

Do Gender Differences Exist Among Victims of Head and Neck Injuries due to Intimate Partner Violence?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) consists of aggression perpetrated by a partner, whether it be psychological, physical, or sexual.

The most commonly reported method of physical aggression in IPV is by the fist, which can result in head and neck injuries (HNI), such as facial fractures and traumatic brain injuries.

In the United States, 30 million women and 12.1 million men reported IPV in their lifetime. The large differential in data between the sexes may be due to the social stigma afforded men in reporting IPV. There is a paucity of research available of men's experiences with IPV. This research aimed to address this gap by comparing the frequency, severity, and characteristics of HNIs due to IPV, between men and women.

Citation:

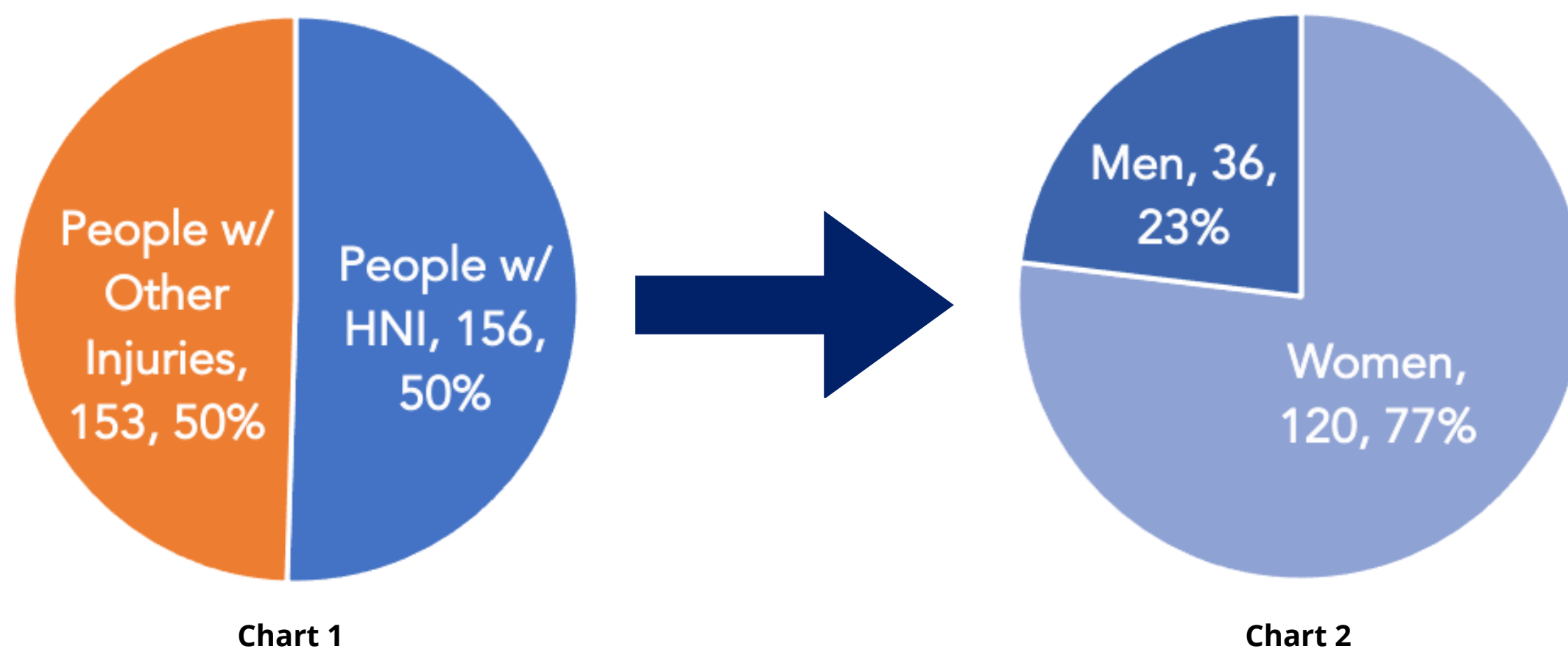
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Methods:

- **Data Collection:** The research team used two methods of data collection to identify the study sample. First, they used a natural languaging process algorithm to identify cases within Grady Memorial Hospital's emergency medical records system. They then cross-referenced these cases with trauma registry data to identify IPV cases specifically in which the patient sustained a head and neck injury (HNI).
- **Study Variables:** Different variables were measured, including demographic information, injury location, method of injury, and severity of injury.
- **Data Analysis:** Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistical Software. For categorical variables, chi-square analyses were used, and for quantitative variables, independent t-tests were used.



Findings:

- Of the 309 patients that had experienced IPV, 156 (50.5%) had HNIs, (See Chart 1). Of this subset, 36 patients were males (23%), and 120 were women, (76.9%), (See Chart 2).
- Women were statistically more likely to have government-subsidized insurance than men ($p=0.03$), a history of alcohol and drug use ($p<0.05$), and previously reported physical abuse ($p=0.004$).
- Of the injury-related variables, women were more likely than men to have brain hemorrhage (11.7% vs. 0%), and/or lower limb injuries (32.5% vs. 13.9%).
- There was no statistically significant difference between males and females in the following categories: racial distribution, setting of injury, day of injury, smoking status, mechanism of injury, injury location, internal brain injury categories, facial fractures, upper extremity injuries, and severity of injuries categories.

Discussion:

Although the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reported that 10.9% of men in the United States have experienced IPV in their lifetime, IPV is still underreported, due to shame and stigma. The findings support the current literature that women experience a higher frequency of IPV than men. Also, the prevalence of alcohol and drug use, brain hemorrhage, and facial lacerations among women survivors of HNI in the study upholds previous studies. However, the study also suggests that lower limb fractures were more common among women than upper limb fractures, which previous studies have not found. Overall, the findings suggest that IPV-related HNIs are lower in men, and men survivors do not report physical abuse as frequently. Future research should look at relationship dynamics among male and female IPV survivors to better explain the underreporting.