

Turkish health workers condone wife beating

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Domestic violence is an inherent problem in Turkey, and healthcare workers are doing little to combat the prevalence of wife beating, according to research published in the online open access journal, *BMC Public Health*. A survey of medical personnel reveals that a lack of training and a cultural acceptance of domestic violence may prevent victims from obtaining the support they desperately require.

173 medical staff from the emergency department of a Turkish university hospital responded to a questionnaire about domestic violence. 69.0% of the female and 84.7% of the male respondents declared that they agreed or partially agreed to at least one reason to justify physical violence.

Accepted grounds for intimate domestic violence included lying to or criticising the male and failure to care for children. Moreover, about three-quarters of the nurses and male physicians and over half of female physicians agreed that deceiving the husband justified physical punishment. Deceiving the husband is a taboo in Turkey and it is among the most important reasons for honour murders.

The vast majority of healthcare workers declared that they were aware of the clinical signs of domestic violence, yet more detailed questions highlighted significant gaps in their knowledge. Few staff knew the correct legal procedures for reporting cases of wife-beating.

"We found that there are no clear procedures to manage the victims of domestic violence in the emergency department in Turkey. However,

informing the victims about their legal rights and starting the legal procedure right after the incident could be a life-saving intervention," noted the study's co-author H. Asli Davas Aksan.

There is little training on the issues of domestic violence for emergency department medical staff in Turkey. Nine out of ten people surveyed had not received any training at all, and of those that had, almost three quarters said it was inadequate.

Source: BioMed Central

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