

Women Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence, California, 1998-2002

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CHAPTER

12

Introduction

Intimate partner violence is defined as actual or threatened physical or sexual violence or psychological/emotional abuse by a spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-boyfriend, or ex-girlfriend. This chapter reviews prevalence data of intimate partner violence (also defined here as domestic violence [DV]) reported by California Women's Health Survey (CWS) respondents during 1998 through 2001. Where possible, intimate partner violence is further broken down into categories of intimate partner physical domestic violence (IPP-DV), control, threats, sexual assault, and stalking. This chapter also assesses all 2002 respondents' expressed inclination to use DV-related services if they were experiencing intimate partner violence.

The California Department of Health Services Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Branch/Office of Family Planning's Domestic Violence Program (DVP) administers the California Battered Women's Shelter Program (BWSP), which funds direct shelter services for abused women and their children. The DVP also funds community prevention and special projects to increase services to unserved and underserved populations. Since 1998, the DVP (formerly known as the Domestic Violence Section) has participated in the CWS work group to obtain DV-related information for estimating intimate partner violence prevalence and for program planning and development purposes. Because the CWS is a cross-sectional study, the findings can be used to determine associations across variables and subgroups but not cause-and-effect relationships. However, the findings can assist statewide domestic violence programs in determining what groups of women have a higher

need of DV-related services. The CWS results can also assist the DVP in defining gaps in desired services through women's expressed willingness or inclination to seek DV-related services.

Background

Approximately one in three homicides of women is committed by intimate partners.¹ In non-fatal situations, DV can lead to adverse physical and mental health consequences, for battered women and their children.² Estimates from national surveys with definitions, methodologies, and time frames similar to the CWS indicate that between one-quarter to one-third of all adult women in the United States have been physically abused by an intimate partner during their lifetime.^{3, 4} The same national surveys also indicate that between 1.3 percent to 3.0 percent of U.S. women experienced IPP-DV during the previous 12 months. The national estimates of IPP-DV during the previous 12 months are lower than the California IPP-DV prevalence estimate of 6.0 percent that was obtained from the 1998 CWS.⁵

Materials and Methods

For this study, IPP-DV was defined as a "yes" response to any question asking whether the respondent: "was pushed, had objects thrown at her, was slapped, was hit with an object, was kicked or hit, was choked, was beaten up, was threatened and/or injured with a gun or a knife" by her intimate partner during the previous 12 months (questions are based on the Conflict Tactics Scale^{6, 7}). In 1998, the first year DV questions were introduced, the DV module administration started two

months after the beginning of the survey. To compensate for the sample size, the 1998 data were re-weighted.

The CWHS questionnaires were revised annually due to the restrictions on the numbers of questions allocated to the DVP. The main revisions are as follows:

- 1 Some DV-related questions were asked in only one of the five years due to CWHS space limitations;
- 2 In 2000, the original 1998-1999 questions were condensed to introduce new questions related to domestic abuse. For example, questions such as, "...has a partner pushed, grabbed or shoved you," and "...has a partner slapped you," that were asked separately in 1998 and 1999 were combined into one question "...has a partner pushed, grabbed, shoved or slapped you," requiring a single response;
- 3 In 2002, the entire set of IPP-DV questions was combined into one question and a hypothetical set of questions was asked of all the respondents to determine inclination or willingness to seek and use DV-related services.

Due to the above considerations, data were analyzed for three different aspects:

- 1 Annual prevalence was calculated to estimate numbers and percentages of California adult women experiencing intimate partner violence (years 1998-2001, where available). This report does not consider the 2002 IPP-DV experience responses as prevalence comparable to the previous CWHS years since the question differed substantially in organization and wording from previous years.
- 2 Four-year data (1998-2001) of survey participants who agreed to talk about intimate partner relationships in the past 12 months were combined to a total of 15,334 (of these respondents, 843 reported they experienced

IPP-DV). This sample was weighted to the 1990 California population census and analyzed. The proportion of each subgroup in each category is presented to indicate the relative magnitude of those subgroups.

- 3 Respondent inclination to use DV-related services available to women experiencing domestic violence was assessed in 2002.

Prevalences were estimated with 95 percent confidence intervals (95% C.I.). In these calculations, overlapping confidence intervals among subgroups within categories were interpreted to mean that the compared subgroups did not differ statistically from each other. Additionally, chi-square tests were conducted to assess associations between subgroups and intimate partner violence. Responses of those who said they did not know or refused to answer the questions were excluded from the analyses.

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Physical Domestic
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Results

Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

Annual IPP-DV prevalence estimates ranged from 5.1 percent to 6.4 percent (Table 12-1). Between 4.9 percent and 7.1 percent of the respondents said that their partners tried to control most or all of their daily activities (three-year range). A slightly lower percentage of respondents reported that they were frightened for family safety because of their partner's anger or threats (3.5 percent to 4.3 percent - three-year range). Less than one percent of the respondents reported that they were victims of intimate partner sexual assault in the previous year (2000, 2001); and approximately 2.4 percent of respondents said that they were victims of intimate partner stalking during the previous year (2001).

Year 2000 survey findings indicate a little over 40 percent of California women experienced IPP-DV in their lifetime. Approximately 12 percent of women reported sexual assault by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Respondents Experiencing IPP-DV in the Last 12 Months--Demographic and Health Factors (1998-2001)

The four-year average IPP-DV prevalence estimate was 5.8 percent (95 percent confidence interval, 5.4-6.2 percent) (data not shown). Thus, on the average, approximately 608,100 California women 18 years of age and older experienced IPP-DV each year. Higher IPP-DV rates were seen among Black/African American (8.5 percent) and Hispanic (7.9 percent) women compared with White (5.0 percent) and Asian/Other (4.8 percent) women (Table 12-2). Younger women (18-24 years of age) (11.0 percent) and those who had been pregnant in the past five years (11.7 percent) or were living with children younger than 18 years of age (8.3 percent) had higher rates of IPP-DV than their counterparts. Level of education was inversely related with prevalence of IPP-DV. That is, women with lower education levels tended to report higher prevalence of IPP-DV than women with higher education. Additionally, respondents who had the following socioeconomic characteristics also had higher IPP-DV prevalence rates: those enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program (16.8 percent); women without health insurance coverage (10.4 percent); women with lower annual household income (6.5 percent); those with more than three people in the household (7.7 percent); and unmarried women (7.8 percent).

IPP-DV experience also appears to be associated with adverse health indicators. Respondents who indicated they were in excellent or good health had lower prevalence of IPP-DV (5.4 percent) than those in poor or fair health (8.0 percent). Respondents who said they felt overwhelmed in the previous 30 days very often or often had higher IPP-DV prevalence rates (16.3 percent) than those who did not report feeling overwhelmed (2.4 percent). Respondents who at first sexual intercourse were 17 years of age or younger had higher rates of IPP-DV (9.4 percent) than those who were older (3.5 percent). Respondents who indicated

experiencing IPP-DV also tended to demonstrate some adverse health behaviors, such as smoking and chronic drinking (Table 12-2).

All the associations above were found to be statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ (chi-square tests).

Inclination to Use DV-Related Services (2002)

About 2.3 percent of the respondents reported experiencing domestic violence. Responses of those who experienced IPP-DV did not differ statistically from those who responded that they did not experience IPP-DV. Overall, 92.0 percent of all CWHS respondents said they would use some type of services (Table 12-3). About 71.6 percent of all CWHS respondents said they would use legal services, followed by crisis counseling (67.2 percent) and support groups (64.4 percent).

Statistical differences for those who would seek any services were observed by race/ethnicity and age group (data not shown). Among the racial/ethnic groups, 95.8 percent of Hispanics, 93.2 percent of Black/African Americans, 92.8 percent of

Asian/Other and 90.6 percent of Whites (chi-square $p < 0.01$) reported they would reach out for some type of services. Respondents 45 years of age and older were less likely to report they would reach out for some type of help (88.7 percent) compared to younger respondents (94.2 percent) (chi-square $p < 0.001$). And women who had children were more likely to say they would use program services (94.7 percent), compared to those without children (89.7 percent) (chi-square $p < 0.001$).

Survey findings indicate a little over 40 percent of California women experienced Intimate Partner Physical Domestic Violence in their lifetime.

Discussion

According to the CWHS, IPP-DV prevalence is higher for California women than national prevalence as found through nationally administered surveys. Results of our analyses indicate that several factors were associated with IPP-DV. Women experiencing IPP-DV were young, had children in households,

were unmarried, and had low income. Among the racial/ethnic groups, Black/African Americans and Hispanics reported higher rates of IPP-DV than White and Asian/Other groups. Women experiencing IPP-DV were more likely to report poor physical health status as well as feeling overwhelmed. They also tended to report adverse health behaviors, such as smoking and chronic drinking. However, it should be noted that these associations do not and should not be interpreted to indicate causality. For example, research indicates that a woman experiencing IPP-DV may use and abuse substances (illicit drugs, alcohol, or tobacco) as a means to self-medicate or sedate herself to the pain and distress of the battering situation.⁸

The results presented here are reflective of one-

way analyses, i.e., no consideration was given to correlations and relationships among the different variables. Furthermore, the impact of socioeconomic status and other compounding and confounding factors that may influence higher prevalence of IPP-DV among Black/African American and Hispanic women were not determined through these analyses.

The 2002 data indicate that most of the respondents (92.0 percent) would use some DV-related resources if the need arose. Future research and interventions should focus on women who may not know about the resources or do not know how to use them. Additionally, studies are still needed to understand why some women may choose not to use the available resources.

Table 12-1

Prevalence of intimate partner physical domestic violence (IPP-DV), control, fear, sexual assault and stalking, California Women’s Health Survey (CWHS), 1998-2001^a

	Survey Year	Prevalence (Percent)	Prevalence 95% Confidence Interval	Estimated Number of Victims
Past 12 Months Experience				
Physical Domestic Violence (IPP-DV)	1998	6.0	5.2-6.8	669,755
	1999	6.4	5.5-7.3	684,273
	2000	5.7	4.8-6.6	611,127
	2001	5.1	4.3-6.0	568,216
Partner tried to control most or all daily activities	1999	7.1	6.1-8.1	707,458
	2000	4.9	4.0-5.7	492,813
	2001	5.3	4.4-6.1	524,789
Frightened for family safety because of partner anger or threats	1999	3.5	2.8-4.1	345,537
	2000	4.3	3.5-5.1	437,704
	2001	4.2	3.4-5.0	418,200
Sexual Assault	2000	0.9	0.6-1.3	96,245
	2001	0.7	0.4-1.0	69,603
Stalking	2001	2.4	1.8-3.0	240,527
Life-time Experience (Ever)				
Physical Domestic Violence (IPP-DV)	2000	41.1	39.3-42.8	4,397,888
Sexual Assault	2000	12.2	11.0-13.4	1,255,976

a - Due to limited space availability, questions related to intimate partner violence were not asked every year. Additionally, some survey questions have been condensed to allow inclusion of questions related to new emerging program needs (please see text). Source: California Women’s Health Survey (CWHS)

Table 12-2

**Prevalence of intimate partner physical domestic violence (IPP-DV)
among demographic, socioeconomic and health subgroups,
California Women's Health Survey (CWHs), 1998-2001 (combined)^a**

Category	Subgroup Percent of Category Total ^b	Prevalence (Percent)	Prevalence 95% Confidence Interval
Demographics			
Race/Ethnicity^c			
White	62.0	5.0	4.4- 5.5
Black/African American	6.9	8.5	6.2-10.7
Hispanic	21.5	7.9	6.9- 8.8
Asian/Other	9.7	4.8	3.5- 6.1
Age group^c			
18-24	14.6	11.0	9.3-12.8
25-34	25.1	9.3	8.2-10.4
35-44	21.1	6.0	5.1-6.8
45-54	13.2	3.2	2.5-3.9
=>55	26.0	0.7	0.4-0.9
Children <18 in the household^c			
Yes	47.8	8.3	7.5-9.0
No	52.2	3.5	3.1-4.0
Social/Economic Characteristics			
Employment^c			
Employed	56.1	6.9	6.0-7.8
Not working for pay	31.2	6.4	5.8-7.0
Retired	12.7	0.5	0.2-0.8
Education^c			
Technical school and less	42.6	7.1	6.4-7.8
Some college and above	57.4	4.9	4.3-5.4
WIC Status, within the last 2 years^{c,d,e}			
WIC	10.8	16.8	13.3-20.4
Non-WIC	89.2	5.8	5.1-6.5
Access to health insurance^c			
Have health insurance	86.2	5.1	4.6-5.5
Do not have health insurance	13.8	10.4	8.8-12.0
Income^c			
<=\$35,000	63.0	6.5	5.9-7.1
> \$35,000	37.0	4.7	4.0-5.3

Table 12-2 continued next page

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Category	Subgroup Percent of Category Total ^b	Prevalence (Percent)	Prevalence 95% Confidence Interval
Marital status^c			
Married	53.1	4.0	3.6-4.5
Not married	46.9	7.8	7.1-8.6
Household members^c			
Three and less	61.0	4.6	4.1-5.1
More than three	39.0	7.7	6.9-8.5
Physical Health			
General health^c			
Excellent/Good	84.3	5.4	4.9-5.8
Fair/Poor	15.7	8.0	6.8-9.3
Mental Health			
Felt overwhelmed in the past 30 days^{c,d}			
Very Often/Often	11.3	16.3	14.0-18.6
Sometimes	19.7	9.5	8.0-11.0
Rarely	26.4	5.2	4.2-6.2
Never	42.6	2.4	1.9-2.9
Health-Related Behaviors			
Smoking status^c			
Current smoker	17.3	11.6	10.1-13.1
Former smoker	22.1	4.5	3.7-5.2
Never smoked	60.6	4.6	4.1-5.1
Had an average of 60 or more drinks in the previous month (chronic drinking)^c			
Yes	1.5	14.4	8.3-20.6
No	98.5	5.7	5.2-6.1
Pregnancies/Sexual history			
Age at first intercourse^c			
<=17 years old	43.4	9.4	8.6-10.3
>17 years old	56.6	3.5	3.1-4.0
Pregnant in the previous 5 years^{c,f}			
Yes	32.9	11.7	10.5-12.9
Not pregnant	67.1	5.6	5.0-6.2

a Category subgroups.

b Subgroup proportion of total survey respondents, missing, refusals and “does not know” responses are excluded. Due to rounding of values sums may not add exactly to 100%.

c Statistically significant distributions of IPP-DV among the subgroups, results of chi-square tests (all tests $p < 0.01$).

d Data are available for 1998-1999 years only.

e WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

f Asked only of women aged <55.

Source: California Women’s Health Survey (CWHS)

Table 12-3

Types of programs/services respondents would use if they were hurt/afraid of an intimate partner, 2002

	Experiencing Intimate Partner Physical Domestic Violence (IPP-DV) (Percent)	Not Experiencing Intimate Partner Physical Domestic Violence (IPP-DV) (Percent)	All Respondents (Percent)
Legal services	68.8	71.7	71.6
Crisis counseling	56.6	67.5	67.2
Support groups	58.5	64.6	64.4
Health services	55.1	60.1	60.0
Battered women's shelter	34.2	43.0	42.8
Housing help	38.3	37.8	37.8
Children's therapy/counseling	31.3	34.2	34.1
Job training/job search	33.5	29.8	29.9
Financial help	23.2	29.0	28.8
Other	14.4	13.6	13.6
<i>Some type of help</i>	89.3	92.1	92.0

Source: California Women's Health Survey (CWHS)

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