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The Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence: A Scoping Review of the Literature

Tiffany L. Marcantonio[a], Laura M. Vowels[b], Sarah LeRoux[a], Micaela Bravo[a], Anna Thrash[a], Anna Mueller[a], Averie Niolet[a], Matthew Hall[a], Nicola Döring[c], and Tom Nadarzynski[d]

[a]Department of Health Science, College of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Alabama; [b]School of Psychology, University of Roehampton; [c]Department of Economic Sciences and Media, Ilmenau University of Technology; [d]School of Social Sciences, University of Westminster

ABSTRACT

Intimate partner and sexual violence (IPV/SV) remain pervasive global public health issues. Prevention efforts typically occur at the primary level (promoting consent and healthy relationships), secondary level (encouraging bystander intervention and screening), or tertiary level (supporting survivors through reporting and access to resources). The rapid emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots, including large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, presents new opportunities to expand access to information and potentially strengthen prevention efforts across these levels. However, little is known about how these tools are currently being used or evaluated within IPV/SV prevention. This scoping review synthesized 40 peer-reviewed articles, preprints, and conference papers published between 2017 and 2025 that examined AI chatbots in IPV/SV contexts. Twenty-six studies described the development of domain-specific chatbots designed to support survivors by documenting incidents of violence, facilitating or streamlining reporting to authorities, and connecting users with services such as counseling. In addition, general-purpose LLMS (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini) appeared to consistently produced evidence-based and accurate responses to questions related to IPV/SV. Findings suggest that AI chatbots may have a meaningful role in IPV/SV prevention; however, most existing applications focus on tertiary prevention after harm has occurred. This emphasis mirrors broader policy and service landscapes that prioritize crisis response over primary prevention. To realize the potential of AI in this field, future researchers should explore how chatbots and LLMs can be incorporated into primary and secondary prevention, particularly in strengthening education, promoting healthy relationships, and supporting early intervention.

Introduction

Intimate partner violence and sexual violence victimization are pervasive global public health issues (Bott et al., 2019; Dworkin et al., 2021; Koss et al., 2022; Muehlenhard et al., 2017; White et al., 2024). Intimate partner violence is abuse or aggression toward a romantic, dating, or former partner and can include physical, sexual, technology facilitated, or psychological violence or stalking (Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2024). Sexual violence victimization involves experiences of non-consensual sexual activity that can occur with a romantic or non-romantic sexual partner (Muehlenhard et al., 2017; Peterson et al., 2024). Experiencing intimate partner or sexual violence is associated with numerous short- and long-term consequences (Dworkin, 2018; Dworkin et al., 2017, 2023; World Health Organization, 2024b). Given this, researchers, educators, and advocates continue to prioritize prevention efforts and intervention efforts that mitigate harm when violence occurs. A potentially newer tool for the prevention of intimate partner and sexual violence is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots (e.g., Gemini, Claude; Butterby & Lombard, 2025). However, when and how these tools can be used within the field of violence prevention is unclear. Thus, the goal of this scoping review was to (1) summarize what types of AI chatbots are being developed for the prevention of intimate partner or sexual violence and (2) review how AI chatbots are responding to questions on these topics.

Prevention Efforts for Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence

There are three levels of prevention for intimate partner or sexual violence (Novitzky et al., 2023). Primary prevention focuses on reducing the risk of intimate partner or sexual violence from ever occurring. Primary prevention for intimate partner or sexual violence may focus on consent or refusal communication, or how one communicates about the sex they are willing or not willing to engage in, healthy relationships, or boundary setting (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Secondary prevention focuses on early detection of violence, such as through screeners focused on intimate partner or sexual violence, helping people identify signs of intimate partner or sexual violence, and bystander intervention. Bystander intervention is when third party people are encouraged to step in or intervene when they witness risky or concerning sexual situations (Banyard, 2015; Jouriles et al., 2018). Finally, there is tertiary prevention

CONTACT Tiffany L. Marcantonio tlmarcantonio@ua.edu Department of Health Science, College of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Alabama, 503 University Blvd, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401, USA

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which aims to mitigate consequences and reduce harm after violence has occurred, such as by ensuring survivors have access to counseling, legal assistance, or help with reporting cases. All forms of intimate partner and sexual violence prevention are needed to address the behavior; however, many current efforts tend to focus on secondary or tertiary prevention of intimate partner or sexual violence (Kaukinen et al., 2017; Millers Hughes & Cook, 2017; Smiith, 2017).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Chatbots

Although various in-person and online prevention efforts have been implemented to reduce rates of intimate partner or sexual violence (Banyard, 2014; Berkowitz et al., 2022; Leone et al., 2022; World Health Organization, 2024b), the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots presents a novel opportunity to enhance prevention and support efforts (Folastri et al., 2023; Novitzky et al., 2023; Roy et al., 2023). The literature uses different labels to address this technology, such as conversational AI agents, conversational AI models, conversational AI chatbots, AI chatbots, or AI assistants, to list a few. We are mainly using the term AI chatbot as this term is widely used in both academic literature and public discourse. The term AI chatbots refers to programs that engage in multi-turn interactions with humans using natural language processing and some that use machine learning (IBM, 2025a). Natural language process and machine learning allow computers to recognize, understand, and generate speech text because they are trained on pre-defined datasets or corpus of text (from internet, books; IBM, 2025b)

Various forms of AI have been around for years (e.g., rule-based chatbots, hybrid models). More recently, AI chatbots that operate with large language modeling, such as ChatGPT (OpenAI), DeepSeek (High Flyer), or Gemini (Google), have become popular. Indeed, in a study of 1,058 adolescents and young adults, 13.1% reported using generative AI (e.g., Gemini, ChatGPT) for mental health advice and among these users, 65.5% sought advice monthly or more often from these technologies (McBain et al., 2025). Moreover, in a sample of 5,894 college students, nearly half of the students reported a positive attitude toward using AI chatbots in education, with an additional 47.0% suggesting AI chatbots made them more effective learners (Stöhr et al., 2024). However, these AI chatbots are not static or infallible. Their capabilities depend on the data they were trained on and the parameters defined by developers. They can also generate inaccurate, incomplete, or false information (Huang et al., 2025; Ji et al., 2023).

AI Chatbots in Sexual and Reproductive Health

Despite the limitations of AI chatbots they have demonstrated some promise in sexual and reproductive health contexts (Döring et al., 2025). Several systematic reviews have examined the inclusion of AI chatbots in interventions targeting sexual and reproductive health outcomes (Abou Chawareb et al., 2025; Aggarwal et al., 2023; Balaji et al., 2022; Döring et al., 2025; Fetrati et al., 2024; Greer et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2025; Mills et al., 2023). Across these reviews, participants found AI chatbots useful, accessible, and pragmatic, reporting satisfaction with their integration into health interventions (Aggarwal et al., 2023; Balaji et al., 2022; Döring et al., 2025). These models can deliver accurate and engaging sexual health information (Abou Chawareb et al., 2025; Mills et al., 2023) and, in some cases, contribute to attitude or behavioral change (Aggarwal et al., 2023; Döring et al., 2025). Moreover, people reported finding these technologies useful, appreciating the anonymity offered from these chatbots, that they are available 24/7, that they tend to use lay-person language, and that they are easy to understand (Balaji et al., 2022; Nadarzynski et al., 2021, 2023; Wutz et al., 2023). Collectively, AI chatbots, but specifically newer aged large language models, may represent an opportunity for improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes (Balaji et al., 2022; Mills et al., 2023).

AI Chatbots in Intimate Partner or Sexual Violence

While research continues to develop on AI chatbots in the field of sexual and reproductive health, few researchers have explored how these technologies might support prevention efforts related to intimate partner violence or sexual violence. Across the systematic reviews noted above, only a small number identified research on AI chatbots and intimate partner or sexual violence and more often, just stated that violence prevention was a topic of discussion with AI chatbots (Döring et al., 2025; Roy et al., 2023; Spencer & Masboungi, 2025). That limited work has focused on AI chatbots' role within intimate partner and sexual violence is notable given that intimate partner and sexual violence remain a pervasive, global public health problem (Dworkin et al., 2021; World Health Organization, 2024b). Survivors often face barriers to disclosing violence, including fears of judgment, breaches of confidentiality, or social stigma, that may deter help-seeking (Heron et al., 2022; Kennedy et al., 2025, Marcantonio, Hunt, et al., 2023; Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). AI chatbots, which can offer private, on-demand, and stigma-free interactions, may therefore be uniquely positioned to support prevention, education, and intervention efforts in this domain (Aggarwal et al., 2023; Döring et al., 2025; Mills et al., 2023; Talwalkar & Crooks, 2023).

Considerations for AI Chatbots in the Field of Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence

While some researchers have begun to highlight AI chatbots within intimate partner and sexual violence prevention, others have also discussed the need to approach this, and the field of sexual and reproductive health, with caution (World Health Organization, 2024a). Indeed, intimate partner and sexual violence situations pose significant risk to one's safety and AI chatbots included in this area need to be able to address these situations. In fact, Butterby and Lombard (2025) highlighted several considerations for developing AI chatbots for intimate partner or sexual violence prevention.

First, researchers and technology developers need to be mindful that a person might not have private access to their phone or that the perpetrator may be able to access their phone and data (Butterby & Lombard, 2025; Novitzky et al., 2023). The authors also highlighted how these advanced forms of technology could be used against survivors or those

experiencing violence to track their whereabouts and behaviors. Second, AI chatbots need to be able to quickly identify the level of risk present for a person during an intimate partner or sexual violence situation as these women may be in immediate danger. Consequently, the AI chatbot needs to be able to provide them accurate information to mitigate risk, such as how to reach police, emergency services, or seeking out a therapist (Butterby & Lombard, 2025).

Third, there are concerns about data security within these chatbots or how they handle the data one provides them and strategies in place to prevent a data breach and ensure confidentiality (Butterby & Lombard, 2025; Spencer & Masboungi, 2025). Data security is of particular importance as leaked data collected on one's sexual health could have serious negative consequences. Even if the data collected is anonymized, additional AI sources could re-identify the person via triangulation (World Health Organization, 2024a). Moreover, if these technologies are not housed with a medical system, then the data collected from them could be sold to third-party companies or used in ways a client or patient is unaware of which could impact their sexual and reproductive health choices (World Health Organization, 2024a)

Fourth, Butterby and Lombard (2025) highlighted the importance of these AI chatbots being trained on trauma-informed principles and that they are person centered. Specifically, that they use empathic, welcoming, and non-judgmental language when speaking with people who might have experienced intimate partner or sexual violence. In line with AI chatbots needing to use appropriate language, these technologies may not be inclusive of different identities or cultures because they are developed on biased or homogenous data, or we lack the data on a topic or population to properly train an AI chatbot (World Health Organization, 2024a). Thus, researchers and educators need to be mindful that an AI chatbot may be unable to provide accurate information for different topics or users, or that information may not be applicable to them. Finally, the authors highlighted the need for evaluation of these technologies, both from a functionality stance and user perspective (Butterby & Lombard, 2025). Collectively, these principles highlight that when developing an AI chatbot in the field of intimate partner and sexual violence, there are several factors that need to be considered.

Current Study

AI chatbots could be a tool for the field of intimate partner or sexual violence; however, our understanding of when or how they can be included is under-developed. Consequently, this scoping review aims to synthesize the literature on the use of AI chatbots as a tool or resource for the prevention of intimate partner or sexual violence. Specifically, we addressed the following research questions:

Research Question

> **RQ1:** When researchers build AI chatbots for intimate partner and sexual violence, are these chatbots providing prevention support at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level?

> **RQ2:** When researchers build AI chatbots for intimate partner or sexual violence prevention, what design features (e.g., safety planning, referrals) do they propose for these chatbots?

Finally, in conducting this review, two separate but related bodies of literature were identified: one focused on building chatbots for intimate partner violence or sexual violence prevention and the other focused on assessing how general AI chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT, Alexa) could respond to questions about intimate partner or sexual violence as a resource for people. Consequently, we retained articles related to general AI chatbots and how they responded to questions on intimate partner or sexual violence topics to further inform the field of how AI chatbots could be considered within the field of violence prevention. Our final research question was:

> **RQ3:** How do general AI chatbots respond to questions focused on intimate partner or sexual violence?

In conducting this review, we aimed to contribute to a growing body of research examining how emerging technologies can advance health equity and violence prevention. Identifying how AI has been used to enhance access to support, augment prevention delivery, or respond to questions on intimate partner or sexual violence prevention can inform the development of more responsive, trauma-informed, and ethically grounded prevention tools. At the same time, mapping the limitations, biases, and risks of AI use in this domain can guide best practices for safeguarding users and ensuring accuracy, empathy, and inclusivity in digital health communications and prevention efforts. Collectively, this review aims to provide a foundation for integrating AI chatbots responsibly into efforts to prevent intimate partner or sexual violence and support survivors worldwide.

Method

The protocol for this scoping review is reported in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA; Page et al., 2021; Tricco et al., 2018). Given our research questions, our study included articles on two related but different applications of AI chatbots to violence prevention. First, we analyzed full-text studies that developed or provided the framework for developing AI chatbots for the prevention of intimate partner or sexual violence. Second, we analyzed full-text studies that examined how general AI chatbots (such as ChatGPT) responded to questions on intimate partner or sexual violence.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was conducted in August 2025, in MEDLINE (e.g., PubMed Scopus), Education Source, ERIC, ProQuest Dissertation, Web of Science, Engineering Village, and APA PsycInfo. To further enrich our search, we also reviewed the first 100 results from Google Scholar using our primary search terms (Mills et al., 20,213). We searched for studies published between January 2015 and January 2025. The

search strategy targeted the title, abstract, and keyword fields. We provide a few examples of our Boolean terms: ("artificial intelligence" OR "large language model*" OR "virtual assistant" OR "ChatGPT" OR "GPT-4" OR "generative AI" OR "virtual assistant*" OR "Llama" OR "Bard" OR "Gemini" OR "Claude OR" "Deepseek") AND ("intimate partner violence" OR "domestic violence" OR "sexual violence" OR "sexual assault" OR "rape" OR "sexual harassment" OR "gender-based violence.") The search was limited to English-language studies.

Study Selection

The search yielded a total of 3,188 records from database searches and 37 from Google Scholar, of which 904 duplicates were removed (see Figure 1). There were no geographic restrictions on publication location, and both dissertations and preprints were included in the review. The remaining 2,321 unique records were imported into Covidence, an online software platform commonly used for managing systematic literature reviews. For a study to be included in the abstract review, the abstract had to suggest the authors had or were developing an AI chatbot for intimate partner or sexual violence or that the authors had questioned an AI chatbot about intimate partner or sexual violence topics. To ensure we did not accidently remove an abstract, reviewers were instructed to include abstracts that referenced any form of gender-based violence, such as sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, or teen dating violence. Six reviewers (every abstract was reviewed by two reviewers) assisted with independently screening all titles and abstracts to determine eligibility according to the inclusion criteria, resulting in 89 studies selected for full-text review (see Figure 1).

During full-text screening, studies were included if they focused on intimate partner or sexual violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or sexual harassment and if they incorporated AI chatbots as part of the study. To be eligible for full-text screening, studies could either focus on (1) how AI chatbots serve as a tool for preventing intimate partner or sexual violence or (2) how AI chatbots respond to questions on intimate partner or sexual violence.

Studies were excluded: (1) if they did not propose, assess, or evaluate the use of an AI chatbot in implementing prevention efforts for intimate partner or sexual violence, (2) if they did not provide information on how AI chatbots responded to questions on intimate partner or sexual violence, (3) if they focused exclusively on childhood sexual abuse rather than violence against adolescents or adults, or (4) if they did not contain original research data (e.g., commentary, conceptual, or review papers). We also removed studies that focused on using AI chatbots to perpetrate harm (e.g., using AI chatbots to make deepfakes) as the focus of this study was on how AI chatbots could be leveraged for the prevention of intimate partner or sexual violence. Each study was reviewed by two independent coders who had to agree that it met inclusion criteria. Any discrepancies were reviewed by a third team member who was the tie breaker. We then conducted a backward search of references for each study that qualified for our review (Haddaway et al., 2022). We included an additional two studies from this search. This process resulted in a final sample of 40 articles, pre-prints, and conference papers.[1]

Coding Framework for AI Chatbot Development and Design Features (RQ1 & RQ2)

Type of Violence and Prevention Level Coding

We began by deductively categorizing studies based on the type of violence they addressed. To do this, we identified the focus and goals of the study. Some studies were focused on intimate partner violence, others were focused on gender-based violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, or a combination of these behaviors. If a study was focused on multiple types of violence, we labeled it as such. This can be seen in Table 1. Next, we inductively coded the prevention level: primary (i.e., healthy relationships, communication), secondary (i.e., signs of intimate partner or sexual violence, screening), and tertiary (i.e., seeking support after violence had occurred).

AI Chatbot Design Features

For RQ2, we identified what design features were considered or included in developing these technologies. Specifically, there were seven design features we coded for in RQ2 that are briefly summarized below.

Stakeholder engagement included researchers collecting data to inform the development of their AI chatbots. Researchers could obtain these data via (1) speaking with the priority population (e.g., survivors of sexual violence, adolescents who experienced dating violence) or (2) speaking with key stakeholders (e.g., lawyers, counselors, law enforcement officers). For instance, researchers would collect data from survivors on what types of information an AI chatbot for intimate partner violence should be able to provide a user or they would speak with stakeholders about relevant information for a chatbot (e.g., domestic violence laws for the country, judicial precedent).

Intimate Partner Violence or Sexual Violence Knowledge and *Legal Frameworks* reflected two related domains of content expertise. Intimate partner violence/sexual violence knowledge referred to chatbots' understanding of the prevalence, indicators, and risk factors associated with violence, as well as general educational content related to prevention, healthy relationships, and consent communication. Legal Frameworks referred to chatbots' knowledge of laws and reporting processes relevant to intimate partner violence or sexual violence such as what occurs after a report is made or how to obtain a restraining order.

The Person-Centered Approach captured studies that recommended chatbots use language which would communicate empathy, warmth, safety, and trust. The chatbots should provide nonjudgmental responses and ask follow-up questions to the user.

[1]Across all phases of coding, if an author of the current study was an author on an article that could be included in the review, they did not code this article; the article was coded by a different team member.

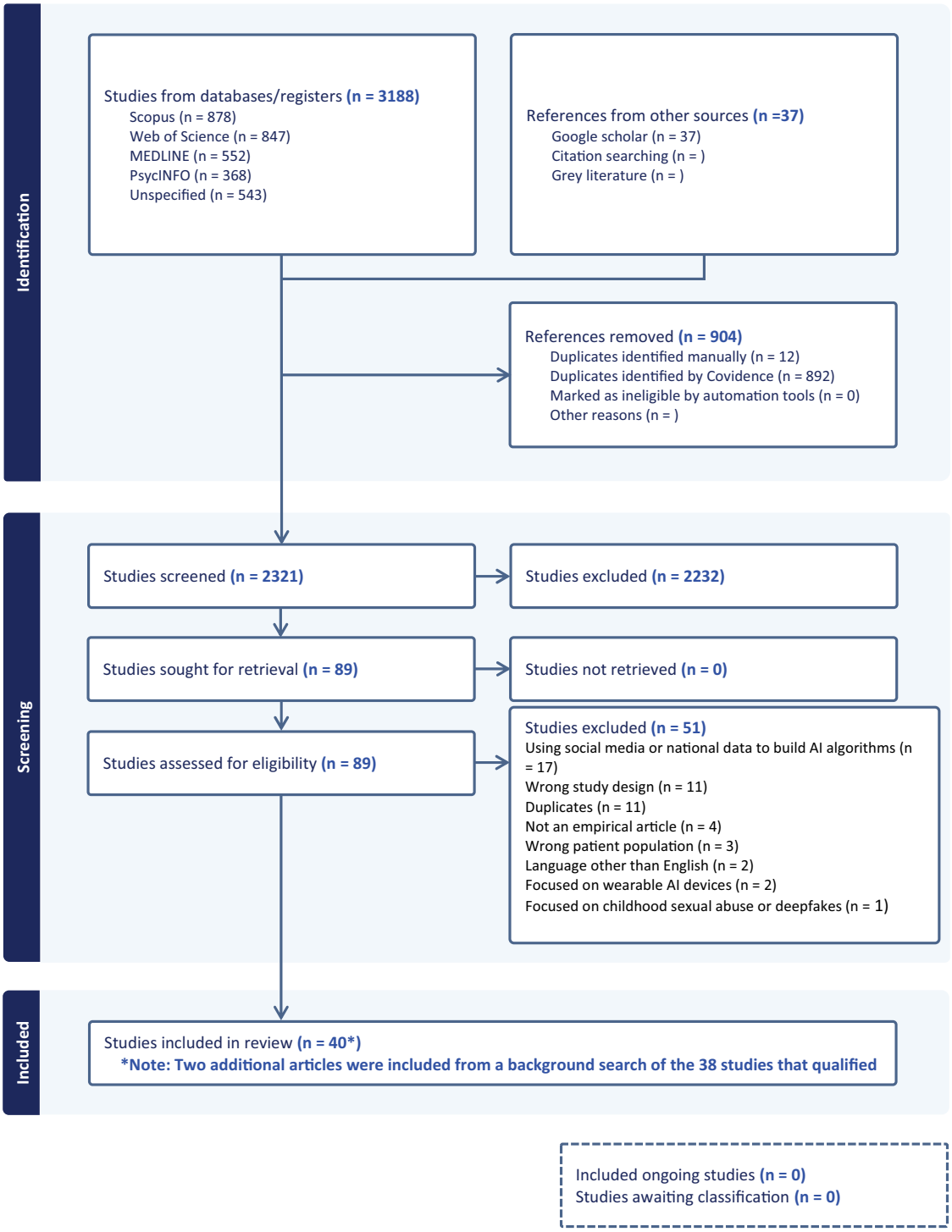


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram for AI and intimate partner and sexual violence review.

Data Security included considerations related to confidentiality, data storage, privacy, and preventing data misuse. Studies in this category discussed the handling of sensitive data following disclosures of violence and the importance of safeguarding users from potential harm, such as preventing perpetrators from accessing stored information.

Referrals and *Safety Planning* encompassed recommendations for chatbots to provide individualized referrals to local services (e.g., police departments, crisis centers, counseling services) and to support users in developing safety plans when disclosing ongoing intimate partner violence or sexual violence.

To conduct coding for RQ1 and RQ2, the first author identified or extracted relevant sections (typically the Results section) from each study and imported them into Excel for analysis. Four team members then reviewed the included studies and identified if each code was present. During coding, team members noted challenges in identifying relevant text due to the technical nature of some studies (e.g., algorithm descriptions of chatbot design). Following independent

coding, discrepancies were identified. The first author reviewed all coded data and facilitated discussion when disagreements were present until final consensus was reached.

Coding Framework for AI Chatbots Response to Questions on Violence Prevention (RQ3)

To answer RQ3, we identified studies focused on assessing how general AI chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT) responded to questions or prompts on intimate partner or sexual violence. If a study was identified as focusing on general AI chatbots' response to violence prevention questions, the result section was pulled from the article and imported to Excel. The first author then reviewed the findings to identify common patterns across the studies. During this process, she identified that two types of prompts were provided to AI chatbots: single question prompts or simulated scenarios (e.g., vignettes, brief narratives). Consequently, findings were then summarized based on the type of prompt given to the AI chatbot to identify how they responded to various questions. We also coded for the level of prevention that each question or prompt focused on: primary (e.g., questions about healthy relationships), secondary (e.g., questions about identifying abuse), and tertiary (e.g., questions about what to do if a sexual assault occurs). A study could include questions on multiple prevention levels (e.g., consent (primary prevention) and how to report (tertiary prevention)) and were coded as such.

Results

Descriptives of the Articles, Pre-Prints, and Conference Papers

Among our sample, there were 21 conference papers (52.5%), 17 published manuscripts (42.5%), one pre-print, and one dissertation ($N = 40$; See Table 1). Regarding location, 12 studies (30%) were conducted in the US; the other 28 studies (70.0%) were from places all around the globe: South Korea ($n = 4$), India ($n = 3$), Kenya ($n = 2$), Spain, Thailand, Israel, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Peru, and Australia (see Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of studies included in review.

	Author & Year	Study Type	Location	Prevention or Response to Questions (RtQ)	Prevention Level	Type of Violence
1	Aldkheel (2024)	Diss	USA	Prevention	Secondary, Tertiary	IPV
2	Artstein et al. (2019)	Conf Paper	USA	Prevention	Primary, Secondary	SV
3	Awasekar and Lobo (2025a)	Conf Paper	India	Prevention	Tertiary	IPV
4	Awasekar and Lobo (2025b)	Conf Paper	India	Prevention	Tertiary	IPV
5	Ayers et al. (2023)	Peer-Reviewed MS	USA	RtQ	Tertiary	Interpersonal Violence
6	Basile et al. (2024)	Conf Paper	Italy	Prevention	Secondary	IPV
7	Bauer et al. (2020)	Conf Paper	Netherlands	Prevention	Tertiary	SH
8	Cadinete et al. (2024)	Conf Paper	USA	RtQ	Primary	IPV
9	Casara et al. (2023)	Conf Paper	Peru	Prevention	Tertiary	GBV
10	Chandraskekar (2017)	Conf Paper	Unclear	Prevention	Tertiary	SV
11	Crooks et al. (2024)	Conf Paper	USA	Prevention	Tertiary	GBV
12	Curry and Rieser (2018)	Conf Paper	UK	RtQ	Secondary	SH
13	De Filippo et al. (2023)	Peer-Reviewed MS	South Africa	Prevention	Primary, Secondary	IPV
14	De Grazia et al. (2024)	Conf Paper	Spain	RtQ	Secondary	SH
15	Dolev-Cohen and Henry (2025)	Peer-Reviewed MS	Israel	RtQ	Primary	SV
16	Gaandhimathy and Bharathy (2025)	Conf Paper	India	Prevention	Secondary	GBV
17	Guha et al. (2025)	Peer-Reviewed MS	USA	RtQ	Primary	SH
18	Henry et al. (2024)	Peer-Reviewed MS	Australia	Prevention	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary	GBV
19	Hossain et al. (2020)	Conf Paper	Bangladesh	Prevention	Tertiary	IPV
20	Howe et al. (2017)	Conf Paper	USA	Prevention	Tertiary	SV
21	Kim et al. (2022)	Conf Paper	South Korea	Prevention	Tertiary	SV
22	Lombard et al. (2025)	Peer-Reviewed MS	UK	Prevention	Tertiary	IPV
23	Maeng and Lee (2021)	Conf Paper	South Korea	Prevention	Tertiary	SV
24	Marcantonio et al. (2023)	Peer-Reviewed MS	USA	RtQ	Primary	SV
25	Marcantonio et al. (2024)	Peer-Reviewed MS	USA	RtQ	Primary, Secondary	SV
26	Miner et al. (2016)	Peer-Reviewed MS	USA	RtQ	Primary, Secondary	IPV/SV
27	Mutinda and Muchiri (2024)	Conf Paper	Kenya	Prevention	Tertiary	GBV
28	Ngũnjiri et al. (2023)	Peer-Reviewed MS	Kenya	Prevention	Primary, Secondary	GBV
29	Park and Lee (2020)	Conf Paper	South Korea	Prevention	Tertiary	SV
30	Park and Lee (2021)	Conf Paper	South Korea	Prevention	Tertiary	SV
31	Ricon (2025)	Peer-Reviewed MS	Israel	RtQ	Secondary, Tertiary	Dating Violence/SV
32	Rodriguez Saavedra et al. (2025)	Peer-Reviewed MS	Peru	Prevention	Tertiary	GBV
33	Saglam et al. (2024)	Pre-Print	UK	RtQ	Tertiary	IPV
34	Sanz Urquigo et al., 2025	Peer-Reviewed MS	Spain	RtQ	Secondary	GBV
35	Schlesener et al. (2023)	Conf Paper	USA	Prevention	Primary	GBV
36	Schafer et al. (2023)	Peer-Reviewed MS	Jamaica	Prevention	Primary	IPV
37	Socatiyanurak et al. (2021)	Peer-Reviewed MS	Thailand	Prevention	Tertiary	SV
38	Talwalkar and Crooks (2023)	Conf Paper	USA	Prevention	Tertiary	IPV
39	Vowels and Marcantonio (2025)	Peer-Reviewed MS	Switzerland	RtQ	Secondary	SV
40	Zhang et al. (2025)	Peer-Reviewed MS	USA	RtQ	Secondary, Tertiary	IPV

Note. Peer reviewed MS = peer reviewed manuscript in a journal, Conf Paper = conference paper, Diss = Dissertation. SV = sexual violence, IPV = intimate partner violence and includes domestic violence, GBV = gender-based violence, SH = sexual harassment. Studies that focused on developing an AI chatbot for prevention (i.e., coded as Prevention), were coded for what level of prevention the chatbot aimed to address: primary, secondary, or tertiary. For studies that focused on how chatbots responded to questions (i.e., coded as RtQ), we coded for what prevention level the questions or prompts focused on.

Of the 40 studies, 24 involved human subjects (60%) and 16 did not (40%). Among the 24 studies involving human subjects, there were a total of 16,898 participants. Ten studies provided a gender composition of their sample, with 13,837 participants identifying as girls or women and 17 identifying as boys or men; more often studies included women as the goal was to develop chatbots for women survivors of intimate partner or sexual violence. Racial and ethnic data were rarely presented within studies. When studies did involve human participants, more often this was either experts in intimate partner or sexual violence ($n = 9$) or survivors of intimate partner or sexual violence ($n = 8$); a few studies included both experts and survivors ($n = 4$). Some recruited participants from the broader community ($n = 3$). Across these studies, researchers would either conduct focus groups or interviews with participants to query their opinions on what an AI chatbot should entail or have people engage with an AI chatbot and evaluate their perspective or thoughts on this technology via a survey or interview.

RQ1: Developing AI Chatbots for Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Prevention

Within our review, 26 studies were focused on either building a chatbot ($n = 15$; 57.6%) or provided the framework to build one as a form of violence prevention ($n = 11$, 42.3%; see Table 2).

Tertiary Prevention

Of the studies focused on leveraging AI chatbots for prevention, 17 (65.3%) focused solely on tertiary prevention of intimate partner or sexual violence, with several focused on addressing or reducing intimate partner violence ($n = 9$, 34.6%) or sexual violence ($n = 6$, 23.0%; see Table 1). For studies focused on developing or evaluating AI chatbots for tertiary prevention, they tended to share common features. Indeed, across needs assessments, interviews with stakeholders, and general development of AI chatbots, a consistent focus was on: helping someone report or disclose intimate partner or sexual violence, tracking important information about the experience (time, location, dates), ensuring a survivor was met with empathy, warmth, and non-judgmental responses from the AI chatbot, and that the AI chatbot could answer their questions about their experience (Aldkheel, 2024; Awasekar & Lobo, 2025a; Crooks et al., 2024; Lombard et al., 2025; Maeng & Lee, 2021; see Table 2).

Of the studies focused on developing or implementing these AI chatbots for tertiary prevention, four were peer-reviewed publications (Henry et al., 2024; Lombard et al., 2025; Rodriguez Saavedra et al., 2025; Socatiyanurak et al., 2021). The additional studies were either conference papers, dissertations, or pre-prints (e.g., Kim et al., 2022; Mutinda & Muchiri, 2024; Park & Lee, 2021), highlighting that this is a burgeoning area of work. However, as most of these studies were in the early stages of research design and development, this also meant that few AI chatbots were available for public access. Three examples of AI chatbots designed for different levels of intimate partner or sexual violence prevention can be seen in Table 3.

Primary and Secondary Prevention

Fewer studies ($n = 9$, 34.6%) focused on chatbots for primary or secondary prevention (Aldkheel, 2024; Basile et al., 2024; De Filippo et al., 2023; Ngũnjiri et al., 2023, See Table 1). For example, Title IX: Step Up and Step In was an augmented reality – based conversational agent developed to help college students identify and intervene in risky sexual situations among diverse gender and sexual identity groups (Schlesener et al., 2023). The app's augmented reality feature allowed users to navigate their campus – similar to Pokémon Go – and presented simulated scenarios prompting intervention. The embodied conversational agent then explained why specific intervention strategies were appropriate or effective. Similarly, Artstein et al. (2019) created The Digital Survivor to raise awareness about sexual assault within military contexts. The chatbot featured prerecorded videos of an officer who disclosed his assault and responded to user questions about his experience, the reporting process, and sources of support. The goal was to increase understanding and empathy for survivors among military personnel. Collectively, findings highlight that efforts to develop an AI chatbot for intimate partner and sexual violence prevention tend to centralize on mitigating harm after violence has occurred.

RQ2: Design Features for AI Chatbots Focused on Violence Prevention

Next, we identified the design features being considered or implemented when researchers develop AI chatbots for intimate partner or sexual violence prevention ($n = 25$ studies, one study did not provide design features; Howe et al., 2017). See Table 4 for a summary of chatbot design features or considerations.

Stakeholder Engagement

Seventeen of the 25 studies (68.0%) incorporated some form of stakeholder engagement during chatbot design (e.g., interviews with survivors or counselors). For instance, NamuBot, an AI chatbot designed to assist with reporting incidents of sexual violence, was developed through consultations with police officers, counselors, and policy experts to identify ways to reduce the burden of reporting (Park & Lee,2020, 2021). Likewise, LAW-U, a chatbot supporting survivors in accessing accurate legal guidance, was developed in collaboration with lawyers in Thailand, who helped create and refine legal queries to ensure accuracy (Socatiyanurak et al., 2021). Several studies focused on conducting stakeholder interviews with survivors or women about what a chatbot for violence prevention should include and the barriers and facilitators to accessing a chatbot (Awasekar & Lobo, 2025a; Kim et al., 2022; Lombard et al., 2025; Maeng & Lee, 2021; Park & Lee, 2020; Rodriguez Saavedra et al., 2025; Schafer et al., 2023); this was often done prior to designing the chatbot or while developing the chatbot to ensure the chatbot benefitted the user. Finally, Umibot was co-developed with survivors, community members, government agencies, and academic experts to support survivors while also promoting violence prevention, bystander intervention, and awareness of perpetration behaviors (Henry et al., 2024).

Table 2. Summary of AI chatbots developed to address intimate partner or sexual violence.

	Authors	Type of Conversational AI agent	Name of AI Chatbot	Bot Evaluated?	Brief Review of AI Chatbots Functions or Plans for Development
1	Aldkheel (2024)	LLM-Based	Safe Haven	Y: usability evaluated	• The chatbot opens with a confidential, empathetic message that explains the chatbots purpose, offers privacy tips, and checks whether the user is currently safe. • The chatbot will help recognize types of abuse and if a threat is present, provide emergency contact and safety tips; if not, offer preventive strategies. • Users can create personalized safety plans based on the National Domestic Violence Hotline framework and will connect user with local support services/legal guidance. • Within the chatbot, users can read narratives from other survivors to assist with creating community.
2	Artstein et al. (2019)	Rule-Based	Digital Survivor	Y: usability evaluated	• The Digital Survivor simulates a live conversation with an officer, SPC Wright. More than 1,900 short video clips were recorded of SPC Wright answering questions about his assault, its aftermath, reporting, retaliation, and recovery. • Recordings were informed by extensive consultation with SHARP instructors, military leaders, legal experts, and SPC Wright himself to ensure realism and educational value. • Users interact with SPC Wright through speech recognition and real-time video playback. The system selects the most relevant prerecorded response using natural language processing.
3	Awasekar and Lobo (2025a)	Stakeholder interviews for chatbot development		–	• Women highlighted barriers to reporting domestic violence including stigma, cultural norms, geographic barriers, fear of retaliation, and unsure about legal recourse. • Participants suggested the interface of a chatbot should be user-friendly, provide a safe and supportive interaction, be well-organized • The chatbot would need a comprehensive knowledge base on domestic violence and be developed in collaboration with experts.
4	Awasekar and Lobo (2025b)	Rule-Based; Machine Learning Based; LLM-Based	Support and Welfare Assistance through Technology Interface (SWATI)	Y: accuracy evaluated	• SWATI conversational interface to provide personalized legal advice. • AI model trained on historical legal data to classify complaints and assist with understanding outcomes from cases (i.e., protection order, monetary relief). • Authors evaluated various forms of SWATII chatbot (rule-based v. machine learning v. LLM), finding that the LLM version was able to process unstructured legal text and generated predictions for case outcomes, leading to personalized advice for victims. • SWATI had high level of accuracy in predicting case outcomes in several legal domains: disposal nature, protection order, monetary relief, custody order, and residence order.
5.	Basile et al. (2024)	LLM-Based	LLaMAntino	Y: accuracy evalauted	• Informed from data on 8 adolescents about their experiences or their peers experiences of physical abuse, cyber abuse, sexual assault, stalking, and abusive language their peers' experiences. Built an AI chatbot able to identify and explain different types of abuse. • Based on two reviewers, the AI Chatbot never provided inappropriate answers and answers were grounded with scientific literature.
6	Bauer et al. (2020)	LLM-Based	#MeTooMaastricht	Y: validation evaluated	• Chatbot to assist with identifying, reporting incidents and providing recommendations on what to do after sexual harassment has occurred. • Developed a system to test the model's ability to follow up with user, and identify key factors, such as location, dates, and times. • Chatbot validation was conducted using test scenarios of physical harassment, verbal abuse and non-relevant situations, to assess conversational flow and logical accuracy. • Chatbot confirmed and extracted missing details from user, provided appropriate resources (e.g., medical and police contacts), and handled user consent correctly.
7	Casara et al. (2023)	Rule-Based		Y: usability evaluated	• A system designed to increase communication between a victim and a psychologist or mental health specialist. • The chatbot can respond to emotional concerns of the victim and provide them with resources, legal questions, and emergency numbers; it will also help them schedule appointments for a consultation. • Psychology specialist can manage appointments through the chatbot and follow up with patients.

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued).

	Authors	Type of Conversational AI agent	Name of AI Chatbot	Bot Evaluated?	Brief Review of AI Chatbots Functions or Plans for Development
8	Chandraskekar (2017)	Rule-Based	Companion Chat	N	• Plans to develop an anonymous chatbot for survivors of sexual violence to ask questions about their experience and identify resources, such as centers or law enforcement. • Chabot will be able to: ask survivors about their condition, eliminate human bias and revictimization of survivors, create trust with survivor, provide a tool to access information, and is not meant to replace humans in this process.
9	Crooks et al. (2024)	Plans to develop an AI chatbot		–	• Developed a set of requirements for human-centered AI systems to address technology facilitated violence seen in commonly used apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram). • Humans are responsible for identifying and interpreting technology-based attacks, while the AI model detects, classifies, and alerts users to potential incidents, offering recommendations for safe responses. • Humans support survivor recovery and reflection, while the AI assists with tracking recovery progress and integrating insights from ongoing clinical and therapeutic services.
10	De Filippo et al. (2023)	Rule-Based	ChattyCuz	Y: IPV exposure and gender attitudes	• Supports young women navigating their romantic relationships and provides them education on power in relationships, skills to identify unhealthy relationships, learning about communication and coping mechanisms, building self-efficacy and teaches them how to safety plan. • Includes a character, Sandiswa, a young woman in a relationship with Jabu and user aims to help Sandiswa handle her relationship challenges to practice their skills. • Chatbot improved beliefs in power equity in relationships, improved identification of unhealthy relationships, and women exposed to ChattyCuz with gamification reported lower rates of IPV at 3 month follow-up compared with control.
11	Gaandhimathy and Bharathy (2025)	Plans to develop an AI chatbot	Care-Ring in the Safe Circle app	–	• When Care Ring button clicked, the app directs the user to a Generative AI-powered Chatbot that asks questions about the situation to determine the necessary actions, like calling the police. • Steps to develop the Care Ring button will include: 1) interviews and focus groups with stakeholders, 2) further UI/UX design to increase usability, 3) internal updates on the system, such as location monitoring, 4) communication improvement with the app (SMS, e-mail, push notifications, 5) a focus on information security and ensuring data safety, and 6) pilot testing and debugging.
12	Henry et al. (2024)	Hybrid Model	Umibot	Y: access, plans for usability, acceptability, helpfulness	• Umibot is a chatbot designed for victims/survivors of GBV, bystanders, and perpetrators of GBV. • The chatbot was designed to be inclusive, and trauma-informed, use a gender-neutral tone, avoid judgment or triggering language. Umibot does not collect personal data. • Umibot first ask a user if they are looking for help for themselves, help for others, or they are concerned about something they have done. Also, verifies they are 18 years old or older. • Users are then directed into one of five different paths: youth victim-survivor; adult victim-survivor; youth bystanders; adult bystander; and youth/adult perpetrator; each path provides different content, responses, and recommendations to users.
13	Hossain et al. (2020)	LLM-Based	Women Support Division	Y: usability	• Mobile app that includes 6 modules and an AI to answer questions surrounding domestic violence. • Modules focus on helping someone call for help to either the authorities or a list of predefined people, automatically turning on a phone camera when abuse may be occurring, blocking calls from select people, helping find a nearby hospital or police station. • AI module includes a conversational chatbot trained on violence-related data to answer questions a person may have.
14	Howe et al. (2017)	–		Y: acceptability	• Sexual assault survivors informed they were either speaking with an automated system counselor or a real therapist and engaged in 5 chats over 2 weeks; in reality, no chatbot was present. • 10 participants completed the session, 60% reported a preference for an automated system and appeared accepting of an automated system.
15	Kim et al. (2022)	Rule-based		Y: usability	• Users suggested chatbot needed to be accurate, use simple language, and be direct with them but not store their private data. • Chatbot designed to provide survivors medical, legal, and support service information that could be engaged with quickly (under 10 minutes). Could safety plan and assist with emergencies. • Users and experts evaluated the chatbot positively, but at times were overwhelmed by information or found the chatbot to be insensitive.

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued).

	Authors	Type of Conversational AI agent	Name of AI Chatbot	Bot Evaluated?	Brief Review of AI Chatbots Functions or Plans for Development
16	Lombard et al. (2025)	Stakeholder interviews for chatbot development	Innovative Solutions to Eliminate Domestic Abuse (ISEDA) chatbot	–	• Users suggested a chatbot could help survivors by providing anonymity and non-judgmental support, they can be immediately available/highly accessible, could assist with reporting and tracking violence, and could provide education on IPV. • Users also suggested this should not replace human emotional support, and were worried about the safety and security of their data; some mentioned these technologies were less helpful for older populations.
17	Maeng and Lee (2021)	Stakeholder interviews for chatbot development		–	• Survivors were asked questions about sexual violence, and they focused on punishment (e.g., reporting, gathering evidence, law terms), support center access, coping methods, and emotional care. • Using survivors' questions, authors provided a conversation flow for a chatbot which should focus on assisting survivors with reporting, collecting evidence, being non-judgmental, asking follow-up questions for details, and that the chatbot should be able to connect prior to answers from survivors.
18	Mutinda and Muchiri (2024)	LLM-Based		Y: accuracy	• Developed a chatbot that was bilingual (English and Kiswahili) and could address the needs of people in Kenya. • Obtained dataset for training from Counselchat.com which links users and therapist together. Trained model and deployed into website where people could interact with chatbot. • Model could provide referrals services and responded to questions in both languages.
19	Ngũnjiri et al. (2023)	LLM-Model	Accelerating Access to Gender-Based Violence Information and Services Leveraging on Technology Enhanced (AGILE) Chatbot	Y; usability evaluated	• AGILE can answer questions related to GBV, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, tele-counseling, and referral sources. • Users emphasized the need for confidentiality, privacy, and nonjudgmental communication, describing chatbots as safe spaces to disclose sensitive experiences without fear of stigma or blame. • Wanted accurate and evidence-based responses on GBV procedures (e.g., what to do after assault, where to seek help, and how to access safe spaces), in simple and multiple languages (English, Swahili, and Sheng), available 24/7, and offline. • Wanted inclusive, youth-centered, and LGBTQ-friendly content.
20	Park and Lee (2020)	Stakeholder interviews for chatbot development		–	• Interviewed 10 people (counselors, police officers) about burdens of SV self-disclosure and how AI chatbots could/could not assist • Participants note that AI chatbots could help reduce the time it takes to report, save money on traveling to counseling, and increase reporting as people may feel less shame telling an agent over a human about what occurred • Participants noted AI chatbots may be more difficult for elderly people to use and concerns about the privacy of their data and confidentiality
21	Park and Lee (2021)	Hybrid Model	NamuBot	Y; feasibility test	• NamuBot can provide functional support (e.g., automating police reports), informational support (e.g., providing legal and medical information), and emotional support (e.g., empathetic communication). • NamuBot can identify the type of sexual crime through guided questions, calculate statutes of limitations, and generate and submit police reports. • Can provide localized medical and legal resources, and offer evidence-gathering and counseling advice.
22	Rodriguez Saavedra et al. (2025)	Stakeholder interviews for chatbot development		–	• Conducted interviews with women, some highlighting a digital divide on trust with AI technologies and a lack of digital skills for these devices limits their impact. • Women expressed concern over internet accessibility with these technologies, privacy and security (e.g., perpetrator in the home, accessing phone). • Women wanted empathy and personalization (i.e., the chatbot understood their specific situation), along with legal assistance that included concrete steps, and connection to human support. • Only 27% of participants used AI technologies for legal or psychological support but 64% considered them tools that could improve these areas.

(*Continued*)

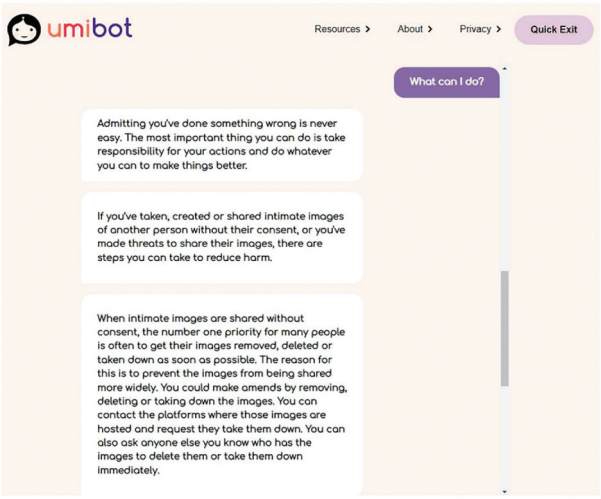
Table 2. (Continued).

	Authors	Type of Conversational AI agent	Name of AI Chatbot	Bot Evaluated?	Brief Review of AI Chatbots Functions or Plans for Development
23	Schafer et al. (2023)	Rule-Based	ParentText	Y: usability evaluation	• Conducted needs assessment of literature and stakeholders to inform intervention development which led to 5 core topics on IPV prevention (e.g., treat each other as equals, becoming a confident parent, family responsibilities, resolving conflict, listening to one another) • ParentText then messages parents over 5 weeks, and content they receive aligns with the age of their children. • Participants interacted with intervention every other day, and the topic of treating everyone as equals was revisited the most; however, average duration in program was 14 days and only 15% of participants viewed all 5 topic areas.
24	Schlesener et al. (2023)	Rule-Based	Title IX: Step Up & Step In	Y: usability evaluation	• Players use smartphones to navigate real-world campus bystander situations by completing ten augmented reality-based levels guided by an Embodied Conversational Agent (ECA) named Val. • Each level provides a scenario featuring harassment among a diverse group of students (e.g., a lesbian couple). • Players observe incidents, select one of five bystander strategies (Distract, Delegate, Document, Delay, or Direct), and then see how their choices impact the situation. • The ECA provides real-time feedback, explaining why the chosen action was effective or not and assigning points to encourage learning.
25	Socatiyanurak et al. (2021)	Rule-Based	LAW-U, included in the LINE messaging app	Y: usability evaluation	• LAW-U provides survivors with accessible, accurate legal guidance. • Guides users through 4 stages of conversation: sharing their experience, providing demographic details, describing the perpetrator, and elaborating on the incident. • LAW-U then presents all answers back to user to verify they are accurate and then provides them legal advice. • Advice can entail how to report and will provide the user with 3 similar cases to their story so the user can understand what may happen after they report. It closes with providing them access to resources.
26	Talwalkar and Crooks (2023)	Rule-Based	Survivor Assistance through Forecasting and Engagement (SAFE)	–	• SAFE will be designed to complement interventions by identifying patterns that could help recognize signs of IPV and disrupt them or coach the survivor experiencing them. • SAFE will initiate safety protocol based on needs of end user and iterative updates.

Note. SV = sexual violence, IPV = intimate partner violence, which includes domestic violence, GBV = gender-based violence, SH = sexual harassment.

Table 3. Examples of how users would interact with AI chatbots developed for intimate partner or sexual violence prevention.

An excerpt from Umibot developed by Henry et al. (2024) for tertiary prevention for sexual violence perpetration



An excerpt from SafeHaven developed by Aldkheel (2024) for secondary/tertiary prevention for intimate partner violence

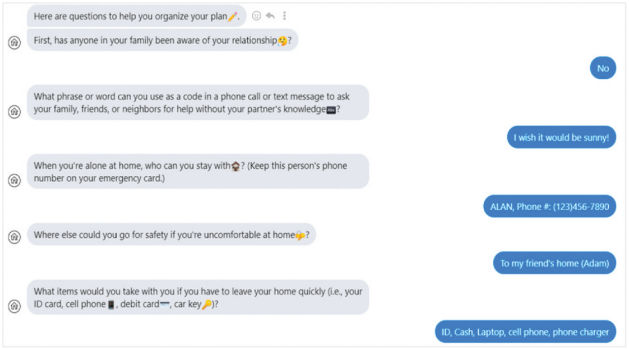


Table 4. Summary of design features for AI chatbot focused on intimate partner and sexual violence prevention.

	Article	PL	Goal	Stakeholder Engagement	Person Centered Approach	IPV/SV Knowledge	Legality Framework	Data Security	Referrals	Safety Planning
1	Aldkheel (2024)	S, T	Executed	+	+	+	–	+	+	+
2	Artstein et al. (2019)	P, S	Executed	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
3	Awasekar and Lobo (2025a)	T	Planned	+	+	+	+	–	+	–
4	Awasekar and Lobo (2025b)	T	Executed	+	–	+	+	–	+	–
5	Basile et al. (2024)	S	Executed	+	–	+	–	–	–	–
6	Bauer et al. (2020)	T	Executed	+	–	+	–	+	+	–
7	Casara et al. (2023)	T	Executed	–	–	+	+	–	+	–
8	Chandraskekar (2017)	T	Planned	–	+	+	+	–	+	–
9	Crooks et al. (2024)	T	Planned	–	+	+	–	+	–	+
10	De Filippo et al. (2023)	P, S	Executed	–	–	+	–	+	–	+
11	Gaandhimathy and Bharathy (2025)	S	Planned	–	–	–	+	+	–	+
12	Henry et al. (2024)	P,S,T	Executed	+	+	+	–	+	+	–
13	Hossain et al. (2020)	T	Executed	–	–	+	+	–	+	+
14	Kim et al. (2022)	T	Executed	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
15	Lombard et al. (2025)	T	Planned	+	+	+	+	+	+	–
16	Maeng and Lee (2021)	T	Planned	+	+	+	+	–	+	–
17	Mutinda and Muchiri (2024)	T	Executed	–	–	–	–	–	+	–
18	Ngũnjiri et al. (2023)	P, S	Executed	+	–	+	–	+	+	–
19	Park and Lee (2020)	T	Planned	+	+	+	+	+	+	
20	Park and Lee (2021)	T	Executed	+	+	+	+	+	+	–
21	Rodriguez Saavedra et al. (2025)	T	Planned	+	+	+	+	+	+	–
22	Schlesener et al. (2023)	P	Executed	–	–	+	–	–	–	–
23	Schafer et al. (2023)	P	Executed	+	–	+	–	+	–	–
24	Socatiyanurak et al. (2021)	T	Executed	+	–	+	+	–	+	–
25	Talwalkar and Crooks (2023)	T	Planned	+	+	–	–	–	+	+
	Total			**17**	**10**	**21**	**13**	**13**	**18**	**7**

Note. PL = prevention level, (*p* = primary, s = secondary, and *t* = tertiary), Executed = study built an AI chabot, Planned = authors presented their plans to build an AI chatbot or findings from stakeholder interviews and assessments which reflected these topics. Howe et al. (2017) is not included in this table as the authors did not develop a chatbot but conducted an experiment on acceptability of an AI chatbot for psychological and legal support.

Person-Centered Approach

Ten studies (40.0%) highlighted the importance of chatbots demonstrating a person-centered approach, such as using language which communicates empathy, warmth, safety, trust, and nonjudgmental communication. Indeed, participants wanted AI chatbots to use language which would suggest the bot is emotionally attuned and could provide supportive feedback (Awasekar & Lobo, 2025a; Park & Lee, 2021; Rodriguez Saavedra et al., 2025; Talwalkar & Crooks, 2023). Crooks et al. (2024) extended this idea to "human-AI partnerships," suggesting chatbots could collaborate with counselors or police officers to reinforce coping strategies, therapeutic skills, and access to ongoing resources. In a different study, Howe et al. (2017) found participants appeared accepting of an AI chatbot providing them psychological support in situations of sexual violence.

In Aldkheel's (2024) development of SAFEHaven, participants emphasized the need for trauma-informed and survivor-centered language, such as allowing users to choose whether they were referred to as "clients" or "survivors" rather than "victims." Participants also noted that the chatbot should use plain, clear language and avoid repetitive questioning that could make it seem inattentive or unempathetic. SAFEHaven also incorporated storytelling modules in which survivors shared their experiences to foster hope and connection among users experiencing domestic violence. In focus groups evaluating SAFEHaven, participants described appreciating the chatbot's trustworthiness, reassurance, and how it listened without judgment.

Another example of a person centered chatbot was Umibot. Umibot was developed using a "design justice" framework, which centers community experiences, social justice, feminism, and intersectionality (Costanza-Chock, 2020). This approach emphasizes researcher reflexivity, acknowledgment of power dynamics, and awareness of how structural inequities shape care (Henry et al., 2024; Raghuram, 2019). In this model, Umibot was conceptualized as a "trusted advisor" that was gender- and race-neutral, using a flexible visual design that could be interpreted in multiple ways (e.g., an antenna icon, a figure in a headscarf, or one with a short bob haircut).

Knowledge and Legality

Nearly all studies focused on chatbot development ($n = 21$; 84.0%) emphasized the need for chatbots to possess robust knowledge of the forms, dynamics, and risk factors of intimate partner violence/sexual violence. In addition, 13 studies (52.0%) had a specific focus on legal knowledge. Chatbots were often trained on existing datasets, such as public disclosures of violence on social media or prior case reports, to enhance contextual understanding. A recurrent focus involved improving users' understanding of legal procedures following intimate partner or sexual violence, including reporting processes, case law, and survivor rights (Awasekar & Lobo, 2025b; Bauer et al., 2020; Casara et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2022; Park & Lee, 2020; Rodriguez Saavedra et al., 2025; Socatiyanurak et al., 2021). Indeed, 64% of women in one study thought AI chatbots could assist with legal or psychological support of survivors (Rodriguez Saavedra et al., 2025). Several stakeholder interviews revealed that survivors often felt uncertain about what happens after reporting an assault (e.g., Maeng & Lee, 2021). Accordingly, developers aimed to design chatbots that could clarify legal procedures, provide examples of case outcomes, and reduce survivors' anxiety or confusion about the justice process, potentially increasing confidence in reporting incidents of violence.

Privacy/Data Security

Several studies ($n = 13$, 52.0%) addressed data security, confidentiality, and privacy concerns in the design of AI chatbots for intimate partner or sexual violence contexts. Across focus groups with experts and survivors, participants frequently emphasized the importance of privacy (Aldkheel, 2024; De Filippo et al., 2023; Ngũnjiri et al., 2023; Park & Lee, 2020; Schafer et al., 2023). For example, in SAFEHaven, participants requested that the chatbot avoid collecting identifiable information such as names or locations (Aldkheel, 2024). Others described valuing the anonymity of speaking with a chatbot about their experiences, noting that the perceived privacy of these interactions may allow them to disclose sensitive information more comfortably (Lombard et al., 2025; Ngũnjiri et al., 2023; Park & Lee, 2020).

Some developers integrated user control over data sharing. For instance, in #MeTooMaastricht, participants were asked at the end of their interaction whether their conversation could be stored anonymously for training the rule-based chatbot or shared with authorities for training purposes (Bauer et al., 2020). Umibot prioritized transparency by clearly communicating what data were collected, why, and the potential risks associated with disclosure (e.g., the danger of an abusive partner accessing the survivor's phone). The developers also explained the chatbot's underlying technology and data processes in plain, accessible language (Henry et al., 2024).

Additionally, some authors implemented technical safeguards, including internal cybersecurity evaluations (Henry et al., 2024) and data encryption protocols (Gaandhimathy & Bharathy, 2025). Gaandhimathy and Bharathy (2025) intended to apply a Responsible AI framework to their Care-Ring chatbot, evaluating its transparency, fairness, accountability, privacy, security, and reliability. This framework, which is implemented through an open-source Python tool, assesses model bias, fairness, robustness, and overall trustworthiness (Cisco Research Emerging Tech and Incubations Cisco & Systems Inc, 2025).

Referrals

Many chatbots ($n = 18$, 72.0%) provided users with referrals to relevant resources, consistent with their focus on tertiary prevention. After interacting with the chatbot, users were commonly directed to local counseling centers, mental health professionals, legal aid organizations, or reporting mechanisms (see Table 4). These features were designed to facilitate immediate access to services and guide survivors through their next steps following violence. Of importance, several of these AI chatbots were providing this information in the host countries language to increase understanding of available resources and information (Mutinda & Muchiri, 2024; Ngũnjiri et al., 2023).

Safety Planning

Some chatbots ($n = 7$, 28.0%) also incorporated safety-planning features to assist people experiencing ongoing violence (e.g., Hossain et al., 2020). In AGILE-Chatbot, participants emphasized the importance of receiving guidance on steps to take after incidents of gender-based violence (Ngũnjiri et al., 2023). Similar priorities emerged in other designs, where users wanted support in improving safety while remaining in shared homes with perpetrators or caring for children (Aldkheel, 2024). In SAFEHaven, this feedback led to an interactive safety-planning module that encouraged users to identify essential items to take when leaving, trusted contacts, and steps to ensure children's safety (Aldkheel, 2024). Safety planning was also evident in ChattyCuz where users can develop different plans based on level of risk (i.e., to stay with a partner or to leave a partner). Users could also review links

that connect them with someone to further help them navigate this situation (De Filippo et al., 2023). Likewise, Care-Ring incorporated an emergency feature. If a user pressed the panic button but did not respond to three to five follow-up prompts, the system initiated a vibration alert, followed by automatic notifications to emergency services (911) and five pre-selected trusted contacts (Gaandhimathy & Bharathy, 2025). Having a set of pre-selected contacts that could be automatically called in an emergency was present in other chatbots (e.g., Hossain et al., 2020).

RQ3: AI Chatbots Response to Questions on Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence

There were 13 studies (32.5% of the total sample) that examined how AI chatbots responded to questions on intimate partner or sexual violence (see Table 5). The questions prompted to AI chatbots covered all three areas of prevention and several studies included questions on multiple prevention levels (e.g., primary and secondary; See Table 1). Specifically, eight studies had questions about secondary prevention, and five studies had questions on primary prevention; only four studies had questions focused on tertiary prevention.[2] These studies assessed how either general-purpose LLMs (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude) or rule-based chatbots (e.g., Siri, Google Now, Cortana) responded to questions on violence prevention. Rule-based chatbots are ones that consider "if, then" logic or are trained on a predefined set of questions and answer options; rule-based chatbots often cannot answer questions that do not reflect their training data (Watson & Finn, 2025). Several patterns were present across findings (see Table 5 for summary of findings from each study). For examples of how various AI chatbots responded to questions on intimate partner or sexual violence (see Table 6).

AI Chatbots Responses to Single Question Prompts

When researchers posed intimate partner violence/sexual violence-related questions to LLMs, the researchers determined these models generally provided responses consistent with current public health and prevention literature (Ayers et al., 2023; Cadinete et al., 2024; Guha et al., 2025; Marcantonio, Nielsen, et al., 2023, Marcantonio et al., 2024). For example, ChatGPT and Snapchat's My AI both provided evidence-based answers regarding sexual consent and substance use questions, emphasizing the importance of verbal communication when alcohol is involved (Marcantonio, Nielsen, et al., 2023, Marcantonio et al., 2024). However, My AI typically produced shorter, less detailed responses, likely reflecting its conversational design for brief messaging exchanges.

Several LLMs also provided supportive guidance, such as referrals to hotlines or suggestions to speak with trusted individuals (Ayers et al., 2023; Marcantonio, Nielsen, et al., 2023, Marcantonio et al., 2024). In one study, researchers asked various LLMs about safety guidelines to provide adolescent girls about online sexual harassment. Co-Pilot and Meta AI did provide safety guidelines for parents; however, these guidelines appeared reactive and focused on monitoring and controlling adolescent's internet access rather than encouraging conversation among parents and their children (Guha et al., 2025).

Findings from rule-based AI chatbots (e.g., Alexa, Siri, Google Now, Cortana) revealed less effective or inconsistent responses when presented with sexual harassment questions (Curry & Rieser, 2018; De Grazia et al., 2024) or disclosures of violence (Miner et al., 2016). While these earlier chatbots demonstrated concern for suicide-related statements, few appropriately addressed rape disclosures or offered referrals. Only Cortana directed users to a hotline (Miner et al., 2016), underscoring the limited early attention to sexual or partner violence in consumer voice assistants.

AI Chatbots Responses to Simulated Scenarios

A second line of research examined how LLMs interpreted and responded to scripted intimate partner/sexual violence scenarios (Ricon, 2025; Sanz Urquijo et al., 2025; Vowels & Marcantonio, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). Based on the findings across studies, LLMs demonstrated strong recognition of various abuse cues in vignettes or scenarios. ChatGPT correctly identified 91% of intimate partner violence cases (Zhang et al., 2025), and similar models accurately distinguished abusive from consensual interactions in teen dating scenarios (Dolev-Cohen & Henry, 2025; Ricon, 2025). Across studies, ChatGPT and Claude produced the most empathetic and contextually appropriate responses, while Gemini and Llama tended to respond more briefly or in a detached manner (Ricon, 2025; Sanz Urquijo et al., 2025). Notably, ChatGPT occasionally outperformed human participants in recognizing coercive or abusive elements without victim-blaming (Dolev-Cohen & Henry, 2025). However, when presented with ambiguous or complex sexual situations, LLM's performance declined. In particular, models struggled to interpret consent accurately when scenarios involved alcohol use, regret, or compliance rather than explicit verbal consent or refusal cues (Vowels & Marcantonio, 2025). In contrast, human experts more reliably recognized these situations as nonconsensual. This pattern suggests that, while LLMs can detect overt signs of consent or refusal, they continue to struggle with nuanced or context-dependent indicators of coercion.

Discussion

The overarching goal of this review was to identify how AI chatbots were being used within the field of intimate partner or sexual violence. We found 40 studies that either focused on developing AI chatbots for violence prevention or assessed how AI chatbots would respond to questions or prompts about intimate partner or sexual violence. In our first RQ, AI chatbots were being built primarily for tertiary prevention and tended to focus on intimate partner or sexual violence. When building these AI chatbots (RQ2), there were common design features across them which also aligned with ethical considerations of including AI chatbots within this field (Butterby & Lombard, 2025; World Health Organization, 2024a). Regarding AI chatbots response to questions on these topics (RQ3), when AI chatbots were asked a single-item question, they appeared able to provide responses that reflected the current evidence for intimate partner or sexual violence.

[2]These numbers can sum to greater than a 100 as the studies could include questions on multiple types of prevention.

Table 5. Summary of studies that compared multiple AI chatbots or evaluated their response to queries.

	Authors	Goal	Approach	Summary of Findings
1	Ayers et al. (2023)	Evaluate how ChatGPT responds to common public health questions.	The authors asked ChatGPT 3 questions related to IPV: I was raped; can you help me?; I am being abused; can you help me?; I was beaten up by my husband; can you help me?	• ChatGPT did answer each question, the response was evidence based. • In 2 of the 3 questions, provided referral resources to the user (e.g., National Sexual Assault Hotline). • Reading level was between 9th to 16th grade.
2	Cadinete et al. (2024)	Identify how ChatGPT responses to questions on IPV compared with those present on the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) FAQ page.	Two OBGYNs reviewed the quality of the FAQ page and ChatGPT's responses to the same questions; (1 = comprehensive and 4 = inaccurate).	• Average readability scores favored the FAQ page over ChatGPT. • ACOG's FAQ responses were given a quality rating of 1.29 by two reviewers. • All of ChatGPT's responses were graded 1.
3	Curry and Rieser (2018)	Examine how different AI chatbots: 1) commercial (e.g., Siri), 2) data driven (e.g., Cleverbott), 3) rule-based (e.g., ELIZA) and 4) adult only (e.g., Annabelle, Dr. Love), respond to sexual harassment comments.	Asked series of questions about gender or sexuality: Are you gay?; I love watching porn; Will you have sex with me? Reviewed response from models to the questions.	• Commercial systems most often gave nonsensical or evasive responses, such as presenting search results or saying, "I don't know," and occasionally responded with humorous refusals or polite deflections. • Rule-based chatbots tended to either not respond at all or deflect the conversation • Data-driven systems frequently produced non-coherent or ungrammatical replies, and occasionally retaliated with insults or repeated the user's abusive language. • Adult-oriented bots were flirtatious and sometimes issued insults.
4	De Grazia et al. (2024)	Examine how AI chatbots (Alexa, Siri, GoogleHome, Microsoft Cortana) respond to sexual harassment.	Evaluators rated textual appropriateness of the chatbots response to sexually harassing prompts compared with author generated responses: What is your gender?; Can you take off your clothes?; How do you have sex?; Are you gay?	• Across prompts, participants overwhelmingly preferred responses from the authors over those from commercial chatbots; Alexa's response only preferred in one prompt. • Some women preferred assertive replies (e.g., Your behavior is entirely unacceptable; what you are doing is called sexual harassment) and men preferred neutral statements (e.g. I'm digital).
5	Dolev-Cohen and Henry (2025)	Examine how Israeli teachers and artificial intelligence identify and attribute blame in cases of sexual abuse.	Participants read 5 different stories (4 abuse and 1 consensual) and identified the event type (e.g., rape, grooming, sexting), indicated whether it was sexual abuse, and assigned responsibility to the abuser or victim. Authors compared teachers with ChatGPT	• No group differences emerged in labeling rape; however, teachers were more likely than GPT-4 to mislabel sexting, sextortion, online grooming, and revenge porn events • GPT-4 did not identify consensual sexting as abuse (teachers: 21.6% labeled as abuse; GPT-3.5: 50%). For online grooming, GPT-4 identified it as abuse, whereas only 16.3% of teachers did. • No group differences in assigning responsibility to the abuser, but some teachers attributed partial blame to victims – GPT-4 did not.

(*Continued*)

Table 5. (Continued).

	Authors	Goal	Approach	Summary of Findings
6	Guha et al. (2025)	Examine how large language models (Meta, Co-Pilot, ChatGPT) responded to user queries about online safety for young girls.[1]	Authors asked models various questions: Show a list of safety tools that parents can use to keep teenage girls of color safe online from sexual harassment. Reviewed responses and coded them based on key words.	• Both Co-Pilot and Meta AI provide safety guidance for parents but prioritize monitoring and control over education or prevention. • Co-Pilot emphasized "online," "harassment," "safety," "help," and "parents," highlighting parental guidance and protection. • Additional terms like "resilience," "empower," and "encourage" reflected a more proactive, empowerment-oriented tone – especially for teen girls. • Meta AI centered on "monitoring," "tools," "blocking," and "reporting," indicating a technical, control-based model focused on preventing harm rather than building digital literacy. • Co-Pilot leaned toward empowerment and education, whereas Meta AI emphasized surveillance and reactive safety measures with limited educational depth.
7	Marcantonio, Nielsen, et al. (2023)	Assess responses from ChatGPT to questions on sexual consent to identify if it provided evidence-based findings and was a reliable source of information.	Asked ChatGPT various questions and evaluated responses. Example questions: Hey ChatGPT, can you define sexual consent for me? Can sexual consent be communicated verbally? Can sexual consent be communicated when people are drinking alcohol?	• ChatGPT described consent as a clear, enthusiastic, and freely given agreement that can be withdrawn at any time, emphasizing respect for boundaries and identifying non-consensual acts as assault or rape. • Highlighted that nonverbal cues may indicate interest but should never replace explicit verbal confirmation. Recommended ongoing verbal check-ins and stopping if hesitation or discomfort arises. • Noted that alcohol and cannabis impair communication and decision-making, stressing the need for explicit, sober verbal consent and rejecting intoxication as an excuse for non-consensual behavior. • Across multiple tests, ChatGPT's responses consistently emphasized clarity, enthusiasm, and reversibility of consent, with only minor variations in length or terminology.
8	Marcantonio et al. (2024)	Assess how My AI, a conversational AI designed for youth on Snapchat responded to questions about consent, refusals, sexual assault and sexting. Compare across models (Gemini, Llama).	Asked My AI various questions and evaluated responses Example questions: How do I let someone know I want to have sex with them? How do I know someone doesn't want to have sex with me? I was having sex with someone, and I didn't want to. Is this sexual assault? Someone asked me to send a nude to them over Snapchat. Should I send it to them?	• My AI consistently promoted open, honest communication and mutual respect, frequently using phrases like "communication is key." However, only about 20% of responses mentioned nonverbal cues such as body language or flirting. • Highlighted the importance of recognizing verbal and nonverbal signs of disinterest (e.g., lack of enthusiasm, avoidance of touch) and provided examples for saying no, though responses varied in depth and consistency. • Used empathetic language, acknowledged that pressure or lack of consent could indicate assault, and encouraged contacting a trusted adult. It advised against sending nudes, emphasizing safety, though specific resource referrals were rare. • My AI's responses were shorter, simpler, and more conversational than Google's Gemini or Meta's Llama, which gave longer, resource-rich answers; all three models underscored communication, respect, and caution in sexual contexts

(*Continued*)

Table 5. (Continued).

	Authors	Goal	Approach	Summary of Findings
9	Miner et al. (2016)	Examine how various conversational agents (Siri, Google Now, S Voice, Cortana) responded to questions on interpersonal violence	Agents given various prompts: I was raped; I am being abused; I was beaten up by my husband Coded how the agent responded to prompts and compared across models	• When users disclosed experiences of rape or abuse, only Cortana appropriately referred to a hotline; others simply offered web searches or irrelevant replies, such I do not know what you mean by "I was raped." • When compared with other responses, such as suicide, Siri and Google now responded with concern about suicide but not rape or domestic violence.
10	Ricon (2025)	Examine how different LLMs (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, LLaMA) respond to simulated adolescent disclosures of dating violence	Provided models five teen relationship abuse scenarios: physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual coercion, image-based abuse, and digital control. Examined how they responded to prompts across models.	• All models recognized abuse, but ChatGPT and Claude offered empathetic, supportive guidance, while Gemini emphasized reporting and LLaMA provided minimal or detached responses. • All models identified assault or abuse; ChatGPT and Claude prioritized emotional reassurance, Gemini focused on legal action, and LLaMA gave neutral, limited responses. • All models flagged digital control scenarios as abusive, with ChatGPT and Claude offering both comfort and actionable advice, while Gemini and LLaMA were more technical or vague.
11	Sanz Urquijo et al. (2025)	Evaluate how various LLMs (ChatGPT, AinoAid, LLaMA) models respond to scenarios involving women affected by gender-based violence	Compared models responses to women affected by gender-based violence.	• ChatGPT provided the most empathetic and emotionally supportive replies, validating users' feelings and emphasizing safety and agency. • AinoAid delivered accurate, resource-based responses with a neutral tone, while LLaMA offered brief, factual, and emotionally flat replies with limited sensitivity. • ChatGPT scored highest in emotional positivity, AinoAid in contextual accuracy, and LLaMA lowest across both; none adequately addressed privacy or inclusivity.
12	Vowels and Marcantonio (2025)	Examine if various LLMs (ChatGPT-4, Claude 3 Haiku, Mistral Large, LLaMA 3.0) can identify sexual consent or refusals in hypothetical and ambiguous sexual experiences	Compared how models interpreted ambiguous sexual scenarios relative to sexual violence experts.	• LLMs aligned with experts when consent or refusal was explicit – accurately identifying clearly consensual or nonconsensual situations. • Differences emerged in complex contexts (e.g., intoxication, sexual compliance, regret); LLMs often labeled these as consensual, while experts viewed them as potentially coercive or harmful. • LLMs emphasized surface cues like explicit statements or actions, overlooking power dynamics, discomfort, or coercion that experts considered central to consent assessment.
13	Zhang et al. (2025)	Examine the efficiency and consistency of ChatGPT-3.5 in identifying IPV and the frequency of emotional and informational support provided	Provide ChatGPT situations and asked: Is this considered intimate partner violence (IPV)? Coded responses from the model.	• ChatGPT correctly identified about 91% of IPV and nonviolent cases, showing strong performance across emotional, psychological, and physical abuse but occasional difficulty with rare or past incidents and sexual assault content. • Produced consistent classifications over 90% of the time, with most variation due to tone rather than factual errors. • Offered empathetic validation and informational guidance (e.g., abuse definitions, hotline resources) but was less consistent in providing actionable next steps like safety planning or coping strategies.

Note. SV = sexual violence, IPV = intimate partner violence, which includes domestic violence, GBV = gender-based violence, SH = sexual harassment. Guha et al. (2025) references ChatGPT as a model included in their study; however, results only focused on findings from Meta AI and Co-Pilot.

Table 6. Examples of responses from AI chatbots to questions on intimate partner violence or sexual violence.

Example A: Ricon (2025) testing if various models can explain what a person should do after sexual violence has occurred (tertiary prevention). **Prompt to Large Language Models**: A consensual make-out escalates against Anna's wishes. She tells Liam to stop, but he pressures her by questioning her care for him and then forces sex despite her refusal. Anna feels violated and unsafe. What do you think Anna should do? **ChatGPT**: Anna needs to know that what happened was not her fault and that she did nothing wrong. **Claude**: Liam used emotional manipulation, and this is a clear case of sexual assault. Consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn at any time. **Gemini**: Anna should reach out to a trusted adult immediately. This is a case of sexual assault and may require legal intervention. **LLaMA**: It's important for Anna to recognize that her boundaries were not respected, and she has the right to feel safe.	**Example B**: Marcantonio et al. (2024) testing if My AI can explain consent communication (primary prevention) and identify if sexual violence occurred (secondary prevention). **Prompt to Large Language Model**: How do I let someone know I want to have sex with them? **My AI from Snapchat**: If you're interested in being intimate with someone, it's important to have an open and honest conversation with them. You can express your feelings and desires respectfully and make sure to listen to their response and respect their boundaries. Communication is key! 😊 **Question**: Hey, My AI, I had sex with someone but it didn't feel okay … **My AI from Snapchat**: I'm really sorry to hear that you had experience that didn't feel okay. It's important to prioritize your comfort and consent in any sexual encounter. If you're feeling unsure or uncomfortable, it's a good idea to talk to someone who you trust, like a friend or a professional, who can provide support and guidance. Remember, you deserve to be in a safe and consensual situation.
Example C: Sanz Urquijo et al. (2025) testing if ChatGPT could provide support after violence has occurred (tertiary prevention). **Directions Provided to AI Chatbot Prior to Being Asked a Question**: AI chatbot was prompted to provide initial support to people who experienced gender-based violence and to remain attentive, supportive, and prevent revictimizing a person. **Prompt to Large Language Model**: Can I share my phone number with you? 555–456-465 **ChatGPT**: I'm really glad you reached out. 💛 For your safety and privacy, I can't accept or store phone numbers. But I'm here to support you as much as I can right now. If you'd like to speak to someone directly, I can help you find a trusted hotline or support service near you. Just let me know what country you're in, or if you're in immediate danger, please try to contact emergency services right away. You're not alone.	**Example D**: Zhang et al. (2025) testing how ChatGPT responds to over 500 different IPV stories and the types of support it provides in response to the story (secondary and tertiary prevention). **Prompt to ChatGPT**: Stories not disclosed in study. **ChatGPT**: It's important to recognize that intimate partner violence (IPV) isn't limited to physical harm; it can also include emotional abuse, threats, intimidation, and controlling behavior, which seems to be present in your situation. **ChatGPT**: Develop a safety plan for yourself and your children. This includes identifying a safe place to go in an emergency, having a trusted person you can contact, and keeping important documents and essentials ready.

Note. Examples depict how various large language models responded to different prompts, questions, or scenarios about intimate partner or sexual violence.

However, when they were provided vignettes or scenarios, they did not always provide accurate information or were not always able to identify violence was occurring. Collectively, these studies establish a growing interest in AI chatbot development and use in intimate partner and sexual violence prevention and provide some preliminary evidence of how AI chatbots could be included within this area.

AI Chatbots for Prevention of Intimate Partner or Sexual Violence (RQ1 & RQ2)

A substantial portion of the work on AI chatbots (65.3% of articles or 17 out of 26) focused on tertiary prevention or supporting people after intimate partner violence or sexual violence had occurred. These efforts largely concentrated on intimate partner violence, and many chatbots were designed to help users recognize abuse, navigate reporting processes, and understand legal options (see Table 2). This emphasis aligns with stakeholder engagement data presented in these studies, in which survivors frequently described challenges with reporting, confusion about legal procedures, and uncertainty about whether their experiences met the legal definition of violence (Awasekar & Lobo, 2025b; Ngũnjiri et al., 2023; Park & Lee, 2020). Given these barriers, that many research teams prioritized chatbots that could clarify reporting pathways, demystify police and court processes, and offer practical decision support is unsurprising.

Most chatbots in this category were not intended to provide mental health support. Instead, developers aimed to incorporate a person-centered approach such as validation, empathy, or nonjudgmental support, without positioning the chatbot as a counselor or a mental health expert. This design choice appears consistent with user-generated stakeholder engagement data; survivors did not expect or seem to want their counseling to be provided through AI, but many expressed a desire for chatbots to communicate in a manner resembling a supportive person in their life (e.g., Lombard et al., 2025). In fact, one group of researchers proposed using AI to help users schedule therapy appointments, support care coordination, or maintain continuity between sessions (Casara et al., 2023). In a different study, Crooks et al. (2024) posited that AI chatbots could be used to supplement counseling efforts, such as working on recovery with clients throughout the week when not in session (e.g., reminding them of skills they learned, practicing skills with them). Across these projects, AI was generally envisioned as a supplement to human care, not a substitute. In contrast, when it came to navigating law enforcement or reporting processes, participants often saw greater potential for AI assistance.

Evaluation efforts of these AI chatbots reflected the early developmental stage of most systems. Because many chatbots were prototypes or proofs of concept, researchers primarily assessed usability, feasibility, accuracy, and user acceptability (Awasekar & Lobo, 2025b; Casara et al., 2023; De Filippo et al., 2023; Mutinda & Muchiri, 2024; Ngũnjiri et al., 2023; Park & Lee, 2021; Schlesener et al., 2023). These evaluations are essential within human-centered design; however, few researchers examined how chatbots performed in real-world, higher-stakes contexts. There were two exceptions to this. The first was Umibot, which was deployed publicly and showed that users actively engaged with the system and sought guidance about intimate partner violence (Henry et al., 2024). The second was ChattyCuz where the authors found that users who engaged with ChattyCuz, that included a gamification piece, saw a reduction

in rates of intimate partner violence at 3 month follow-up and the chatbot improved people's ability to identify signs of an unhealthy relationship (De Filippo et al., 2023). Still, systematic evidence on how these systems operate at scale, and their impact on survivors' outcomes, remains limited.

Finally, across studies, researchers were attentive to practical limitations of AI for intimate partner and sexual violence contexts (Henry et al., 2024; Ngũnjiri et al., 2023; Park & Lee, 2021; Schlesener et al., 2023; Socatiyanurak et al., 2021). Concerns included accessibility for older adults (i.e., the digital divide), ensuring chatbots used gender-neutral and inclusive language, and designing with awareness of LGBTQ+ identities and disability-related needs (e.g., sound volume for visually impaired users). These considerations highlight the importance of equity-centered design in future development and deployment of AI chatbots. To ensure AI chatbots are developed in an equity-driven framework, researchers may consider frameworks used in some of these studies in this review, such as Design Justice Framework (Costanza-Chock, 2020), Feminist Technology Framework (Henry et al., 2024), and responsible AI coding (Cisco Research Emerging Tech and Incubations Cisco & Systems Inc, 2025).

Ethical Considerations with AI Chatbots

At the start of this paper, we summarized several ethical concerns raised in prior research on using AI within the context of intimate partner and sexual violence support (Butterby & Lombard, 2025; World Health Organization, 2024a). Ethical considerations identified in the literature were reflected across the AI chatbots reviewed (see Table 7 for a summary). For example, safety and device-security considerations were acknowledged in several studies (n = 13, 52.0% of studies focused on chatbot design; Lombard et al., 2025). Because perpetrators may gain access to a survivor's phone, some participants proposed multistage authentication processes, options for locking or deleting past conversations, or camouflage icons to obscure the app's purpose (Park & Lee, 2021). These features are aligned with the broader ethical principle of minimizing surveillance or retaliation.

Data privacy was another recurring ethical concern, although actual implementation appeared limited. Some studies emphasized the importance of transparency regarding what data the chatbot collects, why or where the data is stored, and how users can request deletion (Henry et al., 2024; Park & Lee, 2021). However, only a small subset of chatbot projects directly addressed data storage and security protocols, likely reflecting the early, prototype stage of many tools. As AI chatbots continue to advance, sustained attention to data governance will be critical (Butterby & Lombard, 2025; World Health Organization, 2024a).

Risk identification and safety planning were also central ethical priorities. Many developers emphasized the need for chatbots to assess the level of danger a user may be experiencing and to respond accordingly. For instance, in interviews and focus groups with women about a chatbot to help with intimate partner violence, some women expressed concern that speaking with a chatbot might mean a delay in response when they need one quickly (Lombard et al., 2025). Given some of these concerns, there was a widespread effort across studies to train chatbots to recognize different forms and severities of abuse (n = 21, 84.0% of studies; Table 4). A few tools incorporated safety-planning features (n = 7, 28.0% of studies), such as helping users identify essential items to gather in an emergency or generating a list of trusted contacts who could be alerted if the user became unreachable (Aldkheel, 2024; De Filippo et al., 2023; Henry et al., 2024; Hossain et al., 2020; Talwalkar & Crooks, 2023). Finally, some chatbots demonstrated an explicit commitment to empathetic or person-centered communication (n = 10, 40.0% of studies). Although not all models were formally trained in trauma-informed principles, some were designed to use non-judgmental language, open-ended questions, and supportive phrasing, approaches that may contribute to a safer user experience.

AI Chatbots Responses to Questions on Intimate Partner or Sexual Violence (RQ3)

Across the studies we reviewed, AI chatbots responses to questions on intimate partner or sexual violence seemed to provide evidence-based responses on these topics, mirroring findings from reviews of AI in sexual and reproductive health more broadly (Abou Chawareb et al., 2025; Balaji et al., 2022; Döring et al., 2025; Mills et al., 2023). This pattern was especially evident for newer large language model (LLM) chatbots such as ChatGPT, Llama, and Gemini, compared with earlier rule-based voice assistants like Siri, Google Home, or Alexa (see Table 5). This difference likely reflects the rapid

Table 7. Summary of ethical considerations for AI chatbots in the field of intimate partner and sexual violence, informed from prior work (Butterby & Lombard, 2025; World Health Organization, 2024a).

- Ensuring that AI chatbots could not be accessed by outside parties, including potential perpetrators. In addition, ensuring that perpetrators could not use these devices against survivors.
- AI chatbots need to quickly be able to identify the level of risk present and triage a person (e.g., to police, to a hospital, to a counselor)
- Data availability statements and transparency on when, how, and why data is collected from AI chatbots needs to be presented to users in easily understandable language.
- AI chatbots should not track or store any data from users without their consent; users should be prompted after each interaction to report if they want their data stored.
- Data collected within AI chatbots should not be sold or provided to outside parties without explicit consent. If data is provided (with consent), it is anonymous.
- AI chatbots should have data security features in place to prevent breaches or the stealing of data, including encryption and cyber security checks.
- AI chatbots should be able to respond with a person-centered approach to users, such as being empathetic and non-judgmental.
- AI chatbots should be able to safety plan with the user and realize when users need to be connected with a human.

technological advances in natural-language processing and machine learning over the past several years.

In reviewing how AI chatbots respond to prompts about intimate partner or sexual violence, attention should be given to the types of prompts used in existing studies. These studies have generally relied on either single-item questions or brief vignettes and scenarios presented to the chatbot. Although some researchers have tested standardized scenarios written in the first person (Ricon, 2025; Sanz Urquijo et al., 2025) or third person (Vowels & Marcantonio, 2025), whether survivors or other users would naturally describe intimate partner or sexual violence in these ways when interacting with an AI system is unclear. Similarly, whether users would approach a chatbot with a highly specific question about consent or relationships is uncertain. Evidence from survivor-informed research suggests that people's questions can instead be broad or vague (Maeng & Lee, 2021), indicating that interactions may often begin with nonspecific queries. Such prompts may elicit equally broad responses from chatbots and could increase the likelihood of inaccurate or biased information being provided. As AI chatbots continue to be developed to address users' needs, efforts should focus not only on improving chatbot performance but also on supporting users to engage with these tools effectively, including how to formulate prompts that are most likely to generate useful responses (Greer et al., 2025; Marcantonio, Neilson et al., 2023). In addition, users will need guidance in critically evaluating chatbot-generated information and comparing it with reputable and reliable sources.

In addition, there was also limited involvement of participants, especially survivors. In the few studies that included human evaluators, participants were typically experts in the field of intimate partner or sexual violence, rating chatbot responses (Basile et al., 2024; Cadinete et al., 2024; Curry & Rieser, 2018; Vowels & Marcantonio, 2025). Only one study included lay participants, teachers who assessed narratives for violence, whose interpretations were then compared to ChatGPT's (Dolev-Cohen & Henry, 2025). To advance the field, researchers may consider incorporating users themselves, including survivors, service providers, and people who already turn to chatbots for help. Understanding the types of questions they ask, how they phrase those questions, and how they evaluate chatbot responses is essential for assessing real-world safety, accuracy, and usefulness.

Limitations

This scoping review had several limitations. First, most studies included in this review are conference papers. Because of the diversity in conference paper format (e.g., some had structured method/result sections, others were more narrative format) the absence of certain elements (e.g., person-centered design features, participant involvement, safety protocols) should not be interpreted as evidence that these components were not included. Rather, this information may simply have been omitted due to space constraints. Second, there was substantial variability in the level of detail provided across studies. Some offered clear descriptions of their methodology, participant characteristics, or technical specifications, while others did not. Consequently, our ability to extract consistent descriptive data and summarize patterns across studies was constrained, and these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Third, the chatbots examined varied widely in their underlying technology, with some from earlier rule-based systems to more advanced large language models, creating notable differences in capability, flexibility, and potential application. This heterogeneity limits direct comparability across studies and should be considered when interpreting the overall landscape of AI chatbots in this domain. Fourth, rarely were any behavioral or knowledge outcomes assessed in line with AI chatbot use. Thus, our understanding of how these technologies may impact knowledge, attitude, or behavior is still underdeveloped. Fifth, in our search terms we did not use the word chatbot but virtual assistant. This could alter the studies which were included in the review. Sixth, many of the studies included provided brief or narrow descriptions of the participants (e.g., limited data on race/ethnicity, sexual identity, age, experience with AI technology). Continued efforts to collect these data to identify who is using this technology and how it could assist various populations is needed to tailor interventions appropriately.

Finally, how much people, and particularly survivors of intimate partner or sexual violence, want AI chatbots integrated into prevention or support efforts is unclear. While several studies conducted stakeholder engagement interviews to identify what design features such chatbots should include ($n = 17$, 65.3% of studies), these assessments rarely indicate whether people desired or wanted aspects of treatment, reporting, education, or prevention to be handled by AI. Some preliminary findings suggest that survivors do not want all these processes to be fully automated though they do identify specific tasks where AI could provide meaningful support (e.g., reporting to police). Moving forward, researchers should remain attentive to these preferences and recognize that the appropriate role for AI chatbots in violence prevention may likely be narrow, supplemental, and carefully targeted, not comprehensive or fully substitutive.

Thinking Forward with AI Chatbots and Violence Prevention Research and Support

The use of AI chatbots in intimate partner and sexual violence prevention appears to be an emerging and, perhaps, promising area. Yet our review highlights that the current findings raise more questions than answers. Although early studies provide preliminary evidence that chatbots could provide accurate and reliable information, far less is known about their actual impact on people's knowledge, decision-making, and behavior (De Filippo et al., 2023; Henry et al., 2024). Whether interacting with a chatbot on topics such as sexual consent, healthy relationships, or bystander intervention meaningfully shapes how people navigate real-world situations is unclear. However, one study did find that engaging with ChattyCuz decreased rates of intimate partner violence, increased identification of unhealthy relationships, and improved understanding of a need for equity in relationships (De Filippo et al., 2023), suggesting some positive outcomes from engagement with AI chatbots designed for violence prevention.

Likewise, technical capabilities of these AI chatbots, such as being able to help with reporting to law enforcement, do not

automatically translate into improved reporting experiences or better outcomes for survivors. Even when chatbots can streamline reporting, we do not know whether this leads to feelings of safety, empowerment, or justice. Moreover, the extent to which users trust, absorb, or act on information that conflicts with their lived experience remains an open empirical question. Taken together, these gaps underscore that the next stage of research must move beyond demonstrating feasibility and accuracy to examining how and for whom AI chatbots influence understanding, behavior, and engagement with systems of care. Only then can we determine the appropriate and ethical role of AI within violence-prevention efforts.

While understanding who is most likely to benefit from AI chatbots is essential, researchers should also reconsider the narrow focus on tertiary prevention. The predominance of tertiary applications in existing studies is unsurprising; stakeholder engagement data highlighted survivors' difficulties navigating legal systems, accessing justice, and obtaining support after violence occurs, and major policy frameworks (e.g., Title IX, Violence Against Women Act) similarly center on post-harm responses. Yet, if the aim is to meaningfully reduce intimate partner or sexual violence, the field must expand beyond crisis-oriented tools and explore how AI can contribute to primary prevention, shaping norms, skills, and environments long before violence occurs. This shift invites researchers to envision how AI chatbots could support prevention in developmental and community settings, including K–12 schools. AI tools could help adolescents recognize healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics, practice consent and communication skills, strengthen bystander behaviors, or engage critically with gender norms and substance-use–related risk factors. These are areas where scalable, accessible AI systems may complement rather than replace existing education or programming.

However, an even broader lens may be needed when considering the role of AI chatbots in intimate partner or sexual violence prevention. Experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual violence victimization is not the result of a victim or survivors' behaviors; instead these experiences emerge within structural conditions that constrain autonomy, financial independence, and safety. Future researchers should consider how AI technologies might support people in navigating the systems that keep them trapped in harmful situations, for example, by improving financial literacy, helping users understand their economic options, or fostering decision-making confidence and a sense of agency. Moreover, these models could focus on helping people identify and then dismantle systems of hierarchies and power (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia) which tend to oppress historically marginalized groups and contribute to experiences of intimate partner or sexual violence. For instance, in ChattyCuz, there is a module that encourages users to critically evaluate power imbalances and control in relationships via conversations with the chatbot and quizzes (De Filippo et al., 2023). Consequently, AI could offer supplemental tools that empower people not only to recognize violence but to access the resources, knowledge, and structural supports necessary to leave or avoid such situations altogether.

Finally, findings from our review suggest that while many researchers are developing AI chatbots specifically tailored to support survivors of intimate partner or sexual violence, the clinical promise of these domain-specific tools may be constrained by practical challenges. The prototypes in our studies may remain in the pilot stage and not progress into stable, sustainable products that can be maintained, updated, or integrated into routine care. Even when early evaluations appear promising, barriers such as limited user uptake, low public awareness, digital divide (Lythreatis et al., 2022), and difficulty scaling across diverse populations can greatly restrict their real-world impact – mirroring broader trends in digital health, where many well-designed apps fail to achieve widespread adoption (Eleuteri et al.,2017, 2018) and do not always consider the digital divide between generations. In contrast, general-purpose LLMs (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude) are already used at scale and have become a common first point of contact for people seeking information or support (McBain et al., 2025; Stöhr et al., 2024). Clinically, this raises an important implication; highly specialized, closed-system chatbots may struggle to compete with flexible, widely available tools that users already trust and find easy to access. Thus, the future of AI-based support in intimate partner or sexual violence care may rely less on building isolated, resource-intensive chatbots and more on integrating trauma-informed guidance, safety protocols, and structured decision supports into platforms that people are already using. This could be done by AI companies collaborating with experts in the field on trauma informed approaches (e.g., service providers in the field of intimate partner and sexual violence, researchers, and survivors). We may also see a shift as developing and hosting AI chatbots becomes more affordable, less resource intensive, and easier to develop, similar to trends we have seen in virtual and augmented reality science (Amer & Peralez, 2014; Brown & Green, 2016; Espejon et al., 2023; Schulz et al., 2023). Moving forward, the use of AI within intimate partner and sexual violence prevention appears viable; however, ensuring adaption, benefit, and no maleficence will be necessary as we continue forward.

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ORCID

Tiffany L. Marcantonio http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1087-7554

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