



FIGO reaffirms commitment: 'International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women' (25 November 2013)

On 25 November 2013, FIGO reaffirms its commitment to the *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*.

In 2008, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* - a multi-year campaign aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in all parts of the world. Governments, civil society, women's organisations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system are encouraged to work together to address the global pandemic of violence against women and girls.

(SOURCE: <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/about.shtml>)

Violence towards women takes many and varied forms, including intimate partner violence - via physical, sexual and emotional abuse - so-called 'honour' killings, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), trafficking, conflict-related sexual violence and forced and early marriages.

A recent report (June 2013) from the World Health Organization (WHO) - with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the South African Medical Research Council - stated that, overall, 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.

Intimate partner violence is the most common type of violence against women - worldwide almost one third of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. As WHO outlines, the consequences of such actions are sobering and devastating: eg death and injury; depression; alcohol abuse; sexually transmitted infections; unwanted pregnancy; abortion; and low birth weight babies etc.

Clinicians must continue to scale up training so that health care professionals can better recognise the signs of violence, and better assist their patients towards successful outcomes. This scaling up should focus on areas such as effective, confidential consultation and adequate referral systems. Women who suffer the effects of violence have very specific physical and psychological needs, and there must be sensitivity to these facts.

Professor Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, FIGO President, said: 'FIGO - in its unique global role as an advocate for women's health - is ideally placed to encourage its 125 member associations to build on the robust work already being done worldwide to help prevent violence against women, and to deal competently and compassionately with its harrowing consequences.'

FIGO formulated a Resolution on Violence Against Women (made at its World Congress in Copenhagen, 1997). In addition, the FIGO Committee for Ethical Aspects of Human Reproduction and Women's Health, in its 'Ethical Issues in Obstetrics and Gynecology' Guidelines (revised October 2012), includes statements on the issue of violence against women and girls.

Resources:

Global and regional estimates of violence against women

Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf

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World Health Organization 2013

The FIGO Committee for Ethical Aspects of Human Reproduction and Women's Health: 'Ethical Issues in Obstetrics and Gynecology' (October 2012)

<http://www.figo.org/files/figo-corp/English%20Ethical%20Issues%20in%20Obstetrics%20and%20Gynecology.pdf>