

# Appendix H

## Recommended partner abuse screening guidelines for different settings

### Health care settings

Routine screening about partner abuse is an essential component of clinical care for all females aged 16 years and over. In situations where there is an ongoing relationship between health care provider and patient, screening for partner abuse should be taken once annually, unless circumstances suggest more frequent questioning is warranted.

### Primary care settings

#### *When should screening for abuse occur?*

- As part of routine health history.
- During visits for a new problem.
- Any new patient consultation.
- Any new intimate relationship.
- During any preventive care consultation (for example, cervical screening, mammography).

#### *What should patients be screened for?*

- At the first visit, female patients should be screened for any partner abuse, both physical or sexual, that occurred anytime in their lives.
- Annually, women should be screened for physical or sexual abuse over the past year.
- Male patients should be questioned about partner abuse when they present with signs or symptoms indicative of abuse.

### Emergency department/urgent care settings

#### *When should screening for abuse occur?*

- At every emergency department visit.

#### *What should patients be screened for?*

- Female patients should be screened for both physical and sexual abuse over the last year.
- Male patients should be questioned about partner abuse when they present with signs or symptoms indicative of abuse.

### Maternity and Sexual Health settings

#### *When should screening for abuse occur?*

- At every prenatal and postpartum visit (maximum three opportunities).
- At any new intimate relationship.
- At every routine gynaecological visit.
- At family planning visits.
- At STD clinics/visits.
- At abortion clinics/visits.



### *What should patients be screened for?*

- Screening should be about current (past year) and lifetime experience of both physical and sexual partner abuse.

### **Paediatric settings**

#### *When should screening for abuse occur?*

- As part of well child assessments.
- When family violence is suspected.

#### *What should patients be screened for?*

- Women should be screened for both physical or sexual abuse over the past year.
- Male patients should be questioned about partner abuse when they present with signs or symptoms indicative of abuse.

### **Mental health settings**

#### *When should screening for abuse occur?*

- As part of every initial assessment.
- At every new intimate relationship.
- Annually, if receiving ongoing or periodic treatment.

#### *What should patients be screened for?*

- At the first visit, patients should be screened for any partner abuse, both physical and sexual, that occurred anytime in the woman's life.
- Annually, women should be screened for physical and sexual abuse over the past year.
- Male patients should be questioned about partner abuse when they present with signs or symptoms indicative of abuse.

### **Inpatient settings**

#### *When should screening for abuse occur?*

- As part of admission to hospital.
- As part of discharge from hospital.

#### *What should patients be screened for?*

- Female patients should be screened for both physical and sexual partner abuse over the last year.
- Male patients should be questioned about partner abuse when they present with signs or symptoms indicative of abuse.

Adapted from: *Family Violence Prevention Fund: Preventing Domestic Violence: Clinical Guidelines on Routine Screening*. San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund, 1999. [www.fvpf.org](http://www.fvpf.org)