



WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women



Country Findings

Thailand

1. Introduction

The Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women, sponsored by the World Health Organization, between 2000 and 2003 collected data from over 24 000 women in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Study assessed women's experiences of violence using a questionnaire developed and validated for cross-cultural use, with a special focus on violence by intimate partners. It also investigated how such violence is associated with ill-health and injury, and the strategies that women use to cope with the violence.

In Thailand, the research was jointly conducted by the Institute of Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, and the Foundation for Women. It was the first population-based survey conducted in Thailand on this issue and data collection took place in 2000.

2. Methods

In Thailand, a total of 1536 women aged between 15 and 49 years were interviewed in Bangkok and 1282 in Nakhonsawan. Educational levels were considerably higher in Bangkok, where 65% of the women had more than primary education, compared to 37% in Nakhonsawan. In Thailand, women were considered "ever-partnered" if they had ever been married, ever lived with a man or were currently with a regular sexual partner.

In the Study, the following definitions of partner violence were used. *Physical violence* meant the woman had been: slapped, or had something thrown at her; pushed or shoved; hit with a fist or something else that could hurt; kicked, dragged or beaten up; choked or burnt; threatened with or had a weapon used against her. *Sexual violence* meant the woman had: been physically forced to have sexual intercourse; had sexual intercourse because she was afraid of what her partner might do; been forced to do something sexual she found degrading or humiliating.

3. Main findings

3.1 Prevalence of partner violence

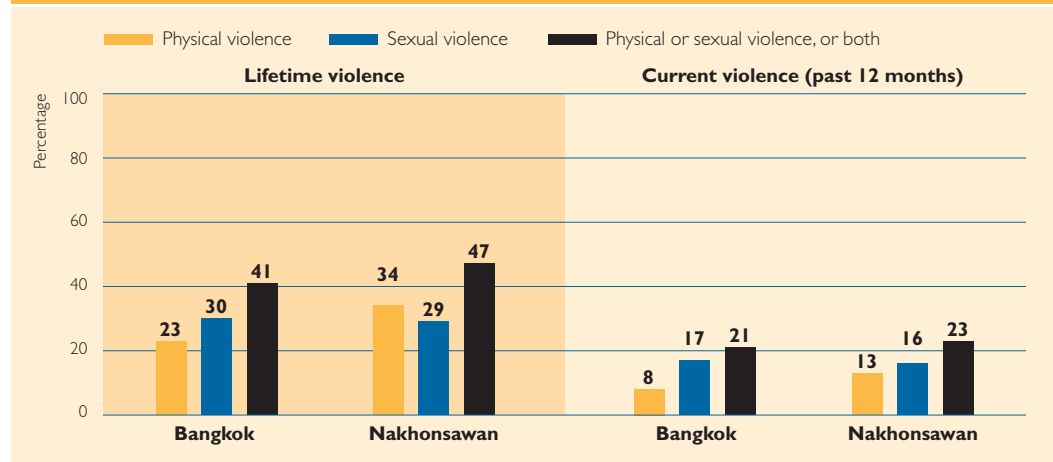
- 23% of ever-partnered women in Bangkok and 34% in Nakhonsawan reported physical violence by their intimate partner at some time in their life.
- 30% in Bangkok and 29% in Nakhonsawan reported that they had experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner.
- Combining these data, 41% of ever-partnered women in Bangkok and 47% in Nakhonsawan had experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.

3.2 Injuries inflicted by a partner

- Among women who had experienced physical violence by their partners, 51% in Bangkok and 44% in Nakhonsawan had ever been injured. Injuries ranged from abrasions and bruises, sprains and dislocations, ear and eye injuries, cuts, punctures, and bites to fractures. In Bangkok, 31% of women who had been injured were so badly injured that they needed health care. In Nakhonsawan, this percentage was 23%.



Percentage of women who experienced violence by an intimate partner, among ever-partnered women aged 15–49 years, Thailand



3.3 Physical violence by a partner during pregnancy

- 4% of women who had ever been pregnant in both Bangkok and Nakhonsawan had experienced physical violence during a pregnancy. Of these, about one third reported that they had been punched or kicked in the abdomen during pregnancy. In almost all cases the perpetrator was the father of the child.

3.4 Non-partner physical and sexual violence since the age of 15 years

- 8% of respondents in Bangkok and 10% in Nakhonsawan had experienced physical violence since the age of 15 years by a non-partner. Relatives were most commonly mentioned as perpetrators.
- 6% of women in Bangkok and 3% in Nakhonsawan had experienced sexual violence since the age of 15 years by a non-partner.
- In Bangkok, strangers were most commonly identified as perpetrators, being mentioned by 45% of the women who experienced sexual violence. In Nakhonsawan, however, boyfriends were cited most frequently, being mentioned by 21% of women who experienced sexual violence.

3.5 Sexual abuse of girls under 15 years of age and forced first sex

- 9% of all respondents in Bangkok and 5% in Nakhonsawan reported sexual abuse before the age of 15 years. The main perpetrators were strangers mentioned by 58% in Bangkok, and 30% in Nakhonsawan.
- Among women who had ever had sex 4% in Bangkok and 5% in Nakhonsawan mentioned that their first sexual experience was forced.

3.6 Impact on women's health of violence by a partner

- 20% of physically or sexually abused women in Bangkok rated their general health as poor compared to 13% of never-abused women; in Nakhonsawan the rates were 27% versus 18%.
- 38% of women who had experienced physical or sexual violence in Bangkok and 33% in Nakhonsawan had ever thought of committing suicide compared with 16% of non-abused women in both sites.

3.7 Help-seeking by women experiencing physical violence by a partner

- 37% of physically abused women in Bangkok and 46% in Nakhonsawan never told anyone about the violence they had experienced. If they had told someone, this was usually their parents or the partner's family.
- Only 20% of physically abused women in Bangkok and 10% in Nakhonsawan had ever turned to formal services (health, police, religious or local leaders, etc.) for help.
- Women who sought help did so because they could not endure the situation any longer (44% of women who sought help in Bangkok and 31% in Nakhonsawan), or because they had been badly injured (31% in Bangkok and 26% in Nakhonsawan).

For more information, see

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

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