

Bates, Elizabeth ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8694-8078> and Graham-Kevan, Nicola (2016) Is the presence of control related to help-seeking behavior? A test of Johnson's assumptions regarding sex-differences and the role of control in intimate partner violence. *Partner Abuse*, 7 (1). pp. 3-25.

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Is the presence of control related to help-seeking behavior? A Test of  
Johnson's Assumptions Regarding Sex-Differences and the Role of  
Control in Intimate Partner Violence

Elizabeth A. Bates\*

University of Cumbria

and

Nicola Graham-Kevan

University of Central Lancashire

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\* Correspondence to Dr Elizabeth A. Bates, University of Cumbria, Carlisle,  
CA12HH, UK

The aim of the current study was to test two of Johnson's (1995) assumptions regarding intimate partner violence (IPV); namely that there are sex differences in the type of physical aggression men and women use; and that controlling aggression is more problematic and requires more outside intervention than non-controlling aggression. These assumptions were tested using survey data from the 13<sup>th</sup> cycle of the General Social Survey in Canada, which was a telephone survey that asked crime victimization questions in a number of areas. There were no sex-differences in the use of controlling behavior or physical aggression. Controlling aggression did not have an effect on problem presentation when compared with relationships low in controlling behaviors. There was mixed support for Johnson's work and the utility of his typology is questioned.

*Keywords:* physical aggression, partner violence, domestic violence, women's aggression, sex differences, control, controlling behaviors

Dobash and Dobash (1979) posited that violence against wives was rediscovered in the 1970s having been established by the public for many years as an acceptable act within marriage. In a more recent paper (Dobash & Dobash; 2004) the authors still maintain that intimate partner violence (IPV) is an asymmetrical problem of men's violence towards women, and that women's violence does not equate to it in terms of consequences, severity or frequency. They, and other feminist researchers (e.g., Debbonaire & Todd, 2012; DeKeseredy, 1988, 2011; Fagan & Browne, 1994; McHugh, Livingston & Ford, 2005; Pagelow, 1984; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 2003; Ferraro, 2013) believe that IPV should be studied on its own and not within the context of family violence. Many feminists acknowledge the statistics that detail women's violence against their partners but argue that these figures represent trivial acts such as a once in a lifetime shove or push: they choose to use other statistics, such as police data, to support their argument. For example, Melton and Belknap (2003) support this assertion by noting within police and court data, 86% of the defendants were male and only 14% female. They believe that this adds support to the feminist view that men are much more likely than women to be the perpetrators of IPV. Advocates of this gender paradigm often do not use the best sources of evidence to evaluate their claims (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005) and have been found to suppress data within their own research (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; see Straus, 2006 for discussion). Furthermore, some studies that attempt to explore the issue of gender symmetry or sex differences in perpetration of IPV in fact only use male or female participants (e.g. Weston, Temple & Marshall, 2005). Despite often being based on flawed methods and data, research has demonstrated that this paradigm is still hugely influential in police training programmes which teaches law enforcement officials that IPV is a gendered crime (Hamel & Russell, 2013).

IPV research can be broadly conceptualised as belonging to one of two influential schools of thought, whose differences in opinion tend to centre on the importance of

patriarchy within IPV (Anderson, 1997). Feminist researchers such as Dobash and Dobash (e.g. 1979) and Yllo (e.g. 1993), focused on gender and power and contend that violence was just one of many ways men maintained their control and dominance over women in society. They see IPV as another form of control and the association between controlling behavior and IPV has been found (e.g. Humphreys, 2006; Pandey, Dutt & Banerjee 2009). Feminist researchers tend to draw on research that uses victimization samples from women's shelters (e.g. Mitchell & Hodson, 1983), male treatment programmes (e.g. Anderson & Umberson, 2001) and court based samples (e.g. Melton & Belknap, 2003). These samples are likely to access severely victimized women and the most violent men.

The other influential approach to understanding IPV is family violence research (e.g. Gelles, 1997; Straus, 1990; Steinmetz, 1978). This approach believes that patriarchy and control are merely parts of a more complex set of reasons for the perpetration of IPV and takes a conflict approach in the belief that violence is used in response to situations where conflict has arisen rather than using it only as a tool for control (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2005). Findings from Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) data collected on the first wave of the National Family Violence Survey highlighted the existence of male victims, however the stigma attached to it prevented men from seeking help or reporting even the most serious incidents to the police (Steinmetz, 1978). Family violence researchers use national survey data, which finds that women are as likely as men to report perpetrating violence within intimate relationships (e.g. Fergusson, Horwood & Ridder, 2005, see Fiebert 2012). From this perspective, the causes and motives of IPV are explored on an individual level, rather than a societal level and research has included variables and processes such as marital dissatisfaction and emotional abuse (e.g., Stith, Green, Smith & Ward., 2008), the reciprocal nature of conflict and aggression (e.g., Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler & field, 2005; Follingstad & Edmundson ,2010; Herrera, et al., 2008; Próspero & Kim, 2009), associations

with aggression outside the home (e.g. Bates, Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2014), issues with communication (e.g. Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson & Gottman., 1993, Feldman & Ridley, 2000); dominance (e.g. Straus, 2008), interactional processes within the relationship (e.g. Stets, 1992, Medeiros & Straus, 2006; Sillars et al., 2002), and personality characteristics such as psychopathic traits (e.g. Grann & Wedin, 2002; Harris, Hilton & Rice, 2011). Other research has attempted to categorise IPV perpetrators based on other personality characteristics and aggressive behavior to non-intimates (e.g. Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; R. Johnson et al., 2006). This approach specifically views and examines IPV in a gender neutral framework which is in direct contrast to the feminist approach which holds that IPV is a “gendered” crime.

The gender-neutral surveying method of the CTS revealed the extent to which men were being aggressive to their female partners, but also, and more surprisingly, it found evidence that such violence was also bi-directional and female-to-male. Many studies within this field have now demonstrated that women are equally as aggressive to men if not more so. One of the most influential papers was John Archer’s (2000) meta-analysis, which examined physical aggression within heterosexual relationships using 82 studies and a total of over 64,000 participants. Archer found that women reported perpetrating aggressive acts towards their partners more frequently than men. Other more recent studies have also found this difference in Western populations (e.g., Archer, 2006; Bates, Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2014; Straus & Rameriez, 2007; Swahn, Simon, Arias & Bossarte, 2008) with others suggesting that bi-directional violence is the most common type experienced in relationships (e.g., Stets & Straus, 1992; Próspero & Kim, 2009).

Johnson (1995) attempted to reconcile the apparent disparity between family violence and the feminist research. Where many researchers before him had argued that it was method and choice of samples leading to these conflicting findings, Johnson proposed that it was

instead the sample population. Family violence researchers tended to use data from representative community samples whereas those that subscribe to the feminist paradigm used women from refuges or men that are in treatment programmes for their violence, and so contained those who have experienced the most serious of violence. Johnson originally argued that incidents of IPV could be categorised into one of two types of physical aggression. The first he labelled “common couple violence”, and is found among representative samples of married, dating and cohabiting couples. This type encompasses the kind of violence that occurs when arguments get out of control: he did not believe it to be of any serious consequence and it was unlikely to escalate (Johnson, 1995). It is this type of violence that Johnson believes is involved when studies show equal numbers of male and female victims.

Johnson labelled the other type of violence “patriarchal terrorism”. In this situation, the violence used in the relationship is part of a range of behavior that men use to dominate and control their female partners. It is this type of violence that is more likely to escalate into something more serious, and to have more damaging physical and psychological consequences. He reviewed evidence from large scale surveys, and also data from women’s refuges, and concluded that some families were suffering from the occasional outburst of aggression by either the male or female partner, but that other families were in fact suffering from “systematic male violence” (Johnson, 1995, p.283). Johnson further highlighted that these were two distinct forms of violence and one was not merely a more serious version of the other; distinct by the presence or absence of control.

Johnson tested these ideas using a set of interview data already collected by Frieze in the 1970s. These were women who were known to be victims of IPV and a matched sample of women from the community. Johnson identified a number of control tactics that the interviews had recorded, which were namely: threats, economic control, use of privilege

and punishment, using the children, isolation, emotional abuse and sexual control. He then performed a cluster analysis and identified a two-cluster solution with one exhibiting high levels of control and the other low levels of control (Johnson, 2006). This allowed him to categorise all the patterns of relationship aggression that he had described. Johnson and Leone (2005) also confirmed the two types of IPV within the data from the National Violence Against Women Survey.

Since Johnson posited his view of IPV, there have been a number of researchers who have empirically tested his assumptions. Some studies have supported the distinctions Johnson has made in his typology and the fact controlling behavior does predict IPV perpetration (e.g. Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2008). Graham-Kevan and Archer (2003b) used four British samples to test if there were in fact the two distinct sub-groups of intimate terrorism and common couple violence. They chose a diverse range of samples that included women from a Women's refuge and their partners, male and female students, men in a batterer program and their partners and finally male prisoners and their partners. Using cluster analysis to categorise respondents into one of the two types and running frequency analyses, there was broad support found for Johnson's theory. Graham-Kevan and Archer (2003a) reanalysed the same data set using three of the samples – the women from the refuge, the students and the prisoners – chosen to represent each of the groups, intimate terrorism, common couple violence and violent resistant. They found further support for the characteristics described by Johnson in each relationship category but that not every sample matched the profile in the way predicted.

The direct assertion is victims of intimate terrorism, those who are victim to more serious and controlling aggression, would also report more negative outcomes and so would be more likely to report the violence and need medical attention. Indeed, Leone, Johnson, Cohan and Lloyd (2004) found victims of intimate terrorism reported more injuries and more

work time lost as a consequence in a sample of low income women. The authors report that compared to the no violence category these victims were also more likely to report visiting a doctor, poorer health and more psychological distress. Similarly, Leone, Johnson and Cohan (2007) reported intimate terrorism victims were more likely to seek formal help (e.g. police, medical agency) but there was no difference between these victims and those of situational couple violence in terms of informal help (e.g. speaking to a friend or family member). These studies highlight issues with some research in this area which involve only asking about victimization; if participants reported their own IPV perpetration there is a possibility that bi-directional aggression would affect the decision to seek help (either formally or informally).

Laroche (2005) used national survey data from Canada with the aim of examining Johnson's typology. He used lifetime rates of intimate partner victimization, in spite of the fact that such rates are unreliable and that shorter timescales are preferable (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter & Silva, 2001; Straus, 1990). He found that the majority of victims, both male and female, who suffered serious physical and psychological consequences were categorised as having been a victim of an intimate terrorist. He emphasised that the percentages of men and women suffering consequences in this category were similar but that the frequency of female victims was higher. This is to be expected as there was a larger proportion of women than men in his overall sample.

Other authors are much more critical of Johnson's theory of IPV with many authors suggesting that control and intimate terrorism is not solely the domain of men (e.g., Graham-Kevan, 2007; Ross & Babcock, 2009; Rosen, Stith, Few, Daly & Tritt, 2005). Archer (2009b) is specifically critical of Johnson's own empirical tests of his typology. Johnson's choice of samples are purposefully either selected for the high proportion of male to female aggression (e.g., women's shelter samples) or cannot be considered completely unbiased

(e.g., violence against women surveys). Some have questioned the utility of the typology based on specific tenants of Johnson's (1995) theory. For example, Johnson asserted that intimate terrorism is more prevalent in marriages and situational couple violence is found more in cohabiting couples. Contrary to this, Brownridge (2010) found that both types of IPV were found equally within both types of relationship and actually cohabiting couples had higher odds of experiencing both. Furthermore, Anderson (2008) found Johnson's typology was not more effective than a simple measure of the range of violence occurring, at predicting negative outcomes for female victims of IPV.

Johnson's assertion that control is a characteristic of men's IPV but not women's is not supported in literature that has explored motivations for perpetrating IPV (including perpetrators' own perceptions of motivations, e.g. Flynn & Graham, 2010). For example Bair-Merritt et al., (2010) conducted a systematic review of 23 studies that explored women's motivations to perpetrate IPV; whilst control was not listed as a primary motivation it was listed in two thirds of the studies reviewed.

Denise Hines and her colleagues have published several papers examining the prevalence of male victims of IPV and the psychological and physical effects they endure. These studies have included those comparing prevalence of both types of effects amongst men and women (e.g., Hines & Saudino, 2003); associations with binge drinking (Hines & Straus, 2007); qualitative analysis of callers to a domestic abuse help line for men (Hines et al., 2007); associations with personality and personality disorders (e.g., Hines, 2008; Hines & Saudino, 2008) and with posttraumatic stress disorder (e.g., Hines & Douglas, 2011). All of these studies have suggested that men suffer psychological and physical effects of IPV victimization. This is contrary to the picture portrayed by those such as Johnson.

Hines is critical of the lack of research comparing abused and non-abused men: much of the research has focussed on comparing abused men to abused women and concluding that

they do not suffer to the same degree (e.g., Hines & Douglas, 2009). Men may be more likely to externalise their behavior (e.g., by using alcohol and drugs) and women to internalise theirs, indicating an unfair comparison (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). Hines and Douglas (2010) attempted to rectify this in the first study to look quantitatively at men who had sought help after their partner's IPV perpetration. They examined intimate terrorism within 302 men who had sustained IPV from their female partner and had sought help, matched with a sample of men from the community. Their findings supported the two types of IPV found within Johnson's typology; with the men from the community sample closely matching situational couple violence. For the help-seeking sample, women perpetrated all types of IPV at a greater rate and they fit with the intimate terrorism pattern in the use of control. This group also had higher rates of injury than their female partners. Hines and Douglas concluded that, contrary to many feminist assertions (e.g., Dobash et al., 1992), male victimization of intimate terrorism is not trivial and these men need to be able to seek support.

Taken together, this research contradicts the notion that men are only trivial victims of IPV and that they are not seriously affected by it. Contrary to Johnson's claims, there is also evidence that women are perpetrating controlling behaviors and that they are equally as likely to be classified as "high control" (e.g., Bates et al., 2014). This lends itself to further investigation into the risk factors affecting the perpetration of IPV, moving away from seeing the cause as being gender

Two areas of the IPV literature where sex differences are apparent are injury and help seeking behavior. Archer (2000) noted from his analysis of injuries that whilst there are men reporting being injured by their partners, it is women who are more likely to be seriously hurt in these situations. Hospital records would also support this notion as women are more frequently admitted and treated for serious injuries identified as being sustained whilst in the

domestic environment; although they are more likely to be screened for this than men. O'Leary et al., (1989) highlight the physical damage inflicted by men upon women is frequently greater than the damage women inflict upon their male partners. Women were also more likely to report depression, stress and suicide as a consequence of IPV than men (e.g. Anderson, 2002).

Felson and Paré (2005) found that assaults are more likely to go unreported if the victim and offender know each other in any way but that men were least likely to report assaults by their partner. They also found a pattern to suggest that women do not consider domestically violent assaults as too minor to report. This is consistent with data from the British Crime Survey (Wallaby & Allen, 2004) that found within the previous year 23% of women had reported their victimization to the police, this figure was only 8% for men.

An additional assumption from Johnson's work relates to the effect of controlling aggression being more problematic than non-controlling aggression within intimate relationships. He holds that intimate terrorism has much more serious consequences both physically and psychologically and so should cause people to seek help more often whether in the form of friends and family or contacting someone official like the police or a lawyer. For example, Leone's (2004) test of a control based typology, found that those who were classified as being victim of intimate terrorism, compared to common couple violence, were more likely to seek help from official channels, but not from alternate sources such as family, friends or neighbours, however the latter finding suggests that the lack of significant difference between the two types of partner violence with regards seeking personal sources of help is indicative of it being a problem to both groups. There may be many reasons for not reporting violent incidents to the police including that they dealt with it another way, they felt it was too minor to report to the police, or maybe that the police would not be able to do anything about it (Kaukinen, 2002).

### *The Current Study*

The aim of the current study was to analyze a large scale data set to test specific hypotheses derived from Johnson's (1995) theory and typology surrounding the presence of control and the impact this has on aggression and help-seeking behaviors. The study utilizes data from the 1999 General Social Survey, a victimization study conducted by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Analysis focused on modules designed to assess emotional and physical abuse by current partners and involves comparing men's and women's reports of physical and emotional abuse by their intimate partner; categorising participants in terms of either intimate terrorism or common couple violence. The analysis will explore sex differences in categorisation and the influence of this on help seeking. It was predicted, based on Johnson's typology, that (1) women will be victim to more physical aggression and will be more likely to be victimized by intimate terrorists than men; (2) that those who are partnered with an intimate terrorist would be more likely to report the violence and use official help seeking sources (e.g. women's refuges) than those in a relationship with common couple violence and (3) that female intimate terrorism victims will seek more help (in all forms) than male intimate terrorism victims.

### *Method*

The General Social Survey (GSS) is conducted in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics and is a survey conducted by telephone across the ten provinces. The current study uses data from the 13<sup>th</sup> Cycle and was collected between February and December 1999. Lists of telephone numbers were purchased from phone companies in each province and random Digit Dialling was used to select households to call so those without telephones in their home were excluded; past research has indicated these people make up a small proportion of the population (< 2%)

### *Sample and Participation Rate*

The total number of participants for the survey was 25,876. Of all the numbers dialled 47.5% reached households from which an overall response rate of 81.3% was obtained. The survey began with a control form that asked about age, sex and marital status. Participants were randomly selected from those eligible within the household (those aged 15 and over). The sample was made up of 44.9% women. Average age for the sample was 44.49 (SD = 17.42) with the largest age group being 35-44 (22.5%). With respect to relationship status 46.7% stated they currently did not have a partner; 46.2% were married, 6.9% living common-law and 0.1% stating they were in a same-sex relationship<sup>1</sup>. Thirty two percent had children living in the home at the time of the survey.

### *Instrumentation*

The survey was divided into several sections and detailed below are the sections that were used in the current study. Participants were reporting on their partner's behavior and so their own victimization (as opposed to perpetration).

### *Measures of Control*

This section included questions related to controlling and emotionally abusive behavior that were taken from the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey. These questions test the links between emotional abuse (or controlling behavior) and physical abuse and provide a context for the reports of violence and were asked in the context of the last 5 years. This section includes 8 items such as "He/she tries to limit your contact with family or friends" and "He/she demands to know who you are with and where you are at all times" to which the respondent answers either "yes" or "no" as to whether this describes their current partner.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the small number of same-sex relationships present, analysis focused on heterosexual relationship only.

These variables were recoded from categorical variables into an interval level scale by adding together then number of “yes” answers leaving a possible score range of 0 to 8 for control.

*Physical Aggression in Current Marriage/Common-law relationships*

Within this section are items encompassing a range of violent acts including being beaten up or choked, and acts of sexual assault. These items were also taken from the Violence Against Women Survey. Respondents were also asked to specify the number of different occasions within the last five years that their partner had been violent towards them. These variables were categorical (as above) and were recoded into interval level scales but adding together the “yes” answers. We then calculated a “minor aggression” subscale which consisted of 3 items (e.g. “...has he/she pushed, grabbed or shoved you in a way that could have hurt you?”) and “severe aggression” subscale which consisted of 5 items (e.g. “...has he/she beaten you”). This left each respondent with a minor aggression, severe aggression and overall aggression score with a score range of 0-3, 0-5 and 0-8 respectively.

*Help-Seeking Behavior*

This section asked respondents about their help seeking behaviors that were coded into: “Contacted official services” (e.g. contacting men’s/women’s centres, shelters and court-based services); “contacted someone official” (e.g. contacted a lawyer or the police) and “contacted someone personal” (e.g. family or friends). As above, respondents answered yes or no to each item and so the data was recoded from categorical to interval based data by adding together the “yes” answers and resulted in a possible score range of 0 to 6, 0 to 3 and 0 to 4 respectively.

### *Results*

Analysis showed 1,540 (5.95%) people answered yes to being emotionally or financially abused by a current partner in the past 5 years. For physical abuse, 501 people (1.94%) reported they had experienced some form of physical abuse in the past 5 years. The most common incident of reported violence was being “pushed, grabbed, shoved” with 23.70% of respondents reporting this. With respect to help-seeking behavior, 16.7% of those who had experienced aggression had sought some form of help over the past 12 months speaking to someone personally, speaking to someone in an official capacity or contacting some form of service (e.g. shelter).

As the current study is investigating IPV in current relationships the analysis conducted below is using only respondents who reported some form of physical aggression with their current partner ( $N = 501$ ).

### *Classification of Victims by Johnson's Typology*

The first hypothesis to be tested was that women would be more likely to report their partners were intimate terrorists; in other words more likely to be classified in the “high control” aggressive group. Initial analysis that examined for sex differences in the victimization different measures of aggression and control found no significant differences between men and women for either minor aggression ( $F(1, 499) = .02, p = .892$ ); severe aggression ( $F(1, 499) = 1.49, p = .223$ ); overall aggression ( $F(1, 499) = .76, p = .385$ ) and overall control ( $F(1, 499) = 1.00, p = .317$ ). These analyses indicated men and women experienced similar victimization across these measures over the past 5 years (see Table 1).

K-Means Cluster analysis was performed to distinguish those who could be classified as victim of “high control” and “low control” using 8 items that measured control including “limits contact with friends and family” and “damages your possessions or property”. A two cluster solution was selected, using Euclidean distance as a measure of dissimilarity, and named “low control” and “high control”. An independent samples *t*-test confirmed that these were significantly different clusters ( $t(241.40) = -26.64, p < .001$ ).

The figures from the Table 2 show that the majority of participants reported their partner using low control rather than high control. A chi square test revealed there was no significant differences between men and women in the classification of being victim of either “high control” or “low control” ( $\chi^2(1) = .56, p = .454$ ), which does not support the prediction that men are more likely to use controlling aggression.

Further analysis was conducted to investigate any interactions between sex differences and control level using a 2 (sex) by 2 (control type) ANOVA. This allowed the exploration of levels of aggression within the high vs low control relationships and to see if there were any sex specific effect present (i.e. were women experiencing more aggression in the high control relationships as Johnson would argue). The dependent variable in this situation was the overall aggression variable described in the method and was a single figure that encompassed all acts of minor and severe aggression. No significant sex differences were found for a total measure of aggression ( $F(1, 497) = .51, p = .474$ ; see Table 1). There was however a significant difference found between high and low control ( $F(1, 497) = 5094, p < .001$ ); this indicates that those who are victim to “high control” ( $M = 2.86$ ) are also victim to significantly more aggression than those in the low control group ( $M = 1.89$ ). There was no significant interaction found between the sex and level of control on the frequency of aggressive victimization ( $F(1, 497) = 1.04, p = .308$ ) indicating experiencing more physical

aggression at the hands of a highly controlling partner was the same for both men and women in this sample.

*Johnson's Typology and Help-Seeking Behavior*

The next stage of the analysis was performed to address the hypotheses surrounding Johnson's typology and help-seeking behavior; specifically the predictions that victims of intimate terrorism would be more likely to seek help than those experiencing situational couple violence and furthermore that the female intimate terrorism victims would be more likely to seek help than the male victims

A 2 (sex) by 2 (control type; high/low) MANOVA explored the use of help-seeking (visiting services, contacting someone official and contacting some personal). Men and women differed significantly regarding contacting someone official ( $F(1, 80) = 6.48, p < .05$ ) with women reporting doing this more. However there was no significant difference for contacting someone personally ( $F(1, 80) = .26, p = .609$ ), or seeking services ( $F(1, 80) = 3.37, p = .070$ ) although the latter approached significance (see Table 3).

There were no significant differences between high and low control for any of the variables: help seeking services:  $F(1, 80) = .184, p = .179$ ; for contacting someone official:  $F(1, 80) = .17, p = .684$ ; and for contacting someone personal:  $F(1, 80) = .01, p = .915$ . Furthermore there were no significant interactions found between gender and the control category for contacting services ( $F(1, 80) = 1.24, p = .269$ ), contacting someone official ( $F(1, 80) = 1.13, p = .291$ ) or contacting someone personal ( $F(1, 80) = .001, p = .972$ ). This is indicative of the fact that being in a controlling and aggressive relationship does not affect problem presentation at either level of gender.

To further explore the effect of levels of aggression and control on help-seeking behavior, two standard multiple regressions (one for men and one for women) were run using

overall aggression and overall control as predictor variables and the overall help-seeking total as a criterion. No significant predictors of help seeking behaviour were found for male respondents indicating that neither the aggression ( $\beta = -.18, t = -.55, p = .592$ ) or the level of control ( $\beta = .15, t = .43, p = .673$ ) being experienced by male victims has any predictive value on whether they would seek help or not. This was the same for female respondents neither aggression ( $\beta = .21, t = 1.69, p = .096$ ) or control ( $\beta = .25, t = 1.94, p = .057$ ) predicted the help-seeking behavior.

## **Discussion**

The aim of the current study was to utilise an existing data set from the General Social Survey in Canada and to test a number of Johnson's assumptions about IPV, gender and controlling aggression. These assumptions are namely that there are sex differences in victimization experiences of partner violence and also that controlling and emotionally abusive aggression will be related to problem presentation measured in the form of help seeking behaviors. These assumptions were not supported by the findings of the current study. Firstly, we found that contrary to Johnson's prediction, there were no sex differences in aggression victimization (for minor, severe and the overall aggression scale). These results are contrary to assertions Johnson makes about physical aggression. According to his typology, it would be expected that there would be no sex differences for minor physical aggression (which is likened to his "situational couple violence" relationship type) but it would also be expected that women would report being victim to more acts of severe physical aggression as it is women most likely to be victim of intimate terrorists.

The current research supports the sexual symmetry argument for IPV (e.g. Archer, 2006; Bates et al. 2014; Straus & Rameriez, 2007). Archer's (2000) meta-analysis demonstrated women were more aggressive to their partners and despite the sample being

mainly found in undergraduates, his later 2006 meta-analysis using only community samples in Western nations found similar results to the current study; very little difference between men and women's perpetration of partner violence (Archer, 2006). We further found that there were no significant differences in typology categorisation, with men and women equally likely to be categorised as victim of intimate terrorism and situational couple violence. Men and women reported being victims of low and high controlling aggression at similar rates. Further analysis suggested that whilst those who reported to being victim of intimate terrorists did report higher physical aggression victimization, this was found to be the same for both men and women. It was not found to be the case that female victims here were experiencing more physical abuse than men. This is also inconsistent with Johnson's assumptions about gender and the relationship type. His theory suggests that women would report being victim of more controlling aggression than men which would be consistent with the profile of an intimate terrorist. Previous studies by Johnson (e.g. 1999) have found very different proportions, namely that the majority of those reporting being victimised in relationships characterised by high control are mostly women – 97%. However, the figures here for high control are consistent with Johnson and Leone (2000) who found 35% of the sample were classified as being intimate terrorists and appear consistent with crime victimization surveys.

The finding that both men and women have the capacity to exhibit controlling behaviors supports other research that has suggested that control and the use of controlling aggression is not solely perpetrated by men and is just as much a characteristic of women (e.g., Bates et al., 2014; Graham-Kevan, 2007; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2009; Laroache, 2005). It provides no support for the contention that the control experienced within IPV is purely patriarchal. The main facets of the feminist theory of IPV involve sex differences in IPV and the use of control and power within relationships. According to feminist researchers

(e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Browne, 1987) IPV is mostly perpetrated by men who (motivated by patriarchy) use their aggression to maintain power and control within the family structure. Patriarchal values may motivate some men's aggression towards their female partner but that is unlikely to be the case for most men or any women who also use control in their relationships - both in the presence or absence of IPV.

As a consequence of beliefs about male IPV and patriarchy, violence in intimate relationships has historically been studied separately to other forms of aggression through the belief that it has a separate etiology (e.g. Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Pence & Paymar, 1993). Felson (e.g. 2002) suggests IPV does not have a different etiology from other forms of aggression (e.g., Felson & Lane, 2010). Rather he argues that contrary to the patriarchal view, the active norm that exists in society, and has done for centuries, is chivalry. This is a norm that protects women not only from other men, but also other women and other forms of threat or danger (see Felson, 2002). Alternative explanations of IPV include evolutionary theory. In species such as humans that have internal fertilisation and also require paternal investment, guarding a mate would infer fitness benefits in terms of paternity certainty for men. This suggests that men have evolved to have a proprietary mindset towards their romantic partners with evidence for it being found in studies of negative forms of mate-guarding (Daly & Wilson 1992, 1993, 1996). While its evolutionary logic is sound, it has been used to argue that partner violence is largely an issue of male to female (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). This however, is not consistent with a large literature that finds that both sexes use IPV (Archer, 2000, 2002, 2006; Dutton, 2006; Felson, 2002). Extensions to this theory have integrated these findings in terms of the utility of mate-guarding for women in order to maximise her fitness by securing adequate provisions for herself and her offspring (e.g. using negative behaviors such as control and IPV Graham-

Kevan & Archer, 2009a, and using a combination of positive and negative behaviour, Buss, 1988, Buss & Shackelford, 1997).

Bates et al., (2014) examined relationships between control, IPV and aggression to same-sex others in a large student sample; they found controlling behavior was a significant predictor of both types of aggression and was similar for men and women. Bates et al. suggested this overlap that occurs between control and aggression is relevant to typology studies that have suggested IPV can be part of a more generally aggressive interpersonal style (e.g., Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010) and is further supported by some of the bullying literature that suggests that bullying and IPV perpetration share similar risk factors (e.g. Corvo & deLara, 2009). Indeed, research has demonstrated the overlap of risk factors and associated variables between men's and women's IPV (e.g. Medeiros & Straus, 2006) as well as between men's and women's IPV and same-sex aggression (Bates, Archer & Graham-Kevan, 2014) and other offending (e.g. Thornton, Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2010). Findings such as these point towards the overlap of IPV and the similarities between men' and women's aggression indicating a more appropriate way to study IPV would be in the context of other forms of aggression.

There were few sex differences found in help seeking behaviors. Women were significantly more likely than men to speak to someone in an official capacity (e.g. doctors/nurses, police, lawyer); this is consistent with official crime statistics which usually show higher rates of IPV with female victims. However, there were no sex differences for contacting someone personal or using services (e.g. shelters). This is largely not in line with predictions derived from Johnson's theory which would suggest IPV (specifically intimate terrorism) has more detrimental effects on women which would push them to seek help more; it is in fact not in line with the literature on help seeking behavior. The lack of a significant sex difference for

two of the sub-scales was surprising but figures for both men and women were low (the mean was higher for women) and the number of men and women in the sample that had sought help was very low (N = 19 for men and 65 for women). As discussed by Hines (e.g. Hines & Douglas, 2010) there is a lack of research exploring the effects of abuse on male victims and men may be more likely to externalize their behavior (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001) and less likely to seek help/report the aggression.

High and low control victims reported no significant differences in help seeking behavior on any of the three measures. This contradicts Johnson's findings once again as he suggests that controlling aggression had more serious consequences to the victim, and so it would lead people in this situation to seek help more. Far from diminishing the effects of controlling aggression, this finding rather points to the comparison between controlling and non-controlling aggression and both being problematic. This finding was the same for men and women. Johnson has a tendency to trivialise common couple violence because it does not always end in injury as severely as often. This is not to say the psychological effects are not damaging however, men and women alike may be subject to feeling shame and embarrassment surrounding the violence as well as anger and fear associated with it. Furthermore, the final set of analyses found that for men and women neither the level of aggression nor the level of control they experienced predicted their overall help seeking behavior. Overall these results can be seen to provide mixed support for Johnson's assumptions about partner violence and its relationship to gender and controlling behavior.

The theoretical and practical implications of these results mainly concern the interventions and treatment of IPV perpetrators. The current interventions that are employed in the UK, the US and Canada have their roots in the theories derived from feminist research, and are thus not built upon strong empirical and scientific foundations. The Duluth Model (Pence & Paymar, 1993) was designed to protect women from the tyranny of controlling and

abusive men. The curriculum of the model is based on power and control, which is perceived to be an exclusively male problem. This model not only excludes the possibility of female perpetrators, but also many male perpetrators who are not controlling and whose aggression could be attributed to other variables, such as personality disorders or a lack of self-control. This model is still used within the UK and the US. Furthermore, Hamel, Desmarais and Nicholls (2007) explored the perceptions of IPV in a diverse group of professionals (including shelter workers and victim advocates) using a vignette based design with half the sample reading a male to female scenario and the other half reading female to male. Male perpetrated IPV was perceived to be more coercive with specifically female participants rating female perpetrated aggression as less coercive than men's. This suggests that those who are dealing with victims (of both sexes) could be biased towards the feminist paradigm.

These results aside the current study is limited to a certain extent. The data is reliant on self-reports of victimization only and did not ask about the respondents' own violence within the home and therefore it is impossible to assess to what extent the violence was bi-directional. Johnson (2006) expanded on his earlier typology to two new patterns of behavior that encompassed the behavior of both partners: the first, named "violent resistance", represents violence of a non-controlling kind in response to controlling aggression from the partner (including violence in self-defence). The other, labelled "mutual violent control", represents a destructive relationship where both partners use controlling aggression. To distinguish between these types of aggression would obviously mean collecting data about self and partner behavior. Indeed, there were very low rates of IPV being reported here which seems inconsistent with previous research, for example Bates et al. (2014) found 18.4% of their large student sample had perpetrated IPV and 9.2% had perpetrated IPV and same-sex aggression to a non-intimate. In the current study, there were also no partner

reports to verify any information that was investigated. It should also be noted that very few filled in the help seeking behavior so future research would need to try and obtain a sample to gain a better response rate. Future research in this area should involve more studies that gather data from both partners so as to be able to confirm or challenge each other's reports. From this it would open up the ability to learn more about the violent resistance and mutual violent control types that Johnson's described that have only been tested rarely (e.g. Bates et al., 2014). These patterns of relationship aggression could be the key to gaining a fuller understanding of relational aggression. The results of this study have shown that both men and women are equally likely to be categorised as either high or low control so Johnson's patriarchal explanation of intimate terrorism needs to be revised. It should be noted however that whilst there are assumptions made about perpetration based samples yielding different results to victimization based samples this was not supported by Sullivan et al. (2010) who found that when these two groups were compared in a sample of African-American women there were no significant differences for physical aggression, psychological aggression or injury.

In conclusion, the results of the current study tend to question the general utility of Johnson's typology within the IPV literature. It provides disconfirming evidence for some of Johnson's most well known assertions about the use of controlling aggression within intimate relationships by finding little difference between victims in relationship categorised as high or low control when it comes to problem presentation as well as finding no sex difference with regards the high control and low control typology. With respect to IPV the concept of control and controlling behaviors can be useful but much more so when considered outside of Johnson's typology. Control was studied in this context before Johnson devised his theory (e.g. Pence & Paymar, 1993). His typology was considered one of the last stands for the feminist perspective on the perpetration and victimization of IPV and is possibly one of the

reasons it has received so much attention. It is, however, rarely used and supported within scientific literature but instead is often quoted by government type documents as it is very illustrative of some of the ideas that they wish to portray.

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*Table 1:*

A Summary Table of the Means and Standard Deviations for Sex Differences in victimization over the past 5 years

	Male (n=257)	Female (n=244)	Row Mean (N=501)	<i>d</i> value <sup>1</sup>	<i>F</i> value
Minor Physical	1.51 (.86)	1.50 (.73)	1.51 (.80)	.01	.02
Severe Physical	.76 (.94)	.65 (1.03)	.71 (.98)	.11	1.49
Overall Aggression	2.27 (1.49)	2.15 (1.52)	2.21 (1.50)	.08	76
Overall Control	1.91 (1.69)	2.08 (1.96)	2.00 (1.83)	-.09	1.00

\*\* p < .001, \* p < .05

<sup>a</sup> A positive *d* value indicates a higher male score, a negative value indicates a higher female score

*Table 2:*

## Prevalence of High and Low control by Sex

		Cluster No of Case		
		Low Control	High Control	Total
Sex	Male	176 (68.5%)	81 (31.5%)	257
	Female	160 (65.3%)	84 (34.3%)	244
Total		336 (67.1%)	165 (32.9%)	(501)

Table 3:

A Summary Table of the Means and Standard Deviations for of Help-Seeking Behavior by sex and control category.

	Male (n=19)	Female (n=65)	<i>F</i> value	<i>d</i> value <sup>1</sup>	Low Control (n = 42)	High control (n = 42)	<i>F</i> value	<i>d</i> value <sup>2</sup>
Services	.26 (.50)	.84 (1.42)	3.37	-.54	.41 (.80)	1.02 (1.58)	1.84	.49
Contact	.95 (.97)	1.49 (.75)	6.48*	6.62	1.36 (.76)	1.38 (.91)	.17	.02
Official								
Contact	1.58	1.74	.26	-.12	1.69	1.71 (1.09)	.01	.02
Personal	(1.43)	(1.11)			(1.28)			

\*\* p < .001, \* p < .05

<sup>1</sup>A positive *d* value indicates a higher male score, a negative value indicates a higher female score

<sup>2</sup> A positive *d* value indicates a higher score in the "high control" group, a negative value indicates a higher "low control" score