

# **Intimate partner violence and reproductive coercion prevalence in Perth, Western Australia: a cross-sectional study in an urban sexual and reproductive health clinic.**

## **Authors:**

Galrao M<sup>1</sup>, Douglas R<sup>2</sup>, Creagh A<sup>3</sup>, Smith S<sup>4</sup>, Brooker C<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sexual Health Quarters (SHQ), Northbridge, WA and Public Health Trainee, <sup>2</sup> SHQ and Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service, Perth WA, <sup>3</sup> SHQ and University of Western Australia, <sup>4</sup> SHQ and King Edward Memorial Hospital, Perth WA, <sup>5</sup> SHQ and Brecken Health WA.

## **Background:**

This paper describes the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and reproductive coercion (RC) amongst the clients presenting to an urban Australian sexual and reproductive health clinic. It explores potential associations between demographic characteristics and disclosing either form of abuse. While prevalence data for IPV exists from national surveys and also some hospital departments in other States, this is novel information for a Western Australian ambulatory clinic setting. There is limited published data on the prevalence of RC in Australia. This new information may assist other clinicians in identifying those patients at risk of IPV and/or RC in other health settings.

## **Methods:**

A cross sectional study using a written IPV/RC screening questionnaire and patients' medical files. The study was conducted from March 2019 to March 2020 and includes 2623 female patients aged 16 and over (70% participation rate). Outcome measures included the prevalence of IPV and RC, and the association (prevalence odds ratio) between exposure to violence and demographic characteristics (age, country of birth, Aboriginality, sexual orientation and socio-economic status).

## **Results:**

Overall, 454 (17.3%) participants had ever experienced IPV, RC or both. Of these, 91 (20%) were experiencing violence at the time of screening. Significant associations were found between current experience of IPV and being Australian born (OR 4.87; 2.67-8.92,  $p < 0.001$ ), aged between 35-54 years (OR 2.25; 1.25-4.05,  $p = 0.007$ ) and in a same-sex relationship (OR 3.89; 1.57-9.65,  $p = 0.003$ ). Similar associations were found for those experiencing RC at the time of screening.

## **Conclusions:**

These results highlight the alarmingly high prevalence of female patients in abusive relationships presenting to a sexual health clinic, and suggest potential associations between exposure to violence and certain demographic characteristics. This knowledge may be of benefit to other clinicians.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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