



## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Prevalence of intimate partner violence in Spain: A national cross-sectional survey in primary care



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Violence in Spain<sup>1</sup>

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### KEYWORDS

Spouse abuse;  
Battered women;  
Socioeconomic  
factors;  
Prevalence;  
Spain

### Abstract

**Objectives:** (1) To analyze the prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence by types. (2) To examine the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and Intimate Partner Violence.

**Design:** Cross-sectional study using a self-administered questionnaire.

**Setting:** Primary Healthcare centers in Spain.

**Participants:** 10,322 women (18–70 years) attending Primary Healthcare centers.

**Main measurements:** A compound index was calculated based on frequency, types, and duration of Intimate Partner Violence. Multivariable adjusted logistic regression models were used to identify the sociodemographic factors, which were independently associated with each Intimate Partner Violence category.

**Results:** The prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence was 24.8%. For the physical only category, no differences were observed regarding education or employment status, and women with the highest income have less risk. For the psychological only category, no differences were observed according to the income level. The risk increases as the education level decreases, and the greatest frequency of only psychological Intimate Partner Violence was observed in women who were unemployed or students. For both the physical and psychological category of Intimate Partner Violence, a clear risk increase is observed as income and education levels decrease. Retired women showed the highest frequency of this violence category.

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**PALABRAS CLAVE**

Abuso conyugal;  
Mujeres maltratadas;  
Factores  
socioeconómicos;  
Prevalencia;  
España

*Conclusion:* The results show that Intimate Partner Violence affects women of all social strata, but the frequency and Intimate Partner Violence category will vary according to the socio-economic.

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## Prevalencia de la violencia de parejas en España: estudio transversal a través de cuestionario en la atención primaria

**Resumen**

*Objetivos:* 1) Analizar la prevalencia de Violencia de Pareja por tipos. 2) Examinar la relación entre las características sociodemográficas y la Violencia de Pareja.

*Diseño:* Estudio transversal a través de cuestionario autoadministrado.

*Emplazamiento:* Centros de Atención Primaria en España.

*Participantes:* 10.322 mujeres (de 18 a 70 años) asistentes a Centros de Atención Primaria.

*Mediciones principales:* Se ha calculado un índice compuesto en función de la frecuencia, el tipo y la duración de la Violencia de Pareja. Se ha llevado a cabo modelos ajustados de regresión logística multivariable para identificar los factores sociodemográficos que se asocian de forma independiente con cada categoría de Violencia de Pareja.

*Resultados:* La prevalencia total de Violencia de Pareja fue de 24.8%. Para la violencia física, no se observaron diferencias en cuanto a la educación y la situación laboral y las mujeres con mayores ingresos tienen menos riesgo de sufrir violencia física. Para violencia psicológica, no se observaron diferencias según el nivel de renta. El riesgo aumenta a medida que el nivel de educación disminuye, y en las mujeres desempleadas y las estudiantes. Para la categoría de violencia tanto física como psicológica, se observa un claro aumento del riesgo según disminuye el nivel de renta y el nivel educativo de las mujeres. Las mujeres jubiladas mostraron una mayor prevalencia de violencia en esta categoría.

*Conclusiones:* Los resultados muestran que la IPV afecta a mujeres de todos los estratos sociales pero que la frecuencia de las diferentes categorías de IPV varían de acuerdo con el nivel socioeconómico.

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**Introduction**

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women is currently recognized as a relevant public health problem and a violation of women's fundamental human rights.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the serious physical and psychological health consequences of this violence are well known.<sup>2</sup>

Internationally, a systematic search conducted to compile evidence on the prevalence of IPV, yielded the global prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among all ever-partnered women was 30.0%,<sup>3</sup> although there is considerable regional variation in the prevalence of physical and/or sexual partner violence.<sup>4</sup>

In general, the studies published to date have used convenience samples, or have been carried out in not very large samples, which has not permitted a comprehensive analysis of the sociodemographic characteristics of the abused women that usually need to be grouped due to simple size constraints. It should also be noted that most of the research on IPV prevalence and associated factors in the past have mainly focused on physical IPV,<sup>5,6</sup> and that our understanding about emotional abuse is not so comprehensive. It would be of great interest to know the prevalence of IPV by type, the

characteristics of the various kinds of abuse, and whether the factors associated with each of them and therefore the prevention strategies to adopt should be different.

Thus, the objectives here set are: (a) To analyze the prevalence of IPV by types (physical and psychological) and by excluding categories, in the previous year, prior to the previous year and in the women's lifetime; (b) To examine the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and lifetime IPV, lifetime IPV physical only, psychological only and both physical and psychological.

**Methods****Design and participants**

This study was designed and developed by 6 research groups in Spain. In this cross-sectional survey, women were recruited during 2006–2007 from female patients aged 18–70 years old seeking medical care for whatever reason in primary healthcare centers. Women were considered non-eligible if they were illiterate, did not understand Spanish or had severe cognitive disabilities that impaired their

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