Good afternoon, it is an honor to be here on behalf of my colleagues, Alessandra Guedes, Sarah Bott and Jennifer Adams and to be able to share our findings about the national prevalence of intimate partner violence against women in the Americas.

During the presentation, I will review the background, methodology, findings regarding the most recent estimates and changes over time, along with recommendations and conclusions.

In two thousand and twelve, PAHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a comparative analysis of violence against women in 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean Region. Data from Demographic and Health Surveys and Reproductive Health Surveys were analyzed. It was the first regional comparison of national data. This publication addressed various forms of violence against women, such as physical, sexual and emotional violence by an intimate partner; controlling behaviors, and sexual violence by any person. And even data on prevalence, risk factors, consequences, and attitudes are reported.
After this publication, we sought to update the information collected. So, in recent years, our team has conducted a systematic review of national surveys on violence against women within the Region of the Americas. Specifically, we looked for surveys that were National representative, population-based, household or telephone surveys, from any PAHO member state, that gathered IPV prevalence data, Who collected data between nineteen ninety eight and two thousand seventeen, studies had to be published before June two thousand eighteen, English, French, Portuguese or Spanish, and mention partner in the items.

Per PRISMA guidelines, the search was performed on SciELO LILACS, PubMed, Google Scholar, the databases of UN Women, SDGs, the Global Health Data Exchange, Reproductive Health Surveys, DHS, and websites of national institutes of statistics (or similar agencies) in each country. Bibliographies of global and regional reviews were manually searched, and researchers and government officials throughout the Region were contacted.

Surveys were excluded under these criteria:
- their reports do not provide enough information to evaluate the methodological quality and the construction of the indicators
- if questionnaires were not available or at least operational definitions
- if it combined estimation of violence against women and men without disaggregation by sex.

We identified six national surveys with data on the prevalence of violence against women by an intimate partner. All were representative of rural and urban areas, with the exception of some surveys that were only urban.
As you can see on this slide, as of July two thousand eighteen, we find that: twenty-four countries (most of the PAHO Member States) had an eligible national survey marked in purple, four countries had national surveys in development or about to be published in orange, such as Cuba, Grenada, Guyana and Suriname. In red, seven countries had no surveys. The rest - in black color - are overseas territories without eligible survey.

Next, we identify the most recent national survey in each country. We include two salvadorean surveys (fourteen and seventeen) since, both measured violence by the current or more recent partner, but, only the two-thousand fourteen survey measured violence by any life time partner. As you can see on this slide, many of these recent surveys were affiliated or used instruments of international research programs, such as: demographic and health surveys (purple) reproductive health surveys (orange), WHO surveys (blue) international survey on violence against women (green). Five countries had surveys based on the ENDIREH Mexican model (red). And others were unique to the country (yellow).

For the twenty-four most recent surveys, a comparative analysis was conducted based on the following indicators: percentage of ever partnered women and girls age fifteen to forty nine years, subjected to physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner, ever and in the past 12 months, disaggregated by type of violence and type of partner. These data are disaggregated by:
- two-time frames,
- two types of partner (current / most recent and any partner in life)
- two forms of violence
• and an indicator of combine physical and / or sexual violence

Which results in twelve separate indicators.

It should be noted that for this systematic review - there were some limitations of resources, time and especially due to the great diversity of the measurement of emotional and psychological violence in the region. In addition, there is still a lack of consensus in terms of what acts should be included in these indicators.

For all these reasons, we had to limit the focus of this work to physical and sexual violence.

Although we recognize that other forms of violence are equally important

For the twenty-four countries, we managed to obtain and reanalyze the databases of thirteen countries and we also received reanalyzed data from three countries directly from the original research teams.

We also obtained data from eight countries directly from the published report.

For several countries, comparative estimates were obtained.

This slide shows the four challenges of comparability.

Operational definitions

Who is considered an intimate partner?

Which partner, any partner in life or current/most recent

Construction of indicators:

Type of violence (physical and/or sexual)

Time frame

Risk of bias was assessed using a checklist adapted from existing tools, informed by good practice guidelines for violence research. I'm happy to discuss this more in the Q&A.
For example, in the type of partner there is a barrier to comparability. Some surveys measure only violence by the current or most recent partner. But women, often have more than one partner in life, and indicators limited to the current or most recent partner, that is violence by only one partner, do not include a substantial proportion of abuse by any partner before the current/most recent relationship.

Eight surveys within our analyzes measured both indicators.

It was found that, in these eight countries, the indicators of violence by any partner in life were significantly higher than violence by the current or more recent partner, for both physical and sexual violence.

The percentages of violence by any partner in life that were NOT reported by the limitation to violence by the current / most recent partner only varied from twelve percent in Ecuador to more than half (fifty-five percent) in Uruguay.

Among the findings, the prevalence of physical and / or sexual intimate partner violence ever in life is observed that the data in purple correspond to any partner in life and range from forty four point four percent in Ecuador to sixteen point seven percent in Brazil and for the current or most recent partner, range from fifty eight point five percent in Bolivia to fourteen point three percent in two thousand seventeen Salvador.

And for the data collected in the last twelve months, we found that past year prevalence varies from sixteen percent in DR to one point one in Canada, and for the current or most recent partner in Bolivia twenty seven point one percent is reported to El Salvador two thousand seventeen five point nine percent.

It should be noted that the article we publish also reports physical violence and sexual violence at some time in life and in the last twelve months, but for reasons of time, I am not discussing them at this time.
On the other hand, in the analysis of changes in prevalence over time, countries that had data from three rounds or more, were taken into account, such as Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and the Dominican Republic.

This slide shows the different data on the prevalence of physical intimate partner violence in the last twelve months, for these countries. A significant decrease was found for Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru while we found an increase in the Dominican Republic.

This is slide shows lifetime physical intimate partner violence.

On the other hand, for the sexual intimate partner violence in the last 12 months, there was a significant decrease for the 6 countries.
And this is slide shows lifetime sexual intimate partner violence.

For more detail, please download and read the article.

Taking into account the methodological findings of the systematic review, we find that estimates of violence are not comparable because some surveys report only violence by any partner or by the most current/recent one; they also build and/or publish indicators of violence that cannot be comparable, since sometimes they are grouped as a single type of violence for which it is desirable that they be better separated; it is important to consider the cohort of the woman’s age and point out how the data is composed in the reports considering the numerators and denominators for clarity.

Last but not least, we suggest that future reports should mention the security procedures used to collect women information and if ethics were considered.

In conclusion, we highlight increase availability of prevalence estimates across countries, however, greater geographic coverage, better quality and continued data collection from future surveys are urged, to monitor the prevalence of IPV.

And although violence has been reduced, it is still present and therefore, a greater and continuous investment is requested for its investigation in order to eliminate partner violence against women within households across the Americas.
Thanks so much