

A Qualitative Report of Women's Life Experiences As Participants in Partner Violence Research



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Introduction

The study of intimate partner violence (IPV) can have an influence on research participants as they reflect on their own life experiences. In the context of a quantitative, longitudinal study of IPV, 42 women qualitatively described their life experiences during their 12 weeks on the study. Our aim was to examine the impact of study participation, and enrich our quantitative findings.

Results

Participants' average age was 38; average duration of violence was 7 years. 71% were Hispanic; half reported annual household income of \$20,000 or less.

Methods

Participants. Researchers recruited 200 women from 6 primary care clinics. Participants were 18-64 years old, living with a male partner for ≥ 6 months, and experiencing verbal or physical abuse within the past 30 days.

Measurement. Participants completed a baseline questionnaire and, for 12 weeks, made daily calls to an automated telephone survey which assessed stressors and IPV. A weekly phone call to a researcher assessed safety and adverse life events. At end-of-study, researchers interviewed 42 participants about their experiences during the study. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative methods.

Conclusion

Participation on the study caused no increased risk to safety for these women and may have provided benefit in the form of insight, emotional support, and access to resources.

Acknowledgements

This study was funded with a grant from the "Dynamics of Human Behavior" program, National Science Foundation, Award #0525026. Automated data collection was provided by the University of Colorado, Department of Family Medicine Information Services group.

| Life Context | Stress | Abuse | Coping | Impact of Participation | Logistics |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Alcohol was a big part of the problem when we first met. We were very obsessed with each other -- It was serious domestic violence. -9012</p> <p>[After Hurricane Katrina] we all was there in Houston. My little niece got me a bus pass to SATX. I was trying to get away from him and he just came along with me. -8156</p> <p>I realize he's been through wars and he's been wounded and he's been captured and he's had a horrendous life. He's been special services military all his life. -8279</p> <p>We lost a child in 2006. -9530</p> | <p>[We have stress] every day because it's either money, it's the children or it's 'cause we can't find work. -8302</p> <p>My family's a circus and dealing with my sisters & my brothers, it effects our marriage real bad. -1140</p> <p>[We are] Like a normal couple except for when he drinks...every Friday, Saturday, Sunday... for 8 years. -9181</p> <p>It was only by accident that I found out we weren't two payments behind. We were 10. -2088</p> <p>My husband had an eye injury and he is going blind in one eye. -6928</p> | <p>I wasn't even worthy of having a cell phone. I don't even have a phone at home. -- 3516</p> <p>...he would hit a wall, break my windshield, or throw a rock at my car and dent it, key his name in my car, just like a kid... - 8133</p> <p>... some shoving, pushing, nothing major. Yeah, he slapped me a few times, too. - 6187</p> <p>He'll be cruel, like smoking and flicking ashes on me... once he told me I was his human ashtray. -6333</p> <p>This foot -- he threw me across the room. Shattered my ankle. I was in a cast for like a year and a half. -9012</p> | <p>I try not to fuel him. I try not to say anything or piss him off. - 9012</p> <p>You have to be strong. You can't let them bring you down. -3201</p> <p>I get away from him. I make him sit there all by himself in the house. -9058</p> <p>...being able to talk to my mom and my daughter and my friend. -8348</p> <p>I'd actually provoke him because I'd want him to leave. -6333</p> <p>I pray a lot and ask for strength, understanding, knowledge, wisdom, which way to go, what to do. -6333</p> | <p>I have more confidence now than what I did 3 months ago. -6141</p> <p>Now I know there is a place to go, for me or for my friends... -9822</p> <p>It was like a friend, the phone, because I could tell somebody what I was going through that day - 9181</p> <p>He's severely slowed down on the physical abuse... because he knew [I had] a 911 phone -8640</p> <p>Before, I wouldn't have thought about trying to get away. I would've just dealt with it. Now, I wanna do something else -8640</p> | <p>[Your husband didn't know about the study?] Nope. [business card?] Hid it. [Study materials?] Hid it. [Cell phone?] Yeah. Hid that thing too.. -5623</p> <p>I've told him about the study because it made me realize that I don't have to take that from him ...I'd rather get a divorce. -8348</p> <p>[feel safe?] Oh yeah. Because I told him it was a 911 phone. I said all I had to do is push this button and the police would be here - 8640</p> <p>[I called] when I was at school, waiting for a class or... before bed and he'd be watching TV. Most of the time he wasn't there. -8448</p> |