

STALKING E RISCHIO DI VIOLENZA (STAR V)

FINAL REPORT

EXECUTED BY

**UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MODENA E REGGIO EMILIA
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IN COOPERATION WITH

Associazione Centro Documentazione Donna
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stalkers can inflict severe injury upon and have been known to kill their victims. Stalking is by no means uncommon, and now that stalking is specifically legislated against in Italy, tools are required to help identify the most dangerous offenders.

Following a file search of 8,000 Italian cases, 59 cases of severe and lethal stalker violence were identified, as well as 61 cases of less serious stalking. The two sets of data were compared via statistical analysis and 10 items were revealed that best predicted severe stalker violence. These items form the basis of a checklist designed to be used by frontline police officers. This checklist takes the form of 10 questions and has the primary aim of increasing the opportunities of police officers to identify potentially dangerous stalkers. Explanatory notes have been provided for each of the 10 questions.

The checklist will not allow a safe prediction of which stalkers will seek to kill their victims (often the stalkers themselves will not know what they are going to do next). Instead, it provides information on those factors that are most often associated with dangerous stalkers. It encourages investigating officers to ask the right questions and obtain sound evidence from victims. If a large number of 'yes' responses to the 10 questions are obtained, then this would suggest that the offender may act out violently and that the police should seek additional evidence for or against this suggestion. It would also suggest that the victim be warned and protected.

This report and the checklist form the first step in the creation of a usable tool. Next, the checklist should be tested for reliability and validity.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

This report provides an overview of the development of a risk checklist for stalking. It is based on data collected from Italian case files and has been created specifically for use by law enforcement.

The now robust literature on stalking demonstrates that although it is related to domestic violence and other forms of violence, stalking has its own patterns of behaviour. As such, there exists a need for stalking-specific tools and training. Stalking is characterised by the persistent imposition of unwanted contact and/or communication towards a victim that normally results in victim fear or distress. Persistent harassment of the victim, such as making threats to harm, destroying property, following the victim from place to place, and making malicious complaints against the victim, is also associated with stalking. Stalking may also include physical violence against the victim, and this can be extreme, resulting in death or permanent incapacity (e.g. James & Farnham, 2003). Around half of all stalking victims will have shared a former intimate relationship with their stalker. The other 50% of victims include be would-be partners, neighbours, strangers, acquaintances, workmates, and professional contacts such as doctors and psychologists (Mullen, Pathé & Purcell, 2000; Thomas, Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2008; McEwan, Mullen, Mackenzie & Ogloff, 2009).

Stalking is highly prevalent and appears to be a worldwide phenomena. In Italy, the National Statistics Institute (ISTAT, 2007) conducted an epidemiological survey on violence against women that showed a rate of stalking victimization of 18.8%. This stalking took place in a domestic violence context as all the women in the sample had been targeted

at the point of relationship breakdown and divorce. It is, therefore, reasonable to expect that if other contexts (i.e. those outside previously romantic relationships) were considered, the rate of stalking in Italy would be revealed to be considerably higher. The ISTAT data also demonstrated that 48.8% of female victims of physical or sexual violence at the hands of a former partner had also suffered persecution behaviours.

As stated above, stalking behaviour is frequently associated with violence. A meta-analysis of 22 studies produced an overall violence rate of 32% and a sexual violence rate of 12% (Spitzberg, 2007). These categories included assault, injury, suicide and attempted suicide, rape and attempted rape, murder and attempted murder, use of a weapon, and vandalism. It has been noted by some (e.g. Rosenfeld, 2004) that much of the violence perpetrated by stalkers is relatively minor, but it is undeniable that stalkers can and do attack and sometimes kill their victims. Given the high prevalence of stalking in the general community, this is a real cause for concern.

The main aims of the risk checklist that has been produced by this work are:

- to help reduce the incidence of violence in stalking cases
- to assist with decisions concerning case prioritisation
- to improve the consistency and transparency of decisions (and therefore increase professional accountability)
- to aid police understanding of the offender
- to help focus the thinking of the police investigator.

As such, the instrument is not a full clinical or actuarial risk assessment. Rather, we have produced a checklist that seeks to guide decision making and aid the collection of useful evidence. The checklist is based on variables that we found to be associated with serious stalker violence in real life Italian cases.

Correlates of stalker violence so far identified by empirical work include: a prior intimate relationship between victim and stalker, explicit threats (mainly of personal violence), a history of substance abuse, and the absence of psychosis in the perpetrator (see Rosenfeld's 2004 meta-analysis of 10 studies examining risk factors for stalking violence). Researchers have noted that the existing literature on predicting stalker violence is rather problematic because of several factors, i.e. small samples and weak and wide ranging study methodologies (Rosenfeld & Lewis, 2005), specific sampling (e.g. arrested or mentally ill stalkers), and varying definitions of violence.

A few previous works have noted that stalker violence is not a homogeneous entity and distinguished between more and less serious forms. In Rosenfeld and Harmon's (2002) USA-based study, 'serious violence incidents' were those where actual or attempted harm perpetrated by the stalker was 'significant'. A small minority (6%) of their sample of 204 court-ordered stalkers had inflicted a significant or potentially life-threatening bodily injury. Other work has employed differing definitions. Also in the USA, Brewster (2000) created a separate category of 'victim injury' where injury included small cuts and bruises. In the UK, James and Farnham (2003) examined 85 stalkers referred to a forensic service. Stalkers who had committed serious assault or murder ('serious violence') were compared with those who had committed non-serious violence or no violence. Serious violence was associated with a lack of prior criminal convictions, employed status, male stalkers, prior intimacy between stalker and victim, written or verbal threats, earlier violence within the stalking episode

(towards people or property), and visiting the victim's home. Logistic regression analysis revealed the three most important predictors of serious violence revealed to be: visiting the victim's home, short duration of the stalking, and the absence of a criminal record. The current work employs a methodology similar to that used by James and Farnham, in that more and less severe cases of stalking violence will be compared with the aim of identifying those factors that best distinguish them.

A recent Australian work by McEwan et al (2009) distinguished violence (physical contact with the intent to coerce or harm) from serious violence (where the violent behaviour was potentially life threatening and/or included attempted or actual penetrative sexual assault), and also examined predictors of violence by stalker subtype (according to the typology of stalker-victim relationships suggested by Mullen et al (2000)). It was found that violence perpetrated by rejected ex-intimate stalkers was best predicted by a history of previous violence, being employed, and making threats. For other types of stalker-victim relationship the best predictors of violence were a history of previous violence, being aged less than 30, and substance use at the time of stalking.

Much of the previous work on the design of tools for predicting stalking violence may be of limited use in police investigations. For example, McEwan et al's (2009) study obtained demographic, behavioural and diagnostic information from a sample of stalkers referred to a community forensic mental health service. Police officers are unlikely to have access to this kind of detailed information about the stalker, particularly in cases where the stalker is not well known to the victim. Such tools are more appropriate within a clinical setting where the assessor has access to the stalker. Violence prediction tools need to be designed with sensitivity to the context in which they will be used, and in the case of policing they need to focus on readily observable (e.g. behavioural and demographic) characteristics, rather than focussing upon psychological characteristics of stalkers.

The current work presents a stalking violence checklist for use by frontline police officers. It is based on data obtained from files kept by the Forensic Medicine Department of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (autopsy reports, forensic medicine consultations), and the Courts of Emilia Romagna (trial dossiers/trial documentation), covering 59 cases of serious and lethal stalker violence. It compares these data with data from files resulting from complaints about stalking (new Criminal Code article 612 bis) presented to a Police Office in the North of Italy (Lombardia), in order to identify those variables that best distinguish serious and less serious cases. Variables cover the stalker, the victim, the process of stalking, stalking behaviours, stalking impact, and the involvement of third parties.

3. METHODOLOGY

Design

This research began with an analysis of the actual Italian situation and from the experience and knowledge of the authors and individuals consulted by the authors, all of whom have been directly involved in the study of the phenomenon of stalking at an international level for a number of years.

The zeitgeist, characterized by serious debate about the need for specific anti-stalking legislation, and a growing national interest in the phenomenon, pushed the researchers to

respond to a national call by the Equal Opportunity Ministry of the Italian Government for studies about violence against women. Considering the previous experience of the researchers and the fundamental link existing between stalking and violence, the project design started from a literature review on the subject.

The methodology was based on the identification and analysis of case studies of murder, attempted murder and sexual violence relating to a period of at least ten years. The cases were taken from several different sources: autopsy reports, forensic medicine consultations, judicial files, and criminal trial reports. Cases were selected where there was clear evidence of stalking behaviour (as identified, described and defined by Pathé, Mullen & Purcell, 2000) prior to the violent index offence. The selected cases were collated via a specifically designed grid to ensure that all relevant variables were extracted (where possible) and that inclusion criteria were fully met. After the construction of a database, data were statistically elaborated.

How the data were collected

The cases of serious (often lethal) violence were selected from the Forensic Medicine Department of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia casuistry (autopsy reports, forensic medicine consultations), and from within the Courts of Emilia Romagna (trial dossiers/trial documentation).

For the Forensic Medicine Department sources, a search of the archives (paper and electronic) relating to the 1950s until the present day was performed. All cases of murder, attempted murder and sexual violence were examined. From these, all those that were preceded by a campaign of stalking were extracted. This was a detailed and protracted task, and was extremely time consuming. A great deal of material had to be read, considering that in the past the phenomenon of stalking was not well known and not clearly described, and therefore not easily recognizable. All the documents connected to forensic medicine and psychiatry reports and consultations have been read, placed in order and classified. Within the Department around 800 cases have been examined in total.

As for the cases selected from the records of the Courts, after obtaining the authorization of the Court Presidents to consult their archives, the researchers proceeded first to a wide selection via the online system (R.E.G.E.) that holds Justice Ministry records from 1999 until now. This database allowed the creation of a list of the crimes relating to the current work, as the researcher was able to insert the relevant articles of the Italian Criminal Code and search on the basis of these (art. 575: murder; art. 56, 575: attempted murder; 609 bis: sexual violence). This produced the first selection of cases. In order to identify those cases in which the index crime was preceded by stalking, the sentences published for each of the listed cases was studied. In this way, it was possible to obtain the specific casuistry we were looking for. That is, cases of serious violence (murder, attempted murder, and sexual violence) that arrived at the end of a stalking campaign. Finally, in order to collect the data required for the analyses, the researchers accessed the complete documentation set for each one of the selected cases.

Considering limitations and difficulties, it must be borne in mind that not all the courts had provided the researchers with access to the documents within the necessary timeframe of the research. Also, the online archives were not always available, meaning

that paper documents sometimes had to be sought. This was extremely time consuming. It was not always a simple matter to identify whether a stalking campaign had taken place prior to the index crime, due to both the limited interest in the past for this phenomenon, and to confused and imprecise descriptions. A total of around 7,000 cases were consulted within the Courts.

Where the information was obtained from

The information was obtained directly from autopsy reports, forensic medicine consultations, judicial files, and criminal trial reports (trial dossiers).

The information from every individual case selected was extracted via a structured analysis grid. This grid, designed specifically for this work, was organized into different sections relating to the following aspects: characteristics of the stalker; stalker criminal history; characteristics of the victim; relationship between stalker and victim; stalking behaviours; psychiatric diagnosis; preventive interventions (police, court, psychiatric services, social services). The grid was designed from the starting point of the available scientific knowledge on the subject, with particular reference to assessing the risk of violence in stalking cases. In order to process and statistically analyse the data (using the statistical software package SPSS for Windows), a specific database was created, and into this all the information collected through the grid was entered.

How data were analysed

After being entered into the SPSS database, a check was made for missing data. As this was found to be minimal (less than 5%) for the variables of importance, no specific provisions were made for the treatment of missing data. Frequency counts were run for all variables and the results examined to ensure that there were no obviously anomalous entries. Some of the frequencies were written up to provide a description of the data (see below). Other descriptive analyses were run, including measures of central tendency.

In order to produce the checklist, a regression analysis was run. Regression analyses allow an examination of how large and significant each independent variable is to the dependent variable. The dependent variable in this case is stalker violence (severe versus less severe). The independent variables are all the other variables examined, such as stalker sex and age, different stalking behaviours, features of the victim. So, we wanted to see which of the independent variables best predicted severe stalker violence.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA

The 59 cases involving serious and lethal violence are described in this section. The index events took place between 1981 and 2009. Most (83.1%) took place during or after the year 2000.

The stalkers

All but one of the 59 stalkers was male. Eleven (18.5%) of the 59 had been born outside Italy. In terms of race, six (10.2%) were not European (four were African and two were South American). Six were not Italian citizens.

At the time of the index event, 39% were single and lived alone. More than a quarter (27.2%) was married and lived with their wives or wives and children. A fifth (20.3%) lived

with their parents or other relatives, 3.4% were cohabiting, 3.4% were engaged and 6.8% lived in a hotel or other community environment. Less than a third (28.8%) were under the age of 35. The average age at the time of the index event was 39 years (SD = 10.3, range 19 to 72 years).

In terms of educational level, the largest proportion of stalkers (32.2%) had completed secondary school. A fifth (18.7%) had completed high school. Just one stalker had a university degree. Two were not literate. The majority (72.9%) were employed. A sixth (15.3%) were unemployed. Two were retired and one was a student. A fifth (20.3%) were non professional workers, and just two could be classed as professionals (self employed businessmen).

A third (35.6%) had previously been convicted of a crime. A fifth of the sample 22.6% had been convicted of violent crimes against the person, and 11.5% had been convicted of crimes relating to property. A sixth (14.5%) had been known to stalk other persons previously. A quarter (27.3%) were known to be substance abusers, and 34.5% had had prior contact with public services. A fifth (18.2%) were known to have had psychiatric treatment and all had complied with this treatment.

The victims

All but four of the victims (93.2%) were female. Eleven (18.5%) were born outside Italy. These women were mainly stalked by offenders who had also been born outside Italy. Five (9.1%) were not European by race and seven (11.9%) were not Italian citizens. More than half (54.9%) were aged under 35 at the time of the index event. Stalkers tended to target victims a little younger than themselves. Victims were better educated than were their stalkers. Three had degrees and more than half had completed secondary school. Most of the remainder were high school graduates.

Almost three quarters of victims (72.5%) were employed at the time of the index event. Just 3.9% were unemployed and most of the remainder were students or housewives.

Two of the victims were known to abuse substances and a fifth (20.3%) had been known to public services. The majority of victims (84.5%) reported fear prior to the occurrence of the index event.

The stalking

Just one of the 59 victims had experienced rare stalking events. The remainder had experienced frequent, repeated contact from their stalker. The largest proportion (59.3%) had been stalked for between three and 12 months prior to the index event. A quarter (23.7%) had been stalked for under three months, and 16.9% had been stalked for over a year.

The critical event believed to have sparked the stalking was end of a romantic relationship (79.6%), refusal of the victim to enter into a relationship with the offender (8.5%), unknown (8.5%), meeting with the victim's husband after many years (1.7%), presumed affair with the ex partner of the stalker (1.7%).

Most victims (65.5%) had known their stalker for more than a year prior to the occurrence of the critical event. More than a fifth (22.4%) had known their stalker for between three and 12 months, and just 12.1% had known their stalker for three months or less.

The table below lists various stalking behaviours, and the proportion of the sample that had experienced those behaviours.

STALKING BEHAVIOUR	%
Unwanted communications	83.1%
Property damage	28.8%
Threats	78%
Following	66.1%
Visits to home and work	59.3%
Watching	54.2%
Sending gifts/other items	6.8%
Physical assault	67.8%
Sexual assault	16.9%
Aggression to third parties	24.1%

More than three quarters of victims were stalked at their home (79.7%), and a similar proportion (78%) were targeted in public places. Clearly, most victims were stalked in both private and public spaces. Most of the employed victims were also targeted at work.

Just two victims (3.4%) were stalked by a stranger. Most (72.9%) were stalked by an ex intimate or a current partner (6.8%). The remaining 16.9% were targeted by a prior acquaintance. As regards stalker subtype, 79.7% were targeted by a rejected stalker, 61% by a resentful stalker, 15.3% by an intimacy seeking stalker, and 5.2% by an incompetent suitor. None were the victim of a predatory stalker. Clearly, a number of stalkers fitted into more than one subtype.

Most victims (61%) suffered physical consequences of being stalked, as well as emotional consequences (78%).

The index event occurred in a private place in the majority of cases. In 42.4% of all cases it happened at the victim's home. In a fifth of cases it took place in some other private space. In almost a third of cases (28.8%), the index event occurred in a public place, and in 8.5% the crime scene was the victim's workplace.

The victim was murdered in 53.4% of cases. In 13.6% of cases the index event was a murder-suicide. Two cases (3.4%) were attempted murders. Sexual violence was recorded in 27.1% of cases. In 40% of cases the victim was stabbed, and in 25.5% of cases the victim was attacked with a gun. The victim was beaten/bludgeoned in 16.4% of cases and asphyxiated/strangled in 5.5% of cases. Half of the guns used were legally registered to the offender.

A psychiatric report was produced in 42.1% of cases. Most stalkers (62.5%) were judged to be fully responsible for their actions. Just 8.3% were recorded as having a total mental defect. The remaining 29.2% of stalkers who were psychiatrically assessed were judged to have a partial mental defect. As regards the motive for the index event, 86.4% were judged to have an anger-related motive, 47.5% a revenge motive, 15.3% a mental illness related motive, and 13.6% a fantasy motive (many stalkers fell into more than one of these categories).

Just under a quarter of stalkers (22%) targeted other persons along with the primary victim. These other persons included family members and acquaintances of stalker and victim, and strangers.

Various other persons had tried to assist the victim as follows: family/friends/colleagues (89.7%), the police (50%), health and social services (17.2%), lawyers (12.3%). The police intervened in 40.7% of cases, social services intervened in 18.6% of cases, the courts intervened in 16.9% of cases, and psychiatric services intervened in 6.8% of cases.

Stalkers received prison sentences that ranged from six to 276 months ($n = 23$, $SD = 90.7\%$). The average sentence was 115 months, and half received prison sentences of seven years or more.

Variables

The variables fed into the analysis were as follows:

Stalker-related variables

Stalker gender, stalker race, stalker citizenship, stalker marital status, stalker age, stalker educational level, stalker employment status, stalker occupation, any previous charges/convictions, any convictions for violence against the person, any previous stalking convictions, any convictions for property crime, any substance abuse.

Victim-related variables

Victim gender, victim race, victim citizenship, victim age, victim educational level, any substance abuse.

Stalking-related variables

Nature of the prior victim-stalker relationship, frequency of stalking conducts, presence of unwanted communications, presence of property damage, presence of threats, presence of following, presence of visits to victim's home/workplace, presence of a weapon, basic motive, whether family/friends/colleagues aided the victim, whether official (non police) bodies aided the victim, whether the police aided the victim, whether the victim had reported the stalker to the police.

Unused variables

The following variables could not be fed into the analysis as they were only present in one dataset (rather than both): whether the stalker lived alone, whether the stalker was homeless, whether the stalker was known to public services, whether a psychiatric report was completed, whether the victim reported fear, whether the victim was known to public services, whether the victim took preventative measures, if the stalker watched victim, if the stalker sent gifts/items, other victims involved, whether the courts intervened, whether social services intervened, whether psychiatric services intervened. It is clear, however, that many of the most important variables were shared between the two datasets.

5. RESULTS

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted in order to assess those variables that best predicted serious stalker violence (i.e. murder, attempted murder and sexual violence). Logistic regression using the forward likelihood ratio method indicated that physical assault by the stalker was predicted significantly by 10 variables. These predictor variables are detailed below.

1. Stalker race and citizenship (non-Italian)
2. Stalker unemployed or in low status employment
3. Property damage

4. Higher number of stalking conducts
5. Stalker substance abuse
6. The stalker harassed the victim in public
7. The stalker was the rejected subtype
8. The stalker used a weapon
9. The stalker had attacked others
10. The victim had reported the stalker to police

Motivation was an important predictor, with those motivated by anger or revenge (following rejection) most likely to act out using serious or lethal violence. Previous convictions, even for stalking, were not significant. Stalker age (over or under 35 years) was not significant, but lower socio-economic status was important. Harassing the victim in public were also important. The latter would suggest that the seriously violent stalker does not really care about coming to the attention of the authorities. This idea is supported by the fact that property damage, attacking third parties, and prior reporting of the case to police were also indicators of serious or lethal violence. A lack of concern about leaving evidence may be related to substance abuse, which was also significant in the analysis. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who used weapons were more likely to seriously hurt or kill their victims than those who did not use a weapon.

6. THE CHECKLIST

The 10-item checklist derived directly from the regression analysis. Each item is detailed below, along with explanatory notes.

Q1. Is the offender a foreign national?

Several studies (e.g. Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002) have noted that stalkers are disproportionately foreign born. Anecdotal and specialist accounts also indicate higher than expected levels of stalkers who are foreign nationals. No empirical study has yet sought to investigate this issue in any detail. Some speculate that foreign born stalkers tend to come from more 'macho' cultures where violence towards and 'ownership' of women is more acceptable than it is in much of western Europe. Others speculate that immigrants may be more isolated and take more desperate measures to establish romantic relationships.

Q2. Is the offender unemployed or in low status employment?

Stalkers, compared with many other offenders, often have higher social status. Those who kill and seriously injure, however, are more likely to have low status employment or else be unemployed. This is only a likelihood: stalkers from all walks of life have been known to kill their victims. Sometimes, a low status stalker will have previously had a higher social status. Falling into debt, losing good housing and good employment will often be associated with stalking as the stalking takes so much time and effort. In other cases, the stalker will blame the victim for his decline and this will help motivate his crime.

Q3. Has the offender damaged the victim's property?

Several studies have identified that a sizeable proportion of stalkers (up to two thirds) will damage their victim's property (see e.g. Blaauw et al., 2002). Damage to the victim's prop-

erty may be associated with rage or frustration (perhaps because the offender is unable to attack the victim directly), revenge, a desire to harm something the victim cares about (e.g. destroying her wedding photographs), a wish to undermine her belief in a safe environment (e.g. by cutting brake cables), as a form of threat, or it may be connected with breaking and entering the victim's property or spying on the victim. Property damage has been identified by researchers as preceding or co-occurring with physical attacks on the victim (e.g. Harmon, Rosner & Owens, 1995, 1998).

Q4. Does the stalker regularly harass the victim?

That is, does the offender harass the victim at least three times each month? Although some stalkers will attack their victim very shortly after beginning to stalk them, most stalkers who seriously hurt or kill their victims will have been harassing them regularly. Some stalkers harass their victims more than 20 times each day. This harassment can take many forms, but the most popular stalker behaviours include: following the victim, communicating with the victim (phone calls, emails, texts), threatening the victim, hanging around outside the victim's home or workplace, and watching the victim. It should be noted that some stalkers may attack their victim after seemingly stopping the harassment.

Q5. Is the offender a substance abuser?

Substance abuse by the stalker has been found to be associated with physical assault on the victim in a significant number of cases (see Rosenfeld's 2004 review of 13 relevant studies). The abuse of various substances by stalkers can contribute both to the basis from which the stalking occurs and to individual violent episodes. Binge drinking or drug taking may directly precede an attack, fuelling obsessional, yearning or angry thought patterns, or by lending the stalker the confidence to approach or attack the victim. It is well known that substance abuse increases the violence risk among those who are already mentally ill (Steadman et al., 1998), although non-mentally ill stalkers may also abuse alcohol and drugs.

Q6. Has the offender harassed the victim in public places?

Most stalkers will be seen by their victims. The positive aspect of this is that evidence can be collected, particularly if the victim keeps a log of stalker sightings and behaviour. Stalkers who loiter around places frequented by the victim tend to be those who are most likely to attack their victim. Such stalkers may be compiling victim-related information or tracking the victim's habits. Alternatively, an attack may be prompted by the stalker's frustration at not achieving his or her aims (such as a relationship with the victim), despite devoting a great many hours to the harassment. Stalkers are a varied group and some will attempt to loiter secretly (even camping out on or in the victim's property), whilst others will make no attempt at concealment. Whether secretive or overt, whether mentally disordered or not, most stalkers will share a belief that their behaviour is an appropriate response to circumstances.

Q7. Is the offender motivated by anger and revenge?

Stalkers will stalk for different reasons (some for reasons known only to the stalker). One of the most common reasons for stalking is the breakdown of a romantic relationship, or romantic rejection (Mullen, Pathé & Purcell, 2000). The stalker may wish to re-establish

the relationship, or obtain revenge (most usually both). This stalker will feel angry and will feel that the victim is deserving of the stalking. These stalkers can be extremely dangerous and are unlikely to respond positively to police warnings.

Q8. Is the stalker known to have access to deadly weapons?

Unsurprisingly, those stalkers who have access to deadly weapons (such as guns and knives), are more likely to seriously kill or injure their victims. Checks should be made as to whether the stalker is likely to own or have access to deadly weapons, and victims should be asked about any specific threats made that mention weapons. The research evidence demonstrates that violent stalkers frequently act on specific threats (James & Farnham, 2003) and so threats can be an excellent source of information.

Q9. Is the offender known to have been violent towards other persons during the current stalking episode? (intelligence or reported)

In the majority of stalking cases, secondary victims will be identified. Although stalkers may stalk more than one person at a time, this item relates to associates of a primary victim. Stalkers will involve third parties for several reasons, principally to upset the victim (e.g. by harassing her family), to obtain information on the victim (by e.g. by hounding her friends), to remove perceived obstacles between the stalker and victim (e.g. by harassing the victim's partner), and to punish those perceived as helping or shielding the victim (e.g. work colleagues who state that the victim is not available). Individual stalkers have been known to harass hundreds of third parties who they perceive as connected with the primary victim (see research by Mohandie, Meloy, Green-McGowan & Williams, 2006; Mullen, Pathé, Purcell & Stuart, 1999). Secondary victims can be a valuable source of evidential information. Stalkers who attack those associated with the victim are more likely to also attack the primary victim. Persons perceived as preventing access to the victim or protecting the victim are at particular risk.

Q10. Has the stalking already been reported to the police?

The research indicates that those stalkers who have already been reported to the police are most likely to engage in serious violence towards their victim. This will usually mean that information is already available to investigating officers. In many (but not all) cases, the stalker will leave a trail of evidence and this can sometimes provide a good indication of future violent behaviour (e.g. notes on the victim's movements, emails to the victim, telephone records, even written threats). The most seriously violent stalkers are likely to be very angry and vengeful and the stalking will be the most important aspect of their life. As such, police warnings/court injunctions will often have little effect.

7. FUTURE STEPS AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research was to design a checklist to identify risk factors for stalking violence. In order for the checklist to have utility for the police it is important that it has good reliability i.e. the extent to which the checklist performs consistently in judgements about different levels of risk and good validity i.e. the ability of the checklist to capture the core features of what we understand to be 'stalking' and its ability to differentiate between high and low risk cases of stalking. To this end, it should be piloted by the police and the results should be collated and analysed.

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9. APPENDIX

9.1 Analysis grid

STALKING AND RISK OF VIOLENCE

Identification number: _____ Date of review: _____ Date of event: _____

THE STALKER

Socio-demographic information

Sex: M F Date of birth: _____ (yy/mm/dd)

Birthplace: _____ Prov _____ Region: _____

Race: _____ Italian citizen: 1 yes 0 not If not specify if he/she 1 is or 0 not a regular foreign citizen

Marital Status:

1. single
2. engaged
3. cohabitant
4. married
5. separated
6. legally Separated
7. divorced
8. widow

Age at the time of offence: _____

Living place at the time of offence: _____

Living with:

1. homeless
2. alone
3. cohabitant
4. wife/husband
5. children
6. parents/relatives
7. hotel/community
8. roommate/friends

Education Grade completed:

1. Post University degree (phd, master)
2. University degree
3. Some post high school degree
4. High school degree (4-5 years)
5. High school degree (2-3 years)
6. Secondary school degree
7. Primary school degree
8. None – able to write and read
9. None – not able to write and read

Missing

Employment Status at the time of offence:

1. employed
2. unemployed
3. regular soldier
4. housewife
5. student
6. disabled
7. retired

Occupation at time of offence:

Subordinate as:

1. executive
2. manager
3. employee

4. worker
 5. apprentice
 6. home worker
Autonomous as:
 7. businessman
 8. freelance
 9. self-employed
 10. member of a co-operative agency
 11. assistant

Criminal History of the stalker

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| Previous charges/convictions | 1 yes | 0 no |
| Convictions for violence against person | 1 yes | 0 no |
| Convictions for violence against property | 1 yes | 0 no |
| Previous stalking conducts (also without convictions) | 1 yes | 0 no |

Clinic history of the stalker

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------|------|
| Substance abuse | 1 yes | 0 no | |
| Previous contacts with public services | 1 yes | 0 no | |
| | If yes specify what: | | |
| | Social services | 1 yes | 0 no |
| | Mental health services | 1 yes | 0 no |
| | Drugs services | 1 yes | 0 no |
| Presence of psychiatric treatment: | 1 yes | 0 no | |
| Compliance to the treatment: | 1 yes | 0 no | |

THE VICTIM

Socio-demographic information

Sex: M F Date of birth: _____ (yy/mm/dd)

Birthplace: _____ Prov _____ Region: _____

Race: _____ Italian citizen: 1 yes 0 not If not specify if he/she 1 is or 0 not a regular foreign citizen

Age at the time of offence: _____ Living place at the time of offence: _____

Education Grade completed:

1. Post University degree (phd, master)
2. University degree
3. Some post high school degree
4. High school degree (4-5 years)
5. High school degree (2-3 years)
6. Secondary school degree
7. Primary school degree
8. None – able to write and read
9. None – not able to write and read

Missing

Employment Status at the time of offence:

1. employed (1 definitive/ 2 temporary)
2. unemployed
3. regular soldier
4. housewife
5. student
6. disabled
7. retired

Clinic history of the victim

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------|------|
| Substance abuse: | 1 yes | 0 no | |
| State of fear: | 1 yes | 0 no | |
| Previous contacts with public services | 1 yes | 0 no | |
| | If yes specify what: | | |
| | Social services | 1 yes | 0 no |
| | Mental health services | 1 yes | 0 no |
| | Drugs | 1 yes | 0 no |
| Presence of psychiatric treatment: | 1 yes | 0 no | |
| Compliance to the treatment: | 1 yes | 0 no | |

STALKING CONDUCTS

Type of behaviour

N. of conducts:

1. rare
2. repeated

Duration of the stalking:

1. less than 3 months
2. over 3 months and less than 1 year
3. over 1 year

Date of beginning: _____

Critical event: (e.g. Separation, divorce) _____

Time between acquaintance/relationship and beginning of stalking:

1. less than 3 months
2. over 3 months and less than 1 year
3. over 1 year

Type of conducts:

unwanted communication (letters, phone calls, sms, e-mail, fax)	1 yes	0 no
property damages	1 yes	0 no
threats (verbal or written)	1 yes	0 no
following	1 yes	0 no
home/work visits	1 yes	0 no
watching	1 yes	0 no
sending gifts and other objects	1 yes	0 no
physical assaults	1 yes	0 no
sexual assaults	1 yes	0 no
assault/aggression to other people (family members, partner, animals, etc.)	1 yes	0 no

Location:

1. victim home
2. public place
3. private place
4. victim working place

Relationship with the victim

1. intimate partner
2. ex intimate
3. Acquaintance
4. unknown

Stalker typology (Mullen et al, 1999)

___ rejected	1 yes	0 no
___ intimacy seeker	1 yes	0 no
___ resentful	1 yes	0 no
___ predatory	1 yes	0 no
___ incompetent suitor	1 yes	0 no

Victim consequences

___ physical	1 yes	0 no	(specify)
___ psychological	1 yes	0 no	(specify)
___ economical	1 yes	0 no	(specify)

VIOLENT EVENT (CRIME)

Date: _____ (yy/mm/dd)

Place:

- 1 victim home
- 2 public place
- 3 private place
- 4 victim working place

Geographical Location: region

Time between the starting of stalking and the violent event:

in months (0 if less than one)

Preventive measure (prison, home arrests, prescriptions, other)

Short procedure: 1 yes 0 no

Level (1-3)

Sentence: in months

Addictional penalties: 1 yes 0 no

Where is actually the author:

Event:	Murder	1 yes	0 no
	Murder/suicide	1 yes	0 no
	Tempted murder	1 yes	0 no
	Sexual violence	1 yes	0 no
	Injury	1 yes	0 no

Method Used: 1=gunshot 2=stabbing 3=asphyxiation/strangulation 4=beating/bludgeoning 5=other (specify____)

Sexual Assault Analysis: 1 yes 0 no

There was a psychiatric report? 1 yes 0 no

Result of the psychiatric report:

1. responsible
2. total mental defect
3. partial mental defect

Dangerousness: 1 yes 0 no

Security measures? 1 yes 0 no

Treatment request:

1. no one
2. pharmacological
3. psychotherapy

Detailed description of the crime and of the crime scene:

Motive:

Details regarding Motive: _____

Emotional state connected to the violence:

Anger	1 yes	0 no
Revenge	1 yes	0 no
Fantasy	1 yes	0 no
Psycopathological disorders	1 yes	0 no

Weapons:

Weapons used: (0=none 1=firearm 2=knife/cutting instrument 3=blunt instrument 4=ligature 5=poison 6=other (specify _____))

If firearm used, describe type of gun: 1=handgun 2=rifle 3= shotgun 4=machine gun 5=other (specify: _____)

Personal fireharm: 1 yes 0 no

Fireharm legally registered: 1 yes 2 no (1 stolen; 2 illegally owned; 3 not known)

Substance abuse of the perpetrator:
Toxicology Report: 1 yes 0 no
Other Victims:
1. no one
2. family members
3. acquaintances
4. unknowns
5. more than one

HELP REQUEST

Contacts of the victim with helping agencies:
Family, relative, friends, colleagues 1 yes 0 no
Lawyer 1 yes 0 no
Gp, psychiatric services, social services 1 yes 0 no
Associations 1 yes 0 no
police 1 yes 0 no
Helping agencies intervention:
Police intervention 1 yes 0 no
Courts intervention 1 yes 0 no
Psychiatric services intervention 1 yes (specify_____) 0 no
Social services intervention 1 yes (specify_____) 0 no

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