



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COURT SERVICES AND OFFENDER SUPERVISION AGENCY &  
PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY  
RESEARCH REVIEW BOARD

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 30, 2002  
TO: Paul Quander  
CC: Susan Shaffer  
FROM: Claire Johnson *CJ*  
RE: Study of Hispanic Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

*PRC*  
*I concur w/ recommendation*  
*10/2/02*

The Research Review Board (RRB) has reviewed the research proposal submitted by Judith Walter of The Catholic University to conduct a study of Hispanic perpetrators of domestic violence. Our recommendation is for CSOSA to support this study with conditions, and the statement supporting this is attached.

Ms. Walter submitted an earlier version of her proposal, which the RRB considered to have a number of significant issues resulting in a recommendation not to support the study as proposed. Ms. Walter received a draft of the Recommendation Statement and was given an opportunity to reformulate her study design to address the RRB's concerns. She resubmitted her proposal, which resulted in the current recommendation to support with conditions.

However, the condition under which CSOSA could support the study would not involve Agency resources. Thus, the RRB recommendation must be considered as support of the concept of the study, and does not require any approval from us.

Please indicate your acceptance or non-acceptance of this recommendation as soon as possible so that we may inform the researchers of the outcome of our review. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-220-5553 or [claire.johnson@csosa.gov](mailto:claire.johnson@csosa.gov).

Thank you.

Enclosures: Research proposal and addendum  
RRB Recommendation Statements  
RRB letter to Ms. Walter

Research Review Board

Janice Bergin, Director of Operations, PSA • Calvin Johnson, Director of Research and Evaluation, CSOSA • Claire Johnson, Director of Community Justice Programs, PSA • Carolyn Peake, Senior Program Analyst, Strategic Planning, Analysis and Evaluation, PSA • George Pruden, General Counsel • Thomas Williams, Associate Director, Community Supervision Services, CSOSA



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COURT SERVICES AND OFFENDER SUPERVISION AGENCY &  
PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY  
RESEARCH REVIEW BOARD**

**RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT  
FOR PROPOSAL RESUBMISSION**

**I. REVISED RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

*Investigator(s):* Judith Walter

*Title:* Hispanic Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

*Institution:* Catholic University

*Type of Data:* Questionnaires via semi-structured interview format

*Subjects:* Offenders - Sample size of 100 batterers, of which 50 are Hispanic immigrants and 50 are non-Hispanic, American born.

*Description:* The purpose of this study is to add to the knowledge about the etiology of domestic violence in immigrant populations in the US. Focusing on a population of domestically violent men, this research will examine differences between Hispanic immigrant batterers and non-Hispanic, American-born batterers in specific etiological variables related to domestic violence and explore relationships among those variables.

*Key Revisions:* The resubmission addresses the concerns identified in the draft Recommendation Statement (see attachment), including modifications for ensuring the adequacy of informed consent safeguards and several options for identifying participants that would reduce the need for CSOSA resources.

**II. RECOMMENDATION**

The RRB recommendation for this study:

- Support       **Support with Conditions**       Do Not Support

This proposal has been reformulated to address critical issues that were raised in the initial RRB review, resulting in the RRB recommendation for CSOSA to support this study with conditions, which include the following:

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**RECOMMENDATIONS STATEMENT FOR PROPOSAL RESUBMISSION**

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- The researcher will utilize the option to identify prospective participants via appropriating individuals at public court proceedings.

As noted by the researcher, this option would not involve CSOSA resources. Thus, the RRB recommendation must be considered as support of the concept of the study, since use of the third option eliminates the need for Agency approval to undertake the study.

### **III. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Although the resubmission presents three possible options for identifying study participants, the two that are preferred by the researcher still require staff and space resources that CSOSA is not in a position to provide. The remaining option fully involves coordinating with the Court, and eliminates the need for CSOSA involvement.



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COURT SERVICES AND OFFENDER SUPERVISION AGENCY &  
PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY  
RESEARCH REVIEW BOARD**

August 21, 2002

Ms. Judith Walter  
4924 Tilden Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Ms. Walter:

The Research Review Board (RRB) has reviewed your research proposal and will recommend for CSOSA/PSA not to support this study as it is currently designed. We will reconsider this recommendation if the study is reformulated to address the issues noted in the attached statement.

We must receive notification of your intent within 30 days of the date of this letter. If we do not hear from you, the current recommendation will go forth.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-220-5553 or [Claire.Johnson@csosa.gov](mailto:Claire.Johnson@csosa.gov).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Claire M. Johnson  
Co-Chair

Enclosures: Draft RRB Recommendation Statement



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COURT SERVICES AND OFFENDER SUPERVISION AGENCY &  
PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY  
RESEARCH REVIEW BOARD**

**RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT**

**DRAFT**

**I. RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

*Investigator(s):* Judith Walter

*Title:* Hispanic Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

*Institution:* Catholic University

*Type of Data:* Questionnaires via semi-structured interview format

*Subjects:* Offenders - Sample size of 100 batterers, of which 50 are Hispanic immigrants and 50 are non-Hispanic, American born.

*Description:* The purpose of this study is to add to the knowledge about the etiology of domestic violence in immigrant populations in the US. Focusing on a population of domestically violent men, this research will examine differences between Hispanic immigrant batterers and non-Hispanic, American-born batterers in specific etiological variables related to domestic violence and explore relationships among those variables.

**II. RECOMMENDATION**

The RRB recommendation for this study:

Support

Support with Conditions

**Do Not Support**

The RRB recommendation is for CSOSA/PSA not to support this study as it is currently designed. This recommendation will be reconsidered if the study is reformulated to address the issues noted below.

**III. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The proposed study is compliant with Federal regulations regarding the protection of human subjects as certified by the Catholic University of America, Office of Sponsored

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DRAFT

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Programs and Research Services, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (Federal Assurance #M1066) on July 10, 2002.

The proposed research shows no evidence of non-compliance with Agency policies pertaining to research.

The proposed research is inconsistent with Agency priorities and/or interests as follows:

- This study requires a significant amount of staff time to assist in the research process, including staff support in the identification of study candidates, support for recruitment of study participants (operational staff invariably are asked to help with explanations, assurances, *etc.*), space for questionnaire administration and space for interviewing. CSOSA is not in a position to provide the staff, space and logistical support that are required for this project.

Outstanding questions, issues or concerns about the proposed study include:

1. The researcher has not designed a method for obtaining informed consent prior to knowing the identity of the offenders. In order to be acceptable, the researcher would have to develop a proposed method that protects the identity of a potential participant until an informed consent has been signed.
2. The proposed methodology raises a concern as to the perceived coercive nature of the questionnaire/interview situation/environment. The study relies on CSOSA staff to identify and (somewhat) recruit participants, which questions whether or not research subjects will perceive the process as voluntary.
3. The research design needs further specification regarding a description of the process for assigning offenders to the treatment/counseling program. Specifically, the description should outline a method for identifying cohorts and selection criteria that ensure comparability in the length of time in treatment.
4. The consent form is somewhat complicated and possibly inappropriate for the CSOSA population of interest. Additionally, as separate research activities, it would be appropriate that the researcher collect separate consents for the questionnaire and the interview.
5. The researcher does not indicate an estimated time frame for the length of the questionnaire/interview or the overall data collection period. It is unclear how long it will take to recruit even the modest sample proposed by the

*Judith A. Walter*  
*4924 Tilden St. NW*  
*Washington, D. C. 20016*

September 4, 2002

Ms. Claire Johnson, Co-Chair  
Research Review Board  
D.C. Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency  
& Pretrial Services Agency

Dear Ms. Johnson,

I appreciate the opportunity to reformulate my study to address the Research Review Board's issues and concerns as they were enumerated in the attachment to your letter of August 21, 2002. To assure as complete a response as possible, I sought meetings with Calvin Johnson and John Patrick Ifedi, both of whom were kind enough to give me time, answer questions, and provide helpful comments.

With this letter I am submitting an Addendum to my research proposal that addresses each of the concerns raised by the RRB. I have developed several options for data collection that have been crafted specifically to meet offender privacy requirements, underscore the independence from CSOSA of this researcher and the proposed study, and minimize the support of CSOSA staff.

I thank the Board for the opportunity to resubmit. It has given me a chance to deal with an issue of which I hadn't been sufficiently aware (i.e., offender privacy rights) and to get more in-depth understanding of the intake process for treatment. Though I would have been happier not to have to resubmit my proposal, I will readily concede that it has required me to do a better job of thinking through my data collection methodology. I hope the RRB will agree that this is an improved submission.

Sincerely,

*Judith A. Walter*  
Judith A. Walter

## Addendum to Research Proposal

Submitted to  
D.C. Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency &  
Pretrial Services Agency  
Research Review Board

by  
Judith A. Walter  
September 4, 2002

All questions, issues or concerns raised by the Research Review Board about the proposed study are repeated below and followed by the researcher's proposal for dealing with them. The first three issues are listed and responded to as a related group.

- 1) **The researcher has not designed a method for obtaining informed consent prior to knowing the identity of the offenders. In order to be acceptable, the researcher would have to develop a proposed method that protects the identity of a potential participant until an informed consent has been signed.**
- 2) **The proposed methodology raises a concern as to the perceived coercive nature of the questionnaire/interview situation/environment. The study relies on CSOSA staff to identify and (somewhat) recruit participants, which questions whether or not research subjects will perceive the process as voluntary.**
- 3) **The research method needs further specification regarding a description of the process for assigning offenders to the treatment/counseling program. Specifically, the description should outline a method for identifying cohorts and selection criteria that ensure comparability in the length of time in treatment.**

The researcher proposes to use a screening sheet as a pre-consent form (available in both English and Spanish). This screening sheet to be distributed to prospective participants would portray the research as an opportunity that is completely independent of CSOSA and that is purely voluntary on the part of offenders.

To facilitate this screening (pre-consent) process, the researcher has developed a written sign-up/screening sheet and talking points for use in describing the research opportunity, naming the researcher and her affiliation, and making clear that CSOSA takes no position on whether or not the offenders should choose to participate in the research. This material is attached to the Addendum Submission.

The researcher proposes to offer the research opportunity to prospective participants before they have actually begun the treatment/counseling program. If they could not answer the questionnaire before their first actual group treatment session, they would



be offered the option of doing so in the first week of treatment. Any offender who had participated in two or more treatment sessions would not be considered eligible to participate in the research.

### Pre-consent Options

The researcher has identified three options for the screening/pre-consent process that are presented below in descending order of preference.

- a) *Most preferred option.* The screening form would be distributed at CSOSA's orientation sessions for DV treatment. These two-hour sessions are held three times each week at the facility on New York Avenue, NE. The Tuesday (9:00-11:00 a.m.) and Thursday (2:00-4:00 p.m.) sessions are conducted in English, and the Wednesday (9:00-11:00 a.m.) session is conducted in Spanish. The session leader would distribute the screening/pre-consent form and speak briefly (1-2 minutes) from the talking points, which emphasize the independence of the researcher and state that CSOSA neither encourages nor discourages participation. Only **after** offenders have pre-consented by signing the screening form would the researcher meet with them.
- b) *Second preferred option.* The screening form would be distributed by the approximately 30 CSOs who refer offenders to CSOSA treatment groups. (About 90-95% of domestic violence treatment referrals come from CSOs.) As in the above option, the prepared talking points would assure emphasis of the independence of the researcher and the research project from CSOSA and underscore the voluntary nature of participation. The researcher would meet with offenders only **after** they signed the pre-consent form.
- c) *Least preferred option.* The researcher would go to court and identify prospective participants by working with court clerks and observing public court proceedings. CSOSA would not be involved. The researcher herself would approach individuals and present the screening information.

### Summary Discussion of Pre-Consent Options.

The preferred option represents the lesser burden on CSOSA staff time of the two alternatives that envision distribution of screening/pre-consent forms by CSOSA staff. Because orientation involves *groups* of offenders and just the three or four COSA staff who lead orientation sessions, using these orientation groups to present information and provide a screening sheet is the most efficient and effective means of dissemination. Using CSOs would mean distribution to offenders one-by-one and involve about 30 CSOSA staff, thus requiring a greater number of CSOSA staff and more staff time in aggregate. The third, and least preferred, option involves no CSOSA staff but has other disadvantages that will be touched on below.

### Options for Administering the Questionnaire

*More preferred option.* This option envisions using space at the New York Ave., NE facility in a way that guarantees privacy of offenders not participating in the research while taking advantage of the fact that offenders are already grouped at this facility for the orientation sessions. This option was designed in consultation with John Patrick Ifedi, Supervisor of Domestic Violence Treatment for CSOSA. Under this alternative, offenders who had signed the pre-consent form and had the time to stay for an extra hour or so after the orientation would remain in the orientation room. After all offenders *not* signing the pre-consent form had cleared the room, the researcher (who would be waiting in Mr. Ifedi's private office directly across the hall) would be signaled to join the remaining (pre-consenting) offenders. The researcher would read aloud through the consent form and subsequently administer the questionnaire in the same way. (If any pre-consenting offenders chose not to sign the consent form, the researcher would excuse them prior to administering the questionnaire to the rest of the group.)

This option takes into account the times of offender group treatment sessions in the building. It is possible for the researcher to enter and exit the building at times either when a domestic violence treatment group is in mid-session or no such groups are meeting. Thus, at all times on the premises of the New York Ave. facility, the researcher would be in a private office, in a room with only pre-consenting offenders, or briefly in a hallway at a time when offenders would not be moving about in the building. In other words, there would be virtually no risk of a chance encounter with an offender who had not signed the pre-consent sheet. At the times planned for administering the questionnaire, the room used for orientation would otherwise be empty. In summary, this option provides that shortly before the scheduled conclusion of the orientation groups on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, the researcher would arrive at the building and go directly to Mr. Ifedi's office (which is the first office after the guard station at the entrance). She would wait there until signaled that the orientation room had been cleared of non-consenting offenders and then proceed directly across the (empty) hall to meet in the orientation room with pre-consenting offenders, present the consent form to them, and administer the questionnaire.

Offenders who did not have the time flexibility to remain right after orientation would have the option to return for similarly scheduled sessions with the researcher later in the same week or in the following week, as long as the consent form and questionnaire could be presented to the offenders before their second group treatment session. If none of the Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday times was convenient for a pre-consenting offender, the researcher might offer a Friday time at the New York Ave., NE facility (there are no group treatment meetings on Friday) or on Saturday at 300 Indiana Avenue. Saturday questionnaire administration sessions, if held, would be timed so that the researcher would avoid arriving at or departing from the Indiana Ave. building during times when she might encounter non-participating offenders attending either of the two Saturday group treatment sessions at that location.

*Less preferred option.* The researcher would seek to use space at 300 Indiana Avenue for presenting the consent form and administering the questionnaire.

### Summary Discussion of Questionnaire Administration Options.

The first option has the advantage of efficiency of administration and reduced inconvenience for those pre-consenting offenders who could simply stay after orientation for an extra period of time. All others would, of course, have to make an extra trip to participate in this phase of the research. This option also has the advantage of increasing the likelihood that a substantial portion of the sample population would be answering the questionnaire before even their *first* group treatment session.

### Interview Space

The researcher proposes not to utilize CSOSA space for the interviews. Rather, with the planned 15-20 Hispanic immigrant offenders who consent to be interviewed, the researcher would arrange with each interviewee individually a mutually convenient time and place for an interview.

- 4) The consent form is somewhat complicated and possibly inappropriate for the CSOSA population of interest. Additionally, as separate research activities, it would be appropriate that the researcher collect separate consents for the questionnaire and the interview.**

To address concerns about how complicated the consent form may be for the CSOSA population of interest, the researcher proposes two actions. First, as described above, a screening sheet that functioned as a pre-consent form would be distributed to offenders. This would use less complicated language to describe the research, its risks/benefits, and its complete independence from CSOSA. Second, at the time the researcher met with offenders who had signed the screening/pre-consent sheet, the first thing she would do would be to actually read aloud through the consent form and offer explanations to answer any and all questions the prospective participants might have. The researcher has concerns about the literacy levels of prospective participants. For that reason, she has always planned to read aloud both the consent form and the questionnaire to all research subjects.

Finally, the researcher agrees that it is appropriate to collect a separate consent for the interview. A draft of a separate consent form for the interview is attached to this Addendum Submission. (The researcher has consulted her dissertation chair about the role of the University IRB with respect to this issue. The dissertation chair has informed the researcher that *added* human subjects' protections do not require approval of the IRB. Only if the researcher were proposing to subtract protections, e.g., by changing or deleting language from the IRB-approved consent form, would the re-approval of the Catholic University IRB be required.) The researcher plans to

use a screening form for interview pre-consent at the conclusion of the administration of the questionnaire and prior to the interview session itself. At the outset of each individual interview session, the researcher would read aloud through the interview consent form and secure a signature before proceeding.

- 5) The researcher does not indicate an estimated time frame for the length of the questionnaire/interview or the overall data collection period. It is unclear how long it will take to recruit even the modest sample proposed by the researcher. Not know what the refusal rate will be makes it even more complicated to try to project the study's length of time.**

The researcher estimates questionnaire administration would take about an hour, and she plans to try to hold interviews to about an hour. Based on discussions with John Patrick Ifedi, Supervisor of Domestic Violence Treatment for CSOSA, the researcher estimates that using the researcher's preferred options the questionnaire-generated data for American-born, non-Hispanic participants could be collected in as short a time as six weeks. This is based on the assumption that of the projected average of 20 such offenders going through orientation *each week*, 50% (10 offenders per week) would consent to participate. If some answered the questionnaire in the week *following* orientation, rather than in the same week as their orientation, it should be possible to collect 50 questionnaires in six weeks.

It would take significantly longer to collect questionnaires from Hispanic immigrant offenders, based on recent data which suggests there are five Hispanics *per month* doing the Spanish-language orientation and a greater but difficult-to-estimate number of Hispanic immigrants attending the English-language orientation. (Offenders are put into the Spanish-speaking orientation and treatment groups only if they cannot function in English.) Assuming five Hispanics *per month* in the Spanish-language orientations and ten Hispanics *per month* in the English-language orientations and assuming a 50% refusal rate, it would take nearly 7 months to accumulate 50 questionnaires from Hispanic immigrant offenders. (The researcher hopes, of course, that the cash incentive will result in a lower than 50% refusal rate.) The researcher will be reviewing progress with her dissertation chair on a monthly basis. As the underlying proposal states, the *plan* is for a sample of 100. The researcher's dissertation chair has agreed that if data collection does not materialize at projected rates, the researcher and her dissertation committee will work together to select a smaller sample size.

The researcher projects that the 15-20 planned interviews with Hispanic immigrant offenders would be completed well before the estimated 7 month timeframe to collect questionnaires from 50 Hispanic immigrant offenders.

Using less preferred options would increase the collection time. Particularly, if the researcher used public court sources to identify prospective research participants, made the initial distribution of information about the research opportunity herself, and attempted to schedule all questionnaire administration at 300 Indiana Avenue, it would require significantly more data collection time and might extend the required

research timeframe enough to render the research plan unfeasible. It is not clear that research participants thus identified would match the CSOSA-related population the researcher is trying to reach, in turn making the data and related dissertation less useful to CSOSA.

# EARN \$10 BY PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH STUDY!

Hello. My name is Judy Walter. I am a graduate student in social work at Catholic University. I am doing a study on domestic violence for my doctoral degree. (I am not connected with CSOSA or any other government agency.) If you will spend about an hour to answer some multiple choice questions that will be read to you, I will pay you \$10.

For my research project, I am collecting information about a group of men in CSOSA's domestic violence program. My questions are about such things as

- your age, education, country of birth
- the difficulties you may have in your life (for example, not enough money or problems at work),
- what you believe about why husbands hit their wives,
- your beliefs about how important good or bad luck is in your life,
- the kinds of people you spend your free time with

I will use the information I collect from about 100 men in this program to put together an overall description of the group's answers to the questionnaire. No one will be able to identify your individual answers because your name will not be put on your questionnaire and I will not use your name in any of my work.

This is an opportunity for you to contribute to knowledge about this issue and to make \$10 for taking an hour or so to answer some general questions. If you are interested in participating in this research, please sign below and list a telephone number where I can reach you. Thank you.

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(Name)

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(Telephone)

## Talking Points

For distribution of flyer about doctoral research project

- I am passing out a flyer that describes an opportunity for you to participate in a research project.
- **This project is not being done by or for CSOSA.** It is being conducted by Judy Walter, a graduate student at Catholic University. CSOSA's only connection is that it has agreed to give you this information [and to let her use space in this building to collect answers to her questionnaire].
- Whether or not you decide to participate is entirely up to you. CSOSA doesn't care one way or the other.
- The flyer explains that Ms. Walter will pay you \$10 for answering a series of questions that she will read to you, and it gives examples of the kinds of questions she will be asking.
- Again, Ms. Walter is doing this research independently. CSOSA just wants to make you aware of the opportunity to participate. If you are interested in participating in the research, you can sign the form, which will be given back to Ms. Walter.

## INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

**Name of Study:** Hispanic Immigrant Perpetrators of Domestic Violence: The Impact of Stress on Dyadic Role-taking as Moderated by Beliefs about Wife Battering, Cognitive Style and Social Support

**Investigator:** Judith A. Walter, MSW, (202) 966-6391, [JudyAW@aol.com](mailto:JudyAW@aol.com)

**Research Supervisors:** Elizabeth Timberlake, DSW (Chair), Fred Ahearn, DSW (reader), Lucy Cohen, PhD (reader)

### **Description of Study:**

I understand that this study is being done for a doctoral dissertation about domestic violence. I understand that I am volunteering to participate in a face-to-face interview that will involve the researcher and a translator.

### **Risks, Inconveniences, Discomforts:**

I understand there is no cost for being interviewed and that it will take about an hour of my time. I understand that I may be uncomfortable with some questions that ask about my experience. I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions that make me uncomfortable. If I need assistance or counseling, the researcher will give me information about services that might help me.

### **Benefits:**

I understand that I will receive \$25 for participating in the interview. There are no other immediate benefits. I understand that the findings from this study will add to the understanding of domestic violence. In the future this study may help improve domestic violence-related services for others.

### **Confidentiality:**

I understand that all information will be kept confidential. The information will be used only for research. My name will not be on any interview records or documents. There will be no way to connect this agreement with my interview. I will not be named in reports or presentations. The information from this study will not be part of CSOSA's records. Any information about my participation in this study will be kept as confidential as legally possible. It is not the purpose of this research to uncover specific instances of unreported domestic assaults. I understand that the researcher will not be asking me questions about whether I have committed or am about to commit such assaults. However, if I voluntarily disclose such information and CSOSA is not aware of it, the researcher will report it to law enforcement authorities. I understand that research records, like hospital records, may be subpoenaed by court order. The consent forms and all notes and records of this interview will be destroyed within one year.

### **Participant's Rights:**

I understand that my participation in this interview is voluntary. I understand that I can choose to not answer particular questions or stop participating at any time without penalty. I understand that the researcher is not working for CSOSA. If I refuse to complete the interview it will not affect my relationship with CSOSA in any way.

I have had a chance to ask any questions about the interview and/or my participation in it. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I have received a copy of this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in the interview.

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Participant's Name (printed)

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Participant's Signature

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Date



**Doctoral Dissertation Research Proposal**  
**Submitted to**  
**CSOSA/PSA Research Review Board**

**I. Summary Statement**

*a) Name and current affiliation of the researcher*

Judith A. Walter, School of Social Service, Catholic University

*b) Title of the study*

“Hispanic Immigrant Perpetrators of Domestic Violence: The Impact of Stress on Dyadic Role-taking as Moderated by Beliefs about Wife Battering, Cognitive Style and Social Support”

*c) Purpose of the project*

The purpose of the project is to add to knowledge about the etiology of domestic violence in immigrant populations in the U.S. Focusing on a population of domestically violent men, this research will examine differences between Hispanic immigrant batterers and non-Hispanic, American-born batterers in specific etiological variables related to domestic violence and explore relationships among those variables.

*d) Location of the project*

*See 9/4/02 Addendum*

The proposal is to gather data from men in CSOSA's treatment groups at the CSOSA facility on New York Ave. NE or a nearby location convenient for participants.

*e) Duration of the study*

The researcher's goal is to complete the study by the spring of 2003.

*f) Research methods to be employed*

This study will employ a questionnaire and use quantitative analysis to compare Hispanic immigrant perpetrators of domestic violence with non-Hispanic, American-born perpetrators on selected variables. Qualitative questions will be used in a semi-structured interview format with a subset of Hispanic immigrant perpetrators to enrich the quantitative findings.

*g) Sample size required or time frame for sample collection*

The research plan calls for a sample size of 100, of which about half would be Hispanic immigrants and half non-Hispanic, American-born. The plan further calls

for interviews of 15-20 Hispanic immigrants. Participants should be in the early weeks of court-mandated treatment. ~~The researcher estimates that data collection would occur over a 3-4 month period.~~

See 9/4/02  
Addendum

*h) Number of agency staff needed to support the study and description of the support needs*

See 9/4/02 Addendum

The researcher needs assistance from staff in contacting group treatment participants at intake or within a week or two afterwards to make them aware of the opportunity to participate in the study. ~~Further, it would be helpful if there were space available at the New York Ave. facility for participants to complete questionnaires.~~

*i) Indication of risk or discomfort to subjects as a result of participation*

Subjects could experience discomfort with some of the questions.

*j) Anticipated results*

The researcher anticipates the project's findings will support the hypothesis that compared to non-Hispanic, American-born domestic violence perpetrators, abusive Hispanic immigrants will have more approving beliefs about violence against women, a higher level of psychosocial and socioeconomic stress, greater availability of gendered social support, a more externally oriented cognitive style, and greater deficiencies in dyadic role-taking. Further, it is anticipated the research will find that the impact of stress on dyadic role-taking is mediated by cognitive style and beliefs about violence and moderated by social support, specifically by the impact of social support on beliefs about violence against women.

*k) Deliverables*

This project will yield a doctoral dissertation for the School of Social Service at Catholic University.

## II. Detailed Statement

### a) *Review of the related literature*

**Empirical literature.** A million U.S. women are victims of domestic violence annually. (Carlson & Choi, 2001), a problem of concern to social workers. Hispanic Americans are believed to be especially vulnerable to this problem (Kantor et al., 1994; Perilla et al., 1994), with rates that may exceed those of Anglo-Americans by upwards of 20% (Kantor et al., 1994; Sorenson & Telles, 1991; Straus & Smith, 1990). One characteristic associated with domestic violence is male deficiency in dyadic role-taking (Forte, Franks, Forte & Rigby, 1996 Pence & Paymar, 1993; Stets, 1988). Role-taking is a cognitive skill that contributes to empathy. The role-taking process is used to anticipate another's cognitions, feelings, and motives in order to coordinate one's overt behavior with that other (Ickes et al., 1990). Anticipating another's responses makes self and social control possible (Forte, 1998).

Generally, those in a more powerful position in a social structure have the symbolic and other resources to exert control over others without role-taking (Schwalbe, 1991), while the less powerful gain influence by using role-taking to ingratiate and negotiate (Thomas et al., 1972). Men have been found to be less active and adept in role-taking than women (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983). These findings resonate with cross-cultural research that highlights norms favoring gendered economic inequality and male domestic dominance as two key indicators of violence against women (Levinson, 1989). Indeed, social workers and others who work with the problem of domestic violence among U. S. immigrants pay keen attention to the role of cultural norms and beliefs. (Kantor et al., 1994; Kibria, 1993; Song, 1996).

Researchers looking at domestic violence among immigrants are concerned also with the stress associated with migration (Drachman & Ryan, 2001; Tong, 1998), acculturation (Jasinski, 1998), and oppression (Tello, 1998), concerns consistent with earlier domestic violence research that looked at stress on families (Farrington, 1980). Men tend to funnel into anger the whole range of negative emotions provoked by stress (Gondolf, 1985). Anger can facilitate aggression, overriding feelings of vulnerability and producing a sense of power and control (Dutton, 1995). Achievement or maintenance of control in an intimate relationship is the objective of domestic violence (Walker, 1999).

Practitioners emphasize the control issue whether they focus on *how* people think (style of cognition) or *what* people think (content of cognition). A loss of control or mastery can be the way immigrants experience migration (Tran, 1993), which carries with it substantial stresses, losses, and burdens of adaptation (Hulewat, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Westermeyer, 1986). This sense of diminished control may, in turn, exacerbate the need to maintain dominance in an intimate

relationship, particularly where cultural norms or beliefs take a rigidly traditional view of gender roles.

The broader social relationship patterns of domestically violent men are less clear. Most research and conventional views paint them as socially isolated (Gelles & Straus, 1988, cited in Asbury, 1993). One group of researchers suggests that for some domestically violent men gendered (male) social support networks may be available (Eisikovits et al., 1993). Since social support networks have historically been viewed as the positive glue of immigrant communities (Mahler, 1995), it is important to explore the role these networks may have in domestic violence.

**Theoretical Constructs.** An *ecological perspective* (Bronfenbrenner, 1999) of domestic violence provides the organizing structure and overall transactional concepts for interactions among study variables. Theoretical constructs from *social learning theory* (Bandura, 1977) and *social support network theory* (Milardo, 1988; Vaux 1988) explore the role and operation of cultural norms; *interaction theory* (Coutu, 1949; Mead, 1934) explores the operation of stressors and role-taking. Social learning theory emphasizes how powerfully “socially mediated experience” acts upon human thought, affect and behavior, including aggression and violence. Social support network theory focuses on mid-level social interactions, which can provide feedback and reinforcement for the maintenance of traditional beliefs and values). Stress theorists have conceptualized stress as a relationship in which environmental demands outstrip an individual’s response capabilities. Domestically violent couples may import stress from external sources or generate it on their own; either way, the dyad may operate as a “crystallizing entity” for stress (Farrington, 1980). When key social roles are altered, there is particular stress. Role changes that are undesired, unscheduled, non-normative, and/or uncontrolled are the most stressful (Pearlin, 1983/1989). Finally, in terms of role-taking, interactionists theorize that inability or unwillingness to assume the other’s perspective allows individuals to violate the rights of others without compunction.

#### ***b) Detailed description of the research method***

**Design.** The study will employ a parallel/simultaneous mixed-method design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) to address the quantitative questions for the entire sample and pose qualitative questions to enrich understanding of domestic violence among Hispanic immigrants.

**Quantitative Hypotheses.** **H<sub>1</sub>:** Compared to non-Hispanic, American-born domestic violence perpetrators, Hispanic immigrant perpetrators of domestic violence will have more approving beliefs about violence against women, a higher level of psychosocial and socioeconomic stress, greater availability of gendered social support, a more externally oriented cognitive style, and greater deficiencies in dyadic role-taking. **H<sub>2</sub>:** The impact of psychosocial and socioeconomic stress on dyadic role-taking will be

mediated by cognitive style and beliefs about violence against women, with beliefs about violence against women being moderated by gendered social support.

**Qualitative Question.** Among Hispanic immigrant perpetrators of domestic violence, how do migration stresses, gender role norms, and support networks influence beliefs about violence against women?

**Sample.** The study will utilize a purposive sample of male volunteers in the early weeks of court-mandated domestic violence treatment through D.C.'s Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency. For the quantitative component, the plan is to build a sample of 100 offenders, of which half will be immigrants from Central America, and for the qualitative component to interview 15-20 of those immigrants.

**Data Collection.** Working with a trained Spanish-speaking assistant, this researcher will administer questionnaires (in English or dialectically appropriate Spanish) at the facility where D.C. domestic violence groups are held. Following completion of questionnaires, Hispanic immigrant volunteers will be contacted for follow-up semi-structured interviews (in English or dialectically appropriate Spanish) at the same location.

**Independent Variables.** *Demographic variables* are Race/ethnicity; Country of birth; Age (current and, if relevant, age at immigration). *Psychosocial/socioeconomic stress* is operationalized by questions developed by the researcher and the Chronic Stress Scale (Noble & Ahearn, 2001), which has alpha co-efficients of .69-.85. *Beliefs about violence against women* are measured by the Inventory of Beliefs about Wife Battering (Saunders et al., 1987), consisting of 30 items in five empirically constructed factors with alpha co-efficients of .89, .77, .89, .61 and .62; all items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale. *Cognitive style* is a two-part construct consisting of 1) the Internal, Powerful Other, and Chance Scales (Levenson, 1981) comprising three 8-item subscales (alpha co-efficients of .64, .77 and .78) with all items rated on a 6-point Likert scale and 2) the Self Control Scale (Rosenbaum, 1980), which consists of 34 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (alpha co-efficients of .78 to .84 for five different samples). *Gendered social support networks* are operationalized by a scale adapted by the researcher from the Interview Schedule for Social Interaction (Henderson et al., 1980/81) utilizing the subscales for close social attachments (alpha co-efficients of .67 and .81) and selected items from the availability of social integration subscale. For all scales, the authors have established construct validity. All instruments will be translated into Spanish and back. To assure reliability for this study's sample, Cronbach alphas will be calculated.

**Dependent Variable.** *Dyadic role-taking* is operationalized by the Dyadic Perspective Taking Scales (Long, 1990) comprised of 29 items in two scales (Self and Other, each with two subscales) rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Alpha co-efficients of .80 or higher are reported, and concurrent/discriminant validity is established (Long, 1990). This instrument will be translated into Spanish and back, and Cronbach alpha will be calculated for this sample.

**Data Analysis.** Multiple T tests will be used to test for statistically significant differences between the groups and multiple regression and path analyses will be used to assess relationships and interactions among the variables. Narrative theme analysis will be used for the qualitative data.

c) *Significance of anticipated results and their contribution to the advancement of knowledge*

Violent men have been studied far less than their female victims (Shupe et al., 1987; Follingstad, 1990; Gelles, 1997). Focus on the problem of domestic violence among immigrant populations has emerged only recently in the social work literature (e.g., Acevedo, 2000, Lee, 2000, Walter, 2001). While integrative etiological approaches to domestic violence have been widely embraced (Dutton, 1995, Gelles, 1997), their inclusion of multiple variables has resulted in a tendency to search for universal solutions (Follingstad, 1990) rather than considering the potentially different needs of specific subgroups. Non-Caucasians, including immigrants, are a group where there is a critical need for more research (Jacobson & Gottman, 1998; Tello, 1998), specifically the development and testing of explanatory models (Lee, 2000; Perilla et al., 1994). While domestic violence among Hispanic Americans has been related to cultural norms (Perilla et al., 1994, Acevedo, 2000) and to problems associated with colonialism, racism, discrimination, and migration (Carrillo & Goubaud-Reyna, 1998), theoretical and empirical support for these ideas is limited. The slim body of literature on domestic violence among Hispanic Americans is also heavily tilted toward studies of female victims. At the same time, explanatory models that could inform social work treatment models for male batterers may be most needed in Hispanic immigrant communities, where evidence suggests that female victims are "often focused on finding assistance for their husbands/partners" so that the family can be preserved (Acevedo, 2000).

d) *Benefits of research and/or participation to CSOSA/PSA*

A substantial minority of men in CSOSA's domestic violence treatment program are Hispanic immigrants. Additional knowledge about this group, and how it may differ from others in the program, would enable CSOSA to better tailor their treatment and/or shift emphases in their treatment to improve the possibilities of positive outcomes, thus potentially reducing the chances of recidivism.

e) *Specific resources required from the Agency*

*See 9/4/02 Addendum*

The researcher will need the ongoing cooperation and assistance of the administrator of CSOSA's domestic violence treatment program and the group facilitators to contact potential participants in the study. If it is feasible, the researcher would also like to use CSOSA facilities (a small room or out-of-the-way hallway where small numbers of participants could complete questionnaires).

- f) Description of all possible risks, discomforts, and benefits to individual subjects or a class of subjects, and a discussion of the likelihood that the risks and discomforts will actually occur.*

It may not be totally convenient for subjects to participate in the study. Some questions on the questionnaire may make subjects uncomfortable. Some interview questions may raise disturbing issues for interviewees. The questions for the questionnaire have been selected to reduce the probabilities of discomfort, and the researcher has worded the interview questions so that they are open-ended and don't narrowly or deeply probe in difficult areas, according the interviewee substantial control over the information he provides.

The participants will receive \$10 for answering the questionnaire.

- g) Description of steps taken to minimize any potential risks or discomforts*

The Informed Consent statement states clearly that participation is voluntary, that subjects may refuse to answer any questions that make them uncomfortable, and that if they need counseling as a result of the face-to-face interviews, the researcher will provide information about services that might be helpful. Further, under the "Participant's Rights" section of the Informed Consent statement, subjects are told that they can stop participating at any time without penalty.

- h) Description of physical and/or administrative procedures to be followed to 1) ensure the security of any individually identifiable data that are being collected for the project; and 2) destroy research records or remove individual identifiers from those records when the research has been completed.*

The information will be kept in a locked file in the home of the researcher, and it will be used only for this research. While the subjects will sign the consent forms, their names will not appear on the questionnaires, which will be assigned a number. Those subjects who volunteer for an interview will be assigned (or will themselves choose) a fictitious name as an identifier for the interview records. All information will be kept as confidential as legally possible. The Informed Consent statement does puts subjects on notice that some information (e.g., a statement of intent to commit an assault) may require the researcher to report to authorities and that research records, like hospital records, may be subpoenaed by court order.

The consent forms and questionnaires for this study will be destroyed within one year of their collection.

- i) Description of any anticipated effects of the research project on Agency programs and operations.*

As described in *d)* above, it is possible the research may yield findings that allow CSOSA to tailor treatment programs in ways that make them more effective for Hispanic immigrant perpetrators of domestic violence.

*j) Relevant research materials:*

- 1) Vita
- 2) Sample informed consent statement
- 3) Questionnaire
- 4) Interview questions
- 5) References used for literature review

The above items follow in this package.

*k) Statement indicating that copies of all deliverables will be provided to CSOSA/PSA*

The researcher will provide to CSOSA/PSA a copy of the doctoral dissertation resulting from this research.

*l) Statement that copies of any datasets will be provided to CSOSA/PSA at the conclusion of the project.*

At the conclusion of the project, the researcher will provide to CSOSA/PSA a copy of the research datasets.

***Included in this submission is a copy of the approval letter from Catholic University's IRB (the University's Committee to Protect Human Subjects) which states the project meets the requirements of the Federal regulations governing protection of human subjects.***