

# **Surviving physical and sexual abuse: what helps low-income women?**

陳怡樺

Patricia O'Campo; Karen McDonnell; Andrea Gielen; Jessica Burke and Yi-hua Chen

## **Abstract**

**OBJECTIVES:** This paper contributes to the growing literature on help-seeking among women who experience violence. **METHODS:** We interviewed 390 low-income women who reported experiencing physical or sexual violence during adulthood, half of whom were infected with HIV. We obtained information on actions taken in response to episodes of violence and for leaving abusive relationships. **RESULTS:** A substantial proportion of women could predict an oncoming episode of violence; although the majority took some action either before or during the violent episode, almost 20% took no action at that time to protect themselves. Although family and friends were the greatest source of help for leaving violent relationships, the majority of women who left their abusers, 70%, did not receive assistance. Jobs and education were identified services that would help women leave abusive relationships. **CONCLUSIONS:** There is need for more services for low-income women experiencing violence that focus on safety and on supporting and promoting financial independence.