

Link found between intimate partner violence and termination of pregnancy

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Intimate partner violence in women (sometimes referred to as domestic violence) is linked to termination of pregnancy, according to a study by UK researchers published in this week's *PLOS Medicine*. The study, led by Susan Bewley from Kings College London, also found that intimate partner violence was linked to a women's partner not knowing about the termination of pregnancy.

The authors reached these conclusions by reviewing 74 published studies that provided information about experiences of [intimate partner violence](#) (which could be physical, sexual, or emotional/ psychological) among [women](#) who had had a termination. From the information in these studies, the authors found that worldwide, intimate partner violence rates among women undergoing termination of [pregnancy](#) ranged from 2.5% to 30% in the preceding year and from 14% to 40% over their lifetime. When combining relevant information from a selection of appropriate studies, the authors found that in women seeking a termination of pregnancy, the lifetime rate of intimate partner violence was 25%. Furthermore, the authors found some evidence that intimate partner violence was associated with single and repeat termination of pregnancy.

The authors also found that women undergoing terminations of pregnancy welcomed the opportunity to disclose their experiences of intimate partner violence and to be offered help, suggesting that termination services may represent an appropriate setting in which to test interventions designed to reduce intimate partner violence.

Among factors that may limit the conclusiveness of these findings are variability among the included studies, the likelihood of under-reporting of both intimate partner violence and termination of pregnancy in the included studies, and the lack of validation of reports of violence through, for example, police reports.

The authors conclude: "Intimate partner violence is associated with pregnancy termination. Novel public health approaches are required to address violence against women and repeat termination. Termination services provide an opportune health-based setting in which to design and test interventions at the individual level."

More information: Hall M, Chappell LC, Parnell BL, Seed PT, Bewley S (2014) Associations between Intimate Partner Violence and Termination of Pregnancy: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *PLoS Med* 11(1): e1001581. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1001581](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001581)

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