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**EFFECTIVENESS OF A  
HEALTH PROMOTION INTERVENTION TO  
ADDRESS PERCEIVED DETERMINANTS OF  
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN THE  
NAWALAPITIYA  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AREA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Introduction**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is the most common form of violence experienced by women. Studies on prevalence, knowledge, attitudes, practices and determinants of IPV are inadequate across the three sectors of Sri Lanka, namely; urban, rural and estate. IPV can be prevented only when the underlying determinants are addressed. Health promotion approach enable communities to address health problems with complex determinants. Hence, health promotion interventions to improve knowledge, attitudes and practices on IPV and to address the determinants must be developed and tested.

### **Objectives**

The study aimed to describe the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to IPV, estimate its prevalence and determinants and to develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a health promotion intervention to reduce IPV by addressing perceived determinants of IPV in the Nawalapitiya Medical Officer of Health area.

### **Methods**

The study included three components. The component I was a qualitative study conducted with ever-married men and women aged 15 to 49 and community leaders. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected by focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The component II was a cross-sectional survey, conducted with 600 ever-married women aged 15 to 49 years using an interviewer-administered questionnaire. The component III was a quasi-experimental component, recruited 90 women aged 15 to 49

years separately from the intervention (Nawalapitiya) and control (Kadugannawa) areas representing urban, rural and estate public health midwife areas to evaluate the implemented intervention. Mothers' support groups were facilitated with a health promotion intervention to identify and address the perceived determinants of IPV in the community. Pre-test, post-test interviewer-administered questionnaires were used.

## **Results**

The response rate for component I, the qualitative study was high among women (88.6%, n=31) compared to men (47.1%, n=8). The qualitative study identified apparent and underlying determinants arising from individual, relationship/family, community and societal level directly and indirectly developed interactions to influence IPV.

The response rate for component II, the cross-sectional survey was 85.6% (N=600). The cross-sectional survey revealed that overall knowledge on IPV was low where only 8.0% (n=41) of the participants had formal training on IPV. More physical (39.5%, n=237), psychological abuse (39.0%, n=234) and controlling behaviours (31.3%, n=188) were reported from all three sectors (urban, rural and estate) where estate women suffered comparatively more abuse.

The response rate for component III, the quasi-experimental study was 90.9% (N=90) during the pre-assessment from both intervention and control areas. During post-assessment it was 87.9% (n=87) and 82.8% (n=82) respectively from intervention and control areas. The quasi-experimental study showed significant positive changes in knowledge, attitudes and certain practices of IPV in the intervention area compared to the

control area. The intervention area reported a statistically significant improvement in the total mean (M) score comprising knowledge, attitudes, practices and determinants from 59.6 (Standard Deviation=17.5) to 80.8 (SD=19.0) ( $\chi^2 = -11.382$ ,  $df=86$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) compared to the improvement in the control area (Pre: M=62.2, SD=17.3; Post: M=63.0, SD=18.9;  $\chi^2 = -0.450$ ,  $df=81$ ;  $p=0.654$ ). Health promotion intervention enrolled twelve mothers' support groups and enabled them to identify and take control, and address certain determinants of IPV.

## **Conclusion**

Prevalence of IPV was high among the study population in terms of physical, psychological and controlling behaviours. More respondents had poor knowledge on IPV with approximately half of them having attitudes generally justifying IPV. The present health promotion intervention identifies a mechanism on how mothers' support groups can be utilized to address IPV in their communities. The designed approach improved knowledge, attitudes on IPV and was effective in addressing certain perceived determinants of IPV. Present approach can be adapted and used in similar contexts in Sri Lanka.

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