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Literature Review: COVID-19's Impact on Violence

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Background

- “COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020, having spread to over 100 countries and territories.” (Who, 2020).
- Forensic Nurses are looking to the research to help guide current and future responses.
- A plethora of articles have emerged related to violence and the pandemic.
- Over 250 Research and Commentary articles were identified relating to the impact of the pandemic on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Child Abuse (CA), Sexual Assault (SA) and Human Trafficking (HT). The bulk of the articles centered around IPV.
- Common Themes along with Conflicting data were found during the literature review.

Purpose

- Evaluate types of research conducted
- Contemplate conflicts in findings
- Look for common themes
- Identify recommendations for improved responses

Method: Literature Search

- ✓ A literature search was conducted through the Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries
- ✓ This search is sent through a variety of data bases including PubMed/Medline, CINAHL Complete, Ovid, PMC .
- ✓ Search terms included: COVID-19, Pandemic, Sexual Assault, Human Trafficking, Child Abuse, Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence.
- ✓ Article were chosen related to relevance and enrichment of knowledge.

Data Collection

- A research tool was created including, author, year, journal, title, country of origin, area of practice, type of study, study size, limitations, bias, generalizability, findings, recommendations.
- Included in this review are, 19 IPV, 12 CA, 4 SA, 5 HT.
- The research was categorized by topic: Adult IPV and COVID, Adult SA and COVID, CA and COVID, and HT and COVID.
- Articles were chosen at random and included if they met the criteria of the review.

Findings

Child Abuse

- Most reports of child abuse are made by teachers and other personnel. Research supports that the number of child abuse cases are underreported secondary to school closures (Garstang et al., 2020). *United Kingdom*
- Children are at higher risk for violence related to isolating with potential abusers (Fore, 2021). *United States*
- IPV in the home increases risk of child abuse (Fore, 2021). *United States*
- Missed screening opportunities related to an overburdened healthcare system during Covid-19 (Greenbaum et al., 2020). *United States*
- Amount and severity of child-abuse related injuries treated in hospital-settings has increased, specifically child abuse involving domestic injury and head trauma (Bressan et al., 2020; Cappa & Jijon, 2021) *United Kingdom, United States*
- Correlation between job loss during Covid-19 and child abuse, specifically psychological maltreatment (Fore, 2021; Greenbaum et al., 2020) *United States*
- In Florida, the number of children placed in foster care during Covid-19 has decreased. While the number of children placed in foster care specifically because of maltreatment increased (Musser et al., 2021). *United States*
- Birmingham, U.K. saw a 39% drop in Child Protection Medical Referrals. This drop specifically correlates to an almost obsolete number of school referrals in 2020 (Garstang et al., 2020). *United Kingdom*
- In the United States, 20% of child abuse and neglect referrals made to child protective services are by educational personnel (Thomas et al., 2020). *United States*
- During March 2020 a U.S. crisis hotline (RAINN) showed a 22% increase in monthly calls from people under 18, with 67% reporting their abuser was a family member and 79% saying they lived with the abuser (Jentsch & Schnock, 2020). *Germany*

Resources Reporting Decrease in IPV

- IPV decreased by 20% during the first few months, then returned to pre-COVID numbers.
- Lower number of IPV noted with areas of higher infection rates (Hoehn-Velasco et al., 2021). *Mexico*
- Self-reporting data shows 8.8% decrease in IPV (Ahlarbi et al., 2021). *Saudi Arabia*
- American College of Surgeons reporting a decrease in IPV in ED's (Viero et al., 2020) *International*
- Perinatal women reported lower incidence of DV, could be under reporting secondary to lock down (Abrahams et al., 2021). *Africa*

Resources Reporting Increase in IPV

- Research showed 1/3 of 1400 residents surveyed after a natural disaster reported a family member displaying increased verbal and physical violence after Hurricanes Andrew. Australians women reported an increase in IPV after bush fire (Anurudran et al., 2020). *USA*
- Covid contributed to decreased incomes resulting in an increase in incidence of abuse (Adibelli et al., 2021). *Turkey*
- If both partners were out of work, this triggered more emotional abuse (Adibelli et al., 2021). *Turkey*
- Noted a 48 % increase in IPV calls to hotline in 2020 compared to 2019 (Aguero et al., 2021) *Peru*
- Showed an increase in IPV especially in Muslims and women with high anxiety scores (Akel, et al., 2021). *Lebanon*
- Persons experiencing multiple types of trauma showed increases in frequency and intensity of IPV (Ahlarbi et al., 2021). *Saudi Arabia*
- 20.5 % increase in IPV was noted (Aolymat, 2021). *Jordan*
- Many Countries are reporting and increase in IPV (Viero et al., 2020). *International*
- Argentina, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK and the USA showing increase in police reports (Viero et al., 2020). *International*
- Incidences of DV have worsened the existing cases of DV (Uzobo & Ayinmoro, 2021). *Africa*
- An established cohort noted an increase in IPV, 8.3% of young people experienced increase in physical IPV (Fares-Otero et al., 2020) *Spain*
- According to WHO DV has become prevalent internationally and termed and epidemic in China (Usher et al., 2021). *Australia*
- Closing bars increases alcohol sales and drinking at home, increasing IPV (Usher et al, 2020) *Australia*

Human Trafficking

- Reports globally of an increase in human trafficking during Covid-19 (Greenbaum et al., 2020). *USA*
- During lockdown, increased time on the internet and isolating with abusers put children at greater risk for abuse and exploitation (Garstang, 2020; Greenbaum et al., 2020; Todres et al., 2021; Rafferty, 2020). *UK, USA, Global*
- Example: From March to April 2020 there was a 2 million to 4.2 million increase of online exploitation noted by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (Todres et al., 2021). *UK*
- Limited employment and increased financial burden place vulnerable populations at higher risk of sex and labor trafficking, interpersonal violence and child abuse. (Armitage, 2020; Roganaworarit & Bouzaidi, 2021; Todres et al., 2021). *USA, Thailand, UK*
- Persons who are trafficked have an increased risk of contracting Covid-19 due to unsafe work and living conditions, lack of access to necessities (healthcare, nutrition) (Armitage, 2020; Roganaworarit & Bouzaidi, 2021; Todres et al., 2021). *USA, Thailand, UK*
- Example: Thailand saw increase in Covid cases related to labor trafficking coming across their borders (Roganaworarit & Bouzaidi, 2021). *Thailand*

Sexual Assault

- Sexual assault centers are reporting a decrease in patient numbers globally, with most reported sexual assaults being IPV situations (Kane et al., 2021; Munro et al.,). *Ireland and USA*
- Example: The Republic of Ireland noted a 27% decrease in the number of sexual assaults, with most cases likely due to IPV (Kane et al., 2021). *Ireland*
- In April 2020, at the University of Michigan, sexual assault exams were 0 (Munro et al.,). *USA*
- An Ontario Hospital noted a 53.49% reduction in SA during the first two months of the pandemic (Muldoon et al.,2021). *Canada*
- Providers need guidance related to improve quality measure and breaking down barriers to access services (Koenig et al., 2020). *USA*

Recommendations

- Increase government awareness, resources and policies (Usher et al, 2020).
- More research is needed (Akel et al., 2021).
- Raise awareness through media and educate persons in the community on signs of IPV and Child abuse (Koenig et al., 2020).
- Let the community know that healthcare systems are open to provide services (Koenig et al., 2020).
- Improve screening and training for mandatory reporters to recognize CA, IPV and HT and escalate concerns (Brown et al., 2020).
- Provide awareness and response campaigns to communities (Usher et al., 2020).
- Covid testing sites to collaborate with IPV programs to incorporate screening (Anurudran et al., 2020).
- Provide reporting sites in places such as grocery stores (Anurudran et al., 2020).

Discussion

- Although there is conflicting data, the literature seems to support an increase in IPV and CA since the pandemic.
- Research on SA and HT is limited, need to explore long term impact of decrease access for these patient populations.
- More stringent research is needed to help guide responses to violence during a pandemic.
- Need to review the quality of the research to evaluate validity. Authors noted that some reports of decreased IPV were conducted through self-report survey that may not accurately reflect findings.
- IPV issues need to be prioritized globally with clear definitions for IPV, SA, HT and CA.
- As research continues to emerge it is imperative that we continue to review and revise recommendations based upon the evidence.

Limitations

- Rapid article review was utilized secondary to the plethora of research and emergence of new research.
- Reviews were done until common themes appeared, or reviews were exhaustive.
- Poster format is limiting related to amount of information that can be shared.

References

Available upon request