

'Fifty Shades of Grey' perpetuates violence against women

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"Fifty Shades of Grey," the best-selling novel that's promoted as a tale of erotic romance, actually perpetuates the problem of violence against women, a new study finds.

Reporting in the *Journal of Women's Health*, Amy Bonomi and co-authors conclude that emotional and sexual abuse is pervasive in the novel, with the main female character, Anastasia, suffering harm as a result.

About 25 percent of women are [victims of violence](#) by [intimate partners](#).

"This book is perpetuating dangerous abuse standards and yet it's being cast as this romantic, erotic book for women," said Bonomi, lead author of the study. "The erotic content could have been accomplished without the theme of abuse."

Bonomi, currently an associate professor at Ohio State University, will become professor and chairperson of Michigan State University's Department of Human Development and Family Studies on Aug. 16. She co-authored the study with Lauren Altenburger and Nicole Walton from Ohio State.

The researchers conducted a systematic analysis of the novel to clarify patterns consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention definitions of [intimate partner violence](#) and associated reactions known to occur in abused women.

Anastasia suffers reactions consistent with those of abused women. She feels a constant sense of threat and loss of self-identity, changes her behaviors to keep peace in the relationship such as withholding information about her whereabouts to avoid Christian's anger, and becomes disempowered and entrapped in the relationship as her behaviors become mechanized in response to Christian's abusive patterns.

Written by E.L. James and published in 2011, "Fifty Shades of Grey" has sold more than 70 million copies and set the record as the fastest-selling paperback of time. A movie based on the novel is in the works.

Provided by Michigan State University

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