



**UK National Screening Committee
Domestic Violence - an evidence review**

Consultation comments pro-forma

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Section and / or page number	Text or issue to which comments relate	Comment	
		<i>Please use a new row for each comment and add extra rows as required.</i>	
2	This review will use the term domestic violence as defined by Feder as “partner violence”; which is physical, sexual or emotional abuse against women with coercive control of a woman by a man or woman partner who is, or was, in an intimate relationship with the woman	<p>To ensure that that there is consistency across all statutory authorities and to avoid any confusion between different agencies, the NSC must use the current government definition of domestic abuse rather than a different one. This was changed and updated in March 2013 and there is no persuasive argument why this definition would not be used.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse</p> <p>The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:</p> <p>any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged</p>	

		<p>16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychological • physical • sexual • financial • emotional <p>If the NSC wishes to hone the definition down into just being those in an intimate relationship, this would be acceptable but this should be a slight amendment of the Home Office definition.</p>
2	<p>This review will use the term domestic violence as defined by Feder as “partner violence”; which is physical, sexual or emotional abuse against women with coercive control of a woman by a man or woman partner who is, or was, in an intimate relationship with the woman</p>	<p>The use of this term “physical, sexual or emotional abuse against women with coercive control of a woman by a man or woman partner who is, or was, in an intimate relationship with the woman” is discriminatory and in breach of the Equality Act 2010 and a range of Domestic Violence Acts.</p> <p>This is because it does not include “coercive control of a man by a woman, or male partner who is, or was, in an intimate relationship with the woman”</p> <p>For the NSC to use such a gendered definition is contrary to all known norms of ensuring equality of all victims and is against the spirit if not letter of the NHS Constitution. As well as a breach in the law it would also lead to breaches in the law in practice by the NHS.</p> <p>(1) The British Crime Survey and other government</p>

		<p>studies show that for every two female victims, on average there will be one male victim. This is borne out by the fact that in 2011/12, 4% of women (675,000) and 3% of men (491,000) experienced partner abuse: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_298904.pdf Page 66 and table 4.03)</p> <p>(2) The Equality Act 2010 clearly states that statutory authorities need to ensure they have due regard to all people with a protected characteristic – in this case gender. Therefore to use a definition that does not take into account those with the protected characteristic of being male is discriminatory and in breach of the Equality Act. This is particularly pertinent in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty and Section 149 of the Act.</p> <p>(3) The consequence of the NSC using a gendered definition, in breach of the law, would also have practical consequences. This will be because if this approach is translated into policy, practice and procedure, men who are potential victims of domestic abuse would not be screened when women who are potential victims of domestic abuse would be, even if the male displays the same potential effects of domestic abuse. This again will be in breach Equality and Domestic Abuse legislation as well as NHS Constitution ensuring all those seeking help are equally supported based on need. In addition, a gendered definition, approach and training for NHS staff would be in breach of normal safeguarding policies and leave male victims (including any children</p>
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		<p>they have) at risk, solely because of their gender.</p> <p>If the NSC continues to use this definition in this review or any other subsequent reviews, The ManKind Initiative will be writing to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, the Secretary of State for Health and the Chief Executive of the NHS.</p>
2	<p>Partner violence against men in heterosexual or same sex relationships is a social problem with potential long-term health consequences for male survivors. It is not the focus of this review as the prevalence of violence against women is more frequent and more severe, and women are three times more likely than men to sustain serious injury and five times more likely to fear for their lives.</p>	<p>This statement is in breach of the Equality Act 2010 because it means this review purposely does not include everyone with the protected characteristic of gender – that is men even though male victims make up at least one third of the victim population. This means that the review itself is discriminatory as the focus is not on all victims of domestic abuse – it is a review of screening for female victims only.</p> <p>In addition, there is no source for the facts that are used in this statement and therefore the use of uncorroborated sources should not be included. This is problematic for three reasons:</p> <p>(1) Using the figures latest British Crime Survey, the prevalence 1.1% of men and 1.3% of women were victims of severe force at the hands of their partner during 2011/12. Over a lifetime the figures are 6.1% and 13.2% respectively.</p> <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_298904.pdf Table 4.01)</p> <p>This means this statement ignores the level of severe force in relationships that men face.</p>

		<p>(2) Secondly, even if the statement used by NSC was true, this is still discriminatory and in breach of the Equality Act. This is because the NSC is effectively stating that not all domestic abuse victims are equal and should be equally recognised. This is a not only unethical in terms of the NHS Constitution it is also in breach of common moral standards in the UK</p> <p>(3) As stated in the previous section, the outcome of this gendered approach will by its very nature lead to discriminatory outcomes in practice as training and screening will be based on gender not on symptoms and equality.</p> <p>For example, if a man is treated by the NHS as a victim of violence, he will not be screened as potential domestic abuse victim, while a woman with the exact injuries would. This would be a discriminatory act.</p>
2.2	Feder reports that lifetime prevalence ranges from 13% to 31% in five community based samples (general population) and from 13% to 41% in eleven studies of women recruited in health service settings (clinical populations e.g. general practice, antenatal, emergency departments).	The NSC if being balanced in its review would recognise that no such research has taken place on men recruited in health service settings. This would give a balanced view to say that potential male victims have not been studied in this environment.
6	Conclusions	We agree with the conclusion but if there are recommendations that emerge to the contrary they must make sure they apply to male victims as well as female victims.

Please return to Valmae Young Senior Administrator/PA (on behalf of John Marshall, Evidence & Policy Lead): screening.evidence@nhs.net by 22nd August 2013.