



RESEARCH ALERT:

Reducing violence to help infants and children thrive: Research to develop a partner violence intervention in a nurse home visit program

Why this research is important:

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread problem with devastating health and social consequences for women and children, and significant costs to society as a whole. Some groups of women are at especially high risk, including young, first time mothers. The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program has professional nurses visit the homes of first-time mothers from pregnancy through to the child's second birthday. It has been consistently found, in large and rigorous studies over the past 30 years, to improve outcomes for mothers and children, including into the child's teen and young adult years. Its success has led to widespread implementation across the US and several other countries, including parts of Canada.

However, IPV among clients enrolled in the NFP program is more common compared to rates in the general population, and the presence of severe IPV reduces the NFP's impact on preventing child abuse in these families. NFP nurse home visitors have identified that IPV in the home makes delivering the NFP difficult and a survey of NFP nurses indicated that many perceive that they don't have enough knowledge and training to address IPV.

What the research is about:

To better support nurses' work with clients exposed to IPV, an international team of researchers, led by Canadian Dr. Harriet MacMillan, and including NFP founder Dr. David Olds, Dr. Jeffrey Coben and intervention development lead Dr. Susan Jack, has developed a way to support nurses in identifying IPV, responding to IPV disclosures and delivering tailored care to support women and their children and to increase their levels of safety in relationships. As part of the new IPV intervention, nurses and supervisors participate in training to identify and respond to IPV. Supports for supervisors and a checklist for organizations to respond to IPV are also included.

The NFP-IPV intervention is based on: 1) current research evidence about what is known to be effective in addressing IPV; 2) the theoretical foundation of the NFP and program guidelines; and 3) the experiences of NFP nurses, clients and community partners, including their perceptions of: 1) the challenges of identifying and addressing IPV in the context of home visitation; 2) what NFP clients who are exposed to IPV need from their home visitors; and 3) an analysis of current nursing, supervisor and community partner practices. This information has been essential for creating an intervention that is specific to the home visiting environment and that can be seamlessly integrated into NFP delivery.

What we've done so far:

The intervention has been developed. For detailed information, click on the link:

- Susan Jack and colleagues (2012): [Development of a nurse home visitation intervention for intimate partner violence](#). *BMC Health Services Research*.

For more information contact the Trial Manager, Chris McKee at cmckee@mcmaster.ca