



# A Randomised Trial of Empowerment Training for Chinese Abused Pregnant Women in Hong Kong

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Dr Agnes Tiwari is Assistant Professor and Acting Head of the Department of Nursing Studies, The University of Hong Kong. She has been actively involved in the care of women with a history of intimate partner violence (IPV) through the nexus of theory-research-practice. Dr. Tiwari and her research team, which includes nurses, doctors, statisticians, social workers, lawyers, clinical psychologists and councillors, have been at the forefront of instituting and developing IPV research in Hong Kong. They have modified and instituted screening instruments for the detection of IPV in Chinese women. Their work has provided the much needed information regarding the prevalence of IPV among clinical and community populations. In addition, they have designed culturally specific intervention programmes for Chinese abused women and their children and tested the efficacy of the programmes using randomised trials, with encouraging results. Dr Tiwari has been invited to join a team of prominent IPV researchers in the United States and is leading the Chinese aspect of a multi-nation study on the impact of IPV on women's health.

**Objective** To assess the efficacy of an empowerment intervention in reducing intimate partner violence and improving health outcomes

**Design** Randomised controlled trial

**Setting** Antenatal clinic in a public hospital in Hong Kong

**Sample** One hundred and ten Chinese pregnant women with a history of intimate partner violence

**Methods** Women were randomised to the experimental or control group. Those in experimental group received training in empowerment intervention designed for Chinese abused pregnant women. Standard care in the form of a wallet-size card containing community resources for abused women was provided to those in the control group. Data were collected at entry to study and six weeks post-delivery.

**Main outcomes measures** Intimate partner violence, health-related quality of life, and postnatal depression.

**Results** Following the intervention, the experimental group reported significantly less psychological abuse and minor physical violence and had significantly lower postnatal depression scores. However, no significant improvement was noted in sexual abuse or severe physical violence. They also had significantly higher physical functioning, and significantly improved role limitation due to physical problems and emotional problems. Interestingly, more bodily pain was reported by women in the experimental group.

**Conclusion** An empowerment intervention designed for Chinese abused pregnant women was effective in reducing intimate partner violence and improving health outcomes.