



MWIA TRAINING MODULE ON VIOLENCE

Intimate Partner Violence During Pregnancy

Definition of the type of abuse

Alcohol is a major factor leading to increased rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) globally.¹ The exact relationship between alcohol consumption and IPV is complex and many theories exist as to whether it is a causal relationship, or simply a contributing factor. Regardless, consumption of alcohol in one or both partners increases aggressiveness and risk of fatality from IPV.² WHO proposes IPV prevention strategies should address alcohol consumption.

General facts/Prevalence rates

- Alcohol negatively impacts executive function and problem solving skills, decreases attention, and increases risk taking, making IPV more likely³
- Women in South Africa, the US and UK report their partners consumed alcohol prior to **65%**, **55%** and **32%** of IPV cases respectively.²
- In Australia, **36%** of perpetrators were reportedly under the influence of alcohol.²
- Heavy drinking in male-female partnerships is linked with higher rates of violence,⁴ especially when both partners used alcohol.⁵
- Being a victim of IPV can lead to increased alcohol use as a coping mechanism, both during attacks, and afterwards.⁵
- Female victims are also 1.8 times more likely to develop an alcohol use disorder.⁶

Risk Factors

- Low socio-economic status, younger partner age and lower education level.⁸
- Alcoholism in one partner (and especially in both partners) increases risk of IPV.⁹
- Trait anger, inhibitory control issues, hostility and neuroticism in the IPV instigator.¹

Types this form of abuse may take

- **Physical abuse**—inflicting physical injury or pain to an intimate partner. Alcohol is more likely to have been consumed in severely aggressive IPV events than mildly or moderately aggressive IPV events.¹
- **Psychological/emotional abuse**—inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on a partner through verbal or non-verbal acts, e.g. blaming, insulting, bullying, being ignored or shouted at, humiliation and intimidation. Psychological and emotional abuse rates are higher when alcohol is involved, but also alcohol fueled IPV can lead to higher rates of mental health issues and alcohol abuse in female victims themselves.⁷
- **Sexual abuse**—non-consensual sexual contact of any kind. Some studies found rates of rape and sexual assault were twice as high when alcohol was consumed by the perpetrating partner in a relationship.⁵

Prevention

- Healthcare professional education and increased use of screening for IPV in women with known alcohol abusing partners.⁷
- Reducing access and availability of alcohol, (e.g. by raising alcohol tax) has been proven effective to some extent.²
- Changing cultural beliefs about alcohol and reducing alcohol-related events can have moderate effect.²
- Public health interventions and government policies play a large role in all of the above.²

References

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