

ABSTRACT

Research on male intimate partner abuser was scarce in Hong Kong Chinese population. The present study aimed at studying the prevalence of intimate partner abuse in Hong Kong, and its cognitive aspects from the male abusers' perspective. Self-reported questionnaires were administered to 226 Chinese married males (aged from 25 to 60). Based on the social cognitive model, it was hypothesized that male gender role belief, masculine gender role stress and positive outcome expectancy for use of violence would be positively related to intimate partner abuse, while marital satisfaction and negative outcome expectancy would be negatively related to it.

Over half of the participants had exhibited some forms of intimate partner abuse in the past 12 months against their wives, with 56% indicating psychological aggression, 16 % indicating minor physical assault and 6% severe physical assault.

The hypotheses received partial support. From the logistic regression analyses, different patterns of variables emerged for different types of abuse. Marital dissatisfaction had significant relationship with higher likelihood for all types of abuse examined. Psychological aggression was found to have significant relationship with outcome expectancy, which was one of the major variables in the decision-making stage of the social information-processing model. Minor and severe physical assault, on the other hand, were found to be significantly related to masculine gender role stress, corresponding to the earlier decoding stage of information processing, in addition to outcome expectancy of the decision-making stage.

Specifically, it was supported that the stressful perception of gender role threat, rather than traditional gender role belief, was significantly related to physical intimate partner abuse. Inferiority was the most important source of gender role stress. As predicted, expectancy to positive outcome, taking charge, was related to higher

likelihood of intimate partner abuse, while expectancy to result in a negative outcome, lose-lose situation, was related to lower likelihood of intimate partner abuse. However, partner retaliation, which was supposed to be a negative consequence, was found to be related to higher likelihood of psychological abuse. Involvement of emotional arousal was speculated.

Further analyses on the moderation and mediation effects were conducted. Although male gender role belief did not show direct relationship with intimate partner abuse, it served as a moderator between outcome expectancy and abuse. For those with strong male gender role belief, outcome expectancy for partner retaliation was positively related to the likelihood of psychological abuse, while there was no such correlation for those with weak male gender role belief. With regards to severe physical assault, outcome expectancy for taking charge was in general positively related to higher likelihood of abuse, but the rate was still high for those with strong male gender role beliefs even when the expectancy to take charge was low. On the other hand, outcome expectancy to take charge was found to mediate the relationship between marital satisfaction and psychological aggression. Limitations and implications of these results for treatment and future research were discussed.