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Experiences of young women survivors of intimate partner violence: a case of Mamelodi, Gauteng

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ABSTRACT

Globally, intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major concern and is recognised as a complex; socio-economic problem, a public health concern and a gross violation of human rights. IPV is also an attack and affects all women, and their dignity. Despite; laws, policies and interventions, South Africa like other countries, continue to experience national crisis of IPV against women. The country's IPV rate is among the highest in the world (Gass, Stein, Williams & Seedat, 2010). Young women are among the most marginalised and vulnerable to being victims of IPV. The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of young women survivors of IPV in Mamelodi Township, Gauteng province in South Africa. This was a qualitative study that used a narrative research design. 10 young women who were aged 25-35 years and survivors of IPV were recruited as participants. For data collection, participants were interviewed using in-depth individual interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded and later analysed using thematic analysis. The main findings of this study demonstrate that IPV is a social and health issue which affects young women in Mamelodi. Participants experienced various types of IPV. Owing to IPV, young women experienced health issues that were associated with physical violence and social problems. These manifested through social isolation and financial dependence on the abusive partners. Participants did not report IPV to the; police, medical practitioners, friends or families, due to fear and a feeling that they needed to protect their partners to build and keep their family together. This study recommends that young women should disclose and seek help from support systems such as friends, families, police and medical practitioners. This study also recommends the need for awareness campaigns on the laws and processes to educate survivors of IPV to get justice. This study further recommends more research to explore the experiences of young men survivors of IPV.

Key words: Intimate partner violence, Young women, Survivor, Violence against women, Mamelodi, Township.