

# Prevalence and Associated Factors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among Women of Reproductive Age in Malaysia

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## INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence (IPV) against women is a global public health issue associated with detrimental social and health effects. Understanding the factors contributing to IPV will pave a way for the development of targeted policies and effective strategies against IPV in Malaysia. Objectives: This study seeks to shed some light on the prevalence and associated factors of IPV among women of reproductive age in Malaysia.

## METHODOLOGY

The study utilised data from the National Health and Morbidity Survey: Maternal and Child Health (NHMS MCH) 2022, a cross-sectional nationwide survey with a multistage stratified sampling design. Women of reproductive age (15 to 49 years) who have ever been married or living with a partner were selected to answer the self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Life Events Questionnaire. Lifetime IPV was defined as women's lifetime exposure to any of the three types of IPV: physical, psychological or sexual violence by a current or former husband or intimate partner. Complex sample design estimates and multivariable logistic regression were used in the analysis. All analysis was done using SPSS version 26.0.

## DISCUSSION

- The prevalence of IPV among women of reproductive age found in this study was slightly higher than the study conducted by Chan YY et al. (2019)[1]. Nonetheless, it was consistent with the finding of the systematic review by Kadir S et al. (2020) that the prevalence of IPV in Malaysia ranges from 4.94 to 35.9% [2].
- The most common form of IPV was psychological violence, which was similar to the study conducted by Haron K et al. (2018) [3].
- Those who were at greater risk of experiencing IPV were more likely to be from a lower education background, Indian ethnicity, those who were not married and were controlled by their partner[1,4].

## CONCLUSION

Despite finding a relatively low prevalence of lifetime IPV, this study unveils a crucial issue: controlling behaviours exhibited by intimate partners significantly contribute to IPV among Malaysian women. Hence, it is imperative to launch effective and strategic campaigns that foster public awareness and understanding of IPV. Furthermore, intervention strategies must prioritise prevention, specifically tackling controlling behaviour within intimate relationships. By doing so, we can foster a culture of non-violence and promote healthy, harmonious relationships.

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## RESULTS

- A total of 1877 respondents participated in the study, giving a response rate of 86.6%.
- The prevalence of lifetime IPV among reproductive-age women was 7.1% (95% CI: 5.19, 9.69), with an estimated of 432,089 women in Malaysia.
- The prevalence of women who ever experienced psychological, physical and sexual violence were 5.9%, 3.6% and 1.6%, respectively.
- Women who were of Indian ethnicity [aOR 2.3, 95% CI: 1.14, 4.58], currently not married or no current partner [aOR 10.4, 95% CI: 5.43, 19.90], no formal or primary education [aOR 2.3, 95% CI: 1.05, 5.14] and those who experience controlling behaviour by their intimate partner [aOR 4.6, 95% CI: 2.92, 7.35] were more likely to experience lifetime IPV.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Count	%
<b>Age group (year)</b>		
18 - 24	208	11.2
25 - 29	314	16.9
30 - 39	817	43.9
40 years and above	522	28.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Malays	1340	72.0
Chinese	99	5.3
Indians	123	6.6
Other Bumiputeras	212	11.4
Others	86	4.6
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single /divorcee/ separated/ widow	254	13.7
Married /cohabiting	1596	86.3
<b>Education level</b>		
No formal/ primary education	133	7.2
Secondary education	986	53.4
Tertiary education	726	39.3
<b>Working status</b>		
Not working / housewife	898	48.7
Working	945	51.3
<b>Household income</b>		
B40		
M40	314	16.7
T20	79	4.2

Table 2: Prevalence of IPV among women in Malaysia by socio-demographic characteristics

Variables	Count	Estimated Population	Prevalence (%)	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Overall</b>	104	432089	7.12	5.19	9.69
<b>Age group (year)</b>					
18 - 24	9	108786	14.61	5.62	32.99
25 - 29	14	71651	6.82	3.25	13.77
30 - 39	55	172049	7.13	4.93	10.21
40 years and above	26	79603	4.31	2.29	7.97
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
Malays	72	240602	7.32	5.27	10.08
Chinese	3	80975	7.33	2.1	22.62
Indians	14	39596	10.18	5.1	19.27
Other Bumiputeras	8	25787	3.19	1.57	6.37
Others	7	45130	9.67	3.31	25.07
<b>Marital status</b>					
Single /divorcee/ separated/ widow	22	115574	42.10	19.33	68.8
Married /cohabiting	81	312578	5.43	3.98	7.37
<b>Education level</b>					
No formal/ primary education	16	67766	11.66	5.47	23.17
Secondary education	57	240048	7.49	4.63	11.89
Tertiary education	30	120337	5.42	3.34	8.66
<b>Working status</b>					
Not working / housewife	58	209910	6.91	4.68	10.08
Working	45	218242	7.33	4.29	12.24
<b>Household income</b>					
B40	86	351418	7.14	5	10.1
M40	13	52084	5.73	2.32	13.45
T20	5	28587	11.79	3.58	32.49
<b>Controlling behaviour by partner</b>					
Yes	75	280312	13.33	9.73	18.01
No	29	151777	3.82	1.85	7.74

Table 3: Factors associated with Lifetime IPV among women in Malaysia

Variables	Adjusted OR	95% Confidence Interval		p-value
		Lower	Upper	
<b>Age group (year)</b>				
18 - 24	1.69	0.71	4.03	0.234
25 - 29	1.22	0.60	2.49	0.586
30 - 39	1.66	0.98	2.82	0.058
40 years and above	1			
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Malays	1			
Chinese	0.83	0.24	2.79	0.758
Indians	2.28	1.14	4.58	0.021*
Other Bumiputeras	0.69	0.31	1.51	0.348
Others	0.97	0.36	2.61	0.957
<b>Marital status</b>				
Single /divorcee/ separated/widow	10.39	5.43	19.90	<0.001*
Married/cohabiting	1			
<b>Education level</b>				
No formal/ primary education	2.33	1.05	5.14	0.037*
Secondary education	1.25	0.74	2.11	0.398
Tertiary education	1			
<b>Working status</b>				
Not working / housewife	1.45	0.92	2.31	0.113
Working	1			
<b>Household income</b>				
B40	0.51	0.18	1.44	0.203
M40	0.58	0.19	1.79	0.342
T20	1			
<b>Controlling behaviour by partner</b>				
Yes	4.63	2.92	7.35	<0.001*
No	1			

\*p-value < α = 0.05 was considered statistically significant