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Presentation title: The Impact of Specialized Prosecution on the Safety of Domestic Violence Victims

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Little is known about how to effectively reduce re-victimization among those who experience domestic violence, despite decades of investment in specialized, collaborative programs run by law enforcement, prosecutors, and court systems across the United States. This study uses the tendency of prosecutors in Cook County, Illinois to include cases in a specialized prosecution program as an instrumental variable to identify the program's effect on serious re-victimization; the rotation of prosecutors in and out of the program creates quasi-experimental variation in which prosecutor makes inclusion decisions on each case. The results indicate that specialized prosecution - which increases prosecutor capacity on each case, and introduces victim advocates into the prosecution process - lowers the likelihood of homicide for those on the margin of inclusion. We discuss several mechanisms that may be driving these results, including the impact of the program on the likelihood of incarceration and the receipt of victim-focused services.