Title:
Partner experiences of risk, aggression and impulsivity in domestic abuse: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Abstract:
Objectives: Identifying those who are at high risk of domestic abuse is a critical issue in safeguarding victims and their children. Research on perpetrators of domestic abuse has made links between impulsiveness and impulsive aggression on physical violence, yet to date there are no studies that have considered integrating partner reporting measures of impulsivity and aggression into domestic abuse risk assessments. This poster presents the first part of a mixed-methods PhD project aimed at exploring this.

Design: This is a qualitative study, chosen as it will explore the nuanced experiences of domestic abuse.

Method: Six semi-structured interviews were carried out with participants who have experienced domestic abuse, and analysed using the qualitative research technique of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Whilst idiographic in nature, it allows for the creation of superordinate themes across the participants.

Results: Initial findings are emerging in the form of the following superordinate themes: ‘Concepts of self, romantic love, and family involvement’, ‘Disempowerment, emotional trauma and processing difficulties’, ‘Consciousness of risk, and actions of managing it’, ‘Partner as coercively controlling and aggressive’, and ‘Partner’s characteristics as intense and troubling’.

Conclusions: These findings will inform the subsequent studies within the PhD, particularly in exploring the accuracy of victim perceptions of aggression and impulsivity in relation to how they may inform future risk assessments. The potential enhancement of existing partner perception risk assessment tools used by practitioners will undoubtedly benefit adult victims and their children by reducing the number of deaths, injuries and mental health issues caused by domestic abuse.