

Personal and Environmental Predictors of Depression Among Victims of Intimate Partner Violence: Comparison of Immigrant and Israeli-Born Women

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Abstract

In the present study, ecological theory was used as a basis for predicting depression among women who survive intimate partner violence (IPV). The predictors examined in the study derived from three ecological systems: the microsystem (background variables and frequency of the violence), the ontogenic system (personal resources), and the mesosystem (support resources). One hundred twenty-five women who immigrated from the Former Soviet Union and 149 Israeli-born Jewish women filled in questionnaires when they entered shelters for victims of IPV. The research findings indicate that background variables, including immigration, did not contribute significantly to the women's depression. Frequency of violence contributed slightly to depression, whereas the women's sense of mastery and social support contributed most significantly. The results highlight the need to strengthen these resources when women are in shelters, and to conduct further research to determine whether these results also hold

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true for women who receive services for prevention of violence in the community.

Keywords

intimate partner violence, depression, immigration, shelters, sense of mastery, social support, ecological model and cultural contexts

Introduction

Violence against women by their intimate partners is a widespread, universal phenomenon in modern as well as traditional societies. There has been growing recognition of intimate partner violence (IPV) as a social problem throughout the world, and research has been conducted in an attempt to identify the consequences of violence for the victims. To date, studies have focused on mental health consequences of IPV in general and depression in particular (Golding, 1999). In addition, attempts have been made to identify the factors that make some women who experienced IPV vulnerable to depression, and the findings of these studies indicate that immigration can be identified as a risk factor for depression (Stockman, Hayashi, & Campbell, 2015; Wong, Tiwari, Fong, Humphreys, & Bullock, 2011).

The present study was based on the ecological theory, which has been adopted in previous research on IPV (Dutton, 1985; Heise, 1998). According to this perspective, IPV occurs within various diverse environments, where the individual simultaneously affects those environments and is influenced by them (Dutton, 1985; Heise, 1998). However, the ecological theory has not yet been used to explore the association of experiencing IPV and immigration with depression. The present study examined whether immigrant women from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) who experience IPV have specific characteristics that distinguish them from Israeli-born Jewish women with regard to depression and predictors of depression. We focused on three ecological systems that can provide a basis for predicting depression among women in the context of immigration: The *microsystem* includes characteristics of the environment in which violence occurs — the frequency of violence, and the women's immigration status. The *ontogenic system* refers to personal resources, which were represented by the women's sense of mastery. The *mesosystem*, which refers to the women's external environment, was represented by the women's social support and their use of services. Previous studies have examined the contributions of each of these systems to depression. However, they examined each system separately among groups of IPV victims from different cultures, and mainly among those who receive community services. The unique contribution of the present study lies in the combination of factors

from different ecological systems, and the integration of these factors into one model to provide a comprehensive picture of the predictors of depression among IPV victims. In addition, the present study focused on women in shelters, who are the most vulnerable group of IPV victims (Alsaker, Kristoffersen, Moen, & Baste, 2011).

Depression Among Women Who Are Victims of Violence

Depression is mainly expressed in loss of mood reactivity, or lack of interest and pleasure in life (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Many studies have found a high frequency of depression among women who are victims of violence (Bargai, Ben-Shakhar, & Shalev, 2007; Martinez-Torteya, Bogat, von Eye, Levendosky, & Davidson, 2009; Rodriguez et al., 2008). Bargai and colleagues (2007) found that of 101 women who stayed in shelters for victims of IPV in Israel, 40% had major depression.

Predictors of Depression Among Women Who Are Victims of Violence

The microsystem

Type and frequency of violence. Previous studies have distinguished between physical violence, that is, bodily harm, and emotional abuse, that is, aspects such as isolating the women, preventing access to resources, and verbal threats (Eisikovits, Winstok, & Fishman, 2004; Golding, 1999; Matud, 2005). It was assumed that when the frequency and severity of violence were greater, women would report higher levels of depression. In addition, a meta-analysis conducted by Golding (1999) presented 18 studies which found that the severity and duration of violence was related to depression. In addition, relationships have been found between the severity of violence and emotional distress (Chandra, Satyanarayana, & Carey, 2009; Matud, 2005). This might be attributed to the increased likelihood that women who experience physical and sexual abuse will also experience emotional abuse (Sullivan, McPartland, Armeli, Jaquier, & Tennen, 2012). Therefore, these women might experience cumulative damage resulting from exposure to different types of violence. However, the differences in the results regarding the frequency of various types of violence and depression among different ethnic groups have not yet been examined.

Immigration and violence. Immigration is defined as a situation of multiple stressors (Ding et al., 2011; Foster, 2001). Individuals and families experience multiple stressors relating to immigration, including language barriers,

problems with employment and integration into the indigenous society, and emotional distress derived from the separation from familiar people and places (Borges et al., 2009; Remennick, 2005; Taler, 1998). These cumulative stressors increase the risk of frequent IPV (Hadas, Markovitzky, & Sarid, 2008). Raj and Silverman (2002) argued that the proportion of immigrant women who are victims of IPV is higher than their proportion in the total population. Contrary to this argument, in a literature review on immigration and IPV throughout the world, Menjivar and Salcido (2002) argued that in developed countries, immigrant women do not experience more violence than indigenous women. However, the literature has revealed that certain characteristics of IPV are more prevalent among immigrant women than among all women who experience violence. Research findings have revealed that immigrant women frequently experience social isolation (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002), because they have broken off their social and family relationships, and because the violent men prevent them from establishing new relationships (Abraham, 2000). The theoretical discussion above points to possible differences between immigrants and nonimmigrants in the prevalence and characteristics of IPV. However, only a few studies have compared these two populations. This gap in the literature is addressed in the current study.

In Israel, the largest group of immigrants is from the FSU (Lissitsa & Peres, 2000), and these immigrants constitute about 16% of the general population (Almagor-Lotan, 2009; Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Various testimonies have revealed that immigrant women from the FSU in Israel are at high risk of experiencing IPV (Grynbaum, Biderman, Levy, & Petasne-Weinstock, 2001). For example, data from the Israel Police Force and the welfare services indicate that 18% of the women staying in shelters in 2009 were born in the FSU. Data also indicate that immigrants from the FSU constitute 55% of the immigrants under the care of violence prevention centers, and 22% of the complaints relating to IPV were lodged to the police by immigrant women from the FSU (Almagor-Lotan, 2009; Mizrahi, 2012). One explanation for this phenomenon is that the Russian Commonwealth countries are characterized by a patriarchal culture, in which women are expected to submit to their husbands and deny family problems (Kagan & Shafer, 2001). In patriarchal societies, violence is a result of the men's need to control their wives by any means necessary, and to display their control even when the women have submitted to them (M. P. Johnson, 1995). However, the implications of these patriarchal traditions among immigrants who arrived in Israel from the FSU for the characteristics and consequences of IPV have not been explored to date.

In addition to the possible implications of immigration at the level of interpersonal relationships (the microsystem), several studies around the

world have examined immigration as a risk factor for emotional distress, and have revealed differences between immigrants and veterans with regard to emotional distress. The immigrants experienced higher emotional distress than did members of the indigenous population who had similar characteristics (Frankenberg, Kupper, Wagner, & Bongard, 2013; Lee, Park, Hwang, Im, & Ahn, 2014). Moreover, a relationship has been found between IPV and depression among immigrant women (Kagan & Shafer, 2001; Newcomb & Carmona, 2004; Wong et al., 2011). Therefore, the present study also examined the role of immigration as a variable that moderates the contribution of the rest of the research variables described below to the women's emotional distress.

The ontogenic system: Sense of mastery. Sense of mastery refers to the perceived control of individuals over their future, their appreciation of cause–effect relationships, and their perceived ability to cope with life stressors (Hobfoll & Walfisch, 1984; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Mastery has sometimes been referred to as agency in the literature (Lehavot, Walters, & Simoni, 2009). IPV is perceived as a situation in which women experience recurring lack of mastery, and often have difficulty assessing the triggers for IPV (Walker, 2009). As a result, they develop learned helplessness, which inhibits their desire to leave the violent relationship (Walker, 2009).

The relationship between immigration and impaired sense of mastery is based on the perspective of immigration as a stress situation that can undermine a person's confidence in everything that is familiar. However, as far as we know, no studies have compared the sense of mastery among immigrants versus indigenous residents. A study conducted among 600 immigrants from the FSU five years after their arrival in Israel revealed that a low sense of mastery is one predictor of emotional distress among immigrants in general, and that the predictive power of emotional distress is especially high among immigrant women (C. Lerner, Kertes, & Zilber, 2005).

The lower sense of mastery as a consequence of experiencing IPV might be an important predictor of higher depression levels. Previous studies conducted among women who have experienced IPV have revealed a low sense of mastery being associated with depression (Bargai et al., 2007; McGuigan & Middlemiss, 2005; Rodriguez et al., 2008). Specifically, Bargai and her colleagues found that the lower the sense of mastery reported by women, the stronger the relationship between the experience of violence and depression. In addition, studies focusing on immigrant populations have revealed a relationship between low mastery and depression (Chou, 2009; C. Lerner et al., 2005; Nicholson, Miller, Schwertz, & Sorokin, 2013). The existing literature has examined the implications of both immigration and IPV for a low sense

of mastery separately, in addition to examining the relationships between a low sense of mastery and high depression. Based on the literature, we examined the role of immigration as a moderator to determine whether the correlation between lower sense of mastery and higher depression is stronger among the immigrant groups who have experienced the multiple stressors of both immigration and IPV.

The mesosystem

Social support and use of services. Studies have revealed that women who are victims of violence receive little social support, and many of them are socially isolated (El-Bassel, Gilbert, Rajah, Foleno, & Frye, 2001; Rodriguez et al., 2008; Theran, Sullivan, Bogat, & Stewart, 2006). The main reason for this is that as part of the cycle of violence, the violent partners isolate the women and prevent them from contacting their families and friends. The literature indicates that immigrant women who are victims of violence have limited social support, both due to their immigration and due to the characteristics of violence among that population (Han & Resurrecoon, 2008; Raj & Silverman, 2003). It has also been found that the prevalence and severity of IPV are higher among immigrant women with low levels of social support (Liao, 2006).

Another potential source of support for immigrant and Israeli-born Jewish women who are victims of IPV may be social services. Findings have revealed that these women use various services, particularly legal services and social services, to deal with the problem of violence (Hutchison & Hirschel, 1998; Zanville & Cattaneo, 2012). However, immigrant women face more barriers which prevent them from using these services, including language barriers (Raj & Silverman, 2002). In Israel, language can be a significant barrier for women from the FSU who are seeking help, because only a few social services have Russian-speaking workers (Almagor-Lotan, 2009). In addition, immigrants from the FSU harbor suspicion of formal government services and institutions, which is related, among other factors, to the negative perspective of the government in their countries of origin (Gorbatov, 2010). This suspicion can prevent them from seeking help even when they are aware that the services exist. Although the theoretical literature has claimed that the barriers preventing immigrant women from receiving different kind of support, no studies have examined differences in levels of both formal and informal support among immigrant versus nonimmigrant women staying in shelters, nor have the potential differences in the implications for women's psychological distress been addressed. The presented study attempted to fill this gap.

Research has revealed a correlation between high levels of social support and low depression among women who are victims of violence in general and

among immigrant women in particular (Beeble, Bybee, Sullivan, & Adams, 2009; Coker et al., 2002; McGuigan & Middlemiss, 2005; Wong et al., 2011). The results of these studies indicate that woman who have experienced IPV and have limited support tend to experience higher levels of psychological distress. Because immigrant women experience the double stress of immigration and violence, in the present study, we examined the moderating effect of immigration, whether there are differences in the relationship between support and emotional distress among immigrant women versus Israeli-born Jewish women. However, owing to the lack of research on the relationship between use of social services and depression among women who are victims of violence, we examined this issue in the present study.

In light of the above literature review, we examined the contribution of immigration and IPV to depression. In addition, we examined whether there are differences in the predictors of depression among immigrant women from the FSU versus Israeli-born Jewish women. The predictors examined in this study included variables in the microsystem (frequency of violence), the ontogenetic system (sense of mastery), and the mesosystem (social support and use of services). Specifically, the following research goals were formulated:

1. To examine differences in depression and in the above-mentioned personal and environmental variables that predict depression among Israeli-born Jewish women versus women who immigrated to Israel from the FSU.
2. To examine the power of personal and environmental variables to predict depression among women who are victims of IPV.
3. To examine the moderating role of immigration in the association between background variables, personal and environmental variables and depression.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 505 women who were referred to 12 shelters for victims of IPV in Israel. A total of 1,409 IPV survivors applied to Israeli shelters between September 2009 and April 2014. After removing women with cognitive impairments or pathological conditions as well as women who left the shelter within 7 days of arrival from the sample, data were collected from 526 women, a response rate of 68.97%. Twenty-one participants were excluded from the research sample because they had responded to less than 40% of the items in the questionnaire. Thus, the final sample included 505

Table 1. Distribution of Background Variables by Country of Birth and *t* Tests.

	All Women (<i>n</i> = 274)	Israeli-Born (<i>n</i> = 149)	Immigrants (<i>n</i> = 125)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
Age	35.65 (9.44)	37.13 (10.53)	33.75 (7.42)	2.89**	255
No. of children ^a	2.50 (1.55)	2.67 (1.41)	2.28 (1.68)	1.97	244
Years of education	12.22 (2.51)	12.39 (2.47)	12.03 (2.56)	1.14	265

^aCalculated for mothers (*N* = 246).

***p* < .01.

participants. One hundred forty-nine of the participants were Jewish (29.5%), 154 were Arab (30.5%), 125 had immigrated from the FSU (24.8%), and 77 had immigrated from Ethiopia (15.2%). The present article will focus on comparing the Israeli-born Jewish women with women who immigrated to Israel from the FSU (henceforth, the immigrants).

Table 1 presents the background characteristics of the research population, and the results of *t* tests for independent samples. The age range of the women was between 20 and 75 years; more than half of them were aged 35 and below. As shown in Table 1, the Israeli-born Jewish women were significantly older than the immigrant women. About 95% of the women had children. The number of children ranged from one to 14; the mode was one child (29.2%). As can be seen in the table, there were no differences between the two groups of participants with regard to the number of children. Similarly, no difference between the groups was found in years of education, where the average number of years was more than 12 (the minimum required for a high school diploma in Israel).

In addition, we used the chi-square test to examine differences in marital status and employment. Among both groups of participants, the largest percentage was married (56.8% of the Israeli-born Jewish women, and 35.8% of the immigrant women). A high percentage of the immigrant women were separated (30.1% compared with 17.8% of the Israeli-born Jewish women). Accordingly, a significant difference was found between the marital status of the Israeli-born participants versus the immigrants: $\chi^2(3) = 12.35, p = .01$. No difference was found between the groups with regard to employment during the year preceding their arrival at the shelter: $\chi^2(1) = 0.62, p = n.s.$ In both groups, about half of the women had not worked during the year prior to their arrival at the shelter.

Procedure

The research was conducted by social workers at the shelters. A self-report questionnaire in Hebrew and Russian was distributed to the participants, who

were asked to complete the questionnaire within three weeks of their arrival at the shelter. All of the women signed informed consent forms stating that refusal to participate would not affect their stay at the shelter. Completed questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes, and participants were ensured of anonymity. The study was conducted according to the ethical guidelines of the authors' university and was approved by the ethical committees of the university and the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services.

Measures

Demographic questionnaire. The questionnaire included data on the women's background characteristics: year of birth, origin, marital status, number of children, years of education, and employment status.

Frequency of violence. The questionnaire was developed by Eisikovits et al. (2004), which measures different types and frequencies of violence: verbal aggression (e.g., insulting), psychological/emotional abuse (e.g., limitation of contact with family and friends), physical assault (e.g., breaking things), and sexual assault (forced intercourse). For each of these items, the women were asked to rank the frequency of abuse in their relationship with their partner on a scale ranging from 1 (*one-time*) to 4 (*daily*). Factor analysis yielded two main factors that explained 44.83% of the variance in the data: physical assault and threats (seven items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$) and emotional abuse (5 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .69$). The overall Cronbach's alpha reliability of the instrument used in this study was .83.

Personal Variables

Sense of mastery. The questionnaire was developed by Pearlin and Schooler (1978) and translated into Hebrew by Hobfoll and Walfisch (1984). The questionnaire examines feelings of control over the environment and the future, and includes seven items (e.g., "What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me"). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agree with each item, on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). One score was derived by calculating the mean of the scores on all items: the higher the score, the greater the participant's sense of mastery. In the present study, Item 2 was mistakenly omitted from the questionnaire. In an early study, Hobfoll, Nadler, and Leiberman (1986) reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .78 for the Hebrew version of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the questionnaire used in the present study was .74.

Environmental Variables

Social support. The questionnaire used in the present study was originally developed by Karlsson, Sjöström, and Sullivan (1995), and adapted by Soskolne and Manor (2010). It contained six statements which measure the participants' perceptions of emotional, financial, and informational support (e.g., "How often is someone available to you during a crisis to offer advice, information or guidance?"). Responses were based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*all the time*). Soskolne and Manor reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .89, and the reliability of the instrument used in the current study was .85.

Use of services. The questionnaire was developed for the present study. Participants were asked to report on the extent to which they used 14 different services listed in the questionnaire. Responses were based on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*continuously*). The general measure was the average frequency of use of different services. The general Cronbach's alpha reliability of the questionnaire was .84.

The Dependent Variable

Depression. We used a scale that measures depression based on the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), which examines psychiatric disorders (Derogatis, 1992). The questionnaire consisted of a list of six problems. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they had experienced each of the problems (e.g., "no hope for the future") on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*to a great extent*). The Cronbach's alpha internal reliability of the scale used in a previous study was .80 (Wang et al., 2010). Norms for the general population were constructed for the BSI. The average norm in Israel for the depression subscale was $M = 0.70$, $SD = 0.69$ (Gilbar & Ben-Zur, 2002). In a study conducted among immigrants from different countries, the average on the depression scale was .94 (Aroian, Patsdaughter, Levin, & Gianan, 1995).

Data Analysis

First, *t* tests and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to examine the differences between the Israeli-born and immigrant women. Afterwards, Pearson's correlations were conducted to verify the relationship between the variables and depression. A four-step hierarchical regression was conducted in accordance with ecological theory to examine the contribution of the variables from the different systems to predicting depression.

Table 2. Differences in Depression and Personal and Environmental Resources—Israeli-Born Jewish Women Versus Immigrant Women From the Former Soviet Union.

	All Women M (SD)	Israeli-Born M (SD)	Immigrants M (SD)	t	df
Depression	2.34 (1.04)	2.47 (0.97)	2.25 (1.11)	1.69	271
Sense of mastery	3.23 (0.98)	3.11 (0.99)	3.29 (0.95)	-1.51	266
Social support	3.05 (1.05)	3.19 (1.02)	2.89 (1.06)	2.31*	264
Use of services	1.70 (0.59)	1.76 (0.59)	1.61 (0.59)	2.00*	261

* $p < .05$.

Findings

To examine whether there were differences between the Israeli-born and immigrant women in levels of depression, a t test for independent samples was conducted (see Table 2). As shown in the table, no significant difference between the groups was found in levels of depression. Following this finding, t tests were conducted to examine differences in levels of depression among the women in the sample versus the level found among the overall population of Israel ($M = 0.70$; Gilbar & Ben-Zur, 2002). The findings revealed that the level of depression among the women in the sample ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.04$) was significantly higher than the level among the overall population: $t(272) = 26.46$, $p < .001$. This finding remained significant when the average levels of depression among the Israeli-born Jewish women and the immigrant women were compared separately with the overall population: $t(148) = 22.13$, $p < .001$, and $t(125) = 15.58$, $p < .001$, respectively.

In the next stage, to examine differences between the Israeli-born and immigrant women in variables that might predict depression, ANOVAs as well as t tests for independent samples were conducted (see Table 2). The analysis of variance conducted for differences between the two groups in types of IPV revealed a significant but weak difference between the groups in the frequency of violence: $F(1, 258) = 3.47$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .026$. However, post hoc Bonferroni analyses revealed no significant difference between the groups with regard to physical violence and threats: $F(1, 258) = 1.58$, n.s., nor was a significant difference found with regard to emotional abuse: $F(1, 258) = 2.56$, n.s. Table 2 presents the results of t tests conducted for independent samples to examine the differences between the groups with regard to the variables: mastery, support, and use of services.

Table 3. Pearson's Correlations of Background Variables, Characteristics, and Personal and Environmental Resources With Depression.

	All Women (<i>n</i> = 274)	Israeli-Born (<i>n</i> = 149)	Immigrants (<i>n</i> = 125)	<i>z</i> test
Background and violence variables				
Age	.11	.09	.09	
No. of children	.06	.18*	-.07	-2.02**
Years of schooling	-.02	-.09	.03	
Physical violence and threats	.16**	.08	.27**	-1.55*
Emotional abuse	.19**	.04	.32***	-2.33**
Personal and environmental variables				
Mastery	-.45***	-.43***	-.48***	0.53
Social support	-.21***	-.32***	-.12	-1.71*
Use of services	.10	.11	.07	

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

The *t* tests for independent samples revealed no significant difference between the Israeli-born and immigrant women with regard to sense of mastery. However, the immigrants from the FSU were found to have less support and use services less frequently than the Israeli-born Jewish women.

Correlations of Background Variables, Personal and Environmental Variables With Depression

To examine the correlations of background variables, characteristics of violence, and personal and environmental variables with depression, we conducted a series of Pearson's correlations (see Table 3).

The Pearson's correlations revealed that most of the background variables did not correlate significantly with depression, except for a positive correlation between number of children and depression among the Israeli-born Jewish women. The frequency of violence correlated with depression, and the source of this correlation was found mainly among the immigrant women. Moreover, we found negative correlations between mastery and depression among the women in both groups. Negative correlation between social support and depression was found among the Israeli-born Jewish women. There was no significant relationship between use of services and depression.

Predictors of Depression Among Women Who Are Victims of Violence

To assess the overall contribution of the background variables, violence variables, and personal and environmental variables as well as the contribution of their interactions with the participants' country of origin, we conducted hierarchical regression analysis. Only country of origin and the variables that correlated with depression were entered into the regression equation. These variables were entered in four steps. In the first step, background variables (country of origin and number of children) were entered. The violence variables (physical violence and threats, and emotional abuse) were entered in the second step. Personal and environmental variables (sense of mastery and social support) were entered in the third step, and the interactions between country of origin and frequency of violence as well as sense of mastery and social support were entered in the fourth step.

As shown in Table 4, the research variables explained 29% of the variance in depression. Except for background variables, all of the sets of variables examined in the regression contributed significantly to predicting depression. The variables entered in the second step contributed 4%. In this step, emotional abuse was found to be a predictor; the more the women experienced emotional abuse, the more they reported depression. However, the variables that contributed most significantly were personal and environmental variables (sense of mastery and social support), which explained 20% of the variance in depression: High mastery and high social support were associated with lower levels of depression, and vice versa. In addition, the interaction variables entered in the fourth step explained 3% of the variance, but none of the variables was found to be a significant predictor of depression.

Discussion

In the present study, we examined differences in levels of depression as well as predictors of depression among immigrant women from the FSU versus Israeli-born Jewish women who are victims of IPV. The findings revealed no differences in levels of depression between the immigrant versus Israeli-born Jewish women. The lack of differences in levels of depression among immigrants versus indigenous populations is inconsistent with the results of a previous study conducted among the overall population (Frankenberg et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2014; Mirsky, 2009). The multiple demands and losses in the process of immigration might explain the previous results. However, the literature indicates that immigrants from the FSU are less inclined to report emotional distress, and they tend to express their distress through somatic

Table 4. Standardized Regression (Beta) Coefficients Measuring the Contribution of the Variables to Explaining Depression.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Background variables								
Origin ^a	-.20	-.10	-.20	-.10	-.18	-.08	-.18	-.09
No. of children	.03	.05	.02	.03	.00	.01	.00	.00
Violence variables								
Physical violence			.16	.11	.12	.08	.15	.10
Emotional abuse			.21*	.14	.14	.09	.11	.07
Personal and environmental variables								
Mastery					-.44**	-.41	-.43***	-.41
Social support					-.15**	-.15	-.16**	-.16
Interactions								
Physical Violence x Origin							.09	.08
Emotional Abuse x Origin							.10	.09
Mastery x Origin							-.06	-.06
Social support x Origin							.10	.10
F	(2, 246) = 1.63		(4, 244) = 3.58**		(6, 242) = 14.13***		(10, 238) = 9.79***	
R ²	.01		.05**		.26***		.29*	
ΔR^2	—		.04**		.20***		.03*	

^a0 = Israeli-born, 1 = immigrants.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

symptoms (V. Lerner, Kanevsky, & Witztum, 2008). This might explain why we did not find differences between the groups when we used the questionnaire that examined psychological distress.

We did find that the levels of depression among both groups of women examined in this study were significantly higher than among the overall population. These findings are consistent with the results of previous studies, which have revealed high rates of depression among women who are victims of IPV (Bargai et al., 2007; Rodriguez et al., 2008). In addition, findings have revealed no differences among women by country origin with regard to the prevalence of IPV. These findings highlight the universal nature of IPV against women of different backgrounds and origins (Clements, Sabourin, & Spiby, 2004; Plichta & Falik, 2001).

The explanation for the absence of differences between the two groups of participants might derive from the fact that the shelter is the last line in the series of services provided to women who are victims of IPV, and that the women arrive at shelters after they have been exposed to extremely severe or life-threatening physical abuse (Grossman & Lundy, 2011; McFarlane, Maddoux, Nava, & Gilroy, 2014). Both immigrant and Israeli-born Jewish women who arrive at the shelters are from the most disadvantaged populations, as reflected in their background variables (e.g., high rates of unemployment). This assumption is consistent with the findings of a study that compared the characteristics of women who arrive at shelters for victims of IPV with those who receive community services for prevention of IPV (Grossman & Lundy, 2011). The study revealed that the socioeconomic status of the women who arrived at the shelter was lower, and they had lower levels of education than the women in the other group. In this vein, another study revealed that women who arrive at shelters experience more violence and more depression than women who receive services for prevention of violence in the community (McFarlane et al., 2014). Therefore, the finding that immigration status was not a moderating variable indicates that immigration from the FSU was no longer a significant characteristic that distinguished these women from the most disadvantaged social groups who arrive at shelters.

The findings indicate that with regard to depression and violence as well as background characteristics, there were more similarities than differences between the two groups of women. However, the immigrant women from the FSU had fewer environmental resources than the Israeli-born Jewish women. In addition to having lower levels of social support, they used social services less than the Israeli-born women. The findings of the present research are consistent with those of other studies, which indicate that informal support from family and friends is less available for immigrant women who are

victims of violence, than it is for women in the indigenous population (Han & Resurrecon, 2008; Raj & Silverman, 2003). Among other factors, this can be attributed to the role of immigration in diminishing the woman's network of close relationships. In addition, the findings of our study are consistent with results presented in the literature review, which indicate that immigrant women face obstacles in seeking assistance from various services (Abraham, 2000; Bauer, Rodriguez, Quiroga, & Flores-Ortiz, 2000; McFarlane, Soeken, Reel, Parker, & Silva, 1997). Our findings also highlight the prevailing cultural norm among immigrants from the FSU, which demands that they keep domestic problems within the family and avoid seeking help from external agencies (Crandall, Senturia, Sullivan, & Shiu-Thornton, 2005; Kagan & Shafer, 2001). These findings are noteworthy, because the low levels of support among victims of IPV can lead to dependence on the violent partner and make it difficult to leave him (Anderson & Saunders, 2003; Barnett, 2001). This is especially true of women from the FSU, who often have no family members in Israel other than their partners. Nonetheless, it is important to note that in the present study, the women in both groups received assistance from various community services before going to the shelter. This finding indicates that women who are victims of IPV used different sources of support for a long time before leaving their abusive partners (D. M. Johnson & Zlotnick, 2007; Lewis, 2002).

In the second part of the study, we examined the variables that predict depression among women who are victims of IPV. The findings reveal that in keeping with ecological theory, several of the systems in the women's environment contributed to exacerbating their depression. The first system addressed in the study was the microsystem. In that context, we examined the contribution of IPV to the women's emotional distress. As mentioned, several studies have found that the severity and frequency of violence are related to depression among victims of IPV (Carbone-López, Kruttschnitt, & Macmillan, 2006; Golding, 1999; Newcomb & Carmona, 2004). However, the findings of the present study revealed that even though physical violence is related to depression, especially among immigrant women, it does not predict the intensity of depression when background variables are taken into account. Nonetheless, the present study's findings highlight the contribution of emotional abuse to depression, particularly for immigrant women. These findings are important because family violence is often perceived only as physical abuse, whereas research has revealed that emotional abuse is also a significant component, and in many cases the only component of violent relationships (Eisikovits et al., 2004; Sullivan et al., 2012).

In the second ecological system, the ontogenic system, we examined the contribution of mastery to the women's emotional distress. A high sense of

mastery plays an important role in enabling these women to break the cycle of violence (Patzel, 2001). This can be explained by our findings as well as by previous findings which indicate that sense of mastery can play a role in preventing the negative mental health consequences of violence (Bargai et al., 2007; McGuigan & Middlemiss, 2005; Rodriguez et al., 2008). Notably, women who believe they have control over their situation tend to experience less depression connected to passive behavior, and therefore might have the ability to leave their abusive husband. In addition, findings have revealed that women who remain in a violent relationship for an extended period have a low sense of mastery (Frisch & MacKenzie, 1991). This might lead to a vicious cycle in which women who are exposed to ongoing violence experience depression besides damage to their sense of mastery, which limits their ability to leave their abusive partners.

The finding that low social support predicts high levels of depression is related to the mesosystem. This finding is in line with the results of previous studies conducted among women who are victims of IPV (e.g., Coker et al., 2002; Wong et al., 2011). As such, these findings are of great importance because they show that informal support contributes significantly to psychological distress, whereas formal support has not been found to predict depression. In the present study, we examined concrete and emotional assistance as one variable. However, Wong and colleagues (2013) found that specific intervention with IPV victims improved the depression symptoms among nonimmigrant women but did not have the same effect on the immigrant women. These findings underscore the need to further examine the results from each of the different services separately for immigrant and nonimmigrant women.

Limitations

Several limitations of the study should be noted. First, it was conducted among residents of a shelter for women who are victims of IPV. Notably, women who arrive at these shelters often experience more severe physical abuse and significantly greater danger to their lives than women who are treated for IPV in community settings (Alsaker et al., 2011). In addition, studies have revealed that the women who seek help are the ones with higher psychological distress (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2015). Moreover, the transition to the shelters and the rules of the shelters might cause loss of support from family and friends and undermine the women's sense of mastery (Glenn & Goodman, 2015). However, this study did not examine the implications of the transition to the shelter. It is important to take this into account in evaluating the implications of the findings for women who experienced IPV did not go to shelters. Furthermore, when the women's personal resources and their

use of services are addressed, there is a need to take into account that women in shelters have already sought help from various services before their arrival at the shelter. In addition, the immigrant women in our study succeeded in receiving support from services, and were able to arrive at the shelter while they were overcoming language barriers that they encountered in the Israeli services. It is possible that in this aspect, these women differ substantially from victims of IPV who remain in the community and do not seek help or do not succeed in finding help. In addition, the response rate of participants in the present sample amounted to about 70% of the women. This was mainly due to the fact that many women left the shelter after short periods, and the findings apparently do not reflect their situation.

Clinical and Policy Implications

Although we did not find differences between the immigrant and Israeli-born Jewish women with regard to the prevalence of depression, the relationship between the severity of different types of violence and levels of depression was more significant among the immigrant women. Besides these findings, the literature indicates that immigrants from the FSU are less inclined to report emotional distress and they tend to express their distress through somatic symptoms (V. Lerner et al., 2008). Therefore, it is important to conduct a comprehensive examination of depression among immigrant women who are victims of violence by identifying somatic aspects that might be indicative of depression (e.g., fatigue, lack of appetite, or excessive appetite). This would provide a basis for offering a solution for the emotional distress of these women.

In addition, it is important to examine the factors that might protect women from the consequences of IPV, with emphasis on strengthening these factors through interventions (Sullivan, 2013). In the present study, we examined the contribution of sense of mastery and social support to depression among women. These aspects can and should be reinforced through individual and group interventions while the women are staying at shelters.

Research Implications

As mentioned, the differences between the immigrant and Israeli-born Jewish women diminished in the setting of the shelter but might have been more significant among victims of IPV who receive services in the community. Therefore, it is important that future studies examine whether there are differences in levels of emotional distress and levels of resources among immigrant women from different countries versus nonimmigrant women who are

victims of IPV and receive services in different community settings. This would create a basis for providing appropriate, culturally sensitive services to women in these situations.

It should also be noted that due to the cross-sectional design of the study, the results are correlational, and cannot be used as a basis for determining causal relationships. Hence, it would be worthwhile to conduct longitudinal studies to establish causality.

In addition, the study examined one ethnic group in Israel and compared it with the Israeli-born Jewish group. It is important to mention that Israel is home to other groups such as Israeli-born Arabs and Ethiopian immigrants, who belong to traditional communities, in contrast to the immigrants from the FSU who are mainly secular. These groups may differ in terms of the resources at their disposal at each of the ecological levels. The initial results from Israel have revealed differences in levels of depression as well as physical victimization among Arab versus Jewish IPV victims (Kattoura, 2013). This discrepancy highlights the need to further explore women from different communities to better assess the risk factors for experiencing violence as well as psychological distress.

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