



"Violence against women: a statistical overview, challenges and gaps in data collection and methodology and approaches for overcoming them"

Expert Group Meeting

Organized by: UN Division for the Advancement of Women
in collaboration with:
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and World Health Organization
(WHO)
11 – 14 April, 2005
Geneva Switzerland

Report of the expert group meeting

1.1 Data collection on violence aga

11-14 April 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the data and statistics currently available regarding the extent, nature and consequences of all forms of violence against women, evaluate the quality of the data, and identify remaining gaps in data collection. Participants reviewed initiatives currently being spearheaded by international and regional organizations, national and local governments, non-governmental organizations and other entities, and tested in various countries, including national level surveys and the development of common indicators.

The current document lays out the expert group's recommendations for enhancing ways for assessing the extent of the problem, especially through improved and more systematic data gathering in the following areas:

- a) Assessment of the types of data currently available and collected, including issues such as:
 - ! The types of violence against women on which data are collected
 - ! The scope of data collection (at national/local level, regional or sub-regional coverage)
 - ! The frequency with which data are collected (systematic, ad hoc)
 - ! The entities responsible for, or contributing to, data collection (independent entities, government entities, and non-governmental organizations)
 - ! The methodologies used to collect and analyze the data (e.g. surveys, secondary analysis, analysis of collated crime or health statistics)
- b) Assessment of the gaps in data collection and challenges facing data collectors, including issues such as:
 - ! The challenge of under- and non reporting of violence against women
 - ! Lack of data collection on certain types of violence against women
 - ! Lack of data by geographical region
 - ! Methodological problems
- c) Assessment of needs of policy makers and professionals working to prevent violence against women:
 - ! Constraints faced by data producers, including researchers, government offices, and organizations of civil society
 - ! Needs of users, including policy-makers, service providers and activists
- d) Recommendations for improved data collection and proposals for better assessing the extent of the problem.

1.3 Participants and format of the meeting

The group consisted of a broad range of experts from both criminal justice and public health perspectives, and included academics, representatives from national and international agencies, activists and policy analysts (see Annex I for the list of participants). The participants elected the following officers:

Chairperson:	Holly Johnson
Vice-chairperson:	Ana Flavia d Oliveira
Rapporteur:	Mary Ellsberg
Facilitator of Working Group I:	Patricia Tjaden
Facilitators of Working Group II:	Ivy Josiah and Holly Johnson

During the first two days of the meeting, the experts presented papers and case studies for discussion in plenary. During the third and fourth days the themes presented in plenary were further developed in working groups, and recommendations were developed in regard to each of the topics of the meeting. Following is a summary of the discussions and recommendations developed during the meeting.

II. Summary of the discussion

The Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women categorizes violence against women as an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace.

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation, and other traditional practices harmful to women, non- spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation occurring at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, and trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

The Declaration recognizes that some groups of women are particularly vulnerable to violence, such as: women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women and women in situations of armed conflict.

Because it is so inclusive, the Declaration's definition of violence against women provides a good conceptual framework for studying violence against women. However, because the types of violence vary greatly in their characteristics, the methods for collecting data on violence must be adapted according to the type of violence under study. Particular attention needs to be paid to addressing forms of violence against women which remain underreported and to assessing the prevalence of violence in certain hard to reach populations.

The expert group discussed in-depth the strengths and weaknesses of the two most common forms of data collection on the subject – population-based surveys and service-based data. In addition to quantitative data collected through these methods, the group discussed the importance of using qualitative data to study other aspects of violence against women. Qualitative methods can be an especially effective tool for assessing the nature of gender-based violence in an environment where little or no systematic data exists, such as conflict-affected areas. They can also be used to gain deeper insight into the causes and consequences of violence against women.

of violence against

- ! **Frequency/duration:** Many studies include some measure of frequency (number of incidents), others also examine duration of the violence. Together, frequency and duration are sometimes referred to as chronicity.

- ! **Severity:** Many studies include measures of severity, determined either by actual injuries or by clearer

interview both men and women about their experiences as victims of violence. Some studies, particularly in the United States of America and Europe, have focused on the experiences of children and youth as victims of violence.

- ! **Coverage:** Some studies are national in coverage, whereas others are representative of one or more regions or local communities.
- ! **Study organizations:** Relatively few studies are carried out under the auspices of National Statistics Offices. More often, they are conducted by universities, independent research institutes and non-governmental organizations (often under the auspices of or with funding from government or international agencies). In some countries where National Statistical Offices are not directly involved in conducting the survey, they have provided assistance with sampling methodology.

While a great deal has been accomplished already, there are still challenges and gaps in developing knowledge on violence against women in all parts of the world. Problems exist with respect to both the reliability and validity of the data being collected, as well as with the comparability of data across studies. There is a lack of standardized methods and instruments for data measurement and collection. Thus, more work is needed to ensure greater uniformity and comparability in the collection and reporting of data on all forms of violence against women. For example, many of the prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence are not comparable, due to methodological differences in the way that violence has been defined and measured, although recent international efforts such as those of the WHO and the IVAWS have sought to address the issue of comparability. Besides the issue of comparability and quality of data, there are enormous gaps in terms of territorial coverage, the populations addressed, and types of violence against women measured.

2.4 Gaps and challenges in population-based research on violence against women

~~Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Congo, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritania, Mauritius, Comoros, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Congo, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritania, Mauritius, Comoros, Djibouti, Somalia~~

WHO Ethical and Safety

There are also on-going efforts of international organizations and institutes to support the implementation of internationally comparative surveys dedicated to violence against women using standard survey methodology. Two important examples of multi-country efforts of dedicated surveys are: (1) the International Violence against Women Surveys (IVAWS), coordinated by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI), with inputs from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Statistics Canada, and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI); and (2) the WHO Multi-Country Study on Domestic Violence and Women's Health Surveys.

The IVAWS has been administered in eleven countries to date. Its purpose is to collect nationally representative data on a broad array of violent acts perpetrated by men against women, including physical and sexual violence by intimate partners and other men. These studies are conducted within a crime victimization framework and provide information that is particularly useful for interventions in the criminal justice sector.

The WHO Multi-Country Study has been conducted in at least ten countries and collects data on women's experiences of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and child sexual abuse, as well as a broad range of negative health outcomes commonly associated with violence. The WHO studies typically collect data from two sites, a national metropolitan site as well as a provincial site.

Increasingly, questions on violence against women are included into

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violence. They also tend to devote more attention to the interaction between interviewers and respondents and to address more comprehensively issues of safety and confidentiality. Experience to date indicates that prevalence estimates produced using these methods tend to be higher than in non-specialized surveys. A disadvantage to these studies is that they tend to be costly, and difficult for countries to repeat on a regular basis.

On the other hand, surveys designed primarily for other purposes can also play an important role in documenting the extent of violence against women, particularly when resources are scarce for conducting dedicated surveys. Moreover, the broad variety of other variables collected in these surveys, such as reproductive and child health outcomes, can be used to deepen understanding of risk factors and health consequences, and to monitor violence against women, and its intergenerational consequences, over time.

A major disadvantage of embedding violence against women surveys in a general survey designed for other purposes is that the breadth of information generated on violence against women can be more limited than the information generated by dedicated studies. There is also a greater risk of under-reporting, for the reasons mentioned above. In sum, there are trade-offs both in utilizing the dedicated survey and general survey approach, and each can contribute valuable evidence for guiding interventions. For the non dedicated studies, a module/instrument with multiple questions is recommended, as the use of only one or two questions has been demonstrated to result in greater under-reporting.

Hard-to-reach populations

Significant progress has been made in the develop

Reproductive Health Response in Conflict (RHRC) Consortium GBV Initiative

From 2000 to 2004 the Reproductive Health Response in Conflict (RHRC) Consortium spearheaded a global GBV Initiative, which resulted in, among other outcomes, a qualitative assessment of gender-based violence in conflict settings. The initiative found that there was scant data available about the prevalence of gender-based violence or best practices for qualitatively or quantitatively describing the problem.

In an effort to improve international capacity to measure, prevent, and respond to gender-based violence among refugees, internally displaced persons, and other conflict-affected populations, the GBV Initiative designed a *Gender-based Violence Tools Manual for Assessment and Program Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation* (2004). In addition to a series of qualitative assessment tools and techniques, the GBV Tools Manual contains a working draft of a standardized population-based survey designed to measure multiple forms of gender-based violence in conflict-affected settings around the world.

Isis-WICCE (Women s International Cross Cultural Exchange) - Bridging the Gap

Realizing that there was very limited information about the realities of women in situations of armed conflict, Isis-WICCE took a deliberate step to utilize two international instruments (the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action) as its framework for documenting violations of women s human rights in situations of armed conflict in Africa, with Uganda as a starting point. In Uganda, Isis-WICCE collected data on women s experiences in situations of armed conflict in seven districts. In addition to documenting their experiences, Isis-WICCE also initiated emergency and long-term interventions in support of victims, in the belief that the purpose of data collection is to utilize the information to make a difference in the plight of women.

Examples taken from papers presented at the expert group meeting, available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-stat-2005/documents.html>.

2.5 Service-based data on violence against women

Service-based data refers to information that is collected routinely through public and private agencies that may come into contact with abused women, even if the violence is not the primary reason for the contact. They include records from health centers, police stations and courts, public services such as housing or social welfare services, and shelters and other support services for survivors of violence. Examples of other support services include women lawyers associations, legal aid services and advocacy organizations. The information collected by services cannot be used to measure the prevalence of violence in a community since in most societies very few abused women actually report violence to the police or other services, and those that do report tend to be the most seriously injured and marginalized women. However, these data, where they exist, can make a valuable contribution to understanding the causes and dynamics of violent acts and societal responses to violence.

Service-based statistics can be used to monitor the number of women coming forward to various agencies for help, and can identify the scope of violence-affected women among specific populations, such as those presenting to medical centres with injuries, or abused women as a percentage of all assaults presenting to criminal court. Together, these data can

contribute to estimates of the cost to society of respond

! Refuges and other support services

Shelters/refuges; rape/sexual assault phone lines; advocacy and related support services; research and documentation centres

A variety of support services led by non-governmental organizations, sometimes with some support from public funds, collect information on the extent and nature of violence against women. These include shelters and refuges, sexual assault phone lines, advocacy and re

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA)

A study on violence against women was recently carried out in Bangladesh as part of the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence. In addition, there are two primary sources of data on gender-based violence: court records of cases (prosecuted) and police records on reported crimes. Police headquarters established a cell on violence against women complaints in 1993. Data on complaints made by women are collected from all the police stations and from the district women's affairs cells. Hospital records and newspaper records are also regarded as important sources for collection of data. Statistics on gender-based violence are also collected by the six divisional offices of the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs.

Aside from official statistics, several non-governmental organizations accumulate data by conducting research. This research covers selected areas rather than the whole country. Several non-governmental organizations compile data based on newspaper records. Newspapers have a tendency to cover sexual crimes rather than domestic violence cases. As a result, reports of maternal mortality or suicide get less attention and adultery, child marriage, forced marriage and forced prostitution receive little coverage unless there is an alleged murder.

In order to assist with the accurate and systematic collection of data on violence against women, the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association recommends that computerized databases be maintained by the police department, local governments, non-governmental organizations, the judiciary and the One Stop Crisis Center. The various databases could be integrated into a centralized national database. The BNWLA also recommends that community based studies on the prevalence of violence against women be routinely carried out and that data on violence against women be made available to organizations and individuals who wish to access this information.

Examples taken from papers presented at the expert group meeting, available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-stat-2005/documents.html>.

2.6 Gaps and challenges with service-based data on violence against women

The availability and quality of service-based data varies a great deal among settings. In some countries, particularly in Europe and North America, information is available from a broad array of sources, although even in these regions additional efforts are needed to collect and present violence-related statistics. In other areas, particularly in resource-poor settings, the challenges for collecting service-based data on violence are much greater.

In general, service agencies do not have data collection as their primary resTtD(e)Tj 22 0 TD()Tj 23 0 D(n)T

Problems with service-based statistics are compounded when social services apart from the police do not exist, exist only in limited number, or when violence against women is not recognized as a crime by police or by society in general and is rarely acted upon. In addition, in certain societies, victims of domestic violence or sexual assault are highly stigmatized and victims therefore rarely come forward for support. As a result, considerable variation exists in the extent to which service-based statistics are available at the country level.

III. Lessons learned and recommendations for improving the quality and availability of data collection on violence against women

3.1 General principles for collecting data on violence against women

Substantial progress has been made in the past ten years in the development of methodologies and procedures for data collection on violence against women and a reliable body of evidence on the extent, nature and consequences of violence is c a

- ! Multiple approaches and measures should be used to determine the severity of violence. These include the extent of physical as well as emotional injuries, frequency of violence (incidents); and outcomes such as reproductive health problems, economic and social participation, costs and service utilization, consequences for children and child mortality. Different outcomes will be of special interest for different constituencies (for example, injury statistics are particularly important for the criminal justice sector, whereas the impact of violence on mortality and fertility are of interest to the health sector).
- ! Researchers and national statistics offices should make every effort to minimize risks to respondents and interviewers, under the basic ethical principle of *Do no harm*. When such efforts are not feasible, data collection should not be performed.
- ! Types of violence should be presented in a differentiated way and data collected accordingly so as to enable more nuanced understanding of the range of violence women experience, the consequences for victims and the implications for policy-makers.
- ! When collection of data on violence against women is included into studies designed primarily for other purposes, a sufficient number of questions should be included to provide a valid measure of violence, and specific measures should be used to maximize the protection of respondents and interviewers. Ideally, a specific module on violence against women should be used rather than a few questions. If basic conditions are not available to enable the collection of reliable estimates of violence against women that takes into account the safety of women, then it is advisable not to conduct the research.
- ! Efforts should be made to strengthen national statistical and research capacity for collecting data on violence against women, through both specialized surveys and ro

! To build capacity for hospitals and clinics to be able to implement injury surveillance (Tj 410, Tj 253)

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Annex II

List of documents

Papers by experts

- ! Violence against women: The Ghanaian case
Elizabeth Ardayfio-Schandorf

- ! Violence against women: a statistical overview, and challenges and gaps in data collection and methodology and approaches for overcoming them. Needs of users of data collection
Indira Jaising (presented by Asmita Basu)

- ! Data on violence against women: The Jordanian situation
Dalia El Farouki

- ! Violence against women : A statistical overview, challenges and gaps in data collection and methodology and approaches for overcoming them
Sharmeen A. Farouk

- ! Violence against women in Brazil: overview, gaps and challenges
Ana Flávia d Oliveira & Lilia Blimmm

Panel 2: International efforts at collecting data on various forms of viol

(Coffee break)

Synthesis

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Discussants will synthesize the strengths, weaknesses, limitations and lessons learned from the presentations, as well as identify gaps in terms of methodologies, types of violence against women covered, populations covered, etc.

! Mary Ellsberg

! Sylvia Walby

Discussion

Tuesday 12 April 2005

10:00 11:00 AM Discussion continued

Plenary Session 2

Objective: To clarify the data and information needs of users, policy makers and practitioners and identify remaining gaps in the collection of data.

11:00 12:30 PM Panel 4: Forms of violence against women for which data is not systematically collected

Presentations by experts addressing forms of violence against women for which systematic data collection does not exist

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2:00 3:15 PM Panel 5: Needs of users of data on violence against women

Presentations by advocates/ practitioners/

Expected output: *Recommendations on how to improve ro*