RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STALKING PERPETRATION,
PERSONALITY DISORDERS AND ETHNICITY: A META ANALYSIS

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DEDICATION

Well, to make this short and sweet I have to dedicate my years of hard work largely to my girls, Crystal, Monique, Nicole, and Shannon. You have watched me grow, supported me through my wild and painful times, and have always loved me unconditionally regardless of my quirks or mood. I’ve definitely come a long way from Center High. My love, appreciation and gratefulness for how unique you each are and how you’ve touched my life knows no bounds. To all of the great professors and friends who I have had the pleasure of growing close to along my academic travels thank you for putting up with my moments of stress and odd sense of humor. I honestly couldn’t have done it without any of you. Thank you, thank you, thank you for believing in me. Now it’s time to dance and celebrate!
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Relationships between Stalking Perpetration, Personality Disorders and Ethnicity: A Meta-Analysis
by
Danita Danielle Wynes
Master of Arts in Psychology
San Diego State University, 2012

Stalking is a widespread phenomenon that can have a devastating impact on not only the victim’s life, but society as a whole. In an attempt to understand the underpinnings of the stalking phenomenon, a considerable amount of research has been produced to identify factors related to stalking such as drug and alcohol abuse, criminal histories, prior relationship to the victim, and mental health disorders. Research narrowing down the specific types of mental disorders that are most likely related to stalking behavior have produced conflicting findings. Some evidence has suggested that there is a link between personality disorder diagnosis and stalking perpetration, whereas other studies have found no such relationship. This lack of homogeneity makes it difficult to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between personality disorders and stalking. In addition, despite all of the research describing stalker characteristics, few studies have looked at possible ethnic differences in stalking behavior. Understanding and acknowledging the impact that ethnicity and mental disorder may have among stalking perpetrators could provide an important element to designing an efficient treatment and assessment tool for offenders. The purpose of this study is to summarize systematically the literature on the association between personality disorder and stalking perpetration across two ethnic groupings, Caucasian and non-Caucasian. To provide a possible explanation for this phenomenon, a search of the literature was conducted to identify empirical studies on stalking perpetration and personality disorders. Literature that met the study’s inclusion and exclusion criteria were reviewed, coded, and analyzed in a descriptive meta-analysis. The sample consisted of 19 studies where the average age of the perpetrators was 34 years and was composed of mostly males (75%). The results indicate that that Axis I and Axis II comorbidity is strongly associated with stalking perpetration. Among stalking perpetrators, non-Caucasian males are more likely to be diagnosed with a personality disorder. In addition, stalkers are more likely to pursue an individual whom they shared a close relationship with, more so than pursuing a stranger. Although additional research is needed to develop strategies to effectively prevent the perpetration of stalking, this study’s results will contribute to the identification and understanding of the factors associated with the behavior.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Stalking has been identified as a crime of obsession, intimidation, control, and retaliation (Miller, 2001). Previous research has identified different types of stalkers: intimate partner, delusional, vengeful, erotomanic, obsessional acquaintance, incompetent, resentful, and predatory (Bates, 1999; Cupach & Spitzberg, 1998; Mullen, Pathé, Purcell, & Stuart, 1999). Although uniquely different from each other these typologies share a common thread, a pattern of unwanted pursuit of another individual (Baum, Catalano, Rand, & Rose, 2009; Dressing, Kuehner, & Gass, 2006; Sheridan, Blaauw, & Davies, 2003). Stalking is committed in various methods with the most common behaviors being unsolicited phone calls, leaving unwanted items, following the victim, electronic monitoring (e.g. listening devices, cameras and GPS), threats, and property damage (Baum et al., 2009; Meloy, 1999; Mullen et al., 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

Stalking is not a new behavior; however, it was only identified as a criminal act in the United States in 1990, when California passed the first law making stalking illegal. By September 1993, all 50 states and the District of Columbia had established some form of stalking (anti-stalking) law (National Institute of Justice [NIJ], 1993). Although the specific definition of stalking varies among researchers and among state jurisdictions, many generally define stalking as the willful, malicious, or repeated following or harassing of another individual, causing them to fear for their safety or well-being (Lewis, Fremouw, Del Ben, & Farr, 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

In recent years, stalking behavior has become a major societal and national concern (Black et al., 2011). According to the National Crime Victimization Survey Special Report,
in 2006 approximately 6 million U.S. residents age 18 or older had experienced behaviors consistent with either stalking or harassment in the previous 12 months (Baum et al., 2009). The same study found that about half of those victims reported being contacted at least once a week by their stalkers, and 11% of the victims reported experiencing prolonged pursuit of 5 years or more. In 2010, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) reported 1 in 6 women and 1 in 19 men had experienced some form of stalking during their lifetime (Black et al., 2011).

In many cases stalking victims were at one point intimately or romantically involved with the perpetrator, (e.g. family member, close friend or ex-spouse, ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend) or was an acquaintance (e.g. neighbor or coworker etc.) (Harmon, Rosner, & Owens, 1995; Kienlen, Birmingham, Solberg, O'Regan, & Meloy, 1997; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Schwartz-Watts, Morgan, & Barnes, 1997; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). One form of intimidation that was reported frequently among stalking cases was the use of threats to harm the victim, their friends, pets or property (Harmon, Rosner, & Owens, 1998; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). In a number of stalking studies, the use of threats was a precursor to violence or assault (Brewster, 2000; McEwan, Mullen, MacKenzie, & Ogloff, 2009; Rosenfeld, 2004). A study conducted by Pathé and Mullen (1997) included interviews from 100 victims of stalking and found that approximately 40% of the victims who had been threatened by their stalker were also physically assaulted. In some cases stalking can lead to property damage or the harassment of the target’s friends or family, when the perpetrator is unable to establish or reestablish the sought after relationship (Meloy & Boyd, 2003; Mohandie, Meloy, McGowan, & Williams, 2006; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). A large meta-analysis on stalking conducted by Spitzberg and Cupach (2007) found that across
82 studies, approximately one-third of the stalking cases involved physical violence towards the focus of the stalker’s obsession. The effect of stalking on its victims has been well-documented over the years and research has shown that being stalked can have a heavy emotional, psychological, and sometimes financial impact on victims (Dressing et al., 2006; Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

Despite growing research on the effects of stalking on victims, pursuit methods, and its prevalence in society, a psychological or behavioral profile does not exist for stalkers. Researchers have examined different factors that may influence an individual’s behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse, gender, and psychological disorders (Baum et al., 2009; Lewis et al., 2001; Mullen et al., 1999; Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2010). Many articles have pointed to personality disorders, which is a subset of psychological disorders under the Axis II category in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (4th ed.), Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR), as a factor related to stalking behavior (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2000; Meloy & Boyd, 2003; Meloy & Gothard, 1995; Mullen et al., 1999). The most common Axis II diagnoses reported in stalking perpetration are borderline, antisocial, and narcissistic personality disorders (McIvor, Potter, & Davies, 2008; Meloy & Boyd, 2003; Meloy & Gothard, 1995). Individuals with a personality disorder tend to be inflexible, rigid, and unable to respond to the changes and demands of life, and may show signs of dramatic, emotional, or erratic behavior in response to unwanted or unexpected events (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). These characteristics may make it difficult for them to deal with other individuals or changes in relationships, which may lead to maladaptive behavior such as stalking.
Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is characterized by emotional instability, impulsivity, and fear of abandonment and rejection (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Lewis et al., 2001; Meloy & Boyd, 2003; Staebler, Helbing, Rosenbach, & Renneberg, 2011). An individual with borderline personality may respond to rejection or loss by impulsively reacting or going to great lengths to avoid real or imagined abandonment in a relationship (Staebler et al., 2011). Antisocial personality disorder is characterized by a long-term pattern of manipulating, deceitfulness, exploiting, violating the rights of others and impulsiveness (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Narcissistic personality is characterized by a high sense of self-worth, importance, and a deep need for admiration (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). In a relationship, an individual with a narcissistic personality may interpret rejection as an act of aggression, which can lead to them feeling resentful or vindictive with a need to retaliate (Harmon et al., 1995; Kienlen et al., 1997). This framework of thinking and responding to situations makes it difficult for individuals to form and maintain relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and significant others (Lewis et al., 2001). In response to a breakup or denied attempt to establish a relationship, an individual with a personality disorder may pursue a victim because of interpersonal dependency, revenge, vindication, uncontrolled anger, obsessive thoughts or ideation (Kienlen et al., 1997; Mullen et al., 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

It is easy to conceive that the combination of the volatile characteristics of a personality disorder combined with an unexpected loss of a relationship, or fear of losing a relationship, can lead to maladaptive behavior such as stalking. A study conducted by Sandberg, McNiel and Binder (1998) explored the characteristics of 17 psychiatric inpatients who had engaged in harassing, stalking, and threatening behavior towards the staff upon
discharge. The results indicated that individuals who stalked were more likely to have a personality disorder than the comparison group (n=326). In a similar study conducted by McIvor et al. (2008), 41 medical health professionals provided information on the stalking behavior of previous patients. Their reports indicated that stalking behavior was mostly perpetrated by individuals with a personality disorder or psychosis. In another comparison study conducted by Meloy and Gothard (1995), obsessional followers were more likely to have a personality disorder diagnosis (n=20) (absent antisocial personality disorder) than the comparison of individuals with other mental disorders (n=30). The articles direct attention to the increased likelihood of stalking behavior among individuals with personality disorders.

In contrast, research conducted by Whyte, Petch, Penny and Reiss (2008), reviewed the records of 33 patients admitted to an inpatient psychiatric hospital who had been identified as stalkers and suffered from some form of mental disorder. Although schizophrenia and personality disorders were the common diagnoses, the study found no statistically significant difference between stalkers and non-stalkers in regards to diagnosis. Similarly, a Canadian study conducted by Storey, Hart, Meloy and Reavis (2009) examined the relationship between psychopathy (identified as a form of personality disorder in the study) and stalking among a sample of 61 male participants in an outpatient forensic psychiatric clinic. In the analysis, psychopathic traits were not found to play an important role in the stalking behavior that their sample had exhibited. Unlike the studies conducted by McIvor and colleagues (2008), Meloy and Gothard (1995), and Sandberg et al., (1998), these articles suggest that an influential relationship does not exist between personality disorders and stalking behavior.
Although the relationship between psychological disorders such as personality disorders and stalking have been identified in some research, the development of the behavior is still unclear. More recent research has branched out to explore additional factors, such as perpetrator demographics, employment, motive, history of violence, and education to provide further explanation and understanding of stalking (McEwan et al., 2009; McEwan, Mullen, & Purcell, 2007; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). However, one descriptive variable that is frequently overlooked is the ethnicity of the stalking perpetrator and how it may play a role in stalking behavior.

According to the outcomes of the National Crime Victimization Survey Special Report (Baum et al., 2009), stalking seemed to lack ethnic/racial boundaries with the behavior being seen in different ethnicities. One of the few ethnic patterns that the survey reported was that victims were more likely to be pursued by an offender of the same age and race. Of the 3,424,100 survey participants, 83% of the White victims perceived their stalker to be White and 66% of the Black victims perceived their stalkers to be Black. However, two independent studies conducted by Rosenfeld and Harmon (2002) and Schwartz-Watts and Morgan (1998) examined participant’s criminal records and found stalking behavior to be more prevalent among older, educated Caucasians. Conflicting outcomes such as these show that further research is needed to explore demographic factors, such as ethnicity, and their impact on stalking behavior.

In addition to examining the relationship between ethnicity and stalking, a few studies have pointed to ethnicity playing an important role in the diagnosis of personality disorders. One study conducted in the United Kingdom by Raffi and Malik (2010), collected 6531 surveys from psychiatric inpatients and found personality disorders to be more prevalent
among the White British patients, 91.6% \((n=250)\) than the Black and Minority Ethnic groups, 8.4% \((n=23)\). These results suggest that there may be a relationship between ethnicity and personality disorders where ethnic minorities are more likely to be diagnosed with a personality disorder than Whites. Similarly in a large, national study of BPD, Native American men were found to have the highest prevalence rate of BPD diagnosis, while the diagnosis was less prevalent among Hispanic men and women, and Asian women (Grant et al., 2008). Both of these studies indicate that there may be variations in the incidence and prevalence rates of personality disorder diagnosis among different ethnic groups. Moreover, these studies bring to light the importance of continued research within ethnic groups to shed light on the role that ethnicity plays in mental health and behavior.

Specifically in addition to personality disorder, ethnicity is a variable that should be further explored in order to obtain a better understanding of stalking behavior. Examined individually, previous research has indicated that there may be a link between personality disorder and stalking, ethnicity and stalking, and ethnicity and personality disorder; however, few have looked at how personality disorder and ethnicity impact stalking behavior. The current study attempts to provide a comprehensive picture of the stalking phenomenon with a meta-analysis of the research on stalking among individuals with personality disorder in order to describe characteristics related to stalking. Specifically, the current meta-analysis examines the relationship between stalking perpetration and personality disorders among Caucasian and non-Caucasian populations and seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevalence of personality disorders among stalking populations?
2. To what extent do personality disorders vary across study characteristics?
3. To what extent does the proportion of personality disorder in samples correlate to the use of violence and threats?
4. Among studies with DSM diagnosis, what proportion of stalking is perpetrated by ethnic minorities and by Caucasians?

5. To what extent does ethnic proportion vary by study characteristic?
METHOD

Criteria for the current project included stalking studies, including published articles and unpublished master’s theses and dissertations, produced after January 1990. The key words, *stalk, stalking,* and *stalker,* were used when searching for the appropriate articles in the major psychological and legal search engines (Criminal Justice Abstracts, PsychINFO, Sociological Abstracts, Web of Science and Communication, and Mass Communication Complete) in addition to periodical Google searches. Approximately 250 journal articles were initially found and evaluated in the preliminary search. A subset of 19 (see Table 1) met the inclusion criteria. Articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the study.

A previously established code book was updated to collect demographic information and quantify themes of stalking for the current study. Variables of interest were identified (personality disorder, stalking perpetration and ethnic breakdown) and coded according to the Stalking Meta-Analysis Coding Booklet (Spitzberg & Ciceraro, 2011). Three coders were selected and trained to work separately while gathering and recording the relevant information from the articles that fit the study’s criteria. Each article’s coding was verified by a second and sometimes third rater and discrepancies were discussed and clarified among the raters.

All of the articles included in the current study derived from the stalking perpetrator’s perspective, and provided information that allowed for calculation of the percentages of the stalking perpetrators characteristics (e.g. personality disorder diagnosis, ethnic grouping differences, use of threats and violence etc.) or a simple comparison of means (mean and
Table 1. Summary of Stalking Perpetrators Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity (% Caucasian)</th>
<th>Used Threats (%)</th>
<th>Used Violence (%)</th>
<th>Axis I (%)</th>
<th>Axis II (%)</th>
<th>History of Substance Abuse (%)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. mental health professionals¹</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. forensic Psychiatry Clinic referrals¹⁷</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. forensic Psychiatry Clinic referrals¹⁸</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes continue


standard deviation). In the case where multiple studies used the same sample of stalkers, only the most comprehensive study (which met the inclusion criteria) was utilized. Articles with irretrievable data, or did not provide appropriate statistical information allowing the calculation of descriptive estimates (e.g., percentage of sample), or effect sizes were excluded from the study. In instances where ranges were provided instead of means, the data was excluded.

Axis I and Axis II diagnoses were coded into two variables. If an Axis I diagnosis was present, there was a major mental disorder such as schizophrenia, mood disorder, or delusional disorder according to *DSM-IV-TR*. If an Axis II diagnosis was present, there was a personality disorder diagnosis such as borderline, antisocial, and narcissistic personality disorders. In instances where the Axis II disorders were broken down into specific diagnosis (e.g. bipolar, antisocial, narcissistic, schizoid) and information for more than one disorder was provided, the most prevalent disorder percentage was recorded as a conservative value. In addition, the perpetrator’s history of substance abuse and sample characteristics (e.g. clinical, forensic, student/college, community) were coded and recorded.

Due to the various methods of listing and categorizing participant ethnicity in previous studies, the stalkers in the current study were divided into two categories based on ethnicity, Caucasian and non-Caucasian. Individuals who identify themselves as European-Americans were placed in the Caucasian sample. Stalking behavior were identified as either holistic (i.e., a general question that includes the word “stalking,” “stalk,” or “stalked”) or legalistic (specifies conceptual conditions that parallel legal statutes, typically consisting of any or all of the following: “pattern” or “repeated” “unwanted” behaviors that cause “fear” or a sense of “threat”) (Spitzberg & Ciceraro, 2011). These behaviors were either from self-
reports by the participant or reported at the time of arrest or recorded during clinical evaluation.

The average percentage of diagnosis of a disorder was assessed as well as the relationship between stalking behavior, threats, substance abuse, violence and ethnic grouping, Caucasian and non-Caucasian were used to calculate effect sizes for each variable. Pearson’s correlation ($r$) was utilized to calculate effect sizes and measure the strength of the relationship between each variable. Cohen’s Kappa ($k$) was conducted to assess inter-coder reliability. Inter-coder reliability was maintained by assigning articles to be reviewed and coded by a second coder. Significance was set at $p< .05$. Microsoft Excel spreadsheets were used to organize the data collected and all analyses was used conducted using SPSS (version 20.0).
RESULTS

Cohen's $k$ was computed to test the inter-rater reliability and consistency among the coders. The resulting $k$ was found to be .82, This indicates a strong level of agreement among the coders.

Due to the small sample size in this study it was more informative to use Pearson $r$ to measure the strength in the relationship between the variables than using significance testing. The correlations of the descriptive profile of the stalking perpetrators are reported in Table 2. A majority of the articles in the current study were composed of clinical and forensic samples. The average age of the perpetrators in the sample was 34 years and was composed of mostly males (75%).

PREVALENCE OF PERSONALITY DISORDERS AMONG STALKING POPULATIONS

All of the literature in the current study provided information on stalking perpetration and the percentage of those stalkers who had been diagnosed with an Axis II personality disorder. Across all of the included studies approximately 41% of the stalkers had been diagnosed with an Axis II disorder and approximately 46% with an Axis I disorder. The percentage of perpetrators with an Axis II and Axis I disorder was statistically significant and positively correlated ($r = .90, p < .01$). This indicates that within this sample, mental health comorbidity is strongly associated with stalking perpetration.
### Table 2. Correlation Matrix for Major Stalking Related Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Caucasian% (Number of studies)</th>
<th>T%</th>
<th>V%</th>
<th>SV%</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>FP</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>IR</th>
<th>CH%</th>
<th>A%</th>
<th>Axis I %</th>
<th>Axis II %</th>
<th>SA%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Used threats (T%)</td>
<td>-.23 (9)</td>
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<td>Used violence (V%)</td>
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<td>Used Sexual Violence (SV%)</td>
<td>.72 (3)</td>
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<td>Intimate/romantic relationship</td>
<td>.19 (7)</td>
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<td>Criminal History (CH)</td>
<td>-.28 (8)</td>
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<td>Axis I (%)</td>
<td>-.52 (7)</td>
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<td>Axis II (%)</td>
<td>-.46 (12)</td>
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<td>History of Substance Abuse (SA%)</td>
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*a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.*

*p < .05; ** p < .01*
CHARACTERISTICS OF PD AND STALKING

The percentage of male perpetrators shared 9% of the variance \((r = .30, p = \text{NS})\) with having an Axis II, personality disorder. This indicates that the male perpetrators were slightly more likely to be diagnosed with a personality disorder diagnoses than female stalkers.

The percentage of male perpetrators shared 20% of the variance \((r = .45, p = \text{NS})\) with having an Axis I diagnosis. This indicates that the male perpetrators are more likely to be diagnosed with an Axis I diagnoses than female stalkers.

Within the current study, approximately 42% of the stalker had an intimate or romantic relationship with their victim. A statistically significant and strong positive relationship was found between stalkers with an Axis II disorder \((r = .62, p < .05)\) and the pursuit of individuals who they once had an intimate/romantic relationship. Similarly, a positive relationship was found between the percentage of stalkers with an Axis I diagnosis \((r = .67, p < .05)\) and the pursuit of individuals who they once had an intimate/romantic relationship. This indicates that stalkers are more likely to pursue an individual who they shared a close relationship with, more so than pursuing a stranger.

Across studies, the average duration of stalking pursuit was approximately 18 months. The percentage of perpetrators with an Axis II diagnosis shared 14% of the variance \((r = -.38, p = \text{NS})\) meaning there was a tendency for samples with larger proportions of Axis II diagnosis to stalk for a longer period of time.

Similarly, perpetrators with an Axis I diagnosis shared 28% of the variance \((r = -.53, p = \text{NS})\) with the average duration of pursuit. It appears that psychological disorders may contribute to stalking duration, with Axis I diagnosis indicating a slightly stronger tendency in this regard.
The percentage of perpetrators with a criminal history shared 12% of the variance \((r = .35, p = NS)\) with Axis II, personality disorder diagnosis. This indicates that there is a very small association between personality disorder and criminal behavior in this sample. However, the percentage of perpetrators with a criminal history shared 41% of the variance \((r = .64, p = NS)\) with having an Axis I disorder. This indicates that there is a slightly larger association between Axis I disorders and criminal behavior in this sample than Axis II.

**PD AND THE USE OF VIOLENCE AND THREATS**

Approximately 58% of the stalking perpetrators used threats and 32% used violence in the pursuit of their target. The use of threats was correlated to the use of physical violence \((r = .76, p < .01)\) among stalkers. Stalkers who used threats in their pursuit were also likely to physically assault their victim.

The percentage of perpetrators with an Axis II diagnosis shared 16% of the variance \((r = .40, p = NS)\) with the use of threats and shared 10% of the variance \((r = .32, p = NS)\) with the use of violence. This indicates that perpetrators with an Axis II diagnoses were moderately likely to use threats but not likely to resort to violence against their victims.

Similarly, the percentage of perpetrators with an Axis I diagnosis and shared 23% of the variance \((r = .48, p = NS)\) with the use of threats and shared .7% of the variance \((r = .27, p = NS)\) with the use of violence. This indicates that perpetrators with an Axis I diagnosis were moderately likely to use threats but not likely to resort to violence in the pursuit of their victims.

In addition, the percentage of Caucasian perpetrators and shared .5% of the variance \((r = -.23, p = NS)\) with the use of threats and shared .6% of the variance with violence
(r = -.25, p = NS). This indicates that Caucasian stalkers are less likely to use threats or violence while pursuing their victims than non-Caucasians.

**Proportion of Stalking Perpetrated by Ethnic Minorities and Caucasians**

On average across the 19 articles in the current study, approximately 59% of the stalking perpetrators were Caucasian.

The percentage of Caucasian perpetrators was positively correlated (r = .64, p < .05) and shared 41% of the variance with being female. This indicates that being identified as Caucasian and being female was associated with stalking perpetration.

The percentage of Caucasian perpetrators shared 21% of the variance (r = -.46, p = NS) with Axis II diagnosis, meaning Caucasian stalkers were less likely to have an Axis II disorder.

The percentage of Caucasian perpetrators shared 27% of the variance (r = -.52, p = NS) with Axis I diagnosis. This indicates that Caucasian stalkers were less likely to have an Axis I disorder.

**Ethnic Proportion Variations by Study Characteristic**

The percentage of Caucasian perpetrators shared 94% of the variance (r = .97, p = NS) with average stalking duration. This indicates that being Caucasian was on average, associated with longer durations of stalking episodes than what was reported from non-Caucasian perpetrators. However, there were only three studies that made up that correlation meaning the statistical power was low.
In addition, the percentage of Caucasian perpetrators shared very little of the variance \(0.09\% (r = -0.03, p = NS)\) with having a criminal history and 4% of the variance \(r = -0.19, p = NS\) was shared with a history of substance abuse. Thus there was a very small relationship between being Caucasian and a stalking perpetrator and having a criminal history or a history of substance abuse.

The percentage of Caucasian perpetrators shared 52% of the variance \(r = 0.72, p = NS\) with the use of sexual violence in the sample. This finding suggests that there was a moderate likelihood of Caucasian perpetrators using sexual violence during the pursuit of their victim.

The percentage of Caucasian perpetrators shared 59% of the variance \(r = -0.77, p = NS\) with the stalker having a previous arrest history for any illegal crime in the sample. This effect indicates that non-Caucasian stalkers were more likely to engage in criminal behavior and to be caught, resulting in a criminal history more so than Caucasian stalkers.
DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to conduct a comprehensive search for empirical research regarding the relationship between personality disorders, ethnicity, and stalking perpetration. A common finding among the literature in this study, and in previous research on stalking and other forms of maladaptive behavior, is the high prevalence mental disorder comorbidity. These results show that a large number of the stalkers in the sample had more than one mental health disorder that may have played a role in their behavior. Individuals with personality disorders tend to experience moments of impulsivity, insecurity, emotional extremes, and fluctuations when faced with interpersonal conflict. It is understandable to see how these characteristics, paired with additional disorders, may disrupt a person's thinking, feelings, moods, and ability to relate to others. This, coupled with the threat of an ending relationship, can result in persistent pursuit with the goal of the reconciliation or retribution for perceived wrongdoings in a break up.

ETHNICITY AND PD

Few studies have incorporated demographic variables, such as ethnicity, when examining factors related to impact that personality disorders may have on stalking behavior. The current study’s results revealed that the non-Caucasian perpetrators, ethnic minorities, across studies were more likely to be diagnosed with an Axis I or Axis II disorder than the Caucasian perpetrators. Although this study did not provide additional detail to further examine this outcome, these results could be linked to financial, community, or disadvantages that some ethnic minorities may encounter such as an inability to afford the
appropriate treatment for the mental health disorders, treatment that could prevent the stalking behavior from manifesting (Bender et al., 2007).

The possibility of this socio-ecological disadvantage impacting mental health outcome also speaks to the high mean percentage of non-Caucasian stalkers in the study who had a previous criminal record, arrest record and history of substance abuse. A study conducted by Harris, Steffensmeier, Ulmer, and Painter-Davis (2009) examined racial discrimination among prison inmates. The results indicated that social environmental conditions as well as possible racial discrimination in the judicial system might contribute to the disproportionate number of minorities in prison (Blacks and Hispanics). Combined, these inequalities could shed some light on the high percentages of minorities with mental health disorders and are in jail.

Previous research has also indicated that stalkers are more likely to be educated, Caucasian, and male (Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Schwartz-Watts & Morgan, 1998). These characteristics may increase the degree of the perpetrators criminal sophistication, allowing him to avoid police detection and, in turn, the accrual of a criminal record, arrest record, or history of substance abuse. More Caucasians were found to use sexual violence in their pursuit than non-Caucasians, and though sexual violence is a crime that one may expect to be reported to the police, this did not seem to increase the likelihood of the Caucasian perpetrators in this study of having a criminal record or history of arrest.

The Caucasian women in the current study were found to engage in stalking behavior more than the Caucasian men. This could be closely related to the motive behind the unwanted pursuit. In an article written by Meloy and Boyd (2003) women stalkers were found to have different motives for pursuing men from previous relationships. The women
were focused on initiating a relationship no matter the cost with their target, whereas men were focused on re-establishing a lost relationship. However, unlike the male perpetrators in the studies, females tended to stalk for a shorter duration of time.

There were only a few articles that presented data on the average duration of stalking behavior, Caucasians were found to stalk for longer durations than non-Caucasians. This could be moderated by access to transportation providing the ability to continue stalking even across distances, access to technical equipment such as bugs or phone tapping devices or, as mentioned earlier, the ability to evade police capture for longer periods of time.

**Threats and Violence and PD and Sexual Violence**

Caucasians were also found to be less likely to use threats and violence in the pursuit of their targets. This again could be related to the perpetrator’s level of education and criminal sophistication. In an effort to stay out legal trouble a perpetrator may choose to pursue their victim from a safe distance using means and methods that would not be necessarily construed as illegal.

In the cases where violence was a method of pursuit, a strong relationship was found between the use of threats and subsequent violence among stalkers. This result could be that perpetrators are more likely to resort to violence if they feel their efforts are being ignored or they feel disrespected. Lashing out in violence could be a brash way of gaining attention or simply a form of punishment for a perceived wrongdoing.

**PD and Stalking**

Whether there are gender differences among the different personality disorders is not yet concrete. Some research has concluded that there is no gender difference in personality disorders (Golomb, Fava, Abraham, & Rosenbaum, 1995; Lenzenweger, Lane, Loranger, &
Kessler, 2007) and some research has indicated that there are some gender differences (Furnham & Trickey, 2011). Our results indicated that across studies male perpetrators tend to report having a diagnosis of an Axis I and Axis II disorder more than female perpetrators.

**Relationship and PD**

In the current study, both Axis I and Axis II disorders were found to be associated with the stalking of a victim who was, or had been, in a romantic relationship with the perpetrator. However, perpetrators with an Axis I disorder tended to have a slightly stronger association with stalking individuals from a previous relationship than individuals with an Axis II disorder. This indicates that individuals are more likely to be stalked by people they know and have engaged with versus being pursued by a stranger. These results are supported by a majority of stalking research, which has indicated that intimate relationships are at a greater risk of being pursued than any other type of stalking victims (e.g. co-worker, neighbor, service provider or stranger) (Palarea, Zona, Lane, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). It may be that once an individual with a personality disorder builds a level of familiarity or intimacy with another person, that established bond makes it difficult to relinquish.

**Duration**

Among the stalkers in the sample, on average, the individuals with an Axis II diagnosis reported pursuing their target for a shorter duration than the stalkers with an Axis I diagnosis. Taking into consideration the differences among diagnosis in Axis II (borderline, narcissistic, paranoid, antisocial disorder, etc.) versus Axis I (bipolar, substance abuse, delusional, intermittent explosive disorder, etc.) more obsessional behavior could be
expected from the individuals with an Axis II disorder, which could contribute to the longer duration of pursuit.

**CRIMINAL AND PD AND ARREST**

A very strong relationship was seen among individuals with either an Axis I or Axis II disorder and the percent of stalkers who had been arrested for any illegal activity. According to a U.S. inmate study from 2005, 56% of the population in prison and jail had a mental disorder of some kind. Approximately 60% of the inmates in the State prisons had a previous criminal record, as did approximately 45% in local jails (James & Glaze, 2006). These results represent the strong prevalence of individuals with mental disorders who are in prison or jail for their behavior.

Across articles in the present study, a difference was seen between the mean percentage of stalkers who had been arrested for a crime and those who had been charged with a crime leading to the accumulation of a criminal record. Stalkers with an Axis I diagnosis were more likely to have a criminal history than individuals with Axis II diagnosis. This is not surprising considering that there are high proportions of individuals with an Axis I diagnosis such as schizophrenia, substance abuse, and depressive disorders in detention facilities (Walsh, Buchanan, & Fahy, 2002).

This study’s results demonstrate that stalkers with an Axis I diagnosis were more likely to have a criminal history than individuals with Axis II diagnosis. This indicates that stalkers with an Axis I diagnosis were more likely to have a criminal history than individuals with Axis II diagnosis. It seems as if Axis I disorders are more closely related with the types of behaviors among stalkers with criminal behaviors than individuals with a personality disorder. One area of concern for law enforcement and society is the likelihood of recidivism
from individuals who stalk. A large four-year study on mental illness, substance abuse, and recidivism found that individuals with comorbid diagnoses were most frequently readmitted to jail (Wilson, Draine, Hadley, Metraux, & Evans, 2011).

**Limitations**

The current study used archival data where some descriptive and diagnostic information was not available in a few cases. This missing data decreased the sample size as well as the statistical power of the study making it difficult to find significant relationships from the data. In addition, some of the self-reported information such as personality disorder diagnosis or prior substance abuse may have been inaccurately recalled in some cases. Among many articles, inconsistencies existed in the way stalking populations were defined and their characteristics were reported (i.e., age mean, ranges, or medians). These discrepancies made it difficult to compare the results of other stalking studies, and in a few instances, these data were excluded. In addition, studies that provided information regarding the ethnicity of the stalking perpetrator were excluded if the study did not include data on personality disorder diagnosis. This exclusion factor may skew the ethnic proportions in the study, because the populations that met the criteria were the individuals who were engaging in extreme or unique behavior that caught the attention of the forensic evaluators. Meaning, the studies that were included are more likely to involve stalking cases that might be more extreme or serious in nature, and therefore making the results of this study hard to generalize to the broader population.

Due to the close relationship between different mental health disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, borderline personality, and substance and alcohol abuse, a number of articles did not provide sub-categories of diagnosis due to the difficulty of
teasing apart overlapping symptoms and disorders. In a few instances, this complexity made it difficult to gather data on solely on the relationship between Axis II disorder diagnosis and its relationship with stalking behavior. The results provided a unique insight into the many factors related to stalking.

Finally, it is important to highlight the way in which the results should be interpreted. The correlations in the current study represent relationships or trends among similar studies, not individuals within each study. The overall percentage of stalkers in the study and the relationship to the other variables of interest (i.e., use of threats, violence, duration of pursuit, sexual violence) were the main focus.

Despite these limitations, the findings from the current study adds to accumulating evidence that the influence of personality disorders, mental disorders, and demographic characteristics should be evaluated to assist in the development of effective treatments and risk management strategies for stalkers. Continued data collection from the perpetrator’s perspective would allow researchers to gather direct demographic, as well as medical and psychiatric information to gain a clearer understanding of the motives and emotions behind the act of stalking. Identifying the potential demographic and psychological variables related to stalking would help clinicians identify and provide effective prevention, intervention, and treatment for those who may be at risk for becoming a stalker, or ending the recidivism of any stalking behavior. In a study conducted by Rosenfeld (2003), personality disorder and substance abuse were found to be predictors of a perpetrator reoffending. Detailed information regarding the contributing factors related to stalking behavior will allow care providers to tailor effective treatment plans for stalkers. Specifically, once a stalker has been identified, a plan can be designed to address their behavior and any personality disorder
which may impact their thoughts or beliefs, and contribute to any intimacy seeking, resentful, or rejected driven stalking behavior. A tailored treatment plan would not only provide effective and efficient assistance for the client, but would also alleviate some of the overcrowding of inmates with mental health issues in prison. This information can also be utilized to improve evaluation and risk assessments for stalkers to prevent recidivism and violence from occurring.

In light of the future changes to the way personality disorders will be defined and diagnosed in the upcoming *DSM-V*, which would focus on an individual’s severity of dysfunction versus criteria counts and clinical cut offs, this study’s results support the argument that a great deal of overlap exists among current personality disorders. The overlap makes it difficult for clinicians to provide accurate and efficient care for individuals because of the many different diagnosis categories. The *DSM-V*’s aim is to collapse and simplify the current categories of diagnosis in order to clean up and streamline the diagnosis process while focusing on the individual’s ability to productively function in society. In the case of the current study, the new focus would allow clinicians to provide treatment to stalkers based on the severity of their behavior, in addition to their diagnosed personality disorder. This new concept would still require researchers to explore ethnic differences in mental health symptomatology, but it is a step in a better, more efficient method of treatment.

In conclusion, it is important to examine how ethnicity, among other factors, can play an important role in the way an individual experiences, perceives, and responds to the world around them. Future research should aim to recognize not only the connection between mental disability and stalking behavior, but also the conceptual and demographic variables that interact with that relationship.
REFERENCES


