National Burden of disease study examining the impact of violence against women

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Over the last decade, there has been a substantial body of research investigating both the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and the relationship between IPV and health outcomes for women. Burden of disease analysis is a method for bringing these two aspects together, and can provide important data for planning, policy development and public education aiming to prevent and reduce the impacts of IPV. It is a comprehensive, rigorous, and internationally recognised method of comparing the impact of different diseases or risk factors in a population. It is used in this project to quantify the health impacts that IPV has on Australian women.

This research study, commissioned by ANROWS, will build on the work in the broader Australian Burden of Disease Study (ABDS) for the reference year 2011. This larger study is being led by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and includes estimates for nearly 200 diseases and 30 risk factors (inclusive of IPV). ABDS has been designed specifically to reflect the Australian context, using high quality Australian health data and updated global methodologies. Results from ABDS are expected to be released in the first half of 2016. This new research study on the burden of disease from IPV will extend the ABDS estimates and ensure that the most appropriate evidence has been integrated.

This presentation will discuss the purpose of burden of disease estimates, how they are arrived at and the ways in which they can be used in policy and practice to respond to and help prevent violence against women. The presentation will cover a systematic review undertaken to identify research studies on the health consequences due to exposure to IPV and its key findings.

It is proposed that the 2012 Personal Safety Survey in 2012 (PSS 2012) will be used in this research study. This will enable the impact of emotional and physical/sexual IPV to be calculated independently, which will be a significant advance on previous burden of disease estimates nationally and internationally.

Applying findings from this work to policy and practice requires an understanding of the strengths and limitations of the estimates. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of the ways in which the estimates can and cannot be used to strengthen IPV prevention and response in planning, policy and public education contexts.