

# Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children



## Field Intersections, Gaps, and Tensions

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### Introduction

Violence Against Women (VAW) and Violence Against Children (VAC) are both major public health problems that violate women's and children's human rights.<sup>1,2</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. The WHO also estimates that 6 in 10 children worldwide (aged 2-17) have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past year.<sup>1,2</sup>

In order to bring greater efforts to end VAW and VAC, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include specific targets to: end all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres (Target 5.2); eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (Target 5.3); and end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children (Target 16.2).<sup>3,4</sup>

The encouragement for interdisciplinary collaboration, however, has not always been the norm. Historically, research, programs, and policies on VAW and VAC have been implemented separately.<sup>5</sup> Independent treaties and specialized UN agencies were created for either women or children as the sole focus.<sup>5</sup> This historical divide continues to drive separate funding streams, strategies, terminologies, rights treaties, and bodies of research.<sup>6</sup> Yet, research and programs on VAW and VAC follow similar paths. Given the substantial evidence of the intersections of VAW and VAC, collaboration between fields is necessary to achieve the SDGs by 2030.<sup>5,6</sup>

### Intersections of VAW and VAC

Researchers have conducted rigorous literature reviews to find the overlapping factors found within each field of research and have come up with six intersections between VAW and VAC.<sup>7</sup> These intersections include: common risk factors, social norms that condone violence and prevent help-seeking, co-occurrence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and VAC, intergenerational effects, common and compounding consequences, and adolescence (Figure 1).<sup>7,8</sup>

Figure 2 goes into further depth for each intersection of VAW and VAC.



Figure 1: Intersections of VAW and VAC<sup>7,8</sup>

### References

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6. Guedes A, Mikton C. Examining the Intersections between Child Maltreatment and Intimate Partner Violence. *West J Emerg Med*. 2013;14(4):377-379. doi:10.5811/westjem.2013.2.16249
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**Figure 2: Intersections of VAW & VAC<sup>6-8,11</sup>**

**Field Gaps**

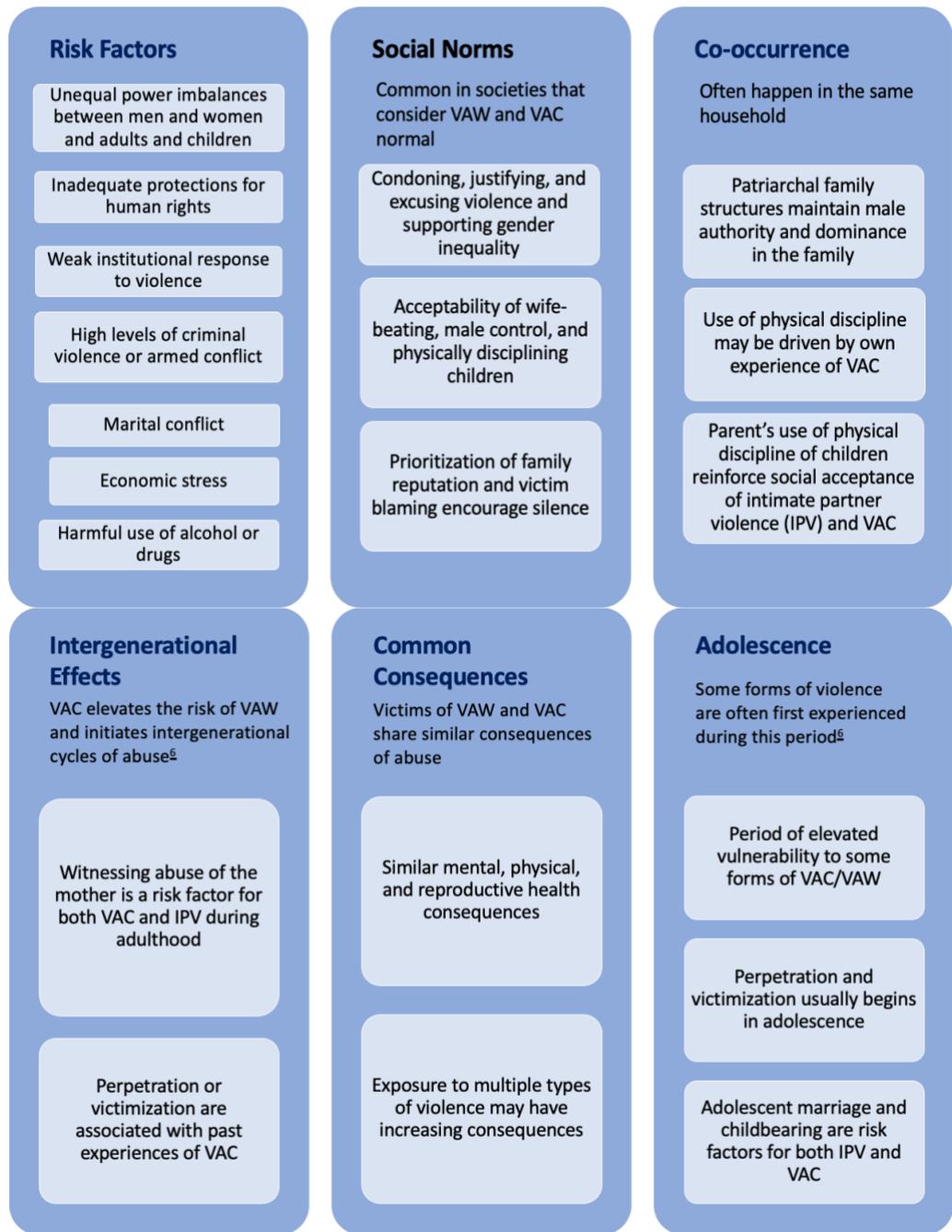
While there is proof of overlapping factors, previous evidence of working on one form of violence alone may miss risk factors, vulnerabilities, and consequences of experiencing multiple types of violence within the family and across the lifespan.<sup>5,9</sup>

Adolescent individuals are the most likely to be missed by VAW and VAC research and programs.<sup>6</sup> Ironically, adolescence is an intersection of the two fields, yet sometimes adolescents are overlooked by child protective services who typically focus on younger children and by research and programs that focus on women.<sup>6</sup>

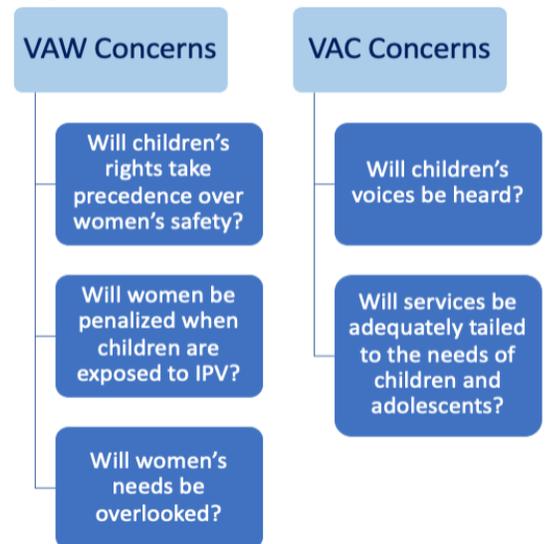
Additionally, given the evidence behind the intergenerational cycles of IPV and VAC, researchers and programs should also be focused on this area to prevent future occurrences of violence.<sup>8</sup> However, without the sharing of information and efforts toward ending the cycle, addressing one area of the cycle may be difficult in ensuring efficacy.<sup>7-9</sup>

**Tensions and Potential Risk of Collaboration**

There are some identified risks of collaboration from either field that may influence fields to work independently (Figure 3).<sup>2</sup> However, these reasons should be discussed between disciplines and should not deter either field from seeking and engaging in greater collaboration.<sup>2</sup> Interdisciplinary collaboration will be necessary for ending VAW and VAC and achieving the SDGs by 2030.<sup>7,10</sup>



**Figure 3: Collaboration Risks<sup>2</sup>**



**References**

9. WHO. Changing cultural and social norms that support violence. *WHO Feature*. 2009.  
 10. Bacchus LJ, Colombini M, Contreras Urbina M, et al. Exploring opportunities for coordinated responses to intimate partner violence and child maltreatment in low and middle income countries: a scoping review. *Psychol Health Med*. 2017;22(sup1):135-165. doi:10.1080/13548506.2016.1274410