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Background

- About 40,000 cases of HIV are officially registered in St. Petersburg, Russia; more than 30% of them are women
 - 70% of Russian women experience various forms of violence from their husbands or partners; 36% report suffering from physical or psychological abuse, and 23% are subjected to sexual violence*
 - HIV-positive women, especially those pregnant or having young children, are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence because of stigma, discrimination, and extreme psychological and social problems
- To address these issues, Doctors to Children and its governmental and NGO partners in St. Petersburg have developed an interagency model to prevent violence against women (VAW) and provide effective assistance to its victims, particularly those who are HIV-positive.

* Amnesty International, EUR 46/056/2005

Results

- The continuum of service model developed, piloted and documented;
- The inter-agency protocol approved by the City authorities, published and disseminated throughout St. Petersburg;
- 228 staff of health care, social service and law-enforcement agencies were trained;
- 462 HIV-positive women with young children were provided with services; of these, 26 women benefited from transitional housing services;
- 87 HIV-positive women increased their understanding of HIV/AIDS and acquired skills of resisting stigma, discrimination and gender-based violence through training and peer support groups;
- The first Russian-language Internet portal for HIV-positive women was launched at www.womenhiv.ru



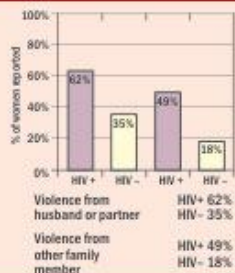
Goal and Objectives

- Reduce violence against HIV-positive women and their children
- Develop an inter-agency protocol to respond effectively to cases of violence against HIV-positive women and their children
- Establish a continuum of service model to prevent violence against HIV-positive women and their children
- Promote independence and leadership among HIV-positive women

Intervention

- Pre- and post-intervention sociological surveys among women and service providers
- Training of social service, healthcare, and law enforcement agencies on HIV/AIDS and VAW
- Developing, piloting, and implementing the inter-agency protocol to assist victims of VAW and their children, particularly those who are HIV-positive
- Public awareness campaign in St. Petersburg

Domestic Violence Against Women

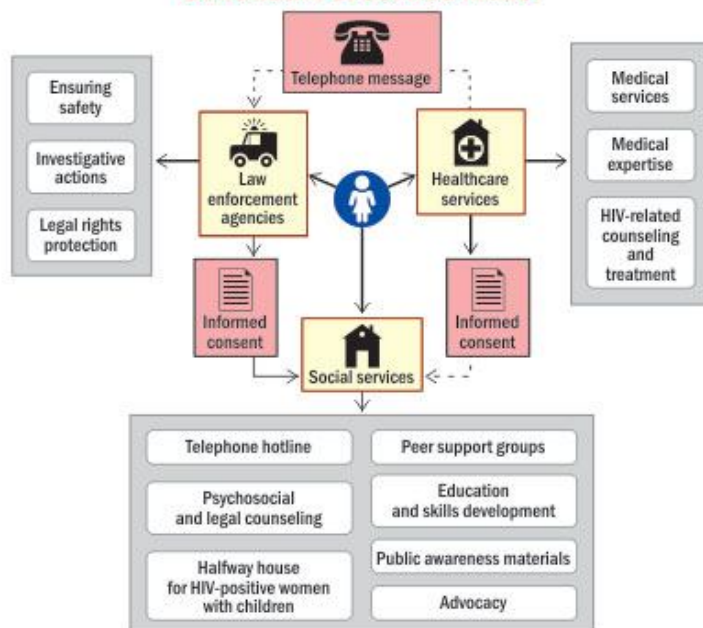


Low awareness among HIV-positive women of existent services:

- 60% of women are not aware of social services available;
- 53% of women are coping with VAW by themselves, and only 14.1% seek professional assistance;

Lack of knowledge among professionals results in low motivation to address the issue of VAW, particularly in HIV-positive women

Continuum of service model



Halfway house

- Shelter for HIV-positive victims of VAW, and their children
- Social and psychological assistance to women
- Prevention of child abandonment
- Vocational counseling and training
- Protection of legal rights of women exposed to stigma and discrimination



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