



# EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE – THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN AND MEN



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JÉRÔME PIETERS | PATRICK ITALIANO | ANNE-MARIE OFFERMANS | SABINE HELLEMANS

**2010**

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# FOREWORD

For several years Belgium has been combating partner abuse by means of an action plan in which the Federal Government, the Communities and the Regions are associated. Coordinated since its inception by the Institut pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes (IEFH - Institute for the Equality of Women and Men), this plan now has a variety of goals.

In this context, it is essential to develop knowledge and increase understanding of the issue in order to guarantee an appropriate partner-abuse policy. Moreover, both at the international and EU levels, the intensification of research endeavours and the promotion of data collection are regularly highlighted and translated into resolutions and recommendations.

Since the coming into force of two criminal-policy directives in 2006, the recording of acts of partner abuse by public prosecutors' offices and police departments has been mandatory. Data are thus being collected by these bodies, which give a consistent and ongoing view of the phenomenon.

However, since it is inadequately reported, partner violence is not apparent enough in official statistics, which therefore do not fully express its true prevalence. In order to effectively combat abuse, studies must be made of all events which are not reported to the public authorities, and are therefore not included in these statistics.

In Belgium, two studies have been performed on the frequency of violence against women (and men). In 1988, a first study analysed violence against women. A second study was extended to men in 1998.

For this reason, ten years on, IEFH has performed a new, large-scale study of the experiences of women and men in the area of gender violence. Its purpose was to gain a clearer view of the occurrence, forms and severity of the physical, sexual and emotional abuse to which women and men are exposed due to their gender, as well as of the associated risk and protection factors.



With this publication, IEFH's aim is to supply new data which may enable a more accurate and in-depth understanding, as well as to improve the policies currently implemented by the various levels of government.

This research task was delegated to Centre Liégeois d'Étude de l'Opinion (CLEO – Liège University Opinion Study Centre) and the Vakgroep Experimenteel-Klinische en Gezondheidspsychologie (Experimental, Clinical and Health Psychology Department) of Ghent University. The study was carried out between September 2008 and December 2009 by Dr. Marc Jacquemain, Frédéric Heselmans, Ivan Toussaint, Jérôme Pieters, Patrick Italiano and Marie-Thérèse Casman of Liège University and Dr. Ann Buysse and Sabine Hellemans of Ghent University, with the support of Anne-Marie Offermans. This report documents their work. IEFH is grateful to them for their cooperation with this project.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the external support committee for their interest throughout this project: Pascale Franck and Ann Beliën (Provincial Coordinators on Violence, Antwerp), Kris De Groof and Gerard Van Menxel (Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk – General Welfare Agency), Benoît Galand (Catholic University of Louvain), Freddy Gazan (Service de la politique criminelle – Criminal Policy Department), Julia Laot (FPS Federation of Family Planning Centres), Lydia Merckx and Anja Termote (Direction générale Statistique and Information économique – Directorate-General, Statistics and Economic Information) and Ivo Aertsen (Catholic University of Leuven). Their valuable opinions and relevant comments have made an undoubted contribution to the quality of this study.

*Michel Pasteel,  
Director, Institute for the equality of women and men*

*June 2010*

# CHAPTER 1. GOALS AND METHODS

# 1

- 1 GOALS OF THE RESEARCH
- 2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF ABUSE
- 3 DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE
- 4 METHODOLOGY

## 1 GOALS OF THE RESEARCH

The overall goal of this research project is to improve our understanding of the occurrence, forms and severity of emotional, physical and sexual abuse which may be experienced by women and men, as well as of the concurrent risk and protection factors. This has to be done by updating the data relating to gender violence. Moreover, we also wish to determine the effectiveness of policies in this area.

This general aim is translated into the following ten research questions:

- 1 To what extent do women and men in Belgium experience emotional, physical and sexual abuse?
- 2 To what extent do women and men in Belgium witness emotional, physical and sexual abuse?
- 3 How does prevalence progress over time?
- 4 To what extent are victims willing to report acts of violence?
- 5 What is the relationship between victim and perpetrator, and if applicable between witness and victim?
- 6 What are the forms, severity and duration of abuse?
- 7 What are the risk factors and protection factors in the area of abuse?
- 8 How do victims respond to emotional, physical and sexual abuse?
- 9 What are the consequences of emotional, physical and sexual abuse?
- 10 Is the Belgian abuse policy, in particular in the areas of primary and secondary prevention, effective? Do victims of abuse have enough access to advice, support and help?

The results then need to be analysed and contextualised, taking into account gender, age and, if relevant, community/linguistic group. On this basis, recommendations must be drawn up to optimise primary prevention and secondary assistance policies.

The above ten questions relate to research goals which are both complementary and highly diverse. The first is to quantify abuse as accurately as possible from various angles: status (victims and witnesses), configuration (form, duration, frequency, severity), context and progress over time. The second is to determine explanatory factors in the abuse (risk/protection factors). Finally, the third goal is prevention through the development of public policies.

## 2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF ABUSE

Interpersonal violence as a social issue was given an increasing amount of attention as of the end of World War II. Formerly, interpersonal violence and its consequences had been mainly considered to be medical issues. By the end of the 1940s, they had also been socially contextualised and studied at various levels. The feminist movement attracted attention to the gender dimension of interpersonal abuse in the 1970s, and made it one of the issues in the social relations between men and women. In this way, the feminist movement helped structure civil society, which led to the acknowledgement of a need for action to prevent intrafamily violence and provide support.

Public interest in the victims of sexual abuse and in other social actors such as the parents of murdered or missing children subsequently reinforced awareness of the issue. A snowball effect brought other forms of violence to light: abuse of parents or other children by children and young people, elder abuse, institutional abuse (in prisons, schools, in the workplace, etc.<sup>1</sup>), and child witnesses of abuse.

European and international organisations such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations have paid attention to violence against women by adopting directives, resolutions and other official documents, the purpose of which has been to develop policy lines, especially in the areas of preventions and research.

In Belgium, violence against women has been a political focus area since the 1980s, a time during which the main areas of interest were sexual and physical abuse by partners. In 1987-88, the then Secretary of State for Social Emancipation, Miet Smet, had a first prevalence survey performed of the nature, frequency and consequences of physical and sexual abuse against women. A policy was developed on the basis of the results to combat physical and sexual violence against women and children. A further prevalence study was carried out in 1998, which also investigated men's experiences of abuse.<sup>2</sup>

In 2001, the first National Action Plan to combat violence against women was drawn up in Belgium. All action taken to combat violence against women in Belgium was coordinated for the first time and taken jointly. Further to an evaluation by the Institut pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes, another action plan was drawn up in 2004, with one priority in mind: abuse of (ex-)partners. During the Interministerial Conference of 8 February 2006, it was decided to extend the action plan against partner abuse to action at the Community and Regional level. The purpose of the successive actions and action plans was to raise awareness, train, prevent, shelter and protect, support, follow up, take repressive measures against perpetrators, record, and, finally, to coordinate and evaluate.

### 3 DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

This study is limited to interpersonal violence and excludes self-directed violence and collective violence (insurrections, wars between states, civil war, genocide), whether economic, political or social.<sup>3</sup>

The definition of gender-related interpersonal violence has been greatly enriched over the past decades. As emphasised by Bruynooghe et al.,<sup>4</sup> the definition of abuse evolves over time, and is a many-faceted and complex issue to begin with. Here are a few definitions.

The Council of Europe has defined violence as any act or omission committed by a person (or group) if it endangers the life, bodily or psychic integrity, or freedom of a person (or group),

<sup>1</sup> Bruynooghe, R., S. Noelanders and S. Opdebeeck (1998). *Prévenir, subir et recourir à la violence*, Hasselt/Brussels: Centre Universitaire du Limbourg/Ministère de l'Emploi et du Travail et de la politique d'égalité des chances, pp. 4-11.

<sup>2</sup> Vandewege, R., R. Bruynooghe and S. Opdebeeck. (1988). *Les femmes confrontées à la violence physique et sexuelle – Prédominance et conséquences*, Rapport destiné à la Secrétaire d'Etat à l'Environnement et à l'Emancipation sociale, Brussels: INBEL; Bruynooghe, Noelanders and Opdebeeck, *Prévenir, subir et recourir à la violence*; Cockx, R. (2009). *Miet Smet: trois décennies de politique d'égalité des chances*, Brussels: Institut pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes, pp. 90-92.

<sup>3</sup> Garcia-Moreno, C. et al (2005). *WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women*, Geneva: World Health Organisation, p. 13, Fig. 2.1.

<sup>4</sup> Bruynooghe, Noelanders and Opdebeeck, *Prévenir, subir et recourir à la violence*, p. 5.

or severely compromises the development of his/her personality and/or adversely affects his/her financial security.<sup>5</sup>

According to the World Health Organisation, partner abuse is any act of violence within an intimate relationship which causes physical, emotional or sexual harm or pain to the persons involved. This definition also includes threats to commit such acts, duress or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private life.

The Belgian National Action Plan against partner abuse (P.A.N. 2006-2007) defines abuse within an intimate relationship as a series of behaviours, actions and attitudes by one of the partners or ex-partners, the purpose of which is to control the other. They include verbal, physical, sexual, economic attacks, threats or duress which are or may be repeated and adversely affect the integrity of the other person or even his/her socio-economic integration.<sup>7</sup>

Within the scope of this study, we shall be defining the concept of injury to the physical or emotional integrity of an individual. According to Jaspard et al., “injury to an individual is a universal ethical concept which has achieved a wide consensus” in relation to respect for the individual’s rights.<sup>8</sup> Although this concept appears to be legally, politically and heuristically operational, the complex and highly diversified reality it covers need to be taken into account for the phenomenon to be quantified. The various forms of abuse – verbal, psychological (or emotional), economic (or financial), physical, sexual – and living spheres (intimate relationships, family, friends, public areas) in which they may occur are taken into account in the questionnaire.

As for the gender dimension of abuse, this needs to be examined case by case. Although in certain situations the fact that violence is related to the social relations between men and women is obvious (for instance, in the case of severe physical and sexual abuse between partners), other situations may be less clear-cut (e.g. theft or mugging in the street). Abuse may also occur irrespective of gender differences.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

As specified above, in order to achieve our goal, it was decided to perform a large-scale survey based on a representative sample of the Belgian population. One major stage was, of course, to draw up a questionnaire.<sup>9</sup>

### 4.1 DEVELOPING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

To develop the questionnaire, a study was first made of recent overseas research on interpersonal violence. Walby and Myhill identify three types of study on interpersonal violence, i.e. studies on crime, studies on intrafamily abuse and on violence against women.<sup>10</sup> On

<sup>5</sup> “Violence is characterised by any act or omission committed by a person (or group) if it endangers the life, bodily or psychic integrity, or freedom of a person (or group), or severely compromises the development of his/her personality and/or adversely affects his/her financial security”; viz.: Council of Europe, Report by “Violence within the family” commission, November 1987.

<sup>6</sup> Krug, Etienne G. et al. (ed.) (2002). *World report on violence and health*, Geneva: World Health Organisation, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> Institut pour l’égalité des femmes et des hommes (2004). *Plan d’action nationale de lutte contre la violence entre partenaires 2004-2007*, Brussels: Institut pour l’égalité des femmes et des hommes, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> “Injury to an individual is a universal ethical concept which has achieved a wide consensus in relation with respect for the individual’s rights”; viz.: Jaspard, M. et al. (2003). *Les violences envers les femmes en France: une enquête nationale*, Paris: La documentation française.

<sup>9</sup> The questionnaire is included in Annex 7.

<sup>10</sup> Walby, S. and A. Myhill (2001). “New survey methodologies in researching violence against women”, *British journal of criminology* 41, pp. 502-522.

the basis of this classification, a body of documents judged to be relevant was selected and studied in depth, which comprised the following studies:

- Prévenir, subir et recourir à la violence (Belgium, 1998);
- La violence et les sentiments d'insécurité chez les personnes âgées: prévalence et conséquences (Belgium, 1998);
- Enquête Nationale sur les Violences Envers les Femmes en France (ENVEFF, 2000);
- Health, well-being and personal safety of women in Germany (2003);
- International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS), project coordinated by the Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI) with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and Statistics Canada (2003);
- Men's experiences of interpersonal violence in Germany: results of a pilot study (2004);
- Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against women (World Health Organisation, 2004);
- Domestic Abuse of women and men in Ireland (2005);
- Violence and abuses against women inside and outside family in Italy (2006);
- Health survey by interview, Belgium 2008 (Institut de Santé Publique, under way);
- Enquête Sociale Générale – Victimization (ESG) (Statistics Canada, under way).

The analysis of these studies enabled us to:

- Identify the main research hypotheses in this area;
- Review the various questionnaire structures;
- Inventory the indicators which take the various dimensions of abuse into account;
- Write the questions relating to these various indicators.

A number of parameters had to be taken into account in the questionnaire:

- The diversity of its goals: the research was intended to identify not only abuse, but also its explanatory factors;
- The priorities of the Institut pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes (IEFH);
- The relevant hypotheses and indicators for the identification of abuse as identified further to studying the literature.

Moreover, while drawing up the questionnaire, we were confronted with a number of practical and methodological limitations which led us to deviate from our initial goal.

1. Originally, the purpose of the questionnaire was to compare the results of the 1998 Belgian prevalence survey<sup>11</sup> and supply an estimate of the quantitative evolution of abuse. However, it became apparent that the fact of taking into account new methods for surveying abuse would reduce the validity of such a comparison. It was therefore decided to update the questionnaire in accordance with new methodological criteria. The problems of comparing our results with those of the ten year old survey would be compensated for by international comparison.
2. The age limit for participation in the survey was increased to 18 instead of 15, as suggested during a first stage. As shown by research, abuse among teenagers is highly

<sup>11</sup> Bruynooghe, Noelanders and Opdebeeck, *Prévenir, subir et recourir à la violence*.

<sup>12</sup> Crick, N.R. and M.A. Bigbee (1998). "Relational and overt forms of peer victimization: a multiinformant approach", *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology* 66(2), pp. 337-347; Mynard, H. and S. Joseph (2000). "Development of the multidimensional peer-victimization scale", *Aggressive behaviour* 26, pp. 169-178.

specific (e.g. peer abuse).<sup>12</sup> It was difficult to include these specific forms of abuse and adapt the vocabulary used to this age group within a questionnaire designed to investigate abuse generally.

3. To increase the validity of the results, the survey of the experiences of abuse during the past 12 months was originally structured according to the following contexts: public areas, professional activities, couple, relations with ex-partner, family and friends. As the issue of workplace abuse has been the object of specific studies, it was decided not to investigate it further in this study.
4. The questionnaire also had to be designed in such a manner that the prevalence of the various forms of abuse could be determined, and to enable a number of situations to be studied in depth. For economic reasons, only one situation – life with a current or former partner during the past 12 months – would be examined in detail. The following aspects would be reviewed: the various consequences of abuse (physical, emotional), requests for assistance from close associates and specialised departments, reporting to the police, the presence of witnesses during the abuse, and finally the characteristics of the partner and his/her family of origin. In the case of other living spheres and life stages, a brief review is made of the act the respondent considers to be the most severe and most important. As emphasised in French survey ENVEFF, “the respondent’s choice, which is by definition subjective, is highly likely to coincide with what is socially or legally considered most serious (a rape being worse than verbal abuse, for instance)”.<sup>13</sup> However, it is essential that these choices be analysed. In this case, a minimum of information would be collected: the relationship with the perpetrator, the fact of seeking help from close associates, and reporting to the police.
5. At first, we had intended to question the respondents on their experience both as victims and perpetrators. Finally, we decided against this idea. First of all, the analysis of respondent experiences in both roles would have taken considerably longer. Also, and probably to a far greater degree, it is difficult to ask respondents to comment first on their experiences as victims of abuse, then as perpetrators, as the respondent’s position is completely reversed. It was therefore decided not to include the questions to perpetrators in this study.

## 4.2 CONSTRUCTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

### 4.2.1 Definitions

The issue of interpersonal violence needs to be adequately introduced, in order not to precipitate refusals from people who do not feel themselves to be concerned, or, conversely, feel themselves to be “too” concerned and may fear repercussions. For this reason, we selected a more neutral title: “Survey of health, safety and living conditions”. Health and safety are less sensitive subjects, easier to introduce, and closely connected with the issue of abuse. Feelings of insecurity on the part of victims and witnesses are characteristic of abuse situations. Moreover, the effects of abuse on health are emphasised by the literature<sup>14</sup>: depression, anxiety, chronic pain, gynaecological problems, use of psychopharmaceuticals, etc. According to the World Health Organisation, partner abuse is the primary cause of death and disability among women aged 16 to 44.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “The respondent’s choice, which is by definition subjective, is highly likely to coincide with what is socially or legally considered most serious (a rape being worse than verbal abuse, for instance)”; viz.: Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*, p. 29

<sup>14</sup> Feder, G. et al. (2009). *How far does screening women for domestic [partner] violence in different health care settings meet criteria for a screening programme ? Systematic reviews of nine UK National Screening Committee criteria*, Health Technology Assessment Programme 13(16).

<sup>15</sup> Krug, E.G. et al. (2002). *World report on violence and health*, Geneva: World Health Organisation, p. 100.

#### 4.2.2 Structure

Taking the questionnaire requires approximately 20 minutes. The approach used is intended to generate trust and the recollection of sometimes distant events (see Table 1).

To establish trust, questions concerning acts of abuse are only asked after five modules devoted to the collection of contextual data (residential characteristics, family characteristics, etc.), as well as information on social networks, state of health, family life, opinions concerning equality between partners and the use of physical violence.

Two modules are dedicated to the issue of violence during 2 periods: during the past 12 months and during the respondent's lifetime. Acts of abuse suffered during the past 12 months are investigated in the following situations: public areas, partnerships (current partner and ex-partner) and family. Abuse suffered after the age of 18 is then investigated, followed by sexual abuse before the age of 18. Finally, respondents are asked about the acts of abuse they have witnessed over their lifetime.

One important point was that we had to be able to distinguish between abuse and conflicts, especially in a marital context.<sup>16</sup> The questions on the couple's relationship – consensus within the couple (see Annexe 1: DAS-16 Dyadic Adjustment Scale<sup>17</sup>) and conflict resolution – are asked during the first part of the questionnaire (Module 5), while abuse issues are raised in the module on the couple (Module 6.2).

The last part of the questionnaire comprises three modules: one concerning knowledge of assistance services and abuse-prevention campaigns, one concerning contextual characteristics such as the nationality, religious beliefs, training, professional activity and income of the respondent and his/her partner or ex-partner, etc. The last module reviews the respondent's satisfaction with the survey.

<sup>16</sup> Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*, p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Antoine, P., V. Christophe and J.-L. Nandrino (2008). "Echelle d'ajustement dyadique: intérêts cliniques d'une révision et validation d'une version abrégée", *L'Encéphale* 34(1), pp 38-46.



**Table 1.** Structure of the questionnaire

<b>Module 1</b>	<b>Identification of the respondent</b>	
<b>Module 2</b>	<b>Social network</b>	
<b>Module 3</b>	<b>Health</b>	
<b>Module 4</b>	<b>Opinions (1st Part)</b>	
<b>Module 5</b>	<b>Family life</b>	
<b>Module 6</b>	<b>Abuse experienced during the past 12 months</b>	
	Context 1	Public areas
	Context 2	The couple
	Context 3	Family and friends
<b>Module 7</b>	<b>Abuse experienced throughout lifetime</b>	
	Part 1	Experiences as a victim of abuse after the age of 18
	Part 2	Experiences as a victim of abuse before the age of 18
	Part 3	Experiences as a witness to abuse
<b>Module 8</b>	<b>Opinions (2nd Part)</b>	
<b>Module 9</b>	<b>Other questions related to identification</b>	
<b>Module 10</b>	<b>Satisfaction of the respondent</b>	

### 4.2.3 Operationalisation of abuse in the questionnaire

The concept of abuse was operationalised in the questionnaire using a variety of indicators such as forms and acts of abuse, their severity and the relationship with the perpetrator.

#### *Acts of verbal and emotional abuse*

The range of acts of verbal and emotional abuse is particularly wide. For instance, the scale specifically designed for the study of emotional violence in partner relationships – the Multi-dimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse (MMEA)<sup>18</sup> – includes 28 acts classified according to 4 sub-scales which correspond to the following categories of emotional abuse: restrictive engulfment, denigration, hostile withdrawal and dominance/intimidation. Moreover, there is, at the time of writing, no consensus concerning acts of emotional abuse, the prevalence of which should be measured first.<sup>19</sup>

In consequence, and in order to achieve a more thorough investigation of abuse situations between partners during the past 12 months, the acts of verbal and emotional abuse were selected in such a way as to define a large number of categories, to determine whether the relationship with the partner or ex-partner was based on control,<sup>20</sup> to include acts most frequently committed by both women and men<sup>21</sup>, and finally to assess the involvement of children in abuse situations.

<sup>18</sup> Murphy, C.M. and S.A. Hoover (2001). "Measuring emotional abuse in dating relationship as a multifactorial construct", in: O'Leary, K.D. and R.D. Maiuro (ed.), *Emotional abuse in violent domestic relations*, New York: Springer, pp. 29-46.

<sup>19</sup> García-Moreno et al., *WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women*, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> The presence or absence of controlling attitudes is one of the indicators which enable conflictual relations [in which violence is reciprocal, occasional and rarely escalates], and dominance relationships [in which violence is one-sided, recurrent and very frequently escalates]. Viz.: Johnson, M.P. (1999). "Two types of violence against women in the American family: Identifying patriarchal terrorism and common couple violence", Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, Irvine, CA, November, pp. 2-3.

<sup>21</sup> Lenz, H.J. and R. Puchert (2005). "Violence within the family: men as victims", *Council of Europe Conference on Violence within the Family: the Place and Role of Men*, Strasbourg: 6-7 December 2005, p. 22.

### Acts of economic abuse

In terms of configuration, economic abuse can be considered, in some cases, to be a specific form of emotional abuse: the control of one partner over another may affect access to resources, to banking and financial data, or to professional activity.

As in almost all surveys, a single question was selected concerning economic abuse for this study. It mentions three acts of abuse involving control and is included in the “Couple” and “Family and friends” contexts in the following form: “During the past 12 months, has your partner or ex-partner (a family member or a friend) taken your salary/pension/savings from you against your will, or has he/she got you into debt?”

### Acts of physical abuse

There are many different acts of physical abuse, since:

- The acts suffered or perpetrated by men and women appear to be different<sup>22</sup>;
- The main schools of thought have drawn up lists of acts of abuse which overlap only in part.

Despite these controversies, there is a consensus concerning acts of physical abuse which need to be included in a questionnaire intended *inter alia* to measure the prevalence of physical abuse between partners.<sup>23</sup> As do other prevalence studies analysed in this survey, we have selected almost all forms of resort to physical force or abuse cited by the Conflict Tactics Scale 2 (CTS2).<sup>24</sup> However, the selected acts were modified to ensure comparability with international data.

### Acts of sexual abuse

Recent surveys diverge as to the number of acts of sexual abuse recorded. This quantitative difference is consistent with a qualitative difference: the higher the number of acts, the more they include acts, the violence of which, although objectively obvious, is difficult to measure: the determination of the degree of violence is left to the respondent.

Rape is included in all questionnaires, as are unwanted sexual relations or touching.

In this study, each context or lifetime period includes at least 3 acts of sexual abuse: forced sexual touching, attempted forced sexual relations, and forced sexual relations.

To further investigate this area, two acts of sexual abuse were added to the questionnaire:

- In the “Public areas” context; During the past 12 months, in the street, public transport or another public area, did someone undress in front of you or touch a part of your body (breasts, buttocks) against your will?”;
- In the “Couple” context: “During the past 12 months, has your partner or ex-partner imposed on you sexual practices or gestures you found humiliating or degrading?”.

<sup>22</sup> Lenz and Puchert particularly emphasise biting and scratching. *Viz.*: Lenz and Puchert, “Violence within the family: men as victims”, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> García-Moreno et al., *WHO Multi-country Study on women’s health and domestic violence against women*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> Choking and burning are not systematically included. *Viz.*: Archer, J.A. (1999). “Assessment of the reliability of the conflict tactics scales: a meta-analytic review”, *Journal of interpersonal violence* 14(12), pp. 1263-1289.

### Acts of neglect (elder abuse)

Two questions specifically intended for individuals aged over 65 and concerning negligence were drawn up on the basis of the study *La violence et les sentiments d'insécurité chez les personnes âgées: prévalence et conséquences*<sup>25</sup> (*Abuse and feelings of insecurity in the elderly: prevalence and consequences*): "During the past 12 months, did a family member or friend leave you by yourself when you were ill or needed medical care?", and "During the past 12 months, did a family member or friend refuse to do shopping for you or take you somewhere?".

#### 4.2.4 Contents of the questionnaire

The survey on abuse was organised according to:

- The position of the person in the abuse situation (victim or witness);
- Time: the abuse most recently suffered (during the past 12 months),<sup>26</sup> abuse suffered after the age of 18, abuse suffered before the age of 18;
- Living sphere, in increasing order of intimacy (public areas, partner, ex-partner, family and friends);
- The acts of abuse: the acts under consideration form a continuum which includes verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Moreover, they are, whenever possible, repeated identically for each living sphere.

These various combinations contribute to the validity of the questionnaire's content and will improve the accuracy of the prevalence rates. As shown by the results of French survey ENVEFF, which is based on the same approach, "repeated questioning, sphere by sphere, concerning acts of abuse suffered during the past 12 months enables respondents to remember and make a selection prior to the final questions relating to their whole lifetime. This method may also have enabled some women to gain insight into the situation, led them to reconsider situations they have experienced, which at first they would not have mentioned, and enabled them to mention them at the end of the survey."<sup>27</sup>

#### 4.2.5 Severity of abuse

It is not easy to assess the severity of abuse, as the indicator developed for the first version of Gelles' and Straus' Conflict Tactics Scale, i.e. the intrinsic severity of the abuse or its nature, appears to be inadequate.

To compensate for this inadequacy, it is recommended to collect the following data in order to estimate the severity of abuse<sup>28</sup>:

<sup>25</sup> Vandenberg, A., S. Opdebeeck and F. Lammertyn (1998). *La violence et les sentiments d'insécurité chez les personnes âgées: prévalence et conséquences*, Leuven/Brussels: K.U.Leuven/Ministère de l'Emploi et du Travail et de la Politique d'égalité des chances.

<sup>26</sup> To establish prevalence during the past 12 months, individuals currently in partnerships who had had contact with their ex-partner during the past 12 months were also given the opportunity to identify acts of abuse committed by their ex-partner (see questionnaire: Q125B-Q137B).

<sup>27</sup> "Repeated questioning, sphere by sphere, concerning acts of abuse during the past 12 months enabled the respondents to remember and make a selection prior to the final questions concerning lifetime prevalence. This method may also have caused certain women to become aware of the phenomenon and led them to reconsider situations which they would not have reported at first, enabling them to report these situations at the end of the interview"; viz.: Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Walby, S. (2006) "Towards international standards for data collection and statistics on violence against women", in: *Proceedings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe meeting on gender statistics*. Online publication; Walby, S. (2007). *Developing indicators on violence against women*, Lancaster: Department of Sociology, Lancaster University; Basile, K.C. and L.E. Saltzman (2002). *Sexual violence surveillance. Uniform definitions and recommended data elements*. Version 1.0, Atlanta, Georgia: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control.

- The frequency of the acts of abuse<sup>29</sup>;
- The physical injury caused by the abuse.

Other data types are also taken into consideration:

- The multiplicity of the abuse;
- The duration of the abuse;
- Fear of the partner;
- The victim's perception of the seriousness of the situation, or the identification of the most serious act by the respondent;
- Psychological injury;
- Hospitalisation or medical care without hospitalisation;
- Inability to work;
- Socio-economic cost;
- Abuse during pregnancy;
- The impact of scenes of abuse on child witnesses;
- Other types of impact (move, etc.).

In this study, the questionnaire collects information pertaining to the above categories, with the exception of the socio-economic cost. The frequency of abuse is systematically recorded in the case of abuse during the past 12 months, irrespective of the living sphere under consideration, and is exclusively evaluated for the most severe act of abuse experienced or witnessed in the course of the victim's or witness's whole lifetime.

It should be noted that the measurement of the frequency of occurrences during the past 12 months is complemented by information concerning the duration of the abuse and the permanency or cessation of abuse situations experienced. Both questions are based on the empirical observation that "partner abuse develops according to cycles. In the most serious cases (those observed by specialised departments), the intensity and frequency of the phases of abuse increase over time, until a point of non-return is reached."<sup>30</sup>

As far as the other living spheres (public areas, family and friends) and periods (before and after the age of 18) are concerned, the available information concerning severity relates to the perception of the abuse by the victim or witness: "Among the acts you have just mentioned, which, according to you, is the most important or the worst?"

The consequences of abuse are also assessed by means of comparisons between the health indicators included in Module 3 of the questionnaire, i.e.:

- Overall assessment of state of health;
- Chronic illness or health problems;
- Stress levels;
- Mental illness (depression, chronic anxiety, insomnia);
- Traumatological injury;
- Consumption of healthcare (consultation of health professionals, hospitalisation);
- Suicide attempts;
- Addiction problems (alcohol, illicit drugs, prescription drugs).

<sup>29</sup> The data concerning the frequency of abuse experienced as well as their occurrence in time are of particular importance, as they enable the hypothesis discussed hereafter to be tested, i.e. according to which the severity of abuse increases as it is repeated.

<sup>30</sup> "Partner abuse develops in cycles. In the most severe cases (those observed by specialised departments) the intensity and frequency of the phases of abuse increase over time until a point of non-return is reached"; viz.: Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*, p. 27.

Connections are made between these indicators and the abuse experienced during the past 12 months, whatever the living sphere in which it has occurred.

#### 4.2.6 Preliminary test

A preliminary test was performed on around 10 people to test the acceptability of the subject-matter, the validity of the questions and their formulation, and the duration of the survey.

The main adjustment was a substantial reduction in the duration of the interview. The scale intended to measure psychological distress (General Health Questionnaire in 12 items<sup>31</sup>) was cut from Module 3, "Health". The Schwartz Scale, which measured the respondent's position concerning values relating to respect for individuals, was removed from the "Opinions" module. Module 7, "Abuse experienced during lifetime", was simplified: the number of acts of abuse experienced after the age of 18 was removed, although the representativeness of the various types of abuse was preserved. Only sexual abuse was retained for the period before the age of 18.

### 4.3 SAMPLE, IMPLEMENTATION AND POST-STRATIFICATION

#### 4.3.1 Target group and sampling

The target group was the entire population of Belgium between the ages of 18 and 75.

The contact data were acquired from WDM Belgium, a marketing-services operator active in the area of data and database management services. They were pre-stratified according to language group, region, gender and age group. The resulting probabilistic sample comprised 5,050 users. Our predicted response rate was 50%, with a minimum of 2,000 surveys collected. In the worst case, the confidence interval would be approximately 2.2%.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Training, briefing and debriefing of surveyors

The surveyors were given general training on the quality and validity of data collection by survey. They also took part in a specific briefing session on abuse, the questionnaire and the contact procedure. The surveyors (who might find themselves dealing with extremely painful situations) were permitted to stop participating in the data collection at any time if it proved too disturbing.

#### 4.3.3 Interviews with respondents

First, an announcement was made by sending each person in the sample a letter. This letter described the survey (the sponsor, goals, questions asked, etc.), explained the arbitrary selection method and emphasised the confidentiality of the data collected. The first contact was made by phone. The actual survey was then conducted, either over the phone or online,

<sup>31</sup> The General Health Questionnaire designed by Goldberg in 1972. Goldberg, D.P. (1972). *The detection of psychiatric illness by questionnaire*, London: Oxford University Press.

<sup>32</sup> The confidence interval is the error margin in the results of a sample-based survey. A confidence coefficient is used to calculate this margin. For instance, it can be said with 95% certainty that the number of women victims of a specific type of abuse is 13 to 17%. P is the likelihood that this is wrong. In Table 7, for instance,  $p=0.05$ , or, in other terms, 5%. When, for instance,  $p=0.008$ , this means that a difference noted is statistically significant, with a certainty of 99.2% of being right and 0.8% of being wrong.

according to the respondent's preference <sup>33</sup>. This mixed technique made it possible to minimise refusals and maximise respondent comfort. Recent information also shows that the reliability of responses to surveys of this type increased with the physical distance between surveyor and respondent, as this distance tends to reduce conformity bias. Moreover, it is easier to answer questions which are highly personal or evoke painful memories when the surveyor is not physically present. This method also ensures the safety of the respondents.

For the same reason, it was decided that female surveyors would speak with all people in the sample, whereas the male surveyors would restrict themselves to male respondents, as women who have been abused by a man may be less willing to confide in a male surveyor.

The data collection process began in early April 2009 and was carried out over a four-month period.

Our logistical tools enabled us to manage the mixed surveying technique. Moreover, the surveyors had worked with the online tools (our virtual contact centre Opinionline), which enabled field work to be monitored and checked in real time.

The surveyors were required to stop the interview if the respondent was "interrupted" by anyone, which might affect the confidentiality and authenticity of the responses. At the end of the interview, the phone number of a department specialised in abuse was systematically given to people who had reported being the victims of abuse.

#### **4.3.4 Non-responses**

To achieve an optimal final response rate, a number of strategies were deployed:

- Use of the contact sheet to vary the dates and times of contacts, to ensure that at least five attempts were made to contact each potential respondent;
- In the case of non-response or a soft refusal at the time of the first contact, the second contact was made by the best surveyors;
- In the event of a soft refusal at the time of the first contact, an alternative contact was suggested (sending of a specific code which enabled the potential respondent to take the survey online);
- Characterisation of the circumstances of non-response (context, respondent profile), to enable reactions to be anticipated.

#### **4.3.5 Responses**

At the end of the survey, the gross response rate was around 41%. After removing wrong numbers, ineligible individuals (aged over 75), individuals unable to take the survey (mental problems, deafness, language issues, etc.) and individuals absent during the survey, the response rate came to approximately 47%. The response rate was slightly lower in Flanders than in Wallonia.

<sup>33</sup> For the purpose of this study, we opted for a phone/online survey, unlike the 1998 prevalence study, in which researchers interviewed respondents face-to-face.

**Table 2.** Response rates – Flanders and Wallonia

FLANDERS	
<b>Basic sample</b>	<b>3.034</b>
Death	3
Illness	40
Language problem	77
Age	114
Long-term absence	22
Wrong number, house move	83
<i>Total</i>	<i>339</i>
<b>Total of eligible interviewees</b>	<b>2.695</b>
Refusal or inability to contact	1.449
<b>Full surveys taken</b>	<b>1.246</b>
Response rate	46,23%

WALLONIA	
<b>Basic Sample</b>	<b>2.003</b>
Death	1
Illness	45
Language problem	43
Age	89
Long-term absence	17
Wrong number, house move	79
<i>Total</i>	<i>274</i>
<b>Total of eligible interviewees</b>	<b>1.729</b>
Refusal or inability to contact	902
<b>Full surveys taken</b>	<b>827</b>
Response rate	47,83%

#### 4.3.6 Data entry and validation

The IT medium used was an interface developed specially for this survey (and also used for the online version of the questionnaire). This procedure enables a file to be produced without routing or entry errors. To guarantee data validity and reliability, we also checked the age variable in the sampling base and in the data collected. After cleaning, our database comprised 2,014 individuals, 1,211 Flemish-speakers and 803 French-speakers.

#### 4.3.7 Post-stratification

Despite the pre-stratification, post-stratification according to age was also required.

**Table 3.** Post-stratification according to age

Age group	Sample	Belgian population	Weight
18-24	9,1%	12,4550	1,368678426
25-34	10,4%	20,1579	1,938263316
35-44	19,6%	20,7814	1,060274484
45-54	18,9%	17,8997	0,94707382
55-64	19,2%	15,1427	0,78868223
65-75	22,8%	13,5633	0,59488219

Other variables such as gender or region did not require post-stratification.

**Table 4.** Respondent gender

	Frequency	Percentage	Weighted frequency	Weighted percentage	Belgium*
Women	987	49,0%	993	49,3%	51,1%
Men	1.027	51,0%	1.021	50,7%	48,9%
Total	2.014	100,0%	2.014	100,0%	100,0%

\* Source: Directorate-General for Statistics and Economic Information, Statbel, year 2008

**Table 5.** Respondent region

	Frequency	Percentage	Weighted frequency	Weighted percentage	Belgium*
Brussels FR	139	6,9%	124	6,2%	9,53%
Brussels NL	23	1,1%	22	1,1%	
Wallonia	662	32,9%	643	32,0%	32,6%
Flanders	1.190	59,1%	1.224	60,8%	57,87%
Total	2.014	100,0%	2.014	100,0%	100%

\* Source: Directorate-General for Statistics and Economic Information, Statbel, year 2008





# CHAPTER 2. PREVALENCE OF EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE OVER LIFETIME

## 2

- 1 ABUSE EXPERIENCED AFTER THE AGE OF 18
- 2 ABUSE EXPERIENCED AFTER THE AGE OF 18:  
FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
- 3 SEXUAL ABUSE EXPERIENCED BEFORE THE AGE OF 18

This study chiefly focuses on abuse experienced in the various living spheres identified (couple, family and friends, and public areas) during the past 12 months. In other words, this is the reference period for our analysis of the experience of abuse by women and men in Belgium. We also asked a number of questions concerning the prevalence of abuse outside this reference period, in particular abuse experienced after the age of 18 in the case of verbal, emotional, physical and sexual violence, and sexual abuse experienced before the age of 18. These figures are presented in this chapter.

Whenever possible, we compare our data with the prevalence figures from the 1998 study by Bruynoghe et al. In Paragraph 4.1 of Chapter 1, we have already emphasised the problems posed by this comparison. The 1998 study was exclusively concerned with abuse experienced over the course of the interviewees' whole life. The various forms of abuse were therefore investigated in far greater detail for this reference period than in our study. Moreover, the goal of the 1998 study was a comparison with the 1988 study, and the population group selected (individuals aged 20 to 50) was far more restricted. Of course, it is possible to select comparable age groups; however, this would restrict sample size. Moreover, the 1988 survey was conducted quite differently (face to face) and the surveyor instructions relating to the questions were also different, meaning that the interview conditions were not identical.

Moreover, the figures for the reporting of acts of abuse do not necessarily reflect the interviewees' full experience, and for this reason caution must be exercised when interpreting differences as a reflection of the progression of actual percentages of victims over the past 10 years. As previously mentioned in the 1998 study, this may reflect either a changed propensity to report abuse or a change in the actual occurrence of abuse. The figures relating to the reporting of abuse may change with social awareness of the issue (viz. the wave of suspicion and memories of abuse generated by the Dutroux case 15 years ago), or with the manner in which the survey context attempts to evoke long-past events. From this viewpoint, the estimated figures concerning lifetime abuse are bound to be more sensitive to selectivity than those concerning the events of the past 12 months.

## 1 ABUSE EXPERIENCED AFTER THE AGE OF 18

First, we shall be examining to what extent the respondents were confronted with abuse in the course of their adult life. Table 6 reveals that 52.2% report not having been subjected to any form of abuse since the age of 18. Once the figures are distributed by gender, it turns out that 55.1 % of them are women and 49.3% men (statistically, this is a significant difference). Hence, men are more affected by abuse (50.7%) than women (44.9%).

**Table 6.** Abuse experienced after the age of 18, in %

	WOMEN (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	55,1%	49,3%	52,2%
Victims	44,9%	50,7%	47,8%

$p=0,005$

Table 7 shows the various forms of abuse submitted to the respondents and indicates prevalence for the entire sample (N=2,014). Verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse are all taken into account, and the data concern all living spheres (couple, family and friends, public areas).

**Table 7. Abuse experienced after the age of 18, in %**

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	39,2%	43,7%	41,5%
Intimidation	22,7%	21,4%	22,0%
Slaps, blows, physical assault	13,9%	16,1%	15,0%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation	5,6%	7,2%	6,4%
Locking in or locking out	5,9%	2,7%	4,3%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations	5,6%	,8%	3,2%

Verbal abuse (insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words) is by far the most prevalent, and men are more often subjected to it than women. On the other hand, in the case of the most severe forms of abuse, victimisation of women is significantly higher: this applies above all to sexual abuse (forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations), but also locking in/out. There are no significant gender differences for the other forms of abuse. At this stage, we are not expressing an opinion concerning the frequency or seriousness of the abuse. It can be assumed that verbal abuse is under-reported (insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words). Although this is quite prevalent in public areas, it does not necessarily leave ineradicable memories. For this reason, we would like to perform the same calculations without including verbal abuse.

**Table 8. Abuse experienced after the age of 18 (excluding verbal abuse), in %**

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-vitims	71,1%	67,0%	69,0%
Victims	28,9%	33,0%	31,0%

$p=0,025$

Table 8 shows that 31% of the respondents experienced at least one act of abuse other than verbal abuse during their adult life, men (33%) a little more than women (28.9%).

### 1.1 COMPARISONS WITH THE 1998 SURVEY: DIFFERENCES IN METHODS AND RESULTS

The comparison of the prevalence figures from this survey with those in the 1998 survey poses methodological problems which are difficult to overcome. Indeed, comparison was not one of the priorities of this project, so that the questionnaire, our introductory instructions and the interviewing methods were not adjusted to those used for the 1998 prevalence survey.

In the introduction to this chapter, we have already stated that in the 1998 study the various forms of abuse concerning which the surveyors had questioned the respondents for the

“lifetime” period of reference were discussed in greater detail than in this study. The fact that a sensitive issue such as abuse is described step by step in one survey (1998) or formulated in a more synthetic manner, by grouping several acts into a single question (2009) may affect results. This may be viewed as the effect of interpretation (by the surveyor or respondent) as to what constitutes abuse, or the effect of memory, or even of suggestion. Methodologically speaking, it is also extremely difficult to compare the results of a survey which lists 17 acts of physical abuse and 24 acts of sexual abuse (1998) with those of another which, although it covers the same forms of abuse, does so in far less detail, in that it includes only three questions on physical abuse and one general question on sexual abuse (2009).

Some methodological choices (e.g. questionnaire, interviewing method, etc.) which might, in other contexts, be considered to be minor, empirically prove very important when the issue is abuse.

In the 1998 survey, only individuals aged 20 to 49 were questioned, which has constrained us to isolate this age group in the data available to us. Also, the scope of the 1998 survey was the interviewees’ lifetime, whereas we investigate only abuse suffered in adult life. For the period before the age of 18, we have only investigated sexual abuse. We therefore simply do not have comparable data, except for a small part of the forms of abuse we have studied. Table 9 presents the prevalence figures for 1998.

**Table 9.** 20-49 age group: abuse experienced during lifetime – 1998 figures in %

	Women (N=783)	Men (N=656)	Total (N=1.439)
Non-victims	31,9%	27,0%	29,7%
Physical abuse only	24,2%	48,0%	35,0%
Sexual abuse only	11,1%	3,8%	7,8%
Physical and sexual abuse	32,8%	21,2%	27,5%

In the case of the 2009 study, only abuse experienced in adult life (after the age of 18) can be taken into account, whereas the figures for 1998 concern abuse experienced over the subjects’ lifetime. In the latter, verbal abuse was not investigated in depth and has therefore not been included in Tables 9 and 10. Neither do these tables include emotional abuse.

**Table 10.** 20-49 age group: abuse experienced after the age of 18 – 2009 figures in %

	Women (N=596)	Men (N=563)	Total (N=1.158)
Non-victims	69,5%	63,3%	66,4%
Physical abuse only	12,9%	21,7%	16,4%
Sexual abuse only	2,3%	,7%	1,4%
Physical and sexual abuse	3,7%	,2%	1,8%

The difference observed in prevalence between 1998 and 2009 does not necessarily point to a (sharp) decline in the occurrence of violence in Belgium. Rather, the difference lies in the temporal frameworks of reference of both surveys (see above). However, this explanation does not suffice, as it would mean that the respondents questioned in 2009 had been exposed to a great deal of abuse before the age of 18. The difference in prevalence may

simply be caused by a difference in the definition of abuse, and in the level of detail in the information included in the survey.

We need to acknowledge that our broad and general wording, e.g. *“Did someone – a partner, family member, friend, colleague, or someone you didn’t know – sexually touch you against your will or force you into having sexual intercourse?”*, used in the 2009 survey for occurrences after the age of 18, does not address the same realities as the details of the various forms of abuse as listed in the 1998 survey. It may be, on the one hand, that such wording evokes buried memories, which are not necessarily evoked by the general question. Also, the semantic differences between “unwanted” and “against your will”, “stroking” and “touching” give much food for thought. Whatever the case, the considerable differences between the prevalence figures bear witness to the sensitivity of a survey on such an issue to the methodological conditions of implementation, including the difference between phone and face-to-face interviews.

Given the differences in measurement between both surveys, it seems irrelevant to take comparison further, whether by age group or otherwise. However, it should be noted that in the case of lifetime abuse, sexual violence concerns women almost exclusively, whether in 1998 or 2009, whereas men experience physical abuse far more often when living spheres are globalised. Further details will be supplied hereafter.

## 1.2 VICTIMISATION ACCORDING TO AGE

We shall now briefly investigate some of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents who experienced abuse in adult life. The only significant characteristics are those relevant to a long period of time: for instance, the respondent’s current place of residence would add no information if the events were not current.

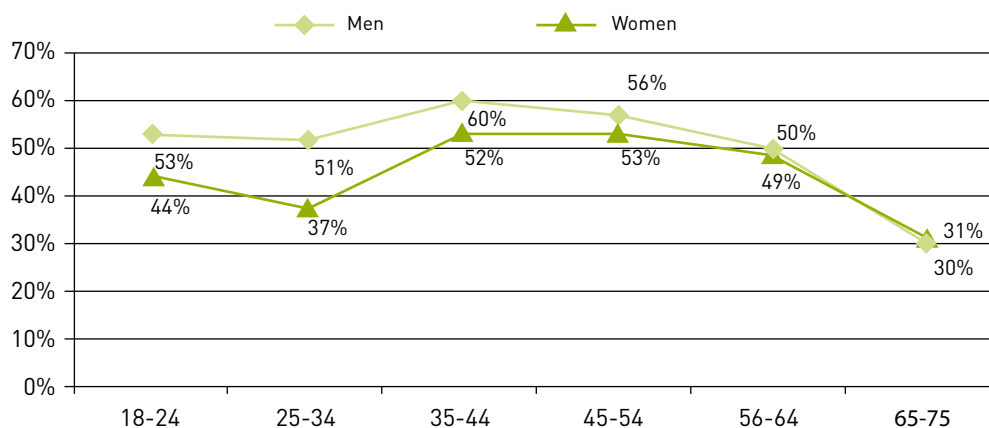
**Table 11.** Abuse experienced (total) after the age of 18 according to age group, in absolute figures and %<sup>34</sup>

		18-24 (N=249)	25-34 (N=405)	35-44 (N=419)	45-54 (N=360)	55-64 (N=307)	65-75 (N=274)
<b>Women</b>	N	58	72	118	90	69	40
	%	43,9%	37,1%	52,4%	52,6%	48,6%	30,8%
<b>Men</b>	N	62	109	116	106	83	43
	%	52,5%	51,4%	59,8%	56,4%	50,3%	29,9%

The oldest women and men are those who report the least abuse overall (Table 11). This can undoubtedly be interpreted as an effect of memory, as the greater length of the period during which these respondents could have faced acts of abuse makes it likelier that they might actually have been abused, even if only once. This underlines the importance of memory or of the selection of events deemed relevant enough to be mentioned.

Concerning male victims, prevalence remains fairly stable whatever the age group, peaking at 59.8% for the 35-44s. Among the under-35s, women are considerably less victimised than men, and catch up after that age. Despite the relatively limited differences between age groups, the relationship between age and victim status remains significant. The diverging pattern observed for the oldest group plays a role in this connection.

<sup>34</sup> The percentages supplied in the cells always reflect the ratio of the number of victims to the number of respondents within the specific category. For instance, 43.9% of women aged 18-24 have been abused. The percentages supplied in the following tables should also be interpreted in this way.

**Graph 1. Abuse experienced (total) after the age of 18 according to age group, in %**

If we focus on the prevalence figures for women, especially the two youngest age groups, it can be seen that women aged 18-24 are abused more often than those aged 25-34. This may be a sign of increasing violence among the young. Although the total number of respondents in Table 11 is large enough, it is difficult to draw conclusions at this stage in data disaggregation. Also, young people are, relatively speaking, less easy to contact by phone. There may have been a selection effect on the youngest age groups, in that those who have only a mobile phone and are therefore not included in the databases were under-represented in this age group.

With this reservation in mind, we shall be investigating the various forms of abuse in Tables 12 to 15. It should be noted that the (low) numbers mean some caution should be exercised when interpreting apparent differences.

**Table 12. Physical abuse experienced after the age of 18 according to age group, in absolute figures and in %**

		18-24 (N=249)	25-34 (N=405)	35-44 (N=419)	45-54 (N=360)	55-64 (N=307)	65-75 (N=274)
<b>Women</b>	N	19	25	42	41	29	11
	%	14,5%	12,9%	18,8%	23,8%	20,6%	8,5%
<b>Men</b>	N	18	49	46	41	32	14
	%	15,3%	23,1%	23,7%	21,7%	19,3%	9,8%

As far as physical abuse is concerned (Table 12), there is a slight difference between women and men. Whereas the prevalence of physical abuse is almost identical (approximately 15%) for men and women in the youngest age group, the victimisation of men aged 25 to 44 increases faster than that of women. The difference in prevalence is highest in the 25-34 category, to the disfavour of men. Above the age of 45, women and men are the victims of physical abuse to more or less the same degree.

**Table 13.** Intimidation experienced after the age of 18 according to age group, in absolute figures and in %

		18-24 (N=249)	25-34 (N=405)	35-44 (N=419)	45-54 (N=360)	55-64 (N=307)	65-75 (N=274)
Women	N	12	39	69	50	41	14
	%	9,2%	20,1%	30,7%	29,2%	29,1%	10,7%
Men	N	29	45	48	48	36	14
	%	24,6%	21,2%	24,7%	25,5%	21,7%	9,7%

Whereas in the various age groups, with the exception of the oldest, men face intimidation to approximately the same degree [21 to 25%], these rates are more variable in the case of women (Table 13). The women in the youngest groups seldom experience intimidation – which is not the case for the men – ; after the age of 35, around 30% of women are victims of intimidation and are more often victimised than men. The percentages then fall considerably in the oldest age groups, for both men and women.

**Table 14.** Sexual abuse experienced after the age of 18 according to age group, in absolute figures and in %

		18-24 (N=249)	25-34 (N=405)	35-44 (N=419)	45-54 (N=360)	55-64 (N=307)	65-75 (N=274)
Vrouw	N	4	8	18	15	7	4
	%	3,1%	4,1%	8,0%	8,8%	5,0%	3,1%
Men	N	0	2	2	1	2	1
	%	,0%	,9%	1,0%	,5%	1,2%	,7%

Sexual abuse (Table 14) is generally less frequent and concerns a tiny fraction of the male respondents in our sample. In the case of women, it is almost twice as high in the middle-aged group (35-54) as in the other groups.

**Table 15.** Verbal abuse experienced after the age of 18 according to age group, in absolute figures and in %

		18-24 (N=249)	25-34 (N=405)	35-44 (N=419)	45-54 (N=360)	55-64 (N=307)	65-75 (N=274)
Women	N	51	60	106	80	57	36
	%	38,6%	30,9%	47,1%	46,5%	40,1%	27,5%
Men	N	55	97	98	86	75	36
	%	46,6%	46,0%	50,5%	45,7%	45,5%	25,0%

As noted earlier, verbal abuse is the commonest form of abuse (Table 15). Men are generally more affected by verbal abuse than women, except between the ages of 45 and 54, when male and female victimisation are more or less equal. The results according to age group are similar to those noted for other kinds of abuse, such as intimidation: over the age of 65, prevalence decreases among both women and men. As far as the other age groups are concerned, almost half the men are the target of verbal abuse, especially those aged 35 to 44. Evolution is less regular in the case of women: if we ignore the oldest category, women aged 25 to 34 are the least often subjected to verbal abuse; however, prevalence increases considerably in the next two age groups.



### 1.3 VICTIMISATION ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

A variety of indicators are available to determine the socio-economic status of respondents. One of these is professional status. However, this indicator can be “conjuncturally variable”, in that, should a respondent with a high level of education happen to be (temporarily) out of work at the time of the survey, he/she would appear to have lower socio-economic status than if he/she were employed. Moreover, pensioners and students would not fall into a specific socio-professional category. For this reason, the level of education was selected as the most relevant indicator of socio-cultural level.

**Table 16.** Abuse experienced (total) after the age of 18 according to level of education, in absolute figures and in %

		Primary school	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Short higher education	Long higher education	University
Women	N	18	52	146	144	13	71
	%	32,1%	43,7%	42,1%	50,7%	33,3%	50,7%
Men	N	14	58	179	107	39	115
	%	33,3%	50,4%	45,8%	55,7%	54,9%	58,4%

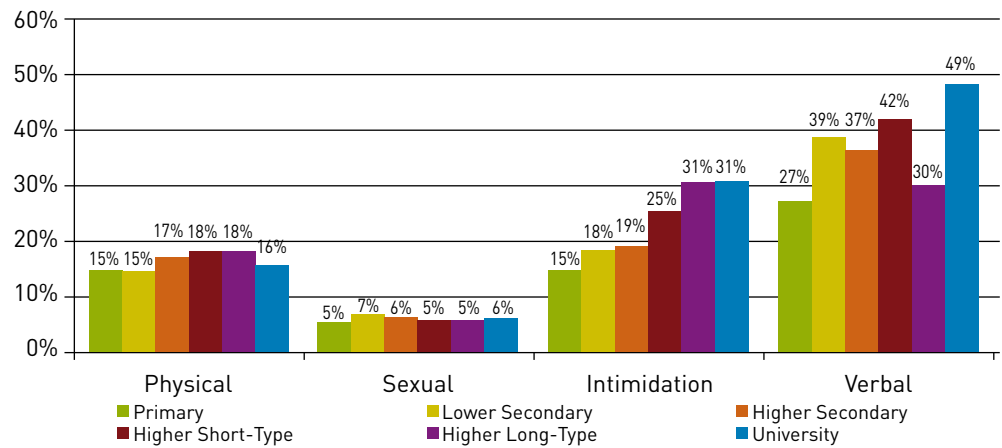
General prevalence does not appear to be pegged to the level of education. Men with the highest educational level, i.e. university graduates, whatever their degree, are most frequently the victims of abuse. This contradicts the dominant perception that abuse occurs most frequently in lower-income classes with lower cultural status. This is also regularly contradicted by other studies: the Belgian health survey of 2004 similarly records a higher rate of abuse, both physical and emotional, in the more educated classes.<sup>35</sup> It can be supposed that this effect is due at least in part to varying respondent selectivity in the various categories as to what deserves to be mentioned in the survey.

The same applies in part to women, except in the case of respondents with a long higher education-type qualification, for whom prevalence is lowest. Indeed, it is within this category that the difference is greatest between women and men, to the detriment of men. Both men and women with primary-school education are the least abused. The historical context – mandatory schooling was extended to the age of 18 in 1983 and made it impossible to leave school with a primary-school qualification only – suggests that this category includes mainly older respondents, for whom the abuse rates are the lowest (see Table 11). There are few general conclusions to be drawn from this analysis, as the educational groups with the lowest abuse rates are also the smallest. We therefore conclude that abuse is prevalent at all educational levels in more or less comparable proportions, even though the differences recorded between both men and women are statistically significant (the respective probabilities being 0.013 and 0.042).

We analyse the prevalence of the various forms of abuse (physical, sexual, intimidation and verbal) according to qualification in Graphs 2 and 3. Qualifications do not appear to have identical effects for each form of abuse and there are, therefore, no overall patterns. It should therefore be remembered that the absolute size of the samples is relatively small, and that few general conclusions can be drawn.

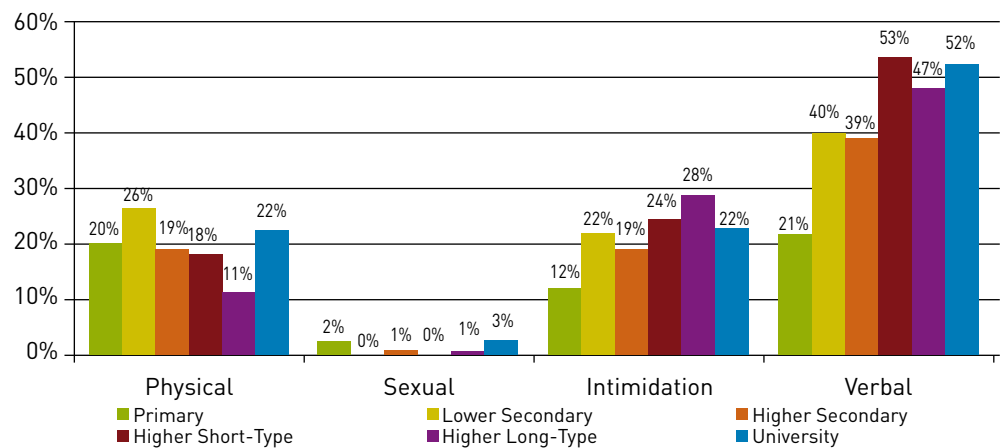
<sup>35</sup> Bayingana, K. et al. (2004). *Enquête de santé par interview Belgique 2004*. Livre VI, Brussels: Institut Scientifique de la Santé Publique (IPH/EPI REPORTS N° 2006 – 034).

**Graph 2.** Abuse experienced by women after the age of 18 according to level of education, in %



In the case of women, correlation with the level of education is significant ( $p=0.031$ ) only in the case of intimidation: prevalence increases with qualification. As mentioned earlier, it is uncertain whether this corresponds to an actual difference in prevalence, or to increased sensitivity to and ability to identify abuse when faced with it. Despite the variations in the graph, there is no significant correlation in the case of verbal abuse ( $p=0.06$ ).

**Graph 3.** Abuse experienced by men after the age of 18 according to level of education, in %



In the case of men, only verbal abuse bears a statistically significant relation to the level of education. Again, there is an ascending trend according to educational level. Whereas there is a large block among men with higher education, prevalence is very low among those with primary-school diplomas (the low numbers should, however, be taken into account).

#### 1.4 VICTIMISATION ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS CONVICTION

The respondents' religious convictions are the last "stable" variable taken into consideration. The results are quite difficult to interpret as they show only similarities and differences between men and women.

**Table 17.** Abuse experienced (total) after the age of 18 according to religious conviction, in absolute figures and in %

		Believers (N=1.073)	Nonbelievers (N=912)
Women	N	257	184
	%	44,3%	45,7%
Men	N	232	281
	%	47,1%	55,2%

Table 17 shows that women believers and nonbelievers experience a similar degree of abuse, so that religious conviction does not appear to play a role in the case of women. On the other hand, it makes a significant difference to men ( $p=0.013$ ): those who identify themselves as nonbelievers experience a higher degree of abuse. However, in purely descriptive terms, women describe themselves more often as believers, i.e. 58%, against 48% in the case of men. As it was not included in the questionnaire, the specific belief system (Catholic, Muslim or other) remains unknown.

As far as the various kinds of abuse are concerned, women are subjected less often to physical abuse when they define themselves as believers ( $p=0.006$ ), which is not verified at a statistically significant level in men, even though the figures in Table 18 show a similar difference.

**Table 18.** Physical abuse experienced after the age of 18 according to religious conviction, in absolute figures and in %

		Believers	Nonbelievers
Women	N	81	87
	%	14,0%	21,6%
Men	N	86	110
	%	17,4%	21,6%

On the contrary, Table 19 shows that male nonbelievers experience significantly more ( $p=0.003$ ) verbal abuse than other respondent categories.

**Table 19.** Verbal abuse experienced after the age of 18 according to religious conviction, in absolute figures and in %

		Believers	Nonbelievers
Women	N	226	158
	%	39,0%	39,2%
Men	N	196	248
	%	39,8%	48,7%

There are no links with religious conviction in the case of the other forms of abuse.

## 1.5 THE CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE

Even though, at this point, we do not know the severity and frequency of abuse, it makes sense to connect this victimisation with the health and lifestyle variables collected, and also with knowledge of welfare services. In some cases, it may be assumed that health problems are a consequence of abuse. However, this remains hypothetical. Contrary to the more detailed survey of recent acts of abuse (during the past 12 months), in which the questions began with the following words: “As a consequence of these actions...”, there may not always be a causal relationship between questions relating to health or knowledge of welfare services, and lifetime experiences of abuse. Relations may therefore work both ways (e.g. use of psychotropic medication may be both a cause and consequence of abuse). A third aspect may also cause both abuse and health problems. It should be noted that respondents were also questioned concerning their state of health over the past 12 months, whereas here we analyse experiences of abuse over their lifetime, so that the abuse may have occurred a long time ago, i.e. prior to the health problems. This could be interpreted as evidence of causality, but we have no detailed information concerning either the time when the abuse occurred, nor concerning its duration.

We do not systematically analyse results according to gender, as the number of observations is not always large enough for this distinction to be made.

### Stress

**Table 20.** Days perceived as stressful according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

	Not at all stressful	Not very stressful	Somewhat stressful	Fairly stressful	Extremely stressful	Does not know
Non-victims	16,3%	16,9%	42,6%	19,5%	4,6%	,2%
Victims	8,8%	16,1%	39,3%	27,6%	8,1%	,1%

$p=0,000$

Table 20 shows symmetry at both extremes: victims of abuse (8.1%) describe their days as extremely stressful twice as often as non-victims (4.6%), and describe them as not at all stressful half as much (8.8%) as non-victims (16.3%). The “not very stressful” and “somewhat stressful” responses yield comparable results depending on victimisation. Victims also describe their days as “somewhat stressful” more often. There is therefore a proven link between victimisation and stress. However, it cannot be concluded whether abuse and stress are two consequences of the same cause, or whether the stress can be attributed to abuse, even if long-past.

When victims of verbal abuse are deducted from the total (Table 21), it can be seen that the number of victims who describe their days as extremely stressful increases further compared with non-victims, but that the difference between victims and non-victims becomes slighter in the “not at all stressful” category. The pattern is therefore not very different, as shown by Tables 20 and 21. It can be concluded that the occurrence of verbal abuse, like other forms of abuse, appears to bear a similar relation to the experience of stress.

**Table 21.** Days perceived as stressful according to victimisation after the age of 18 (not including verbal abuse), in %

	Not at all stressful	Not very stressful	Some-what stressful	Fairly stressful	Extremely stressful	Does not know
Non-victims	14,5%	17,2%	42,1%	21,7%	4,2%	,2%
Victims	8,8%	14,9%	38,6%	27,1%	10,6%	,0%

### Depression and anxiety

**Table 22.** Experience of depression or chronic anxiety during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

	Depression or anxiety	No depression or anxiety	Declined to answer
Non-victims	4,5%	95,3%	,2%
Victims	9,6%	89,8%	,6%

$p=0,003$

Table 22 shows that victims of abuse during the past 12 months experienced severe depression or chronic anxiety twice as often as men and women who experienced no abuse. A number of studies summarised in the meta-analysis by Stith et al.<sup>36</sup> show the influence of abuse on the mental health of the victims. However, there is a difference between men and women in this respect. Although, in all cases, depression is linked to abuse, there are more depressive women among the non-victims (Table 23). It can therefore be supposed that, proportionally speaking, the multiplicative factor of exposure to abuse (if causality is assumed) is higher in men (risks multiplied by 3) than in women (risk multiplied by less than 2).

**Table 23.** Experience of depression or anxiety during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

	Women with experiences of depression or anxiety	Men with experiences of depression or anxiety
Non-victims	6,8%	1,8%
Victims	10,6%	5,8%

When victims of verbal abuse are deducted from the figures (Table 24), it can be seen that the number of both male and female victims with experiences of depression or anxiety increases. This means that victims of non-verbal abuse (emotional, physical and sexual) are more often faced with experiences of depression or anxiety than victims of verbal abuse.

**Table 24.** Experience of depression or anxiety during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (not including verbal abuse), in %

	Women with experiences of depression or anxiety	Men with experiences of depression or anxiety
Non-victims	6,9%	2,0%
Victims	12,2%	7,4%

<sup>36</sup> Stith, S.M. et al. (2003). "Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimization risk factors: a meta-analytic review", *Aggression and violent behaviour* 10(1), pp. 65-98.

### Insomnia

**Table 25.** Frequency of insomnia during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

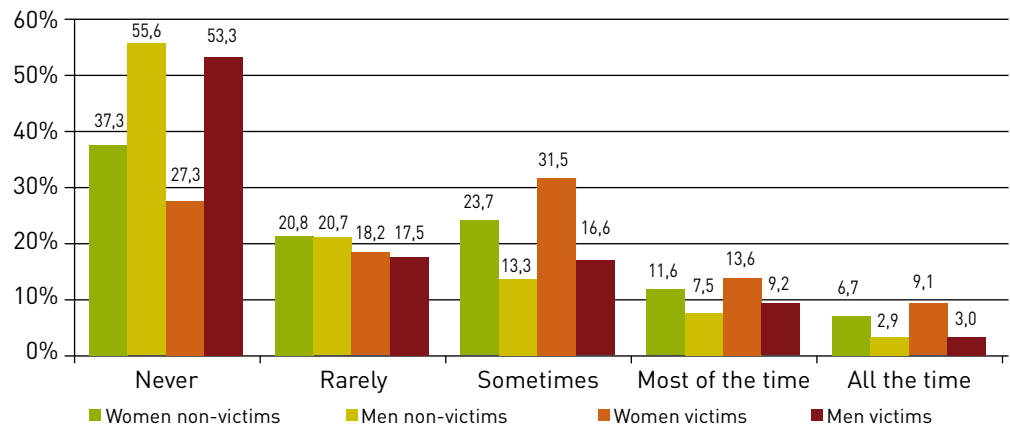
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time	Does not know
Non-victims	47,5%	20,4%	18,5%	9,3%	4,4%	,0%
Victims	41,7%	19,2%	21,9%	10,9%	6,0%	,3%

$p=0,015$

The connection between insomnia and the experience of abuse is significant, but quite low (Table 25): non-victims more frequently report “rarely” or “never” suffering from insomnia than victims of abuse, whereas victims more often report “sometimes” having to deal with it. Both victims and non-victims report suffering from insomnia “most of the time” or “all the time” to much the same degree.

In general, women (victims and non-victims) suffer more from sleep disorders than men, and this correlation is stronger than the one between insomnia and abuse. However, when they have suffered abuse, women experience these difficulties more frequently, whereas this trend is not so strong in men (Graph 4).

**Graph 4.** Frequency of insomnia during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %



When victims of verbal abuse are deducted from the figures, the results do not generate any significant change, which means that the effect of other forms of abuse on insomnia is not necessarily stronger than that of verbal abuse.

### Consumption of sleeping pills and antidepressants

Consumption of antidepressants and sleeping pills is a variable related to the previous one. It can be noted that the correlation between experiences of abuse (of any kind) and the consumption of antidepressants and sleeping pills is not statistically significant. When victims of verbal abuse are deducted from the figures, the ratio of antidepressant and sleeping pill

consumption to victimisation approaches the threshold of significance ( $p=0.08$ ) but does not reach it. It should be noted that there is a slight difference between victims and non-victims who used these drugs previously, but no longer take them (Table 26). This may be an indicator of the link between experiences of abuse and the consumption of sleeping pills and antidepressants, although this link is not confirmed by the statistical test. Again, the dominant characteristic is the fact that women consume sleeping pills and antidepressants twice as much as men, whatever their experience of abuse.

**Table 26.** Consumption of sleeping pills and antidepressants during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (not including verbal abuse) (NOT significant), in %

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly, but not taking them at this time	Regularly and taking them at this time	Does not know
Non-victims	83,6%	3,0%	3,1%	10,1%	,2%
Victims	80,8%	2,6%	5,3%	11,4%	,0%

$p=0,08$

### Consumption of illicit drugs

Although an unambiguous causal relation cannot be established, it can be observed that people who have been abused during the past 12 months consume twice as many illicit drugs (cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, cocaine) (Table 27). Of course, this may be linked to a less settled lifestyle, which increases exposure to abuse in public areas, as well as a form of self-medication of the consequences of abuse.

**Table 27.** Consumption of illicit drugs during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

	Consumption of illicit drugs	No consumption of illicit drugs	Declined to answer
Non-victims	1,5%	98,4%	,1%
Victims	3,8%	96,2%	,0%

$p=0,003$

More men than women consume illicit drugs (Table 28), but there is a link between victimisation and drug consumption in the case of both women and men.

**Table 28.** Consumption of illicit drugs during the past 12 months after the age of 18 according to victimisation (including verbal abuse), in %

		Consumption of illicit drugs	No consumption of illicit drugs	Declined to answer
Women	Non-victims	,7%	99,3%	,0%
	Victims	2,2%	97,8%	,0%
Men	Non-victims	2,4%	97,4%	,2%
	Victims	5,2%	94,8%	,0%

When victims of verbal abuse are deducted from the figures, the results are similar: victims of emotional, physical and sexual abuse consume drugs slightly more often than non-victims.

The figures are too low to analyse the link between victimisation and the frequency of drug consumption, which, although the subject of a specific question, was answered by only 2.7% of the respondents.

### Consumption of alcohol

As shown by meta-analyses of the subject,<sup>37</sup> we noted that there is no statistically significant link ( $p=0.27$ ) between the consumption of alcohol in everyday life and the experience of abuse in adult life. This is true in the case of both men and women when considered separately. There is only a slight increase in consumption (“once or twice a week”) in male victims, which may be linked to the increased risk of experiencing abuse during outings.

### Suicide attempts

The studies show that self-inflicted abuse such as attempted suicide occurs more often in victims of abuse than in non-victims.<sup>38</sup> This is also confirmed by Table 29: twice as many victims as non-victims attempt suicide.

**Table 29.** Attempted suicide according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

	One suicide attempt	Several suicide attempts	No suicide attempts
Non-victims	,9%	,7%	98,5%
Victims	2,6%	1,5%	95,7%

$p=0,006$

When victims of verbal abuse are deducted from the figures, this link appears slightly stronger (Table 30).

**Table 30.** Attempted suicide according to victimisation after the age of 18 (not including verbal abuse), in %

	One suicide attempt	Several suicide attempts	No suicide attempts
Non-victims	,9%	,8%	98,3%
Victims	3,4%	1,6%	94,7%

Attempted suicide is generally more frequent in women than in men (Table 31), and the abuse of women has a significant effect ( $p=0.006$ ) on suicide attempts, whereas it does not in the case of men ( $p=0.188$ ). However, the absolute figures are so low that no general conclusions can be drawn.

<sup>37</sup> Dinh-Zarr, T. et al. (1999). “Preventing injuries through interventions for problem drinking: a systematic review of randomized controlled trials”, *Alcohol and alcoholism* 34, pp. 609-621; Gil-González, D. et al. (2006). “Alcohol and intimate partner violence: do we have enough information to act?”, *European journal of public health* 16, pp. 278-84.

<sup>38</sup> Feder, G.S et al. (2006). “Women exposed to intimate partner violence: expectations and experiences when they encounter health care professionals: a meta-analysis of qualitative studies”, *Archives of internal medicine* 21(166), pp. 22-37.



**Table 31.** Attempted suicide according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

		One suicide attempt	Several suicide attempts	No suicide attempts
<b>Women</b>	Non-victims	1,1%	,9%	98,0%
	Victims	3,6%	2,5%	93,9%
<b>Men</b>	Non-victims	,6%	,4%	99,0%
	Victims	1,9%	,6%	97,5%

### Psychological counselling

Possibly in connection with the living and mental health conditions described in the previous paragraphs, it can be noted that victimisation is also associated with a more frequent resort to counselling ( $p=0.001$ ) by psychologists or psychiatrists. In the best-case scenario, this may be a sign that the problems associated with abuse are being treated, whatever the causal relation. At best, it may be sign that victims of abuse are trying to deal with their problems. However, as in previous cases, no conclusions can be drawn as to causal relations. The same observation has been evidenced by other studies such as the French survey ENVEFF.<sup>39</sup>

**Table 32.** Counselling by psychologist, psychiatrist, etc . during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

	Counselling by psychologist or psychiatrist	No consultation of psychologist or psychiatrist
Non-victims	3,2%	96,8%
Victims	6,3%	93,7%

In general, women request psychological counselling more often than men, whereas twice as many male and female victims consult a psychologist or psychiatrist (Table 33).

**Table 33.** Counselling by psychologist, psychiatrist, etc . during the past 12 months according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

		Counselling by psychologist or psychiatrist	No consultation of psychologist or psychiatrist
<b>Women</b>	Non-victims	4,4%	95,6%
	Victims	8,1%	91,9%
<b>Men</b>	Non-victims	2,0%	98,0%
	Victims	4,8%	95,2%

### Awareness of actions and resources

Experience of abuse has a relatively limited though significant ( $p=0.045$ ) impact on awareness of awareness-raising and partner abuse prevention campaigns, in particular the "White Ribbon" campaign. However, these prevalence figures apply to all living spheres (marital, family and friends and public areas), whereas the "White Ribbon" campaign focuses specifically on partner and intrafamily abuse. However, the connection between victimisation and awareness of the welfare services available to victims (Table 34) is stronger ( $p=0.000$ ).

<sup>39</sup> Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*.

**Table 34.** Awareness of actions and resources according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

	“White Ribbon” campaign	Support services for victims
Non-victims	30,4%	28,7%
Victims	35,4%	43,0%

Whereas about one-third of the respondents are aware of the “White Ribbon” campaign, women are generally more aware of it than men (Table 35). Women victims of abuse are more aware of the campaign than other women. When verbal abuse is not taken into account, this difference is no longer statistically significant, probably due to the low numbers. The difference between male victims and other men is never statistically significant.

**Table 35.** Awareness of “White Ribbon” campaign, in %

		Including verbal abuse	Not including verbal abuse
<b>Women</b>	Non-victims	32,8%	35,0%
	Victims	40,8% (p=0,024)	40,1% (p=0,267)
<b>Men</b>	Non-victims	27,8%	28,1%
	Victims	30,8% (p=0,466)	31,7% (p=0,078)

The progress of awareness of victim welfare services is similar in both male and female victims. Among those aware of these services, a distinction can be made between the degree of awareness of the various resources (Table 36). Awareness of each resource varies very slightly according to whether the respondent is a victim. With the exception of shelters and guesthouses, non-victims are more aware than victims of the resources. The difference according to victimisation is statistically significant only in the case of police victim-support services (p=0.039) and support centres for the elderly (p=0.023).

**Table 36.** Awareness of resources according to victimisation after the age of 18 (including verbal abuse), in %

	Victims (N= 429)	Non-victims (N=310)
Police victim-support services	66,7%	74,5%
Victim services at the public prosecutor’s office	17,0%	18,4%
Support for people subject to trial	14,5%	16,1%
Court House (Maison de justice/Justitiehuis)	26,0%	29,6%
Shelter	46,7%	46,2%
Support centre for the elderly	18,1%	26,1%
Support centre for perpetrators	13,2%	13,9%

## 2 ABUSE EXPERIENCED AFTER THE AGE OF 18: FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OR SERIOUS OCCURRENCES

So far, we have considered abuse in general, whatever the sphere in which it occurred, which may have generated a lack of focus in some areas, as some links are undoubtedly more direct in certain cases, whereas they are diluted when considered as part of a whole. In so far as the focus of this research is abuse experienced during the 12 months before the survey, especially partner abuse, it was decided, in order to limit the length of the questionnaire, to concentrate only on the act considered to be the most important or the most serious among the abuse experienced during the subjects' adult lifetime (after the age of 18)..

Again, we wish to underline the specific scope of our data: although more precise than the previous data as to the type of abuse, its perpetrator and the victim's reactions, they concern only one act or type of act experienced in adult life, which is judged important or traumatic enough to be given as a response. However, this does not prevent other acts, possibly with other characteristics, experienced in the same sphere or another sphere, from being relevant.

### 2.1 MOST SERIOUS FORM OF ABUSE

Table 37 supplies a general overview of the acts identified by the respondents as being the most serious form of abuse, classified by act type. It must be remembered that they do not in any way reflect the frequency of these forms of violence in the population.

**Table 37.** Most serious act selected by victim among acts of abuse experienced after the age of 18 (N=886), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	46,4%	45,7%	46,1%
Intimidation	19,4%	19,7%	19,6%
Slaps, blows, physical assault	17,8%	19,7%	18,8%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation	5,9%	10,9%	8,6%
Locking in or locking out	2,4%	2,4%	2,4%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations	8,1%	1,5%	4,6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

The sample base is different from that in the first part of this chapter, as it includes only victims, whereas the first part considered all respondents. However, the similarity of the figures in Tables 37 and 10 is striking (abuse experienced after the age of 18): verbal abuse, the most widespread form of abuse reported by the population as a whole, is also the commonest among the acts considered to be most serious. It might have been expected that polyvictimisation would have been an underlying factor in responses to this question, which would have caused the intrinsically most severe acts to be over-represented. This is only partly true, especially in the case of sexual abuse and, to a certain extent, certain forms of physical abuse. This shows that the circumstances, repetition, or mode of an act of violence are as important as the *a priori* classification of acts of violence according to severity.

This comment can be substantiated by analysing the 409 respondents who defined verbal abuse as the most serious occurrence. In no circumstances had these individuals experienced only verbal abuse. In view of the existence of poly-victimisation, Table 38 supplies absolute figures, as the same person may be counted several times.

**Table 38.** Other forms of abuse experienced by people who identified verbal abuse as the worst or most important occurrence, in absolute figures

Total number of victims of verbal abuse	409
<i>Declared they had also experienced:</i>	
Intimidation	114
Slaps, blows, physical assault	36
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation	14
Locking in or locking out	10
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations	7

Using the same approach of having victims identify the seriousness of their experience of abuse themselves, we may now review, for each category, the percentages for each of the acts experienced as “most serious or most important” (Table 39). For instance, around 35% of the victims of sexual abuse identify another type of act as the most serious or the most important they have experienced.

**Table 39.** For each form of abuse mentioned, percentage of cases in which it is the most serious or important, in %

Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=775)	52,0%
Intimidation(N=429)	38,9%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=291)	55,7%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=124)	60,5%
Locking in or locking out (N=86)	24,4%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=63)	65,1%

## 2.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH PERPETRATOR

### 2.2.1 Relationship with perpetrator as an indicator of living sphere

The question of the relationship between the victim and perpetrators makes it possible to implicitly identify the living sphere in which the abuse occurred. We begin with a presentation of the type of abuser according to categories which refer to living spheres, further to which we shall be investigating the relationship with the actual abuser in greater detail.

**Table 40.** Relationship with perpetrator identified for the most serious event (N=828), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Partner	30,8%	5,7%	17,5%
Family member	27,4%	16,2%	21,5%
Friend	11,3%	15,8%	13,6%
Workplace	17,2%	21,9%	19,7%
Stranger	13,3%	40,4%	27,7%

Table 40 has a great deal to tell us. The importance of the various living spheres is highly variable. Abuse perpetrated by friends (unrelated) is the least frequently cited (13.6%), but remains significant. Concerning abuse by strangers, identification as the most important act may be due to its traumatic nature (surprise, more or less unfamiliar contact, etc.) which makes the memory stand out. It can also be noted that this type of situation mainly affects men: 40.4% of the acts identified by men as being the most serious were perpetrated by strangers. Of course, it may well be that for social reasons this type of abuse may be far easier to report than others. Conversely, it can be noted that women are markedly more often the victims of partner abuse: over 30% of the most serious acts experienced by women were committed by their partner. However, abuse committed by a family member (it should be remembered that we are discussing only events experienced after the age of 18) is almost as prevalent in women, and less so in men. One out of five "most serious acts" is committed in a work environment, which has not been specifically investigated in this survey, and is cited a little more frequently by men. To conclude, it can be said that men remember and report more abuse committed in public areas (workplace, strangers, and, to a certain extent, abuse committed by a friend – criminological research has shown that physical assaults reported to the police are usually committed between young men who know each other). Women report more abuse committed in the private sphere (partner and family abuse).

**Table 41.** Relationship with perpetrator of most serious act (N=828), in % <sup>40</sup>

	Partner	Family member	Friend	Work-place	Stranger
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	10,8%	30,4%	15,2%	26,9%	16,7%
Intimidation	20,7%	16,7%	16,7%	28,0%	18,0%
Slaps, blows, physical assault	28,2%	16,7%	8,3%	5,1%	41,7%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation	12,5%	N/A	9,4%	3,1%	75,0%
Locking in or locking out	42,9%	47,6%	,0%	4,8%	4,8%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations	41,0%	7,7%	17,9%	7,7%	25,6%

The sphere in which the abuse occurred clearly varies according to the act reported (Table 41). Intimidation is the act distributed most evenly among the various living spheres. Conversely, locking in/out appears almost exclusively in the private sphere, i.e. marital or family. Three-quarters of armed threats are committed by strangers, as are most physical assaults and blows. However, many partners also commit this type of act, and there is a crucial difference between male and female victims: whereas 67% of blows and physical assaults are

<sup>40</sup> "N/A" (not applicable) refers to empty cells, i.e. no occurrences were reported for this particular combination.

committed by strangers on men, 55% of the women have experienced this type of abuse from their partners. Tables 42 and 43 distribute the perpetrator/act combinations according to the gender of the victim. The low numbers in some categories require caution in interpretation.

**Table 42. Relationship with perpetrator of most serious act: WOMEN (N=375), in %**<sup>41</sup>

	Partner	Family	Friend	Workplace	Stranger
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=176)	17,4%	35,9%	13,8%	23,4%	9,6%
Intimidation (N=74)	33,8%	21,6%	13,5%	24,3%	6,8%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=72)	55,6%	27,8%	1,4%	4,2%	11,1%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=21)	33,3%	N/A	14,3%	N/A	52,4%
Locking in or locking out (N=10)	40,0%	60,0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=31)	48,4%	9,7%	12,9%	6,5%	22,6%

**Table 43. Relationship with perpetrator of most serious act: MEN (N=397), in %**

	Partner	Family	Friend	Workplace	Stranger
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=175)	4,6%	25,1%	16,6%	30,3%	23,4%
Intimidation (N=75)	8,0%	12,0%	20,0%	30,7%	29,3%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=85)	4,7%	7,1%	14,1%	7,1%	67,1%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=43)	2,3%	N/A	7,0%	4,7%	86,0%
Locking in or locking out (N=11)	45,5%	36,4%	N/A	9,1%	9,1%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=8)	12,5%	N/A	37,5%	12,5%	37,5%

### 2.2.2 Perpetrator identification

**Table 44. Relationship with perpetrator of most serious act (N=886), in %**

	Women	Men	Total
Partner (man)	26,9%	,4%	12,6%
Partner (woman)	,2%	4,4%	2,5%
Father, father-in-law, mother's partner	8,8%	5,0%	6,8%
Mother, mother-in-law, father's partner	4,1%	2,7%	3,3%
Son, son-in-law or son of partner	,9%	,4%	,6%
Daughter, daughter-in-law or daughter of partner	,5%	,2%	,3%
Brother, brother-in-law	3,4%	1,7%	2,5%

<sup>41</sup> The figures supplied in Tables 42 and 43 are slightly lower than the number of occurrences reported, in so far as it was not possible to reclassify the perpetrators for the "others" or "no answer" categories. "N/A" refers to empty cells, i.e. no occurrences were reported for this particular combination.

Sister, sister-in-law	3,2%	1,2%	2,1%
Other male family member	1,6%	1,2%	1,4%
Other female family member	1,6%	1,4%	1,5%
Male friend known to victim	6,1%	11,4%	8,9%
Female friend known to victim	3,8%	1,9%	2,8%
Colleague (male)	3,8%	13,1%	8,8%
Colleague (female)	6,1%	1,5%	3,6%
Boss (male)	3,8%	3,7%	3,7%
Boss (female)	1,4%	,4%	,8%
Stranger (male)	10,6%	33,4%	22,9%
Stranger (female)	,9%	,8%	,8%
Other	7,0%	3,1%	4,9%
Does not know	5,0%	10,8%	8,1%
Declined to answer	,5%	1,4%	,9%

When detailed identification of the perpetrator is supplied (Table 44), a number of interesting corroborations and observations can be noted. First of all, it becomes clear that women are most often the victims of abuse by their male partner, whereas abuse by strangers plays a greater part in the lives of male victims. In both cases, then, male perpetrators are, quantitatively speaking, the best represented. It can also be noted that 10% of male victims do not know the identity of the perpetrator of the most serious act of abuse they have experienced, which seems strange and probably reflects a reticence or even difficulty – social or in terms of image – in discussing some of the forms of abuse experienced. In the family sphere, abuse by fathers is predominant. However, mothers also abuse their daughters, sisters(-in-law) each other, and brothers(-in-law) each other. In the workplace, male bosses abuse both men and women, whereas colleague abuse generally occurs between people of the same gender.

### 2.2.3 Prevalence of abuse

**Table 45.** Number of occurrences of the most serious act (N=886), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Once	33,0%	42,9%	38,4%
2 or 3 times	25,2%	30,8%	28,2%
4 to 10 times	13,7%	9,3%	11,3%
Over 10 times	16,2%	7,2%	11,3%
(Almost) daily	6,3%	,8%	3,3%
Does not know	5,2%	8,3%	6,9%
Declined to answer	,4%	,8%	,6%

Table 45 shows that, whatever their nature, the acts identified by men as being the most serious most definitely tend to be isolated, which could also be inferred indirectly from the data in Table 44.

Daily (or almost daily) repetition of the most serious act of abuse is very rare. However, the fact that over 6% of female victims, against less than 1% of male victims, report having to face the acts identified as being the most serious or important on a near-daily basis, is striking.

**Table 46.** Number of times the most serious act has been repeated according to the type of act, in %

	Once	2 or 3 times	4 to 10 times	Over 10 times	(Almost) daily	Does not know
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=342)	28,4%	31,5%	12,0%	13,0%	3,4%	11,5%
Intimidation(N=149)	36,4%	28,3%	16,8%	11,0%	3,5%	2,9%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=157)	50,6%	23,5%	4,2%	10,2%	5,4%	4,8%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=64)	64,9%	27,0%	2,7%	5,4%	,0%	,0%
Locking in or locking out (N=21)	52,4%	14,3%	23,8%	4,8%	4,8%	,0%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=39)	53,7%	9,8%	9,8%	19,5%	4,9%	2,4%

A more detailed analysis of Table 46 enables the reported acts of abuse to be defined more accurately. Identification of verbal abuse as the most serious act cannot be explained by a more recurrent character: in around one-third of cases, it is an isolated occurrence. Physical assault, sexual abuse, armed threats and attempted murder are generally isolated acts, but may be repeated in a significant number of recurrent cases. In short, it can be noted that although victims experience the worst forms of abuse on an exceptional basis, a small number endure severe chronic abuse.

**Table 47.** Number of times the most serious act has been repeated according to perpetrator, in %

	Once	2 or 3 times	4 to 10 times	Over 10 times	(Almost) daily	Does not know
Partner	28,5%	21,5%	11,8%	24,3%	9,7%	2,8%
Family member	25,8%	31,5%	18,0%	17,4%	5,1%	2,2%
Friend	44,7%	38,6%	10,5%	6,1%	,0%	,0%
Workplace	34,4%	33,1%	14,7%	10,4%	4,3%	3,1%
Stranger	65,4%	24,6%	4,8%	3,1%	,0%	2,2%

It hardly comes as a surprise that abuse committed by a stranger is usually an isolated act. The repetition of acts of abuse by strangers as mentioned in the third and fourth columns of Table 47 may refer to several assaults or disputes in which the respondent was the victim, but which were committed by several perpetrators. On the other hand, repeated acts are mainly committed by people close to the victim, chiefly his/her partner, then his/her family. It is also noteworthy that abuse committed in the workplace may be either isolated or recurrent.



## 2.3 REACTIONS OF VICTIMS

How did victims respond to the most important or serious act of violence they experienced? We investigated whether the respondents confided in someone or made an official complaint.

### 2.3.1 Talking about the abuse

Obviously – and the fact is confirmed by this study – much of the abuse experienced by victims is not reported, nor is it discussed privately. This may be out of shame or fear, or out of a sense that there is no point in discussing it, or for other reasons. However, the reporting of events previously mentioned in an anonymous environment enables this study to discuss events which have not been mentioned elsewhere. The identification of the victims on the one hand, and of facts not previously mentioned on the other hand, supplies an – admittedly incomplete – indication of the type of unrevealed acts. However, even within the scope of an anonymous survey, not all victims are willing to discuss major acts of abuse which they have experienced. It is therefore unrealistic to believe that this survey exposes all relevant facts.

**Table 48.** Most important or serious act: did you mention it to someone? (N=886), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Yes	81,7%	68,7%	74,7%
No	15,7%	24,3%	20,3%
Does not know	2,2%	6,0%	4,2%
Declined to answer	,4%	1,0%	,7%

Table 48 illustrates the shadow side of violence: 20% of the victims had never mentioned the most serious act of violence they had experienced to anyone. It is also worth questioning the exact meaning of “Does not know”. Are the facts too far distant, are they not particularly relevant to the respondent, or does this response reflect shame at never having mentioned it before?

However, men are – strikingly – more reticent to mention abuse experienced than women: only a little over two-thirds of men mention the abuse to someone, whereas a little over 80% of female victims confide. This is a statistically significant result ( $p=0.000$ ), which suggests that men underreport abuse even more than do women. However, we have seen previously that the type of the acts and the living sphere in which they occurred were not the same for women and men, and therefore they refer to intrinsically different realities.

**Table 49.** Did you mention it to someone? according to type of most serious act, in %

	Yes	No	Does not know	Declined to answer
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=342)	67,7%	24,4%	6,6%	1,2%
Intimidation (N=149)	80,5%	16,7%	2,3%	,6%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=157)	76,6%	18,6%	4,2%	,6%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=64)	90,8%	9,2%	,0%	,0%
Locking in or locking out (N=21)	85,7%	14,3%	,0%	,0%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=39)	73,2%	26,8%	,0%	,0%

Table 49 shows the acts of abuse which are mentioned by victims to a third party. Over 6% of victims of verbal abuse do not know whether they mentioned it to someone else. This may bear out the hypothesis that these facts are accorded only a relative importance by the respondents, at least at the time of the survey. However, over 4% of victims of physical assault do not remember whether or not they mentioned it, which may be explained by feelings of shame, guilt, denial, anxiety, etc. Among the facts which remain unmentioned, verbal and sexual assaults are paramount. In the case of verbal abuse, this may be interpreted as a sign of the low degree of interest in such events, or at any rate of an increasing degree of frequency. Although sexual abuse is less prevalent, over one-quarter of victims do not mention it to a third party. As previously mentioned, women are often the victims of this type of abuse.

**Table 50. Did you mention it to someone? according to type of most serious act: WOMEN, in %**

	Yes	No	Does not know	Declined to answer
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=197)	79,7%	15,2%	4,1%	1,0%
Intimidation(N=82)	90,2%	9,8%	,0%	,0%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=75)	77,3%	22,7%	,0%	,0%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=25)	92,0%	8,0%	,0%	,0%
Locking in or locking out (N=10)	100,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=34)	70,6%	29,4%	,0%	,0%

**Table 51. Did you mention it to someone? according to type of most serious act: MEN, in %**

	Yes	No	Does not know	Declined to answer
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=214)	56,5%	32,7%	9,3%	1,4%
Intimidation(N=92)	71,7%	22,8%	4,3%	1,1%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=92)	76,1%	15,2%	7,6%	1,1%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=50)	90,0%	10,0%	,0%	,0%
Locking in or locking out (N=10)	70,0%	30,0%	,0%	,0%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=7)	85,7%	14,3%	,0%	,0%

Tables 50 and 51 show that propensity to mention verbal abuse ( $p=0.000$ ) and intimidation ( $p=0.013$ ) is significantly different between men and women; in the case of physical abuse, the difference is near-significant ( $p=0.051$ ). Given the small number of responses, these conclusions need to be handled with some care. It can be noted that some men do not recall having mentioned physical abuse to anyone. As a result, the extent to which men and women mention abuse is, ultimately, almost identical. We also noted that, with the exception of sexual abuse, women mention abuse to third parties more than do men. Sexual abuse very seldom affects men (7 cases in all); however, they discuss it more often with third parties. Women, who are more frequently subjected to

sexual abuse than men, mention it less often to third parties (29.4% of female victims of sexual abuse confide in no one).

**Table 52.** Did you mention it to someone? according to perpetrator category (N=828), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Partner	78,5%	58,3%	75,2%
Family member	88,8%	80,3%	85,4%
Friend	90,9%	77,1%	82,5%
Workplace	88,1%	73,2%	79,1%
Stranger	80,8%	76,3%	77,6%

Women are victims of partner violence six times more often than men. However, male victims – to a striking extent – frequently do not mention it, so that the under-estimation of abuse experienced by men may, even beyond the figures reported in this study, be even greater than that of violence experienced by women. Abuse committed by a family member is reported by men and women in more or less equal proportions. Generally, partner violence is the form most often concealed. Neither age nor level of education yield any significant differences, although we did note that the few respondents who had had only primary schooling discussed their own victimisation less with third parties.

### 2.3.2 Making an official complaint

In this paragraph, we investigate to what extent the reported abuse was also reported to the police.

**Table 53.** Did you make a signed statement or a complaint to the police? (N=886), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Yes, you did	13,9%	9,8%	11,7%
Yes, someone else did	1,1%	1,2%	1,1%
No	83,2%	84,9%	84,1%
Does not know	1,3%	2,7%	2,1%
Declined to answer	,4%	1,4%	,9%

In general, only a minority of the acts of abuse considered to be the most serious or important and experienced during adult life led to a complaint, i.e. in a little under 12% of cases. Women make complaints slightly more often, which may confirm that the abuse experienced by men is under-estimated, as mentioned previously. The main differences are to be found in the “Does not know” and “Declined to answer” categories. However, no conclusions can be inferred.

**Table 54.** Did you make a signed statement or a complaint to the police? according to the type of act, in %

	Yes, you did	Yes, someone else did	No	Does not know	Declined to answer
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=408)	4,9%	1,0%	89,7%	2,9%	1,5%
Intimidation (N=173)	13,3%	,6%	83,8%	1,7%	,6%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=167)	19,8%	1,2%	76,6%	1,8%	,6%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=75)	34,7%	2,7%	61,3%	1,3%	,0%
Locking in or locking out (N=21)	19,0%	,0%	81,0%	,0%	,0%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=41)	9,8%	,0%	90,2%	,0%	,0%

It is quite obvious that complaints depend on the type of abuse ( $p=0.000$ ). However, only in the case of armed threats does the number of statements exceed 3 out of 10. Other forms of abuse are reported far less often. Very rarely, the statement is made by a third party. Within the various categories there is no significant difference between the propensity of men and women to complain to the police.

**Table 55.** Did you make a signed statement or a complaint to the police? according to the type of perpetrator, in %

	Yes, you did	Yes, someone else did	No	Does not know	Declined to answer
Partner	17,9%	1,4%	80,7%	,0%	,0%
Family member	6,2%	,6%	93,3%	,0%	,0%
Friend	8,8%	1,8%	89,5%	,0%	,0%
Workplace	6,1%	,0%	92,6%	,0%	1,2%
Stranger	21,1%	2,6%	74,6%	1,8%	,0%

Table 52 showed that the victims of partner abuse were the least likely to confide in third parties. However, Table 55 shows that after abuse by strangers partner abuse is most often reported to the police. However, less than 20% of partner abuse is reported to the police. Victims of abuse perpetrated by a family member, a friend or in the workplace complain to the police in less than 10% of cases. There is no apparent difference between men and women.

However, it is interesting to combine the forms of abuse reported with the type of perpetrator. To ensure the readability of Table 56, we have included all complaints, whether made by the victim or a third party.

**Table 56.** Statements or complaints made to the police further to acts of abuse, according to the type of act and perpetrator (N=828), in % <sup>42</sup>

	Partner	Family member	Friend	Work-place	Stranger
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=408)	16,2%	1,9%	5,8%	4,4%	14,5%
Intimidation (N=173)	25,8%	8,0%	11,5%	9,8%	14,8%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=167)	18,6%	19,2%	16,7%	,0%	31,7%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=75)	37,5%	N/A	50,0%	,0%	41,7%
Locking in or locking out (N=21)	22,2%	20,0%	N/A	,0%	,0%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=41)	,0%	33,3%	14,3%	,0%	10,0%

First of all, it can be noted that verbal abuse committed by a partner is the most often reported; abuse by a stranger is reported to more or less the same extent. It might be deduced that victims are less likely to conceal this specific form of partner abuse than is generally supposed. However, part of this figure may concern complaints made against ex-partners and/or as part of separation proceedings. The comment deduced from Table 55, i.e. the low rate of complaints to the police concerning intrafamily violence is relativised, in so far as physical abuse committed by family members is reported in the same proportion as physical abuse by a partner or friend. Verbal and emotional abuse are least reported to the police. On the other hand, complaints are most frequently made concerning sexual abuse when committed by a family member, whereas no such acts committed by a partner were reported to the police.

Table 57 shows that young people make fewer complaints to the police concerning acts of abuse than older respondents.

**Table 57.** Did you make a signed statement or a complaint to the police? according to age, in %

	Yes, you did	Yes, someone else did	No	Does not know	Declined to answer
18-24	2,5%	,8%	95,8%	,8%	,0%
25-34	8,8%	,0%	89,0%	1,1%	1,1%
35-44	13,7%	1,7%	81,1%	2,6%	,9%
45-54	16,3%	,5%	82,1%	1,0%	,0%
55-64	13,9%	1,3%	80,8%	2,6%	1,3%
65-75	12,0%	2,4%	77,1%	6,0%	2,4%

However, when age and type of abuse are combined (Table 58), under-reporting by young people is statistically confirmed only in the case of verbal abuse ( $p=0.038$ ) and intimidation ( $p=0.041$ ). Age has no incidence where other acts are concerned. The 0% figure for armed threats/attempted murder and sexual abuse is due to the fact that the number of victims for each of these acts in the relevant age group was only 3, which statistically is not significant.

<sup>42</sup> Each figure in the table represents the percentage of occurrences reported to the police for this perpetrator/act combination, and therefore the lines and columns of percentages do not add up. "N/A" is used in empty cells.

The lack of complaints by young people – to which can be added the 6 victims of sexual abuse aged 25-34 – might give legitimate cause for concern; however, the low absolute figures make it hazardous to issue any general statements.

**Table 58.** Statements or complaints to the police concerning acts of abuse, according to act type and age, in % <sup>43</sup>

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-75
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words (N=391)	1,7%	,0%	5,7%	8,6%	12,7%	5,1%
Intimidation(N=170)	,0%	6,1%	20,8%	25,0%	15,8%	,0%
Slaps, blows, physical assault (N=163)	16,7%	19,5%	22,2%	22,0%	19,0%	33,3%
Threat with weapon or other object, attempted murder or strangulation (N=77)	,0%	27,3%	38,1%	54,5%	40,0%	60,0%
Locking in or locking out (N=21)	N/A	N/A	16,7%	20,0%	25,0%	,0%
Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations (N=42)	,0%	,0%	16,7%	9,10%	,0%	33,3%

When the propensity to make an official complaint is combined with the level of education (Table 59), the resulting link is statistically significant ( $p=0.002$ ), in that the share of complaints decreases as the level of education increases. However, when the exercise is repeated according to abuse type, this statistical link disappears. Although in general there is no significant statistical connection between level of education and the most serious act type ( $p=0.593$ ), the figures in Table 59 may be related to a local effect due to which respondents with primary schooling report more blows and physical assaults to the police, but absolute figures remain low.

**Table 59.** Did you make a signed statement or a complaint to the police? according to level of education, in %

	Yes, you did	Yes, someone else did	No	Does not know	Declined to answer
Primary school	21,9%	6,3%	68,8%	3,1%	,0%
Lower secondary school	14,7%	1,8%	77,1%	5,5%	,9%
Upper secondary school	12,6%	,6%	83,4%	2,2%	1,2%
Short higher education	11,2%	1,2%	86,1%	1,2%	,4%
Long higher education	7,5%	1,9%	86,8%	1,9%	1,9%
University	7,5%	1,1%	89,8%	1,1%	,5%

Finally, concerning Table 60, there is a positive correlation between the fact of mentioning the abuse to a third party and reporting it to the police ( $p=0.000$ ).

<sup>43</sup> Each figure in the table represents the percentage of occurrences reported to the police for this respondent age/ act combination, and therefore the lines and columns of percentages do not add up. "N/A" is used in empty cells.

**Table 60.** Did you make a signed statement or a complaint to the police? According to whether mentioned to someone, in %

	Yes, you did	Yes, someone else did	No	Does not know	Declined to answer
<i>Confided in someone:</i>					
Yes	14,6%	1,4%	83,6%	,1%	,3%
No	3,6%	1,0%	95,4%	,0%	,0%
Does not know	,0%	,0%	52,5%	47,5%	,0%
Declined to answer	,0%	,0%	14,3%	,0%	85,7%

## ABUSE EXPERIENCED AFTER THE AGE OF 18: SUMMARY

- In total, 55.1% of women and 49.3% of men state that they did not experience any kind of abuse after the age of 18, whatever the context and whoever the perpetrator. If verbal abuse is not taken into consideration, it would seem that 71.1% of women and 67% of men experienced no abuse as adults.
- Verbal abuse is by far the most frequent (41.5%), followed by intimidation (22%) and blows or slaps (15%). Sexual abuse affects women in particular (5.6%, against 0.8% of men); women are also more often locked in/out (5.9%, against 2.7% of men).
- The methodological choices made for this research make comparisons with the figures in the 1998 prevalence study difficult; any conclusions concerning changes in the prevalence of abuse require great caution.
- We note that the oldest respondents reported experiencing less abuse over their lifetime. This was interpreted as an effect of memory and should not be ignored in the general conclusions concerning lifetime prevalence. Also, a higher prevalence of abuse in the best educated groups, especially men, may be the result of different interpretation thresholds on the part of the victims themselves, concerning what does or does not constitute abuse. In particular, levels of verbal abuse and intimidation increase most with the level of education. On the other hand, religious belief, especially in women, goes hand in hand with lesser exposure to physical abuse.
- The health profiles of victims of abuse are less good than those of other respondents in the following areas: sleep disorders, anxiety, use of prescription drugs, use of illicit drugs, stress. Victims of abuse are twice as likely to attempt suicide, especially female victims of physical abuse (3.4%, against 0.9% of female non-victims). However, alcohol consumption is not affected. Victims also resort more often to psychological counselling. However, they are barely more aware of the "White Ribbon" campaign than non-victims.
- When the most serious or important occurrences are analysed in more detail, it can be seen that verbal abuse accounts for 46% of all reported abuse, even in the presence of other forms of abuse. In general, the perpetrator types are evenly distributed. However, in the case of female victims, they are most often partners (30.8%), whereas men are more often victimised by strangers (40.4%). The acts reported by men as being the most serious are more often isolated, whereas women experience more repeat situations and the abuse is more often perpetrated by a family member or friend.
- Men mention the abuse they have suffered to third parties far less frequently than women (68.7%, against 81.7%). This applies even more in the case of partner abuse. It is therefore possible that partner abuse of men is even more seriously underestimated. Victims complain to the police in only a minority of cases of abuse: 13.9% of women against 9.8% of men make a statement to the police, whoever the perpetrator. Moreover, abuse committed by family members is least often reported, whereas partner abuse (17.9%) and abuse committed by strangers (21.1%) are reported somewhat more often.

### 3 SEXUAL ABUSE EXPERIENCED BEFORE THE AGE OF 18

One module of this survey deals specifically with the experience of sexual abuse before the age of 18, and a limited number of questions asked. We have already presented the data collected on sexual abuse in the first part of this chapter. In this context, it was far more difficult to compare the current figures with those in the 1998 prevalence study. In this section, we shall be examining data concerning experiences of sexual abuse before the age of 18 in greater detail. In the case of all respondents, these were long-past, even near-forgotten situations which may be having real consequences in the present. As this aspect was not included in the questionnaire, we can only characterise the respondents according to risk factors and living conditions at the time of the events. For this reason, during a first stage, we shall be limiting ourselves to a general overview of the victims of this type of abuse. Even the age of the victims as noted at the time of the survey supplies only very approximate information concerning the time of occurrence of the abuse, as we did not request any information concerning the respondents' age at that time. In view of the importance of the methodological choices, which has already been discussed, we would like to repeat the question as asked in the survey to determine prevalence:

"Before you were 18, did someone – a family member, friend, partner (boy-/girlfriend) colleague/classmate, or someone you didn't know:

- a) touch you sexually or make you touch them sexually against your will, or
- b) force you into having sexual intercourse?"

**Table 61. Sexual abuse experienced before the age of 18, in %**

	Women	Men	Total
Forced sexual touching	8,1%	2,7%	5,4%
Unwanted sexual intercourse	3,9%	1,8%	2,8%
Overall prevalence	8,9%	3,2%	6,0%

The wording is the same as for abuse experienced after the age of 18, but differs in that these acts (forced sexual touching or unwanted sexual intercourse) were included in a single question, whereas abuse experience before the age of 18 is the subject of 2 separate questions. In this connection, we observed that sexual abuse is more frequent before the age of 18 than after. The total percentage of victims of at least one of these forms of sexual abuse is 6%, almost twice as high as for victims of sexual abuse after the age of 18 (3.2%, see Table 7). This is chiefly explained by an increase in the number of victims of forced sexual touching. Although this difference applies to both men and women, it is especially marked in the case of victims under 18 (0.8% for victims aged over 18, against 3.2% for victims aged under 18).

The respondent's current age, as mentioned previously, can only serve as an indicator of the time at which the events occurred, and has no significant effect on prevalence, whether overall or according to gender. There is a slight prevalence of sexual abuse in respondents now aged 25 to 24, but it does not suffice to influence the survey.



### 3.1 DESCRIPTION OF ABUSE

#### 3.1.1 The perpetrator

**Table 62.** Relationship with main abuser at the time of the events, in %

	Women (N=88)	Men (N=34)	Total (N=122)
Partner (boy-/girlfriend)	1,1%	,0%	,8%
Father, father-in-law, mother's partner	12,4%	,0%	9,0%
Brother, brother-in-law, son of father's or mother's partner	5,6%	12,1%	7,4%
Other male relative	23,6%	,0%	17,2%
Other female relative	,0%	9,1%	2,5%
Close male friend	18,0%	24,2%	19,7%
Male schoolmate or colleague	2,2%	6,1%	3,3%
Female schoolmate or colleague	1,1%	,0%	,8%
Teacher or boss	6,7%	27,3%	12,3%
Stranger	14,6%	15,2%	14,8%
Other	11,2%	,0%	8,2%
Declined to answer	3,4%	6,1%	4,1%

Table 62 shows first of all that in most cases the perpetrator is male. In the case of a female abuser, she is generally a family member sexually abusing a male victim (N=3), or a schoolmate abusing a female victim (N=1).

The great majority of sexual abuse experienced before the age of 18 is also committed by friends or family members: in the case of female victims, one-quarter is perpetrated by male family members (other than fathers and brothers), followed by fathers (12.4%) and brothers (5%); male perpetrators among friends are responsible for 18 % of the sexual abuse of underage girls. 14.6% of sexual abuse of girls under 18 is perpetrated by strangers, while in one case out of ten female victims also experience sexual abuse from another type of perpetrator. Proportionally, sexual abuse of boys is also often committed by strangers, but most frequently by teachers or bosses and friends not related to the victim.

#### 3.1.2 Repetition

**Table 63.** Number of occurrences, in %

	Women (N=88)	Men (N=34)	Total (N=122)
Once	50,6%	41,2%	48,0%
2 or 3 times	15,7%	20,6%	17,1%
4 to 10 times	14,6%	23,5%	17,1%
Over 10 times	12,4%	11,8%	12,2%
(Almost) daily	2,2%	,0%	1,6%
Does not know	1,1%	,0%	,8%
Declined to answer	3,4%	2,9%	3,3%

When the frequency of abuse is analysed (Table 63), it can be seen that in half of the cases the abuse occurred only once. Although male victims more often experience repetition, the difference is not significant. It should be noted that two of the female victims reported experiencing these acts on an (almost) daily basis.

Perpetrator and frequency can be combined (Table 63). The link is statistically significant ( $p=0.000$ ) (Table 64). To ensure its readability, we created a frequency index according to which "once" is expressed as 1 and "(almost) daily" as 5. Of course, this type of index is not linear and is only used to facilitate interpretation.

**Table 64.** Frequency index by perpetrator type of sexual abuse experienced before the age of 18 (N=117)

Partner (boy-/girlfriend)	4
Father, father-in-law, mother's partner	3,1687
Brother, brother-in-law, son of father's or mother's partner	2,7404
Other male relative	2,5048
Other female relative	3,7653
Close male friend	1,54
Male schoolmate or colleague	1,6015
Female schoolmate or colleague	1
Teacher or boss	1,3215
Stranger	1,4037

The value associated with the partner is not interpretable as this is a single observation. However, it can be seen that acts which occurred in a family context (father, brother, family member) were far more frequently repeated than those perpetrated by individuals who were not family members.

### 3.1.3 Subjective severity

**Table 65.** How do you view the situation you experienced? in %

	Women (N=88)	Men (N=34)	Total (N=122)
Not at all serious	1,1%	9,1%	3,3%
Not particularly serious	18,0%	15,2%	17,2%
Quite serious	25,8%	30,3%	27,0%
Very serious	52,8%	39,4%	49,2%
Does not know	1,1%	3,0%	1,6%
Declined to answer	1,1%	3,0%	1,6%

We have no detailed information concerning the situations or their circumstances. However, we did ask the respondents to what extent they considered their experience to be serious. Half the victims defined their experience of sexual abuse as very serious (Table 65). Nevertheless, one victim in five considered this experience to be "not particularly serious" or "not at all serious". There is no significant difference between male and female victims ( $p=0.228$ ). Table 66 shows that repeated occurrences were most often considered to

be (very) serious ( $p=0.022$ ). The fact that victims of abuse (over 10 times) often give “do not know” responses to the question concerning their assessment of the events, is noteworthy, and certainly relevant to under-reporting. It would seem that it is more difficult to put occurrences of serious abuse into words.

**Table 66.** Frequency index for subjective experience of seriousness of sexual abuse before the age of 18 (N=117)

Not at all serious	1,585
Not particularly serious	1,485
Quite serious	1,842
Very serious	2,181
Does not know	3,909

#### 3.1.4 Confidences and reporting

We asked the respondents if they had mentioned these occurrences to anyone. At the time of analysis, this question proved inadequate, as the answers did not include “did not tell anyone”. Therefore, and assuming that the responses of all victims concerned had been entered, it can only be supposed that those who did not mention it at the time were entered as “refusals”, which would also explain the large number of such responses.

**Table 67.** Did you mention these events to anyone? , in %

	Women (N=88)	Men (N=34)	Total (N=122)
One of your parents	29,5%	20,6%	27,0%
A family member	12,5%	11,8%	12,3%
At school	8,0%	11,8%	9,0%
To the police	4,5%	2,9%	4,1%
To someone else	22,7%	8,8%	18,9%
Does not know	8,0%	11,8%	9,0%
Declined to answer	14,8%	32,4%	19,7%

Given the faulty coding, these data require careful interpretation. It can be seen that, as in the case of abuse experienced after the age of 18, more male victims keep their experiences to themselves. One man in three kept silent, i.e. twice as many men as women. Complaints to the police were rare, though slightly more frequent in women, although the low figures need to be kept in mind when making such interpretations. Women are also more prone to mentioning events to “someone else”, which probably includes their friends.

In view of the limited number of categories and individuals, attempts to combine these results with other variables yield negative results and tables in which many cells are empty. Therefore, this issue cannot be investigated further.

### 3.2 CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL ABUSE EXPERIENCED BEFORE THE AGE OF 18

It may be supposed that, contrary to the prevalence of abuse in adult years, the precedence of the acts of sexual abuse recorded is a far more plausible sign of causality with respect to the consequences we shall be reviewing in terms of mental health and addiction, although there is no evidence that these problems are directly attributable to these experiences, as the respondents were not requested to supply such information.

#### *Stress*

**Table 68.** Days perceived as stressful according to victimisation before the age of 18 (sexual abuse), in %

	Not at all stressful	Not very stressful	Some-what stressful	Fairly stressful	Extremely stressful	Does not know
Non-victims	12,8%	16,4%	41,4%	23,6%	5,6%	,2%
Victims	12,3%	17,2%	33,6%	20,5%	16,4%	,0%

Table 68 shows that the number of victims who experience their days as not at all stressful is identical to that of non-victims. On the other hand, three times more victims experience intense stress on a daily basis.

#### *Depression and anxiety*

**Table 69.** Experience of depression or chronic anxiety during the past 12 months according to victimisation before the age of 18 (sexual abuse), in %

	Depression/Anxiety	No depression/anxiety
Non-victims	5,5%	94,2%
Victims	15,7%	83,5%

Victims suffer three times as often from depression or chronic anxiety as non-victims. They also suffer from anxiety one-and-a-half times more frequently than respondents subjected to the same kind of abuse in adult life (see Table 22). This difference is partly due to the high proportion of women, in so far as, as shown in Table 70, victimisation affects both men and women, but has a significantly stronger effect on women: almost 20% of women victims of sexual abuse suffered from depression and anxiety during the past 12 months. In the literature, depression and anxiety states are frequently associated with the experience of abuse as a victim.<sup>44</sup>

**Table 70.** Experience of depression or chronic anxiety during the past 12 months according to victimisation before the age of 18 (sexual abuse), in %

	Women [% of "yes" responses]	Men [% of "yes" responses]
Non-victims	7,4%	3,7%
Victims	19,3%	6,1%

<sup>44</sup> Stith et al., "Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimization risk factors", pp. 65-98.

### Insomnia

**Table 71.** Frequency of insomnia according to victimisation before the age of 18 (sexual abuse), in %

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time	Does not know
Non-victims	45,5%	19,8%	19,9%	9,8%	4,9%	,2%
Victims	32,2%	20,7%	23,1%	14,0%	9,9%	,0%

Insomnia is also clearly more prevalent ( $p=0.023$ ) in victims of abuse before the age of 18 than in non-victims, and to an obviously higher degree than in victims of abuse in adulthood (see Table 25).

### Consumption of sleeping pills and antidepressants

**Table 72.** Consumption of sleeping pills and antidepressants according to victimisation before the age of 18 (sexual abuse), in %

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly, but not taking them at this time	Regularly and taking them at this time	Does not know
Non-victims	83,1%	3,0%	3,7%	10,1%	,1%
Victims	75,4%	1,6%	5,7%	16,4%	,8%

A logical consequence of the increased prevalence of depression and sleep disorders, victims consume more psychotropic medication than non-victims. When compared with consumption by respondents who experienced sexual abuse in adolescence with victims of abuse in general after the age of 18 (see Table 26), the main difference lies in the categories which regularly consume such medication.

However, contrary to what was observed concerning abuse in adult life (see Tables 27 and 28), exposure to sexual abuse before the age of 18 has no significant effect on the consumption of illicit drugs.

### Suicide attempts

**Table 73.** Suicide attempts according to victimisation before the age of 18 (sexual abuse), in %

	One suicide attempt	Several suicide attempts	No suicide attempts
Non-victims	1,4%	,7%	97,8%
Victims	5,8%	6,6%	87,6%

It can be noted that suicide attempts are far more frequent among minors who experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18. The figures are also far higher than those for victims of abuse (all types) in adult life (see Table 29): there are twice as many single attempts (2.6%, against 5.8%) and four times more multiple attempts (1.5%, against 6.6%). This matches the observations in the literature.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Feder et al., "Women exposed to intimate partner violence", pp. 22-37.

### Psychological counselling

**Table 74.** Consultation of a psychologist, psychiatrist, etc. during the past 12 months according to victimisation before the age of 18 (sexual abuse), in %

	Counselling by psychologist or psychiatrist	No consultation of psychologist or psychiatrist
Non-victims	4,2%	95,8%
Victims	13,9%	86,1%

The data concerning individuals who have resorted to psychological counselling are consistent with the consequences described above. Minors who experience sexual abuse consult a psychologist/psychiatrist three times more often than non-victims, and twice as often as the victims of other forms of abuse in adult life (see Table 32).

### Opinions concerning partner abuse

We also wanted to check the extent to which this experience of sexual abuse before the age of 18 could affect opinions concerning partner abuse. We found no significant difference in the opinions of victims and non-victims concerning a husband's right to force his wife to have sexual intercourse when she does not want to, or intervention by a third party in cases of abuse. However, victims agree far more often with the idea that someone can be so exasperated that he/she has to strike ( $p=0.022$ ). In other words, a significant minority of victims mention acts of abuse in certain conditions.

**Table 75.** "Sometimes people are pushed so far that they just have to hit the other person", according to victimisation before the age of 18 (sexual abuse), in %

	Completely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Completely disagree	Does not know
Non-victims	4,4%	14,7%	19,9%	58,3%	2,2%
Victims	9,1%	19,0%	10,7%	60,3%	,8%

## SEXUAL ABUSE EXPERIENCED BEFORE THE AGE OF 18: SUMMARY

- 8.9% of women and 3.2% of men have experienced forced sexual touching or relations before the age of 18, a higher prevalence than after the age of 18.
- The great majority of sexual abuse before the age of 18 is perpetrated by friends or family members. Sexual abuse is seldom committed by partners. In half of cases, this is an isolated event, especially when the perpetrator is not a family member.
- 80% of the victims believe the reported acts to be "quite serious" or "very serious".
- Only 60% of male victims, as opposed to 77% of female victims, mentioned these events to someone.
- The consequences of sexual abuse experienced before the age of 18 on current health are even more severe than those of abuse in adulthood, in terms of depression, insomnia and (especially) suicide attempts. Victims also resort more frequently to psychological counselling.



# CHAPTER 3. PARTNER ABUSE AND ABUSE BY EX-PARTNERS

## 3

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 OVERALL FIGURES
- 3 CONFIDING IN THIRD PARTIES
- 4 CONSEQUENCES OF PARTNER ABUSE AND ATTITUDES OF VICTIMS TO ABUSE 54



## 1 INTRODUCTION <sup>46</sup>

In this chapter, we shall be discussing all partner abuse experienced over the past 12 months. For the purpose of this survey, we extended the concept of partner abuse to ex-partners. Thus, as well as abuse committed by a current partner, we have also taken into account abuse committed by ex-partners (whether or not the respondent was in a relationship with an ex-partner at the time of the survey).

The concept of partners and couple are also taken in their widest sense: couple may take the form of a nuclear family, with or without children, with or without a legal relationship, and the partners may be living together or separately. A partner is not only a person with whom the respondent is living, but also a boy/girlfriend, fiancé(e), etc. Table 76 shows the existing variations.

**Table 76. Marital situation according to gender, in absolute figures and in %**

	No marital relationship and no contact with ex-partner	Currently in marital relationship		Contact with ex-partner			Total
		Marital relationship, living with partner	Marital relationship, not living with partner	Marital relationship, contact with ex-partner	Separated <sup>47</sup> during past 12 months, contact with ex-partner	No marital relationship during past 12 months and contact with ex-partner	
Women	213	504	83	87	55	52	994
	21,4%	50,7%	8,4%	8,8%	5,5%	5,2%	100,0%
Men	150	673	63	63	53	18	1.020
	14,7%	66,0%	6,2%	6,2%	5,2%	1,8%	100,0%
Total	363	1.177	146	150	108	70	2.014
	18,0%	58,4%	7,2%	7,4%	5,4%	3,5%	100,0%

It can be noted that, among the respondents, 65.6% stated that they were living with someone or in a marital relationship. 7.4% had been in contact with their ex-partner during the past 12 months. 18% (including 58.7% of women) had had no contact or relationship with a partner or ex-partner during the past year. 5.4% had separated during the past 12 months and 3.5% were not in a marital relationship and had had contact with their ex-partner. It is interesting to note that it is mostly the women (74.3%) who stated that they had contact with their ex-partner when not in a marital relationship.

Table 77 shows a link between marital situation and age. It is more frequent for young people not to be in a relationship or not to live with their partner even when they are in a relationship. Most respondents 25 and over live with their partner.

<sup>46</sup> Further to post-weighting, there may be a slight difference between the figures in the tables. As the figures are rounded up or down to the next unit, a unit may occasionally be added or subtracted.

<sup>47</sup> In the rest of this report, "separated" therefore applies not only to married couples who have divorced, but to break-ups in the more general sense, between married couples, couples who are cohabiting legally and couples who are not living together.

**Table 77. Marital relationship according to age, in absolute figures and in %**

	Age						Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-75	
No relationship and no contact with ex-partner	92 25,3%	54 14,9%	30 8,3%	47 12,9%	58 16,0%	82 22,6%	363 100,0%
In relationship and living with partner	22 1,9%	243 20,6%	313 26,6%	230 19,5%	197 16,7%	173 14,7%	1.178 100,0%
In relationship, not living with partner	59 40,4%	31 21,2%	13 8,9%	23 15,8%	15 10,3%	5 3,4%	146 100,0%
In relationship, contact with ex-partner	27 18,0%	31 20,7%	38 25,3%	27 18,0%	21 14,0%	6 4,0%	150 100,0%
Separated during the past 12 months, contact with ex-partner	41 38,0%	33 30,6%	14 13,0%	10 9,3%	6 5,6%	4 3,7%	108 100,0%
No marital relationship during past 12 months, contact with ex-partner	8 11,3%	14 19,7%	12 16,9%	23 32,4%	11 15,5%	3 4,2%	71 100,0%

## 2 OVERALL FIGURES

### 2.1 FORMS OF ABUSE

Table 78 lists the various categories used to quantify partner abuse experiences during the past 12 months.

**Table 78. Acts of abuse committed by partners or ex-partners**

Partner	Ex-partner
<i>Verbal and emotional abuse</i>	
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words
Control over relationships	Stalking, harassment, death threat
Attempts to limit contact with family or friends	
Refusal to talk or discuss	
Intimidation	
Mistreatment of children, separation from children or threat to do so	Mistreatment of children, separation from children or threat to do so
<i>Economic abuse</i>	
Appropriation of income or savings, driving into debt	
<i>Physical abuse</i>	
Throwing an object, pushing, grabbing	
Scratching, pinching, biting, hair-pulling	
Slapping, punching or kicking, striking with object so as to cause injury	Slapping, punching or kicking, striking with object so as to cause injury

Armed threats, attempted murder or strangulation	Armed threats, attempted murder or strangulation
Preventing access to home, locking in, locking out, leaving on roadside	
<i>Sexual abuse</i>	
Imposing degrading or humiliating sexual practices or gestures	
Sexual touching, (attempted) forced sexual relations	Sexual touching, (attempted) forced sexual relations

Tables 78 and 79 show the number of respondents (male and female) who stated that they had experienced this type of abuse by their partner or ex-partner during the past 12 months.

As far as verbal abuse was concerned (insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words), the figures refer to acts experienced more than 3 times during the past year. In the case of emotional, economic, physical and sexual abuse, the figures cover respondents who experienced at least one act.

Given the low number in each identified category, later analyses require that the various forms of abuse be combined. The construction of these indicators – when someone is defined as a “victim of abuse”, “victim of serious abuse”, etc. – is a key element in the research, as indicator construction is performed prior to analysis, so that the choices made in defining them inevitably affect the processing of the results. On the basis of the definitions of victimisation we shall therefore be making certain observations on the analysis of the various categories.

**Table 79.** Acts of abuse by current partner, in absolute figures and in %

	Women		Men	
	N	%	N	%
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	7	1%	8	1%
Demand to know where respondent is and with whom	34	5%	46	6%
Attempts to limit contact with family or friends	28	4%	16	2%
Refusal to talk or discuss	46	7%	41	5%
Intimidation	24	4%	17	2%
Mistreatment of children, separation from children or threat to do so	5	1%	4	0%
Appropriation of income or savings, driving into debt	3	0%	1	0%
Throwing an object, pushing, grabbing	12	2%	4	0%
Scratching, pinching, biting, hair-pulling	4	1%	2	0%
Slapping, punching or kicking, striking with object so as to cause injury	5	1%	2	0%
Armed threats, attempted murder or strangulation	1	0%	1	0%
Preventing access to home, locking in, locking out, leaving on roadside	2	0%	0	0%
Imposing degrading or humiliating sexual practices or gestures	3	0%	0	0%
Forced sexual touching, (attempted) forced sexual relations	2	0%	0	0%

**Table 80.** Acts of abuse by ex-partner, in absolute figures and in %

	Women		Men	
	N	%	N	%
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	26	13%	16	12%
Stalking, harassment, death threat	14	7%	4	3%
Mistreatment of children, separation from children or threat to do so	6	3%	4	3%
Slapping, striking or other physical assault	3	2%	2	1%
Armed threats, threats with other dangerous object (stick, knife), attempted murder or strangulation	2	1%	0	0%
Forced sexual touching, (attempted) forced sexual relations	2	1%	0	0%

We have therefore based our analysis on three indicators:

- A binary indicator: victim/non-victim of at least one act of abuse;
- An indicator based on the type of abuse (verbal, emotional, physical, sexual);
- A synthetic indicator based on the following categories: moderate abuse, serious abuse, very serious abuse.

As we shall see, these indicators are usually correlated, but point to different realities. First of all, we supply the overall figures for each of the three indicators according to key variables. Then, they are used as dependent variables when analysing risk factors, consequences or confidences.

## 2.2. VICTIMISATION AND PARTNER ABUSE DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

**Table 81.** Prevalence of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %

	N	%
No abuse	1.444	87,5%
Abuse	206	12,5%
Total	1.651	100,0%

As noted in Table 81, 12.5% of respondents stated that they had experienced at least one act of abuse by their (ex-)partner during the past 12 months. When further analysing the data by making a distinction according to gender (Table 82), it can be seen that, statistically speaking, women are more frequently exposed to partner abuse than men (10.5%). The number of acts experienced also varies: 6.8% of women state that they have experienced more than one act of abuse, against only 3.7% of men.

**Table 82.** Prevalence of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to victim gender, in absolute figures and in %

	Women	Men	Total
No abuse	665	779	1.444
	85,1%	89,5%	87,5%
One act of abuse	63	59	122
	8,1%	6,8%	7,4%
More than one act of abuse	53	32	85
	6,8%	3,7%	5,1%
Total	781	870	1.651
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$p=0,008$

When the data are differentiated according to marital situation (Table 83), it can be seen, in the case of women, that 87.7% of those in a relationship are not subjected to partner abuse. Women whose relationship ended during the past 12 months and those in contact with their ex-partner more often experience abuse: 18.2% and 24.6% respectively experienced acts of partner abuse during the past 12 months. As far as men are concerned, those who ended a relationship during the past 12 months are least victimised, followed by men in relationships and men who have maintained contact with their ex-partner. For each of these specific categories, there is a significant difference between men and women only in the case of couples who have separated during the past 12 months.

**Table 83.** Prevalence of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to victim gender and marital status, in absolute figures and in %

		In partner-ship	Separated during past 12 months	Ex-partner	Total
<b>Women</b>	No abuse	515	45	104	664
		87,7%	81,8%	75,4%	85,1%
	One act of abuse	40	5	18	63
		6,8%	9,1%	13,0%	8,1%
	More than one act of abuse	32	5	16	53
		5,5%	9,1%	11,6%	6,8%
Total	587	55	138	780	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
<b>Men</b>	No abuse	667	51	62	780
		90,6%	94,4%	75,6%	89,4%
	One act of abuse	46	3	11	60
		6,3%	5,6%	13,4%	6,9%
	More than one act of abuse	23	0	9	32
		3,1%	,0%	11,0%	3,7%
Total	736	54	82	872	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	

$p=0,007$

$p=0,000$

Age does not appear to be a significant variable in the case of either men or women. (Table 84). However, it can be noted that the youngest women (aged 18-24) state that they have experienced significantly more abuse (22.1%) than the other age categories. Women aged 25-34 and 55-64 appear to be less affected by partner abuse (9.8%). The two middle-aged categories (35-44 and 45-54) report approximately the same amount of partner abuse (16.1% and 17.4% respectively). In men, there is no connection between prevalence and age. However, it can be noted that the age group most affected is 35-45 (12.5%).

**Table 84.** Prevalence of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to victim gender and age, in absolute figures and in %

		Age						Total
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-75	
Women	No abuse	74	165	172	114	85	55	665
		77,9%	89,7%	83,9%	82,6%	90,4%	84,6%	85,1%
	Abuse	21	19	33	24	9	10	116
		22,1%	10,3%	16,1%	17,4%	9,6%	15,4%	14,9%
	Total	95	184	205	138	94	65	781
		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Men	No abuse	56	151	161	160	136	115	779
		88,9%	90,4%	87,5%	91,4%	87,7%	91,3%	89,5%
	Abuse	7	16	23	15	19	11	91
		11,1%	9,6%	12,5%	8,6%	12,3%	8,7%	10,5%
	Total	63	167	184	175	155	126	870
		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$p=0,076$

$p=0,763$

As far as the difference between regions is concerned (Table 85), there is a significant difference in prevalence between Wallonia and the other regions. 16.3% of Walloon respondents state that they have experienced partner abuse, against 11 to 12% in Flanders and Brussels.

**Table 85.** Prevalence of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, according to victim region, in absolute figures and in %

	No abuse	Abuse	Total
Brussels FR	81	11	92
	88,0%	12,0%	100,0%
Wallonia	417	81	498
	83,7%	16,3%	100,0%
Brussels NL	16	2	18
	88,9%	11,1%	100,0%
Flanders	931	111	1042
	89,3%	10,7%	100,0%
Total	1445	205	1650
	87,6%	12,4%	100,0%

$p=0,020$

When a distinction is made between men and women (Table 86), it can be seen that there is a significant difference only between women. 21.1% of women living in Wallonia stated that they had experienced partner abuse, against 11-14% of those living in Flanders or Brussels.

**Table 86.** Prevalence of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, according to victim region and gender, in absolute figures and in %

		No abuse	Abuse	Total
<b>Women</b>	Brussels FR	42	7	49
		85,7%	14,3%	100,0%
	Wallonia	148	42	190
		77,9%	22,1%	100,0%
	Brussels NL	8	1	9
		88,9%	11,1%	100,0%
	Flanders	467	66	533
87,6%		12,4%	100,0%	
Total	665	116	781	
	85,1%	14,9%	100,0%	
<b>Men</b>	Brussels FR	39	4	43
		90,7%	9,3%	100,0%
	Wallonia	269	40	309
		87,1%	12,9%	100,0%
	Brussels NL	7	2	9
		77,8%	22,2%	100,0%
	Flanders	464	46	510
91,0%		9,0%	100,0%	
Total	779	92	871	
	89,4%	10,6%	100,0%	

$p=0,014$

$p=0,211$

### 2.3 TYPE AND DURATION OF ABUSE

Alongside binary prevalence (victim/non-victim status), it is important to make a distinction between the forms of abuse (verbal and emotional, physical and sexual) experienced by the respondents.

**Table 87.** Prevalence of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, according to victim gender, during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %

	Women	Men	Total
No abuse	665	779	1.444
	85,3%	89,5%	87,5%
Emotional or verbal abuse	93	84	177
	11,9%	9,7%	10,7%
Physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	15	7	22
	1,9%	,8%	1,3%
Sexual abuse (with or without emotional or physical abuse)	7	0	7
	,9%	,0%	,4%
Total	780	870	1.650
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$p=0,002$

Table 87 shows that emotional or verbal abuse concerns almost 11% of respondents. 1.3% of respondents stated that they had experienced physical abuse (1.9% of women, against 0.8% of men). Sexual abuse by a partner was reported by 0.9% of women. This first count shows that the term “battered women” does not account for all partner abuse, as emotional abuse is preponderant. There is also a statistical link between the type of abuse and respondent gender: women are more often subjected to emotional, physical and sexual abuse by their partner. However, a substantial number of men also experience abuse.

**Table 88.** Prevalence of the various forms of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to victim gender and marital situation, in absolute figures and in %

		In part-nership	Separated during past 12 months	Ex-partner	Total
<b>Women</b>	No abuse	515	45	104	664
		87,7%	81,8%	75,4%	85,1%
	Emotional or verbal abuse	59	8	27	94
		10,1%	14,5%	19,6%	12,1%
	Physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	8	1	6	15
		1,4%	1,8%	4,3%	1,9%
Sexual abuse (with or without emotional or physical abuse)	5	1	1	7	
	,9%	1,8	,7%	,9%	
Total	587	55	138	780	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
<b>Men</b>	No abuse	667	51	62	780
		90,6%	94,4%	75,6%	89,4%
	Emotional or verbal abuse	64	3	18	85
		8,7%	5,6%	22,0%	9,7%
	Physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	5	0	2	7
		,7%	,0%	2,4%	,8%
Sexual abuse (with or without emotional or physical abuse)	0	0	0	0	
	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	
Total	736	54	82	872	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	

$p=0,011$

$p=0,001$

Although experience of partner abuse is strongly linked to gender, the characteristics of the union appear to make the most difference (Table 88). Thus respondents who have contact with their ex-partner report twice as much emotional or verbal abuse by the partner than those in a partnership. Physical abuse is also more prevalent. The high level of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated by an ex-partner can be partly explained by the nature of the relationship. For one, it is easier to report abuse by an ex-partner than by a current partner. Also, a number of studies show that during a break-up, a dynamic of denigration of the ex-partner may be set up, in which the new partner may play a preponderant role.



In the case of each separate category, there is a significant difference between men and women only in the case of individuals living with a partner and individuals who have separated during the past 12 months. As for abuse by an ex-partner, the figures are almost identical for both men and women in the case of each type of abuse.

As shown by Table 89, occurrences of physical abuse are generally multiple and accompanied by verbal or emotional abuse. Whereas 65.7% of victims of emotional abuse reported a single act of abuse, the figure fell to 18.2% for physical abuse. The average is 3 to 4 acts.

**Table 89.** Number of acts of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %

	Number of acts reported									Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	
No abuse	1.444	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.444
	100,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Emotional or verbal abuse	0	117	36	16	7	2	0	0	0	178
	,0%	65,7%	20,2%	9,0%	3,9%	1,1%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	0	4	1	5	7	2	2	0	1	22
	,0%	18,2%	4,5%	22,7%	31,8%	9,1%	9,1%	,0%	4,5%	100,0%
Sexual abuse (with or without emotional or physical abuse)	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	2	0	7
	,0%	14,3%	,0%	14,3%	28,6%	14,3%	,0%	28,6%	,0%	100,0%
Total	1.444	122	37	22	16	5	2	2	1	1.651
	87,5%	7,4%	2,2%	1,3%	1,0%	,3%	,1%	,1%	,1%	100,0%

As for the duration of the abuse (Table 90), it is less than 1 year in 90.2% of situations. There is no difference between men and women. Given the low absolute numbers in the other categories, duration cannot be combined with other variables such as the forms of abuse or their severity.

**Table 90.** Duration of acts of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to gender, in absolute figures and in %

	Less than 1 year	1 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	Over 10 years	Total
Women	96	5	3	2	106
	90,6%	4,7%	2,8%	1,9%	100,0%
Men	70	6	2	0	78
	89,7%	7,7%	2,6%	,0%	100,0%
Total	166	11	5	2	184
	90,2%	6,0%	2,7%	1,1%	100,0%

$p = 0,751$

## 2.4 SEVERITY OF ABUSE

Due to the low absolute figures for each form of abuse, the various variables need to be categorised and a synthetic indicator constructed to determine the severity of the abuse experienced. The synthetic character of this indicator will inevitably cause its results to partly conceal the finer, more detailed descriptions which may be made of victimisation. The latter needs to be approached with some caution, as “the” figure achieved further to calculation of this indicator may be used by the media as an overall figure for abuse. The strategic and political implications are therefore important.

The choice of terminology may also have consequences on external communication should the concept of “severity” or “seriousness” be used in a scale which combines the intrinsic severity of the acts reported (e.g. based on the principle that sexual abuse is always very serious) and frequency (if, in the case of acts which are intrinsically difficult to categorise such as verbal abuse, repetition of acts which in themselves are not very serious is considered to be a sign of typical abuse, as in harassment). We have therefore combined the characterisation of the acts, their frequency and diversity into a single scale, which needs to be named. For this purpose, the words “severity” or “seriousness” refer only to part of the classification for this scale as a whole.

The implications of the synthetic indicator relate both to its interpretation by journalists and the general public and to the comparisons which will be sought with data which are theoretically comparable in time or space. When constructing the questionnaire, we sought international comparability of results, so that the “natural” solution to our methodological choices would be strict alignment with the construction of indicators selected elsewhere. However, even though this was an underlying concern when constructing the questionnaire, as soon as the conditions for the calculation of the indicator are not strictly identical – which they cannot be, given the differences in breadth and scope of surveys according to country – the pernicious effects of such construction soon become apparent.

### 2.4.1 *Construction of indicator*

The direct comparability of the results of this survey with those of the French survey ENVEFF would require that exactly the same type of calculation be performed. However, as our intention was to increase coverage of the various spheres in which abuse may occur, the number of act categories had to be cut.

This difference between the number of types of abuse listed in ENVEFF [22] and in this survey [14] means that, technically, the application of an identical calculation method would de facto generate far more restrictive criteria for taking abuse into account. We therefore needed to develop an indicator which was consistent with the philosophy of the French survey, while adapting it to the characteristics of our own survey.

We shall be using this indicator only to analyse “abuse situations” within couples. In order to better understand the underlying mechanisms in partner abuse, in particular the ways in which it becomes durable, we shall be distinguishing between respondents in partnerships, respondents questioned about relationships terminated during the past year and contacts with ex-partners. As previously noted, the prevalence figures for people in partnerships differ widely from those for respondents who have separated recently.

**Table 91. Selecting a composite indicator**

We tested three different indicators, noting each time the requirements for “very serious” classification, and also, in the latter case, tightening the requirements for “serious situations”.

To avoid compromising victim categories, we judged it to be unavoidable – as in the French survey ENVEFF – that respondents who reported only (to the exclusion of any other act) verbal abuse (insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words) “rarely” or less (i.e. less than 3 times during the past 12 months) should not be included. The first two indicators we propose use this entry criterion, and differ only according to the “serious”/ “very serious” distribution criterion.<sup>48</sup>

**Indicator 1**

Verbal or emotional abuse	
0	If the respondent has experienced no act of emotional abuse
	If the respondent has experienced no more than verbal abuse “rarely”
Serious	If the respondent has experienced an act of emotional abuse “rarely” or “sometimes”
	If the respondent has experienced verbal abuse “sometimes”
	If the respondent has experienced two acts of emotional abuse “rarely”
Very serious	If the respondent has experienced an act of verbal abuse “often”
	If the respondent has experienced several acts of emotional abuse at least “rarely”
Physical abuse	
0	If the respondent has experienced no act of physical abuse
Serious	If the respondent has experienced no more than one act of physical abuse “rarely”
Very serious	If the respondent has experienced at least one act of physical abuse “sometimes”
	If the respondent has experienced at least two (separate) acts of physical abuse “rarely”
Sexual abuse	
0	If the respondent has experienced no act of sexual abuse
Very serious	If the respondent has experienced at least one act of sexual abuse “rarely”

The criterion for upgrading from “serious” to “very serious” is the repetition of emotional or physical abuse beyond “rarely”, or the presence of at least two forms of such abuse. Variety is thus taken into account, but minimally.

The indicator we constructed is therefore based on criteria less strict than those for the ENVEFF indicator. It is unsurprising that it should yield a higher percentage of victims of abuse: the ENVEFF survey identified 6.7% of women living in partnerships who

<sup>48</sup> Without wishing to be too restrictive, the various frequencies can be defined as follows: “rarely” = 1 to 3 times, “sometimes” = 4-10 times, “often” = over 10 times, “systematically” = (almost) every day.

had experienced “serious” abuse, and 2.3% victims of an act of “very serious” abuse. However, there is no reason per se to approximate the French results, as there is nothing to indicate that they should be the same in Belgium and in France. Comparison is methodologically useful in that it enables us to determine the extent to which the selected criteria enable a distinction to be made between “serious” and “very serious”. By definition, there is an arbitrary component to this distinction, and the similarity of the relative ratio of “serious” to “very serious” appears to show that a similar distinction is being constructed. By definition, there is an arbitrary component to this distinction, and the relative ratio of “serious” to “very serious” appears to show that a similar distinction is being made.

### Indicator 2

This indicator is based on an index in which “rarely” = 1, “sometimes” = 2, etc. We add the indices for each act reported, the threshold for “very serious” being 4. The criteria were tightened in the same way in the case of physical abuse, for which the “very serious” threshold was reached when a type of act was reported “often” (index = 3) or a combination of acts with a total index of 3 (e.g., one act “rarely” and another “sometimes”, or three acts “rarely”). In the case of sexual abuse, a single act, even experienced “rarely”, suffices to place the respondent in the “very serious” category, as in the case of Indicator 1.

Within our sample, the distribution is as follows according to this indicator:

	N	%
No abuse, or verbal abuse rarely	1.301	88,4%
Serious abuse	130	8,9%
Heel ernstig geweld	41	2,8%

### Indicator 3

However, beyond the fact that an identical criterion cannot be used for a variety of acts (in view of the diversity of categories), it can be noted that the French indicator imposes stricter requirements for access to the “serious” category in the case of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse does not qualify a respondent for victim status if the abuse is reported to occur only “rarely” (whatever its variety), and a minimum of three acts of emotional abuse experienced “sometimes” are required for the victim’s situation to be considered “serious”. This may lead us to tighten our basic conditions and propose a third indicator for which emotional abuse (other than insults) only qualifies if it occurs “sometimes” or if at least two types of occurrence are reported. In other words, the indicator remains the same as before, but respondents who have experienced control of relationships OR intimidation only “rarely” are not included as victims.

Within our sample, the distribution is as follows according to this indicator:

	N	%
No abuse, or verbal abuse rarely	1.382	93,8%
Serious abuse	52	3,5%
Very serious abuse	39	2,6%

We mainly note the considerable effect of this slight tightening of conditions on the overall result: whereas the first indicators classified Belgian women as being more often victims (the total prevalence being 11.6% against 9% in France), prevalence in Belgium falls below prevalence in France (6.2%, against 7.3%), despite the fact that formally our criteria are less stringent than the French criteria. On the other hand, the distribution between “serious” and “very serious” is not the same, as the weight of both categories is the same for women.

This notable difference, despite being subsequent to a fairly minor change to criteria, shows that in our data many “victims” are listed for relatively rare acts. It should therefore be expected that these criteria will have a considerable impact on the identification of groups of individuals characterised by the “situations of abuse” described by the French authors as having a substantial impact on the life and health of these individuals.

If, for exploratory purposes, we review the consequences experienced by respondents classified according to the three indicators under consideration, we find confirmation that the tightening of the conditions for classification as “serious” and “very serious” abuse, leads to a greater obviousness in cases thus classified. The following table shows the averages of a score calculated on the basis of Q145 (“Further to this abuse, were you forced to change or suspend your day-to-day activities and/or your professional activity?”) and Q146 to 155 (list of consequences, including anxiety, guilt, lack of self-confidence, aggressiveness, etc.).

	Indicator 1	N	Indicator 2	N	Indicator 3	N
No abuse (code 0)	0,0162	1.301	0,0162	1.301	0,0582	1.382
Serious abuse	0,9012	117	1,0101	130	1,4929	52
Very serious abuse	3,2033	54	3,6267	41	3,6631	39

The switch from Indicator 1 to the more restrictive Indicator 2 increases the consequence scores, as more obvious cases were defined as “very serious”. This appears consistent with the logic according to which the situations of abuse listed above are defined. Indicator 3, which tightens the criteria for admission to the “serious” category, also increases “average consequences”, especially for the intermediate category. However, the fact of “reclassifying” 80 respondents under Code 0 also increases the score of the latter.

As such, these scores show that although the categories achieved are plausible, they do not enable us to choose between Indicators 2 and 3. It can be seen that if the 82 individuals shifted further to the tightening of the Indicator 3 criteria are isolated, their consequence score is 0.7880, rather closer to that for the “serious” category than to “Code 0”. We therefore propose a 4-category indicator which includes an intermediate “moderate abuse” category between “Code 0” and “Serious abuse”. The characteristics of this indicator would be as follows.

This last indicator is the one selected for the following analyses.

**Indicator selected**

<b>Verbal or emotional abuse</b>	
0	If the respondent has experienced no act of emotional abuse
	If the respondent has experienced no more than one act of verbal abuse "rarely"
Moderate	If the respondent has experienced (one act of) emotional abuse "rarely"
Serious	If the respondent has experienced an act of emotional abuse "sometimes" or "often"
	If the respondent has experienced verbal abuse "sometimes" or "often"
	If the respondent has experienced a maximum of 3 acts of emotional abuse "rarely"
	If the respondent has experienced a combination of two acts, one of which is experienced at worst "sometimes"
Very serious	If the respondent has experienced an act of verbal abuse systematically
	If the respondent has experienced a minimum of over 3 acts of emotional abuse "rarely"
	If the respondent has experienced a combination of at least two acts "sometimes"

<b>Physical abuse</b>	
0	If the respondent has experienced no act of physical abuse
Serious	If the respondent has experienced one act of physical abuse "rarely" or "sometimes"
	If the respondent has experienced two acts of physical abuse "rarely"
Very serious	If the respondent has experienced at least one act of physical abuse "often"
	If the respondent has experienced at least two acts of physical abuse "sometimes"

<b>Sexual abuse</b>	
0	If the respondent has experienced no acts of sexual abuse
Very serious	If the respondent has experienced a minimum of one act of sexual abuse "rarely"

The indicator yields the following scores:

<b>Proposed indicator</b>	<b>Consequences score</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of respondents in partnership</b>
No abuse (Code 0)	0,0162	1.301	88,4%
Moderate abuse	0,7402	80	5,5%
Serious abuse	1,4929	52	3,5%
Very serious abuse	3,6631	39	2,6%

### 2.4.2 Prevalence of partner abuse

The indicator presented applies to respondents and partnerships and ex-partners throughout this section.

**Table 92.** Synthetic indicator of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to victim gender, in absolute figures and in %

	Women	Men	Total
No abuse	665	779	1.444
	85,3%	89,5%	87,5%
Moderate abuse	37	46	83
	4,7%	5,3%	5,0%
Serious abuse	39	30	69
	5,0%	3,4%	4,2%
Very serious abuse	39	15	54
	5,0%	1,7%	3,3%
Total	780	870	1.650
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$p=0,001$

As previously mentioned, there is a notable difference between men and women in the area of partner abuse (Table 92). Women are characterised by a higher percentage of “serious” and “very serious” abuse. The difference between men and women lies mainly in the severity of the abuse experienced (frequency and form of abuse) than in whether or not they have been abused.

**Table 93.** Synthetic indicator of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to victim gender and marital situation, in absolute figures and in %

		In partnership	Separated during past 12 months	Ex-partner	Total
<b>Women</b>	No abuse	515	45	104	664
		87,7%	81,8%	75,4%	85,1%
	Moderate abuse	31	2	4	37
		5,3%	3,6%	2,9%	4,7%
	Serious abuse	22	3	15	40
		3,7%	5,5%	10,9%	5,1%
Very serious abuse	19	5	15	39	
	3,2%	9,1%	10,9%	5,0%	
Total	587	55	138	780	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
<b>Men</b>	No abuse	667	51	62	780
		90,7%	94,4%	75,6%	89,6%
	Moderate abuse	36	3	7	46
		4,9%	5,6%	8,5%	5,3%
	Serious abuse	22	0	8	30
		3,0%	,0%	9,8%	3,4%
Very serious abuse	10	0	5	15	
	1,4%	,0%	6,1%	1,7%	
Total	735	54	82	871	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	

$p = 0.000$

$p = 0.000$

Marital situation is a major explanatory factor (Table 93). General prevalence is lower for respondents in partnerships, with the highest rate of “moderate” abuse and the lowest rate of “very serious abuse”. There is therefore a linear relation between the moment in the relationship (before/during/after) and the severity of the abuse experienced. However, there is a significant difference between men and women only in the case of couples who have separated during the past 12 months.

When the duration of the abuse is reviewed (Table 94), it can be seen that the vast majority (over 90%) of abuse reported lasted less than a year. However, it can also be seen that the serious abuse experienced by approximately 15% of the respondents lasted 5 to 10 years. There is no significant difference between men and women as to the average duration of the abuse.

**Table 94. Synthetic indicator of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to duration of the abuse, in absolute figures and in %**

	Less than 1 year	1 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	Over 10 years	Total
Verbal abuse, rarely	55	4	0	0	59
	93,2%	6,8%	,0%	,0%	100,0%
Moderate abuse	53	3	2	0	58
	91,4%	5,2%	3,4%	,0%	100,0%
Serious abuse	23	1	4	0	28
	82,1%	3,6%	14,3%	,0%	100,0%
Very serious abuse	36	3	0	2	41
	87,8%	7,3%	,0%	4,9%	100,0%
Total	167	11	6	2	186
	89,8%	5,9%	3,2%	1,1%	100,0%

$p=0,01$

On the basis of the synthetic indicator, Table 95 supplies information concerning the form of abuse experienced by the respondents. Among respondents who experienced only emotional abuse, 46.6% experienced a single act of abuse during the past 12 months, and moreover rarely. 35.4% reported experiencing serious verbal or emotional abuse sometimes. 18% of cases concern systematic verbal abuse or frequent emotional abuse (at least three of which were reported to occur “rarely”), or a combination of verbal and emotional abuse (at least “sometimes”). Among victims of physical abuse, 28.6% reported experiencing a single act of physical abuse “rarely” or “sometimes”. However, over 70% experienced very serious partner abuse. Sexual abuse is always considered to be very serious, whatever its frequency.



**Table 95.** Synthetic indicator of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, according to the type of abuse experienced, in absolute figures and in %

	No abuse	Emotional or verbal abuse	Physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	Sexual abuse (with or without emotional or physical abuse)	Totaal
Verbal abuse	1.444	0	0	0	1.444
	100,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	87,5%
Moderate abuse	0	83	0	0	83
	,0%	46,6%	,0%	,0%	5,0%
Serious abuse	0	63	6	0	69
	,0%	35,4%	28,6%	,0%	4,2%
Very serious abuse	0	32	15	7	54
	,0%	18,0%	71,4%	100,0%	3,3%
Total	1444	178	21	7	1.650
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Finally, we combined the indicator with the following questions: “What is your assessment of the situation you are experiencing or have experienced?” (Table 96). This shows that the assessment of seriousness by respondents does not merely reflect the form and frequency of the acts of abuse. For instance, it can be seen that almost 45% of respondents who experienced moderate abuse considered it to be “not at all serious”. Half of those who experienced very serious abuse consider it to be “quite serious”, while only 13.2% call it “very serious”. In general, victims consider the abuse they have experienced to be “quite serious”.

**Table 96.** Synthetic indicator of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to assessment of situation, in absolute figures and in %

	What is your assessment of the situation you are experiencing or have experienced						Totaal
	Not at all serious	Not very serious	Quite serious	Very serious	Does not know	Declined to answer	
Verbal abuse, rarely	7	12	13	6	0	2	40
	17,5%	30,0%	32,5%	15,0%	,0%	5,0%	100,0%
Moderate abuse	36	16	20	5	3	1	81
	44,4%	19,8%	24,7%	6,2%	3,7%	1,2%	100,0%
Serious abuse	17	11	18	3	1	1	51
	33,3%	21,6%	35,3%	5,9%	2,0%	2,0%	100,0%
Very serious abuse	4	8	20	5	0	1	38
	10,5%	21,1%	52,6%	13,2%	,0%	2,6%	100,0%
Total	64	47	71	19	4	5	210
	30,5%	22,4%	33,8%	9,0%	1,9%	2,4%	100,0%

When the average score is calculated for “seriousness assessment” (0 being “not at all serious”, 1 “not very serious”, 2 “quite serious” and 3 “very serious”), it can be seen that

there is a correlation between the seriousness assessment score and the form of abuse experienced (Table 97). The respondents give a lower score to emotional-abuse situations than to physical-abuse situations. As physical abuse is usually accompanied by emotional abuse, this is a logical outcome.

**Table 97. Forms of abuse according to seriousness assessment score**

		Average	N
Verbal abuse, rarely	Women	1,7110	39
	Men	1,0503	45
	Total	1,3546	84
Emotional or verbal abuse	Women	1,3722	88
	Men	,9681	82
	Total	1,1774	169
Physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	Women	1,9137	14
	Men	1,5000	6
	Total	1,7937	20
Sexual abuse (with or without emotional or sexual abuse)	Women	1,7787	7
	Totaal	1,7787	7
Total	Women	1,5319	147
	Men	1,0195	133
	Total	1,2891	280

The score for “verbal abuse, rarely” merits some attention. It should be noted that both men and women give it a higher score than emotional abuse. This shows that perception of the seriousness of a situation depends greatly on the context in which it occurs. It can be assumed the individuals who experience very little abuse consider it to be serious, however minimal it actually is.

It should also be noted that the average score for women is always higher than that for men, whatever the category.

### 2.4.3 International comparisons<sup>49</sup>

We would like to end with an international comparison. However, the reader should be aware that comparisons are always difficult due to a variety of factors:<sup>50</sup>

- On the global scale, the perception of (partner) abuse is not always the same. Perception and levels of tolerance vary according to current laws and customs. Acts considered to be punishable in some countries are tolerated in others. In much of the world, women’s bodies become their partners’ property as a matter of course. In general, structural inequalities between men and women help increase the risk of partner abuse. In particular, women’s own acceptance of cultural values which legitimise partner abuse plays a major part in exposing them to partner abuse.
- In Western countries, where the problems generated by different perceptions are limited, disparate approaches still make it difficult to compare national approaches. The interpretation of the differences observed between countries is therefore a problem-ridden business. These differences include the wording and number of questions, the

<sup>49</sup> Jaspard, M. (2005). *Les violences contre les femmes*, Paris: éd. La Découverte.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

diversity of the target population (age, marital status), the method by which the survey is taken (face-to-face, self-administration, phone), and the grouping of the variables to construct rates or indicators.

On the basis of the available data <sup>51</sup>, we limited the comparison to the prevalence of physical and sexual abuse inflicted on women by their partner or ex-partner within the past 12 months.

**Table 98.** Prevalence of physical and sexual abuse against women by partners, including ex-partners, during the past 12 months, in various countries, in %

	Year of survey	Physical abuse	Sexual abuse
Finland	1997	7%	2,8%
France	2000	2,7%	1,1%
Sweden	2001	4,6%	,7%
Ireland	2005	1,4%	,7%
Italy	2006	1,7%	1,0%
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>1,9%</b>	<b>,9%</b>

Table 98 shows that each year 1.4 to 1.6% of women experience physical abuse by their partner and around 1% of women are victims of serious sexual abuse. The especially high prevalence rate for physical and sexual abuse reported by Finnish women is surprising: is this due to an incorrect methodological bias or the early date of the survey, or does it reflect reality?

## 2.5 ECONOMIC ABUSE

Special attention was paid to economic abuse in the questionnaire. All respondents in partnerships were asked the question “During the past 12 months, has your partner or ex-partner taken your salary/pension/savings from you against your will, or has he/she got you into debt?”. There are only four victims of economic abuse (3 women and 1 man). Such acts of abuse are never isolated. Among the four individuals identified, two also experienced physical abuse and the other two sexual abuse. The latter account for 40% of the respondents who reported sexual abuse.

**Table 99.** Economic abuse by partner, including ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %

	Has taken your salary/pension/savings or got you into debt		Total
	No	Yes	
Verbal abuse, rarely	1.291	0	1.291
	87,9%	,0%	87,7%
Moderate abuse	78	0	78
	5,3%	,0%	5,3%
Serious abuse	60	0	60
	4,1%	,0%	4,1%
Very serious abuse	39	4	43
	2,7%	100,0%	2,9%
Total	1.468	4	1.472
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

<sup>51</sup> Schröttle, M. et al. (ed.) (2006). *Comparative reanalysis of prevalence of violence against women and health impact data in Europe – obstacles and possible solutions. Testing a comparative approach on selected studies*. Online report, Osnabrück: Co-ordination Action on Human Rights Violations.

In view of the low absolute figures, we did not create a separate category for this form of abuse. Moreover, in view of its seriousness, it was included in physical abuse and classified as “very serious” in the synthetic indicator.

## ABUSE BY PARTNER AND EX-PARTNER – GENERAL FIGURES: SUMMARY

For the purpose of this survey, partner abuse committed within the past 12 months was extended to abuse by an ex-partner.

- 12.5 % of respondents reported having experienced at least one act of abuse by their partner or ex-partner during the past 12 months (14.9% of women and 10.5% of men).
- Women are more often the victims of “serious” and “very serious” partner abuse than men. The difference between men and women lies mainly in the seriousness (form and frequency of abuse) of the acts experienced than in the fact of being a victim or non-victim.
- When differentiating between the various marital situations, it can be noted that women in partnerships are less affected by partner abuse: 87.7% had not experienced abuse. They are followed by women who divorced or separated during the past 12 months and those who remained in contact with their ex-partner, i.e. 81.8% and 75.4%.
- Age does not affect the occurrence of partner abuse in the case of either men or women. However, the youngest women (aged 18-25) reported far more partner abuse (22.1%) than the other age groups.
- Analysis according to the forms of abuse experienced shows that the commonly used expression “battered women” does not reflect all partner abuse, as emotional pressure is preponderant: emotional or verbal abuse concerns almost 11% of female respondents, whereas physical assaults were reported by 1.3% of female respondents.
- In 90.2% of the situations, the duration of the abuse was less than one year.

## 3 CONFIDING IN THIRD PARTIES

In this section, we shall be reviewing the extent to which victims of partner abuse seek help. Help should be taken in the broadest sense of the term, both informal (family, friends, etc.) and official (police, doctors, support services, etc.). We shall be analysing this issue according to several explanatory variables: victim gender, age, marital situation, region and the form of abuse experienced. Finally, we shall see the extent to which victims are satisfied with the help received.

### 3.1 GENDER OF VICTIM

There is a significant difference between confidences by male and female victims: 64.8% of the women mentioned the abuse to someone, against 44.9% of the men (Table 100).

**Table 100.** Percentage of male and female victims of partner abuse who confide in someone, in absolute figures and in %

	Women	Men	Total
<i>Did you mention this abuse to someone?</i>			
Yes	68	31	99
	64,8%	39,2%	53,8%
No	36	44	80
	34,3%	55,7%	43,5%
Does not know	0	4	4
	,0%	5,1%	2,2%
Declined to answer	1	0	1
	1,0%	,0%	,5%
Total	105	79	184
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$p=0,000$

The remaining question is who the victims confide in. For this purpose, we broke down all responses to Q160-167 into Table 101, while maintaining the distinction between men and women.

**Table 101.** Confidences according to victim gender, in absolute figures and in %

The victim mentioned the abuse to:

Total

The victim mentioned the abuse to:	Women	Men	Total
One or more family members	62	23	85
	67,4%	45,1%	59,4%
A friend or neighbour	72	43	115
	79,1%	84,3%	81,0%
A work colleague	19	9	28
	22,4%	20,5%	21,7%
A doctor or nurse	23	5	28
	26,4%	11,1%	21,2%
A psychologist or psychiatrist (at hospital, private office, in another setting)	21	7	28
	24,1%	15,6%	21,2%
A lawyer or solicitor	9	3	12
	10,5%	7,0%	9,3%
A welfare service worker (helpline, victim support, support for people subject to trial, shelter, etc.)	2	0	2
	2,3%	,0%	1,5%
Police	7	3	10
	8,2%	7,0%	7,8%

To further investigate the results, we have grouped the confidences into three spheres: informal (family, friends, etc.), medical/psych/social (doctors, psychologists, support services, etc.) and legal (lawyers, police, etc.).

**Table 102. Confidence spheres according to victim gender, in absolute figures and in %**

	Women	Men	Total
Informal (p=0.00)	90	50	140
	64,3%	42,4%	54,3
Medical/psych/social (p=0.00)	33	8	41
	23,4%	6,8%	15,9%
Legal (p=0.023)	12	4	16
	8,5%	3,4%	6,2%

The informal sphere is the one by far the most resorted to by women (64.3%) and men (42.4%). The medical/psych/social sphere is mainly used by women. 23.6% of female victims confide in a doctor or psychologist, against only 6.8% of men. Finally, only 8.6% of women and 3.4% of men have recourse to the legal sphere.

When these results are examined according to our synthetic partner violence seriousness indicator (Table 103), it can be seen that, whatever the sphere, both women and men confide more in the most serious situations. In the case of women, the switch from “moderate” to “serious” abuse plays a determining role, whereas in the case of men the trigger level is clearly “very serious” abuse.

**Table 103. Confidence spheres according to victim gender and seriousness of abuse, in absolute figures and in %<sup>52</sup>**

		Moderate abuse	Serious abuse	Very serious abuse	Total
Informal	Women	16	19	29	90
		44,4%	59,4%	78,4%	63,8%
	Men	9	8	12	50
		22,50%	30,80%	85,70%	42,40%
Medical/psych/social	Women	4	12	12	33
		11,1%	37,5%	32,4%	23,6%
	Men	1	1	3	8
		2,6%	3,8%	21,4%	6,8%
Legal	Women	2	4	5	12
		5,6%	12,9%	13,5%	8,6%
	Men	0	1	1	4
		,0%	3,8%	7,1%	3,4%

<sup>52</sup> The total numbers for this table are slightly different, as individuals who had experienced verbal abuse only were removed from the seriousness indicator.

### 3.2 AGE OF VICTIM

**Table 104.** Confidences according to age of victim, in absolute figures and in %

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-75
The victim mentioned the abuse to someone	34	23	41	22	17	10
	82,9%	54,8%	56,9%	52,4%	44,7%	41,7%

$p=0,016$

Confidences are also correlated with age (Table 104). There is a substantial difference between the youngest victims (aged 18-24) and the other age groups, as 82.9% of the former confide, whereas the general average is around 57%. Between 25 and 54, the percentage of confidences is close to the average. Finally, the oldest respondents (55-64 and 65-75) are those who mention partner abuse least frequently.

When these results are analysed according to confidence sphere (Table 105), a strong linear relation appears between recourse to the informal sphere and age: the younger the victim, the more he/she resorts to the informal sphere. It can also be noted that respondents aged 45-54 are those who most often use medical/psych/social and legal resources, whereas such resources are generally ignored by the youngest group (18-34).

**Table 105.** Confidence spheres according to victim age, in absolute figures and in %

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-75	Total
Informal	33	23	38	21	16	9	140
	80,5%	54,8%	52,8%	50,0%	43,2%	37,5%	54,3%
Medical/psych/ social	3	4	13	12	6	4	42
	7,3%	9,3%	18,1%	29,3%	15,8%	16,7%	16,2%
Legal	0	2	5	7	2	1	17
	,0%	4,7%	6,9%	16,7%	5,3%	4,2%	6,5%

### 3.3 FORMS OF ABUSE

**Table 106.** Confidences in the informal sphere (family, friend, neighbour, work colleague, etc.), according to the type of abuse experienced, in absolute figures and in %

	Verbal abuse, rarely	Emotional or verbal abuse	Physical abuse (with or without emotional or verbal abuse)	Sexual abuse (with or without physical, emotional or verbal abuse)	Total
Confidences in the informal sphere	47	76	11	7	94
	56,4%	42,7%	50,0%	100,0%	45,1%
No confidences in the informal sphere	36	103	11	0	114
	43,4%	57,5%	50,0%	,0%	54,9%

$p=0,01$

As seen previously (Table 103), there is a link between the synthetic indicator for the seriousness of abuse experienced and recourse to informal and official resources: the worse the abuse, the more victims confide. As shown by Table 106, the same applies to the type of abuse experienced and recourse to the informal sphere: half the victims of physical abuse by partners confide in a family member, a friend, a neighbour or a work colleague. In the case of sexual partner abuse – despite the smallness of the figures – it can be noted that all victims of sexual abuse confide. This figure requires careful analysis. In view of the seriousness of the situation (sexual abuse), it may be supposed that individuals who first took a “personal” approach are more inclined to mention it during a phone survey. In the case of the other spheres, there is no significant difference between confidences and the type of abuse experienced.

### 3.4 MARITAL STATUS OF VICTIM

The victim’s marital status is an important factor in understanding situations of abuse. In Table 107, it can be seen that victims find it easier to confide about abuse committed by an ex-partner than by a current partner, especially if they are living together: only 46.9% of victims in a partnership and who live with their partner confide in third parties. Abuse perpetrated within (existing) partnerships is therefore more frequently concealed from the outside world. The percentage for married respondents is almost identical (46.4%).

**Table 107. Confidences according to marital status, in absolute figures and in %**

	Marital status					Total
	In relationship and lives with partner	In relationship, does not live with partner	In relationship, has been in contact with ex-partner	Separated during past 12 months	Not in relationship and has been in contact with ex-partner	
Confidences	67	14	18	30	18	147
	46,9%	56,0%	62,1%	71,4%	94,7%	57,0%

$p=0,022$

This overall trend is present in each individual confidence sphere (Table 108): in general, victims in a relationship are less likely to confide acts of partner abuse to family or friends, a doctor or psychologist, or the police or legal system.

**Table 108. Confidence spheres according to marital status, in absolute figures and in %**

	In partnership	Separated during past 12 months	Ex-partner	Total
Informal ( $p=0$ )	76	30	34	140
	45,2%	71,4%	70,8%	54,3%
Medical/psych/social ( $p=0.001$ )	22	3	17	42
	13,0%	7,0%	35,4%	16,2%
Legal ( $p=0.001$ )	4	5	8	17
	2,4%	11,9%	16,7%	6,6%



### 3.5 VICTIM'S REGION OF RESIDENCE

In Belgium, support, especially of the psycho-social variety, is organised at community level. It is interesting to see to what extent it is used according to the respondents' region of residence. Victims more frequently discuss their experience of abuse with third parties in Flanders (64.6%) than in Wallonia (42.9%), despite the fact that Flemish respondents are less often victims of abuse (see table 85).

**Table 109. Confidences according to region, in absolute figures and in %**

	Brussels FR	Wallonia	Brussels NL	Flanders	Total
Confidences	6	36	3	102	147
	42,9%	42,9%	75,0%	64,6%	56,5%

$p=0,031$

According to the focus-group participants (see Chapter 8), this difference is partly explained by institutional contexts and a different approach to the problem according to the region. However, when the results are broken down according to confidence sphere (Table 110), it can be seen that the difference between regions is mainly due to greater recourse to the informal sphere in Flanders. As far as the medical/psych/social and legal spheres are concerned, there is little difference between Wallonia and Flanders. In view of the low absolute figures, it is difficult to comment on Brussels.

**Table 110. Confidence spheres according to region, in absolute figures and in %**

	Brussels FR	Wallonia	Brussels NL	Flanders	Total
Informal	5	36	3	95	139
	38,5%	42,9%	75,0%	60,5%	53,9%
Medical/psych/ social	3	12	1	25	41
	23,1%	14,3%	25,0%	15,9%	15,9%
Legal	1	4	1	10	16
	7,1%	4,8%	25,0%	6,4%	6,2%

### 3.6 STATEMENTS TO POLICE

We shall now investigate the extent to which victims have made a statement or complained to the police.

**Table 111. Did you make a statement to the police, in absolute figures and in %**

	N	%
Yes, you did so yourself	9	3,3

As shown by Table 111, only 9 victims made an official complaint. This low figure illustrates the difference between police statistics and reality in the field.<sup>53</sup> However, there is no way we can determine the actual number of victims of partner abuse on the basis of these statistics alone, as they represent a mere 3.3% of the victims identified by this survey.

<sup>53</sup> According to the Belgian Federal Police's partner-abuse criminal statistics, 19,802 acts of physical abuse, 16,938 acts of emotional abuse, 1,510 acts of economic abuse and 131 acts of sexual abuse were recorded in 2008 (Statistiques Policières de Criminalité, 2000 - Trimestre 3 2009, Police Fédérale - CGOP / Données de Gestion. These data can also be viewed at: [http://www.polfed-fedpol.be/crim/crim\\_stat\\_fr.php](http://www.polfed-fedpol.be/crim/crim_stat_fr.php).)

### 3.7 SATISFACTION WITH HELP RECEIVED

We asked victims of partner abuse to what extent they had called upon a professional or requested one or more forms of support. On this basis, we constructed a synthetic satisfaction indicator by giving a score of -2 to “not at all satisfied”, -1 to “not satisfied”, 1 to “satisfied” and 2 to “very satisfied”. The purpose of this was to further dichotomise the indicator and prevent excessive recentering.

Table 112 illustrates (for all spheres) the average score, which is close to the score for “satisfied”. However, the informal sphere scores slightly higher (1.35), the legal sphere less so (0.83).

Overall, men are less satisfied than women. The distinction between women and men reveals substantial differences in the case of the medical/psych/social and legal spheres.

**Table 112. Satisfaction score according to gender and confidence sphere**

Satisfaction further to support received in:	Victim gender	Average	N
Informal sphere	Female	1,3776	86
	Male	1,2919	47
	Total	1,3472	133
Medical/psych/social sphere	Female	1,1932	32
	Male	,1849	8
	Total	,9881	41
Legal sphere	Female	1,0777	12
	Male	,0407	4
	Total	,8284	16

Further breakdown of the satisfaction index (Table 113) yields the following results:

**Table 113. Satisfaction score according to helper**

Satisfaction with support received from:	Victim gender	Average	N
Family member(s)	Female	1,2644	61
	Male	1,1983	21
	Total	1,2476	81
Friend or neighbour	Female	1,4226	69
	Male	1,2467	41
	Total	1,3571	110
Work colleague	Female	1,4099	19
	Male	,9410	7
	Total	1,2834	26
Doctor, nurse	Female	1,1668	22
	Male	-,0146	5
	Total	,9517	27
Psychologist or psychiatrist in hospital, private office or other setting	Female	1,1030	21
	Male	,3104	7
	Total	8917	28
Lawyer or solicitor	Female	1,1031	9
	Male	,8141	3
	Total	1,0356	12

Support service worker (helpline, victim support, support for people subject to trial, shelter, etc.)	Female	1,0000	2
	Male	-	0
	Total	1,0000	2
Police	Female	1,1395	7
	Male	-,7018	3
	Total	,6022	10

There is a significant difference between male and female victims in the case of three helper categories: doctors, psychologists and the police: male victims always report lower satisfaction than women. As mentioned by several speakers during the focus groups, this score is partly attributable to the inexperience and lack of knowledge of certain professionals when faced with partner abuse of men.

Finally, a comparison between the satisfaction scores with helpers in Flanders and Wallonia (Table 114) reveals a correlation between satisfaction with support received and region only in the case of the legal sphere. However, the low absolute figures in this category (legal sphere) require that these figures be analysed with great caution.

**Table 114. Satisfaction score according to confidence sphere and region**

Satisfaction with help received from:	Region	Average	N
Informal sphere	Wallonia	1,1254	36
	Flanders	1,4254	89
Medical/psych/social sphere	Wallonia	,8383	12
	Flanders	,9878	24
Legal sphere	Wallonia	,2295	4
	Flanders	1,0431	10

## ABUSE BY PARTNER AND EX-PARTNER – CONFIDENCES TO THIRD PARTIES: SUMMARY

- Female victims confide more in third parties concerning their experiences than do men: 67.4% of women did so, against 44.9% of men.
- As far as age is concerned, there is a wide gap between the youngest age group (18-25) and the others: 82.9% confide in someone, whereas the average is around 57%.
- Victims are notably more reticent about abuse committed by a current partner: less than half (46.9%) of victims who live with their partners speak up. The percentage for married people is almost identical (46.4%).
- Victims of partner abuse mainly discuss their experiences with family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues. This applies to both men and women. Women are more likely to appeal to a doctor, psychologist or support service (medical/psych/social sphere): 23.6 % of female victims confide in a doctor or psychologist, against only 6.8% of men.
- In general, Flemish victims confide more than their Walloon counterparts. The difference is strongest in the informal sphere.
- As far as the satisfaction of victims of partner abuse with support received is concerned, there is a significant difference between men and women in the case of three categories of helpers: doctors, psychologists and the police, who are systematically rated lower by men than by women. This may be due to inexperience and lack of knowledge on the part of some professionals concerning the dynamic of partner abuse.

## 4 CONSEQUENCES OF PARTNER ABUSE AND ATTITUDES OF VICTIMS TO ABUSE <sup>54</sup>

The analysis of the consequences of partner abuse will be carried out from several angles.<sup>55</sup> First of all, we shall be discussing issues relating to the physical or professional consequences directly attributable to abuse experienced. These include: physical injury, receiving medical care, suspension of day-to-day and/or professional activities due to the abuse. Then, we shall investigate psychological consequences in 10 questions. The third angle of approach is to calculate a synthetic indicator based on both the above types of consequences. This will be combined with several explanatory variables: gender, forms of abuse, seriousness, etc. Finally, without establishing a single cause, we shall analyse a number of variables from the "health" module, in particular concerning the consumption of alcohol or prescription drugs.

The strategies used by the victims to deal with abuse are discussed in the last section of this paragraph.

### 4.1 PHYSICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF PARTNER ABUSE

In order to analyse the physical and professional consequences of partner abuse, we used the previously developed abuse seriousness indicator. When the three questions relating to the physical and professional consequences of abuse (Q144-146) are analysed (Table 115), a linear relation becomes apparent: the worse the abuse experienced by the victim, the more serious the physical or professional consequences.

**Table 115.** Physical and professional consequences of partner abuse according to the partner-abuse synthetic indicator, in absolute figures and in %

	During the situations you experienced, were you ever physically injured in some way?				Total
	Yes	No	Does not know	Declined to answer	
Moderate abuse	0 ,0%	77 92,8%	2 2,4%	4 4,8%	83 100,0%
Serious abuse	4 6,6%	54 88,5%	1 1,6%	2 3,3%	61 100,0%
Very serious abuse	14 27,5%	37 72,5%	0 ,0%	0 ,0%	51 100,0%
	Further to this abuse, were you ever given medical care?				Total
	Yes	No	Does not know	Declined to answer	
Moderate abuse	0 ,0%	79 95,2%	0 ,0%	4 4,8%	83 100,0%
Serious abuse	2 3,2%	56 90,3%	1 1,6%	3 4,8%	62 100,0%
Very serious abuse	6 11,8%	42 82,4%	0 ,0%	3 5,9%	51 100,0%

<sup>54</sup> Differences are apparent in the general totals of the tables, for two concomitant reasons. For one, not all respondents answered all questions asked; moreover, not all respondents were asked all questions. In both cases, this lowers the numbers.

<sup>55</sup> Unless explicitly stated otherwise,  $p < 0.05$  for all combinations in this section.

	Further to this abuse, were you forced to change or suspend your day-to-day activities and/or your professional activity?				Total
	Yes	No	Does not know	Declined to answer	
Moderate abuse	2	76	0	4	82
	2,4%	92,7%	,0%	4,9%	100,0%
Serious abuse	4	54	1	2	61
	6,6%	88,5%	1,6%	3,3%	100,0%
Very serious abuse	10	41	0	0	51
	19,6%	80,4%	,0%	,0%	100,0%

Table 116 shows that over 9% of victims of partner abuse reported being physically injured in some way by the abuse. This percentage varies widely according to gender: 15.7% of female victims report injury, against only 1.1% of men. As this difference cannot be explained only by the differing proportions of male and female victims of physical partner abuse, it can be concluded that female victims of partner abuse are more often physically injured than men.

**Table 116.** Physical consequences according to victim gender, in absolute figures and in %

	During the situations you experienced, were you ever physically injured in some way?				Total
	Yes	No	Does not know	Declined to answer	
Women	17	88	1	2	108
	15,7%	81,5%	,9%	1,9%	100,0%
Men	1	80	2	5	88
	1,1%	90,9%	2,3%	5,7%	100,0%
Total	18	168	3	7	196
	9,2%	85,7%	1,5%	3,6%	100,0%

## 4.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF PARTNER ABUSE

**Table 117.** Psychological consequences according to victim gender, in absolute figures and in %

	You have lost confidence	You have become more aggressive	You feel guilty and/or ashamed	You are afraid of the person with whom you live(d)	You have broken off relationships or people have broken them off with you
Women	44	26	28	19	29
	40,7%	23,9%	25,7%	17,4%	26,6%
Men	14	8	6	5	9
	16,1%	9,2%	7,0%	5,7%	10,3%
Total	58	33	35	24	38
	29,3%	16,7%	17,7%	12,1%	19,2%

	You have problems with depression, anxiety, insomnia	Your children are disturbed by the situation	You have taken measures to protect yourself (alerting a neighbour, etc.)	You left your partner or your home	You try to forget, not to think about it
<b>Women</b>	34	26	27	26	57
	31,2%	23,9%	24,8%	24,1%	52,3%
<b>Men</b>	9	6	6	3	15
	10,3%	6,9%	6,9%	3,4%	17,2%
<b>Total</b>	43	33	32	29	72
	21,7%	16,7%	16,2%	14,6%	36,4%

It can be seen in Table 117 that all psychological consequences are correlated with the "gender" variable. Although it cannot be said that partner abuse of women objectively generates more psychological consequences, these figures illustrate a causal relation which is experienced far more frequently by women, who describe far more psychological consequences of abuse. 40.7% of female victims feel less confident, 25.7% are ashamed and 23.9% have become more aggressive, whereas the corresponding figures for male victims are 16.1 %, 7.0% and 9.2% respectively.

As shown by Table 118, there is a perfect linear relation between the seriousness of abuse and the individual psychological consequences: victims who have experienced very serious abuse report more psychological consequences.

**Table 118.** Psychological consequences according to seriousness of abuse, in absolute figures and in %

	You have lost confidence	You have become more aggressive	You feel guilty and/or ashamed	You are afraid of the person with whom you live(d)	You have broken off relationships or people have broken them off with you
Moderate abuse	7	7	10	0	4
	8,3%	8,3%	11,9%	,0%	4,8%
Serious abuse	22	9	13	5	12
	36,1%	14,8%	21,3%	8,1%	19,4%
Very serious abuse	29	17	12	19	22
	55,8%	33,3%	23,5%	36,5%	42,3%
Total	58	33	35	24	38
	29,3%	16,7%	17,7%	12,1%	19,2%

	You have problems with depression, anxiety, insomnia	Your children are disturbed by the situation	You have taken measures to protect yourself (alerting a neighbour, etc.)	You left your partner or your home	You try to forget, not to think about it
Moderate abuse	7 8,4%	1 1,2%	8 9,6%	5 6,0%	24 28,6%
Serious abuse	13 21,3%	11 17,7%	7 11,5%	8 13,1%	19 31,1%
Very serious abuse	23 44,2%	21 40,4%	17 32,7%	16 31,4%	29 55,8%
Total	43 21,7%	33 16,7%	32 16,2%	29 14,6%	72 36,4%

### 4.3 SYNTHETIC INDICATOR

On the basis of this first analysis of the consequences of partner abuse, we created a synthetic consequence indicator. This indicator was constructed by adding 11 questions and dividing the total by 1.1. It may therefore range from 0 to 10. The questions concerning children (Q154) and separation (Q154) were not taken into account as they depend on the victim's family and marital status.

When this average score is analysed according to victim age (Table 119), no significant difference appears. The youngest age group (18-25) scores lowest (1.36), and the 35-44 age group highest (1.86); the average score is 1.664. In other words, the consequences of partner abuse are no more serious (or less serious) for young people than for older people.

**Table 119.** Consequence indicator according to victim age

	Average	N
18-24	1,3636	27
25-34	1,7172	35
35-44	1,8696	56
45-54	1,6408	39
55-64	1,4286	28
65-75	1,7677	21
Total	1,6640	206

On the other hand, if we compare this score according to gender and the form of abuse experienced (Table 120), it can be seen once again that women feel the consequences of partner abuse more than do men. The consequences of sexual abuse are higher by far than those of other forms of abuse.

**Table 120. Consequence indicator according to victim gender and form of abuse**

	Gender	Average	N
Emotional or verbal abuse	Women	2,0984	93
	Men	0,6657	84
	Total	1,4179	178
Physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	Women	2,6901	51
	Men	2,2927	7
	Total	2,717	22
Sexual abuse (with or without physical or emotional abuse)	Women	4,7689	7
	Men	-	0
	Totaal	4,7689	7
Total	Women	2,3595	115
	Men	0,7838	91
	Total	1,664	206

Finally, we calculated the average scores for each marital situation (Table 121). Victims who have contacts with ex-partners (1.8) experience more consequences of partner abuse than victims in partnerships (1.43). This can be explained to a great extent by the presence of more serious violence in the first category (see Table 93).

As for the very high score among women who have separated during the past 12 months, it can be partly explained by the accumulation of the consequences of separation and abuse. It is interesting to note that the duration of the situations of abuse has no significant bearing on the seriousness of consequences.

**Table 121. Consequence indicator according to victim gender and marital situation**

	Gender	Average	N
In partnership	Women	2,0685	72
	Men	,7820	69
	Total	1,4375	140
Separated during past 12 months	Women	4,1600	9
	Men	1,5784	3
	Total	3,5798	12
Ex-partner	Women	2,4725	34
	Men	,6787	19
	Total	1,8228	54
Total	Women	2,3595	115
	Men	,7838	91
	Total	1,6640	206



#### 4.4 HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

We have examined the extent to which there was a connection between partner abuse and the victim's general state of health, which is investigated in Module 3 of the questionnaire, and unlike Q144-146, does not tie questions to partner abuse. In consequence, these data need to be treated with caution, and no conclusions may be drawn as to the existence of an unambiguous link between both aspects.

There is a close link between, on the one hand, sleep disorders and the consumption of prescription drugs, and on the other hand partner abuse (Table 122). However, this cannot be interpreted as a consequence of abuse in its own right. 47.8% of non-victims of partner abuse reported never having had any problems going to sleep during the past 12 months, against only 27.5% of victims of partner abuse. As far as the other frequency categories are concerned (rarely, sometimes, most of the time, always) for sleep disorders, the figures are higher by 5% in the case of victims of partner abuse.

The same applies to the use of prescription drugs (sleeping pills, tranquillisers, antidepressants, anti-anxiety agents). 18.9% of victims of partner abuse regularly take or have taken drugs, against 12.2% of non-victims.

**Table 122.** Health problems and drug consumption according to victim gender and form of abuse experienced, in absolute figures and in %

	During the past 12 months, how often have you had problems falling or staying asleep?					Total
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time	
Non-victims	690	280	285	127	60	1.442
	47,8%	19,4%	19,7%	8,8%	4,2%	100,0%
Victims	57	54	50	31	15	207
	27,5%	26,1%	24,2%	15,0%	7,2%	100,0%
Total	747	334	335	158	75	1.650
	45,2%	20,2%	20,3%	9,6%	4,5%	100,0%
	During the past 12 months, have you taken prescription drugs, antidepressants or anti-anxiety agents					Total
	Never	Rarely	Regularly, but you are not taking them now	Regularly, and you are taking them now	Does not know	
Non-victims	1.229	37	50	127	1	1.444
	85,1%	2,6%	3,5%	8,8%	,1%	100,0%
Victims	158	7	14	25	2	206
	76,7%	3,4%	6,8%	12,1%	1,0%	100,0%
Total	1.387	44	64	152	3	1.650
	84,1%	2,7%	3,9%	9,2%	,2%	100,0%

However, there is no significant connection to be found between alcohol consumption and partner abuse experienced (Table 123). Frequency of alcohol consumption by victims can-

not, therefore, be interpreted as a risk factor or as a consequence of partner abuse.

**Table 123.** Alcohol consumption according to victimisation (partner abuse), in absolute figures and in %

	How often do you drink alcohol?					Total
	Never	Less than once a month	1 to 3 times a month	1 or 2 times a week	Every day (or nearly)	
Non-victims	226	147	282	537	252	1.444
	15,7%	10,2%	19,5%	37,2%	17,5%	100,0%
Victims	23	25	43	75	41	207
	11,1%	12,1%	20,8%	36,2%	19,8%	100,0%
Total	249	172	325	612	293	1.651
	15,1%	10,4%	19,7%	37,1%	17,7%	100,0%

#### 4.5 ATTITUDES TO ABUSE

When individuals are faced with partner abuse, some confide or take measures. In this survey, the various protective behaviours identified by Bouchard and Tremblay<sup>56</sup> were suggested to the respondents. Table 124 shows these responses according to the seriousness of the abuse experienced. An analysis along gender lines shows that there is no significant difference between women and men in reactions to partner abuse.

**Table 124.** Attitudes to abuse according to seriousness of abuse experienced, in absolute figures and in %

	People try to deal with these situations in different ways. Among these responses, which is closest to yours now:						
	I tell myself that it's not that serious or that it happens in all couples	I think I'm not doing enough to make him/her happy	When things go wrong, I go to stay with my parents or friends, or to a hotel	I've mentioned it to other people who could help my partner	When he/she shouts, I shout, when he/she makes threats, I make threats, even if it's no use	To get out of it I'd have to take measures myself	There's nothing to be done, I just try to survive
Moderate abuse	50	6	4	1	6	2	5
	60,2%	7,2%	4,8%	1,2%	7,2%	2,4%	6,0%
Serious abuse	29	2	2	2	2	6	5
	52,7%	3,6%	3,6%	3,6%	3,6%	10,9%	9,1%
Very serious abuse	15	0	1	6	11	6	4
	32,6%	,0%	2,2%	13,0%	23,9%	13,0%	8,7%

$p=0,000$

<sup>56</sup> Bouchard, M. and D. Tremblay (2002). Validation des concepts relatifs à l'estimation de la sévérité d'une dynamique de domination conjugale. Research report (phase 1), Quebec: La Séjournelle.

The proposition “I tell myself that it’s not that serious or that it happens in all couples” is the commonest protective strategy, whatever the severity of the abuse experienced. However, it decreases linearly as the seriousness of the abuse experienced increases. It can also be seen that victims become increasingly aware of the need to take measures in cases of serious abuse: 2.4% in victims of moderate partner abuse, against 10.9% in victims of serious abuse and 13% in victims of very serious abuse. Finally, there is another striking figure: almost 24% of respondents who have experienced very serious partner abuse use reciprocation as their main strategy.

### **ABUSE BY PARTNER AND EX-PARTNER – CONSEQUENCES OF PARTNER ABUSE AND VICTIM ATTITUDES TO ABUSE: SUMMARY**

- Women report more psychological consequences of partner abuse experienced than men. Further to the abuse, 40.7% of female victims feel less confident, 25.7% are ashamed and 23.9% become more aggressive, against 16.1%, 7.0% and 9.2% respectively of male victims.
- Female victims of partner abuse are more often physically injured than male victims. 15.7% of female victims of abuse report having been injured, against only 1.1% of men.
- A synthetic indicator for the consequences of partner abuse shows that the consequences of sexual partner abuse are far more serious than those of verbal and physical partner abuse.

# CHAPTER 4. RISK FACTORS



- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 RISK FACTORS INHERENT TO PARTNER ABUSE
- 3 MODEL OF RISK FACTORS FOR THE MOST SERIOUS FORMS OF PARTNER ABUSE

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Abuse is a social and societal problem which impacts the population as a whole. It occurs at all levels: in public areas, the workplace, the private sphere, and even at the individual level. The occurrence of abuse raises a recurrent question: “why?” What are the triggers which cause people to become perpetrators or victims of abuse? A great deal of research has already been conducted on the various factors which increase the risk of abuse (risk factors) and those which reduce the probability that it will occur (protection factors)? Despite the many studies which have repeatedly demonstrated the correlation between certain factors and abuse, we have only limited information as to causality.<sup>57</sup> More specifically, this implies that the presence of a risk or protection factor is not a good predictor of abuse or of its absence. It is not because certain factors are more frequently associated with abuse than coincidence would have it that these factors actually trigger abuse. Moreover, some factors may – as explained further – be both risk factors in and consequences of abuse. Nevertheless, various studies have shown that the combined presence of several risk factors increases the risk of abuse.<sup>58</sup>

This study emphasises partner abuse. Contrary to the general expectation, a partner does not always bring security. As has been demonstrated, this is a sphere in which many people incur the risk of experiencing physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse.<sup>59</sup> This chapter attempts to draw a picture of the risk factors which may play a part in (ex-)partner abuse. Many scientific and international studies on partner abuse have already identified many risk factors. In concrete terms, we shall be investigating the links between abuse and a number of concepts, social networks, levels of education, professional status, family income, religious beliefs, age, satisfaction with the relationship, stress, the presence of children, separation, alcohol and drug addiction, pregnancy, the experience of abuse during childhood and individual experience. Health-related aspects such as anxiety or depression will be discussed elsewhere as they can also be due to partner abuse.

## 2 RISK FACTORS INHERENT TO PARTNER ABUSE

In view of the high number of risk factors inherent to partner abuse, a number of researchers have attempted to group them into sub-groups. To guarantee a degree of sub-group consistency, Stith et al.<sup>60</sup> performed a meta-analysis on the basis of 85 studies, and determined four major sets/groups of risk factors (1) macrosystem, (2) exosystem, (3) microsystem and (4) ontogenetic system (Figure 1).

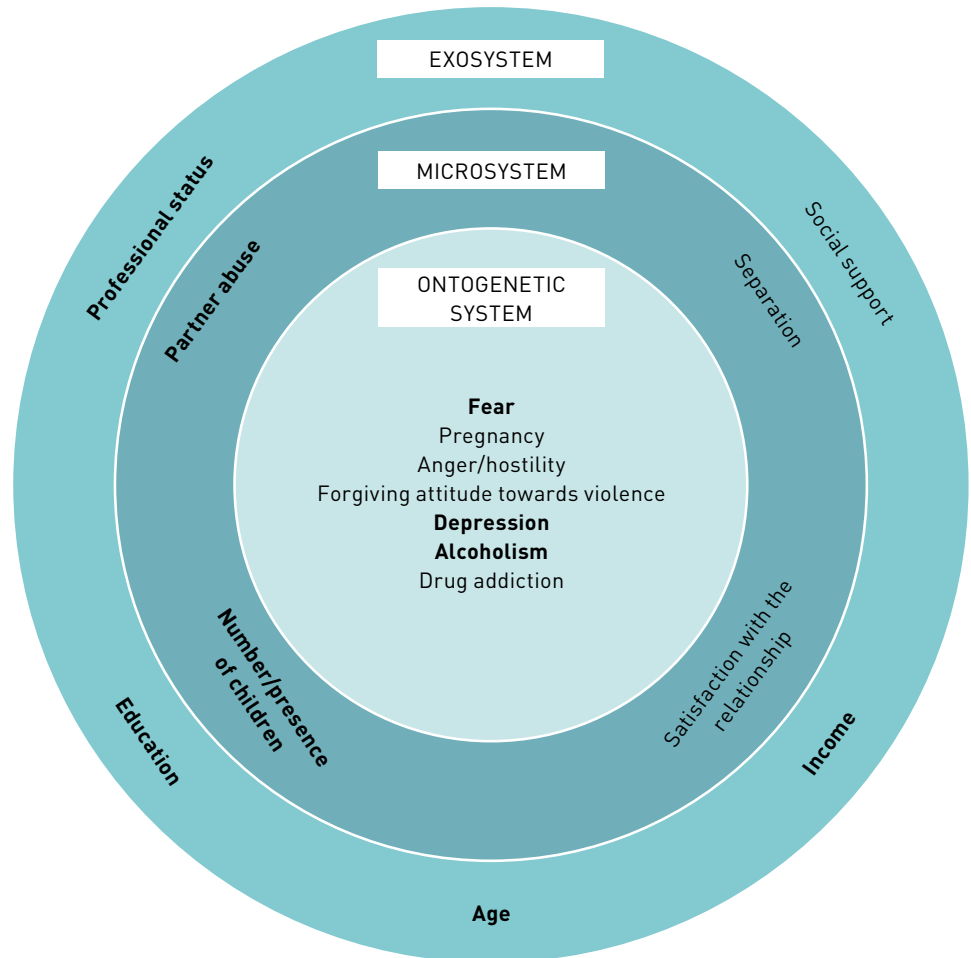
<sup>57</sup> Schröttele et al., *Comparative reanalysis of prevalence of violence against women and health impact data in Europe*.

<sup>58</sup> Stith et al., “Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimization risk factors”, pp. 65-98.

<sup>59</sup> Savenije, A., M.J. van Lawick and E.T.M. Reijmers (2008). *Handboek systeemtherapie*. Utrecht: De Tijdstroom.

<sup>60</sup> Stith et al., “Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimization risk factors”, pp. 65-98.

**Figure 1. Risk factors inherent to partner abuse according to Stith et al.**



The first system, the macrosystem, relates to risk factors at the social level, e.g. social inequality or prevalent attitudes. The exosystem refers to factors on a scale smaller than that of society, e.g. the individual's environment. This includes factors such as the social network, professional status, religious beliefs and age. The micro level comprises factors directly related to the locus of intrafamily abuse: quality of relationship, satisfaction with relationship, stress, children and separation. The last system, the ontogenetic system, includes personal factors such as anxiety, depression, pregnancy, alcohol and drug addiction. Although some factors play a part at all levels, the ontogenetic factors are the most preponderant.<sup>61</sup> Causes may be multiple. It may be that the ontogenetic system is the most decisive, or that it complies with a rule frequent in research: the more proximate a determinant, the easier it is to find significant links.

The following paragraphs supply an overview of the various risk factors on the basis of the systems established by Stith et al. We shall be determining in the case of both men and women whether there is a link between a risk factor and the occurrence (or otherwise) of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual) and its seriousness (moderate, serious, very serious). It should be emphasised that a multi-factorial approach is more appropriate than a unifactorial approach for understanding this issue.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.: "The large number of risk factors with small or moderate effect sizes identified in this study lends support to the complicated nature of domestic violence. Given this complexity, it is unreasonable to assume that any one variable would account for a large amount of the variance in explaining intimate partner violence. This meta-analysis provides support for the importance of examining intimate partner violence from a multifactorial perspective."

## 2.1 MACRO LEVEL RISK FACTORS

Before we continue, we wish to state that this study is far from taking all factors into account. For instance, the sample includes too few individuals of non-Belgian origin to enable comparisons to be made or conclusions drawn. However, this factor has frequently proved relevant in the course of the previous survey.<sup>63</sup>

This study uses eight assertions based on the convictions of men and women concerning traditional role models. Respondents were asked to state to what extent they agreed with each of these assertions. The responses ranges from “Do not at all agree” (score: 1) to “fully agree” (score: 4). The following assertions were submitted to the respondents:

1. Family problems should only be discussed within the family
2. A woman should give in to her husband’s opinion even when she does not agree
3. It is more important for a woman to help her partner in his career than to have her own career
4. Men must earn money for their families
5. A women should care for the children more often than her partner
6. Women must have sex with their partners, even when they don’t want to
7. Sometimes people are pushed so far that they just have to hit the other person
8. If someone is abusing their partner, people outside the family should intervene

Only two assertions were significantly linked to partner abuse, the assertions “family problems should only be discussed within the family” ( $p=0.01$ ) and “sometimes people are pushed so far that they just have to hit the other person” ( $p=0.00$ ). Tables 125 and 126 show the respondents’ average scores, which range from 0 to 4. The higher the average, the more the respondents agree with the assertion. The lower the average, the less the respondents agree with the assertion. Table 125 shows that both women and men agree with the assertion, but victims of abuse less so; Table 126 shows no connection.

**Table 125.** “Family problems should only be discussed within the family”

	Non-victims of partner abuse	Victims of partner abuse
Women	2,35	2,60
	N=662	N= 114
Men	2,02	2,22
	N= 766	N= 90

$p=0,001$

**Table 126.** “Sometimes people are pushed so far that they just have to hit the other person”

	Non-victims of partner abuse	Victims of partner abuse
Women	3,46	2,93
	N= 651	N= 115
Men	3,34	3,33
	N= 762	N= 89

$p=0,000$

<sup>63</sup> Brownridge, D.A. (2006). “Violence against women post separation”, *Aggression and violent behaviour* 11, pp. 514-530.

Agreement with the first assertion only makes a distinction between the victim or non-victim status of the respondent. On the other hand, the second assertion also makes it possible to establish the type of abuse (emotional, verbal or sexual). Thus, Table 127 shows that female and male victims of psychological or verbal partner abuse agree more often with the assertion than male and female victims of physical abuse. More specifically, female victims of sexual abuse perpetrated by their partner agree more with the assertion than female victims of other types of partner abuse.

**Tabel 127.** “Sometimes people are pushed so far that they just have to hit the other person”

		Average	N
Non-victims of partner abuse	Women	3,46	651
	Men	3,34	762
	Total	3,39	1413
Victims of emotional or verbal abuse	Women	2,97	93
	Men	3,34	82
	Total	3,14	176
Victims of physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	Women	2,47	15
	Men	3,20	7
	Total	2,69	22
Victims of sexual abuse (with or without emotional or physical abuse)	Women	3,34	7
	Men	-	0
	Total	3,34	7
Total	Women	3,38	766
	Men	3,34	851
	Total	3,36	1617

$p=0,000$

Four of the above assertions were also used in the 1998 study by Bruynooghe et al., which showed that, in general, there were no significant differences between men’s and women’s conceptions of gender roles and the occurrence of abuse. Their assertion “women sometimes push their husbands so far that they have to be beaten” is close to our own, “people are sometimes pushed so far that they just have to hit the other person”, and in 1998 proved to be linked to a tendency to resort to violence.<sup>64</sup>

## 2.2 EXO LEVEL RISK FACTORS

### 2.2.1 Social network

The literature describes the presence of a social network as an important protection factor in the limitation of abuse. For this reason, a module was included in the questionnaire which comprised six questions concerning the existence of a social network. These questions address both the objective existence of outside social activities (sport, hobby, musical or cultural event, etc.) and socialising with friends and family, and the respondents’ subjective experience. It can be deduced from the results that there is no connection between participation in social activities and the occurrence of abuse. In other words, the fact that a person does not socialise, or socialises less than once a week or several times a week does not increase the risk of being subjected to one or more acts of (ex-)partner abuse.

<sup>64</sup> Bruynooghe, Noelanders and Opdebeeck, *Prévenir, subir et recourir à la violence*.



**Table 128.** Partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to social activity, in absolute figures and in %

	No partner abuse	Victim of one act of partner abuse	Victim of more than one act of partner abuse	Total
Never	6	1	1	8
	,4%	,8%	1,2%	,5%
Less than once a week	219	24	16	259
	15,3%	19,7%	19,3%	15,8%
Several times a week	1.211	97	66	1.374
	84,3%	79,5%	79,5%	83,7%
Total	1.436	122	83	1.641
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$p=0,425$

Neither does the number of times a respondent sees family members or friends who do not live with him/her have any bearing on abuse by a partner or ex-partner. The subjective experience of support by a network is, however, linked to the occurrence of abuse. In more concrete terms, respondents who do not have enough contact with friends or family are more often the victims of abuse by a partner or ex-partner than those who report having enough contact. Table 129 shows that of those who feel they have too little contact with friends or family who do not live with them, 28.6% have experienced several acts of abuse during the past 12 months, 14.8% have experienced a single act of abuse and 11.9% none at all. Respondents who report having enough contact with family or friends hardly ever report abuse.

**Table 129.** Partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to satisfaction with contacts with family or friends, in %

	No partner abuse	Victim of one act of partner abuse	Victim of more than one act of partner abuse
Satisfactory contacts with family or friends	87,9%	85,2%	71,4%
Unsatisfactory contacts with family or friends	11,9%	14,8%	28,6%

$p=0,002$

The analysis of the differences between men and women concerning the subjective experience "I feel that I do not see my family and friends often enough" shows a difference in the reporting of abuse in both women and men, between respondents who feel they have enough contacts and those who feel they do not. This effect is more pronounced in men than in women.

**Table 130.** Satisfaction with contacts with family or friends according to gender of victims of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in %

	Victims of partner abuse	
	Women	Men
Satisfactory contacts with family or friends	75,0%	85,7%
Unsatisfactory contacts with family or friends	25,0%	14,3%

$p=0,000$

However, caution should be exercised when interpreting these results. Victims of abuse by a (former) partner require more contact with the family and friends who do not live with them, and are therefore dissatisfied with their contacts with this network. As explained in the 1998 survey, perpetrators may also force victims to remain silent<sup>65</sup> or prohibit them from contacting these persons. Whatever the case, there is an important connection between the subjective experience of unsatisfactory contacts with other people and abuse.

### 2.2.2 Level of education, professional environment and social status

The meta-analysis by Stith et al.<sup>66</sup> links a low level of education and unemployment to an increased prevalence of partner abuse. However, it cannot be determined that there is always a direct link between these factors and abuse. Various studies have shown that once certain variables have been checked these factors have no predictive value.<sup>67</sup> A study by the World Health Organisation on violence against women shows that a higher level of education is a protection factor. The same conclusion was reached after checking the "age" and "income" variables. The researchers explain this effect by arguing that more educated women are generally married to more educated men. Another explanation emphasises the fact that educated women have a better choice of partners and more say as to whether or not they marry them.<sup>68</sup> An Irish national survey concluded that older adults were generally less well educated than younger adults. It also reported that women who do not work due to an illness or disability run a higher risk of being abused.<sup>69</sup> The French study ENVEFF on violence against women showed that women under 35 with limited or no education experienced emotional abuse twice as much as women with qualifications.<sup>70</sup> Like the Irish study, this survey did not identify a significant link between level of education and abuse (Table 131).

**Table 131.** Level of education and partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %

	No partner abuse	Victim of one act of partner abuse	Victim of more than one act of partner abuse
Primary school	57	13	70
	81,4%	18,6%	100,0%
Lower secondary school	165	17	182
	90,7%	9,3%	100,0%
Upper secondary school	497	82	579
	85,8%	14,2%	100,0%
Short higher education	353	55	408
	86,5%	13,5%	100,0%
Long higher education	84	9	93
	90,3%	9,7%	100,0%
University	275	26	301
	91,4%	8,6%	100,0%
Other	9	2	11
	81,8%	18,2%	100,0%
Total	1.440	204	1.644
	87,6%	12,4%	100,0%

$p=0,080$

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Stith et al., "Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimization risk factors", pp. 65-98.

<sup>67</sup> Schröttle et al., *Comparative reanalysis of prevalence of violence against women and health impact data in Europe*; Watson, D. en S. Parsons (2005). Domestic abuse of women and men in Ireland: report on the national study of domestic abuse, Dublin: National Crime Council, in association with the Economic and Social Research Institute.

<sup>68</sup> Garcia-Moreno et al., *Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women*.

<sup>69</sup> Watson and Parsons, *Domestic abuse of women and men in Ireland*.

<sup>70</sup> Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*.

This may be explained by the fact that, bearing in mind the increased prevalence of abuse among young people, many older people are less educated than young people today. To check the incidence of the level of education on the occurrence of abuse, we attempted to determine whether an “age effect” should be taken into account – which is indeed the case. In the 18-34 age group, there is a definite connection between the level of education and the perpetration of abuse by a partner or ex-partner. The number of victims of partner abuse in this age group is definitely higher in respondents with only primary or secondary school education than in holders of a higher-education or university diploma, i.e. 42.9% against 7.6%. This link does not occur in the other age groups. As this is a highly localised effect, no other interpretations can be made.

As well as the level of education, the study also investigated a potential connection between professional status and the occurrence of partner abuse. The analyses show that, generally speaking, there is no connection with professional status. In other words, there are no differences in abuse by a partner or former partner, whether or not the respondent is in the labour market ( $p=0.322$ ). Again, this result can be partly explained by the fact that a number of respondents are aged over 65 and therefore no longer employed, but are less exposed to abuse by a partner or ex-partner. To check the incidence of a potential age-related effect – as in the case of the level of education – we endeavoured to determine whether, in the age groups assumed to include people in the labour market, a connection could be made between professional status and abuse by a partner or ex-partner. This is indeed the case: the results show that respondents aged 45 to 54 who are not in the labour force are likelier to be victims of partner abuse. There is no connection in the case of the other age groups. Again, as this is a localised effect, no further interpretations can be made.

The analyses intended to identify the respondents most exposed to partner abuse within the category of people not in the labour force (Table 132) show that the main victims of abuse by a partner or ex-partner are students (27.7 %) and the disabled (23.1 %). Pensioners are the least affected (10.6 %), as well as jobseekers (9.7 %). These results are consistent with those of the French study ENVEFF. The effect of professional status was only reviewed in the case of women. However, in this case also, the unemployed, students and the disabled experience more partner abuse, while the least exposed are pensioners.<sup>71</sup>

**Table 132.** Partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to the victim’s professional status (victims not in labour market), in %

Professional status of victim	Victim of partner abuse	Non-victim
Retired/Pensioner	10,6%	89,4%
Jobseeker	9,7%	90,3%
Homemaker	12,9%	87,1%
Student	27,7%	72,3%
Disabled	23,1%	76,9%

The analyses of the connection between the partner’s professional status – i.e. the perpetrator’s status – and the abuse experienced by the respondents also yield an irrelevant result ( $p=0.941$ ). In other words, partners not in the labour market do not perpetrate more abuse than partners in the labour market. These conclusions are similar to those of the French study ENVEFF, in which the fact of being or not being in the labour market has no

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

explicit relevance to the occurrence of partner abuse. However, a more detailed investigation of differences between victims not in the labour market yields major differences, according to category (Table 133). Respondents with partners who are jobseekers (25 %), students (19.4 %) or disabled (19.2 %) experience more abuse than those with retired (9.1 %) or homemaker (8.6 %) partners.

**Table 133.** Partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to the perpetrator's professional status (not in labour market), in %

Professional status of victim/perpetrator	Victim of partner abuse	Non-victim
Retired/Pensioner	9,1%	90,9%
Jobseeker	25,0%	75,0%
Homemaker	8,6%	91,4%
Student	19,4%	80,6%
Disabled	19,2%	80,8%
Others	9,1%	90,9%

$p=0,000$

When we endeavour to determine whether there is a connection between the family's (net) income and the occurrence of partner abuse (Table 134), it can be seen that there is no connection between a family's net income (including family allowance) and the occurrence of abuse by a partner or ex-partner. This conclusion is different from that reached in Ireland. The Irish study demonstrated that women in the lowest income brackets (less than 16,000 Euros/year) were most at risk. The men most at risk belonged to the second-lowest group (16,000-22,500 Euros/year). However, it should be remembered that the Irish study measures the link with the prevalence of abuse over the respondents' lifetime, whereas our study concerns the link with partner abuse over the past 12 months.

**Table 134.** Partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to family's monthly income, in absolute figures and in %

	Non-victim	Victim of partner abuse	Total
Less than 1,000 EUR	50	4	54
	92,6%	7,4%	100,0%
1,000-1,999 EUR	214	29	243
	88,1%	11,9%	100,0%
2,000-2,999 EUR	259	50	309
	83,8%	16,2%	100,0%
3,000-3,999 EUR	259	28	287
	90,2%	9,8%	100,0%
Over 4,000 EUR	139	20	159
	87,4%	12,6%	100,0%
Does not know	273	32	305
	89,5%	10,5%	100,0%
Declined to answer	251	43	294
	85,4%	14,6%	100,0%
Total	1.445	206	1.651
	87,5%	12,5%	100,0%

$p=0,147$

### 2.2.3 Age

Age plays a role. Young adults are more exposed to abuse, as shown by the studies made in Ireland, England and Wales, Finland, and by the World Health Organisation.<sup>72</sup> There are various potential explanations. The World Health Organisation studied the prevalence of violence against women and concluded that older women had been exposed to abuse for longer, so that they had developed a number of strategies to reduce its frequency. Another potential explanation is the fact that older women have higher status on the social scale and are therefore less exposed to abuse. The last possibility advanced by the World Health Organisation is that young men may be more violent than older men and that as a result young women are more exposed to, partner abuse.<sup>73</sup> The effect of age in the current situation and the related figures are described in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study. However, the figures show a significant connection between age and abuse: young people are more often victims of abuse by a partner or ex-partner than older people.

### 2.2.4 Religion

The questionnaire asked whether the respondents were religious believers. The practice of a specific religion entails a number of convictions and rules, and may therefore affect lifestyle.<sup>74</sup> A number of studies have already shown that there may be a connection between a religious context and partner abuse. More specifically, studies of violence against women have shown that men who do not belong to a religious group or belong to a highly restricted religious group or cult are, to a relative extent, the most violent.<sup>75</sup> Despite these results, this factor has proved not to have any substantial explanatory value. The French study ENV-EFF also investigated the effects of religious belief, and noted their existence only in women who reported having very strong religious faith. 5% of women who reported having very strong religious faith, against 2% who attached little or no importance to their faith, had experienced partner abuse during the past 12 months.

This study did not attempt to investigate the importance of religion to the respondents. However, a significant link was identified: religious believers, male and female, experience abuse less often than nonbelievers (male and female). Table 135 shows that 22.9% of female nonbelievers and 9.6% of female believers experienced partner abuse during the past 12 months. In the case of men, 12.8% of nonbelievers and 8.0% of believers experienced partner abuse.

**Table 135.** Partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to religious belief or non-belief, in %

		Believer	Nonbeliever
<b>Women</b> (p=0,000)	Non-victims	90,4%	77,1%
	Victims of partner abuse	9,6%	22,9%
<b>Men</b> (p=0,003)	Non-victims	92,0%	87,2%
	Victims of partner abuse	8,0%	12,8%

<sup>72</sup> Watson and Parsons, *Domestic abuse of women and men in Ireland*.

<sup>73</sup> Garcia-Moreno et al., *Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women*.

<sup>74</sup> Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*.

<sup>75</sup> Römken, R. (1989). *Geweld tegen vrouwen in heteroseksuele relaties: een landelijk onderzoek naar de omvang, de aard, de gevolgen en de achtergronden*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.

## 2.3 MICRO LEVEL RISK FACTORS

### 2.3.1 Relationship quality and satisfaction

Within the context of partner abuse, the most important role is played by factors relating to the quality of the relationship and satisfaction with this relationship. The correlation between relationship quality and the quality of life of both partners is evidenced by various studies. In particular, these studies show that excessive stress in a relationship is linked to anxiety, depression or other health problems.<sup>76</sup> In view of the importance of the relationship between partners in various contexts, researchers have endeavoured to measure it more objectively. One of the tools developed for this purpose is Graham B. Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS, 1976). This is the tool most commonly used to measure the quality of a relationship in the social and behavioural sciences. The original scale comprises 32 elements (DAS-32). For the purpose of this questionnaire, we opted for the shorter version, DAS-16, which comprises four sub-scales: (1) consensus, (2) satisfaction, (3) cohesion and (4) affectional expression. The higher the DAS score, the better the quality of the relationship.

Our analyses revealed a difference in the quality of the relationship between partners: the more serious the violence, the lower the quality. Table 136 shows clearly that all aspects which contribute to the quality of a partnership recede as the abuse gets worse. Lack of cohesion and affectional expression are especially related to the occurrence of abuse. In concrete terms, partner abuse is commoner between partners with a lower degree of mutual adjustment in all the following areas: affection, adjustment in the area of sexual relations, joint activities outside the home, shared laughter and calm discussions of various subjects.

**Table 136.** DAS-16 and partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months

	Consensus	Affectional expression	Satisfaction	Cohesion
Non-victim of partner abuse	14,9623	7,6858	16,4693	12,2002
Victim of moderate partner abuse	14,012	7,0155	15,0625	11,2492
Victim of serious partner abuse	12,4752	6,9092	14,1292	10,7684
Victim of very serious partner abuse	10,8369	5,5341	12,8232	9,6874

When a distinction is made according to gender (Table 137), these factors are seen to affect both groups. In other words, there is no difference in the connection between relationship quality and partner abuse, whether the victim is male or female. However, slight differences do occur between men and women in the area of "satisfaction". In partnerships where partner abuse occurs, the women are less satisfied with their relationship (13.9%) than men (16.4%). The disparity is slightly less pronounced in the other areas, but overall the relationship is assessed in a slightly more negative way by women than by men when there is partner abuse.

<sup>76</sup> Graham, J.M., Y.J. Liu and J.L. Jeziorski (2006). "The dyadic adjustment scale: a reliability generalization meta-analysis", *Journal of marriage and family*, 68(3), pp. 701-717.

**Table 137.** DAS-16 and partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in %

		Consensus	Affectional expression	Satisfaction	Cohesion
Women	Non-victim of partner abuse	15,099	7,794	16,463	12,2048
	Victim of partner abuse	12,6364	6,6771	13,9666	10,6034
Men	Non-victim of partner abuse	14,64	7,4901	16,2616	12,0492
	Victim of partner abuse	14,9623	7,6858	16,4693	12,2002

### 2.3.2 Presence of children

Several studies indicate that the presence of children and their age are also associated with the occurrence of abuse. One Irish study<sup>77</sup> shows that women with children are likelier to be abused by their partners than childless women, especially when single or separated. However, as illustrated by the following table, our results do not confirm this. The presence of children under 7 with women who have remained in contact with their ex-partner during the past 12 months does not increase the risk of abuse.

**Table 138.** Among your children, are any aged under 7? – in absolute figures and in %

	Non-victim of partner abuse	Victim of partner abuse	Total
Yes	19	7	26
	73,1%	26,9%	100,0%
No	96	35	131
	73,3%	26,7%	100,0%
Total	115	42	157
	73,2%	26,8%	100,0%

$p=0,047$

### 2.3.3 Stress

Abuse may be considered to be a form of manipulation, an adaptive strategy which temporarily decreases stress.<sup>78</sup> Table 139 shows that 16.2% of individuals who describe their lives as quite stressful to extremely stressful have been the victims of abuse, whereas 10.9% of those who describe their lives as not at all stressful to mildly stressful have experienced abuse. A more in-depth analysis shows that this mainly takes the form of increased emotional abuse ( $p=.004$ ).

<sup>77</sup> Watson and Parsons, *Domestic abuse of women and men in Ireland*.

<sup>78</sup> Bruynooghe, Noelanders and Opdebeeck, *Prévenir, subir et recourir à la violence*.

**Table 139.** When considering the level of stress in your life, would you say that most of your days are ..., in absolute figures and in %

	Non-victim of partner abuse	Victim of partner abuse	Total
Not at all stressful to mildly stressful	1.014	124	1.138
	89,1%	10,9%	100,0%
Quite stressful to extremely stressful	429	83	512
	83,8%	16,2%	100,0%
Total	1.444	207	1.651
	87,5%	12,5%	100,0%

$p=0,010$

A more detailed analysis shows that this mainly takes the form of increased emotional abuse ( $p=.004$ ) (Table 140).

**Table 140.** Partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to stress, in %

	Emotional or verbal abuse	Physical abuse (with or without emotional abuse)	Sexual abuse (with or without emotional or physical abuse)	Total
Not at all stressful to mildly stressful	9,4%	1,2%	,2%	10,8%
Quite stressful to extremely stressful	13,9%	1,4%	1,0%	16,3%

$p=0,004$

### 2.3.4 Marital status

The number of divorces in Belgium peaked in 2008: the figure supplied by the Directorate-General for Statistics and Economic Information being 35,366.<sup>79</sup> The recent literature states that separation is a risk factor in partner abuse. Despite the currently modest number of studies on the risk of ex-partner abuse, it appears that in certain situations women are more likely to be victims.<sup>80</sup> Separation can be correlated in various ways to the occurrence of abuse. One is cultural: if a man considers that his partner's departure injures his male authority, the woman is likelier to be the victim of partner abuse. A second factor is the experience of separation as a "loss" in which part of the family and social network disappear. In accordance with the theory of social control, it appears that the men with the least to lose socially are those who hesitate least to abuse their ex-partner.<sup>81</sup> A number of other variables also affect the connection between abuse and separation. The existence of abuse prior to separation and the length of time since the separation are both connected with abuse of a partner or ex-partner. The analysis shows that abuse is likeliest to occur during the first three months. Fleury et al.<sup>82</sup> concluded that the risk of abuse decreased when the ex-partners no longer lived in the same environment. As explained previously, the presence of children is also a risk factor, for various reasons. One of these is shared custody of the children.

<sup>79</sup> Viz.: [http://statbel.fgov.be/nl/statistiek/cijfers/bevolking/huwelijken\\_echtscheidingen\\_samenlevingscontracten/echtscheidingen/index.jsp](http://statbel.fgov.be/nl/statistiek/cijfers/bevolking/huwelijken_echtscheidingen_samenlevingscontracten/echtscheidingen/index.jsp)

<sup>80</sup> Brownridge, "Violence against women post separation", pp. 514-530.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Fleury, R.E., C.M. Sullivan and D.I. Bybee (2000). "When ending the relationship does not end the violence: women's experiences of violence by former partners", *Violence against women* 6(12), pp. 1363-1383.



The results of this study show that, in accordance with the literature, more separated individuals experience abuse at the hands of their (ex-)partner: 32.8 % of separated women and 26.7 % of separated men were abused during the past 12 months. There is a significant connection in the case of both groups, but no difference between men and women, which means that separated women have not experienced more abuse than separated men. Marriage is a protection factor for both men and women: “only” 9.1% of women and 8.1% of men have been abused in this situation.

**Table 141.** Partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to marital status, in %

		Single	Married	Cohabiting	Divorced	Widowed
<b>Women</b> (p=0,000)	Non-victim of partner abuse	81,3%	90,9%	81,8%	67,2%	80,0%
	Victim of partner abuse	18,7%	9,1%	18,2%	32,8%	20,0%
<b>Men</b> (p=0,000)	Non-victim of partner abuse	88,3%	91,9%	83,7%	73,3%	100,0%
	Victim of partner abuse	11,7%	8,1%	16,3%	26,7%	,0%

## 2.4 ONTOGENETIC LEVEL RISK FACTORS

At the individual level, many factors may be related to abuse, such as alcohol, illicit drugs, depression and anxiety. Although extremely different, pregnancy is also considered to be a risk factor for women. This section concerns only the ontogenetic factor. Factors with a stronger link to health may also be present further to exposure to abuse, and are therefore discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. For instance, research has shown that poor health, depression and anxiety increased the risk. However, conclusions can only be drawn at the correlational level, and no mutual causality determined.

### 2.4.1 Alcohol and illicit drug consumption

Alcoholism is one of the best-known factors in abuse. However, none of the Belgian prevalence studies of abuse conclude that alcohol is an influence. Neither has this study noted a connection between alcoholism and the occurrence of abuse. Other studies have noted a correlation only in very serious cases.<sup>83</sup> There is a common idea that abuse is committed by individuals who have drunk too much. The reverse may also be said, i.e. that someone may take to drink after being abused.<sup>84</sup> The same applies to drug addiction. This is a major risk factor, and as such is discussed in this section, but as alcoholism and drug addiction may also be caused by abuse, the relevant figures are discussed in another part of this report.

### 2.4.2 Pregnancy

Pregnant women are one of the specific at-risk groups which have received special attention recently. Our questionnaire asked women under 45 if they had been pregnant during the past 12 months. Our results do not evidence a significant connection between pregnancy and abuse. In other words, women who had been pregnant were not more significantly ex-

<sup>83</sup> Schröttle et al., *Comparative reanalysis of prevalence of violence against women and health impact data in Europe*.

<sup>84</sup> Watson and Parsons, *Domestic abuse of women and men in Ireland*.

posed to increased abuse by a partner or ex-partner than women who had not been pregnant. However, this does not mean that this at-risk group is negligible, on the contrary. Among the 42 women who had been pregnant during the past 12 months, 3 were abused, i.e. 7.1%. Other recent studies have also shown that 3% to 8% of women had been abused by their partners during pregnancy.<sup>85</sup>

**Table 142.** Pregnancy and abuse experienced during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %

	Non-victim of partner abuse	Victim of partner abuse	Total
Pregnancy during past 12 months	39	3	42
	92,9%	7,1%	100,0%
No pregnancy during past 12 months	372	70	442
	84,2%	15,8%	100,0%
Total	411	73	484
	84,9%	15,1%	100,0%

### 2.4.3 Experience of abuse during childhood

The research in the literature shows that individuals who experienced or witnessed abuse between their parents in childhood are more likely to experience it in a relationship with a partner. Women are more likely to become victims and men perpetrators.<sup>86</sup> Both the 1998 Belgian prevalence study and the French study ENVEFF show that past abuse and other negative experiences during childhood are correlated to an increase in the risk of physically aggressive behaviour<sup>87</sup> and victimisation by a partner.<sup>88</sup> Frenchwomen who reported having had at least one negative life experience were three times as likely to be the victims of partner abuse as women who reported no negative life experiences.

This study concentrated on the effect of abuse suffered before and after the age of 18 on manifestations of partner abuse during the past 12 months. Concerning abuse experienced before the age of 18, respondents were asked whether they had been victims of sexual abuse. In the case of abuse experienced after the age of 18, respondents were asked to describe its various forms.

Table 143 demonstrates the existence of a significant link between childhood sexual abuse and abuse by a (former) partner during the past 12 months. People who had been sexually abused before the age of 18 (11.5 %) experienced very serious partner abuse more often than those who had not (2.8 %).

<sup>85</sup> Van Parys, A.S. et al. (2009). "Zwangerschap en geweld", *Tijdschrift voor vroedvrouwen* 15 (1), pp. 6-9.

<sup>86</sup> Schröttle et al., *Comparative reanalysis of prevalence of violence against women and health impact data in Europe*.

<sup>87</sup> Bruynooghe, Noelanders and Opdebeeck, *Prévenir, subir et recourir à la violence*.

<sup>88</sup> Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*.

**Table 143.** Victimization before the age of 18 and partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %

		Non-victim	Victim of moderate partner abuse	Victim of serious partner abuse	Victim of very serious partner abuse	Total
Sexual abuse before the age of 18	No	1.367	80	63	44	1.554
		88,0%	5,1%	4,1%	2,8%	100,0%
	Yes	77	2	6	11	96
		80,2%	2,1%	6,3%	11,5%	100,0%
Total		1.444	82	69	55	1.650
		87,5%	5,0%	4,2%	3,3%	100,0%

$p=0,000$

An analysis of the link between abuse experienced after the age of 18 (see Chapter 2) and manifestations of partner abuse during the past 12 months reveals the existence of a significant connection. In other words, individuals who had experienced abuse one or more times after the age of 18 were more often abused by a partner or ex-partner during the past 12 months than those who had not. Table 144 shows that 8.1% of victims of several acts of abuse after the age of 18 had experienced very serious partner abuse during the past 12 months, against 2.1% of those who had experienced no abuse after the age of 18.

**Table 144.** Victimization after the age of 18 and partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %

	Non-victim	Victim of moderate partner abuse	Victim of serious partner abuse	Victim of very serious partner abuse	Total
No abuse after the age of 18	1.012	53	35	24	1.124
	90,0%	4,7%	3,1%	2,1%	100,0%
One act of abuse after the age of 18	263	25	14	13	315
	83,5%	7,9%	4,4%	4,1%	100,0%
More than one act of abuse after the age of 18	170	4	20	17	211
	80,6%	1,9%	9,5%	8,1%	100,0%
Total	1.445	82	69	54	1.650
	87,6%	5,0%	4,2%	3,3%	100,0%

#### 2.4.4 Individual experiences of partner

Besides the connection between the victim's life experiences and the experience of abuse by a partner or ex-partner, there may also be a link between the personal life experiences of the partner and the occurrence of abuse. Respondents who reported experiencing abuse by their ex-partner during the past 12 months were asked a number of questions relating to their partner's past. They were asked if, since they had met their partner, he/she had

fallen seriously ill, had fought with anyone, had been in trouble with the police due to violent behaviour, had struck or sexually assaulted anyone, had been struck or sexually assaulted by a member of his/her family, and if he/she had witnessed acts of abuse between his/her parents. Table 145 shows partner life experiences which are significantly linked to the occurrence of abuse during the past 12 months.

**Table 145, Personal experience of partner and experience of partner abuse, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, in absolute figures and in %**

	Verbal abuse only	Victim of moderate partner abuse	Victim of serious partner abuse	Victim of very serious partner abuse	Total
Partner has previously fought with someone outside the home	5	10	4	16	35
	14,3%	28,6%	11,4%	45,7%	100%
Partner has been in trouble with the police due to violent behavior	3	3	2	9	17
	17,6%	17,6%	11,8%	52,9%	100,0%
Partner witnessed acts of sexual abuse within his/her family before the age of 18	4	11	11	14	40
	10,0%	27,5%	27,5%	35,0%	100,0%

Table 145 shows that 45.7 % of partners who had previously struck someone inflicted very serious abuse on the victim (the other partner) during the past 12 months. 52.9 % of partners who had previously been in trouble with the police due to violent behaviour inflicted very serious abuse on the victim during the past 12 months and 35% of partners who had witnessed abuse between their parents inflicted very serious abuse on the victim.

### 3 MODEL OF RISK FACTORS FOR THE MOST SERIOUS FORMS OF PARTNER ABUSE

We have so far separately identified various risk factors for partner abuse. However, the data also make it possible to investigate the extent to which certain factors are “predictive”, i.e. the extent to which the occurrence of very serious partner abuse is regularly or often associated with certain perpetrator or victim characteristics.<sup>89</sup> It should be made quite clear that these are only risk factors. However, such a model may be particularly useful to support professionals, as it may indicate when greater vigilance is advisable. The technical information concerning the development of the model is supplied in Annexe 6.

<sup>89</sup> The construction of the “very serious” category has been explained in Chapter 3.

The aim was to develop a model which was as simple as possible, i.e., a model which was as predictive as possible, using the smallest possible number of variables. Analysis has enabled three variables to be identified: the fact that the partner has appeared violent (“rowdy”) outside the home during the relationship, the fact that the respondent feels he/she does not have enough contact with his/her family and friends, and the score on the series of questions relating to interactions within the partnership. These three variables make a significant contribution (independent of each other) to the predictive power of the model.

Table 146 illustrates the relative risks of very serious partner abuse according to the various profiles, as determined by the combinations of the selected explanatory variables. The quality of the relationship is summarised in three categories: poor, average and high.<sup>90</sup>

**Table 146.** Very serious partner abuse observed and “predicted”, including by ex-partner, during the past 12 months, according to risk factor model.

Feels he/she has enough interaction with other people	Partner violent outside the home	Quality of relationship	Indicator of very serious partner abuse	Observed (sampling)	Theoretical (predicted by model)
No	No	Low	No	71,6%	77,1%
			Yes	28,4%	22,9%
		Average	No	97,3%	94,9%
			Yes	2,7%	5,1%
		High	No	98,0%	98,3%
			Yes	2,0%	1,7%
	Yes	Low	No	,0%	12,1%
			Yes	100,0%	<b>87,9%</b>
		Average	No	19,5%	43,0%
			Yes	80,5%	<b>57,0%</b>
		High	No	100,0%	70,5%
			Yes	,0%	29,5%
Yes	No	Low	No	93,8%	93,8%
			Yes	6,2%	6,2%
		Average	No	98,7%	98,8%
			Yes	1,3%	1,2%
		High	No	99,5%	99,6%
			Yes	,5%	,4%
	Yes	Low	No	55,6%	38,0%
			Yes	44,4%	<b>62,0%</b>
		Average	No	74,9%	77,1%
			Yes	25,1%	22,9%
		High	No	100,0%	91,4%
			Yes	,0%	8,6%

<sup>90</sup> To prevent any confusion: this is the DAS indicator in its categorial form. The scores were subdivided as follows: <math>\leq 35</math>= poor; 35-44= average; 45+ = high.

The most at-risk profile, i.e. socially isolated individuals who are the victims of partner abuse and with a low-quality relationship, is 220 times more likely to experience very serious partner abuse than the least at-risk category, i.e. individuals in a high-quality relationship who are satisfied with their contacts with family and friends and whose partners do not commit violent acts outside the home. According to the model, the most at-risk category has a 87.9% chance of being abused, against 0.4% for the least at-risk category.

Starting with the highest, the risk of abuse (87.9%) decreases each time one of the three factors changes, to 62% for individuals who are not socially isolated (but have an aggressive partner and a poor relationship), 57% for individuals in average rather than poor relationships and 23% with partners who are not aggressive outside the home. Starting with the lowest risk, the risk increases with each change: to 1.2% when the quality of the relationship is average, 1.7% in the case of the socially isolated, and 8.6% when the partner has displayed violence outside the home. These comparisons show that the fact of being or not being violent outside the partnership has a very strong impact on the likelihood of partner abuse.

In terms of prevention, this model could be used as a basis for a series of questions which should enable individuals to be identified who are at high risk of experiencing serious abuse by a partner or ex-partner. Moreover, this model also appears to be – to a certain extent – useful in predicting less serious forms of partner abuse.

## RISK FACTORS: SUMMARY

For the purpose of this research, partner abuse experienced during the past 12 months has been extended to abuse by an ex-partner.

- To understand abuse, the approach used should be multi-factorial rather than unifactorial. In view of the complexity of this issue, we have assumed that several factors exercise a simultaneous influence at various levels.
- Women and men who agree more with the assertions based on traditional opinions, such as the fact that family problems should only be discussed within the family and that a person may be pushed so far that he/she has no choice but to strike the other, have been abused by their partners more often during the past 12 months.
- Women and men with the subjective feeling of having too little contact with their family and friends have been abused more often by their partners during the past 12 months.
- Women and men with a lower level of education or who are jobseekers have not experienced more partner abuse during the past 12 months. This contradicts the conclusions frequently drawn in the literature, but may be explained by the limited number of victims of partner abuse during the past 12 months.
- Young men and women have more often been abused by their partners during the past 12 months than older men and women.
- Women and men with religious convictions have been less abused by their partners during the past 12 months than women and men without religious convictions.
- Women and men who have been abused by their partners during the past 12 months reported a lower degree of satisfaction with their relationship and lower relationship quality.
- Families with children do not experience more partner abuse than childless families. However, the presence of children under the age of 7 is linked to an increase in emotional partner abuse during the past 12 months.
- There is a connection between the presence of stress and the occurrence of abuse during the past 12 months.
- Separated women and men have experienced more partner abuse during the past 12 months than couples who are not separated.
- The recent literature shows that pregnancy is a risk factor in the exposure of women to partner abuse. However, this study has not uncovered any links between pregnancy and partner abuse.
- Victims of sexual abuse in childhood have more often been victims of partner abuse during the past 12 months. Participants who had had experience of abuse by the age of 18 were also abused more frequently by their partners during the past 12 months.
- The partners of victims of partner abuse during the past 12 months have – since they became acquainted with their partner – been in trouble with the police more often due to violent behaviour and have witnessed more violent behaviour between their parents than the partners of non-victims.
- In terms of violence prevention, it is important to examine whether the partner shows a violent behaviour outside the family sphere, whether a person is socially isolated and whether the quality of the relation is low. These three factors appear to be the best "prophets" of very serious forms of partner violence.

# CHAPTER 5. ABUSE BY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

# 5

- 1 PREVALENCE OF ABUSE
- 2 EXPLORATION OF MOST SIGNIFICANT OR SERIOUS OCCURRENCE



In this survey, the sphere of family and friends (partner or ex-partner excepted) were investigated in less depth than partner abuse, and a specific nomenclature of acts was used. The literature does not reveal a general correlation between intergenerational abuse and victim gender. In so far as they may be significant, the results presented in this chapter may help with the prevention and detection of situations of violence or abuse.

## 1 PREVALENCE OF ABUSE

### 1.1 VERBAL ABUSE

**Table 147.** Insults or contempt by a family member or friend during the past 12 months, en%

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	84,6%	89,1%	86,9%
Victims	15,4%	10,9%	13,1%

In terms of rate, the incidence of verbal abuse from family members or friends is close to that for abuse experienced in public areas (see Chapter 6). There is a perceptible difference between men and women, as women experience more verbal abuse than men ( $p=0.003$ ). Taking into account all acts reported, including occasional abuse, approximately one person in seven has been concerned during the past 12 months.

**Table 148.** Frequency of verbal abuse by a family member or friend during the past 12 months (N=263), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Rarely	43,8%	49,5%	46,2%
Sometimes	39,2%	36,0%	37,9%
Often	12,4%	12,6%	12,5%
Systematically	3,9%	,9%	2,7%
Does not know	,7%	,0%	,4%

The distribution of the frequency of verbal abuse according to gender is not significant. Half the cases relate to rare occurrences, and 15% of this verbal abuse is frequent and may relate to typical emotional abuse.

### 1.2 EMOTIONAL ABUSE

**Table 149.** Mistreatment of children, separation from children or threat to do so by a family member or friend, during the past 12 months, in %

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	97,7%	99,7%	98,7%
Victims	2,3%	,3%	1,3%

Emotional abuse by family and friends was only discussed in the questionnaire in the form of the mistreatment of children. Such events are relatively rare, and nature may make mothers more vulnerable to this form of abuse. In Table 149, it can be seen that far more women than men have been abused in this way ( $p=0.000$ ).

**Table 150.** Frequency of mistreatment of children, separation from children or threat to do so by a family member or friend, during the past 12 months (N=26), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Rarely	25,0%	,0%	22,2%
Sometimes	45,8%	66,7%	48,1%
Often	29,2%	33,3%	29,6%

Although these acts concern few victims, it can be seen in Table 150 that, in contrast to verbal abuse, they tend to be more frequent.

To conclude, it should be noted that women are more often abused verbally and emotionally than men. In the area of physical abuse, the very low numbers require an overall presentation, without distribution according to gender.

### 1.3 PHYSICAL, SEXUAL AND ECONOMIC ABUSE

**Table 151.** Incidence of physical abuse by a family member or friend during the past 12 months, in %

Slap, blow or other physical assault	,6%
Armed threat, attempted murder or strangulation	,0%
Preventing access to home, locking in or out, leaving on roadside	,2%

In table 151, all items are lower than 1% and victim characterisation is impossible. The largest category (slaps and blows) includes a total of 12 respondents.

No respondents in the sample were sexually abused (forced sexual touching or relations).

Economic abuse (appropriation of income/savings, getting into debt) only accounts for 0.4% of the responses (8 responses).

### 1.4 NEGLECT OF THE ELDERLY

A specific two-question module was included in the questionnaire to check the incidence of neglect of the elderly. Only respondents over 65 were asked these questions. In so far as the age limit for the survey was 75, and that people of this age are often perfectly healthy and self-reliant, we may have missed the type of abuse we sought to investigate with these questions. Among the 274 respondents concerned by these questions, only 4 reported being left by themselves when ill or needing care during the past 12 months, and only 1 reported that a friend had refused to shop for him/her or take him/her somewhere. No generalisations can therefore be made.

### 1.5 CHARACTERISATION OF VICTIMS

After grouping all victims of abuse by family members and friends, except those who reported only verbal abuse, the overall figures for incidence during the past 12 months (Table 152) are:

**Table 152.** Overall incidence of abuse by family and friends during the past 12 months, in %

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	94,9%	97,6%	96,3%
Victims	5,1%	2,4%	3,7%

Attempts to characterise these victims do not evidence any significant correlation with the relevant variables, such as age, level of education, habitat (rural or urban), or even the fact of living under the same roof as their parents or children.

## 2 EXPLORATION OF MOST SIGNIFICANT OR SERIOUS OCCURRENCE

**Table 153.** Among these acts, which, according to you, is the most significant or serious? (N=251), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Verbal abuse	80,0%	83,3%	81,3%
Mistreatment of children	14,0%	3,9%	9,9%
Economic abuse	,7%	5,9%	2,8%
Physical abuse	4,0%	2,0%	3,2%
Locking in/out	,7%	2,9%	1,6%
Neglect (healthcare)	,7%	,0%	,4%
Neglect (daily assistance)	,0%	2,0%	,8%

In the case of the mistreatment of children, and to a lesser extent of physical abuse (slaps, blows), there is a difference between men and women; women are more affected by both types of abuse ( $p=0.005$ ). Furthermore, it can be seen that in the great majority of cases (81.3%) verbal abuse is considered to be the most serious or important. In view of the concentration on a single category and the low total number, the following results cannot be distributed by type of abuse.

### 2.1 THE PERPETRATOR

**Table 154.** The main perpetrator of this act was ... (N=251), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Father, father-in-law, mother's partner	12,4%	23,5%	17,0%
Mother, mother-in-law, father's partner	16,0%	8,4%	12,8%
Son, son-in-law, partner's son	4,7%	4,2%	4,5%
Daughter, daughter-in-law, partner's daughter	5,9%	2,5%	4,5%
Brother, brother-in-law	14,2%	11,8%	13,2%
Sister, sister-in-law	22,5%	12,6%	18,4%
Another male relative	7,7%	14,3%	10,4%
Another female relative	7,7%	3,4%	5,9%
Male friend	4,1%	14,3%	8,3%
Female friend	3,0%	,8%	2,1%
Does not know	,6%	2,5%	1,4%
Declined to answer	1,2%	1,7%	1,4%

As shown in Table 154, the perpetrators of abuse are most often the father/father-in-law/

mother's partner or the mother/mother-in-law/father's partner, or a brother/brother-in-law/sister/sister-in-law, or another male relative. The difference between male and female victims ( $p=0.001$ ) is striking. Whereas in the case of female victims, whatever the relationship, the distribution of perpetrator gender is more or less even, or even slightly inclined towards female perpetrators, especially in the case of sister abuse, men are far more often victimised by their father, another male relative, or a male friend. In general, the abuse occurs almost exclusively in the family sphere.

## 2.2 CONFIDING IN OTHERS

**Table 155.** Did you mention this occurrence to anyone? (N=251), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Yes	79,8%	66,9%	74,5%
No	19,6%	30,5%	24,1%
Does not know	,6%	,8%	,7%
Declined to answer	,0%	1,7%	,7%

Concerning the most important or serious act, we asked the victims whether they had mentioned it to someone (Table 155). The difference between men and women is significant ( $p=0.050$ ). As in the case of the other forms of abuse experienced, in particular partner abuse, men confide considerably less than women.

## 2.3 STATEMENT/COMPLAINT TO POLICE

**Table 156.** Did you make a signed statement or complaint to the police? (N=251), in %

Yes, you did it yourself	2,1%
Yes, someone else did it	1,4%
No	94,7%
Does not know	,7%
Declined to answer	1,1%

Finally, it can be seen in Table 156 that acts of abuse perpetrated by family or friends are only exceptionally reported to the police: almost 95% of the victims did not report the facts to the police or make a complaint.

### ABUSE BY FAMILY AND FRIENDS: SUMMARY

- Abuse perpetrated by family and friends during the past 12 months is so rare that little further investigation can be performed within the scope of this survey.
- Most of the abuse is verbal (reported by 13 % of respondents) and women are victimised slightly more often.
- Abuse perpetrated by family and friends is very rarely reported to the police.
- We have not made a specific study of elder neglect or abuse, as the age limit for this survey (75) did not enable the true extent of the problem to be determined, and therefore did not enable a sufficient number of cases to be identified.



# CHAPTER 6. VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC AREAS



- 1 PREVALENCE OF ABUSE
- 2 EXPLORATION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OR THE MOST SERIOUS OCCURRENCE

In order to include all acts of abuse suffered, the questionnaire contains a module that analyses abuse in public areas during the last 12 months. We believe this public area, however, is different from that of the couple relationship or family/close circle, meaning that there is no lasting link between the perpetrator and victim, or only in a limited manner. Such a link can be seen in the frame of a situation of abuse over time, as stated by Jaspard et al.:<sup>91</sup> even if the gravity of the abuse is relative when considered individually, being exposed to abuse may have grave consequences.

As the experiences of abuse experienced by victims in public areas differ greatly, we will examine this chapter more briefly.

## 1 PREVALENCE OF ABUSE

### 1.1 VERBAL ABUSE

**Table 157.** Over the last twelve months, have you been verbally abused or insulted on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	87,1%	87,6%	87,1%
Victims	12,9%	12,4%	12,9%

In table 157 we can see that about 13% of the respondents were verbally abused or insulted in public areas during the past year. There is no significant difference between male and female victims. In magnitude, the prevalence of such abuse is equivalent to the domestic sphere (see Chapter 5), but this also included criticism and contempt.

**Table 158.** Frequency of insults or verbal abuse in public areas over the last 12 months (N=254), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Once	41,4%	34,4%	37,9%
2 or 3 times	39,1%	42,4%	40,7%
Between 4 and 10 times	7,0%	11,2%	9,1%
More than 10 times	4,7%	7,2%	5,9%
Daily or almost	7,8%	4,0%	5,9%

The prevalence expressed in Table 157 seems high, but can be nuanced if we examine the frequency (Table 158): during the past year, this only happened once for four out of ten people and maximum three times for eight out of ten people.

### 1.2 BEING FOLLOWED IN THE STREET

**Table 159.** Over the last twelve months, has someone followed you insistently, on foot, by car, by bike or by motorbike?, in %

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	96,0%	97,9%	97,0%
Victims	4,0%	2,1%	3,0%

<sup>91</sup> Jaspard et al., *Les violences envers les femmes en France*.

Table 159 shows that 4% of the women and 2.1% of the men felt as if they were followed on the street during the last 12 months. This difference between women and men is significant ( $p = 0.010$ ). Although we have no idea about the outcome of these situations, these women can be considered to be victims of emotional abuse on the street.

**Table 160.** Frequency of being tailed in public areas in the last twelve months (N=60), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Once	53,8%	52,4%	53,3%
2 or 3 times	38,5%	38,1%	38,3%
Between 4 and 10 times	7,7%	,0%	5,0%
More than 10 times	,0%	9,5%	3,3%

As shown in Table 160, in half the cases in which a victim was tailed, this only happened once: 18 women in our sample have experienced this at least twice during the past 12 months.

### 1.3 PHYSICAL ABUSE

#### 1.3.1 Aggression related to theft (or attempted theft)

**Table 161.** Over the past twelve months has someone tried to forcefully grab you or rob you of something that belonged to you (handbag, jewellery, etc.) on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?, in %

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	97,5%	96,2%	96,8%
Victims	2,5%	3,8%	3,2%

(Attempted) violent theft (grabbing an object, etc.) occurred in little more than 3% of the population, as estimated by our survey. The slight predominance of male victims is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.100$ ).

**Table 162.** Frequency of theft or attempted theft over the last twelve months (N=63), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Once	84,0%	81,6%	82,5%
2 or 3 times	16,0%	18,4%	17,5%

In the vast majority of cases, the events were isolated but some people have experienced this two or three times during the past year. No respondent was subjected to this type of abuse more than three times over the last 12 months.

#### 1.3.2 Physical assault

**Table 163.** Over the past twelve months has someone slapped you, hit you or perpetrated another form of physical abuse against you on the street, on public transport or in public areas?, in %

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	98,8%	97,5%	98,2%
Victims	1,2%	2,5%	1,8%



Physical assault for a purpose other than theft is somewhat rarer than the type of assault aimed at violently grabbing an object. Our figures confirm a known constant in criminology: men are more often subject to physical assaults outside the home than women ( $p = 0.038$ ) and are twice as likely as women to be victims.

**Table 164.** Frequency of physical assault in public areas in the last twelve months (N=37), in %

	Women	Men	Total
Once	83,3%	76,0%	78,4%
2 or 3 times	8,3%	24,0%	18,9%
Between 4 and 10 times	8,3%	,0%	2,7%

Physical assault in public areas is usually an isolated event (Table 164), but one woman in the sample was subjected to it more than three times during the past year. The low numbers mean the difference between men and women was not significant.

### 1.3.3 Threats with a weapon

**Table 165.** Over the past twelve months has someone threatened you with a weapon, a dangerous object (knife, bat ...) or has somebody tried to kill you, strangle you on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?, in %

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	99,1%	98,6%	98,9%
Victims	,9%	1,4%	1,1%

Threats with a weapon or attempted murder are extremely rare, although one percent of the sample has been subjected to this form of extreme abuse during the past year. One person, a man, experienced this more than once.

When one includes all the victims of physical abuse in public, male victims outnumber female victims, or 5.8% men against 3.9% women.

## 1.4 SEXUAL ABUSE

### 1.4.1 Exhibitionism and unwanted sexual touching

**Table 166.** Over the past twelve months has someone undressed before you, or groped a part of your body (your breasts, your buttocks, ...) against your will, on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?, in %

	Women (N=987)	Men (N=1.027)	Total (N=2.014)
Non-victims	99,5%	99,7%	99,6%
Victims	,5%	,3%	,4%

Table 166 shows that sexual abuse in public areas is even rarer, and we notice that men are affected almost as frequently as women. However, the absolute numbers (respectively, five women and three men) do not lend themselves to a quantitative generalisation. With one exception, these are isolated incidents.

#### 1.4.2 *Forced/unwanted sexual touching or relations*

Only one person reported having been exposed to forced sexual touching or unwanted sex during the last 12 months in a public area. This was a woman, or 0.1% of the female sample.

### 1.5 CHARACTERISATION OF VICTIMS

In order to characterise victims in public areas, we developed an indicator covering all the incidents reported above, except for verbal abuse, suffered a maximum of three times. This indicator for «victims in public areas» represents 8.9% of the total sample.

When we grouped all these incidents together we were unable to find a significant difference between men and women. Nor is the type of habitat (urban or rural) significant. Age is the only major relevant socio-demographic variable ( $p = 0.001$ ) (Table 167).

**Table 167.** Victim rate in public over the last twelve months, by age, in %

	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-75 years
Non-victims	84,0%	91,4%	90,9%	92,8%	93,8%	92,0%
Victims	16,0%	8,6%	9,1%	7,2%	6,2%	8,0%

As might be expected, young people are more exposed to abuse in public areas than the elderly. The victim rate in the 18-24 age category is twice as high as for all other age groups, where prevalence remained stable at between 6% and 9%.

## 2 EXPLORATION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OR THE MOST SERIOUS OCCURRENCE

Among the abuses suffered in public areas the victim was also asked to determine the most significant or the most serious occurrence of abuse (Table 168).

**Table 168.** Among these occurrences, which do you consider the most significant or the most serious?, in %

	Women	Men	Total
Verbal abuse	60,5%	59,3%	59,9%
Being followed in the street	17,8%	6,7%	12,5%
(Attempted) theft with violence	10,5%	14,1%	12,2%
Physical abuse	4,6%	11,1%	7,7%
Armed threat or attempted murder	4,6%	8,9%	6,6%
Sexual abuse	2,0%	,0%	1,0%

The identification of the most significant occurrence reveals a significant but not consistent difference, between men and women ( $p = 0.006$ ): women more than men mention being followed as the most serious occurrence, while men indicate more than women that physical assault is the most serious occurrence. Only a few women think that sexual abuse is the most serious occurrence.

## 2.1 THE PERPETRATOR(S)

**Table 169.** Did you know one or more perpetrators of this abuse?, in %

Unknown perpetrator	45,5%
Known perpetrator	54,1%
Does not know	,4%

Following on from the previous question about the most significant occurrence, the victim was asked whether they knew one or more perpetrators of this abuse (table 169). There are no significant differences between men and women, so below are the results in their entirety: in half the cases the victim knew the perpetrator. Statistically, this question is not dependent on the type of event identified ( $p = 0.160$ ), however, we note that in terms of being followed victims often are less familiar with the perpetrator.

**Table 170.** The perpetrator was, in %

A man	48,0%
A woman	6,9%
A teenage boy	13,1%
A teenage girl	1,5%
A group of men	9,2%
A group of women	1,1%
A group of teenagers	7,7%
A group of men and women	3,5%
Does not know	8,7%
Declined to answer	,2%

As is clear from Table 170, in half the cases the perpetrator was a man alone, regardless of the victim's gender. Just over 20% of the occurrences of abuse that were identified have been committed by a group (men/women/youth/men and women).

**Table 170.** The perpetrator was, in %

	Women	Men	Total
Male	86,1%	92,7%	89,2%
Female	13,9%	7,3%	10,8%

All the categories of perpetrators have been grouped according to gender (Table 171). This shows that in public areas the perpetrator is male in nine out of ten cases of abuse. This result is slightly different depending on the victim's gender but not significantly ( $p = 0.071$ ).

## 2.2 CONFIDING IN OTHERS ABOUT VIOLENT EXPERIENCES

**Table 172.** Have you spoken to someone about this? in %

Yes	79,3%
No	19,5%
Does not know	1,0%
Declined to answer	,2%

The occurrence was reported to a close associate in eight out of ten cases (table 172). The victims thus more frequently discuss this type of abuse than abuse inflicted by a family member or friend (see Table 155). There is no difference between men and women, but as we can see in table 173 the different types of abuse are not confided in the same way: verbal abuse and insults are reported less often.

**Table 173. Confidence according to the type of abuse, in %**

Verbal abuse	67,4%
Being followed in the street	94,4%
(Attempted) theft with violence	94,1%
Physical assault	95,5%
Armed threat or attempted murder	94,7%
Sexual abuse	100,0%

We also see that, contrary to what happens in the domestic sphere (family and partner abuse), all the acts of sexual abuse were reported.

### 2.3 COMPLAINT TO THE POLICE

**Table 174. Did you go to the police and sign a declaration or file a complaint?, in %**

Yes, I did so myself	16,9%
Yes, another person did so on my behalf	,9%
No	80,6%
Does not know	1,3%
Declined to answer	,3%

Although most victims talked about what had happened to someone close to them, as shown in Table 174, only a minority of less than 20% complained to the police. This proportion varies according to the forms of abuse involved (Table 175).

**Table 175. Complaints filed with the police according to the type of abuse, in %**

Verbal abuse	7,0%
Being followed in the street	8,1%
(Attempted) theft with violence	62,9%
Physical assault	28,6%
Armed threat or attempted murder	42,1%
Sexual abuse	50,0%

We see that verbal attacks are rarely reported to the police, as is the fact of having been followed. It is not surprising that most complaints are categorised as theft with violence and that this is the type of event that is most frequently reported, accounting in itself for over half of all reported incidents.

## ABUSE IN PUBLIC AREAS: IN BRIEF

- Men and women are victims of verbal abuse in public areas in similar proportions (12.9%), but most of the time these events are isolated.
- Men are twice as vulnerable to physical assault (2.5%) as women, whereas there is a smaller difference between the numbers of men and women who are victims of theft with (threatened) violence.
- Women are more frequently followed in the street (4%) and subjected to sexual abuse in public, although such events are still exceptional (0.5% of women are victims of exhibitionism or unwanted touching).
- Young people are more exposed to abuse in public places, particularly those aged under 25, where victimisation is twice as high as in other age groups.
- In half the cases, the most serious abuses are committed by someone the victim knows, and the perpetrator is a man in nine cases out of ten.
- Abuse in public places is much more frequently reported to others (eight cases out of ten) and is also the subject of more complaints to the police (two cases out of ten). In the case of theft with violence, over 60% of incidents are the subject of a complaint to the police.

# CHAPTER 7. WITNESSES TO ABUSE



- 1 WITNESSES TO ABUSE BETWEEN PARTNERS
- 2 WITNESSES TO ABUSE THROUGHOUT LIFETIME 136

Regarding the witnesses of abuse two types of questions were posed: firstly, questions related to the presence of witnesses in situations of abuse between partners and secondly, questions about the experiences of respondents as witnesses to abuse.

## 1 WITNESSES TO ABUSE BETWEEN PARTNERS

We first analysed the presence of witnesses in the context of partner abuse experienced during the last 12 months. Table 176 indicates the percentage of abusive situations during which a child, relative or another person were present.

**Table 176.** Witnesses to violent situations in which the respondent was a victim, in absolute figures and in %

	N	%
Children	52	40,8%
Family and friends	33	23,3%
Others	23	15,3%

We noted that in more than 40% of cases of abuse between partners, at least one child has witnessed abuse committed against a parent. In 23.3% of the cases, someone close to them was a witness, and in 15.3% of cases, a third party witnessed the event. The presence of witnesses is not correlated with the victim's gender or with the form of abuse experienced. This means that, irrespective of the victim's gender or the form of abuse experienced, the presence of children, a member of their close circle or others remains the same. We also note that in almost 60% of cases (59.1%) no witness was present during acts of abuse.

Table 177 shows that children are most often present (48.8%) in situations of serious abuse. In addition, we find that children are witnesses in 43.2% of cases of partner abuse identified by the victim as very serious.

**Table 177.** Presence of child(ren) as witness(es) according to the seriousness of the abuse experienced, in absolute figures and in %

	Presence of children?		Total
	Yes, thinks so	No, does not think so	
Moderate abuse	13	29	42
	31,0%	69,0%	100,0%
Serious abuse	21	22	43
	48,8%	51,2%	100,0%
Very serious abuse	19	25	44
	43,2%	56,8%	100,0%

$p=0,04$

Besides the severity of the abuse suffered, marital status should be taken into account when considering the presence of witnesses during abuse between partners or former partners. As shown in Table 178, we find that the presence of (a) child(ren) is very strongly related to the couple's marital status. More than one in two situations of abuse between two former partners is seen or heard by children. This figure decreases to 38.4% for situations

between partners living together. By contrast, marital status has no significant influence on the presence or absence of members of their close circle.

**Table 178.** Presence of child(ren) as witness(es) according to couple's status, in absolute figures and in %

	Presence of children?		Total
	Yes, thinks so	No, does not think so	
Couple	33	53	86
	38,4%	61,6%	100,0%
Separated in the last 12 months	2	10	12
	16,7%	83,3%	100,0%
Former partner	17	13	30
	56,7%	43,3%	100,0%
Total	52	76	128
	40,6%	59,4%	100,0%

$p=0,003$

## 2 WITNESSES TO ABUSE THROUGHOUT LIFETIME

We asked all the respondents whether, in the course of their lifetime, they have ever seen or heard someone insult, criticise or treat with contempt (verbal or emotional abuse), slap, hit or perform another act of physical violence (physical abuse) or sexually aggress someone else (sexual abuse). Over 43% of respondents had witnessed physical abuse and 7.5% sexual abuse (Table 179). Fifty-three percent of the respondents declared that they had witnessed verbal abuse; the respondents thus most frequently witnessed this type of abuse. However, it was to be expected that the witnessing of verbal abuse would be more frequent in public areas. Perhaps this is under-reported, which could be explained by the fact that respondents may not consider these cases as sufficiently serious or important to mention.

**Table 179.** Percentage of male and female witnesses according to the type of abuse, in absolute figures and in %

	Women		Men		Total	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Witnesses to verbal or emotional abuse	496	491	451	579	947	1.067
	50,6%	49,4%	43,5%	56,5%	47,0%	53,0%
Witnesses to physical abuse	622	365	520	507	1.142	872
	63,2%	36,8%	50,3%	49,7%	56,7%	43,3%
Witnesses to sexual abuse	900	87	964	63	1.864	150
	91,2%	8,8%	93,8%	6,2%	92,5%	7,5%

$p=0,014$

$p=0,009$

$p=0,067$

There is a significant difference between men and women with regard to physical and verbal abuse, men are more often exposed to these forms of abuse than women.



Table 180 shows age is a determining factor: the younger you are, the more you will have witnessed physical, verbal or sexual abuse. This trend cannot be explained by a sudden increase in violent situations that the youngest are confronted with, but more likely depends on a memory effect. The time between the situation as a witness and the execution of the investigation plays a key role.

**Table 180.** Forms of abuse witnessed according to the respondent's age, in absolute figures and in %

	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 jaar	65-75 years	Total
Verbal or emotional abuse	152	235	251	199	142	89	1.068
	61,0%	57,9%	60,0%	55,3%	46,4%	32,5%	53,1%
Physical Abuse	151	184	201	166	100	71	873
	60,4%	45,4%	48,1%	46,1%	32,6%	25,9%	43,3%
Sexual abuse	23	17	40	27	27	15	149
	9,2%	4,2%	9,6%	7,5%	8,8%	5,5%	7,4%

For the most serious of the three occurrences mentioned above, we can analyse who the victim and the perpetrator were of the abuse to which the person was a witness.

**Table 181.** Category of the victim according to the form of abuse witnessed, in absolute figures and in %

	Victim of abuse					Total
	Partner	Family	Friend or acquaintance	Colleague - hierarchical superior	Unknown person	
Verbal or emotional abuse	24	156	218	143	432	973
	2,5%	16,0%	22,4%	14,7%	44,4%	100,0%
Physical Abuse	21	117	183	79	417	817
	2,6%	14,3%	22,4%	9,7%	51,0%	100,0%
Sexual Abuse	8	28	37	21	45	139
	5,8%	20,1%	26,6%	15,1%	32,4%	100,0%
Total	53	301	438	243	894	1.929
	2,7%	15,6%	22,7%	12,6%	46,3%	100,0%

If we compare the type of abuse and the categories of victims (Table 181), it appears that the victim is unknown in more than 46% of situations which people witness, followed by a friend or acquaintance (22.7%) or a family member (15.6%). This trend holds true when each form of abuse is considered separately.

The perpetrator is unknown in 55% of cases (Table 182), which suggests that the majority of abuse being witnessed takes place in public areas.

**Table 182.** Category of perpetrator according to the form of abuse witnessed, in absolute figures and in %

	Perpetrator					Totaal
	Partner	Family	Friend or acquaintance	Colleague - hierarchical superior	An unknown person	
Verbal or emotional abuse	48 5,0%	144 14,9%	161 16,6%	104 10,7%	512 52,8%	969 100,0%
Physical Abuse	40 4,9%	100 12,3%	124 15,2%	55 6,7%	496 60,9%	815 100,0%
Sexual abuse	2 1,5%	22 16,4%	25 18,7%	9 6,7%	76 56,7%	134 100,0%
Total	90 4,7%	266 13,9%	310 16,2%	168 8,7%	1.084 56,5%	1.918 100,0%

## WITNESSES OF ABUSE IN BRIEF

- We note that in more than 40% of cases of abuse between partners, at least one child has witnessed acts of abuse committed against a parent. This percentage is respectively 23.3% for a friend or acquaintance and 15.3% for others.
- 48.8% of cases of partner abuse that has been defined as serious are seen or heard by a child. This figure is 43.2% for situations between partners that are defined as very serious.
- The presence of child(ren) is very strongly related to marital status: More than one in two situations of abuse between two former partners is seen or heard by children. This figure decreases to 38.4% for situations between partners living together.
- Taking into account all forms of abuse and all spheres of life (relationship between partners, family/close associates, public areas), more men than women are confronted with verbal and physical abuse as witnesses.



# CHAPTER 8. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT AND DEAL WITH PARTNER ABUSE



- 1 COMPOSITION OF THE TWO GROUPS OF  
STAKEHOLDERS-EXPERTS
- 2 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The statistical analysis of data on the prevalence of gender-based abuse in Belgium was completed, within the framework of this research, with a series of public policy recommendations. To this end, we needed to take into consideration the views and vision of the professionals working in the sector and to respect the diversity, complexity and character of each viewpoint as far as possible. In this chapter we therefore base ourselves primarily on the recommendations that emerged from the focus groups and we compare them with the figures from the statistical analysis of the survey.

We also draw attention to the fact that such an investigation is in no way representative in the statistical sense. This is therefore not a «representative sample» of professionals, but a rational selection of individuals and groups who, by virtue of their diversity, can provide for analysis a maximum range of typical situations and experiences in order to “scan” the field and give an overview of reality.

## 1 COMPOSITION OF THE TWO GROUPS OF STAKEHOLDERS-EXPERTS

### 1.1 SELECTION CRITERIA

Two focus groups were organised: one consisting of French-speaking experts, the other of Dutch-speaking experts. In order to achieve the broadest possible coverage these two focus groups were composed of professionals working in the field who are familiar with the problem of abuse between partners and within the family. Participants were selected on the following criteria:

- sphere of action: the medical and psycho-social world and the legal and law enforcement sector;
- form of intervention offered: front-line medical care, counselling (guidance, support, consultation), social assistance and accommodation. All the available services at legal and judicial level were also considered, ranging from consultation to intervention and including the filing of a complaint; a service that coordinates the community network also participated;
- geographical distribution: to the extent possible, the whole of Belgium has been covered;
- type of target group: priority was given to reaching the victims. However, help for perpetrators of abuse as well as the elderly and pregnant women was also taken into account in the formation of focus groups.

Initially, those selected were contacted by phone or email in order to explain the project and its objectives. At this stage the main aim was to obtain their consent in principle to join the focus groups. An official invitation was then sent to them by mail.

In total, 14 people participated in the French-speaking focus-group and 8 in the Dutch-speaking focus group.

Table 183 shows the types of professionals who participated in the focus groups:

**Table 183.** List of roles

French-speaking focus group	Dutch-speaking focus group
Provincial coordination for abuse	Medical examiner
Mental Health Centre	Help centre for the elderly
Planning centre	Reference magistrate
Consultation in hospital	Aid centre for victims
General practitioner	Aid service for offenders
Shelter	Gynaecologist (specialist in abuse against pregnant women)
Help centre for elderly	Sexologist (partner abuse)
Help Centre for perpetrators	
Aid service for offenders	
Legal Consultation	
Chief of Police Zone	
Medical examiner	
Reference magistrate	
Judge (Court of Appeal)	

## 1.2 PROTOCOL FOR THE FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

The sessions for the focus groups were designed to bring together the range of experience of professionals who are in daily contact with domestic abuse, especially abuse between partners. We wanted to draw some useful recommendations from these sessions for the prevention and treatment of such abuse. The protocol was basically similar for each focus group.

We identified three types of information which these professionals could provide, and which can be placed on an axis running from upstream to downstream of the abuse.

These three types of information were:

- the form of abuse and the target group mainly encountered in their practice, according to their specific role, and the service in which they operate;
- the difficulties they encounter in this context to effectively carry out their mission;
- their recommendations regarding organisational measures, information, or actions to prevent domestic abuse and/or deal with it more effectively based on the one hand on their experience, and on the other on the reading of the survey results

To do this, two three-hour sessions were organised according to the following agenda:

- roundtable of the participants, with a presentation by each on their target groups and the forms of abuse prevalent in their everyday experience;
- presentation, according to the same principle, of the main difficulties encountered. A small variant was introduced in the Dutch-speaking focus group. The moderator posed the following question to start the second part of the session: « What would you do with a million euros in your practice?»

In practice, participants immediately discussed situations in such a way that types of victims and resulting problems emerged in parallel and hence phases 1 and 2 were automatically combined, including in relation to possible means of remediation.

- Brief, confidential presentation of the results of the survey, dealing exclusively with domestic abuse, and highlighting the percentage of victims identified in the population and the observed consequences of victimisation.
- General discussion of recommendations to be formulated on the basis of the comments provoked by the survey results and the difficulties or shortcomings in terms of care encountered by each participant in his/her work

## 2 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings, challenges and recommendations identified by the participants are strongly interlinked, so that summarising them results in a hybrid structure, with themes leaning towards issues related to the organisational aspects of the services or towards specific target audiences, or even types of abuse. Based on an analysis of the interviews, it appears that the majority of topics discussed by French and Dutch-speaking experts in these discussions overlap. The summary presented below therefore incorporates the findings and recommendations from the two focus groups, while mentioning, where appropriate, regional specificities.

### 2.1 THE TARGET GROUPS AND THE SEVERITY OF ABUSE

The participants in the focus groups consider that they are confronted with victims of serious, even very serious situations. The victims only seek help, only find their way to their door, when the situation is very advanced.

Most of the services represented in the focus groups are involved in psychological care, policing and justice: all work downstream of violent situations, when the problems have already escalated. They can therefore not be considered as being on the side of prevention, or even at the early detection stage.

The vast majority of the victims are women, but there is no particular social characterization; a rough estimate indicates 20% from disadvantaged groups, 20% from wealthy backgrounds and 60% middle class.

#### 2.1.1 Emotional abuse

Among the situations that concern participants, beyond the cases of physical or sexual abuse which are very serious but for which tools do exist, is the large incidence of emotional abuse. The importance of emotional abuse is confirmed in the figures from the survey, and in particular the fact that this form of abuse is significantly underestimated.

The victims of emotional abuse whom the focus group participants see are often in states of advanced psychological damage, so that existing tools are ineffective. This is a result of the fact that these situations are revealed too late, when the damage has already been done. A long-term exposure to emotional abuse can cause irreversible harm to the victim. Victims often take a very long time to realise that they suffer emotional abuse, which gives way to serious consequences.

It is not uncommon for these situations to be revealed as a result of complaints of physical abuse, which often result in emotional abuse. Thus these complaints constitute a kind of gateway to the diagnosis of deeply degenerated situations.

Participants confirmed that men talk less easily about the abuse they suffer, and that as the results of the investigation show, they are more frequently victims of such abuse than we would think if we based ourselves on the attendance rate at these services.

A major challenge for both diagnosis and intervention is the identification and definition of the degree of manipulation and control, the basic mechanisms of emotional abuse. The limits of the severity of these behaviours are difficult to establish. It is a challenge when it comes to educating professionals, but also a problem of legal categories, since the courts tend not to recognise this abuse because the penal codes do not provide for it. Emotional abuse is often not considered early on in the diagnosis because of the difficulty of objectifying it: often the perpetrator may have a «perverse» and/or «seductive» profile so that even family support is lacking for the victim.

From the perspective of the police or of forensic medicine, these dimensions of emotional abuse complicate the task of submitting reports or certificates which bear testimony to physical or sexual abuse, since it is the patient himself/herself who has to communicate this information. The physician may thus have to examine his conscience when he has evidence of abuse which shows that a victim is being controlled and does not wish to file a complaint.

We must however remember that this proposition is potentially inconsistent with the recommendation that the victim should have an active role in this in order to promote reconstruction. The degree of danger involved and the degree of progress in terms of awareness with a view to reconstruction may be the dividing line between these two views.

The recommendations we can make on this subject centre on:

- The usefulness of raising professionals' awareness of phenomena of manipulation and control.
- The importance of disseminating information on the violent nature of this type of behaviour.
- The need to reflect on the possibilities for the physician to transmit information on situations of serious abuse including emotional abuse to the public prosecutor's office. Professionals emphasise the need for an agreement between the medical and judicial branches to establish a framework for actions not initiated by the victim. One particular problem that they have to deal with is the moral and philosophical aspect in terms of «freeing the victim against his will».
- The need to devote greater attention to abuse suffered by men, since this type of abuse remains mostly hidden. This can serve as a guideline for prevention campaigns as well as awareness campaigns in terms of frontline assistance aimed at early detection.

### **2.1.2 Risk categories**

Although abuse is found in all social strata of the population, the professionals in the focus groups highlighted developments in the use of their services, for example by categories of people who have greater difficulties in terms of mobilising resources to deal with the abuse that they experience. They mention an increase in consultations by foreign victims, as well as economic difficulties.



They specifically referred to the serious situation of women without residence permits who are often the victims of rape. If they file a complaint, they may risk, for themselves, their children and/or other family members, being deported to their countries of origin where the protection of women is much less guaranteed than in Belgium, thus complicating their situation even more. In some cases, the law, morality or family customs of their country of origin can banish them from society altogether precisely because they have suffered and denounced abuse.

Another obstacle to the ability to mobilise available legal resources is access to pro bono lawyers. If the victim's revenue is slightly higher than the cap which limits access to free legal aid then the victim may be unable to pay for the proceedings, for which there is no, prior estimate of cost and which can easily rise to 2,500 euros in one year, a sum which is impossible to pay on a salary of 1,300 euros a month, which is the cut-off point for free legal aid. The recommendations for these problems are:

- The possibility of granting sheltered status to foreign women who denounce abuse in order to avoid even more dramatic consequences.
- Greater possibility of modulation of conditions for access to pro bono services for legal proceedings relating to the abuse.

## 2.2 PREVENTION

We stress the importance of investing in abuse prevention at the level of the health services. Physicians have a responsibility that cannot be underestimated. Among the participants in the focus group, the professional who has the greatest possibility of prevention or early detection is the GP (family doctor). However, they lack resources, such as training to identify signs of domestic abuse, and information about relevant action.

Another avenue for early detection of abuse against women is the establishment of a «standard screening» in pregnant women. But here again, there are several obstacles. Professionals feel helpless and often refuse to ask questions for fear of having to intervene in those problems for which they are not trained.

There is also a general reaction of distrust by the GP, who feels that he “loses” his patient when he passes the baton to other professionals, even if they work together. GPs often feel that they do not receive enough feedback, which they can discuss with their patients, or which they could use to adapt their approach to their patient in their general practice.

Moreover, the professionals also suggested that lawyers who are eventually consulted for related problems, often do not show sufficient sensitivity when it comes to indications of domestic abuse, which is reflected in the situation of their client.

In terms of objectives aimed at raising awareness, in connection with remarks made earlier about emotional abuse, a particular concern relates to the observation of the spread of behaviour that is considered «normal» among some young people, such as control of the mobile phone. This must be seen in a broader context in which society as a whole is becoming more tolerant vis-à-vis banal forms of abuse, which nevertheless must not be neglected.

Also in this field, the national action plan to fight abuse between partners is judged as having serious shortcomings: professionals point out that it is «unreadable» and «contains only generalities». Several participants question the effectiveness of this plan: What are its

effects? What place does it provide for cooperation between services? Is it even possible to evaluate it?

On this basis, we make the following recommendations:

- Useful tools to aid in early identification and to help in knowing how to deal with signs of domestic abuse should be introduced into the basic training and continuing education of general practitioners and lawyers.
- General practitioners should be included in networks which tackle abuse in order to circulate information, both generic and specific, to patients.
- Awareness campaigns about milder forms of abuse should be directed at young people in order to defuse escalations, help them put the negative emotions that can lead to abuse, such as frustration, anger, etc., into words, and raise awareness about the difference between violent and conflict behaviour.
- There should be investment in research at the level of prevention and assistance in order to demonstrate which interventions are most effective.

### 2.3 THE CONTEXTS OF SEPARATION OR DIVORCE AND CHILDREN

The contexts of separation and divorce are both privileged moments which may reveal abusive situations, and also moments where abuse may continue and escalate. We note, however, as a nuance, that the revelation of abuse between partners does not necessarily result in separation, and also that one must be able to help couples overcome this situation by staying together, where possible. On the other hand, in the case of a new relationship, a dynamic of stigmatization of the former partner may develop which the new partners designate as a cause for the failure of this experience. This dynamic may contribute to making things worse after the separation and reconstruction.

A major challenge in such circumstances is the frequent use of children in abuse aimed at the spouse. It is emphasised that children require special attention for their protection when experiencing abuse between their parents. The new divorce law, which judges apply in the form of joint custody by default, means that in cases of abuse, this formula is the most dangerous for the child, insofar as it allows her/him to continue to be used as a means of abuse. The risks associated with the position of a child who is a witness to abuse between its parents are poorly recognised by the courts.

Professionals highlighted this problem of the use of children as well as abuse against them, which does not necessarily relate to situations of separation, as giving rise to differences of opinion between the judiciary and the Youth Welfare Service. The former is accused of underestimating the risks to the child and instead maintaining the family, and of maintaining poor communication with the other departments concerned.

The recommendations here are:

- In an “ideal world”, preventative parental mediation in case of separation should be set up, which could identify and manage risks to children. In any case, special attention should be paid to the psychological effects on children who witness abuse between parents.
- There should be an assessment of the divorce law to review the default option of joint custody and identify the risks involved in order to exclude this option in cases of abuse between partners.

- The plan to create a family court should be put into effect enabling the contradictions between civil and criminal judgments to be resolved.

## 2.4 IMPROVING THE ORGANISATION OF SERVICES

The different types of participants meeting in the focus groups generally participated with great interest in the exchange of information and ideas that were put forward as part of this study. The request, or even need to share best practices with participants from different backgrounds is also evident in the findings and recommendations concerning improved care for victims. Here we are clearly dealing with the area which is downstream from the abuse.

The fact is that while most professionals are already working in a network, these networks are in fact relatively limited by type of professionals, and there is little communication across these networks. Thus there are psychosocial, legal, medical, etc., networks, which exist side by side. This need for improved collaboration between departments was discussed extensively in the Dutch-speaking focus group. According to the participants, there are too many initiatives which operate without coordination. An effort should thus be made to structure this at all levels as a matter of priority: from policy level to the professionals in the field. It is stressed how detrimental the lack of information flow between these spheres can be. One example is when the decision to release a perpetrator who has been imprisoned for abuse is not disclosed to the victim or to services attending to her/him which exposes the victim to meeting the perpetrator unexpectedly. Therefore it is considered useful that the victim should be informed of how his/her complaint has been followed up. Particularly in the case of the sexual abuse of minors, filing a complaint may be more harmful than helpful for the victim if his/her word is doubted, if no follow-up is given to the complaint or if it takes too long.

Professionals in this field also report their difficulties in dealing with the situations they encounter and they request more supervisory resources or shared resources.

In medical matters, case management by other actors (police, prosecutors) would be facilitated by a standardization of medical certificates recording abuse.

While there was a consensus as to the usefulness of networking for information exchange and coordination, this unanimity does not exist when it comes to the degree of integration desirable. Some professionals stressed that it is essential not to try to fuse all professionals in the same mould, and that a clear delineation of each party's roles should be maintained. The intervention in terms of aid and support to victims does not follow the same logic, the same temporality, the same mandates, and the same culture as the judicial sphere. The different interpretations of the same situation from different angles should be preserved and respected.

In connection with this issue, relations with youth services have already been raised in connection with the protection of children. More generally, professionals regret the multiplicity of guardianship authorities depending on the nature of the intervention.

Another barrier to adequate care for victims of serious crimes is the difficulty in finding accommodation. There is a shortage of emergency housing solutions, which presents serious problems for the protection of victims, largely because of a lack of housing opportunities after the emergency stage has passed. It is impossible to make room for

new cases in the absence of a more permanent solution for victims who are temporarily housed in shelters.

Court decisions regarding the protection of the victim are often contrary to the spirit of the law that provides for the expulsion of the perpetrator from the home. In practice it is often easier to remove the victim and to let the perpetrator stay in the house thus causing further damage to the victim who is uprooted and deprived of his/her connections and/or the comforts of the family home.

It is also worth noting that even if the law is applied when establishing the facts of abuse, it is very difficult for police to verify compliance with legislation in the medium-term. Especially since it is not uncommon for the victim to resume contact with the perpetrator.

The recommendations in terms of the organisation of services are to:

- Create a network between the medical, psychosocial, police and judicial spheres, by including front-line players such as general practitioners or paramedics. According to French-speaking participants, this integration is more advanced in Flanders than in the French-speaking Community. But Dutch-speaking experts who were interviewed did not share that view, or at least believed that integration and collaboration between services in Flanders are still woefully inadequate. Their first recommendation is even to reduce the number of partner abuse cases and to improve the care of victims.
- Establish forums for the exchange of best practices so that the positive experiences implemented in certain regions or cities can be known and spread to other areas.
- Simplify or harmonize the guardianships provided by the various professionals.
- Develop a standardized medical certificate for the recording of abuse.
- Increase the availability of emergency housing solutions by acting downstream to allow easier integration with other units after the emergency and thus free up existing spaces faster.



**CHAPTER 9.**  
**CONCLUSIONS**  
**AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



This survey sought to investigate, using a relatively large sample of the Belgian population, the various forms of abuse which persons aged 18 and over have suffered in their life, by reviewing the different spheres of life (except the professional sphere, which has not been explicitly included) and by detailing those events which are deemed to be most serious. Emphasis, as a matter of priority, was on partner abuse, taking into consideration not only current relationships but also, where appropriate, relationships with former partners.

The aim of the study was to examine the prevalence of gender abuse as broadly as possible. To do this, several decisions of a methodological nature had to be taken, which naturally have had an effect. Thus, the significant diversity of the research group has not always allowed for a very detailed statistical analysis regarding, for example, victim characteristics, or risk factors. We could for example have remedied this by interviewing only women, as in the French survey ENVEFF, but then we would have had no information on male victims. If we had only dedicated this study to abuse between partners, then we also would have been able to study more details on this specific topic, but we would have collected no information on other spheres of life in which abuse occurs, either at times or repeatedly. Other methodological options might have also facilitated the comparison with the 1998 figures regarding the prevalence of abuse in Belgium.

The choices that defined the research area and sample, did, however, provide the desired results. Over and above this we succeeded in highlighting acts of abuse that do not appear in official statistics, including the particularly low percentage of complaints filed with the police for all kinds of incidents, but perhaps particularly, those in the family sphere. The survey also revealed a number of acts of abuse about which the victims had never before spoken to others. We conclude therefore that we have uncovered hidden abuse. However, it is illusory to think that every form of abuse is reported in the study. A telephone survey may facilitate confidences, but shame and social inappropriateness still play a role.

The picture of experiences involving abuse that emerges from the survey is also nuanced. While criminologists do widely accept that men are more often affected by abuse in public areas (as perpetrators and victims), the image of the battered woman does not account for all abuse between partners. In relationships between couples, emotional abuse appears to be much more frequent than physical abuse, and there is no important distinction between the sexes regarding this form of abuse. Men are also victims, and women are also perpetrators. The fact remains that the victims of serious or very serious acts of abuse in the private sphere are mainly women. In a sample of 2,000 people, this image of physical abuse in couples amounts to 22 cases (in other words one in a hundred cases), of which two thirds were women. Underreporting remains a problem. The actual figures are much higher. We also find that men talk about or report abuse against them even more rarely, so that underestimation could be even greater in their case. Trying to circumvent this underreporting by broadening the definition, or taking into account forms of «softer» abuse thus contributes to underestimating it rather than revealing it: insofar as women are more represented in the most serious categories, we would thus reduce the specificity of gender for these tragic cases, diluting them in a larger and vaguer category. Similarly, the consequences of such abuse are important in terms of mental and physical health: here again, broader definitions risk mitigating the consequence table, as well as the risk profiles one. We were not always able to circumvent this kind of dilution. Because of the large sample size, we had to analyse together abuse of different forms and varying degrees of severity. A spectacular result is, however, the dramatic profile of consequences that was identified among victims of sexual abuse before the age of 18, which is significantly more marked than for victims of abuse in adulthood.

At the end of each chapter, we provided a summary of the most significant facts. We list a few here. Verbal abuse is by far the most common form of abuse (41.5%), followed by intimidation (22%), and then striking someone (15%). Sexual abuse mostly affects women (5.6% against 0.8% men), and they are also the ones who are locked up or kicked out most frequently (5.9% against 2.7% for men). Men are more often victims of verbal abuse and beatings than women and face a very similar degree of intimidation. Among female victims, there is, however, a higher incidence of partner abuse and violent situations, while male victims more commonly witness isolated acts of abuse committed by an unknown perpetrator.

Victims of abuse only file a complaint in a minority of cases: 13.9% of female victims and 9.8% of male victims make a statement to the police. This percentage is even lower when the perpetrator is a relative (6.2%), but is higher if the perpetrator is a partner (17.9%) and is highest when the perpetrator is unknown (21.1%).

The mental health of victims on average is worse than that of non-victims. Female victims of physical and sexual abuse more frequently attempted suicide.

8.9% of women and 3.2% of men have had forced sexual contact or relations before the age of 18. In most cases, the perpetrator is a family member or someone close to them, and this is certainly the case for female victims. 40% of male victims and 23% of female victims have never talked about these facts to anyone.

12.5% of respondents said they had dealt with at least one act of abuse by their partner or former partner during the past 12 months (14.9% of women and 10.5% of men). Women are more often victims of more severe, more frequent and different forms of abuse between partners. We observed a higher proportion of incidents of abuse between former partners or at the end of a relationship. Among young people we also recorded a high number of complaints of abuse between partners.

Women talk more easily than men about their experiences of partner abuse, young people more often than older people, and Flemings more than the Walloons. In addition, people talk more easily about abuse between partners when the relationship is over. Professional assistance seems more accessible to women, who, far more often turn to a physician, psychologist or a support service (23.6%) than men (6.8%). Male victims who turned to professional help were significantly less satisfied than women.

The physical and psychological consequences following sexual abuse are much greater than those caused by sexual [sic -- PHYSICAL?] abuse, which has more of an impact than verbal or emotional abuse. Women also reported significantly more consequences linked to partner abuse than men.

Among the higher risk factors which favour serious forms of abuse between partners we include social isolation, the fact that the partner displays violent behaviour outside the home and a poor relationship.

In terms of abuse perpetrated in the public sphere, women and men are more or less equally frequently victims of verbal abuse, and men are twice as frequently exposed to physical assault (2.5%) than women. In the case of (attempted) theft with violence or threats, the



difference between women and men is less important. Sexual abuse on the street mainly affects women, but such occurrences are still exceptional (0.5% of women have been victims of exhibitionism or unwanted contact). In half the cases, the most serious acts of which women and men were victims in public areas have been committed by someone known to the victim; the perpetrator is a man in nine cases out of ten.

We note that in more than 40% of cases of abuse between partners, at least one child has witnessed acts of abuse committed against a parent. This percentage is even higher in situations of serious or very serious abuse. Members of the close circle and others are witnesses of respectively 23.3% and 15.3% of cases of abuse between partners.

The survey provides a snapshot of a situation, or in epidemiological terms, a prevalence rate in different areas. We entrusted the task of making recommendations to groups of experts who met in two focus groups for this purpose and who put forward solid proposals, contained in Chapter 8 of this report. We can say very little, based on the investigation, regarding the conditions of support for victims. We have seen that in general, victims tend to make more use of psychosocial resources than non-victims. If there is an element of information in the survey that we emphasize here, it is that men, in addition to confiding less, also seek advice less than women and when they do seem less satisfied with the support received. Perhaps a first recommendation, in relation to the curative component, would be the development of specific treatment for men. Experts also mention seeing very few men in their professional practice. «Battered women», as we already said, are a group where serious abuse causes terrible damage; their consequence profiles shows that they are a target group which is in need of care but the services are available, the latter know their characteristics, and the conditions for improving their care are better expressed by professionals. That is why we refer the reader to this chapter.

As for the themes, the survey draws attention, more than to blows and physical abuse, to emotional abuse on the one hand, and to sexual abuse on the other. These two subjects should certainly be the focus of prevention efforts. Emotional abuse is less visible, less identified by victims as well as by professionals in the field, and is often a consequence of other types of abuse, but it is also much more frequent than physical abuse. It seems useful to communicate about these forms of abuse so that people in the field can spot these abuses and victims can identify them as abuse and not as normal behaviour. Insofar as they affect both men and women, communication on this subject should not be exclusively targeted at either women or men. Materials and campaigns for both the general public and medical and legal experts could be developed.

Initiatives In this regard aimed at the public – and the experts also raised this issue – should particularly target young people. It is certainly necessary to raise awareness about the abuse posed by certain behaviours that could be perceived as normal by both victims as well as by potential perpetrators. The difficulty, as well as the challenge, is obviously to determine the point at which a more or less harmless behaviour becomes emotional abuse.

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- 2 OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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# ANNEXES



- ANNEXE 1. DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE DAS**
- ANNEXE 2. DETAILED STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**
- ANNEXE 3. SYNOPTIC VIEW OF ACTS OF ABUSE ACCORDING TO FORM OF ABUSE**
- ANNEXE 4. MASTER SAMPLE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABUSE BASED ON THE NUMBER OF ACTS AND OF QUESTIONS**
- ANNEXE 5. COMPARISONS OF ACTS OF ABUSE: DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS AND LIFE PERIODS**
- ANNEXE 6. MODELLING OF RISK FACTORS RELATED TO ABUSE BETWEEN PARTNERS**
- ANNEXE 7. SURVEY ON HEALTH, SAFETY AND LIVING CONDITIONS: QUESTIONNAIRE**



## ANNEXE 1. DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE DAS-16

Since the questionnaire focuses primarily on abuse within relationships between (ex-) partners, it is wise to form a general idea of the relationship quality / satisfaction with the relationship within a couple. The fact that the quality of relationships has a profound impact on quality of life of both partners is apparent from various studies. Research has shown that too much stress in a relationship between partners was related to anxiety, depression or other health problems.<sup>92</sup>

Given the importance of the quality of a relationship between partners in different contexts, researchers have attempted to measure the quality in a more objective way.<sup>93</sup> The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), by Graham B. Spanier (1976) is the instrument most commonly used to measure the quality of a relationship in the context of social and behavioural sciences. The original scale consists of 32 items, whose scores are tabulated and range from 0 to 151. A higher score implies a better quality of relationship. The DAS has been translated into several languages and also published in abridged versions in recent years.<sup>94</sup>

The questionnaire contained an abbreviated version<sup>95</sup> of the DAS, including four subscales - (1) consensus, (2) satisfaction, (3) cohesion and (4) affective expression - which measure the overall relational quality of a couple. We believe that this is not a static state but rather a process in which the two partners are more or less well adapted to each other at any given moment.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Graham, J.M., Y.J. Liu en J.L. Jeziorski (2006). 'The dyadic adjustment scale: a reliability generalization meta-analysis', *Journal of marriage and family* 68(3), pp. 701-717.

<sup>93</sup> Idem.

<sup>94</sup> Idem.

<sup>95</sup> Antoine, Christophe en Nandrino, 'Echelle d'ajustement dyadique', pp. 38-46.

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## ANNEXE 2. DETAILED STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

	Q No.
<b>FORM-INTERVIEWER 1: MAKING CONTACT</b>	
<b>QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	
<b>Introduction: Presentation of the survey</b>	
<b>Module 1: Identification of the respondent</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Module 2: Social network</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Module 3: Health</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Module 4: Opinions (Part 1)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Module 5: Family Life</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Module 6: Abuse experienced during the past 12 months</b>	
<i>Context 1: Public areas</i>	
1. Identification	14
2. Exploration of the most significant or the most serious abuse	5
<i>Context 2: The couple</i>	
1. Identification with respect to the current partner or partner of the last 12 months	28
2. Identification during pregnancy/in the context of the separation	2
3. Identification with respect to the former partner for those who ended their relationship in the last 12 months and who still maintain contact with the latter during this same period	14
4. Exploration of (the) act(s) of abuse that the respondent experienced	
A. Perception of incidents and strategy	4
B. Physical impact and other	15
C. Confidences and use of resources	31
D. Characteristic of the partner or former partner	7
5. Identification with respect to the former partner for those respondents who are currently in a relationship	(14)
<i>Context 3: Family and friends</i>	
1. Identification	18
2. Exploration of the most significant or the most serious abuse	4
<b>Module 7: Abuse experienced throughout lifetime</b>	
<i>Part 1: Experience as a victim of abuse after the age of 18</i>	
1. Identification	6
2. Exploration of the most significant or the most serious abuse	5
<i>Part 2: Experience as a victim of abuse before the age of 18</i>	
1. Identification	2
2. Exploration of the most significant or the most serious abuse	4
<i>Part 3: Experiences as a witness to abuse</i>	
1. Identification	3
2. Exploration of the most significant or the most serious abuse	7
<b>Module 8: Opinions (Part 2)</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Module 9: Other questions related to identification</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Module 10: Satisfaction of the respondent</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>FORM-INTERVIEWER 2: EVALUATION OF THE INTERVIEW</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>269</b>

### ANNEXE 3. SYNOPTIC VIEW OF ACTS OF ABUSE ACCORDING TO FORM OF ABUSE

Public areas	PREVALENCE DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS		
	Couple Current partner or former partner over the past 12 months		Family and friends
<b>VERBAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE</b>			
Terms of abuse, insults	Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words
Has been followed insistently on foot, by car ...	Control of relationships	Has been followed, harassment, death threats	
	Attempt to limit contact with family, friends		
	Refusal to speak or discuss things		
	Intimidation		
	Child abuse, separation from children or threatening to do so	Child abuse, separation from children or threatening to do so	Child abuse, separation from children or threatening to do so
<b>ECONOMIC ABUSE</b>			
	Taking income, savings or incurring debts		Taking income, savings or incurring debts
<b>PHYSICAL ABUSE</b>			
Aggression for theft or attempted theft	Throwing an object, pushing, grabbing brutally		
	Scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair		
Slapping, hitting or carrying out other physical attacks	Slapping, punching or kicking, hitting with an object that has hurt	Slapping, hitting or carrying out other physical attacks	Slapping, hitting or carrying out other physical attacks
Threats with a weapon, attempted murder or strangulation	Threats with a weapon, attempted murder or strangulation	Threats with a weapon, attempted murder or strangulation	Threats with a weapon, attempted murder or strangulation
	Preventing access to the home, locking up, locking out, leaving by the roadside		Preventing access to the home, locking up, , locking out, leaving by the roadside
<b>SEXUAL ABUSE</b>			
Fondling or exhibitionism	Imposing sexual acts or practices that are degrading or humiliating		
Sexual touching, attempted forced intercourse, forced sexual intercourse	Sexual touching, attempted forced intercourse or forced sexual intercourse	Sexual touching, attempted forced intercourse or forced sexual intercourse	Sexual touching, attempted forced intercourse or forced sexual intercourse

<b>NEGLECT (EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE ELDERLY (AGED 65 OR OLDER))</b>			
			Negligent care
			Neglect of daily assistance

<b>PREVALENCE THROUGHOUT LIFETIME</b>	
<b>After the age of 18 years</b>	<b>Before the age of 18 years</b>
<b>VERBAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE</b>	
Insults, criticism, contempt for actions and words	
Intimidation	
<b>PHYSICAL ABUSE</b>	
Slapping, hitting or carrying out other physical attacks	
Threats with a weapon, attempted murder or strangulation	
Preventing access to the home, locking up, locking out	
<b>SEXUAL ABUSE</b>	
	Sexual touching (inflicted or done under duress)
Sexual touching, attempted forced intercourse, forced sexual intercourse	Sexual touching, attempted forced intercourse or forced sexual intercourse

## ANNEXE 4. MASTER SAMPLE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABUSE BASED ON THE NUMBER OF ACTS AND OF QUESTIONS

	EXPERIENCES AS A VICTIM				EXPERIENCES AS A WITNESS		
	INCIDENCE (during the last 12 months) Module 6				PREVALENCE (throughout lifetime) Module 7		
	Public areas	Current partner or in the last 12 months	Last partner	Family and Friends	After the age of 18 years	Before the age of 18 years	Throughout lifetime
<b>VERBAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE</b>							
Number of items	2	6	3	2	2	0	1
Number of acts	2	11	9	6	4	0	3
<b>ECONOMIC ABUSE</b>							
Number of items	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Number of acts	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
<b>PHYSICAL ABUSE</b>							
Number of items	3	5	2	3	3	0	1
Number of acts	7	17	6	9	9	0	3
<b>SEXUAL ABUSE</b>							
Number of items	2	2	1	1	1	2	1
Number of acts	5	4	3	3	3	4	1
<b>NEGLECT (ONLY FOR RESPONDENTS AGED 65 OR ABOVE)</b>							
Number of items	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Number of acts	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>							
<b>Number of items</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Number of acts</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>



## ANNEXE 6. MODELLING OF RISK FACTORS RELATED TO ABUSE BETWEEN PARTNERS

The dependent variable in the model is the indicator of very serious abuse between partners. The limited number of observations also results in limitations for the analysis. Sub-division into smaller categories had to be avoided as far as possible, so that every time, whenever possible, we reduced the qualitative variables (having a finite number of possible answers)<sup>97</sup> to two categories (dichotomised). We have thus created a «dichotomous response» variable to distinguish between victims of serious abuse<sup>98</sup> and other individuals interviewed. In so doing, among the 2,011 valid questionnaires, we identified 57 victims of serious abuse during the past 12 months. Given that we are focusing on abuse between partners, this number of observations will be further reduced to those respondents with a partner or who are still in contact with their former partner, namely 39 cases.

In view of this type of dichotomous variables, the most appropriate statistical tool is logistic regression. Our first analysis will focus on victims of serious abuse.

### Information on the model

Dependent variable	Indicator of very serious abuse (a)
Probability distribution	Binomial
Function	Logit

### Process models with 1 as a response, treating 0 as a reference category

In the theoretical framework of generalized linear modelling, we here applied a linear model with binomial distribution and a Logit function. The reference variable is the absence of abuse, the parameters will reflect the influence of the explanatory variable on the « risk » of being abused.

### Information on category variables, in absolute figures and in %

			N	%
Dependent Variable	Indicator of very serious abuse (a)	No	1,439	97.4%
		Yes	39	2.6%
		Total	1,478	100.0%
Factor	Violent spouse who does not live at home	No	1,452	98.2%
		Yes	26	1.8%
		Total	1,478	100.0%
	Believes he/she has enough interaction with other people	No	191	12.9%
		Yes	1,287	87.1%
		Total	1,478	100.0%

<sup>97</sup> Een andere mogelijke benadering zou zijn een kwalitatieve indicator van ervaren geweld te vormen.

<sup>98</sup> De constructie van de categorie "heel ernstig" werd verklaard in hoofdstuk 3.

### Information on continuous variables

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Covariable	Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	1,478	22.00	59.00	41.8884	4.93304

We chose to introduce the DAS indicator (DAS - Dyadic Adjustment Scale) in quantitative form in order to limit the risk associated with the multiplication of combinations of explanatory factors.

The explanatory variables used (see below) relate to the fact that the partner was violent (aggressive) outside the home during the period of the relationship (CONJVIOLENT) that the respondent feels that he did not have sufficient contacts with family or friends (SATRESSOCIAL) and the score obtained in the set of questions relating to the interaction in the relationship. (DAS\_total)

### Chi-square test

Chi-square	ddl	Sig.
101.839	3	.000

*Dependent Variable Indicator of very serious abuse*

*Model: (y-intercept) CONJVIOLENT, SATRESSOCIAL, DAS\_total*

### The adjusted model compared to the model with only one constant

The chi-square test comparing the adjusted model with the null hypothesis tells us that the hypothesis of independence can be rejected. In other words, the overall explanatory weight of the model cannot be due to chance.

### Measure of association

Entropy	.217
Concentration	.192

The measure of entropy here indicates the « explanatory power » of the adjusted model. Although the proportion of variance explained by the model is still relatively limited, we will see that the factors which «resisted» this model approach allow us to distinguish very contrasting profiles in terms of the risk related to «domestic» abuse.

### Tests of model effects

Source	Type I			Type III		
	Wald's chi-square	ddl	Sig.	Wald's chi-square	ddl	Sig.
(Y-Intercept)	276.800	1	.000	18.752	1	.000
CONJVIOLENT	67.207	1	.000	40.399	1	.000
SATRESSOCIAL	14.960	1	.000	12.597	1	.000
DAS_total	30.913	1	.000	30.913	1	.000

*Dependent Variable Indicator of very serious abuse*

*Model: (Y-Intercept), CONJVIOLENT, SATRESSOCIAL, DAS\_total*



The above table shows the best obtained model in terms of explained shares of variance and of significance. It is clear that the three retained explanatory variables all retain their predictive power when combined in a model. Their interactions (not shown here) by contrast are not significant.

All the other potentially determining variables that we investigated do not seem to stand the test of independence: when incorporated in the model their explanatory power declines significantly. They have therefore not been retained. The variables we examined were: sex, age, income level, educational level of the respondent and partner, marital status, indicators of violence by the partner outside the home, the respondent's social network and the victimization of the partner or of the respondent before the age of 18. If the explanatory power of gender is totally absorbed by the variable reflecting the violent attitudes of the partner outside the home, then this should not be taken to mean that gender in itself is an irrelevant variable, but that in terms of prevention it is « sufficient » to know that the partner is also « violent » outside of the home.

Naturally other models could include the variables that we have discarded here in a different combination and order. However, our ambition here is to identify possible preventive and explanatory approaches. That is why we have retained the model with the most significant explanatory weight while maintaining a limited number of factors.

## ANNEXE 7. SURVEY ON HEALTH, SAFETY AND LIVING CONDITIONS: QUESTIONNAIRE

### INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is ..... from the University of Liège / Ghent University.  
May I speak with Mr/Ms ..... ?

*Yes, this is s/he speaking.*

If not, could you please ask him/her to come to the phone?  
*S/he is not here at the moment. When can I call back?*

I am contacting you about a study which we are currently carrying out on the subject of health, safety and living conditions. We sent you a letter about this. Did you receive it ?

#### ■ YES, I received the letter

As you may have read, you have been randomly selected to participate in this national study commissioned by the IEFH (the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men). This study will help the Institute develop policies for prevention and assistance in terms of health and safety. This telephone survey takes about 15 to 20 minutes and includes questions about your welfare, your health, events in your relationship and your family. No special knowledge is needed to answer the questions. All your answers are anonymous and will remain strictly confidential.

Are you interested in taking part in it?

#### ■ NO, I have not received the letter

May I give you some additional information?

This is a national study sponsored by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. 3,900 people between the ages of 18 and 75 will be questioned. This will help the Institute to develop policies for prevention and assistance in terms of health and safety. This is a telephone survey. It takes about 15 to 20 minutes and includes questions about your welfare, your health, events in your relationship and your family. No special knowledge is needed to answer the questions. All the data collected are anonymous and will be kept strictly confidential.

You have been randomly selected to take part in this study.

Are you interested in taking part in it?

#### ■ NO, I do not wish to participate

If you prefer, you can also answer the survey online.

- Yes

Interviewer: give the respondent an individual code and mention it in the Interviewer 1 form under section 2 «Survey to be answered online.»

- No.

Could you tell me why you do not want to participate? It is important for us to know.

*Interviewer : complete the Interviewer 1 form, section 3 «No response module».*

#### ■ YES, I want to participate

It is important that you feel comfortable during the interview. It is preferable that you are alone in the room when answering the survey. Is this a good time?

#### ■ NO, not now

Can we make an appointment at a time that suits you best?

Interviewer : finalize the appointment and take note of it in Interviewer form 1, section 1 «Contact by telephone table.»

#### ■ YES

Before I begin, I want to remind you that all the information you provide will remain anonymous and strictly confidential. We only use this information for scientific purposes and all results will be published as figures and tables: it will be impossible to identify individual responses. Do you have any other questions?

## MODULE 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENT

### 1. Gender of the respondent:

- 1 Woman
- 2 Man

To begin with:

### 2. How old are you?

... years

### 3. What is your current marital status?

- 1. Single
- 2. Married
- 3. Co-habiting
- 4. Separated
- 5. Divorced
- 6. Widowed

### **Who lives with you most of the time in your home (including those who are only present one week out of two, or a few days a month)?**

Interviewer : if no spontaneous response, please read out the items. Tick the boxes that correspond to those people who mostly live in the household.

	YES	NO
<b>4. Nobody</b>	1	2
<b>5. Your partner (husband/wife, partner)</b>	1	2
<b>6. Your children (son or daughter)</b>	1	2
<b>7. The children of your partner</b>	1	2
<b>8. Your parents or parents-in-law</b>	1	2
<b>9. Your son or daughter in law</b>	1	2
<b>10. Your grandchildren</b>	1	2
<b>11. Another relation (sister, brother, brother or sister-in-law)</b>	1	2
<b>12. Another unrelated person</b>	1	2

### 13. In total, how many people live in this dwelling?

... persons

## MODULE 2 : SOCIAL NETWORK

I will now ask you some questions about where you live and your various relationships.

### 14. What term best describes where you live?

1. A big city
2. The suburbs of a big city
3. A small town
4. A village
5. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
6. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

### 15. In general, in your neighbourhood, do neighbours know each other?

1. Yes
2. More or less
3. No
4. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
5. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

### 16. How often do you participate in an activity outside your home during your free time such as, for example, a sport, recreational, cultural or musical activity?

1. Never
2. Less than once a week
3. One to three times a month
4. Once or twice a week
5. Daily or almost
6. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
7. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

### 17. How often do you see or speak with your friend (s) or members of your family who do not live with you?

1. Never
2. Less than once a week
3. One to three times a month
4. Once or twice a week
5. Daily or almost
6. I have no family or friend(s) (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
7. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
8. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

*Filter*

*If Q17=6, then go to Module 3 «Health», Q19*

*If NOT, continue*

**18. Do you personally think that you have sufficient contact with these people?**

1. Yes, its enough
2. No, not enough
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**MODULE 3: HEALTH**

Now we will talk about your health.

**19. Would you say that, overall, your health is:**

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Average
4. Bad
5. Very bad
6. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
7. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**20. Do you suffer from one or more chronic disease(s), disability/ies, one or more chronic health problems (allergy, asthma, migraine, backache, hypertension ...) or have you suffered from any of these in the last 12 months?**

1. Yes
2. No, go to Q22
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**21. Are you hampered in any way in your daily activities by this/these chronic disease(s), this/these disability/ies or this/these chronic health problem(s)?**

1. No, not at all
2. Yes, I am
3. Yes, severely
4. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
5. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**22. Thinking about the level of stress in your life, would you say that most days are:**

1. Not at all stressful
2. Not very stressful
3. A bit stressful
4. Somewhat stressful
5. Extremely stressful
6. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
7. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**23. Over the last 12 months, have you suffered from serious depression (or depression for a period of at least 2 weeks) or from chronic anxiety?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**24. Over the last 12 months, how often have you had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep?**

- 1 Never
- 2 Rarely
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Most of the time
- 5 All the time
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**25. Over the last 12 months, have you had a fracture, an injury that required stitches?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**26. Did this happen during an argument, a fight or an assault?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

*Filter*

*If the respondent is male (Q1=2) or is female (Q1=1) and 45 years or older (Q2), then go to Q28*

*If NOT, continue*

**27. Have you been pregnant in the past 12 months?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**Over the last 12 months, have you consulted a health professional for yourself:**

	TIMES	NEVER
<b>28. A GP?</b>	....	2
<b>29. A psychotherapist, psychologist, psychiatrist?</b>	....	2
<b>30. A specialist (gynaecologist, dermatologist, dentist ...)?</b>	....	2

**31. Have you been hospitalised in the past 12 months?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**32. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know
- 7 Declines to answer

**33. Over the last 12 months, have you taken sleeping pills, tranquilisers, antidepressants or anxiolytics?**

- 1 Never
- 2 Less than once a week
- 3 One to three times a month
- 4 Once or twice a week
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**34. How often do you drink alcohol?**

- 1 Daily or almost
- 2 Once or twice a week
- 3 One to three times a month
- 4 Occasionally, less than once a month
- 5 Never
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**35. Over the last 12 months, have you used drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, cocaine?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**36. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)



**37. Have you ever attempted suicide?**

1. Yes, once, go to Q 38 (A)
2. Yes, several times, go to Q 38 (B)
3. No, never
4. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
5. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**38 (A). When did you attempt to commit suicide?****(B). When did you last attempt to commit suicide?**

1. In the last twelve months
2. Between 1 and 5 years ago
3. Between 6 and 10 years ago
4. More than ten years ago
5. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
6. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**MODULE 4: OPINIONS (PART 1)**

The following questions are about opinions.

For each sentence that I read out, can you please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree to some extent, disagree to some extent, do not agree at all:

ITEMS	Strongly agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree to some extent	Do not agree at all	Does not know	Declines to answer
<b>39. Family problems should only be discussed within the family</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>40. A woman has to go along with her partner's opinion, even if she disagrees</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>41. For a woman, it is more important to help her partner with his career than to have a career herself.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>42. It is a man's duty to earn money for his family</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>43. A woman must take care of the children more than her partner.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>44. Women are obliged to have sex with their partner, even if they do not feel like it</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>45. Sometimes a person can push another person so far that the latter is obliged to strike the former</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>46. If a person abuses his/her partner, then people outside the family should intervene</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6

## MODULE 5: FAMILY LIFE

We will now discuss your family life.

*Filter*

*If «Partner» indicated in Q5, go to Q49 (A)*

**47. Are you currently in a relationship (that is to say with one or a main partner), whether you are living with this person or not?**

1. Yes, go to Q49 (A)
2. No
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**48. Have you had a relationship over the past 12 months, whether you lived together or not?**

1. Yes, go to Q49 (B)
2. No, go to Q53
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**ONLY the following persons should answer Q49 (A) through Q51 (A):  
- those who are currently in a relationship, whether they are living together or not.**

**49 (A). Is your partner:**

5. A woman
6. A man
7. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
8. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**50 (A). How old is your partner?**

... years

**51 (A). How many years have you been in this relationship?**

... years. Go to Q53

**ONLY the following persons should answer Q49 (B) to Q52:  
- those whose relationship ended in the last 12 months whether they lived together or not.**

**49 (B). Was your last partner:**

- 1 A woman
- 2 A man
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**50 (B). What was the age of your last partner when the relationship ended?**

... years

**51 (B). How long did this relationship last?**

... months

Interviewer : Convert this time into months.

**52. How many months has it been since the relationship ended?**

... months

**53. Do you have children?**

1. Yes
2. No, go to Q57
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**54. With your current partner? (including children that are now deceased)**

Interviewer : please also enter any children that the respondent had with his/her deceased partner

1. Yes
2. No
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**55. In one or more previous relationships? (including children that are now deceased)**

Interviewer : please also enter any children that the respondent had with a former now deceased partner

1. Yes
2. No
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**56. Among your children, are there children who are younger than 7 years?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**Filter**

**IF YES to Q47 or Q48 or «Partner» indicated in Q5, continue**

**If NO to Q47 or Q48, then go to Q76**

**The following persons should answer Q57 through Q75:**

- those who are currently in a relationship whether they live together or not.
- those whose relationship ended in the last 12 months whether they lived together or not.

I will now read out a series of subjects. For each subject, can you please tell me to what extent you and your last partner generally:

- 1 Never agree/agreed
- 2 Rarely agree/agreed
- 3 Sometimes agree/agreed
- 4 Quite often agree/agreed
- 5 Mostly agree/agreed
- 6 Always agree/agreed
- 7 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 8 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

ITEMS	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Mostly	Always	Does not know	Declines to answer
<b>57. Objectives, goals and things that are considered important in life</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>58. Making important decisions</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>59. Signs of affection</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>60. Friends</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>61. Sexual relations</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>62. Philosophy of life (approach to life)</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>63. How to deal with parents and parents-in-law</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

I will now describe some occurrences. For each of these occurrences, can you please tell me whether you experience them and if so how often?

ITEMS	Ne- ver	Ra- rely	So- me- times	Quite often	Mostly	Al- ways	Does not know	Decli- nes to ans- wer
<b>64. Sometimes I think about divorce, separation or about ending our relationship</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>65. We «get on each other's nerves»</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>66. We have stimulating discussions</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>67. Our discussions are calm</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>68. I confide in my partner</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>69. We have common interests outside the home</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>70. We laugh together</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>71. We work together on a project</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

**72. What is your overall level of happiness in your relationship?**

1. Extremely unhappy
2. Fairly unhappy
3. A little unhappy
4. Happy
5. Very happy
6. Extremely happy
7. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
8. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**73. After an argument with your partner, do you find a solution and does this settle the disagreement?**

- 1 Never
- 2 Rarely
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Very often
- 6 Always
- 7 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 8 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**74. Do you consider that over the last 12 months for household chores in your relationship (shopping, cleaning, dishes, laundry, kitchen ... except DIY, gardening):**

- 1 You took care of the bulk of the chores
- 2 Your partner shared the chores with you
- 3 Your partner took care of the bulk of the chores
- 4 Another person living in the home took care of the bulk of household chores
- 5 Another external person took care of the bulk of household chores
- 6 Not applicable
- 7 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 8 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**75. Do you consider that over the last 12 months when it came to caring for the children and their education:**

- 1 You took care of most of the tasks
- 2 Your partner shared the tasks with you
- 3 Your partner took care of most of the tasks
- 4 Another person living in the home is responsible for this
- 5 Not applicable
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**76. Do you sometimes receive help from family members (including the children) for daily chores?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

## MODULE 6: ABUSE EXPERIENCED DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

### CONTEXT 1: PUBLIC AREAS

#### 1. IDENTIFICATION

I am now going to ask you some questions about experiences that you may have had on the street, on public transport, in public areas (shops, government offices, pubs, nightclubs, ...). We will talk about events that may have occurred during the last 12 months.

These events could have occurred with people that you do not know very well or not at all, therefore they are neither your friends or relatives nor your colleagues.

Interviewer : a neighbour who is also a friend should be included in the «Family and friends» module

I will now ask you 7 short questions.

#### **77. Over the last twelve months have you been verbally abused or insulted on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?**

1. Yes
2. No, go to Q79
3. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

#### **78. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

#### **79. Over the last twelve months has someone followed you insistently, on foot, by car, by bike or by motorbike?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q81
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

#### **80. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**81. Over the past twelve months has someone tried to forcefully grab you or rob you of something that belonged to you (handbag, jewellery, ...) on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q83
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**82. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**83. Over the past twelve months has someone slapped you, struck you or perpetrated another form of physical abuse against you on the street, on public transport or in public areas?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q85
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**84. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**85. Over the past twelve months has someone threatened you with a weapon, a dangerous object (knife, bat ...) or has somebody tried to kill you, strangle you on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q87
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**86. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)



**87. Over the past twelve months has someone undressed before you, or groped a part of your body (your breasts, your buttocks, ...) against your will, on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q89
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**88. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**89. Over the last 12 months, has anyone forced you to undergo sexual touching, or did this person forcefully attempt or succeed in having sexual relations with you, against your will, on the street, on public transport or in other public areas?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to context 2 «Couple», Q 96
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes.

**90. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

## **CONTEXT 1: PUBLIC AREAS**

### **2. EXPLORATION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OR THE MOST SERIOUS ABUSE**

*Filter*

*If at least 2 X YES to Q77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, continue*

*If YES to Q77 or 79 or 81 or 83 or 85 or 87 or 89, go to 92*

*If NO to Q77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, go to Q96*

Among the events that we just discussed, for the last 12 months, you have stated that someone on the street, on public transport or in another public place :

- 1 Has insulted you or verbally abused you
- 2 Has insistently followed you, on foot, by car, by bike or by motorbike
- 3 Has attempted to or succeeded in taking something that belonged to you
- 4 Has slapped you, struck you, or perpetrated another form of physical abuse against you

- 5 Has threatened you with a weapon, a dangerous object or attempted to kill you, strangle you
- 6 Undressed in front of you or against your will touched a part of your body
- 7 Has forced you to undergo sexual touching, attempted or succeeded, by force, to have sex with you against your will

**91. Among these occurrences, which do you consider the most significant or the most serious?**

Interviewer : RESPONDENT should select one answer only.

-----

I have four short questions to ask you about this.  
For this occurrence, can you tell me:

**92. Whether the perpetrator(s) of this abuse was completely unknown to you?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**93. If it was?**

- 1 A man
- 2 A woman
- 3 A teenage boy
- 4 A teenage girl
- 5 A group of men
- 6 A group of women
- 7 A group of teenagers
- 8 A group of men and women
- 9 Does not know
- 10 Declines to answer

**94. If you mentioned this occurrence to anyone?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**95. Did you make a signed statement to the police or lodge a complaint?**

- 1 Yes, you yourself did.
- 2 Yes, another person did.
- 3 No
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**CONTEXT 2: COUPLE****1. IDENTIFICATION WITH RESPECT TO PARTNER**

*Filter*

*IF YES to Q47 or Q48 or «Partner» in Q5, continue*

*If NO to Q47 and Q48, go to context 3 «Family and friends», Q196*

Only the following will answer section 1:

- those who are currently in a relationship, whether they live together or not.
- those who have had a relationship that ended in the last 12 months whether they lived together or not.

Introduction: We will now consider the situations of some couples. I remind you that your answers are anonymous and strictly confidential.

Thinking about your partner or last partner, would you say that over the last 12 months, he/she:

**96. Has tried to limit the contact you have with your friend(s) or family members?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q98
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**97. How many times?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know
- 6 Declines to answer

**98. Has insisted on knowing with whom and where you are?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q100
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**99. How many times?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know
- 6 Declines to answer

**100. Has sworn at you, criticized or ridiculed you for what you were doing or saying?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q102
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**101. How many times has this happened in the past 12 months?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know
- 6 Declines to answer

**102. Has stopped talking to you, totally refused to discuss things with you?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q104
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**103. How many times?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know
- 6 Declines to answer

**104. Did something to intimidate you (e.g., screaming, breaking objects, threatening to kill you or threatening to commit suicide)?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q106
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**105. How many times has this happened in the past 12 months?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know
- 6 Declines to answer

**106. Injured the children, separated you from them or threatened to do so?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q108
- 3 Not applicable
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**107. How many times?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know
- 6 Declines to answer

**108. Took your salary (your pension), your savings against your will or incurred debts on your behalf?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q110
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**109. How many times?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know
- 6 Declines to answer

Here are seven short questions

Over the last 12 months, has your partner or former partner:

**110. Thrown something at you, shaken you or grabbed you suddenly?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q112
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**111. How many times has this happened in the past 12 months?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know
- 7 Declines to answer

**112. Scratched you, pinched you, bitten you or pulled your hair?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q114
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**113. How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 or 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know
- 7 Declines to answer

**114. Slapped you, punched or kicked you, hit you with something that hurt you?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q116
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**115. How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**116. Threatened you with a weapon, a dangerous object or attempted to kill you, or strangle you?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q118
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**117. How many times has this happened in the past 12 months?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**118. Prevented you from entering your home, locked you up, locked you out, or when in the car, left you by the roadside?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q120
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**119. How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**120. Forced you to carry out sexual acts that you found degrading or humiliating?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q122
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**121. How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**122. Forced you to undergo sexual touching, attempted or succeeded, by force, to have sex with you against your will?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**123. How many times has this happened in the past 12 months?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**CONTEXT 2: THE COUPLE****2. IDENTIFICATION WITH RESPECT TO PREGNANT WOMEN**

*Filter*

*If YES to Q27, continue*

*IF NO to Q27, continue with section 3 «Identification with respect to the former partner», Q125 (A)*

Only those who were pregnant in the past 12 months can answer the questions in SECTION 2

We have just mentioned one or more behaviours of your former partner.

**124. Did this behaviour start during your pregnancy, did it change (become more common, less common or was there no change at all?)**

Interviewer: do not read out preformed answers, listen and then code them

- 1 It started when I became pregnant
- 2 It became more common
- 3 It became less common
- 4 There was no change
- 5 He does not know that I am pregnant
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**CONTEXT 2: THE COUPLE**

**3. IDENTIFICATION WITH RESPECT TO THE FORMER PARTNER**

FOR PEOPLE Who ended their relationship  
in the LAST 12 MONTHS OR who have maintained CONTACT  
WITH their EX- partner during this SAME PERIOD

Filter

IF YES to Q47 or «Partner» shown in Q5, go to context 2, Section 4, «Exploration of the abuse experienced», Q139

If YES or NO to Q48, continue

Only the following should answer Q125 (A) and Q126 (A):

- those who were in a relationship that ended in the last 12 months.
- those who were not in a relationship during the past 12 months

**125 (A). Have you had any contact with your last partner in the past 12 months?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to context 3 «Family and friends», Q196
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**126 (A). Did the contact with your former partner occur in the context of child custody?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Not applicable



Only the following should respond to Q127 (A) until Q 138 (A):

- those who have had a relationship that ended in the last 12 months.
- those who have had contact with their former partner during the past 12 months

At the time of separation or after the separation, did your former partner:

**127 (A). swear at you, criticise you or ridicule you for what you said or did?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q129
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**128 (A). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**129 (A). Follow you in the street, harass you or make death threats ?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q131
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**130 (A). How many times ?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**131 (A). Hurt the children, prevent you from seeing them or threaten to do so?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q133
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**132 (A). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

At the time of separation or after the separation, did your former partner:

**133 (A). slap you, strike you or physically assault you in another way?**

Yes..

- 1 No, go to Q135
- 2 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 3 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**134 (A). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**135 (A). threaten you with a weapon, a dangerous object or attempt to kill you or strangle you?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q137
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**136 (A). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**137 (A). Force you to undergo sexual touching, attempt or succeed, by force, to have sex with you against your will?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q139
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**138 (A). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**CONTEXT 2: THE COUPLE****4. EXPLORATION OF THE ABUSE EXPERIENCED***Filter*

If YES to at least Q96, 98, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, continue

If YES to at least Q127, 129, 131, 133, 133, 137, continue

If NO go to context 3 «Family and friends», Q196

The following respondents will answer section 4:

- those who are currently in a relationship
- those who have had a relationship that ended in the last 12 months.
- those who have had contact with their former partner during the past 12 months

AND IF respondent reported having experienced at least one occurrence of abuse by his / her former partner

**A. Perception OF THE incidents AND STRATEGY**

I am now going to ask you some questions about how you perceive the behaviour(s) you just told me about.

**139. Do you consider this behaviour:**

- 1 To have stopped, ask Q140 (A)
- 2 To have stopped but it may happen again, ask Q140 (A)
- 3 Is still ongoing, ask Q140 (B)
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT), ask Q140 (A)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT), ask Q140 (A)

*Filter*

If Q139 = 1 or 2 «Has/have stopped» or «Has/have stopped but this may happen again», ask Q140 (A)

Si Q139 =3 «Is still continuing », ask Q140 (B)

**140 (A). How long did this behaviour last?****140 (B). For how long has this been going on?**

Interviewer: indicate the duration from the moment they began, even if over the years this has intensified

- 1 Less than 1 year
- 2 1 to 5 years
- 3 5 to 10 years
- 4 More than 10 years
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**141. How do you see the situation you experience or have experienced?**

- 1 Not at all serious
- 2 Not very serious
- 3 Rather serious
- 4 Very serious
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

*Filter*

*If YES to at least Q47, continue*

*IF NO, go to Section B «Impact and others», Q143*

**142. Faced with such situations, people attempt to cope in different ways. Among the following statements which is closest to your situation:**

Interviewer: RESPONDENT should select one answer.

- 1 I tell myself that it's not that serious or that it's like this in all relationships.
- 2 I think that I do not do enough to satisfy him/her.
- 3 When things are not going well I go to my parents, my friend (s), to a hotel.
- 4 I talked about it to other people who could help my partner.
- 5 When he yells, I yell and when he threatens, I threaten even if it is useless.
- 6 To get out of this situation, I will have to take some steps myself.  
Interviewer: = steps to find work, get therapy for yourself
- 7 There is nothing I can do about it, I'm just trying to survive.

**B. Physical AND OTHER CONSEQUENCES**

We will now discuss the consequences of the behaviour of your former partner that we just mentioned. We will ask questions about when this started.

**143. During the situations that you experienced, have you ever been injured physically in one way or another?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**144. Did you require medical care as a result?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**145. As a consequence of these events did you have to change or stop your daily activities and/or your professional work?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

Other possible consequences

Interviewer: RESPONDENT may answer «Yes» to one or more of the following items.

Again, as a consequence of these events, please indicate whether

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Not applicable (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

ITEMS	Yes	No	Does not know	Declines to answer	Not applicable
<b>146. You became less confident (e)</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>147. You became more aggressive</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>148. You feel guilty, you feel shame</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>149. You're afraid of the person you live with</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>150. You no longer talk with relatives or some have moved away from you</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>151. You suffer from depression, anxiety, or insomnia</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>152. Your children are disturbed by the situation</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>153. You've taken steps to protect yourself (warned a neighbour...)</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>154. You left the person with whom you live or the house</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>155. You try to forget about it</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>156. You became stronger</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
<b>157. You are more understanding compared with others</b>	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>

### C. CONFIDENCE AND USE OF RESOURCES

I will now ask about the people you may possibly have talked to and the steps you may have taken.

**158. Have you discussed this or these occurrence(s) with someone?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q168
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT), go to Q168
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT), go to Q168

If yes,

**159. (A). After how long did you speak about it for the first time?**

- 1 Immediately
- 2 Later (... years ... months ... days)

**159. (B). If later, please specify how long after**

Interviewer: please convert the time in days

Have you discussed this or these event(s) with one of the following:

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

ITEMS	Yes	No	Does not know	Declines to answer
<b>160. With one or more member(s) of your family?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>161. With a friend or a neighbour?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>162. With a co-worker?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>163. With a GP, a nurse</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>164. With a social worker, a psychologist or a psychiatrist (in a family planning centre, a mental health centre, a private practice)?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>165. With a lawyer?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>166. With a support service (helpline, victim support, perpetrator support, shelter)?</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>167. With the police?</b>	1	2	3	4

Filter

If YES to Q166 and NO to Q167, go to Q169 (A)

If YES to Q166 and YES to Q167, go to Q169 (B)

If NO to Q166, continue

**168. Do you know one or more support service(s) which could help you?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q185 if Q158 = 2 (NO) or go to Q169 if 158 = 1 (YES)
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**(A). How did this/these person(s) react?****(B). With the exception of the police, how did this/these person(s) react?**

Interviewer: let the respondent explain their reactions and then select the corresponding preformed answers.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

ITEMS	Yes	No	Does not know	Declines to answer
<b>169. Listened, was understanding</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>170. Gave advice</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>171. Provided assistance</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>172. Referred you to a professional</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>173. Made you go to the police</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>174. Went to the police</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>175. Wrote you a medical certificate</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>176. Wrote you a certificate stating that you were completely incapable of working</b>	1	2	3	4

**177. Overall, how satisfied are you with the assistance you received? Are you:**

- 1 Not at all satisfied
- 2 Not very satisfied
- 3 Quite satisfied
- 4 Very satisfied
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**178. Did the fact of having talked to someone there help, make no difference, or has it made things worse?**

Interviewer: RESPONDENT should select one answer.

- 1 It helped
- 2 It made no difference
- 3 It made things worse
- 4 Do not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

*Filter*

*If YES to Q167, continue*

*If NO to Q167, go to Q185*

Have you talked about this or these event(s) to the police:

**179 (A). After how long did you speak to the police for the first time?**

1. Immediately
2. Later (... years ... months ... days)

**179 (B). If later, please specify how long after**

Interviewer: please convert the time in days

**180. Have you made a signed statement or filed a complaint?**

- 1 Yes, you so yourself.
- 2 Yes, another person did so.
- 3 No
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**181. How were you received?**

- 1 Very badly
- 2 Quite badly
- 3 Quite well
- 4 Very well
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**182. Were there any legal consequences, for example, was a case opened, arbitration, a trial, any prohibitive measures or care with regard to your partner?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**183. Are you satisfied with the work done by the police?**

Are you:

- 1 Not at all satisfied
- 2 Not very satisfied
- 3 Quite satisfied
- 4 Very satisfied
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**184. After the police intervention, did your (former) partner's violent behaviour(s) increase, decrease or stop or remain the same?**

- 1 Increased
- 2 Decreased or stopped
- 3 Is the same.
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)



You did not discuss this with the police:

**185. What is the main reason why you did not call the police?**

Interviewer: the RESPONDENT may list several reasons. In this case, ask them to select the main reason and, if s/he cannot decide, take down the first one (i.e., note it down or memorise it).

- 1 Because everything has been resolved in another way  
Interviewer: for example, you left your former partner, have reported the crime to another official body, or you yourself fixed the problem.
- 2 For fear of your former partner
- 3 Because you do not want to deal with the police
- 4 Because the police could do nothing or would not help
- 5 Because you do not want your former partner to be arrested or put in prison
- 6 Because you do not want someone else to be aware of this, even the police
- 7 Because you have little or no confidence in the criminal justice system
- 8 Because the incident was not serious enough
- 9 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 10 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

During these incidents, was there someone present or did anyone hear what happened? Did:

**186. your children witness this?**

- 1 Yes, I think so
- 2 No, I don't think so
- 3 Not applicable
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**187. your family witness this?**

- 1 Yes, I think so
- 2 No, I don't think so
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**188. Others?**

- 1 Yes, I think so
- 2 No, I don't think so
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

#### D. CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTNER OR FORMER PARTNER

Here are some questions about your (former) partner.

**189. Since you have known your (former) partner has s/he suffered from a long-term illness, disability or chronic condition (allergy, asthma, migraine, backache, hypertension ...)?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**190. Since you have known your (former) partner, has his/her consumption of alcohol ever given rise to problems with relationships or family?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**191. Since you have known your partner, has s/he ever fought with someone outside the home?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**192. Since you have known your (former) partner has s/he ever hit or sexually assaulted another member of the family?**

Interviewer: Family means the persons in the family unit and also the family of the respondent and that of the former partner.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**193. Since you have known him/her, has she ever been in trouble with the police because of violent behaviour?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**194. To your knowledge, before the age of 18, was your (former) partner ever hit or sexually assaulted by a member of his own family?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**195. To your knowledge, before the age of 18, did your (former) partner witness occurrences of abuse between his parents (that is to say that he was present or heard what was going on)?**

Interviewer: witness means that the person may have been present during the incident or have heard what was happening.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

## **CONTEXT 2: THE COUPLE**

### **5. IDENTIFICATION WITH REGARD TO THE FORMER PARTNER FOR THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY IN A RELATIONSHIP**

*Filter*

*If YES to Q47, continue*

*If YES OR NO to Q48, go to context 3 «Family and friends», Q196*

Persons who should answer Q125 (B) and 126 (B):

- those respondents who are currently in a relationship

complete this part.

**125 (B). Have you had any contact with your former partner in the past 12 months? (If you had a previous partner)**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to context 3, «Family and friends», Q196
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**126 (B). Did the contact with your former partner occur in the context of child custody?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Not applicable
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

At the time of separation or after the separation, did your former partner:

**127 (B). swear at you, criticise or ridicule you for what you said or did?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go Q129
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**128 (B). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**129 (B). Follow you in the street, harass you or make death threats ?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go Q131
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**130 (B). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**131 (B). Hurt the children, prevented you from seeing them or threatened to do so?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go Q133
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**132 (B). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

At the time of separation or after separation, did your former partner:

**133 (B). hit you, strike you or physically assault you in any other way ?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q135
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**134 (B). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**135 (B). Threaten you with a weapon, a dangerous object (knife, bat ...) or try to kill you or strangle you ?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q137
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**136 (B). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**137 (B). Forced you to undergo sexual touching, attempted or succeeded, by force, to have sex with you against your will?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 If no, go to Context 3 « Family and friends » Q196
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**138 (B). How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**CONTEXT 3: FAMILY AND FRIENDS****1. IDENTIFICATION**

The following questions are about possible experiences with family members or relatives. May I remind you that your answers are anonymous and strictly confidential.

Over the last 12 months, did a family member or someone close to you other than your partner or former partner:

**196. Swear at you, criticize you or ridicule you for what you were doing or saying?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q168
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**197. How many times?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**198. Hurt your children, separate you from them or threaten to do so?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q168
- 3 Not applicable
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**199. How many times?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**200. Take your salary (your pension), your savings against your will or incur debts on your behalf?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q202
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Not applicable

If yes,

**201. How many times has this happened in the past 12 months?**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Often
- 4 Systematically
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

Here are four other short questions

Over the last 12 months, did a family member or loved one:

**202. slap you, strike you or physically assault you in another way?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q204
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**203. How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**204. threaten you with a weapon, a dangerous object or attempt to kill you or strangle you?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q206
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**205. How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**206. Prevent you from leaving home, lock you up, lock you out, or if in the car, leave you by the roadside?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q208
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**207. How many times has this happened in the past 12 months?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**208. Force you to undergo sexual touching, attempt or succeed, by force, to have sex with you against your will?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q210
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**209. How many times?**

- 1 once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

*Filter*

*If Q2 older than 65, then continue*

*If Q2 younger than 65 and if YES to at least QQ196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, then go to Q214*

*If Q2 younger than 65 and if NO to Q196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, then go to module 7, Q218*

**Only persons aged older than 65 years should answer Q210 and Q212.**

**210. Over the last 12 months, has a family member or someone close to you left you to your own devices when you were ill or when you required care?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to Q212
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**211. How many times has this happened in the past 12 months?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)



**212. Over the last 12 months, did a family member or someone close to you refuse to run errands for you or to drive you somewhere?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes,

**213. How many times?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

### CONTEXT 3: FAMILY AND FRIENDS

#### 2. EXPLORATION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OR THE MOST SERIOUS ABUSE

*If at least 2 X YES to Q196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, continue*

*If YES to Q196 or 198 or 200 or 202 or 204 or 206 or 208, go to Q215*

*If NO to Q196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, go to module 7 «Abuse experienced throughout lifetime», Q218*

Among the facts that we have just discussed, you have said that, during the last 12 months, a family member or someone close to you:

- 1 Swore at you, criticized you or ridiculed what you were doing or saying
- 2 Hurt your children, separated you from them or threatened to do so?
- 3 Took your salary (your pension), your savings or put you into debt, against your will?
- 4 Slapped you, struck you or physically assaulted you in another way
- 5 Threatened you with a weapon, a dangerous object or attempted to kill you, strangle you
- 6 Prevented you from leaving home, locked you up, kicked you out, or if in the car, left you by the roadside?
- 7 Forced you to undergo sexual touching, attempted or succeeded by using force, to have sex with you against your will
- 8 Left you to your own devices when you were ill or needed care
- 9 Refused to run errands for you or drive you somewhere

**214. Among these occurrences, which do you consider the most significant or the most serious?**

Interviewer: respondent should select one answer.

-----

I will ask three brief questions about this occurrence.

For this occurrence, can you tell me:

**215. if the main perpetrator of this occurrence was?**

Interviewer: do not read out preformed answers, listen and then code them

- 1 Your father, stepfather, partner of your mother
- 2 Your father, stepfather, partner of your father
- 3 Your son, your son-in-law or your partner's son
- 4 Your daughter, your daughter-in-law or your daughter's partner
- 5 Your brother, your brother-in-law
- 6 Your sister, your sister-in-law
- 7 One of your grandsons
- 8 One of your granddaughters
- 9 Another man in your family
- 10 Another woman in your family
- 11 A man among your friends that you know
- 12 A woman among your friends that you know
- 13 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 14 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**216. If you mentioned this to someone?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**217. Did you make a signed statement to the police or lodge a complaint?**

- 1 Yes, you yourself did.
- 2 Yes, another person did.
- 3 No
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

## MODULE 7: ABUSE EXPERIENCED DURING LIFETIME

We will end this section by asking you some questions about events that may have occurred during your life, regardless of where they occurred and the person (s) involved. Do not repeat an event here that you have already mentioned for the last 12 months.

May I remind you that your answers are anonymous and strictly confidential.

### PART 1: EXPERIENCES AS A VICTIM AFTER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS

#### 1. IDENTIFICATION

Since the age of 18, did anyone - a partner, family member, a relative or colleague or someone unknown:

**218. Swear at you, criticize you or ridicule you for what you were doing or saying?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**219. Do something to intimidate you (e.g., yelling at you, breaking objects, threatening to kill you or threatening to commit suicide)?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**220. Slap you, strike you or physically assault you in another way?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**221. Threaten you with a weapon, a dangerous object or attempt to kill you or strangle you?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**222. Prevent you from leaving the home, lock you up or lock you out?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**223. Force you to undergo sexual touching, attempt or succeed by force, to have sex with you against your will?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**PART 1: EXPERIENCES AS A VICTIM AFTER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS****2. EXPLORATION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OR THE MOST SERIOUS ABUSE**

## Filter

If at least 2 X YES to Q218, Q219, Q220, Q221, Q222, Q223, continue

If YES to Q218 or Q219 or Q220 or Q221 or Q222 or Q223, go to Q225

If NO from Q218 to 223, go to part 2, «Experience as a victim under the age of 18 years», Q229

Among the facts we have just discussed, you have said that, during the last 12 months, someone – a partner, a family member or someone close to you, or a colleague or someone unknown:

- 1 Swore at you, criticized you or ridiculed what you were doing or saying
- 2 Did something to intimidate you (e.g., yelling at you, breaking objects, threatening to kill you or threatening to commit suicide)?
- 3 Slapped you, struck you or physically assaulted you in another way?
- 4 Threatened you with a weapon, a dangerous object or attempted to kill you, strangle you
- 5 Prevented you from leaving the home, locked you up or kicked you out?
- 6 Forced you to undergo sexual touching, attempted or succeeded, by force, to have sex with you against your will

**224. Among these events, which do you consider the most significant or the most serious?**

Interviewer: Respondent should select one answer.

-----

I will ask you four brief questions about this occurrence

For this occurrence, can you tell me:

**225. If during this abuse the main perpetrator was:**

Interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT preformed answers, listen and then code them

- 1 Your boyfriend
- 2 Your girlfriend
- 3 Your father, stepfather, partner of your mother
- 4 Your father, stepfather, partner of your father
- 5 Your son, your son-in-law or your partner's son
- 6 Your daughter, your daughter-in-law or your daughter's partner
- 7 Your brother, your brother-in-law
- 8 Your sister, your sister-in-law
- 9 One of your grandsons
- 10 One of your granddaughters
- 11 Another man in your family
- 12 Another woman in your family
- 13 A man among your friends that you know
- 14 A woman among your friends that you know
- 15 A male colleague
- 16 A female colleague
- 17 A superior (male)
- 18 A superior (female)
- 19 An unknown male
- 20 An unknown female
- 21 Other:
- 22 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 23 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**226. How often has this happened?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**227. Have you mentioned this to someone?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**228. Did you make a signed statement to the police or lodge a complaint?**

- 1 Yes, you yourself did.
- 2 Yes, another person did.
- 3 No
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**PART 2: EXPERIENCE AS A VICTIM BEFORE THE AGE OF 18 YEARS****1. IDENTIFICATION**

I will now ask you two short questions about what you experienced before the age of 18 years with a family member, someone close to you, a partner (boyfriend, girlfriend), a colleague (workplace or school) or someone unknown:

**229. Did someone force you to undergo or perform sexual touching?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**230. Did someone attempt or succeed, by force, to have sex with you against your will?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**PART 2: EXPERIENCE AS A VICTIM BEFORE THE AGE OF 18 YEARS****2. EXPLORATION**

*Filter*

*If YES to at least Q229 or Q230, continue*

*If NO to Q229 or 230, proceed to part 3, «Experience as a witness», Q235*

I will ask four brief questions about these occurrences

**231. Who was the main perpetrator of this abuse:**

- 1 A partner (boyfriend)
- 2 A partner (girlfriend)
- 3 Your father, stepfather, mother of your partner
- 4 Your father, stepfather, mother of your partner
- 5 Your brother, your brother, son of the partner of your father or your mother
- 6 Your sister, your sister, the daughter of the partner of your father or your mother
- 7 Another man in your family
- 8 Another woman in your family
- 9 A man among your friends that you know
- 10 A woman among your friends that you know
- 11 A male student (classmate), a work colleague
- 12 A female student (classmate), a work colleague
- 13 A teacher or supervisor
- 14 A teacher or supervisor
- 15 An unknown man
- 16 An unknown woman
- 17 Other:
- 18 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 19 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**232. How often has this happened?**

- 1 Once
- 2 2 to 3 times
- 3 Between 4 and 10 times
- 4 More than 10 times
- 5 Daily or almost
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**233. How do you see the situation you experienced?**

- 1 Not at all serious
- 2 Not very serious
- 3 Quite serious
- 4 Very serious
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**234. Have you discussed these occurrences with anyone?**

- 1 With one of your parents
- 2 With another family member
- 3 With people in school (friends, teachers ...)
- 4 With others?
- 5 With the police
- 6 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 7 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**PART 3: EXPERIENCES AS A WITNESS****1. IDENTIFICATION**

In life, you can be present at events without playing an active role. I will now ask you a few short questions about this type of experience.

**235. During your life, have you been present or have you heard what was happening in situations where someone insulted, criticized or ridiculed what another person said or did?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**236. During your life, have you been present or have you heard what was happening in situations where someone slapped, hit or physically assaulted someone else?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**237. During your life, have you been present or have you heard what was happening in situations where someone sexually assaulted another person?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

### **PART 3: EXPERIENCES AS A WITNESS**

#### **2. EXPLORATION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OR THE MOST SERIOUS ABUSE**

*Filter*

*If at least 2 X YES to Q235, 236 or 237, continue*

*If yes to Q235 or 236 or 237, go to Q239*

*If NO to Q235, 236 or 237, go to Mmodule 8 «Opinions (Part 2)», Q245*

Among the facts we have mentioned, during your life, you said that you have witnessed situations where someone:

- 1 Insulted, criticized or ridiculed what another person did or said
- 2 Slapped, hit or physically assaulted someone else
- 3 Sexually assaulted another person

**238. Among these occurrences, which one affected you the most?**

Interviewer: respondent should select one answer.

-----

I will now ask you seven brief questions about this.

For this occurrence, can you tell me:

**239. If at the time there were one or more persons present:**

- 1 One
- 2 Several
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)



**240. If at the time the main victim is / was:**

- 1 A boyfriend
- 2 A girlfriend
- 3 Your father, stepfather, partner of your mother
- 4 Your father, stepfather, partner of your father
- 5 Your son, your son-in-law or your partner's son
- 6 Your daughter, your daughter-in-law or your daughter's partner
- 7 Your brother, your brother-in-law
- 8 Your sister, your sister-in-law
- 9 One of your grandsons
- 10 One of your granddaughters
- 11 Another man in your family
- 12 Another woman in your family
- 13 A man from your close circle, a man that you know
- 14 A woman from your close circle, a woman that you know
- 15 A male colleague
- 16 A female colleague
- 17 A superior (male)
- 18 A superior (female)
- 19 An unknown male
- 20 An unknown female
- 21 Other:
- 22 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 23 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**241. If at the time the main perpetrator is / was:**

- 1 A boyfriend
- 2 A girlfriend
- 3 Your father, stepfather, partner of your mother
- 4 Your father, stepfather, partner of your father
- 5 Your son, your son-in-law or your partner's son
- 6 Your daughter, your stepdaughter or daughter of your partner
- 7 Your brother, your brother-in-law
- 8 Your sister, your sister-in-law
- 9 One of your grandsons
- 10 One of your granddaughters
- 11 Another man in your family
- 12 Another woman in your family
- 13 A man from your close circle, a man that you know
- 14 A woman from your close circle, a woman that you know
- 15 A male colleague
- 16 A female colleague
- 17 A superior (man)
- 18 A superior (woman)
- 19 An unknown man
- 20 An unknown woman
- 21 Other:
- 22 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 23 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**242. If this happens/happened:**

- 1 Rarely
- 2 Occasionally
- 3 Often
- 4 Very often
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**243. If you mentioned this occurrence to someone?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**244. Did you make a signed statement to the police or lodge a complaint?**

- 1 Yes, you yourself did.
- 2 Yes, another person did.
- 3 No
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**MODULE 8: OPINIONS ( PART 2)**

Some questions to end the interview.

**245. Have you heard of the «White Ribbon» campaign?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**246. Are you aware of support services for victims or perpetrators of abuse?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

If yes, which?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

ITEMS	Yes	No	Declines to answer
<b>247. A support service for victims operated by the police?</b>	1	2	3
<b>248. A service for victims operated by the Public Prosecutor's office?</b>	1	2	3
<b>249. A support service for people subject to trial?</b>	1	2	3
<b>250. A legal centre?</b>	1	2	3
<b>251. A shelter which offers accommodation?</b>	1	2	3
<b>252. A help centre for the elderly?</b>	1	2	3
<b>253. A help centre for perpetrators?</b>	1	2	3

#### MODULE 9: OTHER QUESTIONS RELATED TO IDENTIFICATION

**254. What is your nationality?**

.....

**255. Do you feel close to or belong to a religion?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 4 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

*Filter*

*If YES to Q47, ask the questions in this module for the partner using form A*

*If YES or NO to Q48, ask the questions in this module for the former partner using form B*

What is the highest level of education:

**256. That you have achieved?**

**257 (A). That your partner has achieved?**

**257 (B). That your former partner has achieved?**

ITEMS	Respondent	Partner	Former partner
1. None completed			
2. Primary			
3. Lower secondary vocational or technical			
4. General lower secondary			
5. Vocational upper secondary (A3)			
6. Technical upper secondary (A2)			
7. General upper secondary			
8. Higher short-type (A1)			
9. Higher long-type			
10. University			
11. Doctoral or post-doctoral			
12. Other:			
13. Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)			
14. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)			

**258. Over the last 12 months, have you been employed?**

Filter

If YES to Q258 and NO to Q48, go to Q260

If NO to Q258 and NO to Q48, go to Q264

If YES TO Q258 and YES to Q47, continue with the questions for the partner in form A

If YES to Q258 and YES to Q48, continue with the questions for the former partner in form B

**259 (A). Over the last 12 months, have you been employed?**

**259 (B). Over the last 12 months, has your former partner been employed?**

Interviewer: if the former partner has worked temporarily, code «Yes».

ITEMS	Respondent	Partner	Former partner
1. Yes			
2. No			
3. Does not know (INT.) DO NOT READ OUT)			
4. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)			

Filter

If YES to Q258 and 259, continue

If YES to Q258 and NO to Q259, then continue to Q260 and then Q264

If NO to Q258 and YES to Q259, then go to Q261 and then Q264

If NO to Q258 and NO to Q259, then go to Q264

**260. What is the title of your main job?**

**261 (A) What is the title of your partner’s main job?**

**261 (B) What is the title of your former partner’s main job?**

Interviewer: Take down word for word - maximum details. Ask questions about the status (type of contract), the qualification and sector of activity.

	TYPE OF JOB
Respondent	
Partner	
Former partner	

**262. In your main job, what kind of work do you usually do?**

**263 (A) In his main job, what kind of work does your partner usually do?**

**263 (B) In his main job, what kind of work does your former partner usually do?**

Interviewer: take down word for word – maximum details.

	TYPE OF JOB
Respondent	
Partner	
Former partner	

**264. Among the following descriptions which applies to your situation?***Filter**If YES to Q258 and NO to Q48, then go to Q267**If NO to Q258 and NO to Q48, then go to Q267***265(A). And which corresponds to that of your partner?****265(B). And which corresponds to that of your former partner when you were in a relationship?**

ITEMS	Respondent	Partner	Former partner
1. Pensioner			
2. Retired			
3. Looking for a new job			
4. Looking for a first job			
5. Homemaker			
6. Student			
7. Unable to work			
8. In another situation			
9. Does not know (INT..DO NOT READ OUT)			
10. Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)			

*Filter**If YES to Q47 or Q48, continue**If NO to Q47 or Q48, then go to Q267***266. Would you say the amount you contribute to the household is greater than the contribution of your former partner, lower or about the same?**

- 1 More
- 2 Lower
- 3 Almost identical
- 4 Not applicable (no income)
- 5 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**267. Can you tell me the monthly total resources of your household (net income, including family allowances):**

Interviewer: stipulate: include all the members of your household who are earning money.

- 1 Less than 600 euros
- 2 Between 600 and 999 euros
- 3 Between 1,000 and 1,499 euros
- 4 Between 1,500 and 1,999 euros
- 5 Between 2,000 and 2,499 euros
- 6 Between 2,500 and 2,999 euros
- 7 Between 3,000 and 3,499 euros
- 8 Between 3,500 and 4,000 euros
- 9 More than 4,000 euros
- 10 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 11 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

**MODULE 10: RESPONDENT SATISFACTION**

**268. I asked you some questions about sensitive and sometimes difficult topics. How do you feel now?**

- 1 Good/better than before the interview
- 2 Bad/worse than before the interview
- 3 Same/no change
- 4 Does not know (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)
- 5 Declines to answer (INT. DO NOT READ OUT)

Interviewer: note any further comments by the respondent

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Interviewer: if abuse has been mentioned by the respondent

*Let me leave you a phone number that you can call if necessary.*

End of the interview

*Thank you very much for your participation.*



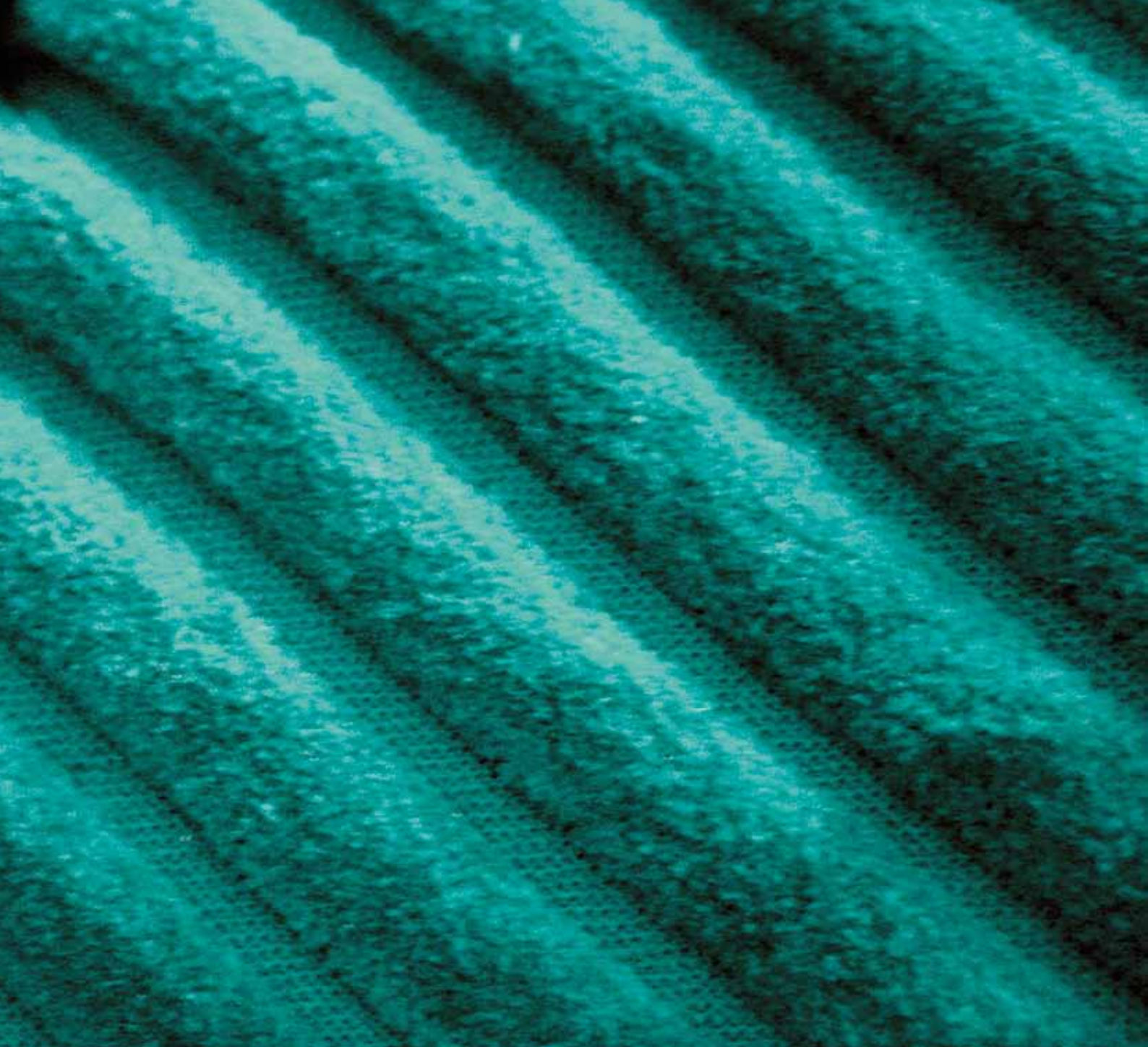












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