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# FAITH, HOPE, BATTERING

A Survey Of Men's Violence against Women  
in Finland

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# Foreword

Violence against women has become one of the central themes of the international debate related to the situation of women and the furthering of equality between men and women. The problem has been dealt with in the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995 in Beijing, and in the March 1998 meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women that dealt with the implementation of the Platform of Action of this Conference. The topic has also been, for some time, one of the main themes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme.

In Finland, violence against women and partner violence have been discussed in the violence committee of the Council for Equality, established in 1990. The violence committee has made several proposals and initiatives in respect of the problem. The prevention of violence against women is also included in the equality programme which the Finnish government accepted in February 1997.

Effective planning and implementation of measures to prevent violence against women have suffered from a lack of basic information about the problem and its linkages. Such basic information is now presented in this study of women's experiences of violence.

A new characteristic of victimisation surveys is that they approach women's violence and harassment experiences by studies that are directed at women only. The first survey

of this kind was carried out in Canada in 1993. Subsequently, similar studies have been made in Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. This report is the first of its kind in Finland.

The study Women's Safety 1997 has been monitored by a group of experts chaired by programme officer Kristiina Kangaspunta of HEUNI, with research director Kauko Aromaa from the National Research Institute of Legal Policy, senior adviser Pirkko Kiviaho of the Council for Equality, project director Helena Koski of the Kuntokallio Foundation, doctor Anna-Lisa Söderholm from the Helsinki University Central Hospital, and researchers Markku Heiskanen and Minna Piispa of the Survey Research Unit of Statistics Finland. Many other experts have also commented on the questionnaire. Our special thanks go to those 5,000 women who took the trouble of answering the questionnaire.

Markku Heiskanen and Minna Piispa have analysed the data and prepared the report. Kauko Aromaa has translated the report into English. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Council for Equality have financed the data collection, analysis and reporting of the survey.

Violence against women is a problem that needs to be tackled. We hope that this report provides information and assistance to all those dealing with violence: citizens, professionals and decision-makers alike.

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# The central findings

## *The prevalence of violence and threats*

- 40 % of adult women have been victims of male physical or sexual violence or threats after their 15th birthday, 14 % in the course of the past twelve months. The lifetime prevalence (after the 15th birthday) of having experienced male physical violence was 30 %, and the corresponding one-year figure was 7 %.
- 52 % of all women have been victims of sexual harassment or sexually offensive behaviour after their 15th birthday, 20 % in the course of the past year.
- 29 % of all women have, before their 15th birthday, experienced violence, or sexually threatening behaviour or have been forced into sexual relations.

## *Violence in partner relationships*

- 22 % of all married and cohabiting women have been victims of physical or sexual violence or threats of violence by their present partner, 9 % in the course of the past year. Overall, 122,000 women had experienced partner violence in the course of the past twelve months. Of these, 90,000 were victims of physical violence.
- violence or threats by their ex-partner had been experienced by 50 % of all women who had lived in a relationship which had already terminated.
- 67 % of all women who had experienced violence reported that this had caused hatred, anxiety or other negative feelings.
- 10 % reported the most serious incident to the police.
- 12 % of the victims had sought help to cope with the problem.
- 6 % of the violent men had sought help in regard to their own violent behaviour.

- Of those men with fathers who had perpetrated family violence, 41 % were also violent against their own partner.

## *Violence perpetrated by men other than the partner*

- 24 % of all women had at least once, after their 15th birthday, been victims of a man's physical or sexual violence or threats, perpetrated by a stranger or an acquaintance other than their partner, 4.5 % during the last twelve months. Physical violence by such men had been experienced by 10 % of all women. The corresponding rate for the last twelve months was 1.4 %.
- In 68 % of the most recent incidents, the assailant was acquainted to the victim.

## *Childhood experiences of violence*

- 21 % of all women had experiences of violence before their 15th birthday.
- 16 % of all women have been victims of sexual violence or sexually threatening behaviour before the age of 15 years.

## *Fear of violence*

- 66 % of all women were concerned or very concerned of the risk of assault.
- 52 % of all women were concerned about being assaulted in the street.
- 44 % of all women were concerned about being raped by a stranger.
- 14 % of all women were concerned about being assaulted in their workplace.
- 11 % of all women were concerned about a violent family member.

## *General description of the study*

- the survey was carried out in the second half of 1997, the questionnaire was returned by 4,955 women between the ages of 18 and 74, with a response rate of 70.3 %.

# 1. Statistics on violence against women

The central aim of the study was to get representative and statistically reliable information about the prevalence of male violence against women and its consequences. Such information is much needed in the debate about violence.

Existing data are scarce. What is available are statistics on persons killed as a consequence of family violence, and special studies of crimes recorded by the police. These cover only a small fraction of violence against women. Neither is it likely that the coverage or depth of registered data will be much improved in the future, as far as violence and its consequences are concerned. It has also been suggested that registered data are biased, violence among the lower social strata being more likely to be controlled and recorded by the authorities than violence among “better people” (Laine 1991). Interview surveys of representative population samples provide a fuller picture of the phenomenon. Such surveys have been carried out in Finland since 1970.

## *Cause-of-death statistics*

Table 1. shows time series of women killed as homicide victims and as victims of family violence. Homicide is classified as family violence if the perpetrator was living in the family. Of women killed in family violence between 1987-1995, 18 % were under 25 years old, 47 % were between 25 and 44 years of age, and 35 % were 45 years old or older. More than half of the female homicide victims were killed as victims of family violence.

**Table 1. Women killed as victims of violent crimes and in family violence, and the percentage of family violence out of all violently killed women in the years 1987-1995.**

Year	Women killed	Family violence	Percentage of family violence %
1987	47	28	59.6
1988	43	27	62.8
1989	40	25	62.5
1990	40	24	60.0
1991	38	19	50.0
1992	61	34	55.7
1993	51	27	52.9
1994	53	33	62.3
1995	50	23	46.0
Average	47	27	56.7

## *Violence recorded by the police*

Crimes recorded by the police do not specify the sex of the victim. Thus, the only information about violence against women from this source is forcible rape. Only a proportion of rapes are reported to the police, and the variation in the annual number of reported rapes is rather large. Table 2. there-

**Table 2. Forcible rape recorded by the police. Annual averages for each decade.**

	Annual average
1960-69	297
1970-79	316
1980-89	342
1990-97	399

**Table 3. Violence and partner violence against women recorded by the police in 1997.**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Partner violence</b>	
		number	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,274</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>15.0</b>
Assault	5,973	923	15.5
Aggravated assault	437	71	16.2
Petty assault	2,422	350	14.5
Other crimes against person	442	46	10.4

fore presents ten-year averages for four de-

cares. The number of rapes recorded by the police has grown decade by decade. The highest figure is from 1997: 468 cases.

As of 1996, police registers have been specially analysed for violence against women (Lättilä 1997). According to this analysis, police recorded about 9,300 incidents of violence against women in 1997. These comprised about 2,000 incidents of family violence and 1,390 incidents of partner violence. In the violent incidents, 12 % of the victims were under 25 years of age, 62 % were between 25 and 44 years old, and 24 % were 45 years old or older.

## 2. Survey research of violence against women in Finland and other countries

Victimisation surveys based on interviews of representative population samples provide information on the occurrence, structure and trends of violence against women (e.g. Heiskanen & Aromaa 1998). These findings are not reproduced here, except for results from the International (Crime) Victimisation Survey (Mayhew & van Dijk 1997).

General victimisation surveys of the whole (adult) population have not been able to provide much detailed information on particular characteristics of women's experiences of violence. Canadian and Australian studies on women's victimisation to violence have, firstly, shown that detailed questions provide important information on the contents of the

violence situations. Secondly, in these studies, the volume of victimisation is larger than that found in the general victimisation surveys (Johnson 1996, McLennan 1996).

In the Canadian survey on women's victimisation (Johnson 1997), one half of all Canadian adult women had been victim of at least one violent incident by a male perpetrator after their 16th birthday. One out of ten had experienced physical or sexual violence in the year preceding the interview. For nearly one half of the victimised women, the perpetrator was a man they knew (husband, cohabitee, boyfriend, friend, neighbour, family member). Out of those living in a relationship at the time of

**Table 4. Women 16 years and older who have been victims of sexual and other violence (% of respondents) over the last five years, 1996. Part of the data are for 1992.**

	Sexual harassment and sexual violence	Other violence	Sample size
New Zealand 1992	9	16	1,122
USA	9	14	594
Canada	9	13	1,098
Australia 1992	9	10	1,095
England & Wales	6	12	1,159
Sweden	6	11	534
The Netherlands	8	9	1,080
Finland	7	9	2,066
Average 1996	7	9	10,150
Switzerland	10	6	538
Austria	10	4	855
France	4	10	503
Scotland	4	9	1,190
Northern Ireland	3	6	533



the survey, 15 % said their present partner had been violent to them. One out of two women who had previously been married or cohabiting said that their ex-partner had used violence against them.

For Australian women, the proportion of those who had experienced male violence after their 16th birthday was 36 %. Six per cent had been victims of male violence in the course of the preceding year (McLennan 1996). Out of those who were in a relationship at the time of the survey, 8 % said their present partner had been violent against them while they were living together. Violence was far more prevalent in relationships that were already terminated; 42 % of the women who had earlier been living in a relationship said they had been victims of violent behaviour by their ex-partner. The violence was more often of a physical than sexual nature.

The results of various studies carried out in different countries are hard to compare due to differences in the methods of data collection and the survey questions themselves. Internationally standardised studies that would focus on violence against women have not yet been carried out. Of the general vic-

timisation studies, the most comprehensive one is the International (Crime) Victimization Survey (Mayhew & van Dijk 1997). Table 4. presents results on sexual and other violence against women, as found in the Mayhew & van Dijk study. Finland is placed in the middle range among "Western countries" for both indicators in 1996.

Sexual violence was defined as an act where the victim is assaulted or touched in a manner that is felt to be sexually offensive. Violence comprises incidents where the victim had been attacked or had been threatened in a manner that really frightened her. Due to the relatively large sample sizes, the country differences are statistically significant. With the exception of Canada, violence has generally increased since 1992 in the countries participating in the survey. Sexual harassment and violence have not increased in a corresponding manner. For Finland, no increase in the violence indicator occurred from 1992 to 1996. Less serious forms of sexual harassment have slightly decreased in Finland (Heiskanen & Aromaa 1996).

### *3. The survey data and the survey questions*

The study was carried out as a postal inquiry in the second half of 1997. A systematic sample of 7,100 Finnish and Swedish speaking women aged 18-74 years was drawn from the Central Population Register. 49 of the persons in the sample had died or moved permanently abroad. Thus, the final sample size was 7,051 persons. Out of these, 4,955 returned an acceptable questionnaire, the final response rate thus being 70.3 %. A detailed description of the research data and the field-work is in Appendix 1.

The main questions that are tackled in this report are:

1) How prevalent is violence by men against women? How much of it is there in different population groups?

2) How prevalent is violence experienced by women in a relationship and what is it like? Violence in a relationship denotes physical violence, threats of violence, and sexual violence perpetrated by the woman's husband or male partner. Partner violence is considered separately for ongoing and already terminated relationships. What kind of men assault or threaten their partners?

3) How prevalent is violence that occurs outside of relationships and what is it like?

How often does it happen that a stranger or a person known to the victim (other than the male partner) assaults or threatens women?

4) How concerned are women about the risk of becoming a victim of violence in different situations in everyday life? How does the degree of concern depend on personal victimisation experiences? Have women taken precautions against victimisation?

5) How prevalent is sexual harassment? Who are the perpetrators and what kind of consequences result for the woman?

6) The description of violence is supplemented in that we also chart such matters as fears, shame, guilt, hatred, etc., resulting from violence, and whether the victim had received any kind of help or support, and also what kind of injuries were caused by the violence and how the violence affected the future of the relationship. Finally, the role of alcohol in the violent situations is described.

7) Do theories of social learning, situational theories, and lifestyle-related explanations receive support in our findings?

## 4. Results

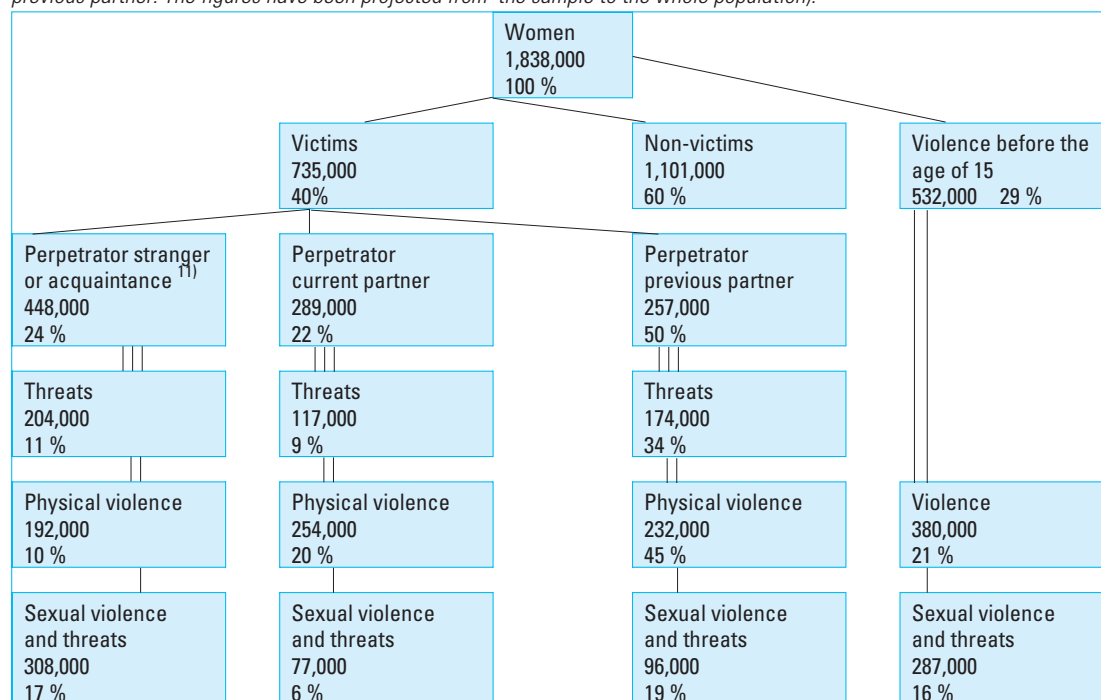
### 4.1. Forms of men's violence against women, and background characteristics of victimisation

#### 4.1.1. Lifetime experiences of male violence

Information on violence experienced by women has been presented in earlier Finnish

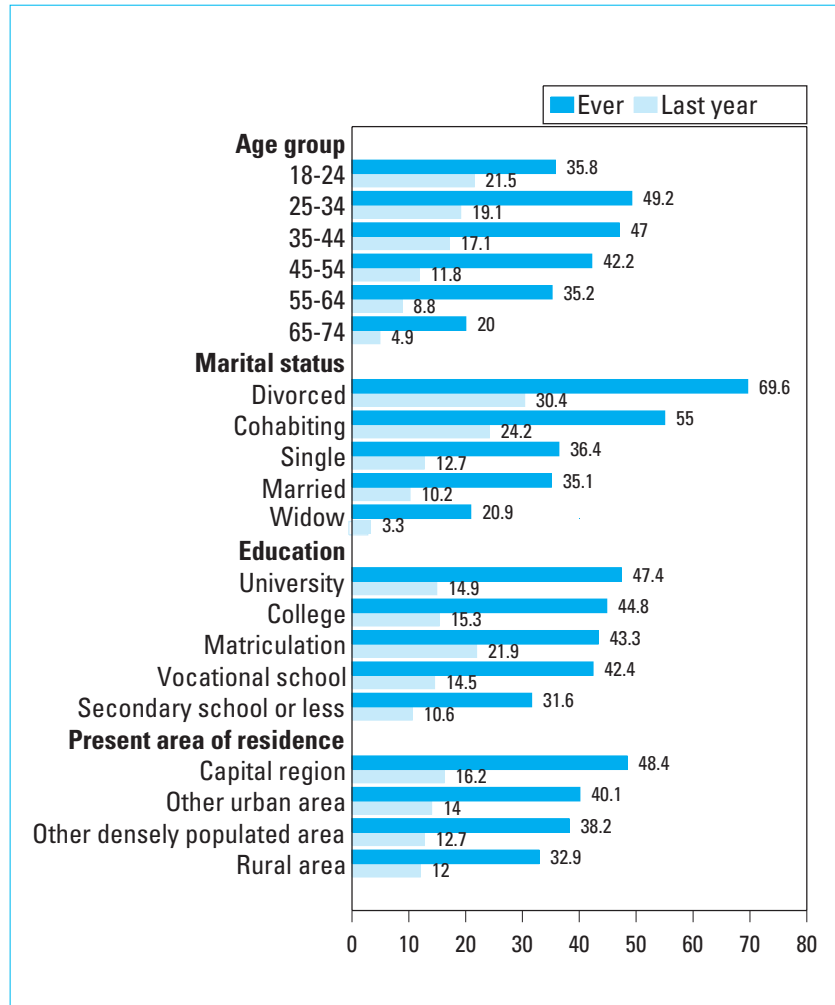
general victimisation surveys for periods of one year and five years (e.g. Suomalaisten... 1993, Heiskanen 1996). In the present Women's Safety Survey 1997 we asked about violence by men for the last year, but also over the respondent's (adult) lifetime. The lower age limit applied was 15 years, i.e. this survey measures male violence experienced by a woman after her 15th birthday. Additionally, at the end of the ques-

**Chart 1. The prevalence of violence by men against women after the woman's 15th birthday, by perpetrator and type of violence, and women who have been victims of violence before the age of 15.** (Ages 18-74. The victim percentages are calculated of those in the subgroup. 1,302,000 women were married or cohabiting, 515,000 women had a previous partner. The figures have been projected from the sample to the whole population).



1 Stranger or acquaintance refers to violence outside of partner relationships. The total number of threats, physical violence and sexual violence and threats is larger than the sum of violence by strangers or acquaintances as the same woman may have been victim of more than one form of violence. The same accounting principle has been applied to violence by current and previous partners.

**Figure 1. Victims of violence by a man at least once after 15th birthday and over the last year, in different groups (%).**



tionnaire were a few additional questions about whether anyone - male or female - had been violent to the respondent before her 15th birthday. Also sexually threatening behaviour, forced sex and attempts at forced sex were asked about.

40 per cent of the women had experienced male violence or threats after their 15th birthday. When events before the age of 15 and sexual harassment are taken into account (in violent events experienced as a child the perpetrator may also have been a woman), one half of the women have been victimised. Nearly one out five women have

been victims of violence both before their 15th birthday and after this date.

Those who have experienced violence more often than the average respondent are in the age bracket 25-44 years. According to the survey data, only one out of five of those in the age bracket 65-74 years have been victimised after their 15th birthday. Seven out of ten separated (previously married or cohabiting) women have at least one experience of violence. Above average victimisation prevalences are found among those with better education, higher incomes, and living in the region of the national capital.

Figure 1. presents some background characteristics of the women who have been victims of male violence at least once. The respondent's background characteristics refer to the time the survey was undertaken and are not always the same as when the violence took place. Nevertheless, even such information is of interest as this shows which women have personal experience of male violence.

Women's experiences of violence during their adult years are divided into two main categories: violence in relationships and violence outside of such relationships, committed by men known (but not by partners) or unknown to the victim (hereafter also called outsider violence). Violence by an outsider has occurred at least once in their adult years to almost a quarter of all women. The proportions of strangers vs. acquaintances may be estimated by information on the perpetrator of the most recent violent incident. When events where the perpetrator was a total stranger are separated from all violence outside of a relationship, two thirds (68 %) of outsider violence was committed by an acquaintance.

This study is primarily focussed on partner violence. Thus, violence committed by male partners, present or former, is treated in greater detail than violence committed by acquaintances or strangers. Violence by their present partner has been experienced by more than one out of five women living in a relationship. One half of the women who have been separated from their partner have been victims of violence or threats. One third (33 %) of all women who have experience of living in a relationship have also experienced partner violence.

In Chart 1. sexual harassment has not been counted as violence. More than one half of all women have at least some experience of sexual harassment. 66 % of all women have, during their adult life, been victims of

either sexual harassment or different types of violence.

#### ***4.1.2. Victimization before the age of 15***

Before their 15th birthday, 29 % of all women have experienced physical violence, sexually threatening behaviour, forced sexual relations or attempts. 21 % of the women had experience of violence, and 16 per cent had been victims of sexual harassment or sexual violence. One quarter of all women who had been victims of violence in their childhood (7 % of all women) had experienced both physical violence and sexual harassment or forced sexual relations. Forced sex had been experienced by two per cent.

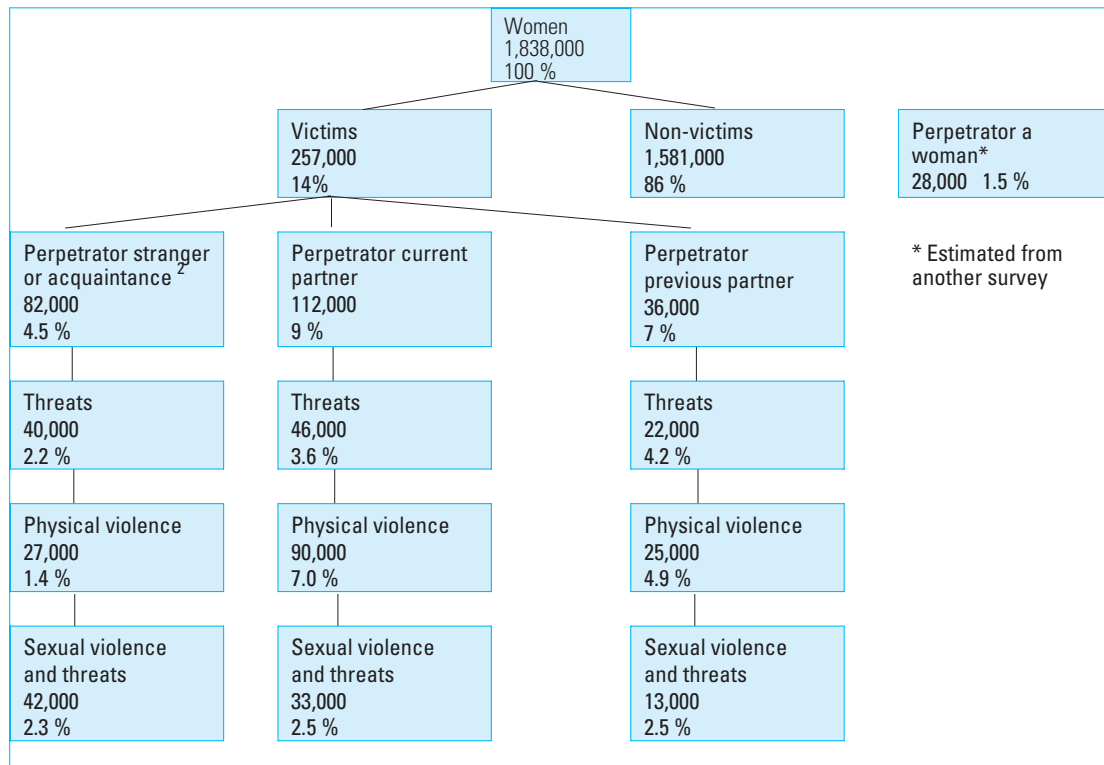
The perpetrators in childhood violence are mostly members of the family or acquaintances. No follow-up questions about the perpetrators of sexual harassment or forced sex were asked.

Significantly more women who had been victims of violence before their 15th birthday had violence experience than those who had not been victimised as children (65 % vs. 31 %).

#### ***4.1.3. Experiences of violence in the last year***

In comparison with lifetime victimisation data, questions on experiences of violence over the last year are more likely to capture less serious forms of violence since the short temporal distance makes it easier to remember relevant incidents. Furthermore, in the one-year measurement, the demographic characteristics of the victim correspond more closely to the time of the incident. A drawback in using the one-year time limit is that many events that may have seriously disturbed the woman's life are not accounted for.

**Chart 2. Victims of violence by men against women over the last twelve months, in different perpetrator groups.**  
Ages 18–74. (The victim percentages have been calculated of those belonging to the group in question. 1,302,000 women were married or cohabiting, 515,000 women had an ex-partner).



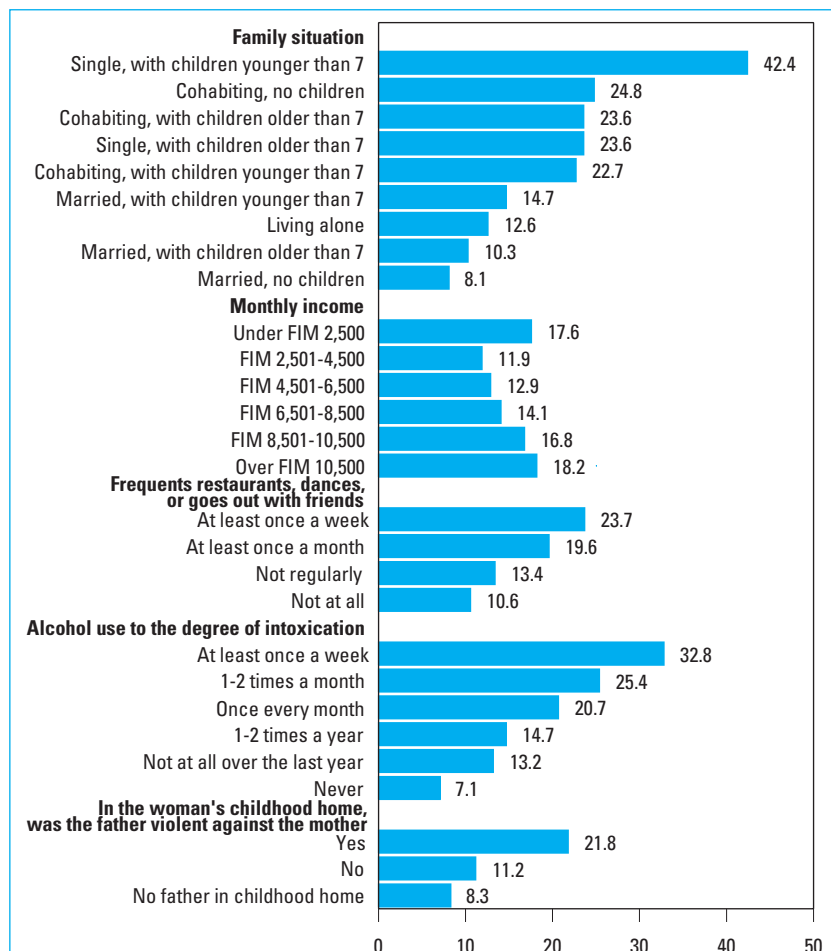
In the course of the last year, 14 % of all women have been victims of at least one violent or threatening incident by a man. For a one-year period, we may also estimate the volume of women's victimisation to violence by other women. According to the general national victimisation survey of 1997 (Heiskanen & Aromaa 1998) 1.5 % of all women had been victims of violence or threats by another woman. The overall prevalence of violence or threats by other persons, male or female, was 8 % for all women in the

age bracket 15-74 years - or considerably less than in the Women's Safety Survey 1997. One source of difference between the results of the two surveys is that the mailed questionnaire of the Women's Safety Survey 1997 contained more details, it paid specific attention to partner violence, and there were also more questions about sexual harassment and violence.

Male violence in a partner relationship is considerably more common than violence by strangers or acquaintances. Seven per

2 Stranger or acquaintance refers to violence outside of partner relationships. The total number of threats, physical violence and sexual violence and threats is larger than the sum of violence by strangers or acquaintances as the same woman may have been victim of more than one form of violence. The same accounting principle has been applied to violence by current and previous partners.

**Figure 2. Victims of violence or threats by a man in different subgroups (%).**



cent of all women who were presently living in a partner relationship had experienced physical violence by their partner in the last year.

Factors affecting the likelihood of becoming a victim of violence are reported separately for the male perpetrator categories distinguished in Chart 2. The present chapter presents a brief overview of the overall volume of violence by men against women, and pinpoints certain risk groups.

In Figure 1., the lighter bars depict violence in the course of the last year. The overall impression as to the distribution of violence across different population categories resembles largely the one regarding lifetime victimisation. The variation by age of

one-year prevalences is larger than in the case of the lifetime figures, since experiences of violence diminish with age. For those in the age bracket 18-24 years, the rate of those who have been victims of violence at least once after their 15th birthday is 1.7 times the corresponding one-year rate. In contrast, for those in the age bracket 65-74 years, the lifetime victimisation prevalence is 4.1 times the one-year figure.

Figure 2. shows that exceptionally high one-year rates are found among single mothers with children under seven. A similar finding was reported in Sweden (e.g. Häll 1991). Our survey comprised 80 single mothers with children under seven, corresponding to 29,000 at the population level.

In such a small group, random variations may have a considerable influence on the result: the statistical confidence interval of the rate is plus or minus 10 percentage points. In addition to these single mothers, cohabiting women also have above average (14 %) victimisation prevalences.

Victimisation becomes more prevalent with higher income levels. The exception are those in the lowest income bracket, with victimisation prevalence that is almost as high as the one in the highest income bracket. Monthly income here denotes the respondent's salaries and other incomes after taxes and income transfers.

Violence becomes more prevalent with increasing frequency of going out to restaurants, discos, dances or otherwise. The respondents were also asked how often they consume alcohol to the extent that they feel intoxicated. Figure 2. illustrates that violence increases with increasing alcohol use. Among those who become intoxicated at least once a week, one out of three had been victim of violence in the course of the last year.

Of childhood experiences, violent behaviour by one's own father (or stepfather) towards the mother is reflected in violence experiences during adult years in the following way: for women in whose childhood home the father had been violent towards the mother, violence during adulthood was almost twice as prevalent compared to those women whose childhood family did not have this kind of violence.

Similarly, women who had been victims of physical violence, sexual violence, or sexual harassment in their childhood had much more often (27 %) been victims of violence and threats in the course of the last twelve months than those who had not had such experiences in their childhood (11 %).

One fifth of all women have experienced sexual harassment in the course of the last twelve months. 27 % of all women had been

victims of violence or sexual harassment (or both) in the last twelve-month period.

## **4.2. Violence in partner relationships**

### **4.2.1. The Finnish couple**

The statistical description of Finnish couples does not indicate any large changes from the 1950s to the late 1990s. Presently, a little under 80 % of the population live in families. In 1950, the proportion of family population was 86 %. As the proportion of people living in families slowly decreases, the average size of families also shrinks (Kartovaara 1997). Of the women between the ages of 18 and 74 who form our target group, 79 % lived in families. One half (52 %) lived in a marriage, 13 % were cohabiting.

Considering the differences in definitions and the time of measurement, the proportions of women living in a marriage and cohabiting, as found in the present survey (55 % and 15.5 %) correspond quite closely to the register data.

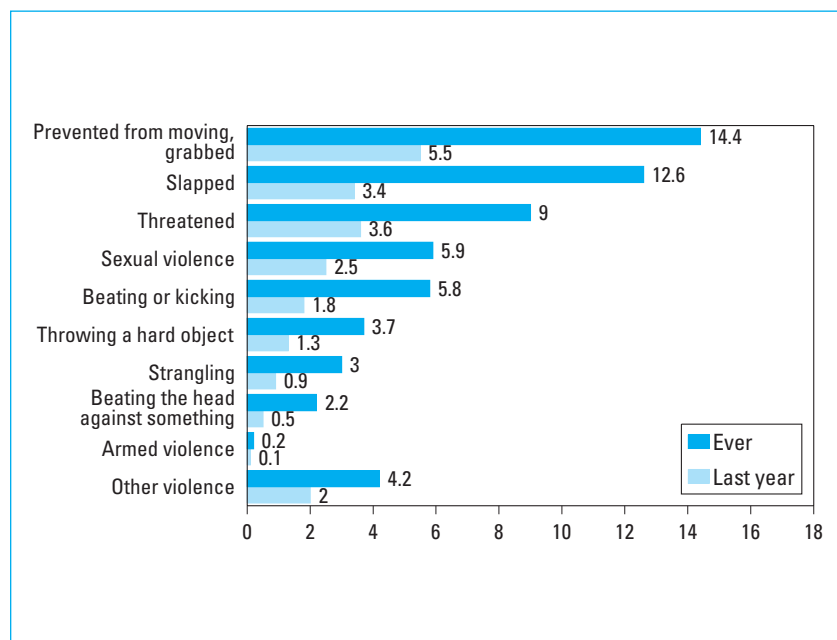
Our questionnaire also carried items about the respondent's relationship to her present male partner. 80 % thought this relationship was very good (48 %) or good (32 %); 14 % said it was acceptable. Only 1.6 % of the women assessed their relationship with the partner as bad, and 0.5 % as very bad. 4 % gave no answer.

### **4.2.2. Violence in the current relationship**

General prevalence. Partner violence was measured by a 10-item question block. The items describe everyday violence from threats to more aggravated forms of physical violence. A similar question block was also used in foreign surveys on violence against



**Figure 3. The prevalence of partner violence in the current relationship after the 15th birthday and in the last twelve months (% of women married or cohabiting).**



women. The Finnish general victimisation surveys are based on the same principle. Conflicts that remained below the level of threats (cf. Straus & Gelles 1992) were excluded from the study.

Physical or sexual violence or threats by their present partner had been experienced at least once by 22 % of the married or cohabiting women; the corresponding one-year rate was 9 %. Two thirds (69 %) of the women who had been victims of violence by their partner in the course of the last twelve months had also earlier experiences of violence by the same man.

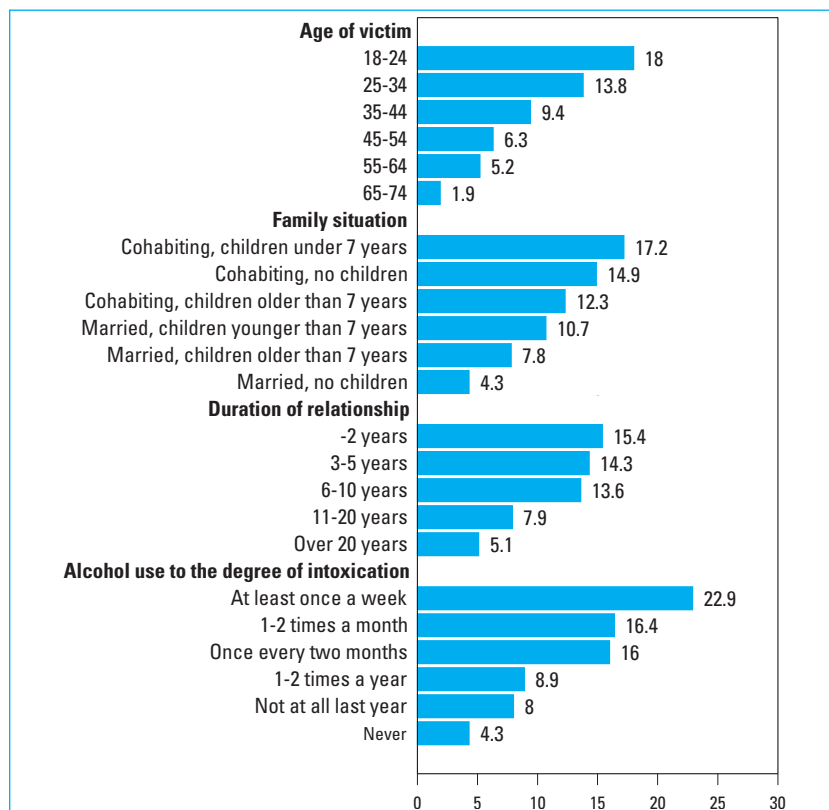
The violence for the last year as well as for the whole relationship most often took the form of preventing the woman from moving or seizing her. Slapping denotes a slap with the palm of the hand, in contrast to more aggravated hitting or beating that is done by fists or some hard object. Strangling also included attempts at strangling. Sexual violence includes pressing, forcing or attempts at forcing sexual contact. Armed violence means shooting, or hitting/slashing with a knife.

Victim characteristics. Violence was most prevalent among young women: of those in the age bracket 18-24 years, 18 % had experienced violence in the course of the last twelve months. This rate decreases with age. One explanation of the low prevalence of violence among elderly women may be that they are particularly resentful about the intrusion of such questions although they do not refuse to participate in surveys.

Violence is also prevalent among students (15 % of students living in a relationship). Above-average violence was also found among women on maternity leave, and those who were unemployed or self-employed. Women employed in agriculture experienced partner violence rarely, less than 3 % of them had such experiences in the last twelve months.

Of the women cohabiting, 15 % had been victims of partner violence last year. For married women, the rate was 7 %. If the cohabiting woman had children under 7, this victimisation rate was 17 %. Violence was most prevalent in relationships that had lasted for two years or less. However, those

**Figure 4. Victims of partner violence in the course of the last twelve months, by age, family situation, duration of the relationship, and the frequency of alcohol use to the level of intoxication (% of all women married or cohabiting).**



who had experienced violence in the course of the last twelve months also comprised many women who had endured long relationships: one out of 20 women who had been in a relationship for more than 20 years had been victim of partner violence during the last year.

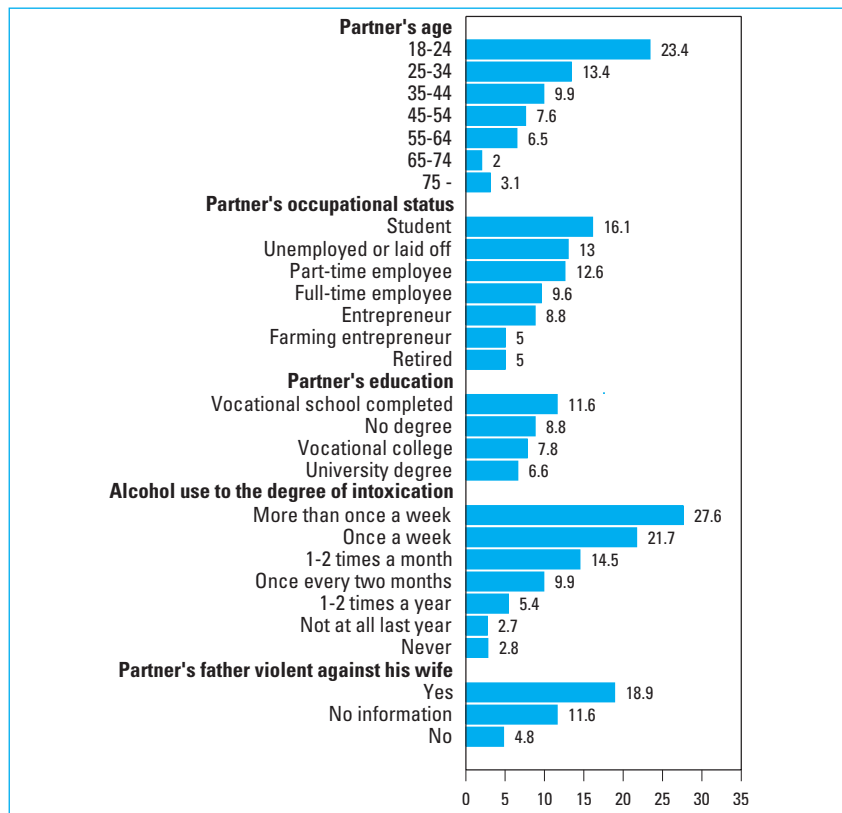
Alcohol consumption leading to intoxication, even if it happens infrequently, has a connection with violent victimisation. 23 % per cent of the women who got intoxicated at least once a week had also been victimised in the course of the last twelve months. The number of women who became intoxicated this frequently was, however, very small, an estimated 25,000 women (n=69).

Other groups with an above-average risk of partner violence were those whose father in their childhood home had been violent towards his partner (13 % of this group experi-

enced partner violence in the course of the last year), those who frequented dancing restaurants/bars at least once a week (14 %), those who participated in cultural events at least weekly (12 %) and those who did not participate at all in cultural events (11 %), and those who earned less than FIM 2,500 a month (USD 1 is about FIM 5).

Lifetime experiences of partner violence (any time after the 15th birthday) do not distinguish among different victim groups as clearly as the last-year rates. However this indicator does, also, show a concentration of partner violence in the younger age brackets (18-24 and 25-34 years), where 25 % have been victims of partner violence at least once. Similarly, the high prevalence (34 %) of violence among cohabiting women with small children is found once more. In contrast, the frequency of alcohol intoxication

**Figure 5. Victims of partner violence in the course of the last twelve months, by partner's age, occupational status, education, alcohol use to the level of intoxication, and whether the father in the partner's childhood home had been violent (% of those married or cohabiting).**



is only vaguely connected with the lifetime experience of partner violence.

Perpetrator characteristics. The man's age, occupational status, alcohol consumption, his father's being violent, and, to some extent, also his education were related to the woman's victimisation. Of the men who were violent in the course of the last year, 29 % consumed alcohol at least once a week to the level of intoxication; of the men who did not behave violently, 10 % became intoxicated at least once a week.

The lifetime prevalence of victimisation to partner violence was only vaguely connected with the man's age (or the woman's); however, violence committed at some stage of the relationship by men in the age bracket 18-24 years was more frequent than average (30 %). In contrast, more than one half (53 %) of the men who became intoxicated at

least once a week had been at least sometimes/once violent towards their partner. 41 % of the men whose father had been violent towards his partner had also been violent towards their own partners.

The women were also asked to rate their partner according to the nine items. The items were intended to measure male use of power and control over the woman. More than three out of four men who had been violent to their partners in the course of the last twelve months had tried to place constraints on their partner's behaviour in one or several of the ways listed in Table 5. The most common restriction is that the man demands to know where and with whom the woman is spending her time. This characteristic is common even among non-violent men. Common features among violent men are: name-calling, trying to hu-

**Table 5. How the women assessed their current partner, by whether the partner has been violent against her over the last year, or earlier, or never (% agreeing with the item, out of those who were presently married or cohabiting).**

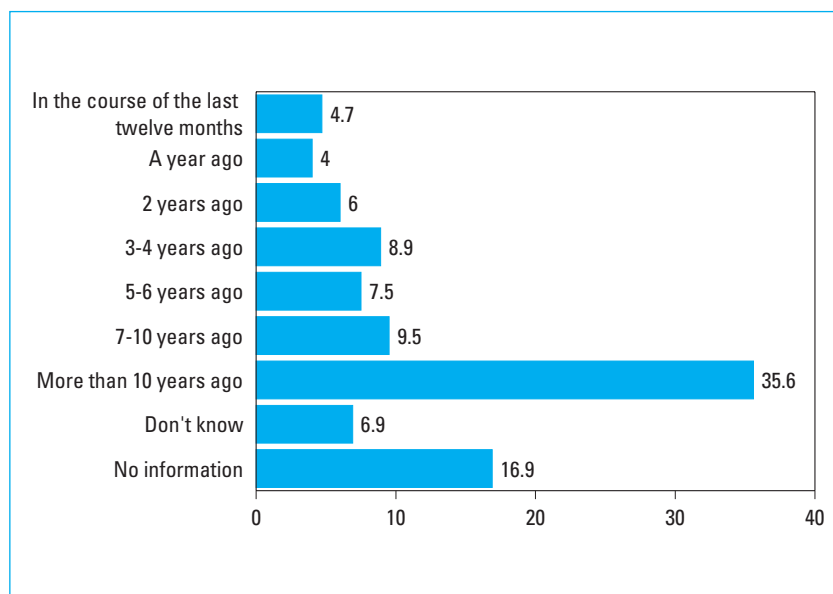
		The man has been violent		
		Over the last year	Earlier	Never
		%	%	%
1.	He is jealous and does not want me to speak with other men	30.6	17.4	3.9
2.	He tries to restrict my seeing my friends and relatives	25.6	10.5	2.6
3.	He demands to know where I go, with whom, and when I am going to return	39.9	34.0	15.2
4.	He calls me names in order to subdue or humiliate me	37.3	16.8	1.7
5.	He prevents me from making decisions about family finances and from shopping independently	11.8	8.7	2.1
6.	He forbids me to go to work outside of the home	3.5	2.7	0.9
7.	He threatens to harm the children	1.6	0.2	0.1
8.	He deliberately destroyed our common property	12.6	3.2	0.2
9.	He threatened to do something to himself if I leave him	14.6	4.9	1.2
	At least one of these items	77.0	54.7	19.7

miliate, jealousy, and attempts at preventing the woman from seeing her relatives - features that are rare among non-violent men. Compared with non-violent men, violent men also more often threaten to harm themselves, destroy common property, and interfere with the woman's finances.

#### 4.2.3. The duration of violence in the current relationship

Among the women who had experiences of violence, 36 % reported that their current partner had perpetrated violence for the first time more than ten years earlier. The figure might be even higher since 17 % of

**Figure 6. When was the first time that the man behaved violently against the woman (% of those who had experienced partner violence, n=794).**



the women with experiences of partner violence did not answer this question. Of these men who have been violent for the first time more than ten years earlier, 41 % had not been violent in the course of the last ten years, i.e. these couples had not experienced partner violence for the last ten years.

However, for many other women, the violence that commenced more than ten years ago had not stopped. 26 % of the women (27,500 women, n=73) who experienced violence for the first time more than ten years ago had also been victimised in the course of the last twelve months, and for nearly 10,000 this was true for the last month.

41,000 women who had been married or cohabiting for at least ten years had been victims of violence in the course of the last twelve months. This number is over 40 % of all women who have experienced violence in their relationship in the course of the last year.

Of the violent men, 14 % had been violent towards the woman or threatened her prior to living together.

Those who had experienced violence were also asked whether violence took place

while pregnant. More than 10 per cent of the violent men had been violent towards their partner during her pregnancy. The accuracy of this finding suffers from the fact that a large proportion of the respondents did not remember this detail or did not answer this question.

#### 4.2.4. Violence in previous relationships

28 % of the women participating in the survey (1,366 women in the sample) had at least one prior relationship. The previous relationships were usually rather long, their average duration being 9 years, with a median length of 6.5 years. One third of the women who had experienced violence in a terminated relationship were, at the time of the survey, divorced, 49 % were living in a relationship (married or cohabiting), 14 % were single, and 4 % were widows.

One half (50 %) of the women concerned had experienced violence by their ex-partner. In general, results for the last twelve months give a rather accurate picture of the violent behaviour of the present partner. However, the one-year reference

**Table 6. How the women assessed the behaviour and control attempts by their violent ex-partner (% agreeing with the item, out of those who had been married or cohabiting previously).**

		The proportion of those who agreed with the item
		%
1.	He was jealous and did not want me to speak with other men	54.1
2.	He tried to restrict my seeing my friends or relatives	45.5
3.	He demanded to know where I go, with whom, and when I am going to return	55.1
4.	He called me names in order to subdue or humiliate me	53.8
5.	He prevented me from making decisions about family finances and from shopping independently	25.4
6.	He forbade me to go to work outside of the home	10.7
7.	He threatened to harm the children	7.7
8.	He deliberately destroyed our common property	31.8
9.	He threatened to do something to himself if I leave him	34.1
	At least one of these items	78.0

period is often inadequate in respect of the ex-partner.

Experiences of violence by the ex-partner were most prevalent among those in the age bracket 18-24 years (64 % of the women who had been married or cohabiting). Experience of violence reduces with increasing age of the victim. Among those in the age bracket 65-74 years with a terminated marriage or cohabiting relationship, 20 % replied that they had experienced violence in their past relationship.

Groups with above average experience of violence by an ex-partner were:

- single mothers with children below the age of 7 years (in this group, 79 % had been victimised during their relationship)
- married women with children below the age of 7 years (62 %)
- cohabiting women with children over 7 years (62 %)
- married women with no children at home (61 %)
- women in whose childhood home the father was violent towards the mother (62 %)
- women who consumed alcohol to the extent of intoxication at least once a month (68 %).

In 75 % of the cases, the perpetrator was the previous partner, in 10 % it was an earlier partner. For 15 %, no information of this detail was received.

17 % of the violent ex-partners had used violence or threats against the woman already before they began living together.

15 % of the violent ex-partners used violence when the woman was pregnant (40,000 victims). For 5 %, the violence commenced during their pregnancy. For an additional 8 %, the violence commenced when the child was less than one year old (20,000 victims). 30 % of all women answered that they had not been pregnant, 22 % did not answer this question.

The man's misuse of alcohol was often connected with the terminated relationships. 46 % of all violent ex-partners used alcohol at least once a week to the level of intoxication. 5 % of all violent ex-partners did not use alcohol at all to this extent. 16 % of all women who had lived in an already terminated violent relationship did not give an assessment of the man's alcohol use.

The descriptions the women gave of their violent ex-partners were systematically more critical than their descriptions concerning their current, also violent partners.

#### ***4.2.5. The most serious violent incident in a relationship***

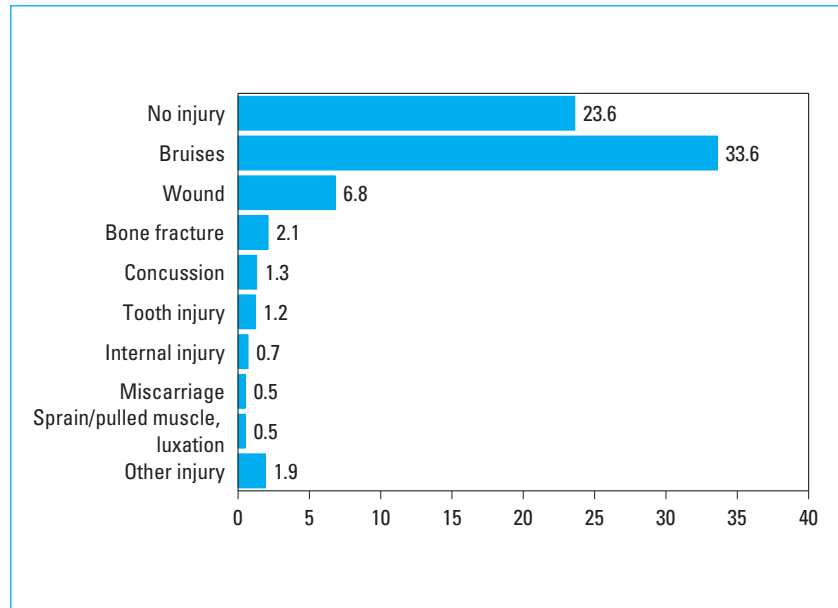
It is difficult to assess the consequences of violence. It is possible to count and describe physical injuries such as wounds or bruises, and these may be used for rating the damage of the incident. In contrast, psychological consequences cannot be observed in a similar manner, and yet it is these that may have the more permanent, even life-long consequences to the victim.

The respondents were asked details of the most serious incident of the latest violent relationship. Such details included physical injuries, the psychological consequences, talking about the incident with outsiders, getting medical attention, and reporting the incident to the police. Information on this issue was received from 1,349 respondents.

##### ***4.2.5.1. The physical and psychological consequences***

One half (49 %) of all women who had experienced a violent relationship (n=1,349) had suffered physical injuries from the most serious incident. A little less than one quarter (24 %) had not received physical injuries, and no data regarding the injury were

**Figure 7. The physical injuries caused by the most serious incident of partner violence (%).**

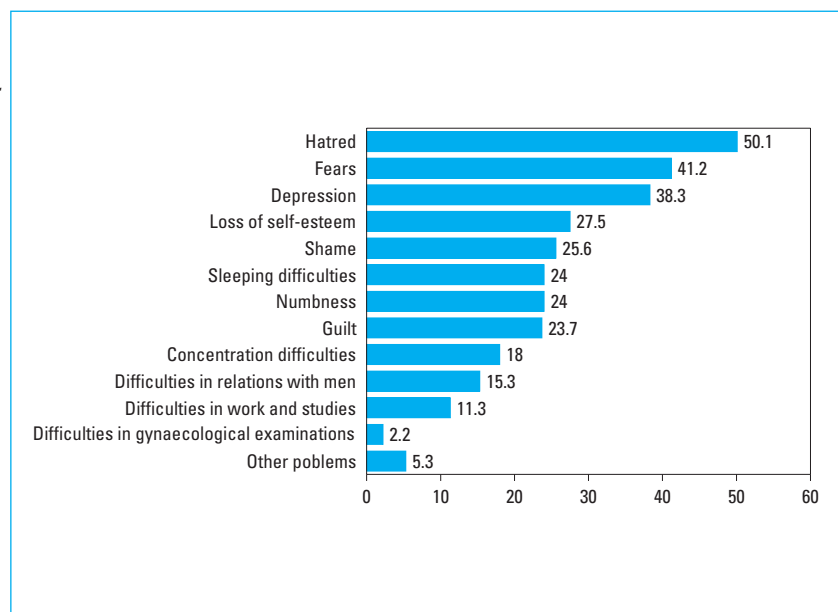


received from a little over one fifth (28 %). These rates were calculated from those women who reported that they had at least once experienced violence after their 15th birthday by their present or former partner. The result is similar to the one found in the Canadian survey, where 45 % of all victims of

violence said they had suffered physical injuries (Johnson 1996).

By age, the highest injury rate was found among those in the age bracket 45-54 years (52 %). Violence committed by ex-partners was generally more serious and resulted more often in physical injury (57 %) than violence by the current partners (40 %).

**Figure 8. The emotional consequences of the most serious incident of partner violence (%).**



In nearly one half (47 %) of the incidents, the man had been intoxicated or under the influence of substances other than alcohol at the time of the most serious violent incident. If the violence resulted in physical injury, this proportion was even higher (66 %).

The typical injuries were bruises. Bone fractures or a miscarriage resulted in 2.6 % of the most serious incidents.

Partner violence almost always had psychological or emotional consequences for the victim. Two victims out of three (67 %) said that this violence had caused them some emotional consequences. Only 7 per cent did not report any such consequences. Hatred was felt by one half of the victims, fear by two out of five (Figure 8.).

Women are afraid of the violence being repeated. They learn to fear and even avoid certain kinds of circumstances in which violence is likely to occur. Violent situations often involve alcohol consumption, and a typical situation where the woman is scared is when the man arrives home after a night out:

*“Say, I felt about this physical violence -, I mean what kind of senseless fear it induces. We were then living in a flat on the third floor, and I woke up at night when he put the key in the downstairs door lock. My hearing became so sensitive to that sort of sounds that I woke up right away. And you know, when I then tried to sleep, I could not sleep until he got back. You tried to sleep, you just walked around the flat, you go have a smoke - you know all the time that something may happen again, in particular if there has been any kind of disagreement, that is then going to get worse. And even if there isn't, you nevertheless kind of feel it and, like, this fear was usually something one wouldn't ever wish to experience. You know, I started to sleep with a knife under my pillow, like. Although I knew I wouldn't be able to do anything to him. Like hitting back or anything. And then even after we got separated, well, I slept for*

*a long time, maybe two years or so, with a knife under my pillow. This man, he was already dead, and still the fear was there, like that somebody might turn up from somewhere...” (32 years, divorced, married for 9 years).*

*(the citations are taken from unstructured interviews collected in the pilot study).*

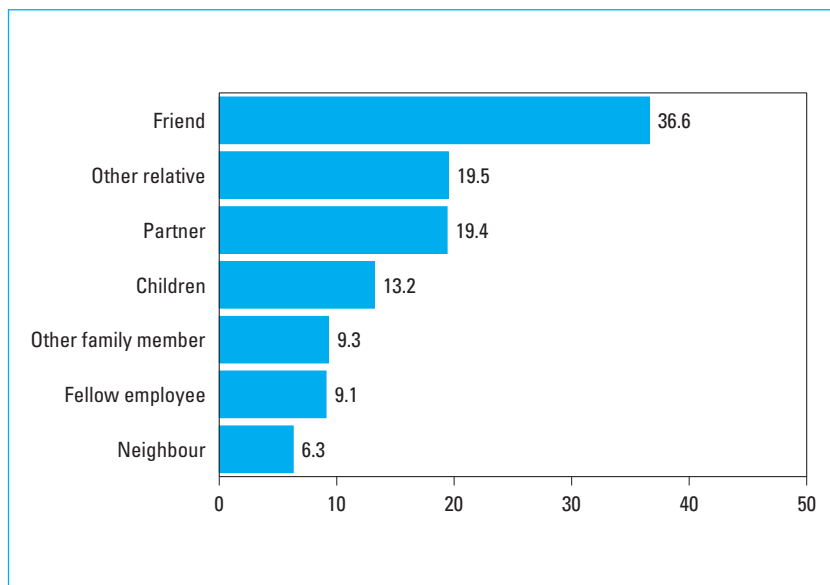
This informant had lived for nine years in a violent relationship. After the divorce, the woman had moved to another town, and some time later the man had died. Yet, the fear continued.

Depression was experienced by nearly two out of five women. Other common consequences were lowered self-esteem and shame (about one quarter each), sleeping difficulties, indifference and guilt (nearly one-quarter each). In circumstances with long-lasting partner violence, the woman, according to Keskinen (1996), begins to believe in her own responsibility for the course of events, she feels that she has failed in the relationship and, gradually, the guilt causes her self-esteem to disappear. The weakening of self-esteem, in turn, may lead to the woman's increasing dependence on the assailant; she may believe that she is unable to enter a new intimate relationship, the present one being the only one in which she has any kind of success. Shame, then, is shame for herself but also on behalf of the partner. It is quite usual that the woman wants to conceal the violence from outsiders, friends as well as relatives. For some women, this even results in a tendency to generally avoid other people.

Violence that had physical consequences was more likely to also have emotional consequences than violence that did not cause physical injury. Almost all (95 %) of the women who had experienced violence resulting in injury said the incident had a psychological impact.



**Figure 9. With whom the woman spoke about the most serious incident of partner violence (%).**



#### 4.2.5.2. Medical attention, contacts with the authorities, satisfaction with the help received

##### Close friends

Partner violence is experienced very personally. The victims often feel humiliation and are ashamed of the incident (Johnson 1996). This may prevent the women from talking to anybody about the matter and from seeking help.

The women who had been assaulted by their partners most often had searched for help by informal channels, talking about the matter with a close friend. More than half (56 %) had discussed the most serious incident with somebody. If the assault resulted in physical injury, this rate was higher than otherwise.

Over one third talked about the matter with a close friend, nearly one fourth with relatives or the assailant himself (Figure 9.). It is not always easy to talk to one's relatives about partner violence. The woman may wish to save them from knowing; also, she may be afraid that they may interfere with

her life. Other reasons for concealing the matter from relatives, the man's relatives in particular, may be fear of their reactions. The parents may blame the woman or deny the whole thing. This has happened to many of the women who participated in the qualitative interviews of the pilot study.

When violence commences, it is often discussed with the assailant afterwards. The man asks for forgiveness and promises it will not be repeated. When the violence then nevertheless is repeated, this often does not happen any more.

*"but not any more, more recently, in the recent past, he never even apologized." (36 years, divorced, married for 8 years).*

Here, Canadian and Finnish women differed clearly from each other. Of the Canadian women who had experienced partner violence, three out of four had discussed the matter with somebody, either with someone close or with a helper organisation. Also in Canada, help was mostly sought from

friends or family members, equally often from both (about 45 %) (Johnson 1996).

### Medical care

Victims of partner violence did not usually seek medical attention for their injuries. Almost one half said the most serious incident was so trivial that no medical care was needed. A little over ten per cent of all victims had sought for medical staff to have the injury attended, and about two per cent had been hospitalised. However, one out of ten thought they should have had their injuries treated by medical staff. Of the women who had suffered physical injury, one quarter had sought medical attention.

Out of those who had received medical attention (n=166), 83 % were satisfied with the treatment, 13 % being dissatisfied. The problems identified were:

- 1) the victim was not informed sufficiently of other options for support and help (27 %).
- 2) the staff played the incident down or were not sufficiently interested (16 %).
- 3) the staff did not treat the woman in an appropriate manner (15 %).

4) the victim did not feel her treatment was up to the necessary standards (14 %).

5) some other problem (6 %).

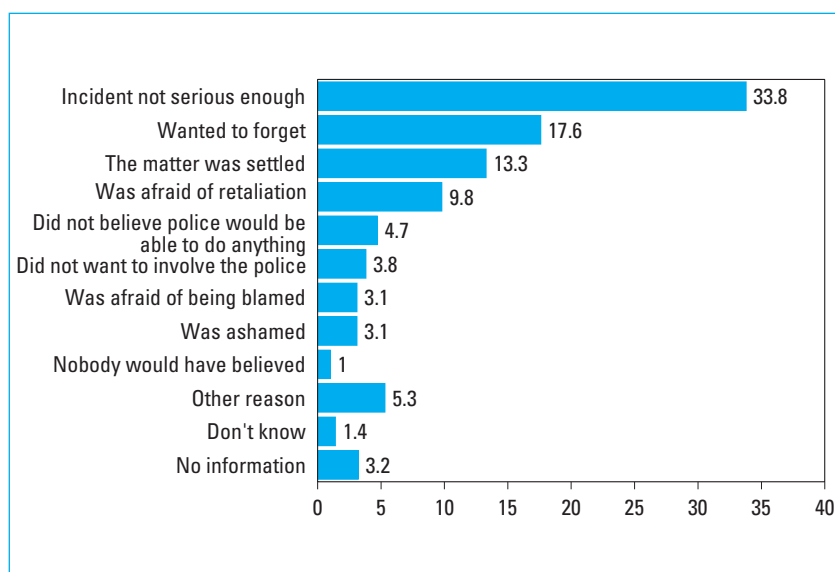
### Police

Less than ten per cent of the most serious assaults in the relationships were brought to the attention of the police, either by the woman herself or otherwise. More than half of the incidents never came to the attention of the police. In more than one third of the cases, the information is missing. Assaults with physical injury were more likely to be reported to the police than those without injury.

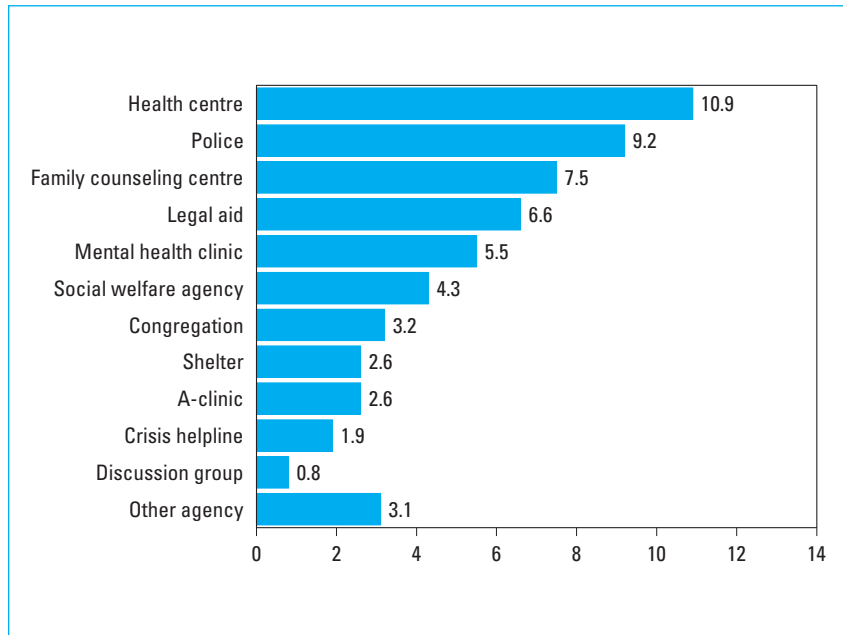
The results confirm the findings of foreign studies, indicating that women who have suffered partner assault are more apt to look for help from informal parties than from the authorities (cf. Bowker 1983, Gelles & Straus 1988, Johnson 1996).

Of those who had been involved with the police (n=84), close to two thirds were satisfied and little over one out of five were dissatisfied with the way the police handled

**Figure 10. Most important reason why the woman did not inform the police (% of those who did not inform the police, n=758).**



**Figure 11. Agency where the women had sought help to partner violence (%).**



their case. The problems identified in the police response were:

- 1) the police played the incident down or were not sufficiently interested (24 %).
- 2) the police did not inform women sufficiently of other options for support and help (20 %).
- 3) the police did not do enough to solve the crime (12 %).
- 4) the police did not treat the woman in an appropriate manner (12 %).
- 5) the police blamed the woman (11 %).
- 6) some other problem (5 %).

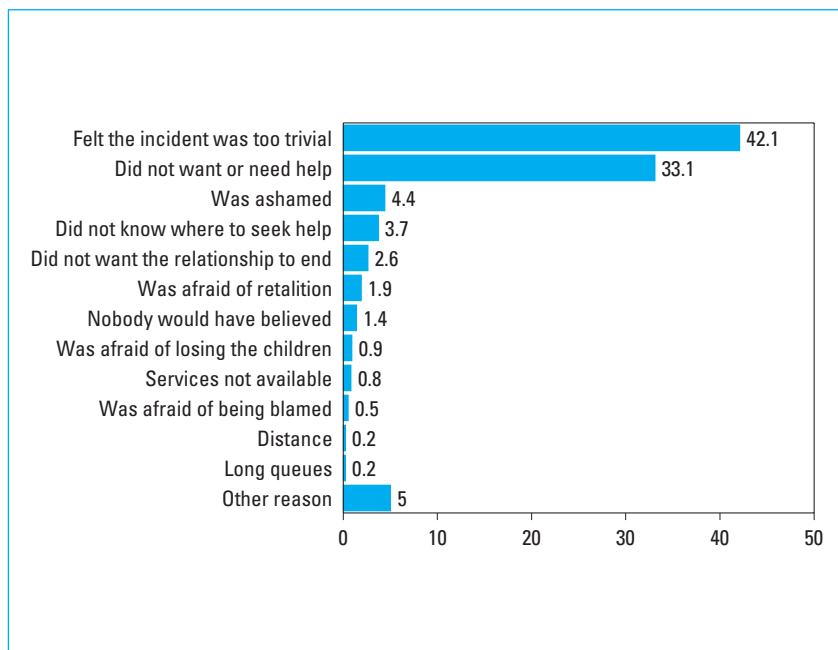
Most often, the incident did not come to the attention of the police because the victim herself did not regard the matter as being serious enough (Figure 10.). Other important reasons were that the victim wished to forget the event, or that she had reconciled the matter with her partner. Non-reporting may also be influenced by the fact that the woman wants to continue living together with the assailant, and police interference might make

this more difficult. The dilemma was put by one of our respondents:

*“Yes. But it is, you know, in that case so final, and therefore I have never called. I have figured that once a police car comes, then that’s it. Like there’s no return then any more.” (32 years, married, the marriage has lasted for 13 years).*

Of the most serious violent incidents that the police were notified of (n=128), only one out of five (20 %, n=26) went to court, 73 % (n=93) did not, and for 7 % no answer was given to this question. In two trials out of three, the assailant was sentenced, in one case out of six he was not sentenced, and the remaining fifth of the cases were still open. In one out of six of those 93 cases that were not taken to court, the victim herself did not press charges, 3 % were processed by mediation.

**Figure 12. The most important reason why the woman did not seek help to partner violence (% , n=996).**



#### 4.2.6. Seeking help in the prior violent relationship

Women who had experience of violence were asked whether they had ever tried to get help to cope with the violence by getting in touch with a shelter for battered women, a social welfare office, police, a lawyer's office, a family counseling office, crisis helpline, women's discussion or support groups, health centre or a doctor, a mental health clinic, an A-clinic (clinic for the cure of alcoholics) or a religious congregation. Just over a quarter of women who had experience of a violent relationship gave an affirmative answer. Of those whose ex-partner had been violent, a larger proportion had sought help than of those who continued to stay with their violent partners. Differences between age groups were small in this regard. Those with education of the middle range (matriculation examination) had sought help less frequently than others. Women with above-average incomes (FIM 8,500-10,500) sought help more frequently than others. Regional differences were small.

Most of those who had gone for help had only tried one agency/option. Women with experience of a violent relationship most typically (11 %) relied on the health centre. Police (9 %) and family counseling (8 %) were frequented almost equally often. The crisis helpline and women's discussion and support groups were the least frequent options mentioned. (Figure 11.).

Compared with their Canadian counterparts, Finnish victims of partner violence did not rely as heavily on the health care, police or social welfare options. In Canada, 26 % had gone to the police, 24 % to the social welfare office, and 23 % to a doctor (Johnson 1996).

Why do women refrain from finding help in coping with the violence? The major explanations identified were (Figure 12.): that the matter was too trivial or that help was not needed/wanted. Both these reasons reflect one common feature: partner violence is not interpreted as a serious crime.

Partner violence is a male problem; however, men seek help only rarely. According

to the women, only 6 % (n=84) of violent men had sought help because of their violent behaviour. Nearly two out of three had not sought help, and for nearly one third, no answer was given. The men in relationships that were already terminated had sought help more frequently (9 %) than men who continued to stay with the victim (4 %).

The agencies the men had approached for help (n=84) were:

- 1) health centre, 30 %,
- 2) A-clinic, 29 %,
- 3) mental health clinic, 28 %,
- 4) family counselling office or family center, 24 %,
- 5) male violence discussion groups, 4 %, and
- 6) some other agency, 20 %.

Most of the battered women suffered from physical or emotional damage because of the violence, but few reported the matter to medical care agencies, police, or some other helping agency. Friends and other close persons were most frequently informed of the matter. A large proportion of violent incidents thus are neither registered with the police nor appear in health care statistics.

#### 4.2.7. Children as witnesses of violence

In 40 % out of all violent partner relationships, the child/children had in some way witnessed the violence. They either saw or heard the event, or they may also have been assaulted themselves. In a corresponding Australian study, the frequency of children witnessing violence was of the same order as in Finland; 38 % in relationships that still continued, and 46 % in relationships that were terminated (McLennan 1996). It is possible that there were still more children who had actually shared violent situations, as 42 % of the respondents did not know about this or did not answer this question. Of course, the violence may have affected the children's

lives even if they had not directly witnessed it. Children may sense the tension between the parents, or they may be used as an instrument of mental violence between the parents. By threatening the children's well-being, the man may compel the woman to obey him. He may, for example, threaten to wake the children in the middle of the night. He may also belittle or humiliate the mother of the children in their presence, as illustrated by our informant:

*"I thought that he was disturbed himself, since he was always made to wake up in the middle of the night when he was a kid. And then he often made us wake up. He woke the children, he said that now you must get up, and he literally tore them out of bed. He stripped me naked and started screaming, look at this, look what your mother looks like, that she's such an ugly woman. That I have to put up with that... one can't be with a woman like that." (36 years, divorced, married for 8 years).*

Also in the Finnish study, children of terminated relationships had themselves suffered violence a little more often than children in relationships that still continued.

#### 4.2.9. Getting separated and coming back

For many battered women, the decision whether to terminate the relationship or to remain is not simple. Some leave after the first hardship, while others leave and return over and over again. Still others make weak attempts to leave but lack the resources to complete a separation (Johnson 1996). Few women quit the violent relationship at once,

instead it is more usual that they leave several times (Dobash & Dobash 1979; Johnson 1996). This pattern was also found in the qualitative interviews in our pilot study. Often, the circumstances of the family change, for example a child is born, or the relationship has non-violent phases, and the termination is delayed.

A little less than half of all women who had experience of living with a violent partner had at some time during the relationship lived separated from the man because of his violent or threatening behaviour (Table 7.). Usually, the woman had left the home. 45 % of the women concerned had never lived separately during the relationship.

If the children had witnessed or been subjected to violence, separation became more likely. More than two thirds of those women whose children had seen or heard, or were subjected to violence had lived separated

**Table 7. Having lived separately during the relationship in current and terminated relationships (%).**

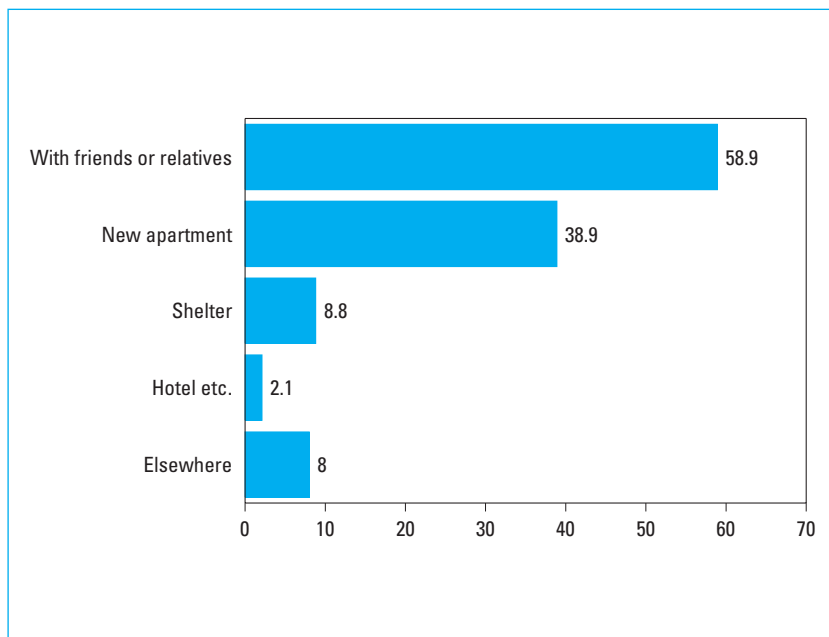
Having lived separately	Current	Terminated	Total
Have not lived separately	56.4	33.2	44.6
Woman left	7.5	26.2	17.1
Man left	1.5	13.5	7.6
Both left	0.2	0.3	0.3
No information	34.3	26.9	30.5
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100

from the man at least once; for those where this was not the case, the percentage was less than 50 (Table 8.). In the Canadian study, other reasons for leaving the man were: reporting it to the police, and the seri-

**Table 8. Having lived separately sometimes during the relationship, by whether the woman sought help, the seriousness of the violence, and whether children had witnessed the violence (%).**

	Lived separately during the relationship				Total
	No	The woman moved out	The man moved out	No information	
<b>Seeking help</b>	44.6	17.3	7.6	30.5	100.0
Did not seek help	45.9	9.6	4	40.5	100.0
Sought help	40.8	38.8	17.7	2.6	100.0
<b>Seriousness of violence</b>					
No injury	72.3	11.2	5.6	10.9	100.0
Injuries	52.7	28.8	12.2	6.4	100.0
No information	6.8	2.6	1.3	89.3	100.0
<b>Children as witnesses of violence</b>					
Not seen/heard	73.5	16.2	7.1	3.2	100.0
Seen/heard, not subjected	55.3	28.9	12.4	3.4	100.0
Seen/heard, subjected to violence	36.8	43.8	15.9	3.4	100.0
No information	14.4	3.4	2	80.2	100.0

**Figure 13. The places where the women who moved away stayed because of their partner's violent or threatening behaviour (% , n=233).**



ousness of the violence (Johnson 1996). In the present study, seeking help of any kind served as an incentive to leave the man, and so did the seriousness of the assault. The criterion used to distinguish serious violence was whether the most serious incident had resulted in injury (Table 8.).

When the women needed practical help, they primarily relied on people close to them, rather than authorities or other services. When staying away from the man, the women (n=233) usually stayed with friends or relatives (59 %). It was also rather common to move into a new flat/house (39 %). Some women went to a shelter for battered women (9 %) or to a hotel (2 %).

Of the women who had at one stage stayed away (n=337), almost half returned (46 %, n=156). If the children's involvement in the violence served as an incentive for the separation, it worked also in the opposite way. Nearly two out three women (62 %) whose children had been involved in the violence did return. In contrast, only one out of three (35 %) of those women whose children

had not seen or heard the violence did return to the relationship.

The dominant reason for returning was that the man promised to change (58 %). Second, the wish to try once more (Figure 14.). Little less than one tenth said the reason was the children. Only a few women had actual external obstacles to living alone, such as economic reasons or lacking a place to stay.

In the qualitative interviews, the women described their strong wish to succeed in the relationship and their faith in their own strength:

*"For some reason I got hung up on him, I thought, I'll make a man out of him, and then I sort of couldn't give up and admit to myself that I have failed." (35 years, married for 15 years).*

*“And me, gullible, that it must be like that, that a person like that whom I love so much, he can’t, I mean - do anything bad to me.” (35 years, single, relationship for 1.5 years).*

*“One just believed and hoped that everything would come to an end... I mean that there would not be any beating any more.” (32 years, divorced, married for 9 years).*

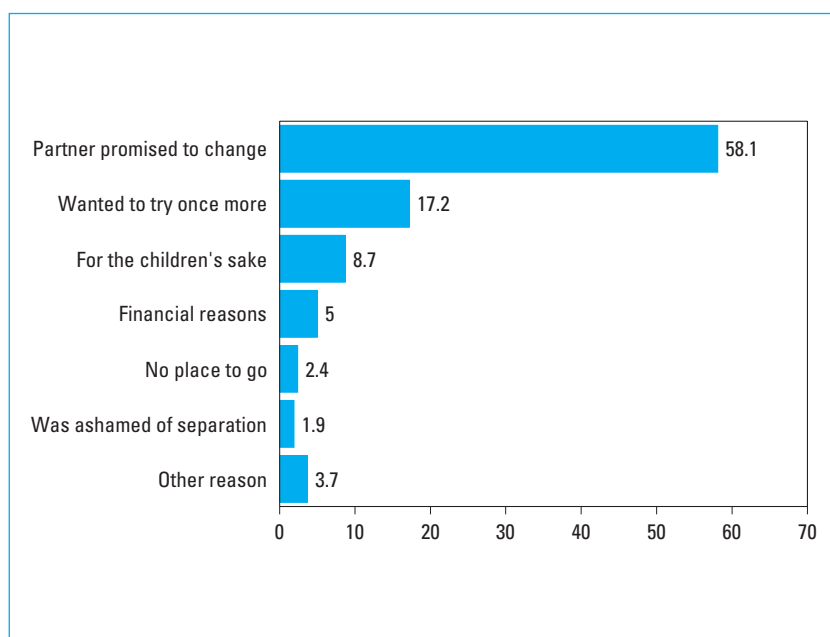
*“Yes, it’s quite odd. I often really wonder afterwards what this vicious circle was about, but I had this idea very strongly, that as I have gotten myself married, I’m not going to give it up easily, and that all help is welcomed.” (27 years, divorced, married for 6 years).*

More than half of those who had left the man because of the violence did not come back (n=177). The three most important reasons for the permanent separation were the man’s violent behaviour towards the respondent or the children, the wish to have a life of one’s own, and the wish to make a better life for the children (Figure 15.). The reasons given indicated that it was mostly the woman who wanted separation.

### **Violence after divorce**

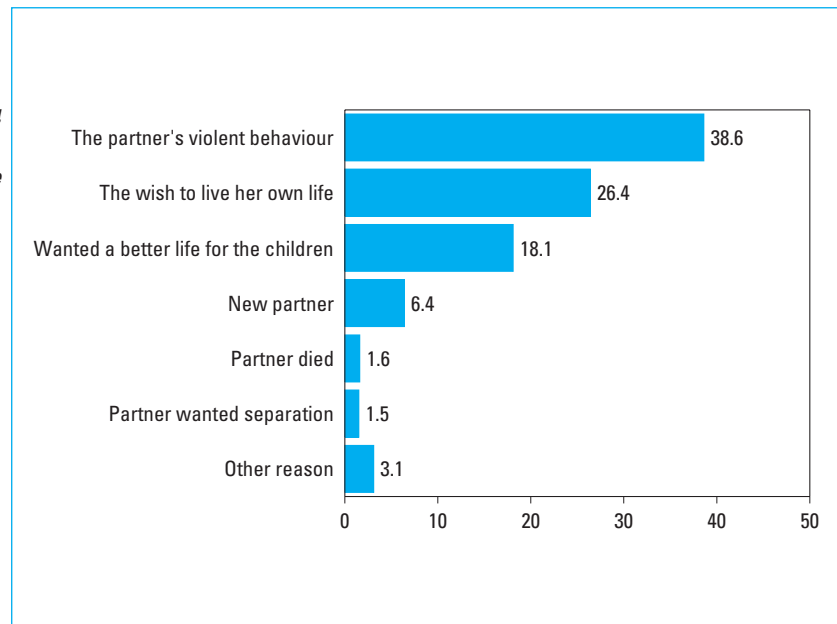
The violence does not always stop when the couple get separated. Out of those who had a terminated relationship in their personal history (n=1,366), close to one out of five had experienced violence by the ex-partner after the separation or after moving apart. 36 per cent of the men who had behaved violently during the relationship had continued in the same manner also after the separation. On the other hand, in well over one half (59 %) of the violent relationships, the violence stopped at the separation. Violence first commenced after the separation in four per cent of all cases where the woman was

**Figure 14. Most important reason for starting to live together again (% of those who returned, n=156).**





**Figure 15. The most important reason for not living again with the partner (% , n=177. Those 4 % who did not give the most important reason are not included.).**



assaulted or threatened by her partner or ex-partner.

Usually (40 %), the violence took place within one year after the couple had moved permanently apart. For just under one fifth, 1-2 years had passed since the separation, for 15 % 2-4 years, and for nearly one tenth 5-9 years. Nevertheless, violence could occur even when at least ten years had passed since the separation (4 %). The rates have been calculated for those who had experiences of violence (n=270).

Violence after permanent separation was assessed by four questions:

Since you have separated or moved apart, has your former husband or cohabiting partner:

- 1) Made threatening telephone calls to you?
- 2) Entered your home without permission?
- 3) Waited, stalked or followed you in the vicinity of your home or elsewhere?
- 4) Grabbed you or hit you?

Most frequently, the man had made telephone calls or stalked the woman. The ex-partner had entered the woman's home

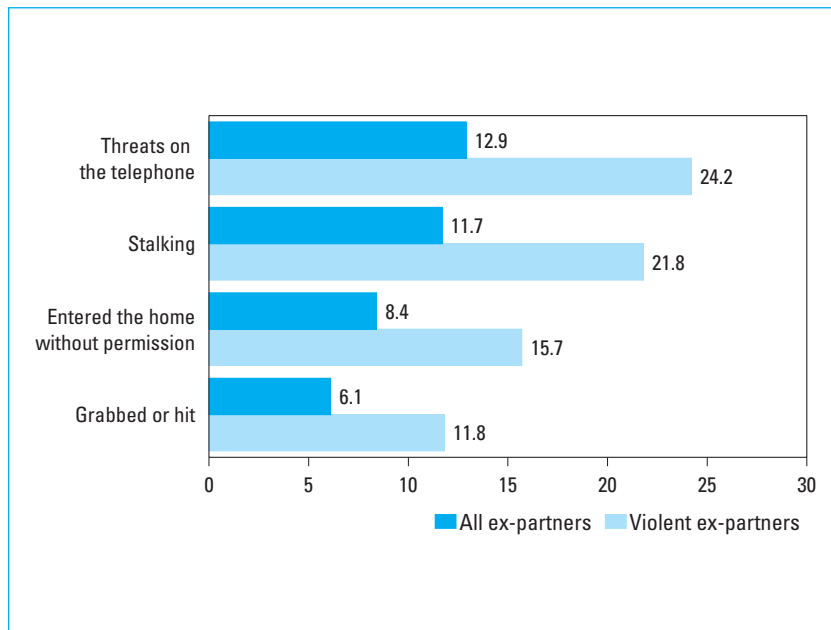
without permission in nearly one case out of ten. Physical violence had been suffered by 6 per cent of women.

All forms of violence were clearly more common if violence had occurred also while the couple lived together. Violence in the relationship usually continued after separation as threatening telephone calls and stalking. Also unauthorised entering into the woman's home and physical assault were clearly more common if the ex-partner had been violent also while the couple lived together (Figure 16.).

### **4.3. Violence outside of partner relationships**

In this study, violence outside of partner relationships denotes all such incidents where a man other than the woman's partner or ex-partner, whether a stranger or an acquaintance, has committed, attempted or threatened to commit physical or sexual violence against her. In the following, the expression outsider violence is used to refer to this.

**Figure 16. The forms of violence that have occurred after separation (%)**



#### 4.3.1. The forms, frequency, and seriousness of the violence

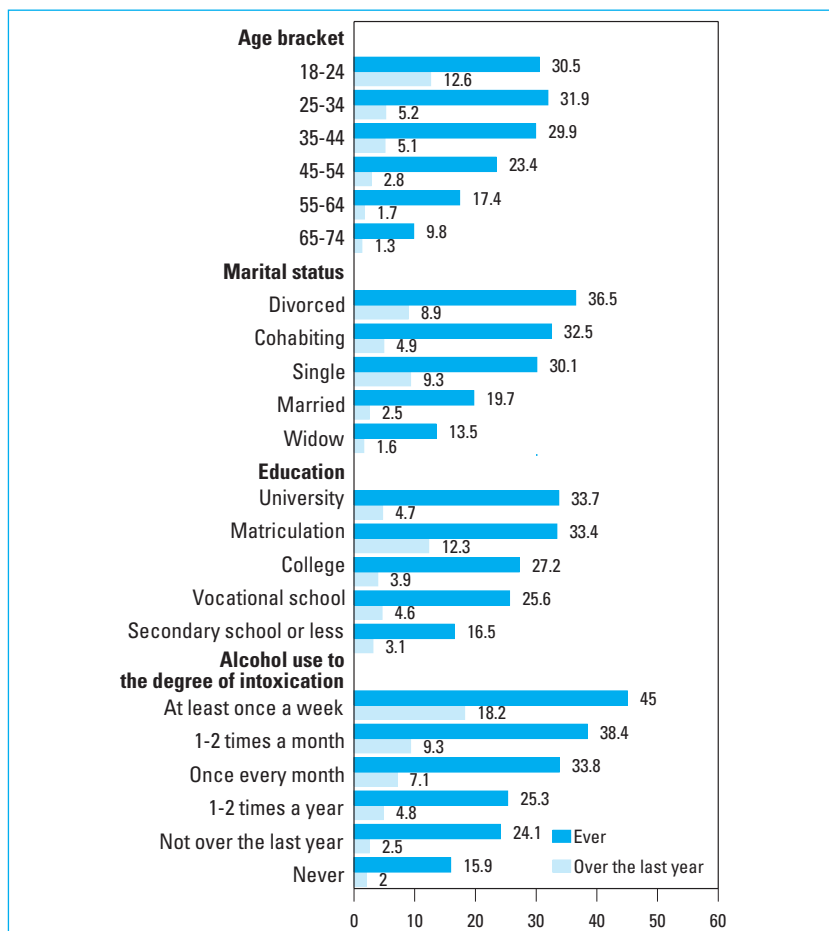
Violence was measured by making reference to six different forms of behaviour: 1) making threats of physical violence by telephone or letter, 2) making threats of physical violence face to face, 3) physical assault such as hitting/beatings, kicking, or making use of weapons, 4) sexually threatening behaviour, 5) attempt to have forced sex, and 6) forcing to sex. Experience of such violence was measured for the past twelve-month period and for the respondent's entire lifetime after her 15th birthday. A sum scale of the overall prevalence of violence was constructed, covering all of these six items.

Nearly one quarter of Finnish women have at least once been a victim of outsider violence. The corresponding one-year rate was 4.5 %. Young (age bracket 18-24 years), single and divorced women had experienced outsider violence more frequently than others (Figure 17.). Also for cohabiting women, the prevalence of outsider violence was above the average rate. Johnson (1996)

has summarized explanations for the finding that cohabiting women have a higher risk of outsider violence than married women. Cohabiting women are younger, a smaller proportion of them have children and have thus less responsibility for the family; also, they may not want to accept responsibilities attached to marriage. Thus, their lifestyle often resembles that of single women.

Women with high or mid-level education (matriculation examination) had a higher lifetime victimisation prevalence than others. Students had been particularly often (12 %) victims of outsider violence in the course of the last year (obviously, this is at least in part a reflection of students generally being quite young). However, the violence directed against these women was clearly less prevalent than in Canada where one out of four women with student status in the survey year (1993) had been victims of violence by their boyfriend or date (Johnson 1996). Those with the highest incomes were more likely to be victimised in the lifetime perspective than others; those with the lowest incomes had the highest one-year

**Figure 17. Women who have been victims of outsider (non-partner) violence, by age of victim, marital status, education, and frequency of alcohol use to the level of intoxication (%).**



prevalence. Violent experiences were more prevalent in the region of the national capital than in other parts of the country.

Of lifestyle variables, frequenting restaurants and using alcohol to the level of intoxication multiplied the risk of victimisation. Also, those who had witnessed violence in their childhood home had a higher likelihood of victimisation than others. Single mothers had experienced outsider violence clearly more often than others. This was true in respect of the last twelve months as well as their entire adult lifetime. For cohabiting women with small children or no children at all, the lifetime victimisation was higher than for other groups.

### *The forms of violence*

Outsider violence against women is more likely to be sexual rather than physical. The most common form of violence was sexually threatening behaviour (lifetime prevalence 13.8 %, one-year prevalence 2 %). Attempts at forced sex, physical assaults, and threats in a face-to-face situation rated second, with lifetime victimisation rates of about 10 per cent each, and one-year prevalences between 1 and 2 per cent (Figure 18.).

In the Canadian survey, almost a quarter of all Canadian women had at least once experienced stranger violence. The most common form of violence in Canada is sexual violence, nearly one woman out of five having experienced this after their 16th birthday.

In the Canadian study, sexual violence was defined to include all forms of violence from unwanted sexual touching to sexual assault with serious injuries. 7 % of all Canadian women had experienced sexual violence at least once in their adult lifetime, and the corresponding rate for physical violence was 8 % (Johnson 1996). The figures are not fully comparable with the Finnish results, as the Canadian survey addressed violence by strangers and boyfriends and other acquaintances separately. In the Canadian study, violence by boyfriends and dates was more often sexual (12 %) than physical (7 %) (Johnson 1996).

Physical violence and direct threats were mostly directed at young women (18-24 years), and became less prevalent with age. Of lifetime experiences, the most serious forms of sexual violence (forced sex and attempts thereof) were directed against women in the age bracket 25-54 years, whereas sexual threats were most prevalent in the age bracket 18-44 years. Examined by the last twelve month period both physical and sex-

ual violence of all forms were most frequently experienced by the youngest women (18-24 years).

Single, cohabiting and divorced women were subject to all forms of violence more frequently than others, except for threats made on the telephone. These were particularly frequent in the group of divorced women.

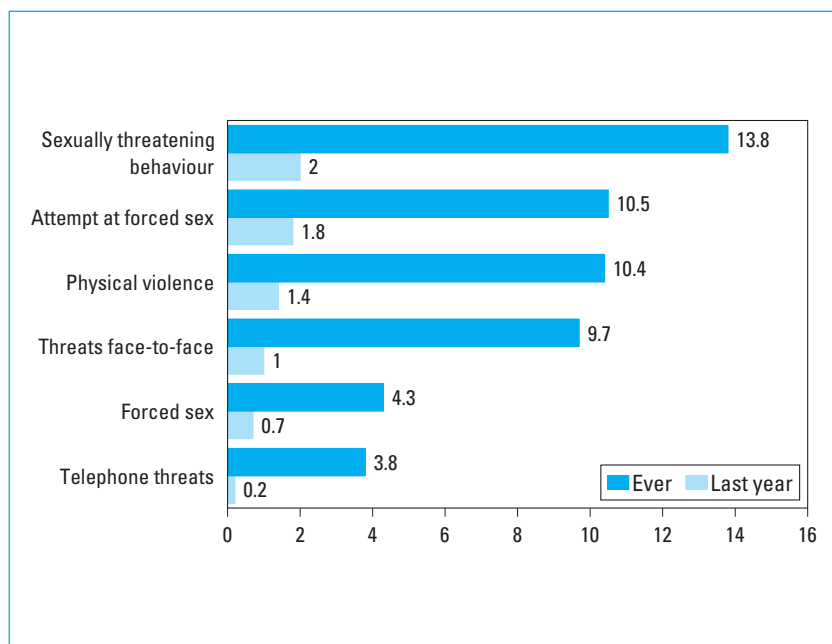
#### **Repeat victimisation**

The Canadian study (Johnson 1996) showed that the risk of being a victim of outsider violence increases after the first violent incident. This was particularly clear among those who had been assaulted sexually. The Finnish results support this finding. Over one half of the victims of outsider violence had been victimised more than once (Table 9).

#### **4.3.2. The assailants in outsider violence**

The perpetrator of outsider violence was a stranger to the victim in over a quarter of cases. Other typical perpetrators were the

**Figure 18. Different forms of outsider (non-partner) violence over the last twelve months and ever (after the 15th birthday) (%).**



present or former boyfriend (18 %), acquaintance or neighbour (14 %), and client or patient (7 %). No response as to the perpetrator was given in 11 % of the cases.

In all forms of violence, the clear majority of perpetrators were in some way known to the victim (Table 10.).

Violence by boyfriends in Finland differed from the Canadian as well as from the Australian findings. In Canada and Australia, violence by boyfriends was more often sexual rather than physical. In Finland more than half of the most recent assaults where the perpetrator was the present or former boyfriend were physical assaults.

In more than half of the incidents of physical assault, the perpetrator was reported as having been under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances. In sexual offences, the assailant was sober more often than in other incident types (34-36 %). However, the victim was often (17-21 %) too shaken to be able to assess the assailant's state of intoxication.

**Table 9. How many times the respondent has been a victim of outsider (non-partner) violence over the last year and ever (after 15th birthday) (% of those who have experienced outsider violence).**

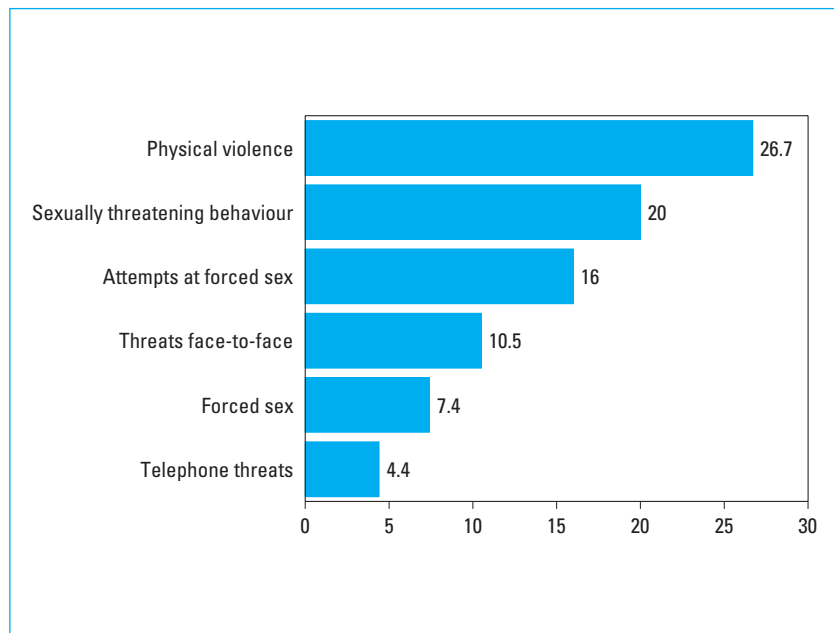
Number of times	Last year	Ever
	%	%
1	44.4	34.7
2	25.0	23.9
3	11.5	12.1
4-9	15.3	18.9
10 or more	3.8	10.4
Total	100	100
n	183	959

#### 4.3.3. Place and year

Of the most recent violent incidents, over one out of ten had occurred during 1997. Two incidents out of three took place earlier. For almost a quarter, the year is not known.

Of the most recent incidents, more than one out five (21.5 %) had occurred in the

**Figure 19. The form of violence in the most recent incident of outsider (non-partner) violence (% of those who have experienced outsider violence, n=1,204. No information not included).**



**Table 10. Most recent incident of outsider (non-partner) violence, by perpetrator (% of those who have experienced outsider violence. No information not included).**

Perpetrator	Telephone threats	Threats face-to-face	Physical violence	Sexually threatening behaviour	Attempts at forced sex	Forced sex
Acquaintance	72.8	67.7	76.1	55.8	63.7	63.6
Stranger	23.4	29.9	22.6	40.8	33.7	35.2
No information	3.8	2.4	1.3	3.4	2.6	1.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	53	127	325	242	193	86

victim's home (Figure 20.). Then, with 12 % each, came apartments, and public places such as streets.

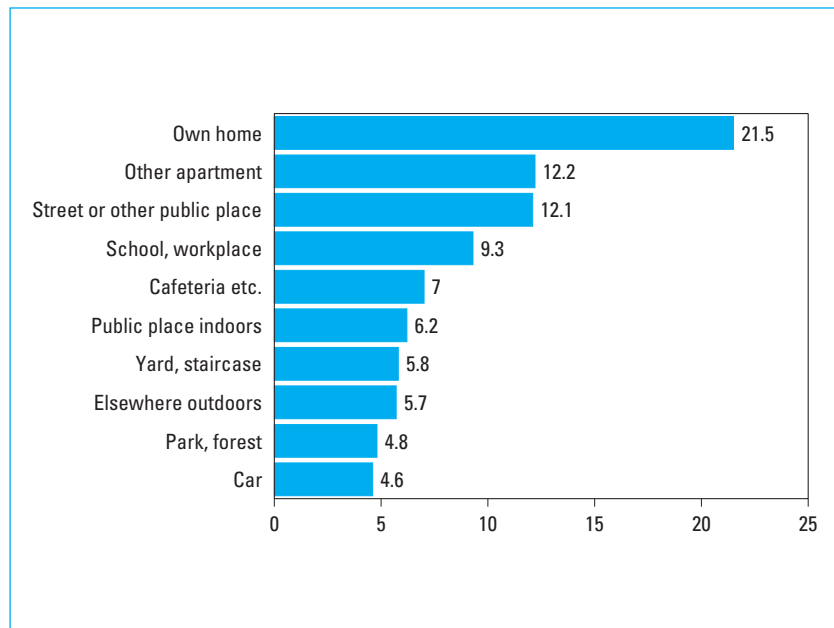
The perpetrator and the place of violence are interrelated. The perpetrator of physical outsider violence was often the present or former boyfriend. This explains why the violence took place more often in the woman's home than, e.g., in the street. Sexual violence, on the other hand, often happened in somebody else's home, as was the case in Canada and Australia, the assailant being a

boyfriend, an acquaintance or a stranger, possibly at parties or other social events. The perpetrator was often under the influence of alcohol.

#### 4.3.4. The aftermath of violence

Three out of four victims had spoken about the incident to someone. Most often, the person with whom the victim talked was her friend (55 %), her partner (25 %), some other family member (24 %), or colleague (21 %) (Figure 22.). A friend was easier to

**Figure 20. The place of the most recent incident of outsider (non-partner) violence (% of those who have experienced outsider violence, n=1,204).**



talk to than members of one's own family. This is particularly true of sexual violence. People wish to hide sexual violence from one's parents, since they wish to conceal their sexual life in general from them (Johnson 1996). Overall, it was easier to talk to someone about stranger violence than of partner violence, about which only 56 % had talked to someone.

More than nine out of ten victims had talked to someone if they had been physically assaulted or threatened with violence. In contrast, only about two out of three victims of forced sex had talked about it to someone. In this respect, sexual violence resembles partner violence. Both are of a very intimate nature, and the victim suffers feelings of humiliation (Johnson 1996).

About five out of six victims said that the most recent incident of outsider violence had some kind of effect on them. The most common consequences were hatred, fear, shame, depression and guilt (Figure 22.).

Forcible sex almost always (94 % of the incidents) had some effect on the victim. Even the least serious form of violence, threats by telephone or letter, had consequences in four incidents out of five.

The consequences of violence varied in relation to the perpetrator (Table 12.). If the assailant was an acquaintance other than the woman's partner, all other consequences (except fear) occurred more frequently than in incidents of stranger violence. Fear, then, was the typical consequence of violence by a complete stranger. Overall, violence by outsiders caused more hatred and fear than was the case with partner violence. Victims of partner violence, again, reported more often than others that the incident lowered their self-esteem and caused depression. Partner violence often has a repetitive character, and therefore its consequences are more far-reaching and profound.

**Table 11. The place of the most recent incident of outsider (non-partner) violence, by perpetrator (% of those who have experienced outsider violence).**

	Acquaintance	Stranger
Own home	32.0	5.5
Other apartment	17.2	5.5
Street or other public place	4.7	31.7
School, workplace	14.0	2.6
Cafeteria etc.	5.0	13.3
Public place indoors	7.9	4.8
Yard, staircase	5.2	8.8
Park, forest	3.1	9.5
Elsewhere outdoors	3.9	9.8
Car	4.1	7.3
No information	2.9	1.2
Total	100	100
n	730	345

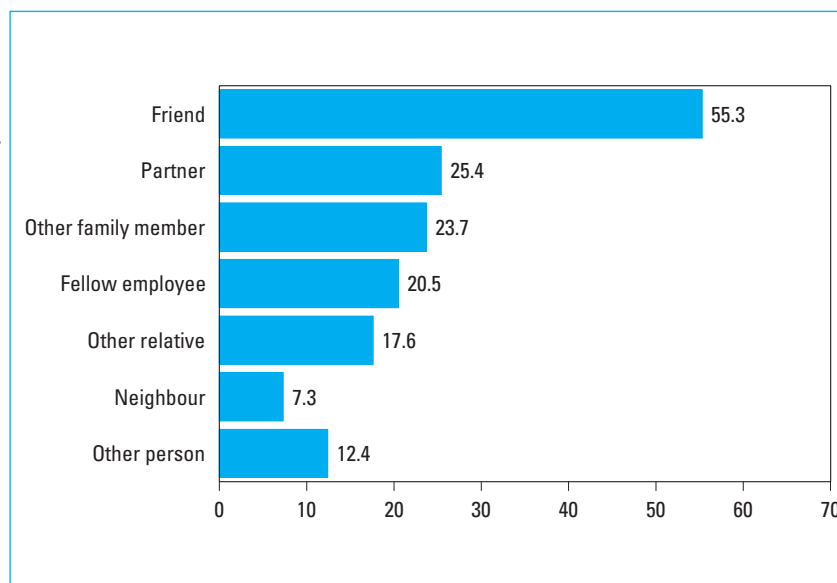
#### 4.3.5. Injuries, help, and dissatisfaction with help

##### *Crisis helpline or other crisis services*

Only two per cent of the victims (n=24) had sought help from a crisis helpline or some other crisis service because of the most recent violent incident. The small number of relevant responses prevents further analysis of this group.

The overwhelming reason given by those who did not seek help by calling a crisis helpline or resorting to other crisis services was that they thought no help was necessary. The second reason for not seeking help was that the incident was too trivial (Figure 24.). The main reasons, thus, were not connected with the availability of help or the lack of knowledge of such services. Rather, the victim saw no need for assistance.

**Figure 21. Women who have spoken about the most recent incident of outsider (non-partner) violence to someone (% of those who have experienced outsider violence, n=1,204).**

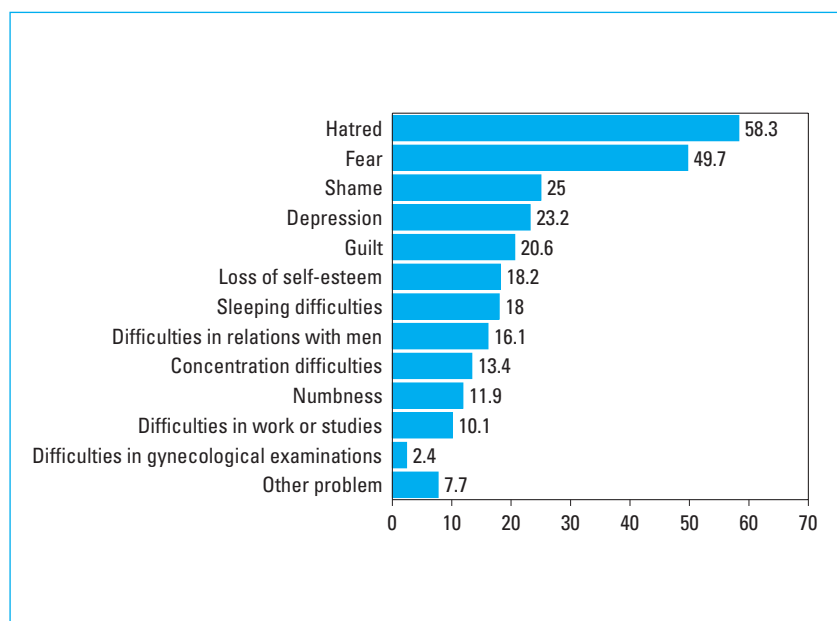


#### **Physical injuries and their treatment**

Half of the victims of outsider violence did not suffer any kind of injury in the most recent incident. The most common injuries were bruises, contusions and cuts. Bone fractures and miscarriages were rare (Figure 24.). Outsider violence resulted in physical injury less frequently than partner violence.

8 % of the victims injured in the most recent incident of outsider violence had medical attention for their injuries. For 62 %, the incident was not serious enough to require medical aid. 5 % did not go to get medical aid although they said they should have done so. Women with injuries from physical assaults resorted to medical attention more often than those injured by other forms of

**Figure 22. The effects of the most recent incident of outsider (non-partner) violence (% , calculated of those who have experience of outsider violence, n=1,204).**





violence. Of the women forced to have sex, only one out of ten visited a physician or a nurse although nearly one half of the victims had suffered some kind of injury.

Of those who went to see a physician or a nurse or who were hospitalized (n=90), 79 % were satisfied with the care they received, 19 % were dissatisfied. For 2 %, no response was received.

The problems identified with medical care were:

- 1) the staff belittled the incident or were not sufficiently interested, 21 %;
- 2) the victim was not informed of other options for support or help, 21 %;
- 3) staff members treated the victim indiscreetly, 15 %
- 4) the victim felt the medical care was inadequate, 13 %;
- 5) some other problem, 6 %.

#### Police

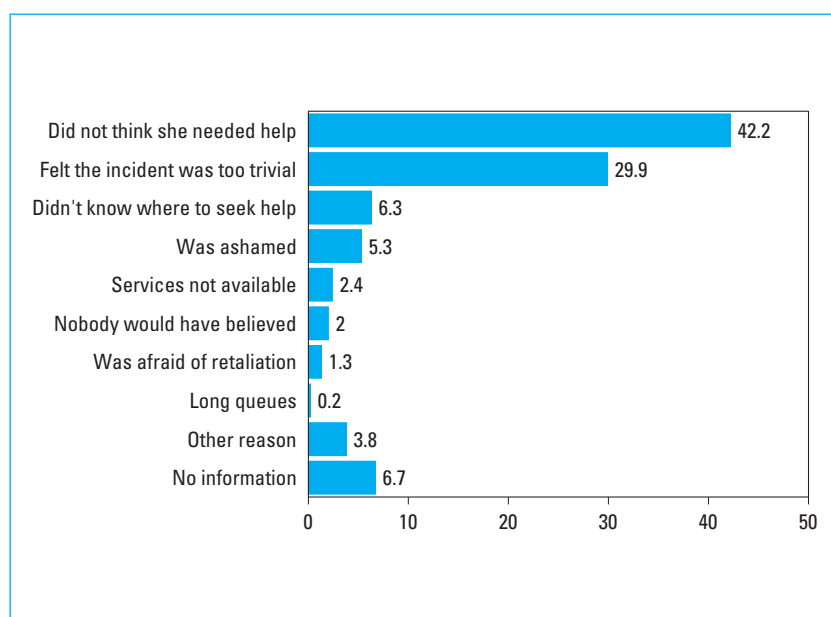
One out of ten victims of outsider violence reported the most recent incident to the police. In 4 %, police were notified of the incident in some other way. 71 % did not report

**Table 12. The consequences of the most recent incident of outsider (non-partner) violence, by perpetrator (% of those who have experienced outsider violence).**

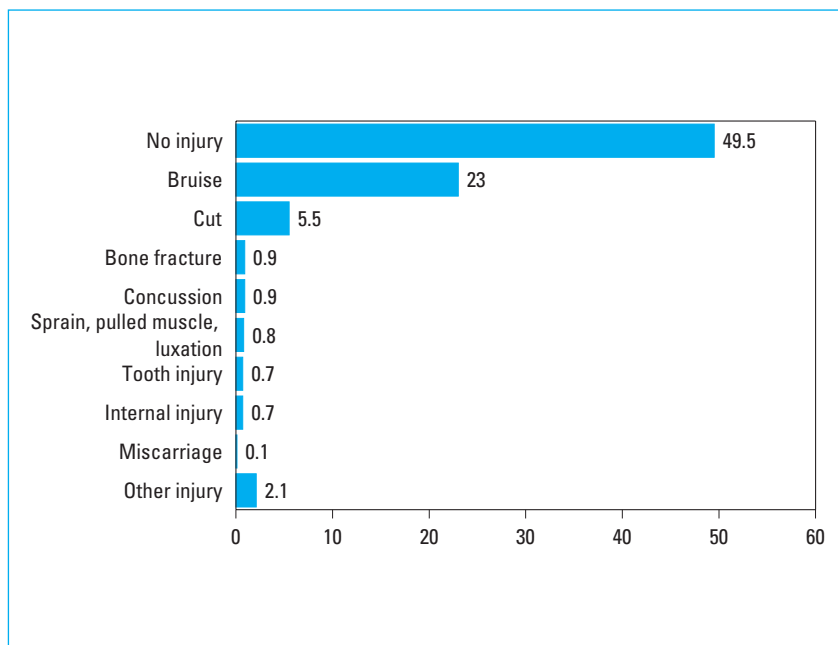
Consequences	Acquaintance	Stranger
Hatred	66.1	59.3
Fears	51.2	62.6
Shame	29.2	23.3
Depression	29.7	16.9
Guilt	25.0	17.6
Loss of self-esteem	22.5	14.5
Sleeping difficulties	21.9	16.2
Difficulties in relations to men	20.4	11.3
Concentration difficulties	16.6	10.7
Numbness	15.5	8.2
Difficulties in work	14.0	5.3
Difficulties in gynaecological examinations	3.0	2.1
Other problems	8.3	8.9
n	730	345

the incident, and for 15 %, no response was received.

**Figure 23. Most important reason for not seeking help from crisis helpline or other crisis services (% , n=1,044).**



**Figure 24. The physical injuries caused in the most recent violent incident by outsiders (others than partners) (% of those who had experienced outsider violence, n=1,204. No information not included).**



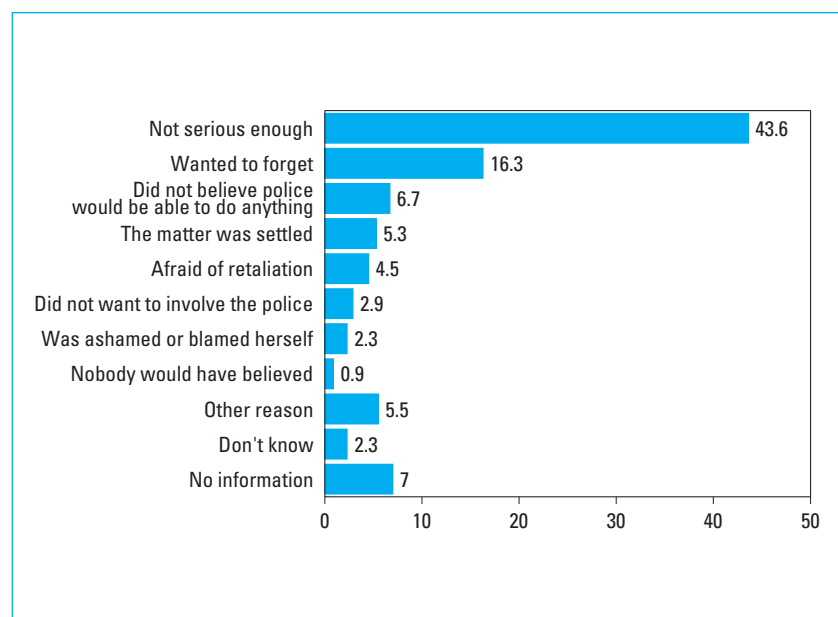
Those who had been assaulted physically were more likely to report the incident to the police than others. Victims of attempts at forced sex were most reluctant to report the incident.

Of those whose victimisation came to the attention of the police (n=166), 64 % were

satisfied with how the police dealt with their case. 25 % were dissatisfied, and 12 % did not answer the question.

The problems identified with the police response were:

**Figure 25. Most important reason for not reporting the most recent incident of outsider (non-partner) violence (% of those who did not inform the police, n=854).**



- 1) police belittled the incident or were not sufficiently interested, 23 %;
- 2) the victim was not informed of other options for support or help, 15 %;
- 3) police did not do enough to solve the offence, 14 %;
- 4) police blamed the victim for the incident, 10 %;
- 5) police treated the victim indiscreetly, 10 %;
- 6) some other problem, 5 %.

For those who did not report the incident to the police (n=858), most thought the incident too trivial to report (44 %). The second reason was that the woman wanted to forget the problem (16 %), and the reason that ranked third was that the victim did not think the police would be able to do anything (7 %). (Figure 25.).

Police were more likely to be notified if the perpetrator was a stranger. The problems with the police response were very similar, regardless of whether the violence was committed by an outsider or a partner. In incidents of outsider violence, however, the victims seeking medical care had more often thought that the staff were not sufficiently interested in their problem.

## ***4.4. Concern at being a victim of violence***

### ***4.4.1. The forms of concern and fear***

Earlier research has shown that women are more concerned than men at being victims of crime (Heiskanen & Aromaa 1996, Niemi 1994, Seppänen 1991). Women express particular fear or concern of violence, robbery and property crimes. Young women more than others were afraid of partners, boyfriends or family, and of sexual violence. As

in earlier research, concern and fear are used synonymously.

Fear of violence was measured by four indicators. The questions addressed fear of street violence, sexual violence, family violence, and workplace violence:

- 1) "When you go out near your home alone at night, are you very concerned, somewhat concerned or not at all concerned about your personal safety?"
- 2) "How concerned are you about being raped by a stranger?"
- 3) "How concerned are you that a family member will be violent against you?"
- 4) "How concerned are you about being a victim of violence in your work?"

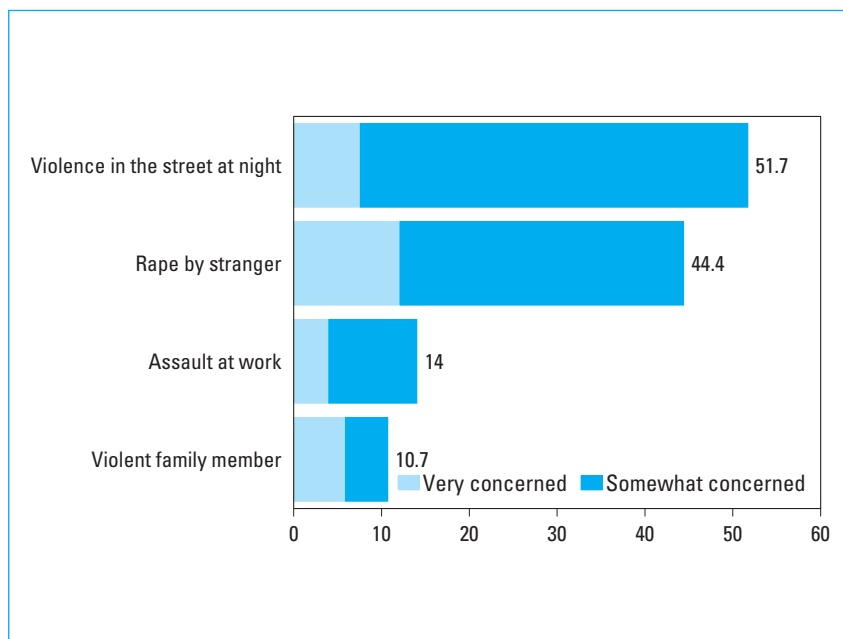
The two first questions reflect fear of violence by strangers. Workplace violence has increased in Finland (e.g. Heiskanen & Aromaa 1998). Therefore, we wanted to measure concern for workplace violence separately. Concern for family violence, then, was the central interest regarding the objectives of the present study.

Two out of three Finnish women between the ages of 18 and 74 were concerned or very concerned at being the victim of at least one of the above forms of violence. Concern was most common in the youngest age bracket, and decreased with age. Single and cohabiting women were most concerned about violence, widows the least.

Those who had experienced violence at least once in their lifetime were more concerned for their safety than women without such experiences. In big cities, concern was more widespread than elsewhere. In rural areas, concern was lowest. Similar results appear in earlier Finnish studies (Niemi 1994, Seppänen 1991).

More than half of the respondents were concerned about being a victim of street violence. This is measured by the item about going out alone at night. In this analysis,

**Figure 26. Concern about being a victim of different forms of violence (%).**

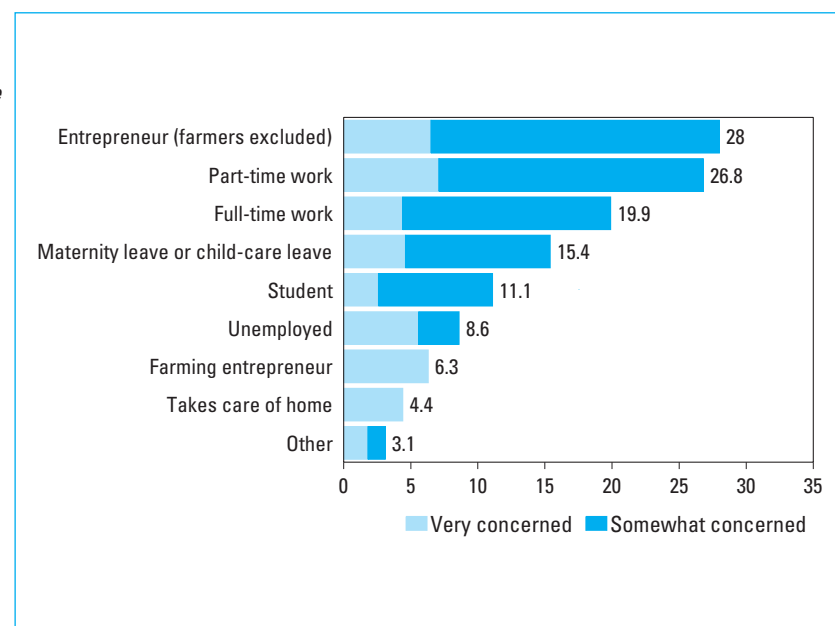


those who did not go out at all at night because of fear were classified together with those very concerned.

44 % of the women were concerned about being raped. The fear of sexual violence was prevalent in the same groups as concern for

other violence: the young, single and cohabiting, those with low income, those who have been victimised before, and those living in urban communities. Women with a matriculation examination or a college degree were more concerned about being

**Figure 27. Concern about workplace violence, by occupational status at the time of the survey (%).**



raped than women with other kinds of educational background.

In order to assess the extent to which the respondents were engaged in activities outside of their home, they were asked how often they frequent restaurants, discos, dances, or go out with friends. The fear of street violence as well as of getting raped increased with increasing frequency of going out. Of those going to restaurants every week, 62 % were concerned of street violence, 64 % of getting raped. Of those who did not frequent restaurants at all, 39 % were concerned of street violence and 31 % of getting raped.

Concern for workplace violence ranked third among individual causes of fear. More than one out ten women were concerned. Concern was greatest among those between the ages of 25 to 54. Concern for workplace violence is, of course, closely related to the occupational status of the respondent: women who were active as entrepreneurs or employees in full or part-time jobs were more often concerned of this than those who were presently outside the active labor market. Among employees and entrepreneurs, the level of concern did not vary by age.

One out of ten women was concerned about being a victim of violence by family members. Here, no distinction was made between different family members. The potential assailant could be her partner, son or brother. Respondents between the ages of 45 and 64 years were concerned slightly more often than others. Cohabiting women expressed the most concern, widows the least. Divorced women were as concerned as married women.

Women with lower education and those with lower professional training were more concerned than others. Fear was most widespread among those belonging to the two lowest income categories. Women who had

experienced violence before were more concerned about violence by family members than those who had never been victimised. In particular, those married or cohabiting women whose present partner had been violent against them were more afraid (27 %) than those whose partner had not used violence (7 %).

#### *4.4.2. Precautionary behaviour*

The use of safety precautions reflects concern about victimisation or the expectation of possible victimisation. The most common precaution used by the women was to plan ahead how they would act in such a situation. Almost two out of three (63 %) chose this option. 7 % had done something concrete in anticipation of violent situations, i.e. they carried some defence device or something that could be used to call for help or alert other people. 4.5 % had taken a self-defence course.

Women with experience of violent victimisation had done something along these lines more often (73 %) than those not victimised (56 %). Precautionary behaviour was more widespread in the region of the national capital and in urban communities than elsewhere. Young women took precautions more often than others, and this behaviour decreased with age. Similarly, as in the case of concern about violence, single and cohabiting women were also more likely to resort to some kind of protective behaviour than others. Precautions became slightly more frequent with increasing income. The exception to this were the women with the lowest incomes who were more often than others carrying something to defend themselves (10 %) and had taken a self-defence course.

## 4.5. Sexual harassment

In the research of sexual harassment, three relatively distinct, parallel research orientations may be discerned. One of these is related to the Scandinavian welfare state debate, in particular, the work safety perspective. The second tradition is related to the Central European social policy debate, underlining the interaction relationships and the social context of harassment. The third orientation in harassment research is the North-American one which pays particular attention to the quantitative characteristics of the phenomenon (cf. Varsa 1996, Mankkinen 1995). The present, questionnaire-based description of sexual harassment represents this third tradition.

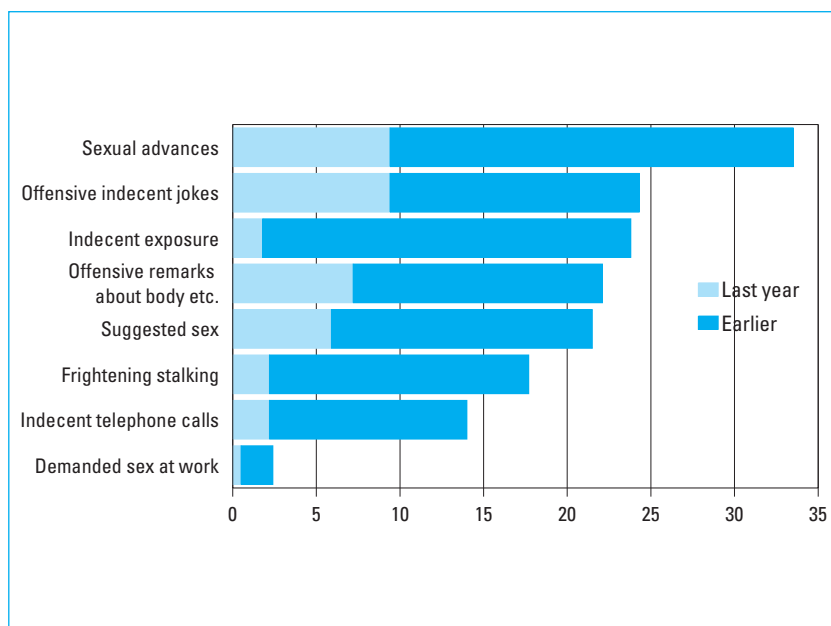
Many researchers who have analysed sexual harassment understand violence against women as a continuum, with one extreme in violent rape, the other extreme covering indirect and non-serious forms of sexual harassment that are often not criminalised in law. In regard to this, Johnson (1996) comments that even if sexual harassment is not ex-

tended into an act of physical violence, it may incite and reinforce fear of violence. The woman subjected to harassment is not in the position to know whether or not seemingly trivial sexual harassment will be followed by more serious events. The distinction between, on the one hand, different forms of harassment, and violence on the other cannot always be made (for example, stalking may develop into a physical attack). Thus, the woman may experience subjectively as frightening an event which other people interpret as harmless.

In the questionnaire, sexual harassment was defined as “such male sexual behaviour that is unwanted, not mutual, and may contain coercion”. As was done in respect of violence, sexual harassment was measured for the time period after the respondent’s 15th birthday. The perpetrator could be a stranger or male acquaintance, other than the woman’s male partner.

One half (52 %) of all respondents answered that they had experienced (at least once) one or several of the forms of harassment listed in Table 13. The rate for the last

**Figure 28. Women who have experience of different forms of sexual harassment (%).**



twelve months was 20 %. The most common forms of harassment were sexual advances and offensive indecent jokes. These two forms were also the most frequent ones for the last twelve months. Many women have at least once been confronted with indecent exposure, but on the one-year basis, this was rather rare.

Sexual harassment had been experienced by women with higher education more frequently than by others (73 % of those with university-level education). The women with the highest education are probably more able to recognize harassment situations; however, they may also be more likely to get into situations that make them vulnerable to harassment. Those with higher incomes had also experienced harassment more often than others.

Sexual harassment becomes less prevalent with age. The same is true for the urban-rural dimension. Single, divorced and cohabiting women had experienced harassment more frequently than married women.

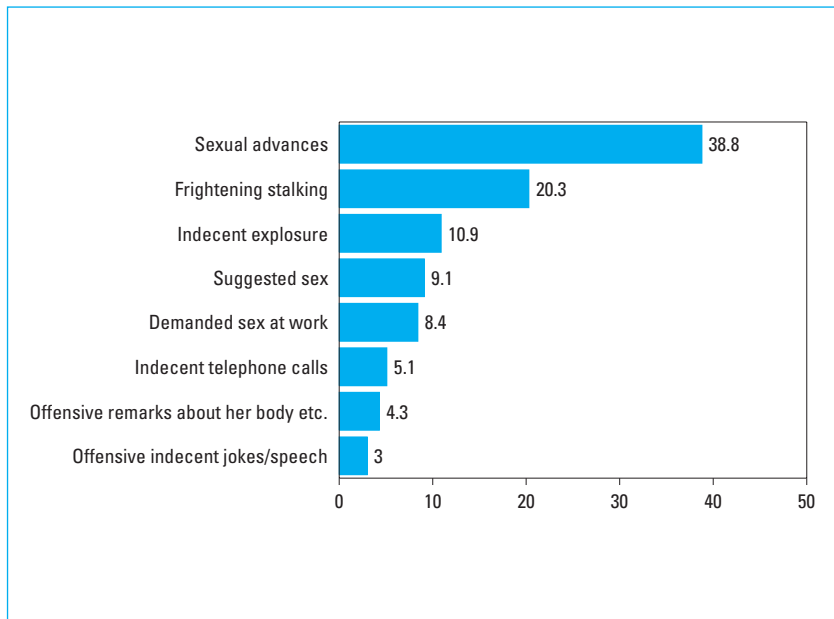
In Canada, sexual harassment was considerably more common than in Finland. According to the Canadian survey, 87 % of all women had such experiences. Partly, the difference is explained by differences in some of the questions used. However, cultural differences in male behaviour may be a more significant factor. For instance, indecent telephone calls to women were considerably more common in Canada than in Finland. Actual attempts at sexual advances were about equally frequent. In Australia, sexual harassment of women was at the same level as in Finland, both in respect to lifetime experiences since the 15th birthday and in the last twelve months. The Australian survey defined sexual harassment more narrowly than the Finnish one.

The respondents were also asked which of the forms of sexual harassment they considered most serious and who the perpetrator was. One quarter of the victims did not respond to these questions. The forms of harassment that were seen as being most se-

**Table 13. Women who had experienced different forms of sexual harassment in the course of the last year or after their 15th birthday (% , the table reproduces the full wording of the questions and the order in which they were presented in the questionnaire).**

	Last year	Ever
Total	19.6	51.8
Made indecent telephone calls to you	2.2	14.0
Exposed himself indecently to you	1.8	23.8
Made offensive remarks about your body or sexuality	7.2	22.1
Told you indecent jokes or spoke to you in a manner you felt to be sexually offensive	9.4	24.3
Suggested sex in an inappropriate context	5.9	21.3
Made passes at you, touched you or tried to kiss you against your will	9.4	33.9
Followed or stalked you so that it frightened you	2.2	17.9
Made you understand that your work or studies will suffer if you don't agree to have sex with him	0.5	2.4

**Figure 29. The most serious form of sexual harassment (% of those who had experienced harassment and identified the most serious incident, n=1,316).**

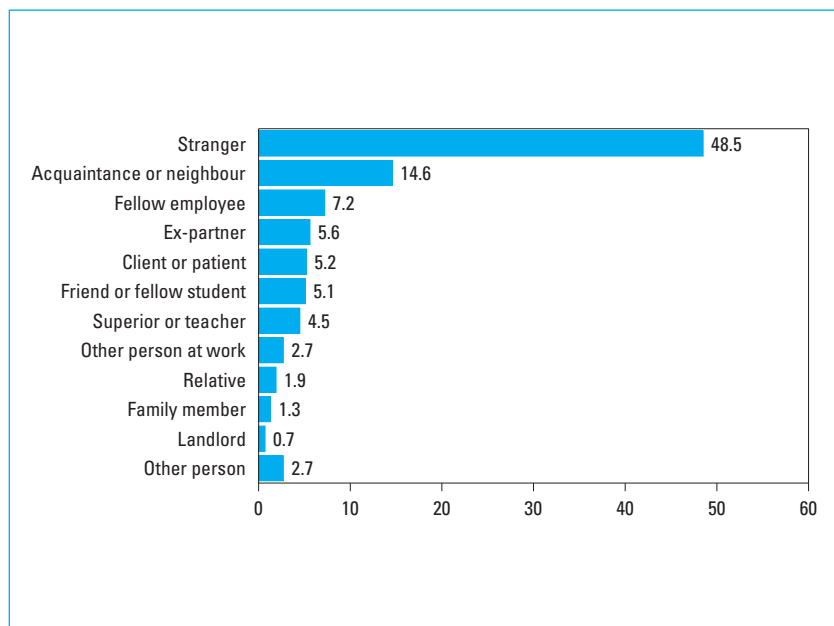


rious were making sexual advances and stalking.

Sexual advances tend to be directed at young women. They become less prevalent with age, regardless of the fact that the measurement denotes all incidents after the respondent's 15th birthday. Experiences of

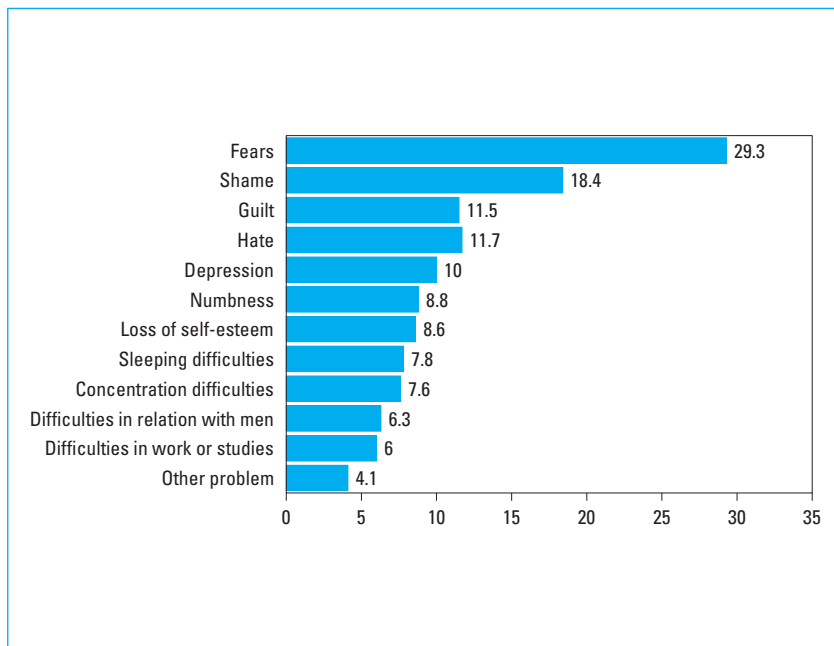
frightening stalking grow more frequent with increasing age. In the age bracket of 65-74 years, the prevalence of such experiences was highest. Also, an above-average proportion (13 %) of those at least 55 years old had at least once in their lifetime been threatened with losing their job as a means

**Figure 30. The perpetrators of sexual harassment (the most serious harassment incident. % of those who identified the perpetrator, n=1,339).**





**Figure 31. Consequences of sexual harassment (% of those who had experienced some form of harassment, n=1,791).**



of coercing them into sexual relations. Young women less frequently than others gave indecent exposure as the most serious form of sexual harassment they had experienced.

Nearly one half of the incidents of sexual harassment were committed by strangers. Of non-strangers, the major harasser categories were acquaintances or neighbours, and fellow workers.

Forms of harassment common to all perpetrator categories were sexual advances, stalking, and offensive sexual proposals. In incidents of indecent exposure, the perpetrators were mostly (84 % of the incidents)

strangers. Suggestive or indecent comments are often made by fellow employees; indiscreet or vulgar remarks about the woman's body or sexuality are mostly made by clients or patients. The woman's superiors make use of their position in sexual harassment situations.

Of all women who had been victims of sexual harassment, 62 % said the harassment had some consequence for them. The most common consequences were emotional, such as fear, shame, feelings of guilt, hatred, and depression.

## 5. Summary

This survey of male violence against women, carried out in the autumn of 1997, is the first of its kind in Finland. The results show that four women out of ten have at least once after their 15th birthday experienced physical or sexual violence or threats by a man. When sexual harassment and violence before the 15th birthday are taken into account, the prevalence of victims amounts to two thirds of all women between the ages of 18 and 74.

In the course of the past twelve months, according to the survey, violence or threats by a man were experienced by 257,000 women, or 14 % of all women between the ages of 18 and 74 years. In 1997, the police registered more than 9,000 assaults with female victims. Annually, an average of 27 women are killed in family violence.

In the second half of 1997, a telephone survey of a sample representing the whole adult population was carried out. According to this parallel survey, 8 % of all women between the ages of 18 and 74 years (147,000 women) were victims of violence or threats over the last twelve months. Because of forgetfulness and the fact that respondents also sometimes purposely conceal relevant events, victimisation surveys are often considered the better the larger the number of victimisation experiences found (cf. e.g. Tuchfarber et al. 1977). Using this criterion, our postal survey seems to produce a more accurate overall picture of the phenomenon compared with the telephone survey.

The situation does, however, alter when different categories of violent perpetrators are analysed. The Women's Safety Study 1997 found 145,000 women who had experienced violence by their present or ex-partner

over the last twelve months. In the telephone survey, the corresponding number of women was 22,000. On the telephone, partner violence is not reported nearly as often as in the postal survey. An important factor contributing to this difference, however, is that the questionnaire in the postal survey was considerably more detailed with regard to partner violence.

In contrast to this, the mail survey found only 82,000 women who over the last twelve months had been victims of violence and threats committed by a man other than the victim's partner. In the telephone study, the estimated number of victims of such incidents amounted to 125,000, and 40 % of the perpetrators of these were complete strangers. Thus, the telephone approach seems to have succeeded better in locating violence outside of permanent relationships than our postal survey. Consequently, the real number of women who have been victimised by outsider violence is probably higher than our postal survey suggests.

### *Women experience violence in the family*

Social communities may be roughly divided into three categories by the type and intensity of violence (Fattah 1991). The smallest, and primary group is formed by family and close relatives. The second is the intermediate group, larger than the family but still quite small in comparison to the whole society: the circle of social contacts. This circle consists of those community members with whom one interacts in various ways, such as

friends, neighbours, fellow workers etc. The remaining group is the largest - the people who exist in the community but with whom one has no interaction at all, strangers. Fattah codifies a “social law” according to which there is an inverse relationship between the size of the social group and the likelihood of homicide. The findings of our survey may lend support to an extension of Fattah’s idea: violence against women is concentrated around the family. 22 % of married or cohabiting women had been victims of violence during the relationship. 50 % of ex-partners had been violent.

### *The perpetrator of outsider violence is often a male acquaintance*

Violence or threats outside of the marriage or cohabiting relationship happened at least once after their 15th birthday to nearly a quarter of women. Outsider violence consists, more often than partner violence, of threats, and in particular sexually threatening behaviour, forced sex, or attempts thereof. 4 % of all women have at least once after their 15th birthday been forced to sex (raped) by an outsider; another 2 % reported that this had happened before their 15th birthday.

For the last twelve-month period, 4.5 % of all women had experiences of outsider violence, 1.4 % of physical violence. For the last twelve months, the proportion of physical violence is much larger in partner violence.

Outsider violence was often committed by a man known to the woman. The perpetrators were boyfriends (20 % of all most recent incidents), acquaintances or neighbours (15 %), clients or patients (8 %) or other family members (6 %). Usually, the violent family member other than the partner was the woman’s father. In one third (32 %) of the

most recent incidents of non-partner violence, the perpetrator was a stranger.

### *Situations explain victimisation*

According to the lifestyle or routine activity model (Sacco & Kennedy 1994; Johnson 1996; see also Garofalo 1987), crimes may be described as social events that cannot be separated from their physical and social context. They are tightly connected with lifestyles and routine activities (of both victim and perpetrator) and place. The degree to which life functions or routines place different persons under risk depends on a number of demographic factors such as marital status, age, work status, and income. In the Canadian study, such factors explain variations in being a victim of violence by both strangers and boyfriends. The use of public transport and walking out alone at night also increased the risk of being a victim of stranger violence. In Canada and Finland alike, young and single women had the highest risk of being a victim of violence by both strangers and acquaintances. Low income and being a student also increased the risk. The large proportion of young single women among violence victims is explained by their lifestyle: they are more likely than others to socialise intensively with young men, and end up in situations with high violence risks.

The higher likelihood of victimisation in urban areas as compared with rural places is also explained by lifestyle differences. The cultures and the opportunities for social contacts are very different in rural areas, small towns, and large cities. In rural areas, the number of strangers is smaller, and the social controls are stronger, both of which

diminish the risk of being threatened or assaulted by strangers. (Johnson 1996).

## *Strangers are feared*

Women mainly fear violence when going out alone at night. Over one half of all women were concerned about street violence. 44 % were concerned about unknown rapists. Violent family members were the concern for 11 % of all women. An assault by a stranger may indeed be more frightening and more damaging although it is less likely to occur than violence by a family member whose violent behaviour, e.g. when drunk, is not unexpected or may even be anticipated. It is true, however, that the violence of the male partner also increases the woman's fearfulness. 27 % of those women whose present partner had been violent or made threats before were concerned, at least to some extent, of being assaulted by a family member.

## *Interpretations of partner violence*

According to situational explanation models of violence, the man resorts to violence to cope with disagreements in the relationship or with his own anxiety. Often, the violent situations are connected with alcohol use. In our survey, the likelihood of the woman experiencing partner violence over the last twelve months was three times as high as the average if her partner used alcohol to the degree of intoxication at least once a week. 28 % of the women with partners who became intoxicated this often had been victims of threats or violence by him in the last twelve-month period. Out of men who did not drink at all, 3 % had threatened or assaulted their partners in the course of the last twelve months. In relationships that were already terminated, the man's frequent use of alcohol was related to violence even more

clearly. Of the men in these relationships who got drunk at least once a week, 65 % had been violent against their partner. The woman's alcohol use also increases her likelihood of being victimised by partner threats or violence. Of the women who got drunk at least once a week, 23 % had been victims of partner violence in the course of the last twelve months.

Unemployed men had been slightly more often violent against their partner over the last twelve months than men who were working full-time (13 % vs 10 %). For those working part-time, the rate was similar to the one for unemployed men. Unemployment thus does not seem to explain partner violence. Men with low level of education were more often violent against their partners than men with higher education.

Another factor increasing the likelihood of partner violence was the young age of both the man and the woman. Partner violence, as well as other violence, become considerably less frequent with the increasing age of victim and assailant alike. Thus, when the relationship grows older, partner violence in many cases either decreases or the relationship is terminated. Nevertheless, more than 27,000 women who had been threatened or assaulted by their present partner over the last twelve months (one quarter of all women in this category) had first experienced violence by the same man ten years earlier.

In 41 % of the relationships that had been violent ten years earlier, the violence had stopped. This indicates that it is possible for violence to end.

In spite of the man's threats and violence, the woman often says that the relationship is good. Of the women who had experienced threats or violence by their present partner, 54 % thought that their relationship with the man was good or very good. Only 10 % of those who had experi-

enced violence said their relationship was bad or very bad. Of those women who had not experienced partner violence over the last twelve months, 90 % said their relationship with their present partner was good or very good; less than one per cent of them thought it was bad or very bad.

### *The reproduction of violence*

The model of social learning stresses that using violence to solve problems is learned from one's near environment. According to this, violent behaviour is primarily learned in the circle of the family. It seems that the role model of a violent father is often taken from the man's childhood home and reproduced in his own relationships. It also seems that if the woman has witnessed violence against her mother in her childhood home, this is subsequently reflected in a higher likelihood of being a victim of partner violence. Of those men whose father had been violent against the mother, 41 % had been violent against their own partner. Correspondingly, of those men whose father had not been violent against the family, only 14 % had been violent against their partner.

Of those women whose father had used violence against his partner, 34 % had been victim of threats or violence by their present partner (at least once). If the father had not been violent, the corresponding rate was 18 %.

Childhood experiences of victimisation are often perpetuated into adulthood. Of women who had been subjected to violence or sexual abuse in their childhood, 65 % had experienced harassment or violence after their 15th birthday. The corresponding rate for women without childhood violence experience was 30 %. The perpetrator of physical violence in the incidents of childhood victimisation was mostly the father or some other family member. In one third of the vio-

lent relationships with children, the children had witnessed - heard or seen - violence. These findings underline the importance of preventive work and support for children of violent families.

### *Violence almost always has consequences*

Violence against women results relatively infrequently in physical injuries if compared, for example, to accidents of various kinds (Heiskanen & Aromaa 1998). However, violence almost always has emotional and psychological consequences. Five out of six women who had experienced violence outside of partner relationships replied that the violence had caused hatred, fear, shame, depression, guilt, lowered her self-esteem or caused other negative feelings. The consequences of partner violence are of a similar kind. Many consequences, such as depression or lowered self-esteem, are more frequent in partner violence as compared with outsider violence. Women with experiences of partner violence have also psychological and psychosomatic symptoms more frequently than women without such experiences.

Violent men often attempt to control and subdue their partner in different ways. Violence very often results in only psychological damage. Therefore, financial costs of violence are very difficult to estimate.

### *Help is sought only infrequently*

Women seek help primarily through informal channels, talking about the problem with an intimate person. More than one half of those who had been victims of partner violence had talked about their most serious incident of victimisation with somebody,

usually a close friend. Outsider violence was discussed more frequently, in three cases out of four, with somebody else. The person with whom the victim talked was, again, usually a close friend. In Canada, victims of violence were more likely to talk about it with someone than was the case in Finland.

In Finland, authorities or professional or volunteer agencies have not replaced the support given by intimate people in coping with the consequences of partner violence. Victims only rarely relied on authorities for help. Help is generally resorted to only in order to have physical injuries attended to. This represents a challenge to the service system aimed at providing support for victims of violence. Why is partner violence reported to the police only rarely; why are women not seeking medical care even when serious injuries are inflicted; why are they not resorting to other support services, either? Of women who had received medical care for their injuries, 13 % were dissatisfied. More than one out of five women who reported partner violence to the police were dissatisfied. The reasons for dissatisfaction were similar: belittling the incident, attitudes felt to be indiscreet, in the case of the police even blaming the victim was said to have occurred. Medical staff and police alike did not often advise the victim of other possibilities to get help and support. Of those clients of the medical services who had been victims of non-partner violence, 19 % were dissatisfied; in the cases reported to the police, one-quarter of the victims were dissatisfied. The reasons for dissatisfaction were the same as those that arose in the context of partner violence.

Violence is the man's problem; however, according to the women, only 6 % of violent men had sought help for their violent behaviour.

The social roles of wife and mother may be a source of problems to women if they are assaulted by their partners. The familist

model of partner relationships presumes that the woman takes responsibility for the welfare of the family and the success or failure of the marriage. The woman's identity is constructed around her relationship to the man, the home and the family, and failure in these respects is experienced as a personal failure, even when the woman is seriously assaulted. The assailant may blame the woman for his violent behaviour, and the woman may accept her own guilt (Johnson 1996). The internalised roles may prevent the woman from seeking help for her situation; they may also function in a way which perpetuates the violent relationship.

### *Violence does not stop at separation*

Threats, unauthorised entering of the woman's home, stalking or physical attacks had been experienced by one fifth of separated women after the relationship was over. Physical violence was suffered by 6 %. Of those men who had been violent while the relationship lasted, 36 % had continued to behave in this way after separation. For men who had not been violent during the relationship, the corresponding rate was 4 %. Against this background, the recent debate in Finland about anti-stalking legislation and other means of securing women's safety after divorce seems to be highly relevant.

### *Violence against women in other countries*

In the Canadian study, one half of all women had experienced male violence after their 16th birthday. In Finland, the comparable figure (with the 15th birthday as the reference point) was 40 %. The Australian rate was 36 % (16th birthday). The surpris-

ingly high victimisation rate of separated women - one half of all separated women had suffered threats or violence in their terminated relationship - receives support from the Canadian survey: the Canadian rate was the same. In Australia, 42 % of all separated women had experienced violence by their partners in their terminated relationship. All of these figures indicate clearly that when the relationship is ending, women's risk of being victimised is exceptionally high.

### *Advice about preventing violence*

As a final question, the respondents were asked about the kind of advice they would give to a woman who becomes victim of violence. The most frequent advice given was that she ought to talk about the matter with someone, even if she feels this is difficult. "Then it is easier to get over it and one doesn't begin to blame oneself," wrote one respondent. The women who had not been victims themselves also regarded talking to

friends to be the primary recommended approach in trying to cope with problems. In serious situations, the victims were advised to contact the police or a physician. Many respondents emphasised that the woman must not submit to partner violence; instead, they advised that the woman leave her violent partner: otherwise the violence is going to continue: "One has to go and get help right from the start," and the woman "has to tell the man right at the beginning of the relationship that it will finish at the first blow." Women who themselves were living in a violent relationship stressed that it is necessary to go and get help right from the start since, later, one does not consider the violence as bad any more. Many saw the need to get children away from the violent situation as a key concern.

Advice regarding violence by a stranger emphasize getting out of the situation either by talking to him or resisting, and then contacting the police. Many replies emphasised that the assailant must be made responsible for what he has done, since otherwise, the violence will not stop.

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# APPENDIX

## 1. Data collection

### 1.1. Method

The research data were collected by a postal survey. In this respect, the study differs from its counterparts in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA, where violence against women has been surveyed by telephone.

The postal survey approach was chosen for several reasons. In the telephone option, the available funding would have allowed only a sample of 3,000 women. In the postal survey, the sample size could be increased to 7,100. Additionally, the telephone approach would not have reached persons without a telephone or who have an ex-directory telephone number. Women who have suffered violence or telephone threats by their former partners or other men may choose to have an ex-directory telephone number and would thus remain outside of the survey. The best approach in this kind of situation might be a combination of different methods. For example, in a survey of sexual behaviour in Finland, carried out in 1991, the data were collected by personal interviews where questions deemed to be particularly delicate were answered on a separate printed questionnaire the interviewer did not see (Kontula & Haavio-Mannila 1992).

In survey literature, the postal survey is recommended, in particular if important topics of the study are of a sensitive nature (e.g. Japac et al. 1997). This approach is considered to provide the best guarantees of anonymity to respondents. The interviewers of Statistics Finland usually work in the area where they live. This might, in particular in smaller communities, diminish the respon-

dents' willingness to talk about partner violence.

Another argument in favour of the postal survey is derived from the study by de Leeuw (1992). She compared different data collection methods in social surveys. According to this research, different data collection methods do not give results that vary significantly. In fact, the results of the postal survey were slightly more consistent and succeeded in better self-disclosure as compared with telephone or personal interviews.

The postal approach is also supported by the chosen time frame: the questionnaire presented questions about matters which, in particular for older respondents, referred to long periods of time, such as lifetime experience of violence after their 15th birthday - maximally a 59-year period. To remember such distant incidents instantly on the telephone could be difficult. Also, the use of the telephone is, in many cultures, connected with a tendency to express oneself briefly, and feel uncomfortable with long pauses (de Leeuw 1992). This may result in victimisation that is not remembered and recounted in a telephone interview.

The questions concerning victimisation often have the form of a list of different kinds of occasions of victimisation, describing in practical terms what is meant by violence in the current study. If such lists are read on the telephone, the interview tends to assume a routine and short character. This weakens the interactivity of the interview. Further, the questions often had to contain specifications that are not very well

suitable for a telephone interview, where questions are expected to be short.

However, the postal survey is not without problems, either. Large non-response rates are considered to be their central problem. Non-response usually weakens the quality and representativeness of the results. The non-response rate of the market research-type postal surveys carried out in Finland in 1995 varied between 20 and 60 % (Suhonen 1997). The large range of variation shows that the postal survey is a delicate instrument. Topic, length, target group, and technical details (such as how many times the non-respondents are approached with a follow-up questionnaire) all have considerable influence on the response rate. As a research topic, women's safety was assumed to be of intrinsic interest to women. Further, compared with men, women tend to participate in surveys more easily and their answers also tend to be more conscientious (Helakorpi et al. 1997).

Particular problems in this postal survey were the topic and the length of the questionnaire. At the planning stage, there was concern about the possible anxiety-provoking effects that the intimate questions about violence might induce in women who had experienced violence as they were made to recall and cope once more with painful memories, hatred, and fear. In the Canadian survey of violence against women, this matter received extensive thought. Questions of research ethics were considered carefully, and the planning and data collection were permeated by attempts to reduce possible traumatic effects (Johnson 1996 and 1997). The interviewers were trained to assume a kind of empathetic approach, in which special emphasis was given to the emotional state of the respondent, and if answering the questions was felt to be difficult, the respondent was not pressed as is often done in interview situations. Further, the interviewers in the Cana-

dian study were instructed to give advice on what agencies women with violence problems could approach in order to solve them or get help.

In Finland, no equivalent critical ethics debate took place. However, the working group dealt extensively with such questions as to whether the study would be more harmful than useful, or whether the findings would actually make the women even more frightened than previously, or how to help women who have experienced violence. In a postal survey, it is not possible to hear the respondent in a sensitive manner, neither can one give personal advice. The respondent has the opportunity to leave difficult or painful questions unanswered more readily than in a personal interview. Some of our worries as to the serious anxiety the questions might evoke in the respondents were alleviated by speaking with people who specialise in women's violence experiences, and they commented, e.g., that it may be beneficial to victims of violence living with unresolved conflicts if they recognise their problem and are encouraged to seek professional help.

In the introductory letter printed on the first page of the questionnaire, the respondents were warned of the sensitiveness of the research topic. In addition, at the end of the questionnaire, the names of two persons were given whom the respondent could contact if she wanted to talk about violence, and who were able to give advice about help options. Only a few people who received the questionnaire actually did contact these experts.

The researchers were contacted on the telephone by 40 persons from the research sample or somebody close to them. This is a larger number than usual in Statistics Finland's postal surveys. The topic of the study was not given as a reason for refusing to participate - the reasons given usually referred

to matters of principle. Mostly, the calls had to do with technicalities connected with answering, and also the objectives of the study.

Indications of the sensitiveness of the research topic could be found: some of the respondents did not fill in their background data. Generally, the confidence of the group carrying out the study seemed to be rather good. It also seems that the study was often felt to be important. This is reflected in the numerous comments written on the questionnaires and the many pieces of advice the respondents wanted to give to women who were victims of violence.

## 1.2. Questionnaire <sup>1)</sup>

It is often recommended that the questionnaire of a postal survey should not exceed 12-16 pages. The length of the questionnaire with the introductory letter and the answering extended to 19 pages. The length is a result of the need to ask separately about different types of violent situations and about different types of partner relationships. In a postal survey, all questions have to be written on paper, and the respondent skips those questions that do not concern her. The complicated structure with many conditional questions is one of the features that made it difficult to fill out this questionnaire.

A second drawback brought about by the postal survey was that even the 19 pages were not sufficient, considering the information needs in the group. The Australian solution where women as perpetrators was included had to be discarded at an early stage of planning. However, an advantage of concentrating on violence by men against women helps to draw strict limits, and anchors the study to the core of one key social problem.

One of the hardest tasks of formulation had to do with combining violence by strangers and acquaintances (violence by men other than the respondent's current or previous partner) into one group of questions. Being assaulted or harassed by an unknown person and violence by an acquainted man are two different matters. In this solution, the distinction between these two can be made at the level of the most recent victimisation incident.

We had no possibility to carry out an extensive pilot study of the kind undertaken in Canada. In the Canadian case, questionnaire testing was, e.g., made in focus groups, by test interviews to gauge the effect of the questions on the respondents, and by two extensive pilot surveys based on random sampling, and analyses of these (Johnson 1997).

In our study, the expert group set up to support the study had a central role. In this group, topics were defined that served as the starting point for 15 qualitative semi-structured interviews. These pilot interviews concentrated on partner violence; interviewing women with personal experience of this provided us with important information regarding the contents of violence and the dynamics of violent relationships, and also the clients' view of the activities of different help organisations. After the qualitative interview, we asked the respondents to fill out the "most recent version" of the postal questionnaire, to comment on it and tell us about problems that came up when filling it out. This gave us information on how the questionnaire would work in the field. Additionally, we interviewed five experts who have been active in practical work in preventing violence. With them, we

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1 The questionnaire is translated into English and is available from the writers. See inquiries.

discussed the nature of violence, the contents of the questionnaire, and the research method.

The topics to be included in the questionnaire were chosen from the following studies related to violence against women: Violence Against Women Survey. Questionnaire Package 1993, Violence Against Women Survey. Public Use Microdata File Documentation and User's Guide 1994 (Canada), Violence and Threats of Violence Against Women in America 1996, Women's Safety Survey, 1996 (New Zealand), Women's Safety 1996. User Guide (Australia), and from Finnish victimisation surveys directed at the entire population (e.g. Heiskanen et al. 1990, Heiskanen & Aromaa 1996). The framework of topics was supplemented by special subjects that the expert group saw as being important. Particular attention was given to tailoring the questionnaire for Finnish respondents and having it correspond to the Finnish service system. Dozens of questionnaire versions were drafted over a six month period.

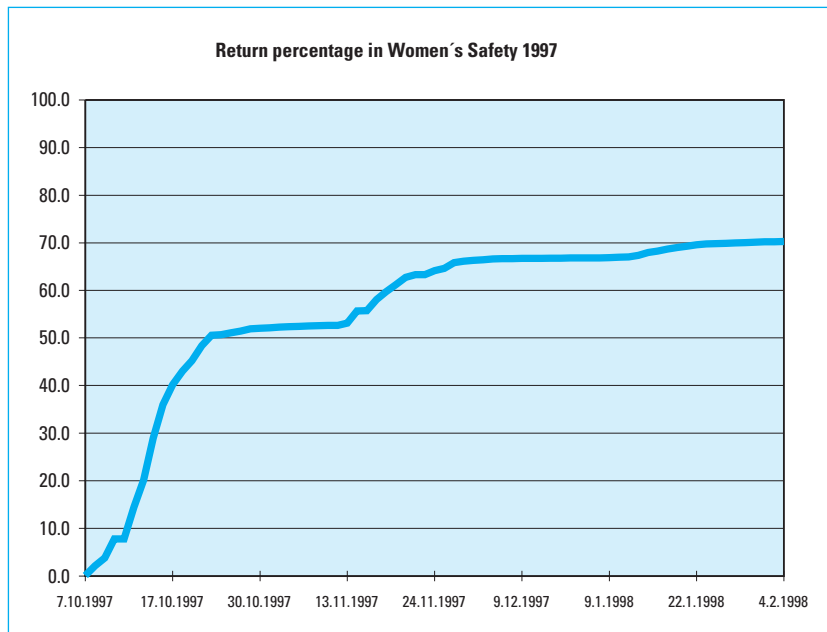
### 1.3. The sample and the respondents

The Central Population Register provided us with a sample of 7,100 women between the ages of 18 and 74 years. The sample covered the whole country, by systematic sampling: every 259th Finnish woman was selected from a register where the population is listed in alphabetical order by their family name. Persons residing permanently in institutions (mainly patients in hospitals) were excluded from the sample.

In order to be able to control the response, the target number was printed on the front page of the questionnaire (except for the last reminder). The copying and posting of the questionnaires was delegated to a mailing company.

Since the number of respondents increased considerably after the second reminder, we decided to send a third reminder at the beginning of January to those who had not yet replied by the end of the year.

**Figure 1.1. The cumulative response distribution.**



**Table 1.1. The sample and the respondents.**

	number	%
Gross sample	7,100	100.0
Overcoverage (dead, emigrated)	49	0.7
Final sample	7,051	100.0
Accepted questionnaires	4,955	70.3
Non-response	2,096	29.7
Causes of non-response	221	3.0
– address unknown	45	0.6
– refusal	66	0.9
– empty form returned	80	1.1
– discarded because of incomplete answers	30	0.4
Cause not known	1,875	26.7

The time schedule of the data collection was as follows:

- 1) 1 October, 1997: The questionnaire was mailed to all persons in the sample. The last day for replies was given as 20 October, 1997.
- 2) A card combining thanks and reminder was posted to everybody on 7 October, 1997.
- 3) A new questionnaire was sent to those who had not replied by 4 November, 1997. They were asked to return the questionnaire by 24 November, 1997.
- 4) A last questionnaire was sent on 7 January, 1998. 21 January was given as the last date for returning it. In practice, replies were accepted up to 4 February, 1998. The survey fieldwork, thus, lasted for four months.

The response rate amounted to little over 70 per cent which can be regarded as good, considering the subject and the length of the questionnaire. The response rate was of the same size order as in a recent postal survey on narcotics use, also dealing with quite sensitive matters (Kontula 1997). Our response rate was, however, slightly lower than the one in a

recent health survey by the Institute of National Health (Helakorpi et al. 1997).

As we have register data of the whole sample, it is possible to control how actively different population groups have answered. Comparisons with regard to other register data besides age are, however, hampered by the fact that 248 respondents could not be linked to the register data. We assume that they are distributed relatively evenly among different population groups. This allows us to make comparisons across population groups despite the fact that the response rates in Table 1.2 remain 3-4 percentage points below the actual rates.

The proportion of those who responded out of the whole sample does not, generally speaking, vary across population groups more than is usual in Finnish postal surveys. The response rate is above average among the youngest women, and a little below average for those between the ages of 65 and 74. Equally, married persons have been found to reply more frequently than other population groups. For widows, the non-response rate is higher than average. In the register data, cohabiting persons are classified as single. As a consequence of the

<b>Table 1.2. Sample, respondents, and the response rates in different population groups.</b>			
	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,051</b>	<b>4,955</b>	<b>70.3</b>
<b>Age bracket</b>			
18-24	842	641	76.1
25-34	1,234	874	70.8
35-44	1,460	1,019	69.8
45-54	1,506	1,040	69.1
55-64	1,032	738	71.5
65-74	980	636	64.9
not known		7	
<b>Education</b>			
Lower secondary level	1,797	1,203	66.9
Upper secondary level	1,545	1,128	73.0
Lowest tertiary	443	329	74.3
Undergraduate	197	144	73.1
Graduate	362	277	76.5
Postgraduate	18	11	61.1
No degree/not known	2,692	1,863	69.2
<b>Marital status</b>			
Married	3,716	2,585	69.6
Single	2,090	1,394	66.7
Divorced	801	483	60.3
Widow	437	239	54.7
Separated	10	6	60.0
Not known		248	
<b>Language</b>			
Finnish	6,587	4,409	66.9
Swedish	365	257	70.4
Other	102	41	40.2
Not known		248	
<b>Municipality of residence</b>			
Urban	4,399	2,923	66.4
Densely populated	1,127	757	67.2
Rural	1,528	1,023	67.0
Not known		248	
<b>Province (previous regional classification)</b>			
Uusimaa	1,927	1,297	67.3
Turku and Pori	980	656	66.9
Häme	1,009	687	68.1
Kymi	454	304	67.0
Mikkeli	280	202	72.1
Northern Karelia	237	145	61.2
Kuopio	351	242	68.9
Central Finland	349	234	67.0
Vaasa	588	383	65.1
Oulu	572	351	61.4
Lappi	271	183	67.5
Åland	36	12	33.3
Not known		248	



below-average response rate of divorced women, the rate of respondents who have experience of partner violence may be a little smaller in the research findings than in the original sample. This may be assumed since divorced/separated women had clearly more experience of violence than married or cohabiting women.

Women with higher level of education replied more often than average. The response rate of those with native languages other than Finnish or Swedish remained below the average.

Regional differences in the response were small, if compared against regions with different population densities. However, a comparison of provinces shows that the provinces of Northern Karelia and Oulu have a below-average response rate. The non-response is often larger in Helsinki than in other parts of the country. That was also the case in this study: in Helsinki, only 65 % of the sampled women returned the questionnaire.

A second response problem is partial non-response: the questionnaire is returned but some questions have not been answered. Some partial non-response was likely to have been caused by the difficult structure and the length of the questionnaire. However, it is also possible to discern instances where details are deliberately left out; the respondent reports something about the incident, but not all. One may conclude that the respondent did not wish to reveal the whole picture. Correspondingly, the answers describe even serious incidents of partner violence (for instance, resulting in broken bones), where the full details are not given. It is, however, also true that the structured, non-flexible question-and-answer form of the questionnaire does not always fit all victimisation experiences. This may have some influence on the partial non-response.

## 1.4. The statistical weighting (Pauli Ollila)

Post-stratification that is made in a manner relevant to the research topic can improve the estimates as well as decrease the non-response bias. Therefore, the data were post-stratified by the following criteria: region (I region of the national capital; II Macro-region 1 - the region of the national capital, 2 and 6; III Macro-regions 3 and 4; IV Macro-region 5), and age (I 18-24; II 25-34; III 35-44; IV 45-54; V 55-64; VI 65-74). The numbers of women in these region\*age subgroups of the whole population (institutionalised persons excluded) were calculated on the basis of preliminary data for the end of 1997 (the most recent estimate of the institutionalised population is for the end of 1996). The estimator for the total number is thus of the form:

$$\hat{t}_y = \sum_{g=1}^G \frac{N_g}{n_g} \sum_{k \in s_g} y_{gk}$$

where N is the size of the region\*age subgroup in the whole population, n is the number of respondents in subgroup g, G is the number of subgroups (or 24), s is the group of respondents in subgroup g, and y is the value of the criterion variable in observation k of subgroup g.

## 1.5. The generalizability of the results

As the results were weighted, a non-response correction based on post-stratification (with age and region as variables) was also made. For this reason, population groups with above-average

<b>Table 1.3. Confidence intervals for different percentages (95 % probability).</b>						
Rate %	Size of sample or subgroup					
	100	200	500	1000	2000	5000
10 or 90	5.9	4.2	2.6	1.9	1.3	0.8
20 or 80	7.8	5.5	3.5	2.5	1.8	1.1
30 or 70	9.0	6.4	4.0	2.8	2.0	1.3
40 or 60	9.6	6.8	4.3	3.0	2.1	1.4
50	9.8	6.9	4.4	3.1	2.2	1.4

non-response receive larger weights than others.

The numbers in the report are population estimates calculated from the sample. They reflect random variation caused by statistical sampling, the size of which may be assessed by table 1.3.

Besides random variation, error is also caused by systematic variation (see Groves 1989). Systematic error may be come about, e.g., because the respondent wants to conceal the matter, or because the questions are badly formulated. The amount and kind of systematic error may, in principle, be assessed by information derived from other sources. In practice, it is difficult to estimate systematic error from the research material itself.

We made some crude comparisons with other information besides those in Table 1.2. For instance, the answers to questions on the

state of health, psychological and psycho-physical symptoms, and leisure-time hobbies were quite similar to those derived from the Living Conditions Survey of Statistics Finland (Tyrkkö 1996).

In the survey, the proportions of women who were single or who were living or had been living with a partner were almost identical with register-based family statistics (Kartovaara 1997). Among the survey respondents, there are about two percentage points more married women than in the register data, and the proportions of divorced and widowed women were correspondingly lower. In the survey and in the register data, we have singled out cohabiting women: according to register data, their proportion out of all women between the ages of 18 and 74 was 12.6 %. In the survey data, the proportion was 15.5 %.