***Intimate Partner Violence Polyvictimization***

In this study, Dr. Hyunkag Cho examined intimate partner violence polyvictimization (multiple victimization by multiple perpetrators over time) using a recent national dataset collected in 2010, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. He classified various polyvictimization experiences into six distinctive patterns: Sexual Violence, Psychological Aggression, Multiple Violence, Coercive Control, Physical and Psychological Violence, and Stalking. Multiple Violence was the most common type of polyvictimization among female survivors, while Coercive Control was the most common among male survivors. Multiple Violence and Physical and Psychological Violence inflicted more negative health consequences than the other types. Intervention and prevention approaches that consider polyvictimization types as a part of survivor need assessments will improve services.

**Angie Kennedy**

Hello. My name is Angie Kennedy, and I'm the Associate Director for Research at the School of Social Work at Michigan State. Welcome to our Research Spotlight, where we profile some of the exciting work being done by School faculty members. Today, I'm joined by Dr. Hyunkag Cho, an Associate Professor here at the School. Dr. Cho studies partner violence and we're going to talk about a study he just finished, entitled, "Concurrent intimate partner violence: Survivor health and help-seeking," that's in press with the journal, *Violence Against Women.* Thanks so much for joining me today, Dr. Cho...

**Hyunkag Cho**

Thank you so much for having me. My pleasure.

**Angie Kennedy**

...on this Friday afternoon. So I'm just going to jump right in here and just get started with some questions. I have a lot of questions. This is a really exciting and interesting study. So for this study, you used data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (or the NISVS). Can you share a little bit about what makes this dataset so special, and what drew you to it?

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yes, I can. This NISVS was first collected in 2010 from about 16,000 nationally representative sample in the U.S. And, but, the second wave of that data also collected in 2015, but this study that I will share today is based on the first one, collected in 2010. So compared it to other dataset, either for nationally representative or not, this dataset has like a couple of strengths. First of all, it just asked the respondents all like a multitude of very complex experiences of intimate partner violence--I will call it as IPV shortly--and about the IPV experiences.

First they were asked if they experienced any of IPV, and if they said yes then they were asked to identify like many, many, many perpetrators who did various different acts related to IPV, and for each perpetrator they were asked to identify like, their relationship, and when did it start? When did it end? And what changed, in terms of their relationship? And what different IPV types actually committed by that person too? So like the pure amount of information collected for IPV and including multiple perpetrators and multiple different types of IPV over time, that's kind of like very hard to compare to previous national data.

So that's probably the biggest strength. And naturally because I'm interested in, like, deriving more like rich information about complexity of IPV victimization, so I'm just naturally drawn to this dataset.

**Angie Kennedy**

Right, right. And so for people who may not be familiar with large datasets like this, so this-- the data were collected and then of course there have been researchers who have done a lot of work, but then it's still open, and there's still many more questions that can be answered using this dataset, that people haven't explored yet.

And so you're just making use of this. And, this is a nice segue to the next question. How do you think-- how would you describe how your work with this dataset fits in with your larger body of research?

**Hyunkag Cho**

I've been doing my research pretty much on IPV and survivors' help-seeking, and I'm also interested in the outcomes of survivors' help seeking on their safety and long-term health. So, so far I just look around and examine like crime victims, or I've sometimes looked at a college students because they are young adults and probably they are exposed to little higher levels of IPV, compared to like adolescent or older adults.

And also sometime else I just look at numerous outcomes of IPV, as it is like survivors seeking help from mental health service providers. And, like, seeking help for a variety of different sources [is] very important--sometimes we label it as "help seeking." So, help seeking may include like "formal" help seeking like talk to your doctor or like social workers or police officers, this is the formal part of help seeking. Another one might be just you casually talking to a family member or friends or coworkers. So that's called "informal." So including both formal and informal, I just examine the relation between like IPV experiences and their health outcomes, and if like whether help seeking is helpful or not in terms of like securing well-being in the long run.

So, but recently, I just gradually focused on "poyvictimization," as we call it, like, it's kind of survivors not only experiencing like a specific type of violence, but they experience like a multitude of different types of violence over time. Sometimes at the same time, but sometimes like a long period of time, like ten years or something. So we call it like polyvictimization. Sometimes it's perpetrated by single perpetrator, but sometimes survivors has the multitude of different numbers of perpetrators. And because of that complexity of like polyvictimization, we found that that effect on like our interested topical area, like health outcomes, either physical or mental or survivor's help seeking behaviors are pretty much different because it's complex, so their behaviors, or relationships, are also complex. So I like to explore that relationship complexity, but I didn't find like a good dataset. But now I got it!

**Angie Kennedy**

Right, right.

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yeah, that's, that's kind of like coincidental: I just attended some research presentation then the presenter mentioned about it, like briefly. So it's kind of about five to six years ago, and I just got it.

**Angie Kennedy**

Right, right. And then the more familiar you become with this really complex dataset than the more you can do with it, and, you know, it just becomes more easy to, to answer all sorts of questions that you have, that that this dataset can answer, that others might not be able to.

**Hyunkag Cho**

Exactly.

**Angie Kennedy**

So could you summarize the main goals of this particular study?

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yes. This study had two main goals. First of all, plus the goal is related to our previous remarks about polyvictimization. So, I like to use this data to classify the types of IPV that may involve multiple perpetrators or multiple types of IPV over time. That's my first goal. Second goal is on top of the first goal, if I successfully classify the types of IPV or like the number of subgroups that shows a similar behavior in terms of perpetuating multiple types of violence, then I like to describe how different each of those types are in terms of like gender and relationship type, or survivors' health outcomes, both physical and mental, and help seeking behaviors of survivors. That's my second goal of this study.

**Angie Kennedy**

Mmm hmm. What are some of the unique aspects of the study, in other words, how does this work fill a gap in the literature or answer some pressing questions for the field?

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yes, I believe this study addressed a couple of gaps that previous studies either didn't do well or like rarely did. So first of all, like we just-- I just remarked about polyvictimization: That thing is like very complex and not understood well. So I like to further our knowledge about that. That's the first gap I wanted to fill.

Another one is like, many studies have a focus on specific sub-populations, such as like only women residing in shelter, or only persons engaging in a specific type of relationship, like dating or cohabiting. So, oftentimes like the specific subgroup such as like man or a different gender/sexual category, are sometimes ignored by that examination.

So I like to fill in that gap too. And like certain forms of IPV--because IPV consists of multiple different types like, not only for physical violence or sexual violence, or... it also includes like stalking or coercive control or rape--so I like to include those types, so among them, like stalking or coercive control, it's kind of like using some kind of psychological manipulation to control a partner's behavior so that the perpetrator can take advantage of whatever benefit they can get from the survivor.

So that's called "coercive control." So those two, like either stalking or coercive control, have not been examined in the context of IPV, assuming like stalking is mostly like strangers or like less intimate. So it's not included in IPV context, but considering like polyvictimization, including multiple different numbers of perpetrators who might engage in multiple different types of IPV, then stalking, who knows, may develop into different types of very serious IPV.

So, this very important for us to take consideration of like stalking or coercive control in the context of IPV. So that's probably my motivation doing this study. So in the long run, I hope, like, some of the study results--it's kind of a first step--so I don't think many directly applicable practice implications can be drawn from this study result, but in the long run, I hope that this study will help identify survivors' needs for better services like legal services or criminal justice intervention and healthcare services. And most of those needs may be based on their complexity of IPV experience. So that's my long-term goal for practitioners.

**Angie Kennedy**

Right. I think one thing I didn't mention or didn't bring up that I should have mentioned was how large this dataset is, right? It's over 16,000 perpetrators that you focused on, so then that enables you to really get into looking at all kinds of different groups, or different types of perpetrators you couldn't do--it's representative dataset. So you can say, okay, yes, we have this, you know, we have 400 of this group and we have 2,000 of that group and it's just, these really big numbers so you can kind of drill down and look at those different--the differences by, by the different perpetrators.

**Hyunkag Cho**

Right.

**Angie Kennedy**

Fabulous. Okay. So you used a statistical approach called latent class analysis, which is a person-centered approach, versus the more commonly used variable-centered approach. What's especially useful about this type of analysis?

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yes, I can tell. In order to describe that aspect, probably we have to first discuss of a distinction or a difference between variable-centered approach and person-centered approach. So first, variable-centered approach, probably we can assume that it's about association between variables. So like they're-- using a set of variables to describe or explain another variable.

For instance, we are talking about IPV, so let's say we are interested in survivors’ mental health. So let's say it’s depression, then we can use like survivors’ demographic characteristics such as age, race or income, like that, to predict their depression level or whether or not they develop depression or depressive symptoms, like that. So if we use the variable-centered approach, then probably the result might be if you are older then you are more likely to show depressive symptoms or vice versa.

Or if you are African-Americans, then you are less likely to show or report depression, like that. So it’s kind of explanation of association between variables, so that's why it's called, I believe, “variable-centered.” While a person-centered approach is slightly different, so the focus is not on variable but on person, then might have like a multitude of different variables together.

So instead of focusing on one or two variables or association between them, person-centered approach, like, try to identify groups or subgroups, of individual who share some similar characteristics. So yeah, we talked about depression. So if we use that example again, then we can just use like-- develop some kind of subgroups of individuals like the previously, we use age, race, and income as variables of survivor characteristics. If we use the same variables, then we can develop like subgroups who might-- are young, Latino, and middle class. That’s one type of group.

Another type may be a little older and African-Americans, mostly, or lower middle class, that's another group. So in this way we can identify like multiple groups like, ideally, not many, like not more than ten, but manageable number of subgroups that we can use to predict depression. Then we can center on person instead of variable, so it may have some very practical implications because we are talking about person instead of variable--probably the study results adopting person-centered approach might be giving out readily available implication for the like, the consideration of practitioners.

**Angie Kennedy**

Mm hmm. And it seems like a person-centered approach can really help get at some of that complexity that you were talking about before, of just the complexity of different perpetrators, different types of violence perpetration, it can, it can, it seems to capture that better than a variable-centered approach.

**Hyunkag Cho**

Right. If you adopt like variable-centered approach, then probably we examine how like physical violence predict their specific help seeking. And we look at another variable, how they are like, age predict [help seeking]. So it's kind of like variable by variable. So it's kind of maybe too simplistic, while the reality is messy.

So probably a person-centered approach a little bit suitable for revealing some aspect of that messiness, but I believe it depends on research questions, so sometimes variable-centered is better than the other.

**Angie Kennedy**

Right. Right. So in this study, you derived six different classes of partner violence perpetration. Can you describe these six perpetrators or kind of types of perpetrators for us?

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yes, sure I can. So before I describe six different types of perpetration, probably I have to first describe how that information is collected by this data. So perpetrators of IPV behavior are measured by 60 items. So it's way more items than previously mentioned data. So, it includes like, obviously, physical violence, like pushing or kicking, like that.

Also, it includes psychological aggression. Like they told you, you are a loser, failure, or not good enough. And it also includes like stalking, like that they made unwanted phone calls to you, and rape or non-rape sexual assault, and some coercive control, like they tried to keep you from family or friends, so limiting your contact so that they can better utilize you or whatever resources exclusively, from you.

So all of those 60 items were used to see how many like a manageable number of subgroups can be created based on those 60 items. And based on that latent class analysis, I got six. So like, let me describe one by one. Of those six groups, like the four groups actually committed like relatively only one type of violence.

So first class, first type of group, I just labeled it as *sexual violence,* because they're usually involved in sexual violence, but other types of violence rarely used, so that’s sexual violence, [the] first type. Second type, I just labeled it as *psychological aggression*, again, because they just predominantly, or even exclusively, use psychological aggression only, so they rarely use physical or sexual or stalking behavior.

That's psychological aggression. Third type is, I called *stalking.* Yes, we can imagine, right? They’re just mostly committing stalking, nothing else. And the next type of group I just called it as *coercive control.* They usually use coercive control behavior, but the other types of behavior rarely used. But other than that, like a psychological aggression, is like frequently used, so it can be easily imagined, right, so coercive controlling is kind of a little bit similar to psychological aggression, so many perpetrators just committed both violence types together. So in terms of like percentage of all perpetrators, so *sexual violence* accounts for almost 10%, and *psychological aggression* accounts for about 12% of all perpetrators, and *stalking* a little smaller, like 6.6%, about 7%, and *coercive control* about 28%.

So these first four types use like mostly only one type of violence. So probably we cannot call them as like a perpetrator who’s involved in multiple types of violence. But, the remaining two types are more serious. So the fifth type of class, I called it *multiple violence* because they just the most likely commit most all types of violence, including physical, psychological aggression, coercive control, and sexual violence. And probably they are the most serious, or severe type of perpetrators.

And they account for alarmingly high percentage, about 24%. So about one-quarter of all perpetrators were multiple violence. And the last one is like the-- I labeled it as *physical and psychological violence* because they use both physical and psychological violence. But in terms of a severity, they are less severe compared to multiple violence, and this lesser type accounts for about 20%.

So they are six types of violence. So probably it's very complicated to listen to all these type, different types. Originally I aimed to get smaller number like three or four types. Then probably maybe a little easier to describe and present and understand. But doing so I just felt like I, I'm losing some kind of complexity. That was the main purpose of this study.

So I chose to keep the six types, but it's a little bit larger than I just desired at the very beginning.

**Angie Kennedy**

But I think it's, you just, you explained it really clearly, and I think it really shows how different, how perpetrators are not all alike, and how there’s just these, these significant and distinct sort of profiles or classes, in how, in different types of perpetration. And so it's not a one-- like that everybody's experience with IPV by every particular partner is the same, there's just so much variety, and I think that this helps, you know, capture that complexity across perpetrators. So I think…

**Hyunkag Cho**

That's right, thank you.

**Angie Kennedy**

I think it makes sense to have six instead of two or three, I think it’s really, really interesting. So your analysis yielded a lot of different, or interesting findings, on how these perpetrator classes were linked to variables such as gender and the type of relationship, as well as victims’ health and mental health outcomes, their service needs, and how they sought help, how they told, you know, formal or informal providers about what was going on.

What are some of the highlights for you in terms of your results?

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yes, there are a lot, so I like to be selective. First of all, I found like sex differences in perpetrator groups, so, among male perpetrators*, multiple violence* group is the largest: About 32% of male perpetrators are classified as *multiple violence*. Again, like let me remind you, that's the most serious type of perpetration. Whereas, among female perpetrators, *coercive control* group is the largest one. So that's probably big difference between men and women in terms of classification. Also, another difference in sex is like, among female perpetrators, like both physical and psychological violence was significantly higher than male perpetrators. Whereas, male perpetrators engaged in sexual violence and stalking more than female perpetrators. That's like first finding: gender differences. Another one is like the association between these types and relationship types.

So in terms of relationship, I compare the three types. First one is like a spouse or live-in partners. Another one is fiancées or boy or girlfriends. Second type of relationship is just the dating partners or someone they were seeing together. So, of these three relationship types, like the among spouses and live-in partners, *multiple violence* is the largest one.

Whereas, among fiancée, boy or girlfriend or dating partners, *coercive controlling* is the most, the largest group. And like among, spouse and live-in partner relationship, like *multiple violence* and *moderate violence* the most prevalent. Whereas, among dating partners, *sexual violence* and *stalking* is the most prevalent. So in a nutshell, it seems like the spouse and live-in partners are like the most committed relationship among three types, so like the committed relationship seem to show the most severe types of IPV perpetration. But it's not kind of a causal relationship we found from this, so I cannot say like the relationship can determine types of like the violence perpetration. But again, like this critical analysis shows like the suggestion of that association.

**Angie Kennedy**

Mmm hmm.

**Hyunkag Cho**

And another interesting finding of this study is that like in terms of help seeking. Probably it’s straightforward from the description of six types of perpetration: Survivors of *multiple violence* seek the most help, either from formal [or] informal. So that's obvious, right? So if you sustained like multiple violence over time then the health impacts should be the biggest so that you have to seek more help than other types of perpetration.

That's not surprising, but surprising aspect of finding of this, like the survivors of *coercive control* and *psychological violence* and *stalking*, also seek more help than other types of violence. So it's a little bit surprising. So we assume usually like the physical violence yes, it just results in physical consequences, so that survivors are more likely to seek help. But psychological aggression, it may be damaging to their mental health, but it may not be that serious for them to seek help.

But this research shows quite differently. Now, even though like stalking or psychological violence or coercive control may sound less severe compared to other types but still, survivors of those types of violence should seek help, because of like the whatever things they have because of that violence victimization. That is probably the last finding I want to share with you today.

**Angie Kennedy**

Mmm hmm. So, did this study leave you with any unanswered questions? Where do you plan to go next in terms of this work?

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yes. Although I just presented all the results that's very clear association, but not. I mentioned earlier like it, this is not a causal link that we can make because it's based on like a one shot survey. So we cannot say like a specific one variable can predict another. Definitely. So but like all those findings, like sex differences or like relationship types, its impact on experience of IPV and help-seeking differences, we explain something, but we can explain further. So I [would] like to do some kind of a little more advanced statistical analysis to explain, potentially why this kind of association was found from these survivors. That's my first step. Another one is like, although I said like gender differences apparent, but another aspect of difference is racial or ethnic or cultural differences were not examined, but we knew from the literature that there are a wide variety of differences among different racial, ethnic, cultural groups, so next step with this dataset, I like to go into that.

**Angie Kennedy**

Mmm hmm. I wonder also if the NISVS offers socioeconomic, you know, like class demographic info because when I-- when you were talking about the live-in partners and versus you know, people who are married, I was thinking about that class piece and, you know, just wondering about how socioeconomic status could play a role.

**Hyunkag Cho**

Yes, they ask the respondents about their income and their education level. I believe they-- all information regarding economic or socioeconomic status,

**Angie Kennedy**

Mm hmm.

**Hyunkag Cho**

and other information about survivors, maybe their immigration status, something like that, but nothing else about socioeconomics.

**Angie Kennedy**

It's there's so much, there's so much to do with this data.

**Hyunkag Cho**

Right. Right.

**Angie Kennedy**

Is there anything else you would like to add today, to talk a little bit more? To share?

**Hyunkag Cho**

I'm, I'm very grateful to have a chance to talk with you because, like, as academia, we do like lots of research, but sometimes that oftentimes they are not shared widely with the public, so doing this podcast or dissemination of these important study findings to the public or the practitioner, it's a very important step. So especially for the public, so we knew, right, or like we are aware of the importance of the public’s response to survivors. If there is some information about their victimization, then how we react to their sharing is kind of sometimes defining to survivors’ safety and their future well-being. So like sharing widely about these results is a very important step, and for that, I'm very thankful to you.

**Angie Kennedy**

Well, it's been a pleasure talking with you and I really appreciate this work and I appreciate you coming and sharing with me and with everyone who's listening. Thanks so much for joining me today.

**Hyunkag Cho**

Thank you for inviting me. Thank you. My pleasure.