Social care support for south Asian domestic violence victims in the United Kingdom: a scoping review protocol

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# Abstract

**Objective:** This scoping review aims to synthesise the literature on social care needs of south Asian domestic abuse victims and barriers and facilitators relating to 1) victims seeking help and engaging with professionals and services and 2) professionals supporting and safeguarding these individuals.

**Introduction:** In the United Kingdom, there is an emphasis on services to prevent domestic abuse and support victims. The south Asian community encounter complexities that prevent services from providing appropriate support and victims from seeking help.

**Inclusion criteria:**Studies that explore psychological, physical, sexual, emotional and/or financial abuse perpetrated by a family member will be included. Also, studies that include samples of male and female adult south Asian domestic abuse victims and survivors and professionals who have had direct experience of supporting these individuals will be included. Studies that include samples of services outside of the United Kingdom, not related to a domestic setting (e.g., institutional abuse) and not published in English will be excluded.

**Methods:** The search strategy involved searching several databases including Web of Science, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) for literature. The titles and abstracts of identified references will be screened using the inclusion criteria in the first instance followed by full text papers. Data will be extracted using a pre-determined data extraction form and analysed using narrative summary. Results will be presented in a table.

### Keywords: domestic abuse; domestic violence; service provision; south Asian; social care

# Introduction

Domestic violence and abuse is defined as ‘any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality’1. This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional, ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. It is a prominent issue that has short and long-lasting psychological, physical and social consequences on those affected2,3.

The Office for National Statistics highlighted that 6.1% of individuals aged 16 to 59 years in England and Wales reported experiencing some form of domestic abuse during March 2019 and March 20204. This figure has remained relatively stable since 2007. However, in recent times cases are reported to have increased dramatically due to the national lockdown in March 2020 in response to the risk of Covid-195. The nature of the lockdown (e.g., spending more time with the abuser, being isolated from support networks and a lack of access to support services) provided an opportunity for abuse to escalate and prevented individuals from escaping abusive situations6.

It is estimated that there are many cases that remain unreported or undetected meaning that actual rates are higher. Research indicates that underreporting is due to individuals not disclosing abusive experiences due to embarrassment, fear of not being believed or not recognising that their experience is abuse7,8. While domestic violence crime is underreported in the general population, it is even more so in South Asian communities due to additional barriers presented by cultural factors (e.g. family honour and modesty)9,10. This group is further disadvantaged due to the lack of specialist knowledge and perceived challenges relating to supporting victims from the south Asian community as well as victims underutilising or not accessing services11.

Initiatives in the United Kingdom have been developed such as developing legislation and policies (i.e., Care Act 2014; Domestic Abuse Bill, 2020) to tackle domestic abuse. The Care Act (2014) emphasises that it is a statutory requirement for local authorities to prevent or delay abuse, provide person-centered support for domestic violence victims and safeguard these individuals. To provide efficient and tailored support, improve service provision and victims’ engagement with services, it is important to establish the social care needs of south Asian domestic violence victims as well as their access and engagement with professionals and organisations. Establishing this can inform future empirical research as well as guidance for professionals and services. Thus, the proposed scoping review aims to answer the review questions listed below.

A preliminary search was conducted on 21st April 2020 to identify completed or on-going scoping or systematic literature reviews in relation to the topic in question. Websites such as Cochrane database of systematic reviews, National institute for health and clinical excellence (NICE), National Institute for Health Research and Campbell Library of Systematic reviews were used for the search. Also, databases or search engines such as Google Scholar, PsychInfo, PubMed, Academic Complete Search and Ethos were also searched. The search identified that 3 systematic reviews were in progress.

One systematic review focused on assessing the effectiveness of intimate partner violence interventions targeted towards south Asian domestic violence women living in America12. Another systematic review aimed to determine what cultural competency means in primary care contexts of women of immigrant and refugee backgrounds experiencing domestic violence13. Another systematic review aimed to synthesise literature on barriers and facilitators of help seeking behaviours in South Asian women residing in high-income countries who have experienced domestic violence14.

In comparison to these reviews, this scoping review aims to synthesise a broader range of literature that is relevant to domestic violence (i.e., including all family members) in south Asian communities, specifically in the United Kingdom. The proposed scoping review aims to evaluate and synthesise aspects relating to south Asian domestic abuse victims’ social care needs, service provision, facilitators and barriers associated with engagement between victims and professionals/support services. It will utilise broader samples that include male and female victims and perpetrators will include all family members. Thus, this will provide a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the literature in this area that can inform future research.

# Review questions

1. What is known about the social care needs of adult south Asian domestic abuse victims in the United Kingdom?
2. What is known about south Asians’ perceptions, experiences, barriers and facilitators to seeking help and engaging with social services regarding domestic abuse?
3. What is known about social care professionals’ perceptions, experiences, barriers and facilitators to engaging with and supporting south Asian domestic abuse victims?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of service provision relating to safeguarding and supporting south Asian abuse victims?

# Inclusion criteria

## Participants

This scoping review will consider studies that include samples of adult south Asian men or women who have experienced domestic violence (i.e., psychological, physical, sexual, emotional, financial, honor-based violence and/or forced married). These participants must be living in the United Kingdom. This includes immigrants and those who were born in the United Kingdom.

Social care professionals who have encountered victims of domestic abuse from the south Asian community will also be included in the scoping literature. Healthcare professionals such as general practitioners and nurses will be excluded. Also, generic and specialist services relating to supporting and safeguarding south Asian domestic abuse victims will be included.

## Concept

This scoping literature review is interested in south Asian domestic abuse victims’ social care and support needs (e.g., financial support, housing, safeguarding, maintaining independence and social interaction), and barriers and facilitators to domestic abuse victims’ seeking help and engaging with professionals and social care organisations. It will also focus on professionals perspectives on safeguarding, supporting, and engaging with domestic abuse survivors from the south Asian community. Lastly, strengths and weaknesses relating to service provision will also be considered.

## Context

The scoping literature review will consider studies that have been conducted with participants based in the United Kingdom.

## Types of sources

Grey literature and primary research studies will be considered for the scoping literature review, as will studies that used qualitative and quantitative methodology (any research design). Charity and government reports that include primary data collection will also be included.

# Methods

The proposed scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI methodology for scoping reviews15. A scoping review, as opposed to a systematic review, was considered appropriate to address the research questions as it allows to synthesise a broad range of existing literature that can form the basis of future research and the development of specific research questions16.

## Search strategy

The search strategy will aim to identify published and grey literature of primary sources of evidence. An initial limited search of Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) and PsycINFO was undertaken to identify articles on domestic abuse in the south Asian community. Key words contained in the title, abstracts and keywords of relevant references was used to develop a full search strategy for CINAHL, PsycINFO, ASSIA, Web of Science (see Appendix I). A shorted version was used for Open Grey, Department of Health and Social Care, NICE and Social Science Research Network The University librarian assisted with the development of search terms. This search strategy was used to search database and a shortened version was used to search grey literature search engines and databases. Once studies are identified and meet the inclusion criteria, the reference lists of those papers that meet the inclusion criteria will be screened to identify further relevant literature.

Articles published in English only will be included. Studies that were published from database inception until the time of the search will be included.

The databases used to search literature were CINAHL, PsycINFO, ASSIA and Web of Science. Gray literature was searched using Open Grey, Department of Health and Social Care, NICE and Social Science Research Network.

## Source of evidence selection

Following the search, all identified records will be collated and uploaded into EndNote and duplicates removed. Following a pilot test, titles and abstracts will be screened by two independent reviewers for assessment against the inclusion criteria for the review. A draft inclusion form is provided (see Appendix II). Potentially relevant papers will be retrieved in full and their citation details imported into the JBI System for the Unified Management, Assessment and Review of Information (JBI SUMARI; JBI, Adelaide, Australia)17. The full text of selected citations will be assessed in detail against the inclusion criteria by two independent reviewers. Reasons for exclusion of full-text papers that do not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion or with a third reviewer. The results of the search will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented in a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) flow diagram18.

## Data extraction

Data will be extracted from papers included in the scoping review by two independent reviewers using a data extraction tool developed by the researchers. The data extracted will include specific details about the study and participant characteristics, methods, phenomenon studied, key findings, researcher(s) reflexivity and recommendations for practice. A draft extraction tool is provided (see Appendix III). The draft data extraction tool will be modified and revised as necessary during the process of extracting data from each included paper. Modifications will be detailed in the full scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be resolved through discussion or with a third reviewer. Authors of papers will be contacted to request missing or additional data, where required.

## Data analysis and presentation

The results will be reported in a tabulated form and narrative summary will accompany this by describing how the results relate to the reviews objective and questions. A narrative summary analysis is appropriate as it allows synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings from a diverse body of literature that uses different methodologies and measures a variety of outcomes19,20.

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# Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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# Appendix I: Search strategy

PsycINFO (via Ovid). Search conducted on August 2020

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Search**  | **Query** | **Records retrieved** |
| #1 | ethnic\* identity OR minorit\* groups OR bangl\* OR bengal\* OR pakista\* OR india\* OR bhutan\* OR sri lanka\* OR tamil OR afghanistan\* OR maldives\* OR nepal\* OR south asia\*ANDunited kingdom OR brit\* OR england OR scotland OR wales OR northern IrelandAND service provision OR social service\* OR social care OR charit\* OR third sector OR voluntary sector OR NGOs OR social work OR support work\* OR mental health OR barrier OR facilitator OR help seek\* OR safeguard\*ANDdomestic abuse OR domestic violence OR family violence OR intimate partner violence OR battered OR IPV OR physical abuse\* OR physical violence OR sex\* abuse OR sex\* violence OR financ\* abuse OR neglect\* OR emotion\* abuse OR coer\* OR survivor\* OR control\* behavio?r OR victimi?ation OR blackmail OR bribery | 8 |

# Appendix II: Screening inclusion criteria form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Initials of data extractor |  |
| Date form completed  |  |
| Publication type e.g. journal, report  |  |
| Study title |  |
| Study authors |  |
| Journal |  |
| Year of publication |  |

**Inclusion / exclusion criteria**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sample | Adult south Asian men or women who live in the United Kingdom. This includes those who were born in the United Kingdom and immigrants.orSocial care professionals (e.g., social workers, support worker) who have encountered victims of abuse from the British south Asian communityYes □ No □ |
| Phenomenon  | Financial, sexual, physical, emotional and/or neglect in a domestic setting by a family memberYes □ No □ |
| Was the source conducted in the United Kingdom? | Yes □ No □ |
| Is the publication in English? | Yes □ No □ |
| Is the topic related to the following topics: | * - Victims’ social care needs (e.g., assistance with activities of daily living, maintaining independence, social interaction, supporting the individual to play a fuller part in society, protecting them in vulnerable situations and helping them to manage complex relationships)
* - Support (E.g., financial support, housing, safeguarding)
* - Victims’ barriers to seek help or engage with social services
* - Victims’ help-seeking behaviours
* - Engagement between victims’ and social care professionals
* - Staff perceptions relating to seeking help, engaging with social services and supporting/safeguarding abuse victims
* - All aspects relating to service provision (e.g., referrals, signposting, safeguarding)
* - Strengths and/or weaknesses relating to service provision. This can include referrals, signposting, safeguarding, and liaising with other agencies to support the victim (e.g., law enforcement, victim support, legal services, court, housing and health)

Yes □ No □ |

**Decision**                                 Include □ Exclude □

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reasons for exclusion  | [Reasons will be added during the screening and study selection phase] |

# Appendix III: Draft data extraction form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Initials of data extractor |  |
| Date form completed  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Description as stated in paper | Source |
| Study characteristics |
| Study title  |   |  |
| Study authors  |   |  |
| Journal  |  |  |
| Year of publication |   |  |
| Study aim(s) |   |  |
| Type of study |   |  |
| Type of abuse |  |  |
| Setting (e.g., third sector organisations) |  |  |
| Country data was collected |  |  |
| When was data collected |  |  |
| Study sample and methodology |
| Number of participants |  |  |
| Who was the sample? |  |  |
| Participant demographics (e.g. age, gender) |  |  |
| If social care professional, what is their role?Where do they work? |  |  |
| Sampling  |  |  |
| Informed consent obtained? |  |  |
| How was data collected? (e.g., questionnaires, interviews) |  |  |
| If applicable, what scales were used and what did these scales measure?(Report reliability and validity scores) |  |  |
| Type of analysis used |   |  |
| Study results |
| Key qualitative findings that relate to scoping review questions |  |  |
| Key quantitative findings that relate to scoping review questions |  |  |
| Author(s) conclusions  |  |  |
| Author(s) reflexivity Strengths and limitations |  |  |
| Authors(s) recommendations |  |  |