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

HEALTH IMPACT: Women exposed to intimate partner violence are...

Mental Health
- Twice as likely to develop depression

Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Twice as likely to develop cervical cancer
- 50% more likely to make use of reproductive and contraceptive services

Death and injury
- 42% of women who experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner have experienced violence as a child
- 38% of all deaths of women globally are reportedly as a result of intimate partner violence

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 recommendations in the following areas:

1. Women-centered care
- Healthcare providers should take a minimum, focused approach to women’s health when attending to women who may be injured, in pain or in need of emotional support

2. Identification and care for survivors of intimate partner violence
- Healthcare providers should ask relevant questions to identify partner violence when assessing individuals for injuries that may be caused or complicated by intimate partner violence, in order to improve diagnosis, documentation and appropriate care

3. Clinical cases for survivors of sexual violence
- Offer an examination of survivors including sexual assault
- Provide referrals to an appropriate medical provider
- Offer medical, psychological and social interventions as appropriate

4. Health-care provider policy and provisions
- Care for women experiencing intimate partner violence
- Improve access to services

5. Mandating reporting of intimate partner violence
- Implementing mandatory reporting of intimate partner violence in line with national laws

HEALTH-CARE WORKER INTERVENTION
Violence against women is a global public health problem of epidemic proportions, 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
- Consents can take place in a private setting
- Confidentiality is protected
- 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 health consequences