

# Measuring the mental health harms in women and men associated with different thresholds of intimate partner violence (IPV): A systematic review and meta-analysis

Project report

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## Project background

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This project was funded by the UKRI Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network as part of its workstream on the theme of measurement of violence, abuse and mental health.

The project ran for a total of 1 year and 8 months



### Project team:

- Dr Nadia Mantovani, St George's, University of London
- Dr Angela Sweeney, St George's, University of London
- Prof Steve Gillard, City, University of London
- Dr Sarah White, St George's, University of London
- Dr. Jacqueline Sin, City, University of London
- Joanna Sharpen, Against Violence and Abuse (AVA)
- Emma Brett, Anglia Ruskin University

### Project partners:

- Anglia Ruskin University: Emma Brett
- UTE University, Research Centre in Public Health and Clinical Epidemiology (CISPEC), Ecuador Associate Cochrane Centre:
- AVA (Against Violence & Abuse): Camila Montesinos Guevara
- Survivor panel: Naima Iqbal, Alicia Khan and Concetta Perot



# Project summary

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## Background

Intimate partner violence (IPV) includes physical and non-physical acts/behaviours such as sexual, psychological, controlling and coercive behaviours. These can be single or repeated acts perpetrated by an intimate partner who may or may not be living together in the same household. The impact resulting from violence and abuse is known to persist over time, particularly, the long-term impact is associated with an increased risk of developing anxiety, psychological distress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, and suicide attempts. The association between violence and mental health problems warrants further research to understand these associations, and to develop strategies to prevent violence.

## Methods

We used systematic review and meta-analysis methods to synthesise results from relevant studies that looked at the impact of violence and abuse on the mental health of men and women. Panel meetings with survivors were held at several key points through the review.

## Results

Experiencing any form of IPV in the past year is very common among women; particularly women in the community (recruited from non-clinical settings), those seeking help from health services, and pregnant women. Psychological violence was the most common form of violence experienced by both women and men. Sexual violence was the least reported form of violence experienced by men. Compared to women who had not experienced violence in the past year, those who had experienced it, had a much higher risk of developing mental health problems, primarily, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and feeling suicidal. The more severe the physical or psychological abuse, the greater the impact on women's mental health, particularly for PTSD.

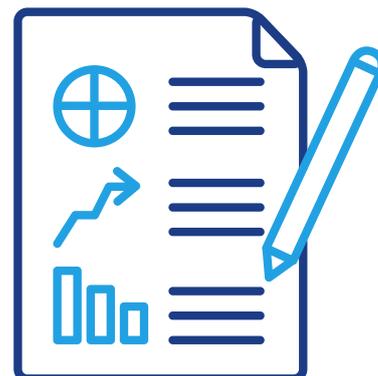
## Conclusions

Both men and women reported high prevalence of IPV in the past year, nevertheless, gender disparities were found with men being at a significantly lower risk of experiencing IPV. The reported negative effects on respondents' mental health, suggest that clinical practice and programmes are needed to prevent violence. Further research should examine gender differences on the impact of IPV on mental health.

## Key messages

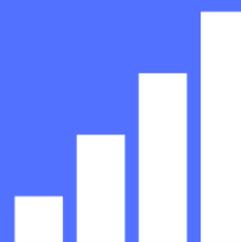
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# Top 3 key messages from the project



Data pooled for this study clearly indicates that both men and women report high levels of IPV; it remains however that men do not report experiencing levels of IPV as high as women.

The association between experience of IPV in the last year and mental health outcomes is strongest for PTSD, OR= 3.49, then depression OR=2.97, and suicidal thoughts OR=2.95. We identified medium correlations between severity of PTSD and severity of physical violence  $r=0.41$ , between PTSD and severity of psychological violence,  $r=0.40$ , and between suicidal thoughts and severity of sexual violence  $r=0.40$ .



We were unable to conduct the systematic review our survivor panel wanted due to a lack of data on non-medicalised impacts (e.g. social impacts, intersectionalities) suggesting an urgent need for quantitative research in these areas.

# The Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network

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We will be sure to keep our members updated on any outputs linked to this project in the future. To keep updated you can sign up to our mailing list and receive our monthly newsletter. You can also follow us on our socials . All links can be found at the bottom of this page.

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## About the VAMHN

We are a network of individuals and organisations aiming to reduce the prevalence of mental health problems by addressing associated violence and abuse, particularly domestic and sexual violence. We bring together and support research by experts from a range of disciplines, sectors, and backgrounds - some with personal experience, others with expertise from the work that they do, and survivor researchers with both.

The activities of the network are organised into 3 themes:

Measurement	Measuring the extent and impact of domestic and sexual violence in relation to mental health. Our first year activities focused on the theme of measurement
Understanding	Understanding the pathways that lead to domestic and sexual violence and their relationship to mental health problems
Intervention	Planning interventions and services to prevent, reduce and address domestic and sexual violence in people with mental health problems or at risk of developing mental health problems

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