

# Dependence and Intimate Partner Abuse: A Betrayal Trauma Perspective

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## 10-Second Take-Away

Characteristics of dependence differed among women who experienced intimate partner abuse (IPA). Consistent with Betrayal Trauma Theory, latent classes experiencing higher dependence were related to women's dissociation symptoms and likelihood of leaving the relationship of abuse.

Relational dependence matters beyond broad levels of closeness and socio-contextual factors of IPA should continue to be evaluated in both general science and intervention research.

## Background

**Relational Dependence Matters:** Outcomes (e.g., dissociative symptoms, revictimization) tend to be worse for women who are abused by an intimate partner than a stranger.

**Betrayal Trauma Theory** (Freyd, 1994) suggests dependence matters because victims abused by someone upon whom they depend for survival experience adaptive pressure to limit awareness of the abuse in order to maintain the relationship.

Relational dependence is usually measured by asking a victim how close they were to the perpetrator (e.g., Goldberg & Freyd, 2006).

However, outcomes vary widely for people who are at the same broad level of closeness (e.g., intimate partners).

## Aims

1. How do women who have experienced intimate partner abuse (IPA) differ based on characteristics of dependence?
2. Do differences in dependence (if they exist) relate to Betrayal Trauma outcomes?

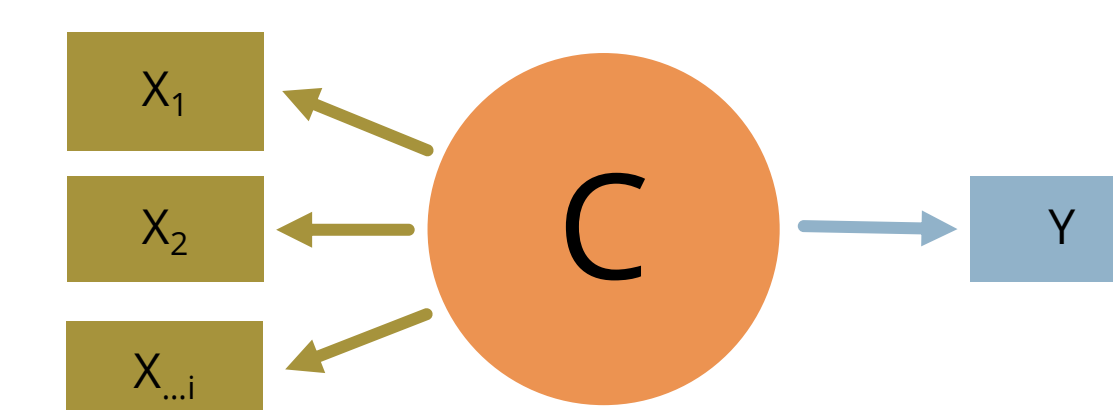
## Methods

Women were invited to participate if they had been involved in an IPA incident with a male offender that was reported to police. Interviews conducted at: baseline, 6 months, 12 months. Baseline interviews were a median 26 days after the IPA incident.

Participants: 236 women, 18–61 years old, 72% racial and/or ethnic minority, English speaking, education range from grade school to postgraduate training.

Latent Class Analysis (LCA) is a statistical technique that finds subgroups of participants within the larger sample based on their patterns of responses.

1. LCA uses **observed indicator variables (X)** to detect **latent classes (C)** among participants

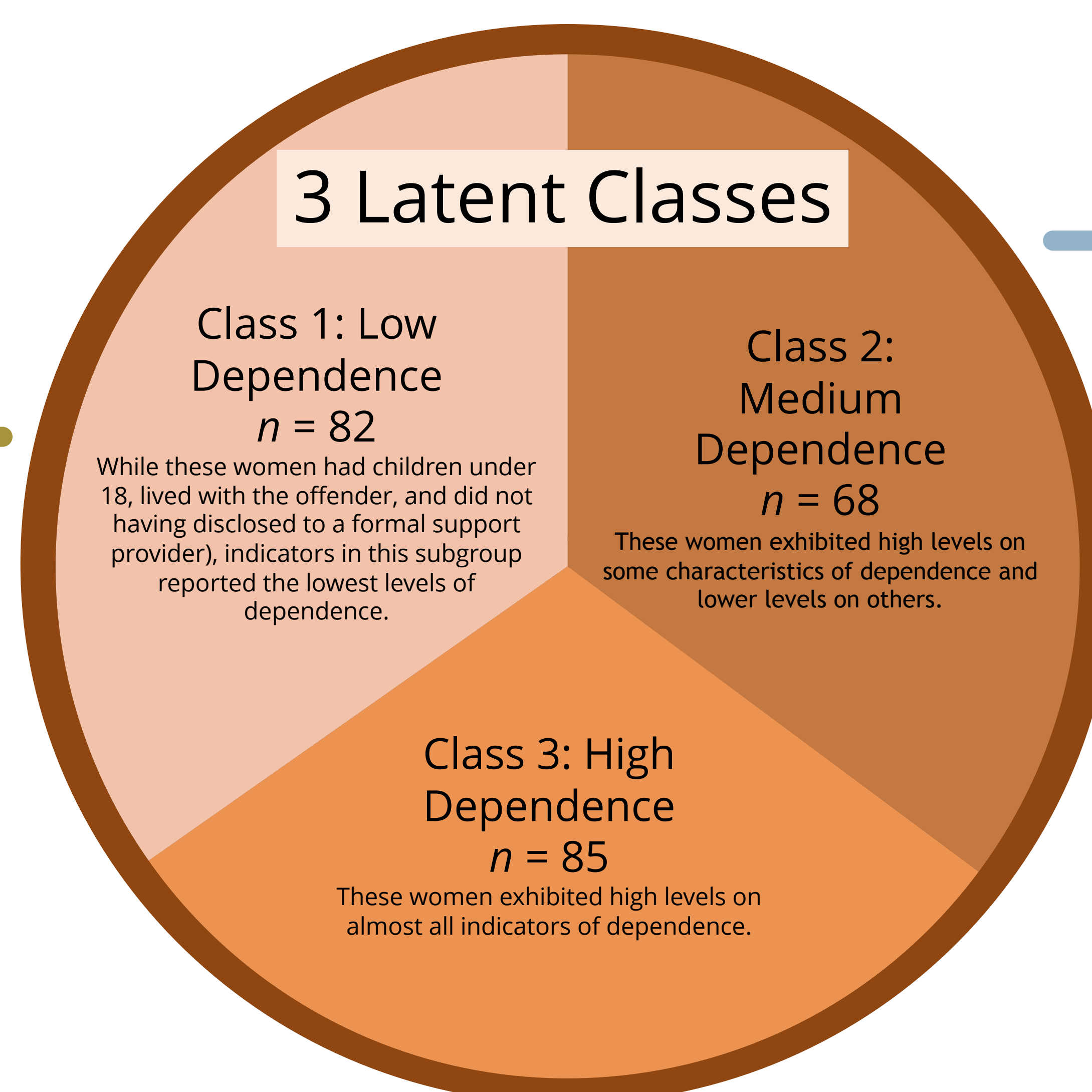


2. **Observed outcomes (Y)** are regressed on **participants' class membership probability**

## Results

13 observed dependence characteristics were used as indicators to identify the latent class model

Indicators: Characteristic of Dependence
Woman's education level
Woman's employment status
Woman's income
Offender's employment status
Offender prevented woman from holding job
Woman's economic dependence self-rating
Woman's relationship to offender
Woman's # of children under 18 years
Woman cohabitating with offender
Woman appraising target IPA as a betrayal
Interpersonal support available to the woman
Abuse disclosure to formal service provider
Woman's disability status

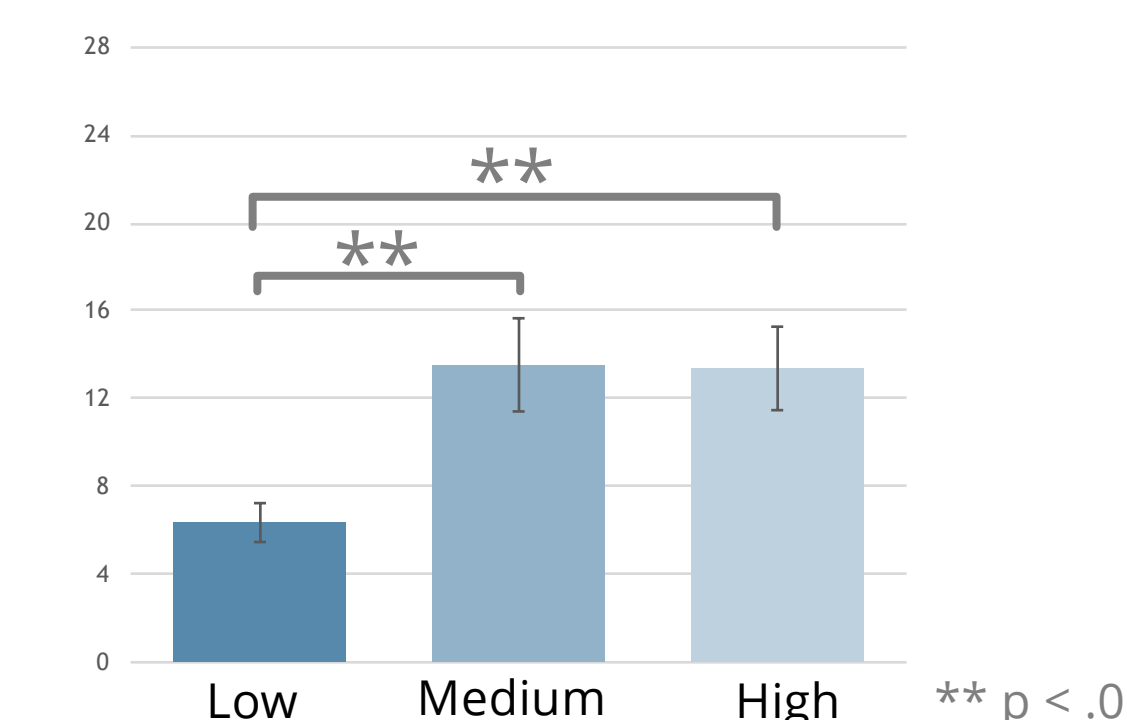


4 outcomes were regressed on latent class membership was used in regressions predicting

**Outcomes:** dissociation, likelihood of leaving relationship with offender, memory quality, & revictimization

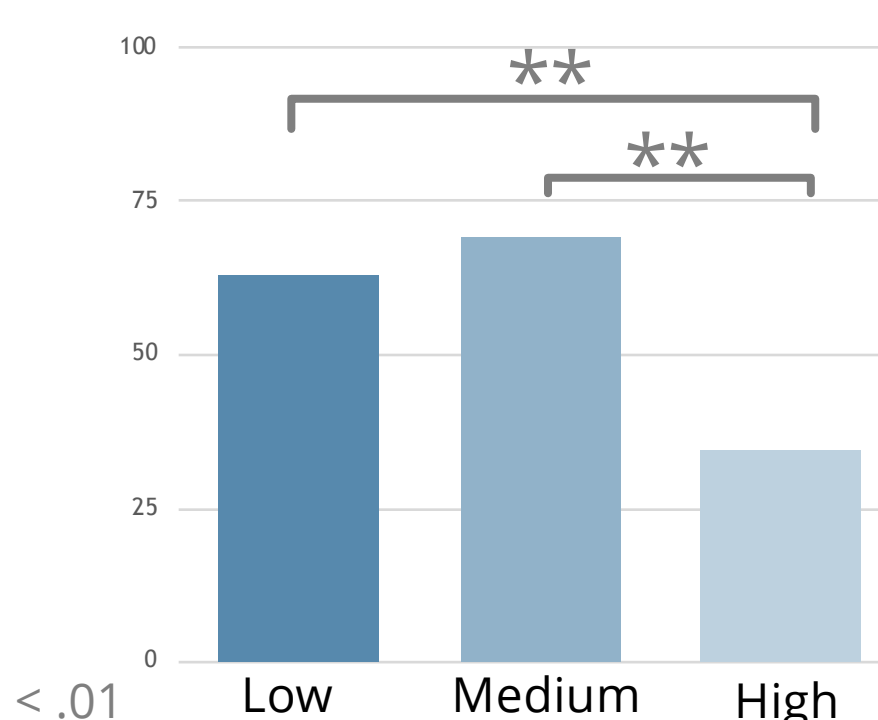
Low-Dependence class reported significantly lower dissociation symptoms than High- and Medium-Dependence classes

Dissociation symptoms 12 months from baseline



High-Dependence class significantly less likely to have left relationship than Low- and Medium-Dependence classes

% left relationship with offender for >6 months at 12 months from baseline



Class was unrelated to memory quality & revictimization

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After comparing models with increasing numbers of classes, the best fitting model (based on AIC, BIC, BLRT) had 3 classes.