

Violence is a public health challenge defined by the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in, or has a high likelihood of, resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. Violence has become one of the leading public health issues of our time. No country or community is untouched by violence and the Eastern Mediterranean Region is no exception.

Because it is so pervasive, violence is often seen as an inevitable part of the human condition, a fact of life to respond to, rather than to prevent. Moreover, its prevention is commonly viewed as an issue for law and order to tackle, not one for health professionals. Their role is not seen beyond that of directly dealing with health, particularly physical health consequences. Such a perception however is rapidly changing, encouraged by the success of public health approaches to other environmental and behaviour-related health problems, such as heart diseases, smoking and HIV/AIDS.

The cost of violence

A substantial proportion of the costs of violence result from its impact on a person's health and the burden it places on health institutions. This gives the health sector both a special interest in prevention and a key role to play. It is evident that violence is a multifaceted problem with biological, psychological, social and environmental roots. There is no simple or single solution to the problem; rather, violence must be addressed on multiple levels and in multiple sectors of society simultaneously.

World report on violence and health

In 2002, WHO launched the first *World report on violence and health*. The goals of the report are to raise awareness of the problem of violence globally, to make the case that violence is preventable, and to highlight the crucial role that public health has to play in addressing its causes and consequences. The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean is following the guidelines and recommendations of the *World report on violence and health 2002* to implement programmes and strategies to address this menace.



[World report on violence against children \[pdf 8.93Mb\]](#)

