




## Intimate partner violence in Global South countries: scoping review protocol

## Violência do parceiro íntimo em países do Sul Global: protocolo de revisão de escopo

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**ABSTRACT | INTRODUCTION:** Intimate partner violence (IPV) represents a serious violation of human rights and a significant public health issue, especially in contexts marked by structural inequalities, such as countries in the Global South. **OBJECTIVES:** This protocol describes the methodological procedures for conducting a scoping review that aims to map the scientific evidence on IPV in this context, focusing on prevalence, risk factors, consequences, and response strategies. **METHODS:** The review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI guidelines, reported following the PRISMA-ScR extension, and registered on the Open Science Framework platform. The research question was structured using the PCC mnemonic. The search strategy will be conducted in the PubMed, VHL, SciELO, ScienceDirect, and ERIC databases, utilizing descriptors and free terms. **EXPECTED RESULTS:** The review aims to identify patterns, gaps, and relevant recommendations to support future research, professional practices, and public policies aimed at mitigating IPV in socially vulnerable contexts.

**KEYWORDS:** Intimate Partner Violence. Developing Countries. Global Health.

**RESUMO | INTRODUÇÃO:** A violência do parceiro íntimo (VPI) representa uma grave violação de direitos humanos e um importante problema de saúde pública, especialmente em contextos marcados por desigualdades estruturais, como os países do Sul Global. **OBJETIVOS:** Este protocolo descreve os procedimentos metodológicos para a condução de uma revisão de escopo que visa mapear as evidências científicas sobre a VPI nesse contexto, com foco em prevalência, fatores de risco, consequências e estratégias de enfrentamento. **MÉTODOS:** A revisão será conduzida com base nas diretrizes do Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI), reportada conforme a extensão PRISMA-ScR e registrada na plataforma Open Science Framework. A pergunta de pesquisa foi estruturada a partir do mnemônico População, Conceito e Contexto (PCC). A estratégia de busca será realizada nas bases PubMed, BVS, SciELO, ScienceDirect e ERIC, utilizando descritores e termos livres. **RESULTADOS ESPERADOS:** Espera-se identificar padrões, lacunas e recomendações relevantes para subsidiar futuras pesquisas, práticas profissionais e políticas públicas voltadas à mitigação da VPI em contextos de vulnerabilidade social.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Violência do Parceiro Íntimo. Países em Desenvolvimento. Saúde Global.

## 1. Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) constitutes a serious violation of human rights and a major public health concern, with physical, emotional, and social implications for victims. It encompasses abusive behaviors, including physical, psychological, sexual, economic, or controlling acts perpetrated by current or former partners within the context of intimate and affective relationships<sup>1,2</sup>. Although IPV predominantly affects women, men may also experience it, albeit to a lesser extent. However, motivations and consequences vary by gender, reflecting structural inequalities and power dynamics<sup>3</sup>.

In countries of the Global South, such inequalities are intensified by colonial legacies and socioeconomic barriers, requiring analyses that are sensitive to their specific contexts. The term *Global South* refers not only to a geographical location but also to a political and epistemological positioning that highlights historical relations of domination and the need to value local epistemologies<sup>4,5</sup>.

Despite the relevance of this issue, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the systematization of evidence on IPV within these contexts. Understanding how IPV has been addressed in the scientific production of the Global South is essential to inform more effective and context-sensitive public policies and intervention practices. In initiatives aimed at addressing complex public health challenges, health education strategies focused on training laypersons have demonstrated potential to strengthen responses in vulnerable settings<sup>6</sup>. In this context, scoping reviews have emerged as an appropriate methodological approach for mapping evidence on complex and sensitive topics<sup>7</sup>.

Accordingly, this scoping review is guided by two research questions. The first seeks to characterize the scientific production. In contrast, the second explores the analytical content of the included studies: (a) What are the characteristics and trends of scientific production on intimate partner violence in the context of the Global South? (b) Which risk factors, consequences, and strategies for

prevention, intervention, or coping are described in studies conducted in these countries? Based on these questions, the objective of this review is to map the scientific literature on IPV in Global South countries, identifying patterns, gaps, and evidence that may advance knowledge and strengthen response strategies.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Study design

This is a scoping review protocol. The proposed review aims to identify knowledge gaps, explore key concepts, and understand the extent, scope, and nature of existing research, thereby advancing scientific knowledge and guiding future investigations, public policies, and professional practices<sup>8</sup>.

The review will be conducted in accordance with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodological guidelines. It will be reported following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR)<sup>9,10</sup>. To organize and interpret the findings, the PAGER Framework will be adopted, categorizing the results into five dimensions: Patterns, Advances, Gaps, Evidence for Practice, and Research Recommendations, thus providing a critical and practice-oriented analysis of the data<sup>11</sup>.

The research question was formulated based on the Population, Concept, and Context (PCC) mnemonic, as recommended by the JBI methodology<sup>8</sup>. The population considered comprises adults aged 18 years or older affected by IPV. The concept encompasses IPV in its multiple dimensions, with a focus on prevalence, risk factors, consequences, and prevention strategies. The context includes countries of the Global South. For operational purposes, countries classified as low- and middle-income according to criteria widely adopted in the literature will be considered, without disregarding the critical and epistemological perspective inherent to the concept of the Global South.

The search results will be exported to the Rayyan software (Qatar Computing Research Institute) for duplicate removal and study screening. This review protocol was registered on the Open Science Framework (OSF) platform under the digital object identifier (DOI): [osf.io/5qjk3](https://doi.org/10.31233/osf.io/5qjk3).

## 2.2 Inclusion criteria

Studies involving adults ( $\geq 18$  years) of any gender identity who are affected by IPV will be included, provided they address prevalence, risk factors, consequences, or response strategies in countries of the Global South. Qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods studies, and experience reports with full texts available in Portuguese, English, or Spanish will be considered.

## 2.3 Exclusion criteria

Studies conducted exclusively in developed countries, studies with an exclusively clinical focus, editorials, protocols without published results, and texts unavailable in full will be excluded.

## 2.4 Search strategy

The search for articles will be conducted in stages by two independent reviewers in the following databases: PubMed, Virtual Health Library (VHL), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), ScienceDirect, and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Descriptors based on the Health Science Descriptors (DeCS) and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH), as well as free-text terms widely used in the scientific literature, will be combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR. Disagreements between reviewers will be resolved by consensus, with a third reviewer involved when necessary.

The search strategy will include the following terms in English: ("Intimate Partner Violence" OR "Domestic Violence" OR "Spouse Abuse" OR "Gender-Based Violence" OR "Partner Violence" OR "Intimate Partner

Abuse" OR "Dating Violence" OR "Spousal Abuse" OR "Coercive Control") AND ("Developing Countries" OR "Global South" OR "Low- and Middle-Income Countries" OR "LMIC" OR "Resource-Limited Settings" OR "Emerging Countries" OR "Underdeveloped Countries"). Synonymous and related terms will be adapted according to the specific requirements of each database.

## 2.5 Study selection

Study selection will be conducted in two stages by two independent reviewers. The first stage will consist of screening the titles and abstracts identified in the databases against predefined eligibility criteria. In the second stage, the full texts of potentially relevant studies will be assessed to confirm inclusion. Disagreements between reviewers will be resolved by consensus, with support from a third reviewer when necessary. Rayyan software will be used to assist with organization, screening, and duplicate removal.

## 2.6 Data extraction

Data will be extracted using a standardized form developed in a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet, including the following items: study title, authors, year of publication, country, database, study type, target population, objective, main findings, prevention or response strategies described, and final considerations. Data extraction will be performed independently by two researchers, with cross-checking to ensure the accuracy of the collected information.

## 2.7 Data synthesis

The extracted data will be organized and presented qualitatively and descriptively, taking into account the methodological characteristics and main findings of each included study. The PAGER Framework will be adopted for the interpretative analysis of the results, enabling a critical and practice-oriented synthesis of the data<sup>11</sup>.

### 3. Expected results

This scoping review is expected to contribute to a comprehensive mapping of the scientific evidence on IPV in countries of the Global South, identifying patterns, gaps, advances, and recommendations reported in the literature. The synthesis of the data will enable the identification of major trends in scientific production on the topic, as well as the risk factors, consequences, and prevention, intervention, and mitigation strategies described in the studies. The findings may also support the development of public policies, professional practices, and future research aimed at reducing IPV in contexts of social vulnerability, particularly in regions marked by structural inequalities and resource limitations.

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### Authors' contributions

The authors declare that they made substantial contributions to the work regarding the conception or design of the study; the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data; and the drafting or critical revision of important intellectual content. All authors approved the final version for publication and agreed to assume public responsibility for all aspects of the study.

### Competing interests

No financial, legal, or political conflicts involving third parties (government, private companies, foundations, etc.) were declared for any aspect of the submitted work, including, but not limited to, grants and funding, advisory board participation, study design, manuscript preparation, statistical analysis, and other related activities.

### Indexers

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