Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Victims & Offenders

An International Journal of Evidence-based Research, Policy, and Practice

ISSN: 1556-4886 (Print) 1556-4991 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/uvao20

The Hidden Roots of Interpersonal Aggressiveness: Dependency, Jealousy, and Revenge

Carolina Papa, Allison Uvelli, Marcela Matos, Marta Floridi, Anna Chiara Franquillo , Claudia Perdighe, Francesco Mancini & Erica Pugliese

To cite this article: Carolina Papa, Allison Uvelli, Marcela Matos, Marta Floridi, Anna Chiara Franquillo , Claudia Perdighe, Francesco Mancini & Erica Pugliese (20 Apr 2026): The Hidden Roots of Interpersonal Aggressiveness: Dependency, Jealousy, and Revenge, Victims & Offenders, DOI: 10.1080/15564886.2026.2652379

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2026.2652379

Published online: 20 Apr 2026.

VICTIMS & OFFENDERS
https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2026.2652379

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The Hidden Roots of Interpersonal Aggressiveness: Dependency, Jealousy, and Revenge

Carolina Papa [a,b], Allison Uvelli [c,d], Marcela Matos [e], Marta Floridi [c,d], Anna Chiara Franquillo [d], Claudia Perdighe [b], Francesco Mancini [b,f], and Erica Pugliese [b,g]

[a]Department of Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy; [b]Associazione di Psicologia Cognitiva APC e Scuola di Psicoterapia Cognitiva SPC, Rome, Italy; [c]Department of Medical Science, Surgery and Neurosciences, University of Siena, Siena, Italy; [d]Scuola di Psicoterapia Cognitiva, Grosseto, Italy; [e]Center for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive and Behavioral Intervention (CINEICC), Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal; [f]Department of Human Sciences, Guglielmo Marconi University, Rome, Italy; [g]Clinical Psychology Group, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

The study examined how regulation of affective dependence relates to aggressiveness via jealousy and revenge. Two opposing dependency patterns – Pathological Affective Dependence (PAD) and Fear of Intimacy (FoI) – were tested against internalized (anger/hostility) and externalized (physical/verbal) aggressiveness. Adults from the general population ($N = 437$; 330 women, 107 men; M(age) = 32.9) completed measures of PAD, FoI, cognitive and behavioral jealousy, revenge motivation, and aggression. Structural equation models specified PAD/FoI as exogenous predictors, jealousy facets as parallel mediators, and revenge as a downstream mediator. PAD predicted both behavioral and cognitive jealousy; FoI predicted cognitive – but not behavioral – jealousy. Both jealousy types predicted revenge, which was positively associated with internalized and externalized aggressiveness. Behavioral jealousy also showed direct positive effects on both aggression forms, whereas cognitive jealousy had no direct effects. PAD and FoI retained direct positive associations with internalized aggressiveness; direct paths to externalized aggressiveness were non-significant for PAD and marginal for FoI. Jealousy-driven revenge appears to be a proximal pathway linking unregulated dependency to aggressive behavior. Targeting monitoring/controlling tendencies (behavioral jealousy), suspicious rumination (cognitive jealousy), and revenge motivations may help prevent escalation of relationship conflict.

KEYWORDS

Pathological Affective Dependence; Fear of Intimacy; jealousy; revenge; aggressiveness; intimate partner violence

Introduction

Aggressiveness is a central – yet often underspecified – driver of intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV is a widespread global phenomenon affecting individuals across genders and relationship configurations. International estimates indicate that a substantial proportion of both women and men report experiences of physical, sexual,

CONTACT Erica Pugliese e.pugliese@uva.nl Clinical Psychology Group, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

or psychological partner violence during their lifetime (Sardinha et al., 2022; World Health Organization, 2025). Research also suggests that aggression within intimate relationships is often bidirectional, with both partners contributing to conflict escalation, although severity, consequences, and contextual factors may differ (Archer, 2000; Misra et al., 2012). IPV – defined as harmful acts within intimate relationships (Council of Europe. Committee of Ministers, 2011) – carries severe psychological and physical consequences, including femicide and suicide – homicide (Edelstein, 2018). Although socio-economic vulnerabilities remain critical, converging evidence highlights individual vulnerabilities – especially momentary mental states, maladaptive emotion regulation, and developmental relational experiences – as key determinants of aggressiveness in IPV (Velotti et al., 2018).

Conceptually, aggressiveness is multidimensional (Perry & Ostrov, 2018). Internalized aggressiveness directs negative affect inward (e.g., rumination, anxiety, depressive symptoms) and reflects difficulties in emotion regulation and self-control (Norlander & Eckhardt, 2005). On the other hand, externalized aggressiveness manifests in outward behaviors (e.g., physical violence, coercion) tied to poor impulse control and behavioral dysregulation (White et al., 2013). Both forms may manifest in a relationship context, but they stem from partly distinct affective – cognitive pathways: internalized aggressiveness primarily originates from maladaptive emotional processing, while externalized aggressiveness is largely driven by hostility/anger and regulation deficits (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

In the context of IPV, both perpetrators and survivors share vulnerability factors rooted in early relational adversity (Millett et al., 2013; Pugliese et al., 2024; Yakubovich et al., 2018). Childhood abuse, neglect, and insecure attachment are linked to heightened aggression in adult intimate relationships (Levenson & Socia, 2016; Velotti et al., 2018); for example, paternal abuse robustly predicts later aggression, with early psychological victimization carrying forward into adulthood (Osa Subtil et al., 2022). While healthy dependency – grounded in the satisfaction of basic relational needs – protects well-being and relational stability (Acevedo & Aron, 2009), unregulated interpersonal dependency can catalyze coercive and aggressive responding.

From an attachment-based perspective, interpersonal dependency can be understood as a manifestation of attachment processes, comprising a set of affective, cognitive, and behavioral strategies – both conscious and unconscious – aimed at obtaining care, protection, and emotional support (Bornstein, 1998; Steele et al., 2001). Rather than representing a categorical trait, relational dependency is conceptualized along a continuum, ranging from a regulated form – characterized by the capacity to seek support while maintaining autonomy – to dysregulated extremes. At one end, hyperactivated forms of dependency involve excessive proximity-seeking, fusion, and fear of separation; at the other, counter-dependent or deactivating patterns involve emotional withdrawal, denial of needs, and avoidance of intimacy (Steele et al., 2001).

Within this framework, Pathological Affective Dependence (PAD) and Fear of Intimacy (FoI), may be conceived as complementary expressions of unregulated relational dependence. PAD is marked by hyper-regulation of attachment needs, while FoI is characterized by hypo-regulation via deactivating/avoidant strategies. These constructs have recently emerged as salient relational vulnerabilities that, when activated in adult relationships, may increase the likelihood of aggressive behavior (Arbinaga et al., 2021; Dominguez-

Pereira et al., 2019; Wigman et al., 2008). Building on this premise, the present work examines aggressiveness in PAD and FoI and the contribution of pathological jealousy and revenge as proximal mechanisms that may channel these vulnerabilities into maladaptive action.

The roles of pathological affective dependence and fear of intimacy in fueling aggressiveness

PAD is a relational condition in which one or both partners find it impossible to separate even when staying entails severe suffering or risk (Pugliese, Saliani, et al., 2023; Pugliese, Uvelli, et al., 2025). According to PAD's theory, this form of relational dependence has its roots in the family of origin and stems from the frustration of three core relational needs – love, dignity, and safety. These needs in early relationships are considered essential for the development of healthy adult bonds (Pugliese et al., 2024). When these needs are unmet, adults tend to seek partners resembling abusive caregivers (Hendrix, 1988), perpetuating cycles of manipulation, stress, and violence. Recent evidence suggests that PAD is a risk factor of IPV victimization, with the type of violence experienced moderating the association between PAD and metacognitive functioning (Pugliese, Papa, et al., 2025). Although PAD's theory postulates that PAD can be shared by both partners (IPV victims and offenders), it has been studied primarily in survivors of violence (Pugliese, Papa, et al., 2025; Pugliese, Uvelli, et al., 2025). To the best of our knowledge, the role of PAD in the perpetration of IPV has not been systematically investigated, with the exception of a single study linking PAD to aggressiveness and controlling behaviors (Petruccelli et al., 2014). Individuals with PAD frequently show a non-assertive style and suppression of anger and fear (Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2021), redirecting affect inward (Kuijpers et al., 2012) to avoid abandonment – a learning traceable to early caregiving. In this framework, externalized aggressiveness in PAD tends to emerge with additional vulnerability factors (e.g., post-traumatic stress; Swan et al., 2005) and is most likely when the bond is perceived as unsalvageable.

On the other hand, FoI, defined as the inability to share meaningful thoughts and emotions with valued others (Descutner & Thelen, 1991), involves a fear of exposing vulnerability and of becoming dependent (Sobral et al., 2015). This construct has been linked to attachment deactivation and interpersonal avoidance (Bartholomew, 1990; Scigala et al., 2022). People high in FoI may desire closeness yet lack the skills to achieve it or defensively deny that need (Bartholomew, 1990). Denying the natural, human need for dependence can engender negative affect and dysfunctional, violent coping (Velotti et al., 2018). Indeed, perpetrators are less likely to engage in intimacy-fostering behaviors (Martin & Tardif, 2014) and tend to pursue low-intimacy relationships (Neilson et al., 2023; Ward et al., 1997).

More broadly, difficulties in emotion regulation increase the risk of IPV (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Velotti et al., 2016). Unmet needs may give rise to displaced aggression (Denson et al., 2011), and their chronic suppression can foster hostile attribution biases that increase vulnerability to reactive aggression (Dodge, 2006; Roberton et al., 2015). PAD and FoI thus represent distinct relational vulnerabilities, both tracing back to early adversities (Clemens et al., 2023; Pugliese et al., 2024) but diverging in how dependency is regulated – up-regulated/hyper-controlled in PAD vs. down-regulated/deactivated in

FoI. Although both reflect unregulated needs for dependence, in PAD the main goal sustaining the relational dependence is "maintaining the relationship at all costs" (Pugliese, Saliani, et al., 2023), whereas in FoI is "avoiding relationships at all costs." Consistent with this, PAD frequently observed among IPV survivors, hinders exit from abusive bonds (Pugliese, Mosca, et al., 2023; Silvestri et al., 2025) and predict IPV victimization (Pugliese, Uvelli, et al., 2025), while FoI is commonly documented among perpetrators – including sexual offenders – and predicts aggressive behavior (Martin & Tardif, 2014; Neilson et al., 2023). These constructs comprise both state-like components (current expressions) and trait-like components (enduring tendencies shaped by past relationships).

Relational mechanisms of aggressiveness: jealousy and revenge

One of the triggers most strongly associated with aggressiveness is jealousy (Pichon et al., 2020) – an emotion specifically experienced within intimate relationships. Jealousy is fundamentally linked to the need to maintain or regain possession of a valued partner (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2007). It comprises a complex of thoughts, emotions, and actions related to the anticipated loss of the partner and one's self-esteem when exclusivity is threatened by a real or imagined rival (White & Mullen, 1989). Jealousy is typically triggered by a perceived transgression compromising a fundamental aspect of the relationship, such as exclusivity (Marazziti et al., 2003). This adaptive emotion can become pathological when it is marked by maladaptive cognitive and behavioral components, including unfounded suspicions and controlling behaviors toward the partner (Costa et al., 2015). Individuals with pathological jealousy may frequently accuse their partner, monitor their actions, or engage in avoidance behaviors in jealousy-triggering situations, thereby escalating negative emotions for both partners. Such patterns can lead to verbal and physical violence, and in extreme cases, homicide (DeSteno et al., 2006).

Recent research on IPV has consistently identified jealousy as a central relational risk factor, particularly when it is coupled with fear of abandonment, emotional dysregulation, and controlling behaviors. Excessive or pathological jealousy has been associated with both victimization and perpetration dynamics, as well as with escalating cycles of coercion, surveillance, and aggression within intimate relationships (Perles et al., 2019; Pichon et al., 2020).

According to Pfeiffer and Wong (1989), jealousy has three different dimensions: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. Emotional jealousy is considered a normal and adaptive response that arises from the fear of losing one's partner. In contrast, the cognitive and behavioral components of jealousy are recognized as pathological dimensions, as they involve maladaptive thoughts and actions detrimental to relationship health, correlating negatively with satisfaction and increasing conflict (De Cristofaro et al., 2023). In Pfeiffer and Wong's model (1989), normal jealousy primarily maps onto the emotional dimension, whereas pathological jealousy corresponds to the maladaptive cognitive and behavioral dimensions. Specifically, its cognitive facet includes ruminative and suspicious thoughts about partner fidelity, while its behavioral facet involves controlling or monitoring actions aimed at restricting partner autonomy.

In the context of IPV, these maladaptive cognitive and behavioral expressions of jealousy are particularly relevant, as they often precede or accompany coercive control, emotional

abuse, and physical aggression (Papa et al., 2026). Empirical evidence shows that infidelity-related jealousy is one of the most consistent relational triggers of partner-directed violence, operating through pathways involving perceived betrayal, emotional dysregulation, and conflict escalation (Martínez-León et al., 2017).

Revenge is another robust driver of aggressiveness (Jackson et al., 2019). Conceptually, it is a retributive response to perceived wrongdoing that aims to restore equity, status, or control (Chester & DeWall, 2018; Frijda, 1994; Rajchert & Winiewski, 2016). In close relationships, the motivation to "get even" is reliably captured by the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations (TRIM) framework, which distinguishes revenge and avoidance motivations following partner transgressions (McCullough et al., 1998). Revenge can manifest behaviorally (overt retaliation) or cognitively as perseverative, vengeful rumination that sustains negative affect (Aquino et al., 2006; Barcaccia et al., 2022). Although retaliation may feel momentarily rewarding via reward-system activation (Chester & DeWall, 2018), it typically fails to resolve anger and often prolongs distress through rumination. This process is named the "paradox of revenge" (Carlsmith et al., 2008). Any short-term relief tends to occur only when the act is perceived to fulfill a justice goal (e.g., offender suffering is salient), and even then effects are fragile (Gollwitzer & Denzler, 2009). In applied terms, revenge reliably escalates conflict cycles rather than closing them – among survivors who may view retaliation as post-traumatic re-control (Davidson et al., 2015) and among perpetrators who may deploy revenge as compensatory self-regulation after breakup distress (Müller, 2018).

Rationale

Theoretical and empirical work depicts PAD as a relational vulnerability marked by non-assertiveness and chronic efforts to preserve the bond – conditions that foster anger suppression and the consolidation of inward hostility (i.e., internalized aggression; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2021). In this framework, aggressiveness is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that includes both internalized forms (e.g., chronic anger, frustration, resentment, and feelings of injustice) and externalized forms (e.g., verbal or physical aggression). Internalized aggressiveness represents a regulatory configuration in which hostile affect is inhibited or redirected inward, and may constitute a precursor or risk factor for later externalized aggression when relational threats intensify (Bushman, 2002; Garofalo et al., 2018). Within this profile, perceived threats to the relationship can precipitate a shift from containment to control-seeking (Petruccelli et al., 2014), making behavioral jealousy a salient pathway through which unregulated dependence is expressed.

By contrast, FoI has been linked to fear-based, deactivating attachment regulation and lower interpersonal trust (Descutner & Thelen, 1991). Within this regulatory stance, unmet needs can fuel hostile attribution biases (Denson et al., 2011; Dodge, 2006) and covert, suspicious monitoring to manage threat, which is consistent with the cognitive form of jealousy.

In these cases, aggressiveness may initially manifest as internalized resentment, mistrust, or hostile cognitions, which can later translate into externalized responses under conditions of relational threat or perceived injustice. Moreover, low-intimacy relational patterns are associated with an increased risk of violent behavior (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Martin & Tardif, 2014; Ward et al., 1997). Furthermore, converging evidence indicates that revenge is

a salient coping response to pathological jealousy, aimed at restoring control or equity (Chester & DeWall, 2018; Frijda, 1994; Jackson et al., 2019; Rajchert & Winiewski, 2016) and is directly linked to aggressiveness (Barcaccia et al., 2022; Dobash et al., 2009; Pichon et al., 2020). Revenge functions as an accessible – albeit costly – regulatory strategy that can emerge in both victimized and perpetrating partners (Davidson et al., 2015; Müller, 2018). Yet it remains unclear how these jealousy and revenge intersect with dependency-related vulnerabilities that shape intimacy regulation. Despite the central role of jealousy and revenge in intimate relationships, no study has yet integrated PAD and FoI within a unified framework that explains their joint contribution to aggressiveness.

The current study

The current study addresses for the first time this gap by introducing a framework in which PAD and FoI jointly contribute to internalized and externalized aggressiveness through distinct pathways involving pathological jealousy (cognitive and behavioral) and revenge, with a specific focus on their manifestation in current or recent relationships (state condition).

Specifically, we hypothesize that:

H1. In both PAD and FoI, the pathological subdimensions of jealousy (cognitive and behavioral) will directly increase revenge motivations, which will in turn predict higher aggressiveness

H2. PAD will relate more strongly to behavioral jealousy, whereas FoI will relate more strongly to cognitive jealousy.

H3. PAD will show a stronger direct association with internalized aggressiveness, and an indirect association with both forms of aggressiveness (externalized and internalized) via behavioral jealousy and revenge.

H4. FoI will show a stronger direct association with externalized aggressiveness, and an indirect association with both forms of aggressiveness (externalized and internalized) via cognitive jealousy and revenge.

Method

Sample

A total of 437 participants (330 females, and 107 males) were included in this study, with an age range between 18 to 68 (32.9; SD = 9.68). More than half of the participants were single or unmarried (54.9%), followed by participants who were living with a partner (25.6%) and those who were married (16.2%). A smaller proportion were divorced (2.5%) or separated (0.7%). Regarding educational attainment, most participants held either a university degree (46.9%) or a postgraduate qualification (25.4%). Additionally, 25.9% had completed a high school diploma, while a small fraction (1.8%) had only completed middle school. In terms

of employment status, 40.6% were salaried employees, while 27.6% were self-employed professionals. Students made up 22.3% of the sample, and a small percentage were unemployed (3.7%). All participants in the research provided informed consent and were fully informed about the study and its objectives. The inclusion criteria stated that participants had to be at least 18 years of age, fluent in Italian, drug-free, and free from clinically severe psychological disorders (e.g., bipolar and related disorders, dissociative disorders, or disorders within the psychotic spectrum).

Procedure

A cross-sectional study was conducted to test the relationship of both FoI and PAD with pathological forms of jealousy (cognitive and behavioral components), revenge, and both internalized and externalized aggressiveness. Data were collected through an online questionnaire targeting the general population. Prior to survey completion, participants completed a demographic form requesting information regarding age, gender, marital status, education level, any drug use, and whether there was a psychological diagnosis. The study received approval from the Ethical Committee (approval number: 04/2024). It was conducted following the ethical standards of the relevant national and institutional committees on human experimentation and the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, revised in 2013. Only fully completed questionnaires were considered for analysis, and all participants who did not fit with the inclusion criteria were excluded from the sample.

Measures

Pathological Affective Dependence was assessed through the Pathological Affective Dependence Scale (PADS; Pugliese, Uvelli, et al., 2025). The PADS is a 17-item self-report questionnaire that assesses three dimensions for both state and trait conditions. The dimensions are internal conflict (IC), inability to separate (IS), and partner abuse (PA), evaluated using a range between 1 (not at all) to 5 (always). An example item from the internal conflict subscale is *"I am aware that I am suffering in this relationship, but at the same time, I cannot leave it"*; from the inability to separate from the partner is *"I would do anything in order not to lose my importance in my partner's sight"*; and from partner abuse subscale is *"My partner devalues me"*. The total score ranges from 17 to 85, with higher scores indicating higher levels of dependence. For this study, we considered the state version of PAD because we were interested in participants' current dependency expressions within ongoing relationships. In the original validation study, Cronbach's alpha was .89 for PAD-state and PAD-trait, while in our sample it was .88 for the PAD-state scale used in this study.

The individual's anxiety about close, dating relationships was assessed using the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS; Descutner & Thelen, 1991; Italian translation by Senese et al., 2020). It is a 35-item self-report questionnaire designed to tap three components of fear of intimacy: content (personal information exchanged), emotional valence (strong feelings about that information), and vulnerability (high value for the partner). The FIS comprises three scales: general Fear of Intimacy (FoI), Fear of Intimacy related to past relationships, and total Fear of Intimacy. Sample items include *"I would feel uneasy talking with 0 about something that has hurt me deeply"*, and *"I have shied away from opportunities to be close to someone"*. In this study, we used the general FoI scale –

anchored to current intimate relationships – to index the state-like expression of FoI that was central to our hypotheses about proximal processes in aggressiveness. Responses in FIS are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total score ranges from 35 to 175, with higher scores indicating a greater fear of intimacy. In the Italian validation, Cronbach's alpha was .91 for general FoI and .73 for past relationships FoI. In our sample, Cronbach's alpha for general FoI was also .91.

To assess levels of jealousy in intimate relationships we used the Short Form of the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (SF-MJS; Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Italian adaptation by Tani & Ponti, 2016). It is a 17-item self-report questionnaire that assesses three dimensions of jealousy, cognitive (e.g., *"I suspect that X may be attracted to someone else"*), emotional (e.g., *"X shows a great deal of interest or excitement in talking to someone"*), and behavioral (e.g., *"I question X about his or her telephone calls"*). Responses are rated on a scale from 1 (very good) to 5 (very bad) for the emotional subscale, instead from 1 (never) to 6 (always) for cognitive and behavioral subscales. The total score ranges from 17 to 85, with higher scores indicating greater levels of jealousy. For this study, we considered only the cognitive and behavioral dimensions, as these two components of jealousy can manifest in pathological forms that may lead to aggressiveness (Bhogal et al., 2025; Delucchi et al., 2024). Cronbach's alpha coefficients reported in the Italian validation study were .80 for both cognitive and behavioral jealousy subscales; in the present sample, they were .96 and .79, respectively.

The Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM; McCullough et al., 1998; Italian adaptation by Barcaccia et al., 2021) was used to assess an individual's situational responses to interpersonal transgression. It is an 18-item self-report that evaluates three-dimensional measures of forgiveness: avoidance, revenge, and benevolence. The avoidance is investigated through items such as *"I keep as much distance between us as possible"*. Revenge is assessed through items such as *"I'll make him/her pay"*. Finally, benevolence includes items such as *"I have released my anger so I can work on restoring our relationship to health"*. Responses are rated on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), and the total score ranges from 18 to 90. For this study, we considered only the revenge dimension, as we were particularly interested in understanding the role of this response strategy in increasing the risk of aggressiveness. The Cronbach's alpha value for the revenge subscale was .94 in the Italian validation study, whereas in this study, it was .84.

Finally, the Aggression Questionnaire (AQ; Buss & Perry, 1992; Italian validation by Fossati et al., 2003) was used to investigate levels of aggressiveness. AQ is a 29-item self-report that evaluates four aggressive dimensions (physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, anger) using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic) to 5 (extremely characteristic). The total score ranges from 29 to 145, with higher scores indicating more aggressiveness. Sample items include "*Occasionally I can't control the urge to hit another person*," "*When my colleagues annoy me, I argue with them*," "*Sometimes, I get angry for no reason*," and "*At times, I feel that life has treated me unfairly*." In the present study, the sum of the Physical Aggression and Verbal Aggression subscales was used to represent externalized aggressiveness (Ext_AG), while the sum of the Anger and Hostility subscales was used to represent internalized aggressiveness (Int_AG). In the study

Table 1. Mean and median scores obtained by the sample, α, ω, kurtosis, and skewness of the measures.

Variable	Mean (SD)	Median (IQR)	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω	Kurtosis (SE)	Skweness (SE)
FoI	59 (17.5)	56 (27)	.91	.91	−.51 (.23)	.55 (.12)
PAD	33.2 (11.6)	30 (14)	.88	.89	1.72 (.23)	1.28 (.12)
COGN_J	12.5 (9.27)	9 (10)	.96	.96	0.28 (.23)	1.26 (.12)
BEHA_J	11.3 (5.42)	10 (5)	.79	.81	6.41 (.23)	2.06 (.12)
REV	8.98 (4.56)	8 (6)	.84	.85	1.56 (.23)	1.39 (.12)
Int_AG	33.7 (10.7)	32 (16)	.87	.87	−.23 (.23)	.53 (.12)
Ext_AG	27.9 (8.28)	26 (10)	.77	.83	1.32 (.23)	1.14 (.12)

Note: FoI = fear of intimacy; PAD = pathological affective dependence; COGN_J = cognitive jealousy; BEHA_J = behavioral jealousy; REV = revenge; Ext_AG = externalized aggressiveness; Int_AG = internalized aggressiveness.

conducted by Fossati and colleagues (2003), Cronbach's alpha value for the total score was .88 while in our sample it was .77 for externalized aggressiveness, and .87 for internalized aggressiveness.

The coefficient α, ω, skewness, and kurtosis values for the variables used in the study are shown in Table 1, as the means and the medians of the scores.

Conceptual model

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model that this research intends to test. The model involves two exogenous variables – Pathological Affective Dependence (PAD) and Fear of Intimacy (FoI) – and five endogenous variables, cognitive jealousy (COGN_J), behavioral jealousy (BEHA_J), revenge (REV), internalized aggressiveness (Int_AG), and externalized aggressiveness (Ext_AG). An error term is included for each endogenous variable.

Based on our hypotheses, PAD was expected to predict behavioral jealousy (BEHA_J), while FoI was expected to predict cognitive jealousy (COGN_J). Both jealousy dimensions were hypothesized to predict revenge (REV), which in turn would mediate effects on internalized (Int_AG) and externalized aggressiveness (Ext_AG). Additionally, we expected

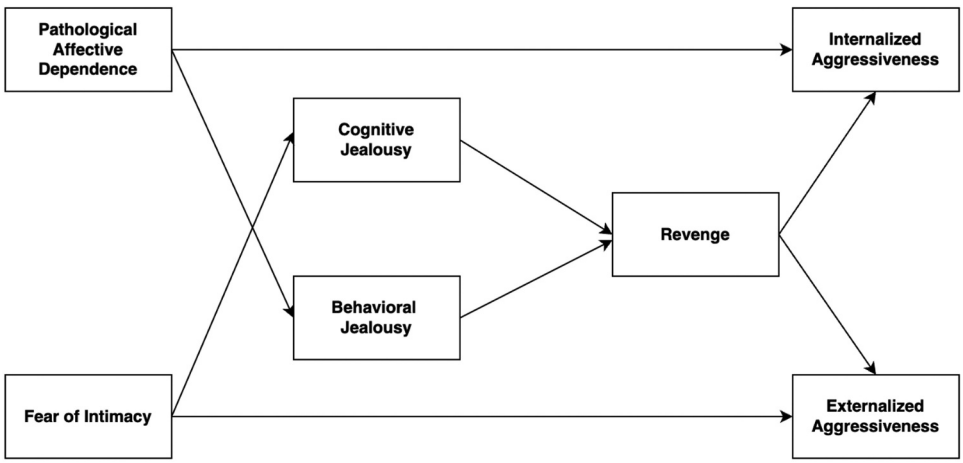

Figure 1. The conceptual model.

a stronger association of FoI with externalized aggressiveness and a stronger association of PAD with internalized aggressiveness.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics summarizing the main sample characteristics were conducted using Jamovi version 2.6.22, including means, standard deviations, medians, and frequency distributions as appropriate. Subsequent correlation analyses were performed in RStudio (version 2025.05.1 + 513) using the Hmisc package, which enables calculation of Spearman's rank correlations along with significance testing. These analyses focused on the relationships among the primary study variables: Fear of Intimacy (FoI), Pathological Affective Dependence (PAD), Cognitive Jealousy (COGN_J), Behavioral Jealousy (BEHA_J), Revenge (REV), Internalized Aggressiveness (Int_AG), and Externalized Aggressiveness (Ext_AG). The hypothesized mediation model was tested within RStudio using the lavaan package (version 0.6–19). We used seven observed composite scores (standardized questionnaires) and no latent factors—i.e., structural paths among observed variables only. In this observed-variable framework, correlation precision benchmarks are most relevant. Simulations by Schönbrodt and Perugini (2013) indicate that, with a ± .10 corridor of stability, samples of roughly 400–450 are sufficient for small-to-moderate true correlations ($\rho \approx .20–.30$). Our $N = 437$ falls within this range, supporting the adequacy of the sample for estimating observed paths and bootstrapped indirect effects with robust confidence intervals.

Data preparation involved computing composite scores for Internalized Aggression (Int_AG) and Externalized Aggression (Ext_AG) by summing relevant subscale scores. The structural model specified PAD and FoI as exogenous predictors, with BEHA_J and COGN_J as parallel mediators sequentially influencing Revenge (REV). Both internalized and externalized aggressiveness outcomes were regressed on these mediators and predictors to assess direct and indirect effects. Model parameters were estimated using maximum likelihood estimation (ML). Model fit was evaluated with multiple indices, including the Chi-square test, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) with 90% confidence intervals, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Indirect effects were evaluated with model-defined parameters and bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (5,000 resamples); effects were considered statistically significant when the 95% bootstrap CI did not include zero. Model refinement was guided by modification indices generated by lavaan, identifying statistically justifiable areas for improvement. The final model included theoretically meaningful covariances added selectively to optimize fit while maintaining conceptual coherence. This iterative process ensured that model adjustments were both empirically supported and substantively relevant.

Results

Table 1 shows the scores obtained by the tools administered to the sample, and the measures indexes. All the measures used in this study show good reliability through α and ω, with a range between .77 and .96. The variables were approximately well distributed, except for BEHA_J, which showed a kurtosis value outside the optimal range (6.41). However,

Table 2. Spearman's ρ correlation between the scores provided by the administered tools.

	FoI	PAD	COGN_J	BEHA_J	REV	Int_AG	Ext_AG
FoI	–						
PAD	.33***	–					
COGN_J	.35***	.35***	–				
BEHA_J	.18**	.38***	.33***	–			
REV	.18**	.24***	.22***	.20***	–		
Int_AG	.30***	.42***	.30***	.43***	.43***	–	
Ext_AG	.16**	.22***	.12*	.24***	.39***	.59***	–

Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$.

according to Hair and colleagues (Hair et al., 2013) and Byrne (2010), values between −2 and +2 for skewness and between −7 and +7 for kurtosis can be considered within an acceptable range for normal distribution.

The relationships between the measures are summarized in Table 2. Both FoI and PAD showed significant positive correlations with the jealousy dimensions (COGN_J and BEHA_J), Revenge (REV), Internalized Aggressiveness (Int_AG), and Externalized Aggressiveness (Ext_AG). Behavioral Jealousy (BEHA_J) and Revenge (REV) demonstrated the strongest associations with both forms of aggressiveness, while Cognitive Jealousy (COGN_J) was primarily linked to Internalized Aggressiveness (Int_AG). Internalized and Externalized Aggressiveness were strongly and positively correlated.

The data fitting to the conceptual model outlined in this study (see Figure 1) was evaluated using SEM. The analysis of the modification indexes indicated the need to include a covariance between COGN_J and BEHA_J. Figure 2 displays the optimized model, and Table 3 presents the standardized path coefficients, standard errors, *p*-values, goodness-of-fit indices, and total indirect effects for the tested model.

The mediation model showed an overall good fit to the data. The Chi-square test was marginally non-significant, χ^2 (2) = 5.91, $p = .052$, indicating an acceptable fit without being overly sensitive to sample size. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was excellent at 0.994, and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was also strong at 0.939, both surpassing the commonly accepted threshold of 0.90 and indicating good comparative model fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.067, with a 90% confidence interval

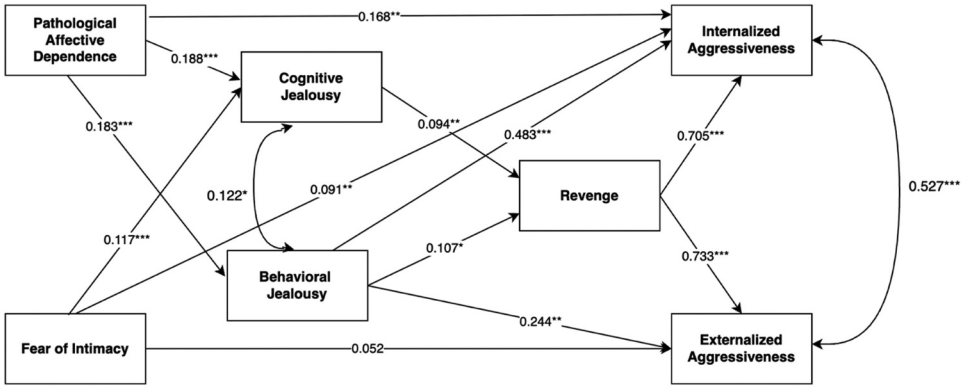

Figure 2. Path diagram of the optimized model. *Note*: Confidence intervals computed with the parametric bootstrap method. Betas are completely standardized effects. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 3. Estimate, standard error, standardized estimates, and significance of the model's regression weights; absolute and relative indexes assessing the goodness of fit.

	Estimate	SE	Standardized estimate	p
FoI → COGN_J	.117	.024	.222	*<.001*
FoI → BEHA_J	.020	.014	.066	.138
PAD → COGN_J	.188	.037	.236	*<.001*
PAD → BEHA_J	.183	.030	.394	*<.001*
COGN_J → REV	.094	.027	.190	*.001*
BEHA_J → REV	.107	.048	.128	*.025*
BEHA_J → Ext_AG	.244	.091	.160	*.007*
BEHA_J → Int_AG	.483	.108	.245	*<.001*
REV → Int_AG	.705	.094	.301	*<.001*
REV → Ext_AG	.733	.095	.405	*<.001*
PAD → Int_AG	.168	.048	.183	*<.001*
PAD → Ext_AG	.018	.037	.027	.617
FoI → Int_AG	.091	.027	.150	*.001*
FoI → Ext_AG	.045	.023	.096	.052
Indirect effects (PAD)				
PAD→BEHA_J→REV→Int_AG	.014	.007	.015	*.043*
PAD→COGN_J→REV→Int_AG	.012	.005	.014	*.011*
PAD→BEHA_J→REV→Ext_AG	.014	.007	.020	*.047*
PAD→COGN_J→REV→Ext_AG	.013	.005	.018	*.011*
Indirect effects (FoI)				
FoI→BEHA_J→REV→Int_AG	.002	.001	.003	.233
FoI→COGN_J→REV→Int_AG	.008	.003	.013	*.011*
FoI→BEHA_J→REV→Ext_AG	.002	.001	.003	.236
FoI→COGN_J→REV→Ext_AG	.008	.003	.017	*.012*
Goodness of fit indexes				
χ^2	**RMSEA**	**CFI**	**TLI**	**SRMR**
5.91, $p = .052$	.067 (95% CI [.000, .132]	0.994	0.939	0.022

Note: Total indirect effects represent the combined mediation pathways involving behavioral and cognitive jealousy and revenge leading to internalized (Int_AG) and externalized (Ext_AG) aggressiveness.
Italics p are significant.

ranging from 0.000 to 0.132. Although slightly above the most stringent cutoff of 0.05, this value remains within the acceptable range (≤0.08), suggesting a reasonable approximation error given the complexity of the model and sample size (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). The RMSEA *p*-value for the test of close fit (≤0.05) was 0.249, supporting the notion that the model fits the population reasonably well. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was very low at 0.022, further confirming a good fit between the model and observed data. Regarding the path coefficients, PAD significantly predicted both BEHA_J ($\beta = 0.183$, $p < .001$) and COGN_J ($\beta = 0.188$, $p < .001$), whereas FoI significantly predicted only COGN_J ($\beta = 0.117$, $p < .001$) but not BEHA_J ($\beta = 0.020$, $p = .138$). This pattern suggests that PAD relates to both forms of jealousy, while FoI is primarily associated with the cognitive dimension. Both jealousy dimensions significantly predicted REV, with BEHA_J showing a moderate effect ($\beta = 0.107$, $p = .025$) and COGN_J a stronger effect ($\beta = 0.094$, $p = .001$). In turn, REV had a strong positive association with both Int_AG ($\beta = 0.705$, $p < .001$) and Ext_AG ($\beta = 0.733$, $p < .001$). BEHA_J also showed a direct positive effect on Int_AG ($\beta = 0.483$, $p < .001$) and a smaller but significant effect on Ext_AG ($\beta = 0.244$, $p = .007$), whereas COGN_J did not have significant direct effects on either aggression outcome. Additionally, both PAD and FoI exerted significant direct effects on Int_AG (PAD: $\beta = 0.168$, $p < .001$; FoI: $\beta = 0.091$, $p = .001$), with PAD showing a trend toward a direct effect on Ext_AG that was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.018$, $p = .617$) and FoI showing a marginal effect ($\beta = 0.045$, $p = .052$). Indirect effects further clarified these

relationships. PAD influenced Int_AG significantly through the pathway involving BEHA_J and REV (β = 0.014, $p = .043$), as well as through COGN_J and REV (β = 0.012, $p = .011$). Similarly, PAD affected Ext_AG through these same indirect pathways via BEHA_J (β = 0.014, $p = .047$) and COGN_J (β = 0.013, $p = .011$). FoI showed significant indirect effects on Int_AG via both BEHA_J and REV (β = 0.014, $p = .043$) and COGN_J and REV (β = 0.012, $p = .011$), as well as similar indirect effects on Ext_AG (β = 0.014 and 0.013, respectively, both $p < .05$). The total indirect effects of PAD and FoI through these mediating pathways highlight the substantial role of jealousy and revenge in linking relational vulnerabilities to both internalized and externalized aggressiveness. The covariances between BEHA_J and COGN_J (β = 0.122, $p = .010$), and between Int_AG and Ext_AG (β = 0.527, $p < .001$), were statistically significant, supporting the conceptual relatedness of these constructs. Overall, the model accounted for 17.7% of the variance in BEHA_J, 14.1% in COGN_J, 6.4% in REV, 33.8% in Int_AG, and 23.5% in Ext_AG, indicating a meaningful explanation of aggression outcomes by the mediation pathways involving jealousy and revenge as influenced by PAD and FoI. These findings suggest that the two relational vulnerabilities – PAD and FoI – are both implicated in aggressive outcomes, although they appear to operate through partially different mechanisms involving jealousy and revenge.

Discussion

This study aimed to provide preliminary insights into the complex psychological pathways linking relational conditions (Pathological Affective Dependence and Fear of Intimacy) and emotions associated with intimate partner violence (jealousy and revenge motivations) to aggressiveness. Specifically, we focused on internalized and externalized aggressiveness, operationalized per the Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992): internalized aggressiveness was indexed by the Anger (affective arousal/irritability) and Hostility (cynicism/resentment) subscales, whereas externalized aggressiveness was indexed by Verbal Aggression and Physical Aggression. Within this framework, we modeled cognitive jealousy (suspicious, ruminative appraisals) and behavioral jealousy (partner-directed control) as proximal pathways, and revenge as a downstream coping response that can translate jealous appraisals into aggressive outcomes.

Below, we delineate what Pathological Affective Dependence (PAD) and Fear of Intimacy (FoI) have in common and what distinguishes them in the expression of aggression. Making this distinction clarifies how dysregulated interpersonal dependence can take different forms and travel along distinct pathways to internalized versus externalized aggressiveness. Specifying the emotional and cognitive mechanisms that potentiate harm enhances our understanding of when and how aggressiveness becomes most damaging, thereby refining targets for more effective IPV prevention.

Common pathways across PAD and FoI

Both PAD and FoI were significantly associated with pathological jealousy, revenge and aggressiveness, highlighting their role in eliciting negative affect and mobilizing maladaptive coping when the bond with a valued partner is perceived as threatened or at risk of loss. These findings confirm our first hypothesis (H1). Children exposed to turbulent or

unsupportive caregiving develop survival strategies, such as threat-activated hypercontrol and punitive rank dynamics (Liotti & Farina, 2011). Consistent with these results, these strategies may be reengaged in intimate relationships in adulthood, in case of a real or also imagined threat.

Moreover, prior research links maladaptive jealousy to poor coping strategies, such as drinking to cope (DiBello et al., 2014). Consistent with this evidence and with the TRIM framework – which proposes that partner transgressions can shift motivation from repair to retribution (McCullough et al., 1998) – our findings suggest that fear of losing the relationship may activate punitive coping responses. In turn, the results indicate a sequence in which pathological jealousy fosters revenge, which is then associated with aggressive outcomes. This finding is consistent with a broader account whereby unregulated dependency keeps the relationship chronically insecure and channels perceived threat into responses that erode individual well-being (Krug et al., 2002).

Taken together, these common pathways are compatible with viewing PAD and FoI as distinct expressions to the same unmet dependency needs and attachment insecurity. Intimate relationships may be chronically sensitive to threat. In this context, jealousy and revenge are two salient maladaptive coping responses (Pugliese, Saliani, et al., 2023; Reis & Grenyer, 2004).

Differential pathways: PAD versus FoI

Jealousy profiles

PAD was associated with both behavioral and cognitive jealousy, partially confirming H2. Indeed, this finding extends our a priori expectation of a primary link between PAD and behavioral jealousy. The relationship of PAD with both pathological forms of jealousy can be explained by the PAD's core belief to "maintain the relationship at all costs" (Pugliese, Saliani, et al., 2023). According to PAD's theory, early frustration of the needs for love, dignity, and safety fosters the belief that personal needs cannot be safely expressed (Pugliese, Saliani, et al., 2023); this nonassertiveness and suppression may be consolidated as internalized aggressiveness.

To maintain a dysfunctional relationship, individuals with PAD may increase overt control and monitoring behaviors (Petruccelli et al., 2014). This shift becomes particularly salient when the threat of loss is activated and closely maps onto behavioral jealousy (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). Limited metacognitive capacity further constrains cognitive reappraisal and mentalization, biasing responses toward action under threat (Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2021; Pugliese, Papa, et al., 2025). In PAD, reduced metacognitive capacity – often stemming from relational abuse – includes the capacity to reflect on one's own and others' mental states (Pugliese, Papa, et al., 2025). This condition increases impulsive reactions to perceived threats consistently with patterns observed in behavioral jealousy. These results are in line with the behavioral jealousy definition (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). The concurrent association with cognitive jealousy indicates that PAD is also characterized by rumination and internalized suspicions. This is in line with the internal conflict of PAD, one of the main factors that compels the IPV victims to stay or return to an abusive relationship. The internal conflict is specifically the tendency to swing between the need to remain with an abusive partner and the need to escape from them. This oscillation is a sort of internal rumination and often ends with a high level of self-criticism (Pugliese, Uvelli, et al., 2025).

By contrast, FoI – a fear-driven avoidance of sharing meaningful thoughts and feelings – was selectively associated with cognitive jealousy, confirming H2. This pattern is consistent with FoI's characterization, in which deactivating strategies and lower interpersonal trust render overt expressions of care-seeking and dependence too risky, fostering non-assertiveness and a guarded relational stance (Descutner & Thelen, 1991; Pilkington & Richardson, 1988). Consequently, in FoI, jealousy and fear of losing one's significant other remain largely internalized, because individuals are afraid to express these feelings to their valued partner. In this regulatory context, the control motive is displaced into covert monitoring and suspicious inference, aligning with the cognitive (ruminative, interpretive) dimension of jealousy and with links to paranoia and couple violence (Dominguez-Pereira et al., 2019; Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Pourmohseni-Kolouri & Afsar, 2025).

Perceived threat that would otherwise trigger overt control strategies (Liotti & Farina, 2011) is thus displaced into covert monitoring (mental checking, scenario building, and suspicious inferences) yielding vigilance for cues of infidelity that maps onto the cognitive (ruminative, interpretive) dimension of jealousy (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). This pattern is also consistent with links between FoI, paranoid ideation and a broader tendency to attribute malevolent intent to others (Pourmohseni-Kolouri & Afsar, 2025). When the attachment system is activated, individuals with FoI express their affect inward (self-critical rumination, self-directed anger, depressive tone), sustaining cognitive vigilance while keeping vulnerability out of view (Dagan et al., 2021; Kuijpers et al., 2012; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Together, these mechanisms help explain a selective link with cognitive rather than behavioral jealousy.

In sum, PAD exhibits a dual jealousy profile – overt, control-oriented behaviors alongside ruminative suspiciousness – likely guided by the goal of "maintaining the relationship at all costs," whereas FoI shows a selective, predominantly cognitive jealousy profile (covert, suspicion-driven), grounded in lower interpersonal trust and deactivating attachment strategies aimed at "avoiding closeness at all costs."

Pathways to aggressiveness

Across conditions, behavioral jealousy – an action-oriented pattern of partner control/monitoring – showed unique direct effects on both internalized and externalized aggression. Enacting control and monitoring likely increases exposure to conflict and amplifies both self- and other-directed anger, thereby fueling anger/hostility and overt aggressive acts (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Pichon et al., 2020). In contrast, cognitive jealousy – characterized by suspicious and ruminative appraisals – more strongly predicted revenge. Although initially "cognitive," revenge ideation is not benign: vengeful rumination sustains distress and can trigger later retaliatory behavior, such that accumulated arousal and resentment may crystallize into subsequent aggressive outcomes when opportunities or triggers arise (Barcaccia et al., 2022; Carlsmith et al., 2008; Chester & DeWall, 2018; McCullough et al., 1998). Taken together, these findings support a model in which action-focused jealousy is more directly linked to aggression, whereas cognition-focused jealousy preferentially channels perceived threat into punitive motivation.

With regard to PAD, we found a direct effect on internalized aggressiveness and indirect effects on both internalized and externalized aggressiveness via jealousy and revenge, supporting H3. The former aligns with accounts in which fear of loss and maltreatment consolidate anger and hostility inward (Kuijpers et al., 2012; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2021;

Pugliese, Uvelli, et al., 2025). Moreover, experimental evidence shows that higher dependency can buffer vengeful responding under relationship threat (Young et al., 2013), consistent with PAD's priority of preserving the bond; thus, when revenge does occur in PAD, it likely reflects a shift from containment to control-restoration under acute threat rather than a default reaction. The latter finding indicates that overt enactment is context-dependent, emerging chiefly when maladaptive control-restoration and retaliatory motives are activated – typically during phases of intermittent conflict in which the person with PAD recognizes relational dysfunction yet feels unable to disengage (Pugliese, Saliani, et al., 2023). Consistent with PAD's maintain-the-bond regulatory profile, revenge and aggressiveness may serve a bond-restorative function when the relationship is perceived to be at risk.

With regard to FoI, we observed an indirect pathway to both internalized and externalized aggressiveness via cognitive jealousy and revenge, but only a marginal direct association with externalized aggressiveness – thus partially confirming H4. This pattern accords with FoI's deactivating, fear-based attachment regulation: unmet dependency needs and mistrust are internalized as hostility because the person feels unable to express them, with overt manifestations emerging chiefly when regulatory capacity is exceeded (Papa & Pugliese, 2025). Developmentally, FoI has been associated with deficits in parental care, with both attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety contributing to its emergence (Perez, 2023). When threat acutely activates the attachment system, FoI can channel affect inward – through self-critical rumination or self-directed anger – sustaining vigilance while minimizing exposure (Dagan et al., 2021; Kuijpers et al., 2012; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Consistently, autonomy-focused, self-critical individuals – conceptually aligned with FoI vulnerability – become more vengeful and less forgiving under relationship threat (Young et al., 2013). Accordingly, aggressiveness in FoI may serve autonomy restoration in the face of perceived dependence when the attachment system is activated.

The marginality of the direct externalized pathway also suggests that manifest aggression in FoI may depend on specific clinical moderators not assessed here – for example, alcohol use disorder and power-restoration motives that heighten dominance-threat appraisals and facilitate behavioral escalation (Neilson et al., 2023).

In sum, PAD and FoI converge in that pathological jealousy feeds revenge, which in turn links jealousy to aggressiveness; they diverge in jealousy profiles and in the conditions under which aggressiveness is expressed. Taken together, these findings indicate that how dependency needs are expressed and regulated shapes the form jealousy takes in intimate relationships and the coping strategies used to manage it – thereby channeling risk toward internalized versus externalized aggressiveness in distinct ways depending on whether there is hyper- or hypo-regulation of dependency needs.

Limitations

Although this study offers preliminary insight into how PAD and FoI relate to aggressiveness, several limitations warrant caution. First, the cross-sectional design not only precludes causal inference or temporal ordering but also risks biasing mediation estimates: cross-sectional "statistical mediation" can yield misleading indirect effects relative to the underlying longitudinal process (Maxwell & Cole, 2007). Accordingly, the mediation paths reported here should be interpreted as associative, and reverse or bidirectional effects

remain plausible. Second, the sample was drawn from a single socio-cultural context and showed a markedly unbalanced gender distribution (predominantly women), limiting generalizability to men and gender-diverse individuals. Third, all variables were assessed via self-report at a single time point, raising concerns about common-method variance, social-desirability bias, and the absence of behavioral, partner-report, or observational indices of jealousy, revenge, and aggressiveness. Fourth, while we focused on PAD and FoI as predictors, we did not model other potentially contributing factors (e.g., personality traits, other interpersonal difficulties, angry rumination, paranoia, or power-related affective processes) that could confound or condition the observed associations. Finally, our emphasis on state-level indices of PAD and FoI – appropriate to our questions – limits inferences about the stability of these processes relative to trait-like tendencies. Future work should employ multi-wave longitudinal designs, experimental or quasi-experimental manipulations of threat/jealousy, and multi-informant/behavioral assessments to test process-level mediation more rigorously and reduce method bias.

Conclusions

The analysis provides important insights into the interplay among PAD, FoI, jealousy, and aggressiveness in intimate relationships. A key finding is that PAD relates to both behavioral and cognitive jealousy, reflecting a broader impact on jealousy dimensions, while FoI is primarily linked to cognitive jealousy, characterized by rumination and guardedness (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). Both PAD and FoI are significantly associated with internalized aggressiveness, indicating that difficulties in emotional regulation and dependency needs contribute to inwardly directed aggressive tendencies. Conversely, only FoI shows a marginal direct effect on externalized aggressiveness, suggesting that the difficulty in expressing vulnerability openly may occasionally lead to outwardly directed aggressive behaviors. This distinction clarifies how different dependency patterns influence relational coping strategies. Jealousy acts as a mediator linking PAD and FoI to revenge, which in turn contributes to both internalized and externalized aggression. This highlights the crucial role of relational emotions and coping responses in shaping aggressive outcomes. The differential pathways observed underscore the need to consider the unique emotional and behavioral profiles linked to these relational conditions. Understanding the hypo- and hyper-regulation of dependency needs and their impact on different forms of aggressiveness offers a nuanced perspective for IPV prevention and intervention. Targeted strategies fostering emotional expression, self-compassion, assertiveness, and adaptive coping may help break cycles of violence and improve outcomes for both victims and perpetrators.

From a clinical and policy-oriented perspective, these findings suggest that dependency-related vulnerabilities and jealousy-driven revenge motivations should be systematically assessed in individuals involved in IPV, including offenders. Traditional risk assessments often focus primarily on overt violent behaviors, whereas the present results highlight the importance of underlying relational and regulatory mechanisms, such as dysregulated dependency needs, cognitive jealousy, and revenge-oriented coping. If these dimensions remain unaddressed, individuals may continue to experience internalized hostility and maladaptive relational strategies, which can increase the likelihood of reoffending once they return to intimate relationships.

Accordingly, incorporating measures of PAD, FoI, jealousy, and revenge motivations into assessment protocols for IPV offenders may help identify specific risk profiles and guide more targeted intervention programs. Treatment approaches could then focus not only on behavioral control, but also on the regulation of dependency needs, the processing of jealousy-related cognitions, and the development of adaptive relational coping strategies. Such an approach may enhance the effectiveness of perpetrator programs, reduce recidivism, and contribute to safer relational environments.

At a broader preventive and educational level, these findings also support the development of interventions aimed at promoting secure dependency patterns, emotional awareness, and constructive responses to relational threats in both clinical and community settings. By addressing these mechanisms early, it may be possible to reduce the escalation from internalized hostility to overt aggression, thereby contributing to more effective IPV prevention strategies.

Author contributions

CRediT: **Carolina Papa:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Allison Uvelli:** Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft; **Marcela Matos:** Supervision; **Marta Floridi:** Writing – original draft; **Anna Chiara Franquillo:** Writing – original draft; **Claudia Perdighe:** Supervision; **Francesco Mancini:** Project administration; **Erica Pugliese:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Project administration, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Carolina Papa http://orcid.org/0009-0006-6417-6509
Allison Uvelli http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1050-3133
Marcela Matos http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7320-7107
Marta Floridi http://orcid.org/0009-0006-9281-1776
Claudia Perdighe http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3784-8155
Francesco Mancini http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8765-4047
Erica Pugliese http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7049-6580

Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to ethical restrictions aimed at protecting participant confidentiality.

References

Acevedo, B. P., & Aron, A. (2009). Does a long-term relationship kill romantic love? *Review of General Psychology*, *13*(1), 59–65. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014226

Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2002). Human aggression. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *53*(1), 27–51. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135231

Aquino, K., Tripp, T. M., & Bies, R. J. (2006). Getting even or moving on? Power, procedural justice, and types of offense as predictors of revenge, forgiveness, reconciliation, and avoidance in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *91*(3), 653. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.3.653

Arbinaga, F., Mendoza-Sierra, M. I., Caraballo-Aguilar, B. M., Buiza-Calzadilla, I., Torres-Rosado, L., Bernal-López, M., & Fernández-Ozcorta, E. J. (2021). Jealousy, violence, and sexual ambivalence in adolescent students according to emotional dependency in the couple relationship. *Children*, *8*(11), 993. https://doi.org/10.3390/children8110993

Archer, J. (2000). Sex differences in aggression between heterosexual partners: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*(5), 651. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.5.651

Barcaccia, B., Ioverno, S., Salvati, M., Medvedev, O. N., Pallini, S., & Vecchio, G. M. (2021). Measuring predictors of psychopathology in Italian adolescents: Forgiveness, avoidance and revenge. *Current Psychology*, *42*(1), 35–49. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01414-2

Barcaccia, B., Salvati, M., Pallini, S., Saliani, A. M., Baiocco, R., & Vecchio, G. M. (2022). The bitter taste of revenge: Negative affect, depression and anxiety. *Current Psychology*, *41*(3), 1198–1203. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00643-1

Bartholomew, K. (1990). Avoidance of intimacy: An attachment perspective. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, *7*(2), 147–178. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407590072001

Bhogal, M. S., Galbraith, N., Guy, A., Rhead, C., & Lalli, G. (2025). Unpacking the role of multi-dimensional romantic jealousy in the perpetration of cyber dating abuse: The mediating role of self-esteem. *Violence & Victims*. https://doi.org/10.1891/VV-2024-0139

Bornstein, R. F. (1998). Depathologizing dependency. *Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease*, *186*(2), 67–73. https://doi.org/10.1097/00005053-199802000-00001

Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K. A. Bollen & J. S. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136–162). Sage.

Bushman, B. J. (2002). Does venting anger feed or extinguish the flame? Catharsis, rumination, distraction, anger, and aggressive responding. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *28*(6), 724–731. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167202289002

Buss, A. H., & Perry, M. (1992). The aggression questionnaire. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *63*(3), 452. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.63.3.452

Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming* (2nd ed.). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Carlsmith, K. M., Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T. (2008). The paradoxical consequences of revenge. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *95*(6), 1316–1324. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012165

Chester, D. S., & DeWall, C. N. (2018). Personality correlates of revenge-seeking: Multidimensional links to physical aggression, impulsivity, and aggressive pleasure. *Aggressive Behavior*, *44*(3), 235–245. https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21746

Clemens, V., Fegert, J. M., Kavemann, B., Meysen, T., Ziegenhain, U., Brähler, E., & Jud, A. (2023). Epidemiology of intimate partner violence perpetration and victimisation in a representative sample. *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, *32*, e25. https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045796023000069

Costa, A. L., Sophia, E. C., Sanches, C., Tavares, H., & Zilberman, M. L. (2015). Pathological jealousy: Romantic relationship characteristics, emotional and personality aspects, and social adjustment. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *174*, 38–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2014.11.017

Council of Europe. Committee of Ministers. (2011). *Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice* (Vol. 5). Council of Europe.

Dagan, O., Groh, A. M., Madigan, S., & Bernard, K. (2021). A lifespan development theory of insecure attachment and internalizing symptoms: Integrating meta-analytic evidence via a testable evolutionary mis/match hypothesis. *Brain Sciences*, *11*(9), 1226. https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci11091226

Davidson, M. M., Lozano, N. M., Cole, B. P., & Gervais, S. J. (2015). Relations between intimate partner violence and forgiveness among college women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *30*(18), 3217–3243. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514555008

De Cristofaro, V., Pellegrini, V., Salvati, M., & Giacomantonio, M. (2023). Examining and understanding patterns of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral jealousy: Dispositional mindfulness as a protective factor in romantic relationships. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, *40*(5), 1368–1397. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075221139631

Delucchi, G., Verdesoto, X. G., Ochoa, J., Mayer, E. L., & Folino, J. (2024). Binational study on partner aggression in university students. *Vertex*, *35*(164), 19–32. https://doi.org/10.53680/vertex.v35i164.543

Denson, T. F., Pedersen, W. C., Friese, M., Hahm, A., & Roberts, L. (2011). Understanding impulsive aggression: Angry rumination and reduced self-control capacity are mechanisms underlying the provocation-aggression relationship. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *37*(6), 850–862. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167211401420

Descutner, C. J., & Thelen, M. H. (1991). Development and validation of a fear of intimacy scale. *Psychol Assess*, *3*(2), 218–225. https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.3.2.218

DeSteno, D., Valdesolo, P., & Bartlett, M. Y. (2006). Jealousy and the threatened self: Getting to the heart of the green-eyed monster. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *91*(4), 626. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.91.4.626

DiBello, A. M., Neighbors, C., Rodriguez, L. M., & Lindgren, K. (2014). Coping with jealousy: The association between maladaptive aspects of jealousy and drinking problems is mediated by drinking to cope. *Addictive Behaviors*, *39*(1), 94–100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2013.08.032

Dobash, R. E., Dobash, R. P., & Cavanagh, K. (2009). "Out of the blue" men who murder an intimate partner. *Feminist Criminology*, *4*(3), 194–225. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085109332668

Dodge, K. A. (2006). Translational science in action: Hostile attributional style and the development of aggressive behavior problems. *Development & Psychopathology*, *18*(3), 791–814. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579406060391

Dominguez-Pereira, G., Field, T., Vivian, J., Hart, S. L., & Bendell, D. (2019). Suspicious jealousy is related to anxious attachment and is mediated by fear of intimacy. *International Journal of Psychological Research and Reviews*, *2*(23). https://doi.org/10.28933/ijprr-2019-10-2705

Edelstein, A. (2018). Intimate partner jealousy and femicide among former Ethiopians in Israel. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *62*(2), 383–403. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X16652453

Fossati, A., Maffei, C., Acquarini, E., & DiCeglie, A. (2003). Multigroup confirmatory component and factor analyses of the Italian version of the aggression questionnaire. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, *19*(1), 54. https://doi.org/10.1027//1015-5759.19.1.54

Frijda, N. H. (1994). The lex talionis: On vengeance. In S. H. M. van Goozen, N. E. Van de Poll, & J. A. Sargeant (Eds.), *Emotions: Essays on emotion theory* (pp. 263–289). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Garofalo, C., Velotti, P., & Zavattini, G. C. (2018). Emotion regulation and aggression: The incremental contribution of alexithymia, impulsivity, and emotion dysregulation facets. *Psychology of Violence*, *8*(4), 470. https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000141

Gollwitzer, M., & Denzler, M. (2009). What makes revenge sweet: Seeing the offender suffer or delivering a message? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *45*(4), 840–844. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2009.03.001

Gratz, K. L., & Roemer, L. (2004). Multidimensional assessment of emotion regulation and dysregulation: Development, factor structure, and initial validation of the difficulties in emotion regulation scale. *Journal of Psychopathology & Behavioral Assessment*, *26*(1), 41–54. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:JOBA.0000007455.08539.94

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2013). *Multivariate data analysis: Pearson new international edition PDF eBook*. Pearson Higher Ed.

Hendrix, H. (1988). *Getting the love you want*. Henry Holt and Company.

Jackson, J. C., Choi, V. K., & Gelfand, M. J. (2019). Revenge: A multilevel review and synthesis. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *70*(1), 319–345. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010418-103305

Krug, E. G., Mercy, J. A., Dahlberg, L. L., & Zwi, A. B. (2002). The world report on violence and health. *Lancet*, *360*(9339), 1083–1088. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)11133-0

Kuijpers, K. F., van der Knaap, L. M., & Winkel, F. W. (2012). Risk of revictimization of intimate partner violence: The role of attachment, anger and violent behavior of the victim. *Journal of Family Violence*, *27*(1), 33–44. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-011-9399-8

Levenson, J. S., & Socia, K. M. (2016). Adverse childhood experiences and arrest patterns in a sample of sexual offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *31*(10), 1883–1911. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515570751

Liotti, G., & Farina, B. (2011). *Sviluppi traumatici*. Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Marazziti, D., DiNasso, E., Masala, I., Baroni, S., Abelli, M., Mengali, F., Mungai, F., & Rucci, P. (2003). Normal and obsessional jealousy: A study of a population of young adults. *European Psychiatry*, *18*(3), 106–111. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0924-9338(03)00024-5

Martin, G. M., & Tardif, M. (2014). What we do and don't know about sex offenders' intimacy dispositions. *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, *19*(4), 372–382. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2014.06.002

Martínez-León, N. C., Peña, J. J., Salazar, H., García, A., & Sierra, J. C. (2017). A systematic review of romantic jealousy in relationships. *Terapia Psicológica*, *35*(2), 195–204. https://doi.org/10.4067/s0718-48082017000200203

Maxwell, S. E., & Cole, D. A. (2007). Bias in cross-sectional analyses of longitudinal mediation. *Psychological Methods*, *12*(1), 23. https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.12.1.23

McCullough, M. E., Rachal, K. C., Sandage, S. J., Worthington, E. L., Brown, S. W., & Hight, T. L. (1998). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships: Ii. Theoretical elaboration and measurement. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *75*(6), 1586–1603. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.75.6.1586

Miceli, M., & Castelfranchi, C. (2007). The envious mind. *Cognition & Emotion*, *21*(3), 449–479. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930600814735

Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2007). Boosting attachment security to promote mental health, prosocial values, and inter-group tolerance. *Psychological Inquiry*, *18*(3), 139–156. https://doi.org/10.1080/10478400701512646

Millett, L. S., Kohl, P. L., Jonson-Reid, M., Drake, B., & Petra, M. (2013). Child maltreatment victimization and subsequent perpetration of young adult intimate partner violence: An exploration of mediating factors. *Child Maltreatment*, *18*(2), 71–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559513484821

Misra, T. A., Selwyn, C., Selwyn, C., & Rohling, M. L. (2012). Rates of bidirectional versus unidirectional intimate partner violence across samples, sexual orientations, and race/ethnicities: A comprehensive review. *Partner Abuse*, *3*(2), 199. https://doi.org/10.1891/1946-6560.3.2.199

Müller, L. (2018). *Revenge after termination of a romantic relationship in young adults: A self-regulation perspective* [Doctoral dissertation]. North-West University.

Muñoz-Rivas, M., Bellot, A., Montorio, I., Ronzón-Tirado, R., & Redondo, N. (2021). Profiles of emotion regulation and post-traumatic stress severity among female victims of intimate partner violence. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(13), 6865. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18136865

Neilson, E. C., Maitland, D. W., & George, W. H. (2023). Power-related emotions, alcohol intoxication, and nonconsensual sex intentions: The role of fear of intimacy. *Sexual Abuse*, *35*(3), 313–339. https://doi.org/10.1177/10790632221096420

Norlander, B., & Eckhardt, C. (2005). Anger, hostility, and male perpetrators of intimate partner violence: A meta-analytic review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *25*(2), 119–152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2004.10.001

Osa Subtil, I. D., Mateo Fernández, P. V., Arias Astray, A., & Ivonne Aguirre, S. (2022). Insecure attachment style and child maltreatment: Relations to aggression in men convicted of intimate partner violence. *Ansiedad y Estrés*, *28*(3), 207–213. https://doi.org/10.5093/anyes2022a24

Papa, C., & Pugliese, E. (2025, September 4–6). *Pathological affective dependence and fear of intimacy: Opposite but intertwined risk factors for intimate partner violence* [Poster presentation]. 55th EABCT Congress, Glasgow, United Kingdom.

Papa, C., Uvelli, A., Franquillo, A. C., Floridi, M., Perdighe, C., Mancini, F., & Pugliese, E. (2026). Measuring jealousy in intimate relationships: A systematic review of instruments and their

psychometric qualities. *Current Psychology*, *45*(3), 252. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-08635-9

Perez, V. M. (2023). Origins of fear of intimacy: The effects of parental involvement and attachment style. *Honors undergraduate theses*. 1404. https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorstheses/1404

Perles, F., San Martín, J., & Canto, J. M. (2019). Gender and conflict resolution strategies in Spanish teen couples: Their relationship with jealousy and emotional dependency. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *34*(7), 1461–1486. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516651316

Perry, K. J., & Ostrov, J. M. (2018). Testing a higher order model of internalizing and externalizing behavior: The role of aggression subtypes. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, *49*(1), 20–32. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-017-0725-0

Petruccelli, F., Diotaiuti, P., Verrastro, V., Petruccelli, I., Federico, R., Martinotti, G., & Janiri, L. (2014). Affective dependence and aggression: An exploratory study. *Biomed Research International*, *2014*(1), 805469. https://doi.org/10.1155/2014/805469

Pfeiffer, S. M., & Wong, P. T. (1989). Multidimensional jealousy. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, *6*(2), 181–196. https://doi.org/10.1177/026540758900600203

Pichon, M., Treves-Kagan, S., Stern, E., Kyegombe, N., Stöckl, H., & Buller, A. M. (2020). A mixed-methods systematic review: Infidelity, romantic jealousy and intimate partner violence against women. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(16), 5682. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17165682

Pilkington, C. J., & Richardson, D. R. (1988). Perceptions of risk in intimacy. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, *5*(4), 503–508. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407588054006

Pourmohseni-Kolouri, F., & Afsar, R. (2025). The relationship between fear of intimacy, paranoid thoughts, and marital problems: The mediating role of attachment styles. *Clinical Psychology and Personality*, *23*(1), 111–122. https://doi.org/10.22070/cpap.2024.18919.1510

Pugliese, E., Mosca, O., Saliani, A. M., Maricchiolo, F., Vigilante, T., Bonina, F., Cellitti, E., Barbaro, M. G. F., Goffredo, M., Lioce, P., Orsini, E., Quintavalle, C., Rienzi, S., Vargiu, A., & Mancini, F. (2023). Pathological Affective Dependence (PAD) as an antecedent of intimate partner violence (IPV): A pilot study of PAD's cognitive model on a sample of IPV victims. *Psychology*, *14*(2), 305–333. https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2023.142018

Pugliese, E., Papa, C., Filippelli, M. C., Murabito, F., Riposo, S., & Carcione, A. (2025). Pathological affective dependence, intimate partner violence, and metacognition: The moderating role of different forms of violence in Italian women survivors. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, & Trauma*, *34*(11), 1641–1660. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2025.2585270

Pugliese, E., Saliani, A. M., Mosca, O., Maricchiolo, F., & Mancini, F. (2023). When the war is in your room: A cognitive model of pathological Affective Dependence (PAD) and intimate partner violence (IPV). *Sustainability*, *15*(2), 1624. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15021624

Pugliese, E., Uvelli, A., van Emmerik, A. A. P., Ferretti, F., Saliani, A. M., Foschino-Barbaro, M. G., Vigilante, T., Cellitti, E., Quintavalle, C., Mancini, F., & Arntz, A. (2025). The pathological Affective Dependence Scale (PADS). *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, *32*(4), e70140. https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.70140

Pugliese, E., Visco-Comandini, F., Papa, C., Ciringione, L., Cornacchia, L., Gino, F., Cannito, L., Fadda, S., & Mancini, F. (2024). Understanding trauma in IPV: Distinguishing complex PTSD, PTSD, and BPD in victims and offenders. *Brain Sciences*, *14*(9), 856. https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci14090856

Rajchert, J., & Winiewski, M. (2016). The behavioral approach and inhibition systems' role in shaping the displaced and direct aggressive reaction to ostracism and rejection. *Personality & Individual Differences*, *88*, 272–279. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.09.018

Reis, S., & Grenyer, B. F. (2004). Fear of intimacy in women: Relationship between attachment styles and depressive symptoms. *Psychopathology*, *37*(6), 299–303. https://doi.org/10.1159/000082268

Roberton, T., Daffern, M., & Bucks, R. S. (2015). Beyond anger control: Difficulty attending to emotions also predicts aggression in offenders. *Psychology of Violence*, *5*(1), 74. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037214

Sardinha, L., Maheu-Giroux, M., Stöckl, H., Meyer, S. R., & García-Moreno, C. (2022). Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual intimate partner violence against women in 2018. *Lancet*, *399*(10327), 803–813.

Schönbrodt, F. D., & Perugini, M. (2013). At what sample size do correlations stabilize? *Journal of Research in Personality*, *47*(5), 609–612. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2013.05.009

Scigala, D. K., Fabris, M. A., Badenes-Ribera, L., Zdankiewicz-Scigala, E., Hintertan, I., & Longobardi, C. (2022). Alexithymia and adult attachment: Investigating the mediating role of fear of intimacy and negative mood regulation expectancies. *Psychological Reports*, *125*(4), 1896–1914. https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941211010252

Senese, V. P., Miranda, M. C., Lansford, J. E., Bacchini, D., Nasti, C., & Rohner, R. P. (2020). Psychological maladjustment mediates the relation between recollections of parental rejection in childhood and adults' fear of intimacy in Italy. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, *37*(6), 1968–1990. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520912339

Silvestri, V., Gobbo, S., Pugliese, E., Mancini, F., & Visco-Comandini, F. (2025). The perception of trustworthiness and emotional identification in women experiencing intimate partner violence: A behavioral pilot study. *Brain Sciences*, *15*(5), 429. https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci15050429

Sobral, M. P., Matos, P. M., & Costa, M. E. (2015). Fear of intimacy among couples: Dyadic and mediating effects of parental inhibition of exploration and individuality and partner attachment. *Family Science*, *6*(1), 380–388. https://doi.org/10.1080/19424620.2015.1106416

Steele, K., Van Der Hart, O., & Nijenhuis, E. R. (2001). Dependency in the treatment of complex posttraumatic stress disorder and dissociative disorders. *Journal of Trauma and Dissociation*, *2*(4), 79–116. https://doi.org/10.1300/J229v02n04_05

Swan, S. C., Gambone, L. J., Fields, A. M., Sullivan, T. P., & Snow, D. L. (2005). Women who use violence in intimate relationships: The role of anger, victimization, and symptoms of posttraumatic stress and depression. *Violence & Victims*, *20*(3), 267–285. https://doi.org/10.1891/vivi.20.3.267

Tani, F., & Ponti, L. (2016). The romantic jealousy as multidimensional construct: A study on the Italian short form of the multidimensional jealousy scale. *The Open Psychology Journal*, *9*(1), 111–120. https://doi.org/10.2174/1874350101609010111

Velotti, P., Beomonte Zobel, S., Rogier, G., & Tambelli, R. (2018). Exploring relationships: A systematic review on intimate partner violence and attachment. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01166

Velotti, P., Garofalo, C., Petrocchi, C., Cavallo, F., Popolo, R., & Dimaggio, G. (2016). Alexithymia, emotion dysregulation, impulsivity and aggression: A multiple mediation model. *Psychiatry Research*, *237*, 296–303. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2016.01.025

Ward, T., McCormack, J., & Hudson, S. M. (1997). Sexual offenders' perceptions of their intimate relationships. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, *9*(1), 57–74. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02674892

White, B. A., Jarrett, M. A., & Ollendick, T. H. (2013). Self-regulation deficits explain the link between reactive aggression and internalizing and externalizing behavior problems in children. *Journal of Psychopathology & Behavioral Assessment*, *35*(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10862-012-9310-9

White, G. L., & Mullen, P. E. (1989). *Jealousy: Theory, research, and clinical strategies*. Guilford Press.

Wigman, S. A., Graham-Kevan, N., & Archer, J. (2008). Investigating sub-groups of harassers: The roles of attachment, dependency, jealousy and aggression. *Journal of Family Violence*, *23*(7), 557–568. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-008-9171-x

World Health Organization. (2025). *Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2023: Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence against women*.

Yakubovich, A. R., Stöckl, H., Murray, J., Melendez-Torres, G. J., Steinert, J. I., Glavin, C. E., & Humphreys, D. K. (2018). Risk and protective factors for intimate partner violence against women: Systematic review and meta-analyses of prospective–longitudinal studies. *American Journal of Public Health*, *108*(7), e1–e11.

Young, R. E., Struthers, C. W., Khoury, C., Muscat, S., Phills, C., & Mongrain, M. (2013). Forgiveness and revenge: The conflicting needs of dependents and self-critics in relationships. *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology*, *32*(10), 1095–1115. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2013.32.10.1095