

Teenage mothers at greater risk of partner violence

March 22 2016



Australian women having their first child as teenagers are at increased risk of experiencing domestic violence, according to new data presented at the United Nations headquarters today.

Professor Gita Mishra from The University of Queensland is attending the 60th session of the [Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW60\)](#) in New York, and has co-hosted a side event with the Australian Government.

Professor Mishra said evidence from the [Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health \(ALSWH\)](#) suggests [intimate partner violence](#) is as high or higher in [young women](#) now as it was 20 years ago.

"ALSWH data indicates that intimate partner violence affects women of all cultures, occupations and education levels in Australia, but a couple of groups are particularly vulnerable," Professor Mishra said.

"Of women who report having experienced intimate partner violence by the age of 40, more than a third had their first child before the age of 25.

"Eleven per cent had their first child in their teens, so health services used by these women during pregnancy may be a useful platform for prevention strategies."

ALSWH, which involves more than 58,000 Australian women and provides two decades of data, was initiated following the [1995 Beijing Declaration](#) of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

"The declaration established a comprehensive map for gender equality and the empowerment of women, including a determination to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls," Professor Mishra said.

"Forty-five per cent of ALSWH women who experienced intimate partner violence only had [high school education](#) or lower, compared to 16 per cent with a university degree or higher.

"Education is the key when it comes to empowering women and preventing violence against them, and it is fitting that we report back on what leading women's studies are telling us."

Professor Mishra recently initiated [InterLACE](#), an international collaboration that draws on data from 220,000 women from studies in nine countries.

"This provides international context on the indicators of [women's](#) health, wellbeing and empowerment, and for assessing progress in these areas," she said.

CSW60 runs until 24 March and is being attended by representatives of member states, UN entities, and accredited non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from all regions of the world.

The [Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health](#) is based at UQ and The University of Newcastle.

Provided by University of Queensland

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