Unit 15: Consequences, Causes, and Prevention of Violence Against Women

Objectives

- Discuss issues with reporting of violence against women
- Understand victim blaming
- Discuss the health effects of violence across a woman’s lifetime
- Investigate public health prevention of violence against women
Reporting of IPV and Sexual Assault

- ½ of domestic violence is reported.
- Rapes are reported 26%-37% of the time.

Reports Often Go Unreported

- Fear unwanted attention
- Distrust hospitals and law enforcement
- Feelings of shame or guilt
- Fear not being believed
- Fear of reprisal
- Victim blaming
**Victim Blaming**

- **Victim Blaming:**
  - Occurs when the victim of any crime or any wrongful act are held entirely or partially responsible for the harm that befell them
  - An ideology used to justify racism, sexism, and social injustice

- Re-traumatizes the victim through the responses of individuals and institutions

**Examples of Victim Blaming**

- Victim’s clothing played a role
- “Person couldn’t help it”
- “Wrong place at wrong time”
- The role of alcohol and drugs
- It wasn’t ‘rape’
- Partner stress
- Brought it on themselves
Why is Victim Blaming so Pervasive?

- Objectification of women
- Patriarchy in society
- Role of power
- Race and economics

Health Effects of Violence Against Women
Impact on Women’s Health

- Happens at all stages of life:
  - Pre-birth
  - Infancy
  - Childhood
  - Adolescence
  - Reproductive Age
  - Elderly
Morbidity and Mortality

- Health Outcomes:
  - Injury
  - Pregnancy
  - STI infection

- 33% of female murder victims were killed by a partner

- Every day, 3 women are murdered by an intimate partner

- Mental Health Outcomes:
  - PTSD
    - 32% of victims
  - Depression
  - Suicide
Also linked to harmful health behaviors such as smoking, abusing alcohol, drug abuse, and engaging in risky sexual behaviors.

What Causes Violence?

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) states that

“violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one the social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared to men.”

Cultural Attitudes Regarding Violence

- Historical acceptance of violence in every day life
- Acceptance of male dominance
- Women are vulnerable
  - Inequities between men and women
  - Rigid gender roles
  - Weak sanctions against violent behavior
  - Cultural norms that support men’s right to sex
Poverty

- Joblessness connected with violence
  - Feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem
- Why do women remain in abusive relationships?
  - Economics

Substance Use

Violence  Substance Use

Violence  Substance Use
### Media

- Violence in the media is pervasive
- Longitudinal studies have found links between childhood TV violence-viewership and adult aggressive behavior
- Creates “mean world” effect

### Public Health Prevention of Violence
Violence Against Women Act

- First passed in 1994, reauthorized in 2013
- $1.6 billion in funding
  - Federal rape shield law
  - Community violence prevention programs
  - Protections for victims evicted from homes
  - Victim assistance services
  - Programs for immigrants, differing ethnicities/races
  - Programs for victims with disabilities
  - Legal Aid
- Major controversy over the reauthorization

Screening For Violence Against Women

- 92% to 98% of women did not discuss experiences of abuse with health care providers
- Although most states have mandatory reporting for child or elder abuse, only a few require reporting of battering of women
How the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Affects Victims of Domestic, Sexual, and Dating Violence

- Prohibits Pre-Existing Condition Exclusion Based on Domestic Violence History

- Supports Routine Screening and Counseling of Domestic or Interpersonal Violence (for women)

- Domestic Violence Training in Early Childhood Health Program
State by State Policy

- States receive a "meets policy" if they have laws that help domestic violence victims get treatment by requiring
  - a) written protocols describing how health care providers should identify and treat domestic violence victims;
  - b) routine screening for domestic violence abuse; and
  - c) training to help health care providers assist domestic violence victims.
- "Limited policy" if they have two of these requirements
- "Weak policy" if they have one of these requirements
- "No policy" if they lack all of these requirements

http://hrc.nwlc.org/policy-indicators/domestic-violence

Class Wrap-Up

- Key Words:
  - Victim blaming,
- Individual Importance:
  - Many women often do not report incidences of IPV or sexual assault because of fears related to not being believed or distrust of the system.
- Public Health Importance:
  - The ACA included important public health prevention efforts for violence against women.
- Socio/Economic Importance:
  - Cultural attitudes regarding gender and the role of men and women in society as well as pervasive images of violence perpetuate violence against women.