Measuring sexual violence: research experiences from South Africa

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Expert Workshop on VAW: Disabling Development
25-26 March 2010
Based on experience in doing sexual violence research in South Africa (and Africa)

- Male and female participants
  - National representative samples
  - Community samples
  - Specific sub groups
    - Workers/ Antenatal attendees/school going children

- Child sexual abuse

- Sexual assault services
Issues of Definitions

‘any sexual act, or attempted to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work’

Definitional issues to be considered

- Force sex - women often describe their experience as forced rather than ‘rape’
- Force may include physical force/ threats of force/use of weapons
- Coercion: fear of violence/abuse of power
- Context specific/behaviours specific
  - Variations in perception of consent/coercion
    - inability to refuse /threats/persuasion/verbal insistence deception etc
- Questions we used based on WHO instrument:
  - ever physically forced you to have sex when you did not want to?
  - Have you ever had sex with...when you did not want to because you were afraid of what he might do?
  - Have you ever been forced you to do something sexual that you found degrading or humiliating?
Definitional issues...

• Recognition and inclusion of subtypes depending on setting
  – Gang rape/ Streamlining (more than one perpetrator at same time)
  – Having sex with a women when she is too drunk to say whether she wants it
  – Forced 1st intercourse
  – ? Denial of right to use contraceptives
  – ? Denial of right to use protection against STI
  – E.g. we excluded FGM
Three household surveys done in same (1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Questions / phrases used</th>
<th>Lifetime prevalence %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Three province study random sample 1306 | (2 questions) Ever physically forced or persuaded to have sex against will (include attempts) | EC – 6.7 %  
MP – 11.9 %  
NP – 6.3 % |
| SADHS random sample 11735       | (two questions) Forced to have sex  
Persuaded to have sex                                                               | Range: 2.3-7.1%  
Range: 2.8-12% |
| Victims of crime survey random 4000 | Screening question ‘sexually abused’  
2nd question used phrase rape                                                        | 1.7%                          |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Respondents Antenatal care attendees IPV</td>
<td>1391</td>
<td>WHO instrument 3 items</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female respondents Stepping Stones Community sample</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>Adjusted from WHO</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Respondents Workers study IPV</td>
<td>1368</td>
<td>2 items Attempted and forced her to have sex</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male respondents Stepping Stones community sample Perpetration all women</td>
<td>1370</td>
<td>Adjusted from WHO Added • Had sex with woman against her will when she is drunk • Gang rape questions</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male community based study in 2 provinces Perpetration all women</td>
<td>1738</td>
<td>7 questions- extended on the SS questions</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Police data vs survey data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MRC 3 Province Study (ages 18-49)</th>
<th>Police stats (all ages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapes per 100,000 women</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 fold increase found in survey
Disclosure

• WHO – set of guidelines to promote disclosure
• Reasons for non disclosure identified in qualitative research
  – Stigma, shame, blame
  – Severity of injury
  – Who perpetrated
  – Support networks
  – Views on rape/sexual violence by important others
  – Level of awareness
  – Availability of services
  – Prevention of HIV
Female homicide/Femicide study

• National mortuary study
  – Data extracted from forensic report to identify evidence of sexual assault at time of murder
    • Evidence of genital and other injuries
    • DNA /semen/ other specimens/ clothes
    • Crime scene information: Position of body /clothes etc
  – rape homicide suspected in 16.3% of murders
    – 1 in 6 female homicides
  – Rape homicide rate of 3.65/ 100 000 women
Other basic data elements ...

• Perpetrator
  – Who perpetrator

Boyfriend........................................1
Husband..........................................2
Father or family member.................3
Teacher...........................................4
Boy from school/area......................5
Man from area.................................6
Stranger/unknown person...............7
Friend of the family......................8
Co-workers/boss.............................9
Other..............................................10

  – Number of perpetrators
  – Frequency
    • Never/once/few times/often
    • Never/once/> once

• Period
  – Ever
  – Last 12 months

• Severity
  – Attended health services

• Use of weapons
  – Guns

• Where incident happen?
  – Home/public spaces
  – Urban/rural

• Perpetration studies (men)
  – Who victim
    • Partner/ non-partner/ other man/boy
Asking men about sexual violence

As perpetrators
- Male workers study (15.3% SV (partners) in last 10 yrs)
- Stepping stones Study - men aged 16-26 (20.9%)
- Male violence and HIV study (27.6% - ever - any woman)

As Victims
- Male workers study
  • 4.9% reported partners had used physical violence against them
- Stepping Stones study (men aged 16-26 years)
  • 3% of all the men had been coerced into sex by a man
- Male violence and HIV
  • 2.9% reported rape of boys or men

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In the field and ethical issues

• Ethical dilemmas
  – Reporting of child sexual abuse
  – Working with perpetrators

• Training and support of field workers critical
  – Vicarious trauma
Sharing our work

• With advocates / policy makers / service providers
  – 1 in 9 campaign
  – Magistrate training on female murders
  – Development of sexual assault policy
  – Child sexual abuse services