

Challenges in measuring Violence against women



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Training course in Sexual Health Research

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World Health Organization

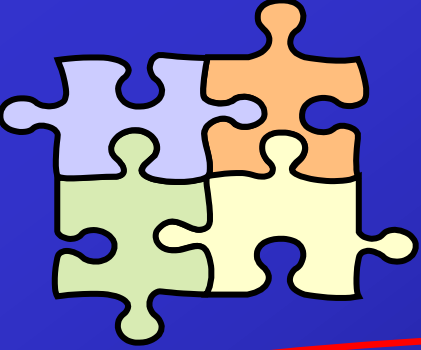
Gender, Women and Health



Objective of this training session

- **To discuss some essential principles and challenges 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. Ethical and Safety recommendations
4. Importance of interviewer training



Sources for data on prevalence of VAW



- Records from police, courts, hospital, etc
- Newspaper articles
- 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

**KNOW WHAT YOUR
DATA TELL YOU**



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



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**

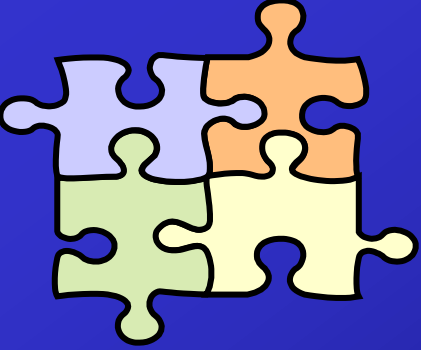


Minimum conditions for using a short module



- 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





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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%



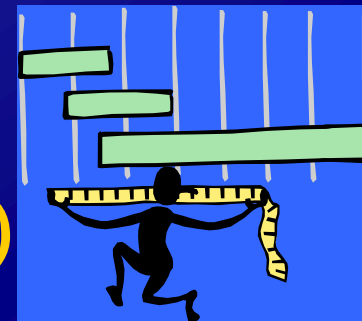
Defining violence



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



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



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



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)



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





"Because I belong to this Herero culture, I can speak to my family about any form of violence except sexual violence. I had the chance in this study to talk with a stranger about what I was suffering. It helped me a lot, it took a burden away"

Respondent in Namibia

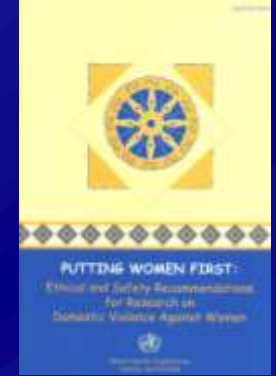
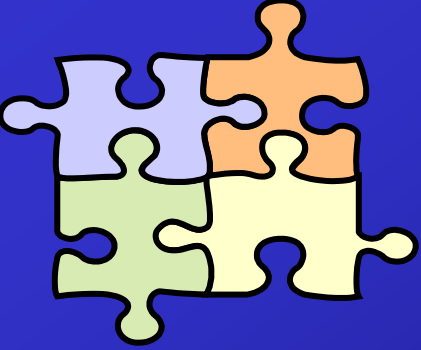


Suggestions for measuring violence against women



- 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





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To whom do woman talk about physical partner violence?

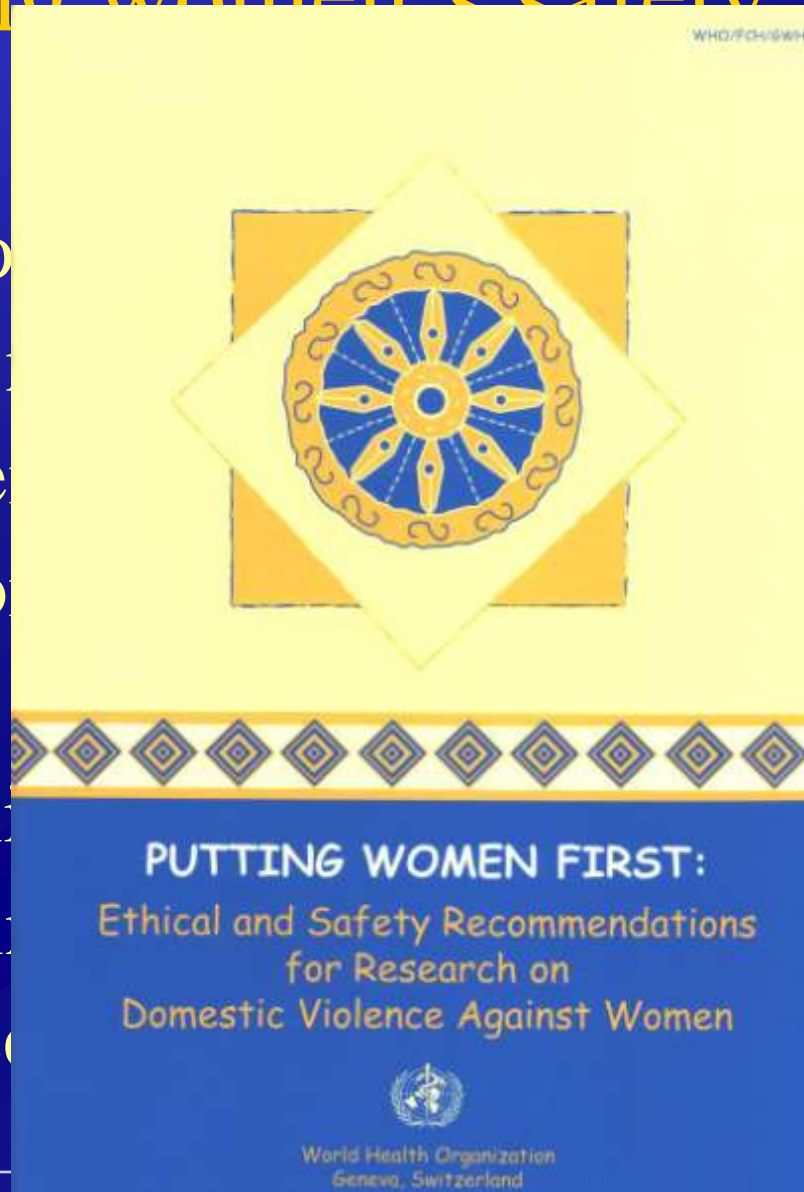
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1. Many women never talked about it before – implications for the interviewers
2. Very few women have talked with "formal services" – implications for value of these services as source of data



Putting women's safety first in

- 1. Safety of
- 2. Studies
- 3. Confide
- 4. Selection
- 5. Actions
- 6. Possibil
- 7. Proper i
- 8. Violence



Research team
Methodologically sound
Data quality
Members
Respondents
Mechanisms
Study results
Surveys



1. Safety of respondents and research team

- Interviews only in a private setting, participant should feel free to reschedule or relocate
- Frame the study not in terms of violence (but further information should be give as part of consent procedure)
- Only one woman per household
- Train interviewers about interruptions
- Logistics and budget planning should consider respondent and interviewer safety



2. Studies need to be methodologically sound

- Ethically it is unacceptable to conduct a poorly designed study that cannot address the aims
- Practically too: too low estimates can be used to question the importance of violence
- Avoid loaded terms as abuse, rape, violence
- Give attention to wording, length of interview, multiple opportunities for disclosure, etc.
- Sex, skill, attitude and training of interviewer
- When results unexpected, discuss findings with key informants, community groups before dissemination



3. Confidentiality for safety and data quality

- Address this in training of interviewers; no interviewers working in their own community
- Confidentiality procedures, consent process
- Handling of names
- Presentation of findings: no one community or individual can be identified
- Handling of photographs



Fieldwork

Brazil



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4. Selection and training of team members

- Training should include introduction on gender and violence
- Training as opportunity for research staff to come to terms with own experiences
- Addressing emotional needs of team members
- Role of interviewers: Not counselling, not trying to "save" respondents



Support for interviewers

Peru



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5. Actions to reducing distress to respondents

- Ask all questions in supportive and non-judgemental manner (language of questions)
- Train interviewers to deal with distress
- Train when and how to terminate interview
- All interviews should end in a positive manner



- *"Somehow it made me feel good, because it was something that I had never told anyone before. Now I've told someone".*
- --Respondent, Brazil



6. Possibilities of referral, support mechanisms

- If possible meet prior to field work with potential providers of support
- Develop list of resources and offer to all respondents – either small enough to be hidden or include a range of other services
- Where few resources exist, consider having a trained counsellor or women's advocate accompany the teams



7. Proper interpretation and use of study results

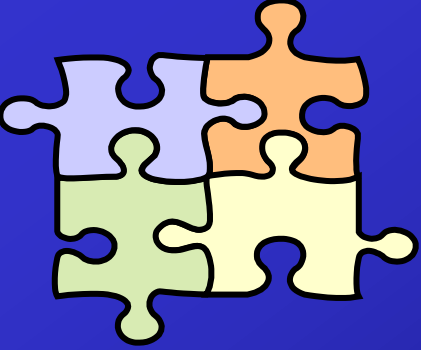
- Research findings should be fed into ongoing advocacy, policy-making and intervention activities
- Involve advocacy and service groups etc from the beginning as part of research team or advisory committee. Also in use and advocacy
- Researchers need to be proactive in ensuring that research findings are interpreted appropriately by public and media-



8. Violence questions in other surveys

- Be aware of the challenges of ensuring data quality and ensuring respondent safety
- It makes sense only if research team is willing and able to address basic ethical and methodological guidelines.





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Interviewer Training



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Goals of interviewer training

- To increase sensitivity of participants to gender issues at a personal as well as a community level;
- To develop a basic understanding of gender-based violence, its characteristics, causes and impact on the health of women and children;
- To understand the goals of the Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence;
- To learn skills for interviewing, taking into account safety and ethical guidelines;
- To become familiar with the questionnaire and protocol of the Violence against Women Study.



Example of training schedule

Week 1

- Presentations from advocacy groups/NGOs
- Sensitization to concepts of gender and violence
- Anonymous disclosure about personal and others' experiences of Inter Partner Violence
- Exposure to support options for women living with violence
- Aim and overview of the WHO Study and questionnaire
- Interviewing techniques and safety measures



Week 2

- Detailed question by question explanation of questionnaire
- Role-plays and field practice of approaching the household and using the complete questionnaire – including interviewing survivors of intimate partner violence, practice at how to respond if interview interrupted or if respondent becomes distressed
- Separate sessions for supervisors on supervisory procedures



Week 3

- Sampling procedures, including repeated visits and re-sampling
- Pilot testing of questionnaire and all field procedures, including logistics, safety measures, supervisory procedures in at least two different locations, alternated by debriefing and feedback sessions
- Final adjustments to questionnaire and field procedures
- Training of data entry staff on all aspects of data management using questionnaires from pilot study



Evidence of the value of training

Serbia and Montenegro 2003

- 13 inexperienced, carefully selected interviewers, trained during 3 weeks
- 21 professional interviewers, selected because of their interest in the topic, trained during one day



Special training vs professional interviewers

	Inexperienced, 3 week training	Professional, 1 day training
Response rate	93%	86%
Disclosure rate	26%	21%
Respondent satisfaction – with violence	46%	29%
Respondent satisfaction – without violence	46%	38%





“I learned a lot from the beginning of the training, till the end of the survey. The survey opened wounds, but I had to learn to face it and cope with it. The respondents really needed and enjoyed this experience... My career path changed, ... because I could do something which can make a difference...”

Interviewer from Namibia



Points to take home

- A population based survey on violence against women should be and can be done ethically and safely
- Women are willing to share experiences with trained and empathetic interviewers



- 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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INDIVIDUAL CONSENT FORM



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Hello, my name is *. I work for *. We are conducting a survey in STUDY LOCATION to learn about women's health and life experiences. You have been chosen by chance (as in a lottery / raffle) to participate in the study.

I want to assure you that all of your answers will be kept strictly secret. I will not keep a record of your name or address. You have the right to stop the interview at any time, or to skip any questions that you don't want to answer. There are no right or wrong answers. Some of the topics may be difficult to discuss, but many women have found it useful to have the opportunity to talk.

Your participation is completely voluntary but your experiences could be very helpful to other women in COUNTRY.

Do you have any questions?

The interview takes approximately * minutes to complete.

Do you agree to be interviewed?



NOTE WHETHER RESPONDENT AGREES TO INTERVIEW OR NOT

[] DOES NOT AGREE TO BE INTERVIEWED
THANK PARTICIPANT FOR HER TIME AND END

[] AGREES TO BE INTERVIEWED

Is now a good time to talk?

It's very important that we talk in private. Is this a good place to hold the interview, or is there somewhere else that you would like to go?

TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWER

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THE ABOVE CONSENT PROCEDURE TO THE PARTICIPANT.

SIGNED:



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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? ”





THANK
YOU

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



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