

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a social problem which affects both prenatal care usage as well as birth outcome. Domestic violence has been shown to either initiate or escalate during pregnancy. Nationally, 23% of women entering prenatal care are victims of abuse. Prevalence rates are alarming with 324,000 pregnant women affected yearly, and 17% experiencing physical or sexual abuse. This is likely an underreporting of actual numbers because many battered women do not reveal the abuse, do not seek prenatal care for fear of reprisal, or are prevented from seeking health care by their batterers. It has been found that unintended pregnancies result in a four times greater likelihood of abuse with abused women two times more likely to start prenatal care in the 3rd trimester.¹

¹ OPDM presentation by Joan Faxon