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Exploring Attitudes towards Intimate Partner Violence

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Morgan Elizabeth Brooks

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Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant societal problem which causes extensive costs, not only to the individuals involved but also to the wider community. Consequently a considerable amount of resources are invested into preventing and reducing the occurrence of IPV. Underpinning all of these initiatives is the focus on changing societal attitudes towards IPV, including attitudes of perpetrators and victims. Most of the focus thus far has been on changing attitudes towards male perpetrated physical IPV, and this continues despite the knowledge that psychological IPV is just as damaging as physical IPV and that IPV is perpetrated equally by males and females. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify what the New Zealand publics' attitude towards IPV is, by looking at male and female perpetrated IPV and physical and psychological IPV. In addition, this study also explored the impact that gender, history of IPV, and age of the participant had on their attitudes towards IPV.

Results of this study established that generally participants had attitudes that were disapproving of IPV, although they were more tolerant of IPV when the perpetrator was female or when the IPV was psychological. In addition, participants younger than 46yrs had more accepting attitudes towards IPV than older participants. It was also found that participant gender and history of IPV did not significantly impact on participants' attitudes towards IPV. The findings of this study provide important areas for future prevention and reduction initiatives to focus on. After all, it is important that the public develop an attitude that IPV is completely unacceptable, for as long as IPV is tolerated it will not be possible for the goal of eradicating the occurrence of IPV to be achieved.

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