

Crime Victims' Institute



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Our Mission

The mission of the Crime Victims' Institute is to :

- Conduct research to examine the impact of crime on victims of all ages in order to promote a better understanding of victimization
- Improve services to victims
- Assist victims of crime by giving them a voice
- Inform victim-related policy-making at the state and local levels.

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Research Highlights

The DOVE Program

October is Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month!

In addition to the many projects CVI is involved in related to understanding and reducing domestic violence, we also want to highlight other promising programs. In this issue of the newsletter, we describe a recent evaluation of the DOVE program that appears to be effective in reducing domestic violence among pregnant women and new mothers.

Sara B. Zedaker

The Domestic Violence Enhanced Home Visitation Program (DOVE) is an intimate partner violence (IPV) intervention program that is aimed toward reducing violence for women who are experiencing IPV or experienced IPV in the year before pregnancy. The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV), of which the DOVE intervention is a part, was created after the passage of the Affordable Health Care Act (ACA) of 2010. The DOVE program is a brochure-based empowerment educational inter-

vention that was developed as an add-on to home visiting programs (Sharps et al., 2016).

During program implementation, Sharps and colleagues (2016) conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of the DOVE intervention with the goal to determine whether integrating a structured IPV intervention, DOVE, would increase perinatal safety. The intervention and evaluation involved a multi-site trial that was conducted from 2006 to 2012 with 239 participants, who were randomly assigned to either the DOVE intervention ($n=124$) or usual care ($n>559$). Women were recruited from one urban health department on the East Coast and 13 home visiting agencies in rural areas in the Midwest. The home visiting programs specifically target low-income, high-risk mothers (e.g., single mothers or families with low birth weight or pre-term infants). To be included in this study, women must have been less than 32 weeks pregnant, English-speakers, 14 years of age or older, low-income (defined as being Medicaid-eligible), experiencing perinatal IPV, and be enrolled in a perinatal home visiting program in one of the identified agencies. The research team



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The DOVE Program, continued...

used the Abuse Assessment Scale (AAS) and the Women's Experience in Battering (WEB) scale to screen the women for perinatal IPV, which included physical, sexual, and/or severe psychological abuse (Sharps et al., 2016).

All women in the study received the usual care of the home visiting program which included, on average, 4-6 visits prenatally and 6-12 visits for up to 2 years postpartum. Women in the usual care group received the standard assessment and referral for perinatal IPV, but perinatal IPV was only discussed if there was an indication it was occurring or if the woman brought it up. The DOVE intervention was delivered six times within the regularly scheduled home visits; three visits were during pregnancy and three were after delivery. During the intervention, the home visitor discussed the DOVE brochure, which contained information about the cycle of violence, Danger Assessment, safety planning, and IPV resources. While the DOVE intervention was structured, the home visitors tailored their discussions about IPV and the available resources depending on the women's individual needs (Sharps et al., 2016).

All home visitors were trained with information about the outcomes associated with IPV and perinatal IPV and how important it is to screen for and intervene in perinatal IPV. Home visitors who were assigned to the DOVE intervention were also trained in how to deliver the intervention and in the use of the Conflict Tactics Scale 2 and the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale to measure IPV experiences and depression symptoms, respectively. In addition, DOVE home visitors were trained in safety protocols for what to do if an abuser came home during the visit (Sharps et al., 2016).

Results of the evaluation indicated that there was a significant decrease in IPV experiences over time from the baseline interview to 24 months postpartum. However, women in the DOVE treatment group reported a larger decrease in IPV from baseline than did women in the usual care group. As such, the evaluation concluded that the DOVE intervention was effective in decreasing IPV. The DOVE intervention is a low-cost, practical intervention that provided home visitors the opportunity to discuss with women various safety planning strategies and options for getting out of an abusive situation (Sharps et al., 2016).

The findings from the DOVE intervention study have important implications for practice. First, targeting IPV interventions at any opportunity—preconception, prenatal, postpartum, and well-child visits—gives practitioners more opportunities to screen for IPV and to offer help and support for women in abusive situations. Second, the DOVE intervention program has shown promise in its integration in the Nurse-Family Partnership program, but also into other home visiting programs

(Sharps et al., 2016). The Nurse-Family Partnership has been successful in other areas of women's and children's lives, such as improving prenatal health and reducing childhood injuries and subsequent pregnancies (Nurse Family Partnership, 2011). Including the DOVE intervention into programs like this for high-risk, low-income women could provide increased benefits to both women and their children. Third, interventions like DOVE increase awareness of domestic violence, which is important not only for the women who are experiencing abuse in their relationships, but also the practitioners who are trying to help these women.

REFERENCES

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- Sharps, P. W., Bullock, L. F., Campbell, J. C., Alhusen, J. L., Ghazarian, S. R., Bhandari, S. S., & Schminkey, D. L. (2016). Domestic Violence Enhanced Perinatal Home Visits: The DOVE randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Women's Health*, 1-10.





Share your ideas:

We welcome your input. Please send issues or topics you would like to see CVI conduct research on to :

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Upcoming Events



Domestic Violence Awareness Month	October
Interdisciplinary Conference on Human Trafficking Lincoln, NE	Oct. 6-8, 2016
Texas Victim Services Association Research Symposium San Marcos, TX	Oct. 27-28, 2016
Nuestras Voces—National Bilingual Sexual Assault Conference South Padre, TX	Oct. 27-28, 2016
American Society of Criminology New Orleans, LA	Nov. 16-19, 2016
18th World Congress of Criminology New Delhi, India	Dec. 15-19, 2016
International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment San Diego, CA	Jan. 29—Feb. 3, 2017

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