



Provided by the author(s) and University of Galway in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite the published version when available.

Title	Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children
Author(s)	Gannon, Robyn
Publication Date	2023
Publication Information	Gannon, Robyn. (2023). Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children. <i>Dearcadh: Graduate Journal of Gender, Globalisation and Rights</i> , 4. <a href="https://doi.org/10.13025/w6t0-re89">https://doi.org/10.13025/w6t0-re89</a>
Publisher	School of Political Science and Sociology, University of Galway
Link to publisher's version	<a href="https://doi.org/10.13025/w6t0-re89">https://doi.org/10.13025/w6t0-re89</a>
Item record	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10379/17861">http://hdl.handle.net/10379/17861</a>
DOI	<a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.13025/w6t0-re89">http://dx.doi.org/10.13025/w6t0-re89</a>

Downloaded 2024-05-14T04:10:42Z

Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.



---

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

---

## **Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.**

**Gannon, Robyn**

***Domestic Abuse Keyworker at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children***

**Abstract** Risk assessment is a key facet in supporting victims of domestic abuse and preventing outcomes such as re-assault or domestic homicide. Campbell's Danger Assessment questionnaire is a risk assessment tool that is used specifically to estimate the risk of re-assault or domestic homicide. This article will investigate the use of the Danger Assessment at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children. A literature review will examine the topics of domestic abuse, domestic homicide, Campbell's Danger Assessment, and domestic abuse risk assessment in Ireland. A sample of 20 danger assessments was taken and analysed for trends from the 162 that were conducted by Aoibhneas in 2021. The results showed that Irish nationals in the sample were more likely to score within a higher risk category than foreign nationals. Furthermore, many clients in the sample reported experiencing controlling, stalking and jealous behaviours from their partners. Though the data analysis is based on a small non-representative sample, the results indicate a likely need for further research into the development of a danger assessment variation that takes into account contextual and cultural differences between Ireland and the country of the danger assessment's origin, the USA.

**Key Words:** Domestic abuse, gender-based violence, risk assessment, danger assessment, domestic homicide

## Introduction

Domestic abuse is a global issue which impacts an estimated 1 in 3 women worldwide (UN Women and UNODC, 2022). Domestic homicide (DH) is the homicide of an individual by their current or former intimate partner or a member of their family, and is the most extreme form of domestic abuse (Evans et al. 2022; David & Jaffe 2021; Monckton Smith 2020). Whilst men comprise the primary victims of homicide globally, women are more likely than men to be victims of domestic homicide (Monckton Smith, 2020). In Ireland, 252 women have been murdered since 1996. Of resolved cases, 55% were murdered by a current or former intimate partner, and 63% were murdered in their own home (Women's Aid 2022).

Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children is a charity that has been operating in North Dublin since 1986, growing to include helpline, drop-in, outreach, court accompaniment and refuge support for women and children. In 2021, Aoibhneas supported 9,878 callers through their 24-hour Helpline, accommodated 366 women and children experiencing domestic abuse through emergency accommodation supports, supported 899 women and children with outreach services, and provided accompaniment to 423 women and children (Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children CLG 2021).

A central component of risk assessment is trying to evaluate the likelihood and potential severity of an incident or accident occurring through data and research. Risk assessment informs risk assessors of things that can go wrong, how likely these things are, and what the impacts could be. When risk is competently assessed, practical and informed steps can be taken to minimise the likelihood of unwanted consequences. It is a fundamental aspect of creating safer environments in a range of contexts. It is vital that risk assessment is grounded in accurate research and is conducted by trained professionals to assess risk as accurately as possible. Risk assessment is a critical component of working with people experiencing domestic abuse. Aoibhneas, as part of this risk assessment, utilises Campbell's Danger Assessment (DA) tool ([dangerassessment.org](http://dangerassessment.org)). The DA has been shown to be predictive of further abuse, severe assaults, and DHs (Evans et al. 2022; Messing et al. 2020; Messing et al. 2013).

The purpose of this article is to contextualise and analyse the results of a study that was undertaken to explore the use of the DA at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children. This study involved taking a sample of 20 out of 162 danger assessments completed in 2021, and analysing the responses given to the questionnaire for trends. The aim of this article is to estimate the level of risk held by clients of Aoibhneas by studying this small sample, and to examine the questionnaire responses given in the sample with the wider literature on danger assessment and DH. This is necessary, as there is little research into DH and domestic abuse risk assessment in Ireland compared to other countries, such as the United States of America or the United Kingdom. Given that the DA is a tool that was developed in the USA, it is important to examine the effectiveness of using the danger assessment in the Irish context.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Domestic Abuse, Domestic Homicide, and Gender.***

Domestic abuse is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality globally (Wilson and Websdale, 2006). Research has shown that there are clear links between domestic abuse and domestic homicide (DH).

Coercive control and stalking in abusive relationships are predictive of DH, particularly when control is threatened (Ávila et al. 2021; Monckton Smith 2020; Bows 2018). Monckton Smith (2020) identified several indicators that display a perpetrator's change in thinking in response to a perceived loss of control of their victim, which may result in a decision to commit DH. These indicators include separation, an escalation in control, an escalation in the frequency, severity, or variety of abuse, begging for a victim to return to the relationship, threats of or actual violence, stalking, or suicide threats. This 'coercive control discourse' in relation to DHs suggests that they can be predicted, and hence, prevented (Monckton Smith 2020).

The significance of gender for both victims and offenders of domestic abuse is reflected in global research and data. However, it is important that the limitations of such data are acknowledged; 36% of global data on victims of homicide in 2021 contained no information on the sex of the victim, and 50% contained no contextual information related to the homicide (UN Women & UNODC 2022). Where data is available, males are more frequently identified as both perpetrators (95%) and victims (80%) of homicide globally. However, the data on DH tells a different story - women represent an estimated 82% of victims of DH globally (Monckton Smith 2020). In 2021, an estimated 45,000 women and girls worldwide were murdered by intimate partners or other family members (UN Women & UNODC 2022). DH is the most common cause of violent death for women in Europe (Bows 2018). Between 2016 and 2021 in Ireland, 79% of female victims of homicide were also the victims of a domestic abuse related incident, whilst this figure stood at 24% for male victims of homicide. 31% of male domestic abuse related homicide deaths were children when the incident occurred. Male perpetrators are far more commonly reported than female perpetrators for violent and threatening offences against both genders (74% for women and 88% for men) (An Garda Síochána 2022).

### ***History of Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment and Interventions in Ireland***

In the 1970s and 1980s in Ireland, grassroots organisations were established that provided support and advocacy to domestic abuse victims. These services included Women's Aid (1974), the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC 1979), and Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children (1986). The 1990s ushered in a number of state developments in response to domestic abuse; in 1993, a domestic violence and sexual assault unit was created within An Garda Síochána (AGS), with 1994 seeing the establishment of a policy within AGS focused on responding to domestic abuse. In 1996, the Domestic Violence Act was passed,

which introduced barring orders, interim barring orders, protection orders and safety orders (Fitzgibbon 2022).

These developments continued into the 2000s and 2010s. In 2010, COSC produced the First National Strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, which highlighted the need to develop a specific risk assessment tool for domestic abuse (COSC 2010). In 2015, a Garda inspectorate report criticised the lack of a standardised and formal risk assessment within AGS to identify potential high-risk cases of domestic abuse. The report recommended the implementation of a new victim centred policy, a risk assessment process, and an analysis of DHs (Fitzgibbon 2022). The same year, the Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB) was set up within AGS (An Garda Síochána 2023; Williams 2015). In 2016 COSC published their Second National Strategy, which outlined future changes to domestic abuse legislation and mandated AGS with developing a specialised domestic abuse risk assessment (COSC 2016). The AGS Domestic Abuse Intervention Policy was published in 2017, while the Domestic Violence Act of 2018 criminalised coercive control and forced marriage (Fitzgibbon 2022). In 2019, divisional protective services units (DPSUs), offshoots of GNPSBs, were established in 29 stations in Ireland (An Garda Síochána 2019).

The 2020s have been characterised to date by both advances and setbacks in state responses to domestic abuse. Setbacks include the developmental delay on the domestic abuse risk assessment tool to be rolled out by AGS, as well as the revelation that over 3,000 emergency calls made in relation to domestic abuse were incorrectly cancelled by AGS since the beginning of 2019 (Lally 2021). However, 2020 also saw Operation Faoiseamh enacted during the Covid-19 lockdown to increase Garda contact with victims of domestic abuse. A report examining the effectiveness of AGS in responding to domestic abuse is expected to be published in June of 2023. Submissions from stakeholder organisations to this report highlight the need for the risk assessment tool in development to be research and evidence based and in accordance with international best practice (O’Keeffe, 2023).

### ***Risk Assessment and Prevention of Domestic Homicide (DH)***

If the key purpose of risk assessment is gaining an understanding of the likelihood and potential severity of violent incidents, can a risk assessment tool exist that assists victims of domestic abuse to estimate their risk of serious injury or death? Many domestic homicides (DHs) may be preventable, and research has shown that it is possible to extract risk indicators through an analysis of cases of DH that can be accurately applied to the tool to predict the risk of re-assault or homicide (Monckton Smith 2020; Campbell et al 2003). Research indicates that certain perpetrator behaviours and acts within an abusive relationship could indicate a risk for DH, including stalking, controlling behaviours, attempted or actual strangulation, sexual abuse, or the use of a weapon (Monckton Smith 2020; Messing et al. 2020; Spencer and Stith 2020).

Whilst risk assessment is necessary to identify those most at risk of serious injury or domestic homicide, it is vital that this is followed through with supports to minimise risk. A key theme

in the literature surrounding DH risk assessment is inadequate levels of cooperation between different state and non-government agencies in relation to assessing risk and putting into place resources to protect high-risk victims. A 2020 study of DH in England and Wales between 2013-2015 found that, of 141 recorded DHs, only 10% of victims had accessed specialist domestic abuse services (Chantler et al. 2020). The importance of a multilevel, cooperative, community approach to domestic abuse has been discussed at length (Evans et al. 2022; UN Women and UNODC, 2022; Stanley, Chantler and Robbins 2019; Wilson and Websdale 2006). There are several community interventions associated with the prevention of DH, including policies and services that reduce contact between victims and alleged perpetrators, reducing the opportunity for violence to occur (known as exposure reduction). However, research has shown that inadequate exposure reduction can be worse than no intervention at all, potentially due to a ‘retaliation effect’, whereby interventions can invoke aggression by the perpetrator without reducing exposure (Dugan, Nagin, and Rosenfeld 2003). It is hence extremely important for agencies to work together to protect those most at risk, and for risk assessments to be conducted at a multi-agency level.

### ***Campbell’s Danger Assessment***

A validated risk assessment tool that is specifically used to predict domestic homicide (DH) is the Danger Assessment (DA) (Campbell et al. 2003; Campbell et al. 2009). The DA is a tool that is used to support victims of domestic abuse and their advocates to assess the risk in their relationships. It was designed through comparative research into cases of domestic abuse which resulted in serious re-assault or DH with cases that did not. The DA attempts to quantify a prediction of the level of risk for re-assault or DH for victims. The DA is the first validated risk assessment tool that was designed to directly estimate the risk of DH or re-assault occurring from the perspective of the victim. It takes the form of a questionnaire with 20 questions, each focusing on the subject’s perception and memories of their relationship, as well as a calendar which aims to assist in remembering the frequency and severity of abusive incidents. It categorises each subject into one of four risk levels based on their score, ranging from variable to extreme danger. Each question has a different weighted score. Behaviours which were more associated with DHs or severe re-assault in the research, such as gun ownership and threats with weapons, are weighted more highly. Hence, a subject who reports these behaviours may be statistically more likely to be killed in a DH, and will score higher than another subject who did not report these behaviours.

It must be highlighted that the DA is not a failsafe predictor, as all risk assessment is based on likelihood rather than certainty. This tool was developed by comparing the risk factors in intimate partner femicide cases with those present in cases where women were abused but not killed. It is predictive of severe re-assaults and DH with similar or greater accuracy than other domestic abuse risk assessments (Evans et al. 2022; Messing et al. 2020; Messing et al. 2013). The benefits of using this tool include helping a client to recognise the level of risk they are facing, assisting in safety planning, and screening high-risk cases that could progress to DH (Olszowy et al. 2013).

Apart from assessing the research-based risk of re assault or DH, the DA is a multifaceted tool that can act as a consciousness raising exercise. When completed between a client and trained domestic abuse advocate, the 20 questions can act as a way for clients to reflect on their experiences of abuse. The DA questions can act as conversation starters to discuss certain abusive incidents and behaviours, and can be used to facilitate informed discussions between clients and advocates. Furthermore, the DA can be used to monitor increases or decreases in predicted risk over time as abuse escalates or deescalates.

### ***Contextual differences in risk assessments***

A key theme in the literature is the importance of risk assessments which are culturally competent (Evans et al., 2022; Ávila et al., 2021; Messing et al., 2020). It is vital to account for differences in the context in which risk assessments are conducted. An intersectional approach to risk assessment must include an acknowledgement that there are local and regional differences in the characteristics of DHs (Avila et al., 2021). For example, the DA, a tool developed in the USA, places gun ownership of an alleged perpetrator as the most highly weighted risk factor. In the USA, rates of firearm homicides are 4.12 per 100,000 population (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2022). It must be queried whether this can be translated to countries such as Ireland, where firearm homicides are comparatively much lower (0.1-0.2 per 100,000 population) and are largely the result of criminal violence (Campbell et al., 2009).

Furthermore, there may be certain groups who are at a higher risk than others for a variety of reasons. Research indicates that women of colour and immigrant women are generally at a higher risk of DH, and has highlighted flaws in risk assessment such as racial bias (Messing et al. 2020; Olszowy et al. 2013). To improve cultural competency in the danger assessment, various versions have been created to support women of different regions, sexual orientations, and cultural backgrounds. Examples include the DA-I (danger assessment for immigrants in the USA, Appendix 3), the DA-Brazil, and the DA-R (danger assessment for women in same-sex relationships, Appendix 4) (Evans et al. 2022; Messing et al. 2013; Glass et al. 2008).

### **Use of the DA at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children**

In 2008, Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children conducted research with the aim of developing a set of early warning signals and tools to help identify women and children at risk of DH through validated assessments. This research highlighted the importance of risk assessment to prevent further serious violence and death, as well as to inform safety planning and to empower clients to realise their risk level and take action accordingly. The report concluded that there is an ongoing need for further research on risk assessment, the development and testing of such models in an Irish context, and the introduction of training programmes for domestic abuse staff (Murphy and McDonnell 2008). Aoibhneas aims to risk

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.

assess clients for further re-assault or DH using the standard 20-question DA as developed by Campbell et al. (Appendix 1 & 2). If a client scores 14 or higher on the DA it is sent, with their consent, to the Garda National Protection Services Bureau (GNPSB) Domestic Abuse Intervention Policy Unit (DAIPU). Through this process, the client will be linked-in with their local Garda station. The DA hence provides a valuable support for clients at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children both during and after their engagement with the service.

## **Methodology**

Approval was sought from the Management team at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children to conduct this study. The researcher is as a domestic abuse Keyworker at Aoibhneas and has conducted domestic abuse risk assessments with clients, including the DA. The privacy and confidentiality of service users was ensured in this study. No identifying data was used in the research. The only personal information used was whether clients identified as Irish or foreign nationals. The data used included overall DA scores and the yes or no answers to each of the questions (Appendix 1). For ease of access as well as ensuring that assessments were picked at random, the DAs chosen were those of the last 10 outreach and the last 10 refuge clients to be registered on the Aoibhneas database in 2021. If the clients chosen had not completed a DA, the next registered client was chosen. The data was transferred by the researcher into Microsoft Excel, where charts and tables were used to analyse and visualise the data. The results were then compared to the literature on the DA and DH.

A limitation of this study is the small sample size. 20 DAs were reviewed out of a total 162 which were conducted within refuge and outreach services in 2021. The sample represents ~12% of the DAs completed this year. The data cannot be used to make definitive analyses of the scores or answers given by all clients in 2021. Hence, the results constitute an indicative rather than a representative sample of the risk held by Aoibhneas clients in 2021.

## **Results**

50% of the sampled clients scored within the severe or extreme danger risk category, with 85% scoring with at least an increased risk of danger. These statistics are represented in Figures 1-3.

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.

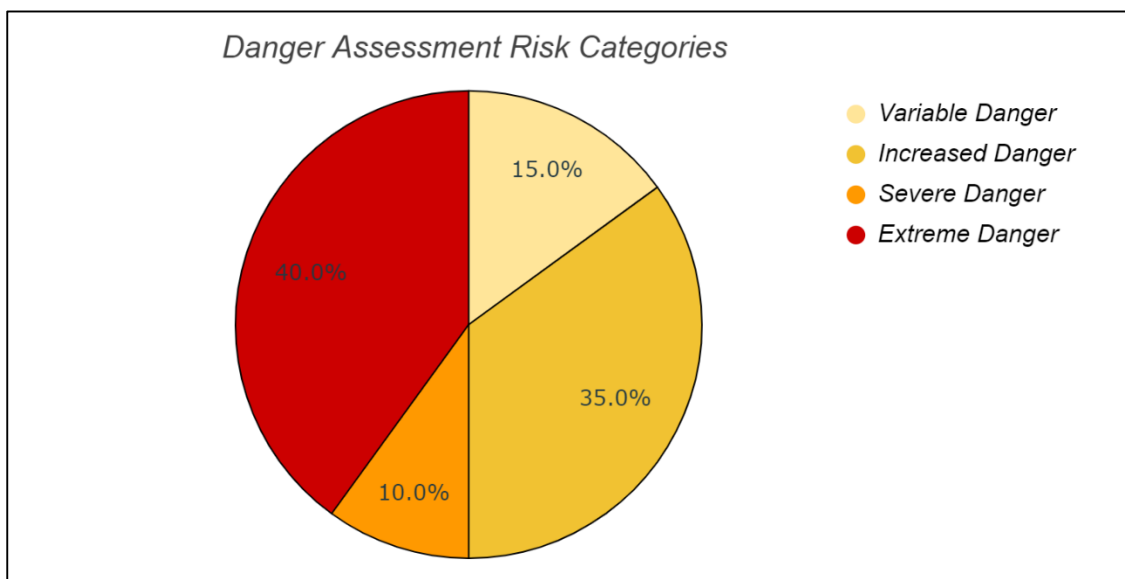


Figure 1: Pie-chart displaying the proportion of the sample who were allocated to each risk-level within the danger assessment (DA)

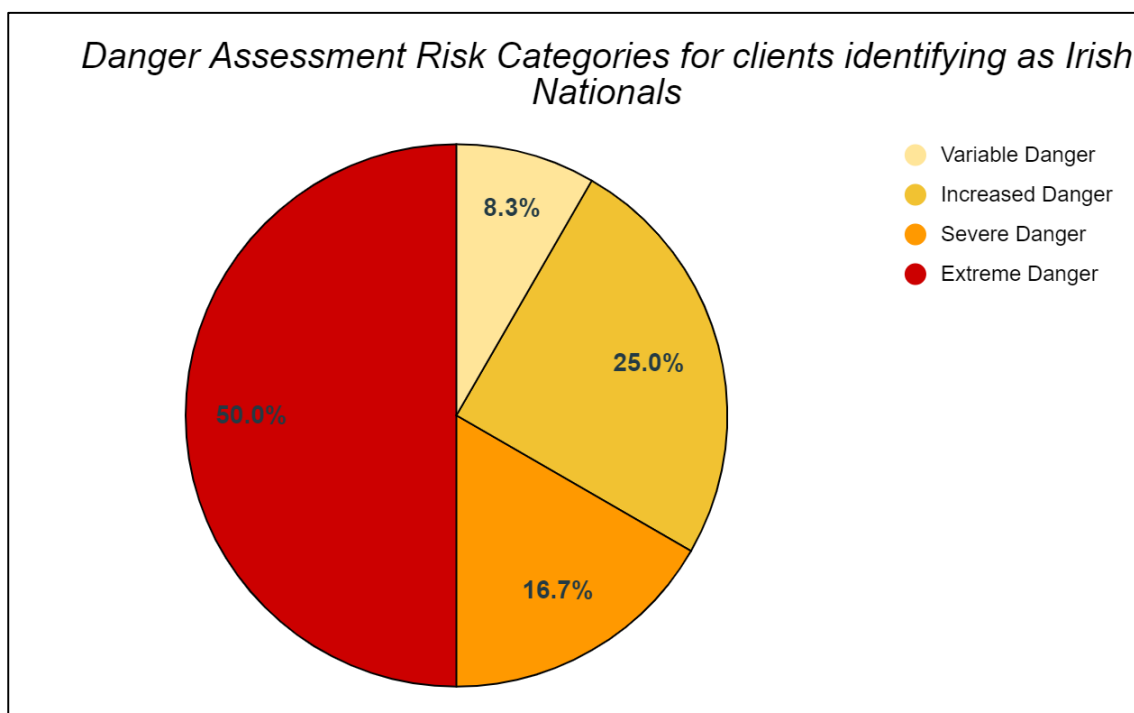


Figure 2: Pie-chart showing the proportion of clients in each risk category for clients identifying as Irish Nationals.

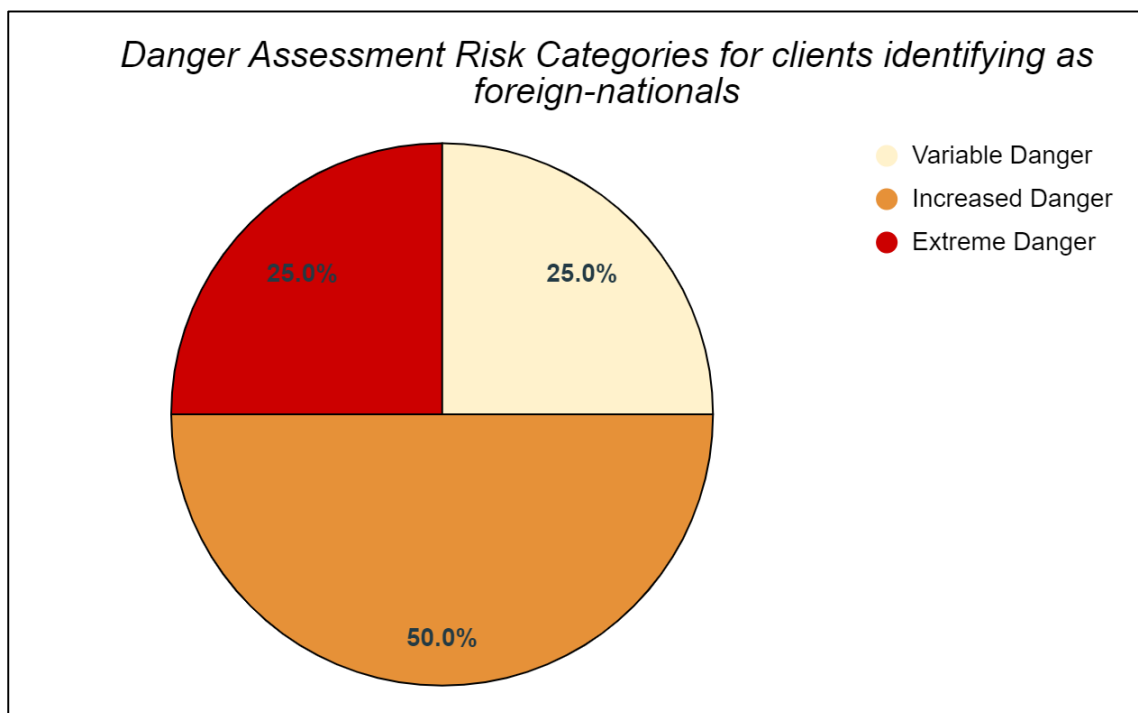


Figure 3: Pie-chart showing the proportion of clients in each risk category for clients identifying as foreign nationals.

Of the sampled clients, 12 identified as Irish nationals, whilst 8 identified as a different nationality. The above chart shows that the sampled Irish-national clients were far more likely to score in a higher risk category on the DA, with 50% scoring in the extreme danger category, and 91.7% scoring at least in the increased danger category. In contrast, sampled non-Irish national clients were most likely to score within the increased danger category (50%), with 25% scoring variable danger and 25% scoring extreme danger.

Table 1 below shows a breakdown of the most commonly answered YES questions by %. The weighted score of each answer can be found in Appendix 2.

DA Questions	% that answered 'yes'
Is he violently and constantly jealous of you?	80%
Does he control most or all of your daily activities?	70%
Do you believe he is capable of killing you?	70%
Does he follow or spy on you/leave threatening notes or messages/destroy your property/call you when you don't want him to?	70%
Is he an alcoholic or problem drinker?	60%
Have you left him after living together during the past year?	55%
Does he threaten to kill you?	55%

Has he avoided being arrested for domestic violence?	55%
Has the physical violence increased in severity or frequency over the past year?	50%
Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to do so?	45%
Does he ever try to choke/strangle you or cut off your breathing?	45%
Does he use illegal drugs?	45%
Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a lethal weapon?	40%
Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?	40%
Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?	40%
Is he unemployed?	35%
Do you have a child that is not his?	35%
Have you ever been beaten by him while you were pregnant?	30%*
Does he threaten to harm your children?	20%
Does he own a gun?	10%
*20% of sample never pregnant by A/P	

Table 1: Table showing the proportion of the sample who answered YES to each question, arranged by most to least frequently answered with YES.

## Discussion

Figure 1 shows that 85% of the total sampled clients within the study were deemed to be at least at an increased risk for serious re-assault or domestic homicide (DH), with 50% of the clients falling into the severe or extreme risk categories. This result indicates the likely level of risk carried by clients of Aoibhneas. Figure 2 provides an indication that non-Irish nationals may score lower than Irish nationals in the DA. This result could be explained by the literature that highlights the limitations of using one DA questionnaire for clients from different backgrounds. There are tools such as the DA-I which may provide a more accurate estimate of the risk carried by non-Irish national clients. However, similar to the use of the original DA in Ireland, this may not be an appropriate tool as it was developed in the USA, therefore representing a different cultural context.

Table 1 shows that a high proportion of sampled clients identified jealous, controlling, and stalking behaviours from their partners (80%, 70% & 70% respectively). As described by Monckton Smith (2020), stalking, and controlling behaviours are risk behaviours that can be associated with DH. However, whilst these factors are identified in recent literature as being predictors for DH in the United Kingdom, they are not highly weighted in the scoring of the

DA (Appendix 2). The high levels of stalking behaviour disclosed by this sample of clients indicates a likely need for the incoming stalking offence to be implemented in Irish legislation (gov.ie 2022).

Between 40% and 60% of the sampled clients identified that their alleged perpetrator is a problem drinker (60%), uses illegal drugs (45%), and/or that themselves or their abuser have attempted or threatened suicide (40%). This may be indicative of the significance of mental health issues for both victims and perpetrators within abusive relationships. Further research could indicate a potential opening for identifying domestic abuse and working with victims and perpetrators within mental health and addiction support services.

Just over half (55%) of clients identified that their alleged perpetrator had threatened to kill them, and/or that they had recently left the relationship. These are both risk factors associated with DH (Monckton-Smith, 2020; Campbell et al. 2003; Johnson and Hotton 2003). The proportion of sampled clients who were in the process of leaving or had left their relationship may be reflective of the context in which the DAs were performed. These clients were actively engaged in refuge or outreach supports, indicating an awareness of the abuse and, in many cases, a desire to leave. As has been explored by research, leaving a relationship can be the most dangerous time for victims of domestic abuse, and this result may be indicative of the high level of risk that Aoibhneas clients are presenting with (Campbell et al. 2003; Johnson and Hotton 2003).

Between 40% and 60% of the sampled clients disclosed experiences of physical and/or sexual abuse. 50% reported that incidents of physical violence had increased within the last year, and 45% reported sexual abuse. 40% reported being threatened with a lethal weapon and/or had a weapon used against them, and 45% reported experiencing strangling or attempts to cut off their breathing. Based on the experiences within the sample, this may indicate a need for the non-fatal strangulation offence, which is due to be enacted into Irish legislation (gov.ie 2022).

30% of the sampled clients who were pregnant by their abuser experienced physical abuse during their pregnancy. The experience of the sampled clients is reflected in global research, which has highlighted that pregnancy is a time of increased risk of domestic abuse for women. Studies have shown that up to 30% of pregnant women suffer from domestic abuse (James et al. 2013). A 2008 study by Chen and Horen found that DH was the leading cause of death of pregnant women in Maryland USA. 20% of sampled clients disclosed that their abuser had threatened to harm their children. It is important to consider that many victims of domestic abuse can be fearful of disclosing child abuse for fear of alerting state social services such as Tusla, and often feel pressured by the state to be the primary protective factor for their children (Holt, 2016).

A small proportion of the sampled clients reported that their partner has access to or owns a gun (10%). This may be reflective of the cultural context of Ireland, in that guns are not as easily accessible as they are in countries such as the USA or Brazil. As this question is the most

heavily weighted of all in the questionnaire (adding 5 points to a client's score, whilst questions surrounding control, stalking and jealousy add only 1 point each), further research may suggest the importance of adapting the DA to the cultural context of the region in which it is being administered. Further research is needed into the dynamics of DHs in Ireland, so that the DA can be examined in this context.

## **Conclusion**

Research has shown that domestic homicides (DHs) may be prevented through early identification of potential victims, accompanied with the provision of survivor-centric support and protection (UN Women and UNODC 2022). A vital aspect of reducing DHs is that accurate risk assessment tools are used as part of wrap-around support plans for those experiencing domestic abuse. The Danger Assessment (DA) is a valuable tool for assessing the risk of serious re-assault or DH. It may be necessary to develop specific DAs that are responsive to the cultural context of Ireland.

The results of the non-representative sample of DAs may be indicative of a need for the development of new DAs that are specific to the cultural context of Ireland. Questions which are heavily weighted in the original DA, including that of gun-ownership, may not be as relevant in an Irish context. The large frequency of answers in the sample related to research-identified high-risk behaviours for DH such as stalking and control may also be indicative of a need to adapt the DA, as these questions are not weighted heavily in the original DA.

There is currently a research gap regarding the efficiency of domestic abuse risk assessments in Ireland, such as the DA. Further research is needed into domestic abuse risk assessment and DH in Ireland. This research should focus on identifying commonalities and trends within known DHs in Ireland, highlighting/pinpointing behaviours associated with an increased risk of DH, similar to the work of Ávila et al. (2021) and Monckton-Smith (2020). Furthermore, ongoing research should be conducted with individuals currently experiencing domestic abuse to identify patterns of behaviours which may lead to re-assault or DH, similar to the research of Campbell et al. (2003), and Evans et al. (2022). This research could lead to the development of culturally competent and more efficient DAs reflective of different minority ethnic groups in Ireland, such as non-Irish nationals or the Travelling community, or a specific questionnaire for marginalised groups such as undocumented migrants and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Further research using a more representative sample will be needed to confirm these conclusions.

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues at Aoibhneas for facilitating this research and for offering their guidance and experience, and my lecturers and classmates on the Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic Abuse course at Dundalk Institute of Technology. I would also like to acknowledge survivors of domestic abuse – I hope that further research-based action will create more resources to increase your safety.

## References

An Garda Síochána. (2022). *Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence: A Report on Crime Levels and Garda Operational Responses. Ireland*. Available from: <https://www.garda.ie/en/about-us/our-departments/office-of-corporate-communications/news-media/an-garda-siochana-domestic-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-report-sept-22.pdf>.

An Garda Síochána, 'The Garda National Protective Services Bureau.' Garda, <https://www.garda.ie/en/about-us/organised-serious-crime/garda-national-protective-services-bureau-gnpsb/>. Accessed 13 Mar. 2023.

An Garda Síochána. 'Six New Divisional Protective Services Go Live on the 9/1/19.' Garda, Jan. 2019, <https://www.garda.ie/en/about-us/our-departments/office-of-corporate-communications/press-releases/2019/january/six-new-divisional-protective-services-go-live-on-the-9-1-19.html>.

Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children CLG. (2021). *Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children CLG Annual Report 2021*. Available from: <https://AoibhneasDomesticAbuseSupportforWomenandChildren.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/AoibhneasDomesticAbuseSupportforWomenandChildren-Annual-Report-2021.pdf>.

Ávila, T.P., Medeiros, M.N., Chagas, C.B., Vieira, E.N., Magalhães, T.Q.S. and Passeto, A.S.Z. (2021). 'Better Prevention of Femicide: Evidence from Brazil.' *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* [online], 10(4), pp.174–188. Available from: <https://www.crimejusticejournal.com/article/view/2073> [accessed 24 December 2022].

Bows, H. (2019). Domestic Homicide of Older People (2010–15): A Comparative Analysis of Intimate-Partner Homicide and Parricide Cases in the UK. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 49(5), pp.1234–1253. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/bjsw/article/49/5/1234/5211414>.

Bows, H. (2018). 'Domestic Homicide of Older People (2010–15): A Comparative Analysis of Intimate-Partner Homicide and Parricide Cases in the UK.' *British Journal of Social Work*, 49, pp.1234–1253.

Campbell, Jacquelyn C., et al. 'Assessing Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide.' *National Institute of Justice Journal*, no. 250, Nov. 2003, pp. 14–19.

Campbell, J.C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C., Campbell, D., Curry, M.A., Gary, F., Glass, N., McFarlane, J., Sachs, C., Sharps, P., Ulrich, Y., Wilt, S.A., Manganello, J., Xu, X., Schollenberger, J., Frye, V. and Laughon, K. (2003). 'Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From a Multisite Case Control Study.' *American Journal of Public Health* [online], 93(7), pp.1089–1097.

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.

Available from: <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1089> [accessed 27 April 2023].

Campbell, J.C., Webster, D.W. and Glass, N. (2009). 'The Danger Assessment: Validation of a Lethality Risk Assessment Instrument for Intimate Partner Femicide.' *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* [online], 24(4), pp.653–674. Available from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0886260508317180> [accessed 31 December 2022].

Chantler, K., Robbins, R., Baker, V. and Stanley, N. (2020). 'Learning from domestic homicide reviews in England and Wales'. *Health & Social Care in the Community* [online], 28(2), pp.485–493. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hsc.12881> [accessed 23 December 2022].

Cheng, D. and Horon, I.L. (2010). 'Intimate-Partner Homicide Among Pregnant and Postpartum Women.' *Obstetrics & Gynecology* [online], 115(6), pp.1181–1186. Available from: <https://journals.lww.com/00006250-201006000-00013> [accessed 31 December 2022].

COSC: National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (Ireland) (2010). *National strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence 2010-2014*. Dublin: Stationery Office. Available from: [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Domestic\\_nationalstrategy.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Domestic_nationalstrategy.pdf).

COSC: National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (Ireland) (2016). *Second national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence 2016 - 2021*. Dublin. Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/135520/bafad2ff-d225-4798-82e2-ec4936a879c0.pdf#page=null>.

[dangerassessment.org](https://www.dangerassessment.org). *DA Tools. Danger Assessment*. Available from: <https://www.dangerassessment.org/DATools.aspx>.

David, R. and Jaffe, P. (2021). 'Pre-Migration Trauma and Post-Migration Stress Associated with Immigrant Perpetrators of Domestic Homicide.' *Journal of Family Violence* [online], 36(5), pp.551–561. Available from: <https://link.springer.com/10.1007/s10896-021-00259-4> [accessed 23 December 2022].

Dugan, L., Nagin, D.S. and Rosenfeld, R. (2003). 'Exposure Reduction or Retaliation? The Effects of Domestic Violence Resources on Intimate-Partner Homicide.' *Law & Society Review* [online], 37(1), pp.169–198. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1540-5893.3701005> [accessed 23 December 2022].

Evans, D.P., Xavier Hall, C.D., da Rocha, R.W.G., Prado, S.M. and Signorelli, M.C. (2022). "'These Questions Have Everything That Happens to me'": Analysis of a Femicide Risk Assessment Tool for Abused Women in Brazil.' *Journal of Family Violence* [online], 37(4), pp.547–557. Available from: <https://link.springer.com/10.1007/s10896-021-00313-1> [accessed 22 December 2022].

Femicide Watch. (2019). *Women's Aid - Domestic violence service in Ireland* [online]. Available from: <https://www.womensaid.ie/about/campaigns/femicide-in-ireland/> [accessed 24 December 2022].

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.

Fitzgibbon, Gerard (2022?). *Policing the Problem? Irish Domestic Violence Policy and the Role of the Police, 1994-2018*. University College Cork, Jan. 2022, <https://cora.ucc.ie/bitstream/handle/10468/14056/119224537%20Gerard%20Fitzgibbon.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. Cork Open Research Archive.

Glass, N., Perrin, N., Hanson, G., Bloom, T., Gardner, E. and Campbell, J.C. (2008). 'Risk for Reassault in Abusive Female Same-Sex Relationships.' *American Journal of Public Health* [online], 98(6), pp.1021–1027. Available from: <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2007.117770> [accessed 22 February 2023].

Gonçalves, L.C., Rossegger, A., Sadowski, F., Urwyler, T., Baggio, S. and Endrass, J. (2022). 'Domestic homicide and other violent crimes: The same or different phenomena?' *Forensic Science International: Mind and Law* [online], 3, p.100075. Available from: <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S2666353822000054> [accessed 23 December 2022].

gov.ie. Minister McEntee to make stalking and non-fatal strangulation standalone offences. Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/8027c-minister-mcentee-to-make-stalking-and-non-fatal-strangulation-standalone-offences/>.

Holt, S. (2016). 'Domestic Violence and the Paradox of Post-Separation Mothering.' *British Journal of Social Work* [online], 10 December 2016, p.bcw162. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/bjsw/article-lookup/doi/10.1093/bjsw/bcw162> [accessed 31 December 2022].

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). (2022). 'On gun violence, the United States is an outlier.' *Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation*. Available from: <https://www.healthdata.org/acting-data/gun-violence-united-states-outlier>.

James, L., Brody, D. and Hamilton, Z. (2013). 'Risk Factors for Domestic Violence During Pregnancy: A Meta-Analytic Review.' *Violence and Victims* [online], 28(3), pp.359–380. Available from: <http://connect.springerpub.com/lookup/doi/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-12-00034> [accessed 31 December 2022].

Johnson, H. and Hotton, T. (2003). 'Losing Control: Homicide Risk in Estranged and Intact Intimate Relationships.' *Homicide Studies* [online], 7(1), pp.58–84. Available from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1088767902239243> [accessed 27 April 2023].

Lally, C. (2021). More than 3,000 domestic violence 999 calls marked 'cancelled' by Garda. *The Irish Times* [online], June 2021. Available from: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/more-than-3-000-domestic-violence-999-calls-marked-cancelled-by-garda-1.4601760> [accessed 13 March 2023].

Messing, J.T., Amanor-Boadu, Y., Cavanaugh, C.E., Glass, N.E. and Campbell, J.C. (2013). 'Culturally Competent Intimate Partner Violence Risk Assessment: Adapting the Danger Assessment for Immigrant Women.' *Social Work Research* [online], 37(3), pp.263–275. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/swr/article-lookup/doi/10.1093/swr/svt019> [accessed 23 December 2022].

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.

Messing, J.T., Campbell, J., Dunne, K. and Dubus, S. (2020). 'Development and Testing of the Danger Assessment for Law Enforcement (DA-LE).' *Social Work Research*, 44(3), pp.143–156. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/swr/article-abstract/44/3/143/5842255?redirectedFrom=fulltext>.

Monckton Smith, J. (2020). 'Intimate Partner Femicide: Using Foucauldian Analysis to Track an Eight Stage Progression to Homicide.' *Violence Against Women* [online], 26(11), pp.1267–1285. Available from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1077801219863876> [accessed 24 December 2022].

Murphy, C. and McDonnell, N. (2008). *Escalating Violence - How to Assess and Respond to Risk: A Review of International Experience*. Dublin: Aoibhneas Women and Children's Refuge.

O'Keeffe, C. (2023). Domestic abuse victims being asked how gardaí treat them [online]. *Irish Examiner* [online]. Available from: <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-41046212.html> [accessed 13 March 2023].

Olszowy, L., Jaffe, P.G., Campbell, M. and Hamilton, L.H.A. (2013). 'Effectiveness of Risk Assessment Tools in Differentiating Child Homicides From Other Domestic Homicide Cases.' *Journal of Child Custody* [online], 10(2), pp.185–206. Available from: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15379418.2013.796267> [accessed 23 December 2022].

Policing Authority. (2022). *Policing Priorities 2022-2024*. Available from: [https://www.policingauthority.ie/assets/uploads/documents/Policing\\_Priorities\\_2022-2024.pdf](https://www.policingauthority.ie/assets/uploads/documents/Policing_Priorities_2022-2024.pdf).

Spencer, C.M. and Stith, S.M. (2020). 'Risk Factors for Male Perpetration and Female Victimization of Intimate Partner Homicide: A Meta-Analysis.' *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* [online], 21(3), pp.527–540. Available from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1524838018781101> [accessed 27 April 2023].

Stanley, N., Chantler, K. and Robbins, R. (2019). 'Children and Domestic Homicide.' *The British Journal of Social Work* [online], 49(1), pp.59–76. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/bjsw/article/49/1/59/4972703> [accessed 24 December 2022].

UN Women and UNODC. (2022). *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates of gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere in 2021. Improving data to improve responses*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Williams, Paul. *New Bureau Supports and Advises in Sex Crime Cases*. Independent.Ie, 12. Nov 2015, <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/new-bureau-supports-and-advises-in-sex-crime-cases-34193171.html>.

Wilson, J.S. and Websdale, N. (2006). 'Domestic violence fatality review teams: An interprofessional model to reduce deaths.' *Journal of Interprofessional Care* [online], 20(5), pp.535–544. Available from: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13561820600959253> [accessed 22 December 2022].

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.

Women's Aid. *Submission to the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland*. Policy Submission, Jan. 2018, pp. 1–21, <http://policereform.ie/en/POLREF/Womens%20Aid.pdf/Files/Womens%20Aid.pdf>.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Danger Assessment (dangerassessment.org)

<b>DANGER ASSESSMENT</b>	
Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Ph.D., R.N. Copyright, 2003; update 2019; <a href="http://www.dangerassessment.com">www.dangerassessment.com</a>	
<p>Several risk factors have been associated with increased risk of homicides (murders) of women and men in violent relationships. We cannot predict what will happen in your case, but we would like you to be aware of the danger of homicide in situations of abuse and for you to see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation.</p> <p>Using the calendar, please mark the approximate dates during the past year when you were abused by your partner or ex-partner. Write on that date how bad the incident was according to the following scale:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Slapping, pushing; no injuries and/or lasting pain</li> <li>2. Punching, kicking; bruises, cuts, and/or continuing pain</li> <li>3. "Beating up"; severe contusions, burns, broken bones</li> <li>4. Threat to use weapon; head injury, internal injury, permanent injury, miscarriage or choking* (use a © in the date to indicate choking/strangulation/cut off your breathing- example 4©)</li> <li>5. Use of weapon; wounds from weapon</li> </ol> <p>(If any of the descriptions for the higher number apply, use the higher number.)</p>	
<p>Mark <b>Yes</b> or <b>No</b> for each of the following. ("He" refers to your husband, partner, ex-husband, ex-partner, or whoever is currently physically hurting you.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has the physical violence increased in severity or frequency over the past year?</li> <li>2. Does he own a gun?</li> <li>3. Have you left him after living together during the past year? 3a. (If you have never lived with him, check here: <input type="checkbox"/>)</li> <li>4. Is he unemployed?</li> <li>5. Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a lethal weapon? (If yes, was the weapon a gun? check here: <input type="checkbox"/>)</li> <li>6. Does he threaten to kill you?</li> <li>7. Has he avoided being arrested for domestic violence?</li> <li>8. Do you have a child that is not his?</li> <li>9. Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to do so?</li> <li>10. Does he ever try to choke/strangle you or cut off your breathing? 10a. (If yes, has he done it more than once, or did it make you pass out or black out or make you dizzy? check here: <input type="checkbox"/>)</li> <li>11. Does he use illegal drugs? By drugs, I mean "uppers" or amphetamines, "meth", speed, angel dust, cocaine, "crack", street drugs or mixtures.</li> <li>12. Is he an alcoholic or problem drinker?</li> <li>13. Does he control most or all of your daily activities? For instance, does he tell you who you can be friends with, when you can see your family, how much money you can use, or when you can take the car? (If he tries, but you do not let him, check here: <input type="checkbox"/>)</li> <li>14. Is he violently and constantly jealous of you? (For instance, does he say: "If I can't have you, no one can.")</li> <li>15. Have you ever been beaten by him while you were pregnant? (If you have never been pregnant by him, check here: <input type="checkbox"/>)</li> <li>16. Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?</li> <li>17. Does he threaten to harm your children?</li> <li>18. Do you believe he is capable of killing you?</li> <li>19. Does he follow or spy on you, leave threatening notes or messages, destroy your property, or call you when you don't want him to?</li> <li>20. Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?</li> </ol> <p>Total "Yes" Answers <input type="text"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thank you. Please talk to your nurse, advocate, or counselor about what the Danger Assessment means in your situation.</b></p>	

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.

## Appendix 2: Scoring of Danger Assessment (dangerassessment.org)

Name of Client: Test	
<hr/>	
<b>Scoring</b>	
Add total number of "Yes" responses, 1 through 19*:	<input type="text" value="19"/>
Add 4 points for a "Yes" to question 2:	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Add 3 points for EACH "Yes" to questions 3 and 4:	<input type="text" value="6"/>
Add 2 points for EACH "Yes" to questions 5, 6, 7 & 10a:	<input type="text" value="8"/>
Add 1 point for EACH "Yes" to questions 8 and 9:	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Subtract 3 points if 3a is checked: *Item 20 is not scored	<input type="text" value="-0"/>
TOTAL:	<input type="text" value="39"/>
<hr/>	
<b>Danger Assessment Scoring</b>	
<input type="radio"/> Less than 8 - Variable Danger <input type="radio"/> 8-13 - Increased Danger <input type="radio"/> 14-17 - Severe Danger <input checked="" type="radio"/> 18 or more - Extreme Danger	

## Appendix 3: DA-I (dangerassessment.org)

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.

## DANGER ASSESSMENT for IMMIGRANT WOMEN

*Jill Theresa Messing, MSW, Ph.D., Nancy E. Glass, Ph.D., MPH, RN, Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN*

Several risk factors have been associated with increased risk of violence, particularly severe and/or life threatening violence, among immigrant women in violent relationships. We cannot predict what will happen in your case, but we would like you to be aware of the danger of repeat and severe violence in situations of abuse and for you to see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation.

Using the calendar, please mark the approximate dates during the past year when you were abused by your partner or ex partner. Write on that date how bad the incident was according to the following scale:

1. Slapping, pushing; no injuries and/or lasting pain
2. Punching, kicking; bruises, cuts, and/or continuing pain
3. "Beating up"; severe contusions, burns, broken bones
4. Threat to use weapon; head injury, internal injury, permanent injury
5. Use of weapon; wounds from weapon (If **any** of the descriptions for the higher number apply, use the higher number.)

#	Yes	No	Mark <b>Yes</b> or <b>No</b> for each of the following ("he" or "him" refers to your husband, partner, ex-husband, ex-partner, or whoever is currently physically hurting you.)
1			Do you prefer to answer these questions in English?
2			Has the physical violence increased in severity or frequency over the past year?
3			Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a lethal weapon? (If yes, was the weapon a gun? _____)
4			Does he threaten to kill you?
5			Has he avoided being arrested for domestic violence?
6			Are you married to him?
7		*	Do you have any children living with you in your home?
8		*	Do you have any children with him?
9			Do you have a child that is not his?
10			Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to do so?
11			Does he ever try to choke you?
12			Is he an alcoholic or problem drinker?
13			Is he violently and constantly jealous of you? (For instance, does he say "If I can't have you, no one can.")
14			Have you ever been beaten by him while you were pregnant? (If you have never been pregnant by him, check here: _____)
15			Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
16			Does he threaten to harm your children?
17			Do you believe he is capable of killing you?
18			Does he follow or spy on you, leave threatening notes or messages on voicemail, destroy your property, or call you when you don't want him to?
19			Are you unemployed?
20			Have you attended college, vocational school and/or graduate school?
21		*	Do you have another / new partner?
22			Do you hide the truth from others because you are afraid of him?
23			Does he prevent you from going to school, or getting job training, or learning English?
24			Has he threatened to report you to child protective services, immigration, or other authorities?
25			Do you feel ashamed of the things he does to you?
26			Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?

\* indicates that a "no" response increases risk.

**Thank you. Please talk to your social worker, advocate, counselor or nurse about what the Danger Assessment means in terms of your situation.**

<b>DANGER ASSESSMENT-Revised</b> <b>For Use in Abusive Female Same-Sex Relationships</b> Nancy Glass, PhD, MPH, RN & Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN <i>Copyright 2007 Johns Hopkins University, School of Nursing</i>	
<p>Several risk factors have been associated with increased risk of re-assault of women in abusive same-sex relationships. We cannot predict what will happen in your case, but we would like you to be aware of the danger of repeat abuse and for you to see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation.</p> <p>Using the calendar, please mark the approximate dates during the past year when you were abused by your partner or ex-partner. Write on that date how bad the incident was according to the following scale:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Slapping, pushing; no injuries and/or lasting pain</li> <li>2. Punching, kicking; bruises, cuts, and/or continuing pain</li> <li>3. "Beating up"; severe contusions, burns, broken bones, miscarriage</li> <li>4. Threat to use weapon; head injury, internal injury, permanent injury, miscarriage</li> <li>5. Use of weapon; wounds from weapon</li> </ol> <p>(If <b>any</b> of the descriptions for the higher number apply, use the higher number.)</p>	
<b>Mark Yes or No for each of the following.</b> ("She" refers to your female partner or ex-partner)	
Yes	No
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
___	___
<b>Total "Yes" Answers</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thank you. Please talk to your nurse, advocate or counselor about what the Danger Assessment-Revised means in terms of your situation.</b></p>	

Investigating the use of the Danger Assessment (DA) Questionnaire to assess risk at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children.



**About the Author:** Robyn Gannon graduated with a first-class honours MA in Gender, Globalisation and Rights from the National University of Ireland Galway in 2022. This is Robyn's second published article with Dearcadh. Robyn's research interests include gender-based violence, domestic abuse, and gendered inequalities in society. Robyn has been working with survivors of domestic abuse at Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children since 2021, and is interested in pursuing further research into Gender-based violence.

**Author Contact Details:**

Email: [gannonro@tcd.ie](mailto:gannonro@tcd.ie)

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/robyn-gannon](https://www.linkedin.com/in/robyn-gannon)