Stalking Victimization: 
Survey in the Icelandic General Public

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Forword

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Acknowledgements

The data used for analysis in this study was obtained from an annual crime victimization survey conducted by the Social Science Research Institution in the year 2015 for the police department of Reykjavík area and the National Commissioner of the Icelandic police. The study was reported to the Data Protection Authority before data collection was performed.
Abstract – English
The main aim of this study was to identify characteristics of stalking victims and the effects of stalking victimization on victims in Iceland. If there would be a difference between genders and relations as well as age groups in experiencing stalking victimization. If being a stalking victim would affect fear and worries experienced by victims as well as if encountering stalking victimization would be associated with experiencing either physical or sexual assault. The data used for analysis in this study was obtained from an annual Icelandic crime victimization survey among the Icelandic general public in the year 2015. The sample consisted of 4000 individuals living in Iceland both women and men at the age 18-76 years old. Results revealed no significant difference regarding gender or relations, however, younger participants were significantly more likely then older to report stalking victimization. There was a significant effect on fear and worries of further victimization, however univariate results demonstrated only a significant effect for worries of further victimization. Finally there was significant association between stalking victimization and experiencing either physical or sexual assault. This study provides rare information regarding nature and prevalence of stalking victimization as well as effects on victims among the Icelandic general public.

Keywords: stalking victimization, gender, relations, residence, fear, violence

Abstract - Icelandic
Since the first anti-stalking legislation was established in California in 1990 (Kurt, 1995; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2004; Podaná & Imríšková, 2014; Scott, Rajakaruna, Sheridan & Sleath, 2013) stalking has gained a lot of attention and interest worldwide (Malsch, 2000; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Westrup & Fremouw, 1998). That is best shown by dramatic increase in stalking researches (Owens, 2015) since the early 90’s (Morville, 1993) as well as widespread establishment of anti-stalking legislations (Westrup & Fremouw, 1998) in America (Tolhurst, 1994; Van der Aa & Römkens, 2013) and many other western countries (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; De Fazio, 2009; Mullen & Pathé, 2002; Westrup & Fremouw, 1998). However, some countries still have no specific anti-stalking legislations (Malsch, 2000; Van der Aa & Römkens, 2013) that applies to all the Scandinavian countries (Malsch, 2000) except Sweden (Sveriger Rikisdag, 2016).

Initially stalking was primarily used to describe repeated harassment famous people experienced by their fans (Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2004; Westrup & Fremouw, 1998) or in association with domestic violence (Kurt, 1995; Schelong, 1994; Tolhurst, 1994). Following extended incidences in the general public (Mullen & Pathé, 2002) stalking has become a growing serious public and social issue (Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002), with high prevalence rates (Dressing, Kuhner & Gass, 2005; Dovelius, Öberg & Holmberg, 2006; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) and serious consequences for victims (Narud, Friestad & Dahl, 2014; Westrup & Fremouw, 1998).

Despite increased researches and widespread awareness the definition of stalking is still a debate that varies between professionals, authorities and within the general public (Tjaden, 2009). Taken together from various research over the past two decades, stalking refers to unwanted (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002), repeated intrusive harassing or threatening behaviour (Morville, 1993; Tolhurst, 1994; Van der Aa, &
Römkens, 2013; Westrup & Fremouw, 1998) that is used against a specific person with the intent to frighten them (Dietz & Martin, 2007; Malsch, 2000; Sheridan & Davies, 2001; Van der Aa, & Römkens, 2013).

What mainly makes stalking problematic to define is the fact that legal definitions are divergent between countries (Sheridan, Blaauw & Davies, 2003; Van der Aa & Römkens, 2013), stalking applies to variety of behaviours (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000) where many of them are not considered illegal (Dovelius, Öberg & Holmberg, 2006) and are often widely used in daily life (Dressing, Kuhner & Gass, 2005; Gibbons, 1998; Jordan, 1995). These behaviours can range from basic phone calls, letters or e-mails (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Thomas, Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2008), sending or dropping off unwanted items or gifts (Baum, Catalano, Rand & Rose, 2009; Dressing, Kuhner & Gass, 2005) and to showing up at the same places as the victim (Baum et al., 2009; Gibbons, 1998).

The most common stalking behaviours identified in researches are consistent and the same unwanted approaches are repeatedly reported (Thomas et al., 2008) where victims are forced in some way to communicate with the stalker (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000). The most frequently unwanted approach reported by victims were phone calls (Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Thomas et al., 2008; Westrup, Fremouw, Thompson & Lewis, 1999) and the least reported behaviour experienced by victims was to receive unwanted gifts or items (Baum et al., 2009; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002; Thomas et al., 2008).

Annual prevalence rates of stalking have been reported between 1.4-2.9% (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Dovelius, Öberg & Holmberg, 2006; Narud, Friested & Dahl, 2014; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) with the most abundant rate off 2.9% (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Dovelius, Öberg & Holmberg, 2006; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002). However, annual prevalence rates vary greatly depending on how
stalking is defined (Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). According to Purcell, Pathé and Mullen (2002), when less detailed definition is used prevalence rates are higher or 5.8% compared to when participants are asked in more detail. For example when participants are asked about the duration of stalking victimization and specific number of stalking methods experienced, annual prevalence rates descend to 2.9%.

Studies have provided information about the characteristics of stalking victims and research over the past 20 years are analogous regarding the victims gender whereas the majority of reported stalking victims were women (Dressing, Kuehner & Gass, 2005; Morville, 1993; Narud, Friested & Dahl, 2014; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002) and according to Budd, Mattinson and Myhill (2000) women were also more likely to experience greater number of stalking methods compared to men. Regarding the age of reported stalking victims they are most frequently younger than older (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002). According to Purcell, Pathé and Mullen (2002), where age was split into three groups, 18-35 years old, 36-55 years old and 56 years and older. The age group that was most likely to report being a victim of stalking was the youngest group, ranging from 18 to 35 years old and the least likely to report were the oldest age group 56+.

Studies are also consistent regarding the relations between the victim and stalker but it is considerably more common for victims to know their stalker then to be stalked by a complete stranger (Baum et al., 2009; Morville, 1993; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002). For example, in Sweden 67 % knew or could identify their stalker versus 34% who were stalked by a stranger (Dovelius, Öberg & Holmberg, 2006). Sligtly higher number of victims in Germany could identify their stalker or 76% versus 24%, that were stalked by a stranger (Dressing, Kuehner & Gass, 2005). Few studies exist regarding the victims residence but according to Budd, Mattinson and Myhill (2000) those living in cities regardless of gender were more likely to experience stalking victimization then those living in rural areas. Furthermore Sheridan and
Lyndon (2012) examined the relation between fear experienced by victims and the country of residence. Results demonstrated that the country of residence was not associated with fear experienced by victims.

Being a victim of stalking can have serious effects on the victim’s life and functions (Blaauw, Winkel, Arensman, Sheridan & Freeve, 2002; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001). But stalking is known to cause victims psychological distress (Blaauw et al., 2002; Dietz & Martin, 2007; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Sheridan & Lyndon, 2012) and has been associated with fear and high levels of stress (Blaauw et al., 2002; Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Sheridan & Lyndon, 2012; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Westrup et al., 1999). But according to Budd, Mattinson and Myhill (2000) stalking victims were more fearful of walking alone after dark compared to those who had not been a victim of stalking in the last year.

Stalking victims also fear for their own safety and the safety of others related to them (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). According to Budd, Mattinson and Myhill (2000), stalking victims fear further victimization but 31% of reported stalking victims feared physical assault, 18% feared sexual assault and 28% feared that violence would be used against someone related to them. Therefore, the fear of violence stalking victims often experience is not unreasonable whereas studies demonstrate that risk of violence due to stalking is estimated around 10-30% (Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002; Thomas et al., 2008), these attacks can have serious physical consequences and can even be fatal (Thomas et al., 2008). In addition to physical violence there is an association between stalking victimization and sexual assault (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002).

The main aim of this study was to identify characteristics of stalking victims and the effects of stalking victimization among victims in Iceland. Based on the above literature it
was hypothesized that: 1) There would be a differences between genders as well as relations between victim and perpetrator in experiencing stalking; 2) Stalking victimization would be more prevalent among younger than older respondents; 3) There would be a gender difference in number of stalking methods experienced; 4) Being a stalking victim would affect fear of being alone after dark and worries of further victimization; 5) There would be an association between number of stalking methods experienced and fear or worries of further victimization based on victims residence; 6) There would be association between being a stalking victim and experiencing either physical or sexual assault in the same year.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of a sample recruited from a participant pool held by the Social Science Research Institution. Participants had agreed in advance to participate in studies carried out and administered by the institution. For involvement in the study participants were compensated by offering them involvement in a lottery wherein the prize was a gift certificate. This study was reported to the Data Protection Authority before data collection was performed. The sample consisted of 4000 individuals living in Iceland that were randomly selected from the participant pool, 2000 from the Reykjavik city area and 2000 from regional Iceland. Of those 4000 participants, 2605 (65%) completed the questionnaire. Of these, 48% were male and 52% female ranging from 18 years old to 76 years old, and the mean age of the sample was 47.8 years (SD = 14.48).

Apparatus/measures

The questionnaire used in this study was constructed by Ólafur Örn Bragasson and Guðrún Sesselja Baldurssdóttir modelled on definitions of stalking and three other studies, one from Germany (Hellmann & Kliem, 2015), second from America (Baum et al., 2009) and third from Sweden (Dovelius, Öberg & Holmberg, 2006). The list consisted of 32 multiple-
choice questions, some with open ended response option. The list also included closed end rating scale questions and Likert scale question. Questions involved, participant’s background information, experiences related to offences, their own safety as well as perception of law enforcement work and functions and three questions regarding stalking victimization. Of the 32 questions there were nine used for analysis in the present study.

Characteristic information of stalking victims was assessed with questions regarding participant’s background information (e.g., gender, age and residence). Participants were asked whether they were male or female. They were also asked to reveal their year of birth and postcode.

Relations were assessed with a question regarding, relations between the victim and perpetrator. Participants were asked to mark one of ten response options, “spouse”, “former spouse”, “family member”, “friend”, “acquaintance/work colleague”, “stranger” and the last 3 options were “don’t know who”, “don’t want to answer” and the last one was “other, who?” Which was an open-ended question where participants could yield relations if other than mentioned above (see Appendix B).

Stalking methods were assessed with a question related to experiencing stalking victimization in the year of 2014, if relevant had repeatedly experienced on more than one occasion a behaviour from a person that induced worries or fear. Participants were asked to mark all stalking methods experienced by the same person and what caused them the most fear. Response options were 10, and of them were 8 with a range of stalking behaviours, and two were, “I don’t know” and “no, not applicable” (see Appendix B).

Fear and worries were assessed with two separate questions. One regarding how safe or unsafe participants felt alone after dark in their environment. Participants were asked to rate how safe or not safe they felt on a Likert Scale from (1) “very safe” to (4) “very unsafe”, in addition there were two options don’t know who/not applicable and don’t want to answer
Second regarding how often, if any time in the year 2014 they experienced worries of becoming a victim of a criminal offence. Participants were asked to rate how often on a Likert Scale from (1) “never” to (5) “very often”, in addition there were two more options “don’t know” and “don’t want to answer” (see Appendix C).

Information on physical and sexual assault were assessed with two separate questions. First regarding if participants experienced physical assault or a violent crime in the year 2014. Where response options were four, “yes”, “no”, “don’t know” and “don’t want to answer” (see Appendix D). Second if participants experienced sexual assault in the year 2014. Where response options were four, “yes”, “no”, “don’t know” and “don’t want to answer” (see Appendix D).

**Research design and data analysis**

This was a cross sectional study with between subject comparisons. Before data analysis a few variables were recoded using the statistical software named SPSS. Participants were asked of relations with the perpetrator and based on answers the variable was recoded in SPSS and relations were divided into two groups, stranger and known. Likewise for the question regarding participant’s year of birth, based on answers the variable was recoded where age was split into three groups for further analysis. The first group ranged from 18-35 years old, second from 36-55 years old and third from 56 and above. The question where participants were asked to fill in their postal code, based on their answers the variable was recoded and residency was split into six groups Capital region, Southern Peninsula, Western region and Westfjords, Northern region, Eastern region and Southern region.

Participants were asked to mark all stalking behaviours they experienced for further analysis and the variable was recoded firstly into two groups, yes (1) and no (0). Yes were those who experienced one to six methods and no were those who did not mark any stalking methods or marked don’t know and not applicable. Secondly methods were split into seven
groups 0-6, ranging from (0) no stalking methods experienced to (6) six methods experienced. Then descriptive statistics were computed to present annual prevalence rate of stalking victimization and basic characteristics of identified stalking victims as well as prevalence of stalking methods experienced by victims.

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test whether there was an effect of victim gender and relations with stalker in experiencing stalking. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine if there was a difference between age groups in experiencing stalking. Scheffe post hoc test was used to examine between what age groups there was a difference. An independent t-test was used to examine gender difference in number of stalking methods experienced. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test if being a victim of stalking had an effect on the fear of being alone after dark and worries of further victimization experienced by victims. Person´s test of correlation was used to analyze if there was association between victims fear and also worries based on victim’s residence. Finally, a Pearson Chi-Square test was used to examine if there would be association between being a stalking victim and experiencing either physical or sexual assault in the same year.

**Procedure**

The study was accomplished over the course of two months in May and June in 2015 and was carried out by the Social Science Research Institution for the police department of Reykjavik area and the National Commissioner of the Icelandic police. Participants were accessed via questionnaire online that featured introduction as well as instructions. In the introduction their participation was appreciated and they were informed that the questions in the study involved public experiences related to offences, their own safety as well as perception of law enforcement work and functions (see Appendix A). With the instructions participants were informed of their entitlements to answer all of the questions or as they
preferred. They were not obligatory to answer the list as a whole, their alternative was to answer selected questions but they were respectfully asked to just mark don’t want to answer. However subjects were informed of the importance of answering questions conscientiously. In addition participants were also informed that responses where confidential and responses could not be traced. Therefore the study was anonymous, which was ensured by asking participants only of gender and birth year. Participants were reminded of confidentiality throughout the study and that it was anonymous and responses could not be traced (see Appendix A). In the end of the questionnaire when participants submitted their answers they were thanked for their participation and informed that they had been registered in a lottery wherein the prize for extended subjects was a gift card.

Results

A total of 2501 participants that reported having been stalked in the past year and 148 stalking victims were identified, equivalent to 5.9 % prevalence rate in the year 2014. As presented in Table 1, stalking victims were slightly likelier to be a woman (56%) and majority of them knew or could identify their stalker (80%). Age of victims ranged from 19 to 75 years old with the mean age of 43.5 years ($SD = 14.52$). The victims residence was equally distributed across the country, with half (50%) living in the Capital region and half (50%) living in regional Iceland. The most common behaviour victims experienced by their stalker and caused worries or fear was that the perpetrator made unwanted intrusive contact via phone calls, e-mails or by social media. The least common behaviour experienced by the victims was being followed. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to examine effect of victim’s gender and relations with perpetrator in experiencing stalking.
Table 1

_Main characteristics of stalking victims along with stalking methods arranged by prevalence_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65 (43.92 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>83 (56.08 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known</td>
<td>103 (79.85 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>26 (20.15 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-35 years</td>
<td>49 (33.11 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-55 years</td>
<td>61 (41.22 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56+</td>
<td>38 (25.68 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital region</td>
<td>74 (50 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Peninsula</td>
<td>10 (6.76 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western region and Westfjords</td>
<td>14 (9.46 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern region</td>
<td>21 (14.19 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern region</td>
<td>9 (6.08 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern region</td>
<td>20 (13.51 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stalking methods</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator made unwanted intrusive contact based on relations (e.g. phone calls, e-mail or social media)</td>
<td>61 (25.52 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator threatened victim or significant others</td>
<td>47 (19.67 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator threatened victim or behaved threatening in his/hers presence</td>
<td>43 (17.99 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator loiter around victim home, workplace, etc.</td>
<td>25 (10.46 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread rumours on the internet or in the media (e.g. social media, blog or e-mail)</td>
<td>27 (11.30 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caused damage to victims properties</td>
<td>17 (7.11 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator physically attacked the victim</td>
<td>12 (5.02 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator followed victim (by car or walking)</td>
<td>7 (2.93 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results from ANCOVA showed that main effect for gender was not significant $F(1,125) = 1.29$, $p = .259$. The results were analogous for relations but main effect for relations was not significant $F(1,125) = 1.59$, $p = .208$. Therefore there was no interaction between relations and gender regarding to experiencing stalking $F(2,125) = .81$, $p = .370$.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the effects of age among stalking victims but age was split into three groups. The first group ranged from 18-35 years old, second from 36-55 years old and the third from 56 years old and above. Results from ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between age groups $F(2,2498) = 4.72$, $p = .009$. Scheffe post-hoc test revealed that there was a significant difference between the youngest and the oldest age group, whereas the youngest group responded on average higher ($M = .08$, $SD = 0.28$, $p = .010$) then the oldest group ($M = .05$, $SD = 0.21$ $p = 0.013$).

However, there was no significant difference between either the middle group ($M = .06$, $SD = 0.23$) and the youngest nor the oldest group.

Furthermore, as presented in Figure 1, men and women were equally likely to report one stalking method but as the when number of methods increased women reported ($M = 0.12$, $SD = 0.56$) to have experienced it considerably more than men ($M = 0.08$, $SD = 0.37$).

![Figure 1. Distribution of number of methods experienced by gender](image-url)
An independent t-test was conducted and results showed that the gender difference was significant $t(2187) = -2.24, p = 0.025$ therefore women that reported having been stalked encountered more stalking methods than men.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyse if being a victim of stalking had effect on fear and worries. Results from MANOVA showed a statistically significant multivariate effect on the fear of being alone after dark in their own neighbourhood and worries of becoming a victim of a criminal offence in the year 2014 based on experiencing stalking $F(2,2348) = 19.17, p < .005$. Univariate results demonstrate a significant effect for worries of becoming a victim of a criminal offence in the year 2014 $F(1,2349) = 38.22; p < .005$ but results for fear of being alone after dark in their neighbourhood was non-significant $F(1,2349) = 1.69; p = .194$.

Pearson’s r test of correlation was used to analyse victims fear or worries based on victim’s residence as shown in Table 2. The only significant association with fear of being alone after dark was among victims of stalking living in Southern region of Iceland. However, regarding to worrying of becoming a victim of another crime there was a small significant association with stalking victims living in several regions of Iceland, namely Southern Peninsula, Capital region, Eastern and Southern region.

A Pearson Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the relation between stalking victimization and physical or sexual violence. The association between being a stalking victim and experiencing physical assault was significant $X^2 (1, N = 2501) = 113.71, p < .001$, the relation with sexual assault in the year 2014 was also significant $X^2 (1, N = 2501) = 33.17, p < .001$. 
Table 2

Association between number of stalking methods experienced, victims residence and fear or worries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stalking methods experienced</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of being alone after dark in their environment</td>
<td>Capital region</td>
<td>1158</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Peninsula</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western region and</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>-.044</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Westfjords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern region</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern region</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern region</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>.145**</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Capital region</td>
<td>1161</td>
<td>.166**</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Peninsula</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>.241**</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worries of being a victim of criminal offence in 2014</td>
<td>Western region and</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Westfjords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern region</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern region</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>.207*</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern region</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>.181**</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ** p < .01. * p < .05

Discussion

The descriptive results show that the annual prevalence rates of stalking victimization in this study were more than double, or 5.9% compared to 1.4-2.9% previously reported (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Narud, Friested & Dahl, 2014; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). This is most likely due to problems regarding definition of stalking, but according to Purcell, Pathé and Mullen (2002) annual prevalence rates vary greatly depending on how detailed definition of stalking is used when participants are questioned. The most frequent stalking method experienced by stalking victims in this study is consistent with previous reported
method, which was unwanted phone calls (Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002; Thomas et al., 2008; Westrup et al., 1999). However, the question used in this study was extensive, by counting unwanted contact via phone calls, e-mail or social media in the same question. The least common behaviour was being followed by perpetrator, which is contrary with least experienced method previous reported which was receiving unwanted gifts or items (Baum et al., 2009; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002; Thomas et al., 2008), however, there was no such response option in this study.

There was no difference between genders or relations among stalking victims in this study and results did not support the first hypothesis that there would be a difference between genders as well as relations in experiencing stalking. Those results are inconsistent with previous researches that demonstrate that majority of reported stalking victims are women (Morville, 1993; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002; Dressing, Kuehner & Gass, 2005; Narud, Friested & Dahl, 2014) and that it is more common for victims to know their stalker (Baum et al., 2009; Morville, 1993; Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002). However, although results were not significant descriptive statistic revealed that victims were more frequently women as well as 80% knew or could identify their stalker. Stalking victimization in this study was more prevalent among younger than older respondents, wherein the younger group of participants responded on average significantly higher or more affirmative than the oldest group regarding experiencing stalking victimization in the year 2014. These findings supported the second hypothesis that stalking victimization would be more prevalent among younger than older respondents and is consistent with result from a study which used the same age groups as this study (Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002).

An important finding in this study also was that women experience more serious form of stalking then men, but women encountered significantly greater number of stalking methods. Those results supported the third hypothesis and that is consistent with Budd,
Mattinson and Myhill (2000) where results demonstrated that women were more likely to experience greater number of stalking methods then men.

Results from this study show that stalking victimization effects fear experienced by victims but there was a multivariate effect on both fear of being alone after dark and worries of becoming a victim of a criminal offence in the same year. Therefore supported the fourth hypothesis that being a victim of stalking would affect fear of being alone after dark and worries of further victimization. Those results are in accordance with previous studies, were stalking victimization is associated with fear and high levels of stress (Blaauw et al., 2002; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Westrup et al., 1999) and also that stalking victims were more fearful of walking alone after dark and they fear further victimization (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000).

Additionally results indicate that fear and number of methods experienced by victim could be based on victims residence. There was association between fear of being alone after dark and number of methods experienced only with victims living in Southern region of Iceland. However, with number of methods experienced and fear of further victimization there was a significant association with victims living in several regions of Iceland, Southern Peninsula, Capital region, Eastern and Southern region. Therefore results also support the fifth hypothesis that there would be association between number of stalking methods experienced and fear or worries of further victimization based on victim’s residence. These results potentially add to the current literature but victim’s residency has not been studied extensively regarding fear or number of stalking methods experienced by victims. However, as revealed by Budd, Mattinson & Myhill (2000) were subjects living in cities more likely to be stalked rather than those living in rural areas in the UK. In addition according to Sheridan & Lyndon (2012) country of residence was not associated with fear.
Results showed that there is association between stalking victimization and experiencing either physical or sexual violence those results supported the sixth hypothesis that there would be an association between being a stalking victim and experiencing either physical or sexual assault in the same year. These findings are consistent with previous studies where stalking victimization was associated with physical violence (Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002; Thomas et al., 2008) and also sexual violence (Budd, Mattinson & Myhill, 2000; Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2002).

The main limitations of this study were that rather few demographic variables were used as well as questions regarding stalking victimization were few and not sufficiently detailed on the context of stalking. The definition of stalking used in this study when participants were asked if they had experienced stalking in the last year was presumably too broad. That is best shown by the high annual prevalence rate and how many reported to have experienced one stalking method. It indicates lack of understanding regarding the concept and the severity of stalking. In addition the data used in this study was from a quantitative research with self-reported data in the form of an online survey. Self-reported data can be biased and quantitative researches often lack depth.

The strengths of this study was the large sample size that consisted of 4000 participants and high response rate or 65%. The respondents age range was wide and gender ratio was almost equal as well as their residency was equally distributed between rural and urban areas of Iceland. However as mention above regarding limitations of quantitative researches there are also strengths. As to when asking about private matters or experiences, respondents could be more likely to answer and answer truthfully in an anonymous quantitative survey then in qualitative.

For future researches it is crucial to use more detailed definition and questions regarding stalking. Where emphasis is placed on the severity of stalking and fear experienced by
victims. To be more direct don´t include worries and focus on fear experienced with sentence like if the stalking behaviour caused them to fear for their own safety or the safety of others or if limited his or hers way of living. For example, did the same person repeatedly use or showed you one or more behaviours that caused you to fear for your own safety or safety of others. Besides definition questions regarding stalking where few, additional questions could include the duration of stalking, if victim changed their lifestyle in some way as a result of stalking victimization and if respondents reported the victimization. Ask respondents to rate fear experienced by stalking also fear experienced in relation with stalking methods. Have more response options regarding behaviours experienced perhaps one open ended option for obtaining more thorough list of possible stalking methods. Finally to add an open-ended question where stalking victims have the alternative to respond if they were willing to participate in further research, perhaps interviews to achieve more depth.
References


Appendix A

intro

Aðæti viðtakandi.

Við bókkum þér kærlega fyrir að taka þátt í þessari könnun þar sem meðal annars er spurt um viðhorf þín til lögreglu, mat þitt á eigin öryggj og það hvort þú hafir orðið fyrir afbrotu/afbrótum.

leidb

Aður en þú byrjar viljum við tilkynna að þér er hvorki skyld að svara einstökum spurningum né könnuninni í heild. Ef þú vilt ekki svara einstökum spurningum merktu það vinsamlegast við „Vil ekki svara“. Rannsóknarinnar vegna er hins vegar mikilvægt að öllum aðilaum sé svarað samvirkusamlega, það tekor um 5-10 minútur að svara spurningalistunum.

Farið verður með svör sem trúnaðarmál og ekki er hægt að rekja svör til einstakra þátttakenda. Rannsóknin hafur verið tilkynnt til Persónuverndar.

leidbeiningar

Hér á eftir koma spurningar sem þér gætu þott persónulegar. Þær eru mjög mikilvægar til að lögreglan sé sem best í stakk núinn til að breiddast við afbrotu og veita sem besta þjónustu. Við minnum þig á að ekki er hægt að rekja svör til einstakra þátttakenda.
### Appendix B

**sp31**

Hver vonu tengsl vín við aðilann sem sýndi siða hagðun (ef fleiri en einn, þá aðilinn sem allr þær mestum ötta)?

- Fyrriðari maki
- Núverandi maki
- Fjölskylduleirlingur annar en maki
- Vinar
- Kunngjöfimaður eða vinnufélagi
- Öðru
- Veit ekki hver
- Annar, hver?

**sp30**

Næsta spurning snyr að eiltreið (stalking) sem er þegar sami gerandi synir létrekt af sér hagðun sem beinist gegn einstaklingum þannig að það velkjur þeir áhryggum og/eða ötta. Hagðuninn þarf að hafa allt sér stað oðar en einu síðin, eða að um fleiri en eina legund hagðunar sér að raða af hálfi sami aðila.

Athugas að þessari spurningu viðum við fá upplýsingar um eiltreið sem framlag var af sama aðila. Ef fleiri en eina aðili hreiddi þegar eða ærøtt með þessum hætti (eiltreið), merktu þá við hagðun þess aðila sem allr þær mestum ötta.

**Vardst þú fyrir því árið 2014 að sami einstaklingur hafi...**

- ...ognað þér og/eða hagað þér ognefjándi í návist þinn?
- ...höfðu þér og/eða þinnun nánustu?
- ...elt þeg (i bil eða gargarjandi)?
- ...verðið í kringum heimili þítt, vinnustuð þínn eða þína stad og þú heimsækir?
- ...ráðfær á þig (likamlega)?
- ...unnó skemmdarverk á egin þínnum?
- ...dreifð meiðurum um þig í fjólmiðum eða à nélínu (t.d. á samfélagsmiðum, bloggi eða í töluzöfum)?
- ...haft semband við þeg og á óvökum hátt móðið við ykkja tengsl/ samzkþi (t.d. með simiðum, samfélagsmiðum að nélínu eða í gognum töluzöfum)?
- Nei, á eiki við
- Veit ekki
### Appendix C

#### sp6

**Hversu örugg(ur) eða öðrugg(ur) finnst þér þú vera þegar þú ert ein(n) á ferli i þinu hverfi þegar myrkur er skollö á?**

- [ ] Mjög örugg(ur)
- [ ] Frekar örugg(ur)
- [ ] Frekar öðrugg(ur)
- [ ] Mjög öðrugg(ur)
- [ ] Veit ekki/á ekki við
- [X] Vil ekki svara

#### sp8

**Hversu oft, af einhvernum tíma, voru ástæður þannig hjá þér árið 2014 að þú hafðið áhyggjur af því að verða fyrir aftroti?**

- [ ] Aldrei
- [ ] Mjög sjaldan
- [ ] Frekar sjaldan
- [ ] Frekar oft
- [ ] Mjög oft
- [ ] Veit ekki
- [X] Vil ekki svara
### Appendix D

#### sp15

**Varðst þú fyrir ofbeldisbroti árið 2014?**

*Med þöfðu broti er átt við viðbeli eða liksársrás, t.d. ef einhver slær mann með hnef eða vopn.*

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#### sp17

**Varðst þú fyrir kynferðisbroti árið 2014?**

*Med þöfðu broti er t.d. átt við eða einhver hafi þvingað þig eða reynt að þvinga þig til kynferðislega aðhafna, gripið í þig eða þu háfr verð sner(ur) kynferðislega gegn vilja þinum.*

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