

Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Implications for Nursing Care

Diane A. Hawley, PhD, RN, CCNS, CNE^{a,*},
Alicia C. Hawley Barker, LMSW^b

KEYWORDS

- Domestic violence • Health care • Abuse
- Intimate partner violence • Nursing
- Domestic violence screening • Spousal abuse

Ashley, a 26-year-old Caucasian woman, walked into the Emergency Department (ED) doubled over with abdominal pain. She also complained of a severe headache and nausea. Her husband of 2 years was present with her, attentive and concerned, helping her walk into the waiting room. The examination identified no medical concerns and she was discharged after 3 hours of observation. Her history included three ED visits in the past 3 years of similar presentation with the same conclusion of no medical diagnoses.

OVERVIEW

Violence against women by their husbands or intimate partners is one of the most common forms of violence. The fact that women rely on their abusers emotionally and economically brings complexity to the difficult situation. Domestic violence is an umbrella term that encompasses child, sibling, and elder abuse as well as intimate partner violence (IPV). Each form of abuse occurs within the confines of a domestic arrangement. The purpose of this article is to provide insight into the complexity of IPV in relation to acute care nursing as well as depict the psychological dynamics of IPV.

The terminologies of IPV versus domestic violence have been debated in the professional world for many years with regard to the type and scope of violence.¹ The

The authors have nothing to disclose.

^a Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Texas Christian University, TCU Box 298620, Fort Worth, TX 76129, USA

^b Transitional Housing Coordinator, Hope's Door Inc. Domestic Violence Agency, 860 Avenue F Suite 100, Plano, TX 75074, USA

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: d.hawley@tcu.edu

Crit Care Nurs Clin N Am 24 (2012) 27–39

doi:10.1016/j.ccell.2011.12.003

cnursing.theclinics.com

0899-5885/12/\$ – see front matter © 2012 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

authors of this article define IPV as physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) maintains that IPV is prevalent in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. It is believed that the prevalence of IPV among lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals is comparable to the domestic violence against heterosexual women.¹

IPV can be represented by four categories to include physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence, and psychological/emotional violence. Physical violence includes the “intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury, or harm.”^{2(p11)} Leone Walker, author of *The Battered Woman*, categorized physical injuries based on various mechanisms and degrees of injury severity:

1. Serious bleeding injuries likely to need suturing
2. Internal injuries that lead to bleeding or organ failure
3. Skeletal damage of various sorts: ribs, vertebrae, skull, pelvic, jaw, arm and leg
4. Burns due to lit cigarettes, hot appliances, stove, iron, acid and scalding liquids.³

Sexual violence is multidimensional and includes offensive sexual contact or forcing an individual to engage in sexual acts.² Offensive sexual contact refers to actions of groping or grabbing a woman in a manner that is insulting. Forced sexual acts, whether completed or not, as well as refusing to practice safe sex, are forms of sexual violence. Sexual violence also involves an act or attempted act against someone who is unable to make an informed or conscious decision to engage in sexual activity whether due to illness, disability, or inability.² Statistics show that almost 7.8 million women have been raped by an intimate partner at some point in their lives.¹ Women under the influence of drugs or alcohol can be easy prey for sexual violence. Studies have found that stalking, forced sex, and physical abuse during a women’s pregnancy are high-risk factors for female homicide.

Two forms of IPV that are less recognized in society include threats of violence as well as psychological or emotional abuse against an intimate partner. An example of a threat of violence is harming the family pet in lieu of the partner but saying “This is what will happen to you next.” Psychological or emotional abuse can include “humiliating the victim, controlling what the victim can and cannot do, withholding information from the victim, deliberately doing something to make the victim feel diminished or embarrassed, isolating the victim from friends and family, and denying the victim access to money or other basic resources.”^{2(p13)} Not allowing the partner to drive and making her sit in the back seat of the car are both examples of psychological abuse. For many women, this type of abuse is far more harmful long term. Abusers may also tell their partners that they are ugly, worthless, and not good enough on a regular basis to emotionally abuse and diminish the survivor’s self-esteem and self-worth.

Findings from the National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Survey, completed in 2000, revealed that roughly 1.5 million women and more than 800,000 men experience physical or sexual violence by intimate partners each year in the United States, although the findings may be underrepresented as it is believed that most violence is not reported to the police. This survey estimated that approximately one fifth of all rapes, one quarter of all physical assaults, and one half of all stalkings were believed to be reported to the police. The survey also found that women were much more likely to experience IPV than men.⁴ According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 85% of domestic violence survivors are women.⁵ Although the aforementioned NVAW survey revealed that men were also survivors of IPV, for the purposes of this article the authors focus on the majority of survivors who are women while recognizing that men experience IPV as well.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/3109220>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/3109220>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)