

A comparison of domestic violence in African American, Asian and Hispanic women

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Abstract. Domestic violence is the most common cause of injury to women in the US. Types of intimate partner violence (IPV) range from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse to homicide. IPV accounts for approximately 40-50% of female homicide. **Method-** This evidence-based literature review compares domestic violence in African American (AA), Asian, and Hispanic women, including frequency, types, risk factors, and response. PubMed, CINAHL, First search, and Medline databases were used. **Results-** Women involved with male partners who have low education levels, low incomes, are alcohol or drug abusers, and who are unemployed are more likely to be victims of IPV. Other risk factors include women of young age, women who receive income from their partners, women with a history of STD, early onset of intercourse and a high number of sexual partners. AA and Hispanic women are at greater risk of IPV than Asian women. AA women between the ages of 15-45 have the highest homicide rate due to IPV. Asian women are more likely to view IPV as their own fault compared to AA or Hispanic women

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is a serious problem that has an impact in the victims' health and daily life. Women are more likely to be killed by violence from an intimate partner than men. In 2001, IPV was the number one crime affecting women, with 85% of IPV directed toward women vs. 15% for men [1]. Thirty-one percent of American women admit to being physically abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point of their life according to the 1998 common wealth survey [2]. Intimate partner violence is the most common cause of death in pregnant women.

Domestic violence occurs in all ethnic groups. Different ethnic groups respond differently to IPV according to what's expected in their community or culture. Women that experience IPV have various explanations and responses when it comes to domestic violence. Response to domestic violence is varied according to culture, age, socioeconomic status, education level, or race. Intimate partner violence

includes physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse and homicide. In 2000, 1247 women were killed by their intimate partner in comparison to 440 men killed by their partner that same year [1]. This evidence based literature review will compare the frequency, risk factors, types of IPV, and response to IPV in African American, Asian, and Hispanic women. This review may provide valuable information to health care providers in preventing IPV and in caring for women who are victims of domestic violence.

2. Results, Discussion

The literature review was conducted using PubMed, CINAHL, First Search and Medline database. The articles came from peer review journals. Twenty-four articles met the inclusion criteria.

Intimate partner violence is more common in women of younger age, with 22.1 years being the average age [3,4]. Overall, 24 % of the articles found low income, low education status, English as a second language, women receiving income from their husbands, HIV-positive women, history of prior STDs, multiple sexual partners, and early sexual intercourse to be risk factors for IPV [2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,11, 12] . Furthermore, gun access, forced sex, and abuse during pregnancy are risk factors for intimate partner homicide [8].

Domestic violence occurs in all ethnic groups. One study, which compared African American women, South Asian women, and Hispanic women, found that South Asians had fewer incidences of IPV than Hispanics and African Americans. However, the severity of IPV was greater among South Asians compared to AA and Hispanics [13]. In one study, results showed IPV to be highest in women age 20-24 in African Americans and 16-34 for Hispanics [5]. Another study showed Caucasian women had the lowest recurrence rate of IPV

compared to African Americans (3.7 times greater) and Hispanics (2.5 times greater [14].

Women that are victims of domestic IPV respond in a variety of ways. One study shows that African American and Hispanic women more often leave their abusers, 83% and 82.6% respectively. Only 10% of Asian women were likely to leave their abuser [13]. Furthermore, according to police reports, African American and Hispanic women had higher rates of reporting violence [3]. Two studies showed that Asian women tolerate IPV more due to accepting IPV as their own fault, expectations of culture to be obedient to their husbands, fear of rejection by the community, and wanting to create a flawless public image to their community [1, 10].

3. Conclusion

Intimate partner violence is a serious problem that affects women of all ages and ethnic groups. In general, younger women seem to be more susceptible to domestic violence. Asian women experienced less IPV, but the types of violence were more severe. African American and Hispanic women were more likely to leave their abusers, while Asian women were more likely to tolerate it. As we become more ethnically diverse, more research in IPV is needed to affectively prevent and care for those involved.

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