

Intimate Partner Aggression and Women's Work Outcomes

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Using conservation of resources theory, we examined the relationship between intimate partner aggression enacted against heterosexual women and 3 types of work-related outcomes for these women: *withdrawal while at work* (i.e., cognitive distraction, work neglect), *withdrawal from work* (i.e., partial absenteeism, intentions to quit), and *performance*. In Study 1, we compared withdrawal both at and from work across 3 clinically categorized groups of women ($n = 50$), showing that experiencing physical aggression is related to higher work neglect. We replicated and extended these findings in Study 2 using a community sample of employed women ($n = 249$) by considering the incremental variance explained by both physical aggression and psychological aggression on these same outcomes. Results showed that physical aggression predicted higher levels of withdrawal both at and from work, with psychological aggression predicting additional variance in partial absenteeism over and above the effects of physical aggression. Study 3 extended the model to include academic performance as an outcome in a sample of female college students ($n = 122$) in dating relationships. Controlling for the women's conscientiousness, psychological aggression predicted lower academic performance after accounting for the effects of physical aggression. We discuss theoretical and practical implications of these results, as well as directions for future research.

Keywords: aggression, intimate partner violence, performance, work withdrawal

Decades of research show that experiencing physical and psychological aggression from intimate partners has meaningful consequences for victims' well-being (Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000; Pico-Alfonso, 2005; Varcoe, Hankivsky, Ford-Gilboe, Wuest, & Wilk, 2011). However, only recently have researchers begun to investigate the impact of physical and psychological aggression from intimate partners on victims' workplace experiences. Existing research has generally addressed the likelihood of victims acquiring and maintaining employment while experiencing intimate partner aggression, as well as the extent to which victims function at work while experiencing intimate partner aggression. In the current paper, we extend research on inti-

mate partner aggression and work outcomes, which has largely used qualitative approaches, focused on physical (rather than both physical and psychological) aggression, and has studied issues of employability rather than ongoing work experiences.

Despite physical aggression from intimate partners attracting the most media attention and public concern, psychological aggression from intimate partners occurs more frequently than physical aggression from intimate partners, characterizing some 75% of intimate relationships (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Jose & O'Leary, 2009; Stets, 1990) and often with consequences as detrimental as those of physical aggression (Marshall, 2001; Pico-Alfonso, 2005; Sackett & Saunders, 1999). For example, the majority of abused women in Follingstad et al.'s (1990) study reported that experiencing psychological aggression had a more negative impact on them than did experiencing physical aggression. In addition, physical aggression rarely exists without prior acts of psychological aggression, which often predicts subsequent physical aggression (Follingstad et al., 1990; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989). Thus, in the current research, we examine the effects of both physical and psychological aggression from intimate partners on women's work outcomes, specifically *withdrawal while at work* (i.e., the extent to which women lose focus and neglect work while at work), *withdrawal from work* (i.e., the extent to which women are absent and want to quit work), and *performance* in the form of academic achievement.

Theoretical Background

Interest in the intersection of the experience of work and non-work is by no means new, appearing first almost 50 years ago (Aldous, 1969) and attracting considerable research interest since then, evident in the number of articles (e.g., Lewis & Cooper,

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1999), meta-analyses (e.g., Byron, 2005), and book chapters (e.g., Grzywacz & Butler, 2008) on the topic. Much of this research focuses on forms of “spillover” (Aldous, 1969; Wilensky, 1960), positing that roles, events, and experiences in one life domain or context transcend their boundaries, with the focus being mainly on the spillover from work experiences to nonwork relationships.

Although there is overwhelming empirical support for the notion that work and nonwork experiences transcend role boundaries, the spillover hypothesis by itself is insufficient in explaining how these experiences transcend boundaries. The spillover hypothesis, which suggests a positive relationship exists between work and nonwork roles, does not speak to the fact that positive relationships between these roles are not inevitable (Barling, 1990). Work and nonwork roles might be positively related because what it takes to be successful in one role is essentially similar in the other (“integrative hypothesis”) or because involvement in one role is purposefully used for gratification in the other (“instrumental hypothesis”). However, work and nonwork roles might also be negatively associated, where gratification in one role is sought because of dissatisfaction in the other (“compensation hypothesis”) or because what is required for success in one role is not compatible with success in the other (“conflict hypothesis”). In some cases, work and nonwork roles may be so different that no statistical relationships emerge (“segmentation hypotheses”). The present research focuses on the negative influence of intimate partner aggression on women’s work experiences and is consistent with the “conflict hypothesis.”

However, the “conflict hypothesis” merely specifies the direction of any influence on intimate partner aggression on women’s work. In contrast, conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003) provides a framework for understanding why experiencing intimate partner aggression will exert negative effects on women’s work. Effective functioning across domains depends on individuals having access to the resources necessary to do so, such as material (e.g., housing), physical (e.g., money), and emotional (e.g., social support, emotional energy) resources, as well as personal characteristics (e.g., optimism, self-esteem). Under most circumstances, people are motivated to acquire, retain, and protect these resources so that they can draw upon them when necessary. COR theory also suggests that these resources are dynamic (Christie & Barling, 2009). Individuals experiencing uncommon life events, unfamiliar situations, or unusual stressors call upon their bank of resources to enable them to cope; facing extreme circumstances, individuals would likely experience a “loss spiral” (Hobfoll, 1989).

In the current research, we argue that experiencing intimate partner aggression would result in such a loss spiral. Victims of intimate partner aggression suffer resource depletion: for example, they have higher levels of anxiety and depression, which would likely be associated with reduced energy levels, as well as lower self-esteem (Jordan, Campbell, & Follingstad, 2010) and reduced social support (Barnett, Martinez, & Keyson, 1996). As a result, we would expect that experiencing intimate partner aggression exerts negative effects on three different aspects of women’s work, namely withdrawal from work and withdrawal at work (the foci of Studies 1 and 2), and performance (Study 3).

Withdrawal From Work

We define withdrawal from work as “physical removal from a particular workplace either for part of a day, an entire day, or permanently” (Johns, 2001, p. 233), and the withdrawal behaviors that researchers have investigated include partial absenteeism, tardiness, absenteeism, and intentions to turnover.

Partial absenteeism goes beyond arriving late for work or tardiness. Although officially at work, partial absenteeism would also include leaving work early, taking extended breaks during work, or spending extended amounts of time talking on the phone for non-work-related reasons (Barling, MacEwen, Kelloway, & Higginbottom, 1994). Consistent with COR theory, being the victim of intimate partner aggression might result in partial absenteeism for a variety of reasons. First, being the victim of intimate partner aggression is associated with a host of negative physical and psychological health consequences (e.g., Golding, 1999; Plichta, 2004; Sutherland, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2001), which could potentially increase the probability of visits to health care professionals, necessitating partial absenteeism. Second, some abusive men actively sabotage their partners’ work (Raphael, 1996), for example, through actions that would make it difficult for victims to arrive on time for work (e.g., hiding car keys) or difficult for them to remain at work (e.g., lying about the well-being of children to get a partner to leave work early).

One set of hypotheses regarding the correlates of work withdrawal relevant to the current research concerns the possible restorative effects of work withdrawal. Central to this notion is the assumption that absence reflects an attempt by the individual to recover resources following a period of resource depletion. As one example, when work overload depletes resources, absence is higher one year later (Diestel & Schmidt, 2012); likewise, depression predicts subsequent absenteeism (Hardy, Woods, & Wall, 2003). Similarly, we predict that resource depletion associated with experiencing intimate partner aggression will predict women’s absence from work. This would be consistent with the findings from two qualitative studies of intimate partner aggression. Swanberg and Logan (2005) showed that more than half of their sample of 32 women reported missing work as a result of abuse. In addition, five of 10 women in Wettersten et al.’s (2004) study on the working lives of victims of intimate partner aggression reported missing work as a result of being in an abusive relationship.

In contrast to these qualitative studies, Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) showed that lifetime victims of partner aggression reported more work absenteeism than nonvictims, but there were no differences in reported absenteeism between current victims and nonvictims. One possibility is that the level and amount of intimate partner aggression experienced might account for the different findings across these studies, if women in the qualitative studies experienced more frequent and/or severe abuse compared with the women in the Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly study.

As resources become depleted, COR theory suggests that individuals would do what they can to halt the depletion, and rebuild their resource bank. In some circumstances, maintaining employment in the face of intimate partner aggression represents a significant and ongoing emotional drain. For example, having to hide any visible signs of physical aggression could deplete resources to the point that choosing to quit one’s job would make it easier to conserve one’s psychological resources. Riger, Ahrens, and Blick-

enstaff (2000) found that several of the women in their sample either quit school or employment as a result of their partners' abusive behavior. Intimate partner aggression might also predict intentions to quit the organization if the abusive partner constantly sabotages the victim's work or if the victim chooses to live far away from her partner to escape the abuse.

Hypothesis 1: Physical aggression from one's partner will be associated with withdrawal from work.

Hypothesis 2: Psychological aggression from one's partner will be associated with withdrawal from work.

Withdrawal at Work

Similar to Hanisch and Hulin's (1990, 1991) distinctions between work and job withdrawal, we differentiate between forms of *withdrawal from work* (i.e., partial absenteeism, intentions to quit) and *withdrawal while at work* (i.e., cognitive distraction, work neglect). This is an important distinction as victims of aggression from intimate partners may not have the luxury of physically absenting themselves from work or quitting the organization. For example, some domestic abuse victims may need to attend work and maintain their employment due to financial need; however, once at work, they might have trouble staying focused on their tasks. As a result, it is possible that both physical and psychological aggression predict withdrawal while at work (cognitive distraction, work neglect).

Cognitive distraction and work neglect both reflect withdrawal at work, in that the victim is physically at work but not productive. Research has consistently shown that stress decreases attention (e.g., Motowidlo, Packard, & Manning, 1986), and given the stress of experiencing intimate partner aggression (Sutherland, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2002), victims may report difficulties concentrating at work. Several of the qualitative studies exploring the relationship between intimate partner aggression and work experiences have found this to be the case. For example, seven of the 10 women who participated in Wettersten et al.'s (2004) study reported having difficulty concentrating at work as a result of an abusive relationship.

Work neglect involves exerting less behavioral effort while at work (e.g., Schat & Kelloway, 2000). To date, no studies have directly investigated the link between intimate partner aggression and work neglect. However, Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly's (2007) measure of work distraction included items that assessed aspects of work neglect (e.g., "did no work"; "worked more slowly than usual"), and current victims of intimate partner physical aggression reported more work distraction than nonvictims.

Hypothesis 3: Physical aggression from one's partner will be associated with withdrawal at work.

Hypothesis 4: Psychological aggression from one's partner will be associated with withdrawal at work.

Performance

Given that abused women's economic security is often psychologically threatened by abusive partners, or threatened when they take refuge in shelters from physical violence, preserving their financial independence is critical. Thus, maintaining high levels of

work performance would be especially important for women experiencing intimate partner aggression. Despite this, withdrawal at work (cognitive distraction and work neglect) that is associated with experiencing intimate partner aggression might lessen the likelihood of high quality-work performance. The notion that resource depletion is an obstacle to work performance is supported by findings showing that emotional exhaustion (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998) and job insecurity (König, Debus, Häusler, Lendenmann, & Kleinmann, 2010) are negatively associated with job performance. Thus:

Hypothesis 5: Physical aggression from one's partner will be negatively associated with performance.

Hypothesis 6: Psychological aggression from one's partner will be negatively associated with performance.

Study 1

The first study adds to the growing literature on the relationship between intimate partner aggression and work outcomes by studying a population experiencing male-on-female physical aggression. Given the number of qualitative studies (e.g., Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al., 2004) that have reported that experiencing partner aggression is associated with cognitive distraction, work neglect, partial absenteeism, and turnover, we predict that experiencing physical aggression from one's partner will be associated with both withdrawal while at work (i.e., cognitive distraction, work neglect) and withdrawal from work (i.e., partial absenteeism, intentions to quit).

Method

Sampling Strategy

In 2004, we invited women with three different victim "profiles" to participate in this known-groups study: maritally satisfied, nonabused women; maritally dissatisfied, nonabused women; and maritally dissatisfied, physically abused women. Previous research on marital relationships (e.g., Barbour, Eckhardt, Davison, & Kassinove, 1998; Marshall & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2010; Marshall, Panuzio, Makin-Byrd, Taft, & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2011) and on work stress and spousal abuse (e.g., Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986) has used a similar sampling strategy, which controls for the potential confound of relationship satisfaction on the effects of physical aggression.

To be eligible to participate, nonabused women had to be employed full-time over the past year and be living with their partners. Abused women were not required to be living with their partners, or employed full-time at the time of the study, but they had to have worked full-time for a minimum of six months in the past year, and they had to have lived with their partner while they were employed.

Following Eckhardt, Barbour, and Davison's (1998) clinical categorizations, *relationship satisfaction* was indicated by a score on the Short Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959) equal to or greater than 115 with no experience of physical aggression in their current relationship, whereas *relationship dissatisfaction* was indicated by a score of 95 or less on the Short Marital Adjustment Test. For maritally dissatisfied, abused

women, clinical scores on the Short Marital Adjustment Test were again less than or equal to 95, and their partners had to have engaged in at least two acts of "minor" (e.g., *My partner grabbed me*) or one act of "severe" (e.g., *My partner choked me*) physical aggression, as measured by the revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) during the past 12 months. Nonabused women reported no acts of physical aggression on the CTS2 in their current relationships.

Recruitment Procedure and Sample

To recruit participants for this study, we used two procedures. The first approach was to post advertisements in local newspapers, fitness clubs, and battered women's shelters in a small Canadian city. Fifty-two women expressed interest in participating in the study (calculation of response rate is not possible given this recruitment procedure). The second approach was to advertise the study through StudyResponse (Stanton & Weiss, 2002), a not-for-profit service that matches researchers with more than 100,000 individuals of varying occupations, ethnicities, and ages willing to participate in social science research. We sent a prescreening invitation to 173 women registered as living in the United States, asking for participants who were employed full-time and in long-term but "unhappy" relationships. Nineteen women answered the invitation expressing a willingness to participate. In total, 71 women were potentially eligible to participate across the two approaches.

Data collection for both of these recruitment procedures took place in two separate stages. First, because training and experience on how to ask about abuse and respond to disclosures of abuse are crucial from both ethical and methodological perspectives (Read, 2007), we hired a social worker with five years of experience working with abused women to collect the data on relationship satisfaction and physical aggression from participants via telephone interviews. We could not use the data for 20 of these women because they did not meet the criteria described above for any of the three clinical groups, and the social worker could not reach one woman to schedule her telephone interview. Of the 50 remaining women, 19 met the criteria for the maritally satisfied, nonabused category, 12 met the criteria for the maritally dissatisfied, nonabused category, and 19 met the criteria for the maritally dissatisfied, abused category.

Second, following the telephone interview, we sent each of the 50 women a paper-and-pencil survey containing questions about work outcomes and demographic variables. For safety reasons, the social worker asked the women during their telephone interviews where they would like the researcher to mail their paper-and-pencil surveys (viz., work or home). For ethical reasons (Becker-Blease & Freyd, 2007), the cover letter informed the women where they could receive counseling if they experienced distress following completion of the study, if they needed help dealing with any marital or work-related problems, or both. We paid the women \$25 each for their participation.

As expected, the three groups of women varied in terms of relationship satisfaction and experience of physical aggression in their relationships, with no significant differences in demographic variables (see Table 1). The women were employed in a variety of occupations, which we categorized into job families using the Occupational Information Network (O*NET; <http://www.onetonline.org/find/family>): 4% of the women ($n = 2$) were employed in the Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance job family, one woman (2%) was employed in the Business and Financial Operations job family, 8% ($n = 4$) were employed in the Community and Social Service job family, one woman (2%) was employed in the Construction and Extraction job family, 6% ($n = 3$) were employed in the Education, Training, and Library job family, 4% ($n = 2$) were employed in the Food Preparation and Serving Related job family, 6% ($n = 3$) were employed in the Health care Practitioners and Technical job family, 6% ($n = 3$) were employed in the Life, Physical, and Social Science job family, 14% ($n = 7$) were employed in the Management job family, 38% ($n = 19$) were employed in the Office and Administrative Support job family, and 10% ($n = 5$) were employed in the Sales and Related job family.

Measures

Descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and reliability coefficients for all study variables appear in Table 2.

Relationship satisfaction. We measured relationship satisfaction over the past year using the 15-item Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959), which has demonstrated reliability and validity across studies (e.g., Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; O'Leary et al., 1989). Scores can range from 2 to 158, with higher scores indicating higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

Table 1
Study 1: Sample Demographics and Group Differences Across the Three Groups ($n = 50$)

Group	Dissatisfied, abused ($n = 19$)		Dissatisfied, non-abused ($n = 12$)		Satisfied, non-abused ($n = 19$)		<i>F</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Age in years	39.53	9.90	41.00	9.34	39.06	12.43	0.21
Years married	10.38	8.75	14.58	10.39	9.81	11.99	0.82
Education in years	14.63	2.19	15.83	1.53	15.32	2.67	0.25
Years employed	7.08	7.77	7.70	8.05	6.50	8.11	0.86
Hours worked/week	40.07	5.19	39.25	4.86	39.42	9.68	0.05
Number of children	1.79	1.40	1.83	1.47	1.63	1.50	0.13
Relationship satisfaction	41.90	18.57	51.25	23.59	134.11	8.57	160.25*
Physical aggression	15.47	18.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.75*

* $p < .01$.

Table 2
Study 1: Descriptive Statistics, Intercorrelations, and Scale Reliabilities (n = 50)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Relationship satisfaction	79.18	46.67	.90					
2. Physical aggression	15.47	18.51	-.40**	.96				
3. Cognitive distraction	3.33	1.27	-.53**	.49**	.90			
4. Work neglect	2.33	0.84	-.44**	.55**	.73**	.81		
5. Partial absence	2.38	0.92	-.27	.34*	.38**	.40**	.80	
6. Intention to quit	2.24	1.06	-.29*	.47**	.49**	.61**	.38**	.75

Note. Scale reliabilities (α) presented in bold on diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Physical aggression. Physical aggression was assessed with a subset of items from the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus et al., 1996). The complete CTS2 measures the extent to which, over the past year, couples engage in verbal aggression, sexual coercion, and physical violence against each other, as well as measuring their use of reasoning to deal with conflicts. We used only the 12 items assessing physical aggression. These items were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*more than 20 times*), and were summed.

Cognitive distraction. Cognitive distraction over the past year was measured with a modified version of Fryer and Warr's (1984) 12-item scale with items reworded to reflect the employment context (e.g., *I've been feeling mentally alert and wide awake* was changed to *I've been feeling mentally alert and wide awake at work*). We deleted three items from the original scale: one item (*I've been taking a long time to get things done*) was nearly identical to an item in the Work Neglect scale described below, and two items were not relevant to a work context (*I've been making mistakes adding up money when shopping* and *I've been slow to make jokes when talking to people*). In addition, we added one item (*I've been making mistakes when talking to my supervisor*), resulting in a 10-item modified scale. The items were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*), and averaged to create a mean score.

Work neglect. Work neglect was measured with seven items, with each item referring to the past year. We took four items from Barling, Rogers, and Kelloway's (2001) Neglect Scale (e.g., *stayed out of sight to avoid work*), and three from Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg's (2003) Work Withdrawal Scale (e.g., *fail to attend scheduled meetings*). A 7-point scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*all of the time*).

Partial absenteeism. We used a modified version of Hepburn and Barling's (1996) 6-item scale to assess partial absenteeism during the prior year. One item from Hepburn and Barling's scale was deleted (*How often have you been distracted at work?*) because it is identical to an item that was used to measure cognitive distraction described above. Responses were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*all of the time*).

Intention to quit. A modified 4-item version of the abbreviated form of the Marital Instability Index (Booth, Johnson, & Edwards, 1983) was used to measure participants' turnover intentions (e.g., *In the past year, have you thought about quitting your job?*). A 7-point scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*all of the time*).

Results

We calculated group differences on the outcome variables using Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric tests of differences among independent groups because variance in the study variables was artificially truncated by clinical categorizations. Cognitive distraction, $H(2) = 14.87, p < .01$, and work neglect, $H(2) = 12.83, p < .01$, were significantly different across the three groups, whereas partial absenteeism and intention to quit were not. Mann-Whitney tests were used to follow up the differences in cognitive distraction and work neglect. Both cognitive distraction ($U = 68.00, r = .53$) and work neglect ($U = 62.50, r = .56$) were significantly higher in the maritally dissatisfied, abused group than in the maritally satisfied, nonabused group. In addition, work neglect was significantly higher in the maritally dissatisfied, abused group than the maritally dissatisfied, nonabused group. Last, women in the maritally dissatisfied, nonabused group reported significantly higher cognitive distraction ($U = 35.50, r = .54$) than women in the maritally satisfied, nonabused group.

Study 1 Discussion

The aim of this first study was to examine the relationship between experiencing physical aggression from intimate partners and both withdrawal while at and from work. Consistent with prior qualitative research (Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007), the findings show that physical aggression predicted increased withdrawal while at work—specifically work neglect—but not withdrawal from work, in comparison with women who were maritally dissatisfied but not physically abused. The possibility that these findings are a function of mono-method bias can be excluded, as data on relationship satisfaction and physical aggression (i.e., predictor variables) were obtained via an interview with a social worker, with data on work withdrawal (i.e., outcome variables) were obtained from self-reports on a separate occasion.

There are several plausible explanations for the differential effects on different forms of work withdrawal. First, consistent with a perspective that intimate partner aggression reflects behaviors that are intended to boost and maintain male superiority while enhancing female dependence (see Tolman & Wang, 2005; Yodanis, 2004), it becomes even more critical in such a situation that women engage in behaviors that maintain their economic independence (e.g., arrive at work on time). Ensuring continued employment would be consistent with this goal, thus making it likely that women in such situations will do what they can to ensure that they are fully "at" work. Not to do so

would leave them in a potentially precarious situation in the eyes of their managers and organizations.

A second possible reason for the differential effects of intimate partner aggression also centers on the instrumental functions of employment. It is possible that some victims of aggression use work as a form of temporary escape from an abusive relationship and as an opportunity to afford themselves some psychological and physical safety. There are data to support this, as six of the 10 participants in Wettersten et al.'s (2004) study described attending work as a way of escaping an abusive home environment. Similarly, the supportive and compassionate relationships that characterize many workplaces (Dutton & Glynn, 2007) could provide social support for abused women, and perhaps compensate for any resources depleted as a function of the abuse.

Although the sample size was limited in this study because of the known-groups design and clinical interview procedure, the consistency and strength of the findings are important for a couple of reasons. First, the effect sizes were large ($r_s > .50$), despite the small cell sizes, suggesting that the phenomenon is of both statistical and practical significance. Second, because we controlled for relationship satisfaction in the three groups (and relationship satisfaction and physical aggression were correlated significantly; $r = -.40, p < .01$), conclusions about the incremental relationship between physical aggression and work outcomes are strengthened.

Some features of the current study, however, limit the inferences that can be drawn. First, the study design required that participants be categorized in separate groups based on clinical cut-off scores, artificially truncating the variance on both predictor and criterion variables. Future research should examine the predictive effects of physical aggression in a sample that reflects the full distribution of this phenomenon in a community context. Second, this study was restricted to examining physical aggression while controlling for relationship satisfaction, and did not measure psychological aggression per se. Study 2 attempts to address both of these limitations.

Study 2

A comprehensive understanding of the intersection between intimate partner aggression and women's work outcomes requires that both psychological and physical manifestations of aggression be included in the model. Participants in the second study are a community sample of employed women, potentially experiencing both psychological and physical aggression from partners. Extending the focus beyond Study 1, we investigate the incremental effects of psychological aggression on work outcomes over and above any effects of physical aggression.

Method

Participants and Procedure

In 2006, we recruited participants through StudyResponse (Stanton & Weiss, 2002). To be eligible for the current study, female participants had to be employed full-time for the past six months while living with their partner either in a long-term or marital relationship.

For this study, StudyResponse prescreened 6,000 women residing in the United States to generate the list of 399 women who met the criteria for inclusion in this study and were interested in

participating. These women were then sent a recruitment letter via e-mail explaining the purpose and voluntary nature of the study and assuring them that their responses would remain confidential. For ethical reasons, the cover letter also provided the women with the phone number of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a 24-hr toll free crisis intervention and referral service available in the United States. All participants received a \$5.00 (U.S.) electronic gift certificate for Amazon.com in appreciation of their participation. Of the 399 women who received the e-mail with the recruitment letter, 249 provided usable data (62% response rate).

The mean age of the sample was 38.74 years ($SD = 9.57$). They had been in their current relationships for an average of 11.46 years ($SD = 9.10$), had an average of 1.44 children ($SD = 1.44$), had been with their current organizations for an average of 7.88 years ($SD = 7.43$), and on average worked for 40.03 hours per week ($SD = 6.70$). The women were employed in a variety of occupations, which we categorized into job families using O*NET (<http://www.onetonline.org/find/family>): 1.2% of the women ($n = 3$) were employed in the Architecture and Engineering job family, 1.2% ($n = 3$) were employed in the Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media job family, one woman (.4%) was employed in the Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance job family, 11.6% ($n = 29$) were employed in the Business and Financial Operations job family, 4.4% ($n = 11$) were employed in the Community and Social Service job family, 4.8% ($n = 12$) were employed in the Computer and Mathematical job family, 14.5% ($n = 36$) were employed in the Education, Training, and Library job family, 4.4% ($n = 11$) were employed in the Food Preparation and Serving Related job family, 8.4% ($n = 21$) were employed in the Health care Practitioners and Technical job family, .8% ($n = 2$) were employed in the Legal job family, 1.2% ($n = 3$) were employed in the Life, Physical, and Social Science job family, 14.1% ($n = 35$) were employed in the Management job family, 19.3% ($n = 48$) were employed in the Office and Administrative Support job family, 1.2% ($n = 3$) were employed in the Production job family, 6.8% ($n = 17$) were employed in the Sales and Related job family, and 1.2% ($n = 3$) were employed in the Transportation and Material Moving job family. Sufficient data were not available to categorize the occupations of the remaining 11 women.

Measures

Psychological aggression was measured using the 14-item brief version of the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI), which is both reliable and valid (Tolman, 1999). The items were rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very frequently*). Scores can range from 0 to 56, with higher scores indicating higher levels of psychological aggression during the past six months.

Physical aggression, relationship satisfaction, cognitive distraction, job neglect, partial absenteeism, and intention to quit were measured with the same scales as those used in Study 1, and reflect the past six months.

Results

Descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and reliabilities for all study variables are presented in Table 3 and the regression coefficients in Table 4.

To determine whether physical and psychological aggression predicted the work withdrawal variables, we conducted four separate

hierarchical multiple regressions. For each regression, we entered relationship satisfaction in the first step, physical aggression in the second step, and psychological aggression in the third step.

After controlling for relationship satisfaction, physical aggression predicted cognitive distraction ($\beta = .17, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .03$), work neglect ($\beta = .32, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .10$), partial absenteeism ($\beta = .27, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .07$), and intentions to quit ($\beta = .32, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .10$). Psychological aggression explained only further variance in partial absenteeism ($\beta = .24, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .03$).

Study 2 Discussion

Study 2 extends prior research by including a focus on interpartner psychological and physical aggression in a community sample. First, replicating the findings of Study 1, the current findings show that among a community sample of women, experiencing physical aggression from an intimate partner is associated with victims' withdrawal at work.

Unlike Study 1, however, the findings also revealed that experiencing physical aggression was positively associated with withdrawal from work; interpartner psychological aggression also had unique effects on partial absenteeism, over and above the effects of physical aggression. Sampling and methodological factors might account for these differences. First, on average, women in Study 1 reported lower marital satisfaction than the women in the community sample in Study 2 ($M = 79.18, SD = 46.67$ vs. $M = 109.94, SD = 33.51$, respectively). In addition, women in Study 1 reported higher levels of physical aggression than the women in the community sample in Study 2 ($M = 15.47, SD = 18.51$ vs. $M = 1.71, SD = 6.39$, respectively). These sampling differences might account for the differential findings in terms of women's withdrawal from work if, indeed, abused women's financial needs preclude them from absenting themselves from work or thinking about quitting the organization. Second, the possibility that the different findings relating to withdrawal from work might be a function of common method variance cannot be dismissed, as physical aggression was only associated with withdrawal from work when self-report data were used for all measures.

However, by including both physical and psychological aggression in these models, the results provide more information on the full range of the experience of intimate partner aggression.

Study 3

The goal of the third study was to extend the findings in three ways. First, we explore the effects of intimate partner aggression

on performance. Focusing on performance might show how widespread the effects of intimate partner aggression might be, and we predict that intimate partner aggression will be negatively associated with performance. We base this prediction on research that suggests that abused women report difficulties concentrating (Martin & Mohr, 2000), and students' cognitive distraction negatively affects school performance (Barling, MacEwen, & Nolte, 1993; Barling & MacEwen, 1991; Barling, Zacharatos, & Hepburn, 1999). Understanding performance (measured in this study as academic achievement) as a possible outcome of intimate partner aggression is important: extending it to organizational contexts, there could be significant implications for victims' employability, at a time when maintaining financial independence is critical. Second, we focus on the experiences of women with intimate relationships of shorter average duration. Given that more than 90% of college women in one study reported experiencing at least one incident of psychological aggression in their current dating relationship (Straight, Harper, & Arias, 2003), college-aged women are an appropriate sample in which to investigate the impact of intimate partner aggression. Third, in addition to relationship satisfaction, we control for conscientiousness as an individual difference variable. In previous research, conscientiousness has been linked to academic performance (Poropat, 2009).

Method

Participants

In 2005 and 2006, we recruited participants via advertisements in school newspapers and posters located throughout three college campuses in Canada, and through announcements in classes with instructors' permission. Participants needed to meet several criteria to participate in this study. First, female students had to be studying full-time in a postsecondary institution (i.e., university or community college). Second, they had to be currently involved in a heterosexual, monogamous relationship for a minimum of five months (i.e., the period from the start of the prior academic semester). Third, their partners had to reside in the same city as them to ensure that the couples had regular contact.

One hundred twenty-two women provided usable data (M age = 21.08 years, $SD = 2.70$) drawn from three different tertiary institutions. On average, participants had been involved in their current romantic relationship for two years ($M = 26.02$ months, $SD = 20.42$ months), and 30% reported that they currently lived with their partner. Of the 122 participants, 53 attended a postsecondary

Table 3
Study 2: Descriptive Statistics, Intercorrelations, and Scale Reliabilities ($n = 249$)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Relationship satisfaction	109.94	33.51	.84						
2. Physical aggression	1.71	6.39	-.21**	.96					
3. Psychological aggression	7.04	9.71	-.60**	.52**	.95				
4. Cognitive distraction	2.50	1.05	-.38**	.24**	.34**	.88			
5. Work neglect	2.11	0.82	-.23**	.35**	.34**	.56**	.80		
6. Partial absence	1.97	0.90	-.12	.28**	.30**	.32**	.48**	.82	
7. Intention to quit	2.05	1.07	-.22**	.35**	.32**	.42**	.52**	.38**	.80

Note. Scale reliabilities (α) presented in bold on diagonal.

** $p < .01$.

Table 4

Study 2: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Work Withdrawal ($n = 249$)

Step	Models	Withdrawal while at work				Withdrawal from work			
		Cognitive distraction		Work neglect		Partial absence		Intention to quit	
	Predictor	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
1	Relationship satisfaction	-.38***	.00	-.23***	.00	-.12 [†]	.00	-.22**	.00
	ΔR^2	.14***		.06***		.02 [†]		.05**	
2	Relationship satisfaction	-.35***	.00	-.17**	.00	-.07	.00	-.15*	.00
	Physical aggression	.17**	.01	.32***	.01	.27***	.01	.32***	.01
	ΔR^2	.03**		.10***		.07***		.10***	
3	Relationship satisfaction	-.30***	.00	-.08	.00	.06	.00	-.08	.00
	Physical aggression	.13 [†]	.01	.25***	.01	.17*	.01	.27***	.01
	Psychological aggression	.09	.01	.17 [†]	.01	.24**	.01	.13	.01
	ΔR^2	.00		.01 [†]		.03**		.01	

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

institution in one Canadian province, with the rest studying at one of two different institutions ($n = 50$ and 19 , respectively) in a different Canadian province. Given this recruitment strategy, we could not calculate an exact response rate.

The study took place at the beginning of the winter semester (i.e., January), with respondents providing self-reports of their experiences of intimate partner aggression, relationship satisfaction, conscientiousness, and academic grades for all previous fall semester courses (i.e., four months, September through December). All participants received \$10, with four draws for a chance to win an additional \$50.

Measures

Psychological aggression. As in Study 2, we measured psychological aggression using the PMWI (Tolman, 1999). Two items were deleted in this study because they were unlikely to apply to all dating relationships (i.e., *My partner used our money or made important financial decisions without talking to me about it*, *My partner restricted my use of the telephone*), and we modified one item to reflect more accurately the nature of dating relationships (changing the item from *My partner accused me of having an affair with another man* to *My partner accused me of cheating on him*). Each item is rated on a 5-point scale, where 0 = *never* and 4 = *very frequently*.

Physical aggression. Physical aggression was measured using the same scale as in Studies 1 and 2.

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured using a modified version of the 15-item Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959). We used only nine of the 15 items; some items were deemed inappropriate for a dating sample (e.g., *handling family finances*, *ways of dealing with in-laws*). Scores on this revised scale can range from 1 to 41.

Conscientiousness. Conscientiousness was measured using the 9-item conscientiousness scale of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991). The BFI is both reliable and valid (Benet-Martínez & John, 1998; John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). Participants rated each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Academic performance. Because reliability increases as more ratings are averaged (Horowitz, Inouye, & Siegelman, 1979), we

calculated students' grade performance by averaging all of their course grades for the fall semester. As the validity of self-reported grades might be in question, we asked students to bring their official academic transcripts to the session; previous research (e.g., Sandys-Wunsch, 1991) has shown an almost perfect correlation ($r = .98$) between self-reported and actual grades. Average overall grade score was 79% ($SD = 8.26$). A one-way ANOVA showed significant differences among students in the three different institutions on grades, with students from one institution reporting significantly lower grades compared to students from the other two schools, $F(2, 119) = 7.95$, $p < .01$. As a result, we standardized grades within institution to enable a comparison across students.

Results

Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and reliabilities of all study variables.

Table 6 contains the results from the hierarchical multiple regression. In the first step, we entered conscientiousness and relationship satisfaction. In the second step, we entered physical aggression. In the third and final step, we entered psychological aggression. Physical aggression did not predict performance in Step 2, failing to support Hypothesis 5. However, in Step 3, psychological aggression predicted academic performance ($\beta = -.25$, $p < .05$, $\Delta R^2 = .04$), thus supporting Hypothesis 6. The pattern of results remained the same when the analysis was rerun excluding conscientiousness in the first step.

Table 5

Study 3: Descriptive Statistics, Intercorrelations, and Scale Reliabilities ($n = 122$)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Relationship satisfaction	32.44	4.04	.71			
2. Conscientiousness	3.99	0.57	.34**	.74		
3. Physical aggression	0.36	1.18	-.21*	-.02	.53	
4. Psychological aggression	4.82	5.43	-.55**	-.20*	.49**	.84
5. Academic performance ^a	0.00	1.00	.04	.31**	-.14	-.18*

Note. Scale reliabilities (α) presented in bold on diagonal.

^a Grades were standardized within college.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 6
 Study 3: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting
 Academic Performance ($n = 122$)

Step	Predictor	Academic Performance	
		β	SE
1	Conscientiousness	.30**	.16
	Relationship satisfaction	-.05	.02
	ΔR^2	.08**	
2	Conscientiousness	.31**	.16
	Relationship satisfaction	-.09	.02
	Physical abuse	-.17 [†]	.08
	ΔR^2	.03 [†]	
3	Conscientiousness	.30**	.16
	Relationship satisfaction	-.20	.03
	Physical aggression	-.07	.08
	Psychological aggression	-.25*	.02
	ΔR^2	.04*	

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Study 3 Discussion

Psychological aggression predicted academic performance after controlling for relationship satisfaction, conscientiousness, and physical aggression, and this finding is important for several reasons. First, previous research has not yet investigated whether a link exists between intimate partner aggression and performance, and the current data suggest that, albeit in an academic context, the effects of psychological aggression are broader than initially acknowledged. Second, the finding that psychological aggression predicts lower grades may have negative long-term consequences for victims: lower grades might well limit subsequent career prospects and possibilities for further study by students. Extrapolating to the work context, poorer job performance might be associated with fewer opportunities for advancement and, possibly, greater difficulties in maintaining employment.

Nonetheless, these results are potentially limited by three factors. First, all data were derived from self-reports. However, the possibility of mono-method bias is low given that (a) students were asked to bring their official academic transcripts to the session, and (b) a very high correlation ($r = .98$) emerged between self-reported and formal grades in a sample that did not know that self-reported grades would be correlated with actual grades (Sandys-Wunsch, 1991). Second, only cross-sectional data were used, prohibiting causal inferences. Third, the data for this study were based on intimate partner aggression within a student sample, potentially limiting the generalizability of any model related to work performance. However, student performance shares many important features with job performance: Skill and ability play a role, there is similarity between the motivational factors required for successful performance across the two contexts (e.g., time management, self-efficacy), and career progression in school and at work is dependent on the positive evaluations of a superior.

General Discussion

The goal of the present research was to ascertain whether being the victim of intimate partner aggression was associated with

women's work outcomes, controlling for relationship satisfaction. The results of the three studies conducted here enable a more nuanced answer to this question than offered by previous research. First, intimate partner aggression is related to withdrawal while at work and withdrawal from work. In Study 1, using clinically categorized groups of women, participants who are physically abused by their partners report greater work neglect than nonabused participants. In Study 2, physical aggression measured in a community sample of women replicates these findings, and also shows a link between intimate partner physical aggression and cognitive distraction, partial absenteeism, and intentions to quit. The inclusion of psychological aggression over and above physical aggression predicted further variance in partial absence. In Study 3, using a sample of college-aged women, psychological aggression from an intimate partner predicts lower academic performance. The findings from Study 3 emerge after controlling for victims' conscientiousness, a known correlate of academic performance.

The findings from these three studies advance our knowledge in several ways. First, any effects of intimate partner aggression are more widespread than previously considered, and the type of intimate partner aggression may be associated with different aspects of women's work outcomes. Second, these findings add to the growing focus in the work-non-work literature on spillover and crossover effects, that is, effects across both roles and partners. Third, while the traditional definition of work withdrawal has been physical absence from the workplace, the importance of studying both *withdrawal at* and *from* work is highlighted. Fourth, we establish a link between interpartner psychological aggression and academic performance.

Most significantly, COR theory offers a greater understanding of why adverse intimate relationships would negatively affect women's work. In all three studies, experiencing either psychological or physical interpartner aggression was associated with women's work outcomes. In doing so, the usefulness of COR theory for understanding cross-domain outcomes is extended.

Most research to date on the effects of being the victim of intimate partner aggression has focused on the personal consequences for the victims themselves (e.g., psychological and physical health; Pico-Alfonso et al., 2006; Plichta, 2004; Sutherland et al., 2002). There is also a large body of research showing negative effects for secondary victims, such as children of abused women who witness acts of intimate partner aggression (Holden, Geffner, & Jouriles, 1998). Together with studies on intimate partner aggression and women's work discussed previously, the negative consequences of intimate partner aggression can now be shown to be more widespread, crossing contextual boundaries, affecting women's withdrawal at and from work, as well as academic performance. The fact that work withdrawal is affected might be of considerable significance for the women affected. If they are more likely to be cognitively distracted, neglectful of work activities, or thinking about quitting the organization, their performance may suffer, threatening their ability to gain or maintain employment or achieve sought-after promotions, at the same time that maintaining or enhancing their employment might be critical to their ability to exit the abusive relationship.

Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Nonetheless, all research has limitations, and these three studies are no exception. First, data for all three studies were cross-sectional. As such, questions concerning causal inference cannot be answered from these data. Second, Study 2 was based exclusively on self-report data, raising the concern that mono-method bias limited the validity of any findings. However, this was not a uniform threat to the validity of all three studies. In Study 1, data on the predictor variables were obtained from interviews conducted by a social worker, with data on the outcomes coming from self-report. In Study 3, we asked participants to bring their formal transcripts to the session to heighten the likelihood of their reporting actual grades. In addition, the nonsignificant correlations between some of the study variables reduce the possibility that mono-method bias is a threat (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Nonetheless, the fact that significant effects on withdrawal from work emerged in Study 2, which was based solely on self-report data, but not in Study 1, in which common method variance was not a substantial concern, suggests that the effects of intimate partner aggression on withdrawal from work should be investigated further.

The findings of the three studies open several avenues for future research that together could further extend our knowledge of the intersection of intimate partner aggression and women's work outcomes. First, the results of the three studies show that a link exists between intimate partner aggression and women's work withdrawal. There is also evidence from the student sample in Study 3 that being the victim of intimate partner aggression is negatively associated with academic performance. Whether this extends to women's work performance in an employment context is of some practical significance: if women's work performance is compromised by being victimized by intimate partner aggression, their employability could become precarious, and thus any effects on work performance are worthy of future study. In a similar vein, research might also focus on a wide range of work experiences other than withdrawal or performance. For example, based on findings showing a link between sleep loss and cyberloafing (Wagner, Barnes, Lim, & Ferris, 2012), which might be seen as a specific form of withdrawal at work, future research might investigate whether work-non-work demands in general, and intimate partner aggression in particular, might be associated with outcomes such as cyberloafing. A related question is whether the work withdrawal or performance of colleagues and peers of the abused women might also be affected. Learning that a coworker is suffering intimate partner aggression could also result in psychological distress for colleagues (e.g., feelings of powerlessness, guilt, and anger) that might affect their own work performance (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). Additionally, as intimate partner aggression transcends hierarchical levels in the organization, it is likely that those in authority positions experience intimate partner aggression, and it would also be important to understand how being the victim of intimate partner aggression affects the leadership and work responsibilities of individuals who hold managerial and leadership positions, as part of their responsibilities involve caring for others.

Second, determining boundary conditions of the relationship between intimate partner aggression and work withdrawal is an important next step. Several possible moderators of this relation-

ship are worthy of investigation. Studies show that relationships characterized by intimate partner aggression differ in the extent to which abusive partners deliberately engage in activities to disrupt or end their partners' employment (e.g., Riger et al., 2000), including actions that would force victims to leave work early (e.g., refusing to care for children). In addition, being abused by a partner is associated with a host of negative physical and emotional health symptoms (e.g., Golding, 1999; Plichta, 2004; Sutherland et al., 2001) and injuries (Jose & O'Leary, 2009), which could potentially increase the probability of absenteeism. Separately, Rothman, Hathaway, Stidsen, and de Vries (2007) suggest several ways in which employment would be beneficial to women suffering intimate partner aggression, for example, employment can provide a physically safe haven or a psychological respite (e.g., Matthews, Booth, Taylor, & Martin, 2011) for abused women. Additionally, consistent with Jahoda's (1983) theory of the manifest and latent functions of employment, employment can provide financial independence, a sense of purpose, a social network, and self-esteem. It is possible that the link between intimate partner aggression and women's work withdrawal might be weaker or nonsignificant if work fulfils any of these functions, and future research might profitably investigate the possible moderating role of these variables. Similarly, the supportive and compassionate relationships that characterize many workplaces (e.g., Dutton & Glynn, 2007) could provide the basis for emotional support and friendship for abused women, and social support obtained at work might also weaken the relationship between intimate partner aggression and work withdrawal.

Third, future research should investigate whether causal inferences about the relationship between intimate partner aggression and women's work withdrawal are justified. Because experimental designs that could enhance causal inferences are unlikely given the topic under investigation, this question may be most amenable to longitudinal field studies. Causal inferences would be more likely sustained if data were collected across multiple time points, allowing for the use of modeling techniques that facilitate inferences about cross-level and within-person change over time.

Fourth, just how intimate partner aggression influences women's work outcomes remains to be assessed. Several possible mechanisms might be investigated. First, research consistently shows that being the victim of intimate partner aggression results in psychological distress (e.g., depression and anxiety), which itself predicts absenteeism over time (Hardy et al., 2003). Second, findings show that one of the consequences of suffering intimate partner aggression is fear (see, e.g., Golding, 1999), which in turn is negatively associated with work-related outcomes such as work neglect (Barling et al., 2001; Schat & Kelloway, 2000) and intent to turnover (Rogers & Kelloway, 1997). Third, pain resulting from injuries sustained in instances of physical abuse might mediate the intimate partner aggression-absenteeism link (van Leeuwen, Blyth, March, Nicholas, & Cousins, 2006). Last, it is possible that the work withdrawal variables studied mediate the relationship between intimate partner aggression and work performance. Over and above the associations established in the three studies between intimate partner aggression and work withdrawal, there are data linking cognitive distraction (Barling & MacEwen, 1991), work

neglect (Barling et al., 2001), and both partial and full absence (Roszkowski et al., 2005) with work performance.

Finally, two research questions might be pursued to enhance the external validity of the models presented here. First, the current findings have focused exclusively on aggression against women in the context of heterosexual relationships. Yet men are also victims of intimate partner aggression within heterosexual relationships (e.g., Cantos, Neidig & O'Leary, 1994), and men and women are also victimized within gay and lesbian relationships (Waldner-Haugrud, Gratch, & Magruder, 1997). This is important as the context of the romantic or marital relationship may moderate the link between intimate partner aggression and work withdrawal. For example, same-sex victims of intimate partner aggression may be less willing to seek and less able to obtain support at work. Second, in extreme cases, abusive partners arrive at women's workplaces where they continue the aggression, sometimes resulting in the victim being assaulted, even murdered (Barling, Dupré, & Kelloway, 2009; LeBlanc & Barling, 2005). In such situations, the workplace would no longer be a psychologically or physically safe haven for abused women (Rothman et al., 2007), leaving both the victims and their colleagues more fearful, with possible attitudinal and performance consequences (Barling et al., 2001; LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002; Rogers & Kelloway, 1997; Schat & Kelloway, 2000).

Practical Implications

The negative consequences of partner aggression demonstrated in the three studies and other research (e.g., Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007), as well as the significant number of women who will, at some point in their lives, experience abuse at the hands of an intimate partner (e.g., Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), underscore the importance of organizations addressing this form of aggression (O'Leary-Kelly, Lean, Reeves, & Randel, 2008). Educating management and employees about intimate partner aggression, having policies and practices in place to address partner abuse, displaying informational posters concerning domestic abuse hotlines, and fostering a climate of support and trust will help assure female employees that the organization is a safe haven in which they can ask for and receive help. Such endeavors are promoted by industry associations (e.g., the safe@work coalition) and exist in large U.S. organizations (e.g., Liz Claiborne; Safe At Work Coalition, n.d.). The difficulties in instituting such programs should not be underestimated, given that the intimate partner aggression would mostly occur outside the organization. For many organizations, there remains a reluctance to become involved in relationship issues, despite the overwhelming evidence for a bidirectional spillover between work and nonwork domains (Grzywacz & Butler, 2008), the normally active role senior managers assume when productivity is threatened (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2008), and the potential benefits of support mechanisms for the victims, their coworkers, and the organization. Nonetheless, as the present research shows, intimate partner aggression is not just an issue affecting those directly involved in the context within which aggression occurs; instead, the consequences of intimate partner aggression are widespread and can spillover to the workplace.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the three studies presented here show that intimate partner aggression is associated with women's work outcomes, including withdrawal while at work, withdrawal from work, and performance. The results of the three studies extend our understanding of the extensive effects of intimate partner aggression. From an organizational perspective, these findings extend our knowledge about differences in withdrawal at work and withdrawal from work, and about nonwork predictors of these different forms of work withdrawal. Should the findings of the current research be replicated across different outcomes and samples (e.g., of same-sex victims of intimate partner aggression) using longitudinal data, while isolating boundary conditions and mediators of the phenomenon, our understanding of the relationship between partner aggression and work outcomes will be further advanced.

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