

Workshop to strengthen capacity of health systems to prevent and respond to Violence Against Women

Trinidad and Tobago 15-17 March, 2017

Concept Note

Scope and purpose:

Violence against women affects a large proportion of women. According to WHO (2013) estimates, 35% of women in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region have experienced intimate partner violence and/or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Violence has serious consequences for women's physical including sexual and reproductive health and mental health. It also has adverse economic and social consequences for women, their children and families.

The health sector has a lead role to play in providing clinical and mental health services to women who experience violence. Evidence shows that women identify health-care providers as the professionals they would most trust with disclosure of abuse. It is therefore important that health care providers know how to respond and health care systems are equipped to provide the best possible care for survivors of sexual assault and/or intimate partner violence.

In 2013, WHO/PAHO published the first global policy and clinical guidelines for responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women. These guidelines are based on the latest available evidence and provide standards that can be the basis for national guidelines and for integrating these issues into health-care provider education, both undergraduate and at service level. The policy and clinical guidelines are the first of a series of additional tools WHO/PAHO is developing, including a clinical handbook, a manual for health systems and training curricula. These tools form the basis of the health component of the Joint UN Programme on Essential Services for Violence against women involving UN Women, UNFPA, UNODC, UNDP and WHO.

Preventing violence against women requires a multisectoral approach although the health sector has a role to play in prevention as well. In 2011, WHO along with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, published evidence-based tools on preventing intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women. Since then, there have been several initiatives supported to generate evidence on prevention of violence against women including the "what works initiative" by UK's Department for International Development (DFID). New evidence is being generated on promising interventions to prevent violence against women that needs to be considered alongside efforts to provide services to survivors.

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In 2015, PAHO's Directing Council approved the Strategy and Plan of Action on strengthening the health systems response to violence against women. In 2016, the World Health Assembly (WHA) approved the Global plan of action on strengthening the role of the health systems in addressing interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls and against children. The PAHO Strategy and Plan of Action and the WHA Global Plan of Action urge Member States to implement actions to provide comprehensive health services to survivors of violence, train health care providers and implement evidence-based prevention programmes.

Through this capacity building workshop PAHO/WHO, in collaboration with UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and CARICOM, aims to contribute to strengthening efforts to prevent violence against women, as well as health systems' capacity to respond to women survivors of intimate partner and sexual violence in select Caribbean countries.

Specific objectives include:

1. To share the latest evidence available on the prevalence and health consequences of violence against women
2. To enable Caribbean countries to exchange experiences and lessons learned in preventing and responding to violence against women, particularly within health systems
3. To enable Caribbean countries to identify multisectoral evidence-based interventions to prevent violence against women including the role and contributions of health systems in prevention
4. To introduce participants to evidence-based recommendations from WHO/PAHO on how to respond to women subjected to intimate partner or sexual violence.
5. To identify actions that countries can take in order to strengthen their health systems' capacity to address violence against women.

Venue: The workshop will take place in the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Center in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Dates: March 15-17, 2016.

Participants

The workshop will bring together approximately 30 participants. Participants should be individuals in senior technical and decision-making positions who can provide insight into the feasibility of engaging in prevention and service delivery activities involving the health and other sectors, and who can, following the workshop, convene other senior colleagues to discuss implementation at a national level. Workshop participants will include four to five participants from each of the countries as follows:

- At least a mid-level manager/decision-maker from the Ministry of Health
- At least a mid-level manager/decision-maker from one of the other ministries responsible for violence against women (e.g. gender or women and child development or social

development, justice) and/or representative from a national task force or committee on violence against women (where these exist)

- Representative from a key NGO partners involved in prevention and/or in delivering health services to women affected by violence against women.
- PAHO Country Office Focal points

Funding for the above categories of participants will be covered. In addition, partners from other UN Agencies, donors and other international NGOs will also be invited, but they will be expected to cover their own costs of participation.

Proposed Countries

- Based on their ongoing efforts to address violence against women, the following countries will participate: Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Format:

The workshop will run 3 days and will be a mix of presentation of evidence, concepts, and recommendations as well as inter-active and participatory learning exercises and exchange of experiences through group-work. Participants will be expected to apply what they have learned to develop a small set of follow up actions that they can apply at the national level to strengthen health systems' response to violence against women.

Expected Outputs

- Increased understanding of the magnitude, risk factors and health consequences of violence against women as a public health problem
- Increased knowledge about evidence-based interventions for preventing and responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women
- Increased understanding of actions to be taken by health systems in order to provide care to survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women
- Improved understanding of barriers and challenges countries face in addressing intimate partner and sexual violence
- Improved understanding of how to plan, design, monitor and evaluate interventions
- Concrete follow up country level actions to be identified to address violence against women as a public health problem.