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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES AMONG ETHNIC SUBGROUPS OF ASIANS

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Abstract

This study explored differences in intimate partner homicides (IPHs) among Asian Americans. Data from newspapers and femicide reports by different state coalitions on 125 intimate partner killings occurring between 2000 and 2005 was analyzed. Men were the perpetrators in nearly nine out of ten cases of Asian IPHs. Gender differences were found in ages of victims and perpetrators, types of relationship between partners, and methods of killing. Most homicides occurred among South-east Asians, and East Asians had the highest within group proportion of suicides. The findings call for culturally competent risk assessment and intervention strategies to prevent IPHs among at-risk Asian Americans.

Research on intimate partner violence (IPV) has begun to pay more attention to Asian Americans with the increase in the number of Asian immigrants in the US and the concerns about IPV and homicides among immigrants groups (Raj & Silverman, 2002). A study of female homicide victims in New York City from 1990 to 1999 found significantly more victims identified as Asians were killed by an intimate partner than by a non-intimate (Frye, Hosein, Waltermeyer, Blaney, & Wilt, 2005). Women comprise a disproportionately higher percentage of intimate partner homicide (IPHs) victims than men (FBI Supplementary Homicide Report: 1976-2005; Fox, & Zawitz, 2012; Raj & Silverman, 2002). Although they rarely do so, if a woman kills anyone other than a child they are most likely to kill an intimate partner, usually in immediate self-defense or after long-term physical abuse. In the US close to as many women killed their partners as did men kill female partners in the 1970's but over the past 25 years the gender difference in intimate partner victimization has widened from close to equal in 1976 to 4-5 female victims for every male starting in the current century as the laws and resources for domestic violence improved (Browne, Williams, & Dutton, 1999; Reckdenwald, & Parker, 2010). Several studies have investigated gender differences in characteristics of IPHs (Browne, Williams, & Dutton, 1999; Liem & Roberts, 2009; Fox, & Zawitz, 2012; Reckdenwald, & Parker, 2010). Gender differences are

noted in characteristics such as situational contexts of homicides and methods used by the perpetrators of crime (Eastman, 2006; Wilson & Daly, 1992).

Characteristics of IPHs also differ among diverse racial and ethnic groups (Azziz-Baumgartner, McKeown, Melvin, Dang, & Reed, 2011; Jurik & Winn, 1990). In a study comparing patterns of homicides among women and men ($n=158$), Jurik and Winn (1990) found white men perpetrators were more likely to kill intimate partners than men from the other racial groups. In contrast minority ethnic women (i.e., Black and Hispanic) were slightly more likely to kill intimate partners than were white women. Azziz-Baumgartner and colleagues (2011), in their study on homicides in Massachusetts from 1993 to 2007 reported Black and Hispanic women were at higher risk of being victimized by IPH than women from other racial/ethnic groups. The racial inequity for Black women is also reflected in national data (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007). Despite these findings, little research exists on IPHs by women and men, that gives us insights into heterogeneity among minorities.

A review of literature suggests researchers have paid little attention to partner homicides among Asians (Wu, 2009). Studies on Asian populations tend to aggregate various ethnic groups, not accounting for cultural heterogeneity among Asians, a very important contextual influence on intimate partner violence, including intimate partner homicide (Runner, Yoshihama, & Novick, 2009). For instance, existing research has examined differences in IPHs between Asians and non-Asians (Wu, 2009), but this report did not disaggregate Asian subgroups by gender in the analysis. Given the different dynamics of male versus female homicides and the range of victim-perpetrator relationships, reports not disaggregated by gender tell us little about homicides committed against women, most often IPHs. Rarely, if ever, have researchers examined the sub-ethnic variations in IPHs among Asian Americans. This study addressed this gap by examining gender differences in IPHs across ethnic subgroups of Asian Americans.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intimate Partner Homicides

Intimate partner homicide (IPH), the killing of an individual by his or her current or former intimate partner, is the most extreme form of intimate partner violence (Mathews et al., 2008; Websdale, 1999). The partner relationships may include couples actively together in a relationship, temporarily or permanently separated, in the process of filing for divorce, or divorced (Dabby, Patel, Poore, 2009). Researchers have investigated various risk factors associated with IPHs such as age, methods of killing, and victim-perpetrator relationship. IPHs are characterized by a wide age gap between victim and perpetrators (Shackelford & Mouzos, 2005), a motivation to kill for emotional versus practical reasons (Thomas, Dichter, & Matejkowski, 2011), and the use of gun as a weapon of choice (Campbell et al., 2007; Eastman, 2006; Frye et al, 2005; Garcia, Soria, & Hurwitz, 2007; Jurik & Winn, 1990). Researchers have also examined and reported gender differences in victimization and perpetration of partner homicides. Men older than 45 years of age are at the highest risk of perpetrating an IPH (Shackelford & Mouzos, 2005), and young women from 15 to 34 years of age are at the highest risk of being victimized (Pratt, & Deosaransingh, 1997). Research

on diverse samples has demonstrated a far higher prevalence of partner homicide victimization among women than men (Eastman, 2006; Frye et al., 2005). IPH most commonly affects women in cohabiting relationships (Eastman, 2006; Shackelford & Mouzos, 2005) and women going through a divorce or separation (Campbell et al., 2007; Reckdenwald & Parker, 2010) and those who have been abused by their partner (Campbell et al, 2003).

Approximately 70% of men who kill have a history of using violence against their partners (Campbell et al, 2003; Morocco, Runyan & Butts, 1998), and the majority have been convicted for an offense of violence (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh & Lewis, 2004). Evidence also suggests men who kill their partners often have mental health problems (Thomas, Dichter, & Matejkowski, 2011) especially if they kill themselves after committing the homicide, kill in response to infidelity, and kill partners who have left them (Wilson, & Daly, 1992). Moreover, the presence of state laws mandating arrest for domestic violence has been related to increased likelihood of men perpetrating IPHs (Gauthier, & Bankston, 2004). Although far fewer women kill male partners, women who do so are more likely to have had experienced severe abuse by their intimate partners, and have low educational status (Reckdenwald & Parker, 2010; Kim & Titterington, 2009) Women tend to kill their partners after years of suffering abuse (Hattendorf, Ottens, & Lomax, 1999; Wilson & Daly, 1992) with resulting PTSD (Hattendorf, Ottens, & Lomax, 1999), after having exhausted all sources of help, and when they feel trapped in the relationship and fear for their own lives (Wilson, & Daly 1992).

Some cases of IPHs are accompanied by killing of children, and are categorized as familicides. *Familicide* is defined as “a multiple-victim homicide incident in which the killer's spouse and one or more children are slain” (Wilson, Daly, & Daniele, 1995; p.275). A parent or a step-parent kills a current or ex-partner and one or more of the couple's children and/or children from a previous relationship (Dabby, Patel, Poore, 2009). Familicides have been reported to be almost exclusively perpetrated by men (Liem and Koenraadt, 2008; Wilson & Daly, 1992; Websdale, 2010; Wilson et al., 1995), with guns as the most frequently used weapons (Wilson et al., 1995). Liem and Koenraadt's (2008) analyses of 536 homicides in Netherlands, for the years 1953-2006, found most familicide perpetrators were men, and were more likely than IPH perpetrators to be married, and to attempt suicide following the homicide. Familicide perpetrators often killed when faced with divorce and/or custody over their children (Liem & Koenraadt, 2008). Women are also killed by partners when they are pregnant, another form of familicide and most often preceded by IPV (Palladino, Singh & Campbell, 2011). Thus, the evidence clearly suggests gender differences in victimization and perpetration rates of IPHs, as well as characteristics of perpetrators and victims. Since research on gender differences in characteristics of IPHs among Asian-Americans is missing, this study compared characteristics of Asian American men's and women's IPHs.

Intimate Partner Homicide-Suicides

Intimate partner homicide-suicide (IPH-suicide) refers to an intimate partner killing the other and then committing suicide (Dabby, Patel, Poore, 2009). Researchers have reported

differences in characteristics of IPH-suicides, such as methods of killings (Sanford et al., 2006) and victim-offender relationship types (Lund, & Smorodinsky, 2001). For instance, Lund and Smorodinsky (2001) found perpetrators of IPH-suicides were most often legally married or cohabiting with the victim. Almost all perpetrators of adult homicide-suicides were found to be men and most victims were reported to be women (Bossarte, Simon, & Barker, 2006). In a cross-cultural study on risk factors of IPH-suicides, Liem and Roberts (2009) discovered men who attempted suicide after committing IPH, were more likely to have depression problems, and to have threatened suicide prior to the offense. The killings were typically motivated by a fear of abandonment and dependency on the victim (Liem & Roberts, 2009). However in the US 11 city intimate partner femicide study, Koziol-McLain and colleagues (2006) found that men who killed themselves after killing partners were just as likely (70%) to have physically assaulted their partners before the homicide, as those males who did not kill themselves after, making IPV the most common risk factor for IP homicide-suicide as well as IPH. Perpetrators of IPH-suicide often had histories of legal or financial problems (Bossarte, Simon, & Barker, 2006). In another study on risk factors associated with IPH-suicide in South Africa, suicides most frequently occurred in cases in which the perpetrators owned a legal gun (Mathews et al., 2008). Data from 186 homicides in California in 1996 conform to this analysis. Perpetrators who used a gun were 13 times more likely to commit suicide after killing their partners than those who used any other type of weapon (Lund, & Smorodinsky, 2001). Although most cases of suicides after homicide involved the use of guns, women were found to be more likely than men to use other types of suicide methods such as poisoning (Sanford et al., 2006). Age was also a factor associated with IPH-suicides. A quarter of homicide/suicide incidents have been found to involve persons over the age of 55 (Malphurs & Cohen, 2002; Bossarte, Simon, & Barker, 2006). For example, a study found IPH-suicides were more common when either the victim or the perpetrator was aged 70 years or older (Lund, & Smorodinsky, 2001). As partner homicide-suicides have unique characteristics that vary by gender in the general population, this study explored gender differences in characteristics of partner homicide-suicides among Asian ethnic sub-groups.

Heterogeneity Among Asian Americans

Asian Americans are heterogeneous in terms of culture, religion, and countries of origin. Despite commonly held patriarchal beliefs and traditional gender norms, Asian Americans differ in manifestations of patriarchy, gender oppression and attitudes towards domestic violence (Lee & Hadeed, 2009). For instance, among South Asians, religious and cultural contexts supporting men's power over women and making the former the guardians of family honor and blaming the latter for besmirching it, can contribute to violence against women (Abraham, 1998; Abraham, 2000; Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004). Violence in intimate relationships has also been related to cultural practices such as the dowry system in India (i.e., gifts from the bride's family to the groom and his family at the time of marriage; Vindhya, 2000), because post-marriage the gifts are stated to be inadequate or violence is used to extract additional gifts. In East Asia, traditional Confucian ideas have placed men in a dominant and superior role, placing women into the virtuous-but-inferior position (Hester, 2004). Cultural aphorisms, such as "Three days without beating your wife, and your home will fall apart" further promote women's low status in society (Xu, Campbell, & Zhu, 2001).

Women who deviate from social rules and norms have been controlled via non-lethal and lethal violence (e.g., honor killings in South Asia). Thus, attitudes supporting violence in intimate partner relationships may place women at high risk of IPH victimization and men at high risk of perpetration of IPH. Whilst the existing literature on cultural differences explores gender norms and attitudes within community, religious and other contexts, it does not purport to explain how these affect domestic violence homicides among Asians. Further, the literature lacks focus on between and within-group variations in characteristics of homicides among Asian Americans.

This study focused on gender differences in IPHs within and between the following ethnic sub-groups of Asians: South-east Asians, South Asians, East Asians and Other Asians and Pacific Islanders. Further, it investigated variations in victim and perpetrator characteristics. The study explored gender differences in characteristics of the following types of intimate partner homicides: IPH-alone and IPH-suicides. Understanding ethnic/gender differences in factors associated with homicides is important for the identification of at-risk groups of Asians and appropriate risk factor specific culturally tailored prevention efforts.

METHOD

Data for this analysis was collected by the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence (APIDV) from newspaper clippings on file at the office of the APIDV, clippings obtained from the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative, advocates and service providers, and femicide reports from selected state coalitions (Minnesota, Oregon, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin) with significant Asian populations who publish annual fatality reports on their websites or in their newsletters. State Coalitions (a statewide network of domestic violence service programs) collect data on domestic violence related homicides from a variety of sources: print and television media reports, police crime logs, fatality review teams, and from member agencies. For California and Hawai'i, two states with high concentrations of Asians, newspaper clippings for the former were on file at the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, and for the latter, in the database of the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative.

The cases included killings that occurred between January 2000 and December 2005 in the United States. Newspaper data have been associated with methodological limitations such as selection bias and description bias-notably the veracity of the coverage (Earl, Martin, McCarthy, & Soule, 2004). Newspaper clippings, however, can be an important source of domestic violence data as the Bureau of Justice Statistics Supplemental Homicide Reports do not adequately capture all the IPHs (Campbell et al, 2007; Langford, Isaac & Kabal, 1998) and the National Violent Death Reporting System does not yet contain data from the majority of states where IP homicide is highest (e.g. Texas) and does not disaggregate ethnicity beyond the official demographic categories. This contribution of this study is the presentation of Asian IPH data that is disaggregated by both gender and ethnicity.

Sample

The original sample included 125 Asian IPH cases reported from 2000-2005, with 90.6% ($n=113$) Asian and 9.6% ($n=12$) non-Asian partner victims. The perpetrators of homicides

included 80.8% ($n=101$) Asians and 19.2% ($n=24$) non-Asians. The information on ethnicity was missing for 3 perpetrators and one victim. To allow sufficient sample in groupings for analysis, the Asian homicide cases were collapsed into the following ethnic sub-groups: South-East Asians (Cambodians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Thai, Malaysians, Hmong, and Laotians), East Asians (Chinese, Japanese and Koreans), South Asians (Indian, Pakistanis, Bangladeshi and Burmese) and Other Asians (Central and West Asians such as Iranians and Iraqis and the Pacific Islanders). Non-Asian perpetrators and homosexual partners were excluded from the analysis, reducing the final sample size to 100 for Asian ethnic group analysis (i.e., the sample involved only homicides committed by Asian partners in heterosexual relationships).

In the overall sample, the majority of victims (54.9%; $n=62$ of the 113 cases) and perpetrators (50%, $n=50$ of the 101) in the sample belonged to the South-East Asian group, followed by the East Asian ethnic group (22.1% victims, $n=25$ and 22% perpetrators, $n=22$). The remaining categories included South Asians (16.8% victims ($n=19$); 20% perpetrators), and the Other Asian and Pacific Islander group (6.2%, $n=7$ victims and 8% perpetrators, $n=8$).

In the majority of Asian IPH cases, the victims and perpetrators were from the same ethnic background (73.4%, $n=91$), with a relatively small percentage of Asians in a relationship with non-Asians (26.6%, $n=33$). Among the South-East Asian homicides, more than half of the cases (52%; $n=13$) involved a perpetrator from a different ethnic background, with the other member of the couple most often being male ($n=12$). Among the remaining three ethnic groups, East Asians experienced the highest proportion of homicides in which the perpetrator was a non-Asian (36%, $n=9$). East Asians also had a significantly higher proportion of non-Asian partner victims (50%, $n=6$; $\chi^2=3.974$; $df=1$, $p=.04$) than the other three ethnic groups (South-east Asians, 25%, $n=3$, Other Asian and Pacific Islander, 16.7%, $n=2$, and South Asians, 8.3%, $n=3$). Gender differences, however, in perpetration of IPHs among inter-racial couples were not significant.

RESULTS

Types of Intimate Partner Homicides

As shown in Table 1, IPHs included intimate partner homicides-alone (IPH-alone) and intimate partner homicide-suicides (IPH-suicides). Familicide ($n=2$) and familicide-suicide ($n=4$) categories were combined with IPH-alone and IPH-suicide respectively, due to their small sample sizes. Overall, the vast majority of victims in all types of domestic violence homicides were women and the great majority of perpetrators were men. Proportions ranged from 96.1% of Southeast Asians perpetrators being male (3.9% females) to 85% of the South Asian cases being male perpetrators and 15% females to 76.2% of East Asian perpetrators being male (23.8% female). The East Asian group significantly differed from other groups in perpetration of IPH-suicides. Notably, the percentage of East Asian perpetrators involved in IPH-suicides (57.1%; $n=12$ out of the total 21 East Asian homicide cases) was significantly higher than the IPH-suicide perpetrators in all the other Asian ethnic sub-groups (29.1%; $n=23$ out of 79 homicides; $\chi^2(1) = 5.73$, $p = .02$). The proportion of IPH-suicides in the other ethnic groups ranged from 20-29%.

Intimate partner homicides-alone—Most domestic violence homicide cases involving Asian perpetrators (63%) were cases of IPHs-alone. The overall proportion of male-perpetrated intimate partner homicides (85.7%; $n=54$ of the 63 cases of IPH-alone) was found to be much higher compared to the proportion of female-perpetrated homicides (14.3%, $n=9$ of the 63 IPH-alone cases). Male predominance in committing intimate partner homicides was true for all ethnic subgroups of Asians (Table 1).

Intimate partner homicide-suicides—IPH-suicides committed by Asian intimate partners accounted for a third (35%) of the total domestic violence homicides ($n=100$), and nearly all of those perpetrators were men (91.4%, $n=32$ of the 35 cases of IPH-suicides). The proportion of homicides followed by a suicide of the male partner ranged from 25% of South Asians to 57.1% of East Asians, a significantly higher proportion ($p<.05$). Three of the female East Asian perpetrators killed themselves after the homicide (2 IPH and 1 familicide) but no females killed themselves after homicide in any of the other groups (Table 1).

Age

Age distribution of victims and perpetrators—The average overall age of Asian domestic violence homicide victims ($N=113$) was 36.6 years. Categorizing ages as 16-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and above, chi-square analyses indicated that there were significant differences in the distribution of ages for male and female victims (*Chi-square* (4) = 9.267, $p = .05$). In the under 40-year old age group, the proportion of female victims (68.3%) was higher than the proportion of male victims. Male victims were more commonly aged above 40 (63.7%). Overall Asian ethnic sub-groups significantly differed in victims' ages ($F(3,91)=3.96$, $p<.05$), with East Asian homicide victims ($M=44.5$) being significantly older than the South-east Asian ($M=34.7$) and South Asian ($M=34.2$) homicide victims. The information on age was missing for 5 victims.

The average overall age of Asian perpetrators ($N=100$) of homicides was 40.5 (Males=40.4; Females=41.6), with missing information on ages for 9 perpetrators. Slightly more than half of the men perpetrators (51 %) were in the under 40 age group and women perpetrators were more common in the above 40 age group (66.7%). No significant gender differences in perpetrators ages were found for the total sample and within the ethnic sub-groups of Asians. However, ethnic sub-group differences were observed with East Asian homicide perpetrators being significantly older in age ($M=48.5$) than perpetrators from the South-east Asian ($M=37.3$) and South Asian ($M=37.9$) ethnic groups ($F(3,87)=4.90$, $p<.05$).

Age gap between male perpetrator-female victim and female-perpetrator-male victim—The largest age gap between perpetrators and victims was found in cases where the perpetrator was a male and victim was a female. On average, female victims of male perpetrators were younger ($M=35.6$) than male victims of female perpetrators ($M=43.8$). This difference was found to be statistically significant ($t(117)=2.29$, $p<.05$). Furthermore, the average age gap between male perpetrators and their female victims ($M=6.3$) was significantly greater than the average age gap between female perpetrators and their male victims ($M=3.2$; $t(110)=-2.07$, $p<.05$). The ethnic sub-groups did not differ significantly on

age gap between perpetrators and victims. The average age gap, however, between female perpetrators and their male victims ($M=6.3$) appeared to be the largest for the South Asian group when compared to the other Asian ethnic sub-groups (Table 3).

Age distribution by type of homicide—The partners in IPHs-alone were relatively younger than the partners in IPH-suicides. The average age of the victim of IPH-suicide ($M=40.5$) exceeded the average age of the victim of IPH-alone ($M=35.0$) by 5.5 years. Further, the average age of the perpetrator of IPH-suicide ($M=45.3$) was higher than the average age of the perpetrator of IPH-alone ($M=37.8$). These differences in mean ages by type of homicide were statistically significant ($p<.05$).

Relationship between victim and perpetrator.

More than half of the domestic violence homicides were committed by current spouses in the overall sample (53.2%, $n=66$ of the 124 cases of homicides-all types) and in the sample of Asian perpetrators only (55%, $n=55$ of the 100 homicides). In examining gender differences within each ethnic sub-group, a substantial proportion of men and women who committed partner homicides killed their current spouses (50%-70.6%).

Comparing current and former partner relationships (married or unmarried), 68.2% of the Asian men perpetrators ($n=60$ of the 88 men perpetrators) and 75% of the Asian women perpetrators ($n=9$ of the 12 women perpetrators) were in a current marital or partner relationship with their victims. Current marital or a current unmarried partner relationship types involved a greater proportion of men and women-perpetrated homicides across all ethnic sub-group of Asians (South-east Asians: 63.2% men vs 100% women; South Asians: 76.5% vs 66.7% women; East Asians: 68.8% men versus 80% women; Other Asians: 83.3% men vs 50% women; Table 2).

Victim-perpetrator relationship by type of homicide—Most cases of Asian perpetrated IPH-suicides (74.3%, 26 of the 35 cases) and IPH-alone (65.1%; 41 of the 63 cases) involved a current marital or a current non-marital intimate partner. IPHs-alone homicides comprised about 70% couples in current (52.4%) or former (17.5%) marital relationships (44 of the 63 cases of IPH-alone). Furthermore, 80% of the IPH-suicides involved partners who were currently (60%) or formerly (20%) married ($n=28$ of the 35 cases of IPH-suicides). This was true for both male and female-perpetrated homicides. Although gender differences were not significant, a higher percentage of male perpetrators of IPHs-alone killed their former partners (37%, $n=20$ of 54 men perpetrated IPHs-alone), when compared to women perpetrators of IPH-alone (22.2%, $n=2$ of the 9 women perpetrated IPH-alone homicides).

Methods of Killing

Methods of victim killing—Stabbing (40.6%; $n=39$) was the most frequently used method of killing overall, used by a substantial number of Asian male homicide perpetrators (39.3%, $n=33$) and half of Asian female perpetrators (50%, $n=6$). Shooting (34.4%; $n=33$) was the second most frequently used method of killing by males (32.1%, $n=27$) and female

(50%, $n=6$) perpetrators of partner homicides. Information on methods of killings was missing for 4 cases (see Table 3).

Male perpetrators used more of a variety of methods to kill their victims; 10.2% ($n=9$) strangled, 3.6% ($n=3$) bludgeoned the victim with an object, 7.4% ($n=6$) used multiple methods to kill one victim (e.g., strangulation and stabbing, stabbing and bludgeoning, shooting and stabbing); 4.4% ($n=4$) killed by using a vehicle and 8.2% ($n=8$) used other means (e.g., set on fire, starved and medically neglected); in contrast, female perpetrators only used two methods; stabbing (50%, $n=6$) and shooting (50%, $n=6$). Stabbing was used by females in all Asian ethnic sub-groups.

Method of killing by type of homicide—Shootings constituted a significantly larger proportion of IPH-suicides (62.9%, $n=22$ of 35 cases) than of IPHs-alone (18%, $n=11$ of the 61 known cases of methods of killings; $\chi^2(1) = 19.81, p < .05$). In contrast, stabbing was proportionately more utilized method of killing in IPHs-alone (52.5%, 32 of the 61 cases) than in IPH-suicides (20%, 7 of the 35 cases; $\chi^2(1) = 9.714, p < .05$). Male-perpetrated IPH-suicides included both stabbing (i.e., 21%; 7 of the 32 Asian men perpetrated IPH-suicides) and shooting, whereas Asian female-perpetrated IPH-suicides only involved shootings (Table 4).

Female perpetrators of IPH-suicides differed markedly from female perpetrators of IPH-alone in their method of killings. While female perpetrators of IPH-suicides only used guns, stabbing was the most common method of killing used by female-perpetrators of IPHs-alone (66.7%, $n=6$ of the 9 female-perpetrated IPH-alone).

Methods of suicide in homicide-suicides—Shooting was the most favored method of suicide for both male (65.7%; $n=23$) and female homicide perpetrators (100%, $n=3$), and for all ethnic-subgroups of Asian perpetrators of homicides (68.4%, $n=26$). Men also tended to use other methods of suicide such as hanging, stabbing, burning, car accident, and drug overdose. Women, on the other hand, used shooting as the only method of suicide (IPH-suicides: 100%, $n=2$ and familicide-suicide: 100%; $n=1$).

Age distribution by method of killing—There were no significant differences in methods of killings by age. However, perpetrators who stabbed their victims ($M=37$; Male: $M=37.4$; Females: $M=35.2$) tended to be younger than those who used other methods of killings ($M=42.9$) ($t(86)=2.267, p < .05$).

Victim perpetrator relationship by method of killing—Most cases of stabbings involved partners in current relationships (66.7%; 26 of the 39 cases of cases of stabbing by an Asian perpetrator), with no significant gender differences. Almost 61% of the current partner killings by males and 62.5% of the current partner killings by females involved stabbing ($n=20$ of the 56 cases of current partner killings by males; $n=5$ of the 8 current partners killed by females).

Although cases of shooting also involved a high percentage of partners in current relationships (51.5%, $n=17$ of the 33 cases of shootings), slightly more than half of the

former partner killings were committed using guns (51.6%; 16 of the 31 former partner killings; $\chi^2(1) = 6.031, p < .05$). When females killed their former partners, they only used guns (100%, $n=3$ former partner killings by women), whereas only 46.4% males used guns to kill their former partners ($n=13$ of the 28 former partner killings by males; $\chi^2(1) = 3.93, p < .05$).

DISCUSSION

This paper explored gender/ethnic sub-group differences in characteristics of Asian IPHs. Similar to the findings of other research (Frye et al., 2005; Wilson, Daly, & Daniele, 1995), the results of this study demonstrate that women are far more likely than men to be victimized by IPHs. Men were far more likely than women to kill their intimate partners. This gender gap was apparent across all Asian ethnic sub-groups. These results are consistent with numerous studies in different racial/ethnic populations, and suggest Asian women are at greater risk for IPH victimization than men and represent an important population for prevention efforts. In the US the overall proportion of females killing males in IPHs is substantially greater, approximately 20% of the total IPH cases, than the 9.7% in this sample, suggesting the concerns for females should be even greater especially among Southeast Asian women (96% female victims).

More than a third (35%) of the Asian IPHs included the subsequent suicide of the perpetrator. Almost all victims of IPH-S were women and almost all perpetrators were men, which is consistent with the existing literature on IPH-suicides overall in the US and Australia (Bossarte, Simon, & Barker, 2006; Eliason, 2009). Women who commit IPH-suicides are often in intimate partner relationships that involve children (Byard, 2005). In our study, one of the three cases of woman-perpetrated IPH-suicides was a familicide-suicide case. We could not determine if the other two cases involved children, but the two of the three cases occurred among estranged couples. Inability to cope with estrangement from children may play a role in IPH-suicides perpetrated by women in estranged relationships. Moreover, beliefs that children could not sustain or cope in their absence may play a part in women-perpetrated familicide-suicides (Wilson, Daly & Daniele, 1995).

IPH-suicides are more likely to occur among married couples. Eighty percent of the IPH-suicides in our sample involved partners who were married or formerly married. A study on IPHs by Bank and colleagues (2008) provides support for these findings. In their study, 70% of the couples in IPH-suicides were married or were in a former marriage relationship, whereas in cases of IPH-alone, there were an equal number of married and unmarried partners.

Age was found to be a significant characteristic, differentiating women from men. Consistent with the existing literature that suggests younger women are at greater risk for being victimized by IPHs (Garcia, Soria, & Hurwitz, 2007; Shackelford, Buss, & Peters, 2000), we discovered women IPH victims were about 8 years younger than men IPH victims. Significant age differences were also noted in IPH-alone and IPH-suicide cases, with partners in IPH-suicides being much older than partners in IPHs-alone. Thus, increase in age may be associated with an increased risk of IPH-suicides among Asian couples, as

suggested by research among other racial/ethnic groups. Evidence shows IPH-suicides are more likely to occur among older couples (Banks, Crandall, Sklar, & Bauer, 2008; Bourget, Gagne, & Whitehurst, 2011; Byard, 2005), due to factors such as disabling illness, the strain of spousal caregiving, and depression (Bourget, Gagne, & Whitehurst, 2011).

Studies on other racial/ethnic groups have shown couples with a wide age gap are at high risk for domestic violence victimization and perpetration (Aldridge & Browne, 2003; Breitman, Shackelford, & Block, 2004; Garcia, Soria, & Hurwitz, 2007; Shackelford, 2001; Wilson, Daly & Wright, 1993). Our study confirmed findings in previous literature. However, a wide age gap appeared to be a risk factor for only male-perpetrated homicides. The average age gap between male perpetrators and their female victims was greater than the average age gap between female perpetrators and their male victims. Men who killed were on average 6 years older than their partners. Factors such as partner heterogeneity and associated stress, monetary gain from killing the spouse, sexual jealousy and, presence of stepchildren in the family have been associated with risk for homicides in relationships with a wide age gap (Breitman, Shackelford, & Block, 2004).

Our findings revealed most victims of IPHs among the Asian ethnic sub-groups were killed by a current marital partner. This is contrary to the findings in other studies that report estrangement as the greatest risk factor for homicides (Campbell et al., 2007). One possible explanation is that Asians couples, because of sociocultural norms, may be more likely to remain married than other racial/ethnic groups. Asian women, even if abused, may hesitate to separate because of traditional values emphasizing the importance of family ties over individualism, stigma of divorce, the need to maintain family respect in the community, or dependent partners' fear of deportation (Han, Kim, & Tyson, 2010; Raj & Silverman, 2002). Among IPHs in which an estranged partner was killed, some gender differences were noted. Compared to the proportion of women perpetrators in estranged relationships, a greater proportion of men were involved in killings of their estranged spouse or partner. This finding is supported by the current literature, which highlights estrangement as a risk factor for female victimization in IPHs and IPH-suicides (Aldridge & Browne, 2003; Eliason, 2009; Wallace, 1986).

Stabbing was the preferred method of killing an intimate partner in contrast to most intimate homicides in the United States where guns are the most commonly used weapons (Campbell et al., 2007; Frye et al., 2005; Roberts, 2009; Wilson & Daly, 1992). Other studies conducted on non-US populations (Ganpat & Liem, 2012) indicate stabbing to be the most common method of killings in IPHs. The ease of access to or availability of knives or sharp objects in the homes and the lack of a tradition of gun ownership may be related to the greater use of stabbing than shooting in Asian IPHs.

Overall, a substantial percentage of killings by stabbing occurred among Asian homicide cases, in which partners were in a current relationship. Partners in current relationship are likely to live in the same residence, have easier access to each other, and are therefore, more likely to use methods that involve close contact with the victim, when compared to partners who do not live together (Mize, Shackelford, & Shackelford, 2009).

Shooting was used in most killings of estranged partners. This is consistent with research that suggests estranged partners are most frequently killed by guns (Campbell et al., 2007). Interestingly, Asian women appeared to be more likely to use guns to kill their estranged partners than Asian men. More than half of the men in our sample who killed estranged partners used stabbing and other methods. Jealousy and extreme rage at partners who leave, has been associated with IPH in other studies; with men resorting to killing their partners in a more violent manner than is necessary (Mize, Shackelford, & Shackelford, 2009).

In suicides, shooting was found to be the most commonly used method among all gender/ethnic sub-groups, which is congruent with the extant literature on suicide (e.g., Banks, Crandall, Sklar, & Blaur, 2008; Bassarte, Simon, & Barker, 2006; Eliasan, 2009).

In this study perpetrators who stabbed their victims were found to be relatively younger than those who used other methods. This finding supports an earlier investigation in which age significantly predicted killings by stabbing and other methods such as beating and strangulation. Younger men were reported to be at greater risk for using more violent methods of killing their intimate partners (e.g., stabbing) than older men (Mize, Shackelford, & Weekes-Shackelford, 2011)

Men used a wider variety of methods to kill their victims and to commit suicide. Moreover, as documented in the literature on other racial/ethnic groups (e.g., Aldridge & Browne, 2003), perpetrators who used more methods and/or force than was necessary to cause death, were exclusively men.

Our results regarding Asian ethnic sub-group differences in homicides indicated the largest number of IPHs occurred among South-east Asians. The cultural assumptions of male power and violent practices in marital relationships (Rydstrom, 2004) place women at high risk of experiencing lethal violence by an intimate partner. A study found South East Asians (i.e., Vietnamese and Cambodians) to be more strongly supportive of male privilege and of the use of violence in certain situations in comparison to the East Asians. South-east Asians were also found to be less likely than East Asians to endorse alternatives to living with violence, such as separation or divorce (Lee & Hadeed, 2009; Yoshioka, DiNoia & Ullah, 2001). However, patriarchal beliefs and practices cannot be extrapolated as justifications for intimate homicides-no culture overtly condones such killings. Future research should conduct an in-depth analysis of antecedents of IPHs and the role of cultural factors in increasing the risk of homicides among Asian Americans.

Asian ethnic sub-groups significantly differed in types of homicides, with a higher within-group proportion of IPH-suicides among East Asians, when compared to the other groups. In addition, victims and perpetrators from the East Asian group, on average, were found to be significantly older than the other Asian ethnic groups. Previous research has established older couples are at high risk for IPH-suicides (Banks, Crandall, Sklar, & Bauer, 2008). It is possible in our sample IPH-suicides among East Asians were linked to the old age of partners. Finally, there were no significant differences among the ethnic sub-groups in victim-perpetrator relationship types and methods of killings.

A number of limitations of our study must be pointed out. Our study was largely based on newspaper reports which can introduce selection and description bias in the data. The first is our inability to identify antecedents of IPHs and IPHs-suicides. Much useful information is left out in newspaper descriptions. Particularly missing from these reports was whether or not prior intimate partner violence preceded these murders. The fatality review teams collect extensive information using multiple sources (e.g., coroner's reports, interviews with family and/or community members, and police) but that information was not attempted for the original study.

A crime may not have been listed as a IPH in a newspaper report. Newspaper editors decide which stories are to be treated as news and therefore included in the paper. The selection and collection of newspaper clippings may have been influenced by the perception of what constituted a IPH event. The process of identifying the ethnicity of victims and perpetrators relied on names, references in newspaper articles to the ethnicity or country of origin of either victim or perpetrator, and information from advocates in community-based organizations and state coalitions.

Future research should examine risk factors among Asian ethnic sub-groups using multiple sources of information such as police records and family members of victims. Second, due to large variations in sample sizes, we were limited in our statistical analysis to detect group differences. For instance, the South-East Asian group was much larger than the other ethnic sub-groups. In contrast, the Other Asian and Pacific Islander group was much smaller than the other groups.

Despite these limitations, this study is the first to examine ethnic-sub group/gender differences in IPHs among Asian-Americans using national data, and adds to the literature on IPHs in the United States. This research highlights the need for early identification for risk of victimization and perpetration of homicide and homicide-suicide; and other approaches to preventing domestic violence homicides among Asian Americans. Efforts are needed to develop culturally appropriate assessment strategies taking into account heterogeneity among Asians, and to identify high risk victims and perpetrators so as to provide services to those in need .

In conclusion, this study described characteristics of IPHs and gender/ethnic sub-group differences in homicide cases among Asians. The results of this indicate while there were not large ethnic sub-group differences in characteristics, women across groups, are at far higher risk of being killed by an intimate partner than men. Although prior violence in the relationship is a risk factor for IPH overall in this country (Campbell et al. 2007), traditional family values, rigid gender roles, and in some cases, immigration related barriers may restrict women from speaking out against their abusive partners (Raj and Silverman, 2002). This calls for education and awareness about dangers of abusive relationships among Asian communities, culturally competent risk/danger assessment, and initiatives targeting their unique needs, to reduce the risk of homicides in intimate partner relationships among Asians.

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Firoza Chic Dabby is the Director of the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence. She has been in the domestic violence field for thirty years and along the way has acquired some expertise on violence against Asian women; strategies for advocacy, community engagement, systems change, and movement building; the psychological and economic effects of violence over the lifecourse; violence over the lifecourse and its influence on help-seeking; trafficking; intimate homicide; child custody; battered mothers in the child welfare system; and sexual violence, particularly in conflict zones. She writes, trains and presents extensively about these and many other issues.

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TABLE 1
TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES INVOLVING INTIMATE PARTNER KILLINGS (N=100)

TYPES OF KILLINGS	TOTAL	MALE KILLS FEMALE	MALE KILLS FEMALE					FEMALE KILLS MALE				
			South-East Asians	South Asians	East Asians	Other Asian and pacific islanders		South-East Asians	South Asians	East Asians	Other Asian and pacific islanders	
Domestic Violence Homicides (N)	100	88										
<i>Intimate Partner Homicide</i> [†] % (N)	63	85.7(54)	93.9(31)	80 (12)	77.8(7)	66.7(4)	3.9 (2)	6.1 (2)	22.2(2)	33.3(2)		
<i>Intimate Partner Homicide Suicide</i> [†] % (N)	31	93.5(29)	100(15)	100 (4)	80(8)	100(2)	-	-	20(2)	-		
<i>Familicides</i> [†] % (N)	2	100(2)	100(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<i>Familicide-Suicides</i> % (N)	4	75 (3)	100(1)	100 (1)	50 (1)	50 (1)	-	-	50(1)	-		

1. Percentages represent percentages within type of homicides for each ethnic and gender group

2. Total homicides and gender breakdown includes homicides involving Asian perpetrators only.

3. A same-sex couple is excluded

4. Gender differences among the victims for the total sample and within ethnic groups were not found to be significant

COUPLE CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 2

CHARACTERISTICS		ASIANS AND COUPLES OF MIXED ETHNICITY			MALE KILLS FEMALE				FEMALE KILLS MALE			
		MALE KILLS FEMALE	FEMALE KILLS MALE	South-East Asians	South Asians	East Asians	Other Asian and pacific islanders	South-East Asians	South Asians	East Asians	Other Asian and pacific islanders	
Men' Age (M)	TOTAL (N=124)	39.7	43.8	37.7	39.1	47.7	41.0	31.0	38.3	52.2	45.0	
		35.6	41.8	34.9	33.5	51.4	34.3	30.0	32.0	51.4	43.5	
6.3		3.2	5.7	6.8	6.1	6.7	2.0	6.3	3.2	0.5		
Mean Age Gap between victim and perpetrator												
Relationship Type	Spouse	53.2 (66)	53.8 (7)	51	64.7	68.8	50	50	66.7	40	50	
	Ex-Spouse	17.7(22)	23.1 (3)	20.4	17.6	12.5	-	-	33.3	20	50	
	Partner (Unmarried)	17.7(22)	23.1 (3)	12.2	11.8	-	33.3	50	-	40	-	
	Ex-partner(Unmarried)	11.3(14)	-	16.3	5.9	18.8	16.7	-	-	-	-	

Note: 1. Percentages and mean ages/age gap for the total sample (n=124) and gender breakdown are calculated including inter-racial couples (i.e., both non-Asian partners and the four ethnic sub-groups of victims and perpetrators) and excluding a homosexual couple 2. For overall sample, on average, victims of male perpetrators (M=35.6) were younger than female perpetrators (M=43.8). This difference was statistically significant; $t(117)=2.29$, $p<.05$. Also the age gap between male perpetrator-female victim (M=6.3) was significantly larger than female perpetrator-male victim $t(110)=-2.07$, $p<.05$

* Percentages represent within gender differences.

TABLE 3
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES PERPETRATED BY ASIAN INTIMATE PARTNERS (N=100)

CHARACTERISTICS OF ASIAN PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES ¹	TOTAL (N=100)	MALE KILLS FEMALE E (N=88)	FEMAL E KILLS MALE (N=12)	MALE KILLS FEMALE ⁶				FEMALE KILLS MALE ⁶				
				South-East Asians=45	South Asians=17	East Asians=17	Other Asian and pacific islanders=6	South-East Asians=2	South Asians=3	East Asians=5	Other Asian and pacific islanders=2	
Perpetrators' Age (Mean)	40.5	40.4	41.6	38.1	38.9	47.7	41	30	32	51.4	43	
Methods of Killings ² %(N)												
1. Stabbing/Slashing ³	40.6 (39)	39.3 (33)	50 (6)	42.2 (19)	41.2(7)	31.3(5)	33.3 (2)	100 (2)	66.7(2)	20 (1)	50 (1)	
2. Shooting ³	34.4 (33)	32.1(27)	50 (6)	37.8(17)	11.8(2)	37.5(6)	33.3(2)	-	33.3(1)	80 (4)	50(1)	
3. Strangulation ³	9.1 (9)	10.2 (9) 3.6	-	8.3 (4)	23.5(4)	-	16.7(1)	-	-	-	-	
4. Bludgeoned with a hammer ³	3.2 (4)	(3)	-	2.3 (1)	-	12.5(2)	-	-	-	-	-	
5. Multiple Methods ⁴	6.5 (6)	7.4 (6)	-	4.5 (2)	11.8(2)	5.9(1)	33.3(2)	-	-	-	-	
6. Run down with a vehicle	4.4 (4)	5.1 (4)	-	4.5(2)	11.8(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
7. Other means ⁵	8.2 (8)	9.4 (8)	-	6.3(3)	11.8(2)	11.8(2)	16.7(1)	-	-	-	-	

¹ Domestic violence homicides in the table include homicide-suicides, familicides and familicide-suicides; Percentages and mean ages are calculated selecting the Asian ethnic sub-groups of perpetrators; Non-Asian perpetrators and same sex couple are excluded.

² Information on homicide methods was missing for ⁷ perpetrators;

³ Stabbing, Shooting, Strangulation, Bludgeoned categories include all multiple methods cases.

⁴ Multiple methods include cases in which victims were a) strangled, beaten and stabbed, b) strangled and beaten to death, c) stabbed and bludgeoned, d) shot and stabbed, e) stabbed and strangled, and f)stabbed and beaten to death with a hammer;

⁵ Other means involve the following methods of killings: blow to the head (n=1), neglect and malnutrition (n=1) and driven off a sea cliff (n=1);

⁶ Percentages represent percentage of total within gender for all Asian groups and percentage of total within gender for each ethnic group; Gender differences for the total sample and within-ethnic groups were not found to be significant.

TABLE 4

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES-SUICIDES (N=35)

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES-SUICIDES/ FAMILICIDE-SUICIDES	TOTAL (N=38)	MALE KILLS FEMALE (N=35)	FEMALE KILLS MALE (N=3)	MALE KILLS FEMALE				FEMALE KILLS MALE			
				South-East Asians=16	South Asians=5	East Asians=9	Other Asian and pacific islanders=2	South-East Asians	South Asians	East Asians=3	Other Asian and pacific islanders
Perpetrators' Age (Mean)	46.1	45.9	47.7	40.1	43.8	52.3	48.5	-	-	47.7	-
Methods of Killings %(n)											
1. Gun/Shooting	63.2(24)	60(21)	100 (3)	68.8(11)	60(3)	44.4(4)	-	-	-	100(3)	-
2. Stabbing	13.2(5)	14.3(5)	-	2.5(2)	20(1)	22.2(2)	-	-	-	-	-
3. Decapitated	2.6(1)	2.9(1)	-	-	-	11.1(1)	-	-	-	-	-
4. Blow to the head	5.3(2)	5.7(2)	-	-	20(1)	11.1(1)	-	-	-	-	-
5. Car accident	2.6(1)	2.9(1)	-	1(6.3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Multiple methods ¹	5.2(2)	5.8(2)	-	1(6.3)	-	-	50(1)	-	-	-	-
7. Unknown ²	7.9(3)	8.6(3)	-	1(6.3)	-	11.1(1)	50(1)	-	-	-	-
Suicide Methods %(n)											
1. Gun/Shooting	68.4(26)	65.7(23)	100(3)	68.8(11)	60(3)	55.6(5)	50(1)	-	-	100(3)	-
2. Stabbing	5.3(2)	5.7(2)	-	-	20(1)	11.1(1)	-	-	-	-	-
3. Hanging	5.3(2)	5.7(2)	-	-	-	22.2(2)	-	-	-	-	-
4. Drug Overdose	2.6(1)	2.9(1)	-	6.3(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Fire/Burning	2.6(1)	2.9(1)	-	-	20(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Car accident	2.6(1)	2.9(1)	-	6.3(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Unknown	13.2(5)	14.3(5)	-	18.8(3)	-	11.1(1)	50(1)	-	-	-	-

¹ Multiple methods include cases in which victims were a) shot and stabbed, b) stabbed and strangled;

² Unknown cases were those in which there was no reported information on methods of killings.

³ Percentages represent percentage of total within gender for all Asian groups and percentage of total within gender for each ethnic group; ³Domestic violence homicide-suicides include intimate partner homicide-suicides only (n=34) and familicide-suicide cases in which both intimate partner and children were killed (n=4); Gender differences for the total sample and within-ethnic groups were not found to be significant.