

# Intimate partner violence and reproductive coercion among American Indian and Alaska native women

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Among a group of American Indian and Alaska Native women interviewed, almost half (45%) reported experiencing reproductive coercion in their lifetime. Intimate partner violence and sexual violence contribute to a disproportionately high prevalence of poor reproductive and sexual health outcomes among American Indian and Alaska Native women, according to a study published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Women's Health*.

The study, coauthored by Elizabeth Miller, MD, Ph.D., from UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and colleagues, aimed to determine how American Indian and Alaska Native women who have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence describe pregnancy experiences, contraceptive behaviors, and reproductive decision making in relation to violence.

A common theme was lack of conversation around sexuality, healthy sexual development, and reproduction. Women were hesitant to go to the doctor to learn about contraception, as this was rarely encouraged by their mothers. Health care providers rarely discussed contraception.

The study approach was used "to facilitate understanding of individual-level factors and socio-cultural and historical forces as they pertain to American Indian/Alaska Native women's reproductive autonomy and safety from violence-related experiences," state the investigators. "Input

from tribal community members further elucidated community assets that could be mobilized to reduce women's risk for [intimate partner violence/sexual violence](#), [reproductive coercion](#), and unintended pregnancy and integrated into a [conceptual model](#) to guide culturally responsive violence prevention and health promotion efforts."

"The Violence Disruptor Model that emerged from this work has the potential to mobilize community strengths to end violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women," says *Journal of Women's Health* Editor-in-Chief Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA.

**More information:** Elena Giacci et al, Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence, Reproductive Coercion, and Reproductive Health Among American Indian and Alaska Native Women: A Narrative Interview Study, *Journal of Women's Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.1089/jwh.2021.0056](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2021.0056)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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