Screening for Domestic Violence

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
June 21 2004
Principles of Screening

• Definition: procedure or test that detects an illness early in an asymptomatic person.
• Desirable only if there exists an intervention that will alter natural history
Effective screening

• BASIC
• Burden of mortality morbidity suffering
• Acceptable to Patient and Physician
• Specific and Sensitive
• Intervention
• Cost-effective
Screening Tools

• WAST
• SHAPES
• RUCS
• Alpha Form
• SAFE
• ABCDE
WAST

- Woman Abuse Screening Tool
  - Valid: significant difference (p<0.001)
  - Appropriate
  - Highly reliable: internal consistency (0.95)
  - Sensitivity: first 2 questions
    - abused 91.7%
    - non-abused 100%

*Development of the Woman Abuse screening Tool for use in family Practice, Brown.*
*JB et al Fam Med 1996;28(6):422-8*
WAST

• In general, how would you describe your Relationship?
  – A lot of tension
  – Some tension
  – No tension
Do you and your partner work out Arguments with:
  – Great difficulty?
  – Some difficulty?
  – No difficulty
Follow up Questions

• Do arguments ever result in you feeling down or bad about yourself?
• Do arguments ever result in hitting, kicking or punching?
• Do you ever feel frightened by what your partner says or does?
Follow up Questions

• Has your partner ever abused you physically?
• Has your partner ever abused you emotionally?
• Has your partner ever abused you sexually?
SHAPES

• Self esteem
• Hitting, kicking or punching
• Afraid
• Physical abuse
• Emotional abuse
• Sexual abuse
RUCS

• Routine Universal Comprehensive Screening Protocol
  – The Abuse Screen is now part of our routine assessment
  – Many of my women patients have been hurt by one or more types of abuse
  – Have you ever experienced abuse as a child, adolescent or adult
If the answer is Yes

• Abuse in last 12 months?
• Abuse still going on?
• Do you still have contact with the abuser?
• Do you feel unsafe now?
• Are there children at risk of being abused?
• Are there children at risk of observing abuse?
If Yes to any of the above

- Discuss, assess health effects of abuse
- Address safety issues
- Document details
- Community referral
- Arrange follow-up
If answer is No

• Educate about woman abuse
  – COMMON AND NEVER ACCEPTABLE
  – Serious health effects
    • Physical
    • Sexual: STDs, chronic pelvic pain
    • Psychological: Self-esteem,
    • Psychiatric: Substance abuse, Depression
Alpha Form

– ANTENATAL PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

• Self-report questionnaire for women
  – Administered at 20 weeks gestation

• THIRD antenatal triplicate sheet
  – Questions asked by Physician
Alpha Form

• Parents’ Relationship
  – My parents got along
  – My father scared or hurt my mother
  – My parents, family scared or hurt me
Alpha Form

• Relationship with your partner
  – We work out arguments with great difficulty
  – Arguments with my partner scare me
  – I have been hurt during a fight
  – My partner humiliates me
  – My partner emotionally abuses me
  – My partner has forced me to have sex
ABCDEN

• Ask and keep asking
• Believe
• Counsel
• Danger assessment
• Escape Plan