



MWIA CASE STUDIES

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE CAUSING PERMANENT INJURY

Case 23: Single mother in Nigeria

Objective

- To illustrate that intimate partner violence can come in many forms, including life threatening injuries

Narrative Case

A twenty-two year old single woman had a child out of wedlock and was living with her parents. One day she went to visit the father of her child; he inflicted an injury on her vulva with a sharp object. The woman did not tell anyone though her mother noticed that her gait had changed. She collapsed at home in a pool of blood.

She was immediately taken to hospital and transfused with one unit of whole blood, as blood products were not available at the centre. A detailed history obtained at this point revealed that she was beaten up by the father of her child who also inflicted an injury on her four days prior to presentation. She did not tell her

parents about the injury but her mother noticed she has been sad and unable to walk properly. Her mother inquired if there was any problem and she did not receive any reasonable answer.

She is a single mother resulting from an unwanted pregnancy while she was a teenager and she is not married to the man. She decided to have the baby although the father of the child wanted her to have an abortion. She visits the man while she and her child reside with her parents. Her parents are responsible for her upkeep and that of her child.

She was discharged home on the four days later and her father paid her hospital bills.

Learning Points

1. Sometimes much probing has to be done as most women who experience violence from an intimate partner conceal it especially in developing countries for fear of loss of the partner.
2. Cultural norms and beliefs may play a role in intimate partner violence as some cultures see violence of a woman by her husband as a result of disobedience on the part of the woman. Therefore the women might feel guilty and do not want to tell anyone about the incident because they might fear further punishment.
3. There should be a high index of suspicion of intimate partner violence in any woman presenting with injuries in the external female genitalia not caused by delivery, and accidents.

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