

Screening for Domestic Violence

A new initiative will support health professionals in preventing and detecting domestic violence among pregnant women, expecting and new parents, and contribute to the development of interventions.

Early Detection of Domestic Violence

The Danish Health Authority, in collaboration with the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI), will prepare national recommendations to prevent and detect domestic violence during pregnancy and the child's first two years of life, as well as develop support and treatment interventions. The initiative is part of the *Action Plan against domestic violence and spousal homicide* and has a particular focus on honor-related conflicts.

Target Group

The target group is pregnant women, expecting and new parents with both Danish and ethnic minority backgrounds, at risk of domestic violence. Especially individuals with an ethnic minority background, including non-Western, can be particularly vulnerable. They may not speak the Danish language, lack social networks, and live in isolation. A particularly vulnerable group is women with an ethnic minority background, who lack knowledge of their rights and opportunities in the Danish social and healthcare systems, and who often do not seek help from the Danish authorities.

Health Consequences of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a serious public health problem, which has major health and psychosocial consequences, such as depression and post-traumatic stress reactions (PTSD). Pregnancy and starting a family can trigger or exacerbate domestic violence.

Health Professionals Can Make a Difference

Midwives, public health nurses, and general practitioners are uniquely positioned to detect domestic violence. The detection rate increases if such violence is addressed several times, and if the health professional has knowledge in this area.

Development of National Guidelines

Guidelines and a screening tool for use in prenatal care and public health nursing will be developed based on two mappings. One mapping covers existing national offers for early detection of domestic violence as well as specific support and treatment offers in municipalities and regions. The other mapping is a literature review of existing international knowledge in the field. An expert panel will be established, and key stakeholders will be involved.

Enhanced Knowledge and Consultation Process for Health Professionals

Cross-professional courses and consultation processes will be developed and offered to enhance the knowledge level of health professionals. This is to strengthen competencies in recognizing signs of and managing situations where pregnant women, expecting, and new parents are exposed to violence, including honor-related violence.

Measures for Pregnant, Expecting, and Parents

A fund with one application round in 2024 will be made available for measures in 2024-2026. The potential applicants are regional family outpatient clinics, which can apply in collaboration with the municipal public health nursing and possibly voluntary organizations. Co-financing from the regions is required to ensure ownership, anchoring, and the potential for continuation after the trial period. The initiative will be evaluated.