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The invisible woman: The lesbian - scared straight

Kathleen Louise Dart

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THE INVISIBLE WOMAN
THE LESBIAN - SCARED STRAIGHT

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Criminal Justice

by
Kathleen Louise Dart
December 2007
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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the victims of lesbian domestic violence and the effect that internalized homophobia and level of outness have on the victim’s likelihood of calling the police for help. A review of the literature on lesbian domestic violence reveals the scarcity of empirical data on this subject in social science research. Due to the difficulties of finding a random sample for this study, an Internet survey was utilized by advertising on popular Internet websites that cater to the lesbian community, as well as events they were most likely to attend. It was found that respondents with higher levels of internalized homophobia were less likely to call the police for help while those with higher levels of outness were more likely to call. In addition, as a woman gets older, her internalized homophobia decreases and her level of outness increases, in that a woman over the age of 30 was two and a half times more likely to call police than a woman less than or equal to 30 years of age. This study not only fills the void in lesbian domestic violence research, it promotes the need for legal and policy changes to assist the lesbian victim of domestic violence. As long as the secretive society of lesbians continues, the lesbian victims of domestic violence remain invisible in society and research.
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Lesbian domestic violence is just beginning to be recognized as a major social problem (Paroissien and Stewart, 2000). It is purported to be equal to or even greater than domestic violence in heterosexual couples (Island and Letellier, 1991). However, difficulty in establishing the prevalence rate of lesbian domestic violence results from the lesbian community being hidden in society; therefore, it is estimated to be highly under-reported and remains inadequately researched (Beauchamp, 1998). This research seeks to provide a better understanding of lesbian domestic violence and to show how barriers to seeking help marginalize lesbians based on their sexual orientation. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Program (2004) reports, lesbian victims of domestic violence do not report abuse, utilize police, other agents in criminal justice systems, or shelters.

The purpose of this study, in part, is to examine factors influencing the decision of lesbian victims of domestic violence to call or not to call the police. The factors tested here include internalized homophobia and
level of outness in order to evaluate the influence they have on the lesbian community.

In Hypothesis 1, it is expected that lesbians with high levels of internalized homophobia will negatively affect the victims' decision to call the police in cases of domestic violence. In Hypothesis 2, it is expected that a lesbian with low levels of outness will negatively affect the victims' decision to call the police in cases of domestic violence. In addition, in Hypothesis 3, it is expected that age will negatively affect the victims' decision to call the police in cases of domestic violence. This research also investigates the perspectives of these women with regard to their experiences with police when responding to the domestic violence incident. It is expected that lesbian victims of domestic violence will reveal a range of perceived treatment by police, from positive to negative.

Chapter Two focuses on the insufficient empirical data available on this subject. Objectives of this proposed research includes a theoretical perspective specifically applied to lesbian domestic violence along with a presentation of the definitions and characteristics of lesbian domestic violence. A thorough examination of the literature regarding this subject matter assists in understanding the challenges faced by these victims, the need
for policy and legal changes, as well as the need for future research. Existing empirical data are based on self-selected, self-reported, non-random samples, so a clear picture of the problem is not available.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology of the study. The purpose of this study, in part, was to examine factors influencing the decision of lesbian victims of domestic violence to call or not to call the police. The factors that influence these decisions include victims' internalized homophobia, victims' level of outness, victims' age, and whether or not they call the police in a lesbian domestic violence situation.

Sampling was obtained through the distribution of postcards and various other methods, including snowball sampling. Instruments utilized to investigate this research include the Internalized Homophobia Scale (Herek et al., 1997), the Outness Inventory Test (Mohr and Fassinger (2000), the HURTS Test (Sherin and Sinacore et al., 1998), the Abusive Behavior Inventory Test (Sheppard and Campbell, 1992), Police Effectiveness, and Demographics.

Chapter Four summarizes the results of the Internet survey conducted at SurveyMonkey.com/rainbowsurvey. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to determine victims' internalized homophobia, level of outness,
and if they called the police. Both quantitative and qualitative questions were utilized to conduct this exploratory research. The survey also questioned victim as to if they called the police, how the police responded, and if they did not call the police, why?

It was hypothesized that a lesbian with high levels of internalized homophobia would be less likely to call the police. Conversely, lesbians with high levels of outness were more likely to ask for police intervention. It was projected that older victims would be more likely to call the police than younger victims. Various tables show the results obtained.

Chapter Five summarizes the findings from this research project. Several limitations are discussed, along with possible implications of these findings and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The Constitution of the United States establishes the protections of all people regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, and sexual orientation. It is ironic that we, as a society, fail to provide equal protection under the law to lesbian victims of domestic violence (National Coalition Anti-Violence Program, 2001). The government’s failure to legalize and officially recognize the marriages of same-sex couples prohibits victims of lesbian domestic violence from advantages provided through legislative protections. It has been estimated that gay men and lesbians make up 10% of the American population (The Human Rights Campaign, 2001), yet only a few researchers have addressed domestic violence in the lesbian community, and almost nothing has been published in mainstream journals (Schilit, Lie, and Montagne, 1990).

Amnesty International (2005) states, "There is an unbroken spectrum of violence that women face at the hands of people who exert control over them" (p. 1). They expound that violence against women results from a culture of discrimination that denies women equal rights. These
Discriminations include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social status, class, and age.

Lesbians are not a part of the dominant cultural group. The reason lesbian couples suffer these inequalities is the oppression of minorities in our society. As reported by the Mass News (2002),

Oppression is a system set up so that a privileged minority of the population defines their experience as the norm, stigmatizes other based on that definition, and uses that stigmatization as a justification for their control of resources and exploitation of others. Its manifestations include hate crime, harassment, denial of services, inferiority, and loss of legal protections. Domestic violence is a manifestation of the power inequity and social control. (p. 1)

Lesbians grow up in a heterosexual world that continually tells them through family, friends, school, the media, and even church that there is something wrong with the way they think and feel (Scherzer, 1998). They are taught to believe that heterosexuality is the only option. These misguided beliefs manifest themselves in internalized homophobia (Smart and Wegner, 1999).
McNiven (2000) claims that this internalized homophobia causes lesbians to try to act as if they are straight. She believes that they monitor their behavior, attitudes, attractions, and live a secret life. McNiven (2000) argues:

When talking about lesbians trying to pass for straight, she thinks of the parallels with people of color trying to "pass" as white in the American South some years ago, or Jewish people in Europe trying to "pass" as Gentiles during the Hitler years -- Lesbians are still trying to "pass". The issues of safety are similar. "Passing" is living a lie that is hard on your health. Moreover, she claims, if one of us has to live a lie, then we are all living a lie. If one person is forced to be watching over her shoulder all the time, monitoring speech, then the world is not yet safe enough. (p. 1)

Trying to pass comes at a high cost to the lesbian in that she lives in constant fear of discovery by others.

**Domestic Violence Defined**

Domestic violence is not about strength. According to Robertson (1999) it is a pattern of behaviors designed to control another. Therefore, women as well as men are capable of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, economic abuse, and
other controlling behaviors. Victims of domestic violence are often exposed repeatedly to threats, violence, and intimidation, along with physical, emotional, and psychological abuse. Constant, repeated exposure to violence has a profound effect on a victim's daily activities, functioning, thinking, interpersonal relationships, and sense of self (Barnett et al., 1997).

To people outside the relationship, the abuser will appear loving and supportive. In reality, they have a dual personality, or Dr. Jekyll/ Ms. Hyde personality. They are manipulative, unpredictable, possessive, jealous, unrealistic, and controlling (Jacobson and Gottman, 1998). Lesbian Domestic Violence Defined

As acknowledged by Waldner-Haugrud and Gratch (1997), lesbian couples experience similar rates of domestic violence to that of their heterosexual counterparts, and yet, they are not afforded the same legal standing in such matters. "Victims may be denied services such as emergency shelter, medical treatment, financial assistance, psychosocial counseling, job training, legal services, and many others that these forums routinely prescribe for battered heterosexual women" (NCAVP, 2001, p. 8).

Many people in society believe that women are not violent and cannot harm one another. The reality is that
there is abuse in both heterosexual and lesbian relationships (Perilla et al., 2003). They found that in heterosexual relationships, gender is the defining factor. However, in lesbian relationships, the power may result from education, class, and ethnicity interacting (Perilla et al., 2003).

Renzetti (2001) affirms that any behavior used by a woman to control another woman, be it physical or sexual, that causes the other woman to live in fear defines lesbian domestic violence. Control mechanisms include pushing, biting, hitting, punching, and even using a weapon. The Santa Fe Rape Crisis Center (2005) stress that women are raped or sexually assaulted by other women. They estimate that one out of three lesbians have been sexually assaulted or raped by another woman. The problem is that rape is traditionally defined as penetration of a woman by a man. This results in woman-to-woman rape not being acknowledged or taken seriously.

San Francisco Women against Rape (2005) challenge that rape is about power and control, not about roles. They believe there is no way to tell by looking at two women who is the rapist and who is the survivor. Moreover, survivors of lesbian rape experience the same feelings as heterosexual women including confusion, anger, and fear. Since most women
are uncomfortable discussing sexual information, it is believed that the majority of these crimes go unreported.

Renzetti (2001) continues there are many other forms of violence including unsafe driving, destruction of possessions, and public humiliation, along with control of money, isolation from friends or family, hurting children or pets, and threatening murder or suicide. Lesbians often say these are the most insidious types of abuse because these behaviors are often regarded as ordinary relationship problems.

Beauchamp (1998) accentuates that homophobia contributes to the opportunity for abuse to occur without incurring any negative consequence. In addition, the silence regarding lesbian domestic violence reinforces homophobia and contributes to prejudice and discrimination of lesbians (Astor 1996). If a lesbian is not out to society, internalized homophobia becomes a powerful tool of control by the abuser. Shidlo (1994) defines lesbian internalized homophobia as "a set of negative attitudes and affects toward homosexuality in other persons and toward homosexual features in oneself" (p.178).

Tactics that an abuser may utilize by threatening to out the victim include convincing the victim that the police will not help her as the justice system is homophobic and
hates homosexuals or that she could lose custody of her children. The abuser may even try convincing the victim that abusive behaviour is normal within lesbian relationships (Ristock, 2002).

Vickers (1996) substantiates that another major concern is the actual response, or lack of response from the police and legal system. Victims of lesbian domestic violence may be reluctant to call the police or seek legal help out of fear that the police will consider the violence as mutual battering resulting in the victim being arrested too (Friess, 1997).

These actions compel the lesbian community to be segregated, secretive, and protective of their community (Island and Letellier, 1991). Until gays and lesbians obtain equal rights under the law, this discrimination, repression and isolation will continue. The invisible woman is the lesbian victim of domestic violence, victimized by her partner, and then by a system that punishes her for a perceived immoral sexual orientation.

The Hidden Society of Lesbians

There is no known group of lesbians. Therefore, no one-size-fits-all policy can be implemented. Even more frustrating is the fact that there is not a means of access to all of the lesbians who might need help. Furthermore,
victims of lesbian domestic violence may not want to reveal their situation out of fear. They may be concerned for their safety and possibly their children's safety. There may also be financial concerns of support. Incredibly, the victim may believe she deserves the abuse and maintains hope that the abuser will change (American Medical Association, 1992).

**Prevalence Rate Testing**

The most recent research of Waldner-Haugrud and Gratch (1997) agree that the inability to identify and infiltrate the population of lesbians makes a prevalence rate for lesbian domestic violence nearly impossible to obtain. Turell (2000) tried to obtain a prevalence rate of same-sex relationship violence by conducting a survey. Turell hypothesizes that due to the hidden nature and secret societies of gay men and lesbians, a true random sample would be impossible.

To test this hypothesis, Turell distributed 1500 written surveys in the Houston, Texas area. She calculated a 33% response rate. Turell attained 499 usable surveys, of which 265 were from women. In the testing of physical abuse items, at least fifty percent of same-sex partners checked one item of abuse.

The results showed that women reported significantly higher percentages in physical abuse, coercion, threats,
shame, and using children as tools. Turell concludes that this results in the underreporting of same-sex domestic violence and that lesbian domestic violence is a significant problem in society within the limitations of the sampling methods.

Study Measures Internalized Homophobia

Research conducted by Herek et al. (1997) measured the affects of homophobia. They systematically assessed internalized homophobia (IHP) and its correlates among gay men and lesbians. They argued that internalized homophobia is associated with less outness to family, friends, and community, resulting in depression and lower self-esteem. Lesbians and gay men with lower levels of IHP were more socially adjusted and accepted themselves. Higher levels of IHP caused lower levels of psychological well-being, less openness about one's sexual identity, less sense of community involvement, and a heightened sense of being stigmatized because of a homosexual identity.

To conduct this research, Herek et al. (1997) recruited 75 women and 75 men at a large lesbian/gay/bisexual street fair in Sacramento, California. Attendance was estimated at 4000 people. Volunteers were paid five dollars to complete a written questionnaire. Internalized homophobia was assessed with a nine-item measure developed from the American
Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd Ed., along with three aspects of psychological well-being including depressive symptoms, disclosure of sexual orientation, and perceived membership in the gay and lesbian community.

The results showed that correlation coefficients for lesbians were not statistically significant. Perception of community scores were negatively correlated with collective self-esteem for both women and men, indicating that respondents felt less connected to the lesbian community to the extent that they experienced higher levels of internalized homophobia. They conclude that lesbians who have negative feelings about their homosexuality are likely to be more in the closet and less into a homosexual social network than other lesbian people are. Moreover, these people may be at a heightened risk for depression and low self-esteem. (Herek et al., 1997).

Level of Outness

As a symptom of internalized homophobia, many lesbians are in the closet to their family, friends, and acquaintances, therefore, the abuser may use the threat of "outing" the person as a means of control (West, 1998). In a training manual for counselors of domestic violence, Caffrey (2001) forcefully states:
The threat of being "outed" is a very serious threat. It is as serious as a death threat. For someone who is closeted the threat of being outing is a threat of losing all security in her/his life. She/he could lose her/his job, children, apartment, house, family, and friends. Utilizing existing services (such as a shelter, attending support groups or calling a crisis line) either means lying or hiding the gender of the batterer or having to "come out", a major life decision. Additional training, sensitivity, and expertise are needed to adequately recognize and address the specific needs of LGBT domestic violence victims.

(p.1)

The threat of outing needs to be taken seriously by all of society as it could be a life or death matter for the lesbian victim of domestic violence.

Theory of Lesbian Domestic Violence

Researchers have avoided domestic abuse in lesbian relationships for fear of contradicting current theories and bringing about homophobia. Moreover, theories of heterosexual relationships fail to explain battering in lesbian relationships and result in restricting services
to lesbians (Bethea et al., 2000). Researchers have looked at several theories used to explain heterosexual domestic violence, but they do not seem to explain why a woman would abuse another woman in an intimate relationship. There appears to be no comprehensive agreed upon theory that explains lesbian domestic violence.

Coleman (1994) delineates, “We need a multidimensional theory addressing sociopolitical factors, social learning, family dynamics, physiology, and individual personality to fully understand lesbian domestic violence” (p. 150). Too many researchers have focused on the similarities between lesbian and heterosexual battering; however, researchers should contain their investigations to the experiences of lesbian domestic violence survivors (Ristock, 2002). Until new theories can be developed and tested, the phenomenon of lesbian domestic violence will continue.

Legislation

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Safety, Health, and Employee Welfare Divisions Domestic Violence Awareness Handbook (2005) affirms that many people continue to believe that domestic violence is a private matter between a couple, rather than a criminal offense that merits a strong and swift
response. People in the criminal justice system including the police, prosecutors, judges, and jurors need to be educated about the role they can play in curbing acts of domestic violence.

The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence against Women (2005) recaps the Violence against Women Act (VAWA) that passed in 1994 was the first federal legislation to address violence targeted at women. It has improved federal, state, tribal, and local response to domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking of heterosexual women by increasing awareness in public attitudes, policy, and law. Funding provided by this legislation supports rape crisis hotlines, victim counseling, educational programs in schools, along with training for law enforcement, and medical personnel.

In addition, VAWA supports the criminal justice system in responding to violence against heterosexual women. This funding also launched the first national domestic violence hotline in 1996. This is good for the heterosexual woman, but what happens to the invisible lesbian as VAWA does not protect them?

Another challenge not addressed in VAWA is the difficulties faced when one or both women try to get help in a lesbian domestic violence situation. Many women fleeing
from an abusive situation try to seek refuge in a woman's shelter. The problem arises when both the abuser and the victim are women. Many shelters have problems figuring out who is the victim and who is the perpetrator. This problem usually results in the lesbian victim not being provided the shelter that a heterosexual woman would. "Professionals and society, in general, need to more closely examine, support, and define, both treatment for the lesbian abuser and help for the lesbian victim of abuse" (Mahari, 2006, p.1).

Renzetti et al., (2001) reasons that this fear needs to be viewed in its broader social, political, and legal context. McClennen et al., (2002) agree stating, "Domestic violence in lesbian relationships needs interventions and strategies on multiple levels, including community, organizational and societal" (p.289).

Legal Response of Police

The NCAVP (2004) deduce that lesbians are often unwilling to call the police, as they believe that the police and the courts do not take lesbian domestic violence or even heterosexual domestic violence as seriously as other kinds of violence. Furthermore, they fear that no one will be able to help them. Social services and legal systems designed for heterosexual couples are difficult for lesbian couples to use and access. Law enforcement, judges, and social workers can
often be unsympathetic and even rude (Barnes 1998). In lesbian domestic violence situations, the police reportedly often fail to respond or respond inappropriately. They are less likely to intervene in lesbian abuse cases. This could be due to state laws failing to explicitly cover such cases, or due to homophobia (Renzetti, 1998).

Anecdotal evidence from lesbian survivors suggests that poor law enforcement responses occur more frequently with same-sex situations. The NCAVP (2001) reports that "sometimes, they inappropriately arrest the victim, especially if she or he is physically larger or is perceived as 'more masculine,' than the assailant; worse yet, police often make anti-gay comments and occasionally even perpetuate anti-gay violence" (p.8). Additionally, survivors of lesbian abuse often confront ignorance and/or prejudice in treatment from medical professionals, domestic violence specialists and other service providers, who lack training in the unique challenges that the lesbian domestic violence survivor faces.

Belknap (1995) found in her study that officers viewed battered women as non-credible and unworthy of police time. They considered marital status for arrest decisions and often avoided arresting batterers, even with pro-arrest policies. In same-sex situations, the
police officers assume the abuse is mutual and are more likely to arrest both members of the couple (West, 1998).

Amnesty International USA (2005) conducted a survey with the largest police department in every state, as well as Washington DC. They found that less than one in five of the twenty-nine departments that responded had policies on how to deal with same-sex domestic violence. They concluded that police officers frequently suffer from homophobia resulting in abuse of gays and lesbians.

Some examples of homophobia in action include a victim claiming an officer told her "You need a real man" or "try me and you won't be a lesbian" (p. 2) as reported by Amnesty International (2005). In another example, a police officer reportedly raped a lesbian at gunpoint in Athens, Georgia, and told her "the world needed at least one less dyke and he was going to make sure that happened" (p. 4). These abusive and humiliating acts were performed with impunity, creating an environment where cruel and insensitive actions against lesbians remain excused or ignored.

Irwin (2005) conducted research on lesbians' experiences of police intervention with 21 participants. Nine of the 21 women experienced multiple forms of abuse including rape with a beer bottle, forced sex, attempted drowning, threatened with knives and guns, beaten, urinated on,
isolated from family and friends, and held captive. Four of the women had contact with the police while six of the 21 participants did not even contemplate calling the police. Their reasons for not involving the police were not being believed, not wanting to beouted, and expectations of non-positive outcomes.

**Legal Response of Courts**

Little empirical data could be located on this subject although it appears that the invisible lesbian does not fair well here either. Lesbians have little or no access to the legal system by definition and this is purported to make lesbians one of the most isolated groups in American society (Elliott, 1996). The court system is not set up to deal with lesbian domestic violence. The NCAVP (2001) for example, relate that, "family courts in many jurisdictions adjudicate domestic violence cases only between married and/or heterosexual partners who have a child in common" (p. 7-8).

The exclusion of lesbian couples from obtaining a protective order in seven states including Arizona, Delaware, Louisiana, Montana, New York, South Carolina, and Virginia is documented by the NCAVP (2001). Three states, including Florida, Maryland, and Mississippi, have laws that can be interpreted to limit protection to heterosexuals or require
the petitioner to admit to an illegal sexual relationship that could result in prosecution.

The Supreme Court struck down the Texas sodomy law of Lawrence v. Texas, in 2003. This law made it a crime for people of the same sex to engage in deviate sexual intercourse defined as oral and anal sex, even if it was consensual. This ruling invalidates sodomy laws that exist in the ten states listed above; however, decriminalization is not deregulation (Lawrence v. Texas, 2003).

Cohabitation versus Marriage

Denied the right to legal marriage, lesbians continue to be invisible in society. Yilo and Straus (1981) conducted a study at the University of New Hampshire of more than 2,000 adults. The results showed that the rate of violence for cohabiting heterosexual couples were twice as high when compared to married couples. The overall rate for "severe" violence was nearly five times as high for cohabiting couples when compared with married couples.

Stets and Straus (1989) argue that cohabitation relationships are comparatively more violent than married couples as cohabiters are less likely to be connected to a network of people that hold them accountable for their actions. Seelau, Seelau, and Poorman (2003) argue that comparisons between cohabiting heterosexual couples and
cohabiting gay or lesbian couples would be a more appropriate study.

Wing (2004) asserts that marriage is a safe haven for women. They claim the permanence of a lifelong commitment through marriage provides the necessary stability required to maintain a healthy, non-violent, intimate relationship. Key implications in the aforementioned study show that as a result of laws prohibiting same sex marriages deprives the lesbian of the increased protections from violence that marriage apparently provides.

Limitations of Previous Research

There are several limitations presented in this literature review. Some of the most obvious limitations include the inability to obtain significant random samples of lesbians and the lack of a specific theory to explain lesbian domestic violence. The literature reviewed contained very little ethnic or racial diversity. West (1998) states that most research conducted on this subject matter contains self-reported data by middle-class white lesbians who are out regarding their sexual identity.

Obtaining a truly representative sample of lesbians, who are out about their sexuality, and willing to discuss lesbian domestic violence in a homophobic society, is
extremely difficult. Lockhart et al., (1994) claim that this obstacle is "virtually insurmountable and for this reason, we are limited to the use of purposive samples" (p. 475).

Moreover, researchers need to address the limitations of self-selected, self-reported victimization bringing into question the reliability and validity of the research results. It would be hard to generalize this research to the entire lesbian population.

Conclusion

Further research is necessary for this topic, as violence in lesbian relationships remains inadequately researched. Renzetti (1998) proclaims most literature obtained on same-sex domestic violence is from anecdotal accounts and articles in lesbian and gay newspapers. In addition, researchers fail to address the motives for physical violence in lesbian relationships or patterns of violent behavior.

Theoretical frameworks need to be developed to address the issues faced by lesbian women. Fear of seeking help in a lesbian domestic violence situation needs to be removed. Further studies should address the question of why lesbian victims report or not report incidents to the police. Moreover, investigations need to be made to determine how
lesbian victims were treated by law enforcement. Practitioners that deal with lesbian relationships need to be better educated. Until this happens, lesbian domestic violence will remain an invisible little secret in society and invisible in research.

Renzetti (1998) concludes, "As long as homophobia forces gays and lesbians to hide their identity from others, including researchers, a true prevalence study of lesbian partner abuse remains undoable" (p. 119). The need for empirical research into the lives of lesbians is evident in the above literature review and in current issues in everyday lives of lesbian women. These issues include domestic violence, the legalization of same sex marriage, hate crime, parenthood, and adoptions by lesbians, along with violence against lesbians of all ages in schools, the workplace, and the community (Bohan, 1996).
CHAPTER THREE  
METHODOLOGY  

Study Design  

The purpose of this study, in part, was to examine factors influencing the decision of lesbian victims of domestic violence to call or not to call the police. This data was obtained through an Internet survey. The factors tested here include the independent variables of internalized homophobia, level of outness, victims' age, and the dichotomous dependent variable of calling the police. In logistic regression, the dependent variable is binary or dichotomous, in that it only contains data coded as 1 (TRUE, success, pregnant, etc.) or 0 (FALSE, failure, non-pregnant, etc.).  

Hypotheses  

The variable of Internalized Homophobia was explored through Hypothesis 1, which states: **High levels of internalized homophobia will negatively effect victims' decisions to call the police.** The exploration of the variable of level of outness was through Hypothesis 2, which states: **Low levels of outness will negatively effect victims' decisions to call the police.** In addition, both internalized homophobia and level of outness were examined in a logistic
regression model with an additional predictor of victims' age. Hypothesis 3 states: **Victims’ age will negatively effect victims’ decisions to call the police.**

Researcher expected that a lesbian with high levels of internalized homophobia was less likely to call the police in cases of domestic violence. Conversely, lesbians with high levels of outness were more likely to ask for police intervention. It was anticipated that older victims were more likely to call the police in a lesbian domestic violence situation than younger victims.

This study also examined the perspectives of these women with regard to the reasons victims did not call the police and their experiences with police when the police responded to the domestic violence incident. It was expected that lesbian victims of domestic violence would reveal a range of perceived treatment by police, from positive to negative. With these purposes in mind, the research design was multi-faceted and included various levels of assessment. While the nature of this study was somewhat exploratory, previously tested instruments were utilized to insure reliability and validity of the findings.

An explanatory study was conducted with lesbian victims of domestic violence through an Internet survey instrument. The proposed research was quantitative, but included some
open-ended questions. This allowed the researcher an opportunity to write in a few qualitative questions in specific areas of the survey in order to investigate the victims’ decision on whether or not to call police. The study design included an evaluation of three independent variables including internalized homophobia, levels of outness, and age. These variables were tested in regards to their impact on the dichotomous dependent variable of the decision to call the police. The criteria for inclusion in this proposed study sample was a woman who identified herself as a lesbian who has experienced a lesbian domestic violence incident.

The survey instrument (see Appendix A) was posted on an online survey website called SurveyMonkey.com, (2007). Their web site service provides:

A professional subscription is only $19.95 USD/month (or only $200.00 USD/year), and includes up to 1000 responses per month. If you exceed 1000 survey responses in any given month, there is an additional charge of $0.05 USD per survey response. There are no long-term contracts, and you can cancel at any time. As a professional subscriber, you have access to all the advanced features of SurveyMonkey. You can create an unlimited number of surveys, with an unlimited
number of pages and questions. Using just your web browser, create your survey with our intuitive survey editor. Select from over a dozen types of questions (single choice, multiple choice, rating scales, drop-down menus, and more...). (p. 2)

A welcome page was provided for participants, along with a means of consent for the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This consent was obtained when the participant entered the survey. These forms were motivational and helpful, with clear instructions for completing or exiting the survey. Participants voluntarily took part in this study and were not asked for any identifying information allowing participants to maintain anonymity. Participants were not compensated in any way for their participation.

Individuals who were interested in participating in this study could either log-on to the survey directly at www.surveymonkey.com/rainbowsurvey or contact the researcher for more information by e-mail at dartk@csusb.edu or phone at 909-844-5686. If contacted, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and answered any questions (Dillman and Bowker, 2001).

Due to the sensitivity of this subject matter and the possibility of emotional upset, all precautions were taken to address the concerns of the participants. Having to recall
and admit past behaviors can cause problems and emotional stress for participants (Schwarz, 1999). Respondents were debriefed upon completion of the survey when necessary. Any questions were answered and comments regarding the survey instrument were graciously accepted.

Operational Definitions

Several terms require definition in order to clarify the research concepts.

Lesbian. Renzetti (1992) describes the word lesbian as a label that depicts a same-sex relationship between two women.

Relationship. In this research, a relationship was defined as dating, living together, or partners, as these are the accepted definitions of relationships in the lesbian community (Ristock, 2002).

Lesbian Domestic Violence. Is defined as any behavior that is used by a woman to control another woman (Renzetti et al., 2001).

Internalized Homophobia. Herek et al., (1997) operationalized internalized homophobia as the dislike of one's own homosexual feelings and behavior, hostile and rejecting attitudes toward other gay/lesbian people, unwillingness to disclose one's homosexuality to others and acceptance of societal stereotypes about homosexuality.
Level of Outness. - defined as the extent that a lesbian is out-of-the-closet about her sexual identity to society, including family, friends, acquaintances, and employers (Ristock 2002).

These definitions are consistent with those found in the literature on lesbian domestic violence police response, the literature on homophobia, along with the literature on outness and lesbian relationship violence.

Data Collection

The researcher used an Internet survey that included several modified survey instruments from previous research along with other questions. Electronic surveys are becoming increasingly common (Lazar and Preece, 1999). The use of Internet surveys provides access to groups and individuals who would be ordinarily difficult to reach. Research has shown that when compared with samples collected via traditional methods, online samples are just as diverse and just as likely to provide accurate information (Gosling, et al., 2004). Online data collection of lesbian research offers a unique opportunity to obtain information on this otherwise hidden population (Savin-Williams and Ream, 2003).

Harris Polling estimates 127 million or two-thirds of American adults have access to the Internet. Furthermore, they state that 13.5 million of these people are gay and
lesbians. The Internet has given lesbians who are "not out" unlimited access to lesbian political and social life with anonymity (Soto, 2006). Lesbians who are not out about their sexuality are unlikely to be active in the lesbian community or frequent lesbian establishments such as bars or support centers. This limits their access through traditional research methods such as paper surveys or face-to-face interviews (Riggle et al., 2005).

The results from the Harris Poll also found that excluding e-mail, nearly twice as many gays and lesbians (32%) say they are online 24 plus hours per week, compared to 18 percent of heterosexuals. In addition, gays and lesbians use online social networks, such as MySpace more than heterosexuals (Soto, 2006). As a social networking website, MySpace.com has become a popular cultural pastime for many people. It currently has over 75 million users, making it the most popular social networking site online. On MySpace, users can search for friends, find a date, advertise their businesses, and post invitations to events and support groups. There is also a sub-group just for gays and lesbians (Gangemi, 2006).

Several universities have utilized Internet surveys to conduct research studies. Koch and Emrey (2001), from the University of California Los Angeles and the University of
New Hampshire respectively, published a paper titled “The Internet and Opinion Measurement: Surveying Marginalized Populations”. Through their research findings, they concluded that the Internet could be a valuable tool to reach difficult populations. Other prominent universities include, but are not limited to the Universities of Kentucky, Indiana, Maryland, and Southern California, along with, Northern Illinois University, Ohio State University, and Georgetown University.

**Sampling**

Approximately 2000 cards containing the web-page address (see Appendix B) were distributed at the Dinah Shore Golf Weekend held in the Palm Springs, California area. This event has been held annually since 1972 and reportedly attracts over 60,000 lesbians each year, therefore, it is said to be the biggest gathering of lesbians in the world (Ryzik, 2007).

Cards were also distributed at various Gay and Lesbian Centers along with local lesbian drinking establishments. In addition, notices inviting lesbians to participate in the survey were placed in chat rooms, such as MySpace and periodicals such as “Lesbian News.” In addition, snowball sampling was utilized, as participants were asked to distribute cards to lesbian friends and family interested in
participating in the study. Berger (1984) found the snowball strategy to be particularly useful for recruiting participants who do not frequent lesbian groups or organizations.

Participants

Lesbian participants are difficult to contact, and many lesbians are reluctant to disclose information about their sexual orientation and relationship. Historically, there has been and continues to be an overwhelming silence about lesbian domestic violence. Violence in lesbian relationships is as real as in heterosexual relationships (Mahari, 2006). Therefore, the combined status of being lesbian and a victim of domestic violence present a unique challenge for the researcher. Since there is no single list of lesbians, obtaining a large non-biased sample was difficult.

Survey Access

Several methods were utilized for participants to reach the website SurveyMonkey.com and complete the survey. To determine how participants got to the survey, an open-ended question was used asking, “How did you find this survey”. The written answers were grouped and added (see Table 1). Almost 60% of the participants responded that they had learned of the survey through the Internet sites MySpace and Olivia.com. The newsletters ProSuzy and COE accounted for 16% of the
participants reaching the survey, along with 16% saying friends told them about the survey. The remaining breakdown included four people stating they learned about the survey through their church and four from periodicals such as Lesbian News and the Desert Daily Guide. Three participants said they learned of the survey through their local Gay & Lesbian Center, and one participant from a postcard (see Table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet (MySpace / Olivia.com)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters (ProSuzy / COE)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals (Lesbian News/Desert Daily Guide)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay &amp; Lesbian Centers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instrumentation

The instruments for this research were based on various instruments utilized in previous studies. Modifications were made to all questionnaire items in order to focus exclusively on lesbians for the purpose of this study. The following tests were administered in order to obtain necessary information for evaluation of this problem.

1. Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHS)  
   (Herek et al., 1997)

2. Outness Inventory Test (OIT)  
   (Mohr and Fassinger 2000)

3. Hurt Insulted Threatened Screamed at Test (HITS)  
   (Sherin and Sinacore et al., 1998)

4. Abusive Behavior Inventory  
   (Sheppard and Campbell, 1992)

5. Police Effectiveness and Response

6. Demographics

Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHS). To test for internalized homophobia, the women’s version of the IHS was utilized. These Internalized Homophobia items were originally derived from the diagnostic criteria for ego-dystonic homosexuality presented in the 3rd edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Herek et al., 1997).

Items were administered to a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Using the
nine items, a mean computation method was used to identify an IHP score for each participant. To this end, scores ranged from 1 (representing low to no internalized homophobia) to 4 (representing high-internalized homophobia). Herek et al., (1997) used the IHP to assess internalized homophobia and its correlates among lesbians. Their findings suggest a Cronbach’s alpha of .71 for women (see Appendix A).

Outness Inventory Test. To determine the level of outness, the Outness Inventory Test designed by Mohr and Fassinger (2000) was administered. This ten-item scale is designed to assess the degree to which lesbians are open about their sexual orientation (see Appendix A). Interpretation of high scores on the subscales are as follows: (a) Out to World (4 items; [alpha] = .79), one's sexual orientation is known by and openly discussed with heterosexual friends, work peers, work supervisors, and strangers; (b) Out to Family (4 items; [alpha] = .74), one's sexual orientation is known by and openly discussed with family members; and (c) Out to Religion (2 items; [alpha] = .97), one's sexual orientation is known by and openly discussed with members and leaders of one's religious community. The designers relay that validity cannot be generalized to subpopulations of lesbian individuals that
are not represented in this sample and should be cross validated in other samples (see Appendix A).

**Hurt Insulted Threatened Screamed at Test.** Experiences of domestic violence was tested utilizing the HITS Test (see Appendix A). Sherin and Sinacore et al. (1998) developed the Hurt Insulted Threatened Screamed at test. This instrument includes four questions utilizing a 5-point Likert scale. There is a minimum score of 4 and a maximum score of 20. A score greater than 11 identifies someone as a victim of domestic violence. The developer states that this test has good consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80. Moreover, it has good concurrent validity with comparison instrument (Conflict Tactics Scale CTS) with correlation of 0.85 and good construct validity, being able to differentiate non-abused from abused persons. Limitations are that respondents may vary in their interpretation of the frequency terms.

**Abusive Behavior Inventory.** The abusive behavior inventory is a 30-item scale with two subscales that measure the frequency of physical and psychological abusive behaviors. The physical abuse subscale includes 13 items (two of which assess sexual abuse). This test is used to test females with current or former intimate partners.

On the Abusive Behavior Inventory scale, participants indicate how often the abuse experience
described in each item has occurred. This is based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from never to very frequently. A total score for abuse is derived by summing the numbers endorsed on the Abuse scale. Thus, a maximum score of five is possible for each of the 30 items on the abuse scale, giving a total maximum score of 150. Shepard and Campbell (1992) report good reliability for this measure, with Cronbach’s values ranging from 0.70 to 0.92, as well as good criterion-related validity, good construct validity (both convergent and discriminant), and good factor validity.

Scoring Instructions: Physical abuse items include 6, 7, 14, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30. Item 21 is not included in subscale computation. The mean score of these items is computed by summing the values of the items and dividing by the applicable number of items. Higher scores are indicative of greater physical abuse (see Appendix A).

Police Effectiveness. Through a questionnaire designed by this researcher, participants evaluate police effectiveness and police response. This is a three-section survey. The first section is a survey utilizing a 4-point Likert scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."
The first section dissects the victim’s reasons for not calling the police in a lesbian domestic violence situation.

The second section examines how the responding police officer treated the victim and abuser. This section scrutinizes the officers' response to the lesbian domestic violence call. The last section evaluates the action taken by the Police officer. (see Appendix A).

**Demographics.** The demographics questionnaire asked respondent's their numeric age, ethnicity/race, education level, employment, annual income, preferred descriptor name, relationship, and City, State and Country of residence. These data were used to ascertain differentials in willingness to call the police. (see Appendix A).

**Limitations**

Due to the hidden nature of the lesbian community, face-to-face interviews would have been difficult (Thompson et al., 2003). Traditional methods of collecting data from the lesbian community have resulted in a sample of lesbians who were likely to be out-of-the-closet regarding their sexuality. They are usually older, with higher incomes, higher education levels, and participate more actively in the lesbian community (Riggle et al., 2005). These sampling issues inhibit the researchers' ability to generalize study
results to the entire lesbian community. This questions the obtained results reliability and validity by using self-reported data.
CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS

Introduction
Survey results are reported in this chapter. SPSS v15 was used for all descriptive and inferential analyses. The analyses addressed the following research hypotheses.

Hypotheses
Hypothesis One: High levels of internalized homophobia will negatively affect victims’ willingness to call the police.

Hypothesis Two: Low level of outness will negatively affect victims’ willingness to call police.

Hypothesis Three: Victims’ age will negatively affect victims’ decision to call the police.

Sample Characteristics
One hundred ninety internet surveys were collected for analysis, however not all of the participants completed the demographic questions of the survey. Participants were asked to verify that they were in or have been in a female-to-female sexual relationship and experienced lesbian domestic violence. The sample summarized in Table 2 (see Table 2)
consists of one hundred thirty-nine participants that completed the survey demographic section.

Of the one hundred thirty-nine participants, the majority (82%) were between the ages of twenty-one to fifty. Only eighteen were over fifty and eight were less than twenty-one years old. In addition, the majority of participants were Caucasian (81%), with nine African Americans, seven Hispanics, three Asians, three American Indians, and four participants specified as other. Two-thirds (63%) were college educated, with the remaining participants having a high school diploma, except for three having a GED and one had dropped out of school (see Table 2).

Close to three quarters (73%) of the participants reported being employed in the professional or business field. Of the remaining participants, twelve were blue-collar workers, nine were unemployed, and eighteen were students. Two thirds of the participants (61%) had an income of $40,000 or less. Thirty-eight had an income of $40,001-$80,000, with nine at $80,001-$100,000 and six over $100,000. (see Table 2)

Just over three quarters of the women, (77%) described themselves as Lesbian. Of the remaining participants, eight identified as gay, three as a dyke, three as homosexual, twelve as bisexual, and one as transgendered. Five of the participants used no label to describe themselves. Almost two
thirds (61%) of the participants stated that they were currently in a committed relationship with thirty-two claiming to be single, but dating and twenty-three single but not dating.

An open-ended question asked the participants where they were from. One hundred twenty-five participants answered the question. The locations were summarized with the majority (94%) being from the United States. These results were fairly divided between the West, Central, and Eastern sections of the country. The remaining 6% consisted of four participants from the United Kingdom, three participants from Canada, and one participant from Mexico. (see Table 2)
Table 2.
Demographic Summary (N = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Called Police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(4.4)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>(30.2)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>(13.7)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>(17.6)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 60</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(7.1)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 - over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(2.7)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response/missing</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>(24.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>(81.0)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(5.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(6.0)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropped Out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>(34.0)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>(40.0)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Degree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>(23.0)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $20,000</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>(27.0)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$21,001 - $40,000</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>(34.0)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,001 - $60,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(20.0)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,001 - $80,000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(8.0)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,001 - $100,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(7.0)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $100,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(4.0)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify As</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>(77.0)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(6.0)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyke</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(9.0)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgendered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Label</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(4.0)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single / Not Dating</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(16.0)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single / Dating</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>(23.0)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnered</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>(61.0)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>125</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>(36.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(30.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesbian domestic violence was reported in 20% of current relationships and 79% of past relationships. Of these current relationships, both the abuse and the relationship had been going on for one to five years. Over one-third (30.4%) of the abusers were between the ages of 22 and 30 years with almost another third (28.3%) between the ages of 31 and 40 years. The majority of the abuse was reported to be equally verbal (37.6%) and emotional (37.6%). Physical abuse accounted for 21% and for sexual abuse four percent. There was a restraining order issued in only nine percent of the cases, and one-fourth of the victims had experienced stalking by the abuser. (see Table 3)
Table 3.
Descriptive Statistics Lesbian Domestic Violence (N = 28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current relationship:</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1-5 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuser age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 30</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restraining order</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those participants who had experienced previous lesbian domestic violence incidents reported having one abusive relationship (46.5%) with 33% reporting two incidents. The length of the relationship and duration of the abuse coincided with the participants reporting in a current relationship at one to five years for both. These participants also reported 64% of the abuse was emotional/verbal with 26% being physical and 11% being sexual. A restraining order had been obtained in 14% of the cases, while 33% had experience being stalked by the abuser. (see Table 4)
Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics Lesbian Domestic Violence (N = 110)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous relationship:</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1-5 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Abusive relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal / Emotional</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restraining order</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

Information was initially collected for 190 cases. Of these cases, eight were missing all survey items related to the level of outness, and these cases were removed from analysis. The remaining 182 cases were reviewed for missing data across variables. Forty-four cases (24%) were missing information for the categorical variable of age. The researcher developed an additional dummy variable category of No Response/Missing in order to include the cases in the inferential analysis. Researcher then ran all inferential analyses with the dummy coded missing age variable (see Table 5), and then without the dummy coded age variable (see Table 6). Inclusion of the dummy coded age variable caused and inflated standard error for logistic regression coefficients. Therefore, the researcher determined that a better model fit was achieved with the omission of the dummy coded missing age category. All cases missing data for the category of Age were removed from all inferential analyses, leaving 138 cases (see Table 6).

The researcher used Person Mean Substitution (PMS) to impute missing survey item responses on the 138 cases used in inferential analysis. The PMS approach replaces missing scale items with the mean of responses for other items that were answered by a particular person. PMS assumes that
because the survey items are assessing the same construct, the individual's responses for answered survey questions are indicative of the potential responses to the items that are missing. Because PMS is computationally simpler, similar in its efficiency, advocated by other researchers and more likely to be an option on statistical software packages, it is the method of choice (King, 1998).

Imputation nearly always gives reduced variance estimates. However, since logistic regression requires a larger sample size, and the population for this type of study was not easily recruited and polled, it was important to the researcher to retain as much data as possible for analysis. Imputation allowed for retention of cases that would otherwise be deleted. Frequency information for data retained and imputed for inferential analysis is listed in Table 5 and Table 6.
Table 5.

Descriptive Statistics for Inferential Analysis Variables with Inclusion of Age Category of No Response/Missing (N = 182)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Called Police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 60</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 - over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response/missing</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total IHS (9 items)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.59</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range = 9 - 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total OIT (9 items)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28.24</td>
<td>6.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range = 9 - 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. IHS = Internalized Homophobia Scale; OIT = Outness Inventory Test; CI = Confidence interval. For both survey instruments of IHS and OIT, scale values were recorded as 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly Agree.
Table 6.

Descriptive Statistics for Inferential Analysis Variables without Inclusion of Age Category of No Response/Missing (N = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Called Police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 60</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 - over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total IHS (9 items)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 9 - 23</td>
<td>12.67</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total OIT (9 items)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 9 - 36</td>
<td>28.16</td>
<td>6.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. IHS = Internalized Homophobia Scale; OIT = Outness Inventory Test; CI = Confidence interval. For both survey instruments of IHS and OIT, scale values were recorded as 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly Agree.
Logistic regression is sensitive to outliers and multicollinearity. The retained data (N = 138) were investigated for outliers. SPSS EXPLORE was used to create box-plots of all study variables for the researcher to view visual outliers. No outliers were found. A coefficients table was generated with SPSS to investigate the assumption of multicollinearity. Collinearity statistics indicated high tolerance values for all study variables, (all values were greater than 0.1) therefore the assumption of no multicollinearity was met.

Two survey instruments were used for the inferential analyses. The Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHS) and the Outness Inventory Test (OIT). Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to check the internal consistency reliability of the survey instruments with the data obtained in this study. Cronbach’s alpha for the IHS scale was .872, and for the OIT scale, the value was .844. A value of .70 or above is considered acceptable; therefore, the survey instruments are reliable for the dataset in this study.

**Inferential Analyses**

Correlation between the predictor variables of Summed IHS, Summed OIT and the categorical variable of Age were investigated. A check of the scatter plot of data points indicated that the assumption of linearity was violated, and
Pearson’s Product Moment Correlations require either continuous or dichotomous variable values (age was grouped into six categories and did not meet the requirements for Pearson’s test).

The researcher decided to use the nonparametric correlation test of Spearman’s rho, which requires only the assumption of independent observations, which was met. The correlation coefficient is a number between +1 and -1. This number reveals the magnitude and direction of the association between two variables. The closer to +1 or -1, the stronger the correlation (Walsh & Ollenburger, 2001).

Significant results indicated a small negative correlation between the variables of Summed IHS and Age \( r = -0.195, n = 138, p < .05 \) indicating higher levels of internalized homophobia associated with lower age groups. A medium negative correlation between Summed IHS and Summed OIT \( r = -0.470, n = 138, p < .01 \) indicates higher levels of internalized homophobia are associated with lower levels of outness.

Negative correlations like these mean that when the value of one variable goes up, the value of the other variable goes down. Therefore, it appears that as a woman gets older, her internalized homophobia goes down; and when
a woman’s internalized homophobia goes down, her level of outness increases. No significant associations were indicated between the variables of Age and Summed OIT.

Binary logistic regression was performed on “Called Police” as the outcome on two continuous predictors of Summed IHS and Summed OIT, and the categorical predictor of Age grouped into six categories: a) Less than 21 years; b) 21-30 years; c) 31-40 years; d) 41-50 years, e) 51-60 years, f) 61 years and over; g) Missing/No Response (see Table 7).

Of the 138 cases included in the model, 100 cases did not call police and were coded as 0 = no. Thirty-eight cases called police and were coded as 1 = yes. A test of the full model with all three predictors against a constant only model (no predictors, and assuming that none of the cases called the police) was statistically significant $X^2 (7, N = 138) = 15.32, p < .032$, indicating that the predictors, as a set, reliably differentiated between those who called the police and those who did not. A summary of the results of the three-predictor regression model are shown in Table 7.
Table 7.

Logistic Regression Analysis of Outcome of Called Police as a Function of Summed Internalized Homophobia Scale, Summed Outness Inventory Test, and Age Grouped by Category (N = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>95% CI for Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summed IHS</td>
<td>-0.103</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>2.756</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td>0.798 - 1.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summed OIT</td>
<td>-0.029</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.636</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>0.971</td>
<td>0.904 - 1.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 21 - 30</td>
<td>0.515</td>
<td>1.132</td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>1.673</td>
<td>0.182 - 15.382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 31 - 40</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>0.661</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.416</td>
<td>2.583</td>
<td>0.262 - 25.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 41 - 50</td>
<td>1.579</td>
<td>1.140</td>
<td>1.919</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>4.850</td>
<td>0.519 - 45.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 51 - 60</td>
<td>0.610</td>
<td>1.265</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.630</td>
<td>1.840</td>
<td>0.154 - 21.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age &gt; 60 years</td>
<td>3.426</td>
<td>1.569</td>
<td>4.771</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>30.76</td>
<td>1.422 - 665.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>1.826</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.939</td>
<td>1.151</td>
<td>.... - ....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. IHS = Internalized Homophobia Scale; OIT = Outness Inventory Test; CI = Confidence interval.
Binary Logistic Regression Model - Hypothesis

**Hypothesis Question 1:** High levels of internalized homophobia negatively effect the victims' decision to call the police.

**Null Hypothesis 1:** Summed IHS scores will not be a significant factor in predicting the likelihood that a victim calls police.

**Alternative Hypothesis 1:** Summed IHS will be a significant factor in predicting the likelihood that a victim calls police.

**Conclusion:** IHS was not a significant predictor in the binary logistic regression model; therefore, do not reject the null hypothesis.

**Note:** Although the predictor of Summed IHS was not statistically significant, the equation of the logistic regression model indicates a negative coefficient for the predictor \( B = -0.103 \). This indicates that higher scores on the IHS scale will negatively effect the decision to call police.

**Hypothesis 2:** Low levels of outness negatively effect the victims' decision to call the police.

**Null Hypothesis 2:** Summed OIT scores will not be a significant factor in predicting the likelihood that a victim calls police.
Alternative Hypothesis 2: Summed OIT scores will be a significant factor in predicting the likelihood that a victim calls police.

Conclusion: Summed OIT was not a significant predictor in the binary logistic regression model; therefore, do not reject the null hypothesis.

Note: Although the predictor of Summed OIT was not statistically significant, the equation of the logistic regression model indicates a negative coefficient for the predictor ($B = -0.029$). This indicates that higher scores on the OIT scale will negatively effect the decision to call police.

Hypothesis 3: The victims' age effects the victims' decision to call the police.

Null Hypothesis 3: The victims' age will not be a significant factor in predicting the likelihood that a victim calls police.

Alternative Hypothesis 3: The victims' age will be a significant factor in predicting the likelihood that a victim calls police.

Conclusion: The victims' age was a significant predictor in the binary logistic regression model; therefore, reject the null hypothesis.
Note: The predictor of age was statistically significant \((p = .033)\), indicating that a woman over the age of 30 is 2.43 times more likely to call police than a woman less than or equal to 30 years of age.

Assessment of Model Fit

The logistic regression model's goodness-of-fit was assessed using the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test, \(X^2 (8, N = 138) = 7.633, p = .470\). For this test, a p-value greater than .05 indicates the data fits well in the model. Goodness-of-fit was not indicated for this model.

Variability of the model was assessed using two statistics, Cox and Snell R-Square \((r^2 = .105)\) and Nagelkerke R-Square \((r^2 = .152)\). These two tests indicate that between 10.5\% and 15.2\% of the variability in the data is explained by the predictors of the model. Percentage accuracy in classification (PAC) of the correct outcome category of Called Police for the three predictor model was 74.6\%, an improvement over the base model of constant only (no predictors) percentage correct of 72.5\%.

Wald statistics indicated that only the Age category predictor of "greater than 61" contributed significantly to the model. The Age category was entered into the model by SPSS with the first category, age less than 21, as the reference to which the other age categories were compared.
For this model, significance for the greater than 61 years category indicates that when compared to women under the age of 21, the groups significantly differ in the outcome of calling police. The odds ratio for the greater than 61 years category is 30.76, indicating that a woman over the age of 61 is 30.76 times more likely to call police than a woman less than 21 years of age.

**Binary Logistic Regression Model - Age: Two Categories**

The Researcher determined that the Age predictor variable might have too many sub-groups that could affect the results. To make the Age predictor a category more even in number, a second binary logistic regression was performed which collapsed the Age predictor variable into two groups: a) less than or equal to 30 years of age \( (n = 63) \); b) greater than 30 years of age \( (n = 75) \). The results from this logistic regression are included in Table 8.
Table 8.

Logistic Regression Analysis of Outcome of Called Police as a Function of Summed Internalized Homophobia Scale, Summed Outness Inventory Test, and Age Grouped by Category (N = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>95% CI for Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summed IHS</td>
<td>-0.084</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>1.988</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>0.920</td>
<td>0.819 1.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summed OIT</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>0.920 1.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 30 years</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>0.417</td>
<td>4.563</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>2.435</td>
<td>1.076 5.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>1.513</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.973</td>
<td>0.950</td>
<td>.... ....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. IHS = Internalized Homophobia Scale; OIT = Outness Inventory Test; CI = Confidence interval.
The model with the three predictors (Age grouped into two categories) against a constant only model (no predictors, and assuming that none of the cases called police) was statistically significant \( X^2 (3, N = 138) = 8.26, p < .041 \), indicating that the predictors, as a set, reliably differentiated between those cases who called police and those who did not.

The model's goodness of fit was assessed using the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test, \( X^2 (8, N = 138) = 9.09, p = .355 \). Since the p-value is greater than .05, the model was determined to be a good fit for the data.

Variability of the model was assessed using two statistics, Cox and Snell R-square \( (r^2 = .058) \) and Nagelkerke R-square \( (r^2 = .084) \). These two tests indicate that between 5.8% and 8.4% of the variability in the data is explained by the predictors in this model. Percentage accuracy in classification (PAC) of the correct outcome category of Called Police did not improve over the baseline model of constant only (no predictors) both models resulted in a PAC of 72.5%.

Wald statistics indicated that only the variable of Age contributed significantly to the model, \( X^2 (1, N = 138) = 4.56, p = .033 \). The Age category was entered into the model by SPSS with the first category, age less than or equal to
30, as the reference to which the other age categories (age greater than 30) was compared. For this model, significance for the age over 30 category indicates that women over 30 significantly differ from women under the age of 30 in the outcome of calling police. The odds ratio for the age greater than 30 years category is 2.435, indicating that a woman over the age of 30 is 2.43 times more likely to call police than a woman less than or equal to 30 years of age.

Although the second model indicated significance, it was not a better predictive model than the baseline model with no predictors. The first logistic regression may have had too many categories for the age predictor. It is recommended that further research utilizing quantitative analysis include the age category as a continuous variable rather than as a categorical variable.

Police Effectiveness

The survey results showed that of the 182 participants, 144 did not call the police and 38 did call the police.

Police were not Called

To determine why victims did not call the police, participants were asked the question: "As a victim, you DID NOT call the police because calling the police would result in" (see Table 9). These responses were then rated with a
Likert scale to determine their agreement or disagreement with each statement. 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, and 4 = Strongly Disagree (see Appendix A). Strongly Agree and Agree were combined into Agree, while Disagree and Strongly Disagree were combined into Disagree to improve research numbers (see Table 9).

The answer with the highest response percentage at 65% was “you do not self-identify as an abuse victim”. The second highest response percentage was 61%, as “your victimization would not be taken seriously by the police”. Over half of the women responded to three other questions including “you were ashamed” at 54%, “you were afraid of your partner” at 52%, and “you did not feel safe going to the police” at 52% (see Table 9).
Table 9.

Descriptive Statistics Reasons Did Not Call Police (N = 144)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a victim, you DID NOT call the police because calling the police would result in:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You do not self-identify as a victim</td>
<td>65% (94)</td>
<td>35% (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your victimization would not be taken seriously by the police</td>
<td>61% (88)</td>
<td>39% (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are too ashamed</td>
<td>54% (78)</td>
<td>46% (66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You were afraid of your partner</td>
<td>52% (75)</td>
<td>48% (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You didn’t feel safe going to the police</td>
<td>52% (75)</td>
<td>48% (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You felt that your sexual orientation was a barrier to getting help</td>
<td>47% (68)</td>
<td>53% (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have no idea where to go for help</td>
<td>45% (65)</td>
<td>55% (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You worried about anonymity and confidentiality</td>
<td>45% (65)</td>
<td>55% (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would increase prejudice and bias</td>
<td>44% (63)</td>
<td>56% (81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police would laugh at you</td>
<td>43% (62)</td>
<td>57% (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would reinforce homophobia</td>
<td>42% (60)</td>
<td>58% (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You would have to come out as Lesbian</td>
<td>31% (45)</td>
<td>68% (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You felt your butchness would make you look like the abuser</td>
<td>21% (30)</td>
<td>79% (118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The abuser might be outing</td>
<td>20% (29)</td>
<td>80% (115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The abuser threatened to out you</td>
<td>15% (22)</td>
<td>85% (122)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants were also asked a qualitative question to determine "What would have encouraged you to call the police". In a summary of responses, thirty participants said, "Better laws, education, and community acceptance, along with trained, and understanding police". Twenty-one participants said "physical violence". Sixteen participants said, "Nothing would have convinced them". In addition, one participant said, "if she was not drugged" and one participant said "I would have called the police if my abusing partner were not a cop".

Police were Called

The survey results showed that of the 182 participants, 144 did not call the police and 38 did call the police. To determine how the police responded when they were called, participants were asked the question: "You called the police and they were". Of the 38 participants that called the police, three-quarters of the participants responded that the police were courteous (70.7%) and professional (75.6%). The remaining participants responded that the officers were indifferent, rude, and verbally abusive. Two participants said the responding police were physically abusive and one participant reported that the police did not respond when called (see Table 10).
Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics Police Attitude When Called (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You called the police and they were:</td>
<td>% (#)</td>
<td>% (#)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courteous</td>
<td>70.7% (27)</td>
<td>29.3% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>75.6% (29)</td>
<td>24.4% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>38.5% (15)</td>
<td>61.5% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rude</td>
<td>29.3% (11)</td>
<td>70.7% (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally abusive</td>
<td>15.0% (6)</td>
<td>85.0% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically abusive</td>
<td>5.0% (2)</td>
<td>95.0% (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not respond to the call</td>
<td>2.6% (1)</td>
<td>97.4% (27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How the Police Responded

Participants who called the police (N = 38), were asked what the police officer did when they responded to the call. The question asked was “When the police responded to your situation, the Police Officer”. Almost 60% of the participants responded that the police officer separated the abuser and the victim, along with 42% responding that the officer counseled the abuser and the victim. In just over one-fourth of the cases (28.6%), the abuser was arrested. There were three cases where the victim was arrested. In 14% of the cases, the officers laughed at the situation and left. Overall, three-fifths of the participants felt the police officer responded properly (see Table 11).
Table 11.

Descriptive Statistics Action Taken by Police (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When the police responded to your situation, the Police Officer:</td>
<td>% (#)</td>
<td>% (#)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrested the abuser</td>
<td>28.6% (11)</td>
<td>71.4% (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrested the victim</td>
<td>7.1% (3)</td>
<td>92.9% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrested both victim and abuser</td>
<td>2.4% (1)</td>
<td>97.6% (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated the abuser and the victim</td>
<td>59.5% (23)</td>
<td>40.5% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseled the abuser and the victim</td>
<td>41.5% (16)</td>
<td>58.5% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughed at the situation and left</td>
<td>14.3% (5)</td>
<td>85.7% (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded properly</td>
<td>64.4% (24)</td>
<td>35.6% (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the first study to investigate lesbian domestic violence as to whether the victim called the police. Lesbian domestic violence has received little attention, as it is just beginning to be recognized as a social problem. Legislation on domestic violence provides numerous benefits to the heterosexual woman, but few to the lesbian victim. The first step in changing the predicament of the victim of lesbian domestic violence is to identify and accept the problem. This study advances our understanding of internalized homophobia, level of outness, and age, along with its impact on lesbians.

The lack of empirically based studies on the subject of lesbian domestic violence is attributed to a hard-to-identify and hard-to-reach population (Koch & Emrey, 2001). The victim is not only a lesbian, but she is also a victim of domestic violence. Since there is no previous dataset on this subject, this study contributes to the understanding of lesbian domestic violence encompassing a large sample (n = 182) of current or previous victims of lesbian domestic violence. This is an exceptionally large number considering the subject matter.
Researchers need to consider the effect of all the aforementioned factors in understanding the victim as they construct the inaccessibility of police, courts, and services to the lesbian victim of domestic violence. McClennen et al. (2002) state, "Domestic violence in same-sex relationships needs interventions and strategies on multiple levels, including community, organizational and societal" (p.289).

Limitations

The major limitation of this study was the difficulty in locating an un-biased sample of victims of lesbian domestic violence. To combat this difficulty this researcher utilized an Internet survey. However, this resulted in the self-selection of the participant and self-selection bias. The use of the Internet survey may have excluded participants who have limited access and knowledge of computers, especially people with a lower socioeconomic status. Another consideration of using the Internet is that the researcher has no idea of who is responding to the survey. It would be hard to generalize this research to the lesbian population. The bias in this research questions the reliability and validity of the results. Researchers should consider using several different outlets to contact this hard to reach group of lesbians. They should also consider conducting the
research for a longer period to reach this community through snowball sampling.

Babbie (2005) contends there is always a risk that people's answers to questionnaire items may not reflect their true feelings or their ensuing actions. He continues that the response rate is the single most important indicator of how much confidence the researcher can place in the results. A low response rate can bias a study.

The response rate for this difficult to locate research population was \((N = 182)\). The question remains, is \(N = 182\) a high or low response rate for this population? Since precise numbers of the lesbian population are non-existent, it is problematical to establish if this is a representative sample. In addition, information on those who did not respond was uncollectible. Therefore, a response rate could not be determined. It is highly possible that non-responders suffered high levels of internalized homophobia, were not out about their lesbianism, and therefore not willing to risk their anonymity by revealing their sexual orientation.

Another limitation of this research was the demographic information for age of the respondents was requested in ranges of under 21, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and 61 and over. These ages were combined into two groups of under 30,
along with 31 and over for testing. Researchers should consider requesting actual age instead of ranges of age as it could result in more revealing information about the victim of lesbian domestic violence.

Research Findings

Of the 190 women who participated in the online survey, 52 did not complete the entire survey; therefore, they were dropped from the analysis. Of the remaining 138 records retained, 100 women did not call the police while 38 women did call the police.

Results of the analyses indicated that women who were over the age of 30 were over two times more likely to call the police after a domestic dispute than women who were less than or equal to 30 years of age. These results were statistically significant. Statistically non-significant results indicated that lesbians with higher levels of internalized homophobia were less likely to call police after a domestic dispute. In addition, lesbians who were less "out" in their homosexuality were also less likely to call police after a domestic dispute.

Other findings indicated that a lesbian's degree of internalized homophobia decreases with age and that a
lesbian's degree of outness increases when her degree of internalized homophobia decreases.

Future Research

It is clear that more research needs to be completed to protect the victim of lesbian domestic violence. Suggestions for future research are to continue to gather data on lesbian domestic violence, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to discover issues vital to decreasing lesbian victimization. Riggle and Rostosky (2005) emphasize that the lack of data and funding for research creates a serious obstacle for researchers to advance the study on lesbian domestic violence. However, access to this community through the Internet, allowing anonymity and confidentiality, should facilitate future research.

Results from this study and the dataset, could produce numerous opportunities for researchers to develop and analyze lesbian domestic violence. This dataset is extremely valuable due to the difficulty in being able to poll 190 lesbians regarding a rather disagreeable subject, lesbian domestic violence. The possibilities of further research are virtually endless. One possible improvement to this research would be to have done the regression with age as a continuous variable instead of categorical.
Policy Implications

Discriminatory and prejudicial elements of society need to be changed so that lesbians do not have to live in fear. Society needs to be open to or at least be accepting of the lesbian lifestyle. This would reduce internalized homophobia and allow the lesbian to be more open about her sexuality, thereby taking the threat of outing the victim away from the abuser.

In addition, policy implications such as the legalization of same-sex marriage would provide lesbians the same rights and services provided to heterosexual victims of domestic violence, such as police, courts, shelters, and other services. Riggle and Rostosky (2005) state,

The denial of the right of same-sex couples to enter into a civil marriage is an institutionalized form of stigma. This stigmatization, especially in the context of the current public debates and actions, devalues the relationships of same-sex couples and ultimately induces psychological harm. A public policy that induces harm by devaluation of a group of citizens is a public health issue. To apply Chief Justice Warren's words from Brown v Board of Education (1954), to separate same-sex relationships from
others of similar circumstance solely because of their choice of intimate partner "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." (p. 221)

By continuing to exclude same-sex couples from marriage and offering them domestic partnership sends the message that lesbians are second-class citizens. Separate is still not equal (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 2004). The difference between a marriage and a domestic partnership is federal benefits and protections. The General Accounting Office (GAO) states that there are more than 1,100 rights and protections in marriage. Domestic partnerships are not federally recognized; therefore, any benefits given by a state are subject to federal taxation (Hartman, 2007).

An example of the difference between a marriage and a domestic partnership became clear when an Orange County, California judge ordered Ron Garber to continue paying his ex-wife Melinda Kirkwood alimony, even though Kirkwood has a registered domestic partnership with another woman. The judge ruled that a domestic partnership is merely cohabitation, not marriage (ONLINE Lawyer Source, 2007).

Laws need to be changed to encompass lesbian violence to ensure that victims are equally protected regardless of
their sexual orientation. In this research, participants were asked, "What would have encouraged you to call the police". In a summary of responses, thirty participants said, "Better laws, diversity education, and community acceptance, along with better trained and understanding police".

Officer training in lesbian domestic violence issues should include anti-homophobic practices that could reduce the fear of ineffective police responses. Extensive training is needed for law enforcement in order to focus on the protection of victims and to treat this issue as the serious problem it is. They should treat the victim respectfully and with priority by removing the abuser from the scene. Finally, officers should not make stereotypic comments about lesbians or victims of domestic violence in general.

Lesbians need to be made aware of the problem of domestic violence and that help is available. As proven through this research study, possible ways of reaching this community is through the Internet, lesbian periodicals, centers, and events. A special effort should be made to reach the lower-socioeconomic areas as it is expected that lesbian domestic violence is prevalent in even higher numbers (West, 1998).
All of these steps could facilitate a safer environment for victims to seek assistance. Girshick (2002) states,

To address woman-to-woman sexual violence and battering requires a social change perspective. Agency staff, activists, and academics simultaneously have to work on changing cultural ideas challenging specific laws and heterosexism in the legal system, reaching out to stigmatized populations, applying for funds for expanded services, providing adequate training for advocates and staff, and very importantly, examining our underlying analysis of interpersonal violence. (p.212)

People should not assume that everyone they know is heterosexual. They might be surprised how many people they know that are in-the-closet, including members of their own family, friends, fellow students, and co-workers. Lesbians need to recognize that by living their lives in-the-closet and by trying to pass for heterosexual, it forces them to live in fear -- the invisible lesbian, scared straight.

Supportive Responses

Several organizations were supportive of this research. They placed the postcard with the web-site
address on their web pages, newsletters, and bulletin boards. A few of the groups sent emails in reply to the research. Following are several comments that were received. The largest response came from the web-site MySpace.com. Following are several comments left on the MySpace.com web page in response to this research.

Amber wrote,

You know its hard to believe that there is a group out there that cares about us lesbians, a woman being beat on by any sex is wrong I wish I had known about this 9 months ago cause the woman I was with put me in the hospital 4 times and I always wished there was someone that could help me and now there is ....thank you so very much for adding me ,I wish you the best with your research and if you ever need a hand please do not be afraid to message me on here or email me at badazzbabygir@yahoo.com....

Another respondent wrote, "I don't know if you cover this at all in your survey but how many women have "switched teams" because of violence, rape, abuse, etc... and have found it no different than the straight world by ending up in an abusive lesbian relationship?"
In summary, many comments left on MySpace.com thanked the researcher for doing this research. They were supportive of the effort and were anxious to know the results.

Other responses came by email. The first response was a result of a free advertisement placed in the "Gazette" in Florida.

Dear Dr. Parsons:

I am the editor of Womyn's Words, the lesbian monthly publication in St. Petersburg / Tampa, Florida, since 1983. I saw your ad in The Gazette calling for response to the issue of domestic violence in the lesbian community ... It has always been an emotional, ubiquitous part of our community and I am grateful to seeing it publicized again.

Respectfully,

Pat the Plumber,

Womyn's Words editor

Another email, received from Megan, at the GLBTA Resource Center at American University stated, "The work you are doing is very important and necessary in shedding light and promoting issues in GLBT Studies". Tom from UCLA said,
"Glad to post your postcard in our Center". The Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Affairs at the University of Michigan said, "Thanks for doing this important research, Best Wishes, Kevin". Brian from the Montrose Counseling Center said, "We deeply value the work that you are doing." Lastly, Celina, from The Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Center said, "Good Luck and I think this is a great topic, Please send postcards to be distributed".

Several other periodicals bear recognition for the contributions to this research including the ProSuzy Newsletter, Mama Raga Newsletter, Lesbian News, and the Desert Daily Guide (placed several free ads in their magazine). Online resources include Bella.Online.com, GASP digest.com, Outlook Mag.com, and Rim of the World.net. Other organizations that sent replies were The Pennsylvania State University Research Dept., The National Violence against Women Prevention Research Center, and Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence.
APPENDIX A

THE SURVEY
PART I
Use the following scale to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. Circle the corresponding number. There is no right or wrong answer.

1 = Strongly Disagree  2 = Disagree
3 = Agree  4 = Strongly Agree

1. I have tried to stop being attracted to women
2. If I could be heterosexual, I would
3. I wish I were not a Lesbian
4. Being a Lesbian is a personal shortcoming
5. I would like professional help to change from Lesbian to Straight
6. I have tried to be more sexually attracted to men
7. It is best to avoid involvement with Lesbians
8. I feel alienated from myself as a Lesbian
9. I wish I could develop erotic feelings about men

PART II
Use the following rating scale to describe how "OUT-OF-THE-CLOSET" you are to the people listed.

1 = Does not Know  2 = Probably Knows/Not talked about
3 = Knows/NOT talked about  4 = Knows/talked about

10. Mother
11. Father
12. Siblings (Sister/Brother)  
13. Relatives  
14. Straight Friends  
15. Work Peers  
16. Work Supervisors  
17. Religious Community  
18. Strangers  

PART III
Use the following scale to answer the next four questions.
1 = Never 2 = Rarely
3 = Sometimes 4 = Fairly Often 5 = Frequently
19. Hurts you physically
20. Insults or talks down to you
21. Threatens you with physical harm
22. Screams or curses at you

PART IV
23. Are you CURRENTLY in an abusive relationship  YES NO
   (If "NO", go to question #40 below)
24. How long has this abuse been happening
   Less than 6 months
   6 months - 1 year
   1 year - 5 years
   Over 5 years
25. How long have you been in this current relationship
Less than 6 months
6 months - 1 year
1 year - 5 years
Over 5 years

26. How old is your abuser
Less than 21
21-30
31-40
41-50
51-60
61 or older

27. Is the abuse (Check all that apply)
Verbal
Emotional
Physical
Sexual

28. Has a restraining order been issued

YES NO

29. Have there been any incidents of stalking

YES NO

30. Have you experienced PREVIOUS lesbian domestic violence incidents

YES NO

31. Approximately how many abusive relationship have you had

1 2 3 4 5 or more

32. During your last previous abuse incident, how old were you?
Less than 21
21-30
31-40
41-50
51-60
61 or older

33. During your last previous abuse incident, how old was your abuser
   Less than 21
   21-30
   31-40
   41-50
   51-60
   61 or older

34. During your last previous abuse incident, approximately how long did the abuse last
   Less than 6 months
   6 months - 1 year
   1 year - 5 years
   Over 5 years

35. During your last previous abuse incident, approximately how long was this relationship
   Less than 6 months
   6 months - 1 year
1 year - 5 years
Over 5 years
36. During your last previous abuse incident, was the abuse
(Check all that apply)
Verbal
Emotional
Physical
Sexual
37. During your last previous incident of abuse,
was there a restraining order issued YES NO
38. During your last previous incident of abuse,
were there any incidents of stalking YES NO

PART V
Here is a list of behaviors that many women report have been used by their partners. Please estimate how often these behaviors occurred during you Lesbian Domestic Violence incident.
1 = Never  2 = Rarely  3 = Occasionally
4 = Frequently  5 = Very Frequently
39. Called you a name or criticized you 12345
40. Kept you from doing something you wanted to do 12345
41. Gave you angry stares or looks 12345
42. Prevented you from having money for your use 12345
43. Made decisions by themselves 12345
44. Threatened to hit or throw something at you
45. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved you
46. Put down your family and friends
47. Accused you of flirting with someone else
48. Put you on an allowance
49. Used your children to threaten you
50. Upset because household chores were not done
51. Said things to scare you
52. Slapped, hit, or punched you
53. Made you do something humiliating or degrading
54. Checked up on you and your whereabouts
55. Drove recklessly when you were in the car
56. Pressured you to have sex
57. Refused to do housework or childcare
58. Threatened you with a knife, gun, or weapon
59. Spanked you
60. Told you that you were a bad parent
61. Stopped you from going to work or school
62. Threw, hit, kicked, or smashed something
63. Kicked you
64. Physically forced you to have sex
65. Threw you around
66. Physically attacked the sexual parts of your body
67. Choked or strangled you
68. Used a knife, gun, or other weapon against you  

PART VI

Use the following scale to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. There is no right or wrong answer.

1 = Strongly Agree  
2 = Agree  
3 = Disagree  
4 = Strongly Disagree

As a victim, you DID NOT call the police because calling the police would result in:

(If you called the police, skip to #85 below)

69. You would have to “COME OUT” as a Lesbian to the police  
70. The abuser threatened to “OUT” you to police or /others  
71. The abuser might be “OUTED” and lose job/family  
72. The police would laugh at you or ridicule you  
73. Your victimization would not be taken seriously by the police  
74. It would reinforce homophobia in the straight world  
75. It would increase prejudice and bias against Lesbians  
76. You were afraid of your partner  
77. You do not self-identify as an abuse victim
78. You had no idea where to go for help
79. You were too ashamed
80. You did not feel safe going to the police
81. You felt that your sexual orientation was a barrier to getting help
82. You worried about anonymity and confidentiality
83. You felt your “Butchness” would make you look like the abuser
84. What would have encouraged you to call the police?

You CALLED the police and they were: (Check all that apply)
85. Courteous  YES  NO
86. Professional  YES  NO
87. Indifferent  YES  NO
88. Rude  YES  NO
89. Verbally abusive  YES  NO
90. Physically abusive  YES  NO
91. DID NOT respond to the call  YES  NO

When the police responded to your situation, the Police Officer:
92. Arrested the abuser  YES  NO
93. Arrested the victim  YES  NO
94. Arrested both the victim and the abuser  YES  NO
95. Separated both the victim and the abuser  YES  NO
96. Counseled both the victim and the abuser YES NO
97. Laughed at the situation and left YES NO
98. Responded properly YES NO

PART VII
Please complete the following demographics to complete this survey, Thank You.

99. How old are you
   Less than 21
   21-30
   31-40
   41-50
   51-60
   61 or older

100. What is your race
     White
     Hispanic
     African American
     Asian
     American Indian
     Other

101. What is your level of education
     Dropped out
     GED
     High School Diploma
College Degree
Advanced Degree

102. What is your employment
Blue Collar
Business
Professional
Unemployed
Student

103. What is your approximate annual income
Under $20,000
$20,001-$40,000
$40,001-$60,000
$60,001-$80,000
$80,001-$100,000
Over $100,001

104. I describe or identify myself as:
Lesbian
Gay
Dyke
Homosexual
Bisexual
Transgendered
No Label

105. My relationship status is:
Single / NOT dating
Single / Dating
Partnered / Committed Relationship

106. I live in the following City, State, and Country

107. "Lesbians should be allowed to be married and enjoy the same rights, protections, and benefits as straight women."

AGREE DISAGREE
APPENDIX B

DISTRIBUTION CARD EXAMPLE
Help bring domestic violence in the
lesbian community out of the shadows...

You're invited to participate in a
ground-breaking study on the problem!

Take the Survey!
www.surveymonkey.com/rainbowsurvey
REFERENCES


Lawrence v. Texas, No. 02-102, Supreme Court of the United States, 539 U.S. 558 (2003).


context of learning, opportunity, and choice. Violence against Women, 9, (1), 10-46.


