Offending Patterns Among Domestic Violence Offenders in Idaho

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Planning, Grants & Research
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ISAC thanks the Bureau of Criminal Identification at the Idaho State Police for facilitating our access to data from the Idaho Criminal History Repository.
Communication & Audience

• Target audience: mostly us (ISAC)
  • But also...BCI, Idaho stakeholders with an interest in DV research, and those interested in using criminal history records for research

• Report posted to ISAC website August 2022

• Alerts sent out through ISAC and ISP mailing lists; ISP social media posts

• Including results in more general ISAC presentations in 2022-2023
Research Question #1

What is the recidivism rate among Idaho’s domestic violence offenders?

ISAC conducted survival analyses, which are statistical models that identify how many offenders were arrested for new crimes after their first DV arrest, what subsequent crimes DV offenders were being arrested for, and how much time passed between arrests.

- Total 5-year recidivism rate (any new charge): 39.8%
- 5-year DV recidivism rate (new DV charge): 17.4%
- Percentage of recidivism events that occurred within 1 year: 40.3%
Research Question #2

What are key characteristics of DV offenders, and do they predict recidivism?

ISAC’s survival analyses also included demographic and criminal history indicators. Some factors that predict whether an individual might be arrested for additional DV crimes are:

1. **Offender sex**: Males were nearly twice as likely as females to be arrested for multiple DV crimes.

2. **Offender age**: The younger the offender was at the time of their first DV arrest, the more likely they were to be arrested for multiple DV crimes (there was a 3-percentage point increase in likelihood of rearrest for each 1-year decrease in age).

3. **Offender criminal history**: DV offenders who had been arrested for a different violent crime before their first DV arrest were 55% more likely to be arrested for multiple DV crimes than those who had not been previously arrested for a violent crime. Additionally, DV offenders who had been previously arrested for a drug/alcohol crime were 36% more likely to be arrested for multiple DV crimes than those who had not.
Research Question #2

Figure 3.
Roughly half of DV offenders who committed non-DV crimes, regardless of crime type, were charged with their first non-DV crime before their first DV arrest, and half after or simultaneously with their first DV arrest.

NOTE: The “none” category represents offenders who only had DV charges in their criminal history records.
Research Question #3

What is the impact of Idaho’s felony enhancement for repeat DV offenders?
ISAC attempted to answer this question by comparing arrest charges to disposed charges in the criminal history data. However, missing data impeded efforts to come to any firm conclusions.

- The number of disposed DV charges (40,359) equaled about half the total number of DV charges (80,156) in the data set.
- Percentage of disposed DV charges that resulted in a conviction: 45.5%
- Average number of DV charges per person: 1.5
Research Question #4

Is criminal history data a suitable data source for this type of study?

In addition to the three substantive questions above, ISAC also aimed to evaluate the utility of criminal history data for use in a recidivism study that also included measures of justice system processes. For answering some questions, the data performed well. For others, it fell short.

The criminal history data was appropriate for use in survival analyses, which calculate recidivism rates and identify predictors that increase or decrease an individual’s likelihood of recidivism. Included in those analyses were demographics (age, sex, and race) as well as two measures of criminal history that have been shown by previous research to be linked to DV offending (prior violent charges and prior drug charges). However, only one definition of recidivism (rearrest) could be used.
Data quality was good in some respects but did have some drawbacks. First, demographic data was relatively reliable. Offender names exhibited the most inconsistency, mostly due to name changes and offender use of aliases. Offender sex was the most consistently recorded data point. Others (race, date of birth) fell somewhere in between. An important note here is that the race indicator included Hispanic as an option, whereas in other criminal justice data sets it is captured in a separate ethnicity variable. This likely led to Hispanic offenders being severely undercounted in the ID CHR data (only 0.1% of DV offenders were categorized as Hispanic) and White offenders being overcounted.

While there is reason to believe that missing arrest data is a small problem that is getting smaller as more agencies transition to livescan fingerprint submission, it is possible that a small percentage of offenders who are cited and released (as opposed to being booked into jail), may not be included in the ID CHR data. This is especially problematic for research on crimes that are typically misdemeanors, such as domestic violence.
The biggest limitation of ID CHR data in a research context is the inability to follow any single charge from arrest to final disposition, as well as the extent of missing disposition data. Part of this problem could be due to the structure of the data file released to ISAC for this particular project. More research is needed to determine if the data could be structured differently in order to facilitate different types of analyses. However, the extent of missing disposition data is a problem that severely limits researchers’ ability to draw conclusions about how the justice system is functioning.
Questions?

For Idaho justice system research and data, visit our website:

isp.idaho.gov/pgr/sac/

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