

Announcements, Information & Resources

Summary Report on Health Costs of IPV in Australia Released

VicHealth in partnership with the Department of Human Services in Australia has released a summary of findings of a joint study conducted to assess the health impact of intimate partner violence on women in Victoria, Australia. The summary report entitled *Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease Caused by Intimate Partner Violence* draws from research evidence to demonstrate the social and economic consequences of the health impacts for women, their families and the community resulting from domestic violence.

A publication providing further detail on the study, and in particular the methodology used to estimate the burden of disease contributed by intimate partner violence, is currently under preparation and information about its availability will shortly be on www.vichealth.vic.gov.au.

The *Health Costs of Violence Report* assessed the health impact of intimate partner violence for Victorian women in relation to its prevalence, the health problems it causes and its contribution to the total disease burden in women. Key findings include:

- Intimate partner violence has wide ranging and persistent effects on women's physical and mental health and contributes *8.8 per cent to the total disease burden* in Victorian women aged *15 to 44* and three per cent in all Victorian women;
- It is the *leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15-44*, being

responsible for more of the disease burden than many well-known risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking and obesity.

- Direct health consequences for women exposed to violence include depression, anxiety and phobias, suicide attempts, chronic pain syndromes, psychosomatic disorders, physical injury, gastrointestinal disorders, irritable bowel syndrome and a variety of reproductive consequences;
- The economic consequences of violence against women are also increasingly recognized with Australian businesses losing at least \$500 million per year because of the effects of family violence on their employees.

One in five Australian women report being subjected to violence at some stage in their adult lives, increasing their risk of mental health problems, behavioral and learning difficulties.

As estimated, one in four Victorian children has witnessed intimate partner violence, increasing their risk of mental health problems, behavioral and learning difficulties.

The summary report has a comprehensive list of references for those wishing to read more widely on this subject. To download a PDF version of the summary, visit: <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/rhadmin/articles/files/Final%20Report.pdf>.