

# Study investigates hospital-treated injuries due to intimate partner violence

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A new report has provided an analysis of the effects on women's physical health resulting from Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). This is the first Australian study to investigate IPV-related assault injuries in women utilising routinely collected hospital admissions and emergency department (ED) data.

The study, conducted by Erin Cassell and Angela Clapperton at the Monash Injury Research Institute, was based on [hospital](#) data held by the Monash Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit (VISU).

The study analysed [hospital admissions](#) and ED presentations in Victoria from 2009/10 to 2013/14, and found 3794 IPV-related assault injury cases among [women](#) aged 15 years and over, an average of 759 per year.

"This count is conservative because of underreporting of IPV-related assault injury cases on hospital datasets and under recognition of cases in the [emergency department](#)," Ms Cassell said.

The majority of injured women (80 per cent) were in age range 15-44 years. From age 45 the frequency of cases decreased as age increased. The perpetrators most commonly hit, punched, kicked or shoved their partners, although some assaults involved knives and blunt objects. The head face and neck was most commonly injured body site.

Among the 1660 admissions, fracture was the most common injury type (22 per cent) followed by superficial injury (19 per cent). However, among the 2134 emergency department presentations, superficial injury was the most common injury type (25 per cent) followed by dislocation, sprain and strain (15 per cent).

At least 11 per cent of the women admitted to hospital for IPV-related assault injury were pregnant, with evidence suggesting that the abdomen/pelvic area was over-involved in these assaults. Available information indicated that former partners were involved in at least 8 per cent of IPV-related assault injury cases.

Reducing family violence is a national and state priority.

"Routinely collected hospital data can be used to monitor the effectiveness of strategies and measures to reduce IPV but the completeness and quality of data collected in Victorian hospitals needs to improve. The advantage of using hospital data is that it includes cases not reported to the police," Ms Cassell said.

"We also need to investigate what care and support is given to women experiencing partner violence when they present to Victorian hospital EDs and whether it is adequate, as there is evidence from overseas studies that women experiencing partner abuse are high users of ED services," Ms Cassell added.

**More information:** The study is available online:  
[www.monash.edu/miri/research/r ... isu/hazard/haz79.pdf](http://www.monash.edu/miri/research/r...isu/hazard/haz79.pdf)

Provided by Monash University

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