

Intimate Partner Violence screening among Men Who Have Sex with Men in an Australian sexual health clinic

Authors:

Boots G¹, Mclver R¹, Crozier B¹, McNulty A¹

¹Sydney Sexual Health Centre

Background:

In Australia, 17% of women and 6% of men have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV). Although most IPV research has focused on heterosexual partnerships, studies suggest that men who have sex with men (MSM) may experience IPV at similar or higher rates than those documented among women. IPV may also take different forms among MSM and have different health and social impacts. This study aims to assess the utility of a screening tool for identifying and responding to IPV among MSM attending a sexual health clinic in Sydney.

Methods:

Between June 2020 and June 2021, 766 MSM clients were screened by clinician interview using standardised questions for IPV experienced in the preceding 12 months. Answers were correlated with routinely collected data including age, employment, country of birth, drug and alcohol use, sexual partner numbers, sex work, PrEP use, HIV status and STI diagnosis. The proportion of clients reporting IPV was calculated and characteristics between the two groups (IPV and no IPV) were analysed using independent samples t-tests and chi-squared tests.

Results:

Thirty-one MSM (4.1%) reported experiencing IPV in the last 12 months. Those who reported IPV were more likely to report intravenous drug use ($p < 0.001$, $n = 765$), sex work ($p < 0.001$, $n = 764$) and sexualised drug use ($p = 0.004$, $n = 763$) and less likely to be employed ($p = 0.019$, $n = 765$) than those who did not report IPV. There was no significant difference in age, being born overseas, HIV status, PrEP use, alcohol consumption, number of partners or rates of STIs. Five men reporting IPV (0.7%) were referred for counselling.

Conclusion:

Although rates of disclosure and referral were relatively low, reported IPV among MSM was associated with significantly increased risk behaviours. Clinicians should be aware of the potential for and impact of IPV in this population.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None.