Abstracts

The process of modernization and rapid economic development in China has brought changes in family structure and gender relation. We reviewed empirical literature on intimate partner violence (IPV) in China within the past 20 years to understand the magnitude and nature of the problem. Information was drawn from 19 empirical studies and a total of 49,201 adult respondents. The average lifetime and year prevalence of male-on-female IPV was respectively 19.7% and 16.8% for any type, 42.6% and 37.3% for psychological, 13.5% and 6.7% for physical, and 9.8% and 5.4% for sexual violence. Higher lifetime prevalence of any type of IPV was reported by rural respondents, by studies conducted in healthcare settings, and by studies using standardized scales to assess IPV. Women were at increased risk of IPV when they and/or their partners were of low education and socio-economic status, grew up in rural areas, and exhibited behavior problems of smoking, alcoholism, and illicit drug use. IPV was also related to long duration of marriage, poor marital quality, marital conflicts, sexual jealousy and extra-marital affairs, status/power disparity between partners, inadequate social support, and extended family structure. Cultural and societal risk markers included patriarchal beliefs, wife-beating myths, and political/legal sanction of violence.