

IDENTIFYING THE CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH INTIMATE PARTNER STALKING: A MIXED METHODS STRUCTURED REVIEW AND NARRATIVE SYNTHESIS

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Abstract

The empirical research on the clinical management of intimate partner stalking perpetrators remains in the early stages of informing forensic practice. This study presents the first known structured review which seeks to inform intervention pathways for this group through illuminating the characteristics associated with intimate partner stalking. A systematic search was conducted across five academic databases, reference lists of papers were reviewed, and ‘experts’ contacted to identify relevant papers. The search strategy identified 2,674 papers. Twenty-two studies were selected in line with predetermined inclusion/exclusion criteria and assessed for methodological quality. All studies employed an observational research design; eighteen quantitative, two qualitative, and two mixed methods design studies were included. Data was extracted and subjected to narrative synthesis. Overall, intimate partner stalking perpetrators presented with some similar characteristics to intimate partner violence perpetrators, whilst some characteristics were deemed more prevalent to intimate partner stalking perpetrators. The findings illustrate there are likely to be subtypes of intimate partner stalking perpetrators, requiring a bespoke approach to intervention. Limitations are presented and recommendations made for future research. The wider implications for forensic practice in informing the clinical management of this group and approaches to intervention are discussed.

Keywords: Intimate partner stalking; characteristics; intervention; structured review; mixed methods; narrative synthesis.

Introduction

Stalking perpetrators¹ present with diverse characteristics, underpinning motivations, and psychopathology (Nijdam-Jones, Rosenfeld, Gerbrandij, Quick, & Galietta, 2018). This presenting complexity brings challenges in the clinical management of perpetrators. Intimate partner stalking (IPS) perpetrators are considered the largest subtype (Logan, Shannon, & Cole, 2007). Compared to other subtypes they have higher recidivism rates (Eke, Hilton, Meloy, Mohandie, & Williams, 2011; Rosenfeld, 2003), and are deemed the most persistent and potentially dangerous (Mullen, Purcell, & Stuart, 1999). Given the risks posed by IPS perpetrators, there is merit in obtaining clarity on the underlying characteristics and how best to intervene. Whilst the literature indicates a connection between intimate partner violence (IPV) and stalking behaviour, this remains unclear (Douglas & Dutton, 2001; Logan, 2010; Gerbrandij, Rosenfeld, Nijdam-Jones, & Galietta, 2018). Nonetheless, the criminal justice response is to consider IPS under the remit of IPV (Melton, 2012). This approach is adopted in the United Kingdom, with IPS perpetrators considered for intervention designed for IPV perpetrators (L, Jonah, personal communication, September 2015). This practice assumes IPS perpetrators share the same criminogenic needs as IPV perpetrators. Insight into the characteristics of IPS perpetrators would inform how these can be targeted via intervention (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Consequently, a review focusing on IPS has value for academia and international policymakers informing on intervention and forensic practice.

The current review

¹ The issue of definition remains a crucial unresolved issue (Owens, 2016), with varying legal, academic, and clinical definitions in the literature (Fox, Nobles, & Fisher, 2011). A common definition within the stalking risk assessment literature is: “Unwanted and repeated communication, contact, or other conduct that deliberately or recklessly causes people to experience reasonable fear or concern for their safety or the safety of others known to them” (Kropp, Hart, & Lyon, 2008, p.1).

The Cochrane Database, PROSPERO and Campbell Collaboration were searched for registered systematic reviews. A scoping exercise utilising search terms of ‘intimate partner’ OR ‘partner*’ AND ‘stalking’ OR ‘harass’ AND ‘risk factor’, AND ‘protective factor’ did not identify any reviews focusing on IPS. Two relevant papers were identified; Douglas and Dutton (2001) and Logan (2010). Nonetheless, both presented a narrative literature review not reporting systematic methods. The conclusions drawn identified a gap in the existing literature which the current review seeks to address. Thus, this review aims to understand whether the characteristics of IPS perpetrators are similar or different to IPV perpetrators by answering the following review question: What are the characteristics of men who have engaged in IPS?

Method

Protocol registration²

The review protocol was registered with the PROSPERO International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews on the 17th August 2018 (registration number: CRD42018088871).

Review method design

This review employed a systematic review process (Moher et al., 2015; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The chosen method to present, summarise and synthesise studies was a modified

² The review protocol can be accessed via the PROSPERO website at <http://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospERO/>.

narrative synthesis approach (Popay et al., 2006). Narrative synthesis is “an approach to the systematic review and synthesis of findings from multiple sources and relies primarily on the use of words and text to summarize and explain the findings of the synthesis” (Popay et al., 2006, p. 5). This approach captures diversity across studies; enhancing findings and informing policy and practice (Harden & Thomas, 2010; Joanna Briggs Institute 2014).

Search strategy

A comprehensive search strategy employing the following search terms was conducted:

Intimate partner: (Partner OR Spous* OR intimate* OR domestic* OR marital* OR romantic* OR civil* OR husband OR boyfriend OR date* OR dating* OR current partner OR prior* OR former* OR ex-intimate* OR couple OR romantic relationship* OR failed romantic relationship*)

AND

Risk factors: (Risk* OR criminogenic need* OR predict* OR static* OR dynamic* OR characteristics OR pathway OR correlate OR factor* OR offender characteristics OR indicator* OR recidiv* OR variable* OR correlate* OR experiences³).

OR

³ Note: Experiences was incorporated to capture behaviours and experiences described within qualitative literature.

Protective factors: (Protect* OR desistance OR strength OR buffer OR risk moderator).

AND

Stalking behaviour: (Stalk* OR harass* OR pursuit* OR fixat* OR obsess* OR psychosexual obsession OR approach behavior? OR cyberstalk* OR cyber-stalk OR technology facilitated stalk* OR cyber harass* OR omnipresence OR surveillance OR unwanted attention OR predatory pursuit* OR erotomania OR intrusive behavior?r OR intrusive harassment OR simple obsessional stalk* OR rejected stalk* OR relational stalk* OR prior sexual intimate stalk* OR ex-partner harass*).

A structured review protocol was designed in line with a modification of the PICO tool (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), incorporating study design to capture quantitative and qualitative studies (See Table 1). [Table 1 insert here]. Five electronic databases were searched between 14th and 15th February 2018. Database searches generated a total of 2,658 hits, with 162 duplicates removed. Titles and abstracts for 2,496 articles were reviewed, resulting in the exclusion of 2,449 studies. The remaining 47 papers were subjected to a full paper screening, against the inclusion/exclusion criteria, resulting in the exclusion of a further 36 studies. Eleven studies were identified for inclusion from the database search. To widen the search and limit potential publication bias, hand-searching of reference lists, email correspondence with experts, and a search of grey literature was conducted. Three email responses were obtained, identifying no new papers. These additional searches generated a further 16 studies. Five papers were excluded. Searching was updated on the 31st May 2018, identifying no additional papers. A total of 22 studies (11 from database searching, and 11

from hand-searching) were included in the review and subjected to quality assessment. Figure 1 shows the PRISMA flowchart of the study selection process. [Figure 1 insert here]

Quality assessment

To prevent bias, studies were not selected based on quality during the search process (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Twenty-two studies remaining were assessed for methodological quality by the review author using a checklist designed for quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods studies. Quantitative papers were assessed using a modification of the Downs and Black (1998) checklist, qualitative papers by the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2006) checklist, and mixed methods studies adapted from the above two quality assessments. Each item on the quality assessment form was scored on a three-point Likert scale (criterion fully met = two, partially met = one, not met/unclear, zero), calculating an overall quality score for each study. Items were omitted not applicable to the study design. The overall quality score for each paper was calculated by summing all the scores together. Maximum score attainable for quantitative papers was 46, qualitative papers 36, and mixed methods 44. The overall score for each paper was calculated, with higher scores reflecting a higher quality paper. Scores were converted into percentages, enabling a clear comparison of quality between studies. Each study was categorised a rating of 'high quality' (100-70%), 'moderate quality' (69-30%) and 'low quality' (0-29%). A sample of quality assessments were subjected to inter-rater reliability by the second author.

Data extraction and thematic synthesis

A data extraction table was created (see Table 2) outlining relevant data pertaining to each study (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), allowing conclusions to be drawn from the review. [Insert table 2 here]. A thematic synthesis of included studies was conducted using the principles of thematic analysis (Harden & Thomas, 2010; Popay et al., 2006) to analyse and report on the characteristics associated with IPS perpetrators. Each study was summarised. Data was organised into preliminary descriptive themes. The final stage involved defining and re-naming preliminary themes through a process of deeper interpretation to generate ‘analytical’ themes and final themes, enabling the identification of recurring themes in relation to the review question.

Findings

Twenty-two studies were included in the review. The research designs of included studies are firstly described, followed by a qualitative synthesis of the findings.

Study characteristics

Nine studies reported on perpetrator samples [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 15, 16], thirteen on victim samples [6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22]. Two studies [7, 8] used the same data, reporting separate results. Twenty-one studies were published articles. One study was a PhD thesis [3]. Studies were published between 1997 and 2018. Sixteen studies originated from the United States, four from Australia, one from Portugal, and one from the UK.

Study design

All studies employed an observational research design⁴; eighteen quantitative [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22]; two qualitative, [6,19]; and two mixed method studies [7, 15]. Five studies incorporated a comparison group [1, 2, 12, 16, 20], comprising: non-intimate stalking compared to IPS [1, 12]; IPV perpetrators who engaged in stalking behaviours and those that did not [2, 16], and stalking victims with and without a history of IPV [20]. One study used a control group comprising women who had not reported IPV within the year prior to attempted or actual femicide [21]. Data was obtained from official archive case file records, psychometrics/surveys, interview, or combination of these methods.

Setting and samples

Ten studies were selected from community samples [6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21]; three from a specialist stalking intervention facility [4, 10, 12]; four from a community or custodial forensic intervention facility [2, 3, 15, 16]; and three from police settings [1, 11, 22]. Convenience sampling was the typical sampling strategy employed. Sample sizes varied depending on the research design. Perpetrator samples ranged from 36 to 1,785, with a combined perpetrator sample of 3,015. Victim samples ranged from 21 to 464, with overall sample size of 1,427.

Measures

All studies provided a definition of stalking, varying dependent on the publication year, country psychometric measure used. A range of psychometrics were employed as outcome

⁴ See Table 2 – The data extraction table outlines study design and type of analysis.

measure for stalking perpetration. Ten studies employed self-report surveys/psychometrics [1, 2, 3, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20]. Qualitative studies employed interviews and questionnaires but did not report on validation or reliability [6, 7, 19].

Quality appraisal

Studies achieved quality scores ranging between 39% and 85%. Eight studies were considered ‘high quality’, 14 moderate, with no papers deemed low quality. Higher scoring studies were recent quantitative papers from Australia from the specialist stalking clinic [4, 10, 12].

Narrative synthesis

Synthesis of the 22 studies provides an overview of the research, illuminating insight into the profile of IPS perpetrators. The following overarching themes were present and connected the studies: (1) Perpetrator demographics; (2) Relationship history and dynamics; (3) Perpetrator background factors; and (4) Nature of stalking. (See table 3). [Table 3 insert here]. Findings are discussed in relation to the wider literature, and comparisons made to IPV literature.

Theme 1: Perpetrator demographics

This theme captures the demographic characteristics associated with the profile of IPS. Most studies centred on age, with limited studies reporting educational attainment, employment status and ethnicity. All studies included demographic variables as descriptors. No study explored demographic factors as predictors to investigate how the relationship between age, ethnicity, educational attainment, and employment were related to stalking recidivism. No studies utilised comparison groups. Twelve studies reported age at the time of stalking perpetration [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 22]. Across studies, age ranged between 17 and 80 years, with the mean age of 34.3 years. This finding is consistent with the general stalking literature, with age spanning from teens to 70 years plus (Jordan, Logan, Walker, & Nigoff, 2003). In contrast, age is reported as a protective factor for IPV, with older age decreasing IPV perpetration (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kimm, 2012). Seven studies reported education and employment status [2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 15]. The findings indicate unemployment is a demographic characteristic for IPS; paralleling the IPV literature (Capaldi et al., 2012). Seven studies reported ethnicity [2, 3, 5, 8, 15, 16, 20]. Caucasians were overrepresented in samples. It is unclear whether proportionately perpetrators matched the demographics of the area from where the sample was drawn.

Summary: Where there is commonality between IPS and IPV perpetration relates to problems with employment. No conclusive findings can be drawn on the demographic profiles of IPS perpetrators.

Theme 2: Relationship history and dynamics

This theme reflects the relationship history of IPS perpetrators. Two subthemes underpin this theme; (1) Victim-perpetrator relationship; and (2) Prior history of IPV.

2a) Victim-perpetrator relationship.

This subordinate theme represents the relationship status at the onset of stalking behaviour. Prior relationship history is reported in 12 studies [2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22]. Eleven studies indicate the stalking campaign began by a current partner while the relationship was intact [2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22], with between 21% [11] and 80.9% of victims reporting this [9]. Two studies utilised comparator groups [9, 11]. Compared to IPV perpetrators who do not stalk, the victim-perpetrator relationship was found to be a considerable factor.

Summary: Whilst there is an indication IPS perpetrators are less likely to be in a relationship at the onset of the stalking campaign, stalking behaviour is also reported to begin when the relationship is intact; thus, reporting mixed findings. This theme is supported by five high quality studies and seven moderate quality studies, indicating strong evidence for this theme.

2b) Prior history of intimate partner violence.

This subordinate theme describes whether a previous history of IPV during the relationship preceded stalking behaviour. Fourteen studies report on the presence of prior IPV; eleven from victims [6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21] and three from perpetrator samples [2, 3, 4]. Victims reported the presence of prior IPV ranged from 39% to 85% [6, 7,

8, 11, 13, 18]; Physical abuse between 39% and 62%, psychological abuse 53% to 82% [6, 7, 14] and sexual abuse 8.6% to 82% [6, 8]. In contrast, perpetrator samples reported ranges between 24% and 62% [2, 3, 4]. Controlling behaviour and psychological violence are strongly associated with IPV (Brownridge et al., 2013). One study found no relationship between stalking behaviour and previous IPV [1]. One study [20] reported 69% of victims acknowledged perpetrating physical and/or psychological abuse during the relationship, indicating a level of bidirectionality of IPV. Some studies suggest psychological rather than physical violence is more prevalent [4, 17, 21]. Two in three perpetrators had a protective order before or after their stalking charge, supporting a link between IPV and stalking; 32% had at least one previous domestic violence order and 53% a prior conviction [5]. Problems with intimate relationships is cited as risk factor for IPV (Kropp & Hart, 2015), with separation/relationship breakdown considered a critical factor (Dutton & Kropp, 2000; Williams & Houghton, 2004).

Summary: The findings suggest IPS co-occurs with physical, sexual, and psychological violence, with perpetrators breaching restrictions/supervision measures. The presence of previous psychological violence maybe a more robust factor than physical violence. This theme is supported by six high quality studies and eight moderate quality studies, indicating strong evidence for this theme.

Theme 3: Perpetrator background factors

This theme integrates findings reflecting a range of perpetrator background factors pertinent to the profile of IPS perpetrators. There are three interlinked subthemes; (1) Psychological and clinical characteristics, (2) History of substance abuse; and (3) Past criminal history.

3a) Psychological and clinical characteristics.

Personality pathology and clinical syndromes including Axis 1 and Axis II disorders was reported in eight studies [1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 15]. Axis 1 diagnosis (excluding psychotic disorder) was present in 40.5% of cases [12]. One in fifty were identified as having a psychotic illness [4]. Antisocial and borderline personality disorder were the most commonly reported, paralleling the IPV literature (Dutton & Kropp, 2000). This finding supports similarities in the profile of IPS and IPV perpetrators, and research from Douglas and Dutton (2001) and Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart (1994) borderline-dysphoric typology. Nonetheless, a broader spectrum of personality disorders has not been investigated in the literature (Nijdam-Jones et al., 2018).

Summary: The presence of personality disorder is common amongst both IPS and IPV perpetrators; most typically antisocial and borderline. This subordinate theme is supported by six high quality studies and two moderate quality studies, indicating moderate evidence for this theme.

3b) History of substance misuse.

This theme captures the role of alcohol and drug abuse in the pathway to IPS. Substance misuse problems was a central factor underpinning the histories of IPS perpetrators, with this theme occurring across eleven papers. Four papers reported on the perspective of the victim [7, 8, 9, 13], and seven on perpetrator samples [1, 2, 3, 11, 12 15, 16]. Victims reported the prevalence of substance misuse ranged between 53.5% (12) and 72% [7], with perpetrators reporting between 36% (15) and 37% [16]. The prevalence of drug use reported by perpetrators was 3.8% [15], with victims reporting higher figures, ranging from 51% (8) to 55% [7]. Two studies reported on a comparator group. Compared to IPV perpetrators who do not stalk, those who had engaged in IPS were more likely to have alcohol or drug problems [16, 19]. Whilst this is a notable finding, gaps remain in understanding the role this plays. Questions remain whether this is due to underlying dependency or a coping strategy in response to relationship breakdown. Alcohol abuse is recognised as a risk factor for IPV (Capaldi et al., 2012; Corvo & Johnson, 2013), whereas drug use has not been widely explored as a risk factor for IPV (Capaldi et al., 2012).

Summary: The findings suggest that an area of similarity between IPS and IPV perpetrators is substance misuse, particularly alcohol. Substance misuse was identified by both victim and perpetrator samples, strengthening the robustness of this as a characteristic of IPS perpetration. This theme is supported by six high quality studies and four moderate quality studies indicating robust evidence for this theme.

3c) Past criminal history.

This theme encapsulates the non-partner past criminal histories of IPS perpetrators, including offending behaviour and history of supervision failures. Five studies reported this factor [1, 3, 8, 13, 16]. Prior arrest for violence against a person ranged from 78.6% and 79.3% [3, 13]; victims were distributed evenly across family members, friends/acquaintances, and strangers [3]. Weapon use was reported by 8% of perpetrators [3]. Violation orders was found in 36% of cases [13]. Two studies reported on comparator groups [2, 16]. A previous criminal history was greater in IPS perpetrators compared to other subtypes of stalking perpetrators [2]. The highest correlation differentiating those who reported stalking and those who did not was whether that person had a history of stalking another victim [16]. These findings are consistent with the IPV literature. That is, an antisocial lifestyle is deemed a risk factor for IPV (Hilton, et al., 2004), along with a prior history of violence perpetrated against non-intimate family members (Hendy, Burns, Can & Scherer, 2012), and previous supervision violations (Kropp & Hart, 2015; Russell, 2012). In contrast, the general stalking literature has found mixed empirical evidence for the role of a prior criminal history. Some studies reported such a history increased risk of stalking violence (Mullen, et al., 1999, Sheridan & Davies, 2001), whereas a meta-analysis found this was not a consistent finding (Rosenfeld, 2004).

Summary: Limited studies have explored a non-partner offending history. Findings indicate that IPS perpetrators are likely to have a criminal history, including the use of non-partner violence and supervision violations. This theme is supported by three high quality studies and two moderate quality studies, indicating moderate support for this theme.

Theme 4: Nature of stalking

This theme captures the behavioural profile of IPS perpetrators. There are three subthemes: (1) Onset of stalking: Motivation and triggers; (2) Pursuit tactics; (3) Threats and escalation.

4a) Onset of stalking: Motivation and triggers.

Nine studies report on motivational factors; five from victims [6, 7, 9, 19, 21] and three from perpetrators [3, 15, 16]. IPS appears to be driven by a combination of non-malicious and malicious motives; including a desire to reconcile a relationship, to show love, need to communicate, desire for revenge/punish/humiliate, access to children. The most common being to reconcile a relationship. Perpetrators presented with less malicious motives. Motives for IPS appear to be similar to those identified in the IPV literature (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, McCullars, & Misra, 2012).

Summary: Victim and perpetrator studies identified similar motives including both non-malicious intent for stalking behaviour with similarity between IPS and IPV perpetrators. This theme is supported by two high quality studies [3, 9] and six moderate quality studies [6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 21], indicating moderate support for this theme.

4b) Pursuit tactics.

Fourteen studies report on methods of pursuit [1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20]. IPS employ a range of stalking tactics categorised into; direct methods of unwanted communication, approach behaviours, technology-facilitated stalking and proxy stalking. The most common being unwanted communication and approach behaviours. The most frequent self-reported behaviour was making unwanted phone calls, ranging between 4.2% to 69% from perpetrators. Sending gifts/flowers/items ranged between 24.2% to 40% [2, 3, 15]. Written communication ranged between 10.9% and 31% [2, 3, 10, 15]. The most common approach behaviour was turning up unexpectedly at the victims' home, workplace, or other public place; ranging between 22% to 61.9% [2, 3, 13, 14]. Physical following ranged from 6% to 22.5% [3, 12]. Spying/watching ranged from 6.7% to 76% [9, 12, 13, 14], trespass on victims' property ranged from 2.9% to 79% [11, 12, 18]. Spying, surveillance and physical following was highlighted as the most dangerous behaviours [17, 21]. Two studies reported on technology-facilitated stalking [6, 14]. Victims reported text messaging and telephoning was the most common method. GPS mobile technology and social media were also cited as a platform to facilitate stalking behaviour, to obtain knowledge but also to publicly humiliate and punish. Proxy stalking was identified in three studies [3, 6, 9]; ranging between 18% and 52.4%. Studies with comparator groups, found that victims who reported previous IPV experienced a high number of different acts of stalking than those who did not [20]. Limited research explored persistence [8, 12, 16, 20]. Wide variations were identified; thus, no conclusive findings can be drawn.

Summary: IPS perpetrators employ a variety of methods or patterns of behaviours in pursuit of the victim. This theme is supported by seven high quality studies [1, 3, 12, 11, 9, 30, 20] and seven moderate quality study [2, 6, 15, 18, 8, 14, 19], indicating strong evidence for this theme.

4c) Threats and escalation.

This theme captures threatening communication and acts of physical harm towards either the primary victim or secondary target. Use of threats and escalation to violence was a central factor in IPS perpetrators, and predictor of violence. This theme occurred in eight papers [1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12 18, 20]. The use of violence ranged between 3.5% and 89% [3, 13]. The discrepancy reflects the self-report by perpetrators that violence was uncommon, compared to victim accounts, which stated physical violence ranged between 45% and 89% [13, 18]. Use of weapons ranged between 5% [11] and 39.6% when stalking had escalated to attempted/actual homicide [21]. IPS perpetrators are more likely to use threats and violence compared to other subtypes of stalking perpetrators and more likely to act with violence if threats have been made. Two studies explored stalking as a risk factor for homicide [17, 21]. Findings suggest stalking in intimate partner homicide victims ranged from 23.4% to 76%. In cases where stalking escalated to attempted/actual homicide, 54.5% had previously threatened to kill the victim [21]. The findings from this review provide robust evidence to indicate a link between intimate partner homicide and stalking. The findings parallel the IPV literature indicating strong evidence for this theme and similarities in the profiles of IPS and IPV perpetrators. Threats to kill is a risk factor for IPV (Dutton & Kropp, 2000), with femicide occurring in the context of separation/relationship breakdown (Morgan & Gilchrist, 2010).

Summary: The use of threats is widely cited as a characteristic of IPS perpetrators, with evidence indicating the presence of prior threats is a predictor of future violence. This finding supports similarity in the profiles of IPS and IPV perpetrators. Critical behavioural

characteristics are threats, following through on threats, and escalation to violence, with robust evidence to indicate a link between intimate partner homicide and stalking. This theme is supported by five high quality studies [1, 3, 9, 12, 20] and three moderate quality studies [7, 8, 18] indicating robust evidence for this theme.

Discussion

This review aimed to advance understanding on the characteristics of IPS perpetrators, and to this end the aims have been met. Limitations are now discussed, along with applications to forensic practice and research.

Limitations

Bias

A systematic approach limits bias, providing transparency in reporting the findings (Sayers, 2007). Searching by the review author was robust. Incorporating perpetrator and victim samples across multiple settings provides a more representative overview. Nonetheless, the review is not without limitations, influencing the strength of the conclusions drawn. Sources of bias include, restricting searching to five electronic databases, excluding papers not written in English language, restricting searching to one reviewer, and subjecting a sample of studies to inter-rater reliability.

Strengths and weaknesses of included studies

Studies varied in overall quality, attaining quality scores between 39% and 85%. Quality assessment identified methodological limitations among the studies which require consideration. No papers employed a randomised control design or other experimental designs. No longitudinal studies were found which would seek to ascertain direction of causality for risk factors. Methodological design was restricted to observational studies with potential for bias and confounding variables. Studies employed several data collection techniques; case files, psychometric/questionnaires, and interview. As such, the limitations of these methods apply to this review. All studies adopted a retrospective design from a convenience sample. There is potential for underreporting or exaggerated accounts from victims. For perpetrators there is the potential for bias due to social desirability and over-reliance on recognising and describing behaviour. For studies using case file data, there is reliance on the accuracy and quality of retrospective clinical/police reporting. Furthermore, samples are not reflective of all levels of stalking behaviour, with clinical samples predominantly including low-level and moderate-level perpetrators. There is a lack of samples from prison settings reflecting those convicted of serious stalking violence. Significantly, there was a lack of studies utilising a control/comparison group. Whilst five studies used a comparison group, only two employed comparison groups differentiating IPV and IPS perpetrators [2, 16]. The lack of comparison/control groups makes it unclear whether the themes identified were unique to IPS perpetrators. There was a lack of robust qualitative studies within the review, with such studies coming from victim samples. All were deemed moderate quality, lacking transparency and clarity on elements of the research design.

Definition and outcome measures.

Definitions of stalking across studies varied, due to the diversity of publications across a twenty-year timespan and across countries with different and changing legislation. Due to cultural variables the results may not be representative of IPS perpetrators internationally. A range of outcome measures were used for stalking and IPV, some of which were not standardised or validated. There is also variability in the theoretical models underpinning the conceptual frameworks of included studies.

Conclusions and recommendations

The findings further illuminate the theoretical debate on the connection between IPV and IPS. The review indicates there are some characteristics (i.e., personality disorder, substance misuse, history of IPV, prior criminal history, and unemployment) deemed similar to IPV perpetrators, and some characteristics (i.e. age, type of personality disorder, psychological violence, and behavioural patterns) more prevalent to IPS perpetrators. A key finding is that the literature suggests IPS perpetrators are not a homogenous group, and there are likely to be subtypes of IPS perpetrators.

Implications for future research

The review has identified gaps in the literature where further research is warranted to address the recommendations of this review and inform forensic practice. Half the studies emerge from the last decade, demonstrating the evolving nature of the stalking literature. There is a lack of research from the UK. Greater variety of study designs are warranted to further understand IPS. There are no known studies exploring obsession, a striking finding given obsession is regarded as a factor in stalking perpetration. There are no qualitative

studies exploring characteristics from the perspective of the perpetrator. A phenomenological approach has the potential to illuminate the pathway to IPS, providing understanding into perpetrators experiences and relationship patterns that cannot be accessed through other methods. There is a gap in understanding the role of trauma and stress in IPS perpetration, clarity on type of personality disorder, and the role of technology-facilitated stalking. Additionally, there is a lack of research from the field of neuropsychology and new theoretical frameworks (i.e. implicit theories). This review originally attempted to include protective factors. However, no studies were identified, highlighting a lack of understanding as to what prevents IPS. Such studies have the capacity to enhance clinical and risk management and is an area warranting urgent exploration. There is also a dearth of research exploring stalking persistence with emphasis specifically on IPS perpetrators.

Implications for forensic practice

The findings have strong practical application for international policymakers and practitioners in informing the clinical management of IPS perpetrators, demonstrating promise for informing future directions for intervention pathways. The finding that IPS perpetrators are not a homogenous group has wider implications for policymakers and those designing interventions. Interventions specific to this group are not compatible with a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach. Whilst IPS perpetrators appear to share some commonalities with IPV perpetrators, indicating IPV intervention may address some characteristics, they likely possess some distinct characteristics not currently targeted on IPV interventions. As such, it is not possible to infer that IPV intervention will address all the needs of IPS perpetrators. Given the definition of stalking is underpinned by obsessive thinking, it is hypothesised that obsessive cognitive characteristics are a potential critical factor in stalking perpetration that

current IPV interventions are unlikely to address. Thus, IPS perpetrators may have a greater level of criminogenic need compared to IPV perpetrators, specifically relating to the possible presence of other type of personality disorder and characteristics which drive psychological violence. This review supports the views expressed in previous literature (McEwan et al. 2017; Purcell & McEwan, 2018). To this end and in light of the review findings, adopting a bespoke approach to intervention is warranted. Significantly, there is likely to be merit in sequencing interventions, particular given the findings this group presents with characteristics linked to substance abuse and psychopathology, which may be deemed intervention interfering factors. Given the above, there is value in considering how the review findings can be disseminated and implemented by practitioners and policymakers to inform the clinical management of IPS.

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Tables

Table 1 – Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Concept	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	<p>Male IPV perpetrators (aged 16 years and over) at time of stalking behaviour.</p> <p>Any nationality, ethnicity and level of cognitive functioning</p> <p>No restrictions on type of setting - samples taken from both forensic, clinical settings in community and custody, police.</p> <p><i>*Note: Mixed gender samples will be included when author specifies number of females in the sample and when >90% of sample are male.</i></p> <p>Mixed subtypes of stalking perpetrators included if authors give breakdown specific to IPS for conclusions to be drawn.</p>	<p>Males under the age of 16.</p> <p>Predominantly female samples</p> <p>Predominantly same-sex relationship samples</p> <p>Study does not include perpetrators with stalking behaviour</p> <p><i>*Note: Samples with mixed subtypes of stalker excluded if authors do not provide breakdown specific to IPS.</i></p>
Interventions	<p>Risk factors, clinical, offence or demographic characteristics</p> <p>Factors predicting stalking recidivism</p> <p>Protective factors</p>	<p>No examination of risk factors / characteristics, factors predicting stalking behaviour/recidivism</p>
Comparators	<p>Studies eligible for inclusion whether or not they included a comparator group. Rationale is that this mixed methods review aims to capture all studies designs that report on risk factors and characteristics from a range of samples some of which may not include studies with a comparator.</p>	<p>Studies eligible for inclusion whether or not they included a comparator group. Rationale is that this mixed methods review aims to capture all studies designs that report on risk factors and characteristics from a range of samples some of which may not include studies with a comparator.</p>
Outcomes	<p>Stalking behaviour</p> <p>Stalking recidivism/reoffending</p> <p>Stalking behaviour measured on self-report and/or official measures</p> <p>Perpetrator and victim self-report</p> <p>Paper must refer to a definition of stalking.</p>	<p>No evidence of stalking behaviour</p> <p>Paper does not refer to definition of stalking</p>
Study Design	<p>In line with the mixed methods review, all study designs considered to incorporate a wide range of study</p>	<p>Reviews, policy documents, commentaries, editorials, discussion/opinion papers</p>

	<p>designs, including quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.</p> <p>Note: Victim retrospective designs included if focus of study is on perceptions of perpetrator characteristics</p> <p>The presence of a control group was not stipulated.</p>	<p>Data reported in a purely descriptive manner without analysis</p> <p>Studies which focus on victims' experiences or student samples exploration of stalking behaviour.</p> <p>*Note: Victim retrospective designs reporting solely on impact of stalking behaviour in victim will be excluded.</p>
Additional Criteria	<p>Written in English.</p> <p>Year of publication 1989 – 2018</p>	<p>Written in other languages</p> <p>Book chapters, editorials, literature reviews, narratives and opinion papers</p>

Table 2

Tabulation of Extracted Data: Summary of Study Characteristics

(Key: D refers to studies retrieved through database search, and H refers to studies retrieved through hand-searching)

Study ID	Title, authors and date	Authors, Date, Country of study	Sample and setting	Research design and data source	Aim(s) and focus of study	Results	Quality assessment score
1 D	The dangerous nature of intimate relationship stalking: Threats, violence and associated risk factors	Palarea,et al. (1999) USA	Forensic setting Offender sample (n=223) Police data: Compared 223 intimates and non-intimate stalking cases managed by police dept.	Quantitative: Observational study Data collection method: Revised Zona profile – Threat Management research questionnaire (Zona et al. 1993) Procedure: Data taken from pre-existing police database	To investigate the link between the presence of an intimate relationship and dangerousness level of stalking perpetration.	Significant relationship between perpetrators intimate versus non-intimate status and violence committed against persons and property. The relationship was positively influenced by level of proximity to the victim and threats towards property but <u>NOT</u> influenced by criminal, psychiatric, IPV history. Overall, intimate partner stalkers used more dangerous stalking behaviours.	Study quality score: 70% Study quality category: High

			Comparat or group: Intimate relationshi p cases (n=135) and non- intimate cases (n=88)	Form of analysis: multiple regression			
2 D	A pattern of violence: Analyzing the relationshi p between intimate partner violence and stalking.	Norris, Huss, & Palarea (2011) Published, USA	Offender sample Forensic setting (n=120) IPV perpetrator s self- referred (28%) or court- referred (62.6%) for IPV treatment <i>Comparat or group: To</i>	Quantitative: Observational study Data collection method: Interview & psychometrics Measures: Risk Assessment Inventory for Stalking (RAIS), MCMI, Beck Depression Inventory, & multidimensio nal Anger Inventory	Explored levels of severity between stalking- related behaviours and IPV, and differences between IPV perpetrators who exhibited stalking- related behaviours and those who did not.	A significant relationship between stalking-related behaviour and IPV was found, with more severe stalking related to higher levels of IPV and more extreme psychopathology. High psychological abuse identified in those who stalked, suggesting psychological intimidation is indicative of an IPV perpetrator prone to stalking against an intimate partner.	Study quality score: 63% Study quality category: Moderate

			examine difference s between IPV who engaged in stalking-related behaviours and those who do not.	(self-report measures) Form of analysis: Chi-square, ANOVas			
3 H	An empirical analysis of stalking as a risk factor in domestic violence	Palarea (2005) USA, PhD Thesis	Offender sample Forensic community sample (n=85) IPV perpetrators (self-referred or court ordered) to a community IPV treatment program	Quantitative: Observational study Survey Self-report measures: Risk Assessment Inventory for Stalking (RAIS). Conflict Tactics Scale-2. Form of analysis: factor analysis	To assess for stalking and abuse within participants intimate relationships.	Motives for stalking behaviours varied. Findings indicated rather than considering stalking and IPV as different constructs, stalking behaviours may be better conceptualized as an extension of the physical and psychological abuse against the partner, with more severe forms of stalking being used by more severe IPV perpetrators.	Study quality score: 75% Study quality category: High

4 H	Re-assessing the link between stalking and intimate partner abuse	McEwan et al. (2017) Australia published	Offender sample Specialist forensic/clinical setting (n=115) Ex-intimate stalkers who had stalked 118 separate victims. Recruited from specialist forensic clinic from clients referred for stalking behaviour to a community based	Quantitative: Observational study Data collection method: History of IPV established from self-report and police records (Interview, questionnaire, existing case file data). Data from case records/database taken from participants and police. Form of analysis: Univariate analysis, multivariate modelling, binary logistic regression.	To explore the nature and link between IPV and stalking. To identify demographic, clinical and behavioural variables that differentiated between ex-intimate stalkers who had and had not engaged in prior IPA against the stalking victim.	Factors associated with IPV during prior relationship were: Criminal history, prior physical violence to other victims, diagnosis PD, sharing children – significant association IPV during prior relationship. A history of violence toward others and sharing children with the victim effectively discriminated between stalkers who did and did not engage in prior IPV.	Study quality score: 85% Study quality category: High
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			mental health service.				
5 D	Stalker profiles with and without protective orders: Reoffending or criminal justice processing ?	Logan et al. (2002) USA, published	Perpetrator sample Forensic setting (n=346) charged with stalking crime.	Quantitative: Observational study Data collection methods: Existing database. Form of analysis: Chi-square	To examine characteristics associated with stalkers with and without a protective order history.	Two in three stalkers had a protective order either before or after their stalking charge, supporting an association of stalking with IPV. Stalkers with a more extensive history of protective orders were also more involved in the criminal justice system.	Study quality score: 61% Study quality category: Moderate
6 H	The Abuse of Technology in Domestic Violence and Stalking	Woodlock (2017) Australia, published	Victim sample (n=46) Women who had experience d IPS Community setting Convenience sampling	Qualitative Observational study (on-line survey) Two elements Survey with advocates and victims. Included in review as authors separate out findings	Explores the use of technology to facilitate stalking and other forms of abuse. To identify how victims report perpetrators have used technology to stalk them.	Technology used to create a sense of omnipresence, and to isolate, punish, and humiliate victims. Perpetrators also threatened to share sexualized content online. Findings confirm that mobile technologies are used by perpetrators to stalk and harass women.	Study quality score: 39% Study quality category: Moderate

				Form of analysis: NVivo/thematic analysis			
7 H	Power and control dynamics in pre-stalking and stalking situations	Brewster (2003) USA, published	Victim sample (n=187) victims stalked by former partner Community setting Convenience sample	Mixed methods Observational study Exploratory study Retrospective Qualitative – semi-structured interview to explore experiences of victims Forms of analysis: Content analysis and regression models (two linear and one logistic) were used to assess the strength	Examines the role of power and control in stalking situations and in the prior relationship between stalker and victim. Reports victims' perceptions of motivations.	A greater number of victims reported social and physical control than psychological, financial, and sexual control during the prior relationship. Psychological control during stalking campaign was reported by nearly all victims. Fewer than half of the victims reported physical assault during the stalking, and just over a quarter reported financially controlling behaviours. Authors suggest that stalking is extension of the abuse of power and control begins within the relationship.	Study quality score: 61% Study quality category: Moderate

and statistical
significance of
the variables.

8 D	Stalking by former intimates: Verbal threats and other predictors of physical violence	Brewster (2000) USA, published	Victim sample Communit y setting Self-report victim data (n=187) of ex- intimate partner stalkers	Quantitative Observational study Method of data collection: Semi- structured interviews and questionnaire. Analysis: Not specified.	Investigated the prevalence of previous IPV. Also assessed the correlates of violence within stalking situations and to assess the relationship between verbal threats and physical violence toward former intimate stalking victims.	A link between verbal threats and subsequent violence. Drug and alcohol abuse were also statistically significant, but only in predicting physical injury during stalking. Threats of violence are better predictors of violence during stalking than is a past history of violence.	Study quality score: 43% Study quality category: Moderate
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9	Predicting the occurrence of stalking in relationships characterised by domestic violence	Melton (2007a)	Victim sample (n=178)	Quantitative Observational study	To investigate what factors predict occurrence of stalking in relationships with IPV history.	Factors which predicted stalking were: victim not in a relationship with abuser, abuser had alcohol or drug problems, controlling behaviour.	Study quality score: 75%
D		USA, Published	Community setting Victims where cases had come into contact with criminal justice system Self-selected sample	Data collection: Interviews, survey & case file data. Retrospective design Measures – stalking measures collated using stalking behaviour checklist (Coleman, 1997) Form of analysis: Univariate analysis Bivariate correlation Cross tabulations			Study quality category: High

10	Risk factors for stalking violence, persistence, and recurrence	McEwan et al. (2017) Australia, Published	Perpetrator sample Forensic setting (n=157 individuals but 143 male) Ex-intimate sample (n=90)	Quantitative study Observational study Retrospective design (both outcomes of stalking violence, persistence and recurrence) had occurred at time of data collection) Data collection methods: Interview, psychometric assessment, and supplementary case file data. Form of analysis: univariate analyses. Mann-Whitney U tests used to	Investigates risk factors associated with stalking violence, persistence and recurrence.	Diverse risk factors associated with different stalking outcomes. Violence more likely to occur with ex-intimate, explicit threats or property damage. Strong relationship between prior IPV (physical) and stalking violence. Results confirm physical IPV should be taken seriously as unique risk factor when managing ex-intimate stalking cases.	Study quality score: 80% Study quality category: High
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				determine relationships with stalking duration			
11 D	The role of stalking in domestic violence crime reports generated by the Colorado Springs police department	Tjaden & Thoennes (2000). USA, published	Victim sample (n=1,785) Police setting Case file review of domestic violence crime reports from USA Police Department during a nine-month period Convenience sampling	Quantitative Observational study Forms of analysis: Series of bivariate analyses, logistic regression in which several independent variables representing characteristics of the victim and suspect were regressed against the dependent variable.	To investigate the prevalence of stalking in domestic violence reports. To explore the risk factors associated with domestic violence stalking. To elicit how often intimate partner stalkers are charged with stalking	There is a link between stalking and violence in intimate relationships. 1 in 6 (16.5%) stalked victim. Most perpetrators were former rather than current intimates. Reports of stalking allegations were significantly less likely to mention physical abuse or victim injury in the presenting condition to involve households with children, or to involve victims and suspects who were using alcohol at the time of the report. Police almost never charged domestic violence stalking suspects with stalking, instead charging them with harassment or	Study quality score: 74% Study quality category: High

						violation of a restraining order.	
12 D	Approach and escalation in stalking	McEwan et al. (2012) Australia, published	Offender sample Community/ Forensic sample (n= 211) (n=71 for ex-intimate sample) <i>Comparat or group used:</i> Former sexual intimates and those who were not.	Quantitative Observational study Method of data collection: Interview, collection of demographic, historical data and psychometric instruments Form of analysis: Chi-square analysis and odds ratios Effect side also calculated	To identify variables associated with approach and escalation amongst ex-intimates and non-ex-intimate stalkers and to compare the latter with the results of the public figure stalking.	In non-ex-intimate stalkers, approach was associated with psychosis and intimacy motivation seeking. The same applied to escalation only more strongly. No associations with approach or escalation was found in ex-intimate cases.	Study quality score: 78% Study quality category: High
13 H	The intersection of stalking and the	Brady & Hayes (2018)	Victim sample Community setting	Quantitative Quasi-experimental design	To examine the link between stalking and the severity of	Victims of life threatening abuse by an intimate partner were significantly more likely to experience	Study quality score: 74% Study quality category: High

severity of intimate partner abuse	USA, Published	(n=464) Data from women's health risk study. Sample of abused and non-abused women from hospitals and clinics and intimate partner homicide victims from proxy interviews and official records.	Data collection methods: face-to-face interviews and questionnaire. Measure/tool – Harassment in abusive relationships: (HARASS; Sheridan, 1992) Form of analysis Univariate and bivariate analysis conducted to examine associations and threatening behaviour across severity of groups. Chi-square & descriptive statistics	intimate partner abuse while controlling for previously identified risk factors of intimate partner homicide.	stalking than victims of non-lethal abuse, (b) after controlling for key risk factors stalking increased the risk of life threatening abuse, (c) threats to kill the victim if she left was the only significant stalking-related behaviour that increased the risk for life threatening abuse, (d) An offender's prior record and a higher number of previous abusive incidents increased the risk of life-threatening abuse.
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14 D	Intimate partner violence and stalking behavior: Exploration of patterns and correlates in a sample of acutely battered	Mechanic, et al. (2000) USA, Published	Victim sample Community setting (<i>n</i> =114)	Quantitative: Observational study (survey/interview) Measures - Stalking Behaviour Checklist (SBC: Coleman, 1997). The Standardised Battering Interview & Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory—Abbreviated Version (PMWI) & Revised Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (CTS-2). Form of analysis: Regression analyses	To provide descriptive data on stalking in a sample of acutely battered women and to assess the inter-relationship between constructs of emotional abuse, physical violence, and stalking in battered women.	Violent and harassing stalking behaviours occur with alarming frequency among physically battered women, both while they are in the relationship and after they leave their abusive partners. Emotional and psychological abuse emerged as strong predictors of within- and post-relationship stalking.	Study quality score: 61% Study quality category: Moderate
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15 D	Batterers stalking patterns	Burgess, Harner, Baker, Hartman, & Lole (2001) USA, Published	Perpetrato r sample (<i>n</i> =149) Forensic setting Follow up study to Burgess et al. 1997 Sample IPV convicted perpetrator s ordered to complete a treatment programm e as a requireme nt of their probation Convien ce sample	Mixed methods: Observational study (Exploratory study) Method of data collection: questionnaire Measures: Modified version of Wright et al. (1996) Stalking Incident Checklist. Form of analysis Factor analysis – on psychometrics Qualitative data – no method described	Explores relationship between battering, stalking and self-report measures on aggression and abusiveness.	Behaviours clustered into two factors: Ambivalent contact pattern and predatory contact pattern. Most frequently reported partner abuse (47%) was pushing or slapping, (7%) reported more severe abuse, including kicking, biting, choking, and threatening their partner. The presence of alcohol (36%) or drugs (4%) was less frequently reported.	Study quality score: 48% Study quality category: Moderate
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16 H	Stalking behaviors within domestic violence.	Burgess, et al. (1997) USA, Published	Perpetrator sample (n=120) Separated into groups based on whether or not reported stalking Police/community sample Comparative group: Compares domestic batterers by whether or not they admit to stalking Convenience sample	Quantitative Observational study Exploratory study Data collection method: survey Measures: Stalking checklist developed and published for profiling (Wright et al 1996) for self-report use with domestic violence perpetrators Form of analysis: Pearson correlation	To explore differences, between domestic violence cases that have a stalking component and those that do not and to explore if there are patterns of stalking behaviours.	(n=36) reported stalking, 84, (70% did not). Variables positively correlating with a self-report of stalking, including a prior history of stalking others, a history of assault, alcohol abuse, and living alone. Identified several variables that differentiated stalking from non-stalking cases: prior surveillance the incident occurring in an open/public place, less perception of victim provocation, the victim being strangled or choked, and a prior history of stalking.	Study quality score: 57% Study quality category: Moderate
17 D	Stalking and Intimate	McFarlane et al. (1999)	Victim sample (n=208)	Quantitative: Observational study	Investigated the incidence of serious violence to	A statistically significant association existed between intimate partner	Study quality score: 65% Study quality category: Moderate

Partner Femicide	USA, Published	Forensic/c linical setting Evaluation of police records. 141 femicide and 65 attempted femicide incidents Retrospect ive sample	Method of data collection: survey/intervie w & psychometrics Measures: 18 item stalking inventory and personal interviews with proxy informants and victims. Used the first 6 items developed by Tjaden & Thoennes (1998) violence and threats of violence against women survey. Twelve items included from Sheridan (1998) HARASS instrument.	determine risk factors for actual and attempted intimate partner femicide. To determine frequency and type of stalking that preceded attempted and actual femicide	physical assault and stalking for femicide victims as well as attempted femicide victims. Stalking is revealed to be a correlate of lethal and near lethal violence against women, coupled with physical assault and is significantly associated with murder and attempted murder. Stalking should be considered a risk factor for femicide.
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				Form of analysis Chi-square tests			
18 D	Violence and the prior victim-stalker relationship	Sheridan & Davis (2001) UK, Published	Victim focus Self-report (n= 87) 49% of sample (47 victims) were ex partners of the victim. Community setting Convenience sample	Quantitative Observational study Descriptive study – questionnaire Retrospective design Form of analysis: Chi-Square	To compare the frequency of violent acts perpetrated by ex-intimate, acquaintance and stranger stalkers	Ex-intimates were most aggressive and most intrusive, most likely to threaten and assault third parties as well as the principal victim.	Study quality score: 54% Study quality category: Moderate
19 H	Stalking in the Context of Intimate Partner Abuse: In the	Melton (2007b) Published, USA	Victim focus (n=21) Community setting	Qualitative Explores stalking in the context of intimate partner abuse (IPA)	Examined victims' perceived motivations for perpetrators who stalked in the context of	Control and anger were often perceived motivations for stalking. Victims also commonly felt that stalking was used to scare them and/or get	Study quality score: 61% Study quality category: Moderate

	victims' words		Method of data collection: Interviews		intimate partner abuse.	them to re-establish the relationship.	
			Convenience sampling				
20 H	Post-Relationship Stalking: The Experience of Victims With and Without History of Partner Abuse	Ferreira & Matos (2013) Portugal, Published	Victim sample Community setting (n=107) Sample women stalked by ex-intimates Comparative group used: Victims with and without a prior history of IPV.	Quantitative: Observational study Retrospective cohort design Data collection method: On-line survey Measures: Partner violence inventory – Part B Version 3; Machado et al 2006 & The Stalking Behaviour Inventory – Version 2 (SBI-2;	To explore the experience of victims and analyse the differences between post-relationship stalking victims with and without history of partner abuse.	Victims who were targets of past violence suffered a more serious post-relationship stalking campaign. Majority of participants reported they had been targets of violence during the former relationship with the stalker. 85% reported experiencing abuse during the prior relationship.	Study quality score: 70% Study quality category: High

			Convenience sample	Grangeia et al (2008)	Form of analysis: Parametric tests		
21	Intimate partner stalking and femicide: Urgent implications for women's safety	McFarlane et al. (2002) USA, Published	Victim sample (n=821) Sample victims of attempted or actual femicide. 263 femicides and 174 attempted femicides. Data part of a multi-city study to determine the risk factors of actual and attempted intimate	Quantitative: Case control study Data collection methods: Interviews and Stalking and Threatening Behaviours Inventory. Form of analysis: Logistic regressions	Investigated the incidence of serious violence in retrospective relationship. Reports on the associations between IPS, threatening behaviors, and femicide in violent intimate relationships compared with an abused cohort. Also examine the extent to which specific stalking and threatening	Victims who were targets of past violence suffered a more serious post relationship stalking campaign. Women who reported the perpetrator followed or spied on them were more than twice as likely to become attempted/actual femicide victims. Conclusions are that certain stalking and threatening behaviours are strong risk factors for lethality.	Study quality score: 61% Study quality category: Moderate

			partner femicide			behaviors are a potential risk factor for femicide.	
			Control group				
22 H	The tactical face of stalking	Nicastro et al. (2000) USA, Published	Victim sample (n=55) Retrospect ive sample of stalking victims case files from Domestic Violence Unit Forensic setting	Quantitative Observational study Data collection methods: Archive/case file data Form of analysis: Analyses of variance and t- tests	To examine the demographic and case profile of stalkers, to explore the relational profile of stalking cases.	A history of violence was reported in the majority of case files and the presence of restraining order had a strong correlation with victimisation. 76% reported a history of IPV.	Study quality score: 52% Study quality category: Moderate

Table 3*Overarching themes and associated subthemes*

Theme Number	Overarching theme	Subtheme
1	Perpetrator demographics	1a) Age 1b) Educational attainment and employment status 1c) Race/ethnicity
2	Relationship history and dynamics	2a) Victim-perpetrator relationship 2b) Prior history of intimate partner violence
3	Perpetrator background factors	3a) Psychological and clinical characteristics 3b) History of substance misuse 3c) Past criminal history
4	Nature of stalking	4a) Onset of stalking: Motivation and triggers 4b) Pursuit tactics 4c) Threats and escalation

Figure 1: PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

