: Department of Public Safety, Criminal Information Center; Maine: *Uniform Crime Report Supplement*; Connecticut: Office of Policy and Management. *Summary of Family Violence Arrest Incidents 1987-1997* (September 1998); Rhode Island: Domestic Violence Reporting Unit; Massachusetts: State Police, Uniform Crime Reporting Unit.
 12. Richard Gelles and Murray Straus, *Intimate Violence*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).
 13. Ola Barnett and Ronald W. Fagan, "Alcohol Use in Male Spouse Abusers and their Female Partners," *Journal of Family Violence* 8 (1993): 1-26.
 14. For a discussion of varying points of view, see Richard Gelles and Donileen Loeske, eds., *Current Controversies on Family Violence* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1993).
 15. Gelles and Straus, *Intimate Violence*, p. 56. Also, NCVS surveys reported in *Violence Between Intimates* that three percent of women in violent assaults received serious injuries.
 16. See Murray Straus, "Identifying Offenders in Criminal Justice Research on Domestic Assault," *American Behavioral Scientist* 5 (1993): 587-600. Straus has reviewed the literature to determine indicators of offenders who pose a high risk for future assaults on a spouse.
 17. According to NCVS survey reported in *Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*, women age 19-29 and women in families with incomes below \$10,000 were more likely to be victims.
 18. In *Policing Domestic Violence* (New York: Free Press, 1992), Lawrence Sherman concludes that setting a policy of mandatory arrests is counterproductive. His research shows that, in three cities, arrests deterred repeat incidents while, in three other cities, arrests increased incidents even though those cities enjoyed a short-term deterrent effect.
 19. Due to an oversight in the reporting form, victims were not asked about present drug use.
 20. These data should be viewed with caution. Officers filled out this information for suspects who had fled and directly asked the questions of suspects present at the scene. The completed forms showed only minor differences between fleeing and non-fleeing suspects in the percentage of those characterized as alcohol abusers, victims of violence, mentally ill, and abused by parents.
 21. National Institute of Justice, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from a National Violence Against Women Survey and its Effect on Women* (November 1998). J. Hillman, J. Silverman, et al. in "Use of Medical Care, Police Assistance, and Restraining Orders by Women Reporting Intimate Violence-Mass., 1996-1997," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 49 (June 9, 2000): 485-488 reported 39% of women responding to a telephone survey received police assistance and 28.7% sought medical care as a result of intimate partner violence.
 22. *Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*.
 23. In 1998, injuries to victims in Rhode Island were also small in number. Ten percent of women and 8 percent of men required medical attention.
 24. See footnote 4 for data on arrests.
 25. For a discussion of "battered husband syndrome," see Julia Chavez, "Battered Men and the California Law," *Southwestern University Law Review* 22 (1992): 239-256.
 26. US Census Bureau, Household Family Characteristics: 1990. <http://factfinder.census.gov>. For unemployment rates, see the Maine Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Services, <http://www.state.me.us/labor/lmis/reports/edrg/laus.html>.
 27. Center for Disease Control, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Prevalence Data, Alcohol Consumption, Maine 1999, <http://www.cdc.gov>.

