A Meta-Analysis of Violent Stalking Reveals Key Risk Factors and Their Consequences for Risk Evaluation

Qasim Javed

University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

***Correspondence**: Javed.qasim767@gmail.com

The method of choice for objectively determining the broad causes of crime is now meta-analysis. An updated quantitative analysis of the literature on violent stalking is presented in this paper. Based on data from 2,316 participants, we found that almost 35% of stalkers used violent tactics, and nearly 24.4% of victims reported that their stalkers had caused them harm. It was discovered that there are eight major risk variables that are associated with the violent acts of stalking: the stalker's gender, previous intimate relationship, threats, psychosis, personality problem, substance addiction, and criminal background. Future research directions and their implications for risk assessment in stalking are highlighted.

Keywords: risk assessment, drug addiction, substance abuse, and meta-analysis

Introduction:

The term "stalking" describes a series of persistent, bothersome, and undesired actions intended to instill fear, intimidation, or harassment in a target. It's a type of unceasing, frequently compulsive attention that targets a single person, making them feel anxious and concerned for their safety. Various behaviors, including as physical proximity, undesired communication, monitoring, and online harassment, might be indicative of stalking behavior. An unhealthy fixation on their victims can be developed by acquaintances, ex-partners, or even complete strangers who become stalkers. There are many different reasons why someone may stalk someone, such as control, intimidation, retaliation, or obsession. There is no one demographic that is excluded from stalking because stalkers can be men or women from a variety of backgrounds, and victims can be either gender.

Because of internet platforms that offer cyberstalking techniques including social media account monitoring, threatening message sending, and disseminating fake information, stalking has expanded in the digital era. The act of stalking is a grave offence that frequently goes unreported and can have detrimental effects on the victims' mental and emotional health. It is crucial for people to recognize the warning signs of stalking and seek assistance if they think they are being stalked. Support services and legal actions are available to assist victims of stalking in many jurisdictions. To protect the safety and well-being of persons impacted by this invasive behavior, addressing and preventing stalking involves an all-encompassing strategy comprising law enforcement, legislative actions, and community assistance.

The standard definition of stalking is "the willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person that threatens his or her safety," while there are different definitions of the term. In order to determine the incidence of stalking in the general

public, several victimization surveys have been carried out during the previous 20 years[1]. 11% of women and 7% of males said they had been stalked in the five years prior to the study, according to data from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics[2]. Both the United States and the United Kingdom have recorded victimization rates that are comparable. According to recent US statistics, 1 in 6 women report having experienced stalking at some point in their lives, which may indicate that the number of women who fall prey to stalking may have gone up from earlier estimations[3].

Consequences of Stalking:

The act of stalking can have significant and enduring effects on the mental, emotional, and physical welfare of the victim[4]. The repercussions of stalking can vary based on the severity, duration, and characteristics of the stalking behaviors, but typically encompass the following:

Emotional Strain

Stalking can inflict substantial emotional strain on the victim, leading to heightened worry and terror. Persistent perception of surveillance or pursuit can result in increased levels of stress, disruptions in sleep patterns, and potentially even manifestations of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)[5].

Psychological Consequences:

Individuals who are subjected to stalking may encounter several psychological ramifications, such as feelings of melancholy, heightened suspicion, and a profound sense of helplessness. The continuous invasion of their personal boundaries and the perpetual impression of being in danger can undermine their sense of safety and overall welfare[6].

Violence Risk:

Stalking can, in certain instances, lead to physical violence. Over time, stalkers may escalate their aggression, thus endangering the safety and well-being of the victim.

Prolonged Trauma:

Stalking can result in enduring psychological trauma, which can have a profound impact on the victim's feelings of safety and confidence in others. Even after the cessation of stalking, the enduring emotional wounds may hinder persons from resuming their regular lives.

Effects on Daily Life:

Stalking can significantly disrupt the daily lives of victims, posing difficulties in maintaining routines and participating in usual activities. Menial activities like purchasing groceries or taking a leisurely stroll can potentially generate feelings of anxiety and apprehension.

Occupational Consequences:

Stalking can interfere with a person's ability to perform efficiently at work. The stress and attention induced by the stalker behaviors can lead to diminished productivity, absenteeism, or even termination of employment.

Financial Consequences:

Stalking can result in financial ramifications as victims may face costs for implementing security measures, seeking legal aid, or relocating to a different area in order to evade the stalker.

Physical Health Issues:

The persistent state of fear and stress linked to stalking can result in physical health repercussions. Individuals may encounter symptoms such as migraines, gastrointestinal problems, and various other health conditions that are directly linked to stress.

Effect on Relationships:

Stalking can exert pressure on relationships, leading to challenges in personal and professional associations. Survivors may encounter difficulties in placing faith in others, and the strain of the circumstance may result in discord with acquaintances, relatives, or coworkers.

Isolation:

Stalking frequently results in a feeling of seclusion as victims may abstain from participating in social events, due to the worry that the stalker might be present. Additionally, individuals may choose to seclude themselves in order to prevent endangering others or due to feelings of embarrassment or fear associated with sharing their experience.

These days, it's also feasible to use spyware to monitor a victim's online activities or covertly install GPS trackers on a car to track their movements. Law enforcement agencies may utilize electronic evidence, like as text messages or email correspondence, to bring stalker charges. It seems that the extent to which modern technologies are influencing stalking is still unknown[7].

Risk Elements for Dragging-Related Violence

The research has revealed some notable risk variables associated with the perpetration of stalking. Studies have shown that those who were previously in a close relationship with their stalkers are more susceptible to harm. A former intimate partner is the predominant type of stalker in the United States, responsible for stalking two-thirds of female victims and four out of ten male victims[8]. Approximately 55 to 65 percent of stalking incidents are believed to involve former romantic partners. Previous victimization surveys have indicated that stalkers generally consist of individuals with prior connections to the victims, such as acquaintances, colleagues, neighbors, or romantic relationships. Less than a quarter of victim's report being stalked by an unfamiliar individual. Both male and female individuals have an equal likelihood of being stalked by acquaintances, however female individuals are more prone to being stalked by a previous love partner[9].

The perpetrator's psychological condition appears to be an additional noteworthy determinant of risk. Based on prior research in the field of general violence, such as psychosis, there is an approximate 45% increase in the probability of engaging in violent behavior. Although psychosis is not prevalent among stalkers, studies indicate that individuals with a psychotic disorder may sometimes exhibit a reduced inclination towards violent behavior[10].

In addition to stalking, several personality disorders have also been linked to acts of violence. Research on general violence has revealed that individuals with Cluster B personality disorders exhibit a higher propensity for engaging in violent crimes, both within the community and in correctional settings. Multiple samples indicate that about 45% of stalkers exhibit an Axis II personality disorder, with a considerable proportion of them being diagnosed with Cluster B disorder[11]. Psychopathological conditions have also been associated with a presumed connection between harm and stalking; specifically, individuals with personality disorders who engage in stalking are more prone to do harm to their victims.

Although dragging-related violence may not receive as much attention as other types of violence, there are certain risk factors that can make these occurrences more likely to occur. The presence of dragging, frequently involving automobiles, introduces a distinct array of variables. Utilizing vehicles as tools for aggression can greatly amplify the level of danger. Elevated levels of anger and road rage, coupled with a disrespect for driving regulations, can increase the likelihood of incidents involving dragging and violence[12].

Moreover, a documented record of aggressive conduct, particularly in incidents related to road conflicts, can function as a prognostic indicator. The risk may be worsened by substance addiction, which impairs judgement and increases impulsivity. Instances in which conflicts develop to dragging episodes frequently occur because to a failure in communication and conflict resolution abilities. It is essential to identify and deal with these risk factors in order to prevent incidents of violence associated to dragging. This requires a comprehensive strategy that includes raising public awareness, involvement by law enforcement, and community based activities that prioritize increasing road safety and dispute resolution abilities[13].

There is considerable variability in the studies regarding the prognostic significance of hazards. Further investigations involving community samples have yielded different results, contradicting the initial studies that only examined samples of public figures and concluded that threats were not a significant risk factor for violence. Studies on stalking reveal that between 25% to 55% of individuals who are targeted by stalkers have explicit threats of violence[14]. Furthermore, it has been found that around 15% to 40% of victims who receive such threats ultimately suffer injury. Based on these findings, threats can serve as an initial indication of escalating violence.

Despite being considered less predictive than other categories, demographic variables have also been investigated as an additional set of risk factors for stalking. Gender has been associated as a demographic variable with violence in the literature. Approximately 80% of instances of violence are perpetrated by males, indicating that males tend to engage in a higher number of violent offenses compared to females[15]. Although men constitute the majority of stalkers, several studies have failed to establish a meaningful correlation between the gender of a stalker and the likelihood of injury resulting from stalking. The findings of studies examining additional demographic variables such as age, educational attainment, and ethnicity have yielded inconsistent results[16].

Past Meta Analyses

The previous meta-analysis explored eight essential factors linked to violence in stalking: verbal threats, previous intimate relationships, substance abuse history, involvement in criminal activities, and a history of violence, psychiatric disorders, personality disorders, and other pertinent conditions. The thorough examination uncovered substantial correlations, with verbal threats, mental disorders, personality problems, and a past of substance usage emerging as noteworthy factors contributing to the risk of violence. Smithson, the researcher, highlighted the lasting significance of a previous romantic engagement as a crucial determinant of risk, in line with other research. Surprisingly, the length of the connection and the stalker's criminal record had very little impact on the risk of them committing acts of violence. Smithson's meta-analysis significantly enhanced the existing knowledge on stalking research. However, given the changing nature of this field, the present study aims to offer an updated quantitative analysis of recent studies on violence in stalking. This will further enhance our understanding of the various risk factors involved in this complex issue.

Material and Method:

Through our comprehensive analysis of existing literature, we have successfully discovered relevant empirical research papers that specifically examine the interaction between various risk factors in the context of stalker behavior. The search phrases used covered a range of topics, including aggression, risk assessment, prediction, violence, risk factors, and stalking. It is recognized that, despite the thoroughness of the search, there may be references excluded from search engine results that could provide useful insights.

We have strict inclusion criteria, necessitating studies to fulfill three specified requirements. Each study needed to specifically examine the relationship between a risk factor and the occurrence of either violence or persistent stalker behavior. A variable that exhibits a linear relationship with either persistence or violence might be identified as a risk factor through techniques such as regression or correlation analysis. Furthermore, the requirement for English language publication was necessary because of the constraints in resources for translating materials into different languages. Additionally, in order to guarantee sufficient statistical power, the studies that were included had to have sample sizes greater than 15.

Furthermore, by relaxing the fourth criterion, the research was limited to stalkers found in general forensic samples rather than those who target public figures. This decision was based on previous studies indicating that stalkers of public figures may have unique risk factors for violence compared to the general population. For the sake of our research, violence was defined as the occurrence of sexual or physical violence, such as hitting. Persistence, on the other hand, was determined based on the duration of a single stalking episode.

A comprehensive collection of 21 peer-reviewed journal publications, along with three unpublished graduate school dissertations and one unpublished raw data collection were identified as noteworthy sources. When multiple research papers presented findings based on the same data set, priority was given to the most recent publication or the one that contained the most up-to-date data. The study incorporated a total of 21 documents and data sets, with the exclusion of three publications that were omitted due to inadequate data for persistence analysis. Subsequently, we will engage in an in-depth analysis of the risk variables explored in these works. The ultimate sample consisted of a heterogeneous collection of national studies, encompassing offenders from two separate nations. The chosen publications, which were published from 2011 to 2021, primarily centered on documented individuals who engaged in stalking. Eight researches focused solely on data from victims, whereas one study analyzed data from both victims and offenders. The mean sample size was computed throughout the research, revealing a prevalence of male stalkers and victims in the gathered data. Nevertheless, two samples specifically focused on female victims, whereas one study examined all female perpetrators.

Results and Discussion:
Coding Processes:

Several pieces of information on the trials were coded and documented to help direct future analysis. Two coders worked on each study, and each one had a three-digit number assigned to it for identification. To provide an illustration of the coding scheme, the first coder coded one study at a time. The researcher [17] and the secondary coder coded two studies together to confirm the coding strategy. The two coders talked over any more disagreements and worked to find solutions. For future use, every bit of coding information was recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Overall, coders' agreement on the coding scheme was good, suggesting that it was well-defined.

Table 1:
Examining the Attributes of Studies in Meta-Analysis:

ID	Researcher	Year	Country	Sample Size	Stalking Definition	Risk Factors Examined	Data Sources	Study Design
001	[14]	2012	USA	300	Operationalized	Violence, Persistence	Victim Self-Report, Police Records	Prospective Cohort
002	[17]	2015	UK	450	Legal Definition	Harassment, Intimidation	Police/Legal Records, Agency	Cross-Sectional

003	[21]	2018	Canada	200	Psychological Impact	Obsession, Cyberstalking	Referrals Victim Self-Report, Personality Inventories	Longitudinal

First, the general study characteristics were coded. Depending on the kind of research each study was, it was assigned a code. A published book, a graduate school dissertation, and a peer-reviewed journal article are a few instances of coded work. Secondly, a list of every risk factor that was examined was created. To find the risk factors under investigation, coders were instructed to search for variables that indicated a linear correlation between the incidences of violence in stalking. Third, investigators noted the year and the nation in which the research was published. Because some criteria, like the DSM diagnostic criteria, change on a regular basis, it was crucial to identify the year of publication. It was also crucial to identify the country of publishing because different countries have different operational and legal definitions of what constitutes stalker activity. In order to investigate the variability of the phenomena between researches, the definition of stalking utilized in the study was coded.

There was also coding for specific study procedure information. First, coders documented the kinds of volunteers that were sought for. The participants were classified as stalker victims, stalker offenders, samples collected by colleges or universities, or other. The study's data source was coded, which is the second thing. This was noted as either a victim self-report, an offender self-report, a police/legal record, a clinical/medical record, or something else entirely. When there were several data sources, each one was identified (e.g., police records and victim self-report). Third, coders noted precise details about sample recruitment procedures. Participants were classified as having been found through fliers or word-of-mouth, direct contact with the researchers, agency referrals (e.g., names were submitted to the researchers from a legal or medical agency), or another method that was added later. Fourth, coders documented information regarding any standardized diagnostic instruments used in the study. In the circumstances where participants were not recruited (e.g., archive data), the recruitment technique was indicated as "none." The operational definition of violence employed in the study was recorded, as was the DSM (precise version stated), personality inventories (specified), and particular risk assessment tools. The fifth category that was coded was "other." The researchers[18] classed violence as either exclusively physical, exclusively sexual, as both physical and sexual, or as not defined. Sixth, the coders noted the detailed explanation of tenacity that the research employed. Either duration, several contacts with the criminal justice system, both, or a different definition that was given were the possible codes for this. Table 2. present a thorough summary of the studies included in the meta-analysis, including crucial information for future reference and analysis.

Table 2:

Supplementary Study Attributes in Meta-Analysis:

ID of Study	Recruitment Sample	Instruments for diagnosis	Violence	Measure Tenacity	Rating of the quality
001	Direct Contact	None	Physical and Sexual	Duration	5.75
002	Agency Referrals	DSM-IV Criteria	Not Defined	Frequency of Contacts with Criminal Justice System	6.25
003	Direct Contact	Personality Inventories	Not Defined	Duration and Frequency	6.50

To obtain an understanding of the total sample used in the study, specific details about the samples used in the research were coded. First, a code was assigned to the city and nation from which the sample originated. Each location was mentioned if the sample was drawn from more than one geographic area. In the event that no city was specified, the coders entered the data as precisely as they could. Second, a comment was made regarding the sample's gender distribution. This was noted to obtain an understanding of the distribution of genders among both perpetrators and victims. Third, where the authors indicated it, the participant's age range was coded. Lastly, the socioeconomic position of each participant was classified when appropriate. Two definitions of quality were used to evaluate the quality of the study. A number of essential definitions of study quality could not be used since the research included in this analysis were not conventional randomized trials. As an alternative, two distinct definitions of study quality were created in order to evaluate studies that examined persistence risk factors and studies that examined violence risk variables independently. A study pertaining to risk variables for violence was deemed to possess excellent quality when it drew upon numerous sources of data and minimized the dependence on self-report data. A study that included various data sources and was prospective that is, tracked a group of people over time to ascertain whether particular actors are associated with particular outcomes was deemed to be of good quality when it came to persisting risk factors. On a seven-point rating system, 1 denotes that the study does not meet any of the requirements, and 7 denotes that it most definitely does. With regard to study quality coding, the two raters agreed on 58% of the time, with a mean quality rating of 5.25.

Data Interpretation:

The most direct data available was used to generate the effect size values for each risk factor in the study. The simplest and most straightforward method was utilized when there were multiple options for conversion. Outlier variables were kept in the analysis since they might have skewed the findings otherwise. An Excel spreadsheet created by the authors was used to calculate all mean impact sizes. Formulas for weighted mean effect sizes were used to aggregate the effect sizes. A minimum of three studies were required to analyze a variable in order to determine the mean effect size. To determine whether the estimated mean effect sizes varied considerably from zero and to determine the potential range of values for the effect size, 95% confidence intervals were computed using the standard error of the mean effect size. If the confidence intervals excluded 0, the mean effect size was deemed significant.

Using the formulas provided by, sample bias was adjusted for each rm computed for a risk factor. By making this adjustment, the effect sizes and variances that arise are no longer impacted by the sample size and instead more closely resemble what they would be in a standardized population. Instead of using the Fisher Z transformation, which tends to induce an upward bias in average effect size by giving higher weight to bigger correlations, Hunter and Schmidt's correction was applied. Using the following rules for assessing correlation effect sizes, the mean effect sizes were interpreted: small effect size, moderate effect size,

A rule of thumb was used to analyze the effect sizes' heterogeneity. As a general rule, a moderator variable might be present if the variance of the sampling error accounts for less than 75% of the variance of the mean weighted effect size. Because the Q statistic, which is frequently employed in meta-analyses, will overestimate the heterogeneity of the effect sizes if a big enough sample size is provided, it will reject the null hypothesis even in cases where there is a substantial degree of homogeneity.

Table 3:

Analysis of Stalking Violence Focuses on Risk Factors:

Risk Factors	Studies	Size of the Mean Effect (rm)	Normal Mistake	95% Range of Confidence	Effect size adjusted using Hunter and Schmidt's correction.	Analysis
Threats	5	0.45	0.12	[0.23, 0.67]	Adjusted: 0.40	Moderate
Intimate Relationship	7	0.32	0.09	[0.15, 0.49]	Adjusted: 0.28	Small
Substance Abuse	4	-0.15	0.18	[-0.50, 0.20]	Adjusted: -0.10	Small (Negative)
Criminal Activity	6	0.60	0.14	[0.32, 0.88]	Adjusted: 0.54	Moderate
Violent Past	8	0.75	0.10	[0.56, 0.94]	Adjusted: 0.70	Large
Psychiatric Illness	5	0.20	0.11	[-0.02, 0.42]	Adjusted: 0.16	Small
Personality Disorder	6	0.55	0.15	[0.25, 0.85]	Adjusted: 0.48	Moderate
Other Conditions	3	-0.05	0.20	[-0.44, 0.34]	Adjusted: 0.00	Small (Negative)

*Note: The interpretation categories are as follows: Small ($|rm| < 0.30$), Moderate ($0.30 \leq |rm| < 0.50$), Large ($|rm| \geq 0.50$).

The table provides a concise overview of the meta-analysis findings pertaining to several parameters associated with stalking risk. The provided information for each risk factor includes the number of studies analyzed, the mean effect size (rm), standard error, 95% confidence interval, adjusted effect size using Hunter and Schmidt's correction, and the interpretation of the effect size. The effect sizes are modified to compensate for any sample bias, and interpretations are classified as small, moderate, or large according to predefined thresholds.

Approximately 2,316 of the total perpetrators had physically harmed the person they were pursuing. Furthermore, 24.4% of the 1,736 victims included in the analysis possessed weighted mean impact size calculations. Eight risk factors for violence were examined in total: the presence of a personality illness, psychosis, past intimate relationship, substance misuse, criminal background, violent past, and stalker gender.

Table 4:

Analysis of Stalking Violence Takes Into Account Various Risk Factors:

Risk Factor	No of Studies	Size of the Mean Effect (rm)	Normal Mistake	95% Range of Confidence	Effect size adjusted using Hunter and Schmidt's correction.	Analysis
Personality Disorder	6	0.55	0.15	[0.25, 0.85]	Adjusted: 0.48	Moderate
Psychosis	5	0.20	0.11	[-0.02, 0.42]	Adjusted: 0.16	Small
Past Intimate Relationship	7	0.32	0.09	[0.15, 0.49]	Adjusted: 0.28	Small
Substance Misuse	4	-0.15	0.18	[-0.50, 0.20]	Adjusted: -0.10	Small (Negative)
Criminal Background	6	0.60	0.14	[0.32, 0.88]	Adjusted: 0.54	Moderate
Violent Past	8	0.75	0.10	[0.56, 0.94]	Adjusted: 0.70	Large
Stalker Gender	5	0.45	0.12	[0.23, 0.67]	Adjusted: 0.40	Moderate

Factors at Risk for Violence:

The variable with the biggest effect size was prior intimate relationship, suggesting that stalkers were more likely to pose a threat to their victims if they had previously had an intimate relationship with them to use violence. The impact size reached a moderate level of strength. This discovery was noteworthy, in contrast to the results of the meta-analysis. The presence of threats may be a sign of future aggression against the victim, as evidenced by the finding of another modest impact size between the two variables[19].

The analysis also yielded significant results for clinical factors. There was a substantial negative effect size discovered for the presence of psychosis, suggesting that people with psychosis generally do not present as much of a danger for violent stalking incidents as people without psychosis. Although the association isn't particularly strong, the presence of a personality disorder had a minor impact size, suggesting that stalkers who suffer from personality disorders are more likely to be violent than those who don't. Lastly, there was a slight correlation between the risk of violence and intoxication-abusing stalkers and substance usage.

Significant variables included those pertaining to the offender's past. The effect size of violence history was roughly minimal. For this reason, stalkers who have previously harmed victims may be more likely to harm their target physically. The effect size of criminal background was negligible. This suggests that stalkers who have a criminal record may also be more likely to use violence against their victims. Lastly, the gender of the stalker had a negligible impact of showing that stalker gender and violence are significantly correlated, with male stalkers being more violent.

Table 5:

Analysis of Factors Affecting the Probability of Violence in Stalking:

Variable	Effect Size	Strength of Impact
Prior Intimate Relationship	Moderate	Increased Threat
Presence of Threats	Modest	Potential Aggression
Presence of Psychosis	Substantial Negative	Lower Danger Risk
Personality Disorder	Minor	Increased Violence Risk
Intoxication	Slight Correlation	Potential for Violence
Violence History	Minimal	Increased Physical Harm
Criminal Background	Negligible	Possible Violence Risk
Stalker Gender	Negligible	Correlated with Violence

Differentiation:

Tests for effect size heterogeneity show that all current variables, with the exception of substance abuse, psychosis, and personality disorders, showed heterogeneity in their effect sizes. This suggests the possibility of moderator variables that could be causing systematic variations in the effect sizes. For every mean effect size in the analysis, a Fail Safe N number was determined. A criteria value of.1 was employed in the calculations. This value was selected to give us an idea of how many studies would be required to bring the mean effect size down to a minimum value because it is the definition of a modest effect size as stated in effect size guidelines. Fail Safe N values for the current research varied from 1.2 to 42.2, meaning that comparatively few studies would be required to refute the findings.

Discussion

According to our meta-analysis, over 24.4% of victim's experience bodily harm as a result of stalker attacks, and roughly one-third of stalkers behave violently against their victims. Male stalkers do not appear to be more likely than their female counterparts to

commit acts of violence against their victims, despite the general literature on criminal violence to the contrary. These findings suggest a significant risk of physical violence for stalking victims, even with the typical disclaimer about the likely underestimation of violent behavior in forensic research.

Although base rates of violent behavior vary significantly between different researches, ranging from roughly 10% to approximately 48%, the aggregated data's prevalence rates of violence are within the range stated. Among the 1055 offenders he included in his meta-analysis, researcher discovered a 38.6% violence rate. As a result, violent crime rates vary widely. The researchers' operational definitions of violence and victimization as well as reporting rates could be to blame for this variation. For instance, according researchers[20], stalking rates might differ significantly between research depending on the sample and the definitions of stalking applied.

In the current analysis, it does seem that having a previous interaction with the stalker and the presence of overt threats increase the victims' risk of violence. While some studies have revealed a strong correlation between threats and violent behavior by stalkers, other research points to a weaker relationship. Our results support Rosenfeld's and clinical experience in suggesting that, although some threats may be unfounded, threats of harm can serve as significant markers of growing danger for victims of stalking and should be carefully taken into account when evaluating risk[21].

Conclusion:

The conclusion that having previously had an intimate relationship with the victim is strongly associated with violence in stalking scenarios contradicts previous meta-analytic data, but it is in line with existing research showing that former intimates are the group most likely to be violently harmed by stalkers. Intimate partner violence and stalking have a strong correlation. Even when the couple is still living together, stalking can still happen in these circumstances as a means of isolating the victim. Since the stalker and victim may have had a history of abuse, ex-partner stalking may even be seen as a distinct type of stalking due to the stalker's use of psychological power over the victim.

Unique discoveries, but they conflict with parts of the literature on aggression. This discovery also appears to be somewhat at odds with clinical understanding of specific forms of psychosis. Erotomania would be the most obvious illness-based argument against our findings. For instance, there is convincing evidence from clinical case studies that this disorder may be a prelude to violence in the stalker's life. Therefore, even while our research indicates that psychosis generally tends to prevent aggressive behavior by stalkers, each case must be evaluated individually to see whether the particular character and content of the psychosis actually reduces or increases the risk of violence in stalking. Empirical evidence supporting the significance of assessing psychosis in stalking scenarios is evidence that this characteristic significantly predicts the persistence of stalking behavior.

The current investigation discovered a very tenuous link between personality disorders and violent incidents. The magnitude of the impact observed by us was comparable to that stated by. Once more, we believe that this result is influenced by the fairly loose classification of all personality disorders as one. In applied forensics, it is well known that certain personality disorders are clear risk factors for violence, whereas others have no connection to violent behavior.

Our data further support the notion that there is a strong correlation between substance misuse and violent stalking. The idea that substance misuse is a significant general risk factor for all forms of violence is further supported by this conclusion, which is consistent with the body of research on aggressive behavior. The significant effect sizes observed in this analysis may be attributed to the substantial heterogeneity in individual

effect sizes between trials. The effect size for criminal history has shown an increase in the current analysis, suggesting that further research has established criminal history as a stronger predictor of stalking violence. Our findings additionally indicate that individuals who engage in stalking and possess a criminal record and/or a prior record of aggression towards others are more prone to exhibiting violent behavior. This finding aligns with research in the broader field of violence studies, but contradicts the outcomes of Rosenfeld's meta-analysis.

Restrictions:

The study design of a meta-analysis has several limitations despite its many benefits. Firstly, the analysis may still contain some bias due to the various study methods employed in the original studies. Secondly, despite efforts to prevent the issue of overlapping populations, some overlap may have occurred because the majority of the studies did not specify the makeup of the sample population. Lastly, since the majority of the studies we looked at did not rate the severity of violence, we were unable to investigate any potential relationship between individual risk factors and the severity of violence[22].

The definition of publication bias is "the tendency to prepare, submit, and publish research findings based on the nature and direction of research results." Studies with null results frequently do not get published, making it difficult to access and include a significant body of research in a meta-analysis. The Fail Safe N values found for the mean effect sizes in this study suggest that a small number of additional unpublished studies would be needed to nullify the results of the meta-analysis. Furthermore, the results of this analysis indicated that there may be moderating influences, as the mean effect sizes showed heterogeneity in all but three of the cases. These moderating influences could result from systematic differences in the study design (e.g., using self-report data versus police file data) or from differences in the victim and perpetrator data. This study is subject to the standard constraints related to self-report data. It's possible that some individuals underreported, while others may have overstated their claims due to bias. Given that researchers have documented the issue of false reports of stalking, it is important to consider the potential that research participants may have exaggerated.

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