

Proposing the Intimate Partner Violence and Stalking Database (IPV-SD)

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"At least ten people will die every week in the UK as a result of violence related to interpersonal abuse"
(Monkton-Smith et al, 2017)

Abstract:

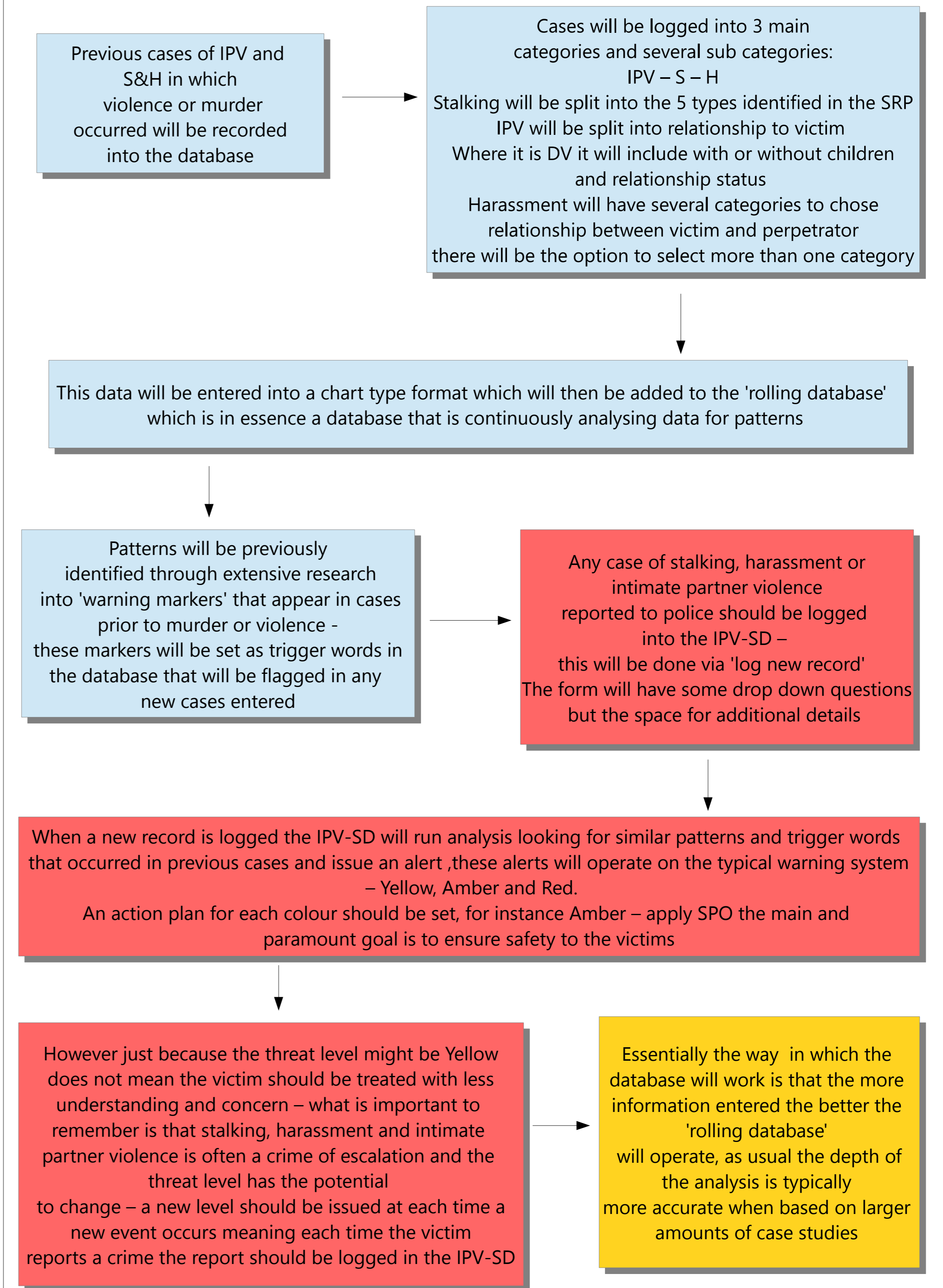
- The amount of previously violent intimate partners that progress to stalk and then seriously injure or murder their ex partner is increasing rapidly year on year (CSEW SEP, 2017), and despite current tools available to the police force, such as the domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence checklist (DASH) (Richards, 2009), authorities are unable to offer any insight into the likelihood of when and how violence may happen and therefore are unable to offer sufficient protection to those most vulnerable.
- Police time and resources are limited and so any program or checklist offered to them needs to be quick and easy to use. Looking at other previously successful tools that offer to not only store years of information but analyse that data quickly to offer potential patterns and suspects, the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) (Howlett et al, 1985) stands out above the rest.
- By using a similar method the IPV-SD could store all reports and cases, of historical and current intimate partner violence, stalking and harassment, acting as a rolling database, a smaller scale reverse VICAP. So that rather than using crime scene information and evidence to find potential perpetrators, the IPV-SD would analyse all past cases stored in the database to spot patterns, offering an estimate of the likelihood of future violent crimes. If successful the IPV-SD could have the potential to progress onto other violent, domestic and sexual crimes.

Why change is needed:

- DASH might not be helping, be being used correctly or at all:** Although there was a slight drop in incidences of DV reported in 2009 when DASH was first implemented; since then the **rates have since seemingly plateaued**. (ONS Domestic Homicide Data 2018)
"2016 evaluation of the use of the DASH found there was a lack of training in risk assessment and too great a focus on physical violence, with other abuse often being missed. This means that **cases were not recognised as high-risk** and victims did not receive support and safeguarding measures" (Houses of Parliament PostNote of Stalking and Harassment, 2018)
- The criminal justice system is struggling to prosecute stalking cases:** A 2020 study found that Intimate Partner Stalking (IPS) within the criminal justice system held "pervasive barriers... including a **lack of knowledge and training on stalking**, difficulties in investigation and prosecution, and negative perceptions of victims" (Augustyn et al, 2020)
- Stalking and Harassment are being confused by police, and no real guidance of the varying types of stalkers are offered:** Misidentifying stalking as harassment is a serious issue with **harassment prosecutions outweighing stalking by 13 to 1**, signalling more training was needed "recording stalking accurately is important because of the risks of reoffending and escalation" (Houses of Parliament PostNote of Stalking and Harassment, 2018)
- Vital data is being missed because of victims fears of not being taken seriously:** "victims experience, on average, **100 incidents of stalking behaviour before going to the police**" (Network for Surviving Stalking survey, 2005)
- The CPS have already identified the need to look into the perpetrators previous charges when confronted with a new case but too much of the responsibility is given to overstretched police officers:** "Police should check the Police National Computer for perpetrators' and victims' names to identify previous recorded incidents and check for a course of conduct" (Houses of Parliament PostNote of Stalking and Harassment, 2018) its effectiveness along with that of the new Stalking Protection Order – are yet to be evaluated

"violent and harassing stalking behaviours occur with alarming frequency among physically battered women" (Mechanic et al, 2000)

Proposed Plan of Model:



Possible Limitations and Future Research:

- In order for the IPV-SD to work, police will have to be consistent and vigilant in entering cases given that police time is already stretched this poses a challenge, the program would only work if all details of the case and report were entered, if a trigger word was not entered it would not be identified – meaning there is risk of user error
- Even if the program worked, there can never be a full and foolproof way of predicting violence, this would still only be an estimated guess
- However if the program was successful there would be the potential to add additional branches – into sexual violence for example and the benefits of having a database with thousands of cases stored and categorised, and updated constantly would be incredibly useful for research and offer the potential for long term studies
- Work needs to be done into how to identify which trigger words to use, by extensively researching pre-cursors to violence and murder, including things like past criminal records
- Research into the National Stalking Clinic and how they risk assess and treat current patients would be beneficial in terms of action plans – if treatment and therapy can help prevent further stalking behaviours, it could be offered rather than just looking to punish

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