Domestic Violence Data

- It is important to note that the estimates of domestic violence in the U.S. are probably not reliable. There are a number of barriers associated with collecting such data:
  - Privacy concerns
  - Fear of further violence
  - Fear of stigma
  - Underestimate reoccurring violence

Types of domestic violence

- Marital violence
- Child abuse and neglect
- Elder abuse
- Sibling violence

Marital Violence

- It is estimated that about 16 out of every 100 couples report some incident of physical aggression over the past year (estimates from 1985).
- The estimates of severe marital violence show about 10 cases for every 100 couples.
- The most common reason for women to seek emergency care due to injuries is marital violence.

Child Abuse and Neglect

- It was estimated that in 1989, between 1,200 and 5,000 children died as a result of mistreatment.
- Another 160,000 children were seriously injured as a result of mistreatment.
- In 1988, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimated that 2.4 million children suffered some form of mistreatment.
- Of those suffering mistreatment, the majority suffer some form of physical neglect.
- The most common type of abuse is physical abuse (5.7 children per 1000)

Is SES related to domestic violence?

- The relationship is not strong, but it does appear to be the case that persons of lower SES are at a greater risk for marital violence compared to those of higher SES.
- The relationship between child mistreatment and SES is somewhat stronger.
  - For children in families making less than $15,000, the rate of physical abuse was 3.5x higher and the rate of sexual abuse was 6x higher.
• The risk of serious harm for this income group was 7x greater whereas it was 5x greater for moderate harm.
• Overall, poorer children were about 7x more likely to suffer harm than children of higher SES.

What are the consequences of domestic violence?
• Physical harm
• Suicide
• Mental health problems
• Developmental problems
• Intergenerational transmission

What factors may mediate the association between domestic violence and health consequences?

What are some of the factors that might produce domestic violence?
• Two factors cited by the authors include alcohol and depression. Given what you know about SES and health, how would you critique these explanations for domestic violence?

What other factors might produce domestic violence?
• Unequal distributions of power in families
• Unemployment(?)
  “…unemployment can destroy relationships just as it destroys individuals. The deterioration in the mental health of the unemployed person—be it the father, the mother, or a child—affects his or her relationships with the rest of the family. And in this time of misery the family are likely to be thrown together more, usually in financially reduced circumstances, and sooner or later something may snap” (Smith, 1987).

Unemployment and DV continued
• Parents of abused children were about 3x more likely to be unemployed than those who did not abuse their children.
• Other studies show associations between overall levels of unemployment and child mistreatment.

A model for domestic violence
• Berkowitz has created a model that links a variety of factors to the production of domestic violence.
Discussion Question
• Is domestic violence a public health problem? If so, how would we treat it using the public health model?
  • Remember that the public health model involves primary, secondary and tertiary stages of intervention.

Crimes linked to social inequality
• Chasin argues that a variety of crimes are linked to social inequality. These include:
  • Domestic violence
  • Rape
  • Forced motherhood or unsafe abortions
  • Bias crimes
  • Police violence

Discussion Question
• In what ways does social inequality produce these types of violence?
  • Domestic violence
  • Rape
  • Forced motherhood or unsafe abortions
  • Bias crimes
  • Police violence
• We have listed a number of ways to help alleviate the effect of low SES on health. Would these same solutions work here?

If all of that wasn’t bad enough...
• Persons of low SES are more likely to live in fear of criminal victimization.
• One study (Bazargan 1994) showed this link for elderly African Americans, but further showed that this fear was associated with a reluctance to leave home.