

# Prevalence and associated factors of intimate partner violence among women of reproductive age in Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Intimate partner violence (IPV) against women is a global public health issue associated with detrimental social and health effects. Understanding the factors contributing to IPV will pave a way for the development of targeted policies and effective strategies against IPV in Malaysia. This study seeks to shed some light on the prevalence and associated factors of IPV among women of reproductive age in Malaysia. **Materials and Methods:** The study utilised data from the National Health and Morbidity Survey: Maternal and Child Health (NHMS MCH) 2022, a cross-sectional nationwide survey with a multistage stratified sampling design. Women of reproductive age (15 to 49 years) who have ever been married or living with a partner were selected to answer the self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Life Events Questionnaire. Lifetime IPV was defined as women's lifetime exposure to any of the three types of IPV: physical, psychological or sexual violence by a current or former husband or intimate partner. Complex sample design estimates and multivariable logistic regression were used in the analysis. **Results:** A total of 1,877 respondents participated in the study, giving a response rate of 86.6%. The prevalence of lifetime IPV among reproductive-age women was 7.1% (95% CI: 5.19, 9.69), with an estimated 432,089 women in Malaysia. The prevalence of women who ever experienced psychological, physical and sexual violence were 5.9% (95% CI: 4.13, 8.42), 3.6% (95% CI: 2.47, 5.20) and 1.6% (95% CI: 0.93, 2.83), respectively. Women who were of Indian ethnicity [aOR 2.3, 95% CI: 1.14, 4.58], currently not married or no current partner [aOR 10.4, 95% CI: 5.43, 19.90], no formal or primary education [aOR 2.3, 95% CI: 1.05, 5.14] and those who experience controlling behaviour by their intimate partner [aOR 4.6, 95% CI: 2.92, 7.35] were more likely to experience lifetime IPV. **Conclusion:** Despite finding a relatively low prevalence of lifetime IPV, this study unveils a crucial issue: controlling behaviours exhibited by intimate partners significantly contribute to IPV among Malaysian women. Hence, it is imperative to launch effective and strategic campaigns that foster public awareness and understanding of IPV. Furthermore, intervention strategies must prioritise prevention, specifically tackling controlling behaviour within intimate relationships. By doing so, we can foster a culture of non-violence and promote healthy, harmonious relationships.