

# CUMULATIVE LIFETIME VIOLENCE SEVERITY: DOES IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE HEALTH OF CANADIAN MEN?

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## BACKGROUND

Specific experiences of violence during childhood, adolescence and adulthood have been linked to various physical and mental health problems. However, the effects of cumulative lifetime violence (CLV) have not been studied in men. CLV is physical, psychological, or sexual violence or abuse that occurred during childhood and/or as an adulthood, as a target and/or perpetrator in diverse contexts such as family, community, school, workplace, or partner relationships. Using a new scale asking about both frequency and distress of 64 experiences of lifetime violence, we measured cumulative lifetime violence severity (CLVS). Mental and physical health, and substance use as well as demographic information was investigated using an online survey.

## SAMPLE

A community sample of 590 participants ages 19 to 65 years who identified as men, were English speaking and lived in New Brunswick, Canada.

## KEY MESSAGES

- This is the first study that has measured cumulative lifetime violence severity in a comprehensive way, using a gendered lens.
- Findings that 97.5% of men in a community sample reported CLV as target and/or perpetrator provides NEW EVIDENCE of the pervasiveness of CLVS.
- First comparative evidence that men with higher CLVS are more likely to have poorer health than those with lower CLVS.
- Notably higher symptoms of depression, anxiety and PTSD among those in higher CLVS group highlights the importance of violence informed care for men when presenting for treatment of mental health problems.
- High prevalence of hazardous drinking (51.2%) and lack of significant differences by CLVS severity is surprising and warrants further study.

## RESULTS

- 97.5% of men reported experiences of CLV, with 82.5% having experiences as both a target and perpetrator. Men were divided by median CLVS score to two groups of lower and higher CVLS. Compared to the lower CLVS group, those in the higher CLVS group had less education, were more likely to be unemployed, and had more difficulty living on their income.
- Overall, higher CLVS was associated with poorer health status. Those in the higher group were more likely to report clinically significant levels of depression, PTSD, anxiety, and chronic pain as well as be current users of tobacco, and cannabis. No differences were found between groups for hazardous drinking, weekly physical activity or number of visits to health professionals in the past year.

