



Abstract Title: Intimate relationships and women's health

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Introduction

Past research has established that a high percentage of women in violent relationships experience a traumatic brain injury (TBI), with one article estimating approximately 23 million women in the US living with a TBI from intimate partner violence (IPV) (Ivany & Schminkey, 2016). Statistics Canada (2015) reported close to 92,000 people were victims of IPV, making up approximately 1/4 of violent crimes. While previous work has focused on establishing the link between IPV and TBI, recent calls to research have identified gaps and areas for future IPV-related TBI research. One such area is exploration of the daily experiences of these women, specifically the challenges and obstacles that they face regarding their own healthcare as well as the health and care of their children (Hunnicuttt et al., 2016). Another area of IPV-related TBI that is lacking is regarding TBI screening tools. Currently there is no policy in place that dictates screening women who present with signs of IPV, and from an evaluation study, no proper screening tools exist for use with these women either (Goldin et al., 2016). The aforementioned two gaps of inappropriate screening tools and lack of insight into the daily struggles of these women must be addressed.

Objectives and Methods

The main objective of this project is to garner a more in depth understanding of the day-to-day challenges that women with IPV-related TBI face. This will partially be done through applying a phenomenological approach to qualitative inquiry to investigate these experiences. Interview questions will focus on: how physical and emotional injuries may have affected their life; what past services they may have received; what these services might have lacked, and specific questions about the challenges of parenting and childcare for mothers. The quantitative portion of the study will include two self-administered standardized scales, the PCL-5 for PTSD symptoms and the CESD-R for depression symptoms.

The secondary objective is to test a new brain injury screening tool that has been developed to be used specifically for IPV-related TBIs.

Results

Results will be discussed regarding main themes of the qualitative interviews.

Conclusion

There are huge gaps in our understanding of the intersection of IPV and TBI, and without proper understanding of the issue, we cannot properly treat or prevent it. From a healthcare standpoint, appropriate screening tools and staff who are trained on how to properly use these tools, is crucial.

References

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