

CSAGA
CMRC

DV - 78
García-Moreno

Population and Development Studies

Harvard School of Public Health



Violence Against Women, Gender and Health Equity

CSAGA
TRUNG TÂM TƯ VẤN VÀ THÔNG TIN TƯ LIỆU
VỀ BẠO LỰC GIỚI (CMRC)
Mã sách:..... *DV-78*.....

Claudia García-Moreno

Working Paper Series
Number 99.15

September 1999

GLOBAL HEALTH EQUITY INITIATIVE

The working papers in the series on "Gender and Health Equity" arise from two workshops held at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies in 1997 and 1998. The workshops were organized as part of the Global Health Equity Initiative (GHEI), a comprehensive project on health equity funded in part by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Swedish International Development Agency. The GHEI is an interdisciplinary project that combines conceptual work on health equity with country-case studies. Other conceptual working groups, similar to the Gender and Health Equity project, are focussing on cross-cutting issues like "measurement", "ethics", and "social determinants". Some of the working papers within this series on Gender and Health Equity will appear jointly in a volume edited by Gita Sen, Pirooska Ostlin and Asha George.

ABSTRACT

This paper starts with a broad definition of violence against women and the different forms it takes, and then focuses on domestic and sexual violence in particular. It provides an overview of the magnitude of domestic and sexual violence against women and of its various consequences including those involving health for women and their children. It looks at the causes of violence, highlighting the links between violence against women and the cultural and social norms around gender, and other inequities, which perpetuate or exacerbate this violence. The paper suggests how a gender analysis may be useful to the violence field more broadly, and not just to violence against women. It discusses some of the limitations of current responses and makes recommendations for policy and programs. Finally it looks at some dilemmas or areas of controversy and identifies areas for further work.

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
130 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A5
416-978-2010
“...women will not be free from violence until there is equality, and equality cannot be achieved until the violence and the threat of violence is eliminated from women's lives.”

Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence is a widespread and growing problem in practically all societies. It takes many forms, and occurs in all settings: at work, in the home, in the streets and the community at large. It affects both males and females of all ages, particularly young people. However there are important differences between women and men in the forms, the nature and the consequences of violence. Most violence is perpetrated by men, whatever the sex and age of the victim. Most significant is the fact that women and girls experience violence primarily at the hands of men they know and within the so-called 'safe haven' of the home and family. The response of society to the different forms of violence also differs. While street violence is considered a crime by everyone and state intervention is seen as legitimate, most governments have been hesitant when it comes to acting, and even legislating, against domestic violence. Because it happens in what is often considered the 'private sphere' of the home, it is harder to document and to prevent and easier to ignore.

Twenty years of activism on violence by women's organisations is slowly changing this. In particular the last five years have seen a growing recognition of violence against women as a legitimate concern. It has become part of the international agenda: initially as a women's human rights issue at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993), and as it related to sexual and reproductive health at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994). The Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) dedicated a whole chapter to violence against women with a number of recommendations for governments, non-governmental and multilateral organisations. More recently violence against women has also begun to receive attention as a public health issue, and has been taken up by international organisations such as the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO), and UNFPA, among others.

Violence against women is a complex and multidimensional problem. There are factors at the individual, household and societal level that put women at risk or alternatively may help to reduce the risk of violence. It is embedded within social and cultural norms that perpetuate inequality between women and men, and condone or even encourage discrimination against women, including the chastisement of women by men and others. Domestic violence in particular is the epitome of unequal power relationships between women and men. The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women states in the introduction to its report that: "It is abundantly and indisputably clear that women will not be free from violence until there is