

Appendix G

Signs and symptoms associated with partner abuse

Physical injuries

- Injuries to the head, face, neck, chest, breast, abdomen or genitals.
- Bilateral distribution of injuries, or injuries to multiple sites.
- Contusions, lacerations, abrasions, ecchymoses, stab wounds, burns, human bites, fractures (particularly of the nose and orbits) and spiral wrist fractures.
- Complaints of acute or chronic pain, without evidence of tissue injury.
- Sexual assault (including unwanted sexual contact by a husband).
- Injuries or vaginal bleeding during pregnancy, spontaneous or threatened miscarriage.
- Multiple injuries, such as bruises, burns, scars, in different stages of healing.
- Substantial delay between time of injury and presentation for treatment.
- Tufts of hair pulled out.

Patient's manner

- Hesitant or evasive when describing injuries
- Distress disproportionate to injuries (for example, extreme distress over minor injury)
- Explanation does not account for injury (for example, 'I walked into a door')

Illnesses

- Headaches, migraines.
- Musculoskeletal complaints.
- Gynaecological problems.
- Chronic pain.
- Malaise, fatigue.
- Depression.
- Insomnia.
- Anxiety.
- Chest pain, palpitations.
- Gastrointestinal disorders.
- Hyperventilation.
- Eating disorders.

Serious psychosocial problems

- Alcohol abuse or addiction.
- Severe depression.
- Drug abuse or addiction.
- Suicidal ideation or attempts.

History

- Record or suspicion of previous abuse.
- Substantial delay between time of injury and presentation for treatment.
- Multiple presentations for unrelated injuries.

From: *The Oasis Protocol: Guidelines for identifying, treating and referring abused women.*
Auckland: Injury Prevention Research Centre, 1996.