International Workshop on Gender Statistics, Wuhan, China

Violence against women: Data and Measurement

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Why health related gender indicators matter

Gender shapes health risks, access to care, health outcomes, and survival

When data on individuals is broken down by sex, health systems can:

- Identify gender inequities in health
- Conduct an intersectional gender analysis - how gender inequality and restrictive gender norms intersect with other factors to shape men's, women's and gender diverse people's health
- Respond to gender and other inequities by designing gender-responsive and transformative health and other policies
- Allocate appropriate resources and build capacity to implement equitable health systems

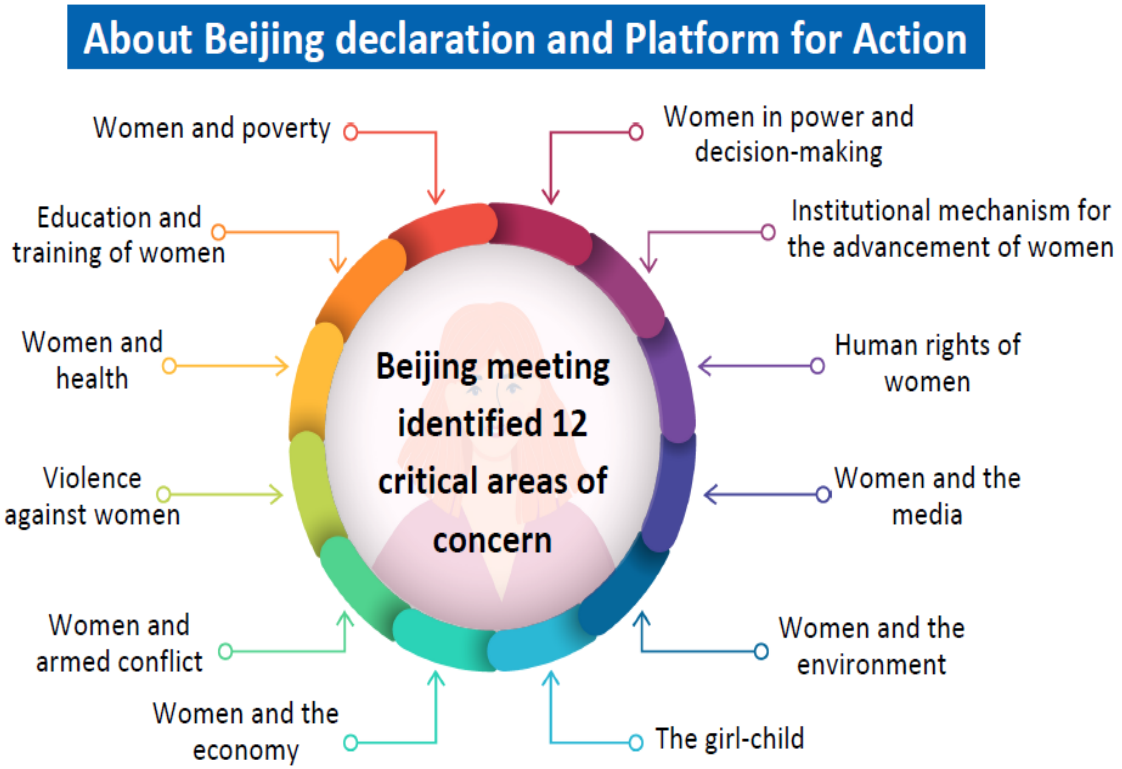
What gets measured gets prioritized!

Health and Gender Equality

Many of the internationally agreed indicators are found across **SDG 3 (Health)** and **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)**, including:

- SDG 3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio
- SDG 3.1.2 Births attended by skilled health personnel
- SDG 3.7.1 Demand for family planning satisfied with modern methods
- SDG 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate
- **SDG 5.2.1 and SDG 5.2.2 Intimate partner violence against women and non-partner sexual violence**
- SDG 5.3.1 Child marriage
- SDG 5.3.2 Female genital mutilation

Violence against women – Beijing Platform for Action, 1995



States that

*"The absence of adequate **sex-disaggregated data and statistics** on the incidence of violence make the elaboration of programmes and monitoring of changes difficult."*

Recommends

"The promotion of research and data collection on the prevalence of different forms of violence against women, especially domestic violence, and research into the causes, the nature and the consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and redress violence against women"

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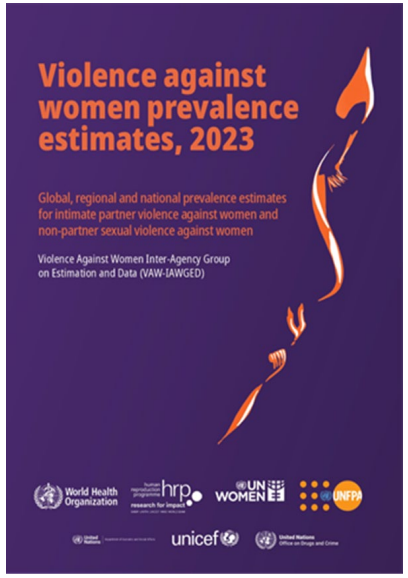
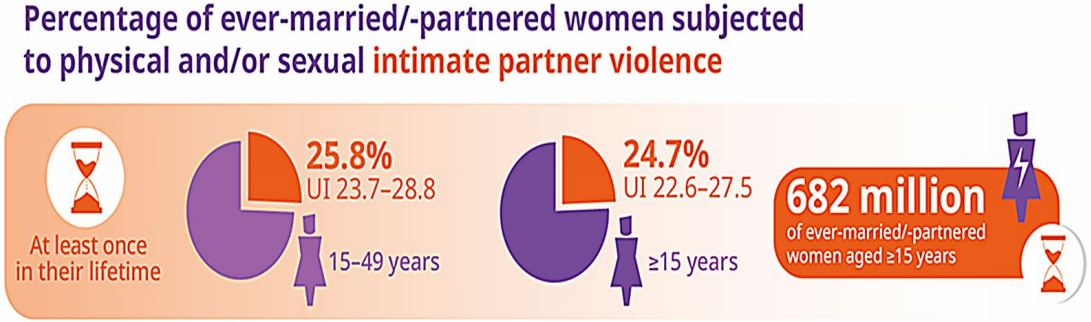
Violence against women – particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence – is a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights





SDG Indicators on violence against women

Goal 5. Gender equality

Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

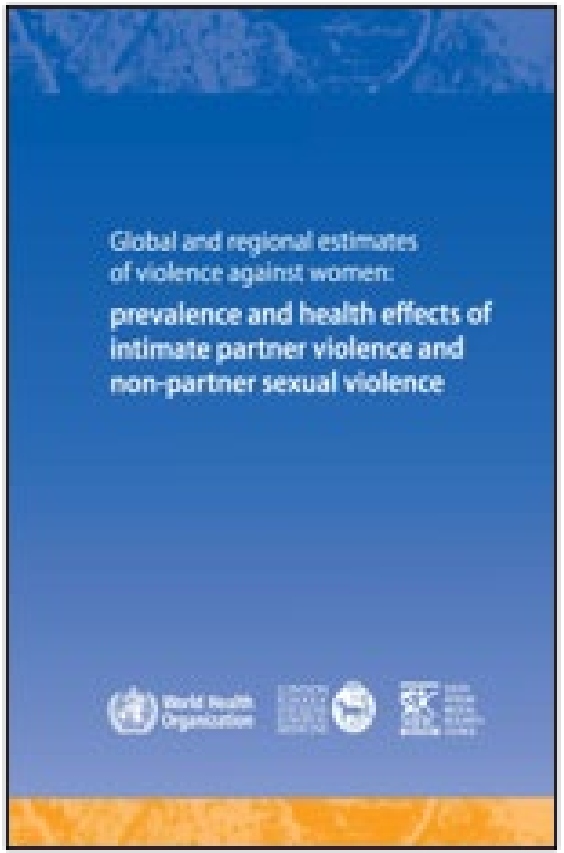
Indicator 5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months

Indicator 5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months

Global, regional and national estimates on the prevalence of violence against women

1995 - 2010

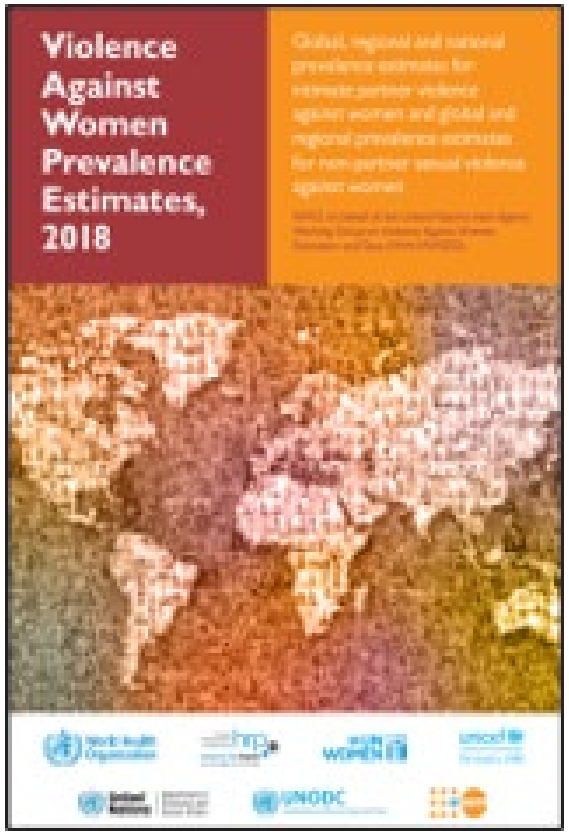
Published 2013



81 countries

2000 - 2018

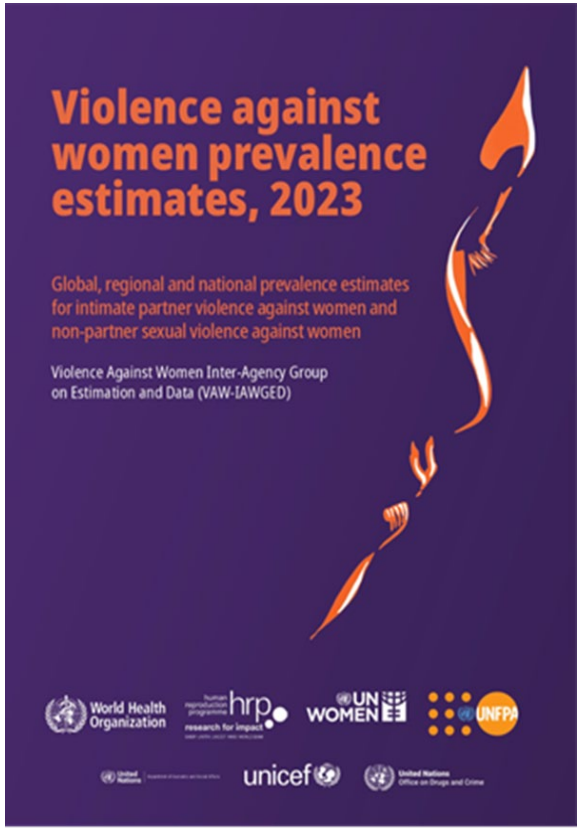
Published 2021



161 countries

2000 - 2023

Published 2025



168 countries

Supersedes previous estimates

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Prevalence Surveys on Violence Against Women

Violence against women modules within larger surveys

- Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)
- Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)
- Reproductive Health Surveys (supported by the CDC)

➢ Violence against women specialized surveys (*preferable to modules within broader surveys*)

- World Health Organization multi-country survey
- International Violence Against Women Surveys (IVAWS)
- EU-wide Survey on Violence against Women (Fundamental Rights Agency - FRA; EUROSTAT, EIGE)
- National surveys on violence against women (E.g. ENDIREH - INEGI), Mexico
- Women's Health and Life Experiences Survey (Caribbean, Oceania, South-east Asia)

➢ Crime victimization surveys (largely in high-income countries)

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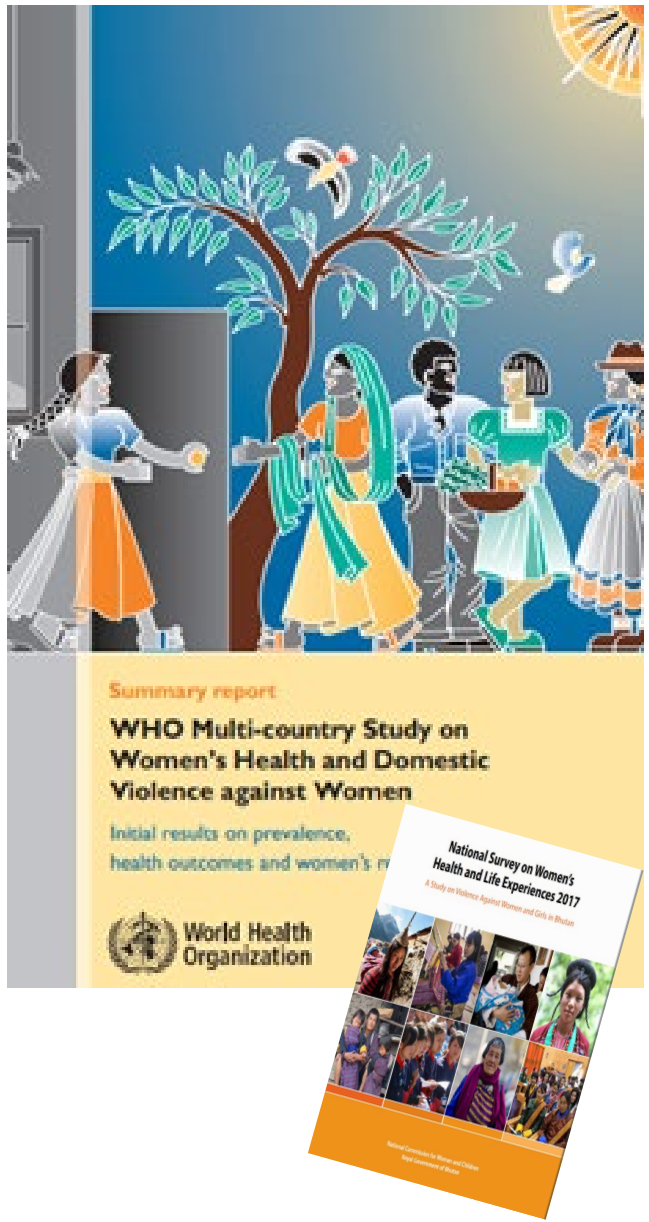
WHO Multi-country study violence against women survey instrument



Key data obtained:

- Prevalence and patterns of various forms of intimate partner and non-partner violence:
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Psychological
  - Economic abuse by a partner
  - Physical and sexual violence by someone other than a partner
  - Sexual harassment
    - School
    - Public spaces
    - Workplace
- Risk factors for violence.
- Association between violence and a wide range of health outcomes.
- Coping strategies including help seeking, reporting.

How did the survey define ever partnered?

Did the survey achieve a representative sample of women and girls?

What age range of women/girls were interviewed & included in denominators?

Did they use act-based measures, and if so which acts of physical or sexual violence?

Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical and/or sexual or violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

Which types of partners were measured or reported (e.g. any in life vs current/most recent?)

What timeframes of violence were measured and published?

Acts-based v/s single questions to measure violence

Since you were 15, has anyone ever hit or physically mistreated you?	Using a more detailed instrument that asked about occurrence and frequency of acts…
14% of women reported abuse by partner	29% of women reported abuse by partner

Physical violence

- Slapped her threw something at her that could hurt her
- Pushed her or shoved her
- Hit her with a fist of something else that could hurt her
- Kicked, dragged or beat her up
- Choked or burnt her on purpose
- Threatened her with or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against her

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How prevalent is violence against women?

sexual
economic
psychological
physical
lifetime
Past 12 months

women who have experienced abuse in a certain period of time

"at risk" women in the study population

Ever-partnered
All women
Currently partnered
Women in paid employment
Women with internet access

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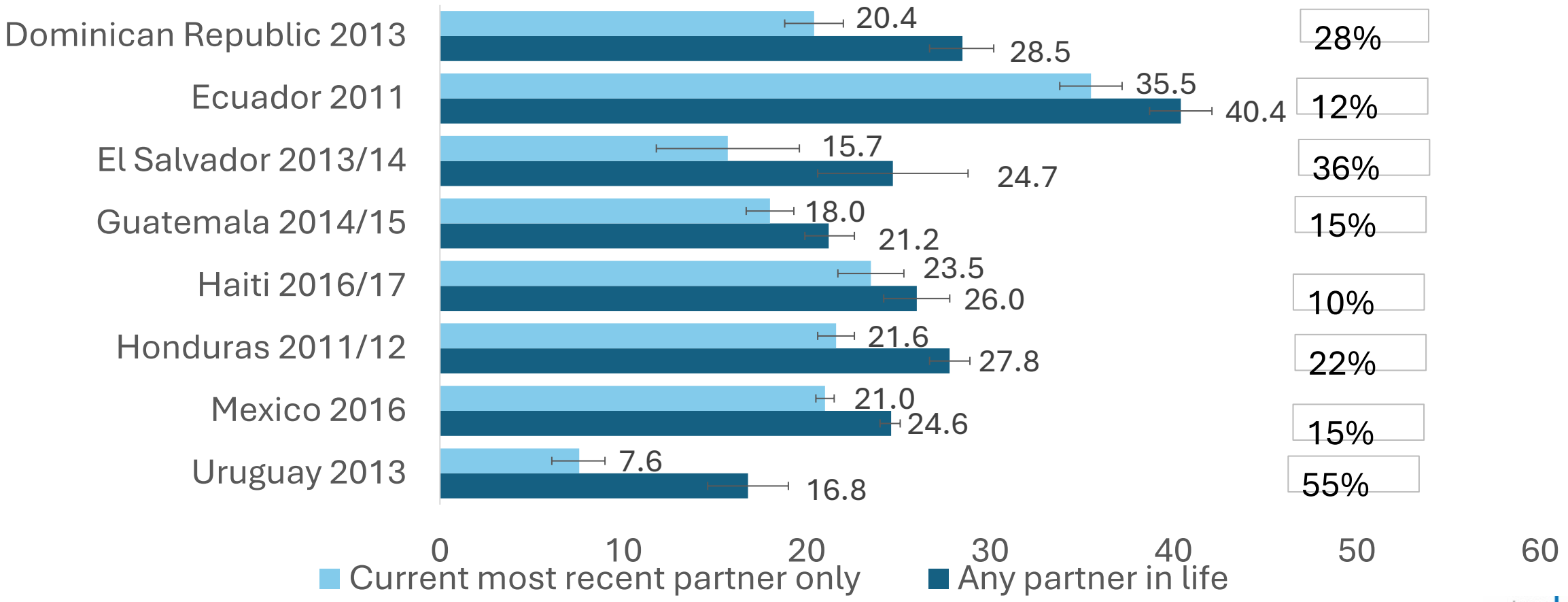
Measurement limitations	Gold Standard
Severe physical and/or sexual violence only	Mease severe and non-severe physical and/or sexual violence
Physical IPV only or sexual IPV only or psychological IPV only but no combined measure or vice versa	Measure and report by specific type of violence and combined measure
Only currently-partnered women or all women included in the denominator	For IPV the gold standard denominator is ‘ever-partnered women
Only violence from a current and/or recent (cmr) partner measured	For IPV Measure and report violence from any current or previous partner in addition to current/most recent partner
For non-partner sexual violence, only currently or ever-partnered women included	For non-partner sexual violence the gold standard is ‘all women’ regardless of their partnership status

How much lifetime IPV is missed by measuring current/most recent partner ONLY?

% of ever partnered women aged 15-49 who reported physical and/or sexual IPV ever, by any partner in life versus current/most recent partner only



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Covariates to adjust	Factors for exact matching
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) DATASETS	
IPV definition: “severe violence” (ref.: “all severity”)	Survey ID, population surveyed, violence type, age, geographical strata, partners
IPV type: “physical only” (ref.: “physical and/or sexual”)*	Survey ID, population surveyed, age, geographical strata, partners
IPV type: “sexual only” (ref.: “physical and/or sexual”)*	Survey ID, population surveyed, age, geographical strata, partners
Reference partners: “*current/most recent*” (ref.: “*any partners*”)	Survey ID, population surveyed, violence type, age, geographical strata, severity
Population surveyed: “all women” (ref.: “ever-partnered”)	Survey ID, violence type, age, geographical strata, severity, partners
Population surveyed: “currently partnered” (ref.: “ever-partnered”)	Survey ID, violence type, age, geographical strata, severity, partners
Geographical strata: “urban” (ref.: “national”)	Survey ID, population surveyed, violence type, age, severity, partners
Geographical strata: “rural” (ref.: “national”)	Survey ID, population surveyed, violence type, age, severity, partners
NON-PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE (NPSV) DATASETS	
NPSV time: “ever” (ref.: “since the age of 15”)**	Survey ID, population surveyed, age, geographical strata, partners
NPSV definition: “rape/attempted rape only” (ref.: “not only rape/attempted rape”)	Survey ID, population surveyed, violence type, age, geographical strata, partners
Population surveyed: “Partnered women only” (ref.: “All women”)	Survey ID, violence type, age, geographical strata, severity, partners
Geographical strata: “urban” (ref.: “national”)	Survey ID, population surveyed, violence type, age, severity, partners
Geographical strata: “rural” (ref.: “national”)	Survey ID, population surveyed, violence type, age, severity, partners

Challenges with measuring non-partner sexual violence (NPSV)

- Geographical gaps in data availability on (non-partner) sexual violence
- Single general questions that relate to forced sex or forced sexual acts against a woman's wishes or rape or attempted rape
- Restricted to rape resulting only from *physical force*
- Ambiguity about 'other unwanted sexual acts' and comparatively lower use of 'acts-based' measures
- Single question to ask women about their experience of sexual violence "*as a child or as an adult*"
- Capturing non-partner only by perpetrator and age of first forced sexual intercourse
- Timeframe of 'previous 12 months' for an aggregate age group of women 15+ results in very small number - difficult to detect change over time.

COMING SOON! NPSV measurement recommendations

Measures of non-partner sexual violence should include at a minimum the following categories

Category 1: Rape/forced sexual intercourse/non-consensual sexual intercourse (rape) with consensus on including separate sub-domains of physically forced, otherwise coerced, and sex when consent was not possible, e.g. while incapacitated due to alcohol or drugs.

Category 2: Attempted rape/forced sexual intercourse (sometimes included as a sub-domain with Category 1).

Category 3: Unwanted sexual acts that involved sexual contact, such as unwanted sexual touching or kissing.

Category 4: Sexual harassment (although this is an underdeveloped domain).

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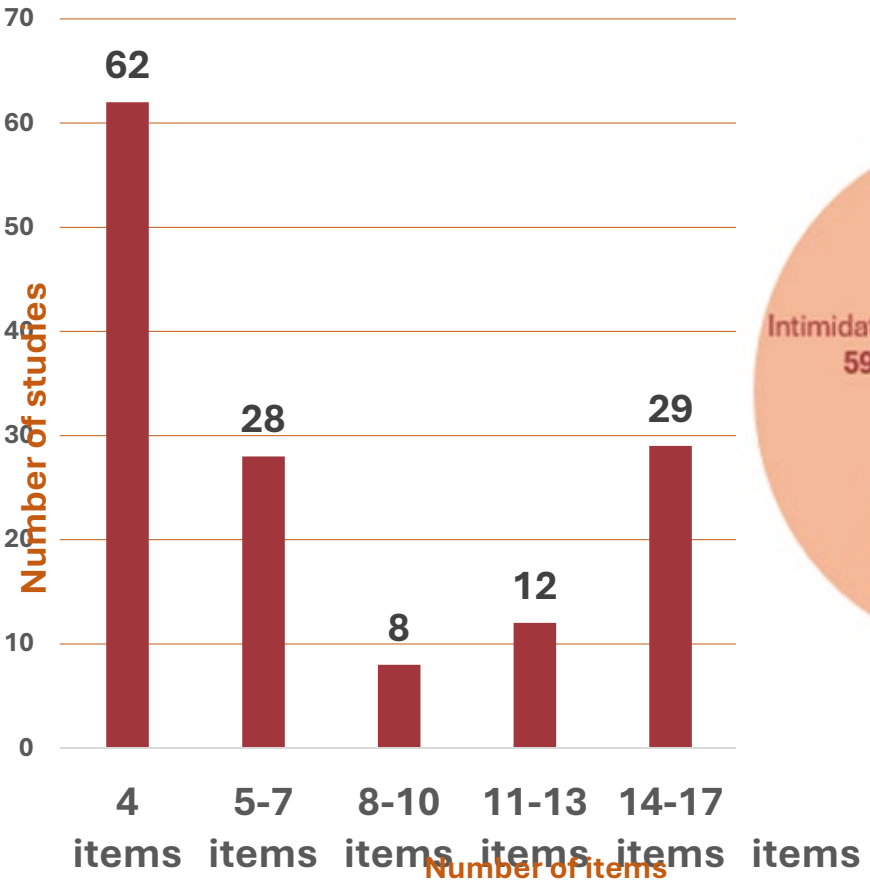
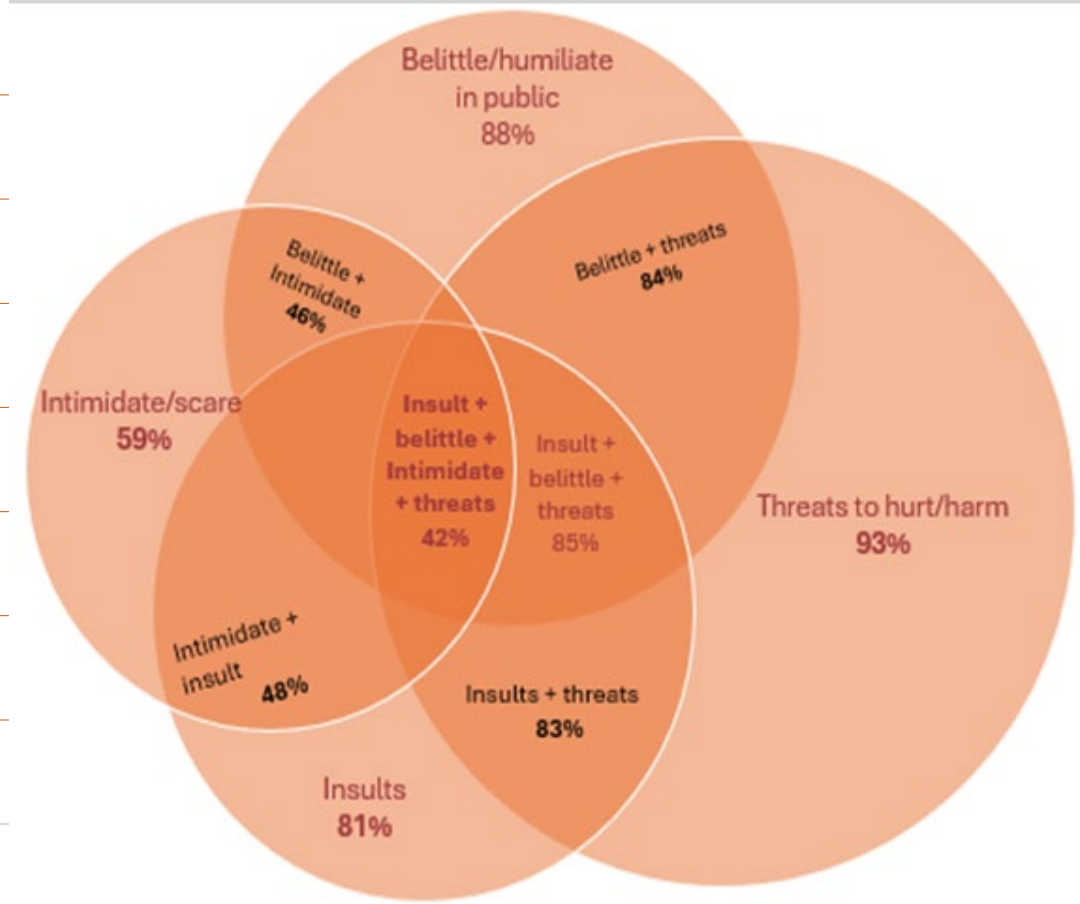
Challenges with measuring psychological partner violence
COMING SOON: Recommendations for standardized measurement





- Wide variation in number of items
- Narrow coverage of psychological IPV by exiting measures
- Heterogeniety in frequency measures
- Lack of thresholds to define violence v/s other relationship conflict
- Measurement invariance across settings

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Progress has been made…but gaps remain

- Increase in the availability and quality of survey data on violence against women but geographical and temporal gaps remain
- Greater recognition of gaps in data and measurement - ongoing work to address these
- Evidence-based policy and programming in “what works” to prevent and address violence against women and girls

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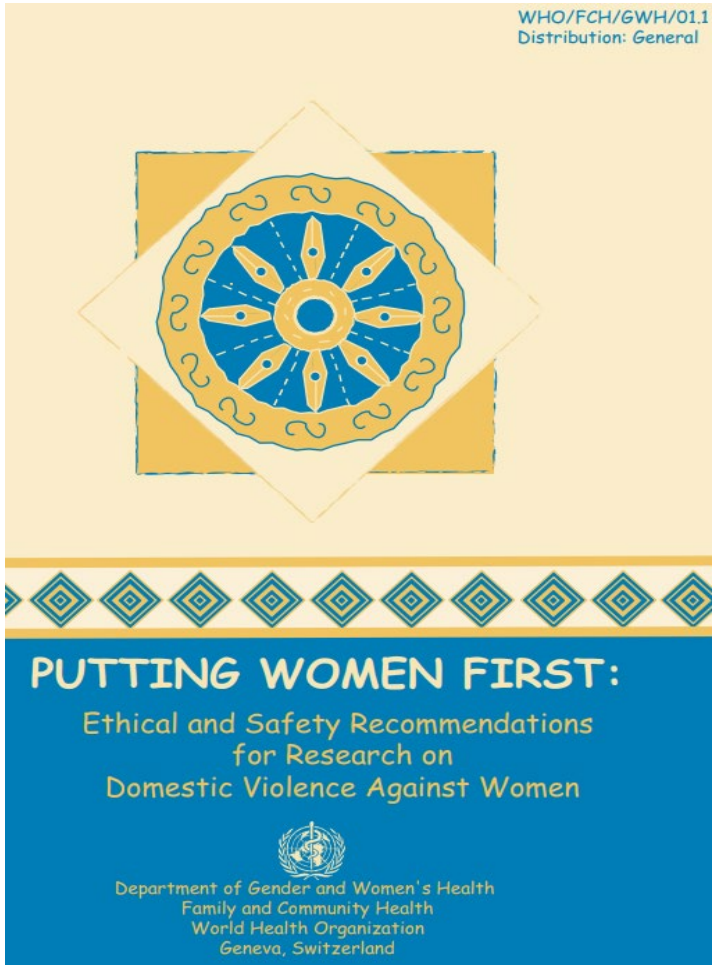
Ethical and safety considerations: Violence against women surveys



Update coming soon!

- **Safety of respondents and survey/research team is paramount**
- **Methodologically sound** and build on current research experience
- **Protecting confidentiality** is essential
- Careful selection and **training** of research team
- **Minimise distress** to participants and researchers
- Ethical obligation to **ensure findings are properly interpreted** to advance policy and intervention
- Violence questions should be incorporated *only* when ethical and methodological requirements are met

Additional and specific considerations for the use of remote and emerging methods

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MERCI!

شكراً جزيلاً

धन्यवाद!

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