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Subject: Domestic Violence as part of the Core Questionnaire

Posted by [Loaiza](#) on Wed, 09 Apr 2014 16:00:10 GMT

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Dear Colleagues at the DHS programme. The issue of domestic violence (DV) has gained recently high recognition, specially in the area of data and evidence. Luckily, the DHS programme has been measuring this area with certain regularity as an optional module. UNFPA would like to propose for consideration, the inclusion of the DV module as part of the core questionnaire for the seventh round of DHS studies. For this purpose and following your guidelines we have prepared a document (attached) in which we present the rationale as well as the modifications and changes we are proposing.

#### File Attachments

1) [Domestic](#)

[Violence\\_Changes\\_to\\_DHS\\_Qnnaires\\_31Mar2014\\_UNFPA.docx](#),

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Subject: Re: Domestic Violence as part of the Core Questionnaire

Posted by [Henriette](#) on Fri, 11 Apr 2014 22:51:34 GMT

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SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DHS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MODULE (also attached)

by Henriette Jansen, International Researcher Violence against Women

(Henriette.jansen@gmail.com) - 11 April 2014

I very much welcome this opportunity that DHS has created for giving input in the DV module. This creates the promise to achieve greater harmonization of different data collection initiatives, allowing increasingly comparable data, in particular for the UN statistical indicators on VAW.

I reviewed the DHS6 DV module in conjunction with the suggestions submitted by UNFPA APRO, PSRO and Indonesia country office, submitted on 6 April (which was shared with me directly by UNFPA APRO).

I agree with most of the comments given by the above group (many comments are reflecting or building on my earlier work on the WHO questionnaire, the UNECE questionnaire module and my contribution to the UN guidelines for producing Statistics on Violence against Women on the measurement and tabulation of the indicators). Nevertheless I would like to add some nuances/additional comments on some points, as well as and indicate where I have a different viewpoint than expressed in the document by UNFPA group.

Further, I would be very hesitant to include the violence domestic questions as part of the core questionnaire in all countries as I have seen suggested by some. In this respect I would like to reiterate the ethical and safety recommendation by WHO that stipulates that surveys should ONLY include violence against women questions if they can guarantee addressing the recommendations around data quality, safety, confidentiality and providing support. If not the survey may result in serious under-reporting and data that do not reflect the reality could potentially be used to question the importance of violence as a legitimate area of concern.

Below follow my comment on specific issues:

#### ON LISTS OF ACTS CONSTITUTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE:

DV05 h) i) j): The acts of sexual violence may be revised with the removal of the word "physical" from "physical force".

Suggested wording may be (from the Pacific version 11.4 of the WHO questionnaire):

a) Did your current husband/partner [or any other husband/partner] ever force you to have sexual intercourse when you did not want to, for example by threatening you or holding you down?

IF NECESSARY: We define sexual intercourse as oral sex, anal or vaginal penetration.

b) Did you ever have sexual intercourse you did not want to because you were afraid of what your partner [or any other husband or partner] might do if you refused?

c) Did your husband/partner [or any other husband or partner] ever force you to do anything else sexual that you did not want or that you found degrading or humiliating?

For above acts of sexual partner violence, a) and b) would constitute 'severe' acts (rape) while c) would be 'moderate' acts

N.B. For non-partner sexual violence rape/non-consensual sex would constitute severe violence, while attempted rape and other sexual acts would be 'moderate' for the sake of tabulation.

#### ON SEVERITY OF VIOLENCE:

For the tabulation of physical and/or sexual partner violence in practice 'severe violence' is based on

(1) severe acts (for physical violence: acts that are likely to cause injuries and for sexual violence: forced sexual intercourse); and/or

(2) presence of injuries and/or miscarriage due to the physical or sexual violence (regardless of nature of the act);

For the tabulation it should also be should be able to distinguish if this severe component (e.g. the injury) happened in past 12 months or not.

While physical and/or sexual violence are combined in the partner violence indicators; it is pertinent that severity should be determined for physical and sexual violence separately so that they can be included in the UN indicators I-IV, and which are meant for all perpetrators combined but treating physical and sexual violence separately.

While I concur with UNFPA comments that impact in terms of affecting physical or mental well-being is an important indication for severity of the impact on the woman; I would not include this as a component in the tabulation of severity of the physical or sexual act. Because this is an EFFECT or consequence of the experience of violence, it is much harder to measure in a standardized way across individuals and cultures and it is impossible to link such impact to specific types of partner violence as partner violence is a course of conduct that most likely includes also all kinds of psychological violence which could have cause the mentioned impact. A similar argument can be given for the 'fear' factor. While health impact and fear are important; they are best tabulated separately. Moreover, note that 'fear' does not work in all cultures: e.g. in some south-east Asian countries 'fear' and 'respect' are the same word and most women will say they fear their husband all the time.

#### ON PERPETRATORS:

For perpetrators of non-partner violence it is extremely important to collect data on the sex of the perpetrator (in the DHS6 version some groups are combined such as sister/brother, daughter/son, other relative, teacher...., which makes it impossible to break down by sex)

#### ON HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR:

DV28- while this question is important I think it loses all specificity if it is asked for "all the different things we have been talking about". If this question is being kept in the module it would be more relevant to have this after the set of partner violence questions, and asking this only for the last/most recent partner, to avoid confusion and mix up.

#### ON ATTITUDES:

The UNFPA group suggested adding questions on attitudes, proposing those from the WHO questionnaire. I would disagree with this, as from experience the attitude questions are the least validated, least valid questions and we are not sure in most cases what we are measuring. While the attitude questions assume that women are able to think beyond their 'own reality' this is often not true and thus answers reflect their experience rather than their opinion. Alternatively, in more developed contexts, you get socially desirable answers. From viewpoint of anthropology and cultural relativism they are biased as they 'try to measure if they think what we think that they should think'. So, while they are 'politically important' I think in practice they are often quite meaningless.

#### ON UNDER-15 EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE:

If there are no other questions on under 15 experience of violence I would NOT include the face card. This is because the face card is meant to corroborate earlier given data, to give a second opportunity to disclose the most sensitive type of violence and to assess the degree of underreporting. Having said this, because the module is already very long and complex and under 15 experience of violence is harder to measure and it is not part of the UN VAW indicators, I would suggest NOT to include questions on this topic.

I have written this quite in a hurry (with the deadline coming up!). Please do contact me if you need further clarifications. Thank you for this opportunity and good luck with the next revision!

#### File Attachments

1) [DHS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MODULE - H Jansen.docx](#), downloaded 1397 times

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