

Domestic abuse exposure linked to increased levels of asthma and other atopic diseases

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Women who have suffered domestic abuse may have a higher risk of developing atopic diseases including asthma, new research has found.

Published today in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice*, the research led by the University of Birmingham found that in analysis of patient records, there were a significantly larger percentage of women who had atopic diseases and had a history of being exposed to [domestic abuse](#) and [violence](#) compared to those who hadn't.

Dr. Joht Singh Chandan from the University of Birmingham and corresponding author of the study said, "After adjusting for possible cofounders, our results show women with a recorded exposure to [domestic violence](#) and abuse had a 52% increased risk of developing atopic diseases,"

"Domestic violence and abuse is a global issue that disproportionately affects women. We set out to deepen our understanding of the health impacts of domestic violence so evidence-based public health policies can be further developed to address not only domestic violence, but secondary effects like the development of atopic diseases."

The team of researchers performed a retrospective open cohort study in the United Kingdom, looking at [adult women](#) (those aged 18 and older) with a physician recorded exposure to domestic violence and comparing them to women over 18 without a recorded exposure. Patients with pre-existing reports of atopic disease were excluded from the study.

A total of 13,852 women were identified as being exposed to domestic violence and were matched to 49,036 similar women without a reported exposure. In total, 967/13,852 women in the exposed group (incidence rate (IR) 20.10 per 1,000 py) were diagnosed with atopic disease compared to 2,607/49,036 in the unexposed group (IR 13.24 per 1,000 py).

There were limitations to the study. Women in the exposed group were more likely to be a current smoker than women in the unexposed group.

Ethnicity data was often lacking in the database and median follow-up for both groups of [women](#) was relatively short given the relapsing nature of atopic disease. Researchers hope to address these limitations in future studies.

More information: Katrina Nash et al, Exposure to Domestic Abuse and the Subsequent Development of Atopic Disease in Women, *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jaip.2023.03.016](#)

Provided by University of Birmingham

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