

Physical abuse most common complication in pregnancy

Homicide leading cause of death for pregnant women

In an earlier issue of this newsletter (July 2010), we shared with you some results of a survey of Artemis clients. You may have been shocked to learn that 34% of the women surveyed indicated they had endured physical assaults while they were pregnant.

As it turns out, this is a frighteningly common event. Look at these chilling facts:

- The Center for Disease Control estimates that every year over 320,000 American women suffer intimate partner violence (IPV)

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during pregnancy.

- IPV homicide is the leading cause of death for pregnant women in the US.
- Pregnant women are 50 % to 60%

more likely to be beaten than women who are not pregnant.

- During pregnancy, violence is more common than hypertension, diabetes, or any other serious complication.

The abuse is not limited to physical violence. Often, abusers will ridicule their pregnant partner for being “fat.” They may interfere with her access to medical care or withhold financial and emotional support. Often, they threaten to take the baby from the mother or report her to child protective services.

As you might assume, violence during pregnancy can have devastating results. It can lead to miscarriage or fetal injury. Maternal trauma can lead to fetal death. Low birth weight

is common among infants whose mothers suffered physical violence during pregnancy. Because they are often isolated and afraid, victims can suffer depression, anxiety and increased use of drugs or alcohol.

There has been little research into the causes of increased IPV during pregnancy. It could be that a woman is most vulnerable while pregnant, making her an easy target. Some of the violence may stem from the male’s resentment that his partner is devoting more care and attention to her unborn child than to him. It is often baffling to the women involved. Please read the following story about a young wife, about to deliver her first child.



Cont'd on page 2

I don't know what happened to set Jeff off. At first he was thrilled about the baby – more excited than I was, really. Somewhere along the line, he seemed to get angry about it. He was mad that all I wanted to do was sleep. He hated to hear me talking to my mom and friends about the pregnancy. Eventually, he wouldn't even look at me. He said my body disgusted him. When he started

hitting me, it seemed like he was really trying to attack the baby – he just kept punching and kicking my stomach. I'm really scared. What's all this doing to the baby? What will it be like once my child is born? Will Jeff resent his own kid?

If you believe someone you know is in a volatile relationship while pregnant, here are some things you

can do:

- Be supportive. Tell her you are concerned.
- Assure her that the abuse is not her fault.
- Suggest she call Artemis Center and talk with an advocate.
- Encourage her to tell her doctor about her situation.

Power and control includes more than physical violence

Contraception often sabotaged as means of controlling relationship

You've seen the story on page 1 about IPV during pregnancy. Did you know a pregnancy itself may be the result of domestic violence? Sometimes a pregnancy happens because of sexual assault. It can also result from birth control sabotage. Such behavior on the part of batterers fits the pattern of manipulation and control that defines DV.

Tactics batterers use to sabotage birth control include:

- Destroying or disposing of contraceptives
- Refusing condom use
- Not allowing a woman to obtain birth control
- Threatening physical harm if she tries to prevent a pregnancy

A 2005 study looked at teen moms who had experienced recent domestic violence. Over 65% reported their partner had sabotaged their birth control. Aside from exerting control in the relationship, birth control sabotage may be the abusive



partner's attempt to tie a woman to him permanently through pregnancy.

Just as a batterer may manipulate his partner's pregnancy, another batterer may use threats to coerce her into terminating her pregnancy. It's important to know there is a strong correlation between IPV and abortion, as a recent study showed:

Reported prevalence of physical/

sexual violence among women seeking abortions:

Over her lifetime: 27% - 39%

In the past year: 14% - 22%

Consider the case of a woman who walked into Artemis Center not too long ago. We'll call her Frankie. In her mid 40s, Frankie is a frightened woman. She told an Artemis advocate about a former boyfriend who would not allow her to take oral contraceptives. "He told me

they could make me get fat,” she explained. He forced her to have frequent, unprotected sex. When she became pregnant, he told her that if she had the baby, he’d kill her. “I believed his threats because I’d seen how mean he could be. But I didn’t want to have an abortion. I decided to leave and get far away from him.”

When she learned that her sister had told the boyfriend that Frankie planned to keep her baby, she went into hiding. Even after her daughter

was born, she remained isolated. Over the years, Frankie has moved often. She changes jobs frequently. As you might guess, she has never filed for child support. She still lives in fear that he will make good on his threat.

For information about a new project Artemis Center is involved in regarding sexual battery and birth control sabotage, please see the box on this page.

Teen Dating Violence: Coalition Looking at New Ohio Laws

In the March 2010 newsletter, we told you about several bills the Ohio legislature was considering. Two of them dealing with teen dating violence are now law. One law grants juvenile courts the power to issue Civil Protection Orders to juveniles. The other requires schools to provide dating violence education in grades 7 through 12.

Artemis Center has partnered with South Community, Inc. to coordinate a coalition focused on the implementation of the new statutes. Members of the Coalition include representatives from several county offices, local police agencies and many school districts.

The Coalition has formed two subcommittees. The Legal Subcommittee is working with the Juvenile Court on developing the process for obtaining a Civil Protection Order. They are looking

at issues such as developing user-friendly instructions teens may use when filling out the court paperwork, giving teens access to victim advocacy services, and crafting enforceable protection orders (particularly in a school setting).

The Prevention and Intervention Subcommittee is working on education of school personnel to teach students about teen dating violence, identify and intervene when a student is at risk of abuse by a dating partner, and implementation of Civil Protection Orders in the school setting.

A coordinated response from community partners and schools will ensure that more teens learn to recognize the warning signs of abuse and can get the help and support they may need to get safe.

Artemis to participate in pilot project on sexual violence

Artemis Center is collaborating along with other Montgomery County agencies on Project Connect, a pilot project addressing sexual health and birth control coercion. Montgomery County was chosen as one of six Ohio

“*All partners will be trained on best practice responses to these individuals*”

sites to receive federal funds for Project Connect. The other agencies involved are YWCA, Planned Parenthood and the public health department. Our role is to regularly screen domestic violence clients for sexual abuse and birth control coercion. When an advocate identifies a client who has been victimized in this way, the advocate will refer her to the healthcare partners for treatment and follow-up. All partners will be trained on best practice responses to these individuals.

ARTEMIS CENTER

Dayton's Domestic Violence Resource Agency

Artemis Center for Alternatives

to Domestic Violence

310 W. Monument Ave.

Dayton, OH 45402

Hotline 937.222.SAFE

Phone 937.461.5091

Fax 937.461.2852

TTY 937.461.7910

www.artemiscenter.org

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Artemis Events

*Artemis Center's
Annual 5k walk/run*

Walk Away from Violence

Sat. May 14, 2011

RiverScape MetroPark

log on at

walkawayfromviolence.kintera.org

to register or make a pledge.

*21st Annual Gala Raises
\$65,000 for Artemis*

On February 5th, guests braved the cold once again to support Artemis Center. Special thanks to DP&L, Vectren, WHIOTV, our table sponsors, and our guests for their generous support.

Did You Know?

- In 2010, Artemis Center served 5,794 individuals. They came to us through the crisis hotline, court outreach, Childrens Services, the Job Center or word-of-mouth. Thank you for supporting Artemis so we can support our clients.
- In 2010, Artemis Center earned more than \$2,500 by recycling old cell phones that donors like you brought to us.
- For years, Habitat for Humanity in Dayton has been our partner in collecting cell phones. You can drop off

your phones at the Habitat office, 3534 Linden Ave., or at their ReStore, 1041 S. Patterson Blvd. The good folks at Habitat will make sure the phones get to us.

- Artemis hosts an interactive workshop called In Her Shoes for groups of 12 to 20. This exercise allows participants to take on the roles of real-life DV victims, making the choices victims face. If you know a group who'd like to learn more about domestic violence and the role we all can play, please call Susan Darcy at Artemis Center, 496-1387.