

WHO UPDATE.....

Global Campaign for Violence Prevention: significant progress for many countries

During recent months, several activities have been conducted to review the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the *World report on violence and health*. The following is a summary of some of these activities as well as an update on a few other recent events which took place in the context of WHO's Global Campaign for Violence Prevention.

In October WHO hosted the *2nd Milestones of a Global Campaign for Violence Prevention* meeting bringing together 150 violence prevention experts from around the world. Co-hosted by the California Wellness Foundation in San Francisco, the meeting marked the third anniversary of the global launch of the *World report on violence and health*. Senior health officials representing Brazil, Latvia, Jamaica, Mongolia, the United Kingdom, and the USA showcased some of their recent achievements in surveillance, prevention, and services for victims. Participants also discussed the media's role in preventing violence with presentations by representatives of the Berkley Media Studies Group (USA), the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) World Service, Globo TV (Brazil), and the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communications (South Africa).

The new WHO publication, *Milestones of a global campaign for violence prevention 2005: changing the face of violence prevention*, which was unveiled during the meeting, provides an update on developments in the Global Campaign for Violence Prevention since early 2004. The publication details activities which have been organized as part of the Campaign, provides updates from WHO's six regional offices, and discusses the Violence Prevention Alliance and its new members. The publication reflects on other important milestones in the field including the development of national violence prevention strategies in Malaysia, the Russian

Federation, South Africa, and Thailand; work on strengthening medical and legal care for victims of sexual violence in Jordan, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and the Philippines; the release of national reports on violence and health in Belgium, Brazil, France, and the United Kingdom; and the creation of entities such as the National Commission on Violence Prevention in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Arab chapter of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

During November the BBC World Service and WHO collaborated on a four week season of radio programming on violence and its prevention. The season entitled *Violence begins at Home* made extensive use of the findings and key messages of the *World report on violence and health*. Through interviews with violence prevention researchers, practitioners, and advocates as well as victims and perpetrators of violence, the series raised issues related to the impact of violence on the health sector, ways in which people are working to prevent violence, and perspectives from people whose lives have been touched by violence in some way. A related BBC World Service website also accompanies the season and provides links to the radio programmes along with additional features such as an e-survey on domestic violence and a "Have your say" section for visitors' comments.

November also marked the global launch of the *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women*. Although violence against women is increasingly recognized as a major global public health problem, the limited data from resource poor settings about the magnitude and nature of the problem, as well as its underlying causes, is a major limitation for developing effective preventive strategies. In recognition of this, WHO developed and implemented the study

which gathered information from 10 different countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Peru, Namibia, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the United Republic of Tanzania. Over 24 000 women were interviewed for the study and the findings indicate that women are at the greatest risk of being victimized, not by strangers or other perpetrators, but by their intimate partners. Intimate partner violence is prevalent everywhere, but the level varies greatly across settings. At least 20% of women reporting physical violence in the study had never told anyone about their experiences before being interviewed.

Finally, in support of these events, WHO's newest series of violence prevention posters, the *Album* series, was made available for broad dissemination. This new poster series depicts how lives can be scarred forever by violence. What for most people are snapshots of cherished memories are often for survivors of violence a painful remembrance. These images underscore the fact that the psychological and physical consequences of violence can last years and sometimes even a lifetime. The posters are available from WHO to support national or local violence prevention campaigns. Electronic files of the posters can be made available for local adaptation, translation, and printing by contacting violenceprevention@who.int. The posters and all WHO violence related materials are available through the website of the WHO Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention by visiting: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/en/.

For more information about the WHO Global Campaign for Violence Prevention, please visit http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/index.html or contact Dr Alexander Butchart, WHO Coordinator for Violence Prevention, at butcharta@who.int.