AN EXAMINATION OF POLICE INVESTIGATIONAL FILES
FOR CRIMINAL HARASSMENT (STALKING):
IMPLICATIONS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The creation of Canada’s anti-stalking statute, or criminal harassment law, slightly more than a decade ago marked the beginning of a new risk assessment imperative. It provided Canadian law enforcement officials with new opportunities to manage stalking cases, but it also created new demands for violence risk assessments. Unfortunately, the empirical research on stalking offers law enforcement personnel little guidance on how to approach these tasks. Although research is starting to identify risk factors of stalking violence, most of this work has been carried out in relatively small, clinical-forensic samples and so the validity and practical utility of these risk factors in the law enforcement context remains unknown. More importantly, there has been virtually no empirical research looking at the relationship of different risk factors to specific case management practices. To develop a better picture of the violence risk factors associated with stalking cases encountered by Canadian law enforcement personnel as well as examine the influence of these risk factors on their selection of case management strategies, this dissertation examined all documented investigations of criminal harassment carried out by the Vancouver Police Department during the 1997 calendar year \((N = 241)\). Arresting the alleged perpetrator was a management strategy implemented in slightly over half the cases in which it was possible for police to intervene. The likelihood of this management strategy being adopted proved to be significantly greater in the presence of numerous violence risk factors, however, only four of these risk factors (unemployed perpetrator, female victim, threats of physical harm, and physical violence) emerged as significant predictors of arrest during a series of multivariate analyses. The implications of these findings for the investigation and management of criminal harassment cases are discussed.

Keywords: stalking, violence, risk assessment, criminal psychology
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INTRODUCTION

A little more than a decade has passed since stalking became a crime in Canada and many other jurisdictions around the world. Stalking may be defined as a pattern of repeated and non-consensual communication or contact that causes another person to fear, reasonably, for his or her safety. The criminalization of stalking is relatively new, but the behaviour is not. Stalking has existed throughout history as evidenced by descriptive accounts of the behaviour that appear in classical literary works, early clinical case reports and the popular media (Meloy, 1999a; Mullen, Pathé & Purcell, 2000; Mullen, Pathé & Purcell, 2001). It has been aptly described as "an old behaviour, a new crime" (Meloy, 1999a, p. 85).

The scope of stalking in society remained a matter of speculation until the latter part of the 1990s, when several large-scale international studies produced the first meaningful prevalence estimates of stalking behaviour (Budd & Mattinson, 2000; McLennan, 1996; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Walby & Allen, 2004). These studies found that between 1% and 8% of female respondents and between less than 1% and 6% of male respondents reported being stalked during the preceding 12-month period. Corresponding Canadian data did not exist until 2005 when the results of a survey conducted with a random sample of more than 24,000 people became available (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005). Estimates derived from
this survey indicate the annual stalking victimization rates of adult women and men in Canada are approximately 4% and 2%, respectively. Understanding the magnitude of the problem becomes easier to appreciate when these rates are extrapolated to the Canadian population at large; more than 575,000 women and more than 300,000 men are stalked annually in this country (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005). Clearly the problem of stalking is large.

Stalking is not only pervasive, it is profoundly harmful too. Studies show that stalking has a devastating impact on the social, financial, emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of its victims (Basile, Arias, Desai & Thompson, 2004; Blauuw, Winkel, Arensman, Sheridan & Freeve, 2002; Hall, 1998; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Lyon & Douglas, 1999; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Westrup, Fremouw, Thompson & Lewis, 1999). Many stalking victims suffer from post-traumatic stress and the level of presenting symptomology appears to be adversely influenced by the associated characteristics of the stalking including its duration, intensity, diversity, and degree of physical violence (Kamphuis, Emmelkamp and Bartak, 2003; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Mechanic, Uhlmansiek, Weaver & Resick, 2000; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Westrup et al., 1999). In some cases, the negative health effects of stalking become chronic, enduring long after the behaviour itself has ended (Blauuw et al., 2002; Davis, Coker & Sanderson, 2002).

An "adult" in this context refers to a person 15 years of age or older.
Despite widespread recognition that stalking constitutes a serious social and public health problem, there is still much we need to learn about stalkers, their behaviour, and the best strategies for managing them. Empirical research of stalking, though growing, is still not well-developed. Most investigations examining the risk of stalking violence are concentrated in clinical-forensic settings and there has been no systematic research examining the use and impact of current case management practices. To make matters worse, stalking is an inherently persistent, targeted form of violence – qualities that distinguish it from other types of violence and pose unique case management challenges (Kropp, Hart, & Lyon, 2002). For this reason, the extent to which the broader empirical literature on violence risk assessment can be usefully applied to these cases remains uncertain (Kropp, Hart, & Lyon, 2002).

For law enforcement officials and other front-line personnel who must manage stalking cases this situation is troubling. Risk assessment and risk management practices should be grounded in the scientific research as far as possible (Douglas, Cox & Webster, 1999; Douglas & Kropp, 2002). Yet the existing empirical literature on stalking is small and the general literature on violence risk assessment is of limited assistance in these cases. The research reported in this dissertation attempts to address some of these shortcomings in the empirical literature by describing the risk profile of criminal harassment (stalking) cases encountered by Canadian police and the relationship of individual risk factors to case management decisions. The overall goal of the research is to foster the development of empirically-derived case management principles that will inform law enforcement practices for dealing with stalking cases in the future.
The introduction to this dissertation begins with a brief overview of the relevant legislative provisions surrounding Canada’s anti-stalking law and a description of its inherent risk assessment and risk management qualities. Next, a review of the empirical literature is presented that summarizes what is currently known about stalkers, the people they target, their behaviour, and the law enforcement strategies used to manage them. The final portion of the introduction describes the rationale for the study and sets out the specific research goals of this dissertation.

The Legislative Response to Stalking in Canada

Stalking, or criminal harassment, became an offence in Canada in 1993 under section 264 of the *Criminal Code* (R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46). Consistent with the general definition of stalking provided earlier, there are three basic legal elements the Crown must prove to obtain a conviction for criminal harassment (Bala, 1993; see also MacFarlane, 1997). First, the accused must have engaged in at least one of the following four prohibited behaviours: repeatedly following; repeatedly communicating; besetting or watching; or, threatening conduct. Second, the accused must have known that the victim was harassed, or was reckless as to whether or not the victim was harassed. Finally, the accused’s behaviour must have caused the victim, reasonably, to fear for his or her safety or the safety of a third person known to the victim (e.g., child, parent, romantic partner, etc.). Criminal harassment is a ‘hybrid’ offence and, as such, the Crown has the option of proceeding with the charge as a less serious ‘summary’ offence or as a more serious ‘indictable’ offence. If criminal harassment is proceeded with summarily, the accused is
liable to a fine of not more than $2,000 and/or up to six months imprisonment. If it is proceeded with as an indictable offence, the maximum period of imprisonment increases to ten years.

Since 1993 there have been several amendments to the *Criminal Code* that relate directly or indirectly to the offence of criminal harassment. One of two legislative goals seems to lie at the root of these changes. The first goal centres on creating stiffer sentencing options for more serious cases of criminal harassment. For example, the maximum period of imprisonment for the indictable offence of criminal harassment was lengthened to ten years, a sentence twice as long as the five-year term originally available under section 264. Aggravating factors specific to criminal harassment were also created under the *Criminal Code* (see s. 264(4)). Aggravating factors consist of factual circumstances that favour a harsher sentence (Schmalleger & MacAlister & McKenna, 2004). Now, more severe sentences are justified in cases where an accused breaches a peace bond, recognizance (i.e., bail), or similar order during the period of his or her harassing behaviour. Finally, the definition of first-degree murder was expanded to include criminal harassment (see s. 231). Accordingly, any culpable homicide committed during the course of criminal harassment, regardless of whether it was planned or not, is construed as first-degree murder and thereby attracts an automatic life sentence on conviction.

The other goal obvious in the legislative changes surrounding section 264 was to improve public safety in situations when the accused is granted judicial interim release, or, as it is more commonly termed, bail. As a result of amendments to the *Criminal Code*
criminal harassment is among a small group of enumerated offences subject to special bail considerations. In particular, the decision of a court to impose any bail condition on someone charged with criminal harassment automatically triggers a legal presumption that a further condition will also be imposed prohibiting that person from possessing weapons. As a legal presumption, the weapons prohibition is not mandatory, but courts must state their reason(s) for not imposing it on the record (see s. 515(4.12)). Lastly, in cases where a court decides that it is appropriate to impose conditions for release on bail, the court is required by statute (see section 515(4.2)) to also consider prohibiting the accused from communicating with certain people (e.g., victim, witness, etc.) and from attending certain locations.

Stalking and the Risk Assessment Imperative

Violence risk assessment is the “process of evaluating individuals to (1) characterize the likelihood they will commit acts of violence and (2) develop interventions to manage or reduce that likelihood” (Hart, 1998, p. 122). As this definition highlights, there are two component tasks to the process of risk assessment. These tasks have also been referred to as risk ‘prediction’ and risk ‘management’ (see Heilbrun, 1997). The focus of risk prediction is to develop an accurate estimate of an individual’s likelihood for acting violently in the future. Considerable controversy exists in the

Interestingly, it is the court’s decision to make the bail release conditional that triggers the legal presumption. If the person charged with criminal harassment is released on bail without conditions, there is no presumption that a weapons prohibition will be imposed.
literature over the best approach for deriving such estimates, but every approach, to some extent, involves conducting an individual case evaluation to identify 'risk factors' that are perceived to increase the likelihood of future violence and 'protective factors' that are perceived to decrease that likelihood (e.g., Hart, 1998; Litwack, 2001; Quinsey, Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 1998). In contrast, the risk management task focuses on selecting and implementing suitable intervention strategies designed to reduce the perceived risk for violence (Hart, 1998; Heilbrun, 1997).

Though conceptually distinct, Hart (1998, 2001) contends that risk prediction and risk management are mutually dependent processes that must be performed together if successful case management is to be achieved. As Hart (1998) observes, risk prediction compels risk management because there is little to be gained from estimating the likelihood of violence if no attempt is made to avert the violence that is predicted. Conversely, it is impossible to formulate meaningful risk management strategies in the absence of a clear understanding of the risk posed and the factors contributing (e.g., substance abuse, impulsivity) to that risk (Hart, 1998). As a practical matter then, risk prediction and risk management, cannot, or at least should not, be carried out as isolated tasks.

Good risk assessment and risk management are just as vital for cases of stalking as they are for cases involving other forms of violence and the advent of anti-stalking statutes has done nothing to weaken or strengthen the soundness of these practices. The introduction of Canada's criminal harassment law did, however, formally embody these practices into the legal process. The criminalization of stalking presented both new
opportunities for case management as well as new demands for violence risk assessments. In short, it created a risk assessment imperative in stalking cases that had not previously existed. Indeed, as the following analysis shows, the processes of risk assessment and risk management permeate every aspect of the criminal justice system’s response to the problem of stalking including: the policy objectives behind our criminal harassment law; the resulting legislative framework of section 264 and other relevant Criminal Code provisions; and, the law enforcement protocols that were subsequently implemented.

At the policy level, one of the primary legislative objectives behind Canada’s criminal harassment law was to create an effective means for criminal justice system intervention in stalking cases. Admittedly, objectives such as deterrence, retribution and denunciation also likely played a role, but the presence of these traditional policy goals does not belie the law’s obvious risk management objective. This policy goal becomes readily apparent on an examination of the legislative and social backdrop that gave rise to the law.

For many years prior to the introduction of section 264, the Criminal Code contained numerous offences that conceivably could be used to deal with various types of stalking behaviour (e.g., threatening, trespassing, assaults; MacFarlane, 1997). In general, these provisions were designed to deal with single, isolated acts usually

3 The Criminal Code offences generally identified in this regard include: trespassing at night (s. 177), uttering threats (s. 264.1), harassing phone calls (s. 372), intimidation (s. 423), and peace bonds (ss. 810 & 811; see generally Manitoba Law Reform Commission, 1997; Pilon, 1993).
involving overtly threatening and aggressive behaviours. Unfortunately, these pre-existing offences were not particularly well-suited for dealing with stalking which consists of acts that individually are often lawful and relatively innocuous, but which collectively form a pattern of implicitly threatening and fear-inducing conduct (MacFarlane, 1997; Pilon, 1993). The ineffectiveness of these measures for intervening in stalking cases was especially disturbing because of the widespread perception that stalking behaviour is a harbinger of more serious violence. The implication of this belief is that stalking behaviour will escalate to physical or even lethal violence if it is allowed to continue unchecked (for examples of these popular conceptions see generally MacFarlane, 1997; Minister Collins applauds stalking legislation, 1993; Pilon, 1993, Way, 1994).

The limitations of the existing Criminal Code regime and the tragic consequences that could follow when authorities either could not, or did not, intercede, were poignantly illustrated by several well-publicized cases of women who were stalked and murdered in early 1993 (House of Commons Debates, 1993, May 6; MacFarlane, 1997; Way, 1994). It was amidst this political backdrop that criminal harassment was added to the Criminal Code. As the government went on to explain, the law was intended to “prevent” stalking behaviour (House of Commons Debates, 1993, May 6, p. 19016) and provide “real

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4 The two most publicized and widely cited cases occurred in the City of Winnipeg in January of 1993. Terri-Lyn Babb was stalked and murdered by a former practical nurse who had cared for her during a period of hospitalization. Sherry and Maurice Paul were murdered by a man who was romantically obsessed with Ms. Paul. In both cases, the eventual killers were subject to restraining orders directing them to have no contact with the victims (see generally, Manitoba Law Reform Commission, 1997; MacFarlane, 1997; Way, 1994).
protection” (Minister Collins applauds stalking legislation, 1993) for women. The legislative goal, in essence, was to establish a new risk management regime specifically designed to address the unique challenges posed by stalking violence.

The inherent risk-oriented nature of the criminal harassment law goes beyond the policy considerations that lay behind the creation of the offence. It is also reflected in the actual statutory language of section 264. Although a detailed legal analysis of the law is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is worth pointing out that the language of the statute was carefully chosen to realize the risk management function of the law without jeopardizing its constitutional validity. For example, an earlier version of the statute required the Crown to prove that the accused possessed the specific intent to harass the victim (MacFarlane, 1997). Some analysts at the time expressed concern that such a requirement would defeat the very purpose of the law which was the timely and effective intervention in stalking cases, for the simple reason that many stalkers do not believe they are harassing their victims (MacFarlane, 1997; Way, 1994). Indeed, many stalkers justify their behaviour as genuine efforts to initiate or re-kindle romantic relationships (MacFarlane, 1997). In response to these concerns the specific intent element was dropped from the final statutory language of the law, thereby enhancing its risk management function (MacFarlane, 1997).

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5 This concern was expressed by both the Attorney General of Ontario and the Assistant Deputy Attorney General of Manitoba. In his statement on the issue, the Assistant Deputy Attorney General of Manitoba stated "[w]hat we want as law enforcement officials is the ability to intervene quickly and early... We feel this insistence of the federal government on a specific intent or at least an averting to the risk that’s required in recklessness may defeat the social purposes of the law." (cited in MacFarlane, 1997, p. 69).
The risk management aspects of the law are evident elsewhere in the *Criminal Code* too. Under the judicial interim release provisions reviewed earlier, individuals charged with criminal harassment who are granted conditional bail release are singled out for special consideration by the courts to determine whether other restrictions or prohibitions are warranted. The imposition of release conditions, like a firearms prohibition, is plainly a means of managing risk and reducing harm.

These same judicial interim release provisions also mandate the performance of risk assessments in stalking cases. A court may only decline to impose a weapons prohibition if it is convinced that such a condition is not required in the “interests of safety of the accused or of any other person” (s. 514(4.1)). Similarly, the exercise of judicial discretion over whether or not to add communication or movement restrictions to the conditions for release require the courts to evaluate whether these conditions are in the “interests of the safety and security of any person” (s. 514(4.2)). Directing the courts to consider the issue of public safety is tantamount to a statutorily mandated risk assessment. Presumably, courts will impose the additional release conditions in cases where the accused presents an elevated risk to public safety, and conversely, they will decline to impose these conditions when the accused is perceived to pose little or no perceived risk to public safety. These statutory provisions also illustrate the interconnected nature of risk assessment and risk management because the court cannot put the risk management function of the statute into practice (i.e., impose bail conditions) until after it has made an appraisal of the violence risk that exists (i.e., evaluate the public safety interest).
Canada's criminal harassment law and its related statutory provisions drive the risk assessment process in other respects, too. The need for some risk assessments will arise merely because criminal harassment is now a criminal offence. Risk assessments occur at nearly every juncture of the Canadian criminal justice system (see generally Lyon, Hart & Webster, 2001) and so the process of charging people with criminal harassment and formally entering them into the criminal justice system will necessarily trigger some assessments. In this sense, criminal harassment is no different than any other criminal offence.

It is also apparent that the offence of criminal harassment promotes the risk assessment process in ways that are specific to this form of violence. In particular, the creation of the criminal harassment offence has led to the establishment of official protocols and procedures for investigating these cases. These protocols frequently mandate that some form of risk assessment be performed. For example, the operational policies of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) specify that investigating officers must consider an enumerated list of risk factors before deciding to discontinue any investigation into allegations of criminal harassment or domestic violence (RCMP, 1998). Where an investigation reveals that an offence of criminal harassment may have occurred, officers are directed, inter alia, to make a summary assessment of the risk to the victim. Similarly, a publication from the Department of Justice Canada (2004)

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 Cann 6 Criminal Harassment Guidelines Check Sheet, Form “E” Div. 566 contained in the Operations Manual of the RCMP directs investigating officers to assess whether “risk is slight (no immediate danger),” “moderate (psychological or property),” or “extreme (physical harm).”
designed to assist law enforcement officials and Crown prosecutors in cases of criminal harassment advises that “[t]he appropriate level or type of intervention in a given case cannot be determined until a threat assessment or risk assessment has been made. The term ‘threat assessment’ is used to describe the process of assessing the risk of violence that the suspect poses to the victim and assessing the potential impact of the type of intervention on the victim’s safety” (p. 16). It is expected that as law enforcement personnel become increasingly familiar with assessing and managing risk, these practices will become more integral features of criminal harassment investigations.

It should be clear from the preceding analysis that the tasks of risk assessment and risk management are intimately bound up in the criminal justice system’s response to the problem of stalking. Canada’s criminal harassment law was conceived, drafted, and implemented as a means of facilitating early and effective intervention in cases of stalking behaviour. The desire for effective case management has in turn driven a need to develop and implement good risk assessment practices. The critical nature of the risk assessment process in cases of stalking underscores the importance of carrying it out in a skilful, prudent and knowledgeable manner. Such a standard can be achieved only if current practices accord with the empirical literature. As Douglas et al. (1999) stress, “science ought to inform practice” (p. 177). At this point, it is appropriate to review what we know about stalkers and stalking from the scientific literature.
What is Known About Stalking?

Stalking Perpetrators

Socio-demographic characteristics

The vast majority of individuals who engage in stalking are male. Epidemiological studies conducted in Canada and abroad as well as official crime reporting data in Canada all indicate that approximately 80% or more of stalking perpetrators are male (Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Hackett, 2000; Kong, 1996; Purcell et al., 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Smaller samples of stalkers drawn from civil or forensic psychiatric settings show greater diversity in the proportion of male perpetrators, but this variation likely reflects differences in sampling procedures and/or the unique institutional setting under study (e.g., Adams, 2001; Gentile, Asamen, Harmell & Weathers, 2002; Meloy, 1996).

Stalking knows no age boundaries. There are reports of stalking perpetrators in their early teens and younger (Gill & Brockman, 1996; Kong, 1996; McCann, 2000; Morrison, 2001; Purcell et al., 2002; Sheridan, Davies & Boon, 2001) as well as perpetrators who are 70 years of age or older (Hall, 1998; Jordan, Logan, Walker & Nigoff, 2003; Mullen, Pathé, Purcell, & Stuart, 1999; Purcell et al., 2002; Sheridan et al., 2001). Despite the wide range of ages evident among stalkers, measures of central tendency (i.e., mean or median) are concentrated between 34 and 40 years of age (e.g., Adams, 2001; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Harmon, Rosner, & Owens, 1998, Kienlen,
A visual inspection of Canadian crime data reveals that the average age of criminal harassment perpetrators is noticeably older than perpetrators of other crimes (Hackett, 2000; Kong, 1996). So far, statistical comparisons are limited to clinical-forensic settings, but the results lend support to the conclusion that stalkers, as a group, are relatively old offenders (Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; but see Meloy et al., 2000).

Studies examining the educational level of stalkers generally find that the majority attained high school graduation or higher (Brewster, 2000; Harmon, Rosner, & Owens, 1995; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Schwartz-Watts & Morgan, 1998; Schwartz-Watts et al., 1997). This level compares favourably to mentally disordered offenders (Harmon et al., 1995; Meloy & Gothard, 1995). Despite their educational achievements, perhaps as many as one third or more of all stalkers are unemployed at the time they engage in stalking behaviour (Brewster, 2000; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hall, 1998; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen & Pathé, 1994a; Mullen et al., 1999; Pathé, Mullen, & Purcell, 2000; Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2001). While their level of unemployment is high relative to the general population (Purcell et al., 2002), there is no indication it is worse than any other group of offenders (e.g., Sheridan et al., 2001).

In general, stalkers experience a great deal of difficulty establishing and maintaining romantic relationships. Numerous studies report that the majority of stalkers
are single while they are pursuing their victims (e.g., Harmon et al., 1995; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Meloy et al., 2000; Morrison, 2001; Mullen & Pathé, 1994a; Pathé et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2001; Sandberg, McNiel, & Binder, 1998; Schwartz-Watts & Morgan, 1998; Schwartz-Watts et al., 1997). Statistical analyses confirm that stalkers are more likely to be unmarried than forensic psychiatric patients (Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Schwartz-Watts et al., 1997), civil psychiatric patients (Sandberg et al., 1998), spousal assaulters (Burgess et al., 1997) and the general population (Purcell et al., 2002). These findings have led to speculation that stalking, at least among intimacy-seeking stalkers, is a socially inappropriate response to loneliness (Meloy, 1996, 1998; Mullen et al., 2000).

So little effort has been made to identify socio-demographic risk factors for stalking violence that a review of the literature on this topic requires that each study be treated individually. Schwartz-Watts and Morgan (1998) failed to find any significant differences in the age, race, education level and marital status of violent and non-violent stalkers undergoing forensic evaluation, however, the small size of the sample (n = 42) in this study and accompanying poor statistical power likely hampered the detection of positive results. The only study to report positive relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and stalking violence involved a large sample of stalkers (n = 204) undergoing forensic evaluations in New York (Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002). These researchers identified three socio-demographic characteristics of the perpetrator that were predictive of stalking violence: young age, low educational achievement, and non-Caucasian race. Importantly, these socio-demographic variables remained significant
predictors of stalking violence even after other stalking characteristics were taken into account using multivariate logistic regression.

**Psychological characteristics**

The psychopathology of stalkers has garnered considerable interest among researchers no doubt owing to the obsessive behaviour manifested by these perpetrators. Most of this research emanates from clinical-forensic samples, but there are a few studies based on police or prosecution file samples that also provide some limited data on this issue. A review by Gill and Brockman (1996) of more than 600 police criminal harassment files from urban centres across Canada found references to a psychological disturbance or mental problem in 14% of the cases. In another study, 4% of 55 stalking perpetrators identified from the files of the San Diego City Attorney’s Criminal Division Domestic Violence Unit were described as delusional (Nicastro, Cousins, & Spitzberg, 2000).

The generally low level of acute and severe psychological disturbances detected in these investigations contrasts sharply with the results of a study by Zona et al. (1993). Zona and colleagues found evidence of mental disorder in 45% of the cases investigated by the Threat Management Unit (TMU) of the Los Angeles Police Department, however, the TMU sample is unique in at least two respects that may place important limitations on the generalizability of these findings. First, it does not include cases involving domestic violence, and second, it handles an unusually high proportion of celebrity stalking cases that may be more likely to manifest serious psychopathology. As a consequence of these
factors, the studies by Gill and Brockman (1996) and Nicastro et al. (2000) may provide a better estimate of the level of serious mental disorder most law enforcement agencies are likely to encounter in stalking cases.

Not surprisingly, the prevalence of psychiatric histories and mental disorder is much higher among clinical-forensic samples. Indeed, the rate of prior psychiatric hospitalization or treatment in these samples generally exceeds 60% (Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Sandberg et al., 1998). The drawback to these studies is that the nature of the sample can be expected to exaggerate the prevalence and severity of psychopathology that exists amongst the broader population of stalkers. Notwithstanding this methodological limitation, clinical-forensic studies of stalkers constitute a valuable source of detailed information concerning psychiatric symptomology.

With few exceptions, the proportion of stalkers in clinical-forensic samples manifesting psychosis typically ranges from 15% to 30%. With respect to Axis I disorders, schizophrenia, delusional disorders, mood disorders and substance abuse are among the most frequently mentioned diagnoses (Gentile et al., 2002; Harmon et al., 1998; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Morrison, 2001; Mullen et al., 1999; Zona et al., 1998). Contrary to initial assumptions, the prevalence of erotomantic delusions among stalkers is quite low and seldom seems to exceed 15% (Harmon et al., 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen et al., 1999; Sandberg et al., 1998). Nonetheless, stalkers may be significantly more likely to manifest these delusions relative to other psychiatric inpatients (Sandberg et al., 1998). These disorders also tend to be a more
prominent feature among stranger or acquaintance stalkers than among ex-intimate stalkers (Farnham, James & Cantrell, 2000; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy et al., 2000).

Histories of substance abuse and dependence are relatively commonplace among stalkers (Adams, 2001; Brewster, 2000; Burgess et al., 1997; Hall, 1998; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Nicastro et al., 2000; Roberts, 2005; Sandberg et al., 1998; Schwartz-Watts & Morgan, 1998; Schwartz-Watts et al., 1997), although it is the group of ex-intimate stalkers who appear to be most at risk of manifesting clinically significant disorders of this kind (Meloy et al., 2000). Very little is known about the actual role played by substance use in stalking cases, but evidence suggests that it is a contributing factor in only a limited subset of those stalkers who have a history of substance abuse (Brewster, 2003; Kienlen, et al., 1997). Moreover, substance abuse disorders are no more prevalent among stalkers, and they may even be significantly less prevalent, than other groups in the criminal justice system including mentally disordered offenders (Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000) and pretrial detainees (Schwartz-Watts et al., 1997). Hence, substance abuse may be no more prominent in stalking than it is in other types of criminal behaviour.

Axis II personality disorders are prevalent among stalkers at rates significantly above those for non-stalking psychiatric inpatients (Sandberg et al., 1998) and mentally disordered offenders (Meloy & Gothard, 1995). Cluster B diagnoses (i.e., borderline, histrionic, narcissistic) tend to predominate (Mullen et al., 1999; Zona et al., 1998) with the exception of antisocial personality disorder (and psychopathy) which is noticeably absent (Harmon et al., 1995; Kropp, Hart & Lyon, 2002; Meloy & Gothard, 1995).
Moreover, many of the stalkers who do not satisfy all the diagnostic criteria for a Cluster B disorder still exhibit narcissistic, grandiose, and dependent personality traits that are features of the disorders (Mullen & Pathé, 1994a; Meloy et al., 2000; Rosenfeld, 2003; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002).

The high level of Cluster B personality disorders and traits among stalkers has fuelled speculation in the literature that it may foster a link between stalking behaviour and domestic violence. Douglas and Dutton (2000) point out that there is a subgroup of spousal assaulters, sometimes labelled borderline/cyclical batterers, who are emotionally dependent, volatile, angry, and who often manifest other traits typical of Cluster B personality disorders. Douglas and Dutton (2000) posit that this subgroup of borderline/cyclical spousal assaulters is the same group of individuals who tend to stalk their former intimate partners following dissolution of their relationship. Empirical support for this theory can be found among surveys of stalking victimization experiences following the end of romantic relationships. In general, these studies report positive correlations between the presence of stalking-like behaviours and various measures of jealousy, possessiveness, dependency and affective instability as well as insecure and anxious attachment styles (Dye & Davis, 2003; Kamphuis, Emmelkamp & de Vries, 2004; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Palarea, Cohen & Rohling, 2000; Lewis, Fremouw, Del Ben & Farr, 2001; Roberts, 2002). Thus, the more possessive, jealous and insecure an ex-partner is within the relationship, the more likely he or she is to display stalking behaviour once the relationship ends.
Based on this review of the literature, it appears there are two broad groups of stalkers that are discernible in terms of their psychopathology (see generally Kurt, 1995; Meloy, 2001b; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2000; Rosenfeld, 2000; Zona et al., 1998). The first is composed primarily of individuals manifesting personality disorders, especially Cluster B disorders, and their associated traits. Members of this group usually have a pre-existing relationship with the victim whom they knew as an acquaintance, a co-worker or an intimate partner. Diagnoses of substance abuse or dependence are prevalent among this group. The second discernible group, which accounts for a smaller proportion of stalkers than the first, is composed of individuals manifesting psychoses and other serious disturbances of thought and reality testing. Typical disorders include schizophrenia, delusional disorders including erotomania, and bipolar disorder. These stalkers generally have little or no contact with the victim prior to the stalking behaviour.

The potential relationship of mental disorder to stalking violence has been empirically examined on a number of different conceptual levels. Studies construing mental disorder the most broadly have simply distinguished (or rated) the presence or absence of any mental disorder. For example, a Canadian study by Morrison (2001) found a positive relationship between the degree of mental disorder manifested by the perpetrator and the presence of aggressive or violent stalking behaviour. Unfortunately, making sense of this finding is difficult because it is based on a composite measure of mental disorder that lumped together Axis I and Axis II disorders as well as severe behavioural problems. A conceptually cleaner approach was adopted by Meloy, Davis and Lovette (2001) who defined a “major mental disorder” as an Axis I disorder.
Although they found that stalkers with major mental disorders were significantly less likely to have engaged in violence (46%) than stalkers without such disorders (78%), the absence of a mental disorder did not prove to be a significant predictor of stalking violence once the victim-perpetrator relationship was taken into account. Notwithstanding the equivocal nature of the findings, the usefulness of these studies is limited by the broad manner in which they construe mental disorder.

Potentially more instructive research has focused on narrower forms of mental disorder such as psychosis, personality disorder, and/or substance abuse. Perhaps the most studied of these mental disorders is psychosis, including particular forms of psychosis such as delusions and/or erotomania. The overwhelming weight of this research either fails to detect a relationship between psychosis and stalking violence (e.g., Farnham et al., 2000; Kienlen et al., 1997; Schwartz-Watts & Morgan 1998), or reports that psychotic stalkers pose a significantly lower risk of violence (Mullen et al., 1999; Zona et al., 1993; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002) and general stalking recidivism (Rosenfeld, 2003). Moreover, a recent meta-analysis that includes most, but not all, of these studies concluded that the presence of a psychotic disorder demonstrates a significant, negative relationship to stalking violence (Rosenfeld, 2004).

Less studied is the possible relationship between personality disorders and stalking violence. An initial investigation by Harmon et al. (1998) of stalkers undergoing forensic evaluations in New York found that rates of violence differed significantly by psychiatric status. The highest rates of violence were observed among stalkers manifesting a personality disorder co-morbid with substance abuse (88%) or an Axis I
disorder (78%). Rosenfeld and Harmon (2002) performed a series of comparative analyses on an expanded version of this same sample, but they found no differences in the rates of violence between stalkers with, and without, personality disorders. This finding is consistent with other studies (Menzies, Fedoroff, Green, Isaacson, 1995; Meloy et al., 2001; Mullen et al., 1999). Despite these individually discouraging results, a meta-analytic review that combined the findings from these four studies found the association of personality disorder and violence exhibits a small, significant effect size and therefore its utility as a risk factor should not be discounted (Rosenfeld, 2004).

Several studies report relationships between substance and/or alcohol abuse and different dimensions of stalking violence. For example, multivariate analyses performed by Brewster (2000) found that perpetrator alcohol and/or substance abuse independently predicted physical injuries among the victims of ex-intimate stalkers. Alcohol abuse also proved to be a significant independent predictor of physical violence committed during the course of stalking former dating partners (Roberts, 2005). Two other studies observed significant univariate relationships between alcohol abuse and violence among clinical-forensic stalking samples (Mullen et al., 1999; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002). Notably, the relationships existing between alcohol abuse and violence in both of these studies disappeared once more comprehensive analyses were carried out that took account of other variables. This finding indicates that substance abuse, at least in these latter two studies, is a correlate of other variables more directly related to violence. A
meta-analysis of the findings from three of these studies7 as well as two others that did not yield statistically significant results (Menzies et al., 1995; Meloy et al., 2000) concluded that substance abuse was a significant predictor of stalking violence (Rosenfeld, 2004).

**Criminological characteristics**

Criminal histories are not uncommon among samples of stalkers. Most studies report that between one third to three quarters of all stalkers have existing criminal records regardless of whether the sample is based on police investigation files (Garrod, Ewert, Field, & Warren, 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996), clinical files (Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen et al., 1999) or victim surveys (Hall, 1998). The proportion of stalkers with actual convictions for violent offences is lower, usually falling within the range of 10% to 30% (Gill & Brockman, 1996; Kienlen et al., 1997; Morrison, 2001; Mullen et al., 1999). Predictably, histories of criminal offences (Meloy et al., 2001; Purcell et al., 2001) and violent offences (Purcell et al., 2001) are significantly more prevalent among male stalkers than female stalkers.

Very little is known about the prevalence of serial stalkers who target multiple victims over a period of time (i.e., target one victim for a period of time before moving to a new target). There is evidence of prior stalking behaviour in approximately one fifth or less of all stalking cases (Burgess et al., 1997; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Jordan et al., 2003; Meloy et al., 2000; Morrison, 2001; Mullen et al., 1999; Zona et al., 1993), but

7 The study by Roberts (2005) was not available for inclusion in the meta-analysis.
these figures should be considered conservative estimates (see Hall, 1998; Sheridan et al., 2001). The relatively recent recognition and criminalization of stalking behaviour means that many occurrences of this behaviour in the past were likely ignored or classified as different offences and so the actual level may be much higher than current research suggests.

Consistent with the notion that there is a link between stalking and domestic violence, there is evidence that many stalkers targeting former intimate partners have histories of prior relationship violence. Two Canadian studies that reviewed police investigation files of criminal harassment both reported that approximately half of the cases involving former intimate partners were characterized by previous relationship violence (Garrod et al., 1995, Gill & Brockman, 1996). A third Canadian study of criminal harassment cases selected from news articles and legal judgments identified 29% of the perpetrators as “batterers” (Morrison, 2001). Although the proportion of cases with previous relationship violence in this latter study appears somewhat lower than the level reported elsewhere, it is based on the entire sample regardless of the victim-perpetrator relationship. The prevalence of prior relationship violence in this study may approximate the levels detected in other investigations if the analysis was similarly confined only to stalkers victimizing ex-intimate partners.

Two complementary lines of research add further empirical support to the relationship between stalking and domestic violence. One line of research shows that ex-intimate stalkers are more likely than non-stalkers to be psychologically or physically abusive within the context of their intimate relationships (Coleman, 1997; Logan,
The other line of research shows that stalking behaviour is more prevalent among men who are physically abusive to their intimate partners than among men who are not abusive (McFarlane, Campbell, & Watson, 2002, McFarlane, Campbell, Wilt, Sachs, Ulrich & Xu, 1999). This overlap between stalking and domestic violence may relate to the stalker's need for control. It is likely that many ex-intimate stalkers perceive the 'need' to engage in stalking behaviour once their relationship with the victim ends because more direct means of controlling and monitoring the victim no longer exist. In this context, stalking may represent the continuation of intra-relationship patterns of emotional and physical abuse beyond the end of the formal relationship (Davis & Frieze, 2000). The tendency for stalking to arise more commonly among estranged partners who were previously in violent relationships than current partners who remain in violent relationships adds further credence to this possibility (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Evidence demonstrating that criminal history is a risk factor for stalking violence is inconsistent. Several existing studies report that stalking violence is significantly related to the frequency of prior arrests (Harmon et al., 1998) or the presence of prior convictions (Mullen et al., 1999; Sheridan & Davies, 2001), but these favourable results must be weighed against a similar number of studies that failed to find such relationships (Meloy et al., 2001; Palarea, Zona, Lane, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002). The unsettled nature of these findings was confirmed by a meta-analysis of these same studies that yielded a small, non-significant effect size for criminal history (Rosenfeld, 2004).
Research of past violence has distinguished between general and intra-relationship violence. Two studies have examined the association of general violence and stalking violence. Rosenfeld and Harmon (2002) found a higher rate of stalking violence among perpetrators with a history of violence (43%) compared to individuals with no known history of violence (31%), but the difference was not statistically significant using conventional cut-offs ($p = .10$). The other study, by Palarea et al. (1999), reported a moderate ($r = .43$) and significant relationship between general violence history and stalking violence.

With respect to research on intra-relationship violence, two of three applicable studies failed to find a significant association with stalking violence (Brewster, 2000; Palarea et al., 1999). A third study, by Morrison (2001), found that a stalker’s status as a batterer, as determined by “known battering/domestic abuse/anger management problems toward the victims” (p. 1408), was significantly related to ratings of aggressive and violent behaviour committed during the course of stalking. With the exception of the study by Morrison (2001), all of these studies were the subject of a meta-analytic review in which the findings were collectively treated as “violence history” (Rosenfeld, 2004). The overall effect size for the association of violence history and stalking violence was non-significant.

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8 With respect to the study by Palarea et al. (1999) that reported relationships for both general and intra-relationship violence, it appears that the larger relationship associated with general violence ($r = .43$) was the one analyzed in Rosenfeld’s (2004) meta-analysis.
Victims

Stalking is primarily a problem of violence against women. In victimization surveys and police statistics the proportion of female victims consistently exceeds 80% (Blaauw, Winkel, Arensman, Sheridan & Freeve, 2002; Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Garrod et al., 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hackett, 2000; Hall, 1998; Harmon et al., 1995; Kong, 1996; Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen & Pathé, 1994b; Nicastro et al., 2000; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Purcell et al., 2002; Rosenfeld, 2003; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Sheridan & Davies, 2001; Sheridan et al., 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Zona et al., 1993). While stalkers targeted people from across the social spectrum, there are signs that a greater risk of stalking victimization exists for individuals who are young, single (unmarried or divorced), or, of certain ethnic backgrounds (Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Purcell et al., 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Walby & Allen, 2004). For example, Aboriginals are twice as likely to report a stalking victimization experience than non-Aboriginal Canadians (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005).

The victim-perpetrator relationship has been a frequent subject of research in the literature, but interpreting this research is complicated by the absence of a uniform classification scheme. Some of the difficulties created by variations in conceptualizing victim-perpetrator relationships can be alleviated by condensing them into the following three broad categories: (1) current/ex-intimate partners; (2) friends, relatives and acquaintances; and, (3) strangers. Based on these broad categories, it is apparent that most stalking victims knew the perpetrator prior to being targeted (Budd & Mattinson,
Early studies typically found that current or former intimate partners comprised the largest group of known perpetrators (e.g., Garrod et al., 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hackett, 2000; Hall, 1998; Purcell et al., 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Contrary findings from recent large-scale epidemiological studies are beginning to cast doubt on the generalizability of these initial studies which raises the possibility that the results were largely the product of the predominantly offender-based samples being studied at the time (e.g., Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; McLennan, 1996; Purcell et al., 2002; cf. Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

The proportion of victims stalked by strangers varies greatly among published studies, but probably accounts for one third of all stalking cases or less (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Garrod et al., 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hackett, 2000; Hall, 1998; Kong, 1996; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Interestingly enough, cases of celebrity stalking, which often receive the greatest amount of media attention, represent only a very small subset of stalking cases involving strangers. It has been estimated that only 1% of all criminal harassment cases in Canada involve celebrity targets (Gill & Brockman, 1996) although it is likely that this figure is much higher for places like Los Angeles which are home to an unusually large number of high profile public personalities (e.g., Zona et al., 1998).

There is growing consensus that the victim-perpetrator relationship, specifically an ex-intimate relationship, is the most powerful predictor of stalking violence currently
identified in the literature. Studies show that former intimate stalkers are more likely than non-intimate stalkers to engage in approach behaviour (Palarea et al., 1999; Sheridan & Davies, 2001), commit property damage (Palarea, et al., 1999; Purcell et al., 2002), make threats (Harmon et al., 1998; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Palarea et al., 1999; Purcell et al., 2002; Sheridan & Davies, 2001), commit acts of physical violence (Farnham et al., 2000; Harmon et al., 1998; Palarea et al., 1999; Purcell et al., 2002; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Sheridan & Davies, 2001), violate restraining orders (Harmon et al., 1998; Sheridan & Davies, 2001) and commit further acts of stalking following arrest (Rosenfeld, 2003). Despite the evidence linking former intimate partners and stalking violence, the underlying reason for this link is not well understood.

**Stalking Behaviour**

**Motivations**

The literature on stalking has made a broad distinction between motivations that are ostensibly amorous in nature and those that are anger or grudge-oriented. Efforts to initiate, continue or reconcile a romantic relationship are some of the amorous-type motivations identified in the research (Brewster, 2003; Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Hall, 1998; Nicastro et al., 2000; Sheridan et al., 2001). Angry or grudge-oriented motivations, on the other hand, include efforts to upset or annoy the victim (Budd & Mattinson, 2000), retaliating against real or perceived slights (Hall, 1998), jealousy (Hall, 1998; Brewster, 2003; Nicastro et al., 2000) and revenge (Brewster, 2003).
Motivation, like stalking behaviour, is dynamic and prone to shift over time. Brewster (2003) interviewed a sample of women stalked by former romantic partners and noted that victims frequently reported observing temporal changes in the perpetrators' motivation for stalking. Many of the victims felt the stalking began as an attempt by the perpetrator to renew their defunct romantic relationship, but as these efforts at reconciliation failed they increasingly turned to stalking behaviours intended to intimidate and terrorize the victim. Some perpetrators fluctuate continually between seemingly incongruous motivations like reconciliation and revenge. For example, approximately 20% of the stalkers studied by Rosenfeld and colleagues (Rosenfeld, 2003; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002) were characterized as displaying ‘other’ attachment patterns that included a mixture of anger-oriented and romantic-oriented motivations. The presence of contradictory attachment patterns and motivational goals may help explain the ambivalent and volatile behaviour displayed by some stalkers.

Despite the importance ascribed to motivation and the pattern of attachment in stalking cases, there have been few attempts to explore its relationship to violence. A series of investigations by Harmon and colleagues provide some of the only research on the subject and the results of these studies are variable. In their initial study (Harmon et al., 1995), they found that perpetrators who were enamoured with their target and made threats were significantly more likely to act violently than enamoured stalkers who did

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Ample evidence of the perceived importance of these factors may be found among the myriad of stalking typologies that incorporate various dimensions of motivation or attachment (e.g., Holmes, 1998; Mullen et al., 2000; Zona et al., 1993).
not threaten. No such pattern emerged for stalkers exhibiting an angry or persecutory attachment to their target. Their second study (Harmon et al., 1998) made a direct comparison of violence rates for amorous (48%) and angry stalkers (45%), but the rates for both groups proved to be essentially the same and statistically non-significant. In their final study (Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002), they found that stalkers motivated by revenge were significantly more likely to be violent than stalkers exhibiting other motivations (e.g., amorous or mixed motivations).

The results of other studies also support the existence of a relationship between anger-oriented motivations and stalking violence. Mullen et al. (1999) found that stalkers described as “rejected” and “resentful” were more likely to threaten and assault their victims than other types of stalkers. Both rejected and resentful stalkers are motivated by vengeance, the distinction being that rejected stalkers vacillate between vengeance and appeasement and resentful stalkers do not. In a related study, Morrison (2001) observed a significant relationship between the degree of anger and/or hatred a stalker exhibited toward the victim and the degree of aggressive and violent behaviour in which they engaged. This last finding should be viewed cautiously because the ratings of anger and hatred were based on many of the same behaviours (e.g., threats and hostility) used to rate the presence of aggression/violence, and as a consequence the relationship between the two is probably over-inflated.
Nature of stalking behaviour

Most stalkers engage in a multitude of different stalking behaviours (Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Kienlen et al., 1997; Mullen et al., 1999; Purcell et al., 2002). The reciprocal is also true – few stalkers confine themselves to a single type of stalking behaviour (Blaauw et al., 2002; Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Mullen et al., 2000). Research carried out in the United Kingdom and Australia shows that about 20% of stalkers or less, engage in only one type of stalking behaviour (Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Mullen et al., 1999).

The nature of stalking behaviour has not been the subject of well-organized and systematic research and as a consequence it is hard to summarize the literature on this topic much beyond noting that stalking is immensely varied and diverse in its behavioural expression (Blaauw et al., 2002; Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Garrod et al., 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Harmon et al., 1995; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Mullen et al., 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Zona et al., 1993). Fortunately, there are signs this situation is beginning to change as demonstrated by several recent studies that used multi-dimensional scaling procedures to identify themes in stalking behaviour (Canter & Ioannou, 2004; Groves, Salfati, & Elliot, 2004; Häkkänen, Hagelstam, & Santilla, 2003).

Research by Groves et al. (2004) provides some empirical validity for their hypothesis that stalking behaviour manifests two identifiable themes; one reflecting control of the victim (e.g., defaming, confronting and threatening the victim) and the other reflecting efforts to initiate a relationship with the victim (e.g., seeking information
about the victim, inviting contact, sending gifts). On the basis of multi-dimensional scaling, Groves et al. (2004) concluded that behaviours identified *a priori* as infatuation themed were more likely to co-occur with other infatuation behaviours than with controlling themed behaviours. Likewise, controlling themed behaviours were more likely to co-occur together than to co-occur with infatuation behaviours. To validate these hypotheses, stalkers in their sample were classified according on the predominant theme evident in their stalking behaviour. Consistent with their hypotheses, Groves et al. (2004) found that infatuation behavioural themes were significantly more common among stalkers who did not have a prior sexual relationship with the victim whereas controlling behavioural themes were significantly more likely to exist among stalkers who had a prior sexual relationship with the victim.

Another way to conceptualize stalking behaviour that draws upon the threat assessment literature (e.g., Cornish, Murray & Collins, 1999; Dietz et al., 1991a, 1991b; Fein, Vossekul, & Holden, 1995) is to organize it according to the perpetrator’s proximity to the victim. The utility of this approach is that as proximity increases so too does the risk of potential physical harm. Using this approach stalking behaviour can be classified into one of the following three broad categories: (1) remote behaviours; (2) approach-oriented behaviours; and (3) direct contact or threatening behaviours (see generally Kropp, Hart, & Lyon, 2002). As its name suggests, remote behaviours involve stalking from afar. These behaviours typically involve a great deal of distance between the victim and the perpetrator as in the case of unwanted telephone calls, letters, faxes, email, and rumour spreading, etc. Approach-oriented behaviours involve closer
proximity to the victim than remote behaviours, but fall short of actual face-to-face contact. Common examples of approach-oriented behaviours include watching, following, and leaving notes or gifts at the victim’s place of work or residence. Direct contact or threatening behaviours involve very close proximity to the victim and therefore these behaviours generally pose the greatest risk of physical harm. This category of behaviours includes the presentation of gifts or notes, face-to-face verbal communication and threats, breaking and entering, and actual physical contact etc.

There are some suggestions in the literature that stalkers tend to commit increasingly more proximate and intrusive forms of stalking behaviour over time. Two Canadian studies of police criminal harassment files both described the typical pattern of stalking as one that begins with remote behaviours that escalate to more approach-oriented and direct contact forms of behaviour as the stalking continues (Garrod et al., 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996).

A more quantitative approach to this issue was adopted by Burgess et al. (1997). They asked a sample of batterers to indicate the chronological order of the different stalking behaviours they perpetrated against their victim. Sample means of these rankings were calculated to identify behaviours that tended to appear early on during the course of stalking versus those that tended to emerge later. The three behaviours to emerge first – anonymous phone calls, hang up phone calls, and efforts to discredit the victim – were all remote stalking behaviours. Stalking behaviours that tended to emerge on a more intermediate basis consisted primarily of more direct contact behaviours such
as contacting the victim at home, work and public places. The last occurring behaviour, breaking into the victim's residence, was also the most forcefully intrusive.

Efforts to explore the relationship between stalking behaviour and violence have concentrated principally on threatening communications, but there are a few exceptions. Palarea et al. (1999) found a small ($r = .15$), statistically significant relationship between property damage and violence and Harmon et al. (1998) reported that violating protection orders was significantly related to stalking violence. Though curious, these findings are isolated and therefore of limited utility at this time.

Rather than focusing on individual behaviours, a potentially more fruitful approach entails elucidating general patterns of stalking behaviour that relate to stalking violence. In one such study, Mechanic et al. (2000) found that relentlessly stalked victims were significantly more likely than infrequently stalked victims to report the presence of post-relationship threats and attempts by the perpetrator to abduct or take custody of the victim's children. A major limitation of this study is that the sample consists of battered women who were stalked as opposed to a general sample of stalking victims.

Instead of looking at the intensity of stalking behaviour, Palarea et al. (1999) rated the physical proximity of a stalker's behaviour to their target using a sample of stalking cases investigated by the Threat Management Unit. They found a small, positive relationship between stalking behaviour proximity and harm to persons. Stalkers exhibiting behaviours involving close proximity to the target showed a higher likelihood of engaging in acts of violence.
Finally, a study by Purcell, Pathé and Mullen (2004) searched for relationships between the duration of stalking behaviour and stalking violence. They divided a sample of respondents to a stalking victimization survey into two groups according to whether the behaviour had continued for more or less than two weeks. It was found that victims who were stalked for more than two weeks were the target of significantly more intrusive and violent behaviours including surveillance, intrusive approaches, threats and physical assaults. It is interesting to note that victims who were stalked for more than two weeks were also more likely to be stalked by someone known to them as opposed to strangers.

**Threats**

The only individual form of stalking behaviour subject to much empirical investigation is the presence of threats. Threats are a distressingly familiar feature of stalking which characterizes as many as 40% to 75% of all cases (Brewster, 2000; Garrod et al., 1995; Hackett, 2000; Hall, 1998; Harmon et al., 1995; Harmon et al., 1998; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Kienlen et al., 1997; McCann, 2000; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Morrison, 2001; Mullen et al., 1999; Nicastro et al., 2001; Palarea et al., 1999; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Roberts, 2005; Sheridan et al., 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Zona et al., 1993). Threats are most often directed against the person being stalked, but other individuals who are perceived to be impeding the stalker's access to the victim (e.g., a new romantic partner or a family member) are relatively common targets too (Bjerregaard, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy et al., 2001; Morrison, 2001; Mullen et al., 1999; Pathé & Mullen, 1997;
Purcell et al., 2002; Sheridan et al., 2001). Sheridan & Davies (2001) reported a positive correlation between threatening the primary stalking victim and threatening other third parties which suggests that stalkers who make threats tend to make multiple threats against more than one target.

So far, there has been virtually no effort in the stalking literature to conceptualize and study threats beyond distinctions based on the target (e.g., stalking victim, a third party known to the victim, the victim's property). Two exceptions to this statement are the companion studies carried out by Dietz and colleagues which examined inappropriate and threatening letters sent to Hollywood celebrities and Members of Congress in the United States (Dietz et al., 1991a, 1991b). These researchers distinguished among threats that were direct (i.e., an explicit statement of an intent to cause harm), conditional (a statement to cause harm that is contingent on something else), and veiled (i.e., vague or indirect communications indicating a potential for harm).

When the results of these two studies are viewed together it is apparent that individuals threatening Hollywood celebrities showed more of a tendency to make conditional threats (71% vs. 50%) and less of a tendency to make direct (26% vs. 48%) or veiled threats (39% vs. 60%) than individuals threatening Congress members. Differences in the threatening communications of these two groups may be a function of the letter writers' perceived relationship to the target. Writers to Hollywood celebrities usually projected themselves in the role of friend, acquaintance, adviser, spouse or suitor of the victim. Consistent with these roles, Hollywood celebrities could ostensibly avoid the harm being threatened by providing some type of personal attention to the letter
writer. In contrast, writers to Members of Congress tended to view themselves as the enemy and so direct threats of assassination were much more prevalent. Conditional threats were less common and usually issued with the aim of gaining power or influence over the Congressional Member. Admittedly, this is not a study of stalkers because there were no requirements that the communications be repeated or that the communications caused the victim to be fearful, but the findings suggest that the type and content of threatening communications vary in accordance with the perpetrator’s perception of his or her victim.

Numerous studies have detected a relationship between the occurrence of threats in stalking cases and the presence of other forms of fear-inducing and violent behaviour including property damage (Palarea et al., 1999), personal contact (Bjerregaard, 2000), physical violence (Bjerregaard, 2000; Brewster, 2000; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Meloy et al., 2001; Palarea et al., 1999; Roberts, 2005; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002) and victim injuries (Brewster, 2000). Further confirmation of this relationship was provided by a recent meta-analysis by Rosenfeld (2004) that included many, though not all, of the above studies. It concluded that the presence of threats was a strong and consistent correlate of stalking violence.

The nature of the relationship between threats and subsequent violence makes integrating this information usefully into practice a challenge. In a review of various independent stalking samples published in the latter part of the 1990s, Meloy (2001a) noted that approximately three quarters or more of stalkers who acted violently issued prior threats. In other words, most of the physical violence that occurred in stalking cases
was preceded by threats. The difficulty is that many stalkers who make threats never actually act upon them (see generally, Meloy, 2001b, 2002; Mullen et al., 2000). To illustrate, Meloy’s (2001a) review computed, *inter alia*, the percent false positives which in this context refers to the proportion of stalkers who issued threats, but who did not act violently.\(^\text{10}\) In five of the six studies for which this calculation could be performed, the percent false positives exceeded 50% (range = 41% to 75%). Hence, most of the stalkers who made threats were never violent. Although it is possible that the utility of threats as a risk factor may be more pronounced for stalkers with particular characteristics such as a history of engaging in violence, or acting on past threats, or harbouring extreme anger toward the victim, there has been little effort to examine the potential interaction between these types of factors. Until we have a better understanding of the factors influencing the decision to follow through on threatening communications it is clear that every threat must be taken seriously.

**Physical violence**

The concern over physical violence in stalking cases has dominated research in this area. Estimates of the actual level of physical violence are plagued by a host of methodological issues surrounding the generalizability of the study samples and the use of widely discrepant, and sometimes problematic, definitions of violence. Despite these persistent problems, a rough approximation of the amount of violence in stalking cases

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\(^\text{10}\) Meloy (2001a) refers to this mathematical expression as the “false positive rate,” however, in keeping with the recommendation of Hart, Webster and Menzies (1993) the term “percent false positives” is used here.
may be gleaned from two relatively recent meta-analytic reviews of the literature (Rosenfeld, 2004; Spitzberg, 2002). No study inclusion criteria are provided for Rosenfeld’s (2004) meta-analysis, but it is limited to a small number of samples (n = 11) that are likely to meet most definitions of stalking. The average rate of physical violence in this set of studies was 39%. Spitzberg (2002) reviewed a much broader selection of studies (n = 103) on “stalking and stalking-related phenomenon” (p. 264) and found that the average rate of violence was 33%. While neither of these two studies is definitive, both point to the fact that episodes of physical violence are relatively commonplace in stalking cases.

Fortunately, most of the physical violence described in the stalking literature is not especially egregious and consists primarily of behaviours like pushing, grabbing or slapping (Garrod et al., 1995; Harmon et al., Meloy et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2002; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002). As with threats, physical violence is most often directed at the primary stalking victim, but third parties also may be at risk if they are perceived to be in the way (Meloy, 1999b; Mullen et al., 2000). The prevalence of weapons in stalking cases varies widely from study to study (15% - 44%) and involves both objects of opportunity (e.g., automobiles) as well as manufactured weapons (Hackett, 2000; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy et al. 2000; Nicastro et al., 2000). Even in cases where weapons are present, they are infrequently used and victim injuries inflicted by weapons are relatively rare (Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hackett, 2000; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy et al. 2000; Morrison, 2001; Nicastro et al., 2000). In fact, physical injuries, whether due to
weapons or not, probably occur in less than 15% of stalking cases (Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hackett, 2000; Kong, 1996; Purcell et al., 2002; but see Brewster, 2000).

There is no doubt that stalking does on occasion lead to very serious violence including severe bodily harm, kidnapping, sexual assault, and even murder (Farnham et al., 2000; Hall, 1998, Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen et al., 1999; Nicastro, 2000; Purcell et al., 2002). At one time Meloy (1996, 1999b) speculated that as many as 2% of stalking cases culminated in homicide, but the accuracy of this figure was questioned by Mullen et al. (2002) who pointed out that it was a statistical impossibility in light of the known homicide rates existing in most western countries including the United States. Meloy (2002) has since resiled from his original estimate and concedes the actual rate of homicide among stalking cases must be much lower, perhaps no greater than one in 400. The only applicable Canadian data indicate that homicide or attempted murder comprised less than 1% of the related charges in criminal harassment cases reported to police in 1994 and 1995 (Kong, 1996). Despite the rarity of lethal violence during stalking, there is growing evidence that stalking behaviour is a risk factor for spousal homicide (Aldridge & Browne, 2003; Farr, 2002; McFarlane et al., 1999; Moracco, Runyan, & Butts, 1998).

**Duration**

The duration of stalking behaviour varies widely. In some cases stalking behaviour lasts for a few days or weeks, but in other cases the behaviour stretches on for many months or even years (Blaauw et al., 2002; Brewster, 2000; Canadian Centre for
Justice Statistics, 2005; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hall, 1998; Mullen et al., 1999; Purcell et al., 2002; Sheridan, 2001). While most stalking behaviour ceases within six months (Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Gill & Brockman, 1996; McLennan, 1996; Morrison, 2001; Purcell et al., 2002; Walby & Allen, 2004) there is a sizeable minority of stalking cases, perhaps a third or so, that persist for more than a year (Budd & Mattinson; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Morrison, 2001; Purcell et al., 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Walby & Allen, 2004).

Numerous studies have examined the duration of stalking behaviour across different victim-perpetrator relationships. The results so far have been mixed. Some studies report that the average duration of stalking is greatest among ex-intimate stalkers compared to other stalkers (Bjerregaard, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Purcell et al., 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Yet other studies find that strangers exhibit the most enduring and persistent stalking behaviour (Garrod et al., 1995; Zona et al., 1993). To complicate these results further, confounding variables such as victim help-seeking behaviour and criminal justice system intervention typically have not been taken into account. Considering these uncertainties it is not possible at this time to draw any firm conclusions regarding an association between victim-perpetrator relationship and the duration of stalking behaviour.
Law Enforcement Intervention

Canadian studies

One of the most neglected issues in the stalking literature concerns criminal justice system intervention in stalking cases. In Canada, only a handful of studies exist. Two Canadian reports analyzed Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR) data of criminal harassment incidents reported to police during the period 1994 to 1999 (Hackett, 2000; Kong, 1996). Although information concerning law enforcement intervention was limited to the manner in which each case was 'cleared' (i.e., considered resolved) by police, there are several trends in the data worth noting. First, the proportion of cases in which police identified a perpetrator and cleared the case remained between 70% and 75% for the entire period (Kong, 1996; Hackett, 2000). Second, in contrast to the stable clearance rate, the proportion of identified perpetrators who were subsequently charged by police declined steadily from 71% in 1995 to 61% in 1999. This decline is accounted for by an equally large rise in the proportion of victims who reportedly did not want charges laid against the perpetrator (17% in 1995 to 27% in 1999). Finally, there was a tendency for police to charge male perpetrators at a higher rate than female perpetrators.

A more detailed review of police involvement in criminal harassment cases was undertaken by Gill & Brockman (1996). They found that roughly one third of the victims

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11 The data analyzed in these reports constitute a non-representative sample of police-reported incidents from more than 100 different Canadian law enforcement agencies that accounted for slightly more than 40% of all the crime reported across the country during the period under study (Hackett, 2000; Kong, 1996).
in a sample of more than 600 Crown counsel and police files had made a previous complaint to police about the perpetrator. This proportion rose to 39% when the analyses were confined to those cases involving a current or former romantic partner. In at least a few of these persistent stalking cases (n = 29), the accused’s behaviour subsequently escalated to physical violence. Unfortunately, without a description of the initial investigative strategy employed in these cases it is not clear what, if anything, may be drawn from this finding beyond the fact that police interventions were not always successful.

Of the cases examined by Gill and Brockman (1996), 474 resulted in criminal harassment charges being laid against the perpetrator. Most of these cases (69%) also attracted additional charges for offences such as assault, uttering threats, or breach of recognizance. Once arrested,13 most of the perpetrators (75%) were granted release on bail rather than being detained in custody (< 20%). This finding replicates the results of a smaller British Columbia study conducted by Garrod et al. (1995) which reported that the vast majority of perpetrators charged with criminal harassment (90%) were granted bail.14 Gill and Brockman’s (1996) study also found that the likelihood of being released on bail was greatest among those accused without a history of breaching a no-contact order,

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12 Includes external instructions not to charge (e.g., policies of the Attorney-General).

13 In nearly all the cases in which a criminal charge was laid the perpetrator was arrested (94%) as opposed to being issued a summons to appear in court (6%).

14 It is not clear from the study results whether the remaining 10% of the perpetrators were denied bail, released on bail without conditions, or some combination thereof.
however, they noted that even if a history of breaches existed the accused was still more likely to be granted bail than to have it denied.

A similar pattern of results emerged from these two studies when the outcome of criminal harassment charges was examined. Nearly a third of the cases reviewed by Garrod et al. (1995) ended in a stay of proceedings (32%) while an even larger proportion of the charges examined by Gill and Brockman (1996) were either stayed or withdrawn (58%). At first blush these data paint a somewhat pessimistic picture of criminal harassment prosecutions, but further examination reveals that the charges were often dropped in exchange for other outcomes like peace bonds (Garrod et al., 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996) or guilty pleas on other charges (Gill & Brockman, 1996) which may be just as desirable. For example, Gill and Brockman (1996) point out that a conviction on at least one charge was obtained in almost half the cases (46%) in their sample. Thus, the existence of a criminal harassment charge can be a useful case management tool even in the absence of an ensuing conviction for this offence.

Aspects of law enforcement intervention were also examined in Morrison’s (2001) study of criminal harassment cases identified through electronic searches of a legal (Lexis-Nexis) and a news article database (Canadian News-Disc). Tabular results show that exactly half the victims in the sample used restraining orders as their initial strategy to deal with the harasser while the accompanying text explains that 62% of the perpetrators were eventually subject to a “legal order” (p. 1407) in the form of either a police warning or a court order directing them to cease contact with the victim. These strategies do not appear to have been very effective because Morrison (2001) states that
“only a very small proportion (7%) chose to obey a known legal order.” While the study’s attention to intervention strategies other than formally arresting and charging the alleged perpetrator is commendable, the unusual sampling procedure it employed likely resulted in the selection of the most serious and persistent cases of stalking.

The most recent Canadian data available concerning law enforcement involvement in cases of stalking comes from the 2004 General Social Survey (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005). Of those respondents who reported being stalked, 37% reported the incident to police. Less than one quarter (23%) of the cases that victims brought to the attention of police resulted in criminal charges. When charges were laid against the perpetrator, these charges were just as likely to be for assault (50%) or uttering threats (49%) as for criminal harassment (46%). Eleven percent of the stalking victims (n = 248) indicated they obtained a restraining order against the perpetrator and nearly half of those victims (49%) reported the order was violated. No details were provided concerning informal police strategies.

As this overview shows, most Canadian research on law enforcement intervention is concentrated on the flow of criminal harassment cases through the criminal justice system and their eventual disposition. These studies show that a large proportion of criminal harassment investigations do not lead to charges, or lead to charges that are subsequently stayed or withdrawn. The mere fact that many criminal harassment charges

15 It is unclear from the study description whether the 7% figure refers to the proportion of the entire sample that was under legal orders and complied with them, or whether the figure refers to the proportion of the perpetrators under legal orders that complied with the orders.
are eventually dropped does not necessarily mean the legislation's risk management function is frustrated. To the contrary, research indicates that criminal harassment charges are often dropped as a means of securing peace bonds (e.g., Garrod et al., 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996) or guilty pleas on other charges (Gill & Brockman, 1996) that may be suitable management strategies in the circumstances of the case. Unfortunately, research looking at informal legal strategies is exceedingly rare in Canada and the few findings that do exist are difficult to interpret in any meaningful way. At this juncture, it is appropriate to review international studies to see what has been learned in other countries about criminal justice system practices in stalking cases.

**International studies**

Even within the international arena, research on law enforcement strategies in stalking cases is confined to a small number of studies. In one such study, Sheridan (2001) surveyed the members of a stalking victims' support group in the United Kingdom (n = 29). Slightly more than two thirds (69%) of the respondents complained to the police about the stalking. When asked to identify factors that alleviated or exacerbated the stalking, six victims felt that legal intervention was effective in reducing stalking behaviour, however, an equal number of victims believed that legal intervention had the opposite effect and actually made the stalking behaviour worse. At the time of the survey, the stalking had ceased for 16 victims. In half of these cases, legal intervention was credited for stopping the behaviour whereas in the other half of the cases the stalking
ended due to non-legal factors (e.g., victim re-locating) or for reasons unknown to the victim. Aside from the equivocal results, interpretation of this study is complicated by numerous methodological weaknesses including the absence of details concerning the legal interventions attempted as well as the inclusion of cases occurring before and after the introduction of the United Kingdom's anti-stalking law. The sample is also small and, as the author concedes, probably unrepresentative of most stalking victims.

Sheridan conducted a second survey of stalking victims, this time involving a sample \((n = 95)\) of persons who contacted a charitable trust to promote personal safety (Sheridan et al., 2001). The stalking had ceased at the time of the survey for 28 of the victims. Six of these victims believed the stalking had ended due to interventions of a legal nature including arrest \((n = 4)\); jail \((n = 1)\); or, detention under a mental health act \((n = 1)\). The other 22 victims could not identify the reason why the stalking stopped or identified non-legal factors. Like before, the implications of this study are uncertain due to the small number of cases involved in the relevant analyses and the mixed nature of the sample which included cases transpiring before and after the creation of the United Kingdom’s anti-stalking law.

The National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) conducted with a random sample of 16,000 Americans is the only study to examine a broad array of formal and informal police interventions in stalking cases (Tjaden & Theonnes, 1998). Of those survey respondents who stalking victimization experiences \((n = 819)\), approximately 53%
made a complaint to police. Police responses to stalking complaints were commonly characterized by one or more informal actions including advice on protective measures (33%) and referrals to victims' services (14%) or prosecutors/courts (23%). Of the cases to which police responded, 24% of the perpetrators were formally arrested or detained. This course of action was significantly more likely to be taken if the victim was female as opposed to male. Charges were laid in 12% of the cases although only slightly more than half (54%) of these charges culminated in a conviction. An effort to identify case factors influencing formal versus informal police responses in these cases failed to uncover any significant predictors (Jasinski & Mustaine, 2001). When victims were asked to indicate the reason why the stalking stopped, slightly more than one quarter identified a legal intervention. Interestingly, an informal police warning was more frequently identified (15%) as halting the stalking than formally arresting (10%) or convicting (1%) the stalker.

The NVAWS also looked at the prevalence and efficacy of restraining orders in stalking cases. Numerous studies of stalkers have addressed this issue in the past, but usually only to report the proportion of stalkers with known restraining order violations. Known violations in these samples vary from approximately 15% to more than 60% (e.g., Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hackett, 2000; Harmon et al., 1995; Harmon et al., 1998; Jordan et al., 2003; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995). Ignoring for the moment the difficulty of interpreting such widely discrepant figures, the fundamental problem with

17 Other American research has also found that a large proportion of charges do not result in convictions (Jordan, Logan, Walker, Nigoff, 2003; Logan, Nigoff, Walker & Jordan, 2002).
this type of study is that the rate of compliance (or violation) remains unknown. The NVAWS addressed this particular shortcoming by first determining the number of cases in which restraining orders existed, and then making inquiries to determine whether the orders were violated. It found that 24% of the stalking victims (n = 182) who participated in the survey had obtained a restraining order and that 70% of these orders were violated (69% for female victims; 81% for male victims).

Other studies have produced similar results. Nicastro et al. (2001) reviewed prosecution files of ex-intimate stalkers and found violations occurred in 67% of the cases where a restraining order was in force. Likewise, Sheridan et al. (2001) reported that close to 80% (15/19) of the civil injunctions obtained by the stalking victims they surveyed were violated. A slightly different approach to this issue was taken by Brewster (2001) who inquired into the perceived effect of restraining orders among ex-intimate stalking victims. Approximately 40% of the victims indicated the stalking behaviour remained unchanged after restraining orders were granted while the proportion of cases in which the behaviour improved (19% - 26%) only slightly exceeded the proportion in which the behaviour worsened (16% - 21%). Stated bluntly, it was perceived that restraining orders had no effect or exacerbated the stalker’s behaviour in over 60% of the cases.

18 Restraining orders existed in 76% of the 55 case files reviewed.
19 The lower figure in each of the ranges provided corresponds to the perceived effect of protection from abuse orders; the higher figure corresponds to the perceived effect of temporary restraining orders.
The only relevant study to employ a comparison group was conducted by McFarlane et al. (2004). These researchers divided a sample of abused women applying for a 2-year protection order \((n = 150)\) into two groups according to whether or not their application was successful. Follow up interviews were conducted after 3, 6, 12 and 18 months to assess the extent to which study participants were subjected to further verbal and physical abuse and stalking behaviour. A comparison of the two groups failed to reveal any statistically significant differences in the level of reported abuse and stalking, however, it was found that the level of abuse and stalking became significantly lower toward the end of the study period as compared to the beginning. Thus, the presence of a protection order had no appreciable effect on stalking behaviour, but stalking behaviour did diminish significantly with the passage of time. The major drawback to this study for present purposes is that the sample was comprised of abused women rather than stalking victims and therefore its implications for stalking cases is uncertain.

Not all studies of restraining orders are so discouraging. A multi-site study conducted in the United States interviewed women one month and six months after they were granted a protection order (see generally U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). A large majority of the participants at both the initial (72%) and follow up interviews (65%) reported that they had not experienced any problems from the person named in the order and less than 18% of the interviewees indicated that they had been the subject of stalking. Perhaps more importantly, most of the women (72%) felt their life had improved since the restraining order was issued and almost all of the respondents (95%) indicated they would consider using restraining orders again in the future. Though cause for greater
optimism, this study suffers from several weakness including the lack of a meaningful comparison group and marked participant drop out. As with the prior study, the sample also involves abused women rather than stalking victims.

Another study reporting more positive results looked at the effectiveness of restraining orders granted to stalking victims (n = 240) in Finland (Häkkänen et al., 2003). Official violations were reported for 35% of the cases during the follow up period which extended, on average, for one year. Even in cases where violations occurred, there was a significant post-restraining order reduction in the level of virtually all the most serious forms of stalking behaviour including assaults (17% vs. 80%), threats to kill (28% vs. 52%), threats to a third party (10% vs. 22%) and property damage (13% vs. 37%). No differences were found in post-restraining order levels of less serious forms of stalking behaviour such as phone calls and letters, watching and visiting. Further analyses revealed that the level of restraining order violations differed significantly according to the victim-perpetrator relationship (family relationships 40% vs. ex-intimate partners 36% vs. acquaintances 18%) and the number of different types of stalking behaviours employed by the perpetrator. When the investigators grouped the perpetrators according to the predominant theme of their stalking behaviours they found restraining order violations were most likely amongst stalkers who engaged primarily in “instrumental/pursuit” behaviours. These are stalking behaviours that are “primarily instrumental” (p. 197) in nature and that are often preceded by “[a]n external event that

20 Only 60% of the women who participated in the initial interview also completed the follow-up interviews.
may have caused anger and provoked revenge” (p. 197) as opposed to stalking that is
carried out primarily to achieve other criminal goals (instrumental/manipulator) or driven
by rage arising from the rejection accompanying a failed relationship
(expressive/violent).

To summarize, the body of international research on law enforcement strategies in
stalking cases, though more extensive than Canadian research, is similarly limited by its
almost exclusive focus on formal criminal justice system responses. Like Canadian
studies, there are indications that perpetrators are arrested in a minority of stalking cases
and most of the charges that are laid do not result in convictions. At least one American
study found that arrests were more likely if the victim was female, a result that may
parallel the Canadian finding that male perpetrators (who tend to stalk female victims)
were more likely to be charged than female perpetrators. The most researched case
management response concerns the use and efficacy of restraining or protection orders.
Although these studies have more frequently yielded discouraging rather than
encouraging results, it is still far too early to draw firm conclusions. The total number of
studies is small, many of the studies do not involve ‘true’ stalking samples, and there has
been little attempt by these investigations to identify case characteristics that might
influence the relative success or failure of the orders. Even if a clear pattern of results
was discernible, jurisdictional and cultural differences would make it prudent to replicate
the results in Canada.
Rationale for the Current Study

As this literature review shows, there is a growing body of empirical research on stalking. Most of the studies to date have been descriptive in nature, but there are signs that deeper theoretical issues relating to the etiology of this behavioural phenomenon are beginning to be explored. Research is also starting to identify factors associated with stalking violence, however, this work is only in the preliminary stages and our understanding of how the risk factors we have identified relate to stalking violence is rudimentary at best (Meloy, 2003; Rosenfeld, 2004). For instance, one of the strongest and most robust risk factors identified in the literature is the victim-perpetrator relationship, yet we still do not understand the reason for its nexus with stalking violence. In fact, there are good reasons to suspect that victim-perpetrator relationship may be a proxy for other underlying and as yet untested risk factors (e.g., anger, obsession, jealousy, etc.) that are more directly related to stalking violence.

In addition, most of what we have learned about stalking so far is derived from studies conducted in clinical-forensic and community settings which may not represent the stalking cases typically encountered by police. Police cases of stalking are unlikely to present the extensive and serious psychopathology commonly found among clinical-forensic studies, yet police samples probably comprise a higher proportion of the more serious and persistent stalking cases found within community studies. Unfortunately, only a few studies have been conducted using police-based stalking samples and many of these studies involved samples that were small, non-random, and/or systematically
excluded certain types of stalking cases (e.g., domestic violence). This situation is disturbing because research shows that when stalking victims seek professional assistance they most often turn to law enforcement officials (Brewster, 2001; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Purcell et al., 2002). The implication of this finding is that law enforcement personnel will typically be the professionals dealing with stalking cases, yet almost all of the available empirical research that might inform their case management practices has been gathered from narrower clinical-forensic samples or broader community samples. Exacerbating matters further is the general absence of empirical research examining the use of legal interventions in stalking cases, an absence all the more striking because the fundamental purpose of anti-stalking statutes is to facilitate more effective and timely intervention in stalking cases.

The overall goal of this research is to address some of these shortcomings in the literature in an effort to provide more empirical data pertaining to the assessment and management of stalking cases in the law enforcement context. Specifically, the research in this dissertation seeks to: (1) develop a more detailed picture of the violence risk factors associated with stalking cases encountered by law enforcement personnel in Canada; and, (2) identify associated case factors that influence the selection and impact of the management strategies law enforcement personnel employ.
METHOD

Procedure

The study sample comprises all criminal investigations relating to section 264 of the Criminal Code (criminal harassment) documented by the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) during the 1997 calendar year. The VPD is a large Canadian police force of approximately 1,100 sworn members who service an ethnically diverse city of more than 500,000 people (CityFacts Census Data Series Population, 1891 – 2001, 2001). Complaints of criminal harassment made to the VPD are assigned to patrol officers who are responsible for conducting the initial investigation. Upon completion of the initial investigation, the originally assigned patrol officers may conclude that: (1) no further action is required; (2) follow up action is required and that action will be provided by the original investigating patrol officers; (3) or, the file should be referred to the Criminal Harassment Unit (CHU).

The CHU is a specialized 3-member investigation unit of the VPD specifically created to handle cases in which there is a pattern of repeated victimization and stalking behaviour (Domestic Violence and Criminal Harassment Mandate, n.d.). There is no single criterion for determining which cases are passed on to the CHU and any number of different factors may play a role in the decision to make such a referral including the complexity of the case, the time and resource demands of the case, and the scheduled duty hours of the assigned patrol officers (personal communication D. LePard. August 3,
Irrespective of who conducts the investigation, once an officer is satisfied that a criminal offence has been disclosed, he or she is required by VPD policy directives to complete an Investigation Report (personal communication D. LePard, August 3, 2005). For this reason, police investigation reports constitute a reasonably comprehensive record of all the criminal harassment incidents brought to the attention of police.

To select cases of criminal harassment for inclusion in this study, VPD staff conducted an electronic search of their Records Management System to identify all 1997 Investigation Reports involving a section 264 Criminal Code offence. A total of 257 reports were identified and made available for the study. These reports represent the entire population of criminal harassment offences identified and documented by VPD members in 1997.

The police files consisted primarily of an Investigation Report and/or a Report to Crown Counsel (RCC). Investigation Reports document basic demographic information (e.g., gender, date of birth) concerning the complainant, the suspect and any witnesses as well as a written narrative by the investigating officer that summarizes the findings of his or her investigation and any follow up action that was taken in the case. If the investigating officer recommended that charges be laid against the suspect then a Report to Crown Counsel (RCC) was completed. In addition to the information present in an Investigation Report, a RCC also contains a summary of the evidence that the complainant and any witnesses are expected to provide in testimony. Written addendums were attached to some reports, most notably in cases where there was either a further act of stalking behaviour, or additional follow up action by the investigating officer, which
took place after the original report had been written. Written statements made by the complainant or copies of notes and letters written by the suspect were also occasionally available.

Information concerning a suspect’s criminal record was obtained via a search of the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) conducted at the time of the investigation or subsequently by the principal researcher. CPIC is a national, RCMP administered, database that contains an official record of criminal charges and convictions incurred by a person anywhere in Canada.

All available information contained in the police investigation files was reviewed and coded using a standardized data collection instrument. The research instrument was developed by the principal researcher based on feedback from individuals with experience in the field of stalking as well as a thorough review of the available literature. The instrument was extensive and designed to gather descriptive information in the following broad areas: (1) perpetrator characteristics; (2) victim characteristics; (3) behavioural characteristics of the criminal harassment; and, (4) law enforcement investigation and management (See Appendix A).

The files were coded by the principal researcher and one research assistant. Prior to commencing the data collection process, the principal researcher reviewed the data collection instrument with the research assistant to ensure familiarity with the coding procedures and the operationalization of the study variables. The subsequent destruction of the file material precluded additional file ratings aimed at assessing interrater reliability.
Research Variables

Socio-demographic Variables

The socio-demographic variables coded from the files included, *inter alia*, the perpetrator’s gender, age, marital status, current living arrangements, educational achievement and current occupation. Age was computed as the difference between the perpetrator’s date of birth and the date of the police investigation. If only partial date of birth information was available then the midpoint of the suspect’s known birth month or year was used as an estimate for the unknown information. For example, if only the year and month of the suspect’s date of birth were reported (e.g., August, 1968) then the day would be coded as the midpoint of the month in which she or he was born (i.e., the 15th of August, 1968). The date of birth was coded as missing if the birth year was not indicated. Occupations were classified according to the Standard Occupational Classification system used by Statistics Canada (1991).

Criminological Variables

The criminal history data was based primarily on the perpetrator’s official record of charges and convictions as documented by CPIC. Offence types were coded according to the 15 offence categories outlined in the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised manual (Hare, 1991). Of particular interest was the extent to which perpetrators had engaged in stalking behaviour in the past. CPIC records were reviewed for convictions relating to the offence of criminal harassment, but very few were expected due to the short period of time the
offence had been in force. With this problem in mind, the following offences which previously might have been used to deal with stalking behaviour were also coded: uttering threats (s. 264.1), intimidation (s. 423), and harassing phone calls (s. 372). References in the police narratives to previous stalking behaviour, relationship violence, and breach of a peace bond were also coded regardless of whether or not official charges or convictions resulted.

**Psychological Variables**

It was not expected that the police files would be a particularly rich source of information on the psychological characteristics of the perpetrators, but the research instrument did contain variables designed to code file references to the perpetrator’s prior psychiatric treatment or hospitalization, formal psychiatric diagnoses, and substance or alcohol use.

**Victim Variables**

The age, gender and marital status of the victim were coded. Date of birth was coded in accordance with the rule described above for perpetrators. In addition to these basic demographic characteristics, the victim-perpetrator relationship was recorded. Following the lead of Zona et al. (1998), further refinements were made to the broad distinctions generally made in the stalking literature among prior romantic, non-romantic and stranger relationships. Three types of former romantic relationships were distinguished (married/common law, dating/intimate, casual sexual) based on the degree
of commitment to the relationship. Previous non-romantic relationships were subdivided into numerous categories based principally on the context and strength of the relationship (e.g., family, friend, co-workers, professional, etc.). Two types of stranger relationships were recognized depending on whether the victim was an ordinary private citizen, or a person viewed as a "celebrity" by virtue of their public involvement in the media, sports, or politics.

**Behavioural Variables**

The stalking behaviour was assessed both at a specific level that focused on the associated characteristics of individual stalking behaviours as well as at a general level that considered the overall character of the behaviour for the entire stalking period. Individual stalking behaviours were assessed according to the type (e.g., telephone calls, following, physical contact) and the rank order of its chronological appearance relative to other types of stalking behaviour (i.e., was it the first, second, third, type of behaviour perpetrated). If a particular stalking incident involved multiple behaviours, then each behaviour was separately coded. For example, a perpetrator who followed a victim at a distance until she reached her home, whereupon the perpetrator made face-to-face contact and verbally invited her out for coffee, would be coded as three separate behaviours (e.g., following, direct contact at home and verbal contact).

Variables of interest relating to the general nature of the stalking behaviour included its duration, frequency, and attachment pattern. The duration was measured as the number of days between the dates on which the first and last stalking incidents
occurred. The frequency of stalking incidents measured the number of discrete stalking incidents that occurred during the period of stalking. To be considered a discrete incident, stalking behaviours had to be separated from one another by the presence of an emotional cooling-off period. A single stalking incident could encompass multiple behaviours if there was no cooling-off period between them. For example, a perpetrator who followed a victim at a distance until she reached her home whereupon the perpetrator made face-to-face contact and verbally invited her out for coffee would be coded as only one incident despite the presence of multiple types of behaviour (e.g., following, direct contact at home, verbal contact). Finally, the predominant type of attachment the perpetrator exhibited toward the victim was coded as angry, amorous, initially amorous and becoming angry, or mixed. A mixed attachment pattern referred to a perpetrator who continually vacillated between angry and amorous feelings towards the victim.

**Threats**

Detailed information was gathered about any threats issued during the course of the stalking behaviour. All threats of harm were coded without regard for the type of harm threatened (e.g., harm to reputation, property, financial status, or physical well-being, etc.). Although such a definition of threats can be criticized as overly expansive, the precise nature of the harm threatened was also coded to permit analyses based on a more conventional definition that was restricted to threats only involving physical harm. The nature of the threat was coded as unconditional (i.e., the threat will be carried out),
conditional (i.e., the threat will only be carried out contingent on something else) or veiled (vague threats of some unspecified harm). The target of the threat was also coded (e.g., primary victim, friend or family member of the primary victim, etc.).

Violence

The type of physical violence (e.g., pushed, slapped, kicked, etc.) was classified using seven levels of severity ranging from “threw something” to “used a knife or gun”. Violence-related data was also collected on the victims who were targeted and the injuries that resulted.

Law Enforcement Intervention Variables

Four levels of law enforcement intervention were coded from the files consistent with the strategies described by the Department of Justice (2004) for the management of criminal harassment cases. These four levels of intervention were: (1) no intervention; (2) a police warning; (3) a section 810 peace bond to restrain the perpetrator; and, (4) an arrest and charge.
RESULTS

Criminal Harassment Files

On reviewing the 257 criminal harassment reports it became apparent that there were instances where the same victim-perpetrator dyad was the subject of more than one report. Multiple reports that obviously related to the same victim-perpetrator dyad are treated as a single case, thereby condensing the sample into 241 cases. In five cases the police concluded that the complainant’s allegations were “unfounded”. These five unfounded cases are excluded from all further analyses leaving 236 cases in the final sample. An examination of the files for these 236 cases revealed that 108 (46%) consisted exclusively of an Investigation Report while the balance of the case files contained a RCC.

Perpetrator Characteristics

The police identified the person who they believed was responsible for harassing the victim in 222 of the 236 (94%) cases, leaving only 14 cases in which the identity of the perpetrator was unknown. Three perpetrators were implicated in two different and unrelated cases in the sample, thereby reducing the number of unique perpetrators to 219. Descriptive statistics concerning the criminal harassment perpetrators are based on an analysis of these 219 unique perpetrators who were identified by police.
Socio-demographic Characteristics

Table 1 displays the socio-demographic characteristics of the known perpetrators. Most were men (87%). The age of the perpetrators at the commencement of the police investigation ranged from 15 to 75 years of age with a mean of 36.6 years ($SD = 11.2$). Removing all cases based on estimated dates of birth ($n = 9$) had virtually no effect on the computed mean ($M = 36.7$, $SD = 11.0$) and so estimated ages are included in all remaining analyses.

Perpetrator age was examined further to determine what portion of the sample fell within each of the following three legally significant age groups: (1) less than 12 years of age (below the minimum age of criminally responsibility); (2) 12 to 17 years of age (a young offender)\(^{21}\); or (3) 18 years and older (an adult). According to the results, none of the known perpetrators were below the age of criminal responsibility, less than 2% ($n = 3$) were legally considered young offenders, and, the rest (99%) were legal adults who had reached 18 years of age or older.

\(^{21}\) Although the relevant statute at the time, the *Young Offenders Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. Y-1 has since been replaced by the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, S.C. 2002, c. 1, there has been no change in the ages (i.e., 12 years or older and less than 18 years of age) at which a person is considered a young offender.
### Table 1.

**Perpetrator Socio-demographic Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% or M (n or SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male gender</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>87.0 (188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>36.6 (11.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>65.5 (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/separated</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.6 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/common law</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.9 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>33.0 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/intimate partner</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.5 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.0 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roommate</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.2 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No fixed address</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.7 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.6 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>38.6 (51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed/self-employed</td>
<td></td>
<td>55.3 (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student/retired/other</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.1 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical worker</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5.3 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers &amp; professors</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.3 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail salesperson</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.0 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/beverage services worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.8 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective services worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.3 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sales &amp; services worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.0 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction trades</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.3 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport equipment operators</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.3 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades helpers &amp; labourers</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.8 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.1 (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Ns less than 219 reflect missing values.*

A breakdown of perpetrator relationship status for the sample is also provided in Table 1. Despite being hampered by missing data, it is clear from the results that the overwhelming majority (89%) of perpetrators were not currently in a romantic
relationship of any kind during the episode of harassment. Conversely, the portion of perpetrators in committed relationships (i.e., married or equivalent) at the time of the harassment was only 11%, although more than one third (34%) of the perpetrators were known to have been in a committed relationship at some point during their lifetime. In those cases where the perpetrator's living situation was known, it was found that isolated and unstable arrangements predominated. More than half of the perpetrators (59%) were living alone or did not have a fixed address. Within the sample, there was an evident overlap in relationship and living situation stability as nearly everyone who was in a committed relationship also enjoyed living with another person in a fixed living arrangement. Due to the large amount of missing data (91%), no results are presented on educational achievement.

Almost 40% of the perpetrators whose employment status was known were found to be unemployed. To the extent possible, perpetrators who were employed \( n = 73 \) were further classified according to their occupation. In 16 cases the perpetrator could not be classified due to insufficient file information, although five of them were known to be business owners. From the partial listing of the most common occupational classifications displayed in Table 1, it is evident that many perpetrators held relatively unskilled positions as retail salespersons (e.g., store clerk), food and beverage servers (e.g., restaurant server, bartender), other sales and service providers (e.g., custodian, hotel laundry worker, building maintenance worker), transportation equipment operators (e.g., taxi driver, delivery driver, airline baggage handler) and labourers (e.g., longshore worker, labourer).
Summary of Socio-demographic Risk Factors

The socio-demographic characteristics of the perpetrators point to the presence of several known violence risk factors. Male gender is one of the more universally shared risk factors within the sample although the presence of such a large majority of male perpetrators means the capacity for gender to discriminate high and low risk individuals in these cases is attenuated. In this respect, age shows more promise. It exhibits a great deal of variability within the sample despite the general absence of very youthful perpetrators.

To the extent that currently being single reflects the inability to form or maintain lasting relationships with others, it is another risk factor that was widely prevalent among perpetrators. In fact, being single was so common that it, like male gender, may not be an especially illuminating risk factor in criminal harassment cases. It also obfuscates the context surrounding the perpetrator’s single status. There are perpetrators who are chronically single and whose harassing behaviour is an inappropriate attempt to initiate a romantic relationship, but there are also perpetrators who recently became single and whose harassing behaviour represent an inappropriate attempt to resurrect a failed relationship. A more informative approach may be to ignore current relationship status in favour of focusing on recent relationship instability. That is, did the perpetrator recently experience the break up of a romantic relationship? This factor, in many respects, is the same one that research is beginning to show is strongly associated with serious forms of stalking violence, the only difference being that it is usually framed in terms of the victim-perpetrator relationship rather than recent relationship instability.
Of the remaining socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., living conditions or type of occupation), only employment status has a known association with violence. It also exhibited reasonable discriminative ability within the sample as evidenced by the relatively large proportion of perpetrators who were positively identified as being unemployed (39%).

Criminological Characteristics

It was not possible to complete official criminal history checks for 12 cases (6%) due to the absence of necessary identifying information (e.g., full name of the perpetrator, date of birth, etc.). No CPIC record could be located in a further 8 cases, despite the presence of file information suggesting that one existed. Of the remaining 199 perpetrators, 50% had a CPIC record documenting past criminal charges or convictions incurred prior to the current investigation for criminal harassment. Only 5% (n = 10) of the known perpetrators had documented charges or convictions as a youth (12 to 17 years), but this figure should be considered a conservative estimate because some records may have been expunged in accordance with the statutory provisions of the Young Offenders Act. Only two perpetrators who possessed a youth criminal record did not have accompanying charges or convictions as an adult. The remaining analyses consider the complete criminal record (i.e., combined adult and youth offences documented by

Under the relevant statutory sections of the Young Offenders Act (ss. 44.1 - 44.01), any record of charges or convictions incurred as a young person (12 years old or more and less than 18 years old) was generally destroyed no later than 5 years after the date of the offence unless that person committed a subsequent offence as an adult within certain stipulated time periods.
CPIC) because it is the information that is accessible to law enforcement officials and therefore likely to inform their case management decisions.

Only a small proportion of CPIC records were confined only to charges (17%) as most (83%) contained at least a single conviction. For the sample as a whole, slightly more than 40% of the perpetrators had a prior conviction documented by CPIC (see Table 2). The mean number of convictions incurred by the sample was 4.1 ($SD = 10.2$) with individual conviction counts ranging from 0 to 78. When all the charges were considered including those that culminated in a conviction, the mean number of charges was 6.6 ($SD = 14.8$) and the range was 0 to 99. The age at first charge ranged from 13 to 64 years with a mean of 25.5 years ($SD = 10.3$). The age at first conviction displayed the same range as that reported for charges (13 to 64 years), but the mean dipped slightly to 24.0 years ($SD = 9.5$).

Criminal diversity, as measured by the number of different offence categories found among a perpetrator's recorded convictions, ranged from 0 to 9 with a sample average of 1.4 ($SD = 2.1$). The modal number of offence categories was zero, a figure that reflects the large proportion of perpetrators who did not have an existing criminal record. Table 2 displays the percentage of perpetrators with at least one conviction recorded in each of the 15 offence categories. Prior convictions were most common for the offences of theft (25%; e.g., theft, breaking and entering, possession of stolen property) assault (23%; e.g., threatening, common assault, assault causing bodily harm); and, escape (19%; e.g., escape lawful custody, fail to appear, breach of recognizance). The latter two offence categories are particularly notable because both past violence and
prior supervision failures of this sort have been identified as risk factors of general violence.

Table 2.

Perpetrator Criminal History Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of offence</th>
<th>Convictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any criminal offence</td>
<td>42.2 (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>24.6 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>7.5 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Offences</td>
<td>15.6 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major driving offences</td>
<td>12.1 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession of a weapon</td>
<td>7.5 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape</td>
<td>18.6 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstruction of justice</td>
<td>8.5 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against the state</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>16.6 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>22.6 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>4.0 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex offences</td>
<td>3.0 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any stalking offence</td>
<td>8.5 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal harassment</td>
<td>1.5 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttering threats</td>
<td>7.0 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>1.0 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassing phone calls</td>
<td>2.5 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent offences (narrow index)</td>
<td>24.6 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent offences (broad index)</td>
<td>25.1 (50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 199.

Of special interest was the presence of prior convictions for criminal harassment and other stalking-like offences. It should be noted that the prevalence rates reported for these individual stalking offences are not independent of those previously reported for the broader offence categories. In general, convictions for criminal harassment and other
stalking-like offences were found in less than 3% of the CPIC records reviewed (see Table 2). This rate was surpassed only by the offence of uttering threats which was found in 7% of all CPIC records. Even treating criminal harassment and the other stalking-like offences as a unitary category, less than one in nine perpetrators had a prior conviction for a "stalking offence".

To assess the prevalence of violent convictions within the sample, some of the offence categories were combined to create two different indexes of violent criminal history. The assault, robbery, murder, and sex offence categories were joined together to form a relatively narrow index of violent criminal history. A broad index of violent criminal history was created by expanding the narrow index to include the following three additional offence categories: possession of a weapon, kidnapping, and arson. Thus, the broad index captures some offences that might be construed as violent yet were omitted from the narrow index, but in doing so, it also encompasses some extraneous offences that fall beyond most definitions of violence (e.g., carrying a concealed weapon).

Despite changing the way violence was defined, the prevalence of violent criminal histories remained remarkably consistent (see Table 2). The broad index of violent criminal history produced a rate (25%) that was only slightly higher than the one that resulted from using the assault offence category alone (23%). The addition of

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23 Only the assault, robbery and sex offence categories made a numerical contribution to the narrow index of violence due to the absence of any perpetrators with convictions for murder.

24 Only the possession of a weapon offence category made a numerical contribution to the broad index of violence due to the absence of any perpetrators with convictions for arson or kidnapping.
several violent offence categories (e.g., sex offences, robbery, possession of a weapon) that have individual prevalence rates of 3% to 8% without appreciably increasing the level of violent criminal histories detected among the sample indicates that it is the same group of perpetrators who are responsible for all (or almost all) of the most serious offences.

Next, a series of analyses were conducted to explore the potential overlap of violent criminal histories with other risk-relevant criminological characteristics. For these and all subsequent analyses, violent criminal history is defined as a conviction for any offence on the narrow index of violence. The non-violent group consisted of every perpetrator with a criminal record (i.e., at least one criminal charge or conviction) that did not include violent offences.

Considerable overlap was expected between violent and stalking offence histories because most of the latter offences were, by definition, also violent; however, the overlap proved to be complete (i.e., every perpetrator with a stalking offence conviction also had a violent criminal history). Perpetrators with violent criminal histories were also found to be significantly more likely to have convictions for escape-related offences (53%) compared to perpetrators with non-violent histories (21%), $\chi^2 (1, N = 101) = 11.06, p = .001$.

The reasons for choosing the narrow index of violence were two-fold: (1) it is relatively consonant with the way violence is defined elsewhere; and, (2) alternative definitions had little practical impact on the proportion of the sample identified with violent criminal histories.
The violent and non-violent criminal history groups were also compared across several indices of criminality. As can be seen in Table 3, the violent criminal history group was much more criminally entrenched than the non-violent group. In particular, they were younger at the time of their first charge, incurred a greater number of charges, and exhibited greater criminal diversity.

Table 3.

Comparison of Violent and Non-violent Criminal History Groups on Selected Indexes of Criminality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Non-violent History</th>
<th>Violent History</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of charges</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>20.80</td>
<td>23.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at first charge</td>
<td>28.23</td>
<td>11.23</td>
<td>22.79</td>
<td>8.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of charges</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. *n = 52 except for age at first charge in which case n = 50. *n = 49.

The analyses performed up to this point have focused exclusively on the data derived from official CPIC records. The final set of analyses considers data gleaned from the written police narratives contained in the files. Based on these narratives, there was evidence of prior stalking behaviour by the perpetrator in 9% (n = 19) of the files. While this level of prior stalking behaviour closely matches the level of stalking offence convictions found in the CPIC records, there was little congruency in the perpetrators identified by the two data sources. Indeed, evidence of prior stalking behaviour in the narratives was significantly more common among cases without a prior conviction for a stalking offence (72%) than it was among cases with a conviction (28%), \( \chi^2 (1, N = 199) = 9.372, p = .002 \).
The narratives also revealed evidence of previous spousal violence (i.e., prior to the current stalking investigation) for nearly one quarter (24%; \( n = 52 \)) of the known perpetrators. The usual victim of prior spousal violence was the person now being stalked by the perpetrator (85%; \( n = 44 \)), however, some of these histories (29%; \( n = 15 \)) involved a different former romantic partner of the perpetrator (i.e., not the person currently being stalked). Only a few perpetrators had a history of spousal violence directed against both the current stalking victim as well as someone else (14%; \( n = 7 \)). Curiously, the perpetrators identified as spousal assaulters were significantly less likely to have prior convictions for violence (41%) than perpetrators without a known history of spousal assault (59%), \( \chi^2 (1, N = 199) = 9.184, p = .002 \).

**Summary of Criminological Risk Factors**

The results of these analyses highlight numerous violence risk factors among the criminological characteristics of the perpetrators. Criminality, as evidenced by an existing CPIC record, was widespread and divided the sample approximately in half between perpetrators who had incurred at least one charge or conviction at some point during their life and those who had no criminal history at all.

Roughly half the individuals with existing criminal records, or about one quarter of the entire sample, had prior convictions of violence. These violent criminal histories are notable not simply because past violence is a risk factor for future violence, but because they converged with other risk factors (e.g., prior convictions for stalking offences and prior supervision failures) and indexes of serious criminality (e.g., onset and
severity of offending). These findings underscore the importance of considering prior violent convictions as well as point to the potential redundancy of these other prospective risk factors once prior violence is accounted for.

About 25% of the criminal harassment perpetrators had a history of spousal assault based on the police narratives, yet these known spousal assaulters were significantly less likely to have prior convictions for violence than perpetrators with no known history of spousal violence. The lack of overlap between prior violent convictions and spousal violence histories together with the relevance of past spousal violence for criminal harassment cases involving ex-romantic partners, clearly signals its value as a risk factor. Evidence of prior stalking behaviour garnered from the police narratives also showed little overlap with convictions for stalking offences, however, this risk factor was documented in only a few cases (< 9%) and therefore it is of very limited utility in this sample.26

**Psychological Characteristics**

There was information in 13% (n = 28) of the case files indicating the perpetrator had a psychiatric history involving treatment or a diagnosis. In the remaining cases there was either no information regarding psychiatric history or positive information to indicate that no psychiatric history existed. In 11% (n = 25) of the cases, the perpetrator was the recipient of psychiatric treatment either through hospitalization or some other therapeutic

26 A decision was made *a priori* to exclude from further analyses those potential risk factors that were present in less than 10% of the cases.
context. References to psychiatric diagnoses were present in only a small proportion of files (6%; n = 13) and all were Axis I disorders with one exception. The specific disorders mentioned were schizophrenia (n = 4), bi-polar disorder (n = 5), depression (n = 3), and obsessive-compulsive disorder (n = 1).

Investigating officers who submit a RCC may request that the perpetrator undergo a psychiatric examination. Psychiatric examinations were requested by police in 40% of the RCCs (n = 35), a figure that corresponds to 16% of all the case files (RCCs and Investigation Reports) with a known perpetrator. A psychiatric examination was significantly more likely to be requested where there was evidence of a clinical diagnosis or treatment (75%) than in the absence of these factors (32%), Fisher’s Exact Test (N = 87) \( p = .004 \).

Evidence of alcohol or drug use by the perpetrator appeared in just under, or slightly over, one fifth of the sample depending on whether it was current or lifetime use that was being examined (see Table 4). Current alcohol use was reported for roughly one in ten perpetrators while substance use was noted for about one in nine perpetrators. These figures would have been higher were it not for eight cases in which the nature of the substance used (i.e., alcohol vs. drugs) could not be established from the case files.

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27 Fisher’ Exact Test was used due to one cell that contained only 4 cases. These analyses were restricted to those cases involving known perpetrators for whom an RCC was submitted because the request for a psychiatric examination could only be made on a RCC (and not the Investigation Report).
Table 4.

Perpetrator Alcohol and Drug Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Current % (n)</th>
<th>Lifetime % (n)¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any alcohol or drug use</td>
<td>19.6 (43)</td>
<td>22.8 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>10.0 (22)</td>
<td>12.3 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>8.7 (19)</td>
<td>10.1 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both alcohol &amp; drugs</td>
<td>2.7 (6)</td>
<td>3.2 (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. N = 219. ¹Includes cases of current, or past alcohol/drug use. Includes 8 cases in which it could not be determined whether the substance use related to alcohol or drugs or both alcohol and drugs.

Although some of the files contained only vague references to drug use (e.g., the perpetrator is a drug addict), wherever possible the type of substance used by the perpetrator was noted. Based on the file information, perpetrator drug use consisted of the following substances: cocaine (n = 8), marijuana (n = 4), heroin (n = 4), and in one case, prescription drugs. Polydrug use was reported in three cases, all of which involved the use of marijuana in addition to either cocaine or heroin. Six cases (3%) presented current substance use co-morbid with alcohol use. The co-morbidity of substance use (i.e., alcohol or drugs) and mental disorder was also addressed using prior psychiatric history as a gross measure of mental disorder. The analysis showed that the conditions were independent of one another with nearly equal proportions of substance users (13%; n = 5) and non-users (12%; n = 23) in this sample manifesting a prior psychiatric history, χ²(1, N = 219) = 0.064, p = 0.80.
Summary of Psychological Risk Factors

Based on these results it seems that at least 13% of the criminal harassment perpetrators manifested a sufficiently serious psychological disturbance that it was diagnosed and/or treated at some point during their lifetime. To the extent that these psychiatric histories represent the presence of major mental disorders they may be a useful risk factor in criminal harassment cases. Ideally any consideration of mental illness should focus on specific disorders or symptomology, but such refined analyses were not possible from the information available and therefore consideration of this risk factor is necessarily limited to the presence (or absence) of a prior psychiatric history.

Substance use, which is emerging as a strong predictor of general violence and, to a lesser extent, stalking violence, was documented in about one fifth of the criminal harassment cases. The negligible difference between rates of current versus lifetime use in this sample suggests there is little to be gained by examining lifetime use rather than simply focusing on current substance use which is expected to exert a greater influence on a perpetrator's immediate behaviour.

Victim Characteristics

The analyses of victim characteristics are based on the entire sample of cases except for one in which a victim could not be identified ($N = 235$). In 2% ($n = 5$) of the cases, the harassment appeared to be directed primarily at an organization (e.g., a company) as opposed to an individual. Where this occurred, the individual(s) primarily
impacted by the harassment (e.g., the manager, the receptionist, etc.) was coded as the victim.

Multiple victims were identified within the same case in 8.5% (n = 20) of the files. These cases typically involved a single primary victim and one or more secondary victims. Secondary victims (n = 26) were generally people who enjoyed close relationships with the primary victim either as a family member (31%; n = 8), intimate partner (27%; n = 7), close friend (19%; n = 5) or co-worker (23%; n = 6). These secondary victims usually became the subject of harassment because they were the perpetrators’ source of access to the primary victim, or alternatively, they were perceived to be assisting the primary victim to the perpetrators’ detriment (e.g., assisting the primary victim in a child custody dispute with the perpetrator).

Multiple primary victims were found in six (2.5%) cases. Three of these cases had two primary victims, two cases had three primary victims, and one case had four primary victims. The number of primary victims for the entire sample totalled 246. Most of the primary victims were female (81%; n = 198) with men comprising fewer than one in five victims identified in the files (19%; n = 47). The age of victims for whom there was a known or estimated date of birth (n = 201) ranged from 14 years to 78 years with a mean of 32.4 years (SD = 10.8).

It is evident from Table 5 that the vast majority of victims knew the person who was harassing them prior to the onset of the behaviour (88%). Prior romantic partners

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28 The gender of one victim was unknown.
29 A known or estimated date of birth was missing for 45 victims.
constituted the largest group of these existing victim-perpetrator relationships. With respect to non-romantic relationships, criminal harassment most often arose in professional contexts (e.g., store clerk-customer, doctor-patient) as opposed to non-professional contexts (e.g., neighbours, friends, or roommates). Victim-perpetrator relationships involving strangers, especially those who were public figures, were uncommon.

Table 5.

Victim-perpetrator Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Known % (n)</th>
<th>Unknown % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88.2 (208)</td>
<td>11.8 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic % (n)</td>
<td>52.1 (123)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-romantic % (n)</td>
<td>36.0 (85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Married/common law        20.3 (48)  Family          2.5 (6)  Public figure stranger 0.8 (2)
Intimate/dating            30.1 (71)  Friend          2.5 (6)  Simple stranger 11.0 (26)
Casual sexual             1.7 (4)    Roommate        0.8 (2)  
                          |             | Neighbour       4.2 (10) |
                          |             | Schoolmate      0.4 (1)  |
                          |             | Co-worker       1.7 (4)  |
                          |             | Professional relations 13.1 (31) |
                          |             | Dates or knows perpetrator's prior romantic partner 2.5 (6) |
                          |             | Other acquaintances 8.1 (19) |

Notes. N = 236. The victim-perpetrator relationship could not be determined for 10 primary victims.

The distribution of victim-perpetrator relationships is visibly different for women and men. Consistent with the overall results discussed above, women were more likely to
be harassed by a prior romantic partner (57%) than a perpetrator with a prior non-romantic relationship (30%) or a stranger (13%). Men on the other hand, were most likely to be harassed by someone with a prior non-romantic relationship (59%) as opposed to a prior romantic partner (34%) or a stranger (7%). These gender differences were statistically significant $\chi^2 (2, N = 235) = 12.9, p = .002$.\textsuperscript{30}

**Summary of Victim Factors**

The presence of a prior romantic relationship is emerging as one of the most robust predictors of stalking violence. It also showed good discrimination in this sample, dividing it approximately in half. The only other victim characteristic of note is the predominance of females who feature in about 80% of the cases. Female gender is not a risk factor per se, but it may be a marker for victim vulnerability. It is widely recognized that women are often, though not always, at a physical and economic disadvantage relative to their male partners. This is one of the explanations advanced for why some women do not leave abusive relationships. For similar reasons, female victims, as a group, may be relatively more vulnerable than male victims to persistent criminal harassment or even physical violence.

\textsuperscript{30} 11 cases were missing.
Stalking Behaviour Characteristics

As the case files were reviewed, brief narratives were made of the events that preceded the onset of the harassing behaviour. From these descriptions, common themes were identified and then subsequently used to classify the cases. The most prominent theme identified within the files was the dissolution of a romantic relationship. It was present in some form or other in 54% of the cases. Relationship break-ups were often interwoven with other complicating factors such as child custody issues, but it was generally impossible to determine the extent to which these other factors served as the "impetus" for the behaviour as opposed to merely the perpetrator's excuse for it. Non-romantic disputes, limited friendly exchanges and the absence of any previous interpersonal interaction each characterized the antecedent histories of 10% to 15% of the cases (see Table 6).

The distribution of attachment patterns between the perpetrator and the victim is shown in Table 6. Although all the different patterns of attachment were represented in the sample, less than 10% of the sample manifested the amorous to angry and sexual patterns of attachment while more than 20% of the sample exhibited each of the remaining three types of attachment (i.e., angry, amorous and mixed).
Table 6.

Stalking Behaviour Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antecedent history</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic break up (perpetrator and victim)</td>
<td>46.1 (109)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic break up (perpetrator and victim's current partner)</td>
<td>3.0 (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic break up and child custody dispute</td>
<td>4.7 (11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispute (unrelated to a romantic relationship)</td>
<td>10.5 (25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneventful friendly exchanges</td>
<td>11.0 (26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No antecedent history</td>
<td>15.7 (37)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.9 (21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attachment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>7.0 (15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amorous</td>
<td>28.6 (61)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amorous becoming angry</td>
<td>8.9 (19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>33.3 (71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (angry and amorous)</td>
<td>22.1 (47)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration (days)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 15</td>
<td>19.0 (43)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 30</td>
<td>11.5 (26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 90</td>
<td>17.7 (40)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 to 180</td>
<td>16.8 (38)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 to 365</td>
<td>16.4 (37)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 365</td>
<td>18.6 (42)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of incidents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 6</td>
<td>17.8 (42)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>15.7 (37)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 25</td>
<td>19.1 (45)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 50</td>
<td>14.8 (35)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 100</td>
<td>20.3 (48)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 100</td>
<td>12.3 (29)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioural pattern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>54.9 (106)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalating</td>
<td>28.0 (54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatically escalating</td>
<td>7.3 (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-escalating</td>
<td>1.6 (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluctuating</td>
<td>8.3 (16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Ns less than 236 reflect missing values.*
The duration of the criminal harassment ranged in length from 1 day to approximately 25 years. Due to a positive skew in the data there was a wide gulf between the median ($Mdn = 100$ days) and mean ($M = 311.0$ days, $SD = 786.0$) periods of duration. Table 6 sets out the percentage of cases in which the behaviour had ceased at selected points in time. These results show that while the behaviour came to an end relatively quickly in many of the cases, a notable proportion (19%) persisted for more than a year. The frequency of incidents ranged from a low of 1 up to an estimated 3,600 incidents in one particularly extreme case. Like duration, the frequency of criminal harassment incidents was positively skewed and the mean ($M = 79.3$, $SD = 328.3$) and median ($Mdn = 19$) values were widely separated.

Most of the cases in which an overall pattern to the harassment could be established ($n = 193$) were characterized as stable (55%). In slightly more than a quarter of the cases, the stalking behaviour exhibited an incremental escalation over time (28%) and in a few cases (7%; $n = 14$) there was a profound escalation in the behaviour. In five of the cases where the behaviour escalated dramatically, the sudden shift was attributed to actual or attempted efforts to stop the harassment that were made by either the victim ($n = 1$), someone known to the victim ($n = 1$), or the police ($n = 3$). In two cases the perpetrator’s behaviour escalated when the victim entered into a new romantic relationship with another person and in another case it coincided with the victim’s refusal to return to the foreign country where she had lived for a time with the perpetrator. It was not clear what precipitated the escalating behaviour in the remaining six cases.
Perpetrators exhibited considerable diversity in the behaviours they used to harass the victim. On average, perpetrators engaged in more than three ($M = 3.6; SD = 1.71$, range = 1 to 9) different types of harassing behaviour. Only 12% of the perpetrators ($n = 28$) confined themselves to a single form of harassment. To gain a sense of the behaviours most often employed by perpetrators, prevalence rates were computed for three broad behavioural categories formed on the basis of their proximity to the victim (remote, approach and direct contact). The majority of perpetrators engaged in at least one behaviour from each proximity category (see Table 7) with only the prevalence rate for the category of direct contact behaviours falling below the 75% level. Subsequent analyses of individual behaviours revealed that the prevalence rates for each of the three behavioural proximity categories could be largely accounted for by a single behaviour contained within it, mainly, phone calls (remote), attending the victim’s residence or workplace (approach), and face-to-face verbal contact (direct).

To evaluate the tendency for different behaviours to emerge earlier or later in the course of harassment, the mean chronological ranking of each behaviour was computed.\textsuperscript{31} The lower the chronological rank, the earlier that behaviour tended to appear in the overall sequence of the harassing conduct. As can be seen from a review of Table 7, perpetrators tended to use remote behaviours before approach behaviours, which in turn,

\textsuperscript{31} Means for the behavioural proximity categories were calculated by, first, determining the average rank of the behaviours committed by each perpetrator within a particular category (i.e., the mean rank of all remote behaviours committed by the perpetrator in case #3) and then determining the sample mean of each category. Means for individual behaviours were computed by averaging the chronological rank of that behaviour for the entire sample.
were typically employed before direct contact behaviours. The means for the individual behaviours show that criminal harassment typically began with remote communications (e.g., phone calls, written letters, and emails/faxes), or approaches to the victim’s residence or workplace. Later occurring behaviours tended to include some of the potentially more fear-inducing forms of conduct such as vandalism, theft, and physical contact (see Table 7).

Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>Chronological Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing letters</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending faxes/email</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone calls</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates about victim</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other remote behaviour</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends residence/workplace</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving gifts/notes</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking and entering</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other approach behaviour</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents gifts/notes</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal contact</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical contact</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other direct contact behaviour</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. N = 236. *The size of the groups for the mean chronological rankings may be smaller than for the prevalence of the same behaviour because it was not always possible to determine the chronological appearance of each behaviour present in every case.
Summary of Stalking Behaviour Risk Factors

The range of attachment styles exhibited among the sample can be distilled into three broad groups for violence risk assessment and risk management purposes. Conceptually, the amorous and sexual attachment styles can be merged into a single group encompassing individuals who express a desire for more intimate relationships with their victims without expressing anger towards them. The angry and the amorous to angry groups may be combined because both display anger as the latest appearing, and therefore most risk-relevant, pattern of attachment. The mixed attachment style is also imbued with anger, but it warrants separate consideration due to the magnitude of its representation in the sample coupled with an important conceptual distinction. The mixed group lacks a stable period of angry attachment and instead vacillates between amorous and angry attachments. This emotional volatility distinguishes mixed attachments and, more importantly, may elevate the associated risk of violence relative to the other anger-oriented attachment styles.

The sample was widely distributed in terms of the number of incidents and the duration of the harassment characterizing the cases. High frequency and/or persistent behaviour is *prima facie* the most troublesome, but it may also signal perpetrators who are more firmly fixed on their targets and therefore less likely to respond favourably to intervention by the criminal justice system. Concerning the overall pattern of behaviour, very few cases (<8%) exhibited behaviour that escalated dramatically, however, the behaviour in more than one third of the cases escalated in some manner or other (i.e.,
either dramatically or incrementally). Based on these results, it may be more instructive to simply focus on the presence or absence of an upward trajectory in the behaviour rather than the rate of that trajectory. Finally, there was little behavioural distinction evident at the remote (e.g., phone calls) and approach (e.g., attending the victims home) proximity levels because almost all perpetrators (> 75%) utilized these behaviours. By comparison, direct contact behaviours, which also pose the greatest potential risk to victims, were utilized by approximately 60% of the perpetrators and therefore these behaviours demonstrated the greatest discrimination within the sample.

Threats and Physical Violence

The following analyses examine the presence of threatening and violent behaviour during the course of harassment. Threats were made in nearly half the cases reviewed (47%) based on a broad definition that includes every threatening communication regardless of its nature (unconditional vs. conditional vs. veiled) or the consequential harm specified by it (e.g., physical injury vs. property damage vs. embarrassment). Using a more restrictive definition that is limited to threats of physical harm lowers the prevalence to 38%.

As Table 8 makes plain, the threats made by criminal harassment perpetrators show considerable variation in terms of their nature, intended target, and consequential harm. For example, while unconditional threats predominate (e.g., “I will shoot you between the eyes”), roughly one quarter of the cases manifesting threatening communications involved veiled (e.g., “You’ll be fucking sorry”) or conditional
statements of harm (e.g., “I want to see my son, or I will kill you”). Inspection of the conditional threats revealed that many of them could be ostensibly averted by the victim furthering the perpetrator’s romantic aspirations through such actions as renewing communications or relationships with the perpetrator \( n = 7 \) or ending current (or avoiding future) romantic relationships with a third party \( n = 2 \). In other cases conditional threats were made by the perpetrator in an effort to gain child custody or access \( n = 4 \), to deter the victim from contacting law enforcement officials \( n = 3 \), or to re-acquire a job, money or property that the perpetrator believed was owing to him or her \( n = 3 \).

The most common target of the threatening communications was the primary victim of the criminal harassment, but there were other targets too (see Table 8). The most frequently identified alternative target was a current romantic partner, but they were only marginally more at risk of being threatened than the victim’s family members. Though less commonly the focus of threatening communications, the children of the primary victim tended to be the subject of a specific form of harm: abduction. In general, the most common form of harm characterizing threat cases was physical injury followed by property damage and damage to reputation or causing embarrassment. Threats to cause embarrassment or harm to reputation usually revolved around the perpetrator divulging personal details concerning the victim’s sexuality (e.g., nude photos, abortions) or criminal conduct (e.g., drug use) or in some cases entirely fictitious details.
Table 8.

Prevalence and Associated Characteristics of Threatening Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Threat or Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any threat</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>47.2 (110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats of physical harm</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>37.8 (88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the threat</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconditional</td>
<td>69.5 (73)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>24.8 (26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veiled</td>
<td>26.7 (28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of harm threatened</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical well-being</td>
<td>81.5 (88)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property damage</td>
<td>13.0 (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career/financial</td>
<td>8.3 (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment/reputation</td>
<td>11.1 (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19.4 (21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target of the threat</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary victim</td>
<td>87.2 (95)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current romantic partner</td>
<td>13.8 (15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member (other than child)</td>
<td>11.9 (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>7.3 (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>10.1 (11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-worker</td>
<td>5.5 (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement officer managing the case</td>
<td>1.8 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The totals may exceed 100% due to cases with more than one associated characteristic.

Occurrences of physical violence were documented in relatively few files. Fifteen percent (14.7%; n = 34) of the cases referenced the occurrence of one or more incidents of physical violence. Only a very small portion of the violence (14%) was rated as premeditated, although the status of six cases could not be determined due to missing or inadequate file information.

The individual acts of violence could be classified in 32 of the 34 cases. Table 9 shows the distribution of the most serious act for each case across seven different levels of aggressive and violent behaviours. In the majority of cases, the most serious act of
violence consisted of pushing, grabbing or kicking. Approximately one quarter of the cases involved more serious violence such as 'beatings' or 'other' acts that included a pepper spray incident (1 case), choking (2 cases) and sexual assault (1 case). The primary victim was the target of the violence in most cases (85%) where it occurred, but family members, friends, current intimate partners and co-workers were also targeted on occasion.

Table 9.

Prevalence and Associated Characteristics of Physical Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any physical violence</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>14.7 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premeditated</td>
<td>28a</td>
<td>14.3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most serious act</td>
<td>32a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threw something</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.4 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushed or grabbed</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.3 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapped or hit</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicked</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.3 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit with something</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.3 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat up</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.4 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used weapons</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target of the violence</td>
<td>33a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>84.8 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current romantic partner</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.1 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member (other than child)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.1 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.1 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.2 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injuries</td>
<td>25a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No physical injuries</td>
<td></td>
<td>68.0 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor physical injuries</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.0 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious physical injuries</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Ns less than 34 reflect missing values.
The relatively low level of serious violence documented among most of the files accords well with the finding that victims typically did not suffer physical injuries as a result of these incidents \((n = 17)\), or at worst, suffered relatively minor physical injuries \((n = 8)\). None of the injuries documented in the files received a rating of "serious" or worse, however, these results should be considered cautiously due to the large number of cases \((n = 8)\) with missing data.

Both threats of physical harm and violence demonstrated strong associations with one another. Perpetrators who made threats of physical harm were significantly more likely to commit acts of physical violence \((30\%)\), \(\chi^2 (1, N = 236) = 26.08, p < .001\) in comparison to non-threateners \((5\%)\). Despite the relationship between threats and violence, it is important to note that most perpetrators in this sample who issued threats of physical harm did not engage in known acts of physical violence \((71\%)\). One caveat is warranted at this point. The threats did not necessarily precede the violence in these cases and therefore the findings should not be interpreted to mean that threats were predictive of violent behaviour.

**Summary of Threats and Physical Violence Risk Factors**

To summarize, perpetrators issued threats of some kind or other in nearly half of the cases reviewed. Over 80% of the cases with threatening communications involved threats of physical harm which tend to raise the greatest *prima facie* concerns over violence risk. Although unconditional, conditional and veiled threats were all identified
within the sample, there is yet no empirical or rational basis for making this distinction for violence risk assessment purposes.

Compared to threatening communications, the rate of physical violence was relatively low (15%). Few distinctions were evident among these cases as nearly all the incidents involved fairly minor forms of physical violence (e.g., pushing, grabbing, striking or throwing objects) directed towards the primary victim and none of the incidents were known to have caused serious physical injury. Despite a positive statistical association between threats of physical harm and physical violence, the majority of threatening perpetrators were not known to have engaged in physical acts of violence.

**Law Enforcement Intervention**

At present, very little is known about what prompts victims to seek law enforcement intervention in criminal harassment cases. In about half the case files (51%; n = 118) it was possible to identify a specific event that precipitated the victim’s request for police assistance. It is evident from Table 10 that most precipitating incidents gave rise to obvious concerns over the victim’s physical safety due to the implicitly or explicitly threatening nature of the perpetrator’s behaviour. In some cases it appeared the decision to contact police was prompted by the victim’s alarm over the personal details the perpetrator obviously possessed about their life such as where they live or worked. The unusual nature of the perpetrator’s communications or contact was identified as the motivating factor in only a very small number of cases (n = 7).
Table 10.

*Events Prompting Victims to Seek Police Assistance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>% (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threatening communication</td>
<td>20.3 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends residence or workplace accompanied by other intrusive behaviours (e.g., refuses to leave; pounds on door; attempts entry)</td>
<td>14.4 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., defamatory comments, harassment resumes after a hiatus, seeks/reveals personal information about the victim)</td>
<td>11.9 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends residence or workplace unaccompanied by other intrusive behaviours</td>
<td>10.2 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>7.6 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other fear-inducing behaviour (e.g., verbal abuse, blocks car, threatening looks)</td>
<td>7.7 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking and entering</td>
<td>6.8 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>5.9 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odd/disturbing communications</td>
<td>5.9 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following or watching</td>
<td>4.2 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>3.4 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of a legal order</td>
<td>1.7 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N* = 118.

The subsequent investigation by police was unsuccessful in identifying or locating the suspected perpetrator in 8% (*n* = 18) of the cases. Police discontinued their investigation in a further 8% (*n* = 18) of the cases for a variety of reasons including victim request, the victim could not subsequently be located, or the victim did not provide a statement or other information considered necessary for the investigation to go further. Information concerning the investigation and intervention of police was missing for one case. The subsequent analyses of police case management decisions are based on the remaining cases (*n* = 199) in which there was a known police intervention.

Nearly one third of these cases were referred to the CHU at some point during the investigation although the reasons that lay behind the referral were seldom specified in
the investigation report. By far the most common intervention strategy selected by police was to arrest and charge the perpetrator. This strategy was adopted in 54% of the cases (see Table 11). The next most common form of intervention, a warning to the perpetrator to cease his or her behaviour, was employed in about 40% of the cases. Police warnings usually occurred as part of a face-to-face interview with the perpetrator, however, there were isolated accounts of warnings issued over the telephone, by letter, or via the perpetrator's parole officer. Case management decisions to obtain a peace bond against the perpetrator, or not to intervene, each occurred in approximately one quarter of the cases or less.

The Criminal Code sections relating to the charges proposed by police are summarized in Table 12. As one might predict, the most frequently recommended charge was criminal harassment (81%), followed by charges for uttering threats (28%) and assault (7%). In British Columbia, final charge approval resides with Crown prosecutors so the charges proposed by police may, or may not, be proceeded with. According to the investigation files, the Crown accepted one or more of the charges proposed by police in 70% (n = 75) of the cases and they declined to proceed on any of the recommended charges in 5% (n = 5) of the cases. The decision of the Crown to accept or reject the charges was not documented in the other 25% (n = 27) of the cases.
Table 11.

**Utilization of Different Police Intervention Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of intervention</th>
<th>Implemented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ever (^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>15.6 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview/warning</td>
<td>39.2 (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace bond</td>
<td>25.6 (51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest</td>
<td>53.8 (107)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(N = 199.\) \(^b\)The total exceeds 100% due to multiple intervention strategies in some cases.

Table 12.

**Criminal Code Charges Recommended by Police**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>% (n) (^a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. 264 – Criminal harassment</td>
<td>81.3 (87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 264.1 – Uttering threats</td>
<td>26.0 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 266 – Assault</td>
<td>7.4 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 348 – Breaking and entering</td>
<td>2.8 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 86 – Careless use of firearm</td>
<td>1.9 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 177 – Trespass at night</td>
<td>1.9 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 334 – Theft</td>
<td>1.9 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 372 – Alarming/indecent/harassing phone calls</td>
<td>1.9 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 430 – Mischief</td>
<td>1.9 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 733.1 – Failure to comply with probation order</td>
<td>1.9 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 87 – Pointing a firearm</td>
<td>0.9 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 145 – Failure to comply (^b)</td>
<td>0.9 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. \(N = 105.\) \(^a\)Figures total more than 100% due to multiple charges in some cases. \(^b\)The specific offence is unknown because the applicable subsection of section 145 was not recorded.
Relationship of Risk Factors to Case Management Decisions

The final set of analyses focus on identifying the relationships of different violence risk factors to the case management decision by police to arrest the perpetrator. The decision to arrest and charge the perpetrator was selected for analysis because it represents the highest case management response. As there was no significant difference in the arrest rates of cases referred to the CHU (48%) versus cases managed by the original investigating officers (57%) the cases were analyzed together $\chi^2 (1, N = 198) = 1.162, p < .281$.

The remaining analyses are presented in two parts. The first part presents the results of univariate analyses that were conducted to determine which of the previously identified risk factors were significantly related to the case management decision to arrest. The second part presents a series of logistic regression analyses performed to predict decisions to arrest using the statistically significant risk factors identified in the univariate analyses.

Univariate Analyses

For these analyses, the dichotomous risk factors (e.g., male gender) were re-coded as present or absent/missing and then tested using chi-square ($\chi^2$) analyses. The results of these analyses as well as the proportion of the arrest and non-arrest case management

---

32 While the term “arrest” is used, it should be recognized that this case management strategy did not always involve the physical arrest of the perpetrator.
groups manifesting each risk factor are displayed in Table 13. It is evident that a significant association existed between case management decisions and each of the dichotomous risk factors, with three exceptions. Male gender, prior psychiatric history and prior violent conviction all failed to reach conventional levels of statistical significance, although the latter risk factor approached this level ($p = .084$).

Three risk factors, perpetrator age, frequency of harassing incidents, and duration of the harassment, were not categorical in nature. For these risk factors, the arrest and non-arrest case management groups were compared using independent-samples $t$-tests. Between 4% and 9% of the cases were excluded from each analysis due to missing data. The difference in the mean ages between the perpetrators in the arrest ($M = 36.7, SD = 10.1$) and non-arrest case management groups ($M = 37.3, SD = 12.3$) was not statistically significant, $t(187) = .382, p = .703$. Likewise, no statistically significant differences were detected in the mean number of harassing incidents committed by the arrest ($M = 121.7, SD = 459.0$) and non-arrest groups ($M = 37.1, SD = 69.7$), $t(179) = 1.601, p = .111$. Nor were the average periods of harassment for the arrest ($M = 375.5$ days, $SD = 995.5$) and non-arrest groups statistically different ($M = 285.4$ days, $SD = 606.7$), $t(189) = .732, p = .465$. 
### Table 13.

**Case Characteristics Related to the Case Management Decision to Arrest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Case Management Decision</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Arrest</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% or M (n or SD)</td>
<td>% or M (n or SD)</td>
<td>$\chi^2$, t or U</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-demographic characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male gender</td>
<td>82.6 (76)</td>
<td>88.8 (95)</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>37.3 (12.3)</td>
<td>36.7 (10.1)</td>
<td>0.382*</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>13.0 (12)</td>
<td>36.4 (39)</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminological characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior conviction</td>
<td>31.5 (29)</td>
<td>47.7 (51)</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior violent conviction</td>
<td>18.5 (17)</td>
<td>29.0 (31)</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of spousal violence</td>
<td>12.0 (11)</td>
<td>34.6 (37)</td>
<td>13.83</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior psychiatric history</td>
<td>10.9 (10)</td>
<td>15.9 (17)</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current substance use</td>
<td>10.9 (10)</td>
<td>28.0 (30)</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female gender</td>
<td>75.0 (69)</td>
<td>87.9 (94)</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior romantic relationship</td>
<td>42.4 (39)</td>
<td>61.7 (66)</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalating</td>
<td>22.8 (21)</td>
<td>38.3 (41)</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachmentb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>43.8 (32)</td>
<td>23.6 (25)</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>38.4 (28)</td>
<td>47.2 (50)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>17.8 (13)</td>
<td>29.2 (31)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct contact</td>
<td>53.3 (49)</td>
<td>72.0 (77)</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of harassment (days)c</td>
<td>285.4 (606.7)</td>
<td>375.5 (995.5)</td>
<td>3634.50*</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of harassing incidentsg</td>
<td>37.1 (69.7)</td>
<td>121.7 (459.0)</td>
<td>2672.00*</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats of physical harm</td>
<td>21.7 (20)</td>
<td>57.0 (61)</td>
<td>25.50</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>4.3 (4)</td>
<td>25.2 (27)</td>
<td>16.41</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The data for both the number of harassing incidents and the duration of harassment each contained some very extreme values which may have contributed to the failure of these risk factors to attain statistical significance. To account for this
possibility, these two risk factors were re-analyzed using the Mann-Whitney $U$ test. It uses a rank-sum procedure that is immune to the influence of extreme values and therefore it is well suited to these data. When this testing procedure was adopted, both the number of harassing incidents and the duration of the harassment proved to be statistically different for the arrest and non-arrest management groups. The results of these comparisons are provided in Table 13.

**Logistic Regression Analyses**

The dependent variable for the following series of analyses is the case management decision of police to arrest (or not arrest) the perpetrator. The preceding univariate analyses identified 13 risk factors that exhibited statistically significant relationships to this case management outcome and each one of these variables was used as a predictor in the logistic regression analyses. Included among the 13 predictors was the attachment risk factor which was trichotomous in nature (i.e., amorous, angry and mixed). It was analyzed as two predictors, angry attachments and mixed attachments, using amorous attachments as the reference group. As a result, the final number of predictors totalled 14.

These 14 predictors were organized into three domains: perpetrator characteristics (unemployed, prior conviction, history of spousal violence, and current substance use); victim characteristics (female gender and prior romantic relationship); and, behavioural characteristics (escalating behaviour, attachment, direct contact behaviour, threats of physical harm, physical violence, duration of harassment, and number of harassing
incidents). Three logistic regression analyses were performed so that the risk factors from each domain could be entered and analyzed separately from the risk factors in the other domains.

The initial analysis involving the perpetrator risk factors produced a significant model, $-2 \log \text{Likelihood} = 242.593$, $\chi^2 (4, N = 199) = 32.148$, $p = .000$. As shown in Table 14, two of the four perpetrator risk factors were significant predictors of police decisions to arrest: unemployment and history of spousal violence.

**Table 14.**

*Logistic Regression Analysis for Perpetrator Risk Factors Predicting Arrest Decisions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE (B)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1.245</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>10.383</td>
<td>3.474</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior conviction</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>1.112</td>
<td>1.120</td>
<td>.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of spousal violence</td>
<td>1.163</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>8.010</td>
<td>3.199</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current substance use</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>.444</td>
<td>2.135</td>
<td>1.913</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.556</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>6.878</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $N = 199$.

In the second analysis, the two victim-related risk factors, female victim and prior romantic relationship, were entered. It too, produced a significant model, $-2 \log \text{Likelihood} = 263.127$, $\chi^2 (2, N = 199) = 11.614$, $p = .003$ that included both victim-related risk factors as significant predictors (see Table 15).
Table 15.

Logistic Regression Analysis for Victim Factors Predicting Arrest Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE (B)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female victim</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.388</td>
<td>4.060</td>
<td>2.187</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior romantic relationship</td>
<td>.720</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>6.006</td>
<td>2.055</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.866</td>
<td>.374</td>
<td>5.359</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 199.

All the behavioural risk factors\(^{33}\) were entered into the third analysis which also yielded a significant model - 2 Log Likelihood = 228.911, \(\chi^2 (8, N = 199) = 45.830, p = .000\). The threats and physical violence risk factors were the only significant predictors of case management decisions to arrest in this model (See Table 16).\(^{34}\)

\(^{33}\) The number of harassing incidents and the duration of harassment variables included some extreme values capable of distorting the results of these analyses. To address this concern, both of these variables were re-coded so that any case with a value greater than 5 times the standard deviation was set at a value equal to 5 times the standard deviation. There were also numerous cases with missing data for these variables. In cases where data was missing, the applicable median value (median rather than mean due to the skewed nature of the data) was substituted.

\(^{34}\) This analysis was performed two further times with modifications to address the problem of missing data associated with the number of harassing incidents and duration of harassment variables. In the first supplemental analysis, any case with a missing value on either variable was omitted which reduced the number of cases by 24. This analysis produced a significant model - 2 Log Likelihood = 207.672, \(\chi^2 (8, N = 175) = 29.409, p = .000\), with one important difference, the physical violence variable was no longer significant \((p = .079)\). In the second analysis, the number of harassing incidents and duration of harassment variables were dropped altogether. This yielded a significant model - 2 Log Likelihood = 232.434, \(\chi^2 (6, N = 199) = 42.307, p = .000\), and physical violence was once again statistically significant \((p = .031)\). No appreciable differences from the original analyses were noted.
Table 16.

Logistic Regression Analysis for Behavioural Risk Factors Predicting Arrest Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE (B)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escalating behaviour</td>
<td>.472</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td>1.777</td>
<td>1.603</td>
<td>.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry attachment</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>1.813</td>
<td>1.710</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed attachment</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>.471</td>
<td>2.292</td>
<td>2.039</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct contact</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>1.008</td>
<td>1.408</td>
<td>.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats of physical harm</td>
<td>.925</td>
<td>.376</td>
<td>6.044</td>
<td>2.522</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>1.198</td>
<td>.605</td>
<td>3.928</td>
<td>3.315</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of harassment*</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of harassing incidents*</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>1.521</td>
<td>1.003</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.244</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>13.265</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. N = 199. *The median value was substituted in missing cases. **Values greater than 5 standard deviations were replaced with a value equal to 5 standard deviations.

For the final analysis, the risk factors from each domain that proved to be significant predictors of arrest in one of the initial logistic regression analyses were re-entered to generate a comprehensive model of case management decisions to arrest. The resulting comprehensive model was significant - 2 Log Likelihood = 218.002, $\chi^2 (6, N = 199) = 56.739$, $p = .000$ and it contained four significant predictors: unemployed perpetrator, female victim, threats, and physical violence (See Table 17).
Table 17.

*Logistic Regression Analysis for Risk Factors Predicting Arrest Decisions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE (B)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1.342</td>
<td>.413</td>
<td>10.576</td>
<td>3.826</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of spousal violence</td>
<td>.708</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td>2.466</td>
<td>2.030</td>
<td>.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior romantic relationship</td>
<td>.245</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>.494</td>
<td>1.278</td>
<td>.482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female victim</td>
<td>.873</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>4.067</td>
<td>2.395</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats of physical harm</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>11.314</td>
<td>3.379</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>1.381</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>5.111</td>
<td>3.980</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.765</td>
<td>.446</td>
<td>15.673</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.*  $N = 199.$
DISCUSSION

The establishment of Canada's criminal harassment law bestowed law enforcement officials with new opportunities to manage stalking cases as well as placing new obligations on them to evaluate the risk of violence in these cases. Research conducted over the past decade is beginning to identify risk factors for stalking violence, however, this work is still in the preliminary stages and most of it is concentrated in settings outside of the law enforcement context. As a consequence, the practical guidance offered by this research for the assessment and management of stalking cases by law enforcement officials remains uncertain.

The fundamental purpose of this dissertation was to (a) describe a sample of criminal harassment cases investigated by police to develop a better picture of the violence risk factors associated with stalking cases encountered by Canadian law enforcement officials; and, (b) examine the relationship of these risk factors to case management decisions. The results of this study will be summarized in accordance with these aims and the implications of the findings for the management of criminal harassment cases will be discussed. As well, the limitations of the study and some possible directions for future research will be outlined.
Summary and Commentary on Study Findings

Perpetrator Characteristics

Socio-demographic characteristics

The criminal harassment perpetrators in this sample were primarily males (87%) who were, on average, in their mid-thirties ($M = 36.6$ years). Nearly all the perpetrators were over the age of 18 and therefore criminally responsible as adults. Young offenders comprised less than 2% of the known perpetrators and no one was below 12 years of age, the minimum age of criminal responsibility. This finding is important because the available range of, and relative emphasis on, different case management options varies according to these legally-based age categories. For example, criminal charges and peace bonds cannot be used in conjunction with individuals below the minimum age of criminal responsibility. The data in this study indicate that police case management options will rarely be limited because the perpetrator is a youth or person below the age of criminal responsibility.

Although information concerning other socio-demographic characteristics was less consistently available, the findings generally reinforce the impression that criminal harassment perpetrators tend to lead isolated, unstable lives that are largely devoid of social success. The majority of perpetrators in the sample were either living alone or in unstable situations (59%) and very few perpetrators were in committed relationships (e.g., married or common law) at the time of the harassment (11%). Many were
unemployed (39%) and those who did have jobs typically worked in relatively unskilled occupations. These socio-demographic characteristics are very consistent with other accounts in the published literature (e.g., Gill & Brockman, 1996; Harmon et al., 1995; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen et al., 1999) and highlight the type of background social conditions that may serve to fuel the development of harassing behaviour among some perpetrators.

**Criminological characteristics**

Several different criminal history backgrounds were evident within the sample. Half of the perpetrators had criminal charges or convictions documented by CPIC, a finding remarkably similar to the one reported by another Canadian study (Gill & Brockman, 1996) which noted that 53% of the perpetrators in the criminal harassment files they examined had prior criminal records. The prevalence rate of criminal histories reported for clinical-forensic samples tends to be the same or slightly higher (55% to 75%) than the level found in this study (Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002) but there have been clinical-forensic samples with lower rates too (Mullen et al., 1999).

Within the group of perpetrators who had an existing criminal record, there was a smaller subset that had convictions for violent offences. These violent criminal histories were common to approximately one quarter of the sample. These criminally violent perpetrators were more persistent and criminally entrenched relative to the perpetrators
with non-violent criminal histories: they began their criminal careers at a younger age, committed more criminal offences, and exhibited greater criminal diversity.

The criminal records also revealed that nearly one fifth of the sample had convictions for escape-related offences. These escape-related convictions are important for two reasons. Empirically, a prior supervision failure is a risk factor for general violence and so criminal harassment perpetrators with this type of conviction likely pose an elevated risk for violence. Rationally, a past disregard for legal directions probably signals a greater willingness to violate similar legal directions in the future, and therefore these perpetrators may also be more prone to continue their harassment despite verbal warnings or legal conditions (e.g., peace bond) to the contrary.

Convictions for the offence of criminal harassment were generally absent from the records documented by CPIC and existed for less 2% of the sample. An analogous study of police investigation files conducted by Gill and Brockman (1996) also found that prior convictions for criminal harassment were fairly rare (3%). By comparison, when police narratives were examined in the current study, there was evidence of prior stalking behaviour for almost 9% of the cases. Furthermore, nearly three quarters of these cases had no convictions for any stalking-related offence (e.g., criminal harassment, threatening, intimidation, harassing phone calls). This low level of criminal harassment convictions was anticipated because the offence had been in existence for only four years at the time the police investigations in this sample were conducted and so very few individuals had ever been prosecuted with it. As the awareness of the offence continues
to grow, more instances of criminally harassing behaviour is likely to culminate in charges and convictions that will be documented in CPIC.

The prevalence of prior spousal assault histories also deserves comment. The police narratives contained evidence of prior spousal assault in approximately 24% of the cases. The rate of spousal assailters in this sample is not surprising in view of the relatively large proportion of prior romantic partners among the sample (52%) together with the growing theoretical and empirical links between ex-romantic stalkers and spousal violence. It is also in line with two other criminal harassment studies that found evidence of prior relationship violence in 29% and 36% of the cases that were examined (Garrod et al., 1995; Gill & Brockman, 1996). What is most striking about the current sample is that the criminal harassment perpetrators with a known history of spousal violence were less likely to have a prior conviction for violence than perpetrators without a known history of spousal violence. The failure of official criminal records to reflect histories of prior spousal violence or stalking behaviour underscores the need for investigating officers to solicit this information from victims and witnesses.

**Psychological characteristics**

Evidence that the perpetrator had undergone psychiatric treatment or diagnostic evaluation in the past was found in 13% of the overall file sample. Psychiatric examinations were requested in about 40% of the RCCs which suggests a greater

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The study by Gill and Brockman (1996) reported that previous relationship violence existed for 50% of the criminal harassment cases involving current or former intimate partners, a figure which converts to 29% of the entire sample.
presence of psychopathology, but interpreting this finding is difficult because no rationale was provided for the request and a large portion of the case files did not include a RCC.

The prevalence of psychiatric histories found in the current study corresponds closely to the level (14%) of mental or psychological problems detected in Gill and Brockman’s (1996) study of criminal harassment cases. It is also markedly lower than the rates of psychological problems found among clinically-based samples which typically do not fall below 50% (Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Meloy et al., 2000; Sandberg et al., 1998; Schwartz-Watts et al., 1997). The evident discrepancy between the rates of police-based and clinically-based samples is probably attributable to both real differences as well as differences in detection. To explain, reviewing psychiatric history and evaluating psychological functioning are routine procedures in clinical settings, but these are not matters police are likely to turn their minds to except where obvious signs or symptoms of mental disorder present themselves.

Within the current sample, there were references to specific clinical diagnoses for half the perpetrators with known psychiatric histories (n = 13), virtually all of which related to mood disorders or schizophrenia. Although specific comparison data for other police-based samples do not exist, the diagnoses reported here are consistent with the psychiatric conditions commonly found in clinical-forensic samples of stalkers (e.g., Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen et al., 1999; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002).

About one fifth of the files contained information suggesting current alcohol or drug use by the perpetrator, but details were so vague in eight of these cases (19%) that the nature of the substance (e.g., alcohol or drugs) could not be ascertained. Ten percent
of the perpetrators appeared to have current drinking problems and nine percent were known drug users. Concurrent drug and alcohol use was evident for less than 3% of the perpetrators. Unfortunately, the investigation reports rarely contained details of the degree to which the substance use related to the onset, continuation, or severity of the harassment.

Determining where the figures from this study fall within the context of the broader literature is difficult due to wide variations in methodology and reported rates. Still, it is worth noting that the rates of drug and alcohol use found in the current sample are nearly double the level (10%) reported for a similar sample of criminal harassment cases (Gill & Brockman, 1996), but at the very low end of the range of rates (20% to 70%) reported for many samples drawn from clinical-forensic settings or victim surveys (Brewster, 2000; Hall, 1998; Kienlen et al., 1997; Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen et al., 1999). It is not clear to what extent the higher rates found in these other investigations is attributable to more thorough investigation, the study methodology, or the nature of the study sample.

The co-morbidity of substance use and mental disorder is a matter of interest because there are empirical findings that suggest this combination may be a powerful risk factor for violence (Swanson, 1994). In general, the two conditions co-existed in less than 2.5% of the sample (n = 5), however, this result is based on using psychiatric history as a proxy for mental disorder. More detailed file information and more sensitive measures of these two conditions might have revealed a higher rate of co-morbidity.
Victim Characteristics

Most victims in the sample were women (81%) and most knew the perpetrator prior to the onset of the harassment (88%). For women, the most common victim-perpetrator relationship was an ex-romantic partner whereas for men it was most often a prior non-romantic relationship such as an acquaintance. This differential pattern of victim-perpetrator relationships is quite consistent with other Canadian police samples (e.g., Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hackett, 2000; Kong, 1996) although the reasons for it are not entirely clear. One possibility being advanced is that these gender differences relate to fear (Kropp, Hart & Lyon, 2002). Being harassed by a current or former romantic partner may, in general, evoke more fear among women than men which leads to gender differences in reporting behaviour to police.

Mention also needs to be made of secondary victims. They were observed in 9% of the files. These were people who were not the perpetrator's main target, but were nevertheless the focus of repeated harassment. Most secondary victims held close relationships to the primary victim (e.g., family member) and they were usually harassed because they either provided assistance to the primary victim or because they became the perpetrator's only avenue for contacting the primary victim. This finding draws attention to the need to consider individuals beyond the primary victim when formulating management plans in criminal harassment cases.
Stalking Behaviour Characteristics

The most common antecedent history to the criminal harassment cases was the break up of a romantic relationship (54%). This finding accords well with the predominance of prior romantic partners within the sample. With respect to the perpetrator’s manifest pattern of attachment to the victim, 36% were classified as displaying attachments of intimacy (amorous or sexual attachments); 42% were classified as angry (angry or amorous attachments that became angry); and, 22% were classified as mixed (fluctuates between angry and amorous). The only other study to examine these patterns of attachment used a clinical-forensic stalking sample (Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002). Their results correspond quite closely to those found here with groups of amorous and angry stalkers each accounting for 40% of the sample and a group of mixed amorous and angry stalkers accounting for the rest (20%).

Some of the perpetrators in this study engaged in very persistent and frequent harassment. About 20% of the sample involved harassing behaviour that continued for longer than one year and a similar proportion of cases consisted of 100 harassing incidents or more. Although behavioural frequency is not as well studied, there are numerous investigations that report about one in five stalkers persist in their behaviour for a year or more (Bjerregaard, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Gill & Brockman, 1996; Purcell et al., 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). These findings have important implications because research shows that chronic and intensive harassment of this nature takes a tremendous toll on victims (Blaauw et al., 2002; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001, Lyon & Douglas, 1999; Pathé & Mullen, 1997, Tjaden & Theonnes.
1998). Hence, the need for timely and efficient intervention remains critical regardless of whether or not there are concerns that the behaviour is likely to culminate in physical violence.

The overall pattern of harassment found for the sample is both reassuring and disconcerting. On the positive side, the majority of cases that could be classified showed stable patterns of harassment. In other words, the severity and intensity of the behaviour did not escalate over time in most cases. Although about one third (35%) of the cases did escalate, the escalation was typically characterized as incremental in nature (> 80%) which suggests that there were opportunities to intervene. Unfortunately, there were some cases, albeit a relatively small proportion, that exhibited a sudden and profound escalation in behaviour. The most troubling aspect of these cases was that efforts to stop the harassment were sometimes perceived to have precipitated the escalation. This last point reinforces the importance of developing carefully tailored case management plans in advance of intervention.

An interesting pattern of results emerged when the proximity level of the harassing behaviours was examined. Nearly all the cases of harassment in this study involved remote (77%) and approach-oriented behaviour (85%). Of these distal stalking behaviours, phone calls (74%) and attending the victim’s residence or workplace (67%) were the two most common. Greater case variation existed for the most proximate behaviours. Less than two thirds of the perpetrators engaged in behaviour that involved making direct contact with the victim (e.g., verbal contact, personally presenting gifts, physical contact). Furthermore, these proximate behaviours tended to emerge later in the
course of the harassment relative to the more distal behaviours. In short, the harassing behaviour in this sample was not distinctive for how far away from the victim it started, but for how close to the victim it ended up.

**Threats and physical violence**

Almost half (47%) of the criminal harassment perpetrators in this study issued at least one communication threatening to harm person, career, reputation or property. The most prominent type of harm threatened was physical injury. It was a feature in 38% of all the criminal harassment cases reviewed. The only comparable data for criminal harassment cases comes from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. This statistical information shows that threats of possible harm were made in 52% of the cases reported to police in 1999 (Hackett, 2000).

Threatening communications were found to vary in nature. Unconditional threats were most common, but conditional and veiled threats could each be found in about one quarter of the threatening communications made. In contrast to unconditional and veiled threats, it appears conditional threats were usually used by perpetrators in an attempt to achieve identifiable goals (e.g., resumption of a romantic relationship) as opposed to simply frightening or intimidating victims. The most common target of threatening communications was the primary victim (87%), but other individuals also proved to be at risk including the victim’s current romantic partner, family members, and friends.

Physical violence was detected in 15% of the cases. This level is very consistent with the findings of two other police samples of criminal harassment cases that reported
rates of 14% and 15% (Gill & Brockman, 1996; Hackett, 2000). Most of the violence in the current study consisted of pushing, grabbing, slapping or kicking and most of these acts did not lead to serious injury. The primary victim was, once again, the most common target, but friends, family members, and current romantic partners were targeted on occasion.

It has been suggested that the violence directed against private citizens (versus public figures) who are stalked is principally reactive in nature (Meloy, 2002). Reactive violence describes spontaneous acts of aggression that are carried out in emotionally charged situations in response to some perceived insult or provocation. It also lacks the emotionally cold, pre-planned, and goal-oriented features of more predatory forms of violence. The data in this study provide tentative support for this theory. Very few acts of physical violence were classified as premeditated (14%) which suggests that most of the acts were relatively spontaneous in nature – one of the hallmarks of reactive violence.

**Summary of Case Characteristics**

Many of the risk factors for stalking violence identified in the scientific and professional literatures could be found in the police investigation reports of criminal harassment cases. Most of these risk factors were found in 15% to 85% of the cases and therefore exhibited some discriminative ability within the sample. A few prospective risk factors, such as single relationship status and prior stalking behaviour, were so prevalent, or alternatively, so uncommon, that they were not considered particularly illuminating risk factors for the sample as a whole.
Law Enforcement Intervention

A specific event precipitating the victim's request for law enforcement assistance could be identified in slightly more than half the cases (51%). These events usually involved some aggressive, disturbing or invasive behaviour on the part of the perpetrator that was oftentimes a criminal offence in itself (e.g., threatening communications, assault, vandalism). The potential utility of the offence of criminal harassment was probably greatest for the remaining cases in which there was no specific event that prompted the victim to contact police. These cases tended to lack individual behaviours that are prohibited under other Criminal Code offences and therefore the presence of a law criminalizing an overall pattern of harassing and intimidating behaviour provided one of the only means of intervention via the criminal law.

Police used warnings in an effort to dissuade perpetrators from continuing their behaviour in almost 40% of the cases, however, warnings constituted the highest form of police intervention in only 22% of the cases. The difference in these rates suggests that for about half the cases in which police issued a warning to the perpetrator they also resorted to one or more higher intervention strategies (e.g., peace bond or criminal charge). Peace bonds were selected as case management strategies in one quarter of the cases, but for more than half of these cases it was not the highest intervention strategy. Again, the implication is that police decided to lay criminal charges in many of the cases where peace bonds were also used. Overall, case management decisions involving charges were adopted in the majority of cases (54%). This charge rate is similar to the 1997 national average which was 60% (Hackett, 2000).
Relationship of Risk Factors and Case Management Decisions

The current study examined the relationship between the extant risk factors in this sample of criminal harassment cases and the case management decision of police to arrest and charge the perpetrator. Univariate analyses revealed that 13 of the 17 risk factors exhibited a significant relationship to arrest decisions. Importantly, these significant relationships were all in the expected direction. The prevalence (or severity) of each risk factor was higher among the cases where police decided to lay charges compared to cases in which an alternative intervention strategy was adopted. In other words, higher risk cases were more likely to receive a more intensive case management intervention (i.e., arrest) than lower risk cases. This result generally comports with good case management practices.

The results show that case management decisions were related to a diverse array of risk factors. Specifically, multiple factors from each broad domain of risk examined (i.e., perpetrator characteristics, victim characteristics, behavioural characteristics) demonstrated positive relationships to the decision to arrest the perpetrator. This finding is encouraging because it means that case management decisions were not associated with the risk factors from one domain to the exclusion of another. A contrary finding could be cause for concern because it might suggest that one or more risk factor domains were being ignored in case management decisions.

The multivariate analyses provide further insight into the relationship of the risk factors to case management decisions. The comprehensive regression model contained four significant predictors of arrest decisions: unemployed perpetrators, female victims,
threats of physical harm, and physical violence. These four independent predictors collectively represent all three risk factor domains and thereby provide stronger support for the notion that multiple domains of risk were reflected in case management decisions.

The two behavioural risk factors, physical violence and threats, were among the strongest predictors. This finding is not particularly surprising considering that: (1) each involves overt violence; and, (2) each is potentially an independent ground for arrest. More intriguing is the failure of prior romantic relationships to enter into the final model because it is one of the most robust risk factors to emerge out of the literature on stalking violence. Past research has shown that it also exhibits strong relationships to both threats and violence (Palarea et al., 1999; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Meloy et al., 2001), which may explain the reason why it became statistically insignificant when these factors were taken into account.

Unemployment was the only perpetrator characteristic retained in the comprehensive model. There are a couple of reasons why criminal harassment cases involving unemployed perpetrators may prove to be difficult to manage. Meloy (1996, 1998) points out that unemployed or underemployed perpetrators have a great deal of time available which enables them to engage in very persistent and intensive campaigns of harassment. Also, unemployment may diminish the effectiveness of intervention strategies such as warnings or peace bonds because there is less social “cost” (e.g., loss of a job) associated with failing to comply.

Mention also needs to be made of the relationship between female victims and case management decisions to arrest. This is not an isolated finding as at least one other
study has found stalking perpetrators were more likely to be arrested or detained if the victim was female (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). If female gender constitutes a rough measure of perceived victim vulnerability, the finding suggests that decisions to arrest were more likely in cases where the victim was more vulnerable. It must be emphasized that no assertion is being made here that being female makes a person vulnerable. Instead, it is likely that being female is associated with other factors like the level of fear, available financial resources, physical size and strength, the presence of dependent children, which can affect a victim’s vulnerability. Although victim vulnerability has been largely ignored in the empirical literature on stalking violence, it may be a particularly salient consideration in criminal harassment cases. Unlike other forms of violence, criminal harassment is targeted toward a specific and identifiable individual. In these circumstances, it seems both relevant and prudent when deciding upon an appropriate case management strategy to assess the factors influencing the victim’s ability to protect himself or herself.

Some comment should also be made of the four risk factors that did not exhibit significant relationships to the arrest decisions of police. Perpetrator age was the only risk factor that did not even exhibit a non-significant relationship in the expected direction. Younger age is generally associated with a higher risk of future violence so it was expected that the perpetrators in the arrest group would, on average, be younger than the perpetrators in the non-arrest group. As it turned out, the mean ages of the arrest ($M = 36.7$ years) and non-arrest groups ($M = 37.3$) were virtually identical. Admittedly, the sample in this study was relatively old and lacked many perpetrators at very young ages.
but this is not a very satisfactory explanation because significant relationships between youthful age and stalking violence have been detected in samples manifesting these same characteristics (Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002).

Three other risk factors exhibited non-significant relationships with police decisions to arrest: prior violent conviction, male gender, and prior psychiatric history. The result for prior violent conviction was unexpected, especially in light of its convergence with other indices of risk and criminality. One possibility is that investigating officers were not always aware of the perpetrator's criminal background because this data was frequently collected independently from CPIC for the study and it did not necessarily form part of the investigation report. Although lack of awareness might be factor in some isolated cases, it is not anticipated that it was a widespread phenomenon because CPIC information is readily accessible to police and criminal background checks are a routine procedure in any investigation.

In contrast, the result for male gender was not especially surprising. It was recognized at the outset that the utility of male gender as a risk factor was diminished because such a large proportion of the perpetrators were male (87%). Nonetheless, the high prevalence of male gender was not an absolute bar. The physical violence risk factor was in the reciprocal position as it was manifested in only a very small percentage of cases (15%); yet it still exhibited a significant relationship to arrest decisions.

With respect to prior psychiatric history, it may be problems with the variable itself that explain its failure to demonstrate a relationship to police case management decisions. Prior psychiatric history was intended to reflect the presence of a major
mental disorder, but it is far from a perfect indicator. Individuals can have major mental disorders without undergoing psychiatric evaluation or treatment; and, conversely, individuals sometimes receive psychiatric care without manifesting a major mental disorder. Furthermore, even if prior psychiatric history was a perfect indicator of mental disorder, it is a static, historical variable. As such, it is incapable of reflecting the dynamic nature of a mental disorder which is liable to change over time in terms of both the strength and character of its presenting symptomology. Due to these inherent weaknesses, it is difficult to determine what interpretation to place on the lack of relationship between this variable and arrest decisions.

Summary of Case Management Decisions

Overall, the results of the univariate and multivariate analyses shed a favourable light on the case management decisions of police in this sample. Three quarters of the risk factors analyzed were significantly more prevalent or significantly more severe among the cases police managed by arresting the perpetrator compared to cases managed through alternative strategies. Stated briefly, the high-risk cases were more likely to receive the most intensive type of intervention. Also, at least one factor from each of the three domains of risk (perpetrator, victim and behavioural domains) proved to be a significant, independent predictor of the case management decision to arrest. This finding indicates that a diverse array of risk factors was represented in case management decisions. Although it cannot be concluded that the presence of certain risk factors in a case caused police to arrest criminal harassment perpetrators, the results of this study
suggest that police practices were generally consistent with sound case management principles.

**Case Management Implications**

There are several case management implications that emerge from the results of this study. This section draws on the study findings to identify and discuss some principles that may usefully inform case management practices in criminal harassment cases. The section should not be interpreted as a comprehensive scheme or set of guidelines for managing criminal harassment cases. It simply attempts to distil some of the study findings into a few practical recommendations.

1. *Case management plans must consider the perpetrator's social situation.* The results show that many of these individuals manifest considerable social instability in terms of their living arrangements, relationships, and employment situation. Unemployment in particular proved to be an important predictor of police decisions to arrest and therefore it seems these cases were perceived to require stronger intervention responses. Social instability may be problematic for a number of reasons beyond its association to violence risk including the time these perpetrators are able to dedicate to harassing the victim and their responsiveness to intervention.

2. *Case management plans must consider the perpetrator's past violent and criminal behaviour.* Approximately one quarter of the perpetrators in this study had violent criminal histories; yet they were no more likely to be charged than perpetrators with non-violent criminal histories. This finding suggests that police did not place much
weight on the perpetrator’s violent criminal history when formulating their case management plan and response. Past spousal violence was also relatively common in this sample (24%) and may be a particularly salient factor among the large proportion of cases involving prior romantic partners. As many of the perpetrators with histories of spousal violence in this study did not have convictions for violence it is critical that investigating officers supplement official criminal records with information gathered from collateral sources (e.g., victim and witness interviews). Finally, nearly one fifth of the sample had convictions for breaching court orders or violating release conditions. This information needs to be carefully considered before relying on intervention strategies, like peace bonds, that are based on the perpetrator abiding by judicial orders.

3. **Comprehensive information needs to be gathered about presenting psychological conditions.** Evidence of current substance use was found for approximately 20% of the perpetrators within the current study and it was positively associated with case management decisions to arrest. From a risk management perspective, these are positive findings. Investigation Reports documented an important risk factor and higher risk cases were the subject of more intensive management responses. Of greater concern was the comprehensiveness and quality of some aspects of the information. For example, reports often failed to indicate whether there was any connection between substance use and the harassment (e.g., harassment occurred only when the perpetrator was intoxicated) and a few reports did not even mention the nature of the substance being used by the perpetrator. Unfortunately, without this
information some opportunities for managing risk may be lost (e.g., getting applicable conditions imposed on bail release or as part of a sentence). A similar trend was evident in the documentation of psychiatric histories as these too lacked relevant details at times (e.g., nature of psychiatric conditions, its relationship to the harassment, treatment compliance). To be fair, it should be remembered that RCCs often included requests for psychiatric examinations so it may be that police officers frequently recognized perpetrators who were experiencing psychological problems, but then left it to mental health professionals to assess. Still, these findings suggest that law enforcement officers may benefit from more training in this area.

4. The case management plan must consider the victim’s situation. In the current study, the case management strategy was significantly more likely to include an arrest when the victim was female as compared to male. Care must be taken to avoid over interpreting this finding, however, it suggests that victim characteristics may influence the case management strategies implemented by police. Such a practice is laudable. The threat assessment literature has stressed for some time the importance of evaluating the victim’s lifestyle, living situation, and personal characteristics to ensure that case management plans adequately address personal safety (Fein et al., 1995; White & Cawood, 1998). Once the situation of the victim is evaluated, efforts can be directed toward effecting appropriate security improvements (Kropp, Hart, Lyon & LePard, 2002).

5. The assessment and management plan should be completed prior to intervention.

Except in exigent circumstances, a full assessment of the case should be completed
and a well-reasoned management plan put in place prior to any actual intervention. To do otherwise runs the risk of implementing a poorly considered or ill-conceived management plan that may have the paradoxical effect of increasing the likelihood of harm to the victim. As the study findings poignantly remind us, there are rare instances when intervention efforts seem to bring about a sudden and dramatic escalation in the perpetrator's behaviour. This recommendation does not mean that measures which may be advisable to improve the victim's immediate physical security should be delayed while the assessment and management plan are being completed (White & Cawood, 1998).

6. Third parties must be consulted and considered in case management plans. The results of this study show that current romantic partners, family members, friends, and co-workers sometimes become secondary targets of stalking behaviour, threats and even physical violence. Individuals perceived by the perpetrator to be aiding or shielding the primary victim appear to be most at risk of becoming a secondary victim. These findings have two important implications. First, individuals close to the primary victim need to be interviewed to determine if they possess any information that might be relevant for the case assessment as well as to gather evidence for any legal proceedings that may need to be instituted. Second, the personal situation of these third parties must be carefully evaluated and considered as part of the overall case management plan.

7. Threatening communications must be carefully assessed and considered in the case management plan. For methodological reasons, it was not possible to evaluate the
ability of threats to predict violence, however, the study findings confirm the existence of a positive and significant relationship between the two behaviours. It is probably sufficient to reiterate the message put forward by others that threatening communications must be taken seriously and appropriate steps need to be undertaken to reduce the likelihood they will be acted on (Meloy, 2002; Mullen et al., 2000).

8. *Contact with the perpetrator should be terminated and access to the victim should be reduced as far as possible.* The results of this study lend further support to the conventional wisdom that victims need to cease all contact with the perpetrators (Meloy, 1997). Most of the violence in this sample seems to have been reactive in nature. It was unplanned and probably arose in situations that became emotionally heated and then escalated to physical confrontations and violence. The implication is that even ostensibly amicable meetings solicited by some perpetrators to bring “closure” to a relationship or say “good-bye” for the last time still have the potential for violence. Relatedly, efforts must also be made to restrict the perpetrator’s access to the victim (Kropp, Hart, Lyon & LePard, 2002). In the absence of restrictions, most perpetrators are likely to approach or contact the victim. In this study, more than 85% of the perpetrators engaged in approach-oriented behaviours and about 60% made direct contact with the victim. The close proximity of these behaviours to the victim means they pose the greatest inherent risk and therefore they need to be prevented or reduced as far as possible.
Are Police Samples Different?

One criticism this dissertation makes of the existing empirical literature on stalking violence is that most of it emanates from clinical-forensic settings and so the generalizability of the findings to the law enforcement context is unknown. This criticism invites the following question: Do police samples of criminal harassment cases differ from groups of stalkers drawn from clinical-forensic or community settings? One way to shed light on this issue is to compare samples drawn from these different settings on a number of major descriptive characteristics. The greater the similarity of the samples in terms of these major characteristics, the more likely it is that findings from one setting will generalize to the others. Conversely, the more divergent the samples, the more likely it is that the findings will not generalize.

Table 18 sets out some selective descriptive characteristics of samples drawn from: (1) law enforcement settings (the current study sample only); (2) clinical-forensic settings (Meloy et al., 2001; Mullen et al., 1999; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002); and, (3) community settings (Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Although only a few comparison studies were selected, an attempt was made to choose some of the larger and more widely cited investigations found in the literature.

There are a few patterns in the data that warrant discussion. In general, the samples are quite similar in terms of the proportion of male perpetrators and female victims. More divergence exists for the proportion of ex-intimate victim-perpetrator
relationships which tend to be smaller among community samples in comparison to police and clinical-forensic samples. On the other hand, the prevalence rates of psychiatric histories, threatening communications and physical violence are noticeably higher among the clinical-forensic samples relative to the police and community samples. Of particular note is the rate of physical violence reported among clinical-settings which is essentially twice the rate found outside of these settings.

Table 18.

Descriptors of Selected Stalking Samples From Three Different Study Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Police(^a) (%)</th>
<th>Community(^b) (%)</th>
<th>Clinical-Forensic(^c) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male perpetrators</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>80 - 87</td>
<td>79 - 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female victims</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>62 - 78</td>
<td>81 - 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior romantic relationships</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17 - 33</td>
<td>30 - 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric history</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>43 - 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29 - 45</td>
<td>62 - 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td>34 - 46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. \(^a\)The current study sample. \(^b\)Based on figures from Budd & Mattinson, 2000; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; and Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998. \(^c\)Based on figures from Meloy et al., 2000; Mullen et al., 1999; and Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to embark on a lengthy discussion of the reasons why these differences may exist beyond making a couple of points. One of the reasons community samples seem to consist of fewer ex-romantic victim-perpetrator relationships relative to police samples may relate to the subjective fear experienced by the victims and its influence on reporting behaviour. There is evidence that victims who are criminally harassed (or stalked) by ex-romantic partners are more fearful for their safety and therefore they are more likely to request police assistance and form a part of
the police caseload (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005). On the other hand, courts typically seek the opinions of mental health professionals about cases involving peculiar or alarming behaviour and as a consequence samples in clinical-forensic settings may be more likely to manifest obvious psychopathology or overtly threatening and violent behaviour. Regardless of the precise explanation, it seems that some distinctions exist among samples drawn from these different contexts.

The question that remains is whether these differences mean that the research conducted in clinical-forensic settings will not generalize to police or community samples? This question cannot be answered by the current study, however, there are reasons to suspect that at least some of the relationships may be susceptible to change. For example, it is fairly well established within the general violence literature that psychosis shows a positive relationship to future violence (Douglas & Hart, 1996). Sharply contrasting results are reported for clinical-forensic stalking samples. This research tends to report a statistically significant, but negative relationship between psychosis and violence. It may well be that the latter research accurately reflects the fact that psychotic individuals who engage in stalking behaviour are less likely to become violent than non-psychotic stalkers. The finding could also be largely a function of the setting where the studies occurred. It may be that psychotic stalkers pose a lower risk of violence, but only when they are compared to behaviourally unstable, personality disordered stalkers who often predominate in clinical-forensic samples. At this point, the results of research from clinical-forensic samples should be used cautiously in the law enforcement context until the results are replicated there.
Future Directions

The results of the current research highlight several directions for future research. It has been emphasized throughout this dissertation that research is beginning to identify risk factors for stalking violence, however, much of the focus has been on established risk factors from the general literature on violence and much of the work has been carried out in clinical-forensic settings. This research needs to be continued and expanded in several important ways.

First, in addition to confirming the relationship of established risk factors (e.g., substance abuse, past violence) to stalking violence, there needs to be more attention paid to identifying “high-fidelity” risk factors that are specific to stalking. Some are already beginning to surface (e.g., ex-romantic relationship), but are not well understood. Many others have received little empirical attention. The results of this dissertation indicate that some prospective risk factors, such as escalating behaviour, persistent behaviour, angry or vacillating patterns of attachment, exist in a considerable proportion of criminal harassment cases and might be fruitful areas for future research.

Research designed to identify risk factors of stalking violence must also move beyond the clinical-forensic settings where most of it has been conducted to date. Although clinical-forensic samples of stalkers exhibit many similarities to community and police samples, the current study has shown that potentially important differences exist too. For this reason, the risk factors identified in clinical-forensic samples need to be cross-validated in other contexts, like law enforcement, where they could be usefully
applied. As was previously pointed out, it is quite possible that some of the findings to emerge from clinical-forensic samples, such as the negative relationship between psychosis and violence, may not hold up in studies among broader police and community samples.

Despite the inherent risk management properties of Canada’s criminal harassment law and the anti-stalking statutes of other jurisdictions, very little is known about the application and efficacy of different risk management strategies. Although the current study indicates that higher risk cases tend to be the subject of more intensive intervention efforts, it does not tell us anything about the effectiveness of those case management strategies. Future research needs to begin evaluating the utility of different intervention strategies and, in particular, what case characteristics enhance or diminish the likelihood of success. In other words, not only do we need to know which management strategies work, but which strategies work best and under what circumstances.

There also needs to be more attention paid to the role of victim vulnerability as part of an overall case management strategy. Female gender was viewed as a general indicator of victim vulnerability in this study, but it is far from ideal and more direct measures of the victim characteristics (e.g., level of fear is incongruent with the extant risk) and the circumstances (e.g., isolated working or living conditions) that might affect self-protection must be used. Unfortunately, the potential importance of victims and their situation to stalking violence risk has, with a few exceptions, gone unnoticed within the literature.
Study Limitations

The nature of the sample imposes some limitations on the potential generalizability of the results. This study examined all the police investigation files of criminal harassment for one year and in one police force. Although the nature of the cases in this sample exhibited similar characteristics to other police samples of criminal harassment cases, there may be variation in the general investigation procedures and case management tactics employed by different policing organizations. As such, the findings here may not speak to law enforcement procedures and practices elsewhere. Also, the criminal harassment investigations examined in this study took place in 1997 and consequently procedures and management practices may have evolved during the intervening period.

The cases included in this study were selected by electronically searching for police reports classified as investigations of criminal harassment. An investigation is classified by the original investigating officer who submits the report. It is therefore possible that some cases of criminal harassment were not included in this study simply because the investigation was classified according to a different offence. For example, research conducted by Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) in the United States found evidence of stalking behaviour in one sixth of the domestic violence reports they reviewed, but the charges laid in these cases were rarely for the offence of stalking.

The tendency for criminally harassing behaviour to be classified according to a different offence may be more pronounced for cases involving serious behaviours that
can be prosecuted under alternative criminal offences offering stiffer sentencing options. It is therefore likely that some investigations of criminally harassing behaviour manifesting serious physical violence (e.g., aggravated sexual assault, assault causing bodily harm) were systematically missed because these were classified according to more serious offences. It also suggests that the rates of physical violence associated with the criminal harassment cases included in this study may be artificially low.

This study relied exclusively on the file data contained in the police investigation files and criminal records obtained from CPIC. It is widely recognized that official criminal records do not constitute a complete record of a person's actual criminal behaviour and so the figures presented in this regard should be viewed as conservative estimates. Additionally, the quality of the information contained in the investigation files varies with the diligence and skill of the officer who is soliciting and documenting that information. It is inevitable that some information relevant for the purposes of this study was not documented in the reports, but determining the extent of this problem is difficult. The absence of file information for a given characteristic (e.g., substance use) could genuinely indicate that the characteristic is not present in that case, however, it could simply reflect the failure of the investigating officer to discover the information, or alternatively, to record it. For this reason, the prevalence rates of all the characteristics reported in this study should also be viewed as conservative estimates.

Finally, destruction of the investigation reports used in this study precluded subsequent efforts to measure interrater reliability. Although much of the data in this study involved characteristics that did not require much judgement on behalf of the raters
(e.g., gender, date of birth, victim-perpetrator relationship) it is nevertheless possible that
file data was coded inconsistently by one rater, or that the file data was coded
consistently by an individual rater, but inconsistently across raters.

Conclusion

The assessment and management of violence risk in criminal harassment
(stalking) cases has been the subject of considerable attention among legislators, criminal
justice system officials, and members of the public. Despite all the attention, we still
know very little about the risk factors of stalking violence, and most of what we do know,
emanates from studies conducted in clinical-forensic settings. We also lack a general
understanding of the relationship between the suspected risk factors of stalking violence
and the case management strategies used by law enforcement personnel.

The present study found that many of the risk factors for stalking violence
discussed in the scientific and professional literatures could usefully discriminate a police
sample of criminal harassment cases. Also, certain of these risk factors were
significantly more common among cases that police decided to manage through an arrest
compared to alternative management strategies. This finding is generally consistent with
sound case management practices.

It was also noted that the characteristics of this sample of criminal harassment
cases differed in some respects to clinical-forensic stalking samples. These differences
indicate that research efforts aimed at identifying risk factors for stalking violence need
to be extended to other settings, like law enforcement, where they might usefully be
applied. Finally, much work also needs to be done looking at the efficacy of different case management strategies and the case-related factors that enhance or diminish the success of these strategies.
REFERENCES


# APPENDIX A.

## RESEARCH CODING INSTRUMENT

### Coding Scheme for Stalking Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Number:</th>
<th>Coder:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Perpetrator Demographics

**Sex:**
- Male
- Female

**Date of Birth:** ______/_____/____ (yy/mm/dd)

**Birthplace:**
- Canada
- Foreign Born

**Country:**

**Marital Status:**
- Single
- Separated
- Married
- Common law
- Divorced
- Other: _____________

**Living Arrangements:**
- Alone
- Roommate

**Spouse/intimate partner**
- No fixed living arrangements
- Other: _____________

**Education:**
- Completed grade:
  - College Diploma
  - University
diplom
- Grade 12 graduation
- Technical Program
- Some post-secondary

**Occupation:**
- At the time of offence:
- Usual occupation:

### Victim Information

**Sex:**
- Male
- Female

**Date of Birth:** ______/_____/____ (yy/mm/dd)

**Age relative to the perpetrator:**
- Equal
- Older than perpetrator
- Younger than perpetrator

**Marital Status:**
- Single
- Separated
- Married
- Common law
- Divorced
- Other: _____________

**Relative Status to perpetrator:**
- Equal
- Higher than perpetrator
- Lower than perpetrator

**Relationship from the victim’s perspective:**
- Stranger
- Professional
- Ex-intimate
- Celebrity
- Employment
- Ex-Spouse/common law
- Acquaintance
- Family member

**Relationship from perpetrator’s perspective:**
- Stranger
- Professional
- Ex-intimate
- Celebrity
- Employment
- Ex-Spouse/common law
- Acquaintance
- Family member
STALKING

Perpetrator and victim ever resided together:
☐ No ☐ Yes

Children (perpetrator's and/or victim's) were an issue in the stalking:
☐ No ☐ Yes:

Stalking involves a fixation on a non-human object (e.g., business etc.):
☐ No ☐ Yes:

Preceding events to the stalking behaviour:

Timing:
Perpetrator and victim first met: ___ / ___ / ___ (yy/mm/dd) ☐ Did not meet prior to stalking
Intimate Relationship: Began: ___ / ___ / ___ (yy/mm/dd) Ended: ___ / ___ / ___
Stalking Behaviour: Began: ___ / ___ / ___ (yy/mm/dd) Ended: ___ / ___ / ___

Type of attachment to the victim:
☐ Angry/persecutory ☐ Amorous becoming angry ☐ Mixed
☐ Amorous ☐ Angry becoming amorous ☐ Other: __________________________

Frequency of stalking behaviour:
☐ 1 - 5 incidents ☐ 10 - 20 incidents ☐ 50 - 100 incidents
☐ 6 - 10 incidents ☐ 20 - 50 incidents ☐ 100 + incidents

Density of stalking behaviour:
☐ Very low density (weeks or months) ☐ High density (every day or two)
☐ Low density (days or weeks) ☐ Very high density (approx. every day)
☐ Moderate density (every 3-4 days) ☐ Extreme density (increasing)
☐ Intermittent (density varies greatly) ☐ Undetermined

Pattern of stalking:
☐ Stable pattern of stalking behaviour ☐ Fluctuating
☐ Incremental escalation in stalking behaviour ☐ De-escalation in stalking behaviour
☐ Dramatic escalation of stalking behaviour ☐ Undetermined

If stalking behaviour escalated dramatically, was there a precipitating event?

Presence of threats:
☐ No ☐ Yes [Complete schedule 1]

Efforts to obtain firearms:
☐ No ☐ Yes [Complete schedule 2]

Presence of physical violence:
☐ No ☐ Yes [Complete schedule 3]
### Stalking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Level of Threat</th>
<th>Perception of Threat</th>
<th>Chronology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Stalking Behaviours</strong></td>
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<td>Phone calls</td>
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<td>Gifts Delivered</td>
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<td><strong>Approach Oriented Stalking Behaviours</strong></td>
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<td>Gifts Left</td>
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<td>Vandalism</td>
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<td>Following</td>
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<td><strong>Direct Contact</strong></td>
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<td>Visits to Home</td>
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<td>Visits to Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visits elsewhere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gift Presented</td>
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<td>Verbal Contact</td>
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<td>Physical Contact</td>
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<td>Break and Enter</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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### Coding Guide

**Location with respect to the victim** (list all locations)
- Residence = 1
- Street/neighborhood = 4
- Open area/park = 7
- Place of work = 2
- Public institution = 5
- Home of a third party = 8
- Other nonresidential place = 3
- School = 6
- Place of work of a third party = 9

**Victim** (list all victims)
- Victim = 1
- Family member = 2
- Co-worker = 3
- Current Intimate/Spouse = 4
- Friend/acquaintance = 5

**Frequency**
The number of times the behaviour has been engaged in.

**Level of Threat** (average rating in the top left & the most severe in the bottom right)
- No threat = 1
- Moderate = 3
- Severe = 4

**Perception of Threat** (average rating in the top left & the most severe in the bottom right)
- No threat = 1
- Moderate (alarm; preventative steps taken) = 7
- Severe (terrified; vomiting/daydreaming) = 4

**Chronology**
Number each type of stalking behaviour in chronological order of occurrence.
**LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTION**

I. **Preliminary Investigation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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</table>

Number of discrete stalking incidents prior to law enforcement contact: __________

Precipitating event leading to the request for law enforcement intervention?
- ☐ No specific event (aggregate effect of the stalking)
- ☐ Yes: __________________________________________

II. **Criminal Harassment Unit**

Case referral to the Criminal Harassment Unit
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th></th>
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</table>

III. **No Intervention**

A. **Police Intervention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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B. **Perpetrator’s Response**

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<th>Date:</th>
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<td>Date:</td>
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</table>

IV. **Interview/Warning**

A. **Police Intervention**

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<th>Date:</th>
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B. **Perpetrator’s Response**

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V. Section 810 Peace Bond

A. Police Intervention

Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________

B. Perpetrator's Response

Stalking: ☐ Ceased ☐ Continued

Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________

VI. Arrest & Charges

A. Police Intervention  ☐ Arrested (no charges)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (yy/mm/dd)</th>
<th>Charge</th>
<th># Counts</th>
<th>Charge Recommendation Accepted</th>
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<td>☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other:</td>
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<td>☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other:</td>
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<td>☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other:</td>
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<td>☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other:</td>
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</table>

Disposition following charges:  ☐ No charges (released)
☐ Remanded until trial
☐ Released on bail: (1) ________________ __________________ (yy/mm/dd)
(2) ________________ __________________ (yy/mm/dd)

C. Perpetrator's Response

Stalking: ☐ Ceased ☐ Continued

Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________

VII. Mental Health Act Related Intervention

A. Police Intervention

Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________

B. Perpetrator's Response

Stalking: ☐ Ceased ☐ Continued

Date: ________________ __________________
Date: ________________ __________________
VIII. Conclusion to Police Intervention

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

☐ Stalking ceased  ☐ Victim request  ☐ Unknown (not recorded)
☐ No perpetrator located  ☐ Other: __________________________

PSYCHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Does the perpetrator deny the harassment
☐ No
☐ Yes: ______________________________________________________

Is there a history of previous psychiatric treatment/hospitalization
☐ No
☐ Yes: ______________________________________________________

Was the perpetrator ever formally diagnosed?
☐ No
☐ Yes: ______________________________________________________

History of drug or alcohol abuse?
☐ None
☐ Past: _____________________________________________________
☐ Currently: ________________________________________________

Has the drug abuse changed recently?
☐ No
☐ Yes: _____________________________________________________

Has the subject experienced any particular stressors recently?
☐ No
☐ Yes: _____________________________________________________

1. Somatic Concern
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
2. Anxiety
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
3. Depression
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
4. Hostility
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
5. Suspiciousness
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
6. Unusual Thought Content
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
7. Grandiosity
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
8. Hallucinations
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
9. Disorientation
   ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
10. Conceptual Disorganization
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
11. Excitement
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
12. Blunted Affect
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
13. Tension
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
14. Uncooperativeness
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
15. Suicidality
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
16. Self-neglect
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
17. Bizarre Behaviour
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
18. Elevated Mood
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
19. Motor Hyperactivity
    ☐ None  ☐ Mild  ☐ Moderate  ☐ Severe
THREATS -- SCHEDULE 1

Approximate number of threats made: ____________

What was the motivation for the threats?

Threat communicated to: (check each box that applies)
- victim
- family member
- children
- current intimate partner
- co-worker
- friend
- law enforcement personnel
- other: __________________________

Intended target/victim (check each box that applies)
- victim
- family member
- children
- current intimate partner
- co-worker
- friend
- law enforcement personnel
- other: __________________________

Mode (check each box that applies)
- Written: __________________________
- Verbal: __________________________
- Symbolic: __________________________
- Other: __________________________

Type of threats (check each box that applies)
- Direct
- Veiled
- Conditional
- Other: __________________________

Threatened consequences (check each box that applies)
- Physical injury/death
- Financial harm
- Property damage
- Harm to career
- Embarrassment/humiliation
- Other: __________________________

Describe: __________________________

What weapons were involved in the threats (check each box that applies)
- Firearms: __________________________
- Other: __________________________
FIREARMS -- SCHEDULE 2

Efforts to obtain firearms:
☐ Applied for Firearms Certificate  ☐ Previously owned  ☐ Firearms obtained

Was there a precipitating factor associated with firearms acquisition or attempts to acquire firearms?
☐ No  ☐ Yes:

If the perpetrator applied for a firearms certificate when did s/he do so?
☐ Prior to stalking  Approximately how many days prior?:
☐ During stalking  Approximately how many days after the initiation of stalking?:

Was the application for firearms successful:
☐ No  ☐ Yes

Firearm acquisition:
☐ Not acquired
☐ Prior to stalking  Approximately how many days prior?:
☐ During stalking  Approximately how many days after the initiation of stalking?:

Extent of firearms involvement (check each box that applies)
☐ Verbal threats to use firearms  ☐ Discharged firearm
☐ Displayed firearms  ☐ Multiple discharges
☐ Aimed at a person

Describe:

If firearms were threatened or used who was the intended target? (check each box that applies)
☐ Victim  ☐ Co-worker  ☐ Bystander
☐ Family member  ☐ Current partner/intimate  ☐ Law enforcement personnel
☐ Children  ☐ Friend  ☐ Other:

Where were firearms used? (check each box that applies)
☐ Victim's home  ☐ Victim's work  ☐ Other:

If firearms were discharged what was the result?
☐ No damage/injury  ☐ Minor injuries (treated & released)  ☐ Death
☐ Property damage  ☐ Severe injuries (hospitalization)
☐ Emotional distress only  ☐ Critical injuries (life-threatening)

Describe:

Why was the person targeted:

Perpetrator's overall involvement/fascination with weapons/military prior to stalking:
☐ None
☐ Moderate (some interest in weapons/military and may own a firearm but uses it infrequently)
☐ High (may subscribe to magazines, uses firearms, may own military paraphernalia)
**PHYSICAL VIOLENCE -- SCHEDULE 3**

**How many times did physical violence occur:**

**Was there a motivation/precipitating event to the violence?**

**Who was the victim of the violence? (check each box that applies):**
- Victim of stalking
- Co-worker
- Family member
- Current partner/intimate
- Bystander
- Law enforcement personnel
- Children of the victim
- Friend
- Other:

**Where did the violence occur?**
- Victim's residence
- Victim's work
- Other:

**Was the violence premeditated:**
- No
- Yes

**Describe:**

---

**What type of physical violence occurred (check each box that applies):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Threw something:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pushed, grabbed, or shoved:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slapped:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kicked, bit, or hit with a fist:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hit or tried to hit with something:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beat up:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Used a knife or gun:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other:</td>
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</table>

**What injuries resulted from the violence?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No damage/injury</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor injuries (treated &amp; released)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional distress only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe injuries (hospitalization)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property damage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical injuries (life-threatening)</td>
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**Describe:**