



Measuring Violence Against Women

Workshop on Improving the Integration of a Gender Perspective into Statistics,

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Introduction

- *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women: Statistical Survey*
- Mandated by the UN Statistical Commission
- Focusing on a core list of indicators (FOC-UNSC)
 - Most common forms of violence
 - Measured through population-based surveys
- Single methodological resource based on/in line with other international initiatives on the production of VAW stats
 - UN Regional Commissions (survey module; ESCWA toolkit; e-learning, workshops)
 - International multi-country studies (IVAWS;WHO)



Overview of Guidelines

- Provide detailed methodological advice on:
 - What to measure
 - core and additional topics, (prevalence, severity, impact of VAW)
 - How to measure
 - population-based surveys, steps required to plan/organize and execute, recommended tabulations, data analysis and dissemination of results
 - Special features of surveys on VAW
 - All other relevant issues for NSOs to conduct statistical surveys on VAW

Definition of Violence Against Women



- United Nations Declaration on the Elimination 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 to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”
- Many forms of violence. These guidelines only cover those that can be measured directly through sample survey data.
- VAW forms not covered include, for example:
 - trafficking
 - honour killing
 - VAW in armed conflicts etc.



How to measure (1)

- Dedicated Surveys (preferred approach)
 1. To measure phenomena in all its complexity through a detailed range of questions
 2. To facilitate disclosure of sensitive topic through properly designed questionnaire
 - Introductory questions to prompt respondents to think of violence
 - Wording and Sequence of questions



How to Measure (2)

3. To ensure the essential features of Surveys on VAW are considered
 - Importance of appropriate sampling design (not to systematically exclude important population sub-groups)
 - Special training of interviewers
 - Ethical considerations
 - Confidentiality
 - Safety of respondents and interviewers
 - Support to victims



How to Measure (3)

- Alternatively,
 - Use a Module in women's health type of surveys
 - When dedicated survey is not feasible
 - Only as long as previous principles are followed

Core indicators - UN Statistical Commission FOC



- Total and age specific rate of women subjected to physical violence in the last 12 months (severity/perpetrator/frequency)
- Total and age specific rate of women subjected to physical violence during lifetime (severity/perpetrator/frequency)
- Total and age specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence in the last 12 months (severity/perpetrator/frequency)
- Total and age specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence during lifetime (severity/perpetrator/frequency)
- Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner in the last 12 months (frequency)
- Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partner during lifetime (frequency)
- Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to psychological violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner
- Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to economic violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner

Intimate partner

Core indicators - Summary



| Indicator Number: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical | x | x | | | x | x | | |
| Sexual | | | x | x | x | x | | |
| Psychological | | | | | | | x | |
| Economic | | | | | | | | x |
| 12 months | x | | x | | x | | x | x |
| Lifetime | | x | | x | | x | | |
| Severity | x | x | x | x | | | | |
| Frequency | x | x | x | x | x | x | | |
| Perpetrator | x | x | x | x | | | | |

Lifetime refers to any violent act since age 15 or (in case of partner violence) since the beginning of the partnership.

Types of Violence: Physical



- Questions should always be posed about occurrences of specific acts rather than just asking generally about violence, which will result in under-reporting
- A minimum list of acts of physical violence consists of the following:
 - Slapped
 - Thrown something at you that could hurt
 - Pushed, shoved, pulled hair
 - Hit with something
 - Hit with fists or other objects
 - Kicked, bit or dragged
 - Beat
 - Choked or burned
 - Threatened with knife, gun, or other weapon
 - Used a knife, gun, or other weapon against her
 - Other threats or acts of physical violence (leave open for the respondent to specify)
- Other acts may be appropriate depending on the context e.g. stoning or throwing acid



Types of Violence: Sexual

- Any sort of harmful or unwanted sexual behaviour that is imposed on someone.

Includes:

- Rape;
- Attempted rape;
- Other sexual acts:
 - Intimate touching without consent
 - Sexual acts other than intercourse forced by money
 - Sexual acts other than intercourse obtained through threats of physical violence
 - Sexual acts other than intercourse obtained through threats to the wellbeing of family members
 - Use of force or coercion to obtain unwanted sexual acts or any sexual activity that the female partner finds degrading or humiliating
 - Other acts of sexual violence



Types of Violence: Psychological

- Examples of behaviours that fit within a definition of psychological violence:
 - **Emotional abuse:**
 - Insults her or makes her feel bad about herself
 - Belittles or humiliates her in front of other people
 - Deliberately scares or intimidates her
 - Threatens to hurt her or others she cares about
 - **Controlling behaviours:**
 - Isolates her by preventing her from seeing family or friends
 - Monitors her whereabouts and social interactions
 - Ignores her or treats her indifferently
 - Gets angry if she speaks with other men
 - Makes unwarranted accusations of infidelity
 - Controls her access to health care
 - Controls her access to education or the labour market
- Always adapt this to the country context – it is hard to define this type of violence for all countries
- Suffers from serious recall bias, so only collect this for the 12 months prior to the survey

Types of Violence: Economic



- When an individual deprives his intimate partner from having access to financial resources, typically as a form of abuse or control, or in order to isolate her or impose other adverse consequences to her wellbeing. It may involve the following:
 - Denying access to financial resources
 - Denying access to property and durable goods
 - Deliberate non-compliance of economic responsibilities, such as alimony or financial support for family, that could result in considerable exposure of the victim to poverty and hardship
 - Denying access to the labour market and education
 - Denying participation in decision-making relevant to economic status
- Most prone to vary by cultural context so this should be adapted very carefully
- This should also only be captured for the 12 months prior to the survey

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)



- Included in core indicators, but should only be used if appropriate for the country context.
- Generally data is collected on the direct experience of women asked, and also the experience of any daughters they have.
- For more detailed information see both UNICEF and DHS information.



Reference periods

- 12 months:
 - Simply the 12 months before the survey
 - Used for physical, sexual, economic and psychological
 - For intimate partner violence can include previous partners if violence occurred within the time frame, so don't confuse this with "current partner violence"!
- Lifetime:
 - For non-partner violence this is only since age 15
 - For partner sexual violence, if the violence occurred within a partnership then it should be included, even if this happened before the age of 15

Topics/variables required to compute inds.



- Core
 - Type of violence
 - Severity of violence
 - Frequency
 - Relationship to perpetrator
 - Age
 - Marital/relationship status



Additional topics

- For respondents
 - Ethnicity
 - Economic activity status
 - Religion
 - Language
 - Educational attainment and Literacy
 - Age at first marriage or co-habitation
 - Place of residence (U/R)

Additional topics



- For violence
 - Attitude towards violence against women
 - Reporting to authorities/seeking help

- For perpetrator
 - Age
 - Substance abuse
 - Economic activity status
 - Educational attainment
 - Witnessing violence in childhood

- For perpetrator (non-partner)
 - Sex
 - Location of the violence

Essential Steps in a VAW Survey



1. Establishing the legal basis
2. Consultation with stakeholders
3. Specifying survey objectives
4. Choosing the mode(s) of data collection
5. Budget and timelines
6. Establishing the organizational structure
7. Questionnaire design and piloting
8. Sample design
9. Selection of interviewers
10. Training
11. Data collection
12. Data capture, editing and verification
13. Data analysis
14. Dissemination
15. Evaluation

Questionnaire Design



- The UNECE has produced a model questionnaire, which can easily be adapted to an individual countries context.
- There are also some general and important guidelines:



Ask about specific individual acts such as kicking or slapping rather than “violence”. This will be more time consuming, but yields better data



Start with more minor violence and order questions so that respondents are “eased in”



Stigmatizing terms such as “rape” and “violence” should be avoided – the list of such terms will depend on the language and culture of the country



Respondents should be made to feel as at ease as possible with the use of introductions to questions

E.g. 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 how your current (or most recent) husband/partner treats (treated) you.

Training of Interviewers



- Specialised training for VAW surveys must ensure interviewers understand:
 - the extreme sensitivity of the topic
 - violence against women and its impacts on victims
 - societal myths about violence against women and how these affect victims and interviewers
 - gender issues at a personal and community level
 - the goals of the survey or module of questions on violence against women
 - ethical requirements of surveys on violence against women, including importance of and strategies for addressing confidentiality, safety and support for respondents
 - skills needed for interviewing on this topic including encouraging participation in the survey and creating a climate that promotes disclosures of sensitive survey questions
 - interviewing techniques for building rapport with respondents
 - skills to detect when respondents are at risk of being overheard and re-schedule interviews accordingly
 - how to identify and respond appropriately to emotional trauma by referring respondents to resources in the local community and avoiding emotional involvement or counselling
 - how to identify emotional reactions in themselves that result from working on this topic (such as traumatization due to reliving own experiences or due to hearing traumatic stories day after day) and develop skills to manage and reduce stress

Ethical Considerations



- WHO recommends that all VAW surveys adhere to the following ethical principles. These are an essential component of planning and undertaking surveys on this topic.
 - The safety of respondents and the research team is paramount and should guide all project decisions
 - Protecting confidentiality is essential to ensure women's safety and data quality.
 - All research team members should be carefully selected, receive specialized training and ongoing support.
 - The study design must include actions aimed at reducing any possible distress caused to the participants.
 - Fieldworkers should be trained to refer women requesting assistance to sources of support. Where few resources exist, short-term support mechanisms can be produced
 - VAW questions should be incorporated into surveys designed for other purposes only when ethical and methodological requirements can be met.

Other Important Ethical Points



- The survey should have a safe name, that does not reveal the nature of the survey e.g. “Women’s Health and Life Events Survey”
- Interviewers should have access to counselors and should not do too many interviews so as to avoid “burn-out”
- Interviewers should not conduct interviews in or near their own community
- Questionnaires should never include names or other identifying information
- Questionnaires and/or data files should always be kept in a secure location and data files should be anonymised

Annexes – Additional resources



- Proposed tabulations for core indicators
- Model questionnaire (DA inter-regional project)
- International instruments and conventions on VAW
- Countries that undertook VAW surveys
- Examples of questions for additional topics



Conclusions on Guidelines

- Focusing on measuring FOC indicators on VAW through a population-based survey
- Highlighting special features of VAW surveys
- Underlying the need to strengthen administrative records (health, justice..) to gather information on other forms of violence
- Stressing the importance of involving national mechanisms for the advancement of women, relevant ministries, other stakeholders to:
 - Ensure consistency of concepts
 - Relevance of statistics for policies and programme development
 - Use of information produced