

# Intimate partner violence early in pandemic affected mental health

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) experiences at the start of the

COVID-19 pandemic were associated with worse mental health symptoms for women aged younger than 60 years, according to a study published online March 14 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Arielle A.J. Scoglio, Ph.D., from the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues investigated the association of IPV with a greater risk for mental health symptoms and adverse health factors during the COVID-19 pandemic in three cohorts of female participants aged 21 to 60 years: the Nurses' Health Study II, Growing Up Today Study, and Nurses' Health Study 3.

Baseline data and follow-up survey responses about IPV experiences early in the pandemic (March to September 2020); mental health domains of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS); and modifiable health factors (May 2020 to October 2021) were examined in the full analytic sample, including 13,597 participants.

The researchers found that experiencing IPV was associated with higher endorsement of depression, anxiety, and PTSS in random-effects meta-analyses across the three cohorts when accounting for sociodemographic factors and prepandemic mental health symptoms (odds ratios, 1.44, 1.31, and 1.22, respectively).

Poorer sleep quality, shorter sleep duration, increased use of alcohol, and use of alcohol or other substances were seen in association with the IPV experience across all cohorts (odds ratios, 1.21, 1.13, 1.10, and 1.13, respectively), and reduced [physical activity](#) was seen in the Nurses' Health Study II (odds ratio, 1.17).

"The analyses provided insights into [health outcomes](#) for [female participants](#) younger than 60 years who experienced IPV early in the pandemic," the authors write. "Such IPV exposure had mental and physical health costs for these individuals."

One author disclosed receipt of personal fees from the U.S. Department of Justice and received book royalties from Guilford Press and Oxford University Press.

**More information:** Arielle A. J. Scoglio et al, Intimate Partner Violence, Mental Health Symptoms, and Modifiable Health Factors in Women During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the US, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.2977](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.2977)

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