

## Mental Health Findings

**57% of the sample** were found to have **depressive symptoms**. Much fewer women (about 14%) displayed post-traumatic stress symptoms. In general, **IPV is highly associated with mental health problems**.

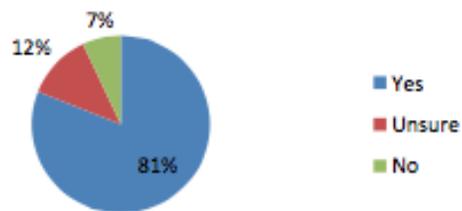
## Sleep Findings

Sleep is an important part of good physical and mental health. Sleep difficulties are usually normal to experience during pregnancy. In this sample, 56% of women were found to have sleep difficulties and it was also found that **poor sleep quality was strongly associated with poor mental health and recent sexual violence by a partner**.

## Intent to Breastfeed

Another aspect that this study examines is women's intent to breastfeed. Breastfeeding has many benefits for a baby's health and development while also appearing to improve the mother's mood, sleep, post-partum depression, and bond with the child. We will have updated results on this part of the study soon, but the good news is that many surveyed women plan to breastfeed their children after birth!

### Do you intend to breastfeed?



## Effects of IPV on Children

### During Pregnancy

Because IPV exposure is associated with many harmful pregnancy outcomes such as premature labor, pre-term delivery, and gynecological problems, **healthy fetal development is often at risk** and can result in prematurity and low birth weight among other things.

### During Childhood

IPV has the potential to negatively affect functioning in children who witness it. About **1 in 10 children have witnessed some form of IPV before the age of 6**. Children may see or hear violent acts, be told about them, or see injuries after them.

**Physical effects** that children may be at a higher risk for include physical abuse, sleeping problems, vulnerability to disease, and health risk behaviors.

**Mental health effects** have been studied as well. IPV has been linked to aggressive behavior, poor concentration, social problems, and adjustment and emotional difficulties.

**If you're interested in participating in a research study about pregnancy or IPV, or would just like to get information about referrals to other resources in our community, you can contact us at:**



**BRAVE Research Lab**

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## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

*Facts, Risks, and Community Statistics on Pregnant Women Exposed to IPV*

# What is intimate partner violence?

**Intimate partner violence** (IPV) includes physical and sexual violence, psychological aggression, and stalking that is perpetrated by an intimate partner (i.e. girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse, dating/sexual partner). It's a growing concern in public health that affects the lives and well-being of millions of men, women, and children around the world.

## Women and IPV

IPV can cause several harmful effects in both men and women, however women are affected disproportionately with **1 in 4 women reporting IPV victimization compared to 1 in 7 men.**

### Physical Effects of IPV

- Gynecological problems
- Central nervous system problems
- Stress-related problems
- Chronic illness
- Injury
- Poor general health

### Mental Effects of IPV

- Depression
- Post-traumatic stress symptoms
- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Sleep disturbances
- Flashbacks

# IPV and Pregnancy

Pregnant women are at a higher risk for exposure to IPV. It not only affects the well-being of the mother, but it also may harm the unborn child and other children in the home. Women exposed to IPV are more likely to experience pregnancy-specific physical and mental health problems than are non-exposed women.

### Physical Consequences for Exposed Pregnant Women

- High blood pressure
- More hospital visits
- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Vaginal bleeding
- Higher chance of miscarriage
- Prenatal health problems

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*Women who are pregnant are at particularly high risk for exposure to IPV.*

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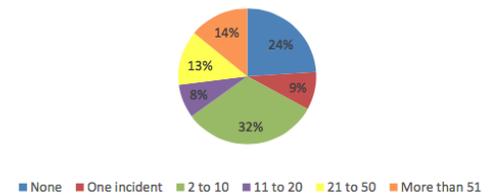
### Mental Health Problems for Exposed Pregnant Women

- More severe prenatal and postpartum depressive symptoms
- Post-traumatic stress symptoms
- Heightened anxiety
- Higher stress levels
- Self-harming thoughts

# Community Sample

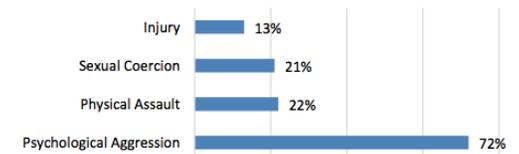
In an ongoing study conducted by the Building Resilience After Violence Exposure (BRAVE) Lab at the University of Notre Dame, 101 pregnant women recruited from the South Bend and Mishawaka WIC offices were interviewed about stressful experiences, current mental health, substance use, sleep quality, and violence. Below are some of the findings from the first collection of data.

**Incidents of Intimate Partner Violence in the Past Year**



Of this group of women, **76% reported at least one instance of IPV in the past year.**

**Types of Intimate Partner Violence in the Past Year**



**The most common type of IPV** women experienced (72%) **was psychological aggression** (i.e. humiliating, name-calling, threatening to inflict harm). **13% sustained serious injury.**

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