

Screening dentists' competence in recognizing and responding domestic violence victims: a preliminary study

Kety Karayianni ¹
Anastasia Mitsea ¹
Zafeiroula Yfanti ¹
Dimitra-Niki Kavoura ¹
Kostas Tsiklakis ¹

¹Department of Oral Diagnosis
and Radiology, Forensic
Odontology Unit, NKUA, Greece

Corresponding author:
anastasiमितsea@gmail.com

POSTER PRESENTATION

J Forensic Odontostomatol
2017 Nov 1; Supp1(35): 76
ISSN :2219-6749

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Domestic violence is a silent cycle of physical, emotional and verbal abuse that affects victims physically and emotionally. Anyone may be a perpetrator or a victim regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomical class, age, sexual and gender identity although usually incidents of domestic violence are perpetrated by men against women. Since most of the victims sustain injuries in the head and neck area, it is crucial for all dentists to be aware of the signs and symptoms of domestic violence. Dental staff's contribution is of a major importance since they may motivate patients to seek for help before life-threatening injuries occur. However a small number of dental professionals are able to detect and report cases of abuse due to minimal training or lack of knowledge and awareness.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to appraise the competence of Greek dentists in recognizing and responding domestic violence victims.

Material and methods: An anonymous identical questionnaire was completed by 50 dentists. Demographic characteristics of all the participants as well as years of practice were collected and categorized. In order to appraise their knowledge and ability to detect and report domestic violence injuries the respondents were asked several questions. In particular questions concerning the location, differential diagnosis, documentation and respond of the injuries were asked. Moreover dentists' awareness of patient's motivation to seek for help and support was evaluated. Statistical analysis of the data performed with STATISTICA 10. Software.

Results: The majority of the dentists were aware that victims sustain injuries in the head and neck area. A high percentage of dentists consider themselves unable to detect signs of domestic abuse, and only few of them have reported or referred those cases.

Conclusion: Dentists in Greece should be better educated in relation to domestic violence victims screening. Adequate knowledge concerning handling of such cases should be provided through continuing education courses.