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HEALTH EDUCATION  
AND PROMOTION

AN INVESTIGATION OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE PERCEPTIONS IN  
NINE COUNTIES IN APPALACHIAN OHIO: A HEALTH BELIEF MODEL  
APPROACH (pp. 227)

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The purpose of this study was to investigate intimate partner violence (IPV) in nine Appalachian Ohio counties by applying the constructs of the Health Belief Model as the theoretical underpinning. A multi-scale instrument was developed to explore participant attitudes toward IPV as a public and personal health concern. Participant ranking of physical, sexual, and expressive aggression, coercive control, and stalking IPV behaviors based on perceived severity was examined. Demographics included age, household income, educational attainment, environment (rural, suburban, urban), Appalachian self-identity, and self-reported lifetime IPV experience. These variables were used to determine if a relationship existed between the variables and attitudes toward IPV behaviors. Cues to action were considered to determine what influences would encourage a woman to seek help if IPV were experienced.

Findings from this study shed light on the diversity in the region, and demonstrated how risk factors played a substantial part in IPV experience, attitudes and behaviors. Results showed how IPV experience (or no experience) may alter perceptions of susceptibility, severity, and barriers to help seeking. Results also presented consistency with seminal findings regarding IPV experience in Appalachia, the effect of labeling one's self as Appalachian, and the importance of family and friends in

addressing IPV issues. Areas of contradiction were highlighted, specifically in regards to rural environments affecting perceptions, and the importance of health care professionals. The HBM was proven to be an effective theory for evaluating IPV-related health behaviors and perceptions.