

3. Género e condições de vida

OC - (22927) - INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND HOUSING INSECURITY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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The COVID-19 pandemic increased risk for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and reduced access to IPV support services worldwide. The pandemic also impacted housing insecurity, and housing is a critical step in safeguarding women from IPV and preventing its escalation. Given the potential for the compounding effects of increased IPV risk and housing insecurity, this study aimed to investigate experiences of housing instability and homelessness in survivors of IPV during COVID-19 pandemic. This community engaged study is part of a larger project addressing the housing needs of young women and mothers during COVID-19 in Toronto, Canada. The project was co-designed and implemented by university researchers and a Toronto based organization mandated to coordinate efforts to ameliorate IPV. The current study aimed to understand how changes to IPV service provision during the COVID-19 crisis contributed to housing insecurity for survivors. We conducted 29 on-line/telephone interviews in winter 2023. Participants were women-identified IPV survivors who sought service provision for IPV during the pandemic and were either 18-24 years old or mothers. The analysis was guided by feminist post-structuralism theories. Results showed that the convergence of COVID-19, income instability, and housing insecurity had a devastating impact on some women. Some shelters could not offer mental health support and some staff lacked training in trauma-informed care. Pre-existing housing programs were inaccessible for a variety of reasons including long waiting periods, demonstrating the absence of adequate protection. The lack of adequate housing support influenced survivors' decisions to leave or not abusive partners. We concluded that housing security is critical to protect IPV survivors, and that the pandemic surfaced the flaws in the current system, which only engages survivors once their housing is in jeopardy. Our project underscores the need to understand housing security as preventative so that housing support is not only considered as an aftereffect of violence.