

# **Intimate partner violence, its mental health and help seeking implications**

**Aline Umubyeyi M.**

Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, Section of Epidemiology and Social Medicine

## **ABSTRACT**

**Aim:** This thesis aimed to explore the magnitude of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), its risk factors and resulting mental health effects. A further aim was to explore the barriers to care for people suffering from mental disorders as well as for people exposed to IPV.

**Methods:** A population-based cross-sectional study was conducted, using the World Health Organization's questionnaire for violence research. It included 477 women and 440 men aged 20-35 years. For mental disorders, we used the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview questionnaire. Simple and multivariable logistic regression was used to identify risk factors associated with IPV, mental disorders and barriers to care. In addition, six focus group discussions were conducted with health care professionals regularly meeting people exposed to partner violence.

**Results:** Women were highly exposed to IPV, with a tremendous impact on women's mental health. In spite of this, women rarely sought professional help for mental problems due to the many barriers experienced. Instead, they preferred to go to someone they knew, partly due to services not being available, accessible, acceptable and of a good quality. Further, a conflict between what the state wants to achieve in terms of gender equality and the existing culture, heavily influenced by masculinity norms, was identified. This situation exposes women to high levels of abuse and poor access to help and support services. For men, there was a different pattern as they were considerably less exposed to IPV. However, men still suffered from mental problems found to be associated with IPV but mainly due to other factors, such as poverty and exposure to traumatic episodes during the genocide. Further, men sought health care for mental problems to a much lower extent than women, possibly due to gender norms. Health care professionals also confirm that men are not seen in the health care services as victims of IPV.

**Conclusions:** The findings in this thesis revealed that women were more exposed to IPV, with serious mental health effects compared to men, and women also faced more barriers when seeking care. Gender inequality was an important factor behind women's poor health. Hence, the promotion of gender equality needs to be reinforced at all levels of societal organization. For both men and women, the attainment of higher levels of education, can improve the present situation. Further, interventions to decrease poverty will lower the prevalence of IPV and reduce its mental health effects. Mental health care and IPV support services need to be made available and equipped with health professionals able to handle IPV cases and mental disorders.

**Keywords:** Intimate partner violence, mental disorders, help seeking, barriers to care

**ISBN:** 978-91-9585-3 (Print), **ISBN:** 978-91-9586-0 (e-pub).

**Electronic publication:** <http://hdl.handle.net/2077/39552>

# Intimate partner violence, its mental health and help seeking implications

Akademisk avhandling

Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av medicine doktorexamen vid Sahlgrenska akademien, Göteborgs universitet, kommer att offentligens försvaras i sal 2118, hus 2, plan 1, Arvid Wallgrens Backe 7 (Hälsovetarbacken),  
Torsdagen den 29 oktober 2015 kl. 9.00

av

**Aline Umubyeyi M.**

Fakultetsopponent:

Professor Ulf Högberg

Professor, specialist physician at Department of Women's and Children's Health, Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Uppsala University.

- I. Umubyeyi A, Mogren I, Ntaganira J, Krantz G. Women are considerably more exposed to intimate partner violence than men in Rwanda: results from a population-based, cross-sectional study. *BMC Women's Health* 2014, 14:99  
doi: 10.1186/1472-6874-14-99, Open Access
- II. Umubyeyi A, Mogren I, Ntaganira J, Krantz G. Intimate Partner Violence and its contribution to mental disorders in men and women in the post genocide Rwanda: findings from a population-based study. *BMC Psychiatry* 2014, 14:315  
doi: 10.1186/s12888-014-0315-7, Open access
- III. Umubyeyi A, Mogren I, Ntaganira J, Krantz G. Help seeking behaviours, barriers to care and self-efficacy for seeking mental health care, a population based study in Rwanda. Accepted for publication in *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatry Epidemiology*  
doi: 10.1007/s00127-015-1130-2. Open access
- IV. Umubyeyi A #, Persson M #, Mogren I, Krantz G. Gender inequality prevents abused women from seeking care despite the gender-based violence legislation: a qualitative study from Rwanda. Manuscript submitted for publication.



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Göteborg 2015