**Intimate partner violence, psychopathy, and recidivism: Do psychopathic traits
differentiate first-time offenders from repeated offenders?**

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This study was conducted at Psychology Research Centre (UID/PSI/01662/2013), University of Minho, and supported by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology and the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education through national funds and co-financed by FEDER through COMPETE2020 under the PT2020 Partnership Agreement (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-007653). The study was also supported by Grant SFRH/ BD/66110/2009 from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology awarded to the first author.

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Abstract

The current study analyzes the relation between psychopathic traits and the four facets of psychopathy (i.e., interpersonal, affective, lifestyle and antisocial) and general and intimate partner violence (IPV) recidivism. The Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) and the Marital Violence Inventory (IVC) were completed by a sample of 279 male perpetrators of IPV who were retrospectively classified as general repeated offenders versus general first-time offenders and IPV repeated-offenders versus IPV first-time offenders. Four separate binary logistic regression analyses were conducted controlling for age and criminal and abuse variables. PCL-R total scores and the antisocial facet were positively correlated with general repeated offenses, despite criminal history showing higher associations with general recidivism. For IPV repeated offenders, only criminal history and frequency of intimate violence were statistically significant. These results support the role of criminal history as an important variable for repeated offenses.

Keywords: intimate partner violence, PCL-R, psychopathic traits, facets of psychopathy, recidivism, first-time offenders

Word count: 11061

Introduction

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) refers to acts of physical violence (e.g., slapping, hitting, kicking, and beating), psychological abuse (e.g., insults, belittling, constant humiliation, intimidation), sexual violence (e.g., forced sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion), and/or controlling behaviours (e.g., isolating a person from family and friends; monitoring their movements) occurring in an intimate relationship (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozana, 2002). There is a growing recognition on the effects of IPV, which has a significant public health impact (WHO; 2013). Several studies highlighted its serious effects on direct and indirect victims (e.g., physical injury, mental health problems) and on society (e.g., costs of hospital care, mental health, incarceration; Ansara & Hindin, 2011; Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, & Garcia-Moreno, 2008; WHO, 2013).

Psychopathy has been identified in the literature as having an important role in the understanding of violence (Porter & Woodworth, 2007) and as being an important predictor of violence and general and violent recidivism (e.g., Kennealy, Skeem, Walters, & Camp, 2010; Leistico, Salekin, DeCoster, & Rogers, 2008; Walters, 2003; Walsh & Kosson, 2008). Research also revealed that psychopathic men tend to commit IPV (e.g., Boyle, O’Leary, Rosenbaum, & Hassett-Walker, 2008; Swogger, Walsh, & Kosson, 2007) and psychopathy is related to and predicts IPV (Cunha, Braga, & Gonçalves, 2018; Hervé, Vincent, Kropp, & Hare, 2001; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Marshall & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2010). This is not surprising given that psychopathy is defined by a combination of specific personality traits, characterized by interpersonal (e.g., grandiose, arrogant, and manipulative interpersonal style), affective (e.g., lacking in empathy, guilt, and remorse), and behavioural characteristics (e.g., irresponsible and impulsive lifestyle, and antisocial and criminal behaviour) (Hare,

2003; Neumann, Hare, & Newman, 2007). Acknowledging the role of psychopathy, the current study focuses on the link between psychopathy and general and violent recidivism, in particular IPV recidivism, contributing to and extending previous work.

Psychopathic traits among IPV perpetrators

Research focused in the identification of typologies of IPV perpetrators hypothesized the identification of three types: the family only, being those who perpetrate violence only within the family context; the borderline/dysphoric, being those who exhibit personality disorder features; and the generally violent/antisocial, being those who commit intra- and extra-familial violent acts (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). This last type of IPV perpetrator is more likely to engage in more severe forms of violence, usually motivated by a need for control (Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, Rehman, & Stuart, 2000). Several studies suggested similarities between the generally violent/antisocial subtype and the core features of psychopathy (Huss & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2000; Spidel et al., 2007; Swogger et al., 2007). Huss and Langhinrichsen-Rohling (2000) highlighted overlapping characteristics between psychopaths and generally violent/antisocial perpetrators: they share a pattern of widespread violence, and both are likely to have higher levels of alcohol and drug dependence. Psychopaths and generally violent/antisocial perpetrators reveal similarities in their interpersonal and affective characteristics, such as manipulation, lack of remorse and insensitivity, and both tend to use instrumental violence (Spidel et al., 2007). Psychopaths (e.g., Hare, 2003; Hemphill, Hare, & Wong, 1998). Generally, violent/antisocial perpetrators (e.g., Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994) are described as particularly dangerous and resistant to treatment. Nonetheless, literature suggests that some of these characteristics may also be present in the other two groups of perpetrators

(i.e. family only and borderline/dysphoric). For example, Theobald, Farrington, Coid, and Piquero (2015) concluded that although generally violent/antisocial perpetrators had the highest mean scores on all facets of the PCL:SV the other type of perpetrators may also present some psychopathic traits. The authors concluded that generally violent/antisocial perpetrators might be distinguished from those who only are involved in IPV at home but only in degree and not in type.

Research revealed that men with psychopathic traits tend to commit a disproportional amount of IPV (Felson & Lane, 2010; Huss & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006; Klein & Tobin, 2008; Swogger et al., 2007), being 1.6 times more likely to commit IPV than non-psychopathic offenders (Hervé et al., 2001). In addition, the prevalence of psychopathy among IPV perpetrators ranges from 15% to 30% (e.g., Gottman et al., 1995; Huss & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2000), which has been found to be related to physical aggression and sexual abuse against intimate partners (e.g., Colins, Andershed, & Pardini, 2016; Czar, Daklen, Bullock, & Nicholson, 2011; Mager, Bressin, & Verona, 2014; Muñoz, Khan, & Cordwell, 2011). A study conducted by Cunha et al. (2018) revealed that PCL-R total score was a significant predictor of IPV frequency, above and beyond criminal variables (e.g., previous convictions for IPV, previous convictions for crimes other than IPV and number of incarcerations). Mager et al. (2014), using PCL:SV, examined the moderating role of gender in the relationship between psychopathy factors and perpetration of IPV. The authors found that psychopathy exacerbates IPV perpetration in men (Mager et al., 2014). In a recent study, Iyican and Babcock (2019), used the Psychopathic Personality Inventory (PPI) to explore the relationship between two factors of psychopathy and IPV perpetration in a sample of 114 couples. The authors concluded that individuals high in PPI-I (Fearlessness-Dominance Factor, that assesses the affective-interpersonal traits of

psychopathy) may be at higher risk of IPV perpetration compared to those high in PPI-II (Impulsive-Antisociality Factor, assesses the behavioral-lifestyle traits of psychopathy). Other studies revealed that IPV perpetrators are characterized by greater callousness and poorer empathy than other offenders and that they presented emotional deficits (e.g., lack of empathy and remorse, deficient emotional expression; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2000; Umberson, Anderson, Williams, & Chen, 2003). Echeburúa and Fernández-Montalvo (2007), in a study evaluating 162 perpetrators sentenced for serious offense against their intimate partner, found that psychopathic aggressors were younger, more impulsive and suspicious, less empathetic and with lower self-esteem than non-psychopathic batterer. Stanford, Houston, and Baldrige (2008), in a sample of 113 men convicted for domestic violence, found that IPV perpetrators whose violence was classified as premeditated scored higher on psychopathic traits.

Psychopathy and IPV recidivism

In criminology, most definitions of recidivism are based on their etymological origins - that is, receding or relapsing. Therefore, criminal recidivism has been commonly described as an individual's relapse into criminal behaviour after receiving correctional intervention (Loeber, Jennings, Ahonen, Piquero, & Farrington, 2017; Zara & Farrington, 2016).

Psychopathy is an important predictor of criminal behavior in general, and particularly of criminal violence (e.g., Hare, 2003; Neuman & Hare, 2008; Porter & Woodworth, 2007; Skeem & Cooke, 2010; Walsh & Walsh, 2006), different forms of aggression (Cima & Raine, 2009), violence in community (Vitacco, Neumann et al., 2005) and future violence and/or general and violent recidivism (e.g., Kennealy et al., 2010; Walters, 2003; Walters & Heilbrun, 2010; see Reidy & Kearns, 2017 for a

review). Psychopathy has also been increasingly applied as a predictor of dangerousness (DeMatteo & Edens, 2006; Walsh & Walsh, 2006) and violence (e.g., Leistico et al., 2008). Offenders with psychopathic traits have shown early criminal behavior and greater criminal versatility (Roberts & Coid, 2007; Tuente, de Vogel, & Stam, 2014). These were also the ones responsible for more serious forms of crime (Coid & Yang, 2011; Porter, Woodworth, Earle, Drugge & Boer, 2003), and had particularly high rates of criminal recidivism (Edens, Campbell, & Weir, 2007; Hare, 2003; Walters, 2003). Research using data from different nations has shown that psychopathic characteristics are associated with more extensive, serious and violent criminal careers (Corrado, McCuish, Hart, & DeLisi, 2015; Kahn, Byrd, & Pardini, 2013; Vaughn, Howard, & DeLisi, 2008).

Similarly to general offenders, psychopathy scores also have been reported as an important contributing factor for the rate and severity of IPV recidivism (Hilton, Harris, & Rice, 2001; Hilton, Harris, Rice, Houghton, & Eke, 2008; Mager et al., 2014; Theobald et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2010). Grann and Wedin (2002), in a sample of 88 male IPV perpetrators referred for court-ordered forensic evaluations, found that higher scores on PCL-R positively predicted recidivism among individuals convicted of spousal assault. Hilton et al. (2008), in a sample of 649 men with police record for wife assault, found that PCL-R improved prediction of recidivism, occurrence, frequency, severity, injury, and charges over other actuarial risk assessment tools for IPV. A study conducted by Rock, Selbom, Ben-Porath, and Salekin (2013) that investigated the association between psychopathy and successful treatment completion and reoffending in 483 convicted male IPV perpetrators undergoing treatment revealed that overall psychopathy was positively associated with treatment failure and recidivism at 1-year follow-up. Thus, the risk of violent recidivism against women seems to be increased by

the diagnosis of psychopathy in perpetrators (Danielson, Moffit, Caspi & Silva, 1998). In fact, literature revealed that psychopathy leads to the onset of violent and cruel conducts (Echeburúa & Amor, 2010; Echeburúa, Amor, & Corral, 2009) and is associated with a higher frequency and severity of violence (e.g. Grann & Wedin, 2002).

Despite the findings linking psychopathy with violent recidivism, other studies showed contradictory findings (e.g., Camp, Skeem, Barchard, Lilienfeld, & Poytress, 2012; Colins et al., 2016; Edens, Poythress, Lilienfeld, Patrick, & Test, 2008). The same seems to happen to what concerns IPV recidivism. For example, a study conducted by Colins et al. (2016) found that psychopathic traits did not significantly contribute to the prediction of future violence against intimate partners. Other studies revealed that the relationship between psychopathy and IPV may be due to the overlap with other risk factors, such as borderline personality disorders (e.g., Weinstein, Gleason, & Oltmanns, 2012) or substance use (e.g., Kraanen, Vedel, Scholing, & Emmelkamp, 2014), since these conditions are also linked to psychopathy (e.g., Fanti, 2013; Howard, McCarthy, Huband, & Duggan, 2013).

Psychopathic facets and IPV recidivism

Although previous studies have suggested a relation between psychopathy and general and violent recidivism, the vast majority of research has focused on psychopathy as a unitary construct. Nonetheless, psychometric work has proposed that psychopathy can be conceptualized as a multidimensional construct (e.g., Benning, Patrick, Hicks, Blonigen, & Krueger, 2003; Hare, 2003). Initial research (Hare, 1991) established that this measure captures two distinct factors: interpersonal–affective factor (factor 1); and lifestyle–antisocial factor (factor 2). In a posterior formulation, Hare (2003) proposed a

two-factor four-facet hierarchical model, representing the interpersonal, affective, lifestyle, and antisocial features of the disorder.

Research has found that some traits of psychopathy are more useful than others for the prediction of violent recidivism (Schmidt et al., 2011) and each factor of psychopathy appears to exhibit a distinct association with violent behavior (Hare, 2003; Vitacco, Neumann & Jackson, 2005). For example, some studies have reported that factor 1 (e.g., interpersonal-affective factor) has a greater predictive power of violence and recidivism (e.g., Walsh & Kosson, 2008), while others have concluded that factor 2 (e.g., antisocial-lifestyle factor) is more associated with violent recidivism than factor 1 (e.g., Kennealy et al., 2010; Walters, 2003).

More recent studies focused on the PCL-R four-factor model revealed that the antisocial facet has been a significant contributor to violent recidivism, delinquency, impulsive behavior and criminal versatility (Sohn, Lyons, Menard, & Lee, 2017; Wallinius, Nilsson, Hofvander, Anckarsäter, & Stålenheim, 2012; Walters, Knight, Grann, & Dahle, 2008). Research revealed that antisocial facet displays incremental validity over the interpersonal, affective and lifestyle facets (Walters, 2012; Walters & Heilbrun, 2010; Walters et al., 2008). A meta-analysis, exploring the relationship between psychopathy and instrumental and reactive violence, found that the interpersonal facet is more important for instrumental violence and lifestyle factor is more significant for reactive violence (Blais, Solodukhin, & Forth, 2014). Studies with juveniles also showed that recidivism was mainly predicted by the antisocial factor, rather than interpersonal or affective (Corrado, Vincent, Hart, & Cohen, 2004; Grettton, McBride, Hare, O'shaughnessy, & Kumba, 2001; Vincent, Odgers, McCormick, & Corrado, 2008). These results lead to question the utility of the core features of psychopathy in predicting recidivism (Corrado et al., 2004; Walters, 2012).

Notwithstanding the increasing evidence linking psychopathy to IPV perpetration, few studies have examined the PCL-R factors/facets separately. For example, Mager et al. (2014), using the PCL: SV, analyzed the relationship between psychopathy and IPV perpetration in women and men. They found that, although both interpersonal–affective (factor 1) and lifestyle-antisocial (factor 2) factors were related to a higher frequency of IPV, the relationship between factor 1 and IPV was stronger in men than in women. A study conducted by Swogger et al. (2007), analyzing the four facets of PCL-R in a sample of antisocial IPV perpetrators in jail and other incarcerated offenders, revealed that IPV was associated with higher scores on the affective facet and relatively lower scores on the lifestyle facet. Another research using a sample of 483 convicted male IPV perpetrators undergoing treatment concluded that the facet of impulsive antisocial behaviour was positively related with treatment failure and recidivism at 1-year follow-up (Rock et al., 2013). Theobald et al. (2015), in a longitudinal study of males from community samples, found that the lifestyle component was the strongest independent predictor for IPV in general. For generally violent/antisocial perpetrators, both the affective and the lifestyle factors were strong independent predictors of IPV perpetration. A recent study conducted by Cunha et al. (2018) in a sample of male IPV perpetrators showed that, when analyzing the four facets of PCL-R, only the affective facet was positively correlated with IPV frequency.

Current study

Despite the increasing evidence from previous studies conducted in different cultural settings linking psychopathy to recidivism, few studies have explored the relationship between psychopathy and IPV recidivism, especially examining the PCL-R four factors separately. To our knowledge, this thematic has not been yet examined in the

Portuguese context. Importantly, most studies did not use PCL-R to assess psychopathy or PCL-R was scored solely based on institutional file information, which presents several limitations (e.g., the interpersonal-affective items are difficult to score without individuals' behaviour observation; institutional files are often unavailable or incomplete which may affect the reliability of PCL-R scoring; Cunha et al., 2018; Hare, 2003). Additionally, previous studies have included samples mainly from prison settings and from north America. Given the role of psychopathy in general and violent recidivism, a better understanding of such construct is needed to increase treatment effectiveness with the aim to prevent persistence of criminal behaviour in general and IPV, and to reduce severity of recidivism. Thus, the aim of this study was to analyze the relation between psychopathic traits and general and IPV recidivism in male perpetrators of crimes in intimacy; specifically, we aimed to assess whether interpersonal, affective, lifestyle antisocial facets of psychopathy, as conceptualized by Hare (2003), are related to general and IPV recidivism after controlling for age, juvenile delinquency, number of previous incarcerations, intimate crime severity and frequency. Although recent data demonstrate that IPV is mainly mutual or bidirectional (e.g., Capaldi et al., 2012; Costa et al., 2015), in this study only male perpetrators were included since they were more likely to be arrested and convicted for IPV than women (Swan et al., 2008). This is also true for Portugal, where about 96% of the condemned for IPV were male (Directorate-General for Justice Policy-DGPJ, 2020) and 82% of the IPV complains were toward men (Internal Security System, 2020). We also aimed to extend previous literature by using PCL-R, scored based both on interviews and file information of an institutional and noninstitutional sample of IPV perpetrators, and by analyzing PCL-R total scores and PCL-R four-facet scores.

Materials and method

Participants

Participants were selected from a non-random convenience sample, using the following inclusion criteria: a) being male; b) being more than 18 years old; c) being involved in an heterosexual intimate relationship; d) being currently or formerly engaged in an intimate relationship with the victim; e) being convicted for IPV (i.e., physical, psychological, and/or sexual violence); f) having sufficient intellectual and communicative skills to give answers to the interview and the instruments adopted.

The sample included 279 perpetrators of IPV against an intimate partner or ex-partner. Among them, 141 (50.5%) were in correctional facilities and 138 (49.5%) were in the community with suspended prison sentences or provisional suspension processes.

The participants' age was, in average, 44.29 years ($SD = 11.31$), and ranged between 22 and 81 years old, 94.6% ($n = 264$), and all were Caucasian and 97.8% ($n = 273$) and Portuguese. More than half of the offenders concluded the sixth grade or less ($n = 190$; 68.1%) and belong to a low socioeconomic status (SES; $n = 151$; 54.1%). The most part of the participants were married or cohabiting with the victim ($n = 118$; 42.3%). The participants' average number of previous incarcerations were .69 ($SD = 1.03$) and ranged from 0 to 6. Moreover, almost three quarters of the participants (72.8%; $n = 203$) committed a less severe crime against the intimate partner (i.e. domestic violence) and more than half of the participants had no history of juvenile delinquency (66.3%; $n = 185$).

Instruments

The *Psychopathy Checklist-Revised* (PCL-R; Hare, 1991, 2003) is a 20-item checklist that uses a semi structured interview, case history information, and specific scoring

criteria to rate each item on a 3-point scale (0 = *not applied*, 1 = *applied somewhat*, 2 = *fully applied*). The sum varies between 0 and 40. PCL-R has satisfactory internal consistency (Hare & Neumann, 2005). An initial exploratory factorial analysis revealed the existence of two correlated dimensions: Factor 1 (clinical) and Factor 2 (antisocial). Subsequently, Hare sustained the existence of four facets: interpersonal, affective, lifestyle, and antisocial (Hare, 2003; Hare & Neumann, 2005), both through exploratory and confirmatory analyses. In the current study, we used the Portuguese version of the PCL-R (Gonçalves, 1999), which reveals good psychometric properties (.84 alpha for total scores). In the present sample, the internal consistency for four-facet was .78 for interpersonal facet, .75 for affective facet, .62 for lifestyle facet, .61 for antisocial facet, and .82 for PCL-R total score.

The *Marital Violence Inventory* (IVC; Machado, Gonçalves, & Matos, 2007) is a self-report instrument composed by 21 items (e.g., slapping, kicking, punching, insult, threaten) that assesses violence in intimate relationships (i.e., marital relationships, cohabitation). The scale is rated on a scale of 3 points (0 = *never*, 1 = *once*, 2 = *more than once*), measuring two dimensions (physical and psychological violence) and a total score of the frequency of violence (the higher the score the higher the frequency of violence). The internal consistency for the current study was .84 for physical violence, .66 for psychological violence, and .85 for the total scale.

A questionnaire was developed to assess the sociodemographic and criminal characteristics of the participants. It includes questions about participants' age, ethnic group, education level, socioeconomic status and nationality, severity of the crime perpetrated against the intimate partner, number of prior imprisonments and history of juvenile delinquency. Perpetrators' individual files were fully analyzed to obtain/complete information about criminal record and antisocial history (e.g., previous

convictions for assault, number of imprisonments, history of juvenile delinquency, number of prior imprisonments). Official criminal recidivism was defined as any previous conviction and was obtained from the analysis of perpetrators' individual files. Participants with at least one prior conviction (that is, any conviction, not necessarily an incarceration) were considered general repeated offenders and perpetrators with no previous convictions were considered first-time offenders. Individuals were also divided into IPV repeated offenders if they had at least one prior conviction for domestic violence (i.e., incarceration, suspended sentence, community service) and IPV first-time offenders if they had no previous convictions for domestic violence.

Procedures

Authorization to access the institutionalized individuals was obtained from the General Directorate of Reintegration and Prison Services–Ministry of Justice (DGRSP-MJ). Data were collected in eight national prisons. Data concerning noninstitutionalized individuals were collected through probation services, child protection services, and family services, located in the north of Portugal, after previous authorization from those institutions.

All participants were informed about the nature of the study, were asked to voluntarily participate in the study, and sign an informed consent. The interviews and self-report questionnaires were administered individually in an appropriate setting. Institutional files were also consulted to complement the information obtained (e.g., prior criminal history) and to score PCL-R.

Ethic procedures concerning privacy and data protection established by the Portuguese legislation were followed.

Data analysis

The data analyses were conducted using the SPSS Version 24. Descriptive statistics were performed using measures of central and dispersion tendency to describe participants. T-tests, Mann-Whitney tests and chi-square tests were performed to compare groups in demographic and criminal variables. Pearson and point biserial correlations were used to analyze the correlations between the variables included in the present study. Two binary logistic regressions were used to test associations between the predictive variables (PCL-R total score and PCL-R facets) and the dependent variable (recidivism status). A p value of $< .05$ was used as an indicator of statistical significance (Aron, Coups, & Aron, 2013).

Results

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for PCL-R total scores and facets' scores and for IVC total scores. Analyzing the IVC total scores, participants presented an average of 12.55 (SD = 7.45) in a possible maximum of 42. The mean average of PCL-R total scores was 11.53 (SD = 6.09). In the facets of PCL-R, results revealed that participants presented higher scores on affective facet and on lifestyle facet. The antisocial facet presented the lowest score.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Correlations between the main variables used in the study are presented in Table 2. Results showed positive statistically significant correlations between PCL-R total scores and all the variables, except for crime severity, between juvenile delinquency and all the variables, except for PCL-R interpersonal facet and number of prior

imprisonments, between PCL-R interpersonal facet and affective and lifestyle facets, between PCL-R affective facet and lifestyle and antisocial facets, between PCL-R lifestyle facet and antisocial facet, between PCL-R antisocial facet and number of prior imprisonments and between number of prior imprisonments and IPV frequency and crime severity. On the contrary, we found a negative statistically significant correlation between crime severity and IPV frequency.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

General recidivism

About 55.6% ($n = 155$) of the individuals were first-time offenders in any criminal behaviour and 44.4% ($n = 124$) of the participants were repeated offenders. As presented in Table 3, statistically significant differences between repeated offenders and first-time offenders were found in PCL-R total scores, $t(249) = -5.423, p < .001$, affective facet, $t(249) = -3.420, p = .001$, lifestyle facet, $t(249) = -3.380, p = .001$, and antisocial facet, $t(249) = -6.662, p < .001$.

[INSERT TABLE 3]

Table 4 displays two binary logistic regression coefficients for general recidivism status. The PCL-R total scores and PCL-R facets are entered as predictors in two independent models after controlling for IPV frequency, severity of IPV (i.e., domestic violence vs. murder or attempt murder), number of previous incarcerations and juvenile delinquency because these are particularly important variables either in terms of criminal recidivism (e.g., Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Bonta, Law, & Hanson, 1998; Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996; Katsiyannis, Whitford, Zhang, & Gage, 2018) or in terms of offending definition (Whitten, McGee, Homel, Farrington, & Ttofi,

2017). Age was also included as a control variable because: a) previous research had found that the odds of recidivism tend to decrease with age (e.g., Rakes, Prost, & Tripodi, 2018); since recidivism was assessed retrospectively, older individuals, as they live longer and healthier lives, may also commit an increasing number of criminal offenses (Blowers, 2015); different studies showed that overall psychopathy declines with age (e.g., Huchzermeir et al., 2008; Gill & Criro, 2012); and, studies revealed that there are differential levels of stability over the years across psychopathy facets (Blonigen, Hicks, Krueger, Patrick, & Iacono, 2006; Lynam, Caspi, Moffitt, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2007). In the first and second models the variables included in the first step produced a statistically significant model, $\chi^2(5) = 127.672, p < .001$. The role of such variables produced a pseudo- R^2 between 40% (Cox & Snell) and 53.3% (Nagelkerke), indicating that the model accurately classified 78.8% of the cases.

When PCL-R total score (Model 1) was added to this analysis, the model was also statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 10.859, p = .001$, as was the final model, $\chi^2(6) = 138.531, p < .001$. The contribution of this variable produced a pseudo- R^2 between 42.5% (Cox & Snell) and 56.7% (Nagelkerke), which indicates that the model accurately classified 79.2% of the cases. A separate analysis of the variables used for the prediction of the recidivism status revealed that the number of previous imprisonments (OR = 5.800), juvenile delinquency (OR = 8.138) and PCL-R total score (OR = 1.110) had a significant contribution to the model. Although PCL-R is related to general recidivism, criminal variables demonstrated the strongest associations.

When PCL-R facets (Model 2) were included in the analysis, the model was also statistically significant, $\chi^2(4) = 19.031, p = .001$, as was the final model, $\chi^2(9) = 146.703, p < .001$. This set of variables made a contribution between 44.4% (Cox & Snell) and 59.2% (Nagelkerke), accurately classifying 79.6% of the cases. Analyzing

individually the variables, number of previous imprisonments (OR = 7.132), history of juvenile delinquency (OR = 4.459) and PCL-R antisocial facet (OR = 1.712) were positively related with recidivism.

[INSERT HERE TABLE 4]

IPV recidivism

Among participants, 38% (n = 106) were repeated offenders in IPV and 62% (n = 173) were IPV first-time offenders. As displayed in table 5, there were statistically significant differences between IPV repeated and first-time offenders in PCL-R total scores, $t(249) = -3.097$, $p = .002$, and in antisocial facet, $t(249) = -3.854$, $p < .001$.

[INSERT HERE TABLE 5]

Table 6 presents two binary logistic regression coefficients for IPV recidivism status. Again, PCL-R total scores and PCL-R facets are entered as predictors in two independent models after controlling for IPV frequency, severity of IPV (i.e., domestic violence vs. murder or attempt murder), number of previous incarcerations and juvenile delinquency because these are particularly important variables for IPV recidivism (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005; Hanson & Wallace-Capretta, 2004; Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, & Tritt, 2004). Age was also included as a control variable. Along with the reasons already mentioned for the binary logistic regression for general recidivism, age was included since research found a decrease in IPV with age (e.g., Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2015; Kim, Laurent, Capaldi, & Feingold, 2008; Verbruggen, Maxwell, & Robinson, 2020).

In both models, the variables included in the first step produced a statistically significant model, $\chi^2(5) = 140.083, p < .001$. The role of such variables produced a pseudo- R^2 between 42.9% (Cox & Snell) and 57.6% (Nagelkerke), revealing that the model accurately classified 82.8% of the cases.

When PCL-R total score (Model 1) was included in the analysis the model was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = .002, p = .965$, but the final model was, $\chi^2(6) = 140.085, p < .001$. The contribution of this variable produced a pseudo- R^2 between 42.9% (Cox & Snell) and 57.6% (Nagelkerke), which indicates that the model accurately classified 82.8% of the cases. The analysis of the variables included in the prediction of IPV recidivism revealed that the number of previous imprisonments (OR = 5.872), juvenile delinquency (OR = 6.573) and IPV frequency (OR = 1.085) made a significant contribution to the model. PCL-R scores were not correlated with IPV recidivism.

After including PCL-R facets (Model 2), the model did not achieve statistical significance, $\chi^2(4) = 2.109, p = .716$; however, the final model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(8) = 142.192, p < .001$. These variables made a contribution between 43.4% (Cox & Snell) and 58.3% (Nagelkerke), accurately classifying 82.0% of the cases. The number of previous imprisonments (OR = 5.833), history of juvenile delinquency (OR = 7.261) and IPV frequency (OR = 1.086) were positively related with recidivism. Again, PCL-R facets were not related with IPV recidivism.

[INSERT HERE TABLE 6]

Discussion

The present study aimed to increase our understanding on the relationship between psychopathy and general and IPV recidivism in a sample of male perpetrators of IPV; specifically, whether interpersonal, affective, lifestyle antisocial facets of psychopathy as conceptualized by Hare (2003) are related to general and IPV recidivism. This study extends previous research on psychopathy and IPV since it uses PCL-R, scored based on both interview and file information, includes an institutionalized and non-institutionalized sample of IPV perpetrators and is, as far as we know, the first study conducted in Portugal that explores the relationship between psychopathy and recidivism among IPV perpetrators.

The results revealed that the total score on PCL-R was significantly related with general recidivism. These results are in accordance with previous studies conducted among samples with different cultural backgrounds that point to a relationship between psychopathy (e.g., Douglas, Vincent, & Edens, 2006; Leistico et al., 2008; Kennealy et al., 2010; Walters, 2003) and criminal variables and general recidivism (e.g., Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Baillargeon, Binswanger, Penn, Williams, & Murray, 2009; Bonta et al., 1998; Gendreau et al., 1996; Katsiyannis et al., 2018; Larney, & Martire, 2010). The relationship between psychopathy and general recidivism is not surprising given that psychopathy is characterized by traits that exacerbate violence and antisocial risk, including lack of remorse, manipulateness, shallow emotion, callousness, and persistent violation of social norms (e.g., Hare, 1991, 2003). Literature also refers that psychopathy fosters the onset of violent and cruel conducts (Echeburúa & Amor, 2010; Echeburúa, Amor et al., 2009) and is related with a higher frequency and severity of violence (e.g., Grann & Wedin, 2002; Hilton et al., 2001; Hilton et al., 2008). However, although PCL-R total scores are related to general recidivism, criminal variables seem to present a higher association with recidivism than psychopathy itself. In fact, literature

on risk factors for recidivism identify eight major predictors of criminal behavior referred as “central eight” risk/needs factors (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006). The “central eight” are antisocial personality pattern, pro-criminal attitudes, social support for crime, substance abuse, problematic family/marital relationships, problems at school/work, lack of involvement in prosocial recreational activities and criminal history. These risk factors are relatively consensual and are relevant for the prediction and prevention of criminal behavior in general. Our results confirm the importance of such factors, especially to what regards criminal history (although this risk factor is a static one). Meta-analyses have also identified criminal variable such as prior offenses, incarcerations, and juvenile antisocial behaviors as important predictors of future criminal behaviors (e.g., Gendreau et al., 1996; Pratt & Cullen, 2005).

However, our results do reveal some specificities that may reflect cultural differences. The participants of our study obtained particularly low scores on the PCL-R compared to those found in other samples of general offenders (e.g., Gonçalves, 1999; Hare, 1991, 2003) and IPV perpetrators (e.g., Grann & Wedin, 2002; Swogger et al., 2007). This suggest some differences in the manifestation of psychopathy across cultural settings. For that reason, Cooke and coworkers (Cooke & Michie, 1999; Cooke et al., 2005) suggested the use of a lower PCL-R cutoff for European settings to diagnose psychopathy, arguing cultural-related processes that influence the expression of psychopathic characteristics. When PCL-R four-facet scores were included in the prediction model of general recidivism, only the antisocial facet, the number of previous convictions and history of juvenile delinquency were significant, which presented higher associations than antisocial facet. These results are consistent with those of other studies that link antisocial facet of psychopathy to general recidivism (e.g., Skeem,

Miller, Mulvey, Tiemann, & Monahan, 2005; Sohn et al., 2017; Wallinius et al., 2012) and that confirm the incremental validity of antisocial facet over the interpersonal, affective and lifestyle facets (Walters, 2012; Walters & Heilbrun, 2010; Walters et al., 2008). In fact, evidence suggest that the relationship between the PCL-R total score and future criminality is largely driven by the antisocial dimension (Kennealy et al., 2010; Walters et al., 2008).

Nonetheless, in our study, criminal variables, especially criminal history, had stronger associations with general recidivism than antisocial facet. Again, this result is not surprising since literature, as previously referred, shows that criminal history is significantly related to recidivism (e.g., Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Baillargeon et al., 2009; Gendreau et al., 1996; Katsiyannis et al., 2018; Larney, & Martire, 2010). Moreover, research revealed a significant relation between psychopathy and crime perpetration (e.g., Echeburúa & Fernández-Montalvo, 2007; Kiehl & Hoffman, 2011). Overall, these results allow to corroborate prior work showing that the first three facets of psychopathy contributed minimally to predictions of future criminality beyond what could be achieved with the antisocial dimension (e.g., Walsh & Kosson, 2008) and criminal history. These results also gave some support to behavior-based conceptualizations of psychopathy, which emphasize a chronic history of antisocial behavior and seem to reflect the diagnoses of antisocial personality disorder (Robins, 1978). Nonetheless, psychopathy antisocial facet might present some overlap with criminal history, since this dimension consists of items assessing a history of early emerging and persistent criminal behaviour. This may also explain why criminal history is significantly related to general recidivism in our sample.

Results from this study showed that neither psychopathy total scores nor psychopathy facets were associated with IPV recidivism. Although a vast literature has

reported associations between psychopathy and violent recidivism (e.g., Kennealy et al., 2010; Walters, 2003; Walters & Heilbrun, 2010), other studies showed contradictory findings (e.g., Camp et al., 2012; Colins et al., 2016; Edens et al., 2008). Despite this, risk factors related to criminal history (i.e., number of previous imprisonments and history of juvenile delinquency) and abuse (i.e., frequency of intimate partner violence) are significantly associated with IPV recidivism, which is consistent with previous studies on IPV risk (e.g., Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005; Hanson & Wallace-Capretta, 2004; Stith et al., 2004). These results suggest that, to what concerns IPV recidivism, perhaps risk factors other than psychopathy might have a higher predictive power than psychopathy. Along with criminal history and frequency of abuse, as found in our study, literature revealed that family factors (e.g., having a criminal father, a disrupted family, poor supervision and relationship problems with parents), individual factors (e.g., unpopularity, daring, impulsivity, aggressiveness and low verbal IQ) and contextual factors (e.g., low socio-economic status, financial issues, and other family issues) may be more pertinent (Theobald & Farrington, 2012; Theobald et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, other factors could explain our results. As previously mentioned, participants from our study obtained particularly low scores on the PCL-R, which might suggest some differences in the manifestation of psychopathy across cultural settings. This might limit the ability to identify any relationships that would exist between the variables. Another possible explanation for the different findings in previous studies about the relation between psychopathy and recidivism might be due to differences in the scoring procedures of the instruments. In the present study, PCL-R was coded using both file information and clinical interview data. Previous studies have indicated that the PCL-R sum scores only based on files are substantially lower than the sum scores derived by using interview and file information together (Bolt, Hare, Vitale, &

Newman, 2004). Hare (2003) also refers that the affective and interpersonal facets of psychopathy require interview data for a reliable assessment. Maybe the use of clinical interview data in the present study led to higher scorings of the affective and interpersonal facets, which could explain to some extent the absence of relation between psychopathy and IPV recidivism. At last, the definition of recidivism in our study (e.g., retrospectively assessed; no specified observation period for recidivism) may also affect and explain our results.

Although psychopathy and its facets were significantly related to general recidivism and previous studies found psychopathy as an important predictor of IPV (e.g., Cunha et al., 2018), and despite the methodological limitations of the present study, our results lead us to reflect on the relationship between psychopathy and recidivism (general and violent) among IPV perpetrators. First, the association between psychopathy and general recidivism is mainly accounted for by behavioural features and not interpersonal and affective ones, as found in previous studies (e.g., Edens et al., 2007; Kennealy et al., 2010). Second, criminal history, such as prior imprisonments and history of juvenile delinquency, presents higher correlations with general recidivism than psychopathy. Third, psychopathy was not related to IPV recidivism, while prior criminal history and the frequency of abuse against the intimate partner were. In fact, prior antisocial behaviour and past history of abuse may be the best indicators for identifying who is at risk of recidivism, both in general antisocial behaviors and in IPV (Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrun, 2001) even beyond psychopathic personality traits. In fact, some studies found an overlap between general crime and IPV perpetration, and IPV is often part of a broader pattern of antisocial behavior (Verbruggen et al., 2020). Thus, it is recommended that when predicting antisocial behaviors, including IPV, other risk and protective factors should be considered and the predictions based on the PCL measures

should be interpreted with caution (Corrado, Vincent, Hart, & Cohen, 2004; Leistico et al., 2008). Nonetheless, psychopathy and antisocial facet of psychopathy still presents significant associations with general recidivism among IPV perpetrators and criminal history is – at least to some extent – linked to psychopathy and to antisocial features of psychopathy, which reveled significant associations with IPV recidivism.

These results allow us to conclude about the importance of including accurate and comprehensive risk assessment tools in primary care and victim support services in order to provide immediate and systematic responses to battered women (Wormer & Roberts, 2008). Those tools should include the main risk factors both for general and IPV recidivism, especially those related with prior criminal history and frequency of abuse. Since psychopathic traits are related to prior history of violence, and prior history of violence is an important predictor of IPV and other severe forms of violence (e.g., Abrunhosa, Castro-Rodrigues, Cruz, Gonçalves, & Cunha, 2020; Spencer & Stith, 2018; Stith et al., 2004), risk assessment tools should also include this construct. One example of risk assessment tool that assesses that critical risk factors is the Domestic Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (DVRAG), which comprises the original ODARA (Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment) items (but scored continuously) combined with the PCL-R (Hilton et al., 2008). Risk assessment and risk screening tools may also be relevant for decision-makers given that identifying the most important risk factors present in a given case allow to make recommendations for treatment, management and risk reduction (e.g., Lavoie, Guy, & Douglas, 2009). Only accurate risk assessments will allow the development of effective risk management measures, such as safety plans for the victims and adequately monitoring, supervising, and treating the offender, aimed to protect the victim and prevent the occurrence of new situations of victimization (e.g., Kropp, 2009).

Despite the significant contributions of the present study, some limitations should be mentioned. First, our sample was entirely composed by men, all Caucasian. It is not clear how the findings extend to other cultures or ethnicities, and whether they are applicable to female offenders. A more ethnical diverse sample as well as the inclusion of women is recommended and may allow the comparisons between groups. Research suggests significant ethnical and gender differences both in IPV and psychopathy (e.g., Field & Caetano, 2004; Nicholls, Ogloff, Brink, & Spidel, 2005; Skeem, Edens, Camp, & Colwell, 2004). Second, recidivism was assessed as a dichotomous variable and the use of more nuanced measures of recidivism (e.g., frequency of re-arrest; time to re-arrest) should be considered. In fact, criminal variables, such as the number and variety of prior offenses (e.g., Andrews & Bonta, 2010) or the length of time between offenses (e.g., Flores, Holsinger, Lowerkamp, & Cohen, 2016) are identified as important predictors of criminal recidivism. Thus, individuals with a lower number and variety of offenses and with shorter periods of time between offenses might represent different types of offenders. Third, recidivism (although based on official data) was assessed retrospectively, meaning that individuals were classified as first-time offenders or repeated offenders based on their criminal history. Psychopathy was also assessed retrospectively. Although psychopathy is considered a relatively stable condition (e.g., Lynam, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2008), a retrospective methodological approach could lead to some overlap between psychopathy diagnoses, especially those related to antisocial features, and recidivism (since in our study recidivism was assessed through criminal history). Thus, longitudinal analyses are needed to better understand the role of psychopathy as a predictor of general and IPV recidivism.

In sum, despite some limitations, the current study sheds light on a relatively unstudied area – the contribution of psychopathy and its facets and general and IPV

recidivism. Our findings revealed that both psychopathy and the antisocial facet of psychopathy are linked to general recidivism; however, criminal history was the factor that best distinguished general repeated offenders and general first-time offenders. Criminal history was also the variable significantly more related to IPV recidivism. These results are not surprising since previous studies recognized criminal history as one of the best predictors of recidivism (Cottle et al., 2001).

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Table 1.

Means and Standard Deviations of IVC Scores and PCL-R Scores

	M	SD
IVC total	12.55	7.45
PCL-R total	11.53	6.09
Interpersonal	3.13	2.26
Affective	2.45	2.10
Lifestyle	2.32	1.96
Antisocial	1.50	1.67

Note. IVC = Marital Violence Inventory; PCL-R = Psychopathy Checklist-Revised.

Table 2.

Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. PCL-R_F1	1								
2. PCL-R_F2	.447***	1							
3. PCL-R_F3	.205**	.567***	1						
4. PCL-R_F4	.067	.330***	.630***	1					
5. PCL-R total	.623***	.796***	.808***	.656***	1				
6. IVC total	.087	.105	.100	.054	.147*	1			
7. No. Prior Imprisonments	.100	.071	.094	.309***	.242***	.282***	1		
8. Crime Severity	-.054	.011	-.022	-.013	-.019	-.287***	.159**	1	
9. Juvenile Delinquency	.063	.170**	.231***	.543***	.361***	.218**	.539***	-.059	1

Note. IVC = Marital Violence Inventory; PCL-R = Psychopathy Checklist - Revised.

Table 3.

Differences Between General Repeated Offenders and General First-Time Offenders on Psychopathy

	Repeated	First-time			
	offenders	offenders	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
	M (SD)	M (SD)			
PCL-R total	13.67 (6.20)	9.71 (5.35)	-5.423	.000	[-5.40, -.2,522]
Interpersonal	3.34 (2.39)	3.00 (2.13)	-1.215	.225	[-.909, .215]
Affective	4.00 (1.98)	3.09 (2.20)	-3.420	.001	[-1.43, -.384]
Lifestyle	2.80 (2.19)	1.95 (1.75)	-3.380	.001	[-1.338, -.351]
Antisocial	2.15 (1.85)	.87 (1.11)	-6.624	.000	-1.657, -.901]

Note. PCL-R = Psychopathy Checklist – Revised.

Table 4.

Logistic Regression Coefficients of PCL-R Total Scores and PCL-R Facets Predicting General Recidivism

		B	S.E.	p value	Exp(B)
PCL-R Total Score					
1st block	Age	-.016	.015	.292	.984
	IVC	.045	.025	.077	1.046
	Juvenile Delinquency	2.559	.586	.000	12.920
	Crime Severity	.301	.445	.500	1.351
	No Previous Imprisonments	1.520	.321	.000	4.574
	Constant	-1.318	.724	.069	.268
2nd block	Age	-.013	.016	.408	.987
	IVC	.028	.026	.285	1.029
	Juvenile Delinquency	2.097	.609	.001	8.138
	Crime Severity	.222	.457	.627	1.249
	No Previous Imprisonments	1.758	.358	.000	5.800
	PCL-R	.104	.033	.001	1.110
	Constant	-2.464	.844	.003	.085
PCL-R Facets					
1st block	Age	-.016	.015	.292	.984
	IVC	.045	.025	.077	1.046
	Juvenile Delinquency	2.559	.586	.000	12.920
	Crime Severity	.301	.445	.500	1.351

	No Previous Imprisonments	1.520	.321	.000	4.574
	Constant	-1.318	.724	.069	.268
2nd block	Age	-.016	.016	.315	.984
	IVC	.038	.028	.175	1.039
	Juvenile Delinquency	1.495	.662	.024	4.459
	Crime Severity	.292	.469	.533	1.340
	No Previous Imprisonments	1.965	.393	.000	7.132
	PCL-R F1	-.022	.089	.807	.978
	PCL-R F2	.196	.111	.077	1.216
	PCL-R F3	-.048	.140	.733	.953
	PCL-R F4	.538	.189	.004	1.712
	Constant	-2.491	.868	.004	.083

Note. IVC = Marital Violence Inventory; PCL-R = Psychopathy Checklist - Revised.

Table 5.

Differences Between IPV Repeated Offenders and IPV First-time Offenders on
Psychopathy

	Repeated Offenders	First-time Offenders	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
	M (SD)	M (SD)			
PCL-R total	13.04 (5.92)	10.66 (6.06)	-3.097	.002	[-2.376, .767]
Interpersonal	3.42 (2.32)	2.99 (2.21)	-1.463	.145	[-.422, .288]
Affective	3.67 (1.81)	3.45 (2.35)	-.809	.419	[-.222, .274]
Lifestyle	2.50 (2.03)	2.28 (2.02)	-.867	.387	[-.224, .259]
Antisocial	1.96 (1.64))	1.17 (1.59)	-3.854	.000	[-.790, .205]

Table 6.

Logistic Regression Coefficients of PCL-R Total Scores and PCL-R Facets Predicting
IPV Recidivism

		B	S.E.	p value	Exp(B)
PCL-R Total Score					
1st block	Age	-.012	.016	.434	.988
	IVC	.081	.026	.002	1.085
	Juvenile Delinquency	1.892	.485	.000	6.629
	Crime Severity	-.102	.465	.827	.903
	No Previous Imprisonments	1.769	.327	.000	5.864
	Constant	-2.403	.792	.002	.090
2nd block	Age	-.012	.016	.438	.988
	IVC	.081	.027	.002	1.085
	Juvenile Delinquency	1.883	.522	.000	6.573
	Crime Severity	-.102	.465	.826	.903
	No Previous Imprisonments	1.770	.328	.000	5.872
	PCL-R	.001	.031	.965	1.001
	Constant	-2.418	.865	.005	.089
PCL-R Facets					
1st block	Age	-.012	.016	.434	.988
	IVC	.081	.026	.002	1.085
	Juvenile Delinquency	1.892	.485	.000	6.629
	Crime Severity	-.102	.465	.827	.903

	No Previous Imprisonments	1.769	.327	.000	5.864
	Constant	-2.403	.792	.002	.090
2nd block	Age	-.012	.016	.467	.988
	IVC	.083	.027	.003	1.086
	Juvenile Delinquency	1.983	.581	.001	7.261
	Crime Severity	-.114	.466	.807	.893
	No Previous Imprisonments	1.763	.337	.000	5.833
	PCL-R F1	.114	.090	.204	1.121
	PCL-R F2	-.094	.114	.411	.910
	PCL-R F3	-.014	.134	.917	.986
	PCL-R F4	.003	.170	.984	1.003
	Constant	-2.468	.867	.004	.085

Note. IVC = Marital violence Inventory; PCL-R = Psychopathy Checklist - Revised.