

Relation between physical violence and not having adequate check-ups during pregnancy

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The detection of gender violence during pregnancy is crucial, because it can affect both the health of the mother and that of the newborn. Credit: Kenny Rivas, Flickr

Women who fail to have adequate check-ups during pregnancy are more

likely to be suffering physical violence at the hands of their partners.

The study also found that pregnant women who fail to attend regular hospital check-ups during pregnancy are more likely to be suffering [physical violence](#) at the hands of their partners.

The research, published by the *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology*, analysed a cohort of 779 women whose pregnancies were being monitored across 15 [public hospitals](#) in Andalusia.

The authors used a validated international screening tool, the Index of Spouse Abuse (ISA), to detect cases of physical and psychological violence perpetrated by the woman's partner during pregnancy. Such cases were identified under the strictest conditions of anonymity and confidentiality. The data were collected by midwives who had previously been trained to detect signs of gender violence.

The results of the study revealed that 9.8% of pregnant women in Andalusia fail to have sufficient check-ups during pregnancy—that is, the number of hospital or health-centre antenatal appointments they attend is lower than recommended.

Stella Martín de las Heras, Professor of Legal and Forensic Medicine at the UGR and lead author of this study, explains: "The detection of gender violence during pregnancy is crucial, because it can affect both the mother's health and that of the new-born. In addition, inadequate pregnancy check-ups can put the health of the mother and the foetus at risk." As the role of the healthcare professionals dealing directly with [pregnant women](#) is critical, "they must be alert to any warning signs."

More information: Stella Martin-de-las-Heras et al. Poor antenatal care attendance is associated with intimate partner violence: Multivariate

analysis of a pregnancy cohort, *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ejogrb.2019.05.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejogrb.2019.05.001)

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