**Template for Requests for Revisions to the DHS Model Questionnaires, Optional Modules, and Biomarkers for DHS-8 (2018-2023)**

# **Section I. Information about the requesting party**

1. Is this request being submitted on behalf of a group? If so, please provide the name of the group and the participating parties.

This request is being submitted on behalf of the Center on Gender Equity and Health, University of California San Diego.

# **Section II. Indicator definition and rationale**

2. Please define the indicator or indicators you are requesting The DHS Program to incorporate. *Multiple indicators derived from a single set of questions should be included in the same submission.* (Response required)

Indicator 1: Coercive sexual environment perception scale

Indicator 2: Coercive sexual environment victimization scale

3. What is the rationale for measuring this indicator (each of these indicators) in DHS surveys? (Response required)

A coercive sexual environment refers to an environment or community wherein harassment, domestic violence and sexual exploitation of women and very young girls become part of everyday life 1,2. Studies have shown that majority of women in the world experience such gender-based abuse, with prevalence being higher for those residing in high-poverty communities3. Sexual harassment puts young women at risk of a range of poor outcomes, including a higher likelihood for experiencing intimate partner violence and emotional abuse, substance abuse and poor school performance 4,5. Studies also suggest that in many contexts, girls drop out of school without completing secondary education because of fear of harassment on their way to school 6. While coercive sexual environments have been shown to have long-term effects on women’s well-being, data on its prevalence is scarce. There are no multi-country surveys which collect information on women’s perception as well as experience of a coercive sexual environment. Availability of such data is crucial for countries to develop interventions for prevention of sexual harassment and provide care to victims. We propose two scales for measuring coercive sexual environment perception and victimization respectively. These two scales have been tested and validated by a study carried out among adults in Washington, D.C, USA 7. They have also been adapted and applied for use in India and Niger.

# **Section III. Proposed additions/revisions to the questionnaires or biomarkers**

4. Please describe the requested addition or revision.

*If the requested change is the addition of new questions to the DHS questionnaires or modules, complete questions 4.1 and 4.1.1. If the requested change is a revision to existing questions, complete question 4.2. If the change relates to anthropometry or a biomarker, please complete question 4.3.*

4.1. **For additions**: If you have developed a question or set of questions to measure the indicator(s), please provide them in the space below or in a separate file attached with your submission.

**Indicator 1: Coercive sexual environment perception scale**

Q1: How much of a problem in your neighborhood/village/community is rape or other sexual attacks?

Q2: How much of a problem in your neighborhood/village/community are women or girls trading sex for money?

Q3: How much of a problem in your neighborhood/village/community are men or boys making unwanted sexual comments or gestures toward girls or women?

Q4: How much of a problem in your neighborhood/village/community are men or boys hurting women or girls?

Response Options:Big problem = 2            Some problem = 1         No problem = 0

**Indicator 2: Coercive sexual environment victimization scale**

Q5 (following questions Q1-Q4): How often in the past year, did someone make unwanted sexual comments, jokes or gestures toward you?

Q6: How often in the past year did someone touch, grab, or pinch you in a sexual way that you did not want?

Q7: How often in the past year were you afraid to go places because you were worried about being touched, harassed, or hurt in these ways?

Q8: How often in the past year did someone touch, grab, or pinch you in a sexual way that you did not want?

Q9: How often in the past year were you afraid to go places because you were worried about being touched, harassed, or hurt in these ways?

Response Options:         Every day=2                 1-2x a week =1            Twice a month or more = 0

4.1.1 If requesting multiple questions, please specify the relative priority of each new question.

The proposed indicators are two subscales of the same scale. Both are key, but if one had to be prioritized, the victimization scale would be of greater importance in measuring actual harassment.

4.2. **For revisions to existing questions**: Please specify the DHS-7 question number, the proposed revision to the question, and the rationale.

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| **DHS-7 question number** | **DHS-7 question text** | **Proposed new question** | **Rationale** |
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4.3. **For anthropometry and biomarkers**: Please describe the measurement procedures or specimen collection procedures, point-of-care or laboratory testing procedures (as relevant), and any recommendations for return of results.

5. Can any related questions be deleted from the questionnaire to make room for the proposed new content? If so, please specify which questions using the DHS-7 question numbers.

NA

6. What are the implications of these requested changes on measurement of trends using DHS data?

There is no implication on measurement of trends to adding these two new indicators.

# **Section IV. Indicator calculation**

7. Indicate how to calculate the indicator(s). Include detailed definitions of the numerator and denominator of each individual indicator. If you have developed a tabulation plan for the indicator(s), please attach a file including the suggested table(s) with your submission.

**Indicator 1: Coercive sexual environment perception scale**

Scores from all subscale items (i.e., Q1-Q4) are summed to create a scale ranging from 0 to 8, with higher scores indicating a higher perceptions of a coercive sexual environment (community).

This score is then normalized for further analysis.

**Indicator 2: Coercive sexual environment victimization scale**

Scores from all subscale items (i.e., Q5-Q9) are summed to create a scale ranging from 0 to 10, with higher scores indicating greater exposure to sexual harassment in public spaces.

This score is then normalized for further analysis.

8. Is the indicator useful when measured at the national level, or is it useful only when disaggregated to specific subnational areas, such as endemicity zones or project intervention regions?

*For each indicator, select one of the three options by clicking in the appropriate box.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Useful only for subnational endemicity zones or project intervention regions. A single estimate at the national level is not meaningful. | Useful at both national and subnational regions, as sample size allows. | Useful only at the national level. Subnational estimates are not needed. |
| Indicator 1 |  |  |  |
| Indicator 2 |  |  |  |
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# **Section V. Prior testing of the proposed question(s)**

9. Have the proposed questions undergone any formal validation; i.e., have the questions been tested against a “gold standard” to assess their accuracy? If yes, please describe how well or poorly the questions performed and/or provide a publication or report of the validation exercise (or a link).

The scales were tested for validity where associations between the two scales and well-established indicators of community violence, social disorder, and collective efficacy, in a study conducted in the USA 7. The only modification made was to change “neighborhood” to “neighborhood/ village/ community”, to be more inclusive of different locales globally.

10. Have the questions undergone any other kind of testing; e.g., cognitive testing, pilot testing. If so, please describe the results of the testing and/or provide a publication or report of the findings (or a link).

The scales were tested on adults residing in Washington D.C 7.

# **Section VI. Other considerations**

11. Please provide information relevant to the kinds of questions below, and/or anything else you wish to share with us about this indicator (these indicators).

* Describe how the data for this indicator are being used (or will be used).
  + Are the data produced by this indicator actionable?
  + Who will use the data?
  + What kinds of decisions will be made using these data?
* For what kinds of countries would the indicator(s) be most useful?
* Does the DHS survey offer any particular advantage over other available data sources for measuring this indicator? If so, what?

Indicators 1 and 2 will offer data on assessing coercive sexual environments. These indicators can be used to monitor and track SDG 11.7 (provision of universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities). The data will be actionable by identifying populations which need interventions to make it safer for women. The data will be used by researchers and policy makers who work in the field of gender and women’s well-being. International research efforts aimed at identifying and understanding high-risk populations with respect to safety of women in their environment/communities can benefit from availability of the proposed data. The data will be useful for all countries globally, especially for countries with high prevalence of gender-based violence. DHS surveys are well suited for collection of such data because they offer an opportunity for comparable estimates of coercive sexual environment perception as well as experience.

References

1. Popkin SJ, Acs G, Smith RJCI. Understanding how place matters for kids. 2010; 22(1): 23-6.

2. Popkin SJ, Leventhal T, Weismann GJUAR. Girls in the’hood: How safety affects the life chances of low-income girls. 2010; 45(6): 715-44.

3. Dominguez S, Menjivar C. Beyond individual and visible acts of violence: A framework to examine the lives of women in low-income neighborhoods. Women's Studies International Forum; 2014: Elsevier; 2014. p. 184-95.

4. Hand JZ, Sanchez LJG, Society. Badgering or bantering? Gender differences in experience of, and reactions to, sexual harassment among US high school students. 2000; 14(6): 718-46.

5. Chiodo D, Wolfe DA, Crooks C, Hughes R, Jaffe PJJoAH. Impact of sexual harassment victimization by peers on subsequent adolescent victimization and adjustment: A longitudinal study. 2009; 45(3): 246-52.

6. Nekatibeb TJAA, Ethiopia: A case study of dropouts from the Amhara, Ethiopia Ori. Low participation of female students in primary education. 2002.

7. Popkin S, Hailey C, Zweig J, et al. Coercive sexual environments: Development and validation of a scale. 2019; 34(1): 27-49.