



CONNECTION OF PARTNER VIOLENCE AND WOMEN'S LOSS OF FERTILITY CONTROL AND IMPACT ON HEALTH

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BACKGROUND

- Abused women experience a wide range of adverse health consequences, including **poor mental health** and **impaired reproductive health**.
- Women's **lack of fertility control** in an abusive relationship is common.
- Although the association between intimate partner abuse (**IPV**) and women's poor mental health functioning is well documented, it remains unclear whether women's **mental health functioning** is linked with **compromised fertility control**.
- Women's fertility control affects **pregnancy outcomes**, especially in an abusive relationship.
- Existing studies either focus mainly on the associations between fertility control and **unintended pregnancy** or examine fertility control as a mediating rather than an independent factor.
- Fertility control has not been examined in relationship to **other adverse pregnancy outcomes**, such as premature birth.

PURPOSE

Outcomes	Women's functioning & safety	Pregnancy outcomes
Reproductive Health Issues	Poor mental health Women's Safety	Unintended pregnancy Miscarriage
Fertility control	Study 1: Relationships b/t fertility control, severity of abuse, & poor mental health	Study 2: Links between fertility control and effects on poor pregnancy outcomes

Study I:

- Can an abused woman's risk for miscarriage be predicted from fertility control items, when controlling for significant covariate?
- Can an abused woman's risk for premature birth be predicted from fertility control items, when controlling for significant covariate?

Study II:

- The purpose of the study is to examine the relationships among fertility control, severity of abuse, and poor mental health among abused women.

METHODS

- Parent study: A longitudinal study to examine the long-term health and functioning consequences of IPV among 150 first-time users of safe shelters and 150 first-time users of the justice system following an abusive relationship.
- Repeated measures every 4 months.
- Measures assessed severity of abuse; danger for murder; mental health symptoms of depression, anxiety, somatization, and PTSD.
- At 32 months, 282 women completed the investigator-developed fertility control questionnaire.**
- Statistical procedures: ANNOVA & logistic regression.

Figure 1. Fertility Questionnaire

We are trying to learn more about how women make decisions about when to have children, how many children to have, and use of birth control. Thanks for helping us.		NO	YES	66
F11	Thinking about your relationship with (name of abuser _____), did you DISCUSS the NUMBER of CHILDREN you wanted to have?	0	1	66
F21	If yes to DISCUSS number of children wanted, did you AGREE on the number of children?	0	1	66
F31	If yes to AGREE on number of children, did you AGREE on time between pregnancies?	0	1	66
F41	When you were with (_____) did you DISCUSS using birth control (BC)?	0	1	66
F51	If yes to DISCUSS, did you AGREE on type of birth control (condoms, pills, other)?	0	1	66
F61	When you were with (_____), was birth control ever used?	0	1	66
F71	If yes to birth control, who made the decision on type? 1=Abuser; 2=Woman; 3=Joint	Code=		66
F81	Did you ever get pregnant because (_____) would not use BC, such as condoms?	0	1	66
F91	Did you ever get pregnant because (_____) would not allow you to use birth control?	0	1	66
F101	Were you ever afraid to talk to (_____) about using birth control?	0	1	66
F111	Were you ever abused when you talked to (_____) about birth control?	0	1	66
F121	Were you ever abused when you used birth control?	0	1	66
Thinking about the PREGNANCIES you had from (name of abuser _____)				
P11	How many PREGNANCIES did you have with _____?			66
P21	How many of the pregnancies with _____ were planned?			66
P31	If yes to planned pregnancies, who made the plan: 1=Abuser; 2=Woman; 3=Joint	Code=		66
P41	How many of the pregnancies with _____ ended in a full term baby?			66
P41	How many of the pregnancies with _____ ended in a premature (born too soon) baby?			66
P61	If yes to premature baby, do you think the baby was born too soon because of abuse?	0	1	66
P71	How many of the pregnancies with _____ ended in stillbirth (born dead)?			66
P81	If yes to stillbirth, do you think the baby died because of the abuse?	0	1	66
P91	How many pregnancies ended in a miscarriage (lost the baby)?			66
P101	If yes to miscarriage, do you think you lost the pregnancy because of abuse?	0	1	66
P111	How many of the pregnancies ended in an abortion?			66
P121	If yes to abortion(s), who made the decision to have the abortion? 1=Abuser; 2=Woman; 3=Joint	Code=		66



RESULTS

Study I:

- Women who reported a pregnancy related to the abuser not using birth control were **28** times more likely to have had a miscarriage related to abuse (*Odds Ratio = 28.70, p < .05*).
- Being abused for using birth control was associated with over **8** times the risk of having a premature birth (*Odds Ratio = 8.34, p < .05*).

Study II:

ANOVA test results with *p < .05*:

Fertility Control Items	Severity of Violence	Poor Mental Health
1. Discuss # of kids	2. Threats	1. PTSD
2. Agree on number of children?		3. PTSD
3. Agree on time b/t pregnancies?	4. Danger	4. Depression & PTSD
4. Used birth control?		5. Depression & PTSD
5. Who decided on birth control?	7. Physical Abuse	6. PTSD
5-1. Abuser		
5-2. Woman		
5-3. Joint		
6. Afraid to talk to abuser about birth control?		
7. Abused because used birth control?		

DISCUSSION

- Compromised fertility control is **associated with** adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as preterm birth and miscarriage.
- Controlling experiences around one's reproductive health is **associated with** what appears to be more severe forms of abuse (i.e. increased lethality risk). Lack of control over fertility is **associated with** poorer mental health.

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