

# Intimate Partner Violence Among Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and Implications for Receiving Countries

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## Abstract

- ❖ Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant problem in the former Soviet Union (fSU). It is estimated that between 9.5% to 60% of women from the fSU will be victims of various forms of IPV during their lifetime. IPV is a major challenge for immigrants from the fSU and has important implications for receiving countries.

## Introduction

- ❖ Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a staggering problem experienced by many women worldwide (Stickley et al., 2008).
- ❖ According to the World Health Organization (2017), almost one in three women has experienced some type of IPV during their lifetime, and violence against women is considered to be one of the largest human rights violations globally (Kabir & Khan, 2019).
- ❖ Although IPV is a significant problem in the former Soviet Union (fSU), very little is known about it, and limited research exists regarding the topic (Barrett et al., 2012; Stickley et al., 2008).
- ❖ Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, emigration has increased, with the largest number of immigrants settling in the United States (Norton, 2011). According to the Department of Homeland Security (2009), over 430,000 legal immigrants from the fSU settled in the United States between 2001-2008.
- ❖ Other countries with large immigrant populations from the fSU include Germany and Israel (Enosh et al., 2016; Tartakovsky & Mezhibovsky, 2012; Tselmin et al., 2007).

## IPV in the fSU

- ❖ IPV and gender-based violence are common in the fSU among all socioeconomic and ethnic groups (Stickley et al., 2008).
- ❖ In Russian society, IPV is widely considered a private matter (Enosh et al., 2016; Horne, 1999; Stickley et al., 2008).
- ❖ As a result, cases often go unreported, making actual prevalence hard to approximate (Horne, 1999; Stickley et al., 2008).
- ❖ Stelmasek and Fisher (2012) estimated that between 9.5% to 60% of women from the fSU would be victims of various forms of IPV during their lifetime.
- ❖ IPV has long been prevalent in Russia, with alcohol use and patriarchal views being the largest contributors (Enosh et al., 2016; Horne, 1999; Ismayilova, 2015; Kamimura et al., 2017; Stickley et al., 2008; Tartakovsky & Mezhibovsky, 2012).

## Public Policy Implications

- ❖ IPV is a significant issue for immigrants from the fSU and has important implications for receiving countries (Enosh et al., 2016; Tartakovsky & Mezhibovsky, 2012).
- ❖ As the number of immigrants increases, so does the need to understand IPV's socio-cultural specifics among different immigrant groups (Tartakovsky & Mezhibovsky, 2012).
- ❖ Stressors from immigration contribute to holding on to attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors developed in the country of origin (Enosh et al., 2016).
- ❖ A better understanding of the cultural factors contributing to IPV among fSU immigrant populations could inform intervention and treatment, as well as law enforcement practices in the receiving country.

### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



**1 in 3 women**

worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence — mostly by an intimate partner.