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The Experience of Intimate Partner Violence Among Pregnant Women Seeking Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder

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The Experience of Intimate Partner Violence Among Pregnant Women Seeking Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder

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Introduction:

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major health issue among those with substance use disorder. A history of partner violence is associated with increased health problems and less improvement in treatment. The perinatal period is a time of increased risk of IPV for women, as well as a key opportunity for opioid use disorder treatment intervention. The purpose of this study is to characterize the experience of partner violence and evaluate the typology of sequelae associated with it in a population of pregnant women seeking medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder.

Methods:

The population of interest in this study is pregnant or parenting women seeking treatment for opioid use disorder at MATER, a comprehensive addiction treatment center in Philadelphia, PA. The main data source used was the Biopsychosocial Document, a form completed by patients upon entry into the program. Data from 168 respondents were used to capture the frequency and character of intimate partner violence as well as related sequelae. Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations for continuous data and count and percent frequencies for categorical data, will be used to describe the data.

Results:

Experience of IPV was very common among the study population, with 62.3% of participants reporting abuse as an adult. Among women who had experienced IPV, the types of abuse with the most frequency were physical (87.9%) and sexual (66.7%). The full spectrum of abuse including psychological, financial, and stalking was observed. Of note, even among those respondents who did not self-report IPV, rates of abuse subtypes were non-zero. This study will further analyze recent drug use, previous treatment attempts, sexual exploitation, and experience of childhood abuse and their associations to violence experienced as an adult.

Conclusion:

Opioid use disorder treatment programs are likely to engage women experiencing intimate partner violence, and treatment initiation represents an important area of potential intervention. Next steps should include qualitative interview-based research into this population's experience of intimate partner violence to further elucidate best methods of support.