Domestic Violence: Risk Assessment

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The purpose of this research was to develop and standardize an evidence-based, culturally-sensitive bi-lingual (Arabic/English) measure of risk for domestic violence for use in health, mental health and social service settings for Arab American clients.
Domestic Violence

Psychological abuse

Physical abuse

Sexual abuse
Arab-Americans

- Present in all 50 states of the US
- Most live in the states of Michigan, California and New York
Setting

- Metropolitan area of Detroit, Michigan, largest Arab-immigrant community in the US
- Arab American population in Michigan ranges from 250,000 to 500,000 inhabitants
Detroit, Michigan
Arab International Festival
Domestic Violence and Immigrants

Problematic especially among immigrant and refugee women due to:

- Inequalities in social services
- Lack of ability to respond to immigrants’ needs in culturally appropriate ways
- unique stressful life-experiences related to political, economical and cultural conditions
Prevalence

Domestic Violence statistics of Arab women (Kulwicki, 1996):

- 25% were beaten by their spouses
- 18.4% were kicked by them
- 7% of women indicated that their husbands used a gun or knife on them
- 20% were sexually abused
Focus group methodology

A select group of professionals and community leaders with expertise in domestic violence were recruited for this study.
Focus Groups

- Service Providers
- Legal Providers
- Religious Leaders
- Health Professionals
Findings of Focus Groups

- Discussions of the focus groups were videotaped, or audio-taped, then transcribed.
- The transcripts were analyzed and reviewed by a second research member.
Data Analysis

• The PI conducted both manual and computer data analyses to extract the themes, which were then reviewed by the study’s consultant.

• Analysis of focus group deliberations shows the main factors which members of the focus groups identified as risk factors for domestic violence.
Risk Factors: Communication In English

- Women who do not speak English
- Victim unable to communicate with the police
- Perpetrator is the interpreter
Illiteracy or low levels of education of females results in dependency
Risk Factor: Transportation

- Some women do not have a car or even a driver’s license
- Lack of public transportation
Risk Factor: Immigration Status

- Husband does not file immigration papers
- No documentation of status
Risk Factor: Isolation

Husband isolates wife from support
Risk Factor: Lack of family support

- Lack of family support
- Absence of extended family
- Lack of male family support
Risk Factor: Economic factors

- Financial dependence
- Husband can’t make enough money
- Unemployment
Risk Factor: In-laws Interference

In-laws may contribute to abuse
The DV Risk Assessment Scale

- The scale was developed addressing the risk factors
- It was administered to 361 participants
- Other scales in the study included: Anxiety, depression, danger assessment, and acculturation
Thank you