Snapshot 1

Violence against women & health:
Understanding the magnitude & consequences

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Overview

- What is a public health approach to violence against women
- Definitions and forms of violence against women
- Prevalence of violence against women globally and in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Health and other social consequences of violence against women
Public Health Approach

Surveillance

Identify risk and protective factors
What are the causes?

Implementation
Scaling up effective policy and programmes

Identify effective interventions
What works? And for whom?
Surveillance

Public health approach: Characteristics

- Population-level
- Interdisciplinary
- Multi-sectoral
Global prevalence

- Violence against women is a violation of human rights.
- Is linked with gender inequality.
- Is a serious public health issue.

Key message
Violence against women

Any public or private act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty with the family or general community.
Violence against women takes many forms

Intimate partner violence: the most common form of violence experienced by women
Intimate Partner Violence

Experience of one or more acts of physical and/or sexual violence and/or emotional/psychological abuse by a current or former partner.
Physical Violence

- being slapped
- having something thrown at you that could hurt you
- being pushed or shoved
- being hit with a fist or something else that could hurt
- being kicked
- dragged or beaten up
- being choked or burnt on purpose
- being threatened with or actually having a gun, knife or other weapon used on you
✓ being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when you didn't want to
✓ having sexual intercourse because you were afraid of what your partner might do
✓ being forced to do something sexual that you found humiliating or degrading
✓ being insulted or being made to feel bad about oneself
✓ being belittled or humiliated in front of other people
✓ being scared / intimidated by the perpetrator through yelling, the smashing of things; and/or threats to hurt someone she cares about
Prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence (SV)

- Can be measured by both victimization and perpetration.
- Underreported in police and services statistics.
- Population-based surveys using self-reports yield best data.
- Consequences of IPV & SV are often “hidden”
1 in 3 ♀ globally: have experienced physical &/or sexual violence by an intimate partner
Partner violence (physical and sexual) affects a substantial number of women in LAC: physical or sexual partner violence ever and in the past 12 months.

Sexual violence by partners and non-partners, ever

Violence starts early in lives of women:

Prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in the last 12 months, by age

First sexual intercourse was forced or rape: % of women age 15-24 who reported that their first sexual intercourse was ‘forced’ or ‘rape’

- Haiti 2005/6: 21.2%
- Guatemala 2008/9: 4.9%
- Dominican Republic 2007: 4.7%
- Jamaica 2008/9: 4.7%
- Ecuador 2004: 2.7%
- Paraguay 2008: 2.2%
- Nicaragua 2006/7: 1.8%
% of women aged 15-24 who reported forced, unwanted, wanted 1st sexual intercourse

HIGH levels of VIOLENCE during pregnancy

“He hit me in the belly and made me miscarry two babies - identical or fraternal twins, I don’t know. I went to the hospital with heavy bleeding and they cleaned me up.”

Woman interviewed in Peru
Pregnancy does not protect women from violence:

% of women who report intimate partner violence during pregnancy

- Peru 2007/8: 11.3%
- Colombia 2005: 9.7%
- Dominican Republic 2007: 6.6%
- Haiti 2005/6: 5.6%

Reported statistics are underestimates: % of women reporting IPV who sought help

Only 10%-36% of survivors seek institutional support

Pathways & health effects of IPV

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

PHYSICAL TRAUMA

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA/STRESS

FEAR AND CONTROL

MENTAL HEALTH

TWICE as likely to experience depression

ALMOST TWICE as likely to have alcohol use disorders

NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES
- cardiovascular disease
- hypertension

SOMATOFORM
- irritable bowel
- chronic pain
- chronic pelvic pain

16% more likely to have a low birth-weight baby

LIMITED SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE CONTROL
- lack of contraception
- unsafe sex

HEALTH CARE SEEKING
- lack of autonomy
- difficulties seeking care and other services

1.5 TIMES more likely to acquire HIV and 1.5 times more likely to contract syphilis infection, chlamydia or gonorrhoea

4.5 TIMES as likely to attempt suicide

38% of all murders of women globally were reported as being committed by their intimate partners

42% of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner have experienced injuries as a result
### Inter-generational & socio-economic consequences

| Effects on children of women who experience abuse | • Higher rates of infant mortality  
• Behavior problems  
• Anxiety, depression, attempted suicide  
• Poor school performance  
• Experiencing or perpetrating violence as adults  
• Physical injury or health complaints  
• Lost productivity in adulthood |
|---|---|
| Effects on families | • Inability to work  
• Lost wages and productivity  
• Housing instability |
| Social and economic effects | • Costs of services incurred by victims and families (health, social, justice)  
✓ 42% higher health care expenditure in the US  
• Lost workplace productivity and costs to employers  
✓ 3.7% of GDP in Peru  
• Perpetuation of violence |
Violence against women

Take home points

1. is widespread

2. has serious health consequences for women and their children

3. has intergenerational consequences

4. has adverse socio-economic impact on families, communities & society