

THE IMPACT OF EXPOSURE

TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF

CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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Children and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- In Canada, as elsewhere, family violence is a serious and pervasive issue; including dating violence, it constitutes **39% of all violent crime**, with **69% of victims being female** (Sinha, 2013)
- **For Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), 80% of victims are female** (Sinha, 2013) and: **rates of male on male violence have diminished over time, rates of violence against women have not** (Status of Women Canada, 2015)
- IPV exposure:
 - Is a form of child maltreatment
 - Often co-occurs with targeted child abuse and is at least as detrimental as child abuse

What we set out to do

Acknowledging the significant work done on the public health concerns related to IPV¹, we set out to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the related literature on the effects of IPV exposure for children and youth
2. Estimate costs associated with IPV exposure outcomes in multiple domains
3. Make the 'monetization case' for primary prevention of IPV exposure in childhood

¹Affi, 2011; Black et al., 2008; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2010; Varcoe & Hankivsky, 2011

Our orientation to this comprehensive review:

- Developmental ecological approach
 - Trajectory of child development emerges as a complex web of interactions between individual and environmental characteristics
- Effective frame to bring together multiple theoretical perspectives under a broad umbrella

Key areas of inquiry:

1. Neurological disorders
2. Physical health outcomes
3. Mental health challenges
4. Conduct and behavioural problems
 - Substance misuse and addiction
5. Delinquency, crime, and victimization
6. Academic and employment outcomes

How we conducted the review

- Searched psychological, sociological, and criminal justice databases
 - *public health databases excluded*
- Queried six key outcome domains
- Timeframe: 2006–2014
- English-language only

Impact of Exposure to IPV

Outcome Area	Databases Searched	Outcome Keywords
Neurobiological pathways	PsycINFO, Google Scholar	Neurobiology, physiology, cortisol
Physical health	SFU FastSearch, Google Scholar	Health, disability, disease, illness, hospitalization
Mental health	PsycINFO, PsycArticles, Criminal Justice Abstracts, Google Scholar	Internalizing, mental illness, mental health, mental disorder, psychiatric
Substance misuse	PsycINFO, PsycArticles, Criminal Justice Abstracts, Google Scholar	Substance use, substance abuse, substance disorder, addiction
Conduct and behaviour	PsycINFO, Criminal Justice Abstracts	Behavioural problems, conduct disorder
Education	SFU FastSearch, Google Scholar	Education, academic, intellectual
Employment	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Employment
Delinquency and crime	PsycInfo, Social Work Abstracts, Google Scholar	Delinquency, crime, pre-delinquent

What the literature suggests

- Direct/indirect IPV exposure can have a lasting effect on diverse domains of children's development
- The greater the level of exposure and attendant adversity the more serious and lasting the effects

What we discovered

- **Cascading effects**
 - Impacts of IPV exposure influence each other in multiple and interconnected ways
- **Long-term effects**
 - Children exposed to IPV are at significant risk for lifelong negative outcomes
- **Far-reaching effects**
 - Consequences of IPV exposure are far-reaching and felt widely in society

Exemplar 1: Neurodevelopmental consequences

- The **neurophysiological findings** show that exposure to IPV in utero and in the early years negatively affect the most critical neurobiological regulatory systems:
 - **The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis**, and the
 - **Autonomic nervous system**
- The complex array of adaptive networks of the child's physiological and behavioral responses can be overwhelmed by stress such that the child develops:
 - Impaired attention and memory processes
 - Problems with emotional control and executive function
 - Heightened sensitivity to unlearned fear and fear conditioning, constant vigilance
 - Altered neuroendocrine activities, reduced body size
 - Lifelong susceptibilities to disease, psychosocial and behavioural problems...

Exemplar 2:

Substance misuse and addiction

- IPV exposure is a source of significant risk for problematic substance misuse and addiction in adolescence and adulthood
- Substance misuse issues are also strongly implicated in delinquency and crime

Exemplar 3: Long term effects

- Pathway is developmental in nature
- Emergence of delinquency and crime



- Family factors predictive of adult criminality:
 - Coercive/inconsistent parental management
 - Involvement with the child welfare system

Exemplar 4: Far-reaching effects

- Barriers to successful academic outcomes and employment emerge from:
 - Delayed cognitive development
 - Stunted intellectual development
 - Dysregulation of the stress regulating system
- Spillover effect on peers in classrooms with presence of trouble peer exposed to IPV:
 - Disciplinary infractions increase
 - Reading and math scores decrease

Highlights of the review

- Our major “take-away” is the reality of the debilitating effects on a significant proportion of children and youth exposed to IPV

Highlights of the review

- The notion of ***cascading effects*** was validated
 - Individual categories of impacts were not only closely related to one another but in a dynamic fashion influence each other in multiple and interconnected ways over time.
- Points to the conclusion that **children exposed to IPV are at significant risk for lifelong negative outcomes**

Our contribution: In Harm's Way

<http://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ijcyfs>

To have the categories of interest examined together:

1. Neurological disorders
2. Physical health outcomes
3. Mental health challenges
4. Conduct and behavioural problems
5. Delinquency, crime, and victimization
6. Academic and employment outcomes

Allowed for a unique comparison and mapping of the outcomes amongst them and possible points of intersection and intervention identified.