

Women in ER for non-urgent care can be screened for health needs

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(HealthDay)—Survey instruments may be used to screen for information about abuse experiences, substance use, and sexual health in women seeking non-urgent care at an emergency department, according to research published in the July issue of the *Journal of Emergency Nursing*.

Melissa A. Sutherland, Ph.D., R.N., of Boston College, and colleagues performed a descriptive analysis of data obtained from a sample of 145 adult women, aged 18 to 45 years, seeking non-urgent health care at an emergency department in the southeastern United States. Questionnaires were administered to assess demographic characteristics, history of [child sexual abuse](#) (CSA), [intimate partner violence](#), reproductive health, and substance use.

The researchers found that 42.8 percent of the women in the sample reported a history of CSA and 34.7 percent experienced intimate partner [physical violence](#) during the past year. About 46 percent of the women had harmful drinking patterns during the past year, and at least half reported some type of substance use in the previous three months. Compared with women who did not, women who had a history of CSA had a significantly greater number of lifetime sexual partners and were at increased risk for pain with [sexual intercourse](#) and a medical history of abnormal Pap smear.

"The women in this sample had high rates of abuse, harmful drinking patterns, and substance use and were at risk for sexually transmitted infections," the authors write. "Through screening for lifetime violence, including sexual violence, emergency nurses can be an important liaison between women who have experienced CSA and appropriate referrals within the health care system."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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