



## City Research Online

### City, University of London Institutional Repository

---

**Citation:** Walby, S. (2005). Improving the statistics on violence against women. *Statistical Journal of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe*, 22(3-4), pp. 193-216. doi: 10.3233/SJU-2005-223-402

This is the published version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version.

---

**Permanent repository link:** <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/21756/>

**Link to published version:** <https://doi.org/10.3233/SJU-2005-223-402>

**Copyright:** City Research Online aims to make research outputs of City, University of London available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. URLs from City Research Online may be freely distributed and linked to.

**Reuse:** Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

---

---



# Improving the statistics on violence against women

Sylvia Walby

*Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YD, UK*

*Tel.: +44 1524 593442; E-mail: S.Walby@lancaster.ac.uk*

**Abstract.** The development of indicators and methods of collecting quantitative data on violence against women is central to both robust evaluation of policy developments and to the development of explanations. Three issues are addressed here: first, dilemmas in developing indicators based on consistent definitions; second, developments and remaining challenges in survey methodology; third, developments and gaps in collecting data from routine administrative sources. Indicators of violence against women need to capture the extent, as measured by both the rate of prevalence and the number of incidents, to measure severity by including injury levels, and to distinguish between acts carried out by intimate partners, other family or household members, and others. In the development of survey methodology, priorities are a comprehensive sampling frame and a high response rate, so as to include the more marginal groups of women who are especially likely to be at risk. In the delivery of the questionnaire, the methodological priority is that of confidentiality from both other household members and the interviewer in order to facilitate disclosure. Some public services collect some information that pertains to domestic violence, but this is rarely in a form relevant to policy. Relatively small additions to the data that is already collected would make it considerably more useful. However, such data does not give a guide to the actual level of violence against women, since many survivors do not report to authorities or use public services. Only survey data can provide a reliable guide to the extent of gender-based violence.

## 1. Introduction

Accurate information on the extent and nature of violence against women is needed in order to develop explanations and to evaluate policy innovations [31]. Complex data is needed to test emergent explanations, especially by exploring the correlations with other forms of inter-personal violence and patterns of social relations. The evaluation of new policy developments requires the development of indicators based on definitions that are consistent over time and between countries and based on reliable, regularly collected data.

There are two possible routes to the collection of this data: representative population surveys and routine administrative data collection. National population surveys have the advantage that they produce data that is nationally representative. The disadvantage is that they can be expensive, especially since they need to be conducted annually or at least very regularly. The advantage of administrative data is that agencies already collect some such data anyway. However, the serious disadvantage of administrative data is that it can never be representative since so many women never report violence to official agencies; no extrapolation from administrative data will ever tell us about the extent of the hidden violence against women.

Three issues in developing quantitative data are addressed in this paper: first, dilemmas in developing indicators based on consistent definitions for use in collecting data in both survey and non-survey forms; second, developments and remaining challenges in survey methodology; third, developments and gaps

in collecting data from routine administrative sources. The focus is on recent developments, remaining gaps, and potential solutions to these challenges.

The paper draws on a review of the methodology of national prevalence studies [71], experience in designing a national prevalence study of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in Britain [70], a project estimating the cost of domestic violence especially for the agencies involved [69], and research for the Luxembourg EU Presidency Report on progress and challenges in developing national machineries for Beijing+10 [64]. Further information on Walby and Allen [70] and Walby [69] is contained in the Appendix to this paper.

## **2. Definitions and indicators**

The development of consistent definitions is necessary in order to produce quantitative data on violence against women that is comparable over time and between countries. It is essential for the development of the indicators and benchmarks against which policy development may be evaluated. This requires the refinement of the concept and its operationalisation using relevant and available data. Without such indicators and relevant quantitative data, it is not possible to robustly evaluate policy developments. The development of such indicators is part of the process of developing the national machineries for gender equality to which governments committed themselves in the 1995 UN Platform for Action, which was reaffirmed in New York in March 2005. However, at the moment, the variation in the definitions used usually precludes the reliable comparison of findings from different studies in different countries [25,51,52,71], although there are exceptions when a consistent definition has been used in a multicountry study [18]. There are several efforts to promote the development and use of a consistent set of indicators [51,54,64].

There are at least five areas of significant divergences in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of violence against women or gender-based violence. These include: first, the range of perpetrators; second, the range of types of violence; third, the threshold at which it is considered 'violence' and the measurement of its severity; fourth, the focus on prevalence or incidents; fifth, experiences over the whole life-time or during the last year. Underlying the debates over these issues is a tension between prioritising a specialised focus on gender-based violence or the use of frameworks that facilitate the mainstreaming of violence against women into dominant perspectives and practices.

There is a choice between a narrow or wide range of perpetrators: first, a specific focus on intimate partner (including former partners) violence; second, the inclusion of all family and household members, thereby including violence between generations; third, any perpetrator; fourth, confining the analysis to that against women, or including children and men as potential victims. A focus on intimate partners provides a clear and specific focus, but if the full range of sexual violence and so-called honour crimes are to be included, then the restriction to intimate partners is too narrow. However, if all forms of inter-personal violence are included then there is a danger of losing the gender-based focus.

There is an issue as to the breadth of range of forms of violence that are included. The definition used by the UN in the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was: 'Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life' [67]. This is potentially inclusive of many separately named forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment in the workplace, female genital mutilation, dowry deaths and so-called honour crimes. The breadth of this definition is both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength in that it enables the inclusion of the range

of women's experiences of violence. It is a weakness in some contexts where this may be associated with a dilution of the attention to specifically gender-based violence and hence a loss of focus for both explanations and policy development.

There are several ways in which the severity of violence against women may be conceptualised and operationalised. In relation to domestic violence, the most frequently used scaling is that of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), used in US surveys in 1975 and 1985 [62] and included as an element, albeit in modified forms, in many later surveys [2,24,70,71]. The CTS consists of a list of items (slightly varied in different versions) of which the latter are regarded as violence. The violence items are: (L) pushed, grabbed, or shoved him/her/you; (M) slapped him/her/you; (N) kicked, bit, or hit him/her/you with a fist; (O) hit or tried to hit him/her/you with something; (P) beat him/her/you up; (Q) choked him/her/you; (R) threatened him/her/you with a knife or gun; (S) used a knife or fired a gun. However, several problems have been identified with this scale. Its use may produce spurious gender symmetry [13]. It may not fully take meaning and context into account (Smith, 1994); the impact of the act may vary [8]; women are much more likely to be frightened and stay frightened than men [42]; the same act is associated with different amounts of injury when men or women are the perpetrators [56,70]. The scale omits some forms of domestic violence, such as sexual assault and stalking [71]. Finally, since the scale is unique to domestic violence, it makes comparisons with other forms of violence difficult. One key alternative measure of severity is that of the level of physical (and mental) injuries caused by the violent assaults. The use of injury as an impact measure has two advantages in particular: it avoids the problem of the differential gender impact of the same act; and it enables easier linkage to mainstream crime concepts, since the scaling of violent crimes usually includes the level of injury as a key element. A further important measure of impact is that of the frequency of the attack.

The measurement of the extent of violence against women has often been based on the notion of prevalence, that is, the proportion of the population that has experienced violence in a given period, usually either (adult) life-time or the previous year. This figure, which ranges from around one quarter to one half of women in their life-time, has been important in the establishment of the scale of the problem [31,49,72], and in raising consciousness about the issue [18]. The concept of prevalence needs to be distinguished from that of incidence [21], while the counting of the number of incidents requires going beyond the CTS, within which it is hard to distinguish whether acts occurred as part of one event or if they occurred at different times of the year [16]. The notion of prevalence captures the particular and specialised nature of domestic violence as a coercive 'course of conduct', a series of related occurrences, rather than a one-off event. However, prevalence is not a concept used in some related domains, such as crime. The counting of the number of incidents, rather than the prevalence rate, is the more usual approach in crime statistics. If domestic violence enters crime statistics as a 'course of conduct', then it counts as just one crime incident, even though there are usually several events within this 'course of conduct'. In this way, the repetition and frequency of the attacks disappears from view, thereby leading to an underestimation of the extent of violent crime and domestic violent crime in particular. It is important to include as indicators both the number of incidents as well as the prevalence rate, not just one or the other, if the extent of violence against women is to be adequately represented in mainline criminal statistics.

A further issue in the development of indicators is whether the focus is on experience over a life-time or last year. The life-time measures are important in establishing the scale of the problem and raising its priority [18]. Even the high rates discovered, tend to underestimate the extent of the problem because of low rates of recall after ten years [76]. By contrast, evaluation of innovative policies requires regular measurements of the amount of violence against women over time, for which the 'last year' rates are

more appropriate. However, reliable data over the shorter time period requires a much larger sample size, because of the lower proportion experiencing violence last year as compared with over a life-time, and thus entails a more expensive survey. This issue highlights the practical resource issues in the development of the methods by which data on violence against women is collected. While many countries have now conducted one-off surveys of the life-time prevalence of violence against women [18,31,51,52,70], the collection of adequate data on an annual basis is extremely rare, with annually collected data being almost entirely confined to methods, such as generic crime surveys, which are known to underestimate the levels of violence against women [71] (the UK Home Office has recently made a commitment to replicate a specialised module within its crime survey). It is striking that national country reports to Beijing+10 repeatedly emphasise the extent of policy innovation in relation to violence against women, but provide little if any hard evidence as to their effectiveness [64]. The challenge is to develop methods to generate adequate annual data, ideally internationally comparable, using a realistically available amount of resource.

Underlying these discussions about the most appropriate indicator of violence against women so as to develop indicators and robust data to support them, is a tension between the specialised definitions that have developed in the VAW expert and practitioner community and the definitions of related phenomena used in mainstream policy and services. An important way of taking forward policy to reduce and eradicate VAW is to mainstream it. This requires easier translation between the specialised concepts, often used in VAW, and mainstream concepts, such as those used for violent crime more generally. For example, this requires routinely including the number of incidents in addition to prevalence rates, and also using physical injury as a measure of severity rather than the CTS.

In summary, indicators of violence against women need to capture the extent as measured by both the rate of prevalence and the number of incidents, to measure severity by including injury levels (physical and sexual), and distinguish between acts carried out by intimate partners (including former partners), other family or household members, and others.

### **3. Issues in survey methodology**

There have been a series of waves of national representative sample surveys of violence against women and domestic violence (see Walby and Myhill 2001a for a review). There are generic crime surveys into which a few questions on gendered violence were inserted (e.g. annual national crime surveys in the US, Britain, Australia); dedicated domestic violence surveys (such as those in 1975 and 1985 by Straus and Gelles in the US [62]; in the Netherlands [53]; and the WHO series [18]; dedicated violence against women surveys (such as the Canada Statistics survey led by Holly Johnson [24], and surveys in Australia [2], Iceland [19], Finland [23], Sweden [36], the US [65]; and a hybrid type of a special module on gender-based violence attached to a mainline survey, such as recently developed in the UK British Crime Survey (BCS) [42,70] and the DHS health surveys [27].

There are a series of methodological dilemmas and challenges. There is the issue of whether a generic or dedicated survey constitutes a better context; the achievement of a comprehensive sampling frame; the best method of delivery of the questionnaire; and whether confidentiality or rapport with the interviewer is more likely to facilitate disclosure of sensitive events.

#### *3.1. Generic or dedicated? Implications for time, focus and interviewing style*

The advantage of a dedicated survey is that it can be tailor made for the methodological needs of investigating violence against women (VAW); the disadvantage is a practical one that the resource base

for an annual dedicated survey is less likely to be available than for one that is integrated into or otherwise attached to a mainline survey.

A generic survey that covers many subjects may be restricted in the amount of time and special effort that can be devoted to the investigation of violence against women. There is pressure to use shorthand and screener type questions, which may limit disclosure if the victim does not identify with these terms. For example, in relation to sexual assault, the term 'rape' is so stigmatised that many women who describe acts that meet the legal definition of rape do not report it when asked using this term, so there is a need to use detailed behavioural descriptions rather than shorthand [28,46,70]. However, there is no intrinsic reason why a generic survey should not find sufficient time to ask the questions in an appropriate manner; this is a matter of priority.

There are a number of issues about interviewing where the priorities of a generic and a dedicated survey may diverge. For instance, an interviewer who is both female and specially trained has an advantage in eliciting responses in such sensitive areas [58,70], however, the prioritisation of such practices in interviewing is less likely to be achieved when there is a generic rather than dedicated survey. Further, a private context for the interview results in higher rates of disclosure than when there is someone else present in the room [42,70]. The achievement of this private context for the interview may be more likely to be prioritised in the context of a dedicated than a generic survey, but there is no intrinsic reason why a generic survey context could not deliver this.

A survey that is framed by the concept of 'crime' may under-record those acts of violence that may not be seen as a crime by the victim [41]. However, careful framing of the issue may prevent this effect. Indeed the special modules in the British Crime Survey (BCS) find that people do report incidents of domestic violence that they do not think are crimes (they are explicitly asked if the incident was a crime) [70].

A solution to the dilemma of whether to pursue a well-resourced generic or a less resourced and less frequent survey is to use the newly developed hybrid form [70]. This uses an existing well-resourced annual national survey that has an established base of expertise and resources and attaches to this a self-contained, specially introduced, specialised module of relevant questions. The cost of the additional questions is modest as compared with the establishment of a dedicated annual survey. The UK BCS has experimented with this form [70] and is now committed to regularly attaching special modules on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

### *3.2. Sampling frame and response rate*

The ideal sampling frame is one that includes all members of the population. This is most closely approached in the census, but many other national surveys may fall short of this ideal to varying degrees, often for reasons of time and resources. The ideal response rate is very high. A comprehensive sampling frame and a high response rate are probably of greater importance in surveys of violence against women than in many other surveys, since it is likely that those who fall outside the sampling frame or are not reached or do not respond are more likely to have been subject to violence than those who have. It is the more 'marginal', excluded and disadvantaged groups of women who are most likely to have been subject to violence, especially in the near past, and these are precisely the groups that are most likely to be omitted if short cuts or economies are taken with the development of the sampling frame and survey instrument. While for many other types of surveys the omission of this section of the population from the sampling frame may not be considered sufficiently important to be worth the expense and effort to include them, for surveys on violence against women this is a potentially significant omission.

For example, women who have fled for refuge to temporary residence with friends and kin, to emergency bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation, or who are homeless in the immediate aftermath of a domestic assault are most likely to be omitted from sampling frames and to have low levels of response to the survey. Samples based on women who have gone to refuges and shelters have consistently shown much higher rates of frequency of abuse than those from national surveys [12,45,62]. The 1985 US National Family Violence Survey found that those women who had been beaten by their partner in the preceding year were assaulted an average of 6 times [62], while Okun [45] found that women staying in shelters for battered women had been abused on average 65 times in the preceding year. The omission of the most heavily abused section of the population is a problem for a survey attempting comprehensive coverage and accurate estimates. This is a significant omission for the measurement of domestic violence in the last 12 months, although it may have less impact on the life-time rate of domestic violence since some women may now be living in settled violence free homes.

This methodological issue can have major implications for theoretical understanding if the most abused and most recently abused group of women are significantly under-represented in the national surveys. The different profiles of the abused population derived from sample surveys and from surveys of refuge samples has given rise to much debate, leading some to suggest that there do indeed exist two quite distinct patterns of violence: one 'common couple violence' where there is low level mutual combat, the other 'patriarchal terrorism' where men terrorise their battered wives [26]. However, this perceived bifurcation may well be non-existent, and be merely a methodological artefact of the undercounting of the most abused women in the sample surveys as a consequence of their lesser likelihood to be living at their permanent home. A more adequate sampling frame would help to test this thesis.

There are ways of supplementing the sampling frame to include these populations, which could enhance future surveys. These include drawing up additional sampling frames based on lists of hostels, refuges, and other temporary accommodation that could be provided by those who fund and run such accommodation. In addition, the procedure for sampling the person in residential households could include all who are actually staying there, not merely those who are permanently resident. However, this is hard to achieve and no VAW survey has yet managed this.

### *3.3. Mode of enquiry: postal, phone, face-to-face interviewing*

Surveys have been carried out using: postal questionnaires, telephone, face-to-face interviewing, and by self-completion on a computer. While some, such as de Leeuw [32], suggest that there is little evidence that it makes much difference, others have argued for particular methods, especially either telephones [57], or telephone or face-to-face [30], or for self-completion by computer [47].

Postal questionnaires usually have the lowest response rate of all methods, so are usually considered inappropriate for those surveys where this is important, as is the case in of surveys of violence against women. However, Statistics Finland used a postal questionnaire and obtained a surprisingly high response rate of 70% [23], as did the Swedish survey [36]. This might be explained in terms of the unique features of Nordic society.

Statistics Canada used the telephone to make contact with respondents. They suggest that since almost all Canadians have a phone this gives good coverage. However, this may well be country specific, since not all countries have such wide phone coverage. For example, telephone ownership rates in private households in Britain are not as high as in Canada, and are particularly low among poor heads of lone adult households who are likely to include disproportionate numbers of women who have fled a violent home. A survey of phone ownership by the Social Survey Division of ONS found that 96% of British



households had a private telephone [3]. However, the distribution of phones was significantly skewed by class and household composition. Among those unskilled workers in social class V, only 88% had phones as compared with 99% among the professionals of class I. Further, among households with only one adult only 91% had phones as compared with 98% of those with two or more adults. On the basis of this evidence, Beerton and Martin [3, p.5] endorse 'the caution about the use of telephone surveys for government surveys which are particularly likely to be interested in the social and economically disadvantaged groups in society'. Thus the use of phones for surveys of violence against women is inappropriate in the UK, since the poorest one adult households are probably the most likely to have been recently subject to domestic violence and are likely to be the most excluded from telephone surveys, and for other countries that are no more developed than the UK.

The issue of greatest importance here is that of the implication of the mode of enquiry for the response rate and the consequences of this for omitting key sections of the population that are most at risk.

### *3.4. Self-completion: Rapport or confidentiality?*

Is rapport or confidentiality more conducive to disclosure of events that may be sensitive? On the one hand there is the possibility that face-to-face interviewing can build up more rapport and support disclosure of sensitive events, while on the other hand, confidentiality engendered by strategies such as self-completion by computer or by questionnaire may increase the likelihood of respondents divulging sensitive information. There has been much discussion as to whether there is a 'feminist methodology' that is uniquely able to address gender issues [20].

The BCS [70] provides a unique opportunity to compare the impact of methods utilising possible rapport in face-to-face interviewing with the confidentiality of self-completion. There are two parts to the survey. In the first, face-to-face interviewing is used for a series of questions about demographics and experience of being a victim of crimes; in the second, there is self-completion of specialised modules. The interview starts face-to-face, with the interviewer entering the respondent's answers into a laptop computer. When the first phase is complete, the interviewer turns the laptop computer around to the respondent. The respondent reads the questions from the computer screen and enters their responses into the computer. The questions are multiple choice, and the answer is entered by moving the cursor key down the list of possible responses and then pressing the enter key, which is marked with a red sticker. Only the respondent can see the questions and the answers they have given. The interviewer does not know the respondent's answers.

The prevalence of domestic violence is five times higher when the more confidential self-completion methodology is used, as compared with the more traditional face-to-face interviewing (see findings in the Appendix to this paper). While there are other differences between the two questionnaires that may contribute to the differences, nonetheless, the scale of the difference suggests that confidentiality is more important than rapport in facilitating the disclosure of domestic violence.

One disadvantage of this method is that it depends upon literacy, which may be unevenly distributed within some populations. The model described here requires lap-top computer-based interviewing, which is increasingly common in developed countries. However, this depends upon a high level of resourcing, which is unlikely to be available in all countries. Nevertheless, there are other ways of delivering confidentiality, such as self-completed paper-based questionnaires. However, this still depends upon literacy, which is uneven in many countries, not only the South.

In summary, the methodological priority in the delivery of the questionnaire appears to be to prioritise confidentiality in order to facilitate disclosure. This is confidentiality not only from other household members (as above) but also from the interviewer.

#### **4. Non-survey administrative data**

Several public services already collect some information that pertains to domestic violence as a routine part of their everyday activities. Often, however, this is not in a form that is easily useable in relation to domestic violence. Here I explore the kind of data that is already collected, and how relatively small adjustments would make it more useful. While this data does not give a guide to the actual level of violence against women, it could provide a guide to services as to the extent to which and in what ways they are used by survivors, and be used to improve their service provision. One reason why it would be most unwise to treat such data as a guide to the actual level of violence is that if it were used as an indicator it might create a perverse incentive to minimise the amount of violence over time in order to suggest improvements. In addition to providing information needed to improve service provision, this data on service use provides a basis for estimating the cost of violence against women. The estimation of the cost of violence against women and other forms of crime is part of a process of integrating these policy domains into the mainstream [6,40,43,74]. While reasons of human rights, justice and relief of human suffering are sufficient grounds for the development of policies to reduce and eradicate violence against women, the estimation of its cost facilitates its inclusion and prioritisation within certain types of policy discourse. The examples below as to administrative sources of data are drawn from the UK and derive from a study of the cost of domestic violence [69]. The manner and extent to which parallel institutions in other countries collect this data will vary.

##### *4.1. Criminal justice system*

Two major types of statistics are collected by the Criminal Justice System: recorded Crime statistics collected by the police; and Criminal Statistics based on criminal convictions in the courts. (In the UK there is in addition a sub-set of criminal statistics on homicide that provides further details on this most serious form of crime.) Recorded Crime statistics are compiled by the police from their routine record keeping of every incident that they are asked to investigate by members of the public. They are based on allegations of crimes, and do not require strong proof that a crime has been committed, merely a presumption that the allegation is well-founded. They are not a perfect record of all complaints made to the police since there are variations in police recording practices [48,50], but nonetheless they are an important source of information. The Criminal Statistics are based on convictions of people for specific offences by the courts, and are fewer in number than 'recorded crimes' because of the need for the police to find the alleged perpetrator and the establishment of proof beyond reasonable doubt during a courtroom based process [11]. Information on crimes is routinely counted and placed in the public domain by the police and the courts on an annual basis in the UK and elsewhere. These forms of data collection are already funded and extensively supported by public funds in many countries.

In most countries there is no specific crime named as domestic violence or gender based violence, though there are exceptions, such as Sweden [15]. Some types of sexual assaults are named as such, but they are often embedded in categories that make it hard to identify those which are of men against women. The only domestic violence category on which UK police currently routinely collect data is non-crime domestic disputes.

Yet most acts of violence against women are crimes. Most domestic violence is a type of violent crime in most countries. In the UK, there are several categories of violent crime, distinguished primarily by the level of physical injury. Common assault is violence that does not lead to any injury. There are two categories of wounding: 'other' which involves minor injuries; and serious, which involves potentially life threatening injuries. Finally there is homicide, which may be murder, if the death was intended,

and manslaughter if it was not or there were forms of mitigation. Sexual offences against women are included within the categories of: rape, assault by penetration, and sexual assault. Stalking is included within the category of 'harassment'.

The distinctions between categories of violent crime are quite different from the categories of severity in the widely used Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS). This is because the distinctions between the crime codes are primarily based on the nature of the injurious impact, while the CTS is based on the nature of the violent act. Walby and Allen [70] translate between the CTS and the crime codes. However, the translation cannot be perfect, not least because acts by men are more likely to cause injury and worse injury than those by women [56,70]. The mainstreaming of violence against women issues into the criminal justice system would be facilitated by the use of a common measurement of severity. The most robust available indicator of this is level of injury.

A simple way to extend this already existing data collection exercise so that it could enable the identification of violence against women would be to routinely cross-classify crimes by whether they are domestic or not and by whether the victim was a woman. The cross-classification of crimes by whether they were domestic or not was carried out and reported on a one-off basis by the Metropolitan Police in 1999 [39]. This demonstrates the feasibility of such a practice. (Of course, it is probable that there would be a need for guidance to be issued to the police and other bodies in order to clarify any new procedures.) It would be important for these additional classifications of crimes to be applied throughout the CJS, including the Crown Prosecution Service, the magistrates and crown courts, legal aid and the reporting of criminal justice outcomes in the *Criminal Statistics*.

All statistics from the Criminal Justice System are likely to be undercounts of the extent of violence against women, since many women choose not to report them to the police. Thus they would be a record of a particular type of processing of violence against women by a public agency, not a measure of the 'real' rate. The comparison between the level of violence found in the population surveys and the level recorded by the police and courts would be helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. A rising rate of recorded crime against women should thus not necessarily be interpreted as a sign of the failure of the CJS, but more probably as a sign of its increased engagement with the issue. The best record of actual levels of violence remains the population survey. Nevertheless, the collection of data from the CJS on violence against women would be helpful in the development of more appropriate policies by the CJS.

In summary, the cross-classification of all violent crimes by whether or not they are 'domestic' and by the gender of the victim by the criminal justice system would provide much valuable quantitative information. The use of these two simple additional codes would enable the use of mainline criminal justice statistics to be used for the measurement of the extent to which violence against women was addressed by the criminal justice system.

#### 4.2. *Civil legal*

The civil legal system is used by some women during their escape from domestic violence. There are two main ways in which it is used. First, there are, in some countries, specialised legal devices, such as injunctions, which enable a person suffering domestic violence to have their violent partner restrained and in some cases removed from the home. In the UK these are injunctions in tort to restrain harassment and also occupation orders (previously called ouster/exclusion orders) that may secure the removal of a violent partner from the home [14]. Second, the process of separation and divorce can involve the civil legal system in order to disentangle a person from the wider aspects of a violent relationship if and

when she seeks to leave permanently. These may involve financial and property issues and the place of residence of and contact with any children, where the civil legal system is often involved in adjudicating between parties in conflict.

In any legal system, there are records kept of those who apply for and receive relief under the civil law. Thus there are routine administrative records [33]. The first set of legal procedures is only used in relation to domestic violence, so the records are unambiguous about this matter. However, they may not identify the gender of the person making the application. In the UK information on the nature and numbers of civil legal actions is derived from the Judicial Statistics 2001 published by the Lord Chancellor's Department [35], now the Department of Constitutional Affairs. For example, in the UK, the Judicial Statistics 2001 show that, under the Family Law Act 1996 Part IV Domestic Violence, 20,968 non-molestation orders and 9,789 occupation orders were granted in 2001, making a total of 30,757 domestic violence related orders in 2001.

However, while the use of the civil legal system for divorce and to facilitate separation is recorded, it is not recorded whether this use is a result of domestic violence. It would be helpful if there were a cross-classification of civil legal cases by whether or not there was domestic violence. This information is often already obtained by solicitors in the course of their work with their clients, and is often recorded in case files even when it is not used in the legal proceedings [37]. The systematic collection of this information on the extent to which domestic violence is a factor in these civil legal cases and its public reporting would be helpful. In particular, there is a public interest in knowing the extent to which divorce and relationship breakdown are consequences of domestic violence.

A further public service that routinely gathers information on domestic violence as part of its work is, in the UK, the probation service. This is because it may be involved in disputed child custody cases following divorce and separation as part of their family court welfare work. They use a set of guidelines derived from the Home Office and Association of Chief Officers of Probation that states that women should be free to choose separate rather than joint interviews when there has been domestic violence in order to safeguard the woman's safety [1]. In order to fulfil this requirement, they must therefore collect information on whether there are allegations of and evidence of domestic violence. However, this routinely collected information is not currently collated and placed in the public domain. It is an example of routine collection of data relevant to domestic violence by a state agency that could be made public (obviously on an anonymised basis).

#### *4.3. Health care*

There are many ways in which health care workers already record the nature of the health problems presented by their patients. The BCS IPV [70] found that most of the women who were subject to domestic violence were asked the cause of their injuries by their doctor and the majority (though by no means all) did disclose. Doctors usually record their diagnosis of the causes of the patient's health problem. However, this is currently ad hoc rather than systematic, at least in the UK. This information about domestic violence, though apparently collected from patients (at least in the UK), is not gathered together in any systematic manner.

The use of an additional code, noting whether the problem was the result of domestic violence would provide the basis of more systematic record keeping. Saltzman et al. [54] offer a procedure for routinely collecting information about domestic violence that is appropriate for a health care setting.

Currently, there is a debate on the viability and ethics of universal screening for domestic violence within certain sections of the health care system. There is concern as to the ethics of routinely asking this

question before support systems are fully in place to refer survivors for specialist help [4]. For instance, the discussion of the issue of 'screening' by academics, doctors and Women's Aid at the seminar organised by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists raised important practical issues. In particular, that screening would make a positive contribution only in the context of appropriately trained staff, time and resources to take appropriate action, back up support systems, and links to other agencies for specific referrals, that is, a broad range of policy innovation [4]. However, most women who have injuries from domestic violence are already asked this question, at least in the UK.

In the US there is a large literature about assessing the risk of domestic violence within a health care setting. This is focused around the extent to which health staff, especially those in front line situations such as Accident and Emergency Departments, can accurately identify those whose injuries result from domestic violence and what they should do with that information [7,17,60]. Indeed, the US Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organisations requires written policies and procedures on domestic violence in emergency departments [61].

If the basic diagnostic information were noted, then it could be gathered, systematised and analysed using several of the already existing systems. First, the information could be collected by the already existing survey of GPs that asks for diagnosis and treatments of their patients, which reports on an annual basis. If domestic violence were to be added as a routine cross-classification, this would provide this much needed information in relation to GPs. Second, domestic violence could be added as a cross-classification to diagnostic codes within the NHS, so that the extent of use of hospital as well as GP services as a result of domestic violence could be ascertained. Third, there could be greater recording of domestic violence on and then use of patients' records. It is not clear whether the information about domestic violence that BCS IPV respondents said was requested from them is routinely placed on patients' medical records. If it were, then it would be possible to conduct more detailed research (with due regard to appropriate ethnic guidelines) on domestic violence and health care. The analysis of such records has been a feature of recent US research in this area, which has provided important information on the extent of usage of medical services by those who have suffered domestic violence [66,75]. GPs are particularly important in monitoring health care and domestic violence since it is probable that the majority of women who have suffered domestic violence have at some point approached their GP for some form of assistance. Fourth, an additional way of proceeding would be for relevant medical specialty (such as, accident and emergency units, pre-natal and maternity units) to develop their own methods of collecting, recording and reporting information. Such a process is currently under development by antenatal services in the UK.

#### *4.4. Social services*

Social service departments in the UK have the task of looking out for the most vulnerable people, for example, children at risk of violence. The files kept by social workers on their clients are likely to include a reference of domestic violence if this is reported to them [59], although there is no requirement on them to keep systematic records of this. Small scale studies examining such files have found that women clients of social workers have a significantly higher than average rate of experience of domestic violence than average. For instance, according to one small scale study finding, one in three social work client files contained reference to domestic violence [38].

Since many social work files on clients already contain information about domestic violence, the requirement of systematic collection of this data might be regarded as an appropriate next step. For social services, this would assist their assessment of the extent and way in which domestic violence may

be implicated in or causative of the complex social problems that is the substance of much social services work. This would require a cross-classification of cases by the presence of domestic violence in addition to the existing classification system. This would benefit the analysis of the social services workload and the best deployment of their resources.

#### *4.5. Public housing*

Public housing services in the UK routinely collect information on the use of housing resources in relation to domestic violence [34]. This is largely because there is a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide assistance to households made homeless as a result of domestic violence. The figures are collected from public housing authorities and provided at a national level by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [44], while the costs of this are presented nationally by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, Statistical Information Service [9]. Fifteen percent of those households that were accepted as homeless by Local Authorities in England and Wales 2001-2, that is, 18,234 households, gave domestic violence as the reason for the loss of their last settled home [44]. It is possible to distinguish between the different types of housing assistance that are provided [9].

The provision of information about the use of public housing resources in relation to domestic violence constitutes a model for the way in which such data might be collected and reported in other areas of public services. It is probable that the statutory requirement to provide these services constitutes at least part of the reason why this level of data provision has been accomplished.

A second area of related provision is that of refuges, or shelters. Refuges constitute a most important source of emergency housing for women experiencing domestic violence. Not only do refuges provide a place to stay, but they also provide many additional support services, not only to women in the refuge and to former refuge residents, but also to other women facing domestic violence. Statistics here are routinely collected by the lead providers, such as the Women's Aid of England, with ad hoc collection by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [34].

### **5. Conclusions**

The development of indicators and methods of collecting quantitative data on violence against women is central to both robust evaluation of policy developments and to the development of explanations. The commitment to do so embedded in the 1995 UN Platform for Action was reaffirmed in March 2005 at Beijing+10 in New York.

Underlying these discussions is a tension between the specialised definitions of violence against women (VAW) and the definitions of related phenomena used in mainstream policy and services. An important way of taking forward the policy to reduce and eradicate VAW is to mainstream it. This requires greater similarity and easier translation between the specialised concepts and mainstream concepts.

Indicators of violence against women need to capture the extent as measured by both the rate of prevalence and the number of incidents, to measure severity by including injury levels (physical and sexual), and distinguish between acts carried out by intimate partners (including former partners), other family or household members, and others.

In the development of survey methodology priority should be given to the use of a comprehensive sampling frame and the use of modes of enquiry that generate a high response rate, so as to include the more marginal groups of women who are most likely to have been at risk. In the delivery of the questionnaire, the methodological priority is that of confidentiality in order to facilitate disclosure; this

is confidentiality not only from other household members (as above) but also from the interviewer. The need for annual surveys in order to generate data about experiences last year, not only across the life-time, brings a sharp focus to the issue of cost and the advantages of mainstreaming. Hybrid surveys, in which special modules are attached to mainline surveys, enable annual collection of data, while maintaining specialist framing and modes of questioning, especially that of self-completion.

Several public services already collect some information that pertains to domestic violence as a routine part of their everyday activities, though often this is not in a form that is easily useable in relation to domestic violence. However, relatively small additions to the data that is already collected would make it considerably more useful. For example, the cross-classification of data already collected on violent crime by whether or not it was domestic, would very considerably improve the usefulness of these administrative records for the evaluation and improvement of services to survivors of gender-based violence. While this data does not give a guide to the actual level of violence against women, it could provide a guide to services as to the extent to which and in what ways they are used by survivors, and be used to improve their service provision.

Many advances in the development of data on violence against women have been achieved in the last two decades. Many more are possible.

## References

- [1] A. Ashworth, Domestic Violence, Children's safety and family court welfare practice, *Probation Journal* (1995), 91–94.
- [2] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Women's Safety*, Australia. (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics), 1996.
- [3] R. Beerton and J. Martin, Household ownership of telephones and other communication links: Implications for telephone surveys, *Survey Methodology Bulletin* **44** (1999), 1–6.
- [4] S. Bewley, J. Friend and G. Mezey, eds, *Violence Against Women*, London: Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, 1997.
- [5] K.S. Bolling and A. Clements, Phelps and P. Smith, 2001 British Crime Survey (England and Wales) Technical Report, London: BMRB, 2002.
- [6] S. Brand and R. Price, *The Economic and Social Costs of Crime*, Home Office Research Study 217, London: Home Office, 2000.
- [7] J.B. Brown, B. Lent and G. Sas, Identifying and Treating Wife Abuse, *The Journal of Family Practice* **36**(2) (1993), 185–91.
- [8] L.D. Brush, Violent acts and injurious outcomes in married couples: Methodological issues in the national survey of families and households, *Gender and Society* **4**(1) (1990), 56–67.
- [9] Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, Statistical Information Service, Homelessness Statistics 2001–02 Actuals, (London: CIPFA), 2002.
- [10] D.A. Counts, J.K. Brown and J.C. Campbell, *Sanctions and Sanctuary – Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*, (Boulder: Westview Press), 1992.
- [11] *Criminal Statistics*, England and Wales 2000 (2001) Cm 5312. (London: HMSO).
- [12] Dobash, Rebecca Emerson and Russell Dobash, *Violence Against Wives: The Case Against the Patriarchy*, (Shepton Mallet: Open Books), 1980.
- [13] R.P. Dobash, R.E. Dobash, M. Wilson and M. Daly, The myth of sexual symmetry in marital violence, *Social Problems* **39**(1) (1992), 71–91.
- [14] S. Edwards, Domestic violence and harassment: An assessment of the civil remedies in: *What Works in Reducing Domestic Violence? A Comprehensive Guide for Professionals*, Julie Taylor-Browne, ed., (London: Whiting and Birch), 2001.
- [15] M. Eriksson, *Peace for women in Sweden? Presented to conference on Responding to violence against women: models from the European Union*, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, 5–6 November 2004.
- [16] W. Fals-Stewart, G.R. Birchler and M.L. Kelly, The timeline followback spousal violence interview to assess physical aggression between intimate partners: Reliability and validity, *Journal of Family Violence* **18**(3) (2003), 131–142.
- [17] A. Flitcraft et al., American medical association diagnostic and treatment guidelines on domestic violence, *Archives of Family Medicine* **1** (1992), 39–47.
- [18] C. Garcia-Moreno, C. Watts, H. Jansen, M. Ellsberg and L. Heise, Responding to violence against women: WHO's multicountry study on women's health and domestic violence', *Health and Human Rights* **6**(2) (2003), 113–127.

- [19] I. Gislason, *Violence against women in Iceland*, (Iceland: Office for Gender Equality), 1997.
- [20] S. Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1986.
- [21] S. Hélie, C. Marie-Eve and L. Marie-Claude, Epidemiological considerations in the conceptualization and utilization of “prevalence” and “incidence rate” in family violence research: A reply to Brownridge and Halli (1999), *Journal of Family Violence* **18**(4) (2003), 219–225.
- [22] Heise, Lori L. with Jacqueline Pitanguy and Adrienne Germain, *Violence Against Women: The Hidden Health Burden*, World Bank Discussion Paper 255. (Washington DC: World Bank), 1994.
- [23] M. Heiskanen and M. Piispa, *Faith, Hope, Battering – A Survey of Men’s Violence against Women in Finland*, (Yliopistopaino, Helsinki: Statistics Finland), 1998.
- [24] H. Johnson, *Dangerous Domains – Violence Against Women in Canada*, (Canada: Nelson Canada), 1996.
- [25] I.M. Johnson and R.T. Sigler, Forced sexual intercourse among intimates, *Journal of Family Violence* **15**(1) (2000), 95–108.
- [26] M.P. Johnson, Patriarchal terrorism and common couple violence: two forms of violence against women, *Journal of Marriage and the Family* **57** (1995), 283–294.
- [27] S. Kishor and J. Kiersten, *Profiling Domestic Violence: A Multi-Country Study*, (Calverton MD: Measure DHS+ORC Macro), 2004.
- [28] M.P. Koss, Hidden rape: Sexual aggression and victimization in a national sample of students in higher education, in: *Rape and Sexual Attack*, A.W. Burgess, ed., (New York: Garland), 1988.
- [29] M.P. Koss, The underdetection of rape: methodological choices influence incidence estimates, *Journal of Social Issues* **48**(1) (1992), 61–75.
- [30] M.P. Koss, Detecting the scope of rape: A review of prevalence research methods, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* **8**(2) (1993), 198–222.
- [31] E.G. Krug, L.L. Dahlberg, J.A. Mercy, A.B. Zwi and R. Lozano, eds, *World Report on Violence and Health*, (World Health Organization: Geneva, WHO), 2002.
- [32] E.D. de Leeuw, *Data Quality in Mail, Telephone and Face to Face Surveys*, (Amsterdam: TT-Publikaties), 1992.
- [33] Legal Services Commission, Annual Report 2001/2. (London: Legal Services Commission), 2002.
- [34] L. Debra and D. Kenny, *The Provision of Accommodation and Support for Households Experiencing Domestic Violence in England*, (London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), 2002.
- [35] Lord Chancellor’s Department, *Judicial Statistics 2001*, Accessed at: <http://www.lcd.gov.uk/judicial/jsar01/contents.htm>, 2002.
- [36] E. Lundgren, H. Gun, J. Westerstrand and A.-M. Kalliokoski, *Slagen Dam: Mäns Våmot Kvinnor I Jämställda Sverige – en Omfångsundersökning*, (Stockholm: Fritzes Offentliga Publikationer), 2001.
- [37] S. Maclean, *Report of the Case Profiling Study: Legal Aid and the Family Justice System*, Research Paper 2. (London: Legal Aid Board Research Unit), 1998.
- [38] M. Maynard, The response of social workers to domestic violence, in: *Private Violence and Public Policy: The Needs of Battered Women and the Response of the Public Services*, J. Pahl, ed., (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1985.
- [39] Metropolitan Police District, Domestic incidents, Metropolitan District – Financial Year 1999/2000 accessed at: [www.met.police.uk/crimestatistics](http://www.met.police.uk/crimestatistics), 2002.
- [40] T.R. Miller, M.A. Cohen and B. Wiersema, *Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look*, (US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice), 1996.
- [41] C. Mirelles-Black, *Estimating the Extent of Domestic Violence: Findings from the 1992 British Crime Survey*, (London: Home Office Research Bulletin No. 37), 1995.
- [42] C. Mirelles-Black, *Domestic Violence: Findings from a New British Crime Survey Self-completion Questionnaire*, (London: Home Office Research Study 191), 1999.
- [43] National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States*, (Atlanta BA, USA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), 2003.
- [44] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), *News: Statistics Release sh-Q3. Statutory Homelessness*, 11 December 2002. Accessed at: [www.odpm.gov.uk/news/0212/shq3.htm](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/news/0212/shq3.htm), 2002.
- [45] L. Okun, (1986) *Woman Abuse: Facts Replacing Myths*, (Albany: State University of New York Press).
- [46] K. Painter, *Wife Rape, Marriage and the Law: Survey Report: Key Findings and Recommendations*, (Manchester: Faculty and Economic and Social Studies, University of Manchester), 1991.
- [47] A. Percy and P. Mayhew, Estimating sexual victimisation in a national crime survey: A new approach, *Studies on Crime and Crime Prevention* **6**(2) (1997), 125–150.
- [48] J. Plotnikoff and Woolfson, *Policing Domestic Violence: Effective Organisational Structures*, (London: Home Office Police and Reducing Crime Unit), 1998.
- [49] Population Reports, *Ending Violence Against Women*, Issues in World Health, Series L, Number 11. Population Information programme, John Hopkins University School of Public Health, Baltimore/Center for Health and Gender Equity, Maryland, 1999.



- [50] Povey, Keith, *On the Record: Thematic Inspection Report on Police Crime Recording, the Police National Computer and Phoenix Intelligence System Data Quality*, (London: HM Inspectorate of Constabulary), 2000.
- [51] Presidencia de la Unión Europea (EU Presidency), *Study on Measures Adopted by Member States of the European Union to Combat Violence Against Women*, Paper prepared by the Institute of Women, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and by María Díaz Aguado and Roasario Martínez Arias of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Accessed at: <http://www.mtas.es/mujer/violing.pdf>, 2002.
- [52] Presidencia de la Unión Europea (EU Presidency), *Good Practice Guide to Mitigate the Effects of and Eradicate Violence Against Women*, Paper prepared by the Institute of Women, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and by María Díaz Aguado and Roasario Martínez Arias of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Accessed at <http://www.mtas.es/mujer/guiaing.pdf>, 2002.
- [53] R. Romkens, Prevalence of Wife Abuse in the Netherlands – Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Survey Research, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* **12**(1) (1997), 99–125.
- [54] L.E. Saltzman, J.L. Fanslow, P.M. McMahon and G.A. Shelley, *Intimate Partner Violence Surveillance Uniform Definitions and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0*. (2nd printing with revisions 2002). (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Atlanta, USA), 1999.
- [55] D.G. Saunders, Wife abuse, husband abuse, or mutual combat? in: *Feminist Perspectives on Wife Abuse*, K. Yllo and M. Bograd, eds, California: Sage, 1988.
- [56] M.D. Schwartz, Gender and injury in spousal assault, *Sociological Focus* **20**(1) (1987), 61–75.
- [57] M.D. Smith, Enhancing the quality of survey data on violence against women: A feminist approach, *Gender and Society* **8**(1) (1994), 109–127.
- [58] S.B. Sorenson, J.A. Stein, J.M. Siegel, J.M. Golding and M.A. Burnham, The prevalence of adult sexual assault – the los angeles epidemiologic catchment area project, *American Journal of Epidemiology* **126**(6) (1987), 1154–1164.
- [59] E. Stanko, C. Debbie, H. Chris and L. Hebe, *Counting the Costs: Estimating the Impact of Domestic Violence in the London Borough of Hackney*, Swindon: Crime Concern, 1998.
- [60] E. Stark and A. Flitcraft, *Women at Risk – Domestic Violence and Women's Health*, California: Sage, 1996.
- [61] K.L.H. Stevens, The role of the accident and emergency department, in: *Violence Against Women*, S. Bewley, J. Friend and G. Mezey, eds, London: Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, 1997.
- [62] M.A. Straus and R.J. Gelles, eds, *Physical Violence In American Families*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1990.
- [63] J. Taylor-Browne, ed., *What Works in Reducing Domestic Violence? A Comprehensive Guide for Professionals*, London: Whiting and Birch, 2001.
- [64] Theisen, Anne-Marie, Nadine Spoden, Mieke Verloo and Sylvia Walby, *Beijing+10: Progress Made Within the European Union*, Report of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union. (Luxembourg EU Presidency: Ministry of Equal Opportunities, Luxembourg), 2005.
- [65] P. Tjaden and N. Thoennes, *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, NCJ 193781. US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice: Washington DC, USA, 2000.
- [66] Y.C. Ulrich, K.C. Cain, N.K. Sugg, F.P. Rivara, B.S. Rubanowice and R.S. Thompson, Medical care utilisation patterns in women with diagnosed domestic violence, *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* **24**(1) (2003), 9–15.
- [67] United Nations, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, UN General Assembly 20 December 1993. UN Doc. A/RES/48/104, New York: United Nations, 1993.
- [68] S. Walby, *Gender Transformations*, London: Routledge, 1997.
- [69] S. Walby, *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, (London: Department of Trade and Industry Women and Equality Unit). The report can be accessed at: [http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research/cost\\_of\\_dv\\_Report\\_sept04.pdf](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research/cost_of_dv_Report_sept04.pdf), 2004.
- [70] S. Walby and J. Allen, *Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey*. Home Office Research Study 276. (London: Home Office). The report can be accessed at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors276.pdf>, 2004.
- [71] S. Walby and A. Myhill, Comparing the methodology of the new national surveys of violence against women, *British Journal of Criminology* **41**(3) (2001), 502–522.
- [72] S. Walby and A. Myhill, Assessing and managing the risk of domestic violence, in: *What Works in Reducing Domestic Violence?* J. Taylor-Browne, ed., (London: Whiting and Birch), 2001, pp. 309–335.
- [73] S. Walby and K. Sothill, *Sex Crime in the News*, London: Routledge, 1991.
- [74] H. Waters, H. Adnan, R. Yogesh, B. Suprotik, A.R. Julian and B. Alexander, *The Economic Dimensions of Interpersonal Violence*, (Geneva: Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention, World Health Organisation), 2004.
- [75] C.L. Wisner, P.G. Toddz, L.E. Saltzman and T.M. Zink, Intimate partner violence against women: Do victims cost health plans more? *Journal of Family Practice* **48**(6) (1999), 439–443.

- [76] M. Yoshihama and B.W. Gillespie, Age adjustment and recall bias in the analysis of domestic violence data: Methodological improvements through the application of survival analysis methods, *Journal of Family Violence* **17**(3) (2002), 199–221.

## Appendix

This paper draws from two research project (excerpts below): first a national prevalence survey on inter-personal violence; second, a national estimate of the cost of domestic violence.

### Summary of UK Prevalence Survey on Inter-Personal Violence<sup>1</sup>

The 2001 British Crime Survey included a detailed self-completion questionnaire designed to ascertain:

- the most accurate estimates of the extent and nature of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, for England and Wales.

The question set also enabled first ever provision at a national level of:

- estimates of sexual assault against men;
- the most detailed distinctions between different forms of sexual assault; and
- the overlaps between domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

A nationally representative sample of 22,463 women and men aged 16–59 were asked, via a computerised self-completion questionnaire, whether they had been subject to domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking during their lifetime and during the preceding year. Those who had been subject to such incidents were asked details about their experiences, enabling distinctions to be made between levels and overlaps of the three forms of violence, the identification of risk factors associated with such violence, the impact it had on people's lives, and the manner in which people sought help.

Previous self-completion modules on domestic violence (1996 BCS), sexual victimisation (1998 & 2000 BCS) and stalking (1998 BCS) have been included in the British Crime Survey. These studies show prevalence rates for domestic violence, rape and stalking of the same order of magnitude as those reported here.

#### *The extent of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking*

- Inter-personal violence is both widely dispersed and it is concentrated. It is widely dispersed in that some experience of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking (at some point in their lives) is reported by over one third (36%) of people. It is concentrated in that a minority, largely women, suffer multiple attacks, severe injuries, experience more than one form of inter-personal violence and serious disruption to their lives.

---

<sup>1</sup>For more information see Walby, Sylvia and Jonathan Allen (2004) *Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey*. Home Office Research Study 276. (London: Home Office). The full report can be downloaded from: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors276.pdf>. pp. v–xi.

*Experience of inter-personal violence in the 12 months prior to interview*

- The BCS estimates that thirteen percent of women and nine percent of men had been subject to domestic abuse, sexual victimisation or stalking in the twelve months prior to interview.
- Four percent of women and two percent of men were subject to domestic violence (non-sexual domestic threats or force) during the last year. Extending the definition to include financial and emotional abuse, increases these figures to six and five percent respectively. If the definition of domestic violence is narrowed to non-sexual domestic force only, then three percent of women and two percent of men were affected.
- Among women subject to domestic violence (non-sexual threats or force) in the last year, the average number of incidents was 20, while 28 percent experienced one incident only. Of men subject to domestic violence (non-sexual threats or force) in the last year, the (mean) average number of incidents was seven, while one incident was experienced by 47 percent.
- There were an estimated 12.9 million incidents of domestic violence acts (non-sexual threats or force) against women and 2.5 million against men in England and Wales in the year prior to interview.
- Two percent of women were subject to less serious sexual assault, 0.5 percent to serious sexual assaults (and 0.3% to rape) during the last year. This equates to an estimated 190,000 incidents of serious sexual assault and an estimated 47,000 female victims of rape (or attempted rape, using the 1994 definition). Among men, 0.2 percent were subject to any form of sexual assault (less and more serious combined), during the year prior to interview. (Figures for serious sexual assaults include attempts throughout).
- Eight percent of women and six percent of men were subject to stalking during the last year. This means that over 1.2 million women and almost 900,000 men were affected.

*Lifetime and since age 16 experience of inter-personal violence*

- Overall, 45 percent of women and 26 percent of men aged 16–59 could recall being subject to domestic abuse, sexual victimisation or stalking at least once in their lifetime, (domestic abuse since 16; sexual victimisation or stalking at any point in a respondent's lifetime).
- The BCS estimates that one in five (21%) women and one in ten (10%) men have experienced at least one incident of non-sexual domestic threat or force since they were 16. If financial and emotional abuse is included, then 26 percent of women and 17 percent of men had experienced domestic violence since the age of 16.
- Twenty-four percent of women and five percent of men had been subject to some form of sexual assault at least once in their lifetime and seventeen percent of women and two percent of men had been sexually victimised in some way at least once since they were 16.
- Seven percent of women had suffered a serious sexual assault at least once in their lifetime (five percent of women had been raped and three percent had suffered another type of serious sexual assault involving penetration of the body). The equivalent figures for such assaults since 16 were five percent, four percent and two percent.
- Overall, 1.5 percent of men had suffered a serious sexual assault at some point in their lives with 0.9 percent reporting rape. The equivalent figures since 16 were 0.5 percent and 0.4 percent.
- Nineteen percent of women and twelve percent of men have experienced stalking or harassment at some point in their lifetimes.

*The most heavily abused*

- While some experience of inter-personal violence is quite widespread, a minority is subject to extreme levels of violence, consistent with exceptional degrees of coercive control. The intensity of

abuse for this group encompasses the frequency of attacks, the range of forms of violence and the severity of the injury.

- Women are the overwhelming majority of the most heavily abused group. Among people subject to four or more incidents of domestic violence from the perpetrator of the worst incident (since age 16), 89 percent were women. 32 percent of women had experienced domestic violence from this person four or more times compared with only 11 percent of men.
- 3.3 percent of women and 0.3 percent of men were subject to all three forms of inter-personal violence (domestic violence, sexual victimisation and stalking, by one or more perpetrators) at some point in their lives.

#### *The experience of inter-personal violence: impact and meaning*

The following findings refer to the worst incident (victim defined) experienced in the time period specified.

- Injuries were often sustained as a result of domestic violence, especially among women. During the worst incident of domestic violence experienced in the last year, 46 percent of women sustained a minor physical injury, 20 percent a moderate physical injury, and six percent severe injuries, while for 31 percent it resulted in mental or emotional problems. Among men, 41 percent sustained a minor physical injury, 14 percent a moderate physical injury, one percent severe injuries and nine percent mental or emotional problems.
- Among women who had been subject to serious sexual assault (that is rape and other forms of unwanted penetration of the body) since 16, for 52 percent the worst incident led to depression or other emotional problems, attempted suicide by five percent, and pregnancy for four percent.
- Domestic violence has a detrimental impact on employment. Among employed women who suffered domestic violence in the last year, 21 percent took time off work and two percent lost their jobs. Among men in this situation, six percent took time off work and two percent lost their jobs.
- 64% of women and 94% of men subject to domestic violence in the last year did not think that what had happened to them was a crime. However, two-thirds of women who had been victimised many times did think it was a crime. These women were also more likely to think that what had happened to them was 'domestic violence'. There was a greater likelihood of applying the concepts of domestic violence and crime to the incident if injuries were sustained and the acts were severe and repeated.
- Among women subject to an act that met the 1994 legal definition of rape since the age of 16, only 43 percent thought of it as rape.

#### *Offenders and relationships*

- Most inter-personal violence, not only domestic violence, is from persons known intimately rather than strangers.
- The rapist was an intimate in 54 percent of (worst) cases suffered since the age of 16, being a husband or partner in 45 percent and former husband or partner in 9 percent. A further 29 percent of the rapists were known to the woman, while only 17 percent were strangers. Only four percent were cases of date rape.
- Thirty seven percent of cases of aggravated stalking (with violence additional to the stalking) against women were by an intimate, 59 percent by other known persons and seven percent by strangers. In such cases among men, eight percent were by an intimate, 70 percent from other known persons and 30 percent by strangers.

- Leaving their violent partner led to the cessation of the domestic violence for the majority (63%) of women, for a significant minority (18%) it continued in another form, such as stalking or harassment. For 78 percent of men who left the violent partner the violence stopped.
- Of the female victims of domestic violence who had seen the perpetrator since they had split up because of their children, 29 percent had been threatened, 13 percent had been abused in some way, two percent had had their children threatened, and in one percent of cases the perpetrator had hurt the children.

### *Risk factors*

- Women were more at risk than men of inter-personal violence, and especially of sexual assault. Younger people were more at risk of all forms of inter-personal violence than older people.
- During the last year women in households with an income of less than £10,000 were three and a half times more likely to suffer domestic violence than those living in households with an income of over £20,000, while men were one and a half times more likely. The nature of the links between poverty and risk of inter-personal violence is unclear. It may be that poverty is associated with the onset of domestic violence, or it may be that in fleeing domestic violence women are reduced to poverty.

### *Seeking help*

- Thirty-one percent of female victims and 63 percent of male victims had not told anyone other than the survey about the worst incident of domestic violence that they had suffered during the last year.
- 40 percent of women told no one about their worst experience of rape suffered since the age of 16.
- 25 percent of those women that were raped in their worst incident (since age 16) and classified it as such, told no one about this incident.
- Among victims of stalking last year, nine percent of women and 17 percent of men had told no one.
- In less than one in four (23% women; 8% men) of the worst cases of domestic violence in the last year did the police come to know.
- In cases of sexual assault the police came to know in less than one in seven of the worst cases (15% completed rape; 12% any serious sexual assault; 13% less serious sexual assault).
- Stalking was the most likely to be reported of these forms of inter-personal violence, but even for this, in only one in three (31% women last year; 30% men) cases did the police come to know.
- Asked why they did not report the worst incident of domestic violence in the last year, 41 percent of women and 68 percent of men replied that they thought it was too trivial, 38 percent of women and 39 percent of men that it was a private family matter, seven percent of women and five percent of men that they did not want any more humiliation, and 13 percent of women but no discernible percentage of men, said that they feared more violence or that the situation would get worse as a result of police involvement.
- In the worst cases of domestic violence against women during the last year where the police had been informed, as far as the women were aware, the police had arrested the perpetrator in 21 percent of cases, sent him to court in 10 percent, spoken to him in 42 percent of cases, and in 29 percent of cases, not found the person, nor spoken to or arrested him, nor sent him to court. Of that minority of women who used the police service, 68 percent were fairly or very satisfied and 31 percent a bit or very dissatisfied.

- Of those who suffered injuries in the worst incident of domestic violence in the last year, 27 percent of women and 14 percent of men sought medical assistance on that occasion. Of the women who sought medical assistance, 94 percent were asked the cause of their injuries by the attending doctor or nurse, 74 percent disclosed a cause, and only 26 percent were referred on to someone else who could help them.

## **Summary of the Cost of Domestic Violence Survey<sup>2</sup>**

### *Why measure the cost of domestic violence?*

Domestic violence has devastating consequences for both the individual victim and the wider society. It drains the resources of public and voluntary services and of employers and causes untold pain and suffering to those who are abused. This report addresses one aspect of domestic violence, the cost, for a range of people and social institutions.

While considerations of justice and fairness provide a sufficient basis for public intervention into domestic violence, a better understanding of the full cost of domestic violence provides the basis for action within an additional policy framework, that of finance. Adding a financial dimension increases the range of ways in which policy interventions can be articulated, measured and evaluated. In particular, it may assist in addressing spending priorities. This is complementary to policy frameworks based on need and justice.

### *How is it done?*

The methodology is based on the Home Office framework for costing crime (Home Office Research Study 217, Brand and Price, 2000), and develops this so as to include the specific costs related to domestic violence (derived from a review of the international literature).

Information on the extent of domestic violence is taken from various sources, including the 2001 Home Office British Crime Survey self-completion module on Inter-Personal Violence (BCS IPV) (Walby and Allen 2004). This includes not only physical domestic violence, but also rape, sexual assault and stalking by intimates.

Information on the costs (e.g. services) is derived from the Home Office study, the BCS IPV, or identified from reports by services on their own expenditure, or from other recent research.

Information on the actual level of service use is gathered from reports by service providers and the BCS IPV.

### *What domestic violence is included?*

Domestic violence includes not only physical force, but also sexual violence and threats that cause fear, alarm and distress including stalking.

---

<sup>2</sup>The aim of the second research project is to estimate the cost of domestic violence in Britain, for the UK Women and Equality Unit. This required finding quantitative data on domestic violence in relation to each of the major agencies involved. For more information see Walby, Sylvia (2004) *The Cost of Domestic Violence* (London: Department of Trade and Industry Women and Equality Unit) at: [http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research/cost\\_of\\_dv\\_Report\\_sept04.pdf](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research/cost_of_dv_Report_sept04.pdf). pp. 10–15.

The Home Office defines domestic violence as: ‘any violence between current and former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever and whenever the violence occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse’ (Home Office 2003: 6). While most of the violence reported here is carried out in the home shared with the abuser, some is carried out later after the end of a relationship.

This report includes domestic violence against both women and men. It does not include violence from family members who are not intimates.

#### *What costs are included?*

There are three major types of costs:

1. Services, largely funded by government:
  - Criminal Justice System
  - Health Care
  - Social Services
  - Housing
  - Civil legal
2. Economic output losses, sustained by employers and employees;
3. Human and emotional costs, borne by the individual victim.

Both men and women are included in the estimates.

The costs are for one year for England and Wales, centred on 2001.

#### *Criminal Justice System*

The cost of domestic violence to the criminal justice system (CJS) is around £1.2 billion a year. This is nearly one-quarter of the CJS budget for violent crime. The largest single component is that of the police. Other components include: prosecution, courts, probation, prison, and legal aid.

#### *Health Care*

The cost to the NHS for physical injuries is around £1.2 billion. This includes GPs and hospitals. Physical injuries account for most of the NHS costs, however, there is an important element of mental health care, estimated at an additional £176 million.

#### *Social Services*

The cost is nearly a £0.25 billion. This is overwhelmingly for children rather than for adults, especially those caught up in the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse.

#### *Housing*

Expenditure on emergency housing includes costs to Local Housing Authorities (and other social landlords) for housing those homeless because of domestic violence; housing benefit for such emergency housing; and importantly, refuges. This amounts to £.16 billion.

#### *Civil Legal*

Civil legal services cost over £0.3 billion, about half of which is borne by legal aid and half by the individual. This includes both specialist legal actions such as injunctions to restrain or expel a violent partner, as well as actions consequent on the disentangling of marriages and relationships such as divorce and child custody.

### *Economic Output*

Lost economic output accounts for around £2.7 billion. This is the cost of time off work due to injuries. It is estimated that around half of the costs of such sickness absences is borne by the employer and half by the individual in lost wages.

### *Human and Emotional*

Domestic violence leads to pain and suffering that is not counted in the cost of services. It has become usual to include an estimate for human and emotional costs in order that this impact is not ignored in public policy. This is practiced in the Home Office (for crime) and the Department for Transport (to estimate the cost of road traffic accidents and hence cost-benefit analysis of road improvement schemes). The methodology to estimate these costs is based on the public's 'willingness-to-pay' to avoid such trauma. Costed in the same way as the DfT and HO, this amounts to over £17 billion.

### *Service Use*

The level of service use is higher among those who are more heavily abused, that is, those who suffer more frequent acts, more severe acts and more serious injuries. This is an important part of the gender asymmetry in service use and costs, since on each dimension of severity of abuse, women are more heavily abused than men.

### *Summary*

Domestic violence costs the state around £3.1 billion and employers around £1.3 billion. The cost of the human and emotional suffering is estimated to be around £17 billion. The total cost is estimated at around £23 billion.

Table S.1  
Summary estimates of the cost of domestic violence

Type of cost	Cost £billions
Criminal Justice System	1.017
Of which police	(0.49)
Health care	1.396
Of which physical	(1.22)
Of which mental health	(0.176)
Social services	0.228
Emergency housing	0.158
Civil legal	0.312
All services	<b>3.111</b>
Economic output	2.672
Sub-total	<b>5,783</b>
Human and emotional	17.086
Total	<b>22.869</b>

### *Methodology*

The estimates of the extent and nature of domestic violence are derived from four sources: the 2001 British Crime Survey self-completion module on Inter-Personal Violence (BCS IPV) (Walby and Allen 2004); the Criminal Statistics for homicides; reports from agencies; and a review of previous research.

Table S.3 shows the number of victims and incidents of different kinds of domestic violence. These categories of domestic violence are linked to the most comparable crime category, since most acts of domestic violence are crimes. The estimate number of victims is usually rounded to the nearest thousand.



Table S.2  
Who bears the cost?

Type of cost	£millions		
	State	Individual victim	Employers
Criminal Justice System	1,017		
Health care Physical	1,206	15	
Mental health	176		
Social services	228		
Housing and refuges	130	28	
Civil legal costs	159	152	
<b>All services</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>195</b>	
Employment		1,336	1,336
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>1,531</b>	<b>1,336</b>
Human costs		17,082	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>18,613</b>	<b>1,336</b>

Table S.3  
Estimate of extent of domestic violence, comparing classifications

Comparable crime category	Domestic violence type	DfT severity	Number of female victims	Number of male victims	Number of victims
Homicide	Domestic homicide	Fatal	102	23	125
Serious wounding	choked or strangled	Serious	65,000	6,000	71,000
Serious wounding	used a weapon	Serious	13,000	11,000	24,000
Rape and assault by penetration	Rape and assault by penetration	Serious	37,000	37,000	
(Of which rape)	(Of which rape)	Serious	28,000		28,000
Other wounding	kicked, bit, hit with fist	Slight	205,000	177,000	382,000
Other wounding	Threatened to kill		82,000	13,000	95,000
Other wounding	Threatened with weapon		36,000	16,000	52,000
Common assault	pushed, held down, slapped		410,000	174,000	584,000
Other wounding	Stalking		446,000	71,000	517,000
Sexual assault	Non-penetrative sexual assault		26,000		26,000

Source: 2001 British Crime Survey self-completion module on Inter-Personal Violence (Walby and Allen 2004) (some figures are calculated from data in Walby and Allen (2004) rather than taken directly from this report); homicide figures are from the Criminal Statistics (since homicide cannot be self-reported). Note: No estimates are available for men for sexual assault because the numbers are too small for reliable analysis.

### Costing

The methodology used to calculate these estimates follows and develops that used by the Home Office to estimate the economic and social costs of crime, as presented in Brand and Price (2000). These estimates of the cost of crime include the costs of the criminal justice system, the health care system, volunteers, lost economic output and the human and emotional costs. In turn, this research builds on the programme of research in the Department for Transport to estimate the full cost of injuries sustained in road traffic accidents, which provides the basic estimates for health care, lost economic output and human costs in the HO research as well as in this report. This report builds on these estimates and methodologies by including some of the additional costs that are the result of domestic violence. It draws on the experience of domestic violence researchers around the world who have started to estimate the extent of the impact and cost implications of domestic violence. These additional cost elements include mental health costs, emergency housing and refuges, social services, and civil legal costs. The estimates of costs are generally rounded to the nearest thousand, except where there is an estimated cost per incident or where more precise figures are available from administrative records.

*Robustness and development of estimates*

Wherever there was any doubt or choice, the more conservative assumptions were used in the preparation of these estimates. There are some costs of domestic violence for which there was insufficient data to enable reliable estimates to be made and some others where only token sums were included. These include: the long term cost implications in relation to children as the next generation; informal support from friends, family, volunteers and the wider society; and mental health, where only a limited range of costs was included.

The report concludes with a review of the data needed in order to improve the estimates of the cost of domestic violence and to monitor the impact of policy development more effectively.

---

**Sylvia Walby** is a Professor in the Department of Sociology at Lancaster University, UK. She was Consultant to the UK Home Office British Crime Survey, leading to the publication of: *Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey* (with J. Allen) Home Office, 2004; and funded by the UK Women and Equality Unit to produce *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, DTI WEU, 2004. Recent research has been on 'gender mainstreaming', including a contribution to the Luxembourg EU Presidency Report for Beijing+10. Her books include: *Gender Transformations* (Routledge 1997), *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Blackwell 1990), *Patriarchy at Work* (Polity 1986), and *Sex Crime in the News* (Walby and Soothill, Routledge 1991). A forthcoming book is *Complex Social Systems in a Global Era* (Sage, 2007).

Copyright of Statistical Journal of the UN Economic Commission for Europe is the property of IOS Press and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.