

# Review raises questions about family violence therapies

July 2 2020

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The comprehensive systematic review and meta-analysis of the effectiveness of psychological therapies for women who experience intimate partner violence (IPV) and abuse is published by the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*.

Research Fellow at the University's Safer Families Center of Research

Excellence, Dr. Mohajer Hameed, worked on the review with others, including Professor Kelsey Hegarty from the University of Melbourne and Royal Women's Hospital.

The review found evidence that for women who experienced IPV, [psychological therapies](#) probably reduced depression and may reduce anxiety.

"However, we are uncertain whether psychological therapies improve other outcomes (self-efficacy, post-[traumatic stress disorder](#), re-exposure to IPV, safety planning) and there are limited data on harm," Dr. Hameed said.

"While psychological therapies probably improve [emotional health](#), it is unclear if women's ongoing needs for safety, support and holistic healing from complex trauma are addressed by this approach."

Cochrane Reviews are internationally recognized as the highest standard in evidence-based health care. They are updated regularly, ensuring that treatment and clinical decisions can be based on the most up-to-date and reliable evidence.

"It assesses the effectiveness of psychological therapies for women who experience IPV on the primary outcomes of depression, self-efficacy and an indicator of harm (dropouts) at six to 12-months' follow-up," Dr. Hameed said.

"It also looks at secondary outcomes of other mental health symptoms, anxiety, quality of life, re-exposure to IPV, safety planning and behaviors, use of healthcare and IPV services, and social support."

Dr. Hameed said that while psychological therapies do not appear to cause any harm, more research is needed.

"There is a need for more interventions focused on trauma approaches and more rigorous trials (with consistent outcomes at similar follow-up time points), as we were unable to synthesize much of the research," Dr. Hameed said.

**More information:** undefined undefined et al. Psychological therapies for women who experience intimate partner violence, *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (2020). [DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD013017.pub2](https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD013017.pub2)

Provided by University of Melbourne

Citation: Review raises questions about family violence therapies (2020, July 2) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-07-family-violence-therapies.html>

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