

Intersections of intimate partner violence and food insecurity in Gauteng

Academic literature indicates a causal relationship between food insecurity and intimate partner violence (IPV) (Gibbs et al., 2017; Hatcher et al., 2019). Food insecurity is a proxy for poverty, but there is a specific causal pathway that leads from food insecurity to a greater likelihood of IPV. Because of widely-shared societal norms and historical gender roles that position men as the expected ‘providers’ or ‘breadwinners’ in a household, an inability to put food on the table can lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety, stress, disempowerment and misplaced anger. This in turn may lead to an increased risk of IPV. This Vignette uses data from the GCRO’s Quality of Life (QoL) survey 6 (2020/21) to explore this causal relationship between food insecurity and IPV among a population-based sample of women in Gauteng. In general terms, the data indicates higher levels of IPV in households that are worse off in socio-economic terms. However, food insecurity seems to significantly compound the problem. Confirming the analysis in the literature, vulnerable women in poorer households also struggling with food insecurity are disproportionately more likely to report experiencing IPV in the past year than their counterparts in food secure households.

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Inputs by

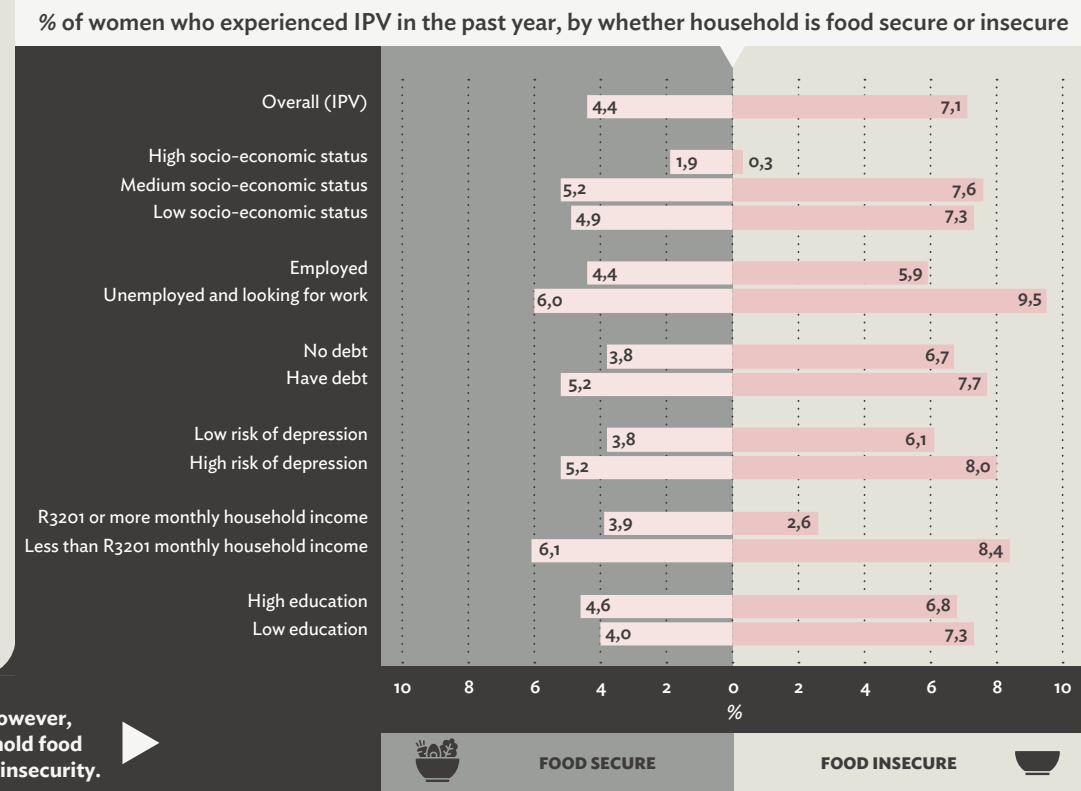
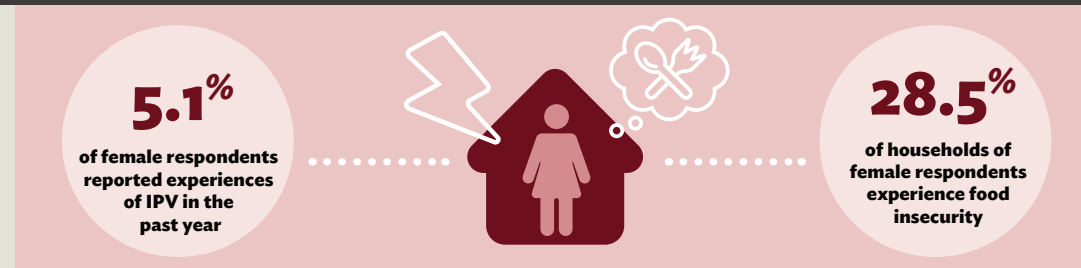
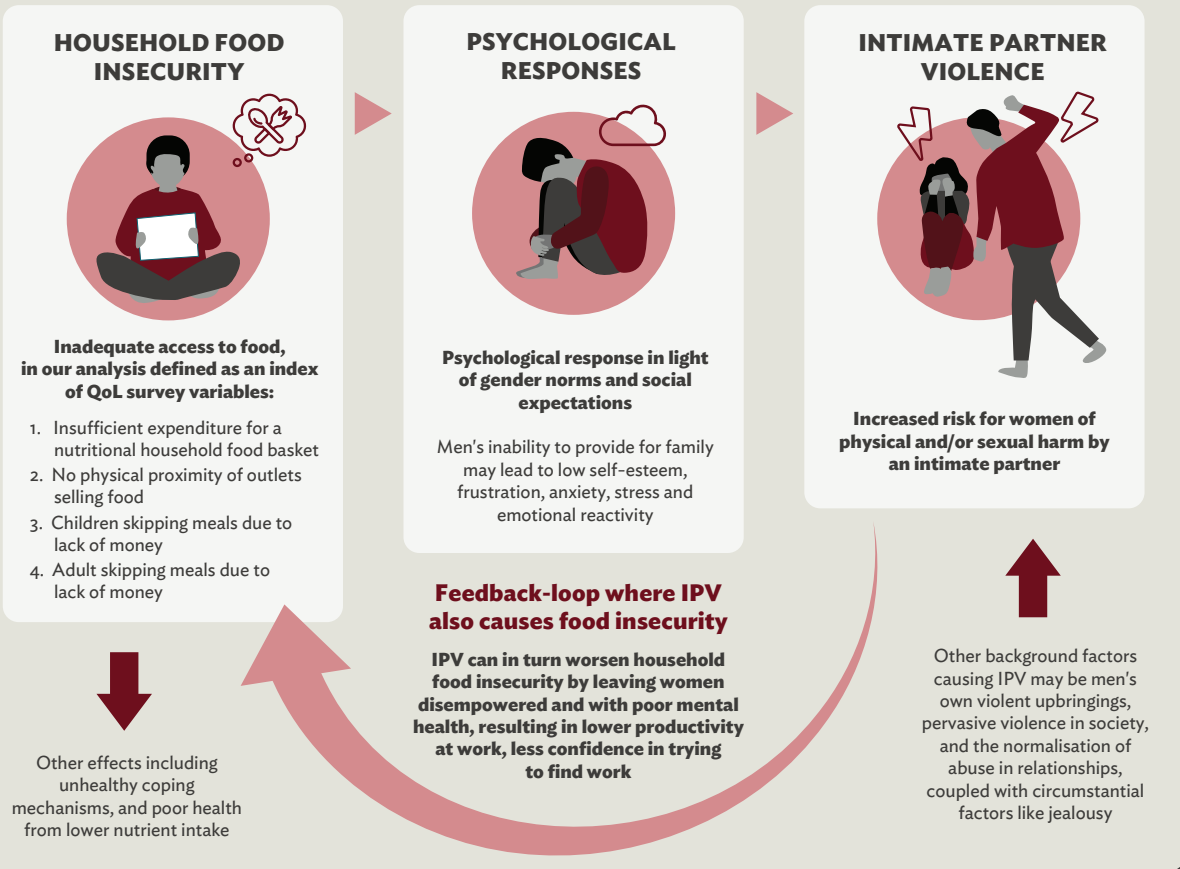
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Source

GCRO’s Quality of Life Survey 6 (2020/21)

Related GCRO research project:
Understanding Quality of Life theme

Framework linking household food insecurity and intimate partner violence



The graph shows that women who are more socially and economically vulnerable may experience relatively more IPV. However, where women face socio-economic challenges (unemployment, low incomes, low education, etc) the presence of household food insecurity significantly exacerbates the problem, increasing the risks of IPV relative to where there is no household food insecurity.