



Intimate Partner Violence in Michigan During the COVID-19 Crisis



IPV in Michigan During COVID: What Was Previously Known

Media reports across the country reported increases in intimate partner violence (IPV) during lockdowns. During March and April 2020, the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence received 393 contacts, up from 189 during the same period in 2019. However, several police agencies and shelters did not see increased requests for help. Data on service use are difficult to interpret because many survivors cannot access services during lockdown.

Key Takeaways

- We conducted an online survey with 1,169 women and transgender/nonbinary adults ages 18 and older residing in the state of Michigan. The sample matched the racial/ethnic and rural/urban distribution of the state.
- Participants were asked about experiences of physical, sexual, psychological, or technology-based IPV 1) during stay-at-home orders (March 2020 - June 2020), and 2) in the 3 months prior to stay-at-home orders (December 2019 - February 2020).



There was no surge in prevalence, but there was a surge in severity that persisted beyond the lockdown period

Prevalence of current IPV remained stable at about **15%**

However, two-thirds of survivors, or **10%** of Michigan women and trans individuals, experienced IPV of **increased severity**, meaning that abuse got more severe, more frequent, or started in a new relationship

Most IPV survivors reported decreases in frequency and severity once the strictest stay-at-home orders were lifted in June. But for those who experienced severe physical IPV, the harm **persisted** and often **worsened**.



Socially and economically vulnerable groups were most at risk for increases in IPV severity

1 in 3 **pregnant** women and 1 in 4 people with a **toddler** reported increased IPV. Those with 6 or more people in the household were also at increased risk.

2 in 5 **trans/nonbinary** Michiganders reported increased IPV.

Those who **could not afford their rent** since COVID, **unemployed/under-employed**, and **essential workers** were more likely to report increased IPV.

1 in 5 individuals who had **taken a COVID test** and 86% of individuals who had tested **positive for COVID** in July 2020 reported increased IPV.

Key Takeaways (continued)



IPV victims are more likely to experience insecurity in other domains.

Victims were **3x more likely** to experience insecurity in **housing, medical care, and phone/internet services**, even after adjusting for other social and economic factors.



Overall low rates of service use were reported among IPV survivors.

Among survivors, 23% called **police**, 8% obtained a **protective order**, 18% stayed in a **shelter**, and 17% called a **hotline** for help.

Barriers to obtaining services included being fearful of their partner, being fearful of contracting COVID-19, and reductions in service availability.

Policy Recommendations & Opportunities

Rent, Childcare, and Employment Support Policies

- These policies may reduce the surge in IPV severity during COVID.

Referral to IPV Services

- These are needed at prenatal and pediatric clinics, daycares/schools, and COVID testing sites, where we found survivors are more likely to go.

Educational Campaigns

- These can be conducted in places in which survivors frequented during lockdown, including workplaces, unemployment services, LGBTQ organizations, grocery/liquor stores, and public transit.
- Outreach strategies may also reduce barriers for survivors to obtain housing, legal support, assistance with protective orders, and counseling.

References

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