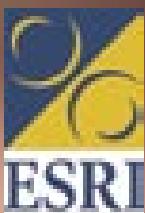




Domestic Abuse of Women and Men in Ireland

Report on the National Study of Domestic Abuse

From the National Crime Council in association with
the Economic and Social Research Institute



Domestic Abuse of Women and Men in Ireland:

Report on the National Study of Domestic Abuse

by

Dorothy Watson and Sara Parsons

(with Survey Questionnaire designed by Nicola Hughes)

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The National Crime Council

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This report has been written by Dr. Dorothy Watson, Senior Researcher with the ESRI, Principal Investigator and Senior Author, and Miss. Sara Parsons, Research Officer with the National Crime Council. The report is based on the findings from the survey questionnaire designed by Ms. Nicola Hughes, the then Research Officer with the National Crime Council. Without the dedication, patience and sheer hard work of Dr. Watson, Miss. Parsons and Ms. Hughes over the period of the project we would not be in a position to publish this report which will contribute to future policy formulation in this area in a very significant manner.

Finally, we want to thank the Director, Ms. Mary Burke, the Administrative Assistant, Ms. Harriet McGarry and Mr. Brian Dunphy, temporary placement with the Council, for the support provided to the Research team, the Advisory Group and the Council during the lifetime of the project.

Foreword and Recommendations from the National Crime Council

Part I: Foreword

The National Crime Council was set up in 1999 with two key roles, namely to focus on crime prevention and to raise public knowledge and awareness of crime. In deciding how best the Council could exercise these twin roles, it was decided initially to give priority to those crimes which cause personal trauma and distress to individuals and which cause fear and anxiety in the community, such as public disorder and domestic abuse.

The tireless work and efforts of many organisations and individuals over the last two decades has led to an increased awareness of domestic abuse as a serious and complex social issue. Nevertheless, the Council is very conscious of the need for reliable and up-to-date statistics and information to inform and guide policy formulation and decision making in this area. This is the first ever large scale study undertaken to give an overview of the nature, extent and impact of domestic abuse against women and men in intimate partner relationships in Ireland today. The report looks, in particular, at domestic abuse that is serious in nature and which is likely to call for an intervention from the Criminal Justice System and/or place demands on support services for victims.

The National Crime Council embarked on the preparations for this national study in the Spring of 2001 with financial support from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Health and Children. We would like to thank both Departments for this support. In preparing the ground work for this study, we benefited from the advice we received from a range of experts and organisations and for this we are most grateful. The questionnaire was developed by the Council's then Research Officer, Ms. Nicola Hughes. The Advisory Group (details at Appendix 5) provided invaluable guidance during the drafting stage and great credit is due to Ms. Hughes for her diligence and attention to detail in ensuring that the questionnaire met the highest standards.

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) was commissioned by the Council to administer the questionnaire using a telephone methodology in 2003. The ESRI put in place a range of protocols and procedures to ensure the safety of both the respondents and the interviewers. This report is published in association with the ESRI. The report was written by Dr. Dorothy Watson, Senior Researcher with the ESRI, Principal Investigator and Senior Author, and Miss. Sara Parsons, Research Officer with the National Crime Council. Only those who have worked closely with the aforementioned and the Advisory Group in recent months will fully appreciate their dedication, patience and commitment to this project.

The Council believes that the results outlined in the report will provide policy makers, organisations providing help and support to women and men experiencing domestic abuse, the research community, the media and the general public with up-to-date information that will inform and assist in the further development of policies and initiatives needed to challenge and reduce this type of often hidden abuse.

Many of the behaviours which form part of domestic abuse are criminal although there is currently no criminal offence of 'domestic abuse' *per se* in Ireland. Given the numerous provisions in current legislation which may be utilised to address most forms of abusive behaviour, the Council does not believe it is necessary to create a new criminal offence of 'domestic abuse'. Furthermore, the study

findings do not suggest that the creation of such an offence would lead to increased reporting and/or prosecution of such behaviour.

Future policy formulation must reflect the fact that both women and men experience severe domestic abuse, albeit men to a far lesser extent than women. The survey findings suggest that domestic abuse has become a more prevalent phenomenon in Ireland in recent years; this demands a cohesive response from Government, statutory and non-statutory bodies. The Council calls on the Government, the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women, and all other organisations dealing with women and men experiencing domestic abuse and perpetrating such abuse to give careful and urgent consideration to the findings and the recommendations set out hereunder.

Part II: Recommendations

In framing its recommendations the Council recognises that domestic abuse can take many forms and usually consists of a pattern of behaviour - often with severe consequences - involving not only physical abuse but also other types of abuse such as emotional and sexual abuse, isolation from family and friends, control over access to money and threats to others including children. The Council's recommendations are divided into a number of subgroups: implications for the legal system; implications for other State services; awareness raising; service provision as well as research and data collection.

a) The Legal System

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is responsible for legal initiatives, both civil and criminal, preventative measures that can be put in place, including intervention programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse and awareness raising measures aimed at changing society's attitude to domestic abuse. The Department also co-ordinates the work of the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women.

The Council acknowledges the work of An Garda Síochána in adopting a pro-active arrest policy when dealing with domestic abuse call-outs. However, the study findings have indicated that people are reluctant to involve the Gardaí in cases of domestic abuse with only a very small percentage of severely abused respondents having reported the incidents to the Gardaí. Many of the reasons for non-reporting stem from a minimising of the behaviour at the time, a belief that the behaviour was not serious enough to warrant Garda involvement and a reluctance to instigate criminal proceedings against a partner or ex-partner. The Council believes that the experiences outlined in this report are serious and do warrant intervention from the legal system which should be able to adapt and respond to the needs of victims of crime, including domestic abuse. Of course, any sanctions imposed by the legal system must prioritise the safety of victims and should aim to rehabilitate the offender. It is against this background that the Council makes the following recommendations to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and bodies under its aegis.

In relation to **An Garda Síochána** the Council recommends that:

- 1) **The recording of domestic abuse call-outs and the Garda action taken in response to such call-outs is closely monitored – consistent practices must be maintained and monitored nationwide if the public are to have the confidence to report experiences of domestic abuse.**
- 2) **The PULSE system must be able to capture repeat call-outs, the existence of court orders, convictions and charges pending.**
- 3) **Members of An Garda Síochána attending a domestic abuse call-out should have available to them, at the time that they respond, all the relevant information from the PULSE system outlined at (2) above.**
- 4) **A review of policy and procedures is undertaken to encourage increased reporting of domestic abuse incidents by women and men.**
- 5) **Members of An Garda Síochána receive on-going appropriate training in how to deal with domestic abuse call-outs placing particular emphasis on dealing with all cases in a confidential and sensitive manner.**
- 6) **Members of An Garda Síochána receive on-going training around cultural diversity to enable them to deal with call-outs from minority groups, including Travellers, in a confidential and sensitive manner.**

In relation to **court procedures** the Council recommends that:

- 7) **When domestic abuse is a contributory factor in a crime a Court should consider such conduct as an aggravating factor when sentencing.**
- 8) **Both the Criminal Courts and the Family Divisions of the Civil Courts should be provided with a wider range of disposal options, taking into account the safety of the complainant and the treatment and/or rehabilitation of the offender.**
- 9) **In criminal cases, where it is considered appropriate, the Court could use the option of deferment of sentence pending the completion of a mandated treatment and/or rehabilitation programme. In such cases, the granting of a Barring or Safety Order could be considered by the Court at the same time.**
- 10) **In family law cases, where it is considered appropriate, the Court could use the option of deferment of the granting of a final Barring or Safety Order pending the completion of a mandated treatment and/or rehabilitation programme. In such cases, the granting of intermediary relief such as an Interim Barring Order or a Protection Order could be considered for the duration of such deferment if deemed necessary by the Court.**

- 11) Judges who sit in Family Law Courts should receive appropriate training in this area and should thereafter receive on-going training.
- 12) The structures, resources and any necessary legislative changes should be put in place to ensure that, in appropriate cases, the Courts can make use of a wider range of sanctions, when dealing with the perpetrators of domestic abuse. In particular, the Probation and Welfare Service should be adequately resourced to enable it to discharge its functions. Consideration should be given to the Service resuming the provision of reports in family law cases.

The Council acknowledges that the Courts Service provides an essential service to those who have experienced domestic abuse and points to the link between domestic abuse and marital breakdown. This latter finding may have implications for the workload of the Courts Service.

In relation to the **Courts Service** the Council recommends that:

- 13) The establishment of dedicated Regional Family Law Courts, using existing court facilities, be considered to protect the privacy of the parties.
- 14) In its on-going court building and modernisation programme the Courts Service should take account of the possible increase in family law litigation thus leading to a requirement for additional accommodation for Family Law Courts with suitable ancillary services.
- 15) Data on the gender, age group and available demographic details of applicants and respondents in family law cases be collected.
- 16) Data on the gender, age group and available demographic details of both accused persons and injured parties in criminal law cases where domestic abuse is a contributory factor be collected.
- 17) Data on applications for domestic violence orders i.e. Barring and/or Safety Orders which are withdrawn or struck out be recorded separately. The Courts Service should put in place a mechanism to monitor and respond to significant variations which may occur in the withdrawal or strike out rates at a regional level.

b) Other State Services

It is clear from the findings in this report that there are implications for Government Departments and others outside the legal system.

The Department of Health and Children, through the Health Service Executive (HSE), has responsibility for the provision of care services to those who have experienced violence, including domestic abuse.

In relation to the **Department of Health and Children** the Council recommends that:

- 18) A Working Group be established to review the findings and recommendations of this report and assess the implications for the supports needed by women and men experiencing domestic abuse. The Working Group should liaise with the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women to co-ordinate and enhance the provision of services to all those women and men who have experienced domestic abuse.**

In relation to the **Health Service Executive** the Council recommends that:

- 19) An awareness programme be co-ordinated amongst all health professionals of the range of service(s) available at a regional/local level to women and men experiencing domestic abuse provided by each of the recently established Health Service Executive Areas and also by other agencies.**
- 20) Specialist nurses and social workers be appointed in General Hospitals and Maternity Hospitals to help in the early detection of domestic abuse and to ensure that patients who disclose such incidents are given effective follow-up counselling and information. These health professionals should be particularly aware not only of the physical injury which can result from domestic abuse but also of the emotional and mental trauma which women and men may be experiencing.**
- 21) Counselling professionals and social workers should receive specialist training so that they are in a position to respond appropriately to women and men who have been emotionally damaged by domestic abuse.**
- 22) Appropriate information be provided to all General Medical Practitioners to assist them in advising patients who disclose incidents of domestic abuse in the confines of the doctor's surgery.**

In relation to the **Department of Education and Science** the Council recommends that:

- 23) A mandatory module on domestic abuse be included in the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme at post primary level.**

In relation to the **Department of Social and Family Affairs** and the **Family Support Agency** the Council recommends that:

- 24) The link between domestic abuse and marital breakdown identified in this report be reviewed and consideration given to what strategies may need to be put in place to provide further supports to families.**

c) Awareness Raising

The Council recommends that:

- 25) A public awareness media campaign highlighting domestic abuse against women and men, including the damaging emotional impact, be developed by the Government with modules designed for different audiences such as young people, minority groups, the general adult population, employers and medical and legal professionals to help them recognise and respond appropriately to the issue.**
- 26) Information on the supports and services available to women and men experiencing domestic abuse should be widely disseminated and made available in user friendly format in appropriate settings.**
- 27) An easily accessible and 'plain English' guide to the civil and criminal litigation options of redress open to those who have experienced domestic abuse should be produced and widely distributed.**

d) Service Provision

The Council recommends that:

- 28) The findings from this report are used to inform decisions on:**
 - the supply and type of services available to women and men experiencing domestic abuse; and
 - the services to be afforded to perpetrators of domestic abuse who show a willingness to change their behaviour.
- 29) Consideration be given to establishing a refuge for men, initially on a pilot basis, in Dublin.**
- 30) Multi-annual funding is guaranteed to service providers, including those providing targeted initiatives for minority groups, to help them plan and develop responses in this area. In particular, the needs of children and the desirability of keeping the family unit together must be catered for.**
- 31) Such multi-annual funding is accompanied by independent evaluation of:**
 - the range and diversity of services provided to women and men experiencing domestic abuse; and
 - the services afforded to perpetrators of this behaviour.
- 32) To ensure the delivery of culturally appropriate services to victims of domestic abuse, appropriate training to increase awareness of the diversity of the Irish population and to promote a culture of anti-racism should be undertaken by service providers.**

e) Research and Data Collection

The Council recommends that:

- 33) The planned National Crime Victimization Survey - arising from a recommendation of the National Crime Council - should include dedicated questions related to experience of domestic abuse.**
- 34) The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should consider undertaking further research to examine the pattern of and regional variations, including variations by population, in:**
 - arrests, charges and convictions resulting from domestic violence incidents; and**
 - the outcomes of applications for domestic violence orders.**
- 35) Annual official data collected by the criminal justice agencies around domestic violence should be monitored by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to assist policy makers in assessing the response of the legal system to this area of crime and the adequacy of current legislation.**

Executive Summary

What is domestic abuse? How common is it in Ireland? Is it something that affects only women or are men affected as well? Who is most at risk? What impact does it have?

These are some of the questions addressed in the present study. The project was commissioned by the National Crime Council and is based on a survey conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute of a nationally representative statistical sample of over 3,000 adult women and men. In addition, a series of in-depth focus group interviews were conducted with marginalised women (Travellers and immigrant women) to draw out the issues of concern to them.

The goal of the project was to provide up-to-date information on the nature, extent and impact of domestic abuse against women and men in intimate partner relationships in Ireland today.

What is Domestic Abuse?

Based on evidence from the international literature and evidence from the survey, it is clearly important to draw a distinction between those **experiencing severe abuse** (a pattern of behaviour with a significant negative impact) and those experiencing **minor incidents** that had little impact on them.

Severe domestic abuse is defined as

a pattern of physical, emotional or sexual behaviour between partners in an intimate relationship that causes, or risks causing, significant negative consequences for the person affected.

It is a *pattern* of behaviour (not just a single act) in intimate relationships of the kind that would typically have a *significant negative impact* (physical injury, high levels of fear or distress) on the person affected. The partners may be married, cohabiting or dating. The abuse may be physical (such as slapping, punching, kicking), verbal threats, sexual (such as actual or attempted forced sexual intercourse) or emotional (such as humiliation, depriving of money, preventing contact with family or friends, name-calling).

In general a single action would not constitute domestic abuse, unless it results in physical injury or high levels of fear or distress. A push or shove of sufficient severity to result in physical injury, for instance, would constitute domestic abuse if it resulted in the person being injured. However, such acts rarely occur in isolation – those experiencing severe abuse generally suffer a number of different types of behaviour from the abusive partner.

In the report we focus on those who have, at some time in their lives, experienced **severe abuse** in an intimate relationship. If we were to consider all isolated instances of pushing, shoving or name-calling as ‘domestic abuse’, this would lead to a misleading picture of the prevalence of abuse, the impact on those affected and the profile of those most at risk. Nonetheless, such forms of behaviour should not be ignored or excused as to do so could be seen as legitimising severe abuse.

How Common is Domestic Abuse in Ireland?

The results show that 15 per cent of women (or about one in seven) and six per cent of men (or one in 16) have experienced severely abusive behaviour of a physical, sexual or emotional nature from a partner at some time in their lives.

One woman in 11 has experienced severe physical abuse in a relationship, one in 12 has experienced sexual abuse and one in 13 has experienced severe emotional abuse.

One man in 25 has experienced severe physical abuse, one in 90 has experienced sexual abuse in a relationship and one in 37 has experienced severe emotional abuse.

These figures show that ***while the risk to women is higher, domestic abuse is something that also affects a significant number of men.*** The survey suggests that in the region of 213,000 women and 88,000 men in Ireland have been severely abused by a partner at some point in their lives.

Who is Most Likely to have Experienced Abuse?

The survey pointed to a number of factors associated with an increased risk of having experienced domestic abuse. The main ones are outlined below.

- As we saw above, **women** are over twice as likely as men to have experienced severe physical abuse, seven times more likely to have experienced sexual abuse, and almost three times more likely to have experienced severe emotional abuse.
- **Young adults** are more likely to have experienced severe abuse than older adults. For men, the odds of severe abuse decline by 37 per cent with each 10 year increase in age, but the odds decline more slowly for women (15 per cent every 10 years).
- Women and men whose **parents were abusive to each other** are at an increased risk of experiencing abuse as adults (more than double the odds of being abused). There is also an increase in risk if the partner's parents were abusive to each other.
- While there is no relationship between the risk of severe abuse and household income, it matters a great deal **who makes decisions about money**. The majority of couples who live together (80 per cent) make decisions about money jointly. Among people living with a partner, the odds of severe abuse are increased dramatically (seven times for women and 2.5 times for men) where the partner controls decisions about money.
- Those who have **ever had children** face over three times the odds of severe abuse compared to those without children. This pattern was found for both women and men and is unrelated to the age of the children or to the number of children. This greater vulnerability associated with parenthood could be due to a number of factors, including the stresses of parenthood or the greater difficulty in leaving a relationship when there are children involved.

- A number of findings in the report suggest an increased risk of abuse where the partners are **isolated from close family and neighbourhood supports**. The odds of having been severely abused are slightly higher (27 per cent) in **urban** than in rural areas; and are 76 per cent higher for **those born outside Ireland** (most of whom are other Europeans) than for those born in Ireland. Where the person does not know whether or not there was abuse between the parents of the partner, suggesting little contact with the extended family, the odds of abuse are almost doubled. These findings suggest that integration into a close-knit community may play a role in preventing abuse.
- Although the ultimate causes of domestic abuse are the subject of ongoing debate, we examined whether abuse appeared to be **triggered** by any specific types of events. In almost two out of five cases, the abusive behaviour **had no specific trigger or was triggered by minor incidents**. In about one third of cases, abuse is associated with the consumption of **alcohol**. However, in only one quarter of cases was alcohol consumption *always* involved. Nevertheless, abuse that occurs in the context of alcohol use may be more likely to lead to injury, so that its role in triggering domestic abuse needs to be taken seriously.

What Impact does Domestic Abuse have?

Among those experiencing severe abuse (physical, emotional or sexual), **about half were physically injured**. Women's injuries tended to be more serious – **women are nearly twice as likely as men to require medical treatment for their injuries** and 10 times more likely to require a stay in hospital.

Domestic abuse is also associated with **poor health** and **disability**. Among those whose health is not good, the odds of having experienced severe abuse are 1.8 times higher than among those whose health is good. The odds of having experienced severe abuse are 2.9 times higher for those who are severely hampered by a condition or disability.

Those who had experienced severe abuse placed a great deal of emphasis on **emotional abuse**. This was also emphasised during the focus group interviews with marginalised women. Almost half of the severely abused respondents – even those who experienced severe physical or sexual abuse – listed an emotional incident as being the worst thing that happened to them, and women and men were very similar in this respect. Both women and men who have been severely abused report negative emotional consequences. Women, however, are more likely than men to have been **very frightened or distressed** (93 versus 62 per cent for men) and to report that the experience had a **major impact on their lives** (80 versus 56 per cent). More women than men also report a **loss of confidence** (30 versus seven per cent).

There is a clear link between domestic abuse and **marital breakdown**. Among those who are separated or divorced, almost 60 per cent of women and 30 per cent of men have experienced severe abuse at some point in their lives. The odds of having experienced severe abuse, when other factors are controlled, are 21 times higher for those who are separated or divorced than for those who are married or widowed.

There is also evidence that people are **leaving abusive relationships**. Of those who were ever physically abused, almost three quarters were no longer in that relationship. **Among those who lived with an abusive partner in the past, over half moved out** and three quarters of abusive relationships with the former partner were ended by the abused person.

Telling Someone and Seeking Remedies

Most women and men who were abused had told someone about it: **almost half had confided in friends** and about two in five had talked to family members. **Only a minority (one in five) had reported the behaviour to the Gardaí**, however **and men were less likely than women to report** (five per cent of those severely abused compared to 29 per cent of women). Women and men give similar reasons for not reporting the abuse, most often related to the seriousness of the behaviour, a preference for handling the situation themselves, and shame or embarrassment. Part of the reason that men are less likely to report abuse may be that they are less likely to receive injuries that require medical attention and many of them are not as affected emotionally, but also that they may have concerns that their situation will not be taken seriously.

There is a fairly high familiarity with the existence of helplines but, perhaps because of the reliance on informal supports, **only seven per cent of those who were abused had contacted a helpline**.

Informal supports were also important when someone left an abusive relationship. Of those who were living with an abusive partner and moved out, **nine out of 10 stayed with family or friends**, and only seven per cent stayed at either a homeless hostel, a refuge or on the street.

Of those who had been severely abused, **one third have never told anybody** or sought help from any of the agencies.

What are the Implications of the Findings?

The findings have implications for a number of areas of public policy.

The Gardaí and the Courts

Given the very significant numbers of women and men affected, domestic abuse should ideally be dealt with by the criminal justice system. However, the fact that many of the particular acts involved can also occur as isolated incidents with little or no impact presents difficulties for the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system is, in the main, designed to respond to particular incidents rather than to a pattern of behaviour and there are difficulties, in particular, in responding effectively to emotional abuse because the acts involved can vary tremendously in their impact.

The official figures on domestic abuse from the Garda statistics represent the tip of the iceberg, since most of those affected have never reported the behaviour. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions about underlying trends in domestic abuse on the basis of figures dealing with incidents reported to the Gardaí. It also means that it is not possible to use these figures with confidence in planning services for those affected in other areas, such as counselling, health and refuges.

In examining the reasons for not reporting to the Gardaí, the responses pointed to the need to emphasise that domestic abuse ***cases will be handled in confidence and with sensitivity, and will be treated seriously.*** There is also a need for clear information on how the legal remedies are applied.

The Family Law Courts need to be sensitive to ***the potential role of domestic abuse in separation and divorce cases.*** While it is certainly positive that people are leaving abusive relationships, it is important to ensure that their rights and safety are protected when they do so.

Health Services

Health care workers, such as doctors and nurses, may be among the first professionals to become aware that a person is being abused. It is important to ensure that GPs and other health personnel have an understanding of the impact of domestic abuse and have information on the appropriate referral agencies, including the Gardaí, helplines and refuges.

Those who experienced abuse rarely contacted social workers or the social services, pointing to a need for publicity on the role of Community Welfare Officers in referring those experiencing domestic abuse to the appropriate agencies, including social workers trained in domestic violence counselling.

Public Education

The data on public attitudes towards abuse showed a high level of awareness of the problem and a low tolerance for abusive behaviour. Therefore, it would appear that it is ***the gap between behaviour and what people see as appropriate*** that needs to be addressed. An understanding of domestic abuse and how it could be avoided, and the role of alcohol could usefully be incorporated into the second level curriculum on Social, Personal and Health Education.

Helplines and Refuges

Not all of those who have been abused may feel the need to contact helplines, given that most tend to draw on informal sources of support from friends and family. However, it is ***important that the service be available for those who do not feel able to talk to people close to them.*** One third of those who had been severely abused have never told anybody. It is likely that the confidentiality of the service and the benefit of simply talking about what has happened, or is still happening, needs to be emphasised to this group.

Again, not all of those who have been severely abused will need the services of refuges. The availability of other options such as staying with family and friends, or legal procedures (such as Barring Orders) for ensuring that the abusive person moves out probably explains why only two per cent of those who were severely abused contacted a refuge for help. Nevertheless, over 7,000 women and almost 1,000 men, had to rely on emergency accommodation from homeless shelters or refuges. Further research is needed on their circumstances at the time they moved out, such as whether they moved out alone or with children, and the nature of the threat from the partner, to determine whether they would require the extra security typically provided by women's refuges.

Another group of concern is those who did not move out and who are still living with an abusive partner. Confidentiality, sensitivity and security also need to be emphasised to this group.

The focus group interviews with marginalised women, who may be among the groups most in need of refuge, point to the need for **security and confidentiality** to be a priority at all refuges in Ireland, and for provision to be made for **the admission of older children to refuges**. The focus group interviews also highlighted the need for services to be **culturally appropriate** and for service providers to adopt an anti-racist code of practice.

Chapter 1 – The Concept Of Domestic Abuse

Background

There is a dearth of systematic, nationally representative information on the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse among women and men in Ireland. Nonetheless, there is ample evidence that a serious problem exists. The most up-to-date Garda statistics on domestic violence³ incidents available, relating to 2003, indicate that the Gardaí recorded an average of over 23 incidents of domestic violence every day. To place these figures in context, an average of almost 11 assaults causing harm and 69 burglaries were reported or known to the Gardaí every day in the same year. These figures on domestic abuse are likely to be the tip of the iceberg, however, since international experience suggests that a relatively small proportion of domestic abuse incidents are reported.

Although domestic abuse is experienced by both women and men, traditionally the research focus has been upon that suffered by women as this was perceived to be at the more serious end of the scale. The Working Party on the Legal and Judicial Process for Victims of Sexual and Other Crimes of Violence Against Women and Children (The Working Party) recommended a national study of the prevalence, nature and consequences of violence against women in 1996. The Working Party also proposed the establishment of an inter-departmental committee to develop a long-term strategy to combat domestic violence. Domestic violence was seen as having multiple dimensions: “the physical abuse sustained by women from men they know is usually accompanied by mental violence in the form of harassment, verbal abuse in the form of sexually derogative language, economic deprivation and social isolation” (The Working Party, 1996: p.33).

A Government Task Force on Violence Against Women was established in 1996 against the backdrop of a recognised need for a coherent national strategy to tackle domestic violence. Furthermore, following the publication of *Making the Links* (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1995), as well as the Department of Health’s consultation process on the issue of women’s health, domestic violence emerged as a major issue. The definition of domestic violence adopted by the Task Force was “the use of physical or emotional force or threat of physical force, including sexual violence, in close adult relationships”. The report went on to include a broad range of specific behaviours; “the term ‘domestic violence’ goes beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse; the destruction of property; isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support; threats to others including children; stalking; and control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone” (Task Force on Violence Against Women, 1997: p.27).

The report made recommendations for the various agencies working with victims of domestic abuse. The main proposal was that the “different players in the public and voluntary sectors could work much more effectively if they co-ordinated their efforts and welded their separate responses into a coherent and co-ordinated approach” (Task Force on Violence Against Women, 1997: p.9). Following the publication of this report the Government established the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women to provide a multi-agency, cohesive response to violence against women. The Committee consists of statutory bodies (including Government Departments and Gardaí), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and representatives of the legal and medical professions. It operates throughout the country via eight regional committees.

3 We favour the broader term ‘domestic abuse’ since, as outlined later in this chapter, we intend it to include incidents of a physical, sexual and emotional nature. The term ‘violence’ tends to bring to mind physical incidents only. The term ‘domestic violence’, however, is used in the legislation and in the Garda statistics. We use the term ‘domestic violence’ in referring to the Garda statistics and the legislation, without intending to limit the meaning to physical behaviour. Provisional Garda figures for 2004 were released in April, 2005, these are however liable to change. These indicated that there were 6,229 domestic violence incidents to which the Gardaí responded in 2004. Also during 2004, 1,104 people were charged in relation to domestic violence incidents and 538 convictions were achieved.

It is against this background that the National Crime Council (NCC) commissioned the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) to conduct the *National Study of Domestic Abuse* (NSDA) survey in 2003. This was the first large-scale survey of domestic abuse in Ireland that included both women and men. The Council allocated core funding to this research from its own budget with further contributions provided by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Health and Children. Domestic abuse is defined broadly to include physical, sexual or emotional behaviour in an intimate relationship that has a significant negative impact on the person affected. In undertaking this *National Study on Domestic Abuse* the NCC sought to provide up-to-date information and data on the nature, extent and impact of domestic abuse against women and men in intimate partner relationships in Ireland today.

Furthermore the study aimed to:

- Identify the use of supports and services which are currently available to women and men experiencing domestic abuse in intimate partner relationships;
- Explore the reasons why some of those who experience domestic abuse in intimate relationships do not report their experiences to An Garda Síochána;
- Ascertain the attitudes of the general population towards domestic abuse against women and men;
- Ascertain the knowledge and level of awareness of the services available to women and men who have experienced domestic abuse in intimate relationships; and
- Make recommendations arising from the findings of the study which could aid future policy formulation.

This report on the study will pay particular attention to domestic abuse of a serious nature that would warrant the intervention of the Criminal Justice System and will draw out the implications of the findings for criminal justice policy and the service needs of those affected.

In the remainder of this chapter we provide an overview of Irish legislation in relation to domestic abuse, review existing research on domestic abuse, develop the concept of domestic abuse and describe the methodology of the NSDA. The terms 'domestic abuse' and 'domestic violence' are used interchangeably in this chapter. Although we favour the term 'domestic abuse', since it does not connote a concern with behaviour that is physical to the exclusion of emotional abuse, the term 'domestic violence' is more commonly used in legislation. Later in the chapter we provide a more precise definition of what we mean by domestic abuse.

Irish Legislation in Relation to Domestic Abuse

There are a number of pieces of legislation currently on the statute books in Ireland which are used to address domestic abuse. Those which are of foremost relevance to the current study are discussed below.

Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2002

The legislation of most direct relevance to domestic violence in Ireland is a piece of civil (as opposed to criminal) legislation, the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the related Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2002. These Acts make provision for the protection, safety and welfare of spouses and other persons in domestic relationships should they be threatened by the behaviour of another person in the domestic relationship. This is provided through court orders which restrict/forbid certain types of behaviour and/or prohibit entry to the shared/applicants home⁴. The Acts also make it a criminal offence for anyone to breach these court imposed domestic violence orders. The Gardaí may arrest without warrant anyone they have reasonable cause to believe has broken a domestic violence order. Neither of the Acts define domestic violence.

There is no criminal offence of ‘domestic violence’. Many of the behaviours which are part of a pattern of ‘domestic violence’ are, however, criminal. These criminal offences are recorded/investigated by the Gardaí and prosecuted through the courts under numerous pieces of legislation; again only those of primary relevance are discussed below.

Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997 (NFOAP)

The NFOAP Act is of particular relevance to domestic violence as it legislates for assaults, threats to kill/cause serious harm, harassment and other related offences. Three types of assault are criminalised in the Act; assault, assault causing harm and assault causing serious harm. What is particularly interesting is the definition of ‘harm’. For the purposes of the Act ‘harm’ is defined as meaning “harm to body or mind and includes pain and unconsciousness” (NFOAP Act, 1997: S1). Whilst ‘harm to the mind’ is included in the legal definition it is not clear how this type of harm could be proved in court or what exactly constitutes this type of harm. Given the emotionally/psychologically abusive aspects of domestic violence, it is important to acknowledge that Irish law appears to adopt a broad definition of harm and violence.

The Act also defines coercion, harassment (commonly referred to as ‘stalking’), endangerment and false imprisonment all of which could be part of abusive/violent intimate partner relationships and all of which are criminal offences.

Criminal Damage Act, 1991

A tactic of control from some abusive partners is to damage or destroy items belonging to a partner. The Criminal Damage Act, 1991 makes it illegal not only for a person to intentionally or recklessly damage property, but also for them to threaten to damage it. Property is defined in the Act and can include any “property of a tangible nature, whether real or personal, including money and animals that are capable of being stolen, and data” (Criminal Damage Act, 1991: S1).

⁴ These court orders are discussed in more detail in Appendix 3.

Sexual Offences and Marital Rape

Sexual offences also come within the definition of domestic violence as outlined in the discussion later in the chapter. It is therefore important to consider the law in relation to these offences and particularly due to the intimate nature of the relationship between the offender and victim.

Criminal Law (Rape) Act, 1981

The Criminal Law (Rape) Act, 1981 defined the offence of rape as including any of the following; rape, attempted rape, aiding, abetting, counselling and procuring rape or attempted rape, and incitement to rape. Legally women and men can commit the offence of rape⁵.

Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act, 1990

The Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act, 1990 criminalised sexual assaults (previously known as indecent assaults) and aggravated sexual assaults against women and men. The aggravating factors as defined by section 3 (1) of the Act could be serious violence or the threat of serious violence or is such as to cause injury, humiliation or degradation of a grave nature to the person assaulted. As with the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997 it can be seen that emotional/psychological elements are incorporated alongside the physical aspects of criminal offences. The Act also criminalised rape involving penetration (however slight) of the anus or mouth by the penis or penetration (however slight) of the vagina by any object⁶.

It is important to note, in terms of the current research, Section 5 (1) of the 1990 Act abolished the marital exemption in relation to rape for the first time. In Ireland, prior to 1990 it was technically not possible for a man to be found guilty of raping his wife. The Act also defined consent, or perhaps more importantly what does not constitute consent in relation to these sexual offences. Section 9 stated that if a person did not offer resistance to the act [offence being committed] that in itself did not constitute consent to the act⁷.

Existing Research on Domestic Abuse

Research on domestic abuse internationally has long been the subject of heated debate regarding concepts, methodology and conclusions. While there is general agreement that important differences exist in terms of the severity and impact of the behaviours involved (e.g. Strauss, 1999a; Dobash and Dobash, 2004), there is less agreement regarding the extent to which the pattern and impact ought to form part of the core concept. This leads to very different methodological approaches and quite different findings regarding the prevalence of domestic abuse.

Broadly, there are two distinct traditions in research on domestic abuse: what might be called the 'Family Conflict' (FC) approach (e.g. Gelles, 1974; Steinmetz, 1978; Strauss and Gelles, 1990) and the 'Violence Against Women' (VAW) approach (Dobash and Dobash, 2004). The FC school is associated with the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) or similar measures. The CTS was developed in the US in the 1970s to explore family violence. It measures behaviours used in response to a conflict situation during the previous 12

5 A woman can commit a rape under section four of the Act using an object and may also commit the offence of 'rape' in that she has aided, abetted or incited a rape.

6 This section of the Act is commonly referred to as 'rape under Section 4' and is applicable to victims of either sex.

7 A major research project is currently being conducted by the Faculty of Law, at National University of Ireland, Galway, into attrition rates in rape cases (O'Connell et al., 2003).

months, ranging from rational discussion, through the use of verbal hostility to the use of physical force and violence. The last part of the scale, focusing on physical force and violence, is the one which has been the focus of much of the controversy (see discussion by Kelly, 2003). The CTS distinguishes eight types of force and violence which range in severity (e.g. throwing things, 'pushing, shoving and grabbing', 'beating up'). The CTS, which is widely used in the United States, almost invariably finds that women and men are about equally likely to use violence in conflict situations, and that women are about as likely as men to initiate violence (see review by Fiebert, 1997).

The reliability of the scale has been established (Archer 1999) but its validity has been questioned. The criticism hinges on the focus on particular 'acts' which can be very variable in terms of their meaning (the intent and context) and their consequences (impact, injury) (Szincovacz, 1982; Browning and Dutton, 1986; Margolin, 1987; Dobash et al, 1998; Nazroo, 1995; Schwartz, 1987). Dobash and Dobash (2004) cites as an example the question on whether the respondent had ever 'thrown an object at your partner', and note that the impact is quite different depending on whether the thrown object is a pillow or a lamp. Similarly, no distinction is drawn between "a 'slap' delivered by a slight, 5ft 4 inch woman with the 'slap' of a heavily built man of 6ft 2 inches" (Dobash and Dobash, 2004). The apparent gender symmetry is largely due to the fact that "it is only necessary for a man or a woman to indicate that they have committed *one single 'act'* on the list in order to be defined as 'violent'" (Dobash and Dobash, 2004: p.330). Hence, the CTS approach counts every act of violence as being of equal importance regardless of the impact upon the victim or context in which it occurred. It is probably fairer to say that while researchers in the CTS tradition can and do measure impact (Strauss, 1999c) differences in impact are assessed after prevalence has been established, rather than forming a central part of the concept itself (Strauss, 1999b: p.56).

The 'Violence Against Women' (VAW) approach questions the assumption that the 'acts' of women and men are equivalent, and that the impact and consequences are not relevant (Dobash and Dobash, 2004). This research has tended to be based on small samples at the extreme end of what we might think of as the domestic violence continuum. Since there are relatively small numbers of severely abused people in the population, the samples are identified through the Criminal Justice System or agencies providing services to victims (e.g. Dobash et al, 2000; Dobash and Dobash, 2004). These studies, sometimes referred to as 'clinical studies', cannot provide any information on the prevalence of domestic violence, since the samples are not representative of the general population, but they invariably find an overwhelming preponderance of females among those most severely affected by domestic abuse. The samples are selected based on impact – they have all come in contact with the system in one way or another – and the consequences and context are given a higher importance. The nature of the samples means that it is not possible to generalise to the wider population.

Somewhere in between these two approaches are crime surveys, such as the British Crime Survey (Walby and Allen, 2004) or the National Crime Victimization Survey in the US. These collect information on experience of domestic violence from nationally representative samples and, like the CTS, ask about specific behaviours or actions. However, the meaning and impact of the acts is at least implicitly defined by the research context – by the fact that the survey is about crime. Strauss (1999a) argues that in crime studies the contextual message can lead respondents to see the questions as dealing only with assaults

that are experienced as a crime or as violence, or assaults that resulted in or are likely to result in injury (1999a: p.22). In effect, the context may lead to a selective filtering of responses to exclude some of the less serious incidents. That this is the case was illustrated in the experience of the British Crime Survey in 2001. A separate computerised self-completion questionnaire on domestic violence was administered to respondents after the main survey. This was designed to increase respondent confidentiality and to facilitate disclosure of sensitive information. The self-completion approach did reveal prevalence rates that were substantially higher than the more limited items on domestic violence included on the main questionnaire (Walby and Allen, 2004: p.8).

Even if only implicitly, crime studies take impact into account. Moreover, there has been an increasing recognition of the necessity of so doing (Walby and Allen, 2004: p.8). Crime surveys generally find more females than males reporting having experienced domestic abuse, perhaps reflecting the tendency of some respondents to respond to the context of the survey and exclude less serious behaviours. For instance, the 2001 BCS found lifetime prevalence rates of non-sexual domestic violence of 26 per cent for women and 17 per cent for men in the 16-29 age group (Walby and Allen, 2004: p.12); the figures for previous year prevalence were six and five per cent, respectively, for women and men, or 13 and nine per cent, respectively, if sexual assault and stalking are included. The 2000 Scottish Crime Survey, which also used a self-completion module on domestic violence, found a lifetime prevalence of 19 and eight per cent, respectively, for women and men of threatened or actual physical violence, and previous year prevalence rates of six and three per cent, respectively (MacPherson, 2002). The figures from a similar self-completion module in the 2003/4 Northern Ireland Crime Survey pointed to somewhat lower prevalence rates than in England and Wales, with lifetime prevalence of 19 per cent for women and 11 per cent for men (Freel and Robinson, 2005). These included emotionally/psychologically damaging behaviours, threatened and actual physical violence and forced sexual intercourse.

The International Crime Victimization Survey⁸ from 2000 contained questions on domestic violence, defined as “any form of actual or threatened psychological, physical or sexual violence... occurring in personal relationships not only limited to married couples but also de facto relationships, divorced, separated and past de facto relationships and dating relationships” (Baldry, 2002: p.249). The five-year prevalence rates for domestic violence ranged from lows of four to six per cent in Portugal and Northern Ireland, to relatively high rates in Scotland and France (both 14 per cent) and England (18 per cent) (Baldry, 2002: p.258).

In 1999, a special module on spousal violence was added to the annual General Social Survey in Canada. The results were based upon telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of women and men aged 15 years and older. ‘Spousal violence’ includes any “experiences of physical or sexual assault that are consistent with Criminal Code definitions of these offences and could be acted upon by a police officer” (Pottie Bunge and Locke, 2000: p.12). The survey covered violence which had occurred in current and previous legal marriages and common law unions only. The prevalence rates over the last five years were eight per cent of women and seven per cent of men; with figures of three per cent and two per cent respectively, in the previous year.

⁸ Ireland did not participate in this survey.

Irish Research on Domestic Abuse

The most significant piece of research conducted in Ireland to date on domestic abuse is the Women's Aid study 'Making the Links' published in 1995 (Kelleher and O'Connor, 1995). Its findings were based upon a national postal, self-completion survey of women and surveys and interviews conducted with women attending doctor's surgeries in Dublin. A survey of service providers was also undertaken. The definition of domestic violence⁹ used in the research included actual and threatened physical violence, forced sex and emotional/psychological abuse (for example, damage to belongings, isolation from family and friends).

A total of 1,483 women aged 18 years and older were randomly selected for inclusion in the national survey, 46 per cent (679 women) responded. Of the 575 women who had ever been in an intimate relationship with a man, 18 per cent (101 women) stated that they had been subjected to at least one form of violence at some time in their lives by a current or former partner (Kelleher and O'Connor, 1995: p.15). The most common form of domestic violence reported by the women was mental cruelty (13 per cent), followed by actual physical violence (10 per cent) and threatened physical violence (nine per cent). Smaller proportions of women had been subjected to sexual violence (four per cent) or had their property damaged (two per cent) by a current or former partner (Kelleher and O'Connor, 1995: pp.15 -17).

Another study of women's experiences was conducted by researchers from Trinity College, Dublin (TCD) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). Self-completion questionnaires were given to a total of 2,615 women aged 16 years and older, attending their General Practitioners (GP) between 1996 and 1997 (Bradley et. al, 2002). Seventy-two per cent (1,871 women) of these women responded. The types of behaviour addressed in the questionnaire included actual and threatened physical violence against the respondent and their children, forced sexual intercourse and controlling behaviours (emotional/psychological abuse).

Of those women who had ever been in an intimate relationship, 39 per cent had experienced at least one episode of violent behaviour by a partner. Almost one in three (31 per cent) had experienced eight or more different types of violent behaviour¹⁰. The researchers highlighted the fact that this was double the rate found in other Irish studies (such as the Women's Aid study). Controlling behaviour was experienced by 69 per cent of women, 21 per cent of women had experienced five or more different types of controlling behaviour¹¹. More than one in four women surveyed (28 per cent) reported feeling afraid of a current or former partner. The study also found a relationship between controlling behaviour and physical violence; "the likelihood of experiencing violent behaviour by a partner rose with increasing severity of reported controlling behaviour" (Bradley et. al, 2002: pp.2-3).

Another report based upon admissions to St. James' Hospital Accident and Emergency Department was published in 1993. In addition to providing training for staff on dealing with domestic abuse cases the project recorded the number of women who were admitted (to Accident and Emergency) and disclosed abuse by a male partner or family member. During 1993 there were 119 admissions of 81 women who disclosed abuse. Disclosure was most likely to occur "as a result of an individual nurse or doctor making time for private discussion with the woman" (Cronin and O'Connor, 1993: p.8). Fifty-two per cent of these

⁹ Kelleher and O'Connor refer to 'domestic violence' as opposed to 'domestic abuse' in their report.

¹⁰ A total of 20 different types of violent behaviour were included in the questionnaire.

¹¹ A total of eight different types of controlling behaviour were included in the questionnaire.

women were aged between 21 and 40 years old. In 84 per cent of cases the abuse had been perpetrated by a husband, partner or ex-partner. The study found that the most frequent types of injury were bruises, lacerations and fractured bones (Cronin and O'Connor, 1993: p.14). Based upon the higher levels of identification of women who had been abused immediately following the training programme the authors recommended that training be provided to staff on an on-going basis.

There has not been a national study in Ireland which has focused on the experiences of men. McKeown and Kidd (2003) were commissioned by the Department of Health and Children to conduct a literature review on men's experience of domestic violence. They conducted an extensive review of studies, mainly using the Conflict Tactics Scale, based on nationally representative gender-neutral samples in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They concluded that, apart from sexual violence which is almost always perpetrated by men against women, women and men are generally similar in terms of their experience of and use of violent behaviour. The authors note, however, that "the outcomes of domestic violence in terms of physical and psychological injuries tend to be considerably more negative for women victims than for men victims" (McKeown and Kidd, 2003: p.8).

In drawing out the policy recommendations, McKeown and Kidd suggest that refuges are not a priority for the male victims of domestic violence unless they have had to leave home with dependent children (p.90). However, they point to the need for counselling services, group support, greater awareness on the part of medical, legal and other service providers (pp. 90-92) for male victims of domestic abuse.

McKeown and Kidd have been criticised for not including crime studies in their review of the literature and for focusing solely on research in the Conflict Tactics tradition¹².

Other Irish studies have addressed domestic violence very briefly in the context of related topics. A study of couples attending marriage counselling between 2000 and 2002 asked respondents to self-complete a questionnaire about their reasons for attending counselling and their relationship generally (McKeown et al, 2002). It included one question on domestic violence taken from the British Crime Survey published in 1999¹³. The findings from just over 1,000 respondents (women and men) indicate that 53 per cent of those attending counselling had experienced domestic violence at some time in their lives, and 36 per cent in the previous year. In about half of these cases partners had been mutually violent. In 30 per cent of cases the female partner was the only one to be violent and in 24 per cent of cases it was the male who was violent.

The authors of the report acknowledged that "these results do not tell us anything about the severity of the violence involved, the context, reasons or initiation of the violence or the extent of injuries resulting from it" (McKeown et al, 2002: p.48). It is also important to remember that the research was conducted amongst couples who were attending marriage counselling. A part of the marital conflict may be due to domestic abuse and hence domestic abuse may be more prevalent amongst these couples than amongst the general population. Similarly, the gender symmetry might not generalise outside of the specific context.

¹² These criticisms are made by anonymous external peer reviewers which were published, along with the report, on the Department of Health and Children website: http://www.dohc.ie/publications/men_domestic_violence.html.

¹³ The exact question asked was; "People sometimes use force in a relationship – grabbing, pushing, shaking, hitting, kicking, etc. Has your partner ever used force on you for any reason? Have you ever used force on your partner for any reason?" (McKeown et. al, 2002: p.31).

In addition to the studies discussed above there have been a number of small-scale and local projects dedicated to the topic of domestic violence (Boothman, 1999; Bowen, 1997; Casey, 1989; Kennedy, 1999; and Ruddle and O'Connor, 1992). These have tended to be purposive samples of women facing, or at high risk of, domestic violence rather than nationally representative samples. A number of studies for example have been conducted on women who have stayed in refuge accommodation or who are known to service providers as victims of domestic violence. The findings from these studies therefore are relevant to probing the pattern, meaning and impact of domestic violence rather than its prevalence. Furthermore, refuges tend to cater for particular groups of women, such as those who do not have the resources and/or family connections to stay elsewhere and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds also tend to be over-represented. Finally, none of the studies included men and hence do not address the topic of male victims of domestic violence.

Sexual Violence

The *Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland* (SAVI) report was published in 2002. Its findings were based upon telephone interviews with 3,120 respondents. The research found that “in the case of both women and men who experienced sexual violence, the abuser was more often known to the abused person than a stranger (70 per cent versus 30 per cent for women and 62 per cent versus 38 per cent for men). Almost one quarter (23.6 per cent) of perpetrators of violence against women as adults were intimate partners or ex-partners. This was the case for very few (1.4 per cent) abused men” (McGee et. al, 2002: p.98).

Developing the Concept of Domestic Abuse

A number of authors have suggested that the findings from the different types of studies apply to different groups of people and reflect different aspects of domestic abuse (Strauss, 1999a; Dobash and Dobash, 2004). Most of the behaviour captured in Family Conflict studies is relatively minor and relatively infrequent, whereas a large part of that captured by crime surveys and clinical studies is severe.

Since the prime concern in the present project is with implications for the Criminal Justice System, the consequences and impact of the behaviour and its pattern need to form a core part of the concept. If the concern is with implications for the Criminal Justice System and services to victims of severe abuse, then it would be a mistake to base conclusions on figures dominated by milder forms of abuse. This is particularly true if the populations are quite different.

On the other hand, the less severe forms of abuse form an important part of the context in which severe abuse occurs. Together with attitudes towards domestic abuse, they can serve to legitimise or de-legitimise certain forms of behaviour. Although not, perhaps, requiring direct intervention, to the extent that such ‘minor’ forms of abuse serve to legitimise more serious behaviour, they are significant from the point of view of ‘primary prevention’ (Strauss 1999a) strategies such as information and educational campaigns.

The concept of domestic abuse underlying this study, then, is

a pattern of physical, emotional or sexual behaviour between partners in an intimate relationship that causes, or risks causing, significant negative consequences for the person affected.

In general domestic abuse consists of a pattern of behaviour. A single action would not constitute domestic abuse, unless it results in physical injury or high levels of fear or distress. A push or shove of sufficient severity to result in physical injury, for instance, would constitute domestic abuse if it resulted in the person being injured. However, such acts rarely occur in isolation – those experiencing severe abuse, as we will see below, generally suffer a number of different types of behaviour from the abusive partner.

The consequences are ‘significant’ if they would warrant the kind of remedies provided through the legal or Criminal Justice Systems (such as Protection Orders, Barring Orders, arrest of the offender) or support services for people affected by domestic abuse.

‘Intimate partners’ include husbands and wives, cohabitees and boyfriend/girlfriend. The partner may be of the same sex or the opposite sex. The partners need not be living together at the time and may be current or previous partners. We do not, however, cover abuse between other household or family members, such as abuse of children or elder abuse.

In the following, we describe the data used in the present study, develop the measure of domestic abuse and present some overall figures on prevalence.

The National Study of Domestic Abuse, 2003 Survey

The National Crime Council commissioned the *National Study on Domestic Abuse (NSDA)* survey in 2003 to provide a nationally representative picture of the nature, prevalence and impact of domestic abuse of women and men in Ireland. This research is the first national study ever in Ireland to include both women’s and men’s experiences of domestic abuse. Details of the survey methodology are provided in Appendix 1, and will be summarised here. The survey was conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). In total 3,077 interviews were completed with a nationally representative, random sample of women and men aged 18 and over. The interviews were conducted by telephone by a specially recruited and trained group of interviewers. Telephone numbers were generated randomly, with an initial stem selected using the ESRI’s RANSAM program for selecting national samples. Telephone methodology was chosen because it afforded respondents a degree of anonymity not available in a face-to-face situation and it had been used very successfully elsewhere in dealing with sensitive topics, notably by the SAVI study, mentioned above.

The fieldwork protocols are described fully in Appendix 1. A post-stratification grid was used to select respondents within households to ensure that respondents were representative of the population in terms of age group, gender and work situation. The response rate to the survey was 58 per cent of contacted households, rising to 93 per cent of individuals identified as eligible to participate (see Appendix 1 for calculation of response rates). Most of the non-response occurred at the initial point of contact with households before a respondent had been selected from among household members and before the

topic of the survey had been explained. Thus there is no reason to believe that the sample is selective with respect to the experience of domestic abuse.

The questionnaire covered attitudes to domestic abuse and personal experience of abusive behaviour (emotional, physical and sexual) from an intimate partner, as well as collecting detailed information on the impact of the abuse on the person affected and their experiences around disclosure and help-seeking. The average interview lasted 21 minutes for someone who had not experienced abuse, and 38 minutes for someone who had experienced abuse. The data were weighted to ensure that the sample is representative of the population in terms of key characteristics of individuals such as age group, sex, region, marital status, level of education, work situation and household size (see Appendix 1 for details). All of the figures in the report are based on weighted data, with the actual number of cases being reported where this is relevant.

The definition of domestic abuse includes physical, sexual and psychological incidents in conjunction with the impact that these had upon the victim. This focus upon the impact (including injuries sustained and feelings of fear experienced) will facilitate analysis of those cases of serious abuse which require the intervention of the Criminal Justice System. The information collected upon a broader range of behaviours that occur within relationships will also allow for discussion of preventative measures that might be usefully employed.

Measuring Domestic Abuse

One of the core tasks of this project is to develop a measure of domestic abuse using the questionnaire items. The core aspects of domestic abuse to be captured, in line with the definition outlined above, are:

- that domestic abuse cannot be sensibly separated from some measure of the *impact* of those behaviours in terms of severity or harm;
- that domestic abuse is not defined by a single isolated ‘act’, unless that act on its own is of sufficient severity to lead to physical injury or high levels of fear or distress, but by the co-occurrence of a number of different types of acts which form a *pattern* of behaviour; and
- domestic abuse has distinct but inter-related *dimensions* (physical, sexual and emotional).

The incident-focus of much crime research creates difficulties in this respect in that impact is not adequately considered, or is considered only after the prevalence of the behaviours has been established. In crime research generally, this is appropriate since it is the act itself that is considered criminal, without regard to the impact, although impact may be taken into account in sentencing. On the other hand, to have impact as a necessary criterion in developing a measure of domestic abuse would also be inappropriate. Those subject to violent behaviour in a domestic setting may come to minimise the effects the behaviour has on them. Therefore, while subjective (fear) and objective (injury) measures of impact are important in identifying the concept, they cannot be seen as necessary components. This process of minimising the effects of abusive behaviour has been noted in other projects as the “normalisation of

violence” (Lundgren et al, 2001: p.18). This ‘normalisation’ means that the abused person can define “the violence as something other than actual violence, thus making it less serious, [which] may be one way of coping with these violent experiences. If violence has been employed in a relationship and if it has been going on for some time, developing a systematic character, this dynamic is reinforced through the normalisation process” (Lundgren et al, 2001: p.18).

In operationalising the concept, it is important to test the validity of the items for inclusion in the measures of domestic abuse. This is necessary because of the large number of items measured in the questionnaire. A relatively large number of items are needed to measure domestic abuse as a constellation of behaviours, as conceptualised here. On the other hand, the inclusion of a large number of items, without regard to impact and consequences, would clearly lead to an inflated, and misleading, estimate of the prevalence of abuse. It is important to ensure that all the items provide good measures of the underlying concept. The inclusion of items measuring incidents that have a minor impact or no impact on respondents, particularly where these incidents occur more frequently, would compromise the validity of the measure.

Impact on Respondent

Impact is measured by a series of items, as shown in Figure 1.1. This includes psychological impact (strong fear and/or distress), the respondent’s assessment of the overall impact the incident(s) had on his or her life; the frequency with which the behaviour was experienced and whether the behaviour resulted in physical injury.

Physical Abuse Items

Tables 1.1-1.3 illustrate clearly why it is important to take the differential impact of potentially abusive behaviours into account¹⁴. Table 1.1 shows the lifetime prevalence and impact on respondents of the different physical incidents measured on the questionnaire. These include physical abuse and threats of physical abuse. Note that the level of fear and the frequency are measured separately for each type of incident (see Figure 1.1), but that the level of distress, the overall impact and physical injury are measured on the physical items as a group. This means that for someone experiencing more than one type of physical incident (such as being pushed and kicked), it is not possible to link the overall impact or the distress to any particular incident. We would expect the measure of fear, therefore, to be more differentiated by type of abuse.

¹⁴ The number of cases available for the prevalence figures, and all tables where the base for percentages is all women and all men, is 1,667 women and 1,363 men.

Figure 1.1: Measures of Impact on Respondents

Impact	Item	Notes
Fear/Distress	Could I ask whether the things you just told me about made you feel frightened or distressed? (Not at all/Yes, a little/Yes, quite/Yes, very) (separate items for fear and distress)	For emotional abuse, asked for the behaviours as a group
Fear/Distress	Could I ask how frightened or distressed you were when your partner did the things you just told me about? (Not at all/Yes, a little/Yes, quite/Yes, very) (separate items for fear and distress)	For physical behaviours and sexual behaviours, refers to behaviours as a group.
Fear	Could I ask how frightened you were when your partner [...] (Not at all/Yes, a little/Yes, quite/Yes, very)	For physical behaviours, asked separately for each type of behaviour reported by respondent
Frequency	How often did your present [former] partner [...]? Was it ... (On one occasion/Now and again/Quite often/Very often)	Asked separately for present and former partner(s) For physical abuse, asked separately for each type of behaviour For sexual and emotional abuse, asked for the behaviours as a group
General Impact	Thinking again of the things you just told me about, could I ask how much of an impact they had on your life? Would you say a major impact, a moderate impact, a minor impact or no impact at all? (Major impact/Moderate impact/Minor impact/No impact at all)	For physical, sexual and emotional behaviours, this item applies to the behaviours as a group
Injury	When your partner did any of the things we discussed, did he/she physically injure or hurt you?	Asked for all forms of behaviour (physical, sexual, emotional) as a group.

Table 1.1: Lifetime Prevalence and Impact of Physical Incidents and Threats

	Prevalence %	Quite/ very often %	Very Fright- ened %	Major impact on life %	Physical injury %	Severe Impact %
Threaten to hurt you or someone close to you*	6	41	53	65	60	68
Threaten you with an object (knife/stick)	3	17	55	70	62	68
Slap you across the face	12	16	16	34	33	36
Kick you	5	20	30	50	64	66
Punch you	6	23	35	54	61	64
Push or shove you	16	16	18	36	32	36
Hold you down against your will	4	17	58	76	64	71
Bite you in order to hurt you	1	22	23	56	61	61
Throw you against something that could hurt you	4	24	61	72	77	81
Try to smother, suffocate or choke you	2	14	78	81	91	95
Other physical abuse	1	16	57	43	49	49

* See Appendix Table A4.2 for additional detail on threats.

The 'severe impact' measure in the final column identifies those cases where –

- physical injury occurred
- or *all three* of the following
 - very frightened or very distressed
 - quite often or very often, AND
 - respondent's self-report that physical abuse had a 'major impact' on life.

Although this is quite a strict set of criteria, apart from slapping and pushing/shoving (both 36 per cent), the majority of respondents experiencing the incidents covered report such a severe impact.

Two of the measures – slapping and pushing/shoving – are both more prevalent and less likely to have a severe impact on the respondent. Twelve per cent of respondents had ever been slapped across the face by a partner and 16 per cent had been pushed or shoved. However, only 16 - 18 per cent were 'very frightened' when this happened, in contrast to figures in the region of 30 - 35 per cent for being kicked

or punched and 58 - 61 per cent for being held down or thrown against something. Respondents who were slapped or pushed/shoved are also less likely than those experiencing other types of incidents to report injury or that the incident had a 'major impact' on their lives.

Although some of the items appear to have a significantly lower impact than others, we need to be cautious in excluding any of these physical items from the definition of 'abuse' since (with the possible exception of pushing and shoving which, on the face of it, could include some very minor types of behaviour) they clearly come within the remit of the Criminal Justice System in that they potentially threaten the safety and welfare of the person experiencing them. However, the item on being pushed or shoved is one that could clearly range in seriousness from minor jostling or rudeness to more violent forms of behaviour. Since this item is also very prevalent for both women and men, its inclusion as domestic abuse could seriously compromise the validity of the measure if it is dominated by incidents of a less severe nature.

A somewhat similar issue arises with respect to slapping across the face. This type of incident is among the more frequent, especially for men. If it is included in the profile of domestic abuse, then men experiencing abuse would be largely those who have been slapped across the face. In a large number of cases, the man was 'not at all frightened' (70 per cent), when this happened and in a substantial number of cases the incident occurred only once (49 per cent). Obviously, having a measure of domestic abuse that included all incidents of this type would compromise the conclusions that could be drawn regarding the implications for the Criminal Justice System of the experiences of male victims of abuse.

A related issue arises in the case of threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to him or her. In 10 per cent of cases the respondent did not believe the partner's threats were serious.

In the measure of the concept of domestic abuse, reported below, the impact as well as the nature of the action is explicitly taken into account.

Sexual Abuse Items

Table 1.2 shows the lifetime prevalence and impact figures for the items measuring sexual abuse. Forced sexual intercourse is clearly a crime, as is attempted rape¹⁵. Note that the seven per cent figure for attempts to force sexual intercourse includes the four per cent where forced intercourse actually took place. Forcing someone to watch or read pornographic material can be an aggravating factor in sexual assault to the degree that it is linked to humiliation or degradation¹⁶. The final item – 'forcing you to do anything else of a sexual nature' was intended to ensure that we captured serious incidents such as penetration of the vagina by an object (covered in law under Section 4 of the Criminal Law (Rape) Amendment Act, 1990) or other forms of sexual assault. However, it seems clear from the lower overall impact that it is also capturing incidents of a less serious nature. Apart from the measures of impact, we have no further detail on the nature of these experiences.

15 *Criminal Law (Rape) Act, 1981 and Criminal Law (Rape) Amendment Act, 1990.*

16 *Criminal Law (Rape) Amendment Act, 1990, Section 3(1).*

Table 1.2: Lifetime Prevalence and Impact of Sexual Abuse

	Prevalence	Quite/ very often	Very fright- ened	Very dist- ressed	Major impact on life	Severe Impact
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Forced to have sex	4	19	48	65	64	52
Try force to have sex	7	14	38	52	43	35
Force to watch/read pornography	1	19	48	64	35	22
Force - other sexual activity	2	23	40	55	59	48

'Severe impact' in the final column of Table 1.2 refers to a combination of 'very' frightened/distressed and the respondent reporting that the incident had a major impact on his or her life.

Emotional Incidents

Table 1.3 provides the prevalence and impact figures for the emotional abuse items. The first column shows the prevalence of the emotional and psychological incidents. Two types of behaviour stand out as being significantly more common: being called names that are hurtful or humiliating (25 per cent) and being deliberately embarrassed in front of others (20 per cent). On the other hand, these items have a weaker association with frequency (25-28 per cent 'quite' or 'very' often compared to 46 per cent, on average, for the other items), fear or distress (26-29 per cent very frightened or distressed, compared to 48 per cent on average for the other items) and self-reported major impact (29-32 per cent vs. 53 per cent).

This difference in impact is apparent even though the follow-up questions were asked about the emotional items as a group rather than following each individual item. For instance, a person may have been deliberately embarrassed by one partner with little effect, but may have repeatedly had personal property damaged by another partner causing great distress and having a major impact on the respondent. We know whether the overall impact of the emotional incidents was severe, but not whether each of the types of incident had the same level of impact.

Table 1.3: Lifetime Prevalence and Impact of Emotional/Psychological Incidents

	Prevalence	Quite/ very often	Very frightened/distressed	'Major' impact on life	Severe impact
	%	%	%	%	%
Deliberately embarrass you in front of other people	20	28	29	32	12
Deliberately keep you short of money	5	54	58	64	33
Try to prevent visiting/contacting family/friends	10	41	38	47	19
Deliberately damage your belongings	6	46	40	47	24
Threaten to harm himself/herself if you leave	10	30	42	42	14
Call you insulting/humiliating names	25	25	26	29	11
Drive a car recklessly to frighten you	6	33	44	41	17
Purposely interrupt your sleep to upset you	7	42	46	49	23
Threaten to take or prevent from seeing your children	3	67	66	71	46
Prevent you from leaving home	3	66	59	68	42
Other emotional incident	1	30	41	48	20

The criteria for severe impact, shown in the final column, are that:

- The incidents occurred 'quite often' or 'very often'; and
- The incidents caused the respondent to be either 'very frightened' or 'very distressed'; and
- The incidents had a 'major' impact on the respondent's life.

Being 'deliberately embarrassed' and 'called names' are less likely to have a 'severe impact' than the other types of behaviour measured.

Identifying Subgroups and Measuring 'Severe Abuse'— Latent Class Analysis

Latent Class (LC) analysis is particularly suited to the problem of identifying a subset of the population based on a set of related indicators. The idea behind LC analysis is that the population can be divided into a number of groups or classes that are distinguished in terms of some underlying, but unmeasured (latent) characteristic. In the present case, the population can be divided into groups that are distinct in terms of whether or not they have experienced abuse in a relationship with an intimate partner. The questionnaire items designed to measure abuse are capturing (even if not perfectly) this underlying reality.

LC analysis assumes that the latent class ‘explains’ all of the common variation in a set of items, and that the items are independent once this common variation is taken into account – this is the assumption of ‘conditional independence’ (Magidson and Vermunt, 2004).

LC analysis allows us to explicitly include a measure of impact on the person abused, and to consider a number of different types of behaviour simultaneously in a manner that is more sophisticated than simply summing them. It allows, for instance, for the fact that not all of those who are called hurtful names by a partner would fall into the ‘abused’ group.

Since we can also test whether the pattern in the data is better explained by two, three or even more classes, it allows us to ask whether it is possible to identify distinct groups in terms of the nature or severity of their experience.

The latent class analysis, together with statistics on model fit, are discussed formally and in more detail in Appendix 2. The structure of the latent classes identified is discussed here. Tables 1.4 - 1.6 show the structure of the latent classes for the three subsets of items – physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Turning first to the latent classes for the physical items in Table 1.4, we can see that three groups are identified: a large group (88 per cent of the population) that, in general, were unlikely to have experienced any of the incidents; a middle group (seven per cent), that were likely to have experienced some of the incidents, but were not severely impacted, and the third group (six per cent) who had the highest probability of experiencing each of the different types of incidents and the highest probability of being severely impacted.

Table 1.4: Structure of Latent Classes for Physical Abuse Items

	Latent Class -Physical		
	Not Abused %	Minor %	Severe %
Per cent of population in this class	87.6	6.9	6.5
Per cent in each class where incident experienced...			
Threaten to hurt you or someone close to you	0.3	13.1	57.7
Threaten you with an object (knife/stick)	0.1	8.5	39.4
Slap you across the face	1.0	46.9	64.8
Kick you	0.0	17.9	53.4
Punch you	0.0	25.2	57.0
Push or shove you	1.5	35.7	72.8
Hold you down against your will	0.6	6.6	41.4
Bite you in order to hurt you	0.2	4.1	13.7
Throw you against something that could hurt you	0.0	7.6	54.0
Try to smother, suffocate or choke you	0.0	0.7	23.7
Other physical abuse	0.1	2.6	4.3
Per cent in each class where ...			
Quite/very often	0.4	8.1	54.5
Very frightened/distressed	2.6	44.6	85.2
Major impact on life	1.5	23.1	64.6
Physical injury	0.0	0.0	82.2
Severe impact	0.0	0.0	93.1
Average number of different types of incident	0.0	1.7	4.8

* severe impact = (quite/very often AND very frightened) OR injury.

As mentioned, 6.5% of the respondents had experienced severe physical abuse. Within this group 73% had been pushed or shoved, 65% had been slapped across the face and 58% had a partner who threatened to hurt them or someone close to them. The figures for the different items show the percentage of members of each class who reported having experienced that type of behaviour from an intimate partner at some point in their lives. It is worth noting that 47 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, of the middle group (the minor physical abuse group) had been slapped or pushed/shoved. None of this group reported physical injury as a result of their experiences and none reported the combination of frequency and fear that formed part of the definition of severe impact.

The incidence of physical injury, ranging from bruising, through cuts requiring stitches to loss of consciousness, was very high (82 per cent) for the third group. The three classes are clearly differentiated in terms of their experience of the different types of behaviour, in terms of impact and in terms of the number of different types of incident they have experienced (1.7 on average for the 'Minor' group and 4.8 on average for the 'Severe' group).

Table 1.5 shows the structure of the latent classes for the sexual abuse items. Here there were two groups, because there were not enough items on sexual abuse of a minor nature to identify a third category. In terms of sexual abuse, we can identify a large group (95 per cent of the population) who tended to experience none of the incidents and a much smaller group (five per cent) who had experienced at least one of the incidents.

Table 1.5: Structure of Latent Classes for Sexual Abuse Items

	Sexual Abuse	
	Not Abused %	Abused %
Per cent of population in this class	95.4	4.6
Per cent in each class who experienced ...		
Forced to have sex	0.0	85.6
Try force to have sex	2.4	98.8
Force to watch/read pornography	0.2	13.1
Force - other sexual activity	0.6	26.0
Per cent in each class where ...		
Quite/very often	0.2	17.6
Very frightened	0.4	51.5
Very distressed	0.5	69.3
Major impact	0.2	63.1
Severe impact	0.0	52.9
Average number of different types of sexual incident	0.0	2.2

Note: severe impact = very frightened/distressed AND 'major impact' on life.

A small proportion of the 'not abused' group had been subject to an attempt at forced sexual intercourse, but none of this group had been severely impacted (very frightened/distressed and 'major impact' on life). Moreover, less than one per cent experienced strong fear or distress. Almost all of the abused group (99 per cent) were subject to at least one attempt at forced sexual intercourse, while 86 per cent experienced actual forced sexual intercourse. Over half of the abused group had been severely impacted. Among those experiencing sexual abuse, nearly 70 per cent were 'very distressed' and 52 per cent were 'very frightened'.

Table 1.6 shows the structure of the latent classes for the items on emotional abuse. The first class, into which 76 per cent of the population fall, consists of those who tend not to have experienced any of the incidents, although five and seven per cent, respectively, have been deliberately embarrassed or called humiliating or insulting names, but without severe impact.

The second class, comprising 19 per cent of the population, consists of those who tend not to have experienced any of the incidents apart from being deliberately embarrassed or being called insulting or humiliating names (65 per cent and 76 per cent, respectively). The third, and smallest class (five per cent of the population) consists of those who tend to have experienced several different types of incidents

and where the incident tended to have had a severe impact on them (quite/very often, very frightened/distressed and major impact on life). Nearly 60 per cent of this group were severely affected; almost 80 per cent experienced emotional abuse 'quite' or 'very' often, nearly three-quarters were very frightened or very distressed and 86 per cent reported that the behaviour had a major impact on their lives.

Table 1.6: Structure of Latent Classes for Emotional/Psychological Items

	Latent Class –Emotional		
	Not Abused %	Minor %	Severe %
Per cent of population in this class	75.7	18.9	5.4
Per cent in each class who experienced ...			
Deliberately embarrass you in front of other people	4.7	65.0	82.1
Deliberately keep you short of money	0.7	9.5	57.0
Try to prevent visiting/contacting family/friends	1.1	29.1	64.1
Deliberately damage your belongings	0.0	17.5	41.6
Threaten to harm himself/herself if you leave	1.9	28.3	53.7
Call you insulting/humiliating names	7.0	76.4	89.6
Drive a car recklessly to frighten you	0.8	18.1	40.8
Purposely interrupt your sleep to upset you	0.0	19.2	61.8
Threaten to take or prevent from seeing your children	0.0	3.3	40.2
Prevent you from leaving home	0.0	3.3	43.0
Other emotional/psychological incidents	0.0	3.4	5.1
Per cent in each class where ...			
Severe impact (frequency, fear/distress, major impact on life)	0.0	0.0	58.4
Very often or quite often	1.4	14.3	79.6
Very frightened or very distressed	1.4	19.4	74.8
Major impact on life	1.1	20.4	85.8
Average number different type of incidents experienced	0.2	2.7	5.7

Note that a high proportion of the third group had also been deliberately embarrassed or called names (82 and 90 per cent respectively). These behaviours are commonly experienced by those who are seriously abused, but on their own they do not constitute abuse. Without taking account of the constellation of behaviours and of impact, it is not possible to distinguish severe abuse from more minor 'couple conflict' situations.

Taking the latent classes for the three types of abusive behaviour together (physical, emotional and sexual), we can identify a large group (72 per cent) who have experienced no abusive incidents; an intermediate group (17 per cent) who have experienced isolated physical or emotional incidents which did not have a serious impact on them and a third group (11 per cent) who, at some point in their lives, experienced a pattern of physical, sexual or emotional behaviour that had a serious impact upon them.

Summary

In this chapter we have proposed a concept of domestic abuse that takes account of both the nature of the behaviour itself and its impact. Domestic abuse is conceptualised as a pattern of behaviour – physical, emotional and sexual – that has a significant negative impact on the person affected. It is not defined solely in terms of particular ‘acts’ – although some acts, by nature, are likely to have such a negative impact. The concept is not defined in isolation from impact since the description of an act itself can be very variable in terms of its severity. The focus of this report is on severe abuse between intimate partners (current or previous) who may be married, cohabiting or dating.

The chapter described the *National Study of Domestic Abuse*, a telephone survey of a nationally representative random sample of over 3,000 respondents conducted in 2003 to collect detailed information on perceptions of abuse and personal experience of abuse in an intimate relationship. The protocols of the survey were carefully developed and managed to protect both respondents and interviewers and to create a safe environment in which respondents could disclose their experiences.

We emphasised the importance of measuring domestic abuse in a manner that is consistent with the conceptual approach as a *pattern of behaviour in intimate relationships that has, or risks having, a significant negative impact on the person experiencing it*.

Three sets of items were used to capture physical, emotional and sexual abuse. In assessing the items as potential indicators of abuse, we demonstrated that they differed substantially in terms of severity and argued that because of these differences in severity it did not make sense to treat the behaviours as equivalent. Instead, the statistical technique of latent class analysis was used to simultaneously analyse the ‘acts’ and the impact. This allowed us to distinguish three groups of people in the population in terms of their experiences. The first and largest group consists of people who have never in their lives experienced any of the incidents. This group accounts for 72 per cent of the population. The second group, into which 17 per cent of the population falls, includes those who have experienced one or perhaps two physical or emotional incidents, but without these having a severe impact on them. This group may have experienced minor incidents of a physical or emotional nature. Because of the relatively small number of items measuring incidents of a sexual nature, we were not able to identify a group of people who experienced minor incidents of a sexual nature.

The third group, in which 11 per cent of the population are found, consists of those experiencing a pattern of behaviour that had an actual or potential severe impact on their lives. This third group was clearly distinguished from the second group in terms of both the number of different types of incidents experienced and the impact the behaviour had on them.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows. Chapter 2 looks in more detail at the prevalence of severe abuse and the nature and impact of the experiences of those who have been severely abused. In this chapter we examine the impact of severe abuse on those affected in terms of physical injury and other emotional or psychological effects. We also consider when abuse is likely to occur in a relationship and whether those severely abused are likely to have been living with their partners at the time.

Chapter 3 considers the institutional environment of domestic abuse. Although the numbers in the sample who have had contact with these agencies are small, we will examine what can be learned from their interaction with the institutional environment by examining disclosure of abuse and help-seeking. Against the background of data on reporting and help-seeking from the survey, figures on domestic abuse from other agencies are then presented in this chapter.

Chapter 4 turns to differences in the risk of severe abuse by characteristics of the individual – age, region, employment situation, socio-economic group and broad income category. This will allow us to see whether there are identifiable groups that are particularly vulnerable. In this chapter we examine the risk factors one at a time, without, for example, controlling for age when looking at how the risk of abuse varies by region or income.

In Chapter 5, we turn to the broader context of domestic abuse – both the attitudinal context and the less severe forms of abuse in intimate relationships. In the course of this chapter we will examine the characteristics of those who have experienced minor forms of abuse with a view to asking whether minor incidents are similar in pattern and distribution to severe abuse. This chapter also includes a multivariate analysis of risk factors for severe abuse. It goes beyond Chapter 4 in examining the net effect of different risk factors by, for example, controlling for age differences in looking at how the risk of domestic abuse varies by income and region.

In Chapter 6 we draw on data collected through a series of focus group interviews with Traveller and immigrant women. These women may be particularly vulnerable to abuse, but their numbers in the national survey are too small to use that source to analyse their circumstances.

The concluding chapter will draw together the main findings from the study in order to highlight what we have learned about domestic abuse in Ireland. We will discuss the implications of the findings for the Criminal Justice System and for the needs of those affected by domestic abuse.

Chapter 2 – The Prevalence And Experience Of Severe Abuse

Introduction

In this chapter we look in more detail at the experiences of those who have faced severe abuse in a relationship. We begin by looking in detail at the prevalence of abuse and go on to examine the impact of the abuse on the individual, including physical injury, the context of the abuse, potential triggers for abusive behaviour and whether, and how, the relationship ended.

The focus of this chapter is on the experiences of those who have been severely abused. This is a considered decision. We saw in Chapter 1 that on the basis of the types of incidents included in the questionnaire, it was possible to identify two very distinct groups: those who had experienced one or more of the incidents but without these forming a pattern of behaviour and having a severe impact on them, and those who had experienced abuse of sufficient severity, regularity and intensity to cause a significant impact on their lives. The concept of domestic abuse, or ‘severe abuse’ as we refer to it here, is defined in the last chapter:

a pattern of physical, emotional or sexual behaviour between partners in an intimate relationship that causes, or risks causing, significant negative consequences for the person affected.

As Arriaga and Oskamp (1999) note:

“Mild or moderate forms of violence occur in a larger number of households than do severe forms of violence, such as those resulting in injuries that require medical attention ... Thus, at least two serious social problems can be identified: (1) For a large number of couples, it is not uncommon to engage in violent behaviours – behaviours that should not be labelled as “harmless” ... and (2) a number of men inflict much more serious physical assaults and severe psychological abuse on their partners – a more critical social problem” (p. 5).

If we were to combine the two groups and report the experiences of both jointly, then the results would be swamped by the experiences of the larger group experiencing more minor incidents. The conclusions drawn, then, would not be helpful in developing policies for those most severely affected.

The focus on the most severely affected groups, however, does mean that the sample size is rather small. Results have been carefully checked for statistical significance and any differences between women and men are reported only where they are statistically significant¹⁷.

Prevalence of Domestic Abuse

Table 2.1 shows the lifetime prevalence of severe abuse and minor incidents of each type for women and men separately, as well as a combined index showing the prevalence of abuse of any type. Nine per cent of women experienced severe physical abuse from an intimate partner at some point in their lives; eight per cent experienced sexual abuse and eight per cent experienced severe emotional abuse. Overall 15 per cent of women, or about one woman in seven, experienced severe abuse of one of these forms from an intimate partner.

¹⁷ Because the sample is not a simple random sample, the standard errors produced by most statistical software are not accurate. The standard errors were estimated using a jackknife technique, based on repeated replications of the achieved sample, available in the WESVAR programme (Brick and Morganstein, 1996).

Although men are much less likely than women to experience severe abuse of either a physical, emotional or sexual nature, four per cent of men (one in 25) experienced severe physical abuse and three per cent experienced severe emotional abuse. The numbers who experienced severe sexual abuse are much smaller (at one per cent)¹⁸.

Table 2.1: Lifetime Prevalence of Severe Abuse and Minor Incidents of Different Types for Women and Men

	Women %	Men %
Severe physical abuse	9	4
Severe sexual abuse*	8	1
Severe emotional abuse	8	3
Any severe abuse	15	6
Severe physical abuse or minor physical incidents	13	13
Severe emotional abuse or minor emotional incidents	26	23
Any severe abuse or minor incidents	29	26

Note: * Because of the small number of items measuring abuse of a sexual nature, no 'minor incidents' in this category are defined.

The bottom panel of the table shows the combined figures for either severe abuse or minor incidents. What we might term 'minor incidents' refers to experiencing one or more of the incidents but not as part of a pattern of behaviour and without being severely impacted.

If the figures for minor and severe abuse are combined, the overall levels are much higher and the levels for women and men are much closer (about 29 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively, overall), and particularly for physical abuse (about 13 per cent for both women and men). This combination of groups, however, would deny the importance of the impact of the behaviour on the person experiencing it and would not be in keeping with the concept of domestic abuse developed here as a constellation of behaviours with a significant negative impact on the person affected.

The figures in Table 2.1 help to clarify one of the core debates in the area of domestic abuse: the issue of gender symmetry or asymmetry in prevalence. It is clear from the table that when we focus on severe abuse women are more than twice as likely as men to be victims. If incidents without a severe impact are included, there is greater symmetry. We will return to this issue in Chapter 5, where we discuss the nature of the relationship, if any, between severe and minor forms of abuse and the implications this has for criminal justice policy. For the remainder of this chapter, and Chapters 3 and 4, we will focus on severe abuse.

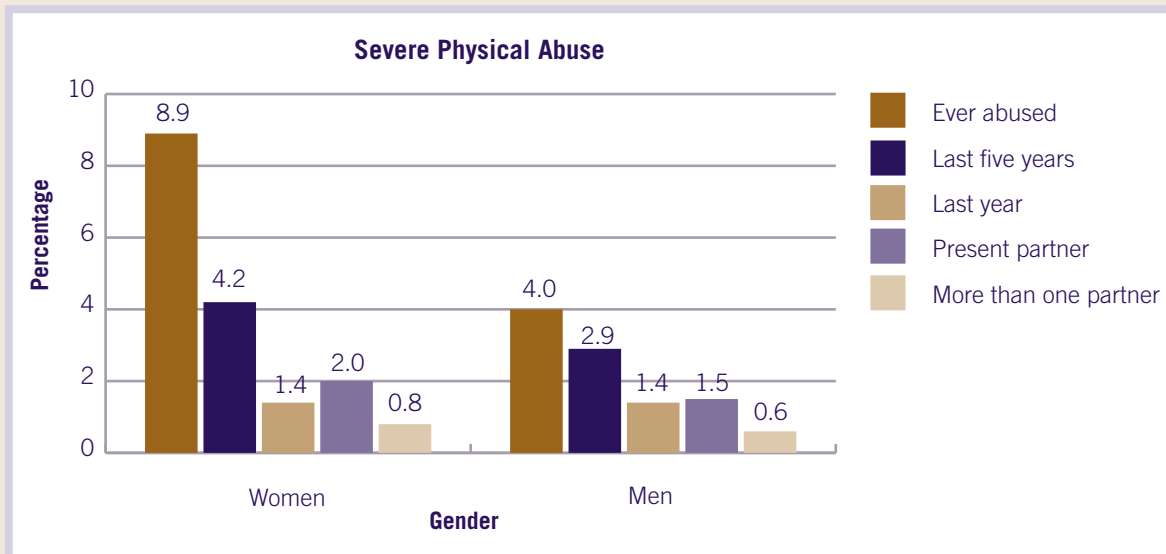
¹⁸ Although same sex relationships are covered under the term 'domestic violence', the indications are that most men who had been abused were abused by a female partner. This is true for sexual abuse (based on a very small number of cases) as well as for physical or emotional abuse.

Detailed Prevalence of Severe Abuse

Figure 2.1 shows the prevalence of severe physical abuse in more detail for women and men: the lifetime prevalence, prevalence in the last year and last five years, prevalence in the present relationship (for those currently in a relationship) and prevalence in more than one relationship.

Some caution is needed in interpreting the figures for more recent abuse. The figures on more recent prevalence, prevalence in the present relationship and prevalence of abuse by multiple partners cannot be as differentiated on the basis of severity as the measure of lifetime prevalence. The questions about the last time the person experienced abuse, whether it happened in the present relationship and whether it was experienced from more than one partner were asked as general follow-up questions to each block of items (physical, sexual and emotional). It is possible that a person might have experienced severe emotional abuse a long time ago from a former partner, and minor abuse more recently from the present partner. The follow-up questions do not distinguish between the minor and severe abuse when the respondent is asked when the type of incident last happened and whether the present partner, former partner or multiple partners were responsible. It may be, then, that the abuse being captured in the more recent period and in the present relationship is of a less severe nature.

Figure 2.1: Detailed Prevalence of Severe Physical Abuse by Gender



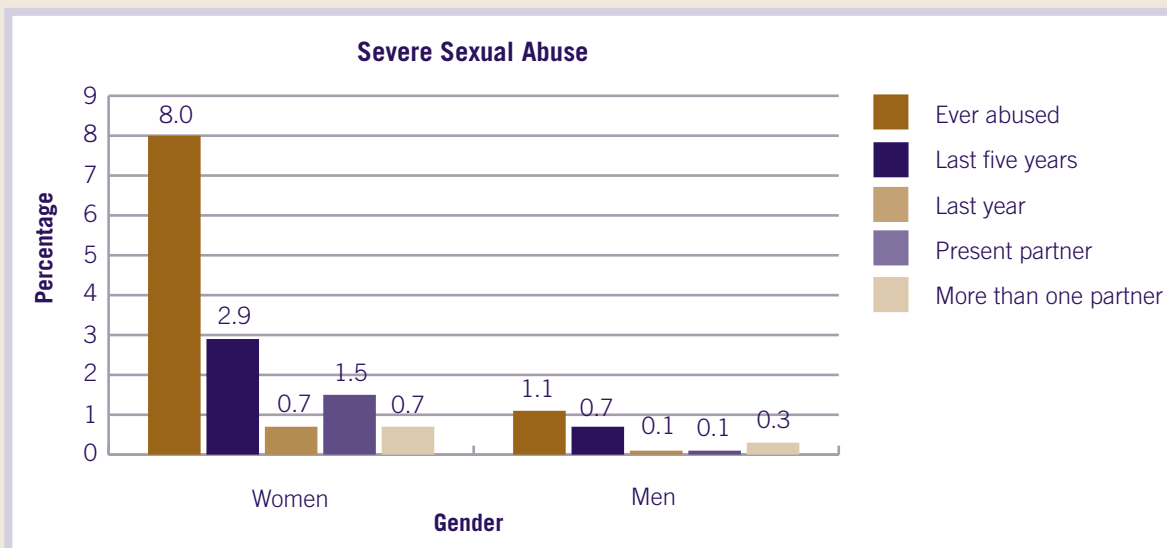
Note: See Appendix Table A4.1 for further detail.

It is clear from Figure 2.1, however, that most of the abuse disclosed in the survey occurred some time ago, particularly for women: while almost nine per cent had experienced severe physical abuse at some time in their lives, the percentage experiencing such abuse in the last five years drops to 4.2 per cent and to 1.4 per cent for the previous year. The pattern is less pronounced for men: dropping from four per cent for lifetime prevalence to 2.9 per cent for the previous five years, and 1.4 per cent for the previous year. This general pattern, and the difference between women and men, has also been found in other surveys. The 1996 and 2001 rounds of the British Crime Survey (BCS), for instance, also found a sharper difference between the lifetime and previous year prevalence rates for women than for men (Walby and Allen, 2004; Mirrlees-Black, 1999). This issue will be explored later in this chapter when we look in more detail at the nature and impact of domestic abuse incidents.

There is some suggestion, also, that women are more likely than men to have experienced severe physical abuse in their present relationship (two vs. 1.5 per cent) and in more than one relationship (0.8 vs. 0.6 per cent). The differences here are not statistically significant, however. Although these groups are of particular concern to criminal justice policy and to service providers, the numbers affected in the sample are very small, so that we will be limited in the conclusions we can draw about them.

Figures 2.2-2.4 show the corresponding detailed prevalence rates for severe sexual abuse, severe emotional abuse and severe abuse of any type. Again, we see a sharp drop in prevalence when we focus on the past year compared to lifetime prevalence. This is more marked for women than for men in the case of emotional abuse, but not in the case of sexual abuse.

Figure 2.2: Detailed Prevalence of Severe Sexual Abuse by Gender

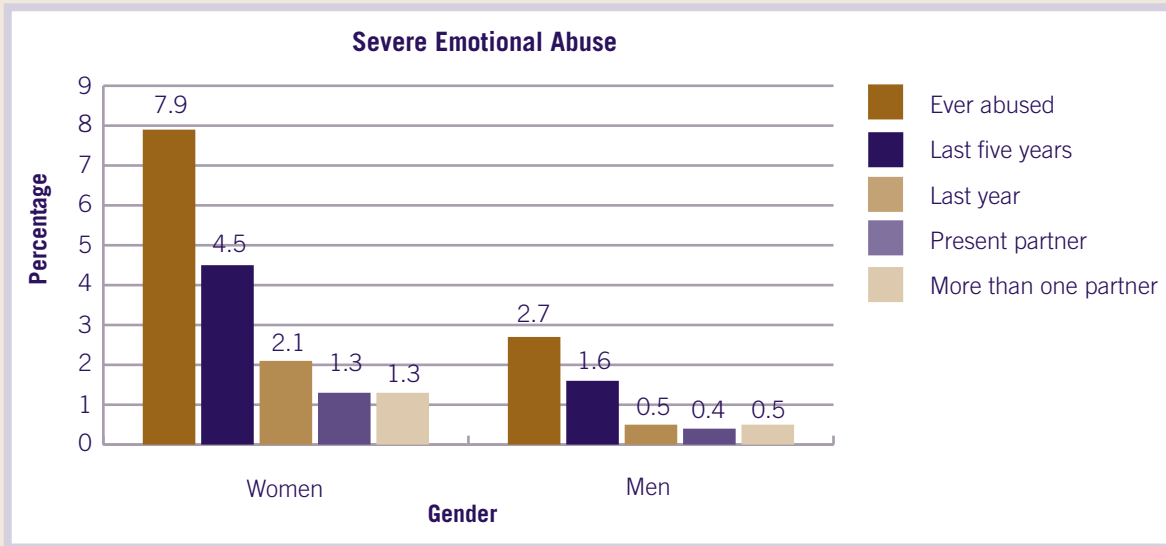


Note: See Appendix Table A4.1 for further detail.

Again, most of the severe sexual and emotional abuse disclosed in the survey occurred in a former relationship. Three per cent of women and under two per cent of men experienced severe abuse of any kind in their present relationship (Figure 2.4).

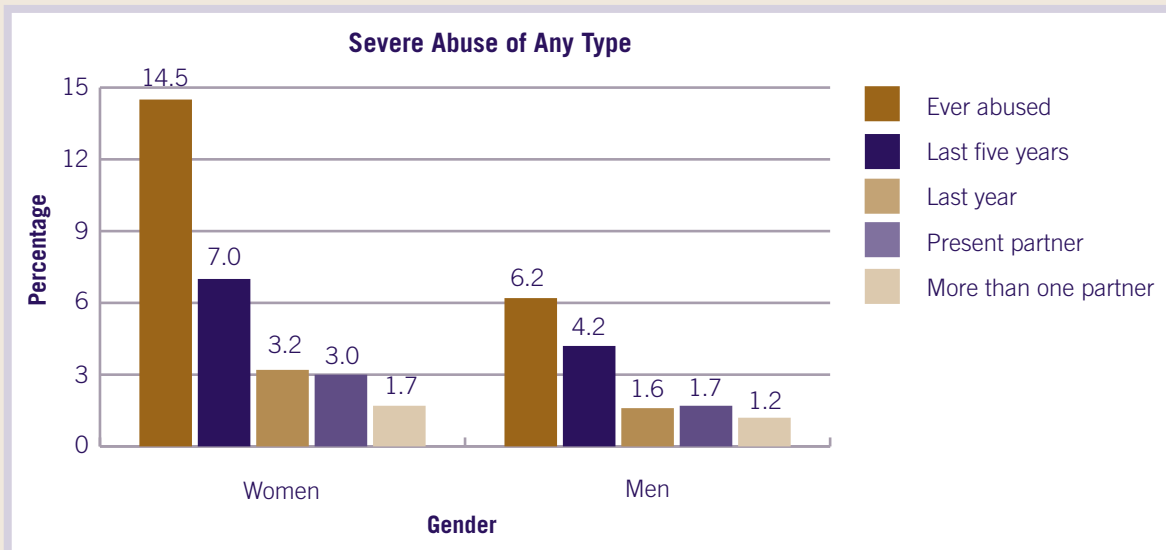
When all types of abuse are considered (Figure 2.4), the difference in lifetime prevalence compared to previous year prevalence is about the same for women and men: about 22 - 25 per cent of those ever experiencing severe abuse experienced an abusive incident in the past year. The percentage of respondents who experienced abuse in more than one relationship is relatively small (1.7 per cent of women and 1.2 per cent of men).

Figure 2.3: Detailed Prevalence of Severe Emotional Abuse by Gender



Note: See Appendix Table A4.1 for further detail.

Figure 2.4: Detailed Prevalence of Severe Abuse of Any Type by Gender



Note: See Appendix Table A4.1 for further detail.

Impact of Abuse

Physical Injury

Despite the debate over whether domestic abuse is symmetrical or asymmetrical with respect to gender, there is little dispute that women are more likely than men to be physically injured (Kelly, 2003; Statistics Canada, 2000; Strauss, 1999a and 1999c; Walby and Allen, 2004). Table 2.2 shows the percentage of respondents who answered 'yes' in response to the question 'When your partner did any of the things we discussed, did he/she physically injure or hurt you?'. The first three columns show the percentages for

the full sample, whether they experienced abuse or not, and the second three columns show the results for the subset of the sample who experienced severe abuse of any type (physical, sexual or emotional). The table shows that women are twice as likely as men to have been physically injured at some time in their lives by an intimate partner. Eight per cent of women and four per cent of men were physically injured as a result of abuse by an intimate partner at some time in their lives.

Among the subset of individuals who experienced severe abuse from a partner, however, the difference between women and men is not statistically significant: just over half of those experiencing severe abuse were physically injured.

A Note on Statistical Significance

When we say that the difference between women and men is ‘not statistically significant’ we mean that, given the sample size, we cannot be confident that whatever difference we see in the sample is due to a true difference between women and men in the population.

It does not mean that we can conclude that there is no difference.

It means that any difference we see in the sample might be due to chance, given the small sample size.

The finding that women in general are more likely than men to be injured as a result of domestic abuse, is consistent with research elsewhere. For instance, Kelly (2003) notes that “[t]here has been little debate on the assertion that male domestic violence is more likely to produce injury. ... Male violence produces injury at six times the rate of female violence. ... Comparing the type of injuries also shows that women suffer greater physical and psychological harm when physically assaulted” (p.809).

Table 2.2: Physical Injury by Gender and Whether Experienced Severe Abuse

	All			Severe abuse		
	Total %	Women %	Men %	Total %	Women %	Men %
Physical injury	6	8	4	54	---	---
Number of Cases	3026	1542	1484	316	224	92

Note: ‘---’ indicates differences between groups are not statistically significant.

However, the finding of no statistically significant differences between women and men who had experienced severe abuse differs from that usually reported in the literature. For instance, the US National Violence Against Women survey found that 41.5 per cent of the women and 19.9 percent of the men who were physically assaulted by an intimate partner since age 18 were injured during their most recent victimisation (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000: p.49). Similarly, the Family Violence in Canada survey found that “[f]orty percent of women and 13% of men who had experienced violence in the five years preceding the survey interview reported experiencing a physical injury... Women were three times more likely than men to report being physically injured by an assault” (Statistics Canada, 2000: p.14).

This difference from the usual pattern of results arises because of the way severe abuse is defined here: we include emotional and sexual abuse, which are less likely to result in physical injury, as well as physical incidents.

There are also important differences in the seriousness of injury among those who claim to have been 'physically injured or hurt' by a partner: women who were injured are much more likely than men who were injured to require medical treatment. Table 2.3 looks in more detail at the severity and nature of the injury for the sub-sample of women and men who experienced severe abuse. It is clear from this, that even the apparent symmetry in the prevalence of injury hides important differences in terms of the severity of the injury. Most men (77 per cent) who reported physical injury did *not* require medical treatment, while most women reporting physical injury did require medical treatment (59 per cent). Almost half of the women reported needing to visit a GP or hospital¹⁹ as a result of the injury, with a further 10 per cent requiring a hospital stay. A much smaller proportion of men who experienced severe abuse required medical treatment: 22 per cent required a GP or hospital visit and one per cent required a hospital stay.

Table 2.3: Severity and Type of Injury by Gender

	Total %	Women %	Men %
<i>Did partner physically injure/hurt you</i>			
Yes	54	---	---
No	45	---	---
Don't remember	1	---	---
Number of cases	316	224	92
<i>Severity of injury (cases where injury occurred)</i>			
Injury did not require medical treatment	52	41	77
Injury required GP/hospital visit	40	49	22
Injury required hospital stay	8	10	1
Number of cases	168	116	52
<i>Type of injury (cases where injury occurred)</i>			
Bruises to face or body	94	97	85
Cuts/grazes -not requiring stitches	46	39	63
Cuts requiring stitches	13	---	---
Broken bones/teeth, fractures	17	23	2
(Female only) Miscarriage	NA	5	NA
Loss of consciousness/blackout	18	23	5
Other injuries	11	---	---
Number of cases	168	116	52

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. '---' indicates differences between groups are not statistically significant.

There are also some differences in the nature of the injuries. Women were more likely to experience bruising (97 per cent compared to 85 per cent of men), while men were more likely to experience minor cuts, scratches or grazes (63 per cent, compared to 39 per cent of women). Women were also more likely to receive severe injuries such as broken bones or fractures (23 per cent compared to two per cent of the severely abused men), and to have lost consciousness or blacked out (23 per cent compared to five per cent of men). Five per cent of the women who were severely abused suffered a miscarriage as a result of the abuse.

Other Effects of Abuse

Apart from physical injury, the definition of abuse also includes other types of impact, such as fear or distress. These other types of effect are shown in Table 2.4. Again, we show the prevalence for all women and men in the first three columns, and the prevalence for those experiencing severe abuse in the columns 4-6.

Turning first to all adults, women are more severely affected than men in terms of fear or distress (21 per cent very frightened or distressed compared to eight per cent of men), frequency (12 per cent experienced abusive behaviour quite often or very often, compared to seven per cent of men) and to report that the abuse had a major impact on their lives (17 per cent compared to seven per cent of men). The summary measure of severe impact, which included measures of frequency and fear, is also greater for women, with 11 per cent being severely impacted²⁰ compared to five per cent of men. These overall differences between women and men, whether they have been severely abused or not, are not surprising, given that 15 per cent of women (or about one in seven) have experienced severely abusive behaviour of a physical, sexual or emotional nature, compared to six per cent of men (or one in 16).

Table 2.4: Emotional Impact of Severe Abuse by Gender

Per cent of cases where ...	All Adults			Severely Abused		
	Total %	Women %	Men %	Total %	Women %	Men %
Very frightened/distressed	15	21	8	84	93	62
Happened quite/very often	9	12	7	62	---	---
Major impact on life	12	17	7	73	80	56
Severe impact (see footnote)	8	11	5	76	---	---
Number of cases	3026	1542	1484	316	224	92

Note: '---' indicates differences between groups are not statistically significant.

However, even among the subset of those who have been severely abused, the effect on women is greater than the effect on men in a number of respects, as shown in the second three columns of Table 2.4. Among those who had been severely abused, women are more likely than men to have been very frightened or distressed (93 versus 62 per cent) and to report that the experience had a major impact on their lives (80 versus 56 per cent). However, the differences with respect to frequency and the summary measure of severe impact are not statistically significant.

²⁰ 'Severe' impact in the case of emotional abuse is defined as involving all three of 'very frightened'/very distressed', 'quite often'/very often' and 'major impact on life'. In the case of sexual abuse it is defined as involving 'very frightened'/very distressed' and 'major impact on life'. For physical abuse severe impact involves all three of 'very frightened'/very distressed', 'quite often'/very often' and 'major impact on life' OR respondent was physically injured.

Table 2.5 shows the impact of abuse on the person's work life. Overall, five per cent of women and two per cent of men had to take time off work because of a partner's abusive behaviour. Among those who had been severely abused, the differences between women and men are not statistically significant, with 38 per cent of this group having had to take time off work. Two per cent of women and one per cent of men overall had to leave a job because of a partner's abusive behaviour. Again, the gender differences are not statistically significant in the case of those who had been severely abused: almost one in eight had to leave a job because of the abuse.

Table 2.5: Whether Respondent's Work was Affected by Gender

Per cent who ...	All adults			Severely abused		
	Total %	Women %	Men %	Total %	Women %	Men %
Had to take time off work because of abuse	4	5	2	38	---	---
Had to leave a job because of abuse	1	2	1	12	---	---
Number of cases	3077	1565	1512	316	224	92

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse and in paid work at time. '---' indicates that differences between women and men is not statistically significant.

Table 2.6 shows the pattern of responses to an open-ended question on any other effects of the partner's abuse:

*What other effects did your partner's behaviour have on you? Please describe as fully as possible.
[Interviewer: If no other effects, write 'None']*

While this open-ended question gave respondents an opportunity to describe in their own words how they had been affected, the responses rely on the person spontaneously volunteering information. This means, for instance, that we cannot conclude that because someone did not mention something like depression or isolation that they did not also experience it.

The emotional impact of the abuse dominated the responses, perhaps because respondents had already been asked about physical injury and effects on their work. Almost one quarter reported a loss of confidence or self-esteem, 17 per cent reported fear, anxiety or sleeplessness and 14 per cent reported difficulties in trusting or relating to other people. Almost one in eight reported emotional distress of a serious nature, such as 'mental anguish' or 'emotional trauma'. Nine per cent reported experiencing depression as a result of the abuse. A small number of respondents spontaneously reported very serious effects such as health problems or a breakdown (four per cent) or feeling suicidal (three per cent). One respondent in six reported no other effects.

Table 2.6: Other Effects on Respondent of Abusive Behaviour

Other effects of abuse	Total %	Women %	Men %
None/not serious	16	---	---
Minor effects - caution etc.	6	3	13
Upset, distress (minor: 'upset at the time' , 'sad', 'unsettled')	5	---	---
Depression	9	---	---
Fear/anxiety/stress/sleeplessness	17	---	---
Angry/annoyed	3	---	---
Loss of confidence/self-esteem	23	30	7
Mistrust of others/difficulty relating to others	14	---	---
Emotional/ more serious distress ('mental anguish', 'emotional trauma')	12	---	---
Self-blame/shame	4	---	---
Suicidal	3	---	---
Health problems/Breakdown	4	---	---
Sexual difficulties	2	---	---
Alcohol problems	1	---	---
Isolation - alone with problem/ Fearful of going out	8	---	---
Stopped seeing partner	2	---	---
Felt humiliated	2	---	---
Number of cases	293	208	86

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. As more than one response was possible, percentages need not sum to 100.

Most of the differences between women and men are not statistically significant, but more women than men reported a loss of confidence or self esteem (30 per cent compared to seven per cent). On the other hand, more men than women reported an increased cautiousness in relating to their partner or to other potential partners (13 per cent compared to three per cent).

Respondent's Perception of Worst Thing that Happened

Table 2.7 shows what those who had been severely abused regard as the worst thing that happened to them. Respondents were asked:

Of all the things you have told me about that a partner has subjected you to, which do you regard as the worst?

The responses were coded into categories to reflect whether the incident mentioned was physical, emotional or sexual. We see again from this table that those who have been severely abused experience emotional abuse, or the emotional effects of abuse, very keenly. Almost half listed an emotional incident or groups of incidents as being the worst from their perspective, and women and men were very similar in this respect.

Table 2.7: Worst Thing that Happened by Gender

	Total %	Women %	Men %
Per cent who say that the worst thing that happened was ...			
Physical	28	---	---
Sexual	16	---	---
Emotional	49	---	---
Unknown/Cannot say	6	---	---
Number of cases	314	222	92

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. '---' indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

This may come as a surprise because, on the face of it, we may think of the acts measured as severe physical or sexual abuse as more serious. The dominance of experiences of an emotional nature among those identified as 'the worst thing that happened' does not arise because emotional incidents form the bulk of what is defined here as constituting 'severe abuse'. Only a minority of those who experienced severe abuse of any type did not experience any severe physical or sexual abuse²¹. The figures in Table 2.8 show that even among those who experienced severe physical or sexual abuse, the proportion identifying the worst thing that happened in terms of emotional or psychological abuse is not significantly lower.

Table 2.8: Worst Thing that Happened by Type of Severe Abuse Experienced

Per cent who say that the worst thing that happened was ...	Those who Experienced ...			
	Physical abuse %	Sexual abuse %	Emotional abuse %	Any Abuse %
Physical	40	16	---	28
Sexual	7	33	7	16
Emotional	---	---	---	49
Unknown/Cannot say	---	---	---	6
Number of cases	197	141	162	314

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. '---' = figure is not significantly different from that for 'Any Abuse'.

This suggests that respondents are answering mainly in terms of their experience of the abuse rather than in terms of specific incident types and points to the danger of inferring the meaning and impact of an experience from the specific type of incident.

The literature also points to the significance of emotional abuse, even where physical abuse is also present. The Family Violence in Canada study, for instance found that "[f]ive year rates of violence in current relationships were 10 times higher for women and men who reported emotional abuse versus those who did not report emotional abuse... indicating that emotional abuse is an important predictor of

²¹ Of the 15 per cent of women and six per cent of men who experienced severe abuse of any type, nine per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, did not experience any severe physical or sexual abuse.

physical violence in intimate relationships” (Statistics Canada, 2000: p.18). Arias (1999) notes that in a study of women with a history of battering, 72 per cent reported that they experienced psychological abuse more negatively than physical abuse. “Interestingly, there was no difference between women who experienced psychological abuse more negatively and those who experienced physical abuse more negatively on the severity or frequency of the physical abuse they endured.” (Arias, 1999: p.146 reporting on a study by Follingstad et al, 1990).

Context of Abuse

In this section, we turn to the context of abusive behaviour and look at whether the partners were living together at the time of the abuse, the age of the abused person when the behaviour began, how long the relationship had been going on when the behaviour began and whether there was anything specific that seemed to trigger the abusive behaviour.

Living Arrangements

Whether the partners were living together at the time abuse happens is obviously important, since abusive behaviour that occurs at the initial stages of a relationship might be expected to have less impact and it may be easier to end an abusive relationship if there are signs of abuse before the partners marry or move in together.

Table 2.9 examines whether the partners were living together at the time any of the abuse happened. Note that this does not tell us whether they were living together when the abuse began. It is clear from Table 2.9 that, particularly for emotional abuse, the partners are likely to have been living together at the time. In over three quarters of cases where severe emotional abuse took place, the partners were living together when at least some of the incidents happened. The figure is somewhat lower for physical (69 per cent) and sexual (56 per cent) abuse. The differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

Table 2.9: Whether Partners Living Together at Time Serious Abuse Happened

	Total %	Women %	Men %
Living together - Physical abuse	69	---	---
Living together - Sexual abuse	56	---	---
Living together - Emotional abuse	76	---	---

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. ‘---’ indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

Age

Table 2.10 shows that abusive behaviour tends to begin when the person affected is quite young. In one quarter of cases the person affected was still in their teens, while in almost 60 per cent of cases he or she was under age 25. In only one case in seven did the abuse begin after the person affected was age 35 or over.

Table 2.10: Age of Respondent when Abusive Behaviour First Experienced

	Total %	Women %	Men %
Age abuse started (per cent of cases)			
19 and under	24	---	---
20-24	35	---	---
25-29	16	---	---
30-34	12	---	---
35-44	11	---	---
45-64	2	---	---
65 and over	1	---	---
Number of cases	314	222	92

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. '---' indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

There is some suggestion in the raw numbers that women who are severely abused experience the abuse at a younger age than men, but these differences are not statistically significant.

When in the Relationship

Table 2.11 shows that the abusive behaviour tends to begin fairly early in the relationship but not in the early weeks. In only 10 per cent of cases did the abuse begin in the first month of the relationship, but in almost half the cases it began in the first year of the relationship and the figure rises to almost 70 per cent within the first two years. However, one case of abuse in 10 first happened more than 10 years into the relationship.

Table 2.11: How Long had Relationship been Going on when Abuse First Happened?

	Total %	Women %	Men %
When did abuse begin? (per cent of cases)			
During the 1st week of the relationship	5	---	---
During the 1st month of the relationship	5	---	---
During the first 6 months of relationship	20	---	---
During the 1st year of the relationship	16	---	---
2 years into the relationship	21	---	---
3 to 5 years into the relationship	14	---	---
5 to 10 years into the relationship	7	---	---
More than 10 years into the relationship	10	---	---
Don't remember	2	---	---
Number of cases	316	224	92

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. '---' indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

Table 2.12 shows that almost half of the relationships lasted five years or more. Note that some of the relationships were still going on at the time of the interview, although most of the abuse disclosed in the survey had happened in the past. About one abusive relationship in five lasted one year or less.

Table 2.12: How Long has Relationship been Going on/did the Relationship Last?

	Total %	Women %	Men %
How long did relationship last? (per cent of cases)			
One month or less	7	---	---
1-6 months	9	---	---
6 months to 1 year	6	---	---
1-2 years	14	---	---
2-5 years	17	12	28
More than 5 years	47	---	---
Number of cases	316	224	92

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. '---' indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

Potential Triggers

The feminist understanding of domestic abuse emphasises its role in controlling and dominating the partner. Note that though the feminist approach was originally formulated to account for abuse of women by men, the analysis in terms of the desire to control and dominate is not necessarily limited to this context. To the extent that a partner seeks to control and dominate rather than, for example, to negotiate and share, this motivation could equally apply to women's abuse of men. If this were the case, then we would expect that there would be no specific triggers or that abuse would be triggered by a disagreement.

The Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), on the other hand is designed to measure violent behaviour (with a heavy emphasis on physical violence) that occurs in the context of conflict in a relationship. The implicit assumption underlying this perspective is that violence is a response to conflict in the relationship – to disagreements or rows.

A third possible perspective is that abuse occurs not in response to an implicit or explicit desire to control, or as a response to conflict, but as an expressive 'lashing out' in response to emotional stress experienced by the abuser. There is some argument in the feminist and Violence Against Women literature that much of women's abuse of male partners may be of this type. If this were the case, we would expect abuse to be triggered by stress, illness or factors specific to the abuser rather than to conflict with the partner.

The item was presented to respondents as an open-ended question:

Was there anything in particular that seemed to you to set off this behaviour?

[Interviewer: Do not read list. Tick all that apply.]

[Prompt ...] Was there anything else? ...

Two things are striking in Table 2.13. The first is that the use of alcohol and ‘minor incidents or nothing in particular’ are by far the most frequently cited trigger, with each mentioned by over a third of respondents. The second striking feature is that there is no significant difference between the triggers mentioned by women and those mentioned by men who had been severely abused.

In support of the feminist analysis is the fact that 36 per cent of respondents reported that the behaviour seemed to be triggered by ‘nothing in particular’ or ‘minor incidents’ such as ‘did not like my attitude’ or ‘anything could start it’. We might possibly add ‘jealousy’ to this total, as unfounded jealousy is often part of the constellation of controlling behaviours that constitute domestic abuse. However, the comments from respondents on which this percentage is based point to a more complex reality: while in some cases the respondents referred to jealousy as unfounded, sometimes the jealousy of a partner was in response to an affair by the person who subsequently experienced the abusive behaviour.

Table 2.13: Potential Triggers for Abusive Behaviour

	Total %	Women %	Men %
Anything that seemed to set off behaviour? (per cent of cases)			
Minor incidents/nothing in particular	36	---	---
Use of alcohol (by either partner)	34	---	---
Disagreement/row	8	---	---
Jealousy	9	---	---
Pregnancy	7	---	---
Use of other drugs (by either partner)	4	---	---
Stress	4	---	---
Moving in together	2	---	---
Getting married	2	---	---
Birth of first child	2	---	---
Birth of subsequent children	1	---	---
Change in work situation (either partner)	1	---	---
Break-up of relationship	3	---	---
Illness	3	---	---
Affair	2	---	---
Number of cases	316	224	92

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. ‘---’ indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

Only eight per cent of respondents said that the abusive behaviour happened in the context of a row or disagreement. While rows or disagreements may have been present in other contexts (such as when one or the other partner had an affair, felt jealous, or was under stress generally), it would seem that disagreements and rows are far from being the dominant factor in abusive behaviour.

Several of the other factors could be seen to be related to an increase in stress: pregnancy (seven per cent), moving in together (two per cent), getting married (two per cent), birth of the first child (two per cent) or of subsequent children (one per cent) and change in work situation (one per cent), illness (three per cent), and 'stress' (four per cent). Note that the respondent may have listed more than one trigger, however, so that the total listing any of these potential stressors is 18 per cent.

Other research has been conducted to explore the issue of domestic abuse and pregnancy. Research conducted amongst pregnant women attending the Rotunda Hospital found that 16 per cent had been physically or sexually abused in the previous 12 months. The authors of the research, reported in the Irish Medical Times, also found that 98.2 per cent of the women believed they should be asked about domestic violence by their doctor. The authors recommended that doctors should ask all pregnant women about their experiences of abuse as "pregnant women suffering from abuse may decide to tell their GP for the first time because she feels it is necessary to protect her child in utero", they added that "if you ask, women find it easier to tell" (Ryan, 2003: p.2). The research findings reported did not detail whether the pregnancy had been a trigger for the domestic abuse, the relationship with the perpetrator of the abuse or if the woman was still experiencing domestic abuse at the time of the research.

Overall, then, it would seem that most abusive behaviour either has no specific trigger (36 per cent) or is associated with the consumption of alcohol (34 per cent).

The association between alcoholism or alcohol abuse and domestic abuse has been long recognised (see review by Leonard, 1999) but there has been some dispute regarding the causal nature of the relationship. Is it the case that alcohol abuse causes domestic abuse or is alcohol abuse the result of, for example, the violent partner seeking an excuse for his or her behaviour? Reporting on a three-wave study of newly married couples in the 1980s, Leonard (1999) finds support for a causal relationship between husband's drinking and physical abuse of wives in couples where there is a high degree of verbal aggression in conflict interactions. However, Leonard cautions that "[d]espite the support that the current research program has provided for a causal role of alcohol on marital aggression, it would be a mistake to overstate this role. Alcohol is neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause of marital aggression. ...[T]he majority of aggressive episodes occur without alcohol, and men who have behaved aggressively with alcohol have often behaved aggressively without alcohol as well. The role of alcohol... appears to be one of a facilitative nature, a contributing cause" (p. 132).

Table 2.14 presents the results of a specific set of questions to respondents on the use of alcohol:

Was there ever alcohol involved when your partner behaved in this way?

(If yes) Who had been drinking?

The results in Table 2.14 indicate that alcohol was involved ‘some of the time’ for 44 per cent of respondents, ‘always’ for 27 per cent of respondents and ‘never’ for 29 per cent. These results are far from clear-cut, but are not strongly suggestive of a causal link between alcohol consumption and abuse: in only 27 per cent of cases was alcohol consumption always involved. The significance of alcohol should not be dismissed, however, since alcohol use may be linked to more severe physical abuse. A study by Testa et al (2003), provides “some evidence that episodes of marital violence in which the husband is drinking may be more severe than episodes perpetrated by the same husbands when sober” (p. 740).

Table 2.14: Whether Alcohol was Involved and Who had Been Drinking

	Total %	Women %	Men %
<i>Ever alcohol involved?</i>			
Yes, some of the times	44	---	---
Yes, always	27	---	---
No, never	29	---	---
Number of cases	312	221	91
<i>If yes, who had been drinking?</i>			
Respondent only	9	---	---
Partner only	57	67	31
Both	34	---	---
Number of cases	221	162	59

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. ‘---’ indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

The lower panel of the table shows who had been drinking when the abuse happened. In over 90 per cent of cases, it was the abuser or both partners who had been drinking. There is a significant gender difference here: it is more likely that only the abusive partner had been drinking where women were abused (67 per cent) than where men were abused (31 per cent). This is consistent with findings reported for Canada, where women were also more likely to report that their partner had been drinking at the time of the incident than were men (Statistics Canada, 2000).

Ending the Relationship

The decision to end an abusive relationship can be a difficult one, since the abused person may feel an attachment to the partner despite the abuse. The obstacles are even greater if the partners are married or living together, since the person who leaves needs to find somewhere to stay; he or she may be

financially dependent on the abusive partner and is likely to be concerned about the effect of the break up on children or other family members. Further, research has suggested that abused women typically undergo several shifts in their thinking about the abuse before leaving permanently so that leaving is better understood as a process, often requiring several attempts before leaving permanently, than as a one-off event (Anderson and Saunders, 2003).

Table 2.15 examines how the relationship with an abusive former partner ended. These figures refer to those who were severely abused by a former partner. The sequence of questions is as follows:

The following questions are about the ending of your relationship with your former partner who [Interviewer: read list from respondent's sheet – things done by a FORMER partner...]

[If more than one former partner, in answering the following questions, please think about the partner who did what you considered to be the WORST thing to you].

How did your relationship with this former partner end?

Did your former partner do [this/ these things] I read out to you during the course of your relationship, after the relationship ended or both?

As Table 2.15 shows, most (83 per cent) of those who had been severely abused were abused by a former partner. In three quarters of the cases where a former partner was abusive, the respondent ended the relationship. In about one case in eight the relationship was ended by the partner, while in nine per cent of cases the relationship ended in some other way, such as the death of the partner or by mutual agreement. Gender differences in terms of the ending of a relationship are not statistically significant.

Table 2.15: Whether Respondent was Abused by Former Partner and How Relationship Ended

	Total %	Women %	Men %
Was person abused by a former partner?			
Yes	83	---	---
No	17	---	---
Number of cases	316	224	92
If yes, how did relationship with former partner end?			
Respondent ended relationship	76	---	
Partner ended relationship	13	---	---
Other	9	---	---
When did abuse by former partner occur?			
During relationship, only	67	---	---
Only after the relationship ended	3	---	---
Both	30	---	---
Number of cases	263	190	74

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. '---' indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

The ending of a relationship is seen by agencies working in this area as a period of high risk in terms of abuse. In most cases (67 per cent), the abusive behaviour occurred only during the relationship and stopped when the relationship ended. In one third of cases, however, the abuse continued after the ending of the relationship. This includes three per cent of severe abuse cases where the abuse began after the relationship ended.

Moving out

In this section we turn to whether either of the partners in an abusive relationship ever moved out. This applies to people who were severely abused and living with the partner at the time.

The sequence of questions is as follows:

Could I just check, have you ever lived with a partner who behaved towards you in any of the ways we talked about during the course of your relationship?

This could be your present partner, or any partner in the past.

Did you or your partner ever move out because of your partners' behaviour towards you, even if it was just for one night?

(If moved out) Did you move out once or more than once?

Where or with whom did you stay when you moved out? Did you ever stay...

Did you move back in with your partner after you had moved out?

Over half of those who had ever experienced severe abuse lived with an abusive partner. As shown in Table 2.16 of those living with an abusive partner, 55 per cent moved out and in 15 per cent of cases the partner moved out. The figures in this respect are similar for women and men.

Women and men are also similar in terms of where they stayed when they moved out, with the majority (65 per cent) staying with family and a sizeable proportion (29 per cent) staying with friends. The next largest destination (12 per cent) consists of temporary accommodation in a hotel, guesthouse or bed and breakfast. Only about one in twenty – and the majority of these were women – stayed in a refuge or homeless shelter. This means that the abused women with whom women's shelters²² have contact form only a minority of those defined as severely abused in this report.

²² There is currently no shelter for abused men in Ireland.

Table 2.16: Whether Respondent or Partner Ever Moved Out Because of Partner's Behaviour

	Total %	Women %	Men %
<i>Did you ever live with an abusive partner?</i>			
Yes	55	---	---
No	45	---	---
Number of cases	316	224	92
<i>If yes, did you or your partner ever move out?</i>			
Yes, I moved out	55	---	---
Yes, partner moved out	15	---	---
No	31	---	---
Number of cases	168	116	52
<i>If moved out, did you move out more than once?</i>			
Once	43	33	---
More than once	57	67	---
<i>If moved out, where did you stay?</i>			
With family	65	---	---
With friends	29	---	---
At a Hotel or B&B	12	---	---
Moved into own flat or house	6	---	---
Homeless hostel	2	---	---
Refuge	5	---	---
On the street etc.	5	---	---
<i>If moved out, did you move back in?</i>			
Yes, I moved back	74	82	---
No	26	18	---
Number of cases	94	64	30

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. '---' indicates that differences between women and men are not statistically significant.

The number of cases is too small to produce the percentages for men, but there is evidence that women are more likely to move back in after moving out. This means that they are also likely to move out more than once. This pattern is consistent with the view that leaving an abusive relationship is a process that takes place over a long period rather than something which is done once and for all (Anderson and Saunders, 2003).

Summary

In this chapter we began by presenting an overview of the prevalence of severe abuse among women and men. These figures showed that while women are more likely than men to have experienced severe abuse at some point in their lives (15 compared to six per cent), a significant number of men have also experienced severe abuse. Most of the severe abuse disclosed in the survey occurred in a former relationship (77 per cent), but slightly over half of those severely abused had experienced an abusive incident in the past five years. The chapter then went on to focus on the experiences of women and men who ever in their lifetimes experienced severe abuse. The main findings on the nature of their experience are summarised below.

- Over half of those severely abused have been physically injured. Women are more likely to be injured because they are more likely to be seriously abused. Gender differences in rate of injury *among those severely abused* are not significant, but there is a significant gender difference in the seriousness of injury, with women more likely to receive injuries that require medical treatment.
- There are also significant gender differences in the nature of injury among those severely abused. Women are more likely to suffer bruising, broken bones and loss of consciousness; men are more likely to suffer minor cuts or scratches.
- Almost two in five of those severely abused had to take time off work and nearly one in eight had to leave a job. Gender differences were not statistically significant in this respect.
- Apart from physical injury, other negative effects frequently reported by those who were severely abused include fear/anxiety, loss of confidence (especially for women), mistrust of people generally and emotional trauma.
- Most severe abuse first happened when the abused person was under age 25 (59 per cent).
- Emotional abuse, or the emotional aspect of the abuse, is considered the 'worst thing' by nearly half of those severely abused. This is true for both women and men, even though most had also experienced physical or sexual abuse.
- The onset of abuse tends to occur fairly early in the relationship (two thirds of cases within first two years), but not in the very early weeks – only 10 per cent happened in first month.
- In 36 per cent of cases, either nothing in particular or very minor incidents triggered the abuse. Alcohol was cited by one third of respondents as a triggering factor. Significant life events (marriage, pregnancy, birth of child) taken together were cited by fewer than 10 per cent of respondents.
- Alcohol was involved in about three quarters of cases, but was always involved in only one quarter. The only statistically significant gender difference is that the partner was the one who had been drinking about twice as often for women who were abused as for men who were abused.

- Most victims were living with the partner when the abuse occurred, particularly for emotional abuse (three quarters). Gender differences in this respect were not statistically significant.
- Half of those who lived with an abusive partner had moved out. Those who left were most likely to stay with family or with friends. Over half of those who moved out did so more than once. The figure is higher (at two thirds) for women experiencing severe abuse. This highlights the fact that leaving an abusive relationship is not a simple or once-off process.

Chapter 3 – The Institutional Environment of Domestic Abuse

Introduction

In this chapter we consider the institutional environment of domestic abuse: the services available to victims, the criminal justice remedies and help-seeking. We begin by examining figures on the use of services by those experiencing domestic abuse from the *National Study of Domestic Abuse* survey. As in Chapter 2, the focus is on the experiences of those who have been severely abused. Although the numbers in the sample are small, they provide important information on how many of those severely affected by abuse will have contact with the Criminal Justice System and other agencies. This insight is crucial in understanding how the agencies meet or fail to meet the needs of those affected by domestic abuse.

Figures on domestic abuse from other agencies are then presented and synthesised in order to provide an indicator of trends and of the significance of the institutional environment in which domestic abuse is handled. Different sources of information on domestic abuse complement one another in the picture they provide of the nature and pattern of experiences and the impact on those affected. This chapter aims to supplement the data from the *National Study of Domestic Abuse* survey by providing an overview of other published statistics on domestic abuse. The section on the Criminal Justice System discusses data from the annual reports of An Garda Síochána (AGS), the Courts Service and the Legal Aid Board.

There are also a number of other sources of data published by voluntary and Non-Governmental Organisations. These sources, which are discussed in the final section of the chapter, are the Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) scheme, Women's Aid, the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and the National Network of Women's Refuges and Support Services²³.

Disclosing and Help-seeking – the NSDA data

In this section we examine disclosing and help-seeking on the part of those experiencing severe abuse from the *National Study of Domestic Abuse* survey.

Table 3.1 shows the percentage of those experiencing severe abuse who told someone about it or sought help from different agencies, including reporting the incident to the Gardaí.

²³ All agencies were given opportunity to comment upon the draft material written in light of the data they published/supplied.

This is based on the following sequence of questions:

I'd like you to think now about all the types of behaviour we have talked about in general, even if they happened in different relationships.

B.33 Did you ever tell anyone about your partners' behaviour towards you?

(If yes) How long were you experiencing the kinds of things you told me about from your partner before you told someone about it?

(If told someone) I'd like to read a list of people whom you might have told, or sought help from. Perhaps you could tell me whether or not you told any of these people about your partner's behaviour towards you.

And did you seek help from any of the following?

Table 3.1 shows the results and, where statistically significant, the breakdown for women and men who ever experienced severe abuse. Women and men were about equally likely to have told someone about the abuse, with two thirds revealing their experiences to someone.

Most often, a friend (49 per cent) or family member (43 per cent) was told about the behaviour. Over one in six of those affected confided in a GP, with about one in 20 confiding in a nurse or a hospital doctor. Just over one respondent in eight told a work colleague. A little under a quarter of those severely affected by abuse told the Gardaí. These findings are in keeping with other research (Pirog-Good and Stets, 1989) that indicates that those who experienced abuse in a relationship are more likely to confide in a friend or family member than to seek help from the Criminal Justice System or agencies working in the area of domestic violence.

The gender differences in terms of disclosing to friends or family are not statistically significant, but women are more likely than men to report it to the Gardaí. Over a quarter of women reported their experience to the Gardaí compared to about one man in 20. In the next section we will look in more detail at reasons for not reporting abuse and reasons for not seeking help.

Table 3.1: Whether Anyone was Told about Partner's Behaviour or Help Sought

	Total %	Women %	Men %
Who was told?			
Friend	49	---	---
Family member	43	---	---
Work colleague	13	---	---
Nurse	4	---	---
G.P.	17	---	---
Doctor in a hospital	6	---	---
The Gardaí	22	29	5
Local Health Board	6	---	---
A solicitor	16	---	---
A priest	7	---	---
Citizen's Advice Bureau	4	---	---
Counsellor (marriage or other)	18	22	9
A refuge	2	---	---
A helpline	7	---	---
A support organisation	4	---	---
Somewhere else	5	---	---
Told nobody	33	---	---
Number of cases	316	224	92
How soon before someone told?			
Within a month	34	---	---
Within a year	23	---	---
More than a year	42	49	26
Number of cases	186	134	52

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse. Note that more than one person/organisation may have been told about the abuse so percentages need not sum to 100.

Among the other types of organisation to which those seeking help might have approached, the most frequently consulted were solicitors (16 per cent) and counsellors (18 per cent)²⁴. Fewer than one in 10 approached a Health Board, helpline or support organisation for help. Apart from counsellors, who are consulted more often by women (22 per cent versus nine per cent), women and men do not differ significantly in terms of the probability that they will approach support organisations or contact helplines. In either case, only a small proportion do so. This indicates that there is a great deal more abuse occurring than is being notified or recorded by the agencies whose goal is to provide support and assistance to those affected.

²⁴ Respondents were about equally likely to consult marriage counsellors and other types of counsellors.

'Making the Links' had similar findings. Women who had reported experience of domestic abuse were most likely to have disclosed to a friend (50 per cent) or a relative (37 per cent). This study found a slightly higher proportion, just under one in three women, had told a doctor of their experiences (29 per cent). Figures on reporting to the Gardaí were similar at 20 per cent or one in five women who had experienced domestic abuse (Kelleher and O'Connor, 1995: p.21).

The bottom panel of Table 3.1 shows how long the abuse had been going on before the respondent told someone about it. About a third of those experiencing severe abuse told someone within a month; a further 23 per cent told someone within a year. Over two fifths of those experiencing severe abuse, however, did not tell anyone until more than a year after the behaviour began. Women are less likely than men to tell someone within a year: only about half of the women, compared to about three quarters of the men, had told someone within a year.

Reasons for Not Reporting Abuse to Gardaí

Why do so few of those experiencing severe abuse report the incidents to the Gardaí? Table 3.2 shows the main reasons listed by the respondents. Although respondents were asked to give the main reason, about one in eight gave two distinct reasons. Two responses were coded in these cases in order to capture the full range of issues affecting the decision regarding reporting.

The reasons are complex, as can be seen from the table, and difficult to discern in the context of a quantitative survey with limited scope for probing. It is notable, however, that there are no significant differences between women and men among this group who have been seriously abused.

The most frequently cited reasons had to do with the perceived seriousness of the behaviour. About one respondent in five felt that the incident was not serious enough to report ('not serious', 'a minor matter', 'did not need to'). A further one in eight did not want to report it or felt they could handle the situation themselves ('did not want it reported', 'wanted to work it out myself', 'ended the relationship'). Just over one in 10 felt it was not a matter for the Gardaí, sometimes because the abuse was not physical ('not appropriate', 'wasting their time', 'not physical abuse, just intimidation').

About one respondent in 20 felt that reporting the behaviour to the Gardaí would not be helpful, either because any action the Gardaí took would be ineffective ('they could not have done anything about it'; 'the Guards are no help in civil matters') or because the Gardaí would not be likely to take any action ('wouldn't think the Gardaí would want to know').

About one in eight felt shame, embarrassment or blamed themselves ('I felt partly to blame', 'felt too embarrassed', 'ashamed and guilty'). A similar proportion made excuses for the partner's behaviour or minimised its seriousness at the time ('felt it was a once-off thing and he wouldn't do it again', 'she was ill', 'because he was drunk').

Eight per cent of respondents felt it was a private matter ('fear of people knowing', 'I didn't want it out in the open', 'know people in the area so I didn't want to bring attention to myself').

For one respondent in twenty the dominant reason was concern for the partner ('I didn't want to let him down', 'it was your girlfriend – you wouldn't do that [report to the Gardaí] to your worst enemy'), or for the relationship ('I loved him, wanted to change him, wanted the relationship to work', 'I didn't want to lose her'). Concern for the effect on children ('I was trying to do my best for the children') or other family members ('my parents – I didn't want to frighten them') was also evident.

Fear held about one respondent in 10 back. In most cases, the reason for the fear was not specified ('I was afraid to report it'). In only three per cent of cases was there a specific mention of possible retaliation ('when the Guards were gone, he would take it out on me'). In another three per cent of cases, the respondent was afraid of not being believed or taken seriously ('no-one would believe me', 'at that time it wasn't accepted that a woman would do those things to a man').

Several of the response categories point to the need to emphasise that domestic abuse cases will be handled in confidence and with sensitivity. Taking together the responses related to shame and embarrassment, concern for privacy, the sense that it was not a matter for the Gardaí or that the Gardaí would or could do nothing, we see that two out of five respondents held back from reporting because of concerns in this area.

Table 3.2: Main Reason Not Reported to Gardaí

	Total %	Women %	Men %
Main reason not reported to Gardaí ...			
Not serious enough	21	---	---
Shame/embarrassment/blamed self	13	---	---
Minimised/excused behaviour at the time	13	---	---
Did not want to/could handle it/ended relationship	13	---	---
Not a matter for Gardaí	11	---	---
Wanted to keep private	8	---	---
Gardaí would/could do nothing (effective) to help	6	---	---
Fear (general)	6	---	---
Did not want to lose partner/get partner into trouble	5	---	---
Fear of partner/retaliation	3	---	---
Fear of not being believed/taken seriously	3	---	---
Concern for children/other family	2	---	---
Other	6	---	---
No reason given	6	---	---
Number of cases	236	151	85

Includes cases experiencing any severe abuse who did not report crime to Gardaí. Since up to two responses were coded, percentages do not sum to 100.

This first section has examined disclosure, reporting and help-seeking in response to abuse. It is clear that only a small proportion of severe abuse cases come to the attention of the Criminal Justice System or the service agencies. Nonetheless, since the cases which are known to these organisations are likely to be those with the most serious consequences, it is worth examining in some detail the statistical information available in order to deepen our understanding of severe abuse. We turn to these other data sources in the next section.

Statistics from the Criminal Justice System

This section of the chapter discusses statistics on incidents of domestic violence recorded by the Gardaí, applications for domestic violence orders made to the Courts and statistics from the Legal Aid Board on those seeking advice or representation in relation to domestic violence.

An Garda Síochána

An Garda Síochána (AGS), in their annual reports publish figures on the number of domestic violence incidents (the term used by the Gardaí)²⁵, charges made, persons injured and convictions. Statistics are published for each of the six Garda regions and for each of the 25 Garda divisions. From 1998 onwards the reports have shown the proportions of complainants and offenders who are male or female. Since 2002 the report has also included the number of cases in which proceedings have been commenced for breaches of domestic violence orders (such as Barring Orders and Safety Orders).

The most up-to-date Garda statistics on domestic violence incidents available are those which relate to 2003²⁶. During that year:

- Gardaí recorded an average of over 23 incidents of domestic violence every day; the equivalent of slightly under one every hour;
To place these figures in context, an average of almost 11 assaults causing harm (10.8) and 69 burglaries (69.1) were reported or known to the Gardaí every day in 2003.
- Nearly four (3.9) arrests were made by Gardaí at domestic violence incidents every day;
- Gardaí charged more than three (3.3) people every day with a domestic violence related offence;
- Every day nearly four (3.8) people were injured as a result of a domestic violence incident; and
- Every day there were 1.8 convictions for a domestic violence related offence.

In interpreting the figures it is important to have an understanding of how they are compiled. First, the figures refer to the number of incidents recorded. No details are provided on the extent of repeat calls to the same address. This means that we cannot say how many distinct victims there are.

²⁵ Note that although the majority of these incidents are between partners or ex-partners, some may be between family members other than spouses/partners.

²⁶ Provisional figures for 2004 were released in April, 2005, these are however liable to change. These indicated that there were 6,229 domestic violence incidents to which the Gardaí responded in 2004 (or 17 incidents every day). Also during 2004 1,104 people were charged in relation to domestic violence incidents and 538 convictions were achieved.

Another consideration is that not all domestic violence incidents reported to the Gardaí will involve a criminal offence. There is no offence of domestic violence *per se*, as noted in Chapter 1. Instead perpetrators of domestic violence may be charged under a number of other headings, such as assault, coercion, harassment or criminal damage.

At the end of each year the figures on domestic violence are collected by Divisional Officers²⁷. The figures are compiled at Divisional Level on the basis of paper records of incidents of 'domestic violence'. As there is no such criminal offence as 'domestic violence', these figures are based on records relating to incidents which occurred in a domestic context. That is, the relationship²⁸ between the offender and the victim is considered in deciding whether to classify an incident as 'domestic violence'.

Recognising the limitations of statistics compiled from paper records, such as the lack of the validation functions and checks available for computerised records, the Gardaí are currently in the process of transferring domestic violence incidents onto the PULSE (Police Using Leading Systems Effectively) computer system. This means that in future years the official figures are likely to be subject to more stringent validation and hence present more comprehensive figures of domestic violence incidents reported to the Gardaí. The PULSE system will also have the potential to record domestic violence as a *modus operandi* in its own right or as one of a series of possible motives²⁹. This will mean that in future years it will be possible to establish details of all incidents of a domestic nature reported to the Gardaí regardless of the offence classifications used in accordance with usual crime counting rules³⁰.

Incidents of Domestic Violence Reported to the Gardaí

Figure 3.1 shows the number of recorded incidents, arrests, charges and convictions from 1995 to 2003³¹. The large gap between the number of incidents and the number of arrests, charges and convictions is likely to reflect, at least in part, repeat call-outs to the same address. Furthermore, just because the Gardaí respond to a domestic violence incident it does not follow that an arrestable offence will have been committed, in which case no power of arrest will exist. Some of the difference may also be accounted for by a reluctance on the part of Gardaí, for a variety of reasons, to make an arrest in domestic violence incidents. Moreover, since recording practices have improved over time, it is almost impossible to draw conclusions about trends from the figures on the number of incidents. Year on year changes in these figures can be quite dramatic, with a doubling of the number of incidents recorded between 1997 and 1998 much of which Gardaí attribute to an improvement in recording practices.

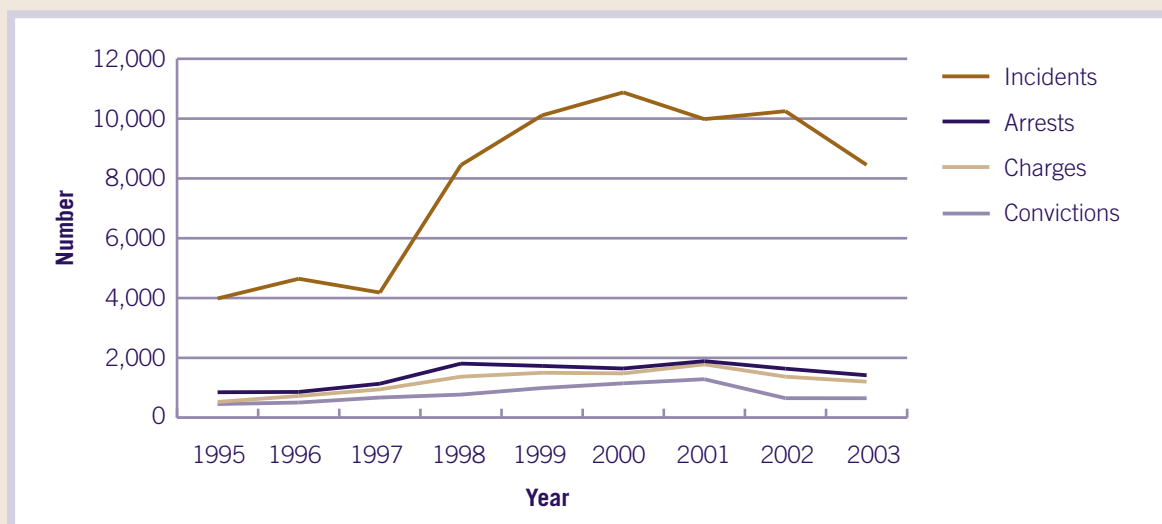
27 Whilst for statistical purposes figures of domestic violence incidents are collected annually by the Crime Administration section, monthly divisional figures are provided throughout the year to the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit (DVSAIU). Details of the Garda policy on Domestic Violence Intervention and of the Unit are included in Appendix 3.

28 A relationship may be between family/household members or partners.

29 There is a dedicated field in the PULSE system for the Gardaí to enter one or several *modus operandi* which should give a more comprehensive overview of all incidents with a domestic violence element.

30 Full details of the Garda crime counting rules, namely the primary offence rule, the one offence per injured party rule and the continuous series of events involving the same injured party and same offender rule, are contained in an appendix to the Commissioner's Annual Report.

31 Appendix 4 provides a complete breakdown of figures between 1995 and 2003 (Table A4.3), and year on year percentage changes (Table A4.4).

Figure 3.1: An Garda Síochána Domestic Violence Incident Statistics, 1995-2003

Source: Commissioner's Annual Reports, 1995-2003.

Arrests and convictions have increased at a comparatively slower rate than either incidents or charges. The total number of domestic violence incidents recorded seems to have little effect on the numbers of arrests, charges or convictions³². In 1995 and 1997 the proportion of incidents leading to arrests, charges and convictions was at its highest. Nationally, the percentage of convictions³³ obtained from all arrests has fallen from just under 70 per cent in 2000 to 46 per cent in 2003.

Since 2001, the number of domestic violence incidents recorded by the Gardaí has fallen by 15 per cent, from 9,983 in 2001 to 8,452 in 2003 (in 2002 the incidents increased slightly to 10,248). During the period 2001 to 2003 court convictions in respect of domestic violence halved from 1,286 in 2001 to 651 in 2002 and 650 in 2003. Further analysis, beyond the remit of this report, is needed of the reasons for the disproportionate decline in convictions compared to incidents, arrests and charges.

As noted above, the statistics do not identify repeat call-outs. This means that we do not know how many incidents involve the same address and/or the same individuals. Likewise it is not possible to ascertain the number of mutually abusive relationships, that is, where the same individual is the offender on one call-out and the complainant on another. The transfer of the records to the PULSE computer system is likely to have an effect on the figures for future years, since it will be possible to identify repeat call-outs to the same address. In the longer term it is hoped that the implementation of PULSE will result in more comprehensive and detailed information being made available in relation to domestic violence incidents.

³² Arrests, charges and convictions may be achieved in subsequent year/s to that in which the incident took place.

Injuries Sustained in Domestic Violence Incidents

Table 3.3 provides a breakdown of the number of incidents, persons injured and percentage of incidents in which there was an injured party, based on figures from the AGS reports on domestic violence incidents.

On average, between 1995 and 2003, one person was physically injured in 14.1 per cent of domestic violence incidents recorded by the Gardaí. This is lower than the figure of roughly one in two people who had experienced severe abuse and were injured as reported in Chapter 2. This may arise for a number of reasons. First, it is likely to reflect a stricter definition of injury in the Garda records. Second, as noted above, the Garda figures are based on incidents rather than individuals, whereas the survey data are based on individuals who were ever injured as a result of domestic abuse.

Table 3.3: Persons Injured at Garda Recorded Domestic Violence Incidents

Year	Number of Incidents	Number of Persons Injured	Percentage of Incidents with an Injured Party	Percentage Change Over Previous Year
1995	3,986	861	21.6%	-
1996	4,645	923	19.9%	-1.7%
1997	4,184	992	23.7%	+3.8%
1998	8,448	1,232	14.6%	-9.1%
1999	10,110	1,334	13.2%	-1.4%
2000	10,877	1,112	10.2%	-3.0%
2001	9,983	1,147	11.5%	+1.3%
2002	10,248	1,050	10.3%	-1.2%
2003	8,452	1,364	16.1%	+5.8%

Source: Commissioner's Annual Reports, 1995-2003.

Incidents in which a person was physically injured and the number of incidents in which arrests were made were also compared. These figures, detailed in Table 3.4, imply that the Gardaí are more likely to make an arrest when a physical injury has been sustained, or conversely where there is obvious evidence of a criminal offence.

On average, at least one arrest was made in 77 per cent of incidents involving injury between 1995 and 2003 with a figure of 96 per cent in 2003.

Table 3.4: Average Number of Injured Persons per Incident Involving an Arrest

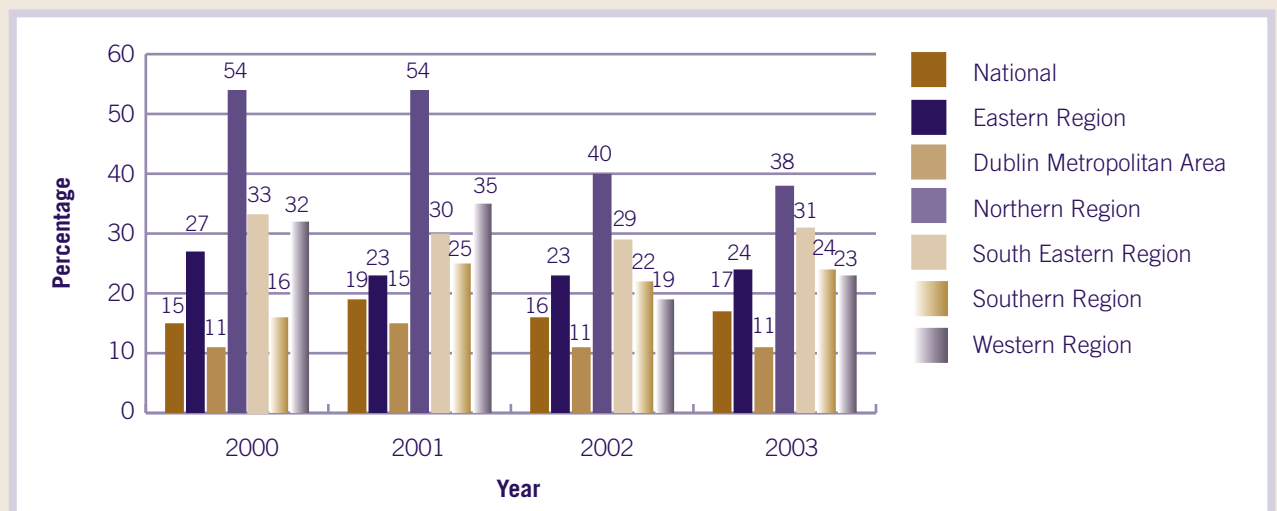
Year	Average number of Persons Injured per Arrest	Percentage Change Over Previous Year
1995	1.01	-
1996	1.07	+0.06
1997	0.87	-0.20
1998	0.68	-0.19
1999	0.77	+0.09
2000	0.68	-0.09
2001	0.61	-0.07
2002	0.64	+0.03
2003	0.96	+0.32

Source: Commissioner's Annual Reports, 1995-2003.

Regional Garda Figures

The Garda statistics give a breakdown by Garda regions and divisions³⁴. Some distinct differences are evident between the regions in terms of not only the number of incidents recorded but also the number of arrests, charges and convictions obtained.

Nationally, the figures for the period from 2000 to 2003 have remained quite stable with 15 to 19 per cent of incidents leading to arrests. However, there are some striking differences between the regions in the percentages of incidents which lead to arrests, as shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Percentage of Domestic Violence Incidents Leading to Arrests

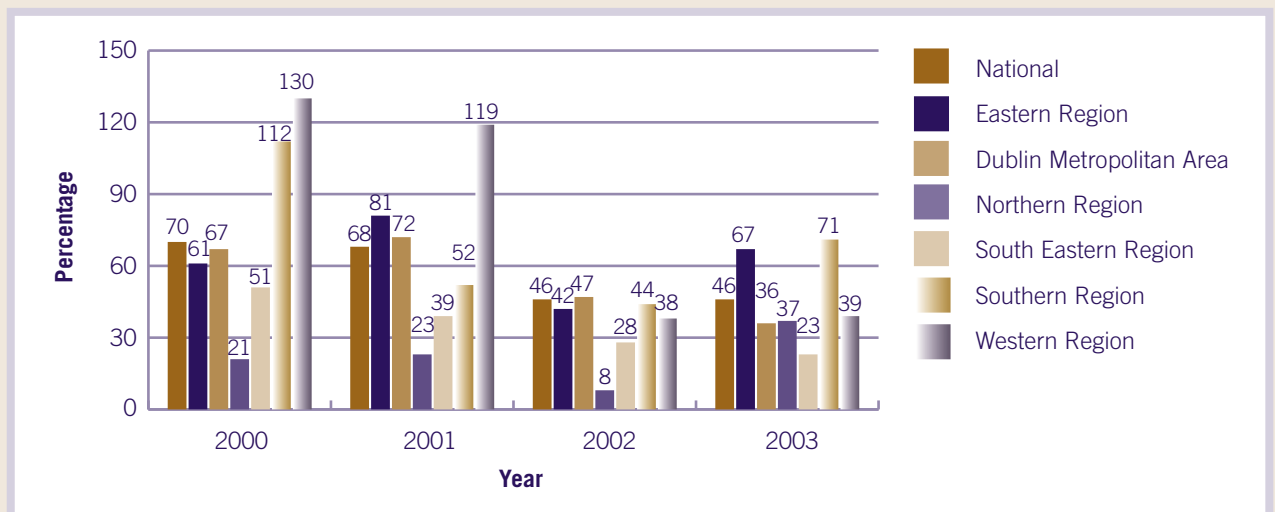
Source: Commissioner's Annual Reports, 2000-2003.

³⁴ There are six regions: Dublin Metropolitan (Dublin city and parts of surrounding counties of Kildare, Meath and Wicklow); the Eastern region (Louth/Meath, Carlow/Kildare, Laois/Offaly and Longford/Westmeath); the South Eastern region (Waterford/Kilkenny, Wexford and Tipperary); the Southern region (Cork, Kerry and Limerick); the Western region (Galway West, Roscommon/Galway East, Mayo and Clare) and the Northern region (Sligo/Leitrim, Donegal and Cavan/Monaghan).

The Northern and South Eastern regions have repeatedly made arrests at a higher percentage of incidents than the other regions. For example, in 2003 there were 38 arrests per 100 incidents recorded in the Northern Region compared to 11 in the Dublin Metropolitan Area (DMA), which has consistently yielded the lowest figure.

There is also a significant amount of regional variation in the rate of charges per 100 arrests. This has averaged 88 per 100 since 2000. Furthermore, Figure 3.3 illustrates the national and regional percentage of arrests which led to convictions. In 2003 only the Eastern and Southern regions achieved a conviction rate higher than the national average of 46 per cent. Again, there is a significant amount of variation between the regions.

Figure 3.3: Percentage of Domestic Violence Arrests Leading to Convictions³⁵



Source: Commissioner's Annual Reports, 2000-2003.

It is interesting to note that whilst the Northern and South Eastern regions made arrests in the highest proportion of domestic violence incidents these regions also recorded amongst the lowest proportion of convictions. It does not follow that because a higher proportion of arrests are made that this will lead to a greater proportion of convictions.

It is possible that the conviction figures are lower in recent years due to a large number of cases being outstanding at the end of each year. The pattern of arrests, charges and convictions resulting from domestic violence incidents merits further research beyond the remit of this study.

Domestic Violence Incidents per 10,000 Population

The Garda regions are different to the geographical county boundaries used in the Census but the Garda calculate and publish figures of the population within each Garda region in their annual reports³⁶. Based

³⁵ Conviction percentages can total more than 100 as offenders may be convicted in subsequent years to that in which the incident/arrest occurred.

³⁶ As all Garda statistics for 2003 were compiled in early 2004 the final population figures by Garda region based on Census 2002 data figures were not available, hence all population figures for 2000 – 2003 are based upon the 1996 Census. The national population figure the Gardaí base their estimates upon is 3,610,569. The Census 2002 recorded the national population as 3,917,203. Due to the large increases in population between 1996 and 2002 these figures slightly over-estimate the actual, reported domestic violence rates per 10,000 population.

upon these figures it is possible to calculate the number of incidents of domestic violence per 10,000 of the population, as shown in the Table 3.5.

From these figures it can be seen that nationally the number of domestic violence incidents reported to the Gardaí has fallen from 30.1 incidents per 10,000 population in 2000 to 23.4 incidents per 10,000 population in 2003³⁷. The Dublin Metropolitan region consistently has an incident rate far above any other region. The Dublin region has also demonstrated the largest fall in figures over the four years. Since 2000, rates per 10,000 population have increased in all Garda regions outside of Dublin, with the Northern region showing the largest increase, from 7.5 incidents per 10,000 population in 2000 to 11.8 incidents per 10,000 population in 2003.

Table 3.5: Recorded Domestic Violence Incidents per 10,000 Population

Region	Year			
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Eastern	13.5	12.1	17.0	13.6
Dublin	74.6	65.1	62.3	48.5
South Eastern	9.3	8.8	11.0	9.8
Southern	14.3	15.8	15.9	15.4
Western	7.2	9.9	9.7	10.6
Northern	7.5	7.8	13.3	11.8
National	30.1	27.7	28.4	23.4

Source: Commissioner's Annual Reports, 2000 - 2003.

A focus on 2003 also reveals significant variations between the proportion of domestic violence incidents and population in each region as outlined in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Comparison of Incidents and Population by Garda Region, 2003

Region	Percentage of all Population ³⁸	Percentage of all Incidents	Difference
Eastern	16.6	9.7	-6.9
Dublin	30.0	62.1	+32.1
South-Eastern	12.5	5.3	-7.2
Southern	19.8	13.0	-6.8
Western	12.3	5.6	-6.7
Northern	8.7	4.4	-4.3

Source: Commissioner's Annual Report, 2003.

³⁷ To place these figures in context, Garda figures for 2003 indicate nationally that there were 10.9 assaults causing harm per 10,000 population and 69.7 burglaries per 10,000 population.

³⁸ Population figures based on those used by the Gardaí.

There could be many reasons for these significant variations between regions:

- Within the Dublin region all emergency calls to the Gardaí are answered centrally by Command and Control who record, during the initial call, if the incident is domestic violence related. This ensures a high level of recording of such incidents³⁹;
- In the other regions it is the responsibility of an Inspector within each Division to inform the DVSAIU/ Crime Administration section of a domestic violence incident via a paper report which may mean that not all domestic violence incidents are recorded as such⁴⁰;
- Those living in Dublin, where anonymity (from family members and the wider community) is more assured, may be more likely to report incidents of domestic violence;
- In areas where there is a low arrest rate in domestic violence incidents people will become less inclined to report incidents, which in turn may lead to lower arrest rates.

It is likely that a combination of these factors affects the recording and reporting of incidents of domestic violence. The variation in recorded incidents of domestic violence regionally merits further research but, again, is beyond the remit of this study.

*Complainants and Offenders*⁴¹

Every year since 1998 the Commissioner's Reports have contained details of the sex of offenders and complainants in domestic violence incidents. There has been little change over this time in the percentages of women and men who have been victims and offenders. Between 1998 and 2003, on average, 89 per cent of complainants were women and 90 per cent of offenders were men.

Breaches of Domestic Violence Orders

The 2002 report was the first to contain 33 new classifications of non-headline offences in addition to the 10 headline offence categories. Group 19 of these non-headline offences is titled 'Breach of Domestic Violence Orders Offences'⁴². Details are given of the number of cases in which proceedings were commenced, the number of convictions obtained, cases dismissed or withdrawn in the Courts and the number of cases which are still pending. As can be seen from Table 3.7 the Gardaí proceeded with 1,544 cases in 2002 and 1,315 cases in 2003. As these are the first two years in which these figures have been published, it is too soon to establish trends, although the decrease represents a year on year fall of 15 per cent.

³⁹ It is possible that some calls are made directly to local Garda Stations.

⁴⁰ The DVSAIU and Crime Administration section are currently transferring their records of domestic violence incidents from manual collection to the PULSE system. In future years there may be substantial changes in the number of domestic violence incidents recorded as the details of incidents are collected at source (local Garda station) on the PULSE system.

⁴¹ Off

⁴² Further details of domestic violence orders are provided in the next section on the Courts Service and in Appendix 3.

Table 3.7: Prosecutions for Breaches of Domestic Violence Orders

Year	Proceedings Commenced	Convictions		Dismissed/Withdrawn		Pending	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
2002	1,544	481	31.2	603	39.1	265	17.2
2003	1,315	319	24.3	455	34.6	391	29.7

Source: Commissioner's Annual Reports, 2002-2003.

Whilst the percentage of convictions obtained in 2003 has fallen *vis-à-vis* 2002 there were substantially more cases outstanding or pending in the courts at the end of 2003 (29.7 per cent), than at the end of 2002 (17.2 per cent)⁴³. It is likely therefore that once all cases have been concluded a certain percentage of these will lead to convictions. There also seems to be a shortfall of cases each year in that the total number of convictions, cases dismissed/withdrawn and cases pending is less than the total number of cases in which proceedings were commenced. In 2002 the number of convictions, dismissals/withdrawals and cases pending compared to the total number of cases proceeded with leaves a shortfall of 195 cases, in 2003 the shortfall is 150 cases.

In 2002, 481 convictions were obtained but only 369 offenders are detailed in the Commissioner's Report, hence each offender was responsible for an average of 1.3 breaches of court orders. The figures for 2003 also equate to 1.3 breaches per offender, 247 persons were detailed as responsible for 319 convictions.

In 2002, 4.1 per cent (14 men and one woman) of those convicted for breaches of domestic violence orders were aged between 17 and 20 years of age. A further 95 per cent (337 men and 15 women) were aged 21 years and over. The age and sex of two offenders are not listed. These figures are similar for 2003, 6.9 per cent (16 men and one woman) convicted were aged between 17 and 20 years old. The remainder of those convicted were 21 years and over.

Summary of An Garda Síochána Statistics

When one considers the overall trends in the domestic violence data between 1995 and 2003 a number of factors become apparent:

- The number of incidents recorded and categorised as domestic violence by the Gardaí more than doubled between 1997 and 2000⁴⁴;
- The number of incidents recorded fell in 2001 and 2003;
- The highest number of arrests were recorded in 2001 (1,890), this is approximately one arrest every four and half hours for a domestic violence related incident somewhere in Ireland⁴⁵ (5.2 arrests every day); and

⁴³ Co

⁴⁴ The Gardaí attribute much of this increase to improved recording practices.

⁴⁵ In 2001, Garda figures show an average 11.7 criminal prosecutions commenced against suspected burglary offenders every day, or one every two hours. The figures for assaults causing harm were very similar to domestic violence incidents, on average 4.7 criminal prosecutions were commenced every day, or one every five hours. Specific arrest figures are only provided for domestic violence incidents in the Commissioner's Annual Reports.

- The number of charges and convictions for domestic violence incidents rose steadily between 1995 and 2001.

Since 2001 there has been a decline in arrests, charges and convictions for domestic violence incidents. In the absence of completely uniform recording practices, it is not possible to say whether this decline is due to changes in the reporting and recording of domestic violence incidents or due to an actual decline in the number of arrests, charges and convictions or from some combination of these two.

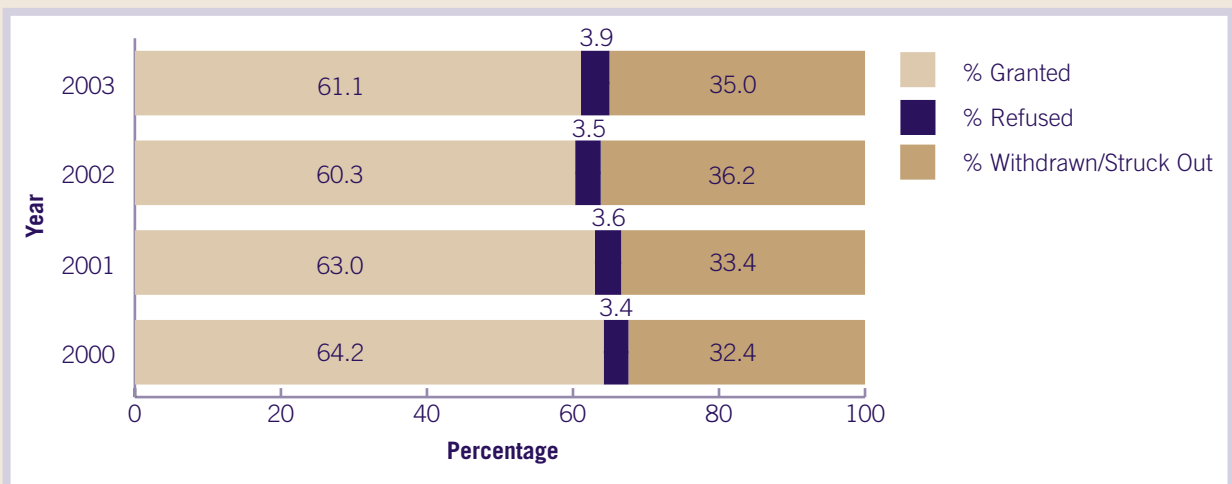
Courts Service

The Courts Service have published data on the number of domestic violence orders applied for, granted and refused together with cases withdrawn or struck out for each of the four orders – Barring Orders, Safety Orders, Protection Orders and Interim Barring Orders – since their first annual report in 2000⁴⁶. Details of the gender, age group or any other demographic details of applicants are not routinely collected by the Courts Service.

The number of applications made in 2000 was 11,891. In 2001 this rose slightly to 12,795 applications. Since then the applications have fallen to 11,410 in 2002 and 9,881 in 2003. This 2003 figure represents a decrease of over 13 per cent on the previous year’s applications. Every year the most applications are for Barring Orders, followed by Protection Orders and then Safety Orders. Interim Barring Orders are applied for the least.

When all applications are considered together, as in Figure 3.4, it can be seen that despite variations in the number of applications, the same outcomes are reached in the same proportion of cases⁴⁷.

Figure 3.4: Outcome of All Domestic Violence Order Applications by Year



Source: Courts Service Annual Reports, 2000-2003.

46 The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the orders are summarised in Appendix 3.

47 Interim Barring Orders were granted in lieu of Protection Orders in 11 cases in 2003, 25 cases in 2002, 44 cases in 2001 and 383 cases in 2000.

Each year approximately 60 per cent of all applications for court orders under the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 are granted. Less than five per cent are refused and a third are withdrawn or struck out.

The number of applications made for each of the orders year on year is less stable. Table 3.8 provides a breakdown of the total number of applications for each of the orders, taking 2000 as the baseline figure.

Table 3.8: Total Number of Applications for Orders, 2000 Baseline (Number)

Year	Baseline Figures of Total Number of Applications			
	Barring Orders	Safety Orders	Protection Orders	Interim Barring Orders
2000	100.0 (4,586)	100.0 (2,307)	100.0 (4,256)	100.0 (742)
2001	97.5 (4,470)	125.8 (2,903)	100.2 (4,263)	156.2 (1,159)
2002	88.7 (4,067)	122.0 (2,814)	86.4 (3,677)	114.8 (852)
2003	78.2 (3,586)	110.8 (2,557)	73.1 (3,109)	84.8 (629)

Source: Courts Service Annual Reports, 2000 - 2003.

The total number of applications in 2003 for all orders except Safety Orders was lower than the number of applications made in the year 2000. The applications for Barring Orders have consistently fallen every year. This may be mitigated by the increase in the number of applications for Interim Barring Orders in 2001 and to a lesser extent in 2002. From the data it is not possible to establish if all of those who apply for Interim Barring Orders go on to make an application for a full Barring Order.

As mentioned previously, trends over the four years reports (2000-2003) suggest a relatively stagnant pattern of the proportions of orders granted, refused and withdrawn or struck out for all orders. Less than half of the applications for Barring Orders and Safety Orders were granted, four per cent of applications were refused and in the remaining half, applicants withdrew or the case was struck out⁴⁸. Protection Orders and Interim Barring Order applications have similar patterns to one another, between 80 and 90 per cent of applications are granted. Usually around five per cent of these applications are refused and about 10 per cent withdraw or are struck out⁴⁹.

Applications by Spouses and Other Partners Only

The majority, over 80 per cent, of applications for each type of order are made by spouses and partners or ex-partners. Table 3.9 details all applications, applications by partners/ex-partners only and applications by non-partners in terms of the percentages granted, refused and withdrawn/struck out.

48 The Courts Service does not provide separate figures on withdrawals and strike outs.

49 A complete breakdown of figures for all orders is available in Appendix 4 (Tables A4.5-8).

Table 3.9: Outcomes of Order Applications in 2003

Type of Order	Applicant Status	Applications	Granted	Refused	Withdrawn/ Struck Out
			%	%	%
Barring	All Applicants	3,586	43.9	4.5	51.6
	Partners Only	3,116 (86.9%)	43.7	4.0	52.3
	Non-Partners	470	45.5	7.9*	46.6
Safety	All Applicants	2,557	43.3	4.4	52.3
	Partners Only	2,233 (87.3%)	44.1	3.6*	52.4
	Non-Partners	324	38.3	10.2*	51.5
Protection ⁵⁰	All Applicants	3,109	90.9	2.5*	6.6
	Partners Only	2,744 (88.3%)	91.1**	2.5*	6.4
	Non-Partners	365	88.8	3.0*	8.2*
Interim Barring	All Applicants	629	84.4	4.8*	10.8*
	Partners Only	523 (83.2%)	83.6	5.2*	11.3*
	Non-Partners	106	88.7*	2.8*	8.5*

Source: Courts Service Annual Reports, 2000-2003. Non-partner applicants include parents, health boards and other applicants. * Caution is advised as figures related to less than 100 cases.

** Includes 11 Interim Barring Orders granted in lieu.

Based on these figures the Courts seem to grant orders in a comparatively uniform manner, regardless of the status of the applicant. There is some evidence to suggest that non-partners are slightly less likely to be granted Safety or Protection Orders but figures for other years (not available for this report) would also need to be considered. Low numbers of cases are involved in many of the refusal figures but there is some indication that non-partners are slightly more likely to be refused orders than are partners for all except Interim Barring Orders.

In the region of 30 per cent of all applications for each type of order are made by partners compared with around 60 per cent of applications by legal spouses. Table 3.10 summarises the outcomes of these applications. It can be seen that when all orders are considered together there is very little difference between the applications granted, refused and withdrawn or struck out to spouses and partners.

⁵⁰ The Law Reform Commission have highlighted the importance of Protection Orders for certain applicants "The importance of the order has diminished since the introduction of the Interim Barring Order. However, it is still a useful remedy for those who are not eligible to apply for the other orders because either they do not have the relevant property interest or they have not cohabited for the necessary period" (Law Reform Commission, 2004: p.170).

Table 3.10: Outcomes of Applications from Spouses and Other Partners, 2003

Order Type	Granted				Refused				Withdrawn/ Struck out			
	Spouse		Partner		Spouse		Partner		Spouse		Partner	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barring	936	44.1	425	42.7	96	4.5*	28	2.8*	1,089	51.3	542	54.5
Safety	670	43.7	314	44.8	50	3.3*	30	4.3*	812	53.0	357	50.9
Protection	1,618	90.6	872	92.1	49	2.7*	19	2.0*	119	6.7	56	5.9*
Interim Barring	312	86.0	125	78.1	20	5.5*	7	4.4*	31	8.5*	28	17.5*
All Orders	3,536	61.3	1,736	61.9	215	3.7	84	3.0*	2,015	35.0	983	35.1

Source: Courts Service Annual Reports, 2000-2003. * Caution is advised as figures related to less than 100 cases.

As can be seen the outcomes of applications for domestic violence orders are similar for spouses and partners. Again these figures are based on one year only so no firm conclusions can be drawn but partners seem to be somewhat less likely to be granted Interim Barring Orders than legal spouses.

Tables 3.9 and 3.10 both illustrate the higher proportion of Protection and Interim Barring Orders granted when compared to Barring and Safety Orders. This may be partly due to the fact that Protection and Interim Barring Orders are both immediate orders which can be obtained whilst an applicant is waiting for other applications to be decided upon. Hence, in these cases the Judiciary may be more likely to err on the side of caution and offer protection to the applicant in the intervening period.

Courts Statistics from 2003

The Courts Service also provided the Council with a detailed breakdown of applications for the various orders in 2003. This included a breakdown of the number of applications, orders granted, refused and cases withdrawn or struck out for every District Court in the country. As the number of applications in individual district courts was often very low it was not possible to consider each court separately. The data were analysed according to the Courts Service regions⁵¹. Again, only the applications made by partners and spouses are discussed in this section.

These figures reveal that there were substantial differences between some of the Courts Service regions in the outcomes of domestic violence order applications. Table 3.11 summarises this regional data for all types of orders.

⁵¹ The Courts Service regions are as follows: the Northern region, covers counties Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim and Donegal; the Eastern region, covers counties Kildare, Meath, Wicklow and Louth; the Midland region, covers counties Offaly, Laois, Longford, Sligo, Roscommon and Westmeath; the South-Eastern region covers counties Waterford, Wexford, Tipperary, Kilkenny and Carlow; the Cork region, covers county Cork; the South Western region covers Limerick, Clare and Kerry; the Western region covers counties Mayo and Galway and the Dublin Metropolitan District covers Dublin City and County.

Table 3.11: Outcome of Order Applications in 2003 by Court Region

Region	Granted		Refused		Withdrawn/ Struck Out		Total Applications	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Northern	298	78.0	11	2.9*	73	19.1*	382	4.4
Eastern	792	72.1	18	1.6*	288	26.2	1,098	12.8
Midland	443	69.3	5	0.8*	191	29.9	639	7.4
South-Eastern	653	65.1	21	2.1*	329	32.8	1,003	11.7
South-Western	745	66.3	33	2.9*	346	30.8	1,124	13.1
Western	266	54.8	44	9.1*	175	36.1	485	5.6
Cork	563	57.8	40	4.1*	371	38.1	974	11.3
Dublin	1,512	52.1	127	4.4	1,261	43.5	2,900	33.7
Total	5,272	61.3	299	3.5	3,034	35.3	8,605	100

Source: Unpublished Courts Service Statistics supplied to the NCC on request. *Caution is advised as figures relate to less than 100 cases.

The Northern, Eastern and Midland regions granted orders in a significantly higher percentage of cases than the other regions; in conjunction with this they also demonstrated lower withdrawals or strike-outs. The Western and Dublin Metropolitan regions on the other hand, showed a lower proportion of applications granted. The Dublin Metropolitan region also showed the highest withdrawal or strike out rate in the country.

When each type of order is considered separately the pattern is very similar⁵². Protection Orders are granted in the highest percentage of cases, 91 per cent nationally. Between the regions the proportion granted varies between 85 per cent, in the Western region and 94 per cent in the South-Eastern region (the Northern region granted 95 per cent of applications but only dealt with 81 applications during the year). Similarly, the granting of applications for Barring Orders varied between 28 per cent in the Dublin region and 70 per cent in the Northern region. Nationally, 44 per cent of Barring Orders were granted. In the case of Safety Orders, 44 per cent were granted throughout Ireland but across the regions the percentages granted ranged between 33 per cent in Dublin and 59 per cent in the Eastern region (the Northern region granted 73 per cent but only dealt with 84 applications during the year). The numbers of applications for Interim Barring Orders was too low to allow for reliable analysis by individual region, nationally however, 84 per cent of applications made by all partners were granted.

It seems unlikely that there should be substantial differences between the outcomes of applications for orders on the basis of the region of the country in which the application is made alone. The Courts Service may therefore wish to consider undertaking additional research to examine these apparent discrepancies. It would be important to establish if the ease of access to the Court, in terms of geographical distance, awareness amongst the public of the different domestic violence orders and their uses and also the previous 'success' rates of applications within a given region have an effect on the number of applications made and the outcome of these applications within each court region.

⁵² A complete breakdown of the Courts Service region data by order type may be read in Appendix A4.10.

Summary

On average in 2003:

- Over 27 domestic violence act orders were applied for every day;
- Over 16 orders were granted by the Courts every day; and
- Every day more than five people were barred from entering their homes because of domestic violence.

Applications per 10,000 Population

This section is based on all applicants (not just partners) for a domestic violence order in 2003. Nationally, 25 order applications were made and 15 applications were granted per 10,000 population. Comparable figures from England and Wales⁵³ show that six orders were granted per 10,000 population during 2003 (Department for Constitutional Affairs, 2004: p.63).

Table 3.12: Comparison of Applications and Population by Courts Region, 2003

Region	Percentage of all Population ⁵⁴	Percentage of all Applications	Difference	Applications per 10,000 population
Northern	7.0	4.1	-2.9	14.8
Eastern	13.1	11.8	-1.3	22.6
Midland	8.6	6.9	-1.7	20.2
South-Eastern	12.4	10.9	-1.5	22.1
South-Western	10.5	12.4	+1.9	29.8
Western	8.3	5.6	-2.7	16.8
Cork	11.4	11.4	0	25.2
Dublin	28.7	37.0	+8.3	32.6

Source: Unpublished Courts Service Statistics supplied to the NCC upon request.

When the figures are compared in this way it becomes apparent that Dublin Metropolitan region and the South-Western region receive a notably higher percentage of applications and more applications per 10,000 population than the other regions. Contrary to this the Northern and Western regions have somewhat lower levels of applications than one might expect. It is possible that people living in Dublin and other large urban centres are more likely to apply for court orders as they can be more assured of anonymity in terms of community/family awareness. Applications may also be influenced by demographics, for example, higher proportions of younger people living in urban areas and conversely higher proportions of older people in rural areas. Even the effects of stress and urban life may have an effect upon the regional figures. Again, there would appear to be a need for further research into why these differences exist.

⁵³ In England and Wales the Family Law Act, 1996 provides for non-molestation and occupation orders as domestic violence remedies. The Judicial Statistics 2003 report from the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) details that non-molestation orders prohibit particular behaviour or general molestation and an occupation order can define or regulate rights of occupation of the home. As in Ireland, applications for these orders can be made by other family members and persons living in the same household in addition to current and ex partners.

⁵⁴ Population figures based on Census 2002 of all persons.

District Court Waiting Times

The vast majority of applications for orders under the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 are made through the District Courts. The Courts Service publish details of the average waiting times for all family law cases to be heard in the District Courts in their annual report. The 2003 Courts Service Annual Report stated that in Dublin there was an average 12 week waiting period between the issue of a summons and the hearing of the application. In Cork this waiting period was less, between seven and eight weeks. In general, there was no delay in hearing family law cases in the provincial District Courts as cases are listed for the next sitting in the District Court area⁵⁵.

Summary of Courts Service Statistics

In summary, the Courts Service data reveal that:

- The number of applications for domestic violence orders has been falling since 2001;
- Over 80 per cent of the applicants for these orders are current or ex spouses and other partners;
- The outcomes of applications from spouses and other partners are generally similar;
- There are some differences in the outcomes of applications between the Courts regions; and
- There is some discrepancy in the percentage of applications made and the percentage of the population resident within each of the Courts regions.

Legal Aid Board

The Legal Aid Board (hereafter the Board) publishes an annual report which details the number of cases in relation to domestic violence and applications for orders under the Domestic Violence Act, 1996. The reports do not include details of the clients who have used the service.

The reports outline the number of Barring and Safety/Protection Orders applied for with the assistance of the Board. Figure 3.5 illustrates the number of applications for these orders between 1999 and 2003⁵⁶.

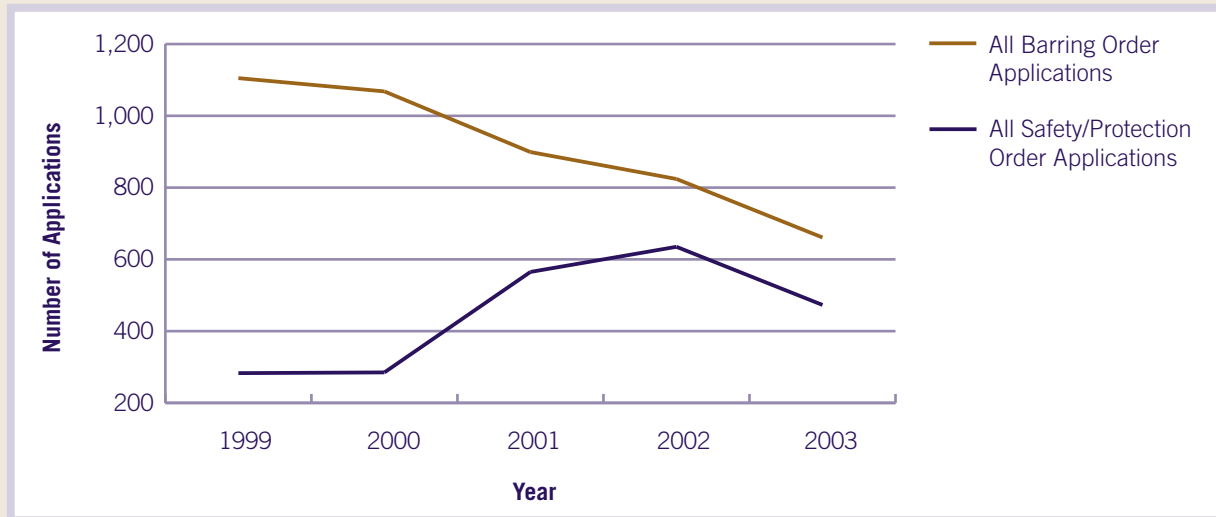
It can be seen that the number of applications through the Legal Aid Board for these orders has changed significantly in recent years. Applications for Barring Orders through the Board have steadily declined every year since 1999 from 1,105 to 672 in 2003. This does not necessarily imply that fewer people are applying for Barring Orders; only that less of them are doing so through the legal aid system. Applications for Safety/Protection Orders have been slightly more uneven, remaining stable in 1999 and 2000 (283 and 285 applications respectively), to a high of 635 in 2002 and declining in 2003 to 473. Again this is not necessarily a true reflection of the number applying for Safety/Protection Orders⁵⁷.

⁵⁵ All family law cases are given priority by the Courts Service. It is important to highlight that these waiting times do not apply to applications for Interim Barring Orders or Protection Orders. As these are immediate orders, these applications are dealt with on the next day regardless of the court district in which the application is made. In some cases this may mean that an application has to be heard in an alternative District Court within the region or that a special sitting of the District Court is arranged. These waiting times therefore relate only to full hearings of applications for Barring Orders and Safety Orders.

⁵⁶ Figures for 1999 taken from the 2000 report.

⁵⁷ The earlier analysis of the Courts Service figures of applications has shown that between 2000 and 2003 applications for Barring Orders decreased by 22 per cent and during the same period applications for Safety Orders increased by 11 per cent.

Figure 3.5: Domestic Violence Orders Applied for through the Legal Aid Board between 1999 and 2003



Source: Legal Aid Board Annual Reports, 2000-2003.

The Board provides the services of solicitors and barristers, in respect of civil matters, to qualifying persons and also provides advice to its clients. The Board employs its own solicitors throughout the country and complements this provision with private practitioners, particularly for cases involving domestic violence, maintenance and custody/access hearings in the District Courts. Generally, in excess of 40 per cent⁵⁸ of the private practitioners' legal aid workload consists of applications for orders under the Domestic Violence Act, 1996. In contrast to these cases account for around 15 per cent of the workload within the dedicated law centres of the Board⁵⁹.

Since 2001 the annual reports of the Board have also included details of the number of clients seeking representation in 'domestic violence' cases. The Board defines these cases as any which involve physical violence between family members. Figures of clients using the Board in these cases have also fallen from a high of 187 cases in 2001, to 184 cases in 2002 and down to 112 cases in 2003.

Statistics from Voluntary and Non-Governmental Organisations

As part of the study the Council also considered a number of other data sources⁶⁰. Firstly, data on hospital admissions are discussed based on the Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) scheme. Following this there is some discussion of data published by two service providers, namely, Women's Aid and the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. Finally, data compiled by the National Network of Women's Refuges and Support Services has been included.

Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) Scheme

The Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) scheme is the principal source of national data on discharges from acute hospitals in Ireland. Most of the hospitals that participate in the scheme have specific computer software to ensure standardised collection of data. The records are designed to facilitate analyses of

58 Exact figures are as follows, 45.6 per cent in 2000, 35.5 per cent in 2001, 34.3 per cent in 2002 and 44.9 per cent in 2003.

59 Exact figures are as follows, 18.5 per cent in 2000, 16.3 per cent in 2001, 13.5 per cent in 2002 and 14.3 per cent in 2003.

hospital activity. The data are coded based upon the patients' complete medical records or charts, which are reviewed in full. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) is responsible for the administration of HIPE.

One of the codes available to those entering information on the system relates to injuries that have been inflicted through violence from a partner or ex-partner. Therefore, the patient must self-report that their injuries were inflicted by a partner for it to be recorded under this code. HIPE records relating to this intimate partner violence were obtained for 2001, 2002 and 2003.

The number of patients in this category is low. This is in part due to the fact that patients must self-report and the need for this information to be recorded in the patient's chart. It may also be partly due to the fact that serious injuries requiring hospital treatment are not very common in domestic violence cases. In 2001, 2002 and 2003 there were 20, 18 and 24 cases respectively which were coded as discharges following treatment for partner inflicted injuries. Nevertheless, the seriousness of the injuries these people suffered is implied in the data. In 2003, all 24 cases were admitted to hospital in an emergency situation⁶¹. Due to the small number of cases only limited data could be released to protect the confidentiality of the patients.

In 2001 and 2002 over 90 per cent of cases involved women patients (90 per cent and 94 per cent respectively). In 2003, 83 per cent of cases involved women patients. Similar patterns were found in the *National Study of Domestic Abuse* survey; among those who were severely abused, women were more than twice as likely as men to require medical treatment for injuries sustained through domestic abuse and 10 times more likely to require a hospital stay. Each year (2001-2003) between 40 per cent and 50 per cent of patients were married. These patients also tended to be aged between 20 and 39 years old; 50 per cent in 2001 (10 patients), 78 per cent in 2002 (14 patients) and 67 per cent in 2003 (16 patients).

As stated, all 24 cases in 2003 were admitted in an emergency situation, of these one-third or eight cases were emergency maternity cases. This figure suggests that the partner's violence could have caused damage to or threatened the life of the unborn child in addition to the injuries inflicted upon the mother. In 2002, 94 per cent of cases were admitted in an emergency situation⁶². Finally, figures were obtained on the discharge destination of all patients. Every year (2001-2003) 80 per cent or more of patients were on their way home, possibly a home shared with their abusive partner, following discharge from hospital⁶³.

Other research has found higher levels of hospitalisation due to injuries inflicted by a spouse or partner, for example, the Women's Aid study conducted at St. James' Hospital⁶⁴ in 1993. This research found that 68 out of the 81 women included in the study disclosed that a spouse, partner or ex-partner was responsible for their injuries (Cronin and O'Connor, 1993: p.10). It is likely that the HIPE statistics undercount the number of hospital admissions due to intimate partner violence. This could be for a number of reasons such as the lack of opportunity for the patient to disclose abuse, the non-recognition of abuse by medical staff, the lack of specific information in the patient's chart and/or incomplete coding of this information.

60 This is not to be taken as an exhaustive trawl of all data sources.

61 It is possible that this figure may include some repeat admissions as the data relates to hospital activity rather than individuals.

62 Figures were coded differently in 2001 and hence are not included here.

63 Exact percentages are as follows: 2001, 80 per cent; 2002, 89 per cent; and 2003, 83 per cent.

64 See Chapter 1 for further details.

Women's Aid

Women's Aid operates a free telephone helpline⁶⁵ seven days a week from 10am to 10pm for people seeking information or support in relation to domestic abuse. A statistical overview of the calls made to the helpline is published annually. The data presented here are those most directly related to the current study of abusive behaviour within intimate relationships.

A total of 12,908 calls were responded to in 2003. This equates to an average of just over 35 calls per day, every day of the year or 33 calls responded to per 10,000 population. The calls are classified into one of five categories; support calls, hang-up calls, administration and indirect support calls, hoax calls and other calls. The largest group (63 per cent) were calls from women seeking support in relation to their experiences of domestic abuse by a male partner. A further 15 per cent of calls were received from other professionals/agencies seeking advice where issues related to domestic abuse had arisen in their work. Calls were received from members of the Gardaí, social workers, local support services, general practitioners and hospital staff. In 2003, 42 per cent of callers disclosed that they had contacted the helpline on a previous occasion, meaning that up to 58 per cent, in the region of 7,500 calls, were first time contacts with the service. Calls were received from Dublin in 30 per cent of the cases, 34 per cent of calls were received from outside of Dublin and the remaining 36 per cent of callers did not disclose their location.

A total of 10,317 instances of abusive behaviour were reported to the helpline during the calls received. This is the equivalent of 26 instances of abusive behaviour disclosed per 10,000 population. Many callers disclosed more than one type of abusive behaviour. Most of these related to emotional abuse (44 per cent) and physical abuse (33 per cent). This is similar to the findings in the *National Study of Domestic Abuse Survey*. Almost half (49 per cent) of those who had experienced severe abuse said that incidents of emotional abuse were the worst types of behaviour they had experienced compared to 28 per cent who stated their worst experience was of physical abuse. There was also a significant amount of sexual (13 per cent) and economic (10 per cent) abuse disclosed to the helpline.

The majority of the perpetrators of this abuse, 62 per cent, were male partners or ex-partners⁶⁶. Female perpetrators were mentioned in one per cent of calls to which the helpline responded. The vast majority, 97 per cent, of calls were received from women and 86 per cent of these were calling to seek support for themselves. A total of three per cent of calls to the helpline were from men, 40 per cent of these had been abused or were calling on behalf of another abused man, 35 per cent were calling on behalf of an abused woman and the remaining 25 per cent were making enquiries about the service. Furthermore, 0.1 per cent of women callers were seeking support or information on behalf of an abused man.

'End the Silence' Media Campaign

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (the Department) and the Northern Ireland Office funded a television and radio advertisement campaign for three weeks in February and March 2005. These advertisements highlighted the service and support offered by the Women's Aid helpline and encouraged viewers/listeners to 'end the silence' by calling the helpline. The Department also

65 The Women's Aid free telephone helpline number is 1800 341900.

66 The helpline

commissioned Lansdowne Market Research to conduct a pre and post advertising evaluation. Prior to the advertising campaign, 53 per cent of those surveyed⁶⁷ had seen or heard advertising/promotions recently about domestic violence. Following the campaign this increased to 58 per cent of those surveyed⁶⁸, a statistically significant increase of five per cent from before the campaign. Prior to the campaign, those who were married were more likely to have seen or heard advertising than those who were single (54 per cent of married men compared to 45 per cent of single men, 60 per cent of married women compared to 52 per cent of single women). This was also the case in the post campaign research which revealed that the advertisement had a particularly strong impact upon married women, 67 per cent of married women could recall recent advertising after the campaign, a statistically significant increase of seven per cent. Prior to the campaign, older people (65 years and over) were almost two times more likely to have seen or heard advertising than the youngest age group (18-24 years), with 66 per cent and 36 per cent respectively. In a slight anomaly, older people, those aged 65 years and over, showed a significant decrease in recall of advertising in the post-campaign research (down 10 per cent). The campaign was particularly effective at reaching younger people, with those in both the 18-24 years and 25-34 years age groups showing statistically significant increases in recall of the adverts (increases of 13 per cent and 10 per cent respectively).

The advertisement campaign had limited effect upon general attitudes towards domestic abuse. The pre-advert survey found that 95 per cent of respondents agreed (slightly or strongly) that “men who perpetrate domestic abuse/violence against their partners are committing a crime”, 97 per cent agreed with this statement in the post-advert research. Prior to the campaign married men, all those aged between 25 and 49 years and those living in urban areas were significantly more likely to strongly agree with this statement. Following the campaign, there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of young people (those aged between 18 and 24 years) agreeing with this statement, from 85 per cent before the campaign to 93 per cent. In the pre-advert research, a total of 75 per cent agreed that “domestic abuse/violence is a common occurrence in Ireland”. Married men, those aged between 35 and 64 years of age, those on lower incomes and those living in urban areas were significantly more likely to strongly agree with this statement. Seventy-four per cent of respondents agreed after the campaign. Conversely, 84 per cent of respondents disagreed (slightly or strongly) in the pre-advert research with the statement “domestic abuse/violence is a private matter only for the two people in that relationship”. This figure remained the same in the post-advert research. Prior to the advertisement, single men were significantly more likely to strongly agree with this statement. Those on higher incomes were significantly less likely to strongly agree with this statement. When those who were prompted are included, almost three-quarters, 73 per cent of respondents, stated that they could recall the specific advertisement funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in the post campaign research.

Women’s Aid also published figures detailing the calls they received to the helpline⁶⁹ for the duration of the advertisement campaign. Women’s Aid recorded a 64 per cent increase in calls responded to over the three weeks of the campaign compared to the same period in 2004. Over 1,000 extra calls were made to the helpline; over 400 calls were from those contacting the service for the first time (a 50 per cent increase of first time contacts). Thirteen per cent of the first time contacts specifically mentioned the advertisement as the reason they called the helpline. Women’s Aid also revealed there had been an

67 Based on a nationally representative sample of 949 adults aged 18 years and over.

68 Based on a nationally representative sample of 956 adults aged 18 years and over.

69 See section on Women’s Aid earlier in this chapter for further details of the helpline and statistics on calls. These figures were reported in the Irish Independent (Donaghy, 2005) and The Irish Times (2005).

increase in disclosure of all types of abuse, the number of calls relating to physical abuse doubled and calls relating to emotional abuse almost trebled.

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre⁷⁰

The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre operates a free, 24-hour telephone helpline⁷¹ staffed by trained counsellors. The helpline provides a confidential listening, support and information service for women and men affected by rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The Centre also offers one-to-one individual counselling. The Centre publishes statistics on the use of the helpline and the counselling service on an annual basis.

A total of 624 clients were seen by the counselling and psychotherapy service of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre in 2003. Of particular interest to the current study is the percentage of persons using the service due to rape by a husband/partner or boyfriend. A total of 10 per cent of clients were in this category. The Service's statistics showed that clients who had been raped by a stranger were more likely (54 per cent) to report the matter to the Gardaí than those raped by a relative or boyfriend (17 per cent).

National Network of Women's Refuges and Support Services

The National Network of Women's Refuges and Support Services (NNWRSS) is the representative body for refuges and ancillary services for women and children who experience domestic violence and abuse. In early 2004 the NNWRSS administered a survey, on behalf of Sonas Housing Association, of all 18 refuges operating in Ireland⁷². A total of 15 of the 18 refuges responded to this survey, giving an 83 per cent response rate. The refuges were asked to provide details of their service provision, occasions when they could not provide accommodation and new and repeat admissions to that particular refuge. The survey also asked about additional services undertaken by the refuges, such as calls to their helplines and drop-in or outreach contacts. The figures indicate that 8,746 telephone calls were made to refuges in 2003, which equates to one call an hour, every day of the year. Further to this 4,888 drop-in or outreach contacts were recorded by the refuges. The number of calls to the helplines and drop-in/outreach contacts varied extensively between the different refuges.

The role of the refuges is to act as emergency accommodation for women and if required for their children, who are experiencing domestic abuse to such an extent that they feel they can no longer remain in their own homes. In 2003, a total of 2,813 women sought refuge accommodation, 60 per cent of these were actually accommodated. There were a total of 1,700 admissions to the 15 refuges who responded to the survey in 2003. The majority of these admissions, 73 per cent, were of women with one or more children. The remaining 27 per cent (458 admissions) were of women who stayed in refuges without children. The survey considered the profile of the admissions to the extent that it distinguished between settled, traveller, non-national and women with disabilities. Traveller women, either alone or with children, accounted for the largest of these four groups; 49 per cent of admissions to refuges were Traveller women⁷³ (824 out of 1,700). Settled women accounted for slightly less, 42 per cent, of admissions. Of the remaining admissions, eight per cent were non-national women and one per cent were women with disabilities⁷⁴.

70 There are 14 other Rape Crisis Centres in addition to Dublin. All collect their own statistics but the Rape Crisis Network of Ireland has established a statistics database to be used by all Centres. It is expected that data from this will be available in mid 2005. All of the Centres offer services including helplines locally.

71 The Rape Crisis Centre free telephone helpline number is 1800 778888.

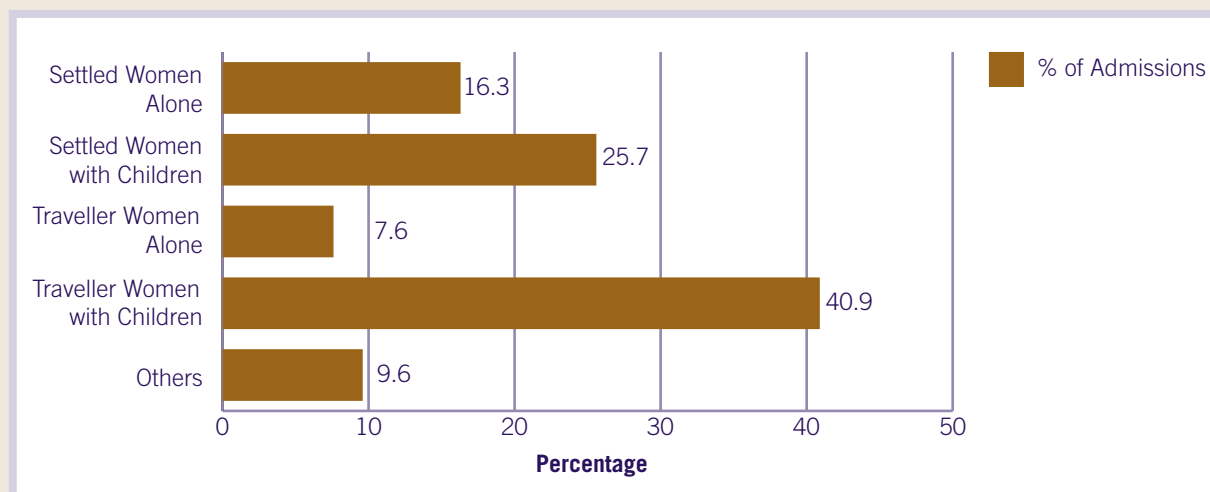
72 A map indicating the locations of these refuges is in Appendix 4, Figure A4.11.

73 Based on the results from the Census 2002, 0.6 per cent of the Irish population are members of the travelling community.

74 Based on the results from the Census 2002 10.4 per cent of the population were not born in Ireland and 8.3 per cent reported having a significant disability or illness.

Admissions of settled and Traveller women to refuges showed distinct differences in both the number of 'lone' admissions and the number of children staying with women in the refuges as shown in Figure 3.6⁷⁵.

Figure 3.6: Admissions to Refuges in 2003



Source: Sonas Housing Questionnaire, Unpublished Results⁷⁶

When admissions of settled and Traveller women only are considered 45 per cent of all refuge admissions in 2003 were Traveller women accompanied by children (compared to 28 per cent of settled women). Conversely, almost 20 per cent of all admissions were of a settled woman on her own (compared to eight per cent of Traveller women). In addition to this, Traveller women accommodated in refuges were on average accompanied by more children per woman than settled women, 2.7 and 2.1 children per woman respectively. It is important to note here that Travellers have a very different age and child bearing profile to the settled population.

The survey also questioned refuges on the number of new and repeat admissions. On average in 2003, 56 per cent of those accommodated in refuges were new admissions to each particular refuge and 44 per cent were repeat admissions. It should be noted that those women who were classed as 'new' admissions could have stayed in another refuge on a previous occasion. Again there are some distinct differences between the settled and Travelling communities. The majority of admissions of settled women (65 per cent) were new admissions, with just over one third being recorded as repeat admissions. In the Traveller community however, the breakdown is more evenly distributed but these women are slightly more likely to be repeat admissions (57 per cent).

The issue of the distances women have to travel to find refuge accommodation was also highlighted to some degree in the survey. It is important to note that not every local authority has a refuge and that a refuge in a different local authority area may be closer to a woman seeking accommodation than one within the same local authority area depending upon where she lives. In addition to this, some women may decide for a variety of reasons, such as safety, that it would be better to seek refuge accommodation

⁷⁵ Others includes non-national women and women with disabilities for whom the number of admissions are low. Of 142 admissions of non-national women, 106 women or 75 per cent were admitted with children. A total of 21 women with disabilities were accommodated, 76 per cent of these, 16 women, were admitted on their own.

⁷⁶ Sonas Housing Association supplied the results of the Sonas Housing Questionnaire, Results for Year Ended, 31st December, 2003 to the NCC on request.

further from home. Overall, 63 per cent of admissions to the refuges were of women who lived within the same local authority area as the refuge⁷⁷. There was however, a significant amount of variation between individual refuges⁷⁸. Admissions of women who lived in the same local authority as the refuge ranged from a low of 26 per cent up to 93 per cent of admissions to one refuge which were of women living within the same local authority. Expressed in another way, women from a different local authority to that in which the refuge is located accounted for as few as seven per cent of all admissions in one case but as many as 74 per cent in another case.

Finally, the survey also considered those who could not be accommodated when they had sought a place in the refuge. The survey responses indicate that a total of 1,113 women were not accommodated in 2003. Refuges were asked to specify whether women could not be accommodated because the refuge was already full or if there were other reasons for the non-admission. On average, 54 per cent could not be accommodated because the refuge was already full, with the remaining 46 per cent refused accommodation for other, unspecified reasons. Again there was a significant amount of variation between the individual refuges⁷⁹. In one refuge no women were refused accommodation. In two refuges women were only denied accommodation on occasions when the refuge was full. Three refuges stated that there were other reasons for refusal in a particularly large majority of cases, between 87 and 97 per cent. In one refuge all refusals of accommodation were made for reasons other than the refuge being full. No information was provided on these other reasons⁸⁰.

Based on these figures it can be seen that:

- Nearly three quarters of women in refuge accommodation are accompanied by their children;
- Traveller women use refuge accommodation to a much greater extent proportionally than settled women;
- In 44 per cent of cases the same woman had been accommodated on a previous occasion at the same refuge;
- Women from the travelling community were more likely to have been accommodated in a refuge on more than one occasion;
- Almost 20 per cent (or one in five) of all those seeking accommodation were refused admission for reasons other than the refuge being full; and
- In 2003, amongst those refuges that responded to the survey, only 60 per cent of women who sought refuge were actually accommodated.

The National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency

The most recent development in the area of domestic violence has been the establishment of a pilot Domestic Violence Intervention Project for victims of domestic violence, with the support of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This is an integrated programme which will co-ordinate the work of the criminal and civil judicial systems, perpetrator programmes, women's support programmes and other key agencies, such as the Probation and Welfare Service, the Gardaí and locally based agencies

⁷⁷ Data for these questions were only provided by 13, rather than 15, of the 18 refuges.

⁷⁸ In some cases percentages are based on small figures so caution is advised.

⁷⁹ Data for these questions were only provided by 13, as opposed to 15, of the 18 refuges.

⁸⁰ The NNWRSS had suggested that the majority of these women were accommodated elsewhere but these figures are not routinely recorded. Further to this they state that anecdotal evidence suggests the main reasons for refusals are that the woman was experiencing mental health problems, had an addiction of some kind or other cases of inappropriate referrals when a woman was referred because there was no where else for her to go rather than because she was seeking help for domestic violence.

and groups. The Domestic Violence Intervention Project is now operating on a pilot basis in two pilot areas, Bray and Dun Laoghaire, to implement an effective response to both the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, within the context of the criminal and civil justice systems. The main objective of the intervention project is to enhance the safety of the victims of domestic violence and to reduce the rate of recidivism for this crime. The National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency (NDVIA) which has been established to oversee the implementation of the pilot project was not in a position to provide data for inclusion in this report.

MOVE (Men Overcoming Violence)

MOVE Ireland is a national organisation that conducts domestic violence perpetrator programmes. At time of going to press there were 12 programmes in nine locations nationwide. The primary aim of MOVE is to promote the safety and well-being of women and their children by developing and offering structured group-work programmes for men who are or have been violent in their intimate relationships.

South East Domestic Violence Intervention Project

The South East Domestic Violence Intervention Project comprises four independent groups running perpetrator programmes in Wexford, Carlow/Kilkenny, Waterford and South Tipperary (Clonmel). They link together with support and co-ordination from paid staff from the Men's Development Network.

An evaluation of all perpetrator programmes in receipt of funding from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (including MOVE, South East Intervention Project and the NDVIA) was started in July, 2003 (Debbonaire and Walton, forthcoming 2005). As a part of this evaluation 72 men involved with perpetrator programmes completed a questionnaire⁸¹. Sixty-five out of the 72 men (90 per cent) had committed at least one criminal act against their partner. Fifteen of the men (21 per cent) had been arrested for assaulting their partner or ex-partner, 13 of these had been charged and 11 of them had been convicted of a violent crime against their current or former partner (Debbonaire and Walton, forthcoming 2005). The men were also asked if they thought that using abuse against a partner or ex-partner was ever acceptable, all 72 (100 per cent) stated that they thought it was never acceptable. The evaluation also made contact with 66 partners of the men involved in the programmes, most of these women stated that they had their own strategies for dealing with the abusive behaviour and most had not asked anyone else for help.

AMEN

AMEN is a voluntary group which provides a confidential helpline, a support service and information for male victims of domestic abuse. AMEN was not in a position to provide data for inclusion in this report.

Summary

The results from the *National Study of Domestic Abuse* survey in relation to disclosure, reporting and help-seeking were discussed in this chapter. These figures indicated that almost two thirds of those who had been severely abused told someone about the abuse. This was most often a friend or family

⁸¹ It is not known how many men were requested to participate in the study only how many actually did participate.

member. About one third told someone within a month and over half told someone within a year of the abuse beginning.

On the other hand, only a minority of those experiencing severe abuse had contacted support agencies or the Gardaí. Only one in five reported the crime. The proportion is higher for women (29 per cent) than for men (five per cent).

The main reasons for not reporting the behaviour were that those affected felt it was not serious enough (21 per cent), that they could handle it themselves (13 per cent), they felt shame, embarrassment or blamed themselves (13 per cent), they made excuses for the partner's behaviour (13 per cent) or felt it was not a matter for the Gardaí (11 per cent). Two out of five of those who experienced severe abuse did not report to the Gardaí because of concerns related to privacy and the sensitivity with which they would be treated.

Only two per cent of those who were severely abused contacted a refuge and seven per cent contacted a helpline, with a further four per cent contacting another support organisation. A higher proportion (17 per cent) told their GP about their experience, with a similar proportion contacting a solicitor. Since these professionals, together with the Gardaí, are likely to be the first point of contact for many of those affected by severe abuse, it is important to ensure that they are in a position to provide information on the full range of services and supports available to those affected by domestic abuse.

The data from the *National Study on Domestic Abuse* survey on reporting and help-seeking set the context for an examination of data on domestic abuse from a number of other sources. It is clear from the survey results that only a small proportion of all cases of severe abuse come to the attention of the Gardaí or other agencies providing services for those affected. The figures from the Criminal Justice System include figures on recorded incidents of domestic violence from the Garda Commissioner's Annual Reports, as well as figures on charges made, persons injured and convictions. Because of recent changes in recording practices and because of the greater public awareness of domestic violence which is likely to have resulted in an increase in reporting rates, it is difficult to use the figures to draw any conclusions about trends in the incidence of domestic violence. The number of incidents recorded jumped sharply after 1997, and dropped back slightly between 2002 and 2003. The number of arrests, charges and convictions has remained much more stable over time, but with a noticeable increase after 1997, and a decline evident after 2001. In the 2003 Garda figures, women experiencing domestic violence outnumber men by a factor of 13 to 1.

Figures from the Courts Service show that about two thirds of applications for domestic violence orders (Barring Orders, Protection Orders, Safety Orders and Interim Barring Orders) are granted, with a slight decrease in the proportion granted in the period from 2000 to 2003. The proportion refused is small (about three to four per cent), and about one third were withdrawn or struck out. The total number of applications for Barring Orders has declined (by about 20 per cent) between 2000 and 2003. There are substantial differences between regions in the proportion of applications granted, as opposed to being withdrawn or struck out, with the proportion being lowest in the Dublin area. It is not possible to say what accounts for these regional differences.

Statistics from voluntary and Non-Governmental Organisations reflect the extent to which those experiencing domestic abuse are identified in other parts of the system, such as hospitals, helplines and refuges. Figures recorded in the HIPE statistics reflect the findings of the *National Study of Domestic Abuse* survey, the vast majority of patients receiving treatment for partner inflicted injuries were women. The data based upon contacts with the Women's Aid helpline revealed that in 2003 in the region of 7,500 people made contact with the service for the first time and that the majority of calls are from women seeking support in relation to domestic abuse perpetrated by a male partner. Interestingly for the Criminal Justice System the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre counselling service statistics showed that clients who had been raped by a stranger were three times more likely to report their experiences to the Gardaí than those who had been raped by a relative or partner. A striking aspect of the experiences of women's refuges is the extent to which they are used by Traveller women. All Travellers account for less than one per cent of the total population yet Traveller women accounted for half of all refuge admissions in 2003. Furthermore, almost half of those who were refused refuge accommodation were refused for reasons other than the refuge being full.

In the next chapter we turn to an examination of differences between groups in the population in the risk of severe abuse.

Chapter 4: Differences In The Risk Of Domestic Abuse

Introduction

In this chapter we examine differences in the risk of severe abuse by characteristics of the individual – age, region, employment situation, socio-economic group and broad income category. This will allow us to see whether there are identifiable groups that are particularly vulnerable.

In examining the risk of domestic abuse, we are looking at variations in the percentage who have experienced severe abuse by characteristics of the individual experiencing that behaviour. This can give an indication of which groups are most vulnerable. However, it does not necessarily tell us much about the causes of abuse. Firstly, there is some evidence that characteristics of the perpetrator rather than characteristics of the person being abused are more important in predicting abuse (Pillemer and Finkelhor, 1989). For instance, the higher risk faced by younger adults may have more to do with the fact that their partners tend to be younger than with their own age. However, in surveys of this nature there is typically more information available on the person who is abused than on the abuser, so we concentrate on the former in this chapter. Secondly, the association may be driven by something else and may disappear when we control for that factor. Finally, where there is an association, it is not always clear which came first, unless detailed longitudinal information is available. When we find an association between health and experience of abuse, for instance, we cannot determine from cross-sectional data whether poor health makes a person more vulnerable to abuse or abuse causes poor health. As Walby and Allen (2004: p.73) note, “risk factors merely describe the distribution of inter-personal violence through the population. They assist analysis of causation but do not substitute for one.”

We have already seen that gender is a highly significant risk factor for severe abuse. This was discussed in some depth in earlier chapters. In this chapter we examine variations in risk by age, marital status, whether the respondent has children, economic status, level of education, socio-economic group, income, region, health status, presence of a long standing condition, whether there was abuse between parents and place of birth. Note that these characteristics of the individual are measured at the time of the survey and may have changed since the time the abuse occurred.

Risk of Severe Abuse from the National Survey

Age Differences in Risk

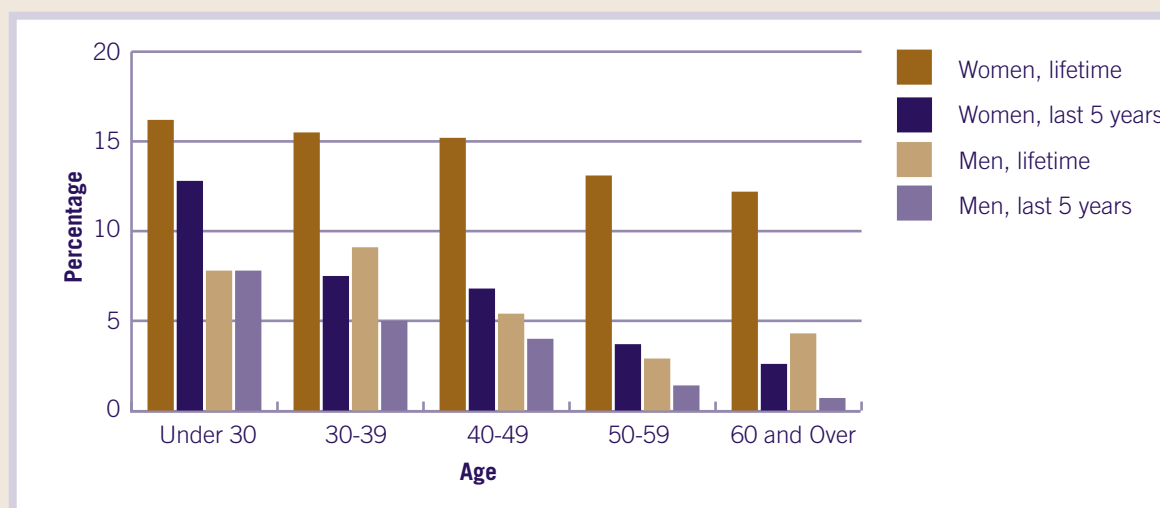
In research elsewhere, age has been shown to be linked to the risk of experiencing domestic abuse with younger women more at risk than older women. The Family Violence in Canada survey found that women and men under the age of 25 were at a higher risk than their older counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2000). Similar results are reported for adults in England and Wales (Walby and Allen, 2004) and for women in Finland (Heiskanen and Piispa, 1998).

Figure 4.1 shows the differences by broad age group in the risk of severe abuse for women and men in Ireland. In considering the risk of abuse by age it is important to keep in mind that older adults would have had a longer period in which abuse might have taken place - a longer exposure to potentially abusive situations. In an attempt to control for this, we also include figures in the chart for experience of abuse in the previous five years. This measure should be less affected by the longer time period over which older adults might have been exposed to abuse. The caveat noted in Chapter 1 applies here

however: because of the way the data was collected, we can be more confident of the severity of abuse for the lifetime measure than for the five-year incidence measure. Some of what is being captured by the five-year measure may be abuse of a more minor nature experienced in the previous five years by someone who experienced severe abuse at some time in her or his life.

In general, as shown in Figure 4.1, there is a decline in risk of severe abuse with age for both women and men. This is particularly clear for five-year incidence of severe abuse. It is not surprising that the pattern is clearer for the five-year prevalence: older adults would have a longer period of potential exposure to abuse in their lifetimes and this would tend to mask the association between age and risk⁸². In the case of lifetime experience, the youngest age group for men (age under 30) are at a somewhat lower risk than the 30-39 age group; and the oldest age group (age 60 and over) have a slightly higher risk than the next-oldest age group (age 50-59). For both women and men, however, the decline in risk with age is sharper when we focus on the measure of experiences in the past five years.

Figure 4.1: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Age Group



Risk by Marital Status

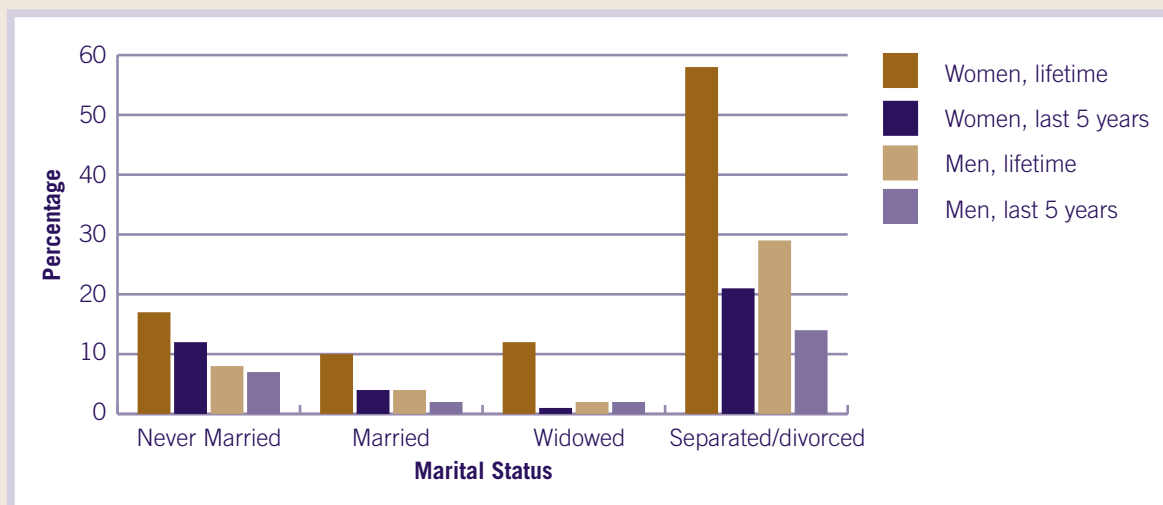
Figure 4.2 shows the differences in the risk of having experienced severe abuse by marital status. Those who are separated or divorced are by far most likely to have been severely abused, with a figure of almost 60 per cent for women and almost 30 per cent for men. The pattern is still evident when we focus on abuse in the last five years, but is less marked. This is consistent with the abuse pre-dating, and contributing to, the separation.

Two factors may be linked to the particularly high rate of abuse reported by people who are separated or divorced. First, the abuse may have been related to the very difficult interactions and negotiations surrounding the separation itself. Second, there may be a greater tendency on the part of those who are separated or divorced to interpret the actions of a partner in a negative light and as having a greater negative impact on themselves.

⁸² Note that older adults may be at risk of abuse from family members or carers other than the partner, but this is outside the scope of the present study.

On the first point, whether the abuse occurred at the time of or prior to the separation, we have some evidence from Chapter 2 that abuse tends to begin early in the relationship (70 per cent within the first two years, Table 2.11). Further, in only three per cent of cases was the abuse triggered by the break-up of the relationship (Table 2.13). In only three per cent did the abuse begin only after the relationship ended (Table 2.15). All of this points to abuse being predated rather than resulting from the decision to separate.

Figure 4.2: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Marital Status



On the second point, the interpretation of behaviour as abusive, it is useful to examine in what proportion of cases where any incident occurs does the respondent report sufficient impact for it to be regarded as 'severe abuse'. The figure is about two thirds for the separated/divorced and also for the widowed; and about one third for the married and never married. It is not clear what we can conclude from this, however, since the severity of the abuse itself may have been a precipitating factor in the decision to separate rather than remaining together. It is just as plausible to argue that married women and men have an incentive to downplay the significance and impact on them of abusive behaviour by their partners, since to acknowledge its severity would mean calling into question an ongoing relationship in which they are likely to be heavily invested. The fact that the proportion reporting sufficient impact for the behaviour to be considered 'severe' is just as high for widows as for separated people lends some credence to this argument. There is no obvious reason for widowed women and men to either downplay or overstate the impact of a partner's abusive behaviour on them. It could plausibly be argued that those who are no longer in a relationship are freer to evaluate the impact on themselves of a partner's abusive behaviour than are those who are still in a relationship with that partner.

While much of the abuse experienced by people who are separated or divorced is likely to have predated the end of the relationship, not all of it is in the distant past. People who are separated or divorced are also at a much higher risk of experiencing abuse in their present relationship, in more than one relationship and in the last year than those in other marital statuses⁸³.

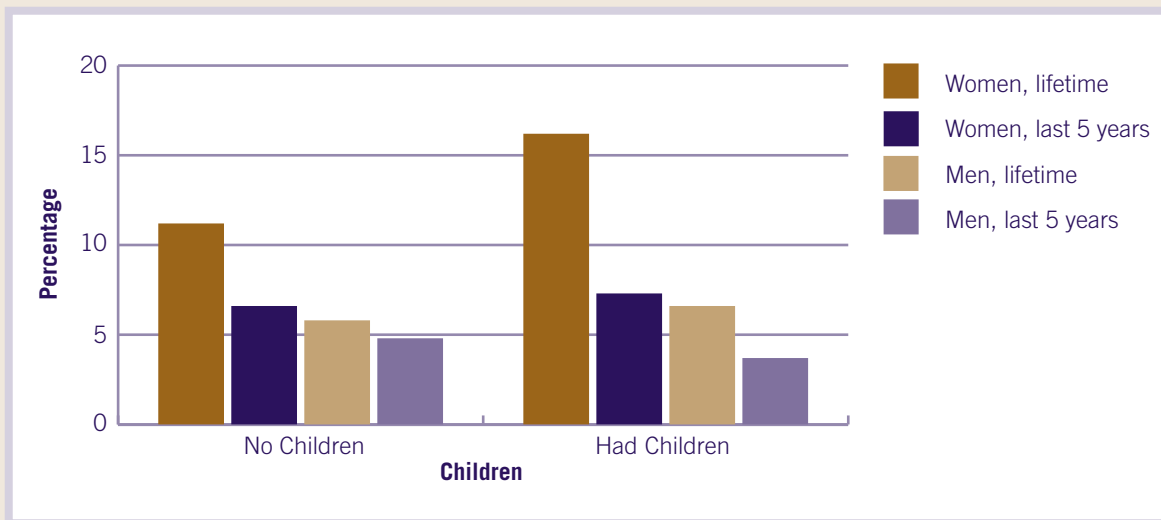
⁸³ See Table A4.11 in Appendix 4.

The British Crime Survey module on domestic violence also found a strong association between being separated and experiencing domestic violence, and the risk was also higher for married adults than among those who were single or divorced (Walby and Allen, 2004).

Risk by Whether Has Children

Figure 4.3 shows the percentage of women and men experiencing severe abuse by whether or not the person ever had children. The risk of ever having experienced abuse is appreciably higher for women who have children and slightly higher for men who have children. The pattern for abuse in the last five years is weaker and is different for women and men: women who have had children are slightly more likely to have experienced abuse in the last five years, while men who have had children are slightly less likely to have experienced abuse in the last five years.

Figure 4.3: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Whether Ever Had Children

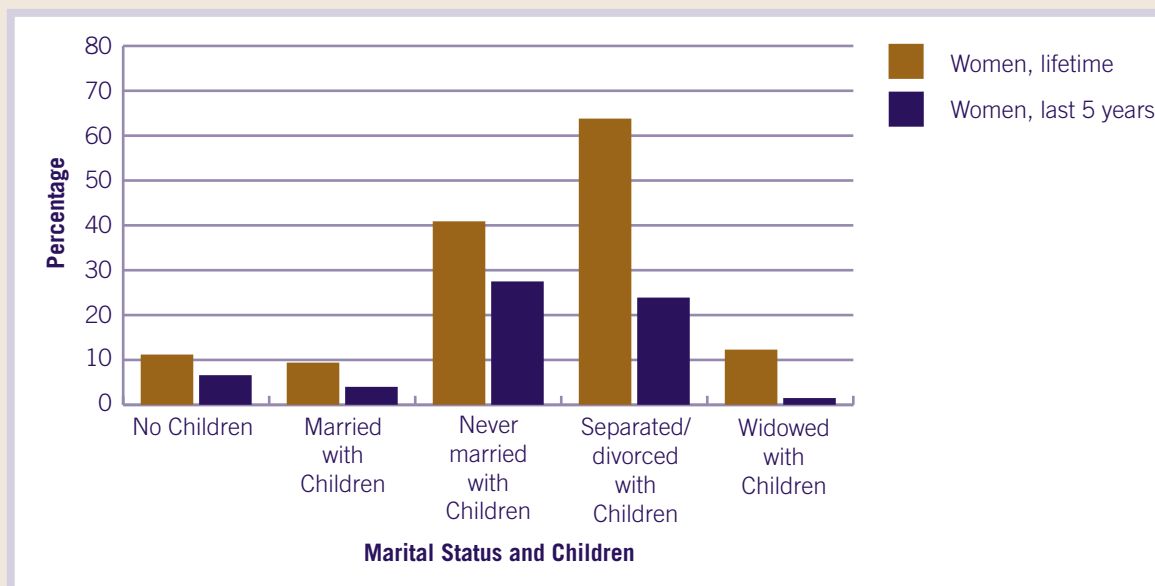


The British Crime Survey (BCS) also found that the presence of children is associated with nearly double the risk of domestic violence for women, and very little difference for men (Walby and Allen, 2004).

This pattern for women is largely driven by the experience of single and separated mothers, as the next figure shows. Figure 4.4 shows that the risk of abuse is higher for mothers who are single (never married) or separated/divorced than for married or widowed mothers or women who have never had children⁸⁴. The fact that the pattern is more marked for lifetime experience of abuse than for previous five year experience of abuse for separated/divorced women but not for single women probably reflects the fact that women who are separated or divorced tend to be older. As a consequence, there is a greater likelihood that the abuse happened more than five years ago.

⁸⁴ There are too few non-married fathers in the sample to produce reliable results for men.

Figure 4.4: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Marital Status and Children (Women only)

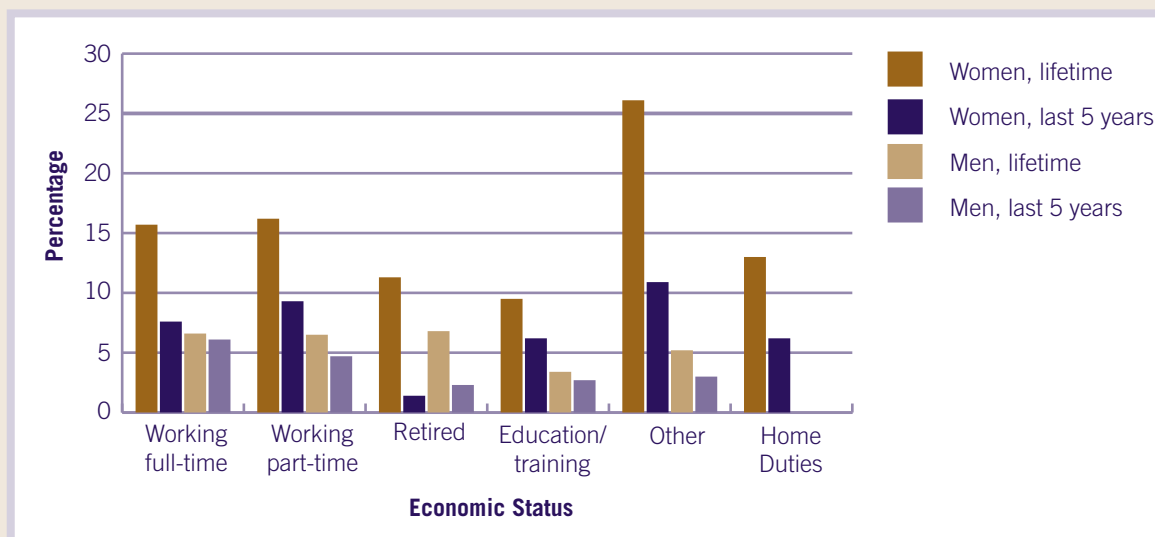


Risk by Economic Status

Figure 4.5 shows differences in the risk of severe domestic abuse by the main economic activity of the respondent⁸⁵. The ‘other’ category for economic status includes those who are unemployed or unable to work for reasons related to physical illness or disability⁸⁶. Among women, the risk is clearly highest for those who are unemployed or prevented from working due to illness or disability. This is true for lifetime risk of severe abuse and for previous five year risk. The differences in risk by economic activity are much less marked for men than for women.

The BCS also found a higher risk of experiencing domestic abuse for women who are unemployed, but little difference between employed and inactive men (Walby and Allen 2004, p.78).

Figure 4.5: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Economic Status



⁸⁵ There are too few men on ‘home duties’ to report figures for this group.

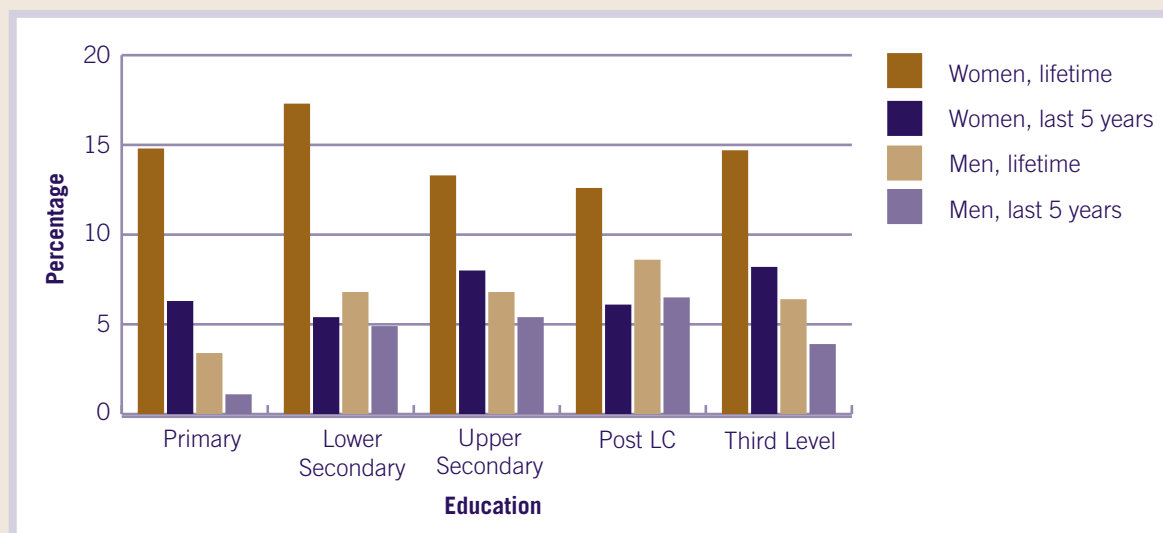
⁸⁶ There are not enough cases in the sample to provide separate figures for these groups.

The influence of age is again apparent in this chart. Those in education or training have the lowest risk of having experienced severe abuse in their lifetimes (because there was a shorter period during which abuse might have occurred) among both women and men, but the lowest risk of having experienced abuse in the previous five years is found among the retired.

Risk by Level of Education

Figure 4.6 shows the differences in risk of severe abuse by level of education. In interpreting the results, it is worth remembering that level of education is associated with age: older adults will, on average, have lower levels of education than younger adults. Perhaps for this reason, differences in the risk of abuse by level of education are rather small. While we might expect women with higher levels of education to be less vulnerable, this pattern is very weak. Women with primary or lower secondary education are at higher risk of severe abuse over their lifetimes than women with higher levels of education, but the differences are small in magnitude. When we focus on experience in the previous five years, the pattern is also uneven: women with upper secondary or third level education tend to be at a somewhat higher risk than those with post Leaving Certificate or lower levels of education. Men with primary education are at a lower risk of having experienced severe abuse than those with higher levels of education, but this may reflect the fact that this group will tend to be older and older adults are generally at lower risk.

Figure 4.6: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Education



The finding of a relatively weak association between education and abuse is consistent with several other national surveys. The Family Violence in Canada survey found similar rates of spousal violence for people from varying educational backgrounds (Statistics Canada, 2000). In the United States, the Commonwealth Survey of Women's Health found little association between women's level of education and rates of domestic violence (Collins et al, 1999).

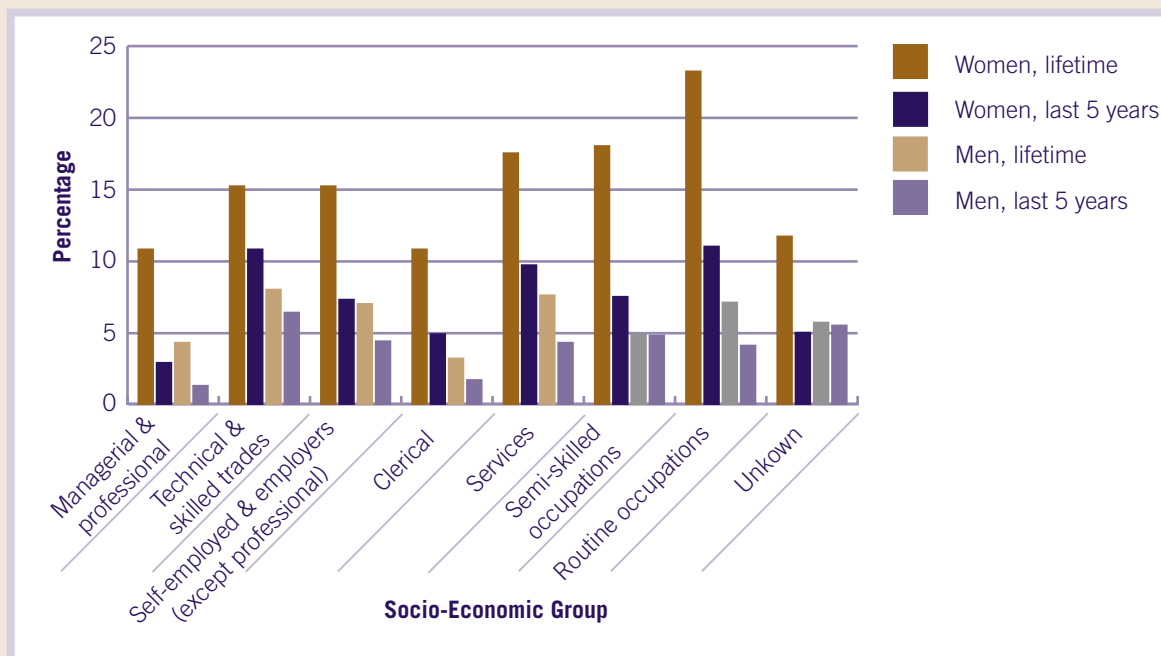
Risk by Socio-economic Group

Figure 4.7 shows the risk of severe abuse by the socio-economic group of the respondent's occupation. This refers to the present job if the person is at work or to their previous job if they are not currently at work. The 'unknown' category includes those who provided no information on their usual occupation. Most of these are not working at present, and some have never worked.

Seven occupational groups are identified. Managerial and professional workers include owners and managers of large companies and professionals such as doctors, nurses and teachers. The 'technical and skilled trades' group includes skilled manual occupations such as carpenters, plumbers, welders and mechanics and 'white-collar' technical or associate professional occupations such as sales representatives, practitioners of alternative therapies (other than those professionally qualified) and insurance brokers.

The self-employed group includes farmers and owners of small businesses. Self-employed professionals (such as doctors or solicitors) are included in the first group ('managerial and professional'). 'Clerical' workers include 'Clerical Officer' or 'Staff Officer' grades in the Civil Service, secretaries, accounts clerks and tellers. The 'Services' group includes shop assistants, waiters/waitresses, bartenders and care workers. 'Semi-skilled' occupations include drivers and manufacturing machine operators and assemblers. 'Routine' occupations include cleaners, kitchen helpers, labourers in building or agriculture and freight handlers.

Figure 4.7: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Socio-economic Group



For both women and men, the lowest risk of having experienced severe abuse is found among managerial/professional workers and clerical workers. This is the case for lifetime experience of abuse and for experience in the previous five years. For women, the highest risk of experiencing abuse in their lifetimes is found among routine workers. The risk also tends to be high for women in services or semi-skilled

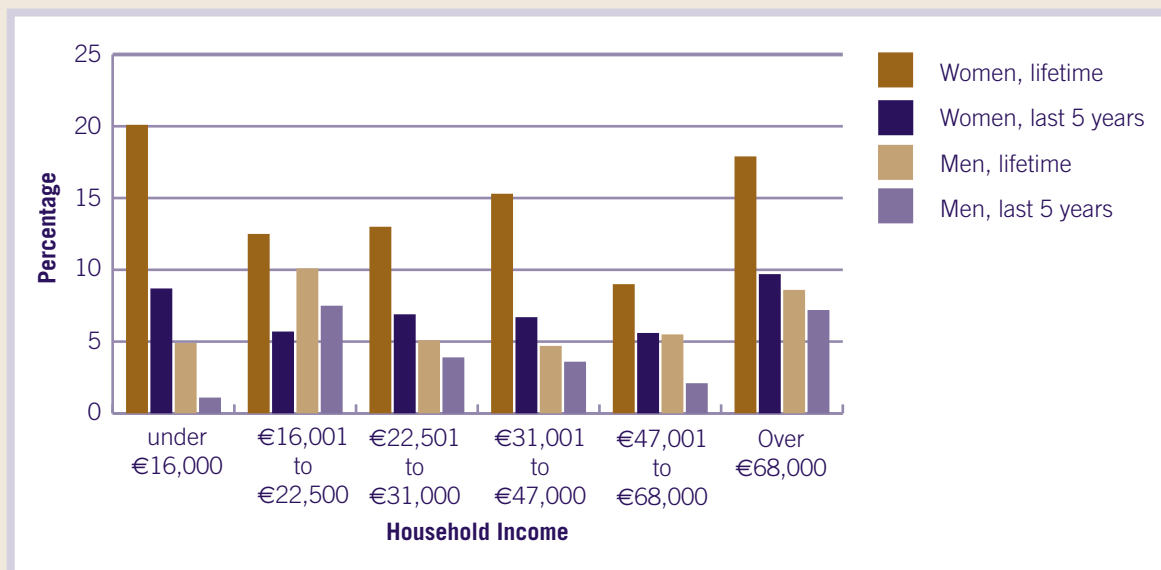
occupations and, when we focus on the previous five years, women in technical or skilled trades. Among men, apart from the lower risk of those in professional/managerial or clerical occupations, the pattern across the other socio-economic groups is less clear and tends to differ depending on whether we focus on lifetime experience or experience in the previous five years.

It turns out, in the analysis conducted in the next chapter, that differences by socio-economic group are not statistically significant when we control for other characteristics such as age, marital status and decision making within the relationship.

Risk by Household Income

Figure 4.8 shows the relationship between the risk of severe abuse and the income category of the household. For women, the risk (both lifetime and previous five-years) tends to be highest for the lowest income category (household net income under €16,000 per year). The relationship with income is not linear however: the risk of lifetime experience of abuse is lowest for the second highest income category (€47,000 to €68,000), and quite high for the highest income category (over €68,000 per year).

Figure 4.8: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Household Income (Euro per year)

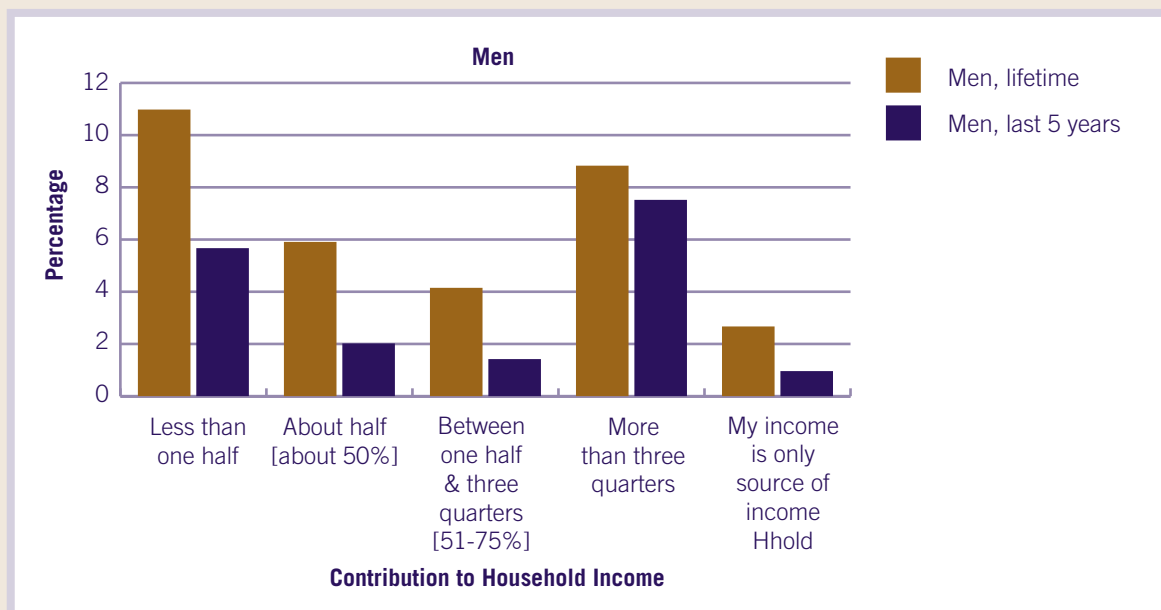


The pattern is different for men. The risk is lowest for the bottom household income category (income under €16,000 per year), and highest for the second-lowest household income category (€16,000 to €22,500 per year). The BCS found that women in households in the lowest income category (under £10,000) were more than three times as likely to have been victims of domestic violence as women in the top income category (over £20,000), but that the relationship was much weaker for men (Walby and Allen, 2004).

In the United States rates of domestic violence are also somewhat higher among lower income women (Collins et al, 1999). However, the analysis in the next chapter reveals that there is no significant difference in the risk of abuse by household income in Ireland when other factors are controlled.

It may be that what matters is not the resources of the household, but the resources over which the individual has some control. Figure 4.9 examines this hypothesis by examining variations in risk by the relative contribution of the respondent to household income.

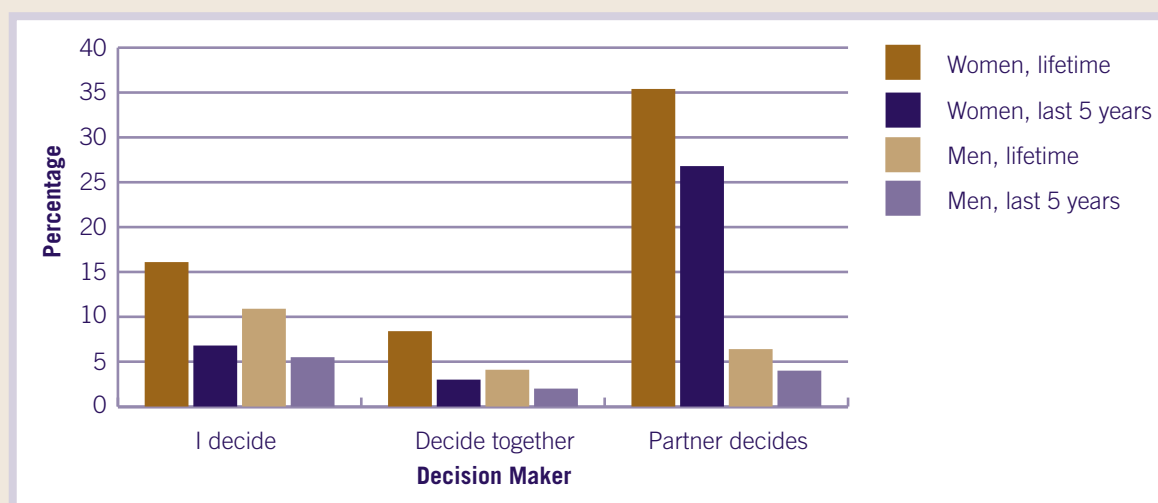
Figure 4.9: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Respondent's Contribution to Household Income



Separate charts are shown for women and men because there are too few women in the detailed categories at the upper end (more than half of total income) and too few men in the detailed categories at the lower end (less than half of total income) to provide reliable estimates. The charts are based on households where the respondent is living with a partner and there are no other adults in the household, to avoid any confounding effects of the incomes of other persons. As such, the figures reflect the relative contributions of the partners to the total household income. However, as shown in the chart, the pattern does not show any clear relationship of abuse to the relative contribution of the respondent to total household income. Once again, differences in income patterns by age may be masking some of the patterns here. Older adults on a fixed income are likely to be found in the lower income groups, and older women are more likely to be engaged in home duties with no income of their own.

Next we turn to decision making regarding household income. The relative contribution of partners to household income may not be a good indicator of the extent to which they have control and influence in how that income is allocated. Figure 4.10 examines whether the respondent, both partners together or the other partner decides how the household income is to be spent. This information is available for those who are living with a partner. It is worth noting that in the majority of cases (80 per cent) the partners decide together, with the remainder evenly divided between cases where the respondent decides and cases where the partner decides.

Figure 4.10: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Who Decides How Money is Spent



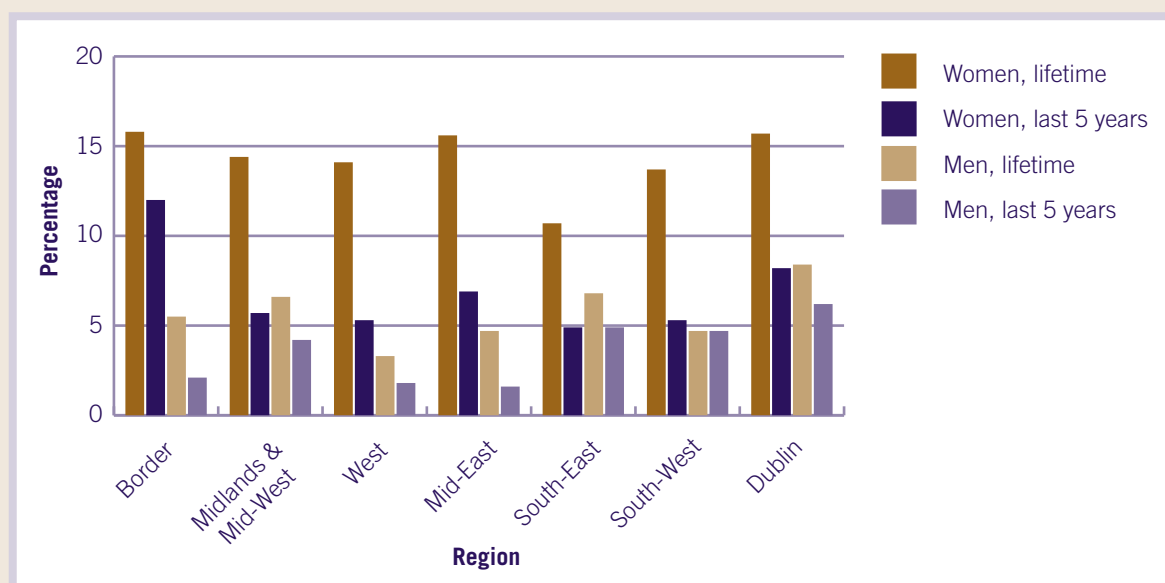
The figure shows a sharply increased risk of severe abuse for women where decisions on household income are made by the partner. There is a somewhat higher risk where the decision is made by the woman herself compared to the situation where the partners decide together. The pattern is evident for lifetime and previous five year risk. For men, on the other hand, there is very little relationship between risk of severe abuse and whether one partner or both jointly make decisions regarding household income. These results suggest that it is not the relative contribution to household income that is significant for

women, but the relative roles of the partners in decision making. The risk of abuse is highest for women where they are excluded from these decisions.

Regional Differences in Risk

Figure 4.11 shows how the risk of severe abuse differs by region. Note that the Midlands and Mid-West were combined because the number of respondents in these two regions is rather small for the production of reliable estimates⁸⁷.

Figure 4.11: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Region



The pattern by region is very mixed and differs depending on whether the focus is on women or men and also by whether the focus is on lifetime or five-year risk. Among women, the risk of experiencing severe abuse at any time is rather lower in the South-East (at 11 per cent) than in the other regions (14-16 per cent), but the differences are small. However, when we focus on experience of abuse in the previous five years, women in the Border region show a higher risk (12 per cent), with the figures in other regions ranging from five to eight per cent.

The lifetime and five-year risk for men are both low in the West, while the five-year risk is low in the Mid-East.

There is certainly no evidence here to support the conclusion that the incidence of domestic violence is substantially higher in Dublin, as was suggested by a comparison of the numbers in the Garda statistics, controlling for population size (see Chapter 3). In fact, as we will see in the next chapter, regional differences disappear, apart from a slightly increased risk in urban compared to rural areas, when other characteristics are taken into account. This suggests that regional differences in the incidence of domestic abuse recorded in Garda statistics may reflect differences in reporting rates, differences in recording practices, or differences in the number of re-calls to the same address.

⁸⁷ The Border region includes counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo; Dublin City, Dunlaoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin are in the Dublin Region; Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath are in the Midlands; Galway, Mayo and Roscommon are in the West; Kildare, Meath and Wicklow are in the Mid-East; Clare, Limerick and Tipperary North are in the Mid-West; Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary South, Waterford and Wexford are in the South-East; Cork and Kerry are in the South-West.

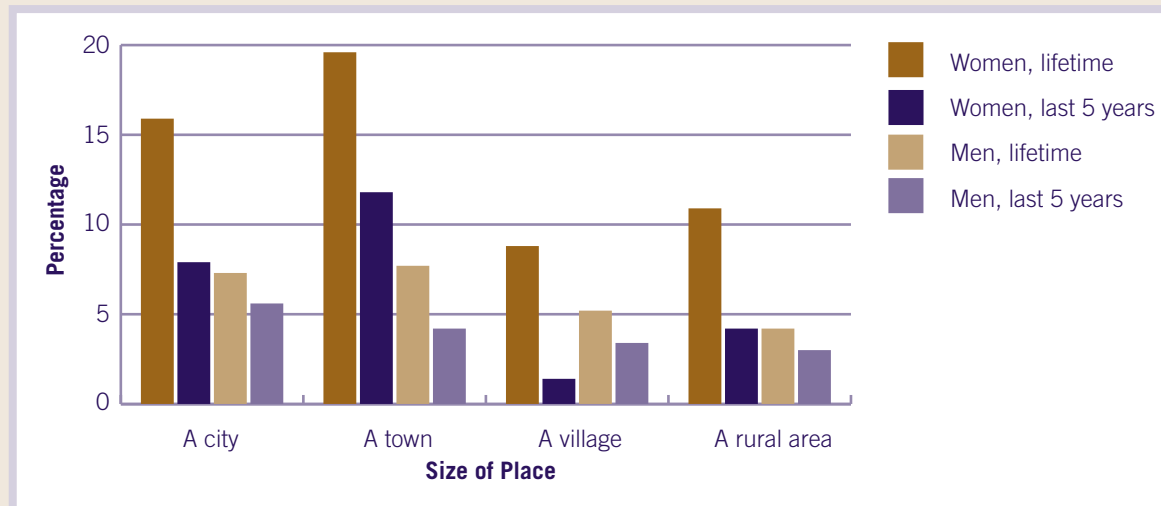
Figure 4.12: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Size of Place

Figure 4.12 shows the pattern of risk by size of place. ‘Size of place’ is based on a question to respondents as to whether they live in a ‘city’, ‘town’, ‘village’ or ‘rural area’. Note that this refers to the area where the person lives at present and need not refer to the location where the abuse was experienced. Women who live in towns have a substantially higher risk of lifetime abuse (20 per cent) and previous five-year abuse (12 per cent) than women living in cities (16 per cent and eight per cent) or in villages and rural areas (nine to 11 per cent and one to four per cent). It could be argued that women who have experienced abuse in rural areas or villages have left the relationship and moved to towns or cities. However, the fact that the pattern is equally strong for experience of abuse in the previous five years⁸⁸ suggests that the data are genuinely capturing differences in experiences by type of location.

The differences by size of place for men are much smaller, but they do show a somewhat lower risk for men in villages and rural areas compared to towns and cities. The British Crime Survey (Walby and Allen 2004), found a higher prevalence of domestic violence in inner city areas, probably associated with low income, than in other urban or in rural areas. Again, the association was stronger for women than for men. On the other hand, the British Crime Survey found relatively minor differences in the risk of abuse by region (Walby and Allen, 2004) and the Family Violence in Canada survey found comparable rates in urban and rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2000).

Differences by type of area in Ireland may reflect differences in the age structure of the population, however, rather than anything peculiar to the urban environment. To disentangle the effects of age, marital status, region and income requires a multivariate analysis and this is undertaken in the next chapter.

Risk by Health

We would expect to find an association between health and domestic abuse, but this could arise either because of the negative effects of abuse on health or because poor health makes a person more vulnerable generally. With cross-sectional information, as we have available here, it is only possible to provide a

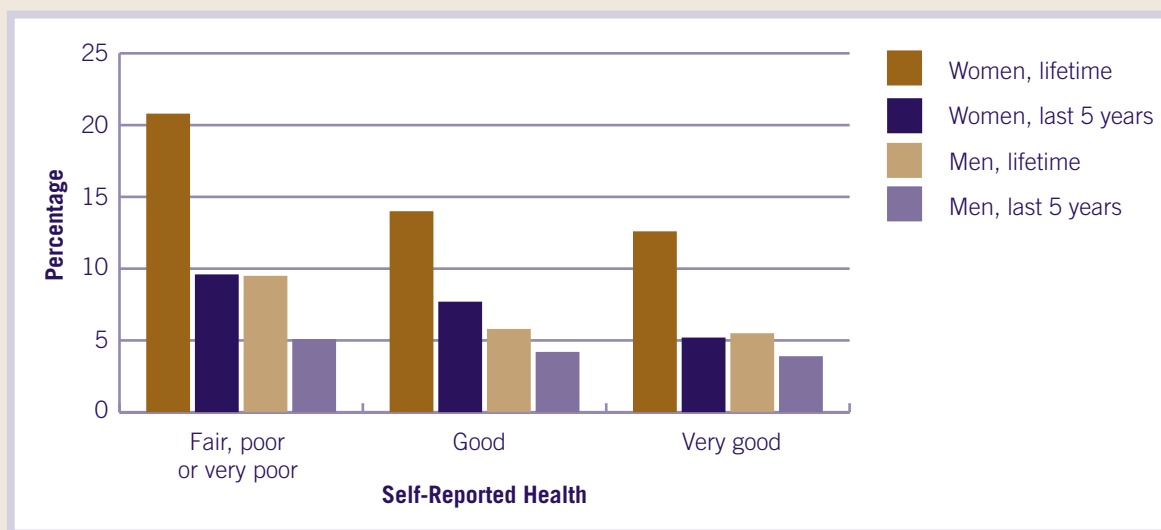
⁸⁸ The higher risk found in towns is also observed for experience in the previous year.

snapshot of the relationship. We cannot say whether the experience of abuse leads to a deterioration in health or whether the greater vulnerability associated with poor health increases the risk that the person will be abused in a domestic relationship. Respondents to the survey were asked the following question:

“In general, how would you describe your health?” (Very poor, poor, fair, good, very good)

Figure 4.13 shows the pattern of risk by the self-reported health status of the individual⁸⁹.

Figure 4.13: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Self-Reported Health



When we consider women’s experience of abuse, there is a clear relationship with poorer health among those experiencing higher levels of risk. The pattern is also evident for experiences of abuse in the previous five years. Women in fair to poor health are twice as likely as women in very good health to have experienced severe abuse in the previous five years (10 per cent compared to five per cent). The pattern is much weaker for men: five per cent of those in fair to very poor health have experienced severe abuse in the previous five years compared to four per cent of those in good or very good health.

Since older adults are more likely to be in poor health and are also less likely to have experienced domestic abuse, the relationship is likely to be even stronger if age were controlled. This analysis is conducted in the next chapter.

Risk by Presence of a Long-standing Condition

As well as asking respondents about their general health, the survey asked whether they had any ongoing illness or disability:

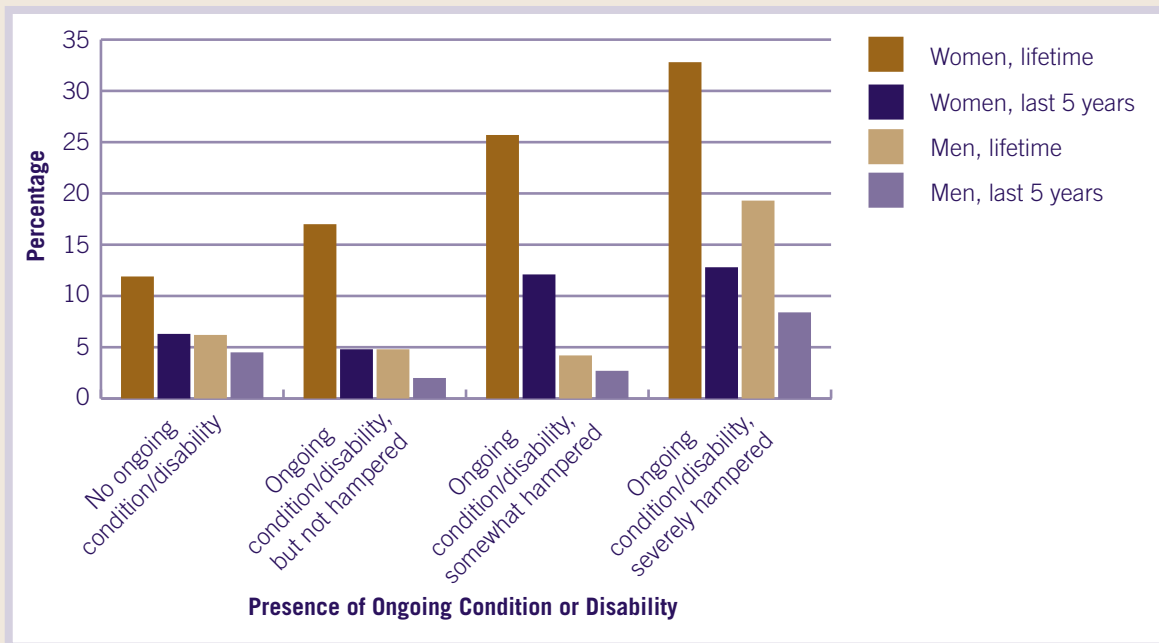
Do you have any ongoing physical or mental health problem, illness or disability?

(If yes,) Are you hampered in your daily activities by this physical or mental health problem, illness or disability? (Yes, severely; Yes, somewhat; No)

⁸⁹ The categories ‘very poor’, ‘poor’ and ‘fair’ were combined as too few people report ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ health to provide reliable estimates.

Figure 4.14 shows the risk of severe abuse by presence of such a condition and whether it limits the person’s daily activity. There is only a very weak relationship for men but a strong relationship for women. Twenty-seven per cent of women who have an ongoing condition that limits their daily activities have experienced severe abuse at some time in their lives; compared to 17 per cent of those who have an ongoing condition and are not hampered and 12 per cent of those with no ongoing condition or disability. Twelve per cent of women who are hampered in their daily activities because of an ongoing condition or disability have experienced severe abuse in the last five years; compared to five-six per cent of those who have no such condition or a condition which does not hamper them.

Figure 4.14: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Presence of Ongoing Condition or Disability



There is some evidence that men who are severely hampered by an illness or disability may have experienced higher levels of abuse, but the number of such men in the sample is rather small (39 cases). There does not appear to be an increased risk of having experienced abuse among men who are moderately hampered or who have an illness or disability and are not hampered by it. If anything, these men face a risk which is slightly lower than men in general. The analysis in the next chapter will consider whether these patterns persist when age and other characteristics are controlled.

Risk by Whether there was Abuse between Parents

In this section we turn to whether those reporting that there was abusive behaviour between their parents are at a greater risk of experiencing domestic abuse themselves as adults. This is based on a set of questions posed to all respondents:

To the best of your knowledge did your father/step-father ever use threatening, abusive or violent behaviour towards your mother?

To the best of your knowledge did your mother/step-mother ever use threatening, abusive or violent behaviour towards your father?

Figure 4.15: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Whether there was Domestic Abuse Between Parents

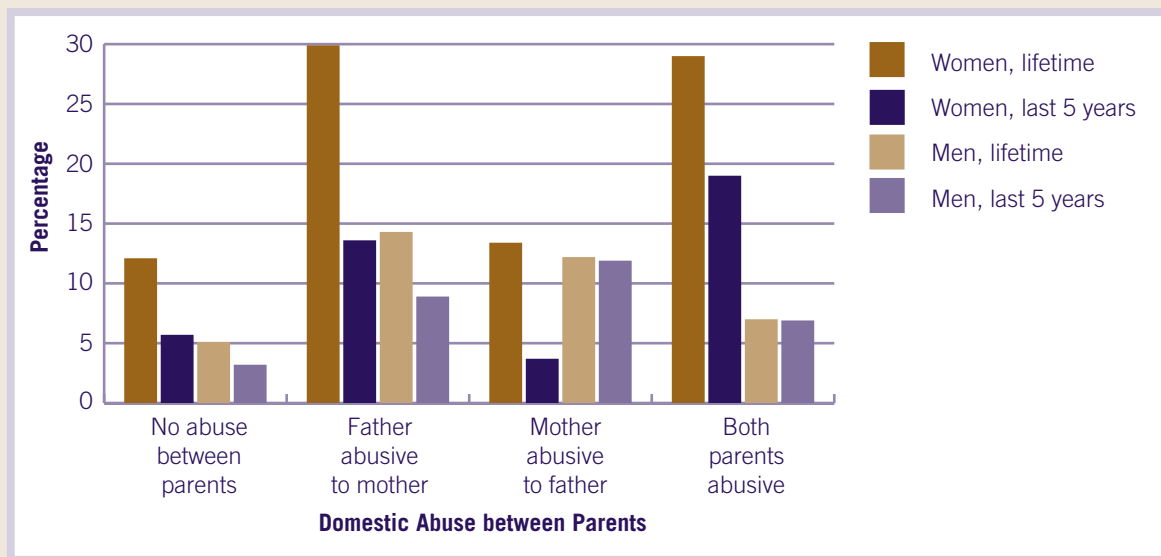


Figure 4.15 shows the results. For women, there is a sharply increased risk of having experienced abuse if their fathers were abusive towards their mothers, but not where the mother was abusive towards the father. The number of cases where the mother was abusive to the father is very small, however, when cases where both parents are abusive are excluded. The multivariate analysis undertaken in the next chapter, however, finds that the difference is not statistically significant depending on which parent was abusive.

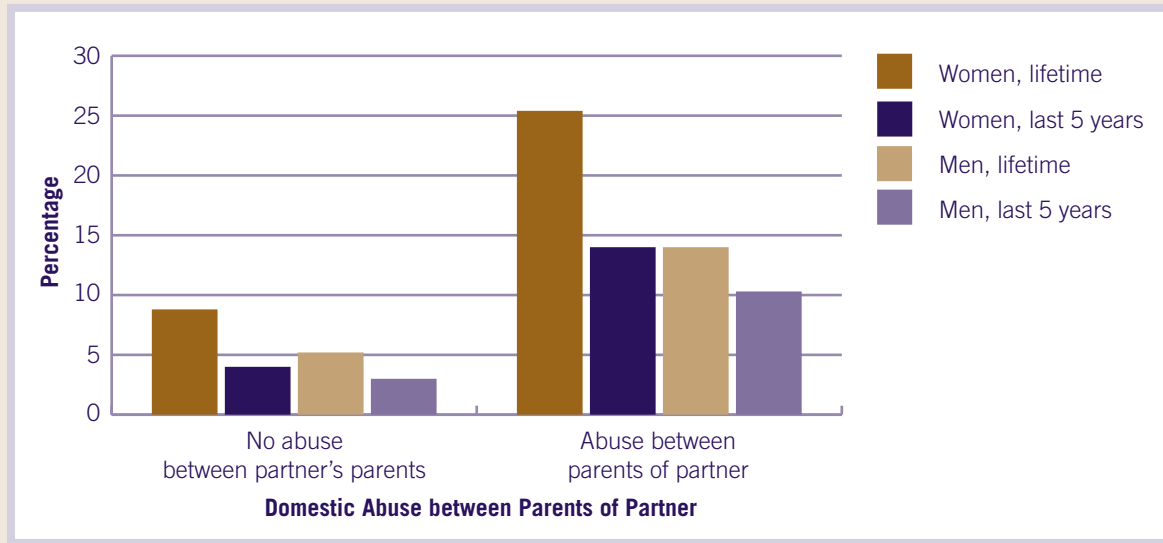
Figure 4.16 examines the pattern of risk by whether, as far as the respondent can say, there was abuse between the parents of his or her partner. The number of cases is smaller here, because not all respondents have a partner and because not all of those with partners can answer the questions. The wording was as follows:

To the best of your knowledge did your partners' father/step-father ever use threatening, abusive or violent behaviour towards his wife or partner?

To the best of your knowledge did your partners' mother/step-mother ever use threatening, abusive or violent behaviour towards her husband or partner?

The figure shows a sharply increased risk where there was abuse between the parents of the partner. It is important to note, however, that abuse in the family of origin is very far from predetermining a pattern of abuse in adulthood. Even among those who were aware of abuse between their parents, or between the parents of a partner, the majority (70-75 per cent) have not experienced abuse themselves.

Figure 4.16: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Whether there was Domestic Abuse Between Parents of Partner



Risk and Country of Birth

The final two charts in this section examine whether there is a link between country of birth and experience of domestic abuse. About four fifths of those in the sample who were born outside Ireland were born in other European countries, especially the United Kingdom, with the remainder evenly divided between other English-speaking countries such as the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand and the rest of the world. As such, the non-Irish born in Figure 4.17 differ from the immigrant women discussed in the context of the focus group material in Chapter 6, who are all of non-European origins.

Figure 4.17 shows that the risk of having experienced domestic abuse is higher for those born outside the country. The pattern is strongest for women's lifetime experience of severe abuse: 14 per cent of women born in Ireland ever experienced domestic abuse compared to 24 per cent of those born outside of Ireland. The difference is smaller for men: six per cent of men born in Ireland have ever experienced severe abuse compared to eight per cent of those born outside Ireland.

Figure 4.17: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Whether Born in Ireland

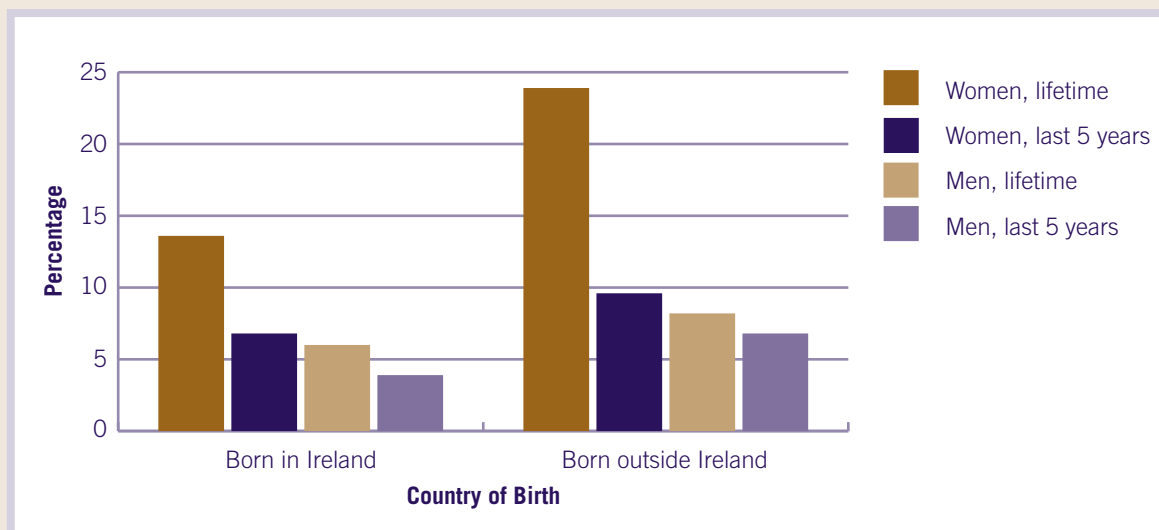
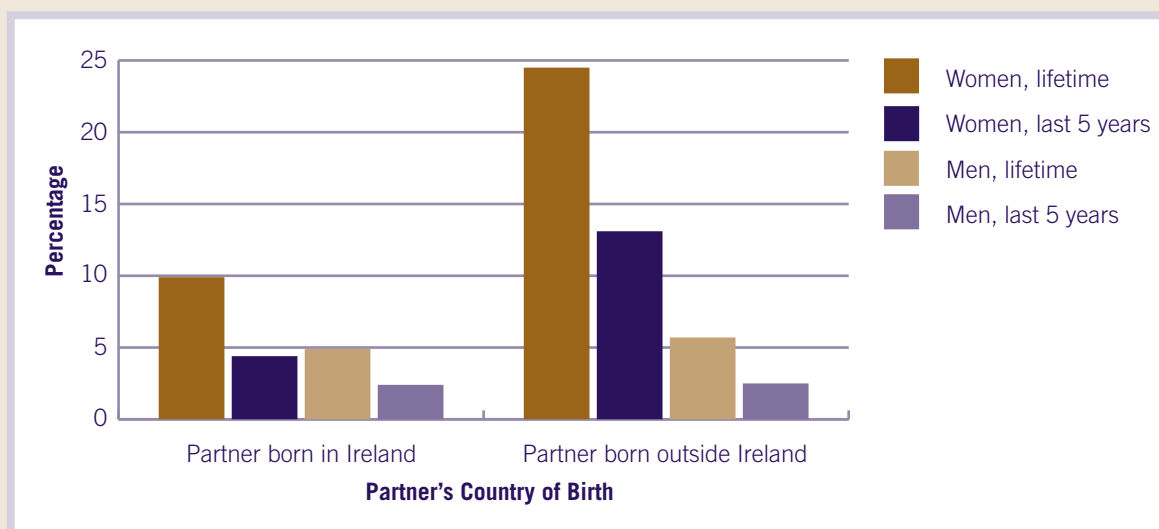


Figure 4.18 shows that being married to a partner born outside of Ireland is also associated with greater risk especially for women. Again, most of the partners born outside of Ireland (75 per cent) were born in other European countries, with the remainder evenly divided between English speaking countries such as the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and the rest of the world.

Figure 4.18: Lifetime and Previous Five Year Experience of Severe Abuse by Whether Partner was Born in Ireland



The risk is greater for women whose partner was born outside of Ireland, but there is almost no difference for men. Almost 25 per cent of women whose partner was born outside of Ireland have experienced severe abuse in their lifetimes, and 13 per cent have experienced severe abuse in the previous five years, compared to figures of 10 and four per cent, respectively, for women whose partner was born in Ireland.

A number of factors could be driving this pattern. Those born outside of Ireland, or whose partners have been born outside of Ireland, will tend to be younger, on average, since mass migration into Ireland is a relatively recent phenomenon. So part of the difference may be driven by the link between age and risk of abuse. Second, we do not know whether the abuse took place before the move to Ireland or not, since the survey did not collect a detailed migration history. Thus, it is not possible to say whether women and men moved to Ireland in leaving an abusive relationship or whether the abuse occurred in the context of the stresses associated with changing country of residence. Finally, we do not even know if the respondent or partner born outside Ireland was brought up in Ireland or abroad.

Some of these issues could be addressed by a multivariate analysis of the present data, but others would require more detailed information than we have available on migration history and the timing of abuse in relation to this.

Summary

This chapter examined differences in the risk of abuse by characteristics of the respondent and, to a more limited extent, characteristics of the partner. The focus has been on lifetime experience of severe abuse. The main findings are:

- A higher risk for younger adults, especially those under age 30.
- A very high risk of having experienced abuse among separated/divorced people for both women and men.
- Those with children are at a higher risk than those with no children, but this appears to be the case only for those who are separated or divorced or never married.
- Women who are unemployed or unable to work face an increased risk, but the differences by economic situation for men are very small.
- There is only a weak relationship between risk of abuse and level of education.
- The risk is lower for women and men in managerial/technical occupations than for those in other occupations. These differences may be due to other characteristics of these individuals, such as age, marital status and patterns of decision making in the household.
- There is a mixed pattern by income, with a higher risk at the extremes for women. Again, as we will see in the next chapter, differences in risk by household income appear to be due to other characteristics of those living in high-income and low-income households.

- There is little association with the person's contribution to total household income, but a sharply increased risk for women (not for men) where decisions on how income is to be spent are made by the partner rather than jointly. This issue is explored in more detail in the next chapter.
- There are minor differences by region but the risk is higher in urban than in rural areas and villages.
- Severe abuse is associated with poor health and ongoing limiting condition, for women but not for men.
- The risk of severe abuse is higher where there was abuse between the individual's parents. The risk is also increased where there was abuse between the parents of the partner.
- There is a somewhat higher risk where the person or the partner was born outside Ireland. Most of these are other Europeans.

Throughout this chapter we have noted that some of the patterns (or non-patterns) may be due to the influence of other related factors. Age differences in the risk of abuse, for instance, may be responsible for some of the differences observed by region or size of place. We return to this issue in the second half of the next chapter when we examine the results of a multivariate analysis of the factors associated with domestic abuse.

Chapter 5: The Wider Context of Domestic Abuse

Introduction

There are two parts to this chapter, both linked to deepening our understanding of domestic abuse in Ireland. In the first section, we provide descriptive information on public attitudes to domestic abuse. General attitudes towards domestic abuse form an important part of the context in which such behaviour occurs. This analysis will provide some pointers on areas where public information may be lacking and should assist in targeting future media campaigns to combat domestic abuse.

In the second section of the chapter we present the results of a multivariate analysis of factors associated with severe abuse and minor incidents. We saw in Chapter 4 that the incidence of severe abuse differed by gender and age group and also by other factors such as region, urban/rural area, household income, and abuse between the parents of the respondent. In looking at the patterns taking one factor at a time, however, we can never be sure whether something else (such as age) is driving the observed differences by, for example, region or size of place. The multivariate analysis will allow us to examine the effects of each of these factors with all other factors controlled.

The multivariate analysis will also allow us to examine whether severe abuse and minor incidents are associated with the same characteristics of the respondent. This report has focused on those who have experienced severe abuse, since the situation of these individuals is most urgent. We have not discussed the situation of those experiencing minor incidents since Chapter 1. In that chapter we saw that, apart from those experiencing severe abuse, an equally large group had experienced minor incidents that did not form a pattern of abusive behaviour and that did not have a severe impact upon them. An important question in this regard is whether minor incidents can be seen as a potential precursor to more severe abuse or are we talking about two completely separate phenomena. In the former case, a significant policy concern is to understand what prevents severe abuse from emerging. In the latter case, if we are talking about two separate types of behaviour, minor incidents are of concern because they form part of the backdrop against which severe abuse occurs. While it will not be possible in the context of a cross-sectional survey to check whether minor incidents lead to severe abuse over time, we can check to see whether the group identified as experiencing only minor incidents are distinct from those who experienced severe abuse.

Public Perceptions and Awareness of Domestic Abuse

As noted above, public attitudes towards domestic abuse, and the extent to which particular types of behaviour are labelled as 'abusive' form an important part of the context in which domestic abuse can occur. All respondents to the survey were presented with a set of questions designed to capture public perceptions of domestic abuse. The tables in this section, then, are based on responses from the full sample, whether they personally experienced abuse or not.

Behaviours Regarded as Abusive

The first set of items capturing general perceptions was as follows:

People think of different things when they hear the term domestic abuse. What about you? Would you regard the following types of behaviour as domestic abuse?

The behaviours were presented in the following order:

One partner pushing or shoving the other

One partner punching the other

One partner deliberately embarrassing the other in public

One partner not allowing the other to have money

One partner kicking the other

One partner calling the other hurtful names

One partner forcing the other to have sexual intercourse

One partner slapping the other across the face

In Table 5.1 the emotional behaviours and physical behaviours are grouped together to facilitate interpretation. The majority of respondents see all of the actions as constituting domestic abuse. However, the proportions are somewhat lower for ‘deliberately embarrassing a partner in public’ (85 per cent) and ‘pushing or shoving’ (82 per cent).

It is interesting that while there is a tendency for psychological or emotional behaviours to be less often regarded as abusive than physical behaviours, the difference is very small. A large majority (94-95 per cent) of respondents regard ‘calling hurtful names’ and ‘not allowing to have money’ as abusive, compared to 99-100 per cent for the physical behaviours: ‘slapping across the face’, ‘punching’, ‘kicking’ and ‘forcing to have sexual intercourse’.

Table 5.1: Whether Certain Behaviours Seen as 'Domestic Abuse' by Gender, Age, Socio-economic Group and Whether Experienced Abusive Behaviour

	Deliberately embarrassing in public %	Calling hurtful names %	Not allowing to have money %	Pushing or shoving %	Slapping across the face %	Punching %	Kicking %	Forcing to have sexual intercourse %
Total	85	94	95	82	99	100	99	99
Women	88	94	97	85	99	100	100	99
Men	83	94	93	80	98	99	98	99
Age Group								
Under 30	73	91	92	76	98	99	99	99
30-39	86	92	95	89	99	100	100	100
40-49	89	95	96	86	99	99	99	99
50-59	92	97	96	87	99	99	99	99
60 and over	93	95	96	79	99	100	99	99
Socio-economic Group								
Managerial and professional	86	94	97	84	99	100	100	100
Technical and skilled trades	87	92	95	81	99	99	99	100
Self-employed & employers (except professional)	87	95	94	82	99	99	99	98
Clerical	88	93	97	83	99	100	100	100
Services	82	92	94	86	99	99	99	99
Semi-skilled occupations	85	94	93	78	99	99	99	99
Routine occupations	85	93	97	79	97	100	98	99
Experienced domestic abuse?								
None	87	95	95	84	99	100	99	100
Minor	78	89	94	79	98	99	99	99
Severe	88	91	95	82	97	98	98	98

There are few differences between groups: women and men are very similar; as are the different socio-economic groups. There are only minor differences between those who have experienced severe domestic abuse and those who have not experienced abuse. Younger adults (under age 30) and those

who have experienced minor incidents are somewhat less likely than adults generally to view ‘deliberately embarrassing’ or ‘pushing/ shoving’ as abusive.

How Common is Domestic Abuse?

Table 5.2 examines how common people believe domestic abuse to be in Ireland today. About one fifth of people believe domestic abuse is very common; and almost three fifths more see it as ‘fairly common’.

Women were more likely than men to see domestic abuse as ‘very common’ (25 vs. 14 per cent), as were those who are older, in services, semi-skilled or routine occupations, and those who have experienced severe abuse themselves (36 per cent).

Table 5.2: Whether Domestic Abuse Seen as Common by Gender, Age, Socio-economic Group and Whether Experienced Abusive Behaviour

	How common is domestic abuse in relationships in Ireland?			
	Very common %	Fairly common %	Not very/not at all common %	Don't know %
Total	20	58	14	8
Women	25	58	9	8
Men	14	59	19	9
Age Group				
Under 30	18	57	19	6
30-39	18	61	15	7
40-49	20	61	11	7
50-59	24	59	9	9
60 and over	19	55	13	13
Socio-economic Group				
Managerial and professional	11	62	17	10
Technical and skilled trades	19	58	14	9
Self-employed and employers (except professional)	19	59	14	8
Clerical	17	59	13	11
Services	27	54	13	6
Semi-skilled occupations	23	61	10	6
Routine occupations	25	52	15	8
Experienced domestic abuse?				
None	17	58	15	10
Minor	21	61	13	4
Severe	36	53	7	4

It is interesting that adults under age 30 are most likely to regard domestic abuse as ‘not very common’ or ‘not at all common’ (19 per cent), given that women in this group are at a higher risk of having experienced severe abuse. Young adults (as we saw in Table 5.1) are as willing as older adults to describe behaviours as abusive, but they may be thinking of behaviour between married couples (rather than between dating or cohabiting couples) when they hear the term ‘domestic abuse’.

Knowing Someone who was Abused and Action Taken

All respondents were asked towards the beginning of the survey whether they knew somebody who had been abused by a partner. Table 5.3 examines the extent to which people know somebody who was abused and how this person is known. Two out of five adults know somebody who was abused. Women are more likely than men to know someone who was abused (44 vs. 38 per cent), but the difference is not large.

Other figures from the survey reveal that in most cases where the respondent knew someone who was abused, that person was a woman (89 per cent); the partners were living together at the time (94 per cent) and in 70 per cent of cases, as far as the respondent knew, the abuse happened in the past.

Table 5.3: Whether Respondent Knows Someone Whose Partner Uses Abusive or Violent Behaviour Towards Him or Her by Respondent Characteristics

	Know anyone whose partner is abusive?			How this person is known				
	Yes, know of one case	Yes, know of more than one	No	Family member	Friend	Work colleague	Neighbour	Other
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	21	20	59	29	42	7	15	9
Women	23	21	56	33	42	6	13	7
Men	19	19	62	23	41	8	17	11
Age Group								
Under 30	17	15	68	34	49	4	9	5
30-39	27	24	49	31	44	8	9	7
40-49	24	25	50	28	37	10	15	12
50-59	25	22	53	25	39	7	20	10
60 and over	16	16	68	23	36	5	24	12
Socio-economic Group								
Managerial and professional	21	21	57	24	40	9	13	15
Technical and skilled trades	20	21	59	22	48	5	15	11
Self-employed & employers (except professional)	26	25	49	26	40	11	16	9
Clerical	20	19	62	35	42	6	12	6
Services	21	17	62	34	40	6	13	7
Semi-skilled occupations	24	18	58	36	42	10	9	3
Routine occupations	20	27	53	28	39	4	23	7
Experienced domestic abuse?								
None	18	16	66	28	38	7	18	11
Minor	29	26	45	34	44	8	9	5
Severe	28	39	33	26	53	4	10	7

Table 5.3 shows that the relationship to the person experiencing domestic abuse is likely to be close – typically a friend (42 per cent) or family member (29 per cent). More women than men are aware of a family member experiencing abuse (33 vs. 23 per cent), but there is no difference with respect to awareness of a friend experiencing domestic abuse.

The youngest and oldest age groups are least likely to know someone who has experienced domestic abuse. Managerial and professional workers are more likely than others to know someone, often through their professional or work roles. While those who have experienced severe abuse themselves are more likely to know someone who was abused (67 per cent vs. 41 per cent overall), it is striking that one third of those experiencing severe abuse do not know anyone else who was abused.

Table 5.4 examines how the respondent came to know about the abusive behaviour for those respondents who know someone who was abused. Most often, those who know someone who was abused find out about the abuse by being told by the person affected (43 per cent), or by someone else (28 per cent).

Table 5.4: How Respondent Found out About Abusive or Violent Behaviour by Gender, Age, Socio-economic Group and Whether Experienced Abusive Behaviour

	How did you know about it?						
	Told about it by person who was abused %	Was told about it by someone else %	Saw bruises, marks, cuts etc %	Saw an abusive/violent incident %	Heard an abusive incident (didn't see it) %	Some other way %	Don't know/can't remember %
Total	43	28	13	17	8	6	0
Women	53	21	12	15	8	5	0
Men	31	35	13	19	9	6	0
Age Group							
Under 30	35	29	13	20	4	5	0
30-39	44	29	15	18	10	6	0
40-49	46	26	13	17	10	6	1
50-59	47	26	9	14	7	7	1
60 and over	44	29	11	14	11	6	0
Socio-economic Group							
Managerial and professional	46	31	12	8	8	7	0
Technical and skilled trades	43	38	8	18	7	5	0
Self-employed and employers (except professional)	38	29	14	16	9	9	0
Clerical	53	24	13	16	9	3	0
Services	49	19	14	18	10	8	0
Semi-skilled occupations	32	29	15	24	7	2	3
Routine occupations	32	21	19	30	7	4	0
Experienced domestic abuse?							
None	40	31	12	16	8	7	0
Minor	42	27	14	19	9	5	1
Severe	57	16	15	16	9	2	0

Base is respondents who know someone who was abused.

Only one in six witnessed an abusive incident, but this rises to 30 per cent of those in routine occupations. Those who have been severely abused themselves are more likely (57 per cent) to be told by the person who was abused. Women are more likely than men to be told by the person who was abused (53 per cent vs. 31 per cent for men), while men are more likely to be told by someone else (35 per cent vs. 21 per cent for women). Those under age 30 are less likely to be told (35 per cent), but are somewhat more likely to witness abuse (20 per cent vs. 17 percent overall).

Those who knew someone who was abused were asked what they had done:

Many people are at a loss to know what to do in these situations. I'd like to read you a list of things that people might do. Perhaps you could tell me whether you did any of them.

Table 5.5: What Did the Person Do about the Abusive or Violent Behaviour by Gender, Age, Socio-economic Group and Whether Experienced Abusive Behaviour

	What did you do when you found out about abuse?					
	Talk to person who experienced abuse %	Talk to partner who was abusive %	Tried to find more information re.situation %	Tell the Gardaí %	Something else %	None of these %
Total	66	25	40	8	17	22
Women	75	21	44	9	17	16
Men	55	30	36	7	16	29
Age Group						
Under 30	65	26	40	11	12	20
30-39	68	25	46	8	19	21
40-49	65	26	44	8	22	20
50-59	69	24	35	6	15	21
60 and over	61	25	33	5	13	28
Socio-economic Group						
Managerial and professional	63	23	40	6	22	25
Technical and skilled trades	62	30	37	8	15	27
Self-employed and employers (except professional)	61	29	39	10	20	27
Clerical	70	20	49	5	16	17
Services	74	18	42	10	17	13
Semi-skilled occupations	71	40	28	12	9	17
Routine occupations	60	20	45	7	13	23
Experienced domestic abuse?						
None	58	24	36	7	17	28
Minor	71	27	46	9	16	14
Severe	84	27	45	8	16	10

As shown in Table 5.5, nearly four out of five did something. Two thirds talked to the person who was abused, one quarter talked to the abusive partner, and two out of five tried to find out additional information. Only eight per cent reported the domestic abuse to the Gardaí. About one in six did something else – most often advising the person affected to seek help or report the incident or by directly providing support such as a place to stay or taking care of the children.

Women are more likely than men to have done something (only 16 percent of women did nothing compared to 29 per cent of men). They are also more likely than men to talk to the person experiencing the abuse (75 vs. 55 per cent). Men, on the other hand, are more likely than women to have talked to the abusive partner (30 per cent vs. 21 per cent).

Older adults (28 per cent did nothing) and those who did not personally experience abuse (also 28 per cent) are less likely to get involved. Nine out of 10 of those who personally experienced severe abuse took some action, most often (84 per cent) talking to the person who was abused.

The following question was asked of all of those who knew someone who had been abused:

People have different reasons for not doing anything in particular, or for not doing more.

I'm going to read a list of possible reasons.

Perhaps you could tell me whether or not each one applied to you.

The results are shown in Table 5.6. Fear of making things worse is cited by 65 per cent of respondents; followed by not knowing what to do (53 per cent) and not wanting to get involved (46 per cent). Nearly two in five were told by the abused person not to get involved.

Men are more likely than women (52 vs. 40 per cent) to not want to get involved. Those in middle age range (30 to 59) are more likely to say they did not know what to do than younger or older people. Younger adults are more likely to be told not to get involved (under 40) than older adults.

Not wanting to get involved was the dominant reason given by those who did not take any action (71 per cent). Otherwise, differences between groups based on age, socio-economic group and personal experience of abuse are small.

Among the other reasons for not doing anything or not doing more were a feeling that the respondent did not know the abused person well enough to get involved, the fact that the abuse was over by the time the person knew about it and the belief that others were already providing the necessary support.

Table 5.6: Reasons for Not Doing Anything or Not Doing More by Gender, Age, Socio-economic Group and Whether Experienced Abusive Behaviour

	Reasons for Not doing anything/doing more?				
	You did not know what to do	Told by abused person not to get involved	You did not want to get involved	Afraid you'd make things worse	Some other reason
	%	%	%	%	%
Total	53	39	46	65	21
Women	53	43	40	66	21
Men	53	35	52	65	22
Age Group					
Under 30	46	45	49	61	23
30-39	56	45	44	69	22
40-49	60	38	41	64	24
50-59	55	32	50	65	21
60 and over	49	33	45	66	15
Socio-economic Group					
Managerial and professional	45	31	46	58	32
Technical and skilled trades	49	41	47	62	15
Self-employed & employers (except professionals)	47	22	50	65	18
Clerical	62	40	41	68	24
Services	55	43	45	67	21
Semi-skilled occupations	54	52	54	80	15
Routine occupations	62	49	35	67	17
Experienced domestic abuse?					
None	53	33	47	63	23
Minor	55	45	44	69	21
Severe	50	55	44	66	17
Did the person take some action?					
Did take some action	55	46	39	68	21
Did not take some action	46	16	71	53	23

Base is those who knew someone who was abused. Note: Since more than one reason may have been given, percentages do not sum to 100.

What Would You Do if You Knew of Domestic Abuse?

Those who did *not* know anyone who was abused were asked the following questions:

Now I'd like to ask what you think you would do if you knew or suspected that a family member or friend was experiencing abusive or violent behaviour from a partner. I am going to read a list of things people might do. For each one, perhaps you could tell me whether or not you would do it. Again, there are no right or wrong answers, just what you think you would do.

It is worth noting that the question wording predefines the situation as abusive, thus bypassing any confusion as to whether an incident or behaviour was 'really' abusive. It is probably this factor, combined with the closeness of the hypothesised relationship to the abused person (family or friend) and the fact that it is taking place in the present, that accounts for the fact that the vast majority (97 per cent) of respondents believed that they would do something, as shown in Table 5.7. In most cases, this involved talking to the person who was abused (87 per cent) or trying to find further information about domestic abuse (77 per cent). Over half (57 per cent) believe they would contact a support organisation dealing with domestic abuse. Just under one half (46 per cent) would talk to the abusive partner and about one fifth would report the behaviour to the Gardaí.

Men are more likely than women to say that they would speak to the abusive partner (58 vs. 34 per cent), while women are more likely to seek information (83 vs. 72 per cent) or contact an organisation providing services to those affected by domestic abuse (61 v. 53 per cent). There are only minor differences between age groups in the type of action they believe they would take, but those over age 60 are somewhat less likely to take any of the actions covered. The differences by socio-economic group are also rather small, but those in professional/managerial occupations and the self-employed/employers are somewhat less likely to report the behaviour to the Gardaí (17 to 18 per cent), and those in semi-skilled occupations are most likely to contact a support organisation (70 per cent) or to seek additional information (83 per cent).

It is interesting to note that those who themselves experienced severe abuse are less likely than those who experienced no abuse to say that they would tell the Gardaí (15 per cent vs. 23 per cent for those experiencing no incidents). Among those who experienced minor incidents but no severe abuse, the figure is even lower at 12 per cent. This could suggest a level of scepticism among those directly affected by abuse as to whether invoking the remedies of the Criminal Justice System is the most appropriate response, but it is more likely to reflect a desire to let the person who is abused have some control of their situation by making that decision for herself or himself. We saw in Chapter 3 that a somewhat higher proportion – about one fifth – of those who experienced severe abuse reported the behaviour to the Gardaí in their own cases. It is also noteworthy that both these groups – those experiencing severe abuse and minor incidents – are no more likely than those experiencing no abuse to say that they would contact a support organisation. Again, this may be due to a concern not to take control of the situation away from the person who is abused.

It is interesting to note that 21 per cent of people believed they would tell the Gardaí if they knew someone who was experiencing domestic abuse whereas earlier in Table 5.5 we saw that only eight

per cent of those who actually knew someone who had experienced domestic abuse told the Gardaí. What people think they would do and what they actually do can be different.

Table 5.7: What Would you Do if you Knew a Family Member or Friend was Being Abused by Gender, Age, Socio-economic Group and Whether Experienced Abusive Behaviour

	What would you do if you knew a family member/friend was being abused?					
	Talk to your family member or friend %	Talk to your family member's /friend's partner %	Tell the Gardaí %	Try find out more about this type of situation %	Contact an organisation for those who experience abuse %	None of these/it depends %
Total	87	46	21	77	57	3
Women	86	34	22	83	61	3
Men	87	58	21	72	53	4
Age Group						
Under 30	95	48	20	83	55	1
30-39	88	41	19	85	65	1
40-49	87	44	22	81	67	2
50-59	85	49	24	74	59	4
60 and over	77	46	21	64	47	8
Socio-economic Group						
Managerial & professional	85	41	17	74	51	4
Technical & skilled trades	89	57	20	79	59	1
Self-employed and employers (except professional)	91	52	18	70	56	3
Clerical	81	33	21	76	61	4
Services	90	44	25	80	59	2
Semi-skilled occupations	90	52	21	83	70	4
Routine occupations	87	61	23	76	42	5
Experienced domestic abuse?						
None	85	45	23	75	57	3
Minor	91	50	12	83	56	3
Severe	93	45	15	85	56	1

Base is those who did not know someone who was abused.

Familiarity with Services and Legal Remedies

Table 5.8 shows the results of a series of questions on the familiarity of the population with services for those experiencing domestic abuse and the legal remedies available. There is a high level of familiarity with the existence of refuges (76 per cent), especially among women (80 per cent). A somewhat lower proportion, two thirds of respondents know of helplines for those experiencing abuse. Although familiarity with these services is generally higher among those who have experienced severe abuse, a sizeable minority do not know of the existence of refuges (17 per cent) and/or know of any helplines (30 per cent).

Table 5.8: Familiarity with Legal and Other Services by Gender, Age, Socio-economic Group and Whether Experienced Abusive Behaviour

Familiarity with legal and other services								
	Have you ever heard of a refuge for victims of domestic abuse? %	Do you know if there are any help lines? %	Have you heard of a Barring Order? %	Have you heard of a Protection Order? %	Have you heard of a Safety Order? %	Have you heard of an Interim Order? %	Have you heard of the family law courts? %	Have you ever had to attend the family law court? %
Total	76	67	97	83	28	28	92	7
Women	80	66	96	83	31	24	92	9
Men	71	67	97	83	25	32	92	5
Age Group								
Under 30	61	63	92	82	28	20	86	5
30-39	80	67	99	88	27	31	95	8
40-49	85	67	99	86	31	32	93	10
50-59	83	72	99	86	30	33	97	7
60 and over	77	66	97	74	26	28	92	4
Socio-economic Group								
Managerial & professional	82	68	99	83	27	35	96	6
Technical & skilled trades	72	73	96	82	26	26	93	5
Self-employed and employers (except professional)	73	69	100	81	26	32	93	9
Clerical	81	68	97	84	29	29	96	6
Services	74	69	95	83	35	26	89	9
Semi-skilled occupations	78	61	96	91	24	21	90	7
Routine occupations	67	57	95	83	25	26	87	10
Experienced domestic abuse?								
None	75	66	97	82	27	29	92	4
Minor	73	66	94	88	29	26	92	7
Severe	83	70	97	86	38	25	93	24

Base is all respondents.

The majority of respondents had heard of Barring and Protection Orders (97 and 83 per cent, respectively) and of the family law courts (92 per cent), although this does not necessarily mean that understanding of these orders is accurate. Fewer of the respondents had heard of Interim Barring or Safety Orders (both 28 per cent).

Only seven per cent of respondents had ever had to attend the family law courts, rising to almost one quarter of those who had experienced severe abuse. Apart from a greater familiarity with Safety Orders (38 per cent), those who experienced severe abuse are similar to respondents generally in terms of the proportions having heard of the different legal remedies.

In the next section we turn to another aspect of the broader context in which domestic abuse occurs: the minor incidents that, as discussed in Chapter 1, may be relatively common in relationships but that do not form a pattern of behaviour and do not have a severe impact on the person experiencing them. We discuss these minor incidents in the context of a detailed analysis of the risk factors associated with both severe abuse and minor incidents to ask whether they are affected by the same characteristics of the individual and his or her partner.

Multivariate Analysis of Factors Associated with Minor Incidents and Severe Abuse

In this section, we present the results of an analysis of factors associated with domestic abuse. In Chapter 1, we drew a distinction between three groups in the population: a large group who had experienced no abuse; a second group who had experienced some isolated incidents but without these having a severe impact on them and a smaller group who had experienced severe abuse in a relationship. In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 we focused on the group who had experienced severe abuse. In the following, we consider both groups jointly and ask whether similar factors are associated with vulnerability to both types of behaviour.

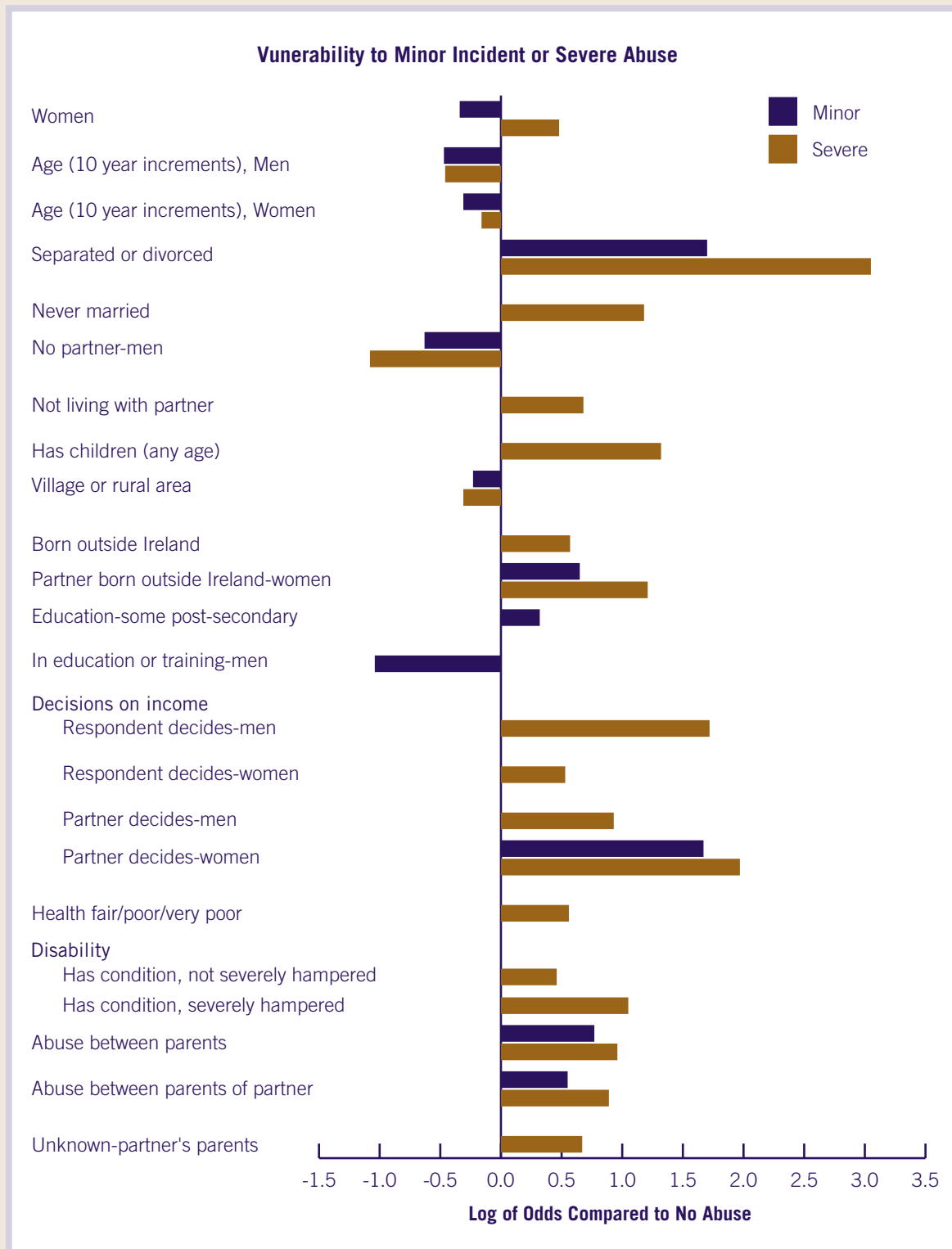
If the factors associated with them are similar, then this would lend some support to the argument that minor incidents could be a precursor to severe abuse. If the factors are very different, then it is likely that we are talking about two very different phenomena. In this case, the main relevance of minor incidents is as part of the context that may serve to legitimise, or excuse, more severe forms of abuse.

In Chapter 4, we examined the risk factors for severe abuse taken one at a time. The analysis here differs in that we consider a number of different characteristics jointly. The statistical technique used for this analysis is described more fully in Appendix 2⁹⁰. In this chapter, we present the results of the final model in Figure 5.1 and Table 5.9. Only the effects that were statistically significant are shown in the table and the figure. The full model is shown in Appendix 2.

The focus is on lifetime experience because, as noted in Chapter 1, we can distinguish between minor incidents and severe abuse more accurately for lifetime abuse than for abuse experienced more recently such as the last five years or the last year.

⁹⁰ The technique used is multinomial logit modelling.

Figure 5.1: Factors Associated with Vulnerability to Minor Incidents and Severe Abuse (Log of odds compared to 'no abuse')



The scale used in Figure 5.1 is better for displaying the results visually, but is cumbersome to describe in words⁹¹. The figures in Table 5.9, which presents the same results in a different scale⁹², have a more intuitive interpretation as the percentage increase in the odds (compared to the reference group) for each factor.

From Figure 5.1 we can see that the biggest difference in terms of severe abuse is between those who are separated and divorced and those who are married or widowed (the reference category for marital status).

It is also clear from the figure that severe abuse and minor incidents are affected differently by characteristics of the respondent. For instance, women have a lower risk than men of experiencing minor incidents on their own but a higher risk of severe abuse. Vulnerability to minor incidents declines more sharply with age for women than vulnerability to severe abuse and, while vulnerability to severe abuse is higher among those with children and those in poor health or with a disability, these factors have no impact on vulnerability to minor incidents.

Interpreting the Results

Turning to Table 5.9, as noted above, the figures can be interpreted as the effect of each factor on the odds of being severely abused (or experiencing minor incidents) when all other characteristics are controlled. The notion of odds is one that is familiar to most people. If it is twice as likely to rain as to snow, for instance, the odds are 'two to one' for rain versus snow. If a gale is only one third as likely to occur as a light wind, we can say that the odds of a gale versus a light wind are .33. In the present context, we are looking at the change in the odds of having experienced severe abuse (or minor incidents) versus 'no abuse' for each factor, when all other factors are controlled. For instance, the figure of -29% for 'female' and 'minor incidents' in Table 5.9 shows that women have 29 per cent lower odds than men (the reference group) of experiencing 'minor incidents' when all other factors are controlled. However, the figure of 62% for 'female' and 'severe abuse' shows that women have a 62 per cent higher odds of being in the group that experienced severe abuse with all other factors controlled. Remember that those in the 'minor incidents' group have experienced some isolated incidents of the type described in Chapter 1 but without these forming a pattern of behaviour or having a severe impact on them.

91 The scale used is the log of the odds of experiencing minor incidents or severe abuse, compared to no abuse for a unit increase in each factor. This scale has the advantage of clearly displaying the relative magnitudes of positive and negative effects.

92 These are the exponentiated log odds (risk ratios) expressed as a percentage difference.

Table 5.9: Effects of Characteristics of Respondent and Partner on Odds of Experiencing Minor Incidents or Severe Abuse (Relative Risk Ratios, n=2959)

		Per cent change in odds of experiencing ...	
		Minor incidents	Severe abuse
Gender (Reference: male)	Female	-29%	62%
Age	Age (10 year increments), Male	-37%	-37%
(Reference: age 45)	Age (10 year increments), Female	-27%	-15%
Marital	Separated or divorced	448%	2010%
(Reference: married or widowed)	Never married		225%
(Reference: living with partner)	No present spouse/partner - Female		
	No present spouse/partner - Male	-47%	-66%
	Not living with partner		97%
Children (Reference: no children)	Has children (any age)		275%
Size of place (Reference: city, town)	Village or rural area	-20%	-27%
Born (Reference: Ireland)	Outside Ireland		76%
Partner born (Reference: Ireland)	Partner born outside Ireland - Female	92%	235%
Level of education (Ref.: all other)	Some education beyond 2nd level	37%	
Economic status (Ref: all other)	In education or training - Male	-65%	
Decisions on income	Respondent decides - Male		457%
(Reference: both decide)	Respondent decides - Female		71%
	Partner decides - Male		154%
	Partner decides - Female	433%	616%
Health (Reference: very good or good)	Health fair/poor/very poor		76%
Disability (Reference: no condition)	Has condition, not severely impaired		58%
	Has condition, severely impaired		186%
Abuse between parents (Ref.: none)	Abuse between parents	117%	162%
Abuse between parents of partner	Abuse between parents of partner	73%	144%
(Reference: none)	Unknown-parents of partner		96%

Note: model includes cases who were ever in a relationship and for whom information is non-missing on lifetime experience of abuse. Variables with no significant effect for either minor incidents or severe abuse are not shown, but some are included as controls. See Appendix 2 Table A2.6 for the full set of variables included.

Age

As we would expect based on the tables in Chapter 4, the risk of severe abuse declines with age. However, the decline is sharper for men than for women. Age, in Table 5.9, is measured in 10 year increments. The odds of having experienced severe abuse decline by 37 per cent for a 10 year increase in age for men, with a similar decline in the odds of having experienced minor incidents. The decline with age is much lower for women (15 per cent for severe abuse and 27 per cent for minor incidents). This sharper decline with age in the risk of abuse for men than for women was evident in Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4. The results here show that this persists when other factors are controlled.

Another relationship that is relevant in the context of age is the significantly lowered odds of minor incidents for men in education or training, most of whom will be young. The odds of having experienced minor incidents are 65 per cent lower for men in education or training than their counterparts who are in a different economic situation⁹³. The impact on severe abuse is not statistically significant and there is no corresponding reduction in the odds of abuse for women in education and training.

Marital Status

We saw in Chapter 4 that the risk of severe abuse was higher for women and men who are separated or divorced than for women and men who are married or widowed. The figures in Table 5.9 show that this pattern persists and is very strong even when other factors are controlled. Moreover, the effect is much stronger for severe abuse than for minor incidents. Those who are separated or divorced have 448 per cent higher odds of having experienced minor incidents but 2010 per cent higher odds of having experienced severe abuse. This means that women and men who are separated or divorced are over 20 times as likely to have experienced severe abuse. This association primarily reflects the fact that people are leaving abusive relationships.

Those who have never married are more likely to have experienced severe abuse (over three times the odds of married or widowed people), but do not differ in terms of minor incidents. This association between abuse and being single could come about in two different ways. Single people may be dating more and hence exposed to more potentially abusive partners. On the other hand, remaining single may be an outcome of having experienced abuse in the past. These are very different causal processes but it is not possible to disentangle them with point-in-time data.

Present Relationship Situation

The analysis presented in Figure 5.1 and Table 5.9 is based on those who have been in a relationship at some point in their lives. Men who are not in a relationship at present are less likely to have experienced minor incidents or severe abuse, perhaps because this group of men have had fewer relationships in the past and, hence, a reduced exposure to potential risk⁹⁴. This pattern does not hold for women.

Those who are in a relationship but not living with the partner are more likely to have experienced abuse. The effect of not living with a partner (once 'no present spouse/partner' is controlled), shows the impact of being in a relationship but not living with the person. This is associated with almost a doubling in the risk of having experienced severe abuse, but no difference in terms of minor incidents. This pattern, like

⁹³ This does not appear to be an age interaction: an interaction term for males under 25 was not statistically significant.

⁹⁴ The effects of being in a relationship and living with a partner need to be interpreted together. Note too that marital status is controlled here.

the association with being never married, discussed above, could arise because people not living with a partner may be exposed to more potentially abusive partners, or not living with a partner may be a response to having been abused in the past.

Children

Those who have had children are at a higher risk of having experienced severe abuse (275 per cent higher odds), but there is no difference for minor incidents. This holds for both women and men. The number of children and the age of the youngest child did not make a significant difference with other factors controlled.

Education

There is no effect of level of education on severe abuse but there is a small increase in risk of minor incidents for those with some education beyond second level but below the level of degree.

Decisions about Money

Household income itself does not have an impact on the odds of either minor incidents or severe abuse. However, for those living with a partner, decision-making about money is clearly important. In most couples, both partners decide jointly how the money is to be spent. If the respondent makes decisions about money, the odds of severe abuse are 457 per cent higher for men and 71 per cent higher for women. This somewhat counterintuitive finding may reflect a failure of the partner to take responsibility for household matters. If the partner makes the decisions about money, the odds of severe abuse are 154 per cent higher for men and 616 per cent higher for women than where both partners jointly decide. The odds of minor incidents for women is also increased substantially (by 433 per cent) where the partner controls decisions about money.

Health and Disability

Health problems and disability are associated with severe abuse but not with minor incidents. Compared to people in good health, those who rate their health as 'very poor', 'poor' or 'fair' have an increased risk of abuse (76 per cent higher odds). Increased risk is also associated with having an ongoing condition or disability and the risk increases with the level of limitation associated with the condition. Those with a condition that does not severely limit their daily activity face a 58 per cent greater odds of severe abuse, while for those who are severely limited the odds of severe abuse are 186 per cent greater. Most of this pattern is likely to reflect the negative effects of abuse on health, rather than those with health problems or disability being more vulnerable to abuse. However, people with health problems or disabilities are likely to face greater difficulties in leaving an abusive relationship.

Abuse in Family of Origin

A history of abuse between one's parents or between the parents of one's partner is associated with increased risk of both severe abuse and minor incidents. The odds of severe abuse increase 162 per cent and the odds of minor incidents increase 117 per cent among those reporting that their father was

abusive to their mother or that their mother was abusive to their father, compared to those who report no abuse between their parents. There is a similar increase in vulnerability among those who report abuse between the parents of their partners. The odds of minor incidents are 73 per cent higher and the odds of severe abuse are 144 per cent higher among those reporting abuse between the partner's parents. Differences between women and men in this respect are not statistically significant.

Community Integration

There are a number of findings in Table 5.9 that point to a link between domestic abuse and the extent to which the couple is integrated into a wider community. The risk of severe abuse is slightly higher in urban than in rural areas, for those born outside of Ireland, and for those who know little of the partner's family.

There is a modest, but statistically significant difference associated with living in an urban or rural area. The odds of having experienced severe abuse are 27 per cent lower and of having experienced minor incidents are 20 per cent lower for those living in rural areas or villages than for those living in towns or cities. While we cannot be sure that the abuse took place in the area where the respondent now lives, this suggests that abuse is more likely in urban areas than in rural areas. This may be related to community integration, since in villages and rural areas both partners are likely to be known reasonably well by other members of the community. The difference between cities and towns was not statistically significant, however, and neither were the differences by region. In particular, there was no overall tendency for the risk to be higher in the Dublin region than in other parts of the country, when other factors were controlled.

Those born outside Ireland have a higher risk of severe abuse (odds are 76 per cent higher). For women, the odds are 235 per cent higher if the partner was born outside Ireland, but there is no impact on birthplace of partner for men. As noted in Chapter 4, most of those in the sample born outside Ireland were born in other European countries, so we are not, in the main, looking at a pattern driven by the experience of refugees, asylum seekers or economic refugees from less developed parts of the world. Moreover, we do not know whether the abuse took place in Ireland or outside of Ireland. People born outside of Ireland may be more isolated from the support of family and kinship networks which might make the person more vulnerable. The increased risk to women where the partner was born outside Ireland could be associated with the stresses of relocation to a new country.

There is also an increased risk among those who say that they do not know whether or not there was abuse between the parents of the partner. For this group, the odds of severe abuse are almost doubled. Since we have already controlled for not having a partner, this may reflect an increased vulnerability when the background of the partner is not known. Again, this may reflect a degree of isolation from the social circle and family network of the partner.

This tendency for the risk of domestic abuse to be higher where the couple is less well integrated into a wider community suggests that close contacts with the family and with the wider community would tend to inhibit the emergence of severe abuse. It also suggests that the risk may be higher where the couple is socially isolated.

Education, Income and Socio-economic Group

Several of the patterns observed in Chapter 4 turned out not to be statistically significant when other variables were controlled⁹⁵. The risk of severe abuse or minor incidents is not associated with level of income or income share of the partners when decision-making regarding income is controlled. Differences by level of education are not significant, apart from a small increase in vulnerability to minor incidents among those with some post-secondary education below the level of a third-level degree. The only relationship between vulnerability and main economic activity is a lower risk of minor incidents among men in education or training. Differences by socio-economic group are not statistically significant. There is no difference by region and the higher risk observed for women living in towns is not significantly different from the small increase in risk in towns and cities compared to rural areas.

Two Different Phenomena or Different Levels of the Same Phenomenon?

Figure 5.1 and Table 5.9 show that minor incidents and severe abuse are affected differently by characteristics of the individual and the partner. In general, characteristics of the respondent and partner were more strongly associated with severe abuse than with minor incidents and several factors associated with severe abuse (such as having children, poor health and disability) had no relationship at all to minor incidents⁹⁶.

It is not the case, then, that vulnerability to minor incidents and to severe abuse are associated with the same characteristics. Rather, they are linked in different ways to characteristics of the respondent and the partner. This finding lends support to the argument that two different phenomena are being captured by the behavioural items used to measure domestic abuse. It is an important caution against an uncritical ‘acts-based’ approach that ignores the pattern of behaviour and the impact on the person experiencing it. To measure domestic abuse solely on the basis of whether the person ever experienced a certain behaviour from the partner would be to make the mistake of conflating two very different phenomena.

Summary

In this chapter we have used data from the national survey to examine public perceptions of abuse and the risk factors for both minor incidents and severe abuse.

The analysis in the first section demonstrated a high willingness on the part of the public to label behaviours such as slapping, punching, kicking and forced sexual intercourse as abusive. The proportion who regard emotional behaviours such as name calling and depriving of money as abusive is only slightly lower.

Four fifths of the public believes that domestic abuse is common or very common and two out of five know someone who was abused by a partner. In most cases, this abused person was a woman and the abuse was in the past by the time of the survey. In 70 per cent of cases this was a friend or family member and people tend to know about the abuse through being told about it – abuse is not often seen or heard by someone outside the relationship (less than one third of the cases where someone knew about it). Of those who knew of someone who was abused, nearly four out of five did something – including talking to the abused person or seeking more information. Only eight per cent reported the abuse to the Gardaí.

⁹⁵ The full set of models are shown in Appendix 2.

⁹⁶ Appendix 2 describes a more formal test to determine whether minor incidents and severe abuse are affected similarly by these factors. The hypotheses that similar factors affect the risk of both outcomes was rejected.

Reasons for not doing more or doing nothing included fear of making things worse, not knowing what to do and not wanting to get involved. Not wanting to get involved is a more important reason among those who did nothing than among those who took steps such as talking to the person affected or seeking further information.

Those who did not know someone who was abused were asked what they would do if they knew of a friend or family member experiencing domestic abuse. Almost all said that they would do something, generally talking to the person affected or seeking further information. Only one fifth say that they would report the behaviour to the Gardaí. The proportion who say they would tell the Gardaí is somewhat lower among those who have themselves experienced severe abuse, which may be because they do not want to take control away from person directly affected.

The public have a high level of familiarity with the existence of refuges for women who are experiencing abuse (over three quarters had heard of them) and with the legal remedies available, although the proportion who had heard of Safety Orders and/or Interim Barring Orders was low. Public familiarity with the existence of helplines was somewhat lower, with about two thirds having heard of them.

The analysis in the second part of the chapter returned to the distinction between minor incidents and severe abuse, first highlighted in Chapter 1. The results indicated that minor incidents and severe abuse were affected differently by characteristics of the individual and the partner. This suggests that while these minor incidents form part of the overall context in which domestic abuse occurs, they are capturing a different phenomenon.

The risk of having experienced severe abuse is very high in couples where decisions about money are not made jointly. The risk is also higher for women than for men, for single people, for younger adults, for those with children, for those (mostly Europeans) born outside Ireland, for women whose partner was born outside Ireland (again, most are Europeans), and for those with a history of domestic abuse in their family of origin or in the partner's family.

The very high risk of having experienced severe abuse among those who are separated or divorced is due to people leaving abusive marriages. Similarly, the association between abuse and poor health or disability reflect the negative consequences of abuse for health and functioning.

In the next chapter we turn our attention to women who are not adequately represented in the national survey because of their small numbers in the population. We saw in Chapter 3 that the experiences of women's refuges, in particular, suggested that women who are members of minority groups may be particularly at risk. However, because of their small numbers in the population generally, Traveller women and immigrants are not present in the national sample in sufficient numbers to be able to draw sensible conclusions about their experiences from this source. We turn in the next chapter, then, to a detailed examination of the experiences of Traveller and immigrant women based on a series of focus group interviews with members of these groups.

Chapter 6 – Focus Groups with Marginalised Women

Introduction

The telephone survey methodology used in the *National Study of Domestic Abuse* by definition excluded certain people who do not have a landline telephone. In order to gain an understanding of the issues affecting some groups of these people four focus groups were conducted. These focus groups, as with the telephone survey, were with women⁹⁷ who may or may not have experienced domestic abuse. An outline of key topics to address in the focus groups was developed on the basis of the principal topics covered in the telephone survey. This schedule was then reviewed in consultation with the focus group facilitators to ensure its suitability for use with each group.

In order to identify groups to interview it was necessary to consider those groups most prevalent in Irish society who do not have a landline telephone. The Household Budget Survey, 1999-2000, conducted by the Central Statistics Office estimated that 89.2 per cent of all households in the State had a landline telephone⁹⁸. Certain groups of people are most likely not to have access to a landline telephone, namely; Travellers⁹⁹, homeless people, asylum seekers (particularly those in direct provision accommodation), prisoners, hospital in-patients, mental institution patients and people staying in refuges or shelters¹⁰⁰. Due to constraints on time and resources it was not possible to specifically address all of these groups in the current study. Focus groups were conducted with Traveller and immigrant women¹⁰¹.

The 2002 Census recorded 23,681 Travellers in the State, therefore, they represent approximately 0.6 per cent of the Irish population. The gender breakdown for Travellers is evenly split between women and men (51 per cent women and 49 per cent men). The age profile amongst the Traveller community is distinctive, 50 per cent of Travellers are aged 17 years or younger and 50 per cent are 18 years of age or older¹⁰². Of the 19,975 Travellers enumerated as living in Traveller only households on Census night, 56 per cent were living in permanent households, 37 per cent were living in temporary accommodation (caravans, mobile homes and other temporary dwellings) and eight per cent did not state the type of accommodation in which they were living.

The organisation and facilitation of three Traveller focus groups by the Violence Against Women Programme of Pavee Point was of great benefit to the study. During the planning of the focus groups it was apparent that we would only be able to include women in the interviews. This was primarily for reasons of access but the staff of Pavee Point also felt that Traveller men would be highly unlikely to discuss an issue as personal as domestic abuse in a group situation¹⁰³. Three focus groups were held with Traveller women; one in the Pavee Point centre in the North Inner City Dublin, one in Galway in a hotel where the women were already attending a day of events¹⁰⁴ and one in Tallaght in the group's regular meeting room. Between eight and 14 Traveller women attended each focus group. These

97 The rationale for including only women in the focus groups is discussed later in the chapter.

98 A much smaller survey of 1,000 respondents conducted on behalf of the Communications Regulator at the time of the fieldwork for the *National Study on Domestic Abuse* estimated that 83 – 84 per cent (with a margin of error of +/- 3%) of households had a landline telephone.

99 Guidelines from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government recommend that all Traveller group housing schemes and halting sites be equipped with at least one fixed telephone line, however, Pavee Point contends that many Travellers do not have any access to a landline telephone.

100 There is some evidence to suggest that partly due to increased mobile phone usage an increasing number of people are choosing not to have or for other reasons do not have access to a landline telephone. This is therefore, more of an issue now and for future research than it was at the time of the fieldwork (March to June, 2003) for the *National Study on Domestic Abuse*.

101 None of these women participated in the telephone survey.

102 The Census 2002 recorded that the entire Irish population was evenly split (50:50) between men and women it also showed that 26 per cent of the population are aged 17 years and younger the remaining 74 per cent are 18 years of age and older.

103 At the time of the research, the Pavee Feens Hawken (Traveller Men Working) programme working with Traveller men had started to look at the issue of domestic abuse.

104 The Galway group are from the Galway Traveller Support Group, Primary Health Care Programme, they met in the hotel on this day due to a lack of space in the support groups premises.

three focus groups took place between October, 2003 and March, 2004. The focus groups with Traveller women were not tape recorded as the facilitators felt this would make the women reluctant to talk openly, hence a shorthand transcriber, a member of Pavee Point staff, was also present in each focus group to make a record of the discussions.

In order to establish contact with the refugee and asylum seeker¹⁰⁵ population the Irish Refugee Council were consulted. They agreed to circulate a poster advertising the study amongst all of their contacts and requesting participation. In response to this the Vincentian Refugee Centre contacted the Council. The centre operates from St. Peter's Church in Phibsboro, Dublin. A group of women who meet in the centre regularly agreed to participate in a focus group¹⁰⁶. As no questions were asked with regard to the women's nationality¹⁰⁷ or legal status¹⁰⁸ this group are referred to as immigrant women from this point onwards. Eight women participated in this focus group. This was the only focus group conducted with immigrant women¹⁰⁹. This focus group took place in July 2004 and was tape-recorded for transcription purposes.

The remainder of the chapter discusses the key themes which emerged from the focus groups; firstly, in respect of Traveller women and secondly, from the perspective of immigrant women. These groups are relevant in a discussion of domestic abuse as "Traveller women, alongside women of colour, experience a particular form of oppression as a result of the fusion of racism and sexism" (Fay, 1999: p.25). Where possible, attempts have been made to compare the attitudes and experiences of these groups to those identified elsewhere in the report through the telephone survey. There are of course certain themes that relate specifically to these groups and these are also discussed.

Traveller Women

The following section outlines the themes most evident in the focus group discussions. It is relevant to point out that "traditionally there has been widespread denial among Travellers about sensitive issues such as violence in the home" (Fay, 1999: p.26). In more recent times, however, this has begun to change. "With an increasing number of Traveller women accessing educational opportunities and beginning to work on the issue, Traveller women who experience violence are beginning to realise that this does not have to be a regular occurrence" (Fay, 1999: p.27). A further issue for Traveller women was raised in the recently published National Action Plan Against Racism which recognised that "racism can take different, sometimes overlapping forms, which can include racism experienced by Travellers on the basis of their distinct identity and nomadic tradition" (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2005: p.56).

105 There are no figures available of the number of refugees and asylum seekers currently resident in Ireland. In the period 1992 to 2004 a total of 63,891 applications for asylum were received in Ireland. The Census 2002 recorded 10 per cent of the population had been born outside of Ireland although the majority of these were from other countries within the European Union (mainly the United Kingdom).

106 As with the Travellers it was felt that domestic abuse was an issue many immigrant men might be reluctant to discuss, furthermore, in order to maintain as much consistency as possible it was thought appropriate to include only immigrant women.

107 It is believed all of the women were of African (predominantly Nigerian) origin. Note that this group differs from those born outside Ireland who were picked up in the national survey (discussed in Chapter 5). Most of the latter were of European origin.

108 The women in the focus group were not asked about or selected upon the basis of their refugee application status hence it is not known if all of the women in this group were asylum seekers or refugees.

109 Due to time constraints it was not possible to devote additional resources to finding alternative ways to contact further groups of asylum seekers/refugees.

Attitudes Towards Domestic Abuse

The Traveller women defined domestic abuse in quite broad terms and without prompting acknowledged that it could incorporate mental/emotional abuse as well as physical violence. They also mentioned that in many ways they felt that the physical violence would be easier to cope with than a man “put[ting you] down” or “being made a prisoner in your own home” or “getting called names”, as the following quote from a woman in the Galway focus group illustrates.

“There’s two kinds. There’s domestic violence and then there’s the torment. It doesn’t have to be physical. You can be called names and treated like dirt. That’s worse than getting a beating. Other things can be mental torture” (Galway: P8).

The automatic response of the women was to consider only other women as the victims of domestic abuse but all of the groups acknowledged that men could also experience domestic abuse, albeit to a lesser extent than women.

Many of the women felt it was positive that domestic abuse is discussed more openly now than has been the case in the past. They noted that improved access to and participation in education had benefited the younger women in the Travelling community as they had more awareness that this behaviour was/is wrong and more knowledge about how to get help if they needed it. The women were divided on the issue as to whether or not domestic abuse was/is more prevalent amongst the Traveller or settled population. They did state, however, that they felt domestic abuse was more hidden amongst the middle and upper class professions and that sanctions would be less likely to be taken or harder to impose against these people.

“Doctors, solicitors and judges are the worse kind because when they do it it’s not known. I know a woman who was kicked to death and he was a big shot” (Galway: P8).

“They’re too high up to come down” (Galway: P7).

Disclosure

The focus group participants felt that women might be more inclined to disclose if they were experiencing domestic abuse now than would have been the case in the past. The discussion still contained many references to the hidden nature of domestic abuse and of the excuses for injuries women will provide to keep their experiences private. Some of the women raised a very interesting point in relation to the way the Traveller way of life has changed in recent times and the implications of more Travellers living in permanent accommodation.

“There was a more open life on the road, now we’re living more private than we did years ago” (Dublin: P6).

Whereas previously on the road side or in a halting site the women would be able to provide informal supports to one another there was the impression that now women were more isolated from one another and so the same level of support could not be offered.

As was found to be the case in the survey, the women recognised that it would be easier to disclose to a friend or a stranger than to their own mothers. This was largely explained by the fact that the women would not wish to cause worry or distress to their mother.

“Sometimes it’s easier to tell a stranger than one of your own” (Tallaght: P8).

“Some would like to tell their mothers but they won’t do it” (Dublin: P8).

Disclosing experience of domestic abuse to a settled person was also a difficult option as the women felt there was a general lack of understanding of Traveller culture and also that the settled population would be prejudicial against them.

“Even if they do nothing gets done they just say you’re a Traveller and aren’t Travellers always fighting and drinking” (Dublin: P11).

A further complication for the Travelling community is, in many cases, the lack of access to a landline or a mobile telephone. This means that contacting any services or agencies and even calling a helpline is very problematic for many of the women.

Refuge Use

As has been shown by an examination of the refuge survey data in Chapter 3, there are a disproportionate number of Traveller women using refuge accommodation. There was widespread awareness of numerous refuges amongst the women and many recounted personal experiences of refuge use. Whilst the women were appreciative of the option of refuge accommodation being open to them, there were nevertheless problematic issues. Essentially these were the opinions of others, particularly Traveller men, as to why women are staying in refuge accommodation and the security of the refuge. It is important to note at this point that the women often refer to refuges as ‘hostels’ in the direct quotations.

There seemed to be the suggestion that there were a lot of negative opinions about refuges and that generally, women would only use them if they were desperate and had no where else to go. In particular, it was suggested that Traveller men would be deeply suspicious of what a woman had been doing while staying in a refuge – implying that Traveller men believed this was only used as an excuse to allow other behaviour.

“If you’re not with your family – they know where you are – there’s only the hostel. There’d be gossip in your own place” (Galway: P2).

“They’d say she was in there having a child. ... They’d say it was a whore’s home or a prostitute house” (Tallaght: P6).

“Even with some married women they’d say she’s gone off with a man” (Tallaght: P9).

Some of the women questioned the notion that a woman should have to leave her home at all because of domestic abuse.

“I don't think women should leave – it's he who should have to go. If he's causing the problem he should go” (Dublin: P4).

The issue of whether or not there should be Travellers working in the refuges and/or Traveller only refuges was discussed in the focus groups. The general feeling was that a Traveller only refuge was not necessary because:

“We're all women at the end of the day. ...I remember a woman came in driving a gold Rolls Royce. It took her 20 years to leave her home because she was ashamed in front of the neighbours. She got beaten the day she got married. The two of us were in the one boat. I don't think there should be a special Traveller refuge” (Tallaght: P6).

On balance, the majority felt that it would be useful to have Travellers working in the refuges or at least for the staff to have culturally appropriate and anti-racist training in relation to Traveller culture. This would put the women more at ease whilst staying in the refuge but they also acknowledged that there were some potential negative consequences to this. Firstly, it was believed that other Travellers, particularly Traveller men, might react less than favourably to a woman working in a refuge as they would wonder as to her motivations and also:

“You would be asking for trouble working in the hostel [refuge]. If I was her and I went home it could come onto my family and start trouble. They'd say she wasn't minding her own business” (Galway: P14).

Secondly, it was felt that confidentiality would be a major issue. If a Traveller was working in a refuge they would have to maintain high levels of confidentiality so as not to disclose the identity and/or whereabouts of another Traveller staying in the refuge. It was felt that the way this 'news' would spread quickly throughout the Travelling community could put women's lives in danger.

“My own point of view – I didn't talk to a Traveller or wouldn't discuss my private thing for fear of bringing it outside [the refuge]. You'd have to have trust. With the Traveller men it wouldn't work out – wouldn't know what she'd [the Traveller worker] bring in or out” (Galway: P7).

The Traveller Health Strategy was published by the Department of Health and Children in 2002 and proposed that “Traveller organisations [will] be funded to train and employ Traveller women as refuge workers and counsellors” (Department of Health and Children, 2002: p.55). The implementation of the Strategy will be reviewed later this year by the Department of Health and Children.

A further issue raised in all of the focus groups and of major concern to the women was that of the security of the refuges and ease with which men can gain access to some of the refuges. When asked to describe their ideal refuge a number of women stated:

“One that can't be found – seriously. They know the one here and the one in Navan and Dundalk” (Tallaght: P6).

The women felt that the men were too aware of the locations of the refuges and would go looking for the women:

“The way it is with Traveller men, they’d say my missus is gone. Well, have you tried the one in Navan and the one in Dundalk” (Tallaght: P8).

A more worrying aspect described by the women is the ease with which the men are able to gain entry into the refuge itself.

*“The hostel in *1* is more secure than the hostel in *2*. In *2* they [the men] can walk in the door. There’s no safety. *1* is a better hostel. *1* is the best hostel that’s going. In *1* there’s a big yard and no man is allowed in. ...In *2* they [the men] can walk in the door” (***: P7)¹¹⁰.*

The refuge is the very place that women have turned to for safety:

“They go in there for protection and they should get it” (Dublin: P7).

“[The refuge] was safe – there were gates and no one could just walk in. She felt very, very safe” (Dublin: P3).

It appears there is a need to address at least the perception that men can gain easy access to some of the refuges and to reassure people that refuge staff will not reveal the names of those staying there to any third party.

The women also agreed that there was a need for greater awareness amongst Traveller women of the various support services that are available. Whilst there is widespread awareness of refuges, there is little awareness or use of helplines or other support services. The women felt that this could most readily be addressed through posters/leaflets advertising services/numbers, that business cards should be made available providing telephone numbers (particularly for those with reading difficulties) and there could also be greater television advertising. The issue of access to a mobile telephone, mentioned below in the context of difficulties in reporting abuse to the Gardaí, is also likely to be a factor for Traveller women.

Issues Relating to the Criminal Justice System

The women in all of the focus groups were vocal in their opinions of the response of the Gardaí and the Courts to the issue of domestic abuse. In line with the findings from the telephone survey discussed in Chapter 3, the main issue for Traveller women in respect of the Gardaí was a general reluctance to report their experiences of violent and abusive behaviour at all. The main reasons for not reporting their experiences to the Gardaí were based on a concern that the Gardaí could or would not do anything, that the Gardaí would not believe them or would not take it seriously and/or fear of reprisal from their partner.

¹¹⁰ The location of this focus group has been withheld to protect the identity of the refuges to which the quote refers.

“Rather suffer than go to the Gardaí and what can they do?” (Dublin: P9).

“Men can blame the woman and this fella can be as violent as hell and the guards believe the man more than the woman” (Dublin: P6).

“It’s only domestic violence to them [the Gardaí]” (Galway: P2).

“I put up with an awful life. I was afraid to go to the Gardaí. I was afraid it would get out and he’d kill me altogether” (Galway: P13).

This rationale for non-reporting seems to differ from that found in the telephone survey where a large proportion of respondents stated that their experiences were not serious enough to warrant the involvement of the Gardaí¹¹¹. A belief that the Gardaí could/would not do anything effective to help and a fear of making the situation worse were mentioned by six per cent of survey respondents. The report, ‘An Garda Síochána Human Rights Audit’ stated that “Pavee Point has over the years raised concerns over racial discrimination, and physical and verbal abuse by Gardaí, and also lack of protection for Travellers when they report crimes carried out against them. Other organisations working with women have also pointed to the double discrimination faced by Traveller women, particularly in cases of domestic violence when stereotyped assumptions are made about Traveller lifestyle which can prevent assistance being given” (Ionann Management Consultants, 2005: p.79).

An additional factor militating against Traveller women contacting the Gardaí is the practical difficulties some women face as many do not have landline telephones. Few of the women, especially the older women, have access to a mobile phone. This means that they physically cannot call the Gardaí in an emergency situation:

“I couldn’t get out of the house. I didn’t have a phone. There might be people now who haven’t a phone. How are you going to get the Gardaí?” (Galway: P8).

The women also outlined the dilemma they face in calling the Gardaí; if the guards come and take action then they face the recriminations from the rest of their community as well as from their partner. Conversely, if the Gardaí come and do not take what the women believe to be effective action, they face recriminations from their partner and also will be less inclined to report their partners behaviour again in the future.

“Garda – an odd one too much afraid that he’d be arrested and if so she’d be killed altogether” (Dublin: P8).

“If they bring the guards in – if he’s arrested then straight away the wife is blamed. ...Garda can come out but if they don’t do anything about it the woman is twice as worse off” (Dublin: P4).

“If police come and nothing is done that’s taken all the trust away” (Dublin: P11).

111 This is despite the fact that they came within our classification of having experienced severe abuse.

On the more positive side one woman suggested that news of one occasion where the Gardaí had responded in a way that the women felt was appropriate would become common news throughout the Travelling community. This might encourage further reporting and might also boost relations generally between the Gardaí and the Travelling community.

“If it started and there was one man and something was done – you’d hear an awful lot about it” (Dublin: P11).

Furthermore, the women did acknowledge that “not all Gardaí are bad” and that they had good relations with some Gardaí who were “nice”.

The women had a number of suggestions to make about how the Gardaí could improve the manner in which they respond to domestic abuse cases. Principally, these focussed upon providing additional, culturally appropriate and anti-racist training for all Gardaí in relation to how to deal effectively with domestic abuse call-outs. As noted in the ‘Garda Action Plan for the Implementation of the Garda Human Rights Audit’ report the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána has undertaken to “further develop human rights and diversity training for all staff” (An Garda Síochána, 2005b: p.6). Furthermore, the ‘An Garda Síochána Policing Plan 2005’ commits the Gardaí to “conduct anti-racism and cultural diversity training to increase knowledge levels [around ethnic and cultural diversity]” (An Garda Síochána, 2005a: p.13).

Some Traveller women expressed the opinion that there should be a specialist domestic abuse unit in every Garda station with dedicated personnel to respond to domestic abuse cases. Others thought it would be helpful for Garda personnel to visit refuges and speak to women about their experiences to gain a greater understanding of the issues. In the Tallaght focus group the women suggested it would be helpful if the Gardaí worked more closely with the refuges and made contact with the women there:

“When a woman goes to a refuge, the police should check as well to see if the family are alright, and there should be on and off checks when she goes back [home]. That might frighten the husband if he knows these people are keeping a close eye on him” (Tallaght: P6).

The women believed there was merit in this continuing and preventative contact between the Gardaí and themselves. This is a resource and deployment issue for the Gardaí but may merit further consideration.

The Courts and the process of applying for court orders under the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 were discussed at some length in all of the focus groups. Again, there were practical issues that were of concern to the women. Primarily, they noted difficulties associated with the process of going to court and applying for an order.

“I don’t think women should have to go to court. She should be able to get a Barring Order if she goes to the police station. It’s an emergency” (Tallaght: P6).

“Or there should be a court session in the refuge” (Tallaght: P8).

“They should have the Barring Orders printed and then you’d just put your name to it. A phone call should do” (Tallaght: P6).

There also seemed to be a degree of confusion around the Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2002¹¹². Confusion over legal terminology is an issue for all women, but particularly for those with low literacy levels. The provision of training and information on women’s legal rights may be required to ensure women experiencing violence obtain appropriate supports to leave a violent relationship.

The women expressed the view that the court hearing itself could be traumatic. If the person whom they were applying for the order against (the respondent) was also present in court they could attempt to upset or intimidate the women:

“Solicitor should go into the safe house and say here’s your Barring Order so you wouldn’t have to go to court to get it. That way you don’t have to look at him. There’s body language you know” (Galway: P8).

There was also some confusion amongst the women over whether or not women who were/are living in a caravan could obtain Barring Orders. This was further complicated by their communal living, as the women believed they could not seek protection unless they remained living in the same place as their partner.

The women suggested that the legislation be amended so that a Barring Order offered protection to the complainant regardless of where they were living:

“A Barring Order should cover you – not where you live” (Galway: P19).

Again there seemed to be a lack of awareness amongst the women as to the different types of orders available and the different protection that they can offer. A Barring Order provides that the respondent must leave the shared home and (in cases where the applicant is residing at another place) must not enter any place where the applicant resides¹¹³. Safety and Protection Orders on the other hand refer to the individuals and prohibit the respondent from certain types of behaviour regardless of where they are. This was also found to be the case in the survey, where just over one in four respondents (28 per cent) had heard of Safety and Interim Barring Orders.

A further area of concern to the Traveller women was the manner in which the Barring Orders are issued by registered post to the respondent rather than being served in person by a Garda. The women expressed the opinion that this placed them at additional risk of violence.

“What use is a Barring Order when it’s sent out in the post? They should send the Gardaí out with it and not bring the woman into court. You get a beating when the Barring Order is landed in the post” (Galway: P7).

¹¹² The Traveller women were under the impression that the man would have to consent to the order being made. In fact this is not the case. The Act simply imposed a time limit on Interim Barring Orders that are made *ex parte* (in the absence of the respondent) to protect the right of the respondent to be heard in court as well as the complainant. None of the orders require the permission of the respondent and efforts should be made to dispel this myth amongst Traveller women.

¹¹³ Certain restrictions as to the length of time a couple have been living together in the period immediately prior to the application and in relation to ownership (legal or beneficial interest) of the property apply to applications for Barring Orders and Interim Barring Orders.

Furthermore, there was the perception that breaches of Barring Orders need to be more vigorously punished by the courts and that any breach should lead to an automatic custodial sentence.

“If he breaches the Barring Order one time he should be sent to jail” (Galway: P7).

Currently, the legislation stipulates that a breach of any order is an offence punishable on summary conviction by “a fine not exceeding £1,500 [punts] [equivalent to €1,905] or, at the discretion of the court, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or to both” (Domestic Violence Act, 1996: S17(i)).

Impact upon Children

A recurring theme in the focus groups was the differing effects and consequences that domestic abuse can have for children. These discussions centred around four general areas; the effects of domestic abuse upon children, the complications which can occur with refuge use due to children, the fear women have of their children being taken into care and legal custody of their children.

Some of the women mentioned that children could become the victims of domestic abuse in certain situations. There was the suggestion that children might be the victims of violence in order to further distress their mother.

“Some beats the children to aggravate her or to get to her” (Dublin: P10).

Generally, the women did not feel that children were likely to be in danger of direct violence but there were serious concerns about the effects of witnessing violence and of being aware of abusive behaviour in the home upon children.

“They’re [the men] not really a danger to the children but it is bad for the children” (Galway: P14).

“They end up missing school and they’re afraid of their lives” (Dublin: P4).

As well as the more immediate effects of being afraid and absent from school some of the women discussed the longer-term effects upon children. They believed that whilst some children would grow up vowing never to use violence against their partner, others might follow the example they had witnessed as children.

“When I grew up there was a bad atmosphere and it does impact on you” (Galway: P15).

“The sons are getting it from their fathers. Some say they saw their mothers getting bet and say I’m not going to do it” (Tallaght: P6).

The topic of children was also raised on numerous occasions during the discussions on the use of refuge accommodation. Some of the women felt reluctant to take children to a refuge at all:

“Who’s going to take the children to a hostel [refuge]?” (Galway: P8).

A more important issue though was whether or not the refuges would accept children, particularly boys, over a certain age and whether or not the refuges would admit women with large numbers of children.

“In hostels isn’t there a certain age limit? If I left [home] the children would have to come with me” (Galway: P11).

“No mother on earth is going to leave her children behind her. I went to a hostel but they were full out. They’d ask how many children and when I said nine they full out” (Galway: P8).

The policy of refuges in relation to the admittance of children is clearly of serious concern to the Traveller women. Many related stories of experience of being turned away from refuges because they had too many children with them or because their children were too old to be admitted to the refuge. As women are obviously reluctant to leave children behind when going to stay in a refuge this issue needs to be addressed. The National Network of Women’s Refuges and Support Services (NNWRSS) in conjunction with their partners are, at time of going to press, drafting a ‘Child Protection and Welfare Policy’ document which will address the issues of the admittance of children to refuges. At this stage, the NNWRSS hopes to begin nationwide implementation of the policy document in late 2005.

Concern for children also affects whether or not a woman will leave her home and seek refuge and indeed their decision to return to a violent partner.

“I’d rather leave the small ones and take the big one – I’d be afraid he’d be beating up the bigger ones if I wasn’t there” (Tallaght: P9).

“Most times you go back for the sake of the children. You want to take the older ones into the refuge but its 14 years for boys” (Tallaght: P5).

Other women were anxious that children’s education should not be affected if their mothers do decide to take them to a refuge. This factor is of course complicated by the fact that sometimes women may have to travel long distances to a refuge.

“The whole idea of schools for the children in the refuges – there should be a bus that picks them up. They have to go to school” (Tallaght: P8).

Concern over children being taken into care was a major barrier noted by the women that prevented them from reporting experiences of domestic abuse and made them reluctant to seek help. When asked why they were reluctant to discuss their experiences the women suggested that:

“When women had a bad life she’d be protecting the children because the children would be taken off them” (Galway: P13).

“Maybe there’s lots afraid the children would be taken off them – social workers” (Tallaght: P9).

These comments should be viewed in the context that disproportionate numbers of Traveller children are being taken into care which means the women are more fearful of disclosing domestic abuse¹¹⁴. Social workers and the courts are guided on taking children into care by the Child Care Act, 1991. This Act maintains the importance of the family unit, it stipulates that health boards shall “have regard to the principle that it is generally in the best interests of the child to be brought up in his own family” (Child Care Act, 1991: S3 (2)(c)). Taking a child into care is, therefore, a last resort measure. A woman disclosing her own experiences of domestic abuse is therefore unlikely to lead directly to a child/children being taken into care unless the child is also at substantial risk.

There is, however, research and practice to suggest that this is a concern that affects all women, not just Travellers. A report produced on child protection for the Mid-Western Health Board (as it was called at the time) stated that “abused women generally fear contact with agencies like Health Boards because of anxieties that their ability to parent and child protection issues will become the primary concern of professionals” (Ferguson, 1997: p.6). These concerns, shared by all women can serve as a “block to effective intervention” because of the “dilemma that an abused mother faces, in that she cannot protect her child unless she herself is protected, but if she asks for that protection, her child may be removed” (Holt, 2003: p.57). Pavee Point also raised concerns over racial discrimination by social workers working with Travellers.

The issue of child custody was one that the women did not see as affecting their decision to leave and/or apply for a Barring Order. All of the women were sure that men would not want to seek custody of their children and equally that they could not rely on men to look after their children if they could not take them with them when seeking refuge.

“You never hear of a man and woman arguing and the man taking the children. It would stop them having a good time. It’s always the women. If you’re getting a Barring Order that’s the least of your worries” (Dublin: P11).

Issues Specific to the Travelling Community

Certain issues also arose in the focus groups that were specific to the Traveller culture, way of life and the attitudes of Traveller men. In many instances the women were undecided as to whether changes, in more recent times, had had the effect of lessening or contributing to domestic abuse. These issues involve the matchmaking tradition, the attitudes of Traveller men towards their wives, marital rape and sexual abuse and the informal supports Traveller women offer to each other.

Traditionally, Travellers have had their own form of arranged marriages and courting or dating was uncommon. In more recent times couples have begun to date and to have a greater role in choosing their own partner.

“In the old days you didn’t know each other when you got married. You’d have a few children and then split up. Now there are better opportunities to get to know each other and you may go out with each other for a while” (Galway: P2).

¹¹⁴ A summary leaflet on research conducted by the Traveller Health Unit of the Eastern Region found that “Travellers comprise less than 1 per cent of the total population but about 6 per cent of children in alternative care in the Eastern Region are Travellers” (Traveller Health Unit, 2004). This disproportionate representation is attributed by the authors to the fact that “the basic situation of Traveller identity is not recognised in policy or planning for child welfare and protection services, many Traveller children’s health and well being are at severe risk due to their accommodation situation” (Traveller Health Unit, 2004).

The women were divided as to whether or not the move towards selecting one's own partner was proving to be more or less beneficial for the success and happiness of the marriage. It is also interesting to note that generally there did not seem to be a negative attitude towards marital breakdown and/or separation amongst the women. Whilst this may cause "disappointment" to the family, the women would not be prevented from leaving an unhappy marriage.

Traveller men were presented as being particularly controlling of their wives in terms of social interaction and in some cases economically controlling as well. There was the general impression given that women were the property of the man and that in some cases, whatever a woman did, it would not be enough to make their husband happy. Again, though the women suggested that this was changing in recent times as the women were allowed to become involved with organised groups, such as Pavee Point, which would not previously have been the case.

"Women get bullied – want them to be shopping for better food, but haven't the money for it, want alterations in the place their living. They're not allowed to mix with the other women. They mightn't even talk to someone else" (Dublin: P7).

"They say she's mine and I'm in control. ...With an allowance one woman can keep that – another woman has to hand it all up" (Dublin: P6).

The issue of economic control by Traveller men is likely to put Traveller women at increased risk of experiencing domestic abuse. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 women whose partners make decisions on household income are at increased risk of experiencing severe domestic abuse.

There are, of course, many barriers to women talking about the issue of marital rape, particularly for those who live in a small community or where there has been a matched or arranged marriage. All of the focus groups addressed the issue of marital rape. A common theme amongst many of the Traveller women, as with women in general, was the lack of awareness that marital rape is illegal.

"I thought if you were married it wasn't rape. I'd say a lot of Travellers think that" (Dublin: P8).

"Because you're married they can do it" (Dublin: P11).

The women also discussed the many methods they have for informally supporting each other if they are aware one of the women is experiencing domestic abuse and who, for whatever reason, does not want to leave her home and go to a refuge. The women recounted stories of the 'secret' (from the men) ways in which they used to communicate with each other on the roadside to share food and other resources between them in order to keep their husbands happy. They would also:

"Give them an odd ring. ...Give her a lift" (Tallaght: P6).

"If you've money give it to her" (Tallaght: P9).

These informal supports, however, can leave the women open to arguments in their own relationships as the men do not approve of the women ‘interfering’ in each others lives in such a manner.

“I gave someone a lift one day – I gave her a lift to the train station. The children told back on her. He had the face worn off me. I got a telling off. She came back to me again and asked me to give her a lift. I told her I couldn’t – it was going to bring trouble to my door” (Tallaght: P5).

From the Traveller focus groups it has been established that Traveller women use a variety of informal supports to assist one another if one of their group is experiencing domestic abuse. This mutual aid is of particular importance due to the extent of control Traveller men exert over their wives, however, this control also serves to complicate and limit the aid the women can offer each other. It has also been documented that Traveller women are often reluctant to seek help from outside of the Travelling community due to a fear of experiencing prejudice and a general mistrust of the authorities. Many of the issues raised in the Traveller focus groups might equally apply to women generally, such as, their opinions of the commonality of experience of abuse, concern over the effects of domestic abuse upon children, a reluctance to upset family members, the security of refuges and the need for improved information on domestic violence orders and marital rape.

Immigrant Women¹¹⁵

It is recognised that “women asylum seekers/refugees are particularly vulnerable and encounter specific problems accessing services” (Genesis Europe, 2002: p.108). They also have much in common with other marginalised women, such as Traveller women. The key issues raised by the immigrant women in their focus group are outlined below.

Attitudes Towards Domestic Abuse

There was a high level of awareness of domestic abuse amongst the immigrant women. As with the Travellers they recognised that this was physical violence but could also include emotional aspects and verbal abuse.

“Hitting the partner.”

“Well, physical only, the problem, emotions... to be unhappy. The situation in the house is not the best for anybody.”

The women also acknowledged that whilst domestic abuse was predominantly initiated by the male partner, women also instigated abuse against their male partners.

“I have heard about domestic abuse... situation where there is a fight between a couple, mostly initiated by the male, by the man, and sometimes you also have situations where it is initiated by the woman.”

Sexual violence was not necessarily regarded as a form of abuse within a relationship.

¹¹⁵ None of these women participated in the telephone survey.

“Most people don’t understand sexual violence as an abuse.”

As with the Traveller women the general attitude was that marital rape and sexual assault were not serious offences. The women suggested that, whilst they would hope these types of behaviour would not occur, when they are committed by the husband they are to be accepted as a part of married life.

The underlying tone of the discussions amongst the women was very much that domestic abuse was considered to be a part, albeit an unwelcome part, of married life and something one had to ‘put up with’ within a relationship. The women expressed the view that they believed domestic abuse to be more prevalent amongst the immigrant community than in Irish society generally. Research studies in the UK (Mirrlees-Black, 1999 and Walby and Allen, 2004) have found that there is little difference in the risk of victimisation based on ethnicity, with the possible exception of Asian men who appear to be less likely to experience domestic abuse than white men.

Disclosure

The immigrant women stated that they would be unlikely to tell any authority figure, but particularly the Gardaí, of experiences of domestic abuse. The main reasons for not reporting or disclosing were linked to their insecurities over their status in Ireland and also a fear of recriminations from their families. They were very much of the view that domestic abuse was a private matter that should only be discussed publicly in the most severe cases.

“If you call the Gardaí in it becomes a public matter and most people would not want their family affairs to be a public issue and it is not culturally accepted, for a woman most especially, to report the husband, especially to the police or the authorities, when it comes to domestic disputes.”

Reporting a man to the Gardaí would be viewed negatively by the community and the women would be made to feel ashamed of reporting him.

“If the man is sent out of the house because of that [woman reporting behaviour] it is a problem for the woman because she will have to face the family and friends and the community which will see that as a bad behaviour on the part of the woman.”

A key problem identified by the immigrant women involved both their own and their husbands legal status in Ireland. The women expressed the view that those who had not been granted refugee status or residency in Ireland would be less inclined to report experiences of domestic abuse for fear of the effects this may have upon their asylum application. The women also expressed concern that, regardless of their legal status, they would not wish to see their partner end up with a criminal record if they reported their experiences.

“Very few of them would have the courage to call the Gardaí for their husbands for fear of one that the husband might be deported eventually or that she might not get her residency. So many things she will think of before she takes that decision, except probably where the person in question has their residency but she probably feel that it might be a criminal record against her husband in the country.”

Other underlying issues identified by the immigrant women surrounded the implications of being left alone with children to care for and also gynaecological problems¹¹⁶ from which some of the women may suffer. The women highlighted the vulnerable position of many immigrant women in the discussions. Many are here with young children to care for and this factor in combination with the fact that their legal status may still be undecided means that many are not participating in the labour market. They are, therefore, dependent upon the earnings of their partners in many cases. This dependence would make the woman more inclined to stay with their partner to try to make the relationship work and less inclined to report his behaviour.

“If the husband was taken away like the children would not have anything to feed on as he is the breadwinner, a lot of times when women tend to cope with domestic violence is sheer poverty.”

Any gynaecological problems which a woman may be experiencing would also dissuade her from leaving her partner or disclosing domestic abuse to anyone. This was due to the fact that the woman would feel no other man would love her and there would be no prospect of re-marriage. This would particularly influence her decision if she had children as single parenthood is not culturally acceptable to African women.

The immigrant women also highlighted the informal route that they might take to try to resolve a domestic abuse situation. They said that they would turn to their family and friends to act as intermediaries between the couple.

“Rely on friends and families to talk with the man and try to solve the issue. Mostly that happened you call in family members or maybe the church pastors or the church priests.”

“Just try to talk to the couple, to counsel them.”

“They would first of all ask what the problem is. They would call them together to see what the problem really is, what happened, and try to find a solution.”

Refuge Use

There was very little knowledge and awareness amongst the immigrant women of refuges, almost none had heard of them and they did not know what services they offered¹¹⁷. When this was explained to the group the response of the women was overwhelmingly positive. They felt they provided the ideal solution as women could go there for a couple of days until the situation at home had calmed down and then return safely all without the need to formally report or disclose experiences of domestic abuse.

“It’s [going to a refuge] better than calling the Gardaí. She just needed to be outside of the home for a day or two, that was all she wanted. ...Such a place would be a good idea.”

Furthermore, the women suggested that it would be beneficial to have other immigrant women working in the refuge so that there was someone to talk to who understood their own culture and its implications for their situation.

¹¹⁶ The wo

¹¹⁷ Details of refuge locations and their contact details were given to the women following the focus group.

“I don’t know if you have non-Irish people that work there, I wouldn’t know, but I also know that if you have someone that comes because your culture is quite different from mine and the angle you might be looking at a situation from would be a great different from the way I am going to look at it because of my background, my origin, so it would be nice if you have African or some other [working in the refuge].”

The details of national free phone helplines were also explained to the women, as they were not aware of this type of service either¹¹⁸. Again, they were very positive in their responses and felt that immigrant women would be particularly likely to use a helpline. This is likely to be due to the anonymity they offer to the women. Similarly to the refuges, the women suggested it would be beneficial to have other immigrant women working on the helplines who would have a greater understanding of their culturally specific problems and issues.

Summary

In this chapter, we have looked in detail at the perceptions of domestic abuse expressed by two groups of marginalised women in Ireland: Travellers and immigrant women.

Both groups regarded emotional, as well as physical, abuse as ‘domestic violence’, but the general attitude was that marital rape and sexual assault were not serious offences. Evidence from the focus groups suggests that both Traveller and immigrant women feel a strong reluctance to involve authorities in cases of domestic abuse. For immigrant women, this factor is further complicated by their fears and insecurities surrounding their legal status in Ireland.

There are certain issues specific to immigrant women, such as their lack of awareness of refuges and other support services and their concerns and pain surrounding female genital mutilation. Traveller women also expressed some specific concerns about the extent of control Traveller men have over them, the negative effects of domestic abuse upon children and the security of refuge accommodation.

Another issue of potential relevance to both groups, in the context of limited literacy or difficulties with English, is the availability of information on legal protections and support services in a culturally appropriate format.

¹¹⁸ Details of telephone helplines were given to the women following the focus group.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion and Policy Implications

In this chapter we synthesise the main findings of the report and point to areas of criminal justice and other social policy where the results are relevant. In the foreword to the report, the National Crime Council makes more detailed recommendations.

Key Findings on Domestic Abuse

The findings are drawn together under a number of headings: the concept of domestic abuse, especially the distinction between severe abuse and minor incidents; the experiences of women and men; reconciling official statistics and the survey results; the significance of emotional abuse; trends in domestic abuse; leaving abusive relationships; vulnerable groups; potential triggers and public attitudes to abuse.

The Concept of Domestic Abuse

In keeping with the theoretical approach outlined in Chapter 1, domestic abuse is not defined solely in terms of particular behaviours or acts, but as *a pattern of physical, emotional or sexual behaviour between partners in an intimate relationship that causes, or risks causing, significant negative consequences for the person affected.*

In Chapter 1 we emphasised the importance of measuring domestic abuse in a manner that is consistent with the conceptual approach. Three sets of items were used to capture physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The measures of physical and emotional abuse included several items that could capture ‘milder’ acts as well as more severe ones. Physical abuse was measured by questionnaire items ranging in presumed seriousness from pushing or shoving and slapping, through threats, punching and kicking and, finally, to very severe physical violence such as attempting to smother, suffocate or choke you. The sexual abuse items included rape and attempted rape, and forcing the person to view pornography. The emotional abuse items included deliberately embarrassing the person in public, calling hurtful or humiliating names, trying to prevent the person from contacting family and friends, and deliberately keeping the person short of money.

In assessing the items as potential indicators of abuse, we demonstrated that they differed substantially in terms of severity, as measured by the proportion of people experiencing them who reported being physically injured, very frightened or distressed or that the behaviour had a major impact on their lives. We argued that because of these differences in severity it did not make sense to treat the behaviours as equivalent. Instead, the statistical technique of latent class analysis was used to simultaneously analyse the ‘acts’ and the impact. This allowed us to distinguish three groups of people in the population in terms of their experiences. The first and largest group consists of people who have never in their lives experienced any of the incidents. This group accounts for 72 per cent of the population. The second group, into which 17 per cent of the population falls, includes those who have experienced one or perhaps two physical or emotional incidents, but without these having a severe impact on them. This group may have experienced minor incidents of a physical or emotional nature. Because of the relatively small number of items measuring incidents of a sexual nature, we were not able to identify a group of people who experienced minor incidents of a sexual nature.

The third group, in which 11 per cent of the population are found, consists of those experiencing a pattern of behaviour that had an actual or potential severe impact on their lives. Because of the tendency of abused people to minimise the impact on their lives, we did not make disclosure of self-assessed severe impact a requirement for this group. It was enough that they experienced one or more of the types of behaviour that had a high probability of resulting in a severe impact in terms of physical injury, fear or distress. As the analysis in Chapter 1 showed, this third group was clearly distinguished from the second group in terms of both the number of different types of incidents experienced and the impact the behaviour had on them. In subsequent chapters where we focused on those who had been abused, we gave priority to the severity dimension rather than to the distinction between physical, sexual and emotional abuse and focused on this third group.

In Chapter 5 we returned to a consideration of the relationship between those experiencing minor incidents and those experiencing severe abuse. A key question in understanding domestic abuse is whether minor incidents which do not have a severe impact can be seen as precursors to severe abuse. If this is the case, we would expect them to be associated with similar characteristics of the respondent, except, perhaps, that minor incidents may occur at an earlier age. What we found was that characteristics of the respondent that we would expect to be associated with domestic abuse had a stronger relationship to severe abuse than to minor incidents. The risk of severe abuse was greater for women, for those who are separated/divorced or never married, in couples with unequal involvement in decisions about money, and in situations where there was domestic abuse between the parents. The risk of having been severely abused was also greater for those with children, those born outside Ireland or women whose partner was born outside Ireland and for those with poor health or a disability. The risk of experiencing minor incidents (but no severe abuse) was greater for men than for women and was not associated with being never married, having children or unequal decision making on money for men (although it is associated with unequal decision making for women).

Both minor incidents and severe abuse decline with age and the rate of decline with age is sharper for men than for women. If minor incidents were a precursor to severe abuse, we would expect a stronger decline with age for minor incidents than for severe abuse. Remember, when we speak of minor incidents we are talking about a group of people who experienced isolated acts of the type that might be considered abusive, but without being severely affected. If minor incidents are a precursor to severe abuse, we would expect a strong decline with age because the person either leaves the relationship or the behaviour moves to the 'severe abuse' category. For men, minor and severe abuse decline at a similar rate as age increases. There is some suggestion of a more rapid decline in minor incidents than in severe abuse for women, but the difference is not statistically significant¹¹⁹.

The results in Chapter 5, therefore, suggest that minor incidents and severe abuse have different predictors and risk profiles. This is consistent with the view that we are not dealing with different levels of the same phenomenon but with two different phenomena.

These results point to the danger in combining behaviours based solely on the nature of the acts, without regard to pattern and impact. This amalgamation of very different experiences would produce a

¹¹⁹ When control for men in education and training is omitted, age effect for men is slightly larger but still not significantly different for minor incidents vs. severe abuse and the model fit disimproves. Difference for women is not statistically significant ($P=.078$ for test of equality of age coefficients for women between minor incidents and severe abuse). Model with main effect for age fits significantly worse than model with separate age terms for men and women.

misleading picture of the prevalence, impact and risk factors for domestic abuse. Rather than treating impact as a dependent variable which can be assessed after measuring abuse on the basis of particular types of actions, the measurement of abuse needs to take account of impact explicitly and from the beginning. Because of the different profiles of those at risk of minor incidents and severe abuse, to adopt an acts-based approach to the measurement of domestic abuse would produce misleading results.

The Experiences of Women and Men who are Abused

In Chapter 1 we briefly reviewed the different, and sometimes contradictory, findings in the literature regarding the risk of abuse faced by women and men. These differences, we argued, stem from different approaches to the measurement of domestic abuse. The Conflict Tactics Scale, in particular, seeks to measure abuse solely based on types of behaviour or acts, without taking impact and meaning into account. This approach finds roughly equal prevalence of abuse among women and men, while acknowledging that the impact on women in terms of physical injury is more severe. The approaches that take impact into account, even if only implicitly by virtue of the link to crime victimisation, find a higher prevalence of abuse among women than among men. As we argued in the previous section, impact needs to be taken into account or we risk combining acts with very different impact and meaning into a measure which is likely to produce misleading conclusions.

In Chapter 1 we make an important distinction between those experiencing 'severe abuse' and those experiencing potentially abusive types of incidents, but without these having a major impact on them ('minor incidents'). We saw that women were much more likely than men to have experienced severe abuse: they are over twice as likely to have experienced severe physical abuse, seven times more likely to have experienced severe sexual abuse, and almost three times more likely to have experienced severe emotional abuse.

The analysis in Chapter 5 found that women are at a greater risk of severe abuse, even when other risk factors such as age, childhood experience and marital status are controlled. On the other hand, women are somewhat less likely than men to be found in the group that experiences minor incidents only (but no severe abuse) when all other factors are controlled. If minor incidents and severe abuse are combined, then, as with the approach adopted in the Conflict Tactics Scale, women and men would appear to be more similar in terms of risk. As we have argued, this approach is unwarranted as it involves combining very different forms of behaviour.

Women are about twice as likely as men to be injured as a result of severe abuse. Among those experiencing severe abuse (physical, emotional or sexual), about half were physically injured. However, even among the severely abused sub-sample, women's injuries tended to be more serious – women are nearly twice as likely as men to require medical treatment for their injuries and 10 times more likely to require a stay in hospital.

Apart from injury, women and men are affected differently by abuse in a number of other respects. Women are more likely than men to experience fear, to report that the abuse had a 'major impact' on their lives, and to report a loss of confidence. Men, on the other hand, are more likely than women to report that the experience made them more cautious.

Nonetheless, the survey results showed that there are a minority of men who have experienced severe abuse and the number of men, relative to the number of women, is not as different as official Garda statistics on abuse would lead us to believe. About one man in 25 has experienced severe physical abuse, one in 90 has experienced sexual abuse in a relationship and one in 37 has experienced severe emotional abuse. The figures for women are one in 11 for severe physical abuse, one in 12 for sexual abuse and one in 13 for severe emotional abuse. About one in 16 men and one in seven women have experienced one of these types of severe abuse.

Part of the difference between the survey results and Garda figures arises because men are less likely to report their experience to the Gardaí. The survey results showed that five per cent of severely abused men reported their experience to the Gardaí, compared to 29 per cent of severely abused women. However, women and men who were abused but did not report gave very similar reasons for not reporting to the Gardaí. The main reasons for not reporting the behaviour were that those affected felt it was not serious enough (one in five), that they could handle it themselves (one in eight), they felt shame, embarrassment or blamed themselves (one in eight), they made excuses for the partner's behaviour (one in eight) or felt it was not a matter for the Gardaí (one in nine). Two out of five of those who experienced severe abuse, then, did not report to the Gardaí because of concerns related to privacy and the sensitivity with which they would be treated.

Women and men were about equally likely to have told someone about the abuse, with two thirds revealing their experiences to someone. Most often, this was a friend or a family member.

Notwithstanding the fact that women are more than twice as likely as men to be severely abused, and that the consequences of the abuse in terms of seriousness of injury, fear and distress are more acute for women, domestic abuse is something that also affects a significant number of men. The survey suggests that in the region of 213,000 women and 88,000 men in Ireland have been severely abused by a partner at some point in their lives.

Official Statistics and Survey Results

As noted above, the survey suggested that only about one fifth of those who were severely abused reported the behaviour to the Gardaí. This suggests that official statistics on domestic violence incidents will capture only a small proportion of all cases. The survey also found no significant differences by region when other variables were controlled, although the rates are somewhat higher in towns and cities than in villages and rural areas. The pattern in the official statistics, showing a higher incidence of domestic violence in Dublin than in other areas, is likely to reflect differences in reporting or in recording practices by region. Unfortunately, the number of cases where severe abuse took place was too small to check whether reporting differed by region.

As noted in the previous section, women who have experienced domestic abuse are more likely than men who have experienced severe abuse to report it to the Gardaí (29 per cent versus five per cent). Thus the gender difference in terms of experience of severe abuse is not as large as suggested by the official statistics. The survey results lead us to expect about 2.3 severely abused women for every severely

abused man. In contrast, the ratio in the Garda Statistics for 2003 is 13 abused women for every one abused man.

Emotional Abuse

The evidence from the survey pointed to the importance of taking emotional abuse into account. In terms of public perceptions of what constitutes domestic abuse, survey respondents were only slightly less likely to regard emotional behaviours such as deliberately keeping short of money or calling hurtful names as abusive, compared to physical behaviours such as slapping, punching or kicking.

Those who had experienced severe abuse also placed a great deal of emphasis on emotional abuse. When asked what was the worst thing they experienced in a relationship, of all the types of behaviour discussed, almost half of the severely abused sub-sample listed an emotional incident as being the worst from their perspective, and women and men were very similar in this respect. Even among those who experienced severe physical or sexual abuse, the proportion identifying the worst thing that happened in terms of emotional or psychological abuse is about one half. This suggests that respondents are answering the question in terms of their experience of the abuse rather than in terms of specific incident types.

There was also evidence from the focus groups that respondents were placing a strong emphasis on emotional abuse, or the emotional consequences of abuse, with terms like ‘mental torture’ indicating how damaging and keenly-felt this abuse can sometimes be. Statistics from helplines, reported in Chapter 3, indicated that more calls were about emotional than physical abuse.

On the other hand, incidents of an emotional nature often occur without forming part of a pattern of behaviour and without having the kind of negative impact necessary, in our terms, to regard the abuse as ‘severe’. Nineteen per cent of respondents experienced emotional incidents of a minor nature – that is, no incidents that met our criteria for ‘severe’ abuse. This contrasts with only seven per cent who experienced physical incidents of a minor nature, with no major impact or pattern.

These results point to the importance of the emotional aspects of abuse for those most severely affected, but also to the danger of inferring the meaning and impact of an experience from the specific type of incident. Emotional abuse, in particular, cannot be defined without reference to the impact and patterning of the behaviour, otherwise a large proportion of those deemed to be ‘abused’ would in fact have experienced isolated incidents of minor consequence.

Trends in Domestic Abuse

Because of changes in the way domestic abuse incidents are recorded by the Gardaí, it is very difficult to conclude anything from this source regarding trends over time. As discussed in Chapter 3, there have been substantial changes in the way incidents of domestic abuse are processed and handled and, consequently, in the statistics that are available. Besides, we have seen that only about one in five of those experiencing severe abuse actually report it to the Gardaí.

The nature of the NSDA also made it difficult to draw conclusions regarding trends since it is a point in time survey. Nonetheless, there is something to be learned from the association between domestic abuse and age.

In Chapter 5 we saw that there is a clear decline in the risk of severe abuse by age. For men, the odds of both severe abuse and minor incidents decline by 37 per cent with each 10 year increase in age. The decline for women is not as sharp: a 15 per cent reduction in the odds of severe abuse and a 27 per cent reduction in the odds of minor incidents for each 10 year increase in age.

If we focus on abuse experienced in the last five years, the actual pattern is even more marked than this. One possibility is that older adults ‘forget’ abuse that happened earlier in their lives. This may be likely in the case of minor incidents, but is less likely in the case of severe abuse. Since we have controlled for marital status, being in a relationship at present and parenthood – all of which, as indicators of the level of investment in a relationship, may make it more difficult for people to disclose abuse – it is unlikely that the age differences are attributable to differences in the propensity to disclose abuse.

Unless we believe that there is a high rate of ‘forgetting’ abuse over time, the evidence suggests that young adults now are at a greater risk than their older counterparts were at the same age. This could be associated with a later age of marriage and changes in dating behaviour – including dating more partners – all of which may be associated with an increased exposure to potential abuse.

The evidence in Chapter 2 on the age at which abuse began also supports this argument of an increase in risk for young people. Here it was evident that in about 60 per cent of cases where the person was severely abused, the abuse began when they were under age 25. The fact that the abuse tends to be experienced fairly early in the relationship (70 per cent within the first two years) is also consistent with this view.

Leaving Abusive Relationships

In Chapter 2, we looked in detail at when the abuse was experienced. As noted in that chapter, the figures on more recent experience of abuse, experiences in the present relationship and experience from multiple partners cannot be as differentiated on the basis of severity as the measure of lifetime prevalence. It may be, then, that the abuse being captured in the more recent period and in the present relationship is of a less severe nature. Nonetheless, we saw in Chapter 2 that of all those who ever experienced severe abuse, a substantial proportion did not happen in the last five years or in the present relationship.

The data suggest that people are leaving abusive relationships in significant numbers. This is also borne out in the high rate of lifetime experience of severe abuse among those who are separated or divorced: close to 60 per cent of women and 30 per cent of men, as we saw in Chapter 4. Further evidence came from Chapter 2 where we saw that of those who were severely abused and living with the partner at the time, over half moved out.

While it is certainly positive that people are leaving abusive relationships, it is important to ensure that concern for their welfare does not end at that point. For one thing, the figures in Chapter 2 suggested that in about one third of cases where a severely abusive relationship ended, the abuse continued (or more rarely, actually began) after the relationship ended.

Vulnerable Groups

Several groups were identified as being highly likely to have experienced abuse:

- Those who are separated or divorced;
- Those whose parents or whose partner's parents were abusive to each other;
- Couples where there is inequality in decision making about money;
- Those with health problems or a disability; and
- Those born outside Ireland, most of whom come from other European countries.

Among those who are separated or divorced, almost 60 per cent of women and 30 per cent of men have experienced severe abuse at some point in their lives. The odds of having experienced severe abuse, when other factors are controlled, are 21 times higher for those who are separated or divorced than for those who are married or widowed. While this abuse is likely to have pre-dated the end of the relationship, not all of it is in the past. People who are separated or divorced are also at a much higher risk of experiencing abuse in their present relationship, in more than one relationship and in the last year than those in other marital statuses. This group, then, stands out as being most in need of support to cope with the effects of past abuse and to avoid becoming trapped in an abusive relationship in the future.

Family History

Women and men whose parents were abusive to each other are at an increased risk of experiencing abuse as adults. There is also an increase in risk if the partner's parents were abusive to each other. In both cases – own parents abusive and partner's parents abusive – the odds of severe abuse are more than doubled. In Chapter 4, it looked as though there was a stronger negative effect of the father abusing the mother, but this was not statistically significant in the multivariate models in Chapter 5, perhaps because of the much smaller number of cases where the mother was abusive to the father.

Where the person does not know whether or not there was abuse between the parents of the partner, there is also an increased risk – the odds of abuse are almost doubled. This is likely to reflect an increased vulnerability where the partner, and his or her family background, are not known very well. The slightly higher risk of abuse in towns and cities, compared to rural areas, may also reflect the weakening of social control associated with the greater anonymity of large urban areas.

This vulnerability in adulthood points to the damaging effects on children of abuse between the parents. An understanding is needed of the mechanism through which abuse in the family of origin translates into increased vulnerability to abuse in adulthood in order to develop appropriate responses.

Unequal Decision Making

While there is no relationship between the risk of severe abuse and household income, and no relationship to the proportion of total household income earned by the individual, it matters a great deal who makes decisions about income. The majority of couples who live together (80 per cent) make decisions about money jointly, with the remainder evenly divided between cases where the respondent decides and cases where the partner decides. Among people living with a partner, the risk of severe abuse is increased dramatically where decisions about money are made by one partner rather than by both jointly. The odds of severe abuse are increased sevenfold for women and two and a half times for men where the partner controls decisions about money. This association between abuse and exclusion from decisions about money is consistent with the feminist analysis of abuse as a pattern of behaviour linked to controlling the partner. On the other hand, the odds of severe abuse are increased five and a half times for men and 1.7 times for women where the decisions are made by the person himself or herself, rather than jointly. This paradoxical result may reflect a pattern of abuse linked to a failure to take responsibility for household decisions, and is worthy of further exploration.

Health and Disability

Among those whose health is not good, the odds of having experienced severe abuse are 1.8 times higher than among those whose health is good. The odds of having experienced severe abuse are 60 per cent higher for those with an ongoing health problem or disability and 2.9 times as high for those who are severely hampered by a condition or disability. Like divorce and separation, health problems and disability are likely to be primarily outcomes of abuse rather than something that makes an individual more vulnerable to abuse. However, being in poor health or being disabled also make it more difficult for people to leave an abusive relationship. We saw in Chapter 4 that women who are severely hampered by an ongoing condition are more likely to have experienced abuse in the last five years. Although the pattern was less evident for men in the figure in Chapter 4, when we control for other variables such as age and marital status in Chapter 5, the difference in impact is not significantly different for men and women. Thus, as well as concern for the impact of abuse on health and disability, we need to be concerned that people with health problems and disabilities who are in abusive relationships have full access to support and legal services.

Parenthood

When age, marital status and whether the person has a partner are controlled, those who have ever had children face 3.75 times the odds of having experienced severe abuse compared to those without children. This pattern was found for both women and men and is unrelated to the age of the children or to the number of children. This greater vulnerability associated with parenthood could be due to a number of factors, including the stresses of parenthood or the greater difficulty in leaving a relationship when there are children involved.

Migrants

Women and men born outside Ireland and women whose partners were born outside Ireland are at a higher risk of having been abused. As noted in Chapters 4 and 6, most of the sample members born outside Ireland came from other European countries and the same was true of the birthplace of non-Irish partners. We do not know whether the abuse happened in Ireland or outside Ireland or when it occurred in relation to the migration to this country. If the abuse occurred before the move, it may be that moving to Ireland was part of the process of leaving the relationship. If the abuse occurred after the move, the increased vulnerability may be associated with the stress of moving or with isolation from the support of family and friendship networks. As with people who are separated or divorced, however, this group may be in particular need of ongoing support to cope with the experience of having been abused.

Triggers

It is important to distinguish between triggers of abusive behaviour and ultimate causes. A trigger is an immediate precursor to the behaviour, whereas the ultimate causes are likely to be more complex.

The ultimate causes of domestic abuse are the subject of ongoing debate, and in Chapter 2 we briefly outlined some of these approaches. In that chapter, we also examined whether severe abuse appeared to be triggered by any specific types of events. In almost two out of five cases, the abusive behaviour had no specific trigger or was triggered by minor incidents. In about one third of cases, abuse is associated with the consumption of alcohol (34 per cent), especially when the male partner has been drinking. Further probing on the role of alcohol revealed that alcohol consumption was involved 'some of the time' for over two out of five respondents who were severely abused, and 'all of the time' for one quarter of cases. These results are far from clear-cut, but are not strongly suggestive of a primary causal link between alcohol consumption and abuse: in only one quarter of cases was alcohol consumption always involved. Nevertheless, abuse that occurs in the context of alcohol use may be more likely to lead to injury, so that its role in triggering domestic abuse needs to be taken seriously.

Public Attitudes

Public attitudes towards domestic abuse form an important part of the context in which this behaviour occurs. The evidence from the survey points to a low tolerance for physical, emotional and sexual behaviours that might be regarded as abusive. This was evidenced in the very high proportions who regarded behaviours such as slapping, punching, forcing sexual intercourse, depriving of money and name-calling as abusive. While the percentages willing to regard emotional behaviours as abusive was somewhat lower than the percentages regarding physical violence as abusive, the difference was very small.

The low tolerance for abusive behaviours was combined with a perception that abuse is relatively common: three quarters of respondents saw domestic abuse as either ‘very common’ or ‘fairly common’ in Ireland today, and two out of five people know someone who was abused. These results are significant in that they reveal a high level of awareness of domestic abuse and a low tolerance of the kinds of behaviours that are involved.

Points Relevant to Criminal Justice and Other Policy

As noted earlier, specific recommendations have been appended to this report by the National Crime Council. In the following, we will briefly outline the main areas where we feel the results of this study have a contribution to make.

The Gardaí and the Courts

The contrast between the survey results and the figures on domestic abuse available to the Gardaí point to the danger of basing policy and assessment of needs on figures on reported incidents. The survey showed that only about one in five adults who have ever experienced severe abuse have reported the abuse to the Gardaí, so that even with the improved recording and collation of data available with the PULSE system a large proportion of cases are likely to remain outside the Criminal Justice System.

In examining the reasons for not reporting abuse to the Gardaí, several of the responses point to the need to emphasise that domestic abuse cases will be handled in confidence and with sensitivity. Taking together the responses related to shame and embarrassment, concern for privacy, the sense that it was not a matter for the Gardaí or that the Gardaí would or could do nothing, we see that two out of five respondents held back from reporting because of concerns in this area. There is clearly room to get the message out that domestic abuse cases will be handled with sensitivity, confidentiality and will be treated seriously, and information on how the legal remedies are applied. It is important that the Gardaí promote public knowledge and awareness of the actions that they can take in response to domestic violence and of their commitment to responding effectively to domestic violence.

There is a need for the Gardaí to provide clear explanations to complainants as to what responses are within their power and the alternative routes which can be pursued (such as applying for an Interim or full Barring Order whilst the suspected offender is still in custody). It is Garda policy to object to bail being granted in domestic abuse cases and to inform the court of all possible grounds for refusing bail, including any history of violent or abusive behaviour.

Another telling point regarding the role of the Criminal Justice System is the response of those who had been severely abused when asked what they would do if they knew someone who was abused. We saw in Chapter 5 that they were somewhat less likely than average to tell the Gardaí, but were somewhat more likely to talk to the person who had been abused. Since more of them actually reported their own abuse than said they would report abuse of someone else, we interpreted this as suggesting a reluctance to take control of the situation out of the hands of the abused person. Combined with some of the reasons for not reporting expressed in Chapter 2 (such as ‘wanted to handle it myself’), this points to the need

to take the wishes of the abused person into account. Of course, there will be cases where the risk to the person's health and safety, or to the safety of children, is so great that intervention is required with urgency. However, where possible, a graduated approach, ensuring that the concerns of the abused person are treated with respect, would seem to be preferable.

The focus group interviews with Traveller and immigrant women pointed up a general reluctance to involve the Gardaí (or any authorities) in a situation of domestic abuse. This suspicion points to a possible need for additional and culturally appropriate training to Gardaí, or at least publicity confirming that all cases of domestic abuse will be taken seriously and that the welfare of the person at risk of abuse is the primary concern.

The Courts and Legal Protections

Very few of the sample had actually gone to court¹²⁰, which is not surprising given the low reporting rates. Most people had heard of the Family Law Courts, however, and most had heard of Barring and Protection Orders. Familiarity with Safety Orders and Interim Barring Orders was lower, however, suggesting a need for public information on these legal remedies. Clear and accurate information should be produced in a user friendly format as to the applicability and coverage of all orders.

If the case is to be pursued, the Courts Service should, as is current practice, continue to prioritise family law cases. The issue of granting bail is one for the Judiciary but Judges should be made fully aware of the intimidation of witnesses likely to occur in all domestic abuse cases.

Difficulties are faced by some women, particularly those with low literacy levels, in gaining knowledge of and accessing the legal system. The National Adult Literacy Agency published 'A Plain English Guide to Legal Terms' in 2003. This should be made widely available through libraries, citizen's information centres and refuges. The National Adult Literacy Agency in association with other relevant agencies might consider producing similar guides and support materials on a range of specific topics, such as, domestic abuse.

Other Services

Helplines

About two thirds of adults generally, and a slightly higher fraction of those who were severely abused had heard of helplines for people experiencing abuse and three quarters were aware of the existence of refuges. Given this high level of familiarity with the existence of helplines, it is somewhat puzzling that only seven per cent of those who were severely abused actually contacted a helpline. Not all of those who have been abused may feel the need to contact helplines, given that almost half have confided in friends and about two in five have talked to family members. However, it is important that the service be available for those who do not feel able to talk to people close to them. One third of those who had been severely abused have never told anybody. It is likely that the confidentiality of the service and the benefit of simply talking about what has happened, or is still happening, needs to be emphasised to this group.

¹²⁰ Only seven per cent of the sample and one quarter of those who had been severely abused.

Refuges

Again, not all of those who have been severely abused will need the services of refuges. Of those who were living with an abusive partner and moved out, nine out of 10 stayed with family or friends, but seven per cent stayed at either a homeless hostel, a refuge or on the street. It is this group, numbering over 7,000 women and almost 1,000 men, who have had to rely on emergency accommodation. We do not know from the survey whether those who moved out brought children with them and whether they required the extra security typically provided by women's refuges.

Another group of concern is those who did not move out and who are still living with an abusive partner. In some cases, the most appropriate solution is undoubtedly for the partner to move out (sometimes requiring the use of a Barring Order).

The availability of other options such as staying with family and friends probably explains why only two per cent of those who were severely abused contacted a refuge for help. The lack of places in refuges and the publicity surrounding this may be a deterrent to some women who would otherwise leave an abusive and potentially dangerous situation. There is likely to be a stigma associated with the need to use a refuge. Further, it is very difficult for someone who is already frightened, probably experiencing severe intimidation and whose confidence has been shaken, to make what is, after all, a drastic move and leave their familiar environment to move into somewhere unknown.

The focus group interviews with marginalised women, who may be among the groups most in need of refuge, point to the need for security and confidentiality to be a priority at all refuges in Ireland.

Traveller women expressed concerns in relation to the admission of children to refuges. It is anticipated that the 'Child Protection and Welfare Policy' document currently being drafted by the NNWRSS will address this issue.

The focus group interviews with marginalised women also highlighted the need for services to be culturally appropriate and for service providers to adopt an anti-racist code of practice, recommendations that have already been made by a number of other bodies (Genesis Europe, 2002: p.107; The Working Party on the Legal and Judicial Process for Victims of Sexual and Other Crimes of Violence Against Women and Children, 1996). Pavee Point is currently developing a public awareness campaign aimed at challenging the myths and misinformation in relation to violence against women within Traveller, Black and other ethnic minority groups. The campaign includes the development of a brochure which will be widely disseminated.

Health Policy

Health Service Providers

There is clearly a link between health and disability, on the one hand, and abuse on the other, but it is difficult to say with the present data to what extent the causal process runs from one to the other.

Although we cannot be certain whether the health problems and disability are an outcome of the abuse or made the person vulnerable to abuse the data point to an area where special intervention may be required.

General Practitioners, along with solicitors and the Gardaí, were among the professionals to whom those experiencing severe abuse were most likely to disclose their experiences, although only about one in six did so. Given the association between severe abuse and poor health, the GP may be well placed to sensitively enquire as to whether the person is experiencing problems with abuse and to provide further information, where needed. In this respect, it is important that GPs have access to information on the appropriate referral agencies.

Relationship Counselling and Post-Relationship Counselling

Only about one severely abused person in 20 contacted the local health board for support and advice. This reflects the fact that while the Health Boards have a clear mandate to intervene if children are at risk, their role with respect to domestic abuse is not as well defined or developed. On the other hand, nearly one in five of those who had been severely abused talked to a counsellor about it. Over one fifth of women but only one in 10 men had talked about the abuse to a counsellor. There is an obvious need here to ensure that counsellors are aware of the prevalence of abuse among women and men, and are in a position to provide appropriate referral to further information on the services and legal remedies that are available.

The high proportion of separated and divorced women and men who have experienced severe abuse, combined with the negative health consequences of abuse, suggests a need for counselling for those who have left abusive relationships.

Employers and Unions

We saw in Chapter 2 that among those who had been abused and who were at work at the time, almost two in five lost time at work and one in eight had to leave a job because of the abuse. There is a need for employers and unions to be sensitive to the impact of domestic abuse on a person's work life.

Educational Policy

The effects of domestic abuse upon children are cause for serious concern expressed by Traveller and immigrant women and also apply to the settled community. Educational Welfare Officers associated with the National Educational Welfare Board may be among the first to become aware of problems experienced by children and need to be aware of the potential links to domestic abuse. Some provision should be made to ensure that, whenever possible, children's education is not affected if their mother's are staying in refuge accommodation for a sustained period of time.

Home School Liaison (HSL) Officers may also have a role to play. However, the HSL scheme is available only in schools designated as disadvantaged and we saw in Chapter 6 that domestic abuse is not related to household income or levels of education. It would be a mistake for those providing pastoral care in

schools outside the HSL scheme to assume that their pupils are immune from the potential problems arising from domestic abuse.

Social, Personal and Health Education

The issue of domestic abuse could usefully be addressed as part of the curriculum of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in secondary schools. There is widespread agreement among the public, as noted earlier, that behaviours such as slapping, name-calling, kicking, punching and forcing sexual intercourse constitute domestic abuse, but this is not yet reflected in behaviour, and the figures showing a higher level of risk among young people are a cause for concern. This points to a need for education not so much on what is not acceptable in a relationship, but on how abusive behaviour can be avoided. This could usefully be incorporated into education dealing with preparation for relationships.

Since alcohol has a significant role in triggering domestic abuse, it is important that education on the mature use of alcohol emphasises the damaging effect that misuse of alcohol can have on relationships and particularly on the partner who experiences abuse as a result.

Regarding the acceptability of behaviour, the focus group interviews with marginalised women revealed some confusion as to whether marital rape was 'domestic abuse'. This was not explicitly addressed in the national survey, as the question on 'forced sexual intercourse' could be interpreted as applying to dating and cohabiting as well as married couples. There is a need, however, for women and men to be made aware that forced sexual intercourse is a crime, irrespective of the relationship between the parties.

In the context of SPHE (and also, perhaps, in the context of the Stay Safe curriculum in primary schools) it would be worth emphasising the negative impact of emotional as well as physical abuse. Emotional incidents were frequently identified by those experiencing abuse as 'the worst thing' that happened to them. This points to the importance of taking emotional abuse very seriously.

Appendices and References

Appendix 1: Detailed Survey Methodology

Methodology: Survey Questionnaire and Protocols

Questionnaire

An extensive consultation process began in the Spring of 2001 with Irish and international academics, researchers, service providers, Government Departments and other interested parties. These meetings, together with consideration of other completed Irish and international research informed the questionnaire design along with feedback from the Advisory Group to the study¹²¹.

The questionnaire was pilot tested in March 2003 and was further modified following the experience of the pilot. The main change involved reducing the number of detailed follow-up questions (on reporting, help-seeking and so on) for respondents who had experienced only psychological incidents that did not have a severe impact on them. In the pilot, such respondents had expressed annoyance at being asked whether they had reported the incidents or sought help for them.

The Sample and Data Collection Methodology

The survey was conducted by telephone. While this approach has some drawbacks, particularly in terms of the reduced opportunity to build a rapport with respondents, it offered a number of clear advantages. First, since the numbers were selected by adding random digits to a telephone number stem, the respondent could be assured of anonymity: we do not know the names or addresses of the respondents. Second, given the topic of the survey, it was important to provide as much protection as possible to respondents who may otherwise have been reluctant to participate for fear of reprisals. From the point of view of respondent security, a telephone survey is desirable since it allows the respondent to terminate the interview at any time, simply by hanging up. Finally, the telephone methodology provided greater security to interviewers themselves.

Prior to fieldwork, a circular was sent to each Garda Division outlining the purpose and nature of the survey so that Gardaí would be aware of it in case respondents contacted them regarding any concerns they had. This was in addition to the freephone telephone number that respondents could telephone to confirm the bona fides of the survey.

Sample selection was on a two-staged clustered basis. The sampling points (PSUs) were selected at random from the National Electoral Register, using the ESRI's RANSAM program designed to select nationally representative samples. This is the only comprehensive register of households which is available in the public domain in Ireland. The Electoral Register contains some 2.9 million entries in respect of those registered to vote in Ireland.

For sampling purposes the register is restructured to form a listing of spatially contiguous District Electoral Divisions (DEDs). These are the most disaggregated spatial units for which Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) are available. The Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) are selected from aggregates of the District Electoral Divisions. These aggregates of DEDs are formed on the basis of minimum population criteria.

Once the sampling points have been selected a set of randomly generated telephone numbers are derived for each sampling point or cluster. A total of 100 such numbers are selected for each cluster.

¹²¹ Details of the membership of the Advisory Group may be read in Appendix 5.

These numbers are generated from a random stem within the cluster. We do not know in advance, however, whether any given random number from the set of 100 generated will be an active live number to a private household. The interviewers use these sets of randomly selected numbers to complete a target of completed questionnaires in each sampling point.

A stratification control is imposed at the point of interview in the selection of individuals within the household to ensure that the socio-demographic structure of the completed survey is in line with that of the national population at large. This control is determined by gender; broad economic status (at work or not at work) and broad age cohort. One person is interviewed in each household, and the person is selected so as to reach a specific number of respondents in each category in a given cluster. This ensures the selection of a representative selection of individuals within the randomly selected households. Figure A1.1 shows the post-stratification grid used for each cluster.

Paper questionnaires were used for the first few weeks of fieldwork, as some late amendments to the questionnaire meant that the CATI system had not been programmed and fully tested in time. This gave interviewers an opportunity to get used to the structure of the questionnaire and its content, without having to learn the CATI system at the same time¹²². Once the CATI system was operational, it worked very well and greatly simplified the complex routing on the questionnaire. Interviewers had paper questionnaires available in case of computer difficulties.

Figure A1.1: Post-Stratification Grid for Selection of Respondents Within Households

National Study on Domestic Abuse, Main Survey, 2003

Cluster Check Sheet

Cluster Number _____ Interviewer Number _____ Interviewer Name _____

Sex	Age	Employment	Target	Tick the boxes as you go to indicate the number of interviews obtained in each category	Total Number of Interviews
Males	Under 50	At Work	4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Not at work	1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Aged 50 or over	At work	2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Not at work	1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Total			8		
Females	Under 50	At Work	3	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Not at work	2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Aged 50 or over	At work	1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Not at work	2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Total			8		

Note: Within each cluster (PSU), 16 interviews were to be completed, eight with males and eight with females with the characteristics (age, work situation) above. The square boxes indicate the ideal number in each category. Interviewers were permitted to exceed this number but by no more than one in each category (indicated by the diamonds). A maximum of 18 interviews was to be completed in each cluster.

¹²² Only one interviewer had used a CATI system prior to this survey.

The average completion time was 21 minutes for the questionnaire with someone who had not experienced abuse and 38 minutes with someone who had experienced abuse.

Survey Protocols

An Ethics Committee closely examined the questionnaire and the protocols prior to going into the field. The Committee provided useful additional information on referral services that might be offered to respondents who expressed an interest in seeking help. The issues of informed consent, respondent burden, risk to respondents, responsibilities to interviewers, and responsibilities with regard to child protection were all discussed and the recommendations incorporated into the protocols.

On the issue of informed consent, there was initially some concern that presenting the survey to respondents as a survey of domestic abuse (rather than, for instance, a study of behaviour in relationships) might colour responses or the initial willingness to participate. There is some suggestion that the context may affect responses. For instance, Strauss (1999a) argues that the reason crime studies come up with a lower prevalence rate for domestic violence than do family conflict studies is that in the context of a crime study respondents are likely to exclude incidents that they do not regard as 'criminal'. However, on balance, the ethics committee felt that to present the study as anything other than a survey on domestic abuse would mean that consent to participate was not fully 'informed'.

A related issue discussed by the Ethics Committee was that the exact nature of the survey was to be explained directly only to the selected respondent within the household. This was designed to protect the privacy of the respondents and to reduce risk in the event that they were living with an abusive partner. The selected respondent would not necessarily be the first person contacted in the household, since the post-stratification protocols required that a mix of respondents in terms of age group, sex and work situation be selected within households. Figure A1.2 shows the structure of the initial contact with the household and the point at which the topic of the survey was introduced to respondents.

Interviewers

Eighteen interviewers were specifically recruited to work on the project. Recruitment criteria included experience in telephone work, particularly where listening and an ability to convey a non-judgemental attitude were essential.

Figure A1.2: Introductory Sequence to the Questionnaire**National Study on Domestic Abuse, 2003**

Interviewer Num _____ Cluster _____ Hsd _____ Date _____

A Hello, my name is _____. I'm from the Economic and Social Research Institute, the ESRI. We do research on a wide range of social and economic issues for government departments and state agencies. [You may have heard of our reports on the radio or TV or read about them in the newspaper.]

B We are doing a confidential survey of the general population dealing with attitudes and behaviour. We need to select one adult in each household for this survey. Could I ask how many males and females aged 18 years or over are in this household? Males _____ Females _____

C I would like to speak to (....explain the characteristics of the person whom you want to speak to) Would there be someone like this living in the household?
Yes, available for interview now ₁ Yes, but not available now ₂ No ₃
[Make appointment, or check when person is likely to be in]

TO RESPONDENT

D [Hello, my name is _____. I'm from the Economic and Social Research Institute, the ESRI. We are doing a survey of the general population in Ireland.] The survey is completely confidential and anonymous. Your phone number was selected at random. We simply used a computer to generate these random numbers. I do not know your name, address or any details at all about you.

E **Before we go on, could I just check that you are over age 18?**
Gender of resp.: Male ₁ Female ₂ Age over 18? Yes ₁ No ₂
Proceed End Interview

F OK, now I can give you some more details on what the survey is about. The survey deals with abusive or violent behaviour within marriages and relationships. We are just as interested in talking to people who have not experienced this kind of behaviour as to those who have experienced domestic abuse. Your participation is completely voluntary. This is an important survey, and the information we collect will be used by people making policy to assist those affected. Would you be able to help us? The survey will usually take about 20-25 minutes to complete.
["You do not have to be married or in a relationship to participate. It is just as important for us to speak to people who have not had this kind of experience themselves as to those who have".]
[If respondent says it is not convenient now arrange for a time to call back and record this on the sheet]

Some practical questions before we start.

G First, this is an entirely anonymous and confidential survey. I do not know your name and address. To protect your privacy, I would prefer to keep it that way. Is that alright with you?
Second, are you in a situation where you can take this call without being overheard, as some of the questions are quite sensitive?
[If no, can you change phones or would you like me to call back when you can take the call in private?]
Finally, I'd just like to say that if you have any concerns about how this survey or this call is being conducted you can phone this freephone number 1 800 200 434 and ask for the Domestic Abuse Project Co-ordinator or you can phone the main ESRI switchboard at Dublin 667 1525 and ask to speak to the Domestic Abuse Project Team.
So, are you ready? Time interview began ____ : ____ [24 hour clock]

Interviewer training involved a five-day course with presentations, discussions and role-play. It covered the issues of domestic abuse, sexual violence, telephone techniques, the CATI system, the questionnaire and strategies for coping with the stressful material of the survey. As well as the material presented, the training week involved open discussion of the issues and role play (face-to-face and on the telephone) of the interview situation.

The training week provided an additional opportunity to assess the interviewer's ability to adequately fulfil their role. After this intensive process, we concluded that some candidates, among the most sincere and open-minded applicants, would not perform well in the role. Problems identified at this stage included issues such as a telephone manner that would not be conducive to disclosure, an inability to commit the necessary time to the actual fieldwork, and difficulties in dealing with the stresses associated with the project. Both women and men participated in the training sessions, but the 18 selected for the final telephone survey were all women.

The telephone schedule was organised into three shifts per day from Monday to Friday, with a break on Monday mornings to make any necessary adjustments to the CATI system and one shift on Saturday afternoon¹²³. In general, the evening shifts tended to be the most productive in terms of making contact with households, and particularly in terms of making contact with males and those at work.

An appointment system was put in place for calling respondents who could not complete the interview when first contacted. The system was formalised so that the supervisor issued all appointments for a given shift. This worked well and ensured that an appointment was not missed if the original interviewer was unable to make the call at the appointed time for any reason.

All interviewers attended a debriefing every Friday. Two debriefing sessions were held: one for the morning and afternoon shift combined, and one for the evening shift. Procedural issues were covered as well as a sharing of experience in coping with difficult calls. It was very evident from these sessions that the interviewers developed a strong team spirit and were supportive to one another. The breaks during the shift also provided a time when the interviewers could talk over any difficult calls they encountered. The three supervisors did an excellent job in keeping abreast of how the team members were doing.

Respondents

In general, respondents who agreed to participate were very positive. Those who had experienced an abusive relationship in the past were often very willing to participate, in the hope that the survey results will help others. There were some irate and awkward respondents, as with any telephone survey. The irritation tended to centre on the fact that they were being called to participate in a telephone survey, however, rather than because of the topic of the survey itself.

A free-phone number was made available to all respondents so that they could call back and verify the survey. Respondents wishing to verify the survey used the free-phone about 20 times during the course of the fieldwork. In addition, the ESRI spoke to about the same number of respondents who called the ESRI main number. Most enquiries have been from people with unlisted telephone numbers who wanted to know how the number had been selected.

¹²³ The start time of the morning shift was changed from 9:30a.m. in the pilot to 10:00a.m. in the main survey, as the time from 9:30a.m. to 10:00a.m. was not very productive in terms of making contact with respondents. We also encouraged interviewers to move from morning or afternoon to evening shifts, as these were the most productive times.

All respondents who have experienced abuse were called back by the interviewers, unless the respondent explicitly requested that a call-back not be made. In cases where the interviewer was not available to make a call-back at the best time for the respondent, she arranged with the respondent that the shift supervisor would do so. In addition, respondents who became distressed for other reasons, such as parents whose grown-up children are in abusive relationships, were called back. The call-back was a second opportunity for the interviewers to offer respondents information about referral services.

The interviewers were clearly instructed that their role was not to counsel or to provide advice to respondents, even though a number of them had experience in this area. Instead, respondents were offered referrals for further information at the end of the interview. In addition to the contact numbers for domestic abuse and sexual abuse services, we added contacts for bereavement support and for depression, as these often emerged as issues being faced by respondents.

Quality Control

The quality of the completed questionnaires and issues of response rates were closely monitored by the team supervisors and project leaders. Strategies for improving response rates, particularly among younger respondents, were shared and discussed at the weekly debriefing sessions.

One would normally conduct spot checks in a survey of this kind to validate the interview and to ensure that respondents were satisfied with the professionalism of the interviewer. Given the sensitive nature of the content of the present survey, however, this was not done. The ESRI were also aware of the potential risk to the respondent if someone other than the respondent was later contacted in the household. However, the interviews were validated against detailed listings of calls and their duration provided by Eircom. These were validated against the automatically recorded time, date and duration of the interview built into the CATI system.

Survey Outcomes

Figure A1.3 gives details of the survey outcomes and Figure A1.4 gives a further breakdown of the meaning of each of the outcome categories. A total of 17,578 numbers were called. Of these, 9,387 were invalid (not a household, not in service, no contact made). Of the 8,191 valid numbers, 3,316 contained an eligible person and 1,895 were not eligible (household away, unable to participate or a sufficient number of persons with the age/gender/work characteristics of household members had already been interviewed).

Figure A1.3: Outcomes of National Study of Domestic Abuse Survey

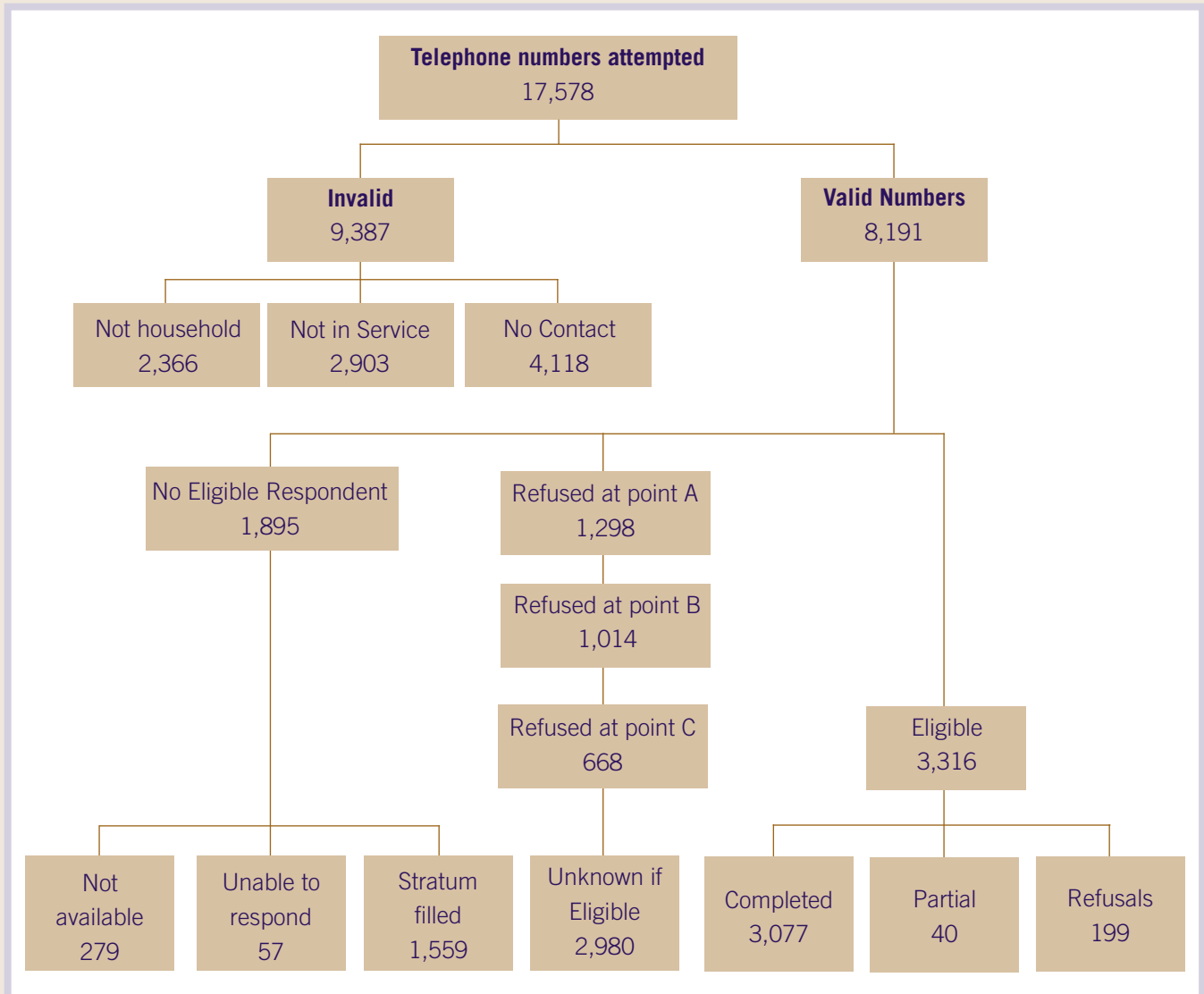


Figure A1.4: Outcome Categories used in National Study of Domestic Abuse Survey

Outcome description	Details
Telephone numbers attempted	This includes all of the numbers attempted up to 10 times in an effort to contact respondents.
Not available	The household (or the eligible person in the household) was away for the fieldwork period.
Unable to respond	The eligible respondent was ill or unable to participate due to language difficulties.
Stratum filled	No household member meets the post-stratification criteria (gender, age group, work situation) remaining to be filled in that cluster.
Unknown if eligible	Contact with household was terminated before it could be determined whether there was an eligible person in the household.
Completed	Questionnaire completed.
Partial	Questionnaire partially completed (not usable).
Refusals	Refusal by an eligible person.
Refused at point A	Refusal by a household member before making contact with eligible person or determining whether there is an eligible person in the household. (Point A in Figure A1.2).
Refused at point B	Refusal by a household member before making contact with eligible person or determining whether there is an eligible person in the household. (Point B in Figure A1.2).
Refused at point C	Refusal by a household member before making contact with eligible person or determining whether there is an eligible person in the household. (Point C in Figure A1.2).
Not household	Telephone number of a business or other organisation – not a private household.
Not in service	Telephone number disconnected or not in service.
No contact	No contact made – no reply, no answer, answering machine only, always engaged. Where the target numbers had not been completed in a cluster, each number was attempted 10 times. In some clusters, fewer than 10 calls were needed if the target number of completed interviews was achieved sooner.
Invalid numbers	Numbers other than private households.
Valid numbers	Telephone numbers of private households.

As noted earlier, a post-stratification technique was used to ensure the selection of a representative group of respondents within households. Each interviewer was given a target number of women and men in two broad age groups and two broad economic status groups to complete within each cluster of

100 numbers¹²⁴. Interviewers were encouraged to target the ‘hard to reach’ groups (younger adults, adults at work and males) from the beginning of work on a cluster, so that in a household containing a young person at work and an older person not at work, the former would be chosen as the target person in preference to the latter. An eligible person, then, is someone in the age/sex/work status categories where the target has not yet been filled for a particular cluster. ‘Non-eligibility’ tends to occur towards the end of work on a cluster, where a sufficient number of interviews have been completed with people of a given age/gender/work status category.

A total of 3,077 interviews were completed in households containing an eligible person, and there were 40 partially-completed questionnaires. Only 199 identified respondents refused to participate (or 239 if the part-completed questionnaires are counted here). In the case of the part-completed questionnaires, the respondent tended to terminate the interview in the course of the general attitudinal questions in the first section of the questionnaire, before reaching the questions dealing with their own experiences.

There were 2,980 households where we did not have enough information to determine whether there was an eligible person in the household. In the event that the household broke off contact, or the respondent was identified and refused to participate, the interviewers noted the point in the introduction at which this occurred (see Figure A1.2). ‘Unknown eligibility’ occurred where contact with the household was terminated by the householder at points A, B or C in the introduction (before the relevant information for that section had been obtained), as shown in Figure A1.2.

The response rate or participation rate depends on the assumptions made about the households where eligibility was unknown. Table A1.1 shows response rates under different assumptions about the eligibility of the household members where contact was broken before a target respondent had been identified. Clearly, the assumption underlying the response rate of 93 per cent is unrealistic: that none of the households where the first person contacted did not provide enough information to identify a target person actually contained an eligible person. Likewise, the assumptions underlying the response rate of 49 per cent is overly restrictive (that all of these households would have contained an eligible person). The more realistic assumption is that a similar proportion of the ‘unknown eligible’ households would have contained an eligible person as the households where the eligibility status is known. Based on this calculation, the response rate is 58 per cent.

Table A1.1: Participation and Co-operation Rates Under Different Assumptions About Eligibility of Household Members Where Target Respondent Not Identified

Response Rate, assumption		Per cent
1	Response Rate (assuming all Unknown at A,B,C eligible)	49%
2	Response Rate (apportioning Unknown at A+B+C)	58%
3	Response Rate (assuming ALL unknown not eligible)	93%

Note: A, B and C refer to the points in the introduction (see Figure A1.2) where the first person contacted in a household broke off contact with the interviewer.

¹²⁴ If the original cluster had a large proportion of numbers ‘not in service’ or of businesses, an additional set of 50 numbers was issued, as needed, for the same cluster.

The response rate is somewhat lower than would be typical for a telephone survey conducted by the ESRI. This is due to the fact that the importance of the survey could not be stressed to the first point of contact in a household since, for reasons of respondent security and confidentiality, only the eligible respondent was informed about the topic of the survey.

The topic of the survey was not a major factor in non-response, as can be seen from the fact that once the respondent was identified and informed about the topic of the survey, 93 per cent actually completed the interview. This is reassuring since it suggests that there was little link between non-participation and the topic of the survey. Since respondents were told the length of the interview at about the same time as the topic, some of the seven per cent who refused may have done so because of the time involved rather than because of the topic. In either event, the numbers affected are relatively small.

Sample Representativeness and Sample Weights

Table A1.2 shows how these 3,077 questionnaires are distributed in terms of the sex, age group and work status of the respondents. The table also shows the estimated population percentage of each group.

In general, the breakdown of the completed questionnaires by gender and work situation is reasonably close to the population figures. This indicates that the protocols used for selection of respondents within households have worked well. In common with most surveys, the response rate from women is higher than the response rate from men. It also tends to be higher for older adults than for younger adults, and (apart from women over age 45) for those not at work than for those at work.

Table A1.2: Completed Questionnaires by Gender, Age Group and Work Situation of Respondent compared to Population Distribution of these Groups

	Per cent of completed questionnaires	Per cent of population age 18 and over
Males, under 45, at work	18	22
Males, under 45, not at work	4	6
Males, 45 and over, at work	15	12
Males, 45 and over, not at work	8	9
Females, under 45, at work	16	17
Females, under 45, not at work	11	11
Females, 45 and over, at work	12	7
Females, 45 and over, not at work	17	16

Source: Population figures from special table provided by CSO from QNHS, Q4 2002.

Sample Weights

The purpose of sample weighting is to compensate for any biases in the distribution of characteristics in the completed survey sample compared to the population of interest, whether such biases occur because of sampling error, from the nature of the sampling frame used or differential response rates. Whatever the source of the discrepancy between the sample and population distributions, we would like to adjust the distributional characteristics of the sample in terms of factors such as age, sex, economic status, marital status and so on to match that of the population. This is typically done by comparing sample characteristics to external population figures from sources such as the Census or the Quarterly National Household Survey.

The household weights were developed by calibrating the sample totals against external information provided by the Central Statistics Office from the Quarterly National Household Survey for the last quarter of 2002. The result of the weighting procedure was to ensure as close as possible a match between the sample and the population in terms of the distribution of the characteristics shown in Figure A1.5.¹²⁵

Differences in response rates between population groups resulted in the sample diverging slightly from the population in terms of the sizes of these groups. In order to redress this imbalance, weights were constructed for use in analysing the data. The variables used in constructing the weights are shown in Figure A1.5, and included age, sex, region, marital status, economic status, level of education and household size.

Figure A1.5: Characteristics of Respondents used in Constructing Sample Weights

- Region (eight regions) by age group (under 65, 65 or over) by sex
- Marital status by age group by sex (nine categories) by broad region (BMW, Dublin, East and South)
- Work situation (at work/not at work) by age group (four categories) by sex by broad region
- Unemployment by sex
- Educational level (five categories) by sex by broad region
- Number of adult males and number of adult females in the household

The weight was constructed so as to adjust the sample distributions to these external population totals¹²⁶. The weights were constrained to the range from .125 of the average weight to eight times the average weight, in order to avoid placing too much reliance on the representativeness of a small number of observations. Nevertheless, the resulting match between the weighted sample characteristics and the population characteristics used as controls was highly satisfactory, indicating that extreme weights were not required to achieve this adjustment.

¹²⁵ Household income was not available from an external source for use as a control in weighting the sample. However, level of education, household size and employment situation, which would be correlated with household income, were included.

¹²⁶ The Gross program developed by Joanna Gomulka was used (Atkinson, Gomulka and Sutherland, 1998; Gomulka, 1992).

Appendix 2: Statistical Methodology

Validation of Measure of Domestic Abuse Using Latent Class Analysis

Latent Class Analysis

In validating the items as measures of domestic abuse, and in keeping with the conceptualisation of domestic abuse as a constellation of behaviours with a significant impact on the respondent, it is important to examine both the impact of the incidents and the co-occurrence of incidents of different types. This type of problem is addressed by using the statistical technique of latent class (LC) analysis.

The idea behind latent class analysis is that it is possible to divide the population into several groups that are distinctive in terms of some criterion that is not directly observed (i.e. the latent class) but is measured indirectly by responses to questionnaire items. In this context, the latent classes are those who are abused and those who are not abused. The questionnaire items are the measures of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. That is, each individual item measures psychological abuse with some error. However the error is assumed to be randomly distributed, so that an erroneous 'yes' to one item is not systematically associated with an erroneous 'yes' to another item. The latent class can be identified by assuming that the latent class accounts for the correlation among the items. In the present context, we could postulate that there are three latent classes. The first class consists of those who have not been abused. The second class consists of those who have experienced some of the incidents, but who have not been seriously affected. The third class consists of those who have experienced the incidents and been seriously affected by them.

More formally, LC analysis assumes that there is a latent variable X with T latent classes. Each observation is a member of one of the T latent classes. It also assumes that local independence exists between the manifest variables, that is, conditional on latent class membership, the manifest variables are mutually independent of each other. This model can be expressed using (unconditional) probabilities of belonging to each latent class, and conditional response probabilities as parameters. For example, in the case of four nominal manifest (measured) variables A, B, C, and D we have:

$$\pi_{ijklt} = \pi_t^x \pi_{it}^{A/X} \pi_{jt}^{B/X} \pi_{kt}^{C/X} \pi_{lt}^{D/X}$$

where π_t^x denotes the probability of being in latent class $t = 1, 2, \dots, T$ of latent variable X; $\pi_{it}^{A/X}$ denotes the conditional probability of obtaining the i th response to item A, from members of class t , $i = 1, 2, \dots, I$. The symbols $\pi_{jt}^{B/X} \pi_{kt}^{C/X} \pi_{lt}^{D/X}$, ($j = 1, 2, \dots, J$; $k = 1, 2, \dots, K$; $l = 1, 2, \dots, L$) denote the corresponding conditional probabilities for items B, C and D, respectively (Magidson and Vermunt, 2004).

In contrast to a direct classification of respondents based on whether or not they have experienced any of the incidents and whether or not they were seriously affected, LC analysis does not assume that the questionnaire items are perfect measures of the underlying concept. It allows for the fact that some of what may be captured by items such as pushing or shoving, for instance, may be expressive behaviour in the course of conflict or even playful behaviours between couples which may have a minor, or no, impact. LC analysis makes use of the co-occurrence of the items to test this assumption.

The results of the latent class analysis are shown in Tables A2.1-A2.3 which show the fit statistics for the models¹²⁷. Table A2.1 shows the model fit to the 11 physical abuse items, plus the item for impact (physical injury or all three of 'very' frightened/distressed, 'quite'/'very' often and 'major impact' on life). The two-class model fits the data quite well (as seen in the p-value of 1.0 for the likelihood ratio chi-squared statistic L^2)¹²⁸, but the three-class model provides a significantly better fit (L-squared drops by 502 for 13 degrees of freedom) and accounts for a larger percentage of the variation in the data (87 per cent vs. 78 per cent) (Magidson and Vermunt, 2004). The lower BIC statistic also points to a better model fit with three classes¹²⁹.

Table A2.1: Goodness of Fit Statistics for Latent Class Models for Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse Items (11 items plus impact measure)	Model 1 (1 class)	Model 2 (2 classes)	Model 3 (3 classes)	Model 4 (3 classes + restriction)
L^2	5719	1254	752	898
degrees of freedom	4083	4070	4057	4058
P- value	0.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
% reduction in L^2	0%	78%	87%	84%
BIC	-26932	-31391	-31789	-31651
Dissimilarity index	36%	12%	6%	6%
Change in L^2		4465	502	-146
Change in degrees of freedom		13	13	-1
Change in BIC		4460	398	-138
Classification error	0.0%	0.2%	2.7%	3.7%

The structure of the three-class model and its substantive meaning is discussed more fully in Chapter 1. The three-class model resulted in a large class where most respondents had experienced no incidents, a smaller intermediate class where respondents had experienced isolated incidents but most had not been seriously affected and a slightly smaller class where respondents had been subject to physical abuse and most had been seriously affected. In order to improve the definition of the model, and clarify the conceptualisation of the categories, a restriction was imposed to constrain all of those experiencing a serious impact to be members of this third class. Note, however, that impact was not a necessary condition for class membership, for the reasons discussed in Chapter 1. The fit statistics for this model (Model 4) indicate a slight reduction in model fit. However, the improvement in the definition of the classes and the distinction between classes 2 and 3 in terms of impact make this worthwhile.

The table also shows the classification error for each model. This is the percentage of cases predicted to be misclassified if each case were assigned to its modal class (i.e. the class into which it has the highest probability of falling, based on the response pattern to the items). In general, the classification error will increase as the number of classes increases. The classification error increases slightly from 2.7 per cent to 3.7 per cent when the restriction is added to the three-class model, but the level remains moderate.

127 The LC models were run in LEM (Vermunt, 1997).

128 The Likelihood ratio Chi-Square statistic is sometimes referred to in the literature as G2. It is preferred to the Pearson Chi-square statistic because it permits comparison of nested models (Uebersax, 1997).

129 The BIC statistic ($BIC = L^2 - \ln(N) DF$; Raftery, 1986) is an information criterion weighting both model fit and parsimony and can be used for comparing the fit of alternative models. In general, a model with a lower BIC statistic is preferred.

Table A2.2 shows the fit statistics for the four items on sexual abuse and the impact measure ('very' frightened/distressed and 'major impact' on life). In this case, only two classes were needed to account for the pattern in the data¹³⁰. The two-class model accounts for 97 per cent of the common variation among the items. Although the p-value suggests that some improvement in fit is possible¹³¹, the three-class model made no improvement. The BIC statistic for the three-class model is higher, the explained variation is no better than for the two-class model and the rate of classification error is too high (31 per cent). Since the two-class model resulted in easily-interpreted classes (not abused and abused, see Chapter 1 for structure) and accounted for the bulk of the variation the two-class model was considered adequate.

Table A2.2: Goodness of Fit Statistics for Latent Class Models for Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse Items	Model 1 (1 class)	Model 2 (2 classes)	Model 3 (3 classes)
L2	1404	46	45
degrees of freedom	26	20	14
P-value	0.0000	0.0008	0.0000
% reduction in L2	0%	97%	97%
BIC	1195	-114	-67
Dissimilarity index	11%	1%	1%
Classification error		0.3%	31%

Table A2.3 shows the fit statistics for the 11 emotional abuse items and the measure of serious impact (all three of 'very' frightened/distressed, 'quite'/'very' often and 'major impact' on life). As with the physical items, the two-class model provides an acceptable fit according to the L2 statistic, but accounts for only 72 per cent of the variation. The three-class model increases the explained variation to 81 per cent, provides a significant improvement in fit (drop of 475 in L2 for 13 degrees of freedom) and results in a further reduced BIC statistic.

The restricted model (Model 4) constrains all of those who were seriously impacted to be in Class 3, as was done for the physical abuse items: giving a clear distinction between a large class experiencing no abuse (or minor incidents only); an intermediate class experiencing some incidents but not severely impacted and a smaller class with a higher probability of experiencing emotional abuse and of being seriously impacted. The fit of the model declines somewhat, but this model is preferred on conceptual and interpretational grounds since it clearly distinguishes between a group that is seriously impacted and a group that is not seriously impacted (see Chapter 1).

¹³⁰ In all probability, this is due to the fact that we only have four items – if more items were available measuring other, and perhaps less serious, forms of sexual abuse three classes may have been needed to account for the pattern in the data.

¹³¹ The p-value in these models may not be accurate, because the data are sparse (i.e. some cells in cross-classification of variables do not have any observed cases) (Magidson and Vermunt, 2004).

Table A2.3: Goodness of Fit Statistics for Latent Class Models for Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse Items (11) plus impact	Model 1 (1 class)	Model 2 (2 classes)	Model 3 (3 classes)	Model 4 (3 classes + restriction)
L2	5246	1482	1007	1087
degrees of freedom	4083	4070	4057	4059
P-value	0.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
% reduction in L2	0%	72%	81%	79%
Dissimilarity index	40%	14%	9%	9%
BIC	-27521	-31180	-31551	-31487
Difference in L2		3764	475	-80
Difference in degrees of freedom		13	13	-2
Difference in BIC		3660	371	-64
Classification error	0.0%	2.1%	4.8%	7.0%

The classification error for the three-class model is rather high for the emotional abuse items: almost five per cent for the basic model and seven per cent for the restricted model¹³². Since the central focus in this report is on those experiencing severe abuse, the classification errors are most serious if they affect the third (severely abused) class. If the classification errors affect those with a probability of being in either the first (no abuse) or second (intermediate) class, they are less consequential.

Classification errors arise because individuals are not assigned to a class with certainty, but with a probability which is less than 1.0. Where the probability is less than 1.0 that an individual is in the modal (or most probable) class, there is a non-zero probability that they are in one of the other classes¹³³. Table A2.4 shows the probability that a case modally assigned to one class is actually in each other class. The figures are presented as a percentage of the total sample. It is clear that the bulk of the classification error (about five per cent of the seven per cent total) arises because cases modally assigned to Class 1 have a five per cent probability of ‘belonging’ in Class 2. Moreover, the probabilities are similar for women and men. Only a small proportion of the total classification error (about one per cent of the seven per cent total) affects the third class: these are cases modally assigned to the second class, which have some probability of being in the third class.

132 The items were examined to determine whether all of them might in fact be considered criminal in themselves. Three of the items do not correspond clearly to any offence in the criminal code: being deliberately embarrassed, being kept short of money and being called hurtful names. The series of models was run again with these items omitted. The overall model fit was satisfactory, but the classification errors for the unrestricted model were high at six per cent overall – higher than the unrestricted model with the full set of items (4.8 per cent). Further checks included testing to see whether a four-class model reduces classification error; whether separate models are needed for women and men; checks for local dependence (i.e. an unexplained association between two or more of the items) and whether a model with two separate latent variables improves the specification. The classification errors were not substantially reduced.

133 The modal cl

Table A2.4 Probability that Cases Modally Assigned to a Given Class are in Each Other Class

	Per cent of total		
	Total	Women	Men
In Class 1, probability Class 1	71%	70%	72%
In Class 1, probability Class 2	5%	5%	5%
In Class 1, probability Class 3	0%	0%	0%
In Class 2, probability Class 2	17%	16%	18%
In Class 2, probability Class 1	1%	1%	1%
In Class 2, probability Class 3	1%	1%	1%
In Class 3, probability Class 3	5%	8%	2%
In Class 3, probability Class 1	0%	0%	0%
In Class 3, probability Class 2	0%	0%	0%

A closer examination of the cases modally assigned to Class 1 with a probability of being in Class 2 indicated that they tended to be individuals who had experienced only one type of incident and that this was most often being deliberately embarrassed or being called hurtful names¹³⁴. Intuitively, it seems appropriate that these be regarded as belonging to the 'not abused' group. From the perspective of the present study, therefore, the classification errors do not pose a problem.

Having developed the latent class models, the individual respondents were assigned to the modal class based on their response pattern. The structure of the latent classes and the substantive implications are discussed in Chapter 1.

Summary

Latent Class analysis was used to construct a more parsimonious measure of physical, sexual and emotional abuse by using the items measuring the behaviours in each category and the measures of impact on the respondent. This allowed us to identify three latent classes for both the physical and emotional items and two classes for the sexual abuse items. These classes capture the bulk of the common variation in the items while also taking account of impact. As such, they are consistent with the conceptualisation of domestic abuse as involving a constellation of behaviours that have a significant negative impact on the person affected. The distinction between the latent classes will be used to clarify and simplify the presentation of the material in the report.

¹³⁴ There were 405 cases with less than 98 per cent probability of being in Class 1. All had experienced only one type of incident, and in over 70 per cent of these cases that incident was being deliberately embarrassed or called hurtful names.

Multinomial Logit Model of Minor Incidents and Severe Abuse

In this section we describe the multinomial logit model (MLOGITS)¹³⁵ to analyse the factors associated with minor incidents and severe abuse.

Logit models predict the log of the odds of an event. If p is the probability of an event, then the odds are $p/(1-p)$. For instance, if the probability of an event taking place is .25, the odds are $.25/(1-.25) = .333$ (or one to three). Similarly, if the probability of an event is .75, the odds are $.75/(1-.75) = 3$ (or three to one). The log of the odds are predicted because they have a more plausible range of potential values and a more plausible distribution (Gould, 2000).

Multinomial logit models (MLOGITs) are used to analyse dependent variables which are categorical, rather than continuous, and where there are more than two categories. In contrast to ordered logit models, there is no assumption that the categories are ordinal. An assumption of ordinality is inappropriate in the present context since it would not allow us to test whether the factors predicting minor incidents and severe abuse are different: the ordered logit model assumes that the same factors predict the different levels of the dependent variable.

In MLOGITs, there are k outcomes 1,2, ... k . One of the outcomes is chosen as the base outcome. In the present context, there are three outcomes: (1) experienced no incidents, (2) experienced 'minor' incidents (i.e. experienced one or a small number of incidents but not forming a pattern of behaviour and not having a severe impact), and (3) experienced major abuse (experienced a pattern of behaviour which had a severe impact). The 'experienced no incidents' category is chosen as the base.

The model is:

$$\text{odds } (y_j = 2 \mid y_j = 2 \text{ or } y_j = 1) = \exp(\mathbf{x}_j \mathbf{b}_2 + \mathbf{c}_2)$$

$$\text{odds } (y_j = 3 \mid y_j = 3 \text{ or } y_j = 1) = \exp(\mathbf{x}_j \mathbf{b}_3 + \mathbf{c}_3)$$

The term b above refers to an independent variable, such as age. The exponentiated coefficient is interpreted as an odds ratio: the odds if variable b is incremented by one versus the odds if the variable b is not incremented by 1. So, for instance, if being single (as opposed to being married) has an odds ratio of 3 for severe abuse, this means that single people have three times the risk of abuse as married people.

The MLOGIT model was estimated using maximum likelihood in STATA. A series of models was run, as shown in Table A2.5. The table shows the coefficients that are statistically significant ($p \leq .05$) for each model. The coefficients are log-odds ratios. The table shows that there are few differences by region, household income, economic activity or socio-economic group. When gender interactions are controlled in the final model, the effect of income share (which is strongly associated with gender) disappear, as does the coefficient for the South-West region.

¹³⁵ These are sometimes referred to as polytomous logistic regression models.

In arriving at the final model, separate models were run for women and men to check whether the coefficients were different. Where the coefficients appeared to be different, an interaction term was introduced into the main model and tested for significance. An interaction term allows us to capture effects that are different for women and men. Significant interaction terms were retained. Other non-significant coefficients were then sequentially dropped from the model. The final model is shown in Table A2.6, and is discussed in Chapter 5. The table shows the coefficients that are statistically significant ($p \leq .05$). In Chapter 5, the coefficients of the final model are presented as relative risk ratios expressed as percentage change, for ease of interpretation. The relative risk ratio r_1 is calculated as (Gould, 2000)

$$r_1 = P(y=1)/P(y=\text{base category}).$$

It is the exponentiated coefficient in a multinomial logistic regression. In Chapter 5, the results are rescaled as percentage changes: $\text{Pct} = (r_1 - 1)$ for ease of interpretation of both positive and negative effects.

Table A2.5: Sequence of Multinomial Logit Models for Minor Incidents and Severe Abuse vs. No Abuse: Log-odds Coefficients (N=2959)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse
	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff	Coeff
LR chi ²	0		410.43		464.02		565.15		617.06		711.12	
Prob > chi ²	N/A		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000	
Pseudo R ²	0		0.0906		0.1025		0.1248		0.1363		0.1571	
	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse	Minor Incidents	Severe Abuse
Constant	-1.5	-1.9	-1.6	-4.3	-1.6	-4.4	-2.4	-4.2	-2.5	-4.6	-2.6	-4.8
Gender			-0.2	0.7		0.8		0.9		0.9		0.9
Age (10 year increments)			-0.3	-0.1	-0.3	-0.1	-0.3	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3
Marital Status												
(Ref: Married)												
			1.7	3.0	1.6	2.8	1.4	3.0	1.4	3.0	1.4	2.9
Never married				1.4		1.3		1.2		1.1		1.0
Has partner?											-0.5	-0.6
Not living with partner				0.5		0.7		0.9		0.9		0.9
Has children				1.5		1.5		1.3		1.3		1.3
Region												
(Ref: Dublin)												
Mid-East												
Midlands												
Mid-West												
South-East					0.3		0.4		0.4		0.4	
South-West												
West												
Urban/rural												
Town												
Village					-0.6			-0.5		-0.6		-0.6
Rural						-0.5		-0.4		-0.5		-0.5
Where born					0.3	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.5
Outside Ireland					0.4	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.9
Where partner born												

Table A2.6: Final Model of Vulnerability to Minor Incidents and Severe Abuse: Log-odds ratios (N=2925)

	Number of obs	2959			
	LR chi ² (50)	673.41			
	Prob > chi ²	0.0000			
	Pseudo R2	0.1487			
	Log likelihood	-1927.12			
		Minor Incidents		Severe Abuse	
		Coeff	P	Coeff	P
Gender	Female	-0.3	0.015	0.5	0.019
Age	Age (10 year increments), Male	-0.5	0.000	-0.5	0.000
	Age (10 year increments), Female	-0.3	0.000	-0.2	0.021
Marital	Separated or divorced	1.7	0.000	3.0	0.000
(Ref: Married, widowed)	Never married			1.2	0.000
(Ref: Living with partner)	No partner - female				
	No partner - male	-0.6	0.019	-1.1	0.003
	Not living with partner			0.7	0.012
Children	Has children (any age)	0.0	0.964	1.3	0.000
Size of place (omit city, town)	Village or rural area	-0.2	0.038	-0.3	0.031
Born (omit - Ireland)	Born outside Ireland			0.6	0.004
Partner born (omit - Ireland)	Partner born outside Ireland-female	0.7	0.013	1.2	0.000
Level of education (Ref: Primary, secondary, third level)	Education - some post-secondary	0.3	0.016		
Economic status	In education or training-male	-1.0	0.008	-1.2	0.081
Decisions on income	Respondent decides - male			1.7	0.005
(Ref: Both decide)	Respondent decides - female			0.5	0.047
	Partner decides - male	0.5	0.073	0.9	0.019
	Partner decides - female	1.7	0.000	2.0	0.000
Health (Ref: Good/ very good)	Health fair/poor/very poor			0.6	0.003
Disability (Ref: No condition)	Has condition, not severely impaired			0.5	0.010
	Has condition, severely impaired			1.1	0.002
Abuse between parents	Abuse between parents	0.8	0.000	1.0	0.000
(Ref: None)	Unknown-abuse between parents				
	Abuse between parents of partner	0.5	0.003	0.9	0.000
	Unknown-partner's parents			0.7	0.001
	Constant	-1.9	0.000	-4.9	0.000

Note: Age is transformed to measure deviations in 10 year increments from the average age of the sample (45.7). Only statistically significant coefficients are shown in the table.

Formal Test of Similar Factors Affecting Minor Incidents and Severe Abuse

It is evident from the model in Table A2.6 that minor incidents and severe abuse are affected differently by characteristics of the respondent.

In order to test this more formally, an ordered logit model was fit to the data and the fit of the model was compared to that of the multinomial logit model, using the same set of variables as shown in Table A2.6. The ordered logit model assumes that minor incidents and severe abuse have the same risk factors. As shown in Table A2.7, the fit of the ordered logit model is significantly worse: the test statistic, based on the change in the log-likelihood is statistically significant at $p < .005$. Thus, we must reject the hypothesis that minor incidents and severe abuse represent different degrees of severity of the same phenomenon.

Table A2.7: Comparison of Fit of Multinomial Logit Model and Ordered Logit Model of Vulnerability to Abuse

	Multinomial Logit	Ordered Logit
Number of observations	2959	2959
Likelihood Ratio $\chi^2(50)$	673.41	574.44
degrees of freedom	50	25
Prob > χ^2	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.1487	0.1269
Log Likelihood	-1927.12	-1976.613
<i>Comparison of Fit</i>		
Change in df	25	
Change in - 2 (Log Likelihood)	98.975	
Significance	P<.005	

Appendix 3: Additional Background Material

Garda Policy on Domestic Violence and Details of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit

In 1994 the Garda Síochána Policy on Domestic Violence Intervention¹³⁶ was introduced and further revised in 1997. The Gardaí advocate a pro-arrest policy for incidents of domestic violence and state that where a power of arrest exists it should be used. The Policy states very clearly that the primary role of the Gardaí when responding to an incident of domestic violence is protection through the enforcement of the law, not reconciliation which should be left to those who are skilled in that area. The Policy details the procedures which should be adhered to by a Garda when responding to a domestic violence incident and how to ensure the welfare of any children who may be involved. Under this policy the Gardaí must ensure that the victim is fully informed of the legal redress available to her/him through the civil courts and made aware of relevant services in their area.

The Garda policy on domestic violence also stipulates that the consent or co-operation of the victim in cases of domestic violence is not a prerequisite for arrest or prosecution. The proactive arrest policy of the Gardaí is aimed to provide an immediate solution and prevent any, or any additional, injury or damage to property. Arrests are made primarily under the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997.

The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit (DVSAIU) was established within An Garda Síochána in 1993. This followed from a recommendation of the investigation into the Kilkenny Incest Case, that such a unit should be established to deal exclusively with all aspects of rape, sexual assault and domestic violence. The first complete year for which figures collected by the DVSAIU are available is 1995. Originally the DVSAIU was responsible for the Dublin Metropolitan Area (DMA) only, however, four years later, in 1997 it was placed under the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation and given nationwide responsibility.

The objectives of the DVSAIU are:

- to oversee all cases of domestic violence and sexual violence and to assist where necessary in the investigation of more complex cases;
- to improve the methods of investigation by providing training, advice and assistance for members of An Garda Síochána;
- to liaise with both statutory and non-statutory bodies and organisations which have a responsibility for domestic violence and sexual assault;
- to arrange, where appropriate, for its duties to be preformed in tandem with Community Relations Officers and Juvenile Liaison Officers; and
- to draft a protocol on the role of Gardaí in such cases.

¹³⁶ See Office of the Tánaiste, 1997.

Remedies Available Under the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2002

The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 provides legal protection for anyone experiencing violence in the home. This Act applies not just to spouses, but also to co-habitees, parents and certain other people who are living together. Protection can be granted at District Court level under four main court orders; a Barring Order, a Safety Order, a Protection Order and an Interim Barring Order. The four court orders are described in detail below.

Barring Order

A Barring Order provides for the complete exclusion of a respondent (the violent person) from the family home for a specified length of time, up to a maximum of three years and under specific terms as stipulated by the Court. If a Barring Order is granted the respondent is prohibited from using or threatening to use violence against the applicant (the victim of the violence) or any dependent person and/or of watching or besetting the place or vicinity where the applicant resides. There are three distinct groups of people who are eligible to apply for a Barring Order, subject to certain residency and property restrictions:

- a spouse;
- a co-habitee who has been living with the respondent as husband and wife for six of the previous nine months, though only if the applicant has an equal or greater legal or beneficial interest in the property to which the order relates; and
- a parent where the respondent, their son or daughter, is over the age of 18 years, though again only if the applicant has an equal or greater legal or beneficial interest in the property to which the order relates.

Under Section 6 of the Act Health Boards can apply for a Barring Order on behalf of an abused person who could make the application on their own behalf, but who is deterred or prevented from making the application because of violence or the threat of violence from the respondent. The Health Board does not have to have the permission of the abused person to make an application, but she or he must be consulted. The grounds for granting a Barring Order includes physical violence and the psychological welfare of the applicant and any dependent children.

Safety Order

A Safety Order prohibits the respondent from using or threatening to use violence against the applicant or any dependent person. Unlike a Barring Order, the respondent is not required to leave the family home under a Safety Order. If the applicant and respondent are not living together, the respondent is prohibited from watching or besetting the place or vicinity where the applicant resides. There are four groups of people who are eligible to apply for a Safety Order:

- a spouse;
- a co-habitee who has been living with the respondent as husband and wife for six of the previous 12 months;
- a parent where the respondent, their son or daughter, is over the age of 18 years; and
- anyone over the age of 18 years who is residing with the respondent in a relationship ‘the basis of which is not primarily contractual’, for instance if two relatives are living together one relative would be eligible to apply for a Safety Order against the other.

A Safety Order will expire five years after the date on which it was granted or when the Court decides, though five years is the maximum duration of a Safety Order. A Health Board can also make an application on behalf of an abused person in the same way that it can make an application for a Barring Order. The grounds for granting a Safety Order include physical violence and the psychological welfare of the applicant and any dependent children.

Protection Order

While an applicant is waiting for the Court to decide on an application for a Barring Order or a Safety Order, an immediate order can be granted by the court until a decision has been made, this is a Protection Order. A Protection Order has the same effect as a Safety Order and can only be granted in tandem with a Barring or Safety Order, it cannot be granted on its own.

Interim Barring Order

An Interim Barring Order can be granted on the making of an application for a Barring Order or between the time when the application is made and its determination by the Court. It is granted in “exceptional cases” where the Court is of the view that the granting of a Protection Order would not be sufficient to protect the applicant or any dependent person prior to the hearing for the Barring Order. To grant an Interim Barring Order the Court must be of the view that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the applicant or any dependent person is in significant danger if the order is not made immediately. The Interim Barring Order, therefore, ceases to exist once the Court has decided on the application for the Barring Order. Interim Barring Orders are granted on an *ex parte* basis, this means that the applicant does not have to inform the respondent that an application has been made and the respondent does not have to be present in Court for the order to be granted. The respondent must go to Court to have the order discharged.

Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2002

In October 2002 the Supreme Court ruled that Section 4(3) of the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 as it relates to *ex parte* Interim Barring Orders, was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court found that, in failing to prescribe a fixed period of relatively short duration during which time such an order would continue in force, the respondents in such cases were deprived of the protection of one of the basic tenets of natural justice, *audi alteram partem*, the right to have their side heard. Following from this Supreme Court judgement the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2002 was enacted. Under this Act an Interim Barring Order granted on an *ex parte* basis will lapse not more than eight days from the date on which it was granted unless it is continued in force by the Court following proceedings at which the respondent has been given an opportunity to have their side heard. The Act also provides that, where an Interim Barring Order is granted *ex parte*, a note of the evidence on which it is based must be made and served on the respondent so that he/she has notice of the allegations made against them.

Appendix 4: Detailed Tables

Table A4.1: Detailed Prevalence of Severe Physical, Emotional and Sexual Abuse - Whether Present Partner, Multiple Partners, Last Year, Last Five Years

	Severe Physical Abuse %	Severe Sexual Abuse %	Severe Emotional Abuse %	Severe Abuse of Any Kind %
Total				
Ever abused	6.5	4.6	5.4	10.5
Last five years	3.6	1.8	3.1	5.6
Last year	1.4	0.4	1.3	2.4
Present partner	1.7	0.8	0.9	2.4
More than one partner	0.7	0.5	0.9	1.5
Women				
Ever abused	8.9	8.0	7.9	14.5
Last five years	4.2	2.9	4.5	7.0
Last year	1.4	0.7	2.1	3.2
Present partner	2.0	1.5	1.3	3.0
More than one partner	0.8	0.7	1.3	1.7
Men				
Ever abused	4.0	1.1	2.7	6.2
Last five years	2.9	0.7	1.6	4.2
Last year	1.4	0.1	0.5	1.6
Present partner	1.5	0.1	0.4	1.7
More than one partner	0.6	0.3	0.5	1.2

Note: This table forms the basis for Figures 2.1-2.4 in Chapter 2.

Number of cases: 1,667 women and 1,363 men.

Appendix Table A4.2: Whom did Partner Threaten to Hurt

Whom did partner threaten to hurt	Per cent
You, yourself	89.7
Your child(ren)	16.0
Someone else living in your household	6.0
Someone not living in your household	6.3

Note: This table provides additional detail related to Table 1.4 in Chapter 1.

Appendix Table A4.3: Garda Recorded Domestic Violence Incidents

Year	Figures of Domestic Violence Incidents			
	Incidents	Arrests	Persons Charged	Persons Convicted
1995	3,986	850	527	455
1996	4,645	860	725	506
1997	4,184	1,135	947	673
1998	8,448	1,808	1,371	772
1999	10,110	1,730	1,501	991
2000	10,877	1,644	1,481	1,149
2001	9,983	1,890	1,783	1,286
2002	10,248	1,638	1,370	651
2003	8,452	1,418	1,203	650

Note: This table forms the basis for Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3.

Appendix Table A4.4: Yearly Percentage Changes in Garda Recorded Domestic Violence Incidents

Year	Year on year percentage changes in Domestic Violence Incidents			
	Incidents	Arrests	Charges	Convictions
1995	0	0	0	0
1996	+16.5	+1.2	+37.6	+11.2
1997	-9.9	+32.0	+30.6	+33.0
1998	+101.9	+59.3	+44.8	+14.7
1999	+19.7	-4.3	+9.5	+28.4
2000	+7.6	-5.0	-1.3	+15.9
2001	-8.2	+15.0	+20.4	+11.9
2002	+2.7	-13.3	-23.2	-49.4
2003	-17.5	-13.4	-12.2	-0.2

Note: This table provides additional detail related to Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3.

Appendix Table A4.5: Outcome of Barring Order Applications, 2000-2003

Year	Barring orders			Total No. of Applications
	% Granted	% Refused	% Withdrawn/ Struck Out	
2000	46.7	4.1	49.2	4,586
2001	46.2	4.8	48.9	4,470
2002	42.8	3.8	53.4	4,067
2003	43.9	4.5	51.6	3,586

Note: This table provides additional detail related to Figure 3.4 in Chapter 3.

Appendix Table A4.6: Outcome of Safety Order Applications, 2000-2003

Year	Safety orders			Total No. of Applications
	% Granted	% Refused	% Withdrawn/ Struck Out	
2000	40.4	3.9	55.7	2,307
2001	42.4	3.6	54.0	2,903
2002	42.2	3.3	54.5	2,814
2003	43.3	4.4	52.3	2,557

Note: This table provides additional detail related to Figure 3.4 in Chapter 3.

Appendix Table A4.7: Outcome of Protection Order Applications, 2000-2003

Year	Protection orders			Total No. of Applications
	% Granted	% Refused	% Withdrawn/ Struck Out	
2000 ¹³⁷	82.9	1.9	6.2	4,256
2001 ¹³⁸	87.1	2.5	9.4	4,263
2002 ¹³⁹	88.3	2.6	9.1	3,677
2003 ¹⁴⁰	90.5	2.5	6.6	3,109

Note: This table provides additional detail related to Figure 3.4 in Chapter 3.

137 It is unknown how many Interim Barring Orders were granted in lieu of Protection Orders in 2000.

138 In 2001, 44 Interim Barring Orders were granted in lieu of Protection Orders.

139 In 2002, 25 Interim Barring Orders were granted in lieu of Protection Orders.

140 In 2003, 11 Interim Barring Orders were granted in lieu of Protection Orders.

Appendix Table A4.8: Outcome of Interim Barring Order Applications, 2000-2003

Year	Interim barring orders			Total No. of Applications
	% Granted	% Refused	% Withdrawn/ Struck Out	
2000	87.2	5.8	7.0	742
2001	86.9	3.1	10.0	1,159
2002	82.9	6.0	11.2	852
2003	84.4	4.8	10.8	629

Note: This table provides additional detail related to Figure 3.4 in Chapter 3.

Appendix Table A4.9: Percentages of Applications for Domestic Violence Orders Made by Spouses and other Partners, 2003

Order Type	% Spouse Applications	% Other Partner Applications
Barring Orders	59.2	27.8
Safety Orders	59.9	27.4
Protection Orders	57.5	30.5
Interim Barring Orders	57.7	25.4

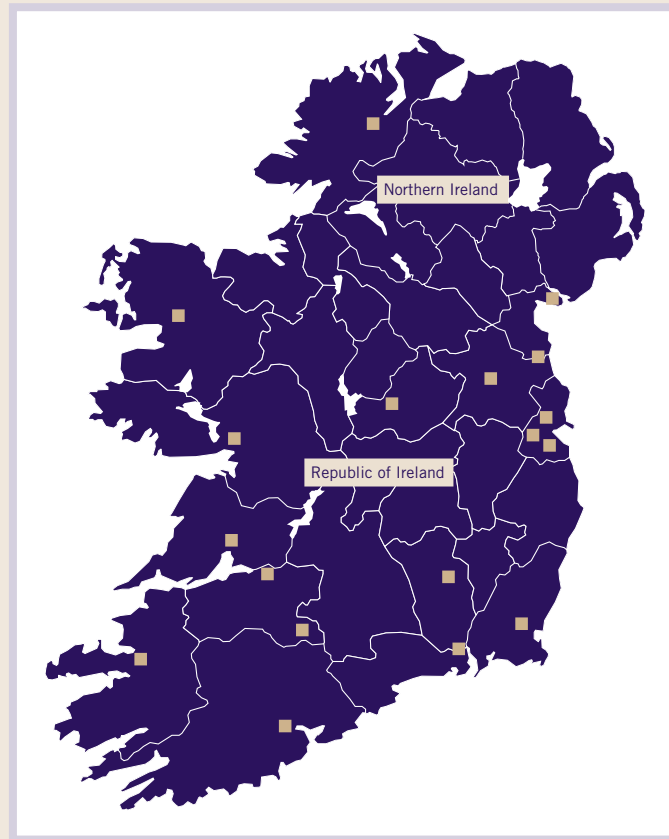
Note: This table provides additional detail related to Table 3.10 in Chapter 3.

Appendix Table A4.10: Outcomes of Domestic Violence Order Applications Made by Spouses and Other Partners Only in each Court Region, 2003*

Order Type	Region	Granted		Refused		Withdrawn/ struck out		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barring Order	Northern	131	70.1	4	2.1*	52	27.8*	187	6.0
	Eastern	210	58.2	7	1.9*	144	39.9	361	11.6
	Midland	139	59.2	2	0.9*	94	40.0	235	7.5
	South-Eastern	173	49.9	7	2.0*	167	48.1	347	11.1
	South-Western	259	51.5	23	4.6*	221	43.9	503	16.1
	Western	76*	41.8	17	9.3*	89	48.9*	182	5.8
	Cork	104	30.3	10	2.9*	229	66.8	343	11.0
	Dublin Metropolitan	269	28.1	54	5.6*	635	66.3	958	30.1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1,361</i>	<i>43.7</i>	<i>124</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>1,631</i>	<i>52.3</i>	<i>3,116</i>	<i>100</i>
Safety Order	Northern	61	72.6	6	7.1	17	20.2	84	3.8
	Eastern	164	59.4	5	1.8	107	38.8	276	12.4
	Midland	71	49.0	1	0.7	73	50.4	145	6.5
	South-Eastern	138	47.8	7	2.4	144	49.8	289	12.9
	South-Western	135	55.6	7	2.9	101	41.6	243	10.9
	Western	57	39.0	14	9.6	75	51.4	146	6.5
	Cork	80	38.3	9	4.3	120	57.4	209	9.4
	Dublin Metropolitan	278	33.1	31	3.9	532	63.3	841	37.7
	<i>Total</i>	<i>984</i>	<i>44.1</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>3.6*</i>	<i>1,169</i>	<i>52.4</i>	<i>2,233</i>	<i>100</i>
Protection Order	Northern	77	95.1*	1	1.2*	3	3.7	81	3.0
	Eastern	343	92.0	4	1.1*	26	7.0	373	13.7
	Midland	172	90.5	1	0.5*	17	9.0	190	7.0
	South-Eastern	315	93.8	6	1.8*	15	4.5	336	12.3
	South-Western	350	93.6	0	0*	24	6.4	374	13.7
	Western	129	84.9	13	8.6*	10	6.6	152	5.6
	Cork	342	92.7	12	3.3*	15	4.1	369	13.5
	Dublin Metropolitan	762	88.8	31	3.6*	65	7.6	858	31.4
	<i>Total</i>	<i>2,490</i>	<i>91.1</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>2.5*</i>	<i>175</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>2,733</i>	<i>100</i>
Interim Barring	Northern	29	96.7*	0	0*	1	3.3*	30	5.7*
	Eastern	75	88.2*	2	2.3*	11	12.5*	88	16.8*
	Midland	61	88.4*	1	1.5*	7	10.2*	69	13.2*
	South-Eastern	27	87.1*	1	3.2*	3	9.7*	31	5.9*
	South-Western	1	25.0*	3	75.0*	0	0*	4	0.8*
	Western	4	80.0*	0	0*	1	20.0*	5	1.0*
	Cork	37	69.8*	9	17.0*	7	13.2*	53	10.1*
	Dublin Metropolitan	203	83.5	11	4.5*	29	11.9*	243	46.5
	<i>Total</i>	<i>437</i>	<i>83.6</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>5.2*</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>11.3*</i>	<i>523</i>	<i>100</i>
Grand Totals	All Regions	5,272	61.3	299	3.5	3,034	35.3	8,605	100

Note: This table provides additional detail related to Table 3.11 in Chapter 3.

*Caution is advised in the interpretation and use of certain percentages due to the low number of cases.

Appendix Figure A4.11: Locations of Women's Refuges in Ireland¹⁴¹**Table A4.11:** Detailed Prevalence of Severe Abuse by Gender and Marital Status

		Lifetime	Last 5 years	Last year	Present partner	More than one partner
Married	Women	9.7	3.8	2.6	5.8	1.0
	Men	4.0	1.7	1.2	3.3	0.8
Separated/ divorced	Women	58.3	21.4	12.0	45.7	5.8
	Men	29.2	14.4	2.2	24.7	3.4
Widowed	Women	11.6	1.3	0.0	5.3	1.1
	Men	2.3	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Never married	Women	16.8	11.6	3.7	10.6	2.4
	Men	7.7	6.6	2.1	3.8	1.7
All	Women	14.5	7.0	3.2	9.2	1.7
	Men	6.2	4.2	1.6	4.0	1.2

141 Map taken from 'Irish National Report on Refuge Service for Women who have Experienced Domestic Violence' by the NNWRSS.

Appendix 5: Membership of the Advisory Group for the National Study on Domestic Abuse

Representatives of the National Crime Council:

Prof. Dermot Walsh¹⁴² – Professor of Law, University of Limerick (Chair);

Ms. Lillian McGovern (Deputy-Chair);

Ms. Mary Ellen Ring S.C.

Representatives of the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women:

Ms. Rachel Mullen¹⁴³;

Ms. Sharon O'Halloran¹⁴⁴.

Representative of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform:

Mr. Brendan Callaghan¹⁴⁵ – Principal Officer, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Representative of the Minister for Health and Children:

Mr. Aidan Browne – Health Service Executive.

Other Experts¹⁴⁶:

Prof. Liz Kelly – Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University (formerly the University of North London);

Prof. Sylvia Walby – Professor of Sociology, Leeds University.

142 Replaced Mr. John Hynes.

143 Replaced Ms. Denise Charlton.

144 Replaced Ms. Sinéad Hanly.

145 Replaced Ms. Michelle Shannon.

146 Dr. Dorothy Watson was a member of the Advisory Group until August, 2002 when she resigned to avoid any potential conflict of interest in the tendering process where her employer (the ESRI) was likely to submit a tender in response to the 'Request for Tender' document issued by the National Crime Council. Dr. Kieran McKeown tendered his resignation from the Advisory Group in June, 2002.

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