

Evaluation of the Accuracy of a 'Two Question Screening Tool' in the Detection of Intimate Partner Violence in a Primary Healthcare Setting in South Africa

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Abstract : Intimate partner violence (IPV) has been recognised as a global human rights violation. It is universally under diagnosed and the institution of timeous multi-faceted interventions has been noted to benefit IPV victims. Currently, the concept of using a screening tool to detect IPV has not been widely explored in a primary healthcare setting in South Africa, and it was for this reason that this study has been undertaken. A systematic random sampling of 1 in 8 women over a period of 3 months was conducted prospectively at the OPD of a Level 1 Hospital. Participants were asked about their experience of IPV during the past 12 months. The WAST-short, a two-question tool, was used to screen patients for IPV. To verify the result of the screening, women were also asked the remaining questions from the WAST. Data was collected from 400 participants, with a response rate of 99.3%. The prevalence of IPV in the sample was 32%. The WAST-short was shown to have the following operating characteristics: sensitivity 45.2%, specificity 98%, positive predictive value 98%, negative predictive value 79%. The WAST-short lacks sufficient sensitivity and therefore is not an ideal screening tool for this setting. Improvement in the sensitivity of the WAST-short in this setting may be achieved by lowering the threshold for a positive result for IPV screening, and modification of the screening questions to better reflect IPV as understood by the local population.

Keywords : domestic violence, intimate partner violence, screening, screening tools

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