

## The *Nabilan* Health and Life Experiences Study

# FACT SHEET 1. WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN TIMOR-LESTE

Updated March 2016

In every country, violence against women and girls is a public health and human rights issue. Globally, 35% of women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, and 30% have experienced intimate partner violence.<sup>1</sup>

The *Nabilan* Program is an innovative eight-year program funded by the Australian Government, targeting violence against women in Timor-Leste, implemented through The Asia Foundation. In 2015, as part of *Nabilan*, The Asia Foundation conducted the Health and Life Experiences Baseline Study. The Study was implemented through two population-based cross-sectional household surveys, adapting international high-standard methodologies<sup>2</sup> to the Timorese context. Prevalence and perpetration rates of violence were measured by asking women and men a number of behavior-specific questions related to their life experiences (see Box 1 for acts that are used to determine partner violence). The nationally-representative women's survey was conducted with 1,426 randomly selected women. The men's perpetration survey was carried out with a total of 839 randomly selected men in two district-representative samples.

## KEY FINDINGS

### In their lifetimes, most women experience some form of physical, sexual, emotional, or economic violence by a husband or boyfriend

- 3 in 5 (59%) women aged 15-49 years, who have ever been in a relationship, have experienced some form of physical or sexual intimate partner violence, or both, by a male partner in their lifetime, and 47% in the 12 months before the interview.
- More than half (55%) of ever-partnered women have experienced emotional violence in their lifetime, and 44% in the 12 months before the interview.
- Overall, 43% of ever-partnered women have experienced economic violence in their lifetime, and 37% in the 12 months before the interview.

### Box 1: Definitions of intimate partner violence

**Intimate partner violence** is any form of physical, sexual, emotional or economic violence committed against a woman by a current or previous husband or other male intimate partner.

**Physical violence** means the woman had been: slapped, or had something thrown at her; pushed or shoved; 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** means that the woman had been: forced to have sexual intercourse; had sexual intercourse because she was afraid of what her partner might do; had been forced to do something else sexual she did not want to or found degrading or humiliating.

**Emotional violence** means that the woman had been: insulted, humiliated, intimidated, or threatened with harm against herself or someone she knows as a way of hurting her.

**Economic violence** means that the woman had been: stopped from working; had her earnings taken against her will; or her partner kept earnings for himself despite difficulty to pay household expenses.

Figure 1: Women's lifetime experiences of intimate partner violence

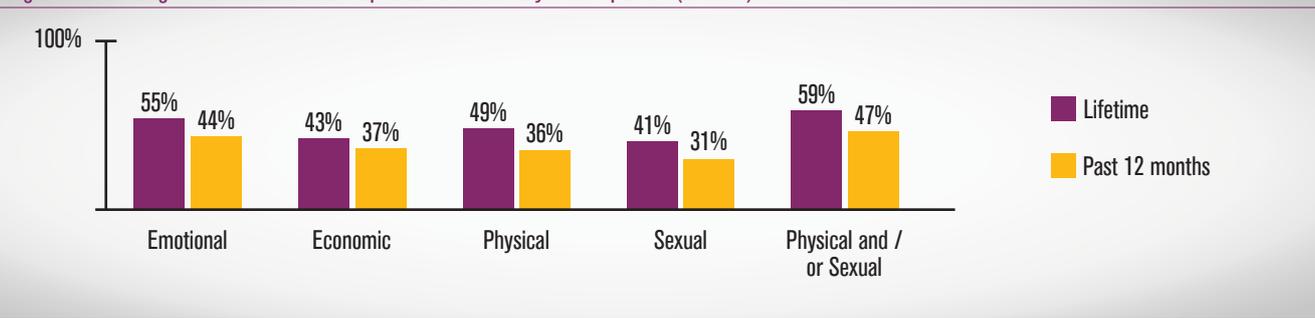


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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), 2013, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*. Available at: [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The WHO *Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women*, and the UN *Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence*.

Figure 2: Percentage of women who have experienced violence by a male partner (N=1105)\*



\*Among women aged 15-49 who had ever been in an intimate relationship, married or otherwise

### In Timor-Leste, women’s experiences of intimate partner violence are rarely a one-off incident

- 4 in 5 (81%) women who have experienced intimate partner violence have experienced this violence many times. Only 5% of women who have been physically or sexually abused by a partner have experienced this just once.

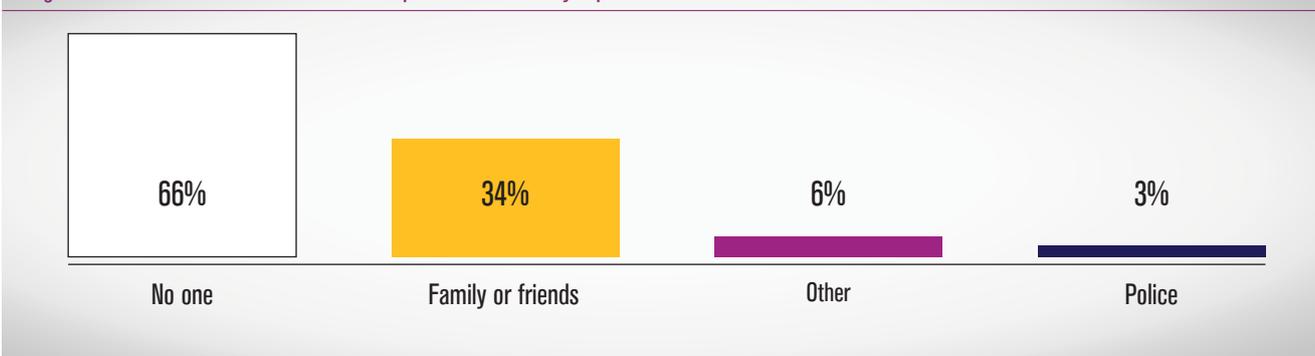
### Women in Timor-Leste are more likely to experience severe forms of physical violence

- 77% of women who had ever been physically abused by their male partners had experienced severe violence, compared to 23% who experienced moderate violence.<sup>3</sup>

### Most women who experience violence never seek help

The Study found that 66% of women who experienced intimate partner violence did not tell anyone about the violence they experienced and very few women told the police or other authority figures. When women did tell someone, they usually told a family member or friend.

Figure 3: Who women told about the intimate partner violence they experienced



### Moving forward: The *Nabilan* Program and preventing violence against women

The *Nabilan* Health and Life Experiences Baseline Study shows that intimate partner violence against women in Timor-Leste is a significant issue, affecting more than half of all Timorese women, multiple times throughout their lives. An issue of this scale needs to be addressed by all sectors of society. Improved access to health, justice, and legal services, as well as addressing the root causes of violence – particularly social norms about men and women’s roles – and shifting the social acceptance of violence against women and children are vital steps towards ending violence against women in Timor-Leste. Together, we can stop violence before it starts.

<sup>3</sup> Moderate physical intimate partner violence includes being pushed, shoved or slapped by a male partner. Severe physical partner violence includes being hit with a fist or something else that could hurt her, kicked, dragged, beaten up, choked or burnt on purpose, or threatened with or had a weapon used against her.

**For more information on the *Nabilan* program or the Study methodologies, please contact:**

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