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Violence against Women
Clinical and Public Health Perspectives

Violence against Women Public Health Problem

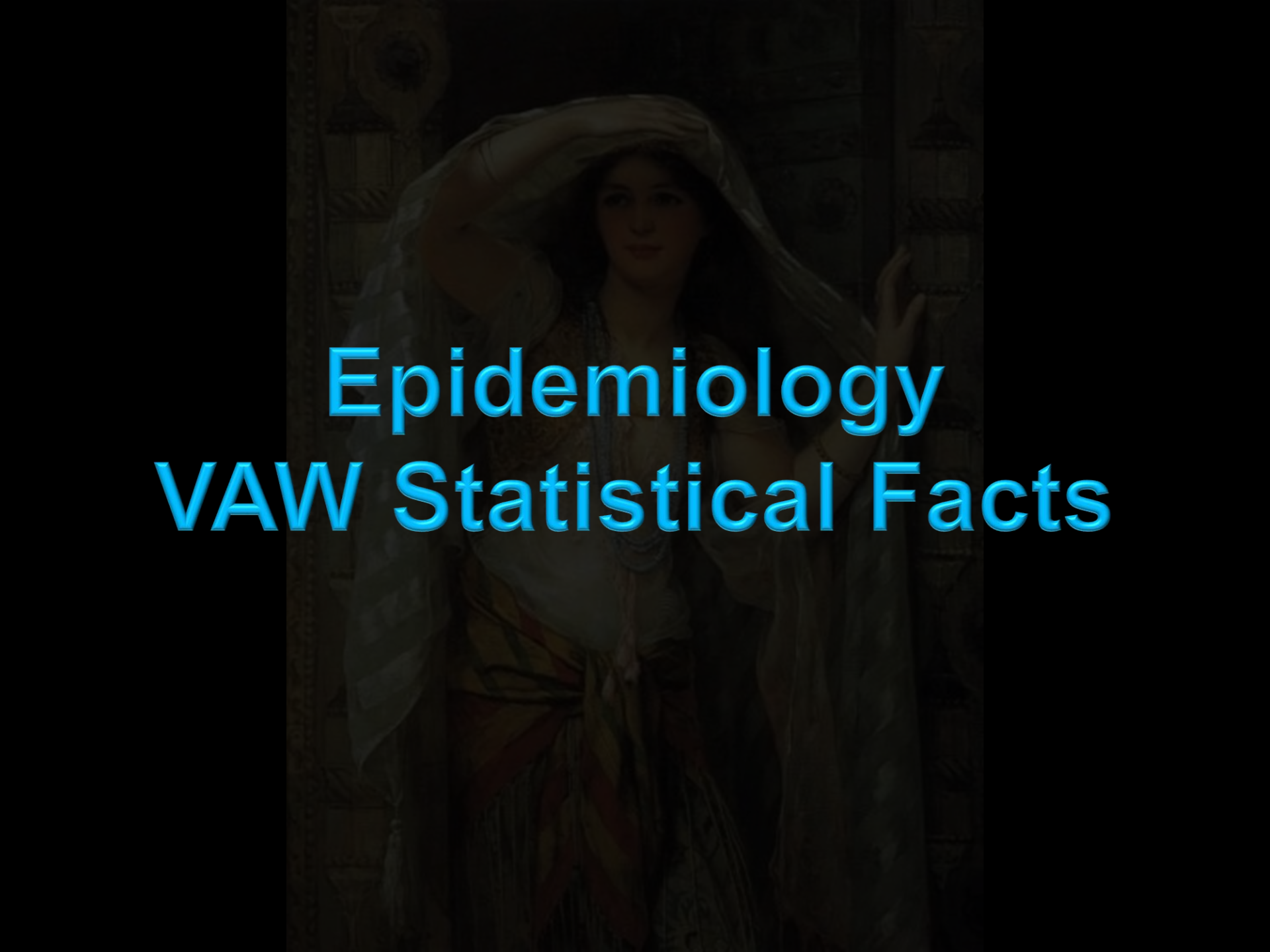
Definition **VAW** UN Study

Any act of violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.

It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

The term “women” is used to cover females of all ages, including girls under the age of 18.

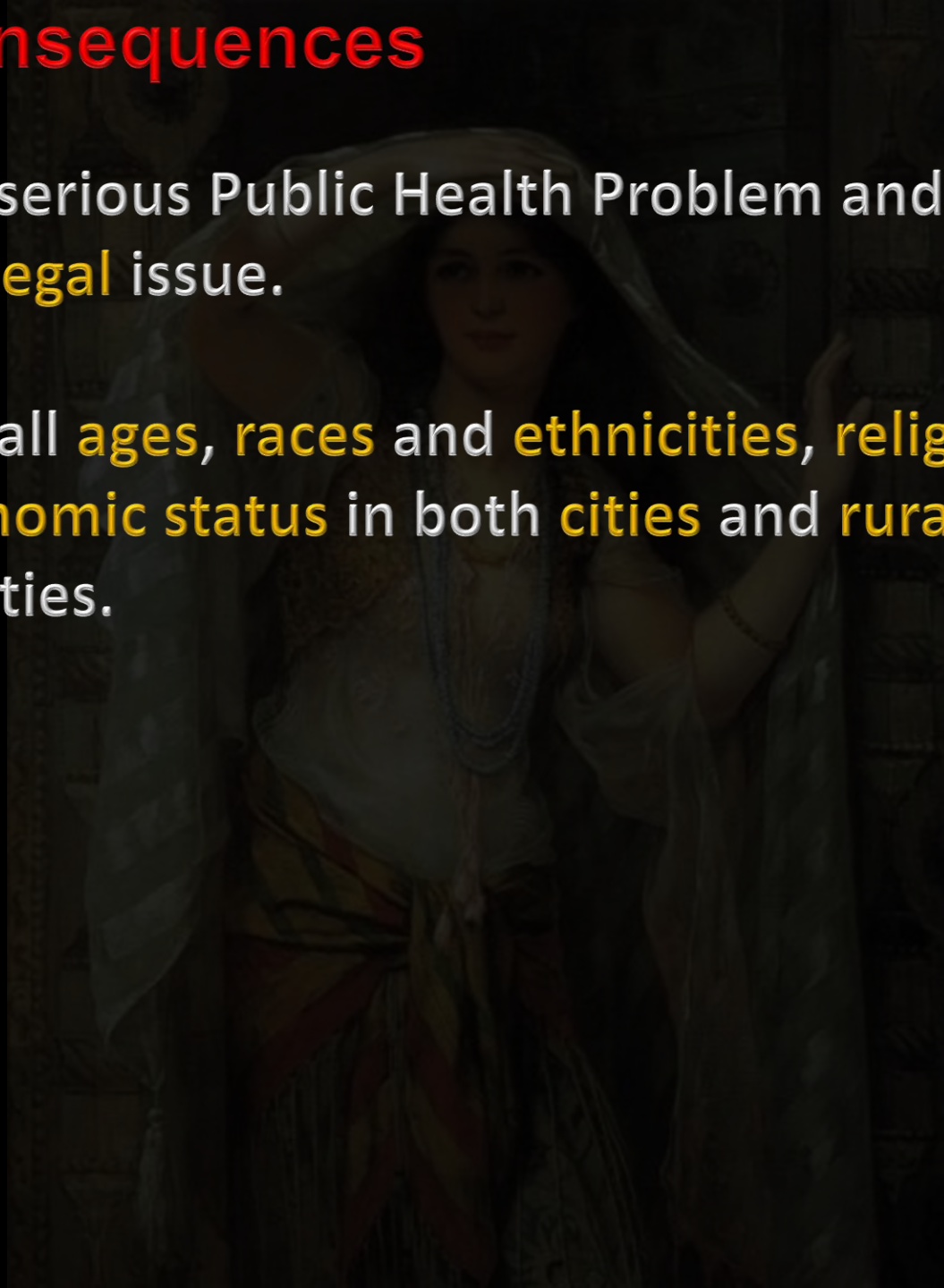
VICTIMS = ♀

A woman wearing a white headscarf and a long, light-colored dress stands in a dimly lit room. She is looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. The background features a wall with a repeating pattern of small, dark, ornate designs. The overall lighting is low, creating a somber and serious atmosphere.

Epidemiology VAW Statistical Facts

Health Consequences

- VAW is a serious Public Health Problem and not only a **social** or **legal** issue.
- It affects all **ages, races and ethnicities, religions, and socioeconomic status** in both **cities and rural communities**.



Health Consequences

WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women:



Measured prevalence in 15 sites in 10 countries and found that

- **15–71%** of ever-partnered women aged 15–49 years, reported **physical and/or sexual violence** by an intimate partner at some point in their lives.
- **13–61%** reported ever having experienced **physical violence** by a partner.
- **4–49%** reported having experienced **severe physical violence** by a partner.
- **6–59%** reported **sexual violence** by a partner at some point in their lives.
- **20–75%** reported experiencing one **emotionally abusive** act, or more, from a partner in their lifetime.

Health Consequences

Emergency departments

- **12-25%** of women seen in emergency departments are due of VAW.
- **37%** of injured women seen in emergency department are due VAW.
- **Up to 54%** of all women seen in emergency departments have been threatened or injured by a partner at some time in their lives.

Health Consequences

Primary health care setting

GP, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine Clinics

- **6 % to 23%** (current or past year violence) of all patients.
- **28% to 66%** (lifetime prevalence) of all patients.

Why women don't disclose Violence against them?

- Fear of retaliation.
- Lack of alternative means of economic support.
- Concern for their children.
- Lack of support from family and friends.
- Stigma of divorce.
- Fear of losing custody of children.
- Love and the hope that the partner will change.

Why women don't decide to leave violent partners?

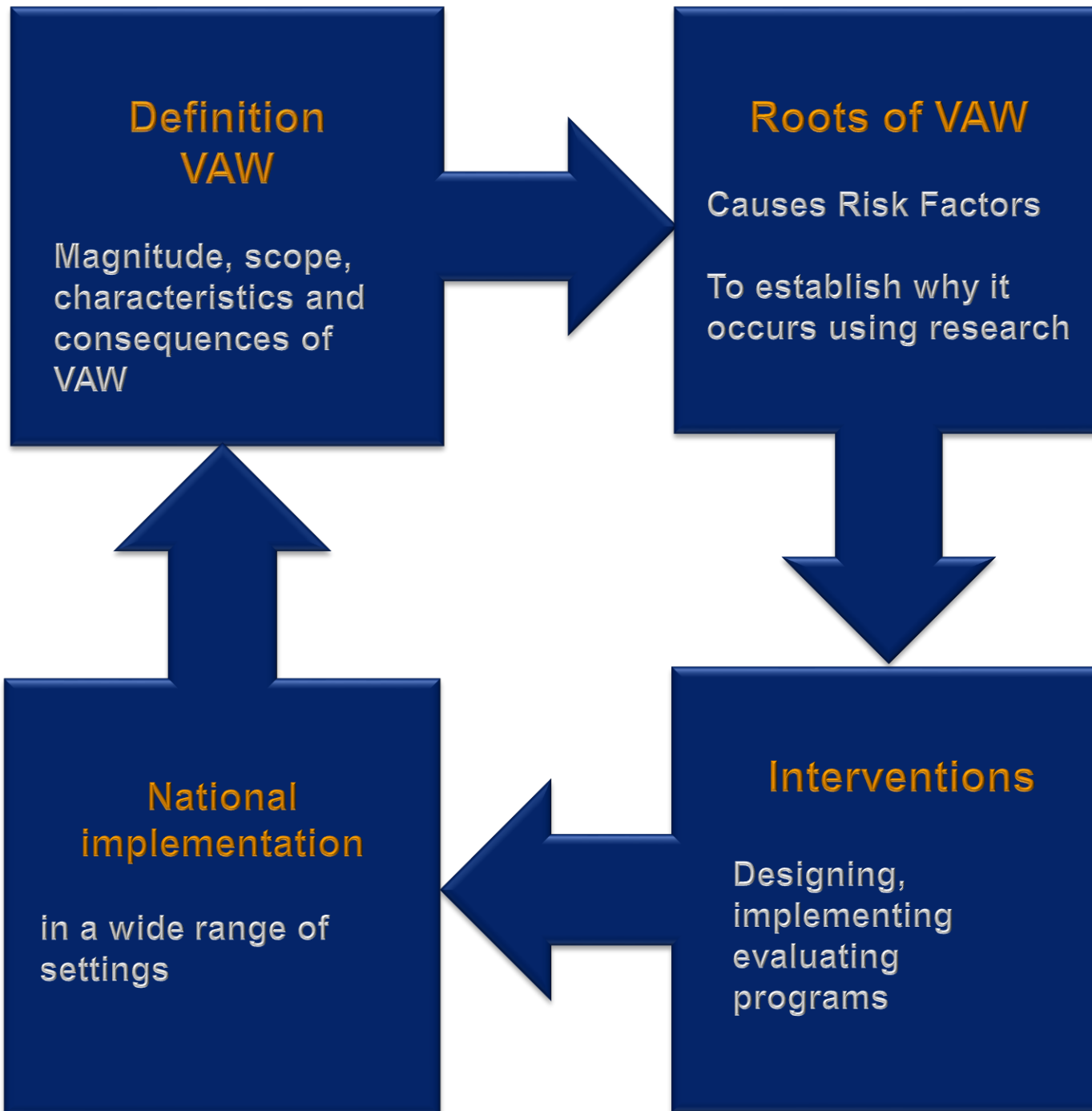
19–51% of women who had ever been physically abused had left home for at least one night.

8–21% had left two to five times.

Why physicians don't diagnose VAW?

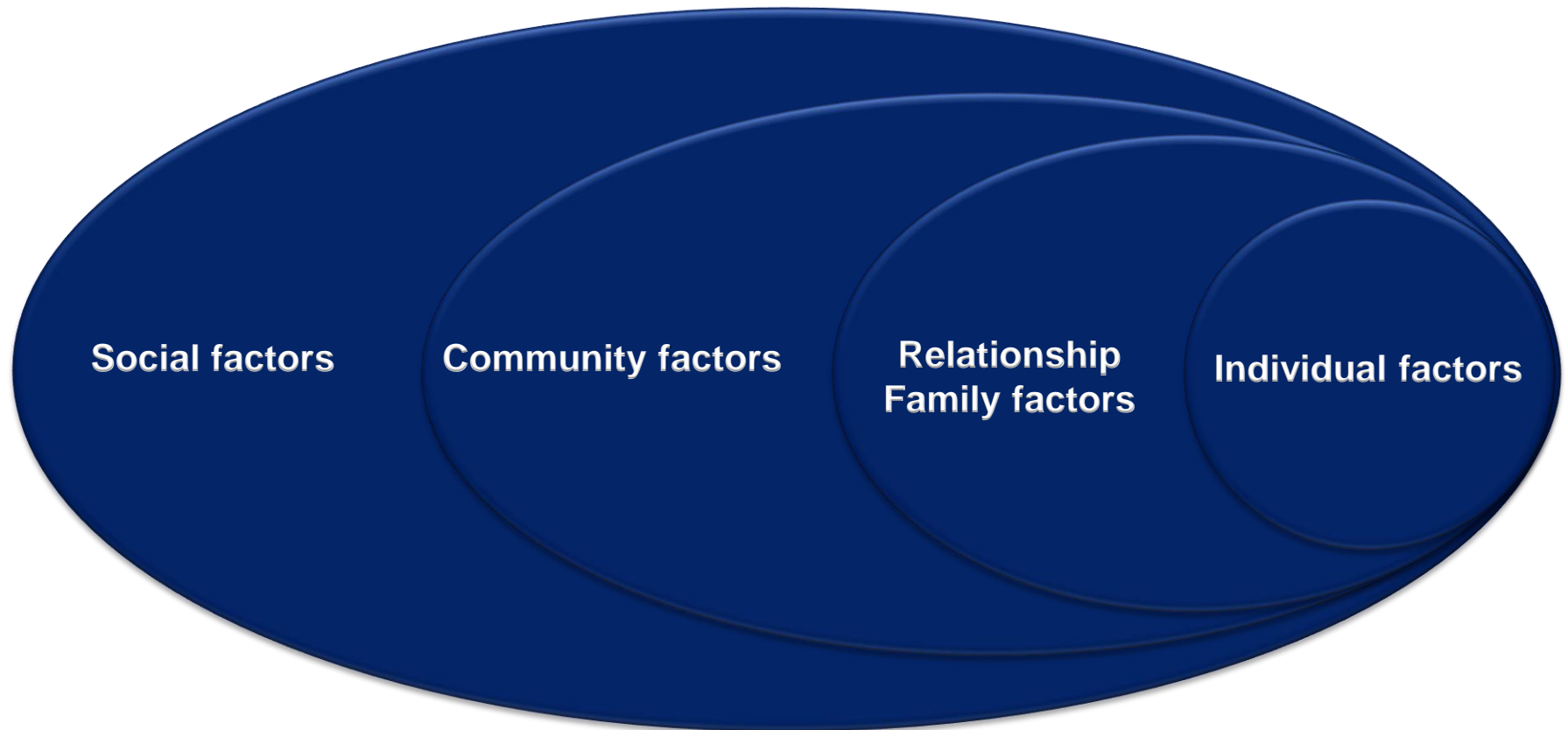
- Lack of knowledge and skills to deal with the issue of VAW and its consequences.
- Huge caseload and the practice of not taking full history.
- Believing that VAW is a private issue and physicians needs not to get involved.
- Not familiar with Law and ethical codes.
- Emotional reaction prevail over professional responsibility.
- Time Consuming.
- Avoiding to get involved with police and court.

Public Health Approach
to
Violence against women



Causes of and Risk Factors VAW

Ecological Model



Causes of and Risk Factors VAW

Ecological Model

Individual factors – Abuser

1. Young age
2. Low level of education;
3. Witnessing or experiencing violence as a child;
4. Harmful use of alcohol and drugs;
5. Personality disorders;
6. Acceptance of violence (e.g. feeling it is acceptable for a man to beat his partner)
7. Past history of abusing partners.

Individual factors - Woman Victim

1. Low level of education;
2. Exposure to violence between parents;
3. Sexual abuse during childhood;
4. Acceptance of violence;
5. Exposure to other forms of prior abuse

Individual factors

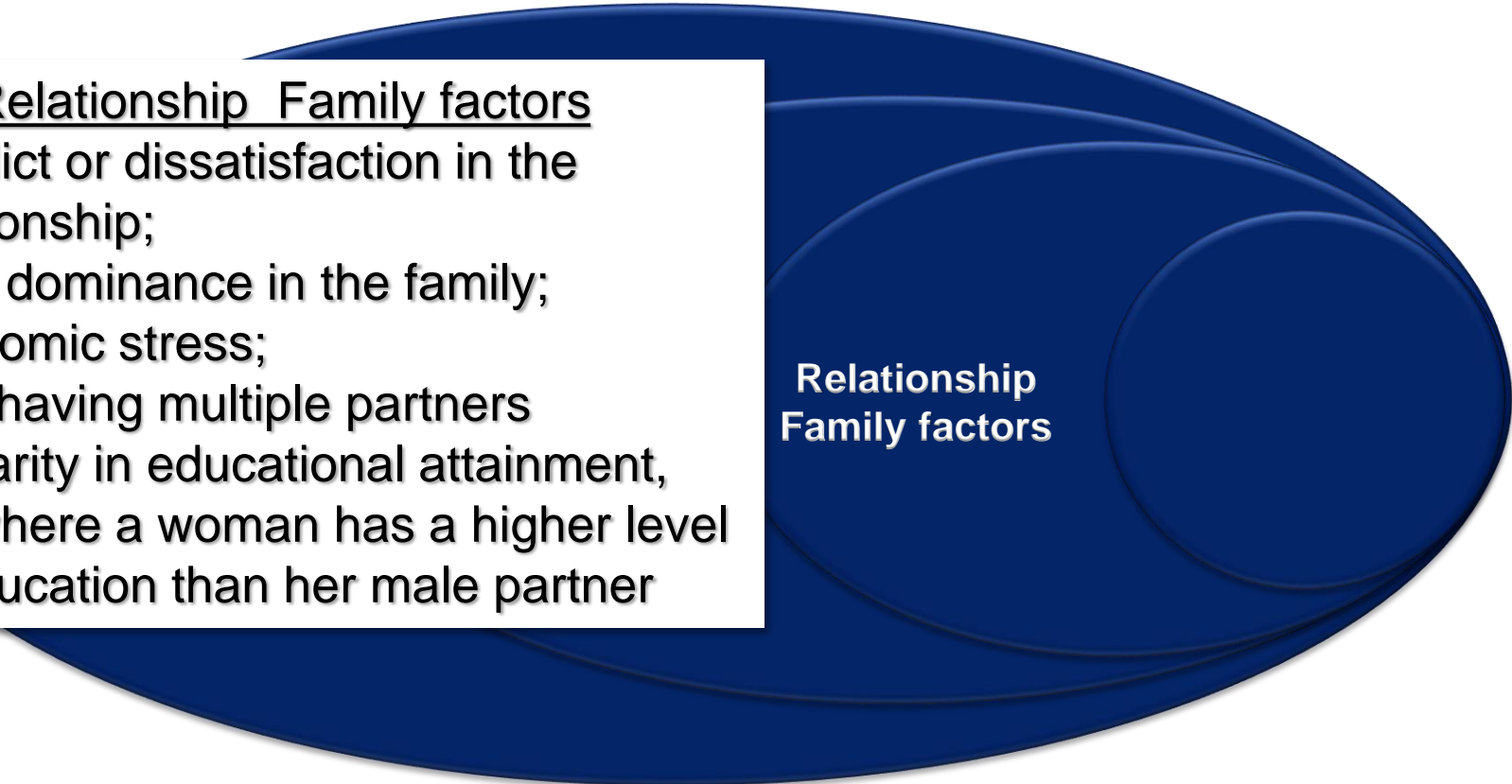
Causes of and Risk Factors VAW

Ecological Model

Relationship Family factors

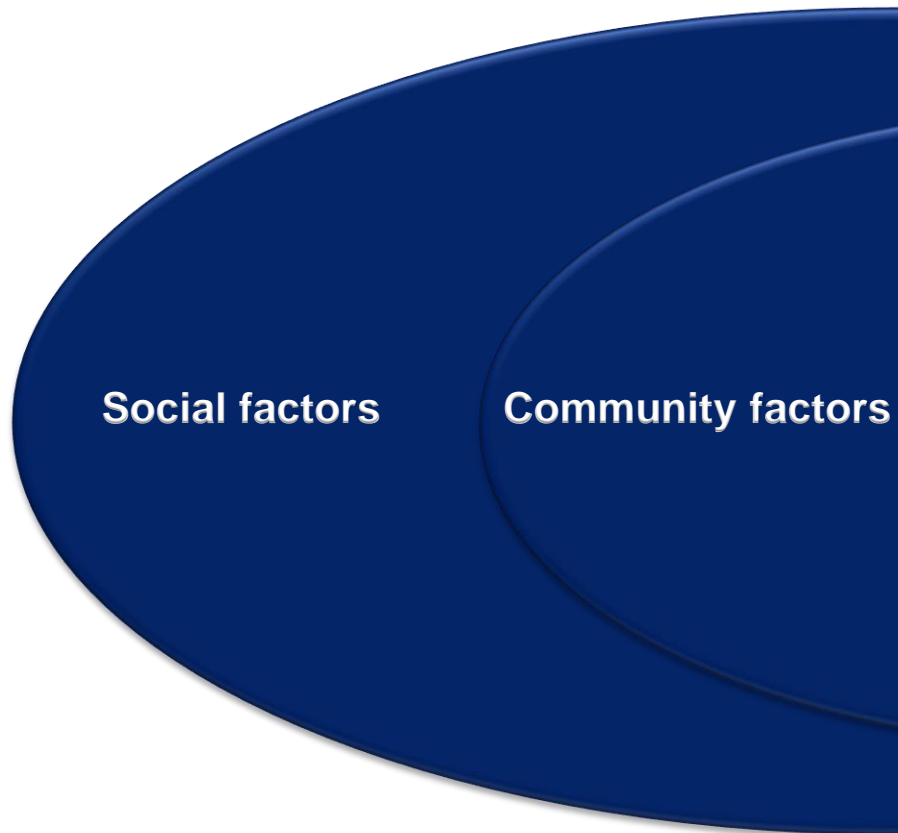
1. Conflict or dissatisfaction in the relationship;
2. Male dominance in the family;
3. Economic stress;
4. Man having multiple partners
5. Disparity in educational attainment, i.e. where a woman has a higher level of education than her male partner

Relationship
Family factors



Causes of and Risk Factors VAW

Ecological Model



Community and societal factors

1. Gender-inequitable social norms (especially those that link notions of manhood to dominance and aggression);
2. Poverty;
3. Low social and economic status of women;
4. Lack of women's civil rights, including restrictive or inequitable divorce and marriage laws;
5. Weak community sanctions against IPV;
6. Broad social acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict;
7. Armed conflict and high levels of general violence in society.

A dark, low-key photograph of a woman in traditional attire, possibly a headscarf, with the text "Clinical Diagnosis" overlaid in a bright yellow font. The woman is the central figure, her face partially visible as she looks towards the camera. She is wearing a light-colored, patterned garment with a dark sash or belt. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall with faint patterns. The overall mood is somber and mysterious.

Clinical Diagnosis

Violence against Women Public Health Problem



Red Flags associated with VAW

- Site of Injuries
- Pattern of Injuries
- Severity injuries.
- Delay requesting health care and old injuries.
- Injuries are not compatible with history.
(accidental versus intentional)
- Injuries in multiple sites in the woman's body.
- Recurrent injuries.
- Injuries that have varying ages.

A woman wearing a white headscarf and a traditional, patterned dress stands in a dark, ornate setting. The background features intricate carvings or patterns on a wall. The overall mood is solemn and traditional.

Health Consequences

Health Consequences



Immediate

Direct cause of serious injuries and deaths

Acute Mental and Behavioral problems

Long term

Disability

Physical and mental health sequels for many years

Family

Extend to affect the health of children.

Society

Weakens the quality of life of the entire community.

Economic cost on the Health Sectors.

Health Consequences

Physical Consequences

- 1) **Acute or immediate physical injuries 19%-55%** , such as bruises and welts; lacerations and abrasions; abdominal or thoracic injuries; fractures and broken bones or teeth; sight and hearing damage; head injury; attempted strangulation; and back and neck injury
- 2) **Serious injuries**, which can lead to **disabilities**, including injuries to the head, eyes, ears, chest and abdomen
- 3) **Functional disorders** or 'stress-related conditions', and include irritable bowel syndrome, gastrointestinal symptoms, fibromyalgia, various chronic pain syndromes and exacerbation of asthma, chronic pain syndromes (**Abused women twice at risk**)

Health Consequences

Mental and Behavioral

- 1) Direct Emotional Effects: Fear, Anger, Guilt, Embarrassment,
- 2) Decreased Self-Esteem, Helplessness
- 3) Sleeping and eating disorders
- 4) Anxiety disorders
- 5) Self-harm and suicide attempts
- 6) Depression.
- 7) Substance misuse, alcohol etc...
- 8) **Stockholm syndrome**. Hostages-captors attachment.
- 9) **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**
- 10) **Abused Woman Syndrome**. Subcategory of PTSD

Health Consequences

Sexual and reproductive

- 1) Unintended and unwanted pregnancy
- 2) Abortion and unsafe abortion
- 3) sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- 4) pregnancy complications miscarriage
- 5) vaginal bleeding or infections
- 6) chronic pelvic infection
- 7) urinary tract infections
- 8) fistula (a tear between the vagina and bladder, rectum, or both)
- 9) painful sexual intercourse
- 10) sexual dysfunction

Health Consequences

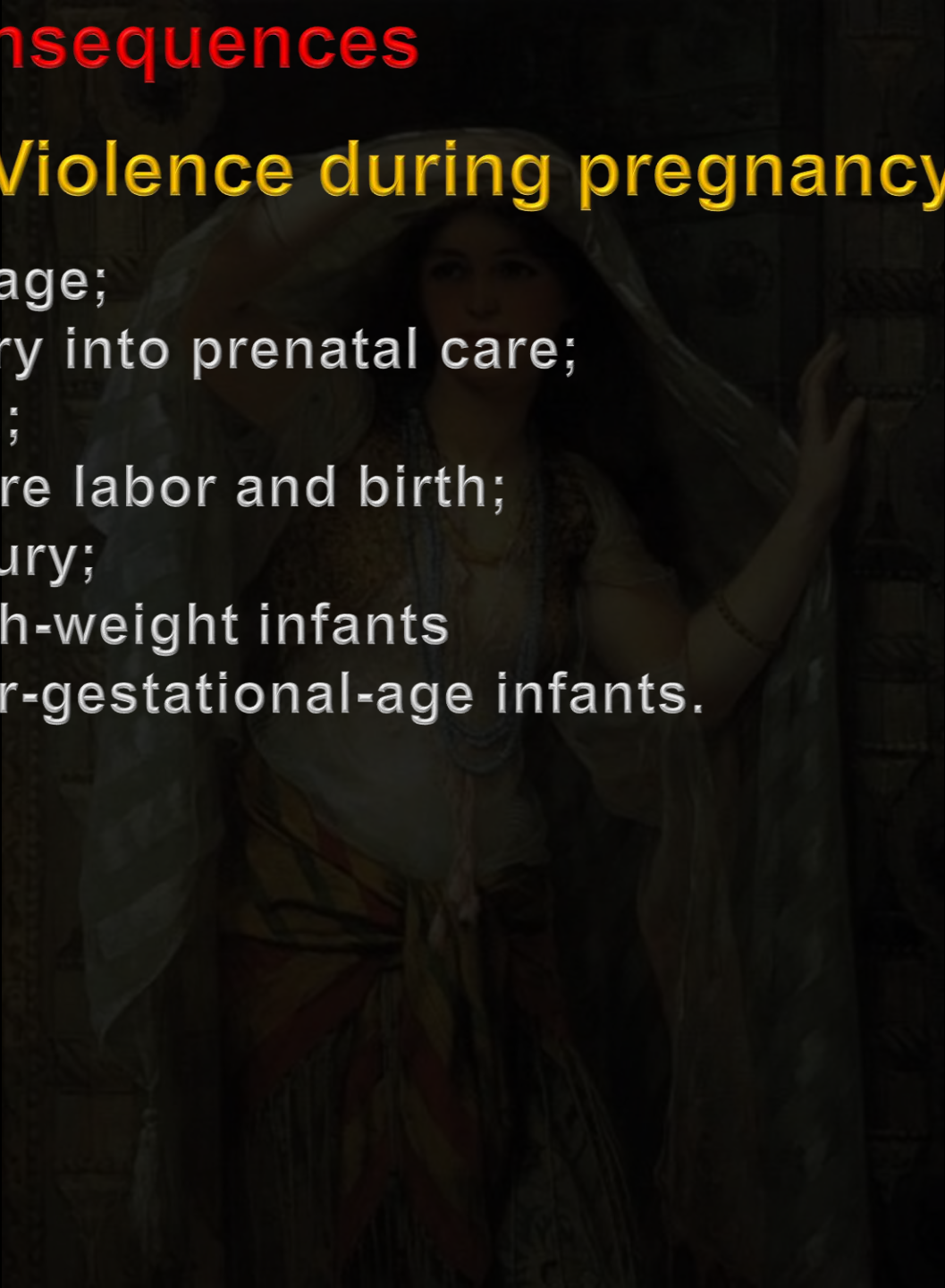
Vulnerability to disease

Compared with non-abused women, victims of violence are more likely to experience a number of serious health problems.

- 1) Severe menstrual problems
- 2) Sexually transmitted disease
- 3) Urinary tract infection
- 4) Irritable bowel syndrome
- 5) More likely to smoke and abuse drugs and diseases related to them.

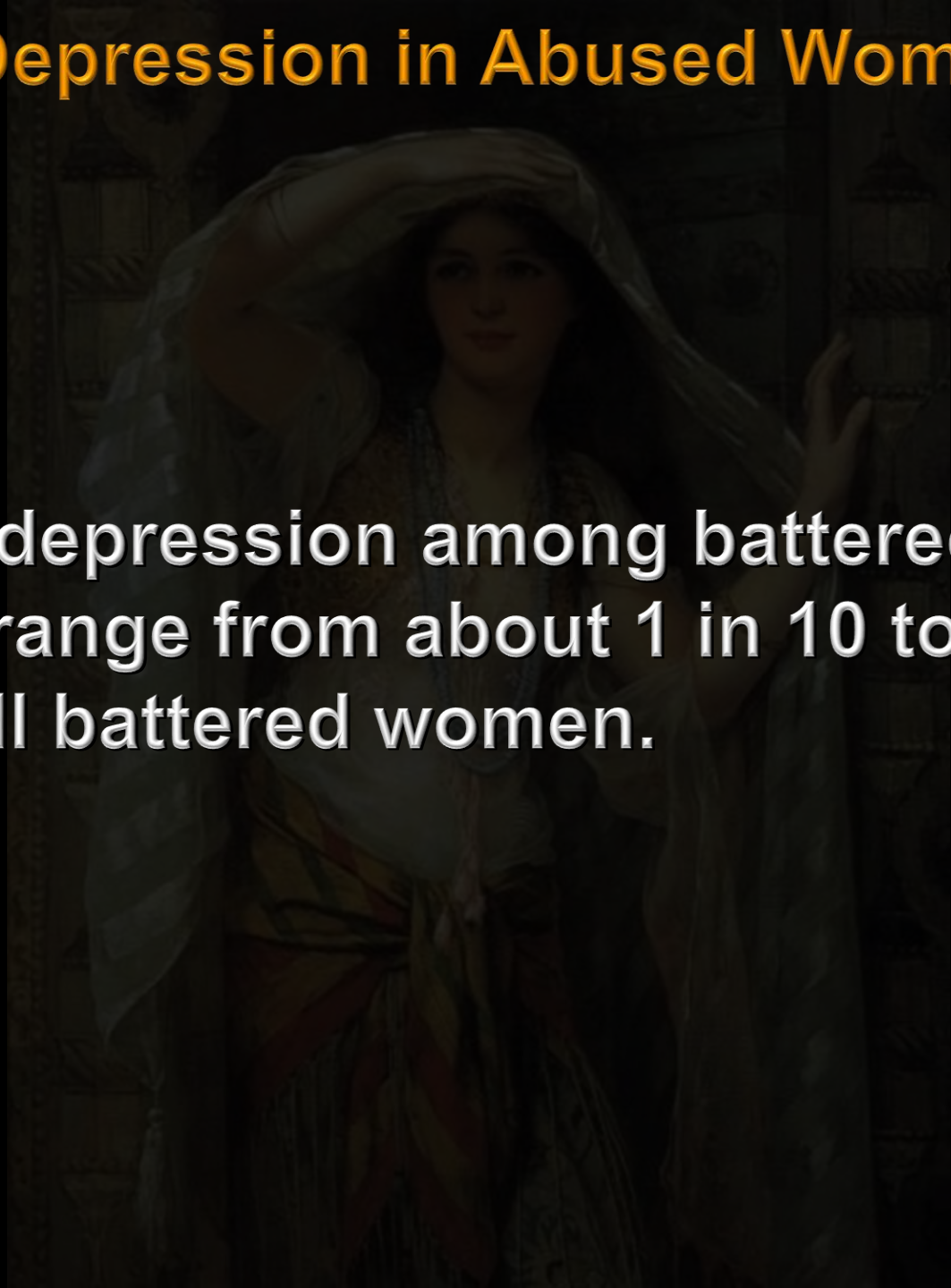
Health Consequences

Violence during pregnancy

- 1) Miscarriage;
 - 2) Late entry into prenatal care;
 - 3) Stillbirth;
 - 4) Premature labor and birth;
 - 5) Fetal injury;
 - 6) Low-birth-weight infants
 - 7) Small-for-gestational-age infants.
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Depression in Abused Women

Clinical depression among battered women usually range from about 1 in 10 to about 1 in 3 of all battered women.



Health Consequences

Femicide

Definition: Femicide is generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women.

- 1) Intimate Femicide
- 2) Murders in the name of 'honor'
- 3) Dowry-related Femicide

Numerous studies report that most women who die of homicide are killed by their partner or ex-partner.

Death

Death may result from and kind of VAW

- 1) Forced Suicide
- 2) Death from injuries
- 3) AIDS

Prevention and Response

Prevention and Response

Multi-disciplinary System at three Levels

1. Policy (i.e. councils...)
2. Prevention (i.e. MSD MOH...)
3. Response

Programs: Examples

- 1) Life-skills at community and school-based
- 2) Early intervention services for at-risk families
- 3) Build the knowledge base and raise awareness
- 4) Community mobilization
- 5) Empower women socially and economically
- 6) Reform legal frameworks

Prevention and Response Health Sector

- 1) Women centered care: (empathetic listening, non-judgmental attitude, privacy, confidentiality, link to other services).
- 2) Identification and care for survivors
- 3) First-line support, emergency response and protection
- 4) Training of health-care providers.
- 5) Health-care policy and provision integrated in the health system at all levels.
- 6) Mandatory reporting of intimate partner violence.