NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

PREGNANCY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACTS

WHY IT MATTERS

Violence occurs commonly in pregnancy — between 4 and 8 percent of women experience domestic violence during their pregnancy.[1] The effects of violence during pregnancy can be devastating to both the mother and the unborn child. Domestic violence during pregnancy is linked to depression, substance abuse, smoking, anemia, first and second trimester bleeding, and a reduction in birth weight.[2] Unfortunately, because domestic violence is rarely screened for during prenatal exams, this deadly health risk often goes undetected.

DID YOU KNOW

- Each year approximately 1.5 million women in the U.S. are raped or physical assaulted by an intimate partner.[3] This number includes more than 324,000 women who were pregnant when the violence occurred.[4]
- Among the women whose pregnancies were intended, 5.3% reported abuse during the pregnancy, compared with 12.6% for women whose pregnancies were mistimed and 15.3% for women whose pregnancies were unwanted.[5]
- 50-70% of women abused before pregnancy are abused during pregnancy.[6]
- 26% of pregnant teens reported being physically abused by their boyfriends. Nearly half of them said that the battering began or intensified after he learned of the pregnancy.[7]

HOMICIDE AND PREGNANCY

- Murder is the second most common cause of injury-related death for pregnant women (31%) after car accidents.[8]
- Between 1990 and 2004 more than 1300 pregnant women were murdered.[9] Most of these women (56%) were shot to death while the rest were stabbed or strangled.[10]
- 77% of pregnant homicide victims are killed during the first trimester of pregnancy.[11]
- Many deaths associated with pregnancy may go undetected because death certificates and medical examiners' records do not always note whether the deceased was pregnant.[12]

WHO'S MOST AT RISK

- Women under age 20 and women who receive late or no prenatal care are most vulnerable to intimate partner homicide.[13]
- Women with unintended pregnancies are two to four times more likely to experience physical violence than women with planned pregnancies.[14]

THE IMPACT OF DV IN PREGNANCY

- Women who are abused during pregnancy are more likely to delay entry into prenatal care.[15]
- Pregnancy complications, including low weight gain, anemia, infections, and first and second trimester bleeding, are significantly higher for victims of domestic violence.[16]
- Pregnant women who are victims of intimate partner violence are more likely to suffer from depression and suicide, as well as engage in tobacco, alcohol and drug use during pregnancy.[17]

HEALTH CARE SCREENING

- 96% of women in the U.S. who have a live birth, receive prenatal care.[18] On average, pregnant women are seen for an average of 12-13 visits.[19] Despite this frequent interaction, less than half of reproductive health care providers regularly screen patients for intimate partner violence.[20]
- Only 18% of pregnant women examined at an urgent care triage unit reported having been asked by their physician about intimate partner violence.[21]

NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
NCADV
Every Home A Safe Home

The Public Policy Office of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is a national leader in the effort to create and influence Federal legislation that positively affects the lives of domestic violence victims and children. We work closely with advocates at the local, state and national level to identify the issues facing domestic violence victims, their children and the people who serve them and to develop a legislative agenda to address these issues. NCADV welcomes you to join us in our effort to end domestic violence.

IF YOU NEED HELP

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence and wants help, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE.

HOW TO HELP

One of the most effective ways to help end domestic violence during pregnancy is to write your Congressional representatives asking them to support the following initiatives:

- Ask your legislators to support reproductive freedoms for women.
- Ask state and local governments to support programs designed to train medical personal, including general health care providers and emergency room staff to look for signs and ask questions regarding domestic violence when treating patients.
- Ask your legislators to support domestic violence programs aimed at teen dating violence, particularly programs that emphasize safe sex practices.
- You can also ask your own health care provider how he or she addresses issues of domestic violence. Offer to bring them information or suggest they contact their state coalition to learn more about the role health care providers play in screening and detecting domestic violence. For more information, read the Center for Disease Control's "Intimate Partner Violence During Pregnancy, A Guide for Clinicians," available at www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/violence/IntimatePartnerViolence/index.htm.

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