

Challenges in measuring Violence against women



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Training in Research in Reproductive Health/Sexual Health

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World Health Organization

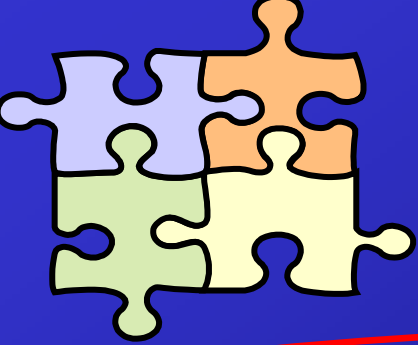
Gender and Women's Health



Objective of this training session

- **To discuss some essential principles around measuring violence against women**
- **To give you access to the tools and resources that you may want to use...**





1. Sources of data on violence against women
2. Definitions: study population, violence
3. Example of specialized survey: WHO Multi-country study on VAW
4. Development of questionnaire, including translation
5. Examples of questions, results and presentation of data (WHO VAW Study)
6. Short module vs. specialized survey



Sources for data on prevalence of VAW



- Records from police, courts, hospital, etc
- Population based surveys:
 - National crime victimization surveys
 - Demographic and reproductive health surveys
 - Focussed specialized surveys
 - Short module added to other surveys



Service based data do not represent the actual situation in the population ...



According to police records in Nicaragua, 3,000 women reported domestic violence in 1995

According to population based surveys 150,000 women suffered domestic violence in 1995



Service based records are not easy to interpret...



- In 1997 more than 8,000 cases were reported
- Did rates of violence increase?
- During this period special police stations for women were opened throughout the country, and media campaigns carried out





More services and better quality of care



More women reporting violence



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Problems with this indicator



- It is not representative
- It is not “interpretable”

**BAD DATA IS WORSE
THAN NO DATA !!**

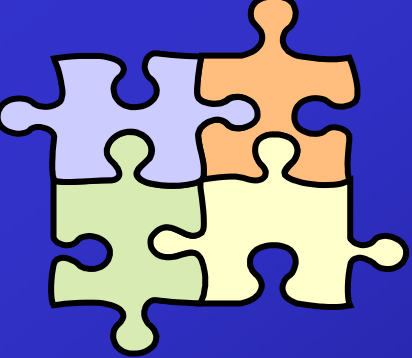


What about population-based data on prevalence of violence?



- Prevalence figures on violence are highly sensitive to methodological issues
- Population-based research on violence raises major issues of safety and ethics
- Results useful for understanding the magnitude and characteristics of violence





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UN Definition of Violence against Women



- "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering of women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or in private life".



How common is violence against women?



Definition of Prevalence

women who have experienced **abuse** in a certain **period of time**

"at risk" women in the study population



Defining the study population



- Cutoff ages
- Marital / relationship experience
- Regional vs. national studies





Country	Study population
Canada	Women > 18
Chile	Women 22-55 married for >2 years
Colombia	Women 15-49 currently married
Nicaragua (DHS)	Women 15-49 ever married
Philippines	Women 15-49 with pregnancy outcome



WHO VAW study



Country	Study population
Bangladesh	Women 15-49 ever married
Peru	Women 15-49 ever married/cohabiting, ever dating
Serbia and Montenegro	Women 15-49 ever married/cohabiting, currently dating



Effect of “study population” on reported prevalence estimates in Nicaragua



	Current physical violence
All women 15-49	20%
Ever partnered women 15-49	27%
Currently partnered women 15-49	30%



Defining violence



- Who defines: the researcher or the respondent?
- Types of violence, severity
- Time frame
- Frequency
- Multiple perpetrators



Studies have used:



- Any kind of physical, sexual, or emotional violence by any perpetrator at any time.
- One or more acts of physical violence by a partner at any time.
- Only physical violence of a certain level of severity, or which has been repeated a certain number of times.
- Only acts of partner violence occurring in the last year.
- Economic, as well as physical, sexual, or emotional violence.
- Any behavior that women themselves identify as abusive by virtue of its intent or effect



Researcher vs. Self-Defined Rates of Past Year Abuse (Japan)



<u>Type of Violence</u>	<u>Researcher</u> (percent)	<u>Self</u>
Any violence	45	27
Physical	14.7	11.4
Emotional	42	23.2
Sexual	8.5	4.7



Factors that affect disclosure



- How the questions are phrased
- Number of opportunities to disclose
- Context in which questions are asked
- Characteristics and skill of interviewers
- Social stigma attached to issue



Single versus multiple questions to measure abuse, Nicaragua



Since you were 15, has anyone ever hit or physically mistreated you? Who?

- 14% of women reported abuse by partner

Using a more detailed instrument that asked about occurrence and frequency of acts...

- 29% of women reported physical abuse by a partner





“...In the first question, they would say that he didn't beat them, but when we got to the other questions, then they would say yes, sometime he beats me and kicks me or uses a gun, or whatever.”

(interviewer, Nicaraguan DHS)



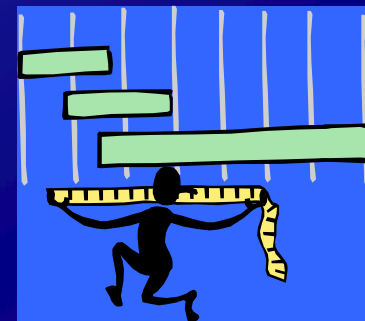
Suggestions for measuring violence against women



- Define the study population broadly
- Use behaviorally specific questions: specific acts
- Specify discrete time frames (last year, ever)
- Give multiple opportunities to disclose
- Cue respondent to different contexts and perpetrators



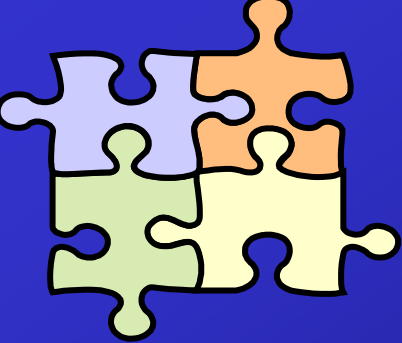
Types of domestic violence in WHO study



- Partner violence: physical, sexual, emotional
- Physical violence: moderate and severe
- Violence in pregnancy
- Violence resulting in injuries

- Rape and sexual coercion
- Physical violence by others (>15)
- Childhood sexual abuse (<15)





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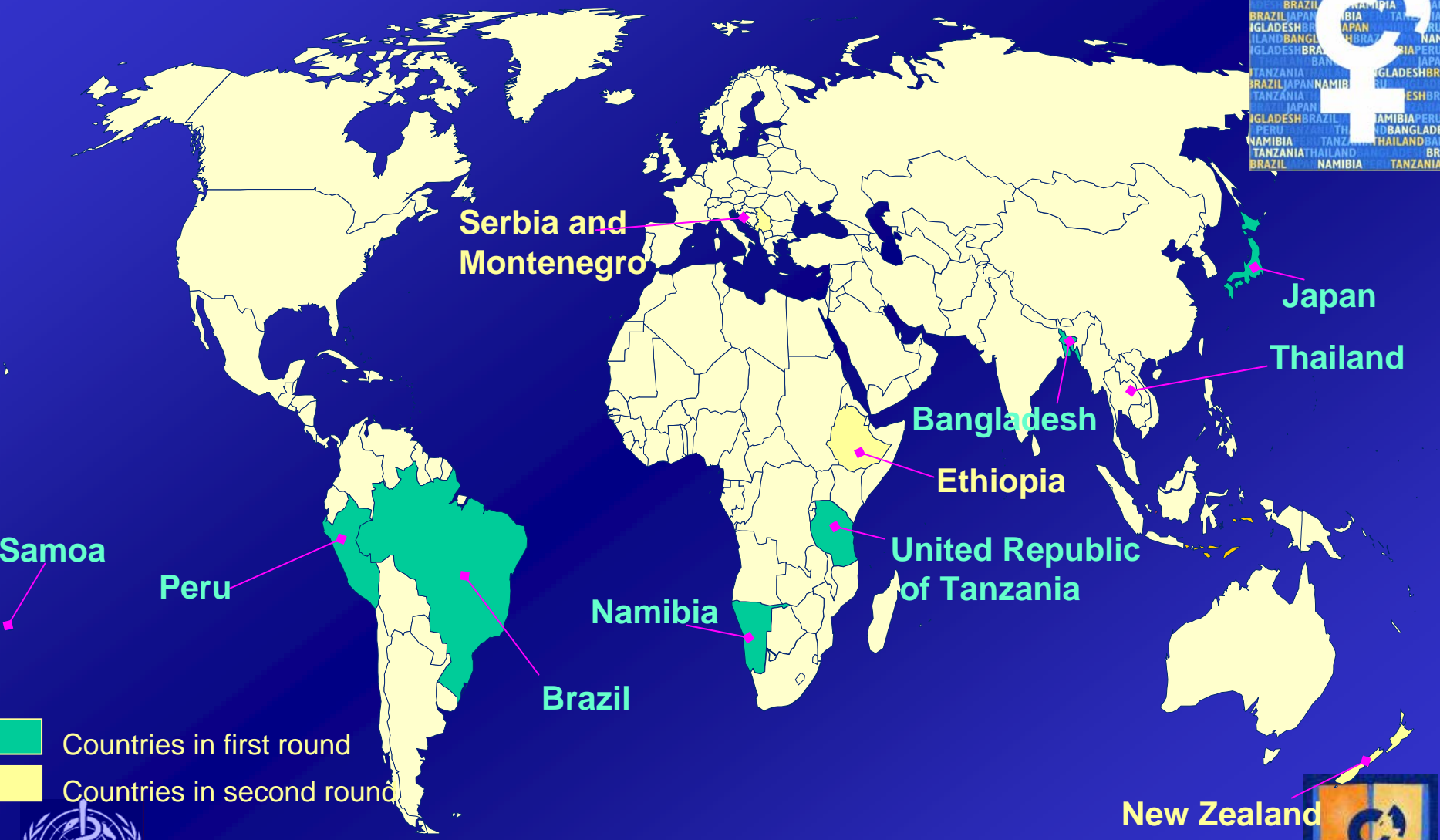
Who is involved?

- Core research team
 - Claudia Garcia-Moreno & Henriette Jansen, WHO
 - Charlotte Watts, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
 - Mary Ellsberg & Lori Heise, PATH (Washington D.C.)
- Expert Steering Committee
- Country teams: women's group equal partner with research institute
- Local consultative committees





Countries participating in the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence



Objectives

- Estimates of prevalence of violence against women
- Associations between partner violence and health variables
- Risk and protective factors for domestic violence against women
- Strategies used by women who experience domestic violence

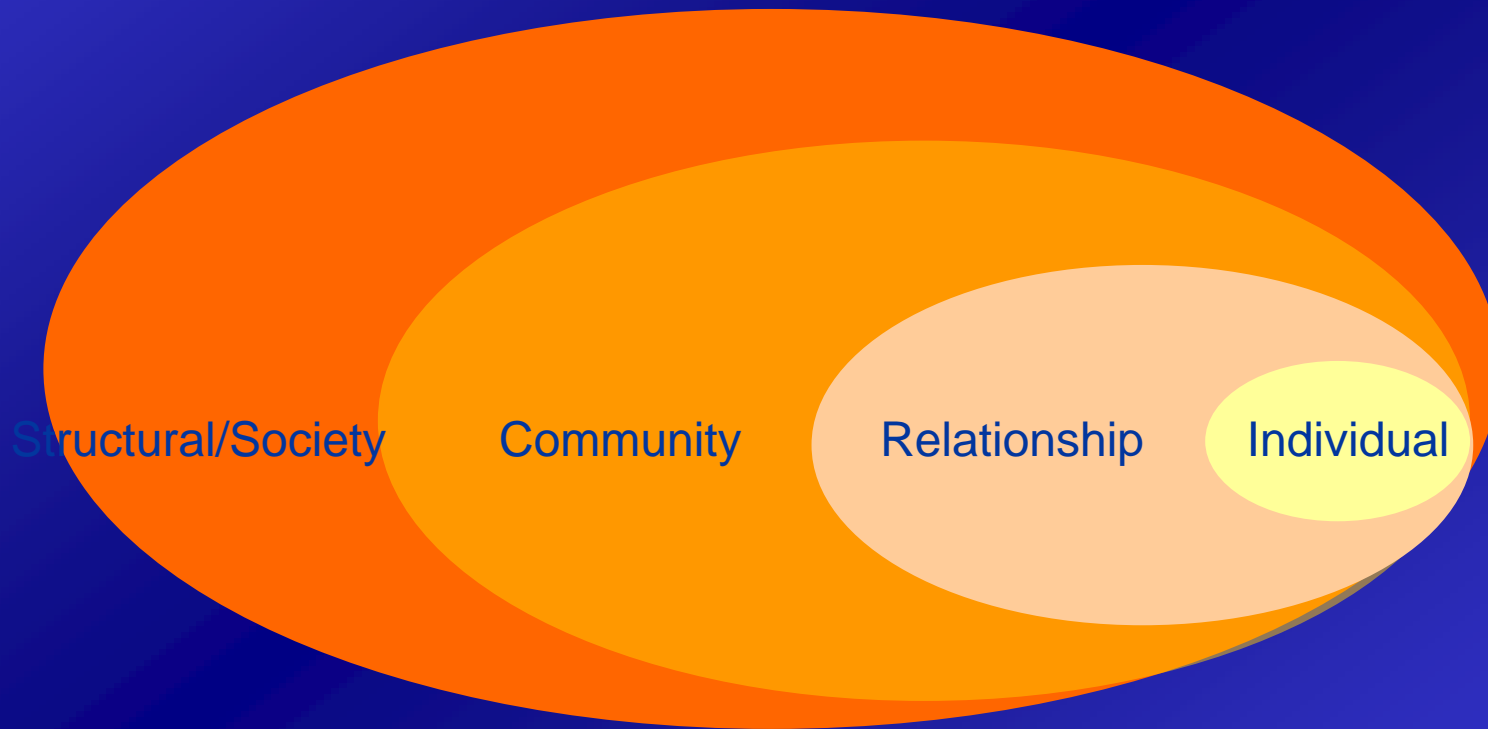


Additional Objectives

- Develop and test new instruments for measuring violence cross-culturally
- Increase national capacity amongst researchers and women's organizations working on violence
- Increase sensitivity to violence among researchers, policy-makers and health providers
- Promote ethically sound research



Ecological framework



WHO VAW Study Study Design

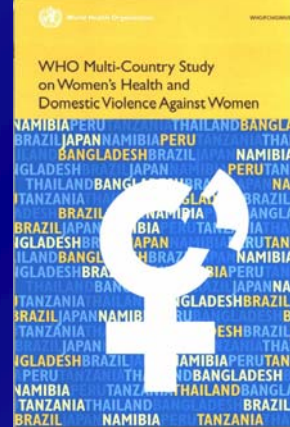
- Formative qualitative research
- Quantitative household survey of women 15-49 years
- Two sites per country: approx. 1500 women per site
- Standardized 3 week training of interviewers and supervisors
- Standard questionnaire (13 modules)
- All participants provided with information about sources of support; follow up support offered
- Standardized quality control measures

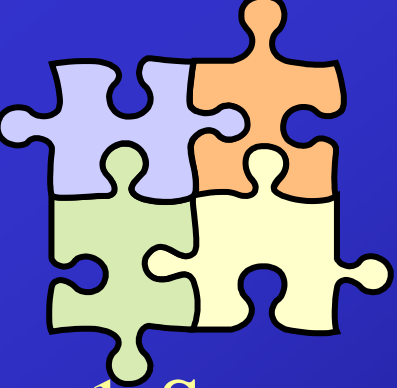
• One data entry system, double entry



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Questionnaire development



- Result of a long process of discussion, consultation and consensus building
- Experiences of IRNVAW
- Formative research in first 5 countries
- Inputs from technical experts in specific areas, including VAW, reproductive health, mental health, drug & alcohol use
- Input from Expert Steering Committee
- Field test results from 7 countries



Women's Health and Life Events - Questionnaire



Section 1: Respondent and her community

Section 2: General Health

Section 3: Reproductive health

Section 4: Children

Section 5: Current or most recent partner

Section 6: Attitudes toward gender roles

Section 7: Respondent and her partner

Section 8: Injuries

Section 9: Impact and coping

Section 10: Other experiences

Section 11: Financial autonomy

Section 12: Completion of the interview



Translation of questionnaire (1)



- Professional translation into local languages.
- Use if possible formative research
- Professional back-translations are not a very reliable way to check the accuracy of questions on violence and its consequences.
- The translated questionnaire should in first instance be checked by local researchers involved in the study

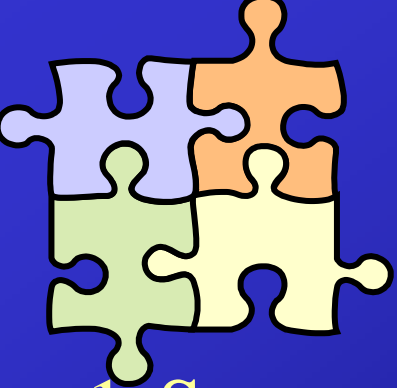


Translation of questionnaire (2)



- **Oral back translation sessions, to identify differences in translations which could alter the meaning and to establish cognitive understanding of the items in the questionnaire.**
- **Having interviewers from various cultural backgrounds helps in ascertaining whether wording used is culturally acceptable. During the training: further revisions to the translation.**
- **During the field pilot final modifications to fine-tune the translated questionnaire.**





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Introduction of Section 7 to ask about violence experience

“ When two people marry or live together, they usually share both good and bad moments. I would now like to ask you some questions about your current and past relationships and how your husband / partner treats (treated) you. If anyone interrupts us I will change the topic of conversation. I would again like to assure you that your answers will be kept secret, and that you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. May I continue?”



Has your partner ever..... (in the last 12 months has this happened once, a few times, many times?)

WHO Study

- Slapped or threw something at that could hurt you?
- Pushed or shoved you or pulled your hair?
- Hit with his fist or with something else that could hurt you?
- Kicked, dragged or beat you up?
- Choked or burnt you on purpose?
- Threatened to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against you?

Moderate

Severe



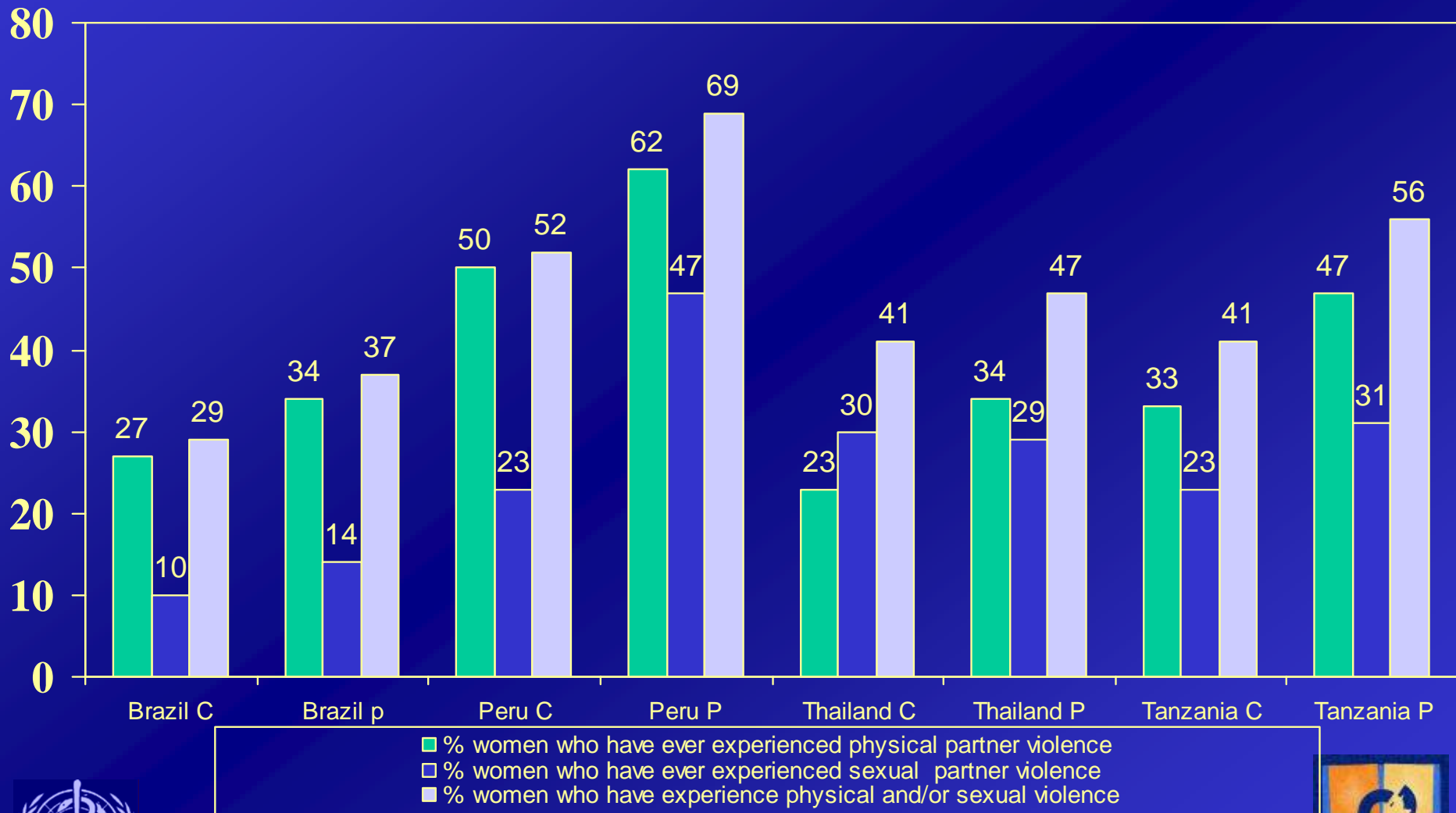
Measurement of sexual violence by partner

WHO Study

- Were you ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse when you did not want to?
- Did you ever have sexual intercourse you did not want because you were afraid of what he might do?
- Ever force you to do something sexual that you found degrading or humiliating?

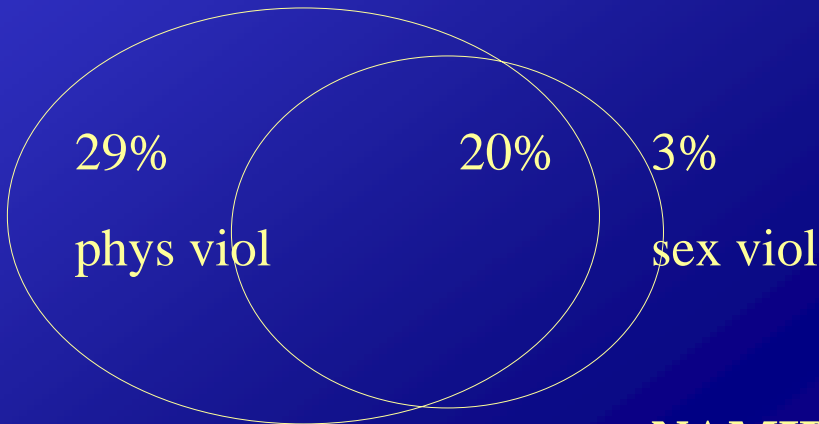


Prevalence of physical or sexual partner violence

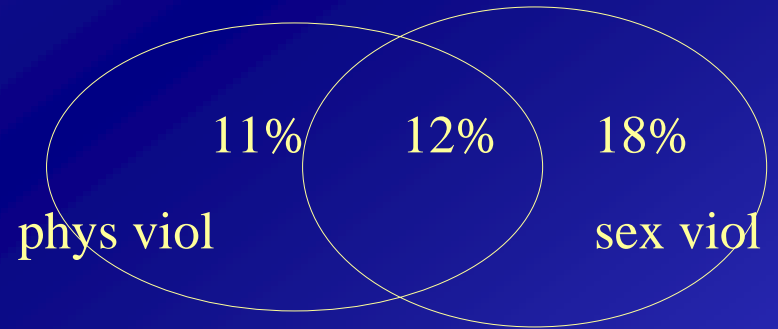


Overlap lifetime physical and sexual violence

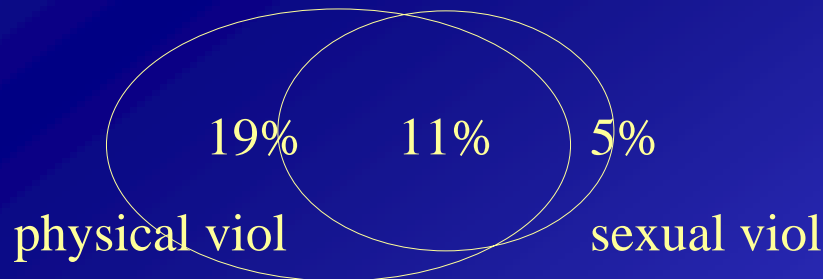
PERU - CAP



THAILAND - CAP



NAMIBIA - CAP



Measurement of Child Sexual Abuse

WHO Study

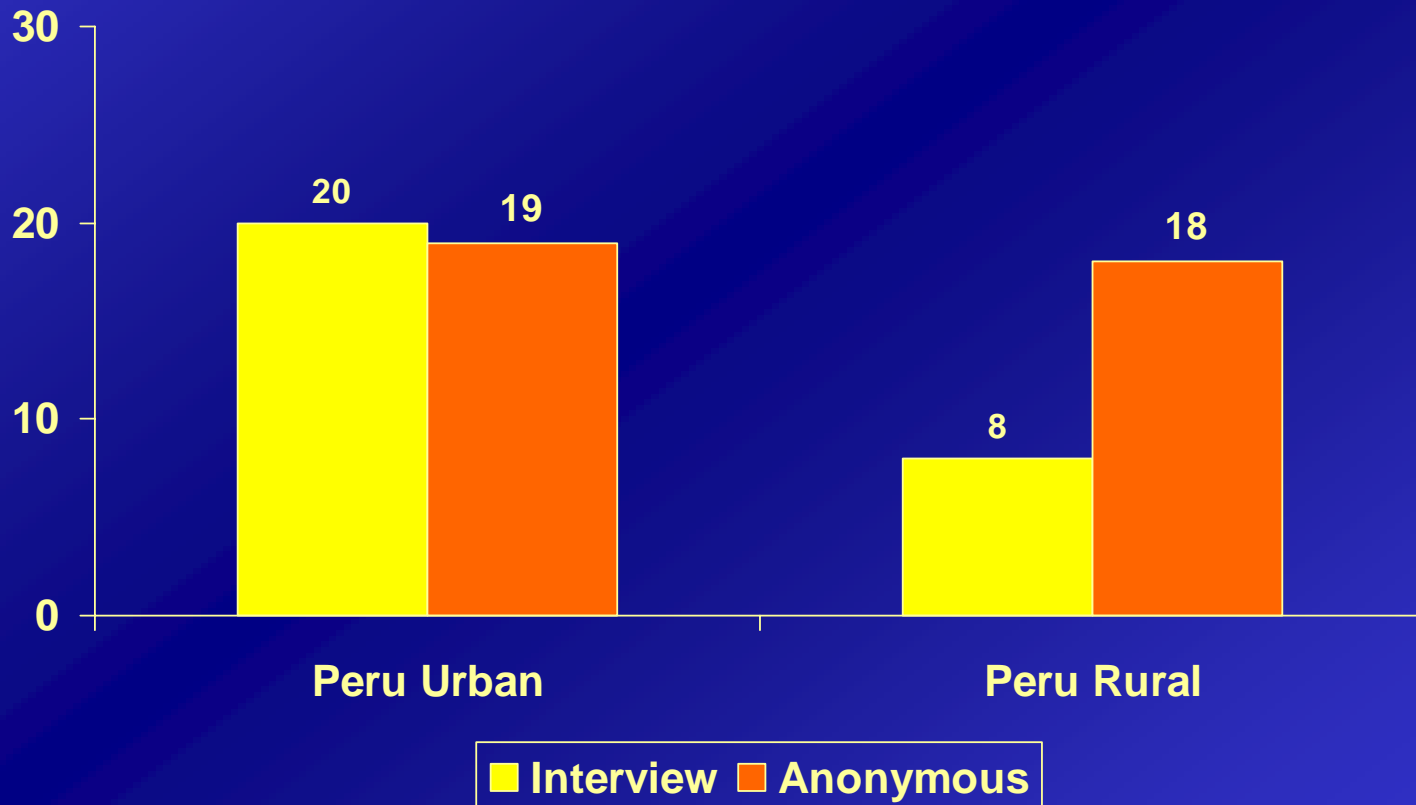
- Before the age of 15, do you remember if any one in your family ever touched you sexually or made you do something sexual that you didn't want to?
 - If yes, who did this to you?
 - How old were you when it happened for the first time?
 - How old was this person?
 - How many times did this happen? Once/twice; few, many?
- Probes: school, friend or family, neighbor; stranger or anyone else?



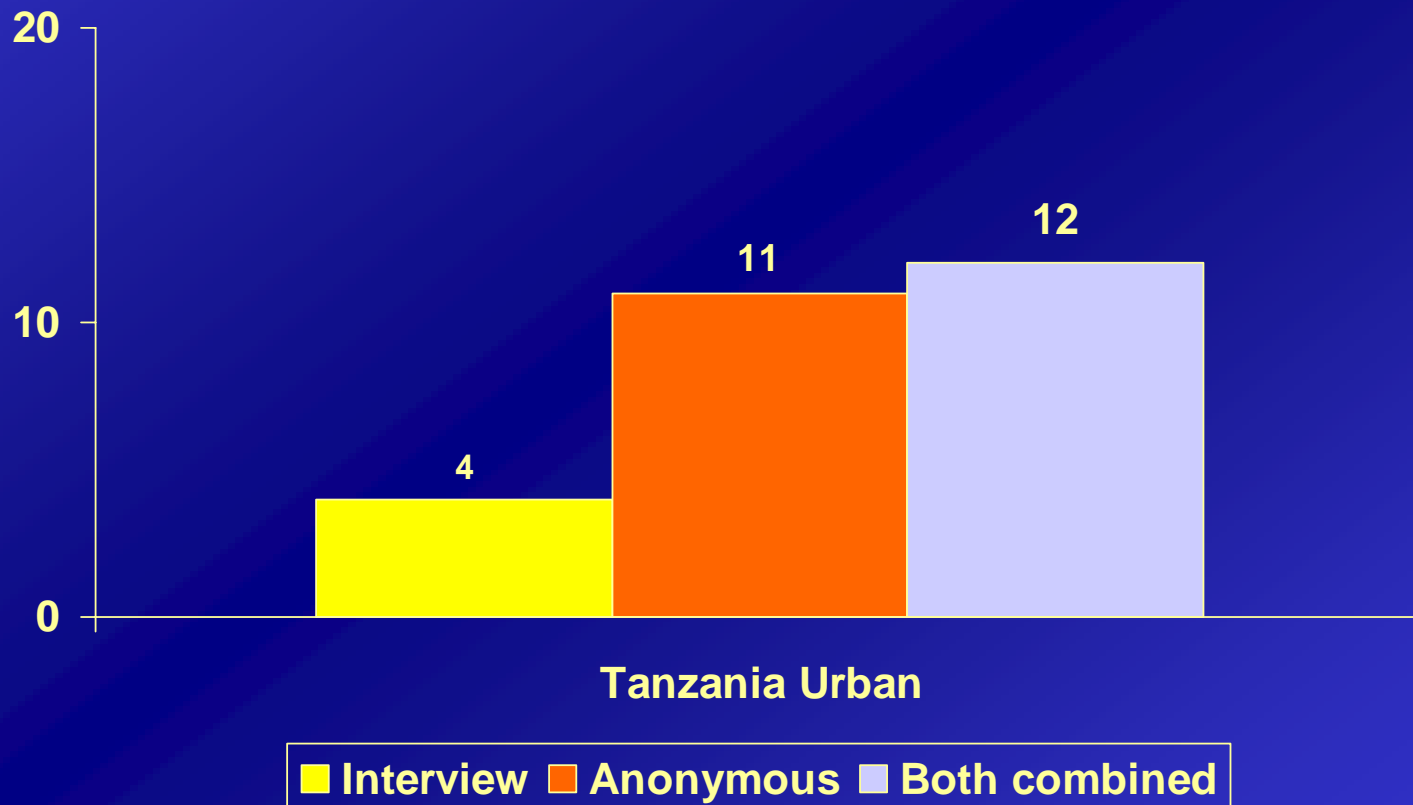
Anonymous reporting of sexual abuse before age 15



Comparison of methods of measuring sexual abuse before age 15



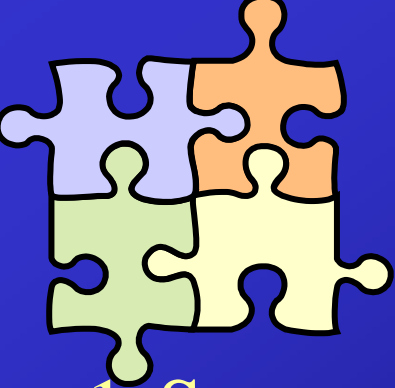
Percentage reporting sexual abuse before age 15, Tanzania



Prevalence - Discussion

- In all participating countries physical and sexual violence against women by intimate partners is very high
- Variations of prevalence within and between countries - further analysis will explore the determinants of these
- Such analysis can help inform future prevention initiatives





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What is your objective?

- To raise awareness about the problem
- To influence policy

**Short
module**

- To monitor trends
- To contribute to indicators at global level
- To compare between countries
- To understand more about violence, the associations, risk and protective factors

**Special
survey**



Strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches



Short module in survey:

- Official statistics
- Includes other variables
- Less detailed information on violence
- Less attention to safety
- Lower prevalence

Specialized survey:

- Often smaller scale
- More attention to safety issues
- Measures to enhance disclosure
- More in-depth information on violence
- Higher prevalence estimates



Examples of short modules



- DHS violence module
- CDC violence module in reproductive health surveys
- WHO violence against women instrument
 - (partner violence and non-partner violence)



Minimum conditions for using a short module



- Measures to protect safety of respondents and interviewers
- Crisis intervention and referrals to specialized services for respondents who need this
- Special training and emotional support and follow-up for interviewers



These minimal set of conditions are crucial for



- Doing research safely for all involved
- Enhancing disclosure
- Data quality – scientific rigour
- Political importance, to be able to do fieldwork in future research



CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Know your questions! Do you want to create awareness? Are there specific issues that need to be addressed: E.g. Crime prevention, health? From where is the demand coming?
- Find out what information already exists
- If you decide on a study: keep your objectives in mind.



- Ensure buy in of stake-holders, build local partnerships from the beginning
- Do not reinvent the wheel!
- Get technical advice, tools, manuals, support from those who have the experience
- Take all measures possible for safe and ethically sound data collection (including due attention to interviewer training!!...)
- ...and data interpretation and use!





THANK
YOU

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<http://www.who.int/gender/>



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