

CHAPTER 14. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In recent years, there has been increasing concern about violence against women in general, and domestic violence in particular, in both developed and developing countries. Not only has domestic violence against women been acknowledged worldwide as a violation of the basic human rights of women, but an increasing amount of research highlights the health burdens, intergenerational effects, and demographic consequences of such violence (United Nations 1993; Heise et al. 1994, 1998; Jejeebhoy 1998). Gender-based violence occurs across all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and in many societies in the Pacific, including RMI, women are socialized to accept, tolerate, and even rationalize domestic violence and to remain silent about such experiences (Zimmerman 1994). Violence of any kind has a serious impact on the economy of a country: because women bear the brunt of domestic violence, they bear the health and psychological burdens as well. Victims of domestic violence are abused inside what should be the most secure environment – their own home.

Worldwide, women experience many forms of violence to a greater extent than men. Violence against women is often referred to as gender-based violence. Gender is the term used to denote the social characteristics assigned to men and women, which interact with other factors such as age, religion, nationality, ethnicity, and social background. Gender-based violence is therefore violence targeted to women or girls on the basis of their subordinate status in society (Heise et al. 1995).

WHO defines violence as ‘the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation’ (Krug et al. 2002). Violence can be self-directed, such as suicidal behavior; interpersonal, such as family or intimate partner violence or violence between individuals who are not related; or collective, including violence by states and organized groups of people. Furthermore, the nature of violent acts may be physical, sexual, or emotional, or may involve neglect or deprivation.

The 2007 RMIDHS included a module of questions that focus on specific aspects of violence within this broad realm. The module addresses women’s and men’s experience of interpersonal violence, including acts of physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Information was collected on both domestic violence (also known as spousal violence or intimate partner violence) and violence by other family members or unrelated individuals. Specifically, this chapter presents the prevalence of women and men who have ever experienced interpersonal violence (physical violence since the age of 15 and lifetime experience of sexual violence), and the prevalence of women and men who have ever experienced intimate partner violence, or experienced it in the past 12 months. In addition, detailed information is presented on intimate partner violence, including the physical consequences of violence and when the partner violence started.

14.1. MEASUREMENT OF VIOLENCE

Collecting valid, reliable, and ethical data on intimate partner violence poses particular challenges because:

- a) what constitutes violence or abuse varies across cultures and individuals;
- b) a culture of silence surrounds domestic violence that can affect reporting; and
- c) the sensitivity of the topic, concerns for the safety of respondents and interviewers when asking about domestic violence in a familial setting, and the protection of women who disclose violence all raise specific ethical concerns.

The responses by the 2007 RMIDHS to these challenges are described below.

14.1.1. The use of valid measures of violence

The 2007 RMIDHS measures violence by spouses and by other household members. Accordingly, information was obtained from ever-married women on violence by spouses and by others, and from never-married women on violence by anyone, including boyfriends.

International research on violence shows that intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of violence against women. Thus, spousal/partner violence was measured in more detail than violence by other perpetrators by using a greatly shortened and modified Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Straus 1990). Specifically, spousal violence was measured using the following set of questions for women:

(Does/did) your (last) husband/partner ever do any of the following things to you?

- a) *Slap you?*
- b) *Twist your arm or pull your hair?*
- c) *Push you, shake you, or throw something at you?*
- d) *Punch you with his fist or hit you with something that could hurt you?*
- e) *Kick you, drag you or beat you up?*
- f) *Try to choke you or burn you on purpose?*
- g) *Threaten or attack you with a knife, gun, or any other weapon?*
- h) *Physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to?*
- i) *Force you to perform any sexual acts you did not want to?*

In cases where the answer was yes, women were asked about the frequency of the act in the 12 months preceding the survey. A 'yes' answer to one or more of items (a) to (g) above constitutes evidence of physical violence, while a 'yes' answer to items (h) or (i) constitutes evidence of sexual violence.

Emotional violence among ever-married women was measured in a similar way, using the following set of questions:

(Does/did) your (last) husband ever:

- a) *Say or do something to humiliate you in front of others?*
- b) *Threaten to hurt or harm you or someone close to you?*
- c) *Insult you or make you feel bad about yourself?*

This approach of asking about specific acts to measure different forms of violence has the advantage of not being affected by different understandings of what constitutes a summary term such as violence. By including a wide range of acts, this approach has the additional advantage of giving the respondent multiple opportunities to disclose any experience of violence.

In addition to these questions asked only of ever-married women, all women were asked about physical violence from persons other than their current or most recent spouse/partner with the question: *From the time you were 15 years old, has anyone [other than your (current/last) husband] hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically?* Respondents who answered this question in the affirmative were asked who had done this to them and the frequency of such violence during the 12 months preceding the survey.

All women were also asked: *At any time in your life, as a child or as an adult, has anyone ever forced you in any way to have sexual intercourse or perform any other sexual acts?* Respondents who said yes were then asked questions about the age at which this first happened and the person who committed the act.

Although this approach to questioning is generally considered to be optimal, the possibility of underreporting of violence, particularly of sexual violence, cannot be entirely ruled out in any survey.

14.1.2. Ethical considerations

Three specific protections were built into the questionnaire, in accordance with WHO's ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence (WHO 2001):

- a) Only one eligible person in each household was administered the questions on violence. In households with more than one eligible woman, the respondent to participate in the module was randomly selected through a specially designed simple selection procedure (based on the 'Kish Grid') that was built into the household questionnaire. Interviewing only one person in each household using the violence module provides assurance to the selected respondent that other respondents in the household will not talk about the types of questions the selected respondent is asked.
- b) Informed consent was obtained from the respondent for the survey at the start of the individual interview. In addition, at the start of the violence section, the respondents were read an additional statement informing them that the proceeding questions could be sensitive and reassuring them of the confidentiality of their responses.
- c) The violence module was implemented only if privacy could be obtained. If privacy could not be obtained, the interviewer was instructed to skip the module, thank the respondent,

and end the interview. If a translator was needed to conduct the interview, in order to maintain privacy, respondents were not asked questions from the violence module.

14.1.3. Special training for implementing the domestic violence module

Complete privacy was also essential for ensuring the security of the respondent and the interviewer. Asking about or reporting violence, especially in households where the perpetrator may be present at the time of interview, carries the risk of further violence. Accordingly, interviewers were provided specific training for implementing the violence module to enable the field staff to collect violence data in a secure, confidential, and ethical manner.

Although most women interviewed do not necessarily ask for help, some abused women may ask the interviewer for assistance. To prepare for this possibility, interviewers were trained to instruct the respondents that they could seek help from a Police, Probation and Social Welfare Officer. These officers are responsible for handling social welfare matters, including the welfare of children and families.

14.2. EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE BY WOMEN AGED 15–49 AND MEN AGED 15–54

This section of the chapter discusses women's experience of violence from any individual. The section begins by examining experience of physical violence since age 15 and physical violence during pregnancy, and continues by presenting data on lifetime experience of sexual violence. Background characteristics associated with increased risk of violence are also discussed.

14.2.1. Physical violence since age 15

Table 14.1 shows the distribution of women and men who have experienced physical violence since age 15, ever and in the previous 12 months, by background characteristics. About 3 in 10 women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. More than half of these women, or 22 percent of all women, have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months. Four percent of women experience physical violence often, while 18 percent experienced violence occasionally in the past 12 months.

The proportion of women who have experienced physical violence is highest among women aged 25–39. However, women aged 15–19 are most likely to report having experienced physical violence in the past 12 months (30 percent). Although there is very little difference between employed and unemployed women in their experiences, women who are employed are a little more likely to report having experienced physical violence since age 15, while unemployed women are more likely to have experienced physical violence often in the past 12 months than women who are employed for cash (5 percent compared to 3 percent).

Marshallese women who are married or living with their partner are less likely to have ever experienced physical violence (27 percent) than women who are currently divorced/widowed/separated (58 percent). The pattern for recent violence is the same, with currently married women less likely to have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months (20 percent) and currently divorced/widowed/separated women more likely (51 percent). Parity is also related to experience of physical violence. Women with one or two living children are less likely to have experienced physical violence since age 15 and in the past 12 months than other

women. Marshallese women with no children are the most likely to have experienced physical violence since age 15 and in the past 12 months.

Table 14.1. Experience of physical violence

Percentage of women aged 15–49 who have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 and percentage who have experienced physical violence during the 12 months preceding the survey, by background characteristics Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Percentage who have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 ¹	Percentage who have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months			Number of women
		Often	Sometimes	Often or sometimes	
Age					
15–19	(34.5)	(7.8)	(22.0)	(29.8)	31
20–24	24.7	3.1	19.3	22.4	122
25–29	32.8	2.3	23.9	26.2	178
30–39	28.3	4.7	15.7	20.4	315
40–49	25.8	4.4	13.9	18.4	213
Employed last 12 months					
Not employed	28.1	4.7	17.6	22.2	537
Employed	28.6	3.0	17.8	20.9	323
Marital status					
Married or living together	26.8	3.0	17.3	20.2	818
Divorced/separated/widowed	(57.8)	(24.7)	(25.9)	(50.6)	42
Number of living children					
0	35.5	4.1	17.4	21.5	64
1–2	23.5	2.7	17.8	20.5	248
3–4	27.0	3.8	17.0	20.8	262
5+	32.0	5.4	18.3	23.7	287
Residence					
Urban	28.8	4.3	17.7	22.0	635
Rural	27.0	3.3	17.6	20.9	225
Education					
No education/primary	29.3	3.1	16.2	19.3	209
Secondary	29.2	4.6	19.2	23.8	523
More than secondary	23.0	3.3	13.7	17.1	128
Wealth quintile					
Lowest	27.9	2.0	20.7	22.8	158
Second	34.7	6.5	20.5	27.1	163
Middle	28.3	4.7	18.7	23.4	187
Fourth	27.1	4.3	15.1	19.4	172
Highest	24.1	2.6	13.9	16.4	180
Total	28.3	4.0	17.7	21.7	860

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases.

¹ Includes in the past 12 months

Physical violence is higher among Marshallese women in urban areas than in rural areas (29 percent compared with 27 percent). Women in rural areas are more likely to have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months, and to have experienced it often during that time.

Experiencing physical violence ever and in the past 12 months is highest among women with secondary-level education (29 percent and 24 percent respectively). Although women with no or primary education and those with secondary education are equally likely to have ever experienced

physical violence, women with secondary education are more likely to have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months (24 percent compared to 19 percent). Marshallese women with ‘more than secondary’ education are least likely to have experienced physical violence since age 15 and also least likely to have experienced physical violence in the 12 months before the 2007 DHS (23 percent and 17 percent respectively). By wealth quintile, there is no clear pattern in women ever experiencing physical violence. Nevertheless, information from Table 14.1 shows that Marshallese women in the highest wealth quintile are the least likely to have experienced physical violence since age 15 or in the past 12 months.

Among women who have ever experienced physical violence and among women who have experienced sexual violence, Table 14.2 shows the percentages who reported specific persons who committed the violence. Since respondents could have experienced violence at the hands of several people, the percentages do not sum to 100. Among women who have experienced physical violence since age 15, 72 percent report that a current husband or partner committed physical violence against them, while 21 percent report they experienced violence by a former husband/partner. Other perpetrators commonly reported by women are parents or stepparents (20 percent), and sisters and brothers (6 percent).

A similar pattern is observed among women who have ever experienced sexual violence. Half of them (50 percent) report that a current husband or partner committed that sexual violence against them, while 5 percent report that a former husband/partner committed the violence. Other perpetrators commonly reported by women include strangers (2 percent).

Table 14.2. Persons committing physical and sexual violence

Among women aged 15–49 who have experienced physical violence since age 15, and among women aged 15–49 who have experienced sexual violence, percentage who report specific persons who committed the violence, Marshall Islands 2007

Person	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Current husband/partner	71.5	50.2
Former husband/partner	21.4	5.3
Current boyfriend	1.9	na
Former boyfriend	2.4	na
Father/stepfather	7.0	0.4
Mother/stepmother	13.1	na
Sister/brother	5.6	na
Other relative	1.8	0.5
Mother-in-law	1.1	na
Family friend	na	0.3
Stranger	na	1.7
Other	0.8	na
Number of women	243	168

na = not applicable

14.2.2. Physical violence during pregnancy

Women who have ever been pregnant were asked about their experience of physical violence during pregnancy. The findings presented in Table 14.3 indicate that overall, 7 percent of Marshallese women have experienced physical violence while pregnant. Results by background characteristics reveal that the likelihood of having experienced violence during pregnancy decreases with increasing age but increases with the number of living children. For instance, 9 percent of women aged 15–19 years are likely to have experienced violence during pregnancy compared to 5 percent of women aged 45–49 years. In contrast, 5 percent of women who have ever been pregnant and have 1–2 living children have experienced violence compared to 10 percent of women who have five or more children. This relationship is not unexpected, because women with more living children have had more pregnancies and thus greater exposure to the risk of physical violence during pregnancy.

Table 14.3. Violence during pregnancy

Among women aged 15–49 who have ever been pregnant, percentage who have ever experienced physical violence during pregnancy, by background characteristics, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Percentage who have ever experienced physical violence during pregnancy	Number of women who have ever been pregnant
Age		
15–19	(8.9)	25
20–24	8.5	112
25–29	8.0	165
30–39	6.8	310
40–49	5.3	203
Marital status		
Married or living together	6.9	775
Divorced/separated/widowed	(8.5)	40
Number of living children		
0	*	19
1–2	5.2	248
3–4	5.0	262
5+	9.7	287
Residence		
Urban	7.5	603
Rural	5.6	212
Education		
No education/primary	6.4	199
Secondary	7.0	501
More than secondary	8.0	115
Wealth quintile		
Lowest	5.7	149
Second	4.6	160
Middle	9.8	179
Fourth	10.5	163
Highest	3.9	164
Total	7.0	815

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

There appears to be little difference by marital status; however, married women or those in a living-together arrangement are less likely to have experienced physical violence during pregnancy than those who are divorced, separated, or widowed (7 percent compared to 9 percent). Eight percent of urban women have experienced physical violence while pregnant compared with 6 percent of rural women. Obviously, this urban/rural experience of violence during pregnancy reflects the prevalence of ever having experienced physical violence (see Table 14.1), with women in urban areas being most at risk. Relatively higher levels of physical violence during pregnancy are also found among women in the middle to the fourth wealth quintiles. Women with secondary or higher levels of education are more likely to have experienced physical violence during pregnancy than those with lower education.

14.2.3. Lifetime sexual violence

The 2007 RMIDHS investigated women's experience of sexual violence, including a question on whether the respondent's first sexual intercourse was forced against his or her will. Table 14.4 shows that first sexual intercourse is much more common among women aged less than 15–29. Eight percent reported that their first sexual intercourse was forced against their will. These women are more likely to have experienced the forced sexual encounter before first marriage or first cohabitation than at the time of first marriage or first cohabitation (9 percent compared to 6 percent).

Table 14.4. Force at sexual initiation

Percentage of women aged 15–49 who have ever had sexual intercourse who say that their first experience of sexual intercourse was forced against their will, by age at first sexual intercourse and whether the first sexual intercourse was at the time of first marriage or before, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Percentage whose first sexual intercourse was forced against their will	Number of women who have ever had sex
Age at first sexual intercourse		
<15	10.9	102
15–19	7.2	648
20–24	15.9	64
25–29	*	3
Missing	(3.0)	42
First sexual intercourse was:		
At the time of first marriage/first cohabitation	6.3	236
Before first marriage/first cohabitation ¹	9.1	582
Missing	(3.1)	42
Total	8.0	860

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ Includes never-married women

In addition to the question on whether first sexual intercourse was forced, the 2007 RMIDHS included two sets of questions on sexual violence. Sexual violence limits women's ability to practice safer sex and to protect themselves from STIs and unwanted pregnancies (WHO 1997). The first set of questions asked only ever-married respondents about sexual violence committed by their current spouse if they were currently married, and their most recent spouse if they were

currently divorced, separated, or widowed. The second set asked all respondents whether they had ever, as a child or as an adult, experienced sexual violence. *Sexual violence here includes being forced to have sexual intercourse or perform any other sexual act against one's will.* Tables 14.5 and 14.6 present the results on experiencing any sexual violence. The results on sexual violence by a spouse or intimate partner are explored in Section 14.3, 'Spousal/intimate partner violence'.

Table 14.5. Experience of sexual violence

Percentage of women aged 15–49 who have ever experienced sexual violence, by background characteristics, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Percentage who have ever experienced sexual violence ¹	Number of women
Age		
15–19	(33.2)	31
20–24	21.0	122
25–29	20.7	178
30–39	21.6	315
40–49	12.7	213
Employed last 12 months		
Not employed	19.3	537
Employed	19.9	323
Marital status		
Married or living together	18.4	818
Divorced/separated/widowed	(41.2)	42
Residence		
Urban	19.2	635
Rural	20.6	225
Education		
No education/primary	24.4	209
Secondary	20.0	523
More than secondary	9.9	128
Wealth quintile		
Lowest	20.2	158
Second	19.1	163
Middle	28.5	187
Fourth	13.7	172
Highest	15.7	180
Total	19.5	860

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ Including those whose sexual initiation was forced against their will

As shown in Table 14.5, almost one in five women (20 percent) have experienced sexual violence. Women aged 15–19 are more likely to have experienced sexual violence. Women who are employed, are divorced/separated/widowed, and live in rural areas are more likely than other women to have experienced sexual violence. The likelihood of experiencing sexual violence decreases with a woman's educational attainment, and is higher among women in the middle wealth quintiles than those in the lowest, followed by those in the highest quintiles.

14.2.4. Physical or sexual violence

Table 14.6 shows the percentages of respondents who have received different combinations of physical and sexual violence, by age. Overall, 17 percent of women aged 15–49 have experienced only physical violence, while 8 percent have experienced only sexual violence. Over 1 in 10 women (12 percent) have experienced both physical and sexual violence, and almost 4 in 10 have experienced either physical or sexual violence (36 percent). The likelihood of having experienced either physical or sexual violence decreases with age, from 50 percent among women aged 15–19 to 30 percent among women aged 40–49.

Table 14.6. Experience of different forms of violence

Percentage of women aged 15–49 who have experienced different forms of violence by current age, Marshall Islands 2007

Age	Physical violence only	Sexual violence only ¹	Physical and sexual violence ¹	Physical or sexual violence ¹	Number of women
15–19	(16.7)	(15.4)	(17.8)	(49.9)	31
20–24	14.7	10.9	10.1	35.6	122
25–29	16.6	4.6	16.1	37.4	178
30–39	17.4	10.8	10.8	39.0	315
40–49	17.2	4.1	8.6	29.9	213
Total	16.8	8.0	11.5	36.3	860

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases.

¹ Including those whose sexual initiation was forced against their will

14.3. SPOUSAL/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

This section of the chapter is devoted to violence perpetrated by intimate partners who are married to the respondent, or who live with the respondent as if married. Since spousal or intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence for women aged 15–49, the 2007 RMIDHS collected detailed information on the different types of violence experienced – physical, sexual, and emotional. Currently married women were asked about violence perpetrated by their current husband, and formerly married women were asked about violence perpetrated by their most recent husband.

14.3.1. Degree of marital control exercised by husbands

Marshallese women were asked about six specific acts of control exercised by their husbands or partners. The results are summarized in Table 14.7, which shows the percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 whose husband/partner has ever demonstrated specific types of controlling behaviors, according to background characteristics of the respondent.

Four in 10 (40 percent) Marshallese women said that their husbands or partners insist on knowing where they are at all times. Similarly, almost 4 in 10 (38 percent) women reported that their husband or partner is jealous or angry if they talk to other men, and a similar proportion (36 percent) of women cited that they are frequently accused of being unfaithful. One in five respondents (20 percent) went on to say that they are not permitted to meet their female friends, and 17 percent said that their husband or partner does not trust them with any money.

Overall, the husbands or partners of almost a third of the respondents (32 percent) display three or more of the specific behaviors described in Table 14.7, compared to 44 percent who said that their husbands or partners do not display any of the specific behaviors listed. In terms of experience by age, there is little variation observed; however, women aged 20–39 are more likely to have experienced three or more of the specific behaviors listed compared to younger and older age groups. As for experience by employment status in the last 12 months, employed women are least likely to experience three or more of the specific behaviors listed (29 percent) compared to 34 percent for unemployed women. Meanwhile, women with zero living children and those with five children or more are very likely to have experienced three or more of the specific behaviors listed compared to women of other parities.

By marital status and duration, almost 6 in 10 divorced, separated, or widowed women are more likely to have experienced any three or more of the controlling behaviors listed, while those married more than once have experienced the second-highest level of three or more specific controlling behaviors listed. There is no specific pattern by marital duration; however, those women who have only married once and are in their first 0–4 years of marital duration and those married for 10 or more years are equally likely to have experienced three or more of the controlling behaviors listed in Table 14.7.

Table 14.7. Degree of marital control exercised by husbands

Percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 whose husband/partner ever demonstrates specific types of controlling behaviors, according to background characteristics, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Percentage of women whose husband:								Number of women
	Is jealous or angry if she talks to other men	Frequently accuses her of being unfaithful	Does not permit her to meet her female friends	Tries to limit her contact with her family	Insists on knowing where she is at all times	Does not trust her with any money	Displays 3 or more of the specific behaviors	Displays none of the specific behaviors	
Age									
15–19	(26.7)	(29.7)	(15.0)	(8.9)	(39.8)	(26.1)	(26.9)	(49.7)	31
20–24	39.5	34.8	22.9	13.5	41.3	20.1	33.7	40.1	122
25–29	40.5	42.7	23.3	9.3	44.5	16.5	35.3	40.9	178
30–39	40.0	35.4	20.1	6.2	42.3	14.3	32.0	40.7	315
40–49	31.8	31.7	17.7	7.6	33.6	16.4	28.6	51.1	213
Employed last 12 months									
Not employed	40.6	36.2	20.7	9.4	41.8	15.9	33.6	43.4	537
Employed	32.5	35.1	19.9	6.5	38.0	17.6	29.2	43.7	323
Number of living children									
0	40.9	41.8	22.1	14.8	43.0	9.7	39.4	43.3	64
1–2	31.1	28.6	17.4	6.7	37.1	19.6	23.7	46.0	248
3–4	35.0	30.8	22.4	7.5	32.9	17.4	29.1	46.9	262
5+	44.6	44.9	20.7	9.0	49.5	14.6	39.8	38.5	287
Marital status and duration									
Currently married woman	36.1	34.5	18.1	7.4	39.7	16.2	30.7	44.8	818
..Married only once	33.4	31.7	15.6	7.5	37.3	14.7	27.8	47.7	619
...0–4 years	32.5	32.4	19.8	7.8	43.2	17.1	26.3	43.5	137
...5–9 years	34.9	29.3	13.6	8.1	29.9	18.4	27.3	49.8	156
... 10+ years	33.1	32.6	14.8	7.1	38.3	12.0	28.7	48.4	327
..Married more than once	44.7	43.1	26.0	7.0	47.2	20.6	39.4	36.1	199
..Divorced/separated/widowed	(67.2)	(61.7)	(66.4)	(27.9)	(55.6)	(24.5)	(58.5)	(15.1)	40
Residence									
Urban	38.1	34.6	19.4	6.0	40.6	14.1	30.8	44.4	635
Rural	36.0	38.7	23.1	14.9	39.8	23.3	34.9	41.1	225
Education									
No education/primary	38.5	39.3	20.7	12.2	43.5	19.8	34.9	40.9	209
Secondary	37.4	34.7	21.5	7.9	40.1	15.6	31.7	44.1	523
More than secondary	36.7	34.2	15.3	3.6	36.3	14.7	27.7	45.7	128

Table 14.7. (Continued)

Characteristics	Percentage of women whose husband:										Number of women
	Is jealous or angry if she talks to other men	Frequently accuses her of being unfaithful	Does not permit her to meet her female friends	Tries to limit her contact with her family	Insists on knowing where she is at all times	Does not trust her with any money	Displays 3 or more of the specific behaviors	Displays none of the specific behaviors			
Wealth quintile											
Lowest	36.1	36.9	20.8	13.5	37.4	20.0	35.5	45.4		158	
Second	45.6	45.4	24.9	10.6	49.7	27.2	44.1	33.7		163	
Middle	35.1	36.9	21.7	7.6	44.8	14.9	30.7	42.2		187	
Fourth	39.1	40.8	23.2	6.9	41.2	7.8	31.2	44.7		172	
Highest	32.4	19.7	11.8	3.9	29.2	13.7	19.6	51.1		180	
Total	37.5	35.7	20.4	8.3	40.4	16.5	31.9	43.6		860	

Notes: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. Women not currently married were asked questions about the behavior of their most recent husband/partner using the past tense.

More Marshallese women in rural areas than in urban areas (35 percent compared with 31 percent) are likely to have experienced three or more controlling behaviors from their husbands or partners. However, more urban women are likely to have experienced jealousy or anger leveled at them if they talk to other men than women in rural areas (38 percent compared to 36 percent). With increasing levels of education, controlling behaviors by husbands or partners are likely to decrease, as observed in Table 14.7. For example, the proportion of women who reported three or more controlling behaviors by their husband or partner for those with no or primary education is 35 percent compared to 28 percent for those with ‘more than secondary’ education. As for household wealth quintile, it appears that husbands’ or partners’ controlling behaviors experienced by women in the poorest households are high compared to the level reported by women in the wealthiest households (36 percent compared to 20 percent report three or more of the listed controlling behaviors).

14.3.2. Physical, sexual, or emotional violence

Respondents were asked about seven specific acts of physical violence, two of sexual violence, and three of emotional violence. The acts are listed in Table 14.8, with the results showing that 22 percent of women have experienced physical violence at the hands of their husband or partner, 11 percent have experienced sexual violence, and 15 percent have experienced emotional violence. Overall, almost one-third of ever-married women (30 percent) have experienced any kind of violence (physical, sexual, or emotional) by a husband or other intimate partner.

Among the physical acts of violence, slapping was the most commonly reported act, experienced by 17 percent of women, while 14 percent have been pushed or shaken or have had something thrown at them by their husbands or partners. Ten percent of women have been forced to have sex by their husbands/partners when they did not want to, and 10 percent of women have been humiliated in front of others.

Table 14.8. Forms of spousal violence

Percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 who have experienced various forms of violence ever or in the 12 months preceding the survey, committed by their husband/partner, Marshall Islands 2007

Forms of violence	Ever	In the past 12 months ¹		
		Often	Sometimes	Often or sometimes
Physical violence				
Any	22.1	3.6	16.1	19.7
..Pushed her, shook her, or threw something at her	13.6	1.8	11.0	12.8
..Slapped her	17.2	2.3	13.5	15.7
..Twisted her arm or pulled her hair	8.3	1.4	5.8	7.2
..Punched her with his fist or hit her with something that could hurt her	11.3	1.7	8.6	10.3
..Kicked her, dragged her, or beat her up	6.7	0.8	5.7	6.5
..Tried to choke her or burn her on purpose	2.6	0.4	1.7	2.1
..Threatened or attacked her with a knife, gun, or any other weapon	2.9	0.7	2.0	2.7
Sexual violence				
Any	10.6	1.4	9.0	10.4
..Physically forced her to have sexual intercourse with him when she did not want to	9.7	1.1	8.2	9.3
..Forced her to perform sexual acts she did not want to	8.7	0.9	7.7	8.7
Emotional violence				
Any	14.7	3.3	10.5	13.8
..Said or did something to humiliate her in front of others	9.6	2.3	6.5	8.8
..Threatened to hurt or harm her or someone close to her	8.6	2.0	5.9	8.0
..Insulted her or made her feel bad about herself	3.9	0.7	2.9	3.6
Any form of physical and/or sexual violence	26.9	4.3	20.4	24.7
Any form of physical and sexual violence	5.9	1.7	4.1	5.8
Any form of emotional, physical and/or sexual violence	29.6	5.4	22.2	27.6
Any form of emotional, physical and sexual violence	3.7	1.5	2.2	3.7
Number of ever-married women	860	846	846	846

¹ Excludes widows

Table 14.9 shows the experience of ever-married women with different types of violence by background characteristics. Among ever-married women, as age increases their experience of emotional, physical, and sexual violence at the hands of their husband or other intimate partner reduces (42 percent for age 15–19 years reduces to 24 percent for age 45–49 years). Those who are employed are least likely to have experienced emotional, physical, and sexual violence at the hands of their husband or other intimate partner, while those who are unemployed are most likely to have experienced each type. As parity increases, Marshallese women are more likely to have experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence at the hands of their husband or other intimate partner. For example, one-quarter (25 percent) of women with zero parity have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence at the hands of their husband or other intimate partner compared to almost one-third of women with five or more living children.

Once again, marital status shows a strong relationship with experience of violence. Women who are divorced, separated, or widowed are most likely to have experienced each type of violence. This finding suggests that experience of violence may increase the likelihood of a relationship ending. Currently married women in their first marriage are less likely than currently married women who have married more than once to have experienced physical and sexual violence by their husbands (25 percent compared to 34 percent). Among women who have married only once, there is no clear pattern on their likelihood of having experienced each type of violence; however, those in their first 0–4 years are more likely to have experienced all kinds of abuse compared to those in longer duration of union.

Table 14.9. Spousal violence by background characteristics

Percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 by whether they have ever experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner, according to background characteristics, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence	Number of women
Age						
15–19	(17.1)	(29.8)	(12.8)	(38.6)	(41.8)	31
20–24	11.8	19.7	11.4	26.5	27.5	122
25–29	17.5	28.4	16.6	32.5	34.6	178
30–39	13.3	21.8	10.8	28.1	30.1	315
40–49	15.7	17.6	4.5	18.7	23.9	213
Employed last 12 months						
Not employed	16.4	21.5	11.1	27.0	30.7	537
Employed	11.9	23.2	9.8	26.6	27.8	323
Number of living children						
0	12.2	21.2	5.9	21.6	24.9	64
1–2	9.5	20.7	11.4	26.4	28.0	248
3–4	16.5	22.5	12.1	28.5	30.2	262
5+	18.0	23.2	9.6	26.9	31.3	287
Marital status and duration						
Currently married woman	13.1	20.4	10.2	25.2	27.6	818
..Married only once	11.6	17.8	9.7	22.8	25.4	619
....0–4 years	18.6	26.8	11.7	32.9	35.2	137
....5–9 years	7.3	14.2	11.2	19.4	20.5	156
....10+ years	10.8	15.7	8.2	20.2	23.7	327
..Married more than once	17.7	28.7	11.4	32.6	34.2	199
Divorced/separated/widowed	(46.4)	(57.1)	(20.1)	(61.8)	(71.3)	40
Residence						
Urban	15.2	22.6	9.9	26.8	30.0	635
Rural	13.1	20.7	12.5	27.0	28.4	225
Education						
No education/primary	11.8	19.3	11.0	24.3	26.5	209
Secondary	16.8	24.3	11.7	29.3	32.1	523
More than secondary	10.4	17.7	5.3	21.3	24.2	128
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	12.4	22.9	13.4	29.2	29.7	158
Second	19.3	25.1	9.2	30.5	35.4	163
Middle	13.8	22.0	14.2	27.9	31.2	187
Fourth	17.6	22.4	10.5	26.8	29.5	172
Highest	10.5	18.6	5.7	20.5	22.4	180
Respondent's father beat her mother						
Yes	19.1	25.5	14.5	31.5	34.8	228
No	11.1	19.0	9.6	23.8	25.8	544
DK	25.2	32.7	6.7	33.7	39.2	88
Total	14.7	22.1	10.6	26.9	29.6	860

Notes: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. Women not currently married were asked questions about the behavior of their most recent husband/partner using the past tense.

Rural women are less likely to have experienced each type of violence at the hands of their husband than urban women. Women with secondary education are more likely to have suffered each type of violence at the hands of their husband, while those with no or primary education are more likely than those with 'more than secondary' education to have experienced physical or sexual violence by their husband.

The results from Table 14.9 show also that as household wealth increases, the level of violence to women decreases. For instance, women in the highest wealth quintile are least likely to have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence at the hands of their husband or other intimate partner compared to women in lower wealth quintiles.

Respondents who in the past have witnessed or experienced violence committed by their father against their mother are more likely to have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence at the hands of their own husband or other intimate partner than respondents who have not (35 percent compared to 26 percent).

14.3.3. Frequency of spousal abuse

Table 14.10 show the percent distribution of ever-married respondents who reported emotional violence and who reported physical or sexual violence by current or most recent spouse in the 12 months preceding the survey and the frequency with which violence was experienced, according to selected background characteristics. Ninety-three percent of women who have ever experienced emotional violence by their current or most recent husband experienced such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, and 22 percent of them experienced emotional violence often. Similarly, 90 percent of women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by their current or most recent husband experienced such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, and 14 percent experienced such violence often.

For women who have ever experienced spousal emotional, physical, or sexual violence, those who are unemployed are more likely to have experienced such violence ‘often’ in the past 12 months than those who are employed for cash, who are more likely to have experienced such violence ‘sometimes’ in the past 12 months.

As regards women who have ever experienced spousal emotional, physical, or sexual violence by parity, the likelihood of experiencing such violence ‘often’ in the past 12 months increases with increasing parity (increasing number of living children).

Among women who have ever experienced spousal emotional, physical, or sexual violence, it appears that the likelihood of experiencing such violence in the past 12 months decreases with increasing age; however, more information is needed to confirm this pattern. As can be expected, the frequency of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey among women who report ever experiencing violence is higher for currently married women than for women who are separated or divorced. However, currently married women who have been married more than once are more likely than currently married women in their first marriage to have experienced violence in the past 12 months, and to have experienced it ‘sometimes’. Meanwhile, currently married women in their first marriage are more likely to have experienced violence in the past 12 months often than those who have been married more than once.

Differentials by residence show that women who have ever experienced spousal emotional, physical, or sexual violence are more likely to have experienced such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, and to have experienced it more often if they live in urban areas than if they live in rural areas.

Women who have ever experienced spousal violence and have secondary-level education are more likely than women with no or primary-level education to have experienced spousal violence in the past 12 months and to have experienced violence often in the past 12 months.

Table 14.10. Frequency of spousal violence among those who report violence

Percent distribution of ever-married women aged 15–49 (excluding widows) who have ever suffered emotional violence committed by their husband/partner by frequency of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey and percent distribution of those who have ever suffered physical or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner by frequency of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, according to background characteristics, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Frequency of emotional violence in the past 12 months				Number of women	Frequency of physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months				Number of women
	Often	Sometimes	Not at all	Total		Often	Sometimes	Not at all	Total	
Age										
15–19	*	*	*	100.0	5	*	*	*	100.0	12
20–24	*	*	*	100.0	14	(13.9)	(83.7)	(2.3)	100.0	33
25–29	(6.6)	(87.8)	(5.6)	100.0	31	5.4	89.5	5.2	100.0	58
30–39	(23.7)	(76.1)	(0.2)	100.0	37	15.2	71.2	13.7	100.0	83
40–49	(28.1)	(56.6)	(15.4)	100.0	28	(19.5)	(62.4)	(18.2)	100.0	38
Employed last 12 months										
Not employed	29.4	66.4	4.1	100.0	80	15.4	75.4	9.2	100.0	138
Employed	(6.7)	(81.0)	(12.3)	100.0	37	10.2	78.9	10.8	100.0	85
Number of living children										
0	*	*	*	100.0	*	*	*	*	100.0	14
1–2	(18.4)	(71.5)	(10.1)	100.0	23	8.7	88.4	3.0	100.0	65
3–4	(18.2)	(71.7)	(10.2)	100.0	39	13.6	73.0	13.4	100.0	69
5+	(25.1)	(71.6)	(3.3)	100.0	46	16.9	69.5	13.6	100.0	75
Marital status and duration										
Currently married woman	19.0	76.4	4.5	100.0	106	10.9	80.0	9.2	100.0	206
..Married only once	26.5	66.8	6.8	100.0	70	12.7	76.4	10.9	100.0	141
....0–4 years	*	*	*	100.0	25	(18.0)	(80.3)	(1.7)	100.0	45
....5–9 years	*	*	*	100.0	11	(8.8)	(87.7)	(3.5)	100.0	30
....10+ years	(30.5)	(62.4)	(7.1)	100.0	34	10.8	68.6	20.6	100.0	66
..Married more than once	(4.2)	(95.8)	(0.0)	100.0	35	6.9	87.7	5.4	100.0	65
Divorced/separated	*	*	*	100.0	*	*	*	*	100.0	18
Residence										
Urban	25.0	69.5	5.5	100.0	87	15.1	73.6	11.2	100.0	164
Rural	14.6	74.9	10.5	100.0	29	8.9	85.2	5.9	100.0	60
Education										
No education/primary	(14.7)	(76.9)	(8.4)	100.0	23	5.6	75.4	19.0	100.0	48
Secondary	26.0	67.6	6.5	100.0	82	15.6	77.1	7.4	100.0	149
More than secondary	*	*	*	100.0	*	*	*	*	100.0	27
Total	22.4	70.9	6.7	100.0	116	13.5	76.7	9.8	100.0	224

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed. Table excludes widows who were not asked about spousal violence in the past 12 months, and includes one woman who was employed not for cash in the last 12 months.

14.3.4. Spousal violence by husband's characteristics

Table 14.11 shows the percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 who have suffered emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner according to his characteristics, marital characteristics, and women's empowerment indicators. Among respondents who experienced such violence, those whose husbands or partners have secondary or higher level of education are more likely to experience emotional, physical, or sexual violence than those whose husbands or partners are less educated.

A husband's alcohol consumption and, particularly, how often he gets drunk are associated with spousal violence. Interestingly, women who report that their husbands never drink are as likely to experience each type of spousal violence as women who report that their husbands drink. Spouses who report that their husbands get drunk often are more likely to have experienced each type of violence than those whose husbands get drunk sometimes. For example, 43 percent of women whose husbands get drunk very often have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence, compared with 38 percent of those whose husbands get drunk sometimes and 20 percent of those whose husbands do not drink.

Table 14.11. Spousal violence by husband's characteristics and empowerment indicators

Percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 who have ever suffered emotional, physical or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner, according to his characteristics, marital characteristics, and empowerment indicators, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence	Number of women
Husband's/partner's education						
No education/primary	11.1	17.2	9.6	23.5	27.0	210
Secondary+	15.6	23.9	10.7	27.8	30.0	641
Don't know/missing	*	*	*	*	*	7
Husband's/partner's alcohol consumption						
Does not drink	7.2	14.2	7.4	18.2	20.2	436
Drinks/never gets drunk	*	*	*	*	*	5
Gets drunk sometimes	20.7	29.0	13.7	35.2	38.2	377
Gets drunk very often	(29.8)	(36.9)	(15.5)	(36.9)	(43.3)	41
Spousal age difference¹						
Wife older	10.5	16.8	8.0	20.8	25.0	177
Wife same age	10.3	19.9	10.6	24.5	24.5	83
Wife 1–4 years younger	15.0	24.0	9.8	29.0	30.8	311
Wife 5–9 years younger	12.4	18.3	12.1	24.3	26.6	168
Wife 10+ years younger	16.6	19.3	12.1	22.5	25.5	77
Spousal education difference						
Husband better educated	13.0	23.4	11.2	26.9	28.0	360
Wife better educated	17.9	25.2	9.3	29.5	32.9	283
Both equally educated	12.5	16.3	10.7	22.9	26.9	203
Number of marital control behaviors displayed by husband/partner						
0	2.4	4.6	0.5	5.0	5.5	374
1–2	11.7	21.1	14.1	30.7	33.2	212
3–4	29.1	44.0	18.1	51.4	57.9	216
5–6	50.2	56.3	34.5	61.9	64.9	59
Number of decisions in which women participate¹						
0	21.5	21.3	8.9	23.6	27.3	121
1–2	14.1	21.8	13.6	28.6	31.0	130
3–4	11.1	19.9	9.6	24.7	26.8	568

Table 14.11. (Continued)

Characteristics	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence	Number of women
Number of reasons for which violence against women is considered to be justified						
0	15.7	20.2	5.7	21.0	24.9	351
1–2	19.0	29.6	3.8	30.6	35.2	138
3–4	9.9	17.5	17.9	28.7	29.8	265
5	17.2	30.3	17.3	36.8	37.2	106
Total	14.7	22.1	10.6	26.9	29.6	860

Notes: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed. Women not currently married were asked questions about the behavior of their most recent husband using the past tense.

¹Currently married women

Total includes one woman with missing information on her husband's/partner's alcohol consumption and two women with missing information on spousal age difference, who are not shown separately.

Table 14.11 shows that spousal age differences are associated with violence. For example, wives who are older than or the same age as their husbands or partners are less likely to have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence than wives who are younger than their husbands or partners. As regards spousal education differences, wives who are equally as educated as their husbands or partners are less likely to have experienced all three types of violence than wives who are better educated than their husbands or spouses, followed next by wives whose husbands are more educated than them.

Marital control behaviors displayed by husbands/partners (as listed in Table 14.7) appear to be strongly associated with spousal violence. Table 14.11 shows clearly that as the number of marital control behaviors displayed by the husband/partner increases, the proportion of wives experiencing emotional, physical, or sexual violence also increases.

Women's participation in household or family decision-making probably does not have a strong association with emotional, physical, or sexual violence experienced at the hands of their husbands or partners. The results shown in Table 14.11 show some variation within each violence category; however, overall there is little variation in the experience of all three categories (emotional, physical, or sexual) as the number of decisions where women participate increases.

There is some relationship between the reasons for which violence against women is considered justified and the emotional, physical, or sexual violence women experience at the hands of their husbands or partners. As the evidence in Table 14.11 shows, in general as the number of reasons for which violence against women is considered justified increases, the proportion of women respondents who experience violence at the hands of their husbands or partners increases.

Meanwhile, Table 14.12 shows the percent distribution of ever-married women by number of years between marriage and first experience of physical or sexual violence by their husband/partner, if ever, according to marital status and duration.

Table 14.12. Onset of marital violence

Percent distribution of ever-married women by number of years between marriage and first experience of physical or sexual violence by their husband/partner, if ever, according to marital status and duration, Marshall Islands 2007

Marital status and duration	Experienced no violence	Before marriage ¹	Years between marriage ¹ and first experience of violence					Don't know/missing	Total	Number of women
			<1 year	1–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10+ years			
Currently married	74.8	8.3	3.4	5.9	4.2	1.0	0.5	1.8	100.0	818
...Married only once	77.2	8.3	2.9	4.6	3.6	1.0	0.5	2.0	100.0	619
....< 3 years	71.0	11.8	9.5	1.8	–	–	–	5.9	100.0	66
....3–5 years	71.1	9.6	6.2	4.2	3.6	na	na	5.2	100.0	96
....6–9 years	79.2	4.4	1.8	4.8	2.3	4.8	na	2.7	100.0	128
....10+ years	79.8	8.8	1.1	4.6	4.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	100.0	327
Married more than once	67.4	8.5	4.9	10.0	6.4	1.1	0.5	1.3	100.0	199
Divorced/separated/widowed	(38.2)	(14.4)	(8.1)	(33.4)	(3.4)	(0.0)	(2.5)	(0.0)	100.0	40
Total	73.1	8.6	3.6	7.2	4.2	1.0	0.6	1.7	100.0	860

Notes: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ For couples who are not married but are living together as if married, the time of marriage refers the time when the respondent first started living with her partner.

na = not applicable

Table 14.12 shows that overall, 25 percent of ever-married women have experienced physical or sexual violence by their husband/partner, of which 9 percent first experienced it before marriage, 7 percent experienced it 1–2 years after marriage, and 4 percent experienced it the first time either less than one year after marriage or 3–5 years after marriage.

14.3.5. Physical consequences of spousal violence

In the 2007 RMIDHS, women who had ever experienced spousal physical or sexual violence were asked about the physical consequences of the violence. Specifically, they were asked if, as a consequence of what their spouses did to them, they had ever had any of three different sets of injuries:

- 1) cuts, bruises, or aches;
- 2) burns, eye injuries, sprains, or dislocations; and
- 3) deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, or any other serious injury.

Table 14.13 shows the percentage of ever-married women who reported any spousal physical or sexual violence by the different types of physical consequences, according to the type of violence ever experienced.

Almost half the women (49 percent) who had ever experienced physical violence by their current or most recent husband/partner suffered any of the injuries asked about, compared with 33 percent of women who had suffered sexual violence, and 42 percent of women who had suffered physical or sexual violence. For each type of violence, women were most likely to report having experienced cuts, bruises, or aches, followed by eye injuries, sprains, dislocations, or burns. Women were least likely to report having suffered the most severe injuries; nevertheless, more than 1 in 10 women (ranging between 1 and 4 percent) who had ever experienced physical or

sexual violence by their husband reported suffering deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, or other serious injuries.

Table 14.13. Injuries to women due to spousal violence

Percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 who have experienced specific types of spousal violence by types of injuries resulting from what their husband/partner did to them, according to the type of violence and whether they have experienced the violence ever and in the 12 months preceding the survey, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Cuts, bruises, or aches	Eye injuries, sprains, dislocations, or burns	Deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, or any other serious injury	Any of these injuries	Number of ever-married women
Experienced physical violence					
Ever ¹	46.3	20.8	4.0	49.3	190
In the past 12 months ²	49.7	22.2	3.8	52.4	167
Experienced sexual violence					
Ever ¹	28.2	16.7	1.8	32.6	91
In the past 12 months ²	28.3	17.3	1.9	32.9	88
Experienced physical or sexual violence					
Ever ¹	39.5	17.3	3.3	42.0	231
In the past 12 months ²	41.2	17.9	3.0	43.4	209

¹ Includes in the past 12 months

² Excludes widows

14.3.6. Self-report of violence initiated by the respondent

The 2007 RMIDHS asked women about violence they themselves initiated against their spouse or other intimate partner. Specifically, women were asked, ‘Have you ever hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to physically hurt your (last) husband/partner at times when he was not already beating or physically hurting you?’ Respondents who said yes to this question were asked about the frequency of such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Table 14.14a shows the percentage of ever-married women who have ever initiated violence against their current or most recent husband, and the percentage of ever-married women (excluding widows) who say that they have initiated spousal violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Overall, 12 percent of ever-married women report that they have ever initiated physical violence against their current or most recent husband, while 9 percent say they have committed such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Table 14.14a. Violence by women against their spouse

Percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 who have committed physical violence against their husband/partner when he was not already beating or physically hurting them ever and in the past 12 months, according to women's own experience of spousal violence and their own and husband's/partner's characteristics, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Percentage who have committed physical violence against their current or most recent husband/partner			
	Ever	Number of women	In the past 12 months ¹	Number of women ¹
Woman's experience of spousal physical violence				
Ever	36.1	190	27.9	183
..In the last 12 months	38.9	167	31.2	160
..Not last 12 months/widow/ missing	*	*	*	23
Never	5.1	670	3.4	663
Current age				
15–19	(24.1)	(31)	(24.7)	31
20–24	17.6	122	15.3	122
25–29	9.1	178	5.1	178
30–39	11.3	315	8.4	309
40–49	10.4	213	6.0	206
Employed last 12 months				
Not employed	12.4	537	9.1	527
Employed	11.5	323	8.0	319
Number of living children				
0	15.8	64	15.8	64
1–2	11.8	248	10.2	247
3–4	9.6	262	6.2	255
5+	13.5	287	8.1	279
Residence				
Urban	12.5	635	9.2	623
Rural	10.5	225	7.3	223
Wealth quintile				
Lowest	13.2	158	10.9	157
Second	9.7	163	4.9	156
Middle	12.5	187	10.5	184
Fourth	14.2	172	10.7	170
Highest	10.3	180	6.4	179
Total	12.0	860	8.7	846

Notes: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ Excludes widows

In comparing the statistics presented in Tables 14.14a and 14.14b, it is important to keep several things in mind. First, because of the survey's protections for respondents, interviewers did not collect violence data from couples. Only one person per household was administered the violence module, so it is not possible to compare an individual woman's report with her husband's experience. Second, the less thorough manner in which respondents were asked about spousal physical violence they initiated compared to violence they received (one question versus seven) is expected to result in a lower figure. Finally, underreporting by respondents of violence they initiated could also be an issue.

Table 14.14b. Violence by women against their spouse (continuation)

Percentage of ever-married women aged 15–49 who have committed physical violence against their husband/partner when he was not already beating or physically hurting them ever and in the past 12 months, according to women's own experience of spousal violence and their own and husband's/partner's characteristics, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Percentage who have committed physical violence against their current or most recent husband/partner			
	Ever	Number of women	In the past 12 months ¹	Number of women ¹
Marital status and duration				
Currently married woman	11.6	818	8.4	818
..Married only once	7.4	619	5.9	619
....0–4 years	12.6	137	11.8	137
....5–9 years	8.4	156	5.5	156
....10+ years	4.9	327	3.7	327
..Married more than once	24.7	199	16.1	199
Divorced/separated/widowed	19.3	40	18.2	28
Education				
No education/primary	9.3	209	7.6	204
Secondary	12.7	523	8.9	516
More than secondary	13.5	128	9.6	126
Husband's/partner's education				
No education/primary	10.1	210	7.5	210
Secondary+	12.7	641	9.1	630
Don't know/missing	*	*	*	5
Husband's/partner's alcohol consumption				
Does not drink	5.5	436	3.4	429
Drinks/never gets drunk	54.5	5	20.3	5
Gets drunk sometimes	18.3	377	14.9	369
Gets drunk very often	18.2	41	8.1	41
Spousal age difference²				
Wife older	9.8	177	6.1	177
Wife same age	12.7	83	8.4	83
Wife 1–4 years younger	13.2	311	9.5	311
Wife 5–9 years younger	11.2	168	8.3	168
Wife 10+ years younger	9.9	77	9.6	77
Spousal education difference				
Husband better educated	13.4	360	9.9	356
Wife better educated	12.0	283	8.0	276
Both equally educated	9.9	203	7.7	203
Don't know/missing	4.0	14	5.3	11
Total	12.0	860	8.7	846

Total includes women with missing information on husband's/partner's alcohol consumption, husband's/partner's education, and spousal age difference, which are not shown separately.

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ Excludes widows

² Currently married women

Differentials in women initiating physical violence against their current or most recent husband are generally small. It is noted that women who report ever experiencing physical violence at the hands of their husband are more likely to report initiating violence against their husband than women who have never experienced physical violence by their husbands (36 percent compared with 5 percent). Younger women in urban areas and women with no children and who are in low

or the fourth wealth quintile households, have married more than once, are unemployed, and have more than secondary education, whose husband has higher education, whose husband drinks, whose age is younger than their husband's age, whose husband is better educated than them, and who are better educated than their husband are more likely to report initiating physical violence against their husband than other women.

14.4. HELP-SEEKING

All respondents who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by any person were asked a series of questions about whether and from whom they sought help to try to end the violence. Table 14.15 shows that the proportion of women who experienced violence who sought help is 26 percent, compared to 52 percent who never told anyone and 14 percent who told someone. Women who experience physical violence only or who experience both physical and sexual violence are more likely to seek help than those who experience sexual violence only. In other words, those women who experience only sexual violence are least likely to have sought help or told someone. The percent of respondents who sought help generally increases with age and with number of living children, while unemployed women are the least likely to tell anyone if they have experienced violence.

Women who are divorced, separated, or widowed and have ever experienced physical or sexual violence are less likely than currently married women to seek help. Currently married women who have been married more than once are less likely than currently married women in their first marriage to seek help (51 percent compared to 55 percent).

Thirty-three percent of women in rural areas have sought help, compared with 23 percent of women in urban areas. However, more than half of all women were unable to seek help when they experienced violence (54 percent rural compared to 51 percent urban). Women with no or primary-level education were more likely not to seek help when they experienced violence than women with higher levels of education. Unemployed women were more likely to seek help than employed women. Meanwhile, there is no clear pattern with wealth quintiles and women's help-seeking behavior when they experience violence; however, women in the highest, second, and middle wealth quintiles were more likely than other income quintiles to not tell anyone when they experienced violence.

Table 14.15. Help-seeking to stop violence

Percent distribution of women aged 15–49 who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by whether they have told anyone about the violence and whether they have ever sought help from any source to end the violence, according to type of violence and background characteristics, Marshall Islands 2007

Characteristics	Never sought help				Total	Number of women
	Never told anyone	Told someone	Sought help from any source	Missing/don't know		
Type of violence						
Physical only	51.0	17.2	31.7	0.2	100.0	144
Sexual only	53.5	4.9	5.1	36.5	100.0	69
Both physical and sexual	51.9	16.3	31.8	0.0	100.0	99
Age						
15–19	*	*	*	*	100.0	16
20–24	(47.9)	(2.6)	(40.0)	(9.5)	100.0	44
25–29	61.9	15.6	22.5	0.0	100.0	67
30–39	47.2	16.1	24.5	12.2	100.0	123
40–49	48.9	18.9	25.0	7.2	100.0	64
Employed last 12 months						
Not employed	55.4	11.1	28.1	5.4	100.0	190
Employed	46.3	19.0	22.3	12.4	100.0	122
Number of living children						
0	(56.8)	(4.2)	(29.7)	(9.3)	100.0	26
1–2	55.8	12.9	24.1	7.2	100.0	80
3–4	49.6	17.9	25.2	7.2	100.0	94
5+	49.6	14.3	26.8	9.3	100.0	112
Marital status and duration						
Currently married	53.5	12.2	26.1	8.3	100.0	286
..Married only once	54.9	10.0	23.4	11.7	100.0	190
....0–4 years	62.5	8.0	18.7	10.8	100.0	54
....5–9 years	(68.0)	(3.6)	(27.1)	(1.2)	100.0	38
....10+ years	45.6	13.7	24.5	16.2	100.0	97
..Married more than once	50.6	16.3	31.4	1.7	100.0	96
Divorced/separated/widowed	(34.2)	(36.1)	(23.2)	(6.4)	100.0	27
Residence						
Urban	51.1	15.9	23.2	9.8	100.0	230
Rural	53.8	9.4	33.3	3.5	100.0	82
Education						
No education/primary	64.6	9.8	23.0	2.6	100.0	76
Secondary	47.1	14.9	26.4	11.7	100.0	201
More than secondary	(51.3)	(19.6)	(29.1)	(0.0)	100.0	35
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	51.8	7.1	41.1	0.0	100.0	56
Second	57.6	11.1	24.2	7.2	100.0	73
Middle	(52.6)	(7.0)	(22.4)	(18.0)	100.0	76
Fourth	(38.2)	(32.4)	(23.6)	(5.7)	100.0	58
Highest	(58.0)	(16.5)	(19.0)	(6.5)	100.0	50
Total	51.8	14.2	25.8	8.1	100.0	312

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

Table 14.16 shows the sources of help among women who have ever experienced violence and have sought help, by type of violence. Among all those who sought help, over 6 in 10 women are most likely to have sought help from their own family (70 percent). The second-highest source of

help is a friend or neighbor, to whom over one-third (38 percent) of women go to seek help when they experience violence. Over 1 in 10 women are likely to seek help from their in-laws (11 percent).

Table 14.16. Sources from where help was sought

Percentage of women aged 15–49 who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence and sought help according to source from which help was sought, by type of violence experienced, Marshall Islands 2007

Source where help was sought	Type of violence		Total
	Any physical	Any sexual	
Own family	69.9	(58.6)	68.4
In-laws	11.3	(7.9)	11.2
Friend/neighbor	39.0	(52.7)	38.1
Doctor/medical personnel	0.0	(0.9)	0.4
Police	2.9	(0.0)	2.8
Other	3.5	(9.0)	4.6
Number of women	77	35	81

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases.