

Active detection of victims of violence and their characteristics

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Family violence has an impact on health. The purpose of this research was to establish the frequency of violent victimization and the readiness of patients to disclose possible experiences of physical violence and/or psychological abuse in the family. For the first time, physicians themselves asked their patients about possible experiences of family violence.

This screening research study included 25 doctors of family medicine from the Republic of Slovenia, who for 14 days questioned every fifth patient, composing a sample of 797 persons. Doctors thus actively identified victims of physical violence and/or psychological abuse, the frequency of violence, the perpetrators of violence and the readiness of victims of violence to seek help. This research repeated a pilot screening study carried out in 2006, in which 27 doctors of family medicine in Slovenia participated, who for 14 days asked every fifth patient about this phenomenon, which composed a sample of 1103 patients. The present sample consisted of 295 males (37.0%) and 502 (62.3%) females, of which 21 males (7.1%) and 76 females (15.1 %), i.e. 97 persons (12.2% of the sample), reported physical violence in the last five years. Forty-seven males (15.9%) and 184 females (36.65%) were victims of psychological abuse, i.e. 231 persons from the entire sample (29.0%). Eighty-five respondents (10.7%) were victims of physical violence and psychological abuse, 12 males (4.1 %) and 73 females (14.5%). On the other hand, it was established that 235 males (80.7%) and 315 females (62.7%) had not reported any kind of violence, i.e., 553 persons (69.4%), which corresponds to data obtained by the research carried out in 2006, when 777 person (70.44%) did not report any experiences of family violence.

A statistically typical male victim of abuse is 38.7 years old, lives in a town, is single, has never been married, the perpetrator of violence does not belong to the family circle and he is abused once a year. A typical female victim of physical violence is 44.1 years old, lives in a town, is married, is without children or has two children, the perpetrator of the violence is her partner, she is abused once a month or once a year, and the likelihood of her seeking help of her doctor is 45%.

A typical male victim of family psychological abuse is 43.7 years old, lives in a town, is married, is without children or has two children and is abused by his partner once a year. A female victim of family psychological abuse is 45.2 years old, lives in a town, is married, is without children or has two children and is abused by her partner once a month or continually; her likelihood of seeking help of her doctor is 20%.

A typical male victim of physical violence and psychological abuse is 39.4 years old, lives in a town, lives in a partnership relation or is single, has never been married, is without children or has one child and is victimized once a year, with an equal chance of it being within the family or outside it. A typical female victim of physical violence and psychological abuse is 44.3 years old, lives in a rural area, but may be in a town, she lives in a partnership relation, is without children or has two children and is abused by her partner once a week or once a month; her likelihood of seeking help is over 60%.

It was established that the possible infertility of a couple or a life in a partnership relation without children is a circumstance that should be examined from the point of view of intimate partner violence.

Key words: family violence, physical violence, psychological abuse, abuse, frequency of abuse, a person with experience of victimization, perpetrators of violence, family medicine, screening

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