

## Chapter 16

# Limitations and Strengths

There are several limitations to consider when discussing the current research. Although this sample size exceeds sample sizes of other previous studies, the method of case collection (drawn from adjudicated law enforcement files) limits generalizability. Cases were not collected randomly, although they are representative of operational cases. Consequently, researchers and criminal justice professionals should always be prepared to interpret recommendations and suggestions made by the authors as they relate to a particular case.

The strength of the study is that data collected for each case came from various sources. Methodology of previous studies often was limited to one source of information. Sources for this study included medical examiner reports, investigative files, crime scene photos, psychiatric records, CPS records, recorded interviews, and presentence reports. Even with access to a variety of case reports, some case records provided non-specific medical and psychological information. Nevertheless, the exceptional nature of maternal filicide cases likely encourages most professionals to collect as much information as possible about psychological and social factors contributing to the act.