Understanding Partner Violence and Alcohol Use in Peru: A mixed methods assessment

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Background

*Domestic Violence (DV) is a robust predictor of injury, poor physical and mental health, and negative prenatal outcomes worldwide (WHO, 2005).

*Levels of DV in Peru are among the highest in the world. Estimates from ENDES (INEI, 2015) suggest lifetime prevalence of DV against women is as high as 85% in some regions of Peru.

*Alcohol use is consistently identified as one predictor of domestic violence (e.g., Flake et al., 2006). Yet, despite repeated calls from WHO to address DV and alcohol use, few efforts have been made to address DV and alcohol use.

*Thus, this project uses the PRECEDE-PROCEDE implementation framework (Green, 1974) to investigate the relationship between DV and alcohol use over time, and potential clinical targets in perpetrators of DV.

*Study 1 is an epidemiological and environmental diagnosis at the regional level investigating the relationship between alcohol use and DV over time. Study 2 is a behavioral diagnosis, in progress, at the individual level and is a qualitative assessment (thematic analysis of content) of features and reasons for DV under the influence of alcohol in DV perpetrators.
Fig. 1: Levels of DV in Peru

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Fig. 2: Precede-Proceed Model

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Methods

*Study 1:* Using ten years of data from the DHS survey in Peru, we utilized generalized linear modeling to investigate the relationship between the percentage of women in each region who report domestic violence (physical, sexual, and psychological) and the percentage of women who report alcohol use by their partner over time.

*Dependent variables* were the percentage of women, for each region, that reported their current partner ever perpetrated *physical*, *psychological*, and *sexual* violence against them.

*Independent variables* were the percentage of women who reported that their *partner drinks*, and year of survey (*time*).

*Based on prior literature published in this area (e.g., Flake et al., 2006) we included covariates of *family size* (# of children), the *socioeconomic status* (DHS wealth index), *region* (25 dummy coded regions), *years of education* completed by the woman, the percentage of women who report seeing their *father hurt their mother*, the percentage of women who were *hurt by their parents*, and *length of marriage*.

*Study 2:* We are currently collecting 30 (n = 7 complete) qualitative (one-hour semi-structured) interviews with male perpetrators of physical violence with concurrent alcohol use in two groups, one from the Coast and the other from the Sierra, for a two-cell comparison of themes of domestic violence and alcohol use.

*Participants were recruited through Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings via purposive sampling, targeting men between 25 and 60 years of age. Men are eligible if they reported a history of violence perpetration under the influence of alcohol with a partner (relationship length minimum of 3 months).

*In accordance with prior literature on DV and alcohol use (e.g., Stuart et al., 2009), our interviews were developed with proximal and distal factors in mind. Where *proximal factors* act directly to influence the behaviour in question, and *distal factors* are related to the behaviour in question in an ancillary manner.
**Study 1: Quantitative epidemiological and environmental analysis of DV and Alcohol in Peru**

*10 years of DHS survey data
*18 – 35 year old women
*n = 275 (11 time points, 25 regions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DV: Psychological, Sexual, and Physical Violence</strong></td>
<td>% of Women in each region who experienced DV in lifetime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV: Partner drinks?</strong></td>
<td>% of Women in each region who reported their partner drinking</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IV: Time</strong></td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Covariates: As seen in the literature</strong></td>
<td>Family size, socioeconomic status, region, years of education, father hurt by mother, hurt by parents, length of marriage</td>
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**Fig. 3:** Study 1 Methods

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Study 2: Qualitative behavioral analysis of DV and Alcohol in Peru

*Costa/Sierra: 2 cell theme comparison with high violence, representative of region
*Men in current partnership (3 mo min), 25-60 years of age, Hx of DV under influence of alcohol
*7/30 participants recruited
*Interviews probe for distal/proximal factors based on a conceptual model of DV and alcohol use

Fig. 4: Study 2 Methods

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Findings

*Study 1*: Multiple regression results suggest that DV is reducing over time (environmental), and that alcohol contributes to DV in women (epidemiological). However, the contribution of partner alcohol use is very small, suggesting that alcohol contributes only a small amount to the levels of DV across Peru.

*Study 2*: Because we will be using both inductive and deductive coding, we only conducted very preliminary analyses (Lima n = 6, Huancayo n = 1).

*Distal factors included a family history of alcohol abuse, history of familial domestic violence, a personal history of alcohol abuse, and alcohol expectancies such as "desiring a social lubricant".

*Proximal factors included alcohol use immediately before the violence, relationship discord, and salient cues threatening masculinity.

*Important treatment strategies identified included peer relationships, spiritual/holistic treatment of the person, evidence-based, emotional coping, and community engagement.
Fig. 5: Study 1 Results (Note: Blue = Costa, Green = Selva, Purple = Sierra)

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Fig. 6: Study 2 Results

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**Interpretation**

*DV is an important area of concern in Peru, which is slowly reducing over time.*

*Alcohol use contributes to domestic violence, but does not appear to robustly contribute to DV over and above other factors. This suggests that simply removing alcohol will not address DV in Peru, and preliminary qualitative analysis outlines some feasible treatment strategies.*

*The qualitative analysis reveals how distal factors influence proximal events to result in violence, and highlight interpersonal skills related treatment targets.*

*Specifically, alcohol use plays a large part in boosting men's confidence for dating, a "social lubricant," that later backfires if the male feels threatened. Thus, alcohol may be serving as a way to cope with inadequacies (distal), but might actually make men more myopic to these inadequacies later in the relationship (proximal).*

**Limitations:** These results are preliminary. Study 1 cannot be interpreted with any causal effect, and does not solve many of the limitations of cross sectional data. An ideal study would match alcohol and DV over time within individual relationships. Study 2 is still lacking 21 interviews, with only results from Lima.

**Future directions** will continue to collect appropriate precede data, with the goal of proceeding into an intervention to target DV and alcohol use with continuous evaluation.
Haley Carroll is a Clinical Psychology Intern at Harvard Medical School/Massachusetts General Hospital and a PhD student at the University of Washington. Her overarching career goal is to become a Global Mental Health scientist with an active program of research investigating systems of oppression, stigma, and structural violence. Her work has included individuals with substance use disorders who have been chronically homeless, survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence, as well as individuals who receive treatment for mental health disorders despite significant stigma. Her experience in mental health outside the US includes a year long Fogarty Fellowship in Peru investigating domestic violence and alcohol use, and her current collaboration with scholars in Mexico (Universidad de Monterrey) investigating barriers and facilitators to mental health care from the prospective of patients, providers, and researchers. She aspires to expand these lines of research as she positions herself for a career in global mental health.