The High Cost of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Assault: A Public Health Concern

- **Intimate Partner Violence** —also called domestic violence, battering, or spouse abuse—is violence committed by a spouse, ex-spouse, or current or former boyfriend or girlfriend. It can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples.

Intimate Partner Violence as a Health Concern
- IPV results in physical injury, psychological trauma, and sometimes death. (Gelles 1997; Karrin, Wolf and Holt 2000; Revenson and Wolchik 2000; Semans and Gelles 1994)
- The consequences of IPV can last a lifetime.
- Abused women experience more physical health problems and have a higher occurrence of depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide attempts than do women who are not abused. (Golding 1996; Campbell, Sullivan and Davidson 1995; Kessler et al. 1994; Kaslow et al. 1998; Moscicki 1989)
- They also use health care services more often. (Miller, Cohan and Abelson 1998)

Injuries/Losses Related to IPV
- Based on NVAWS (National Violence Against Women Survey) data, an estimated 5.3 million IPV victimizations occur among U.S. women ages 18 and older each year. (www.cdc.gov, 3/03)
- This violence results in nearly 2.0 million injuries, more than 550,000 of which require medical attention.
- In addition, IPV victims also lose a total of nearly 8.0 million days of paid work—the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs—and nearly 5.6 million days of household productivity as a result of the violence.

Rapes, Physical Assaults and Injuries
- The National Violence Against Women’s Survey (NVAWS) found that:
  - 36.2% of the women who were raped by an intimate partner sustained an injury (other than the rape itself) during their most recent victimization.
  - 41.5% of physical assault victims were injured (www.cdc.gov, 3/03)

IPV and Rape: The Medical Response
- Of the estimated 322,230 intimate partner rapes each year, 116,647 result in injuries (other than the rape itself), 36,161 of which require medical care.
- Of the nearly 4.5 million physical assault victimizations, more than 1.8 million cause injuries, 519,391 of which require medical care.
- Nearly 15,000 rape victimizations and more than 240,000 physical assault victimizations result in hospital ED visits.
- Multiple medical care visits are often required for each IPV victimization. For example, victims of both rape and physical assault averaged 1.9 hospital ED visits per victimization, resulting in an estimated 486,151 visits each year to hospital EDs.

Monetary Costs of IPV
- The costs of intimate partner rape, physical assault, and stalking exceed $5.8 billion each year, nearly $4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health care services.
- The total costs of IPV also include nearly $0.9 billion in lost productivity from paid work and household chores for victims of nonfatal IPV and $0.9 billion in lifetime earnings lost by victims of IPV homicide.
- The largest proportion of the costs is derived from physical assault victimization because that type of IPV is the most prevalent.
- The largest component of IPV-related costs is health care, which accounts for more than two-thirds of the total costs.

Medical Consequences of Abuse

• Battering is the single most common cause of injury to women
• Up to 35% of women presenting with any complaint to the ED are there because of symptoms related to partner abuse
• Approximately one-third of pregnant women are abused; battering of pregnant women is thought to cause more birth defects than all diseases combined for which children are immunized
• Battered women account for 14% of women seen in Internal Medicine clinics
• Medical Expenses from IPV total more than $5 billion annually

(American Medical Association Alliance, Inc. Physician Reference notes on Recognizing and Treating Victims of Domestic Violence)

Clinical Findings in Emergency Rooms

• Contusions, abrasions, fractures, sprains, burns
• Face, neck, chest, sexual organ, and abdominal injuries
• Multiple sites of injury
• Repeat and chronic injuries
• Any injury when the patient’s explanation is not consistent with the type of injury presented

(American Medical Association Alliance, Inc. Physician Reference notes on Recognizing and Treating Victims of Domestic Violence)

Mental Health Problems and Abuse

• Women are drastically more likely to develop a mental disorder at some point in their lives if they have been the victim of rape, sexual assault, stalking, or intimate-partner violence, according to a new study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.
• Experiencing abuse or an attack can lead to serious mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety

(MH Care & Physical Assault)

MH Care Costs & Rape

• According to NVAWS estimates, one-third (33.0%) of IPV rapes result in the victim’s speaking with a psychologist, psychiatrist, or other mental health professional about the incident.
• On average, each incident requires 12.4 mental health care visits, for a total of 1.3 million mental health visits per year, at a mean cost of $78.86 per visit.
• The mean mental health care cost per incident of IPV rape is $323; the mean cost per IPV rape among victims who actually receive treatment is $978.
• Victims pay for more than one-third of mental health care services; private health insurers pay only slightly more than victims.

(MH Care & Stalking)

MH Care & Physical Assault

• More than one-quarter (26.4%) of IPV physical assaults result in the victim’s speaking with a psychologist, psychiatrist, or other mental health professional, according to NVAWS estimates.
• On average, each incident requires 12.9 visits, for a total of 15.2 million visits annually, at a mean cost of $78.86 per visit.
• The mean mental health care cost per incident of IPV physical assault, is $269; among victims who actually receive treatment, the mean cost per incident is $1,017.
• Victims pay for approximately one-third of the costs

(MH Care & Stalking)

MH Care & Stalking

• NVAWS estimates indicate than more than half a million women are stalked by intimate partners each year. Forty-three percent of these victims seek mental health care services, at an average of 9.6 visits per person.
• That’s a total of nearly 2.1 million mental health care visits related to IPV stalking annually at a mean cost of $71.87 per visit.
• The mean mental health care cost per stalking incident by an intimate partner is $294; the mean cost per stalking incident among victims who actually receive treatment is $690.
• Private insurance pays for 34.7% of this mental health care; victims pay for 32.0%.

(MH Care & Stalking)
Reactions to Trauma

- Feeling hopeless about the future
- Feeling detached or unconcerned about others
- Having trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling jumpy and getting startled easily at sudden noises
- Feeling on guard and constantly alert
- Having disturbing dreams and memories or flashbacks
- Having work or school problems

Physical Reactions to Trauma

- Stomach upset and trouble eating
- Trouble sleeping and feeling very tired
- Pounding heart, rapid breathing, feeling edgy
- Sweating
- Severe headache if thinking of the event
- Failure to engage in exercise, diet, safe sex, regular health care
- Excess smoking, alcohol, drugs, food
- Having your ongoing medical problems get worse

Emotional Reactions to Trauma

- Feeling nervous, helpless, fearful, sad
- Feeling shocked, numb, and not able to feel love or joy
- Avoiding people, places, and things related to the event
- Being irritable or having outbursts of anger
- Becoming easily upset or agitated
- Blaming yourself or having negative views of oneself or the world
- Distrust of others, getting into conflicts, being over controlling
- Being withdrawn, feeling rejected or abandoned
- Loss of intimacy or feeling detached

Abuse and PTSD

- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a condition that can develop after you have gone through a life-threatening event. If you have PTSD, you may have trouble keeping yourself from thinking over and over about what happened to you. You may try to avoid people and places that remind you of the trauma. You may feel numb. Lastly, if you have PTSD, you might find that you have trouble relaxing. You may startle easily and you may feel on guard most of the time.

Abuse and Depression

- Depression. Depression involves feeling down or sad more days than not. If you are depressed, you may lose interest in activities that used to be enjoyable or fun. You may feel low in energy and be overly tired. You may feel hopeless or in despair, and you may think that things will never get better. Depression is more likely when you have had losses such as the death of close friends. If you are depressed, at times you might think about hurting or killing yourself. For this reason, getting help for depression is very important.

Abuse and Suicide

- Suicidal thoughts. Trauma and personal loss can lead a depressed person to think about hurting or killing themselves.
The Impact of IPV/Assault on Children

- Statistics show that more than three million children each year witness violence in their homes.
- Domestic Violence/IPV affects every member of the family, including children.
- Family violence creates a home environment where children live in constant fear.
- Children who witness are affected in ways similar to children who are physically abused.
- Often, they are unable to establish nurturing bonds with either parent.

(www.acadv.org)

Emotional Impact

- Grief for family and personal losses
- Shame, guilt, and self blame
- Confusion about conflicting feelings toward parents
- Fear of abandonment, or expressing emotions, the unknown or personal injury
- Anger
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Powerlessness
- Embarrassment

(www.acadv.org)

Physical Impact

- Somatic complaints, headaches and stomach aches
- Nervous, anxious, short attention span
- Tired and lethargic
- Frequently ill
- Poor personal hygiene
- Regression in development
- High risk play
- Self abuse

(www.acadv.org)