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**Session 1 – Invited paper**

**Italian survey on violence against women**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Official data gathered with criminal statistics do not provide needed evidence on the phenomena of violence and, above all, on domestic violence. Violence in the family setting is still an underreported and understudied social problem affecting millions of women all over the world (Yllo & Bograd, 1988). Violence against women exists in all societies, in all cultures and religions and in all social classes and according to Unicef estimates 50 percent women will be abused in the family context during her life.
2. Recommendations and policies at the national and international levels have provided useful guidelines for the implementation of laws and services, for the protection of women and their children (EU Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of women against violence). One of the crucial aspects to learn about a sensitive problem is to address it specifically.
3. Violence against women, in general, and specifically, domestic violence are sensitive problems very difficult to study. Learning about the prevalence and nature of domestic violence, as well as the characteristics of those involved and its consequences, helps develop at an institutional and legal level, needed policies and services to protect those most in need.
4. Victimization surveys, developed to shed light on the underreported crimes, are useful methods to address and understand several types of victimisation. However, they don't do justice to disclose those forms of violence perpetrated by someone closest to the victim (usually the partner or former partner) unless they make use of special wording and a description of complex patterns of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence that characterises domestic violence.

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5. It is in this respect that the first dedicated surveys on violence against women originated at the beginning of the nineties. Data need to be collected with large and representative samples of the population by using sound and tested instruments that can and should be tested first on smaller pilot samples.

6. The Italian Minister of Equal Opportunities, through European funds, has funded the project on violence against women survey. Istat has agreed that such a study could only be conducted by the National Statistic Institute that is in charge of producing all official statistical data on a large national scale, by using representative samples of the population. Furthermore, Istat has agreed to participate to IVAWS promoted by the United Nations.

7. Before setting up such studies, there is a need to follow essential steps, outlined here according to the procedure adopted by the Italian National Institute of Statistics:

- 1) Identification and definition of the phenomenon
- 2) Creation of useful indicators to measure the phenomenon under investigation
- 3) Identification of the population and sampling procedure
- 4) Qualitative studies to fully understand all possible aspects of the problem under investigation
- 5) Pilot stage of the study to test the instrument
- 6) Final survey

8. The National Survey on violence against women originates from the need to disclose the problem on violence against women in Italy in terms of its prevalence, incidence, rate and nature. This is an important topic that still needs further investigation. Women rarely disclose what has happened to them and even more rarely do they report to the police or they might seek for help in the crisis centres or in other social services.

## **II. THE CONTRIBUTE OF VICTIMIZATION STUDY ABOUT VIOLENCE TOPIC**

9. In western countries dedicated surveys on violence against women and particularly on domestic violence have been rarely conducted within the official statistical system. Only a limited numbers of countries have implemented surveys dedicated to this topic due to its sensitiveness and related problems in setting up such studies. Statistics Canada in 1993 has for the first time addressed this problem (Holly Johnson, 1993); Australia in 1995 and at the end of the nineties, the UNICRI (United Nation Interregional Crime Research Institute) under the auspices of the United Nations started addressing the problem. More recently, Finland, Sweden and USA (NVAWS) have conducted ad hoc survey too. In other countries, the topic is often studied through a victimization survey context and not through a dedicated research: this is the case of the NCVS (National Crime Victimization Survey) in the United State and of the BCS (British Crime Survey) in Britain.

10. As in the above-mentioned countries, also in Italy, there were no surveys on this specific issue, till now. So far, in the past years ('97/98 and 2002), the National Statistics Institute carried out two victimization surveys in which data on sexual harassment and sexual violence were collected on a representative sample of women aged 14-59 (20.064 in 1997 and 22.778 in 2002). This victimization survey is not a dedicated one and does not focus on domestic violence and could bias the topic estimates, even if the questions posed would be able to provide information on the offender, the relationship with the victim and disclose violence among intimates.

11. For the first time, in fact, thanks to this kind of research, it was possible to overcome the widespread stereotype of rape portrayed by the media. It was possible to address violence as part of normal situations and relationships, the portrait of the abuser, emerging from the survey, is not of a stranger that acts in the dark, during the night, but that of a friend, a boyfriend or a colleague, a relative, a trustworthy person. Someone in which women have confidence that acts in "safety" places (at home, in the car, at work ...).

12. This is an type of sexual harassment that is very different from that of sexual harassment perpetrators who are generally strangers or persons not well known that preferably act in the street, park, disco, cinema or on the bus.

13. Furthermore thanks to this survey, it has been possible to know for the first time the amount of crimes not reported, the so called dark figure of crime. Even if recently, the reporting rate is constantly increasing, due to the new law and to the new social climate that help woman disclosing violence and in reporting to the police, the percentage of violences not reported is very high (table 1). The rate of sexual violence reported to the police is absolutely low 12,3% and it increases to 15,5% when the offender is a stranger, but it decreases to 4% if the offender is a known person.

**Table1. Percentage of violence reported to the police for type of violence and period of occurrence**

| Type of violence | During the life course | In the last three years |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rape             | 17,8                   | 32,8                    |
| Attempted rape   | 6,9                    | 1,2                     |

*Source: Citizen's Safety Survey 1997-1998*

14. Victimization surveys also help to shed light on the characteristics of victims and consequences of violence. An important result concerns the victim's profile. It emerges that different types of victims are linked to particular types of violence. More educated women are abused more often by unknown persons in street. While less educated and younger people are abused more by friends or relatives. Older women (50 -59 years old) disclose more cases of intimate violence and groups of victims aren't able to answer about the relationship with the author and the place in which violence happened.

15. Victimization surveys help us in defining more a frame of violence, but they don't focus on different forms of violence, physical, psychological, economic and sexual, and they are not designed to focus on domestic violence.

16. Studying domestic violence, instead, implies adopting methodological and procedural dedicated tools that take into consideration all relevant aspects with regard to the variables measured, ways of posing questions, funnelling effects, use of specific terms, and specific training of interviewers. Dedicated surveys on violence against women are designed in such a way that eases women so that they can build up confidence with the interviewer who is trained to deal with these cases. Not all forms of violence women suffer from, such as psychological and economical violence, are acknowledged by women themselves; in this respect the instrument used to collect data needs to address the problem in all its aspects.

17. Implementing a dedicated survey measuring ‘sensitive data’ is essential in a cultural context that, even if has changed in the last years and it is in constant evolution, is still biased with regard to gender roles within the family context and domestic violence issues. In addition to this aspect, there are those related to the sensitive topics addressed that produce strong psychological dynamics in interviewers and interviewees (Yllö & Bograd, 1988).

### **III. COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS**

18. The Italian context has changed during the last decades, but it’s very different from the Anglo-Saxon one. Many taboos are no more present, but it’s not so easy to speak about violence in family or about sex, even in a violence frame. Because of these reasons we developed some doubts, which led to beginning of a qualitative phase. The aim was to build a questionnaire, adapted to the Italian context, to understand more about survey feasibility (are women and the community ready to deal with violence matters), women availability (are women ready to answer?) and women disclosure (are women ready to open themselves and to speak about their violence experiences, if any?).

19. The safety citizens survey has demonstrated women’s willingness and availability, but the high rate of no violence answers could give evidence to the existence of some problems.

20. So, to plan such a dedicated survey, the National Research Institute identified the need to think of a qualitative phase of the research which consisted of conducting focus groups with battered women, workers working in shelters and conducting interviews with key people. Qualitative results were helpful for the development of the best strategies to face all procedural and content-based problems to address a complex survey dealing with sensitive data.

21. Qualitative methods can be useful because they gather information on those involved who can provide accounts on the issue under investigation and information relevant to the methodological aspects. Qualitative methods can be used before or after quantitative ones. When used before, they can help to understand better the issue under investigation and use accounts provided by participants in this stage to develop the best instrument to address domestic violence. This triangulation method increases the validity and reliability of the study and of the findings obtained (Bryman, 1988).

22. Due to these aspects, the first stage of the project regarding the implementation of the survey has been done by using a pretrial of the first version of the questionnaire as well as a qualitative study conducted by using a *focus group* technique and in-depth interviews of key-professionals.

23. The aim was to investigate methods and tools to search for the best methodology to address this topic (by addressing the drawing up and the administration of the questionnaire and the training and recruitment of interviewers).

#### **3.1 The IVAWS Project and the pretest**

24. *The project on a survey on Violence Against Women originated from an agreement between the Department of Equal Opportunities and Istat, under the auspices of the United Nations, Unicri, Heuni, and Statistics Canada, which came up with a project that can be internationally compared according to the International Violence against Women Survey (IVAWS). The main aim of this international wide-range project is to gather sound comparable data.*

25. The questionnaire aims to address several aspect of violence against women:
- Prevalence and incidence rate of different types of violence (psychological, economical, physical and sexual), in which specific attention has been addressed towards domestic violence by current or former partner;
  - Characteristics of those involved and characteristics and consequences of violence;
  - Risk and protective factors related to individuals as well as socio-demographical domain.
26. All interviews will be done, in Italy, by adopting CATI technique (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview), while in some other countries they will be done with the face-to-face method.
27. In Italy this dedicated survey will be conducted in its final phase in 2005 with a national representative sample of 30.000 women, while the pilot stage was conducted in year 2004 with a sample of 950 women.
28. During the first semester of the year 2002, the International Team consisting of experts from different countries (such as Canada, Poland, Denmark, Switzerland, Australia, Costa Rica, Italy) tested, on a limited number of women, a first version of the questionnaire. This has been done in order to test the accuracy of the instrument and the relevance of the issues addressed.
29. In Italy the pretrial of the first version of the questionnaire has been done in May 2002 with 78 women. 11 of them came from Antiviolence Women Centres.
30. The pre-test was a very important and meaningful experience; it was a confirmation of the need and the feasibility to study violence in more detail: women interviewed told us they appreciated very much this kind of survey, they opened themselves to interviewers and reported their sad and painful experiences. Many women (also those not part of victimization centres) reported many cases of violence, both physical and sexual. Similar results also emerged from the Italian Victimization Survey. Interviews very often represented the possibility to give vent to one's feelings.
31. Furthermore, it comes out from the interviewers' notes the existence of a climate of psychological pressure in some interviewees' family that perhaps is not adequately defined and deepened in the questionnaire itself.
32. Nevertheless, in spite of women's availability, the questionnaire appears to be very heavy and subjected to criticism from several points of view. In fact, on one hand, a few interviews didn't have positive final codes (refusal and interrupted interviews), even if all interviewees had been previously contacted, and on the other the pre-test was very psychologically stressful for interviewers themselves. These difficulties seemed due to different aspects, the questionnaire's contents, its length, the delicacy of certain questions, and lack of complete professional profile of our interviewers.
33. The interviewers above all underlined problems about the interview's length, which was considered rather long in general, and about some questions, which were too long; this produced too long interviews that tired and annoyed the women interviewed.
34. Furthermore, these problematical aspects are even more emphasized for women who previously got in touch with the specialized shelter, according to what has been outlined by the antiviolence centres' responsible. As a matter of fact, in spite of the interest that the agencies had

in this project, during the survey they showed some doubts regarding the women's psychological distress in consequence of the interview.

35. As a matter of fact, the expectation of the interview's length has not been confirmed in those cases, because it had a dramatic increase when the women had to report a violence episode. In a first moment this was seen as the reason why women get stressed, and as a solution, the agreement has been that the interviews could not be completed all at one time, but could be divided in more times by scheduling appointments for the interviews. Nevertheless, women still continued to seem very stressed after the interview not because of the interview length now, but as regard the difficulty in talking about painful events and because they were forced to remember and relive these episodes.

36. These problematic aspects brought us to a deeper reflexion about the questionnaire and the interviewers. The following aspects are the more emerging.

#### *Problems about the screening technique*

- The choice of repeating the screening about violence for each author (male stranger, male relative, well-known man, previous partner, current partner) make the interview, even if helpful for the memory, too heavy, annoying and sometimes irritating.
- When the women interviewed declare a violence episode they would like to talk immediately about that and to go vent their feelings. To be compelled to follow a scheme and to have to answer all the screening could be disorienting and incomprehensible. The woman, especially those from Anti-violence centres, interviewed didn't understand, were distracted and sometimes irritated. Even if this is the inevitable consequence of the screening technique. In this survey it causes more problems because of the interview's length and of the peculiar topics faced.

#### *Problems of definition and wording*

- The interviewers found it embarrassing to read the rape definition. Besides, this and other questions were really very long. Our experience with telephone surveys points out that when the questions are too long. On one hand, interviewers tend to shorten the questions and, on the other hand, respondents often give their answers without listening the complete question.

#### *Problems about embarrassing and disclosure*

- From interviewers' notes and comments it emerges that some women do not have any problems in disclosing the violence they suffered from and in providing details about these episodes. Other women, on the contrary, without any consideration decisively deny to have ever been victims of violence or of sexual harassment. In face of such different ways of responding to the interview, we think we have to take more care not only of what we actually ask, but also the sequence of the questions. In fact, it is probably unsuitable for some women who need to be introduced more gradually and softly to these themes, to ask in the first place about serious episodes of violence (forced sexual intercourses and rapes).

#### *Problems about Psychological violence and topic*

- Some of the women interviewed during the first trial reported critical, but not-violent situations in their current intimate relationships. Actually, the questionnaire, as it was originally conceived, does not point out psychological abuse.

### **3.2 The focus group phase**

37. The *focus groups* have been conducted with women who could provide, according to their role or position, an important contribution to better understand the problem of violence against women. In particular this sample consisted of women victims of violence by their partners, workers at a shelter for battered women, interviewers with expertises in victimization surveys and women from 18 to 70 not belonging to any of the previous targets.

38. Interviews conducted with key-experts involved professionals who have been dealing with the problem of violence for several years. A public prosecutor belonging to a special unit working on cases of violence at the Court, a coordinator of a shelter for battered women, two lawyers specialized in criminal law, and a police officer were the key experts.

39. Each focus group was conducted with at least one psychologist and was video/audio recorded and then transcribed and, according to the group, different questions were posed, with the aim of learning about the content of the questionnaire and the procedural methods.

40. About the Content of the questionnaire the focus was on:

- What is domestic violence (especially psychological violence);
- Different expressions of violence (**Economical violence, Psychological violence, Physical violence, Sexual violence**) ;
- How women deal with violence, in their own perception;
- Early precursors of domestic violence and the cycle violence;
- The attribution of responsibility;
- Risk factors;
- Consequences of violence;
- The influence and role of children or others in reporting of violence or leaving a violent situation;
- Prejudices and stereotypes.

41. About the procedural methods the stress was on:

- How to gain women's faith (for the training of interviewers);
- Feelings experienced from women as regards to the survey;
- Characteristics of interviewers;
- The emotional impact on interviewers;
- What to ask and how;
- Wording and sequence;
- How to introduce the study;
- Length of the interview.

## **IV. METHODOLOGICAL RESULTS**

42. Results from these different procedures show that domestic violence is a complex phenomenon difficult to measure and to reveal. On top of these aspects, results were able to shed some light on significant procedural and methodological aspects.

43. At the end of the pilot study, there was a need to better define our research, concerning not only the topic addressed (i.e. the actual instrument, the questionnaire used to collect data and the questions developed), but also the procedural aspects of collecting data.

44. The procedural aspects of the survey should focus on those who are collecting information to guarantee reliability and validity. Special attention should be dedicated to the selection and training of the interviewers and to their supervision and follow-up. The relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer is essential in helping women disclose violence.

#### ***4.1 The questionnaire and the account on violence***

##### *Psychological violence*

45. In the group discussion conducted, it emerged that psychological violence is important to measure because one of the most significant predictor of further (physical) violence. Psychological violence considered as a pattern of different behaviours, such as humiliation, downgrading, threats, intimidations, represents its own form of violence. Most forms are not evident. Women rarely recognized it as violence and because of *psychological violence* is not visible from a social point of view. It's difficult for women to speak about it and vent one's feelings. In fact, it's often culturally accepted that a woman does not have autonomous thoughts, that she has to do what her husband is asking, or that she is or thinks what her husband tells her.

46. To measure these types of violence, it is important to look at different aspects of the daily life that could cover cases of violence. For instance, questions such as "Is he willing to talk with you and exchange your opinions?" or "He criticizes you for the way you look or dress, for example, by telling you that you are not very attractive, ugly, or inadequate?" or "He criticizes you for the way you raise your child, look after the house or cook, for example, by telling you that you are not a good mother or that you are incompetent" or "He forces you what to wear, how to arrange your hair, or how to behave in public?"

##### *Wording and the questionnaire design*

47. With regard to the questionnaire, it emerged that questions measuring violence should be included gradually, from the most general questions to the more specific ones. The language adopted should be clear and not redundant; questions should also adopt sentences not using jargons or other unclear questions.

48. Different types of crime analysed are presented with a screening procedure, which helps to focus attention on both the type of violence as well as on all possible perpetrators.

49. According to the aim of the study, we think it is necessary to two screening questions about the type of violence perpetuated and, then, subsequently go into more details by asking

“When did it happen?”, “How many times?”, “Who do the violence?”. The first screening concerns violence episodes perpetuated by strangers, relatives or known men, the second concerns violence from partners and/or former partners.

50. In this way, respondents will not have the impression of repetitive questions, causing tiredness, boredom and lack of co-operation.

51. Furthermore, from the focus group, it emerged that it is very important to gradually develop a relationship with the female interviewer: questions on the every day life, leisure time, social networks, and health are asked before those on violence. The objective is to create a positive climate of trust between interviewer-interviewee; and questions on violence from the partner, in the section on the partner’s characteristics, are asked after having spoken about their relationship and the psychological violence battery.

52. Regarding the victimization report sections, we decided to go more in depth about the last episode of violence (i.e. questions about consequences and cost of violence have been considered). With regard to domestic violence, we chose to ask something about the history of violence and stalking.

**Table 2. The questionnaire structure**

- A. Control form
- B. Marital status and respondent characteristics
- C. Experience of violence by non partners
- D. Non-partner victimisation report
- E. Characteristics of current intimate partner and partner experience of violence
- Ebis. Characteristics of the last partner and experience of violence (if there isn’t an actual partner)
- F. Experience of violence by previous partners and characteristics of the violent previous intimate partner
- G. Partner/previous partner victimisation report
- H. Mother and partner abuse history and childhood victimisation
- I. Conclusion
- L. Quality section

#### **4.2 How to approach the woman**

53. With regard to the story provided by the women, it is clear that in order to be able to talk about violence, several aspects need to be taken into account: acknowledging the violence to which they were subjected, ‘anger’ against the partner, faithfulness towards the interviewer, the absence of the (violent) partner during the interview. Women said, in fact, that it is easier for a woman to disclose violence if she is interviewed immediately after “*she had a fight*” or “*she might be piss off with him!*”.

54. It’s also essential to reassure the interviewee about her anonymity and the privacy issues, find the best time for her, and to give her the possibility to verify who you are and why you are phoning, or by calling to a toll free number.

55. Furthermore it's very important to make a powerful and effective introduction and motivate towards the interview understanding that the research is in the interest of the whole community, and give any possible restitution.

#### ***4.3 Interviewers***

56. One of the core elements of this survey is the validity of data collection, referring to the actual interviewers: their expertise and their motivation. In this regard, it is important to focus our attention on a reduced number of female interviewers who are fully trained, supervised and are experienced, prepared and well motivated.

57. In this regard, interviewers, beside the basic skills needed to conduct interviews, they need to be trained on the topic of the study. Becoming experts in the field of domestic violence will enable them to help the interviewee to feel at ease and disclose any violence. Special attention needs to be addressed with regard to the initial training and the ongoing supervision. Basic requirements to conduct this study could be identified as: relationship with the household contacted, communicating skills, skills to handle emotions, and technical knowledge of the instrument used. The most effective training model reflects the needs and aims to be reached in the study through 6 days of theoretical training and 2 days of technical training. Furthermore, all interviewers will be constantly monitored and supervised by conducting *debriefings* and group discussions.

#### ***4.4 The implementation of data collection***

58. The quality of data collection reflects different strategies adopted during the data collection to acknowledge and respect needs and wishes of both interviewees and interviewers.

59. *The procedural aspects of the survey should focus on:*

a) building a clear and direct relationship with interviewers; b) have motivated interviewers who believe in what they are doing and share the goals of the study; c) understand any request of further training; d) understand needs for psychological support; and e) prevent any *burn out* by revealing signs of maladjustment.

60. *The relationship with the interviewee should focus special attention on:*

a) a good environment; b) encourage and motivate the interviewed woman about the importance of the study by presenting it in a clear and efficient way; c) reassure the woman about the validity of the study and the confidentiality of data collected; d) establish directly with the woman interviewed the best moment to collect data (accept any time to conduct the study and telephone number to call, including mobiles); and e) provide any feedback required regarding the study and any information on services for battered women, i.e. providing phone numbers of services such as Centres for violence against women.

#### ***4.5 The survey organization***

61. To guarantee the sample's representativeness it is necessary to produce a large over sampling of the units. This would also prevent the loss of information due to refusals that could

be cut down taking special care of the announcement letter, the presentation of the interview on the telephone, the training of the operators, and the management of the CATI interview.

**62. Announcement letter:** Before the beginning of the survey a letter announcing a subsequent phone call must be sent to all the sample units. We think this letter should be as soft as possible without explaining deeply the theme of the survey. We believe this is a good strategy that would not "scare" women from answering the questionnaire and, in particular, would avoid embarrassing and dangerous situations for those women who live in a violent family.

**63. Presentation of the telephone interviews:** The telephone interview must start with a presentation of the survey quite similar to the letter and go gradually into details once in touch with the target respondent.

**64. Management of the CATI interview:** It is important to make respondents understand that it is feasible to complete the interview in a step-by-step manner by making different appointments. This would make the survey period longer than necessary, but would reduce the respondent's fatigue thus lowering the risk of definitive interruptions of the phone conversation and allowing respondents to choose the most suitable moments to answer the questionnaire.

## V. THE PILOT STUDY

65. From April to July 2004 Istat carried out a pilot study to prepare for the full-fledged survey. The pilot was also considered a laboratory in which to test some aspects linked to interviewers skills, training contents and strategies, and to test the questionnaire itself.

### 5.1 Survey organization and sample design

66. The pilot study was a CATI survey with two groups of interviewers, one group with more expertise in the CATI method (8) and a second group of women working in shelters for battered women (7). The second group was chosen because of their knowledge base with the aim of knowing the profile of violence better. The interviewers were paid for hours worked (including the payment during the training phase) and not for completed interviews.

67. The interviews were carried out from 9am to 9pm, Monday to Friday and from 9am to 7pm on Saturday. In these hours there was the possibility to make an appointment with the interviewee and to call her on a mobile phone to augment privacy. Furthermore a toll free number was provided.

68. In the pilot survey 1.000 women had to be interviewed. The sample was a two stages random sample stratified at the first stage. The first stage were the households present on the official list of telephone subscribers and the stratification criterion was due to the stratus variable that merged the region and type of municipality. 1.000 households were selected all over the country, as well as a sample of 5000 households for possible substitution, according to the territorial criterion of proximity. The second stage was composed of women aged 16-70 years old, randomly selected in the household of eligible women.

### 5.2 Interviewers Training and the monitoring phase

69. The theoretical training lasted 6 days, from 9am to 2pm, and concerned content, and procedural and emotional aspects. The training instruments were lessons, videos, practice, and roleplaying. The training considered different subjects: sexual violence, domestic violence, emotional abuse and psychological violence, risk factors and consequences of violence. The section about methodology regarded: how to read the question, how to codify the answer, how to recognize violence, the sample, and the contact procedure. Finally, the emotional part covered how to handle emotions, the use of a warm tone of voice and how to learn to be empathetic yet detached.

70. Technical training lasted 2 days from 9am to 5.30pm and it was on CATI system, the appointment technique, and the recall system. At the end of the briefing the interviewers had to do some trial calls to households not part of the sample (about ten).

71. During the entire collection phase, help assistance was guaranteed, as the presence of two psychologists, who were part of the researcher team. Furthermore, to assure the quality of the process, every day quality indicators (refusal rate, contact/non contact rate, appointment rate, average length...) were calculated for interviewers, for interviewer groups, for time of calls, and at local levels debriefing with interviewers were performed every week.

### **5. 3 Results about the survey quality and the feasibility of the survey**

72. The survey gave good results. The household refusal rate was 18,5% similar to refusal rate of victimization survey. Neither of the refusal rates of selected person was high (3,8%). This means that women are available to answer and to deal with the violence.

73. Which is the respondent burden? Surprisingly, it is not so high. The average lenght is of 28,8 minutes, even if the range is wide (See Table 3). And the interruption rate (2,7%) is absolutely in the average of telephone surveys.

**Table 3. Percentage of interviews length**

| Class of lenght | %    |
|-----------------|------|
| <15             | 12,9 |
| 15-30           | 62,2 |
| 31-45           | 19,9 |
| 46-60           | 3,8  |
| 61-70           | 1,1  |
| 71-80           | 0,1  |

#### *About the interviewers*

But looking at the performance of the two interviewers' groups, it's possible to underline some differences:

- Against every expectation, interviewers from shelters obtained more interviews than the other ones.
  - They were "new" to this work, so they do not try to use short cuts to maximize their work. Each call is an adventure;
  - They were able to conquer the household, to put each respondent at ease, and to value her;

- The interviewers from shelter
  - Read the questions slowly and entirely;
  - Gave the interviewees time to reflect and to answer;
  - Created a confiance climate with women.

74. This means more ability to capture violence. Women were able to disclosure themselves more. Interviewers working in shelters collected almost one episode of violence on 32,1% of interviews against the 24,7% of interviewers professionist of CATI systems.

75. In table 3, it is possible to observe that interviewers from shelters shed light to the majority of violence cases. It's clear that there is a link between length and violence rates. But sometimes, time is not enough. "***Women often recall violence episodes only at the end of the interviews***" as reported by interviewers in the open-ended notes placed at the end of the questionnaire.

**Table 4. Partnerviolence and non-partner violence by interviewers' group (percentage)**

|                                 | Non partner physical violence | Non partner sexual violence | Partner violence | Partner physical Violence | Partner sexual violence |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Interviewers from shelters      | 58,7                          | 68,6                        | 62,4             | 62,1                      | 59,3                    |
| Cati professionist interviewers | 41,3                          | 30,6                        | 37,6             | 37,9                      | 40,7                    |
| Total                           | 100,0                         | 100,0                       | 100,0            | 100,0                     | 100,0                   |

76. Interviewers from shelters, furthermore, are better to help older people in remembering or reporting violence episodes in the past. This group seems to be more suitable to perform this survey, but another thing must be underlined. Availability, sensitivity, professionalism and motivation are important characteristics, but also that they can be found not only in interviewers from shelter, but also in interviewers that directly experienced violence in their life.

77. From the pilot survey, it also emerges that whether the woman was alone at home or had the possibility to call back made and make an appointment was important to success of the interview.

#### *About the questionnaire*

78. Other problems concern the type and the number of details collected when the violence episodes are perceveid not serious. For instance after a sexual harassment or a minor threat or slap (also by the partner) many questions of the victimization report section are felt as inadequate and are too much of a burden. At this regard, many women have expressed feelings of boredom and tiredness with an increasing risk of untruthful answer and interruption.

79. Problems about wording concern the importance of not naming a "violent behaviour" as a violent episode when it is considered normal by the woman. This can affect the respondents and cause them to be unwilling to talk.

80. Finally interviewers underlined that women sometimes complain the partners' indifference is not revealed by the questionnaire. But to be ignored is violence or not? This is a question to which we have to answer.

81. In the next months we have to review our survey (that will be carried out in 2005) according to the pilot results and consider also international comparisons with the IVAWS results and other international studies.

82. We think that this kind of survey is a valid instrument to address the problem of violence against women in a reliable and sound way. Furthermore, we underline the relevance of the international approach and the need to have a common regulating way of gathering these data, at least every five years, to provide updated and reliable data on violence against women.

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