

Incorporating Domestic Violence Screening into Workers' Compensation and Occupational Medicine Histories

Theodore C. Hanf, J.D., M.P.H.

American Public Health Association
November 5, 2007

Defining the Problem

- Domestic Violence is more than you think
 - Not just physical
 - Not always obvious
 - Not always visible
 - Not always women



Defining the Problem

- Domestic Violence is multi-dimensional
 - Physical Violence
 - Emotional Violence
 - Verbal Abuse
 - Threats against others
 - Children
 - Pets
 - Family members
 - Cherished objects

Defining the Problem

- Domestic Violence is multi-dimensional
 - Financial “Violence”
 - Limited access to funds
 - Economic enslavement
 - Bankruptcy
 - Coercion
 - “Guilt Trips”
 - Sexual Abuse
 - Forced sex

Impact on the Work Place

- Assaults frequently occur at work
- Homicide was 2nd leading cause of workplace deaths of women in 2000
- DV causes missed time from work

Magnitude of the Problem

- >4 Million women beaten or abused / yr
- Health related costs of sexual / physical assault by intimate partners >\$5.8 Bil
- Lost productivity and earnings \$1.8 Bil

Magnitude of the Problem

- Victims lose > 8 Mil days of work / yr
 - 32,000 FTE Jobs !
- 96% of victims have abuse related problems at work
 - 56% are late to work due to abuse issues
 - 28% leave work early
 - 54% miss whole days

Figuring the Costs

TAR Domestic Violence Cost Calculator <http://www.texashealth.org/apps/DomesticViolenceCostCalc.asp>

**Texas Health Resources
Domestic Violence Cost Calculator**

COMPANY DATA Please input the following information for your company and click the Calculate button:

TOTAL WORKFORCE _____

PERCENTAGE FEMALE _____

AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE FOR YOUR COMPANY _____

Total annual cost to your company due to domestic violence

BASED ON YOUR INPUT ABOVE YOUR COMPANY'S POTENTIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV) COSTS ARE HIGHLIGHTED BELOW. THE BLUE TEXT REPRESENTS NATIONAL DV STATISTICS THAT ARE USED TO CALCULATE THE TOTALS.

VICTIMIZATION	Total workforce _____ Percentage female _____ Total estimated female employees _____ Number of female employees divided by 1000 _____ 116 National DV rate per 1,000 Female Employees* Expected number of female DV victims at your company per year _____ 3.4 Average number of victimizations per DV victim per year* Total expected victimizations at your company/year _____
MEDICAL COSTS	38.85% Percentage of victimizations that result in injury* Total expected victimizations resulting in injury at your company per year _____ 38.85% Average percentage of victims seeking medical care nationally* Predicted number of your company's DV victims seeking medical care per year _____ 1.9 Average number of medical visits per victimization* Predicted total number of medical visits by DV victims for your company _____ \$3,867 Average medical cost per victimization (adjusted to 2005 dollars)* 75% Average U.S. percentage paid by insurance* Total predicted medical cost/victimization for your company/year _____
MENTAL HEALTH	39.79% Average percentage of victimizations resulting in mental health service usage* Estimated number of victimizations resulting in mental health service usage _____ 12.66 Average number of visits per victimization* Total predicted mental health visits _____ \$95,397 Average cost per visit (adjusted to 2005 dollars)* 60% Average U.S. percentage paid by insurance* Total predicted mental health cost/victimization for your company/year _____
LOST PRODUCTIVITY	19.5% Percentage of victimizations that result in lost work days* Estimated number of victimizations resulting in lost work days _____ 6.09 Average number of lost work days per year per victimization* Total estimated lost work days due to DV for your company _____ Average hourly wage for your company _____ Total estimated productivity lost in your company/year due to DV _____

1 of 2 9/15/2007 4:39 PM

www.texashealth.org/apps/DomesticViolenceCostCalc.asp

How This Presents

- Violence played out at workplace
- Workers' Compensation Claim
- Utilization of Employer Health Programs

How This Presents

- Head, Neck, Face injury
- Orthopedic Claim – Upper Extremity
 - Distal Fracture / Spiral Fracture
 - Defensive wounds
 - Carpal Tunnel, Overuse Syndromes



Red Flag Indicators

- Headaches
- Chronic Pain Syndromes
- TMJ
- Extreme Weight Loss / Malnutrition
- Psychological Injuries

How This Presents

- Often advanced warning
 - Someone knows something is going on
 - Victims often in denial
 - Employers / Co-workers often in denial
 - “don’t want to get involved”

Program Development

- Screening for DV by Occ Med
 - Typically looks only for specific trauma
 - MVA
 - Slip and Fall
 - Accidental injuries
 - Typically doesn't look behind the workplace injury
 - Victims often deny / rationalize/ blame self

Program Development

- Occupational Medicine / Forensic History
 - Pushed or shoved you?
 - Thrown objects at you?
 - Refused help or care when sick or injured?
 - Threatened with a weapon?
 - Threatened harm to loved ones or treasured objects?

Program Development

- Use Established Screening Instruments
 - LifeSpan (www.lifespan.org)
 - JHSON (www.dangerassessment.org)
 - HITS (Sherin 1998, Fam.Med)
 - WAST (www.jfponline.com)

Program Development

- Have resource info at work and clinic
 - Victims have limited access to communications at home
 - Risky for victims to have brochures
 - Can provoke violent reaction in abuser



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

If you or someone you know is being abused, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233) or 800-787-3224 (TTY).

If you are interested in information, referrals, or funding opportunities related to domestic violence, visit OVW's Web site at www.usdoj.gov/ovw.



Working Together to End the Violence

Nearly 25% of surveyed women and 8% of surveyed men said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time in their lives. Domestic violence is wrong. It affects not only the direct victims, but their children and families as well. Working together, men and women can change attitudes and perceptions about domestic violence.

For more information, contact the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women at 202-307-6026, or visit our Web site at www.usdoj.gov/ovw.

Office on Violence Against Women



U.S. Department of Justice

Handout

If you are being abused at home . . . you are not alone.

Millions of women just like you are victims of abuse or violence in their homes.

Partner abuse is a health problem.

Partner abuse impacts your children's health.

Your healthcare provider can help.

Local Services for Victims of Abuse or Violence:

Call 911 if you are in danger or need help.
National Domestic Violence Hot Line:
1-800-799-SAFE

Remember:

- Nothing you say or do causes your partner to act violently.
- It is impossible for you to prevent these attacks by being the perfect wife or girlfriend.
- No matter what, no one has the right to hurt you.
- That kind of behavior is called domestic violence.
- It is against the law.
- Domestic violence does not go away on its own. In fact, it tends to get worse over time, and it is harmful to children as well.

What you can do to protect yourself:

- Use your own instincts about what is safest for you and your children.
- Talk with a relative or friend about what is going on.
- Contact your local domestic violence program to find out how they can help you.
- Tell your health care provider what is going on and make sure a record is kept of your injuries (bruises, scratches, black eyes, etc.).
- Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, a change of clothes and copies of important papers and anything else you may need for you and your children with someone you can trust.

We care about your health and well-being. We are here for you.

Ask your doctor or nurse for a domestic violence safety plan or call a domestic violence 24-hour crisis line. The call is free and completely confidential.

Source: Poster created by Mercy Healthcare, Sacramento & WEAVE

California Medical Training Center
04/14/03

Evaluation

- Identification of abuse cases / intervention
- Referrals to assistance organizations
- Reduced Group Health / Workers' Comp \$
- Reduced absenteeism
- Increased productivity

Justification

- Uneasy about asking sensitive questions ?
 - US Preventive Services Task Force
Asking questions about abuse is justifiable
 - High prevalence of abuse
 - Value in identifying victims
 - Low cost to screen
 - Low risk to screen in that setting

Justification

- Uneasy about asking sensitive questions ?
 - American Academy of Family Physicians
 - American College of Physicians
 - American Medical Association
 - Am. Col. Gynecologists and Obstetricians

Recommend screening for Domestic Violence

Justification

- Uneasy about asking sensitive questions ?
 - JCAHO
 - Mandates all hospitals screen for DV