

Intimate Partner Violence Webinar's Public Health Implication

Sir,

Sustainable Developmental Goal-5 emphasizes achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. One of the targets is to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.^[1]

Globally, 27% of ever-partnered women aged 15–49 years are estimated to have experienced physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence in their lifetime. This violence starts early, affecting adolescent girls and young women, with 24% of women aged 15–19 years and 26% of women aged 19–24 years have experienced this violence at least once since the age of 15.^[2]

National Family Health Survey-5 reports that the prevalence of physical/and sexual violence in ever-married women aged 18–49 years was 29.3% [urban (24.2%) vs. rural (31.6%)], whereas 3.1% experience physical violence during pregnancy [urban (2.5%) vs. rural (3.4%)].^[3]

On November 25, 2022, All India Institute of Medical Sciences Kalyani, in collaboration with Indian Medical Association—Junior Doctors' Network (Tamil Naidu), organized a webinar, “Intimate Partner Violence: A Multi-stakeholder Perspective,” in which resource persons from various disciplines like legal and judiciary [advocate, police officials including senior IPS officer], forensic medicine, psychiatry, psychology, ophthalmology, and community medicine and family medicine participated.

The resource person from the medical discipline highlighted the risk factors, signs and symptoms of intimate partner violence, the consequences of IPV on the mental health of victims' children, and reasons why victims are unable to leave their perpetrators, whereas the resource person from legal discipline elaborated the IPV victims rights and legal access.

The rationale of this webinar was to focus on physician preparedness and awareness to address the issue at chamber practice and community, and in case of a positive history of intimate partner violence, there should be proper documentation. In the community setting, medical officers and frontline workers should be able to screen for intimate partner violence.

This webinar series is planned to be conducted each year on 25th November, “The International Day for the Elimination

of Violence Against Women,” with the subsequent year's emphasis on Violence and its Prevention against Commercial Sexual Workers. Intimate partner violence has been documented among female sexual workers in abroad and in India.^[4] Violence in terms of physical, verbal threats, forced unprotected sexual intercourse, and unwanted sexual acts with female CSW have been documented.^[5] Violence against this marginalized population is a public health concern because they are vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDs.^[5] There is an exigency to address the violence against female sex workers and resolve the issue with a multidisciplinary initiative.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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