

Nauru Family Health and Support Study

An exploratory study on violence against women



Violence against women (VAW) is one of the most concerning human rights violations and public health issues in the world today. United Nations defines VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” (UN Resolution A/RES/48/104, 1993).

The Nauru Family Health and Support Study (FHSS) aimed at obtaining reliable data on VAW in Nauru. Among other objectives, the study also sought to document the associations between partner violence and health issues and other outcomes. The study is based on a convenience sample of 148 women, of which 131 were ever-partnered women. Although the findings of the study are not nationally representative, they provide a preliminary understanding of VAW in the country and serve as a limited evidence base to create awareness campaigns and education programs around gender roles and VAW. The following are the most relevant findings of the study.

PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL PARTNER VIOLENCE

- **48%** of women who participated in the survey **experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner** at least once in their lifetime.
- **47%** of interviewed women **experienced physical partner violence in their lifetime** and 21% experienced such violence **in the 12 months preceding the interview**.
- The **most common act of physical partner violence** was being slapped or having something thrown at her (84%).
- **25%** of ever-pregnant women who experienced partner violence said they **experienced physical partner violence in at least one pregnancy**.
- **21%** of interviewed women **experienced sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime** and **10%** experienced such violence **in the 12 months preceding the survey**.
- The **most common act of sexual partner violence** was having sex when she did not want to because she was afraid of what partner might do if she refused (30%).

IMPACT OF PARTNER VIOLENCE ON HEALTH

- **51%** of women who experienced partner violence **were injured at least once**.
- **16%** of ever-injured women **lost consciousness** at least once
- **19%** of ever-injured women **needed health care** because of the injuries.

VIOLENCE BY NON-PARTNERS

- **47%** of all interviewed women experienced **sexual abuse by a person other than a partner** since the age of 15.
- **30%** of all interviewed women **experienced sexual abuse** by a non-partner **in childhood** (before age 15).
- The **most common perpetrators** of **child sexual abuse** were **male family members**.

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