Measuring jealousy in intimate relationships: A systematic review of instruments and their psychometric qualities

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Abstract

Jealousy may constitute a risk factor for intimate partner violence (IPV). Several authors have validated instruments based on different theoretical models to measure jealousy. However, studies have yet to compare existing questionnaires to evaluate their psychometric properties and understand which instrument best helps to prevent IPV. The objective of the systematic review was to evaluate the psychometric properties of instruments for studying jealousy in intimate relationships. We focus on the reliability, validity, and overall effectiveness of self-report questionnaires used to measure this construct, identifying the most suitable tools for different populations and contexts. A search was conducted on the electronic databases of PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Eric. Using inclusion and exclusion criteria, 32 studies were included, representing 21 instruments, with sample ages ranging from 13 to 65 years. Results revealed the presence of various scales for measuring jealousy: some focused on different triggers and relational consequences of jealousy, while others differed in their purpose and content. These instruments also differ in their psychometric properties, with most demonstrating adequate reliability and validity. However, there are limitations in the way this construct is conceptualized and measured, leading to difficulties in identifying the psychological mechanisms that contribute to pathological forms of jealousy. In conclusion, validated self-report measures of jealousy are crucial for advancing research and clinical practice, helping to identify maladaptive jealousy patterns and inform effective interventions. This work also underscores the need for future research to develop more comprehensive tools that capture the complex individual and relational factors involved in jealousy, particularly as a risk factor for IPV.

Keywords Jealousy · Scale · Measurement · Instruments · Systematic review · Intimate relationships · Intimate partner violence

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Introduction

Jealousy is one of the most complex and fascinating human emotions that plays an important role in shaping interpersonal dynamics, especially in intimate relationships. The emotion of jealousy refers to the complex thoughts, emotions, and actions associated with the anticipated loss of the other and one's self-esteem when relational exclusivity is at stake due to a real or imagined rival (White & Mullen, 1989). Over time, various definitions and theories of jealousy have emerged to explain its role and different forms within intimate relationships. Miceli and Castelfranchi (2007) stated that jealousy is characterized by the need for exclusivity and suspiciousness, which can be traced back to the need to maintain or restore possession of a beloved possession. According to the authors, a component of envy is included

in jealousy when the jealous person compares themselves with a rival to whom they feel inferior (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2007). Whereas envy focuses on shortcomings relative to a rival, jealousy focuses on the sadness resulting from the loss and resentment of being deprived of what is one's own (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2002). Feeling jealousy is part of human nature itself, and jealousy, like all emotions, also has an evolutionary value and serves to ensure social order (Clanton, 1996). Factors concerning the intimate relationship started to be considered as fundamental in defining causes, levels, and forms of jealousy. For instance, White and Mullen (1989) argue that the more a romantic relationship is valued, the more likely a person is to try to maintain it, remain vigilant to threats to the relationship, and experience strong emotional reactions to loss or the threat of loss. This should not be read as a deterministic claim: valuing a relationship is neither necessary nor sufficient for jealousy, which reflects multiple individual and contextual factors. Consistent with this view, to date, most scholars and researchers favor a multidimensional approach to investigating and understanding jealousy in intimate relationships. For example, Pfeiffer and Wong (1989) distinguish emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. *Emotional* jealousy (1) refers to the negative emotions an individual feels in response to a perceived threat to a valued romantic relationship and is commonly experienced by humans. On the contrary, the cognitive and behavioral components can take on pathological characteristics. *Cognitive* jealousy (2) involves concerns and suspicions about relationship rivals and a partner's infidelity or betrayal. In contrast, *Behavioral* jealousy (3) consists of a person's investigative or protective measures to minimize or eliminate the perceived threat, real or imagined, of relationship rivals (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). Bringle's (1991) transactional model of jealousy specifies two types of jealousy: *suspicious* jealousy mainly involves thoughts, behaviors, and feelings that are typically experienced in the absence of significant jealousy-evoking events, whereas *reactive* jealousy occurs more strongly when there are concrete transgressions that violate fundamental aspects of the relational bond (e.g., sexual exclusivity). A key distinction in the model is that suspicious jealousy is more related to individual internal factors. In contrast, reactive jealousy is linked to external factors stemming from the social context and the relationship (Rydell & Bringle, 2007). Buunk (1997) also considered jealousy as a multidimensional emotion triggered by real or imagined behaviors of the partner in an intimate relationship. Specifically, he distinguished three subtypes: (1) *reactive* jealousy, arising in response to confirmed, concrete partner behaviors with a rival-including the anticipated negative affect to intimate and sexual partner behaviors (e.g., flirting, intimate dancing, kissing); (2) *anxious* jealousy, characterized by internally

generated scenarios and worries that the partner may be involved with someone else; and (3) *preventive* jealousy, consisting of attempts to restrict or pre-empt contact on the basis of perceived signals—i.e., minimal or ambiguous cues (e.g., "slight indications of interest," "innocent, superficial contact") rather than verified partner acts (Buunk, 1997).

The evolutionary theory is one of the best-known theoretical models for the conceptualization of jealousy. According to this model, the level of jealousy varies in response to both different types of infidelity (sexual or emotional infidelity) and gender: men felt jealousy more in situations involving sexual infidelity and women more in situations involving emotional infidelity (Buss et al., 1992). DeSteno and Salovey (1996) reinterpret Buss' findings through the double-shot hypothesis. They argued that emotional and sexual infidelity are not independent events and that there are specific psychological mechanisms that explain gender differences in jealousy. In this regard, the Dynamic Functional Model theorizes jealousy as an emotion arising when the loved one is paying attention to a rival. This would simply motivate the impulse to regain their attention (Harris, 2003; Chung & Harris, 2018). The authors postulated that there is a more elaborate form of jealousy in which interpretations become increasingly relevant. In this case, the cognitive processes determine the propensity for jealousy, as well as its intensity and manifestation, leading to prolonged processes of active evaluation and threat management (Chung & Harris, 2018). While evolutionary models postulate that jealousy evolved because women and men want to maximize the supply of resources for their offspring (Buss et al., 1992), social-cognitive models propose that social and cultural factors influence jealousy. In line with that, several studies have confirmed how other variables, besides gender, come into play in defining specific jealousy responses, such as age, education, number of lifetime sexual partners, relationship status, and attitudes toward infidelity (De Visser et al., 2020).

Although jealousy is most commonly studied in romantic relationships, it also manifests in other relational contexts such as friendships and family relationships. In the family domain, experimental observations of parent–child–sibling triads show that when parental attention is directed to one child, the other displays jealous affect and behavioral dysregulation—highlighting how jealousy emerges from the interactional context and children's emotion regulation capacities (Volling et al., 2002). In early-adolescent friendships, validated "friendship jealousy" measures document stable individual differences and link jealousy toward friends to aggressive behavior and poorer peer adjustment (Parker et al., 2005). More broadly, population-based twin research indicates that romantic jealousy reflects both genetic and unique environmental influences, underscoring

dispositional variability beyond immediate relational contexts (Kupfer et al., 2022). In sum, jealousy in intimate and close relationships emerges as a multifaceted emotion shaped by individual dispositions, relationship dynamics, and broader social and cultural influences.

Jealousy in intimate partner violence

Recent research has highlighted multiple risk factors underlying intimate partner violence (IPV) and its consequences. IPV not only arises from individual vulnerabilities but also leads to severe outcomes for victims, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and chronic pain (Trevillion et al., 2012; Dokkedahl et al., 2022; Uvelli et al., 2024, 2025). Personality traits contribute to perpetration, with avoidant, histrionic, and self-defeating patterns commonly observed, while more severe violence is associated with Cluster A traits (paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal) (Teva et al., 2023; Apostolopoulos et al., 2018). Pathological Affective Dependence (PAD), characterized by dysfunctional attachment, fear of abandonment, and emotional dysregulation, has emerged as a key factor in both victimization and perpetration of IPV (Pugliese et al., 2023a; Pugliese et al., 2024; Pugliese et al., 2025a). Impaired emotional awareness is also prevalent among individuals involved in IPV, suggesting that interventions enhancing emotional regulation, such as Metacognitive Interpersonal Therapy (MIT), may help reduce aggression (Veggi et al., 2024; Misso et al., 2022; Pugliese et al., 2025b). Furthermore, excessive or pathological jealousy can act as a trigger for violence, with gender differences influencing its manifestation and severity (Perles et al., 2019; Pichon et al., 2020).

In this sense, pathological jealousy denotes an enduring, evidence-resistant preoccupation with suspected infidelity, spanning obsessive ruminations to delusional certainty, with impaired reality testing and heightened risk of violence; it can present primarily or secondary to psychiatric/neurological disorders (Easton et al., 2008; Seeman, 2016).

According to Johnson (2024), a higher percentage of intimate partner homicide-suicide cases reported jealousy as a preceding factor (9%) compared to homicide-only cases (6%). Homicide-suicide cases had 3.5 times greater odds of recording jealousy as a precipitating event compared to homicide-only cases. Indeed, the association between violence and jealousy in intimate relationships increases the risk of pathological jealousy (Echeburúa & Amor, 2016) and alcohol-related problems (Rodriguez et al., 2015), as well as the number of attempted homicides against partners (Easton & Shackelford, 2009). In this regard, Guerrero (1998) highlighted the distinction between the experience and the expression of jealousy, where the former is characterized as an intrapersonal experience that is not necessarily

perceived by others, while the latter may involve actions and communications directed toward others (Mason, 2021). By identifying different types of communicative and behavioral responses to jealousy, Guerrero and colleagues (2011) classified four response strategies: (1) the constructive strategy, which involves an effort to express one's feelings and a commitment to improving the relationship; (2) the destructive strategy, which consists of harmful behaviors such as emotional distancing, attempts to induce jealousy in the partner, manipulation, and violent behaviors; (3) the avoidant strategy, which entails a denial of the relationship and/or the experience of jealousy; and (4) the rival-focused strategy, which includes partner surveillance, derogation of the rival, and exhibition of possession's signs (Guerrero et al., 2011). Thus, how jealousy manifests and is expressed plays a crucial role in determining its impact on relationship dynamics and, in some cases, may serve as a significant risk factor for IPV. Research has shown differences in the emotion of jealousy depending on gender and sexual orientation in response to different types of infidelity, with men being more susceptible to sexual infidelity and women to emotional infidelity (Bendixen et al., 2015). Additionally, homosexual orientation tends to exhibit lower levels of jealousy in the face of infidelity compared to heterosexual orientation (Scherer et al., 2013). Sexual orientation and identity play a fundamental role in shaping the experience and expression of jealousy and, consequently, the risk of IPV. In recent decades, the concept of 'bisexual jealousy' has emerged (Klesse, 2011; Mason, 2021; Ummak et al., 2024) as a key precursor to the escalation of violence (Cleghorn et al., 2024). In this context, violent behaviors may include threats to disclose one's sexual orientation to friends and family (Badenes-Ribeira et al., 2015), exacerbating victims' distress and adding to the stress of belonging to a sexual minority (Murray et al., 2007). The influence of sexual orientation and gender identity on the experience and expression of jealousy has significant implications for studying this highly heterogeneous and multidimensional construct.

In recent years, two noteworthy systematic reviews have examined pathological jealousy in the context of dysfunctional relationships: one by Martínez-León et al. (2017), which synthesizes associations between romantic jealousy and individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural variables, and the other by Pichon et al. (2020), which focuses on jealousy, (suspected) infidelity, and violence against women/IPV. From Martínez-León et al. (2017), evidence indicates that romantic jealousy is influenced by interpersonal factors such as attachment style and perceived affection, as well as sociocultural variables like infidelity norms and communication patterns, which can shape its intensity and expression. By contrast, Pichon et al. (2020) primarily map the links between infidelity-related jealousy and IPV, where

IPV refers to any form of harmful behavior carried out by a current or former partner—including physical assault, sexual coercion, emotional or psychological abuse, and controlling/coercive behaviors that undermine autonomy and well-being (White et al., 2024). Specifically, Pichon and colleagues (2020) identify three overarching routes and six specific pathways linking infidelity, jealousy, and IPV, and their findings support the role of cultural norms, gender roles, and difficulties in emotion regulation and conflict management in contributing to IPV. Both studies indicate that jealousy can manifest in specific ways in some individuals, increasing the risk of problematic relational behaviors (i.e. physical assault; prolonged verbal abuse and denigration, including hours-long yelling and slurs; and sexual coercion/marital rape; Puente & Cohen, 2003).

Study rationale and objective

Since jealousy ranges from normative experiences to pathological, violence-related forms, reliable, comprehensive assessment is essential in both clinical and research settings—particularly in the context of IPV, where its recognition is often hampered by definitional ambiguity and confusion with envy, possessiveness, or fear of abandonment (Marazziti et al., 2003). Despite the proliferation of measures, no gold standard exists, and generalizability is limited by cross-cultural gaps: sociocultural variables can predict jealousy more strongly than gender (Zandbergen & Brown, 2015), and societies differ in what counts as "unfaithful" and in perceived rival characteristics (Buunk & Hupka, 1987; Buunk & Dijkstra, 2015). A recent review identified 40 instruments (Martínez-León et al., 2017), underscoring the value of forced-choice methodologies and continuous measures (Sagarin et al., 2012) and the need to extend research across diverse cultural contexts (Carpenter, 2012).

While both Martínez-León et al. (2017) and Pichon et al. (2020) offer valuable insights into psychological, interpersonal, and sociocultural dimensions—especially the link to IPV—they do not systematically review jealousy measures or appraise their construct coverage and psychometric quality across contexts. In contrast, this review systematically maps available instruments and, for each, details the development process, content validity (domains covered), structural validity (e.g., EFA/CFA/KMO), and internal consistency (e.g., Cronbach's α), to guide measure selection and advance assessment practice.

Specifically, this review (1) catalogues self-report instruments for jealousy in intimate relationships and evaluates their psychometric properties (reliability, validity, structure); (2) identifies measurement gaps and sources of bias that limit capture of the construct's multifaceted nature;

(3) offers decision-oriented guidance for researchers and clinicians on instrument selection across populations and settings; and (4) outlines priorities for developing next-generation measures that assess jealousy as a complex risk factor for IPV.

Methods

This systematic review evaluated the psychometric properties of the jealousy questionnaires found in the literature. This search protocol was based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021), according to the POS (Population, Outcome, Study Design) guidelines. We followed a Consensus-based Standard for the Selection of Health Status Measurement Instruments (COSMIN), and a Modified Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluation (GRADE) was used to rate the best available evidence.

Search strategy

The research was conducted on the online electronic databases of PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Eric from April to June 2024 (last accessed on June 28, 2024), and a manual review of references was conducted. The databases are selected to contain the most high-quality empirical studies.

The research question relating to the jealousy questionnaire was composed following the POS criteria (P- adolescent and adult between 13 and 65 years: O- identify which instrument better assesses the jealousy construct; S- psychometric validation study) and was: ("jealousy") AND ("questionnaire" OR "scale" OR "test" OR "instrument" OR "tool" OR "checklist" OR "assessment" OR "measurement" OR "validation study"). The keywords have been chosen after conducting a preliminary literature search to identify the most frequently used and relevant terms. We included the keyword "jealousy" to analyze this concept, regardless of the various interpretations found in the literature. We included keywords related to standardized questionnaires to ensure only scientifically valid items were considered, and we added necessary keywords related to validation studies to obtain the data needed for comparison. We chose to include studies involving adolescence, as this developmental stage is characterized by the consolidation of early romantic and peer relationships in which jealousy plays a central role. Empirical evidence shows that jealousy is a frequent emotion in adolescents' daily lives, strongly associated with well-being and interpersonal context (Lennarz et al., 2017). Moreover, jealousy emerges as a normative reaction in early

romantic experiences and can influence relationship quality and conflict management during this period (Daly & Wilson, n1988AQ; Guerrero, 1998). Given that the core components of jealousy do not appear to vary significantly with age (Green & Sabini, 2006), we considered it important to include validated instruments for both adolescent and adult populations. There were no period restrictions on the search to increase the yield of the studies, though the language was restricted to studies published in English or Italian. Authors were also contacted via email where there was insufficient data, and references from included studies were manually scanned for further sources as per published recommendations (Higgins & Green, 2011; Horsley et al., 2011; Beynon et al., 2013). All validation studies were considered in the search to allow for a comprehensive review, using the eligibility criteria, and for all psychometric characteristics the minimum p-value was set to < 0.05.

Eligibility criteria

The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Type of participants: adolescents and adults between 13 and 65 years of age. Studies involving participants below and/or above the selected age range will also be included as long as the average age of all study participants is in the 13–65 age range.
- Type of studies: studies that describe the design of instruments to measure any dimension of jealousy that evaluated at least one psychometric property from the COSMIN checklist. To properly evaluate psychometric characteristics, studies must include at least one criterion to avoid being deemed inadequate.
- Type of instrument: self-reported quantitative instrument.
- Study publication language: English or Italian.

The exclusion criteria were as follows:

- Instruments not validated.
- Qualitative studies.
- Studies not published in English or Italian languages.
- Systematic reviews with or without meta-analyses.
- Grey literature (books, conference abstracts, commentaries, dissertations, theses that have not been officially published or have not gone through a peer-review process, etc.).

Study selection and data extraction

Studies were selected in a three-stage process. All citations identified during the initial search (articles extracted in April 2024) were imported into Zotero Software. Duplicate citations were removed, and then two reviewers independently scrutinized all remaining article titles from the original search (A.C.F. and M.F.). After this, both reviewers independently analyzed all remaining article abstracts. If there was a disagreement, they discussed the references until they reached an agreement and consulted a third independent reviewer (A.U.). In case the abstract was unclear, the reference was included in the next stage (full-text screening) to confirm the information provided in the no full text. For studies assessed for eligibility, full manuscripts were obtained, and two reviewers carried out an independent full-text review of all English/Italian language articles. Disagreements concerning inclusion or exclusion criteria were resolved through consensus or by consulting an independent third reviewer. Two reviewers independently conducted data extraction using an Excel sheet. The sheet included the name of the instrument, authorship, country, sample, content validity, construct and criterion validity, and internal consistency. Missing data were requested from authors via email.

Assessment of the methodological quality

Three researchers evaluated the methodological quality using the COSMIN Risk of Bias checklist (Mokkink et al., 2018; Terwee et al., 2018). This checklist assesses various psychometric properties such as development, content validity, structural validity, internal consistency, cross-cultural validity/measurement invariance, reliability, measurement error, criterion validity, hypotheses testing for construct validity, and responsiveness. Each property is evaluated based on specific design requirements and statistical methods individually.

The following scores were awarded: very good (V), adequate (A), doubtful (D), inadequate (I), and not applicable (NA). The overall score for each property was determined by the lowest rating given to any item in the evaluation table for that property.

Assessment of the measurement properties

The different psychometric properties of each instrument were assessed using the COSMIN guideline for systematic reviews of patient-reported outcome measures (Prinsen et al., 2018). The measurement properties were categorized as positive (+), negative (-), or indeterminate (?) based on their alignment with the quality criteria set out by COSMIN. Content validity, however, was not assigned a rating and was evaluated based on the relevance, comprehensiveness, and comprehensibility of items without relying on statistical analyses. Consequently, it only received a methodology

quality rating (Terwee et al., 2018). This evaluation was conducted independently by three researchers, and any discrepancies in ratings were resolved through discussion.

Synthesis

We used the modified Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation (GRADE) approach (Prinsen et al., 2018) to assess the quality of available evidence. This modified version, as recommended by COSMIN, differs from the standard GRADE system in that it was specifically adapted for evaluating the methodological quality of patient-reported outcome measures. In particular, it excludes domains such as publication bias and indirectness that are not relevant to psychometric studies, while focusing on risk of bias, inconsistency, and imprecision across studies. The final quality of evidence for each measurement property was graded as high, moderate, low, or very low.

Results

Literature identifications and study/tool characteristics

The search protocol identified 1708 publications from online databases. 617 were removed as they were duplicate publications. The remaining 1091 studies were screened against title and abstract criteria, after which 964 were excluded (In the flowchart, this step has been divided to clarify which articles can be eliminated by title alone and which can be eliminated by abstract). Of the 127 studies selected for full-text review, 95 were excluded: 20 were written in unknown languages, 25 included not-validated tools, and 50 were not validation studies. After the quality assessment was carried out 32 articles were included. See the flowchart in Fig. 1.

The years of the study range from 1981 to 2023; studies from the USA are 17.6%, 8.8% are from Pakistan, Turkey, Italy, Brazil, Colombia, and Canada, respectively, and 29.4% are from other countries. The sample size ranges from 50 to 1038, and its age ranges from 15 to 88, representing both males and females in a relationship or not. Across studies, several samples were female-skewed and only a subset conducted gender-focused analyses. Regarding gender and sexual diversity, 12 studies explicitly reported the type of relationship (Zahid & Rafique, 2022; Naseer & Malik, 2022; Banaszkiewicz, 2022; Ipek & Turhan, 2023; Muise et al., 2009; Demirtas-Madran, 2016; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023; Mathes & Severa, 1981; Hartwell et al., 2015; Walters et al., 2020; Rich, 1991; Kizildag & Yildirim, 2016). Of these, 11 validations were conducted in heterosexual samples, while one study included participants in heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or other types of relationships (Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023). In the remaining studies, sexual orientation was not reported, which precluded orientation-specific subgroup analyses and measurement-invariance tests. Articles contain tools to assess different aspects of jealousy, including its components, consequences, perception, and triggers. There are eight tools (Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale of Buunk, 1997; Multidimensional Jealousy Scale of Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Australian validation of Elphinston et al., 2011; Italian validation of Tani & Ponti, 2016; Serbian validation of Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017; Brazilian validation of Lima et al., 2017; Scale on Jealousy of Riaz et al., 2020; Questionnaire on the Emotion of Romantic Jealousy of Banaszkiewicz, 2022; Redeemer's University Romantic Jealousy Scale of Ariyo et al., 2022; Italian brief version of the multidimensional jealousy scale of Diotaiuti et al., 2022; Indigenous Jealousy Scale for Polygamous Women of Naseer & Malik, 2022; Romantic Jealousy Scale for Married Men and Women of Zahid & Rafique, 2022; Obsessional Jealousy Severity Scale of Ahlen et al., 2023) that assess the presence and frequency of various aspects of jealousy, including sexual, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, possessive, anxious, reactive, and preventive jealousy. Additionally, three tools (Facebook Jealousy Scale of Muise et al., 2009; Turkish validation of Demirtas-Madran, 2016; Conflicts in Romantic Relationships Over Facebook Scale of Gonzalez-Rivera & Hernandez Gato, 2019; Colombian validation of Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023; Digital Jealousy Scale of Gubler et al., 2023) specifically focus on Facebook jealousy, and one tool (Pornographic Jealousy Scale of Walters et al., 2020) focuses on pornographic jealousy. There are three tools (Jealous Reaction Scales of Rich, 1991; The Communication Responses to Jealousy Scale of Guerrero et al., 1995; Spouse Emotional Jealousy Scale of Kizildag & Yildirim, 2016) that evaluate the consequences of jealousy, such as distancing from the partner, negative affection, avoidance, and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, three tools (Interpersonal Jealousy Scale of Mathes & Severa, 1981; Brazilian validation of da Costa et al., 2013; Romantic Jealousy-Induction Scale of Mattingly et al., 2012; Motives for Inducing Romantic Jealousy of Mattingly et al., 2012; Hungarian validation of Orosz et al., 2015; Colombian validation of Martinez-Leon et al., 2018) assess the triggers of jealousy, including general tendencies, susceptibility to partner's infidelity, and susceptibility to partner's popularity. Two tools assess perceptions and beliefs about jealousy (Jealousy is Good Scale of Hartwell et al., 2015; Romantic Jealousy in Relationships Scale of Ipek & Turhan, 2023), and there is one tool designed to measure various jealousy profiles (QUEstionario della GElosia of Marazziti et al., 2010; Brazilian validation of Lima et al., 2017). The

Fig. 1 Prisma flowchart (Page et al., 2021)
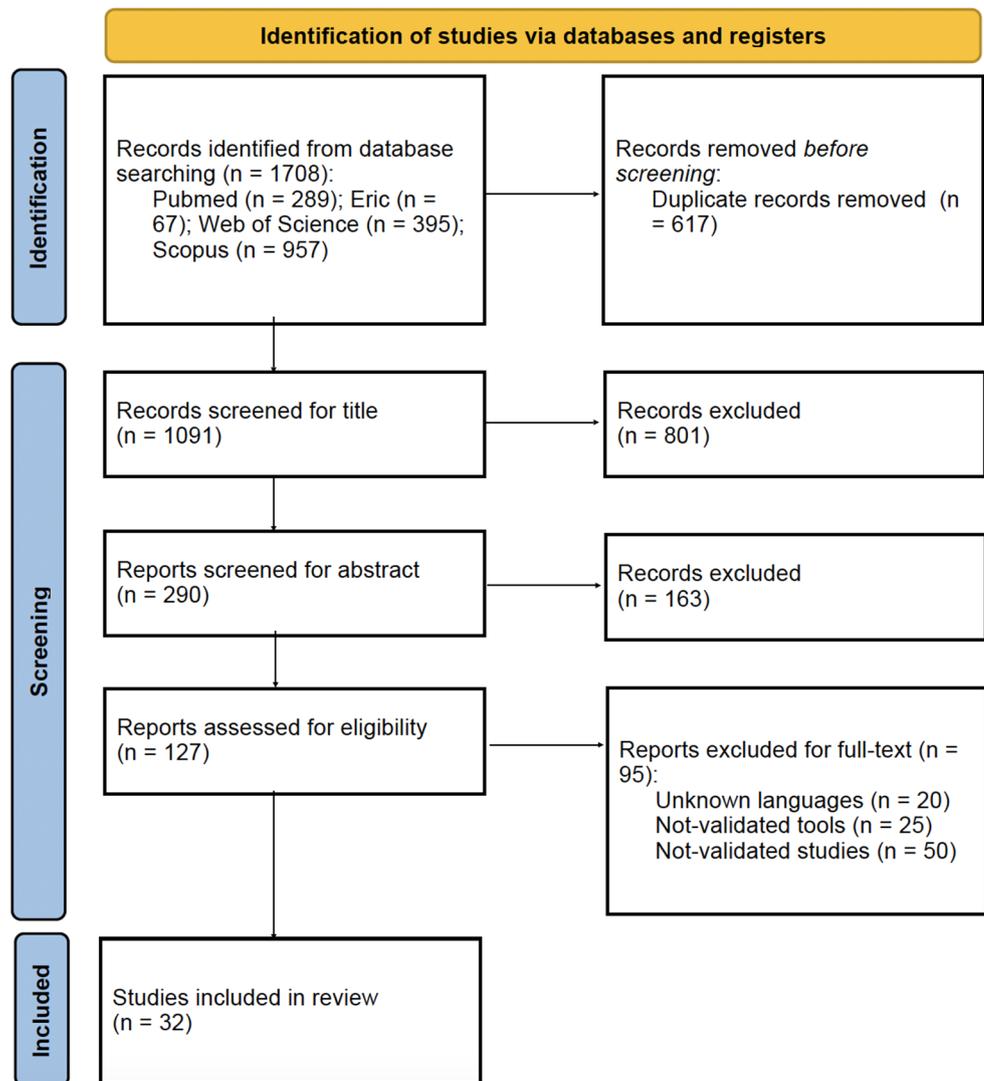
item numbers range from 9 to 65, and each tool has factors between 1 and 6. Out of these tools, one has only one factor, four have two factors, eight have three factors, one has four factors, four have five factors, and three have six factors. With respect to gender-specific findings reported by individual studies, the Serbian Multidimensional Jealousy Scale validation showed acceptable factor structure for women but not for men (Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017); the Redeemer's university romantic jealousy scale provides gender-specific norms (Ariyo et al., 2022); and the Interpersonal Jealousy Scale reported sex-related discrepancies in convergent validity (Mathes & Severa, 1981). Exploratory evidence from a Hungarian Facebook-context validation suggested higher jealousy among women following public relationship-status announcements, though causal interpretation was cautioned (Orosz et al., 2015).

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the included studies, and Table 2 summarizes the characteristics of the included tools.

Content validity

Most of the studies presented a clear conceptual framework or a well-defined construction model to be measured, and some of them were based on instruments that addressed the same construct. The item construction process is clearly defined and consistent with the guidelines in the literature. Only one study (Mathes & Severa, 1981) presents an inadequate theoretic model. Of the 21 instruments, 5 are validated in different languages and/or cultures, and 9 articles of them (Elphinston et al., 2011; Tani & Ponti, 2016; Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017; Lima et al., 2017; Martinez et al., 2018;

Table 1 Sample characteristics of the included studies

Authors	Sample	Relationship status
Zahid & Rafique, 2022 (Pakistan)	318 (158 F, 161 M) 36.25 y/o	In a heterosexual relationship
Naseer & Malik, 2022 (Pakistan)	173 F 33.83 y/o	In a heterosexual polygamous relationship
Banaszkiewicz, 2022 (Poland)	806 (462 F, 344 M) 19–50 y/o	In a heterosexual relationship
Ipek & Turhan, 2023 (Turkey)	400 (200 F, 200 M) 18–30 y/o	63.6% in a heterosexual relationship
Gonzalez-Rivera & Hernandez Gato, 2019 (Puerto Rico)	300 (150 F, 150 M) 32.87 y/o	In a relationship
Muise et al., 2009 (Canada)	308 (231 F, 77 M) 18.70 y/o	50.5% in a heterosexual relationship
Demirtas-Madran, 2016 (Turkey)	307 (177 F, 130 M) 20.60 y/0	In a heterosexual relationship
Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023 (Colombia)	1212 (727 F, 485 M) 25.22 y/o	In a relationship (94.9% heterosexual, 2.1% homosexual, 1% bisexual, 2% other)
Buunk, 1997 (Netherlands)	200 (100 F, 100 M) 33 y/o	In a sexually open relationship
Martins et al., 2019 (Portugal)	578 (395 F, 183 M) 23.45 y/o	In a relationship
Marazziti et al., 2010 (Italy)	500 (314 F, 186 M) 28.6 y/o	24% in a relationship
Lima et al., 2017 (Brazil)	2042 (1449 F, 593 M) 28.9 y/o	32.2% in a relationship
Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989 (Canada)	178 (91 F, 87 M) 44.83 y/o	/
Elphinston et al., 2011 (Australia)	326 (207 F, 119 M) 24.07 y/o	In a relationship
Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017 (Serbia)	500 (395 F, 105 M) 18–40 y/o	71% in a relationship
Tani & Ponti, 2016 (Italy)	361 (193 F, 168 M) 26.5 y/o	In a relationship
Diotaiuti et al., 2022 (Italy)	2928 (1470 F, 1388 M) 30.38 y/o	In a relationship
Mathes & Severa, 1981 (USA)	211 (132 F, 79 M)	In a heterosexual relationship
Martinez-Leon et al., 2018 (Colombia)	603 (355 F, 248 M) 26 y/o	/
da Costa et al., 2013 (Brazil)	122 42.43 y/o	/
Orosz et al., 2015 (Hungary)	532 (380 F, 152 M) 24.88 y/o	In a relationship
Hartwell et al., 2015 (USA)	559 (414 F, 145 M) 23.43 y/o	69.5% in a heterosexual relationship
Ahlen et al., 2023 (Sweden)	1038 (574 F, 464 M) 44 y/o	/
Ariyo et al., 2022 (Nigeria)	130 (73 F, 57 M) 39.04 y/o	In a relationship

Table 1 (continued)

Authors	Sample	Relationship status
Walters et al., 2020 (USA)	307 (221 F, 86 M)	In a heterosexual relationship
Riaz et al., 2020 (Pakistan)	390 19.68 y/o	/
Gubler et al., 2023 (Germany and UK)	1197 (812 F, 390 M) 33.5 y/o	33.75% in a relationship
Rich, 1991 (USA)	150 (75 F, 75 M) 32.2 y/o	87.33% in a heterosexual relationship
Guerrero et al., 1995 (USA)	363 (222 F, 141 M) 23 y/o	In a relationship
Kizildag & Yildrim, 2016 (Turkey)	570 (263 F, 307 M) 33.5 y/o	In a heterosexual relationship
Mattingly et al., 2012 (USA)	179 (132 F, 47 M) 19.4 y/o	In a relationship
Mattingly et al., 2012 (USA)	179 (132 F, 47 M) 19.4 y/o	In a relationship

Martins et al., 2019; Diotaiuti et al., 2022; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023; Orosz et al., 2015) complied with the aspects of the standards set out in the guidelines for the process of cross-cultural adaptation of self-report measures (Beaton et al., 2000). Only two (da Costa et al., 2013; Demirtas-Madran, 2016) do not comply with all of these. They also consulted experts in the field of interest and carried out cognitive interviews with the target population. The results are presented in Table 3.

Structural validity

Structural validity refers to the extent to which the scores of a measurement tool accurately represent the underlying dimensions of the construct being measured. This is typically assessed using Classical Test Theory (CTT) or Item Response Theory (IRT) techniques, such as the Rasch model. In our study, all the authors utilized CTT to evaluate structural validity. The only three studies that did not assess structural validity were those of Buunk (1997), da Costa et al. (2013), and Orosz et al. (2015). These instruments assessed internal consistency, which was found to be adequate, and Buunk (1997) also assessed criterion validity. The 28 remaining studies performed at least the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) considering as adequate which of reported the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), Barlett's test of sphericity, and/or the factors loadings. 15 studies (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Guerrero et al., 1995; Elphinston et al., 2011; Tani & Ponti, 2016; Kizildag & Yildirim, 2016; Lima et al., 2017; Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017; Hartwell et al., 2015; Martinez-Leon et al., 2018; Gonzalez-Rivera & Hernandez Gato, 2019; Martins et al., 2019; Riaz et al., 2020; Diotaiuti et al., 2022; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023;

Gubler et al., 2023) performed also the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) considering as adequate which of reported the x2/df, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) or the standardized root mean residuals (SRMR).

Internal consistency

Internal consistency refers to how closely related items are to each other and is usually assessed using Cronbach's alpha. This should be calculated separately for each unidimensional subscale or the total score of the tool. Values greater than 0.7 indicate sufficient internal consistency (Mokkink et al., 2018). All the scales, except that of Mathes and Severa (1981), were tested for internal consistency, and they all met or exceeded the recommended value, showing good methodological quality. In 11 studies, the overall α was assessed (Buunk, 1997; Muise et al., 2009; Mattingly et al., 2012; da Costa et al., 2013; Orosz et al., 2015; Hartwell et al., 2015; Kizildag & Yildirim, 2016; Lima et al., 2017; Martins et al., 2019; Zahid & Rafique, 2022; Gubler et al., 2023). The remaining 22 studies examined the α of the subscales, and 3 of them (Riaz et al., 2020; Naseer & Malik, 2022; Ipek & Turhan, 2023) addressed both overall α and subscale α.

Reliability

The review included four studies (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Kizildag & Yildirim, 2016; Demirtas-Madran, 2016; Ipek & Turhan, 2023) that provided reliable data. Their methodological quality was considered adequate if the intraclass correlation coefficient or Cohen's Kappa was greater than 0.7 (Mokkink et al., 2018).

Table 2 Psychometric properties of jealousy Self-Report instruments

Instrument	Development	Content validity	Structural validity	Internal consistency
Romantic Jealousy Scale for Married Men and Women	The instrument was empirically generated through interviewing 7 participants (married men and women). Understanding and determining jealousy keeping in consideration the various dimensions of jealousy along with the religious and cultural elements of Pakistan's culture.	Starting from 18 items until 15 items total as retained that contributed significantly theoretically as well as empirically. 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = *not all true* to 5 = *completely true*) Factors: sexual and emotional jealousy	EFA KMO = 0.93	Total α = 0.86
Indigenous Jealousy Scale for Polygamous Women	Developing an indigenous scale to assess jealousy among polygamous women, and determining its psychometric properties. Investigating the differences between first and second wives in terms of jealousy. Establishing its convergent and discriminant validity.	65 items 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 3 (0 = *never*, 1 = *sometimes*, 2 = *often*, 3 = *always*) Factors: emotional, cognitive, behavioral, sexual, and possessive jealousy	EFA KMO = 0.85	Total α = 0.93 Emotional jealousy α = 0.96 Cognitive jealousy α = 0.92 Behavioral jealousy α = 0.87 Sexual jealousy α = 0.95 Possessive jealousy α = 0.85
Questionnaire on the emotion of romantic jealousy	Assessing individual emotions, thoughts and behaviours occurring in the context of jealousy, which would be specific to Polish people. Based on the responses of the first stage, 64 item were generated.	49 items 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) Factors: emotional devastation and focus on infidelity, low self-esteem and sense of guilt, efforts to save the relationship, and vengeful aggression.	EFA KMO = 0.91– 0.95.91.95	Total α = 0.94– 0.98.94.98 Emotional devastation and focus on infidelity α = 0.94– 0.97.94.97 Low self-esteem and self of guilt α = 0.93– 0.97.93.97 Efforts to save the relationship α = 0.73– 0.88.73.88 Vengeful aggression α = 0.65– 0.86.65.86
Romantic Jealousy in Relationships Scale (JRRS)	Developing and instrument who can help individuals gaining insight into themselves in order to secure new relationships or relationships they already have. An item pool was developed after reviewing the national and international studies in the literature. An initial pool of 50 items was formulated based on the opinions of Psychological Counseling and Guidance experts.	16 items 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) Factors: social environment and past relationship; jealousy perception; self-perception	EFA KMO = 0.88	Total α = 0.85 Social environment and past relationship α = 0.83 Jealousy perception α = 0.83 Self-perception α = 0.71

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument	Development	Content validity	Structural validity	Internal consistency
Conflicts in Romantic Relationships Over Facebook Scale	Measuring conflicts over Facebook (FB) use in a tridimensional model. Researcher originally developed 30 items that were submitted to the opinion of 8 judges.	18 items 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1=*never*, 2=*seldom*, 3=*sometimes*, 4=*usually*, and 5=*always*) Factors: partner FB intrusion, conflict over FB use, jealousy over FB use	CFA $\chi2$=367.57 DF=132 RMSEA=0.07 CFI=0.94 TLI=0.93	Total α=0.90 Partner FB intrusion α=0.87 Conflict over FB use α=0.93 Jealousy over FB use α=0.95
Facebook Jealousy Scale (FJS)	Assessing the experience of jealousy in the context of Facebook.	27 items 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1=*very unlikely*; 7=*very likely*) Factors: facebook related jealousy, general propensity toward jealousy, levels of trust, self-esteem, relational uncertainty, commitment	EFA KMO=0.82	Total α=0.96
Facebook Jealousy Scale - Turkish version (FJS)	Assessing the experience of jealousy in the context of Facebook.	27 items 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1=*very unlikely*; 7=*very likely*) Factors: facebook related jealousy, general propensity toward jealousy, levels of trust, self-esteem, relational uncertainty, commitment	EFA KMO=0.94	Total α=0.95
Facebook Jealousy Scale - Colombian Short-Form version (FJS)	Assessing the experience of jealousy in the context of Facebook.	15 items 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1=*very unlikely*; 7=*very likely*) Factors: partner activity, partner vigilance, partner romantic and sexual relationship	EFA KMO = 0.95 CFA $\chi2$=508.07 DF=87 CFI=0.92 TLI=0.90 RMSEA=0.09	Partner activity α=0.94 Partner vigilance α=0.95 Partner romantic and sexual relationship α=0.90
Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale	Assessing the extent to which one anticipated a negative affective response to various intimate and sexual behaviors of the partner. Assessing reactive jealousy.	15 items 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1=*not at all upset* to 5=*extremely upset*) Factors: reactive, possessive, and anxious jealousy	EFA Factor loading=0.55−0.79	α=0.76
Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale - Portuguese version	Assessing the extent to which one anticipated a negative affective response to various intimate and sexual behaviors of the partner. Assessing reactive jealousy.	15 items 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1=*not at all upset* to 5=*extremely upset*) Factors: reactive, possessive, and anxious jealousy	EFA Factor loading=0.42−0.92 CFA $\chi2$=411.32 DF=85 CFI=0.93 RMSEA=0.08	Reactive jealousy α=0.77 Anxious jealousy α=0.92 Possessive jealousy α=0.81
Questionario della gelosia (QUEGE)	Exploring the presence, frequency, and duration of feelings and behaviors related to jealousy in the general population.	30 items 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 (1=*absence of behaviors/feelings related to jealousy*; 4=*highest frequency or duration of the behaviors/feelings*) divided into obsessive jealousy, depressive jealousy, jealousy related to separation anxiety, paranoid jealousy Factors: self-esteem, paranoia, interpersonal sensitivity, fear of being abandoned, obsessionality	EFA Factor loadings=0.43−0.82	Total α=0.72−0.84
Jealousy Questionnaire (QUEGE)- Portuguese version	Exploring the presence, frequency, and duration of feelings and behaviors related to jealousy in the general population.	30 items 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 (1=*absence of behaviors/feelings related to jealousy*; 4=*highest frequency or duration of the behaviors/feelings*) divided into obsessive jealousy, depressive jealousy, jealousy related to separation anxiety, paranoid jealousy Factors: self-esteem, paranoia, interpersonal sensitivity, fear of being abandoned, obsessionality	EFA KMO=0.94 CFA $\chi2$=2363.5 DF=265 CFI=0.94 RMSEA=0.06 SRMR=0.05	Total α=0.94

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument	Development	Content validity	Structural validity	Internal consistency
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (MJS)	6 psychology students and the authors spent several brain-storming sessions generating items that describe cognitive, emotional, and behavioral jealousy. An item was retained only when all eight judges reached a consensus.	24 items 7-point Likert scale from 1 to 7 The cognitive and behavioral subscales ranged from 1=never to 7=all the time; while the emotional subscale ranged from 1=very pleased to 7=very upset Factors: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral jealousy	EFA Factor loading=0.51 −0.87 CFA CFI=0.97 RMSEA=0.05	Cognitive jealousy α=0.92 Emotional jealousy α=0.85 Behavioral jealousy α=0.89
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale - Short Form (SF-MJS)	After deleting six cross-loading items, the authors obtained a new form for re-testing using factorial analyses.	17 items 7-point Likert scale from 1 to 7 The cognitive and behavioral subscales ranged from 1=never to 7=all the time; while the emotional subscale ranged from 1=very pleased to 7=very upset Factors: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral jealousy	EFA KMO=0.86 CFA $\chi2/DF=1.57$ CFI=0.91 RMSEA=0.06 SRMR=0.07	Cognitive jealousy α=0.77 Emotional jealousy α=0.81 Behavioral jealousy α=0.70
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale - Serbian version (MJS)	Examine and assess the psychometric properties of the MJS in a Serbian sample.	24 items 7-point Likert scale from 1 to 7 The cognitive and behavioral subscales ranged from 1=never to 7=all the time; while the emotional subscale ranged from 1=very pleased to 7=very upset Factors: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral jealousy	CFA CFI=0.96 NFI=0.92 RMSEA=0.04	Cognitive jealousy α=0.90 Emotional jealousy α=0.83 Behavioral jealousy α=0.82
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale - Italian Short-Form (SF-MJS)	Examine and assess the psychometric properties of SF-MJS in an Italian sample.	17 items 7-point Likert scale from 1 to 7 The cognitive and behavioral subscales ranged from 1=never to 7=all the time; while the emotional subscale ranged from 1=very pleased to 7=very upset Factors: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral jealousy	CFA $\chi2=345.234$ DF=117 CFI=0.90 TLI=0.89 RMSEA=0.06 SRMR=0.07	Cognitive jealousy α=0.80 Emotional jealousy α=0.85 Behavioral jealousy α=0.80
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale - Italian Brief version (B-MJS)	Modify some items and reduce the scale to broaden its applicability across different ages and sexual orientations.	15 items 7-point Likert scale from 1 to 7 The cognitive and behavioral subscales ranged from 1=never to 7=all the time; while the emotional subscale ranged from 1=very pleased to 7=very upset Factors: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral jealousy	EFA KMO=0.84 CFA $\chi2/DF=1.31$ CFI=0.96 TLI=0.95 RMSEA=0.04	Cognitive jealousy α=0.80 Emotional jealousy α=0.77 Behavioral jealousy α=0.83
Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (IJS)	After reading literature on jealousy, authors define jealousy as the negative emotion resulting from actual or threatened loss of love to a rival. Authors wrote items which seemed to measure this emotion.	28 items Measuring with a range between 4 (absolutely true/agree) and −4 (absolutely false/disagree completely) Factors: susceptibility to partner's infidelity, susceptibility to partner's popularity, susceptibility to untrustworthy partner, susceptibility to partner's old dates, susceptibility to partner's indifference, sex difference.		Total α=. 92
Interpersonal Jealousy Scale - Colombian version (IJS)	After removing six items with unacceptable outfit values and four items with the lowest values, the authors created a new version of the IJS.	18 items Measuring with a range between 4 (absolutely true/agree) and −4 (absolutely false/disagree completely) One-dimensional Scale	CFA $\chi2/DF=2.6$ RMSEA=0.05 CFI=0.93 TLI=0.92	Total α=. 90

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument	Development	Content validity	Structural validity	Internal consistency
Interpersonal Jealousy Scale - Portoguese version (IJS)	Examine and assess the psychometric properties of IJS in a Brazilian sample.	28 items Measuring with a range between 4 (absolutely true/agree) and −4 (absolutely false/disagree completely) Factors: susceptibility to partner's infidelity, susceptibility to partner's popularity, susceptibility to untrustworthy partner, susceptibility to partner's old dates, susceptibility to partner's indifference, sex difference.		Total α = 0.97
Interpersonal Jealousy Scale - Hungarian version	Examine and assess the psychometric properties of IJS in a Hungarian sample.	12 items Measuring with a range between 1 (absolutely false/completely disagree) and 6 (absolutely true/agree) Factors: jealousy toward ex-partner, exclusivity, and anticipated infidelity	CFA $\chi2/DF = 2.15$ RMSEA = 0.04 CFI = 0.97 TLI = 0.96	Total α = 0.78
Jealousy is Good Scale (JIGS)	The purpose of this study was to create a measure of the belief that jealousy is good within the context of relationships. Items were developed through a brainstorming process among the researchers after a review of the literature on jealousy and its link to romantic relationships.	10 items 6-point Likert scale from 1 (disagree strongly) to 6 (agree strongly)	EFA Factor loading = 0.40 − 0.80 CFA CFI = 0.95 RMSEA = 0.09 SRMR = 0.05 for women CFI = 0.93 RMSEA = 0.10 SRMR = 0.06 for men	Total α = 0.87
Obsessional Jealousy Severity Scale (OJSS)	Authors aimed to develop and evaluate a measure of jealousy severity that captures clinically important aspects, such as distress and impairment.	49 items 5-point Likert scale from 0 to 4 Factors: jealous thoughts, jealous behavior	EFA Factor loading = 0.50 − 0.92	Total α = 0.89 Jealous thoughts α = 0.88 Jealous behavior α = 0.85
Redeemer's University Romantic Jealousy Scale (RUN-RJS)	Items were based on the symptoms of romantic jealousy as identified in the literature. 35 items were generated and used for item refinement by psychology specialists.	18 items 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not relevant) to 5 (very relevant) Factors: cognitive, emotional, behavioral jealousy	EFA KMO = 0.87	Cognitive jealousy α = 0.89 Emotional jealousy α = 0.89 Behavioral jealousy α = 0.86
Pornographic Jealousy Scale	Using the definition of romantic jealousy as "the negative emotion generated by the loss or possible loss of love to a rival", authors wrote 25 items to measure the extent to which the use of pornography by the romantic partner might threaten the love experienced.	24 items 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Definitely False) to 7 (Definitely True) Factors: relationship threat, masturbation disgust, self-esteem threat	EFA KMO = 0.96	Relationship Threat α = 0.98 Masturbation Disgust α = 0.94 SelfEsteem Threat α = 0.87
Scale on Jealousy	50 items were generated based on empirical data by researcher through extensive study of literature and brain storming session. Item pool were evaluated by experts and 34 item were retained and administered.	13 items Factors: cognitive, behavioral, and emotional jealousy	EFA KMO = 0.83 CFA CFI = 0.95 TLI = 0.94	Total α = 0.80 Cognitive jealousy α = 0.80 Emotional jealousy α = 0.62 Behavioral jealousy α = 0.77

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument	Development	Content validity	Structural validity	Internal consistency
Digital Jealousy Scale (DJS)	Students were asked to create statements about the manifestation of jealous feelings and associated behavioral intentions in the context of one's partner's activities on social media. Items were developed based on those statements.	9 items 6-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) Factors: cognitive, affective, and behavioral jealousy	Study 1: CFA CFI=0.99 RMSEA=0.03 Study 2: CFA German sample CFI=0.99 RMSEA=0.03 CFA English sample CFI=0.99 RMSEA=0.04	Study 1: α=0.91 Study 2: German sample α=0.89 English sample α=0.90
Jealous Reaction Scales (JRS-I, JRS-II)	Items were written to be consistent with the two-factor model of jealous reactions. 5 psychologists served as expert raters.	14 items 9-point Likert scale (1=not at all descriptive of me"; 9=extremely good description of me") Factors: dissatisfaction's expression with the partner's contribution to the relationship, individuals reaction to a jealousy-evoking situation.	EFA Factor loading=0.56 −0.89	Factor 1 α=0.85 Factor 2 α=0.87
The Communication responses to jealousy scale	University students responded to an open-ended question about jealousy thanks to which 962 communicative responses to jealousy emerged. Responses were transcribed onto index cards by the authors resulting in 13 superordinate categories. Two undergraduate research assistants checked these categories.	51 items 7-point Likert scale Categories: interactive responses, general behavioral responses Factors of interactive responses: active distancing; negative affect expression; integrative communication; distributive communication; avoidance/denial; violent communication/threats Factors of general behavioral responses: surveillance/restriction; compensatory restoration; manipulation attempts; rival contacts; violent behavior	EFA KMO=0.89 for interactive responses KMO =. 84 for general behavioral responses CFA χ2/DF=1.93	Active distancing: α=0.83 Negative affect expression: α=0.81 Integrative communication: α=0.82 Distributive communication: α=0.85 Avoidance/denial: α=0.77 Violent communication/threats: α=0.89 Surveillance/restriction: α=0.89 Compensatory restoration: α=0.76 Manipulation attempts: α=0.69 Rival contacts: α=0.84 Violent behavior: α=0.78
Spouse Emotional Jealousy Scale (SEJS)	Items were constructed and interviewed 10 married individuals to compose the scale's item pool. 44 items were prepared to be presented for expert opinion. 33 items were presented to 33 participants.	22 item 3-point Likert scale (1=i am never jealous; 3=i am too jealous). Factors: feeling unworthy; relationship dissatisfaction and lack of love; unwillingness to spend time together	EFA KMO=0.94 CFA χ2/DF=2.95 CFI=0.91 RMSEA=0.008	Total α=0.94

Table 2 (continued)

Instrument	Development	Content validity	Structural validity	Internal consistency
Romantic Jealousy Induction Scale	Developing a valid and reliable scale assessing individuals' romantic jealousy-inducing behaviors. Developing a valid and reliable scale assessing individuals' varying motives for inducing romantic jealousy. Examining whether experienced romantic jealousy, attachment orientations, relational quality variables, love styles, and sex were associated with romantic jealousy inducing behaviors and motives.	18 items 7- point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) Factors: talking about past relationships; talking about current relationship; flirting; dating/sexual contact with another; lying about the existence of a rival	EFA Factor loading = 0.72 − 0.87	Total α = 0.97
Motives for Inducing Romantic Jealousy	Developing a valid and reliable scale assessing individuals' romantic jealousy-inducing behaviors. Developing a valid and reliable scale assessing individuals' varying motives for inducing romantic jealousy. Examining whether experienced romantic jealousy, attachment orientations, relational quality variables, love styles, and sex were associated with romantic jealousy inducing behaviors and motives.	23 items 7- point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) Factors: testing/strengthening the relationship; revenge; power/control; security; self-esteem	EFA Factor loading = 0.48 − 0.87	Testing/ strengthening relationship α = 0.90 Revenge α = 0.88 Power/ control α = 0.84 Security α = 0.94 Self-esteem α = 0.86

Hypothesis testing

In 16 studies (Mathes & Severa, 1981; Buunk, 1997; Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Elphinston et al., 2011; Tani & Ponti, 2016; Hartwell et al., 2015; Ahlen et al., 2023; Martinez-Leon et al., 2018; Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017; Martins et al., 2019; Gonzalez-Riviera & Hernandez Gato, 2019; Naseer et al., 2022; Diotaiuti et al., 2022; Ariyo et al., 2022; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023; Gubler et al., 2023), hypothesis testing using convergence or divergence validity was conducted. Studies were evaluated for quality of measurement property and were rated as "adequate" (A), "doubtful" (D), or "inadequate" (I) depending on the results of the correlations. Only one study (Martinez-Leon et al., 2018) did not receive an adequate evaluation.

Criterion validity

The validity of the criterion was tested on 16 instruments (Mathes & Severa, 1981; Rich, 1991; Guerrero et al., 1995; Buunk, 1997; Mattingly et al., 2012; Hartwell et al., 2015; Demirtas-Madran, 2016; Martins et al., 2019; Walters et al., 2020; Banaszkiewicz, 2022; Diotaiuti et al., 2022; Ahlen et al., 2023; Ipak & Turhan, 2023; Gubler et al., 2023; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023). The methodological quality of all of them was rated adequate because they reported a correlation > 0.70.

Summary

Finally, a summary is necessary to qualify the best available instrument to assess jealousy included in our systematic review according to the results of the qualitative assessment of the papers carried out through the GRADE approach (Prinsen et al., 2018). Each of these was categorized as high, moderate, low, or very low based on the quantity and quality of the presented psychometric characteristics.

In accordance with the 6 psychometric criteria, studies meeting 0 to 2 criteria are classified as very low quality, studies meeting 3 criteria are classified as low quality, those meeting 4 criteria are classified as moderate quality, and those meeting 5 to 6 criteria are classified as high quality.

The Portuguese and Hungarian versions of the Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (da Costa et al., 2013; Orosz et al., 2015) are the only two with very low quality, representing only content validity and internal consistency adequately.

The low-quality studies are the Romantic Jealousy Scale for Married Men and Women (Zahid et al., 2022), the Facebook Jealousy Scale (Muse et al., 2009), the Scale of Jealousy (Riaz et al., 2020), the Brazilian version of Jealousy Questionnaire (Lima et al., 2017), representing content validity, structural validity, and internal consistency, the Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981), representing content validity, hypothesis testing, and criterion validity, and the Questionario della Gelosia

Table 3 Quality assessment of included studies

Instrument/version	Content validity	Structural validity	Internal consistency	Hypotheses testing	Criterion validity	Reliability
Romantic Jealousy Scale for Married Men and Women (Zahid et al., 2022)	+ A	+A	+ A	-	-	-
Indigenous Jealousy Scale for Polygamous Women (Naseer et al., 2022)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-
Questionnaire on the emotion of romantic jealousy (Banaskiewic, 2022)	+ A	+?	+ A	-	+ A	-
Jealousy Scale in Romantic Relationship (Ipek et al., 2023)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	+ A	+ A
Conflicts in Romantic Relationships Over Facebook Scale (Gonzalez-Rivera & Hernandez Gato, 2019)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-
Facebook Jealousy Scale (Muise et al., 2009)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-	-
Facebook Jealousy Scale - Turkish validation (Demirtas-Madran, 2016)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	+ A	+ A
Facebook Jealousy Scale Colombian - short-form (Sánchez-Fuentes et al., 2023)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-
Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale (ASJS) (Buunk, 1997)	+ A	?	+ A	+ A	+ A	-
Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale - Portuguese version (Martins et al., 2019)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-
Questionario della gelosia (QUEGE) (Marazziti et al., 2010)	+ A	+ I	+ A	-	-	-
Jealousy Questionnaire–Brazilian Portuguese Version (Lima et al., 2017)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-	-
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (MJS) (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	+ A
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (MJS) - short form (Elphinston et al., 2011)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (MJS) - Serbian version (Tošić-Radev & Hedrih, 2017)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (MJS) - short form - Italian version (Tani & Ponti, 2016)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-
Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (MJS) - brief form - Italian version (Diotaiuti et al., 2022)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-
Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981)	+ I	?	-	+ A	+ A	-
Interpersonal Jealousy Scale - Colombian version (Martínez-León et al., 2018)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ D	-	-
Interpersonal Jealousy Scale - Portuguese version (da Costa et al., 2013)	?	?	+ A	?	-	-
Interpersonal Jealousy Scale - Hungarian version (Orosz et al., 2015)	+ A	-	+ A	-	-	-
Jealousy is Good Scale (JIGS) (Hartwell et al., 2015)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-
Obsessional Jealousy Severity Scale (OJSS, Ahlen et al., 2023)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-
Redeemer's University Romantic Jealousy Scale (RUN-RJS, Ariyo et al., 2022)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-
Pornographic Jealousy Scale (Walters et al., 2020)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	+ A	-
Scale on Jealousy (Riaz et al., 2020)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-	-
Digital Jealousy Scale (Gubler et al., 2023)	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	+ A	-
Jealous Reaction Scales (JRS-I, JRS-II) (Rich, 1991)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	+ A	-
The Communication responses to jealousy scale (Guerrero et al., 1995)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	+ A	-
Spouse Emotional Jealousy Scale (SEJS) (Kizildag & Yildirim, 2016)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	-	+ A
Romantic Jealousy-Induction Scale (Mattingly et al., 2012)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	+ A	-
Motives for Inducing Romantic Jealousy (Mattingly et al., 2012)	+ A	+ A	+ A	-	+ A	-

*+= positive, -=negative,?=indeterminate

**A=adequate, D=doubtful, I=inadequate

(Marazziti et al., 2010), reported content validity, internal consistency, and an inadequate structural validity.

The moderate studies are the most representative of our sample. They include the Indigenous Jealousy Scale for Polygamous Women (Naseer et al., 2022), the short form of the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (MJS; Elphinston et al., 2011), the Serbian version of the MJS (Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017), the Italian short version of the MJS (Tani & Ponti, 2016), the Conflicts in Romantic Relationships over Facebook Scale (Gonzalez-Rivera & Hernandez Gato, 2019), and the Redeemer's University Romantic Jealousy Scale (Ariyo et al., 2022), which demonstrated content validity, structural validity, internal consistency, and hypothesis testing. Additionally, the Colombian version of the Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Martinez-Leon et al., 2018) is included, but its hypothesis testing is uncertain. The Pornographic Jealousy Scale (Walters et al., 2020), the Jealous Reaction Scales (Rich, 1991), the Communication Responses to Jealousy Scale (Guerrero et al., 1995), the Romantic Jealousy-Induction Scale (Mattingly et al., 2012), the Motives for Inducing Romantic Jealousy (Mattingly et al., 2012) demonstrated content validity, structural validity, internal consistency, and criterion validity. However, the Questionnaire on the Emotion of Romantic Jealousy (Banaszkiewicz, 2022) shows inadequate structural validity. The Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale (Buunk, 1997) reported content validity, internal consistency, hypothesis testing, and criterion validity, and the Spouse Emotional Jealousy Scale (Kizildag & Yildirim, 2016) reported content validity, structural validity, internal consistency, and reliability.

Lastly, the high-quality studies that in our review obtained 5/6 criterion: in Jealousy Scale in Romantic Relationship (Ipek & Turhan, 2023), and Turkish version of Facebook Jealousy Scale (Demirtas-Madran, 2016) the only missing criterion is the hypothesis testing, in the Colombian version of Facebook Jealousy Scale (Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023), Portuguese version of Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale (Martins et al., 2019), Italian brief form of MJS (Diotaiuti et al., 2022), Jealousy is Good Scale (Hartwell et al., 2015), Obsessional Jealousy Severity Scale (Ahlen et al., 2023), and Digital Jealousy Scale (Gubler et al., 2023) the missing criterion is the reliability, and in MJS (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989) is the criterion validity.

Discussion and limitations

The purpose of this systematic review was to identify and analyze instruments measuring jealousy in intimate relationships. Considering the eligibility criteria, 32 studies representing 21 quantitative self-report instruments were included. Regarding the multiplicity of theoretical models on jealousy—cognitive (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2007), evolutionary (Buss, 2000), "bad" (Buunk & Bringle, 1987; White & Mullen, 1989) or "good" (Clanton, 1996)—the measurement landscape inevitably mirrors these divergent starting points, which complicates construct clarity and instrument comparability. This conceptual heterogeneity increases ambiguity and often leads to partially appropriate tools not firmly grounded in robust theory.

Results showed that measures focus on different aspects: (1) how jealousy is experienced, expressed, and externally communicated in intimate relationships (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Guerrero et al., 1995; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2019), and downstream responses (Rich, 1991; Kizildag & Yildirim, 2016); (2) context-bound expressions, e.g., Facebook (Gonzalez-Rivera & Hernandez Gato, 2019; Muise et al., 2009; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023), pornography (Walters et al., 2020), and cultural or population-specific adaptations (Zahid & Rafique, 2022; Banaszkiewicz, 2022; Naseer & Malik, 2022; Tani & Ponti, 2016; Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017; Martins et al., 2019; Lima et al., 2017); (3) psychological factors (e.g., self-perception: İpek & Turhan, 2023; susceptibility to specific partner behaviors/characteristics: Mathes & Severa, 1981); (4) classifications that distinguish "normal" from potentially pathological jealousy, including triggered events—e.g., reactive, possessive, and anxious jealousy (Buunk, 1997); (5) profiles incorporating individual vulnerability (Marazziti et al., 2010; Lima et al., 2017); and (6) the psychological impact and functioning associated with jealousy (Ahlen et al., 2023). Furthermore, instruments assessing triggers of jealousy address general tendencies, susceptibility to partner's infidelity, and susceptibility to partner's popularity (Mathes & Severa, 1981; da Costa et al., 2013; Mattingly et al., 2012; Orosz et al., 2015; Martinez-Leon et al., 2018). These heterogeneous foci raise questions about what, precisely, each instrument is measuring and underscore the need for clearer construct definitions to guide item development and improve validity.

Limitations of the evidence base constrain generalizability. Many studies relied on convenience samples (often college students or specific demographics), limiting population-wide inference (Buunk, 1997; Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Walters et al., 2020; Hartwell et al., 2015). Demographic imbalances were common (female-skewed or young samples; underrepresentation of ethnic minorities), with implications for validity across diverse groups (Mattingly et al., 2012). Instruments were frequently developed/validated within specific cultural contexts, highlighting the need for cross-cultural adaptation and validation (Riaz et al., 2020; Naseer & Malik, 2022; İpek & Turhan, 2023). Methodologically, cross-sectional designs predominated (limiting causal inference and developmental trajectories;

Elphinston et al., 2011; Gubler et al., 2023), and self-report reliance introduces social-desirability and perceptual biases (Demirtas-Madran, 2016; Guerrero et al., 1995). Several studies presented incomplete validity testing (e.g., limited convergent/discriminant evidence; Zahid & Rafique, 2022; Demirtas-Madran, 2016), small samples (da Costa et al., 2013; Marazziti et al., 2010), overgeneralized correlations across subgroups, and insufficient contextual covariates (relationship type/duration, social-media use; Muise et al., 2009; Walters et al., 2020).

Gender and sexual orientation are insufficiently integrated into measurement practice. Some validations explicitly addressed gender: the Serbian MJS showed acceptable factor structure for women but not for men (Tosic-Radev & Hedrih, 2017); the RUN-RJS provides gender-specific norms (Ariyo et al., 2022); and the Interpersonal Jealousy Scale reported sex-related discrepancies in convergent validity (Mathes & Severa, 1981). Exploratory Hungarian data suggested higher jealousy among women after public relationship-status announcements, with sampling/causality caveats (Orosz et al., 2015). Conversely, many instruments rely on heterosexual samples or unbalanced sex ratios (e.g., Jealousy Is Good Scale; Hartwell et al., 2015). Extending this concern, most measures were developed and validated primarily in heterosexual samples—and many studies do not report participants' sexual orientation—so orientation-specific analyses (and invariance testing) are typically not feasible, which limits applicability to LGBTQ+ relationship dynamics and should be addressed in future validations. At the same time, orientation- and identity-specific dynamics relevant to IPV are documented—e.g., "bisexual jealousy" (Mason, 2021; Klesse, 2011; Ummak et al., 2024) and coercive tactics such as threats of outing (Cleghorn et al., 2024; Badenes-Ribeira et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2007)—underscoring the need for dedicated validation in LGBTQ+ samples.

Jealousy as a risk marker should not be conflated with causal justification. To date, no instrument offers an all-inclusive assessment that jointly captures jealousy facets together with IPV-relevant maladaptive coping or controlling strategies. While jealousy can act as a situational correlate or amplifier of aggressive/controlling behavior (Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2019), violence is multi-determined and agentic, and escalation pathways remain under-studied, constraining targeted prevention.

Context also matters. In a forced-choice paradigm using hypothetical scenarios administered to convenience samples of adults, Shackelford and colleagues (2004) found that men were more likely than women to judge sexual infidelity as more distressing, whereas women more often selected emotional infidelity; this sex difference attenuated among older women. Older women were less likely than younger women to select emotional (vs. sexual) infidelity as more distressing, whereas men showed no age difference; nonetheless, both sexes reported distress to both forms. The results should be interpreted with appropriate caution given the limitations—including cross-sectional design, reliance on imagined scenarios, and limited covariate data (e.g., no partner-age information)—which constrain generalizability and the inference of causal mechanisms (Shackelford et al., 2004).

Cultural predictors (e.g., collectivism vs. individualism) can outstrip gender for sexual-infidelity responses (Zandbergen & Brown, 2015), and cultural differences shape tolerance/variability (Keller & Lamm, 2010). Early caregiving experiences around attention distribution also relate to later jealousy expression (Keller, 2002; Keller & Lamm, 2010).

Review-level limitations include the restriction to quantitative self-report questionnaires in English or Italian, which introduces selection bias. Translated versions were included; where translation/back-translation and structural-validity checks were limited, measurement properties may differ across versions (Schellingerhout et al., 2012).

Future research

Many researchers have highlighted the need for further cross-cultural validations (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023). Longitudinal studies are also needed to examine how jealousy and related factors evolve over time and across different relationship stages. Future research should consider a broader range of contextual influences, including relationship dynamics, social media use, and individual differences.

Although other psychological risk factors for violence—such as pathological affective dependence—are recognized (Pugliese et al., 2023a, 2023b, 2025), few studies have investigated how jealousy manifests within these conditions or its role in trauma and IPV for both victims and offenders (Pugliese et al., 2024). Similarly, although paranoid features are considered central to pathological jealousy (Rydell & Bringle, 2007), their specific contribution to IPV-related aggression remains underexplored.

Future research should also aim to delineate developmental trajectories leading to IPV, clarifying the role jealousy may play in victimization and perpetration. Measurement tools should capture pathological and harmful manifestations of jealousy, particularly in relation to personality traits or adverse childhood experiences.

A comprehensive review comparing existing definitions of jealousy in intimate relationships is desirable to resolve conceptual inconsistencies and reach consensus on this

complex construct. Finally, further validation in clinical settings or with individuals seeking treatment for jealousy-related issues is needed (Ahlen et al., 2023).

Addressing these gaps will improve measurement precision, refine theoretical models, and advance understanding of jealousy as a multifaceted phenomenon relevant to IPV and mental health outcomes.

Practical implications

This review identifies several self-report measures with strong psychometric properties, operationalized according to COSMIN, suitable for both research and clinical applications in the study of jealousy and IPV. High-quality instruments include the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (MJS; Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989), its Italian short form (Diotaiuti et al., 2022), the Jealousy Scale in Romantic Relationships (Ipek & Turhan, 2023), the Turkish and Colombian versions of the Facebook Jealousy Scale (Demirtas-Madran, 2016; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023), the Digital Jealousy Scale (Gubler et al., 2023), the Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale (Martins et al., 2019), the Jealousy Is Good Scale (Hartwell et al., 2015), and the Obsessional Jealousy Severity Scale (Ahlen et al., 2023).

For researchers, these instruments can be mapped to specific use cases: (a) broad, multidimensional assessment: MJS and MJS-short; (b) pathological or obsessional presentations: Obsessional Jealousy Severity Scale (Ahlen et al., 2023); (c) digital contexts: Facebook Jealousy Scales (Demirtas-Madran, 2016; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023) and Digital Jealousy Scale (Gubler et al., 2023); (d) sexual-domain triggers: Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale (Martins et al., 2019); (e) attitudinal beliefs normalizing jealousy: Jealousy Is Good Scale (Hartwell et al., 2015). This mapping facilitates cross-study comparability and targeted subdomain analyses.

In clinical settings, a practical approach is to start with a broad, multidimensional measure (MJS; Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989; Diotaiuti et al., 2022) to establish a baseline profile. Where obsessional intensity or persistence is suspected, the Obsessional Jealousy Severity Scale (Ahlen et al., 2023) may be added; if cyber-monitoring or technology-mediated triggers are relevant, digital-context measures should be included (Demirtas-Madran, 2016; Sanchez-Fuentes et al., 2023; Gubler et al., 2023). For sexual triggers, the Revised Anticipated Sexual Jealousy Scale (Martins et al., 2019) can refine assessment, and for beliefs normalizing jealousy, the Jealousy Is Good Scale (Hartwell et al., 2015) provides further insight. Used this way, these tools support triage, risk formulation, treatment planning, and monitoring of therapeutic progress.

From a social policy perspective, incorporating jealousy-related risk factors into prevention and intervention programs may enhance early detection of IPV risk. Training professionals to recognize problematic jealousy dynamics can facilitate timely intervention, potentially preventing coercive or abusive behaviors. Structured assessment of jealousy-related distress in clinical settings can inform tailored therapeutic approaches, ultimately supporting individuals at risk and improving outcomes in IPV prevention and intervention.

Data availability Not applicable.

Declarations

Ethics approval Not applicable.

Consent to participate Not applicable.

Competing interests The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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