Hostile Husbands Worsen Depression in Wives

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Men who are hostile and antisocial increase depression symptoms in their wives, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Family Psychology*. The conclusion seems obvious, but sometimes studies like these are necessary to change policies and public opinion.

It's hard to believe that it was only following a lot of work on the part of feminists in the late 1960s and early 1970s that physical abuse toward women began to be taken more seriously in the United States. Numerous studies have since proven that physical and psychological abuse has long-lasting psychological consequences for abused women.

Less extreme forms of abuse are now getting more attention. In this case, behavior on the part of husbands that was consistently self-centered, angry and critical toward their wives, significantly increased symptoms of depression in women. Interestingly, hostile and antisocial women did not appear to contribute to depression in their husbands.

"It's critical that professionals ask people experiencing depression about their close relationships and recognize that their spouse's behavior influences how they feel about life and themselves, especially among women," says lead researcher Christine Proulx, PhD, assistant professor of human development and family studies at the University of Missori. "It is important to intervene at the couple level and make spouses aware that how they act toward each other has a long-term effect on their emotional and physical well-being."

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