Background

Intimate partner violence (IPV) during pregnancy affects up to 17% of women (Bailey, 2010), affecting maternal physical and mental health. IPV includes physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse. The DOVE study (Sharps et al, 2016) is one of the few studies that followed women longitudinally throughout pregnancy and post-delivery, and was able to document women who had multiple partners during the study.

Methodology

- Sample: 58 rural women living in a mid-west area in the US.
- Data was obtained from research nurses’ logs recorded after interviews at baseline, delivery, 3, 6, 12, 18, and 24 months post-delivery.
- A descriptive content analysis was conducted to determine themes related to the multiple partners that the women were associated with at each point in time.

Results

The following themes were identified:

- Financially, women were tied to their abusers and non-abusive partners.
- Rural women were geographically bound to their area and could not escape.
- Women were in love with their abuser.
- Women felt an increased level of safety when their partner/s were in jail. This also provided an opportunity to get involved with other men.

Conclusions

- A significant number of women have multiple partners, especially in rural areas.
- More than one partner can be abusive at a time.
- DOVE did make a difference by providing the knowledge for women to recognize abuse, to respond to it, and leave (Sharps et al, 2016).

Nursing Implications

DOVE is an evidence-based intervention that can be delivered prenatally but also during other outpatient visits, such as pediatrics. Women should be screened for all partners, not just the current partner because of the ramifications of multiple abusers.

References:
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