



INTER-SPOUSAL  
Assault  
IN MARYLAND

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A SURVEY REPORT ON WOMEN

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Report of the Maryland Commission  
For Women and The Commission to  
Study Implementation of the Equal  
Right Amendment

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INTER-SPOUSAL ASSAULT IN MARYLAND:

A SURVEY REPORT ON WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

This is the first in an anticipated series of reports from a telephone survey conducted under the joint auspices of the Governor's Commission to Study the Implementation of the Equal Rights Amendment and the Maryland Commission For Women, both Commissions of the Maryland Department of Human Resources. The study was initiated to measure how frequently and in what percentage of the population of Maryland spouse battering occurs and the extent and nature of the violence. The study also sought demographic information on participants in spouse-battering to assess the needs for programs and services specifically for the victims of spousal violence and for the perpetrator when appropriate.

Definitions

In this study, the following terms have the definitions indicated:

Battered Spouse - a spouse who has received deliberate, severe, and repeated demonstrable physical injury from the other spouse. The minimal injury is severe bruising. (Gayford, 1977.)

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research verifies the rate of incidence of the occurrence of violence between spouses in Maryland. The question studied was: What is the incidence of violence between spouses in Maryland?

The questions that sought to answer this question were:

1. Question 14: Have you ever been hit or slapped by your present husband? (By husband I mean either a legal marriage or a man with whom you now share a household.)

2. Question 15: Have you ever been physically abused in any relationship with a man--your husband or a man with whom you shared a household? (By physically abused, I mean beaten, burned, cut, or stabbed.)

### Selected Review of the Literature

Wife battering, or the physical abuse of wives by their husbands, is receiving increasing attention from the mass media and from health and legal professionals. This review of the literature will first discuss the other major incidence studies of wife abuse and then some of the theories that have attempted to explain the dynamics behind the occurrence of wife battering.

Documenting the incidence of wife abuse has been attempted by several authors who have looked at court and police data. (Fields, 1977; Eisenberg, 1977) While these studies reveal numbers of battered women, they are limited to women who have sought outside intervention by the police or legal system and therefore not necessarily representative of all battered women.

At this date there are only two other known studies in which the incidence of spouse abuse has been measured in families selected randomly and therefore representative of the general population.

#### Incidence Studies

The most highly publicized incidence study of family violence was conducted by Straus, Gilles and Steinmetz (Straus, 1977a) in 1975. In this study, of the 2,143 couples who were interviewed 82, or 3.8 percent, of the wives reported one or more incidents of a physical attack in the preceding 12 months that fall under the definition of wife beating. Straus applies this incidence rate to the 47 million couples in the United States and estimates that in any one year 1.8 million wives are beaten by their husbands. This survey also reported that 28 percent of the couples in the study reported at least one violent incident during the years of their relationship. Unfortunately, the data for the events preceding the year of the survey did not distinguish between victim and

assailant or the degree of violence. As Straus, however, points out, violence is part of a family power struggle and it often only takes one such event to fix the balance of power in a family for many years. Straus repeatedly points out that these figures represent the minimal estimates of wife abuse as under reporting of domestic violence is well known, and only intact families were interviewed in this study. Straus concludes by estimating that the true incidence is probably closer to 50 or 60 percent of all couples.

A second incidence study of spouse abuse was of a random sample population conducted by the National Crime Survey (NCS) sponsored by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (Gaquin, 1977). In this study 60,000 households were selected that represented the total population of the United States. Sample households were interviewed every six months for a series of seven interviews. At each interview, respondents were asked to recall any incidence of crime that occurred during the previous six months. The NCS Study had data on the incidence of spouse abuse since 1972. Their findings were that fifteen (15) percent of all assaults against women were perpetrated by their husbands or ex-husbands and that husbands or ex-husbands are responsible for one-fourth of all assaults against women who have ever married. The NCS Study found that for every 1,000 women 3.9 were victims of physical abuse from their spouse or ex-spouse and that for every

1,000 men .3 were assaulted by their spouse or ex-spouse. An additional finding was that spouse abuse victims were more likely to be injured, to require medical attention and hospitalization and to lose time from work.

The family dynamics behind wife abuse has been studied from several theoretical frameworks. These theories include studies of personality traits of both the victim and the offender, violence and alcohol abuse, the multi-generational transmission process and the social structure theory of violence.

#### Personality Theories

Several authors attempt to explain the incidence of wife abuse by ascribing psychiatric labels to both the victim and the offender. Three authors (Schultz, 1960; Snell, 1964; Dewsbury, 1975) have followed this framework in attempting to find an explanation for the occurrence of wife abuse.

Schultz (1960) studied four cases in which the husband was convicted of assaulting his wife with intent to kill. He found that "Husbands tended to parentify their wives and appeared foredoomed to take a submissive role toward them, as they did toward their mothers." (1960, p. 108) Schultz (1960, p. 108) also interviewed the three surviving wives and found them to be:

. . . very masculine, outspoken, domineering women, who had much in common with their husbands' mothers . . . the wives tended to exploit and profit from their husbands' permissiveness and dependency.

Snell, et al. (1964), studied twelve families who were referred by district courts in Framingham, Massachusetts. He described the family structure common among families of men whose wives brought complaints against them of assault and battery. This family structure was characterized by the husband's "passivity, indecisiveness, sexual inadequacy, and the wife's aggressiveness, masculinity, frigidity, and masochism." (Snell, 1964, p. 111)

Anton Dewsbury (1975) studied fifteen battered women identified in his general practice in England. He categorized the battered women by psychiatric diagnoses and found "a third of the patients [wives] showed gross personality disorders, and a further third showed neurotic reactions." (1975, p. 291)

Other authors have questioned this psychiatric labeling. Straus (1974b, p. 53) noted: "The available evidence suggests that, with rare exceptions, family members using violence are not mentally ill." He has also stated that ". . . individual pathology is but a minor element. . . . few if any of the people studied can be considered as suffering from any gross abnormality." (Straus, 1974a, p. 16.)

In a previous study, Scott stated (1974, p. 437):

There must be great caution in assuming that a woman is masochistic and prefers a battering husband, for many of the alternative explanations are not easily appreciated; covert threats to her or the children, inability to find alternative housing or

support, isolation. . . . It must further be remembered that the expectations of marriage in some women who are themselves from violent families may be very low.

He continued (1974, p. 437):

It is expected that future research will demonstrate that frank masochism or sadism in either marital partner is not a central factor of either baby or wife beating.

Perhaps the most interesting commentary on psychiatric labeling was made by Erin Pizzy, founder and director of Women's Aid Limited, a shelter for battered women in London. Shortly after the opening of the Women's Aid Center for battered women, it was filled to capacity. She wrote the following (1975, p. 297):

. . . As the newspapers picked up the stories and asked loud questions as to why this level of female suffering had gone unnoticed, various agencies went into embarrassed spasms of explanations, many psychiatrists gazing coolly at the evidence of knifing, strangling, burning and black eyes, announced that most women "provoked it."

#### Violence and Alcohol Abuse

Some authors (Gayford, 1975; Dewsbury, 1975) have found a relationship between wife abuse and excessive use of alcohol. The NOW (National Organization of Women) task force in Ann Arbor, Michigan, interviewed more than seventy-five victims of domestic violence. They found alcohol present in at least 60 percent of the cases and estimated that (Fojtik, 1976, p. 4): "alcoholism or at least the over-consumption of alcohol is present in approximately 90 percent of the calls received."

It is unwise, however, to assume a direct causal relationship between alcohol abuse and wife battering. Straus (1976a, p. 32) has pointed out, "It is not clear if people act violently because they are drunk or whether they get drunk in order to have implicit social permission to act violently."

#### Multigenerational Transmission Process

Parker (1977) studied all the women who applied to the Domestic Relations Division of the Baltimore Legal Aid Bureau and compared the battered and non-battered women in this population. Among the fifty women interviewed there was no significant difference between the 20 battered and 30 non-battered women in age, race, number of children, years of the wife's education, years of the marriage and the amount of parental arguing in the nuclear family of origin. There was a positive relationship to the victim of wife abuse and her mother also being beaten by her father.

Data analysis also revealed a small number of "non-battered" women ( $n = 13$ ) who were victims of violence on one occasion and either left the husband at that time or warned the husband that further violence would not be tolerated, and, if further abused, successfully sought outside intervention. These women were designated as a sub-group and defined as Violence Syndrome Averters (VSAs). There was significantly less ( $p = .02$ ) violence in the

family of origin of VSAs than in the family of battered women. This finding tends to substantiate the postulate of vertical transmission of violence: women who did not observe violence in their family of origin found wife battering inconsistent with their role and were able to cope with and avoid further violence.

### Social Structural Theory of Violence

The most comprehensive studies on wife abuse are those that viewed the phenomena from the theoretical framework of social and cultural norms and learned behavior.

Straus wrote (1976b, p. 1):

The high frequency with which physical violence is used by married couples, and especially the disproportionate frequency with which wives are the victims, reflects the structure of contemporary Euro-American societies in the form of cultural norms which implicitly make the marriage license a hitting license and the sexist organization of the society and the family system.

This theory states (Straus, 1974, p. 53):

. . . In addition to the family being the locus of more violence than any other social relationship, the available evidence suggests that, with rare exceptions, family members using violence are not mentally ill. Instead, violent acts by one family member against another are the result of socially learned and socially patterned behavior.

In this framework, wife abuse is not just a personal abnormality, but rather has its roots in the very structure of the family and society. Thus, on one level there are formal and informal norms strongly opposed to wife battering, but at the same time there are implicit but powerful norms which permit and even encourage such acts.

In this framework, the etiology of wife abuse is consistent with the social and cultural norms that give implicit permission for a husband to use physical violence on his wife. There is evidence that, for many husbands, striking a wife is a legitimate act. (Gelles, 1974; Straus, 1975.) This legitimacy was further demonstrated in a sample survey conducted by the Violence Commission (Steinmetz and Straus, 1974, p. 15), which showed that 25 percent of the men and 16 percent of the women surveyed approved of a husband slapping his wife under certain conditions.

Further evidence for this cultural normative theory can be found in ancient laws and folklore. References are found in ancient law to the right of the husband to "chastise his wife with a rattan no bigger than . . . [his] thumb to enforce the statutory restraints of domestic discipline." (Steinmetz and Straus, 1974, p. 88.) The Napoleonic Code also stated: "Women, like walnut trees, should be beaten daily." (Warrrior, 1975a, p. 17.)

During the session of the Legislature of Pennsylvania in 1885, a bill was presented "to provide for the infliction of punishment on all male persons convicted of willfully beating their wives." The bill was defeated. (Steinmetz and Straus, 1974, pp. 45-46.)

One of the results of this implicit acceptance of wife battering is that it lays the groundwork for the normative legitimacy of intrafamilial violence and provides

a role model, or even a specific script for such actions. In addition, for many children there is not even a need to generalize this socially-scripted patterning of behavior because "millions of children can directly observe and role model the physical violence of their father to their mother." (Straus, Gelles, Steinmetz, 1976a, p. 22.) In this context, a history of violence in the nuclear family of origin of both the husband and the wife has been found to be highly significant. The explanation offered for this relationship is that experience with violence as a victim and/or as an observer teaches the individual how to be violent and also to approve of the use of violence. Straus (1974b, p. 58) indicated that "wife-beaters are carrying out a role model, which he learned from his parents and which is brought into play when social stresses become severe."

William Gayford (1975, p. 194) interviewed one hundred battered women and found that "most wives were subjected to repeated violence because they had no alternative but to return to their home." Gayford (1975, p. 196) also found a high incidence of violence in the family histories of both partners.

Erin Pizzy has interviewed and provided shelter for thousands of battered women. Her perception of family violence is that violence is a learned pattern of behavior. She stated (1975, p. 298): "The women I see on our doorstep all have one thing in common, they came from homes

where they either watched their father batter their mother or they themselves were beaten."

Behind these various theories of wife abuse are the important issues of the role of women in the family and society. The victim of wife assault is often economically dependent on her assailant. Most women have the primary responsibility for child-rearing and are often financially unable to independently support themselves and their children. The woman's position in the family as unpaid laborer is a status that most women are encouraged to attain. This is accomplished by positive reinforcement, through the myth that wifehood is the most appropriate arena for a woman to exercise her abilities to the fullest, and by the negative reinforcement of closing most other options to her and discouraging her from pursuing an independent life. Consequently, most women devote all their time to home maintenance and child-rearing for which they are dependent on their husbands for financial support. (Warrior, 1975b, p. 5.)

In addition to economic dependence, there are psychological and emotional ties, and very often children, which have developed over the time in which the wife was subjected to abuse. Very often the woman doubts her own worth, her integrity, and her right to live without the threat of violence.

Wife abuse is also an example of the actual or implicit threat of physical coercion that is one of the many factors underlying male dominance in the family. Thus, the family reflects our social structure that keeps women subordinate, through force, if necessary; the marriage license legitimizes a man's right to keep his woman in line.

Dr. Murray Straus (1976a, p. 35) has said:

A great deal of the physical violence between husband and wife is related to conflicts over power in the family and specifically to attempts by men to maintain their superior power position. One might therefore expect that as families become more equalitarian, violence between husband and wife will decrease. However, this will be the case only to the extent that men voluntarily give up their privileges. To the extent that sexual equality comes about by women demanding equal rights, the movement toward equality could well see a temporary increase in violence rather than a decrease.

In summary, this chapter included a review of the two previous incidence studies on family violence and a selected review of some of the theories that attempt to look at the dynamics behind families who resort to the use of violence.

## METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this report was collected in a statewide telephone survey of 602 women who had current or past experience of living with a man. The marital status of the women did not affect their eligibility for the survey.

The women were selected by a randomization technique called random digit dialing. The process entailed calling phone numbers at random all over the State of Maryland. Questionnaires then were administered by phone to those women who agreed to participate in the survey. Only five women refused to participate.

Hollander Cohen Associates of Baltimore, Maryland selected the telephone numbers and administered the 602 questionnaires. The questionnaires included up to 130 questions, depending on the responses of the participants. 399 of the questionnaires were completed in August, 1977; 203 questionnaires were completed in July, 1978.

An original draft of the questionnaire was done by Dr. Roger Petersen of the Research Center of the School of Social Work and Community Planning, University of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland. The questionnaire was subsequently enlarged in order to include questions in areas of special interest to various members of the Project's committee. Barbara Parker, School of Nursing,

University of Maryland, for example, suggested a series of questions to determine if the man or woman had been in the military. Kathleen O'Ferrall Friedman, Project Coordinator, suggested questions regarding any injuries, medical attention, or police assistance received by any victims of interspousal assault. Sidney Hollander, Hollander Cohen Associates, suggested methods to gather data on the region the respondent lived in, and to better determine their attitudes towards their lives and marriages. The final questionnaire was the result of the committee's opinion on what information was wanted.

The women surveyed were asked a variety of questions on the topic of violence. They were asked if any violence had occurred between themselves and their spouses, and for information on any such violence that had occurred. There were also questions asking if they or their spouse hit their children (if any existed), whether they had injured their children, and if they had been hit or abused as children. They were asked if their parents had abused each other. Other questions were asked on the women's experiences with and perceptions of violence. Data on a wide range of demographic characteristics was also requested.

After the questionnaires were completed and spot checked for accuracy by Hollander Cohen Associates, they were turned over to Dr. Petersen for data processing tasks and for analysis of the data. Construction of the coding

procedures, coding, grouping, and arrangement of the data were done directly by Dr. Petersen or under his supervision. All keypunching and arithmetic calculations were done by the Computer Center, University of Maryland, Baltimore. The arithmetic calculations included frequencies on all variables, cross tabulations, and standard deviations on selected variables.

The size of the sample used in this survey (602) is more than adequate to insure that the results reported by the women surveyed reflect the experiences of all women in Maryland who have lived with a man.

#### Concerns with the Methodology

There are a number of possible problems with the methodology employed in this study. The primary problem is whether women will honestly answer questions on such a sensitive subject as family violence. Several steps were taken to overcome this problem. First, the questionnaire was pretested on 25 phone numbers that included those of several women who were known to have experienced interspousal violence. The interviews accurately identified those women known to have experienced spouse abuse. Secondly, the questionnaire was designed so that the questions on the sensitive subjects came after the respondent was comfortable with being interviewed on the subject of violence.

To help evaluate the responses, the interviewers were asked to record the attitude of the women they interviewed and to specify if there had been any hesitancy or reluctance to answer the sensitive questions. The vast majority of women interviewed (97 percent) were reported to be interested or cooperative in giving their views on, and experiences with, violence. Only 3 percent were reported to be guarded or reluctant in their answers. Less than 1 percent (.005 percent) were reported to be suspicious, uneasy, or hostile.

Another possible problem with the methodology is that the questionnaires were administered at two distinct times: in the summer of 1977 and in the summer of 1978. The data collected in each of these periods was examined separately to determine if different results were obtained during the two sampling periods. No differences in the two samples were found. The reported incidence of all violence in all questions and the reported attitudes towards the violence varied less than 1 percent between the questionnaires completed in 1977 and those completed in 1978. This remarkable consistency in results suggests that the random sample drawn was excellent and that the proportion of the population that encounters any of the various kinds of family violence is constant over time.

One problem that sometimes occurs with survey data could not be completely overcome. This is the problem of inaccurate, inconsistent, or missing responses to certain

questions. In many instances when asked to give information only on their current husband, the women gave information on men they no longer lived with. This was most frequently done by women who were separated or widowed. The resulting data on the husband's income and occupation, therefore, may be years out of date. Where this was done by women who had remarried, the information simply was no longer valid.

The marital status of the women also was sometimes incompletely or inconsistently reported. Additionally, the women often did not know specific information about their spouses, did not remember details of their own childhood, and declined to provide information on their own income. Wherever possible, inconsistent data was corrected after a careful examination of the questionnaire, or changed to missing information. In most cases it was possible to "clean up" the data. The data on the women's income and that on the income, occupation, and education of the man still has a large amount of missing information. The accuracy of the data on these variables, therefore, will not be comparable to that for other more fully reported variables.

The question of how widely applicable the results in the findings section are, is not easy to answer. We can say that they are applicable to Maryland's population; probably they are applicable to the states surrounding

Maryland that have similar population mixes. It is also true that some of the things found to affect abuse in Maryland such as violence in the family background and socio-economic status will probably also affect the levels of violence elsewhere. Beyond these statements, the question of applicability can only be answered by the existence of other studies in other areas.

## FINDINGS

The statewide results on questions concerning the incidence of several types of family violence are reported in the section entitled Incidence of Family Violence: Statewide. The impact of various demographic variables upon these results is reported in a separate section.

### A. Incidence of Family Violence: Statewide

#### Interspousal Violence: Definitions

The questionnaire employed in this study separated the milder form of interspousal violence, termed "hitting" in this report, from the severe form of interspousal violence labeled "abuse" in this report. "Hitting" is defined as hitting or slapping; "abuse" is defined as beating, burning, cutting, or stabbing. Women in one question, thus, were asked if they had been hit or slapped, and in a separate question were asked if they had been beaten, burned, cut, or stabbed. The exact same procedure was used when the women were asked if they hit or abused their spouses, and if any such violence had occurred between their mothers and their fathers.

Questions on the two kinds of interspousal violence were framed in somewhat different time contexts. The questions on whether the women hit or were hit by their

spouses always specified that the spouse be their current spouse. The questions on whether the women were themselves abused or abused their spouses were framed both as to whether this had ever happened and whether this had happened with their current spouse.

The term "husband" or "spouse" as used both in the survey and in this report is defined to mean the man to whom a woman was legally married or a man with whom she shares a household. The term wife is similarly defined. Marriage is used to connote either a legal marriage or a "living together" relationship.

All percentages reported in this section are calculated on the basis of those eligible to answer each particular question.

#### Interspousal Violence: Incidence

The testimony of the women sampled suggests that an equal percentage of men and women in Maryland hit or slap their spouses. 16.5 percent of the women report they have ever been hit or slapped by their present spouse and 16.2 percent of the women state they themselves hit or slap their present spouse. See Table 1. The same situation exists when the women are asked if this has occurred within the last two years. 6.2 percent of the women report being hit by their current husband in the past 24 months, and 6.7 percent state they had hit their current spouse in the past two years.

Table 1

Incidence of Interspousal Violence  
Reported by Women in the Sample

Question	% of Women Responding Yes
Ever hit by present husband?	16.5% (90/547)
Hit by present husband, last two years?	6.2% (34/547)
Ever hit your current husband?	16.2% (89/547)
Hit your current husband in last two years?	6.7% (37/547)
Ever abused by your husband?	8.7% (52/602)
Abused by husband in last two years?	2.6% (13/602)
Abused by current husband?	1.8% (10/547)
Ever abuse your husband?	2.0% (12/600)
Abuse your husband in last two years?	1.0% (6/600)
Abuse current husband?	1.1% (6/547)

Far more women report that they have ever been abused by a husband (8.7 percent) than report that they themselves have ever abused their husbands (2.0 percent). The same trend exists when the women are questioned about

abuse in the last two years. 2.6 percent of the women living with a spouse reported being abused by their spouse within the last two years while 1.0 percent report that they themselves abused their husbands in the same period.

The reports from the women sampled thus indicate that while the milder interspousal violence (hitting, slapping) is a problem for equal numbers of Maryland's men and women, severe interspousal violence (beating, burning, cutting, stabbing) is a problem mostly for Maryland's women.

The 1970 federal census reported that Maryland had close to 2 million women living in the state and that approximately 35 percent of these women were married. Using the census and survey figures, it can be inferred that 2.6 percent of the 700,000 married women in Maryland, or 18,200 women, suffered severe interspousal violence within the past two years.

46 percent of the women who report being abused within the past two years also report abusing their husbands during the same two years. Thus we can infer that slightly more than 8,300 women and 8,300 men live in relationships where each spouse inflicts severe violence on the other. (46 percent x 18,200 women abused in the past two years.) Slightly less than 9,900 women in Maryland were abused by their husbands and did not return the abuse in that time period. This survey did not

determine whether the man or woman initiated the abuse or was responding in kind to abuse initiated by the partner.

All of the women who reported abusing their husbands within the past two years also report that their husbands abused them. However, of the women who reported ever abusing their husbands, only 75 percent reported that their husbands also abused them. 20 percent (9/45) of the women who state that they ever were abused and had children report that they had been abused when they were pregnant.

Few women continue to live with a husband who physically abused them. 81 percent of the women who report ever being physically abused by their husbands also report that they no longer live with the abusing males. In the majority of cases, that is, in 60 percent of the cases, where an abused woman no longer lives with an abusing male, it was the woman who left the home. In just 12.5 percent of the cases did the man move out. Only 54 percent of the women abused in the past two years still live with the abusing man. This number equals only 1.3 percent of the women in the survey. The small figures of women reporting abuse by husbands with whom they are currently living reflect the fact that most women leave abusive situations. This should not be construed to mean that abuse is not occurring in a particular category reported. Most women either do not continue to live with an abusive

husband or will not report abuse while living with an abusive husband.

When asked why the abuse stopped, just 5 percent of the abused women said it was because of outside help. Another 5 percent reported that it was due to an attitude change on the man's part. The physical abuse of wives, thus, does not seem to be self-correcting nor to have been stopped by outside help. The solution to the problem adopted by most Maryland women has been for them to leave the man.

The women in the sample who had been abused within the past two years (13) were asked a series of questions about that abuse. In only one instance had a weapon been used in the abuse. (Weapon is defined as a knife, gun, hammer, etc., something besides his fists.) In 23 percent (3/13) of the abuse cases, however, the woman had been threatened by a weapon.

57 percent (13) of the women abused in the past two years reported that they were injured during the abuse. Using the projection figure of 18,200 abused in the past 24 months, it can be inferred that approximately 10,000 women in Maryland were injured by abusing husbands during those two years. In 21 percent of all recent abuse cases (last two years), the injury suffered was cuts or broken bones. In 36 percent of the cases the injury reported was bruises. 54 percent of the women recently abused stated that they needed medical

attention as a result of the abuse. It can then be inferred that 9,800 women statewide have needed medical attention because of abuse in the last 24 months.

(54 percent x 18,200 women.) Half of the women who said they needed medical attention also said that they received it; half said they did not receive it.

None of the women recently abused (13) said that the violence occurred on a daily or weekly basis. 15 percent of these women said the abuse occurred monthly; 54 percent said it occurred every few months; and 31 percent said it occurred less frequently than every few months. 77 percent of these women said they discussed this abuse with others.

None of the abused women said that they often called the police because of the abuse. 46 percent said they seldom called the police; 54 percent said they never called the police.

62 percent of the women abused in the past two years (13) said that they do have a place to hide during violent episodes. Parents' homes are the most frequently mentioned hiding spots. Interestingly, 50 percent of the recently abused women (6/12) state they "would like a place where . . . [they] could be protected from the abuse."

When asked whether they deserved the abuse, 92 percent of the women abused in the past two years (13) said they did not deserve the abuse. When asked what triggered the abuse, 70 percent of the women mentioned

drinking and 15 percent mentioned money. No other trigger was mentioned by as much as 10 percent of the women.

A similar series of questions to what has just been reported above was asked of those women who reported abusing their husbands in the past two years. Unfortunately, the number of such women was too small (6) to permit any meaningful analysis. The following figures, therefore, are suggestive. Half of the women used or threatened use of a weapon. Injuries occurred in only one case; the injury was serious (cuts) and required medical attention. In only one case did the abuse occur more frequently than every few months. In only one case did the husband get involved in the fight. In the remaining five cases the men protected themselves or did nothing. Five of the six women said they did not feel guilty about abusing their husbands, and four of the six women stated that their husbands deserved the abuse. In only one case were the police called to the home. Drinking was mentioned as a trigger to the abuse in half of the cases.

The picture suggested by the above data is one that shows these few women abusing their husbands without physical provocation; the husbands are encountering defensive measures. The men receive few injuries and do not call the police. The women do not feel guilty but rather feel that the abuse was deserved.

Interspousal Violence: Prevalence Among Parents of Women in the Survey

Interspousal violence is not a new phenomenon in American life. This can be seen in the number of women who report that their mothers and/or fathers abused or hit one another. The answers to the questions on abuse indicate that in the past as well as in the present, women were the chief victims of interspousal violence. The pattern of abuse in the past generation as reported by the women in the survey is seen in Table 2.

Table 2  
Incidence of Interspousal Violence Among  
Parents of Women in the Sample

Question	% of Women Responding Yes
Did your mother hit/slap your father?	7 % (42/602)
Did your father hit/slap your mother?	11 % (68/586)
Did your mother abuse your father?	1 % (6/600)
Did your father abuse your mother?	3 % (18/598)

Although less interspousal violence is reported in the women's parents' generation than in the women's own generation, it should not be inferred that less

interspousal violence took place in the past. Memory is more fallible the more distant the event remembered. Also, direct experience is more reliable than sporadic observation of others' experiences.

How being raised in a home where abuse or hitting occurred affects the women's own marriages is discussed in the section on the results of demographic variables.

#### Parental Violence Toward Children: Incidence

The questionnaire used in the survey requested information as to whether the women or their husbands had been abused as children by their parents. They were also asked whether they or their husband hit or injured their own children. The information from these questions is presented in this section. It should be noted that the term "abuse" has a different meaning when used in connection with violence toward children than it did when used in the discussion of interspousal violence. In the context of violence toward children, abuse denotes the standard dictionary definition of "physical ill treatment."

The data in Table 3 suggests that it is the mothers who more often physically discipline the children and who worry that this discipline is too severe. When asked how often they or their husbands hit their children, the majority of the women (57.2 percent) said that this occurred less than every few months. 2.7 percent said it occurred daily; 14.4 percent said that it occurred weekly;

12.6 percent reported that it occurred monthly; and 13.1 percent said that it happened every few months.

Table 3  
Violence Towards Children As  
Reported By Women

Question	% of Women Responding Yes
Were you abused by your parents?	5.5% (33/602)
Was your husband abused by his parents?	5.8% (30/516)
Do you believe in spanking/hitting your children?	73.0% (347/477)
Does your husband believe in hitting/spanking your children?	59.0% (280/478)
Do you worry about hitting the children too hard?	27.3% (102/371)
Does your husband worry about hitting the children too hard?	12.6% (47/372)
Have either you or your husband ever bruised or injured your children?	3.7% (14/380)

The women who reported abuse in either their own or their husband's childhood also identified which parent was the abuser. In the majority (55 percent) of the cases where the woman herself was abused, the abusing parent was the woman's mother. In most (76 percent) of the cases where her husband was abused, the abusing parent was the husband's father. Parents seem to be more likely to abuse children of their own sex than they are to abuse children of the opposite sex.

There is a relationship between the different forms of family violence. This will be discussed in the section on the demographic variables.

B. Incidence of Interspousal Violence Against Women as Affected by Selected Demographic Variables

Introduction

The demographic characteristics of women and their husbands affect the probability that the woman will be a victim of interspousal violence. A woman's chances of suffering some form of interspousal violence are increased if she comes from a broken home or if she was abused as a child. However, whether a couple hit or spank their own children has little effect on the woman's chances to be hit or abused by her spouse.

Most of the variables selected for analysis were requested by the Project Coordinator. Some were added by Dr. Petersen to clarify the results of other variables or because some of the originally-selected variables proved to be inappropriate or less informative than other variables. Tables are the primary way of presenting the data. The objective has been in this analysis to identify and report how the incidence of interspousal violence is affected by the demographic characteristics of the woman and her spouse.

The definitions of abuse and hitting are the same as used in the previous section on the statewide incidence of interspousal violence. "Hitting" means slapping or hitting; "abuse" means beating, burning, cutting, or stabbing. Abuse, thus, is the more severe form of interspousal violence and is used only to connote the above-listed activities.

#### Violence in the Family of Origin

The existence of violence in a woman's family of origin dramatically increases the likelihood that she will experience interspousal violence. Women who came from a background of family violence reported a much higher incidence of interspousal violence with themselves as victims than women who had no violence in their family of origin. This was true for every category examined. See Table 4.

The women who reported the highest incidence of interspousal violence were those whose mother had abused their father or whose father had abused their mother. This suggests that it is not important which parent was the abuser; only that abuse occurred in the family of origin. The figures also suggest that the existence of abuse in the family of origin makes a woman more likely to experience interspousal violence in her adulthood than does the existence of hitting or slapping by parents in the family of origin. Women who come from a family where one parent abused the other have six times as great

a chance of being abused by their husbands than do women who come from families where such abuse did not occur.

Table 4

## Incidence of Interspousal Violence:

Effect of Violence in Family of Origin

	Total no.	% of women in each category abused by spouse	% of women in each category abused by cur- rent spouse
Father hit mother	68	19.1% (13)	5.8% (4)
Father did not hit mother	523	7.3% (38)	1.1% (6)
Father abused mother	18	44.4% (8)	16.7% (3)
Father did not abuse mother	579	7.6% (44)	1.2% (7)
Mother hit father	30	30.0% (9)	3.3% (1)
Mother did not hit father	551	7.4% (41)	1.6% (9)
Mother abused father	6	66.0% (4)	16.6% (1)
Mother did not abuse father	595	7.9% (47)	1.5% (9)
Husband's parents fought	37	21.6% (8)	8.1% (3)
Husband's parents did not fight	452	6.6% (30)	1.1% (5)

Being married to a man with violence in his family of origin also increases a woman's chances of being abused by her husband. See Table 4.

Divorce or Separation in Family of Origin

Women whose parents were separated or divorced report a much higher incidence of ever being abused than

women who did not come from broken homes. Women whose parents were divorced or separated report an incidence of abuse of 19.1 percent. The incidence of interspousal abuse among women whose parents were not separated or divorced is only 4.7 percent.

The effect of the husband coming from a broken home on the incidence of interspousal abuse is not as great as the effect of the wife having parents who had separated or divorced. Women report a 10.3 incidence of ever being abused if their husband's parents were divorced or separated. 7.4 percent of the women whose parents were not divorced or separated experienced abuse from their husbands.

#### Husband or Wife Abused as Children

39.4 percent of the women who were abused as children report ever being abused by their husbands. This is an incidence five times greater than that of women who were not abused as children (6.9 percent). See Table 5. The impact of a husband being abused as a child is less dramatic. Women whose husbands were abused as children report only a somewhat higher incidence of ever being abused (12.9 percent) than women whose husbands were not abused as children (7.8 percent). The effect of the woman being abused as a child has a greater impact on the incidence of abuse reported than does the fact that the husband was abused as a child.

Table 5

Incidence of Interspousal Abuse of Women:  
Effect of Abuse in Childhood

	Total no.	% of women ever abused by husband	% of women ever abused by current husband
Woman abused as a child	33	39.4% (13)	12.0% (4)
Woman not abused as a child	568	6.9% (39)	1.0% (6)
Husband abused as a child	30	12.9% (4)	6.7% (2)
Husband not abused as a child	485	7.8% (38)	1.4% (7)

Effect of Hitting, Spanking, or Child Abuse in Home

Hitting or spanking children, when done by either parent, does not relate to the incidence of abuse that women report. However, the likelihood that a woman will be abused by her husband is increased if the couple abuse their children. 28.6 percent of the women who report that her children are bruised or injured by herself or her husband also report suffering interspousal abuse. In contrast, women whose children are not bruised or injured by herself or her husband report an incidence of interspousal abuse of 7.3 percent. See Table 6.

It is clear that interspousal abuse against women is much more common among women who come from broken homes, from homes where one parent abused the other, and from homes where the parents abused their children, than

it is among women who did not come from such homes. Knowing this, it is no surprise that interspousal violence against women is also much more common among women who live in homes where child abuse occurs than it is among women whose children are not physically abused.

Table 6

Incidence of Interspousal Abuse of Women: Effect  
of Hitting, Spanking, or Child Abuse In Home

Physical treatment of children in home	Total no.	% of women ever abused by husband	% of women abused by current husband
Wife does not hit/spank	131	6.9% (9)	1.5% (2)
Wife spanks/hits sometimes	107	4.7% (5)	1.0% (1)
Wife spanks/hits	239	8.8% (21)	1.6% (4)
Husband does not hit/spank	193	8.8% (17)	2.5% (5)
Husband spanks/hits sometimes	70	7.1% (5)	1.0% (1)
Husband spanks/hits	204	6.4% (13)	1.4% (1)
Parents do not bruise/injure	358	7.3% (26)	1.1% (4)
Parents do bruise/injure	14	28.6% (4)	7.1% (1)

Age of Women Victims of Interspousal Violence

The incidence of interspousal violence against women is somewhat higher among younger women than it is among older women. This is true for the incidence of abuse by the present husband, the incidence of ever being

abused by a spouse, and for the incidence of being hit or slapped by the present husband. The highest incidence in all three categories just mentioned is reported by women who are twenty-one or younger. See Table 7.

#### Age of Husbands of Victims of Interspousal Violence

Women with younger husbands report a higher incidence of abuse than do women with older husbands. This is not surprising given the fact that younger women report more abuse than do older women. 12.4 percent of the wives of men twenty-one years of age or younger have been abused, whereas only 5.2 percent of the wives of men aged 50-59 have been abused. Table 8 looks at the various age categories of husbands and reports on what percentage of their wives have experienced interspousal abuse.

Table 7

Incidence of Interspousal Abuse of Women: By Age of Women

	Under 21	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
% abused ever	25.0% (4/16)	11.0% (13/117)	7.3% (11/151)	12.5% (12/104)	5.3% (6/114)	5.9% (5/85)
% abused by present husband	18.8% (3/16)	4.3% (5/117)	1.3% 2/151	1.0% (1/104)	1.0% (1/114)	0% (0/85)
% ever slapped/ hit by present husband	37.5% (6/16)	20.9% (24/117)	17.9% (25/140)	20.0% 20/99	13.4% (14/104)	1.7% (1/64)

Table 8

Incidence of Interspousal Abuse of Women:  
By Age of Husband at Time of Interview

	Under 21	Age Categories of Husbands				
		22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
% abused ever	14.2% (1/7)	13.5% (11/81)	7.8% (11/140)	10.2% (12/117)	5.2% (6/115)	7.4% (5/67)
% abused by present husband	14.2% (1/7)	2.5% (2/81)	2.8% (4/140)	1.7% (2/117)	1.0% (1/115)	0% (0/67)

Age Difference Between Husband and Wife

The age difference between the marital partners does not appear to have much effect on the incidence of abuse reported by the women. While 14.8 percent of the wives who are 11-15 years younger than their husbands have ever been abused, which is higher than the average incidence rate (8.7 percent statewide), the incidence rate in all other categories is fairly uniform and is near the statewide average. See Table 9.

Table 9

Incidence of Interspousal Abuse of Women:  
By Age Difference Between Husband and Wife

Age Difference	% Women ever abused by husband
Same age	6.4% (5/77)
Man older 1-2 years	8.1% (14/172)
Man older 3-5 years	9.4% (13/138)
Man older 6-10 years	6.4% (5/78)
Man older 11-15 years	14.8% (4/27)
Man older 16+ years	8.3% (1/12)
Woman older 1+ years	10.3% (9/87)

Age of Women at Marriage

Conventional wisdom maintains that the best time to marry is after one reaches the mid-20s. The reported incidence of women ever being abused, however, is considerably higher for women who marry after their twenty-fourth birthday than it is for women who marry earlier. 8.7 percent

of the women who married by age 19 report ever being abused, while 16 percent of the women who married between the ages of 29-33 report ever being abused. See Table 10.

It is important to note that while women who married late, relatively, report the highest incidence of ever being abused, they also report the lowest incidence of being abused by their present husband. No women who were married at the age of 20 or older are abused by their present husband. This suggests, once again quite clearly, that women leave abusive relationships, or that they do not report abuse until they leave.

Types of Residential Areas Where Interspousal Violence Occurs

Wife abuse occurs in each kind of residential area: city, suburb, small town, and rural. However, women who live in cities have the highest rate of ever being abused by a spouse. 13.5 percent of women who live in cities report having ever been abused while only 7.1 percent of the women who live in rural areas report ever being abused by a spouse. The second highest rate of incidence of women who have ever been abused is among women living in small towns. See Table 11. The incidence of wives being hit or slapped follows the same pattern.

Table 10

Incidence of Interspousal Abuse of Women:

By Age of Woman at Marriage

	Age of Woman at Time of Marriage					
	0-19	20-23	24-28	29-33	34-39	40+
% Woman ever abused	8.7% (16/184)	4.4% (10/227)	11.0% (12/109)	16.0% (6/37)	13.6% (3/22)	22.2% (4/18)
% Woman abused by present husband	2.1% (4/184)	1.7% (4/227)	1.8% (2/109)	0% (0/37)	0% (0/22)	0% (0/18)

Table 11  
 Incidence of Interspousal Violence to Women:  
 By Residential Area \*

	City	Suburb	Small Town	Rural Area
% Woman ever abused	13.5% (20/148)	6.9% (19/291)	9.6% (7/73)	7.1% (6/84)
% Woman abused by current husband	2.0% (3/148)	2.1% (6/291)	1.4% (1/73)	0% (0/84)
% Woman ever hit/slapped by current husband	20.5% (27/132)	15.1% (41/271)	18.8% (12/64)	10.7% (8/75)
% Woman hit/ slapped by current husband in last two years	6.8% (9/132)	6.6% (18/271)	7.8% (5/64)	0% (0/75)
* Type of residential area was defined by respondent.				

The importance of this data is that it shows that interspousal violence does occur in all kinds of residential areas and that no area is immune to this behavior.

Geographic Regions of the State Where Interspousal Violence Occurs

Abuse occurs in every geographic region in Maryland but the incidence of wife abuse does vary from region to region. 11.3 percent of the women from Baltimore City report ever being abused, in contrast to 5.8 percent of the women from Western Maryland who report ever being abused.

The incidence of women ever being hit or slapped also varies from region to region. Once again the incidence is highest in Baltimore City (18.6 percent) and lowest in Western Maryland (12.2 percent).

Perhaps the most surprising fact in the data on region is that the incidence of women being abused by their present husband and the incidence of women being hit or slapped by their husband in the past two years are both highest in the Eastern Shore region. See Table 12.

It is important to note that while there are variations in the incidence of abuse from region to region, there is also a minimum of 5.8 percent incidence of women who have ever been abused in all regions of the state.

Table 12

## Incidence of Interspousal Violence to Women:

## By Geographic Region of Maryland\*

	Balt. City	Balt. Area Counties	DC Suburbs and Annapolis	Eastern Shore	Western Md.
%Woman ever abused	11.3% (22/194)	7.3% (4/55)	6.4% (9/141)	8.5% (9/105)	5.8% (3/52)
%Woman abused by current husband	2.6% (5/194)	0% (0/55)	1.0% (1/141)	3.0% (3/105)	2.0% (1/52)
%Woman ever hit/ slapped by current husband	18.6% (33/177)	17.8% (8/45)	14.0% (19/136)	14.6% (15/103)	12.2% (6/49)
%Woman hit/slapped by current husband in last two years	6.7% (12/177)	2.2% (1/45)	3.7% (5/136)	8.7% (9/103)	4.1% (2/49)
* Geographic regions are determined in this survey by Zip Code. In most cases Zip Code areas are not coterminous with county boundaries. Following are the Zip Codes used to determine regions in this report: Baltimore City = prefix 212; Baltimore Area Counties = prefixes 206, 216, 218; Washington, D.C. Suburbs = prefixes 207, 208, 209; Eastern Shore = prefixes 210, 211, 214, 219; Western Maryland = 215, 217.					

Religion

The highest incidence of abuse is reported by women who state that they were not raised in a religious tradition. Women who report that they were raised in one of the three major evangelical Protestant churches--Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian--report the highest incidence of ever being abused (13.3 percent) of the women who specify the religious tradition in which they were raised. The lowest such incidence is reported by women raised in the old state churches (churches formerly the official church of a state or nation)--Episcopal, Lutheran, Congregational and Quaker. Only 1.6 percent of the women raised in one of these religions reported ever being abused by a spouse. The old state churches usually are upper middle class, so it is possible that the low incidence of abuse among women of these churches reflects their socio-economic status as well as their religious tradition.

The pattern of abuse that emerges when the religion of the husband is examined parallels the pattern found in examining the religion of the abused women. The incidence of abuse among various religions is shown in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13

Incidence of Interspousal Violence to Women:  
By Religion of Woman

	None	Catholic	Religion of Woman				Other Protestant
			Jewish	Baptist Methodist Presby.	Episcopal Lutheran Congreg.		
% Woman ever abused	14.0% (1/7)	5.5% (9/164)	6.0% (2/33)	13.3% (35/264)	1.6% (1/63)	6.2% (4/68)	
% Woman ever hit/slapped by present husband	42.0% (3/7)	17.1% (26/152)	12.5% (4/32)	18.6% (44/236)	10.5% (6/57)	11.4% (6/61)	

Table 14

Incidence of Interspousal Violence to Women:

By Religion of Husband

	None	Catholic	Jewish	Baptist Methodist Presby.	Episcopal Lutheran Congreg.	Other Protestant
% Woman ever abused	26.0% (5/19)	8.0% (13/163)	5.4% (2/37)	9.0% (22/244)	5.1% (3/58)	7.4% (5/67)
% Woman ever hit/slapped by present husband	31.0% (6/19)	17.3% (26/150)	5.9% (2/34)	18.4% (41/223)	5.5% (3/55)	12.0% (9/66)

### Education of Wife

The amount of education a woman possesses has a small but measurable impact upon her chances of being abused at some time by her husband. In general, women with more education have a lower incidence, or less chance, of being abused than women with less education. For example, women who have attended college report a lower incidence of ever being abused (6.8 percent) than do women who never attended college (9.8 percent).

### Education of Husband

The level of a man's educational achievement has a much greater impact on the incidence of wife abuse than does the educational level of a woman herself. Women whose husbands have completed the eighth grade or less report the highest incidence of abuse (13.7 percent). In contrast, 2.9 percent of the women whose husbands attended graduate school reported that they had been abused at some time. Thus, women married to the least educated men report an incidence of abuse that is almost five times as great as that reported by women married to the most educated men.

Education is not only a measure of educational achievement. It is also an excellent indicator of social class. More lower class men abuse their wives than do middle class men, and upper middle class men abuse their wives least of all. The data on the

husband's income and occupation, other indicators of social class, also support the conclusion that wife abuse is far more prevalent among the lower social classes than among the middle or upper middle classes.

It should be remembered that a woman's education only minimally affected the incidence of abuse reported. This, coupled with the findings above, suggests that whether or not wives are abused is far more dependent upon the man's education (and, therefore, social class) than it is upon the woman's education. Since the man is the abuser, this should not be surprising.

#### Yearly Income of Women

It is difficult to interpret the data collected on women's income largely because it is not clear whether each woman is the chief breadwinner in the family or a second income. The income figures, hence, are not necessarily indicative of the socio-economic class of the family.

The data do suggest some conclusions. Women who do not work report a lower incidence of abuse than women who do work regardless of the income which the woman earns. Perhaps this is because in most cases those women who do not work are able to do so because their husbands earn sufficient incomes to support the family. These families, then, are more likely to be middle class or upper class families.

The data also suggest that women who earn over \$10,000 a year are not abused by their present husbands. See Table 15. Some of these women report being abused at one time. In most cases this abuse probably occurred in a former relationship. Here, as elsewhere, there is an indication that abuse is a longer term problem for women in the lower classes.

#### Income of Husband

The data on the husband's income suggest one major conclusion. Men with lower incomes are far more likely to abuse their wives than are men in middle or upper income brackets. 16.2 percent of the women with husbands who earn less than \$10,000 yearly are abused at some time. This is three times the percentage of abused women with husbands who earn over \$10,000 (5.7 percent). The incidence of abuse by the woman's present husband follows the same pattern: lower income men are more likely to abuse their wives than men with larger incomes. Table 16 gives the rate of wife abuse for men of varying income categories. It also shows the percentage of men in different income brackets who hit or slap their wives. This rate or incidence generally decreases as the man's income increases.

Table 15

## Incidence of Interspousal Abuse of Women:

By Yearly Income of Woman

	no income	0- 6,000	<u>Annual Income of Women</u> <u>Reported in Dollars</u>			
			6,000- 10,000	10,000- 15,000	15,000- 20,000	20,000+
%Woman ever abused	4.0% (8/196)	14.3% (20/140)	11.0% (8/73)	7.3% (5/68)	15.6% (5/32)	9.0% (1/11)
%Woman abused by current husband	1.0% (2/196)	3.6% (5/140)	2.7% (2/13)	0% (0/68)	0% (0/32)	0% (0/11)

Table 16

## Incidence of Interspousal Violence to Women:

By Yearly Income of Husband\*

	Annual Income of Husband Reported in Dollars					
	0- 6,000	6- 10,000	10- 15,000	15- 20,000	20- 30,000	30,000+
% Woman ever abused	21.0% (8/38)	12.7% (7/55)	7.7% (9/116)	5.3% (5/93)	4.0% (3/74)	5.7% (2/34)
% Woman abused by current husband	10.5% (4/38)	0% (0/55)	1.8% (2/116)	1.0% (1/93)	1.3% (1/74)	0% (0/34)
% Woman ever hit/ slapped by current husband	31.5% (12/38)	16.7% (9/54)	17.2% (20/116)	11.8% (11/93)	14.6% (11/74)	11.5% (4/34)
% Woman hit/slapped by current husband in last two years	18.4% (7/38)	11.1% (6/54)	5.1% (6/116)	5.3% (5/93)	2.7% (2/74)	2.9% (1/34)
* 99 women stated that they did not know their husband's income. 92 stated that the question was not applicable because they were not married, or the husband was retired, or the husband was unemployed.						

Home Ownership or Rental as Factor in Abuse

Home ownership is looked upon as one more indicator of socio-economic status. If wife abuse is more prevalent among the lower classes than it is among the middle and upper classes, as other data has indicated, one would expect to see more wife abuse among those who rent than among those who own their own home. This is exactly what the survey data showed. 21.7 percent of the women who rent report they have ever been abused by their husbands. Only 2.3 percent of the women who own their own homes report such abuse. The incidence rate of ever being abused, therefore, is nine times as great among women who rent than it is among women who own their own homes. In the face of these figures it is very difficult to argue that wife abuse is not far more prevalent among the lower income groups. See Table 17.

Table 17  
Incidence of Interspousal Violence To Women  
By Home Ownership vs. Renting

	Own	Rent
%Women ever abused	2.3% (19)	21.7% (32)
%Women never abused	97.7% (415)	78.3% (115)
Total	100 % (434)	100 % (147)

Occupation of Women as Related to the Incidence of Abuse

It is very difficult to draw conclusions regarding the incidence of wife abuse as related to occupation of the woman. In five of the occupational categories there is insufficient data to draw any conclusions. The data on the seven remaining occupational categories presented in Table 18 again point to the relationship between abuse and socio-economic status. Women who are employed in professional or management positions report the lowest incidence of ever being abused of all women who work for wages. Homemakers report an incidence of ever being abused that is approximately the same as that reported by professional women.

Table 18

## Incidence of Interspousal Violence to Women:

By Occupation of Woman

Occupational Category *	% Woman ever abused by husband	% Woman slapped/ hit by present husband
Professional, Technical	4.0% (3/74)	17.4% (12/69)
Management, Administration	7.6% (2/26)	22.7% (5/22)
Sales	11.0% (1/9)	33.0% (3/9)
Clerical	13.0% (13/100)	22.1% (21/95)
Craftsman	Insufficient Data	
Semi-skilled workers	17.5% (3/17)	12.5% (2/16)
Transport equipment operators	Insufficient Data	
Laborers	Insufficient Data	
Farmers	Insufficient Data	
Service workers	18.0% (9/50)	25.5% (11/43)
Self-employed	Insufficient Data	
Housewives	6.7% (20/294)	11.1% (30/268)

\* Occupational categories based on those used by  
1970 U.S. Census

Occupation of Husband as Related to Incidence of Wife Abuse

Women who are married to men who are employed in professional, administrative, sales, and craft positions report a far lower incidence of ever being abused than women

whose husbands work in less skilled and lower paying positions. The relationship between social class and wife abuse thus appears again in the data on the husband's occupation. The data is presented below without further comment.

Table 19

Incidence of Interspousal Violence to Women:  
By Occupation of Husband

Occupational category *	% Woman ever abused by husband	% Woman slapped/ hit by present husband
Professional, Technical	5.9% (7/117)	10.0% (11/110)
Management, Administration	3.7% (3/82)	11.3% (9/79)
Sales	2.4% (1/41)	18.4% (7/33)
Clerical	6.3% (1/16)	25.0% (4/16)
Craftsman	6.9% (7/101)	20.0% (19/95)
Semi-skilled workers	14.8% (4/27)	16.0% (4/25)
Transport Equipment operators	18.1% (4/22)	19.0% (4/21)
Laborers	20.0% (7/35)	28.0% (9/33)
Farmers	13.0% (2/15)	0% (0/14)
Service Workers	18.7% (3/16)	40.0% (6/15)
Police, Military	8.7% (2/23)	25.0% (5/20)
Self-employed	15.6% (5/32)	13.3% (4/30)
* Occupational categories based on those used in 1970 U.S. Census		

Number of Children in Household

The number of children in a household has no visible effect upon the incidence of abuse that women report. Women with no children report an incidence of ever being abused of 8 percent. 9 percent of women with one child report ever being abused; 6.6 percent of women with two children report the same abuse. For women with three children the incidence rises to 15 percent, but for women with four children the incidence drops to 5.2 percent. Thus there is no clear pattern of the relationship between the occurrence of wife abuse and the number of children in the household.

Number of Persons in Household

The number of persons residing in a household does not seem to affect the incidence of abuse reported by women. When asked if they had ever been abused by a man they lived with, 13 percent of the women who currently live alone said that they had. 6.8 percent of the women living in a household of two persons stated that they had been abused. The incidence of abuse for three in a household was 12 percent; for four in a household it was 5 percent; for five in a house, it was 6.1 percent; and for six in a household it was 20 percent. These figures do not constitute a pattern of incidence.

Race

The incidence of husbands abusing their wives and of husbands hitting their wives is sharply higher among blacks than it is among whites. 19.7 percent of black women report ever being abused while 6.7 percent of white women report that they have been abused at some time. The incidence of abuse, thus, is three times as great among black women as it is among white women. See Table 20.

Table 20

## Incidence of Interspousal Violence to Women:

By Race

	<u>Race</u>	
	White Women	Black Women
% Woman hit by current husband	14.6% (67/460)	26.6% (21/79)
% Woman hit by current husband in past two years	5.0% (23/460)	14.0% (11/79)
% Woman ever abused by husband	6.7% (34/502)	19.6% (18/92)
% Woman abused by current husband	1.4% (7/502)	3.3% (3/92)

A much larger percentage of blacks than whites belong to the lower socio-economic groups in this society. It is necessary, therefore, to determine if the higher incidence

of abuse among blacks is simply reflecting the fact that blacks are poorer than whites. As demonstrated before in this paper, the incidence rate of the poor is higher than that of persons with larger incomes. It is necessary, therefore, to separate the effects of race from the effects of socio-economic class.

When one looks at the incidence of abuse as it is distributed across black economic groups and compare that to the incidence of abuse as it is distributed across white economic groups, several things become clear. Blacks belonging to lower socio-economic groups report a much higher incidence of abuse than do blacks belonging to middle and upper socio-economic groups. Whites, as well, show the same pattern: those belonging to lower socio-economic groups report a much higher incidence of abuse than do whites in the middle and upper classes. Thus, within each racial group, socio-economic status has a great impact on the incidence of abuse reported.

It is also clear that within the same socio-economic class the incidence of abuse is higher among blacks than it is among whites. Black women whose husbands earn more than \$10,000 yearly report an incidence of ever being abused of 8.5 percent. In contrast, white women whose husbands are in the same income bracket report

an incidence of abuse of 4.2 percent. Black women whose husbands earn less than \$10,000 annually report an incidence of ever being abused of 29.1 percent, whereas white women whose husbands also earned under \$10,000 report an incidence of abuse of 13.4 percent. Similar patterns appeared when the data on education and occupation were separated by racial group.

It appears that much of the high rates of abuse among blacks can be attributed to the economic status of blacks, and that some of these high rates can be attributed simply to race and the different cultural norms within racial groups. This may be partially due to the added stress blacks encounter in coping with racism in our society.

#### Women's Attitudes

The women surveyed were asked several attitude questions. Only one of those questions had a marked effect on the incidence of abuse reported by the women.

When asked if it was right for a husband to punish a wife, 93.4 percent of the women said that it was not right. These women who stated that it is not right for a husband to punish a wife reported an incidence of ever being abused of 7.7 percent. Only nine women in the sample (1.5 percent of the women surveyed) said that it was right for a man to punish his wife; five of these

nine women (56 percent) said that they themselves had been abused.

Whether or not a woman thought that a man should be strong did not affect the incidence of abuse reported. Women who thought that a man should be strong reported an incidence of abuse of 9.6 percent; women who did not believe that a man needed to be strong reported an incidence of 8.3 percent.

The woman's approval or disapproval of separation and divorce also did not affect the incidence of abuse reported. Women who approved of separation reported an incidence of abuse of 11.0 percent; women who disapproved of separation reported an incidence of 7.7 percent. Women who approved of divorce reported an incidence of abuse of 11.5 percent, whereas women who opposed divorce reported an incidence of abuse of 6.5 percent.

## CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this Survey provide helpful information for planning programs and policies for intervention to alleviate the problem of spouse-battering in this state.

It is established that more women report that they have ever been abused by their husbands than report that they themselves have ever abused their husbands. Projecting these data figures on the population of Maryland, it can be inferred that a substantial number of women, 18,200, suffer severe intraspousal violence in the last two years. The problem is of significant proportion to warrant immediate attention from the Department of Human Resources to expand existing services, including shelters, hot-lines and advocacy programs.

The Report shows that more than one-half of the abused women never called the police. Police data in the past have provided the only available statistics for measuring the extent of the problem. Preliminary data from a study conducted by the Maryland State Police at the request of the General Assembly show that from December 1, 1977 through July 31, 1978, 8,462 assaults occurred between spouses,

1,611 of these being aggravated assault.<sup>1</sup> This is at a rate of 1,000 per month. If more than one-half of the victims of these assaults never called the police, any statistics from the police may be safely doubled in attempting to arrive at a realistic figure of violence between spouses. It is interesting to note that if that is an accurate statement then doubling the figure of the reported assaults in the police study realizes a figure of 24,000 assaults in a given year, a figure that is higher than the extrapolated figure of 18,200 women estimated by the survey.

In comparing the information provided by the respondents there was an attempt to ascertain what makes the abuse stop. Unfortunately, leaving seems to be the only thing that works. This may be the only solution to the problem because there have been no visible services in the past either to prevent or treat the problem. Clearly, it is the community's responsibility to provide alternatives in an effort to prevent the breakdown of the family.

Abuse occurs at all educational levels and income brackets. However, it is more likely to occur

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<sup>1</sup>Aggravated assault is defined as an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Uniform Crime Reports For the United States (Washington: U.S. Printing Office, 1977.)

where the man's educational achievement and income is low. The incidence of abuse is three times greater among black women than it is among white women. Nevertheless, when income brackets are compared with the numbers on race, black men, regardless of income, show a higher incidence of abuse than white men.

Women who are currently abused all have incomes less than \$10,000. Also, abuse is much more likely to occur in homes where the husband earns less than \$6,000. This suggests that the lack of financial resources inhibits resolution. The data also show higher incidence rates for current abuse, such as hitting and slapping, among women in rural areas. This suggests that a lack of community alternatives may force women in those areas to remain in abusive situations rather than leave.

Abuse occurs in every geographical region in Maryland, but the incidence of wife abuse does vary from region to region. 11.3 percent of the women from Baltimore City report ever being abused, in contrast to 5.8 percent of the women from Western Maryland who report ever being abused. In terms of present, on-going abuse, the Eastern Shore region reported an incidence slightly higher than Baltimore City. This would indicate that the next shelter should be located in the Eastern Shore area.

Finally, it is clear from the survey that there are strong generational implications to family violence. People who experience violence in their homes as children act out violently in their adult life among themselves or with their children. Work with battered spouses is but another attempt to break the cycle of violence and help children in their resocialization to a non-violent home situation.

Although the percentages in some of the abuse categories are small, they do allow us to establish priorities among the different areas, socio-economic groups, etc., where abuse occurs in Maryland. For example, they permit us in Table 12 to say that women report a greater incidence of abuse on the Eastern Shore than in any region except for Baltimore. It would be a mistake to view the percentages as etched in stone, but it would be correct to view them as allowing us to compare and rank order where and among what groups abuse occurs.

#### Recommendations

There are presently shelters (14) and advocacy programs sponsored by private groups and public agencies. The Department of Human Resources should develop comprehensive services for victims of intraspousal abuse and consider such abuse a major social problem.

The Department is expected to report back to the legislature this session on Senate Bill 776 and its obligation to provide a pilot shelter in a major metropolitan area. The Department has provided a grant to the House of Ruth, Baltimore, Inc. to meet this mandate. Nevertheless, the Department should consider supporting emergency shelters for victims of domestic violence throughout the state where they exist and developing shelters where they do not already exist but are needed. Strong consideration should be given to opening a shelter in the Eastern Shore area, as indicated by the data. The Department should consider, to the extent possible, coordinating community services and already-existing shelters in order to insure continuance of their programs.

In gathering information on the geographical need for services, the Department should compare the data gleaned in this survey with the statistics obtained by the Maryland State Police on assault and aggravated assault. This comparative data will augment each other.

It is recommended that the Department of Human Resources consider creating an advisory board to coordinate the planning and administration of services throughout the state in a wholistic and systematic fashion. The various forms in which family violence manifests itself must be taken into consideration. The advisory board would determine what role the Department should take in stimulating, developing and funding services throughout the state.

The Department should take responsibility for continuing collection of data from a variety of sources, including police, hospitals, social services agencies, spousal abuse shelters and other services, mental health services, etc. This data would assist the Department in its on-going program for prevention and treatment.

Finally, the data on the male questionnaires has yet to be analyzed. It will be very helpful to compare the incidence reported by the men and the demographic information with that of the females in order to obtain a clearer picture of the problem. It is anticipated that this information might help in developing legislation and programs to help severely violent men. Since information gleaned indicates the only available solution is the breakup of the marital home, it appears that to solve marital violence it is necessary to provide aid for the men.

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