

Pregnancy-controlling behavior by men among women who have experienced intimate partner violence: an unexplored dimension of reproductive health in the United States

Abstract

Previous work has found a correlation between intimate partner violence (IPV) and negative reproductive health outcomes (lower rates of contraceptive use, higher rates of unintended pregnancy and abortions). The purpose of this study was to collect detailed narratives of women's reproductive histories among women who have been in abusive relationships to elucidate the range of partners' reproductive control and the effects of that control on contraceptive use and pregnancy. Seventy-five in-depth interviews were conducted with women recruited from a domestic violence shelter, a freestanding abortion clinic and a family planning clinic in the United States who had experienced IPV. Fifty-three respondents had experienced pregnancy controlling behavior defined as pregnancy-promotion including contraceptive sabotage, control during pregnancy to influence the outcome of the pregnancy and post-pregnancy punishment after a miscarriage, abortion or birth. Reproductive health providers need to screen women on pregnancy-controlling behavior to better serve their reproductive health needs.

Introduction

Intimate partner violence has been found to be associated with negative reproductive health outcomes in the United States.^{1,2} The mechanisms for these associations include forced sex in the context of abusive relationships and condom refusal.³ More recent qualitative studies have highlighted partner control of contraception, condom manipulation, and birth control sabotage as additional mechanisms for this association.^{4,5}

The correlation between intimate partner violence and negative reproductive health has been examined according to the outcomes of unintended pregnancy and abortion rates but the breadth of male partner behaviors that impact women's pregnancy experiences including terminations has not been fully explored. The purpose of this study was to collect detailed narratives of women's pregnancy experiences among women who have been in abusive relationships to elucidate the range of male partners' reproductive control over their female partners, and the effects of that control on contraceptive use and pregnancy outcomes.

Background

The literature regarding IPV and pregnancy-related behaviors is limited but consistent: among women, there is a correlation between having experienced IPV and reporting undesired reproductive health outcomes. Campbell et al.'s¹ review of the reproductive health consequences of IPV found that population-based studies have established links between intimate partner violence, unintended pregnancy, and exposure to HIV/AIDS.⁶⁻⁸

The acts which place women at risk of unintended pregnancies within abusive relationships have been documented by a number of studies: forced or coerced sex, males' refusal to use birth control (condoms or withdrawal) or refusal to allow their partners to use birth control (birth control pills or tubal ligation), birth control deception (tearing condoms or lying about having taken a medicine that made them sterile), and preventing their partners from having abortions were the tactics used by men to get or keep participants pregnant against their will.^{3-5,9,10} Pregnancy encouragement or promotion by abusive partners was documented among adolescents by Miller et al.⁵ who found that partners were actively trying to impregnate the young women in their study. Female adolescents reacted with a range of responses from hiding contraception to actively trying to get pregnant to keep their partner happy. The power differential based on age and social status of a male partner where the female is significantly younger (the median age difference was four years for this sample) may have influenced perceived and actual reproductive choices for young women.

The goal of this research project was to explore the reproductive histories of women who have experienced IPV. Through capturing their contraceptive and pregnancy experiences, forced sex and birth control sabotage emerged as just some of the ways that these women's reproductive health was compromised by their partners within abusive as well as non-abusive partners.

Methods

Sample

The study, conducted in 2007, employed a purposive sampling strategy, recruiting 75 women with a history of IPV from three sites: a domestic violence shelter, a freestanding abortion clinic, and a family planning clinic providing abortion and other reproductive health services. Each of these recruitment sites was located in a large city, one in the Midwest and two on the East Coast. The domestic violence shelter was selected as a place to interview women with known IPV experiences about their reproductive health; the clinics offered opportunities to identify women seeking reproductive health-related screened (i.e. known reproductive health experiences) who screened positively for IPV. Final sample size was determined by content saturation as well as achieving a balanced sample from the three sites. Four females were excluded from this analysis; three had incomplete interviews, and one only had a history of childhood sexual abuse, no IPV (final N = 71).

Recruitment

Respondents were recruited at the three sites by facility staff and members of the research team. They were eligible to participate if they were between 18-49 years of age and answered one or both of the following questions affirmatively: "Have you ever been hit, slapped, choked, kicked, physically hurt or threatened by a current or former partner?" or "Has anyone ever made you take part in any sexual activity when you did not want to?" Female researchers trained in conducting interviews on violence and sexual health conducted the interviews in private places at each facility. A Certificate of Confidentiality from the National Institutes of Health was obtained, and the meaning and

limitations of this certificate were reviewed with participants as part of the consent process. Interviewers obtained informed consent immediately prior to each interview. The study protocol was approved by the Human Subjects Research Committees of the Guttmacher Institute.

Using a mixture of open-ended and semi-structured questions, participants were asked to describe their reproductive health histories including all contraceptive use, births, abortions and miscarriages. These topics were explored through a relationship history which captured whether or not each partner had been violent. Interviews examined respondents' abilities to manage and negotiate sexual situations, contraception and decisions around pregnancy. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were provided a list of local resources for mental health and violence-related services. Participants received \$40 cash for their time.

Data Analysis

Interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed verbatim. (No identifying information was recorded with the interviews.) The transcripts were then edited for accuracy by members of the research team. Coding took place using N6 software (QSR, Melbourne, Australia). The coding structure reflected both the original research questions in addition to themes and topics that emerged from the data. The creation of this structure was revised multiple times during the coding process to accommodate emerging information. Additions of new codes or changes in code definitions were determined via consensus among the entire research team. No new codes emerged after approximately 30 interviews were coded, suggesting content saturation was achieved. The team checked each other's work to verify agreement in coding. Patterns and concepts were retrieved within the context of females' relationships, some of which included IPV, some which did not. The current analysis focuses on pregnancy

Results

Sample characteristics

Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the respondents of the entire sample as well as just of the respondents who reported at least one type of pregnancy-controlling behavior. Those who experienced pregnancy-controlling behavior did not look different than the rest of the sample on the primary demographic characteristics measured. The data come mostly from 20-29 year old African-American Christian and non-religious women who completed at least high school.

Pregnancy-controlling behavior as defined here is composed of a) pregnancy promoting behavior including forced sex with an intention to impregnate the woman and contraceptive sabotage including condom non-use again with an intention of impregnating the woman; b) intentions to influence the outcome of the pregnancy such as forced continuation or forced termination of pregnancy; and c) post-pregnancy punishment which are behaviors manifesting after pregnancy resolution to register the man's displeasure with how the pregnancy was resolved (through miscarriage, abortion or birth). Some respondents experienced all of the behaviors surrounding one particular

pregnancy; some experienced multiple episodes of these different types of pregnancy control; others experienced aspects of these behaviors across different pregnancies. Comprehensive examples of each are provided in Table 2. Each type of control is examined in turn below with contextual information added about each respondent.

Pregnancy-controlling behaviors are summarized for each respondent in Table 3.

Pregnancy-promoting behavior

Partners exerting pressure and coercion to get pregnant or not use contraception

Miller et al. define pregnancy promoting behavior as “explicitly stating that he wanted her to become pregnant.”⁵ Respondents related how their partners told them that they were going to make them pregnant.

He was like, "I should just get you pregnant and have a baby with you so that I know you will be in my life forever." Like, he wants to me have a baby, and just because, just, like, he wants to do what he wants to do, but, yet wants me in his life, but don't want me to do anything. It's just like, for what, you want me to not go back to school, not go to college, not want me to do anything just sit in the house with a baby while you are out with friends.

--Miriam, age 19

In a number of situations, the abusive partner was being sent to jail and stated that there would be less chance of his partner leaving him if she were pregnant when he was sent away. When women objected to being told that they were going to have his baby, respondents reported that the men ignored their verbal protests and treated the women's protests as if she were joking.

Contraceptive sabotage

Contraceptive sabotage is the partners' active interception of the woman's birth control use including citing substantiated or unsubstantiated side effects that discourage the woman from using contraception. Forced sex which does not give the woman an opportunity to protect herself from an unwanted pregnancy also indirectly prevents the woman from using a contraceptive method and the nature of the event makes it unlikely the man would use contraception. Forced sex is often perpetrated without an explicit intent to impregnate the woman. For the purposes of this analysis, only examples of forced sex where the woman felt vulnerable to an unintended pregnancy due to some kind of withholding of contraception by her partner are included.

The most common ways contraceptive sabotage occurred was men failing to withdraw when that had been the agreed upon method of contraception and not using condoms (actively refusing or deceptively not using) or compromising the condom before use. Describing the circumstances that led to her first pregnancy, Christy said about her abusive partner:

Respondent (R): I said [to him], “What are you doing, stop, stop, yeah like stop, what are you doing, what are you doing, stop, stop.”

[...]

Interviewer (I): So you wanted him to practice withdrawal?

R: Yeah, yeah.

I: Did he practice withdrawal?

R: No. Bastard.

--Christy, age 24

Yeah, I was real pissed off when he nudded in me. [...] I was off Depo, but, you know I am saying, I was just like, "Do not!" Literally, I am just laying on the floor and I am just like, "You just came in me, didn't you?" I was heated. I was pissed off. And he just smiled at me, "Oh, you want me to get you pregnant." [I said,] "What? You don't even take care of the kids you have now, what makes you think that I want to hinder your child for what? Your mom is telling me you take care of other ones—I don't see you put in no work on nothing. What makes you think I want to carry a baby around for 9 months for a no good ass nigga? What makes you think that?"

--Claire, age 19

He basically held me on top of him. [...] He basically grabbed my legs and held me on top of him when he finished so --.

--Lynn, age 22

The control that partners exercised over the respondents made respondents vulnerable to partners' manipulations including condom non-use. Women explained that partners did not use condoms, refusing, saying they didn't want to, they didn't like it, they did not keep any in the house, that they were allergic. Women vocalized how their partners' preferences dominated. One respondent described how because she insisted on condoms, her partner would have sex with her while she was asleep.

When partners would use condoms, many respondents said the men manipulated them to render them ineffective including taking them off during sex; biting holes in them; and not telling their partners when the condom broke during sex.

But see, this is the reason why I'm pregnant now. My boyfriend is a little younger than me. He's 17. And like every time we laying like this, he have it on, but when I turn around to the back he will always take it off, but I wasn't noticing at first until one day after we just got finished I put my hand beside the side of the bed, and I felt the condom right there, and I was like, "I know you didn't take the condom off." And he was like, "Yeah, I did." [...] I stopped him from having sex from the back for awhile, and then one night we did it again from the back, and the same thing happened.

--Cora, age 25

When women did try to insist on condoms, their abusive partners would accuse them of infidelity.

Some respondents related that their partners tried to convince them not to use birth control in spite of the fact that the women did not want to become pregnant. One way that men tried to dissuade their partners from using birth control was to cite potential side effects.

Respondent (R): And then there was a time I started taking the Patch.

Interviewer (I): Did he find it?

R: No, I was like with that one, I'd actually hide it. [...] The mistake that I made I put it on my butt one time [...] And one day, when I was taking a shower, he was like, "What's that?" [...] so I told him what it was. And he is like, "Oh, do you know that some girl died and this and that?" And I was like, "I didn't hear nothing like that." He said, "Oh, she got a blood clot and she died from that, I don't know why you are using that and then on top of it you see your hair falling out, that's why your hair is falling out." I told him like, "No, because you be stressing me out and that's why my hair is falling out." He was like, "No, you say I am stressing you out, I am not stressing you out. You keep using that Patch, I told you about the birth control, they don't work, they do this, they do that."

--Heather, age 24

I was on the shot, well when I started the relationship with him I went on the shot, DepoProvera Shot, and I was experiencing like [a] lot of mood swings and stuff but now in retrospect I don't know how much of it was really me and how much of it was really him being like, "Oh my god, you are crazy. You got to get off that." For a long time he was saying how it was bad and it wasn't good for my body and this and that so I went off of it. [...] I wasn't on the birth control because he didn't think it was a good idea.

--Clara, age 25

Forced sex was yet another way partners put respondents at risk of an unwanted pregnancy.

He would come over on the side of the bed where I was at, we slept on opposite sides of the bed; kids slept in the middle. You know, I didn't want him touching me at all. [He said:] "Why you got the kids in the middle?" [I said:] "I don't want you touching me." That's point blank. I'll wake up to him on top of me, clothes off. I jump up push him off, pull my clothes back up. [I would say:] "Leave me alone I'm sleep. I am tired and you are not touching me." He'll get sneaky like that because I sleep deeply but when somebody is touching me like that I'm going to wake up. So, of course he get an attitude, start fussing and fighting, he would come try to snatch my clothes and tell me you going to give me some or you going to get out. I am not going nowhere. You know, it's funny I have a child of yours and you want to tell me I have to get out.

--Jodi, age 27

Respondent (R): I was supposed to go back for my Depo shot and I missed my appointment and of course, I can't tell him no, he can't have any you know.

Interviewer (I): Why can't you tell him no?

R: Because “no” is not a question, no is not, there is no “no” when it comes to sex with him. [...] So regardless of whether I wanted to get pregnant or not you know, there’s, you can’t say no.

--Josephine, age 25

A few respondents related that their partners physically interfered with their use of hormonal methods.

Respondent (R): I was extremely depressed when I found out [I was pregnant] because I really didn’t want to have the baby and I was on birth control actually and he used to take my pills and pop them all out and flush them in the toilet....

Interviewer (I): And what would he say when he was doing that?

R: “You are trying not to have my baby. You don’t want to be a part of me. [...] You just don’t want to be a part of me. You just don’t want me to be around forever.” And I will have to like coerce him into believing that I wanted to be with him and that wasn’t the reason why, to avoid him back lashing with all that extra, “I am not shit” and “I am a whore” and all that kind of stuff.

I: And would you go out and get pills again and?

R: And I would be able to take them for a while without him knowing but then when he would find them he would take them and flush them down the toilet.

I: How would he find them?

R: Just searching through the house, “Because you are not pregnant yet. You must be taking something,” and he would search the house. I even went as far as hiding them in the pasta jar where you put the pasta in. I have even went as far as hiding them in there. He went in there and took them.

--Karen, age 28

Interviewer (I): Do you feel like you ever try to control or use a birth control?

Respondent (R): Yeah.

I: How so?

R: By telling me not to use it or like when I had the pill, he used to act out and ask me why I am using them, I am trying and I am hiding to use it and stuff like that.

Then, there was another time I started using the ring and he pulled it out of me.

[He asked:] “What’s this, who be advised you to be using this kind of stuff?” [...]

I was like, “I thought I could actually hide this one, not knowing you will come up inside of me and pull it out of me.”

--Heather, age 24

Influencing the outcome of the pregnancy

Controlling decision-making

Control of the pregnancy includes partners’ attempts to control the outcome of a woman’s pregnancy. In the majority of cases, partners’ desires were contrary to the respondent’s. In a few cases, the respondent was ambivalent or even in agreement with the pregnancy outcome that her partner wanted. However, even in those cases, men’s actions show a blatant disregard for the woman’s preferences and are therefore included in this analysis.

The pressure occurred in both directions—to carry the pregnancy to term or to abort. Women reported being pressured into having a birth with one pregnancy, and having an abortion with a different pregnancy (sometimes the same women, in different relationships, or even within the same relationship). Most women who reported that their partner attempted to control the pregnancy outcome experienced pressure or coercion. Smaller numbers of women reported more extreme behaviors such as threats and the use of force.

Partners' Desire for Births

Respondents described abusive partners making them feel bad about their desire to abort; begging, badgering and making promises to support the baby to pressure them into giving birth. Some respondents described giving in to this pressure, and some did not.

And I told him—right when I found out I was pregnant, I told him, “You know, I hate to say this, but I want to have an abortion, because I know you're going to leave me.” [...] I'm against abortions and everything but, at that point, I told him, “You know what? I know we're not going to be together. I know that I'm going to end up raising my kids on my own. I want to have an abortion.” [He said], “No, you're crazy. How can you say that, [respondent]? You can't just kill your child!” And he was just making me feel so guilty until, finally, I was just, like, “Okay, then. I'll keep the baby.”

--Ellen, age 19

Respondents also described more invasive tactics used by partners to keep them from obtaining abortions such as refusing to pay or help pay for an abortion. Although some women in the sample said that their partners were simply unable to pay for their abortions due to poverty, a few reported this as a mechanism of pregnancy control. In these instances, their partners did have the money and the women did not (often due to other controlling behaviors perpetrated by their partners), and the refusal to fund an abortion was viewed by both parties as a way to force the woman to have a birth. Margarita, age 25, for example, had been with her abusive husband since she was a teenager. Her husband was about to go to jail so he impregnated her with the express purpose of ensuring that she would not abandon him while he was incarcerated. She did not want a baby, but he refused to pay for an abortion, so she had the baby.

Partners also interfered with respondents' healthcare, specifically, sabotaging appointments for abortions:

He kept stopping it [the abortion], remember, he kept track [of when the appointments were], taking the car, [saying the car] wouldn't work, saying, “I can't come because of this, and this but I have to be there, but I have to work this day,” so he kept dragging it out, 'cause he wanted me to not be able to have it, that was my last one, and it was bad, yeah, real bad, so.... Yeah, he kept making it so it would be hard to do it, right.

--Nina, age 26

A small number of respondents described partners who threatened to harm or kill them if they had an abortion:

He really wanted the baby—he wouldn't let me have—he always said, "If I find out you have an abortion," you know what I mean, "I'm gonna kill you," and so I really was forced into having my son. I didn't want to; I was 18. [...] I was real scared; I didn't wanna have a baby. I just got into [college] on a full scholarship, I just found out, I wanted to go to college and didn't want to have a baby but I was really scared. I was scared of him.

--*Nina, age 26*

A larger number of respondents reported that their partners simply refused to allow them to have abortions, and control of their lives by their partner was such that they were thereby forced to give birth.

Partners' Desire for Abortions

In other situations, women described experiencing pressure and coercion to abort:

He really wanted me not to keep it... I was under 18 so we had to go to [neighboring state with no parental consent law]. And I went to [the clinic] and I remember only the lady asked me if I really [wanted to have an abortion], but she gave me a paper, and she [asked] me that if I wanted to do that, that if nobody else was making me. And I remember I just wanted to leave and not do it, because I did want to keep the baby. But he told me, he was next to me and he went like this [poke] and told me that – "Tell her!"

--*Margarita, age 25*

A few women reported that their partners forced them to have abortions sometimes by threatening to hurt them in order to end their pregnancies.

Respondent (R): So he is like, "Well, you're not gonna have it!" and I was like, "I know." [...] He sat there and was like, "If you don't get it done, I'm throwing you down the steps, or I'm doing something!"

Interviewer (I): Did that scare you?

R: At the same time, yeah, because I probably could believe he would do it. But, because at one time, he was like, "I'll just punch in your stomach," and I am thinking, oh yeah, he punched me on my face, he might punch me in my stomach. So just actually feeling like the pain because feeling the baby there, it was, like I can't do this, I was like this is crazy. I was like if it doesn't get done [by a doctor], he's going to do it, and I don't want that to be done. So if it's going to be done, it's going to be done right way, so.

--*Stephanie, age 21*

Resistance

Women offered stories of their own resistance to this control. It did not always follow that a woman had a birth or an abortion because that is what her partner wanted. In some cases, women reported that they had multiple abortions, even though they knew that their partner would impregnate them again in order to force them to bear his child:

Interviewer (I): Did he ever try to get you pregnant?

Respondent (R): Oh yeah, many of times. I went to clinic, too [...] because I have 2 kids, and like, I have to; I started to realize I am doing this by myself anyway, and nobody is helping me. So every time I used to come up pregnant, I used end up going to the clinic and have an abortion, and I used to feel bad after I would do it. But I be asking God every time I do it to forgive me because he is not the one to, he is not the one to be good basically.

I: Did he ever try to tell you not to get an abortion?

R: Yeah, a lot of times. "Oh, keep it, keep it. I'm going to help you." No, you did not. I help myself.

--Wendy, age 25

Women also offered stories of outright resistance to pregnancy controlling behaviors:

When I was pregnant the second time, he wasn't happy. He was like, "You're pregnant again? I want you to get an abortion." I was like, "No, I'm keeping my son." I'm like, "I'm keeping my child," [...] He was really beating me down [emotionally], like, about having an abortion with my second child, and I'm like, "No, I'm going to take care of my child."

--Vanessa, age 23

My second child, her dad, when I got pregnant this last time, he told me I need to get an abortion. I basically told him I said if I have this baby you just won't have nothing to do with it, since you wanted me to get an abortion. I don't believe in abortions. My health is not good, so it wouldn't have been in my best interest to have the baby, but I'm not going to jeopardize a child's life because of my health as well. So I'm not going to get an abortion.

--Jodi, age 27

One respondent took emergency contraception to try to avoid becoming pregnant by her partner.

...I almost got caught with that [EC], because it was in a little pack like this. so I had to take.... the only thing which saved me, it didn't have my name on it so I blamed it on my sister, because I knew he was trying to get me pregnant once again, and I knew that morning before I went to work, I told him I had to go to work early, and I went there and got those pills, because I knew I would have been pregnant.

--Roxanne, age

More than a quarter of respondents reported undergoing multiple abortions, (and having multiple births), most often with the same abusive partner. A common narrative was that an abusive partner would refuse to use contraception or would sabotage it, resulting in multiple pregnancies. Some partners tried to control the outcomes of these pregnancies, as described above. However, many women who experienced multiple pregnancies and abortions reported that their partners were ambivalent or unconcerned with their decision to end the pregnancies.

Post-pregnancy punishment

In addition to partners' pregnancy-controlling behaviors of pregnancy promotion and/or controlling the outcome of her pregnancy, respondents reported behaviors related to the resolution of a pregnancy. These behaviors had a high level of emotional significance to the respondents. The extent to which this punishment was anticipated is unclear.

Therefore, the extent to which they served to control women's reproductive outcomes cannot be determined. Most of the women discussing post-pregnancy punishment said that it happened with abusive partners.

Denying paternity

Half of the women who experienced post-pregnancy punishment said that their partner denied paternity, and nearly a quarter of those women had experienced some form of pregnancy-promoting behavior with those pregnancies. Although this was reported only in the context of abusive relationships, it happened across all pregnancy outcomes (even when the pregnancy was desired by the partner). Men often stated disbelief that his partner was pregnant, and then when that was no longer viable to deny the pregnancy, men moved on to denying paternity. Women found these behavior, and its attendant accusation of infidelity and disavowal of responsibility to them and/or the child, to be extremely hurtful.

He just went about his business, didn't claim my first child. I don't know; he was very mentally abusive... [He would say:] "You ain't nothing, you a whore, you probably doin' this with everybody, you done give it up to me." I almost tried to commit suicide a couple of times, just by popping a lot of pills, trying to get rid of his... "Well, I'm not having your child!"

-June, age 27, was 15 at the time that the above incident occurred

It's not really violence, but the fact that he said our last kid is not his. That, like kind of hurt, being with somebody that long [5 years], and think you will lie about something like that.

-Angela, age 25

Accusations of causing or misrepresenting a miscarriage

A few women reported another behavior that was also experienced as extremely cruel: a partner accusing them of either causing a miscarriage or having a covert abortion and claiming that it was a miscarriage:

At first he thought I had snuck and got an abortion, until he saw the papers from the emergency room, because I was just like at the point I was like fed up, and I was like, “Well, think whatever you want to think. You think I went and got an abortion, then, fine, whatever,” because I wasn’t scared of him. I just didn’t feel like him hollering and yelling, but at [that] point, I was just tired. And he was like, “I knew it, I knew it, I knew you went and got an abortion. You don’t love me. You don’t care about me. You have killed my baby,” and all this and I was like, “You are such a dummy,” and I pulled the paper [from the emergency room] out and I slammed it on the bed. And he was like, “Oh my god, you really did have a miscarriage,” and I said “Yeah, you were out in the street” because he used to run on streets a lot. I said, “You were out on the street. So you were nowhere to be around. So how would you know?” So he was like real apologetic about it, but he was, like, immediately wanting to try again.

-Karen, age 28

He left me because he said I killed the baby. [...] Yeah, that’s what he said. He snapped on me while I was miscarrying, and he took me to the hospital. He snapped on the doctor, tried to fight the doctor. They had to call security and take him out of there. [...] I called him, and he was like, “You’re a murderer.” I said, “How? I didn’t do it.” Obviously God didn’t want me to have it, or whatever, and he said, “I’m not trying to hear that. You did it. You did it.” And then he just stopped talking to me. [...] After that, he was just like, “I don’t even want to be bothered with you anymore.”

-Cora, age 25, describing a non-violent relationship

Abuse and other punishment after an abortion

Respondents reported being subjected to verbal abuse, most often being called killers or murderers of their partners’ children, after obtaining abortions (and having miscarriages, see above). In a few cases, this verbal abuse escalated into physical violence, and respondents were forced to leave their homes. Yolanda’s abusive partner denied paternity while she was pregnant, and after she had an abortion, he said:

“Matter of fact, I just want you to leave.” And being as I was staying there, too, like, I had didn’t have nowhere to go, so I was, like, “I’m not leaving, ‘cause I don’t have nowhere to go.” And he was, like, “Well, I want you to leave. Just get out. I want you to go. Pack your stuff and just leave.” And I wouldn’t leave, so that’s when he choked me.

Punishment after a birth

Some respondents who gave birth against their partners’ wishes said that their partners left them later they gave birth. A few others described partners that did not leave, but ignored their children:

Yeah, he was mad. And after I had her, like, he didn’t have anything, want to have anything to do with her, like, he wouldn’t help take care of her. He wouldn’t hold her, nothing. And he wouldn’t, like, work to help provide for us.

-Nicole, age 32

Discussion

Physically and/or sexually violent relationships impact women's ability to control their fertility in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. The women in the sample described being pressured to have children, to become pregnant and then to have abortions, having multiple unintended pregnancies, and being badgered to into abortions and into births by the same partner. Women experienced these acts on a continuum ranging from minor annoyances to incredible fear. The resulting outcomes of partner's pregnancy-controlling behavior were pivotal in these women's lives: being faced with a decision to abort or carry to term an unintended and frequently unwanted pregnancy; and being forced to bear an unwanted child or abort a wanted child.

The lack of respect of the woman's physical autonomy and her fertility preferences are the hallmarks of the behaviors described in this paper. All forms of partners' pregnancy-controlling behaviors are chilling examples of the loss of bodily integrity experienced by women exposed to IPV. Women described behaviors ranging from pressure and coercion to threats and violence used to enforce a partners' desired pregnancy outcomes. These behaviors were rarely one-time incidents; more commonly, they were patterns that repeated within and across respondents' relationships.

Pressure and coercion were the most common tactics employed by controlling partners, both to convince women to give birth or to have an abortion. Although these acts themselves did not force women to carry out the outcome that their partner desired, women experienced their partners' pregnancy-controlling behaviors in the context of other kinds of control. Women who described these behaviors occurring within abusive relationships (where most of the pregnancy control occurred) had often been isolated by their partners, unable to maintain contact with family and friends. The threat of a partner leaving if his desired pregnancy outcome did not come to pass was very frightening in these situations. Women described verbal and emotional abuse as often worse, and more destructive to their self-esteem, than the physical and sexual abuse that they endured. In this context, pressure and coercion to resolve a pregnancy according to an abusive partner's wishes as extremely powerful.

Other tactics partners used other tactics to prevent women from achieving the pregnancy outcome that they desired including having their appointments for abortions obstructed and having needed funding withheld. They described partners accompanying them to abortion clinics in order to ensure that they underwent the procedure. At the most extreme end of the spectrum, some respondents reported that they were hurt or credibly threatened with violence by their partners in attempts to force the partners' desired pregnancy outcome. Women were threatened with death if they did not give birth, threatened with a forced miscarriage if they did not obtain abortions, and were beaten and raped during their pregnancies.

Post-pregnancy punishment such as denying paternity and accusing respondents of purposely causing a miscarriage had a high level of emotional significance for the

respondents. Partners' reactions to pregnancy outcomes are another potent locus of control around reproduction.

Although most of these behaviors were reported in the context of violent relationships, a significant minority of women described similar pregnancy controlling behaviors occurring within non-violent partnerships. All of the women in the sample had been exposed to intimate partner violence and/or sexual assault during their adolescence and/or their adulthood. The presence of pregnancy control within non-violent partnerships possibly indicates increased susceptibility to reproductive control among women exposed to violence.

Recommendations

Pregnancy control should be of specific concern to reproductive healthcare providers. Screening on ever having experienced abuse is possibly a more useful indicator of women's risk to pregnancy-control than screening on whether the woman is experiencing current abuse as pregnancy controlling behaviors occurred within as well as out of abusive relationships among these respondents. Clinicians, particularly those providing reproductive health services, need to remain vigilant about signs of partner interference in women's reproductive decisions. Contraceptive counseling should include screening for contraceptive sabotage so as to be able to help match the woman with a contraceptive method that has the greatest probability of allowing her to use contraception as long as she wants to. Prenatal care and abortion counseling should take place in privacy and should include questions about whether anyone is pressuring her to resolve the pregnancy. If disclosure occurs, though, firm protocols need to be in place since as these data illustrate, if the pregnancy is not dealt with as the partner wants, the woman may be in danger such as having him attempt to induce a miscarriage if he does not want the child or threaten her life if she aborted a pregnancy he wanted her to keep. Each situation will have to be handled uniquely as the circumstances dictate by trained staff members.

We could mention the lack of knowledge about/use of EC in the recommendations section, as women in abusive relationships could obviously benefit from information about and access to the product.

Limitations

For this research project, we wished to interview women who had experienced both a range of severity of abuse as well as a spectrum of reproductive health outcomes. We chose recruitment sites that captured women seeking social services, either reproductive health services or shelter from an abusive partner. There are limitations with both samples. Shelter residents are a unique population who may represent the extreme end of the abuse spectrum. Women seeking reproductive health services (abortion or family planning services) are more likely to be in need of reproductive health services, possibly because of contraceptive control and sabotage, potentially giving us a sample that overrepresents negative reproductive health outcomes compared to other women who have experienced similar IPV histories.

However, whether a woman goes to shelter isn't necessarily correlated with how extreme the abuse is. (A woman could be in an extremely dangerous situation, but there may be

no viable shelter for her either due to additional issues or because she has children, or she may have enough money to not have to go to a shelter or she simply may stay with her abusive partner). Similarly, women getting reproductive health services may not have experienced more interference with their reproductive autonomy; they may simply be more proactive about seeking services than other (possibly more subjugated) women. In sum, while there are biases inherent in our recruitment sites, the direction of the biases is not clear.

Conclusion

Capturing the reproductive health narratives of women who had experienced IPV allowed us to provide greater context to experiences that may be taking place around the same time as contraceptive sabotage. We found that contraceptive sabotage is one aspect of abuse that continues in many cases through subsequent partner control of the pregnancy including pregnancy-resolution. These narratives also demonstrate that pregnancy control is not limited to abusive relationships but instead having ever experienced abuse might be a more accurate measure of risk to pregnancy-controlling behavior.

The results presented here only captured the experiences of women who had experienced IPV at some time in their lives. Whether or not these behaviors are experienced by women in the general population requires further exploration. The fact that that behavior was also present within non-physically abusive relationships suggests that pregnancy-controlling behavior can occur without physical violence. It is therefore necessary to develop more targeted screening, intervention, and prevention strategies to reduce unintended pregnancies among women who have experienced physical and sexual abuse.

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Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Entire Sample (n=71) and those who experienced any pregnancy controlling behavior (N=53)

	All	PCB
Age		
18-19	7	7
20-24	16	12
25-29	22	18
30-39	15	10
40-49	10	5
Total	70	52
Race		
White/Caucasian	23	14
Black/ African-American	37	32
Asian Pacific		
American Indian/ Alaska Native	1	
Hispanic/ Latina	8	6
Other	1	1
Total	70	53
Religion		
Protestant	12	8
Roman Catholic	10	9
Jewish		
Other	26	21
None	20	13
Total	68	51
Education		
0-8th grade		
9-11th grade	9	8
High school graduate/ GED	20	18
Some College/ Associate's Degree	24	16
College graduate or higher	13	6
Total	66	48
Abortion experience		
Yes	48	40
No	23	13
Total	71	53

Table 2: Pregnancy-controlling behaviors

Category	Behavior
Pregnancy promotion	pressuring and coercing a woman to become pregnant; stating intentions to impregnate a woman in order to tie her to him; closely monitoring for signs of pregnancy; pressuring woman to become pregnant again immediately after a pregnancy loss; accusing her of being unfaithful if she used birth control; accusing her of being unfaithful if she wanted to abstain from sex
Sexual violence	forcing unprotected sex; forcing partner to continue having sex after condom breaks; refusing to withdraw (despite being agreed upon method for contraception)
Condom manipulation	removing condom during sex; compromising the condom (biting holes covertly not putting the condom on; refusing to use condoms; accusing woman of cheating if she asks partner to use condoms; forcing partner to continue having sex after condom breaks
Contraceptive sabotage	flushing birth control pills down the toilet; searching the house for hidden birth control pills or emergency contraception in order to destroy them; removing the NuvaRing from inside her vagina; refusing to withdraw (although that was the agreed-upon method of contraception); removing condom during sex; forcing a woman to continue having sex after a condom breaks; having unprotected sex with a woman while she was sleeping; refusing to help pay for birth control; forcing sterilization; convincing her that birth control has dangerous side effects
Controlling pregnancy outcome	refusing to help pay for an abortion; refusing to allow her to have an abortion; strongly encouraging or pressuring her to have a birth; threatening to end her pregnancy violently if she did not have an abortion; perpetuating violence against her in order to cause a miscarriage or kill the fetus
Interfering with healthcare	interrupting, obstructing or sabotaging abortion appointments (sometimes resulting in the woman having an abortion at a later gestation than she desired); sabotaging abortion plans by forcing woman to be ineligible for an abortion; preventing access to prenatal care
Post-pregnancy punishment	accusing woman who had a miscarriage of having a covert abortion; accusing a woman having a miscarriage of intentionally killing the baby; abandoning her after a miscarriage; abandoning her after a birth; denying paternity; denying that she is pregnant or accusing her of faking a pregnancy; accusing her of infidelity since she became pregnant (because she cannot get pregnant while she is already pregnant); being verbally abusive after an abortion; kicking her out of their home after having an abortion

Table 3: Synopsis of respondents' experiences with pregnancy controlling behaviors

Alias	Age	Description
Karen	28	Within her abusive relationship, Karen's partner repeatedly flushed her birth control pills down the toilet and refused to use condoms so that she would become pregnant by him. He attempted to monitor her to see if she was pregnant. When she did become pregnant, she had a miscarriage, and she believes that it happened because she was so depressed about being pregnant when she did not want to be. Partner accused her of having a covert abortion. Years later he raped her and she became pregnant and did have an abortion.
Miriam	19	Miriam's boyfriend has been abusive. He told her that he wanted to impregnate her in order to keep her with him forever. He refused condoms and tried to convince her not to use birth control, accusing her of being unfaithful if she wanted to do those things. He denied paternity when she did become pregnant. She has had two abortions with him, which he has refused to help pay for.
Candice	41	Candice is 41 and has been married to her husband (who has never physically or sexually abused her) for many years, and they have a child together. He wants another child and she does not. She has become unwantedly pregnant by him several times and has had abortions, after which he accused her of "killing their children". They were using withdrawal due to her difficulties with hormonal methods, but he ejaculated inside of her and lied when she asked him about it.
Tammy	23	Tammy used birth control pills while her abusive boyfriend was incarcerated, but had to hide that from him, because he would have thought that she was being unfaithful to him. She became pregnant and had an abortion, and she didn't tell him for fear that he wouldn't let her. A different abusive boyfriend wanted her to be pregnant when she did not want to be; he stopped using condoms.
Norma	26	Norma was in an abusive relationship with the same person for 10 years, from the time she was 15 years old. She has two children by him, as well as having had a miscarriage and two abortions. Her partner cheated on her, had a baby with another woman, and gave Norma herpes. He did not want her to be on birth control or to use condoms (even now, when they are no longer together), because he took it as a sign that she was being unfaithful. He refused to use condoms, compromised them when he did use them and refused to withdraw to prevent a pregnancy.
Christy	24	Christy's abusive partner first impregnated her against her will by refusing to withdraw, and she got an abortion. When he impregnated her again, she wanted to get an abortion, but he insisted that she have the child. He got her pregnant a third time, although she didn't want to have another child. Previously, a non-abusive partner had tried to impregnate her by refusing to withdraw.
Cora	25	Cora's nonabusive boyfriend repeatedly removed his condom during sex without her permission, stating that if she became pregnant, "we can take care of it". Cora became pregnant and had an abortion. Previously, she had a miscarriage with another nonabusive boyfriend, who accused her of intentionally killing the baby.
Suzanne	25	Suzanne had a boyfriend who was not previously been abusive to her, but was addicted to drugs, so she did not want to become pregnant with him. He wanted her to have a baby by him, so he tried to impregnate her by having unprotected sex with her while she was asleep.
Joyce	18	Joyce's nonabusive boyfriend would refuse to withdraw, and she thinks it may have been in order to impregnate her.

Flora	23	During her teenage years and young adulthood, Flora had a boyfriend that was sexually abusive to her. He never actually tried to impregnate her, but he told her that she should have his child to prove her love to him. Flora's next boyfriend was verbally and emotionally abusive, but he was not physically abusive to her. However, he refused to use condoms, and she became pregnant. He strongly encouraged her to have an abortion, which she did.
Dolores	44	Dolores's first pregnancy with her abusive partner occurred when she was 13. She had three more children, and five abortions, with him, over the course of more than 20 years. He denied paternity for most of her pregnancies in order to hurt her.
Monica	20	Monica's boyfriend is verbally but not physically abusive. He did not try to impregnate her, but once she became accidentally pregnant, he wanted her to have an abortion. When she resisted, he threatened to end the pregnancy by kicking her in the stomach. He didn't actually do that, and she ended up getting an abortion for her own reasons. However, after he offered to pay, he then decided to withhold the money and Monica had to pay for it herself.
Margarita	25	Margarita has been with her abusive husband since she was a teenager. He never tried to impregnate her, and did not care about her contraceptive use. They became pregnant for the first time when she was 16, and he strongly encouraged her to abort, against her wishes. She became pregnant a second time while taking a break from Depo, and he did not try to influence the outcome; she wanted to give birth and she did. After that birth she had trouble with contraception and was not using any. Her husband was about to go to jail, so he impregnated her with the express purpose of ensuring that she would not abandon him while he was incarcerated. She did not want a baby, but he refused to allow her to have an abortion, or to pay for an abortion, since she had no money of her own, so she had the baby. She became pregnant a fourth time, while she was not using contraception and he refused to use condoms, and he denied paternity. She wanted an abortion and he did not try to stop her this time, and he paid for it.
Natalie	24	Natalie was using injectable contraception, but she didn't tell her abusive boyfriend about it, because she wasn't sure how he'd react. When she missed a shot and became pregnant, he wanted her to have the child, in order to tie her to him. She didn't want to have a child and she had an abortion. When she got home from the clinic, her boyfriend had put all of her belongings on the sidewalk. Later, he would deny that he had been the father of the child, in order to hurt her. After the abortion, he tried to refuse to use condoms, accusing her of infidelity because she wanted to use them, so that she would become pregnant again.
Lynne	22	Lynne was in two concurrent abusive relationships. One of her partners wanted to impregnate her, specifically so that she would leave her other partner. In order to do this, he forced her to have unprotected sex with him. However, when she did become pregnant from this, he denied paternity. He did not stop her when she decided to terminate the pregnancy (she was conflicted about having an abortion, but was worried about the fetus because of her drug use); in fact, he threw some money at her.
Louise	32	Louise's abusive boyfriend refused to use condoms on a few occasions, because he wanted her to get pregnant. It was a goal of his - he had it all worked out in his mind, despite the fact that she didn't want to be pregnant at that time. When she became pregnant and told him that she wanted to have an abortion, he pressured her not to.
Velma	25	Velma had an abusive boyfriend when she was a teenager, and he took off a condom while they were having sex. He told Velma that he'd had a dream that she was going to be his baby's mother. He repeatedly asked her whether she'd gotten her period. She did become pregnant, and had the baby.

Sarah	19 Sarah's abusive boyfriend would refuse to use condoms, or he would put them on and then remove them, or he would tell her he was going to withdraw and then refuse to do so. He stated that he wanted to have a child with her. He was violent toward her during the pregnancy (which she was keeping, because she thought she was too late for an abortion, and felt that he would have been even more violent toward her if she had tried to obtain one), and she miscarried.
Allison	26 When Allison got pregnant with her first son, she felt that her abusive partner was trying to make it happen. They had stopped using condoms, but had not discussed having a child together. However, she felt that he was insecure that she would leave him, and wanted her to be pregnant so that she would stay. She became pregnant, and had a child.
Rhonda	47 Rhonda was in a violent relationship with a much older man. He would have sex with her while she was sleeping, and she would often drink in order to make herself numb so that she could have sex with him - this interfered with her ability to use contraception. She became pregnant and had an abortion without telling him. During another relationship, her partner refused to withdraw, and Rhonda became pregnant. She had a child at that time. Rhonda has has many abortions with multiple partners.
Elizabeth	44 Early in Elizabeth's relationship with her abusive husband, she was pregnant from her previous relationship. Her husband pressured her into having an abortion. During their marriage, however, he wanted her to be pregnant more often than she wanted to be. He would often ejaculate in her without her permission. He would monitor her medication intake in order to be sure that she wasn't taking birth control pills. She became pregnant at three times, and had three children. When he found out she was pregnant with the third, he denied paternity and accused her of infidelity. She sought an abortion without telling him, knowing that he would refuse to allow it, but she was already 7 months pregnant.
Carol	37 Carol suspected that one of her children's fathers had tried to impregnate her in order to hold her back in life, so she had an abortion without telling him. Later, Carol's husband had sex with her, without her consent, while she was asleep. She became pregnant and she didn't want to be, but her husband tried to coerce her not to have an abortion. She had an abortion, but two weeks later he did the same thing, and she became pregnant again, and she had another abortion.
April	43 April had three violent relationships, however, it was a non-abusive partner who coerced her into having an abortion even though she did not want to have one. She was afraid he would leave her if she didn't, but she had the abortion and he left her anyway.
Kimberly	39 In one of Kimberly's nonviolent relationship, her partner refused to use condoms. She became pregnant and wanted to have the baby. However, her partner wanted her to have an abortion, and coerced her into doing so.
Ellen	19 Ellen hadn't wanted to become pregnant with her violent, much older partner at that time because she was only 16, however, he refused to use condoms. She attempted to use birth control pills, but he would refuse to pay for them and she would run out, and he would accuse her of taking them because she was cheating on him. He is the father of her young daughter, and when she first became pregnant, he was happy. But right before she delivered, he began insisting that the child wasn't his, and kicked her out of the house. They got back together, and she became pregnant again, and he beat her during the pregnancy and again denied paternity.

Heather	24	First serious relationship at 19; they were together four years before he hit her and her grandmother pressed charges and he got locked up. She said when they fought, she would fight back. He fathered another child with someone else while the two of them were together. She had tried to also use the birth control pill in this relationship but this partner had scared her about the potential side effects including saying that she could never have children and she said he “acted out” when she tried to use contraception. He refused to use condoms. She got pregnant with this abusive partner twice and had abortions both times. After the pregnancies, he gave her STIs. At time of interview, she had a son with someone else who was abusive and sabotaged her birth control. He pulled the NuvaRing out of her. She was able to get back on the birth control pills and she hid them underneath the bed where he didn’t look. She got pregnant with him again and she thought they had agreed on an abortion, but he flipped out when she had an abortion.
Michelle	18	Michelle got together with her abusive partner when she was 16 and he was 24. He told her he wanted her to have children by him. He got her pregnant against her will within the first 3 months of their relationship by surreptitiously removing condoms during sex, when he wasn't refusing to use them altogether. She had the child. Very quickly, he impregnated her again, telling her that it would keep other men away from her. His pressure to have the child contributed to her decision to keep the pregnancy, but mostly it was because she could not afford an abortion. She had wanted to be on bcps but was not able to access them.
Lucy	49	While Lucy was married to the non-abusive father of her children, she made decisions about when to have children and when not to. She became unintentionally pregnant several times due to gaps in contraceptive use, and had abortions without telling her husband, because she felt it was her decision to make. However, he did want to become pregnant at a time when she didn't, so she used bcps without telling him. She felt that she didn't want to argue with him about it.
Yolanda	18	When Yolanda told the father of her first pregnancy who was violent partner that she was pregnant, he first accused her of faking the pregnancy, then tried to kick her out of their home, then beat and choked her, then pulled a gun on her. She had the child against her wishes, because her family was opposed to abortion and she needed their consent for an abortion. Her next partner was also violent, and he told her that he was going to impregnate her. That night, they were having sex a condom broke, and he refused to stop having sex, and she became pregnant. He threatened her with violence if she had an abortion, but she had one anyway, gathering money from friends and family in order to do so.
Stephanie	21	Stephanie's violent partner told her that he wanted her to have a baby with him. However when she did become pregnant, he badly wanted her to get an abortion. Stephanie didn't want to have a baby, either, but a combination of fear and lack of money delayed her from making an appointment for an abortion. About 4 months into the pregnancy, when she did try to obtain an abortion, the descriptions of the procedure at that gestation further frightened her, and she delayed further. Her partner threatened to throw her down the stairs or punch her in the stomach to cause an abortion, and this prompted her to obtain a safe abortion 5 months into the pregnancy.
Claire	19	Claire's abusive partner impregnated her by ejaculating in her without her permission. He was happy when they confirmed the pregnancy, but he threw her down the stairs during a fight, and she miscarried.
June	27	June's abusive partner denied paternity of their child while she was pregnant at age 15, upsetting her so badly that she attempted suicide. Later in her life, a partner whom she classified as non-violent attempted to get her pregnant by refusing to use condoms and by having unprotected sex with her while she was asleep.

Nicole	32	The father of Nicole's first child hurt her occasionally. He did not try to get her pregnant, but she did become pregnant by accident. He was angry and wanted her to abort, but she felt differently and had the child. He refused to have anything to do with the baby and eventually Nicole left.
Angela	25	Brothers and their friends have intercourse with her up until age 11. The father of her kids who she was with 5 years hit her and she would fight back. She had 4 pregnancies with him. He didn't want to use condoms and he told her he would marry her if she kept the second pregnancy which she wasn't enthusiastic about keeping. He blamed her for having miscarried the third pregnancy.
Amelia	30	Forced childhood sexual intercourse by family friend and brother; first voluntary sex partner (her baby daddy) was a junkie, he smoked crack, he was very abusive--he beat her during the pregnancy and she left after the baby was born; next baby daddy was a drug dealer who, when she got pregnant, was happy to keep her in "lock-down." She sold sex for drugs because she started doing crack 3 years ago. She
Josephine	25	With an abusive man for 8 years who would make her have sex and not use condoms. Her last two pregnancies with him were unwanted.
Beverly	28	Was raped by two crack heads when she was 15, has had over 100 sex partners and made sure they have her something for having sex; at age 14, her partner was sent to jail and she got pregnant with another man because they didn't make condoms in his size--they kept on breaking; when her daughter was 9 months old she started hooking with a pimp and was raped numerous times and tortured; the husband who had been in jail beat her; he didn't know she was working as a prostitute up until very recently; they recently got back together and got married but it didn't change anything; both of them were not interested in abortion and pregnancy happened because of nonuse of condoms but she's not sure she didn't want to get pregnant; husband expressed a son preference--i.e.. accepted child because it was a son.
Charlotte	31	Charlotte has had many sexual partners, but only three relationships, all of which were abusive and all of which produced children. A common reaction among these partners was to deny paternity. One partner tried unsuccessfully to pressure her into having an abortion. Charlotte's last relationship became abusive as a result of her pregnancy. Her partner did not want a baby, but he refused to use condoms. When she became pregnant, he stabbed her.
Marilyn	32	Marilyn's abusive husband did not really want to have either of their 2 children, but did not try to prevent her pregnancies or truly influence their outcomes. However, after the second child, he forced her to be sterilized.
Roxanne	30	Roxanne was sexually abused as a child and young adolescent and was raped at 16 by an acquaintance. Soon afterwards she entered into relationship, which turned violent after the birth of her first child. She ended that relationship and had another violent partnership. This second partner, after threatening her and beating her in order to force her not to have abortions, beat her badly during her next two pregnancies, causing her to give birth prematurely in both cases. One of the children was hospitalized for a long time, and the other died shortly after birth. Both of these partners refused to use condoms. She was pregnant by the 2nd partner 7 times - 1 child, 1 stillbirth, 4 abortions, 1 miscarriage.
Clara	25	Was in an abusive relationship where he dissuaded her from using contraception; there were many times where she was at risk of pregnancy but did not get pregnant.
Jodi	27	Had recently miscarried. She had not been able to get to the doctor for her Depo shot because he had refused to give her the bus money.

Nina	26 Nina was raped at the age of 11, and was sexually abused by a much older man when she was 13. Her first steady boyfriend was physically abusive and impregnated her. She didn't want to have the baby, but he threatened to kill her if she had an abortion, so she had the child. Her partner attended the delivery against her will, and she ran away from him a few days after the birth. She later married another violent partner, who also impregnated her against her will by refusing to withdraw and forcing her to have sex. He tried to stop her from obtaining an abortion by keeping her from getting to appointments, and disrupting appointments at the clinic. She ended up aborting at 4 months gestation. She had four other abortions with this partner.
Wendy	25 Wendy was sexually abused as a child, and was in an abusive relationship starting at age 19. This partner refused to use condoms, or he would rip them so that they'd be ineffective. She had 2 children by him, and had 8 abortions. He would try to convince her not to abort, but Wendy felt that he was not even taking care of the children they did have.
Vanessa	23 Vanessa was sexually abused by family members as a small child. Her first child's father was physically abusive, and tried to kill her fetus by kicking her in the stomach when she was pregnant by another man (after she and he had broken up). He refused to use condom with her, and accused her of being unfaithful when she brought it up. They were in agreement about wanting to keep their first pregnancy, but he tried to pressure her into aborting her second pregnancy. She successfully resisted this pressure and had a second child. She also had two abortions by this partner. Vanessa had recently gotten pregnant by a non-violent father who refused to withdraw, and she had a baby.