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Domestic violence study 'flawed' say men's health advocates

A national coalition of men's health advocates has made a formal complaint to the UNSW Ethics Committee about an 'online study of young people's attitudes towards domestic and family violence' that it appears to have approved.

The complaint states the survey on which the research is to be based is gender-biased, poorly formulated and misleading. It cannot achieve its stated aims and any consequent findings will be unreliable and are likely to mislead the public.

The study, being conducted by the Gendered Violence Research Network at UNSW, the White Ribbon Campaign and Youth Action NSW, states it intends to represent a follow up on research conducted in 1999 by the Crime Research Centre.

Men's Health Australia has lodged a [complaint](#) with the Ethics Secretariat at UNSW, asking the committee to consider withdrawal of approval for the project in its current form.

Men's Health spokesman Greg Andresen said, "We have three major areas of concern with this research. Firstly the survey questions are poorly formulated and gender biased. Secondly, the methodology used in the survey is so dissimilar to the original as to make any useful comparison impossible. Finally the promotional material to prospective online participants contains false and misleading information."

"We are concerned that the current survey ignores many of the findings of the 1999 research with respect to the experience of men and boys of domestic abuse and instead focuses almost entirely upon stereotypes and sexist attitudes toward women and girls. The study seem bound to unearth 'evidence' of 'poor attitudes to violence against women' simply because it contains leading questions and fails to ask about attitudes to violence against men!" said Mr Andresen.

Men's health advocates are also alarmed that the promotional materials for the study contain significant factual errors and misrepresentations. In one example, the flyer states that "one in four young people have witnessed domestic violence against their mother or step mother," neglecting to mention that the same percentage of young people have witnessed domestic violence against their father or step father.

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