

Women with careers 'twice as likely' to be victims of domestic abuse as they 'threaten men's authority and power'

By [Ruth Whitehead](#)

Trouble at home: the study found that women who go out to work were more likely to report having faced abuse from their partner

Women who work are more likely to be abused by male partners than women who don't, a study has found.

New research carried out in the US has found that domestic violence is more than twice as likely to happen in homes where both partners have jobs.

The study found that over 60 per cent of women in heterosexual couples where both partners worked reported victimisation, compared with just 30 per cent of those in relationships where just the male was employed.

The Texas-based researchers said the findings suggest that men may see lovers who have their own career rather than take the traditional role of staying at home as a threat to their 'authority and power'.

The figures are alarming with so many women going out to work in Britain, where one in four women will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime, with one incident reported to the police every minute.

On average, 35 assaults happen before the police are called and according to the NSPCC, 12 per cent of under 11s, 18 per cent of 11-17s and 24 per cent of 18-24s have been exposed to domestic abuse between adults.

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Dr Courtney Franklin, of Sam Houston State University in Texas, said: 'When both male and females were employed, the odds of victimisation were more than two times higher than when the male was the only breadwinner in the partnership, lending support to the idea female employment may challenge male authority and power in a relationship.'

Support: researchers concluded that some men felt threatened by the financial and social independence brought by working outside the home

The study, which will be published in the US-based journal *Violence Against Women*, was based on telephone interviews with more than 300 women who identified themselves as either currently or recently in a serious romantic relationship.

Two-thirds of these women, who ranged in age from 18 to 81, reported some form of physical or psychological victimisation by their partner during the preceding two-year period.

Taking it all in: the study found that witnessing domestic violence during childhood increased the likelihood of abuse later in life

These actions included having something thrown at them, being pushed, grabbed or shoved, slapped, hit, kicked or bitten or threatened with a gun or knife.

Dr Franklin said: 'When women are home-bound through their role as domestic workers, they lack connections to co-workers and the social capital that is produced through those connections, in addition to wages, job prestige, resources, and thus, power.

'In turn, they must rely solely on their male partner for financial sustenance and can benefit from the distinction that his employment brings the couple.

'Those women who work outside the home have access to these tangible and intangible assets, which may devalue or, in some cases, even undermine the contributions and provisions supplied by male-only employment.'

The study also found distress in a relationship and witnessing intimate partner violence during childhood increased the odds of victimisation.

Hispanic women were significantly less likely than their white counterparts to report abuse, as were older women of all races and ethnicities.

The researchers recommended doctors who treat victims develop specific strategies to address these risk factors and cultural differences.

They also advised young people who have witnessed violence during childhood to be targeted with additional support programmes for better methods of conflict resolution among adults in intimate relationships.