

## **Protocol Review: Evidence Used and Rationale**

**Protocol name:** Family and Domestic Violence

**Rationale:** Unfortunately, family and domestic violence occurs not uncommonly in Australia, with rates in the Kimberley even higher than the Australian population as a whole and with Aboriginal people being over-represented in service presentations for family violence. According to the ABS 2012 Personal Safety Survey, since the age of 15, 1 in 6 women and 1 in 19 men had experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner, and 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men had experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner. In the Kimberley, rates of reported FDV in 2012-13 was up to 8.8 times higher than in any other region in WA, and the rate of hospitalisation from domestic assault was between 4.2 and 35 times higher than any other region per head of population.

To date there has not been any KAMSC guidelines covering FDV, an area that clearly is of importance and concern in the Kimberley, as demonstrated with these statistics above. This protocol has been written as a short guide for health care providers in the Kimberley to assist them in identifying and assisting people who experience FDV, including reference to both Kimberley specific and state-wide/national resources that are available.

### **Initial Working Group:**

KAMS: Rebekah Ledingham (Obstetric GP), Emma Griffiths (GP and protocol co-ordinator)

WACHS BHS: Philippa Gray (Resident Medical Officer)

**Further review from:** Janet de San Miguel (Regional Coordinator Maternal & Child Health), Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum (KAHPF) Maternal and Child Health Subcommittee

### **Discussion points:**

#### **Screening for Family and Domestic Violence**

Although some presentations of FDV may be obvious, with clear physical injuries from an assault, many are less apparent and may go unrecognised unless considered and screened for frequently. RACGP's "White Book" and the Women and Newborn Health Service "Reference Manual for Health Professionals – Responding to Family and Domestic Violence" provide more comprehensive reviews of clinical presentations and screening for FDV, from which this section has been adapted to provide a more concise guideline.

#### **Useful contacts and referral options**

In the Kimberley, the WA Police, DCPFS and Anglicare work closely together to ensure victims of FDV have access to appropriate services and support, with frequent dialogue between these services. If there are any concerns for the patient's immediate safety the police should be contacted and any concerns for the safety of children should always be reported to DCPFS. Anglicare have regional offices in Kununurra and Broome, but also provide services in other towns and communities in the Kimberley.

The flowchart used in this guideline has been adapted from RACGP's "White Book", and aims to provide some guidance for management of disclosed/suspected FDV. The table provides a list of resources gathered from discussion with local service providers, Internet searching, and input from the Maternal and Child Health Subcommittee. It aims to capture local and state-wide/national services available for both health care providers and victims of FDV but is by no means an exhaustive list.

Unfortunately there are minimal local services for perpetrators of abuse, although the Men's Domestic Violence Helpline can provide some phone counselling, and guidelines are available from the DCPFS website.

### **Resources and references used:**

#### Guidelines (Government, College and Hospital):

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) guidelines:

- Abuse and Violence: Working with our patient's in general practice (white book): <http://www.racgp.org.au/download/Documents/Guidelines/Whitebook/whitebook-4thedn.pdf> , updated June 2014

Department of Health Western Australia Women and Newborn Health Service guidelines:

- Guideline for Responding to Family and Domestic Violence: [www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/attachments/894.pdf](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/attachments/894.pdf), updated 2014
- Reference Manual for Health Professionals Responding to Family and Domestic Violence: [www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/attachments/895.pdf](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/attachments/895.pdf), updated 2014

Department of Child Protection and Family Services – Family and Domestic Violence publications and resources

- The Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: <https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/CrisisAndEmergency/FDV/Documents/2015/CRARMFFInalPDFAUg2015>, updated 2015
- DCPFS Practice Tool 2: Common risk assessment tool: <http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/CrisisAndEmergency/FDV/Documents/2015/PracticeTool2Commonriskassessmenttool.pdf>

#### Online services

Respect Line: National sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling service: <https://www.1800respect.org.au>, updated 2015