

Intimate partner violence simulation training at MU is first in nation

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Intimate partner violence (IPV), has become a prevalent health care issue. Instances of assault, battery, rape, stalking and emotional abuse in relationships can be difficult for nurses to handle as they often lack the appropriate training to feel confident enough to screen patients for IPV. A new training program developed in the Sinclair School of Nursing at the University of Missouri, provides a powerful tool to better equip nurses in assisting victims of IPV. The Sinclair School of Nursing is the first program in the U.S. to implement such a simulation in their undergraduate curriculum, and the results from the program indicate it could become a national model for training nurses.

"Nearly every nurse will encounter a victim of IPV during his/her career," said Lea Wood, director of [simulation](#) and assistant teaching professor of nursing. "Yet, many providers feel uncomfortable when it happens. They worry that they will say the wrong thing and make the situation worse for the patient. So while providers know the importance of screening patients for IPV, the number of screenings actually occurring remains low. "

Wood's goal in designing a training program for nursing students was to overcome existing barriers through the use of simulation in the classroom as opposed to lecture alone. Close to 100 undergraduate nursing students participated in a simulation that include treating a Hispanic woman who wanted to go back to school. When she told her husband, he reacted violently. In treating the patient, students practiced building trust, ensuring privacy and making the patient feel safe while

also considering cultural components that arise in health care.

Students were surveyed on their confidence and knowledge in dealing with [partner violence](#) before the simulation began. They then were surveyed after a lecture on IPV and once again after participating in the simulation. Wood found significant evidence in the research that simulation had a greater positive impact on nursing students' perceived confidence and knowledge about dealing with IPV than lecture alone.

"The positive effects we found are significant enough to conclude that simulation could also go well beyond nursing students," said Wood.

"Current nurses and health care providers could easily include a simulation component as part of professional development programs. Simulation also may be an effective tool in training nurses in other difficult areas such as infant death and substance abuse."

"Confidence in tackling sensitive issues is one of the biggest barriers in providing quality [health care](#)," said Judith Fitzgerald Miller, dean of the Sinclair School of Nursing. "The IPV simulation as part of the undergraduate curriculum showcases how our faculty are at the forefront in improving health. MU's [nursing students](#) will leave school better prepared to address IPV in their work."

Research about the simulation was published in *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*. Currently, the simulation is offered to undergraduate students in the Sinclair School of Nursing and the program will soon be open to graduate students.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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