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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCREENING STUDY

Physicians are missing an important opportunity to document violence and help patients. Nearly one-third of primary care providers (28 percent) do not record a patient's disclosure of domestic violence on their medical charts. Even though eight in ten clinicians (82 percent) strongly agree that it is their role to inquire about intimate partner violence, only 68 percent express confidence in their ability to manage it. These are findings from the recent study, "How and why community hospital clinicians document a positive screen for intimate partner violence: a cross-sectional study," published in *BMC Family Practice*.

The authors of the study examined medical records of patients who reported intimate partner violence on their waiting room screening questionnaires. Clinicians were given the questionnaires at the time of service. Seventy-two percent of clinicians included some documentation of domestic violence on their patients' charts, but only ten percent of those charts included a referral and safety plan.

Clinicians were also surveyed on their knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding intimate partner violence. Two-thirds of primary care providers (67 percent) cited time constraints as a barrier to care. Clinicians also reported that they base their confidence in treating domestic violence patients on the hours of recent training and clinical experience with intimate partner violence.

The study, *How and Why Community Hospital Clinicians Document a Positive Screen for Intimate Partner Violence: A Cross-Section Study* (2005), is available online at www.biomedcentral.com/bmcfampract/