

Encountering victims of torture in a GP's surgery

This module follows the story of a young woman from Uganda who is a victim of torture. You may find her experience upsetting.

The most widely accepted definition of torture internationally is that set out by Article 1 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT):

"... 'torture' means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions."

Some doctors specialise in treating and investigating victims of torture but identifying victims of torture is the responsibility of every health professional. This case examines the protocol for identifying and treating victims of torture in a general practice setting.

Health professionals have a duty to support the needs of their individual patients who are victims of torture. Additionally, identifying and recording acts of torture is a step towards finding and prosecuting the perpetrators.

– No sound. –

