

Risk factors and health consequences of experiencing reproductive coercion: A scoping review

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Background:

Reproductive coercion (RC) refers to behaviours that restrict an individual's reproductive choices, such as pregnancy coercion, contraceptive sabotage, forced abortion, and forced sterilisation. Health settings that provide sexual and reproductive health care are well-positioned to identify and support those affected by RC. However, the lack of clarity and awareness around RC makes it challenging for health providers to identify at-risk patients. Synthesising evidence on RC risk factors and health consequences may facilitate appropriate RC identification and development of RC interventions in relevant health settings. Therefore, we aimed to assess the scope of evidence in relation to risk factors and health consequences of experiencing RC.

Methods:

We conducted a scoping review according to the JBI methodology for scoping reviews. We searched five databases for primary research articles published in English between 2010 and 2023. Studies that examined RC risk factors and/or health consequences were included. Two independent reviewers screened articles for eligibility, with conflicts resolved by a third reviewer. Eligible articles were synthesised using a narrative approach.

Results:

A total of 83 studies met the inclusion criteria. Results indicate that risk factors associated with RC are complex and multifaceted, but can be categorised into four domains across the socio-ecological model: individual, interpersonal, community, and societal. Health consequences included unintended pregnancies, higher rates of sexually transmitted infections, and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Additionally, experiencing RC was associated with decreased use of contraception and increased risk of intimate partner violence.

Conclusion:

This scoping review highlights the importance of addressing RC as a form of violence in clinical practice and public health interventions. An increased awareness of the risk factors and health consequences of RC may assist health providers to identify individuals who may be at higher risk and provide them with appropriate support and resources.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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