



The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence
An Oifig Náisiúnta um Fhoréigean Baile, Gnéasach agus Inscnebhunaithe a Chosc

Attitudes to Domestic Abuse in Ireland

*Report of a survey on perceptions and beliefs of
domestic abuse among the general population of Ireland*

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Executive Summary

Domestic abuse affects all types of people in Irish society (Watson and Parsons, 2005). Support services for victims¹ of domestic abuse are provided by State and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). However, research has shown that victims are reluctant to seek help and continue to suffer. Attitudes and beliefs about violence are critical in deciding what kind of support victims will get from family, friends, and neighbours as well as from State and Non-Governmental Organisations.

State and Non-Governmental Organisations are working together to improve preventive and responsive actions. In order to inform these improvements Cosc – The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence - decided to undertake a study of public attitudes to domestic abuse. This research sets out to gauge attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and behaviour around domestic abuse in two respects. First the study analyses various facets of people's awareness of the problem among men and women in contemporary Ireland. A second research area examined is the public's willingness to act or respond should they encounter domestic abuse at some point in their lives.

The survey undertaken for this study builds on national and international research. The study covers the perceptions of the seriousness of domestic abuse, understandings of the phenomenon and the perceptions of impact on men and women. The study also covers the most likely responses and the rationale underpinning these when people are asked to consider what they would do if they were to witness domestic abuse.

The data arising from this survey have the potential to serve as a baseline from which to measure the effectiveness of awareness raising, education, prevention and intervention strategies developed and/or applied in Ireland in the future. Repeating this survey on a regular basis would facilitate the systematic tracking of attitudinal trends over time.

The study is based on a survey of a representative sample of 2,008 adults resident in Ireland. The data were collected by telephone interviews.

The data arising from this survey have the potential to serve as a baseline from which to measure the effectiveness of awareness raising, education, prevention and intervention strategies developed and/or applied in Ireland in the future.

¹ There is much debate over what is the most appropriate term to identify a person who has experienced domestic and/or sexual abuse. Terminology ranges from "victim", "victim/survivor" to "survivor". Each of the terms defines the person in relation to the experience of abuse. From a legal point of view the term "victim" is often used as a statement of fact - i.e. the person being a victim of a crime. However, the use of this term is often criticised for its negative labelling and disempowering of those who have experienced abuse. The term "survivor" is often used by individuals and agencies to describe a person who has survived domestic and/or sexual abuse recognising their strength in living through and recovering from those events. The authors of this report recognise the complexities in using either/both terms. These terms are not to be confused as being synonymous with one another and so it is for this reason the authors of this report have opted for the term "victim" capturing as it does both the legal point of view highlighted above and the active role of the perpetrator of such abuses and its impact on the abused. By using the term "victim" throughout the report we do not intend to characterise or label people who have experienced domestic abuse in any negative way and we also very much recognise the resilience shown in surviving domestic abuse.

² This share reflects the shares for close family and extended family combined.

How Common is Domestic Abuse?

» Just over 70 per cent of those surveyed said they consider domestic abuse *against women* to be a fairly or very common problem. This view was reported more often by women (81 per cent) than men (60 per cent), by younger than older age groups and by groups with lower education.

» Far fewer people consider domestic abuse *against men* to be common (42 per cent). In fact a greater share felt that it was not a common occurrence (54 per cent). Again, more women (50 per cent) than men (34 per cent) and groups with lower education regard domestic abuse against men as common. There is no indication that whether people live in a rural or urban setting is related to how widespread people think domestic abuse is.

» The share of people who reported domestic abuse *against women* to be increasing (46 per cent) was larger than those who felt there was no change (40 per cent) over the last 3 years in Ireland.

» In terms of the perception of change regarding domestic abuse *against men*, there is a relatively small difference between the share who report the problem as increasing (42 per cent) and those who regard it as unchanged (44 per cent).

» Forty-four per cent of people said they knew somebody who personally had been a victim of domestic abuse. A much greater share of respondents said they knew a woman (40 per cent) than a man (21 per cent) who had been subjected to domestic abuse. Women were more likely to report knowing a woman (41 per cent) and men were more likely to report knowing a man (23 per cent).

» The largest share of people who knew a woman victim was friends/acquaintances (36 per cent), followed by family members (28 per cent²) and

from work (14 per cent). Women were more likely to mention knowing a woman victim through their family, while work was the context most mentioned by men.

» The largest share of people who knew a man victim said they were a friend/acquaintance (41 per cent), a family member (23 per cent) or that they knew them from a work context (17 per cent). Work as the situation for becoming aware of a victim was cited more frequently by both the younger and older age groups and by the better educated.

» Most respondents were not worried that they themselves or somebody close to them might become affected by domestic abuse (70 per cent). Thirty-two per cent of women and 28 per cent of men were worried about this possibility. The youngest age group of women were the most concerned.

What is Domestic Abuse?

This study examines if respondents find that particular behaviours such as slapping or punching a partner constitute domestic abuse, and under which circumstances they believe this to be the case.

» An overwhelming majority felt that all of the behaviours enquired about in the survey were, under all circumstances, forms of domestic abuse. The shares for each respective form of abuse in descending order were: forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse (more than 97 per cent), punching a partner (more than 97 per cent), slapping a partner (87 per cent) and finally calling a partner hurtful names (67 per cent).

» There were no substantial differences between men and women on forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse, punching a partner or slapping a partner. Overall, men (64 per cent) were less inclined to agree that calling hurtful names was a form of domestic abuse under all circumstance than women (71 per cent).

Is Domestic Abuse a Criminal Offence or a Private matter?

» Of all respondents 88 per cent indicate a strong agreement and a further 9 per cent indicate some agreement that abuse in the domestic context is a criminal offence. People with higher levels of education were more likely to agree with this belief.

» Most people disagreed that domestic abuse is a private matter that should be dealt with in the family. Women (86 per cent) were more likely to hold this view than men (81 per cent), as were the more educated groups.

How Does Domestic Abuse Affect Men and Women?

The research enquired about people's views on the relative impact of domestic abuse on women compared to men. Respondents were first asked to consider the impact of physical harm, emotional harm and fear. They were then asked whether they thought domestic abuse was something more serious if the victim was a woman or a man.

» Overall the public considered women to suffer more physical harm than men (83 per cent). Women are also thought to suffer more emotional abuse than men (52 per cent). Fifty-three per cent of respondents felt that the fear arising from domestic abuse would be greater for women.

» In terms of slapping, 72 per cent think that it is equally serious whether a man slaps a woman or a woman slaps a man. Sixty-six per cent felt that punching a partner was equally serious whether the perpetrator was a man or a woman. Seventy-two per cent felt there is no differential impact between men and women when it comes to forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse. A man calling a woman hurtful names and a woman doing the same to a man is considered to be equally serious by most respondents (94 per cent). Women are more likely than men to consider slapping, punching and forced intercourse to be equally serious for women and men.

Encountering Domestic Abuse: What would you do?

» When asked about what they would do if they suspected a friend was a victim of domestic abuse, 95 per cent said they would talk to their friend, 93 per cent would encourage the friend to contact a helpline, 87 per cent would encourage the friend to contact An Garda Síochána, 85 per cent would encourage their friend to contact a social worker, 77 per cent would ask the victim directly about the abuse, 74 per cent said they would speak with other friends about the problem, 43 per cent would report it to An Garda Síochána themselves and 35 per cent said they would speak with the perpetrator.

» Ninety-four per cent of respondents said they would help a friend, 65 per cent said they would help a stranger and 38 per cent said they would help a neighbour being subjected to domestic abuse.

Respondents were also asked whether they think other people who had witnessed domestic abuse would report it to An Garda Síochána and if not, what the reasons would be.

» Seventy-four per cent said that other people would be unlikely to report domestic abuse incidents to An Garda Síochána.

» In terms of reasons for not reporting, respondents greatest concern was the feeling they should not get involved in other people's business (88 per cent), followed by fearing they might make matters even worse (75 per cent), that it might result in the removal of children from the family (73 per cent), that it would not improve the safety of those involved (70 per cent). Fifty-two per cent said that people feel An Garda Síochána would not treat the problem seriously enough.

The results conclude by examining respondents' perceptions of the type of help they might receive if they were to visit a general practitioner if they had been subjected to domestic abuse.

» The majority (96 per cent) reported that a GP would give advice about where to get further help. This was followed closely by people feeling that the GP would understand the nature of the problem (93 per cent) and would record evidence of injuries (92 per cent).

Conclusions

» A large majority of the Irish population exhibit high levels of awareness of the problem of domestic abuse. People perceive domestic abuse against women to be a common and increasing

problem and have a broad definition of what constitutes domestic abuse.

» Domestic abuse is perceived to be more common among women and the consequences are perceived to be more severe for women than men.

» The findings support the view that the Irish population regards domestic abuse to be unacceptable.

» People feel responsible and are willing to intervene if they witness domestic abuse. However, if the victim is somebody outside the family milieu, such as a neighbour that they don't know well, people are reluctant to become involved. Concern or fear of making things even worse than they are is the main reason given for not intervening.

» There is little evidence pointing to significant changes in many attitudes to domestic abuse over the last ten years.

The survey provides a baseline for understanding public attitudes to domestic abuse in Ireland. Cosc will use this survey to inform work being undertaken to improve the system of prevention and response to domestic abuse in Ireland. This includes the development of accessible information for the public, to assist them in understanding, and being prepared to act to counter these crimes. The complete report of the survey, and more information on domestic, sexual and gender-based abuse, is available on www.cosc.ie.

Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and Rationale for the Study

In western countries domestic abuse affects about 25 per cent of women at some point in their lives (Hagemann-White, 2001). The impact of domestic abuse on their physical and mental health and the wider outcomes for families, communities and society makes it a public health priority (WHO, 2002). The rates of domestic abuse vary across countries and over time. The WHO estimate prevalence rates of domestic violence between 10 per cent and 69 per cent in countries around the world and rates of sexual violence of up to 47 per cent (WHO, 2002).

In Ireland, research conducted over the last decade or so indicates that domestic abuse has been and continues to be a significant problem. There are three key sources of prevalence data for domestic abuse. First, in 1995 a national survey of 679 women indicated that 18 per cent of women in intimate relationships had been subjected to violence by a current or former partner (Kelleher and O'Connor, 1995). The lifetime prevalence³ for the various forms of domestic violence among women involved in intimate relationships was 13 per cent for mental cruelty, 10 per cent for actual physical cruelty, 9 per cent for threatened physical violence, 4 per cent for sexual violence and 2 per cent for abuse of pets, property and other items (ibid, 1995).

The second Irish survey to produce prevalence data on domestic abuse was conducted in 2003 (Watson and Parsons, 2005). This work involved a nationwide survey of 3,077 adults. Covering women and men, this work examined whether domestic abuse affects men as well as women and also compared the risk and impact of domestic abuse on women and men. This study found 15 per cent of women experienced severe abusive behaviour of a physical, sexual or emotional nature from a partner at some point in their lives. Among women, the lifetime prevalence of experiencing various forms of abuse from an intimate partner was 9 per cent for severe physical abuse, 8 per cent for severe sexual abuse and 8 per cent for severe emotional abuse.

For the first time in Ireland, this report showed that the risk of domestic abuse exists for both women and men across the general population. The report indicated that, although men are much less likely than women to experience severe abuse, 6 per cent of male respondents to this survey reported having experienced some form of severe abuse from a partner at some point in their lives. Of this group 4 per cent experienced severe physical abuse, while 3 per cent and 1 per cent reported severe emotional and sexual abuse, respectively (Watson and Parsons, 2005).

The third source of relevant prevalence data in Ireland is the SAVI Report - Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (McGee et al., 2002) and, among other matters,

15% of women experienced severe abusive behaviour of a physical, sexual or emotional nature from a partner at some point in their lives. (Watson and Parsons, 2005)

it provides insights on sexual violence in the home. Based on a population survey of a sample of 3,000 adults, SAVI provided estimates of the prevalence of sexual violence for men and women in Ireland. A total of 42 per cent of women and 28 per cent of men reported some form of sexual abuse or assault in their lifetime, but the important and relevant finding for this study was that nearly 30 per cent of women and 25 per cent of men reported some level of sexual abuse in childhood. According to this study 24 per cent of women have experienced sexual abuse by their partner or ex-partner. This was the case for very few abused men (just over 1 per cent).

The three studies discussed above are key sources of data on domestic abuse in Ireland. These prevalence studies vary by methodology which makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about changes in prevalence of domestic abuse in Ireland between 1995 and 2005. It can, however, be concluded that the indications are that the prevalence of domestic abuse among women did not change greatly in the decade between the surveys. The differences between lifetime prevalence of physical and emotional violence were small and while more mental cruelty was reported in 1995, in 2005 physical violence was more frequently reported.

1.2 Monitoring Attitudes, Perceptions and Beliefs

Monitoring prevalence figures is one key part of primary prevention as it measures at population levels the frequency with which domestic abuse is experienced by victims. Another key, but less developed line of work in primary prevention, is the monitoring of knowledge, attitudes and understandings around domestic abuse (WHO, 2002). Attitudes and beliefs about violence are critical in deciding what kind of support women will get from family, friends, and neighbours as well as from State and non-State agencies. In order to inform policy development for prevention across the population, this study sets out to gauge attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and behaviour around domestic abuse in two main respects. First the study analyses various facets of awareness of the problem among men and women in contemporary Ireland. A second research area examined is the public's willingness to act or respond should they encounter domestic abuse at some point in their lives.

³ Lifetime prevalence refers to the proportion of people in the sample who reported having experienced a form of domestic abuse at some point in their life. A person who reports lifetime prevalence may – or may not – be currently experiencing domestic abuse. Lifetime prevalence should not be interpreted as meaning that people have necessarily experienced domestic abuse over a long period of time or that they will experience it in the future.

When both minor and severe forms of domestic abuse are considered, 29% of women and 25% of men report experiencing domestic abuse. (Watson and Parsons, 2005)

This study is preceded by two surveys covering attitudes towards domestic abuse in Ireland. The earliest of these, Eurobarometer 50.1 (1999), was a comparative survey in 17 EU Member States. The Irish sample comprised of 1,004 respondents. Watson and Parsons (2005), discussed above, also surveyed general attitudes towards domestic abuse and how people cope with being confronted with this experience.

Domestic abuse tends to be more prevalent in communities in which there is limited social censure of the problem and in which there is strong socio-cultural support for the privacy of the family and the right of men to exercise authority over women (Heise et al., 1999; WHO, 2002). One important line of research from this perspective has been to focus on how society defines domestic abuse, the behaviours that are included in this definition and the degree of severity attributed to the impact of these behaviours. Attitudes generally are grounded in specific social settings and among specific social groups. Social consensus around concepts such as gender (gender attitudes, roles and relations) and culture (race, ethnicity, and other cultural factors) fetter the degree to which people adhere to myths and stereotypes about women, men and violence and make associations between domestic abuse and socio-economic, cultural or ethnic attributes (see Flood and Pease, 2006 for a comprehensive review).

Research indicates that people consider some forms of abusive behaviour to be more serious than others. An increasingly common topic for research is the relationship between domestic abuse and the gender of the perpetrator. Watson and Parsons (2005) found that when both minor and severe forms of domestic abuse are considered, 29 per cent of women and 25 per cent of men report experiencing domestic abuse. They caution however that combining more severe and minor forms of abuse in this way does not reflect differences in the impact of the behaviour on the person experiencing domestic abuse (p. 53). There is a dearth of research, particularly in the European context, about whether people evaluate the seriousness of aggressive behaviour against a partner differently if it is committed by a woman or a man. Outside Europe the indications are that people judge the seriousness of the impact differently depending on the gender of the perpetrator. For example, MacNeil et al

(2001) report from a small Australian sample that most respondents think that the effect of domestic abuse on men is minimal. Research from the U.S. indicates that people in New York are less likely to define aggressive behaviour as domestic abuse or to be considered serious enough to be a criminal offence when they are told it is committed by a woman (e.g. Pollitz et al, 2005). Greenblat (1983) also reports that men and women in the U.S. are more accepting of women hitting men than men hitting women. He suggests this is because people perceive the vulnerability and potential harm to women and men as victims and perpetrators differently⁴. A worrying effect of overlooking differences in such attitudes towards abusive behaviour among men or women could be that in the long run there is a reinforcing and signalling of a tolerance of certain forms and degrees of domestic abuse.

There is evidence to suggest that perceptions of seriousness around domestic abuse depends not only on what association and/or causes people apply, but also what behaviours are considered relevant. Emotional, social and financial forms of abuse are less likely to be seen as serious, despite evidence demonstrating their negative health and social consequences for both women and men. People living in Ireland were asked about the seriousness of different forms of domestic abuse during Eurobarometer 51.0 (1999). An overwhelming majority (96 per cent) stated they believed sexual violence to be 'very serious'. This was followed in order of considered seriousness by physical violence, psychological violence, threats of violence and finally, restricted movement. Each of the top four (sexual, physical, psychological and threats of violence) ranked higher in perceived seriousness in Ireland than any other EU Member State participating in the study (European Commission, 1999).

Watson and Parsons (2005) covered eight different types of behaviour in their examination of people's perceptions of domestic abuse: punching, forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse, kicking, slapping across the face, depriving a partner of money, calling hurtful names, embarrassing a partner in public, pushing/showing. They found that the majority of respondents surveyed considered all of the actions as constituting domestic abuse. The proportions were a little lower for deliberately embarrassing a partner in public and pushing and showing. One limitation of this approach is that it does not reflect the patterned nature of domestic abuse: there is no distinction made between isolated and repeated events and this approach also does not capture the impact the behaviour has on the victims.

Societal norms around accepting or being tolerant of domestic abuse manifest themselves in attitudes such as low empathy with the victim, victim blaming and unwillingness to intervene or to become involved when they encounter or witness the issue. Indications of people's different response orientations can be gleaned from their beliefs and attitudes around whether they consider it appropriate to intervene at all or whether it is more important to respect that it is a private affair

⁴ Perhaps noteworthy for preventative research is that studies find minor violence by women increases the probability of severe assaults by men (Bowker, 1983; Feld and Strauss, 1989). Some suggest this is due to immediate and severe retaliation from men.

in which one should not interfere. The Eurobarometer survey (1999) indicates little support for the latter view. The respondents felt that societal institutions such as the State, police, medical services but also friends and family, have a responsibility to support victims of domestic abuse. In Ireland people felt stronger about this than in most of the other EU countries (European Commission, 1999). Watson and Parsons, 2005 indicated that, when people become aware of domestic abuse the vast majority indicated a willingness to do something to help. Of those who had not responded or who felt they should have helped more, nearly two thirds (65 per cent) feared making matters worse while 46 per cent simply said they didn't want to get involved. Over half of the respondents involved said they simply did not know what to do (53 per cent).

Not knowing what to do is a theme that is particularly pertinent for awareness raising initiatives. Research shows that there is much uncertainty surrounding what people do and feel they should do if they encounter domestic abuse. The national and international literature is consistent in the finding that there is still a significant threshold for people reporting incidents of domestic abuse witnessed to the police authorities. For example, only 8 per cent of people in Ireland witnessing domestic abuse reported it to An Garda Síochána. Other forms of helping or intervening are chosen much more frequently. In Ireland, of a sample of people who became aware of domestic abuse, 66 per cent said they talked directly to the person who had been abused, 25 per cent talked to the abusive partner, 40 per cent tried to find out additional information and 16 per cent did something else such as advising to seek further help or offering to help with accommodation or childcare (Watson and Parsons, 2005). Barata (2007), in a small-scale exploratory study of women who were victims of domestic abuse in the UK, points to one reason for the reluctance for reporting to law enforcement agencies: although most women experienced law enforcement agencies as trustworthy, doubts were aired whether the criminal justice system could secure the safety of the victims and that its actions may make matters worse. Witnesses or third parties may share similar concerns regarding the risks associated with the involvement of law enforcers.

Close ties between people, and particularly the willingness of family and friends to intervene appear to be a crucial source of help and assistance. Taylor and Mouzos (2006) find in the Australian context that people are willing to intervene in a domestic abuse situation even where the victim is a stranger (81 per cent), neighbour (84 per cent) but most of all when the person is a family member or friend (95 per cent). In the Irish context,

there is evidence that close relationships, both family and friendship, also foster a recognition or awareness of the problem of domestic abuse in the victim's life. In fact this research reports that very often people are told about the abuse by the victim themselves.

The survey undertaken for this study builds on the national and international research discussed above. The study covers the perceptions of the seriousness of domestic abuse, the respondents' understanding of the phenomenon and the perceptions of impact on men and women. The study also covers the most likely responses and the rationale underpinning these when people are asked to consider what they would do if they were to witness domestic abuse.

In response to its receipt of submissions on the development of its priority research programme, Cosc identified key areas of research for the 2008-2009 period. This programme of work feeds directly into Cosc's ongoing efforts to improve public knowledge of service availability, accessibility and awareness. To inform crime prevention initiatives and awareness raising projects, it was decided that an initial step in Cosc's research programme would be to survey attitudes to domestic abuse among the general population of Ireland. There are a myriad of reasons influencing a person's decision not to disclose domestic abuse either to informal supports such as to friends or family or to formally report the violence to An Garda Síochána or other support agencies. It is imperative that Cosc builds an understanding of these issues for crime prevention, awareness raising and ultimately to inform the development of the first national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

1.3 The Survey

A review of relevant literature concluded that up-to-date information was required to inform the scope and direction of awareness raising. This review highlighted not only the timely aspect to this work, but identified also the need to build on earlier research – continuing certain established practices such as the gathering of certain key information and adapting earlier practices as well as developing new areas of knowledge and perspectives around attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and understandings of domestic abuse.

The objectives of the survey are to:

- » examine the key attitudes, perceptions and beliefs on domestic abuse current among the general population in Ireland;

It is imperative that Cosc builds an understanding of these issues for crime prevention, awareness raising and ultimately to inform the development of the first national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

» gauge the general public's awareness of recent trends in domestic abuse in Ireland, as well as their awareness of and readiness to use supports and services for victims of domestic abuse; and

» examine some of the salient factors highlighted in the relevant literature known to be associated with attitudes on domestic abuse.

The data arising from this survey have the potential to serve as a baseline from which to measure the effectiveness of awareness raising, education, prevention and intervention strategies developed and/or applied in Ireland in the future. Implementing this survey on a regular basis would facilitate the systematic tracking of attitudinal trends over time.

The decision to proceed with this survey was taken in mid-March 2008 and it was planned the report would be complete for publication by October 2008. Given this timeline, it was essential that the project process begin immediately and that the scope of the work be confined to maximise feasibility. Having considered other

options, it was decided that a telephone interviewing technique would be the most appropriate method to apply (see Chapter 3 for a fuller discussion of the merits of telephone interviewing techniques).

1.4 Overview of the Report

This report provides an overview of the principal findings from the Survey of Attitudes on Domestic Abuse in the General Population of Ireland (2008). **Chapter 1** presents the background and context for this study as well as an overview of the relevant literature on substantive and methodological issues that informed the development of this study. **Chapter 2** contains the methodological information for this research, outlining details pertaining to the questionnaire design and interviewing techniques, sampling procedures, data preparation and data analyses. **Chapter 3** presents the results of this work. **Chapter 4** summarises the main findings of this study and draws main conclusions for future research. The final sections of this report contain relevant appendices and bibliographic details.

Chapter Two
METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Objectives

The aim of this research was to conduct a survey in order to examine attitudes and perceptions towards domestic abuse among the general population in Ireland. The data arising from this survey serve as a baseline from which to measure the effectiveness of awareness raising, education, prevention and intervention strategies implemented in the future.

The objectives of the survey are to:

- » examine the key attitudes, perceptions and beliefs on domestic abuse current among the general population in Ireland;
- » gauge the general public's awareness of recent trends in domestic abuse in Ireland, as well as their awareness of and readiness to use supports and services for victims of domestic abuse; and
- » examine some of the salient factors highlighted in the relevant literature known to be associated with attitudes on domestic abuse.

2.2 Survey design

2.2.1 Planning and Commissioning Process

The research design, questionnaire development and sampling procedures were designed internally by Cosc. Dr Dorothy Watson, Senior Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute provided advice on survey design.

Entailing a substantial fieldwork component, the data collection phase required dedicated telephone interviewing facilities as well as the capacity to generate interlocking quota samples. A scoping exercise indicated a limited number of companies that could offer this combination of services, expertise and experience. Consequently, a restricted tender process was undertaken in April 2008. In May 2008 Cosc formally commissioned CM Surveys to conduct the fieldwork of the survey.

2.2.2 Data Collection Mode

The survey was conducted using telephone interviewing with Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) techniques. Domestic abuse and violence are examples of sensitive topics in which people can be relatively reluctant to participate. Given the absence of name and address details associated with random digit dialling, interviewing by telephone affords the interviewee superior levels of anonymity and privacy relative to any other method.

CATI also facilitates efficiency in interview time and data set preparation. The electronic recording of responses avoids errors that can arise due to data entry and due to complex routing procedures. A minimum of 10 per cent of completed interviews were back-checked.

2.2.3 The Questionnaire

The telephone interview was conducted using a pre-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of mainly closed questions. The items were primarily Likert scaled, which is a bipolar scaling method measuring either positive or negative responses to a statement.

As questions become more sensitive or threatening, people are increasingly likely to overstate or understate behaviour even when the best question wording is used. Consequently it is important to try and minimise for people the feeling that it is their behaviour that is the focus of the question. For this reason, the survey sometimes enquired instead about what people thought other people's reasons for their behaviour may be. This strategy of introducing a proxy subject was applied when reasons for not reporting to An Garda Síochána were examined.

2.2.4 The Pilot Study

The pilot study was designed to test the questionnaire and interview practice and process. First, the items, scales and indices used in the questionnaire were piloted. Many of the items were well-established but most had never before been applied in the Irish context. Items developed specifically for the study as well as items adapted for the purpose of the study were also used in the pilot questionnaire. Second, the quality of the script developed for CATI as well as the interviewing procedures were tested. The pilot study was conducted in June, 2008 with 200 telephone interviews completed. The resulting data was subjected to quality checks including range, logic, consistency and variable distribution. Validity and reliability analyses were also undertaken. The results and conclusions from these analyses directly informed the refinements applied to the main study questionnaire and procedures.

2.2.5 Interviewer Briefing and the Interviewing Team

The briefing of interviewers for this research covered the background to the survey, administrative details and a lengthy review and discussion of the questionnaire. Debriefing interviewer sessions were conducted by the data collector. Staff training and performance were closely monitored by the data collection organisation.

Given the nature of the research topic, it was necessary that interviewers be prepared and briefed to respond appropriately should respondents indicate concern – for example, expressing concern or reporting to be adversely affected by the interview. For this purpose Cosc compiled an extensive list of referral and support services for each county in Ireland. In turn, this list was provided to the interviewing staff, ensuring they had information about the range of support and counselling services relating to domestic abuse that are available across Ireland.

Interviewers were regularly assessed and the random monitoring of calls was ongoing. The interviewing team comprised both male and female interviewers and were across a range of ages.

For this study, interviewers were instructed to call up to six times – an initial call, plus five call-backs to try and speak to the potential respondent. Telephone calls were made between 10.00 am and 9.00 pm from Monday to Saturday. One individual within each household was interviewed and the selection was guided according to quota requirements.

2.2.6 Sampling

The target population of the survey was the general population, that is, people normally residing in Ireland and older than 18 years. Persons who did not have a landline or persons living in institutions (for example, prisons, hostels, etc.) were not covered by this survey. The survey combined probability sampling of households with quota sampling of eligible members of these households. Households were randomly sampled within geopolitical areas using random digit dialling techniques that generated telephone numbers. The telephone survey was restricted to landlines. Unlisted as well as listed telephone numbers were used and the sample of households was representative at the level of major regions in Ireland.

The target sample size was 2,000 respondents. This sample size should be large enough to generate reliable estimates, to facilitate group comparison and sub-group analyses. Interlocking quota control was by age (4 brackets: 18-24, 25-44, 45-64, 65+), gender and economic situation (at work, not at work) that mirror the multivariate distribution of these characteristics among the Irish population (according to the CSO census of population 2006).

Table 2.1 summarises the interlocking quotas. The column 'Quota' gives the numbers of respondents that were specified by Cosc for the sampling plan. The data

collector did not however succeed in filling these quotas. As some groups (younger people, in particular younger men and non-working young women) were difficult to reach, the sample was completed by selecting respondents according to convenience. The column 'Achieved' of Table 2.1 reports the number of respondents of each group that are included in the sample.

2.2.7 Contacts

The data collection agency reports that a total of 27,000 phone numbers was attempted. Of these, 2,209 calls resulted in fully completed interviews - 2,008 interviews as part of the main survey and 201 in the pilot study. A further, 6,572 completed calls were made to people who were eligible but who refused to participate. Another 7,307 of the completed calls proved to be ineligible numbers (non-working or disconnected numbers, fax/data lines, working telephone lines that did not belong to households).

A further 10,912 calls could not be completed. Outcomes of these calls are only recorded for the last attempt. Of these, in 8,782 cases the telephone was not answered, in 709 cases the line was busy and in 1,421 cases, call backs were requested. Given this contact information, the response rate as the ratio between completed interviews and all numbers attempted which were established as eligible or for which eligibility is unknown is 11.2 per cent (known as 'response rate 1' according to the standards set by the American Association of Public Opinion Research). This response rate is very conservative as it does not take into account that a proportion of the incomplete calls were calls to ineligible telephone lines. Using the contact information including the information for the last attempts of incomplete calls, this share can be estimated as 42 per cent of the 9,491 final calls with no answer or busy lines. Under these assumptions, the resulting response rate is 14 per cent ('response rate 3').

Table 2.1: Set quotas, achieved quotas and post-stratification weights

Gender	Age	In work	Quota	Achieved	Weight
Male	18-24	Yes	76	44	1.7433
Male	25-44	Yes	371	150	2.4819
Male	45-64	Yes	218	242	0.9061
Male	65+	Yes	15	40	0.3865
Male	18-24	No	69	23	2.9945
Male	25-44	No	55	23	2.4193
Male	45-64	No	74	75	0.9906
Male	65+	No	114	137	0.8340
Female	18-24	Yes	63	46	1.3750
Female	25-44	Yes	292	270	1.0851
Female	45-64	Yes	147	351	0.4216
Female	65+	Yes	6	33	0.1706
Female	18-24	No	78	25	3.1485
Female	25-44	No	123	103	1.1970
Female	45-64	No	141	263	0.5367
Female	65+	No	157	183	0.8635
TOTAL			1999	2008	

2.2.8 Weighting

The resulting sample does not mirror completely the distribution of the quota characteristics among the population. In order to minimise the effect of the deviation of the sample composition from the population composition on the population estimates, the sample has been weighted in a way that the multivariate distribution of the quota-defining characteristics in the sample corresponds with the distribution among the population in Ireland. Gender X Age X Work status groups have been weighted by the ratio of the population proportion of these groups (according to the 2006 CSO census) and the sample proportion of these groups. The last column of Table 2.1 reports the weights for the different groups. All results summarised in this report are based on the weighted sample.

2.3 Correlates

In this report, we summarise the data using the following schemes: first, proportions for the total population are reported; second, proportions for men and women separately are reported; further, proportions for age

Table 2.2: Distribution of Correlates

	Raw Sample	Weighted Sample
Total	2008	2008
Women	1274	1011
Men	734	997
Age Group by Gender		
Women		
18-24	71	142
25-44	373	416
45-64	614	289
65+	216	164
Men		
18-24	67	146
25-44	173	428
45-64	317	294
65+	177	130
Education by Gender		
Women		
Junior Cert or less	277	187
Leaving Cert	465	369
Third Level	520	445
Men		
Junior Cert or less	178	181
Leaving Cert	251	349
Third Level	300	461
Residence by Gender		
Women		
City	100	85
Suburb	230	181
Town	360	282
Rural/Village	568	449
Men		
City	62	85
Suburb	162	218
Town	219	291
Rural/Village	283	392

groups by gender, education by gender and residence by gender are reported. Table 2.2 reports the number of respondents for each group for the raw sample and the weighted sample.

For the age group by gender, the following age brackets are used:

- » 18-24 years
- » 25-44 years
- » 45-64 years
- » 65 years and older.

For education by gender tables, education information refers to the highest level of schooling completed by the respondent (self-reported). The following education categories are used.

» *Junior certificate or less* comprising respondents with no formal education, completed primary education, and Junior/Intermediate/Group Certificate or equivalent.

» *Leaving Certificate* refers to respondents with Leaving Certificate or a Certificate (after the Leaving Certificate) as the highest level of education.


» *Third level education* comprises respondents with a diploma, a primary or a postgraduate degree as the highest level of education.

For residence by gender tables, we use the following categories of residence types: *Cities, Suburbs, Towns and Villages/Rural areas.*

2.4 Reporting Conventions

In the text accompanying the tables we report only differences between men and women that exceed 4 per cent. When we compare smaller subgroups, such as age brackets by gender, the threshold for reporting is 8 per cent. This reflects differences in a size of an order that would be statistically significant given the group sizes and the sampling design. Occasionally, we sometimes deviate from the rules if the observed differences present a clear 'linear' pattern between the grouping and the outcome variable or clear differences between aggregated groups. In general, percentages are reported for the overall population and for the gender breakdown. For the subgroups, percentages are only reported if they are particularly striking.

Further, the tables contain an asterisk if the number of respondents in the group is very small ($n < 40$). In this case, percentages have to be interpreted with extreme caution because random fluctuations in the sample composition have a major affect on the distribution of answer categories in the sample.



Chapter Three
FINDINGS

Table 3.1: Whether domestic abuse against women is seen as common

	Very common	Fairly common	Not very common	Not at all common	Don't know
Total	14.2	56.1	24.7	1.7	3.3
Women	17.8	62.7	16.6	0.2	2.7
Men	10.5	49.3	32.9	3.2	4.1
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	18.3	52.8	28.9	0.0	0.0
25-44	14.7	68.5	13.9	0.0	2.9
45-64	23.5	57.8	15.2	0.3	3.1
65+	15.2	65.5	15.2	0.6	3.6
Men					
18-24	3.4	50.0	39.0	4.1	3.4
25-44	9.8	45.1	38.1	4.7	2.3
45-64	13.2	52.5	26.8	1.7	5.8
65+	14.7	55.0	22.5	0.8	7.0
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	25.5	60.1	11.7	0.0	2.7
Leaving Cert	17.0	64.6	15.7	0.3	2.4
Third Level	15.1	63.1	19.1	0.2	2.5
Men					
Junior Cert or less	17.2	60.0	19.4	0.6	2.8
Leaving Cert	13.5	51.4	26.1	2.0	6.9
Third Level	5.6	43.8	43.0	5.2	2.4
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	31.8	48.2	17.6	0.0	2.4
Suburb	18.8	61.9	17.1	0.0	2.2
Town	13.8	67.5	15.9	0.4	2.5
Rural/Village	17.1	63.3	16.7	0.2	2.7
Men					
City	15.3	58.8	24.7	0.0	1.2
Suburb	6.4	51.8	33.5	3.7	4.6
Town	14.1	51.5	30.2	2.4	1.7
Rural/Village	9.2	44.5	35.6	4.3	6.4

3.1 How Common is Domestic Abuse?

This section summarises respondents' views in relation to how common they believe domestic abuse against women and men to be in Ireland, and whether they think that the level has increased or decreased in recent years. It also shows attitudes towards particular groups that are often considered to be at risk, in particular low income families and women from cultures with more traditional views on gender roles. Furthermore, it is examined who respondents consider to be most likely to commit acts of domestic abuse against women. Also it reports if people know of anybody who has become the victim of domestic abuse, and how they know this person. Lastly respondents were asked whether they worry that they themselves or somebody close to them might become subjected to domestic abuse.

3.1.1 Perceived Occurrence of Domestic Abuse in Ireland

Against women: Table 3.1 examines how common people believe domestic abuse *against women* to be in Ireland. Fourteen per cent of the respondents believe that domestic abuse against women is very common in Ireland and 56 per cent regard it as fairly common. While more than 70 per cent regard domestic abuse against women as (very or fairly) common, only 26 per cent consider domestic abuse against women as not very common or not at all common. Women are far more likely than men to regard domestic abuse against women in Ireland as common. Eighteen per cent of women believe that domestic abuse against women is very common and a further 63 per cent see it as fairly common. The corresponding figures for men are 11 per cent ('very common') and 49 per cent ('fairly common').

Younger respondents tend to be inclined to perceive domestic abuse against women as less common. In particular, women under 25 years and men under 45 years of age are less likely than older women and men to believe that domestic abuse is common. For both genders, more educated respondents are less likely to think that domestic abuse of women is common. Seventy-eight per cent of women and 50 per cent of men with some kind of third level education hold that domestic abuse against women is very or fairly common, but by contrast, 86 per cent of women and 77 per cent of men with a Junior Certificate or less as their highest level of education do so. Women and men residing in a city are more likely to consider domestic abuse to be common than women or men living in a suburb, town or village/rural area.

Table 3.2: Whether domestic abuse against men is seen as common

	Very common	Fairly common	Not very common	Not at all common	Don't know
Total	4.3	38.0	46.0	7.6	4.1
Women	5.6	44.6	41.2	4.3	4.2
Men	3.0	31.3	51.0	10.7	4.0
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	7.0	37.3	44.4	11.3	0.0
25-44	3.8	45.1	44.1	3.1	3.8
45-64	7.6	48.3	36.2	2.8	5.2
65+	5.5	43.3	39.6	4.3	7.3
Men					
18-24	2.1	30.8	46.6	17.1	3.4
25-44	2.3	29.5	55.0	11.5	1.6
45-64	3.4	33.7	50.3	7.1	5.4
65+	5.4	32.3	43.8	9.2	9.2
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	7.5	50.3	34.2	2.1	5.9
Leaving Cert	4.1	47.7	39.3	5.1	3.8
Third Level	6.3	40.4	45.4	4.7	3.1
Men					
Junior Cert or less	5.5	43.1	39.8	7.2	4.4
Leaving Cert	2.6	33.0	49.9	8.5	6.0
Third Level	2.2	25.2	56.0	14.3	2.4
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	4.7	47.1	37.6	3.5	7.1
Suburb	5.0	46.7	41.1	4.4	2.8
Town	6.0	44.9	40.6	4.9	3.5
Rural/Village	5.8	44.2	42.4	3.6	4.0
Men					
City	4.7	34.9	46.5	12.8	1.2
Suburb	1.8	27.4	51.1	15.5	4.1
Town	5.2	32.3	54.3	4.5	3.8
Rural/Village	1.8	32.1	48.5	12.8	4.8

Against men: Table 3.2 reports how common people think domestic abuse *against men* is. People are less inclined to believe that domestic abuse against men is more common than domestic abuse of women. A majority of 54 per cent think that domestic abuse against men is not very common or not common at all. However, a substantial minority of 42 per cent believe that domestic abuse of men is a common phenomenon in Ireland.

The same category of people who are most likely to regard domestic abuse of women as common tend also to regard domestic abuse against men as common: women are much more likely than men to hold that domestic abuse against men is common in Ireland (50 per cent vs. 34 per cent). Older respondents and respondents with relatively little education are more likely than younger and well-educated people to believe that violence against men is common. Residence has little relationship to the attitudes of women, but for men those resident in cities and towns are more likely to think that abuse of men is common than men living in suburbs and rural areas.

Table 3.3: Whether the amount of domestic abuse against women over the last 3 years has increased, decreased or remained the same

	Increased	Remained the same	Decreased	Don't know
Total	45.8	40.3	5.6	8.3
Women	53.4	35.3	4.3	7.0
Men	38.0	45.5	7.1	9.4
Age Group by Gender				
Women				
18-24	44.4	45.1	8.5	2.1
25-44	48.6	39.7	4.1	7.7
45-64	58.5	31.8	3.5	6.2
65+	64.6	22.0	2.4	11.0
Men				
18-24	29.5	48.6	16.4	5.5
25-44	30.1	51.3	8.2	10.5
45-64	45.9	39.5	3.7	10.9
65+	55.8	36.4	0.8	7.0
Education by Gender				
Women				
Junior Cert or less	62.8	25.0	4.3	8.0
Leaving Cert	55.1	33.2	5.1	6.5
Third Level	47.7	41.7	3.6	7.0
Men				
Junior Cert or less	54.1	36.1	2.7	7.1
Leaving Cert	45.4	38.6	7.7	8.3
Third Level	25.6	54.9	8.2	11.3
Residence by Gender				
Women				
City	50.6	32.9	2.4	14.1
Suburb	52.8	35.6	5.6	6.1
Town	53.7	32.9	6.7	6.7
Rural/Village	53.5	37.9	2.4	6.2
Men				
City	47.1	37.6	5.9	9.4
Suburb	38.5	39.0	10.1	12.4
Town	38.3	50.7	4.1	6.9
Rural/Village	35.6	47.6	7.4	9.4

3.1.2 Has Domestic Abuse Increased Over the Last 3 Years?

Against women: Table 3.3 reports whether people think that the amount of domestic abuse against women has increased, decreased or remained the same over the last three years. Forty-six per cent of the people believe that domestic abuse against women has increased, 40 per cent hold that it has remained the same while 6 per cent think that the amount of domestic abuse against women has decreased. Women are much more likely than men to believe that domestic abuse has increased over the last 3 years (53 per cent vs. 38 per cent).

The likelihood that a respondent thinks that the level of domestic abuse of women has risen increases with age and decreases with the level of education of the respondent. For example, only 44 per cent of women under 25 years and 30 per cent of men of the same age believe in an increase of domestic abuse against women, but 65 per cent of the women and 56 per cent of men older than 65 years do. Sixty-three per cent of women and 54 per cent of men with a Junior Certificate or less as their highest level of education hold that the amount of domestic abuse of women is increasing compared to only 48 per cent of women and 26 per cent of men with third level education. While men living in a city are more likely to believe that domestic abuse against women is on the increase than other men, place of residence did not significantly influence the perceptions of female respondents.

Table 3.4: Whether the amount of domestic abuse against men over the last 3 years has increased, decreased or remained the same

	Increased	Remained the same	Decreased	Don't know
Total	41.9	44.4	3.3	10.5
Women	47.6	40.5	2.0	9.9
Men	36.0	48.4	4.5	11.0
Age Group by Gender				
Women				
18-24	47.2	46.5	4.2	2.1
25-44	48.1	40.1	1.7	10.1
45-64	48.3	40.6	1.0	10.1
65+	45.7	36.0	2.4	15.9
Men				
18-24	33.1	49.0	12.4	5.5
25-44	35.7	48.6	5.1	10.5
45-64	36.4	50.0	1.4	12.2
65+	39.2	43.8	0.8	16.2
Education by Gender				
Women				
Junior Cert or less	46.0	39.0	2.1	12.8
Leaving Cert	45.7	40.5	3.5	10.3
Third Level	50.3	40.7	0.7	8.3
Men				
Junior Cert or less	42.0	44.8	1.7	11.6
Leaving Cert	36.6	47.7	5.1	10.6
Third Level	33.0	50.7	5.2	11.1
Residence by Gender				
Women				
City	42.4	34.1	2.4	21.2
Suburb	48.3	40.0	2.2	9.4
Town	50.4	39.4	2.5	7.8
Rural/Village	47.0	42.5	1.3	9.1
Men				
City	40.5	46.4	2.4	10.7
Suburb	32.6	45.9	8.3	13.3
Town	36.8	52.6	2.1	8.6
Rural/Village	37.0	47.2	4.1	11.7

Against men: Table 3.4 reports whether people think that the amount of domestic abuse against men has increased, decreased or remained the same over the last three years. Forty-two per cent of the people believe that domestic abuse against men has increased, 44 per cent hold that it has remained the same while 3 per cent think that the amount of domestic abuse against men has decreased. While a substantial number of people see domestic abuse of women as more common than abuse of men, there are no large differences with regard to the question whether domestic abuse of women and of men has increased. Women are more likely than men to think that domestic abuse against men is on the increase (48 vs. 36 per cent).

With increasing age, men tend to see it as more likely that there has been an increase in the level of domestic abuse of men. However, there is no relationship between age and the belief in an increase as far as women are concerned. Similarly, better-educated men are less likely to report that domestic abuse of men has increased but for women there is no significant relationship between education and belief in an increase of violence against men. Regarding residence, women in cities were less likely to believe in an increase of violence against men, whereas for men no significant relationship between place or residence and attitudes was found.

Table 3.5: Whether respondent agrees that domestic abuse happens more in families with low incomes

	Fully agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Fully disagree	Don't know
Total	26.5	30.4	18.2	21.5	3.3
Women	23.4	27.8	20.1	26.0	2.7
Men	29.7	33.1	16.3	17.0	3.9
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	19.7	30.3	34.5	15.5	0.0
25-44	21.2	29.9	15.9	29.6	3.4
45-64	23.0	26.5	20.6	27.8	2.1
65+	33.1	22.7	17.2	22.7	4.3
Men					
18-24	26.9	33.1	19.3	16.6	4.1
25-44	24.3	36.4	18.5	18.5	2.3
45-64	32.0	32.3	14.3	15.6	5.8
65+	45.4	23.8	10.8	15.4	4.6
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	28.9	19.3	24.1	25.7	2.1
Leaving Cert	24.1	28.2	19.5	25.2	3.0
Third Level	20.0	31.5	18.9	27.2	2.5
Men					
Junior Cert or less	39.4	26.7	13.9	16.7	3.3
Leaving Cert	28.4	36.4	13.5	17.2	4.6
Third Level	26.5	32.4	19.5	16.9	3.7
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	17.4	32.6	25.6	23.3	1.2
Suburb	21.7	27.2	22.2	24.4	4.4
Town	25.9	28.7	16.7	26.6	2.1
Rural/Village	22.9	27.2	20.3	27.2	2.4
Men					
City	32.6	31.4	14.0	17.4	4.7
Suburb	35.3	34.9	13.3	14.7	1.8
Town	34.4	32.3	15.5	13.7	4.1
Rural/Village	22.6	33.2	19.3	20.1	4.8

3.1.3 Does Domestic Abuse Happen More in Low Income Families?

Table 3.5 summarises the responses on the question of whether the respondent agrees that domestic abuse happens more in families with low incomes. Twenty-seven per cent of the respondents fully agree with the statement and a further 30 per cent slightly agree. Twenty-two per cent fully disagree with the statement and a further 18 per cent slightly disagree. Men agree more frequently and more strongly with this statement, with only 51 per cent of women fully or slightly agreeing as opposed to 63 per cent of men.

For women and men alike, there is a tendency to be more likely in full agreement with the statement the older and the less educated the respondent is. Regarding the residence of respondents it was found that men in rural areas agreed less than other males, whereas for women those living in cities agreed less than other women.

Table 3.6: Whether respondent agrees that domestic abuse happens more to women from cultures with traditional views of women and men

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Total	38.9	30.5	10.9	10.7	9.1
Women	38.8	28.9	11.7	13.3	7.4
Men	39.0	32.0	10.1	8.1	10.7
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	38.7	32.4	11.3	17.6	0.0
25-44	35.2	30.1	14.2	14.7	5.8
45-64	39.0	25.5	11.7	14.5	9.3
65+	47.6	28.7	5.5	3.7	14.6
Men					
18-24	33.1	39.3	11.0	7.6	9.0
25-44	34.6	34.6	11.7	8.2	11.0
45-64	45.2	25.5	9.2	9.5	10.5
65+	45.7	30.2	6.2	5.4	12.4
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	44.7	24.5	8.5	11.2	11.2
Leaving Cert	40.7	29.3	11.4	11.7	7.0
Third Level	34.8	30.6	13.3	15.7	5.6
Men					
Junior Cert or less	39.6	30.2	8.2	8.2	13.7
Leaving Cert	41.4	31.1	10.3	8.9	8.3
Third Level	36.4	33.5	10.8	7.6	11.7
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	40.0	29.4	14.1	12.9	3.5
Suburb	31.3	32.4	15.9	11.5	8.8
Town	45.4	24.5	11.7	11.0	7.4
Rural	37.0	30.7	9.8	15.4	7.1
Men					
City	37.2	33.7	9.3	8.1	11.6
Suburb	41.6	27.9	13.7	6.4	10.5
Town	43.0	32.6	7.6	5.5	11.3
Rural/Village	34.4	34.1	10.4	10.4	10.7

3.1.4 Does Domestic Abuse Happen More to Women from Cultures with Traditional Gender Views?

Table 3.6 summarises the responses to the question whether the respondent agrees that domestic abuse is more likely to happen to women from cultures with traditional views of women and men. Thirty-nine per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and 31 per cent slightly agreed. Eleven per cent strongly disagreed and a further 11 per cent slightly disagreed. Women and men do not differ a lot in their answer pattern: 68 per cent of the women and 71 per cent of the men agree with the question, but women are more likely to strongly disagree than men (13 per cent vs. 8 per cent).

Older women and men are more likely to agree with the question than younger women and men, respectively. While education plays little role for the responses of men, women less frequently agree the higher their educational level is. Women resident in suburbs are less likely to agree than other women, as are men living in rural areas and villages in comparison to other men.

Table 3.7: Whether respondent thinks that most acts of domestic violence against women are committed by a partner, an ex-partner or by another family member

	By partner	By ex-partner	By other family member
Total	81.1	9.0	9.9
Women	83.1	8.2	8.7
Men	79.1	9.8	11.0
Age Group by Gender			
Women			
18-24	76.8	12.7	10.6
25-44	88.9	3.8	7.2
45-64	83.0	6.9	10.0
65+	74.8	17.2	8.0
Men			
18-24	69.2	16.4	14.4
25-44	83.4	6.3	10.3
45-64	79.6	10.2	10.2
65+	74.6	13.8	11.5
Education by Gender			
Women			
Junior Cert or less	76.1	13.8	10.1
Leaving Cert	82.1	8.1	9.8
Third Level	87.0	5.6	7.4
Men			
Junior Cert or less	65.7	16.6	17.7
Leaving Cert	81.0	8.3	10.6
Third Level	83.3	8.2	8.5
Residence by Gender			
Women			
City	80.0	10.6	9.4
Suburb	78.5	8.3	13.3
Town	85.5	7.8	6.7
Rural/Village	84.2	7.6	8.2
Men			
City	83.7	9.3	7.0
Suburb	81.2	6.0	12.8
Town	78.7	12.0	9.3
Rural/Village	78.1	10.7	11.2

3.1.5 Who is Most Likely to Commit Acts of Domestic Abuse Against Women?

Table 3.7 shows who respondents believed to be most likely to commit acts of domestic abuse against women. Eighty-one per cent believed partners to be the most probable perpetrators compared to only 9 per cent for ex-partners and 10 per cent for other family members. Women were more likely to think that the partner was the most frequent person to commit acts of domestic abuse against women, selecting this in 83 per cent of cases compared to 79 per cent of men.

Women and men under 25 years of age or older than 65 years were less likely to believe the current partner to be the perpetrator and more likely to consider it to be the ex-partner than respondents between 25 and 64 years. The higher the education of both male and female respondents, the more likely they were to think the current partner to be the most likely perpetrator as opposed to the ex-partner or another family member. Place of residence, however, did not appear to affect responses in a systematic way.

Table 3.8: Whether respondent knows of a woman, a man or any person who has been a victim of domestic abuse

	A woman	A man	Any person
Total	39.8	20.5	44.2
Women	41.2	17.6	44.3
Men	38.3	23.4	44.1
Age Group by Gender			
Women			
18-24	22.5	9.2	24.6
25-44	47.2	19.5	49.8
45-64	48.1	21.8	50.9
65+	30.5	12.8	36.0
Men			
18-24	29.0	14.5	37.7
25-44	40.4	25.5	46.7
45-64	41.8	26.5	45.6
65+	33.3	20.0	39.2
Education by Gender			
Women			
Junior Cert or less	40.6	17.1	43.9
Leaving Cert	37.6	15.4	41.5
Third Level	45.0	19.6	47.4
Men			
Junior Cert or less	37.6	24.2	44.2
Leaving Cert	41.3	21.5	45.7
Third Level	36.9	24.5	43.2
Residence by Gender			
Women			
City	40.0	15.3	40.0
Suburb	40.9	17.7	43.1
Town	47.0	18.7	50.0
Rural/Village	38.3	17.4	42.3
Men			
City	37.2	17.4	38.4
Suburb	37.6	22.5	42.2
Town	42.8	26.5	48.1
Rural/Village	35.6	22.9	43.0

3.1.6 Personal Knowledge of Victims

Table 3.8 summarises the responses to the question of whether the respondent knows of a woman, a man or any person who has been a victim of domestic abuse. Forty per cent of the respondents know of a female victim and 21 per cent know of a male victim of domestic abuse, whilst 44 per cent know of ‘any person’⁵. Women are somewhat more likely than men to know of a woman who has been a victim of domestic abuse (41 per cent vs. 38 per cent) while men are more likely to know of a man who has been a victim of domestic abuse (23 per cent vs. 18 per cent). Forty-four per cent of women and of men know a person who has been a victim.

Respondents younger than 25 and older than 65 years were less likely to know of a victim than respondents between these ages. Education, on the other hand, does not appear to affect the likelihood of knowing a victim. Residents of towns had a higher chance than respondents living in other residential areas to know anybody affected compared to those in other residential areas.

⁵ The variable ‘Any person’ counts the number of respondents who indicated that they have personal knowledge of any person who has been a victim of domestic abuse. The variable included those respondents who said they either knew a woman, or knew a man as well as including those respondents who said they knew both a woman and a man who have been victims of domestic abuse.

Table 3.9: How does the respondent know the woman who is the victim of domestic abuse

* category contains less than 40 valid cases

	Work	Close Family	Extended Family	Friend	Acquaintance	Neighbour	Community	Other
Total	13.8	21.0	6.9	27.4	9.0	6.6	11.8	3.5
Women	12.2	23.2	6.9	29.7	7.9	7.2	7.7	5.3
Men	15.5	18.6	6.8	24.9	10.2	6.0	16.3	1.6
Age Group by Gender								
Women								
18-24 *	3.2	16.1	3.2	61.3	3.2	9.7	0.0	3.2
25-44	15.2	24.9	9.1	25.9	8.6	3.0	8.6	4.6
45-64	10.1	23.0	5.0	29.5	7.9	10.8	6.5	7.2
65+	11.8	21.6	5.9	25.5	7.8	11.8	11.8	3.9
Men								
18-24 *	4.7	34.9	7.0	30.2	7.0	4.7	11.6	0.0
25-44	20.1	15.5	8.6	24.1	8.6	2.9	17.2	2.9
45-64	15.6	13.9	4.9	25.4	13.9	9.8	15.6	0.8
65+	9.3	25.6	7.0	20.9	7.0	9.3	20.9	0.0
Education by Gender								
Women								
Junior Cert or less	9.2	18.4	7.9	27.6	7.9	7.9	13.2	7.9
Leaving Cert	9.3	23.6	7.9	33.6	7.1	7.9	4.3	6.4
Third Level	14.9	24.9	6.5	27.9	8.5	6.5	8.0	3.0
Men								
Junior Cert or less	7.4	23.5	4.4	27.9	11.8	7.4	17.6	0.0
Leaving Cert	16.8	18.2	4.2	27.3	4.9	8.4	18.9	1.4
Third Level	17.9	17.3	10.7	22.0	13.7	3.0	13.7	1.8
Residence by Gender								
Women								
City	8.8	35.3	0.0	26.5	11.8	5.9	2.9	8.8
Suburb	10.8	25.7	1.4	32.4	8.1	8.1	6.8	6.8
Town	9.8	19.5	8.3	33.8	6.8	6.8	12.0	5.3
Rural/Village	15.1	22.7	9.9	27.3	5.2	5.2	5.8	4.1
Men								
City *	6.3	25.0	3.1	31.3	15.6	6.3	12.5	0.0
Suburb	13.3	18.1	7.2	32.5	8.4	1.2	18.1	1.2
Town	13.9	11.5	8.2	23.0	17.2	4.9	19.7	1.6
Rural/Village	20.9	22.3	6.5	20.9	4.3	10.1	13.7	1.4

Table 3.9 reports the relationship between the respondent and a female victim known to her or him and Table 3.10 the relationship between the respondent and a known male victim. Most victims are friends or acquaintances of the respondent (36 per cent of female victims; 41 per cent of male victims) or belong to the closer or extended family of the respondent (28 per cent of female victims; 23 per cent of male victims). A further

14 per cent of the female victims and 17 per cent of the male victims are known from work settings.

Women are more likely to know the woman victim of domestic abuse through family relations (30 per cent of women vs. 26 per cent of men). To an even greater extent women are more likely to know the man victim through family relations (33 per cent of women vs. 15 per cent of men).

Table 3.10: How does the respondent know the man who is the victim of domestic abuse

* category contains less than 40 valid cases

	Work	Close Family	Extended Family	Friend	Acquaintance	Neighbour	Community	Other
Total	16.8	15.6	7.1	27.0	14.4	6.1	10.2	2.9
Women	11.9	21.5	11.3	24.9	14.1	6.2	9.0	1.1
Men	20.5	11.1	3.8	28.6	14.5	6.0	11.1	4.3
Age Group by Gender								
Women								
18-24 *	8.3	25.0	25.0	33.3	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0
25-44	13.6	21.0	9.9	25.9	13.6	7.4	7.4	1.2
45-64	11.1	22.2	9.5	22.2	20.6	4.8	9.5	0.0
65+	5.0	20.0	15.0	25.0	5.0	5.0	20.0	5.0
Men								
18-24	0.0	40.0	0.0	15.0	15.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
25-44	23.1	4.6	4.6	34.3	15.7	9.3	6.5	1.9
45-64	25.6	10.3	2.6	26.9	11.5	5.1	12.8	5.1
65+ *	11.1	22.2	7.4	18.5	14.8	3.7	22.2	0.0
Education by Gender								
Women								
Junior Cert or less	6.1	36.4	15.2	18.2	12.1	9.1	3.0	0.0
Leaving Cert	7.0	19.3	14.0	28.1	15.8	5.3	10.5	0.0
Third Level	17.4	17.4	8.1	25.6	14.0	5.8	11.6	0.0
Men								
Junior Cert or less	6.8	9.1	0.0	43.2	11.4	6.8	20.5	2.3
Leaving Cert	22.7	12.0	5.3	24.0	9.3	9.3	16.0	1.3
Third Level	24.1	11.6	4.5	26.8	17.9	3.6	5.4	6.3
Residence by Gender								
Women								
City *	7.7	46.2	0.0	23.1	15.4	0.0	7.7	0.0
Suburb	15.2	21.2	3.0	27.3	21.2	6.1	6.1	0.0
Town	11.1	16.7	14.8	20.4	14.8	5.6	13.0	3.7
Rural/Village	11.7	19.5	14.3	27.3	9.1	7.8	10.4	0.0
Men								
City *	0.0	40.0	0.0	40.0	13.3	0.0	6.7	0.0
Suburb *	20.8	16.7	6.3	27.1	12.5	4.2	12.5	0.0
Town	26.3	6.6	2.6	21.1	11.8	6.6	17.1	7.9
Rural/Village	19.8	8.8	3.3	34.1	16.5	7.7	7.7	2.2

Work is a more important context for men (12 per cent of women vs. 16 per cent of men for female victims; 12 per cent of women vs. 21 per cent of men for male victims). The importance of friendship is particularly high for victims of the same sex as the respondent (30 per cent of women vs. 25 per cent of men for female victims; 25 per cent of women vs. 29 per cent of men for male victims).

Age does not appear to affect how respondents know the victim, although, as would be expected, work is somewhat more important for individuals in the middle age categories than the youngest and oldest respondents. Equally, for the better educated work is more frequently cited. Place of residence, on the other hand, does not have a systematic effect on how respondents know the victim.

Table 3.11: Whether respondent worries about the possibility that the respondent or anyone close to the respondent might become a victim of domestic abuse

	Yes	No
Total	30.0	70.0
Women	32.0	68.0
Men	27.9	72.1
Age Group by Gender		
Women		
18-24	43.7	56.3
25-44	29.8	70.2
45-64	30.4	69.6
65+	30.7	69.3
Men		
18-24	27.1	72.9
25-44	30.3	69.7
45-64	27.7	72.3
65+	21.7	78.3
Education by Gender		
Women		
Junior Cert or less	36.2	63.8
Leaving Cert	32.0	68.0
Third Level	30.8	69.2
Men		
Junior Cert or less	35.0	65.0
Leaving Cert	25.6	74.4
Third Level	27.2	72.8
Residence by Gender		
Women		
City	30.6	69.4
Suburb	30.9	69.1
Town	31.3	68.7
Rural/Village	33.0	67.0
Men		
City	31.0	69.0
Suburb	24.7	75.3
Town	31.7	68.3
Rural/Village	26.9	73.1

3.1.7 Fear of Victimization

Table 3.11 reports whether the respondent worries about the possibility that the respondent or anybody else close to him or her might become affected by domestic abuse. Thirty per cent of the respondents have such worries, 32 per cent of the female respondents and 28 per cent of the males. Young women between 18 and 24 years are the group that is by far the most concerned by this issue (44 per cent), with men older than 65 years being the least concerned (22 per cent). Respondents with lower educational qualifications are more likely to worry than respondents with a Leaving Certificate or third-level education. The residence of the respondent has no systematic relationship with the likelihood of worrying about victimisation for female or male respondents.

Table 3.12: Under what circumstances respondents consider forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse to be domestic abuse (percentage indicating yes)

	Injured victim	Hurt but not injured victim	Causes great distress	Frequent occurrence	Under all circumstances
Total	99.7	99.2	99.8	99.8	97.8
Women	99.9	99.4	99.8	99.9	98.1
Men	99.4	99.0	99.8	99.7	97.4
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	100.0	97.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
25-44	99.8	99.8	99.8	99.8	98.3
45-64	100.0	99.7	99.7	100.0	98.3
65+	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	95.7
Men					
18-24	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.6	97.9
25-44	99.5	99.5	100.0	100.0	98.8
45-64	99.7	98.6	99.7	99.7	97.6
65+	97.7	96.9	99.2	99.2	92.2
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	100.0	97.9	99.5	100.0	97.9
Leaving Cert	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.1
Third Level	99.8	99.6	99.8	99.8	98.4
Men					
Junior Cert or less	100.0	98.9	100.0	100.0	97.8
Leaving Cert	99.4	98.9	100.0	100.0	96.3
Third Level	99.3	99.3	99.8	99.3	98.3
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Suburb	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.9
Town	99.6	98.2	99.3	99.6	97.2
Rural/Village	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.2
Men					
City	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	96.5
Suburb	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.5
Town	98.6	97.9	100.0	100.0	97.3
Rural/Village	99.7	99.2	99.7	99.2	96.7

3.2 What is Domestic Abuse?

This section is concerned with respondents' definitions of what constitutes domestic abuse and how it impacts on people affected by it, with a particular interest in the different attitudes regarding male and female victims of abuse. It firstly examines if respondents find that particular actions such as slapping or punching a partner constitute abuse, and under what circumstances they believe this to be the case. This is followed by a summary of responses to the question whether abuse is a criminal offence or a private matter that should be handled within the family. The second set of questions relates to the differential impact of abuse on men and women, examining if abuse has a more harmful physical and emotional effect on either sex, and if the level of fear is perceived to differ for men and women. Also respondents were asked whether they thought that particular acts such as slapping or punching varied in seriousness depending on the gender of the person subjected to it.

3.2.1 Definitions of Domestic Abuse

Forcing partner to have sexual intercourse: Table 3.12 describes whether forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse is defined as domestic abuse under different circumstances. Almost all respondents agreed with this statement, with 99.7 per cent answering yes if it led to injury, 99.2 per cent if the other partner was hurt but not injured and 99.8 per cent if it led to great distress. Frequent occurrence was also seen to qualify forced intercourse as abuse by 99.8 per cent of individuals, and 97.8 per cent considered forced intercourse as abuse under all circumstances.

Men and women did not differ in their views on these issues, with differences being below one percentage point. Age did not have a systematic effect, but men, and to a lesser extent women, of 65 years or over were less likely to consider this to be abuse 'under all circumstances' with 92 and 96 per cent respectively agreeing with this statement compared to between 98 and 100 per cent of men and women of other age groups. Neither education nor residence were found to have a systematic effect on outcomes.

Table 3.13: Under what circumstances respondents consider punching a partner to be domestic abuse (percentage indicating yes)

	Injured victim	Hurt but not injured victim	Causes great distress	Frequent occurrence	Under all circumstances
Total	99.7	99.0	99.9	99.8	97.5
Women	99.6	98.8	99.9	99.8	97.3
Men	99.7	99.2	99.8	99.8	97.7
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	100.0	95.8	100.0	100.0	93.7
25-44	99.5	98.8	100.0	99.8	98.1
45-64	99.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.9
65+	99.4	99.4	99.4	99.4	98.2
Men					
18-24	98.6	98.6	98.6	98.6	97.9
25-44	100.0	98.8	100.0	100.0	97.2
45-64	100.0	99.7	100.0	100.0	98.6
65+	99.2	99.2	100.0	100.0	96.9
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	99.5	96.3	100.0	100.0	95.7
Leaving Cert	99.5	99.7	100.0	99.7	97.6
Third Level	99.8	99.1	99.8	99.8	98.0
Men					
Junior Cert or less	98.9	97.2	98.9	100.0	93.9
Leaving Cert	100.0	99.4	100.0	100.0	97.7
Third Level	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.6	99.1
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	98.8	95.3	100.0	98.8	97.6
Suburb	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.3
Town	99.3	97.9	100.0	100.0	95.4
Rural/Village	99.8	99.6	99.8	99.8	98.2
Men					
City	97.7	97.7	97.7	100.0	95.3
Suburb	100.0	99.1	100.0	100.0	99.1
Town	100.0	99.0	100.0	100.0	96.9
Rural/Village	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.5	98.2

Punching a partner: Table 3.13 summarises the percentages of respondents who define punching a partner as abuse. Ninety-eight per cent did so under all circumstances, and almost all respondents (99.7 per cent) did if it caused injury. Ninety-nine and 99.9 per cent respectively defined punching as abusive behaviour if it hurt (but did not injure) or greatly distressed the other partner, and 99.8 per cent did so if it happened frequently. Men and women did not differ to any significant extent in their responses (all differences are below one percentage point). Equally neither age, education, nor place of residence influenced responses.

Table 3.14: Under what circumstances respondents consider slapping a partner to be domestic abuse (percentage indicating yes)

	Injured victim	Hurt but not injured victim	Causes great distress	Frequent occurrence	Under all circumstances
Total	98.8	96.9	98.9	99.4	87.1
Women	98.8	97.1	99.3	99.7	87.1
Men	98.7	96.6	98.4	99.1	87.1
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	100.0	95.8	99.3	100.0	76.1
25-44	99.3	96.4	99.3	99.5	87.8
45-64	99.0	97.9	99.7	100.0	90.7
65+	96.9	98.2	98.8	99.4	89.0
Men					
18-24	95.9	91.8	95.9	98.6	77.4
25-44	100.0	97.2	98.8	98.8	87.9
45-64	98.6	98.0	99.3	100.0	89.1
65+	97.7	96.9	97.7	97.7	90.7
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	98.4	98.4	99.5	100.0	84.0
Leaving Cert	98.1	96.5	98.9	100.0	87.5
Third Level	99.8	97.1	99.5	99.6	87.9
Men					
Junior Cert or less	96.1	94.5	97.8	98.3	85.6
Leaving Cert	99.4	97.4	97.4	100.0	88.0
Third Level	99.1	96.7	99.3	98.7	87.0
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	100.0	98.8	100.0	100.0	83.5
Suburb	100.0	96.7	100.0	99.4	85.6
Town	97.5	96.8	99.3	99.6	88.3
Rural/Village	98.9	97.3	98.9	99.8	87.5
Men					
City	98.8	98.8	100.0	96.5	87.2
Suburb	99.1	95.4	99.1	99.1	89.0
Town	97.9	96.2	97.9	99.3	87.6
Rural/Village	99.0	96.7	98.2	99.5	86.0

Slapping a partner: Table 3.14 shows under what circumstances individuals think that slapping a partner is domestic abuse. Eighty-seven per cent found that this constituted abuse under all circumstances, and if the partner was injured almost all respondents (99 per cent) felt this way. If it led to the partner being hurt (but not injured) or distressed, 97 and 99 per cent respectively agreed domestic abuse was involved. If the slapping happened frequently, 99 per cent agreed it was domestic abuse.

Men and women did not differ to any significant extent in their responses (all differences are below one percentage point). Neither did age groups differ significantly with the exception of men and women under 25 years who were less inclined to consider slapping as abuse under all circumstances than were older respondents. Responses did not differ for educational level or place of residence.

Table 3.15: Under what circumstances respondents consider calling a partner hurtful names to be domestic abuse (percentage indicating yes)

	Causes great distress	Frequent occurrence	Under all circumstances
Total	91.4	96.8	67.3
Women	93.7	97.8	70.6
Men	89.2	95.8	64.0
Age Group by Gender			
Women			
18-24	88.7	95.8	58.5
25-44	93.3	98.1	69.5
45-64	95.2	98.6	76.5
65+	95.7	97.5	73.2
Men			
18-24	80.1	96.6	47.9
25-44	89.0	94.9	62.4
45-64	92.2	96.3	70.0
65+	93.0	96.9	73.8
Education by Gender			
Women			
Junior Cert or less	96.8	97.9	75.9
Leaving Cert	92.2	96.8	72.1
Third Level	93.3	98.7	67.4
Men			
Junior Cert or less	87.3	93.9	72.9
Leaving Cert	91.4	97.4	69.6
Third Level	88.3	95.2	56.2
Residence by Gender			
Women			
City	94.1	97.6	71.8
Suburb	90.6	98.3	65.7
Town	94.0	97.9	69.5
Rural/Village	94.2	97.8	72.8
Men			
City	89.4	96.5	52.3
Suburb	88.1	95.0	58.7
Town	88.3	93.8	64.9
Rural/Village	90.1	97.8	68.2

Calling partner hurtful names: Table 3.15 examines whether calling a partner hurtful names constitutes domestic abuse according to respondents. Sixty-seven per cent find that this is the case under all circumstances, and 91 and 97 per cent respectively would consider it domestic abuse if the other partner was either very distressed or if it happened frequently. Men were overall less inclined to agree that name calling was abuse than were women, with 89 per cent of men compared to 94 per cent of women agreeing if it caused distress, and 96 per cent of men vs. 98 per cent of women agreeing if it happened frequently. “Under all circumstances” was selected by only 64 per cent of men compared to 71 per cent of women.

Younger men and to a lesser extent younger women were less likely to find that name calling was abuse particularly under all circumstances, but also if it caused great distress. Age did not affect responses when name calling was a frequent occurrence. Respondents with higher education were less likely to agree that name calling constituted abuse under all circumstances, with 56 per cent of men and 67 per cent of women with third level education agreeing as opposed to 73 per cent of men and 76 per cent of women with Junior Certificate or lower level of education. Place of residence had no bearing on women’s responses, whereas men resident in cities and to a lesser extent men living in suburbs were less likely to find name calling to be domestic abuse under all circumstances than men from towns and rural areas.

Table 3.16: Whether domestic abuse is considered a criminal offence

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Total	87.8	9.2	1.7	0.5	0.7
Women	87.7	9.8	1.3	0.5	0.7
Men	87.9	8.6	2.2	0.5	0.8
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	85.1	12.8	2.1	0.0	0.0
25-44	91.6	7.5	0.0	0.5	0.5
45-64	87.9	9.3	1.4	0.3	1.0
65+	80.4	13.5	3.7	1.2	1.2
Men					
18-24	87.7	8.9	3.4	0.0	0.0
25-44	91.6	6.3	1.2	0.5	0.5
45-64	84.4	11.2	2.4	0.7	1.4
65+	84.0	9.9	3.8	0.8	1.5
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	84.5	11.8	1.6	1.1	1.1
Leaving Cert	85.6	12.2	1.6	0.0	0.5
Third Level	90.8	7.0	0.9	0.7	0.7
Men					
Junior Cert or less	84.5	11.6	3.3	0.0	0.6
Leaving Cert	89.1	8.3	0.9	1.4	0.3
Third Level	88.3	7.8	2.6	0.0	1.3
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	85.9	12.9	1.2	0.0	0.0
Suburb	87.8	9.4	1.1	1.1	0.6
Town	90.4	7.4	1.1	0.7	0.4
Rural/Village	87.1	10.7	0.9	0.2	1.1
Men					
City	97.6	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0
Suburb	87.2	9.6	1.8	0.5	0.9
Town	87.2	9.0	1.4	1.4	1.0
Rural/Village	87.0	9.2	3.3	0.0	0.5

3.2.2 Is Domestic Abuse a Criminal Offence or a Private Matter?

Criminal offence: Table 3.16 examines whether domestic abuse is considered a criminal offence by respondents, and it appears that a vast majority of 88 per cent agree strongly and a further 9 per cent agree slightly. Only 2 per cent disagreed either strongly or slightly, and there were little differences between female and male respondents, with 98 and 97 per cent respectively agreeing either strongly or slightly.

Agreement differed little among age groups, although women over 65 were less likely to agree strongly than other women respondents. Respondents with higher education agreed more strongly that domestic abuse is a crime. Men resident in cities were more likely to strongly agree (98 per cent) compared to men from suburbs, towns and rural areas who agreed strongly (87 per cent). Residence did not appear to matter to a significant extent for women respondents.

Table 3.17: Whether domestic abuse between couples is considered a private matter that should be handled by the family

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Total	5.7	8.2	13.2	70.3	2.5
Women	4.6	7.0	11.5	74.7	2.2
Men	6.8	9.4	15.0	65.8	2.9
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	3.5	6.3	14.7	72.0	3.5
25-44	3.4	4.6	9.9	80.3	1.9
45-64	3.5	7.3	9.7	78.1	1.4
65+	11.1	13.0	15.4	57.4	3.1
Men					
18-24	12.3	9.6	15.1	59.6	3.4
25-44	4.7	7.0	14.0	72.0	2.3
45-64	5.8	8.5	16.7	66.2	2.7
65+	10.1	19.4	14.7	51.2	4.7
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	11.2	13.8	9.6	62.2	3.2
Leaving Cert	4.0	6.2	12.4	75.5	1.9
Third Level	1.6	4.9	11.2	80.0	2.2
Men					
Junior Cert or less	10.6	16.1	17.8	53.9	1.7
Leaving Cert	8.0	10.3	10.3	69.1	2.3
Third Level	3.9	6.1	17.8	68.5	3.7
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	2.4	7.1	11.8	72.9	5.9
Suburb	5.0	5.0	11.7	76.1	2.2
Town	4.9	5.3	9.5	77.4	2.8
Rural/Village	4.2	8.9	12.4	73.1	1.3
Men					
City	8.2	4.7	14.1	69.4	3.5
Suburb	7.8	11.1	14.7	62.7	3.7
Town	8.6	9.6	14.4	65.6	1.7
Rural/Village	4.1	9.7	16.0	67.2	3.1

Private matter: Table 3.17 summarises the agreement of respondents to the statement that domestic abuse is a private matter that should be handled by the family. Seventy per cent disagreed strongly with this, and a further 13 per cent disagreed slightly. Eight per cent agreed slightly and 6 per cent strongly agreed. More women disagreed than men, with 86 per cent of women disagreeing compared to 81 per cent of men. Seventy-five per cent of women and 66 per cent of men disagreed strongly.

Respondents of both sexes aged 65 years or over, and men under 25 years of age disagreed less than others. Higher education was associated with less agreement with the statement. Place of residence, on the other hand, did not affect attitudes.

Table 3.18: Whether men or women are more likely to suffer physical harm as a result of domestic abuse

	Men would suffer more	Women would suffer more	Men and women would suffer equally	Don't know
Total	2.1	82.6	14.5	0.7
Women	2.2	80.4	16.5	0.9
Men	2.1	84.9	12.4	0.6
Age Group by Gender				
Women				
18-24	3.5	76.2	20.3	0.0
25-44	1.4	82.3	14.9	1.4
45-64	2.1	80.6	17.0	0.3
65+	3.7	78.0	17.1	1.2
Men				
18-24	3.4	78.6	17.9	0.0
25-44	1.6	86.4	11.5	0.5
45-64	2.0	86.4	10.5	1.0
65+	2.3	83.2	13.7	0.8
Education by Gender				
Women				
Junior Cert or less	3.2	74.9	21.4	0.5
Leaving Cert	2.2	81.9	15.4	0.5
Third Level	2.0	81.1	16.0	0.9
Men				
Junior Cert or less	2.2	81.2	16.0	0.6
Leaving Cert	2.0	84.2	13.5	0.3
Third Level	2.2	87.2	9.8	0.6
Residence by Gender				
Women				
City	1.2	78.8	20.0	0.0
Suburb	3.9	78.5	17.1	0.6
Town	3.9	78.8	15.5	1.8
Rural/Village	0.9	82.0	16.7	0.4
Men				
City	2.4	92.9	3.5	1.2
Suburb	2.3	92.7	5.0	0.0
Town	2.1	81.0	16.9	0.0
Rural/Village	1.8	81.9	15.0	1.3

3.3 How Does Domestic Abuse Affect Men and Women?

This section summarises the impact people think domestic abuse has on people, in particular with regards to differences between men and women. Firstly it asks whether respondents think that men or women are more likely to suffer physical or emotional harm as a result of domestic abuse, and if the level of fear is the same for both sexes. It also examines if abuse is considered to be more serious if the victim of abuse is female or male, or if indeed it is seen to have the same impact for both men and women.

3.3.1 Who Is Likely to Suffer More Harm?

Physical harm: Table 3.18 shows whether respondents believe that men or women are more likely to suffer physical harm as a result of domestic abuse. Overall women are believed to suffer more than men with 83 per cent of respondents agreeing with this, and only 2 per cent thinking that men would be worse affected. Fifteen per cent feel that there is no difference in how men and women would be affected, and this percentage is slightly higher for female than male respondents (17 per cent vs. 12 per cent).

Young women and men under 25 years are most likely to perceive the impact to be the same for men and women, but otherwise age does not affect attitudes strongly. The higher the respondents' education, the more likely he or she is to respond that women suffer more and less likely to believe that the impact does not differ between males and females. Place of residence mattered little for female respondents, but there are differences for males. Men from cities or suburbs are more likely to believe that women suffer more with almost 93 per cent selecting this option, and only 4 and 5 per cent believing that the impact is equal. In towns and villages, on the other hand, 81 and 82 per cent of men think that women suffer more and 17 and 15 per cent believe that men and women suffer equally.

Table 3.19: Whether men or women are more likely to suffer emotional harm as a result of domestic abuse

	Men would suffer more	Women would suffer more	Men and women would suffer equally	Don't know
Total	10.7	52.3	36.4	0.6
Women	10.1	49.9	39.3	0.7
Men	11.3	54.8	33.3	0.6
Age Group by Gender				
Women				
18-24	8.5	58.5	33.1	0.0
25-44	9.8	50.6	38.4	1.2
45-64	10.7	48.1	40.8	0.3
65+	11.0	43.9	44.5	0.6
Men				
18-24	11.6	60.3	28.1	0.0
25-44	12.1	53.3	34.6	0.0
45-64	10.9	56.0	32.1	1.0
65+	9.2	50.8	37.7	2.3
Education by Gender				
Women				
Junior Cert or less	12.3	51.3	35.3	1.1
Leaving Cert	7.8	54.6	37.3	0.3
Third Level	11.2	45.4	42.7	0.7
Men				
Junior Cert or less	12.2	54.1	32.0	1.7
Leaving Cert	13.5	58.5	27.8	0.3
Third Level	9.3	52.3	38.0	0.4
Residence by Gender				
Women				
City	14.0	43.0	43.0	0.0
Suburb	11.7	45.6	42.2	0.6
Town	8.9	48.6	41.8	0.7
Rural/Village	9.8	53.2	36.3	0.7
Men				
City	8.2	58.8	31.8	1.2
Suburb	9.6	59.8	29.7	0.9
Town	11.7	52.2	35.7	0.3
Rural/Village	12.5	53.7	33.3	0.5

Emotional harm: Table 3.19 reports whether respondents think that either men or women are more likely to suffer emotional harm as a result of domestic abuse or whether the impact would be the same. Over half of respondents think that women suffer more, with 36 per cent believing that both men and women suffer equally and 11 per cent considering that men are worse affected. These findings differ from those regarding physical harm, where people less frequently thought that the impact was equal. Females are more likely than males to think that men and women suffer the same emotional harm, with 39 per cent of women as opposed to 33 per cent of men selecting this response.

Older respondents are more likely to believe that the impact is the same for men and women, and less likely to think that women suffer more. This differs from findings regarding physical harm, where younger respondents believed slightly more often in equality of impact. Respondents with third level education are also more likely to select equal impact and less likely to feel that women would suffer more, which is again the opposite pattern to what was observed in relation to physical harm. Where people lived, however, did not affect responses systematically with regards to emotional harm.

Table 3.20: Whether the level of fear experienced is worse for men, women or equally bad for both

	Worse for men	Worse for women	Equally bad for men and women	Don't know
Total	1.3	53.1	44.7	0.9
Women	1.4	50.4	47.2	1.0
Men	1.3	55.7	42.1	0.9
Age Group by Gender				
Women				
18-24	0.7	48.2	50.4	0.7
25-44	1.2	46.5	51.8	0.5
45-64	1.0	54.0	43.9	1.0
65+	1.8	56.7	39.0	1.0
Men				
18-24	2.1	40.0	57.9	0.0
25-44	0.0	56.1	43.5	0.5
45-64	2.4	59.7	35.9	2.0
65+	2.3	62.3	34.6	0.8
Education by Gender				
Women				
Junior Cert or less	2.1	49.5	46.8	1.6
Leaving Cert	1.9	50.0	47.8	0.3
Third Level	0.7	51.4	47.1	0.9
Men				
Junior Cert or less	2.2	47.5	50.3	0.0
Leaving Cert	0.6	54.4	43.8	1.1
Third Level	1.3	59.7	38.0	1.1
Residence by Gender				
Women				
City	2.4	58.8	37.6	1.2
Suburb	1.1	51.1	47.2	0.6
Town	1.1	48.9	48.9	1.1
Rural/Village	1.3	48.9	49.1	0.8
Men				
City	1.2	67.4	31.4	0.0
Suburb	1.8	47.7	48.6	1.8
Town	0.7	56.4	42.6	0.3
Rural/Village	1.3	57.1	40.8	0.8

3.3.2 Who Experiences a Higher Level of Fear?

Table 3.20 summarises the extent to which respondents think that the level of fear experienced is worse for men, women, or equally bad for both. The majority, 53 per cent, believe that it is worse for women, whereas 45 per cent think that it is equally bad for both. Only 1 per cent of respondents think that men are worse affected. Women are more likely than men to think that the level of fear is equal for men and women (47 per cent vs. 42 per cent), and less likely to think that women are worse affected (50 per cent vs. 56 per cent), which reflects the pattern in the findings regarding emotional and physical harm.

Older respondents more frequently agreed that women experience more fear and less often thought that the level is the same for men and women. Education does not appear to have an impact on women's attitudes, but men with higher education are more likely to think that women experience more fear than men. Regarding residence, respondents from a city more frequently think that the situation is worse for women rather than being equal. Men from suburbs, on the other hand, were more likely than other men to think that both men and women experience the same level of fear.

Table 3.21: Whether it would be more serious if a man slapped a woman, a woman slapped a man or equally serious for both to slap their partner

	Man slapping woman	Woman slapping man	Equally serious
Total	27.6	0.4	72.0
Women	20.9	0.3	78.8
Men	34.3	0.5	65.2
Age Group by Gender			
Women			
18-24	33.1	0.0	66.9
25-44	13.2	0.2	86.5
45-64	19.0	0.3	80.6
65+	32.9	0.6	66.5
Men			
18-24	41.4	2.1	56.6
25-44	29.0	0.0	71.0
45-64	34.8	0.7	64.5
65+	43.1	0.0	56.9
Education by Gender			
Women			
Junior Cert or less	24.1	0.5	75.4
Leaving Cert	21.4	0.5	78.0
Third Level	18.9	0.0	81.1
Men			
Junior Cert or less	41.8	1.1	57.1
Leaving Cert	34.0	0.6	65.4
Third Level	31.9	0.4	67.7
Residence by Gender			
Women			
City	20.0	0.0	80.0
Suburb	23.8	0.6	75.7
Town	18.4	0.4	81.3
Rural/Village	20.8	0.2	79.0
Men			
City	40.0	0.0	60.0
Suburb	29.7	0.9	69.4
Town	34.0	0.0	66.0
Rural/Village	36.4	1.0	62.6

3.3.3 Is it More Serious if the Victim of Abuse is Male or Female?

Slapping a partner: Table 3.21 examines whether respondents believe that it is more serious if a man slaps a woman, a woman slaps a man or if it is equally serious. A vast majority of 72 per cent believe that it is the same for both men and women, and 28 per cent think that a man slapping a woman is more serious. Less than one per cent of respondents think that a woman slapping a man is a more serious issue. There are gender differences in the responses, with women being much more likely to think that the seriousness is the same regardless of the sex of the perpetrator. Seventy-nine per cent of women believe this as opposed to only 65 per cent of men.

Both the youngest respondents under 25 years and the oldest respondents over 65 years are more likely to find a man slapping a woman to be more serious, with respondents between 25 and 65 years being more likely to think of either one being equally serious. Respondents with higher education more frequently believe that both abusive behaviours are equally serious, and less often think that a man slapping a woman is worse. These patterns hold for both genders. Place of residence does not affect attitudes strongly, but it can be noted that men in cities and rural areas are more inclined to find slapping a woman to be more serious, whereas men in suburbs agree less frequently with this.

Table 3.22: Whether it would be more serious if a man punched a woman, a woman punched a man or equally serious for both to punch their partner

	Man punching woman	Woman punching man	Equally serious
Total	33.7	0.2	66.1
Women	25.8	0.1	74.1
Men	41.7	0.3	58.0
Age Group by Gender			
Women			
18-24	36.6	0.0	63.4
25-44	19.0	0.0	81.0
45-64	24.6	0.3	75.1
65+	35.6	0.6	63.8
Men			
18-24	45.5	2.1	52.4
25-44	34.1	0.0	65.9
45-64	43.5	0.0	56.5
65+	58.5	0.0	41.5
Education by Gender			
Women			
Junior Cert or less	29.3	0.5	70.2
Leaving Cert	26.5	0.0	73.5
Third Level	23.8	0.0	76.2
Men			
Junior Cert or less	55.8	0.0	44.2
Leaving Cert	38.9	0.6	60.6
Third Level	38.3	0.4	61.3
Residence by Gender			
Women			
City	29.4	0.0	70.6
Suburb	32.0	0.0	68.0
Town	22.3	0.4	77.4
Rural/Village	24.1	0.0	75.9
Men			
City	51.8	0.0	48.2
Suburb	47.7	0.9	51.4
Town	39.7	0.0	60.3
Rural/Village	38.0	0.5	61.5

Punching a partner: Table 3.22 examines whether respondents believe that it is more serious if a man punches a woman, a woman punches a man or if it is equally serious. About two-thirds (66 per cent) find both equally severe, about one third (34 per cent) find a man punching a woman more severe, and only a fraction of a per cent say this about a woman punching a man. Women are more likely to find both to be of equal seriousness than men. Seventy-four per cent of women believe this as opposed to only 58 per cent of men.

Women younger than 25 and older than 64 are more likely than women between 25 and 64 to regard punching of a woman by a man as being more serious. Men older than 65 are most likely to consider punching of a woman by a man as more serious and men between 25 and 44 are least likely to think so. Education appears to matter little as far as women are concerned; however, poorly educated men are more likely to perceive punching of women by men as more serious. Individuals from cities or suburbs were more inclined to find the abusive behaviour more serious if the woman was being punched than those from towns and rural areas, with this pattern again being stronger for men than women.

Table 3.23: Whether it would be more serious if a man called a woman hurtful names, a woman called a man hurtful names or equally serious for both to call their partner hurtful names

	Man calling woman	Woman calling man	Equally serious
Total	4.6	1.1	94.2
Women	3.3	0.4	96.3
Men	6.0	1.9	92.1
Age Group by Gender			
Women			
18-24	5.6	0.0	94.4
25-44	2.2	0.5	97.4
45-64	3.5	0.3	96.2
65+	3.7	0.6	95.7
Men			
18-24	7.6	2.1	90.3
25-44	4.0	1.6	94.4
45-64	5.1	1.7	93.2
65+	13.1	3.1	83.8
Education by Gender			
Women			
Junior Cert or less	3.7	0.0	96.3
Leaving Cert	5.7	0.5	93.8
Third Level	0.9	0.5	98.6
Men			
Junior Cert or less	10.4	1.1	88.5
Leaving Cert	7.2	2.0	90.8
Third Level	3.5	2.4	94.1
Residence by Gender			
Women			
City	2.4	0.0	97.6
Suburb	1.1	0.0	98.9
Town	4.6	0.7	94.7
Rural/Village	2.4	0.4	97.1
Men			
City	5.9	4.7	89.4
Suburb	6.5	1.4	92.2
Town	7.6	2.1	90.4
Rural/Village	4.6	1.5	93.9

Calling a partner hurtful names: Table 3.23 examines whether it is perceived to be worse if a man calls a woman hurtful names, or if a woman does so with a man, or if indeed both are equally serious. A vast majority of respondents found the latter to be the case, with 94 per cent evaluating this to be of equal seriousness. Five per cent found it to be more serious if the woman was being called names by her male partner and only one per cent if a man was called names by his partner. Women were more likely than men to reply that both incidences are equally serious (96 per cent for women vs. 92 per cent for men) and somewhat less likely to find that a female victim was worse (3 per cent vs. 6 per cent).

For female respondents age mattered little, whereas men over 65 years were less inclined to say that either abusive behaviour was equally serious. Education has a stronger effect for men than for women: higher education led to an increased likelihood of an “equally serious” response from men. Place of residence, however, appeared to have no bearing on the attitudes expressed by respondents.

Table 3.24: Whether it would be more serious if a man forced a woman to have sexual intercourse, a woman forced a man to have sexual intercourse or equally serious for both to force their partner to have sexual intercourse

	Man forced woman	Woman forced man	Equally serious
Total	27.9	0.2	71.9
Women	23.4	0.1	76.5
Men	32.3	0.3	67.4
Age Group by Gender			
Women			
18-24	16.9	0.0	83.1
25-44	20.4	0.2	79.3
45-64	25.6	0.0	74.4
65+	33.1	0.0	66.9
Men			
18-24	29.5	1.4	69.2
25-44	24.8	0.0	75.2
45-64	38.8	0.3	60.9
65+	45.4	0.8	53.8
Education by Gender			
Women			
Junior Cert or less	27.3	0.0	72.7
Leaving Cert	23.8	0.0	76.2
Third Level	21.1	0.2	78.7
Men			
Junior Cert or less	39.2	0.6	60.2
Leaving Cert	34.1	0.3	65.6
Third Level	28.0	0.4	71.6
Residence by Gender			
Women			
City	28.2	0.0	71.8
Suburb	26.0	0.0	74.0
Town	21.6	0.0	78.4
Rural/Village	21.8	0.2	78.0
Men			
City	25.9	0.0	74.1
Suburb	38.5	0.0	61.5
Town	31.6	0.7	67.7
Rural/Village	30.8	0.5	68.7

Forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse: Table 3.24 reports whether respondents believe that it is worse if a man forces a woman to have sexual intercourse, if a woman forces a man or if both is equally serious. Most respondents believe that there is no difference, with 72 per cent selecting this response. Twenty-eight per cent think it is worse if a man forces a woman, whereas only a fraction of a per cent think it is worse if a woman forces a man.

Women more often found that the seriousness was equal (77 per cent vs. 67 per cent), as did younger respondents. Higher education led respondents to evaluate both as equal more frequently, with this effect being more pronounced for male respondents, with 72 per cent of men with third level education responding 'equally serious' as opposed to 60 per cent of men with Junior Certificate or lower level. Female respondents from cities and suburbs were less inclined to find both equally serious and more often agreed that a woman being forced by her partner to have sexual intercourse was more serious. Men resident in cities were more likely to find both equally serious.

3.4 Encountering Domestic Abuse: What would you do?

This section is concerned with the reactions people think they themselves or others would have if witnessing or being told about an incident of abuse. Firstly it summarises the likely reactions of respondents themselves if they became aware that a friend of theirs was abused by her/his partner, followed by their reactions if a neighbour or a stranger were in this situation. The next part of this section deals with the perceived likelihood of people reporting an incident to the Gardaí, and reasons for perhaps not doing so. The final part concerns the reactions people would expect of General Practitioners.

3.4.1 Reactions if a Friend, Neighbour or Stranger was the Victim / Survivor of Domestic Abuse

Friend: Table 3.25 summarises the reactions respondents are likely to have if they suspected that their friend Mary, who has become withdrawn and jumpy since she started going out with John and who has a bruise on her face, is being abused by her partner. A vast majority of 95 per cent is either very or fairly likely to ask Mary if she is alright without mentioning the suspicion of abuse. Fewer respondents, but still a large majority of 77 per cent think that they would ask Mary directly about their suspicion. Only about one third (35 per cent) would talk to her partner John. Almost three quarters of respondents (74 per cent) would talk to friends about what might be wrong with Mary. People also think frequently that they would encourage Mary to get further help, with 93 and 85 per cent respectively agreeing that they would try to get her to contact a helpline or a social worker. Eighty-seven per cent would try to persuade her to report the incident to the Gardaí, although only 43 per cent would take the initiative themselves and report the abuse. Only 5 per cent of people thought that they were likely to not do or say anything if they found themselves in this situation.

Male and female respondents differed in some ways regarding their perceived reactions, with women being more likely to talk to friends about the situation (77 per cent vs. 71 per cent). Men, on the other hand, were more than twice as likely as women to talk to John, with 47 per cent selecting this as opposed to only 23 per cent of women. Women more frequently than men thought that they would encourage Mary to seek further help, either from a helpline (95 per cent vs. 90 per cent) or from a social worker (87 per cent vs. 83 per cent), whereas they less often thought that they would contact the Gardaí themselves (40 per cent vs. 46 per cent). About equal proportions of women and men said that they would ask Mary if she was alright (96 per cent vs. 93 per cent), mention the abuse directly (77 per cent of both men and women), encourage her to contact the Gardaí (88 per cent vs. 85 per cent) or not do anything (5 per cent of both men and women).

Younger women were more likely than older women to think that they would talk to Mary, either by asking if she was alright or by directly bringing up the suspicions of abuse. They also more frequently than older women reported that they would discuss the situation with friends. Female respondents over 65 years of age in particular were much less likely to confront Mary directly with their suspicions. On the other hand, older women were more likely to talk to Mary's partner John than younger women. Encouragement to seek help did not differ for women of different age groups, but younger women were more likely than older female respondents to try to get Mary to contact the Gardaí. Age did not systematically affect the likelihood that women would contact the Gardaí, although women between 25 and 44 years of age were slightly more likely to do this than younger or older women.

Regarding male respondents, those over 65 years less frequently believed that they would talk to Mary either by asking about her well-being in general, by mentioning their suspicions of abuse directly, or by talking to friends about the problem. There was little difference between other age groups. Male respondents' likelihood to talk to John did not differ strongly by age, with older men being slightly less likely to do so. Younger men, on the other hand, less frequently than older men agreed that they would encourage Mary to seek help through contacting a helpline or a social worker. Men between 25 and 44 years more often responded that they would persuade Mary to contact the Gardaí, and men between 25 and 65 years were more likely than other men to actually contact the Gardaí themselves. For both genders, respondents over 65 years more frequently than others reported that they were likely to not do or say anything.

Higher education made respondents more likely to talk to friends about the situation. A large difference was found for the likelihood of talking to Mary's partner John, with respondents with higher education being much less likely to do this. For men the difference between those with Junior Certificate or lower level of education and those with some form of third level education is 20 percentage points, and for women 8 percentage points. Women with low education were less likely to encourage Mary to report to the Gardaí, whereas for men, those with Junior Certificate or less were the most likely to do this. A similar pattern occurs with regards to reporting the incident oneself, with higher education leading to slightly higher likelihood of this for women and significantly lower likelihood for men. Those with lower education slightly more often believed that they would not do or say anything than other groups.

Residence did not have a systematic effect on responses, but some differences did occur. Most noteworthy is that female city dwellers had a substantially higher inclination to contact the Gardaí themselves.

Table 3.25: How likely it is that respondents would act in a particular way if they suspected their friend Mary to be the victim of domestic abuse (sum of percentage indicating very and fairly likely)

	Ask Mary if she is alright	Ask her directly about abuse	Talk to her partner John	Talk to friends about what is wrong	Encourage her to contact helpline	Encourage her to contact social worker	Encourage her to report to Gardai	Report to Gardai	Not say or do anything
Total	94.6	76.9	35.0	73.9	92.5	85.0	86.6	42.6	4.9
Women	96.2	76.6	23.0	76.9	95.1	86.7	88.1	39.7	4.7
Men	93.0	77.1	47.0	70.9	89.9	83.2	85.0	45.6	5.2
Age Group by Gender									
Women									
18-24	98.6	84.5	22.5	83.1	92.3	88.0	95.8	36.2	3.5
25-44	97.4	78.8	21.4	85.6	96.9	86.1	90.6	43.4	4.8
45-64	95.8	75.1	22.5	68.5	95.2	85.9	87.2	38.4	3.8
65+	92.7	66.5	28.7	64.0	92.7	88.3	78.0	35.4	7.3
Men									
18-24	93.8	77.9	48.6	69.7	86.3	75.2	82.2	40.0	4.1
25-44	94.4	78.7	48.0	76.9	88.6	83.7	88.6	48.0	3.5
45-64	93.5	79.6	45.6	70.1	92.8	84.4	83.7	47.1	5.5
65+	86.9	66.7	45.0	53.8	91.5	88.4	79.1	41.1	11.5
Education by Gender									
Women									
Junior Cert or less	94.1	75.4	27.3	72.2	93.1	89.4	85.6	36.2	6.4
Leaving Cert	96.5	77.2	24.9	75.3	93.8	85.9	87.0	42.2	5.1
Third Level	97.1	76.6	19.8	79.6	96.6	86.5	90.3	38.7	3.6
Men									
Junior Cert or less	88.0	73.5	60.4	64.3	87.3	87.3	86.8	56.9	7.2
Leaving Cert	95.1	80.6	48.9	69.9	90.8	82.9	83.4	43.8	5.1
Third Level	93.5	76.1	40.7	74.4	89.8	81.6	85.4	42.3	4.6
Residence by Gender									
Women									
City	96.5	77.6	18.8	81.2	89.4	82.4	89.4	49.4	4.7
Suburb	97.2	79.6	22.1	72.9	95.0	87.8	88.3	37.0	4.4
Town	96.5	80.9	24.8	75.9	97.2	90.5	88.7	37.9	5.3
Rural/Village	96.0	72.6	23.4	78.0	94.9	85.1	87.8	40.3	4.5
Men									
City	92.9	83.5	50.0	68.6	92.9	91.8	90.7	45.9	1.2
Suburb	95.0	79.7	47.5	72.5	87.6	80.2	86.2	50.0	6.4
Town	92.1	76.3	43.6	69.7	89.0	81.4	82.8	46.4	7.9
Rural/Village	92.9	75.5	48.7	71.8	91.3	84.7	84.9	43.2	3.3

Table 3.26: How likely it is that respondents would get involved in any way if they became aware that a neighbour that they do not know very well is experiencing domestic abuse by their partner

	Very likely	Fairly likely	Fairly unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know
Total	9.5	28.6	29.5	28.7	3.7
Women	11.3	27.2	27.3	30.4	3.9
Men	7.7	29.9	31.7	27.0	3.6
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	10.6	37.3	26.1	21.8	4.2
25-44	11.8	28.3	30.5	26.6	2.9
45-64	13.2	25.0	24.0	33.0	4.9
65+	7.4	20.2	25.8	42.3	4.3
Men					
18-24	3.4	33.1	40.7	20.7	2.1
25-44	7.5	31.3	32.2	25.5	3.5
45-64	10.9	28.9	27.9	28.2	4.1
65+	6.2	24.0	28.7	36.4	4.7
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	11.8	18.2	22.5	41.2	6.4
Leaving Cert	10.3	29.5	25.5	31.2	3.5
Third Level	11.9	29.7	30.9	24.8	2.7
Men					
Junior Cert or less	10.4	23.6	28.6	32.4	4.9
Leaving Cert	7.2	29.5	29.5	31.2	2.6
Third Level	7.4	32.5	34.7	21.7	3.7
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	16.3	26.7	20.9	31.4	4.7
Suburb	12.7	26.0	24.3	30.4	6.6
Town	12.1	31.2	27.0	27.0	2.8
Rural/Village	9.8	25.8	29.6	31.8	2.9
Men					
City	5.9	34.1	34.1	20.0	5.9
Suburb	5.9	34.7	27.4	31.1	0.9
Town	10.0	25.2	30.0	31.4	3.4
Rural/Village	7.7	29.6	34.2	23.5	5.1

Neighbour: Table 3.26 describes how likely respondents would be to get involved in any way if a neighbour they did not know well was experiencing domestic abuse. Only 10 per cent said that this was very likely to happen, and 29 per cent thought it was fairly likely. A majority, however, believed that it was rather unlikely, with 30 per cent thinking it was fairly unlikely and an almost equal amount of 29 per cent agreeing that it was very unlikely. Men and women did not differ substantially in relation to involvement: 39 per cent of women and 38 per cent of men believed that it was very or fairly likely that they would do anything. The older female respondents were, the more unlikely they were to get involved, and similarly men over 65 years of age were less likely to do anything than younger men. People with higher education more often thought that they would get involved. Women with Junior Certificate or lower were particularly doubtful that they would do anything in this situation, with 30 per cent thinking that their involvement was very or fairly likely as opposed to 40 per cent of women with Leaving Certificate and 42 per cent of women with some form of third level education. Community size also matters primarily for women, with women in rural areas being least likely and women from cities being most likely to believe that they would do anything.

Table 3.27: How likely it is that respondents would get involved in any way if a woman they did not know was physically assaulted by her spouse in public

	Very likely	Fairly likely	Fairly unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know
Total	32.1	33.2	16.7	15.5	2.4
Women	27.9	32.6	16.0	20.3	3.2
Men	36.4	33.9	17.5	10.6	1.6
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	16.2	37.3	21.8	23.9	0.7
25-44	29.1	31.5	17.5	17.8	4.1
45-64	32.4	33.1	13.1	18.3	3.1
65+	27.0	30.7	12.3	27.6	2.5
Men					
18-24	33.1	33.1	21.4	12.4	0.0
25-44	35.8	35.8	19.7	7.5	1.2
45-64	41.0	32.1	15.0	9.6	2.4
65+	31.5	32.3	11.5	21.5	3.1
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	27.8	25.7	15.5	27.8	3.2
Leaving Cert	27.1	32.8	14.9	20.9	4.3
Third Level	28.8	35.8	16.9	16.4	2.0
Men					
Junior Cert or less	40.9	26.0	16.0	16.6	0.6
Leaving Cert	39.8	31.2	15.8	10.6	2.6
Third Level	32.3	39.0	19.1	8.2	1.3
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	23.5	34.1	20.0	20.0	2.4
Suburb	25.8	37.4	14.3	19.2	3.3
Town	29.4	31.6	15.2	20.2	3.5
Rural/Village	28.5	31.4	16.5	20.7	2.9
Men					
City	26.7	43.0	22.1	7.0	1.2
Suburb	36.4	35.0	17.1	11.1	0.5
Town	33.3	35.4	16.5	12.4	2.4
Rural/Village	41.5	30.5	16.3	10.2	1.5

Stranger: Table 3.27 reports the likelihood of respondents getting involved if a woman they did not know was physically assaulted by her spouse in public. A higher percentage felt that they would get involved in this scenario, with 32 per cent claiming this was very likely and a further 33 per cent fairly likely. Seventeen per cent thought that it was fairly unlikely and 16 per cent saw this as very unlikely. Women less frequently thought it was likely that they would get involved than men, with a difference of about ten percentage points for the answers 'very likely' and 'very unlikely'. People under 25 years and over 65 years were the least likely to do anything in this situation, as were people with lower education. Residence, on the other hand, did not significantly influence the likelihood of intervening in this situation.

Table 3.28: Likelihood of respondents to intervene if a friend, a neighbour or a stranger became the victim of domestic abuse (sum of percentage indicating very and fairly likely)

	Friend	Neighbour	Stranger
Total	94.2	38.1	65.4
Women	94.2	38.5	60.5
Men	94.3	37.7	70.3
Age Group by Gender			
Women			
18-24	94.4	47.9	53.5
25-44	95.0	40.0	60.7
45-64	94.8	38.2	65.4
65+	91.4	27.6	57.7
Men			
18-24	95.9	36.6	66.2
25-44	96.7	38.8	71.7
45-64	92.8	39.8	73.1
65+	88.5	30.8	63.8
Education by Gender			
Women			
Junior Cert or less	91.4	29.9	53.5
Leaving Cert	93.2	39.7	59.9
Third Level	96.0	41.7	64.7
Men			
Junior Cert or less	91.2	34.1	66.9
Leaving Cert	94.6	36.7	71.1
Third Level	95.2	39.9	71.4
Residence by Gender			
Women			
City	91.7	43.0	57.6
Suburb	94.5	38.7	63.0
Town	94.3	43.3	61.0
Rural/Village	94.4	35.6	60.0
Men			
City	98.8	40.0	69.8
Suburb	93.6	40.6	71.4
Town	91.4	35.4	68.7
Rural/Village	95.9	37.2	72.0

Comparing Reactions - Friend, Neighbour and Stranger:

Table 3.28 directly compares respondents' willingness to intervene if their friend, a neighbour or a stranger were affected by domestic abuse to compare the extent to which the relationship between the respondents and the victim influences their willingness to do anything. Overall willingness is highest if a friend is involved, with almost all respondents (94 per cent) thinking that they would do something, followed by willingness to intervene if a person was assaulted by her or his partner in public (65 per cent). Only 38 per cent believe that it is likely that they would get involved if a neighbour that they did not know well was being abused. There are little differences in men's and women's reactions with regards to a friend or a neighbour (94 per cent for both men and women in case of a friend, 39 per cent of women vs. 38 per cent of men in the case of a neighbour). However, men are more likely to believe that they would intervene if a stranger assaulted his spouse in public (70 per cent vs. 61 per cent).

Older respondents are generally less likely to think that they would do anything, with this difference being particularly pronounced for women if a neighbour was the victim of abuse. Men and women under 25 years report lower likelihood of intervening if a stranger was being assaulted. Individuals with higher education more frequently replied that they would take some form of action in all three cases, with the biggest difference being observed for women regarding a neighbour or a stranger, where females with Junior Certificate or lower level of education are over ten percentage points less likely to intervene than women with some form of third level education. Place of residence did not appear to have a strong effect on people's attitudes.

Table 3.29: How likely respondents think it is that people in Ireland who witness domestic abuse would report to the Gardaí

	Very likely	Fairly likely	Fairly unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know
Total	4.7	18.2	39.3	35.0	2.8
Women	3.8	17.4	39.8	36.2	2.9
Men	5.6	19.1	38.9	33.7	2.7
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	2.1	12.7	39.4	45.8	0.0
25-44	4.6	18.3	39.4	35.8	1.9
45-64	3.8	17.9	38.3	35.9	4.1
65+	3.7	18.3	43.3	29.3	5.5
Men					
18-24	3.4	10.3	49.3	31.5	5.5
25-44	6.3	20.8	38.2	34.7	0.0
45-64	6.8	20.1	36.4	33.3	3.4
65+	3.9	20.9	34.9	33.3	7.0
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	5.3	17.6	34.8	38.5	3.7
Leaving Cert	4.3	20.6	38.8	33.9	2.4
Third Level	2.9	14.4	42.7	37.8	2.2
Men					
Junior Cert or less	7.7	19.8	30.8	38.5	3.3
Leaving Cert	6.9	16.6	38.7	35.8	2.0
Third Level	4.1	20.6	42.1	29.9	3.3
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	3.5	16.5	36.5	41.2	2.4
Suburb	5.0	24.9	43.6	24.3	2.2
Town	2.8	16.0	42.2	36.2	2.8
Rural/Village	4.0	15.6	36.7	41.0	2.7
Men					
City	3.5	32.9	38.8	24.7	0.0
Suburb	5.5	15.5	41.6	32.9	4.6
Town	7.9	16.5	38.1	35.1	2.4
Rural/Village	4.6	19.8	38.2	34.6	2.8

3.4.2 Reporting to the Gardaí

Likelihood of reporting: Table 3.29 summarises how likely respondents think it is that people in Ireland witnessing domestic abuse will report to the Gardaí. Overall people think that others are rather unlikely to do so, with 35 per cent agreeing that it is very unlikely and 39 per cent thinking that it is fairly unlikely. Only 5 per cent believe that it is very likely and 18 per cent that it is fairly likely. Men and women do not differ much in their responses, with 76 per cent of women and 73 per cent of men finding it either very or fairly unlikely that people would report to the Gardaí.

Table 3.29 shows that young people under the age of 25 consider that very few people would report to the Gardaí. Education does not appear to exert a strong influence on the perceived likelihood that people would report to Gardaí. Regarding residence, women in suburbs were the most likely out of all female respondents to think that people would report domestic abuse, whereas men in suburbs were the least likely to do so out of all male respondents. Men in cities, on the other hand, had much higher confidence that people would call the Gardaí.

Table 3.30: Reasons respondents think people who witness an incident of domestic abuse might have to be reluctant to report domestic abuse to the Gardaí (sum of percentage indicating very and fairly likely)

	Feeling that they should not get involved	Feeling that Gardaí would not treat it seriously enough	Fear that it might make things worse	Feeling that it would not improve safety of those involved	Fear that children would be removed from family
Total	87.9	52.1	75.2	69.5	73.4
Women	88.9	53.8	78.2	72.6	74.6
Men	87.0	50.5	72.2	66.4	72.2
Age Group by Gender					
Women					
18-24	93.0	68.5	89.4	83.8	93.7
25-44	91.1	48.8	76.7	70.2	73.1
45-64	84.7	55.7	79.2	74.0	70.6
65+	87.2	49.7	71.2	65.9	68.9
Men					
18-24	88.4	54.1	78.1	74.0	79.5
25-44	86.7	47.9	74.1	65.9	74.5
45-64	87.8	50.3	71.0	63.3	67.2
65+	85.4	54.6	61.8	66.2	66.9
Education by Gender					
Women					
Junior Cert or less	86.1	58.0	78.1	71.7	72.7
Leaving Cert	89.2	51.5	76.7	71.4	74.8
Third Level	89.9	54.3	80.0	74.4	75.1
Men					
Junior Cert or less	84.6	51.9	65.9	61.3	71.3
Leaving Cert	88.8	55.6	75.1	72.9	77.0
Third Level	87.0	46.6	72.9	64.1	69.4
Residence by Gender					
Women					
City	92.9	61.2	77.6	68.6	78.8
Suburb	87.8	50.8	72.8	68.0	64.1
Town	88.3	50.9	80.9	74.8	77.4
Rural/Village	88.9	55.6	78.9	74.2	76.2
Men					
City	85.9	65.9	76.7	72.1	65.9
Suburb	81.2	46.3	70.6	67.9	68.3
Town	88.3	46.0	72.5	71.1	77.0
Rural/Village	90.3	53.1	72.2	61.1	73.3

Reasons for not reporting: Table 3.30 examines the reasons why people think others who witness an incident of domestic abuse might be reluctant to report it to the Gardaí. A vast majority of 88 per cent thinks that the feeling that one should not get involved is a likely reason for people to not report an incident. Only just over half of respondents (52 per cent) think that this could be because people feel that the Gardaí would not take the situation seriously enough. About three quarters of people (75 per cent) replied that they think people might not report because they fear that it could make the situation worse, and 70 per cent think that it is because people do not believe that it would improve the safety of those involved. Almost three quarters (73 per cent) replied that it could be due to the fear that children would be removed from the family.

Female respondents were more likely to believe in any of these reasons than male respondents, with the biggest difference occurring with regards to fearing that the situation might be made worse by the involvement of the Gardaí (78 per cent vs. 72 per cent) and that it would not improve the safety of those involved (73 per cent vs. 66 per cent). Feeling that they should not get involved was mentioned by 89 per cent of women and 87 per cent of men, and the feeling that the Gardaí would not take the incident seriously enough by 54 per cent of women and 51 per cent of men. The fear that children would be taken away from the family was cited by 75 per cent of women and 72 per cent of men.

Younger women, especially those under 25 years of age, were more likely than older women to believe that any of the above could be a reason for reluctance to report domestic abuse to the Gardaí, and this is also true to a lesser extent for younger men in comparison to older male respondents. In addition to this main trend, men over 65 years were equally as likely as men under 25 to believe that people might not report because they do not think that the Gardaí would take the situation seriously enough.

Education also had little effect on responses. Men with Leaving Certificate more often than men with lower or higher level of education agreed that people might fear that the involvement of the Gardaí would not improve the safety of those involved in a domestic abuse situation. Residence again did not influence results in the same way for all responses, but some differences along place of residence can be observed. Women in cities are more inclined than other female respondents to think that people would not report abuse because they think that the Gardaí would not take the incident seriously enough. Women living in suburbs less frequently report fear that involvement would make things worse or that children would be removed from the family. Regarding male respondents, those in suburbs, followed by men resident in cities, least frequently found that the "Feeling that they should not get involved" would deter people from reporting abuse. Men living in cities, however, were most likely to agree that people might believe that the Gardaí would not take the situation seriously enough. Male respondents resident in rural areas were less likely to think that people would feel that reporting an incident would not improve the safety of those involved. Men in towns were most likely to agree that witnesses of domestic abuse would fear that the children might be removed from the family if the incident was reported to the Gardaí.

Table 3.31: Perceived likelihood that a GP would react in a particular way if contacted by a victim of abuse (sum of percentage indicating very and fairly likely)

	Would take situation very seriously	Would give advice for further help	Would understand this type of problem	Would record evidence of hurt/ injuries
Total	88.4	96.2	92.9	92.4
Women	87.4	97.2	92.7	93.2
Men	89.4	95.2	93.2	91.6
Age Group by Gender				
Women				
18-24	93.0	100.0	88.8	95.8
25-44	89.2	98.8	93.0	94.0
45-64	85.8	96.2	92.7	93.4
65+	81.0	93.9	94.5	87.8
Men				
18-24	94.5	97.9	93.8	94.5
25-44	92.7	95.6	95.6	93.2
45-64	84.0	92.5	90.8	89.5
65+	86.0	97.7	90.8	88.5
Education by Gender				
Women				
Junior Cert or less	82.9	95.2	93.6	89.9
Leaving Cert	86.0	97.6	91.3	90.8
Third Level	90.8	98.0	93.7	96.6
Men				
Junior Cert or less	81.2	93.4	89.0	93.5
Leaving Cert	89.4	97.1	93.4	91.7
Third Level	93.1	94.4	94.6	94.6
Residence by Gender				
Women				
City	83.5	94.1	88.2	89.4
Suburb	88.4	96.1	93.4	93.9
Town	89.0	96.8	92.9	92.9
Rural/Village	87.5	98.9	93.1	94.9
Men				
City	91.9	95.3	96.5	98.8
Suburb	92.2	93.6	93.1	89.0
Town	87.6	94.8	91.0	91.1
Rural/Village	89.3	96.4	94.4	92.1

3.4.3 Perceived Reactions of General Practitioners

Table 3.31 summarises the perceived likelihood of respondents with regard to how a GP would react if he or she was contacted by a victim of domestic abuse. A large majority of 88 per cent of respondents believed that the GP would take the situation very seriously, and even more thought that it was likely that he or she would give advice on where to go for further help, with 96 per cent selecting this response. Ninety-three per cent agreed that it is likely that a GP would understand this type of problem and 92 per cent believed that any hurt or injuries of the victim would be recorded by the practitioner. Men and women did not differ strongly in their opinions regarding the likelihood of any of these reactions, with the difference being two percentage points or less for all items.

Age, on the other hand, did influence the responses given by different people, with younger individuals being more likely to believe in the GP to react in any of the above mentioned ways, with the exception of “would understand this type of problem”, where older women were slightly more likely to expect this than younger women.

Respondents with lower education judged it to be less likely that a GP would take the situation seriously. On the other hand, education mattered little with regards to the perceived likelihood of the victim receiving advice for further help and the GP understanding this type of problem. However, men with only Junior Certificate or lower level of education were slightly less likely than other men to believe that a GP would comprehend the issue. Female respondents with higher education also perceived it to be more likely that a GP would record injuries than women with a lower level of education, although this pattern does not occur for male respondents. Place of residence did not influence responses to any of the four items.

Chapter Four

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 3 presented the results from this survey of attitudes to domestic abuse in Ireland. The survey covered several aspects of people's understanding, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours relating to domestic abuse. All of these results were broken down by gender, age and education. The main areas covered by the survey were: first, identifying the behaviours people think constitutes domestic abuse; how common as well as how serious they consider the problem of domestic abuse to be in Ireland and with whom is it associated. Second, looking at the impact of domestic abuse, the survey covered physical harm, emotional harm and the fear that people experience when they are victims of abuse. It explored whether people's perceptions of severity of impact would vary depending on whether the victim is a man or a woman. Third, the survey examined a range of issues around individuals responding to or coping with domestic abuse encounters. To this end, the survey explores whether people feel it is appropriate to become involved, under which conditions and in what ways. Other issues covered in the survey are whether people associate domestic abuse with being a type of criminal offence, and whether they see it as a problem experienced by mainstream or marginal groups.

This chapter presents firstly the main findings on each of these topics (Sections 4.1 to 4.6). In Section 4.7, some core findings are drawn, highlighting some of the areas of concern highlighted by the results from this survey. Section 4.8 indicates possible directions for future research.

4.1 How Common is Domestic Abuse?

The first section of this report examined how prevalent people considered domestic abuse against women and against men and presented the following findings.

» Just over 70 per cent said they consider domestic abuse *against women* to be a fairly or very common problem. This view was reported more often by women (81 per cent) than men (60 per cent), by younger than older age groups, and by the lower education groups.

» Far fewer people consider domestic abuse *against men* to be common (42 per cent). In fact a greater share felt that it is not a common occurrence (54 per cent). Again, more women (50 per cent) than men (34 per cent) and lower education groups regard domestic abuse against men as common. There is no indication that place of residence (or where people live) is related to how widespread people think domestic abuse is.

This section also examined whether people thought that domestic abuse against women and against men increased, decreased or remained the same in Ireland over the last 3 years.

» The share of people who reported domestic abuse *against women* to be increasing (46 per cent)

6 This share reflects the shares for close family and extended family combined.

Just over 70% said they consider domestic abuse against women to be a common problem.

was larger than those who felt there was no change (40 per cent) in the last 3 years in Ireland. The likelihood that domestic abuse of women is reported to be increasing is higher among women (53 per cent) than men (38 per cent), increases with age and decreases with education levels. While place of residence has little effect on this perception among women there is a greater likelihood of this perception among men living in a city context.

» In terms of perceptions of changes in domestic abuse *against men*, there is a relatively small difference between the share who report the problem as increasing (42 per cent) and those who regard it as the same (44 per cent). Women (48 per cent) are much more likely than men (36 per cent) to report domestic abuse against men as an increasing problem. Those men who consider domestic abuse against men to be increasing are among the older age groups and the less well educated.

A third area in this section is how much people think domestic abuse occurs to women from certain backgrounds, i.e., from low income groups and from certain cultural backgrounds.

» The findings indicate that a majority share (57 per cent) (fully or slightly) agree that domestic abuse occurs more often to women *from low income groups* and this is a view reported more often by men (63 per cent) than women (51 per cent). There is a clear pattern of agreement among both men and women with this view where the respondent is older and the education background lower. Women living in non-city areas report this view more frequently than women living in any other type of area.

» The results show that a large majority (70 per cent) strongly or slightly agree that domestic abuse happens more often to *women whose cultural background is associated with traditional gender roles*, with men and women differing little on this view. Older women and less well educated women are more likely hold this view.

The theme of how common domestic abuse is in Ireland was continued by examining results around who the respondents felt is most likely to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse against women.

» Most people (81 per cent) see the victim's partner to be the most likely perpetrator of

A much greater share of respondents said they knew a woman (40%) than a man (21%) who had personally been subjected to domestic abuse.

domestic abuse. This view is reported somewhat more by women than men (83 per cent vs. 79 per cent), by the better educated groups and by those aged between 25 and 64 years. There is no evidence that where people lived had any systematic impact on this view.

A share of 44 per cent of people said they knew somebody who personally had been a victim of domestic abuse. The youngest and oldest age groups were least likely to know somebody in this situation whilst residents of towns were most likely to say they knew somebody who had experienced domestic abuse. The report developed a profile of the victims involved by examining the gender of the victim and how the respondent knew this person.

» A much greater share of respondents said they knew a woman (40 per cent) than a man (21 per cent) who had personally been subjected to domestic abuse. Women were more likely to report knowing a woman (41 per cent) and men were more likely to report knowing a man (23 per cent).

» The largest share of people who knew a *woman victim* did so as friends/acquaintances (36 per cent), followed by family members (28 per cent⁶) and from work (14 per cent). Women were more likely to mention knowing a woman victim through their family while work was the context most mentioned by men. The work context is also most cited by those with higher levels of education.

» The largest share of people who knew a *man victim* said they were a friend/acquaintance (41 per cent), a family member (23 per cent) or that they knew them from a work context (17 per cent). Work as a context was cited more frequently in the middle age categories and by the better educated.

The report also examined whether respondents said they are worried that they themselves or somebody close to them might become affected by domestic abuse.

» Most respondents said they had no such worries (70 per cent).

» However of those who are worried about this possibility, 32 per cent of this group were

women and 28 per cent were men; Among women, the youngest age group were the most concerned while men older than 65 years were least concerned.

» Respondents with lower educational credentials reported worrying more frequently than other educational groups.

4.2 What is Domestic Abuse?

The report examined if respondents find that particular behaviours such as slapping or punching a partner constitutes abuse, and under which circumstances, if any, they believe this to be the case.

» An overwhelming majority felt that all of the behaviours enquired about in the survey were, under all circumstances, forms of domestic abuse. The shares for each respective form of abuse in descending order were: forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse (98 per cent); punching a partner (98 per cent); slapping a partner (87 per cent); and finally calling partner hurtful names (67 per cent).

» There were no substantial differences between men and women on forcing a partner to have sexual intercourse, punching a partner or slapping a partner. Men (64 per cent) were overall less inclined to agree that calling hurtful names was a form of domestic abuse under all circumstances than women (71 per cent). Respondents with higher education were also less likely to agree.

4.3 Is Domestic Abuse a Criminal Offence or a Private Matter?

» Of all respondents 88 per cent indicate a strong agreement and a further 9 per cent indicate slight agreement that domestic abuse is a criminal offence. Women with higher levels of education are more likely agree with this belief.

» Most people disagreed that domestic abuse is a private matter that should be dealt with in the family. Women (86 per cent) were more likely to hold this view than men (81 per cent), as were the more educated groups.

4.4 How Does Domestic Abuse Affect Men and Women?

This section summarises the findings on respondents' views on the relative impact of domestic abuse on women compared to men. The section examined the issue of impact firstly by looking at views on the impact of physical harm, emotional harm and fear. The report then examined

⁶ This share reflects the shares for close family and extended family combined.

whether people thought domestic abuse was something more serious if the victim was a woman or a man.

» Overall women (83 per cent) are thought to suffer more *physical harm* than men (2 per cent) while 15 per cent of respondents felt that men and women would suffer equally. Those with higher levels of education are most likely to report that women are more seriously affected by physical harm. Among men respondents, those living in urban contexts are most likely to believe that women suffer more than respondents living in other areas. Younger women are most likely to feel that women and men are equally affected by physical harm.

» Women are also thought to suffer more *emotional harm* as a result of domestic abuse than men (52 per cent vs. 11 per cent) although the difference is less stark when compared to views on the impact of physical abuse outlined above. The older the respondent age group, the more likely they are to report that emotional abuse would impact similarly on men and women.

» More than half (53 per cent) of respondents felt that the *fear arising from domestic abuse* would be greatest for women while 45 per cent are of the opinion that this would be similarly felt by women and men. More women (47 per cent) than men (42 per cent) are likely to hold the view that the level of fear is equal for men and women. Older respondents think the fear is greater for women as do city residents. Men from suburban areas are more likely than other men to think that the fear would be equal for women and men.

» In terms of *slapping*, a large majority (72 per cent) think that it is equally serious whether a man slaps a woman or a woman slaps a man. Women (79 per cent) are more likely to hold this view than men (65 per cent) and this is also the case among the higher educated. In terms of a man slapping a woman, 28 per cent said this is more serious, with the youngest and oldest age groups agreeing most with this view.

» Similarly the majority (66 per cent) felt that *punching a partner* is equally serious whether the perpetrator is a man or a woman. Women (74 per cent) are more likely to hold this view compared to men (58 per cent). Again, the next largest share (34 per cent), find a man punching a woman to be more serious. Women in the youngest age category and both women and men in the oldest age categories consider that a man

punching a woman is more serious. Men who are less well educated and both men and women living in cities or suburbs are more likely to perceive a man punching a woman as more serious.

» Results show that *calling a partner hurtful names* is considered to be equally serious by most respondents (94 per cent). This view was strongest among those with higher education levels.

» Most respondents (72 per cent) consider the impact of forced sexual intercourse on both men and women to be equally serious. This view is more evident among women (77 per cent) than men (67 per cent) and among younger women (83 per cent of those aged 18-24 years and 79 per cent for those age 25-44 years). This view increased with higher levels of education although this effect was stronger for men. The “equally serious” view and was reported most by women who live in towns and village/rural areas (78 per cent) compared to cities (71 per cent). A much smaller share of all respondents (28 per cent) report it is more serious if a man forces a woman.

4.5 Encountering Domestic Abuse: What would you do?

This section examines what people think they themselves, or others, would do if they witnessed or were told about an incident of domestic abuse. The first component to this section compares respondents’ willingness to become involved if a friend, a neighbour or a stranger is subjected to domestic abuse. Finally the section examines issues around reporting incidents of domestic abuse to An Garda Síochána and perceived reactions of General Practitioners.

» People are most willing to assist or help when a friend (94 per cent) is involved and least likely to assist with a neighbour (38 per cent) they do not know; 65 per cent said they would help a stranger.

» Men are substantially more likely to become involved than women if a woman is assaulted by her spouse in public (70 per cent vs. 61 per cent).

» When asked about what they would do if they suspected a *friend* was a victim of domestic abuse, most respondents (95 per cent) surveyed said they would most likely talk to their friend but not address or speak directly about the suspected

More than half (53%) of respondents felt that the fear arising from domestic abuse would be greatest for women while 45% are of the opinion that this would be similarly felt by women and men.

When asked about what they would do if they suspected a friend was a victim of domestic abuse, most respondents (95%) surveyed said they would most likely talk to their friend but not mention the suspected abuse.

abuse. When asked about what they would do if they suspected a *friend* was a victim of domestic abuse, 95 per cent said they would talk to their friend, 93 per cent would encourage the friend to contact a helpline, 87 per cent would encourage the friend to contact An Garda Síochána, 85 per cent would encourage their friend to contact a social worker, 77 per cent would ask her directly about the abuse, 74 per cent said they would speak with other friends about the problem, 43 per cent would report it to An Garda Síochána and 35 per cent said they would speak with the perpetrator.

» Among women the most popular options in descending order were the following. First, to enquire with their friend about her well-being but not mention their suspicions of abuse directly (96 per cent) – this view increases with education. Second, to encourage their friend to contact a helpline (95 per cent), again a view that increases with education but is reported most among the middle age groups. Third, to encourage the friend to report the incidents to An Garda Síochána (88 per cent).

» The same rank ordering of responses was reported by men. Encouraging victims to use a helpline increases among men with age and education. Reporting to An Garda Síochána is highest among those men who are aged between 25 and 64 years.

» Comparing men and women, women were more likely than men to: speak with the friend they suspect was being abused without mentioning the problem directly (96 per cent vs. 93 per cent); encourage their friend to use a helpline (95 per cent vs. 90 per cent); and to encourage them to report the problem to An Garda Síochána (88 per cent vs. 85 per cent). Men however were more likely than women to speak with the perpetrator (47 vs. 23 per cent) and to take the initiative and report the incident to An Garda Síochána (46 per cent vs. 40 per cent).

The evidence above suggests that people would use several different options.

When asked what they would do if a *neighbour* they knew only slightly was a victim of domestic abuse the following were the responses.

» The majority (59 per cent) said they thought it would be (very or fairly) unlikely that they would get involved. A smaller share (39 per cent) felt that their involvement was very or fairly likely to happen.

» People in the older age and the lower education

groups were very unlikely to become involved to help a neighbour. As regards residency, women living in town/village contexts were the most reluctant group to report a willingness to do something in this situation.

When asked what they would do if they witnessed somebody who was a *stranger* to them being subjected to domestic abuse nearly two thirds (65 per cent) said they would be likely to get involved and this was more frequently reported by men (70 per cent) than women (61 per cent). This view is strongest among men with levels of education at Junior Certificate or lower. People living in towns or villages are also more likely to report that they would become involved.

Asking people about their reporting to the police is widely considered to be an area that is sensitive to enquire about – i.e. that respondents will try to answer in a way that reflects positively on them. As questions become more sensitive or threatening, people are increasingly likely to overstate or understate behaviour even when the best question wording is used. Consequently it is important to try and minimise for people the feeling that it is their behaviour that is the focus of the question. For this reason, the survey enquired instead about what people thought other people's reasons may be for not reporting to An Garda Síochána and in this way introduce a proxy subject for them to respond to.

» Almost three quarters (74 per cent) said that other people would be (very or fairly) unlikely to report domestic abuse incidents to an Garda Síochána. Women aged 18-24 years responded "very unlikely" more than others. Women living in cities more frequently reported "very unlikely" than men living in cities (41 per cent vs. 25 per cent). Of all respondents, 23 per cent said that it was (very or fairly) likely that others would report incidents to An Garda Síochána.

» In terms of *reasons for not reporting*, respondents' greatest concern was the feeling they should not get involved in other people's business (88 per cent), followed by fear that they might make matters even worse (75 per cent), that it might result in the removal of children from the family (73 per cent), that it would not improve the safety of those involved (70 per cent). Fifty-two per cent said that people feel An Garda Síochána would not treat the problem seriously enough.

» Those aged 18 to 24 years scored highest on almost all of the five reasons given for not reporting to An Garda Síochána.

» The largest difference between men and women's responses around not reporting to An Garda Síochána was seen in the belief that doing so would not improve the safety of those involved. Women reported more frequently than men on this question (73 per cent vs. 66 per cent).

» For most age groups the greatest concern around reporting to An Garda Síochána was the belief they should not get involved followed by the fear that reporting might make things even worse.

Section 3.4 concludes by examining respondents' perceptions of the type of help one might receive if they were to visit a general practitioner if they had been subjected to domestic abuse.

» The majority (96 per cent) reported that a GP would give advice about where to get further help. This was followed closely by people feeling that the GP would understand the nature of the problem (93 per cent) and would record evidence of injuries (92 per cent).

» Women aged 65 and over were least likely of all to feel that the situation would be taken seriously. This age group also ranked lowest on the belief that GPs would record evidence of injuries.

» People with a Junior Certificate or less were the least likely to report that GPs would take the situation seriously.

4.6 Changes in Attitudes Towards Domestic Abuse Over Time

Some of the findings can be compared with outcomes of the earlier surveys – Eurobarometer 51.0 (1999) and Watson and Parsons (2005), as the sampling and data collection methods as well as the question wording are sufficiently similar. In 1999, 81 per cent of the Irish sample regarded violence against women as either fairly or very common. In 2003, 78 per cent of the Irish sample regarded domestic abuse as common (the question relevant for this figure in 2003 did not differentiate between domestic abuse against men and women). In 2008, the share of respondents regarding domestic abuse against women as common is 70 per cent. Although care should be taken in interpreting these figures as a trend, less people appear to consider domestic abuse as a common problem in 2008 when compared with data collected five and ten years earlier.

In 2003, 41 per cent of the sample said they knew somebody whose partner was abusive. In 2008, 44 per cent indicated that they knew either a man or a woman who had been a victim of domestic abuse. Taking the different question wording into account, these figures appear to be quite similar.

There are no indications that the share of people who perceive domestic abuse to be common or know somebody who has been subjected to domestic abuse, has increased since five or ten years ago – although the majority of

respondents in the 2008 sample felt domestic abuse had increased in recent years.

4.7 Core Findings

In short this study indicates the following.

» A large majority of the Irish population exhibit high levels of awareness of the problem of domestic abuse. People perceive domestic abuse against women to be a common and increasing problem and have a broad definition of what constitutes domestic abuse.

» Domestic abuse is perceived to be more common among women and the consequences are perceived to be more severe for women than men.

» The findings support the view that the Irish population regards domestic abuse to be unacceptable.

» People feel responsible and are willing to intervene if they witness domestic abuse. However if the victim is somebody outside the family milieu, such as a neighbour that they don't know well, people are reluctant to become involved. Concern or fear of making things even worse than they are is the main reason given for not intervening.

» There is little evidence pointing to significant changes in many attitudes to domestic abuse over the last ten years.

4.8 Future Research

Attitudinal research can play a key role in providing a basis for policy in relation to the prevention of domestic abuse and the protection of victims of such abuse and can inform national strategy to tackle this problem.

» Attitudes towards domestic abuse need to be monitored on an ongoing, periodic and regular basis. This study is an important source of evaluation for the impact of various types of ongoing work in this area (e.g. both service provision and awareness raising). A follow-up survey on attitudes towards domestic abuse should take place not later than 2012. In order to increase comparability with the results from this survey, there should be considerable overlap with regard to the questions and their wording. However, some areas of the questionnaire used in this study require further development and elaboration and this should be taken into account in future work.

» General population surveys such as this are limited. They do not provide sufficient coverage of groups which are difficult to access (i.e. 'hard-to-reach' groups). Furthermore, the capacity to identify and describe attitudes and beliefs of sub-groups or sub-cultures of the population is restricted.

General population surveys should therefore be complemented by future research which applies methodologies appropriate to establishing and monitoring the attitudes of such difficult to access groups and sub-cultures in Ireland.

» A more detailed understanding of people's definitions of domestic abuse is required. In particular future research should further refine the measurement of people's perceptions of the severity of the different forms of behaviours constituting domestic abuse.

» For the purpose of developing awareness raising strategies, research that has the purpose of describing people's attitudes (*descriptive research*) should be complemented by research that examines the causal mechanisms and processes driving the development (both formation and change) of attitudes relating to domestic and sexual violence (*explanatory research*).

» Greater knowledge is needed about the perceived alternatives, behavioural choices and the underlying motivations and reasoning of people who become aware of domestic abuse. A greater understanding of these is vital to the development and improvement of facilities, programmes and initiatives aiming to encourage appropriate and safe ways that people can use when responding to domestic abuse. The research required should provide a fine-grained description of people's behavioural responses, how these vary with situational characteristics and the underlying decision making processes.

» The social fabric of Irish society is rapidly changing. Future research should examine how being embedded in society (i.e. the extent of social embeddedness) affects victimisation and support (including reporting/disclosing). This work would analyse the challenges posed by social change and associated risks related to individualisation, secularisation and fragmentation processes in

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