VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: GLOBAL PICTURE

HEALTH RESPONSE

PREVALENCE

1 in 3 women

Throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner

All statistics can be found in the report entitled Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, by the World Health Organization, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and the South African Medical Research Council, found here: http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/en/index.html

Map showing prevalence of intimate partner violence by WHO region

KEY

- Region of the Americas
- Western Pacific Region
- Eastern Mediterranean Region
- African Region
- South-East Asia Region
- European Region
- High income countries

HEALTH IMPACT:

- Mental Health
- Women exposed to intimate partner violence are more likely to have a low birth-weight baby
- 16% of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner have experienced injuries as a result
- 1 in 3 women

- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Women are twice as likely to experience depression
- 1.5 times more likely to have alcohol use disorders
- 1.5 times more likely to acquire HIV and 1.5 times more likely to contract syphilis infection, chlamydia or gonorrhoea
- 38% of all murders of women globally were reported as being committed by their intimate partners

- Death and Injury
- Violence against women is a global public health problem of epidemic proportion, requiring urgent action. Health-care providers are in a unique position to address the health and psychosocial needs of women who have experienced violence, provided certain minimum requirements are met:

GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH SECTOR RESPONSE

WHO’s new clinical and policy guidelines on the health sector response to partner and sexual violence against women emphasize the urgent need to integrate these issues into clinical training for health care providers. WHO has identified the key elements of a health sector response to violence against women which have informed the following recommendations:

- Health-care worker intervention

  Violence against women is a global public health problem of epidemic proportion, requiring urgent action. Health-care providers are in a unique position to address the health and psychosocial needs of women who have experienced violence, provided certain minimum requirements are met:

  - Health-care providers are trained
  - Standard operating procedures are in place
  - Confidentiality is guaranteed
  - A referral system is in place to ensure that women can access related services
  - Health-care settings are equipped to provide a comprehensive response, addressing both physical and mental consequences
  - Health-care providers gather forensic evidence when needed

  - Mandatory reporting of intimate partner violence
  - Anonymous reporting to the police by the health-care provider is not recommended

  - Health-care providers should offer to report the incident if the woman chooses