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**Who reports intimate partner violence in Aotearoa New Zealand:
comparing episodes across reporter categories**

A dissertation
submitted in fulfilment
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of
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Abstract

Much research has examined the different types of people who report intimate partner violence to the police and what makes them more or less likely to do so, typically focusing on victims and third parties separately. However, little research has examined the range of roles reporters can take, and the types of demographic, relationship, and episode characteristics that are associated with those roles. In this study we¹ examined intimate partner violence episodes reported to New Zealand police (n = 323) and found that victims and third parties reported episodes at similar rates. Of the third parties, neighbours most frequently reported episodes, followed by family members, members of the public, friends, and then other types of services (e.g., ambulance staff). Third parties known to the dyad reported less frequently than those unknown to them. We also found that victims were more likely than third parties to report when there was a history of family violence and when episodes involved their former partner. Third parties were more likely than victims to report episodes involving verbal harm by the aggressor, but there was no association between physical harm and who reported the episodes. These results indicate that variables influencing the visibility of the episode are more important to who reports than indicators of severity. We identified several variables worth further research and suggested methodological changes that could provide more insight into the types of episodes reported by reporters of different roles.

Keywords: Intimate partner violence; Police reporting; New Zealand; Victim reporting; Third party reporting.

¹This research is my own, however, it was conducted in a lab environment; in this dissertation I use “we” to acknowledge the guidance from my supervisor and the collaborative nature of psychological research.

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Who reports intimate partner violence in Aotearoa New Zealand: comparing episodes across reporter categories

Family violence is a salient social issue in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ), defined in the Family Violence Act (2018) as any physical, sexual, or psychological abuse inflicted on a victim by someone they are or were in a familial relationship with. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a sub-type of family violence specifically occurring between people who are current or former intimate partners. During the 2024-25 financial year, the NZ police responded to 170,883 family violence related callouts (i.e., 15.1% of their total calls to service; NZ Police, 2025). Older police data has shown that 60% of family violence callouts did not result in any criminal offence being detected – an updated statistic has not been provided for more recent years (NZ Police, 2023). Between 2013 and 2023, the incidence of family harm reported to NZ police increased by 81%, and the proportion of frontline police's time accounted for by family violence increased from 10% to 19% (NZ Police, 2024). According to the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) in 2024 alone, 176,000 intimate partner violence offences (85,000 involving former partners and 91,000 involving current partners), and 79,000 offences by other family members occurred (Ministry of Justice, 2025b). However, only 28.7% of offences by current or former intimate partners and 33.9% by other family members were reported to police (Ministry of Justice, 2025a). Māori experience a disproportionate amount of family violence offences, with 4.9% of adult victims being Māori compared with 2.1% NZ European, and 2.4% Pacific Islander (Ministry of Justice, 2025b).

Importantly, it is not always victims of IPV who report episodes of violence to police, it can also be third parties such as family members, flatmates, neighbours, members of the public, and sometimes the aggressors themselves. Researchers to date have examined separately what makes victims and third parties more or less likely to report crime to the police (some specifically studying IPV), but a lack of studies directly compare the rates of

episodes reported by victims, aggressors, or third parties, and the similarities and differences in the attributes of episodes that prompt them to call police. In this study we will identify the different roles reporters take in IPV episodes reported to NZ police (i.e., victims, aggressors, and different types of third parties) and examine variables which may be associated with who reported an episode. Directly comparing episodes will help to identify distinct variables that may be differentially operating on reporting decisions across types of reporter, understanding these could help us to better understand barriers and facilitators to reporting, as well as tease out some of the nuances of different reporters decisions which may have been missed by prior studies which have tended to examine third parties without differentiating relationship to the couple.

Despite public campaigns urging victims, witnesses, and aggressors of IPV to seek help in NZ and internationally (e.g., *It's Not OK* in NZ since 2007) there are many reasons why people choose not to. Research using victimisation surveys has identified the most common reasons victims choose not to report family violence are they believe the matter was too trivial, or a private matter (Felson et al., 2002). Another commonly cited reason is the victim is fearful of reprisal although this is more often the case for female victims than male (Felson et al., 2002). NZCVS results from 2024 said 41.6% of victims did not report an offence because they believed the matter was too trivial, 24.9% because they did not think police could do anything, 23.6% because they thought police would not be interested, and 21.6% because their bank or credit card company dealt with the offence instead (Ministry of Justice, 2025b). Female IPV victims in a study by Qiu and colleagues (2023) cited belief that the police wouldn't be able to help (52%), that they didn't want to get into trouble (51%), or fear of her abuser (47%) as reasons for not calling police. Victims may also be reluctant to call police if they feel culpable or that they may get into trouble themselves. As noted in the general crime literature, victims often contribute to the escalation of conflict and can be

involved in illegal activity (such as gang membership or drug dealing, related or unrelated to a violent episode) which makes them reluctant to involve police (Berg & Rogers, 2017). For some, calling police signals vulnerability and can result in being labelled a snitch, which can prompt further negative outcomes for the victim (Berg & Rogers, 2017). Victims of IPV are less likely to report episodes to police if they were using drugs or alcohol, or if they were physically violent first (Felson & Paré, 2005). Women who used force in an IPV incident said they were treated less fairly by police because of it, though their reasons for doing so were they were trying to get the violence to stop, so they could leave the home, because they were tired of being hurt, or in attempt to protect their children (Qiu et al., 2023).

Third party reporting of IPV (and FV in general) can take a lot of the burden off victims making that decision (Mossman et al., 2019). Despite the potential to help families, there are common reasons why third parties do not report incidents to police. Weiss (2021) in the general crime literature categorised the ways third parties rationalised their inaction when they witnessed a crime event (not necessarily IPV or FV incidents). The main strategies were denying the harm (not serious enough or worth the effort), blaming victims (denying the victim's worthiness of help), denying their own capability to intervene effectively, deeming it unsafe to intervene or appealing to a higher loyalty (e.g., not intervening because the third party had children with them), or simply rejecting the guardianship role and refusing to take responsibility for intervention often with little or no reason (Weiss, 2021). Little research has examined different types of third party reporters, but there is some evidence that third parties unrelated to the parties involved in the incident are more heavily influenced by visible indicators of the seriousness of an incident than people who are related to the victim or aggressor (Galvin & Safer-Lichtenstein, 2018), likely because visual indicators are often the only information available to strangers.

Multiple efforts have been made to devise a theoretical structure for victim and third party reporting. One of these is Kidd's (1979) mobilisation theory (or social psychological model of reporting) which focused on third party decisions to report crime. His model is comprised of three key parts. The first part is the process by which the bystander comes to label the situation as a crime. They must first take notice of an unusual behaviour or situation and experience a reflexive feeling of unease that stems from a discrepancy with the third party's personal norms (behaviour they believe is appropriate in the given situation). This unease is due to cognitive dissonance which prompts the third party to want to find an explanation for the feeling, and to figure out how to alleviate the cognitive strain. Kidd (1979) posited that the bystander explains the feeling by labelling what they are witnessing as a crime. The second part of his model addresses how the bystander decides to act to alleviate the cognitive strain, with one potential action being notifying the police (and others being, for example, intervening themselves). The decision begins with the witness assuming personal responsibility to react to the situation which Kidd says depends on two things: 1) the third party believing the aggressor deserves to be caught and punished, and 2) the third party empathising with the victim. If the third party assumes personal responsibility, they then undertake an analysis of the potential costs and benefits they see emanating from the decision to report or not. If the perceived potential benefits of reporting the situation outweigh the potential costs of reporting and benefits and costs of not reporting, then the third party will notify police. Kidd (1979) emphasises the role of the cognitive dissonance in motivating the bystander to do something, either by assuming responsibility and then notifying police, or by minimising the discrepancy between the situation and their personal norms to mitigate the cognitive dissonance, perhaps using a technique identified by Weiss (2021) as discussed earlier.

Hardy's (2019) broader ecological model can be considered alongside Kidd's (1979) model. Hardy used qualitative and quantitative victimisation surveys to show that the reporting decision-making process for victims of crime is influenced by structural, social, situational, and individual factors which interact to determine whether they will report either formally or informally. It is feasible that the decision-making processes surrounding reporting used by victims and third parties may differ. Greenberg and colleagues (1979) proposed that the third party decision to report is a 'cold', rational process, while victims are directly affected by the incident and their initial decision to report is a 'hot' decision based on their emotions and is less rational. Rational choice being involved to a lesser extent in victim reporting is debatable, however, and there can be a delay between when the incident happens and when victims report it so presumably the strength of associated affect may be diminished over time. The idea that third party decision making is a 'cold' process also underestimates the level of emotional impact felt by third parties. Hardy (2019) found that characteristics of the incident were the most predictive of whether victims reported it to police, over and above the victim's demographics and neighbourhood characteristics.

Variables associated with reporting

Plenty of research has been dedicated to the characteristics of IPV incidents and the people involved in them, and whether they are associated with the likelihood that victims or third parties will notify police. Some of the variables of relevance to the current study are as follows:

Gender: Male victims are less likely to report assaults by their partners than female victims (Felson & Paré, 2005; Voce & Boxall, 2018). Similarly, bystanders are more likely to report IPV incidents when they perceive a female is the victim (Felson & Paré, 2005; Campbell & Berg, 2024). According to one study's results there is no evidence that the sexual orientation of the couple impacts third party reporting, concluding that the victim's gender

was the strongest predictor with bystanders most likely to mobilise for female victims and least likely for male victims in opposite sex relationships (Campbell & Berg, 2024).

Ethnicity: Victims who belong to a minority ethnic group are more likely to report their abuse to the police (Felson & Paré, 2005; Voce & Boxall, 2018). The pooled results across all cycles (until 2024) of the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey display the same finding but for crime in general, where more Indian (40.4%), Māori (40.1%), and Pacific (38.4%) victims of crime reported to police than victims of European descent (35.2%; Ministry of Justice, 2025b). Voce and Boxall (2018) found the effect of ethnicity disappears once socioeconomic status is controlled for, however. There may be a link between offender ethnicity and victim reporting, but it appears to be mediated by victim ethnicity (Voce & Boxall, 2018).

Age: The likelihood of victims reporting increases with their age (Felson & Paré, 2005). This finding is consistent with the general crime literature as well (Felson et al., 2002; Galvin & Safer-Lichtenstein, 2018). For bystanders, the pattern is slightly different. Middle-aged bystanders are more likely to report violence against women than younger and elderly bystanders (Gracia & Herrero, 2007). Additionally, one study found that bystanders are less likely to report if the aggressor is younger, but this was referring to violence by juveniles rather than intimate partner violence (Galvin & Safer-Lichtenstein, 2018).

Relationship status: Victims of sexual assault have been found to be less likely to report their victimisation to police when they knew the offender compared with when they were a stranger (Felson & Paré, 2005). In the broader crime literature, Black (1979) explained how people are less likely to sue those they are relationally closer to. Research on third party reporting has shown that people are less likely to report disturbances between couples than between strangers, with disputes between people known to one another being

seen as less serious and more of a private matter (Felson & Paré, 2005; Gartner & Macmillan, 1995). This evidence together suggests that victims and third parties known to the victim and aggressor may be more inclined to report episodes to police when the couple are former partners compared with current partners, though Voce and Boxall (2018) found mixed evidence for this in their more recent study.

History of family violence: Victims who have experienced abuse for more than one year are more likely to call police for help than those who have not experienced it as long (Voce & Boxall, 2018). The same study also showed victims who had reported abuse to the police before, or had experienced violence in a prior relationship had 41% higher odds of reporting. Galvin and Safer-Lichtenstein (2018) in the broader crime literature found that if there was a series of similar crime events within a short period of time (six events within six months) third parties were less likely to report the incidents to police.

Perceived seriousness: The seriousness of an incident is usually measured by whether and how badly the victim was injured, and whether there was a weapon involved, the presence of which increase the likelihood that victims and bystanders will report an IPV incident to the police (Galvin & Safer-Lichtenstein, 2018). Seriousness is also sometimes measured by the number of different types of abuse endured by the victim (usually physical, sexual, and psychological), where more types of abuse tend to increase the likelihood that a victim will report (Malihi et al., 2021).

Type of harm: Adjacent to seriousness, the type of harm involved in an episode is related to reporting. Physical abuse is the type of harm most likely to be reported to police by victims and bystanders (Felson & Paré, 2005; Voce & Boxall, 2018). Sexual abuse is much less likely to be reported perhaps because embarrassment or belief it would not be believed outweighs the effect of the severity.

Drug and alcohol use: As mentioned earlier, victims are less likely to report intimate partner violence to police if they were using alcohol or other drugs at the time (Felson & Paré, 2005). Likewise, bystanders are less likely to call the police on behalf of a victim under the influence, however, they are more likely report if the offender was (Felson & Paré, 2005).

Presence of children: The literature tends to show that the presence of children at the episode scene alone does not impact the likelihood of victim reporting, but if the children *witnessed* violence the likelihood is increased (Voce & Boxall, 2018). Children are an interesting variable because their presence can have an impact either way – some victims may be more likely to report if they have children because they believe it will keep them safe (Malihi et al., 2021). Alternately, they may be less inclined to call because they are concerned about the risk of having their children uplifted or otherwise involved in the criminal justice system (Hollenshead et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2019).

Current study

While there are many studies that focus on one type of role and examine what makes people in that role more or less likely to report IPV and crime in general to police, they do not directly compare the types of situations reported by each of them. In the current study we use reports written by NZ police officers who attended IPV episodes to examine the types of situations that are associated with reporting by people in different roles (i.e., victims, aggressors, and different types of third parties). Directly comparing the IPV episodes reported by victims with those reported by different types of third parties will help us to determine whether there are distinct variables that may be operating on reporting decision-making in different ways for different types of reporters. Identifying these variables may help us to better understand barriers and facilitators to reporting and how they differ between reporter categories. Existing research has also tended to group third party reporters together, which may be sacrificing some interesting and important nuances that could exist between different

types of third parties because they have different relationships with the victim and aggressor, different opportunities to become aware of an episode and, presumably, different perceived costs and benefits to reporting. By categorising reporters in all types of roles in our sample, we can find out who is involved in IPV episodes and who is supporting families. The data will also enable us to code some contextual information about the kinds of episodes police are attending daily in Aotearoa New Zealand, how reporters are becoming aware of these episodes, and potentially the outcomes sought by different people from calling the police.

Our first research question is what proportion of IPV episodes are reported to police by each category of reporter that we identify? Second, are there any differences in variables such as victim and aggressor demographics and relationship and episode characteristics associated with whether IPV episodes are reported by the victim versus a third party? Third, does the category of reporter of an episode predict different outcomes when we control for victim and aggressor demographics and episode characteristics?

Using the existing body of research on IPV reporting we can hypothesise what answers we may expect to find to our questions. It is hard, however, to estimate the proportion of victim and third party reporters we might expect to see. In a sample of police reports examined by Hollenshead and colleagues (2006) in the United States there were 33 episodes reported by third parties and 93 by victims. Some research has concluded that third parties are less likely to report disorder between couples than between people unknown to each other, and disputes between people known to each other are perceived by third parties as less serious and more of a private matter (Felson & Paré, 2005; Gartner & Macmillan, 1995). On the other hand, Mossman and colleagues reported in a 2019 New Zealand-based study that there was a heightened awareness of family violence in the community, resulting in an increase in third party reporting in more recent years. In another New Zealand-based study, three quarters of IPV victims they interviewed had called police themselves (The Backbone

Collective, 2024). We cannot, therefore, make a precise hypothesis about the proportion of episodes reported by victims and third parties, but we may speculate that third parties could be reporting between 25-50% of episodes police attend. It is harder still to estimate the prevalence of different types of third party reporters, particularly because we are unsure of the range of third party roles present in our data. Black (1979) found that people were less likely to lay negligence suits against those they were relationally closer to which indicates we may see more episodes reported by people unfamiliar with the dyad. However, Christy and Voigt (1994) found bystanders were more willing to intervene when they witnessed child abuse if they knew the victim or perpetrator, which may indicate the opposite. In a recent New Zealand-based study, family members were the most common third party to have called police, so family members being the most common third party category may be our best guess (The Backbone Collective, 2024).

Turning now to our second research question about the demographic, relationship, and episode variables we may see associated with different reporter categories. As discussed earlier, existing research is framed as whether a particular variable is associated with reporting or not reporting for a specific group of potential reporters. This research therefore includes events the potential reporters did not report, which makes it hard for us to extrapolate whether a variable may be associated more with victim or third party reporting, in a dataset where only those events that were reported by someone are available. Gender is often a pivotal variable in IPV research. Prior studies show that male victims are less likely than female victims to report incidents to the police (Berg & Rogers, 2017; Felson & Paré, 2005), and bystanders are also less likely to mobilise when they perceive a male to be the victim (Campbell & Berg, 2024; Felson & Paré, 2005). We also know that females are overrepresented in IPV victimisation statistics, therefore we might expect to see similar patterns of mostly female victims across reporter categories in this study. There does not

seem to be any reason to hypothesise there would be victim or aggressor age differences across reporting groups either. Victims and third parties have both been found to be more likely to report when the victim was older, while young people seek more informal help (Galvin & Safer-Lichtenstein, 2018; Malihi et al., 2021), indicating we would be likely to see similar aged people across reporting categories. For ethnicity, overseas research has found people of minority ethnic groups are more likely to formally report when they are victimised, while those of majority ethnic groups tend to turn more to community-led family violence organisations (Felson & Paré, 2005; Hollenshead et al., 2006). More recent New Zealand-based research has not reported any effect of ethnicity on reporting by female victims, but male victims of Māori and Pacific descent were less likely to access formal and informal help than European men (Malihi et al., 2021). Therefore, it is hard to say whether we will see an effect of victim or aggressor ethnicity on category of reporter in this study.

Examining relationship-based variables, victims may more often report episodes involving their former partners, based on the logic of research suggesting people are less likely to report people they know due to the higher perceived potential costs of doing so (Black, 1979; Felson & Paré, 2005). However, others have found mixed or no evidence of an effect of relationship status on victim reporting (Voce & Boxall, 2018; Felson et al., 1999). Regardless, in a cost-benefit analysis of reporting it is likely victims would be more concerned about the repercussions of reporting their current partner than a former one where there is generally no desire for a continued relationship. We may see more reporting of episodes involving current partners by third parties, as it seems reasonable to think current-partnered people are more often together at social gatherings or in public, leading to increased opportunity for episodes involving current partners to take place around third parties rather than former partners. We could also hypothesise that victims may report higher numbers of episodes where there is a history of family violence indicated in the police report

(Voce & Boxall, 2018). We may not see any differences between victim and third party reported episodes when it comes to protection orders. Victims may feel more empowered to report episodes themselves when they have a protection order in place, but studies have also reported victims being too afraid to use them or finding them ineffective (The Backbone Collective, 2024; Wilson et al., 2019). Third parties have been found to be more likely to consider an assault abuse when they were aware of a protection order between the couple, but this relies on them knowing about the order which is often not the case (i.e., with stranger third parties; Russell et al., 2015).

Based on the level of visibility of an episode, those reported by third parties may be more likely to involve more noticeable forms of harm (e.g., loud arguing, property damage, and physical abuse outside the home; Malihi et al., 2021), while episodes reported by victims may be more heavily comprised of psychological abuse. Because increased severity is associated with more of both victim and third party reporting, we may not see a difference across the reporter categories in this study (Campbell & Berg, 2024; Felson et al., 1999). It is possible we may see lower rates of victims using harm against the aggressor and victim alcohol and drug use in victim-reported episodes compared with third-party reported episodes. This is because we are less likely to report incidents when we feel we may get ourselves in trouble, or we feel some level of culpability (Berg & Rogers, 2017; Felson et al., 2002; Felson & Paré, 2005). It is hard to hypothesise the effect of the presence of children on reporting – in some cases the presence of children can make it more likely that victims report because they see it as a way to protect them, in other cases children are a reason to avoid calling the police out of fear of them being uplifted (Malihi et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2019). One study found that children increased victim reporting only if they witnessed the abuse (Voce & Boxall, 2018). Based on opportunity, we might see third parties reporting fewer

episodes than victims where children are present, because children are more likely to be present in the home than in public or at social gatherings.

Finally, for the third research question, whether the outcome of an episode is associated with who reported an episode over and above demographic and episode characteristics, we hypothesise that police may be more likely to take formal action in response to episodes reported by third parties. Hollenshead and colleagues (2006) found that the odds of arrest were seven times higher when a third party reported an IPV episode than when a victim reported, while the odds of dual arrest were five times higher. The authors speculated this may have been because the police felt they secured a witness in the third party reporter, or because third parties reported episodes with a higher level of harm severity. Mossman and colleagues (2019) reported that families engaged with the same service our sample came from had increased reports of lower-level family violence episodes (i.e., verbal only), we wanted to examine whether there was a difference in whether couples had further episodes reported to police based on who reported their first episode. This research question is more of an exploratory step, as there is minimal research to guide hypotheses.

Method

Data source

The data we used in this research were provided by the Integrated Safety Response (ISR) which is a multiagency response to family violence that operates in the Waikato and (parts of) Canterbury provinces of Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand Police, 2026). The ISR holds meetings daily to assess family violence episodes (individual incidents) police attended in the previous 24 hours with the goal of assessing risk and planning steps to be taken to promote the safety of each family (Ryan & Block, 2019). Weekly meetings are also held by the ISR specifically to review the cases (a collection of all episodes involving a single family) of families they deem at high risk of further harm (Ryan & Block, 2019). These meetings typically involve a combination of representatives from the police, Department of Corrections, Oranga Tamariki (New Zealand's ministry for children), Accident Compensation Corporation, and the Ministries of Justice, Education, Health, and Social Development (New Zealand Police, 2026; Ryan & Block, 2019). Non-governmental organisations are also often involved such as Kaupapa Māori agencies, Women's Refuge, and other organisations culturally relevant to the families being assessed (Ryan & Block, 2019). Each organisation brings the information they may have about each family to be used to inform the allocation of support services (Ryan & Block, 2019).

We received data on 461 episodes of IPV (including between current and former partners) that occurred between February 1st and 20th of 2022 (inclusive) in the ISR provinces. Each episode was the first in the family's current case with the ISR, though it is possible the family or individuals within it had been engaged with the ISR before. Families' cases with the ISR are closed when immediate safety concerns and risks are reduced and a longer-term safety plan has been put in place (Mossman et al., 2019). The data included a narrative report written about each episode by the attending police officers. The narratives

varied in length and detail, but each typically included a short description of the nature of the relationship between the parties involved (e.g., have been separated for six months and there is a protection order in place with X as the respondent), a description of the events police responded to, a summary of statements from each party and any witnesses, and a description of action police took in response (if any). A Dynamic Risk Assessment (DYRA) and Frontline Safety Plan were also available and sometimes contained additional circumstantial information about the parties involved that weren't mentioned in the narrative. The DYRA is a tool comprised of questions about the aggressor and the family's circumstances that police complete with a victim of a family violence episode to help them assess the risk of ongoing harm and to inform their response to an episode (Jolliffe Simpson et al., 2021). The Frontline Safety Plan outlined steps police should take, or things they should consider in their response to an episode such as whether they informed parties of support services, whether parties were separated, whether police deem parties to be safe at home, and whether support people have been called to stay with the victim.

The age and ethnicity of the victim and aggressor were variables that came directly from the ISR. The identities of the victim and aggressor came pre-determined by the data as well. The attending police officers decide who they believe the primary victim and aggressor each are based on what they observe at the scene. They also have an option to determine the parties as being mutual participants (i.e., both sides were contributing to the harm going on in the episode). In these cases, aggressor and victim roles are still allocated, and are decided based on history of violence and/or who has the most physical capacity to do harm to the other (Jolliffe Simpson et al., 2021).

Creating variables and interrater reliability

The goal was to use the ISR data to create a set of variables we could then analyse to examine factors associated with who reported IPV. We chose initial variables of interest by

reviewing the literature on what factors are associated with victim and third party reporting (or not) of family and intimate partner violence, and crime more broadly. Four categories of variables came from the literature review: those outlining the identity of the reporter, those which described the victim and aggressor involved and their relationship, those which described what happened during the episode, and variables recording any action police took in response to the episode. We wanted to avoid losing detail and context from the data as much as possible. Therefore, some variables were initially coded qualitatively with the intention of categorising them further during the data cleaning process (explained further under preparation for analysis below).

Having identified a range of potentially relevant variables in the literature, I conducted an initial round of coding for 60 episodes. For each episode, I read the available information, extracting and coding any details that could be relevant given previous research. Periodically during this initial stage, the second rater (Devon Polaschek) independently coded a selection of episodes I had also coded to informally test the clarity of operational definitions and scoring options. During this iterative process we refined how some variables were operationalised (e.g., separate variables measuring property damage and threats to kill from the aggressor became a single threat variable measured categorically as verbal, nonverbal, both, or unspecified), dropped some variables entirely (e.g., it was difficult for raters to agree on the distinction between children being present (asleep in bed or elsewhere on the property) and children being involved in an episode, so children involved was dropped), and started coding some new variables based on common occurrences in the episodes (e.g., people being trespassed as an outcome variable). When changes were made, I went back to recode previous episodes to reflect these changes. The final set of variables and their definitions can be found in Appendix A. It is important to note that some episodes were reported to police by more than one person. In these instances, we chose who to code as the reporter based on the

amount of information provided by police. Sometimes mention of an additional reporter was more of a footnote in the report, in which case they were noted under a 'multiple reporters' variable so that information was not lost. When multiple reporters' perspectives were centred in the report, we chose the person who belonged to a less frequently reporting category (based on running totals). For example, if both the victim and a neighbour reported an episode, we chose to code the neighbour as the reporter because there may have been something different about that episode that made the neighbour also report, opposed to episodes only reported by the victim.

Once we settled on the final variables and their definitions we conducted reliability analyses on 20 randomly selected new episodes. We calculated Cohen's kappa using IBM SPSS Statistics v. 31 and determined that most of our variables were being consistently coded, with kappa values ranging from .78 (moderate agreement) to 1 (perfect agreement; McHugh, 2012). Some variables had no variation in scores given by at least one coder (i.e., coded all ones or all zeros), so SPSS was unable to calculate Cohen's kappa. In these instances, we instead calculated the percent agreement which ranged from 90-100% agreement (McHugh, 2012). Some variables had low enough kappa values to warrant a second round of reliability analysis (i.e., multiple reporters ($k = .45$), history of family violence ($k = .66$), aggressor threats ($k = .63$), and victim physical harm ($k = .64$)). Children involved had the lowest kappa value ($k = .35$) and since we had perfect agreement for the children present variable, we decided to drop it (as mentioned above). The variables with the lowest kappa values were hard to analyse because they occurred infrequently, meaning one instance of disagreement had a much stronger negative effect on the kappa values than it would for a more frequently occurring variable. For the second round of analysis, I selected 10 different episodes I had already coded which had at least one of the variables we were recoding endorsed. This meant that each variable had between five and seven episodes where

at least one coder endorsed their presence rather than just two or three. The only exception to this was aggressor threats which, after this second round of reliability analysis, still only had a kappa value of .69 (moderate agreement; McHugh, 2012). This is because we were measuring threats categorically, distinguishing between when they were delivered nonverbally (e.g., intimidating behaviour such as breaking property or cornering someone), verbally (e.g., saying “I’m going to kill you” or “I’m coming to take the kids” out loud or via phone call or text message), or both ways. While more episodes from the second round of analysis had threats from the aggressor, there still were not enough of the individual types of threat to get a good read of our reliability in coding them. We decided, therefore, to analyse Cohen’s kappa for aggressor threats as a dichotomous variable indicating whether there was *any* type of threat from the aggressor – this increased the kappa value to .87 (strong agreement; McHugh, 2012). We then also changed the victim threats variable to a dichotomous measurement to keep the threat variables consistent with one another. The other variables coded by the second rater and then re-analysed improved to kappa values ranging from .87 to 1, so we were content for myself to continue coding the remaining episodes using the revised coding scheme. See Table 1 for the variables’ final kappa values and agreement percentages.

Table 1

Final Cohen's Kappa Values and Percent Agreement for Interrater Reliability of Variable

Scoring

Variable	Cohen's k/% agreement	ASE	Approx. T	Sig.
Who reported	.92	.08	5.77	<.001
Reporter relationship	.93	.07	7.40	<.001
Reporter residence	.86	.10	6.69	<.001
Multiple reporters	1	.00	3.88	<.001
Protection order	95%			
History of FV	.87	.13	3.38	<.001
Current/former partner	.92	.08	5.68	<.001
Location	1	.00	6.71	<.001
Victim gender	.78	.14	4.42	<.001
Aggressor gender	.90	.10	5.33	<.001
Children present	1	.00	4.47	<.001
Children involved	.35	.26	2.05	.040
Victim alcohol use	100%			
Victim drug use	100%			
Aggressor alcohol use	1	.00	4.47	<.001
Aggressor drug use	100%			
Weapon use	90%			
Aggressor verbal harm	.90	.10	4.04	<.001
Aggressor physical harm	1	.0	4.47	<.001
Aggressor threats	.69	.14	4.71	<.001
Any aggressor threats	.87	.13	3.38	<.001
Victim verbal harm	1	.0	4.47	<.001
Victim physical harm	.87	.13	3.39	<.001
Victim threats	100%			
Strangulation	100%			
Self-harm	100%			
PSO issued	1	.00	4.47	<.001
Arrest/warrant	1	.00	4.47	<.001
Trespassed	1	.0	4.47	<.001
Police action	.86	.13	4.69	<.001

Note. k = kappa; ASE = alpha's standard error; FV = family violence; PSO = police safety order.

Preparation for analysis

During the coding process there were episodes that we were unable to code for multiple reasons and we began data preparation by excluding them from the final sample. We first

excluded episodes when the identity of the reporter was not explicitly recorded by police ($n = 93$). Other episodes were excluded because the report was not about current or former intimate partners ($n = 14$), the report was not related to a specific event (e.g., ongoing harassing messages or stalking behaviour, or people seeking advice regarding a situation they or someone they know is in; $n = 28$), the report was a continuation of an earlier episode ($n = 1$), the episode was about an aggravated robbery of a family member ($n = 1$), or we were unable to decipher actions taken or people involved from the narrative report ($n = 1$). Once these episodes were excluded, we were left with a final sample size of 323.

Next, we began aggregating the qualitative data into categorical variables and cleaning the formatting of the data (e.g., making sure the cases of letters and the wording were consistent across scores for categorical variables). See Appendix A for a list of variables and their descriptions. Some of the qualitative variables were intended just to be aggregated on their own. For example, reporter awareness was used to note any information about how the person who reported to police found out about the episode to begin with (e.g., heard argument, or victim ran next door for help). These notes were summarised into a new variable ‘aware’, with the categories *involved*, *heard*, *saw*, *informed*, *service*, and *not stated*. Other qualitative variables were intended to be taken together to get the most comprehensive categories possible, this was key to making sure no reporter categories were missed. In the beginning we had a variable describing the relationship of the reporter to the victim and aggressor (e.g., victim’s adult daughter) and another describing where the reporter lives (e.g., neighbour, with the couple). These were taken together to create an overall reporter variable with seven categories (i.e., victim, aggressor, family member, friend, neighbour, and services). Reporter relationship was used to create another variable indicating whether third parties were known to the victim or aggressor.

Data analysis plan

The following analyses were conducted using RStudio version 2026.01.0 (Posit Team, 2026) and preregistered through AsPredicted (see Appendix B). To answer research question one – what proportion of IPV episodes are reported to police by each category of reporter that we identify – we first conducted simple descriptive analyses to find out how many and what proportion of episodes were reported by each category of reporter in the sample. We also reported some of the qualitative data here to provide some additional context, such as how each category of reporter tended to become aware of the episode, and whether they indicated to police a specific desired outcome from calling (e.g., to have the aggressor removed from the property).

Moving on to research question two – are there any differences in variables such as victim and aggressor demographics and relationship and episode characteristics associated with whether IPV episodes are reported by the victim versus a third party – we used chi square tests of independence for variables which had no expected cell counts less than one and no more than 20% less than five (McHugh, 2013; expected cell counts for these analyses are displayed in Appendices C and D). We used one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the association between aggressor and victim age and reporter category. We ran these analyses to compare all reporter categories and then repeated the analyses after combining the third parties into one group (using t-tests for the age analyses this time). Combining the third parties into one group aligned better with the research question and allowed more variables to undergo chi square analysis because it increased the expected cell counts. Because aggressors do not fall under the victim or third party categories, episodes reported by aggressors were excluded from the combined third party analyses, decreasing our sample size to 303. We also decided to combine the Asian ethnicity category with the Other category moving forward because of small expected cell counts, and because doing so also removed two potential parameters from the regression analyses. After the bivariate analyses we ran a binary logistic

regression to analyse which variables were uniquely associated with whether an episode was reported by a victim or third party. Third party reported episodes were the smallest of the two groups ($n = 126$) meaning 12.6 parameters (i.e., 126 events divided by 10) could be included in the regression to avoid overfitting the model (Heinze et al., 2018). We decided to only include the variables that the chi square analyses showed to be significantly associated with category of reporter, which is a common method of variable selection and equalled 13 parameters (Heinze et al., 2018). To assess the collinearity of the variables we checked the variance inflation factors which ranged from 1.03 to 1.82, well below commonly accepted thresholds even for weaker models (e.g., $VIF < 2.5$; Senaviratna & Cooray, 2019), indicating there was no evidence of multicollinearity (VIF values reported in Table 7 of results section).

We also preregistered an analysis of whether episodes differed based on whether a third party reporter was known versus unknown to the victim or aggressor. For this analysis we repeated the same method of conducting chi square analyses and a binary logistic regression, except with only third parties in the sample ($n = 126$) and known versus unknown being the outcome variables. Because of the smaller sample, chi square analyses could not be run on many of the variables due to low expected cell counts (displayed in Table 6).

To answer research question three – does the category of reporter of an episode predict different outcomes when we control for victim and aggressor demographics and episode characteristics – we first planned to include the outcome variables in the descriptive and chi square analyses (i.e., examining similarities and differences across all reporter categories, then victim and aggregated third party, and then the known and unknown third party comparison). We then plan to run a binary logistic regression with whether police took any official action as the outcome variable. Demographic, relationship, and episode variables would be entered in one block as control variables, and the categories of reporter would be

added to the model in a second block (with categories as disaggregated as possible for the analysis).

Results

Total sample and all categories of reporter

Table 2 displays the frequencies and proportions of variables coded from episodes for the total sample, and broken down by the category (i.e., role) of the person who reported the episode to police. By comparing proportions in each of the ‘who reported’ columns with the proportions in the total sample (see the far left column), we can begin to get an idea of some of the key variables that may be associated with different reporters. Data from Table 3 provides more context about the reporting decisions using the qualitative information we collected.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic, Relationship, Episode, and Outcome Variables by Reporter Category (n = 323 episodes)

Variables	Total <i>n</i> (%)	Who reported <i>n</i> (%)						
		Victim (<i>n</i> = 177)	Aggressor (<i>n</i> = 20)	Family member (<i>n</i> = 32)	Friend (<i>n</i> = 11)	Member of the public (<i>n</i> = 22)	Neighbour (<i>n</i> = 53)	Service (<i>n</i> = 8)
Demographics								
Victim ethnicity								
European	147 (45.5)	85 (48.0)	12 (60.0)	12 (37.5)	6 (54.5)	6 (27.3)	22 (41.5)	4 (50.5)
Māori	109 (33.7)	54 (30.5)	5 (25.0)	14 (43.8)	2 (18.2)	10 (45.5)	22 (41.5)	2 (25.0)
Pacific Peoples	6 (1.9)	4 (2.3)	0 (0)	1 (3.1)	0 (0)	1 (4.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Asian	8 (2.5)	8 (4.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Other	53 (16.4)	26 (14.7)	3 (15.0)	5 (15.6)	3 (27.3)	5 (22.7)	9 (17.0)	2 (25.0)
Aggressor ethnicity								
European	155 (48.0)	96 (54.2)	12 (60.0)	12 (37.5)	6 (54.5)	9 (40.9)	18 (34.0)	2 (25.0)
Māori	105 (32.5)	45 (25.4)	5 (25.0)	13 (40.6)	3 (27.3)	8 (36.4)	26 (49.1)	5 (62.5)
Pacific Peoples	11 (3.4)	5 (2.8)	1 (5.0)	2 (6.3)	0 (0)	1 (4.5)	1 (1.9)	1 (12.5)
Asian	15 (4.6)	11 (6.2)	0 (0)	2 (6.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (3.8)	0 (0)
Other	37 (11.5)	20 (11.3)	2 (10.0)	3 (9.4)	2 (18.2)	4 (18.2)	6 (11.3)	0 (0)
Victim age								
<i>M</i>	34.1	34.9	38.5	34.7	27.5	31.8	32.1	29.8
<i>SD</i>	11.7	11.4	15.3	12.3	8.9	12.5	10.9	7.7
<i>Median</i>	32	32	32	32	31.5	32	32	32
Aggressor age								
<i>M</i>	34.9	36.3	37.6	32.9	31.7	33.7	32.5	29.4
<i>SD</i>	11.2	11.5	11.2	9.7	12.2	12.6	10.3	5.4
<i>Median</i>	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
Relationship								
Protection order	24 (7.4)	18 (10.2)	1 (5.0)	1 (3.1)	0 (0)	1 (4.6)	3 (5.7)	0 (0)
History of FV	178 (55.1)	112 (63.3)	12 (60.0)	13 (40.6)	7 (63.6)	8 (36.4)	23 (43.4)	3 (37.5)
Current partners	217 (67.2)	101 (57.1)	13 (65.0)	24 (75.0)	9 (81.8)	17 (77.3)	45 (84.9)	8 (100)

Episode								
Location								
Residence	274 (84.8)	150 (84.8)	18 (90.0)	29 (90.6)	11 (100)	9 (40.9)	51 (96.2)	6 (75.0)
Public	28 (8.7)	9 (5.1)	2 (10.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	13 (59.1)	2 (3.8)	2 (25)
Online/digital	21 (6.5)	18 (10.2)	0 (0)	3 (9.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Female victim	265 (82.0)	149 (84.2)	13 (65.0)	20 (62.5)	11 (100)	20 (90.9)	46 (86.8)	6 (75.0)
Male aggressor	263 (81.4)	147 (83.1)	13 (65.0)	20 (62.5)	11 (100)	20 (91.0)	46 (86.8)	6 (75.0)
Mutual participants	65 (20.1)	28 (15.8)	8 (40.0)	5 (15.6)	1 (9.1)	9 (40.9)	13 (24.5)	1 (12.5)
Children present	123 (38.0)	67 (37.9)	7 (35.0)	14 (43.8)	5 (45.5)	5 (22.7)	22 (41.5)	3 (37.5)
Victim alcohol use	28 (8.7)	9 (5.1)	6 (30.0)	1 (3.1)	3 (27.3)	0 (0)	7 (13.2)	2 (25.0)
Victim drug use	3 (0.9)	3 (1.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Aggressor alcohol use	83 (25.7)	50 (28.3)	5 (25.0)	9 (28.1)	4 (36.4)	1 (4.6)	11 (20.8)	3 (37.5)
Aggressor drug use	18 (5.6)	13 (7.4)	0 (0)	2 (6.3)	1 (9.1)	1 (4.6)	0 (0)	1 (12.5)
Injuries								
None	266 (82.4)	154 (87.0)	18 (90.0)	26 (81.3)	7 (63.6)	18 (81.8)	41 (77.4)	2 (25.0)
Minor	36 (11.1)	15 (8.5)	2 (10.0)	3 (9.4)	3 (27.3)	3 (13.6)	8 (15.1)	2 (25.0)
Moderate	13 (4.0)	6 (3.4)	0 (0)	3 (9.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (5.7)	1 (12.5)
Severe	8 (2.5)	2 (8.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (9.1)	1 (4.5)	1 (1.9)	3 (37.5)
Weapon use	26 (8.1)	11 (6.2)	3 (15.0)	5 (15.6)	1 (9.1)	2 (9.1)	3 (5.7)	1 (12.5)
Aggressor verbal harm	237 (73.4)	110 (62.2)	20 (100)	23 (71.9)	8 (72.8)	21 (95.5)	49 (92.5)	6 (75.0)
Aggressor physical harm	87 (26.9)	45 (25.4)	4 (20.0)	10 (31.3)	5 (45.5)	5 (22.7)	14 (26.4)	4 (50.0)
Aggressor threats	99 (30.7)	64 (36.2)	4 (20.0)	11 (34.4)	5 (45.5)	5 (22.7)	9 (17.0)	1 (12.5)
Victim verbal harm	216 (66.9)	107 (60.5)	18 (90.0)	20 (62.5)	6 (54.6)	19 (86.4)	41 (77.4)	5 (62.5)
Victim physical harm	29 (9.0)	13 (7.3)	3 (15.0)	3 (9.4)	0 (0)	3 (13.6)	5 (9.4)	2 (25.0)
Victim threats	12 (3.7)	4 (2.3)	1 (5.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (9.1)	3 (5.7)	2 (25.0)
Strangulation	11 (3.4)	7 (4.0)	0 (0)	1 (3.1)	1 (9.1)	0 (0)	2 (3.8)	0 (0)
Self-harm								
Aggressor	7 (2.2)	3 (1.7)	0 (0)	1 (3.1)	1 (9.1)	1 (4.6)	0 (0)	1 (12.5)
Victim	1 (0.3)	0 (0)	1 (5.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Outcomes								
Any official action	81 (25.1)	41 (23.2)	3 (15.0)	12 (37.5)	3 (27.3)	4 (18.2)	14 (26.5)	4 (50.0)
Trespassed	11 (3.4)	8 (4.5)	1 (5.0)	1 (3.1)	1 (9.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
PSO issued	56 (17.3)	28 (15.8)	2 (10.0)	10 (31.3)	0 (0)	3 (13.6)	10 (18.9)	3 (37.5)
Arrest/warrant	17 (5.3)	8 (4.5)	0 (0)	2 (6.3)	2 (18.2)	1 (4.6)	3 (5.7)	1 (12.5)
Any further report(s)	100 (31.0)	54 (30.5)	6 (30.0)	8 (25.0)	4 (36.4)	7 (31.8)	18 (34.0)	3 (37.5)

Note. FV = family violence; PSO = police safety order.

From the total sample column of Table 2 we can see that overall, victims and aggressors were 34 years old on average mostly NZ European or Māori. About two-thirds of episodes involved a victim and aggressor who were in a relationship at the time. There were indications of a history family violence within the family unit in just over half of reports, but fewer than one-tenth of reports stated there was a protection order between the victim and aggressor. Most IPV episodes occurred in residential spaces, usually the victim and/or aggressor's home but occasionally at friends' houses too. Much smaller proportions of the episodes occurred in public spaces or were solely through technology (e.g., phone calls, messages). Police assigned the victim role to a female and the aggressor role to a male in more than three-quarters of episodes and deemed the pair to be mutual participants in just under one-quarter. Children were present during one-fifth of episodes. The aggressor was under the influence of alcohol in one-quarter of episodes, while drug use was far less commonly indicated in the reports. Victim alcohol use was noted in less than 10% of episodes, and drug use in less than 1%. In most episodes police did not note any injuries, and when they did, they were usually minor with only 6.6% of episodes resulting in moderate or severe injury. Verbal harm was present in most episodes, used by both victims and aggressors, and in 36.6% of episodes it was the only form of harm identified (not shown in table). Aggressors used physical harm in just over one-quarter of episodes and made some form of threat in just under two-thirds of episodes, while victims used physical harm toward the aggressor in less than 10% and made threats in less than 4% of episodes. Weapon use, strangulation, and self-harm were also all very uncommon occurrences.

Police decided some official action needed to be taken in response to one-quarter of episodes. The most common action police took was to issue a PSO which occurred in just under one-fifth of episodes. Arrests or warrants to arrest were the outcome of less than 20 episodes, though aggressors in a few more episodes were arrested on unrelated outstanding

warrants. Even fewer episodes resulted in people being trespassed (usually the aggressor being trespassed from the victim's home). Police did advise trespass, parenting, and protection orders as options to victims in many more episodes where no action was taken at the time.

Victim-reported episodes were the largest reporting category, making up 54.8% of the sample. Compared with the total sample, a lower proportion of victim-reported episodes involved current partners and verbal harm from the aggressor. Victims also reported a disproportionately high number of episodes which occurred online or over the phone. Table 3 tells us police mentioned in six victim-reported episodes that there was an additional person who called police (3.4%). Victims called on family, friends, or neighbours for help before or instead of calling police in 10.5% of episodes. When it was possible to determine the reporter's desired outcome from calling police, the most common reason victims reported was because they wanted someone (usually the aggressor) removed (20.9%). The next most common reason was because they wanted advice and/or wanted the episode recorded by police (7.3%).

Aggressor-reported episodes made up 6.2% of the sample. Compared with the total sample, aggressor-reported episodes involved a higher proportion of victims and aggressors of European descent. These episodes involved a lower proportion of female victims and male aggressors, meaning aggressors who called police were more often female and thought by police to be the predominant aggressor against their male current or former partner. However, police labelled a disproportionately higher number of victims and aggressors in aggressor-reported episodes as mutual participants (i.e., when aggressors reported, police were more likely to judge the episode as one where aggression was coming from both parties). Turning to the behaviours exhibited within aggressor-reported episodes, police recorded both victim and aggressor verbal harm and victim alcohol use more often than observed in the total

sample, aligning with the higher proportion of mutual participants. Disproportionately fewer episodes reported by the aggressor resulted in any official action being taken by police, but no specific outcome occurred disproportionately when trespassing, PSO issuing, and arrests/warrants were examined individually. According to Table 3, 35% of aggressor-reported episodes had a second reporter who phoned police. The victim was the second reporter in 25% of episodes, and the other 10% were calls from a family member of the couple. We were able to discern a reason the aggressor called the police in 60% of episodes. The most common reasons were because they wanted someone (usually the victim) removed (15%), they wanted advice and/or for police to record the episode (10%), or they wanted assistance to retrieve property or report for insurance purposes (10%). Three aggressors (15%) also called police either to report their own actions or that they were afraid of being unable to control their actions, indicating most aggressors who reported likely thought they were the predominant victim in the episode.

Family-reported episodes made up 9.9% of the sample. Compared with the total sample, family member reported episodes involved a higher proportion of victims who were Māori and fewer aggressors of European descent. Dyads who were involved in family-reported episodes were more often partners when the episode occurred, but police indicated a history of family violence in fewer of their circumstances than dyads in the total sample. Family-reported episodes involved more female aggressors and male victims. A disproportionately higher number of family-reported episodes resulted in police taking official action, specifically issuing a higher number of PSOs than in episodes from the total sample. Turning to Table 3, a second person called police in two (6.3%) family-reported episodes – both additional calls came from a neighbour. Family reporters most often became aware of the IPV episodes because they were present when they occurred (65.6%) and either saw, heard, or became involved themselves. Family reporters were informed by someone else

(usually the victim or another family member) afterwards in 31.3% of episodes. Indeed, victims had sought help from family in 21.9% of episodes subsequently reported by family members. When reasons for calling were discernible (34.4% of the time), family members most often indicated fear for another's safety or wanting someone removed by police.

Friend-reported episodes made up 3.4% of the sample. Compared with the total sample, friend-reported episodes involved a higher proportion of victims of European descent, and fewer Māori victims. The average age of victims in friend-reported episodes was 6.6 years younger than the average age of victims in the overall sample. Every friend-reported episode involved a female victim and a male aggressor, with police only considering one of these dyads as being mutual participants in the episode. Compared with the total sample, a higher proportion of friend-reported episodes involved a victim and aggressor who were currently in a relationship at the time. Friend-reported episodes also involved more victim and aggressor alcohol use (though not necessarily during the same episodes). Aggressors were also more often making threats and using physical harm, while victims used verbal harm less than in the total sample. A higher proportion of episodes reported by friends resulted in police arresting one party or issuing a warrant for their arrest. Table 3 shows that friend-reported episodes were the only ones where the police never recorded any additional callers. Friends became aware of five of the episodes (63.6%) because they were present at the time and either saw, became involved, or (less frequently) just heard the altercation. Friends became aware of the remaining episodes because the victim called on them for help. The reason for reporting was only clearly recorded for two of these episodes: one friend said they were afraid for another's safety, while the other friend was concerned about someone who drove off intoxicated.

Episodes reported by a member of the public made up 6.8% of the sample. Compared with the total sample, public-reported episodes involved a lower proportion of European

victims, and a higher proportion of Māori victims. The victim and aggressor were more often in a relationship at the time of the episode, and police less often noted the presence of children and evidence of a history of family violence in their circumstances. Public-reported episodes involved a higher proportion of female victims and male aggressors than the total sample, and police considered a higher proportion of them to be mutual participants. Public-reported episodes occurred more often in public places, and less often at places of residence. A higher proportion involved verbal harm from victims and aggressors. Table 3 shows that when multiple people reported, it was at least one other member of the public who had called police. Public-reported episodes were also the only ones where there was sometimes more than one additional reporter. Public reporters became aware of incidents because they saw them happen in just over two-thirds of episodes. Just under half as many became aware because they heard something. None of the members of the public who called police had become involved in the episodes themselves. In the two episodes where we were able to ascertain the reason for calling, both members of the public said they were afraid for the safety of someone involved.

Neighbour-reported episodes were the second-largest category, making up 16.4% of the sample. Compared with the total sample, neighbour-reported episodes involved fewer aggressors of NZ European descent, and more of Māori descent. The victims and aggressors involved were more often in current relationships, but police less often recorded indications of a history of family violence in their circumstances. Neighbour-reported episodes involved a disproportionately high amount of victim and aggressor verbal harm compared with episodes in the total sample. Unsurprisingly, most of these episodes occurred at a place of residence (the few remaining were in public places which neighboured residential addresses). From Table 3 we can see there were two neighbour-reported episodes with additional reporters. One episode was also reported by the victim, while the identity of the other

additional reporter was unknown. Neighbours were made aware of episodes a majority of the time because they had heard arguing, with some saying they also heard banging and crashing. Only 18.9% of neighbours actually saw an altercation before they called police.

Service-reported or service-detected episodes were the least common, making up 2.4% of the sample. These were episodes where the police became aware of episodes while on patrol or attending other calls, or they were notified by other services such as ambulances or hospital emergency departments. Due to the low frequency of these episodes, the following results should be interpreted with caution. Compared with the total sample, service-reported episodes involved a higher proportion of aggressors of Māori and Pacific descent, and a lower proportion of NZ European descent. All service-reported episodes involved a victim and aggressor who were in a relationship at the time of the episode, but police indicated a history of family violence in fewer of their circumstances. Victims and aggressors both were under the influence of alcohol in a higher proportion of episodes than in the total sample. Both victims and aggressors also used physical harm more often, and injuries at every level of severity were more common. More victims used threats in service-reported episodes compared with the total sample. Service-reported episodes more often resulted in police taking some kind of official action; they specifically issued more PSOs than the proportion of episodes in the total sample. According to Table 3, only one service-reported episode had an additional reporter, who was a neighbour. In three instances, police saw or heard an episode occurring while they were on patrol or responding to an unrelated call, prompting them to respond. Other calls came from social workers at hospital emergency departments or from ambulance staff. In two service-reported episodes (25%), the victim had called a family member or neighbour for help instead of calling police.

Table 3*Summary of Qualitative Contextual Information (n = 323 episodes)*

Variables	Total <i>n</i> (%)	Who reported <i>n</i> (%)						
		Victim (<i>n</i> = 177)	Aggressor (<i>n</i> = 20)	Family member (<i>n</i> = 32)	Friend (<i>n</i> = 11)	Member of the public (<i>n</i> = 22)	Neighbour (<i>n</i> = 53)	Service (<i>n</i> = 8)
Additional reporters								
Victim	6 (1.9)	-	5 (25.0)	-	-	-	1 (1.9)	-
Aggressor	2 (0.6)	2 (1.1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Family member	3 (0.9)	1 (0.6)	2 (10.0)	-	-	-	-	-
Member of the public	9 (2.8)	2 (1.1)	-	-	-	7 (31.8)	-	-
Neighbour	4 (1.2)	1 (0.6)	-	2 (6.3)	-	-	-	1 (12.5)
Unknown other	1 (0.3)	-	-	-	-	-	1 (1.9)	-
None	298 (92.3)	171 (96.6)	13 (65.0)	30 (93.8)	11 (100)	15 (68.2)	51 (96.2)	7 (87.5)
Awareness of episode								
Involved	204 (63.2)	176 (99.4)	20 (100)	4 (12.5)	3 (27.3)	-	1 (1.9)	-
Heard	54 (16.7)	-	-	8 (25.0)	1 (9.1)	6 (27.3)	38 (71.7)	1 (12.5)
Saw	39 (12.1)	-	-	9 (28.1)	3 (27.3)	15 (68.2)	10 (18.9)	2 (25.0)
Informed	20 (6.2)	1 (0.6)	-	10 (31.3)	4 (36.4)	1 (4.5)	3 (5.7)	-
Service	3 (0.9)	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 (37.5)
Not stated	4 (1.2)	-	-	1 (3.1)	-	-	1 (1.9)	2 (25.0)
Victim called informal help before or instead of police								
Family	18 (5.6)	8 (4.5)	-	7 (21.9)	-	-	2 (3.8)	1 (12.5)
Friend	13 (4.0)	6 (3.4)	-	1 (3.1)	4 (36.4)	1 (4.5)	1 (1.9)	-
Neighbour	3 (0.9)	2 (1.1)	-	-	-	-	-	1 (12.5)

None	289 (89.5)	161 (91.0)	20 (100)	24 (75.0)	7 (63.6)	21 (95.5)	50 (94.3)	6 (75.0)
Reason for reporting								
Wanted someone removed	43 (13.3)	37 (20.9)	3 (15.0)	3 (9.4)	-	-	-	-
Wanted advice and/or incident recorded	15 (4.6)	13 (7.3)	2 (10.0)	-	-	-	-	-
Concern for aggressor's welfare	13 (4.0)	11 (6.2)	-	2 (6.3)	-	-	-	-
Feared for own safety	13 (4.0)	11 (6.2)	-	2 (6.3)	-	-	-	-
To get property back or for insurance	10 (3.1)	8 (4.5)	2 (10.0)	-	-	-	-	-
Feared for another's safety	8 (2.5)	-	1 (5.0)	3 (9.4)	1 (9.1)	2 (9.1)	1 (1.9)	-
Custody dispute	5 (1.5)	4 (2.3)	-	1 (3.1)	-	-	-	-
Cited wanting to prevent escalation	4 (1.2)	3 (1.7)	1 (5.0)	-	-	-	-	-
Concerns about someone driving intoxicated	4 (1.2)	3 (1.7)	-	-	1 (9.1)	-	-	-
Calling about what they have done or fear of what they will do	3 (0.9)	-	3 (15.0)	-	-	-	-	-
Needed help leaving premises	3 (0.9)	3 (1.7)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wanted police to warn aggressor	2 (0.6)	2 (1.1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not stated	200 (61.9)	82 (46.3)	8 (40.0)	21 (65.6)	9 (81.8)	20 (90.9)	52 (98.1)	8 (100)

Table 4 displays the results of chi square tests for independence across all categories of reporter. Whether the victim and aggressor were current or former partners at the time was significantly associated (at $\alpha = 0.05$) with who reported the episode, with a small effect size (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016). The presence (or not) of verbal harm from the aggressor was also significantly associated with reporter identity with a medium effect size, as was verbal harm from the victim with a small effect size (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016). We were also able to run chi square tests examining the association between all categories of reporter and the presence of children; alcohol use, physical harm, and threats by the aggressor; whether police took any official action; and whether the victim and aggressor dyad had any further episodes reported to police within six months. All these tests returned non-significant results indicating the variables are not associated with who reported episodes to the police. We also ran two one-way ANOVAs that indicated there was no significant difference in average victim age ($F(6, 316) = 1.83, p = .093$) or average aggressor age ($F(6, 316) = 1.75, p = .109$) across the reporter categories.

Table 4

Chi Square Test Results for Relationship, Episode, and Outcome Variables Across all Reporter Categories (Victim, Aggressor, Family Member, Friend, Member of Public, Neighbour, and Service; n = 323 episodes)

Variables	χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
Relationship			
Current partners	22.70	.001	.27
Episode			
Children present	3.24	.778	.10
Aggressor alcohol use	7.78	.255	.16
Aggressor verbal harm	34.09	<.001	.33
Aggressor physical harm	5.28	.508	.13
Aggressor threats	11.49	.016	.22
Victim verbal harm	15.63	.016	.22
Outcomes			
Any official action	7.34	.291	.15
Any further reports	1.10	.982	.13

Note. *V* = Cramer's *V*. Variables with insufficient expected cell values excluded from table as they were unable to be analysed.

Victim- vs. third party-reported episodes

Next, we compared episodes reported by victims with those reported by any type of third party. To do this we removed aggressors ($n = 20$) from the sample and collapsed the third party categories into one overall category. Table 5 displays the frequencies and proportions of variables coded from episodes for the total sample and then broken down by episodes reported by the victim and by third parties. The results for chi square tests of independence are also displayed alongside variables which met test assumptions (expected cell counts for these tests are displayed in Appendix D). I will focus here on the variables which were significantly associated with whether an episode was reported by the victim or by a third party; see Table 5 for the variables which returned non-significant chi-square results.

Examining demographic variables from Table 5 first, aggressor ethnicity was significantly associated with whether an episode was reported to police by the victim or by a third party, with a small effect size (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016). Looking at the observed counts and frequencies, victim-reported episodes had a higher proportion of aggressors of NZ European or Other descent, and a lower proportion of Māori and Pacific descent compared with episodes reported by third parties. Using independent two-sample t-tests, we also found that victims were significantly older on average in victim-reported compared with third party-reported episodes, $t(271.5) = -2.11, p = .036$ (95% CI = -5.38, -0.19). The same applied for aggressor age, $t(284) = -2.95, p = .003$ (95% CI = -6.25, -1.25).

Moving on to relationship variables, history of family violence and whether the dyad were current or former partners were both significantly associated with whether an episode was reported by the victim or a third party, both with small effect sizes (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016). A higher proportion of victim-reported episodes had a history of family violence indicated by police in the dyad's circumstances compared with third-party reported episodes. Victim-reported episodes involved a disproportionately lower number of current partners compared with third party-reported episodes.

Turning to episode variables, victim- and third party-reported episodes occurred at residential locations to similar proportions. However, victim-reported episodes occurred in public less often and via technology more often than third-party reported episodes did. Someone was injured in a higher proportion of episodes reported by third parties than those reported by victims. Aggressor and victim verbal harm occurred in a higher proportion of episodes reported by third parties, while aggressor threats occurred in a higher proportion of episodes reported by victims. These episode variables were all associated with whether a victim or third party reported, with small effect sizes (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and Chi Square Results Comparing Demographic, Relationship, Episode, and Outcome Variables by Victim- and Third Party-Reported Episodes (n = 303 episodes)

Variables	Total <i>n</i> (%)	Who reported <i>n</i> (%)		χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
		Victim (<i>n</i> = 177)	Third party (<i>n</i> = 126)			
Demographics						
Victim ethnicity						
European	135 (44.6)	85 (48)	50 (39.7)			
Māori	104 (34.3)	54 (30.5)	50 (39.7)			
Pacific Peoples	6 (2.0)	4 (2.3)	2 (1.6)			
Other	58 (19.1)	34 (19.2)	24 (19)			
Aggressor ethnicity				12.40	.006	.20
European	143 (47.2)	96 (54.2)	47 (37.3)			
Māori	100 (33)	45 (25.4)	55 (43.7)			
Pacific Peoples	24 (7.9)	5 (2.8)	19 (15.1)			
Other	36 (11.9)	31 (17.5)	5 (4)			
Victim age						
<i>M</i>	33.9	34.9	32.2			
<i>SD</i>	9.4	11.4	11.3			
Median	26	33	30			
Aggressor age						
<i>M</i>	44	36.3	32.6			
<i>SD</i>	5.9	11.5	10.4			
Median	39	33	31			
Relationship						
Protection order	23 (7.6)	18 (10.2)	5 (4)	3.20	.074	.10
History of FV	166 (54.8)	112(63.3)	54 (42.9)	11.58	.001	.20
Current partners	204 (67.3)	101 (57.1)	103 (81.7)	19.28	<.001	.25
Episode						
Location				12.51	.002	.20
Residence	256 (84.5)	150 (84.7)	106 (84.1)			
Public	26 (8.6)	9 (5.1)	17 (13.5)			
Online/digital	21 (6.9)	18 (10.2)	3 (2.4)			
Female victim	252 (83.2)	149 (84.2)	103 (81.7)	0.16	.687	.02
Male aggressor	250 (82.5)	147 (83.1)	103 (81.7)	0.02	.888	.01
Mutual participants	57 (18.8)	28 (15.8)	29 (23)	2.05	.153	.08
Children present	116 (38.3)	67 (37.9)	49 (38.9)	0.00	.950	.00
Victim alcohol use	22 (7.3)	9 (5.1)	13 (10.3)	2.27	.132	.09
Victim drug use	3 (1)	3 (1.7)	0 (0)			
Aggressor alcohol use	78 (25.7)	50 (28.2)	28 (22.2)	1.10	.294	.06
Aggressor drug use	18 (5.9)	13 (7.3)	5 (4)	0.96	.328	.06
Injuries (Any)	55 (18.2)	23 (13)	32 (25.4)	6.81	.009	.15
Injury categories						
None	248 (81.8)	154 (87)	94 (74.6)			
Minor	34 (11.2)	15 (8.5)	19 (15.1)			
Moderate	13 (4.3)	6 (3.4)	7 (5.6)			

Severe	8 (2.6)	2 (1.1)	6 (4.8)			
Weapon use	23 (7.6)	11 (6.2)	12 (9.5)	0.73	.394	.05
Aggressor verbal harm	217 (71.6)	110 (62.1)	107 (84.9)	17.68	<.001	.24
Aggressor physical harm	83 (27.4)	45 (25.4)	38 (30.2)	0.61	.435	.05
Aggressor threats	95 (31.4)	64 (36.2)	31 (24.6)	4.05	.044	.12
Victim verbal harm	198 (65.3)	107 (60.5)	91 (72.2)	4.00	.046	.12
Victim physical harm	26 (8.6)	13 (7.3)	13 (10.3)	0.49	.482	.04
Victim threats	11 (3.6)	4 (2.3)	7 (5.6)			
Strangulation	11 (3.6)	7 (4)	4 (3.2)			
Self-harm (Any)	7 (2.3)	3 (1.7)	4 (3.2)			
Outcomes						
Any official action	78 (25.7)	41 (23.2)	37 (29.4)	1.17	.279	.06
Trespassed	10 (3.3)	8 (4.5)	2 (1.6)			
PSO issued	54 (17.8)	28 (15.8)	26 (20.6)	0.86	.354	.05
Arrest/warrant	17 (5.6)	8 (4.5)	9 (7.1)	0.53	.469	.04
Any further report(s)	94 (31.0)	54 (30.5)	40 (31.7)	0.01	.918	.01

Note. V = Cramer's V ; FV = family violence; PSO = police safety order.

Reporters known vs. unknown to the victim and aggressor

Results of the final round of descriptive statistics are presented in Table 6, examining the frequencies, proportions, and results of chi square tests for independence but this time broken down by whether the reporter was known to the victim or aggressor or not. The total sample size decreases again in this table as we were examining only third party-reported episodes, excluding the 20 aggressor-reported and 177 victim-reported episodes. The known and unknown categories were created using qualitative information collected in the 'Reporter relationship' variable (See Appendix A for a description of all variables). Family members and friends were put into the 'known' category, while members of the public and services were put into the 'unknown' category. Neighbours were put into the 'unknown' category unless the 'Reporter relationship' variable indicated the neighbour was familiar or friends with the dyad.

Table 6 shows that aggressor verbal harm was the only variable found to be significantly associated with whether an episode was reported to police by a known third party or an unknown third party, with a small effect size (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016). A higher proportion of episodes with aggressor verbal harm were reported by third parties unknown to the victim and aggressor compared with third parties known to them.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics and Chi Square Results Comparing Demographic, Relationship, Episode, and Outcome Variables for Episodes Reported by People Known vs. Unknown to the Victim and Aggressor (n = 126 episodes)

Variables	Total <i>n</i> (%)	Who reported				χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
		Known		Unknown				
		<i>(n</i> = 46)		<i>(n</i> = 80)				
		Expected <i>n</i>	Observed <i>n</i> (%)	Expected <i>n</i>	Observed <i>n</i> (%)			
Demographics								
Victim ethnicity								
European	50 (39.7)	18.3	20 (43.5)	31.7	30 (37.5)			
Māori	50 (39.7)	18.3	17 (37)	31.7	33 (41.3)			
Pacific Peoples	2 (1.6)	0.7	1 (2.2)	1.3	1 (1.3)			
Other	24 (19)	8.8	8 (17.4)	15.2	16 (20)			
Aggressor ethnicity								
European	47 (37.3)	17.2	19 (41.3)	29.8	28 (35)			
Māori	55 (43.7)	20.1	18 (39.1)	34.9	37 (46.3)			
Pacific Peoples	5 (4)	1.8	2 (4.3)	3.2	3 (3.8)			
Other	19 (15.1)	6.9	7 (15.2)	12.1	12 (15)			
Victim age								
<i>M</i>	32.9		32.8		31.8			
<i>SD</i>	9.2		11.5		11.2			
<i>Median</i>	26		30.5		29			
Aggressor age								
<i>M</i>	43.4		32.9		32.3			
<i>SD</i>	5.8		10		10.7			
<i>Median</i>	39		32		30			
Relationship								
Protection order	5 (4)	1.8	2 (4.3)	3.2	3 (3.8)			
History of FV	54 (42.9)	19.7	21 (45.7)	34.3	33 (41.3)	0.09	.769	.03
Current partners	103 (81.7)	37.6	35 (76.1)	65.4	68 (85)	1.02	.314	.09
Episode								
Location								
Residence	106 (84.1)	38.7	43 (93.5)	67.3	63 (78.8)			
Public	17 (13.5)	6.2	0 (0)	10.8	17 (21.3)			
Online/digital	3 (2.4)	1.1	3 (6.5)	1.9	0 (0)			
Female victim	103 (81.7)	37.6	34 (73.9)	65.4	69 (86.3)	2.21	.137	.13
Male aggressor	103 (81.7)	37.6	34 (73.9)	65.4	69 (86.3)	2.21	.137	.13
Mutual participants	29 (23)	10.6	7 (15.2)	18.4	22 (27.5)	1.84	.175	.12
Children present	49 (38.9)	17.9	22 (47.8)	31.1	27 (33.8)	1.89	.171	.12
Victim alcohol use	13 (10.3)	4.7	5 (10.9)	8.3	8 (10)			
Victim drug use	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	-	0 (0)			
Aggressor alcohol use	28 (22.2)	10.2	14 (30.4)	17.8	14 (17.5)	2.13	.145	.13
Aggressor drug use	5 (4)	1.8	3 (6.5)	3.2	2 (2.5)			
Injuries (Any)	32 (25.4)	11.7	10 (21.7)	20.3	22 (27.5)	0.25	.615	.05
Injury categories								
None	94 (74.6)	34.3	36 (78.3)	59.7	58 (72.5)			
Minor	19 (15.1)	6.9	6 (13)	12.1	13 (16.3)			
Moderate	7 (5.6)	2.6	3 (6.5)	4.4	4 (5)			
Severe	6 (4.8)	2.2	1 (2.2)	3.8	5 (6.3)			
Weapon use	12 (9.5)	4.4	6 (13)	7.6	6 (7.5)			
Aggressor verbal harm	107 (84.9)	39.1	34 (73.9)	67.9	73 (91.3)	5.57	.018	.21

Aggressor physical harm	38 (30.2)	13.9	15 (32.6)	24.1	23 (28.8)	0.06	.800	.02
Aggressor threats	31 (24.6)	11.3	16 (34.8)	19.7	15 (18.8)	3.23	.072	.16
Victim verbal harm	91 (72.2)	33.2	28 (60.9)	57.8	63 (78.8)	3.81	.051	.17
Victim physical harm	13 (10.3)	4.7	3 (6.5)	8.3	10 (12.5)			
Victim threats	7 (5.6)	2.6	0 (0)	4.4	7 (8.8)			
Strangulation	4 (3.2)	1.5	2 (4.3)	2.5	2 (2.5)			
Self-harm (Any)	4 (3.2)	1.5	2 (4.3)	2.5	2 (2.5)			
Outcomes								
Any official action	37 (29.4)	13.5	15 (32.6)	23.5	22 (27.5)	0.16	.687	.04
Trespassed	2 (1.6)	0.7	2 (4.3)	1.3	0 (0)			
PSO issued	26 (20.6)	9.5	10 (21.7)	16.5	16 (20)	0.00	.997	.00
Arrest/warrant	9 (7.1)	3.3	4 (8.7)	5.7	5 (6.3)			
Any further report(s)	40 (31.7)	14.6	12 (26.1)	25.4	28 (35)	0.70	.403	.08

Note. V = Cramer's V ; FV = family violence; PSO = police safety order.

Comparing victim and third party reporting roles: regression analyses

First, we ran a binary logistic regression to examine the odds of an episode being reported to police by the victim compared with a third party (results displayed in Table 7). The predictor variables included are those which were significantly associated with who reported episodes from chi square results from Table 5 discussed earlier. These variables together created a model with moderate explanatory power (McFadden's pseudo- $R^2 = .16$; based on McFadden and colleagues' (1977) assertion that pseudo- R^2 "values between .2 and .4 represent an excellent fit", p. 26). The model provides a significantly improved prediction of whether an episode is reported by the victim or a third party over a null model without the predictors.

Examining the individual predictors, Table 7 indicates that aggressor ethnicity added significantly to the predictive value of the model. Episodes involving Māori aggressors had around 54% lower odds of being reported by the victim than a third party. Episodes involving dyads with a history of family violence had two-times higher odds of being reported by the victim than by a third party. Episodes involving former partners had odds of being victim-reported more than twice those of being third party-reported. Episodes where someone was injured had 51% lower odds of being reported by the victim compared with a third party. When aggressors used verbal harm in an episode it was 72% less likely to be reported by the

victim than a third party. Victim and aggressor ages, episode location, aggressor threats, and victim verbal harm did not contribute significantly to the predictive value of the model.

Table 7

Binary Logistic Regression Results Showing Odds of an Episode Being Reported by the Victim vs a Third Party (n = 303 episodes)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for <i>Exp(B)</i>		<i>p</i>	VIF
			LL	UL		
Victim age	-.01	.99	.95	1.04	.810	1.77
Aggressor age	.03	1.03	.99	1.08	.160	1.82
Aggressor ethnicity ^a						1.03
Māori	-.77	.46	.25	.83	.010	
Pacific Peoples	-1.08	.34	.08	1.46	.143	
Other	-.14	.87	.41	1.88	.717	
History of FV	.71	2.03	1.18	3.51	.011	1.06
Relationship status ^b	.85	2.35	1.26	4.49	.008	1.10
Location ^c						1.06
Residence	-.05	.95	.19	3.61	.947	
Public	-.81	.45	.07	2.22	.344	
Injuries (Any)	-.72	.49	.24	.96	.039	1.04
Aggressor verbal harm	-1.27	.28	.12	.60	.002	1.26
Aggressor threats	.31	1.37	.75	2.50	.308	1.06
Victim verbal harm	.69	1.99	.99	4.09	.057	1.28

Note. Model fit: $\chi^2(13) = 66.57, p = <.001$; McFadden's $R^2 = .16$. C.I. = confidence interval;

LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; VIF = variance inflation factor; FV = family violence.

^a Reference = NZ European. ^b Reference = Current partner. ^c Reference = Online.

Table 8 displays the results of the binary logistic regression comparing the odds of a third party known to the victim and aggressor reporting an episode to police with the odds of being reported by an unknown third party. Aggressor verbal harm was the only variable we found to be significantly associated with whether a known vs. unknown third party reported an episode (Table 6). Aggressor verbal harm was entered into the model on its own in order to determine the strength and direction of its predictive power. Table 8 shows that the aggressor

verbal harm model had weak, but significantly improved predictive power compared with a null model with no predictors (McFadden et al., 1977). When aggressor verbal harm was present it more than tripled the odds of a third party unknown to the victim and aggressor reporting the episode to police. However, this odds ratio had a large confidence interval indicating it is an imprecise estimate which could be due to a small sample size which is unevenly distributed across the reporter categories. Because the descriptive and chi square analyses did not reveal any significant associations between the outcome variables and the reporter categories we chose not to run the regression analysis we planned to answer research question three.

Table 8

Binary Logistic Regression Results Showing the Odds of an Episode Being Reported by a Third Party Unknown vs Known to the Victim or Aggressor (n = 126 episodes)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for <i>Exp(B)</i>		<i>p</i>
			LL	UL	
Aggressor verbal harm	1.30	3.68	1.36	10.68	.012

Note. Model fit: $\chi^2(1) = 6.59, p = .010$; McFadden's $R^2 = .04$. C.I. = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of IPV episodes reported by different categories of reporter in Aotearoa New Zealand. We examined a sample of 323 IPV episodes reported to police between February 1st and 20th of 2022 (inclusive), in the Waikato and (parts of) Canterbury provinces of Aotearoa. Below we unpack the key findings and how they relate to what we expected to find. We then discuss the possible implications and limitations of the study, and some ideas and recommendations for future research before concluding.

The first research question was what proportion of IPV episodes were reported to police by each category of reporter we identified? We found that victims reported the largest proportion of episodes (54.8%, $n = 177$) and aggressors were among the least frequently reporting groups (6.2%, $n = 20$), with the remaining 39% of episodes reported to police by a third party. This aligns with our hypothesis that episodes reported by third parties would comprise somewhere between 25-50% of our sample. Of the third parties, neighbours reported most frequently, followed by family members, members of the public, friends, and then the smallest proportion were detected or reported by services themselves. We speculated based on prior New Zealand-based research that family members would be the most common third party reporters (The Backbone Collective, 2024). However, this previous research was a victim self-report study. Victims may often be unaware that someone else reported an episode, let alone their identity. Therefore, it is not unusual that neighbours who report may have been missed in other studies. We also found some interesting contextual information surrounding reporting decisions made by different categories of reporter. Neighbours who reported episodes to police most often became aware of the episodes because they heard arguing, a much smaller proportion neighbours called because they visually witnessed an altercation. This indicates that the threshold for what communities consider concerning

behaviour is quite low, as indicated by Malihi and colleagues (2021), and people therefore feel motivated to call in help for less serious harm. Most episodes reported by neighbours did occur inside residential addresses, and perhaps there is a level of concern from neighbours hearing an argument about what *could* be happening physically that they are unable to see. Members of the public who reported episodes most often became aware of an episode because they visually witnessed a disturbance (which still may have been a verbal-only episode). Neither members of the public nor neighbours tended to get themselves involved in episodes they reported (e.g., contribute to the disorder to try to intervene themselves), this was more common for friends who reported. In just over one third of reports police recorded that the reporter gave a reason for calling police. For victims, the most common reason they gave for calling police was because they wanted someone (generally the aggressor) removed from the property. This aligns with findings from The Backbone Collective (2024) who said that reporting IPV to police is often a last resort for victims who are requiring immediate assistance. However, episodes which were reported after some form of physical violence likely did not require explicit verbalisation for why police were called and therefore would not have been picked up by the reason for reporting variable.

The second research question was whether there were any differences in the demographic, relationship, or episode characteristics associated with whether IPV episodes were reported by the victim versus a third party. We also examined the variables' associations with whether episodes were reported by a third party known versus unknown to the victim or aggressor. Aggressor ethnicity was the only significant demographic predictor of who reported, with victims having 54% lower odds of reporting than third parties when the aggressor was Māori compared with when they were NZ European. Voce and Boxall (2018) found that white victims were less likely than minorities to report IPV to the police, and that there could be a relationship between offender ethnicity and whether victims reported or not.

Each of these associations were mediated by socioeconomic status and by victim ethnicity, respectively. Additionally, Berg and Rogers (2017) said that victim and aggressor ethnicity should be examined together rather than in isolation. Because we could not analyse victim ethnicity alongside aggressor ethnicity, we may be missing part of the picture. The Backbone Collective (2024) found that victims who were Māori women were less likely to want their partner arrested as an outcome of calling police, but they were more likely to than non-Māori women to have that happen. Māori women were also less likely to feel heard by the police and that the police treated them with dignity and respect compared with non-Māori women (The Backbone Collective, 2024). Additionally, Wilson and colleagues (2019) noted that Māori children were more likely than NZ European children to be brought to the attention of New Zealand's child welfare system, and more likely to be placed in care outside the home. This is despite the importance felt by Māori women to keep their children connected to their father's side of the family which guided their decision making around responding to victimisation (Wilson et al., 2019). All this is to say that perhaps there is a reluctance for Māori people to report IPV to police themselves due to the likelihood the outcome will not be what they wanted. The NZCVS shows Māori report crime more than other ethnicities, but the results do not indicate whether this pattern is the same for IPV specific episodes, and the NZCVS only accounts for criminal offences, whereas the data in the current study does not (Ministry of Justice, 2025b). While Māori in our sample were partnered with another person identified as being of Māori descent 63.8% of the time, indicating when there was a Māori aggressor it was often a Māori victim deciding whether to call police, we cannot conclusively unpack this finding without examining victim ethnicity alongside as a covariate.

We found that episodes involving former partners had odds more than twice as high of being reported by the victim compared with a third party. This finding supports our hypothesis and may be because victims perceive the costs of reporting a former partner as

being much lower than the costs of reporting a current partner. People are also more likely to attend social gatherings with friends and family alongside a current partner, increasing the opportunity for disputes to arise between current partners around third party reporters rather than former partners. Victims were also twice as likely as third parties to have reported an episode to police when there was an indication in the police report of a history of family violence issue in their current family unit. One potential reason for this is that the family may have been involved with the ISR or other family violence agencies in the past. The ISR in particular emphasises calling the police as a preventer of further harm or escalation as a part of safety planning (Mossman et al., 2019). Isolating the victim from informal social supports is also a common tactic used by aggressors (Heron et al., 2022). Therefore, victims who have experienced ongoing harm may be more likely to report because they have lost informal supports that were available to them before, forcing them to turn to formal reporting.

As for what happened during episodes, victims had 51% lower odds of reporting episodes resulting in someone in the dyad being injured compared with third parties. We hypothesised that there would not be a difference in severity across reporter categories. We may have found this difference because the third party category in this study includes episodes detected by police themselves or reported to police by ambulances or emergency departments. Injuries were more common in service detected/reported episodes because the involvement of emergency departments and ambulances necessitates someone being quite seriously hurt. Most episodes did not result in any injuries, so the inclusion of the service category may account for injuries increasing the likelihood of third party reporting.

When aggressors used verbal harm in an episode (either alone or alongside other types of harm), victims had 72% lower odds than third parties of reporting to police, and third parties unknown to the victim and aggressor had 3.5 times higher odds of reporting the episode than third parties known to them. These findings may be because verbal aggression

makes episodes more noticeable to third parties, increasing the opportunities for third parties to become aware of an episode and subsequently report it. Victim verbal harm may not operate in quite the same way because their verbal aggression is less obvious and threatening sounding than that used by aggressors, hence being labelled by police as the victim rather than the aggressor. Victim verbal harm was often coded as being present in this study because police recorded that someone in the dyad said they had an ‘argument’, which could involve the aggressor being quite heated, and the victim arguing back was just asking the aggressor to quiet down. Victims and known third parties may be less likely to report when the aggressor uses verbal harm because they do not see the behaviour as serious enough to report and may minimise or normalise the behaviour. Known third parties may also consider intervening themselves and not see a need to call in formal help. Unknown third parties may perceive potential for escalation or – as mentioned earlier regarding neighbours – may be unsure about the extent of further harm happening behind closed doors that is not audible or visible to them in the moment. Unknown third parties may also be aware of campaigns encouraging people to call police when they are aware of IPV (i.e., the *It’s Not OK* campaign in NZ).

Our third research question was does the category of reporter of an episode predict different outcomes when we control for victim and aggressor demographics and relationship and episode characteristics? We did not find any association between the category of reporter of an episode and whether police took official action (i.e., arrested, created a warrant to arrest, trespassed, or served a PSO) in response to an episode, or whether the victim and aggressor had any further episodes reported to police within 6 months. We did not have a specific hypothesis for this research question, we only wanted to examine it based on prior research which found arrests and dual arrests were more common when a third party had reported an IPV episode than when a victim reported (Hollenshead et al., 2006). This finding is promising, as it indicates that, as we would expect, police are basing their responses to IPV

episodes on the characteristics of the episodes themselves and the relationship of the people involved, rather than who called them to begin with.

Finally, there were several other null findings which are worth discussing. Neither victim nor aggressor gender were associated with category of reporter which supports our hypothesis. Females are overrepresented in IPV victim statistics to begin with. Because male victims are less likely to report and have third parties report on their behalf than female victims, it follows that both victim-reported and third party-reported episodes would have high concentrations of female victims (Berg & Rogers, 2017; Campbell & Berg, 2024; Felson & Paré, 2005). The presence of children at the episode was also not associated with the category of reporter who called police. We hypothesised that perhaps we would see fewer third party-reported episodes having children present due to increased opportunity for children to be present during episodes in residential places. The hypothesis assumes, however, that third party reported episodes would occur largely in public places, which was not the case mostly due to the number of episodes reported by neighbours. The lack of effect of the presence of children may just be reflective of the complex decision-making that occurs: weighing up how to best protect the child without risking them being uplifted by child protective services (Malihi et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2019). Prior research has also shown that children only increased the likelihood of victim reporting if they *witnessed* the episode (Voce & Boxall, 2018). It is unknown whether child witnesses would also increase third party reporting, and we were unable to measure the level of involvement of the children who were present in this study. Neither victim nor aggressor age were associated with reporter category either. This supports our hypothesis which was based on prior research finding both victims and third parties were more likely to report when the victim was older, while younger people seek more informal help (Galvin & Safer-Lichtenstein, 2018; Malihi et al., 2021). Victim and aggressor physical harm were also not associated with the category of reporter. This

alongside the finding that aggressor verbal harm *was* associated may indicate that the visibility of an episode is more important than the severity in terms of *who* reports an IPV episode. Physical harm may occur more often behind closed doors, while audible arguments spill into shared spaces, affecting the likelihood that someone will notice and subsequently report an episode. This theory does align with research by Malihi and colleagues (2021) who said episodes reported by third parties may be more likely to involve more noticeable forms of harm.

Implications

Many prior studies have examined separate categories of crime reporter and what makes them individually more or less likely to call police. This study has instead taken episodes of IPV that were reported to police and directly compared the characteristics of each across different categories of reporter. Examining reporting in this way has helped us identify distinct variables such as relationship status, family violence history, and aggressor verbal harm which appear to have differential effects on victims and third parties' decisions to report IPV to police. Additionally, identifying that variables like physical harm are not associated with who reported an episode is just as informative as it tells us that visibility may be more important than severity in terms of who reports IPV episodes. Prior research has also examined a narrow scope of third parties, and we wanted to know the extent of the roles reporters play in IPV episodes. We identified seven categories of reporter in this sample: victims, aggressors, family members, friends, neighbours, members of the public, and services (e.g., ambulances or police detecting episodes themselves).

Practically, it's promising that neighbours and people unknown to the dyads comprise so much of the third party reporter category and that they did not appear to require much evidence of a crime or high severity before they decided to call police (i.e., most neighbours only heard yelling before they called). This could mean we need to focus more on

encouraging third parties who know the victim or aggressor to take the step of formally reporting when they become aware of IPV. Known third parties could also be intervening in other ways unable to be captured in this sample, however, which could be an interesting future research step. It is also promising that the category of reporter was not associated with the way police responded to episodes, showing that police are focusing on more important factors like episode and relationship characteristics when deciding on appropriate action to take.

Limitations

Sample size limited our ability to conduct significance testing on key variables of interest due to low expected cell counts, particularly for the analyses comparing disaggregated reporter categories and comparing third parties known versus unknown to the victim or aggressor. While our overall sample size was large, the rarity of variables such as victim drug and alcohol use and victim physical harm meant there were still only very small counts of each. A larger sample size also would have allowed us to enter more variables of theoretical relevance into the regression analyses (such as victim ethnicity).

The second limitation is that the allocation of victim and aggressor roles is likely not entirely independent from who reported an episode to police. One police report explicitly stated that the police allocated the victim label to one party because they were the party that phoned the police. This allocation of victim and aggressor roles at least partially based on who called the police was confirmed to me as being common practice by an individual working for the ISR as well. We believe this limitation may only be a concern for the 20% of episodes where police indicated the victim and aggressor were mutual participants, meaning police saw both sides contributing to the disorder in the episode and they were required to use their own judgement and additional information to make the victim and aggressor role allocations.

The final limitation is that the nature of this research project means the data has essentially undergone two levels of interpretation. The information that was available to us in the police reports was dependent on what attending police officers noticed and thought was important or relevant enough to record. These reports were then read by two coders who interpreted what happened a second time to create analysable variables. While we did what we could to maximise the reliability of coding, the possibility of human error at the police and researcher levels should be acknowledged.

Future Research and Recommendations

Future researchers could run a similar study again but with a larger sample size, allowing for more of the rarely occurring variables like victim physical harm and drug and alcohol use to be analysed. Using a different method such as latent class analysis could also lead to interesting insights about different types of IPV episodes by identifying clusters of demographic, relationship, and episode characteristics that commonly co-occur, which we did not examine in this study. Researchers could then examine who tends to report each class of episode.

There are some variables that may be worth researching in finer detail. First, the differences between third parties known versus unknown to the dyad. Due to small sample sizes of these categories of third parties we could not conduct significance testing on many variables. Family members and friends reported less often than neighbours and members of the public, though, which is worth examining. Additionally, the impact of children on whether episodes are reported and by who remains inconclusive. We were unable to examine whether the level of involvement of children in an episode is associated with who reported it, so this is something worth further consideration. Victim and aggressor ethnicity and their association with who reported could also be worth further research. We found that episodes involving Māori aggressors were less likely to be reported by victims than third parties, but

prior research indicates aggressor ethnicity should be examined alongside victim ethnicity which we were unable to do due to small sample size.

Finally, this study's sample only included episodes that were reported to police. We may get better insight into reporter decision-making by also examining episodes people became aware of but chose not to report. This could be done using self-report surveys asking about if the respondent has witnessed an altercation or violent episode and if so, describe what happened, what their relationship to the people involved was, what they thought the people's relationship to each other was, and whether they reported it to police.

Conclusion

In this study we examined victim and aggressor demographic, relationship, and episode characteristics and their association with who reported IPV episodes to NZ police. Just over half of the episodes in this sample were reported by victims, but most of the other half were reported by third parties (and a small proportion by aggressors). Of the third parties, IPV episodes were most often reported by neighbours, followed by family members, members of the public, then friends. A small proportion were detected by police on patrol or reported by ambulance or hospital services. We found that aggressor verbal harm increased the likelihood that a third party would report an episode compared with the victim, but physical harm was not a significant predictor of who reported. These results indicate that the visibility of an episode may be more important than the severity when it comes to who reports an IPV episode. Additionally, we found third parties unknown to the victim and aggressor reported more often than those known to the dyad, and third parties often did not require much information before they chose to report, with most neighbours only hearing an argument before they decided to call. This study offered a new way to analyse reporting of IPV episodes, and sparked ideas for further research such as focusing more on which variables

commonly co-occur and examining who reports different clusters, and investigating the qualities of episodes people choose not to report as well.

Appendix A

Descriptions of the Final Variables and how they were used

Variable type	Variable name	Description	How it was coded	Examples/Instructions
Reporter	Who reported	Highest level descriptor of who reported the episode to police. Used to filter data.	Categorical: Victim, Aggressor, Third party, Not stated	Only to be coded if report explicitly says who called, if not explicit code as 'Not stated' and stop coding there as the episode will be excluded from analysis. If multiple people reported the episode record the primary reporter here, and the details of the other reporter/s under 'multiple reporters'. If unclear who should be considered the 'primary' reporter discuss with other coder. Primary reporter should be decided by considering who there is the most information from and/or who reports least often (e.g., aggressors are rarest so if they report then have them as the primary reporter, bystanders and victims are similar frequency so far so base primary reporter on who police focus on more in the report).
	Reporter relationship	Describes the interpersonal relationship between third party reporters and the victim and/or aggressor. Used to help create final reporter categories.	Qualitative: Victim, Aggressor, Stranger, or free text	If victim reported code 'Victim'. If aggressor reported code 'Aggressor'. If reporter is a member of the public or a neighbour and there is no indication they have a relationship with the couple involved, assume they're a 'Stranger'. For anyone else give some context: e.g., victim's adult child, aggressor's mother, shared child, police, ambulance, etc.
	Reporter residence	Gives context about the spatial relationship the reporter has with the victim and aggressor. Used to help create final reporter categories.	Qualitative: free text	For example: lives with victim, lives with couple, neighbour. If the victim or aggressor reported just code 'Victim' or 'Aggressor' again. Code NA for reporters like members of the public, police detected, etc where it doesn't have any relevance.
	Awareness of episode	Describes how the reporter became aware of the episode happening. Used descriptively to	Qualitative: free text	Gives some context about the amount of information available to the reporter, so code according to the situation that indicative of the most information the reporter had (e.g., if they

	give context about how third parties find out about the episodes they report.		heard arguing but then went to see what was going on code it as physically witnessed). Examples: Involved, saw episode happen (or part of it), heard episode only, victim approached for help, informed by victim of episode later.
Multiple reporters	Indicates whether there were people who reported the episode in addition to the reporter captured in the prior variables.	Qualitative: free text (or 0 if no additional reporters).	If the report indicates more than one person reported, put the relationship and residence of the other reporter(s) to the victim and aggressor here (based on reporter relationship and reporter residence variables above). If unclear who should be considered the 'primary' reporter discuss with other coder. Primary reporter should be decided by considering who there is the most information from and/or who reports least often (e.g., aggressors are rarest so if they report then have them as the primary reporter, bystanders and victims are similar frequency so far so base primary reporter on who police focus on more in the report).
Reporter	Final categorical variable summarising the reporters identified. Created during data preparation based on combining the information collected in the reporter relationship and residence variables above.	Categorical: Victim, Aggressor, Family, Member of public, Neighbour, Friend, Service	Family and Friend include people who are a family member or friend of the victim and/or aggressor. Service indicates episodes where police detected episodes themselves, or they were called by another service like an ambulance or hospital emergency department.
Aware	Final categorical variable summarising how reporters became aware of the episode. Created during data preparation based on grouping common occurrences from the awareness of episode variable above.	Categorical: Involved, Saw, Heard, Informed, Service, Unknown	Involved was mostly used to denote victims and aggressors who reported, but for third parties it indicates they were part of the altercation or attempted to intervene. Informed indicates the reporter was made aware by someone else. Includes, for example, disclosures from victims or their children, police being informed by ambulance services, victims approaching neighbours or calling friends or family for help.
Multiple	Final categorical variable summarising who additional reporters were when there were multiple calls to police. Created during data preparation based on descriptions in multiple reporters variable above.	Categorical: Victim, Aggressor, Family, Member of public, Unknown/Anonymous, None	Tried to align these categories with those used in the Reporter variable. No additional reporters were services or friends, and a few were merely noted as being an anonymous caller.

	Known/unknown	Created during data preparation for analysis based on information from the reporter relationship variable above.	Categorical: Known, Unknown	Known third parties included reporters from family, friend, and neighbour categories. Unknown third parties included reporters from neighbour, member of public, and service categories.
Victim and aggressor demographics	Victim gender	Describes the gender of the person determined by police to be the victim in the episode.	Categorical: Female, Male	Often not explicitly stated in the police reports, so coded based on pronouns used and their names.
	Victim age	The victim's age in years at the time of the episode.	Numeric	Provided by the ISR alongside police report data.
	Victim ethnicity	Ethnicity category the victim belongs to.	Categorical: NZ European, Māori, Pacific, Asian, Other	Provided by the ISR alongside police report data.
	Aggressor gender	Describes the gender of the person determined by police to be the aggressor in the episode.	Categorical: Female, Male	Often not explicitly stated in the police reports, so coded based on pronouns used and their names.
	Aggressor age	The aggressor's age in years at the time of the episode.	Numeric	Provided by the ISR alongside police report data.
	Aggressor ethnicity	Ethnicity category the aggressor belongs to.	Categorical: NZ European, Māori, Pacific, Asian, Other	Provided by the ISR alongside police report data.
Victim-aggressor relationship	Protection order	Indicates whether the police report states there was an active protection order in place between the victim and aggressor at the time of the episode	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	If report states that a temporary protection order was enacted years prior without specifying it was inactivated, assume it went permanent and code 1. (This was the case in approximately 2-3 reports.)
	History of family violence	Indicates whether the police report stated any evidence of ongoing family violence involving the victim and/or aggressor within the family unit, regardless of whether it was reported to police.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Code yes if any indication of abusive behaviour or fighting in the longer term (e.g., victim mentions aggressor yelling at them or that they are arguing frequently, or pushing them that one time, controlling behaviour, child abuse). Does not include violence in prior relationships, only the victim and aggressor and any children involved with them. If protection order is coded 1, code 1 here also.
	Current/former partner	Indicates whether the victim and aggressor were in a relationship or separated at the time the episode happened.	Categorical: Current, Former	A relationship status variable was provided by the ISR alongside the police data, however it usually reflected the reported status of the relationship more immediately post-episode which is not what we wanted to capture (people often break up temporarily after an altercation without meaning for the relationship to end for good, reporting decisions differ

				depending on whether someone is invested in a continuing relationship with the person they are implicating). We only resorted to using the predetermined relationship status when it was unclear from the police report what their status was when the episode happened.
Episode characteristics	Report related to specific episode	Was the report made about a specific episode or incident?	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Victim seeks advice from police because their ex has been regularly sending them harassing messages since they broke up a month ago = 0 A couple have been arguing all day and there is a physical altercation which prompts a call to police = 1 If there is a pattern of behaviour that seems to have escalated prompting a call to police, code this as 1 If the episode has unfolded across a day or so, code this as 1
Location	Where did the episode occur? For episodes that occurred across multiple locations, code the location where the part of the episode that likely triggered the report occurred.	Categorical: Public, Residence, Online		Public = e.g., The Warehouse carpark, in the street Residence = inside or outside a private dwelling Online = e.g., threats via text message
Children present	Were there children (under 18 years) present at the time of the episode? Doesn't matter where the child was at the time (e.g., sleeping in another room, in the room with aggressor).	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes		If there are children in the family but there's no mention of them being there at the time code 0. If there are children under the 'witnesses' heading in the narrative code 1. If the victim and/or aggressor are under 18 years code 0.
Victim alcohol use	Does the report indicate the victim was under the influence of alcohol in this episode?	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes		
Victim drug use	Does the report indicate the victim was under the influence of alcohol in this episode? Includes if experiencing drug withdrawal	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes		Code yes if police or other involved parties are suspecting drug use, or there is reason to believe they might be using drugs in the episode.
Aggressor alcohol use	Does the report indicate the aggressor was under the influence of alcohol in this episode?	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes		

Aggressor drug use	Does the report indicate the aggressor was under the influence of drugs (excl. alcohol) in this episode? Includes if experiencing drug withdrawal	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Code yes if police or other involved parties are suspecting drug use, or there is reason to believe they might be using drugs in the episode.
Injured person	If someone was physically injured in this episode code their role (e.g., victim, aggressor, third party). If no one was injured code 0.	Categorical: Victim, Aggressor, Third party	
Injury type	Brief description of physical injury if applicable, including whether police stated indicator of severity	Qualitative: free text	Code 0 if there were no injuries noted
Injury category	Categorisation of injury severity created in data preparation stage based on information from injury type variable above.	Categorical: None, Minor, Moderate, Severe	
Any injuries	Dichotomous variable indicating whether anyone was injured at any level of severity in the episode. Created during data preparation stage.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	
Weapon use	Indicates whether the aggressor used any object as a weapon in the episode, whether to threaten, physically assault someone, or damage property.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Does not have to be something traditionally considered a weapon. Includes if they use it to threaten their own life.
Aggressor verbal harm	Indicates whether the aggressor used verbal harm against anyone in the episode (including but not limited to person identified as victim). Indicates lower level episodes where there isn't indication in the report of threats to physical safety.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Code both aggressor and victim verbal harm when it says there was an 'argument' or similar. If verbal threats are made code relevant threats variable instead.
Aggressor physical harm	Indicates whether the aggressor used physical harm against	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Does not include strangling or suffocating victim, code this under 'Strangulation'

	anyone (including but not limited to person identified as victim). Includes any kind of forceful physical action, doesn't need to cause injury.		
Aggressor threats	Indicates what kind of threats (if any) were made by the aggressor in the episode. Including but not limited to those toward the victim.	Categorical: None, Nonverbal, Verbal, Both, Unspecified	Nonverbal = incl. looks or gestures that imply immediate danger like warning looks, standing over someone, cornering someone, or advancing toward someone menacingly, and other similar behaviours. Also includes property damage. Verbal = threats expressed verbally or written (e.g., texts) could incl. threatening separation, child custody, or to kill or otherwise harm the aggressor, themselves, or their loved ones or pets Unspecified = it says X threatened Y but doesn't specify how Do not code if they ended up acting on the threat. (e.g., if they verbally threaten to kill but don't kill them it's a verbal threat, but if they threaten to stab someone and they do, code that as physical harm instead).
Any aggressor threats	Dichotomous variable indicating whether the aggressor made any form of threat in the episode.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	
Victim verbal harm	Did the victim use verbal harm against the aggressor in this episode? Indicates lower level episodes where there isn't indication in the report of threats to physical safety.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Code both aggressor and victim verbal harm when it says there was an 'argument' or similar. If verbal threats are made code relevant threats variable instead.
Victim physical harm	Did the victim use physical harm against the aggressor in this episode? Includes any kind of forceful physical action and actions in self-defence, doesn't need to cause injury.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	
Victim threats	Indicates what kind of threats (if any) were made by the victim in	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Nonverbal = incl. looks or gestures that imply immediate danger like warning looks, standing over someone, cornering

		the episode. Does not include victim threatening to call police unless it's framed by police in the report as manipulative or similar.	someone, or advancing toward someone menacingly, and other similar behaviours. Also includes property damage. Verbal = threats expressed verbally or written (e.g., texts) could incl. threatening separation, child custody, or to kill or otherwise harm the aggressor, themselves, or their loved ones or pets Unspecified = it says X threatened Y but doesn't specify how Do not code if they ended up acting on the threat in the episode.
	Mutual participants	Indicates whether police perceived both the victim and aggressor contributing to the disorder in the episode.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes Provided by the ISR alongside the police data.
	Strangulation	Did the aggressor strangle the victim in this episode? Include grabbing neck and face, or clothing around neck, or covering the victim's face.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes
	Self-harm	Indicates whether the aggressor or victim intentionally harmed themselves or attempted to in the episode.	Categorical: None, Victim, Aggressor
	Any self-harm	Dichotomous variable indicating whether the victim or aggressor intentionally harmed themselves or attempted to in the episode.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes
Outcomes	PSO issued	Indicates when the police issued a police safety order in response to the episode.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes
	Arrest/warrant	Indicates whether police arrested the aggressor or put out a warrant for their arrest as a result of the episode?	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes Do not code if they were arrested on outstanding charges unrelated to the episode. Includes arrests for contravening protection order Includes arrests for assaulting responding officers

	Trespassed	Indicates whether police trespassed the aggressor from a location as a result of the episode?	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Includes if they were trespassed from somewhere other than the victim's home.
	Any police action	Dichotomous variable created during the data preparation stage indicating whether police took any official action in response to the episode. Based on if any of the PSO issued, arrest/warrant, or trespassed variables were endorsed.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	
	Further episodes	Indicates whether the victim and aggressor had another episode reported to police (by any reporter) within 6 months of the episode in this sample.	Categorical: 0 = no, 1 = yes	Subsequent episodes had to involve the victim and aggressor, but they may have switched roles.
Contextual information	Context	Write a note if it is clear from the narrative why the reporter called police.	Qualitative: free text	e.g., victim wanted immediate protection, seeking advice, wanted episode recorded, aggressor wouldn't leave, fear/concern about future harm Don't infer if not explicitly stated, just code 0.
	Context simplified	Variable created during the data preparation stage grouping together consistent reasons provided in the context variable above.	Qualitative reason or 'Not stated'	Examples of reasons are wanted person removed, to prevent escalation, and concern for aggressor welfare.
	Informal help	If the victim called on informal help before or instead of the police, note who was called here	Qualitative: free text	
	Informal help simplified	Categorical variable created during the data preparation stage indicating who, if anyone, the victim called before or instead of police.	Categorical: None, Friend, Family, Neighbour	

Note. ISR = Integrated Safety Response; PSO = Police safety order.

Appendix B

AsPredicted Pre-registration of Study



Examining who reports what types of IPV episodes to New Zealand police. (#244094)

Author(s)

This pre-registration is currently anonymous to enable blind peer-review.
It has 2 authors.

Pre-registered on:
2025/08/25 15:34 (PT)

1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

It's complicated. We have already collected some data but explain in Question 8 why readers may consider this a valid pre-registration nevertheless.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

RQ1: What proportion of IPV episodes are reported by different parties (e.g., victims, aggressors, household members, neighbours, etc)?

RQ2: Which victim and aggressor demographics and episode characteristics are associated with whether IPV episodes are reported by the victim versus a third party?

RQ3: Does the type of reporter an episode resulting in different outcomes over and above victim and aggressor demographics and episode characteristics?

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

Episodes will be grouped at the highest level as victim reported and third-party (everyone else) reported episodes. Types of third parties may include:

- Aggressors
- Other household members (could be further separated into child, family, and other adult to establish relationship to the victim and/or aggressor)
- Neighbours
- Other/Stranger

But will depend on the number in each reporting group after we have extracted who reported from each episode narrative.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

We will not assign people to conditions, but we will examine the association between victim/aggressor demographics, episode characteristics, outcome variables, and the identity of the reporting party. The data for some of these variables will be collected by reading the narratives included in the police reports for each episode

Reporting related information:

1. Who reported (victim, third-party) *
2. Reporter relationship (free text) *
3. Reporter residence (free text) *
4. Awareness of episode (free text) *
5. Multiple reporters (free text) *

Victim/aggressor demographics:

1. Age (numeric)
2. Gender (male/female) *
3. Ethnicity (categorical)
4. SAFVR risk level (categorical, for aggressors only)

Relationship between victim and aggressor

1. Relationship (current or former partners) *
2. History of IPV (yes/no) *
3. Protection order (yes/no) *

Episode characteristics:

1. Whether report was related to specific episode (yes/no) *
2. Location (public, inside private residence, outside private residence, online) *
3. Victim substance/alcohol use (yes/no) *
4. Aggressor substance/alcohol use (yes/no) *
5. Victim harm (verbal, physical) (yes/no for each) *
6. Aggressor harm (verbal, physical, property damage, self-harm, threats to kill, strangulation, weapon use) (yes/no for each) *
7. Children (present, involved) (yes/no for each) *
8. Mutual participants (yes/no)
9. Injuries (anyone injured, type/severity) (free text) *

Outcome variables:

1. Arrest made related to episode (or warrant) (yes/no) *
2. PSO issued (yes/no) *
3. Any recurring episodes (after the initial episode in their case) (yes/no)

New variables we will be pilot coding include those indicated by *. Variables that are coded by free text will be put into categories after initial coding based on the types of reporters or injuries that are mentioned in the police reports.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

RQ1: Descriptive statistics, proportion of episodes reported by each type of reporting party.

RQ2: Two binary logistic regressions, one with the outcome of victim reported vs. third party (all types) reported, the other with third parties known to the victim or aggressor vs. unknown third parties. Both will have the demographic and incident characteristics as predictor variables.

RQ3: Either three binary logistic regressions with the outcome variables each being arrest/warrant (yes/no), PSO issued (yes/no), and any further episodes reported (yes/no). The predictor variables for each would be the categories of reporter. Demographic and episode as control variables.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

Episodes will be excluded from analysis if:

- Who reported the episode is not explicitly stated in the police report and/or,
- The report is not involving current/former intimate partners.
- We may also exclude episodes that are related to patterns of behaviour rather than a specific episode.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

The entire sample (with non-IPV episodes) included 2195 family violence cases managed by the Integrated Safety Response in Waikato and Canterbury where the first episode in the case occurred between 1 February – 31 March 2022. In our sample we have narrative police reports extracted from the Family Safety System for 462 intimate partner violence callouts, but our sample for analysis will be smaller as some episodes will be excluded for the reasons mentioned above.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

As per Q1 (have any data been collected for this study already?) our data have already been collected in the sense that we are using narrative reports written by police who attended family violence callouts which have already happened, we also have some variables ready for analysis which have been extracted from the source. However, this is still a valid pre-registration because we are coding an assortment of new variables based on the police reports, and then using those variables in our analyses.

Appendix C

Expected values for chi square tests for demographic, relationship, episode, and outcome variables by reporter category (n = 323 episodes)

Variables	Who reported Expected n						
	Victim (n = 177)	Aggressor (n = 20)	Family member (n = 32)	Friend (n = 11)	Member of the public (n = 22)	Neighbour (n = 53)	Service (n = 8)
Demographics							
Victim ethnicity							
European	80.6	9.1	14.6	5	10	24.1	3.6
Māori	59.7	6.7	10.8	3.7	7.4	17.9	2.7
Pacific Peoples	3.3	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.4	1	0.1
Asian	4.4	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.5	1.3	0.2
Other	29	3.3	5.3	1.8	3.6	8.7	1.3
Aggressor ethnicity							
European	84.9	9.6	15.4	5.3	10.6	25.4	3.8
Māori	57.5	6.5	10.4	3.6	7.2	17.2	2.6
Pacific Peoples	6	0.7	1.1	0.4	0.7	1.8	0.3
Asian	8.2	0.9	1.5	0.5	1	2.5	0.4
Other	20.3	2.3	3.7	1.3	2.5	6.1	0.9
Relationship							
Protection order	13.2	1.5	2.4	0.8	1.6	3.9	0.6
History of FV	97.5	11	17.6	6.1	12.1	29.2	4.4
Current partners	118.9	13.4	21.5	7.4	14.8	35.6	17.4
Episode							
Location							
Residence	150.1	17	27.1	9.3	18.7	45	6.8
Public	15.3	1.7	2.8	1	1.9	4.6	0.7
Online/digital	11.5	1.3	2.1	0.7	1.4	3.4	0.5
Female victim	145.2	16.4	26.3	9	18	43.5	6.6
Male aggressor	144.1	16.3	26.1	9	17.9	43.2	6.5
Mutual participants	35.6	4	6.4	2.2	4.4	10.7	1.6
Children present	67.4	7.6	12.2	4.2	8.4	20.2	3
Victim alcohol use	15.3	1.7	2.8	1	1.9	4.6	0.7
Victim drug use	1.6	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.1
Aggressor alcohol use	45.5	5.1	8.2	2.8	5.7	13.6	2.1
Aggressor drug use	9.9	1.1	1.8	0.6	1.2	3.0	0.4
Injuries							
None	145.8	16.5	26.4	9.1	18.1	43.6	6.6
Minor	19.7	2.2	3.6	1.2	2.5	5.9	0.9
Moderate	7.1	0.8	1.3	0.4	0.9	2.1	0.3
Severe	4.4	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.5	1.3	0.2
Weapon use	14.3	1.6	2.6	0.9	1.8	4.3	0.6
Aggressor verbal harm	129.9	14.7	23.5	8.1	16.1	38.9	5.9
Aggressor physical harm	47.7	5.4	8.6	3	5.9	14.3	2.2
Aggressor threats	54.3	6.1	9.8	3.4	6.7	16.2	2.5
Victim verbal harm	118.4	13.4	21.4	7.4	14.7	35.4	5.3
Victim physical harm	15.9	1.8	2.9	1	2	4.8	0.7
Victim threats	6.6	0.7	1.2	0.4	0.8	2	0.3
Strangulation	6	0.7	1.1	0.4	0.7	1.8	0.3
Self-harm							
Aggressor	3.8	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.5	1.1	0.2
Victim	0.5	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.2	0
Outcomes							

Any official action	44.4	5	8.0	2.8	5.5	13.3	2
Trespassed	6	0.7	1.1	0.4	0.7	1.8	0.3
PSO issued	30.7	3.5	5.5	1.9	3.8	9.2	1.4
Arrest/warrant	9.3	1.1	1.7	0.6	1.2	2.8	0.4
Any further report(s)	54.8	6.2	9.9	3.4	6.8	16.4	2.5

Note. FV = family violence; PSO = police safety order.

Appendix D

Expected cell counts for variables across victim and aggregated third party reported episodes

(n = 303 episodes).

Variables	Total <i>observed</i> <i>n</i>	Who reported <i>Expected n</i>	
		Victim (<i>n</i> = 177)	Third party (<i>n</i> = 126)
Demographics			
Victim ethnicity			
European	135	78.9	56.1
Māori	104	60.8	43.3
Pacific Peoples	6	3.5	2.5
Other	58	33.8	24.1
Aggressor ethnicity			
European	143	83.5	59.5
Māori	100	58.4	41.6
Pacific Peoples	24	5.8	4.2
Other	36	29.2	20.8
Relationship			
Protection order	23	13.4	9.6
History of FV	166	97	69
Current partners	204	119.2	84.8
Episode			
Location			
Residence	256	149.5	106.5
Public	26	15.2	10.8
Online/digital	2	12.3	8.7
Female victim	252	147.2	104.8
Male aggressor	250	146	104
Mutual participants	57	33.3	23.7
Children present	116	67.8	42.8
Victim alcohol use	22	12.9	9.1
Victim drug use	3	1.8	1.2
Aggressor alcohol use	78	45.6	32.4
Aggressor drug use	18	10.5	7.5
Injuries (Any)	55	32.1	22.9
Injury categories			
None	248	144.9	103.1
Minor	34	19.9	14.1
Moderate	13	7.6	5.4
Severe	8	4.7	3.3
Weapon use	23	13.4	9.6
Aggressor verbal harm	217	126.8	90.2
Aggressor physical harm	83	48.5	34.5
Aggressor threats	95	55.5	39.5
Victim verbal harm	198	115.7	82.3
Victim physical harm	26	15.2	10.8
Victim threats	11	6.4	4.6
Strangulation	11	6.4	4.6

Self-harm (Any)	7	4.1	2.9
Outcomes			
Any official action	78	45.6	32.4
Trespassed	10	5.8	4.2
PSO issued	54	31.5	22.5
Arrest/warrant	17	9.9	7.1
Any further report(s)	94	54.9	39.1

Note. FV = family violence; PSO = police safety order.

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