

Unemployed women face a greater risk of domestic violence

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Women with a higher risk of job loss are more likely to become victims of domestic abuse, according to research at Royal Holloway, University of London.

A team of researchers, from the Department of Economics at Royal Holloway, discovered that high or rising female unemployment is associated with increases in domestic violence.

Surprisingly, the study carried out by Professor Jonathan Wadsworth, Professor Dan Anderberg and Tanya Wilson, also found significant gender differences, with a higher number of men out of work correlating with a decrease in abuse cases.

"These results show that unemployment does not influence domestic violence in the way that many commentators expect", said Professor Wadsworth.

"One explanation could be that women are more likely to remain in an abusive relationship if they think the costs of enduring it are less than the costs incurred in ending the relationship. Equally, a higher risk of unemployment for men may act to deter violence in the home, since the contribution of the man to any partnership is reduced.

"From a policy perspective, measures designed to enhance women's job security could be an important contributor to a reduction in domestic violence."

The study, which analysed rates of unemployment and domestic violence between 2005 and 2011, also challenges the perception that [domestic violence](#) rose after the economy went into recession in 2008. Results show that the opposite seems to be the case, particularly for the rate of physical abuse, which fell during the downturn.

The researchers used data on [unemployment](#) rates among men and women across the 43 police force areas in England and Wales that are reported in each year of the British Crime Survey. Each survey includes interviews with around 12,000 women of working age who are asked

whether they have suffered any abuse over the past 12 months.

Provided by Royal Holloway, University of London

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