

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Women's Perception of Partner Violence in a Rural Igbo Community

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## Abstract

Partner violence is a serious public health problem affecting mostly women. This qualitative study assessed the perceptions of rural Igbo women of Nigeria of intimate partner violence. Information was elicited using in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Women of childbearing age were selected from the various women age grades in Ozubulu, Anambra State, Nigeria. Findings revealed that the women generally condone and are complacent with intimate partner violence, perceiving it as cultural and religious norms. The women felt that reprimands, beating and forced sex affecting their physical, mental and reproductive wellbeing are normal in marriage. They did not support reporting such cases to the police or divorcing the man, they would rather prefer reporting to family members. They felt that exiting the marriage would not gain the support of family members. They also expressed fear for the uncertainty in re-marrying, means of livelihood after re-marriage, social stigmatisation, and concern for their children. Socio-cultural norms and structures favour partner violence in Anambra State of Nigeria. There is a need for advocacy and concerted action that will involve the educational, health, civil and religious sectors of the society to evolve sustainable structures that will empower women and provide support to enable victims to react appropriately to violence. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2005; 9[3]:77-88)

**Keywords:** Perception, Partner, Violence, Women, Igbo

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