

First multi-country study of rape and partner violence finds that nearly a quarter of men report having committed at least

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The results are published to coincide with a new report from Partners for Prevention, a UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UN Volunteers Regional Joint Programme, entitled Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific.

An international team of researchers surveyed more than 10 000 men from six different countries in the Asia Pacific region. Survey respondents came from both urban and rural areas, and from a range of age groups, although men aged over 50 were excluded from the study to avoid heightened sensitivity over discussing sexual matters and reduce recall bias.

The surveys were performed by trained male interviewers, who recorded results onto handheld computer devices with bespoke software. Participants answered the most sensitive questions alone, by self-completing audio recordings in response to questions. Men were not asked directly whether they had committed rape or [violence](#), but were rather asked questions such as, "Have you ever forced a woman who was not your wife or girlfriend at the time to have sex?", or "Have you ever had sex with a woman who was too drugged or drunk to indicate whether she wanted it?".

In the first Article, led by Professor Rachel Jewkes of South Africa's Medical Research Council, the authors analysed the prevalence of rape among survey respondents, and the factors associated with rape perpetration. Overall, over one in ten men surveyed (11%) reported having raped a woman who was not their partner. When men who reported having raped a partner were included, this proportion rose to nearly a quarter (24%). Of those men who reported having committed rape, just under half (45%) said they had raped more than one woman.

However, the prevalence of rape perpetration varied widely between study sites. The lowest prevalence of single perpetrator rape of a female non-partner was in rural Bangladesh (3%), while the highest prevalence (27%) was in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. The lowest prevalence (2%) of male rape was found in Jayapura and Jakarta, Indonesia, while the highest (8%) was again found in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

When asked why they had committed rape, nearly three quarters (73%) of respondents who had committed rape said that they did so for reasons of sexual entitlement. Over half (59%) said they did it for entertainment, while over a third (38%) said they had raped a woman in order to punish her. Over half (58%) of men who had raped somebody who was not their partner had committed their first rape as teenagers.

Men with a history of victimisation, especially childhood sexual abuse and having been raped, or otherwise sexually coerced, themselves were more likely to have committed rape than those without such a past. A history of physical violence towards a partner, having paid for sex, or having had a large number of sexual partners were also associated with an increased likelihood of having committed rape against a non-partner.

According to Professor Jewkes, "In view of the high prevalence of rape worldwide, our findings clearly show that prevention strategies need to show increased focus on the structural and social risk factors for rape.

We now need to move towards a culture of preventing the perpetration of rape from ever occurring, rather than relying on prevention through responses."

The second Article, led by Dr Emma Fulu, of Partners for Prevention, in Bangkok, Thailand, looked at levels of intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV constitutes physical violence (such as punching or kicking) or [sexual violence](#) (forcing a partner to have sex against their will); the researchers also analysed the prevalence of emotional abuse (such as insulting or threatening to hurt a partner), and economic abuse (such as prohibiting a partner from working, or throwing them out of the house).

Overall, nearly half (46%) of men who had ever been in a relationship reported having committed some form of IPV or abuse. However, as with the results for rape prevalence, these figures varied widely between sites. Rural Indonesia had the lowest prevalence of reported physical or sexual IPV (25%), and Bougainville in Papua New Guinea had the highest (80%). When emotional and economic abuse were included, prevalence ranged from 39% in Sri Lanka, to 87% in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea.

By analysing the factors associated with men's perpetration of acts of violence or abuse against their partners, for the first time, the researchers were able to analyse whether or not physical and sexual violence against partners can be thought of as part of the same pattern.

However, as Dr Fulu explains, "Surprisingly, our results show that although some overlap exists, physical and sexual violence do not always appear to be committed together, or for the same reasons, in different regions. This is likely to have profound implications for the way that interventions to prevent IPV are designed and carried out, because until now, it has very often been assumed that physical and sexual violence are part of the same pattern of behaviour, whereas our results show that this

isn't necessarily the case."

"Worldwide, there is very little data on men's reporting of IPV, so these new results are essential to help us understand the risk factors that result in these actions," she adds. "Only when we have a better understanding of these factors can we start to develop effective interventions to stop men committing acts of violence against their partners."

While the authors caution that the survey findings do not represent the whole Asia and Pacific region, because only some countries were included, and few sites, the survey respondents' profiles nonetheless represent a good demographic match against the countries studied.

"Our findings are of substantial global interest, partly because most of the world's population lives in this region, and partly because the countries we studied are very culturally diverse," says Professor Jewkes.

She adds that, "Effective prevention of rape and gender violence clearly requires long-term strategies, including challenging of practices that are deeply rooted in cultural ideals of masculinity and gender hierarchy. There is still very little evidence-based research in this area, and further work is urgently needed to establish the most effective interventions, and to determine how we can develop effective national prevention programmes."

Writing in a linked Comment on both papers, Dr Michele Decker of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, USA, states that, "Without effective reduction of male gender-based violence perpetration, women's health, wellbeing, and safety will continue to suffer worldwide. The findings from this multi-country study provide...policymakers with the evidence base and mandate to create meaningful and sustainable reforms. The challenge now is to turn evidence into action, to create a safer future for the next generation of

women and girls."

More information: Jewkes et al, 'Prevalence of and factors associated with non-partner rape perpetration': [www.thelancet.com/journals/lan... \(13\)70069-X/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lan... (13)70069-X/abstract)

Fulu et al 'Prevalence of and factors associated with male perpetration of intimate partner violence': [www.thelancet.com/journals/lan... \(13\)70074-3/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lan... (13)70074-3/abstract)

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