



# THE FELLOW

September 2007 | Volume 2 • Issue 1

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The official peer-reviewed publication of doctoral students at the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania

## Welcome New and Returning Students!



As another academic year begins, it brings with it the second volume of *The Fellow* and, hence, a new tradition is solidified here at SP2. For those of you who are new to SP2, *The Fellow* was initiated last year as a forum for doctoral students to share their ongoing work, academic successes and accumulated knowledge with all members of the SP2 community. We thank those of you who contributed last year and we are eager to hear from those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to do so.

There has been, and continues to be, a great deal of activity among SP2 doctoral students. Over the course of the past few months, many were awarded their Ph.D.'s and they are now embarking on well-deserved jobs and post-doctoral fellowships. Those of us who remain are developing and working on dissertations, teaching classes, publishing articles in our areas of interest, and starting to think about comprehensive exams. Finally, the most important activity of all is the addition of four new Ph.D. students into our family. We are pleased to welcome them and we are excited for the contributions they will make.

We hope that this year is as productive and rewarding as those in the past. We extend ourselves as this year's representatives of SP2's doctoral student body— please feel free to come to us with your concerns and suggestions.

Kristie Thomas & Sara Wiesel Cullen  
*DSSC Co-chairs*



The end of the summer is a period of academic reflection. We successfully lost six amazing, newly minted, Ph.D.s who undertook academic positions in top universities and research centers. And now, before we know it, a new cohort of students is joining us. People who I looked at as students in the program will now be colleagues I meet in academic conferences. It is fulfilling to know that those who graduated from SP2 are highly regarded in the academic job market. Our ranking as a top doctoral program (second in the nation by the Chronicle of Higher Education) helps. This year we are going into a process of review by the Graduate Council of the University. I will ask on many of you to help in the process and I hope that they will see our strengths and will help us improve.



Every time I come across a published article by one of our graduates, I am filled with pride and a sense of accomplishment. But even more affirming is the fact that many of you doctoral students are active in publishing. The greatest trend is for a few of you to get together and author a joint manuscript. During the summer, I got five notices of

such acceptances for publication. I cannot think of anything better for you and for the school. Similarly, many of you submitted proposals for national conferences and so far most of you were accepted. It will be lovely to meet outside of Penn and spread the word about our doctoral program and its well-trained students.

I know that some of you are going to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) annual meeting in San Francisco. This will be a special meeting for the school because next year the CSWE annual meeting is coming to Philadelphia to celebrate with us the school's centennial. In San Francisco we are holding a reception and anyone of you who will attend the conference, please come and join us.

The plans for the centennial of the school are in full motion. In addition to the CSWE conference in October 2008, the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) will come to join us in November 2008. We are working on two books that will feature the school's centennial: one book chronicles the history of the school and one book features the intellectual heritage of the school. There are many other fascinating events that will be part of the centennial celebrations and I hope you will all take advantage of them. I am looking forward to seeing you regularly throughout the academic year.

Ram A. Cnaan  
*Associate Dean for Research and Doctoral Education*

## PEER REVIEW

We all work hard writing papers for class, and many papers are worthy of more than just a letter grade. *The Fellow* provides an outlet to share unpublished manuscripts, essays, book reviews and editorials with colleagues in an effort to distribute ideas, spark debates, obtain feedback, encourage journal submissions, and support interdisciplinary collaborations. Full references are available upon request to the authors.

### *Use of the 911 System as a Risk Indicator for Intimate Partner Violence in the Emergency Department* by Melissa E. Dichter & Karin V. Rhodes | mdichter@sp2.upenn.edu

#### Background and Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread public health problem leading to injury, morbidity, and mortality, particularly among women. Identifying individuals who have experienced IPV, typically through brief screening, can assist healthcare providers in meeting patient needs. Traditional brief screening, however, which asks about past-year experiences of violence and/or threat, leads to many false-negatives due to patients' discomfort in disclosing abuse and limited sensitivity of the questions.

In addition to hospital emergency departments (EDs), the criminal legal system is a primary first point of contact for many women experiencing IPV. Kothari and Rhodes (2006) found, among IPV cases identified through the prosecutor's office, almost two-thirds (63.9%) of female victims had been an ED patient within the same year. Given this significant overlap between systems, and that the incidents leading to a 911 call tend to be the more severe cases of violence (Bonomi, Holt, Martin, & Thompson, 2006; Davies, Block, & Campbell, 2007), a recent IPV-related 911 call may be an indication of a potentially dangerous situation. The purpose of this study was to determine the incidence of IPV-related 911 calls in the past year among female adults presenting to the ED and to evaluate this measure as an indicator of IPV.

#### Methods

This study took place in an urban academic hospital ED in a large East-coast city that sees more than 30,000 female adult patients each year, approximately 70 percent of whom are African-American. Trained research assistants screened all female, adult (18-65 yrs), English-speaking, oriented patients presenting to the ED 7am-midnight 7 days per week for 12 weeks. As part of routine care, patients were asked two commonly-used IPV screening questions: 1) In the last 12 months, has a partner (boyfriend / girlfriend / husband / lover / father of your child) hit, pushed, slapped, kicked or otherwise physically hurt you? and 2) In the last 12 months, have you felt threatened (in any way) by a current or former partner? As part of an eligibility screen for a larger study, we also asked, In the last 12 months, have the police been called because of a fight between you and a male partner? Women who reported an IPV-related police call were invited to participate in a longer questionnaire measuring their experiences with violence victimization and their risk of re-assault.

#### Results

Of the 4663 patients that were screened, 4.8% screened positive for having been physically hurt or threatened by an intimate partner (the traditional IPV screening questions), and 4.0% reported that the police had been called due to a fight between themselves and a male intimate partner, in the past 12 months. More than a third (37.1%) of those who screened positive for a 911 call did not screen positive for IPV on the traditional IPV screening questions. Seventy-four percent of 911-positive women completed the longer questionnaire and, of those, nearly all (96.9%) reported, on the questionnaire, a history of IPV victimization and 60.4% had risk scores in the categories of extreme or high danger of re-assault. The additional question about an IPV-related 911 call increased detection of likely IPV by 30.4%.

#### Conclusions and Discussion

The study is limited in that it was conducted in one hospital ED and is not representative of other populations. Data were not collected between the hours of 12am to 7am and non-English-speaking women, and men, were excluded. Although the traditional questions were asked in gender-neutral terms, the police call question referred only to heterosexual relationships.

Our prevalence rates for past-year IPV victimization were low compared to other studies, including those in this same ED (e.g., Datner, Shofer, Parmele, Stahmer, & Mechem, 1999) that find prevalence rates between 14-30 percent (Anglin & Sachs, 2003; Kramer, Lorenzon, & Mueller, 2004; McCloskey et al., 2005). Our lower rates may have been due to in-person interviews rather than anonymous written surveys. Patients may also have been more reluctant to disclose victimization to the screeners who were undergraduate students rather than healthcare providers. The group of screeners included both males and females; most were younger than 30 and White with limited experience and training. Previous research (e.g., Thackeray, Stelzner, Downs, & Miller, 2007) has indicated that IPV survivors typically feel most comfortable with screeners who are female, of their same race, and between 30-50 years old.

This study revealed a population of female ED patients who have experienced partner violence and are at high risk of re-assault but were not identified through traditional screening methods. Findings provide support for adding one additional question regarding police calls to standard IPV screening as an objective method that could alert healthcare providers to potential severe IPV risk without significantly increasing screening time.

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## The Magic of Sampling Distributions

An important feature of inferential statistics is the process of going from the part to the whole. Researchers usually study a selected group in order to make generalizations about the entire body of objects. The small group that is observed in our research is called a *sample*, and the entire body of objects from which researchers select a sample is called a *population*. Researchers want to estimate characteristics of populations, or *parameters*, from characteristics of samples, or *statistics*. How, then, do we do that? To understand this inferential process, we should know the concept of *sampling distributions*. Major terms of statistics, such as *standard error*, *Type-1* and *Type-2 errors*, come from this concept. Let's see the magic of sampling distributions. Technically, *sampling distribution* refers to "the distribution of values taken by the statistics in all possible samples of the same size from the same population." What does that mean?

Suppose that 5 aliens (A, B, C, D, and E) live on Mars. Thus, the entire population of Mars is these 5 aliens. Now, suppose the weight of each alien is {A=10, B=20, C=30, D=40, E=50} pounds. NASA scientists want to measure the average weight of all Martians. The best way is to measure the weight of all 5 aliens. Unfortunately, Mars is large so it is difficult to meet all 5 aliens. Instead, the scientists decide to measure the weight of only two 2 aliens. Hence, the sample size is 2. There are several ways to make a sample with  $n=2$  from a population with  $N=5$ . For example, scientists can meet alien A and C. In this case the mean weight of the sample {A=10, C=30} will be 20 pounds. Or they may meet alien B and E. If so, the mean weight of the sample {B=20, E=50} will be 35 pounds.

Sampling Case	Mean of Case
{10, 20}	15
{10, 30}	20
{10, 40}	25
{10, 50}	30
{20, 30}	25
{20, 40}	30
{20, 50}	35
{30, 40}	35
{30, 50}	40
{40, 50}	45

The table above shows every conceivable combination of sampling cases from the population and the means of each sampling case. This is the *sampling distribution* (The exact name is the *sampling distribution of means*. But we simply call this *sampling distribution*). Like other distributions, a sampling distribution has its own mean. In our example, the mean of the sampling distribution is 30 ( $= [15 + 20 + 25 + 30 + 25 + 30 + 35 + 35 + 40 + 45]/10$ ). Now, let's check the mean of the population. The mean of the population is 30 ( $= [10 + 20 + 30 + 40 + 50]/5$ ). Interestingly, the mean of population and the mean of sampling distribution are same. Is this coincidental?

No. This is the most important characteristic of a sampling distribution. That is, **the mean of a sampling distribution is equal to the mean of the population**. Moreover, sampling distributions have two other important characteristics. First, the standard deviation of the sampling distribution is equal to the standard deviation of the population divided by the square root of  $n$  ( $n$ =sample size). In our example, the standard deviation of the sampling distribution is 9.6 while that of population is 13.6. We can get 9.6 when we divide 13.6 by the square root of 2. Second, regardless of the population, when sample size goes up, sampling distribution itself becomes a *normal distribution*.

In order to make a sampling distribution, we need to know the characteristics of a population. However, we usually do not know about the population and therefore, we cannot make the sampling distribution either. Then, how can we apply these characteristics to inferential statistics? Next time, we will see this inferential process as well as hypothesis tests including power and Type 1 & 2 errors.

*\*Kim is a 4th year Ph.D. student & author of "Applied regression: Data analysis for social science," a book recently published in Korea.*

## You Should Join...

### Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR) [www.iaswresearch.org](http://www.iaswresearch.org)

The IASWR Listserv is a free service that provides useful announcements, weekly funding opportunities, conferences and trainings, calls for papers, news and notices, awards, and important research findings. This is the primary resource for social work researchers with an interdisciplinary nature (includes public health, sociology, criminology, criminal justice, mental health, etc.). The IASWR Listserv is free and well-edited.

### Conference Alerts [www.conferencealerts.com](http://www.conferencealerts.com)

The Conference Alerts resource maintains a database of academic conferences worldwide and offers a monthly email announcement of upcoming conferences tailored to your specific interests based on keywords you select (e.g., child maltreatment, social work, women, criminology, race, teaching, HIV/AIDS, etc.). The fascinating conferences in exotic places provide motivation to get working and get out there (to have trips covered at more than \$350/year).

## Did You Know...

MS Excel, PowerPoint, and Word have a built-in AutoRecover feature. The AutoRecover feature saves copies of all open Excel, PPT and Word files at user-definable fixed intervals (see: ToolsàOptionsàSave). AutoRecover is only effective for unplanned disruptions, such as a power outage or a crash. AutoRecovered items are automatically presented at next startup. Online and product manual searches did not locate similar features for SAS, SPSS, or Stata – save frequently!

PUBLICATIONS

**Caplan, J. M.** (2007). What factors affect parole? A review of empirical research. *Federal Probation*, 71(1), 16-19.

**Cederbaum, J. A.**, Marcus, S. C., & Hutchinson, M. K. (in press). Impact of knowing someone with HIV/AIDS on parent-child communication and HIV risk behaviors. *Journal of HIV/AIDS Prevention & Education for Adolescents & Children*, XX-XX.

Mandell, D. S., Eleey, C., **Cederbaum, J. A.**, Hutchinson, M. K., Jemmott, L. S., & Blank, M. B. (in press). Excess sexual health risk among adolescents receiving special education services. *Journal of School Health*, XX-XX.

Cnaan, R. A., & **Dichter, M. E.** (in press). Thoughts on the use of knowledge in social work practice. *Research on Social Work Practice*.

Teitelman, A. M., **Dichter, M. E.**, **Cederbaum, J. A.**, & Campbell, J. A. (in press). Review of the literature on intimate partner violence, condom use and HIV risk for adolescent girls: Implications for research and prevention. *Journal of HIV/AIDS Prevention & Education for Adolescents & Children*, XX-XX.

**Kim, T.**, & **Zurlo, K. A.** (2007). Factors that influence workfare program participants: Focusing on South Korea's Self-Sufficiency Program. *International Social Work*, 50(6), XX-XX.

Polsky, D., Lave, J., **Klusaritz, H.**, Jha, Al, Pauly, M.V., Cen, L., Xie, H., Stone, R., Chen, Z., & Volpp, K. (in press). Is Lower 30-day Mortality among Blacks Unique to the Veterans Affairs Health Care System? *Medical Care*.

**Matejkowski, J.**, **Cullen, S.**, & Solomon, P. (in press). Characteristics of persons with severe mental illness who have been incarcerated for murder. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, XX-XX.

**Thomas, K. A.**, **Joshi, M.**, Wittenberg, E., & McCloskey, L. A. (in press). Intersections of harm and health: A qualitative study of intimate partner violence in women's lives. *Violence Against Women*, XX-XX.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS/INVITED SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

**Cederbaum, J. A.** (2007, July). Mother HIV status, mother-daughter sexual risk communication, and adolescent behavioral beliefs. Poster presented at NIMH Annual Research Conference on the Role of Families in Preventing and Adapting to HIV/AIDS, San Francisco, CA.

**Cederbaum, J. A.**, Marcus, S. C., & Hutchinson, M. K. (2007, July). The Influence of Knowing Someone with AIDS on Youth Sexual Risk Behaviors. Poster presented at NIMH Annual Research Conference on the Role of Families in Preventing and Adapting to HIV/AIDS, San Francisco, CA.

**Dichter, M. E.** (2007, July). The relationship between battering, violence, and danger among adult female emergency department patients. *International Family Violence and Child Victimization Research Conference*. Portsmouth, NH.

**Dichter, M. E.**, Kolansky, S., & Rhodes, K. (2007, May). Use of the 911 system as an indicator of intimate partner violence in the emergency department. Refereed poster presentation. *Society for Academic Emergency Medicine Annual Conference*. Chicago, IL.

**Dichter, M. E.** (2007, April). The relationship between battering, violence, and danger among adult female emergency department patients. *Penn Graduate Women's Studies Conference*. Philadelphia, PA.

Wittenberg, E., **Thomas, K. A.**, **Joshi, M.**, & McCloskey, L. A. (2006, October) Domains of health in intimate partner violence: informing the construct validity of HRQOL measures. Poster presented at the *Society for Medical Decision Making conference* Boston, MA.

AWARDS

**Joel Caplan** - Best Overall Graduate Student Map, North East Map Org. (NEMO) GIS Map Design Competition.

**Jason Matejkowski** - University of Pennsylvania GAPSA/Provost's Award for Interdisciplinary Innovation. Team Leader of a study entitled Validation of the Personal Norm of Reciprocity Measure for Persons with Mental Illness.

The Cochrane and Campbell Collaborations

Systematic reviews can help researchers and practitioners keep up-to-date on studies in their fields by summarizing large bodies of research on the same question. Two online collections of systematic reviews available to the public, each one focusing on different fields of research, are highlighted.

The Cochrane Collaboration (at: <http://www.cochrane.org/index.htm>), founded in 1993, produces and disseminates systematic reviews of healthcare interventions and promotes the search for evidence in the form of clinical trials and other studies of interventions. While focusing on healthcare, the Collaboration does provide reviews of Schizophrenia research and Methodology Reviews (e.g. "Methods to increase response rates to postal questionnaires" and "Strategies to improve recruitment to research studies") that may be of interest to social scientists.

With substantive priorities in education, crime and justice, and social welfare, The Campbell Collaboration (at: <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/index.asp>) was developed in 2000 to disseminate systematic reviews of research evidence on the effectiveness of social interventions. The Campbell Collaboration currently consists of two unique data bases: the Register of Interventions and Policy Evaluations and the Social, Psychological, Education, and Criminological Trials Registry.

Both The Cochrane and Campbell Collaborations encourage involvement from persons with interests that match their substantive areas (and are open to suggestions for new areas for reviews) to become authors, editors, "handsearchers" (identifying control trials to be indexed in online databases), and for other positions. FYI: The University of Pennsylvania has provided Campbell with human resources, website development, and financial support for Campbell Colloquia via the Graduate School of Education, the School of Social Work, the Annenberg School of Communications, and the Fels Center for Government.

(From: Cochrane and Campbell web pages)

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