The perils of conducting meta-analyses of observational data

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Accessibility
The perils of conducting meta-analyses of observational data

Dear Editors,

We read with interest Li and colleagues’ recent article in this journal [1], which conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of the literature on associations between intimate partner violence (IPV) and HIV infection in women. The authors found a significant positive association between various types of IPV and HIV, concluding that “physical violence, sexual violence, a combination of physical and sexual violence, and any type of IPV were associated with HIV infection in women (p < 0.05)” [1].

The authors noted in their Table 1 that a past study of which we were co-authors reported no significant association between IPV and HIV in 10 Demographic and Health Surveys conducted between 2003 and 2007 [2]. We were therefore surprised to see that, in conducting their meta-analysis, the authors report that our data show significant positive relationships between IPV and HIV in women. The authors noted that “our data show significant positive relationships between IPV and HIV, concluding that “physical violence, sexual violence, a combination of physical and sexual violence, and any type of IPV were associated with HIV infection in women (p < 0.05)” [1].

The perils of conducting meta-analyses of observational data in this journal [1], which conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of the literature on associations between intimate partner violence (IPV) and HIV infection in women. The authors found a significant positive association between various types of IPV and HIV, concluding that “physical violence, sexual violence, a combination of physical and sexual violence, and any type of IPV were associated with HIV infection in women (p < 0.05)” [1].

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aggregated and individualized data [10], may also prove fruitful in generating trustworthy effect measures.

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References