

Family Violence Prevention Fund

The Facts on Reproductive Health and Violence Against Women

Violence against women is a costly and pervasive problem, and women of reproductive age – in particular, those ages 16 to 24 – are at greatest risk. Violence limits women's ability to manage their reproductive health and exposes them to sexually transmitted diseases. Abuse during pregnancy can have lasting harmful effects for a woman, the developing fetus and newborns.

- On average, almost 500 women (483) are raped or sexually assaulted each day in this country.¹
- Some women have trouble getting prompt access to emergency contraception – a safe, effective back-up birth control method that can prevent pregnancy when taken within days of unprotected intercourse.
- As many as two-thirds of adolescents who become pregnant were sexually or physically abused some time in their lives.²
- Some 25 to 50 percent of adolescent mothers experience partner violence before, during, or just after their pregnancy.³
- Homicide is the second leading cause of traumatic death for pregnant and recently pregnant women in the U.S., accounting for 31 percent of maternal injury deaths.⁴
- Women with unplanned pregnancies have a two to four times greater risk of being a victim of violence than women whose pregnancies were planned.⁵
- Violence is linked to a wide range of reproductive health issues including STD and HIV transmission, miscarriages, risky sexual health behaviour and more.⁶
- Women experiencing abuse in the year prior to and/or during a recent pregnancy are 40 to 60 percent more likely than non-abused women to report high-blood pressure, vaginal bleeding, severe nausea, kidney or urinary tract infections and hospitalization during pregnancy and are 37 percent more likely to deliver preterm. Children born to abused mothers are 17 percent more likely to be born underweight and more than 30 percent more likely than other children to require intensive care upon birth.⁷
- Few doctors screen their patients for abuse⁸, even though up to 1 in 12 pregnant women are battered⁹.
- A study of 474 adolescent mothers on public assistance found that 51 percent, and two in three of those who experienced domestic violence at the hands of their boyfriends, experienced some form of birth control sabotage by a dating partner.¹⁰

1 National Crime Victimization Survey: Criminal Victimization, 2005. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved September 2006. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv05.pdf>

2 Leiderman, Sally and Cair Almo. 2001. *Interpersonal Violence and Adolescent Pregnancy: Prevalence and Implications for Practice and Policy*. Center for Assessment and Policy Development and the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting, and Prevention.

3 Leiderman, Sally and Cair Almo. 2001. *Interpersonal Violence and Adolescent Pregnancy: Prevalence and Implications for Practice and Policy*. Center for Assessment and Policy Development and the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting, and Prevention. Available at <http://capd.traininghelpdesk.com/pubfiles/pub-2001-10-01.pdf>

4 Chang J, Berg C, Saltzman L, and Herndon J. 2005. Homicide: A Leading Cause of Injury Deaths Among Pregnant and Postpartum Women in the United States, 1991-1999. *American Journal of Public Health*. 95(3): 471-477.

5 Rabasca, Lisa. 1999. More Research is Needed on Violence and Reproduction. *American Psychological Association Monitor*. 30(8). Available at <http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep99/pi1.html>.

6 Violence Against Women: Effects on Reproductive Health. *Outlook* 20(1). 2002. Available at http://www.path.org/files/EOL20_1.pdf.

7 Silverman, JG, Decker, MR, Reed, E, Raj, A. Intimate Partner Violence Victimization Prior to and During Pregnancy Among Women Residing in 26 U.S. States: Associations with Maternal and Neonatal Health. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 2006; 195(1): 140-148.

8 Parsons, L., et.al. 2000. Violence Against Women and Reproductive Health: Toward Defining a Role for Reproductive Health Care Services. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*. 4(2): 135.

9 Gazmararian JA, Petersen R, Spitz AM, Goodwin MM, Saltzman LE, Marks JS. Violence and reproductive health: current knowledge and future research directions. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 2000;4(2): 79-84.

10 Domestic Violence and Birth Control Sabotage: A Report from the Teen Parent Project. 2000. Center for Impact Research. Chicago, IL. Available at <http://www.impactresearch.org/documents/dvandbirthcontrol.pdf>

<p>Home Office 383 Rhode Island Street, Suite 304 San Francisco, CA 94103- 5133 P 415.252.8900 F 415.252.8991</p>	<p>Washington Office 1522 K Street, NW Suite 550 Washington, DC 20005-1202 P 202.682.1212 F 202.682.4662</p>	<p>Boston Office 67 Newbury Street Mezzanine Level Boston, MA 02116 P 617.262.5900 F 617.262.5901</p>	<p>General Information E info@endabuse.org TTY 800.595.4TTY Order Materials P 415.252.8089</p>
--	--	---	--