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Verizon Foundation and MORE Magazine Survey:

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS.

A huge number of women — an alarming 44% — say that they have experienced a form of domestic violence including physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse.

SEVENTY PERCENT OF WOMEN SUFFER FROM A CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION. THIS INCREASES TO

88%

FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ABUSE AND 81% FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ANY FORM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

GfK Custom Research LLC conducted interviews with a total of 1,005 women ages 21 and older from August 7 to August 12, 2013. The study was conducted using the KnowledgePanel. Use of the KnowledgePanel assures representative samples that are statistically valid and projectable to the population of women 21 and older. The margin of error for this study is +/- 3.8%.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Domestic violence is a significant problem for American women with very disturbing implications for their health. A huge number of women — an alarming 44% — say that they have experienced a form of domestic violence including physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse.

The Verizon Foundation and MORE Magazine Survey shows that women who have experienced domestic violence are significantly more likely to suffer from a chronic health condition than those who have not.

Seventy percent of women suffer from a chronic health condition. This increases to 88% for women who have experienced sexual abuse and 81% for women who have experienced any form of domestic violence.

Those who report any kind of domestic violence report greater incidences — sometimes twice as many — of chronic health conditions, including respiratory or lung disease, diabetes, digestive disease and depression, than those who have not experienced abuse. Women who experienced no domestic violence were less likely overall to report a chronic condition (62%).

Women are not making the connection between chronic health conditions and domestic violence. Respondents list other risk factors such as smoking and alcohol more frequently as causing chronic health conditions.

Doctors and nurses may not be making the connection either. Despite the fact that 81% of women who experienced domestic violence have some type of chronic health condition, only 6% believe their doctor or nurse has ever made a connection between the two.

The majority of women (75%) say they have never been screened for domestic violence by a doctor or nurse. However, nearly all women (92%) feel it is important for a doctor or nurse to ask them about domestic violence in their medical exams. Healthcare professionals are not asking questions or offering insight into whether a woman is experiencing domestic violence and abusive behavior, despite the pervasiveness of the problem.

This survey makes a compelling case for healthcare providers to screen women for domestic violence. Since the data shows that survivors of domestic violence have much higher rates of chronic health conditions, it is imperative for screenings to take place.

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A majority of women (70%) suffer from a chronic health condition, and significantly, women who have experienced any kind of domestic violence are much more likely to have a chronic health problem than those who have not.

DESPITE THE FACT THAT

81%

OF WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HAVE SOME TYPE OF CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION, ONLY 6% BELIEVE THEIR DOCTOR/NURSE HAS EVER MADE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO.

KEY FINDINGS

Key Finding: Domestic violence is pervasive among women and many women remain in abusive relationships.

- Forty four percent of American women say they have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime, including physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse.
- One in four women (25%) admit to experiencing physical abuse in a relationship. Shoving (21%) is most common, followed by hitting (17%), slapping (16%) and choking (11%).
  - Those who are not married (53% vs. 36%), are Hispanic (59% vs. 42% White and 47% African American) and women who don't have a college education or higher (47% vs. 36%) are most likely to have experienced "any" form of domestic violence.
  - Physical abuse is highest for women between the ages of 45 to 64 (nearly 1 in 3, 29%).
    - Demographically, women who are not married are nearly twice as likely to have suffered from physical abuse as those who are married (33% vs. 17%). The same is true of those with a lower education versus those who have a college degree or higher (29% vs. 16 %). Four in ten Hispanic women have experienced some form of physical abuse compared to only 22% of White women and 28% of African Americans.
- Nearly four out of ten women (38%) say they have experienced emotional abuse.
  - Certain women are at higher risk for emotional abuse. Those who are not married and those without a college education are more likely than their counterparts to have experienced emotional abuse.
- Nearly one in five women (18%) report experiencing sexual abuse.
- Sixteen percent of women have suffered from economic abuse.
  - Age differences are not found when looking at sexual abuse or economic abuse for the most part. Very little variance is noted for economic abuse and while those 65 and older are significantly less likely to have experienced sexual abuse, the proportions are nearly identical across the younger segments.
  - Marital status again seems to be a key factor in determining the likelihood of having experienced some type of sexual or economic abuse. Women who are not married are significantly more likely to have experienced both sexual (24% vs. 12%) and economic (20% vs. 13%) abuse.
- Many women (nearly one in ten) report remaining in relationships with domestic violence.
  - Women who are married are significantly more likely to remain in an abusive relationship.

Key Finding: A majority of women (70%) suffer from a chronic health condition, and significantly, women who have experienced any kind of domestic violence are much more likely to have a chronic health problem than those who have not.

- Seven out of ten (70%) women surveyed suffer from some kind of chronic health condition. Most common are high blood pressure, lower back pain (26% each), headaches (24%), difficulty sleeping (23%) and depression/anxiety (21%).

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION	ANY TYPE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	NO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
DIABETES	14	9
REFLUX PROBLEMS	21	14
DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY	30	14
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER	5	1
LOWER BACK PAIN	35	19
CERVICAL PAIN	9	2
HEADACHES	32	19
DIFFICULTY SLEEPING	30	18
IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME	9	4

Fewer than 1 in 5 (18%) women, who had been asked questions about domestic violence say their healthcare professional provided them with resources or referrals to get help.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF WOMEN 65 AND OLDER

(85%)

SAY THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN ASKED ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN A MEDICAL EXAM, THOUGH THEY ARE NO LESS LIKELY THAN YOUNGER WOMEN TO HAVE SUFFERED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

  - This increases to nearly nine in ten (88%) women for women who have experienced sexual abuse. They are more likely to have a chronic condition than the total population of women over 21.
  - Three out of four women who are not married (77% vs. 64%) suffer from a chronic health condition. The same is true of women who have less than a college education (74% vs. 63%).
- Women who report having experienced no domestic violence behaviors were less likely overall to have a chronic condition (62% who had not experienced vs. 81% who had experienced).
- In many chronic conditions — from lower back pain, to headaches, depression, diabetes, asthma, digestive disease — those who report any kind of domestic violence report greater incidences of these conditions than those who have not experienced domestic violence — sometimes, twice as much.

Key Finding: Women and their healthcare providers are not making a connection between chronic health conditions and domestic violence.

- Despite a connection between chronic health conditions and domestic violence, women list other risk factors more frequently as causing chronic problems.
- While most women associate chronic disease with physical activity (74%), smoking (81%) and alcohol use (77%), fewer agree there is a connection between chronic health conditions and domestic violence (54%).
- Doctors and nurses may not be making the connection either. Despite the fact that 81% of women who experienced domestic violence have some type of chronic health condition, only 6% believe their doctor/nurse has ever made a connection between the two.

Key finding: The majority of women (75%) say they have never been screened for domestic violence during a medical exam; yet, nearly all women think it is important that it be done.

- Nearly all women (92%) feel it is important for a doctor or nurse to ask them about domestic violence in their medical exams, but only one in four (24%) say they have ever actually been asked.
  - Of those, most said that nurses are most likely to have done the asking (47%).
  - Women who have experienced domestic violence are similarly likely as women overall to say their doctor or nurse asked about it during an exam (27% and 24% respectively).
  - Yet, fewer than 1 in 5 (18%) women, who had been asked questions about domestic violence say their healthcare professional provided them with resources or a referral to get help.
- The practice of asking women if they have experienced domestic violence appears more likely among younger women.
  - Women 65 and older are significantly less likely than women age 21 to 34 to be asked by a doctor or nurse if they have experienced domestic violence.
  - The vast majority of women 65 and older (85%) say they have never been asked about domestic violence in a medical exam, though they are no less likely than younger women to have suffered domestic violence.
- Of women age 21 to 34, 63% say they have never been asked.

Key Finding: Healthcare professionals are not asking the types of questions that offer insight into whether a women is experiencing domestic violence and abusive behavior, though the majority of women (55%) support their health provider personally asking them the questions.

- Only two in ten (20%) women report that their doctor or nurse asked questions about specific abusive behaviors. The question asked most often is "has anyone close to you made you feel afraid for your own safety" (15%) followed by "has your partner ever physically hurt you" (10%).
  - Younger women, especially those 21 to 44, are most likely to have been asked these types of questions by their doctor or nurse (27%) compared to only 15% of those 45 or older.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of women who have experienced an abusive behavior would want their doctor or nurse to ask them about domestic violence. This increases to more than seven in ten when a woman has suffered from economic (72%) or sexual (70%) abuse.
- Though 1 in 10 women report being choked, dentists and dental hygienists are even less likely to be questioning their patients about domestic violence. Only 3% of women report that their dentists asked the type of questions that might determine if domestic violence has occurred,

GfK's Public Affairs & Corporate Communications division specializes in customized public affairs and public opinion polling, communications research, and reputation measurement in the US and globally.

despite the fact that dentists are in the best position to detect the impact of certain kinds of abuse, such as choking.

METHODOLOGY

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