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Background

The tools presented in this guide were initially developed by the South African Gender-based Violence and Health Initiative (SAGBVHI) for a national situation analysis of sexual assault services. The SAGBVHI was formed in November 2000 from 15 partner organisations and individuals working at the interface of gender-based violence and health in South Africa with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. Its aim was to maximise the utilisation of resources and skills to strengthen collective efforts to improve the health sector response to gender-based violence in South Africa. The study was undertaken as a collaborative initiative between several partners led by the Gender and Health Research Unit, Medical Research Council, South Africa.

The idea for the study came from a research agenda setting workshop held in March 2001 with representatives from national and provincial Departments of Health. A national situation analysis of sexual assault services emerged as a top priority research area. It was apparent that few of the provincial Department of Health representatives attending the workshop knew which rape and domestic violence policies were available in provinces, how many people were trained and employed to examine rape survivors, what training health providers had received, what the problems with providing services were, and how well equipped facilities for managing patients after rape were. In order to fill these gaps, a proposal was written for a national situation analysis of services for managing women who experience gender-based violence. Ethical approval for the study was given by the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee.

This study was a collaborative effort, bringing together clinical expertise, as well as approaches from qualitative research, epidemiology and health systems research. The National Department of Health was involved in the development of the project from its inception. It had a high degree of ownership over the process and provided opportunities for study findings to be presented at several influential gatherings of managers and policy makers and to be used to inform an emerging health sector policy.

The methodology from the SAGBVHI study was adopted by the World Health Organisation. A project was then initiated for a multi-country situation analysis of sexual assault services. Earlier versions of the tools were used in different settings to determine the applicability across settings. This included the Philippines.

About the Guide

A national situation analysis on health services for victims/survivors can assist in understanding aspects of service quality, determine where better services are being provided and which factors influence the quality of services. This guide provides you with the tools developed for the SAGBVHI study, and outlines the steps to take when embarking on a national situation analysis of sexual assault services.

This guide has been developed with support from the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI). It is hoped that people using the guide will give feedback to the SVRI about lessons learned and experiences to promote continuous learning and development of the tools. We would appreciate your thoughts on the guide, and in particular the tools, how they worked in your setting, ways they were adapted and how the guide and the tools can be improved or made more generalisable. Please send questions and comments about the tools to the Sexual Violence Research Initiative: svri@mrc.ac.za