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Screening for violence in the home: mHealth Technology Versus Paper?

Globally, the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) during pregnancy ranges from 4%-29%. Screening and identifying abused pregnant women continues to be a challenge, especially for home visiting programs. Computer-assisted technology has been effective for screening sensitive issues such as depression and substance use. The purpose of this presentation is to describe the effectiveness of two different methods (paper-pencil vs. computer-assisted) for screening for IPV in perinatal home visit programs. Pregnant women (N=416) participating in the “Perinatal Home Visiting Program Enhanced with mHealth Technology”, (1 R01 HD 071771 NICHD/NIH) in urban, suburban and rural settings were randomized to either traditional paper-pencil IPV screening or IPV screening on hand-held tablets. Screening data were examined for IPV prevalence rates comparing paper-pencil vs. tablet. Variables included settings and ethnic/racial background. The prevalence rates were similar using paper was 21.8% versus 24.5% using tablets (p=.507). Although there were no significant differences between paper versus tablet the prevalence rates were higher using tablets (Urban –paper=15.6% vs. tablet=16.3%, p=.881; Suburban paper=30.6% vs. tablet=34.5%, p=.634; Rural-paper=22.9% vs. tablet=31.7%, p=0.390). Prevalence rates were not significantly different between the two screening methods; however paper screening had a slightly higher prevalence (Af. Am.–paper=28.8% vs. tablet=24.5% -p=0.62q; Euro Am - paper=20.7% vs. tablet=20.0%, p=.895). This study’s result provides evidence that women will reveal their abuse status regardless how asked or strategies used to screen for IPV. The important strategy is having protocols and training that prepare health care providers to screen for IPV. Health care providers in all settings that provide care to women should screen and then connect women to resources in order to improve pregnancy outcomes.

Biography

Phyllis Sharps, PhD, RN, FAAN, Elsie M. Lawler Endowed Chair, Professor of Nursing and Associate Dean for Community Programs and Initiatives, at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing. She is internationally known for her research, leadership of interdisciplinary research teams and her advocacy for violence against pregnant and parenting women. She has published more than 90 articles on reducing violence among African American women, specifically, the physical and mental health consequences of violence against pregnant and parenting women, infants, and very young children. She has been the principal investigator for 2 NIH funded grants, totaling more than \$8M.

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