INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN URBAN WEST AFRICA

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to the range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used women by current or former male intimate partners. The preponderance of evidence at present suggests that women are more likely to be abused. The frequency and severity of violence varies greatly but the main goal is usually to control the victims through fear and intimidation. IPV is an important public health problem that cuts across geographic and cultural barriers.

Objectives:
To ascertain the magnitude of IPV amongst pregnant women in Gambia and the associated factors.

Methodology:
A cross sectional survey was carried out at Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital (RVTH), Banjul, The Gambia, on ANC clinic attendees between October and December 2011, using a pre-tested structured interviewer administered questionnaire.

Results:
25% of enrolled subjects reported IPV. Yelling, verbal assault, trying to forcefully control and physical assault were the commonest forms, with 12% requiring medical care on account of IPV. 3% had been prevented from seeking healthcare by IPV.

Conclusion:
IPV is common in urban West Africa and is a threat to the health of Africa’s women.