Guidance on recording of domestic violence and abuse information in general practice medical records

The challenge of recording domestic violence and abuse (DVA) information in the electronic medical record (EMR) of people experiencing or perpetrating abuse and their children is how to do this without increasing risk of harm to victims and their children. The perpetrator may not know that their ex/partner/family member has disclosed DVA to a GP or nurse. Nor will they necessarily know if their case is being discussed at the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC). When the perpetrator is not aware of a disclosure of DVA, an accidental discovery increases the risk to the victim and their children.

Relevant to all DVA information

- Ensure that any reference to DVA on a victim’s or their children’s records is not accidentally visible to the perpetrator during appointments. The computer screen showing the medical record should never be seen by third parties (i.e. family or friends accompanying a patient)
- Never disclose any allegation to the perpetrator or any other family members
- Ensure that any decision to record the information in the perpetrator’s EMR is made with due regard to the associated risks, and documented.
- Ensure that any reference to DVA in a perpetrator’s record is redacted if provided to the perpetrator unless you are certain it is information that the perpetrator already knows
- Be aware of the potential danger of the perpetrator having access to information about their abuse and to information in children’s EMRs; this includes via online access to their own information and their children’s information, as well as via the victim’s EMR.
- Ensure that any reference to DVA is redacted from children’s records if provided to the perpetrator or provided to children who are deemed to have capacity to request their information.

Information about DVA from police report or MARAC correspondence

When you are certain* that the perpetrator is aware that domestic abuse has been disclosed to the police or another agency, relevant information regarding the abuse should be recorded in the perpetrator’s EMR and that of the victim and children.

When you are not certain* that the perpetrator is aware of any allegation, the guidance is the same as for disclosure from the victim.

*This can be ascertained from the details and source of the information received by the practice. The practice safeguarding/domestic violence lead may be best placed to make this judgement.

Disclosure by a victim, perpetrator or child living in a household with DVA

Three flow charts are presented below to summarise what to do in each of these cases. If you are not sure whether someone is a victim or perpetrator of abuse it is probably safest to follow the victim disclosure flow chart. If you do code a consultation or communication as ‘History of Domestic Abuse’, as we recommend, this should be a major active problem until the abuse is resolved or the patient is presenting it as a past problem.

RCGP Adult Safeguarding Toolkit, June 2017
Victim discloses DVA to clinician in the practice

**Victim’s EMR**
- Record the disclosure under ‘History of domestic abuse’ (14XD)
- Nature of abuse can be coded through the HARK template and/or free text
- Use the online visibility function to hide this consultation from online access

**Children’s (or vulnerable adult’s) EMR**
- If you are confident of your practice’s redaction protocol, record the under 14XD code
- Use the online visibility function to hide this consultation from online access
- Ensure that any reference to DVA is redacted from children’s records if provided to the perpetrator or provided to children who are deemed to have capacity to request their information.

**Perpetrator’s EMR**
- Do not record

Perpetrator discloses DVA to clinician in the practice

**Perpetrator’s EMR**
- Record the disclosure under ‘History of domestic abuse’ (14XD)
- Nature of abuse and perpetrator status should be recorded as free text

**Children’s (or vulnerable adult’s) EMR**
- Record the disclosure under the 14XD code
- Use the online visibility function to hide this consultation from online access

**Victim’s EMR**
- Record the disclosure under the 14XD code
- Use the online visibility function to hide this consultation from online access
Child discloses DVA to clinician in the practice

- Record the disclosure under ‘History of domestic abuse’ (14XD)
- Use the online visibility function to hide this consultation from online records

Children’s (or vulnerable adult’s) EMR

- Do not record

Perpetrator’s EMR

- Record the disclosure under the 14XD code
- Use the online visibility function to hide this consultation from online records
- Ensure that any reference to DVA is redacted from children’s records if provided to the perpetrator or provided to children who are deemed to have capacity to request their information.

Non-abusing parent and siblings’ EMR

This guidance has been written by:

Ø Professor Gene Feder
- Professor of Primary Health Care, Centre for Academic Primary Care, University of Bristol
- Chair of Inter-Collegiate and Agency National DVA Forum
- Chair of NICE Programme Development Group for NICE guidance (PH50, February 2014) Domestic Violence and Abuse: multi-agency working

Ø Dr Lucy Potter
- GP & Academic Clinical Fellow, Centre for Academic Primary Care, University of Bristol
- Clinical Lead for IRISi Bristol

Ø Medina Johnson
- Chief Executive of IRISi

(IRIS intervention, www.irisdomesticviolence.org.uk)