

Alcohol-related domestic violence in households with children: Analysis of police-initiated domestic violence protection order records in Lithuania

Ilona Tamutienė¹ and Daumantas Stumbrys¹

¹ Vytautas Magnus University, K. Donelaičio str. 58, 44248, Kaunas, Lithuania.

Abstract

Aim: A police-initiated domestic violence protection order is a preventive measure aimed at protecting individuals of the same household against the risk of domestic violence. The aim of this study is to examine the role of alcohol intoxication in domestic violence incidents in households with children, and identify factors associated with the application of police-initiated protection orders.

Data and Methods: The authors have analysed police records of domestic violence interventions in Lithuania from July 2023 until February 2024 ($n = 20,010$). The analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics and multivariable logistic regression.

Results: It was established that police-initiated domestic violence protection orders were issued in 70.1% of the analysed police records, whereas 46.7% of the cases involved an alcohol-intoxicated person who posed a risk of domestic violence to others. Furthermore, 26.5% of interventions involving domestic violence were carried out in households with children. Among households with children, the majority of individuals posing a risk of domestic violence to others while being intoxicated were men (85.2%, $p < 0.01$). The average blood alcohol concentration of intoxicated individuals was 0.23% (SD = 0.08). By applying the multivariable logistic regression model, the criteria of alcohol intoxication (OR = 4.08 CI[3.44, 4.84]), male gender (OR = 3.56; CI[3.00, 4.24]), history of domestic violence over the past 24 months (OR = 6.09; CI[4.97, 7.46]), and the presence of a child during the incident (OR = 8.38; CI[6.83, 10.29]) were independently associated with a higher likelihood of the issuance of a police-initiated domestic violence protection order.

Conclusion: In practice, the findings have revealed that alcohol consumption and male violence are important factors to consider when devising long-term strategies to prevent domestic violence.

Introduction

Domestic violence is defined as an intentional physical, psychological, sexual, economic, or other harm inflicted on a person through acts or omissions within their immediate environment. The environment includes individuals who are or were connected by marriage, partnership, affinity, kinship, or other close ties, as well as individuals who live together and manage a joint household, and such actions may result in physical, material, or non-material harm (Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, 2011). Domestic violence is a major social problem with negative effects on all household members, particularly children (Berg et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2025). These effects include an increased risk of alcohol use and depression in adulthood (Anda et al., 2002), as well as an increased risk of becoming a perpetrator of domestic violence themselves (Thulin et al., 2021).

Evidence shows that alcohol plays a substantial role in police-reported cases of domestic violence (Mayshak et al., 2022). It is well established that problematic alcohol consumption carries with it a heightened risk of physical and psychological domestic violence (Leal et al., 2024). A study conducted in nine communities found that 4% of caregivers reported domestic violence against children induced by alcohol-intoxicated individuals (Laslett et al., 2020).

It has been well argued that children who witness domestic violence are more likely to become perpetrators themselves (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Jung et al., 2019; Mehfooz et al., 2023). Researchers are exploring ways to improve our understanding of the mechanisms underlying the transgenerational transmission of violence to help prevent the 'cycle of abuse' (Ehrensaft & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2022; McCloud & Abdullah, 2024). Being subject to the

combined effects of alcohol use', domestic violence, and police interventions in the household represents one of the most severe types of adverse childhood experiences (Karatekin et al., 2022). These experiences are associated with long-term harm to children's development, physical and mental health, social functioning, and overall well-being (Arnold et al., 2023; Hughes et al., 2017).

In European countries, the economic burden of adverse childhood experiences is substantial, ranging from \$0.1 billion in Montenegro to \$12.4 billion in Germany. Furthermore, the economic burden ranges from 1.1% (Sweden and Turkey) to 6% (Ukraine) of the national GDP. In Lithuania, the estimated financial burden associated with adverse childhood experiences accounts for 3.3% of the total GDP (Hughes et al., 2021). Nevertheless, effective interventions can promote children's well-being and mitigate the long-term social and economic consequences of such experiences.

Police play a crucial role in deterring and mitigating domestic violence, and informing child protection agencies and social services. Evidence shows that protection orders are a common legal response to domestic violence, which aim to prevent further re-victimisation by the perpetrator and are associated with a small but significant reduction in domestic violence (Benitez et al., 2010; Dowling et al., 2018). According to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Protection Against Domestic Violence (2011), a police-initiated domestic violence protection order is a preventive measure intended to protect a person at risk of domestic violence. A person who poses a risk of domestic violence is defined as someone who raises a reasonable suspicion that they may commit an act of domestic violence. Police officers use a structured risk assessment tool, according to which three or more risks indicate a high risk of domestic violence, and issue a police-initiated domestic violence protection order (Commissioner General of the Lithuanian Police, 2025). The Law requires an adult who poses a risk of domestic violence to temporarily leave their place of residence, which they share with another person who is at risk of domestic violence. Furthermore, it prohibits visiting the protected person's place of residence, approaching the protected person or their family members, and initiating any form of contact. A short-term (15 days) police-initiated domestic violence protection order was introduced in Lithuania as a preventive measure in 2023 (Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, 2011). To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study presents the first analysis of police intervention data after the implementation of the police-initiated domestic violence protection order.

A previous study found that alcohol use was associated with more frequent protection order violations. It demonstrated repeated domestic violence occurrences, compared to a control group of men who did not abuse alcohol (Herrera & Amor, 2024). Therefore, it is crucial to obtain the most recent evidence on alcohol-related domestic violence and the application of police-initiated domestic violence protection orders in households with children, in order to inform effective policy in Lithuania and other countries.

This paper examines alcohol-related domestic violence in households with children through the lens of police-initiated domestic violence protection orders. Specifically, it analyses the prevalence of such orders in relation to incidents of domestic violence involving certain specific variables. The authors of the study put forward the hypothesis that the following factors would be independently associated with the likelihood of police-initiated domestic violence protection orders: the (male) gender of a person posing a risk of domestic violence; a history of domestic violence over the past 24 months; alcohol intoxication; and incidents of domestic violence occurring in the presence of a child.

Prior to presenting the research methodology, this paper provides a brief overview of the legal and institutional context of protection against domestic violence in Lithuania.

Protection against Domestic Violence in Lithuania

According to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Protection Against Domestic Violence (2011), upon receiving a call, the police must immediately visit the scene and assess the risk of domestic violence. If indicators of a crime are identified, the offender is taken into custody, and a criminal investigation is initiated. The requirement to live separately from the victim, not to approach the victim closer than a certain distance, and not to communicate with the victim or any person living with them is a precautionary measure provided by the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Republic of Lithuania. This measure also enables the victim to remain in the residence, and the person posing the risk of violence is obliged to move out. It is imposed by the investigating judge at the request of the public prosecutor (Code of Criminal Procedure, 2002). In 2024, 4,747 domestic violence crimes were registered in Lithuania, accounting for 12.8% of all registered crimes (Statistics Lithuania, 2025).

Lithuanian law also provides for civil protection. The court may, upon request, impose interim protective measures if the claim is substantiated and, in the absence of such measures, the enforcement of the court decision may be hindered (Civil Procedure Code of the Republic of Lithuania, 2002, Article 144). Moreover, an applicant may apply for interim measures even if they have not filed a civil action. However, this protective measure is rarely used (Zurba, 2024).

The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Protection Against Domestic Violence (2011) was supplemented by a police-initiated domestic violence protection order. This order is an emergency measure designed to prevent violence, and remains in effect for 15 days. Police officers assess risk using the domestic violence risk assessment criteria approved by the Minister for Internal Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. These criteria include the following: aggressive behaviour towards the officers; intoxication with alcohol or other psychotropic substances; refusal to undergo a breathalyser test; children living in the same household; children witnessing the violent incident; the perpetrator's criminal history; a permit to possess a weapon; the victim's economic dependence on the perpetrator; isolation from means of communication; and living alone with the perpetrator in a remote rural area. At least three of these 17

criteria must be met for a protection order to be issued (Ministry of the Interior, 2023). In 2024, 54,602 reports of domestic violence were registered by the police in Lithuania, and after risk assessment, 21,022 police-initiated domestic violence protection orders were applied (Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior, 2024). Article 489 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania provides for a fine of EUR80 to EUR320 for failing to comply with the obligations under a domestic violence protection order. If the violation is repeated, the fine ranges from EUR 300 to EUR 780 (Code of Administrative Offences, 2015).

In all cases of police intervention in domestic violence occurrences, those experiencing, or at risk of, domestic violence are informed about the Specialised Complex Support Centre which provides emotional, psychological and legal support to victims. If domestic violence occurs in households with children, police officers must inform the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. The specialists from the Service will then assess the child's situation and take measures to ensure their safety, including initiating case management and transferring the child to a safe environment (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, 2019). Ensuring a safe environment for a child was necessary in 6,968 cases in 2024. Of these cases, 66% ($n = 4,573$) were due to parents or legal guardians being intoxicated by alcohol or other psychotropic substances. Police reports on the need to assess violations of children's rights and to take protective measures accounted for 64.8% of all reports (State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, 2024). Following the introduction of police-initiated domestic violence protection orders and the emergence of issues related to child protection, the Police Department and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service established joint operational procedures. They cover cases where the only person at risk of domestic violence is a child, or where the person posing the risk is the only person who can care for the child (State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, 2024).

Data and Methods

Data

The authors have analysed police records on domestic violence interventions with police-initiated domestic violence protection orders in Lithuania ($n = 20,010$). The compiled register does not include other types of protection orders issued by the court, such as precautionary measures in criminal cases or civil protection measures that require a victim's request. The information in the register is collected by police officers who deal with cases of domestic violence. The authors have analysed records of incidents that had been deemed not to require referral to criminal courts, but which had posed a risk of domestic violence. The analysis included only those cases in which police officers identified a risk of domestic violence but did not initiate pre-trial investigation, and where a police-initiated protection order could be applied. Cases with missing information on key variables were excluded from the respective analyses. The data under review includes police interventions from the introduction of

police-initiated domestic violence protection orders from July 2023 to February 2024.

The dependent variable is the status of a police-initiated domestic violence protection order, coded dichotomously (0 = not issued, 1 = issued). The analysed data also contains various independent risk assessment variables related to domestic violence, such as whether a child lives with individuals who pose a risk of domestic violence, whether an incident occurred in the presence of a child, or whether there has been a history of domestic violence in the past 24 months. Two distinct variables related to children were used in the analysis. The first variable, 'child lives in the household', captures whether a child resides in the household where the domestic violence incident occurred. The second variable, 'incident occurred in the presence of a child', refers to cases in which a child directly witnessed the incident. These variables are coded dichotomously: 0 = no risk factor present; 1 = risk factor present. Moreover, the data includes two variables relating to alcohol intoxication. The first is blood alcohol concentration (BAC), which is used as a contextual variable to show the average level of intoxication. In Lithuania, legally defined BAC thresholds are established exclusively in the context of driving under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol intoxication is considered to begin at a BAC threshold of 0.041%, which entails administrative liability (Code of Administrative Offences, 2015, article 422) whereas a BAC threshold of 0.151% or higher is associated with criminal liability (Criminal Code, 2000, article 281¹). In cases of domestic violence, no statutory BAC threshold is specified. However, alcohol intoxication is conventionally defined as beginning at BAC of 0.041% or higher. The second variable is a binary indicator (0 or 1) denoting the presence of alcohol intoxication at the time of the incident. It is used in descriptive analyses of households with children and as a risk variable in the regression model.

This operationalisation has been chosen to distinguish the presence of alcohol rather than modelling dose-dependent effects. The sociodemographic characteristics of individuals posing a risk of domestic violence and those at risk of domestic violence are considered as well, including age, gender and place of residence (see Table 1).

Methods

The analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, including the Pearson chi-squared test, and multivariable logistic regression. The applied model examined the issuance of police-initiated domestic violence protection orders in households with children. Furthermore, the analysis included variables such as alcohol intoxication, gender, a history of domestic violence over the past 24 months, and whether incident occurred in the presence of a child. All variables were considered simultaneously in the multivariable logistic regression analysis.

Ethics

The data has been obtained pursuant to the cooperation agreement between Vytautas Magnus University and the Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior

(No VDU-S-974 of 3 July 2024). The Police Department has provided anonymised data, without names, personal codes, addresses or any other personal information that could have been used to identify affected individuals. The study has been conducted in accordance with local legislation and institutional requirements for research ethics and data handling. Such studies of secondary data do not require ethics committee approval in Lithuania.

Results

Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

The sample comprised data from 20,010 police records of interventions in cases of domestic violence for which no precautionary measures were taken, and no pre-trial investigation was initiated. Police-initiated domestic violence protection orders were issued when there was a high risk of domestic violence, i.e. when a structured

questionnaire used by police officers identified three or more risk factors. Table 1 summarises the key characteristics of the study sample. In the sample, 70.1% of cases involved police-initiated domestic violence protection orders, and the remaining 29.9% did not. Of those posing a risk of domestic violence, 80% were men and 20% were women. Similarly, women accounted for 74% of potential victims, while men accounted for the remaining 26%. The mean age was 43.95 years (SD = 13.43) for individuals posing a risk of domestic violence, and 47.6 years (SD = 16.29) for potential victims.

Nearly half of the cases (46.7%) involved individuals who posed a risk of domestic violence while under the influence of alcohol, the average BAC being 0.23% (SD = 0.08). In contrast, 53.3% of the sample population were not intoxicated. In the sample, 26.5% of cases had a child living in the household where the incident occurred. Moreover, 11.3% of incidents occurred in the child's presence.

Table 1

Main Sample Characteristics

Variable	<i>n</i>	% (Mean; SD)
Total sample	20,010	
Protection order issued		
Yes	14,031	70.1
No	5,979	29.9
Gender of individual posing a risk of violence		
Men	15,885	80
Women	3,959	20
Gender of individual experiencing potential risk of violence		
Men	5,177	26
Women	14,763	74
Age (years)		
Individual posing a risk of violence	19,898	(43.95; 13.43)
Individual experiencing potential risk of violence	19,971	(47.62; 16.29)
Place of residence		
Urban	6,785	36.9
Semi-urban, rural	11,584	63.1
Alcohol intoxication of person posing a risk		
Yes	9,340	46.7
No	10,670	53.3
Alcohol intoxication, BAC, %	9,340	(0.23; 0.08)
Child lives in household		
Yes	5,312	26.5
No	14,698	72.8
Incident occurred in the presence of a child		
Yes	2,266	11.3
No	17,615	88.0

Following the general description of the sample, which includes households with and without children, a more detailed analysis was conducted focusing on households with children. This analysis examined the alcohol intoxication status of individuals posing a risk of domestic violence and explored the distribution of associated risk factors within these households.

Domestic Violence Risk Factors in Households with Children

The available data enabled the creation of a detailed profile of individuals posing a risk of domestic violence in households with children. The analysis examined the relationship between the alcohol intoxication status of

individuals posing a risk of violence, their gender and age, and other relevant sociodemographic characteristics. This provided insights into the broader contextual conditions in which children lived at the time of a police intervention. Among cases of domestic violence in households with children, 41.2% involved intoxicated individuals who posed a risk of violence, compared to 48.6% in households without children ($\chi^2 = 85.53$, $p < 0.01$; see Table 2).

In the category of alcohol-intoxicated individuals posing a risk of violence, the proportion of men (85.2%) was statistically significantly higher than that of women (14.8%). In contrast, within the non-intoxicated cohort, the gender

difference was less significant: 78.3% vs 21.7%, respectively ($\chi^2 = 40.55$, $p < 0.01$). Age-based analysis indicated that the lowest proportion (of men to women) of cases with alcohol-intoxicated individuals occurred among the group under 25 years of age (8.1%). In contrast, the highest proportion (50.6%) was observed in the age group from 36 to 50 ($\chi^2 = 34.51$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, police records showed a statistically significant difference in the prevalence of cases with alcohol-intoxicated individuals in households with children located in rural areas (63.4%), compared to those in urban areas (36.6%; $\chi^2 = 18.34$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2

Sociodemographic Data of Individuals Posing a Risk of Domestic Violence in Households with Children, by Alcohol Intoxication Status

Variables	Not intoxicated % (n)	Intoxicated % (n)	p
Gender of individuals' posing a risk of violence			
Men	78.3 (2434)	85.2 (1860)	.00
Women	21.7 (675)	14.8 (322)	
Age group of individual posing a risk of violence			
≤ 25 years	13.1 (410)	8.1 (178)	.00
26 - 35 years	28.6 (894)	29.3 (641)	
36 - 50 years	47.8 (1492)	50.6 (1108)	
51+ years	10.5 (325)	12 (589)	
Place of residence			
Urban	41.2 (1166)	36.6 (745)	.00
Semi-urban, rural	58.8 (1665)	63.4 (1290)	
Incident occurred in the presence of a child*	90.2 (2812)	92.4 (2024)	.01

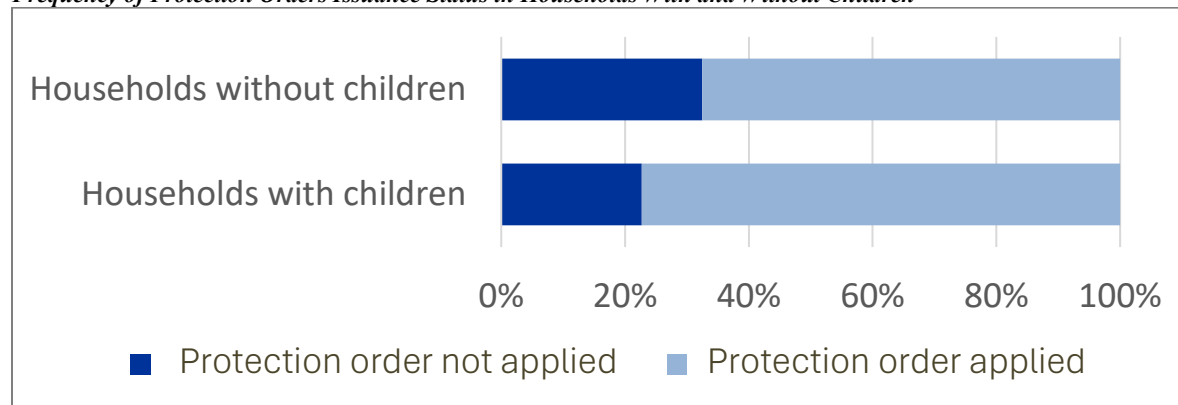
Note: *Only positive results (answer 'Yes') are indicated.

The results showed that protection orders were issued more frequently in households with children (77.3%) compared to those without children (67.5%; see Figure 1). This difference

is statistically significant ($\chi^2 [1, n = 20,010] = 1,781.71$, $p < 0.01$), but the correlation is very weak (Cramer's $V = 0.10$).

Figure 1

Frequency of Protection Orders Issuance Status in Households With and Without Children



Note: The difference between household types was statistically significant, $p < 0.01$, $n = 20,010$

Results of Multivariable Logistic Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was performed, in which both the dependent and covariate variables were dichotomised (0 =

no, 1 = yes). The model explained 37.1% of the variance in the outcome, as indicated by a Nagelkerke R^2 value of 0.371. Table 3 presents the odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence

intervals (CI) for the issuance of protection orders. It examines the effect of the following factors on the likelihood of an individual posing a risk of violence: gender; history of

domestic violence in the past 24 months; alcohol intoxication; and the presence of a child at the time of the incident.

Table 3

Odds Ratios (OR) of Issuing a Protection Order and 95% Confidence Intervals in Households With Children, by Domestic Violence Risk Factors.

Variable	OR	95% confidence intervals	
		Lower	Upper
Gender of an individual posing a risk of violence			
Men (ref. ‘Women’)	3.56	3.00	4.24
Domestic violence history in the past 24 months			
Yes (ref. ‘No’)	6.09	4.97	7.46
Alcohol intoxication			
Yes (ref. ‘No’)	4.08	3.44	4.84
Incident occurred in the presence of a child			
Yes (ref ‘No’)	8.38	6.82	10.28

Notes: All ORs were statistically significant different at the $p < 0.01$ level. Reference groups (OR equals 0): 'Women' (gender), 'No' (alcohol intoxication), 'No' (incident occurred in the presence of a child), 'No' (domestic violence history in the past 24 months). All variables were included into the model simultaneously. The variable 'incident occurred in the presence of a child' applies only to the subset of households where children were usually present.

The analysis revealed that the gender of individuals who posed a risk of domestic violence was a significant predictor of the issuing of the police-initiated domestic violence protection order in households with children (OR = 3.56; CI[3.00, 4.24]). The likelihood of a police-initiated protection order being issued was substantially higher when the incident occurred in the presence of a child (OR = 8.38; CI[6.82, 10.28]). In addition, a higher probability of a protection order being issued by the police was found to be associated with alcohol intoxication (OR = 4.08, CI[3.44, 4.84]). The odds of a police-initiated protection order being issued were also significantly higher if the individual posing a risk of violence had committed an act of domestic violence within the last 24 months (OR = 6.09; CI[4.97, 7.46]). Overall, the findings suggest that police officers have considered gender, alcohol intoxication, prior criminal history, and the presence of a child during the incident as key risk factors influencing their decision to issue a police-initiated protection order in domestic violence cases.

Discussion

We aimed to examine the role of alcohol intoxication in domestic violence incidents in households with children, and identify factors associated with the application of police-initiated protection orders. In the overall sample, alcohol-intoxicated individuals accounted for nearly half of the cases, and their level of intoxication was substantial (BAC = 0.23%). This can be interpreted as a factor conducive to the escalation of violence (Nagar & Rabinovitz, 2024). Slightly more than one quarter of the sample involved households with children. When households with children were analysed according to the IPR alcohol intoxication status, the absolute number of cases was higher among non-intoxicated individuals. The analysis revealed that alcohol intoxication

is not only a contextual factor but is also associated with certain demographic and situational characteristics. Within-group analysis showed a higher concentration of men, individuals aged 36 to 50 years, and residents of rural areas in the intoxicated group compared with the non-intoxicated group, which is consistent with epidemiological studies on alcohol use (Tamutienė et al., 2022).

In cases of domestic violence involving children, men who were under the influence of alcohol were approximately six times more likely to be involved as perpetrators than women. These findings are consistent with the findings of previous studies (Laslett et al., 2025; Willoughby et al., 2025). Similarly, Graham et al. (2021) found that, in cases of interpersonal violence occurring in households with children, perpetrators were more frequently intoxicated men, whereas victims were more often women.

The data from our study only allowed for the assessment of the of alcohol intoxication among individuals posing a risk of violence, rather than that of the potential adult victim. This is an important limitation, as bidirectional alcohol intoxication may influence both the dynamics and severity of domestic violence incidents. As another recent study by Miščikienė et al. (2025) found, alcohol intoxication was prevalent among both perpetrators (92.3%) and victims (86.5%), with the majority of alcohol-related homicides occurring during binge drinking episodes in domestic settings and resulting from unplanned interpersonal violence (78.8%). It should be noted that our study did not include severe cases of domestic violence, such as those resulting in homicide. Previous research indicates that parental or caregiver alcohol use is a significant risk factor for child maltreatment (Leung et al., 2025). However, the identification of high-risk families with children and

implementation of police-initiated protection orders may contribute to prevention of more severe forms of violence.

In Lithuania, if the police find that parents or legal guardians are intoxicated by alcohol during an intervention in a domestic violence incident, they must notify child protection services and remove the children from an unsafe environment. Prior studies have consistently demonstrated that problematic alcohol use is prevalent among families from which children enter the child protection system (Huckle & Romeo, 2023; Laslett et al., 2013; Leung et al., 2025; Tamutienė, 2018). Our findings additionally indicate that in rural settings, households with children were significantly more likely to be affected by alcohol-related domestic violence incidents when alcohol intoxication was present at the time of the incident, compared with households where no intoxication was recorded. This is in line with the findings of Russell et al. (2025) who reported that protection orders are more frequently issued to residents of rural areas. This pattern may be explained by the higher prevalence of harmful alcohol consumption in rural areas (Friesen et al., 2022; Tamutienė et al., 2022), and potentially lower levels of alcohol policy enforcement in rural areas, combined with more limited access to support and treatment services (Calvert et al., 2020). These findings collectively underscore the role of alcohol consumption in shaping both the prevalence and dynamics of domestic violence, particularly in households with children.

Our analysis revealed that police-initiated domestic violence protection orders were issued significantly more often in households with children (77.3%) than in households without children (67.5%). This suggests that police-initiated protection orders in domestic violence contexts serve not only to safeguard adult victims but also to ensure the safety of children in the household. Our findings are consistent with those reported by Petersson and Thunberg (2022), who found that Swedish police were more likely to recommend that women with children apply for restraining orders (OR = 1.6). This alignment suggests a wider institutional acknowledgement that households with children are higher-risk environments with the potential for multiple victims. It also suggests that the presence of children may influence police decision-making by enhancing the perception of vulnerability and harm.

In the multivariable logistic regression model, alcohol intoxication, male gender, history of domestic violence in the past 24 months, and the incident occurring in the presence of a child were independently associated with a higher likelihood of the issuance of the police-initiated domestic violence protection order. These findings are consistent with those of Graham et al. (2021), who identified male gender, alcohol intoxication and the presence of children during the incident as significant risk factors for intimate partner violence. Our results suggest that police officers identify and take these risk indicators seriously when deciding whether to issue protection orders.

However, the current data does not allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of these police-initiated protection orders in reducing violence, particularly in households with children. Previous studies have reported that protection orders may

have a small yet statistically significant effect in decreasing domestic violence incidents (Benitez et al., 2010; Dowling et al., 2018). Nonetheless, Cordier et al. (2021) have emphasised the lack of methodological consensus in assessing the effectiveness of protection orders, which complicates cross-study comparisons and policy evaluations. Future research should address this gap, as recurrent domestic violence poses substantial long-term risks for children's well-being and life trajectories (Hopkins et al., 2024; Karatekin et al., 2022).

Strengths and Limitations

When interpreting our findings, it is important to consider the limitations of our study, which was based on anonymised data from the Police Department's database. Since the data only covers police-initiated domestic violence protection orders, it does not include information on pre-trial investigations of domestic violence. This study also does not identify violations of police-initiated protection orders and repeat orders. Violations of police-initiated protection orders and repeatedly issued protection orders are also not identified in this study. Due to a lack of data, there is no information about the victims' alcohol intoxication, as the police only record the intoxication of individuals posing a risk of domestic violence. The authors of the study were unable to assess the number of children or their ages because this data was unavailable. To stay focused on the key study population, the multivariable logistic regression analysis has been performed only for households with children (noting whether they were present or not at the time of the incident). Therefore, the study's results cannot be generalised to the entire household population.

This study provides crucial, evidence-based insights into the phenomenon of domestic violence in Lithuania. The analysis is based on the national police register data, allowing the examination of documented cases rather than relying on self-reported survey data. Alcohol intoxication indicators are considered to be reliable, as police officers regularly perform breathalyser tests on individuals posing a risk during each intervention. This procedure increases the reliability and representativeness of the results. Although police practice for assessing alcohol intoxication is based on broader situational factors, the routine collection of administrative data may be affected by technical or procedural inaccuracies relating to the urgency of interventions and data entry practices. While this aspect should be considered a limitation of the study, it is not expected to have a significant impact on the overall trends analysed. The study reveals that police-initiated protection orders are more frequently employed in households with children, indicating a growing child-centred institutional approach to domestic violence. The study also contributes to the recognition of children as distinct and vulnerable family members who must be visible in the intervention process and protected from exposure to domestic violence.

Implications of the Findings

From a policy perspective, the early identification of families with children at high risk of domestic violence, coupled with the use of police-initiated protection orders,

could help to prevent severe violence and ensure that children receive timely support. The findings also highlight the need to strengthen interagency cooperation by targeting interventions for high-risk groups, particularly targeting the male population and rural areas. Our findings highlight the need for targeted alcohol-related interventions following police callouts in domestic violence cases. These could include systematic screening for alcohol intoxication, brief interventions delivered at the point of police contact, and structured referral pathways to addiction treatment services. It is important to clearly define institutional responsibilities for implementing screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment, in order to ensure not only the identification of individuals at risk, but also effective linkage to care (Hahn et al., 2024; Mayshak et al., 2022). Strengthening coordination between police, health care, and social services is essential to ensure continuity of support. In cases where children are present in the household, or witness domestic violence incidents, timely intervention becomes particularly critical to prevent further harm and reduce adverse childhood experiences. Integrating child protection considerations into alcohol-related interventions may therefore enhance both immediate safety and long-term well-being outcomes. Furthermore, expanding the availability and accessibility of addiction treatment services, particularly in rural areas, remains a critical policy priority (Hahn et al., 2024; Vil et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The results suggest that several risk factors, including alcohol intoxication, male gender, a prior criminal history and the presence of a child during the incident, are independently associated with a higher likelihood of police-initiated domestic violence protection orders being issued. This suggests that police consider multiple individual risk factors when deciding whether to issue protection orders. We recommend that future research evaluate the effectiveness of these orders from a child protection perspective, particularly in cases where the risk of violence is linked to problematic alcohol consumption. Policymakers can contribute to reducing the prevalence of domestic violence and safeguarding the well-being of children in vulnerable environments by prioritising preventative measures and family support systems. This study is a foundational step towards understanding the complexities of domestic violence in Lithuania, emphasising the need for ongoing research, policy development and targeted interventions where police, criminal histories, domestic violence, child protection issues, gender and intoxication interact.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania for granting access to the data used in this study. We would like to thank an English language editor for reviewing and improving the language of the manuscript, as well as the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

References

- Anda, R. F., Whitfield, C. L., Felitti, V. J., Chapman, D., Edwards, V. J., Dube, S. R., & Williamson, D. F. (2002). Adverse childhood experiences, alcoholic parents, and later risk of alcoholism and depression. *Psychiatric Services*, 53(8), 1001–1009. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.53.8.1001>
- Arnold, R., Ahmed, F., Clarke, A., Quinn, N., Beenstock, J., & Holland, P. (2023). The relationship between parental adverse childhood experiences and the health, well-being and development outcomes of their children: A systematic review. *Public Health*, 219, 146–153. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2023.03.025>
- Benitez, C. T., McNiel, D. E., & Binder, R. L. (2010). Do protection orders protect? *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Online*, 38(3), 376–385.
- Berg, K. A., Evans, K. E., Powers, G., Moore, S. E., Steigerwald, S., Bender, A. E., Holmes, M. R., Yaffe, A., & Connell, A. M. (2022). Exposure to intimate partner violence and children's physiological functioning: A systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Family Violence*, 37(8), 1321–1335. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-022-00370-0>
- Calvert, C., Toomey, T., Lenk, K., Joshi, S., Nelson, T., & Erickson, D. (2020). Variation in alcohol policy enforcement across urban and nonurban communities. *The Journal of Rural Health*, 36(2), 240–246. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jrh.12394>
- Civil Procedure Code of the Republic of Lithuania. 28 February 2002 No. IX-743. Current version 2025-02-24. Retrieved October 10, 2025, from <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.2E7C18F61454/asr>
- Code of Administrative Offences. 25 June 2015 No. XII-1869. Current version 2025-01-02. Retrieved October 10, 2025, from <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b8d908e0215b11e58a4198cd62929b7a/asr>
- Cordier, R., Chung, D., Wilkes-Gillan, S., & Speyer, R. (2021). The effectiveness of protection orders in reducing recidivism in domestic violence: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 22(4), 804–828. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838019882361>
- Criminal Code. 2000-09-26 No. VIII-1968. Current version from 2026-01-01. Retrieved October 10, 2025 from <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.2B866DFF7D43/asr>
- Code of Criminal Procedure 2002-03-14 No. IX-785. Current version 2025-02-01 - 2026-06-29. Retrieved October 10, 2025, from <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.163482/asr>
- Commissioner General of the Lithuanian Police. (2025). Description of the procedure for police officers' response to reports of domestic violence and the issuance, enforcement, and supervision of an order for protection against domestic violence (Order No. 5-V-506 of June 20, 2023, as amended by Order No. 5-V-839 of July 15, 2025). Retrieved Jun 6, 2025, from <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/tt/legalAct/8c89ed0162d911f0a8bbd1e98310677d>
- Director of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and the Director General of the Police

- Department 26 March 2024 Order No. S-V-305 on the approval of common operating procedures. Retrieved June 6, 2026, from <https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/uploads/vaikoteises/documents/files/Bendradarbiavimo%20sutartys/sutartis%20su%20PD%20atnaujinta.pdf>
- Dowling, C., Morgan, A., Hulme, S., Manning, M., & Wong, G. (2018). Protection orders for domestic violence: A systematic review. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, (551), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.52922/ti116237>
- Ehrensaft, M. K., & Langanichsen-Rohling, J. (2022). Intergenerational transmission of intimate partner violence: Summary and current research on processes of transmission. *Handbook of interpersonal violence and abuse across the lifespan: A project of the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan (NPEIV)*, (pp. 2485–2509). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-89999-2_152
- Eriksson, L., & Mazerolle, P. (2015). A cycle of violence? Examining family-of-origin violence, attitudes, and intimate partner violence perpetration. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 30(6), 945–964. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514539759>
- Graham, K., Bernards, S., Laslett, A. M., Gmel, G., Kuntsche, S., Wilsnack, S., Bloomfield, K., Grittner, U., Taft, A., Wilson, I., & Wells, S. (2021). Children, parental alcohol consumption, and intimate partner violence: A multicountry analysis by perpetration versus victimization and sex. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(11–12), 5608–5634. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518804182>
- Hahn, C., Tilstra-Ferrell, E., Salim, S., Goodrum, N., Rheingold, A., Gilmore, A. K., Barber, S., & Moreland, A. (2024). Web-based screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment for traumatic stress and alcohol misuse among survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence: Usability and acceptability study. *JMIR Formative Research*, 8, e49557. <https://doi.org/10.2196/49557>
- Herrera, M. J., & Amor, P. J. (2024). Protective orders for male perpetrators of intimate partner violence: differences between violators and non-violators. *Violence Against Women*, 30(3–4), 911–933. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231163578>
- Hopkins, C., Haugland, S. H., Greenfield, T. K., Tamutienė, I., Hettige, S., & Laslett, A. M. (2024). Harms to children from men's heavy drinking: A scoping review. *International Journal of Alcohol and Drug Research*, 12(2), 85–100. <https://doi.org/10.7895/ijadr.523>
- Huckle, T., & Romeo, J. S. (2023). Estimating child maltreatment cases that could be alcohol-attributable in New Zealand. *Addiction*, 118(4), 669–677. <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.16111>
- Hughes, K., Bellis, M. A., Hardcastle, K. A., Sethi, D., Butchart, A., Mikton, C., Jones, L., & Dunne, M. P. (2017). The effect of multiple adverse childhood experiences on health: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet. Public Health*, 2(8), e356–e366. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(17\)30118-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(17)30118-4)
- Hughes, K., Ford, K., Bellis, M. A., Glendinning, F., Harrison, E., & Passmore, J. (2021). Health and financial costs of adverse childhood experiences in 28 European countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet. Public Health*, 6(11), e848–e857. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(21\)00232-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(21)00232-2)
- Jung, H., Herrenkohl, T. I., Skinner, M. L., Lee, J. O., Klika, J. B., & Rousson, A. N. (2019). Gender differences in intimate partner violence: A predictive analysis of IPV by child abuse and domestic violence exposure during early childhood. *Violence Against Women*, 25(8), 903–924. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218796329>
- Karatekin, C., Mason, S. M., Riegelman, A., Bakker, C., Hunt, S., Gresham, B., Corcoran, F., & Barnes, A. (2022). Adverse childhood experiences: A scoping review of measures and methods. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 136, 106425. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106425>
- Laslett, A. M. L., Dietze, P. M., & Room, R. G. (2013). Carer drinking and more serious child protection case outcomes. *British Journal of Social Work*, 43(7), 1384–1402. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcs052>
- Laslett, A. M., Ramsoomar, L., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., Hopkins, C., Graham, K., Blackburn, N., Walker, M. J., Haugland, S. H., Tamutienė, I., Room, R., Greenfield, T. K., Gilchrist, G., Tanyos, A. S. B., Willoughby, B., Hettige, S., Waleewong, O., & Wilson, I. M. (2025). Harms to women and children from men's alcohol use: An evidence review and directions for policy. *RTI Press*. <https://doi.org/10.3768/rtipress.2025.op.0098.2509>
- Laslett, A. M., Stanesby, O., Graham, K., Callinan, S., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., Wilsnack, S., Kuntsche, S., Waleewong, O., Greenfield, T. K., Gmel, G., Florenzano, R., Hettige, S., Siengsounthone, L., Wilson, I. M., Taft, A., & Room, R. (2020). Children's experience of physical harms and exposure to family violence from others' drinking in nine societies. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 28(4), 354–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16066359.2019.1704272>
- Law on Protection against Domestic Violence 2011-05-26 No. XI-1425 Current version 2023-07-01. Retrieved January 8, 2026, from <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.400334/asr>
- Leal, W. E., Iesue, L., Moscrop-Blake, K., Regalado, J., Timmer, A., & González, J. (2024). The mediating role of problematic alcohol consumption on the association between pandemic-related strains and domestic violence across six countries. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 40(13–14), 3378–3404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605241271389>
- Leung, J. Y. Y., Parker, K., Lin, E. Y., & Huckle, T. (2025). The association of parental or caregiver alcohol use with child maltreatment: A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Addiction*, 120(9), 1724–1738. <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.70055>
- Mayshak, R., Curtis, A., Coomber, K., Tonner, L., Walker, A., Hyder, S., Liknaitzky, P., & Miller, P. (2022). Alcohol-involved family and domestic violence reported to police in Australia. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(3–4), NP1658–NP1685. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520928633>

- McCloud, B., & Abdullah, A. (2024). Theoretical analysis of the cycle of intimate partner violence: A systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 26(5), 1064–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241301781>
- Mehfooz, M., Amir-ud-Din, R., & Zafar, S. (2023). Does childhood experience of interparental abuse shape women's attitude toward intimate partner violence in their adult life? Evidence from 31 developing countries. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38(7–8), 5490–5518. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221123293>
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. (2019). Order on the procedure for assessing the situation of a child, 2019. Retrieved October 10, 2025, from <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/5ce006612b1311ea8f0dfdc2b5879561/asr>.
- Ministry of the Interior. (2023). Order on the establishment of criteria for assessing the risk of domestic violence of 29 March 2023 No. 1V-171. Retrieved October 10, 2025, from https://e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/94f92270cdea1cd9978886e85107ab2?utm_source.
- Miščikienė, L., Trišauskė, J., Štelemėkas, M., & Astromskė, K. (2025). Explaining the link between alcohol and homicides: Insights from the analysis of legal cases in Lithuania. *Medicina*, 61(4), 657. <https://doi.org/10.3390/medicina61040657>.
- Petersson, J., & Thunberg, S. (2022). Vulnerability factors among women victimized by intimate partner violence and the presence of children. *Journal of Family Violence*, 37(7), 1057–1069. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00328-8>
- Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior. (2024). *Statistics on domestic violence*. Retrieved October 10, 2025, from <https://policija.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/viesosios-tvarkos-ir-gyventoju-saugumo-uztikrinimas/smurtas-artimoje-aplinkoje/smurto-artimoje-aplinkoje-statistika/>.
- Russell, B., Cox, J., Hamel, A., MacNeil, E., & Stewart, H. (2025). A systematic review of intimate partner violence protection order research: A decade of insight. *Partner Abuse*, 16, PA-2024. <https://doi.org/10.1891/PA-2024-0050>
- State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2024) *Activity report*. Retrieved October 1, 2025, from <https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/public/canonical/1741207566/220/2024%20m.%20veiklos%20ataskaita.pdf>.
- Statistics Lithuania. (2025). *Recorded domestic violence crimes*. Retrieved October 5, 2025, from https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?indicator=S3R0127&fbclid=IwY2xjawJCPKNl_eHRuA2FlbQlXMAABHdU5HjfvCWmCjubeG6b9Kl_KKNg3VG-8oUln6XZjRXXnq-gCKp6fJm8Ugw_aem_9P8lQJHJNZ8skHxX35cmhKw#/.
- Tamutienė, I. (2018). Alcohol-related child maltreatment: Reports to the Child Rights Protection Service in Kaunas municipality. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 35(1), 9–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1455072517749132>.
- Tamutienė, I., Civinskas, R., Stumbrys, D., Peištarė, B., Auglytė, V. (2022). *From temperance movements to evidence-based alcohol policy: an evaluation of the Lithuanian case*. Vytautas Magnus University. Retrieved September 9, 2025 from <https://ebooks.vdu.lt/eb/3087/nuo-blaivybes-judejimu-iki-irodymais-gristos-alkoholio-politikos-lietuvos-atvejo-vertinimas/>.
- Thulin, E. J., Heinze, J. E., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2021). Adolescent adverse childhood experiences and risk of adult intimate partner violence. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 60(1), 80–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2020.06.030>
- Vil, N. M. St., Haley, D. F., Montgomery, B., Williams, M., Watson, L., Zhang, S., & Wingood, G. M. (2024). An exploration of geographic access to substance use treatment programs and violence against women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 39(23–24), 5033–5055. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605241246000>.
- Willoughby, B., Smit, K., Wilson, I. M., Gilchrist, G., Hopkins, C., Tanyos, A., Saunders, M., Alen, G. D., & Laslett, A. M. (2025). Understanding the intersection between men's alcohol use, masculinity and perpetration of intimate partner violence: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 15248380251383937. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380251383937>
- Zhang, Y., Cannata, S., Razza, R., & Liu, Q. (2025). Intimate partner violence exposure and self-regulation in children and adolescents: A systematic review. *Journal of Family Violence*, 40(2), 401–417. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-023-00636-1>
- Zurba, E. (2024). Emergency barring orders and the case-law of their application. *Jurisprudencija*, 31(1), 118–142. <https://doi.org/10.13165/JUR-24-31-1-06>.