

THE INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF WOMAN ABUSE
IN CANADIAN UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE DATING RELATIONSHIPS:
RESULTS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY'

A Report for Health and Welfare Canada's
Family Violence Prevention Division

by

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INTRODUCTION

A large number of self-report and victimization surveys clearly demonstrate that male-to-female physical, sexual, and psychological abuse are endemic to U.S. university and college dating relationships.¹ However, very few comparable Canadian studies have been conducted. Canadian researchers have focused mainly on the incidence, prevalence, correlates, and causes of male physical and psychological attacks on married, cohabiting, and separated/divorced women (Brinkerhoff & Lupri; 1988; Ellis and Stuckless, 1992; Ellis and Wight, 1987; Ellis et al., 1987; Kennedy and Dutton, 1989; Lupri, 1990; Smith, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b). There are some survey data on the extent of female victimization in post-secondary school dating relationships (Barnes et al., 1991; DeKeseredy, 1988, DeKeseredy et al., 1992; Elliot et al., 1992; Finkelmann, 1992); however, these findings are derived only from non-probability samples of university and college students in Ontario, New Brunswick and western Canada. Table 1 presents these results and the methods used to generate them.

¹See DeKeseredy (1988), DeKeseredy et al. (1993), Koss et al. (1987), Lloyd (1991), Sugarman and Hotaling (1989), and Ward et al. (1991) for comprehensive reviews of these studies.

TABLE 1: WOMAN ABUSE IN UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE DATING SURVEYS

Survey	Survey Location	Sample Description	Interview Mode	Measure(s) of Abuse	ABUSE RATES	
					Incidence Rate(s)	Prevalence Rate(s)
DeKeseredy (1988)	Southern Ontario	308 male university students	Self-Administered questionnaires	CTS* & 2 modified SES* items	70% reported physical and/or psychological abuse; 69% stated that they engaged in psychological abuse; 12% reported being physically abusive; & 2.6% admitted to having been sexually aggressive	Not examined
Darnes et al. (1991)	Manitoba	245 male university students	Self-Administered questionnaires	CTS, VBN* & CRA* Abuse Index	Not examined	42% reported using violence & 92.8% said that they emotionally abused women
DeKeseredy et al. (1992)	Eastern Ontario	179 female & 106 male university/college students	Self-Administered questionnaires	CTS & SES	13% of the men reported that using physical violence; 68% reported psychological abuse; & 8% indicated being sexually aggressive. 26% of the females indicated being physically abused; 69% said they were psychologically victimized; & 23% stated that they were sexually abused	18% of the men said that used physical violence; 75% psychologically abused women & 12% reported acts of sexual assault. 32% of the women reported experiencing physical violence; 77% indicated being psychologically attacked & 40% stated that they were sexually abused
Elliot et al. (1992)	University of Alberta	1,016 undergraduate students (men & women)	Self-Administered questionnaires	Modified SES	Not examined	44% of the students who reported an unwanted sexual experience while registered at the U of A, stated that the offender was a romantic partner & 13% said that the perpetrator was a casual or first date
Finkelman (1992)	University of New Brunswick & St. Thomas University	447 undergraduate students (men & women)	Self-Administered questionnaires	SES	Approximately 34.4% of the 127 respondents who reported one or more unwanted sexual experiences were victimized by a boyfriend/girlfriend or date*	Not examined

*Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979).

*Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss and Oros, 1982)

*Violent Behavior Inventory (Domestic Abuse Project, cited in Gondolf, 1985).

*CRA Abuse Index (Stacy and Shupe, 1983).

*Gender variations in victimization are not reported in this study.

Although, the surveys in Table 1 support feminist activists' (e.g., Harris, 1991) claims that Canadian female students' lives "rest upon a continuum of violence" (Stanko, 1990: 85), they do not provide accurate information on how many male-to-female assaults take place in the Canadian post-secondary student population at large. As Smith (1987) correctly points out, only random sample surveys can achieve this goal. This study attempts to fill a major research gap by providing estimates of the incidence and prevalence of woman abuse in Canadian university/college dating relationships which are derived from the first national representative sample survey of men and women. Incidence refers here to the percentage of women who stated that they were abused and the number of men who indicated that they were abusive in the past 12 months. Prevalence is, since they left high school, the proportion of men who reported having been abusive and the percentage of women who indicated having been abused.

METHOD

Sample Design

Since the primary concern of this research was to yield estimates of woman abuse that are representative of undergraduate and community college students across Canada, with the assistance of York University's Institute for Social Research (ISR), a multi-stage, systematic sampling strategy was developed. This sampling

plan is briefly described below.²

Regional Breakdown

For the purpose of making regional comparisons, Canada was divided into six strata: Atlantic Canada, including Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; Quebec (French-speaking schools); Ontario; the Prairies, consisting of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta; British Columbia; and a Language Crossover stratum which included both English-language institutions in Quebec and French-language schools outside of this province (e.g., in Ontario and New Brunswick). The number of schools selected in each area was based on the regional distribution of the Canadian student population documented by Statistics Canada (1992a, 1992b). Table 2 presents the number of students enrolled in each stratum and Table 3 describes the number of institutions selected in each region (Pollard, 1993).

TABLE 2: STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY REGION

	UNIVERSITIES		COLLEGES	
	N	%	N	%
Atlantic Canada	63,718	8.71	5,554	1.92
Quebec (French)	162,724	22.24	109,566	37.91
Ontario	261,996	35.81	90,339	31.25
The Prairies	117,842	16.11	30,697	10.62
British Columbia	52,450	7.17	26,475	9.16
Language Crossover	72,846	9.96	26,408	9.14
TOTAL	731,576	100.00	289,039	100.00

²For more detailed information on the sample design, see Pollard (1993).

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS SELECTED BY REGION

	UNIVERSITIES	COLLEGES
Atlantic Canada	4	3
Quebec (French)	5	4
Ontario	6	5
The Prairies	4	3
British Columbia	4	3
Language Crossover	4	3
TOTAL	27	21

The Selection of Institutions

For each region, the ISR prepared a listing of all universities and colleges that might be included in this study. Universities with fewer than 500 students and colleges with less than 100 students were excluded. Then, random numbers were used to pick schools to participate in this survey, and the selection was based upon each institution's population relative to the overall regional student population.

The sample plan required the selection of 48 institutions (27 universities and 21 community colleges); but, since four schools were randomly picked two times,³ a total of 44 institutions were chosen. The four universities or colleges selected twice counted as eight altogether and therefore resulted in a grand total of 48 schools. Additionally, each stratum was oversampled because we anticipated that several schools would not want to participate due to the sensitive and controversial subject matter, even though anonymity and confidentiality was explicitly guaranteed. This selection procedure was also influenced by the fact that 60 U.S.

³The selection procedure allowed for the inclusion of schools that were randomly selected more than once.

institutions refused to participate in Koss et al.'s (1987) comparable study.

Selection of Classes

The sample was further divided into junior and senior segments in anticipation of different responses from students who attended university or college for various lengths of time. In most cases, incoming students were categorized as junior undergraduates and third year undergraduates (second year students in some community colleges) were classified as seniors. Hence, at each institution, two classes were selected for inclusion in this survey, resulting in a grand total of 96 classes. However, as expected, several classes included in the initial sample were replaced because they were either ineligible or they did not want to participate.

In order to be eligible to participate in this study, each university class had to have an enrollment of not less than 35 students, and college courses were required to have a minimum of 20 students enrolled. Twenty-one classes were replaced because of ineligibility and 17 departments or individual instructors refused an invitation to be included in the survey. Two of the 48 schools originally selected chose not to participate. Administrators at one of these institutions stated that they did not have a policy on our invitation and until one was in place, they would not participate. The other school was simply not amenable to the study.

Data collection began on September 28, 1992 and time constraints dictated that all of the data be collected by the end of November, 1992. The ISR gained approval for the research team to visit 95 of the 96 classes it had expected to survey in this time period. Unfortunately, one instructor would not allow the investigators to visit his class until January 1993. Since this would delay the completion of the study, it was excluded from the final sample.

Selection of Programmes of Study

Many people believe that the leisure activities of students enrolled in certain programmes, such as engineering, are characterized by sexist interpersonal dynamics, which in turn lead to woman abuse (Johnson, 1992). On the other hand, some people assert that students who take women's studies courses are less likely to be abusive because they are more sensitized to the negative effects of gender inequality (Schwartz and Nogrady, 1993). Reliable empirical support for both arguments, however, is not yet available. In order to adequately discern whether some disciplines are more conducive to woman abuse than others, the sample was also stratified by programmes of study. The ISR assembled this sampling frame by first listing the faculties in each institution selected previously. Following this procedure, all of the subjects taught within each faculty were listed. The university data are derived from the 1991 Corpus Almanac and Canadian Source Book (Southam Business Information and Communications Group, 1990). Statistics

on community colleges were collected from college calendars held in York University's library. Calendars not housed there were provided by the selected institutions.

To select classes within each participating school, a main programme of study or faculty was first selected through the use of random numbers, and the probability of selection was directly related to the percentage of students enrolled in each faculty. These statistics were compiled from Statistics Canada (1992a, 1992b) sources. Students enrolled in larger faculties, such as Arts, had a greater chance of being selected. When a main programme of study was picked (e.g., Engineering), all of the subjects taught under this rubric were given random numbers and a particular subject (e.g., Civil Engineering) was chosen.

Arrangements for Data Collection

Before the questionnaires could be administered, in the summer of 1992, the ISR phoned the Chairs of the 96 departments within the universities and colleges that had been randomly selected to participate in this survey. During each call, the purpose of the study was made explicit, questions were answered, and the ISR tried to gain initial approval to administer our survey. After the Chairs gave their verbal approval, letters were sent to confirm the details of the data gathering techniques and to determine the precise location of the class, the time of our visit, and any other details about the distribution of the survey.

Of course, the participating institutions were concerned about the ethical nature of the study, and the research team carefully responded to their demands. In several cases, despite approval from ethical review boards, professors insisted on obtaining the consent of their students before responding to the research team's request to survey their classes.

Data Collection Procedures

In each classroom two separate questionnaires were distributed. Although, both instruments included a few similar questions, one was tailored to elicit women's reports of their experiences' and the other was designed to elicit those of men. The major advantage of distributing questionnaires in classrooms is that the researchers' presence both guarantees a high completion rate and encourages respondents to answer all of the questions (DeKeseredy, 1989). Moreover, the reliability and validity of this approach is well established (Koss et al., 1987; Sheatsley, 1983).

Before each administration, students were explicitly told that participation in this survey is strictly voluntary and any information they provide will be kept completely confidential. Students were also told that they did not have to answer any question that they did not want to and they could stop filling out the questionnaire at any time. This information was also provided

¹To date, only one other Canadian study has collected female victimization data on abuse in community college dating relationships (DeKeseredy et al., 1992).

on the cover page of the instrument which respondents were asked to read before they started filling out the questionnaires.

Following each administration, we provided a brief lecture on the frequency and severity of dating violence on both Canadian and U.S. campuses, and all of the respondents were given a list of local social support services that they could turn to if they needed assistance. Additionally, participants were warmly encouraged to ask us questions and to call us collect if they required further information about the survey. These debriefing techniques are similar to those used in Koss et al.'s (1987) national sexual assault study.

Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of 3,142 people, including 1,835 women and 1,307 men. Table 4 presents the demographic characteristics of these respondents and Table 5 shows their educational characteristics. As described in Table 4, the median age of female respondents was 20 and the median age of males was 21. Most of the participants identified themselves as either English Canadian or French Canadian, and the vast majority of them were never married. Table 5 shows that most of the participants were junior students and a sizeable portion were enrolled in Arts programmes. Very few women were members of sororities and a small proportion of men belonged to fraternities.

TABLE 4: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
AGE (median)	21	20
ETHNICITY		
Central American	.2	.1
Scandinavian	1.1	1.0
French Canadian	27.0	22.4
English Canadian	46.0	47.9
British ^a	4.3	5.5
West European ^b	2.9	3.2
East European ^c	2.9	3.2
South European ^d	4.9	5.5
Far Eastern ^e	5.0	5.3
African ^f	1.9	1.6
Caribbean	1.0	1.6
Middle Eastern ^g	1.0	1.4
Latin American	.3	.3
Aboriginal	1.9	1.8
Black	.2	.1
Jewish	.2	.1
Other	1.0	.7
REFUGEE	1.7	.7
RECENT IMMIGRANT ^h	4.3	3.8
MARITAL STATUS		
Never Married	81.8	77.9
Married	7.8	7.6
Living with an Intimate Heterosexual Partner	8.4	10.5
Separated	.7	1.8
Divorced	.8	1.9
Widowed	.5	.3

^aWales, Scotland, N. Ireland, England

^bFrance, Germany, Holland, etc.

^cRussia, Poland, Baltic States, Hungary, etc.

^dItaly, Spain, Portugal, Greece, etc.

^eJapan, China, India, Honk Kong, etc.

^fNorth, Central or South

^gIsrael, Lebanon, Iraq, etc.

TABLE 5: EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
YEAR OF STUDY		
First	39.2	42.4
Second	27.9	23.8
Third	19.3	19.6
Fourth	9.4	10.2
Other	4.0	4.0
MAJOR		
Arts	19.6	42.2
Education	3.2	11.2
Fine Arts	1.3	2.0
Agriculture	6.1	2.9
Engineering	4.4	.7
Health	1.1	2.8
Sciences	13.2	9.0
Business	15.2	12.5
Law	3.8	3.0
Trades	6.5	5.3
Service Occupation	1.0	3.0
Technology Programme	13.0	3.3
Don't Know	1.5	1.7
CURRENT FRATERNITY MEMBER	3.0	0
PAST FRATERNITY MEMBER	2.6	0
CURRENT SORORITY MEMBER	0	1.6
PAST SORORITY MEMBER	0	1.2

Measurement of Woman Abuse

Woman abuse in the context of university/college courtship is defined as any intentional physical, sexual, or psychological assault on a woman by a male dating partner, regardless of whether he is married, single, or cohabiting with someone. A modified version of Straus and Gelles' (1986) rendition of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) was used to measure both psychological and physical abuse. The CTS generally consists of at least 18 items and measures three different ways of handling interpersonal conflict in intimate relationships: reasoning, verbal aggression, and physical violence. The items are categorized on a continuum

from least to most severe with the first ten describing non-violent tactics and the last eight describing violent strategies.

To collect information on a wider range of psychologically abusive experiences, two new items were added to the CTS. Currently being employed by Statistics Canada in their national Canadian telephone study on violence against women, these measures are: "put her (you) down in front of family" and "accused her (you) of having affairs or flirting with other men."

A slightly reworded version of Koss et al.'s (1987) Sexual Experience Survey (SES) was employed to operationalize various forms of sexual assault. The CTS and SES are widely used, and they are reliable and valid measures (Koss and Gidycz, 1985; Smith, 1987; Straus et al., 1981). The texts of all of the items used are presented in Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9.⁵

FINDINGS

The Incidence of Woman Abuse in University/College Dating Relationships

Approximately 81.4 percent of the women reported having been victimized by at least one form of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse during the year preceding this study. Seventy-six percent of the men admitted to committing one or more abusive acts during the same time period. Consistent with the global estimates reported by DeKeseredy (1988) and DeKeseredy et al.

⁵Missing cases are excluded from these tables.

(1992), these figures are exceptionally high and are probably the result of including responses to many abuse items. Moreover, these findings cannot be compared with other Canadian and U.S. studies because they did not present comparable global abuse statistics. Researchers tend to separate incidence data on different forms of abuse in their reports. Nevertheless, our overall figure suggests that Canadian female university/college students' fear of being victimized by male dating partners is "well-founded" (Hanmer and Saunders, 1984).

The SES global incidence rates for female victims and male offenders are 28.8 percent and 11.3 percent respectively. Table 6 presents the frequencies of each incident. These figures are similar to those presented in DeKeseredy et al.'s (1992) pretest for this national survey. For example, their male sexual assault estimate (8%) is only slightly lower than the one described here. It is difficult to compare our national findings with other Canadian incidence data presented in Table 1. For example, although Finkelman (1992) used the same measures and time period, he does not provide data on gender variations in victimization. Instead, he reports the total number of students (both men and women) who were sexually abused.

Additionally, our male findings cannot adequately be compared with DeKeseredy's (1988) because he used different measures. For example, he asked men whether or not over the past 12 months they had threatened to use force, or actually used force "to make a

woman engage in sexual activities." If one presumes that students read the term to mean only sexual intercourse or attempted sexual intercourse, then the responses to item 10 in Table 6 (.2%) are obviously much lower than DeKeseredy's (2.6%). On the other hand, if DeKeseredy's respondents read his questions to also mean forced kissing, fondling, or petting, then the proportion of our male respondents (.9%) who engaged in such activities is still significantly lower than DeKeseredy's estimate.

Consistent with U.S. national data (Koss et al., 1987), the findings presented in Table 6 show that male respondents admitted to using less severe forms of coercion to get women to engage in sexual activities. For example, they were more likely to employ alcohol, drugs, arguments, and continual pressure. Similar reports were provided by women; however, the female incidence rates for these items are much higher. Furthermore, approximately 2 percent of the women reported that they had sexual intercourse because a man either threatened or used some degree of physical force. This figure is slightly lower than Koss et al.'s national U.S. finding (3%). Table 6 also shows that female victimization rates for other sex acts involving the use or threat of force are also considerably higher than the male statistics.

The male physical abuse figure (13.1%) derived from the CTS approximates statistics reported in previous Canadian and U.S. incidence studies that used similar measures (DeKeseredy, 1988; DeKeseredy et al., 1992; Makepeace, 1983). Table 7 shows that

every type of physical violence was used (including used a knife or a gun) by at least one respondent; even so, consistent with most of the earlier North American survey research, less lethal assaults were reported more often. These so-called "minor forms" of violence, however, should not be trivialized because as Smith (1986) has shown, a slap can break teeth. Our CTS data, unfortunately, does not offer any information on the medical consequences of violence.

Given the fact that socially desirable responding is more common among perpetrators than victims (Arias and Beach, 1987; Dutton and Hemphill, 1992), it is not surprising that our female CTS physical victimization rate (22.4%) is much higher than the above male figure and slightly lower than DeKeseredy et al.'s (1992) estimate (26%). Again, consistent with our male findings, Table 7 shows that women report less lethal forms of violence more often.

High rates of psychological abuse were reported by both male perpetrators (75%) and female victims (79%). The proportion of male accounts is moderately higher than those reported by DeKeseredy (69%) and DeKeseredy et al. (68%). On the other hand, the female estimate is significantly higher than DeKeseredy et al.'s (69%).

The Prevalence of Woman Abuse in University/College Dating Relationships

Since we also asked to students to report events that took

place over a broader time period (e.g., since they left high school), to be expected, all of the abuse prevalence rates are higher than the incidence figures. The following results, however, should be read cautiously because they do not tell us precisely whether or not most of the abusive incidents took place in university/college dating relationships. Some probably occurred before people start their post-secondary education.

Again, "less serious" forms of forms of victimization were reported more often, and the prevalence of all types of abuse reported by men (82.1%) is moderately lower than the female rate (89%). The proportion of men who reported having been psychologically abusive (81.3%) is also moderately lower than the percentage of female respondents who reported having been a victim of such mistreatment (85.7%).

The male psychological abuse estimate is moderately higher than DeKeseredy et al.'s (75%), but it is markedly lower than the prevalence figure reported by Barnes et al (92.6%). The variation between our rate and Barnes et al.'s could possibly be explained by the use of different measures.

Female physical and sexual victimization prevalence rates are much higher than the proportion of offences reported by male offenders. For example, 34.9 percent of the women indicated that they were victimized by physical abuse, and 45.8 percent stated that they were sexually assaulted. In sharp contrast to these data, only 17.2 percent of the men reported acts of physical

violence, and 19.4 percent admitted to having been sexually abusive. The above female estimates are higher than those gleaned by DeKeseredy et al. (32% and 40% respectively); but the male physical abuse figure is markedly lower than Barnes et al.'s estimate (42%). Perhaps Barnes et al.'s higher rate can be explained by the fact that their rendition of the CTS included a sexual assault item and several others distinct from those used in our modified version.

Unfortunately, our sexual abuse data cannot be adequately compared with other Canadian prevalence studies, such as Elliot et al.'s (1992), because they used slightly different measures and confounded male and female victimization figures. Methodological differences also make it hard to compare our findings with those produced by Koss et al.'s (1987) comparable national U.S. study. For example, even though these researchers used the same sexual abuse items to determine prevalence rates, they focused on a much broader time referent - since age 14.

The data for the individual items used to calculate the physical, sexual, and psychological abuse prevalence rates are presented in Tables 8 and 9. Like the incidence rates for each item reported previously, less severe forms of abuse were reported more frequently by both men and women. However, the gender variations between most of the physical and sexual abuse prevalence items are significantly higher than the gender differences presented in Tables 6 and 7.

TABLE 6

SEXUAL ASSAULT INCIDENCE RATES

TYPE OF ABUSE	Men (N=1,307)		Women (N=1,835)	
	%	N	%	N
1. Have you given in to sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure?	8.2	95	19.4	318
2. Have you engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because a man used his position of authority (boss, supervisor, etc.) to make you?	.9	10	1.3	21
3. Have you had sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?	.9	11	3.3	54
4. Has a man attempted sexual intercourse (getting on top of you, attempting to insert his penis) when you didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.), but intercourse did not occur?	.6	7	4.1	67
5. Has a man attempted sexual intercourse (getting on top of you, attempting to insert his penis) when you didn't want to because you were drunk or high, but intercourse did not occur?	2.5	29	7.4	121
6. Have you given in to sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure?	4.6	54	12.2	198
7. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man used his position of authority (boss, supervisor, etc.) to make you?	.6	7	.5	8
8. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because you were drunk or high?	1.9	22	7.9	129
9. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?	.5	6	2.1	34
10. Have you engaged in sex acts (anal or oral intercourse or penetration by objects other than the penis) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?	.2	2	1.8	29

TABLE 7
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE INCIDENCE RATES

Type of Abuse	Men (N=1,307)		Women (N=1,835)	
	%	N	%	N
PSYCHOLOGICAL				
Insults or swearing	54.2	623	53.1	857
Put her (you) down in front of friends or family	20.3	233	30.4	491
Accused her (you) of having affairs or flirting with other men	30.5	350	38.1	614
Did or said something to spite her (you)	58.5	670	61.5	989
Threatened to hit or throw something at her (you)	6.2	71	10.8	174
Threw, smashed or kicked something	26.5	304	26.8	433
PHYSICAL				
Threw something at her (you)	3.5	40	5.3	85
Pushed, grabbed or shoved her (you)	11.5	132	19.8	319
Slapped her (you)	2.6	30	5.3	85
Kicked, bit, or hit her (you) with your (his) fist	1.4	16	3.8	61
Hit or tried to hit her (you) with something	1.7	20	3.3	54
Beat her (you) up	.6	7	1.3	21
Choked you (her)	.9	10	2.1	32
Threatened her (you) with a knife or a gun	.8	9	.6	9
Used a knife or a gun on her (you)	.7	8	.1	2

Table 8

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVALENCE RATES

TYPE OF ABUSE	Men (N=1,307)		Women (N=1,935)	
	%	N	%	N
1. Have you given in to sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure?	14.9	172	33	553
2. Have you engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because a man used his position of authority (boss, supervisor, etc.) to make you?	1.7	20	3.9	66
3. Have you had sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?	2.1	24	9.2	154
4. Has a man attempted sexual intercourse (getting on top of you, attempting to insert his penis) when you didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.), but intercourse did not occur?	1.5	18	9.0	151
5. Has a man attempted sexual intercourse (getting on top of you, attempting to insert his penis) when you didn't want to because you were drunk or high, but intercourse did not occur?	5.2	61	14.6	244
6. Have you given in to sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure?	8.2	95	20.9	349
7. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man used his position of authority (boss, supervisor, etc.) to make you?	1.2	14	1.4	24
8. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because you were drunk or high?	4.1	48	15.4	257
9. Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?	1.3	15	6.7	112
10. Have you engaged in sex acts (anal or oral intercourse or penetration by objects other than the penis) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?	1.1	13	3.1	51

Table 9

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE PREVALENCE RATES

Type of Abuse	Men (N=1,307)		Women (N=1,635)	
	%	N	%	N
PSYCHOLOGICAL				
Insults or swearing	63.6	747	65.0	1105
Put her (you) down in front of friends or family	27.5	322	43.9	742
Accused her (you) of having affairs or flirting with other men	42.1	495	53.3	901
Did or said something to spite her (you)	65.5	773	71.8	1216
Threatened to hit or throw something at her (you)	8.3	97	20.6	346
Threw, smashed or kicked something	31.7	373	38.6	652
PHYSICAL				
Threw something at her (you)	4.3	50	11.0	185
Pushed, grabbed or shoved her (you)	15.4	182	31.4	529
Slapped her (you)	4.5	53	11.1	186
Kicked, bit, or hit her (you) with your (his) fist	2.4	28	8.1	135
Hit or tried to hit her (you) with something	2.9	33	8.1	136
Beat her (you) up	.7	8	3.7	63
Choked you (her)	.8	9	4.8	80
Threatened her (you) with a knife or a gun	.8	9	2.4	41
Used a knife or a gun on her (you)	.8	9	.5	8

DISCUSSION

Surveys on the extent of woman abuse in Canadian university/college dating relationships are in short supply. The few which have been conducted clearly demonstrate that many women are at great risk of being physically, sexually, and psychologically attacked in courtship. Since the data presented in these studies (see Table 1) are gleaned from nonprobability samples, they tell us little about the incidence and prevalence of woman abuse in Canadian post-secondary student population at large. Such data is clearly necessary to "provide a surer footing than presently exists for the development of social policies and programs needed to ameliorate the problem" (Smith, 1987: 144).

The results of the national representative sample survey reported here provide more accurate and reliable data on the extent of woman abuse in Canadian higher institutions of learning than previous research described in Table 1. Furthermore, a comparison of our prevalence findings with those reviewed by Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) show that the problem of dating abuse is just as serious in Canada as it is in the U.S.

Although they are "alarmingly high" (Smith, 1987: 285), the estimates presented in this report should, as is the case with all survey statistics on woman abuse, be read as underestimates for the following reasons. First, many people do not report incidents because of fear of reprisal, embarrassment, or they may perceive some acts as too trivial to mention. Second, some people may

forget abusive experiences, especially if they took place long ago and were relatively "minor" (Kennedy and Dutton, 1989; Smith, 1987). Third, because of social desirability factors, men are less likely than women to provide reliable accounts of their behaviour. Finally, many women may not want to recall the pain and suffering they endured in their dating relationships (Smith, 1987). These four shortcomings cannot be avoided and they are part-and-parcel of every type of study.

In order to advance a better understanding of woman abuse in post-secondary school dating relationships, and to both prevent and control it, more than just accurate incidence and prevalence data are required. Indeed, we need to empirically discern the major "risk markers" (Hotaling and Sugarman, 1986) associated with assaults on female university/college students, such as level of intimacy, male peer support, educational status, ethnicity, etc. Thus far, Canadian researchers have not devoted much attention to identifying the primary determinants of woman abuse in courtship. In addition to providing more concrete information on who is at greatest risk of being abused or abusive, correlational research will also assist in the development of theories (DeKeseredy et al., 1993). Subsequent articles on the national survey will address these and other issues, such as the influence of familial patriarchy, the context, meaning, and motive of women's violence, the influence of male peer group dynamics, and the effectiveness of various support services (e.g., women's centres and criminal justice agencies).

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