Background
● Domestic violence (DV) victims are already in extremely tense situations, even without a worldwide pandemic
● Now, victims are stuck at home with their abusers, with no way to seek help
● Increase in violence, and 3x the number of victims needing DV services (Jarvis, 2021)
● “While many people are safe in their homes, home is not a safe place for everyone”* - Journey Center

VirA project: a secure technology that would activate upon a trigger word from a person in danger. It could prevent harm, with settings tailored to the user’s preferences
● Could also record evidence for legal purposes

Population:
● People experiencing domestic violence, during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, as well as those helping them

Activities and Methods:
● Literature review: Done on domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, health surveillance, and social registries
● Meeting with an interdisciplinary group (law, biomedical engineering, computer science, and social work) weekly
● Meeting with the public health team weekly
● CITI trainings
● Development of Semi-Structured Interviews for different groups
● Conducting interviews with domestic violence advocates on their opinions on VirA (to use for grant proposals)

Results and Deliverables:
● Results and next steps:
  ○ Further developing the VirA technology
  ○ Reaching out to more domestic violence centers in Cleveland to conduct focus groups with advocates and survivors
  ○ Reaching out to legal representatives to conduct focus groups
  ○ Submitting proposals for grants to secure funding
● Deliverables:
  ○ Semi-structured interviews for domestic violence advocates, domestic violence survivors, surveillance experts, and legal representatives
  ○ Letters of intent to DV centers for IRB approval
  ○ Fact sheet on VirA to use during interviews
  ○ Information gained from interviews on VirA

Lessons Learned:
1. Health surveillance for non-biomedical conditions, such as domestic violence, should be utilized
2. How interdisciplinary groups can work together to achieve a common goal
3. Developing technology is not a linear process - there are several security and legal implications

Public Health Implications:
● Public health surveillance has the potential to be used for other non-biomedical conditions
● Technology can be used to help those in vulnerable conditions, and make aid more accessible
● Further research and explanations are explored in my capstone

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References: