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## Risk factors related to intimate partner violence police recidivism in Spain

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### KEYWORDS

Violence risk factors;  
Intimate partner  
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VioGen system;  
Ex post facto study

**Abstract** *Background/Objective:* Some professionals, such as police officers, are required to prevent violent behavior, such as intimate partner violence (IPV). For this task they use actuarial tools designed to estimate the risk of occurrence of further violence after a previous complaint (police recidivism), taking into account risk and protective indicators which they can observe, in spite of they are not behavioral assessment experts. *Method:* To try to refine the police risk assessments carried out in Spain since 2007 and to improve the two tools available on the Spanish VioGén System, Police Risk Assessment and Risk Evolution (VPR<sub>3,1</sub> and VPER<sub>3,0</sub>), this paper, using an epidemiological design, in a sample of 6,613 new cases of IPV of Spain, studies empirical relationships among 65 indicators (56 risk and 9 protection) and IPV police recidivism up to six months. *Results:* It resulted in a recidivism rate of 7.4%, finding statistically significant associations of 46 indicators. *Conclusions:* Empirical evidence about static indicators and new relevant dynamic indicators in the victims' police protection management is presented. Practical implications for future police risk assessments are discussed.

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**PALABRAS CLAVE**

Factores de riesgo de violencia;  
violencia contra la pareja;  
reincidencia;  
Sistema VioGén;  
tipo de estudio

**Factores de riesgo asociados con la reincidencia policial en violencia contra la pareja en España**

**Resumen** *Antecedentes/Objetivo:* Algunos profesionales, como los policías, tienen la obligación de actuar para prevenir comportamientos violentos, como en la violencia contra la pareja (VCP). Para ello se ayudan de herramientas actuariales diseñadas para estimar el riesgo de ocurrencia de nueva violencia después de una denuncia previa (reincidencia en el ámbito policial), atendiendo a aquellos indicadores de riesgo y de protección que estén a su alcance al no ser expertos en evaluación de conductas. *Método:* Para tratar de afinar más en las valoraciones policiales de riesgo que se realizan en España desde el año 2007 y perfeccionar las dos herramientas con que cuenta el Sistema VioGén español, Valoración Policial del Riesgo y Evolución del Riesgo (VPR<sub>3.1</sub> y VPER<sub>3.0</sub>), en este trabajo se ha utilizado un diseño epidemiológico para estudiar, en una muestra de 6.613 nuevos casos de VCP de España, las relaciones empíricas existentes entre 65 indicadores (56 de riesgo y 9 de protección) y la reincidencia policial en VCP a seis meses. *Resultados:* Resultó una tasa de reincidencia del 7,4%, encontrándose asociaciones estadísticamente significativas en 46 indicadores. *Conclusiones:* Se presenta evidencia empírica sobre indicadores estáticos y nuevos indicadores dinámicos importantes en la gestión de la protección policial de las víctimas. Se discuten las implicaciones prácticas para futuras valoraciones policiales de riesgo.

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Violence against women within partner relationships has been awakening tremendous social sensibility, and is now considered a public health issue. Since 2004, Spain has had an Organic Law for the Integral Protection against Gender Violence (L.O. 1/2004), which defines gender violence as a phenomenon carried out by the man against his female partner or ex-partner. However, this definition, while being included in this organic law, has not been accepted by the [Real Academia Española \(2004\)](#). Because of this, this study will use the term intimate partner violence (IPV).

Within this legal frame, institutions heavily involved in IPV ([Delegación del Gobierno para la Violencia de Género, 2015b](#)) state that in 2015, 129.193 IPV complaints (1.98% higher than in 2014) were registered. Other data taken from macro surveys about the prevalence of IPV in Spain ([Delegación del Gobierno para la Violencia de Género, 2015a](#)) shows that 10.3% of women that are 16 or older have suffered physical violence at the hands of their partners or ex-partners, 8.1% have suffered sexual violence, and 25.4% have suffered psychological violence sometime in their lives. These facts are made aware to the Security Forces (FCS) in 26.8% of cases, and in 1.7% of cases they are directly stated at court, which shows that institutions are only aware of 28.5% of this type of violence. According to the National Statistics Institute, in 2015, women who were victims of IPV and made use of precautionary measures or protection orders were a total of 27.624, 2% more compared to the year before ([Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE, 2015](#)).

In Spain, the annual crime recidivism prevalence rate is between 9 and 17%. It is important to remember that the term "recidivism" is not homogeneous and that each type of recidivism (self-inculpation, penitentiary, judicial, police, penal, etc.) has different rates and characteristics; official records, judicial and penitentiary records to be

precise, as well as those that were declared to the police, partner or ex-partner reports and the underlying mechanisms of the aggression being the most commonly used in IPV cases ([Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004](#); [Chereji, Pintea, & David, 2012](#); [Novo, Fariña, Seijo, & Arce, 2012](#)).

There are difficulties when comparing IPV recidivism data from different studies, due to the diversity in the methods used, the legal definition of the concept, the type of violence, the size of the sample used and the monitoring periods, which vary according to the objectives of the study, and can range from 3 months long to 10 years long, when studying criminal trajectories ([Klein & Tobin, 2008](#)). In global terms, it is estimated that there is a recidivism rate of 20%, even though the values are quite varied (between 8-60%) ([Loinaz, 2014](#); [Ortega, Bermúdez, Gutiérrez-Quintanilla, Buela-Casal, & Sierra, 2009](#)), and, in the specific case of gender aggressors, recent meta-analyses which were based on data from official records have found a prevalence of 21%, and those that were based on partner reports found a prevalence of 35% ([Arias, Arce, & Vilariño, 2013](#); [Babcock et al., 2004](#)). It seems that the critical period or the period of highest recidivism is found within the first six months ([Gondolf, 2002](#); [Kingsnorth, 2006](#)). In the Spanish Integral Gender Violence Monitoring System, also known as VioGen System ([Secretaría de Estado de Seguridad, n.d.](#)), administered by the Ministerio del Interior, it is found that out of 378,645 registered cases between 2007 and 2015, 68,430 were recidivism cases (18.07%, and 29.62% of those were cases of multirecidivism). It was also observed that police recidivism was at 6.66% at three months, at 9.04% at six months, at 11.5% at a year, and at 14.65% at two years.

The study of recidivism is important because it allows us to identify factors and their risk and protection indicators

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