

# REPRODUCTIVE COERCION AND ABUSE AMONG A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF AUSTRALIAN ADULTS: THE THIRD AUSTRALIAN STUDY OF HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

## Authors:

Carter A<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Vaughn C<sup>4</sup>, McManus H<sup>1</sup>, de Visser R<sup>5</sup>, Rissel C<sup>6,7</sup>, Ogilvie E<sup>1</sup>, Tarzia L<sup>8</sup>, Gunaratnam P<sup>9</sup>, Yeung S<sup>10</sup>, Fisher C<sup>11</sup>, Callander D<sup>1</sup>, Hammoud M<sup>1</sup>, Hocking J<sup>12</sup>, Grulich A<sup>1</sup>, Guy R<sup>1</sup>, Bateson D<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia, <sup>2</sup>Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia, <sup>3</sup>Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada, <sup>4</sup>Nossal Institute for Global Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne, <sup>5</sup>Primary Care and Public Health, Brighton & Sussex Medical School, Falmer, UK, <sup>6</sup>Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, <sup>7</sup>Rural and Remote Health, College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia, <sup>8</sup>Department of General Practice and Primary Care, Melbourne Medical School, University of Melbourne <sup>9</sup>Primary Health Care, Clinton Health Access Initiative, Lao People's Democratic Republic, <sup>10</sup>MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, Unity Health Toronto, Toronto, Canada, <sup>11</sup>Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, LaTrobe University, Melbourne, Australia, <sup>12</sup>Sexual Health Unit, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne, <sup>13</sup>Daffodil Centre, Faculty of Medicine and Health, the University of Sydney

## Background:

Reproductive coercion and abuse (RCA) involve behaviours used to control a person's reproductive autonomy. We provide the first population-based estimates of the prevalence and correlates of RCA in Australia.

## Methods:

We analysed cross-sectional survey data from a nationally representative sample of 7,229 adults aged 16-69 years, collected via computer-assisted telephone interviews in the Third Australian Study of Health and Relationships. Women who had engaged in vaginal intercourse (n=3,459) were queried about any partner interference with contraception and forced sterilisation/contraception; those with a history of pregnancy (n=2,477) were asked about coerced abortion and forced continuation of pregnancy. Men (n=3,490) were queried about forced vasectomy; those who had engaged in vaginal intercourse (n=3,127) were asked about partner interference with contraception (conceptually distinct from RCA). Logistic regression identified correlates.

## Results:

Among women, the most prevalent form of RCA was coerced abortion [5.6% (95% CI: 4.5-6.9)], followed by partner interference with contraception [4.7% (3.9-5.6)], forced sterilisation/contraception [2.5% (1.9-3.3)], and forced continuation of pregnancy [2.1% (1.6-2.9)]. Among men, forced vasectomy showed a comparable prevalence to forced sterilisation [1.9% (1.43-2.44)] and partner interference with contraception was common

[9.1% (8.0-10.4)]. RCA was predominantly perpetrated by a partner, although women were more likely than men to report experiencing RCA from a parent and other family member. For both women and men, logistic regression showed a strong positive association between RCA and several social determinants of health (e.g., disability, financial hardship, unstable housing, incarceration, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, bisexuality), history of substance use, having experienced sexual and intimate partner violence, reporting ever having an STI, young maternal age at first pregnancy, and poor general health, psychological distress, and anxiety during sex.

**Conclusion:**

Approximately 5% of Australians report RCA, with marginalised communities disproportionately affected. RCA intersects with various forms of violence and has adverse effects on physical, sexual, and mental health.

**Disclosure of interest:**

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## FEMALES

	Contraceptive interference	Forced sterilisation/ contraception	Forced abortion	Forced pregnancy
Positive associations with:	<p>Unique:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did not find sex pleasurable</li> </ul> <p>Similar across 3 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bisexual</li> <li>- Rent/homeless</li> <li>- No private insurance</li> </ul> <p>Similar across all 4 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Prison</li> <li>- Worse Kessler scores (distress)</li> <li>- Poor health</li> </ul>	<p>Unique:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Older age</li> <li>- Divorced/sep/wid.</li> </ul> <p>Similar across 2 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ATSI</li> </ul> <p>Similar across 3 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No emerg. Funds</li> </ul> <p>Similar across all 4 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Prison</li> <li>- Worse Kessler scores (distress)</li> <li>- Poor health</li> </ul>	<p>Unique:</p> <p>Similar across 2 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ATSI</li> </ul> <p>Similar across 3 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bisexual</li> <li>- Rent/homeless</li> <li>- No private insurance</li> <li>- No emerg. Funds</li> </ul> <p>Similar across all 4 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Prison</li> <li>- Worse Kessler scores (distress)</li> <li>- Poor health</li> <li>- Currently smoke</li> </ul>	<p>Unique:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No religion</li> </ul> <p>Similar across 3 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bisexual</li> <li>- Rent/homeless</li> <li>- No private insurance</li> <li>- No emerg. Funds</li> </ul> <p>Similar across all 4 RCA types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Prison</li> <li>- Worse Kessler scores (distress)</li> <li>- Poor health</li> <li>- Currently smoke</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently smoke</li> <li>- Ever injected drugs</li> <li>- Excessive alcohol</li> <li>- Unwanted sex</li> <li>- Forced sex</li> <li>- IPV</li> <li>- Anxious during sex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently smoke</li> <li>- Ever injected drugs</li> <li>- Excessive alcohol</li> <li>- Unwanted sex</li> <li>- Forced sex</li> <li>- IPV</li> <li>- Anxious during sex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently smoke</li> <li>- Ever injected drugs</li> <li>- Excessive alcohol</li> <li>- Unwanted sex</li> <li>- Forced sex</li> <li>- IPV</li> <li>- Anxious during sex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ever injected drugs</li> <li>- Excessive alcohol</li> <li>- Unwanted sex</li> <li>- Forced sex</li> <li>- IPV</li> <li>- Anxious during sex</li> </ul>
Negative associations with:				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Older age</li> <li>- Other language</li> </ul>

## MALES

	Contraceptive interference	Forced vastectomy
Positive associations with:	Unique: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tasmania</li> </ul>	Unique: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No emerg. Funds</li> <li>- No private insurance</li> <li>- Lacked interest in sex</li> <li>- Did not find sex pleasurable</li> <li>- Felt anxious during sex</li> <li>- Young age at first intercourse</li> </ul> Similar across all 4 types:

	<p>Similar across all 4 types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divorced/sep.</li> <li>- Homeless</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Prison</li> <li>- Worse Kessler scores (distress)</li> <li>- <del>Poor health</del></li> <li>- Currently smoke</li> <li>- Ever injected drugs</li> <li>- Excessive alcohol</li> <li>- Unwanted sex</li> <li>- Forced sex</li> <li>- IPV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divorced/sep.</li> <li>- Homeless</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Prison</li> <li>- Worse Kessler scores (distress)</li> <li>- <del>Poor health</del></li> <li>- Currently smoke</li> <li>- Ever injected drugs</li> <li>- Excessive alcohol</li> <li>- Unwanted sex</li> <li>- Forced sex</li> <li>- IPV</li> </ul>
Negative associations with:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Born outside Australia - other countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Born outside Australia - other countries</li> </ul>