

# Chapter 3: Response Rate & Description of the Sample



This chapter describes the response rates to the survey, the characteristics of the respondents, and how well the sample reflects the general population of women in Fiji. It also describes how women felt after the interview.

### 3.1 Response rates

There was a very high response rate to the survey despite the sensitive nature of the questions. Members of the FWCC field team commented that communities and women were very welcoming to FWCC and demonstrated an interest in participating in the research.<sup>8</sup> There were no significant differences in response rates between urban and rural areas, or between Divisions.

Of 3538 households included in the sample, 3474 were true households and 64 were not. Most of the latter were permanently vacant, destroyed, or unable to be located. Of these 3474 households, 3389 completed the household interview (the first section of the questionnaire), 43 (1.2%) refused to participate, and 42 (1.2%) had no adult household members at home during several repeat visits; this provides a household response rate of 97.6%. Of the 3389 households who completed the household section of the questionnaire, 142 (4%) had no eligible women aged between 15 and 64 (Table 3.1 of Annex 1).

This gives a total of 3247 households that had eligible women. Among these, 3193 women (98.3%) participated in the survey interview. Only 13 women from the 3247 households refused to participate (0.4%); 21 women were either not at home during several visits or were incapacitated (0.7%) and therefore could not participate. Of the 3247 participating households, only 23 women partially completed the questionnaire (Table 3.1 of Annex 1).

### 3.2 Description of respondents in the sample

#### 3.2.1 Characteristics of respondents

Of the 3193 respondents, 41% were from the Central Division, 10% from the Eastern Division, 18% from the Northern Division and 31% from the Western Division. Overall, 47% of respondents live in urban areas and 53% in rural areas. Sixty-three percent of respondents were i-Taukei women, 32% were Indo-Fijian and 5.5% were from other ethnic groups (Table 3.3 of Annex 1).

Nine percent (9%) of respondents were educated to primary level, 74% to secondary level and 18% to tertiary level. Forty-seven women had never received any education at all.

Seventy-six percent (76%) of respondents were married, 4% were living with a man at the time of the survey, and 3% were dating a regular partner. Six percent (6%) were widowed, and another 6% were divorced or separated. In total, 3035 of the 3193 respondents (95%) had ever had an intimate partner and 5% had not (Tables 3.2 and 3.3 of Annex 1).

#### 3.2.2 Household head

The household selection form section of the questionnaire (Annex 2) asked respondents whether the household head was male or female: 83.5% of respondents said that the household was headed by a man, 14.9% said the household head was a woman, and 1.6% said that both were heads of the household. There were more female-headed households in urban areas (18.4%) and in the Central and Western Divisions (16.7% and 16.4%) compared with the national average. There were also more female-headed households among primary school graduates (24.2%) (Table 3.6 of Annex 1).

<sup>8</sup> Workshop with FWCC staff, September 2012.



### 3.2.3 Socio-economic assets index

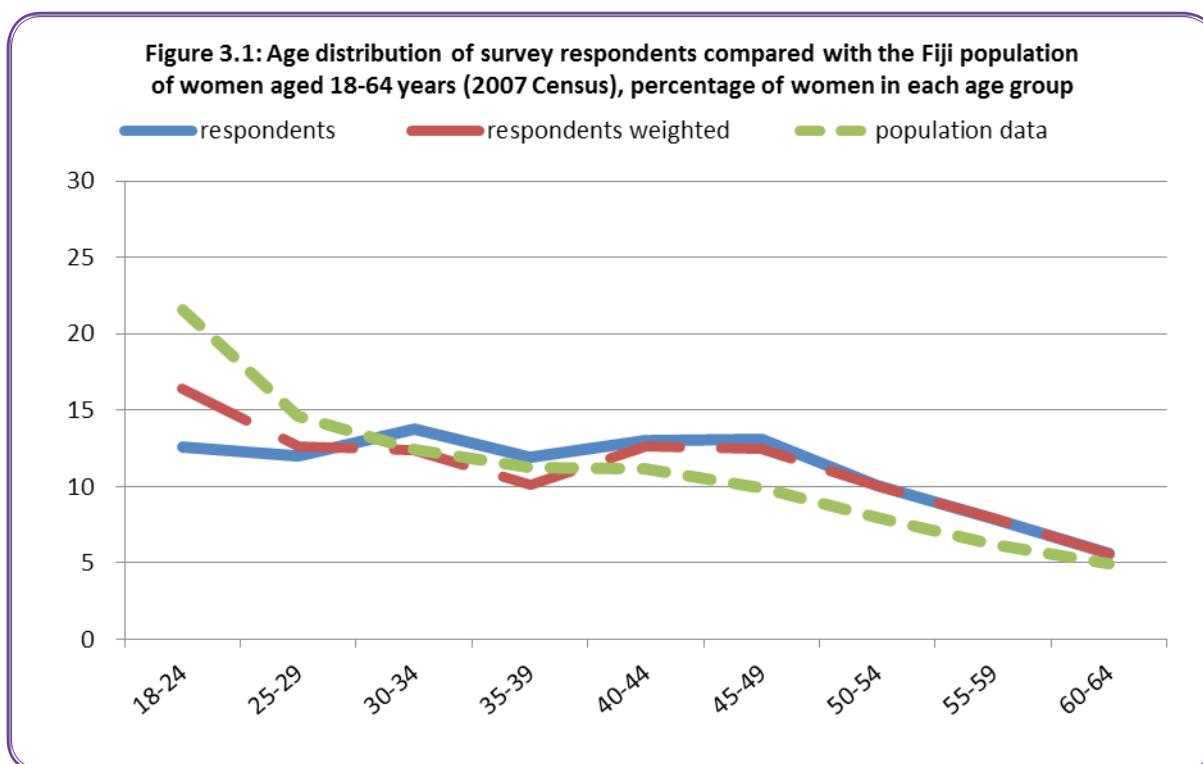
A socio-economic assets index was developed using data collected from the household section of the questionnaire on source of drinking water, toilet facility, wall materials, source of lighting, ownership of several household assets, land ownership, and a measure of household crowding based on the number of rooms in the house and the total number of household members. Rather than dividing sample households into 3 equal-sized groups (terciles) or 5 equal-sized groups 5 (quintiles), statistical analysis was used to cluster all the responding households into 3 groups based on the ownership of assets: 23% of households were clustered into the lowest group, 28% into the medium group, and 48% into the higher group (Table 3.2 of Annex 1 and Annex 4). The statistical method used to cluster households into 3 groups is described in detail in Annex 4.

The 2008/2009 Household Income and Expenditure Survey reported that 31% of Fiji's population was below the basic needs poverty line (Narsey et. al. 2010: vi), and the 2010 Millennium Development Goals Report estimated that around 40% of Fijians were living in poverty (Ministry of National Planning 2010: 8). **It is important to emphasise that the socio-economic clusters used in this report do not represent socio-economic status as it is commonly understood, and should not be interpreted as a measure of the levels of poverty in Fiji.** The household questionnaire was not designed to measure the incidence of poverty. No questions were asked in the household survey about income. Consequently the 3 socio-economic clusters used in this report describe groups with similar ownership of assets (see the household questionnaire in Annex 2): those in the higher cluster own all or many of the assets listed in the household questionnaire, those in the middle cluster own some of the assets, and those in the lower cluster own very few or none of the assets.

### 3.3 Representativeness of the sample

To assess whether survey respondents were representative of the population of women aged 18-64 in Fiji, a comparison was made with 2007 Census data by Division, religion, education, ethnicity, age and partnership status (Table 3.3 of Annex 1). For safety reasons, only one woman was selected for interview from each household (see Chapter 2); consequently women from larger households (that is, with more than one woman aged 18-64) had a lower probability of being selected to participate in the survey. To explore the impact of this potential bias, the sample of respondents and the main prevalence outcomes were weighted to compensate for differences in the number of eligible women in each household (Table 3.4 of Annex 1).

The results of these comparisons show that differences in the probability of a woman being selected did not significantly affect the prevalence rates of the various forms of violence against women (Table 3.4 of Annex 1). Hence, unweighted prevalence rates are used throughout this report. The comparison also shows that young women were less likely to be randomly selected where there was more than one eligible woman per household. However overall, differences between weighted and unweighted data, and between the survey sample and 2007 Census data are not significant (Figure 3.1 and Table 3.3 of Annex 1). In other words, the survey sample is broadly representative of the population of women aged 18-64 in Fiji.



Sources: Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics. 2007 Population Census and Table 3.3 of Annex 1.

### 3.4 How women felt after the interview

The average duration of the interview was 45 minutes. Interviews with women who had not experienced violence lasted about 40 minutes on average, and those with women who had experienced violence ranged from 44 to 51 minutes, with longer interviews for those who had experienced both physical and sexual violence.

When asked how they felt at the end of the interview, 92% of the survey respondents said they felt good or better, 1% said they felt the same, and 7% said they felt worse. Women who experienced physical or sexual violence by their husband/partner appreciated the opportunity to talk about it during the survey; among those women who experienced both physical and sexual violence, 96% said they felt good or better (Table 3.5 of Annex 1). For about half of the women living with violence, this was the first time they had told anyone about their experiences (see Chapter 10). Among those who had never experienced violence, 88% felt good or better, 1% felt the same, and 11% felt worse (Table 3.5 of Annex 1). These findings are a testament to the skill and sensitivity of FWCC's interviewers.

This positive response to the survey was also found in the WHO's multi-country study (WHO 2005) and in studies undertaken in the Pacific region in the Solomon Islands (SPC 2009), Kiribati (SPC 2010), Vanuatu (VWC 2011) and Tonga (Ma`a Fafine mo e Famili 2012). In addition to providing an opportunity for women to talk about their experiences with a non-judgemental and empathic person, FWCC believes that undertaking the study has contributed to raising women's awareness of their rights, supported by FWCC's ongoing campaigning and community education activities. Every woman interviewed by the survey team was provided with information on FWCC services. Counsellors have noticed that there is an ongoing impact from the research fieldwork; women who were interviewed in 2010 and 2011 are still finding their way to FWCC and the Branches.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Monitoring and evaluation workshops with FWCC staff, July 2012 and July 2013.

# Chapter 4: Violence Against Women by Husbands & Intimate Partners



## Summary of main findings

- **64% of women (almost 2 in 3) who have ever been in an intimate relationship experienced physical and/or sexual violence or both by a husband or intimate partner in their lifetime; 24% (almost 1 in 4) experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months.**
- 61% of ever-partnered women experienced physical violence in their lifetime (more than 3 in 5), and 19% in the last 12 months (almost 1 in 5).
- 34% of ever-partnered women experienced sexual violence in their lifetime (more than 1 in 3), and 14% in the last 12 months.
- 58% of ever-partnered women experienced emotional violence in their lifetime (almost 3 in 5), and 29% in the last 12 months.
- **Overall, 72% of ever-partnered women experienced at least one or more of these three forms of violence (physical, sexual or emotional) by their husband/partner in their lifetime; most of these women experienced multiple types of violence.**
- For the majority of women living with physical violence by their husband/partner, the violence occurs repeatedly and is often severe, including being punched, kicked, dragged, beaten up, choked, burned, threatened with a weapon, or actually having a weapon used against them.
- 69% of women have been subjected to at least one form of controlling behaviour by their husband/partner, and 28% (more than 1 in 4) were subjected to 4 or more types of control.
- Rates of physical, sexual and emotional violence are higher in rural areas than urban areas. They are highest in the Eastern Division and lowest in the Central Division.
- There are high rates of intimate partner violence among women from all ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups, but prevalence is higher for i-Taukei women and those from all other ethnic groups.

## 4.1 Definition of prevalence

This chapter presents findings on the prevalence of violence against women by their husbands or partners, including physical and sexual violence, emotional abuse, and the types of control that men exert over their wives and partners. Section 4.2 presents an overview of national prevalence rates, comparing rates of physical, sexual and emotional violence. Section 4.3 focuses in detail on acts of physical violence and their severity and frequency; section 4.4 on sexual violence; section 4.5 on emotional violence; and section 4.6 on controlling behaviours by men. More detailed data on each is presented in the statistical annex (Annex 1). Section 4.7 discusses the findings in all these areas.

Of all the women interviewed, 3035 had ever been married or had an intimate sexual relationship with a partner. Throughout this report, this group is referred to as “ever-partnered” women, and includes all those who were ever legally married (including those currently married as well as those now divorced, separated or widowed), those who ever lived with a partner including in a de facto relationship, those who ever had a regular intimate male partner but never lived with him, and those who had an intimate relationship with a man they were dating (Tables 3.2 and 3.3 of Annex 1).<sup>10</sup>

In order to measure the prevalence rates of physical, sexual and emotional violence, women were asked whether they had ever experienced specific acts of violence and emotional abuse by their husband/partner (see section 7 of the questionnaire in Annex 2 and the operational definitions in Box 2.1 of Chapter 2). The calculation of national prevalence rates follows the international standard used by the WHO. Lifetime prevalence is the proportion of ever-partnered women who have ever experienced at least one act of a specific type of violence by her husband/partner, at least once in her life. Current prevalence is the proportion of ever-partnered women who experienced any one act of violence in the 12 months before the survey interview occurred.

The lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence among women aged 15-49 years is commonly used for international comparisons (WHO 2005: 19), because both types of violence tend to be committed together by the same perpetrator. FWCC’s survey sampled women aged 18-64 (see Chapter 2). Thus, two national prevalence rates are presented below: the rate for all women in the survey, and the rate for those aged 18-49 years, which may be used for international comparisons.

The acts of violence that women were questioned about in the survey were comprehensive, but not exhaustive. As such, the WHO concluded that prevalence estimates are more likely to underestimate the true prevalence of violence in any country where the methodology is used (WHO 2005: 14, 23).

## 4.2 Overview of violence against women by husbands and partners

### 4.2.1 National prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional violence

Overall, 64% of ever-partnered women aged 18-64 experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their husband or partner in their lifetime, and 24% suffered from either or both of these forms of violence in the last 12 months (Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1).

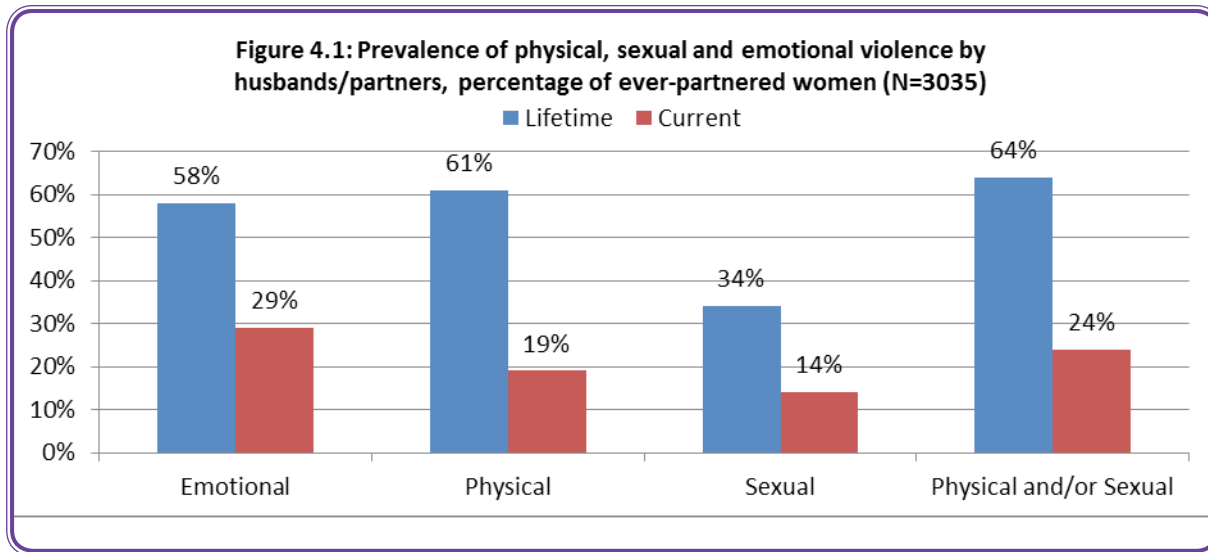
- Of the three types of violence, physical violence is the most widespread over a woman’s lifetime, with 61% of all ever-partnered women (more than 3 in 5) experiencing it, compared with 58% experiencing emotional violence and 34% (more than 1 in 3) experiencing sexual violence.
- The picture for current violence is somewhat different. The most prevalent form of violence over the last 12 months is emotional violence, with 29% (more than 1 in 4) currently suffering from this, compared with 19% who are currently living with physical violence, and 14% with sexual violence.

<sup>10</sup> 3035 of the women interviewed had male sexual partners; 1 of these also had a female sexual partner.



**Table 4.1: Lifetime and current prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional violence against women by husbands/partners (percentage of ever-partnered women aged 18-64, N=3035)**

	Emotional	Physical	Sexual	Physical and/or Sexual
<b>Lifetime</b>	58%	61%	34%	64%
<b>Current</b>	29%	19%	14%	24%



Source: Tables 4.1 and 4.9 of Annex 1.

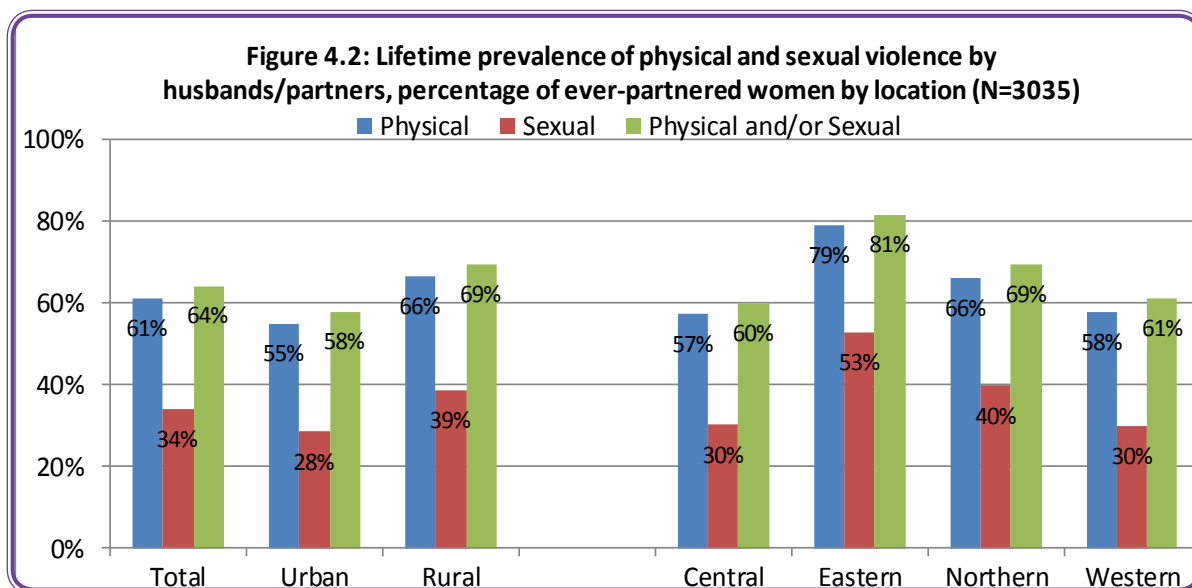
Prevalence is higher for all types of violence when we consider women aged 18-49. For example, 66% of women in this age group experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, and 30% in the last 12 months (Table 12.1 of Annex 1). This is due to the higher rates of all forms of violence experienced by younger women (see the discussion below).

#### 4.2.2 Who experiences intimate partner violence?

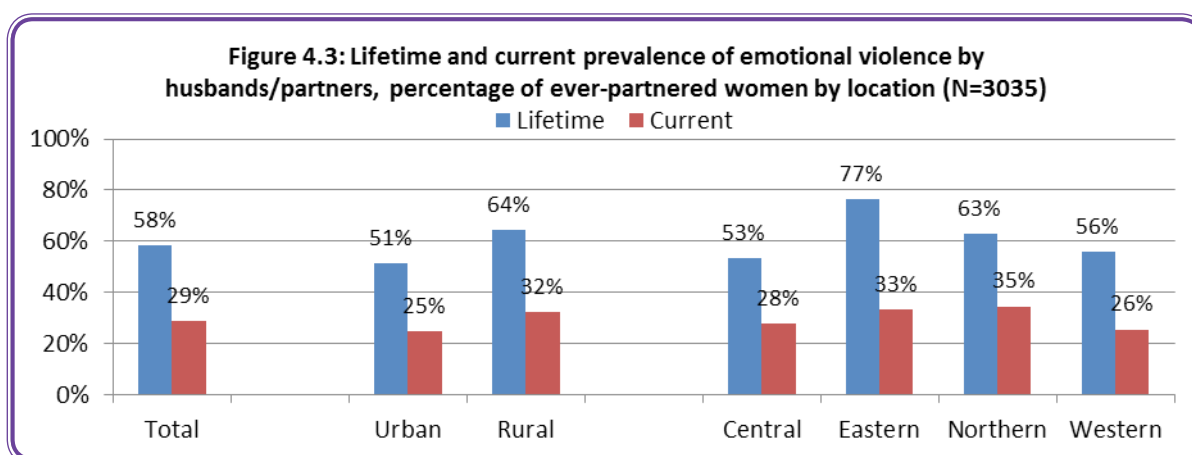
**There are high rates of all forms of violence against women by their husbands/partners, regardless of where they live, age, education, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status.** However, there are some noteworthy differences in prevalence between some of these categories.

##### *Prevalence by location*

All forms of violence are more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas. The Central and Western Divisions have the lowest rates of lifetime prevalence, whereas the Eastern Division has substantially higher rates of all forms of violence, followed by the Northern Division: the rate of physical and/or sexual violence is 81% in the Eastern Division (4 in every 5 women), compared with 64% for Fiji as a whole. More than half of women in the Eastern Division experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, and 40% in the Northern Division, compared with less than 1 in 3 in the Central and Western Divisions. Similarly women in the Eastern and Northern Divisions suffer from considerably higher rates of emotional violence during their lifetime than those in the Central and Western Divisions (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).



Source: Table 4.1 of Annex 1.



Source: Table 4.9 of Annex 1.

However, there is less variation in the current prevalence of all forms of violence between divisions: 28% of women in the Eastern and Northern Divisions, 24% in Central and 19% in the Western Division are currently living with physical and/or sexual violence (Table 4.1 of Annex 1). While women in the Eastern Division are more likely to experience emotional violence over their lifetime, the current prevalence is very similar for the Eastern and Northern Divisions (33% and 35% respectively), and higher in the Central (28%) Division than Western Division (26%) (Figure 4.3).

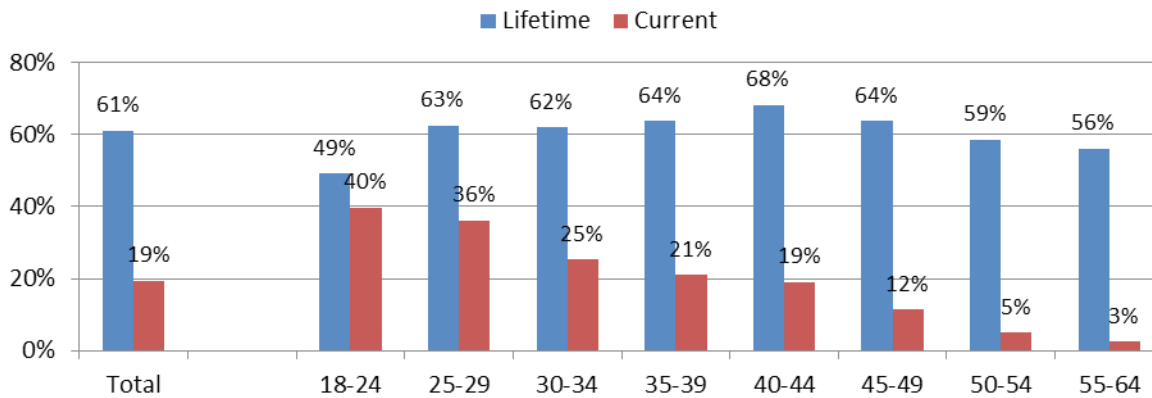
#### Prevalence by age

Women are at risk of violence by husbands/partners at any age. However, comparing lifetime and current prevalence shows that younger women aged 18-29 have a much higher current risk of experiencing partner violence than older women: 40% of women aged 18-24 (2 in 5) experienced physical violence in the 12 months before the survey, compared with 36% for those aged 25-29, and 19% (1 in 5) for Fiji as a whole (Figure 4.4). A similar picture is seen for sexual violence: more than 1 in 4 women under 29 were subjected to sexual violence in the 12 months before the survey, compared with 14% for Fiji as a whole (Figure 4.5). In contrast, women over 50 were significantly less likely to be subjected to physical or sexual abuse: 5% of women aged 50-54 were subjected to physical or sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey, and 3% of women aged 55-64 (Figures 4.4 and 4.5).



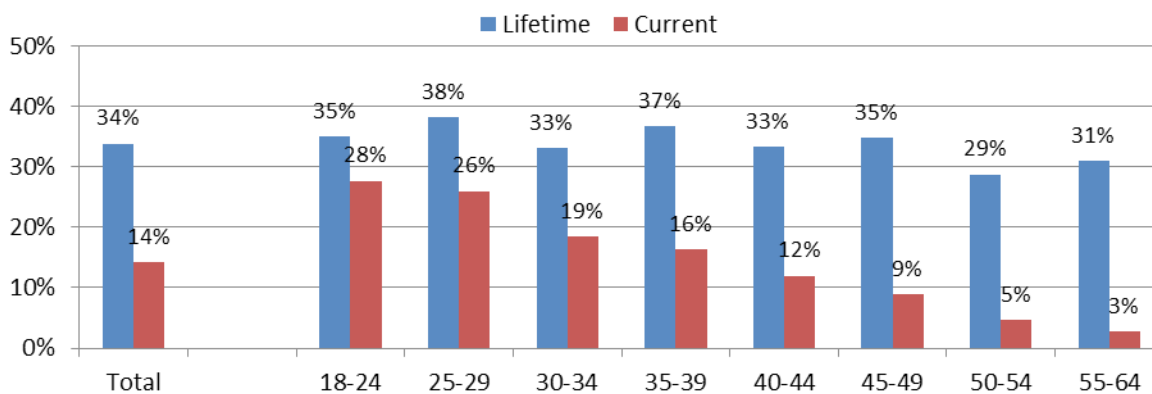


**Figure 4.4: Lifetime and current prevalence of physical violence by husbands/partners, percentage of ever-partnered women by age (N=3035)**



Source: Table 4.1 of Annex 1.

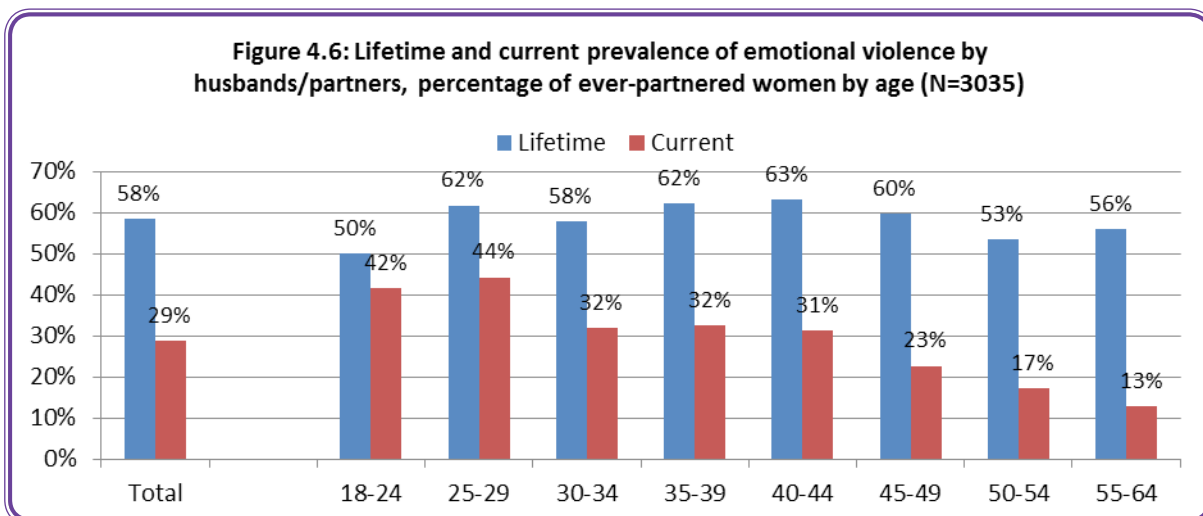
**Figure 4.5: Lifetime and current prevalence of sexual violence by husbands/partners, percentage of ever-partnered women by age (N=3035)**



Source: Table 4.1 of Annex 1.

Nevertheless, the data also demonstrate that some women continue to suffer from these forms of violence throughout their lives. Among those women who experienced physical violence in their lifetime, almost one-third (31%) were subjected to physical violence in the 12 months before the survey; among those who experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, 41% are currently subjected to sexual violence. Overall, among women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, 38% are currently living with violence.

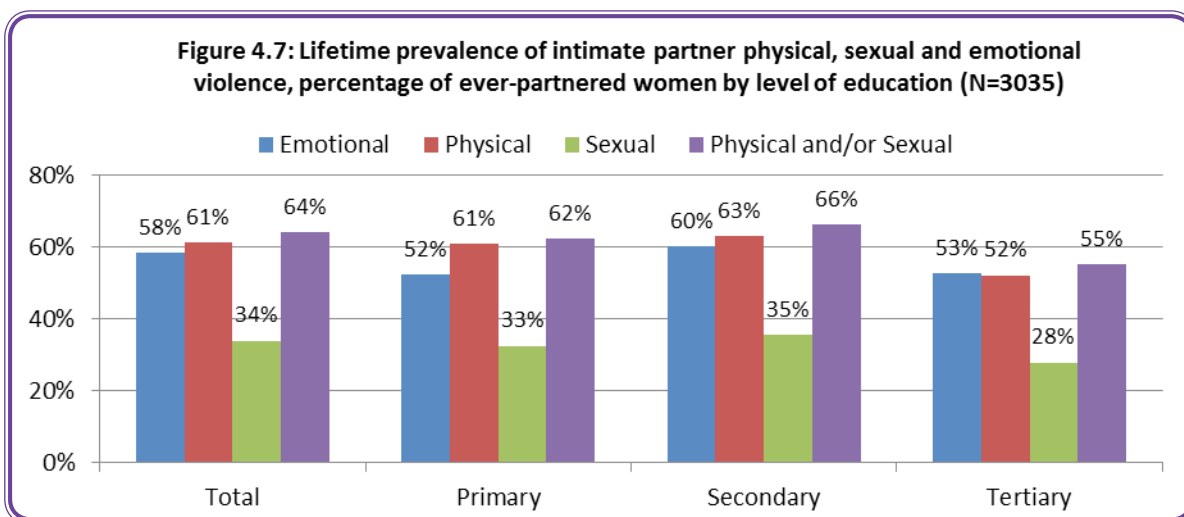
Similarly, women aged 18-29 have a higher prevalence of emotional violence: 42% of women aged 18-24 and 44% of those aged 25-29 (more than 2 in 5) are currently living with emotional violence, compared with a national rate of 29% (Figure 4.6). The risk of emotional violence also reduces somewhat as women age, but this reduction does not occur at the same rate as for physical and sexual violence. In other words, while some women will experience less incidents of physical and sexual violence as they age, emotional abuse is more likely to persist throughout a woman's life (Figures 4.4 to 4.6). Among those women who have ever experienced emotional violence, about half are currently suffering from this form of abuse. This is in line with FWCC's experience; Counsellors observe that emotional abuse often intensifies and persists through the life cycle, even when incidents of physical violence reduce.



Source: Table 4.9 of Annex 1.

*Prevalence by level of education*

Women with a tertiary education are slightly less likely to be subjected to sexual violence and emotional abuse by their husbands/partners over their lifetime, compared to those educated to primary or secondary level. However, they experience physical violence at much the same rate as women educated to primary level. Women with secondary education have the highest lifetime prevalence for all forms of partner violence (Figure 4.7).

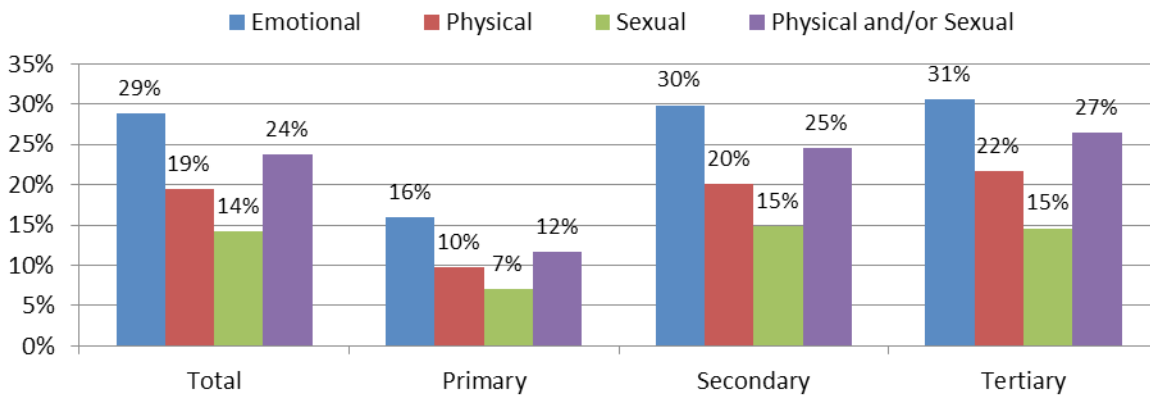


Source: Tables 4.1 and 4.9 of Annex 1.

However, the picture is somewhat different when we consider current prevalence: women educated to tertiary level have the highest prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence (27%), followed by those who have attended secondary education (25%), with the lowest prevalence (12%) for those who have only completed primary school. This pattern is repeated for current prevalence of emotional violence (Figure 4.8), and may be due to higher levels of educational achievement among younger women, who experience substantially higher levels of current violence than older women. Nevertheless, education is not a significant factor overall regarding whether women are subjected to violence by their husbands/partners (see Chapter 11).



**Figure 4.8: Current prevalence of intimate partner physical, sexual and emotional violence, percentage of ever-partnered women by level of education (N=3035)**

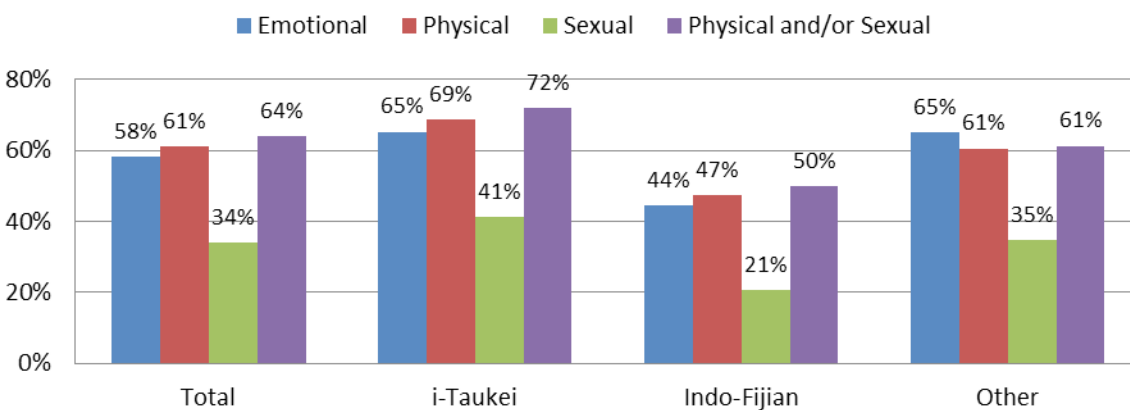


Source: Tables 4.1 and 4.9 of Annex 1.

*Prevalence by ethnicity and religion*

Indo-Fijian women are significantly less likely to experience emotional, physical and sexual violence than the national average: 44% of Indo-Fijian women experienced emotional violence in their lifetime, compared with 58% for the country as a whole; and 50% experienced physical and/or sexual violence compared with 64% for Fiji. In contrast, i-Taukei women experienced higher rates of all forms of violence than the national average: 65% experienced emotional abuse and 72% experienced physical and/or sexual violence (Figure 4.9). However, it is important to note that the lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence for Indo-Fijian women, although lower than for other ethnic groups in Fiji, is much higher than the global prevalence of 30% (WHO 2013: 16).

**Figure 4.9: Lifetime prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional violence by husbands/partners, percentage of ever-partnered women by ethnicity (N=3035)**

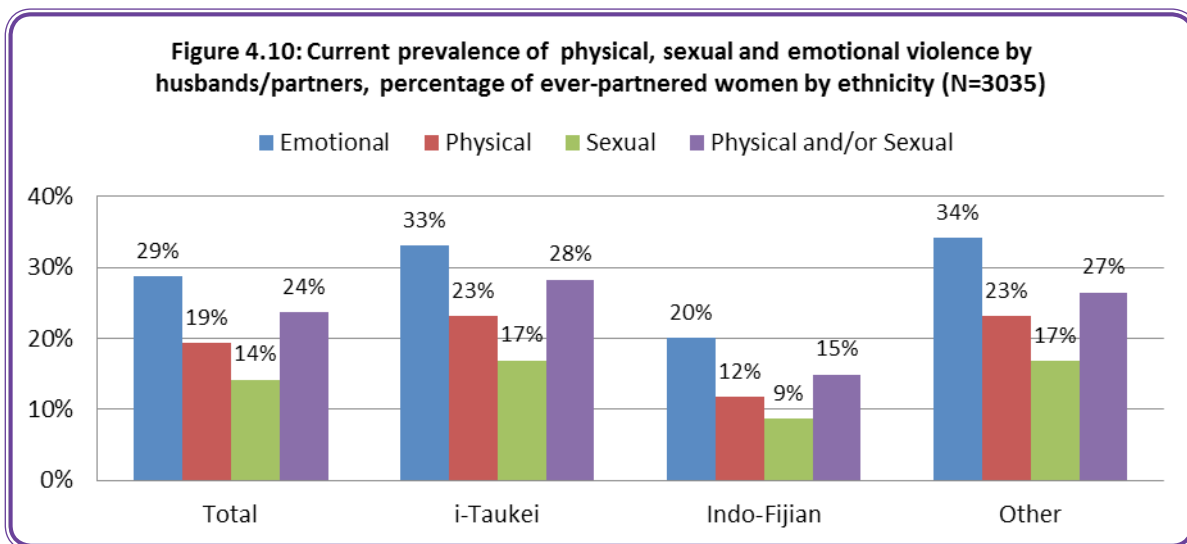


Note: "Other" includes Rotuman, mixed ethnicity, other Pacific Islander, Chinese, European and others. Source: Tables 4.1 and 4.9 of Annex 1.

This pattern is repeated for current prevalence, where the rates of physical and/or sexual violence for i-Taukei and other ethnic groups are almost double those experienced by Indo-Fijian women: 15% of Indo-Fijian women were subjected to physical and/or sexual abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared with 28% for i-Taukei and 27% for women from all other ethnic groups combined.

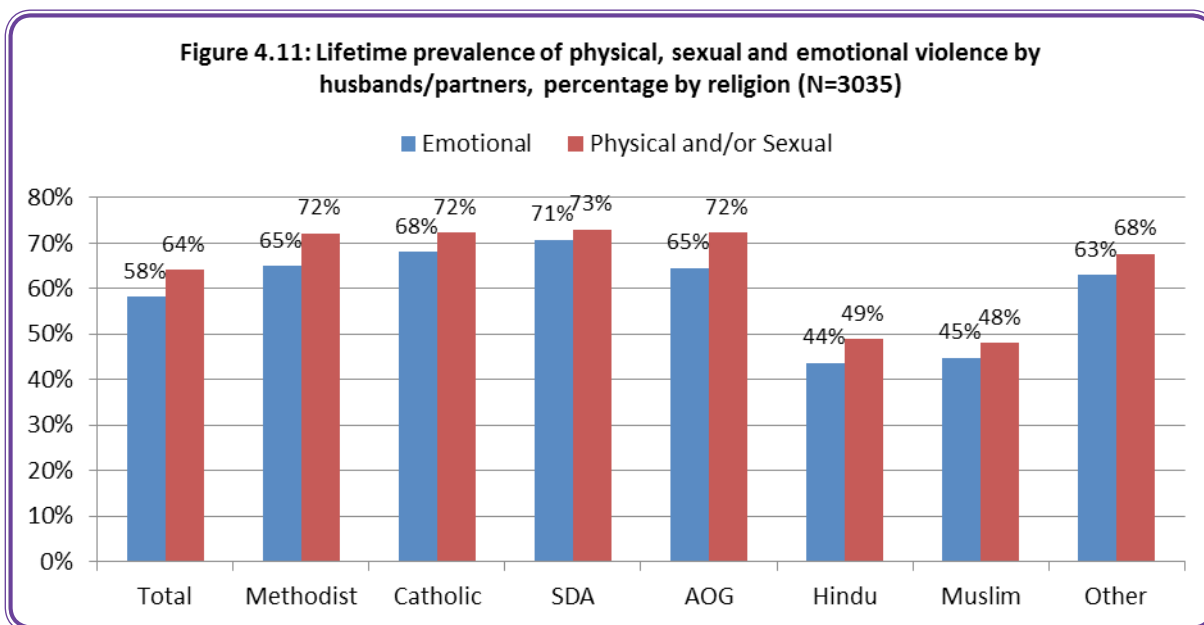


The current prevalence of emotional violence also paints a disturbing picture, affecting one in 5 Indo-Fijian women, and one in 3 of those from all other ethnic groups (including i-Taukei) in the past 12 months (Figure 4.10).



Note: "Other" includes Rotuman, mixed ethnicity, other Pacific Islander, Chinese, European and others. Source: Tables 4.1 and 4.9 of Annex 1.

Ethnic differences are reflected in the prevalence of violence among women of different religions. All the Christian religions have higher rates of emotional, physical and sexual violence than the national average; and women following the Hindu and Muslim faiths have somewhat lower rates than the national average (Figure 4.11).

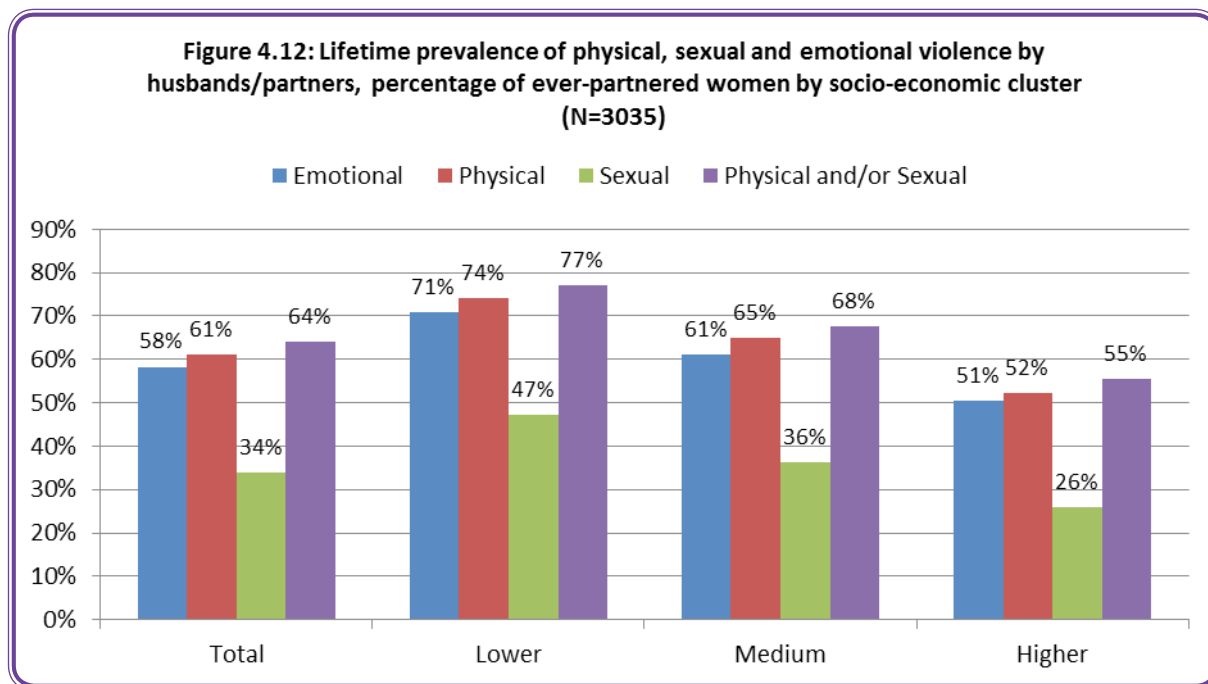


Note: "Other" includes all other religions and those with no religion. Source: Tables 4.1 and 4.9 of Annex 1.



### Prevalence by socio-economic cluster<sup>11</sup>

Rates of violence also vary somewhat according to socio-economic cluster, although these differences are not as marked as those for location, ethnicity and religion. In general, women in the lower socio-economic cluster have a greater likelihood of experiencing violence than those in the medium or higher socio-economic clusters: 55% of women from the higher socio-economic group were subjected to physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, compared with 68% from the medium and 77% from the lower socio-economic group. A similar pattern is seen with emotional violence: 51% of women from the higher group have experienced emotional abuse, compared with 61% in the medium group and 71% in the lower group (Table 4.12).



Source: Tables 4.1 and 4.9 of Annex 1.

### 4.2.3 Overlap of physical, sexual and emotional partner violence

Most women living with intimate partner violence experience several different forms of abuse from their husbands/partners. Looking first at the overlap between physical and sexual violence over a woman's lifetime, figure 4.13 shows that 31% of women in Fiji have been subjected to both physical and sexual violence; 30% were subjected to physical violence alone during their lifetime, and very few (3%) experience sexual violence alone. In other words, about half of those who experienced physical and/or sexual violence were subjected to both forms of violence.

<sup>11</sup> Socio-economic clusters are based on an assets index and do not refer to poverty levels (see section 3.2.3 and Annex 4).

Figure 4.13. Overlap of lifetime prevalence of physical and sexual partner violence, percentage of ever-partnered women (N=3035)

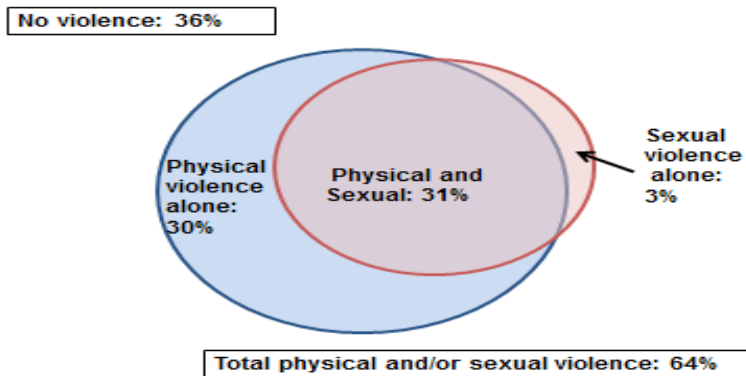
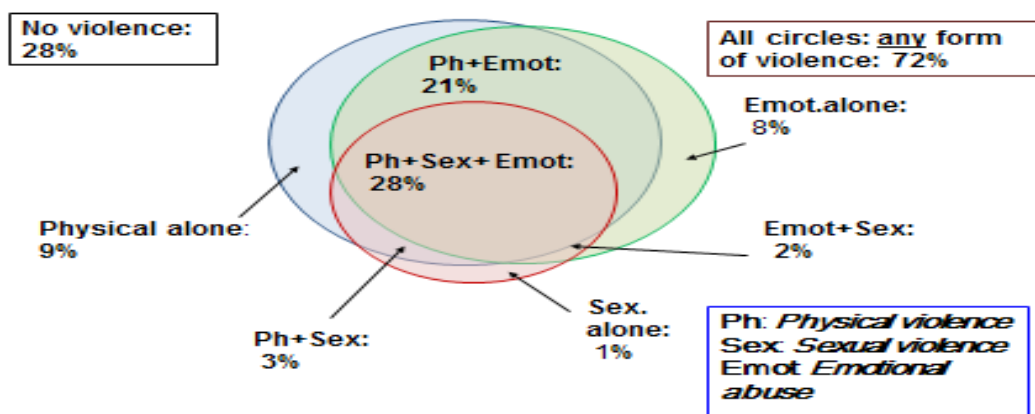


Figure 4.14 shows the overlap between those who self-reported the three forms of violence in their lifetime: emotional, physical and sexual. The green shaded area shows those who reported emotional violence during the survey, blue represents those who reported physical violence, and the red shading shows those who reported sexual violence. Among all the survey respondents, 28% said they had been subjected to all three forms of violence in their lifetime, which is more than a third of those women living with violence; 26% experienced 2 of the 3 forms of violence (physical and emotional, emotional and sexual, and physical and sexual). In other words, about three-quarters of those who have lived with violence have suffered from 2 or 3 of the forms of violence. A minority said that they had only been subjected to one of the three forms of violence: 9% said they had only experienced physical violence, 8% said they had only been emotionally abused, and 1% said they had only been sexually abused by their husbands/partners.

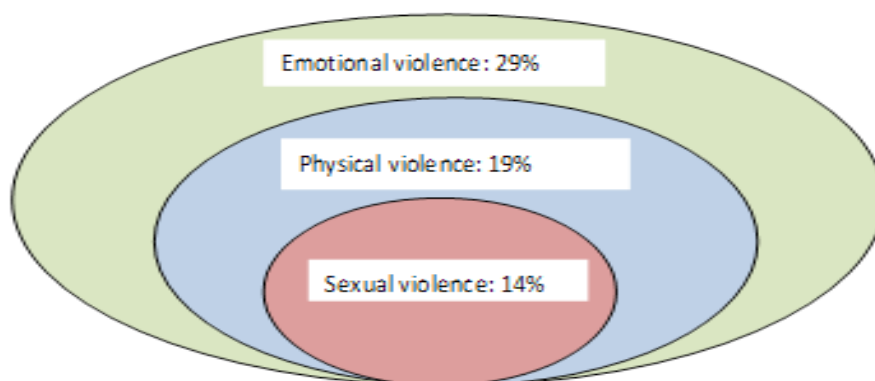
Figure 4.14. Overlap of lifetime prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional violence by husbands/partners, percentage of ever-partnered women (N=3035)



**Overall, 72% of ever-partnered women in Fiji have experienced one or more of these three forms of violence**, and the vast majority reported during the survey that they experienced more than one type of violence. Only 28% said they had never experienced any form of violence from their husbands/partners in their lifetime (Figure 4.14).



**Figure 4.15. Current prevalence of physical and sexual violence and emotional abuse by husbands/partners, percentage of ever-partnered women (N=3035) represented according to FWCC's experience**



This picture in Figure 4.14 does not accord with FWCC's experience with counselling, where physical and sexual violence do not occur without emotional violence; this is discussed in section 4.7 below. However, it is worth re-iterating that women's self-reporting of violence over the previous 12 months before the survey shows that emotional violence is currently the most prevalent form of intimate partner abuse; Figure 4.15 shows the current prevalence rates, represented diagrammatically to illustrate FWCC's experience of how the different forms of violence overlap.

### 4.3 Types, frequency and severity of physical partner violence

The most common types of physical partner violence are being slapped, or having something thrown at them (57% of ever-partnered women); being hit with a fist or something else (42% or more than 2 in 5 women); and being pushed, shoved and having their hair pulled (37%). More than 1 in 4 women (27%) have been kicked, dragged or beaten up. More than 1 in 10 (12%) have either been threatened with a weapon, or have had a weapon used against them, and 6% have been choked or burnt on purpose (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 also shows the percentages of women experiencing each specific type of physical violence, among the 1853 women who reported that they had experienced any one act of physical violence in their lifetime. These figures provide a disturbing insight into these women's lives: 68% of the women who do suffer from violence by their husbands/partners have been hit with a fist or something else; 44% have been kicked, dragged or beaten up; 10% have been choked or burnt on purpose; and for 20% the violence has involved a weapon.

**Table 4.2: Lifetime prevalence of different types of physical violence against women by husbands/partners (percentage of ever-partnered women [N=3035] compared with percentage of women who experienced physical violence [N=1853])**

Types of physical violence	Number	% of ever-partnered women (N=3035)	% of ever-partnered women who experienced physical violence (N=1853)
Slapped or threw something	1738	57%	94%
Pushed, shoved or pulled hair	1119	37%	60%
Hit with fist or something else	1255	41%	68%
Kicked, dragged, beaten up	815	27%	44%
Choked or burnt on purpose	179	6%	10%
Threatened or used a weapon	370	12%	20%
At least 1 act of physical violence	1853	61%	100%

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% because women could report more than 1 type of physical violence. Source: Table 4.2 of Annex 1.

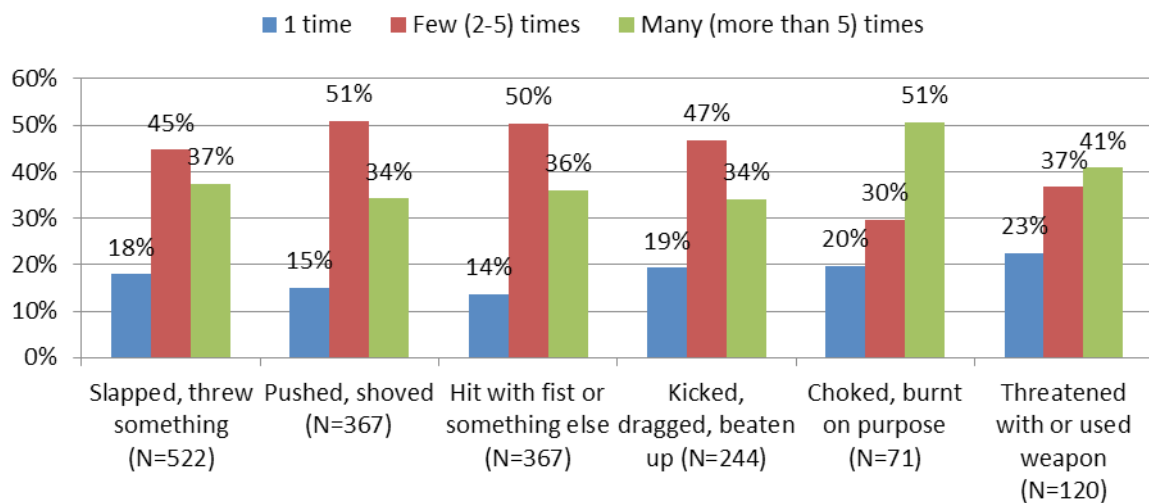
The vast majority of women who experience physical violence are abused frequently, and they experience multiple types of physical attack. On average, each woman experienced 3 different types of physical violence by her husband/partner. When we consider the frequency of each type of physical violence over the last 12 months, the picture that emerges

is one of repeated and intense acts of violence. For example, among those who were kicked, dragged or beaten up during the last 12 months, 47% were subjected to this 2-5 times and 34% more than 5 times. Although comparatively few women were choked or burnt on purpose by their husbands/partners, half (51%) were subjected to this torture more than 5 times, and 30% between 2 and 5 times in the year before the survey. Among those who were threatened with a weapon or had a weapon used against them, 37% experienced this 2-5 times, and 41% more than



5 times. For women who were hit with a fist or an object, the vast majority (86%) were hit more than twice in the last 12 months. Similarly, most of those who were slapped, had something thrown at them, pushed or shoved also experienced these acts of aggression many times. Taking into account all the acts of physical violence that were included in the survey questionnaire, a minority of women reported that they had only experienced them once over the last 12 months (Figure 4.16). All these findings confirm FWCC's counselling experience that physical assaults are frequent often extremely severe.

**Figure 4.16: Frequency of different types of physical partner violence in the past 12 months (percentage of women who experienced each type)**

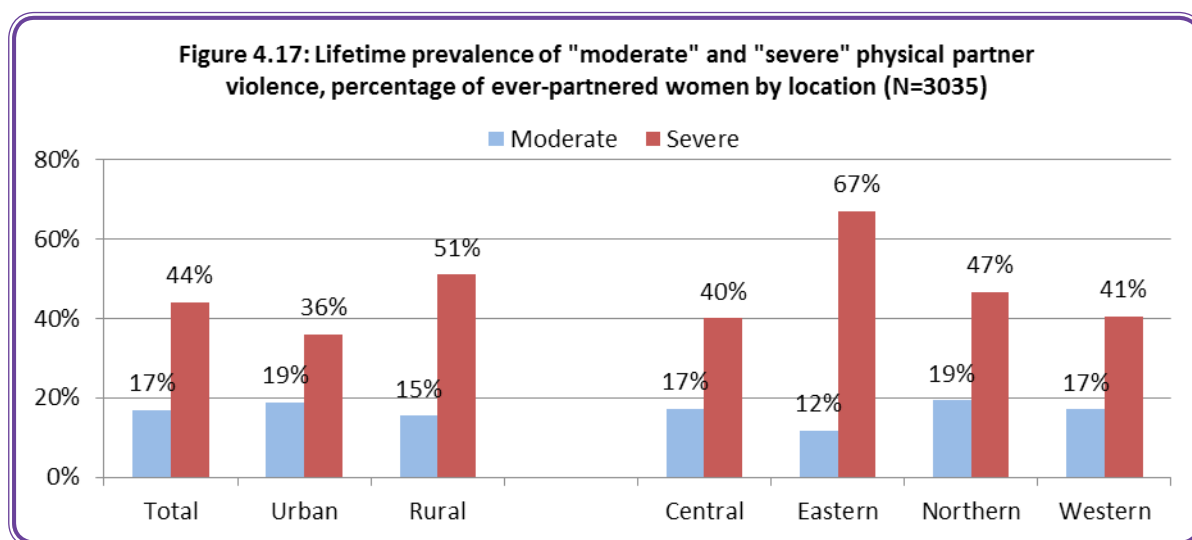


Source: Table 4.4 of Annex 1.





The WHO categorises some forms of violence as “moderate” – such as slapping, throwing something, pushing and shoving – and others as “severe”, including hitting with a fist or something else, kicking, dragging, beating up, choking, burning, and using a weapon, or threatening to use a weapon. FWCC believes that all forms of violence against women are serious; all are a violation of human rights, all can cause injury, and all have damaging psychological consequences. Nevertheless, physical attacks defined by the WHO as “severe” are far more prevalent than those categorised as “moderate”: 44% of women throughout the country were subjected to the most severe forms of physical attack in the lifetime, compared with 17% who experienced acts defined as moderate (Figure 4.17).

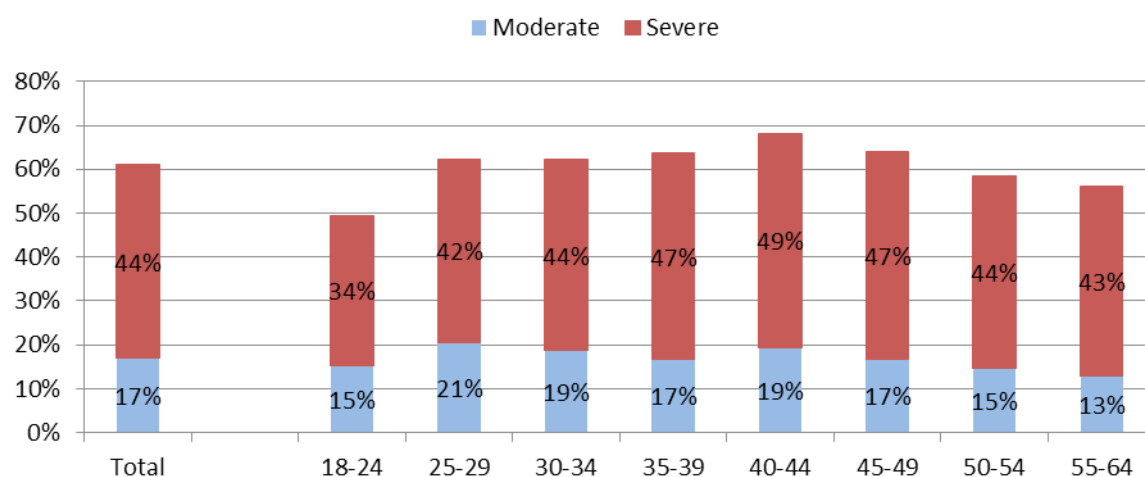


Note: “moderate” violence includes slapping, throwing something, pushing or shoving; “severe” includes all other forms including hitting with a fist or something else, kicking, dragging, beating up, choking, burning, using a weapon and threatening to use a weapon. Source: Table 4.3 of Annex 1.

Consistent with findings on the overall prevalence of partner violence, the most “severe” forms of violence are also more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas, and far more prevalent in the Eastern Division where 67% of women are living with the most severe types of attacks, and 12% with those classified as moderate. Nevertheless, the most severe forms of physical violence are prevalent in every Division (Figure 4.17). Women in every age group suffer from the most severe forms of physical attack, although women in their later reproductive years (aged 35-49) have a slightly higher prevalence than the national average, and young women aged 18 -24 are somewhat less likely to suffer more from the most severe types of physical attack (Figure 4.18).

The more severe forms of physical violence are more prevalent in i-Taukei communities: 55% of i-Taukei women experienced the most severe types of physical violence, 24% of Indo-Fijian women, and 49% of women from other ethnic groups, compared to a national prevalence of 44%. Although all types of severe physical violence are more prevalent among i-Taukei women, they are substantially more likely to be hit with a fist or something else, kicked, dragged or beaten up. Similarly, there is a higher prevalence of the most severe forms of physical violence among women following the Christian faith (between 53% and 56% depending on the denomination), compared with the national rate. Women with secondary education have the highest levels of prevalence for severe physical violence (47%), followed by those educated to primary level (40%), and those with tertiary education (31%) (Tables 4.2, 4.2a-4.2c and 4.3 of Annex 1).

**Figure 4.18: Lifetime prevalence of "moderate" and "severe" partner violence, percentage of ever-partnered women by age (N=3035)**



Note: "moderate" violence includes slapping, throwing something, pushing or shoving; "severe" includes all other forms including hitting with a fist or something else, kicking, dragging, beating up, choking, burning, using a weapon and threatening to use a weapon. Source: Table 4.3 of Annex 1.

#### 4.4 Types and frequency of sexual partner violence

The most common form of sexual violence is rape; 28% of ever-partnered women (more than 1 in 4) have been forced to have sex by their husband/partner. In addition, 25% have had sex because they were afraid of what their husband/partner might do; and 15% have been forced to do something sexual that they felt was degrading or humiliating (Table 4.3). Among those subjected to this form of violence, on average each woman experienced 2 different types of sexual violence by her husband/partner over her lifetime; women who living with sexual violence over the last 12 months were also subjected to about 2 different types of sexual violence on average.

Table 4.3 also shows the percentages of women experiencing each type of sexual violence, among the 1030 women who reported that they had experienced any one act of sexual violence in their lifetime. As with physical violence above, once again these figures paint a brutal picture: 82% of the women who do suffer from sexual violence by their husbands/partners have been raped; 74% have had sex because they were afraid; and 44% were forced to perform a humiliating or degrading act.

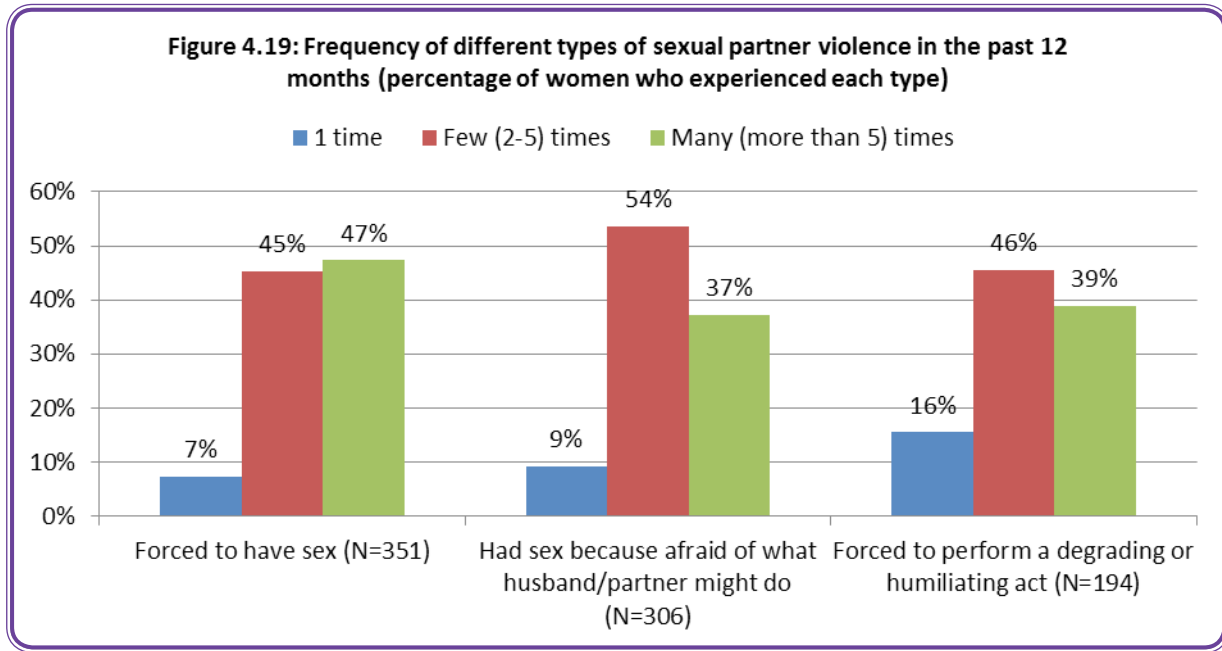
**Table 4.3: Lifetime prevalence of different types of sexual violence against women by husbands/partners (percentage of ever-partnered women [N=3035] compared with percentage of women who experienced sexual violence [N=1030])**

Types of sexual violence	Number	% of ever-partnered women (N=3035)	% of ever-partnered women who experienced sexual violence (N=1030)
Forced to have sex when she did not want to	842	28%	82%
Had sex because she was afraid of what her husband/partner might do	759	25%	74%
Forced to perform a degrading or humiliating sex act	455	15%	44%
<b>At least 1 act of sexual violence</b>	<b>1030</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% because women could report more than 1 type of sexual violence. Source: Table 4.7 of Annex 1.

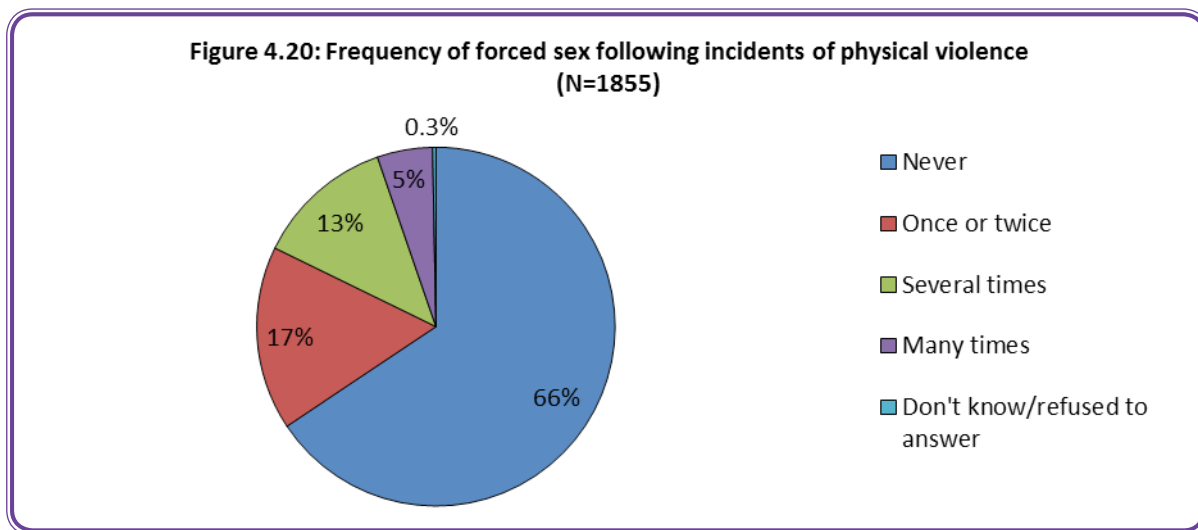


While these rates of sexual violence against women by their husband/partner are high, the picture becomes even more disturbing when we consider the frequency of each type of sexual violence during the last 12 months. Very few women were abused only once in the last year: 45% were raped 2-5 times and 47% were raped repeatedly. Among those who had sex due to fear, 54% were subjected to this 2-5 times and 37% more than 5 times. Similarly, 85% of women forced to perform a degrading sexual act did so more than once, including more than a third who were forced to do so more than 5 times (Figure 4.19).



Source: Table 4.8 of Annex 1.

For some women, acts of physical abuse are often followed by rape. Of 1855 women who suffered physical violence in their lifetime, 36% had been forced to have sex following the physical attack (Figure 4.20). This occurred substantially more for women living in the Eastern Division, where almost half (49%) had been raped following physical violence (Table 4.12 of Annex 1).



Source: Table 4.12 of Annex 1.

#### 4.5 Types and frequency of emotional violence

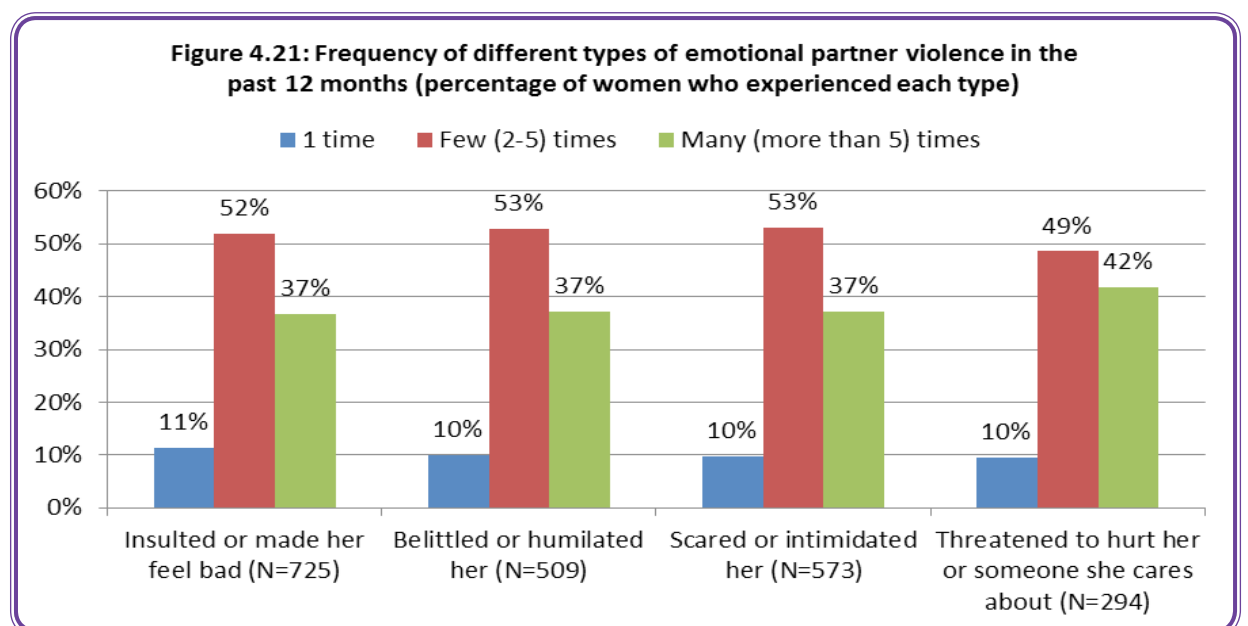
The most common type of emotional violence is insults that make the woman feel bad about herself; this type of abuse affects more than half of ever-partnered women in Fiji during their life (51%). In almost 2 in 5 relationships (38%), the husband/partner scares or intimidates his wife, for example by yelling or smashing things. Belittling and humiliation in front of other people has happened to women in 35% of relationships in Fiji. Threatening to hurt the woman or someone she cares about affects 20% of ever-partnered women over their lifetime (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 also shows the percentages of women experiencing each type of emotional violence, among the 1769 women who experienced any one act of emotional violence in their lifetime: 87% of those who suffer from emotional abuse are insulted by their husbands/partners, 66% are scared or intimidated by him, 60% are humiliated in front of other people, and 35% are subjected to threats. On average, women live with between 2 and 3 of these types of emotional abuse.

**Table 4.4: Lifetime prevalence of different types of emotional violence against women by husbands/partners (percentage of ever-partnered women [N=3035] compared with percentage of women who experienced emotional violence [N=1769])**

Types of emotional violence	Number	% of ever-partnered women (N=3035)	% of ever-partnered women who experienced emotional violence (N=1769)
Insulted her or made her feel bad	1545	51%	87%
Belittled or humiliated her in front of other people	1061	35%	60%
Done things to scare or intimidate her on purpose	1164	38%	66%
Threatened to hurt her or someone she cared about	622	20%	35%
<b>At least 1 act of emotional violence</b>	<b>1769</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% because women could report more than 1 type of emotional violence. Source: Table 4.10 of Annex 1.



Source: Table 4.10 of Annex 1.

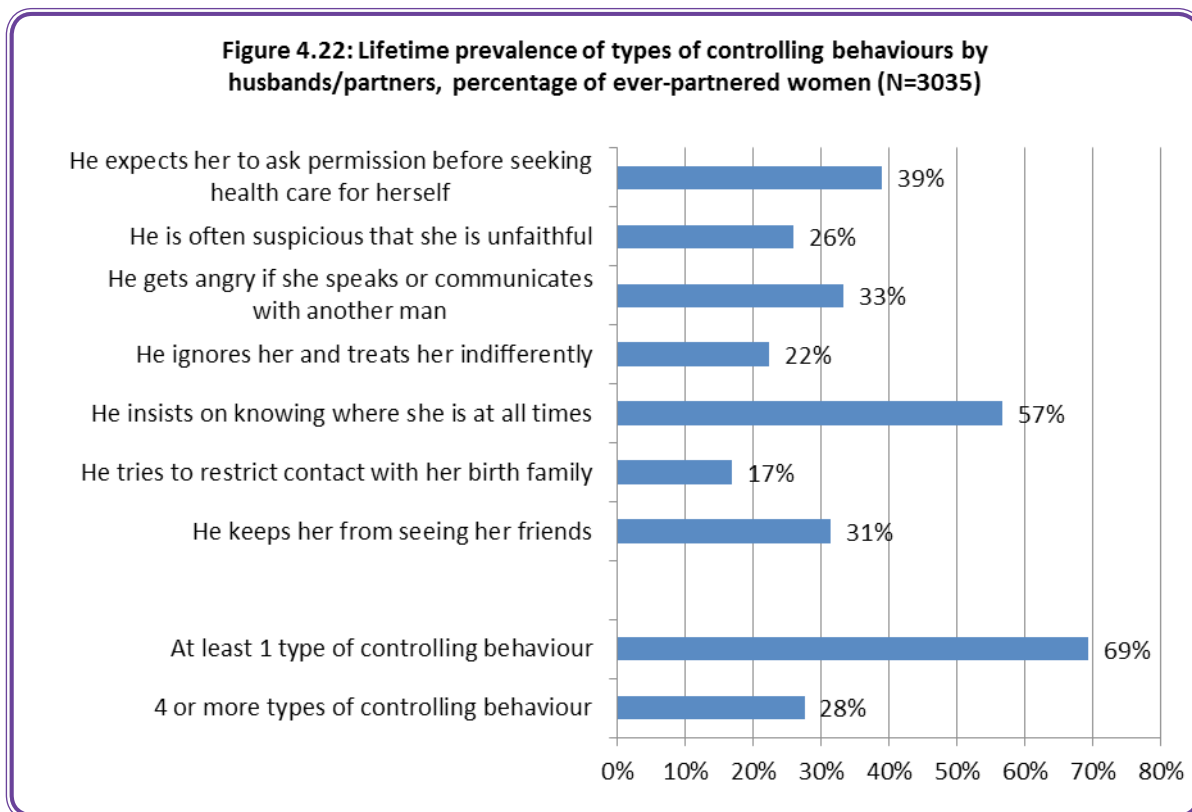


When we consider the women who were subjected to emotional violence during the past 12 months, once again the picture tells a disturbing story – particularly when we remember that emotional abuse is usually accompanied by physical or sexual abuse or both, and considering the enormous harm to self-esteem and self-confidence that results from this behaviour by men. One in 10 women were emotionally abused only once in the previous 12 months before the survey; about half were subjected to emotional abuse 2-5 times; and the remainder suffered from repeated acts of abuse (Figure 4.21). FWCC’s experience through counselling suggests that these figures under-estimate the amount of emotional abuse and emotional blackmail suffered by women in Fiji; this is discussed in section 4.7 below.

## 4.6 Types of controlling behaviours

### 4.6.1 National prevalence of controlling behaviours

The survey asked questions about 7 different types of control that men exert over their wives and partners. Overall, 69% of ever-partnered women (more than 2 in 3) experienced at least one form of controlling behaviour by their husbands/partners, and 28% (more than 1 in 4 women) have lived with 4 or more types of control by their husbands and partners (Figure 4.22).



Source: Table 4.11 of Annex 1.

The most common type of control that men have over their wives and partners is to insist on knowing where she is at all times; this affects 57% of ever-partnered women, which is almost 3 in 5. Two in 5 women (39%) need to ask permission from their husband/partner before they access health care for themselves; this clearly has very serious implications for women’s health-seeking behaviour. Almost one-third (31%) of all ever-partnered women are prevented from seeing their friends; and for 1 in 3 (33%), the husband/partner gets angry if she communicates with another man. More than 1 in 5 women (22%) reported that her husband/partner ignores her or treats her indifferently. In 17% of relationships, husbands/partners try to restrict a woman’s contact with her family of birth; this is extraordinarily high, taking into account the cultural norms within Fiji’s ethnic groups (Figure 4.22).

#### 4.6.2 Who experiences control by husbands/partners?

Women from all locations, ages, education levels, ethnicity and religions experience controlling behaviours. However, similar patterns are seen with controlling behaviours as with other forms of violence discussed above (physical, sexual and emotional) regarding location, level of education, ethnicity and religion.

More women in rural areas are subjected to all the various types of control than those who live in urban areas. Substantially more women from the Eastern Division are subjected to control by their husbands/partners than their sisters in other Divisions, and those from the Central and Western Divisions have the lowest prevalence. For example, 45% of women from the Eastern Division and 43% of those from the Northern Division have to ask for permission before they access health care, compared with the national average of 39%. Women in rural areas have more restrictions placed on their movement than those in urban areas: for 51% of those living in urban areas, the husband/partner insists on knowing where she is at all times, compared to 62% for those living in rural areas. For 71% of women in the Eastern Division, their husbands insist on knowing where they are at all times, compared with 60% from the Northern Division, 56% from Western Division and 52% from Central Division (Table 4.11 of Annex 1). Moreover, 25% of women in the Central and Western Divisions are subjected to 4 or more types of control, compared with 31% in the Northern Division and 38% in the Eastern Division.

Women with secondary education are more likely to be subjected to all types of controlling behaviours compared with those educated to primary or tertiary level, and are also more likely to be subjected to 4 or more types of control. In general, women educated to primary level tend to have the lowest rates of control by their husbands/partners. However, there are some exceptions to this pattern: 29% of tertiary-educated women have to ask permission to get health care, compared with 37% of primary-educated and 41% of secondary-educated women, and a national rate of 39%. Similarly, women educated to tertiary level are the least likely to be restricted from seeing their birth family (12% of tertiary-educated women compared with a national prevalence of 17%), and to be ignored and treated indifferently (19% for tertiary-educated women compared with a national prevalence of 22%). Level of education makes very little difference to the husband's/partner's insistence on knowing where a woman is at all times, which is the most prevalent form of control (Table 4.11 of Annex 1).

A woman's age makes little difference to whether or not she experiences each individual type of controlling behaviour. For example, 65% of women aged 25-29 have husbands/partners who insist on knowing where she is at all times, and 60% of women aged 35-39, but prevalence for all other age groups is below the national rate of 57%. The findings do not indicate that younger women are more likely to be subjected to any particular type of control; however, younger women aged 18-29 are slightly more likely to be subjected to 4 or more types of control than older women. Overall, the data suggests that control of women by their husbands/partners persists throughout a woman's life (Table 4.11 of Annex 1). This is consistent with the findings on emotional abuse which also persist throughout the life cycle (section 4.2.2).

As with the findings on physical, sexual and emotional violence discussed above, i-Taukei women and those from other ethnic groups have a higher prevalence of most forms of controlling behaviours than Indo-Fijian women. The only exception to this is women needing to ask the husband's/partner's permission to seek health care, which affects 40% of i-Taukei women, 39% of Indo-Fijian women, and 34% of women from other ethnic groups. Indo-Fijian women are less likely than those from other ethnic groups to be subjected to 4 or more controlling behaviours: 15% of Indo-Fijian women are subjected to this intense web of control, compared with 34% of i-Taukei women, 32% from other ethnic groups, and a national prevalence of 28%.

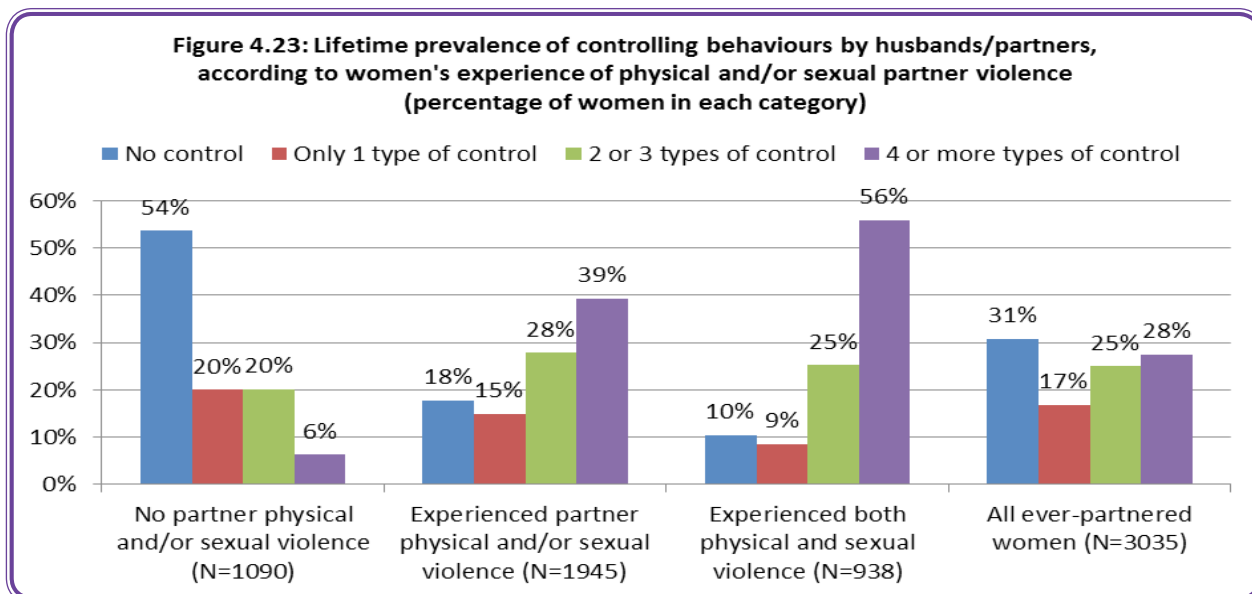


Women from the Christian religion are more likely to be subjected to more forms of control than those from other faiths. The only exception to this pattern is the need to seek permission before accessing health care, which affects women from all religions at about the same rate. Between 33% and 40% of Christian women are subjected to 4 or more types of controlling behaviour, compared with 17% of Muslim women and 15% of Hindu women (Table 4.11 of Annex 1).

#### 4.6.3 How are controlling behaviours associated with physical and sexual violence?

Women who have experienced either physical or sexual violence are far more likely to be subjected to each form of controlling behaviour: P values measuring the statistical significance of the association between each controlling behaviour and the experience of physical and/or sexual violence are less than 0.001<sup>12</sup> (Table 4.11 of Annex 1 and Figure 4.23). Moreover, those women subjected to both physical and sexual violence live with extremely high levels of control by their husbands and partners: more than half (56%) are subjected to 4 or more types of control, compared with 39% for those women who experience either physical or sexual violence, and only 6% of those women who have never experienced physical or sexual violence (Figure 4.23). These findings provide further evidence of the overlapping nature of the different forms of violence, and of the fact that physical and sexual abuse generally occurs within a relationship of extreme gender inequality, with the husband/partner exerting control over several aspects of women's lives.

It is also useful to disaggregate the findings to consider the proportion of women who are subjected to 2 or 3 types of control: this affects one in five women (20%) who are not living with physical or sexual violence (Figure 4.23). It is interesting that there is no significant difference between the major ethnic groups or religions when we consider the proportion of women subjected to 2 or 3 forms of control: this affects 24% of Indo-Fijian women, 26% of i-Taukei and 16% of women from other ethnic groups; one in 4 women (25%) in Fiji and from all religions are subjected to 2 or 3 forms of control. Overall, 2 or more forms of control is the norm for more than 53% of relationships (Figure 4.23 and Table 4.11 of Annex 1). These are important findings because they provide evidence of the social context of gender inequality for all women. They indicate that male control is a common element in the majority of relationships in Fiji, regardless of whether a woman experiences physical or sexual violence.



Source: Table 4.11 of Annex 1.

<sup>12</sup> P values measure statistical significance; a P value of less than 0.001 means there is only 0.1% chance that this association is incorrect. See the Glossary of Statistical Terms in Annex 6 for a detailed explanation.



## 4.7 Discussion of findings

### 4.7.1 Myths about intimate partner violence against women

Some common myths are challenged by the survey findings. For example, many people believe that domestic violence does not happen often or that it is a minor problem. The prevalence of all forms of intimate partner violence against women in Fiji is extraordinarily high. For those women who are living with violence, the findings describe a terrible reality: intense and repeated abuses, with many suffering from multiple types of physical and sexual attack, humiliating emotional abuse and high levels of coercive control by their husbands/partners.

The frequency and intensity of physical and sexual assaults over the 12 months before the survey describe a situation of torture for the majority of women living with violence. While all forms of physical violence can cause injury and emotional trauma, comparing the prevalence of “moderate” and “severe” forms of physical abuse may help to dispel the myth that physical partner violence is not serious. The high proportion of women who experience frequent incidents of extremely severe forms of violence is a very worrying finding, including being beaten up, choked, burned and attacked with a weapon. The findings underline the need for police, relatives, and community leaders to act immediately when women seek protection and help, and to take all reports of violence very seriously. They also point to the need for the media to refrain from trivialising the problem of domestic violence, and reinforcing false ideas about its nature, since these actions can contribute to women’s reluctance to tell others what they are experiencing and seek help.

Another common but false belief is that domestic violence only occurs among the poor. In fact, more than half the women in Fiji from the higher socio-economic group experience physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, compared with a national prevalence of 64%; this is substantially higher than the global prevalence of 30% for physical and/or sexual partner abuse (WHO 2013). Similarly, more than half the women in the higher socio-economic group in Fiji live with emotional violence.

Although less women overall suffer from sexual violence by their husbands and partners than physical violence, many who do are raped repeatedly, and live in fear of what may happen if they do not have sex. Many people believe that men rape women for sexual satisfaction, or that they cannot stop themselves once they are aroused. The evidence demonstrates that these beliefs are myths. The findings show that sexual abuse is one aspect of a wider pattern of domination and control over women – this is demonstrated by the overlap between physical, sexual and emotional violence; the fact that physical violence is sometimes followed by rape; the fact that one in 4 women have sex because they are fearful; and that more than one in 10 are forced to perform degrading or humiliating acts.

#### *Can physical and sexual violence occur without emotional abuse?*

The findings appear to suggest that some women who experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime do not experience emotional abuse and control by their husbands/partners (Figures 4.11 and 4.20). This does not accord with FWCC’s experience with counselling and community education, where it is unknown for women to be subjected to physical or sexual violence without also being emotionally abused and subjected to various types of controlling behaviour.

During counselling and community education, women regularly describe what day-to-day life is like for them: many have a constant and pervasive fear due to the threat of violence, which may be expressed in “the look” that their husband gives them to express his displeasure or to signal a warning to her. Many also describe the ongoing anxiety associated with not knowing how their husband will behave when he comes home each night, and whether he will be in a good or bad mood. During male advocacy training and community education sessions, men also describe the various types of emotional control they exert over their wives and partners, and often admit that one form of prevalent emotional abuse is “the look”: a warning that she needs to behave or take care in order to avoid further violence.





Other types of emotional abuse described by women and men in FWCC community education and training sessions include the emotional impact of men having extra-marital affairs, control over women's dress or hairstyle, controlling money and/or refusing to provide enough money (see discussion in Chapter 9).

While pervasive fear and non-verbal cues are difficult to capture in a quantitative survey, the findings nevertheless point to an important lesson regarding the content of the questionnaire, which did not adequately explore the ongoing and debilitating fear which arises from living in a violent relationship, and other more subtle types of emotional abuse and control.<sup>13</sup> For these reasons, FWCC believes that the findings under-estimate the prevalence of emotional violence and control.

#### **4.7.2 Intimate partner violence and gender inequality**

Coupled with physical and sexual abuse, the findings on emotional abuse and controlling behaviours describe a situation of extreme gender inequality, with men imposing power over women in a range of damaging ways. The findings paint a picture of a highly controlled and oppressive environment for women living with violence, pervaded with intimidation and threats. This pattern of multiple forms of abuse and control in intimate relationships has been found in all other countries where research has been undertaken on violence against women, including in the Pacific region (Fulu 2007; Jansen et al 2009; SPC 2009; SPC 2010; VWC 2011; and WHO 2005).

Women in violent relationships in Fiji have men controlling their mobility, access to health care, who they see, and who they communicate with. This web of control, emotional and physical abuse has enormous consequences for women's mental and physical health, self-confidence and self-esteem (see discussion in Chapter 7). It contravenes their human rights, inhibits their ability to care for themselves and their families, and prevents them from taking up opportunities for social and economic development.

Restrictions on women's access to health care are particularly damaging because they have a profound impact on women's health seeking behaviour. This finding has critical implications for health authorities and particularly for health promotion and outreach programs – since this degree of control by men and its high prevalence (2 in 5 ever-partnered women) is undoubtedly a risk to the effectiveness of health promotion and treatment efforts targeted at women to improve their own and their family's health. Restricting women's access to health care prevents women from getting the help that they need to deal with injuries and other impacts of violence, and contributes to violence being kept hidden. This finding provides a stark insight into the status of women, whose health is either not seen as important, or who are not seen as competent to make decisions about their own health care.

Some commentators may argue that insisting on knowing women's whereabouts – the most prevalent type of controlling behaviour affecting almost 3 in 5 ever-partnered women – may be seen as an expression of love and concern, rather than evidence of gender inequality. However, the key word here is "insist". There are many circumstances under which one may insist on knowing the whereabouts of a child for their own safety and protection, and where this is part of an adult's duty of care; but to do so in a relationship between adults conveys inequality and disempowerment. Moreover it provides a way for men to control and monitor most other aspects of women's behaviour, and contributes to a climate of powerlessness when the fear and threat of violence is constantly hanging over a woman's head.

In addition, the prevalence in Fiji of husbands/partners trying to restrict contact with a woman's family

<sup>13</sup> This was also acknowledged by the WHO in their multi-country study, which asserted that the survey questions on emotional abuse and controlling behaviours should not be considered as a comprehensive measure of all forms of emotional abuse (WHO 2005: 14).