

AN EXAMINATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF  
MARITAL VIOLENCE HELD BY ADVOCATE-COUNSELORS  
WHO WORK IN EMERGENCY SHELTERS FOR BATTERED WOMEN

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This paper presents a survey of 121 advocate-counselors who work in shelters for battered women in North Carolina and Virginia. Fifty four percent of the subjects viewed the husband as primarily responsible for marital violence, 38% of the sample considered the husband completely responsible, and 8% regarded the husband and wife as equally responsible. In all, 62% of the respondents believed both spouses have some role in marital violence.

Advocate-counselors who viewed the husband and wife as sharing responsibility for marital violence were significantly more likely to believe an abusive husband could learn to stop being violent and to accept a battered woman's goal of remaining married. Advocate-counselors

who believed the husband was completely responsible were significantly more likely to encourage a wife to leave her husband even if she wanted to remain married to him and to believe abusive husbands can never learn to control their violent behavior.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

Although once a virtually ignored topic, marital violence has become an important social, legal, therapeutic, and research issue during the last 15 years (Gelles & Cornell, 1985). A recent national survey estimated that approximately 1.8 million wives are physically assaulted by their husbands each year (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). A primary focus of recent attention has been to propose strategies to remedy the problem of conjugal violence and to provide help for wives in violent marriages (Walker, 1984).

One common response to the issue has been the emergence of organizations which provide temporary emergency shelter programs and other services to women in abusive marriages. These shelter programs provide a safe haven for a woman to escape from marital violence and make decisions about her future. The need for shelters for battered women has been well documented (Dobash, Dobash & Wives, 1977-1978; Fields, 1976; Lynch & Norris, 1977-1978; Martin, 1976; Roberts, 1981; Straus, 1977; Straus, et al., 1980; Walker, 1979). Roberts' (1981) national survey revealed that in 1980 approximately 100,000 abused women used the services of the 300 emergency shelters that

existed in the United States that year. Since 1980, the number of women's shelters has grown even larger (Walker, 1984).

Most emergency shelter programs are private, non-profit local service organizations formed by concerned community citizens. In addition to emergency shelter, most organizations offer telephone counseling and crisis intervention services, group and individual counseling, information and referral, and advocacy for women in abusive marriages (Roberts, 1981).

One issue facing shelter organizations has been a debate regarding theoretical explanations for, or perceptions of, marital violence (Walker, 1984). A variety of theoretical perspectives have been developed (Gelles & Straus, 1979). Of particular interest has been the possible relationship between the perception of marital violence held by advocate counselors and the services which they provide to both individuals and couples in abusive marriages (Erchak, 1983; Gulotta & de Cataldo Newburger, 1983; Walker, 1984).

## Review of Literature

Perceptions of marital violence range on a continuum on which at one endpoint the wife is seen as completely responsible for the violence to the other endpoint where the husband is seen as completely responsible, while at the midpoint of the continuum the spouses share equal responsibility for marital violence (Lynch & Norris, 1977-1978). Lynch and Norris have suggested that the perceptions of service providers would cluster around the extremes and midpoint of this continuum and have described the three distinguishable views.

Perception #1 (wife completely responsible) describes the viewpoint of those who attribute total responsibility to the wife for violence inflicted upon her. This perception views the wife as the one provoking the violence by acting in a manner which she should know would cause her husband to lose control. Further, this view suggests that she likes or needs the abuse, or else she would leave her husband (Lynch & Norris, 1977-1978).

Perception #2 (couple responsible), at the midpoint of the continuum, interprets violence as a result of the husband and wife being "caught in a vicious circle of mutual responsibility for the violence" (Lynch & Norris, 1977-1978, p. 556). This point of view focuses on the

couple's interactions which support and maintain violence and on the social system contexts that affect both partners (Giles-Sims, 1983; Lynch & Norris).

At the other endpoint of the continuum, Perception #3 (husband completely responsible) holds that the husband is fully responsible for all violence which he inflicts on his wife. This view includes psychological and social explanations for violence: psychological factors include the husband's low frustration tolerance and his emotional pathology; social factors include the patriarchal nature of society and its failure to take legal sanctions against marital violence (Lynch & Norris, 1977-1978; Walker, 1979).

Current theoretical debate has focused on Perceptions #2 (couple responsible) and #3 (husband completely responsible) (Walker, 1984). Both of these views reject the idea that battered women want abuse because of masochistic needs (Perception #1 or wife completely responsible) and both consider societal factors as an important influence in explaining marital violence (Gelles, 1980). Proponents of both perspectives, the couple responsible and the husband completely responsible, have argued that their respective perceptions would be the

most beneficial to service providers who work with the battered women who seek help from emergency shelters.

Battered Wives, Martin's (1976) powerful chronicle, has been most influential in promoting Perception #3 (husband completely responsible) (Walker, 1981). Martin urges acceptance of the view that battering men are the sole perpetrators and cause of marital violence toward women. This orientation devotes much attention to the personal characteristics assumed to be related to the violent behavior of abusive husbands. Traits considered associated with batterers are jealousy, low self-esteem, a dual personality, aggressiveness, depression, and low tolerance for stress (Bernard & Bernard, 1984; Walker, 1979, 1984). Sexism, on the part of the husband and the broader society, is also seen as a primary underlying cause of wife battering (Dobash & Dobash, 1981).

The husband completely responsible perception (also labeled the feminist perspective) regards battered wives as victims of their husbands (Dobash, et al., 1977-1978; Hilberman & Munson, 1977-1978; Keller, 1982; Martin, 1976; Walker, 1979, 1984). It emphasizes that abused women are in no way responsible for the violence in their marriage. "It is entirely possible that any (emphasis mine) woman may find herself in a battering relationship by accident"

(Walker, 1979, p. 22). Proponents of the feminist view stress this perspective is necessary in the treatment of violent marriages (Stark & Flitcraft, 1983; Taggart, 1985; Walker, 1981).

The second principal approach to explaining marital violence is the couple responsible or systemic perspective supported by Cook and Frantz-Cook (1984), Erchak (1983), Giles-Sims (1983), Gulotta & de Cataldo Newburger (1983), Straus (1973), and Traicoff (1982), among others. Rather than attributing violence solely to the husband, this perspective views both partners as responsible for violent patterns in their marriage. Spouses are not seen as behaving independently of each other; rather, both partners are seen as having a role in accelerating and maintaining the abusiveness (Erchak, 1983; Margolin, 1979; Straus, 1973). This is not to imply that the wife wants to be abused. However, women may "unwittingly interact with men during certain vulnerable times (to) help ignite the violence" (Hanks & Rosenbaum, 1977, p. 306) or they may unintentionally reinforce the violent behavior of their husband (Straus, 1973).

Rather than a focus on either individual, the specific interactions associated with violence and the relationship in general are the target of this

perspective. Cook & Frantz-Cook (1984) contend that "from what we know about relationship systems, it is almost impossible not to see that something very powerful within the marital and family system serves to maintain the recurrent cycle of violence" (p. 84). "In treatment, then, the family system, rather than the individual battered female or battering male, is seen as the basic unit. By focusing on the family system and orchestrating change within the system, change occurs in the individual members of the system" (Traicoff, 1982, p. 109).

Yet despite the frequent claim of the importance played by these perceptions on the counseling performed by service providers in shelters, no research exists regarding this issue. Published descriptions of the treatment methods used with abusive couples vary widely (e.g., Anderson, 1984; Cook & Frantz-Cook, 1984; de Shazer, 1982; Geller & Wasserstrom, 1984; Gelles, 1982; Minuchin, 1984; Saunders, 1979; Walker, 1984). These treatment strategies, however, have the following commonalities: a) a belief by the counselor that the couple can develop a nonviolent relationship; b) an acceptance of the client's goal of developing a nonviolent marriage; and c) treatment plans for both marriage partners whenever possible. What perceptions exist among



shelter advocate-counselors and how a service provider's perception of marital violence is related to these variables considered important in the treatment of abusive couples is not known.

The present study was designed to address these two voids. Advocate-counselors were surveyed in an attempt to answer two research questions: 1) what perceptions of marital violence actually exist among the advocate-counselors who work for emergency women's shelters; and, 2) is a service provider's perception of marital violence related to the counseling variables deemed important when working with battered wives who wish to remain married. Since emergency shelters are an important societal response to the needs of abused women, research aimed at investigating factors related to the effectiveness and improvement of services provided by these organizations could greatly benefit efforts to help alleviate this serious problem. If perceptions relate to the type assistance advocate-counselors offer abused women, shelter officials could use this knowledge to better design training programs which foster a perspective most helpful for aiding their clients.

## Rationale and Hypotheses

The first objective of this project was to examine what perceptions of marital violence were held by advocate-counselors who work in shelters for battered women.

Hypothesis 1. Perceptions of marital violence by advocate-counselors in emergency women's shelters will be equally distributed along the continuum suggested by Lynch and Norris.

Two five position questions based on the theoretical positions described by Lynch and Norris (1977-1978) were used to rate the perceptions of marital violence held by each service provider.

The second objective of this project was to determine if the perception of marital violence held by service providers influences the manner in which they approach the task of working with battered women seeking assistance from emergency shelters.

Hypothesis 2

No relationship exists between an advocate-counselor's perception of marital violence

and his or her belief that violence can end in an abusive marriage.

In addition to providing safe refuge for women who wish to escape a violent marriage, the primary goal of shelters is to help abused women explore their options and enable them to make the best decisions for their future (North Carolina Council on the Status of Women, 1978; Roberts, 1984). This project was designed to examine whether a service provider's perception of marital violence was related to variables important when counseling a woman who wishes to remain married and wants to establish a nonviolent relationship with her husband.

Published descriptions of the treatment methods used with abusive couple vary widely (e.g., Cook & Frantz-Cook, 1984; Geller & Walsh, 1977-1978; Geller & Wasserstrom, 1984; Gelles, 1982; Minuchin, 1984; Saunders, 1979; Walker, 1984). These treatment strategies, however, have the following commonalities: a) a belief by the counselor that the couple can develop a nonviolent relationship, b) an acceptance of the client's goal of developing a nonviolent marriage; and, c) treatment plans for both marriage partners whenever possible. The present research examined whether or not an advocate-counselor's perception

of marital violence was related the variables frequently associated with counseling abused women who wish to develop a nonviolent marriage.

### Hypothesis 3

No relationship exists between an advocate-counselor's perception of marital violence and his or her support for a battered wife's desire to remain married.

Walker (1984), stressing that counselors working in shelters for abused women should never restrict a client's options, explains that the feminist philosophy allows "the battered woman the option of trying everything she needs to do before giving up a relationship that has provided her both pleasure and pain " (p. 121). Cook and Frantz-Cook (1984) explain that the systemic approach also affirms that "men can learn how to control their violent behavior" (p. 87) and that "couples can be taught ways to reduce and control dysfunctional anger and violence in their relationship" (p. 87). Therefore, both perspectives are described as endorsing the notions a) that abusive couples can stop the violence in their relationship and b) that service providers should support a woman's

decision to work towards a nonviolent marriage rather than encourage her to leave her husband.

If an advocate-counselor believes the couple cannot develop a nonviolent relationship, then the abused woman may be advised to leave her husband even if she wishes to remain married. Such advice does not serve to meet the goal of the abused woman.

## Chapter II

### Sample

The population of interest in this study was advocate-counselors who work in emergency shelters for women in abusive marriages. Initially this study sought to survey all the advocate-counselors at 21 randomly selected North Carolina shelters. Approximately 387 volunteer and paid advocate-counselors worked with these shelters when contacted in January, 1986.

Each of the directors of these 21 shelters received a letter from the author which briefly described the project. The letter requested the director's permission to allow advocate-counselors with their shelter to complete questionnaires for this study. Eighteen shelter directors responded, each expressing an interest in participating in the study. The total number of active advocate-counselors working with these shelters was 354.

Representatives from each of these shelters received a packet of materials which included questionnaires for each advocate-counselor on staff. After receiving the questionnaires, 11 shelters decided not to participate in the study. Approximately 110 advocate-counselors worked with the remaining seven shelters.

Due to the high withdrawal rate, a shelter in Virginia was contacted with a request to participate in the study. Thirty-six questionnaires were completed from the approximately 40 advocate-counselors who worked with this shelter in March, 1986.

A total of 121 advocate-counselors from North Carolina and Virginia completed and returned questionnaires for this project. This represents a 78% response rate of the advocate-counselors in the participating shelters. However, of the number of advocate-counselors working in the total of 22 shelters contacted, only 121, or 28%, returned questionnaires. (Table 1 presents the demographic information collected from respondents. Appendix 1 describes the low response rate and Appendix 2 discusses a possible response bias in this study).

Comparisons were conducted among data collected from advocate-counselors at the participating shelters and responses were generally consistent among the eight groups of respondents, including the Virginia sample. Thus, the Virginia group of advocate-counselors was included in all results reported in this paper.

TABLE 1

General Description of Advocate-Counselors n=121


---

	<u>MALE</u>		<u>FEMALE</u>	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Marital Status:</b>				
Never married	6	50.0	40	37.7
Married	4	33.4	44	41.6
Separated	1	8.3	5	4.7
Divorced	0		14	13.2
Widowed	1	8.3	3	2.8
<b>Education:</b>				
Less than 12 Years	2	15.4	2	2.0
High School Graduate	0		13	12.6
13-15 Years	3	23.1	34	33.4
College Graduate	3	23.1	17	16.6
Post Graduate	5	38.4	36	35.4
<b>Race:</b>				
White	9	69.2	79	74.6
Black	3	23.1	24	22.6
Other	1	7.7	3	2.8
<b>Advocate Status:</b>				
Paid	4	30.8	26	25.2
Volunteer	9	69.2	77	74.8
<b>Age:</b>				
mean	32.2 years		33.5 years	
range	20-53 years		19-67 years	
<b>Months as Advocate:</b>				
mean	21.4		18.5	
range	1-48		0-84	

---



### Procedure

A questionnaire was developed by this author specifically to test the the hypotheses of this study (Appendix 3 includes a copy of the questionnaire). The instrument was pretested in a telephone survey in October, 1985. Twenty-two advocate-counselors in North Carolina were included in the pretest and comments about the questionnaire were requested from the respondents. Feedback from subjects in the pretest was incorporated in the development of the final copy of the instrument.

Forty-three organizations in North Carolina operate emergency shelters for battered women (North Carolina Council on the Status of Women, 1984). Twenty-one of these shelters were selected at random to be included in this study. One North Carolina shelter was not considered for selection since it was included in the pretest of the questionnaire.

Each of the directors of the 21 shelters was contacted by mail to request their cooperation and participation in the study. Those interested in participating were asked to provide the following information: name and address of the shelter, number of paid and volunteer advocate-counselors, and the name of a contact person for future correspondence.

Participating shelters received a packet of materials, including questionnaires for each active advocate-counselor, instructions about distributing and collecting questionnaires, and a postage-paid envelope to return completed questionnaires. One contact person was appointed by the director of each shelter to coordinate the distribution and collection of questionnaires with their organization. Since all shelters reported conducting monthly meetings for advocate-counselors, the instructions to the contact person suggested that the questionnaires be distributed at the February, 1986 advocate meeting if possible.

Three weeks after receiving the questionnaires, the contact person received a follow-up letter which included a reminder of the deadline date for returning all materials. Also, shelter representatives were contacted by telephone throughout the project to monitor questionnaire distribution.

The respondents in this study were informed that participation was completely voluntary. Anonymity of respondents was protected since no names, addresses, or social security numbers were requested on the questionnaire.

Several unstructured interviews were conducted with directors and advocate-counselors of shelters in North Carolina in addition to the questionnaire. Information from these interviews was used to help interpret data and better describe those advocate-counselors who were contacted but chose not to participate in the study.

## Chapter III

### Results

Hypothesis 1. Perceptions of marital violence by advocate-counselors in emergency women's shelters will be equally distributed along the continuum suggested by Lynch and Norris.

Research question: What is the predominant perception of marital violence among advocates who work in shelters for battered women?

Lynch & Norris (1977-1978) have described perceptions of marital violence as ranging on a continuum where responsibility for violence is attributed completely to the husband at one endpoint and attributed completely to the wife at the other endpoint. The midpoint of the continuum describes the perception that marital violence is the equal responsibility of both the husband and wife. The first objective of this study was to describe the perception of marital violence held by advocate-counselors who work in shelters for battered women.

Two questions, based on the theoretical positions described by Lynch and Norris, were used to assess advocates' perceptions of responsibility for marital violence. Both questions had five-point rating scales which advocates used to describe who they viewed as

usually being responsible when wife abuse occurs. The two questions were:

People have different opinions about who is responsible for physical abuse in a marriage. In your opinion who is usually responsible when wife abuse occurs? (please circle the appropriate letter)

- a. THE WIFE COMPLETELY
- b. PRIMARILY THE WIFE
- c. THE HUSBAND AND THE WIFE EQUALLY
- d. PRIMARILY THE HUSBAND
- e. THE HUSBAND COMPLETELY

and

On the scale below, think of a score of 1 as meaning that the wife is completely responsible for the abuse, and a score of 5 as meaning that the husband is completely responsible for the abuse. What score between 1 and 5 comes closest to the way you feel? (circle one)

WIFE  
COMPLETELY  
RESPONSIBLE

HUSBAND  
COMPLETELY  
RESPONSIBLE

1

2

3

4

5

The correlation between ratings by respondents on the two questions was .676 ( $p < .001$ ). As such, for convenience and consistency, the first of the two perception questions was used in all calculations presented in this study (See Table 2 for a presentation of answers of the respondents).

TABLE 2

Responses to the Two Perception of Marital Violence  
Questions

---

People have different opinions about who is responsible for physical abuse in a marriage. In your opinion who is usually responsible when wife abuse occurs? (please circle the appropriate letter)

	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
a. THE WIFE COMPLETELY	0	0.0
b. PRIMARILY THE WIFE	0	0.0
c. THE HUSBAND AND THE WIFE EQUALLY	10	8.4
d. PRIMARILY THE HUSBAND	64	53.8
e. THE HUSBAND COMPLETELY	45	37.8

and

On the scale below, think of a score of 1 as meaning that the wife is completely responsible for the abuse, and a score of 5 as meaning that the husband is completely responsible for the abuse. What score between 1 and 5 comes closest to the way you feel? (circle one)

	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
WIFE COMPLETELY RESPONSIBLE		
1	0	0.0
2	0	0.0
3	13	11.2
4	59	50.9
HUSBAND COMPLETELY RESPONSIBLE		
5	44	37.9

---

Chi-square analysis of the rating of advocate-counselors in this study indicated that respondents statistically more often reported the belief that the husband is primarily responsible when wife abuse occurs ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 37.83; p < .001$ ). More than half (53.8%) of this sample consider the husband primarily responsible, 37.8% view the husband as completely responsible, and 8.4% believe the husband and wife are equally responsible. In all, 62.2% viewed the husband and wife as sharing some responsibility for marital violence. None regarded the wife as primarily or completely responsible.

Advocates were also asked to report their opinion of responsibility for seven categories of violence: the husband throwing something at the wife, the husband pushing the wife, the husband slapping the wife, the husband hitting the wife, the husband beating the wife, the husband threatening to use a gun or knife, and the husband using a gun or knife on the wife. The relationship between a respondent's rating of perception of marital violence and rating of responsibility for each of the seven categories was highly significant ( $p < .001$ ) with Pearson correlations ranging from .377 to .501.

Ratings of responsibility for the seven categories demonstrated a small, nonsignificant trend of viewing the

husband as increasingly responsible as the severity of violence increases. (See Table 3)



TABLE 3

## Ratings of Responsibility for Wife Abuse

---

<u>Perception:</u>	The Wife Completely	Primarily The Wife	The Husband and Wife Equally	Primarily The Husband	The Husband Completely
Overall self rating			8.3%	52.9%	37.2%
Husband:					
throwing something at the wife	.8%	.8%	6.6%	30.6%	61.2%
pushing the wife			5.0%	36.4%	58.7%
slapping the wife			4.1%	28.9%	66.9%
hitting the wife			5.0%	19.0%	76.0%
beating the wife			2.5%	20.7%	76.9%
threatening the wife with a gun or knife			1.7%	17.4%	81.0%
using a gun or knife against the wife			1.7%	17.5%	80.8%

---

## Hypothesis 2

No relationship exists between an advocate-counselor's perception of marital violence and his or her belief that violence can end in an abusive marriage.

Research Question: Is perception of marital violence related to an advocate's belief that a husband can learn to control his violent behavior with his wife?

Six scenarios describing hypothetical violent couples were presented to advocate-counselors (See Appendix 3). After each scenario, respondents were asked if they thought the husband could learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife. One half of the respondents indicated they thought the husband could not learn to control his violence in at least one of the hypothetical scenarios.

A significant relationship exists between an advocate's perception of marital violence and an advocate's belief that an abusive husband can learn to control his violence towards his wife ( $\chi^2_{(2)}=11.23; p<.005$ ) As shown in Table 3, the more the husband is viewed as responsible for marital violence, the more likely an advocate is to believe he cannot control his behavior. Thus, hypothesis two was rejected.

TABLE 4

Relationship Between Advocate-Counselors' Perception of  
 Wife Abuse and Belief That Abusive Husbands  
 Can Learn to Control Violence in Their Marriage

---

<u>PERCEPTION</u>	CAN CONTROL		CANNOT CONTROL VIOLENCE	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Equal Responsibility	7	78	2	22
Primarily The Husband	35	59	24	41
Completely The Husband	12	30	28	70
TOTAL	54	50	54	50

---

### Hypothesis Three.

No relationship exists between an advocate-counselor's perception of marital violence and his or her support for a battered wife's desire to remain married.

Research Question: Some battered women who seek assistance from shelters wish to remain married to their husband and want help in ending marital violence. Are advocates likely to encourage these women instead to end their marriage? Is support of a woman's goal of remaining married related to an advocate's perception of marital violence?

Sixty-two percent of the advocates surveyed report they do support a woman's goal to remain married and work to end the violence in her marriage. Thirty-six percent report they would not support this goal but rather would encourage the woman to leave her husband.

Again, perception of marital violence is related to this variable. The more an advocate views the husband as responsible for marital violence, the more likely the advocate will encourage the woman to leave her husband even when the wife wants to remain married ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 8.82$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

TABLE 5

Relationship of Perception of Marital Violence and  
Support of Client's Goal to Remain Married to Abusive  
Her Husband

---

<u>Perception of Responsibility</u>	Support		Encourage to Leave	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Equal	9	90.0	1	10.0
Primarily Husband	44	69.8	19	30.2
Completely Husband	21	47.7	23	52.3

---

As might be expected, a strong correlate of support for a battered wife's goal to remain married is the belief that a man can learn to control the violence against his wife. Advocates believing that men cannot learn to stop their violent behavior toward their wives were much more likely to encourage a woman to leave her husband against her wishes ( $r=.336$ ;  $p<.001$ ).

### Summary of Results

Increasingly, marital violence has been recognized as a serious and widespread problem. At least 18% of all American marriages are estimated to have had at least one incident of severe violence between partners (Straus, et al., 1980). To help women in abusive relationships, organizations nationwide have established shelters which provide temporary housing and other services needed by abused women.

Shelters describe their programs as offering a variety of services to meet the needs of abused women. Some women seek help from shelters because they want to end a marriage which has been unsafe and painful for them. Others wish to remain married but are seeking ways to rid the violence from their relationship with their husband. This project has focused on the services provided by shelter advocate-counselors to wives wanting help in developing a nonviolent marriage with a husband who has assaulted her.

Various treatment strategies have been described as helpful for such spouses seeking a nonviolent relationship (e.g., Cook & Frantz-Cook, 1984; Geller & Wasserstrom, 1984; Gelles, 1982; Minuchin, 1984; Saunders, 1977; Walker, 1984). These strategies all share at least three

commonalities: a) a belief by the counselor that the couple can develop a nonviolent relationship, b) a counselor's acceptance of the client's goal of developing a nonviolent marriage; and, c) treatment plans for both marriage partners whenever possible. This research has examined whether perceptions of marital violence held by an advocate-counselor were related to these variables when working with women to develop a nonviolent relationship with her husband.

Results from this sample of advocate-counselors have demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between perception of marital violence and two of these counseling variables. Advocate-counselors who view the husband and wife as sharing responsibility for violence were most likely to a) accept a woman's goal of remaining married and b) believe an abusive husband can learn to control his violence towards his wife. However, advocate-counselors who consider the husband alone as responsible for marital violence are more likely to encourage a woman to end her marriage against her wishes and to believe abusive husbands sometimes can never learn to control his violent behavior.



## Chapter IV

### Summary, Discussion, and Conclusions

Perception of marital violence is presently an issue of debate in the treatment and assistance provided to abused women seeking help from emergency women's shelters. Two different perspectives have emerged among counselors and theorists working in the area of marital violence. The feminist perspective interprets marital violence as completely the responsibility of the husband. The couple responsible perspective views both husband and wife as having some involvement and responsibility for violence in a marriage.

While the issue of perception has received considerable theoretical attention, no published research has examined the perceptions of counselors who work for shelters for battered women. This project was designed to address this research void by conducting a study of counselors' perceptions and the relationship between perceptions and the services they provide to the clients they serve.

Based on the findings reported in this study and interviews with advocates and directors of shelters for battered women, perception of marital violence is associated with different treatment approaches and

beliefs. The feminist perspective is closely associated with legal remedies for conjugal violence; the couple responsible perspective appears to rely on counseling as the principle solution.

Advocates espousing a feminist point of view (both questionnaire respondents and persons interviewed who did not complete a questionnaire) focused on the criminal aspect of marital violence. From a legal perspective, an abusive husband is the perpetrator and criminal while the the abused wife is a victim of a crime. Legally, when wife abuse occurs, the husband is the guilty party and the wife innocent.

Early in the movement to help battered women, improved legal protection was identified as an important need for women in violent marriages (North Carolina Council on the Status of Women, 1978). Groups associated with the movement have been instrumental in the promotion of stronger governmental legislation to facilitate the arrest and prosecution of abusive husbands.

Persons holding a husband completely responsible or feminist perspective in this study explained that legal considerations strongly influence their philosophy of marital violence and their treatment approach to the women

they serve. For example, one shelter director with this perspective wrote that wife abuse is:

a difficult, although simple problem in our society. Anyone who assaults, hits, strikes or threatens another person is guilty of a crime in this country. Any attempts to blame the victims of assaults are inappropriate. This is the basic premise of our agency.

Another director explained that:

Our organization believes that all forms of violence are against the law and therefore, totally unacceptable. We also believe that batterers, the perpetrators of crime, are responsible for their violence, not battered women, the victims of crime.

A third shelter director, commenting on the questionnaire used in this study, remarked:

The questionnaire itself would be very damaging to the efforts of programs for domestic violence in this state. The questions tend to suggest that the place for blame in violent relationships lie (sic) with someone other than the person choosing to be violent. If you're robbed because you walk through Central Park, it's not your fault but the blame resides with the thief.

From a legal perspective, the remedy involves separating the victim from the attacker and prosecuting the guilty party. When violence is severe, respondents viewing the husband as completely responsible also most often recommended that the husband be arrested rather than

receive counseling. Advocate-counselors who viewed the husband as completely responsible were also most likely to encourage a woman to end her marriage even if the wife wanted to continue living with her husband. In interviews, advocate-counselors with this perspective expressed a sense of failure when abused women chose to continue her marriage with her husband. Since the husband is presumed to be completely responsible, removing him from the scene solves the problem.

In contrast, advocate-counselors in this sample who viewed the woman as sharing some of the responsibility for wife abuse regard marital violence as a problem of family dysfunction rather than as primarily a legal problem. These advocates also recognized that assault is a criminal act and believed violence between people is unacceptable. Yet, according to these advocates, to view marital violence as a simple criminal act overlooks the relationship that exists between a husband and wife. As one advocate with this perspective explained, the motivation behind a theft in Central Park is much different than violence between spouses in a dissatisfying, argumentative marriage.

This group of advocate-counselors explained that marital violence must be understood by examining aspects

of a couple's relationship. Specifically, these advocates discussed poor conflict resolution, unresolved marital issues, jealousy, drug and alcohol abuse, and poor management of anger between spouses as some relationship factors commonly related to marital violence.

These advocates noted that many women who seek help from shelters do want to remain married and eventually return to their husbands. Without attention to these problems in the marriage, violence can continue once the wife returns. As such, advocates viewing the couple as sharing responsibility usually thought counseling was the best solution for marital violence if the woman wants to remain married.

Advocates viewing the husband and wife as both responsible also described several drawbacks to legal remedies for spouse abuse. First, police are sometimes hesitant or even unable to arrest an abusive husband, particularly if they do not witness any violence. Second, wives frequently drop criminal charges against their husbands before the couple is to appear in court. This can frustrate legal officials and diminish their support of other women seeking help. Third, legal penalties against abusive husbands are often considered too mild to adequately deter future violence. Finally,

the entire family can suffer from the husband's prosecution. Men may lose work time or even their jobs because of their conviction, decreasing the family's income. Also, because of her role in the arrest, a wife may be the target of her husband's anger and additional violence. Due to these limitations, legal options may be inadequate for a woman seeking relief from marital violence.

Thus, based on this research, two distinguishable approaches to helping battered women are evident among advocate-counselors in emergency women's shelters. One group viewed husbands as completely responsible for wife abuse. These advocates usually believed abusive husbands are sometimes incapable of learning to control their violent behavior, suggested legal punishment for these men, and encouraged abused women to leave their husbands even when she wants to remain married. In the second approach, the husband and wife are both viewed as responsible for marital violence. The focus of this approach is the problematic and conflictual marital relationship. These advocates reported they do support a woman's decision to remain married and believe husbands can learn to control their violence. Rather than punishment, counseling was recommended as most helpful to

a couple seeking relief from violence in their marriage  
(Figure 1 provides a summary of these two approaches).

## FIGURE 1.

Comparison of the Two Approaches of Advocate-Counselors  
Who Work in Shelters for Battered Women

## HUSBAND RESPONSIBLE

1. The husband is viewed as completely responsible for wife abuse.
2. Wife abuse is a crime and should be treated as such. It is against the law, and the husband should be punished.
3. Separation is the best solution for an abused wife. She should be encouraged to leave her husband even if she wishes to remain married to him.

## COUPLE RESPONSIBLE

1. The husband and wife both contribute to wife abuse.
2. Violence is a result of a dysfunctional family and marital relationship. Counseling offers the couple the best hope of developing a nonviolent marriage.
3. An abused woman must decide herself if she wants to continue living with her husband. This decision should be supported by a counselor.



## Figure 1 (continued)

4. If marital violence is severe, the husband may never be able to learn to control his violence.

4. Any abusive husband can learn to control his violence.

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## Appendix 1

### Low Response Rate

In order to adequately describe the population of advocate-counselors who work in North Carolina battered women's shelters, this project sought to question a large, randomly selected sample of North Carolina advocates. However, a large percentage (78%) of those sent the questionnaire did not respond. This is important since those not responding may have a different perception of marital violence than the majority of those who did complete questionnaires.

In the original population, estimated to be 387 advocates, only 81, or 21%, completed and returned questionnaires. This low response rate suggests that all results of this study should not necessarily be seen as representative of the population from which the sample was drawn. This section will describe events surrounding the low response rate. Appendix 2 will discuss specific objections the questionnaires met and discuss the generalizability of the findings reported in this study.

Initially, twenty-one North Carolina shelters, selected at random, were asked to participate in this survey. The directors of each of the 21 shelters received a letter which briefly described this project and

received a letter which briefly described this project and requested their cooperation and participation in the study. Representatives from 18 of these shelters responded to the letter and agreed to distribute questionnaires to advocates working at the shelter which they were director of. A packet of material, including enough questionnaires for all active advocate-counselors, was mailed to each of these 18 shelters. Three hundred fifty four questionnaires were included in this mailing.

After receiving and reviewing the questionnaires, directors of two shelters decided against participating in the study. Both directors explained they disliked the tone of the questions, reporting they thought the questions blamed women for wife abuse. One of these directors also reported that she would recommend that the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the state's major organization working to help battered women, urge its members not to allow advocates at their shelters to complete this study's questionnaires.

Second, the North Carolina Council on the Status on Women, a governmental organization which provides support and training for North Carolina shelters, withdrew its support for this project. When this



project was conceived in 1984, the director of the North Carolina Council on the Status of Women was contacted. The Council's director offered endorsement of this project and provided input as the study was developed. The Council's director resigned without notifying this author or discussing the project with the new director. Upon learning of the questionnaire, the new director mailed a letter to each North Carolina shelter explaining the North Carolina Council did not support the study. She was contacted by the author and informed of the North Carolina Council's previous support. Despite an explanation of past endorsement, an explanation of the study, and a request to support this project, the director declined to support the survey, also citing concerns about the tone of the questions.

However, most detrimental to the response rate was an organized effort by members of the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence to inhibit participation by shelters. At the February, 1986 meeting of the coalition, opponents of this survey urged the Coalition to encourage shelters not to allow advocates to complete the project's questionnaire. The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence

voted to oppose the study but chose in its official statement not to recommend withdrawal but to share its concerns about the survey with all North Carolina shelters. Despite several conversations with representatives of the North Carolina Coalition, this author was not able to gain the support of the group. The director of the North Carolina Coalition mailed letters to all North Carolina Shelters negatively criticizing several aspects of the questionnaire.

At that time only 12 shelters were committed to continuing to distribute and collect questionnaires from staff and volunteer advocates. To further inhibit participation, the North Carolina Coalition's director then contacted these shelters to first urge that they not participate and later to inform them, erroneously, that the project had been cancelled. Five more shelters withdrew from the project following these actions, even though the directors of these shelters did not personally oppose use of the questionnaire. Only 7 of the original 21 North Carolina shelters returned questionnaires.

In order to obtain a larger sample, a battered women's shelter in Virginia was asked to participate in the study. This shelter provided 36 questionnaires

completed by active advocates. This increased the number of completed questionnaires to 121.

## Appendix 2

### Opposition to the Study

The low response rate of this study is due primarily to the opposition the questionnaire generated from leaders in the domestic violence movement in North Carolina. Directors of both major organizations working to help battered women and over one-half of the directors of shelters in North Carolina opposed the questionnaire. Some even labeled the questionnaire damaging and dangerous for battered women. This section will detail the objections raised against the questionnaire and study.

As explained previously, opposition to the study came from individuals who described themselves as strongly supporting a fundamental feminist perspective of domestic violence. Consistently, those opposed emphasized that in any incidence of wife abuse, the husband is completely responsible and the wife shares no responsibility. In fact, the primary reason given for objecting to the questionnaire was that it lacked a feminist bias.

Those feminists opposed to the study were most critical of the questions which in fact asked advocates to report their opinion of who is responsible when wife abuse occurs. As one person explained, "to merely ask the question (of who is responsible for wife abuse) implies

abuse occurs. As one person explained, "to merely ask the question (of who is responsible for wife abuse) implies that the woman may have some responsibility for the violence". The two questions which raised this objection are:

People have different opinions about who is responsible for physical abuse in a marriage. In your opinion who is usually responsible when wife abuse occurs? (please circle the appropriate letter)

- a. THE WIFE COMPLETELY
- b. PRIMARILY THE WIFE
- c. THE HUSBAND AND WIFE EQUALLY
- d. PRIMARILY THE HUSBAND
- e. THE HUSBAND COMPLETELY

and

On the scale below, think of a score of 1 as meaning that the wife is completely responsible for the abuse, and a score of 5 as meaning that the husband is completely responsible for the abuse. What score between 1 and 5 comes closest to the way you feel? (circle one)

WIFE  
COMPLETELY  
RESPONSIBLE

HUSBAND  
COMPLETELY  
RESPONSIBLE

1

2

3

4

5

Attempts by this author to negotiate with the North Carolina Council on the Status of Women and the North Carolina Coalition against Domestic Violence were unsuccessful. Variations on the above question were offered to reduce objections, including eliminating the five response choices and replacing them with an open

ended response form. However, these groups maintained that the question would be unacceptable no matter how it was written. In any form, they contended, the question appeared biased to them since it deviated from their belief that the husband is always responsible for marital violence.

#### Non-Response Bias

It may be likely that the 79% of the advocate-counselors in the original sample who did not respond may hold different views of marital violence than respondents who did return completed questionnaires. Individuals who opposed the questionnaire and were interviewed by this author professed a strong feminist viewpoint of marital violence, stressing that the husband is always completely responsible for wife abuse. Respondents who returned questionnaires most often viewed the husband as primarily, not completely, responsible for marital violence.

This possible bias raises questions about the generalizability of this study's description of the predominant view of marital violence held by advocate-counselors working in battered women's shelters. Those not responding may have overwhelmingly held the view

that the husband is completely responsible. If so, the view that husbands are completely responsible would be predominant among advocates in North Carolina shelters.

Only paid staff were involved in opposing the study and deciding not to allow the advocates at the shelters with which they were associated to participate. However, in 1983, only about 10% of the advocates working in North Carolina shelters were paid staff members (North Carolina Council on the Status of Women, 1983). Paid staff may hold very different views of marital violence than volunteers. To test this suggestion, the data collected were broken down by volunteer and paid staff to determine if differences in perceptions exist between the two groups.

The perceptions of marital violence of volunteer advocates are not significantly different than paid advocates ( $\chi^2_{(2)}=1.47$ ;  $p=.469$ ). Also, advocates were asked who was described as responsible for wife abuse in the training provided to them by the shelter. The correlation in the this sample between advocates' perception of marital violence and the perception used by trainers at the shelter was significant ( $r=.620$ ;  $p<.001$ ). Therefore, no evidence in this study suggests volunteer advocates differ from paid counselors in those shelters whose

directors refused to participate and also view the husband as completely responsible. Thus, advocates in North Carolina may more likely view the husband as completely responsible, rather than as primarily responsible as reported in this study.

However, no evidence exists that the associations reported between perception and other variables, such as support for a woman's desire to continue living with a man who has abused her and belief that abusive husbands can learn to control their violence, would differ if the response rate of this study was higher.



### APPENDIX 3

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. To insure confidentiality, please do not sign your name on the questionnaire. Instead, sign the Signature Sheet once you have finished answering the questions. Your participation is greatly appreciated, and is completely voluntary. Please see your shelter director if you have any questions.

FEBRUARY, 1986  
Virginia Tech University

1. People have different opinions about who is responsible for physical abuse in a marriage. In your opinion who is usually responsible when wife abuse occurs? (please circle the appropriate letter)
  - a. THE WIFE COMPLETELY
  - b. PRIMARILY THE WIFE
  - c. THE HUSBAND AND THE WIFE EQUALLY
  - d. PRIMARILY THE HUSBAND
  - e. THE HUSBAND COMPLETELY
  
2. In the training provided to you by the shelter, who was described as usually responsible for wife abuse? (please circle the appropriate letter)
  - a. THE WIFE COMPLETELY
  - b. PRIMARILY THE WIFE
  - c. THE HUSBAND AND THE WIFE EQUALLY
  - d. PRIMARILY THE HUSBAND
  - e. THE HUSBAND COMPLETELY
  
3. For each example of family violence listed below, please mark the column which best describes your opinion about who is responsible.

	the wife	primarily the wife	the husband and wife equally	primarily the husband	the husband
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
A. The husband throwing something at the wife	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. The husband pushing, grabbing or shoving the wife	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
C. The husband slapping the wife	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D. The husband hitting the wife with his fist	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
E. The husband beating up the wife	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
F. The husband threatening the wife with a gun or knife.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
G. The husband using a gun or knife on the wife	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

4. Please indicate your opinion about each of the following statements. (Circle T if true, F if false)

T F MOST MEN WHO REPEATEDLY ABUSE THEIR WIVES PROBABLY SUFFER FROM SOME SORT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OR EMOTIONAL ILLNESS.

T F MOST ABUSED WOMEN IN SOME WAY NEED OR WANT ABUSE OR ELSE THEY WOULD LEAVE THEIR HUSBANDS.

T F ABUSIVE HUSBANDS CAN LEARN TO CONTROL THEIR VIOLENT BEHAVIOR TOWARDS THEIR WIVES.

5. In some cases battered wives who seek help from shelters wish to continue living with their husbands. In such cases, what is usually most appropriate for an advocate to do? (Circle one)

- a. SUPPORT THE WIFE'S DESIRE TO CONTINUE LIVING WITH HER HUSBAND or  
b. ENCOURAGE THE WIFE TO CONSIDER LEAVING HER HUSBAND

6. What services have you personally provided for abused women? (Please indicate all that apply)

- EMERGENCY SHELTER  
 TELEPHONE COUNSELING  
 CRISIS INTERVENTION  
 GROUP COUNSELING  
 INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING  
 COUPLE COUNSELING  
 PROVIDING INFORMATION  
 PROVIDING REFERRALS  
 PROVIDING ADVOCACY  
 OTHER (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. What services have you personally provided for husbands who abuse their wives? (Please indicate all that apply)

- TELEPHONE COUNSELING  
 CRISIS INTERVENTION  
 GROUP COUNSELING  
 INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING  
 COUPLE COUNSELING  
 PROVIDING INFORMATION  
 PROVIDING REFERRALS  
 PROVIDING ADVOCACY  
 OTHER (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Below are six different hypothetical cases describing wives who might seek help from a shelter for abused women. Assume that in each case the woman has been married to her husband for seven years. Please answer the questions that follow each case.

A. Wife A reports that she has been severely beaten by her husband almost once a week since the beginning of her marriage. As a result of these attacks she has received several cuts and two broken bones.

1. Which would probably be the most helpful for this couple? (circle only one)

- a. SEEK A DIVORCE  
b. SEEK MARITAL COUNSELING  
c. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE HUSBAND  
d. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE WIFE  
e. ARREST THE HUSBAND FOR HIS VIOLENCE

2. In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES  
b. NO

B. Wife B reports that she has been severely beaten twice by her husband during her marriage. The second attack, which occurred a week ago, left her with a broken arm.

1. Which would probably be the most helpful for this couple? (circle only one)

- a. SEEK A DIVORCE
- b. SEEK MARITAL COUNSELING
- c. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE HUSBAND
- d. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE WIFE
- e. ARREST THE HUSBAND FOR HIS VIOLENCE

2. In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES
- b. NO

C. Wife C reports that she has been pushed, shoved, and slapped by her husband almost every week since she has been married. She has received minor cuts and bruises in these attacks.

1. Which would probably be the most helpful for this couple? (circle only one)

- a. SEEK A DIVORCE
- b. SEEK MARITAL COUNSELING
- c. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE HUSBAND
- d. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE WIFE
- e. ARREST THE HUSBAND FOR HIS VIOLENCE

2. In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES
- b. NO

D. Wife D reports that she has been pushed, shoved, and slapped by her husband twice during her marriage. Both times she received minor bruises.

1. Which would probably be the most helpful for this couple? (circle only one)

- a. SEEK A DIVORCE
- b. SEEK MARITAL COUNSELING
- c. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE HUSBAND
- d. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE WIFE
- e. ARREST THE HUSBAND FOR HIS VIOLENCE

2. In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES
- b. NO

E. Wife E reports that during arguments with her husband they often begin hitting each other. She explains that these arguments usually occur after she has been drinking and nagging her husband.

1. Which would probably be the most helpful for this couple? (circle only one)

- a. SEEK A DIVORCE
- b. SEEK MARITAL COUNSELING
- c. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE HUSBAND
- d. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE WIFE
- e. ARREST THE HUSBAND FOR HIS VIOLENCE

2. In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES
- b. NO

F. Wife F reports that she is frequently hit by her husband for no apparent reason. Sometimes these attacks occur after he has been drinking heavily at a bar; however, he has even beaten her while she was sleeping.

1. Which would probably be the most helpful for this couple? (circle only one)

- a. SEEK A DIVORCE
- b. SEEK MARITAL COUNSELING
- c. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE HUSBAND
- d. SEEK INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING FOR THE WIFE
- e. ARREST THE HUSBAND FOR HIS VIOLENCE

2. In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES
- b. NO

9. On the scale below, think of a score of 1 as meaning that the wife is completely responsible for the abuse, and a score of 5 as meaning that the husband is completely responsible for the abuse. What score between 1 and 5 comes closest to the way you feel? (circle one)

WIFE COMPLETELY RESPONSIBLE						HUSBAND COMPLETELY RESPONSIBLE
1	2	3	4	5		

Please also answer the following questions about yourself.

10. Sex

- Male
- Female

11. Race

- White
- Black
- Other

12. At the present time, how old are you?

\_\_\_ years old

13. How many years of school did you complete?

\_\_\_ years

14. At the present time, do you have a job?

- yes
- no

If so, what kind of work do you do? (please describe in a sentence).

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Is your job full-time or part-time?

- full time
- part time

16. At the present time, are you married, separated, divorced, widowed, or have you never been married?

- married
- separated
- divorced
- widowed
- never married

17. If married, how long have you been married to your current spouse  
 years  
 If you are widowed or separated, how long have you been so?  
 years
18. How many living children do you have?  
 children
19. How long have you been working at this shelter?  
 years     months
20. Are you a paid or volunteer advocate/counselor?  
 paid  
 volunteer
21. If you are a paid staff member, are you a full-time or part-time advocate/counselor?  
 full-time  
 part-time
22. Did you participate in a shelter-sponsored training program before beginning your work as an advocate/counselor?  
 yes  
 no
23. If you answered "yes" to question 22, approximately how many hours of training did you receive?  
 hours
24. Have you received additional shelter sponsored training since beginning your work as an advocate/counselor?  
 no  
 yes    If so, approximately how many hours of training?  
 hours
25. Has the training provided to you by the shelter been adequate to prepare you for your duties as an advocate/counselor?  
 all of the time  
 most of the time  
 some of the time  
 none of the time

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT IS TO COLLECT AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THE IMPORTANT WORK YOU DO AS AN ADVOCATE. PLEASE USE THE BACK OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO ADD ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS YOU THINK MAY BE HELPFUL.

Jay McKeel, Director  
 Domestic Violence Service Project  
 Virginia Tech University

Responses to Six Hypothetical Cases: Can An Abusive  
Husband Learn to Control His Violence?

Below are six different hypothetical cases describing wives who might seek help from a shelter for abused women. Assume that in each case the woman has been married to her husband for seven years. Please answer the questions that follow each case.

- A. Wife A reports that she has been severely beaten by her husband almost once a week since the beginning of her marriage. As a result of these attacks she has received several cuts and two broken bones.

In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES (n=71) 60.2%  
b. NO (n=47) 39.8%

- B. Wife B reports that she has been severely beaten twice by her husband during her marriage. The second attack, which occurred a week ago, left her with a broken arm.

In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES (n=105) 89.0%  
b. NO (n=13) 11.0%

- C. Wife C reports that she has been pushed, shoved, and slapped by her husband almost every week since she has been married. She has received minor cuts and bruises in these attacks.

In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- a. YES (n=92) 77.3%  
b. NO (n=27) 22.7%

- D. Wife D reports that she has been pushed, shoved, and slapped by her husband twice during her marriage. Both times she received minor bruises.

In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- |    |     |         |       |
|----|-----|---------|-------|
| a. | YES | (n=119) | 98.3% |
| b. | NO  | (n=2)   | 1.7%  |

- E. Wife E reports that during arguments with her husband they often begin hitting each other. She explains that these arguments usually occur after she has been drinking and nagging her husband.

In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- |    |     |         |       |
|----|-----|---------|-------|
| a. | YES | (n=114) | 96.6% |
| b. | NO  | (n=4)   | 3.4%  |

- F. Wife F reports that she is frequently hit by her husband for no apparent reason. Sometimes these attacks occur after he has been drinking heavily at a bar; however, he has even beaten her while she was sleeping.

In this case, do you think the husband can learn to control his violent behavior toward his wife?

- |    |     |        |       |
|----|-----|--------|-------|
| a. | YES | (n=74) | 64.9% |
| b. | NO  | (n=40) | 35.1% |

**The vita has been removed from  
the scanned document**