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Abused womens' long term health studied

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A national study targeting the physical and mental health and well-being of women who have left abusive partners is shedding new light on the extent of the long-term health and economic consequences they face.

SFU political science professor Olena Hankivsky, a co-investigator on the research team, says women's response to the study to date shows that health concerns are far-reaching. Researchers want to know more about the long term effects of abuse and hope that what they learn by tracking some 300 women over the next four years will lead to the development of more effective interventions, adds Hankivsky, who is also an associate professor in women's studies.

"We know that when women leave abusive relationships they can face major transition difficulties, and that their risk of being harmed or harassed doesn't often end there," says Hankivsky. "There are many issues, from personal safety to financial barriers, that weigh on them." The researchers are looking at changes in the womens' health over time, whether they have access to personal, economic and social resources, their confidence levels and coping skills, and how new relationships may be impacted. The \$1.3 million study is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and is being conducted by researchers from SFU, the University of Victoria, the University of Western Ontario and the University of New Brunswick. While the study has drawn a high response from women across the country, Lower Mainland subjects are still being sought. Researchers are looking for women over 18 years of age who have left abusive male partners in the last three years (and at least six months ago). Subjects undergo an initial interview and will have a health assessment done annually for the next four years. Those interested can call toll-free 1-[Phone removed].