

Domestic Violence Fact Sheet

Worldwide, 40-70% of all female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.

In no country in the world are women safe from this type of violence. Out of ten countries surveyed in a 2005 study by the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 50 percent of women in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Tanzania reported having been subjected to physical or sexual violence by intimate partners, with figures reaching staggering 71 percent in rural Ethiopia. Only in one country (Japan) did less than 20 percent of women report incidents of domestic violence. An earlier WHO study puts the number of women physically abused by their partners or ex-partners at 30 percent in the United Kingdom, and 22 percent in the United States.

The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the costs of intimate partner violence in the United States alone exceed US\$5.8 billion per year: US\$4.1 billion are for direct medical and health care services, while productivity losses account for nearly US\$1.8 billion.

In 2006 89 States had some form of legislative prohibition on domestic violence, including 60 States with specific domestic violence laws, and a growing number of countries had instituted national plans of action to end violence against women. This is a clear increase in comparison to 2003, when UNIFEM did a scan of anti-violence legislation and found that only 45 countries had specific laws on domestic violence.

In a randomly selected study of nearly 1,200 ninth-grade students in Geneva, Switzerland, 20 percent of girls revealed they had experienced at least one incident of physical sexual abuse.

Around the world at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Most often the abuser is a member of her own family.

In all, women are victims of intimate partner violence at a rate about 5 times that of males.

In the US, domestic violence is most prominent among women aged 16 to 24.

In the US, poorer women experience significantly more domestic violence than higher income women.

In the US, the rates at which individuals report domestic violence to police vary along racial and gender lines. Hispanic and black women report domestic violence at the highest rate (approximately 65% to 67% of abuse is reported). For white females, only about 50% of the abuse is reported.

Sources: UNIFEM, Amnesty USA, Stopvaw.org, findcounseling.com

A 2010 Lenten Study compiled by the World Council of Churches, the World Student Christian Federation and the World YWCA <http://women.overcomingviolence.org>.