

Hospital database of serious injuries can be used to identify domestic violence and abuse

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Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) could be identified in the future using an already established national database of serious injuries, according to new University of Bristol-led research. The pilot study,

published in *Injury Prevention* on 26 May, developed a method to identify DVA victim-survivors from hospital records.

It is recognized that patients will present to hospital with injuries caused by [domestic violence](#) and abuse. These are often injuries to a single part of the body such as [head injuries](#), facial injuries, or a fractured arm. Until now, there have been no published studies in the U.K. looking at the relationship between multiple injuries in adults and DVA.

Researchers from Bristol Medical School, CLARITY (Collaborative Aging Research) group at North Bristol NHS Trust, and King's College London wanted to pilot a way of using the [national database](#) for trauma, the Trauma Audit and Research Network (TARN), to assess whether people experiencing DVA could be found. Patients are included in the database if they are admitted to hospital for longer than three days, or to critical care, or die from their injuries. Everyone included has either a severe single injury e.g. brain bleed, or multiple severe injuries. This means that any person included in the database will have significant and [severe injuries](#) that require hospital admission and treatment.

Using a tailored search method, 10,102 records submitted to TARN by Southmead Hospital North Bristol NHS Trust, were looked at by the team. This covered seven years of admission from 2012 to 2019. The researchers were able to identify 36 victims of DVA, confirmed by a review of the paper notes. Importantly, the team were able to assess the association of DVA with the person's medical details, such as showing that victim-survivors of DVA were more likely to be admitted to ITU.

Dr. Hollie Garbett, a Clinical Teaching Fellow at Bristol Medical School and in the CLARITY research group, and the study's lead author, said: "Currently, no routine screening or [data collection](#) occurs within hospital trauma pathways for DVA. This study aimed to test a tailored search strategy to identify suspected cases of DVA from a local hospital trauma

database that can be applied to any hospital or the national dataset to find possible DVA related injuries.

"Our findings show that DVA-related injuries are present in patients with serious injuries, and confirm that searching the TARN database is a feasible way to help identify suspected cases of DVA. Future work is needed to further understand this relationship on a national level."

More information: Hollie Garbett et al, Domestic violence and injuries: prevalence and patterns—a pilot database study to identify suspected cases in a UK major trauma centre, *Injury Prevention* (2022). [DOI: 10.1136/injuryprev-2021-044481](https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2021-044481)

Provided by University of Bristol

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