

Witnessing Marital Violence as Children: Men's Perceptions of Their Fathers

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ABSTRACT. This study examined 104 men to explore the type of relationship they had with their fathers during childhood/adolescence. A group of men who had witnessed marital violence as children were compared with a group of men who did not witness marital violence to determine whether there were differences in how these men perceived their relationships with their fathers. Adult men's perception of their fathers was measured using the Fatherhood Scale (FS), which found significant differences between the two groups on their total FS score. This study sought to determine, if in addition to the father's violence against the mother, there were other aspects of fathering behavior that were predictors of whether or not these men, as children, would witness marital violence. The results indicated that child abuse and emotional abuse by the father, and parental divorce were significant predictors of whether or not the men in the study would witness marital violence during childhood. Using logistic regression, child abuse, emotional abuse and parental divorce classified 75% of the men in the correct group. Results indicate significant differences in self-reported measures of fathering between the two groups of men on five out of the seven FS subscales. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2005 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

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In recent years there has been an increase in research into the effects of witnessing marital violence on children (Ballif-Spanvill, Clayton, Hendrix, & Hunsaker, 2004; Edleson, Mbilinyi, Beeman, & Hagemeister, 2003; Kahil, Tolman, Rosen, & Gruber, 2003), and it is now widely accepted by the professionals working with violent families that both children's short- and long-term development is impacted by exposure to intimate partner violence (Geffner, Igleman, & Zellner, 2003). Children are often present when the violence occurs, either in the same room or an adjacent room in 90% of the cases (Hughes, 1988), and the perpetrator of the abuse is often the child's father (Dick, 2004). Few researchers have explored children's perceptions of their relationships with their fathers (Sternberg, 1997), and our understanding of adult men who witnessed parental violence as children and their perceptions of their fathers has been an ignored area of research. This research examines two groups of adult men: those who witnessed marital violence as children and those who did not, in order to explore the type of relationship they had with their fathers growing up.

It is estimated that 10 million children in the US between the ages of 3 and 17 have been exposed to parental violence (Strauss, 1991). However, the actual number is not known since marital violence is often underreported, and there has never been a national study to determine the extent of children who witness parental aggression (Edleson, 1999). Additionally, much of the research that has examined the effects of domestic violence on children has over relied on samples from battered women's shelters, and may represent a more severe type of exposure to parental violence. Onyskiw (2003), in a review of 47 studies on the impact of children's adjustment to exposure to parental violence, found that 37 (79%) of the studies reviewed focused on children residing in shelters or were former shelter residents. This subgroup of children who live in shelters not only experience the trauma of witnessing parental violence, and/or be at risk for abuse themselves, but they also experience the aftereffects of the trauma by moving to a shelter and losing a sense of familiarity with their daily routines, their neighborhoods and friendships, as well as loss of contact with their fathers (Kahil et al., 2003). While some children become known to the shelters, the child welfare system and the police, for many children, the fact they have witnessed marital aggression is only known to them and their families. For another group of children who have

told no one, the parental violence they observed as children remains a silent internal experience, often lasting long into adulthood.

EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

There are divergent viewpoints on whether or not witnessing marital violence is child abuse. On one hand, a proliferation of studies has shown compelling evidence that exposure to parental violence is in and of itself a form of emotional abuse (Logan & Graham-Berman, 1999). Others would argue that witnessing the father abuse the mother is not child maltreatment since several studies have shown that some children who witness marital violence show no adverse developmental problems and display strong coping mechanisms (Edleson, 1999). Labeling witnessing marital violence as child maltreatment ignores the mother's attempts to buffer her children from the violence (Edleson, 1999), and it also ignores the child's relationship with the father. What we do know from the research is that children and adolescents who witness marital violence are at risk for a host of both short- and long-term problems; and that fathers make important and lasting contributions to their children's lives (Parke, 1996).

Much of the research has examined children and adolescents externalizing and internalizing behaviors as a result of witnessing family violence (Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson, & Zak, 1986a; Jouriles, Norwood, McDonald, Vincent, & Mahoney, 1996; Onyskiw & Haydak, 2001). These studies reveal that children exposed to family violence are typically more aggressive, destructive, non-compliant, and more antisocial than children in comparative groups (Onyskiw, 2003). Mothers who experience intimate partner violence report greater parenting stress (Graham-Berman & Levendosky, 1998; Kahil et al., 2003). Their sense of well-being and their ability to parent has been found to be associated with children's adjustment. Parenting stress is associated with externalizing behaviors for children who witness marital violence, yet mothers who report high levels of parenting stress were neither more likely to use harsh punitive punishment, nor were there decreased levels of warmth toward their children (Kahil et al., 2003).

It appears that even very young children exposed to family violence are at risk for adjustment problems. In a study of preschool children of battered women, Graham-Berman and Levendosky (1998) found that when comparing preschool children exposed to family violence with a group of children not exposed to family violence, the preschoolers

exposed to family violence experienced significantly more behavioral problems and had higher scores on internalizing behaviors. The preschool children of battered women had higher levels of negative emotional expression, peer interactions, and interactions with caregivers than children not exposed to family violence. These children displayed more sadness, more anger, exhibited more depression and frustration, and were quicker to express negative feelings (Graham-Berman & Levendosky, 1998).

Research continues to indicate a link between child maltreatment and adult intimate violence. In an analysis of over 30 studies, Appel and Holden (1998), found that in homes where there was adult intimate violence, on average 40% of the children were also abused. Children are also likely to become directly involved in the conflict. When children witness marital violence, they are eight times more likely to either verbally or physically intervene (Adamson & Thompson, 1998). In a study examining children's involvement in the abuse, 52% of the mothers reported their children yelled from another room; 53% yelled from the same room; 21% called for help, and 23% became involved in the abusive incident (Edleson, Mbilinyi, Beeman, & Hagemester, 2003). The older the child and the more severe the abuse, the more likely the child intervenes in the abuse.

As we try to understand how male abusers approach their roles as fathers, we know that several studies on marital violence have indicated that children are at risk for physical abuse if their fathers engage in physical violence toward their partners (Silvern, Karyl, Waelde, Hodges, Starek, Heidt, & Min, 1995; Simons, Wu, Johnson, & Conger, 1995; Jouriles & Norwood, 1995; Moore & Pepler, 1998); and emotional maltreatment (Dutton, 1996, 1998). Research has indicated that in homes with severe battering, sons are more at risk of child abuse than girls (Jouriles & Norwood, 1995). The studies on the co-occurrence of child abuse and witnessing marital violence vary across sample and assessment methods. Appel and Holden (1998) analyzed 31 studies and found that the co-occurrence of child abuse and witnessing parental violence gathered from data collected from community samples ranges from 5.6% (Straus & Gelles, 1988) to 21% (Silvern, Karyl, Waelde, Hodges, Starek, Heidt, & Min, 1995). Data collected from battered women revealed widely divergent percentages of co-occurrence with a high of 100% to a low of 10% (Appel & Holden, 1998). When Appel and Holden examined data collected on reports of child abuse, co-occurrence ranged from 26% to 50%.

It is likely that the man's violent behavior toward the child's mother is likely to impact the way in which he carries out his role as a father in other domains of fatherhood, especially in terms of his emotional responsiveness toward his children. The father's lack of emotional attunement to his children may play a part in the difficulty children exposed to marital violence have with emotional expression and in recognizing the emotional state of others. In a study of 120 children ranging in age from 7-12, children exposed to family violence were found to avoid emotion and had difficulty processing and expressing feelings about family members (Logan & Graham-Berman, 1999).

What has been missing in research on children who witness intimate partner violence is the child's perception of the relationship with the father, and how adults who witnessed marital violence as children view their father. Children who observe their father become violent toward their mother are at risk for imitating the violent behavior in later adult intimate relationships (Dick, 2004). The son may identify with the father's aggressive behavior and re-enact the violence he observed in his own adult intimate relationships, or he may distance himself from the father and choose not to have any contact. It is important to understand how these men view their fathers after they move into adulthood.

The Role of the Father

Fathers make a significant contribution to their children's psychosocial development (Marsiglio, 1995; Lamb, 1996; Palkovitz, 1997; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000), and the relationship between children and their fathers has a long-lasting impact on adult development. The initial conceptualization of father involvement (Lamb, 1975) has expanded from a model consisting of engagement, accessibility and responsibility to a more multidimensional model (Palkovitz, 1997; Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, & Ringo Ho, 2004). The warmth and the closeness of the father/child relationship are important influences in children's development and adjustment (Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999). However, the emotional quality of the father/child relationship is often an ignored area of research (Dick, 2004). Much is known about the internal and external effects witnessing violence has on children, but we know very little about the type of relationship men had with their fathers following witnessing parental aggression.

FATHERS ARE A MISSING LINK IN RESEARCH ON FAMILY VIOLENCE RESEARCH

Fathers are important to their children and have a profound impact psychologically on their sons, both in childhood and on into adulthood. Our understanding of the relational context of the father/son relationship remains elusive and mysterious, especially for those who are emotionally and physically abused as children by the father and/or who witness him abuse the mother. It is important to understand the role of the abusive father and to inquire about children's and adults' perceptions of the relationship (Sternberg, 1997). Fathers have been the missing parent in research on family violence, and this omission (Sternberg, 1997) hampers our ability to understand the role of fathers in abusive families, and in the intergenerational transmission of violence. It also precludes us from understanding the totality of the father/son relationship in these families. In order to understand the role of the abusive father as a parent, it is important to not only inquire about the negative and abusive aspects of parenting, but to ask about neutral and positive dimensions of the various types of father involvement and the degree to which fathers enact the various roles of fatherhood (Sternberg, 1997).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Many fathers are psychologically absent from the emotional life of their children despite the fact that they are physically present in the home. With the exception of Dutton's (1995, 1998) work on male batterers and their fathers, this paternal loss, which extends into adulthood, has been a neglected area of research in the study of the family, and yet it is often an issue that surfaces in clinical work with men (Osherson, 2001). Dutton's (1995, 1998) seminal work on the batterer provided us with our first look at the dynamics of the abusive father/son relationship. Dutton found that the abusers were often emotionally abused and shamed by their fathers, and reported feeling vulnerable and struggled with internal feelings of inadequacy. From a social learning perspective, witnessing the father abuse the mother becomes a risk factor for later intimate partner abuse. It is important to understand the emotional aspect of the abusive father/son relationship, and the degree to which these fathers are both covertly and/or overtly psychologically abusive toward their children. It is important to understand the family dynamics and the father's role in psychological violence. In developing a typology of psychologically abusive families, re-

searchers concluded that there are four types of families where psychological abuse is likely to occur: (1) a child is a scapegoat; (2) a domineering and intolerant father; (3) a rigid and manipulative mother; and (4) a chaotic and incompetent parent (Gagne & Bouchand, 2004).

Some scholars would view witnessing marital violence as a form of emotional/psychological abuse. In addition to considering witnessing marital violence as an emotionally abusive experience; some children directly experience emotional abuse from the father or father figure. Tutty (1999) found that in a study of 79 women, 76% of the mothers reported that they were emotionally abused daily by their partners, and 19% of the children had been emotionally abused by the perpetrator. If the father is perceived as warm, kind, understanding, and emotionally available, then the father can become a self-motive source of self-esteem for the child, as they seek recognition, validation, and acceptance from their father. This behavior is similar to what self-psychologists refer to as mirroring (Kohut, 1977). On the other hand, abusive fathers present additional challenges to their children. Instead of moving toward their fathers for emotional support, they may disengage from their fathers, preferring to distance and buffer themselves from the harmful effects of negative paternal involvement. In order to cope and protect themselves from the trauma of witnessing family violence, children may distance themselves, disconnect, and feel less close to those around them (Logan & Graham-Berman, 1999). In some cases, the father may also distance himself and not involve himself with his children, either from his own choosing or from actions imposed by the legal system. Either way, these children are likely to suffer a loss; an internal sense of paternal deprivation. Researchers have found that as father to mother aggression increases, that closeness between the adolescent and parent decreases, as well as their desire for closeness with the parent (Winstok & Eisikovits, 2003).

As conflict and abuse escalates within the family, children are likely there to distance themselves from the abusive father. This distance may serve there as a coping function, and/or as a means to protect them from physical or emotional abuse, yet it is likely to affect the bond between a father and his children. Research has shown that a connection with the father is a contributing factor to high self-esteem in adult men (Dick & Bronson, 2005). In a study of connection and communication between fathers and their children, results indicate that during adolescence, the connection to the father is a contributing factor to the quality of the relationship (Acock & Demo, 1999). Staying emotionally connected to the father after witnessing marital violence, and or being a recipient of child physical abuse and/or emotional abuse may be problematic.

The psychological loss of the father is likely to influence how these children feel about themselves and interfere with the intersubjective relational nature of this relationship. Garbarino (1999), in his work with violent boys, suggests that disruptions in attachment in childhood leaves boys psychologically alone, socially vulnerable and in emotional pain. Understanding men's perceptions about their fathers and inquiring about the emotional aspects of that relationship is important. Osherson (1991) suggests that in order for men to have a richer identity, they need to embark on the "second journey of adulthood" by *naming their father* and coming to terms with who their fathers really are.

The relational perspective which has expanded our view of women's development (Miller & Stiver, 1997) would suggest that the self forms in relationships with others, and is a dynamic and ever-changing process that requires empathy and mutuality. We need to expand our understanding of the relational perceptions men have with their fathers, despite the cultural prohibitions for men to express feelings and emotion, acknowledge dependency, or to admit to depression. To do otherwise and ignore men's relationships with their fathers may only further support another socially sanctioned cultural story of men's development that fails to broaden our understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner violence.

It is estimated that 5.6-100% of the children who witness parental violence also experience other forms of child maltreatment (Appel & Holden, 1998). When children witness marital violence, they are at risk of physical abuse, neglect, or psychological maltreatment (Folsom, Christensen, Avery, & Moore, 2003). In a study of 8,629 adults, researchers found an interrelationship between various forms of child abuse and other family adverse events (Dong et al., 2004). Thirty-one percent of the children who were emotionally abused and 58% of the children who were physically abused witnessed domestic violence. The biological father is the perpetrator of the violence against the mother in the majority of the cases, and these children are likely to have ambivalent and conflictual feelings toward their fathers that last long into adulthood. We know very little about the quality of this paternal/child relationship in abusive and violent families. On one hand, for some children an emotionally available, nurturing, and positively engaged father never existed for them. For other children, a positive relationship with the abusive father may lead to psychological problems, as they become torn and confused by what they see and hear him doing to their mother. On the other hand, a positive relationship with the father could very well be a protective factor from the effects of the violence.

METHOD

Research Design

This study examined two groups of adult men: a group that witnessed marital violence as children and a group that did not witness marital violence as children. The goal of this study was to compare the kinds of fathering these two groups of men experienced during their childhood and to determine if certain types of father involvement could predict whether or not they would witness marital violence. This study used a retrospective design and was interested in the subjects' perceptions of their relationship with their fathers. Understanding the subjective experience of those who witness marital violence can lead to understanding the intergenerational transmission of violence (Giant & Vartanian, 2003). The internal experience of the relationship the men had of their fathers was more important than whether or not their fathers would agree with how they rated the father/son relationship.

In order to establish the categorical dependent variable, the sample was divided into two groups. Those men who indicated they observed their father beating or hitting their mother ($n = 52$) were classified as witnessing marital violence, and those men who self-reported they did not observe their fathers beating or hitting their mothers ($n = 52$) during childhood were classified as not witnessing marital violence. Witnessing marital violence during childhood was operationalized as seeing the father *beating* or *hitting* the mother—a more severe form of intimate physical violence.

In order to understand how men who witnessed marital violence and those who did not witness marital violence perceived their relationships with their fathers, the men completed the Fatherhood Scale (Dick, 2004) which measures nine dimensions of fatherhood: positive emotional responsiveness, positive paternal engagement, negative paternal engagement, paternal responsibility, paternal accessibility, paternal androgyny, and three paternal roles: moral father role, good provider role, and the sex-role model. Several characteristics measuring fatherhood were used as independent variables. Four types of paternal engagement were included as independent variables: (1) child abuse, (2) emotional abuse, (3) positive emotional responsiveness, and (4) positive paternal engagement. Divorce was a family characteristic that was included as the fifth independent variable. In this study, there were five hypotheses. First, it was hypothesized that there would be a positive association between witnessing marital violence and child abuse. Second, there would be a positive association

between witnessing marital violence and emotional abuse. Third, there would be a negative association between witnessing the father abuse the mother and positive emotional responsiveness. Fourth, there would be a negative association between witnessing the father abuse the mother and positive paternal engagement. The fifth hypothesis was that there would be a positive relationship between witnessing the father abuse the mother and later adult intimate violence. Divorce was included in the logistic regression since 54% of the men who witnessed marital violence experienced a parental divorce during childhood.

Participants

The participants in the study were a convenience sample of 104 males ranging in age from 19 to 61. The mean age of the participants was 35.6 ($SD = 9$). The mean level of income was \$53,369 ($SD = \$42,356$). The largest racial group in the study was Caucasian (71%), and African Americans comprised 20% of the sample. The majority of the men were married (54%) at time of the study. Twenty-one percent were single/never married; 9% were divorced; 9% were separated; and 7% reported they were currently living with someone. Twenty-five percent reported their highest level of education was a high school diploma; 24% completed college; 19% completed graduate school; 11% did not finish high school; 7% had gone to technical school; and 14% had some college.

The majority of the men (69%) defined the father as the primary adult male caretaker during childhood and 54% reported that they always lived with their fathers during their formative years. Forty-three percent reported their parents had divorced during their childhood and the mean age of the children at the time of divorce was 8.6 ($SD = 7.02$).

Educational data were also collected on the subjects' fathers ($n = 104$). Thirty-one percent had less than a high school education. Twenty-six percent had graduated from high school; 10% had attended Technical School; 9% had attended some college, and 14% of the subjects' fathers had graduated from college. Eight percent of the fathers completed graduate school.

Procedure

Participants were invited to be involved in a research study about their relationships with their fathers during their childhood and adolescent years and how their father's past parenting may have influenced

how they settle conflict with their wives or girlfriends today. Participants were assured anonymity. The convenience sample was recruited from parent meetings at a public Montessori School and from a batterer's treatment program in a large Midwestern city. The goal of the study was to explore men's relationships with their fathers. The rationale in sampling men who had children attending a public Montessori School with a high level of parental involvement was based on the assumption they may have had fathers who were highly involved with them during their growing up years. Since the literature reports that men who are abusive grow up witnessing marital violence, subjects were recruited from batterer's treatment groups. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed and the return rate was approximately 33%. For the purposes of this study, the 52 subjects who witnessed marital violence were compared with a random selection of 52 out of a pool of 95 men who did not witness marital violence.

Instruments

The men who participated in this study completed a demographic data form and two instruments: The Fatherhood Scale (Dick, 2004) and the Conflict Tactics Scale II (Straus, 1996). A 10-item questionnaire was developed to gather basic demographic data on the subjects and their fathers. Information gathered on the subjects included age, marital status, educational level, income and race. Information was collected on the educational level of the subjects' fathers. Subjects were also asked whether they had always lived with their father during childhood, to identify their primary adult male caretaker, whether or not their parents divorced, and if so, the subject's age at the time of the divorce.

The Fatherhood Scale (FS). The FS utilized in this study was the original version of a 75-item instrument designed to measure an adult's perception of his/her relationship with his/her father during their growing-up years. A revised version of the *Fatherhood Scale* (Dick, 2004) consists of 64 items. The FS consists of nine subscales measuring both positive and negative types of paternal engagement, the emotional relationship with the father and various roles fathers have historically assumed. The Cronbach alpha for the entire FS is .98.

The Conflict Tactics Scale (2)(CTS 2). Intimate violence was measured using the CTS 2 (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). The 78-item self-report instrument measures the extent and level to which partners engage in physical and psychological attacks on one another. The scale is widely used to obtain concrete acts of sexual coer-

cion, psychological aggression and injuries sustained during physical attacks, and the use of negotiation skills to resolve conflict. Reliability ranges from .79 to .95 (Straus et al., 1996). The Cronbach alpha attained in this study was .97.

RESULTS

Logistic regression was used in this study to determine which aspects of fatherhood would predict whether or not the children would be exposed to intimate partner violence. In the group that witnessed marital violence ($n = 52$), 25% of the men self-reported they *often* witnessed marital violence; 38% *sometimes* witnessed marital violence, and 38% said that they had witnessed intimate violence, but it was *rare*. Sixty-three percent of those reporting they observed their fathers hit their mothers also indicated they saw their fathers beat their mothers.

The men who witnessed marital violence were somewhat younger ($M = 35$, $SD = 8.45$) than the men who did not witness marital violence ($M = 36$, $SD = 10.1$). Those men who witnessed marital violence were less likely to be married (46%) than the men who did not witness marital violence as children (60%). The men who witnessed marital violence were more likely to be divorced (12%) than those men who did not witness marital violence (5%), and were much more likely to be separated at the time of the study: 14% for those men witnessing marital violence compared with 3% for those men who did not witness marital violence.

Men who observed marital violence were more likely to have dropped out of high school (14%), compared to men who did not witness marital violence (8%); yet those men who observed marital violence were slightly more likely to have graduated from college (25%), than men who did not witness marital violence (23%). However, the men who did not witness marital violence were much more likely to have completed graduate school (23%), compared with 15% for those men who did not witness marital violence.

There were differences in the educational level of fathers of the men in the study. Thirty-nine percent of the fathers in the witness group did not complete high school, compared with 23% of the fathers in the non-witnessing group. The non-abusive fathers were more likely to have completed college and/or completed graduate school (31%) than the fathers who abused their partners in front of their children (14%). Similar percentages of fathers in both groups had graduated from high school; 27% for the witness group and 26% for the non-witness group;

technical school 8% compared with 12% for non-abusive fathers. Twelve percent of the abusive fathers had some college education, and 6% of non-abusive fathers had attained some college. Overall, the abusive fathers were more likely to have dropped out of high school, whereas the non-abusive fathers were more likely to have a college or a graduate degree.

Both groups (69%) identified fathers as their primary male caretaker while growing up. Sixteen percent of the men who witnessed marital violence identified their step-fathers as their primary caretakers, compared with 8% of the men in the non-witness group. One striking difference was the men in the non-witness group (19%) were nearly twice as likely to list their primary caretakers *other*, than the men who witnessed marital violence (10%). The men who witnessed marital violence were more likely to have experienced a divorce (54%) during childhood and/or adolescence, than the men who did not witness marital violence (33%). The men in the non-witness group were more likely to have always lived with their fathers growing up (58%) than the men who witnessed marital violence (50%).

Differences in Paternal Involvement Between the Two Groups

There were significant differences between the two groups on father involvement ($t(104) = 3.770, p < 0.001$). The men who witnessed marital violence scored significantly lower ($M = 206.2, SD = 46.8$) on five out of seven subscales as measured by the Fatherhood Scale, than the men who did not witness marital violence ($M = 243.7, SD = 54.1$). Scores on the FS range from 75 to 375. Scores ranging from 75 to 150 indicate that fathers were never or rarely involved with their children, whereas scores ranging from 300 to 375 indicate that fathers are highly involved with their children in positive ways. Scores falling within the mid-range (151-299) indicate that fathers are sometimes involved with their children in positive ways, yet may be highly involved in some areas and lower in others. In this study the scores ranged from 113 to 347 (see Table 1).

There were also differences between the two groups in terms of how accessible these men felt their fathers were to them. Men who witnessed marital violence scored their fathers lower ($M = 11.7, SD = 4.49$), compared with men whose fathers did not abuse their mothers ($M = 14.2, SD = 5.46$). The men who did not witness marital violence viewed their fathers as being there when they needed them, more available to talk to them about their personal problems, and more helpful in solving prob-

TABLE 1. Group Differences Between Witnessing Marital Violence Groups on Fatherhood Scale

Subscales	Witnessing Marital Violence (n = 52)			Did Not Witness Marital Violence (n = 52)			t	p
	SEM	M	SD	SEM	M	SD		
Emotional Abuse	0.99	35.3	7.19	0.70	42.4	5.09	5.81	.000
Emotional Responsiveness	2.3	51.0	16.9	2.6	59.5	19.1	2.38	.019
Moral Father Role	0.68	11.9	4.96	0.77	15.7	5.59	3.70	.000
Paternal Accessibility	0.62	11.7	4.49	0.75	14.2	5.46	2.52	.013
Paternal Responsibility	0.52	10.7	3.74	0.67	13.0	4.88	2.74	.007
Good Provider Role	0.39	7.1	2.83	0.39	7.8	2.81	1.28	.202
Gender Role Model	0.63	15.5	4.56	0.65	16.6	4.71	1.31	.193

lems, than the men who witnessed marital violence. There were significant differences in the how the groups viewed their fathers in terms of being a responsible father. The responsible subscale measures a father's involvement with his children helping them with daily child care tasks, including school related activities, taking their child to the doctor, reading to them, helping with homework and attending their school related activities. Men who witnessed marital violence scored their fathers lower ($M = 10.7$, $SD = 3.75$), compared with men who did not witness marital violence as children ($M = 13.0$, $SD = 4.88$). There were no differences between the groups on the gender role model subscale, or on the androgynous subscale.

Witnessing Paternal Violence and the Type of Father Involvement

Child Abuse and Witnessing Paternal Violence. There were significant differences between the two groups on experiencing child abuse by the father ($t(104) = 5.634$, $p < 0.05$). The men who did not witness marital violence ($M = 9.46$, $SD = 0.874$) were less likely to be a victim of child abuse than the men who did witness marital violence ($M = 7.98$, $SD = 1.70$) as children (inversely scored). A Pearson r indicated a significant positive correlation between child abuse and witnessing paternal violence against the mother ($r = 0.573$, $p = 0.01$). The men who witnessed marital violence self-reported that they were more likely to be physically abused by reporting that they were spanked and/or hit by their fathers, and that they observed them hit a sibling compared with the men who did not witness marital violence.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse. There were significant differences between the two groups on psychological/emotional abuse ($t(104) =$

2.387, $p < 0.05$). The men who did not witness marital violence were much less likely to be emotionally and psychologically abused (inversely scored) by their fathers ($M = 42.4$, $SD = 5.09$), than the men who witnessed marital violence as children ($M = 35.3$, $SD = 7.19$). A Pearson r indicated significant positive correlations between psychological/emotional abuse and witnessing paternal violence against the mother ($r = 0.554$, $p = 0.01$). The group that witnessed marital violence was more likely to have their fathers say hurtful things to them, shout at them if they did something wrong, get angry at them and say they didn't like them. The men who witnessed marital violence were more likely to indicate that their fathers were ashamed of them compared to the men who did not witness marital violence (see Table 2).

Positive emotional responsiveness (the nurturing father role). There were significant differences between the two groups of men on positive paternal emotional responsiveness ($t(104) = 2.387$, $p < 0.05$). The men who had fathers who did not abuse their mothers had self-reported their fathers as more nurturing ($M = 59.5$, $SD = 19.1$), than the men who witnessed marital violence ($M = 51$, $SD = 16.9$). A Pearson r indicated a significant positive correlations between positive emotional responsiveness and witnessing paternal violence against the mother ($r = .264$, $p = 0.01$). The men who did not witness marital violence had fathers who were more likely to verbally express love, affection, and praise than the men who witnessed marital violence. Their fathers were more likely to say to their sons that they loved them, to praise them for the things they did well, to hug them, to tell them that they were good boys, and act caring toward them than the men who witnessed marital vio-

TABLE 2. Correlations Between Witnessing Marital Violence and the Fatherhood Scale Subscales

Subscales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Witnessing Violence								
2. Emotional	0.554*							
3. Emotionally Responsive	0.264**	0.398**						
4. Moral Father Role	0.300**	0.272**	0.686**					
5. Accessible Father	0.277**	0.410**	0.893**	0.673**				
6. Responsible Father	0.298**	0.374**	0.772**	0.669**	0.767**			
7. Good Provider	0.196*	0.182	0.544**	0.520**	0.523**	0.523**	0.644**	
8. Gender Role Model	0.103	0.097	0.794**	0.623**	0.745**	0.745**	0.631**	0.422**

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, two-tailed. * $p < 0.05$, two-tailed.

lence. These men also were more likely to self-report that they felt close to their fathers, more likely to tell their fathers they loved them, report warm feelings toward their fathers, and were more likely to report being close to their fathers as teenagers, than the men who witnessed marital violence. Overall, the men who did not witness marital violence reported their fathers as more caring, and felt that they showed concern for them when they were hurt, compared with the men who witnessed their fathers physically assault their mothers.

Positive Paternal Engagement. There were significant differences between the two groups of men on positive paternal engagement ($t(104) = 2.623, p < 0.05$). The men who did not witness marital violence were much more likely to report positive paternal engagement with their fathers ($M = 37.8, SD = 13.8$), than the men who witnessed marital violence as children ($M = 31.3, SD = 11.1$). A Pearson r indicated a significant positive correlations between positive paternal engagement and witnessing paternal violence against the mother ($r = .297, p = 0.01$). Men who reported they witnessed marital violence were less likely to have fathers who took them on activities, and they were less likely to indicate that they enjoyed spending time with their fathers than men who did not witness marital violence.

Witnessing Marital Violence and Adult Intimate Violence. In order to understand the relationship between witnessing marital violence as a child and intimate partner violence as an adult, independent sample t -tests were conducted between the two groups on the use of abusive tactics using the Conflict Tactics Scale II. The men in the witness group were much more likely to use abusive tactics ($M = 69.6, SD = 47.7$), than the men who did not witness marital violence ($M = 52.9, SD = 32.6$). There were significant differences between the two groups ($t(104) = -2.078, p < 0.05$). A Pearson r indicated a significant negative correlation between witnessing paternal violence and later adult intimate violence ($r = -.208, p = 0.05$).

Logistic Regression

The following five independent variables (1) emotional abuse by the father, (2) positive paternal emotional responsiveness, (3) child abuse by the father, (4) parental divorce, and (5) positive paternal engagement were analyzed using the stepwise forward conditional method to determine whether or not they could predict the probability of children witnessing the father engage in marital violence. Table 3 shows that the logistic regression correctly predicted 35 of the 52 (67%) men in the

witness violence group, and correctly predicted 43 of the 52 (83%) of the men in the non-witness group.

There were three variables that predicted witnessing marital violence: experiencing emotional abuse by father ($Bk = -0.111$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.895$), parental divorce ($Bk = -1.03$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.356$), and child abuse by the father ($Bk = 0.629$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.533$). When $\text{Exp}(B)$ is less than one, increasing the values of the variable decreasing the odds the event will occur. All three variables were less than one; therefore for a one-unit increase in these variables, the odds of witnessing marital violence are decreased. Scores on emotional abuse and child abuse were inversely scored, indicating that low scores meant the event occurred, and as the scores increased (moved toward a higher score), the event would be less likely to occur. Holding all other variables constant, for a one-unit increase in the score on emotional abuse ($\text{Exp}(B) 0.895$, the odds of increasing witnessing marital violence are decreased by a factor of 0.10 or by 10%. Holding all other variables constant, for a one-unit increase in the score on divorce ($\text{Exp}(B) 0.356$, the odds of increasing witnessing marital violence are decreased by a factor of 0.64 or by 64%. Holding all other variables constant, for a one-unit increase in the score on child abuse ($\text{Exp}(B) 0.533$, the odds of decreasing witnessing marital violence are increased by a factor of 0.56 or by 56%. The proportion of variance explained by the independent variables is $R^2 L = 0.421$.

The five predictor variables correctly classified 67% of the men in the witness marital violence group (35 of 52) and 83% of the men in the non-witness group (43 of 52) based on the information contained in those variables. The overall model was significant, $\chi^2(8, N = 104) = 20.854$, $p < 0.001$, correctly classifying 75% of the subjects in the correct group: witness or did not witness marital violence. Therefore, the

TABLE 3. Classification Table: Predicting Witnessing Violence (N = 104)

Observed	Predicted		Percent Correct
	Witness Violence (n = 52)	No Witness Violence (n = 52)	
Witness Violence (n = 52)	35	14	73
No Witness Violence (n = 52)	43	9	83
Overall Percentage Correct			78%

overall model significantly predicts who will witness marital violence based on the specific predictor variables.

There are several limitations to this study. The nonprobability sampling procedures limits the generalizability of the study to the sample being studied. Subjects who self-select may respond by giving more socially acceptable responses. This research study did not control for social desirability. There are limitations in that the study did not include all the ways in which fathers are involved with their children. Second-order levels of father involvement such as levels of cognitive involvements that measure the fathers' thoughts and include such processes as reasoning, planning, evaluating, and monitoring (Palkovitz, 1997), were not included in this study. Another limitation of this study is that while it is important to know how these men differ on demographics, future studies on men's relationships with their fathers may want to match subjects based on similar demographics, especially the educational level of the father.

DISCUSSION

Understanding abusive men's relationships with their children and how they carry out their paternal roles is an important issue in preventing violence against women. The aim of this research was to investigate men's relationships with their fathers and to determine if there were differences in their relationships based on whether or not they witnessed marital violence during childhood. We have little empirical research on how abusive men parent and practically none exists on how adults who witness marital violence view their relationships with their fathers. The results indicate that there were differences in the type of relationship men had with their fathers based on whether or not they witnessed their fathers physically abuse their mothers during childhood. The men who witnessed marital violence were more likely to be physically and emotionally abused by the father. Men who witnessed marital violence during childhood were more likely to abuse an intimate partner in adulthood than men who did not witness marital violence during childhood. Although caution must be used in generalizing these findings beyond this sample, the results indicated that there were significant differences in how adult men who grew up witnessing marital violence viewed their father's involvement with them compared with a group of men who did not witness marital violence. While not indicating a cause-and-effect

relationship, the present results indicate that two aspects of father involvement predict whether or not children will be exposed to paternal violence against the mother: child abuse and emotional abuse by the father. Divorce was also a predictor of correctly classifying witnessing marital violence or not witnessing, and this may indicate that prior to the divorce, these families were chaotic and abusive.

Previous research shows that if a child is exposed to a particular adverse childhood experience within the family, such as witnessing marital violence, there is the likelihood of a relationship to other adverse family events, such as emotional and physical abuse (Dong et al., 2004). In terms of father involvement and the ways in which men assume the role of fatherhood, this seems to be true in this study. Fathers who engaged in violent physical abuse towards the children's mother were viewed as less positive on a number of measures on fatherhood compared with the subjects whose fathers did not abuse their mothers. There were significant differences between the two groups on seven measures of father involvement: child abuse, emotional abuse, positive emotional responsiveness, positive paternal engagement, moral father role, accessibility, and responsible fathering.

There were a number of demographic variables that indicated differences between the two groups. Divorce was a predictor in the probability of these men witnessing marital violence during childhood. Furthermore, the men exposed to marital violence during childhood were less likely to be married, and more likely to divorced/and or separated at the time of the study. It is possible that these men may be hesitant to make a commitment to a long-term relationship, and if conflict arises within the marriage, are more likely to leave the marriage. There was a significant statistical difference between the two groups on adult intimate violence, and it may very well be that their own violence as adults played a significant role in their own divorce. The men who witnessed marital violence experienced less of their father's emotional support and understanding than the men who did not witness marital violence. They felt less close, less warmth from him, and certainly were more emotionally abused by him than the fathers in the non-witness group. This type of fathering provides an indirect kind of lesson about relationships that may help understand these differences in marital status.

Previous research has indicated a positive association between positive fathering and academic performance (Jones, 2004). When boys are more dependent on their fathers for responsible kinds of fathering such as having concrete basic needs met and when their attitudes and beliefs are similar to fathers, they have been found to perform better academi-

cally. This research indicated that men who were exposed to paternal violence were more likely to have dropped out of high school and yet more likely to have completed graduate school than men not exposed to paternal violence. These types of findings indicate a need for further research that examines the quality of the father/child relationship and its association to child and adult outcomes.

Understanding the diversity of ways in which men carry out the role of fatherhood has been a challenge for scholars researching fatherhood and for those who design instruments to measure the constructs of fatherhood. However, there are certain roles that the majority of men assume in parenting. This study looked at the moral father role, the gender role model, and the good provider role. There were no differences between the two groups on the later two roles, which may indicate that men, regardless of their behavior, engage in the breadwinning role, and serve as a gender role model for their sons. A father who engages in the moral father role as measured by the FS (which is constructed to capture the father's religious leadership within the home and his ability to teach right from wrong) is directly involved in positive activities with his child, such as attending church, saying grace at mealtime and talking about God. It is also possible that it is not just the degree to which the father embraces this role in terms of religion, but it also may be his accessibility that is just as important.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

These findings have implications in clinical work and in the treatment of men who batter women. Helping men understand their relationships with their fathers is an important stage of adult psychological development (Osherson, 2001). Furthermore, as therapists help men explore their relationships with their fathers, they can help them construct a paternal role with their own child that incorporates the strengths of their fathers, but differentiates from the negative aspects of his behaviors. The goal of batterer's treatment is to eliminate violence against women. This research supports other studies that indicate a strong association between witnessing marital violence and later adult intimate violence. This intergenerational transmission of violence may be passed down in how the father directly and indirectly fathers. Maybe it is time for batterer's treatment programs to extend their focus and incorporate into their groups modules on fathering, to help these men think about

how their violence is affecting their children and whether or not this is the paternal role they desire. As men explore their own feelings about witnessing marital violence or being a victim of psychological/emotional abuse by their fathers, perhaps they will understand how their behavior is affecting their own children.

This study found that there were differences between the two groups on child abuse and emotional abuse. Men who came out of violent families were much more likely to have experienced child abuse and emotional abuse than men from non-violent families. Seventy-five percent of the men who witnessed marital violence experienced child abuse compared with 21% of the men who did not witness marital violence. Sixty-seven percent of the men who witnessed marital violence reported they were emotionally abused by their fathers, whereas 33% of the men who did not witness marital violence reported they were emotionally abusive. These findings have implications for child welfare practice. If child welfare workers are responding to police reports of domestic violence where the children are in the home, they should screen for child abuse and emotional maltreatment.

Fathers are the missing link in research on family violence (Sternberg, 1997), and future research needs to examine not only how these men view their fathers, but their own level of paternal involvement. Future research on how abusive men parent may have implications for policy, practice, as well as in legal decisions around custody following divorce.

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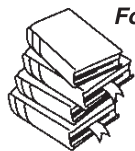
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