

# Association between Intimate Partner Violence and Homelessness Risk, Unhealthy Alcohol Use, and Risk of Unintended Pregnancy

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# Background

- More than one in three women in the United States experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking from an intimate partner in their lifetimes (intimate partner violence, IPV)<sup>1</sup>
- Experience of IPV can contribute to homelessness, unhealthy substance use, and unintended pregnancies, among other social conditions<sup>2-4</sup>
- Women veterans are a growing population of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) patients and face particular risks of these social health conditions, which are associated with negative health outcomes and impact each other<sup>3-6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Black et al., 2011; <sup>2</sup>Black, 2011; <sup>3</sup>Hamilton et al., 2011; <sup>4</sup>Gerber et al., 2014; <sup>5</sup>Byrne et al., 2013;

<sup>6</sup>Goyal et al., 2012

# Study Purpose

- To identify the association between experience of past-year IPV and three social health conditions: current homelessness risk or housing instability, current unhealthy alcohol use, and current risk of unintended pregnancy, among a sample of female VHA patients
- By identifying the overlap between IPV and other social health conditions, we can better tailor assessment and intervention to meet patients' holistic healthcare needs

# Methods

- Setting: Two VA medical centers in Pennsylvania, women's primary care clinics
- Sample: 583 female VHA primary care patients
- Data collection: Self-administered paper-based social health screen provided as part of primary care visit
- Instrument: 14-item Social Health Screen
- Analysis: bivariate, chi-square

# Measures

Construct	Measure	Items	Scoring
Past-year IPV	Extended Hurt, Insult, Threaten, Scream scale (E-HITS) <sup>1</sup>	Physically hurt, insult or talk down to, threaten with harm, scream or curse, forced sexual activities	Any violence
Unstable housing	VA Homelessness Screening Clinical Reminder <sup>2</sup>	Not living in stable housing in past 2 months, worried/concerned about not having stable housing in next 2 months	Positive response on either item
Unhealthy alcohol use	Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT-C) <sup>3</sup>	Past year: frequency of drinking, number of drinks per day when drinking, binge drinking	≥3
Risk of unintended pregnancy	Contraceptive Vital Sign <sup>5</sup>	Birth control method – <i>among age ≤50, heterosexually active, able to get pregnant, and not currently pregnant or trying to become pregnant</i>	No/ lower-efficacy birth control method

<sup>1</sup>Chan et al., 2010; <sup>2</sup>Montgomery et al., 2013; <sup>3</sup>Bush et al., 1998; <sup>4</sup>Schwarz et al., 2012

# Social Health Screen

## Social Health Screen

In order to better meet your needs, please complete the questions below and then hand the completed form to your nurse or primary care provider.

1. In the past 2 months, have you been living in stable housing that you own, rent, or stay in as part of a household? (choose one)
  - Yes, living in stable housing
  - No, not living in stable housing → skip to Question #3
2. Are you worried or concerned that in the next 2 months you may NOT have stable housing that you own, rent, or stay in as part of a household? (choose one)
  - Yes, worried about housing in the near future
  - No, not worried about housing in the near future
3. Where you have lived for MOST of the past 2 months? (choose one)
  - Apartment/House/Room – no government subsidy
  - Apartment/House/Room – with government subsidy
  - With Friend/Family
  - Motel/Hotel
  - Hospital/Rehabilitation Center/Drug Treatment Center
  - Homeless Shelter
  - Anywhere Outside (e.g., street, vehicle, abandoned building)
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

In the past 12 months, how often did an intimate partner (e.g., boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife, sexual partner):

- |  | Never                    | Rarely                   | Sometimes                | Often                    | Frequently               |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. Physically hurt you                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Insult or talk down to you          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Threaten you with harm              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Scream or curse at you              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Force you to have sexual activities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
9. How often did you have a drink containing alcohol in the past year? (choose one)
    - Never → skip to Question #12
    - Once a month or less
    - Two to four times a month
    - Two to three times per week
    - Four or more times a week

Please continue on the other side

10. How many drinks containing alcohol did you have on a typical day when you were drinking in the past year? (choose one)
  - 1 or 2
  - 3 or 4
  - 5 or 6
  - 7 to 9
  - 10 or more
11. How often did you have six or more drinks on one occasion in the past year? (choose one)
  - Never
  - Less than monthly
  - Monthly
  - Weekly
  - Daily or almost daily

If you are age 50 or younger, please answer the questions below.

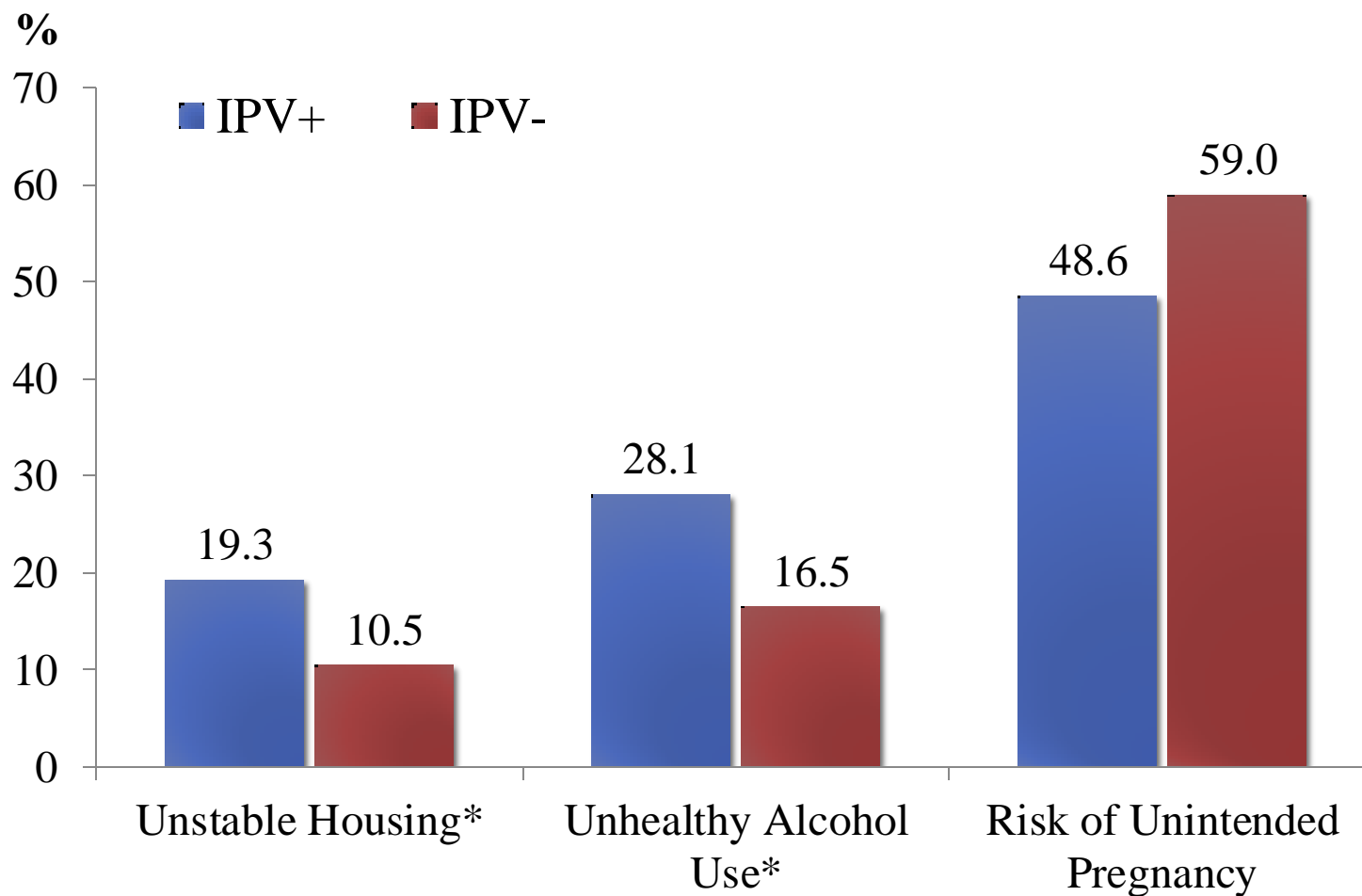
If you are older than 50, please skip to question #14.

12. Are you currently pregnant or trying to become pregnant?
  - I am currently pregnant → Skip to Question #14
  - I am trying to get pregnant → Skip to Question #14
  - No, I've been through menopause → Skip to Question #14
  - No, I've had a hysterectomy → Skip to Question #14
  - I am not trying to get pregnant but I wouldn't mind being pregnant
  - No
13. There are many ways that people try to avoid becoming pregnant. Which are you using? (you can choose more than one)
  - I have not been sexually active with men in the last 3 months
  - Birth control pills, vaginal ring, or patch
  - Condoms or diaphragm
  - Depo-Provera (shot)
  - Intrauterine Device (IUD) or Implanon/Nexplanon (the implant)
  - Tubal ligation
  - My partner has a vasectomy
  - Other (such as spermicides, a sponge, withdrawal, timed intercourse, etc.)
  - No method
14. Please note any other concerns you would like to discuss with your provider today:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Findings: IPV Screening

	n	%	Total n
<b>Any IPV</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>564</b>
Any Psychological IPV	116	20.6	562
Any Physical IPV	19	3.4	561
Any Sexual IPV	10	1.8	555
E-HITS $\geq 6$	105	19.1	549
E-HITS $\geq 7$	81	14.8	549

# Findings: IPV and Other Conditions



\*  $P < .05$



# Discussion

- Past-year IPV associated with increased risk of unstable housing and unhealthy alcohol use
  - Nearly 1 in 5 women with past-year IPV reported currently unstable housing
  - > 1 in 4 women with past-year IPV reported current unhealthy use of alcohol
  - No statistically significant difference between IPV+ and IPV- on risk of unintended pregnancy (among women able to become pregnant)
- Considerations
  - Diverse sample from two medical centers but not representative of larger population
  - No statistical control of demographic characteristics
  - Novel measures of homelessness risk and risk of unintended pregnancy

# Conclusions and Implications

- IPV co-occurs with other social health conditions (homelessness, unhealthy substance use), placing women at increased risk of negative health outcomes
- Policies and programs for women experiencing IPV should address a variety of social service needs to promote health and safety
- Policies and programs addressing homelessness and unhealthy alcohol use among women should also assess for and address experience of IPV
- Further research should examine the association between IPV and risk of unintended pregnancy, including contraceptive use and need for contraceptive care among women experiencing IPV

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# Thank you!

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