

Experiences of domestic violence and abuse in gay & bisexual men attending a UK sexual health service

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Objectives of Presentation

- To explore the extent and nature of domestic violence/abuse (DVA) in gay & bisexual men attending a sexual health service
- To understand men's preferences for discussing abuse in relationships with health practitioners

PROVIDE - UK

- Programme of Research On Violence In Diverse domestic Environments
- 5 year programme funded by National Institute for Health Research Programme under its Programme Grants for Applied Research Programme
- First large scale UK programme of research on health sector responses to domestic violence led by University of Bristol (Professor Gene Feder)



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The Clinical Setting

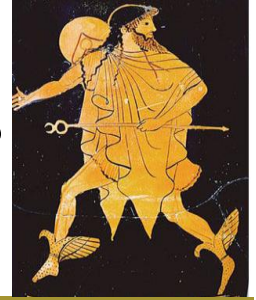
- Hospital based sexual health service in South East London
- Patients can self-refer
- Clinic offers a mix of walk-in times and bookable appointments
- Offers free confidential services including screening for STIs, HIV testing, counselling and information
- Run by a team of doctors, nurses and health advisors
- Waiting time can be 1-3 hours and patients may need to see a range of practitioners



Study 1: PROVIDE Male Waiting Room Survey

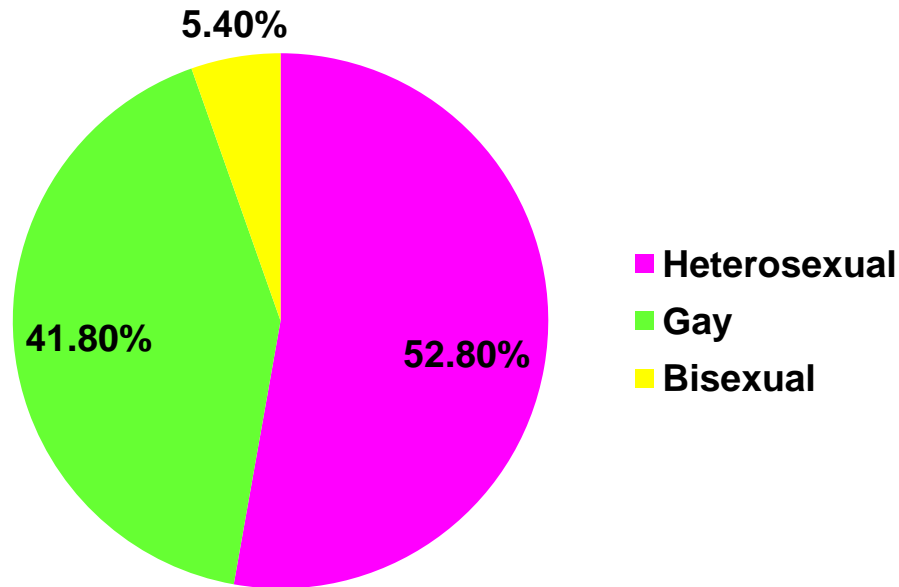
- *Relationship and Health Survey* (Sept 2010 to May 2011)
 - male patients
 - aged 18+
 - english speaking
 - attending either one of 2 generic clinics or 1 specialist LGBT sexual health clinic
 - randomisation of weeks to different clinics
- Consent form asked for permission to access the patient's medical record
- Patient invited to participate in a future qualitative interview upon returning the survey to researchers

Study 2: HERMES (HEalth professionals Responding to MEN for Safety)



- Implementation of pilot educational intervention for practitioners at the After Five (LGBT) sexual health clinic
- Pre and post training audit of medical records to determine changes in identification of DVA, documentation and referral to GALOP (specialist LGBT organisation which offers support for DVA and sexual abuse)
- In-depth interviews with health practitioners post training
- PROVIDE Intervention Measure (PIM) for health professionals pre and post training
- Data will inform cost effectiveness model of the intervention

Clinic Survey (n=1,133 men)



% based on N=1,127 men who reported their sexuality

532 gay/bisexual men

- Mean age 34.5 yrs (range 18 to 75)
- 434 (80.8%) White ethnic group
- 246 (46.8%) had a current partner
- 461 (87.2%) in paid employment

Findings 1: Experience of behaviours from a partner (n=522 gay/bisexual men)

Behaviour	Frequency	%
As an adult, have you ever felt frightened of the behaviour of a partner	130	24.90
Have you ever needed to ask your partner's permission to work, go shopping, visit relatives, or visit friends?	44	5.43
As an adult, have you ever been hit, slapped, kicked or otherwise physically hurt by a partner?	101	19.35
As an adult, has a partner ever forced you to have sex or made you engage in any sexual activity when you did not want to?	46*	8.86
Any of the above behaviours	178	34.10

* "Forced to have sex" based on n=473 responses

Findings 2: Experiences of behaviours from a partner

Number of behaviours experienced (n=178)

88 (49.4%) 1 behaviour

90 (50.6%) >1 behaviour

Type of partners who behaved in this way (N=167)

5 (2.99%) Current female partner

11 (5.59%) Former female partner

32 (19.16%) Current male partner

125 (78.85%) Former male partner

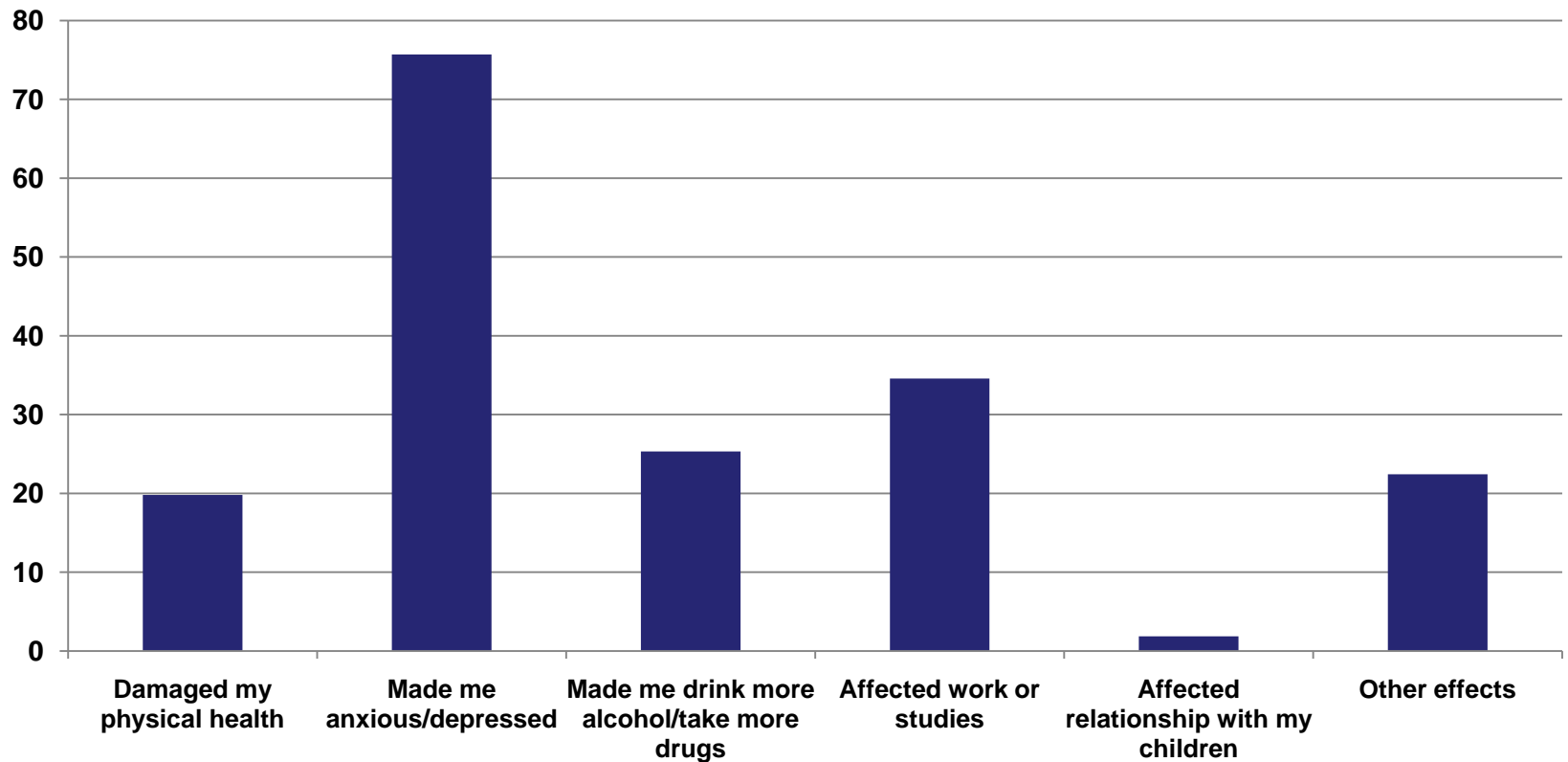
Findings 3: Duration of behaviours

- 50/169 (25.6%) had experienced the behaviour in the last 12 months

Duration of behaviour from a partner	Frequency	%
Only once	90	54.55
More often – for up to 6 months	35	21.21
More often – for up to a year	10	6.06
More often – for over a year	30	18.18
Total	165	100.00

Findings 4: Impact of behaviours

% Impact of Behaviours Experienced From a Partner (N=107)



Findings 5: Perceptions of domestic violence/abuse

- 66/517 (12.8%) men felt that they had “*ever been in a relationship that could be described as domestically violent or abusive*”

Lifetime experience of any behaviour from a partner	Ever been in a domestically abusive or violent relationship		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	62 36.05	110 63.95	172 100.00
No	4 1.18	336 98.82	340 100.00
Total	66 12.89	446 87.11	512 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 123.6811 Pr = 0.000
Fisher's Exact = 0.000

Findings 6: Perceptions of domestic violence/abuse

Definitions of domestic violence and abuse (from qualitative interviews with men)

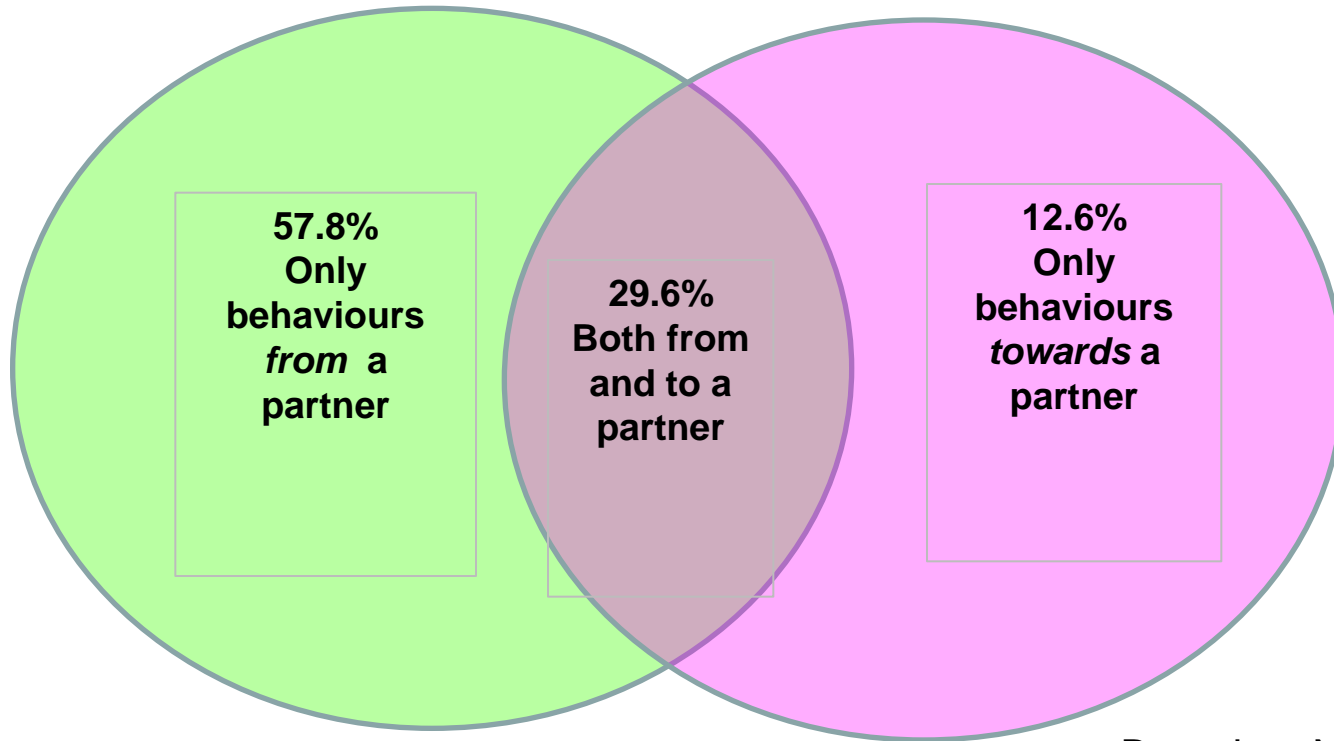
“For me violence means physical. Abuse, you see if you say domestic violence, I think of an episode, it’s something happening with physical violence. If you say abuse I think that encompasses both the violence and more of it or over a longer period of time”

“I would say that domestic violence would be something that would...it's like wife beating someone who's hitting as abuse....remember that man who locked his wife and his daughter in the cellar for fifteen years and raped her pretty much every day, I mean, what do you classify that as? It's off the scale, isn't it? So that's both violence and abuse just keeping someone locked up in a room, that's not violence, it's just abuse, I'd say.”

Findings 7: Experience of behaviours *towards* partner

Behaviour	Frequency	%
As an adult, have you ever behaved in a way that made a partner feel frightened	54/516	10.47
Has a partner ever needed to ask your partner's permission to work, go shopping, visit relatives, or visit friends?	11/516	2.13
As an adult, have you ever hit, slapped, kicked or otherwise physically hurt a partner?	56/513	10.92
As an adult, have you ever forced a partner to have sex or made them engage in any sexual activity when they did not want to?	7/512	1.37
Any of the above behaviours	84/516	16.28

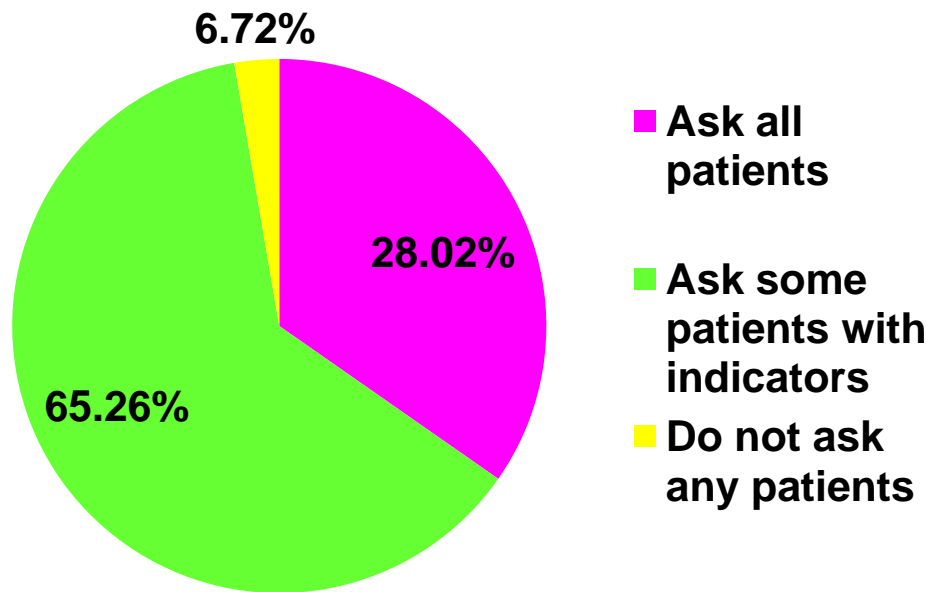
Findings 8: Overlap between victimisation & perpetration



Based on N=515

Grey area may be problematic for health practitioners in terms of identification of DVA and referral

Findings 9: *Should health practitioners ask whether a partner has hurt or frightened you?*



% based on N=521 respondents

21/523 (4%) said that a health professional had ever asked them about whether a partner had hurt or frightened them

Men felt that sexual health practitioners are better placed to discuss relationship abuse compared to GPs

Audit of medical records found no documentation of domestic violence

Summary

- Experience of abusive behaviours from a partner is high in this sample of gay/bisexual men attending a sexual health service
- Many had experienced this for over a year and it had significant impacts on their health and day to day life
- Some men do not define their experiences as “domestic abuse” or “domestic violence” (e.g. denial, minimisation, rationalising)
- Sexual health practitioners are not detecting DVA in male patients according to an audit of medical records
- The overlap between victimisation and perpetration represents a grey area in terms of DVA interventions in health settings

Team

Research Team

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Collaborators from Specialist DVA Organisations

Respect

GALOP

Stonewall Housing

Broken Rainbow



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