



It's everybody's business.

CAEPV Update

January 25, 2008

IN MEDICAL NEWS – SCREENING TOOL HELPS IDENTIFY MOTHERS AFFECTED BY INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

A brief screening tool was effective in helping pediatricians identify mothers who were affected by intimate partner violence (IPV), according to the results of a study reported in the January issue of *Pediatrics*.

"There is a need for a practical pediatric model that enables pediatric health care providers to identify and address IPV effectively," write Howard Dubowitz, MD, from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, and colleagues. "The objectives of this study were (1) to examine the prevalence of IPV in families using a university-based pediatric primary care clinic, (2) to examine the stability of the Parent Screening Questionnaire (PSQ) questions for IPV, and (3) to examine the validity (ie, sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value [PPV] and negative predictive value [NPV], positive likelihood ratio [LR+], and negative likelihood ratio [LR-]) of the PSQ using the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) as the 'gold standard.'"

In a primary care clinic, 200 parents (mostly mothers) accompanying children younger than 6 years for child health supervision completed the PSQ, a brief screen for psychosocial problems including 3 questions on IPV. Within 2 months, mothers then completed the computerized study protocol, which included the PSQ and the CTS2. The investigators compared the diagnostic usefulness of different combinations of the IPV questions versus the CTS2.

At least 1 of the PSQ screening questions was answered "yes" by 12.0% of the mothers, and responses to the screening questions showed moderate stability with time. Positive responses on the CTS2 ranged from 9% (physical injury in the past year) to 76% (psychological aggression). The single PSQ question that was most effective versus the "physically injured" CTS2 subscale was, "Have you ever been in a relationship in which you were physically hurt or threatened by a partner?" For this

question, sensitivity was 29%, specificity was 92%, PPV was 41%, NPV was 88%, LR+ was 3.8, and LR– was 0.77.

Limitations of this study include disadvantaged status of the participants possibly affecting meaning of words such as "afraid" or "hurt"; sample limited to parents of preschoolers; and relatively broad criteria of the CTS2 for what constitutes IPV, particularly psychological aggression.

"Intimate partner violence is a prevalent problem," the study authors write. "A very brief screen can reasonably identify some mothers who could benefit from additional evaluation and possible services. Additional research is needed to find a more sensitive screen and to examine whether identifying intimate partner violence leads to interventions that benefit mothers, families, and children."

The Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services supported this study. The study authors have disclosed no relevant financial relationships.

Pediatrics. 2008;121:e85-e91. (Source: Medscape)