



Modus Operandi and Personality Disorder in Incarcerated Spousal Killers

Donald G. Dutton* and Greg Kerry†

Introduction

Previous studies of uxoricide (wife murder) have tended to focus on the ratio of uxoricide to femicide (killing of women), prior histories of physical abuse, use of excessive force (“overkill”), and the role of estrangement as risk factors. However, little attention has been directed toward personality disorder in perpetrators of uxoricide and whether personality disorder relates to the modus operandi pattern of the murder.

Campbell (1992) found that 28 of 65 femicides in Ohio were uxoricides. Of these, 18 of 28 (68%) had recorded histories of previous physical abuse, and 17 of 28 (61%) used “excessive force” during the killing. Wolfgang (1956) had found that 44 of 53 husbands who killed their wives did so with excessive force. His definition of excessive force was two or more separate actions of stabbing, cutting, or shooting, involved in the process of slaying the victim. Cooper (1994) also reported excessive force as frequent (51% of cases of uxoricide).

In a study of 896 woman killings (femicides) with identified perpetrators in Ontario from 1974 to 1990, Crawford and Gartner (1992) found that 551 (62%) were killed by intimate partners. Of all femicides where a motive for the killing could be established from police records, 32% were “estrangement killings”, another 11% were based on beliefs that the female partner was sexually unfaithful, a variation of the abandonment fear without actual physical estrangement (Dutton, 1995).

Crawford and Gartner (1992) also reported excessive force as frequent (60% of uxoricides). Crawford and Gartner (1992) found that 551 of 896 (62%) of femicides in Ontario were uxoricides. Of the uxoricides, 297 had prior recorded histories of domestic violence, 166 had records of threats to the

*Professor of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

†Psychologist, Correctional Services of Canada, Warkworth Penitentiary, Campbellford, Ontario, Canada.

Address correspondence and reprint requests to Prof. Donald G. Dutton, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, V6H 1Z4; E-mail: dutton@interchange.ubc.ca

woman, and 130 had records of prior police intervention. Both Stout (1993) and Cooper (1994) reported that use of a knife was the most common modus operandi of uxoricide. Both studies found that 41% of uxoricides were the result of stabbings. The use of firearms declines from nonfamily murders (60%) to family murders (40%) (Dawson & Langan 1994).

Psychopathology and Spousal Homicide

Biro, Vucovic, and Djuric (1992) examined Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI; Hathaway & McKinley, 1943) profiles of 112 convicted homicide perpetrators in Eastern Europe. They found that 49% of their sample showed a "hypersensitive-aggressive" profile characterized by scale elevations on the Paranoid (Pa) and Depression (D) scales, in other words, exhibiting signs of paranoia and depression. Factor analysis of MMPI scores revealed six factors. One of these (Factor 5) depicted "overcontrolled" murderers (Megargee, 1966), however, the authors did not analyze personality factors by spousal versus stranger homicides.

Kalichman (1988) collected MMPI data on 16 women and 20 men convicted of murdering spouses and 19 other men convicted of murdering strangers during the course of a crime. Although there was a high incidence of psychopathology in each group, the patterns varied. Sixty-nine percent of the female perpetrators had no significant scale elevations on the MMPI, whereas only 15% of the male perpetrators had "normal" profiles (i.e., no scale elevations). The most frequently elevated scale in the male uxoricide group was Psychopathic deviate (Pd) (35% had elevations over *T* scores of 70). Men who had killed strangers had more scale elevations than the uxoricidal group, with 37% showing elevations on the Mania (Ma) scale as well as the Pd scale. We could find no previous studies reporting MCMI profiles of murderers, although MCMI profiles of nonlethal spouse assaulters have been reported (Dutton & Starzomski 1993).

Estrangement and Uxoricide

Wilson and Daly (1993) point out that equality in the sex ratio of killing does not connote equal motives for spousal homicide. One motive that appears disproportionately by sex in the homicide data is what they call "estrangement," a misnomer that appears to mean recent, or imminent abandonment. Abandonment means that the eventual perpetrator was left or expects to be left by the eventual victim; whereas estrangement means simply that the perpetrator and victim are separated. Clearly, if the male left, he would have a reduced motive to kill.

Recent abandonment serves as a risk factor for uxoricide but not mariticide (husband killing). Wilson and Daly (1993) examined police records in Canada, Australia (New South Wales), and the United States (Chicago) and found that estrangement was associated with an elevated risk of uxoricide. (A risk factor of 3 [Chicago], 6 [Australia] or 7.5 [Canada]). This effect did not replicate for mariticide. Comparable increases in mariticide for separated men are as follows: In Chicago and Canada the risk factor was 2, in New South Wales it was 0. Hence, abandonment appears to disproportionately affect uxoricide.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات