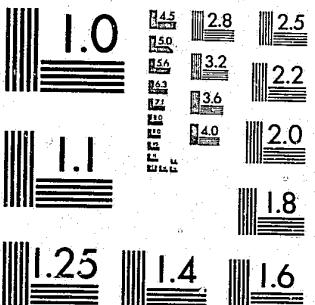


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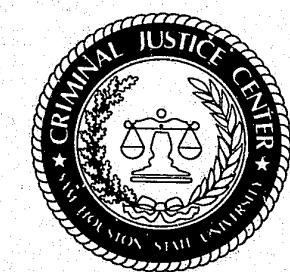
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# **SPOUSE ABUSE IN TEXAS: A STUDY OF WOMEN'S ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES**

Prepared for the  
Texas Department of Human Resources



89/31

**Survey Research Program  
Criminal Justice Center  
Sam Houston State University  
Huntsville, Texas 77341**

# SPOUSE ABUSE IN TEXAS: A STUDY OF WOMEN'S ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES\*

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February 1983

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Raymond H.C. Teske Jr. and Mary L. Parker

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SPOUSE ABUSE IN TEXAS

### A STUDY OF WOMEN'S ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES

This study examined the attitudes, knowledge, and experiences of a sample of women residents in Texas concerning spouse abuse. The study was conducted in cooperation with the Texas Department of Human Resources by the Survey Research Program at Sam Houston State University's Criminal Justice Center.

The specific areas covered in the survey were:

1. Perceptions of the problem, including what constitutes spouse abuse.
2. How the public believes the problem should be addressed.
3. The extent to which respondents to the survey have been abused, both during the previous twelve months and during their lifetimes.
4. The extent to which women in Texas are aware of others who have been abused. Knowledge of others included:
  - Close friends
  - Neighbors (other than close friends)
  - Acquaintances
  - Relatives
5. Several secondary issues were also examined in the survey.
  - The role of the police in spouse abuse
  - Types of abuse experiences
  - The extent to which abused women are using available services
  - Perceived causes of the abuse
  - The extent which children are also abused by the abusers

Survey instruments were mailed to a scientifically selected random probability sample of 2000 female residents of Texas, age 18 and over. A total of 1210 useable questionnaires, representing 60.5% of the original sample, were returned. If adjustment is made allowing for individuals who had moved (non-forwardable) or who were deceased, the adjusted return rate was 64.98%. Of the useable returns, 82.8% of the respondents were White, 6.7% were Black, 9.4% were Spanish-surname, and 0.7% were of "Other" ethnic origin. The average age of the respondents was 42 and the median age was 38. Ages ranged from 18 to 87—with two exceptions, one 16 and one 17 year old responded to the survey. Whites were slightly overrepresented compared to the total population of women age 18 and over in Texas; and, Blacks and Spanish-surname were slightly underrepresented in the returns when compared to the original sample. At the same time, the age, income, place of residence (returns were received from residents of 173 counties) are statistically representative of the population of Texas. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the results from this survey can be generalized to the population of women in Texas, age 18 and over, holding valid drivers licenses, providing that recognition is made that the results could vary slightly if a greater percentage of Blacks and Spanish-surname had responded to the survey.

The following are some of the more significant findings:

1. Respondents Experience With Spouse Abuse
  - 8.5% of the respondents had been victims of abuse during the previous 12 months.
  - 29.7% of the respondents had been abused during their lifetime.
  - Based on these findings, and using 1980 Texas census data, it can be estimated that at least 436,072 women age 18 and over were abused by their husband or live-in partner during the previous twelve months, including 317,528 who suffered some type of physical abuse. Moreover, 1,519,902 women age 18 and over, currently living in Texas, have been abused during their lifetime, with 1,308,216 having experienced some type of physical abuse.
  - The abuse was most likely to have been by the woman's legal husband (80% previous year; 87% lifetime), rather than by a common-law husband or live-in partner.
  - 19% of the women abused during the previous year, and 25% of the women abused during their lifetime, were abused at least once a week or more.
  - 12% of the respondents abused during the previous year, and 24% of those abused during their lifetime, required medical treatment by a doctor or hospital.
  - Based on these findings it can be estimated that at least 358,595 women currently living in Texas have required medical treatment by a doctor or hospital because of abuse by a spouse or live-in partner.
  - 25% of the women abused during the previous year divorced or permanently left their husband (or live-in partner).
  - 63% of those abused during their lifetime have divorced or permanently left their husband (or live-in partner).

- 17% of the women abused during the previous year and 33% of those abused during their lifetime had children who were also abused by the abuser.
  - 20% of the women abused during the previous year, and 30% of those abused during their lifetime, said that the police had been informed about the abuse.
  - In 10% of the cases where the police were informed during the previous year an arrest was made. In 15% of the incidents where the police were informed during a respondent's lifetime — with reference to the most recent time they were informed — an arrest was made.
- 2. Knowledge of Others Abused During the Previous Year**
- 21.8% of the respondents had at least one close friend who was abused by her husband or live-in partner.
  - 7.7% knew at least one neighbor (who was not a close friend) who was abused during the previous year.
  - 13.3% knew at least one acquaintance who was abused during the previous year.
  - 14.6% knew at least one relative who was abused during the previous year.
  - Over three-fourths of the persons in each category were abused by their "legal" husband. The remainder were abused by either a common-law husband or live-in partner.
  - 32% of the close friends who were abused, 26% of the neighbors, 27% of the acquaintances, and 20% of the abused relatives required medical treatment by a doctor or hospital.
- 3. Perceptions of the Problem**
- At least three-fourths (75%) of the respondents considered each of the 16 items listed by the researchers to be abuse. These ranged from what might be considered less serious abuse (e.g., pushing, shoving, or grabbing, 75%) to what should be considered serious abuse (e.g., beating with an object or fist, 97%).
  - The respondents did differentiate significantly with respect to their perceptions of the seriousness of each of the 16 items, with acts of physical abuse perceived as much more serious. The one noteworthy exception was "deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter" which was considered "very serious" abuse by 59% and "serious" abuse by 23% of the respondents — if committed on a regular basis.
  - Perceived seriousness of the acts also differed significantly depending on whether the act occurred once, or on a regular basis.
- 4. Approaches to the Problem**
- Regarding physical abuse, 50% of the respondents said that the abuser should be considered emotionally disturbed and ordered to receive treatment, 24% said that he should be treated as a criminal and prosecuted, 16% said that the matter should be handled in civil court only, and 3% said that the abuser should be considered normal and that the husband and wife should work out the problem.
  - Regarding sexual abuse, 56% said that the abuser should be considered emotionally disturbed, 22% said treated as a criminal, 12% said handled in civil court only, and 3% said consider him as normal.
  - Regarding verbal, mental, and/or emotional abuse, 60% said he should be considered emotionally disturbed, 14% said handle in civil court, and 10% said consider him as normal.
  - In cases of physical abuse, only 24% of the respondents said that the woman should call the police. Almost two-thirds (59%) said that she should either leave the house or apartment (38%) or call a social service agency for advice (21%).
  - 16% said that the police should be called in cases of sexual abuse and only 5% said that the police should be called in cases of verbal, mental, and/or emotional abuse.
  - 88% of the respondents believed that "more places where abused women (and children) can seek help" would be either effective (32%) or very effective (56%) for dealing with the problem of men abusing their wives or live-in partner.
  - 80% believed that "more treatment for men who abuse women" would be either effective (33%) or very effective (47%).
  - Although 80% believed that stiffening of the laws and penalties would be effective (or very effective), 87% said that stiffer enforcement of the laws and penalties would be effective (or very effective).
  - 65% believed that more training for policemen in how to deal with this problem would be effective (or very effective) and 78% believed that public awareness of programs would be effective or very effective.
  - Regarding the use of tax money for the treatment of men who have abused their wives or live-in partners, 57% of the respondents agree that state tax money should be used for this purpose, 40% agree with the use of federal tax money, 48% agree with the use of county tax money, and 46% agree with the use of city tax money.
  - Regarding the use of tax money for the care and assistance of women who have been abused by their husband or live-in partner, 63% of the respondents agree that state tax money should be used for this purpose, 47% agree with the use of federal tax money, 58% agree with the use of county tax money, and 56% agree with the use of city tax money.

- 5. Awareness and Use of Services**
- 33% of the respondents said that they are aware of some type of service(s) available for women in their community for a woman who has been abused by her husband or live-in partner.
  - 47% of those aware of some type of service(s) and 15% of the total number of respondents were aware of shelters for women being available in their communities.
  - 6% of the respondents knew someone personally who had made use of a shelter for women because she was threatened or abused by her husband or live-in partner.
  - 22% of the respondents knew someone personally who had contacted the police because of abuse by a husband or live-in partner.
  - 9% of the respondents had contacted the police at least once during their lifetime because of abuse by a husband or live-in partner.
  - 12 (1%) of the respondents to the survey had ever made use of a shelter because they were threatened or abused by a husband or live-in partner.

## PURPOSE

This document has been prepared for the Texas Department of Human Resources by the Criminal Justice Center's Survey Research Program at Sam Houston State University. The purpose of the document is to report the results of a state-wide survey of women in Texas concerning their attitudes toward, and experiences with, spouse abuse. A contract was entered into between the Texas Department of Human Resources and the University on June 1, 1982 whereby the Texas Department of Human Resources provided the primary financial support for the survey and Sam Houston State University's Criminal Justice Center provided the necessary expertise and support services.

## SURVEY RESEARCH PROGRAM

In order to better understand the context in which this survey was conducted, it may be helpful to provide a brief overview of the Criminal Justice Center's Survey Research Program. For over six years the Survey Research Program has regularly conducted a state-wide survey entitled the *Texas Crime Poll*. The format of the *Texas Crime Poll* remains the same each time and many of the questions are replicated on a regular basis in order to allow for measurement of changes in public opinion. Other items are topical in nature and are included only once.

In addition to the *Texas Crime Poll*, the Survey Research Program conducts several special surveys each year. These special surveys are designed to address current issues which are of special interest to the criminal justice system in Texas and the *Special Survey on Family Violence* was one such survey. (The title *Texas Crime Poll: Special Survey on Family Violence* was selected for the questionnaire, rather than *Spouse Abuse*, because it was believed that the title would carry a broader meaning and would seem less offensive to persons receiving the questionnaire.)

The Survey Research Program's researchers, then, have an extensive background of experience on which to rely when conducting these special surveys. Moreover, in 1978, a pilot (and more limited) survey on spouse abuse in Texas was conducted by the Survey Research Program. Also, in 1978, a special statewide survey was conducted focusing on child abuse in Texas. Therefore, the experience and knowledge gained from these two previous special surveys were very useful in formating the current survey on spouse abuse.

## THE SURVEY: SPOUSE ABUSE IN TEXAS

The survey instrument was developed through a series of meetings between representatives of the Texas Department of Human Resources and the researchers. These meetings were directed toward identifying those areas where additional information con-

cerning spouse abuse was needed in order to provide for a rational decision-making process. Consequently, the following subject areas were identified and addressed in the survey: (1) perceptions of the problem, including what constitutes spouse abuse; (2) how the public believes the problem should be addressed; (3) the extent to which women in Texas are aware of others who have been abused — including close friends, neighbors, acquaintances, and relatives; and, (4) the extent to which respondents to the survey have themselves been abused, both during the previous twelve months and during their lifetimes. In addition to these four primary areas of concern, secondary issues were identified and addressed in the survey: (1) the role of the police in spouse abuse; (2) types of abuse experienced; (3) the extent to which abused women are using available services; (4) perceived causes of the abuse; (5) the extent to which children are also abused by the abusers; and, (6) estimates of the extent of spouse abuse in Texas.

It should also be noted that the procedure used for conducting these surveys, that is, by mail, has several advantages for this type of study. First, it is difficult to employ interviewers who will go into all parts of the community, especially at night. Secondly, it is difficult to reach many people through door-to-door surveys due to inaccessibility (condominiums, apartments, non-availability at certain hours) or their fear of opening the door to strangers — especially after dark. Thirdly, this was a sensitive subject and it is difficult to get people to answer questions for a stranger (interviewer) regarding spouse abuse — or similar topics — in a face-to-face relationship. Fourthly, based on past experience, the Survey Research Program is achieving a return rate that exceeds door-to-door and telephone surveys. (Note, too, that telephone surveys have the problem of reaching only those who have telephones.) Fifthly, this procedure allows for complete coverage of residents in the State of Texas at a very effective rate of cost.

## Sampling Procedure

A systematic random sample of 2000 names was drawn from the list of women holding valid drivers licenses in the State of Texas — age 18 and over. Every nth name was taken in order to provide the size sample required. Over 90% of Texas residents age 18 and over have drivers licenses and are listed in the file. This does, of course, present a problem regarding those who do not hold valid drivers licenses, but the procedure does provide a very systematic random sample of individuals from throughout the State of Texas. The procedure was originally developed by the Statistical Analysis Center of the Texas Department of Public Safety for their Crime Trend Surveys. Since that time, it has been used many times by the Survey Research Program at the Criminal Justice Center, and has proven to be a very reliable procedure. At the same

time, the reader should keep in mind that the results can be generalized only to women holding valid drivers licenses in Texas.

#### Research Format

The first set of questionnaires was mailed on July 29, 1982. One week prior to this date each person in the sample was sent a post card informing her that a questionnaire would arrive within a week and explaining the purpose of the study. The initial mailing included the following: (1) a personalized letter explaining the purpose of the survey; (2) a copy of the survey instrument; and, (3) a stamped, return-addressed envelope. At the end of two weeks 31% of the 2000 questionnaires had been completed and returned. In addition, a number of the questionnaire packets had been returned as undeliverable. At the end of two weeks, all non-respondents were sent a post card asking them to complete and return the questionnaire. At the end of three weeks 41.3% had been completed and returned. At this time, all non-respondents were sent a second packet, including a letter asking them to reconsider if they had not already returned a completed questionnaire. Finally, at the end of five weeks, all non-respondents were sent one more reminder post card. The cut-off date for the last questionnaire was October 6, 1982 (see Table 1).

Standard procedure for the *Texas Crime Poll* and special surveys is to code the questionnaire with an assigned number and then place the same number on questionnaires in the follow-up mailing. This procedure allows the researchers to check for duplicate questionnaires which might be received from the same respondent. Respondents are assured that the code numbers will be used only for this purpose, and that their responses will remain confidential. Upon completion of the data analysis phase, all names and references are destroyed.

#### Returns

A total of 1210 women — representing 173 Texas counties — returned completed, useable questionnaires. This represented a return rate of 60.5 percent of the original sample of 2000. In addition, 137 questionnaires were returned because the individual had moved to a new address and they could not be forwarded. Also, one was returned because the person was deceased. If these 138 are subtracted from the original sample of 2000, this leaves a potential sample of 1862, and an adjusted return rate of 64.98 percent.

#### Characteristics of the Respondents

Whites accounted for 82.8 percent of the respondents, Blacks accounted for 6.7 percent, and Spanish-surname for 9.4 percent (see Table 2). Moreover, 9 (0.7%) were classified as "Other" races (e.g., Asiatic) and 4 (0.3%) did not indicate their race. Based on the original sample list it could be determined that 8.6 percent of the sample was Black. Hispanics are listed as "White" on the original sample list; therefore, the researchers sought to identify all Spanish-surnames on the list and then subtract this number from the total number of Whites. (Of course, it was not possible using this procedure to identify Hispanic women married to Anglo or Black males.) Accordingly, it was estimated that the original sample of 2000 contained 82.9 percent Whites and 8.5 percent Spanish-surname. There was no way to identify the number of women of "Other" races in the original sample.

TABLE 2

#### RACE OF THE RESPONDENTS

|                 | Respondents<br>Number | Percent | Total Sample<br>Number | Percent |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|
| White           | 1002                  | 82.8    | 1658                   | 82.9    |
| Black           | 81                    | 6.7     | 172                    | 8.6     |
| Spanish-surname | 114                   | 9.4     | 170                    | 8.5     |
| Other           | 9                     | .7      | 0                      | 0.0     |
| No Response     | 4                     | .3      | 0                      | 0.0     |
| Total           | 1210                  | 99.9    | 2000                   | 100.0   |

TABLE 1

#### WEEKLY SURVEY RETURNS

| Week of Return | Weekly Total | Percent of Respondents | Cumulative Percent of Respondents | Percent of Total Sample | Cumulative Percent of Total Sample |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1              | 149          | 12.31                  | 12.31                             | 7.45                    | 7.45                               |
| 2              | 471          | 38.93                  | 51.24                             | 23.55                   | 31.00                              |
| 3              | 206          | 17.03                  | 68.27                             | 10.30                   | 41.30                              |
| 4              | 166          | 13.72                  | 81.99                             | 8.30                    | 49.60                              |
| 5              | 133          | 10.99                  | 92.98                             | 6.65                    | 56.25                              |
| 6              | 41           | 3.39                   | 96.37                             | 2.05                    | 58.30                              |
| 7              | 28           | 2.31                   | 98.68                             | 1.40                    | 59.70                              |
| 8              | 8            | .66                    | 99.34                             | .40                     | 60.10                              |
| 9              | 7            | .58                    | 99.92                             | .35                     | 60.45                              |
| 10             | 1            | .08                    | 100.00                            | .05                     | 60.50                              |
| Total          | 1210         | 100.00                 |                                   | 60.50                   | 60.50                              |

The percentage of respondents who were Whites was almost exactly the same as the percentage of Whites in the original sample. Blacks were slightly less likely to respond and Spanish-surname were somewhat more likely to respond. Overall, then, the racial distribution of the respondents closely approximated the racial distribution of the original sample.

Age distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 3. The average age was 42 and the median age was 38 (one-half of the respondents were 38 or younger and one-half were 38 or older). Ages ranged from 16 to 87. (Note: only women 18 years of age and older were to be included in the sample; however, one 16 year old and one 17 year old returned questionnaires.) Approximately one-fourth of the respondents (24%) had a college degree, or an advanced college degree. An additional 30 percent had attended college, slightly more than one-fourth (28%) indicated that they had completed high school or a GED, and 16 percent had less than a high school education (see Table 4).

TABLE 3

#### AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

|              | Number | Percent |
|--------------|--------|---------|
| Less than 20 | 46     | 3.8     |
| 20-24        | 76     | 6.3     |
| 25-29        | 181    | 14.9    |
| 30-34        | 186    | 15.4    |
| 35-39        | 144    | 11.9    |
| 40-44        | 98     | 8.1     |
| 45-49        | 98     | 8.1     |
| 50-54        | 87     | 7.2     |
| 55-59        | 78     | 6.4     |
| 60-64        | 87     | 7.2     |
| 65-69        | 69     | 5.7     |
| 70-74        | 37     | 3.1     |
| 75-79        | 15     | 1.2     |
| 80 +         | 8      | .7      |
| Total        | 1210   | 100.0   |

TABLE 4

#### EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

|                         | Respondents<br>Number | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Less than high school   | 192                   | 16      |
| Completed high school   | 340                   | 28      |
| Some college            | 364                   | 30      |
| College degree          | 196                   | 16      |
| Advanced college degree | 94                    | 8       |
| No Response             | 24                    | 2       |
| Total                   | 1210                  | 100     |

Over two-thirds (68%) of the respondents were married and 11 percent were single (see Table 5). Ten percent were divorced, 7 percent were widowed, and 1 percent indicated that they were separated. In addition, 15 (1%) wrote in that they were "living together" and 2 indicated their status as "engaged." Approximately one-third of the respondents listed their family income as between \$25,001 and \$50,000 (see Table 6).

and 10 percent indicated that their annual family income exceeded \$50,000. The median family income was slightly more than \$25,000 per year.

TABLE 5

#### MARITAL STATUS

|             | Respondents<br>Number | Percent |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Single      | 128                   | 11      |
| Married     | 820                   | 68      |
| Divorced    | 122                   | 10      |
| Widowed     | 87                    | 7       |
| Separated   | 17                    | 1       |
| Other*      | 18                    | 1       |
| No Response | 18                    | 1       |
| Total       | 1210                  | 99      |

\*Other responses listed were "no expectations" (1), living together (15), and engaged (2).

TABLE 6

#### INCOME LEVELS OF THE RESPONDENTS

|                      | Respondents<br>Number | Percent |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Less than \$3,000    | 32                    | 3       |
| \$3,001 to \$6,000   | 65                    | 5       |
| \$6,001 to \$10,000  | 94                    | 8       |
| \$10,001 to \$15,000 | 144                   | 12      |
| \$15,001 to \$25,000 | 258                   | 21      |
| \$25,001 to \$50,000 | 405                   | 34      |
| Over \$50,000        | 124                   | 10      |
| No Response          | 88                    | 7       |
| Total                | 1210                  | 100     |

The size of the community where respondents lived represented a cross-section of the Texas population (see Table 7). Over one-fourth (27%) lived in a community of over 500,000 population and 45 percent lived in communities with populations greater than 100,000. At the same time, approximately one out of every ten (11%) lived in a rural area and an additional 6 percent lived in a community with a population of less than 2,500 residents. (According to the U.S. census definition, 17% of the respondents would be classified as "rural.") Moreover, approximately four out of five (79%) of the respondents indicated that they lived in either a house (73%) or a farm house (6%), while 10 percent lived in an apartment and 6 percent lived in a mobile home (see Table 8).

TABLE 7  
SIZE OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE RESPONDENTS LIVE

|                    | Respondents<br>Number | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Rural              | 134                   | 11      |
| Less than 2,500    | 71                    | 6       |
| 2,501 to 10,000    | 119                   | 10      |
| 10,001 to 25,000   | 137                   | 11      |
| 25,001 to 50,000   | 78                    | 6       |
| 50,001 to 100,000  | 126                   | 10      |
| 100,001 to 250,000 | 107                   | 9       |
| 250,001 to 500,000 | 104                   | 9       |
| Over 500,000       | 331                   | 27      |
| No Response        | 3                     | 1       |
| Total              | 1210                  | 100     |

TABLE 8

TYPE OF DWELLING

|             | Respondents<br>Number | Percent |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Apartment   | 118                   | 10      |
| House       | 878                   | 73      |
| Farm House  | 80                    | 6       |
| Mobile Home | 80                    | 6       |
| Other*      | 32                    | 3       |
| No Response | 22                    | 2       |
| Total       | 1210                  | 100     |

\*Other categories listed by respondents were condominium (16), duplex (6), dormitory (2), and military housing (8).

RESULTS

The results have been divided into five sections: (1) general perceptions of the problem; (2) opinions regarding what should be done; (3) knowledge of, and use of, available services; (4) respondents' personal experiences with abuse, during the previous twelve months and during the respondent's lifetime; and, (5) knowledge of persons abused during the previous twelve months.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROBLEM

The first section of the questionnaire was designed to ascertain what the respondents, in general, considered to be abuse, as well as their opinions regarding the seriousness of selected acts.

For the purpose of this study, the concept spouse abuse was considered to have a broader meaning than abuse between a legally (formally) married man and woman. Rather, it was intended to encompass abuse of a woman by a man with whom she had established a permanent living arrangement. Therefore, spouse abuse was considered to include legally (formally) married couples, couples having common-law marriages, and live-in partners (that is, couples who have established permanent living relationships). Throughout the questionnaire, then, the questions referred to "... abuse of a woman by her husband or live-in partner."

The first question in this section asked respondents to indicate which of the 16 items listed they considered to be abuse of a woman by her husband or live-in partner (see Table 9). The 16 items were intended to range from what might be considered less serious forms of abuse (e.g., verbal abuse/verbal threats) to very serious forms of abuse (e.g., use of a knife or gun). The items were not ranked in a hierarchical order in order to avoid biasing the responses. Also, the choices included the items listed on the Department of Human Resources' intake forms at shelters for abused women, although the choices were not limited to this list.

TABLE 9  
PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES ABUSE

QUESTION: Which of the following would you consider to be abuse of a woman by her husband or live-in partner?

|  | Number<br>(N=1210) | Percent |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| Pushing, shoving, or grabbing                          | 904                | 75      |
| Verbal abuse; verbal threats                           | 925                | 76      |
| Mental (psychological) abuse                           | 1000               | 81      |
| Punching   | 1090               | 90      |
| Deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter | 988                | 82      |
| Threatening with a knife or gun                        | 1147               | 95      |
| Use of a knife or gun                                  | 1171               | 97      |
| Slapping   | 1064               | 88      |
| Throwing things at her                                 | 1046               | 86      |
| Biting   | 1060               | 88      |
| Striking with fist                                     | 1160               | 96      |
| Choking  | 1161               | 96      |
| Beating with an object or fist                         | 1173               | 97      |
| Pulling hair   | 1015               | 84      |
| Burning with cigarettes, cigar, hot object, etc.       | 1165               | 96      |
| Forcing sex  | 1106               | 91      |
| Other  | 29                 | 3       |

\*NOTE: Respondents could check as many as they thought applied.

Each of the 16 items were considered to be abuse by at least three-fourths (75%) of the respondents. The category "pushing, shoving, or grabbing" was selected the least often (75%), followed by "verbal abuse/verbal threats" (76%). Categories selected by at least 80 percent of the respondents were, in ascending order: "mental (psychological) abuse" (81%); "deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter" (82%); "pulling hair" (84%); "throwing things at her" (86%); "slapping" (88%); and "biting" (88%). Categories selected by 90 percent or more of the respondents were: "punching" (90%); "forcing sex" (91%); "threatening with a knife or gun" (95%); "striking with fist" (96%); "choking" (96%); "burning with cigarettes, cigar, hot object, etc." (96%); "use of a knife or gun" (97%); and, "beating with an object or fist" (97%).

Several of the respondents wrote in other things which they considered to be abuse, including "child abuse" (6); "kidnapping" (6); "locked in or out" (5); "neglect" (5); and, "taking of possessions" (1).

TABLE 10

SERIOUSNESS OF SELECTED ACTS COMMITTED ONLY ONE TIME

QUESTION: Consider that for each of the types of action listed below that a man committed the act toward his wife or live-in partner only one time. How serious would you consider the act to be?

|  | Very Serious |    | Serious |    | No Opinion** |    | Not Serious |    | Definitely Not Serious |   |
|--|--------------|----|---------|----|--------------|----|-------------|----|------------------------|---|
|  | N            | %  | N       | %  | N            | %  | N           | %  | N                      | % |
| Pushing, shoving, or grabbing                          | 116          | 10 | 439     | 36 | 95           | 8  | 449         | 37 | 111                    | 9 |
| Verbal abuse; verbal threats                           | 137          | 11 | 527     | 44 | 110          | 9  | 352         | 29 | 84                     | 7 |
| Mental (psychological) abuse                           | 312          | 26 | 479     | 40 | 164          | 13 | 208         | 17 | 47                     | 4 |
| Punching   | 578          | 48 | 455     | 38 | 77           | 6  | 78          | 6  | 22                     | 2 |
| Deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter | 432          | 36 | 462     | 38 | 141          | 12 | 123         | 10 | 52                     | 4 |
| Threatening with a knife or gun                        | 957          | 79 | 179     | 15 | 32           | 3  | 15          | 1  | 27                     | 2 |
| Use of a knife or gun                                  | 1063         | 88 | 54      | 5  | 64           | 5  | 4           | *  | 25                     | 2 |
| Slapping   | 357          | 30 | 554     | 46 | 129          | 10 | 145         | 12 | 25                     | 2 |
| Biting   | 444          | 37 | 497     | 41 | 145          | 12 | 100         | 8  | 24                     | 2 |
| Throwing things at her                                 | 389          | 32 | 514     | 43 | 137          | 11 | 151         | 12 | 19                     | 2 |
| Striking with fist                                     | 778          | 64 | 302     | 25 | 83           | 7  | 27          | 2  | 20                     | 2 |
| Choking  | 925          | 76 | 178     | 15 | 76           | 6  | 8           | 1  | 23                     | 2 |
| Beating with object or fist                            | 964          | 80 | 141     | 12 | 69           | 5  | 9           | 1  | 27                     | 2 |
| Pulling hair   | 345          | 28 | 510     | 42 | 159          | 13 | 166         | 14 | 30                     | 3 |
| Burning with cigarettes, cigar, hot object, etc.       | 966          | 80 | 128     | 11 | 76           | 6  | 15          | 1  | 25                     | 2 |
| Forcing sex  | 621          | 51 | 353     | 29 | 137          | 11 | 63          | 5  | 36                     | 3 |

\*Less than 1%

\*\*Includes those who did not respond to the question, as well as a few multiple responses.

These same 16 categories, then, were used consistently throughout the questionnaire when asking respondents about their opinions, experiences with, and knowledge of, spouse abuse.

The next two questions in this section focused on identifying how serious the respondents considered each of these acts to be. The first question asked: "Consider that for each of the types of action listed below that a man committed the act toward his wife or live-in partner only one time. How serious would you consider the act to be?" Respondents were given five choices for each of the 16 items: (1) very serious; (2) serious; (3) no opinion; (4) not serious; and, (5) definitely not serious. Those who did not respond to the question were classified as "no opinion."

Analysis of the responses indicated that the respondents did differentiate with respect to the seriousness of the acts (see Table 10). For example, although 75 percent of the respondents had indicated that they considered "pushing, shoving, or grabbing" to be abuse, only 10 percent considered it to be very serious abuse, and 36 percent considered it to be serious abuse. At the same time, 37 percent said that it is not serious and 9 percent said that it is definitely not serious. On the other hand, 80 percent indicated that "beating with an object or fist" is very serious and 12 percent indicated that it is serious abuse. (The reader will have to refer to Table 10 for the complete list of responses. These two categories were selected only to

illustrate the point that, although 75 percent or more of the respondents did indicate that they consider each of the 16 items to be abuse, nevertheless, the respondents did differentiate as to how serious a form of abuse they consider each of the individual items to be.)

The second set in this pair of questions was designed to differentiate between a one-time act and an act which is repeated on a regular basis. Therefore, respondents were asked the same question as above except that they were asked how serious they would consider each act to be if it was committed on a regular basis (for example, at least once a month).

Again, respondents differentiated in their assessment of the seriousness of the act. For example, when committed only once, only 10 percent considered "pushing, shoving, or grabbing" to be very serious and 36 percent considered it to be serious. However, if the same act is committed on a regular basis, then 45 percent considered it to be very serious and 36 percent considered it to be serious (see Table 11). And, 87 percent then considered "beating with an object or fist" to be very serious, as compared to 80 percent who considered it to be very serious if committed only once. Moreover, an additional 4 percent then considered it to be serious. (Again, the reader will need to refer to Table 11 for a complete summary of the responses.)

TABLE 11  
SERIOUSNESS OF SELECTED ACTS COMMITTED ON A REGULAR BASIS

QUESTION: Consider that for each of the types of action listed below that a man committed the act toward his wife or live-in partner on a regular basis (for example, at least once a month). How serious would you consider the act to be?

|  | Very Serious |    | No Opinion** |    | Not Serious |    | Definitely Not Serious |   |
|--|--------------|----|--------------|----|-------------|----|------------------------|---|
|  | N            | %  | N            | %  | N           | %  | N                      | % |
| Pushing, shoving, or grabbing                          | 538          | 45 | 437          | 36 | 118         | 10 | 89                     | 7 |
| Verbal abuse; verbal threats                           | 504          | 42 | 450          | 37 | 127         | 10 | 104                    | 9 |
| Mental (psychological) abuse                           | 628          | 52 | 366          | 30 | 134         | 11 | 51                     | 4 |
| Punching   | 850          | 70 | 215          | 18 | 98          | 8  | 22                     | 2 |
| Deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter | 712          | 59 | 278          | 23 | 135         | 11 | 41                     | 3 |
| Threatening with a knife or gun                        | 1005         | 83 | 95           | 8  | 70          | 5  | 9                      | 1 |
| Use of a knife or gun                                  | 1073         | 89 | 35           | 3  | 68          | 5  | 2                      | * |
| Slapping   | 772          | 64 | 284          | 24 | 90          | 7  | 35                     | 3 |
| Biting   | 795          | 66 | 269          | 22 | 91          | 8  | 27                     | 2 |
| Throwing things at her                                 | 734          | 61 | 299          | 25 | 106         | 8  | 48                     | 4 |
| Striking with fist                                     | 973          | 80 | 127          | 11 | 72          | 6  | 10                     | 1 |
| Choking  | 1040         | 86 | 69           | 6  | 70          | 5  | 3                      | * |
| Beating with an object or fist                         | 1053         | 87 | 53           | 4  | 68          | 5  | 3                      | * |
| Pulling hair   | 671          | 55 | 339          | 28 | 116         | 10 | 58                     | 5 |
| Burning with cigarettes, cigar hot object, etc.        | 1035         | 85 | 68           | 6  | 70          | 6  | 8                      | 1 |
| Forcing sex  | 851          | 70 | 192          | 16 | 104         | 9  | 26                     | 2 |

\*Less than 1%

\*\*Includes no response and some multiple responses

#### APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM

The next section of the questionnaire elicited the respondents' opinions and perceptions regarding various approaches and proposed solutions to the problem of spouse abuse. The possible types of abuse were encompassed in three categories, with examples: (1) physical abuse (e.g., slapping, striking with fist, beating up, etc.); (2) sexual abuse (forcing natural or unnatural sex acts); and, (3) verbal, mental, or emotional abuse. For each type of abuse, then, respondents were presented with four mutually exclusive choices: (1) "considered normal — let the husband or wife work out the problem"; (2) "handled in civil court only

(separation, divorce, damages paid, etc.)"; (3) "considered emotionally disturbed and ordered to receive treatment"; and, (4) "treated as a criminal and prosecuted".

With respect to physical abuse, one-half (50%) of the respondents indicated that the abuser should be considered mentally disturbed and ordered to receive treatment (see Table 12). Sixteen percent thought that the matter should be handled in civil court and 3 percent thought that the abuser should be considered normal and that the husband and wife should work out the problem. Only one-fourth (24%) said that the abuser should be treated as a criminal and prosecuted.

TABLE 12  
APPROACHES TO HANDLING THE ABUSER

|   | Physical Abuse <sup>1</sup> |     | Sexual Abuse <sup>2</sup> |     | Verbal, Mental, Emotional Abuse <sup>3</sup> |     |
|---|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|--|-----|
|   | N                           | %   | N                         | %   | N  | %   |
| Considered normal — let the husband and wife work out the problem     | 34                          | 3   | 39                        | 3   | 124  | 10  |
| Handled in civil court only (separation, divorce, damages paid, etc.) | 190                         | 16  | 139                       | 12  | 234  | 19  |
| Considered emotionally disturbed and ordered to receive treatment     | 610                         | 50  | 678                       | 56  | 721  | 60  |
| Treated as a criminal and prosecuted                                  | 285                         | 24  | 264                       | 22  | 52   | 4   |
| Multiple response*  | 42                          | 3   | 38                        | 3   | 25   | 2   |
| No response   | 49                          | 4   | 52                        | 4   | 54   | 5   |
| Total   | 1210                        | 100 | 1210                      | 100 | 1210   | 100 |

\*NOTE: The response categories were designed to be mutually exclusive and respondents were requested to select only one response; however, several respondents still selected more than one response.

<sup>1</sup>QUESTION: If a man physically abuses his wife or live-in partner (slapping, striking with fist, beating up, etc.), do you think that he should be:

<sup>2</sup>QUESTION: If a man sexually abuses his wife or live-in partner (forcing natural or unnatural sex acts), do you think that he should be:

<sup>3</sup>QUESTION: If a man verbally, mentally, or emotionally abuses his wife or live-in partner, do you think that he should be:

Regarding sexual abuse, 56 percent indicated that the abuser should be considered emotionally disturbed and 12 percent said that it should be treated as a civil matter. Again, 3 percent said that he should be considered normal and only 22 percent wanted him to be treated as a criminal. Almost two-thirds (60%) indicated that in cases of verbal, mental, or emotional abuse the abuser should be considered emotionally disturbed and only 4 percent wanted him to be treated as a criminal. In addition, 19 percent perceived it to be a matter for the civil courts and 10 percent indicated that he should be treated as normal.

The next question asked respondents their opinions regarding what the woman's reaction should be to the abuse. Abuse was again presented in three categories — physical abuse, sexual abuse, and verbal, mental, or emotional abuse. The respondents were provided with four possible choices for each type of abuse and asked to select only one: (1) "she should stay home and try to work out the problem"; (2) "she should leave the house or apartment"; (3) "she should call a social service agency for advice"; and, (4) "she should call the police."

With regard to physical abuse, more than one half (59%) indicated that she should either leave the house or apartment (38%) or that she should call a social service agency for advice (21%) (see Table 13). Approximately one-fourth (24%) indicated that she should call

the police and 3 percent said that she should stay and try to work out the problem.

Regarding sexual abuse, 39 percent said that she should leave the house or apartment; however, 27 percent indicated that she should call a social service agency for advice and only 16 percent indicated that she should call the police. In addition, 5 percent said that she should stay and try to work out the problem.

Concerning verbal, mental, or emotional abuse, approximately one-third (31%) of the respondents indicated that she should leave the house or apartment; however, two out of five (41%) indicated that she should call a social service agency for advice and 13 percent said that she should stay and try to work out the problem. In this case, only 5 percent indicated that she should call the police.

Respondents were then asked to evaluate how effective or useful they believed each of six proposed approaches would be "... for dealing with the problem of men abusing their wives or live-in partner". Two approaches were rated very high with respect to effectiveness. "Stiffen enforcement of laws and penalties for men who abuse women" was rated as effective (26%) or very effective (61%) by a total of 87 percent of the respondents (see Table 14). Eight percent had no opinion and only 5 percent believed that this approach would be either not effective (3%) or definitely not effective (2%).

TABLE 13  
WHAT SHOULD BE THE WOMAN'S REACTION TO THE ABUSE

|  | Physical Abuse <sup>1</sup> |     | Sexual Abuse <sup>2</sup> |     | Verbal, Mental, Emotional Abuse <sup>3</sup> |     |
|--|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|--|-----|
|  | N                           | %   | N                         | %   | N  | %   |
| She should stay and try to work out the problem    | 38                          | 3   | 56                        | 5   | 153  | 13  |
| She should leave the house or apartment            | 465                         | 38  | 477                       | 39  | 377  | 31  |
| She should call a social service agency for advice | 253                         | 21  | 332                       | 27  | 501  | 41  |
| She should call the police                         | 288                         | 24  | 194                       | 16  | 56   | 5   |
| Other  | 60                          | 5   | 55                        | 5   | 54   | 5   |
| Multiple response*                                 | 94                          | 8   | 75                        | 6   | 53   | 4   |
| No response  | 12                          | 1   | 21                        | 2   | 16   | 1   |
| Total  | 1210                        | 100 | 1210                      | 100 | 1210   | 100 |

\*Note: Respondents were requested to select only one response; however, several did select more than one response.

<sup>1</sup>QUESTION: In general, if a man physically abuses his wife or live-in partner, what do you think the woman should do?

<sup>2</sup>QUESTION: In general, if a man sexually abuses his wife or live-in partner (forcing natural or unnatural sex acts), what do you think the woman should do?

<sup>3</sup>QUESTION: In general, if a man verbally, mentally, or emotionally abuses his wife or live-in partner, what do you think the woman should do?

The second approach rated very high on effectiveness was "more places where abused women (and children) can seek help." Eighty-eight percent believed that this approach would be either very effective (56%) or effective (32%).

It is interesting to note that the respondents rated both use of the criminal law and treatment of the abusers as being equally effective. Specifically, 80 percent believed that "more treatment programs for men

who abuse women" would be either very effective (47%) or effective (33%). At the same time, 80 percent also believed that to "stiffen laws and penalties for men who abuse women" would be either very effective (41%) or effective (39%).

Approximately the same percentage (78%) believe that "public awareness of programs (television, newspapers, etc.)" would be either very effective (40%) or effective (38%) for dealing with the problem. And,

TABLE 14  
EVALUATION OF SELECTED APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM

QUESTION: How effective or useful do you believe each of the following would be for dealing with the problem of men abusing their wives or live-in partner?

|   | (N=1210)       |    |           |    |             |    |               |    |                          |   |
|---|----------------|----|-----------|----|-------------|----|---------------|----|--------------------------|---|
|   | Very Effective |    | Effective |    | No Opinion* |    | Not Effective |    | Definitely Not Effective |   |
|   | N              | %  | N         | %  | N           | %  | N             | %  | N                        | % |
| Stiffen laws and penalties for men who abuse women                  | 501            | 41 | 468       | 39 | 107         | 9  | 101           | 8  | 33                       | 3 |
| More training for policemen in how to deal with this problem        | 318            | 26 | 475       | 39 | 225         | 19 | 154           | 13 | 38                       | 3 |
| More places where abused women (and children) can seek help         | 674            | 56 | 391       | 32 | 85          | 7  | 39            | 3  | 21                       | 2 |
| Public awareness of programs (television, newspapers, etc.)         | 482            | 40 | 462       | 38 | 154         | 13 | 85            | 7  | 27                       | 2 |
| More treatment programs for men who abuse women                     | 565            | 47 | 396       | 33 | 120         | 10 | 85            | 7  | 44                       | 3 |
| Stiffen enforcement of laws (and penalties) for men who abuse women | 735            | 61 | 316       | 26 | 94          | 8  | 39            | 3  | 26                       | 2 |

\*Includes no response

TABLE 15  
ADVISING FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR TO CALL THE POLICE

QUESTION 1: If a friend or neighbor contacted you and indicated that her husband or live-in partner was acting toward her in the following way, would you advise her to call the police?

QUESTION 2: If a friend or neighbor contacted you and indicated that last week, one time only, her husband or live-in partner had acted toward her in the following way, would you advise her to call the police?

|  | In General<br>(N=1210) |    |          | One Time Only<br>(N=1210) |    |          |
|--|------------------------|----|----------|---------------------------|----|----------|
|  | No                     |    | Response | No                        |    | Response |
|  | Yes                    | %  |          | Yes                       | %  |          |
| Pushing, shoving, or grabbing                          | 28                     | 65 | 7        | 11                        | 82 | 7        |
| Verbal abuse; verbal threats                           | 26                     | 66 | 8        | 12                        | 80 | 8        |
| Mental (psychological) abuse                           | 22                     | 69 | 9        | 12                        | 80 | 8        |
| Punching   | 73                     | 20 | 7        | 39                        | 54 | 7        |
| Deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter | 28                     | 64 | 8        | 16                        | 76 | 8        |
| Threatening with a knife or gun                        | 90                     | 5  | 5        | 69                        | 26 | 5        |
| Use of a knife or gun                                  | 94                     | 2  | 4        | 84                        | 11 | 5        |
| Slapping   | 52                     | 41 | 7        | 28                        | 65 | 7        |
| Biting   | 53                     | 40 | 7        | 32                        | 61 | 7        |
| Throwing things at her                                 | 52                     | 40 | 8        | 27                        | 65 | 8        |
| Striking with fist                                     | 86                     | 8  | 6        | 59                        | 34 | 7        |
| Choking  | 91                     | 4  | 5        | 73                        | 21 | 6        |
| Beating with an object or fist                         | 93                     | 2  | 5        | 76                        | 18 | 6        |
| Pulling hair   | 38                     | 54 | 8        | 21                        | 70 | 8        |
| Burning with cigarettes, cigar, hot object, etc.       | 90                     | 5  | 5        | 74                        | 20 | 6        |
| Forcing sex  | 56                     | 37 | 7        | 38                        | 54 | 8        |

almost two-thirds (65%) indicated that "more training for policemen in how to deal with this problem" would be either very effective (26%) or effective (39%).

Two questions were included in order to ascertain whether the respondents would advise a neighbor to call the police if she were abused by her husband or live-in partner. One of the questions did not delimit the extent of the abuse, and stated only "... that her (the neighbor's) husband or live-in partner was acting toward her in the following way..." The second question was very specific and stated he had acted toward her in this way **one time only**. The 16 categories referred to previously were listed under each question and the responses to both questions are presented in Table 15.

Again, as in the case of the responses regarding the seriousness of the acts, the respondents differentiated between an act committed only once, or on a regular basis. And, the respondents also, differentiated with regard to the types of acts that they believed warranted calling the police. The respondents were much less likely to indicate that the police should be called if the acts were not violent, especially if they occurred only once, and much more likely to indicate that the police should be called in the case of violent acts.

The percentage of respondents who indicated that the police should be called were: pushing, shoving, or grabbing (in general, 28%; only once 11%); verbal abuse/verbal threats (in general, 26%; only once, 12%); mental (psychological) abuse (in general, 22%; only once, 12%); and, deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter (in general, 28%; only once, 16%). "Pulling hair" did not group with the other categories with 38 percent indicating that they would, in general, advise calling the police and 21 percent if it occurred only once.

Then, there was a mid-range, with respect to acts which occurred in general, where approximately one-half of the respondents would advise their neighbor to call the police. These acts were slapping (in general, 52%; only once, 28%); biting (in general, 53%; only once, 32%); throwing things at her (in general, 52%; only once, 27%); and forcing sex (in general, 56%; only once, 38%). With regard to punching, approximately three-fourths (73%) indicated that they would advise their neighbor to call the police if the act were occurring in general and 39 percent would advise her to do so if it had occurred only once.

Concerning the other acts, approximately nine out of ten would advise her to call the police: threatening with a knife or gun (in general, 90%; only once, 69%); use of a knife or gun (in general, 94%; only once, 84%); striking with fist (in general, 86%; only once, 59%); choking (in general, 91%; only once, 73%); beating with an object or fist (in general, 93%; only once, 76%); and, burning with cigarettes, cigar, hot object, etc. (in general, 90%; only once, 74%).

It is instructive to take special note of several types of acts, especially if they occurred only once, for which

respondents would not advise their neighbor to call the police. Specifically, 26 percent would not advise a neighbor to call the police if her husband or live-in partner had threatened her with a knife or gun. And, 11 percent would not advise her to do so even if he had used the knife or gun only once (2% if he had used a knife or gun in general). And, approximately one-third (34%) would not advise her to call the police if he had struck her with his fist and 20 percent if he had burned her with cigarettes, cigar, hot object, etc.

The final two questions in this section asked respondents their opinions regarding the spending of tax money to (1) treat abusers and (2) to assist abused women. The first question asked: "In your opinion, should tax money from the following be used for the treatment of men who have abused their wives or live-in partner?" Four different sources were listed, with respondents answering "yes" or "no" for each source: (1) federal tax money; (2) state tax money; (3) county tax money; and, (4) city tax money. The majority of the respondents (57%) were willing to have state tax money used for this purpose and 48 percent indicated that county tax money should be used (see Table 16). At the same time, only 40 percent indicated that federal tax money should be used and 46 percent said that city tax money should be used for this purpose.

TABLE 16

#### SHOULD TAX MONEY BE USED TO TREAT ABUSERS

QUESTION: In your opinion, should tax money from the following be used for treatment of men who have abused their wife or live-in partner?

|             | Federal Tax Money | State Tax Money | County Tax Money | City Tax Money |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes         | 488               | 40              | 688              | 57             |
| No          | 590               | 49              | 406              | 33             |
| No Response | 132               | 11              | 116              | 10             |
| Total       | 1210              | 100             | 1210             | 100            |

The respondents were then asked: "In your opinion, should tax money from the following be used to care for and assist women who have been abused by their husband or live-in partner?" The same four sources were listed after this question. Almost two-thirds (63%) indicated that state tax money should be used for this purpose and more than one-half would be willing to see county tax money (58%) or city tax money (56%) used for this purpose (see Table 17). However, slightly less than one-half (47%) indicated that federal tax money should be used for this purpose.

TABLE 17

**SHOULD TAX MONEY BE USED TO ASSIST ABUSED WOMEN**

**QUESTION:** In your opinion, should tax money from the following be used to care for and assist women who have been abused by their husband or live-in partner?

|             | Federal        |     | State          |     | County         |     | City           |     |
|-------------|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|
|             | Tax Money<br>N | %   |
| Yes         | 567            | 47  | 762            | 63  | 703            | 58  | 674            | 56  |
| No          | 540            | 45  | 335            | 28  | 372            | 31  | 399            | 33  |
| No Response | 103            | 8   | 113            | 9   | 135            | 11  | 137            | 11  |
| Total       | 1210           | 100 | 1210           | 100 | 1210           | 100 | 1210           | 100 |

**KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF AVAILABLE SERVICES**

The respondents were asked a series of general questions in order to obtain an estimate of the extent to which women in Texas are aware of and/or have made use of services for women who are abused. The first question in this series asked: "to your knowledge, are there any services available in your community for a woman who has been abused by her husband or live-in partner?" One-third (33%) of the respondents said that they are aware of such services in their community (see Table 18). This question was followed by an open-ended question which asked the respondents to list the services of which they are aware. (Respondents could list more than one type of service.) Of the 400 respondents who were aware of some type of service, 186 (47%) listed "shelter(s) for women" (see Table 19). This meant that 15 percent of the total sample would be aware of a shelter(s) for women in their communities. The service listed next most frequently was "social services" (9% of the 400 were aware of some type of service), followed by "crisis hotline" (5%); "pastoral counseling" (2%), and "police" (2%). Two listed "domestic violence counseling," 20 (5%) listed other

types of services and 38 percent of those who were aware of some type of service in their communities did not specify the service.

TABLE 18

**KNOWLEDGE OF SERVICES**

**QUESTION:** To your knowledge, are there any services available in your community for a woman who has been abused by her husband or live-in partner?

|             | Number | Percent |
|-------------|--------|---------|
| Yes         | 400    | 33      |
| No          | 778    | 64      |
| No Response | 32     | 3       |
| Total       | 1210   | 100     |

The respondents were then asked: "Do you personally know someone in your community who has made use of a shelter for women because she was threatened or abused by her husband or live-in partner?" Sixty-eight (6%) of the respondents were aware of someone in their community who had made use of a shelter for women (see Table 20).

TABLE 20

**KNOW SOMEONE PERSONALLY WHO HAS USED SHELTER**

**QUESTION:** Do you personally know someone in your community who has made use of a shelter for women because she was threatened or abused by her husband or live-in partner?

|             | Number | Percent |
|-------------|--------|---------|
| Yes         | 68     | 6       |
| No          | 1122   | 93      |
| No Response | 20     | 2       |
| Total       | 1210   | 101*    |

\*Due to rounding, the total exceeded 100%

TABLE 19

**TYPES OF SERVICE AVAILABLE**

**QUESTION:** If yes, please list the services that are available.\*\*

Pastoral Counseling  
Shelter For Women  
Domestic Violence Counseling  
Social Services  
Crisis Hotline  
Police  
Other  
Knew of services but did not list any

| Number | Percent of Respondents Aware of Services (N=400) | Percent of Total Sample (N=1210) |
|--------|--|----------------------------------|
|        |  |                                  |
| 7      | 2  | 1                                |
| 186    | 47   | 15                               |
| 2      | *  | *                                |
| 37     | 9  | 3                                |
| 20     | 5  | 2                                |
| 8      | 2  | 1                                |
| 20     | 5  | 17                               |
| 151    | 38   | 12                               |

\*Less than 1%

\*\*NOTE: This was an open-ended question and respondent's wrote in their responses which were then grouped into categories. Respondents could list more than one response.

The respondents were also asked: "Do you personally know someone in your community who has contacted the police because she was threatened or abused by her husband or live-in partner?" More than one out of five (22%) respondents said that they knew someone who had contacted the police (see Table 21). Then, respondents were also asked: "Have you ever contacted the police because you were threatened or abused by your husband or live-in partner?" Nine percent of the respondents indicated that, at some time, they had contacted the police for this reason (see Table 22).

**RESPONDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH ABUSE**

Two sections of the questionnaire asked about the respondents' personal experiences with spouse abuse. The first of these sections asked the respondent about experiences with abuse during the previous year (July, 1981 to July, 1982) and the second asked about the respondent's experiences with abuse during her lifetime. Although these were two separate sections of the questionnaire, with only a few minor exceptions, the questions were essentially the same. Therefore, the responses to both sections are presented simultaneously in order to provide for a more meaningful presentation of the data. It should also be noted that the questionnaire was constructed so that these two sections followed four preceding sections of the questionnaire which inquired about the respondents' knowledge of others who had been abused. This was done for procedural reasons related to the survey; however, it is more logical and meaningful with respect to reporting the findings to present these findings first, followed by findings regarding knowledge of others who have been abused.

The respondents were asked two preliminary questions which served as the basis for the analysis of the data in these two sections. "During the previous twelve months (July, 1981 to July, 1982) were you the victim of abuse by your husband or live-in partner?" And, "During your lifetime, have you ever been the victim of abuse by your husband or live-in partner?" (It should be noted that, by this point in the questionnaire, the respondents had already covered the sections concerning what they consider to be abuse, as well as their opinions regarding solutions to the problem; therefore, the respondents should have already established, or considered, what they believe to be abuse. Also, by this point, the respondents should have had a firm orientation as to the context in which the concept abuse was being used.)

A total of 103 (8.5%) of the respondents said that they had been victims of abuse during the previous twelve months (see Table 24). Moreover, 359 (29.7%) indicated that they had been abused by a husband or live-in partner during their lifetime. Further analysis of the data indicated that 75 (72.8%) of the 103 women abused during the previous year had experienced some type of physical abuse and 309 (86.1%) of the 359 women abused during their lifetime had experienced physical abuse. In other words, 6.2 percent of the total sample of 1210 had suffered some type of physical abuse during the previous year and 25.5 percent of the total sample of 1210 had suffered some type of physical abuse during their lifetime.

Using these findings it is possible to calculate an estimate of the number of women in Texas who have been abused. At the same time, it should be recognized that these are estimates and that the actual numbers of abused women in Texas may vary depending on several factors. One factor, in particular, is that

TABLE 23

**USE OF SHELTER BY RESPONDENT**

**QUESTION:** Have you ever made use of a shelter for women because you were threatened or abused by your husband or live-in partner?

|             | Number | Percent |
|-------------|--------|---------|
| Yes         | 12     | 1       |
| No          | 1181   | 98      |
| No Response | 17     | 1       |
| Total       | 1210   | 100     |

TABLE 24

## **RESPONDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH ABUSE**

**QUESTION 1:** During the previous twelve months (July, 1981 to July, 1982) were you the victim of abuse by your husband or live-in partner?

**QUESTION 2:** During your lifetime, have you ever been the victim of abuse by your husband or live-in partner?

|                 | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|-----------------|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|                 | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Yes             | 103           | 8.5     | 359      | 29.7    |
| No              | 1033          | 85.4    | 794      | 65.6    |
| Not Applicable* | 66            | 5.4     | 27       | 2.2     |
| No Response     | 8             | .7      | 30       | 2.5     |
| Total           | 1210          | 100.0   | 1210     | 100.0   |

\*Refers to respondents who (1) were not married or living with someone during the previous year or (2) have never been married or had a live-in partner.

**NOTE:** Assuming that these findings are representative of the total population of women in Texas age 18 and over, and based on

population of women in Texas age 18 and over, and based on the 1980 Texas census, it can be estimated that 436,072 women age 18 and over were abused by their husband or live-in partner during the previous twelve months. Moreover, 1,519,902 women age 18 and over, living in Texas, have been abused during their lifetime.

there is no way of knowing the extent to which abused and/or non-abused women respond to this type of survey. However, the most reasonable assumption, in view of evidence to the contrary, is that that abused and non-abused women responded at the same rate. Another factor which should be considered is that the sample frame was limited to women holding valid drivers licenses.

Moreover, based on a careful examination of the characteristics of the respondents, it is quite reasonable to assume that estimates based on the responses to this survey are underrepresentative of the actual number of abused women in Texas. This assumption is predicated on two factors. First, in relation to the total

population of women in Texas with valid drivers licenses. Secondly, it is reasonable to assume that women from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to hold valid drivers licenses. And, therefore, since the available literature suggests that spouse abuse is more prevalent among Blacks and women of lower socio-economic status it is reasonable to assume that estimates based on the findings from this study are underrepresentative of the actual number of abused women.

One additional factor should also be noted. Although there is no way of estimating — at this time — the extent to which abused women will or will not respond to a survey of this nature, analysis of the characteristics of the respondents demonstrated that they are statistically representative of the women in the total sample of 2000. Furthermore, based on previous experiences with the *Texas Crime Poll*, and similar surveys, there is no reason to assume that the respon-

dents to this survey are any less representative than respondents to these previous surveys, that is, there is no indication of response bias.

With these factors taken into consideration, it is possible to make a projection, or estimate, regarding the number of abused women in Texas — recognizing that these estimates are most likely underrepresentative of the actual number of abused women. According to the 1980 Texas census, there were 5,122,789 women age 18 and over. Based on this population figure — which provides for a conservative estimate, since 1980 population data are used — 436,072 women age 18 and over were abused by their husband or live-in partner during the previous twelve months, with 317,528 having experienced some type of physical abuse. Moreover, 1,519,902 women age 18 and over, living in Texas, have been abused during their lifetime, with 1,308,216 having experienced some type of physical abuse.\*

Respondents were then asked about their relationship to the abuser. Eighty percent of those who had been abused during the previous year were abused by their legal husband, 7 percent were abused by a common-law husband, and 7 percent were abused by someone with whom they were living on a permanent basis (see Table 25). Concerning those who had been abused during their lifetime, 87 percent were abused by their legal husband, 2 percent by a common-law husband, and 7 percent by someone with whom they were living on a permanent basis.

Of those who had been abused during the previous year, approximately one-third (35%) had been abused only once, 44 percent had been abused about once a month or less, 11 percent about once a week, and 8 percent more than once a week (see Table 26). Regarding those who had been abused during their lifetime, 20 percent indicated that they had been abused only once, 42 percent said that the abuse had occurred

about once a month or less, 13 percent said that it had occurred about once a week, and 12 percent indicated more than once a week.

TABLE 2

## **RESPONDENT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE ABUSER**

|                                 | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|                                 | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Legal Husband                   | 83            | 80      | 311      | 81      |
| Common-Law Husband              | 7             | 7       | 7        | 2       |
| Lives With On A Permanent Basis | 7             | 7       | 27       | 7       |
| No Response                     | 6             | 6       | 14*      | 4       |
| Total                           | 103           | 100     | 359      | 100     |

\*Includes 2 multiple responses

TABLE 2

## FREQUENCY OF THE ABU

**QUESTION:** How often were you abused?

|                            | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|                            | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Only happened once         | 36            | 35      | 73       | 20      |
| About once a month or less | 46            | 44      | 151      | 42      |
| About once a week          | 11            | 11      | 47       | 13      |
| More than once a week      | 8             | 8       | 44       | 12      |
| No response                | 2             | 2       | 44       | 12      |
| Total                      | 103           | 100     | 359      | 96      |

TABLE 2

## **TYPES OF ABUSE EXPERIENCED BY THE RESPONDENT**

**QUESTION:** Which of the following types of abuse occurred? (check as many as apply)

|  | Number | Previous Year                       |                                  | Number | Lifetime                           |                                  |
|--|--------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|  |        | % of Abused Respondents<br>(N=1210) | % of All Respondents<br>(N=1210) |        | % of Abused Respondents<br>(N=359) | % of All Respondents<br>(N=1210) |
| Pushing, shoving, or grabbing                          | 55     | 53                                  | 5                                | 245    | 68                                 | 20                               |
| Verbal abuse; verbal threats                           | 79     | 77                                  | 7                                | 280    | 78                                 | 23                               |
| Mental (psychological) abuse                           | 65     | 63                                  | 5                                | 256    | 71                                 | 21                               |
| Punching   | 20     | 19                                  | 2                                | 143    | 40                                 | 12                               |
| Deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter | 8      | 8                                   | 1                                | 64     | 18                                 | 5                                |
| Threatening with a knife or gun                        | 11     | 11                                  | 1                                | 93     | 26                                 | 8                                |
| Use of a knife or gun                                  | 2      | 2                                   | *                                | 28     | 8                                  | 2                                |
| Slapping   | 40     | 39                                  | 3                                | 213    | 59                                 | 18                               |
| Biting   | 5      | 5                                   | *                                | 22     | 6                                  | 2                                |
| Throwing things at you                                 | 27     | 26                                  | 2                                | 115    | 32                                 | 10                               |
| Striking with fist                                     | 23     | 22                                  | 2                                | 140    | 39                                 | 12                               |
| Choking  | 18     | 17                                  | 2                                | 112    | 31                                 | 9                                |
| Beating with an object or fist                         | 12     | 12                                  | 1                                | 94     | 26                                 | 8                                |
| Pulling hair   | 29     | 28                                  | 2                                | 119    | 33                                 | 10                               |
| Burning with cigarettes, cigar, hot object, etc.       | 2      | 2                                   | *                                | 10     | 3                                  | 1                                |
| Forcing sex  | 8      | 8                                   | 1                                | 96     | 27                                 | 8                                |
| Other  | 1      | 1                                   | *                                | 5      | 1                                  | *                                |

\*Less than 1

(26%). Other types of abuse experienced were deliberate failure to provide food or shelter (18%), use of a knife or gun (8%), biting (6%), and burning with cigarettes, cigar, or hot objects, etc. (3%).

Of the 103 women who had experienced spouse abuse during the previous year, 12 (12%) required medical treatment by a doctor or hospital because of the abuse (see Table 28). And, approximately one-fourth (24%) of the 359 women who had been abused during their lifetime had also required medical treatment. Although the percentage of women who were abused during the previous year, and required medical treatment, is too low to adequately generalize to the population, there were a sufficient number of women abused during their lifetime, who required medical treatment, to safely project an estimate to the general population. A total of 85 (7%) of the sample of 1210 have required medical treatment during their lifetime due to abuse by a husband or live-in partner. Assuming the representativeness of this finding, it can be estimated that 358,595 women currently living in Texas have required medical treatment by a doctor or hospital because of abuse by a spouse or live-in partner.

TABLE 28

MEDICAL TREATMENT REQUIRED

QUESTION: Did you ever require medical treatment by a doctor or hospital because of the abuse?

|             | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|             | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Yes         | 12            | 12      | 85       | 24      |
| No          | 91            | 88      | 260      | 72      |
| No response | 0             | 0       | 14       | 4       |
| Total       | 103           | 100     | 359      | 100     |

Respondents were also presented with a list of 12 factors and asked to check all those that, in their opinion, caused or contributed to the abuse (see Table 29). Three factors were selected by one-half or more of the respondents who had experienced abuse during the previous year: drinking or alcoholism (52%); depression and/or emotional problems (50%); and, his unpredictable temper (for no apparent reason) (52%). Other factors selected were jealousy (41%), financial problems/unemployment (37%), family problems (in-laws, other relatives, etc.) (30%), stress at work (28%), drug abuse (15%), sexual demands (12%), child or children (12%), another man or woman (12%), and pregnancy (3%).

Concerning those who had experienced abuse during their lifetime, the ranking of the factors were very similar and selection varied by only a few percentage points (plus or minus). The one exception was the category "another man or woman." Whereas only 12 percent of those who had experienced abuse during the previous year indicated that this was a contribut-

TABLE 29

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ABUSE

QUESTION: In your opinion, which of the following factors caused or contributed to the abuse? (check as many apply)

|   | Previous Year<br>(N=103) |         | Lifetime<br>(N=359) |         |
|---|--------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
|   | Number                   | Percent | Number              | Percent |
| Drinking or alcoholism                            | 54                       | 52      | 199                 | 55      |
| Drug Abuse  | 15                       | 15      | 49                  | 14      |
| Depression and/or emotional problems              | 51                       | 50      | 188                 | 52      |
| Financial problems/unemployment                   | 38                       | 37      | 117                 | 33      |
| Sexual demands                                    | 12                       | 12      | 47                  | 13      |
| Pregnancy   | 3                        | 3       | 17                  | 5       |
| Jealousy  | 42                       | 41      | 150                 | 42      |
| Family problems (in-laws, other relatives, etc.)  | 31                       | 30      | 97                  | 27      |
| Another man or woman                              | 12                       | 12      | 76                  | 21      |
| Stress at work                                    | 31                       | 28      | 84                  | 23      |
| His unpredictable temper (for no apparent reason) | 54                       | 52      | 189                 | 53      |
| Child or children                                 | 12                       | 12      | 34                  | 9       |
| Other   | 4                        | 4       | 6                   | 2       |

ing factor, 21 percent who had experienced abuse during their lifetime indicated that this was a factor.

In order to obtain a more precise understanding of the extent to which drinking was associated with the abuse, respondents were asked the following question: "Did the abuse take place while your husband or live-in partner was drinking or drunk? (If yes, how often?)." Forty-four percent of the respondents who had been abused during the previous year indicated that their husband or live-in partner had not been drinking (see Table 30). At the same time, in almost one out of every five cases (19%) he had been drinking every time the abuse occurred. Moreover, in 14 percent of the cases he had been drinking, or was drunk, more than half the time, and in 17 percent of the cases he had been drinking, or was drunk, less than half the time.

TABLE 30

DRINKING IN RELATION TO ABUSE: PREVIOUS YEAR

QUESTION: Did the abuse take place when your husband or live-in partner was drinking or drunk? (If yes, how often?)

|   | Previous Year |         |
|---|---------------|---------|
|   | Number        | Percent |
| No  | 45            | 44      |
| Yes, occasionally (less than half the time) | 17            | 17      |
| Yes, usually (more than half the time)      | 14            | 14      |
| Yes, every time the abuse occurred          | 20            | 19      |
| No response                                 | 7             | 6       |
| Total                                       | 103           | 100     |

NOTE: 50% of the women abused during the previous year indicated that alcohol was involved at least some of the time.

The next question focused on actions taken by respondents after the abuse. The respondents were presented with nine response categories and could select as many as applied. And, respondents who had been abused during their lifetime were asked to respond with respect to the most recent incident of abuse.

Over one-half (53%) of the respondents who were abused during the previous year stayed in the same house with their husbands or live-in partners, 17 percent moved in with relatives, 12 percent moved out to their own place, and 6 percent moved in with a friend or friends (see Table 31). In addition, 17 percent indicated that they stayed and the husband or live-in partner left. Since these are mutually exclusive categories, it is reasonable to conclude that approximately one-half of those abused during the previous year continued to live with their husband or live-in partner and in approximately one-half of the cases the respondent or the husband/live-in partner moved out of the residence.

TABLE 31

USE OF SERVICES

QUESTION: After the abuse, did you: (check as many as apply)?\*\*

|  | Previous Year<br>(N=103) |         | Lifetime<br>(N=359) |         |
|--|--------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
|  | Number                   | Percent | Number              | Percent |
| Make use of a shelter for abused women                     | 0                        | 0       | 1                   | *       |
| Move in with relatives                                     | 17                       | 17      | 94                  | 26      |
| Move in with a friend or friends                           | 6                        | 6       | 23                  | 6       |
| Move out to your own place                                 | 12                       | 12      | 84                  | 23      |
| Stay in the same house; husband or live-in partner left    | 18                       | 17      | 76                  | 21      |
| Stay in the same home with your husband or live-in partner | 55                       | 53      | 96                  | 27      |
| Obtain a temporary restraining order against the abuser    | 9                        | 9       | 44                  | 12      |
| Obtain a peace bond against the abuser                     | 2                        | 2       | 33                  | 9       |
| Obtain a protective order from the court                   | 3                        | 3       | 22                  | 6       |

\*Less than 1%

\*\*With reference to lifetime, respondents were asked: "After the most recent incident of abuse did you?"

(27%) stayed in the same home with their husband or live-in partner (compared to 53% who had been abused during the previous year). Moreover, almost one-half (49%) moved in with relatives (26%) or moved out to their own place (23%). In 21 percent of the cases the respondent stayed and the husband or live-in partner left and 6 percent moved in with a friend or friends. In addition, respondents abused during their lifetime were more likely to have obtained protection from the courts than those who were just abused during the previous year. Twelve percent obtained a temporary restraining order, 9 percent obtained a peace bond, and 6 percent obtained a protective order.

Based on these data, then, it may be concluded that those abused over time are less likely to stay with the abuser and more likely to seek protection from the courts.

Respondents who had been abused during their lifetime were also asked if they had ever made use of an abuse shelter. Of the 359 who had been abused during their lifetime, 7 (2%) indicated that they had made use of a shelter (see Table 32).

TABLE 32

USE OF ABUSE SHELTER: LIFETIME

QUESTION: Have you ever made use of an abuse shelter?

|             | Lifetime |         |
|-------------|----------|---------|
|             | Number   | Percent |
| Yes         | 7        | 2       |
| No          | 338      | 94      |
| No response | 14       | 4       |
| Total       | 359      | 100     |

Five (5%) of the respondents abused during the previous year had filed charges against the abuser (see Table 33). Also, one-fourth (25%) had divorced or permanently left the abuser (see Table 34). In addition, 13 percent had filed for divorce (or left him) but had then changed their mind. Over one-half (55%) had not divorced or permanently left the abuser. However, almost two-thirds (63%) of those who had been abused during their lifetime had left the abuser and only one out of four (27%) had not divorced or left him. Also, 7 percent abused during their lifetime had filed for divorce (or left) but had changed their mind.

TABLE 33

CHARGES FILED AGAINST ABUSER: PREVIOUS YEAR

QUESTION: Were charges ever filed against the abuser?

|             | Previous Year |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|
|             | Number        | Percent |
| Yes         | 5             | 5       |
| No          | 81            | 79      |
| No response | 17            | 16      |
| Total       | 103           | 100     |

TABLE 34

## DIVORCED OR LEFT ABUSER

QUESTION: Did you divorce (or permanently leave) your husband or live-in partner?\*

|   | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|---|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|   | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Yes   | 26            | 25      | 225      | 63      |
| No, filed for divorce (or left him) but changed my mind | 13            | 13      | 26       | 7       |
| No  | 57            | 55      | 97       | 27      |
| No response   | 7             | 7       | 11       | 3       |
| Total   | 103           | 100     | 359      | 100     |

\*NOTE: The question regarding lifetime asked: "Have you ever divorced or permanently left your husband due to the abuse?"

Five (5%) of the respondents abused during the previous year were pregnant at the time (see Table 35). Of the 359 who had been abused during their lifetime, 100 (28%) had been abused at a time when they were pregnant.

TABLE 35

## PREGNANT DURING ABUSE

QUESTION: Were you pregnant at the time of the abuse?\*

|             | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|             | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Yes         | 5             | 5       | 100      | 28      |
| No          | 96            | 93      | 245      | 68      |
| No response | 2             | 2       | 14       | 4       |
| Total       | 103           | 100     | 359      | 100     |

\*NOTE: With reference to lifetime, respondents were asked: "Were you ever pregnant at the time of the abuse?"

Respondents were also asked about children living at home at the time of the abuse and whether the children had also been abused. Approximately two-thirds (67%) of the women abused during the previous year had a child or children living with her at the time and approximately the same percentage (68%) of those who had been abused during their lifetime had a child or children living with her at the time of the abuse (see Table 36).

TABLE 36

## CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME

QUESTION: Did you have a child (children) living with you at the time of the abuse?

|             | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|             | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Yes         | 69            | 67      | 244      | 68      |
| No          | 32            | 31      | 106      | 29      |
| No response | 2             | 2       | 9        | 3       |
| Total       | 103           | 100     | 359      | 100     |

Of the 69 respondents who had been abused during the previous year, and had a child(ren) living at home at the time, 17 percent indicated that the child(ren) had also been abused (see Table 37). One-third (33%) of those who had been abused during their lifetime, and had a child(ren) living with her, indicated that the child had also been abused by the abuser. With respect to the total sample this means that 6.7 percent of the women responding to the survey were abused during their lifetime and, at the same time, had children who were also abused by their husband or live-in partner.

TABLE 37

## CHILDREN ABUSED BY SPOUSE

QUESTION: ..., were the children ever abused by the abuser?

|             | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|             | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Yes         | 12            | 17      | 81       | 33      |
| No          | 57            | 83      | 163      | 67      |
| No response | 0             | 0       | 0        | 0       |
| Total       | 69            | 100     | 244      | 100     |

Of the 12 respondents who had been abused during the previous year, and also had a child who was abused, 3 (25%) indicated that the child had been abused only once, 4 (33%) indicated about once a month or less, 2 (17%) indicated about once a week, and 3 (25%) indicated more than once a week (see Table 38).

TABLE 38

## HOW OFTEN WERE THE CHILDREN ABUSED: PREVIOUS YEAR

QUESTION: ..., how often did the abuse occur?

|                            | Previous Year |         |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------|
|                            | Number        | Percent |
| Only happened once         | 3             | 25      |
| About once a month or less | 4             | 33      |
| About once a week          | 2             | 17      |
| More than once a week      | 3             | 25      |
| No response                | 0             | 0       |
| Total                      | 12            | 100     |

Several questions focused on the extent to which the police had been informed about the abuse, as well as the actions taken by the police. Twenty percent of the respondents who had been abused during the previous year indicated that they, or someone else, had informed the police about the abuse and 30 percent of those abused during their lifetime said that the police had been informed (see Table 39). Table 40 presents the number of times the police had been informed regarding those who had been abused during their lifetime. Respondents who were abused reported that the police had been informed a total of 334 times, or an average of .93 times for each abused respondent.

TABLE 39

## POLICE INFORMED ABOUT ABUSE

QUESTION: Did you, or someone else, ever inform the police about the abuse?

|             | Previous Year |         | Lifetime |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|----------|---------|
|             | Number        | Percent | Number   | Percent |
| Yes         | 21            | 20      | 107      | 30      |
| No          | 82            | 80      | 235      | 65      |
| No response | 0             | 0       | 17       | 5       |
| Total       | 103           | 100     | 359      | 100     |

TABLE 40

## NUMBER OF TIMES POLICE INFORMED: LIFETIME

|                     | Lifetime |         |
|---------------------|----------|---------|
|                     | Number   | Percent |
| Police not informed | 235      | 65.5    |
| 1                   | 48       | 13.4    |
| 2                   | 15       | 4.2     |
| 3                   | 6        | 1.7     |
| 4                   | 3        | .8      |
| 5                   | 4        | 1.1     |
| 6                   | 1        | .3      |
| 7                   | 2        | .5      |
| 8                   | 4        | 1.1     |
| 9                   | 1        | .3      |
| 10+                 | 7*       | 1.9     |
| No response         | 33       | 9.2     |
| Total               | 359      | 100     |

\*Respondents who were abused reported that the police had been informed a total of 334 times, or an average of .93 times for each abused respondent. The greatest number of times listed was 50.

TABLE 41

## POLICE RESPONSE: PREVIOUS YEAR

QUESTION: If the police were informed, which of the following best describes your experience with the police? (If the police were informed more than once, think of the most recent incident.)

|  | Previous Year |         |
|--|---------------|---------|
|  | Number        | Percent |
| The police never came to the house     | 3             | 14      |
| The police came but took no action     | 12            | 57      |
| The police assisted me to a safe place | 3             | 14      |
| The police arrested the abuser         | 2             | 10      |
| No response                            | 1             | 5       |
| Total                                  | 21            | 100     |

TABLE 42

## POLICE RESPONSE: LIFETIME

QUESTION: What did the police do? (If the police were informed more than once, think of the most recent time they were informed.)\*

|                          | Lifetime |         |
|--------------------------|----------|---------|
|                          | Number   | Percent |
| Provided advice          | 20       | 19      |
| Nothing                  | 41       | 38      |
| Arrest made              | 16       | 15      |
| Provided protection      | 7        | 7       |
| Assisted to a safe place | 6        | 5       |
| No response              | 17       | 16      |
| Total                    | 107      | 100     |

\*NOTE: This was an open-ended question.

Respondents were also asked the following question with respect to abuse during the previous year: "If the police were informed, which of the following best describes your experiences with the police? (If the police were informed more than once, think of the most recent incident.)" Three (14%) said that the police never came to the house (see Table 41). Twelve (57%) said that the police came but took no action, three (14%) said that the police assisted her to a safe place, and 2 (10%) said that the abuser was arrested. Respondents who had been abused during their lifetime were asked the following: "What did the police do? (If the police were informed more than once, think of the most recent time they were informed)." This question was open-ended and respondents wrote in their responses. Twenty (19%) said that the police provided advice, 41 (38%) said that the police did nothing, 16 (15%) said that the abuser was arrested, 7 (7%) said that the police provided protection, and 6 (5%) said that the police assisted them to a safe place (see Table 42). In addition, seventeen (16%) did not indicate what the police did.

The last three tables in this section contain data regarding the age of respondents who were abused. This information was not elicited directly from the respondents and has been calculated from other data obtained through the questionnaire. The information contained in these tables is presented in order to provide a more complete picture of the abused respondents' characteristics.

TABLE 43

## POLICE PROFESSIONALISM: PREVIOUS YEAR

QUESTION: ... how would you rate their handling of your situation? (If the police were informed more than once, think of the most recent incident.)

|                     | Previous Year |         |
|---------------------|---------------|---------|
|                     | Number        | Percent |
| Very professional   | 5             | 24      |
| Professional        | 5             | 24      |
| No opinion          | 3             | 14      |
| Unprofessional      | 4             | 19      |
| Very unprofessional | 3             | 14      |
| No response         | 1             | 5       |
| Total               | 21            | 100     |

TABLE 44

## POLICE FAIRNESS: PREVIOUS YEAR

QUESTION: ... how would you rate their handling of your situation? (If the police were informed more than once, think of the most recent incident.)

|             | Previous Year |         |
|-------------|---------------|---------|
|             | Number        | Percent |
| Very fair   | 5             | 24      |
| Fair        | 4             | 19      |
| No opinion  | 4             | 19      |
| Unfair      | 6             | 28      |
| Very unfair | 0             | 0       |
| No response | 2             | 10      |
| Total       | 21            | 100     |

The average age of all respondents to the survey was 41.9 and the median age was 38 (see Table 45). The average age of the 103 respondents who had been abused during the previous year was significantly less — 32.6, with a median age of 33. Axiomatically, the average age of non-abused respondents was higher — 42.7, with a median age of 34.

TABLE 45

## AGE OF WOMEN ABUSED DURING PREVIOUS YEAR

|                | All         |       | Abused         |       | Not Abused*    |               |   |   |
|----------------|-------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|---------------|---|---|
|                | Respondents | N     | Previous Year  | N     | %              | Previous Year | N | % |
| Less than 20   | 46          | 3.8   | 3              | 2.9   | 43             | 3.9           |   |   |
| 20-24          | 76          | 6.3   | 13             | 12.6  | 63             | 5.7           |   |   |
| 25-29          | 181         | 14.9  | 23             | 22.3  | 158            | 14.3          |   |   |
| 30-34          | 186         | 15.4  | 28             | 27.2  | 158            | 14.3          |   |   |
| 35-39          | 144         | 11.9  | 10             | 9.7   | 134            | 12.1          |   |   |
| 40-44          | 98          | 8.1   | 12             | 11.7  | 86             | 7.8           |   |   |
| 45-49          | 98          | 8.1   | 3              | 2.9   | 95             | 8.6           |   |   |
| 50-54          | 87          | 7.2   | 7              | 6.8   | 80             | 7.2           |   |   |
| 55-59          | 78          | 6.4   | 1              | 1.0   | 77             | 7.0           |   |   |
| 60-64          | 87          | 7.2   | 3              | 2.9   | 84             | 7.6           |   |   |
| 65-69          | 69          | 5.7   | 0              | 0.0   | 69             | 6.2           |   |   |
| 70-74          | 37          | 3.1   | 0              | 0.0   | 37             | 3.3           |   |   |
| 75-79          | 15          | 1.2   | 0              | 0.0   | 15             | 1.3           |   |   |
| 80+            | 8           | .7    | 0              | 0.0   | 8              | 0.7           |   |   |
| Total          | 1210        | 100.0 | 103            | 100.0 | 1107           | 100.0         |   |   |
| Average = 41.9 |             |       | Average = 32.6 |       | Average = 42.7 |               |   |   |
| Median = 38    |             |       | Median = 33    |       | Median = 34    |               |   |   |

\*Includes those who did not respond as to whether or not they had been abused.

Regarding the 359 respondents who had been abused during their lifetime, 241 had indicated the year in which the abuse had first begun. With respect to only these 241, then, the average age at which the abuse began was 22, and the median age was 23 (see Table 46). The range of ages at which the abuse began was from 12 to 56. The length of time that the abuse lasted could be calculated for 220 of the 359 respondents who had been abused during their lifetime and this information is presented in Table 47.

TABLE 46

## AGE AT WHICH ABUSE BEGAN: LIFETIME

NOTE: The age at which abuse first began was calculated based on the year listed by the respondent and the current age of the respondent.

|              | Number | Percent |
|--------------|--------|---------|
| Less than 20 | 75     | 21      |
| 20 to 24     | 76     | 21      |
| 25 to 29     | 44     | 12      |
| 30 to 34     | 24     | 7       |
| 35 to 39     | 9      | 3       |
| 40 to 44     | 5      | 1       |
| 45 to 49     | 5      | 1       |
| 50+          | 3      | 1       |
| No Response  | 118    | 33      |
| Total        | 359    | 100     |

Known N=241  
Average=22  
Median=23  
Range=12 to 56

TABLE 47

## LENGTH OF ABUSE: LIFETIME

NOTE: Respondents were asked to indicate the year the abuse began and the year the abuse ended. These data were calculated based on the responses to these two questions.

|                    | Number | Percent |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| Less than one year | 31     | 9       |
| 1                  | 50     | 14      |
| 2                  | 23     | 6       |
| 3                  | 16     | 5       |
| 4                  | 16     | 5       |
| 5                  | 11     | 3       |
| 6                  | 5      | 1       |
| 7                  | 5      | 1       |
| 8                  | 8      | 2       |
| 9                  | 7      | 2       |
| 10 to 14           | 26     | 7       |
| 15 to 19           | 5      | 1       |
| 20 to 24           | 6      | 2       |
| 25 to 29           | 4      | 1       |
| 30+                | 2      | 1       |
| No Response        | 139    | 38      |
| Total              | 359    | 100     |

## AWARENESS OF OTHERS WHO HAVE BEEN ABUSED

Four sections of the questionnaire inquired about the respondents' awareness of others who had been abused during the previous year. Each of the four sections addressed awareness concerning different types of acquaintances that a respondent might have: (1) a close friend; (2) a neighbor, who is not a close friend; (3) an acquaintance; and, (4) a relative. Each of these categories was followed by a series of questions; however, in order to provide for continuity, the results are presented simultaneously in this report. And, it should also be noted that the respondents may have known more than one abused person in each category; therefore, if the respondent did know more than one abused person in a category, the respondent was asked to think in terms of the most seriously abused person.

A total of 264 (21.8%) of the respondents had at least one close friend who was abused by her husband or live-in partner during the previous twelve months, 93 (7.7%) knew a neighbor, who was not a close friend, who had been abused, 161 (13.3%) were aware of an acquaintance who had been abused, and 177 (14.6%) knew of at least one relative who had been abused (see Table 48). Of those who knew of a relative who had been abused, the most frequently listed relative was a sister (37%), followed by a daughter (14%), a cousin (8%), a niece (6%), a mother (5%), and an aunt (4%) (see Table 49). One-fourth (26%) did not indicate their relationship to the relative who was abused.

TABLE 49

## RESPONDENT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE ABUSED RELATIVE

QUESTION: What is your relationship to this person (sister, daughter, cousin, etc.)?

|               | Number | Percent |
|---------------|--------|---------|
| Mother        | 8      | 5       |
| Daughter      | 24     | 14      |
| Sister        | 66     | 37      |
| Cousin        | 15     | 8       |
| Niece         | 10     | 6       |
| Aunt          | 7      | 4       |
| Not indicated | 47     | 26      |
| Total         | 177    | 100     |

In each category, over three-fourths of the abused persons were abused by their "legal" husband—close friend, 78%; neighbor, 77%; acquaintance, 79%; and, relative, 85% (see Table 50). With the exception of relatives, approximately 10 percent in each category were common-law marriages (close friend, 9%; neighbor, 13%; acquaintance, 9%; relative, 4%). Also, approximately 10 percent in each category were abused by someone with whom they had established a place of residence (close friend, 11%; neighbor, 8%; acquaintance, 11%; relative, 8%).

The age distributions of abused persons in each category are presented in Table 51. The median ages were very similar for each category (close friend, 32; neighbor, 30; acquaintance, 29; relative, 29), as were the average ages (close friend, 29.6; neighbor, 32.4; acquaintance, 30.3; relative, 32.0). It should be noted, as well, that over two-thirds of the persons abused, in each category, were between 20 and 39 years of age (close friend, 75%; neighbor, 71%; acquaintance, 70%; relative, 67%).

TABLE 48

## KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONS ABUSED DURING PREVIOUS YEAR

QUESTION: During the past twelve months (July, 1981 to July, 1982) was one of your ... abused by her husband or live-in partner? (If more than one ... was abused, think of the most seriously abused ...)\*

|             | Close  |          |              |          |
|-------------|--------|----------|--------------|----------|
|             | Friend | Neighbor | Acquaintance | Relative |
| Yes         | 264    | 93       | 161          | 177      |
| No          | 921    | 957      | 927          | 906      |
| No response | 25     | 160      | 122          | 127      |
|             | 1210   | 1000     | 1210         | 1000     |

\*Respondents were asked about their knowledge of abuse regarding four types of persons: (1) close friend; (2) neighbor; (3) acquaintance; and, (4) relative. Each of the four categories was followed by a complete set of questions; however, for the purposes of this report, the responses pertaining to each of the four categories have been grouped together. The reader should also note that the respondents may have known more than one abused person in each category; therefore, if the respondent did know more than one abused person in a category, the respondent was asked to think in terms of the most seriously abused person.

TABLE 51

## AGE OF ABUSED PERSONS: 1981

QUESTION: What was the approximate age of the abused person?

|          | Close Friend |     | Neighbor |    | Acquaintance |     | Relative |     |
|----------|--------------|-----|----------|----|--------------|-----|----------|-----|
|          | N            | %   | N        | %  | N            | %   | N        | %   |
| 16 to 19 | 12           | 4   | 2        | 2  | 6            | 4   | 10       | 6   |
| 20 to 24 | 60           | 23  | 11       | 12 | 32           | 20  | 40       | 23  |
| 25 to 29 | 68           | 26  | 22       | 24 | 34           | 21  | 39       | 22  |
| 30 to 34 | 44           | 17  | 16       | 17 | 31           | 19  | 25       | 14  |
| 35 to 39 | 25           | 9   | 17       | 18 | 16           | 10  | 14       | 8   |
| 40 to 44 | 15           | 6   | 6        | 6  | 10           | 6   | 12       | 7   |
| 45 to 49 | 6            | 2   | 5        | 5  | 4            | 3   | 8        | 4   |
| 50+      | 10           | 4   | 3        | 3  | 8            | 5   | 16       | 9   |
| Unknown  | 24           | 9   | 11       | 12 | 20           | 12  | 13       | 7   |
| Total    | 264          | 100 | 93       | 99 | 161          | 100 | 177      | 100 |
| MEDIAN   | 32           |     | 30       |    | 29           |     | 29       |     |
| AVERAGE  | 29.6         |     | 32.4     |    | 30.3         |     | 32.0     |     |
| RANGE    | 16 to 90     |     | 17 to 74 |    | 15 to 65     |     | 17 to 74 |     |

Also, almost one-third (32%) of the respondents who knew a close friend who had been abused said that the close friend required medical treatment by a doctor or hospital (see Table 53). And, 20 percent or more of the respondents who knew of an abused person in each of the other categories indicated that the person required medical treatment (neighbor, 26%; acquaintance, 27%; relative, 20%).

TABLE 53

## WAS MEDICAL TREATMENT NECESSARY

QUESTION: Did your abused... ever require medical treatment by a doctor or hospital?

|             | Close Friend |     | Neighbor |     | Acquaintance |     | Relative |     |
|-------------|--------------|-----|----------|-----|--------------|-----|----------|-----|
|             | N            | %   | N        | %   | N            | %   | N        | %   |
| Yes         | 84           | 32  | 24       | 26  | 44           | 27  | 35       | 20  |
| No          | 145          | 55  | 45       | 48  | 84           | 52  | 115      | 65  |
| Do not know | 30           | 11  | 24       | 26  | 32           | 20  | 22       | 12  |
| No response | 5            | 2   | 0        | 0   | 1            | 1   | 5        | 3   |
| Total       | 264          | 100 | 93       | 100 | 161          | 100 | 177      | 100 |

TABLE 50  
RELATIONSHIP OF ABUSED TO THE ABUSER

|  | Close Friend |     | Neighbor |     | Acquaintance |     | Relative |     |
|--|--------------|-----|----------|-----|--------------|-----|----------|-----|
|  | N            | %   | N        | %   | N            | %   | N        | %   |
| Legal husband  | 205          | 78  | 72       | 77  | 127          | 79  | 150      | 85  |
| Common-law husband   | 25           | 9   | 12       | 13  | 15           | 9   | 8        | 4   |
| Someone with whom she had established a place of residence | 30           | 11  | 7        | 8   | 18           | 11  | 14       | 8   |
| No response  | 4            | 2   | 2        | 2   | 1            | 1   | 5        | 3   |
| Total  | 264          | 100 | 93       | 100 | 161          | 100 | 177      | 100 |

TABLE 52  
TYPES OF ABUSE

QUESTION: Which of the following types of abuse occurred? (check as many as apply)

|  | Close Friend (N=264) |    | Neighbor (N=93) |    | Acquaintance (N=161) |    | Relative (N=177) |    |
|--|----------------------|----|-----------------|----|----------------------|----|------------------|----|
|  | N                    | %  | N               | %  | N                    | %  | N                | %  |
| Pushing, shoving, or grabbing                          | 169                  | 64 | 53              | 57 | 104                  | 65 | 116              | 66 |
| Verbal abuse; verbal threats                           | 208                  | 79 | 67              | 72 | 120                  | 75 | 135              | 76 |
| Mental (psychological) abuse                           | 160                  | 61 | 46              | 49 | 89                   | 55 | 108              | 61 |
| Punching   | 152                  | 58 | 35              | 38 | 84                   | 52 | 82               | 46 |
| Deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter | 53                   | 20 | 16              | 17 | 34                   | 21 | 43               | 24 |
| Threatening with a knife or gun                        | 63                   | 24 | 10              | 11 | 26                   | 16 | 31               | 18 |
| Use of a knife or gun                                  | 20                   | 8  | 7               | 8  | 5                    | 3  | 4                | 2  |
| Slapping   | 162                  | 61 | 50              | 54 | 106                  | 66 | 96               | 54 |
| Biting   | 23                   | 9  | 6               | 6  | 11                   | 7  | 18               | 10 |
| Throwing things at her                                 | 102                  | 39 | 29              | 31 | 46                   | 29 | 54               | 31 |
| Striking with fist                                     | 153                  | 58 | 42              | 45 | 89                   | 55 | 81               | 46 |
| Choking  | 77                   | 29 | 17              | 18 | 38                   | 24 | 35               | 20 |
| Beating with an object or fist                         | 66                   | 25 | 19              | 20 | 49                   | 30 | 28               | 16 |
| Pulling hair   | 95                   | 36 | 22              | 24 | 37                   | 23 | 52               | 29 |
| Burning with cigarettes, cigar, hot object, etc.       | 7                    | 3  | 3               | 3  | 5                    | 3  | 1                | 1  |
| Forcing sex  | 39                   | 15 | 13              | 14 | 27                   | 17 | 24               | 14 |
| Other  | 4                    | 2  | 3               | 3  | 0                    | 0  | 24               | 14 |

Data concerning the frequency of abuse are presented in Table 54. With the exception of neighbors, in approximately one-third of the cases the respondents did not know how often the abuse occurred (did not know: close friend, 32%; neighbor, 19%; acquaintance, 38%; relative, 29%). Also, in approximately one-third of the cases, the abuse occurred "about once a month or less" (close friend, 29%; neighbor, 33%; acquaintance, 32%; relative, 31%). And, with the exception of neighbors, in approximately one-fourth of the cases known to the respondent the abuse occurred either "about once a week" or "more than once a week" (close friend, 24%; neighbor, 34%; acquaintance, 20%; relative, 24%).

The respondents were also asked about the action or actions taken by the abused person — at least, to the respondent's knowledge. The same nine categories of action listed for those respondents who were themselves abused were listed here, and respondents were asked to check all that applied (see Table 55). To

summarize, only 12 (5%) of the close friends, none of the abused neighbors, 7 (4%) of the abused acquaintances, and 5 (3%) of the abused relatives made use of a shelter for abused women. In general, the most frequently taken actions were either to stay in the same home with the husband or live-in partner (close friend, 28%; neighbor, 52%; acquaintance, 36%; relative, 37%), or to move in with relatives (close friend, 31%; neighbor, 26%; acquaintance, 31%; relative, 32%). The use of court actions varied depending on the relationship of the respondent to the abused person. Temporary restraining orders were obtained by 14 percent of the close friends, 5 percent of the neighbors, 11 percent of the acquaintances, and 7 percent of the relatives. Peace bonds were obtained by 11 percent of the close friends, 4 percent of the neighbors, 7 percent of acquaintances, and 3 percent of the relatives. In general, the action least likely to be taken was to obtain a protective court order: close friend, 4%; neighbor, 0; acquaintance, 4%; and, relative, 3%.

TABLE 54

## FREQUENCY OF THE ABUSE

QUESTION: How often did the abuse occur?

|                            | Close Friend |     | Neighbor |    | Acquaintance |     |     |     |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----|----------|----|--------------|-----|-----|-----|
|                            | N            | %   | N        | %  | N            | %   |     |     |
| Only happened once         | 37           | 14  | 10       | 11 | 16           | 10  | 28  | 16  |
| About once a month or less | 76           | 29  | 31       | 33 | 51           | 32  | 55  | 31  |
| About once a week          | 30           | 11  | 19       | 20 | 18           | 11  | 18  | 10  |
| More than once a week      | 33           | 13  | 13       | 14 | 15           | 9   | 24  | 14  |
| Do not know                | 86           | 32  | 18       | 19 | 61           | 38  | 51  | 29  |
| No response                | 2            | 1   | 2        | 2  | 0            | 0   | 1   | *   |
| Total                      | 264          | 100 | 93       | 99 | 161          | 100 | 177 | 100 |

\*Less than 1%

TABLE 55  
ACTION(S) TAKEN BY ABUSED PERSON

QUESTION: To your knowledge, after the abuse, did your ...? (check as many as apply)

|  | Close Friend |    | Neighbor |    | Acquaintance |    |    |    |
|--|--------------|----|----------|----|--------------|----|----|----|
|  | N            | %  | N        | %  | N            | %  |    |    |
| Make use of a shelter for abused women             | 12           | 5  | 0        | 0  | 7            | 4  | 5  | 3  |
| Move in with relatives                             | 82           | 31 | 24       | 26 | 50           | 31 | 57 | 32 |
| Move in with you or other ...                      | 34           | 13 | 8        | 9  | 18           | 11 | 23 | 13 |
| Move out to her own place                          | 48           | 18 | 6        | 6  | 30           | 19 | 32 | 18 |
| Stay in same home; husband or live-in partner left | 50           | 19 | 11       | 12 | 22           | 14 | 27 | 15 |
| Stay in same home with husband or live-in partner  | 73           | 28 | 48       | 52 | 58           | 36 | 6  |    |

To the knowledge of the respondents, charges were filed against the abuser by 13 percent of the close friends, 4 percent of the neighbors, 12 percent of the acquaintances, and 10 percent of the relatives (see Table 56). Over one-third (38%) of the abused close friends divorced or permanently left the abuser, as did 24 percent of the neighbors, 37 percent of the acquaintances, and 31 percent of the relatives (see Table 57).

TABLE 56

#### CHARGES FILED AGAINST ABUSER

QUESTION: Were charges filed against the abuser?

|             | Close  |          |              |          |
|-------------|--------|----------|--------------|----------|
|             | Friend | Neighbor | Acquaintance | Relative |
|             | N      | %        | N            | %        |
| Yes         | 33     | 13       | 4            | 4        |
| No          | 176    | 67       | 65           | 70       |
| Do not know | 25     | 9        | 19           | 20       |
| No response | 30     | 11       | 5            | 5        |
| Total       | 264    | 100      | 93           | 99       |
|             | 161    | 100      | 177          | 100      |

The respondents were also asked if the abused person, to their knowledge, was pregnant at the time of the abuse. Eleven percent said that the close friend was pregnant, 4 percent that the neighbor was pregnant, 11 percent that the acquaintance was pregnant, and 12 percent that the relative was pregnant (see Table 58).

Three questions were asked regarding children of the abused persons in order to identify the extent to which the children might also have been abused. First, respondents were asked if the abused person had a child or children living at home, and, approximately two-thirds or more in each category did have a child(ren) living at home — close friend, 69%; neighbor, 76%; acquaintance, 65%; relative, 69% (see Table 59). Of the 182 abused close friends who had children living at home, 20 percent had a child(ren) who also was abused (see Table 60). Moreover, 31 percent of the abused neighbors, 18 percent of the abused acquaintances, and 13 percent of the abused relatives with a child(ren) living at home had a child(ren) who was also abused.

TABLE 57

#### DIVORCED OR LEFT ABUSED

QUESTION: Did your ... divorce (or permanently leave) her husband or live-in partner?

|  | Close  |     | Neighbor |     | Acquaintance |     | Relative |     |
|--|--------|-----|----------|-----|--------------|-----|----------|-----|
|  | Friend | %   | Friend   | %   | Friend       | %   | Friend   | %   |
| Yes  | 99     | 38  | 22       | 24  | 59           | 37  | 55       | 31  |
| No, filed for divorce (or left him) but changed her mind | 49     | 19  | 0        | 0   | 28           | 17  | 31       | 18  |
| No   | 100    | 38  | 60       | 65  | 69           | 43  | 77       | 43  |
| Do not know  | 4      | 1   | 7        | 7   | 2            | 1   | 2        | 1   |
| No response  | 12     | 4   | 4        | 4   | 3            | 2   | 12       | 7   |
| Total  | 264    | 100 | 93       | 100 | 161          | 100 | 177      | 100 |

TABLE 58  
PREGNANT DURING ABUSE

QUESTION: Was your ... pregnant at the time of the abuse?

|             | Close  |          |              |          |
|-------------|--------|----------|--------------|----------|
|             | Friend | Neighbor | Acquaintance | Relative |
|             | N      | %        | N            | %        |
| Yes         | 29     | 11       | 4            | 4        |
| No          | 223    | 84       | 76           | 82       |
| Do not know | 2      | 1        | 8            | 9        |
| No response | 10     | 4        | 5            | 5        |
| Total       | 264    | 100      | 93           | 100      |
|             | 161    | 100      | 177          | 100      |

\*Less than 1%

TABLE 59  
CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME

QUESTION: Did your abused ... have a child(ren) living at home?

|             | Close  |          |              |          |
|-------------|--------|----------|--------------|----------|
|             | Friend | Neighbor | Acquaintance | Relative |
|             | N      | %        | N            | %        |
| Yes         | 182    | 69       | 71           | 76       |
| No          | 76     | 29       | 21           | 23       |
| Do not know | 0      | 0        | 0            | 0        |
| No response | 6      | 2        | 1            | 4        |
| Total       | 264    | 100      | 93           | 100      |
|             | 161    | 100      | 99           | 177      |
|             | 100    | 100      | 100          | 100      |

TABLE 60

#### CHILD (CHILDREN) ALSO ABUSED

QUESTION: Was the child (children) also abused by her husband or live-in partner?

|             | Close  |     | Neighbor |     | Acquaintance |     | Relative |     |
|-------------|--------|-----|----------|-----|--------------|-----|----------|-----|
|             | Friend | %   | Friend   | %   | Friend       | %   | Friend   | %   |
| Yes         | 37     | 20  | 22       | 31  | 19           | 18  | 16       | 13  |
| No          | 123    | 68  | 36       | 51  | 60           | 57  | 89       | 72  |
| Do not know | 22     | 12  | 13       | 18  | 24           | 23  | 17       | 14  |
| No response | 0      | 0   | 0        | 0   | 2            | 2   | 1        | 1   |
| Total       | 182    | 100 | 71       | 100 | 105          | 100 | 123      | 100 |

NOTE: Totals and percentages refer only to those cases where a child was living in the home.

The frequency with which the children were abused is presented in Table 61. The norm was "about once a month or less" (close friend, 24%; neighbor, 23%; acquaintance, 26%; relative, 19%), followed by "more than once a week" (close friend, 16%; neighbor, 27%; acquaintance, 11%; relative, 19%).

Finally, to the knowledge of the respondents, with regard to close friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, the police were informed in 32 percent of the cases, and in 20 percent of the cases involving relatives (see Table 62). In those cases where the police were informed about the abuse, respondents were asked to indicate what happened. (If the police were informed more than once, respondents were asked to think of the most recent incident.) The most common response for each category was that "the police came, but took no action" (close friend, 40%; neighbor, 53%; acquaintance, 39%; relative, 43%) (see Table 63). In 25

percent of the incidents involving close friends the police arrested the abuser. The abuser was arrested, to the respondents' knowledge, in 7 percent of the incidents involving neighbors, 14 percent involving acquaintances, and 11 percent involving relatives.

TABLE 62

#### POLICE INFORMED ABOUT THE ABUSE

QUESTION: Were the police ever informed about the abuse?

|             | Close  |          |              |          |
|-------------|--------|----------|--------------|----------|
|             | Friend | Neighbor | Acquaintance | Relative |
|             | N      | %        | N            | %        |
| Yes         | 84     | 32       | 30           | 32       |
| No          | 149    | 56       | 48           | 52       |
| Do not know | 26     | 10       | 13           | 14       |
| No response | 5      | 2        | 2            | 0        |
| Total       | 264    | 100      | 93           | 100      |
|             | 161    | 100      | 177          | 100      |

TABLE 61

#### HOW OFTEN CHILDREN ARE ABUSED

QUESTION: How often did the abuse to the child(ren) occur?

|                            | Close  |     | Neighbor |     | Acquaintance |     | Relative |     |
|----------------------------|--------|-----|----------|-----|--------------|-----|----------|-----|
|                            | Friend | %   | Friend   | %   | Friend       | %   | Friend   | %   |
| Only happened once         | 5      | 14  | 1        | 4   | 3            | 16  | 3        | 19  |
| About once a month or less | 9      | 24  | 5        | 23  | 5            | 26  | 3        | 19  |
| About once a week          | 3      | 8   | 3        | 14  | 2            | 11  | 1        | 6   |
| More than once a week      | 6      | 16  | 6        | 27  | 2            | 11  | 3        | 19  |
| Do not know/No response    | 14     | 38  | 7        | 32  | 7            | 36  | 6        | 37  |
| Total                      | 37     | 100 | 22       | 100 | 19           | 100 | 16       | 100 |

NOTE: Totals and percentages refer only to those cases where a child was abused.

TABLE 63

#### EXPERIENCE WITH THE POLICE

QUESTION: If the police were informed, which of the following best describes your ... 's experience with the police? (If the police were informed more than once, think of the most recent incident.)

|                                    | Close  |   | Neighbor |   | Acquaintance |   | Relative |   |
|------------------------------------|--------|---|----------|---|--------------|---|----------|---|
|                                    | Friend | % | Friend   | % | Friend       | % | Friend   | % |
| The police never came to the house | 5      | 6 | 1        | 3 |              |   |          |   |

## CONCLUSIONS

In 1978 the Survey Research Program at Sam Houston State University conducted a pilot survey designed to analyze the extent and types of spouse abuse in Texas. The sample size in the initial survey was limited and questionnaires were sent to both men and women. This initial survey was especially useful in two respects. First, it did provide a general estimate of the extent (and types) of spouse abuse experienced by both men and women in Texas. Secondly, the pilot survey demonstrated that it is feasible to use a mail (postal) survey to collect valid and reliable data concerning spouse abuse in Texas.

The findings presented in this report are the result of a statewide survey of women predicated on the pilot survey. The subjects addressed in the current survey were more extensive and detailed and the study provided a much broader picture of the subject of spouse abuse in Texas. There are, of course, some limitations due to the sampling process — particularly the fact that minorities tend to be underrepresented in comparison to the total population of women in Texas with valid drivers licenses. At the same time, there are some distinct advantages in conducting this type of survey, and these have been reaffirmed through this particular study. Specifically, this procedure elicits responses concerning a very sensitive subject which women are reluctant to discuss with door-to-door interviewers. The same can be said regarding reluctance to answer sensitive questions over the telephone. Secondly, the survey questionnaire reaches individuals in places where it is difficult to send interviewers. The same is true with regard to the time that interviewers can find individuals at home. Thirdly, the characteristics of the original sample are known and can be compared against the final sample of respondents. And, fourthly, this method presents a cost effective means of sampling a cross-section of women from across the entire State of Texas.

Taking into consideration the inherent limitations of this study, particularly with respect to non-respondents, a series of meaningful, as well as reliable, conclusions can be drawn. The following are among the more salient.

1. Spouse abuse among women in Texas is, truly, a very significant problem. A total of 8.5 percent of the respondents to the survey were abused by their husbands or live-in partners during the previous twelve months. Moreover, 29.7 percent of the respondents to the survey have been abused by their husbands or live-in partners during their lifetime. And, 24 percent of the respondents who have been abused during their lifetime required medical treatment by a doctor or hospital. Assuming that these findings can be generalized to the total population of women in Texas, this means that more than 440,000 women age 18 and over were abused by their husband or live-in partner during the previous twelve months and that more than

1,500,000 women age 18 and over, currently living in Texas, have been abused during their lifetime. Moreover, more than 350,000 women currently living in Texas have required medical treatment by a doctor or hospital specifically because of abuse by a husband or live-in partner.

These figures, of course, are impressive and thought-provoking. However, the findings from the study reveal a much more important fact, that is, that most of the incidents of spouse abuse recorded in this survey did not come to the attention of the authorities — either official support agencies or the police. Only 30 percent of the respondents who were abused during their lifetime had ever informed the police (that is, they or someone else had informed the police) and only 12 of the 359 who had been abused during their lifetime had ever made use of a shelter because they were abused by a husband or live-in partner.

2. The impact of spouse abuse on the general population is significant. A total of 18.6 percent of the respondents had divorced or left their husband or live-in partner due to abuse. Moreover, one out of every three women who had been abused had had a child or children who had also been abused. With reference to abused spouses, the divorces referred to are not simply the result of incompatibility or infidelity; rather, these are the direct result of spouse abuse. At the same time, it should be noted that only 25 percent of the respondents who were abused during the previous twelve months had divorced or permanently left their husband or live-in partner, whereas 63 percent of those abused during their lifetime had done so.

Reference should also be made to the secondary impact of spouse abuse. Children, as noted above, are frequently present and are also abused. Moreover, the abuse must certainly impact the lives, values, and perceptions of many non-abused women through their association with abused victims. More than 20 percent of the respondents knew at least one close friend who was abused during the previous year and almost 15 percent knew at least one relative who had been abused. Many of these relatives, according to the findings, were daughters and sisters and it is self-evident that relatives would suffer emotionally along with the abused.

3. Women in Texas share a rather strong consensus as to what constitutes abuse. Most noteworthy is the fact that perceptions of abuse are not restricted to injury producing physical violence. Rather, a large majority of women in Texas perceive deliberate failure to provide adequate food or shelter, as well as verbal and emotional abuse, to be serious abuse.

Women in Texas also differentiate regarding the seriousness of acts with reference to the frequency with which the act occurs. The police are more likely to be informed if the act (abuse) occurs more than once — even in the case of non-violent acts of abuse. The findings also support the position that drinking or

alcoholism is a contributing factor in at least one-half of the cases of spouse abuse. And, abused women frequently attribute the abuse to combinations of financial and emotional problems on the part of the abuser. At the same time, it is quite evident that the factors contributing to the abuse are multiple in nature and that there is no one single causal factor which dominates.

4. As noted previously, less than one-third of the abused women ever informed the police about the abuse. Moreover, the use of shelters by the abused women was limited. The findings suggest (see Table 31) that in early stages of abuse the women tend to stay with their husband or live-in partner. Over time, however, there is a tendency to move in with relatives or to one's own place and, at the same time, to rely more on the criminal justice system for protection — through informing the police and/or through the acquisition of restraining orders, peace bonds, protective court orders, and so forth. However, filing charges against the abuser does not appear to be a frequently taken action.

5. Assuming that the findings from this study remain constant, at least one out of every twelve women in Texas, who hold valid drivers licenses, will come into contact with the police at some time during her lifetime because of abuse by a husband or live-in partner. Also, each year in excess of 85,000 women contact the police in Texas at least once because of abuse by a husband or live-in partner. The need for police training in this area, then, is self-evident. Moreover, this suggests a need for police officers to be informed regarding the availability of services for these women, including safe shelters.

6. The majority of women in Texas believe that the abuser should be considered emotionally disturbed and ordered to receive treatment, whether the abuse is physical, sexual, or mental (including verbal and emotional). Even in the case of physical abuse (such as slapping, striking with a fist, beating-up, etc.) less than one out of four respondents to the survey believe that the abuser should be treated as a criminal and prosecuted. Similarly, less than one in four believe that the police should be called — even in the case of physical abuse — as opposed to the woman leaving the house (or apartment) or calling a social service agency for advice. At the same time, almost nine out of ten women believe that stiffer enforcement of the laws and penalties would be effective in dealing with the problem of spouse abuse. In general, based on the findings, it is reasonable to assume that women in Texas believe that legal measures are necessary and can be effective; however, they believe that, to the extent possible, the abuser should be considered as emotionally disturbed and treated, rather than punished. This is furthered evidenced in the fact that the majority of the women would be willing to have state tax money used for the treatment of men who have abused their wives or live-in partners.

It is also evident from the findings that women in Texas are in support of the development of additional services for abused women. Almost nine out of ten support the development of additional places where abused women (and children) can seek help and almost two out of three believe that state tax money should be used to assist these women.

7. Perhaps one of the most noteworthy findings with reference to policy implications is that only one out of three respondents are aware of some type of service(s) available in their community for a woman who has been abused by her husband or live-in partner. And, only 15 percent of the women are aware of shelters for women being available in their community. Considering the percentage of women in Texas who, each year, personally know someone who has been abused, much less the number of women in Texas who are actually abused each year, it would be advisable to identify means whereby more women in general can be made aware of these services. Based on the findings, it would also be advisable to develop additional programs whereby ministers, police officers, physicians, hospital emergency room personnel, and others who have regular contact with abused women are informed, and reinforced, regarding available support services and shelters for abused women. And, as part of this information process, they should also be made aware of the findings from studies, such as this study, which serve to illustrate the magnitude and severity of the problem of spouse abuse in Texas.

8. Finally, this study exemplifies the need for additional research concerning the subject of spouse abuse. Although additional in depth analyses of these data will be undertaken, and published, nevertheless, the study has opened up a number of new questions for future research. Among other issues, future survey research should look at the decision-making process, that is, why the decision is made to inform the police — or to take some other type of action. Also, future research should examine whether or not the abusive behavior follows a developmental pattern and, if so, the nature of the process. And, it would be well to examine those instances where the abusive behavior ceased and did not eventually end in separation or legal action, or did not come to the attention of the police or official support agencies, in order to identify effective methods for addressing the problem in the early stages.

In conclusion, it should be reemphasized that the sample in this study included only women holding valid Texas drivers licenses. This was due, principally, to limitations on the sample size in relation to the issues under investigation. At the same time, this should not negate the need for including men in future studies concerning spouse abuse. Some, of course, are abused by their spouses. Moreover, in order to obtain a complete picture of the abuse issue, the perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes of men regarding this issue

are of definite importance. And, this study does illustrate the need for further research employing a substantially larger sample. The data collected in this study are certainly adequate for calculating estimates of the amount and types of spouse abuse which occur in Texas, as well as public perceptions, knowledge,

and attitudes; however, more in depth analysis of the issues involved — especially controlling for such variables as race, age, community size, etc. — will require much larger samples in order to generate sufficiently large categories of variables.

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