Lessons Learned from WHO Multi-country Violence Study
To whom do women talk about physical partner violence?

1. Many women never tell anyone about partner violence
2. Very few women talk to a formal agency or person in authority.
What is the implication of the findings?

- Interviewer is often the first recipient of this women painful experience
  - Interviewer has huge responsibility to normalize her emotion
  - Interviewer could get affected adversely
- Services are rarely mentioned
  - Reveals limitation of service statistics – police/health
  - Service data are good for monitoring but not for measuring prevalence
According to police records in Nicaragua, 3,000 women reported domestic violence in 1995.

According to population based surveys 150,000 women suffered domestic violence in 1995.

Service based data do not represent the actual situation in the population ...
A hospital record shows that as more services are provided and quality of care improved,

More women came reporting violence

How will you interprétate data?
Population-based data on prevalence of violence

- Prevalence figures on violence are highly sensitive to methodological issues
- Population-based research on violence raises major issues of safety and ethics
- Results useful for understanding the magnitude and characteristics of violence
Now I am going to show a table from a paper comparing prevalence rate of violence in different countries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Ever</th>
<th>During the previous 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>4049</td>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>5533</td>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>4955</td>
<td>18-74</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>5908</td>
<td>18+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>10264</td>
<td>16-85</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>1010</td>
<td>18-74</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>20-60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Moldova</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>4790</td>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>5322</td>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Three provinces</td>
<td>5482</td>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia &amp; Montenegro</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Belgrade</td>
<td>1189</td>
<td>15-49</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>5868</td>
<td>18-64</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1994-1996</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>20-60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>E &amp; SE Anatolia</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>14-75</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>5596</td>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>12226</td>
<td>16-59</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are your observations on this table?

- Different sample size
- Different years
- Different age group
- Different coverage

- Could be different in definition
- Could differ in asking question
- Different ethical standard and safety
Challenges to developing a common set of indicators on violence against women

1. Enhancing comparability
   - How violence is defined
   - How is violence measured

2. Enhancing disclosure
   - Opportunities to disclose, context, skill of interviewers

3. Enhancing safety
   - Privacy, special training for field staff, support for respondents and interviewers
Challenges when measuring violence in population based studies

- Study population (age, regional vs. national)
- Operational definition of violence (who defines, types, frequency, severity, timeframe, perpetrators)
- Ethical and safety measures
- Type and training of interviewers
Effect of “study population” on reported prevalence estimates in Nicaragua

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current physical violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All women 15-49</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever married women 15-49</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently married women 15-49</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally married women 15-49</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Researcher vs. Self-Defined Rates of Past Year Abuse (Japan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Researcher (percent)</th>
<th>Self (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any violence</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training

- 13 inexperienced, carefully selected interviewers, trained for 3 weeks
- 21 professional interviewers, selected because of their interest in the topic, trained during one day

- Who will provide better answer?
- What difference you expect?
### Special training vs professional interviewers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inexperienced, 3 week training</th>
<th>Professional, 1 day training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response rate</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure rate</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent satisfaction – with violence</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent satisfaction – without violence</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What factors could affect disclosure of violence?

- How the questions are phrased
- Number of opportunities to disclose
  - Avoid gateway or filter questions
- Context in which questions are asked
  - Be careful about preceding question
- Characteristics and skill of interviewers
  - Careful selection of interviewer: empathic, non-judgmental, good listener
- Social stigma attached to issue
Global study with interviews with 24,000 women in 10 countries (2005)
Objectives

- Estimation of prevalence of violence against women
- Associations between partner violence and health outcomes
- Risk and protective factors for partner violence
- Strategies used by women who experience partner violence (who do they talk to, where do they seek help, what response do they get)
Additional Objectives

- Develop and test new instruments for measuring violence cross-culturally
- Increase national capacity amongst researchers and women’s organizations working on violence
- Increase sensitivity to violence among researchers, policy-makers and health providers
- Promote ethically sound research
Study design

- Formative qualitative research, consultations,…
- Household survey of women 15-49 years
- 1 or 2 sites per country: 1500 women per site
- Standardized questionnaire
- Standardized 3 week training
- All respondents provided with information about sources of support; follow up support offered
- One data entry system, double entry
- Standardized quality control measures
The HH survey Questionnaire

- Section 1: Respondent and her community
- Section 2: General Health
- Section 3: Reproductive health
- Section 4: Children
- Section 5: Current or most recent partner
- Section 6: Attitudes toward gender roles

- Section 7: Respondent and her partner
- Section 8: Injuries
- Section 9: Impact and coping
- Section 10: Other experiences
- Section 11: Financial autonomy
- Section 12: Completion of the interview
### Study population in WHO VAW study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Study population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Women 15-49 ever married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Women 15-49 ever married/cohabiting, ever dating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>Women 15-49 ever married/cohabiting, currently dating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of domestic violence in WHO study

**Domestic**
- Partner violence: physical, sexual, emotional, controlling behaviours
- Violence in pregnancy
- Violence resulting in injuries

**By others**
- Physical violence by others (>15)
- Sexual violence by others (>15)
- Childhood sexual abuse (<15)
- Forced first sex
Measurement of physical violence by partner

Has your partner ever.....

- Slapped or threw something at that could hurt you?
- Pushed or shoved you or pulled your hair?
- Hit with his fist or with something else that could hurt you?
- Kicked, dragged or beat you up?
- Choked or burnt you on purpose?

(in the last 12 months; has this happened once, a few times, many times?)
- Threatened to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against you?
Measurement of sexual violence by partner

- Were you ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse when you did not want to?
- Did you ever have sexual intercourse you did not want because you were afraid of what he might do?
- Ever force you to do something sexual that you found degrading or humiliating?
Measurement of emotional abuse:

Has your partner ever....

- Insulted you or made you feel bad about yourself?
- Belittled or humiliated you in front of other people?
- Done things to scare or intimidate you on purpose (e.g. by the way he looked at you, by yelling and smashing things)?
- Threatened to hurt you or someone you care about?
Measurement of child sexual abuse

- **Before the age of 15**, do you remember if anyone in your family ever touched you sexually or made you do something sexual that you didn’t want to?
  - If yes, who did this to you?
  - How old were you when it happened first time?
  - How old was this person?
  - How many times did this happen? Once/twice many?
  - Probes: school, friend or family, neighbor; stranger or anyone else?
Putting women’s safety first in violence research

1. Safety of respondents and research team
2. Studies need to be methodologically sound
3. Confidentiality for safety and data quality
4. Selection and training of team members
5. Actions to reducing distress to respondents
6. Possibilities of referral, support mechanisms
7. Proper interpretation and use of study results
8. Violence questions in other surveys
Interviewer training

Training should include introduction on gender and violence

- Training as opportunity for researchers and interviewers to come to terms with own experiences
- Addressing emotional needs of team members
- Role of interviewers: Not counselling, not trying to "save" respondents
“I learned a lot from the beginning of the training, till the end of the survey. The survey opened wounds, but I had to learn to face it and cope with it. The respondents really needed and enjoyed this experience… My career path changed, … because I could do something which can make a difference…”

Interviewer from Namibia
"Somehow it made me feel good, because it was something that I had never told anyone before. Now I’ve told someone".

Respondent, Brazil
Points to take home

- A population based survey on violence against women should be and can be done ethically and safely
- Women are willing to share experiences with trained and empathetic interviewers
- Build in mechanisms to ensure findings are owned by a wide range of stakeholders
- Data collection can be an intervention in itself!
Points to take home

- Define the study population broadly
- Use behaviorally specific questions
- Specify discrete time frames (last year, ever)
- Cue respondent to different contexts and perpetrators
- Give multiple opportunities to disclose