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MATRIC NO.:19/SCI14/004

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence (also named domestic abuse or family violence) is violence or other abuse in a domestic setting, such as in marriage or cohabitation. Domestic violence is often used as a synonym for intimate partner violence, which is committed by a spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other spouse or partner, and can take place in heterosexual or same-sex relationships, or between former spouses or partners. In its broadest sense, domestic violence also involves violence against children, parents, or the elderly. It takes a number of forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, economic, religious, reproductive, and sexual abuse, which can range from subtle, coercive forms to marital rape and to violent physical abuse such as choking, beating, female genital mutilation, and acid throwing that results in disfigurement or death. Domestic murders include stoning, bride burning, honor killings, and dowry deaths (which sometimes involve non-cohabitating family members).

Globally, the victims of domestic violence are overwhelmingly women, and women tend to experience more severe forms of violence. They are also likelier than men to use intimate partner violence in self-defense. In some countries, domestic violence is often seen as justified, particularly in cases of actual or suspected infidelity on the part of the woman, and is legally permitted. Research has established that there exists a direct and significant correlation between a country's level of gender equality and rates of domestic violence, where countries with less gender equality experience higher rates of domestic violence. Domestic violence is among the most underreported crimes worldwide for both men and women. Due to social stigmas regarding male victimization, men who are victims of domestic violence face an increased likelihood of being overlooked by healthcare providers.

Domestic violence often occurs when the abuser believes that abuse is an entitlement, acceptable, justified, or unlikely to be reported. It may produce an intergenerational cycle of abuse in children and other family members, who may feel that such violence is acceptable or condoned. Many people do not recognize themselves as abusers or victims because they may consider their experiences as family conflicts that got out of control. Awareness, perception, definition and documentation of domestic violence differs widely from country to country. Domestic violence often happens in the context of forced or child marriage.

In abusive relationships, there may be a cycle of abuse during which tensions rise and an act of violence is committed, followed by a period of reconciliation and calm. Victims of domestic violence may be trapped in domestic violent situations through isolation, power and control, traumatic bonding to the abuser, cultural acceptance, lack of financial resources, fear, shame, or to protect children. As a result of abuse, victims may experience physical disabilities, dysregulated aggression, chronic health problems, mental illness, limited finances, and a poor ability to create healthy relationships. Victims may experience severe psychological disorders, such as posttraumatic stress disorder. Children who live in a household with violence often show psychological problems from an early age, such as avoidance,

hypervigilance to threats, and dysregulated aggression which may contribute to vicarious traumatization.