

# Intimate partner violence in men who have sex with men is linked to adverse health effects

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) among men who have sex with men (MSM) is linked to greater risk of mental and physical health symptoms, substance misuse, and sexually transmitted infections, according to a research article published in this week's *PLOS Medicine*. The study, led by Ana Maria Buller and Loraine Bacchus from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK, working with experts from King's College London, identified associations with negative health indicators for both victims and perpetrators of IPV among MSM.

The authors reached these conclusions by reviewing 19 published studies that provided information about IPV and various health conditions or sexual risk behaviors among MSM. Taken together, the studies suggest that the lifetime rate of exposure to physical, emotional, or sexual IPV among MSM was 48%. Exposure to IPV was associated with an increased risk of alcohol or drug use, self-report of depressive symptoms, being HIV positive, and engagement in unprotected sex. Perpetration of [intimate partner violence](#) was associated with an increased risk of substance abuse.

A number of factors limit the conclusiveness of these findings, including the small number of studies, variability among the included studies, and that the health and violence exposure measures were self-reported and relied on recall.

The authors conclude: "Our results highlight the need for research into effective interventions to prevent IPV in MSM, as well as the importance of providing health care professionals with training in how to address issues of IPV among MSM and the need to raise awareness of local and national support services."

**More information:** Buller AM, Devries KM, Howard LM, Bacchus LJ (2014) Associations between Intimate Partner Violence and Health among Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. PLoS Med 11(3): e1001609. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1001609](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001609)

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