

Forced Sex & Leaving Intimate Relationships: Results of the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study

Carolyn Rebecca Block
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Walter S. DeKeseredy¹
University of Ontario Institute of Technology

KEY WORDS: FORCED SEX, INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE, WOMEN'S HEALTH,
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Only a handful of studies have examined sexual assaults women experience when they try to leave or have left intimate relationships. Further, most of the social scientific work done so far on this topic focused on the plight of rural heterosexual women and involved the gathering of qualitative exploratory data. This paper helps fill a research gap by presenting some of the quantitative results of the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study (CWHRS). Data reported here are derived from interviews with 705 women sampled as they came into hospitals and clinics in Chicago neighborhoods. In addition to focusing on the experiences of women who have not received much attention from the social scientific community, this study provides rich information on the temporal relationship between forced sex incidents and leaving intimate relationships.

Indeed, "knowledge about women's experiences of intimate violence has grown exponentially" (Stanko, 1997, p. 629). Since the 1970s, scholars from around the world have produced rich qualitative and quantitative data on a wide range of harms women experience in various types of intimate relationships. Further, researchers from many disciplines have constructed and tested numerous, sometimes competing theories. Still, some key questions remain and some groups of women have been under-studied. Although it is well-known that leaving a violent man is one of the most dangerous events in a woman's life (Campbell et al., 2003; Tutty, 2006), relatively little empirical attention has been given to the physical abuse of women who want to end, are in the process of ending, or who have ended relationships with intimate partners (DeKeseredy et al., 2006; Fleury, Sullivan & Bybee, 2000).

It is common for empirical research to use marital status as an indicator of leaving, even though there is no necessary connection between marital status and relationship to the abuser. For example, a woman may be married to a non-abusive partner, but experiencing stalking and physical abuse from an ex-husband or a same-sex partner.

¹ The research reported here was supported by grant #96-IJ-CX-0020 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Arguments presented in this paper do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. We would like to thank Aysan Sev'er and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments on and criticisms of this paper. Please send all correspondence to Walter DeKeseredy, Criminology, Justice and Policy Studies, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7K4 (e-mail: walter.dekeseredy@uoit.c).

For research to provide useful information for the reduction of violence, it must more accurately reflect the complex reality of women's lives. Further, although there is a feminist literature on what is variously termed marital rape, spousal rape, wife rape, forced sex, or sexual assault, only a handful of researchers have examined the connection between forced sex and leaving, or trying to leave, the relationship.²

To the best of our knowledge, only one U.S. study was specifically designed to address the relationship between leaving and forced sex. Conducted in three rural Ohio counties and limited to women being abused by a current or former male marital or commonlaw partner, this exploratory, qualitative project revealed that most of the 43 women interviewed had experienced multiple forms of forced sex, as well as other forms of victimization (e.g., beatings, stalking, psychological abuse). Further, 67% of the sample reported on a variety of ways in which their partners' male peers encouraged and legitimated forced sex. The research team also found that perpetrators' substance use, their adherence to the ideology of familial patriarchy and their consumption of pornography contributed to the harms endured by the women (DeKeseredy & Joseph, 2006; DeKeseredy et al., 2006).

Although this Ohio study enhances a sociological understanding of intimate partner violence, it does not speak to the experiences of urban women, women who terminate relationships with boyfriends or same-sex partners, or women who do not live with or have never lived with abusive partners. It also does not speak to the experiences of some groups of abused women 'from the margins' (Crenshaw, 1994; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005), such as those who are African-American or Latina/Hispanic. This is hardly a trivial concern, given that recent studies show that "the very nature of violence against women is different for different women" and that it is time to move beyond a "simplistic analysis that centers itself on the experiences of white, middle-class, U.S. born, heterosexual women who experience abuse" (Richie, 2005, pp. xvi-xvii).

Data gathered by the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study (CWHRS) on 500 women who experienced violence in the past year and 205 comparison women answers questions raised by the exploratory work of DeKeseredy and Joseph (2006) and DeKeseredy et al. (2006). Specifically, this analysis asks: (1) Is forced sex more frequently experienced by women who are attempting to leave or who have left intimate relationships, compared to women who have not left or tried to leave and if so, what is the temporal relationship between leaving and incidents of forced sex; and (2) Does partners' controlling behavior affect the likelihood of forced sex when women attempt to leave relationships?

² See DeKeseredy, Rogness & Schwartz (2004), DeKeseredy, Ellis & Alvi (2005) and Hardesty (2002) for in-depth reviews of the extant social scientific literature on various types of separation/divorce assault.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given the limited data on forced sex and leaving, it is not surprising that the subject has received little theoretical attention. Even the marital rape literature is essentially atheoretical, restricted to either presenting women's opinions about why their partners assaulted them or to constructing typologies (DeKeseredy et al., 2004; Mahoney & Williams, 1998). For example, Finkelhor and Yllö (1985) identified three types of rape: Battering rape, force-only rape and obsessive rape. Because these and other typologies of marital rape (e.g., Bergen, 1996; Bergen & Bukovec, in press; Russell, 1990) have been reviewed elsewhere (see Mahoney & Williams, 1998), it is beyond the scope of this paper to repeat these summaries.

Although DeKeseredy et al. (2004) offer a feminist/male peer support model that attempts to help fill the gap in the theoretical literature on leaving and forced sex, the CWHRS data do not include the variables necessary to test it. However, the CWHRS data speak to Wilson and Daly's (1992, 1993) male proprietariness theory of violence against wives, which contends that leaving elevates the risk of forced sex because it challenges male proprietariness, "the tendency [of men] to think of women as sexual and reproductive 'property' they can own and exchange" (Wilson & Daly, 1992, p. 85). Proprietariness refers to "not just the emotional force of [the male's] own feeling of entitlement but to a more pervasive attitude [of ownership and control] toward social relationships [with intimate female partners]" (p. 85).

Many women resist or eventually will resist their partners' proprietariness in a variety of ways, such as arguing, protesting and fighting back if they have been abused (Bergen, 1996; DeKeseredy et al., 2006; Sev'er, 2002; Websdale, 1998). Women may also defy their partners' control by leaving or trying to leave a relationship. This may involve emotional separation, obtaining a separate residence, telling the partner to leave her alone or stay away, obtaining an Order of Protection, moving away or hiding, starting or completing a legal separation/divorce, or combinations of these. Regardless of how a woman does it, her attempt to leave or her successful departure from a relationship challenges male proprietariness (Goetting, 1999). In response, men use forced sex to regain control and force reconciliation (Hardesty, 2002).

Obviously, other factors might contribute to forced sex whether a woman is trying to leave or not, such as the partner's consumption of pornography, patriarchal male peer support (DeKeseredy et al., 2006; Russell, 1990; 1998), women's informal social support networks (Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1997), and everyday life-events stress (Hardesty, 2002). Further, Wilson and Daly's original theory does not explain the 'off-diagonal'—women who leave their partners but are not victimized during and after leaving (Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1997; Hardesty, 2002). Why does leaving end abuse for women in some situations, but escalate abuse

for women in other situations? Speaking to the question at hand, under what circumstances do women leave or try to leave and still avoid forced sex? Moreover, under what circumstances does forced sex lead to leaving or trying to leave? Analysis of CWHRS data can illuminate these questions.

Our research focuses on women-initiated departures, because “they are the decisions that challenge male hegemony the most” (Sev’er, 1997, p. 567). Leaving a relationship is a process because, as Goetting (1999, p. 15) points out, leaving “may involve one exit or several. Either way, that process extends back to the decision point to leave and includes the evolution of strategy refinement.”

METHODS

Sample & Data Collection

The CWHRS was developed to provide nurses, police officers and other service providers with information necessary to lower the risk of life-threatening injury or death for women who are experiencing intimate partner violence.³ The project was designed around comparison of a ‘homicide sample’ of all 87 intimate partner homicides involving a woman that occurred in Chicago over a two-year period and a ‘clinic/hospital sample’ of 705 detailed interviews with women sampled as they came into hospitals and clinics in Chicago neighborhoods chosen because the population-based risk of intimate partner homicide was high. The study was approved and supervised by the Institutional Review Boards of each site. Women were asked to give signed consent to the screener and to the detailed interview. Screening and interview procedures were developed by working closely with the separate clinics of each medical site, so that the woman’s safety, privacy and confidentiality would be ensured (Block et al., 2000; Block, Engel, Naureckas, & Riordan, 1999a; 1999b).

About 2,740 women were screened as they entered the hospital or clinic for any reason (e.g., a well-baby check, a bad cold, or a car accident), using a short questionnaire containing three screening questions: Physical violence, sexual violence and being ‘afraid to go home.’ The screening was given as a part of the clinic or hospital routine and followed a strict protocol for safety and confidentiality (see Block et. al., 2000). Interviews were conducted with all women older than 17 who answered ‘yes’ to at least one screening question and with a random sample of women over 17 who answered ‘no’ to all three questions and who were in an intimate relationship in the past year.

The interview rate was 86% of eligible women who screened positive, 27% of eligible women who screened negative but had experienced abuse before the prior year and 9% of eligible women who

³ See Block & Devitt (2000) and Block et al., (2000) for more information on the methods of the CWHRS and the data generated by it.

screened negative. Older screened women were significantly less likely to be interviewed, but the woman's language or racial/ethnic group made no difference. A considerable number (22%) of women who screened negative interviewed positive and some (9%) who screened positive interviewed negative. For more details of the screening and interview safety protocols and response rates, see Block, et al. (2000).⁴

The division of the 705 sampled women into 'abused' and 'comparison' groups was based on their responses to 11 questions about attempted or completed physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year that were included in a modified version of the Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS) (Straus, 1979) originally constructed for the Canadian Violence Against Women Survey (Johnson, 1996; Johnson and Sacco, 1995). The CWHRS interview asked women whether each of the 11 types of violence happened to them in the past year at the hands of an intimate partner. In addition, women who responded 'yes' to any of these items were asked to complete a Calendar History covering the previous 12 months, in which they and an interviewer marked on a calendar important events in their lives as well as the violent incidents, with details about each incident noted in the margin. Because responses to the CTS items defined whether a woman was in the abused or the comparison group, by definition, none of the comparison group women answered 'yes' to any of these items. After the interviews, 500 women were categorized as 'abused in the past year' and 205 were categorized as 'not abused in the past year' and became the comparison group.

Demographically (see table 1), there was no significant difference between the abused and comparison groups in percent Black/African-American or Latina/Hispanic. Comparison women were significantly older (mean age 32.5 versus 30.7), but the difference was not large (Pearson $r = .085$). Comparison women were also significantly more likely to have graduated from high school (62% versus 52%; Chi square= 6.266; $df = 1$; $p = .012$), though 15 women in the abused group (3%) had a college degree or more. For Latinas, the abused and comparison group did not differ in unemployment, but for other women there was a strong and significant difference (Chi square= 18.511; $df = 3$; $p = .0001$). There was no significant difference in household income. As might be expected, the women in the comparison group were more likely to be in a current relationship with 'Name'⁵ than were the women in the abused group.

⁴ The CWHRS conducted follow-up interviews with two-thirds of women who interviewed 'abused' over 12 months. For these women, Calendar History data were collected from each follow-up back to the most recent interview. The present analysis, however, uses only the initial interview and Calendar History data.

⁵ 'Name' refers to the abusive intimate partner, or where there was more than one abusive partner in the past year, the person women chose as the one who committed the most serious incidents or incidents that 'bothered you the most.' For comparison women, 'Name' refers to the partner she is 'closest to.'

Table I. Sociodemographic Characteristics of CWHRS Women Sampled in Hospitals or Clinics

Woman's Demographic Characteristics	Comparison Women (N = 205)	Abused Women (N = 500)
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/ Black	62.4	68.9
Latina/Hispanic	8.9	7.8
Non-Latina White	25.7	21.5
Asian/ Pacific Islander	2.0	.4
Native American	.5	.2
Multi-racial	.5	1.2
Total N (100%)	(202)	(498)
Refused	(3)	(2)
Age at Initial Interview		
18-20	15.1	17.0
21-25	15.6	16.2
26-30	18.5	17.2
31-40	25.9	34.6
41-50	19.0	13.0
51-62	5.9	2.0
Total N (100%)	(205)	(500)
Education		
Never went to high school	7.4	8.0
Some high school	30.4	40.1
High School or GED	29.4	23.2
Some college or trade school	27.0	21.6
Junior college, trade school grad	1.0	4.0
College or professional degree	4.9	3.0
Total N (100%)	(204)	(499)
Missing	(1)	(1)
Occupation		
Full or part-time job	41.0	29.2
Homemaker	12.2	8.8
Student	7.3	10.6
Unemployed: in treatment, disabled, prostitute, etc.	39.5	51.4
Total N (100%)	(205)	(500)
Household Income from All Sources, Past Year		
Less than \$5,000	24.2	34.8
\$5,000 - \$9,999	22.0	20.1
\$10,000 - \$19,999	25.8	20.6
\$20,000 - \$29,999	8.1	10.1
\$30,000 - \$39,999	8.7	4.7
\$40,000 or more	9.3	9.6
Total N (100%)	(172)	(426)
She doesn't know	(29)	(71)
Missing/refused	(4)	(3)
Relationship to Name		
Current wife	26.3	17.0
Ex-wife	2.9	4.2
Wife, but husband now deceased	.0	.2
Current commonlaw	6.3	4.4
Ex- or former commonlaw	1.5	2.0
Current girlfriend	50.2	31.9
Ex-girlfriend	8.3	31.9
Current same-sex partner	1.0	2.8
Ex or former same-sex partner	.5	1.2
Current other (friend, lover)	2.4	.6
Former other (baby's father, lover)	.5	3.8
Total N (100%)	(205)	(499)
Missing (but Name is male)	(0)	(1)

Woman's Health		
Pregnant at initial interview	15.8	9.6
Pregnant in past year	14.3	20.4
General health, compared to other women her age:		
Excellent	12.7	11.2
Very Good	19.5	16.2
Good	38.0	35.6
Fair	23.9	29.4
Poor	5.9	7.6
Total N (100%)	(205)	(500)

Data generated by a question about 'your general health in the past year, compared to other women your age,' show that there was no significant difference between comparison and abused women. However, comparison women were significantly less likely to have been pregnant in the past year. Abused women were much more likely to have a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis (63.6% versus 27.5%; Chi square= 75.808; df= 1; $p < .0001$), to have 'ever had a problem with alcohol' (24.0% versus 8.8%), to have 'ever had a problem with drugs' (31.9% versus 11.2%) and to have had an 'emotional condition' in the past month that she identified as 'depression' (33.8% versus 15.6%). Abused women also had a significantly higher mean score on a four-item 'depressed feelings' scale (1.52 versus 0.71).

Operational Definitions

Forced Sex: In the CWHRs interview schedule, the modified CTS items were introduced as follows:

The questions in this section have to do with PHYSICAL VIOLENCE. Some questions may be difficult to answer, but it is important to hear from women themselves if we are to understand the very serious problem of violence against women. For each of the next questions, I'd like you to tell me if each thing has happened to you in an INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP, with a current or former intimate partner (husband, boyfriend, sex partner, etc.), in the past year (last 12 months). In the past year, has an intimate partner:

Eleven items asking about a type of violence followed this introduction. Our operational definition of 'forced sex' is based on a 'yes' response to the final item: 'Forced you into any sexual activity you did not want to do, by threatening you, holding you down, or hurting you in some way?'

Three women answered 'no' or refused to answer this item, but told the interviewer about a forced sex incident in the past year in the Calendar History part of the interview. These women were included in the 'forced sex' group. Of the 500 women in the 'abused' group, responses were missing for three, one said that she had experienced forced sex but had not been held down or threatened and six had been raped but by someone else. These seven were included in the 'no forced sex' group, resulting in 177 'yes,' 320 'no,' and three missing cases.

Leaving or Trying to Leave: It is almost a truism in research on intimate partner violence that 'leaving is a process.' The CWHRS interview schedule was designed to capture that process by reflecting the complexity of women's lives. The central question for measuring leaving was the following: 'During the past year, did you leave or stay apart from (Name), or ask (Name) to leave or stay away from you?'

Although the interviewer was encouraged to record women's comments in the interview margins, the following structured responses were offered: 'Yes, left/stayed away;' 'Yes, asked (Name) to leave or stay away;' 'Asked (Name) to leave or stay away, but (Name) refused' and 'No.'

The interview provided many additional opportunities for women to describe their situations. Just prior to the above item was a 'co-reside' question, 'Were you and (Name) living in the same place at any time during the past year?' with structured responses including: 'Yes, entire year,' 'Yes, but now living apart,' 'Yes, recently moved in together,' 'No, but lived together in prior year(s)' and 'No, never.' In the section about their household arrangements, women were asked to tally each person living in their household and the person's relationship to them and to describe any change(s) in the household structure in the past year. Women were also asked their 'main reasons' for leaving or trying to leave and their reasons for returning (if applicable). In addition, in the Calendar History, each woman had the opportunity to record the specific process of leaving, as it happened in her life.

At the zero-order level, there is a highly significant association (Chi square= 62.195; df= 1; $p < .0001$) between having experienced forced sex at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year and having left or tried to leave that partner in the past year. Of the 177 women who had experienced forced sex, 86% had left or tried to leave, compared to 53% of the 522 women who had not. However, this correlation does not tell us the temporal relationship between leaving and forced sex. Did forced sex influence women to leave, did abusive partners punish women for leaving with forced sex, or are both processes operating?

Fortunately, the time-related Calendar History information in the CWHRS allows us to answer these questions. Each violent incident entered on the Calendar History became a record in the CWHRS 'incident history' file (5017 records in the initial interview), and each event became a record in the 'event history' file (3287 records). Since women's lives are often complex and because the word 'leaving' may mean a different thing to different women, the first author carefully examined the entire interview schedule and Calendar History, including all of the notes in the margins, consulting with native speakers of Spanish to assure that Spanish notes were translated accurately, to determine whether the women had 'left' and the dates when leaving-related events had occurred. These events include (not necessarily in temporal order) the following: She moved out from Name; She moved the children out from her home

with Name; She moved to a group home, shelter or treatment center; Name kicked her out of the house; Name left her; Name moved out; She put Name out of the house; She asked Name to leave and he refused; She asked Name to leave and Name left but kept coming back; She asked Name to leave and Name did; She and Name separated; She hid from Name; She decided to leave Name; She told Name she was going to leave; She and Name had no further contact; Sexual relations with Name stop; She stopped speaking to Name; She broke up with Name; She broke up with Name, but they continued to have contact; She left Name temporarily; She and Name got a divorce; She and Name lived together but without any contact; She and Name reconciled but are living apart; Name died; She went to the hospital or jail; Name went to the hospital or jail; Name came to her house even though she asked Name to leave; She is trying to get an Order of Protection against Name; She got an Order of Protection. For each of the 705 women, using all available information, the first author determined the date of the end of the relationship.

Using the 'yrmoda' function in SPSS, we calculated the number of days since October 15,1582 (start of the Gregorian Calendar) for the date of each incident and the date of the end of the relationship. The difference between the yrmoda of the incident and the end of the relationship produces two variables: (1) the number of days an incident occurred before the end of the relationship and (2) the number of days an incident occurred after the end of the relationship. Two other variables, 'pursued' and 'days pursued,' represent whether or not the woman experienced a violent incident after the end of the relationship and the number of days after the end of the relationship that the most recent incident had occurred. Note that the definition of 'pursued' includes violence only. Some women were stalked, but did not experience a violent incident after the relationship ended.

Abuser's Controlling Behavior: Controlling behavior is a key symptom of male proprietariness (DeKeseredy et al., 2004; Wilson & Daly, 1992; 1993) and is a strong predictor of violence severity (Johnson, 1996). To measure this problem, the CWHRS used the five-item yes/no dichotomous 'Power and Control Scale' that was developed for the Canadian Violence Against Women Survey (Johnson, 1996; Johnson & Sacco, 1995). For the CWHRS sample, the reliability coefficient Cronbach's Alpha is .8164. The five items, introduced with 'In the past year, an intimate partner...', are as follows: 'Was jealous and didn't want you to talk to other men (women);' 'Tried to limit your contact with family or friends;' 'Insisted on knowing who are with and where you are at all times;' 'Called you names to put you down or make you feel bad;' and 'Prevented you from knowing about or having access to family income, even if you ask.' The family income question was not applicable to the 67 women (9.5%) who did not share a household income with an intimate partner. The abused and comparison groups did not differ in

having a shared family income, but Black/African-American women were more likely not to have a family income (12% versus 5%; Chi square= 7.786, df=1, p= .005), and Latina/Hispanic women were less likely not to have a family income (4% versus 11%; Chi square = 8.479; df= 1; p= .004). There was no difference for white or other women.

Score on the Power and Control scale is significantly correlated with both forced sex (Pearson's $r = .433$) and leaving ($r = .488$). This holds for all three racial/ethnic groups, Latina (.327 and .481), Black (.458 and .474) and white or other (.457 and .559).

Relationship with Name: The CWHRS, in contrast to many other studies, does not depend on 'marital status' to measure a woman's relationship to her partner. The variable, Relationship with Name, describes the relationship to the abusing (ex)partner (for the abused group) or to the partner a woman 'feels closest to' (for the comparison group). Women whose relationship to Name at the initial interview was 'current or ex-girlfriend' were the most likely to have left or tried to leave the relationship in the past year (65.8% of 462 women); Women who were 'current or ex-commonlaw' were a close second (60.4% of 48), followed by women who were 'current or former same-sex partners' (56.5% of 23). Women who were Name's 'current or ex-wife' were the least likely to have left or tried to leave in the past year (47.9% of 167). These differences are significant (Chi square= 16.688; df= 3; p=.001).

Women's relationship to Name makes no difference in the likelihood of forced sex. For example, the percentages of women who had experienced forced sex at the hands of a partner in the past year are: 27.3% (current or ex-girlfriend), 27.1% (current or ex-commonlaw), 21.7% (current or former same-sex), and 19.2% (current or ex-wife). Controlling for having left or tried to leave in the past year made no difference.

Social Support Network: The 12-item Social Support Network (SSN) scale was developed by the collaborators of the CWHRS to provide an instrument appropriate for measuring the social support network for adult women, particularly those challenged by poverty or abuse (Block, 2005). The scale's twelve items capture three aspects of informal social support: acceptance and support (five items), emergency help (four items) and access to resources (three items). The SSN has been widely used in studies conducted by other researchers, is archived in the Health and Social Instruments (HaPI) database and now exists in three languages: English, Spanish and Tagalog.

Mean SSN score is significantly ($t = 2.168$; $df = 689$; $p = .031$) lower for women who left or tried to leave (8.95) compared to women who did not (9.45), and also significantly ($t = 5.059$; $df = 699$; $p = .0001$) lower for women who had experienced forced sex (8.18) compared to women who did not (9.48). For example, of the 394 women scoring a 'perfect' 4 on the 'emergency help' subscale, only 20.1% had experienced forced sex,

compared to 40.4% of the 52 women who scored zero on emergency help.

FINDINGS

For over half (57%) of the women who had experienced violence in the past year, the relationship had not ended by the initial interview (see Table 2). Of the 208 women where the relationship had ended, 41% were pursued at least one day after the relationship ended, 17% experienced violence that day but not afterwards and 42% did not experience any violence the day the relationship ended or afterwards.⁶

Table II. Sample Frequencies: Women who were Pursued after the Relationship Ended

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
'Abused' group (partner violence or threat in past year)		
Relationship current as of the initial interview	284	56.9
Relationship former or "ex"	215	43.1
Total abused (100%)	499	
Missing information	1	
Abused women who left		
No violence the day relationship ended or afterward (not pursued)	87	40.7
Violence the same day but not after relationship ended (not pursued)	40	16.8
At least one incident after relationship ended (pursued)	87	40.7
Total (100%)	214	
Can't tell: End date missing	1	
Comparison group (no intimate partner violence in past year)		
Relationship current as of initial interview	177	86.3
Relationship former or "ex"	28	13.7
Total (100%)	205	

Temporal Relationship between Leaving & Forced Sex

The length of pursuit for the 86 pursued women ranged from two to 3,998 days (almost 11 years), with a mean of 299 days and a median of 121 days. Remember that length is 'censored.' A woman interviewed the day after she left would have zero chance of any post-leaving incident, so would have zero chance of being pursued. This censoring is partially controlled for, however, because the denominator of 'percent forced sex' is the total number of incidents. A fourth had been pursued 23 days or less as of the initial interview and a fourth had been pursued 335 days or longer. Incidents occurring long after the relationship had ended ranged from violent threats (e.g., ex-boyfriend came over wanting to know why they couldn't get back together. Threatened and scared her.), to forced sex (e.g., Children's father forced his way into apartment, raped her.), to serious injury. For example, one woman was admitted through Trauma with knife injuries resulting from an incident and another suffered head

⁶ Eighteen of the 85 pursued women experienced violence the day the relationship ended as well as later. Of the 183 women in the 'abused' group whose relationship had ended in the prior year, 54 (30%) experienced violence that day. Twenty-four women had ended their relationship before the prior year window, but were being violently pursued in the prior year. For these women, we do not know if they experienced violence the day the relationship ended.

injuries from being beaten with a phone.

Table 3 describes the temporal relationship between forced sex incidents and leaving. The 497 women for whom we have information told us about a total of 5,013 incidents, of which 1,023 (20.4%) included forced sex. The 3,067 incidents occurring to women whose relationship was current at the initial interview were more likely to include forced sex than the 1,926 incidents occurring to women whose relationship was former or ex (25.5% versus 12.5%). Table 3 shows the likelihood that an incident included forced sex, depending on when the incident happened relative to leaving.

Table III. Forced Sex & the Timing of Incident Relative to the End of the Relationship
(N = 1,926 Incidents)

Time Period Relative to the Date the Relationship with Name Ended	Total Number	Number Including Forced Sex	Percent Including Forced Sex
Pre-Leaving Incidents			
Nine to twelve months before (241-351 days)	131	24	18.3
Seven or eight months before (181-240 days)	167	15	9.0
Five or six months before (121-180 days)	235	37	15.7
Four months before (91-120 days)	174	37	21.3
Three months before (61-90 days)	244	28	11.5
Two months before (31-60 days)	253	29	11.5
7 to 30 days before	246	37	15.0
Less than a week before	80	10	12.5
Total Pre-Leaving Incidents	1,530	217	14.2
Same day as incident	59	7	11.9
Post-Leaving Incidents			
Less than a week after	19	4	21.1
7 to 30 days after	51	3	5.9
Two months after (61-60 days)	42	3	7.1
Three months after (61-90 days)	44	1	2.3
Four months after (91-120 days)	26	1	3.8
Five or six months after (121-180 days)	44	0	.0
Seven or eight months after (181-240 days)	54	1	1.9
Nine months or more after (241-3998 days)	57	4	7.0
Total Post-Leaving Incidents	337	17	5.0
Total incidents occurring to women who left	1,926	241	12.5
Incident by another partner, not Name	7	1	
Not pursued but end date missing	1	0	
Date of relationship missing	12	0	
Date of incident missing	4	0	
Total missing incidents	24	1	
Incidents occurring to women in current relationship	3,067	781	25.5
Total incidents	5,017	1,022	

Pre-Leaving Forced Sex

Overall, 14.2% of the 1,530 incidents occurring pre-leaving involved forced sex. There is no apparent relationship between forced sex and the timing of the incident prior to leaving. The highest probability that a pre-leaving incident would include forced sex was for incidents that happened four months before leaving (21.3%), which was less than the probability for women who had not left (25.5%).

Post-Leaving Forced Sex

Overall, 5% of the 337 incidents that occurred after leaving included forced sex. However, the 19 incidents that occurred within a week of leaving the relationship had a much higher likelihood of including forced sex (21.1%). Further, the 57 incidents occurring nine months or longer after the relationship ended were also relatively likely to include forced sex (7%).

Risk Factors for Post-Leaving Forced Sex

Of the 213 abused women who ended the relationship with the abuser, 127 (60%) did not experience violence after they left (were not pursued), 70 (33%) experienced violence but not forced sex and 16 (8%) experienced at least one incident that included forced sex.⁷ This indicates that forced sex sometimes, but not always, follows leaving. What are the risk factors for forced sex occurring after the relationship ends?

A series of cross-tabulations comparing the risk of a forced sex incident after leaving revealed the following significant factors: The number of incidents in the past year (Chi square= 10.660, df= 2; p=.031), whether Name was high on drugs in at least one incident in the past year (Chi square= 11.267, df=2; p=.004), whether Name was drunk in at least one incident in the past year (Chi square= 7.422, df=2; p=.024), whether she was high on drugs in at least one incident (Chi square= 10.403, df= 2; p=.006), whether she and Name had any children (Chi square= 14.542, df=2; p= .001), whether Name had ever threatened or used a weapon against her (Chi square= 6.215, df=2; p=.045), and whether Name had ever beaten her when she was pregnant (Chi square= 7.719; df= 2; p= .021).

None of the demographic variables (including racial/ethnic group, age, income, education, employment, or same-sex relationship) made any difference, but homeless women were significantly more at risk (Chi square= 6.278; df= 2; p= .043). Length of relationship was curvilinear, with the highest risk of post-leaving forced sex occurring when she and Name had been together less than a year or at least 10 years. Though one of the strongest zero-order risk factors was whether or not she had experienced forced sex by Name before she left or the day she left (Chi square= 15.019; df= 2; p= .001), it was also curvilinear—women who

⁷ One of the 214 women who left was pursued, but we do not know whether the incidents included forced sex.

had previously experienced forced sex were less likely to be pursued after leaving, but more likely to experience forced sex if pursued. No other factor was significant in zero-order crosstabulations, including Power and Control, her general health, her social support network, or her help-seeking (seeking counseling, medical help, or calling the police).

When post-leaving forced sex was regressed against the factors that had been significant in zero-order analysis, only two remained significant, whether she and Name had any children and whether Name had ever used or threatened to use a weapon against her. With these two independent variables, $r = .292$ and $r^2 = .076$. of the 76 women who had children by Name, 11.8% experienced forced sex after leaving, compared to 5.3% of the 132 women who did not have children by Name. Of the 130 women where Name had threatened or used a weapon against her, 10.0% experienced forced sex after leaving, compared to 3.7% of the 81 women where Name had not.

DISCUSSION

In CWHRS results, we hear the voices of 705 women in their complexity and detail. This paper focuses especially on the voices of those 214 abused women who left abusive partners and did not return, asking about experiences of forced sex, both before she left and after. What these women tell us is sometimes surprising and sometimes seems to be at variance with the extant literature on separation/divorce assault. Where the results vary from previous studies, the CWHRS sample may be the cause. The CWHRS sample is urban and the women lived in the catchment areas of hospitals and clinics with a high-risk population. The majority of CWHRS participants are economically challenged and belong to racial or ethnic minority groups. In fact, the CWHRS was specifically designed to yield a large enough sample of disadvantaged groups so that the results could overcome the bias of some previous studies where these groups were undersampled. Consequently, however, the results cannot be easily generalized to rural women, or to non-disadvantaged women.

In addition, unlike many other studies of intimate partner violence, the CWHRS sample includes all women with an intimate relationship—whether married or not, living together or not, same-sex or not. The literature indicates that women who are not married to the abuser are more likely to be socially excluded (Stets & Straus, 1990), that the police are less likely to provide effective social support or a criminal justice response (Alvi & Selbee, 1997; Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1989; Yllö & Straus, 1981), and that the abuser is more likely to use force if she leaves (Billingham, 1987; DeKeseredy et al., 2005). In fact, CWHRS results show that the 22 women leaving a marriage were more likely to be pursued (experience violence after leaving) than the 191 women leaving other kinds of intimate relationships (45.5% versus 39.8%). However, none of the 22 married women experienced forced sex after leaving, compared to

16 of the 191 other women (8.4%). In addition, we found no relationship between the score on the Social Support Network scale (SSN) and forced sex after leaving, or between the SSN score and relationship (marriage versus other intimate relationship).

As well, the CWHRS was designed to collect information from the point of view and the experiences of women. It tells us what situations put women at higher risk, but it provides very limited information about the point of view or experiences of the abusive partner. CWHRS results cannot provide insight into abuser motivation (DeKeseredy et al., 2004), which must be “acquired through invading and critically examining the social constructions of” sexually abusive people (Scully, 1990, p. 4). On the other hand, the CWHRS is in the tradition of past feminist research on women, which provides rich insight into male power and control, male peer support and pornography (Bergen, 1996, 2006; DeKeseredy, et al., 2006; Finkelhor & Yllö, 1985; Russell, 1990, 1998; Sev’er, 2002). Certainly, it is important and necessary to listen to women’s voices because it “may be the only way to describe a complex reality for which we have few names” (Mahoney, 1991, p. 41).

Given these caveats, however, CWHRS data convey to us the detailed and complex experiences of a large, comprehensive group of abused women. What do they tell us about leaving and the risk of forced sex? First, even though forced sex and leaving may be correlated in the aggregate, it is important to look at their temporal relationship. The 3,067 abuse incidents occurring to the 284 women who did not leave were more likely to include forced sex than the 1,926 incidents occurring to the 214 women who left. Of the women who left, 52 had experienced at least one forced sex incident before she left (or the same day), from one to 45 incidents. Eight of the 52 also experienced at least one forced sex incident after they left. Of the 161 women who left and had not experienced forced sex pre-leaving, eight experienced forced sex after leaving.

This may explain why there is a curvilinear relationship between past forced sex and forced sex after leaving. Most of the 52 women (71%) who had experienced forced sex before leaving were not pursued. Fewer, though still a majority, of the 161 women who had not experienced forced sex before leaving were not pursued (56%). This could indicate that forced sex can be one of the factors that frightens women enough so that they seek extra protection from abusers when they leave. Indeed, women who had experienced forced sex before leaving were significantly (Chi square= 10.370; df= 1; p .001) more likely to have sought medical care and advice after an incident. If women were pursued, however, the pursuit was more likely to include forced sex if they had been victimized by this harm before they left (15.4% versus 5.0%).

Other puzzling results are the lack of a significant multi-variate relationship with Power and Control or SSN, even though the zero-order relationships are strong. It appears that other factors over-ride the influence of Name’s controlling behavior and her social support network.

One of these factors is the presence of children. This factor is often commented upon by advocates, but seldom appears in empirical analysis. If Name has access to her via their children, then she is vulnerable to forced sex. Fortunately, recent programs have been developed to create a 'Safe Place' for non-custodial parents to visit their children, while custodial parents are protected from harm.

Obviously, more research on separation/divorce sexual assault is needed and will be done soon. Still, no matter what research methods or sites are selected, it is equally important to develop and test theories of separation/divorce sexual assault because, again, there is a lack of theoretical work on this type of woman abuse. Certainly, "the purpose of all theory is to understand and explain" (Einstadter & Henry, 1995, p. 12). In addition to serving as conceptual tools that help us make sense of data, theories are practical. They can help us guide the development of effective policies that prevent the harms uncovered by the CWHRS and other studies of violence against women.

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