Introduction to Domestic Violence

Dyson Initiative - Community Pediatrics
Columbia University
What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is defined as the actual or threatened *physical, sexual, psychological or economic abuse* of an individual by someone with whom they have or had an intimate relationship with.
National Statistics –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall DV Crimes Committed in 1998</td>
<td>1,033,660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murders</td>
<td>1,830</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Women are 5x more likely than men to be victimized, 767 versus 146 per 100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Black women are 35% higher than any other groups, latino women 2.5% more than any other group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Women in households with lower income experienced violence at a higher rate.</td>
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### National Statistics – Cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Murder appears to be more prevalent in divorced &amp; separated couples than among married couples.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages</td>
<td>Mostly between 20 to 24 years old.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location &amp; Times</td>
<td>Mostly in the evening and in their own home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>43% children resided in the household, and 27% were present at time of incident.</td>
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State Statistics

- Four women a week are killed as a result of DV.
- One person is victimized by physical violence in the home every 3 minutes, 20 every hour, 432 every day and 157,680 every year.
Local Statistics

Total DV # of arrests and complaints for the borough of Manhattan North, 96th St. to the tip of Manhattan, 1999
  – Arrests 1999: 3,833
  – Complaints 1999: 4,291

Washington Heights/ Inwood
  – Arrests 1999: 2,047
  – Complaints 1999: 2,125
Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

- Effect on Children
  Stress, which also causes physical symptoms of enuresis, asthma, headaches, abdominal complaints, and self-abusive behaviors. Emotional problems include anxiety, depression, guilt and confusion.
Screening Tools for Pediatricians

- “Routine Screening for DV in Pediatric Practice” manual and Health Resource Center on DV “Screening Patients for DV” manual
  - The purpose of these guidebooks is to help pediatricians when they are confronted with one of our major public health problem.
    - Every patient represents an opportunity for the pediatrician to explore the effects of hidden attitudes on the health of the family.
    - When an abused woman who is treated in a health care setting experiences respect, caring and interest in her thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and well-being, she may discover that she can pursue her own choices without fear of retaliation.
Ways of Approaching the Issue

- Becoming sensitive to and knowledgeable about the issue.
- Developing a supportive and non-threatening environment.
- Developing community linkages and making appropriate referrals.
- Intervening on behalf of the battered woman.
- Allowing the parent to take the steps to get help.
- Keeping the focus on the family – intervening on behalf of the parents is a way to protect children.
AAP Statement Regarding Screening for DV

• The AAP states that “the abuse of women is a pediatric issue,” and that, “intervening on behalf of battered women is an active form of child abuse prevention…Helping parents helps children.”
Necessary Tools for Residents

- Familiarize yourselves with the issue of DV and how it is affecting the families/children in the community you serve
- Familiarize yourselves with screening instruments used by other pediatricians
- Develop the sensitivity and skills necessary to identify and act on the issue
- Familiarize yourselves with the community resources available to make appropriate referrals