

The relationship between trial data in judicial sentences and self-reported aggression in men convicted of violence against women

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Abstract

Background: The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2) is widely used to assess intimate partner violence (IPV). Given the limitations preventing the collection of dyadic data, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the offender's own self-reporting and the facts established in trial proceedings. This study assesses the relationship between aggression data self-reported by participants via CTS-2 and the data contained in convictions for partner abuse. **Method:** Two groups of men convicted of abuse against their female intimate partners or ex-partners (1,998 imprisoned offenders and 804 court-referred offenders), and 590 men from the community (general population) participated. The relationship was analyzed between the scores for self-reported CTS-2 items and violent behaviors described by proven facts. An ANCOVA with post-hoc comparisons (Bonferroni) was performed to assess the differences in CTS-2 scores between the three groups. **Results:** In the two groups of convicted participants, a significant relationship was found between CTS-2 items and the proven facts. Meanwhile, significant differences were found between the three groups in three CTS-2 subscales. **Conclusions:** The CTS-2 self-reported perpetrated aggression data provided by the convicted participants are related to the factual basis for convictions, and such data are therefore usable in forensic and psychological intervention contexts.

Keywords: CTS-2, self-reported aggression, abusers, gender violence, convictions.

Resumen

Relación entre hechos probados en sentencias judiciales y agresión autoinformada en hombres condenados por violencia de género.

Antecedentes: la Escala Táctica de Conflictos Revisada (CTS-2) es ampliamente utilizada para evaluar la violencia contra la pareja (VCP); dadas las limitaciones para obtener datos diádicos, es necesario examinar la relación entre el autoinforme de los maltratadores y las sentencias judiciales. Se evaluó la relación entre la agresión autoinformada mediante la CTS-2 y las condenas por maltrato de pareja. **Método:** participaron dos grupos de hombres condenados por maltrato contra su pareja o ex pareja femenina (1.998 internos en prisión y 804 derivados de la Justicia), y 590 hombres comunitarios (población general). Se analizó la relación entre las puntuaciones en los ítems de la CTS-2 y las conductas objetivadas por los hechos probados en las sentencias. Se realizó un ANCOVA con comparaciones post-hoc (Bonferroni) para evaluar las diferencias en la CTS-2 entre los tres grupos. **Resultados:** en los dos grupos de participantes condenados se encontró relación significativa entre algunos ítems de la CTS-2 y los hechos probados. Se encontraron diferencias significativas entre los tres grupos en tres subescalas de la CTS-2. **Conclusiones:** los datos de agresión autoinformada mediante la CTS-2 por los participantes condenados guardan relación con los hechos probados, y pueden ser útiles en contextos forenses y de intervención psicológica.

Palabras clave: CTS-2, agresión autoinformada, maltratadores, violencia de género, sentencias condenatorias.

Intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) is a major problem worldwide (Cuenca & Graña, 2018; Graña, Redondo, Muñoz-Rivas, & Cuenca, 2017; World Health Organization [WHO], 2013). In terms of magnitude, nearly one third (30%) of all women worldwide who are, or have been, in a relationship have suffered physical and/or sexual IPVAW, and the estimated prevalence of such violence in high-income countries is 23.2% (WHO, 2013).

In the Spanish context, 10.3% of women over 16 have suffered physical IPVAW, 8.1% have been the victims of sexual IPVAW and 25.4% have experienced psychological IPVAW. The number

of women murdered each year by their partners or ex-partners (female intimate partner homicide—female IPH—) in Spain ranges from 71 in 2003 to 47 in 2018, peaking at 76 killings in 2008 (Government Delegation for Gender Violence [GDGV], 2018).

Despite these high rates of IPV against women in particular, intimate partner violence (IPV) can and does occur in all kinds of couples, whether the relationship is heterosexual, gay or lesbian (Wasarhaley, Lynch, Golding, & Renzetti, 2017). IPV is, then, a universal yet heterogeneous phenomenon which affects diverse social strata, age groups, sexes and sexual orientations (Ali, Dhingra, & McGarry, 2016; Gerino, Calderera, Curti, Brustia, & Rollè, 2018). Though both men and women can be victims of IPV, it is nonetheless women who suffer the most severe violence (Gámez-Guadix, Borrajo, & Calvete, 2018).

The heterogeneity of IPV and the greater severity of IPVAW perpetrated by men are not incompatible phenomena, as Johnson (2006) concludes. According to the classification proposed by

Johnson (2006, 2008, 2011), meanwhile, there are two main types of IPV depending on the degree of control:

(1) *Situational couple violence*: This consists of a pattern of bidirectional, episodic and reactive violence associated not only with the management of conflict within an intimate relationship but also with the occasioned by separation or divorce. (2) *Coercive controlling violence or intimate terrorism*: This type presents as a stable relational pattern of coercive violent behavior, which is maintained and even increases after separation, when mostly men behave violently towards women for reasons of gender, although violent resistance sometimes appears among victimized women and in some cases both parties may even engage in mutual violent control (Johnson, 2006; Muñoz & Echeburúa, 2016).

Situational couple violence is present in 89% of IPV cases in community couples (Johnson, 2006), where it is characterized by a predominance of psychological aggression and low rates of physical aggression (Cuenca & Graña, 2018). Looking at physical aggression in community couples worldwide, Esquivel-Santoveña and Dixon (2012) found that rates of physical IPV are roughly equal between the sexes in the US (incidence of 12% among both men and women). Similar results were found in our context by Graña and Cuenca (10.9% for men and 11.9% for women engaged in physical IPV in Spain in 2014). With regard to psychological violence in community couples in our context, Graña and Cuenca (2014) found an incidence of psychological violence of 63.2% among women and 60.1% among men, while Graña, Andreu, Peña, and Rodríguez (2013) observed rates of psychological violence of 71.8% perpetrated by women and 66.1% by men.

The fact that IPV in community couples is perpetrated to roughly equally by both sexes, and that it is characterized by low rates of physical violence, makes this phenomenon qualitatively different from coercive controlling violence, where it is usually the man who engages in a form of IPV involving high rates of severe physical aggression. Some authors argue that situational couple violence is the appropriate conceptual framework for understanding IPV in community couples who are not involved in court proceedings (Cuenca & Graña, 2018).

Other scholars (Muñoz & Echeburúa, 2016) have proposed, meanwhile, that coercive controlling violence can provide a framework to understand IPV in cases that reach the courts and shelter context. This statement is supported by the data reported by Johnson (2006), given that coercive controlling violence perpetrated by men is present in: (a) 11% of all IPV found in community couples (n= 37, survey sample); (b) 68% of cases in court samples (n= 34, court sample); (c) and 79% in cases of abused women (n= 43, shelter sample; Johnson, 2006). According to Johnson (2006), “for wives, the general survey sample is dominated by situational couple violence, and the court and shelter samples are dominated by violent resistance” (p. 1011).

These data imply (1) that situational couple violence appears roughly equally among both men and women in community samples; (2) that a high prevalence of coercive controlling violence perpetrated by men appears in judicial samples, coupled with a high prevalence of violent resistance on the part of women; and (3) that a high prevalence of violent resistance also appears in women’s shelter samples. The legal data for the period 2015-2017 show that significantly more convictions were handed down against men on charges of gender violence (7,426) than against women on charges of domestic violence (6,925) (General Council of the Judiciary [CGPJ], 2018).

Sentencing data for imprisoned offenders (Loinaz, Echeburúa, Ortiz-Tallo, & Amor, 2012) show that the acts of violence perpetrated by imprisoned offenders are more serious than in the case of court-referred offenders (Graña, Redondo, Muñoz-Rivas, & Cantos, 2014) and by community men (Graña & Cuenca, 2014; Graña et al., 2013). Imprisoned offenders also reported higher levels of violence than court-referred offenders and community men did.

Research concerning offenders convicted on gender violence charges (e.g., Graña et al., 2014; Graña et al., 2017; Loinaz et al., 2012) has proliferated since the entry into force of Spain’s Organic Law 1/2004 on comprehensive protection measures against gender violence (2004) (Spanish Gender Violence Act), coinciding with an exponential increase in the number of complaints and convictions against violent men. The number of men serving prison sentences increased from 4,734 in 2009 to 5,915 in 2015 (GDGV, 2017), and 5,998 in 2016 (GDGV, 2018), while the number of restraining orders issued rose from 22,487 in 2013 (GDGV, 2013) to 24,649 in 2015 (GDGV, 2017), and 24,711 in 2016 (GDGV, 2018).

According to Álvarez-Dardet, Pérez Padilla and Lorence (2013), there are no data suggesting a real increase in the incidence of the underlying problem of IPV in Spain, and the rise in both convictions and restraining orders seems more likely to be the result of the enhanced visibility of the phenomenon and greater outlays in terms of legal and healthcare resources. Data on female IPV in Spain do not suggest escalation either (see above).

The *Conflict Tactics Scale* (CTS-2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) is the most widely-used scale internationally for the assessment of partner violence (Cuenca & Graña, 2018; Loinaz et al., 2012). CTS-2 assesses IPV based on the type—*individual* or *dyadic*—of data used. Individual data refer to self-reported aggressive behaviors (perpetration or victimization) at the individual level (i.e. reported by one of the members of a couple), whereas dyadic data are based on self-reported aggressive behaviors (perpetration and victimization) at the level of the couple (i.e. reported by both members; Cuenca & Graña, 2018). Ethical and legal issues prevent the collection of dyadic data, which precludes comparison with the information provided by the victim (Graña et al., 2014; Loinaz et al., 2012), while the main bias found in assessments based on individual data is that they understate the prevalence of aggression compared to dyadic data (Cuenca & Graña, 2018).

Since it is not possible to compare victims’ and offenders’ self-reports, it is necessary instead to examine the degree of convergence between offenders’ self-reports and external indicators (convictions) and to compare the self-reports of offenders convicted on charges of severe IPV (imprisoned offenders) with the self-reports of offenders convicted for less severe IPV (court-referred offenders serving non-custodial sentences that involve comply with a community-based intervention program) and of community men who have not been reported to the police.

The general objective of this study is to determine whether the IPV data self-reported in the CTS-2 scale correlates with judicial decisions adopted under Organic Law 1/2004 (2004). Meanwhile, the study’s specific objectives are: (a) to analyze the relationship between the violent behaviors objectified by the proven facts established in the judgments handed down by the courts and the types of perpetrated aggression self-reported through CTS-2 by the two groups of imprisoned and court-referred offenders; and (b) to compare the levels of self-reported aggression perpetrated by three groups of men comprising imprisoned offenders, court-referred offenders and community men (general population).

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were divided into three groups. The first group was made up of 1,998 men convicted of a crime involving gender violence who were serving a prison sentence of more than two years in all cases; (2) 804 court-referred offenders convicted on charges of gender violence and ordered to participate in a mandatory community-based intervention program for IPVAV offenders as an alternative measure to serving a prison sentence

of less than two years; and (3) 590 community men. As shown in Table 1, there were significant differences in the age variable between the three groups of participants. Also, a strong association was found between: a) being married and belonging to the group of community men; b) being a Spanish national and belonging to the group of community men or the group of imprisoned offenders.

The exclusion criteria applied to the two offender groups consisted of problems relating to severe drug or alcohol abuse and the presence of acute psychotic symptoms. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria for the group of community men were being under 18 years of age and not having been in a heterosexual relationship for the last 12 months.

Table 1
Distribution of sociodemographic variables according to the groups

	Imprisoned offenders (n= 1998) [1]	Court-referred offenders (n= 804) [2]	Community men (n= 590) [3]	F _(2,3392) Bonferroni / χ^2
	M (SD) /%	M (SD) /%	M (SD) /%	
Age (years)	39.10 (8.28)	38.39 (10.23)	45.39 (10.43)	123.92 (p = .000) 3 > 1 (p = .000) 3 > 2 (p = .000)
Crime				
Physical	91.1%	80.4%		267.74 (p = .001)
Psychological	6.9%	19.6%		672.90 (p = .000)
Sexual	2%	0		— ^b
Duration of sentences ^a	12.29 (4.67)	53.90 (36.29)		[t = -50.32 (p = .000)]
Marital status				
Married	12.7% (AR = -20.3)	21.2% (AR = -4.5)	79.5% (AR = 31.3)	
Single	20% (AR = -5.1)	37.4% (AR = 11.1)	13.9% (AR = -5.8)	
Cohabiting	10.7% (AR = 3)	9.5% (AR = 0.1)	5.1% (AR = -4)	1196.22 (p = .000)
Separated	15.1% (AR = 6.7)	12.3% (AR = 0.4)	0.8% (AR = -9.1)	
Divorced	39.1% (AR = 17.1)	19% (AR = -5.7)	0.5% (AR = -15.9)	
Widower	2.4% (AR = 4.4)	0.6% (AR = -2.5)	0.2% (AR = -3)	
Nationality				
Spanish	88.4% (AR = 9.6)	60% (AR = -20.3)	97.6% (AR = 10.3)	
Latin American	7.1% (AR = -9.4)	29.7% (AR = 18.9)	0.7% (AR = -9)	
Moroccan	1.2% (AR = -1.7)	3.2% (AR = 4.6)	0.2% (AR = -2.9)	467.12 (p = .000)
Eastern European Countries	1.9% (AR = -1.8)	4.7% (AR = 5.5)	0.2% (AR = -3.7)	
Other nationalities	1.4% (AR = -1)	2.4% (AR = 1.7)	1.4% (AR = -0.7)	
Profession				
Civil servant / Office worker	0.8% (AR = -11.4)	2.9% (AR = -1.9)	16.4% (AR = 16.9)	
Businessman / Managing Director	6.8% (AR = -6.3)	15% (AR = 6.2)	10.8% (AR = 1.3)	
Employee worker / Unemployed	83.4% (AR = 12.8)	62.4% (AR = -10.4)	67.5% (AR = -5)	515.58 (p = .000)
Pensioner / Retired	9% (AR = -3.3)	19.6% (AR = 8.9)	3.9% (AR = -5.7)	
Student	0% (AR = -3.6)	0.1% (AR = -0.9)	1.4% (AR = 5.7)	

Note: Data for the age variable reflect the mean (SD in brackets). Sociodemographic data are expressed in percentages. AR = adjusted residuals; ^a average number of months; ^b statistics could not be calculated because the frequency in the court-referred group was 0

Instruments

Socio-demographic Questionnaire (Graña et al., 2014). Diverse items were included to evaluate participants' socio-demographic characteristics: age, marital status, nationality, and professional activity. For the two groups of offenders, information about the crime was obtained from the analysis of sentences.

CT2-2. *The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale* (CTS-2; Straus et al., 1996; Spanish adaptation by Loinaz et al., 2012). The scale was administered to an all-male sample, in the absence of permission to contact female victims of gender violence. This scale assesses the frequency, prevalence and severity of assaults in couple relationships using a self-administered response format (see Cuenca & Graña, 2018). The CTS-2 scale consists of 78 items, 39 asking about the perpetration of aggressive acts and 39 about victimization by such acts over the past year of cohabitation. The 78 items of the scale are grouped into five factors, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between .79 and .95 (Straus et al., 1996). The CTS-2 scores show good psychometric properties for the Spanish general adult population (Graña et al., 2013). In addition, CTS-2 discriminates between the prison population and the Spanish general population (Loinaz et al., 2012). Mean annual frequency was used in the present study for the CTS-2 perpetrated violence subscales and prevalence rates for the items. The Cronbach alphas for the overall Perpetration scale were: .85 for imprisoned offenders, .79 for court-referred offenders and .63 for community men.

Procedure

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology of the Complutense University of Madrid on May 30th, 2009. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the estimated duration of the assessment, and the procedure that would be followed to carry it out. Finally, informed consent was obtained in writing from all participants.

Sample of offenders. The two groups completed the two measures used in this study, as described above, as part of a broader assessment protocol before initiating the intervention program. To minimize socially desirable responding, participants were expressly informed that the therapists leading the groups would be blind to their responses.

Community men's group. This study used a quota sampling method to recruit a community sample of couples from the Madrid Region. The study uses only the data collected from the male members of couples, who are treated as a control group for the general population with respect to the two groups of offenders. Meanwhile, 100 research assistants (RAs) were selected, each of whom was assigned to a census area in the Madrid Region and instructed to recruit at least eight couples from the community, requesting voluntary participation and assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses. The couples who agreed to participate were requested separately to complete the two measures used in this study (as described above) and to send the questionnaires anonymously to a PO box. A random control of 10% of the participants was carried out. A final sample of 1,180 valid protocols was obtained.

Data analysis

All statistical analyses were performed using the statistical package SPSS® v. 22.0. (Armonk, NY: IBM® Corp.). First,

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the general CTS-2 scale used in the study. Next, the prevalence of each type of aggressive behavior was calculated for both types of data (i.e. self-reported data provided by offenders and data obtained from the analysis of the proven facts of convictions). The possible differences between the self-reported and the sentencing data were calculated using Pearson's chi-squared test, and the effect size of the differences was analyzed using the Phi coefficient (ϕ). We also applied the Mantel-Haenszel test to establish the existence of possibly significant differences between the two groups of offenders. Finally, an ANCOVA with post hoc comparisons (Bonferroni) was performed to determine possible significant differences between the three sample groups in the levels of self-reported aggression perpetrated.

Results

Table 2 shows the relationship between self-reported responses to CTS-2 items by the two groups of offenders and violent behaviors objectified by the facts proven in court.

As shown in Table 2, there is significant relationship in all behaviors involving physical aggression except "Burned or scalded partner on purpose" in the two groups of offenders and, in the case of the imprisoned offenders, in the behavior of "Kicked partner". In *physical aggression (minor and severe)*, the effect size values ranged between .28 and .65 for the court-referred offenders and between .12 and .39 for the imprisoned offenders.

There is no significant relationship between most of the self-reported responses and the behaviors objectified in psychological aggression, except in the behaviors consisting of "Insulted or swore at partner" and "Threatening to hit or throw something at partner that could hurt".

In addition, we found a significant relationship among the imprisoned offenders between the self-report and the proven facts in two behaviors of severe sexual aggression: "Used force to make partner have oral or anal sex" and "Used force to make partner have sex".

In the two groups of offenders, we found a significant relationship between the self-report and the proven facts in relation to the harm suffered by the offender's partner, except in the case of "Partner needed to see a doctor but didn't".

Table 3 compares the average scores obtained for the frequency of violent behaviors in the CTS-2 subscales for the three groups. As can be seen, CTS-2 allows differentiation between the three groups (community men, court-referred offenders and imprisoned offenders) in terms of *psychological aggression*, *physical aggression* and *injury*. The effect size values were low.

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between IPVAW self-reported by the two groups of offenders through the CTS-2 scale and the proven facts in convictions meted out under Law 1/2004 (2004). The second objective was to compare the levels of aggression exhibited in three different samples of male participants from different settings: (1) imprisoned offenders; (2) court-referred offenders; (3) men from the community.

We found a significant relationship between offenders' self-reporting of physical aggression assessed through the CTS-2 and the presence of objectified violent behaviors in our analysis of convictions (e.g., shoving, grabbing, kicking, injury, homicide,

Table 2
Differences between the *Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2)* self-reported items and violent behaviors objectified through the facts declared proven in the judicial sentences

Aggressive acts classified according to the CTS-2 subscales	Prevalence rates							Prevalence rates						
	Court-referred offenders							Imprisoned offenders						
	CTS-2 items ^a	Proven facts ^b	χ^2	p	Φ	CTS-2 items	Proven facts	χ^2	p	Φ	MH χ^2 ^c (χ^2) ^d	p		
<i>Minor psychological aggression</i>														
5. Insulted or swore at partner	68.4%	14.3%	16.45	.000	.14	67.7%	6.9%	7.43	.006	.06	25.32 (21.83)	.000 .000		
35. Shouted at partner	78.6%	2.4%	1.81	ns	ns	71.3%	5.2%	1.84	ns	ns	.01 (.41)	ns ns		
49. Stomped out of room	60.3%	5.2%	.82	ns	ns	62.4%	2.6%	.80	ns	ns	.03 (.01)	ns ns		
67. Did something to spite partner	53.3%	3.4%	.13	ns	ns	55.6%	0.9%	1.28	ns	ns	.19 (.08)	ns ns		
<i>Severe psychological aggression</i>														
25. Called partner fat or ugly	26.2%	0.8%	.52	ns	ns	32.8%	1.6%	.03	ns	ns	.49 (.01)	ns ns		
29. Destroyed something of partner	23.5%	0.6	.03	ns	ns	35.3%	0.2%	.19	ns	ns	.17 (.01)	ns ns		
65. Accused partner of being a lousy lover	15.7%	0.2	.37	ns	ns	23.8%	0.6%	1.53	ns	ns	.44 (.45)	ns ns		
69. Threatened partner to hit or throw something that could hurt	19.1%	4.8%	175.71	.000	.45	34.4%	6.8%	181.08	.000	.30	197.96 (313.25)	.000 .000		
<i>Minor physical aggression</i>														
7. Hit partner with something	15.8%	38.1%	259.61	.000	.55	27.7%	73.2%	236.36	.000	.34	348.55 (457.75)	.000 .000		
9. Twisted arm to the partner or pull the hair	21.1%	44.8%	287.40	.000	.57	30.9%	75.8%	162.11	.000	.29	345.35 (401.05)	.000 .000		
17. Pushed or shoved partner	47.1%	19.4%	235.58	.000	.52	49.9%	28.6%	28.82	.000	.12	166.26 (150.25)	.000 .000		
45. Grabbed partner	49.7%	69.9%	372.11	.000	.65	54%	32.4%	98.97	.000	.23	259.12 (353.44)	.000 .000		
53. Slapping partner	21.1%	44.2%	294.14	.000	.58	32.6%	69%	291.63	.000	.38	440.21 (551.85)	.000 .000		
<i>Severe physical aggression</i>														
21. Employed a knife or a weapon against partner	4.6%	1.7%	317.84	.000	.60	20.2%	32.9%	257.50	.000	.36	333.58 (309.59)	.000 .000		
27. Pinched partner or hit with an object	20.6%	44.3%	284.76	.000	.57	33.7%	76.8%	291.63	.000	.38	397.22 (554.14)	.000 .000		
33. Try to drown partner	4.1%	1.6%	69.87	.000	.28	14.8%	46.1%	30.07	.000	.12	67.80 (38.39)	.000 .000		
37. Slammed partner against wall	16.6%	39.7%	263.58	.000	.55	27.3%	76.1%	214.46	.000	.32	340.54 (440.76)	.000 .000		
43. Beat up partner	9%	1.1%	101.67	.000	.34	20.8%	74.9%	304.19	.000	.39	123.20 (202.74)	.000 .000		
61. Burned or scalded partner on purpose	2.6%	0.3%	.08	ns	ns	13.1%	21.7%	.35	ns	ns	.99 (.28)	ns ns		
73. Kicked partner	11.7%	55.9%	91.12	.000	.32	23.1%	62.2%	.276	ns	ns	35.77 (14.91)	.000 .000		

Table 2 (continued)

Differences between the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2) self-reported items and violent behaviors objectified through the facts declared proven in the judicial sentences

Aggressive acts classified according to the CTS-2 subscales	Prevalence rates					Prevalence rates					MH χ^2 ^c (χ^2) ^d	p
	Court-referred offenders		χ^2	p	Φ	Imprisoned offenders		χ^2	p	Φ		
	CTS-2 items ^a	Proven facts ^b				CTS-2 items	Proven facts					
<i>Minor sexual coercion</i>												
15. Compelling partner to have sex without using a condom	5.3%	0.3%	.17	ns	ns	14.8%	2.4%	.603	ns	ns	.74 (.25)	ns ns
51. Insist partner on having sex without using force	17.8%	0.1%	.22	ns	ns	23.7%	0.2%	3.07	ns	ns	.56 (.55)	ns ns
63. Insist partner to have oral or anal sex without using force	9.3%	0%	— ^e	—	—	17.1%	0.5%	.06	ns	ns	.04 (.03)	ns ns
<i>Severe sexual coercion</i>												
19. Used force to make partner have oral or anal sex	3.2%	0%	— ^e	—	—	13.4%	1.8%	36.08	.000	.13	72.31 (130.63)	.000 .000
47. Used force to make partner have sex	2.9%	0%	— ^e	—	—	13.5%	2.4%	28.80	.000	.12	24.93 (31.53)	.000 .000
57. Threatened partner to have oral or anal sex	2.9%	0%	— ^e	—	—	12%	2.3%	.99	ns	ns	.24 (.01)	ns ns
75. Threatened partner to have sex	3.4%	0%	— ^e	—	—	13%	1.1%	3.55	ns	ns	1.42 (2.47)	ns ns
<i>Minor injury</i>												
12. Caused partner a sprain, cardinal or cut	30.6%	55.7%	306.29	.000	.59	39.4%	87.7%	169.59	.000	.29	354.88 (461.37)	.000 .000
72. Caused partner physical pain that lasts more than a day	22.7%	44.3%	321.59	.000	.61	33.1%	52.5%	335.18	.000	.41	441.38 (615.50)	.000 .000
<i>Severe injury</i>												
24. Partner lost consciousness after a blow	4%	10.7%	305.81	.000	.59	14.4%	72.1%	126.28	.000	.25	214.60 (229.30)	.000 .000
32. Partner went to doctor for injury	34.9%	57.2%	351.35	.000	.63	38.7%	77.7%	362.03	.000	.43	455.59 (682.74)	.000 .000
42. Partner needed to see a doctor but didn't	8.4%	0.6%	.46	ns	ns	19.8%	0.5%	.63	ns	ns	.47 (.01)	ns ns
56. Cause partner a fracture of a bone	4.0%	12.1%	263.83	.000	.55	15.1%	32.3%	224.08	.000	.34	262.65 (334.44)	.000 .000

Note: The foregoing description of the CTS-2 items is abridged; ^a self-reported data through the CTS-2 perpetration items; ^b behaviors objectified by the facts established in court; ^c adjusted Mantel-Haenszel test by sample size; ^d unadjusted Mantel-Haenszel test; ^e statistics could not be calculated because the frequency of the proven facts was 0

attempted homicide). We also observed a significant relationship between two items belonging to the CTS-2 psychological aggression subscale (“Insulted or swore at partner”, “Threatening to hit or throw something at partner that could hurt”) and the presence of those violent behaviors objectified in the proven facts.

In the case of physical violence, there is a significant relationship between the self-report and the proven facts but significant differences also exist between the two groups of offenders, as shown by the Mantel-Haenszel statistic. The effect sizes range from .14 to .65 in the court-referred offenders but from .06 to .43 in the case of imprisoned offenders. Since social desirability is a factor that influences both offenders and community men (Loinaz

et al., 2012), the lower effect sizes found among imprisoned offenders (i.e. the sample group responsible for the most serious acts of aggression) suggest that more extreme violence may in fact be more socially desirable.

We found significant differences among the three groups in terms of self-reported psychological aggression, physical aggression, and injury. The mean annual frequencies of each type of aggression found in the present study are similar to the frequencies found by Graña et al. (2013) in community men, and by Jose et al. (2014) and Graña et al. (2017) in court-referred offenders. However, the mean annual frequencies found for all three types of aggression are lower than reported by Loinaz et al.

Table 3
Comparison of levels of self-reported perpetrated aggression in different groups of men

Variable	Imprisoned offenders (N = 1,998) [1]	Court-referred offenders (N = 804) [2]	Community men (N = 590) [3]	F _(2,3392)	Bonferroni	χ ²
	M ¹ (SD) (M ²)	M ¹ (SD) (M ²)	M ¹ (SD) (M ²)			
CTS-2 - Perpetration						
Psychological aggression	20.59 (27.32) (20.85)	16.75 (24.77) (17.22)	10.25 (14.73) (8.69)	38.55*****	1 > 2**** 1 > 3***** 2 > 3*****	.022
Physical aggression	6.88 (15.09) (6.99)	3.50 (8.48) (3.69)	1.36 (3.52) (0.73)	52.91*****	1 > 2 **** 1 > 3***** 2 > 3***	.030
Sexual coercion	1.71 (5.98) (1.73)	1.55 (6.19) (1.59)	1.46 (4.65) (1.30)	0.49		
Injury	2.46 (6.43) (2.48)	1.44 (4.76) (1.46)	0.24 (1.57) (0.15)	38.20*****	1 > 2***** 1 > 3***** 2 > 3*****	.022

Notes: CTS-2 = The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale. The data correspond to the mean (SD in brackets). ¹Adjusted means by age. ²Unadjusted mean. $\chi^2 = \chi^2_{\text{partial}}$;
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .006$; **** $p < .001$; ***** $p < .000$

(2012) among imprisoned offenders, although only slightly so in the case of injury.

These findings may be interpreted as reflecting a continuum in the frequency of IPVAV, stretching from men from the community, who exhibit low levels of aggression, through court-referred and imprisoned offenders, who display ever increasing levels of violence. However, there is a greater incidence of physical IPVAV (both self-reported and objectified) in the group of imprisoned offenders, and also a significant relationship in the two violent sexual behaviors described by the following CTS-2 items (“Used force to make partner have oral or anal sex”, “Used force to make partner have sex”).

These data partially support Muñoz and Echeburúa (2016), who argue that the most serious acts of violence are those that involve the law. This is usually coercive violence. Our data confirm the proposition, but we would go further to contend that the most serious acts of violence are those that involve custodial sentences—committed by the imprisoned offenders—. However, we cannot categorically conclude that this means coercive controlling violence, which involves a series of parameters which we have not examined (e.g. unidirectionality and the intention to control), though they will need to be addressed in future research, including surveys of the kind proposed by Johnson (2006), who found an 11% incidence of coercive controlling violence among community couples using this methodology.

Our findings indicate that the CTS-2 could be used in expert assessments carried out in forensic (e.g. Gender Violence Courts) and penitentiary contexts, since convicted men actually report higher levels of aggression in many of the violent behaviors analyzed than appear from the proven facts of convictions. Furthermore, the data show that the information obtained from the CTS-2 scale may be useful in assessments of the effectiveness of psychological interventions among offenders.

Despite the accuracy of CTS-2 in male aggressors, it would nevertheless also be helpful to compare the data obtained with

the information provided by the victim. As Esquivel-Santoveña and Dixon (2012) argue, it is imperative to adopt an approach that includes both the gender perspective and an additional methodology involving the description of violent acts by both members of a couple (perpetrator and victim).

A key limitation of this study, aside from the fact that it was not possible to assess victims, is that it excluded men who had not been reported by their female intimate partners or ex-partners, or by third party informants. Also, CTS-2 assesses aggressive behaviors but not the underlying motivations. Because of this, it is not possible to conclude about the nature of the violence (coercive controlling or situational couple violence). We concur with the approach taken by Johnson (2006), who argues that it is necessary to differentiate between types of violence in treatment contexts. Furthermore, CTS-2 may not measure the whole possible universe of violent behaviors. In this regard, Johnson (2006) underscored the importance of financial control and the use of children, among other matters.

A further limitation of this study is that the effect size values found are low to moderate in imprisoned offenders, which could be due to enhanced social desirability. If so, this aspect should be taken into account in the design of specific components in intervention programs. In this light, it will be necessary to continue investigating the use of CTS-2 in the prison population, where violence is more serious and probably different qualitative terms. Finally, we should not discard the possibility of adapting CTS-2 or developing other instruments, including questions that would allow us to distinguish between different types of violence.

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