RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG SURVIVORS IN LEBANON

ABAAD—Resource Center for Gender Equality, Global Women’s Institute at George Washington University
PARTNERSHIP WITH GWI

- Part of GWI’s Project, Building Safe, Ethical GBV Research Capacity in Humanitarian Settings (funded by US DoS BPRM)
- Research priorities were set by stakeholders
  - GBV +MH
**Objective:** To better understand mental health among adult women survivors of GBV in Lebanon

**Question:** What mental health needs do adult women GBV survivors have, and how do these affect their ability to access GBV and MHPSS services in North Lebanon and the Bekaa?
LEBANON CONTEXT

• 1.5 million Syrian refugees
• Economic and political instability
• High level of stressors, poverty, statelessness, lack of job opportunities
• These stressors + displacement are associated with GBV
• Lebanon Crisis Response Plan unifies response, but still unable to reach most vulnerable
BACKGROUND

• Environmental vulnerabilities and GBV services
• Studies have shown association between GBV and MH
• No such studies in Lebanon
• Connection between GBV and MH can increase awareness/sensitization about best practices from the field, improve access/quality of service in both fields.
- Mixed methods study (quantitative and qualitative)
- Two locations: Northern Lebanon and Northern Bekaa
- Quantitative: 975 administered surveys
  - Target population: randomly selected women (ages 18-65) in the above regions accessing Abaad’s psychosocial support/awareness services
- Qualitative: 15 focus group discussions
  - Target populations: community members, community leaders, GBV/MH service providers
Contents of the survey (by category):

• Socio-demographics (e.g. age, marital status, age of marriage and/or pregnancy, number of children, educational attainment, etc.)
• Intimate partner violence (economic, emotional, physical, and sexual)
• Non-partner violence (physical and sexual)
• Mental health + functionality
• Access to violence + non-violence services
• Coping mechanisms
DEFINITIONS

- **GBV**: any violence (i.e. economic, emotional, physical, or sexual) committed against a person on the basis of their gender.
- **IPV**: violence committed by an intimate partner such as a husband or a life partner.
- **NPV**: violence committed by a non-partner (e.g. military personnel, family member, etc.).
- **Child marriage**: forced marriage under the age of 18.
RESULTS: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

Age of Participants by Nationality

- Nationality Lebanese (%)
- Nationality Syrian (%)
- Nationality All (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-65</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese (%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian (%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
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Nationality of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syrian</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

Educational Attainment of Participants by Nationality

- Lebanese (%): 53
- Syrian (%): 62
- All (%): 58

- Educational attainment secondary or higher: 22
- Educational attainment completed primary: 28
- Educational attainment less than primary: 27

Marital Status of Participants by Nationality

- Married, living with partner (Lebanese (%)): 73
- Married, living with partner (Syrian (%)): 68
- Partnered, living apart (Lebanese (%)): 5
- Partnered, living apart (Syrian (%)): 7
- Single (Lebanese (%)): 12
- Single (Syrian (%)): 7
- Nonconsensual marriage (Lebanese (%)): 14
- Nonconsensual marriage (Syrian (%)): 16
- Marriage before age 18 (Lebanese (%)): 44
- Marriage before age 18 (Syrian (%)): 30
- Forcing child marriage (Lebanese (%)): 5
- Forcing child marriage (Syrian (%)): 11
RESULTS: GBV

Types of Violence Experienced by Participants

- Any GBV: 85
- Any IPV: 77
- Any NPV: 31
- Forced Marriage: 16
- Forced Child Marriage: 9
- Early Pregnancy: 26
**RESULTS: FACTORS THAT EXACERBATE GBV**

- Significance for factors varies by nationality
- Lebanese: all but source of income are significant
- Syrian: only working for income is significant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women's characteristics associated with sexual and/or physical IPV</th>
<th>Sexual and/or physical IPV</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lebanese (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent Age (10 year group)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>40*</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>45*</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>53*</td>
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<tr>
<td>55-65</td>
<td>56*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational attainment</strong></td>
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<td>less than primary</td>
<td>54*</td>
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<tr>
<td>completed primary</td>
<td>37*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completed secondary</td>
<td>23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher</td>
<td>41*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does she work for money or engage in income generating activities?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>main source of income</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>no income</td>
<td>57*</td>
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<tr>
<td>money from own work</td>
<td>55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>husband/partner</td>
<td>39*</td>
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<tr>
<td>humanitarian aid</td>
<td>78*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other source</td>
<td>49*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chi-square statistic significant at p<0.05.*
RESULTS: GBV AND MENTAL HEALTH

Association between GBV and Mental Health among Participants

Likelihood of severe distress among women who have experienced different forms of GBV

*Compared to women who have not experienced violence
*Odds ratio significant at p<0.05
RESULTS: MH AND ACCESSING SERVICES

Among those who have experienced GBV, women who report distress are half as likely to seek services related to violence, except for those who report mild distress (as opposed to severe).
RESULTS: COPING

Percentage women using coping mechanisms by severity of distress

- I try to accept that this has happened and cannot be changed: K6 <19 (33%), K6 >18 (40%)
- I try to get advice from someone about what to do: K6 <19 (75%), K6 >18 (77%)
- I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives: K6 <19 (70%), K6 >18 (66%)
- I try to find comfort in my religion: K6 <19 (96%), K6 >18 (96%)
CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

• Strong association between experiencing any act of GBV and severe distress among participants

• Strengthen existing safe referral pathway between GBV and MH services, as well as from other services to GBV + MH

• Conduct further research on conceptualization of forced versus child marriage in Lebanon

• Individual efforts alone may not better mental health. Requires further research on best practices, policies, institutional structures, resources/services might better MH
THANK YOU!

For any questions regarding the study, kindly reach out to Rassil Barada at rassil.barada@abaadmena.org or Alina Potts at apotts@email.gwu.edu

Or find us at the conference!