Sexual Abuse and Forced Sex Among a Sample of Women Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence: Identifying the Need for Sexual Health Interventions and Sexual Safety Planning

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To learn more about the prevalence of, and factors associated with, **forced sex and sexual abuse** by an intimate partner in a sample of women who have reported intimate partner violence in order to inform needs assessment and services provided.
Research Questions

What is the prevalence of sexual abuse and forced sex among a sample of women experiencing IPV?

What factors are related to sexual abuse and forced sex among a sample of women experiencing IPV?
Background Definitions

- **Intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV)**
  - Sexual component of intimate partner violence

- **Forced sex**
  - Unwanted sex obtained through physical force
  - Includes a range of sex acts

- **Intimate partner sexual abuse (IPSA)**
  - Sexual coercion
  - Sexual control, e.g. refusal to wear condoms
IPSV Prevalence

- Nearly 1 in 10 women in the U.S. has been raped by an intimate partner (CDC, 2011)
- In previous studies, 7.7% (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000) to 13% (Basile, 2002) U.S. women reported forced sex by an intimate partner in national random samples
- Past year sexual coercion rates in community samples ranged from to 14% (Meyer, Vivian, O'Leary, 1998) to 50% (Marshall & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005)

- IPSV has been correlated with negative physical, mental, emotional, and sexual outcomes
Data: From the OK-LA Study

Lethality Assessment Program (LAP)

Collaboration b/t police and social service providers created by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

Two Steps:

1. 11-item Lethality Assessment (LA) to assess homicide risk (derived from the 20-item Danger Assessment)

2. Immediate coordination with local social service providers for victims at high risk
Data: The OK-LA Study

- Comparison group at T1 – structured phone interview
- Avg < 1 day after police-involved DV incident
- 7 Oklahoma police jurisdictions
  - 1,137 referrals
    - 38.7% (n=440) women completed interviews
    - 42.7% (n=486) unable to be contacted
    - 27.2% (n=164) refused
    - 4.1% (n=47) not eligible (not IP, under 18)

**432 women included in dataset** (missing data n=8)
- nearly 90% reported severe or near-lethal violence
## Study Sample: Demographics

**432 women included in dataset**  
(missing data n = 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.59 (9.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>(45.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>(32.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>(13.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>(7.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(6.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>(58.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>(23.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>(18.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No HS degree</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>(20.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS degree or higher</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>(79.40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dependent Variable

- **No Sexual Violence (=0)**
- **Sexual Abuse (=1)**
  - Has your partner made you have sex without a condom? (CTS-2)
  - Has your partner insisted on sex when you did not want to (but did not use force)? (CTS-2)
- **Forced sex (=2)**
  - Has your partner used force (like hitting you, holding you down or using a weapon) to make you have sex? (CTS-2)
  - Has your partner ever forced you into sex when you didn’t wish to? (Danger Assessment)
Results: Prevalence of IPSV

Of those who experienced forced sex, 91.30% (n = 105) also reported sexual abuse.

Prevalence of IPSV is greater in a sample of women who report IPV than in the general population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some form of IPSV</th>
<th>43.98% (n = 190)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse only</td>
<td>17.36% (n = 75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced sex</td>
<td>26.26% (n = 115)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results: Factors Related to IPSV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>Sex Abuse (AOR)</th>
<th>Forced Sex (AOR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Jealousy</td>
<td>251 (58.10)</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats to Kill</td>
<td>204 (47.22)</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking/Harassment</td>
<td>231 (53.47)</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.57**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangulation</td>
<td>315 (72.92)</td>
<td><strong>2.74</strong></td>
<td>2.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscarriage due to IPV</td>
<td>27 (6.25)</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td><strong>3.36</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child in Common</td>
<td>204 (47.22)</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td><strong>2.24</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>315 (72.92)</td>
<td><strong>2.80</strong></td>
<td>3.07**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>2.33 (1.52)</td>
<td><strong>1.29</strong></td>
<td>1.29*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 432

* p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
If forced sex and/or sex abuse is reported:
- Urgent need for safety planning and PTSD screening
- Attention to childcare, child safety needs, & child custody concerns
- Understanding the influence of shame on help seeking

DV and SA agency directors identified:
- Concern with their ability to provide integrated and comprehensive services for both IPV & sexual assault
- IPSV survivors may have different needs, e.g. more likely to seek individual than group services
- IPV clients may not report IPSV (Macy et al., 2010)
Discussion: Sexual Safety Planning

Adapted from Rountree and Mulraney's (2010) HIV risk reduction intervention

- Self-perception & self image
- Healthy relationships
- Impact and health consequences of IPSV
- Sexual risk assessment
- Dynamics of violent relationship
  - Power and control
  - Early warning signs of a violent relationship
- Safety planning for immediate danger
- Communication and sexual negotiation skills
- Links to sexual health services and support
Questions for Future Research

**Found:** Overlap in sexual abuse and forced sex

Do these forms of IPSV occur in tandem, or is there a trajectory from sexual abuse to forced sex?

**Found:** Forced sex is related to having a child with the abuser

Is forced sex related to unintended pregnancy?
Are childcare, child safety, and child custody factored into services provided?
Questions for Future Research

**Found:** Sexual abuse and forced sex are related to risk factors for IP homicide.

Are social workers knowledgeable about risk factors and safety planning?

**Found:** Sexual abuse and forced sex are related to PTSD symptoms and shame.

Should social workers screen for PTSD and IPSV?

Is sexual safety planning an effective intervention for women who have experienced IPSV?