



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



Country Findings

Peru

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 Peru, the core research team was drawn from the Faculty of Administration and Public Health at Cayetano Heredia Peruvian University and the Flora Tristán Center for Peruvian Women. In the department of Cusco, additional support was provided by the José María Arguedas Andean Center for Education and Promotion (CADEP). Data collection in the field took place in 2000.

2. Methods

In Peru, the team interviewed a representative sample of 1414 women between 15 and 49 years of age in Metropolitan Lima and 1837 women in the Department of Cusco. In the Cusco sample, about one quarter of the women were from the city of Cusco and the remainder from predominantly rural areas. About 88% in Lima had at least one year of secondary schooling, compared to 44% in Cusco. In Peru, women were considered "ever-partnered" if they had ever been married, ever lived with a man or ever had 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, shoved, or had her hair pulled; 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

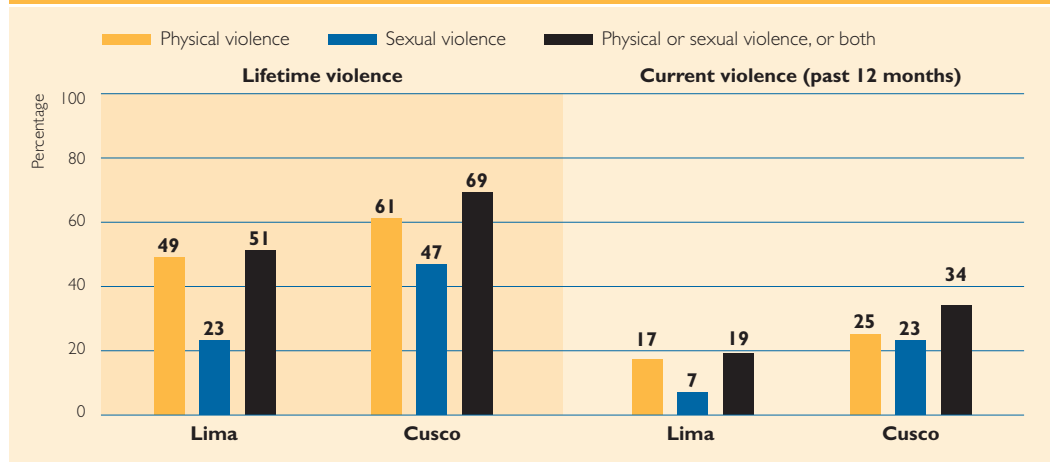
- 49% of ever-partnered women in Lima and 61% in Cusco reported physical violence by a partner at some time in their life. For sexual violence by a partner these percentages were 23% in Lima and 47% in Cusco.
- 51% of ever-partnered women in Lima and 69% in Cusco had experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner.

3.2 Injuries inflicted by a partner

- In both sites, about half of the women who had experienced physical violence by a partner reported injuries as a result of the violence, but serious injuries were more frequent in Cusco.



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



For instance, 12% of the women who had been injured in Lima had suffered ear or eye injuries, compared to 30% in Cusco.

- In both sites one in four ever-injured women reported that they had been injured more than five times.

3.3 Physical violence by a partner during pregnancy

- 15% of ever-pregnant women in Lima and 28% in Cusco experienced physical violence during at least one pregnancy. Of these, one third in Lima and over half in Cusco were punched or kicked in the abdomen. In virtually all cases the perpetrator was the unborn child's father.

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

- 28% of all respondents in Lima and 32% in Cusco reported physical violence by someone other than a partner since age 15 years. The main perpetrators were fathers, and female and male relatives.
- One in 10 women had experienced sexual violence by a non-partner since age 15 years. While boyfriends were the most frequently mentioned perpetrators (about 30% of cases in both sites), strangers were almost as frequently mentioned in Lima (28%) and in Cusco (26%).

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

- In both sites, about one in every five women in both sites reported being sexually abused as a child. The main perpetrators were male relatives (other than the father or stepfather), followed by strangers.
- For those women who had their first experience of sexual intercourse before the age of 15 years, this was forced for more than 40% in both sites. Percentages differ between sites when first sex was at a later age: among women having first sex at 18 years or older, this was forced for 3% in Lima and 17% in Cusco.

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

- Women who had experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner were twice as likely to report poor general health as non-abused women. Physical symptoms that were more frequent among abused women included pain, dizziness, problems walking, and vaginal discharge.
- Women who had experienced violence also more often reported suicidal thoughts.
- Ever-pregnant women who had experienced partner violence were significantly more likely to have had induced abortions and miscarriages than non-abused women.

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

- One third of women in Lima and Cusco told no one about physical violence inflicted by their partner.
- Only about one third of women who had experienced physical violence by a partner sought help from a service provider; mainly the police (25%) or health service (8% in Lima, 17% in Cusco).
- Over one quarter of women who did not seek help said it was because the violence was "normal" or not serious, while 15% in Lima and 28% in Cusco reported not seeking help because they felt shame or thought they would not be believed.

For more information, see

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

or contact:

Nancy Palomino
Facultad de Salud
Pública y Administración,
Universidad Peruana Cayetano
Heredia (UPCH),
Lima, Peru.
Tel.: +511 319 0041,
Fax: +511 381 9072,
email: nancypal@upch.edu.pe
www.diassere.org.pe

Dr Silvia Pessah
Program on Sexual Rights and
Citizenship in Health,
Centro de la Mujer
Peruana Flora Tristan,
Parque Hemán Velarde #42,
Lima, LI. Peru.
Tel.: +511 433 1457 ext. 279,
Fax: +511 433 9500
email: silvia@flora.org.pe
www.flora.org.pe

Department of Gender,
Women and Health,
World Health Organization,
Avenue Appia 20,
1211 Geneva 27,
Switzerland.
Fax: +41 22 791 1585
email: genderandhealth@who.int