

The *Nabilan* Health and Life Experiences Study

FACT SHEET 2. HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN TIMOR-LESTE

Updated April 2016

In every country, violence against women and girls is a public health and human rights issue.¹ In 2015, as part of the *Nabilan* Program, The Asia Foundation conducted the Health and Life Experiences Baseline Study. The *Nabilan* Health and Life Experiences Study aimed to produce national data on the prevalence, and consequences, of different forms of violence against women in order to increase awareness, inform programs and policies, and monitor progress towards the elimination of violence against women in Timor-Leste.

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. For more details on the methodology see Fact Sheet 1.

KEY FINDINGS

Many women are injured by violence from their husbands and boyfriends but accessing health care is a challenge

- Among women who had ever experienced physical or sexual partner violence, more than one in four (27%) had been injured at least once.
- Half of the women who had been injured from partner violence (52%) were injured severely enough to need health care, including cuts, burns, sprains, broken bones, and internal injuries. However, 1 in 3 (32%) of those women did not receive the health care they needed.
- Only 1 in 3 (37%) women who received health care for a violence-related injury told the health care worker the real cause of the injury.



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¹ World Health Organization (2014) 'Violence against women: Intimate partner and sexual violence against women'. For more information see <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>.

Women who have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence are **5 times** more likely to have had suicidal thoughts.

They are **2.5 times** more likely to be at risk of disability.

Intimate partner violence has serious implications for women's health

- Women who have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence are significantly more likely to be at risk of disability², suicidal thoughts, depression, and unintended pregnancy.³
- The relationship between women's experiences of violence and these health risks may work in multiple directions. For example, it is likely that women who have disabilities are at more risk of violence, however, it is also likely that the health impacts of violence may contribute to an increased risk of disability through injury.

Partner violence also has significant implications for children's wellbeing

- Partner violence is also a significant issue for children. More than half (55%) of women who experienced physical intimate partner violence reported that their children witnessed the violence on at least one occasion.
- Women who had experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence and had children aged 6-15 years were almost twice as likely (1.7 times more likely) to report their children having problems such as nightmares, bed-wetting, or being timid or aggressive (Figure 4). Women who experienced violence were also more likely to report that their children had dropped of school.

Moving forward: The Nabilan Program and preventing violence against women

The findings of the *Nabilan* Health and Life Experiences Baseline Study show that intimate partner violence is a significant issue for women's physical, mental, and reproductive health, as well as impacting on the wellbeing of their children. These findings highlight the need to:

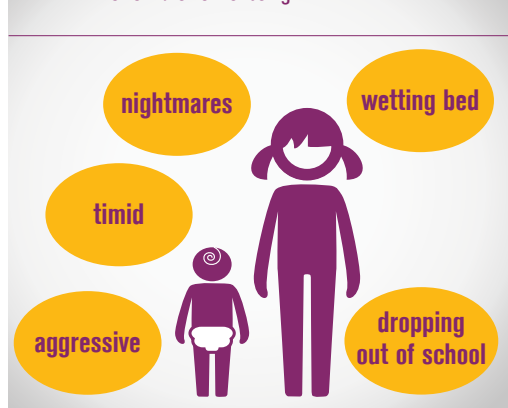
- Recognize violence against women as a major public health issue.
- Provide women who have experienced violence with appropriate and sensitive healthcare that responds to their physical, psychosocial, and safety needs.
- Promote the prevention of violence, including through health care settings.
- Ensure that children who witness violence have access to appropriate support services.

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.

Figure 3: Implications of partner violence for women's health



Figure 4: Implications of intimate partner violence for children's wellbeing



² Risk of disability includes any reported difficulty with sight, hearing, walking, memory, self-care, or speaking. The Study uses the phrase 'at risk of' disability rather than those 'with' disability because if someone with an impairment had access to something that would remove their barrier(s) to participation, that would remove their 'disability'.

³ All statistically significant associations and odds ratios presented in this fact sheet are based on multivariate logistic regression, adjusting for age and education.

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

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