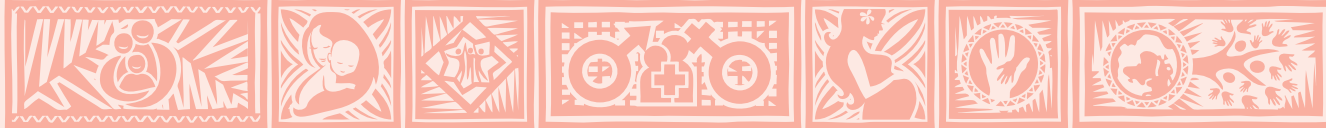




## Belau Family Health and Safety Study



Violence against women (VAW) is one of the most concerning human rights violations and public health issues in the world today. The 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 Belau Family Health and Safety Study (FHSS) aimed at obtaining reliable data on the prevalence and different types of VAW in Palau. Among other objectives, the study also sought to document the associations between partner violence and health issues and other outcomes, as well as to identify protective and risk factors for experiencing partner violence. The following are the main facts about violence against women in Palau.

### PHYSICAL PARTNER VIOLENCE

- **23%** of women in Palau have **experienced physical violence by a partner** in their lifetime.
- The prevalence of partner physical violence in the 12 months prior to the interview was the **highest among younger women (ages 15-29)**.
- The **most common acts of partner physical violence** were being ‘slapped or having something thrown at her’ (17%) and being ‘pushed or shoved’ (16%).
- **Nearly 5% of ever-pregnant women experienced physical violence during pregnancy** in their lifetime. In most cases, the perpetrator of the violence was the father of the child.

### SEXUAL PARTNER VIOLENCE

- **10%** of women in Palau have **experienced sexual violence by a partner** at least once in their lifetime.
- **4%** of women in Palau said they **experienced sexual partner violence in the 12 months prior to the interview**.
- The **most common acts of sexual partner violence** were being forced to have sexual intercourse (8%) and having sex because she was afraid of what partner might do if she refused (7%).
- **Women with elementary level education were more likely to report sexual partner violence** in the 12 months preceding the interview (20%) than women with secondary (12%) and tertiary (8%) education.

### EMOTIONAL PARTNER VIOLENCE

- **23%** of women in Palau have **experienced emotional abuse by a partner** in their lifetime.
- **Emotional partner violence was generally higher among Christian women**, particularly among Seventh Day Adventists (32%), Evangelical Protestants (26%), and Roman Catholics (21%).
- The **most common acts of emotional abuse** were being scared or intimidated (15%), being insulted (14%), and being belittled or humiliated (12%).

### ECONOMIC PARTNER VIOLENCE

- **6%** of women in Palau have **experienced at least one act of economic abuse by a partner** in their lifetime.
- The **prevalence of economic partner abuse was the highest among women aged 55-59**: 9% had earnings or savings taken away and 6% were refused money.
- The **most common act of economic abuse was partner taking away what the woman had earned or saved** (4%), followed by partner refusing to give her money for household expenses (3%).

For this study, partner violence against women is defined as the violence experienced by a woman, perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner, whether cohabiting or not, that includes acts of physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse. Non-partner violence against women is defined as the violence experienced by a woman that is perpetrated by anyone other than a partner that includes acts of physical and sexual abuse.

### IMPACT OF PARTNER VIOLENCE ON HEALTH

- **47%** of women who reported experiencing physical and/or sexual partner violence **were ever injured** as a result of such violence.
- **11%** of ever injured women **lost consciousness** at least once and **19% needed health care** because of the injuries.
- The **most common injuries** were scratches, abrasions, or bruises (89%), cuts, punctures, or bites (38%), and broken eardrums or eye injuries (28%).
- Women who experienced partner violence were more likely to report **fair or poorer health** (29%) than women who never experienced partner violence (17%).
- Women who ever experienced partner violence were more likely to **think about suicide** (20%) than women who never experienced partner violence (8%).
- Women who experienced partner violence were **more likely to report a miscarriage** (8%) than women who never experienced partner violence (4%).

### VIOLENCE BY NON-PARTNERS

- **15%** of women in Palau have ever **experienced sexual violence by a person other than a partner** since the age of 15.
- The **most common act of sexual non-partner violence** since age 15 was an attempted rape or other unwanted sexual acts (14%).
- Roughly **12%** of women have **experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15**.
- The **most common perpetrators** for non-partner sexual abuse before and after the age of 15 were **male relatives and male friends/acquaintances**.

### OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS

- **37% of ever-abused women had not told anyone** about the violence. Those who did tell someone mostly confided in friends (30%) and parents (29%).
- **61%** of women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner **left home at least once** because of the severity of violence.
- **67%** of women who experienced partner violence **did not seek help from formal services or authorities**.
- The **most common reasons for not seeking help** were: believing that partner violence is normal (45%) and being embarrassed or afraid of not being believed (25%).

### RISK FACTORS FOR PARTNER VIOLENCE

Most risk factors associated with lifetime and current partner violence were related to the **characteristics of the woman and her partner**:

- **Age.** Women aged 45-49 were 77% less likely to experience physical or sexual partner violence in their lifetime and 94% less likely to experience current partner violence than women aged 15-24.
- **Religion.** Women who reported their religion as 'Other Christian'—which included denominations such as Jehovah's Witness, Christian, Mormon, Baptist, Apostolic, and Assembly of God—were nearly 3 times more likely to experience partner violence both in lifetime and in the 12 months prior to the interview than Roman Catholics.
- **Nature of first sexual intercourse.** Women whose first sexual experience was coerced were over 2 times more likely to experience partner violence in their lifetime and over 3 times more likely to experience current partner violence than women whose first sex was wanted.
- **Partner's alcohol consumption.** Women whose partners consumed alcohol on a weekly or daily basis were over 2 times more likely to experience partner violence in their lifetime and nearly 3 times more likely to experience current partner violence than women whose partners did not drink or drank less frequently.
- **Partner fights with other men.** Women whose partners had a history of fighting with other men were over 3 times more likely to experience partner violence in lifetime and 4.5 times more likely to experience current partner violence than women whose partners did not fight with other men.
- **Not knowing whether partner had parallel relationships with other women.** Women who said they did not know whether their partners had parallel relationships with other women were 3 times more likely to experience partner violence in their lifetime and 4 times more likely to experience current partner violence than women who were certain that their partner did not have parallel relationships with other women.



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