



# Surveying adolescents about abuse and intimate partner violence: perceived benefits, harms and regrets

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# Background

- Sensitive information which are highly private and sometimes illegal (e.g. substance use, sexual practices, violence and abuse)
- Serious ethical concerns. How do research participants feel about being asked these questions? Are we doing more damage by asking them these questions? Do they find it beneficial to talk about your experiences?



# Background

- Systematic review in the American Journal of Public Health
- Adolescents and adults
- Described the harms, benefits and regrets reported
- Explored risk/benefit patterns for victims and/or perpetrators of abuse, for younger and older individuals, and across gender

Am J Public Health. 2015 Feb;105(2):e31-45. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2014.302293.

**Adolescents' and adults' experiences of being surveyed about violence and abuse: a systematic review of harms, benefits, and regrets.**

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# Background

- Findings:
  - Only 4 adolescent studies
  - Very little evidence on harms and none on benefits and regrets
  - Only looked at victims of abuse, not perpetrators, while this study looks at both victims and perpetrators
  - Only 1 study conducted in South Africa but it is on adults only



# AIMS

1. Does participation in the PREPARE baseline survey result in participants experiencing harms, benefits or regrets? The PREPARE baseline survey included sensitive questions about IPV, verbal, physical and sexual abuse
2. To compare the harms, benefits and regrets in specific subgroups:
  - victims VS non-victims
  - perpetrators VS non-perpetrators



# METHODS

What did you like about participating in this research project?	What did you not like about participating in this research project?
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Harms</b>
It felt good to be open/honest about myself	It made me feel distressed (sad, upset, angry)
It helped me to share the bad things I've been through	I didn't like thinking about the bad things I've been through
It made me think about myself and my life	
This research will help others	
It was educational and helpful	



# RESULTS

## Benefits, harms and regrets related to research participation

- 70.3% reported benefits
- 27.7% reported harms
- 14% had regrets



# RESULTS

- **Victims VS Non-Victims**

	Benefits	Harms	Regrets
Victims	72%	31%	13%
Non-Victims	67%	21%	17%





# RESULTS

- **Perpetrators VS Non-Perpetrators**

	Benefits	Harms	Regrets
Perpetrators	67%	36%	17%
Non-Perpetrators	73%	26%	13%



# CONCLUSION

- The results found are consistent with our systematic review in indicating that although answering questions about sensitive topics can be distressing, on balance, participants are far more likely to report benefits than harms and regrets
- When participants mention they are distressed, we don't know how severe the distress is, but it seems because they are benefiting at the same time, it might not be harmful distress
- We don't know why 14% regret participation and if it is related to answering the sensitive questions about abuse



# CONCLUSION

- Victims have a more positive benefit to harm ratio than non-victims and they are less likely to regret participation suggesting that participation in research about abuse has more value for them
- Perpetrators have a more negative benefit to harm ratio than non-perpetrators and they are more likely to regret participation suggesting that participation in research about abuse has less value for them



# CONCLUSION

- Further research is needed on the severity of the harms and the intensity of the benefits, reasons why participants regret participation and the longer term effects of research participation



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# Questions?





# Systematic Review Results

30 studies included (4 adolescent and 26 adult)

- Adolescent:

- Harms: 3% - 37% (median: 6%)
- Benefits or Regrets: none measured
- 3/4 : victims > non-victims (harm)
- 1/2 : perpetrators = non-perpetrators (harm)
- 2/3 : females > males (harm)
- 1/3 : females > males (interest in survey)
- 1/1 : younger(10 -12yrs) > older (13 – 15yrs) (harm)





- Adults:
  - Harms: 4% - 50% (median: 25%)
  - Benefits: 23% to 100%(median: 92%)
  - Regrets:1% to 6% (median: 2%)
  - 5/10: victims > non-victims (harm)
  - 3/7 : victims > non-victims (benefit)
  - 1/3 : perpetrators > non-perpetrators (harm)
  - 3/8 : females > males (harm)
  - 3/8 : females > males (positive)
  - 3/3: older > younger (harm)





# Pilot responses

Response options	Sample participant quotes from Pilot study
<b>Benefits</b>	
It felt good to be open/honest about myself	“That it made me feel free about things I don’t want to talk about to friends or family”, “The fact that I could be totally honest and I have privacy”, “I finally could be able to open up and not be afraid that some people are going to laugh at me”
It helped me to share the bad things I’ve been through	“It made me feel comfortable and free to talk about my dark secrets or secrets that I had never ever discussed with anyone”
It made me think about myself and my life	“It makes me think twice about the things I done in my life. It will help me understand life more.”
This research will help others	“I would like you people to continue with this project because it might help lots of children”
It was educational and helpful	“The way it teaches you about safe sex”



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Response options	Sample participant quotes from Pilot study
<b>Harms</b>	
It made me feel distressed (sad, upset, angry)	“Is that some of the questions were hurting me and affecting one of my friend and family member and my neighbors”
I didn't like thinking about the bad things I've been through	“Some of the questions is something you have done in your life and that hurts and you will be not be able to answer these kind of questions”