

WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses.

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WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses.

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Abstract : This report of the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women analyses data collected from over 24 000 women representing diverse cultural, geographical and urban/rural settings: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Japan, Peru, Namibia, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the United Republic of Tanzania. The study was designed to: (1) estimate the prevalence of sexual and emotional violence against women, with particular emphasis on violence by intimate partners; (2) assess the association of partner violence with a range of health and social outcomes; (3) identify factors that may either protect or put women at risk of violence; (4) document the strategies and services that women use to cope with violence by an intimate partner. This report presents findings on objectives 1, 2, and 3. The analysis of risk and protective factors, will be addressed in a future report. The findings indicate that violence by a male intimate partner (also called "domestic violence") is widespread in all of the countries included in the study. However, there was considerable variation from country to country, and from setting to setting. This indicates that violence is not inevitable. The proportion of ever-partnered women who had suffered physical violence by a male intimate partner ranged from 13% in Japan to 59% in Peru, with most sites falling between 23% and 49%. The range of lifetime prevalence of sexual violence by an intimate partner was between 6% (Japan and Serbia and Montenegro) and 59% (Ethiopia) with most sites falling between 10% and 50%. The most common abusive acts by a partner included: being insulted or made to feel bad about one's appearance; being humiliated in front of others; being intimidated or scared on purpose; being threatened directly, or through a threat to someone the respondent cares about. In all countries, between 20% and 75% of women had experienced one or more of these acts, most within the past 12 months. Over half of physically abused women (55% and 95%) reported that they had never sought help from formal services (police, health services, legal advice, shelter) or from people in positions of authority (police, nongovernmental organizations, local leaders, and religious leaders). Only in Peru had more than 20% of women contacted the police, and only in Namibia and the United Republic of Tanzania had more than 20% sought help from health care providers.

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