

Intimate Partner Violence and Unemployment among California Women

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Study for Health and Employment

Conducts research and provides consultation to the CA Department of Social Services to address intimate partner violence (IPV) in CalWORKs programs



Background

- Evidence of a directional effect of violence against women on employment instability (Byrne et al, 1999; Staggs et al, 2007)
- Other studies have mixed findings on relationship between IPV & employment
 - Definition of IPV, employment
 - Sample (welfare, high-risk, etc)

Background (cont.)

Physical and psychological violence may affect women's functioning differently

(Dutton, Goodman, & Bennett 1999)

- Physical/sexual violence → strategic response (i.e., attempts to leave relationship)
- Psychological violence → traumatic stress response

Background (cont.)

IPV may impact employment outcomes directly or indirectly through mental health sequelae such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



Research Questions

1. Are physical and psychological IPV associated with unemployment?
2. Does PTSD play a role in the relationship between IPV and unemployment?

Methods

California Women's Health Survey (CWHS)

- Sponsored by CA Department of Health Services in collaboration with other state agencies
- Annual telephone survey of CA women
- Large and diverse random probability sample (approx 4,000/year)
- Provides population estimates used to set state priorities



Participants

- Participants in the CWHS from the years 2001, 2003, and 2004
- Respondents aged 18-65 years
- In the labor force*
- N = 6,698

Employment Measure

- Employed
 - full-time
 - part-time
 - self-employed
- Unemployed
 - “Out of Work”

*Women who reported being a homemaker, student, retired, or disabled/unable to work were considered to be out of labor force and were excluded from the analyses.

Measure of Past-year IPV

Assessed whether a partner...

1. Physical violence: threw something at them; pushed, grabbed, shoved or slapped them; kicked, bit or hit them with a fist; beat them up or choked them; forced them to have sex against their will; or used a knife on or fired a gun at them.
2. Psychological violence: followed or spied on them; caused them to fear for their safety; or tried to control most or all of their daily activities.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

In your life, have you ever had any experiences that were so frightening, horrible or upsetting, that, *in the past month*, you....

1. Have had nightmares about it or thought about it when you did not want to?
2. Tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that reminded you of it?
3. Were constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled?
4. Felt numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings?

(Hoge, Auchterlonie, & Milliken, 2006; Prins et al, 2004)



Analysis

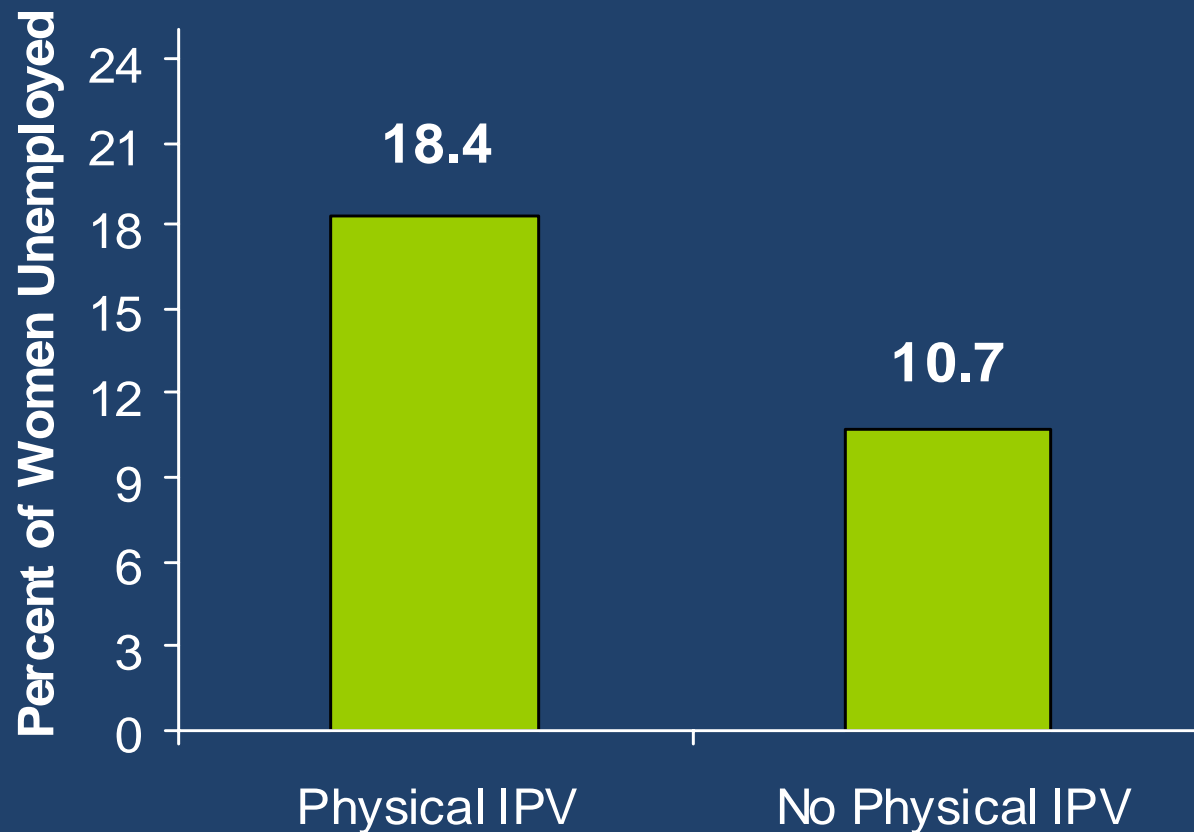
- Multivariate logistic regression, with 95% confidence intervals (CI)
- Covariates
 - Demographics (age, race/ethnicity, nativity, education)
 - Intimate partner violence (physical/sexual and psychological)
 - PTSD symptoms

Results: Prevalence of IPV

- 6.2% of California women experienced recent physical IPV
- 9.0% of California women experienced recent psychological IPV
- Both types of violence were reported by 4.1% of women

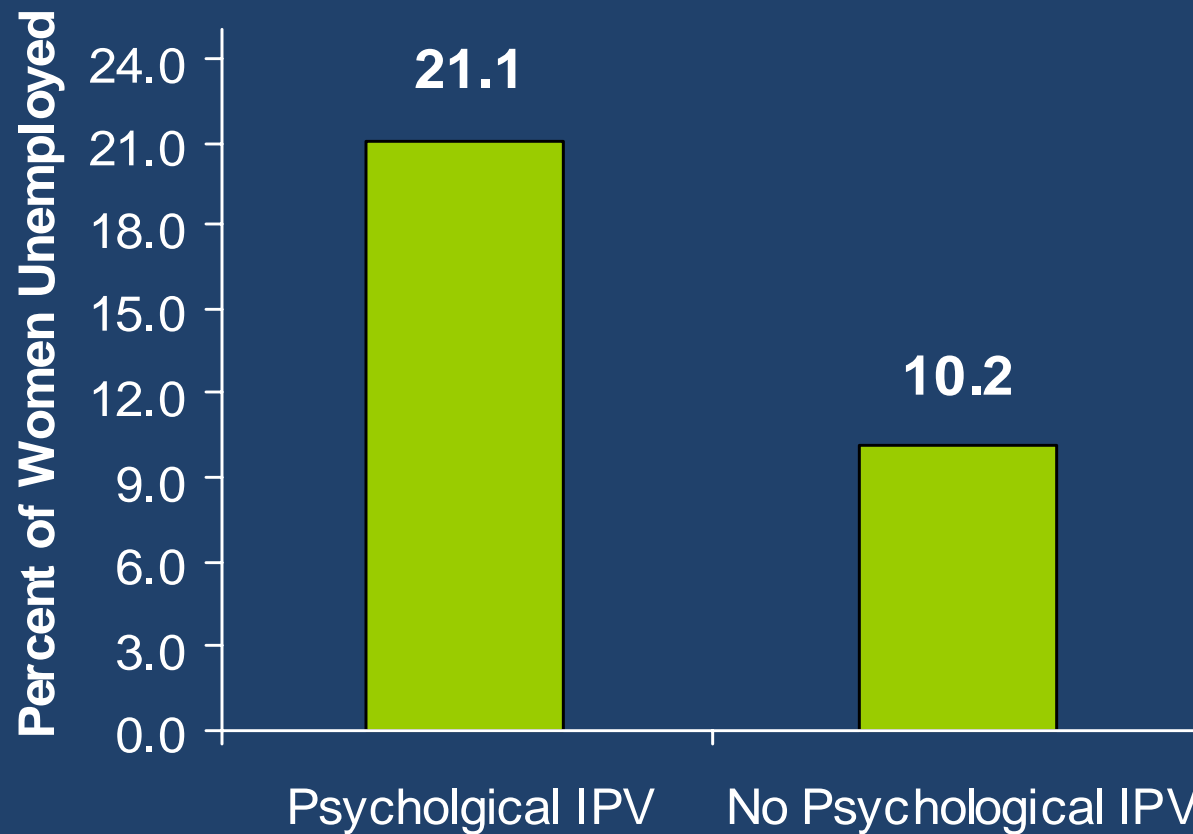
Physical IPV & Unemployment

Unemployment among California Women by Recent Experience of Physical Intimate Partner Violence



Psychological IPV & Unemployment

Unemployment among California Women by Recent Experience of Psychological Intimate Partner Violence



Unemployment & IPV Exposure - OR

*Odds Ratios & 95% CI's for Unemployment
(N=6,698)*

	OR	95% CI
Physical IPV	1.87*	1.44-2.43
Psychological IPV	2.37*	1.91-2.93
PTSD	2.04*	1.59-2.62

*95% CI does not include 1.00

Unemployment & IPV Exposure - AOR

Adjusted Odds Ratios & 95% CI's for Unemployment (N=6,698)

	AOR ^a	95% CI
Physical IPV	0.98	0.71-1.36
Psychological IPV	1.78*	1.36-2.32
PTSD	1.60*	1.22-2.09

^a Adjusted using logistic regression for age, race/ethnicity, education, education, nativity, and other variables in the table
*95% CI does not include 1.00



Key Findings

- Findings indicate significantly higher rates of unemployment among women who have experienced recent physical and psychological IPV, as well as those with current PTSD symptoms.
- Psychological IPV and PTSD were independent risk factors for unemployment, after adjusting for key employment-related variables



What this does not mean:

These results do not necessarily rule out the role of physical IPV in women's employment outcomes, but do highlight the robust population-level association between psychological IPV and employment status.

Limitations

- Cross-sectional design
 - (Bi-)Directional relationship?
 - Report bias?
- Employment measure possibly insensitive
 - How do psychological and physical IPV affect hours worked, income received?
 - Economic self-sufficiency

Implications

- Prevent
 - Increase awareness and education around the impact of IPV in the workplace
- Identify
 - Consider psychological abuse, as well as physical/sexual violence as an obstacle to women's ability to work
- Treat
 - Improve access to treatment for both the direct effects of IPV as well as its mental health sequelae

References

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3. Hoge CW, Auchterlonie JL, Milliken CS. Mental health problems, use of mental health services, and attrition from military service after returning from deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Mar 1 2006;295(9):1023-32.
4. Prins A, Ouimette PC, Kimerling R, et al. The Primary Care PTSD Screen: Development and operating characteristics. *Primary Care Psychiatry*. 2004;9(1):9-14.
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