

Domestic violence: Frequent radiological findings

Factsheet

The following description refers in particular to domestic violence (DV) against adults (e.g. partners). Special aspects in the broader context are child abuse. Radiological findings may be decisive for its detection.

Please note that the lists are not exhaustive; it represents only a selection.

Contacting a physician in cases of DV

- In many cases, victims do not report domestic violence as the cause of an injury or for hospitalisation.
- Medical presentations that do not directly involve an injury can also provide indications of domestic violence.
- Victims of domestic violence receive radiological examinations more often, especially for physical trauma (in one study about four times more often than in controls).



Find pictures of
radiology
findings [here](#).

Common injuries detectable with medical imaging

- **Injuries to the reproductive organs** (also during pregnancy, e.g. chorionic hematoma)
- **Acute fractures** (especially in the facial region, e.g. nasal bone fracture, orbital floor fracture; but also fractures of the extremities)
- **Subacute and temporally indeterminate fractures** (especially face, extremities and spine)
- **Soft tissue injuries** (e.g. hematoma and laceration)

Evaluation of image findings and the role of radiology

- Radiological findings and imaging data contribute to the documentation of the extent of physical injuries.
- The injury patterns of adult victims of domestic violence are similar to those of other causes of injury.
- The positive predictive value of a radiological examination alone for the possible presence of domestic violence is limited, but can be better assessed and thus increased by considering the overall clinical context.

- This can include injury patterns that do not match the medical history, the presentation of multiple injuries of different ages and frequent radiological examinations in the past.
- The radiologist's complementary view of the case and the often somewhat calmer situation when preparing and reporting the findings of the examinations (compared to the emergency room) can thus facilitate the detection of domestic violence.



Find more information on **indicators** in [Module 2](#).

Helpful sources

They can be found [here](#).