

Domestic Violence as a Major Public Health Issue

Prevalence

- 4 million women in America experience a serious assault by an intimate partner during an average year.
- Nearly 1 in 3 adult women in America experience at least one physical assault by a partner in adulthood.

SOURCE: American Psychological Association, "Violence and the Family: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family" (1996).

Risk Factors

- The chance of being victimized by an intimate is 10 times greater for a woman than a man.

SOURCE: Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: National Crime Victimization Survey, Violence Against Women (1994).

- Domestic Violence (DV) is statistically consistent across racial & ethnic boundaries.

SOURCE: Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey (1995).

Mortality

- Homicides are the fourth leading cause of death of injury among females of childbearing age
- Half of all female homicides are battering-related.

SOURCE: Dannenberg, et al. "Intentional and Unintentional Injuries in Women: An Overview." Annals of Epidemiology, March 1994.

Morbidity

- Over 1.5 million women seek medical care each year for injuries related to domestic violence.
- 20% of female patient ER visits for injury are caused by DV.

SOURCE: Flitcraft, "Physicians and Domestic Violence: Challenges for Prevention." Health Affairs, Winter 1993.

Battering During Pregnancy

- Between 4-8% women seek are battered at least one time during pregnancy.
- ¼ of pregnant women who were beaten were struck in the abdomen.
- Women assaulted during pregnancy are twice as likely to experience preterm labor, miscarriage or birth defects.

SOURCE: Berenson, et al. "Perinatal Morbidity Associated with Violence Experienced by Pregnant Women." American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, June 1994, Volume 170, No. 6.

Impact on the workplace

- Each physical assault victim averages productivity losses of \$476 per victim.
- Productivity losses per homicide average \$610,000.
- Lifetime costs paid by society for assault victims is estimated at \$96 billion.

SOURCE: Miller, et al. "Victim Costs of Violent Crime and Resulting Injuries," Health Affairs, Winter 1993.

Health Care Costs of Domestic Violence

Each year, DV injuries result in:

- 21,000 hospitalizations
- 99,800 inpatient treatment days
- 28,700 Emergency Room visits
- 39,000 medical office visits.
- Total medical costs exceeding \$44 million

SOURCE: Loring & Smith, "Health Care Barriers and interventions for Battered Women." Public Health Reports, May/June 1994.

"Of all the health and human services challenges we face, perhaps the most devastating, and ironically, most preventable is the epidemic of violence sweeping across this nation."

--Donna Shalala, former US Secretary, Health & Human Services
"Addressing the Crisis of Violence." Health Affairs, Winter 1993.