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Characteristics of domestic violence offenders

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Research issues

Research studies on the spread of spousal abuse, also called "domestic violence", have been mostly focused on a woman victim since domestic violence toward wives is usually inflicted by their husbands (Pospiszyl, 1998; Badura-Madej, 2000; Lipowska-Teutsch, 1998; Gelles, 1988; Dutton, 1988; Krahe, 2005). Few research studies have been concerned with profiling a domestic violence offender. O'Leary (after Brown and Herbert, 1999), Weitzman and Dreen (1982) characterized domestic violence offenders as insecure people experiencing different fears resulting from their low self-esteem, inability and abandonment. Goldstein and Rosenbaum (1985) added that offenders' distinctive features are low assertiveness, low self-evaluation and poorly-developed social skills. It has been also found that there is a significant connection between doing harm to a spouse and mental disturbances (Faulk, 1974; Bland and Orn, 1986; after Herbert and Brawn, 1999).

On the basis of clinical data and research findings, Brown and Herbert (1999) described characteristic features of spousal violence offenders. Among others features there such ones as low self-esteem, lack of social skills and assertiveness, emotional disorders (anxiety, depression), alcohol abuse, poor self-control, imperiousness, jealousy, lack of empathy and sympathy, material and social problems (unemployment). Barnett et al. (1997), Bennett and Wiliams (1999; after Krahe, 2005), and Wiehe (1998) showed that people doing harm to their female partners are characterized by low self-esteem, a sense of helplessness resulting from the

causes lying outside of a relationship, pathological jealousy, antisocial personality disorders.

It has also been suggested that violence offenders have problems with alcohol abuse, experienced violence in the past and demonstrate improper reactions to stress (O'LEARY, 1993; RODE, 1998).

Consequently, a few authors tried to classify types of violence offenders who are characteristic of special risk factors and aggressive behaviour patterns. On the basis of the thorough analysis of previous typologies, HOLTZWORTH-MUNROE and STUART (1994) proposed an integrated typology where three types of such men were distinguised:

1. Family only batterers — their acts of violence are exclusively limited to their own families, not showing signs of psychopathology.
2. Borderline-dysphoric batterers — use of violence is a result of emotional instability and mental disorders. Their aggression is concentrated on their own families, sporadically they resort to extra-family violence.
3. Generally-violent antisocial batterers, antisocial — perform acts of violence both in the family and outside it, apart from physical aggression they release mental and sexual aggression.

In general, research findings indicate that one type of an marital violence offender cannot be singled out. We also do not know what conditions of forming individual personality traits of violence offenders could be since there are diverse factors which affect the occurrence of acts of aggressions by offenders.

The aim of research studies conducted by the author was to draw up psychological and social characteristics of domestic violence in terms of:
• selected personality traits
• biological functioning, alcohol abuse, mental disorders
• process of socialization
• social functioning.

The following definition was quoted in the work: "Domestic violence, also called family violence, is a deliberate activity exploiting the advantage of power directed against family members, which infringes rights and personal interests causing sufferings and harm" (Anti-Domestic Violence Programme, conducted by the State Agency for Prevention of Alcohol Related Problems in Poland; SASAL, 1998: 17).

This definition refers to an act of violence, when both an offender and a victim can be an adult person or a child. An offender is most frequently an adult while a victim is a partner and/or a child, however, the direction of this dependence can be reverted. This definition comprises intentional actions of a violence offender; violence is dependent on the relation with a close person (a partner, a spouse) where there is the un-

equal balance of power which leads to the abuse of power and physical force over weaker persons by stronger ones, causing harm and violation of all personal rights of the affected person and the lack of possibility to defend themselves.

According to the Polish Penal Law, using force toward a family member is called harassment. In the Penal Code, harassment is one of offences against family and custody and is specified in Article 270§1, 2, 3 of 6 June 1997 Act. The main interests protected by this provision are: proper and harassment-free treatment of people in a family in terms of their physical and moral health.

Research methods

The research was conducted on the group of 405 men — convicted, pursuant to article 270§1, 2 of harassment over a family member — a wife. In the research study the following research techniques were employed: the Intelligence Scale by D. Wechsler, the Self-esteem Scale by E.M. Berger, the Delta Questionnaire by R. Drwal, the SABD Questionnaire by Buss-Durkee, the Temperament Questionnaire — FCZ-KT by Strelau and a categorized interview conducted with violence offenders.

A rarely used analysis of documents, such as court records of penal cases, was applied and a taxonomic matrix was drawn up to make it possible to code the data included in case records. The matrix included the following categories: formal data, demographic data, penologic data, forensic analysis of an offence of harassment. The analysis of documents — court records — belongs to quality studies which are useful when quantitative data collected in the same research should be supplemented, explained, clarified or subject to different interpretations. The analysis of the obtained quality data made it possible to complement the characteristics of a violence offender in the field of social functioning and crime.

Within the first stage of a statistical analysis, the sample group of 405 domestic violence offenders that participated in the research was subject to categorisation so as to form subgroups of the subjects which differed in terms of chosen personality traits, such as: intellectual functioning of offenders, their level of self-esteem, behaviour control, aggression and temperamental traits. Since the research material was lacking in some data, 325 offenders were qualified for further analysis. The starting point was the findings obtained from a group of 325 offenders as regard to five individual variables taken into consideration. In order to catego-

rize specific subgroups from the whole group of subjects to make them homogenous in terms of the chosen subject characteristics, the procedure of a cluster analysis was applied. It is based on the similarity of objects and makes it possible to compare them, and then to cluster them in terms of a number of traits at a time. As far as the objective of this study is concerned, the non-hierarchical cluster method using k-means was employed. Considering the fact that in this technique a number of clusters is previously defined, the procedure insists in conducting a cluster analysis for a different number of clusters one by one. Further, such a solution was selected to give optimal differentiation possible to be interpreted contentwise. As a result of the conducted analysis in a given group of violence offenders, four subgroups (clusters) different in terms of selected personality traits were singled out. Subsequently, the characteristics of offenders in specific groups was drawn up including their biological, social functioning and socializing process.

Research findings

Characteristics of a group of offenders in the scope of chosen personality traits

The values of k-means (stens) and standard deviations obtained in a group of violence offenders in the scope of sixteen individual factors are contained in Table 1. The obtained values of k-means are presented in the graphical form in the Figure 1.

Table 1. Sten values in the scope of sixteen subjective characteristics in four groups of violence offenders singled out through the application of a cluster analysis

Variables	Cluster (stens)			
	A N = 113	B N = 71	C N = 85	D N = 56
1	2	3	4	5
Intelligence quotient	4.5	3.6 (78.0)	6.3 (99.0)	8.3 (123)
Self-esteem	5.1	2.9	8.4	6.3
Self-control (Drwal)	6.4	7.1	3.2	4.3
Interpersonal reaction — negativism	4.2	3.5	5.7	4.0
Interpersonal reaction — resentment	5.0	4.4	7.0	5.5

| 1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal reaction — suspiciousness	6.3	4.7	6.7	4.0
Interpersonal reaction — physical aggression	7.4	6.5	5.8	4.4
Interpersonal reaction — verbal aggression	8.1	8.2	6.3	6.7
Interpersonal reaction — indirect aggression	4.7	5.2	3.7	3.7
Interpersonal reaction — irritability	6.1	6.8	5.5	4.5
Temperament — jauntiness	4.1	3.1	6.1	6.6
Temperament — perseverativeness	5.0	4.4	3.5	4.8
Temperament — sensory sensitivity	4.7	5.5	3.1	5.7
Temperament — emotional reactiveness	6.9	6.1	3.6	5.0
Temperament — resilience	4.6	3.0	7.5	6.6
Temperament — activeness	4.5	3.4	7.4	6.7
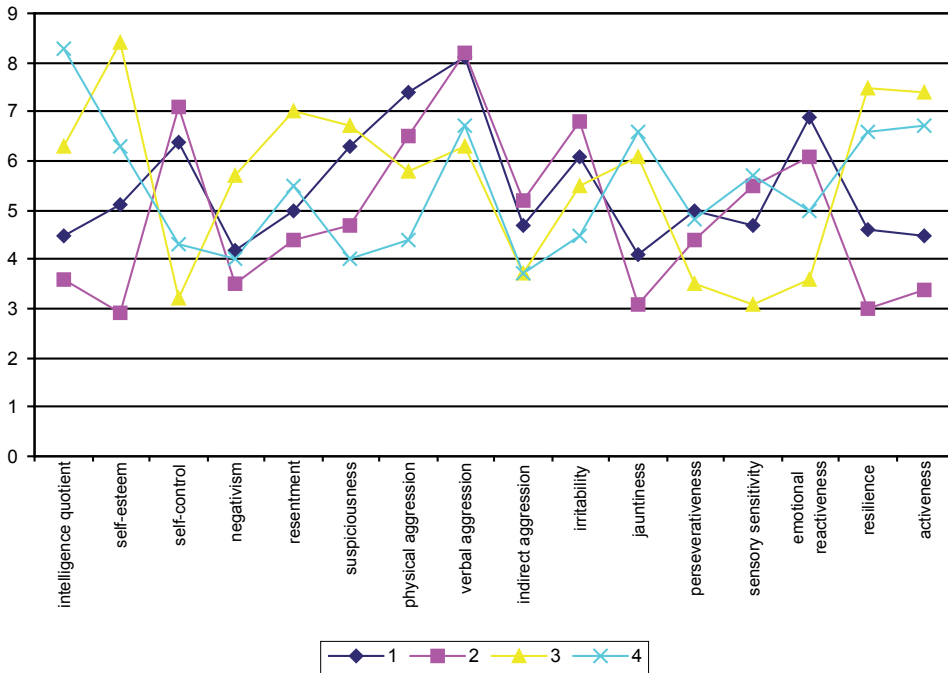
Fig. 1. Results of the final cluster centres

On the basis of the content analysis of the research findings, it can be said that there is a specific system, forming a constellation of traits which can be characterized as follows:

Group A consists of 113 persons (**reactively aggressive**) who are characterized by a high level of physical and verbal aggression, high emotional reactiveness, low assertiveness and resilience. They have an external locus of control and an average level of self-esteem. Their intelligence quotient equals 85.

The subjects have intelligence quotient defined as below average intelligence (mental retardation), which is indicated by low mental fitness of their thought processes although they still remain within an intellectual norm. Intellectual activities only comprise basic operations: analysis, synthesis, reasoning, deduction and anticipation; abstract thinking and planning are limited for these persons. It can be predicted that these individuals may have difficulty solving various problems.

The violence offenders in this group are distinguished by an average level of self-esteem, which implies a divergence between the "real me" and the "ideal me" is small, so behaviours of these offenders are regulated by both expectations and a level of aspiration.

An external locus of control. These persons demonstrate their conviction that daily life incidents and their behaviour are the result of situational and random factors and are not subject to their control. Thus getting involved in any activity makes no sense since the incident which occurred is not dependent on these activities (DRWAL, 1981; KURTEK, 2005).

Aggression — the persons qualified to this group are characterized by a high level of physical and verbal aggression, irritability, a low level of negativism, an average level of suspiciousness, resentment and indirect aggression.

Temperament — they show high emotional reactiveness, low jauntiness and activeness, average sensory sensitivity, perseverativeness and resilience. The persons demonstrating a high degree of reactiveness are distinguished by: considerable emotional excitability even as regard to incidents of the slightest importance. They demonstrate small emotional resilience and tendency to break down in difficult situations. While carrying out a structural analysis of the FCZ-KT results it can be noticed that these persons are averagely resilient, very emotionally reactive, inactive; they show average sensory sensitivity and perseverativeness. These persons are prone to impulsive behaviours, they are short-tempered and quickly respond with aggression.

Summary: the offenders from this group are characterized by a high level of emotional aggression — regulation of behaviour at the emotional and impulsive level, lack of ability to control aggressive behaviours cognitively (intelligence quotient below average), lack of ability to cope actively with tasks in difficult situations (low activeness, jauntiness, average resilience).

Group B consists of 71 persons (**with low preventive competencies**) who are characterized by average physical and indirect aggression, mildly reactive, low activeness and resilience, low self-esteem and extremely external sense of control. Intelligence within the norm (borderline retardation). Because of a specific configuration of traits, this group involves more wide-ranging analysis than the remaining groups.

The men qualified to this group, in comparison with the subjects belonging to other groups, are distinguished by intelligence quotient on the borderline between mental disability and the norm. It indicates considerable difficulty in information processing in the central nervous system, the most frequently lowers the precision of information reception and possibilities and correctness of using the effects of this processing in practice. In the opinions of researchers, persons on the borderline of retardation are characterized by lowering effectiveness of cognitive activities, such as: perception, imagination, attention and memory.

The violence offenders belonging to this group represent a very low level of self-esteem, which means a big information divergence between their "real me" and "ideal me". This divergence leads to overtaking of regulating functions by the structure "ideal me", that is a level of aspiration. It is a source of emotional and motivational tension. Strong stimulation evoking overoptimal increase of activation and strong emotional tension (Jakubik, 1997).

While considering the personality characteristics of intramarital violence offenders, a sense of control as a personality dimension was also taken into account. The offenders in this group are characterized by a high sense of external control. They are convinced that the incidents that occur in their lives are not dependent on their actions and that other forces and persons have an impact on these occurrences. They are lacking in trust of their own potential and ability to control what is going on in specific situations. The offenders with a low level of self-esteem and an external sense of control perceive the effects of their actions as random ones, being out of their control. Consequently, the outcome of their actions stops controlling their behaviour, and in this way it is not conducive to the involvement of motivation in order to change their behaviour or a situation. The offenders with an external sense of control are positive about unpredictability of incidents in their environment and inability to control them by themselves. It gives them — considering a low intellectual level, so difficulty in processing information and low self-esteem — a conviction about the lack of correlation between their own behaviour and the incidents that occurred.

Average physical and indirect aggression, average suspiciousness, low negativism and resentment indicate that these offenders are inclined to

attack others, either directly or indirectly in a verbal way. They do not have a sense of bitterness or anger.

Temperament — the offenders belonging to this group are distinguished by low activeness, resilience and moderate reactiveness.

Summary: the aggression of these offenders may manifest itself as a mechanism which increases a level of self-esteem and their control over the environment — the increase achieved through decreasing the value of others. Their aggression may be triggered by both an attack or irritating factors. The subjects from group B are characterized by low emotional resilience, poor professional and social activeness and low flexibility in their behaviour.

Group C consists of 85 persons (**psychopathic-retaliatory**) who are described by high resentment and suspiciousness, low emotional reactiveness, moderate aggression. High resilience and activeness. Very high self-esteem and internal control. Average intelligence (intelligence quotient equal 99).

A dominant characteristic in this group is hostility which, according to Bussa (after Kosewski, 1977) manifests itself as hatred toward the environment, a suppressed sense of anger and resentment. These persons are convinced that there are others that inflict harm and plan it. They are in opposition to authorities and governing bodies, often toward the law. They are unaffected by social pressure and the influence of other people; they control the environment.

Low emotional reactiveness (accompanied by low sensory sensitivity) indicates that their emotional sensitivity is small, they are emotionally unaffected. They show no tendency to break down in difficult situations. The efficiency of this group is big: these persons are distinguished by big activeness of behaviours. They are resilient, they can manage in unfavourable conditions. They are low-reactive, so they show an increased demand for stimulation. The source of stimulation can be external stimuli e.g. the environment, a situation, a task, as well as their own behaviour. While considering the context of aggressive behaviours — violence toward the closest in a family — it can be suggested that aggressive behaviour of such offenders are often a source of strong stimulation, in particular instrumental (causative) aggressive behaviours are used to compensate for the deficiency of stimulation. This suggestion can be confirmed by the self-esteem rate. Very high self-esteem indicates a low level of divergence between the "real me" and "ideal me". The regulatory standard is the "real me", so the regulators of behaviour are expectations, which is expressed by aspiration to confirm them in order to consolidate the "real me". A small divergence between two kinds of "me" (high self-esteem)

has a low stimulating value which can result in constant understimulation so typical of improper personality (ELIASZ, 1981).

To recapitulate, the offenders from this group have a number of improper personality traits. Aggression of the offenders of this type can be: firstly, a source of strong simulation, and secondly, a mechanism to gain control and self-confirmation (dominance, imposition of the only "right" viewpoints, egoism).

Group D consists of 56 persons (**with high adaptation potential**). On the basis of the obtained results, the offenders from this group can be defined as persons without any dysfunction in their personality structure; they are individuals whose individual resources are very beneficial for their functioning, both cognitive and social ones (ability to manage in different daily situations). They have high intelligence, high self-esteem, and internal self-control. They show a low level of negativism, suspiciousness, indirect aggression and physical aggression. Average verbal aggression and resentment. High activeness, resilience and jauntiness. Average emotional reactiveness, sensory sensitivity and perseverativeness.

The configuration of traits indicates the effective regulation of stimulation and general tendency to seek stimulation (a regular level of excitement within the limits of optimum). These people are characterized by generally big adaptation abilities, criticism; in frustrating situations they virtually act very constructively, show consideration for the feedback about the consequences of their conduct. Increased activeness in searching for information to facilitate the process of taking specific decisions.

To recapitulate, aggressive behaviour of the offenders from this group can be a result of uncontrollable reactions to provocative behaviour of a female partner — a combative person triggering different types of clashes in marriage; they are characterized by high aggressiveness.

Biological functioning of offenders
Addictions, mental disorders

The factor describing the biological functioning of offenders plays an important role because, by forming a development base for man, it mediates in personality formation, particularly in emotional, motivational and cognitive spheres. The significance of the central nervous system (CNS) efficiency to manage difficult and stressful situations is emphasized. The comparison of the examined groups in terms of variables describing the functioning of the central nervous system (CNS) is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Variables describing the functioning of the central nervous system (CNS)

Degree of CNS damage	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total	Statistical method	Value (out of 325)	df	Asymptotic significance
	A	B	C	D					
None	69.0	54.9	92.4	92.0	76.0	Pearson χ^2	41.934	6	.0001
Microdamage — abnormal EEG records	29.2	43.7	6.1	8.0	22.8	Reliability quotient	45.687	6	.0001
Considerable damage — CT diagnosis	1.8	1.4	1.5		1.2	Linear relation test	21.196	1	.0001

It can be noticed that 24% of the entire examined group of offenders shows anomalies in the functioning of the central nervous system (CNS). Most frequently (28%) there are microdamages of brain structures which were confirmed by pathological records of brain bioelectrical activity. In comparison with other groups of offenders, microdamages most often occurred in the following groups: group B — offenders with low preventive competencies, and group A — reactively aggressive offenders. Structural examinations of brain (CT) shows distinct brain tissue damage only in a small percentage of persons in groups A, B and C. It is difficult to state whether the damages are a result of possible injuries or the diseases of the central nervous system. They can also result from alcohol addiction. However, it can be assumed that excessive impulsiveness and poor control of behaviour demonstrated by some offenders can be linked with a brain factor and characteropathic changes. Still, this assumption involves further research studies.

A significant role in domestic violence is played by alcohol, which in most cases increases aggressiveness, decreases inhibition, control and criticism. It contributes to a long-lasting conflict between an offender and a victim. The research findings concerning alcohol consumption of the offenders are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Alcohol abuse

Level of alcohol consumption	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total	Statistical method	Value (out of 220)	df	Asymptotic significance
	A	B	C	D					
Lack of alcohol use or occasional drinking	26.5	34.1	63.4	71.2	45.5	Pearson χ^2	40.338		.0001
Abuse	44.6	36.4	34.1	23.1	35.9	Reliability quotient	44.463	6	.0001
Addiction	28.9	29.5	2.4	5.8	18.6	Linear relation test	34.166	1	.0001

The research findings indicate that approximately 36% of the offenders abuse alcohol. There are 18% addicted — medically diagnosed. Most often alcohol is abused by the offenders form groups A, B and C respectively. They have problems to control drinking and to control their own behaviour. It should be reminded that the offenders belonging to groups A and B — the persons with low intellectual potential, externally controlled, are often susceptible to the influence of third parties, and in spite of a level of self-esteem, aggression and reactiveness — they are likely to cope with difficult situations by recovering from their anger and frustration by means of alcohol. It is usually their basic technique to deal with problems. Additionally, there are most persons showing organic brain damage in these groups, which may result from long-lasting alcohol intoxication. The offenders from group C — hostile persons, low-reactive and mostly controlling their behaviour, have a strong demand for stimulation, and alcohol is one of basic sources of the increased input of stimulation and an excuse for their bahaviour: "I am aggressive but it is alcohol to be blame for it."

The research data about the mental health conditions of the offenders show that 73.7% of domestic violence offenders are the persons without any mental disorders. On the basis of psychiatric analysis of the remaining 26.3% of the offenders, the following disorders were distinguished:

- depression-anxiety syndrome (group A — 1.0%)
- post-alcohol psychosis (group A — 4.5%, group B — 5.7%)
- depression (group B — 1.4%, group D — 1.3%)
- organic depression syndrome (group A — 1.8%, group B — 8.6%)
- psychotic incidents (group A — 1.8%).

The significant differences between the groups as regard to mental disorders were not found. While analysing the data, it can be noticed that most frequently the offenders from groups A and B have problems to maintain their mental health. The problems are connected with regular alcohol consumption, which results in the occurrence of post-alcohol psychosis symptoms or organic depression syndrome.

Family socialization process

There have been attempts to draw up the family socialization of the offenders, taking into account such variables as: a family structure, evaluation of emotional bonds among family members, parents' alcohol addiction, parents' mental diseases and domestic violence experienced by the subjects in their family house.

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Table 4. Family structure

Offender's family structure	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total	Statistical method	Value (out of 325)	df	Asymptotic significance
	A	B	C	D					
Full family	81.3	70.4	73.8	88.0	78.9	Pearson χ^2	44.748	15	.0001
Common-law marriage	1.8	12.7	1.5		3.7	Reliability quotient	40.984	15	.0001
Divorced	8.0	11.3	4.6	8.0	8.0				
Illegitimate child	7.2	5.6	20.0	4.0	8.7	Linear relation test	.384	1	.535
Brought-up in children's home	1.8				0.6				

The majority of the examined offenders (78.9%) comes from so-called full families. There are significant differences between each group as regard to family structure. The offenders belonging to groups B and C had the least favourable relations owing to the lack of a father (an illegitimate child, a divorced family), whereas the offenders from group D were most frequently brought up in families of a stable structure. What were the bonds between the offenders and their parents? The findings showed no significant differences between groups. Equally, in groups A, B and C a positive emotional bond with a mother existed in most cases, while in group C the persons described an emotional bond with their mothers as weak, negative. 51% of the subjects declared their positive attitude toward both parents. Emotional bonds created in a family should give an individual a sense of belonging and closeness, form empathy and respect for the other man. Although the offenders were raised in full families, their parents could not meet the tasks defined by their role. 65% of the violence offenders described their relation with parents as improper, confrontational, even disturbed. A frequent cause of conflicts in a family was alcohol abuse by a mother, father or both parents. The data are shown in tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Mother's addiction to alcohol

Offender's mother's addiction	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total	Statistical method	Value	df	Asymptotic significance
	A	B	C	D					
No	89.4	78.9	93.8	85.3	87.0	Pearson χ^2	7.608	3	.55
Yes	10.6	21.1	6.2	14.7	13.0	Reliability quotient	7.619	3	.55
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Linear relation test	0.012		.613

Table 6. Father's addiction to alcohol

Offender's father's addiction	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total	Statistical method	Reliability (out of 325)	df	Asymptotic significance
	A	B	C	D					
No	63.7	50.7	75.4	80.0	67.0	Pearson χ^2	16.871	3	.001
Yes	36.3	49.3	24.6	20.0	33.0	Reliability quotient	17.002	3	.001

In the offenders' families a problem of alcohol abuse mostly referred to fathers. There were significant differences between the groups of the offenders. 49.3% of the subjects from group B had a direct contact with an alcohol problem at home on account of a deepening process of mother's and father's addiction. A third of the offenders (32.1%) from group A were brought up in a family where only a father was addicted to alcohol. Alcoholism in a family is linked with the disturbed married life, improper problem-solving by means of force and aggression, lack of positive bonds between parents. In the future life, this leads to adopting the way of solving problems and satisfaction of needs in the form of an aggressive attack on others. The attention-deserving fact is that the addiction of the offenders' mothers' (excluding group B) was rather a relatively rare phenomenon. The significant differences between the groups of the offenders, as regard to psychotic disorders of their parents, were not found. There were mostly mothers' depressive disorders.

In the literature of this subject matter is a view that the experience of being wronged in childhood and observing violence used by parents may transform a victim into an offender. The question was asked whether the subjects experienced violence in their biological families. The data are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Violence experience in a biological family

Violence experience in the offender's family	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total	Statistical method	Value	df	Asymptotic significance
	A	B	C	D					
None	55.8	47.9	64.6	72.0	59.6	Pearson χ^2	10.206	3	.012
Present	44.2	52.1	35.4	28.0	40.4	Reliability quotient	10.353	3	.016
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Linear relation test	6.392	1	.011

The data indicate that in each personality group of the offenders, the part of the subjects experienced violence in their family of origin. The

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offenders from group D — originating from full families with proper family atmosphere, were affected by the least negative experiences connected with domestic violence. The most affected by violence incidents were the subjects from group B. It should be emphasized that they are the persons with intelligence quotient within the norm (borderline retardation) with a low level of self-esteem. As a result of this, they are more inclined than others to emulate other people's behaviour acquired in a learning process. All the more when aggressive behaviour is prized and brings benefits. The family which hands down their children traditions and norms permitting violence in mutual relations, cause that children learn aggressive behaviours in order to control their environment and they function in their adulthood following these patterns. Moreover, experiencing domestic violence causes the reduction in ability to control hostile emotions and aggressive impulses.

Most often the offender in the subjects' family of origin was a father.

Social functioning of offenders

In this variable range there were shown: educational background of the offenders, professional status, relationships in the working environment and a criminal record of the subjects.

Table 8. Professional status of offenders

Professional status of offenders	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total	Statistical method	Value (out of 325)	df	Asymptotic significance
	A	B	C	D					
Working	50.4	42.3	75.8	81.3	60.9				
Unemployed with unemployment benefit	4.4		1.5		1.8	Pearson χ^2 Reliability quotient	61.007	21	.0001
Unemployed without unemployment benefit	21.2	23.9	4.5	5.3	14.8				
Pensioner	6.2	4.2	4.5	5.3	5.2	Reliability quotient	66.723	21	.0001
Disability pensioner	9.7	18.3	10.6	5.3	10.8				
Usual work	2.7	9.9	1.5		3.4				
Partner's dependent	2.7	1.4			1.2	Linear relation test	14.344	1	.0001
Pre-retirement benefit	2.7		1.5	2.7	1.8				

The group which is characterized by a relatively high level of education is the offenders from group D — 55% had secondary education,

16% — higher education, and the remaining ones were persons with vocational secondary education. The lowest level of education was characteristic of the subjects from group B — 79% held primary education, often completed in special primary school, 8% — incomplete primary education, and the remaining persons had vocational education. The offenders belonging to group A received mostly vocational secondary education with various specializations and they made 69% of the subjects, the remaining persons were people with primary education and 10% with secondary one. In group C there was a diversity of educational background, vocational secondary education received 38%, secondary education — 31% and 31% had primary education.

The myth as regard to the professional status of violence offenders — they are unemployed people, are their partners' dependent, earn their living as casual workers — has not been fully confirmed. It can be generally concluded that the majority of the subjects work and have their source of income. The examined groups of domestic violence offenders considerably differ in terms of their professional status. The similar status is presented by group C and group D. These persons are professionally active, have financial income from: old age pension, disability pension or pre-retirement benefit. Their professional position is confirmed by their educational background and personality traits (active, jaunty, resilient, a high level of self-esteem, high intellectual potential). The offenders from group B may encounter problems with maintaining a job since it is the least educated group characterized by intellectual potential within the norm, low self-esteem, resilience and low activeness, most likely in their professional life, too.

Table 9. Relationships at work

Relationships at work	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total	Statistical method	Value (out of 325)	df	Asymptotic significance
	A	B	C	D					
Very good	5.3	3.1	19.6	25.4	14.8	Pearson χ^2	33.855	9	.0001
Good	68.4	46.9	72.5	52.4	61.1	Reliability quotient	39.205	9	.0001
Difficult/Bad	26.3	50.0	7.8	22.2	24.1				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Linear relation test	5.855	1	.0001

If most of the subjects work, they have to maintain defined relationships in the working environment with their colleagues, superiors, inferiors, therefore, it was examined whether the subjects demonstrating aggressive behaviour at home, can control their emotions at work, or

whether they also have problems in contact with others, and if so, these problems should affect the relationships in their workplaces.

One of domestic violence offenders typologies (HOLZWORTH-MUNROE and STUART, 1994) distinguishes, among others, two types of offenders. One type comprises offenders that use violence within the area of their homes, only toward their own families; the other type is an antisocial offender who commits acts of violence both in the family and outside, often at work. Relationships at work may partly define a type of a violence offender.

Relationships at work were specified through indicators defining the quality of relationships: very good, good, difficult/bad. The obtained findings suggest that the subjects have good relationships at work, receive recognition from their superiors, are respected and appreciated by their colleagues, can rely on their assistance, have no serious conflicts at work, can adapt themselves to the environment. There are significant differences between groups. Very good relationships (25.4%) are maintained by the offenders belonging to group D — the persons with high intellectual potential, proper self-esteem, without complexes, professionally active. Good and very good relationships are also characteristic of the offenders belonging to group C — the constellation of their personality traits shows that they are individuals with improper personality; in order to gain benefits — the positive evaluation of themselves — they manipulate others, which allows them to avoid conflicts and maintain good relationships. The difficulty in maintaining positive contacts in the working environment is experienced by half of the offenders from group B. Their weak resilience to obstacles and stress, low emotional resistance, inability to cope with problems causes that they may react aggressively even to weak stimuli inflicted by their environment, which makes it difficult for them to maintain good contact with others.

The last variable which was taken into consideration in the analysis of social functioning of the subjects, was the offenders' criminal record. The data are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Punishable acts committed by the subjects

Offender's criminal record	Analysis of 4 clusters (%)				Total
	A	B	C	D	
With a criminal record	83.2	84.5	90.9	96.0	88.0
With a clean record	16.8	15.5	9.1	4.0	12.0

The obtained findings indicate that the majority of the examined violence offenders have a clean criminal record. There are no significant

differences between the offenders within a specific group. The most frequent categories of committed offences were: abuse of family members (Article 207, Article 246 of he Penal Code) and an offence bearing the features of "an assault" (Article 135§1 of the Penal Code).

Concluding remarks

The obtained research material allowed the distinguishing of four groups of offenders demonstrating different selected personality traits: self-control of behaviour, self-esteem, habits of interpersonal relations and the structure of temperament and intellectual functioning. There were significant differences between groups of the offenders as regard to their socialization, biological functioning, alcohol abuse and social functioning.

While taking into consideration the entire group of 325 subjects, the general conclusions are the following: 36% of the violence offenders abused alcohol, and there were 18% addicted persons medically diagnosed. Thus, it can be assumed that alcoholisation of the offender is an important risk factor of the occurrence of violence.

Violence offenders mostly originated from a full family, 65% of the offenders described the relations with parents as improper, confrontational, or even disturbed. A frequent cause of conflicts in a family was the abuse of alcohol by a father or mother.

Out of all the subjects 40% were violence victims in their childhood, in each personality group of the offenders, the part of the subjects experienced violence in their family of origin.

The professional status of the offenders can be defined as good, 60% of the subjects are working people, approximately 17% live off their old-age or disability pension. The violence offenders have good relationships with their colleagues, superiors, they are respected and appreciated, have not serious conflicts.

The thorough examination of violence offenders should make it possible to adapt more efficiently the support system for victims and offenders of domestic violence. The treatment of offenders cannot be an alternative to court proceedings, it must become a constituent of comprehensive intervention programmes on domestic violence.

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