



Intimate Partner Violence

Background

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious and preventable public health problem that affects millions of Americans and occurs across the lifespan. It can begin as soon as people start dating or having intimate relationships, often in adolescence.

Intimate partner violence is highly prevalent, affecting millions of people in the United States each year. Data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey indicate that nearly one in four adult women (23%) experienced severe physical violence (ie, being kicked, beaten, choked, or burned on purpose, having a weapon used against them) from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Screening

Box 1 shows sample screening questions from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' (ACOG) Committee Opinion No. 518, *Intimate Partner Violence*.

Box 1. Sample Intimate Partner Violence Screening Questions

While providing privacy, screen for intimate partner violence during new patient visits, annual examinations, initial prenatal visits, each trimester of pregnancy, and the postpartum checkup.

Framing Statement

"We've started talking to all of our patients about safe and healthy relationships because it can have such a large impact on your health."*

Confidentiality

"Before we get started, I want you to know that everything here is confidential, meaning that I won't talk to anyone else about what is said unless you tell me that...(insert the laws in your state about what is necessary to disclose)."

Sample Questions

"Has your current partner ever threatened you or made you feel afraid?"

(Threatened to hurt you or your children if you did or did not do something, controlled who you talked to or where you went, or gone into rages.)[†]

"Has your partner ever hit, choked, or physically hurt you?"

("Hurt" includes being hit, slapped, kicked, bitten, pushed, or shoved.)[†]

(continued)

Box 1. Sample Intimate Partner Violence Screening Questions (*continued*)

For women of reproductive age:

“Has your partner ever forced you to do something sexually that you did not want to do, or refused your request to use condoms?”*

“Does your partner support your decision about when or if you want to become pregnant?”*

“Has your partner ever tampered with your birth control or tried to get you pregnant when you didn’t want to be?”*

For women with disabilities:

“Has your partner prevented you from using a wheelchair, cane, respirator, or other assistive device?”‡

“Has your partner refused to help you with an important personal need such as taking your medicine, getting to the bathroom, getting out of bed, bathing, getting dressed, getting food or drink, or threatened not to help you with these personal needs?”‡

*Family Violence Prevention Fund. Reproductive health and partner violence guidelines: an integrated response to intimate partner violence and reproductive coercion. San Francisco (CA): FVPF; 2010. Available at: http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/HealthCare/Repro_Guide.pdf. Retrieved October 12, 2011. Modified and reprinted with permission.

†Family Violence Prevention Fund. National consensus guidelines on identifying and responding to domestic violence victimization in health care settings. San Francisco (CA): FVPF; 2004. Available at: <http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Consensus.pdf>. Retrieved October 12, 2011. Modified and reprinted with permission.

‡Center for Research on Women with Disabilities. Development of the abuse assessment screen-disability (AAS-D). In: Violence against women with physical disabilities: final report submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Houston (TX): Baylor College of Medicine; 2002. p. II-1–16. Available at <https://media.bcm.edu/documents/2015/12/abuse-assessment-screen-disability.doc>. Retrieved October 18, 2011. Modified and reprinted with permission.

Resources

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Clinical Guidance

- ❖ Intimate partner violence. Committee Opinion No. 518. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2012;119:412–7.
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists’ guidance on screening for IPV, how to offer support, and available prevention and referral options.
- ❖ Reproductive and sexual coercion. Committee Opinion No. 554. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2013;121:411–5.
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists’ guidance on screening for IPV and reproductive and sexual coercion and interventions such as education, counseling on harm-reduction strategies, and prevention of unintended pregnancies by offering long-acting reversible contraception.
- ❖ Sexual assault. Committee Opinion No. 592. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2014;123:905–9.
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists’ guidance on routine screen for a history of sexual assault and offering victims emergency contraception and sexually transmitted infection prophylaxis.

Health Care Provider Tools for Patient Care

- ❖ Fisher D, Lang K, Wheaton J. Training professionals in the primary prevention of sexual and intimate partner violence: a planning guide; Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2010. Available at: <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/5760>. Retrieved March 1, 2018.

Guide describes how to develop, implement, and evaluate a training process taking into account available level of resources.

- ❖ Rabin RF, Jennings JM, Campbell JC, Bair-Merritt MH. Intimate partner violence screening tools: a systematic review. *Am J Prev Med* 2009;36:439–45.e4.

Systematic review summarizing IPV screen tools tested in health care settings, providing a discussion of existing psychometric data and an assessment of study quality.

Health Care Provider Tools for Advocacy

- ❖ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. WEBTREATS: domestic violence. Washington, DC: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; 2017. Available at: <https://www.acog.org/About-ACOG/ACOG-Departments/Resource-Center/WEBTREATS-Domestic-Violence>. Retrieved March 9, 2018.

List of resources on domestic violence identified by ACOG's Resource Center librarians.

- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Preventing intimate partner violence across the lifespan: a technical package of programs, policies, and practices. Atlanta (GA): CDC; 2017. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf>. Retrieved March 1, 2018.

Compilation of strategies to help communities and states focus on prevention activities with the greatest potential to prevent IPV.

Treatment

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf>

This technical package represents a select group of strategies based on the best available evidence to help communities and states sharpen their focus on prevention activities with the greatest potential to prevent intimate partner violence (IPV) and its consequences across the lifespan.

Readiness

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/state_compendium.pdf

Identify resources in your community and be aware of local legislation. Compendium of State Statutes and Policies on Domestic Violence and Health.

Coding

See [Coding for Intimate Partner Violence](#)