

WOMEN INVOLVED IN FAMILY LAW CARE PROCEEDINGS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RISK FACTORS

BACKGROUND:

The detrimental impacts of domestic abuse and violence (DVA) are felt by those directly exposed, as well as family members. Suffering significant harm may include bearing witness, or exposure to DVA at the hands of a parent or caregiver. The WHO classed the effect on health and wellbeing on children a major public health concern.

DVA is more common among people considered vulnerable, including

those involved in Public Law Family Court proceedings initiated when a child is identified as having suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm (section 31 of the Children Act (1989)).

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) publish various risk factors in DVA guidelines. However, there is a lack of evidence regarding risk factors for vulnerable groups including those involved in the family justice system.

AIM: investigate primary care (GP) reported DVA risk factors and prevalence for women involved in public law family court proceedings, and women in the general population in Wales.

METHODS: Family Court related individual-level data supplied by Cafcass Cymru (Child and Family Courts Advisory Support Service). Data anonymously linked to array of health and other administrative data held in the SAIL Databank. Included women with GP data (~80%).

COHORT: mothers of children aged under 18 involved in court proceedings (2011-2019)

COMPARISONS: mothers of children aged under 18 (2015), matched on age and deprivation.

OUTCOME - Primary Care (GP) reported DVA: presence of specific DVA Read codes captured by GP in primary care data (validated code list) within 2 years prior to index date (Cohort = court date, comparisons = July 1st 2015).

RISK FACTORS AND MODELLING APPROACH:

Six NICE risk factors, as well as additional risk factors from literature were linked to individuals using administrative data and measured across a two-year baseline period. Multivariate logistic regression models quantified associations between DVA outcome (binary) and each of the risk factors.

National guideline (NICE) risk factor models:

POPULATION model: establish baseline and test validity of recreated NICE risk factors across population. Additional court proceedings involvement as a risk factor.

COHORT model: to permit population and cohort NICE risk factors comparisons.

Final risk factor model: Establish final risk factors for women in court proceedings.

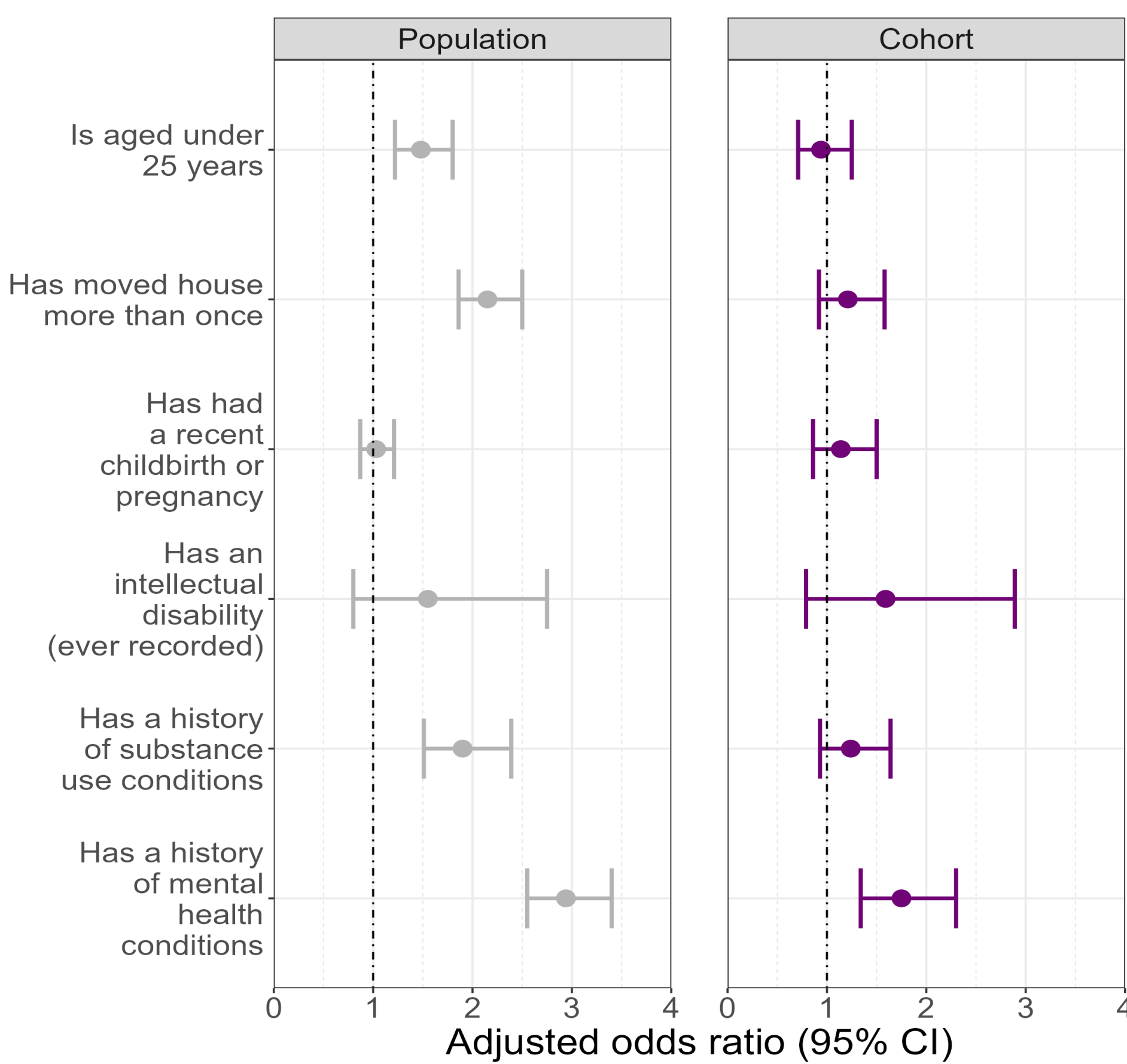
RESULTS

Cohort: n=4,899; DVA prevalence = 5.7%

Comparisons: n=254,444; DVA prevalence = 0.3%

DVA is underreported across reporting sources. The Crime Survey England and Wales 2020 estimated female prevalence at 7.3%. Our findings are similar to a prior (2017) data linkage primary care study with a lifetime prevalence 0.37%.

NICE GUIDELINE MODEL RESULTS



Court proceedings involvement was also included in the Population model but is excluded from the plot due to scale. Adjusted odds ratio = 8.0 (95% CI 6.6-9.7)

Women involved in court proceedings were **EIGHT TIMES MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A RECORD OF DVA**

DATA availability and trust

Administrative data provides opportunities to examine and highlight risk factors for DVA. Our study evidences the potential of administrative data and proof that sensitive research can be completed in an anonymised, trusted research environment such as the SAIL Databank.

DVA is underreported due to multiple reasons; improved data capture would strengthen results generalisability and encourage future research possibilities.



KEY FINDINGS:

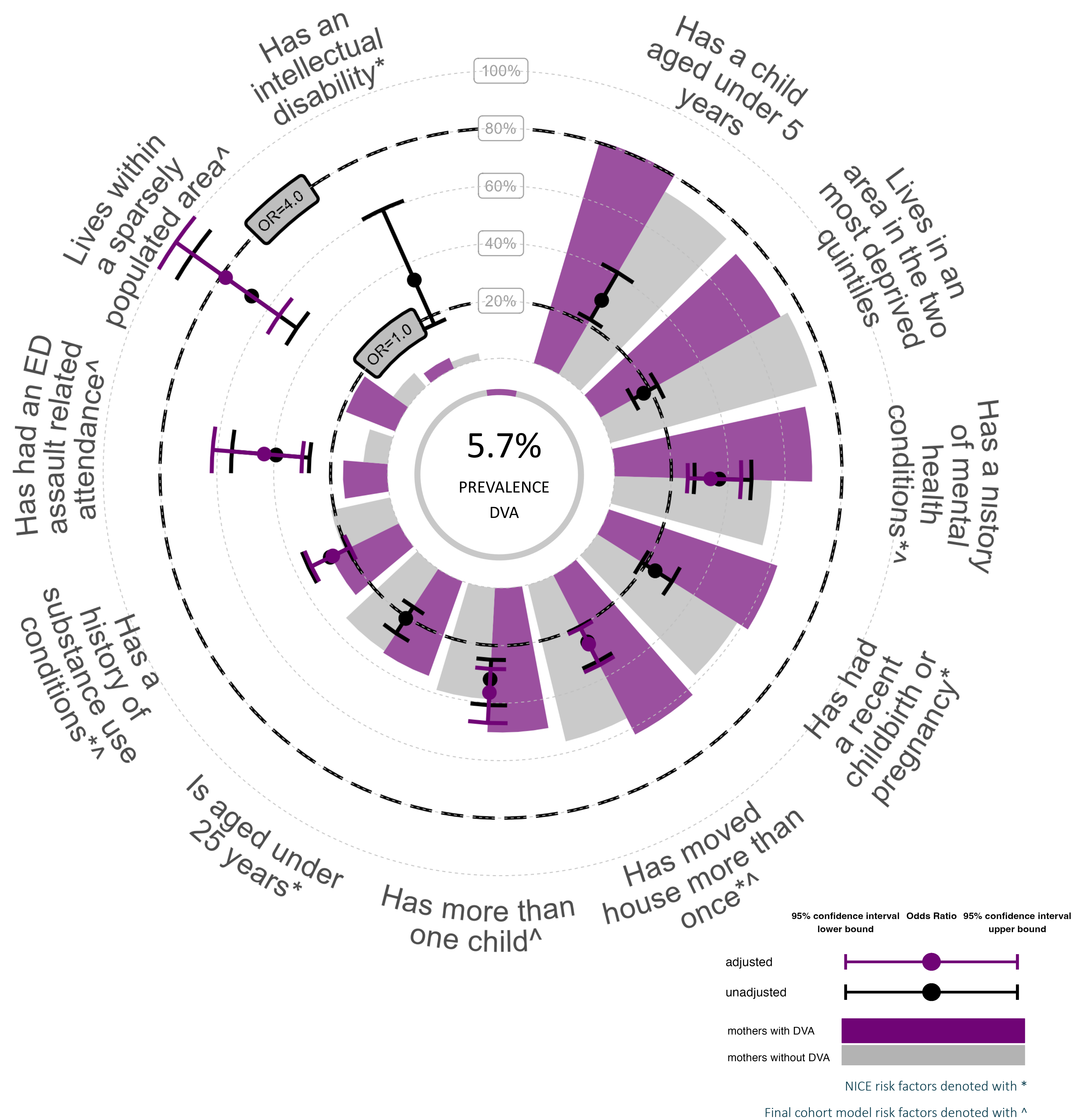
- Evidenced and emphasised increased vulnerabilities of women involved in court proceedings with an adjusted eightfold increased risk of DVA (23 times unadjusted increased risk).
- Women involved in family court proceedings do not have the same pattern of national guideline risk factors as women in the general population.
- Additional risk factors highlighted not included in national guidelines which could be used to signpost help, and help inform

future policy and practice interventions for tailored support services (living in rural areas, emergency department assault related attendances, and having more than one child).

- Replication and corroboration of NICE risk factors using administrative data sources proved a successful approach which could be used in wider research.
- Confirmed prevalence and level of underreporting of GP reported DVA in women within cohort and general population.

FINAL COHORT MODEL RESULTS

The percentage of mothers with and without a DVA record & the Odds Ratio of having DVA compared to those without DVA for each risk factor¹



If you are worried that a friend, neighbour or loved one is a victim of domestic abuse, you can call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for free and confidential advice, 24 hours a day:

0808-2000-247



Full study published here:

Risk Factors Associated with Primary Care-Reported Domestic Violence for Women Involved in Family Law Care Proceedings: Data Linkage Observational Study. *J Med Internet Res* 2023;25:e42375

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