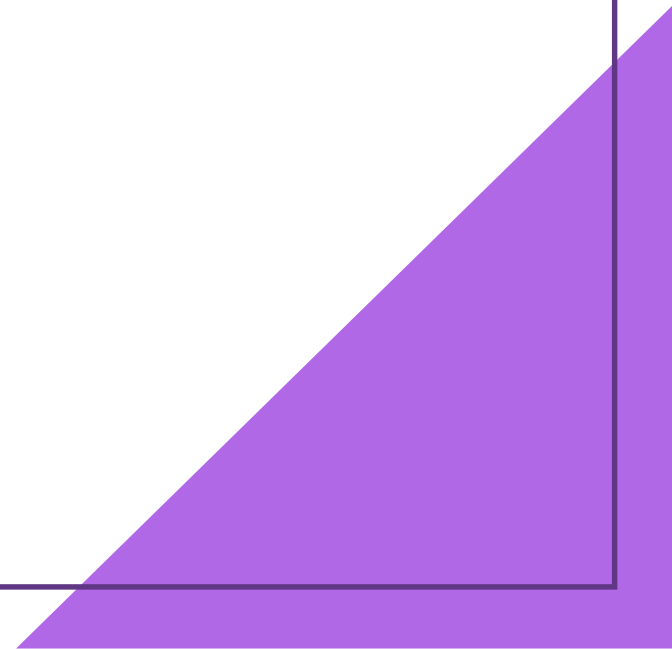


# Head Trauma and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): Assessing Current Understandings and Moving Towards a Healthier Future

Jackie Mehr | December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020





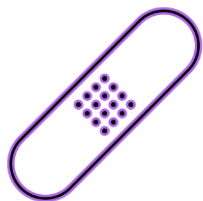
## Institute for Women's Leadership

The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

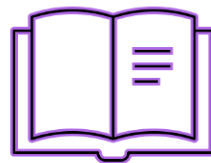
This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice leadership through action*.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership's website at <http://iwl.rutgers.edu>.



Nearly 3 in 4 women exposed to physical IPV have experienced a partner-inflicted head injury

Source: Valera & Berenbaum, 2003



Head injuries in IPV are inadequately and rarely screened for, causing these injuries to go largely undetected

Source: Goldin, Haag, & Trott, 2016



Untreated head injuries can result in impaired cognition and memory, as well as debilitating chronic central nervous system symptoms (headache, dizziness, etc.)

Source: Campbell et al., 2018

Head trauma in IPV is a widespread issue with devastating consequences

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What can be done to remedy this?

# Social Action Project Overview

## Aims

- Investigate current understandings of head trauma in IPV held by those working in related fields
- Identify barriers to comprehensive medical care for head injuries in IPV survivors
- Design solutions to address barriers and improve the health outcomes of individuals with partner-inflicted head injuries

## Methods

- Conduct interviews with individuals working in the head trauma and/or IPV space
- Review current literature on head trauma, traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), IPV, and screening for IPV in medical facilities
- Establish resources to raise awareness on the issue of head trauma in IPV

# Interviews and discussions

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Ramesh  
Raghupathi, PhD



Courtesy of Drexel University College of  
Medicine

- Professor of Neurobiology & Anatomy, Drexel University College of Medicine
- Conducts preclinical and clinical research on head trauma

Sasha Taner



Courtesy of Rutgers IWL

- Rutgers IWL Program Director and Research Coordinator
- Has 8+ years of experience working in shelters for women exposed to IPV

Linda Locke,  
CNM, MPH,  
LSW, FACNM



Courtesy of New Jersey Health Care  
Quality Institute

- Founding chair of the NJ Health Cares about Domestic and Sexual Violence Collaborative
- Experienced midwife and social worker

Reverend Susan  
Kramer-Mills



Courtesy of My Central Jersey

- Executive Director of the Town Clock Community Development Corporation
- Helped establish Dina's Dwellings, a long-term shelter for IPV survivors

# Interviews and discussions (continued)

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Gloria Bachmann, MD



Courtesy of Rutgers Magazine

- Director, Rutgers Women's Health Institute
- Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences, RWJMS
- Practicing OB-GYN

Rajni Bhardwaj, DO



Courtesy of ZocDoc

- Adjunct Professor, Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Family medicine physician with experience in neuromusculoskeletal medicine

Eve Valera, PhD



Courtesy of Harvard Health Publishing

- Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School
- Renowned researcher known for her pioneering work investigating head trauma in IPV

## Research

### Problem

- A lack of research on how head injuries present in females, because animal models of head injury are almost always male

### Solution

- The inclusion of female animal models of head injury
- Education on the public health and social justice implications of research projects



## Healthcare

### Problem

- A lack of conscious awareness of the intersections between IPV and head trauma
- Inadequate or insufficient screening to detect partner-inflicted head injuries

### Solution

- Comprehensive education on the issue of head trauma in IPV
- Whole person medicine



## Community

### Problem

- A lack of knowledge on symptoms of head trauma
- A shortage of resources to detect and provide care to contribute towards healing

### Solution

- Education on signs and symptoms of head trauma
- Allocation of more resources to help support survivors of IPV



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# Project Impact

- Interviewed by leading Rutgers journalist
- Video published on YouTube on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020
  - Conversation viewed 70+ times



Courtesy of Calvin Schwartz | Conversations with Calvin; We the SpecIEs

# Project Impact—moving forward

## Contents

- Overview of head trauma in IPV, synthesizing interview information and published literature
- Subsections with relevant information and suggestions for researchers, clinicians, and community-based workers

## HEAD TRAUMA AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

### Moving Towards a Healthier Future

Jackie Mehr

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<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jacqueline-mehr/>

## Distribution

- Following Completion in spring 2021
- Via individuals interviewed for this project and their affiliated organizations
- Professional societies (Society for Neuroscience, NCADV)

## Future Projects

- Updated versions of this report
- Other forms of action for alternative solutions (seminars, fundraisers, etc.)

# Feminist Leadership



Leading  
through  
listening



Prioritizing  
empathy and  
service



Actively  
combating  
patriarchal  
norms

# Lessons Learned



Do not be  
afraid to make  
asks



There is always  
more to learn



Every voice  
matters

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