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Forensicare

The positive impact of RNR-informed policing on future severe family violence

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43rd ANZAPPL Congress, 4.12.2025

Family Violence Incident (FVI)

Definition

- Any acts of physical (including sexual), psychological, or economic violence committed by a family member

Breakdown (police reported)

74% female victim

77% male perpetrator

60% IPV

15% CPA

10% child maltreatment

15% other family

Recidivism (IPV)

15% - 60% globally
(Hilton et al 2010; Klein & Tobin, 2008; Lin et al., 2009; Loinaz, 2014).

36% - 42% in Sweden
(Belfrage & Strand, 2012; Svalin et al., 2014).

30% in Victoria (police-reported)
(Spivak et al., 2020)

Challenges of policing FVI

1. Volume – 100,000 police reports per year (pop. 5.5 million)
2. Behaviour is characterised by pattern rather than incident-based
3. Physical and non-physical abuse
4. Highly variable risk presentations potentially not reflected in each reported incident
5. Non-expert risk assessors
6. Limited time & scope for assessment
7. Intersectionality (gender, culture, sexuality, rural vs urban)

Risk assessment of FVI in policing

- Started in 1990s in North America for intimate partner violence, adapting from other fields
  - Danger Assessment (Campbell et al., 2009), ODARA (Hilton et al., 2004), SARA (Kropp et al., 1995), DVSI (Williams & Houghton, 2004)
- Seen as an evidence-based way of managing harm/need AND targeting resources AND managing volume (Medina Ariza, Robinson & Myhill, 2016)
- Problems
  - Adoption of unvalidated instruments
  - Unclear whether or how most risk assessment achieves police aims
  - Few broader principles/framework informing implementation

Risk, Need and Responsivity model (Bonta & Andrews, 2016)

- It´s an individual-level, offender-based framework developed in correctional settings and intended to guide rehabilitative interventions
  - The **risk** principle - matching the level of risk management to an offenders' risk for recidivism.
  - The **need** principle - identifying the offender´s criminogenic needs and addressing these with adequate interventions.
  - The **responsivity** principle - tailoring the intervention to an offender´s motivation, abilities and strengths, to maximise the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Challenges in applying RN(R) to policing

Risk principle:

- Is there a valid tool for police needs?
- Can police apply the tool correctly?
- Can police direct management resources towards those at increased risk?

Need principle

- What are relevant criminogenic needs for FVI presenting to police?
- Do police have any capacity to implement need-targeted interventions?
- Should police be doing anything other than law enforcement…?

Implications for RNR in policing FVI

▲ Risk principle

- Multiple valid IPV risk assessments (actuarial and SPJ for male assault of female partner), two for family violence (both actuarial)
- Multiple studies showing that police can use instruments reliably and with internal validity (e.g., Belfrage & Strand, 2009; Strand & Storey, 2019)
- Multiple studies demonstrating that Swedish police do put more risk management towards cases assessed as higher risk using the B-SAFER and SARA (Belfrage & Strand, 2009; Belfrage et al., 2012; Storey et al., 2014; Strand & Storey, 2019)
- No rigorously designed studies of whether police risk management has positive impact on future FVI

Implications for RNR in policing FVI

▲ Need principle

- IPV offenders present with the Central 8 criminogenic needs but at higher levels than violent or other offenders (Bonta & Andrews, 2016; Hilton & Radatz, 2018; Stewart & Power, 2014).
- Potentially some differences in the import of dynamic risk factors for 'family only' versus 'antisocial' IPV offenders (Petersson et al., 2019)
- Swedish police struggled to match interventions to identified needs (Svalin et al., 2018)
- Query about whether police have enough options to actually implement need principle (Strand & Storey, 2019)

Kind of interventions police can implement

Law enforcement focussed:

- Restraining orders
- Arrest, remand/bail conditions
- Charge

Proactive protection:

- Referrals to social services (mental health, substance use, housing, etc.)
- Referrals to women's safety and support agencies
- Advice to victims about safety
- Monitoring (in person or electronic)

The Australian projects

- 2014 Identified problem following two high profile family violence homicides

  Local commander identified existing risk assessment approach was not working

  Police-initiated project in one division – embedded forensic psychologist with police family violence team, B-SAFER on selected cases

- 2015 Recognition of need for a valid 2015 developed local actuarial risk assessment for Victoria Police

  Developed and validated an actuarial instrument for frontline police decision making

- 2016 – 2018 Implemented and evaluated a tiered approach to family violence risk assessment and management

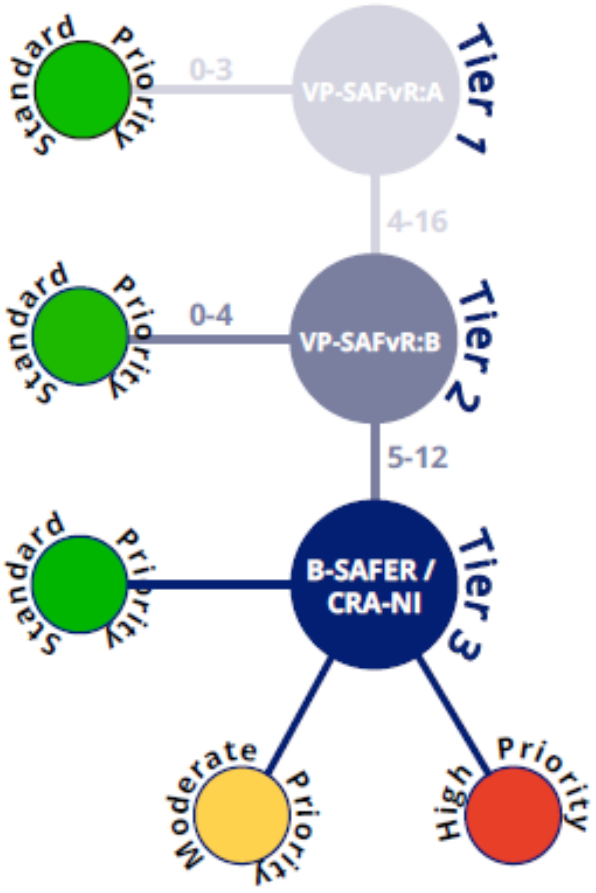
  Two police divisions plus a control division. Actuarial screening of cases to specialist family violence teams with embedded clinical/forensic psychologists supporting SPJ risk assessment

- 2019 – ongoing state-wide implementation and refinement

  Further validation of actuarial tool

  Replaced SPJ approach for specialists with machine learning instrument

2016-2018 Implementing tiered risk assessment and management in two police divisions



- All police reports of family violence (N = 6127) assessed actuarially (Spivak et al., 2020)
- Tier 3 (N = 1122) receive SPJ risk assessment
- High priority (N = 251) and moderate priority (N = 507) get specialist family violence team risk management
- Intention is to prevent 'severe' FVI recidivism
- Recidivism followed up over six months
- Compared to control division (N = 1552)

Term	Definition
Odds	likelihood of a subsequent FVI
Rates	number of new FVIs reported by a family over six months
Time	the duration of time to the subsequent FVI
Same family dyad	FVIs involving the same victim & respondent as the index incident
Any family dyad	FVIs involving the respondent & any victim (including index victim& others)
FVIs	the presence of any further police recorded FVIs (without necessarily resulting into a charges).
Severe FVIs	presence of another FVI which led to at least one charge for physical violence considered likely to have caused an injury that could require medical attention (e.g., assault with weapon), or stalking.

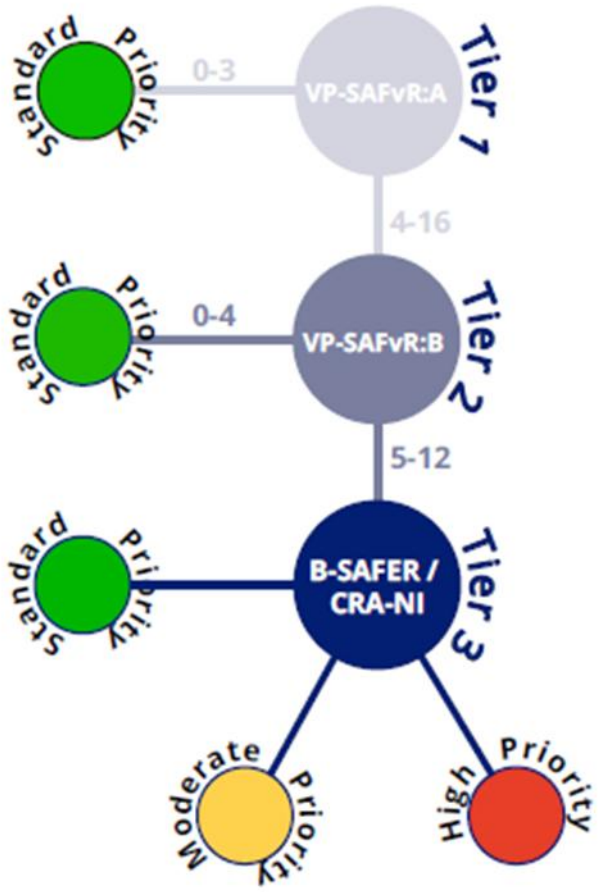
- Note: FVI = family violence incident; AFM = affected family member

Research Questions

Does a tiered police response informed by Risk-principle help in reducing the probability and frequency of reported severe family violence?

Would a tiered police response informed by RNR-principal prolonged the time to family violence recidivism?

If there is an effect, is it observed among those who receive risk management because they were assessed as being higher risk?



Design

- Between group quasi-experimental design
- 6 months follow-up of recidivism

	Evaluation Sample (ND2/3)	Control Sample (ND4)
Process	Tiered risk assessment by police and targeted risk management process	Existing police approach (actuarial risk score calculated by researchers)
Sample	6127	1552

Demographics

Demographics	Evaluation Sample (ND2/3)	Control Sample (ND4)
Perpetrator Age, M (SD)	34.91 (11.75)	35.48 (12.50)
Victim Age, M (SD)	37.06 (14.24)	36.67 (16.10)
Perpetrator Gender, F (%)	1222 (19.99%)	344 (22.18%)
Victim Gender, F (%)	4730 (77.21%)*	1125 (72.63%)*
Intimate Partner (%)	3919 (64.24%)*	873 (56.29%)*
High Severity Family Violence Outcome – same dyad (N, %)	283 (5%)	74 (5%)
High Severity Family Violence Outcome – any dyad (N, %)	454 (7%)	126 (8%)

- * $p < .05$

Does it reduce the likelihood, frequency and duration of severe family violence over six months?

The odds of same dyad severe FVI were **1.46 higher in the control group**. Odds of any dyad severe FVI were **1.41 higher in the control group** (based on logistic regression controlling for demographic variables and actuarially assessed risk).

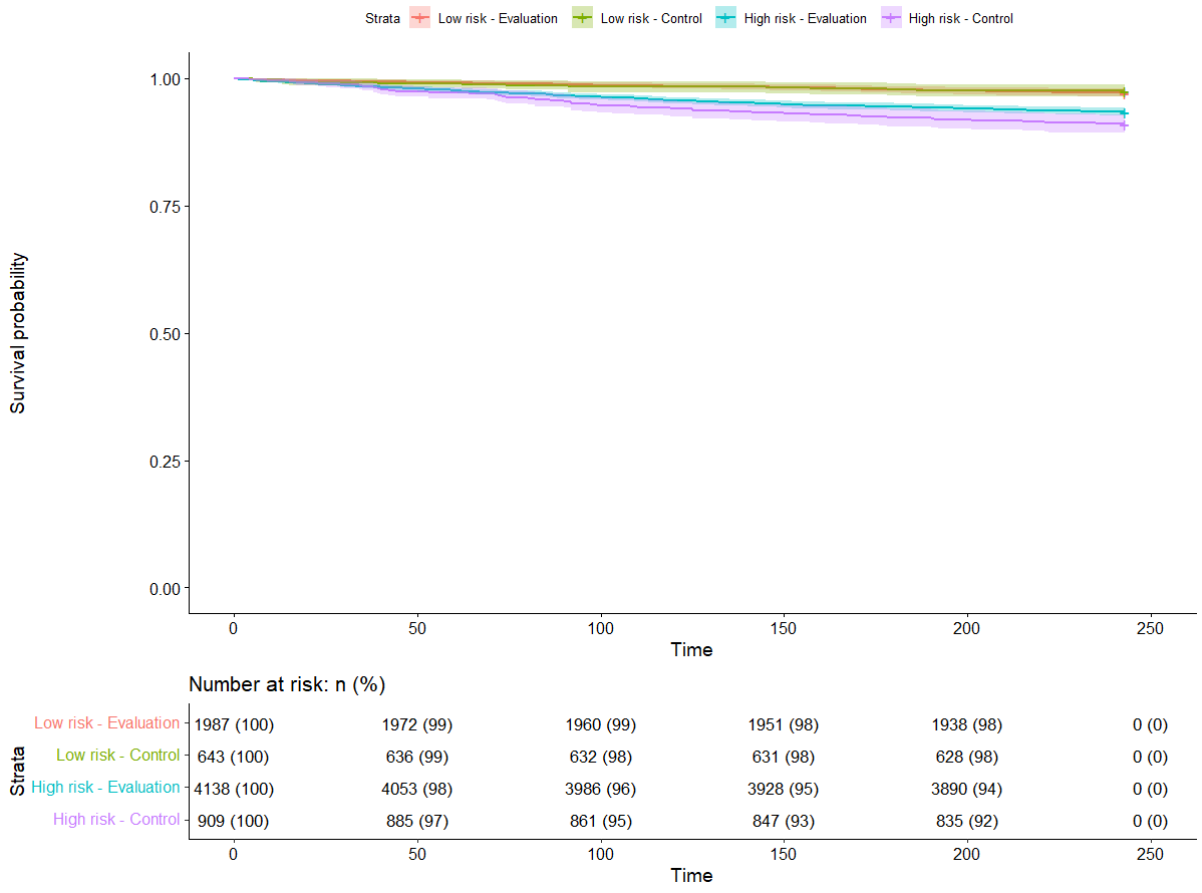
The rate of severe FVIs within the same family did not differ between groups, ranging from 0 – 12 incidents for both groups.

The RNR-informed policing reduced the overall probability of severe family violence in the evaluation division, but not the rate of severe violence within a family reporting any such violence.

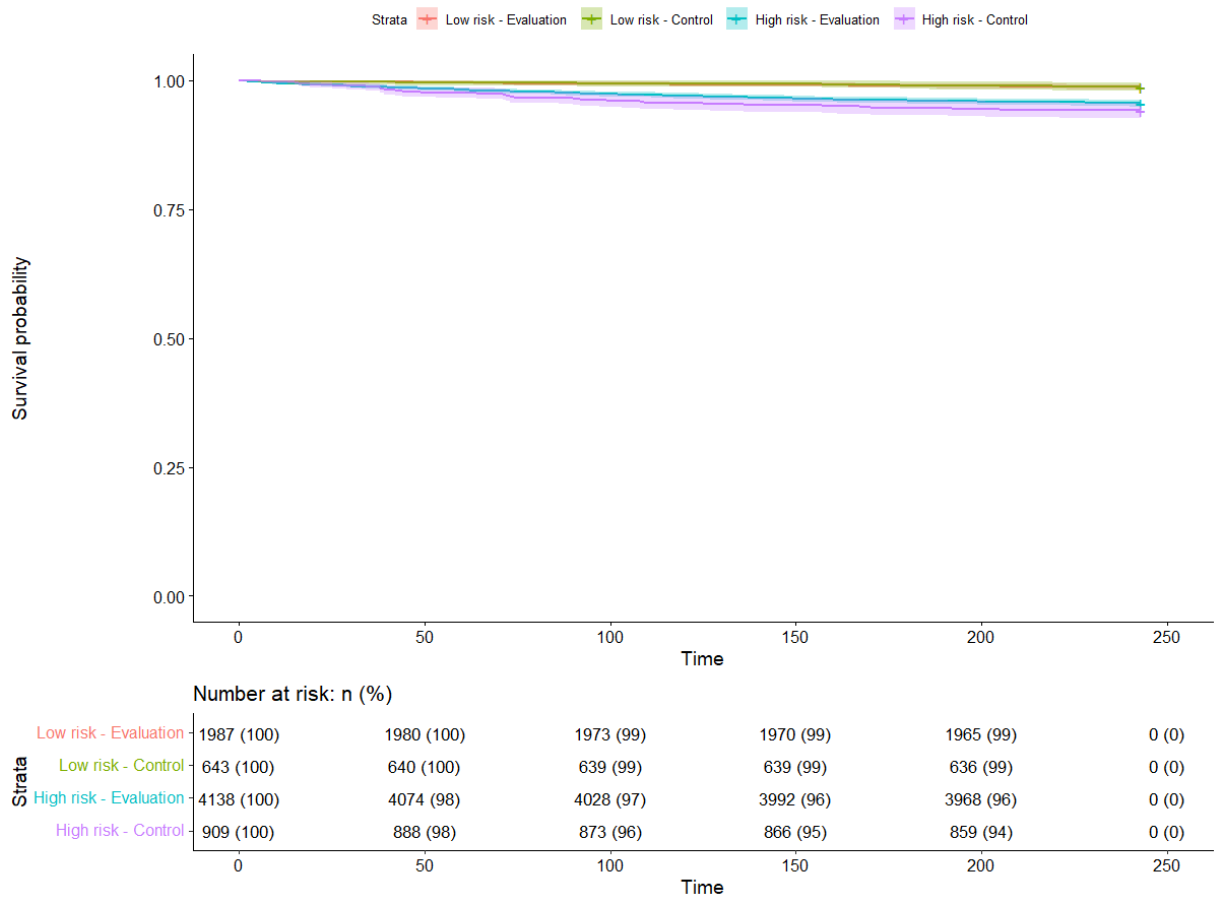
The was no difference between the time to severe family violence between groups.

Time to subsequent severe FVI

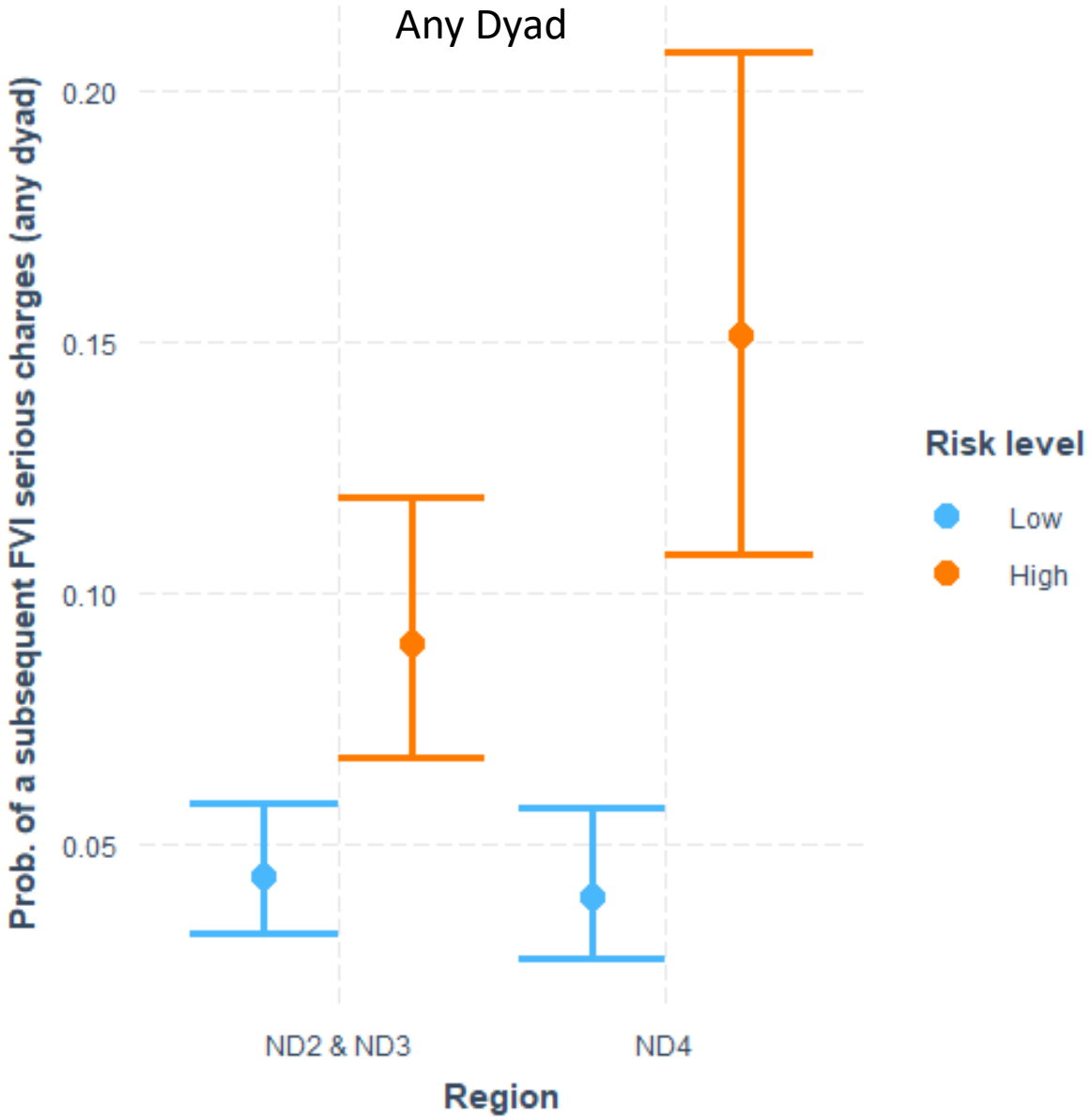
Any Dyad

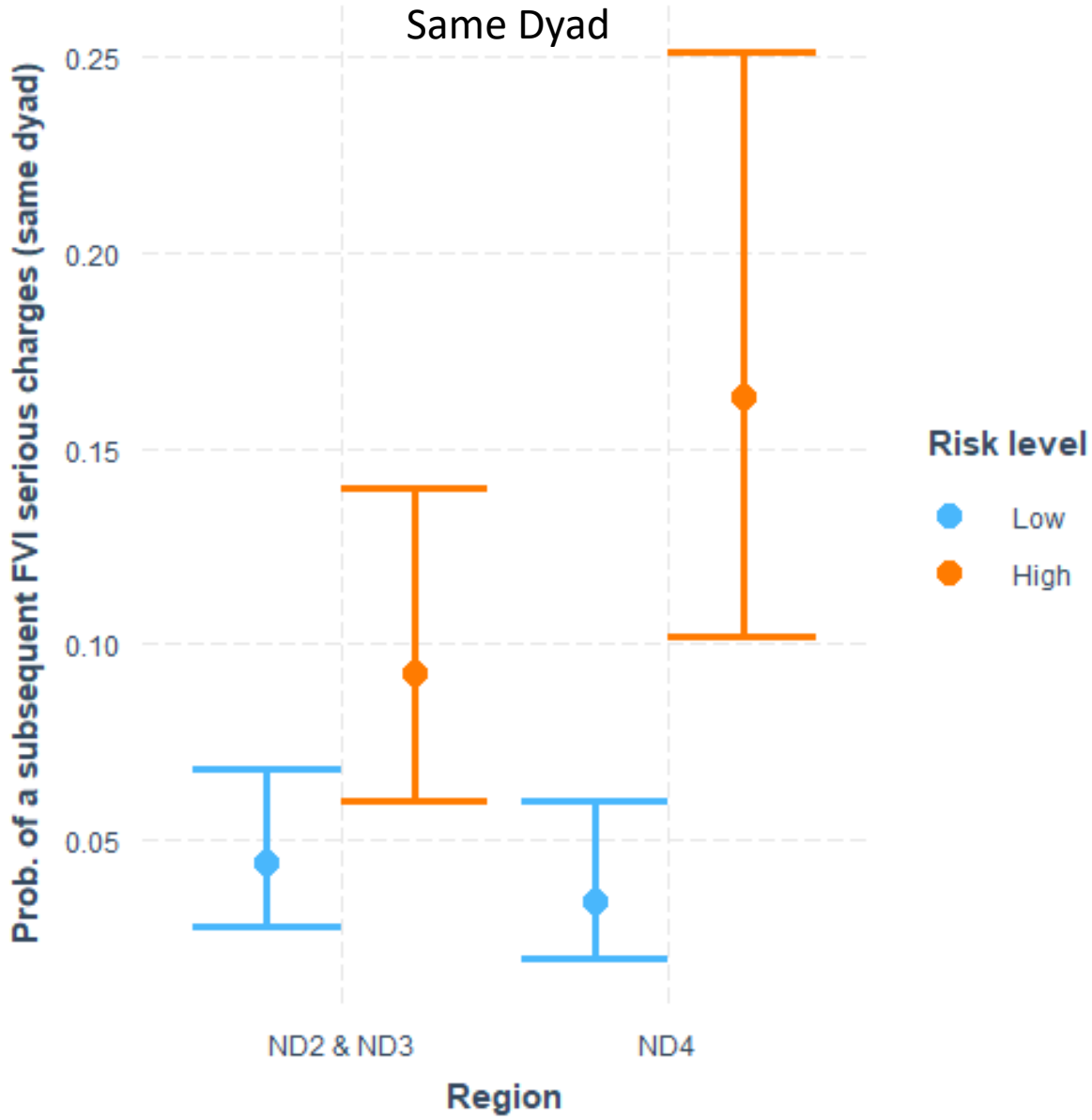


Same Dyad



Is the effect associated with risk management (mod/high families)?





Risk categorisation and severe FV recidivism

Dyad	Risk category	Evaluation Sample (ND2/3) N (%)	Control Sample (ND4) N (%)
Same dyad	Low risk with severe FV outcome	135 (3.2%)	27 (2.3%)
	Moderate/High risk with severe FV outcome	148 (8.0%)	47 (12.9%)
Any dyad	Low risk with severe FV outcome	230 (5.4%)	56 (4.7%)
	Moderate/High risk with severe FV outcome	224 (12.1%)	70 (19.2%)

Summary

- RNR-informed policing resulted **in lower probability of high severity family violence** recidivism in the experimental division.
- Moderate/high risk families who received Targeted Risk Management guided by the Risk-principle had lower probability of subsequent high severity family violence.
- However, if a family reported high severity family violence, risk management did not appear to change the number of reports over 6 months.

Implications

- Police risk management reduced the probability of severe FVIs in the **same dyad from 15% to 9%** and **any dyad from 16% to 9%** (controlling for demographic variables and actuarial risk).
- Police could effectively reduce the odds of severe FVIs by allocating more resources to family dyads with higher risk.
- Targeted police risk management (**addressing the Risk-principle** and not the Need-principle) could already reduce severe FVI outcomes.
- BUT half of the severe outcomes were occurring in the low risk group because of false negatives in screening to SFVT
- Limitation: only FVIs known to police was included in this study.

Questions?

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