

The Samoa Family Health and Safety Study



SPC
Secretariat
of the Pacific
Community



The Samoa Family Health and Safety Study



Secretariat of the Pacific Community
United Nations Population Fund
Samoa

© Copyright Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2006

All rights for commercial / for profit reproduction or translation, in any form, reserved. SPC authorises the partial reproduction or translation of this material for scientific, educational or research purposes, provided that SPC and the source document are properly acknowledged.

Permission to reproduce the document and/or translate in whole, in any form, whether for commercial / for profit non-profit purposes, must be requested in writing.

Original SPC artwork may not be altered or separately published without permission.

Original text: English

Secretariat of the Pacific Community Cataloguing-in-publication data

The Samoa family health and safety study / Secretariat of the Pacific Community
1. Family violence — Oceania 2. Wife abuse — Oceania
3. Child abuse — Oceania
I. Title II. Secretariat of the Pacific Community

LCSH 305.4

AACR2

ISBN 982-203-977-8

Secretariat of the Pacific Community
BP D5, 98848 Noumea Cedex
New Caledonia
Telephone: +687 26 20 00
Facsimile: +687 26 38 18
spc@spc.int
<http://www.spc.int/>

Photos: David Becker and the Pacific Women's Bureau
Illustrations: Jipé Le-Bars
Layout: Publications section
Printed by Graphoprint, Noumea, New Caledonia
Prepared for publication at the
Secretariat of the Pacific Community,
Noumea, New Caledonia 2006

Acknowledgements

The research team wishes to acknowledge with thanks and gratitude the support and cooperation of all households and individual respondents interviewed in the course of this research project. We were privileged to talk with and share the life stories of many individuals. Without their support and help we would not have been able to complete this project. To the village Pulenuu and church ministers, faafetai tele lava for providing food, shelter and assistance to our survey staff.

We were privileged to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Women Affairs, and are grateful to Luagalau Foisagaasina Eteuati-Shon, Secretary of Women Affairs, who was very supportive and instrumental in the implementation and daily progress of this project. We also acknowledge Ministry staff, who assisted in the implementation of the project. La faamanuia le Atua i lo outou soifua galulue.

When this project was implemented in Samoa, a steering committee was established to give advice and guidance to the project team. We greatly appreciate the commitment and support of the following committee members:

Afioga Luagalau Foisagaasina Eteuati-Shon, Secretary of Women Affairs and chairperson of the committee

Faasili Afamasaga, Ministry of Women Affairs

Palanitina Toelupe, Ministry of Women Affairs

Inspector Annie Laumea, Department of Police and Prison

Sharon Potoi-Aiafi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Karene Karene, Department of Health

Mativa Mulipola, Department of Statistics

Theresa Fepuleai, Women in Business

Faleati Vaeluaga and Faoliu Wendt, Mapusaga O Aiga

UNFPA provided funding for this project. We greatly appreciate their support.

Table of contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
LIST OF TABLES	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VI
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	I
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background on Abuse	2
1.3 International Strategies to Prevent Domestic Abuse	4
1.4 The Samoan Context	4
1.5 Domestic Abuse in Samoa	6
CHAPTER TWO: REPORT ON THE WOMEN'S SURVEY	9
2.1 Introduction and Background	9
2.2 Background Characteristics of Respondents	11
2.3 Patterns of Domestic Abuse	14
2.4 Impact of Abuse on Respondents' Health	19
2.5 Reproductive Health	27
2.6 Characteristics and Behaviour of Abusive Partners	30
2.7 Impact of Partner Abuse on Family Life	33
2.8 Ownership of Assets, Employment and Financial Autonomy	37
2.9 Marriage and Perception of Community	39
2.10 Coping with Physical Abuse	41
2.11 Do Samoan Women Believe Partner Abuse is Justified?	46
CHAPTER THREE: REPORT ON THE MEN'S SURVEY	51
3.1 Introduction	51
3.2 Background Characteristics of Respondents	53
3.3 Domestic Violence Against Men	55
3.4 Reasons for Physical Abuse by Female Partners	58
3.5 Men's Experiences of Non-spousal Abuse	58
3.6 Characteristics of Abusive Men	60
3.7 Opinions and Attitudes Towards Gender Roles	63
3.8 When is a Married Women Justified in Refusing to Have Sex With Her Spouse?	65
3.9 Strategies to Eliminate Violence Against Women	66
CHAPTER FOUR : THE QUALITATIVE SURVEY	71
4.1 Introduction	71
4.2 Domestic Violence in Samoa, its Consequences and Perpetrators	72
4.3 Causes of Violence Against Women in Samoa	76
4.4 Attitudes Toward Violence and the Expression of Anger	80
4.5 Responses to Violence Against Women	81
4.6 Solutions and Recommendations for Change	83
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	85
5.1 Introduction	85
5.2 Women's Survey	86
5.3 Men's Survey: Findings and Conclusions	89
5.4 Qualitative Study: Key Findings and Conclusions	91
5.5 Community Recommendations	93
REFERENCES	95
APPENDIX: EXCERPTS FROM QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS	97

List of Tables

CHAPTER TWO

2.1	Characteristics of respondents	12	
2.2	Spousal abuse experienced by women who have ever been in a relationship		14
2.3	Classification by type of abuse	16	
2.4	Characteristics of respondents ever in a relationship		17
2.5	General health, pain and discomfort	20	
2.6	Symptoms of ill health and stress	22	
2.7	Impact of recent abuse on health of respondents		24
2.8	Recent symptoms of ill-health and stress	24	
2.9	Effect of physical abuse on health	26	
2.10	Reproductive health	27	
2.11	Respondent's last pregnancy	28	
2.12	Experience with contraception	29	
2.13	Characteristics of respondent's partner		31
2.14	Partner's behaviour	32	
2.15	Reasons for physical abuse	33	
2.16	First sexual experience and childhood exposure to abuse		34
2.17	Effects of physical abuse on family life	35	
2.18	Impact on young children of abuse of women by partner		36
2.19	Assets owned by respondents	37	
2.20	Financial autonomy of respondents	38	
2.21	Characteristics of respondent's family and marriage		39
2.22	Number of relationships and separations	40	
2.23	Respondents' perception of community attitudes and behaviour		40
2.24	Help sought when physically abused	42	
2.25	Reasons for seeking or not seeking help	43	
2.26	Reasons for leaving home after physical abuse	44	
2.27	Physical abuse by someone other than partner	45	
2.28	Forced to have sex with someone other than partner		45
2.29	Touch or other unwanted sex by/with someone other than partner		45
2.30	Respondents' beliefs about their right to refuse sex	46	
2.31	Respondents' belief about when physical abuse is justified		48
2.32	Respondents' attitudes to gender roles	49	

CHAPTER THREE

3.1	Number and age groups of emotionally abused men, grouped by age of abusive women		56
3.2	Highest level of education completed by abused men and abusive women		56
3.3	Main daily activities of emotionally abused men and abusive women		57
3.4	Age groups of sexually and physically abused men and abusive women		57
3.5	Highest level of education completed by sexually and physically abused men, grouped by abusive women's education level and type of abuse		57
3.6	Main daily activity of sexually abused men and abusive women		58
3.7	Main place of usual residence of physically abused men		58
3.8	Reasons women physically abused their spouse	58	
3.9	Perpetrators of sexual abuse of respondents	59	
3.10	Age of respondents at the first time the sexual abused first occurred by persons who committed the offence		59
3.11	Age of respondents when first raped	60	
3.12	Number of times the rape occurred	60	
3.13	Age at first sex according to marital status	60	
3.14	Education levels of physically abusive respondents and their spouses		61
3.15	Main daily activity of abusive men and their spouses	61	
3.16	Makeup of physically abusive respondents' households	62	
3.17	Spousal abuse by respondents' fathers	62	
3.18	Reasons for spousal abuse by respondents' fathers		62

3.19	Respondents' views regarding their father's spousal abuse	63
3.20	Respondents' opinions on when spousal abuse is justified	64
3.21	Urban versus rural respondents' opinion on when spousal abuse is justified	65
3.22	Respondents' opinion on when woman are justified in refusing to have sex with their spouses	65
3.23	Respondents' opinions on what men should do to refrain from beating their wives	66
3.24	Respondents' opinions on what women should do to avoid being beaten by their husbands....	67
3.25	Respondents' opinions regarding actions civil societies should take to eliminate domestic violence	67
3.26	Respondents' opinions on what Village Councils must do to stop domestic violence	68

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1	Types of domestic violence mentioned by informants	73
4.2	Total number of sexual assault crimes, 1990-1999	73
4.3	Physical consequences of physical violence against women	74
4.4	Emotional and mental consequences of physical violence against women	75
4.5	Consequences of sexual violence	75
4.6	Who is the violent offender?	76
4.7	Causes of violence against women mentioned by informants	76
4.8	What makes a good husband?	78
4.9	What makes a good wife?	79
4.10	Circumstances mentioned by informants as justifying violence	80
4.11	Women's responses to violence	81
4.12	Informants' views about who is mostly likely to intervene when women are abused	82
4.13	Alternative to violence suggested by focus groups	83
4.14	Solutions to violence against women suggested by service providers	84

List of Figures

CHAPTER TWO

2.1	Age distribution of respondents	11
2.2	Highest education level of respondents	12
2.3	Marital status of respondents	12
2.4	Household status of respondents	13
2.5	Membership in community organisations	13
2.6	Respondents who have experienced abuse	15
2.7	"A woman can refuse to have sex with her partner when..."	47
2.8	"A man can beat his partner when..."	49

CHAPTER THREE

3.1	Age distribution of respondents	53
3.2	Highest level of education completed by respondents	53
3.3	Marital status of respondents	53
3.4	Main daily activity of respondents	54
3.5	Church membership	54
3.6	Age groups of emotionally abused men and abusive women	56
3.7	Main daily activities of emotionally abused men and their partners	57
3.8	Number and age groups of physically abused men and abusive women	57
3.9	Age of respondents by whether or not they were physically abused before the age of 15	59

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The Samoa Family Health and Safety Study (SFHSS) is a component of the larger Pacific Multi-site Study of the Effects of Violence Against Women on Family Health and Safety, which is a joint research initiative of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Multi-site study follows the methodology of the World Health Organization (WHO) Multi-country Study of Women's Health and Domestic Violence, and uses questionnaires based on those developed by WHO. The Pacific Multi-site Study was designed to:

- provide detailed information on the prevalence and frequency of different forms of violence in families (defined to include relationships between de facto partners);
- examine risk and protective factors at the household and community level;
- document the health and legal consequences of domestic violence;
- explore strategies and interventions used by victims, families, and communities; and
- assess the impact of attitudes on the prevention and intervention of violence.

The Pacific Multi-site Study will be carried out in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. Samoa was selected as the first country for the study, and as a representative of Polynesia. The SFHSS was carried out with the agreement and assistance of the Samoan government and the Ministry of Women Affairs, and the work was guided by a steering committee composed of Samoan representatives.

The SFHSS first undertook a qualitative study to determine the key issues relating to domestic abuse

in Samoa. On the basis of these findings the WHO multi-country questionnaire was adapted to suit the Samoan context, and a questionnaire-based survey of 1646 women was carried out. Subsequently, a questionnaire for Samoan men was developed and 664 men were interviewed.

In addition to addressing the objectives (within Samoa) listed above for the larger Pacific Multi-site study, the SFHSS was intended to:

- contribute to the development of appropriate protocols, methodologies and instruments to measure domestic violence in the Pacific region;
- increase the awareness and capacity of researchers, policy-makers and service providers and strengthen regional cooperation in addressing the issue of domestic violence;
- add to the information and knowledge of the region from a Pacific perspective; and
- strengthen the professional research capacity of SPC's Pacific Women's Bureau to compile and disseminate gender-desegregated information.

The qualitative survey was carried out by Dr Dorothy Counts, who also wrote the original report on the results of the qualitative research, on which Chapters One and Four and the Appendix of this report are based. Tina Tauasosi-Posiulai implemented the women's and men's surveys, assisted by Tima Levai-Peteru and staff of the Ministry of Women Affairs.

This report includes five chapters. Chapter One presents background information on domestic abuse and discusses the Samoan context. Chapters Two and Three are detailed reports on the women's and men's surveys, carried out as part of the SFHSS. Chapter Four is a summary of the qualitative study,

with an appendix comprising verbatim transcripts of respondents' comments. Chapter Five includes a summary and recommendations, including those formulated by the project steering committee and representatives of various government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who attended a workshop in Apia on 15 and 16 March 2001 to review the findings and discuss strategies

to address the problem of domestic abuse in Samoa.

This report was prepared by Chris McMurray. Chris McMurray also analysed the women's survey data, and Tina Tauasosi-Posiulai analysed the men's survey data. Mark Smaalders edited and prepared the report for publication.

1.2 Background on Abuse

No person (male or female) can realise their full potential if they are oppressed by abuse. Abuse in any form impacts on the victim's psychological well-being, and causes psychological stress. Stress may contribute to serious illness, and can even be a cause of suicide attempts. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines violence as:

any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and includes threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether in public or in private life.

The main types of domestic abuse are physical, emotional (psychological) and sexual. Physical abuse refers to slapping, shaking, beating, strangulation, burning, kicking, threats with a weapon, and other forms of physical assault. Emotional abuse affects mental health and includes excessive possessiveness, jealousy, intimidation, insult, harassment, and constant belittling and humiliation. Sexual abuse is any form of forced sexual act through physical force without the victim's consent, the most extreme form being rape. Rape or sexual assault can be very damaging psychologically to a woman, leaving emotional scars that time and counselling often cannot erase. In male-dominated societies, women may even be accused when a rape occurs rather than being regarded as the victim.

Domestic abuse has long been a part of social and family life in all nations and social classes around the world. While people in many societies understand the meaning of the terms "child abuse" and "wife beating", it is only in the past two or three decades that people considered them as social problems with serious costs to the health and safety of women and children. Indeed, the husband who failed to "train" his wife and children properly or to solve domestic conflict by "disciplining" his wife was a subject of scorn. Domestic abuse occurs in virtually every ethnic, social, cultural, economic, political and religious group. It is most likely to occur where people are socialised to consider violence an appropriate response to stress, anger or

frustration. Because of their relatively greater physical strength, men are more likely to abuse women, and children are more likely to be abused by adults, than the reverse. Although abuse of women and children is a very serious problem, discussion of such abuse is often regarded as taboo. Domestic abuse of men is discussed even less, even though it may also be significant.

Men are more likely to impose domestic abuse on women than women are to abuse men. The most common form of abuse against women is spousal abuse, or abuse of women by their intimate male partners. This type of abuse occurs everywhere in the world. Violence against women tends to occur most often when women have an inferior position in their society. Important variables associated with partner abuse are male attitudes toward women, whether men exercise control over women, and whether women have political equality with men. Women who reside with or near their natal families are less likely than other women to be beaten by their husbands (Counts 1990).

One of the speakers at the United Nations Advancement of Women Conference in 1995 referred to domestic abuse as a "manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women, which has led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and prevented the full advancement of women". Some people regard this statement as unfair, arguing that domestic abuse has not led to the domination of women, but that it has added to discrimination against women.

Men also may be subject to domestic abuse by their female partners, although emotional abuse is more common than physical or sexual abuse. However, when men who have been victims report their experiences of abuse, they often encounter negative reactions, ranging from mockery to accusations that it is their fault that they were abused (Strauss and Gelles 1999).

Although women probably inflict emotional abuse on men for the same reasons that men abuse women

(Strauss and Gelles 1999), self-defence is probably the most common reason for women striking men. Several studies in America have concluded that women are as likely as men to strike their partner, but viewed from the perspective of injury, the picture changes. For example, police reports in Santa Barbara, California indicated that in 90% of cases in which abused persons received injuries, the injured party was female. In the remaining 10%, both parties had injuries. In all cases where both parties had injuries, the woman's injuries were more severe than those sustained by the man (Strauss and Gelles 1999).

Results from a large number of research studies, conducted in many different countries, found that between 16% and 52% of women experienced physical abuse; 3% to 20% of women experienced abuse during pregnancy. In Papua New Guinea, 67% of rural and 56% of urban women have been victims of spousal abuse. In Bangladesh, the killing of women by their husbands accounts for 50% of all murders, while in France 95% of victims of abuse are women, with 51% abused by husbands. In the US, more women are injured in domestic abuse incidents than in car accidents and muggings combined. It is estimated that at least one woman in five experiences rape or attempted rape during her lifetime.

Domestic abuse may also be so severe as to result in death. Statistics from the United States Federal Bureau of Justice (1994) show that in 1990, 30% of female murder victims were killed by their husband or boyfriend. Of the 5745 women murdered in 1991, half were murdered by a spouse or someone with whom they had been intimate. In 1992, 29% were murdered by a boyfriend or husband, while only 4% of male victims were murdered by their wife or girlfriend.

A World Health Organization report identified the effects of domestic abuse on women's health and reported that they include financial cost, irregular attendance at work, low productivity, unwanted pregnancies, vulnerability to diseases and permanent mental problems. The report also identified effective strategies to prevent abuse and to decrease morbidity and mortality amongst female victims of abuse.

The bulk of expenses and costs governments incur in relation to domestic abuse are for treating serious injuries. Substantial costs are also associated with treatment of emotional problems (e.g. managing anxieties and anti-depression medication), and with police, courts and legal services to prosecute abusive husbands and partners.

In general, women are more likely to be socially disadvantaged by the consequences of abuse. When a relationship breaks up, the usual outcome

is that the man will keep his job and the woman will keep the children. Abused women have also proven to contribute less to society. A survey in Canada showed that 30% of abused women and 50% of those injured by abuse took time off work. Consequently, abused women tend to earn less, are less likely to receive promotion and more likely to be economically dependent than their husbands. So, although abuse against men deserves attention, as a group, women are far more disadvantaged by domestic abuse.

Women who are sexually abused are more likely to experience unwanted and early pregnancies, and to produce children who are likely to go through the same experiences. A study in the US found that women who experience sexual abuse during childhood are more likely than non-victims to become pregnant before age 18. They are also more likely to contract STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Data indicate that one in ten victims of rape in Thailand contracted STDs.

Psychological problems are another damaging potential consequence of domestic abuse, with many women suffering emotional problems because of abuse. Common symptoms are severe depression, anxiety and sleeplessness. Victims often turn to alcohol, or experience eating disorders, which may result in victims losing their income, job, husband or general interest in life; victims may lose custody of their children because of their inability to look after them. Abused women generally have low self-esteem and tend to be unassertive. They are also prone to experience depression, permanent fears and sensations of shame and humiliation. They also tend to live in isolation from their surroundings.

Physical abuse is the most common form of domestic abuse of women, but may occur in conjunction with sexual and emotional abuse. In contrast, men are more likely to experience emotional abuse in domestic situations.

It is generally agreed that domestic abuse is related to power relations and gender inequality in society. Abuse of women derives essentially from the lower status they are accorded in the family and in society. The three types of domestic abuse of women by their partners are all linked to male power, privilege and control.

Domestic abuse is caused by a number of factors. Common reasons why women are abused include disobeying their partner, not respecting their partner's family, not carrying out domestic duties (e.g. cooking, looking after children), or because their partner suspects them of infidelity. Often women accept abuse as a normal part of marriage, and submit because they respect their partner as head of the household. Other factors such as

male dominance, wealth, decision-making and the relative status of men and women also influence the prevalence of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is strongly associated with a widely held view that beating is a form of correction, and is acceptable as long as it is justified. This view that

a woman's behaviour can justify abuse may also be used to justify sexual coercion. For example, some men would argue that raping a woman with a revealing dress who is drunk outside a bar is more acceptable than raping the virginal daughter of a pastor (Mapusaga O Aiga 1996).

1.3 International Strategies to Prevent Domestic Abuse

In the 1970s the women's movement in North America and Western Europe drew attention to the consequences of violence against women. As a result, it is now widely recognised as a social problem. Increasingly, the media, politicians, law enforcement agencies, health and social service professionals, social scientists and concerned citizens search for ways of addressing this serious problem (Health and Welfare Canada 1989).

In December 1979 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), widely considered as a bill of rights for women. Ratification of this convention demonstrates a country's unqualified commitment to prohibiting and eliminating discrimination against women. Thirteen Pacific countries have ratified the Convention.

In 1993 the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna passed a declaration and programme

of action that affirmed women's human rights as a fundamental part of all human rights and declared that they must be protected in the home as well as in public. The 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo emphasised that equal relationships between women and men with regard to sexual relationships and reproduction are necessary for the success of population and development programmes. The Beijing Conference held in 1995 passed the following Platform for Action:

All governments, irrespective of their political, economic and cultural systems, are responsible for the promotion and protection of women's human rights.

The Platform for Action also recognised that violence against women is a critical area of concern and hampers the achievement of women's human rights (UNFPA n.d).

1.4 The Samoan Context

This study is concerned with domestic abuse in Samoa. Samoa has a distinctive hierarchical society in which many traditional values and customs remain strong. In order to understand the nature and causes of domestic

violence and to formulate strategies to prevent it, it is essential to understand the Samoan context. The rest of this section provides a brief description for those who are unfamiliar with Samoan society.

1.4.1 The Samoan land and people

Samoa (formerly Western Samoa) is an independent country located in the mid-Pacific Ocean, close to Fiji and Tonga. It includes two large inhabited islands, Upolu and Savai'i; two smaller inhabited islands, Apolima and Manono; and six uninhabited islands. The 2001 census count was 180,000 people, most of whom live in villages. About 25% of the people live

in the capital, Apia, but even Apia's main residential areas are organised into village communities.

Because of a low gross domestic product per/capita (of just over USD1000 in 1998), Samoa is classed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as a Least Developed Country, and

receives considerable donor assistance. Most economic activity is subsistence and semi-subsistence in nature and includes agriculture, fishing and tourism.

Approximately 40% of those in the formal economic sector and 33% of the total workforce are women. Samoan women often enter the economy through small business enterprises, including cooperative marketing of handicrafts, honey and coconut oil (PWRB 1999). The Samoan government is a major employer of women, who comprise 48% of government employees. Although most women working in government are in the lower grades of public service employment, a number of women have management roles in the public sector. In 2001, five government departments and the Samoan Visitor's Bureau were headed by women.

Although many Samoan women participate in the labour force, women tend to be economically disadvantaged. According to the Ministry of Women Affairs, fewer women than men are either employers or self-employed. Employed women are more often in jobs that pay comparatively low salaries compared with those earned by men, and women have less access to credit. "In short, women as a group have a lower socioeconomic status than men. Yet women play an integral role in the development of families, communities, and the nation as a whole" (Ministry of Women Affairs 1993).

The central ethos of Samoan culture and society, known as *fa'a Samoa*, or the "Samoan way", emphasises the dignity and achievement of the group

rather than the individual (Department of Statistics 1991). A significant part of Samoan identity focuses on the need to belong to and respond to the needs and demands of the social group. Samoan people are strongly community oriented.

The importance of the family (both immediate and extended) and of social obligations over individual achievement are two factors with significant implications for Samoan enterprise. In modern society, successful business practice demands that social relationships are secondary to contractual obligations. An entrepreneur must be able to say "no" to the demands of family and friends for special credit and favourable prices, or the employment of unqualified kin or friends (PWRB 1999). Similarly, wage and salary workers must not allow family responsibilities to prevent them from performing to the satisfaction of their employer.

Because of societal expectations it can be especially difficult for women in Samoa to reconcile good business practice with their responsibilities to their own and their husband's family and their own children. Women who achieve the delicate balance between being good businesswomen and also good wives and mothers can ease financial pressure on their husbands and bring prestige to their families. Failure to balance these responsibilities, however, can be a source of conflict. The NGO, Women in Business, is actively promoting business activity by women, especially in the rural areas, with the general support of the community, including village men.

1.4.2 Legal status of Samoan women

Samoa's laws protect all citizens, and both law and custom protect women from discrimination. Samoa is one of three countries in the Pacific whose constitution permits the legislature to pass affirmative action legislation, that is, laws that benefit disadvantaged groups (Jalal 1998). Before 1991 the right to vote was limited to matais (customary leaders). In that year the government introduced universal suffrage for all Samoans over the age of 21. It also formed the Ministry of Women Affairs and gave it a mandate to assist the socioeconomic development of Samoan women. The government consolidated its commitment to female equity in 1992 with the ratification of CEDAW.

Some legislation in Samoa impacts directly on the status of women. For example:

- Abortion is legal if it can be proven that it is necessary to save the mother's life.
- A Non-Molestation Order can be obtained from a court to prevent a woman's husband from

beating her, going near her, telephoning her, or otherwise bothering her. However, courts will only accept applications for Non-Molestation Orders if they are accompanied by applications for maintenance, custody or divorce (Jalal 1998).

- Perpetrators of domestic violence can be charged with common assault, but there is no specific legislation relating to domestic violence.

Sexual offences are covered by the Crimes Act Part 6 SS. 46-58. The Crimes Amendment Act 1969 replaced SS. 42-58 of the 1961 Crimes Ordinance (Jalal 1998). Forms of sexual assault include rape, indecent assault, incest and sexual intercourse with a related girl under age 20 by a man responsible for her care and protection. Samoa does not recognise the category "marital rape", relying on the common law principle that a man may always assume his wife's consent to sexual intercourse and therefore cannot be guilty of raping her (Jalal 1998).

1.4.3 Social and political structure

The basic social unit of Samoa is the extended family (*aiga potopoto*). The *aiga* is headed by at least one leader (*matai*) who is appointed by the consensus of the *aiga*. Approximately 1 in every 19 *matai* titles are held by women. The *matai* administers the use of family land and other assets, settles disputes, and represents the family on the village council. A *matai* also serves as the village mayor. *Matais* are expected to behave honourably, as befits their title. In return, untitled members of the family serve them (Department of Statistics 1991:3; Ministry of Women Affairs 1993; PWRB 1999).

The Samoan status system emphasises respect for the eldest female of the family, and has resulted in high status for women. Both women and men can hold title to land. Women hold this title primarily through their connection to a *matai* title. They also hold lease arrangements that allow them access to available freehold land. Membership in Parliament is generally limited to *matais*.

The traditional Samoan village was made up of two conceptual entities, “the village of men” and “the village of women”. This dichotomy reflects the gender division of labour on which almost all traditional institutions in Samoa are based. The criteria for membership in village groups are age, marital status,

political status, and whether one is born into the village or married into it. This system accounted for everyone and imposes a number of different obligations on all members of the village.

The policies introduced by early missionaries to Samoa changed the roles of women’s organisations, resulting in some loss of independence and status by Samoan women. The missionaries thought that Samoan women were oppressed. They disapproved of polygamy practised by chiefs, the use of women in transactions among men, the lack of choice women had in such situations, and the low status of wives and concubines.

They thought that the introduction of Christian marriage, as practised in the West, would elevate and liberate women. What they did not appreciate was the concomitant decline in their status as sisters would be to the detriment of women. ... Women had been respected as sisters and co-descendants, particularly if they were of chiefly rank, but wives had a lowly status as outsiders in their husband’s *aiga* and village. Pre-Christian Samoans would have agreed with the teaching that wives were subjects of their husbands (Colossians 3:18), but not that wifehood was the more honourable estate for women. (Schoeffel 1995:102–104).

1.5 Domestic Abuse in Samoa

In Samoa, and elsewhere in the Pacific, both women and men may hit their spouses. However, the nature of the violence tends to be different. When Pacific women attack their husbands, their violence is usually a protective reaction to physical aggression initiated by the man. There is some evidence that modernisation and rapid social change may be responsible for an increase in the frequency of domestic violence (Counts 1990).

The mandate of the Samoan Ministry of Women Affairs includes advising the government on policies and legislation of concern to women and ensuring that government departments consider the impact of potential policies on women (Quinn and Afamasaga 1998). Statistics obtained by the Ministry of Women Affairs show that reported crimes against women increased in number between 1987 and 1993 (Ministry of Women Affairs 1993). Most of these crimes were of a sexual nature, because physical abuse, which is more prevalent than sexual abuse, tends to be reported only when it is very severe. Reported crimes against women include rape, indecent assault, indecent acts,

incest, indecent language and intercourse with a girl between the age of 12 and 15 years. Eighty-one per cent of all crimes against women during this time occurred on Upolu, but this may be because crimes are more likely to be reported in urban areas than in rural villages.

In 1993, the Western Samoan Association of University Women established Mapusaga O Aiga (Family Haven). The organisation was founded to raise awareness about sexual abuse and domestic violence and to educate people about these issues (Ministry of Women Affairs 1993). In 1994 the Samoan government established a three-year programme of assistance for Samoan women. One of the priority components of this programme was support for the work of Mapusaga O Aiga in the area of women and violence.

In 1996 Mapusaga O Aiga published the results of a research project conducted in 1995 in which researchers interviewed 257 women aged 15 and over, in four villages from the major regions of Samoa (Mapusaga O Aiga 1996). This survey found that just

over half of the women surveyed were aware of violence against women in their villages, while about a quarter said they had been victims of violence. Those women who knew about violence in their villages said that the major causes of violence were:

- the wife disobeying her husband,
- men consuming alcohol,
- men unable to control their sexual desire,
- lack of education,
- the husband being dissatisfied with his wife sexually, and
- husband's jealousy.

Of the women who reported being victims of violence, 78% said they had experienced domestic violence, 11% were victims of sexual violence, and 11% had experienced indecent assault. Ninety-seven per cent of women who were victims of domestic violence did not report it to the police. Thirty-six per cent of these women said they failed to report it because they felt it was a private matter between husband and wife, 8% because they felt it was a minor offence and 7% because reporting was incompatible with their love for their husbands. Ninety-six per cent of the perpetrators were the women's husbands. The victims said that most of the perpetrators were angry when they committed the assault (5% because their wives refused to have sexual relations), while 19% were drunk, 9% were angry and drunk, and 9% were jealous (Mapusaga O Aiga 1996).

Almost half of the women interviewed suggested that women who encountered any form of violence should go to the police. Other suggestions included consulting either Mapusaga O Aiga or a church minister, talking to family members, reporting the incident to the village council, escaping, or shouting and stoning the offender. The two most common suggestions on how to stop violence against women were "to improve fellowship with God" and "to have patience and not answer back to husband" (Mapusaga O Aiga 1996: 40–41).

A review of the Samoan Women in Policy and Programme Development Project (carried out by Marian Quinn, a New Zealand Overseas Development Agency Gender and Development Specialist, and a local consultant, Tilianamua Afamasaga, between 25 June and 4 July 1998) found that the work of Mapusaga O Aiga had made progress in three areas:

- Increasing awareness of the issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse of women and children;
- Informing women of their legal rights; and
- Identifying appropriate actions for victims of violence.

Mapusaga O Aiga also identified a need to review laws relating to marriage and domestic violence, and to provide further training in domestic violence for police (Mapusaga O Aiga 1996).

In 1999, Cribb and Barnett published the result of a survey conducted in 1998 among Samoan women in three communities: Papa, a village in rural Savai'i; Vaivase Tai, a suburb of Apia; and New Zealand. One question asked of the women surveyed was, "If your husband was beating you, what would you do?"

Rural women responded differently than did women in Apia. In Papa, 80% of the women said that if their husbands beat them they would leave their partners and go to their extended families, the home of their family's matai or to their church minister (Cribb and Barnett 1999). Most of those who said they would stay with their partners if they were beaten had cash incomes and were the primary wage earners for their household. In contrast, only 57% of women in Vaivase Tai said they would leave their partners if they were beaten. The women in Vaivase Tai said they would use one of three strategies:

1. Use the social support system of their extended family. These women were mostly young and well educated, and had prestige because of their education.
2. Tell their husband to leave. This response came primarily from women who lived with their own families; the families were typically wealthy, and headed by a matai who was either the woman's father or uncle.
3. Either go to the police or divorce their husbands. The women who mentioned this option were better educated, more economically independent, and were more likely to have been educated abroad than were the women in the other two groups.

Forty-three per cent of the women in Vaivase Tai said they would not leave their partners. Instead, they said they would cry and feel sad, apologise to their husbands, or not react. These women generally had less education and fewer employment prospects than did the urban women who said they would leave. Most of the urban women who said they would not leave lived in an extended family (Cribb and Barnett 1999).

According to Cribb and Barnett, women living in an urban extended family are in a more difficult situation than are women living in a rural situation. Urban women without jobs must negotiate with their husbands or their matai for money. Because such women have limited resources and low prestige, their matai are not likely to intercede for them, nor are other families likely to take them in. Often their only option is to remain in an abusive situation.

Economic independence is an important element in protecting women from violence. Being a wage earner does not, however, protect a woman unless

she has control over the money she earns. A woman who has dependent children may “choose” to remain in a violent relationship because she cannot raise her children without financial support either from her family or her husband (Cribb and Barnett 1999).

The surveys of women and men described in this volume substantiate the major finding of Cribb and Barnett and Mapusaga O Aiga: domestic abuse in Samoa is a complex problem that cannot be solved by legislation alone. In Samoa, as elsewhere, domestic abuse has its roots in men’s and women’s attitudes and expectations about their roles. As the following chapters will show, strategies to reduce domestic

abuse need to take a multi-faceted approach, and tackle community attitudes as well as the legislative framework.

The Draft National Policy for Women, 2000–2004 prepared by the Ministry of Women Affairs recognises that the incidence of reported abuse against women is increasing. The Ministry of Women Affairs confirms its close cooperation with non-governmental organisations such as Mapusaga O Aiga in addressing the problem of domestic abuse in Samoa. This study represents part of this continuing initiative. The findings and recommendations in this volume will form a basis for and contribute to future action.



REPORT ON THE WOMEN'S SURVEY

2.1 Introduction and Background

Disagreement is almost inevitable in any society, as well as in any family. While disagreement itself is a healthy part of society, and contributes to individuality, creativity and innovation, disagreement can be destructive if not well handled. The conflict resolution skills (such as discussion and negotiation) needed to handle and adjust to disagreement peacefully and effectively do not come naturally to all individuals. Most people need to be taught these skills by parents teachers, or other community members.

When conflict resolution skills are lacking, conflicts within families and relationships are prone to escalate into abuse of some sort, in part because of close proximity but also because of social expectations. In many societies, including Samoa, relationships between men and women are widely perceived as unequal partnerships, which men are expected to dominate. As a result of these social expectations, men may feel obliged to assert their dominance whenever there is disagreement. If unable to obtain their partner's compliance by negotiation, some men may feel compelled to resort to abuse because they fear social criticism if they appear to be dominated by a woman. In the same way, parents may feel obliged to resort to abuse to control their children if they have difficulty controlling them in other ways, because it is expected that parents will dominate and control their children.

Domestic abuse, whether abuse of a spouse or abuse of other family members, is thus used to control and gain power over another person. To put it simply, abuse is about power. Inevitably, therefore, it is usually

a matter of stronger people abusing weaker people, rather than the reverse.

Not only is abuse primarily about power, but it is almost always a substitute for effective communication. Often it is used as a last resort when other attempts to communicate have failed. However, abuse may also become a habit, completely replacing all attempts to resolve conflicts by peaceful means.

Domestic abuse occurs in virtually every country in the world, although usually in only a minority of families in each country. It is perpetrated by adults of all ages, from all social and economic groups. However, studies in most countries show that domestic abuse occurs most often among those with low education levels and low incomes (World Bank 1995).

Physical abuse persists in some countries due to a widespread belief, among both men and women, that it is justified. For example, more than half of 90,000 Indian women interviewed in a recent survey thought that certain behaviours in a wife — such as neglecting children or housework, going out without her husband's consent, and infidelity — were justifiable grounds for wife-beating (Reuters/ABC News.com, 17 November 2000). As will be shown in this report, many Samoan men and women also believe that a man has a right to beat his wife in some circumstances.

Domestic abuse has become a major issue on the United Nations Human Rights Agenda (UNFPA 1998). In 1993 the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which regards violence against

women as a violation of human rights, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. In addition, many countries now have legislation against violence, whether domestic or otherwise, which means that perpetrators of domestic abuse can be prosecuted.

Nevertheless, data from more than 50 recent surveys, undertaken in a range of countries, indicates that between 10 and 50 per cent of respondents had been abused by an intimate partner (Heise et al. 1999). Much domestic violence goes unreported to police or other authorities, and although neighbours and relatives may be aware that domestic abuse is taking place, they often do nothing to stop it, and thus legal mechanisms to prevent abuse are not implemented. When called, police may try to dissuade victims from taking action against the perpetrators, particularly when a wife has been abused by her husband (World Bank 1995).

While much attention focuses on domestic abuse of women, child abuse may be less visible, and children tend to receive even less protection from legislation than do their mothers. In many countries beating children is both legally and socially acceptable, not only for parents but also for officials such as teachers and priests.

Even where legislation to prevent domestic abuse exists, a precise definition of the boundary between acceptable physical contact and abuse is typically absent. Although most people know intuitively how normal physical or social interaction and abuse differ, lack of specification means that perpetrators, authorities and even victims can dismiss episodes as “acceptable”, or fail to report them because others may dismiss them as “acceptable”. Differences in judgement between perpetrators and victims as to the acceptability and severity of an incident, and differences in community perceptions as to what is and is not acceptable, are major factors supporting the persistence of domestic abuse. They can also be utilised by authorities, such as police, who wish to avoid troublesome prosecutions.

This report comprises an analysis of data collected in 2000 by SPC’s Pacific Women’s Resource Bureau (PWRB) for the SFHSS. As described in Chapter One, the questionnaire, methods and protocols are based on the WHO Multi-country Study on Violence Against Women in Families. The sample for the women’s survey was based on a list of all Samoan households provided by the Samoa Department of Statistics. This list was divided into 355 clusters of approximately 60 adjacent households each, with households drawn from adjacent villages where necessary to ensure clusters of equal size. One hundred and thirty-three clusters were randomly selected from the total of 355, using a random number generator. No stratification was applied. This resulted in 88 clusters in rural areas and 45 clusters in areas designated as urban. A

systematic sample of 15 households was drawn from each of the selected clusters, with an average of one woman in every four households interviewed.

All women aged 15 to 49 years were eligible for interview, but only one eligible woman per household was interviewed. Where there was more than one eligible woman in a household, they were allocated numbers. Corks bearing these numbers were placed in a container and one number was drawn out at random. The woman who had been allocated the number selected became the interviewee. If the eligible respondent refused to be interviewed, no replacement was made.

In all, a total of 1995 eligible women were identified. From these, a total of 1646 interviews were substantially completed. As discussed in Section 2.3.1, the selection of only one eligible woman in each household introduced some sampling bias, because the prevalence of abuse was higher in households with only one eligible woman. Weights were therefore used to adjust the overall prevalence of abuse. However, even though the overall sample was not self-weighting the method of sample selection is not likely to have introduced significant bias into other information in the survey, since it relates to the characteristics and experiences of abused respondents as compared to respondents who have never been abused. The remainder of this analysis is therefore based on unweighted data.

This chapter begins by examining the characteristics of survey respondents, and the prevalence of domestic abuse in Samoa. It then focuses on the characteristics of abused respondents, how abuse affects respondents’ health and their families, and the causes of and responses to abuse. The term “abuse” has been adopted in this report because it is both broader and less emotive than “violence”. Abuse is generally defined as “misuse or bad use” (in this case of power and strength). In contrast, violence implies “great force” (i.e. intense, vehement and furious). This study is concerned not only with physical assaults involving intense anger and emotions, but with all forms of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, some of which may occur without intense anger.

The principal method of analysis used in this study was cross-tabulation with the Chi Squared statistical test of significance. Since the project protocol was that each possible response to questions in the questionnaire was coded as a separate variable during data entry, many questions resulted in 30 or more variables. This meant that extensive programming was required to analyse most key questions, and it was not feasible to carry out multi-variate analysis within a reasonable time frame. As a consequence, the significant patterns identified in this report are valid, but, especially where several variables have a significant association with an outcome, they should not all be assumed to be causal.

It must also be noted that multi-variate modeling to assess the relative strength of association of each variable with any particular outcome often shows that the effect of one variable is such that other associations become insignificant.

The Samoan social context is described in detail in Section 1.4 of this volume. Briefly, Samoa is a Pacific Island country of approximately 180,000 people, almost all belonging to the Polynesian ethnic group. A little over 20% live in the main urban area of Apia, but at least that many live in the adjacent, densely settled

region of northwest Upolu, while regular bus links allow many village dwellers to commute to work in urban areas (Samoa, Department of Statistics 2000). Although the majority of Samoans live in traditional villages, almost all adults are literate, and have had extensive exposure to modernisation. Many have travelled overseas, especially to New Zealand and American Samoa. Nonetheless, traditional social values and customs are strong, upheld by the matai system of village leadership and by the far-reaching influence of Christianity. Most Samoans belong to and regularly attend a Christian church.

2.2 Background Characteristics of Respondents



As indicated in Section 2.1, a total of 1 646 respondents completed the interview or answered most of the questions. As the focus of this study is domestic abuse, an important distinction is made between women who have ever been married or lived with a male partner and those who have not. Questions about possible domestic abuse by a spouse or partner were asked only of women who had ever been in a relationship with a man, while other questions were asked of both groups, so that differences can be identified.

Of the total sample, 73.6% had been in a relationship with a man at some time. Table 2.1 compares the background characteristics of all respondents with the characteristics of those who had ever been in a relationship. The key features of this table are shown in Figures 2.1 to 2.5.

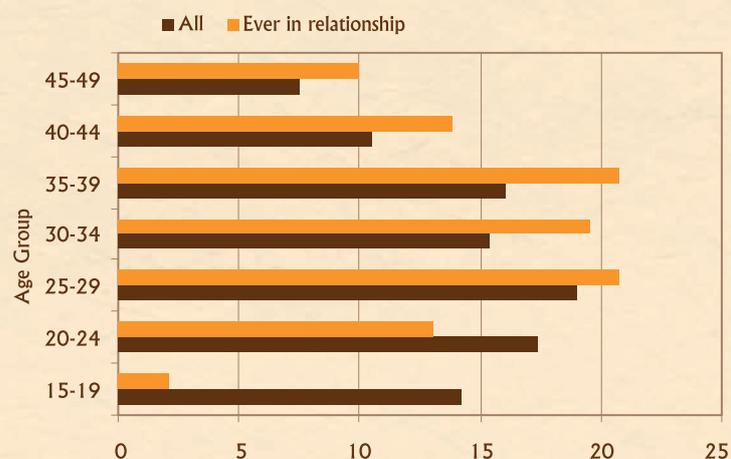


Figure 2.1: Age distribution of respondents

Table 2.1: Characteristic of respondents (per cent)

	All respondents	All respondents ever in a relationship
Age group		
15-19	14.2	2.1
20-24	17.4	13.0
25-29	19.0	20.7
30-34	15.4	19.6
35-39	16.0	20.7
40-44	10.5	13.9
45-49	7.5	10.0
Highest education level		
No schooling	0.4	0.4
Primary	11.8	14.2
Secondary	80.9	79.8
Tertiary	6.9	5.6
Ever in a relationship		
Yes	73.6	100
No	26.4	0
Marital status		
Never married	26.4	0
De facto	15.0	20.4
Married	53.2	72.2
Separated/Divorced	4.5	6.1
Widowed	1.0	1.3
Status in household		
Head	1.5	1.7
Wife of head	33.4	45.4
Daughter	36.5	26.6
Daughter-in-law	11.7	15.8
Other relative	16.1	9.7
Not related	0.9	0.7
Membership in organisations		
None	18.5	14.4
Civil/political/union	0.2	0.2
Social work/charity	0.2	0.3
Sport/arts/crafts	1.4	1.1
Economic/savings	0.4	0.5
Women's	42.2	51.3
Religious	75.1	77.8
Other relative	0.7	0.8
Number of respondents	1646	1212

2.2.1 Age

Respondents were selected randomly within each household, so there is an uneven distribution by age, as can be seen in Figure 2.1. The majority (50.4%) of all respondents were aged 25–39. As relatively few of those under age 25 had ever been in a relationship, the age distribution of women who had ever been in a relationship is less even, with around 61% aged 25–39. Only 18% of all respondents and 23.9% of respondents ever in a relationship were aged 40 and over.

2.2.2 Education

Samoa has a well-established and comprehensive education system, and this is reflected in the high percentages of surveyed women who had attained secondary education, including 80.8% of all respondents and 79.8% of those ever in a relationship. Only 0.4% had never attended school (see Fig. 2.2). Women who had ever been in a relationship were less likely to have tertiary education compared with all respondents, which is largely because younger women tend to be better educated than older women, and there were fewer respondents under age 25 among those ever in a relationship.

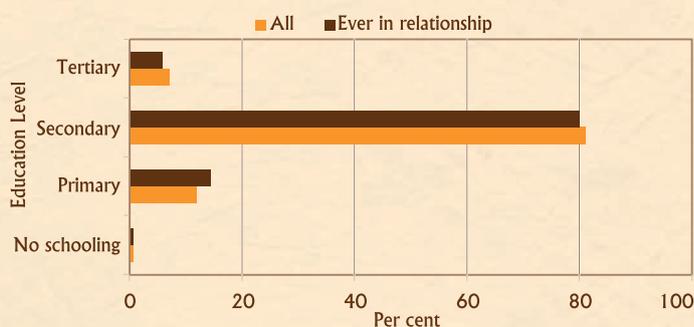


Figure 2.2: Highest education level of respondents

2.2.3 Marital status

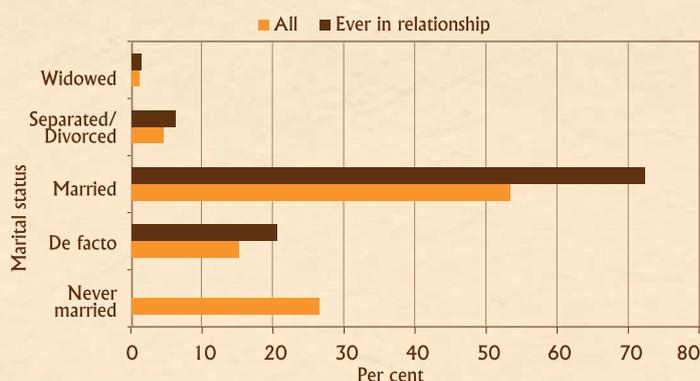


Figure 2.3: Marital status of respondents

Approximately three quarters of respondents had been married or in a relationship with a man at some time. Of those who had, by far the majority (72.2%) were legally married. Only 20.4% of those who had ever been in a relationship were in a de facto marriage, 6.1% were separated or divorced, and 1.3% were widowed.

2.2.4 Status in household

A woman's status in the household in which she lives is an important determinant of the way she is treated. Survey respondents were asked to describe their status in relation to the head of their household. The most common category was wife of head (33.4% of all women and 45.4% of those ever in a relationship). It is interesting that only 1.7% of those who had ever been in a relationship described themselves as head of their household, even though 7.4% were separated, divorced or widowed.

It is likely that women whose marriage breaks down tend to return to their families rather than live independently with their children. The relatively high percentages of daughters-in-law (11.7% overall and 15.8% of those ever in a relationship) also reflect the propensity of Samoans to live as extended families.

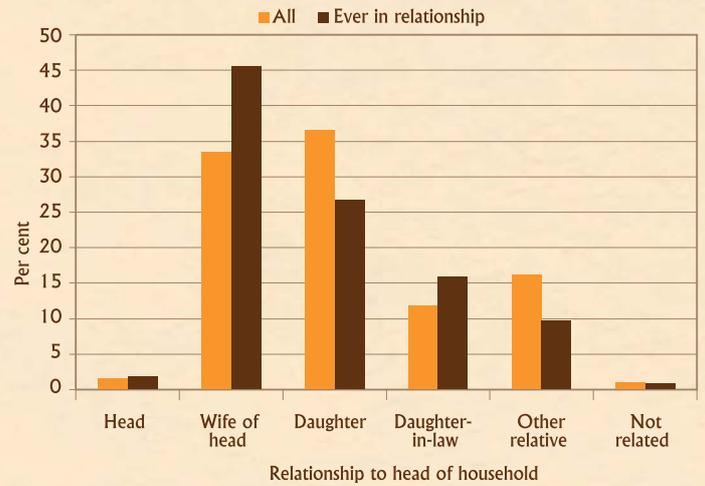


Figure 2.4: Household status of respondents

2.2.5 Membership in organisations

Belonging to a community organisation of some type can help strengthen a woman's sense of identity and network of support within her community. Respondents were asked if they regularly attended any group. By far the most common affiliation was with a religious organisation (75.1% of all women and 77.8% of those ever in a relationship).

Next most popular were women's organisations. Married women were more likely to belong to women's organisations than were single women (42.2% of all women and 51.3% of women ever in a relationship).

Membership in other types of organisation, including unions, financial, arts, cultural and sports, was uncommon (less than 2%), while 18.5% overall and 14.4% of those ever in a relationship did not belong

to any type of organisation. Almost all members of women's and other organisations also belonged to a religious organisation.

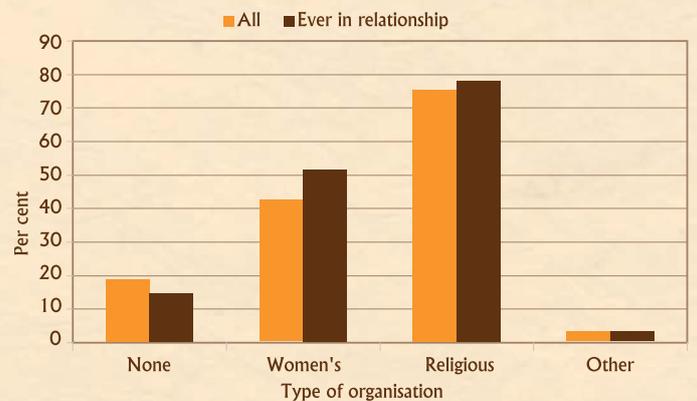


Figure 2.5: Membership in community organisations



2.3 Patterns of Domestic Abuse

2.3.1 Experience of abuse



The 1212 respondents who had ever been in a relationship were asked if they had ever experienced any abuse from their partner. This included physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Physical abuse included slapping or throwing objects; pushing or shoving; hitting with fists or other objects; kicking, dragging or beating; choking or

burning; and threatening to use or using a gun, knife or other weapon against the respondent. Emotional abuse comprised insults, belittling or humiliating the respondent in front of others, and intimidation or threats. Sexual abuse included respondents being forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not

wish to, being coerced into having sexual intercourse or being forced to engage in a sexual act that they found degrading or humiliating. Respondents were also asked when the abuse occurred and to estimate the frequency of these events, as “once”, “a few times” or “many times”.

As noted in Section 2.1, only one eligible female respondent was interviewed in each household. The data showed that respondents in households with more than one eligible respondent (i.e. more than one woman aged 15–49 years) were less likely to have been abused by their partner compared with respondents who were the only eligible respondent in their household. As a result, the percentages calculated from the raw data tend to overstate the level of abuse by a few percentage points, as compared with a sample including all eligible women. In order to allow for the difference in risk, the percentages in Table 2.2 have been weighted, to give a more realistic picture of the levels of abuse that can be expected in Samoa. All other tables in this report are unweighted, as they are primarily concerned with the characteristics of abused women rather than with levels of abuse.

Table 2.2: Spousal abuse experienced by women who have ever been in a relationship

Type of Abuse	Ever abused?	When?		Frequency of abuse in last 12 months?		
	%	In last 12 months %	More than one year ago %	Once %	Sometimes %	Many times %
All respondents ever in a relationship						
Any Physical Abuse	37.6					
Slapped/threw objects	34.5	14.2	20.3	5.2	5.0	4.1
Pushed/shoved	9.2	4.8	4.4	1.3	1.6	1.9
Punched	18.4	9.4	9.0	3.0	2.7	3.7
Kicked/dragged/beat	11.2	5.8	5.4	1.6	1.7	2.5
Choked or burned	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.5
Threatened or used gun or knife	4.4	2.7	1.7	0.8	0.6	1.3
Any Emotional Abuse	18.6					
Insults	13.6	8.7	5.3	2.7	2.9	3.1
Belittled / humiliated	7.2	3.9	3.3	0.5	1.6	1.7
Intimidated	9.9	5.7	4.2	1.3	1.5	2.8
Threatened	5.9	3.6	2.3	0.8	0.7	2.0
Any Sexual Abuse	19.6					
Forced intercourse	17.4	9.7	7.7	1.8	3.9	4.0
Coerced intercourse	11.3	6.8	4.5	1.6	2.1	3.1
Degrading sex	3.2	2.1	1.1	0.5	0.6	1.0
Any Form of Abuse	46.4					
Number of respondents	1212					

Note : Data in this table have been weighted according to the number of eligible respondents in each household (see Section 2.3.1). Multiple responses possible.

Table 2.2 and Figure 2.6 show that 37.6% of Samoan women who have ever been in a relationship are likely to have experienced physical abuse by their partner, 18.6% are likely to have experienced emotional abuse by their partner and 19.6% are likely to have experienced sexual abuse by their partner. There is some overlap between categories, as a result of some respondents experiencing more than one type of abuse. Overall, 46.4% of women who have ever been in a relationship are likely to have experienced one or more types of abuse by their partner.

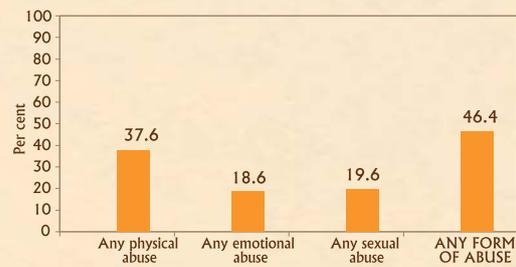


Figure 2.6: Respondents who have experienced abuse (percentage of all respondents ever in a relationship)

Sexual abuse was subdivided into three categories. “Forced intercourse” refers to a partner using physical force to compel the respondent to submit. “Coerced intercourse” means that, although not physically forced, the respondent submitted to sexual intercourse because she was afraid of what her partner might do if she did not submit. “Degrading sex” refers to being forced or coerced into sexual activities that made the respondent feel ashamed or humiliated.

By far the most common type of abuse was slapping or throwing objects, which had been experienced by 34.5% of respondents who had ever been in a relationship. Second most common was punching (18.4%). If only abuse that occurred in the preceding year is considered, the percentage of respondents who had been slapped or had an object thrown at them decreased to 14.2%, and forced intercourse becomes the second most common type of abuse (9.7%). Slapping and object throwing was most likely

to occur “many times” in the preceding year (4.1%) followed by forced intercourse (4.0%) and punching (3.7%). The most common form of emotional abuse was insults, which had been experienced by 13.6% in the preceding year, and “many times” by 3.1%.

It is surprising that, overall, forced intercourse was more common than insults. Only 13.6% said they had received insults, while 17.4% of respondents who had ever been in a relationship had been forced to have sexual intercourse. The type of sexual abuse most likely to occur “many times” also was forced intercourse (5.7%).

Of the respondents who had experienced physical abuse by their partner, 23.8% had been punched, kicked or beaten while they were pregnant (not shown in the table). In more than 96% of these cases, the person who perpetrated the abuse was the father of the child the woman was carrying.



2.3.2 Method used to categorise types of abuse

Since a substantial percentage of respondents had experienced more than one type of abuse, it is difficult to separate the impact of different forms of abuse on their lives. It would not be valid to simply compare all women who had experienced physical abuse with all women who had experienced emotional or sexual abuse. This is because some women would be in two or three categories simultaneously, and it would be unclear which type of abuse was most strongly associated with their problems.

In fact, the majority of survey respondents who had experienced emotional or sexual abuse had also experienced physical abuse. Although 222 respondents had experienced only physical abuse, there were insufficient numbers of respondents who had experienced only emotional abuse (28) or only sexual abuse (52) to make statistically significant comparisons between the three groups.

In order to allow for a logical comparison to be made, respondents were grouped, with each respondent placed into one sub-group only. Groups were formed based on two factors: the general literature on the effects of different types of domestic abuse, and the occurrence of multiple types of abuse in the surveyed respondents.

The first group, physical abuse, comprises 222 respondents who had experienced physical but not sexual or emotional abuse by their partner. The second group, emotional abuse, comprises 126 respondents who had experienced either emotional abuse only, or both physical and emotional abuse, but not sexual abuse. The third group of 236 respondents comprises those who had experienced only sexual abuse, sexual abuse in combination with either physical or emotional abuse, or all three types of abuse.

Table 2.3: Classification by type of abuse (per cent)

All respondents ever in a relationship		
	%	Number
Never abused	51.8	628
Physical abuse only	18.3	222
Emotional abuse (total)	10.4	126
Emotional only	2.3	28
Emotional plus physical	8.1	98
Sexual abuse (total)	19.5	236
Sexual only	4.3	52
Sexual plus physical	6.1	74
Sexual plus emotional	1.3	16
Sexual plus emotional plus physical	7.8	94

These groupings are shown in Table 2.3. The group labeled “Sexual abuse” therefore comprised not only respondents who had experienced sexual abuse (which is the form of abuse likely to be the most psychologically traumatic), but also 94 who had experienced physical and/or emotional abuse as well. It is therefore expected that *this group is most likely to exhibit abuse-related symptoms and to possess characteristics that make them vulnerable to abuse. This grouping is used in relevant tables in the rest of this chapter to examine the impact of different types and levels of abuse on respondents’ lives.*



2.3.3 Characteristics of respondents who had been abused by their partner

This section examines the characteristics of respondents ever in a relationship who had and had not been abused, in order to determine whether certain groups of women are susceptible to domestic abuse.

It also compares the characteristics of respondents who had experienced different types of abuse, as defined in the preceding section.

Table 2.4: Characteristics of respondents ever in a relationship (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig*.	Physical abuse %	Emotional abuse %	Sexual abuse %	Sig.
Age Group			n.s.				n.s.
15-19	1.9	2.2		1.8	1.6	3.0	
20-24	13.1	13.0		12.2	14.3	13.1	
25-29	23.2	18.0		15.3	19.8	19.5	
30-34	19.3	20.0		22.5	22.2	16.5	
35-39	20.1	21.4		22.1	16.7	23.3	
40-44	13.5	14.2		16.2	11.9	13.6	
45-49	8.9	11.1		9.9	13.5	11.0	
Highest Education Level			*				n.s.
No schooling	0.2	0.7		0.9	0.8	0.4	
Primary	11.6	17.0		17.6	19.0	15.3	
Secondary	81.7	77.7		76.6	73.8	80.9	
Tertiary	6.5	4.6		5.0	6.3	3.4	
Marital Status			n.s.				n.s.
De facto	18.8	22.1		20.7	23.8	22.5	
Married	74.5	69.7		74.3	67.5	66.5	
Separated/Divorced	5.4	6.8		3.6	7.1	9.7	
Widowed	1.3	1.4		1.4	1.6	1.3	
Status in Household			n.s.				n.s.
Head	1.9	1.5		1.8	2.4	0.8	
Wife of head	44.7	46.1		48.6	47.6	42.8	
Daughter	27.4	25.7		20.7	26.2	30.1	
Daughter-in-law	15.1	16.6		17.6	17.5	15.3	
Other relative	9.9	9.6		10.4	6.3	10.6	
Not related	1.0	0.5		0.9	0.0	0.4	
Membership in Organisations			n.s.				n.s.
None	14.6	14.0		12.2	15.9	14.8	
Women's organisation only	6.7	7.7		6.8	10.3	7.2	
Church organisation only	35.5	31.7		36.5	28.6	28.8	
Multiple organisations	42.2	46.2		44.6	43.7	49.2	
Other organisation only	1.0	0.3		0.0	1.6	0.0	
Place of Residence			**				*
Rural	46.2	53.8		45.6	20.7	21.6	
Urban	65.0	35.0		27.8	16.5	14.6	
Household Economic Status			**				n.s.
Low	30.1	44.0		42.8	46.0	44.1	
Middle	43.8	38.7		42.8	29.4	39.8	
High	26.1	17.3		14.4	24.6	16.1	
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>628</i>	<i>584</i>		<i>222</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>236</i>	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant
For definition of categories of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) see Section 2.3.2

Table 2.4 shows the characteristics of respondents in the various categories. As in most of the tables in this report, the numbers of respondents in each category varies considerably. When there are only a few respondents in any category, it is possible that some differences occur by chance rather than reflecting real differences between groups. For example, it is well known that in Samoa, as elsewhere, women with higher education tend to have fewer children than do women with only primary education. However, it would be possible to draw a sample of, say, 10 Samoan women, in which, by chance, the university graduates had more children than the other women. Obviously, it would be unwise to conclude from such a sample that university graduates always have more children than do other women. Even when samples are large, differences can occur by chance. Statisticians have therefore developed special tests of significance to distinguish chance occurrences from significant patterns.

In Table 2.4, and in other tables in this report that compare groups of respondents, the Chi Squared statistical test has been used to distinguish statistically significant patterns from patterns likely to be due to chance. In this report patterns are considered significant only when they have no more than a 5% probability of occurring by chance. Significant differences are marked with one star (*). Differences that have a 1% probability or less of occurring by chance, (i.e. are highly significant), are marked with two stars (**). The letters "n.s." indicate that differences are not significant. In most instances, judgements and conclusions should be based only on statistically significant patterns.

Table 2.4 shows no significant differences in the percentages abused or type of abuse experienced according to respondent's age, but there is a significant difference in the percentages abused in each education group. Respondents with no schooling or only primary education are significantly more likely to experience any type of abuse, and the percentages abused decline as education level increases. There was no significant variation in type of abuse experienced by women with different education levels.



There are striking associations between abuse, low household economic status and rural residence. As there was no direct question on household economic status in the survey, ownership of household assets was used as a proxy for economic status. Households were categorised roughly as having high, medium or low economic status, depending on whether they owned a TV, refrigerator, telephone and/or car. Although abuse occurred in medium, low and high economic status households, it was most common among respondents from households of low economic status, and least common among those from households of high economic status. Similarly, abused respondents were significantly more likely (53.8%) to come from rural as opposed to urban (35%) households. Rural residents were also significantly more likely than urban respondents to experience all three types of abuse.

This is an interesting finding in light of the literature on domestic abuse, and some of the responses in the qualitative survey (Chapter Four), both of which suggest that modernisation has contributed to increased domestic

abuse of women. In contrast, this survey indicates that abuse is more prevalent in low-income households, which are more prevalent in rural areas. Women in urban areas are more likely to be wage earners, which may enhance their status and reduce their risk of abuse. The association between women's income and abuse is discussed further in Section 2.8.

This strong association of abuse with lower income levels is consistent with studies elsewhere in the world (e.g. World Bank 1995; UNFPA 1998; Heise et al. 1999). The higher incidence of abuse in rural rather than urban households is interesting, however, since, as it is widely held in Samoa that a major factor contributing to domestic abuse is "the stress of modernisation" (see Chapter One of this report). Further research using more precise indicators of economic status and the extent to which households can be deemed to be "modernised" is needed to verify the association of partner abuse in Samoa with economic status and degree of modernisation.

2.4 Impact of Abuse on Respondents' Health

2.4.1 Assessing health status

WHO defines health as a “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely as the absence of disease or infirmity” (Cleland and Hill, 1991:2). According to this definition, it is apparent that partner abuse of any type, whether physical, emotional or sexual, has the potential to affect health.

The health status of an individual can be assessed by clinical diagnosis or by self-assessment, as well as by other methods. A clinically-defined condition, such as a non-communicable or infectious disease, can be accurately diagnosed only by means of examination by medical personnel, with respondents able to report only symptoms. Moreover, some symptoms reported by respondents may not have any clinical basis, and therefore could be disregarded in a medical examination.

Although respondents' reports may not be sufficient to accurately identify a clinical condition, and even in some cases may be “imagined” rather than “real”, the perception of a symptom by a respondent is itself an indication of a health problem. For example, a respondent may report stress-related symptoms, such as stomach cramps, because she is in an abusive relationship and suffering from a heightened state of anxiety. Her report would therefore indicate that she is not completely well, even if it is an insufficient basis for a clinical diagnosis.

The SFHSS asked all respondents who had ever been in a relationship, both those who had been abused and those who had not been abused, a number of detailed questions about their health, before asking about their experience of abuse. Respondents were first asked to rate their general health, and then asked to indicate whether they had experienced a number

of specific symptoms in the four weeks preceding the survey, such as pain and mobility impairment. Some of the symptoms they were asked to report on were quite vague, such as “easily frightened”, “unable to be useful” and “cried a lot”.

Reporting of symptoms, especially of vaguely specified symptoms, is highly subjective. Perception of symptoms varies between individuals, as people have different notions of what constitutes good health, and different thresholds for pain. For example, one person who had a slight cold might say their work has been affected in the last four weeks, while another who had a severe cold but who continued to go to the office every day might say her work had not been affected. Similarly, one woman who cut her finger might report that she had experienced pain in the past four weeks, while another might not.

An important objective of the SFHSS was to collect information about the effect of abuse on women's lives and health. Inevitably, however, participants' responses would have included some symptoms of clinical conditions that were unrelated to abuse, such as symptoms of diabetes, and discomfort associated with normal healthy menstruation.

The issue explored in this section is whether abused respondents are more likely to report symptoms of ill health than are respondents who have not been abused. Except for Table 2.9, which is specifically concerned with injuries resulting from physical abuse, the tables and discussion in this chapter should be regarded as indicative only and should not be construed as establishing a direct link between abuse and the symptoms reported.



2.4.2 General health, pain and discomfort

Responses to questions on general health are shown in Table 2.5. Although the terminology used was not specific, it can be seen (under “General health”) that respondents who had been abused were significantly less likely to describe their health as “excellent” and more likely to describe it as “fair” (18.5% compared

with 10.4%). There were no significant differences between respondents who had experienced the different types of abuse. This is partly because there are relatively few respondents in each of these categories, so only very marked differences will appear as statistically significant.

Table 2.5: General health, pain and discomfort (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.	Physical abuse %	Emotional abuse %	Sexual abuse %	Sig.
General health			**				n.s.
Excellent	43.2	34.8		39.2	35.7	30.1	
Good	44.7	45.4		42.8	46.0	47.5	
Fair	10.4	18.5		16.2	17.5	21.2	
Poor	1.8	1.4		1.8	0.8	1.2	
HEALTH IN PRECEDING FOUR WEEKS							
Mobility impaired			**				n.s.
No problems	88.9	83.2		83.3	82.5	83.5	
Few or some	9.4	15.2		14.0	15.9	16.1	
Many	1.7	1.6		2.8	1.6	0.4	
Work affected			*				**
No	86.8	81.7		85.6	86.5	75.4	
A little	11.3	16.9		12.6	11.9	23.7	
A lot	1.9	1.4		1.9	1.6	0.8	
Pain or discomfort			**				n.s.
None	50.5	36.8		41.0	34.9	33.9	
Light or moderate	45.7	59.6		55.9	60.3	62.8	
Severe	3.8	3.6		3.2	4.8	3.2	
Medication for pain			**				n.s.
No	62.1	55.0		57.2	56.3	52.1	
A few times	36.9	42.3		41.0	39.7	44.9	
Many times	1.0	2.7		1.8	4.0	3.0	
Medication for sleep			**				n.s.
No	81.4	76.9		77.5	75.4	77.1	
A few times	18.2	22.1		22.1	23.0	21.7	
Many times	0.5	1.0		0.5	1.6	1.3	
Concentration problems			n.s.				n.s.
No problems	90.6	88.7		89.6	92.1	86.0	
Few or some	8.8	10.2		9.5	7.2	12.7	
Many	0.7	1.0		1.0	0.8	1.2	
Dizziness			**				n.s.
Yes	43.5	54.6		50.5	54.8	58.5	
Vaginal discharge			**				n.s.
Yes	1.4	4.1		3.2	4.0	5.1	
Consulted health professional			**				n.s.
Yes	19.7	22.8		22.6	23.9	22.5	
Number of respondents	628	584		222	126	236	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant
For definition of categories of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) see Section 2.3.2

Responses about whether mobility and work had been affected in the past four weeks are very subjective. The fact that slightly more abused respondents reported a few problems with mobility (16.8% compared with 11.1%) and work (18.3% compared with 13.2%) may possibly indicate only a tendency for them to feel their health is not good rather than signifying that they are clinically ill or physical impaired. Nonetheless, the differences between respondents who had experienced abuse and those who had not experienced abuse were significant. It is notable that those who had experienced sexual abuse were significantly more likely than the other categories to say that their work had been affected in the four weeks preceding the survey; this was the only question in this table for which significant differences were noted between the various categories of abuse.

Reporting of pain or discomfort is highly subjective, as discussed above. Even so, abused respondents were significantly more likely to report light or moderate pain than were respondents who had never been abused (59.6% compared with 45.7%). Interestingly, those who had experienced only physical abuse were less likely to report pain than those who had suffered emotional or sexual abuse. (This association, categorised in Table 2.5 as not significant, became significant when light or moderate pain was combined with much pain, resulting in 59.1% of physically abused women reporting pain, compared with 65.1% of those emotionally abused, and 66% of those sexually abused). This could be because emotional and sexual abuse contribute to low self-esteem and a heightened perception of health problems to a greater degree than does physical abuse. Note also that the majority of respondents grouped here in the categories of “Emotional abuse” and “Sexual abuse” for the purposes of analysis were in fact physically abused as well (see Table 2.3 and Section 2.3.2).



Respondents who had experienced abuse were a little more likely to be taking medication for sleep (23.1% compared with 18.7% of those who had not been abused) and pain (45.0% compared with 37.9%), and these patterns were statistically significant, but there was no significant difference between those who had experienced the different types of abuse. Only about 1% of both groups were taking anti-depressants (not shown in the table) and there was no significant difference between any of the three groups.

There were no significant differences in the percentages in each group reporting problems with concentration in the past four weeks, but abused respondents were significantly more likely to report dizziness (56.6% compared with 43.5%) and vaginal discharge (4.1% compared with 1.4%).

It is notable that the percentages reporting dizziness are very high (40–50% or more) for all four groups of respondents. Although not all occurrences of dizziness are necessarily associated with ill health, dizziness can be a symptom of serious health conditions such as hypertension. The high percentages reporting dizziness should be investigated by health authorities. There may also be a need for a health campaign in Samoa advising women who experience dizziness to have their health checked by a health professional.

Although there was not much difference in the overall percentages who had consulted a health professional in the preceding four weeks, abused respondents were significantly more likely to have done so (22.8% compared with 19.7% of those who had never been abused); there was little difference according to type of abuse.

2.4.3 Recent health

Respondents were asked if they had experienced a number of other symptoms of ill health in the four weeks preceding the survey. Table 2.6 shows some statistically significant patterns, which suggest that abuse may tend to adversely affect the current health of some women. It is notable, however, that,

as in the previous table, there are more significant differences between respondents who have never been abused and those who have been abused than between respondents who have experienced different types of abuse.

Table 2.6: Symptoms of ill health and stress (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.	Physical abuse %	Emotional abuse %	Sexual abuse %	Sig.
In past four weeks							
Headaches	41.7	53.4	**	48.6	54.8	57.2	n.s.
Loss of appetite	10.4	14.7	**	13.5	11.1	17.8	n.s.
Sleeping badly	10.8	15.2	*	11.7	16.7	17.8	n.s.
Easily frightened	11.5	15.1	n.s.	14.0	15.1	16.1	n.s.
Hands shaking	3.7	5.7	n.s.	4.5	5.6	6.8	n.s.
Nervous tension	21.5	31.3	**	30.2	31.0	32.6	n.s.
Indigestion	1.9	2.7	n.s.	0.5	2.4	5.1	*
Confusion	8.1	11.3	n.s.	8.6	11.9	13.6	n.s.
Unhappiness	25.0	34.6	**	29.3	34.9	39.4	n.s.
Cry more than usual	5.9	8.7	n.s.	5.9	7.1	12.3	*
No enjoyment	12.7	17	n.s.	9.9	19.0	22.5	**
Indecisive	27.4	32.9	n.s.	29.7	34.1	35.2	n.s.
Work suffering	8.6	15.2	**	11.3	22.2	15.3	*
Feel unable to be useful	4.8	4.8	n.s.	4.1	6.3	4.7	n.s.
Loss of interest	23.7	23.8	n.s.	19.4	27.0	26.3	n.s.
Feel worthless	7.2	8.7	n.s.	7.2	8.7	10.2	n.s.
Thought of suicide	3.0	7.5	**	5.4	7.1	9.7	n.s.
Always tired	15.6	24.3	**	18.5	31.0	26.3	*
Stomach discomfort	7.6	12.8	**	9.9	14.3	14.8	n.s.
Easily tired	16.6	25.9	**	22.5	31.0	26.3	n.s.
Ever							
Thought of suicide?	7.3	14.9	**	9.5	13.5	20.8	**
Attempted suicide?	1.9	5.3	*	1.8	6.3	8.1	
In past 12 months							
Had surgery?	3.2	3.3	n.s.	1.8	4.0	4.2	n.s.
Been hospitalized?	4.6	5.5	n.s.	3.2	6.3	7.2	n.s.
Ever smoked? **							
Never	69.3	62.0		66.7	62.7	57.2	n.s.
Occasionally	17.8	25.2		23.9	22.2	28.0	
Every day	12.9	12.8		9.5	15.1	14.8	
Smoke now?							
Yes	22.0	24.9	**	22.5	23.8	27.5	n.s.
Ever drink alcohol? n.s.							
Never	96.3	95.2		96.8	92.9	94.9	n.s.
Occasionally	1.9	2.6		1.9	4.0	2.5	
Weekly or more often	1.8	2.2		1.4	3.2	2.5	
Drank alcohol in past 4 weeks? n.s.							
No	1.8	2.6		0.9	7.6	3.0	n.s.
1-3 per day	1.6	1.4		1.4	0.8	4.0	
4 + per day	0.3	0.8		0.9	1.6	0.4	
Problems related to alcohol? n.s.							
Money	0.4	1.1		0.5	0.0	2.2	n.s.
Health	0.0	5.1		0.0	0.0	1.3	
Conflict in family	0.5	0.7		0.0	0.8	1.3	
Number of respondents	628	584		222	126	236	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant
 For definition of categories of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) see Section 2.3.2

Respondents who had experienced abuse were significantly more likely to report headaches, loss of appetite, disturbed sleep, nervous tension, unhappiness, impaired work performance, thoughts of suicide, fatigue and stomach discomfort, as compared with respondents who had never been abused. Although these symptoms can occur in connection with a number of clinical conditions, they are also some of the most common symptoms of anxiety. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that respondents who had experienced abuse were more likely to suffer from anxiety than were those who had never been abused.

There were fewer significant differences according to type of abuse. Sexually abused respondents were significantly more likely to report indigestion, crying and lack of enjoyment. Emotionally abused respondents were significantly more likely to report impaired work performance and fatigue.

Respondents who had ever been abused were also significantly more likely to have contemplated suicide (14.9% compared with 7.3%). Sexually abused respondents were more likely to have contemplated suicide than those experiencing other types of abuse (20.8% compared with 9.5% of physically abused respondents and 13.5% of emotionally abused respondents). An alarming 5.3% of abused respondents (31 respondents) said they had attempted

suicide, compared with only 1.9% of those who had never been abused (12 respondents).

Even more alarming is that 6.3% of emotionally abused respondents (8 women) and 38.8% of those who had been sexually abused (19 women) had actually attempted suicide. In this instance the numbers are too small to be statistically significant, but since suicide is an extremely serious outcome, it should nonetheless be a matter for concern. It is also notable that the percentages of emotionally and sexually abused respondents who had attempted suicide are twice as high as the percentage of physically abused respondents who had attempted suicide. This is consistent with the expectation indicated earlier, that emotional and sexual abuse are likely to be more traumatic for Samoan women.

There were no significant differences in the percentages who had undergone surgery or had been hospitalised in the 12 months preceding the survey. Occasional smoking was significantly more common among respondents who had ever been abused, and these women were also significantly more likely to be current smokers, but there were no significant differences between the categories of abuse. There were no significant differences in the percentages of respondents in any category drinking alcohol or experiencing problems related to alcohol consumption.

2.4.4 Recent abuse and recent ill-health

In order to establish an association of abuse and health status, it is necessary to consider the time period to which the information relates. Abuse that occurred in the distant past or which was experienced with a former partner is less likely to impact on a respondent's current health than is more recent abuse.



Although the questions on recent health problems relate to a four-week period, respondents were asked if they had experienced each type of abuse within the preceding 12 months. Although it could be argued that any abuse within a 12-month period is likely to impact on current health, this depends on the type of abuse experienced, the respondent's perception of abuse and also on events since the incident occurred. For example, it is possible that for women who perceive physical abuse as a normal part of married life, the impact of moderate physical abuse could be limited to physical problems such as bruising. If so, the impact could be expected to be of much shorter duration than the impact of emotional or sexual abuse, which is likely to have a more profound psychological impact. Moreover, a woman whose relationship with her partner had improved since the abuse would be less likely to suffer from the effects of abuse that occurred 12 months previously than would a woman whose relationship remained unchanged. Since these reference periods do not match, only limited conclusions can be drawn about the impact of abuse on recent health.

Table 2.7: Impact of recent abuse on health of respondents (per cent)

	Abused more than 12 months prior to survey %	Abused in past 12 months %	Sig.
General health **			
Excellent	41.8	28.6	
Good	42.1	48.2	
Fair	14.7	21.9	
Poor	1.4	1.3	
HEALTH IN PRECEDING FOUR WEEKS			
Mobility impaired n.s.			
No problems	86.4	80.4	
Few or some	11.7	18.3	
Many	1.7	1.2	
Work affected *			
No	86.1	77.8	
A little	12.5	20.9	
A lot	1.4	1.2	
Pain or discomfort n.s.			
None	41.4	32.8	
Light or moderate	55.3	63.3	
Severe	3.3	3.9	
Medication for pain n.s.			
No	58.2	52.1	
A few times	39.9	44.3	
Many times	1.8	3.5	
Medication for sleep n.s.			
No	77.3	76.5	
A few times	21.6	22.5	
Many times	1.1	1.0	
Concentration problems n.s.			
No problems	90.1	87.5	
Few or some	9.9	11.3	
Many	0.8	1.3	
Dizziness **			
Yes	48.0	60.5	
Vaginal discharge n.s.			
Yes	4.0	4.2	
Consulted health professional n.s.			
Yes	51.0	49.0	
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>273</i>	<i>311</i>	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

Table 2.8: Recent symptoms of ill-health and stress (per cent)

	Abused more than 12 months prior to survey %	Abused in past 12 months %	Sig.
In past four weeks			
Headaches	47.6	58.5	**
Loss of appetite	13.2	16.1	n.s.
Sleeping badly	13.2	17.0	n.s.
Easily frightened	11.0	18.6	**
Hands shaking	3.3	7.7	*
Nervous tension	29.3	33.1	n.s.
Indigestion	0.7	4.5	**
Confusion	8.8	13.5	*
Unhappiness	31.5	37.3	*
Cry more than usual	4.4	12.5	**
No enjoyment	12.8	20.6	**
Indecisive	29.7	35.7	*
Work suffering	11.7	18.3	*
Feel unable to be useful	3.7	5.8	n.s.
Loss of interest	20.9	26.4	n.s.
Feel worthless	10.6	7.1	n.s.
Thought of suicide	4.0	10.6	**
Always tired	20.1	28.0	*
Stomach discomfort	11.4	14.1	n.s.
Easily tired	22.7	28.6	n.s.
Ever			
Thought of suicide	10.3	19.0	**
Attempted suicide	1.8	8.4	*
In past 12 months			
Had surgery	2.6	3.9	n.s.
Been hospitalised	4.0	6.8	n.s.
Ever smoked? n.s.			
Never	63.7	60.5	
Occasionally	25.3	25.1	
Every day	11.0	14.5	
Smoke now? *			
Yes	22.0	27.3	
Ever drink alcohol? n.s.			
Never	94.9	95.5	
Occasionally	2.6	2.6	
Weekly or more often	2.6	1.9	
Drank alcohol in past 4 weeks? n.s.			
No	2.6	2.6	
1-3 per day	1.0	1.6	
4 +	1.5	0.3	
Problems related to alcohol? n.s.			
Money	1.8	0.3	
Health	0.7	0.3	
Conflict in family	0.7	0.6	
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>273</i>	<i>311</i>	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

Despite this limitation, there are some statistically significant differences in Tables 2.7 and 2.8 between respondents who had been abused in the past 12 months and those who had experienced abuse more than 12 months prior to the survey. Recently abused respondents were significantly more likely to report their health as only good or fair rather than excellent, to have had problems performing their usual work in the past four weeks, and to have experienced dizziness. It must be remembered, however, that, as shown in Table 2.5, all respondents who had ever experienced abuse were likely to experience these and other problems mentioned in this table.

Table 2.8 compares other health problems experienced by recently abused respondents and those who had been abused more than 12 months prior to the survey. In the four weeks preceding the survey, recently abused respondents were significantly more likely to have experienced headaches, to be easily frightened, to have trembling hands, indigestion, confusion, unusual crying, lack of enjoyment, sub-optimal work performance, thoughts of suicide and to be frequently tired. Most of these symptoms are associated with stress, which suggests that abuse tends to increase the likelihood of experiencing stress, and recently abused women are more likely to display stress-related symptoms.

A striking feature of Table 2.8 is the association of recent abuse with thoughts of and attempts at suicide. As respondents were asked only if they had ever attempted suicide, and not when the attempt was made, it is not possible to make a direct connection

between recent abuse and suicide attempts. However, it is alarming that respondents who had been abused within a year of the survey were almost twice as likely to have thought of suicide, and more than four times as likely to have attempted suicide.

Overall, 26 respondents who had been abused in the preceding year had attempted to commit suicide at some stage of their lives, as had five respondents who had been abused more than a year previously. That is, more than half of the total of 43 out of 1212 surveyed respondents who had ever had partners and who had ever attempted to commit suicide, had been abused in the year preceding the survey. Three-quarters of the respondents who had ever attempted suicide had been abused at some time in their lives.

The SFHSS did not collect any data on women who had died as a result of a suicide attempt, or on reasons for their suicides. However, it is possible that the pattern of association of female suicides with domestic abuse could be similar to that of the suicide attempts reported in this survey. If this were the case, it could mean that eliminating abuse by partners could reduce the rate of suicide for Samoan women who have ever had partners by as much as 75%.

There are no significant differences between respondents abused recently and respondents abused more than a year prior to the survey in their experiences of surgery, hospitalisation, smoking and alcohol, or problems relating to alcohol consumption. However, recently abused respondents were more likely to be smokers at the time of the survey.



2.4.5 Physical abuse and health

The tables discussed thus far in this chapter suggest that physical abuse is less likely to be associated with poor general health and symptoms of stress than are emotional and sexual abuse. This is consistent with a tendency for some Samoan women to accept physical

abuse as a normal part of relationships, as discussed in Section 2.11. Irrespective of whether or not a woman believes abuse is a normal part of relationships, there is no doubt that physical abuse can cause injury. Table 2.9 is concerned with injury caused by physical abuse.

Table 2.9: Effect of physical abuse on health (per cent)

All respondents ever physically abused		
	%	
Ever injured		
Yes	29.5	
How often injured		
1-2 times	15.8	
3-5 times	6.3	
>5 times	7.1	
Injured in past year		
Yes	15.3	
Type of injury		In past year
Cuts, punctures, bites	8.5	8.4
Abrasions, bruises	21.5	13.6
Sprains, dislocations	0.4	0.4
Injuries, cuts, gashes	3.3	2.3
Damaged to ear or eye	8.7	5.1
Broken bones	1.4	0.4
Lost consciousness	8.1	4.7
Respondents who needed medical care		
How often needed healthcare		
Never	19.0	
1-3	6.7	
4+, Don't know	3.6	
Number of respondents	488	
Received healthcare?		
No	25.5	
Yes, sometimes	56.9	
Yes	17.6	
Number of respondents	51	
Respondents who received medical care		
Nights in hospital		
None	76.3	
1-3	7.9	
4-7	7.9	
>7	7.9	
Told truth about injury to hospital staff?		
Yes	68.4	
Number of respondents	38	

Of the 488 respondents who had ever been physically abused by a partner, 29.5% said they had been injured. Overall, 15.8% had been injured three or more times, and 15.3% had been injured during the year preceding the survey. Respondents were asked to describe the injuries received, with multiple responses possible. The most common type of injuries were abrasions and bruises (experienced by 21.5% of all respondents who had ever experienced physical abuse), followed by damage to eye or ear (8.7%) and cuts, punctures and bites (8.5%), while 8.1% had lost consciousness. Broken bones had been sustained by 1.4% of physically abused respondents. In general, most of those who had ever experienced injuries had been injured within a year of the survey. Since it is unlikely that there were more injuries in the year preceding the survey than in other years, and since half of those who had ever been injured said it had occurred only once or twice, it is likely that some respondents under-reported injury.

The level of injury caused by physical abuse is a matter for concern. Of particular concern are damage to eye or ear, broken bones and loss of consciousness, which suggest abuse severe enough to result in permanent physical injury, or, in the case of lost consciousness, even death.

Despite the frequency of injuries, 19% of respondents said they had never needed healthcare because of physical abuse. Of those who said they needed healthcare 25.5% said they had not received it, and 56.9% said they had received it only sometimes. Of the 38 respondents who had received healthcare, 23.7% had spent one or more nights in hospital as a result of physical abuse, and 7.9% (3 women) had spent more than seven nights in hospital.

Alarmingly, almost one-third of the 38 respondents who received healthcare, concealed from hospital staff the truth about how their injuries had been acquired, which suggests they were either afraid or embarrassed to admit they were victims of partner abuse. Other respondents may have felt the same way, which could explain why the percentage who received healthcare, is substantially lower than the percentage needing it (see Table 2.9). Feelings about abuse, such as shame or embarrassment, are discussed in more detail in Section 2.11.

2.5 Reproductive Health

2.5.1 Reproductive characteristics of abused respondents

Table 2.10 compares the reproductive health characteristics of respondents who had and had not been abused. The table shows that abused respondents were significantly more likely to have more than four children (52.9% compared with 42.4%). Since there was no significant association of abuse with age group (see Table 2.4), this may be a reflection of the tendency for abused respondents to have lower educational levels and to be less likely to

have wage jobs. In Samoa, as in almost every country in the world, there is a negative association between fertility and education and wage employment (see Muagututia 1992; Samoa, Department of Statistics 1999 and 2000). Among respondents who had experienced different types of abuse, emotionally abused respondents were more likely to have seven or more children. Sexually abused respondents were more likely to have no children.

Table 2.10: Reproductive health (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.	Physical abuse %	Emotional abuse %	Sexual abuse %	Sig.
All respondents with partners							
Number of children							
None	9.4	5.5		5.8	1.6	7.2	*
1-3	48.2	41.6		38.3	45.3	42.8	
4-6	29.9	34.4		39.6	30.1	31.7	
7+	12.5	18.5		16.3	23.0	18.3	
Any dead children?							
Yes	9.9	16.2	**	13.7	15.3	19.1	n.s.
Ever miscarried?							
Yes	7.8	14.6	*	16.0	14.5	13.3	n.s.
Children all same father?							
Yes	92.7	82.9	**	85.8	79.0	82.2	n.s.
Father support children?							
Some or all of his children	93.3	92.7	**	96.1	93.4	89.2	n.s.
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>628</i>	<i>584</i>		<i>222</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>236</i>	
Respondents with no children							
Ever Pregnant?							
Yes	40.7	30.3		28.6	0.0	35.3	n.s.
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>33</i>		<i>14</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>17</i>	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant
For definition of categories of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) see Section 2.3.2

Respondents who had been abused were significantly more likely to have dead children than were respondents who had never been abused (16.2% compared with 9.9%). This could mean either that the death of a child could be a cause of conflict within relationships, or that children received less care in abusive households. There was also a significant association of miscarriage with abuse, with respondents who had experienced a miscarriage more likely to have been abused than those

who had not (14.6% of abused respondents had miscarried, compared with 7.8% of those who had not been abused). Again more research is needed to determine whether the abuse caused the miscarriage or vice versa. There was no significant variation in experience of child death or miscarriage between respondents who had experienced the various types of abuse. Nor was there any significant association of abuse with number and gender of dead children, or multiple births (not shown in table).

Respondents who had children by more than one partner were significantly more likely to be abused than respondents who had children with only one partner (16.9% compared with 7.3%). The mechanism here is unclear; since abuse is a common cause of breakdown of relationships, the abuse itself may be the cause of multiple fathers, rather than a consequence. There was no significant variation according to type of abuse experienced.

There was little difference in the proportion of abused and never-abused respondents who received child support from their children's father, with most receiving support for at least some of their children (93.3% of those never abused compared with 92.7% of those who had been abused). Sexually abused respondents were least likely to receive child support (10.8% received no support). This could be because more sexually abused women choose to sever all contact with the partner who abused them.

Respondents who had no children were asked if they had ever been pregnant. Those respondents who had never been abused were more likely to have been pregnant (40.7% compared with 30.3%) although this was just outside the 95% confidence limit because of the small number of cases. While it is very likely that childlessness is associated with abuse, further research is needed to determine the mechanism. That is, whether Samoan women are likely to be abused because they are childless, whether they choose to remain childless because they are in an abusive relationship or even whether they tend to be unable to have children because of the effects of abuse.



2.5.2 Respondent's last pregnancy

Table 2.11 considers the last pregnancy of abused and non-abused respondents with children. There are no statistically significant patterns according to the sex or survival status of the last child, nor according to how long it was since the last child was born. However, respondents who had been abused were significantly more likely to have wanted to delay or not want any children at the time of the interview.

Table 2.11: Respondent's last pregnancy (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
All respondents with partner and children			
Sex of last child			
Boy	49.6	53.4	
Girl	50.4	46.6	
Last child born alive?			
Yes	97.7	97.8	
Age of last child			
<1 year	23.6	22.4	
1-4	47.5	48.9	
5-9	19.4	18.3	
10-14	6.4	6.8	
>15 years	3.1	3.6	
Wanted last pregnancy? **			
Yes, then	74.5	74.9	
Preferred to delay	7.5	9.9	
Didn't want children	3.3	6.6	
Didn't mind	14.8	8.6	
<i>Number of respondents</i>	569	552	
Respondents with a child born in past 5 years			
Partner wanted last pregnancy? n.s.			
Yes, then	85.5	88.4	
Preferred to delay	2.8	2.8	
Didn't want children	1.3	2.3	
Didn't mind	9.3	6.3	
Don't know	1.3	0.3	
Ante-natal checks by whom? *			
No one	3.7	2.7	
Doctor	10.4	9.2	
Obstetrician	5.3	2.7	
Nurse/midwife	48.7	52.5	
Traditional Birth Attendant	5.8	6.7	
Partner encouraged ante-natal care? n.s.			
Tried to prevent it	1.3	1.3	
Encouraged it	96.2	96.2	
Indifferent	2.5	2.5	
Sex of child preferred by partner n.s.			
Son	15.5	17.5	
Daughter	11.5	15.7	
No preference	73.0	66.8	
Did you drink alcohol while pregnant? n.s.			
Yes	0.5	1.3	
Did you smoke while pregnant? *			
Yes	10.5	15.4	
Did you get a post-natal check-up? n.s.			
Yes	47.8	42.0	
<i>Number of respondents</i>	400	395	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

Further questions were asked of respondents with a child born in the five years preceding the survey. There were no significant differences in whether the partner wanted the last pregnancy. However, respondents who had been abused were less likely to have received antenatal care from a doctor or obstetrician, and more likely to have seen only a nurse or midwife. This could be associated with the cost of such services, and could imply that abused women tend to have less access to money to pay for medical services.

Both abused and never-abused respondents were equally likely to have partners who encouraged them to seek antenatal care, and there is also no significant

difference in partners' preferences for the gender of children. While there is no significant difference in the percentages of respondents drinking alcohol during pregnancy, which are very small for both groups, respondents who had ever been abused were significantly more likely to smoke during pregnancy. As smoking has serious implications for the health of both mothers and unborn children, this is a matter for concern.

Although just outside the statistically significant range, respondents who had ever been abused appear less likely to have received a postnatal check up. Further investigation is needed to confirm whether this is true, as this too is an important health issue.

2.5.3 Use of contraception

Table 2.12 shows respondents' experiences of contraception. Overall, 40.7% of surveyed respondents who had ever had a partner had attempted to delay or avoid pregnancy. The figure is significantly higher for those who had ever experienced abuse (47.3%) than for those who had never experienced abuse (34.6%). It is possible that women are inclined to want to avoid having children when they feel they are in an unstable relationship, but further research is needed to confirm this, as the abuse could be a consequence of the use of contraception. Also significant is that 50% of respondents who had experienced physical abuse had tried to avoid pregnancy, compared with 44.4% of those emotionally abused and 46.2% of those sexually abused.



Table 2.12: Experience with contraception (per cent)

	Never abused	Ever abused	Sig.	Physical abuse	Emotional abuse	Sexual abuse	Sig.
All respondents with partner	%	%		%	%	%	
Ever tried to avoid pregnancy?			**				*
Yes	34.6	47.3		50.0	44.4	46.2	
Currently using contraception?			n.s.				*
Yes	45.2	37.3		40.5	35.7	34.9	
Number of respondents	628	584		222	126	236	
Contraception users only							
Methods used			*				n.s.
Female methods	93.9	99.0		100.0	99.5	100.0	
Male methods	5.1	1.0		0.0	0.5	0.0	
Partner knows you use contraception?			n.s.				*
Yes	96.8	94.1		100.0	89.5	89.5	
Partner opposed to contraception?			**				*
Yes	5.3	14.7		10.4	13.5	19.5	
Number of respondents	98	103		45	20	38	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant
For definition of categories of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) see Section 2.3.2.



Of those who had ever used contraception, 40.8% of all partnered respondents were current users. Although the percentage is lower for those who had experienced abuse (37.3%) compared with those who had never experienced abuse (45.2%), this is not statistically significant. There was a significant difference between respondents who had experienced different types of abuse, with emotionally and sexually abused respondents less likely to be current contraception users than were physically abused respondents. Again, it is possible that respondents who had experienced only physical abuse were more able to make important decisions, such as to control their fertility, than were those who had been more severely traumatised by abuse, but further research is needed to confirm this.

Respondents who were currently using a contraceptive method were asked what method they were using. The responses were grouped into methods that required action only by the

woman (female methods, such as pill, injectables, implants, IUD, female sterilisation) and methods that required action by, or the cooperation of, the man (male methods, such as condoms, calendar, withdrawal, male sterilisation). It is striking that, with one exception, all respondents who had ever been

abused were using female methods. The only exception to this statistically significant pattern was one woman whose partner had had a vasectomy. Since vasectomy is a permanent method, it does not require cooperation on a day-to-day basis. This is an important finding that has implications not only for family health and safety but also for sexual health programmes. A male method, the condom, is the main source of protection against sexually transmitted infections. If abused women are obliged to rely on female methods because they cannot depend on their partners' cooperation, they will be at greater risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections.

Respondents who were currently using contraception were asked if their partner knew they were current users. All of those who had been physically abused said their partner knew they were using contraception, but 10.5% each of those who had been emotionally and sexually abused said their partner did not know that they were using contraception.

This is an interesting finding, since physically abused respondents had a higher rate of use than the other groups. Moreover, more abused respondents overall (14.7% compared with only 5.3% of those who had not been abused) had partners who opposed their use of contraception with anger, threats, assault, removing or destroying contraceptives or other indications of disapproval. Among the different types of abuse, respondents who were sexually abused were most likely to have partners who disapproved of contraception. This is consistent with the lower overall usage rate for sexually and for emotionally abused respondents than for those who had experienced only physical abuse.

The higher rate of partner opposition to contraception use by abused respondents is especially important, considering that abused respondents tended to have more children (Table 2.10) and rely more on female methods (Table 2.12). One possible reason why some abusive men could be opposed to contraception is that they see impregnation as a way of demonstrating their power over their partner.

2.6 Characteristics and Behaviour of Abusive Partners

This section considers the characteristics and behaviour of the most recent partners of respondents, to establish whether there are significant differences between partners of women who have and have not been abused. An important limitation of this survey is that it was not possible to establish whether the most recent partner, whom the respondent was asked to describe, was actually the abusive partner. Although

the survey asked whether respondents had ever been separated, and whether they had experienced abuse in the 12 months preceding the survey, respondents could have changed partners since abuse occurred. However, given that only 18.3% of respondents who had been abused by a partner had had more than one partner, it is probable that in most instances they are describing the man who committed the abuse.

2.6.1 Partner's characteristics

Table 2.13 shows that, compared with partners of respondents who had not abused, partners of abused respondents were more likely to have only primary education (20% compared with 15%) and less likely to have secondary (57.8% compared with 61.3%) or tertiary education (7.6% compared with 11.1%). Although there was no significant difference in whether the partner was working, the partners of respondents who had been abused were more likely to have worked in the past year and less likely to have been long-term or permanently unemployed. This is an interesting finding that is contrary to the usual expectation that unemployed men are more likely to be abusive. It should not be treated as an important finding, however, due to the fact that it is not possible to determine whether these actually are the abusive partners, and in light of the high prevalence of informal employment in Samoa.



There is a highly significant association between abuse and partner's type of work. Although abuse was found among all categories of partner's employment, abused respondents were more likely to have partners who were planters, fisherman or were unskilled, and less likely to have partners who were police, employed professionals or semi-skilled workers. The association of abuse with lower status occupations is consistent

Table 2.13: Characteristics of respondent's partner (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
Age group n.s.			
<25	5.3	6.9	
25-29	16.2	14.0	
30-34	18.5	18.3	
35-39	19.9	17.3	
40-44	17.8	18.8	
45-49	12.7	12.3	
50+	9.6	12.4	
Age difference between respondent and partner n.s.			
Partner younger	14.0	15.4	
0-9 years	70.9	71.4	
Partner > 9 years older	15.1	13.2	
Partner literate? *			
Yes	100.0	99.3	
Partner's education level *			
Primary	15.0	20.0	
Secondary	61.3	57.8	
Tertiary	11.1	7.6	
Don't know	12.6	14.7	
Partner working? n.s.			
Yes	85.8	87.5	
Looking for work	13.2	12.2	
Not in labour force	1.0	0.3	
If not working, when last worked? *			
Within past year	19.3	28.9	
> 12 months ago	62.7	50.7	
Never	18.1	14.1	
Partner's type of work **			
Professional	19.6	11.0	
Semi-skilled	13.9	12.5	
Unskilled	33.5	29.8	
Police	2.5	1.7	
Planter/fisherman	29.7	44.3	
Other	0.8	0.7	
Number of respondents	628	584	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant;
* = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

with findings elsewhere, and with the evidence in Table 2.4 (that abused respondents were more likely to be from households with low economic status). It may also be that in Samoa, abuse is more common among those practicing traditional, village lifestyles than among those living in a modern environment. However, further research is needed to determine whether this is true.

2.6.2 Partner's behaviour

Table 2.14: Partner's behaviour (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
All respondents ever in a relationship			
How often does partner drink alcohol? **			
Every day	4.1	8.0	
1-8 times per month	28.0	32.0	
Rarely/never/don't know	67.9	60.0	
Number of respondents	628	584	
All respondents whose partners drank			
How often have you seen him drunk? n.s.			
Most days	13.7	15.3	
Every week or month	67.4	63.2	
Infrequently or never	18.9	19.6	
Has his drinking caused money problems? **			
Yes	26.0	49.6	
Has his drinking caused family problems? **			
Yes	19.8	44.2	
Has his drinking caused other problems? n.s.			
Yes	0.0	1.1	
Number of respondents	227	274	
All respondents ever in a relationship			
How often does partner use drugs? **			
Every day	0.3	2.6	
1-8 times per month	1.3	2.9	
Rarely/never/don't know	98.4	94.5	
Number of respondents	628	584	
Has partner ever fought another man? **			
Yes	10.5	28.1	
Number of respondents	628	584	
Respondents whose partners fought			
How often in the past year? n.s.			
Never	53.0	54.3	
Once or twice	43.0	39.6	
Three times or more	3.0	6.0	
Number of respondents	66	164	
All respondents ever in a relationship			
Partner had other woman while with you? **			
Yes	12.9	24.0	
Number of respondents	628	584	
Partner had child with other woman while with you? n.s.			
	28.9	33.6	
Number of respondents	83	143	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

Table 2.14 shows that partners of abused respondents were significantly more likely to drink alcohol and more likely to be frequent drinkers. The difference is not great, however, with 67.9% of partners of respondents who had never been abused drinking only rarely or never, compared with 60% of partners of abused respondents. In contrast, the partner's drinking habits were more than twice as likely to cause money and/or family problems in the households of respondents who had been abused. This is a highly significant pattern that suggests that alcohol consumption is likely to be an important factor in abusive relationships.



Although drug use was infrequent overall, respondents who had been abused were more likely to have partners who used drugs: 2.6% used drugs every day and 2.9% used drugs 1-8 times per month. The percentages for partners of never-abused respondents were 0.3% and 1.3%, respectively.

Another striking feature of Table 2.14 is that partners of respondents who had been abused were much more likely to have fought another man at some time (28.1% compared with 10.5%), although there was no significant difference in how often they fought. Partners of abused respondents were also almost twice as likely to have had an affair with another woman while living with the respondent (24% compared with 12.9%). Although they were also more likely to have had a child with another woman, the number of cases was too small to determine whether this was a statistically significant association.

2.6.3 Reasons for physical abuse

Table 2.15 shows the opinions of respondents who had experienced physical abuse on why their partner had abused them. It must be noted that this table relates only to physical abuse, and multiple responses are possible. By far the most common reasons were “family problems” (45.7%) and the respondent disobeying (44.3%). The nature of family problems was not specified, but it is likely that they include problems or instances in which the male partner felt the need to exert more control over the female partner. Consequently, some women who ascribed their abuse to family problems may actually have been beaten for disobedience. Drunkenness was given as a reason by 14.8% of respondents, while other reasons were given by only a small percentages of respondents.



Table 2.15: Reasons for physical abuse (per cent)

All respondents ever physically abused	%
No particular reason	3.5
Drunk	14.8
Money problems	3.1
Work worries	0.8
Out of work	0.0
No food at home	1.6
Family problems	45.7
Pregnant	0.0
Jealousy	6.1
Refused sex	3.5
Disobeyed	44.3
Other	8.6
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>488</i>

Note: Multiple responses possible

These figures suggest that a substantial proportion of Samoan men who engage in physical abuse do so even when they are sober, and that the primary reason is domination of their female partner.

Since family problems and disagreement (which are common in all societies) appear to be the main reason for domestic physical abuse, partner abuse is unlikely to be significantly reduced unless there is a change in beliefs about the acceptability of physical abuse. This is discussed in more detail in Section 2.11, which looks at respondents’ perceptions about whether physical abuse is justified.

2.7 Impact of Partner Abuse on Family Life

The physical abuse of a woman by her partner is usually a highly traumatic event, which is extremely disturbing, not only for the woman herself but also for others in the household, especially children. It is

therefore important to consider the impact of abuse on family life, as well as on the abused woman herself. This section considers the impact of abuse on both the respondent and on her children.

2.7.1 First sexual experience and childhood exposure to domestic abuse

Table 2.16 compares the exposure to sex and domestic abuse of respondents who had and had not suffered abuse. Those who had experienced abuse were significantly more likely to have had their first

sexual intercourse at younger ages (15–19 and 20–24) compared with those who had never been abused. However, there were no significant differences according to experience of different types of abuse.

Table 2.16: First sexual experience and childhood exposure to abuse (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.	Physical abuse %	Emotional abuse %	Sexual abuse %	Sig.
Age at first sex			**				n.s.
10-14	1.9	2.4		0.9	3.2	3.4	
15-19	42.0	57.9		54.5	61.9	58.9	
20-24	43.6	33.2		37.8	31.7	29.7	
25-29	11.7	8.5		6.3	1.6	5.9	
30-34	0.8	0.7		0.0	1.6	0.8	
35-39		0.3		0.5		1.3	
Experience of first intercourse			**				*
Wanted	86.4	77.9		88.7	74.6	69.4	
Not wanted	8.9	14.2		9.0	15.9	18.3	
Forced	4.6	7.9		2.3	9.5	12.3	
Mother hit by father			**				
Yes	35.1	50.2		47.3	50.0	53.0	
Saw mother hit by father			n.s.				*
Yes	34.4	49.3		45.9	49.2	52.5	
Partner's mother beaten			**				**
Yes	5.9	15.8		11.3	25.4	14.9	
Partner saw mother beaten			*				*
Yes	5.6	14.0		9.4	23.8	13.1	
Partner beaten regularly			**				n.s.
Yes	4.0	11.1		7.2	12.7	14.0	
Sisters abused by partners			*				n.s.
Yes	25.3	31.6		29.3	34.1	32.6	
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>628</i>	<i>584</i>		<i>222</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>236</i>	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

For definition of categories of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) see Section 2.3.2

Those who had been abused were also less likely to have wanted their first intercourse (77.9% compared with 86.4%) and more likely to have had it when it was not wanted (14.2% compared with 8.9%) or when they were forced (7.9% compared with 4.6%). It seems rather contradictory that 4.6% of those who had never been abused said they had been “forced” to have their first intercourse. Perhaps they did not view the “forcing” severe enough to be described as sexual abuse, or perhaps they did not believe that forced sex constituted sexual abuse. Respondents who had been emotionally or sexually abused were significantly more likely than were physically abused respondents to have had their first intercourse when they did not want to, or to be forced to have their first intercourse.

Another distinctive and highly significant pattern in Table 2.16 is that respondents who had experienced abuse were more likely to have had a mother who was physically abused by her spouse (50.2% compared

with 35.1%), and to have seen this happen (49.3% compared with 34.4%). The percentages relating to respondents’ own partners’ experience of beating are much lower, largely because many respondents apparently did not know about their partner’s childhood experiences. Even so, among those respondents who were able to answer this question, partners of respondents who had been abused were more likely to have themselves seen (14% compared with 5.6%) or experienced abuse (11.1% compared with 4%). The same pattern holds true for sisters, with more respondents who had themselves been abused reporting that their sisters had also been abused (31.6% compared with 25.3%).

Significant differences in these experiences according to type of abuse can also be seen. Emotionally and sexually abused respondents were more likely than physically abused respondents to have mothers and partners whose mothers were abused. Emotionally abused respondents were more likely to have

partners whose mothers were abused, while abuse of the respondent's mother was most common among sexually abused respondents. There were no significant differences between the groups in the percentages who had abused sisters, or in the percentages whose partners were abused. These findings suggest a tendency for abuse to concentrate in families. Although the woman herself is not necessarily turned into an abuser by her family circumstances, it is likely that women who have grown up with abuse

may be more accepting of it, or may feel that there is no way of avoiding it and so do nothing to prevent it. Moreover, such women may be less wary of marrying an abusive man. This is consistent with the findings of many other studies of family dynamics (e.g. Levinson 1989; Edleson and Eisikovits 1997). Further research is needed to explore this phenomenon and to determine the exact mechanisms causing this pattern in Samoan families, so that strategies to reduce domestic abuse can take family factors into consideration.

2.7.2 Physical abuse and family life

Table 2.17 shows responses to questions about how physical abuse has affected family life. This table is concerned only with the 488 respondents who had been physically abused. Of these, 43.3% said their children had witnessed them being abused by a partner sometimes or many times. More than 12% said their children had witnessed abuse many times. It must be noted that the awareness of children of abuse could be much higher than these percentages indicate, since children may know that physical abuse is taking place, even when their parents believe them to be asleep.

The percentages in Table 2.17 are important, and not only because they indicate that some children were exposed to traumatic experiences. As Table 2.16 indicates, men whose mothers were physically abused by a partner were more likely to physically abuse their own partners, even if the abuse was not directly witnessed. These data suggest that strategies to reduce physical abuse should emphasise the importance of protecting children from exposure to any physical abuse, not only to reduce stress but to prevent them from possibly coming to believe that abuse is normal, if terrifying, behaviour.

Only 9.7% of respondents who had been physically abused said they were sometimes or usually forced to have sex afterwards. This is consistent with the higher percentages of physical abuse than sexual abuse in this study, which suggest that while many men use physical abuse to exert authority over their partners, forced sex is much less common.

Only 22.4% of abused respondents said that they sometimes or usually defended themselves. This is clearly a reflection of the greater strength of men and possibly also a reflection of attitude towards abuse. It appears that more than three-quarters of respondents believe they are powerless against their partner's greater strength, and/or that the abuse will end sooner if they do not try to defend themselves.

Reluctance to provoke men because of their superior strength may also account for the fact that only 4.5% of respondents had ever struck their partner when he had not physically abused her. If this were not true, it would be expected that, since men often resort to physical abuse to exert authority over their partners, women in the same community would use the same method if they were the physical equals of their partners.

Slightly more than a quarter (27.4%) of physically abused respondents felt that being physically abused by their partner had affected their health. This is slightly less than the 29.5% who indicated that they had been injured as a result of physical abuse (see Table 2.9), possibly indicating some women did not believe the physical injuries had affected

Table 2.17: Effects of physical abuse on family life (per cent)

All respondents ever physically abused	
	%
Children witnessed abuse?	
No children/or missing	5.1
Never	51.6
Sometimes	31.0
Many times	12.3
Forced to have sex afterwards?	
Never	90.4
Sometimes	7.4
Usually	2.3
Ever defend yourself?	
Never	77.7
Sometimes	18.3
Usually	4.1
Ever hit partner when not being hit?	
Never	95.5
Sometimes	3.5
Often	1.0
Has partner's abuse affected your health?	
No effect	72.5
A little	17.6
A lot	9.8
Has partner's abuse disrupted your work?	
Not disrupted	30.9
Interrupted work	3.4
Can't concentrate	4.5
Can't work	5.9
Lost confidence	0.4
Other	0.2
Don't work	57.6
Number of respondents	488

their health. Almost one-third (30.9%) of abused women (including 72.9% of abused women who were employed) felt the abuse had not disrupted their work. This can be seen as a reflection of the way in which physical abuse is used by men, to correct and control

their partners, rather than with any intent to inflict serious or permanent damage on them. It may be that women are better able to cope with physical abuse because they too perceive it in this way.



2.7.3 Impact of partner abuse on young children

Overall, 739 respondents who had ever had a partner had children aged 5–12 years living with them at the time of the survey. At these ages children are especially vulnerable to emotional trauma, and especially likely to experience stress if their mother is abused. Table 2.18 compares symptoms of stress in children of respondents who had ever and never been abused. The only statistically significant patterns were that children of respondents who had ever been abused were more likely to have nightmares (34.9%

compared with 28.2%), more likely to be aggressive (46.5% compared with 34.4%) and more likely to repeat classes (11.2% of boys and 13.1% of girls compared with 8.2% of boys and 8.5% of girls) or drop out of school (13.1% compared with 8.5%). The greatest difference was in the percentage who were aggressive, with children of abused mothers 35% more likely to be aggressive than children of mothers who had not been abused.

Table 2.18: Impact on young children of abuse of women by partner (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
Respondents with children aged 5–12			
Children have nightmares? *			
Yes	28.2	34.9	
Children suck thumb? n.s.			
Yes	3.5	1.6	
Children wet bed? n.s.			
Yes	12.7	12.1	
Children are timid? n.s.			
Yes	29.8	32.3	
Children are aggressive? **			
Yes	34.4	46.5	
Children ever run away? n.s.			
Boys	1.4	1.3	
Girls	1.9	1.3	
Any children repeated classes? *			
Boys	8.2	11.2	
Girls	8.5	13.1	
Any children dropped out of school? *			
Yes	8.5	13.1	
Number of respondents	365	374	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

These data are insufficient to draw firm conclusions about the association between parental aggression and child stress. The SFHSS did not attempt to establish whether the children were aware the abuse occurred nor whether the children themselves were abused, nor the time frame for any of these events. Although physically abused respondents were asked if their children ever witnessed the abuse, the numbers are too small and the details of timing too imprecise to determine whether there are statistically significant associations. Moreover, some children could have been aware that their mother was being physically abused, even though she believed they had not witnessed the event. This could be why no significant differences were found when the behaviours in Table 2.18 were compared for children whose mothers believed they had witnessed the abuse, and children who were thought not to have witnessed the abuse (not shown).

Even so, the fact that children of abused mothers tended to manifest more symptoms of stress and exhibit aggression is a matter for concern and further investigation. Certainly it provides further evidence that abusive behaviour is likely to be passed down through families, with children of abusers likely to become abusers themselves.

2.8 Ownership of Assets, Employment and Financial Autonomy

2.8.1 Financial autonomy and bargaining power

As discussed in Section 2.1, the major underlying reason why one person abuses another is to establish power over them. This applies to all types of abuse, ranging from the physical abuse inflicted on a child by a parent or a teacher to discipline that child, to the sexual abuse of a woman by her partner or by a stranger. In each case the abuser seeks to dominate the abused, and impose their will upon them. Abuse is about power, and it is easier to establish power over a weak person than over a strong person.

In human society a person's strength is measured not only in physical terms but also by their social

status and control over assets, which can be thought of as "bargaining power". Although most women are physically weaker than their male partners, they may be equal or even stronger in terms of bargaining power. It is therefore reasonable to assume that financially autonomous women, who are stronger in terms of bargaining power, are less likely to be abused than are women who are financially dependent on their partners. In order to test the validity of this assumption, this section compares the ownership of assets, employment status and financial autonomy of respondents who have and have not been abused.

2.8.2 Ownership of assets

Table 2.19 compares ownership of assets and earnings of respondents who were never in a relationship and those who have been in a relationship, and those who have and have not been abused by their partners. Respondents who had never had a partner were used for comparison in this table to show whether marriage tended to increase or reduce women's financial autonomy.

A striking feature of Table 2.19 is the very high and similar percentages of both single and ever-partnered respondents who jointly own assets. Joint ownership is highest in the case of land and houses, as would be expected, but is also the most common form of ownership of businesses, large and small animals, crops and large household items. Only jewellery was almost always solely owned by respondents, while about half of those who owned handicrafts had sole ownership. The similarity between single respondents and those who had ever had a partner reflects the fact that, in early life at least, most of the assets owned by Samoan women represent their share in their parent's wealth rather than their own or their partner's earnings.

Table 2.19: Assets owned by respondents (per cent)

	Never in a relationship %	Ever in a relationship %	Sig.	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
Own Land			n.s.			n.s.
No	6.7	4.7		5.1	4.3	
Jointly owned	92.2	92.7		91.6	94.0	
Solely owned	1.2	2.4		3	1.7	
Own house			**			n.s.
No	3.5	2.1		2.4	1.7	
Jointly owned	94.9	92.1		90.4	94.0	
Solely owned	1.6	5.8		7.2	4.3	
Own business			**			*
No	82.4	86.9		64.2	89.7	
Jointly owned	17.1	11.6		13.6	9.4	
Solely owned	0.0	1.6		2.2	0.9	
Own large animals			n.s.			n.s.
No	76.7	73.2		75.2	71.1	
Jointly owned	23.3	25.8		23.8	27.9	
Solely owned	0.0	1.0		1.0	1.0	
Own small animals			*			**
No	15.9	13.3		16.6	9.8	
Jointly owned	83.2	83.4		79.2	87.8	
Solely owned	0.9	3.3		4.2	2.4	
Own produce or crops			**			n.s.
No	33.4	36.0		36.3	35.8	
Jointly owned	66.6	59.4		57.8	61.1	
Solely owned	0.0	4.5		5.9	3.1	
Own large household items			*			*
No	5.3	4.3		4.0	4.6	
Jointly owned	92.4	90.3		88.8	92.0	
Solely owned	2.3	5.4		7.2	3.4	
Own jewellery			n.s.			*
No	9.7	9.4		7.2	11.8	
Jointly owned	1.8	2.2		2.7	1.7	
Solely owned	88.5	88.3		90.1	86.5	
Own handicrafts			**			**
No	55.6	47.9		50.5	45.0	
Jointly owned	25.1	21.6		18.1	25.3	
Solely owned	18.7	30.6		31.5	29.6	
Earn income			n.s.			**
No	79.0	79.0		74.6	67.1	
Yes	21.0	21.0		25.4	32.9	
Number of respondents	434	1212		628	584	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

This study did not collect data on the identity of co-owners, or comparative data on sole ownership of assets by partners, so it is not possible to deduce whether respondents are disadvantaged in ownership compared with their partners. However, women who are co-owners of key household assets should command some respect. Respondents who had ever had a partner were significantly, if only slightly, more often sole owners of houses, businesses, small animals, crops, large household items and handicrafts than were single respondents. The most important significant difference between respondents who had and had not been abused was that those who had never been abused were more likely to solely own a business (2.2% compared with 0.9%).

As regards income earning, the percentages of single and ever-partnered respondents were identical (21% of both groups earned income). In contrast, respondents who had ever been abused were significantly more likely to earn income than were respondents who had never been abused (32.9% compared with 25.4%). At first sight this would seem to contradict the assumption that women are less likely to be abused if they have financial autonomy. However, in the absence of detailed data on amount earned and employment status, this should not be treated as an important finding.

2.8.3 Employment status and financial autonomy

Table 2.20 compares the employment status and financial autonomy of respondents who had and had not been abused. Although the percentages working are approximately the same, it can be seen that abused respondents are significantly less likely to be engaged in wage employment, and more likely to engage in selling, trading or other occupations, which tend to be lower status activities than wage employment.

The table shows that there were no significant differences between the groups in who controlled the income of those respondents who were earning, or whether respondents contributed more or less to the household than did their partners. Even so, a higher percentage of abused respondents contributed more to the household budget than did their partners, possibly because more of them were living without partners at the time of the survey. When all respondents ever in a relationship are considered, partners of abused respondents are significantly more likely to take their earnings (4.9% compared with 1.4%) or to refuse to give them money when needed (8.2% compared with 1.6%). Substantial percentages of both groups of respondents (17.3% of never abused and 19.7% of ever abused) had declined job offers because their partners wished them to, but the difference between the two groups was not significant. Nor was there a difference between the two groups in their perceived ability to support their family without their partner (around 84% of each group). There may have been a greater difference between the groups if the question had been whether they thought they could manage indefinitely without a partner rather than for only four weeks.

Overall, this analysis does not show a very clear association between financial autonomy and risk of abuse. A clearer association may have been evident if the survey had collected more detailed information on amount earned and employment status. Further research is needed to determine whether or not abuse by partners in Samoa is relatively independent of bargaining power.

Table 2.20: Financial autonomy of respondents (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
All respondents ever in a relationship			
Respondent's work *			
Not working	48.3	47.2	
Wage employment	25.3	16.9	
Selling/trading	12.1	17.9	
Seasonal work	2.0	0.2	
Other	12.3	17.8	
Ever stopped/refused work for partner? n.s.			
Yes	17.3	19.7	
Partner ever take your earnings? **			
Yes	1.4	4.9	
Partner ever refuse you money? **			
Yes	1.6	8.2	
Could you manage alone for 4 weeks? n.s.			
Yes	84.3	83.9	
<i>Number of respondents</i>	628	584	
Respondents ever in a relationship who have income			
Who spends money you earn? n.s.			
Self	47.3	46.0	
Some to partner	45.6	43.3	
All to partner	4.8	5.7	
Other	2.4	4.9	
Who contributes most to household? n.s.			
Self	27.2	36.9	
Partner	37.1	32.3	
About the same	34.4	28.9	
Don't know	1.4	1.9	
<i>Number of respondents</i>	294	263	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

2.9 Marriage and Perception of Community



The nature of the relationship between a man and a woman — whether it is formal or informal, and community sanctioned or not — can affect the way they behave and react to each other. This is particularly true in Samoan communities, which tend to be conservative and traditional, and place a high value on religious wedding ceremonies. It is also common for Samoans to strongly disapprove of marital breakdown, and to even stigmatise those who divorce. Women who are unable to meet social expectations, for whatever reason, or who do not have the moral support and assistance of their families, are therefore at greater risk of abuse. This chapter explores the nature and number of relationships of women who have and have not been abused, and whether respondents perceive their community as being supportive and safe.

2.9.1 Contact with family and type of marriage

Table 2.21: Characteristics of respondent's family and marriage (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
All respondents ever in a relationship			
Family live nearby n.s.			
Yes	52.3	47.7	
How often see family *			
Weekly	80.6	73.5	
Monthly	13.5	18.2	
Annually or rarely	5.9	8.4	
Would family help you if needed? n.s.			
Yes	93.6	91.8	
Do you live with partner's family? **			
Yes	47.5	52.5	
Do you live with own family (while married)? **			
Yes	54.5	45.5	
Type of wedding *			
None	22.8	27.6	
Civil wedding	10.4	10.8	
Religious wedding	66.8	61.6	
Who chose your partner? n.s.			
Self and partner	76.4	79.4	
Self	20.2	16.8	
Own family	0.0	0.9	
Partner	3.3	2.8	
Were you asked if you wished to marry? n.s.			
Yes	93.8	100	
Number of respondents	628	584	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant.

Table 2.21 shows the nature of respondents' contact with their families, and the type of wedding they had. Although there was no significant difference between abused and never-abused respondents in whether they lived near their families, abused respondents were significantly less likely to see their family often (73.5% compared with 80.6%) and more likely to see them only rarely (8.4% compared with 5.9%). However, more than 90% of both groups believed their family would help them if needed. Abused respondents were significantly more likely to live with their partner's family (52.5% compared with 47.5%), which is consistent with women being more likely to be abused by their partner when they do not have their own family nearby to protect them. Likewise, only 45.5% of those who had ever been abused lived with their own family, compared with 54.5% of those who had never been abused.

The majority of both groups had a religious wedding, and approximately 10% of each group had a civil wedding, but abused respondents were more likely to have had no wedding (27.6% compared with 22.8%). The percentage who had no wedding seems surprisingly high, given the prevailing values and attitudes in Samoa.

There were no significant differences between respondents in the way in which their partner was chosen. Although the difference is not significant, it is interesting that more abused respondents said they had been asked if they wished to marry.

2.9.2 Number of marriages

Table 2.22 shows the number of relationships and separations of respondents who had ever been in a relationship. Of the total of 1212 respondents, 87.6% had been in only one relationship, 11.6% had been in two relationships and 0.8% had been in three relationships. Compared with those who had never been abused, abused respondents were significantly more likely to have had multiple relationships, with almost three times as many having had two or more

Table 2.22: Number of relationships and separations (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
All respondents ever in a relationship			
Number of relationships **			
One	93.2	81.7	
Two	6.2	17.3	
Three	0.6	1.0	
Number of respondents	628	584	
Respondents with multiple partners			
How previous relationship ended n.s.			
Separated	81.0	83.3	
Widowed	19.0	16.7	
Number of respondents	42	48	
Separated respondents			
If separated, who ended relationship? n.s.			
Self	20.6	15.0	
Partner	55.9	60.0	
Both	8.8	15.0	
Other	14.7	10.0	
Number of respondents	34	40	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

relationships. Although it is not possible to determine from this survey whether multiple relationships were a cause or a consequence of abuse, it is notable that, for both groups, the decision to end a relationship was more likely to be made by the partner (55.9% and 60%) rather than by the respondent (20.6% and 15%). This could indicate that Samoan women are more likely than Samoan men to prefer to endure unsatisfactory relationships rather than end them.

Table 2.23: Respondents' perception of community attitudes and behaviour (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
All respondents ever in a relationship			
Do neighbours know each other well **			
Yes	91.1	95.9	
Would neighbours stop a fight? **			
Yes	88.4	93.1	
Would neighbours work together? **			
Yes	95.4	97.9	
Do neighbours trust each other with money? *			
Yes	64.2	69.0	
Do neighbours help when people are sick? n.s.			
Yes	89.5	91.4	
Response to being interviewed *			
Feel better	99.0	98.1	
Indifferent	0.6	1.9	
Number of respondents	628	584	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant



2.9.3 Perceptions of community support

Table 2.23 shows respondents' perceptions of the support likely to be received from their community. Questions about community characteristics were asked of all respondents who had ever had a partner. It can be seen that there are highly significant differences between respondents who had and had not been abused, for all questions except whether neighbours help people who are sick. A very interesting feature of this table, however, is that respondents who had been abused generally seemed to hold more positive views about their community than do those who had never been abused. (see Table 2.23)

Although there is not much difference in the percentages, which are around 90% or more for all

but one category, those who have been abused are significantly more likely to believe that neighbours know each other well, that neighbours would stop a fight in the community, and that neighbours work well together. They are also more likely to believe that neighbours would trust each other with money, although the percentages of both groups holding this view are considerably less than for the previous statements (69% and 64.2%, compared to 88.4% and above). Although the difference in percentages for the last question, "Do neighbours help when people are sick?" was too small to be statistically significant, the pattern was the same, with respondents who had ever been abused more likely to believe that neighbours would help.

This suggests that abused women tend to be well integrated into their communities, and do receive help from their neighbours when they need it. It also implies, however, that although people cooperate and know each other well in Samoan communities, these communities apparently lack a mechanism to prevent domestic abuse.

At the beginning of each interview, during the process of identifying the eligible respondent in each household, the person providing the basic household information was asked their opinion about the level of crime in their neighbourhood. Their views on the level of neighborhood crime are interesting, although it should be noted that these opinions were not necessarily given by the eligible respondent, and in fact 13% were given by men. In 60.4% of households where the respondent had not been abused and in 63.2% households where the respondent had been

abused, the person answering the question said they were very worried by the level of crime in their neighbourhood. Overall, 6.8% said they had actually been a victim of crime in the four weeks preceding the survey. This presents an interesting contrast with the positive views about community support expressed by respondents in Table 2.23, and implies that respondents perceive the crime to be originating from outside their own community or neighborhood.

One of the last questions in the survey was how talking about “difficult things” in the interview had made the respondent feel. More than 98% of both abused and never-abused respondents said that it made them feel better, and none said it had made them feel bad or worse. However there was no significant difference between respondents who had ever been abused and those who had not, with abused respondents slightly more likely to report that they felt indifferent.

2.10 Coping with Physical Abuse

This chapter explores the ways in which respondents cope with episodes of physical abuse. The tables show what respondents do when their partner physically abuses them, whether or not they seek assistance from the community and how much assistance they receive.

2.10.1 Assistance sought by abused respondents

Table 2.24 shows whether or not respondents told anyone that they were being physically abused and whether they received assistance. A surprising 53.7% had never told anyone about the abuse (until interviewed for this survey). Overall, 25% had told their parents, 11.5% had told friends and 9.8% had told their partner’s family. It is interesting that despite

the widespread perception that neighbours can be relied on to help in times of sickness or other family difficulties (Table 2.23) only 4.5% had told their neighbours. Less than 2% had told the police, health workers, priests, counsellors or others, and none had told a women’s organisation.



Table 2.24: Help sought when physically abused

All respondents ever physically abused

Ever told anyone about abuse?	
No one	53.7
Friends	11.5
Parents	25.0
Brother/sister	7.2
Uncle/aunt	1.8
Partner's family	9.8
Children	0.2
Neighbours	4.5
Police	1.2
Doctor/health worker	1.8
Priest	1.2
Cousellor	0.0
Woman's organisation	0.0
Local leader	0.8
Other	0.2
Has anyone ever helped you?	
No one	48.6
Friends	9.2
Parents	18.9
Brother/sister	7.4
Uncle/aunt	2.3
Partner's family	16.4
Has anyone ever helped you?	
Children	1.8
Neighbours	5.9
Police	0.6
Doctor/health worker	0.8
Priest	1.0
Cousellor	0.0
Women's organisation	0.0
Local leader	0.8
Other	1.0
Ever seek help from	
Police	4.7
Hospital/health centre	7.2
Legal centre	0.6
Court	1.2
Local leader	5.3
Women's organisation	0.2
Mapusanga o Aiga	1.0
Priest/religious leader	2.5
Other	0.6
Number of respondents	488

Note: Multiple responses possible



Some possible reasons for this secrecy are that some women feel shame and embarrassment when they are physically abused, while some feel they are at fault and deserve to be abused (as discussed in Section 2.11). Some also may be afraid of the long-term consequences if it becomes public knowledge that their partner is abusing them. Another possible reason for this low frequency of reporting is fear of being stigmatised (i.e. being criticised, condemned or discriminated against in some way). This has been found in many other societies to be a common reason for women to keep silent about physical abuse by their partners (see for example, World Bank 1995; UNFPA 1998).

A striking finding, not shown in the table, is that rural respondents were significantly more likely not to have told anyone (56.8%) compared with urban women (41.6%). This suggests that rural women may feel more social pressure to accept partner abuse, or are more likely to feel shame and embarrassment because they live in a small community where everyone knows each other well, and where episodes of abuse are unlikely to go unnoticed. Further evidence of this is that rural women were significantly more likely to accept abuse as “normal/not serious” (see 2.10.2 below). There was no significant difference between younger and older respondents in the likelihood that they had told someone about the abuse they had experienced.

The tendency of respondents not to tell people about the physical abuse they have experienced almost certainly contributes to the lack of assistance they receive. By far the largest percentage, 48.6% of physically abused respondents, reported that no one had ever helped them. The remainder had received help mainly from relatives.

Urban women were again significantly more likely than rural women to have received help (60.4% compared with 49.1%), while women aged 35 years and over were significantly less likely than younger women to have received help (45.1% compared with 56.9%). This is particularly interesting, since the older women could have experienced the abuse at younger ages, but still they are less likely to have received help than women who were aged less than 35 years at the time of the survey.

It is interesting that more respondents had been helped by their partner's family (16.4%) than reported telling the partner's family about physical abuse. Presumably in some instances, the partner's family members were aware the abuse was occurring (i.e. did not need to be told), and offered to help the victim. This is probably also true for other offers of assistance.

It is notable that assistance from police, priests and social services was received only very rarely (0.6% had been helped by police, 0.8% by a doctor or health worker, and 1.0% by a priest). Even so, considerably higher percentages of respondents had sought help from these sources (4.7% sought help from police, 7.2% from a hospital or health centre and 2.5% from a priest or religious leader). Similarly, only 0.8% had received help from a local leader, although 5.3% had sought help from this source. Only one respondent had ever sought help from a women's organisation, but she had apparently not received any help. Table 2.24 thus suggests that, even when approached, courts and legal centres appear not to provide assistance that is considered by physically abused women to be helpful.

The lack of consistency between help sought and help received from authorities and social services is a matter for concern. Although data in this survey are insufficient to support firm conclusions, the very small percentages receiving what they considered to be help from authorities and social services indicates that further investigation is needed into the capacity

of these agencies to deal with domestic abuse. It is possible that the lack of effective assistance provided by these sources is one of the reasons why respondents appear to perceive physical abuse as a wholly domestic matter, which they must endure or keep within the family, rather than deal with through formal mechanisms.

2.10.2 Reasons why assistance was not sought

Table 2.25 examines the reasons why respondents did and did not seek assistance from an official source or social service when they were physically abused. In each panel the percentages are based on the total number of physically abused respondents. Those who had approached an official source for assistance were asked why they did so. The main reason, given by 10% of respondents, was “couldn’t stand any more”. Another 4.1% had sought such help because they were afraid of serious injury or being murdered. Only very small percentages had sought such help for other reasons. The remaining respondents, who had not sought help from a formal organisation or social service, were asked why they did not do so. Their responses are shown in the middle panel of Table 2.25.

By far the main reason given for not seeking help from legal and social services was “physical abuse is normal, not serious” (72.5%). Although there was no significant difference by age of woman, it is also striking that rural women were significantly more likely than urban women to say “physical abuse is normal, not serious” (76.0% compared with 59.4%).

This is a very important finding. If this truly reflects respondents’ views, it suggests that one of the main reasons why substantial percentages of men inflict physical abuse on their female partners is because the women themselves accept it as normal, especially rural women. This result is also consistent with the apparent preference of women to seek help within their families rather than bring abuse to public attention.

Further research into the reasons why women do not seek help is needed to fully explain the causes of current levels of domestic physical abuse in Samoan society. A full understanding of all the factors contributing to domestic abuse is needed before effective strategies can be designed to prevent it.

It is interesting that, although Table 2.25 shows only small percentages of respondents received help from authorities and social services, they generally did not seem dissatisfied with the level of help received, except for 9% who felt they could have received more help from the church. Much higher percentages felt they could have received more help from their family (35.9%) or from their mother (21.7%). This again points to the existence of a widespread attitude among abused women, and perhaps also the community, that domestic physical abuse is a normal part of family life, which should concern only families.

Table 2.26 focuses on whether or not respondents left home because of physical abuse. All percentages in this table are based on the total number of physically abused respondents. Overall, only 28.5% of respondents who had been physically abused by their partner had left home at some time because of this abuse. As in

Table 2.25: Reasons for seeking or not seeking help (per cent)

All respondents ever physically abused	
Why sought help?	
Encouraged by friends	0.8
Couldn't stand any more	10.0
Injury/fear of dying	4.1
He made death threats	1.0
He threatened children	0.2
Children suffering	1.0
Thrown out of home	0.2
Fear she might kill him	0.2
Other	1.2
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>67</i>
Why did not seek help?	
Don't know	1.8
Fear of more abuse	2.5
Abuse is normal, not serious	72.5
Embarrassed/ashamed	0.0
Not likely to be helped	0.2
Might end the relationship	2.7
Might lose children	1.6
Bad for family reputation	4.1
Other	2.3
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>421</i>
Who could have given more help?	
No one	40.2
Family	35.9
Respondent's mother	21.7
Partner's mother	3.3
Health centre	1.2
Police	2.5
Priest or religious leader	9.0
Other	4.3
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>488</i>

Note: Multiple responses possible

the case of reasons for seeking help (Table 2.25) the main reason given was that they couldn’t stand any more (20.9%) followed by fear of serious injury or death (4.7%). None left because they were encouraged to by a community organisation.

Table 2.26: Reasons for leaving home after physical abuse

All respondents ever physically abused

Ever leave home after abuse?	
No	71.5
Yes	28.5
Number of respondents	488

Respondents who left

Why leave?	
No particular incident	0.4
Encouraged by friends	1.0
Couldn't stand any more	20.9
Injury/fear of dying	4.7
He made death threats	1.2
He threatened children	1.2
Children suffering	0.6
Thrown out of home	1.0
Other	3.5
Went where?	
Own relatives	24.0
His relatives	0.8
Own friends/neighbours	2.9
Church/temple	0.2
Other	0.6
Duration away last time	
Days	23.6
Months	2.3
Left permanently	2.7

Why returned?	
Be with children	13.5
Sanctity of marriage	3.7
Avoid shaming family	1.5
Couldn't support children	0.2
Loved him	3.3
He asked her to return	9.8
Family said to return	1.0
Forgave him	3.7
Thought he would change	0.2
Threatened her/children	0.2
Nowhere to stay	0.2
Other	1.6
Number of respondents	136

Respondents who stayed

Why didn't leave?	
Be with children	45.5
Sanctity of marriage	18.9
Avoid shaming family	6.8
Couldn't support children	0.4
Loved him	31.6
Didn't want to be single	1.0
Family said to return	0.8
Forgave him	12.5
Thought he would change	1.6
Nowhere to go	0.4
Other	2.0
No reason	0.8
Number of respondents	352

Note: Multiple responses possible

Almost all who left home went to their own relatives (24% out of the total of 28.5% who left), with 2.9% going to the homes of friends or neighbours. Durations away were generally short, with most staying away for some days (23.6%), and only 2.3% staying away for some months, while 2.7% left permanently.

The main reason for returning was to be with their children (13.5%) while 9.8% returned because their partner asked them to return. A further 3.7% each returned because of their belief in the sanctity of marriage or because they had forgiven their partner, while 3.5% returned because they loved their partner.

The reasons given for not leaving home when physically abused were similar. Overall, of the 71.5% who had not left home when physically abused, 45.5% remained because they wanted to stay with their children, 31.6% because they loved their partner, 18.9% because of the sanctity of marriage, and 12.5% because they forgave him.

Interestingly, 6.8% said they stayed to avoid shaming their family, while only 1.5% had returned for this reason, and none mentioned embarrassment as a reason for not seeking help (see Table 2.25). Although shame is clearly not the main factor in Samoan women's tolerance of domestic physical abuse, there are indications that they are sensitive about community perceptions of an abusive relationship, and could feel embarrassed because they feel partly to blame for the abuse, as discussed below (see Section 2.11).

2.10.3 Abuse by people other than a partner

So far this analysis has focussed on abuse by partners, either legal husbands or others with whom respondents had a relationship. However, in any society, partners are not the only source of domestic abuse. All 1646 respondents, both those who had ever had a husband or partner and those who had not, were asked if they had ever been physically or sexually abused by someone other than a partner. As the percentages abused by a non-partner were approximately the same in all households, regardless of the number of eligible respondents, data in this section are not weighted.

Overall, 64.7% of respondents had been abused by someone other than a partner. As in the case of partner abuse, some respondents had experienced more than one form of abuse by someone other than a partner. Of the total of 1646 respondents, 23.5% had been abused by two other people, 9.4% by three other people, 1.8% by four other people, and 0.2% (three respondents) had been abused by five or six people other than a partner.

As regards type of abuse by other people, by far the most common was physical abuse. In all, 61.8% said they had been physically abused by someone other than a partner, 10.6% said they had been forced to have sex against their will, and 1.9% said they had been touched sexually or made to do something sexual that they did not want to do. It is notable that physical abuse by someone other than a partner occurs more frequently than does abuse by a partner (61.8% compared with 40.3%). This is because it includes physical punishment of children by their parents, teachers and others. In contrast, forced sex with others is less common than forced sex with a partner (10.7% compared with 17.7%).

2.10.4 Perpetrators of abuse

Table 2.27: Physical abuse by someone other than partner (per cent)

All respondents	Physically abused by	Frequency of abuse		
		Once or twice	A few times	Often
Perpetrator	%	%	%	%
Father	35.8	10.3	11.4	14.0
Step father	0.5	0.3	0.2	
Other male family member	4.5	2.7	0.7	1.0
Female family member	38.6	10.3	11.6	16.7
Teacher	18.6	4.5	4.3	9.8
Male friend of family	0.1	0.1		
Female friend of family	0.4	0.3	0.1	
Boyfriend	0.2	0.2		
Stranger	1.0	0.9	0.1	
Priest/religious leader	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.2
Other person	0.4	0.2	0.1	
Number of respondents	1646			

Table 2.28 shows those who were forced to have sex against their wishes with someone other than a regular partner. Almost half of the perpetrators were boyfriends, followed by strangers and other family members. In almost all instances the respondent was forced to have sex only once. However, as it is most likely that the forcing occurred the first time the respondent had sex, it is possible that they decided on subsequent occasions that it would be wiser not to resist, even though they may not really have wished to have sex. Since almost one respondent in 20 was forced to have sex against her will with a boyfriend, it is clear that the phenomenon known in other countries as “date rape” is also prevalent in Samoa, and may constitute a major cause of loss of virginity.

Table 2.29 shows the numbers who were touched, or subjected to some other sexual activity with someone other than their partner. As this table relates to only a very small number of respondents, actual numbers rather than percentages are shown. The most common perpetrator was a stranger, followed by boyfriend and other male family member or other person. For this

Table 2.27 shows that the main perpetrators of physical abuse were a female family member (38.6%), father (35.8%) and teacher (18.6%). Only small percentages had been physically abused by people other than these. The table also shows that, of those who had been abused by their father or mother, roughly two-thirds were abused only once, or “twice or a few times”, and only a little more than a third were abused “many times”. In contrast, of those who had been physically abused by teachers, a little over half had been abused “many times”.

Table 2.28: Forced to have sex with someone other than partner (per cent)

All respondents	Forced to have sex by		Frequency of abuse		
	%	Number	Once or twice	A few times	Often
Perpetrator	%	Number	%	%	%
Father	0.1	2	not stated		
Other male family member	0.9	14	0.6	0.2	0.1
Female family member	0.1	2	0.1		
Teacher	0.4	7	0.4		
Police/soldier	0.1	1	0.1		
Male friend of family	0.6	11	0.5	0.1	
Boyfriend	4.9	80	3.4	0.7	0.8
Stranger	2.5	41	2.3	0.1	0.1
Someone at work	0.2	4	0.2		
Other person	0.8	13	0.9		
Number of respondents	1646				

question, respondents were asked their own age and the perpetrator’s age when the incident occurred. In all instances the respondent was aged 15 years or less, while perpetrators were aged between 12 and 60 years. Overall, about half of the perpetrators were post-adolescent men.

Table 2.29: Touch or other unwanted sex by/with someone other than partner (number)

All respondents	Perpetrator	Ages of respondents		Ages of perpetrators		Frequency of abuse		
		number	years	years	Once or twice	A few times	Often	
		number	years	years	number of perpetrators			
	Step father	1	11	60	1			
	Other male family member	5	10-14	20, 30, 39, 40	5			
	Female family member	1	12	16	1			
	Teacher	1	13	25	1			
	Male friend of family	2	10, 15	19,50	2			
	Boyfriend	7	10, 14	16-23	5	1	1	
	Stranger	10	12-14	12, 14, 20-28, 42	7	3		
	Other person	5	10-14	14, 16, 23	4		1	
	Number of respondents	1646						

Although it is shocking to contemplate sexual abuse of young girls by older men, this is clearly an infrequent event in Samoa, and the numbers are probably no greater than would be found by a similar survey conducted

anywhere else. Even so, these data point to the fact that young Samoan women are vulnerable to sexual interference from men of all ages, and mechanisms to protect them are needed in Samoa, as in other countries.

2.11 Do Samoan Women Believe Partner Abuse is Justified?

So far, this analysis has found a number of patterns that suggest that substantial percentages of respondents were resigned to partner abuse in some way, or felt partly to blame for it. These include accepting abuse as “part of normal married life” (Section 2.10.2), not telling medical staff how they became injured (Section 2.4.5), reluctance to seek help when abused because of shame or embarrassment (Section 2.10.2) or seeking help only from family members rather than social services (Section 2.10.1).

As shown in Section 2.6, the main reasons given by respondents as to why their partners physically abused them were family problems and their own disobedience. Only 14.8% attributed the abuse

to drunkenness, and only 3.5% said there was no particular reason for the abuse (Table 2.15). None attributed physical abuse to uncontrollable anger. This tends to imply that most respondents thought there was a good reason for the abuse, and in effect, were making excuses for their partner.

Clearly, if men believe that women consider abuse to be a part of normal married life, or if men feel justified in abusing their partners in certain circumstances because the women themselves believe that it is warranted, men are more likely to be abusive. This section considers responses to specific questions on the rights of women to refuse sex, justification for abuse and attitudes to gender roles.

2.11.1 Beliefs about the acceptability of refusing sex

Table 2.30 shows respondents’ agreement and disagreement with a series of statements about when it is acceptable for a woman to refuse to have sex with her partner. The striking feature of this table is not the

small differences between the groups of respondents, but the very high percentages of respondents who seem to believe they are obliged to have sex at times when it is unlikely to be enjoyable for them.

Table 2.30: Respondents' beliefs about their right to refuse sex (per cent)

All respondents ever in a relationship "A woman can refuse sex with her partner if..."	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.	Rural %	Urban %	Sig.
She does not want to			<i>n.s.</i>			**
Agree	27.3	28.3		31.3	19.3	
Disagree	72.6	71.2		68.4	80.1	
Don't know/not stated	0.2	0.5		0.2	0.6	
He is drunk			<i>n.s.</i>			**
Agree	51.8	56.3		58.4	43.6	
Disagree	46.4	41.8		40.3	53.3	
Don't know/not stated	1.8	1.9		1.3	3.0	
She is sick			<i>n.s.</i>			**
Agree	71.0	75.3		76.9	64.1	
Disagree	28.7	24.0		22.5	35.6	
Don't know/not stated	0.3	0.7		0.5	0.3	
He mistreats her			**			**
Agree	63.8	76		76.7	53.3	
Disagree	35.4	23.5		22.9	45.6	
Don't know/not stated	0.8	0.5		0.5	1.1	
Number of respondents	628	584		849	362	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

Overall, more than 70% of respondents believed they should not refuse to have sex with their partner when they do not want to; more than 40% would not refuse when he is drunk; and 24% or more would not refuse when they themselves are sick. The only significant difference between women who had been abused and those who had not was in the percentages who felt they could refuse to have sex with their partner if they were mistreated. Seventy-six per cent of abused woman agreed with this statement, but only 63.8% of respondents who had never been abused, agreed. That is, 35.4% of respondents who had never been abused and 23.5% of abused respondents still felt obliged to have sex with their partner even if they were mistreated by him.

The difference between rural and urban respondents was striking and in an unexpected direction. In all instances the difference in Table 2.30 was highly significant, with more urban than rural respondents reporting that they would submit to sex with their husband when he was inconsiderate. This surprising finding runs counter to assumptions that urban women are more likely to assert their independence than are rural women. Perhaps higher standards of behaviour are the norm in rural areas, and rural women feel more secure in their village communities than do urban women, who may be living away from their families. There were no significant differences between respondents aged under 35 and older respondents. Presumably there are differences between tertiary educated women and others, but there was insufficient variation in educational levels to produce significant differences. These results suggest that most respondents believe men are justified in putting their own needs before the welfare and wishes of their partner. Whether or not the men actually do this, the existence of this belief among so many respondents implies that they have

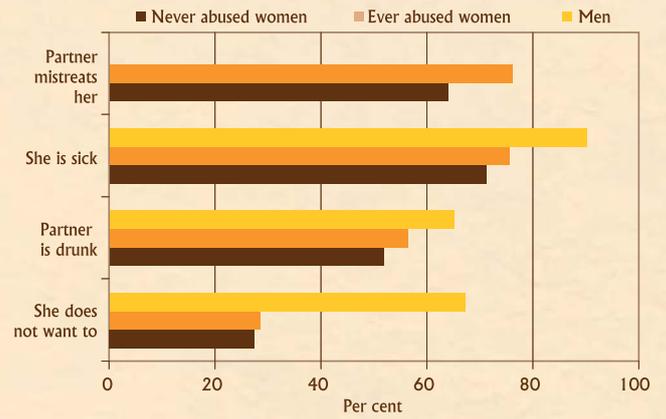


Figure 2.7: "A woman can refuse to have sex with her partner when....."

no expectation of a relationship in which partners consider and respond to each other's feelings and wishes. It follows that these women would be likely to tolerate a male partner using abuse to obtain sexual gratification. Figure 2.7 compares women's responses with those of men, who were asked the same question in the men's survey (see Chapter Three). Of the 664 men answering the question, more than 90% said it was acceptable for a woman to refuse to have sex with her partner if she was sick or had a menstrual period, and 80% or more felt it was acceptable for her to refuse if physically abused by her partner or if he had sex with another woman. A woman not wanting to have sex was an acceptable reason to 70% of urban men and 64% of rural men, and 63% (urban men) and 66% (rural men) thought that a woman could refuse sex if her partner was drunk. In contrast, around 90% said that a wife not wanting to get pregnant was not an acceptable reason for refusal. The data in Figure 2.8 are striking, showing that in all categories, men are more likely than women to believe a woman is justified in refusing to have sex with her partner.



2.11.2 Beliefs about when a man has good reason to beat his wife

Table 2.31 shows female respondents' views about when a man has good reason to beat his wife. Again, the key feature of this table is not the differences between the groups but that some respondents in both groups believe it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife in certain circumstances. These include when she does not do the housework properly (9.3% of the never abused and 13.2% of abused respondents), when she disobeys him (16.1% and 21.9%), when she asks about his other girlfriends (7.0% and 9.6%) when he thinks she is unfaithful (20.9% and 27.2%) and if she is unfaithful (64.9% and 71.7%).

This suggests that the use of abuse to control a wife's behaviour in certain situations is likely to be tolerated by respondents who agreed with these statements because, in effect, they would think it was deserved. Obviously the existence of this attitude provides strong social support for partner abuse. Men are less likely to discontinue abusive practices if they know that some women believe there are good reasons for partner abuse in some circumstances.

Interestingly, only 6.4% of never-abused and 9.4% of ever-abused respondents thought that a wife refusing sex was a good reason for a man to hit her, despite the high percentages in Table 2.30 who believe she is obliged to provide sex. Even so, this means that about one respondent in every 12 believed that her partner was entitled to beat her if she refused to have sex with him when it was unlikely to be enjoyable for her. There were no significant differences between rural and urban women or between younger and older women, so they are not shown in this table.

The percentages in Table 2.31 can be compared with the Indian survey mentioned in Chapter One (Reuters/ABC News 2000). In the Indian survey, 40% of women thought wife beating was justified for neglecting housework or children, 37% if the wife went out without informing her husband, 34% for showing disrespect to in-laws and 33% for suspicions of infidelity.

Overall, a higher percentage of Samoan respondents thought that beating was sometimes justified (around 70%). This is interesting since 46.4% of Samoan respondents had experienced some form of abuse by their partner, and 64.7% had experienced some form of abuse by someone other than a partner. In contrast, only 20% of surveyed Indian women had been beaten or mistreated by anyone, including people other than their partner.

The views of Samoan men as to when it is acceptable for a man to physically abuse his partner, shown in

Table 2.31: Respondents' beliefs about when physical abuse is justified (per cent)

All respondents ever in a relationship			
	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.
<i>"A man has good reason to hit his wife if...."</i>			
She does not do the housework well *			
Agree	9.3	13.2	
Disagree	90.7	86.1	
Don't know/not stated	0.0	0.7	
She disobeys him *			
Agree	16.1	21.9	
Disagree	83.6	77.6	
Don't know/not stated	0.3	0.5	
She refuses sex *			
Agree	6.4	9.4	
Disagree	92.2	90.1	
Don't know/not stated	1.4	0.5	
She asks about his other girlfriends n.s.			
Agree	7.0	9.6	
Disagree	92.2	89.6	
Don't know/not stated	0.8	0.9	
He thinks she is unfaithful *			
Agree	20.9	27.2	
Disagree	78.3	72.4	
Don't know/not stated	0.8	0.3	
If she is unfaithful *			
Agree	64.9	71.7	
Disagree	34.8	27.9	
Don't know/not stated	0.3	0.3	
Number of respondents	628	584	

Sig. = Significance Level; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant



Figure 2.9, also present an interesting comparison. Once again, more women than men believed abuse was justified in certain instances.

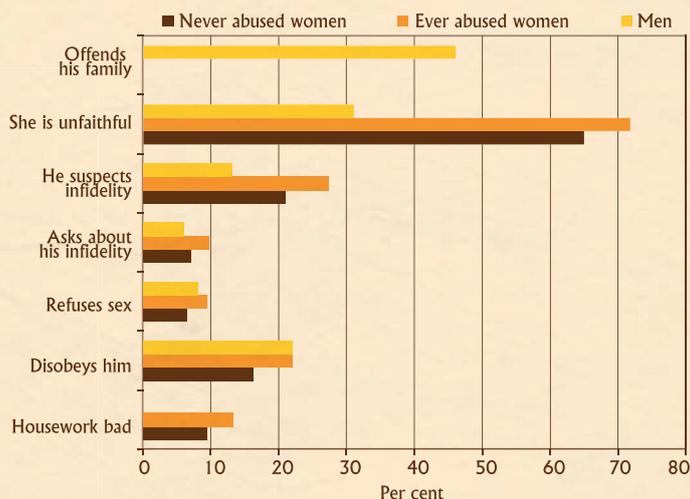


Figure 2.8: "A man can beat his partner when....."

At least 50% of men thought that none of the reasons suggested justified beating their partner. To male respondents, the most widely accepted reason for beating a partner was if she offended his family by being disrespectful (around 50%). A total of 31% of men believed physical abuse was justified if their spouse were having an affair. This contrasts with some 70% of women who felt being unfaithful justified abuse. Approximately 20% of men mentioned disobedience or child neglect as grounds for physical abuse, while 8% of men thought that a partner refusing sex was grounds for beating her.

It is important to compare not only the discrepancies between the women's and men's responses, but also the discrepancies between Tables 2.25 and 2.31. In Table 2.25, 72.5% of respondents who had been physically abused said they did not seek help because

"abuse is normal and not serious". Yet much smaller percentages agreed that certain behaviour justified partner abuse. This indicates clearly that there are many women who do not believe that abuse is justified, yet accept it as normal.

2.11.3 Perceptions of gender roles within relationships

Table 2.32 considers respondents' attitudes to certain gender roles in relationships. It can be seen that the percentages in this table reinforce the patterns in Tables 2.30 and 2.31 and some of the findings reported elsewhere in this study. By far the majority of respondents agreed with the statements "a good wife should obey her husband", "family problems should be kept private", "a man should show his partner who is boss" and "a woman is obliged to have sex with her husband". There were only small differences between respondents who had ever been abused and those who had never abused. Only about 44% of both groups thought that a woman should be free to choose her own friends. However, both respondents who had been abused and those who had never been abused thought that others should prevent a man beating his wife, with abused respondents significantly more likely to hold this view.

Table 2.32: Respondents' attitudes to gender roles (per cent)

	Never abused %	Ever abused %	Sig.	Rural %	Urban %	Sig.
All respondents ever in a relationship						
A good wife obeys her husband n.s. **						
Agree	89.0	92.1		93.4	83.7	
Disagree	10.0	7.7		6.4	14.9	
Don't know/not stated	1.0	0.2		0.2	1.1	
Family problems should be kept private n.s. n.s.						
Agree	91.4	92.3		91.9	91.7	
Disagree	8.6	7.7		8.1	8.3	
A man should show his partner who is boss ** **						
Agree	79.6	87.2		85.3	78.5	
Disagree	19.9	12.8		14.7	20.7	
Don't know/not stated	0.5	0.0		0.0	0.8	
A woman should be free to choose her own friends n.s. n.s.						
Agree	44.2	44.3		42.6	48.1	
Disagree	55.2	54.5		56.7	50.6	
Don't know/not stated	0.6	1.2		0.7	1.4	
A wife is obliged to have sex with husband * **						
Agree	71.1	76.9		76.9	66.9	
Disagree	27.4	22.8		22.7	30.9	
Don't know/not stated	1.4	0.3		0.4	2.2	
Others should prevent a man beating his wife ** **						
Agree	87.4	92.5		92	84.8	
Disagree	11.8	7.4		7.7	14.4	
Don't know/not stated	0.8	0.2		0.4	0.8	
Number of respondents	628	584		849	362	

Sig. = Significance Level; ** = Highly Significant; * = Significant; n.s. = Not Significant

In this table there were significant differences between rural and urban residents, which were as could be expected. However, these differences were quite small, and it is interesting that urban women were less likely to endorse the involvement of others when partner abuse takes place. Presumably this is because urban neighbours are less likely to be relatives. As in Tables 2.30 and 2.31, there were no significant differences between older and younger women, while there were insufficient tertiary educated women to demonstrate a significant difference according to education.

Men interviewed in the men's survey also regarded obedience as crucial, with 97% saying that a good wife does as she is told. However, only 57% said that domestic abuse was a private matter between partners, compared with more than 90% of female respondents. Despite this, only 43% of men thought it was acceptable for outsiders to intervene in disputes between couples, compared with around 90% of female respondents (see Chapter Three). The findings of the women's survey are of great importance to the

promotion of family health and safety in Samoa. They suggest a widespread tendency for Samoan women to accept abuse as inevitable and, at times, justified. In many instances it appears that they are more accepting of domestic abuse than are men. This is definitely not to say that these women ask to be abused, as abusive men sometimes claim when justifying their actions. However it does indicate that many respondents seem to believe that men are entitled to use abuse to dominate relationships.

Although the existence of this belief among some women in no way absolves their partners of responsibility for their actions, it does help to perpetuate partner abuse. When women believe that abuse is a normal part of relationships, abusive men are unlikely to be condemned for their actions, and may even be able to rely on their partners to keep quiet about the abuse inflicted on them. It therefore seems unlikely that domestic abuse will become infrequent in Samoa unless all women modify their opinion and come to believe that it is unacceptable in any circumstances.



REPORT ON THE MEN'S SURVEY

3.1 Introduction

As originally designed, the Samoa Family Health and Safety Study (SFHSS) included only a survey of women. SPC, UNFPA and the Samoa Steering Committee agreed, however, that conducting research on men's experiences and perceptions of domestic abuse was equally important. It is often argued that men are also victims of domestic abuse inflicted by their wives.

In addition, intervention programmes to combat domestic violence against women were considered to have a greater likelihood of being accepted and successfully implemented if both men and women participated in the research. The men's survey questionnaire was therefore developed and the survey implemented.

1.4.1 The Samoan land and people

Domestic abuse of men in Samoa is generally thought not to exist. A man physically abused by his spouse is considered to be weak, foolish, lacking in self-esteem, or besotted with his wife. Although a man who beats his wife is referred to as a wife-beater, this does not necessarily have negative connotations. Abuse committed by men is regarded differently from that committed by women, much as there are two perceptions of infidelity. When a man has extra-marital affairs he is known as an *avi* (a great lover). In contrast, a woman who sleeps with many men is known as a *pau mutu* (whore), which is a very degrading word in the Samoan language, and causes disputes among families when it is used. The prevailing attitude is that when a woman is promiscuous, she is immoral, but the same behaviour in men is accepted and even admired. Many Samoan women believe that extra-marital affairs are a man's «right», and it is generally held that women ought to remain faithful and not object when such events occur, as the man will almost always eventually return to his wife.

The same attitude applies to spousal abuse. Many women and men accept physical abuse, as reflected in

the saying, «*la a le fasi ai foi e le kamaloa i le oso o le gutu*». One hardly ever hears people say «*la a le fasi ai foi e le fafine talu ai le gutu oso poo le fai teine foi*».

In Samoa and elsewhere, the frequency with which physical abuse of husbands by wives occurs is insignificant compared with domestic abuse of women by their male partners. According to the Department of Police and Prisons of Samoa, only one or two men a year report physical abuse by a women. This is confirmed by the results of the men's survey, which found that only two per cent of married respondents were physically abused by their wives. There may well be unreported cases, however; for example, a wife known to one of the researchers poured hot water onto her husband's genitals. The matter was resolved by the family and never reported to the police. In some cases, women abuse their husbands in retaliation for their spouse's constant physical aggression and humiliation.

For the most part, Samoan women have high regard and respect for men generally and their spouses in particular. Men are regarded as heads of households,

irrespective of their education or economic status as compared to their wives. Samoan men generally consider themselves superior to their wives. This attitude is evident in male survey respondents' perceptions that women should obey and do as husbands instruct. The respondents said that women can express ideas and opinions during discussion, but if told to do something they must obey.

As shown in Chapter Two of this study, many Samoan women accept domestic abuse as a man's

right, and as part of marriage. During focus group discussions with married females, many women stated that a man has the right to hit his wife if she disobeys his orders or is disrespectful to his parents (see Chapter Four).

Some also believed that a man has the right to have sex with his wife, regardless of her feelings, and some female respondents stated that the main reason men and women marry is to have a sexual relationship.

3.1.2 Objectives of the men's survey

The survey of men was designed to:

- determine the extent of violence against men;
- document the characteristics of abusive men and abusive women;
- identify causes of domestic violence against men; and
- identify strategies to minimise domestic violence against men and women.

3.1.3 Survey design

As outlined in Chapter One, the SFHSS methodology closely follows that developed by WHO as part of a global study, in order to allow comparison of results from different regions of the world. The SFHSS men's survey was developed by the SPC research team. The objective was to have a final responding sample of at least 500 men aged between 15 and 49 years. To achieve this, 800 households were selected, with one eligible male chosen from each household. A list of households was obtained from the Department of Statistics in Samoa. All villages were classified into 1065 clusters of approximately 20 households. To ensure clusters of equal size, some included households from two geographically adjacent villages. From all 1065 clusters in the country, 40 clusters were randomly chosen; no stratification was applied. All 20 households in each of the 40 randomly selected clusters were chosen, resulting in a national sample of approximately one male in every 20 households. Any households to which the

interviewers belonged were excluded from the study. The eligible respondents were males aged 15 to 49, who either usually lived in the household or were visitors who had been staying in the house for four weeks or more. If a household included more than one eligible male, a participant was selected by allocating a number to each and then drawing (at random) one of a number of similarly numbered corks from a bag. The selected male was asked to participate in a private interview; if he chose not to participate, the interviewer recorded the reason for refusal before moving on to the next selected household. No replacements were made.

The selection of only one male per household rather than all eligible males probably biased the sample, in the same way this method biased the women's survey. There are insufficient details on household composition, however, to verify this or assess the extent of bias.

3.1.4 Survey training and fieldwork

The survey interviewers were 15 men aged 19 to 35. All had completed secondary school. Interviewers included both never married and married men, from rural villages as well as urban Apia. Most had some work experience, although a few had just completed secondary school or never worked before. Training took place two weeks prior to fieldwork. Interviewers were trained in how to ask

survey questions, and how to deal with situations that could arise during interviews. Additional time was spent studying concepts and practical aspects of fieldwork. Interviewers tested the questionnaire before the pilot was finalised, and several changes were made to ensure respondents would understand the questions. The fieldwork took place during a seven-week period.

3.1.5 Data analysis

The data were analysed using the US Bureau of the Census IMP4.1 software. This software is intended for analysis of census data, and does not include subroutines for calculating statistical significance; as a result, no significance tests were performed on

these data. In view of this limitation and the sampling bias described above, the results of the men's survey should be treated as indicative only, and should not be interpreted as being statistically representative of all Samoan men.

3.2 Background Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 664 men completed the interview or answered most of the questions. As the focus of the survey was domestic violence against men, an important distinction was made between men who had ever been married or lived with a female partner

and those who had not. Questions about possible domestic violence by a female partner were asked only of men who had ever been in a relationship, while other questions were asked of all respondents.

3.2.1 Age

As shown in Figure 3.1, teenagers aged 15–19 accounted for 20% of all respondents; none were ever in a relationship. The second largest group (17%) were aged 20–24. Men aged 40 and over accounted for just 19% of all respondents and 32% of men ever in a relationship. Overall, 52% of all respondents and 24% of those ever in a relationship were aged 15–29.

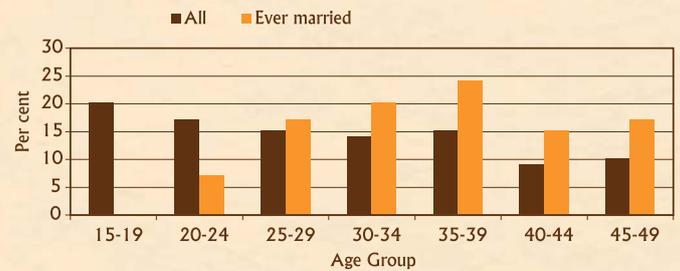


Figure 3.1: Age distribution of respondents

3.2.2 Education

Data from the 1991 census shows that the percentage of the Samoan population participating in school improved markedly at all levels between 1981 and 1991. This improvement is reflected by the high percentage of respondents (72% of all and 76% of those ever in a relationship) who completed secondary school level. Only 1% of both groups had never attended school.

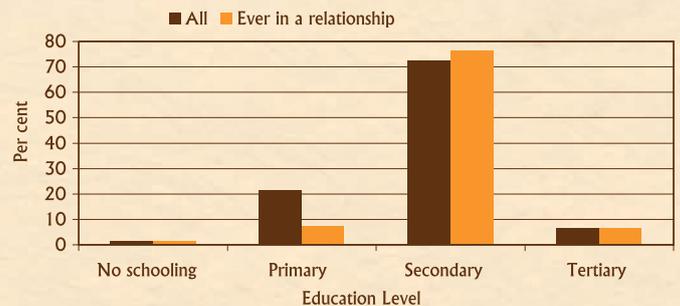


Figure 3.2: Highest level of education completed by respondents

3.2.3 Marital status

Of 664 men surveyed, 58% (386) were or had been married, or were or had been living with a woman at some time in their lives. In this report, “ever in a relationship” will be used to refer both to those who had been legally married and those who had been in a de facto marriage. Of those who had ever been in a relationship, the majority (82%) were legally married; 14% were in a de facto union; while 4% were divorced.

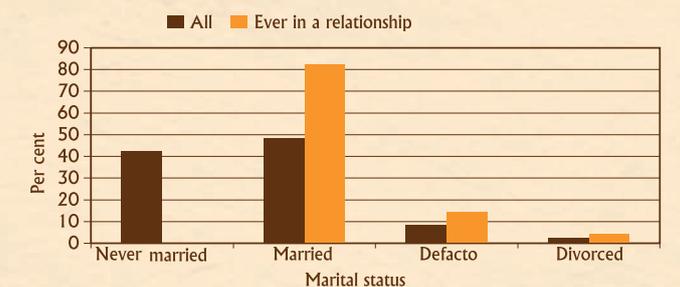


Figure 3.3: Marital status of respondents

3.2.4 Main daily activity

The women's survey (see Chapter Two, Table 2.13) revealed a highly significant association between the type of work men were engaged in and abusive behaviour, with

abused women more likely than non-abused women to have partners who were planters or fishermen. For this reason respondents in the men's survey were asked to describe their main daily activities (see Figure 3.4; the association between spousal abuse and abusive men's daily activities is shown in Table 3.3).

As could be expected in a subsistence-based economy, the most common daily activities of all respondents were fishing and farming (practised by 38% of all respondents and 34% of those ever in a relationship). Men in full-time paid employment included 26% of all and 31% of those ever in a relationship. Twenty-two per cent of all respondents and 16% of those ever in a relationship were engaged in domestic duties.

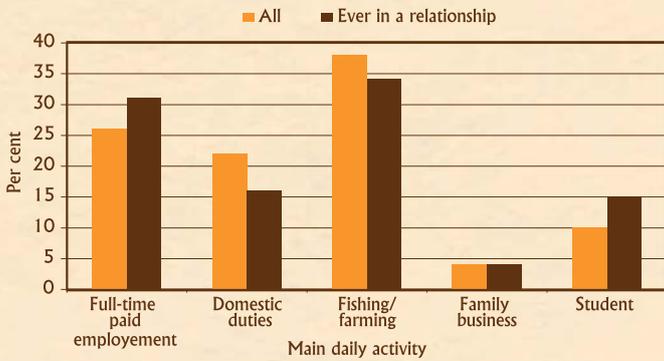


Figure 3.4: Main daily activity of respondents

3.2.5 Matai title



The bestowing of a matai title on a man or a woman is generally an indication that the person is believed to be responsible enough to care for family affairs, and able to make wise decisions regarding family and village affairs. Twenty per cent of all male respondents and 31% of those ever in a relationship held matai titles.

3.2.6 Place of usual residence

Place of residence has some influence on the way spouses treat each other, and on domestic violence. Survey respondents were asked where they usually lived; 58% of all and 30% of respondents who were ever in relationship lived with the respondent's

parents. Those living with their wife and children included 32% of all and 55% of ever married respondents, while 8% of all (and 14% of those ever in a relationship) lived with spouse's parents; 1% lived with their spouse and other people.

3.2.7 Religion

All respondents stated that they were church members; the percentages belonging to Samoa's three major churches are shown in Figure 3.5. In addition, 27% of all respondents and 31% of those ever in a relationship belonged to "other" churches.

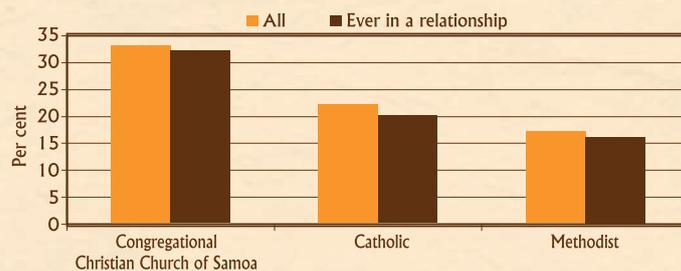


Figure 3.5: Church membership

3.2.8 Alcohol consumption

The risk of domestic violence is increased through the use of alcohol. The survey asked the respondents whether or not they drank alcohol; if they did, they were asked

how many drinks they had consumed over the previous seven days. Forty-two per cent of those ever in a relationship and 31% of all respondents drank alcohol.

3.3 Domestic Violence Against Men

This section focuses on men who had ever been in a relationship, and who experienced domestic abuse inflicted by their wives or partners. It reviews the type of abuse, the characteristic of abused respondents and their wives or partners, and the causes of abuse.

A total of 386 men who were ever in a relationship were asked if they had experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from their spouse.

Physical abuse included:

- slapping or throwing objects,
- hitting with a fist,
- kicking, dragging or beating,
- choking and strangling, and
- using a gun, knife or other weapon against the respondent.

Sexual abuse included:

- forcing the respondent to have sexual intercourse or touching their genitals against their wishes, and
- forcing the respondent to perform sex acts they found degrading and humiliating.

Psychological or emotional abuse included:

- insults,
- belittling or humiliating the respondent in front of others,
- stopping the respondent from seeing friends or family, and
- threats or intimidation.

3.3.1 Men's experience of abuse



Women were most likely to express their anger and frustration with their partners verbally, as is reflected in the much higher incidence of emotional abuse (45% of those ever in a relationship), as compared to sexual abuse (reported by 3%) and physical abuse (2%). Less than 2% of respondents experienced both physical and emotional abuse; none had suffered all three types of abuse.

Emotional abuse was reported by 175 individuals. Common forms of emotional abuse included spouses demanding to know the whereabouts of their partner at all times, suspecting their partner of having an affair with another woman, and stopping their partner from speaking to other women. It should be noted that respondents did not necessarily characterise their spouse's insistence on knowing where they were at all times as emotional abuse.

Sexual abuse by their partner was reported by 11 individuals; none of the respondents

admitted to forcing their partners to have sex. The latter is not consistent with the finding from the women's survey that 17.4% of women ever in a relationship had been forced by their partners to have sex (see Chapter Two, Table 2.2). It is possible that men were embarrassed to admit to having forced sex upon their partners. The discrepancy may also reflect differing perspectives on the issue of abuse. Samoan law does not consider forced sexual intercourse between husband and wife to be rape, and many men may take the same view. In addition, although unwilling, women may consent to sex to please their partner, or to avoid being abused. This was also reflected in the focus group discussions (see Chapter Four).

Eight respondents reported experiencing physical abuse. Of these, six were slapped or hit by objects thrown at them, and two were hit with a fist, kicked, dragged or beaten. Five of the physically abused men admitted to physically abusing their wives.

3.3.2 Characteristics of emotionally abused men and their abusive partners

As shown in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.6, women of all age groups emotionally abuse their spouses, and men of all ages are abused; the proportion of abused men in different age groups closely matches the age distribution of men ever in a relationship (see Figure 3.1).

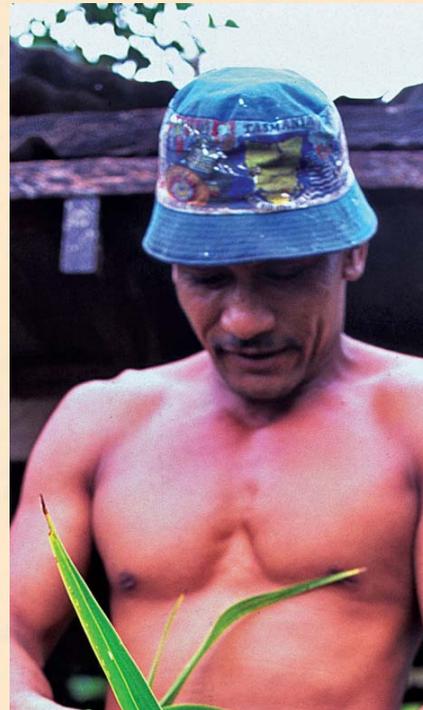
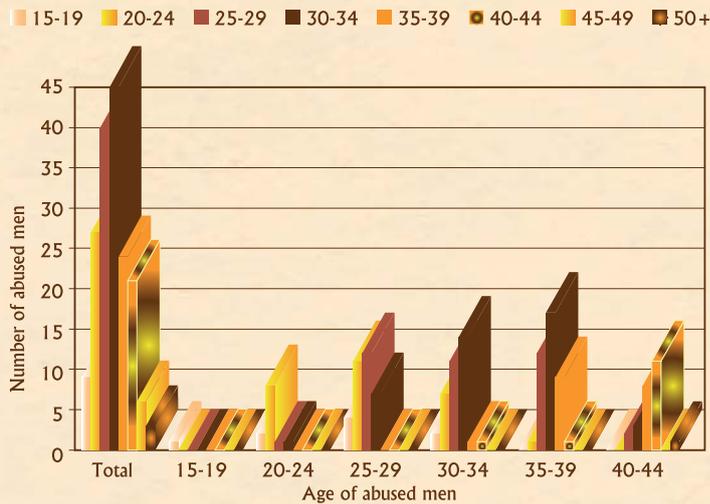


Figure 3.6: Age groups of emotionally abused men and abusive women

Table 3.1: Number and age groups of emotionally abused men, grouped by age of abusive women

Age groups of abused men	Age groups of emotionally abusive women								
	Total	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+
Total	175	9	27	40	45	24	21	6	3
15-19	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20-24	12	2	8	1	1	-	-	-	-
25-29	34	4	11	12	7	-	-	-	-
30-34	36	2	7	11	14	1	1	-	-
35-39	40	-	1	12	17	9	1	-	-
40-44	25	-	-	2	3	8	11	-	1
45-49	27	-	-	2	3	6	8	6	2

Table 3.2 indicates that women of all educational backgrounds abused their spouses, while education levels of abused men closely matched those of all men ever in a relationship. Sixty-seven per cent of abused men (and 76% of all men ever in a relationship) had a secondary education; 6% of both groups had a tertiary education.

The majority (75%) of emotionally abusive women were engaged primarily in domestic duties; 37 (21%) were employed full time, as shown in Table 3.3 and Figure 3.7.

Table 3.2: Highest level of education completed by abused men and abusive women

Abused men's highest level of education completed	Abusive women's highest level of education completed		
	Primary	Secondary	Unknown
Total	11	158	6
No schooling	1	2	-
Primary	4	21	2
Secondary	5	127	3
Tertiary	1	8	1

Fishing and farming were the main activities of 41% of abused men, with 23% engaged in domestic duties, and 30% in paid employment. The results indicate that no abused men reported being full-time students, although 15% of all men ever in a relationship listed this as their main daily activity (Fig. 3.4).

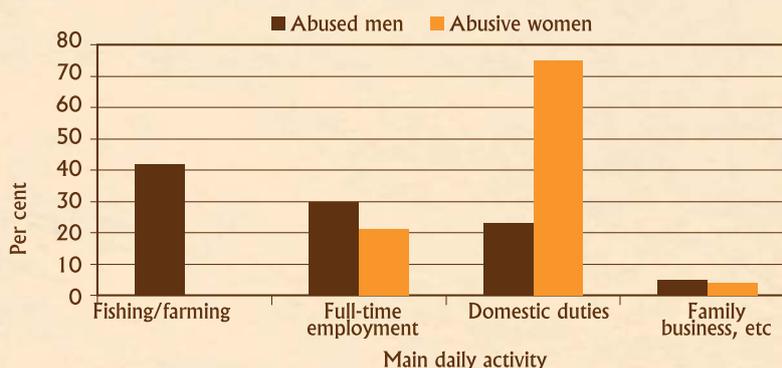


Figure 3.7: Main daily activities of emotionally abused men and their partners

Table 3.3: Main daily activities of emotionally abused men and abusive women

Main daily activities of emotionally abused men	Number engaged in activity			
	Full-time paid employed	Domestic duties	Family business	Other
Total	37	131	4	3
Paid employment	11	40	1	-
Domestic duties	13	27	-	-
Fishing/Farming	12	59	-	3
Family business	1	5	3	-

3.3.3 Sexual abuse and physical abuse

The characteristics of sexually and physically abused men and their abusive wives are shown in Table 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 (see also Fig. 3.8). The number of men who experienced sexual or physical abuse was very small, making it impossible to draw broader conclusions from the data.

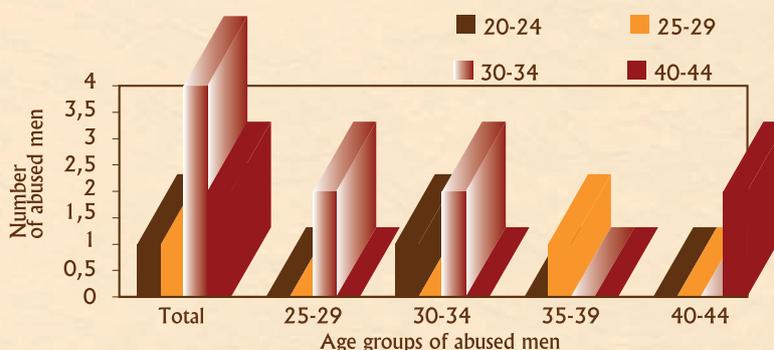


Figure 3.8: Number and age groups of physically abused men and abusive women

Table 3.4: Age groups of sexually and physically abused men and abusive women

Age groups of abused men	Age groups of abusive women and type of abuse									
	20-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44	
	Sex	Phys	Sex	Phys	Sex	Phys	Sex	Phys	Sex	Phys
Total	3	1	2	1	3	4	2	-	1	2
20-24	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25-29	1	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
30-34	1	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
35-39	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
40-44	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	2

Table 3.5: Highest level of education completed by sexually and physically abused men, grouped by abusive women's education level and type of abuse

Abused men's highest level of education completed	Highest level of education completed by abusive women, and type of abuse					
	Primary		Secondary		Unknown	
	Sex	Phys	Sex	Phys	Sex	Phys
Total	1	-	10	7	-	1
Primary	1	-	-	1	-	1
Secondary	-	-	10	5	-	-
Tertiary	-	-	-	1	-	-

Table 3.6: Main daily activity of sexually abused men and abusive women

Main activity of abused men	Main activity of abusive women, and type of abuse					
	Paid employed		Domestic duties		Other	
	Sex	Phys	Sex	Phys	Sex	Phys
Total	3	1	8	6	-	1
Paid employed	1	-	1	3	-	-
Domestic duties	1	1	4	1	-	-
Fishing/Farming	1	-	3	2	-	1

Table 3.7: Main place of usual residence of physically abused men

Main place of residence of abused men	Number
Total	8
Parents	4
Wife's parents	1
Couple and children only	3

Some women physically abused their partner while living with his parents, as shown in Table 3.7. Although it is unusual for a family to permit such behaviour, these men may have beaten their spouses, who then

responded in self-defence. It is also possible that the women beat their spouses when the man's family was not present, or was otherwise unable to see the abuse occurring.

3.4 Reasons for Physical Abuse by Female Partners

Respondents who stated that their spouses beat them were asked why they believed the abuse occurred. The reasons given are shown in Table 3.8, and are similar to those given by men when asked why they physically abused their spouses.

Table 3.8: Reasons women physically abused their spouse

Reasons women beat their spouse	Number
Total	8
Answering back or disobedience	2
Husband suspected of having an extra-marital affair	2
Food was not prepared	1
Children were not cared for	1
Husband was drunk	1
Spouse sought to protect herself from husband's beating	1

3.5 Men's Experiences of Non-spousal Abuse

In many instances the cycle of domestic violence is perpetuated by individuals who were themselves abused during childhood. Conversely, some individuals who are abused as children do not develop into abusive adults. To help explain this linkage, respondents were asked whether they had been physically or sexually abused by people other than their spouse. If they had been abused, they were asked about their experience of physical abuse before age 15, and whether they had ever been forced to have sexual intercourse, or perform degrading or humiliating sexual acts. Respondents were also asked their age during their first sexual intercourse, and whether the intercourse was voluntary or forced.



3.5.1 Physical abuse before the age of 15

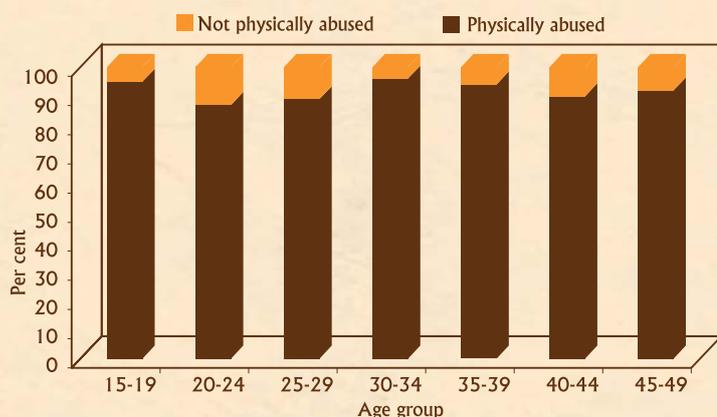


Figure 3.9: Age of respondents by whether or not they were physically abused before the age of 15

Samoans often say spare the rod and spoil the child. That this belief is apparently widespread is reflected by the very high (92%) percentage of respondents who were physically abused before they reached 15 years of age. Physical abuse of children appears to have been consistently practised for many years in Samoa, with more than 80% of respondents of all ages (from 15–49) reporting that they were physically abused (see Fig. 3.9).

Data indicate that children are most likely to be abused by people they know very well (e.g. parents, teachers, church ministers).

Samoa has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but children have nevertheless died as a result of being beaten (by parents or elderly relatives). Government regulations state that only principals or head teachers are allowed to administer corporal punishment (excessive physical abuse of school children can be prosecuted under the Crimes Ordinance of 1961). The results of this survey suggest physical beatings of children by teachers are common. Teachers, parents and pastors often have ambivalent views about corporal punishment, with some suggesting that physical beatings are part of Samoan culture.

The use of physical force to discipline children or to express anger and frustration on the part of an adult toward a child may have long-lasting detrimental effects on children's lives, and may potentially affect a subsequent generation as well, if an abusive child develops into an abusive adult. Samoa should honour the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and adults should be encouraged to express frustrations, hostility, and ill feelings toward children (and others) through dialogue rather than physical abuse. Children should also be encouraged to express their own views and thoughts, as an inability to communicate effectively with adults is one of the factors contributing to youth suicide.

3.5.2 Sexual abuse

Seven per cent (44) of respondents reported being forced to have sexual intercourse, or engage in degrading or humiliating sexual acts, by persons other than their spouse or partner. Fa'afafines accounted for the majority of the perpetrators (57%), while 27% were girlfriends, as shown in Table 3.9. The results suggests that some respondents may not have treated this question seriously.

Table 3.9: Perpetrators of sexual abuse of respondents

Perpetrators	Number	%
Total	44	100
Fa'afafine	25	57
Girlfriend	12	27
Stranger	3	7
Neighbour	3	7
Mother	1	2

The age of respondents when first sexually abused is given in Table 3.10, which shows that most (82%) were between 15 and 24.

Table 3.10: Age of respondents at the first time the sexual abused first occurred by persons who committed the offence

Perpetrators	Total	Age of respondents when sexual abuse first occurred					Don't know
		4-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	
Total	44	1	5	26	10	1	1
Fa'afafine	25	-	3	16	6	-	-
Girlfriend	12	-	2	7	2	1	-
Neighbour	3	-	-	2	1	-	-
Stranger	3	1	-	1	1	-	-
Mother	1	-	-	-	-	-	1

Respondents were also asked if they had ever been forced to have sexual intercourse. Of 664 respondents, 22 (3%) reported being raped sometime in their life. Their ages when raped are given in Table 3.11; 86% were between 15 and 24.

Table 3.11: Age of respondents when first raped

Perpetrators	Total	Age of respondents			
		10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29
Total	22	1	12	7	2
Girlfriend	9	-	5	3	1
Stranger	6	-	3	3	-
Fa'afafine	4	1	2	1	-
Neighbour	2	-	1	-	1
Family member	1	-	1	-	-

Rape victims were also asked how often they had been raped, with 86% stating it had occurred once or twice (Table 3.12). In addition, 17 respondents reported both rape and degrading or humiliating sex acts.

Table 3.12: Number of times the rape occurred

Perpetrators	Total	Frequency of rape		
		1-2 times	3-4 times	More than 5 times
Total	22	19	2	1
Girlfriend	9	7	1	1
Stranger	6	5	1	-
Fa'afafine	4	4	-	-
Neighbour	2	2	-	-
Family member	1	1	-	-

Fa'afafine were most likely to have forced or performed degrading sex upon the respondents, while strangers and neighbours each accounted for 7% of cases. It is alarming to hear about children being sexually exploited by adults, including by neighbours and family

members. Although sexual abuse of men appears to be taking place, it is very rarely reported to police. Further research should be undertaken to investigate the extent of sexual abuse of men, and male children, and to determine the impact on their lives.

3.5.3 Age at first sex

Of 278 men who had never been married or in a *de facto* relationship, 47% had already had sex, either with women or men. As Table 3.13 shows, respondents who had never been married or lived with a woman were more likely to have sex at an early age.

Table 3.13: Age at first sex according to marital status

Marital status of respondent	%	Age at first sex	
		10-14	15-19
Ever in a relationship	2	42	56
Never in a relationship	6	64	30

The results of this study indicate that many Samoan men are sexually active before marriage, during their teenage years. Sexual activities outside marriage could pose a threat to men, women and children due to the risk of sexually transmitted infections.

3.6 Characteristics of Abusive Men

There is a broad spectrum of behaviour that spouses may engage in, and the emotional and psychological scars from abusive relationships may take much longer to heal (and have a far more damaging effect on women) than physical injuries. About 12% (47) of male respondents ever in a relationship abused their spouses both physically and emotionally; 45% (173) abused their spouses emotionally; 18% abused their wives physically; none admitted to sexual abuse. Physically abusive men were asked why they abused their spouses, both to allow comparison with the

results of the women's survey, and to help identify strategies to combat domestic violence.

This section focuses on the characteristics of physically abusive men and their spouses, the behaviour of physically abusive men, causes of physical abuse, and abuse witnessed by abusive men when they were children. Although a greater percentage of respondents committed emotional abuse, such abuse is more difficult to define and quantify, and will not be examined in detail.

3.6.1 Reasons respondents physically abused their partners

Eighteen per cent (69) of all respondents ever in a relationship who physically abused their partners were asked why they had been abusive. About 74% (51) of the 69 abusive respondents physically abused their spouses for “answering back” or disobedience. Twenty-six per cent (18) gave other reasons, including: their spouse refused to have sex, failed to care for the children, or was disrespectful to the respondent’s parents; respondents suspected their spouse of having an affair; the respondent

was drunk; or because of a lack of money. These statistics confirm the findings of both the women’s survey and the qualitative research, which indicate that men abuse their spouses primarily as a response to answering back, or disobedience. It appears that Samoan men treat their partners in much the same way as they do children. As discussed in Chapter Four, many Samoan parents, teachers and pastors physically abuse disobedient children, apparently believing it to be an effective disciplinary action.

3.6.2 Characteristics of physically abusive respondents

The age distribution of physically abusive men was similar to that of their wives. Thirty-two percent of abusive men (and 36% of their spouses) were aged 20–29; 42% (44% of spouses) were aged 30–39, and 26% (13% of spouses) were between 40 and 49. The majority of physically abusive respondents and their spouses had completed secondary education, with more men than women completing tertiary (see Table 3.14).

The data in Table 3.15 indicates that the majority of abusive men held full-time paid jobs, while their wives spent most of their time doing domestic chores. It is possible that women of low economic status, who are dependent on their husbands for financial support, may be more at risk of being abused than are financially independent women. This was indicated by the women’s survey results, which showed that women from households of low economic status were most likely to experience abuse.

In Samoan society, the *matai* is supposedly the peace-maker within the family and village community. *Matai* command the respect of village inhabitants and uphold law and order. They are also expected not to abuse their wives. Of the 69 physically abusive respondents, 35% were *matai* and 65% untitled men. Although the percentage of *matai* among abusive respondents is slightly higher than the percentage of *matai* among all respondents ever in a relationship (31%) (see Section 3.2.5), the number of cases is too small to indicate a significant association. Moreover, the survey did not ask when the abuse occurred, so some may have abused their wives before receiving their *matai* titles.

Alcohol is often seen as a major cause of domestic violence, but the survey showed that the majority (52%) of abusive respondents did not drink. Alcohol use was somewhat more common (48%) among physically abusive respondents than among all men ever in a relationship, 42% of whom drank.

Table 3.14: Education levels of physically abusive respondents and their spouses

	Abusive respondents		Respondent’s spouses	
	%	Number	%	Number
Highest level of education completed				
Total	100	69	100	69
Primary	11	8	6	4
Secondary	80	55	87	60
Tertiary	6	4	1	1
None	3	2	1	1
Unknown	-	-	5	3

Table 3.15: Main daily activity of abusive men and their spouses

	Abusive respondents		Respondent’s spouses	
	%	Number	%	Number
Main daily activity				
Total	69	100	69	100
Full-time paid employment	30	44	10	15
Fishing/farming	25	36	-	-
Domestic duties	11	16	57	83
In family business	3	4	1	1
Other	-	-	1	1

Samoan women traditionally have a well-established and recognised status in their own families and village communities. This status changes when a woman marries. If women live with their husband’s family they become either the wife of a talking chief/orator (*tausifaletua*), or the wife of an untitled man (*taulealea*), depending on their husband’s status. Wives are often regarded as the home-maker and servant (*tautua*) of the husband’s family. In modern Samoa, however, this depends on how the wife is perceived by her in-laws. A man may beat his spouse if encouraged to do so by his mother or sisters, which can occur if they dislike the wife, or perceive her to be disrespectful to family members.

Traditionally, no man would physically abuse his spouse if a couple lived with the wife's parents. The survey revealed, however, that seven physically abusive men (10%) lived with their wife's parents (see Table 3.16). Fifty-five per cent of physically abusive respondents lived alone with their wife and children, and 33% lived with their own parents. These figures are close to the pattern for all respondents, indicating that place of residence does not appear to be associated with physical abuse of a partner.

Table 3.16: Makeup of physically abusive respondents' households

Who lives with the respondent	Number	%
Total	69	100
His wife and children	38	55
His parents	23	33
His wife's parents	7	10
Other	1	2

3.6.3 Family factors associated with domestic violence

It is often argued that domestic violence is cyclic, in that a son or daughter is more likely to become abusive if they have abusive parents. To better understand this linkage, the survey asked men about their knowledge

of their parents' relationship: Has there ever been a time in your life that you saw/heard your father beat your mother?

Table 3.17 Spousal abuse by respondents' fathers

Situations	Abusive respondents		Non-abusive respondents ever in a relationship	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	69	100	317	100
Father beat mother	29	42	98	31
Father did not beat mother	27	54	214	68
No father	3	4	5	1

As shown in Table 3.17, the percentage (42%) of abusive respondents who witnessed their fathers abusing their mothers was higher than that of non-abusive respondents who were ever in a relationship (31%). Twenty-three per cent of respondents ever in

a relationship who witnessed abuse by their fathers were themselves abusive; 15% of respondents who had never witnessed abuse as children developed into abusive adults. Overall, 33% of all men ever in a relationship witnessed spousal abuse by their fathers.



3.6.4 Reasons for father's spousal abuse

When asked why their fathers beat their spouses, respondents gave reasons that were similar to those listed by abusive respondents as to why they beat their own spouses, with over 60% indicating it was because their mothers had answered back or been disobedient (Table 3.18).

The figures in Tables 3.17 and 3.18 suggest that witnessing spousal abuse by their fathers may have impacted on respondents' attitudes and behaviour, helping initiate another generational cycle of abuse. Educational and awareness programmes should be encouraged, and should be designed to inform the public about the dangers children face when living in an abusive environment. These programmes should also address the impact on women's lives and self-esteem.

Table 3.18 Reasons for spousal abuse by respondents' fathers

Situations	Abusive respondents whose father abused their spouse		Non-abusive respondents whose father abused their spouse	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	29	100	98	100
Answering back/disobedience	20	69	61	62
Drunkenness	3	10	8	8
Other	6	21	29	30

3.6.5 Respondents' view of father beating mother

The survey asked respondents about their views concerning their father's spousal abuse. Of 205 respondents who were aware that their fathers had beaten their spouses, 24 (12%) stated that their

fathers acted properly, while 181 (88%) said the abuse was wrong. Interestingly, 26 (23%) of the 112 ever married respondents who viewed their father's actions as wrong were themselves abusive.

Table 3.19 Respondents' views regarding their father's spousal abuse

	Never married		Married		De facto		Separated	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Was it right or wrong for father to have hit spouse?								
Total	78	100	100	100	22	100	5	100
Right	9	12	11	11	4	18	0	0
Wrong	69	88	89	89	18	82	5	100

The percentage (33%) of ever married respondents whose fathers engaged in spousal abuse is substantially higher than the 18% of spouses who reported beating their own spouses. Although encouraging, this apparent downward trend in the incidence of abuse

should not be considered indicative of the prevalence of physical abuse in Samoa, and broader conclusions should not be drawn until additional research is conducted.

3.7 Opinions and Attitudes Towards Gender Roles

Men's views, perceptions and ideas about gender roles can have a significant influence on the way they treat women. For example, many men believe that if they are married, their spouse is obliged to have sex, irrespective of her own feelings at the time. Women's own perceptions are also important: data

from the women's survey indicate that women often feel the same way, and anticipate having sex with their husbands regardless of their own feelings. This section explores the opinions and attitudes of all respondents concerning gender issues and domestic violence against women.

3.7.1 Expression of opinion

As discussed previously, a primary reason given for physical abuse of a spouse is answering back or disobedience. Men were asked whether a woman should have the right to express her opinions, whether or not the husband agrees with them. Ninety-five per

cent of all respondents (including 93% of abusive and 97% of non-abusive men) agreed that women should have the right to voice their opinions. Of the 5% who said women did not have the right to express their views, 44% were ever in a relationship.

3.7.2 A good wife obeys her spouse and does as she is told

The survey asked men to react to the statement: A good wife obeys her husband and does as she is told. About 98% per cent of the respondents agreed that a good woman obeys her husband; of these 58% were ever in a relationship. It is notable that only 2% of respondents believed a woman could be disobedient

and still be a good wife, which confirms the high value Samoan men place on obedience. The result appears to conflict with the opinion expressed by 95% of respondents, that women should have the right to express their own opinions. There are several possible explanations: men may not consider answering back

or disobedience an expression of opinion; men may anticipate that women will refrain from expressing their own views when told to obey; or men may be prepared to accept expressions of opinion, but expect

women to obey nevertheless. Further research is needed to clarify men's views concerning disobedience and the expression of opinions or discussion of issues between men and their spouses.

3.7.3 Is domestic violence a public matter?

In Samoa and other societies, domestic violence is regarded as an issue that pertains solely to the couple or the family within which the violence occurs. Those who seek to interfere to stop the abuse are often not welcomed; people are usually reluctant to intervene

in what they perceive to be an internal matter, best resolved by those involved. Fifty-seven per cent of urban respondents and 63% of rural respondents supported the view that domestic violence is a private matter.

3.7.4 Should a woman ask her spouse to cook and clean the house?

About 79% of all respondents (of whom 60% were ever in a relationship) agreed that women should have the right to ask their husbands to cook and clean. Of the 21% who disagreed, 50% were ever in a relationship. Traditionally, Samoan women were expected to do

the domestic chores, while men worked in the family plantation. Domestic duties such as cleaning, cooking and looking after children were considered by society to be easier than gardening and fishing.

3.7.5 When is physical abuse justified?



All respondents were asked their views about what, if any, actions on the part of a woman justified physical abuse by her spouse. Although 74% of abusive men gave answering back or disobedience as the reason why they physically abused their wives (see Section 3.6.1), Table 3.20 shows that only 22% of all respondents believed disobedience was a valid reason for beating one's wife. The percentage of abusive respondents who believed disobedience justified physical abuse was higher (43%, not shown in table), but still far below the 74% who abused their wives for this reason. It appears some men understand that beating their spouse for disobeying orders is unjustified, but resort to abuse nonetheless. The highest percentage (46%) of respondents believed beating one's wife was justified if she was disrespectful to her husband's parents or family. In Samoa, once a person marries, he or she is married not only to their spouse, but also to the spouse's immediate and extended family. The view that disrespect of a man's family justifies domestic abuse reflects the importance that is placed on familial respect.

Table 3.20: Respondents' opinions on when spousal abuse is justified (per cent)

Asked of all respondents		
Is spousal abuse justified by the following situations?	Yes	No
Disrespectful to husband's parents/family	46	54
Wife having an affair with another man	31	69
Disobedient to husband	22	78
Wife not caring for children	20	80
Husband suspects wife having an affair	13	87
Refused to have sex	8	92
Wife asked if he's having an affair with another woman	6	94

Table 3.21 shows the views of respondents in urban and rural areas. It is striking to note that in almost all situations the proportion of urban men who believed spousal abuse to be justified was higher than the percentage of rural men.

Table 3.21: Urban versus rural respondents' opinion on when spousal abuse is justified (per cent)

Is spousal abuse is justified by the following situations?	Urban		Rural	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Disrespectful to husband's parents/family	50	50	41	59
Wife having an affair with another man	34	66	27	73
Disobedient to husband	26	74	19	81
Wife not caring for children	19	81	22	78
Husband suspects wife is having an affair	12	88	15	85
Refused to have sex	10	90	5	95
Wife asked if he's having an affair with another woman	7	93	5	95

3.8 When is a Married Women Justified in Refusing to Have Sex With Her Spouse?

Although respondents stated that none of them forced their spouse to have sex when she did not wish to, it is interesting to note that 11 respondents admitted that their wives forced them to have sex when they did not want to. However, one respondent claimed that he beat his wife because she refused to have sex with him, and one respondent claimed that his wife beat him when he refused to have sex with her.

The survey asked respondents whether or not they agreed that married women should have the right to refuse to have sex with their husbands in the situations listed in Table 3.22. High percentages (between 63% and 95%) of men in both urban and rural areas agreed that women should be able to refuse to have sex with their spouses in all situations, except when a women did not wish to become pregnant.

Table 3.22: Respondents' opinion on when woman are justified in refusing to have sex with their spouses (per cent)

Is refusal to have sex justified in the following situations?	Urban		Rural	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Having menstrual period	94	6	95	5
Wife is sick	90	10	89	11
Recently gave birth	88	12	88	12
Husband having sex with another woman	85	15	86	14
Husband beats up wife	81	19	79	21
Wife has interest in having sex	70	30	64	36
Husband is intoxicated	63	37	66	34
Wife doesn't want to get pregnant	12	88	9	91

It is important to further investigate whether men wanted women to use birth control methods and continue to have sex, or if they wanted additional children. Health officials should also examine the impact of such an attitude on couples with respect to sexually transmitted infections. Men's attitudes could also be interpreted as an exercise of power and control over women's bodies and choices.

A significant percentage of respondents (30–36%) believed a woman should have sex with her husband even if she had no desire to have sex, or when he is intoxicated (34–37%), or physically abuses her (19–21%). This is a denial of a woman's basic human rights, but is nevertheless supported by most women (see Chapter Two). This encourages the perpetuation of men's abusive attitudes and behaviours.



3.9 Strategies to Eliminate Violence Against Women

This section explores possible strategies to help both men and women live in a peaceful family and community. All 664 survey respondents were asked their opinions and perceptions of mechanisms that should be in place to help eliminate domestic violence against women. The following questions were asked:

- What should a man do to refrain from beating his wife?
- What should a woman do to protect herself from being beaten by her husband?
- What should civil societies responsible for peace within a family do to eliminate family violence?

- What should Village Councils do to help solve the problem of domestic violence?
- What should the churches do to combat family violence?

The results show that many Samoans believe domestic violence to be a private matter between husband and wife, and may refrain from intervening for that reason. It is important to encourage public awareness regarding the detrimental effects of domestic violence against women, and to encourage the public to intervene, and stop abuse from escalating.

3.9.1 What should a man do to refrain from beating his wife?

Table 3.23 compares the views and opinions of respondents with respect to the strategies which they believed men should use to refrain from beating their wives. Fifty-nine per cent of all respondents (and 45% of abusive men) suggested men should control their anger and be patient; they further indicated men should leave their house until they could control their anger (not shown in table). The proportion advocating a closer relationship with God as a solution to spousal abuse was twice as high (20% as opposed to 10%) among abusive respondents.

Table 3.23: Respondents' opinions on what men should do to refrain from beating their wives

Actions men should take to refrain from beating their wives	All respondents		Abusive respondents	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	664	100	69	100
Control anger and be patient	395	59	31	45
Have a close relationship with God	65	10	14	20
Talk with spouse when encountering problems	56	8	10	14
Know spouse's life history before marriage	38	6	6	9
Quit drinking alcohol	34	5	6	9
Love wife	31	5	-	-
Other	45	7	2	3

Men's principal solution to domestic violence involved anger management, and this suggests programmes should be available to assist men with this. It appears that when women disobey their husbands, men resolve their anger or embarrassment through physical action. If men were able to control and manage their frustrations or disappointments, however, they would be able to resolve problems in a non-violent way. It is important for civil societies to develop workable strategies to help men control their violent emotions and actions.

3.9.2 What should women do to protect themselves from being beaten?

Men were asked what they thought women should do to protect themselves from being beaten, or to avoid physical abuse (Table 3.24). When responses that include obedience are totalled, over 77% of men indicated that women should obey their husbands to avoid being physically abused. This finding is consistent

with the main reason given by abusive men for their abusive behaviour (see Section 3.6.1).

Samoan parents normally beat their children when they are disobedient, and it appears that some men use the same means to enforce obedience in

Table 3.24: Respondents' opinions on what women should do to avoid being beaten by their husbands

	Number	%
Total	664	100
Obey men's word	331	50
Obey and be humble	76	11
Obey and be patient	74	11
Be patient	53	8
Obey and love	30	5
Other	100	15

their wives. None of the respondents said that men should obey their wives, reflecting men's belief of themselves as superior to and more powerful than women. These findings reinforce the need to focus on policies and programmes that help control or manage men's anger and frustrations. The issue of power must also be addressed, and men should realise the importance of sharing ideas and views, both as an effective means of communication, and as a means to reduce abusive behaviour.

3.9.3 Actions by civil societies to overcome domestic violence

Civil societies such as Mapusaga O Aiga, Suicide Awareness, Sautiamai, and the Department of Police and Prisons (DPP) are the primary organisations that victims of domestic violence approach for assistance. Because all of these civil societies are based in Apia, people in rural villages are often not aware of them, and may be unable to travel to their

offices to report abuse, or seek help. Only DPP is well known by the majority of people in Samoa, but many individuals are reluctant to seek help from DPP, for both family and personal reasons. Some people seek the advice and help of church ministers, but many resist approaching them, because of they are held in such high regard.

Table 3.25: Respondents' opinions regarding actions civil societies should take to eliminate domestic violence

Actions civil societies should take to combat domestic violence	Number	%
Total	664	100
Conduct seminars in schools, village communities, church groups, and families about ways to stop domestic violence	294	44
Provide media programs on ways to stop domestic violence	81	12
Provide biblical dramas or meetings with couples only	58	9
Seminars for newly wed couples	54	8
Provide counseling	50	8
Provide media programs and conduct workshops in village communities	49	7
Provide seminars for couples who face domestic violence	46	7
Provide media programs and dramas about relationships and how they should live in peace and harmony	15	2
Other	17	3

As shown in Table 3.25, 44% of respondents indicated civil societies should promote peace and harmony within families by conducting seminars (in schools, village communities, church groups, and families).

Mapusaga O Aiga has conducted workshops and seminars in urban and rural villages, schools and community organisations for over five years. Mapusaga O Aiga has also provided media education programmes, counselling education of several theological colleges, counselling and referral for abused women and men, and other services. Because Mapusaga O Aiga's office is in Apia, many respondents were not aware of its existence. Further publicity of Mapusaga O

Aiga's functions and responsibilities is needed to help individuals and families access their services.

Official services such as DPP have offices in rural communities but it appears that people do not approach them when abuse takes place. This could be because many respondents, as well as the general populace, consider spousal abuse to be a private matter. It is important that the public trust police and other social services to assist them with their problems. Increased awareness among members of the public that domestic violence is an offence, with perpetrators potentially subject to prosecution, is also important.

3.9.4 What should Village Councils do to stop domestic violence?

Village Councils are the highest authority in a Samoan village community, setting rules and regulations for the good of the inhabitants and the natural environment. Many Village Councils refrain from involvement or interference in cases of domestic abuse, which they typically consider to be private matters, best resolved by husband and wife. When a man or woman is seriously injured by domestic violence, however, the Village Council may impose fines on the person who caused the injury (married individuals found guilty of having an affair may also be fined by the Village Council). If a survivor of violence decides to take the matter to court, the Village Council may act as a witness to the court, with the accused pardoned if they have already paid

a tribute to the council. It is important to note that the survivor of violence does not directly benefit from this process, although sometimes a victim's family and the Village Council at large may benefit, with regards to material goods. The survey asked respondents what Village Councils could do to stop domestic violence. As shown in Table 3.26, 39% suggested that village councils should impose fines on abusive men. Seventeen per cent suggested that Village Councils establish rules and regulations so that when couples argued, a fine (either monetary or in kind) would be paid to the council. Respondents also felt that the councils should establish rules, give advice, and impose fines when the couples, or individuals breaks council rules and regulations.

Table 3.26: Respondents' opinions on what Village Councils must do to stop domestic violence

Actions village councils must take to stop domestic violence	Number	%
Total	664	100
Abusive man to pay fine to the village council	260	39
Establish rules and regulations to force couples who argue to pay fine	110	17
Establish rules and regulations to protect women from being abused	79	12
Give advice to couples; if fighting continues, couple should be banned from village	62	9
Give advice to those with troubles	51	8
Advise men not to beat their spouses	43	6
Person who started a fight must pay the fine	26	4
Advise village people to live in peace and harmony	10	2
Advise village people while young to refrain from domestic violence	8	1
Other	15	2

Although the majority of respondents suggested that either the abusive man or troubled couples should pay fines to the council, this view warrants further investigation, as paying fines may not have a positive impact on a female survivor of domestic

violence. Fines are presented to the councils for their own use, rather than going to help victims of abuse. Thus victims do not benefit, and may even suffer because their families are deprived of income or goods.

3.9.5 What must the churches do to stop domestic violence?

Samoa is widely recognised as a religious and Christian nation. Many villages impose fines on people who do not attend church services on Sundays. In the evenings, village men line up along the road to guard the village during family devotional services. Church ministers are also highly regarded in village communities. Hence, the impact of religion and Christianity in Samoa is profound. As in many other Christian societies, however, problems and criminal actions persist and may have increased, despite widespread church attendance. Although the church does not impose fines on men who beat their spouses, the church does penalise those who shed the blood

of others, particularly when the accused has a role in church (e.g. deacon, church minister, etc). Church ministers often preach about peace and harmony within families and communities and the country as a whole. Despite this, domestic violence persists, including among some church ministers.

The survey asked respondents what they believe the church and its leaders should do to combat domestic violence. Twenty-four per cent of respondents wanted church ministers to preach about the importance of couples living in harmony, while 22% suggested congregations should conduct seminars for



youth groups and Sunday schools on ways to stop violence. Nineteen per cent would like pastors to visit families in their congregation to discuss family problems; 18% suggested pastors should speak with

troubled couples; 9% would like all couples to become Christians; and 7% thought church ministers should conduct seminars to discuss the duties and responsibilities of men and women.



THE QUALITATIVE SURVEY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of qualitative research is to gather in-depth information about attitudes and experiences. The usual methods of gathering qualitative information are to conduct in-depth interviews with certain people; to bring together groups of similar people to discuss a particular topic (focus groups); and to observe people's behaviour (participant observation). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research (e.g. surveys using questionnaires) in that no attempt is made to obtain representative statistical information on the prevalence of particular characteristics or experiences. Instead, qualitative research identifies key issues so that appropriate questionnaires can be designed, and is used to collect additional information on issues identified by quantitative surveys. Although it is sometimes convenient to summarise qualitative data in tables, it must be remembered that the numbers in the tables are too small to be indicative of the characteristics, attitudes and experiences of the Samoan population as a whole.

Qualitative research on domestic abuse associated with the SFHSS was carried out during 1999, to gather information on typical attitudes and experiences relating to domestic abuse. The information collected was used during the design of the questionnaires for the surveys of women and men. This section of the report provides additional information on the issues that were investigated by the two quantitative surveys. It is concerned with the views of a selection of people, including both victims of domestic abuse and those who work with victims. The actual numbers holding particular views and experiencing abuse are reported in Chapters Two and Three of this volume, which contain the results of the women's and men's surveys.

Qualitative data were collected by means of:

- twelve interviews with women who had been victims of domestic violence;
- eleven focus group discussions about domestic abuse;
- ten interviews with men who have been violent to their wives or partners;
- twenty-nine interviews with service providers, in Apia or nearby. Twenty-two of the service providers interviewed were female, seven were male. The service providers included:
 - ▶ five female and two male health care providers (three nurses, three physicians, and one traditional healer);
 - ▶ two female and one male counsellors who deal with women, and one female educator;
 - ▶ five workers in NGOs who deal with women, (four females and one male, including one from Mapusaga O Aiga, three from Women In Business, and one from Family Planning);
 - ▶ one female from the Attorney General's office;
 - ▶ one female member of the Department of Foreign Affairs;
 - ▶ four female members of the Department of Justice (two from Pardon and Parole, and two from Maintenance);
 - ▶ one female member of the Ministry of Women Affairs;
 - ▶ two male religious leaders; and
 - ▶ three female and one male police officers.

Some interviews were conducted in English, but most were conducted in Samoan. Additional information was collected from books and articles in the National Library and the library of the National University of

Samoa, police records from 1996 to August 1999, and hospital records for 1998 and the first eight months of 1999.

As qualitative research includes long interviews and discussions, it generates copious amounts of material. In order to simplify this report, and to make it easier for busy people to read, longer extracts from

the transcripts of key interviews have been placed in an appendix rather than in the main text. Readers who wish to know exactly what the informants said about each topic can refer to the appropriate numbered topic in the Appendix. The Appendix also summarises the official records of sexual abuse cases seen by the Parole and Probation division of the Department of Justice between 1990 and July 1999.

4.2 Domestic Violence in Samoa, its Consequences and Perpetrators

This section is concerned with four main questions: Is violence against women a problem in Samoa? What types of violence do Samoan women experience? What are the consequences of violence for Samoan women and their families? Who commits the violence?

4.2.1 Is violence against women a problem in Samoa?

Informants generally believed that domestic violence was not part of traditional Samoan culture, but has increased with westernisation (see Appendix — Topic 1). All but two of the service providers interviewed said that they consider violence against women to now be a problem in Samoa. However, one made the important point that it has often been reported in a biased way:

I'm very critical of the kind of reporting about women violence in Samoa that is done in a very unbalanced and unfair way. This focus on violence against women is needed by some so they can have an office and some consultants and apply for funds from overseas. You see what I mean! The temptation among some of the recipients of benefits from overseas, is to try to put together something that justifies their application, and this is a very wicked sort of thing. But it paints the name of the community in general as a very pagan kind of people.

Several other service providers observed that violence against women is a worldwide problem, unique neither to Samoa nor to Pacific Island nations. Others said that it is an under-reported problem because abused women are shamed by their abuse and do not wish to talk about it (see Appendix — Topic 2).

Some people do not discuss domestic abuse because of shame. For example, one service provider started to describe her own experiences with violence during an interview about her professional experiences. She said this was the first time she had discussed it with anyone in Samoa because it shamed her and she did not want anyone, even family members, to know about it. Others discussed how shame reduces the willingness of abused women to either report the assault to police or go for help (see Appendix — Topic 3).

4.2.2 What types of violence do Samoan women experience?

The following information was obtained from service providers, discussions and police reports, (which are concerned only with abuse that constitutes an offence).



PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Most physical violence involves slapping or hitting women in the face or head with the hand or the fist. Women were also kicked and struck with sticks, rocks or other objects. Some had their lives threatened or were threatened with a knife or a gun. Four women were killed by their husbands. According to police, a man whose wife was burned to death by her husband

explained that he had only intended to disfigure her face so that she would not be attractive to other men. He had not intended to kill her.

Some service providers reported incidents of very severe physical abuse in which women were seriously injured and sustained major and disfiguring injuries (see Appendix — Topic 4).

Table 4.1: Types of domestic violence mentioned by informants

Type of violence	Total	Men FGD*	Women FGD	Police report: assault	Police report: bodily harm	Service providers	Abusive men	Abused women	Hospital records
Beaten	41	6	12	2	4	11	4	2	0
Burned	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Choked	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Cut	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hair pulled	8	0	1	6	0	1	0	0	0
Forced sex	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
Hit on face, head	48	0	4	16	7	12	5	2	2
Hit on arms, body	24	0	2	7	2	10	2	1	0
Hit while pregnant	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Hit with fist	36	3	7	16	1	0	3	5	1
Hit with hand	15	0	7	0	0	7	1	0	0
Head hit against floor, stone	4	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Hit with stick	19	2	5	3	1	6	1	1	0
Hit with rocks or other objects	10	0	3	2	2	3	0	0	0
Kicked	13	0	0	4	2	1	3	1	2
Killed	4	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
Pushed	5	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0
Slapped	15	0	4	3	0	3	4	1	0
Stabbed	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Stones, other objects thrown	8	0	4	1	1	1	0	1	0
Threatened with death	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0
Threatened with knife, gun	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0

*FGD = focus group discussion

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Most sexual violence reported to the police was either indecent assault or carnal knowledge. Rape was the third type of sexual violence most often reported to the police. Many of the victims of carnal knowledge and indecent assault were young children under the age of 10 years. One victim was three years old. The offending man was usually either a relative of the girl or woman, or someone in a position of trust whose relationship to her should have been one of a protector and guide (see Appendix — Topic 5).

Table 4.2: Total number of sexual assault crimes, 1990-1999

Crime	Number
Indecent assault	81
Carnal knowledge	70
Rape	46
Incest	9
Attempted rape	12
Sexual intercourse with related girl	7
Total assault crimes	225

Source: Dept. of Justice, Pardon and Parole Section

RAPE

Police records indicate that rape often involves both an unwilling partner and the use of physical violence. Some Samoans say it is both leaga (bad, evil) and mataga (meaning unseemly behaviour), while others characterise rape or incest as inosia (repulsive, filthy). In spite of the opprobrium and consequences associated with rape, Samoan men may rape a girl to punish her for her aloofness. Service providers offer other explanations for sexual violence (see Appendix — Topic 6).

Forced sex in marriage is another form of violence that, according to service providers, is common. As there is no legal concept of marital rape in Samoa, women tend to give in and accept forced sex as part of marriage. However, with increasing awareness of sexually transmitted infections, some women are concerned about the health risks of having sex with husbands who are unfaithful (Appendix — Topic 7).

4.2.3 What are the consequences of violence for Samoan women and their families?

This section examines the physical and emotional consequences of domestic violence for abused women and their families, especially their children.

PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

As Table 4.3 shows, the most frequent physical consequences of violence are injuries to the eyes and the face, followed by damage to the head and body.

Table 4.3: Physical consequences of physical violence against women

Type of injury	Number reported						
	Total	Abused women	Abusive men	Service providers	Police reports: abuse	Police reports: actual bodilyharm	Hospital records
Arm broken, swollen	3	0	2	0	1	0	0
Body bruised, welts	6	0	4	2	0	0	0
Bones broken	5	0	0	4	0	1	0
Difficulty sleeping	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Eye injuries	14	0	3	5	5	1	0
Face bruised, abrasions	14	0	2	6	2	3	1
Frequent headaches	4	1	0	3	0	0	0
Head injuries	7	0	1	2	0	4	0
Jaw fractured	4	0	0	3	0	0	1
Lips swollen	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Loss of teeth	4	1	0	2	0	1	0
Suicide attempt	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Suicide	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Ulcer	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Unconscious	3	0	1	0	0	2	0

The physical consequences of violence against women can be severe, as the descriptions by service providers quoted above demonstrate. Some abusive husbands acknowledged the damage they inflict on their wives (Appendix — Topic 8).

EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

The only sources of information about the mental and emotional consequences of physical violence were abused women themselves and two health care providers, one physician and one psychiatric nurse. The most commonly mentioned problems arising from abuse were depression and thoughts of suicide. (Appendix — Topic 9).



Violence against women also affects the children in the family. Sometimes a woman's emotional turmoil changes the way she interacts with her children. In other cases children are also abused because their mothers are. Some abusive husbands acknowledge the possibility that their violence against their wives may cause similar behaviour in their children. Consequently, some of them do not like to beat their wives in front of their children. Another concern is that a pattern of violence is being passed from one generation to another (Appendix — Topic 10).

CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence can have both physical and emotional effects. The main consequences of sexual assault for women were said to be depression and thoughts of suicide. These responses are similar to the mental and emotional consequences of physical violence. For some women it becomes difficult to have normal sexual relations when they marry.

(Appendix — Topic 11)



4.2.4 Who commits the violence?

Most people interviewed said that women's husbands or sexual partners are the perpetrators of violence against them. One service provider felt that the attention given to violence against women exaggerated the problem, while the issue of violence against men is ignored. A medical service provider also commented that sometimes the wife is the violent member of the family. Another medical service provider agreed that women may be violent, and a woman who has an affair with someone else's husband may become a victim of violence by the outraged wife and her family. Other service providers observed that young women who are newly married and who are living with their husband's family are often beaten by his mother or sister for "laziness", or beaten by their husband at the request of his mother or sister. Counsellors working with young women or involved in planned parenthood reported that young women who go with boys

Table 4.4: Emotional and mental consequences of physical violence against women

	Total	Abused women	Service providers
Emotional or mental consequences			Number
Anti-social	1	1	0
Depressed	6	4	2
Difficulty making decisions	2	2	0
Easily frightened	2	2	0
Irritable	1	1	0
Loss of self respect, pride	1	0	1
Nightmares	1	1	0
Nervous breakdown	1	0	1
Poor concentration	2	2	0
Suicidal thoughts	4	3	1

Table 4.5: Consequences of sexual violence

	Total	Service providers	Police records
Type of impact			Number
Body (upper) injuries	2	0	2
Depression	4	4	0
Head injuries	2	0	2
Job productivity affected	4	4	0
Suicidal tendencies	3	3	0
Torn vagina	2	2	0
Unconscious	1	0	1

Data derived from service providers and police records of sexual assault

whom their families dislike, or who become pregnant before marriage, are beaten by their fathers or brothers. These events are often not reported to the police (Appendix — Topic 12).

Police reports on assault and actual bodily harm, and interviews with service providers who work in the criminal justice system, included reports of women attacked by members of their own family, members of their husband's family, or by other women who were in a sexual relationship with a former husband. Sexual partners (husbands, ex-husbands, and boyfriends) were most often mentioned as abusers. Members of the woman's own family came next, followed by members of her husband's family. In one case a woman stabbed her husband while he was sleeping. The police reports in Table 4.6 relate only to incidents considered to be offences.

Table 4.6: Who is the violent offender?

Relationship of offender to victim	Type of violence		
	Total	Assault	Bodily harm
Aunt	1	1	0
Boyfriend	2	2	0
Brother	1	1	0
Ex-husband	3	2	1
Girlfriend of man	1	1	0
Husband	8	4	4
Husband's brother	2	1	1
Husband's sister	2	0	2
Husband's uncle	1	0	1
Niece	2	1	1
Sister	1	0	1
Son	1	1	0
Teacher	1	1	0
Uncle	2	2	0
Wife	1	0	1

A service provider working in the Department of Justice described the punishment one of her clients received from her husband's father. The incident recounted was not in the police reports. A police officer said these incidents are seldom reported because women are constrained by their feelings of shame. There was only one case of a woman attacking her husband without direct provocation (while he was asleep), although in this instance the husband had stated his intention to end their marriage by means of a legal separation. (Appendix — Topic 12).



4.3 Causes of Violence Against Women in Samoa

The most frequently mentioned causes of violence against Samoan women were the behaviour of the victim, the partner's use of alcohol and/or drugs, eco-

nomie problems, problems with his family, her sexual jealousy, his sexual jealousy, lack of communication, and gender role expectations.

Table 4.7: Causes of violence against women mentioned by informants

Causes	Total	Abusive men	Abused women	Service providers	Police report: bodily harm	Police report: assault	Methodist workshop	News-paper	Women's FGD*	Men's FGD
Alcohol, drugs	27	6	2	13	1	4	0	0	0	1
Anger (generalised)	8	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Church teachings	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
Communication (lack of)	12	0	3	7	0	0	0	0	2	0
Disobedience, defiance	47	8	5	10	3	8	0	0	8	5
Economic problems	13	1	2	9	0	0	0	0	1	0
Family planning	4	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gender role expectations	8	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Her demands, desire to be with him	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jealousy (hers)	13	1	1	5	1	2	0	1	2	0
Jealousy (his)	12	3	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Little things, she doesn't know why	4	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Modernisation	7	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	0
Problems with his family	13	0	2	6	1	1	0	0	3	0
Sex education needed	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
She goes out with family or friends	7	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
She left him	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
She refused sex	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
Work commitments (hers)	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

*FGD: Focus Group Discussion

4.3.1 Behaviour of the victim

This largest category of causes includes the woman disobeying her husband's orders, her not obeying him quickly enough, arguing with him or being "cheeky",

nagging, questioning him when he comes home late at night, and fighting back when he hits her (Appendix — Topic 13)

4.3.2 Husband or partner's use of alcohol or drugs

This cause was mentioned most by service providers and by abusive men. Some service providers saw alcohol use as a symptom of underlying causes of violence, such as the stress of rapid socioeconomic change or economic problems, rather than as a primary cause.

However, some service providers and some abusive men said that alcohol was not a major cause of abuse, and men were less likely to become abusive when they had been drinking than when sober (Appendix — Topic 14)

4.3.3 Economic problems

This was mentioned most often by service providers and includes having too little money to meet family obligations, quarrelling over how money is to be

spent, and the husband's spending money on his own pleasure rather than on his family's needs. (Appendix — Topic 15)

4.3.4 Problems with partner's family

A young woman who goes to live with her husband's family is likely to be under the critical scrutiny of her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law. They may either hit her themselves or complain to her husband that she is lazy and urge him to beat her. When newly married couples reside with her family, the young wife is

less likely to be beaten. However, some informants argued that restrictions on young wives ultimately are for their benefit and can help them mature into a position of influence and perhaps even earn the title of matai (Appendix — Topic 16).

4.3.5 The woman's sexual jealousy

A woman may become suspicious that her husband is having an affair when he goes out in the evening and comes home late, or when he is seen talking to another women. If she challenges her husband and

accuses him of being unfaithful, or accosts the other woman, the result may be a violent confrontation; a husband may also severely beat his wife (Appendix — Topic 17)

4.3.6 The man's sexual jealousy

Men may become jealous and suspect their wives of having an affair when they talk with other men at social gatherings, when they work late or frequently come home late from work, or if they want to practise family

planning. Samoan men are alert to the possibility that other men may attempt to steal their wife, and so tend to be suspicious of wives who are frequently absent from home or gone for a long time (Appendix — Topic 18)

4.3.7 Lack of communication

A lack of communication between the couple was the cause of violence against women most often mentioned by service providers. Examples of failure to communicate include a woman's fear of discussing family plan-

ning with her husband, men beating their wives rather than discussing a problem, and the inability of women and youths to discuss their problems with the husband and father of the family (Appendix — Topic 19).

4.3.8 Gender role expectations

Gender role expectations are a source of tension between couples because women and men sometimes expect different things from their partners and view their responsibilities to their partners differently. Both male and female informants tended to emphasise home-centred activities as the most important attributes for the opposite gender, but social position as the most important attributes of their own gender. Problems mentioned by some observers included the masculine image of a real man as one who has many children, and the notion that a husband has the right to sexual access to his wife, whether or not she is willing (Appendix — Topic 20).

Women and men in focus group discussions described the qualities of a good wife and a good husband. The results were markedly different. For example, women said that a good husband is a man who helps with household chores and childcare, who loves his wife, who is loyal and faithful to his family and who treats his wife as an equal and works with her. Men did not consider helping their wives with chores and childcare, faithfulness and loyalty, or treating their wives as equals to be important attributes of a good husband. They did think that a good husband loves his wife and family, is patient and peaceful, and humble. (Appendix — Topic 21)

Women and men agreed that a good wife cares for her husband and children, is a good housekeeper and is obedient to her husband. Women also thought that a good wife guides her children, keeps a happy, peaceful home and advises her husband well, qualities that men did not mention as being important (Appendix — Topic 22).

The points mentioned during the focus discussions about what makes a good husband and what makes a good wife are summarised in Tables 4.8 and 4.9.



Table 4.8: What makes a good husband?

Qualities mentioned by focus group informants	Focus groups:	
	male	female
Active in body, mind	1	0
Active in church, village	1	0
Adaptable	1	0
Advises others	1	0
Advises children	1	0
Advises family	1	0
Advises wife	2	0
Advises wife, children	0	6
Beats children, wife (to teach them, if necessary)	1	2
Caters fa'alavelave	1	0
Christian, spiritual	0	7
Compromises	0	1
Controls anger	1	1
Disciplines children	3	0
Does his best	0	1
Does not beat wife, children	0	5
Does things with wife	0	7
Family first	0	8
Faithful to family, loyal	1	10
Gentle, considerate in bed	0	1
Gets things done	1	0
Gives good advice	1	0
Good relationship with his family	1	0
Good role model	1	0
Happy	1	1
Hard working, dutiful	1	6
Helps cook, does house chores, child care	1	15
Helps wife resolve problems	0	4
Homebody	0	1
Honest	1	1
Humble	4	5
Job stability	0	3
Keeps marriage vows	1	3
Kind, understanding, thoughtful, considerate	1	5
Listens to wife	0	3
Loves church & village	1	0
Loves, cares for children, family	0	13
Loves wife and family	6	0
Loves wife	0	11
Loving	2	0
Meets wife's needs	1	0
No drinking	1	2
Patient, peaceful, quiet	4	8
Permits her to go to meetings	0	1
Pleasant person	1	0
Practices what he preaches	1	1
Prays regularly	1	0
Provides for family	1	1
Reliable in church and/or village affairs	1	0
Respectable in behaviour	2	0
Respected by others	1	0
Respects wife, listens to her	0	4
Responsible, meets church & family responsibilities	1	1
Self sufficient, independent	0	1
Sex drive controlled	0	1
Sex is good	0	1
Shares decisions with wife	0	2
Shares resources, generous with wife, kids	0	5
Spiritual	1	0
Wife treated as equal, feels free	0	9
Works with, helps wife	0	9

Table 4.9: What makes a good wife?

Qualities mentioned by focus group informants	Focus groups: male	Focus groups: female
	Number of informants who mentioned quality	
Active person	1	0
Advises husband well	1	13
Attitude positive	0	4
Cares for children, husband	7	16
Cares for in-laws, elders, aiga	0	5
Child centred, loves children	0	7
Children, teaches, guides	0	13
Children treated equally	0	4
Church going, active in, works for, important	1	5
Christian, spiritual, prays daily, leads prayers	1	5
Circumspect	2	0
Clothing, cares for husband's, kids'	0	6
Community, village worker	0	5
Cooks, prepares balanced diet	0	2
Does her best	0	1
Does things properly, makes good home	3	0
Educated, self sufficient	0	3
Faithful	1	2
Family oriented	0	9
Generous	0	3
Happy, happy home makes others happy	1	10
Hardworking	0	8
Helpful, considerate	0	8
Homebody	2	2
Honest	2	1
Housekeeper, clean home, all housework	5	13
Humble	1	4
Kind	0	1
Last to bed, first to rise	0	0
Loving, caring	3	7
Manages family resources	1	0
Obeys husband, submissive	3	9
Well organised	0	4
Patient	1	4
Peaceful, keeps peace in home	1	10
Personally clean, respectable	0	3
Reliable	2	0
Respectful	0	2
Respects husband's parents	1	0
Responsible (for home)	1	3
Sharp mind	1	0
Trustworthy	1	0

4.3.9 Modernisation

Modernisation was considered by service providers to be a cause of violence. Modernisation included the stress and demands of contemporary urban life, increased demands for money, lax discipline of youths, and the introduction of sexually explicit videos. One aspect of modernisation is the trend toward nuclear family households rather than extended families in urban areas. This change in residential patterns results in a loss of help in caring for children and in dealing with other daily problems. The monitoring and control of violent behaviour that was provided by the extended family is also lost (Appendix — Topic 23).

Other causes of violence against women mentioned by informants include:

- sexual activity by an unmarried girl, resulting in pregnancy out of wedlock;
- a woman's desire to do things without her husband, including visit her family or go out in the evenings with female friends;
- family planning practised by the wife without the permission of her husband;
- wife insisting that her husband remain at home with her and the children rather than go out with his friends in the evenings, or wanting to go out with him rather than stay home alone;
- a wife's refusal to have sex with her husband;
- teachings of the church that encourage a woman to bear pain with patience or that glorify violence;
- her work commitments, which may either lead him to suspect her of having an affair or result in her not fulfilling her domestic chores to her husband's satisfaction; and
- little things, such as an argument over whether children should be given candy, which escalate into violence. Women sometimes say that they do not even remember the insignificant incident that precipitated the violent episode.



4.4 Attitudes Toward Violence and the Expression of Anger

Informants were asked if there were any circumstances in which violence against women was acceptable, and if so when. Almost all service providers insisted that they personally believed there was no justification for a man hitting a woman, but referred to common perceptions. The responses by abusive men and members of focus groups reflect their own attitudes.

Some groups thought that some kinds of behaviour, such as adultery, warrant a beating, while others did not mention that behaviour. This is because they are responding to direct questions by the interviewer about that behaviour rather than responses volunteered by the interviewees.

Table 4.10: Circumstances mentioned by informants as justifying violence

Circumstances that justify violence	Total	Number of informants mentioning a circumstance			
		Service providers*	Abusive men	Women's focus groups	Men's focus groups
Adultery	15	0	9	6	0
Answering back	15	4	0	7	4
"Asked for it"	1	1	0	0	0
Asked for money	1	0	1	0	0
Contraceptive use	3	3	0	0	0
Custom	7	7	0	0	0
To discipline her	25	7	5	4	7
Disobedience	16	3	1	8	4
Disrespectful to him	7	0	3	4	0
Disrespectful to his family	8	1	3	3	1
Drinking alcohol	5	0	5	0	0
Duties undone	9	4	4	1	0
Early marriage	3	1	2	0	0
Embarrassing him	1	1	0	0	0
Family matter	1	6	0	0	0
Father's role	1	1	0	0	0
Goes out without permission	2	1	1	0	0
Gossips	2	0	2	0	1
Her jealousy	1	1	0	0	0
He's drunk	1	1	0	0	0
Husband's right	9	3	2	1	3
Immodest dress	2	1	0	1	0
Laziness	3	2	0	1	0
Mistreats children	2	0	0	1	0
Neglects children	8	0	6	2	0
None	16	0	1	10	5
Part of marriage	5	4	0	1	0
Refuses sex	17	0	4	11	2
Refuses to give him money	2	0	2	0	0
Seen with another man	4	0	3	1	0
Self defence	1	1	0	0	0
Unwed pregnancy	1	1	0	0	0

* Almost all service providers indicated they personally believed there was no justification for domestic violence; their answers refer to common perceptions. The responses of abusive men and the focus group participants reflect individual's attitudes

People in all groups agreed that some Samoans think it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife if she requires disciplining, just as it is all right for a parent to discipline a child. Informants' comments pointed out this parallel between disciplining a disobedient child and a wife whose behaviour is unacceptable suggests that Samoan women do not have full adult status. This is consistent with informants reporting that unacceptable behaviour is the most frequent cause of violence against women. Many informants considered that a wife's answering back or arguing with her husband, disobeying him, refusing to give him money, embar-

rassing him publicly, or being rude to his family are behaviours that are disrespectful to him as the head of the household. They are therefore considered adequate reason for a man to physically punish his wife (Appendix — Topic 24).

Abusive men and focus groups composed of both men and women were asked if a man was justified in beating his wife if she refused to have sex with him. Opinions were mixed in both groups, but more women than men agreed that this is the case (Appendix — Topic 25).

4.4.1 Expressing anger

One service provider commented that there are few socially acceptable ways for Samoans to voice their anger.

Part of our culture is not to discuss it [anger]. It's always hiding. It's like a front to always look happy, or to look another part than what's really going on at home. Part of our culture, when you spank a child and right after you've spanked them and they're crying, it's a common thing to hear the parent say, 'Now smile. Laugh. Laugh back at me. Don't cry.' Immediately you must switch off and then switch back on.

This suggests that some Samoan people might have difficulty learning to manage their anger and aggression as they increasingly participate in the modern world. This is consistent with the view of some service providers that the stress of modernisation is one source of domestic abuse. It may also be related to the relatively high rates of suicide in Samoa, especially among young people.

Another explanation for violence suggested by some service providers is that a childhood in which boys see their mothers beaten may lead men to beat their wives. Others argued that men, remembering the experience with sorrow and shame, vow never to behave like their fathers.

Abusive men were asked if their father, or the senior male in the family, beat his wife. Six replied that they had, one said that his father verbally abused his wife but never hit her, and one said that he was too young when his father died to remember. Six of these men also reported that their brothers beat their wives and that their sisters were beaten by their husbands. One abusive man said that both he and his mother were beaten when he was a child. This man experienced anger that erupts into violence if it is not suppressed. He says he tries to control his temper because otherwise "something might suddenly happen." Another described occasions when he felt so angry and hurt that he beat his wife so that she would also feel hurt (Appendix — Topic 26).

4.5 Responses to Violence Against Women

This section examines the responses of women and of the community to episodes of violence against women.

4.5.1 Women's responses to violence

Table 4.11 summarises the information given by interviewees on the ways in which women respond to violence. The most common response was for her to leave her partner, at least temporarily. The next two most common reactions of women were to fight back and to go to the police.

Women who have been hit or abused over a length of time may change their responses as their situations grow more desperate and they attempt to find different ways of coping with the violence. They may follow the advice of friends and family who urge them to go to the police or leave their husbands. Some women try multiple strategies to minimise or end the violence against them (Appendix — Topic 27).

Table 4.11: Women's responses to violence

Women's responses	Total	Abused women	Abusive men	Service providers	Focus groups
Be patient	1	0	0	1	0
Blame self	1	0	0	1	0
Seek counselling	3	0	0	3	0
Cry	1	0	1	0	0
Denial	1	0	0	1	0
Depression	5	2	0	3	0
Fight back	10	4	4	0	2
Forgive him	5	3	0	2	0
Have sex and make up	7	0	1	0	6
Hide birth control	1	0	0	1	0
Hide from others	1	2	0	1	0
Indifferent to him	1	0	1	0	0
See lawyer	1	0	0	0	1
Leave him	16	4	0	3	9
Seek medical help	6	1	0	5	0
Talk to Pastor, matai	2	0	0	2	0
See police	10	4	0	6	0
Protect husband	3	0	0	3	0
Refuses to press charges	4	0	0	4	0
Run away	5	2	1	1	1
Feel shame	7	1	0	4	2
Suicidal thoughts	4	2	0	2	0
Suicide attempt	2	1	0	1	0
Talk to him	1	1	0	0	0
Tell family	5	3	0	1	1
Go to women's crisis centre	4	2	0	2	0

Although abused women do call the police, their cases often do not go to court. Sometimes the police discourage the woman from filing a complaint, or encourage the couple to reconcile. If a woman seeks medical help for injuries suffered during a beating, medical personnel will contact the police on her behalf (Appendix — Topic 28).

Women sometimes lie to authorities about the source of their injuries because they are ashamed that they have been beaten (Appendix — Topic 29).

A woman's attempt to discuss the problem with her partner may not help to end the violence, as he may

react badly. A woman who fights back when she is beaten may receive even worse punishment. A man sometimes beat his wife so that she will return to him out of fear. When an abused woman says she wants to get out of the relationship, a service provider may try to help her by providing support and information, but this may not succeed (Appendix — Topic 30).

A woman's response to abuse may change over time (Appendix — Topic 31) and abused women may try several strategies to protect themselves and their children. If these strategies continually fail, they may even become suicidal (Appendix — Topic 32).

4.5.2 Community support and intervention

Table 4.12 summarises the views of informants who were asked to identify the persons most likely to intervene in an episode of violence against a woman. Rural people, both women and men agreed that the primary sources of intervention are family members

and neighbours. Urban area service providers thought that the police were a primary source of assistance. However, as villagers commented, the police are seldom represented in villages and are not a source of help for rural women.

Table 4.12: Informants' views about who is mostly likely to intervene when women are abused

Who will intervene	Total	Service providers	Abused women	Abusive men	Number	
					Women's focus groups	Men's focus groups
Anybody	11	4	0	1	3	3
Children	3	0	0	2	0	1
Church/pastor/religious community	6	5	0	0	1	0
Crisis centre	6	5	0	1	0	0
Elders	4	2	0	0	2	0
Family	38	6	10	1	11	10
Friends	2	2	0	0	0	0
Matai	6	3	0	0	3	0
Medical help	4	3	0	0	1	0
Neighbours	31	1	1	2	21	6
Nobody	12	4	3	2	3	0
Police	10	8	0	0	2	0
Shame offender	1	1	0	0	0	0
Village court	2	2	0	0	0	0
Workshops	2	2	0	0	0	0

Some women feel they have no one to turn to. This is especially true for women who are poorly educated or without their own economic resources, and therefore of relatively low status (Appendix — Topic 33).

Several sources of support and intervention exist for village women. These include the village court, the pastor, neighbours and family members. However, some women may be too ashamed to seek help, and in some instances no one intervenes, because they are afraid or simply do not want to get involved (Appendix — Topic 34).



4.6 Solutions and Recommendations for Change

This section reviews the suggested alternatives to violence, the solutions that some Samoans have found, and the changes that informants recommended to deal with the problem of violence against women. Their suggestions are summarised in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Alternative to violence suggested by focus groups

Alternatives	Number who suggested alternative			
	Total	Women's focus groups	Men's focus groups	Abusive men
Advise her	9	1	2	6
Calm her down	9	8	1	0
Charm her	1	0	0	1
Chase her away	2	0	0	2
Chase her away to her family	5	0	1	4
Divorce	2	0	0	2
Fight/kill other man	3	3	0	0
Find another woman	3	0	1	2
Find truth	3	2	1	0
Have sex	3	2	0	1
Help with house chores	2	0	0	2
Patience	9	7	0	2
Prison	2	0	0	2
Separate	1	0	1	0
Shame her	1	0	0	1
Talk	27	19	8	0
Think first	5	3	2	0
Trust her	7	2	4	1

The alternative to violence most often mentioned by participants in focus group discussions was for the couple to talk things over. The alternative that abusive men preferred was for the husband to advise his wife to cease her unacceptable behaviour. Abusive men also favoured “chasing” the wife back to her family, divorcing her, or sending her to prison. They also favoured a conciliatory approach: have patience,

take time to calm down before acting, help with the chores, or trust her.

Shaming his wife was an option for one man who stressed that chasing her back to her family shames her before both the community and her family (Appendix — Topic 35).

4.6.1 Solutions to the problem of violence against women



Service providers emphasised that the solution lies in more counselling and in village workshops. In order to be effective, these programmes should teach women to recognise their own worth and to be economically self-sufficient. They should also stress that violence is not a form of love, should teach men non-violent ways of expressing anger, frustration and stress when they interact with family members, and should instruct families how to communicate their concerns and frustrations to one another before violence occurs. These are consistent with the major alternatives to violence recommended by participants in focus groups discussions: calming down before action and talking things over.

Table 4.14: Solutions to violence against women suggested by service providers

Solutions	Number
Change attitudes, culture	5
Christian/church teachings	4
Communication	8
Counselling	12
Education	9
Family intervention	1
Gender equality	2
Intervention between woman & family	2
Legal changes	1
Mapusaga O Aiga	5
Matais	3
Pastors	4
Persuade influential people	4
Public awareness	4
Reduce women's shame	1
Return to her family	1
Services for women	2
Shame perpetrators	1
Shelters	3
Traditional sources of help	1
Trial marriage	1
TV programmes on violence, sex education	2
Village councils	4
Village workshops/seminars	10
Women financially independent, self sufficient	5

Some of the recommendations were complex, combining education, counselling and community workshops and seminars (Appendix — Topic 36).

Some service providers suggested that special education could provide a solution to the problem of family violence. This special education would include a variety of programmes to raise public awareness of the possibilities of changing current cultural practices (Appendix — Topic 37).

When there is no other help available, counselling and sheltered protection for women who have been abused is available from a few sources. There are also community organisations that could provide more of this type of assistance (Appendix — Topic 38).

Service providers are aware that solutions to the problem of violence against women cannot depend on legislation alone. In countries across the Pacific, including those that have ratified CEDAW, women's rights are still threatened by domestic violence and by laws and customs that conflict with parts of it. As observed by Ms Emele Duituturaga, former women's development adviser to SPC's Pacific Women's Bureau: "CEDAW is just a means to an end.... ratification is just the beginning. In itself, it will not achieve women's rights overnight. It is clear that implementation is a tougher challenge than ratification."



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Introduction

The Samoa Family Health and Safety Study (SFHSS) was a joint research initiative undertaken by SPC and UNFPA, and is part of a larger Pacific Multi-site Study on Family Health and Safety. The research was fully funded by UNFPA and executed by SPC. As outlined in Chapter One, survey methodology was based on methodology developed by WHO. The SFHSS was carried out with the agreement and assistance of the Samoan Government and the Ministry of Women Affairs. The work was guided by a Steering Committee comprising a wide representation of government ministries, NGOs and service providers.

The SFHSS was designed to:

- provide detailed information on the prevalence and frequency of different forms of violence in the family (including de facto partners);
- examine risk and protective factors at the household and community level;
- document the health and legal consequences of domestic violence;
- explore strategies and interventions that are used by victims, families, and communities; and
- assess the impact of attitudes on both the prevention of violence and interventions.

The study also incorporated the underlying objective of assisting the Ministry of Women Affairs by providing information on domestic abuse, which could be used as a basis for the formulation of strategies to reduce its occurrence. The SFHSS study additionally sought to:

- contribute to the development of appropriate protocols, methodologies and instruments to measure domestic violence in the Pacific region;
- increase the awareness and capacity of research-

ers, policy makers and service providers and strengthen regional cooperation in addressing the issue of domestic violence;

- add to the information and knowledge of the region from a Pacific perspective; and
- strengthen the professional research capacity of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau to compile and disseminate gender-desegregated information.

For the purpose of the SFHSS, domestic abuse was defined as a “pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviours, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, used by adults or adolescents against their current or former intimate partners.” Most common types of abusive behaviours are physical sexual and mental abuse. Examples of physical abuse are slapping, shaking, beating with fist or object, strangulation, burning, kicking, and threats with a knife or gun. Examples of sexual abuse are coerced sex through threats or intimidation, coerced sex through physical force, forcing unwanted sexual acts, forcing sex in front of others and forcing sex with others. Examples of mental abuse are isolation from others, excessive jealousy, verbal aggression, intimidation through destruction of property, harassment or stalking, threats of violence, constant belittling and humiliation.

The study included three parts:

- a questionnaire-based survey of a representative sample of Samoan women (discussed in Chapter Two);
- a questionnaire-based survey of a smaller but still representative sample of Samoan men (discussed in Chapter Three); and

- a qualitative study comprising interviews with service providers and other relevant people and focus group discussions with groups of men and women (discussed in Chapter Four).

A national symposium was convened from 15 to 16 March 2001 to review and discuss the findings of the study, and produced a set of recommendations for reducing domestic abuse in Samoa. These are presented at the end of this chapter.

5.2 Women's Survey

A total of 1646 women were interviewed for the women's survey component. Of the total sample, 1212 were "ever in a relationship", a category that includes women who were then married, who were

previously married, or who were or had been in a de facto marriage. The key findings of the SFHSS women's survey (presented in detail in Chapter 2) are as follows.

5.2.1 Key findings

PREVALENCE OF ABUSE BY PARTNERS

1. Overall, 46.4% of respondents had experienced some form of partner abuse, of whom 37.6% had experienced physical abuse, 18.6% emotional abuse (possibly in combination with physical abuse) and 19.6% sexual abuse (possibly in combination with physical and/or emotional abuse) (Table 2.2 and Figure 2.6).

CHARACTERISTICS OF ABUSED RESPONDENTS

2. Respondents with no schooling were significantly more likely to experience any type of abuse by their partner, and the percentages abused declined as education increases (Table 2.4).
3. Respondents living in households with few economic assets were more likely to be abused by their partner than were respondents in households with more assets (Table 2.4).
4. Abused respondents were significantly more likely to come from rural rather than urban households, with 53.8% of rural partnered-respondents having experienced abuse compared with only 35% of urban-partnered respondents (Table 2.4).

HEALTH IMPACTS OF ABUSE

5. Respondents who had been abused more frequently by a partner reported more symptoms of pain, ill health or stress than did respondents who had never been abused by a partner (Tables 2.5 and 2.6). Respondents who had been abused within a year of the survey were more likely to report symptoms than were those who had been abused only a year or more previously (Tables 2.7 and 2.8).
6. There appears to be a high incidence of dizziness among surveyed women, which should be investigated by health authorities (Table 2.5).
7. Respondents who had been abused by their partner were more likely to have contemplated or attempted suicide (Tables 2.6 and 2.8). Emotionally and sexually abused respondents were more likely to have contemplated or attempted suicide than were physically abused respondents.
8. About 30% of respondents who had been physically abused had been injured, but only about 10% had needed health care. However, injured respondents did not always receive the healthcare they needed, and some of those who received care did not tell hospital staff the true source of their injuries (Table 2.9).
9. Respondents who had been abused by their partner were more likely to smoke during pregnancy (Table 2.11).
10. Respondents who had been abused were more likely to use contraception, and also more likely to use "female methods" of contraception, rather than methods that require the cooperation of men. As safe-sex depends on male cooperation, abused respondents were therefore at greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (Table 2.12).

CHARACTERISTICS OF ABUSIVE PARTNERS

11. Partners who had lower education levels and worked as planters and fishermen were more likely to be abusive than professional and skilled workers (Table 2.13).

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ABUSE

12. “Family problems” and the respondent “disobeying her partner” were the main reasons why respondents were abused (Table 2.15 and Figure 2.7).
13. Abuse tended to cluster in families, with both victims of abuse and abusive partners more likely to have had mothers who suffered spousal abuse (Table 2.16). Children of respondents who had been abused were more likely to display aggression (Table 2.18).
14. Respondents who were wage earners were less likely to be abused by their partners than were those engaged in selling or trading (Table 2.20).
15. Respondents who lived with their partner’s family were more likely to be abused than were those who lived with their own family (Table 2.21).

RESPONSES TO ABUSE

16. Where relationships had broken down, the male partner was more likely to have initiated the separation than was the female partner (Table 2.22).
17. Respondents who had experienced partner abuse had a more positive view of the supportiveness of their community than did those who had not been abused (Table 2.23) but more than half had never told anyone about the abuse they experienced, and almost half had never sought help from anyone (Table 2.24).
18. Only very small percentages of physically abused respondents had ever sought help from the police, legal system, courts or other community organisations, and only one respondent had ever sought help from a women’s organisation (Table 2.24). Women under age 35 were more likely to have received help.
19. The main reason why respondents did not seek help when they were physically abused was that they believe abuse in relationships is “normal and not serious” (Table 2.25).
20. Physically abused respondents in rural areas were more likely not to have told anyone about the abuse, less likely to have received help and more likely to say that they did not seek help because “physical abuse is normal, not serious” (Section 2.10.1).
21. Less than 30% of respondents had left home when they were physically abused by their partner, and the main reason given for not leaving was to remain with the children (Table 2.26).

PREVALENCE OF ABUSE BY NON-PARTNERS

22. Overall, 62% of the total sample of 1646 respondents had been physically abused by someone other than a partner, including by parents and teachers. The percentage (38.6%) who reported being abused by a female family member exceeds the 37.6% who were physically abused by their partners; 16.7% reported the abuse by a female family member occurred often, which contrasts with 14% who were often abused by their partners. A total of 10.6% had been forced to have sex when they did not wish to, most by a boyfriend. Less than 2% had been touched or otherwise interfered with sexually (Sections 2.10.3 and 2.10.4; Tables 2.27, 2.28 and 2.29).

GENDER EXPECTATIONS AND ATTITUDES

23. More than 70% of respondents who had ever had a partner felt they could not refuse to have sex when they did not wish to. More than 40% felt they could not refuse when their partner was drunk, and 24% felt they could not refuse when they themselves were unwell. Urban respondents were more likely than rural women to feel they could not refuse to have sex (Table 2.30).
24. Around 20% of respondents believed it was reasonable for their partner to physically abuse them if they disobeyed him or if he suspected her of being unfaithful, and around 60% thought physical abuse would be justified if they were unfaithful. There were no significant differences between rural and urban women (Table 2.31).
25. The views of respondents in the women’s survey about when sexual compliance is obligatory and when abuse is justified were not consistent with the views of respondents in the men’s survey. In some circumstances higher percentages of women than men thought compliance was obligatory and abuse justified (Sections 2.11.1 to 2.11.3).

5.2.2 Conclusions from the women's survey

The starting point for the WHO Multi-country Study on Violence Against Women in Families, of which the SFHSS is a part, is the international human rights perspective, that all domestic abuse is always unacceptable. The questions in the survey questionnaire were designed from this perspective, and the data collected using this questionnaire have identified a number of health and social problems, among both women and children, which appear to be associated with domestic abuse.

The data also show clearly, however, that a substantial percentage of female respondents said they regarded abuse as acceptable in some circumstances, and as a normal part of married life. This raises some very important questions. Does this mean that abuse is not a problem for these women, or for Samoan society as a whole? Or does it mean that women feel obliged to accept and explain away domestic abuse as “normal” because they believe it is inevitable, shameful or in some way their fault? As noted in Section 2.11, men's responses to questions about when it is acceptable for men to expect sexual compliance or to physically abuse their wives indicate that they were sometimes less accepting of abuse than were female respondents.

The discrepancies between male and female attitudes to abuse and the reported rates of abuse in the male and female surveys are key findings of this study, and need further investigation. It seems likely that both male and female respondents were influenced by their perceptions of social norms and expectations,

and these perceptions shaped their responses to a greater or lesser extent.

Whatever the reason for the discrepancy, the implications are clear. Any strategy intended to influence levels of abuse in Samoa must include two essential components:

1. The official view on the unacceptability of domestic abuse would need to be clearly stated in the form of government acts and policies that include definitions of domestic abuse.
2. There would need to be widespread community education about this official view on domestic abuse, and the consequences of not complying. It is particularly important that such an educational programme would reach into villages, churches and other core structures in Samoan society, so that any myths and discrepancies in beliefs about the acceptability or otherwise of domestic abuse are dispelled.

It is apparent from the data collected through the women's survey that the main supports for domestic abuse in Samoa are individual and community attitudes rather than any special characteristics of men and women. It therefore follows that when individuals and communities are well informed about the official unacceptability of domestic abuse, and about any obligations or rights individuals have in connection with it, the levels of abuse in Samoa should naturally adjust to match the official view.



5.3 Men's Survey: Findings and Conclusions

A total of 664 men, aged 15–49, were interviewed for the men's survey component with interviews held late in 1999. Of the interviewees, 386 were "ever in a relationship", a category that includes men who were then married, who were previously married, or who were or had been in a de facto marriage.

5.3.1 Key findings

PREVALENCE OF ABUSE BY PARTNERS

1. The survey of men indicated that emotional abuse was by far the most common form of domestic abuse suffered by men. Of the 386 respondents ever in a relationship, 175 (or 45%), said they were emotionally abused by their spouses. This is far higher than the 18.6% of women interviewed in the women's survey who reported suffering emotional abuse, but accords well with the 45% of male respondents who stated they had abused their wives emotionally. These figures suggest perceptions of what constitutes emotional abuse differ significantly between men and women (Section 3.3.1 and Table 3.1).
2. Sexual and physical abuse was reported by only 3% and 2% of men respectively, making such abuse much less prevalent than sexual or physical abuse of women (reported by approximately 20% and 38% respectively). Of the eight males who experienced physical abuse, five also admitted to physically abusing their wives (Section 3.3.1).

PREVALENCE OF ABUSE BY NON-PARTNERS

3. Overall, 92% of respondents were physically abused before they reached 15 years of age. More than 80% of respondents of all ages (from 15–49) reported that they were physically abused when young. Children were most likely to be abused by people they knew well (e.g. parents, teachers and church ministers (Section 3.5.1).
4. Seven per cent of respondents were forced to have sexual intercourse, or engage in degrading or humiliating sexual acts, by persons other than their spouse or partner, about half of whom were fa'afafines. Eighty-two per cent of respondents were between 15 and 24 when first abused (Tables 3.9 and 3.10).

SPOUSAL ABUSE BY RESPONDENTS

5. Overall, 18% of male respondents who were ever in a relationship indicated they had beaten their wives, and 12% admitted to physically and emotionally abusing their wives; none of the respondents admitted to sexually abusing their wives. The latter is not consistent with the finding from the women's survey that over 17% of women ever in a relationship had been forced by their partners to have sex. It is possible that men were embarrassed to admit to having forced sex upon their partners; the discrepancy may also reflect differing perspectives of the issue of abuse (Section 3.6).
6. Answering back and disobedience on the part of their spouse was the primary reason given by male respondents for physical abuse (74%), with other reasons (including refusal to have sex, not caring for children, and being disrespectful to the husband's parents) accounting for 26% (Section 3.6.1).

CHARACTERISTICS OF ABUSIVE MEN

7. Forty-four per cent of abusive men held full-time paid jobs, while most wives (88%) spent the majority of their time doing domestic chores (Table 3.15).
8. The majority (52%) of abusive respondents did not drink, although alcohol use was somewhat more common among physically abusive respondents (48%) than among all men ever in a relationship (42%).
9. Place of residence did not appear to be a determinant of domestic abuse by men (Table 3.17).



WITNESSING OF PARENT'S SPOUSAL ABUSE

10. Overall, 33% of all men ever in a relationship witnessed spousal abuse by their fathers, while 42% of abusive respondents witnessed such abuse. Reasons given for their fathers' spousal abuse were similar to those they gave for their own; 88% said that their fathers' spousal abuse was wrong. Twenty-three per cent of respondents ever in a relationship who viewed their father's actions as wrong were themselves abusive (Tables 3.17, 3.18 and 3.19).



ATTITUDES REGARDING RELATIONSHIPS AND ABUSE

11. Ninety-five per cent of all respondents agreed that women should have the right to voice their opinions; 98% per cent of respondents agreed that a good woman obeys her husband (Section 3.62).

12. Fifty-seven per cent of urban respondents and 63% of rural respondents supported the view that domestic violence is a private matter.

13. Twenty-two per cent of all respondents believed disobedience justified wife-beating, while 46% of respondents believed wife-beating was justified if she was disrespectful to her husband's parents or family (Table 3.20).

14. Between 63% and 95% of men in both urban and rural areas agreed that women should be able to refuse to have sex with their spouses in all situations, except when a women did not wish to become pregnant, when agreement dropped to between 9% and 12%. Significant percentages believed a woman should have sex with her husband even if she had no desire to have sex (30–36%), or when a man was intoxicated (34–37%), or physically abusing her (19–21%) (Table 3.22).

CONTROLLING AND AVOIDING ABUSE

15. Fifty-nine per cent of all respondents (45% of abusive men) suggested men should control their anger and be patient in order to refrain from abusing their wives (Table 3.23).

16. Over 77% of men indicated that women should obey their husbands to avoid being physically abused (Table 3.24).

17. Forty-four per cent of respondents indicated civil societies should work towards peace and harmony within families by conducting seminars (in schools, village communities, church groups, and families) (Table 3.25).

18. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents suggested that village councils should impose fines on abusive men, and 17% suggested fining couples who had violent disagreements.

19. Twenty-four per cent of respondents wanted church ministers to preach about the importance of couples living in harmony, while 22% suggested congregations should conduct seminars for youth groups and Sunday school classes on ways to stop violence (Table 3.26).

5.3.2 Conclusions from the men's survey

The survey showed that, overall, the number of women physically or sexually abusing their husbands is minimal compared with the number of men beating or sexually abusing their wives. The percentage of men claiming to be emotionally abused was twice the percentage of women making that claim. The results indicate that men and women have differing views of what constitutes abuse, and of what behaviour is acceptable in a marriage. The survey also indicated that

physical abuse of respondents during childhood was widespread.

The survey results suggest that causes of domestic abuse are closely tied to individual and community attitudes, and that children are learning abusive behaviour from their parents. These factors need to be taken into account when strategies to reduce domestic abuse are formulated.

5.4 Qualitative Study: Key Findings and Conclusions

The qualitative study was carried out as the first stage in the SFHSS, to identify community concerns and issues relating to domestic abuse in Samoa. It was primarily concerned with physical and sexual abuse. Emotional abuse, as well as physical and sexual abuse, was researched in the surveys of women and men (see Chapters Two and Three of this volume).

The Samoa Ministry of Women Affairs, established in 1990, has a mandate to assist the socioeconomic development of Samoan women. In 1991 the Samo-

an government introduced universal suffrage for all Samoans over the age of 21. The government consolidated its commitment to female equity in 1992 with its ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Laws of special interest to Samoan women include legislation permitting abortion if a mother's life would be threatened by a pregnancy, legislation permitting abused women to apply for a non-molestation order, and laws against common assault and sexual assault.

5.4.1 Key findings

TYPES OF ABUSE (SECTION 4.22)

Most physical abuse involves slapping or hitting women in the face or head with hand or fist. Some women were also kicked and struck with sticks or other objects. Some had their lives threatened or were threatened with knives or guns. The consequences of physical abuse range from bruised faces and swollen eyes to bruised bodies, fractured jaws and head injuries. Psychological consequences include depression, suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide, loss of self-respect and anti-social behaviour.

Sexual assault within the family is also a problem for some Samoan women. Reports from the Justice Department showed that for the period 1990–1999, the most common types of sexual convictions recorded were indecent assault, carnal knowledge and rape. Rape usually involves physical force and violence as well as sexual violence. Samoan law does not recognise rape as an offence that can be committed by a husband against his wife.

PERPETRATORS OF ABUSE (SECTION 4.24)

Almost all informants said that husbands or other male sexual partners were the most frequent perpetrators of domestic abuse. Some service providers commented that some wives may also become violent, or that a woman who has an affair with another woman's husband may become a victim of violence by the outraged wife and her family. Other service providers observed that young women who are newly married

and who are living with their husbands' family are sometimes beaten by their mother or sisters-in-law for «laziness», or by husbands at the request of their mothers and sisters. Counsellors who worked with young women or were involved in planned parenthood reported that young women who go out with boys their families dislike, or who become pregnant before marriage, are at risk of being beaten by their fathers or brothers.

CAUSES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE (SECTION 4.3)

The main causes of domestic abuse identified by informants during the qualitative research were:

- **behaviour of the victim** (refers to the wife disobeying husband's orders, arguing, nagging or being «cheeky» to him, or questioning him when he comes home late at night);
- **men's use of alcohol and drugs;**
- **economic problems** (including arguments over how income is spent and the husband spending money for his personal gratification rather than on the family);
- **problems with the husband's family** (these can be serious for a young wife who goes to live with his family. She is likely to be under the critical scrutiny of her mother-in-law and sisters-

in-law, who may look for signs of laziness. If her behaviour is not up to their expectations, they may either beat her themselves or complain to her husband and urge him to beat her. When newly married couples reside with the woman's family, the young wife is less likely to be beaten);

- **women's jealousy** (a wife may become jealous if she suspects her husband of having an affair with another woman when he goes out in the evening and comes home late, or when he is seen talking to another woman. A wife may challenge her husband and accuse him of being unfaithful, or she may attack the other woman. The husband may retaliate by beating her);

- **men's jealousy** (some men are jealous and suspect their wives of having an affair if they talk with other men at social gatherings, frequently work late or come home late from work, or if they want to practise family planning);
- **lack of communication** (examples include a woman using family planning without discussing her decision with her husband; men beating their wives instead of talking over a problem; and the inability of women and youths to peacefully discuss their needs and plans with their husbands or parents);
- **gender role expectations** (including the belief that the husband is the head of the household who must be obeyed immediately and without question; failure by the woman to fulfil her perceived duties; disagreement about who is to perform «women's duties» if both husband and wife are working; the common portrayal of masculinity that requires men to have many children; and the belief that a husband

has the right to sexual access to his wife, whether or not she is willing. Gender expectations can become a cause of domestic abuse when the husband and wife differ in their views on their own and each other's role in marriage);

- **anger** (may cause a man to lash out at his wife because he is enraged at someone else or because he is unable to control his temper); and
- **modernisation** (including the stress and demands of contemporary urban life and the trend toward the nuclear family household. Urban nuclear families lack the ready assistance with child-care and other daily tasks that are offered by the extended family. Constraints on violence normally provided by the extended family are also absent. Other aspects of modernisation that affect the level of family violence include increased demands for money, lax discipline of youths, and the introduction of sexually explicit videos).

OTHER CAUSES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE OF WOMEN INCLUDE:

- sexual activity by an unmarried girl, resulting in her pregnancy out of wedlock;
- a woman's desire to do things without her husband, including visit her family or go out in the evening with female friends;
- a woman's insistence that her husband remain at home with her and the children rather than go out with his friends in the evenings, or that she go out with him rather than stay home alone;
- a wife's refusal to have sex with her husband, a behaviour that many Samoans see as justification for violence;
- woman's work commitments, which may either lead her husband to suspect her of having an affair or result in her not fulfilling her domestic duties to her husband's satisfaction; and
- simple things, such as an argument over whether children should have sweets, that escalate into violence. Women sometimes say that they do not even remember what trivial incident precipitated a violent episode.

ACCEPTABILITY OF ABUSE (SECTION 4.4)

Informants generally agreed that most Samoans think a man should discipline his wife if she behaves disrespectfully towards him. Some informants equated wives, especially young wives, with children, saying that both require discipline if they disobey the husband/father of the family. More women than men believed that a husband is justified in beating his wife if she refuses to have sex with him. Others said that

Samoans consider violence to be justified if a woman fails to carry out her domestic duties satisfactorily or fails to care for the children properly. According to some respondents, Samoans accept that a husband has the right to hit his wife. Others said that most Samoans consider marital violence to be a normal part of marriage.

EXPRESSION OF ANGER (SECTION 4.4)

The majority of abusive men interviewed reported that when they were children their fathers beat their mothers. They, in turn, learned violent behaviour as children, and tended to grow up to become abusive men. Most of those from abusive families said that their brothers beat their wives and their sisters are beaten by their husbands. Child rearing practises and

examples of family violence may teach Samoan children that violence is an appropriate way to express anger. For some it seems to be the only way to express anger, and strong pent-up emotions may erupt in the form of sudden, uncontrolled violence. The high suicide rate in Samoa, and comments from abusive men, suggest that this topic needs further study.

RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC ABUSE OF WOMEN (SECTION 4.5)

When asked who is most likely to intervene in an episode of violence against a woman, rural people who participated in focus group discussion agreed that family members and neighbours are the primary sources of intervention. However, they often choose not to intervene, as they believe that couples are best left to work out their own problems. Service providers thought that the police were a primary source of

assistance. However, police are seldom present in villages and are not usually a source of help for village women. Informants believed that options are limited for those women who are poorly educated or without economic resources. Shame may also prevent both rural and urban women from seeking help from her community or social services.

Other sources of support and, intervention for village women include the village court, the pastor, neighbours, and family members, especially the parents and the children of the couple. Villagers usually prefer

to handle violence within the community themselves rather than to involve outsiders. Sometimes there is no assistance for a woman who is being beaten, with no one intervening to help her.

5.4.2 Informants' solutions and recommendations (Section 4.6)

Informants were asked what alternatives to violence were available. Participants in focus group discussions thought that couples should talk things over. Abusive men said that the husband should advise his wife to cease her objectionable behaviour. They also favoured «chasing» the wife back to her family as an alternative to beating her. Other options most mentioned were for the husband to trust his wife and have patience with her, and for him to take time to calm down before acting.

Service providers were asked what changes they recommended to reduce violence against women. Most believed that the solution lies in a combination of more counselling opportunities, village workshops, and educational programmes to instruct families how to communicate their concerns and frustrations to one another before violence occurs.

Many of the service providers interviewed were members of Mapusaga O Aiga. Many others recommend Mapusaga O Aiga to the abused women with

whom they come in contact. One service provider has opened her home to abused women who are at risk. While some service providers thought there should be a shelter or refuge available for threatened women, others said it would not be appropriate in Samoa because there would be no way to keep its location a secret. Under those conditions a shelter might become a target for violent men, with risks for both the abused residents and the staff.

It is important for a country to have a legal basis for action against domestic abuse, and while some basis already exists in Samoa, most informants thought that more is needed. Service providers spoke of the need for a law specifically prohibiting men from physically abusing their wives in the home. Some thought that there should be legislation protecting women against forced sex in marriage or marital rape. Most agreed, however, that the final solution to family violence must come from changes in attitudes and social relationships. Laws will not, in themselves, solve the problem.

5.5 Community Recommendations

Summaries of the women's, men's and qualitative surveys were presented to a meeting of the SFHSS Project Steering Committee, representatives from government departments, and NGOs, held in Apia 15–16 March, 2001. Participants discussed the find-

ings of the surveys, and then divided into groups to discuss strategies to address the problem of domestic abuse in Samoa. The recommendations of the three groups are presented below, grouped by topic.

5.5.1 Education and awareness programs

- Educate families inclusive of parents.
- Educate youth groups and children in their respective villages through women committees/fellowships and the Chief Council.
- Develop an educational program focussed at encouraging people to control their anger (anger management).
- Educate to improve the respect and communication between couples and parents.
- Improve and encourage dialogue through the media.
- Encourage pastors and their wives to educate members of their congregation.
- Organise programs to encourage people to disclose and publicise the problems of abuse of women.
- Education awareness and counselling for urban and rural men that focuses on:
 - ▶ Changing behaviour and attitudes;
 - ▶ Promoting two-way communication and understanding;
 - ▶ Enhancing respect and appreciation; and
 - ▶ Building self-esteem.
- Encourage well-established, excellent interactions and relationships in families and between couples and work towards freedom, sharing and dialogue.
- Congregations and pastors should assume responsibility for actively opposing domestic violence through frequent family visits, and encourage dis-

- discussion and counselling of concerned couples.
- Institute awareness programs through TV, radio, and NGO programmes and activities.

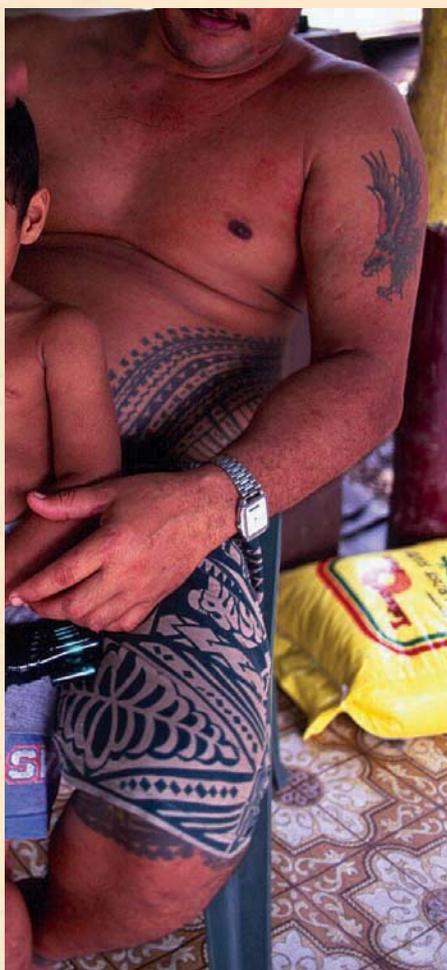
- Mothers should take responsibility for their daughters.
- Educate to promote awareness.

5.5.2 Legislation

- Develop separate legislation for domestic violence that serves to safeguard individuals.
- Add legislation to the Village Meeting Act to prohibit violence whatsoever in the family.
- Enforce existing relevant penalties for family violence (Crimes Ordinance 1960).
- Introduce laws to enforce protection of women from all forms of violence and abuse.
- Maintain relevant government and district legislation.
- Legislation to be precise for each specific section.
- Legislation to be at the disposal of women's committee in each village.
- Legislation and related issues must be given recognition and appreciation by the Chief Councils, particularly during their meetings.
- Implement heavy/severe penalties in the villages.
- Enforce education to enable a change of behaviour.
- Organise a support team to continually carry out training.
- Enforce and emphasise legislation.

5.5.3 Other recommendations

- Revise the roles, functions and policies of the Ministry of Women Affairs to prioritise issues of domestic abuse.



References

- Cleland, J. and Hill, A. (eds). 1991. *The health transition: Methods and measures*. Health Transition Series No. 3. Canberra: Health Transition Centre, The Australian National University.
- Counts, D.A. 1990. Domestic violence in Oceania: *Pacific Studies* 13 (3).
- Cribb, J. and Barnett, R. 1999. Being bashed: Western Samoan women's responses to domestic violence in Western Samoa and New Zealand. *Gender, Place and Culture* 6(1):49–65.
- Department of Statistics. 1991. *Report of the census of population and housing 1991*. Apia, Samoa: Government of Western Samoa.
- Edleson, J.L. and Z.C.Eisikovits. (eds). 1996. *Future interventions with battered women and their families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 244 p.
- Fowler, H.W. and Fowler, F.G. (eds). 1994. *Concise Oxford dictionary*, 6th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heise, L., Ellesberg, M. and Gottemoeller, M. 1999. *Ending violence against women*. Population Reports, Series L. No. 11. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.
- Human and Welfare Canada. 1989. *Family violence: A review of theoretical and clinical literature*. Ottawa: The Minister of National Health and Welfare.
- Jalal, I. 1998. *Law for Pacific women — A legal rights handbook*. Suva: Fiji Women's Rights Movement.
- Levinson, D. 1989. (ed). *Family violence in cross-cultural perspective*. Newbury Park, California: Sage. 145 p.
- Mapusaga O Aiga. 1996. *Research Report: A study of domestic and sexual violence against women in Western Samoa*. Apia, Samoa: Mapusaga O Aiga.
- Ministry of Women Affairs. 1993. *A statistical profile on women and men in Western Samoa*. Apia, Samoa: Government of Western Samoa.
- Muagututia, R. 1992. *Fertility patterns in Western Samoa*. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Graduate Program in Demography, The Australian National University, Canberra.
- PWRB. 1999. *Gender and entrepreneurial development for women: a situation analysis of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu*. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Women's Resource Bureau, Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Quinn, M. and Afamasaga, T. 1998. A review of NZODA/Samoa women in police and programme development project. Evaluation, Analysis and Programme Support Section (DEAP), Development Corporation Division. Apia, Samoa.

Samoa, Department of Statistics. 1999. Report on the 1999 Samoa demographic and health survey. Apia, Samoa: Department of Statistics.

Samoa, Department of Statistics. 2000. Demographic and vital statistics survey, 2000: Analytical report. Apia, Samoa: Department of Statistics.

Schoeffel, P. 1995. The Samoan concept of feagaiga and its transformation. p. 85–105. In: Huntsman, J. (ed). Tonga and Samoa: Images of gender and polity. Christchurch, N.Z.: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies. 122 p.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 1998. Project request from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Noumea, New Caledonia: SPC.

Strauss, M.A. and Gelles, R. (eds). 1999. Physical violence in American families. 2nd Edition. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Press. 622 p.

UN. 1993. UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

UNFPA. 1998. Violence against girls and women: A public health priority. New York: United Nations Population Fund.

UNFPA. n.d. Reproductive health effects of gender-based violence: policy and programme implications. Programme Advisory Note Number 6.

US Department of Justice, Bureau of Statistics. 1994. Violence against women: A national crime victimization survey report. Washington, D.C.

World Bank. 1995. Toward gender equality: the role of public policy. Washington: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Excerpts from Qualitative Interviews

Topics

- 1: Domestic violence and Samoan culture
- 2: Is violence against women a problem in Samoa?
- 3: Shame and domestic abuse
- 4: Types of violence
- 5: Indecent assault and carnal knowledge
- 6: Rape
- 7: Forced sex
- 8: Physical consequences of abuse
- 9: Emotional and psychological consequences of physical violence
- 10: Effects on children of physical abuse of their mother
- 11: Effects of sexual abuse on women
- 12: Who commits abuse?
- 13: Causes of abuse – the woman's behaviour
- 14: Causes of abuse – alcohol
- 15: Causes of abuse – economic problems
- 16: Causes of abuse – problems with a partner's family
- 17: Causes of abuse – women's sexual jealousy
- 18: Causes of abuse – men's sexual jealousy
- 19: Causes of abuse – lack of communication
- 20: Causes of abuse – gender role expectations
- 21: What makes a good wife?
- 22: What makes a good husband?
- 23: Causes of abuse – modernisation
- 24: When is abuse justified?
- 25: Should the husband beat the wife if she refuses sex?
- 26: Management of anger in families
- 27: Individual strategies to end violence
- 28: Responses of health personnel and police
- 29: Hiding the truth from health personnel and police
- 30: Negotiation and mediation
- 31: Changing responses over time
- 32: Trying various strategies unsuccessfully
- 33: Women who lack economic resources
- 34: Sources of help for village women
- 35: Shaming instead of abusing
- 36: Combined solutions suggested by service providers
- 37: Special education to prevent domestic abuse
- 38: Counselling, shelter and other solutions

1 Domestic violence and Samoan culture

Q DO YOU SEE VIOLENCE AS BEING A PROBLEM FOR SAMOAN WOMEN?

Service provider: No, I don't. I think it's because we are working toward an equality of women and men. We won't say there's no discrimination, but not so much as we hear from the other islands in the Pacific. In Samoa it's only small things, like a woman wanting to start a small business and because she doesn't have any collateral she doesn't get a loan. Small examples like that. But we feel that Samoa has come a long way. There have been many changes and Samoa has changed along with it. But the old people still maintain their traditional thinking and way of doing things.

Q DO YOU THINK THAT SAMOAN TRADITIONS HAVE KEPT VIOLENCE AT A LOW LEVEL?

A: You see, Samoa doesn't make a big thing of homosexuals like they do outside. In Samoa we treat them just as part of the community, as normal people. It's basically like the issue that you're talking about now. We don't see it as a problem because if the woman is being bashed by the husband or the sister or the brother, there are other members of the family who will work together to protect each other from that type of violence. We see it now, it's coming up now as other people see it as a problem, but other parts of the world have violence too. In Samoa it's maybe one or two out of ten. Not a problem. Not a big problem.

Q DO YOU SEE THE RAPID CHANGES THAT ARE HAPPENING NOW, BRINGING IN CULTURE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, AS CREATING A PROBLEM OR AS REPLACING THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM THAT HAS PROTECTED PEOPLE?

A: Yes. Because we're really aware of it. I've lived outside for years and I'm scared that our culture will be replaced with all the Westernised living that's coming to Samoa. I think that's what we're praying won't happen. But the world is changing, Samoa has to change along with it, but we must still maintain our culture. By our project, the fine mats, we as an organisation are trying to maintain the uniqueness of that treasure. Because of economic needs, because of money, people are paying others to do that. Before there was no money, just the fine mats, and we weave the finest, the best. But now that's changing too, and we're trying to take it back. To try to maintain the culture we had in the days of our ancestors. I believe in communication. That's why when we talk to the women we need to make room, to make exceptions for the young people, especially the girls and young women, and at the same time maintain that parental care that we've always had for the culture. Western tradition has made a lot of changes in our culture. We have TV, and girls do what the TV says and then they get into trouble. They are not good changes. We try to tell them that they're not good changes. As an example,

there were arranged marriages before, and they really worked. But now, you meet somebody, you go to the pictures, you go to dinner, you go out to a dance and then you end up getting married because she's expecting a baby. Those changes.

Q DO YOU THINK THAT MARRIAGES TODAY ARE LESS PEACEFUL THAN WERE MARRIAGES DONE IN THE TRADITIONAL WAY?

A: (laughs) Marriage in the traditional way was really a good thing because it worked. If we compare the two, the arranged ones were far better than the modern version. In those days there weren't many jobs, and now education is easier for our children. In our day there weren't many colleges, no university. And our children have everything now. In our day English schools were just coming to Samoa. And those days were peaceful.

Service provider: Samoan custom focuses on the community and so we share everything with other women, and in our social structure women are grouped together. There are the wives of the chiefs and orators, and there are the unmarried women. We tend to share everything in the village. To be honest, I think the Samoan culture doesn't allow any kind of violence at all. Nothing is alright, especially between men and women. I don't know where the violence came from. Even though we had civil war then, it wasn't between men and women. It was between religions. No, the Samoan culture doesn't allow violence.

Service provider: I found that there were a whole lot of remedial measures, not necessarily in the Western courts or legal system, but there were a lot of deterrent measures in the traditional society. We have forgotten a lot of these traditional measures because we have opted to look at other systems which have been introduced. It has been observed that the impact of such systems is not uniform throughout the country. There are some villages that still practise it to the letter, whereas in others they don't bother with such security measures within their village systems.

Q WHAT KIND OF TRADITIONAL REMEDIES WERE THERE?

A: The traditional system is based on the family. It's not based on the individual who commits the misdemeanour. The Samoa custom is that it's the whole family that gets penalised. So if they are asked to provide 100 pigs for the village it is quite a serious measure for the family. Of course any individual would ensure that they don't incur the wrath of the whole family. In this way it prevents people from behaving in such a way. There are still a lot of villages now

who practise the 'fono tauati' which is the highest form of community punishment for any offender in the village system. When this is done the worst form of punishment is the banishment of a family from all village lands. I do know that there are still a number of villages that practise this. All these offences in the village situation are discussed at such a meeting. Of course people are pretty cautious from behaving in such a manner when they know their cases are going to be taken to that council.

Police woman: We police don't listen to tradition. If a male hits a female we always charge him with assault. That if is we know. The police go there and arrest him and charge him. But a lot of domestic violence is still kept secret in the home and the village, and people won't come here. It's a common problem here. I've seen it in the village where I live, but they never come here because they're afraid. They're afraid of the husbands and the fathers. The women are so stupid. I think. I want to change the tradition. We have set norms here and I think it's time to change them. People here they always say, "Oh, that's tradition." When men eat first and women eat later, that's tradition. I think that's living with somebody and you're not married. That's stupid. People get married and they don't understand each other. They do that in North America, in New Zealand. I think that would help here too. Then they'd be in love deeply. But here in Samoa they don't know each other. Parents would say "You're pulling our family down." It's a nasty thing here in Samoa. People don't have enough time to know each other. You know, we have a saying here in Samoa. We hit people to teach them. It's part of tradition. There's a saying in Samoa, you hit children, or husbands hit wives so that they can become clever. And that's a cause.

Service provider: In my view, because Samoan culture is so strong, most women that I come in contact with and that I interview say that it [violence against women] doesn't exist, it's not a problem.

Q DO YOU THINK THEY ARE DENYING IT?

A: Yes.

Q WHAT IN SAMOAN CULTURE LEADS THEM TO DENY IT?

A: Because the rules have already been set. Like the woman does all of the home chores, she does child bearing, mostly the domestic duties. Whereas the spouse is the breadwinner of the family, he provides for his wife and children. I think they tend to conceal that issue [of violence] because they're afraid of being abused. In the Samoan culture the man is the dominant figure in the family. He tends to hold power and authority in the family.

Q ARE THEY AFRAID THAT IF THEY TALK ABOUT IT HE'LL ABUSE THEM MORE?

A: Yes. I think that nowadays most of the problems lie especially in the conservative families, because that's where they are afraid to seek help and advice. In the Samoan culture there's already in existence a formal way of solving those sorts of problems within families. They're afraid of taking it outside the family environment. So that's why, if they come to seek help from our services, to their families they are taking it out of the family environment. They view us as outsiders.

Q DOES IT MAKE PEOPLE ANGRY IF A WOMAN TAKES THE PROBLEM OUTSIDE OF THE FAMILY?

A: Yes, because there are chiefs in the family, and that's who they should take their problem to. If there's a form of abuse in the family then they take it to the extended family. That's where the solution comes from instead of the other services available to them.

Q AND HOW DO THE CHIEFS, THE EXTENDED FAMILY, SOLVE THE PROBLEM? WHAT DO THEY DO FOR THE WOMEN?

A: They mainly discuss the problem in an informal form of decision making where they decide how they will punish the man and how they will punish the woman. They can determine who is at fault.

Q DO THEY THINK SHE DESERVES THE PUNISHMENT?

A: Yeah, in my opinion. I think that kind of attitude is in the general society. I think that kind of attitude still lies with the conservative part of society, but I think that the people who have been educated, those are the ones that are trying to change that attitude by making public awareness programs and pamphlets that they're trying to distribute to the rural areas. I think it does exist in the general Samoan society, that attitude that a woman deserves to get beaten up if she doesn't do as the man tells her to do. That problem still remains in the villages where there's that hierarchical way of doing things: the village council of chiefs, the chiefs of each family and then the family at the head of the family. I think that in the urban areas where they tend to adapt to modern changes, they are eating together – because that's another thing in the Samoan culture: males get served first, instead of women and children. But in the urban areas, especially with the services that are available for women, they're trying to push that it doesn't really matter if the men get served first and children and women afterwards.

Q CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT KINDS OF THINGS SHOULD A WOMEN NOT DO IN THE RURAL AREAS?

A: The way she dresses. If she wears shorts or mini-skirts. That's very inappropriate in the villages. So you have to wear a lavalava or something that's not really revealing. That goes for both single women and married women because they have rules lined up on how they should dress up. And they have to dress according to those rules, that they shouldn't wear mini-skirts,

they shouldn't wear tank tops that are revealing. The other important thing in the rural area is the way that they behave. They shouldn't laugh out loud when there's no good reason for doing such a thing. And the way they talk: they have to talk politely to everybody older than they are. That's another thing in the Samoan way, there's a hierarchy of doing things. You have to have respect for the elderly and people above your age. If you're disrespectful you get in trouble, and that's another factor that relates to violence in the family. Mainly because they have been brought up that way. In the rural villages they always see the man as the dominant figure. And it's really hard for them to change. It's really hard for them to accept the fact that nowadays women are getting the same treatment as men in education and employment opportunities. The women in the rural villages, it's very hard for them to accept the fact that women are more-or-less coming to have the same treatment as men. They have been brought up in that way. They have been moulded and shaped in that way. And if you go out into the villages it's the women who do all of the domestic chores.

And that's where the majority of our clients come from, the rural areas.

Medical service provider: They [women] talk to me in a joking way. Their jokes have an ambiguous meaning. They will talk like that jokingly, but they really mean it. And you can sense it. A lot of women are unhappy. There's just not enough intimacy between them. Something is missing, the basis of a happy relationship, and it seems to be more so when they have a lot of children. They have many children. And more women are having this problem. I think they never knew whether it was any better or any worse before. They had nothing to compare. In the village 50 years ago nobody complained, but they've gotten educated now and there are more demands from each other, and now as we progress you begin to question your rights. You say, "Now look, I do my 50 percent, I do my work, so now I'd like to have a say in things." I think the modern Samoan woman is thinking like that, but the traditional Samoan woman doesn't know any better.

2 Is violence against women a problem in Samoa?

Service provider: I certainly appreciate the effort to try to do something about this violence against women in Samoa. I think they are trying to do a good thing. But at the same time, I am very critical of the kind of reporting about women violence in Samoa that is done in a very imbalanced and unfair way. This focus on violence against women is needed by some so they can have an office and some consultants and apply for funds from overseas. You see what I mean! The temptation among some of the recipients of benefits from overseas, is to try to put together something that justifies their application, and this is a very wicked

sort of thing. But it paints the name of the community in general as a very pagan kind of people. Just like going back to the time when there was no Gospel. I objected to this when this point was raised in this women thing in the meetings in ———. I was one of the delegates and a report said that in Samoa 50 percent of women suffer violence. I thought this was a very unfair sort of statement. Not because of my own personal pride in Samoa. Not at all. But it is a very unfair thing just to throw remarks like that and label people that way. Fifty-percent of women suffer from violence in Samoa??!



3 Shame and domestic abuse

Physician: Once their bruises have faded and their wounds have healed, they disappear. They're too ashamed to come back. They don't want to talk about it any more. I think that shame is the strongest emotion that they feel. The pain, the physical pain, they can put up with that. I think it's the emotional distress of being in that position. [The source of the shame is] that you're married to an abusive person that maybe doesn't care for you and protect you. The man you marry is supposed to protect you and to care about you, not to beat you up. That's bad. That's shaming. I think there's sexual abuse, where girls will allow sexual intercourse because they're frightened of resisting, because often it's a family member or a friend of a member of the family, someone they know. And they feel ashamed that they're in that situation and

they're not going to fight it. Because if she made a big hoo-haw the shame on everyone is something she'd have to deal with.

Service provider, nurse: These women lack the courage to come up with ideas of how to approach other people for help. Shame is one of those concepts that is quite [sic] with Samoan people. A woman would be very shamed to go to the neighbour or even to the minister because she will be asked about what had happened. They are ashamed by the abuse. They do not wish it to be known by other women that they have been hit or abused by their husband. So they have feelings of shame as well as the physical pain.

4 Types of violence

Q DOES HE HIT YOU WITH A BASEBALL BAT VERY OFTEN?

Abused woman: When I'm interfering in his life he does that. He wants me to shut up and do what he says. If I want something I have to be really nice and everything so I can deserve something. Then he'll ask me to do this or do that, and if I don't do it then that's when he starts hitting me. She left her husband after he chased her with a knife. Then, "On Tuesday afternoon they came to me at work and told me that my second son was in hospital, that he got hit by a car. And then my boss said I had to go and see him. I was so scared. I was worried, I thought it was true. Then I went to the hospital and that's when he beat me up. That's why I have all these marks on my face.

Q YOUR HUSBAND MET YOU AT THE HOSPITAL?

A: Yes. He was there.

Q WAS YOUR SON THERE?

A: No.

Q HE JUST HAD YOU COME THERE SO HE COULD HIT YOU?

A: Yeah. So he could beat me up.

Q YOU'RE AFRAID HE'LL KILL YOU?

A: Yeah. Because that's next. That's next. I know that's next. Everything's got worse and worse. He beats me more, beats me harder, beats me with anything. And now it's like he's ending up with a knife.

Abused woman: He would get really angry and then he'd start beating me. It started with a small thing and then the next thing I knew he was becoming more violent, and he got more violent every time it happened. It started with a slap and the next thing I knew I had bruises and the next thing I knew I had a crack on my head, and it got worse every time it happened.

Q WHERE DID HE HIT YOU?

A: Almost always on the face. And every time he beat me up I'd always try to block my face. It just happened so many times that I can't remember how many times he did that.

Policewoman: I see a lot of badly defaced women. They're beaten on their faces. I saw one with a broken jaw. I knew her very well and I couldn't even recognise it was her. When I saw her I didn't know it was her until I looked carefully. Then I said, "Is it ——?" and she said, "Yes, it's me." And I said, "Oh my God!" Then she told me how she'd been badly beaten. She had bruises all over her face and a broken jaw. Some of the women have broken teeth, and some have concussions and fractured skulls. Some of them are beaten on the back. I saw one who was beaten up by her husband with a big, thick stick with a nail sticking up from it. Another woman was badly sexually molested by her husband. She showed me her vagina and she was badly torn. Some have broken ribs. I saw one woman with the burn of a rope around her neck. You know that rope that is used for cattle? You've seen pictures of a cowboy throwing a rope around the neck of a bull? She said that he threw the rope around her neck like that. But she still loved him.

Service provider: Just recently we completed another case of a woman who has been abused both by her husband and the father-in-law. They had five children and she said her father-in-law beats a tin with a stick to wake her up in the morning and make his breakfast. It's a signal, when the mother is asleep in the morning. If the father-in-law gets up and doesn't see her around he gets a tin and a stick and beats the tin, and that's a signal to the woman that she has to get up at that time. The woman reported to us that if she doesn't comply to all these little signals she gets beaten up. He throws stones at her, or anything that the father-in-law gets hold of at the time. And sometimes the father-in-law wouldn't even feed her if she didn't do the chores properly. So that's why she came to us. Her children were there with the husband's family, and she reported that the father-in-law is so cruel that he even drowns her sons in the river. There's a nearby river. You know how children are, they're always running around and making noise, and he doesn't like that. So when he gets really angry he

does that. He puts them under water until they say "Yes, I won't do that again."

Summary of police report: The victim complained to her husband that their employees were not doing their jobs, and asked for some workers to come and help clean their home. In reply the offender said it was none of her business how the employees performed and he got upset. He eventually came up to the victim and punched her in the mouth. In the evening as victim was crying and holding their baby she told him to "leave her alone." He took the baby away from her and grabbed her and threw her on to the stone pavement. He kicked her in the stomach and back, left eye, nose and her nose started to bleed. Kicks were mostly directed to the stomach, she being two months pregnant at the time. Family members tried to hold him back and he turned around and started to beat them up as well.

5 Indecent assault and carnal knowledge

Service provider: Of course it is a problem. It happens here. The thing about sexual abuse by a member of the family is that it's hidden. I think it's very hard for the girl, if she's been sexually abused by an uncle or by a cousin or brother or father, to tell somebody. So the abuse goes on for a while without anybody knowing about it. And I think she's scared to tell anybody. Maybe the person who does the abuse has threatened her if she tells anybody, and also she probably feels very dirty, very shamed. Shamed to tell her family because they might make her feel like she's stupid or she might be blamed for it.

Summary of police report, indecent assault: The offender, a 23-year-old teacher, physically pinned down his 15-year-old student, "fondled her breast and kissed her private parts." He was given a sentence of nine months imprisonment and a fine.

Summary of police report, indecent assault: The parties are a father, age 51 and his daughter, age 24 who lives with her parents. The father approached his daughter at night while she was sleeping and touched her private parts. Her screams awoke other family members who found the father naked with his daughter. She left that evening for her grandmother's house and returned with the grandmother to her father's home to apologise. When they arrived, the father used a stone to hit the victim on the head and face. The grandmother, who tried to stop the beating, was also assaulted. He was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment. The man has a previous record of sexu-

ally molesting his daughter. He also forbade her to see young men and, when he learned that she was quietly seeing a male friend, he hit her with a broom and a bush knife. He also stoned the young man when he came to the house to visit the young woman.

Summary of police report, carnal knowledge: The assailant, a 37-year-old pastor, was convicted of carnal knowledge with a 15-year-old girl (details not given) who was "placed in custody of offender for protection." He was sentenced to two years imprisonment because he was "a man of God who should not have done what he did."

Summary of police report, carnal knowledge: The offender, a 36-year-old man, is the maternal uncle of the victim, a 14-year-old girl. He "crawled into the victim's mosquito net. She awoke and he silenced her by threatening to beat her up, and had sexual intercourse with her while she moaned in pain." He apologised to his sister and was sentenced to two years imprisonment.

Summary of police report, carnal knowledge: The assailant, a 55-year-old man, is the great uncle of the victim, a 15-year-old girl. The girl's aunt lodged the complaint and said that the girl had been sexually assaulted many times by her great uncle. The assaults began when he took her to live with him in his house. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment.

6 Rape

Service provider: It is my belief that sexual violence against women has increased, especially with younger females. The results such as increased teenage pregnancies, and other sexual offences are evidences of such claims. According to some of the interviews that I have done with men, during the time they have the urges to have sexual intercourse there seems to be a strong thinking pattern that it doesn't matter who it is it is and it's usually whoever is there. These men do show a tendency to be attracted to the bodies of younger females rather than their wives. I feel that such results are consequences of both physical and emotional mental health problems faced by these men.

Service provider, explaining the cases of sexual violence that she deals with: I think videos are the most important influence on sexual assaults. The media. That part. I think it has a lot to do with it. I think, too, that parents are becoming very lenient with their children. They allow them to go out at night. I see that in my family. When I was little by 6 o'clock in the evening I should be at home. I should have taken my shower and be ready for evening prayers, the meal, and then do my homework. Now my nephews and my niece can go out of the house, and by 7:00 p.m. when we were eating we realised that one of them wasn't there, and that's when we started going out looking for them. And I think that's one of the problems.

7 Forced Sex

Q WHAT ABOUT MEN FORCING THEMSELVES ON THEIR WIVES WHEN THEIR WIVES DON'T WANT SEX?

Service providers: Yes, I think that's common also.

Q WHAT DOES A WOMAN DO IN THAT SITUATION?

A: She just gives in. She silently gives in. Where does a woman like that go to discuss it? There's no place available to discuss it, but I think there are a lot of unhappy women.

Q THEY HAVE NOBODY THEY CAN TALK TO?

A: They talk to me in a joking way. Their jokes have an ambiguous meaning. They will talk like that jokingly, but they really mean it. And you can sense it. A lot of women are unhappy.

Q IS THIS [FORCED SEX IN MARRIAGE] ACCEPTABLE IN SAMOAN SOCIETY?

A: Yes. My opinion, I think it shouldn't be. It's not right. Even if I'm married, I'm my own person and I'm entitled to my own rights. And I don't think it should be ac-

Summary of police report, rape: The offender, a 17-year-old man attacked the 42-year-old victim from behind and tried to strangle her. She struggled, and he hit her on the head, chest and shoulders with a stone until she fell unconscious. He proceeded with sexual intercourse while she was unconscious. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

Summary of police report, rape and abduction:

The offender claimed that the victim, a 16-year-old girl, and her boyfriend were on his land and threatened them with his machete. He first tried to force the boyfriend to have sexual intercourse. Then he raped her, threatening her with his machete if she screamed. He was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for rape and three years for abduction.

Summary of police report, rape: The offender wrapped his arm around the victim's neck, pulled her to the ground by her hair, and threatened to kill her. She suffered injuries including "swollen bruised lip, internal cut, abrasion 5 cm x 5 cm on left leg, injury to the right knee, redness of mucosal membrane of vagina." He was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

cepted. But I think Samoan men – not all of them – Samoan men tend to have that sort of notion, if it's their wife they own her. And I think it's also due to their own insecurities. It's the men's own insecurity. For example, if I don't want to have sex they think something's wrong with them and they take it in the wrong sense. And then it'll end up in a domestic dispute.

Q DO WOMEN EVER COMPLAIN ABOUT THAT TO THE LAW?

A: No. They don't. There's no legal recourse for that. The women did talk about it [forced sex by their husbands], but they accepted it as part of their marital role. This was the man's right. They talk about it in a way that it was unwanted, but it was not something that they considered to be abuse or violence, because it was a man's right to demand sex in marriage. I think that the concept of marital rape is something very new in Samoa, and I don't know that Samoan women would see unwanted sex as rape. But they did talk about it, and it concerned them a lot. It concerned some women because they knew that their husbands were playing around and having sex outside marriage,

and it concerned them because of what the implications were for their relationships with their husbands. But I don't think they were prepared to make a complaint on the grounds of unwanted sex in marriage. They were concerned about the implications in terms of their health, but not as an act that violated their rights. The programs about sexual transmitted dis-

ease have been effective with women because they made them aware of what might happen to them if their husbands were playing around, when they came back to the marital bed. I think that concerned them more than the unwanted sex. That's just something a wife does. You just accept that as part of your role in marriage.

8 Physical Consequences of Abuse

Abusive man: I felt sorry for her because she really suffered. She had a lot of injuries. I saw her face and body was all welted. I beat her quite severely. She had a broken arm, puffed up lips, her eye was hurt, her body was bruised. I beat her up very badly. Her face was all battered from me kicking her with my feet. I could see that my wife was in a very bad state from that beating.

Abusive man: Her eye was injured. I remember she had a bad eye, I punched her there, she also had abrasions on her mouth and hand. And I also had injured hands from her finger nails, my hands were all bad. She had also scratched my neck. This was the worst beating of my wife because it was not just a single beating. I remember her eye was swollen and bruised, her cheek was bruised, and she told me she felt her body was broken from me punching her especially her shoulder and hip, her side especially when she was down and I was kicking her in her back and stuff like that.

9 Emotional and psychological consequences of physical violence

Abused woman: Sometimes when I have a problem with my husband, I think of just committing suicide. Sometimes I really think of that».

Q HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO DO THAT?
A: No.

Q HAVE YOU TOLD ANYBODY THAT YOU THINK ABOUT SUICIDE?
A: I told him. I told my husband. Just my husband. I was crying and I told him. That's the only thing I'm trying to do, just to get out of all these problems

Q HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT COMMITTING SUICIDE?

A: Sometimes. Sometimes. Ever since our first child, yes I have.

Q DID YOU EVER TRY TO DO IT?
A: I tried drinking Genola. It's a washing liquid.

Q DID YOU WIND UP IN THE HOSPITAL?
A: Yeah, I went to the hospital for that and they helped me out. I see these faces, his family's face all staring at me giving me the evil eye giving me the evil eye. Like they thought I should do it, I should die. Like they should let me do it and everything.

Q DID THEY SAY THAT TO YOU?
A: I hear it. I hear it. They say it to each other but I hear it.

10 Effects on children of physical abuse of mother

Abused woman: I seem to be getting an ulcer. My thoughts are all mixed up and my concentration is not as good. I'm not as good at my job now. I'm being affected physically and mentally. I'm very irritable now. I feel so weak and tired, but when my marriage was smooth I could concentrate on my kids. I could read to them, take them to the park. But when my husband and I fight all the time I haven't got time for the kids. I yell at them all the time, I slap them. "Don't ask me questions, I'm driving" It affects the way I treat my children.

Abused woman: If any of my kids come up to me (when he's hitting me) then that's when he slaps them in the face. If they come up to me, crying to me, wanting him to stop, he'll pull them away from me and slap them and tell them to sit down and shut up. That's why it's so painful for me, seeing my kids living like that, having my kids there. My husband beats me up and my kids are there seeing everything. It makes me depressed.

Abused woman: Yes, yes they [the children] are afraid of him. They cry a lot. They don't really understand. When I spend time with my kids, they don't really want to know him when he comes home they give him this stare. They just stare at him. They're quiet. They never make noises when he's around.

Q DO THEY HAVE NIGHTMARES?

A: Yes, my son and my daughter do. My oldest son. He's two, that's all. When he has nightmares he wakes up if he touches them. Like saying "What's wrong?" They just shut up because when they wake up he slaps them and tells them to go back to sleep. When I'm there I can just hold them, just comfort them, just hug them and tell them "Calm down, calm down, nothing's going to happen." I try to protect them, tell them there's someone there to protect them. I protect my kids.

Abusive man: It is difficult for me to beat her in front of the kids because the kids should not see me beating her, but I am also conscious about the lives of kids who grow up seeing this. It should not be used as an example, for kids to see this. They are like cameras which absorb everything that occurs within the family.

Abusive man: I cannot, I cannot hit my wife in front of my children as I did the last time. I slapped her in front of my children and they screamed, and I realised that I could not hit her again in case they got affected, or in case they took up this habit when they grew older.

Abusive man: The impact on the community of domestic violence, I see it will never end. As children are growing up and seeing violence among their parents or if they witness their father beating their mother, I think those kids will grow up to be as violent as the father. And they will be violent toward their wives. I'm not saying all, but the cycle of violence will continue. Also, if somebody is subjected to a lot of abuse over a long time, that person will feel helpless, have nowhere to go, and it may eventually lead to suicide because we do have a suicide problem here too. But I think it's mostly among the younger age group.

Q HAVE YOU EVER EITHER DEALT WITH ANYONE WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE BECAUSE OF ABUSE?

A: When I was working at the hospital I was aware of cases of suicide that were admitted. These were the young 17-18-19 year olds. But they were mostly single, so it was more a case of abuse by their own families.

11 Effects of sexual abuse on women

Service provider: I have seen women who have been raped and they have never reported it until they have been married. They seem to feel that something is wrong with the marriage. They tend to stand back from their husbands somehow, or they seem frightened to engage in sexual intercourse with their husbands. It is a reflection of what has happened. They keep thinking that they will not perform their best for their husbands because they have been traumatised earlier in their lives. I have seen four girls, three in their early 30s one of them in her late 20s. These four girls were all rape cases. They all worked in government departments, two of them worked at the bank. The results proved to be that the productivity of their work was very low, their thinking appeared to be shallower, and they tended to be really disturbed within themselves, and they found that their performance in their work was not the same as it was before they were raped. I could see the emotional upsets in these women. Three of these women as I recall were very suicidal. They felt the world was no longer a place to live in and that their bodies were not worth giving to a husband they would marry, having been touched and fondled by these men. Again, they were very suicidal and I had to switch over from rape cases to suicidal counselling to help them with their way of thinking. The internal feelings or the internal hurt of these victims remains. Performance wise, they do not appear to be able to physically perform their best anymore. They often feel that people are talking about them, or looking at them and the eyes of people are always on them because of what has happened.



12 Who commits abuse?

Service provider: But how many men suffer because their wives are very dominant? This is very much ignored. There is the picture that the majority on the men's side who are dominant or domineering in their families, but there are families where the women do the bossing, do the decision making, everything. Whatever the man wants, he waits until the mother comes and says "This is what we do. Our children must do this, and do that." And even the children are afraid of the mother, rather than the father, because the father loves them and spoils them. But the mother is a very disciplinary person. So we must look at the matter in a balanced way, rather than just because you want something put out for women and that will attract the attention of donors to pour in money to help this. I know that many projects favour the women today. The funding agencies love to donate. If you want to be successful in your requests for funds from overseas, take the women as your main subject for your project, and the people will love you. And bring out only the incidents when women suffer, but no incidents when men suffer because their wives are very dominant and treat them in a bad way.

Service provider: There are some women who are very autocratic in their ruling or in their leadership roles and they seem to hit men more than the men hitting them. In the field of mental health I have come across women who are like that. When the subject of violence against women comes up, and if men are present, they get up and say, "You know the women are also hitting us." There are some women who are very strong with their mouth and use verbal abuse against their husbands. In reality I don't think there are a lot of women that hit men. There are much more cases of men hitting women.

Service provider: We've had some cases of men who have been subjected to harassment from their wives, or from frustrating and stressful situations at home because of the over control of their wives in their lives. You know, at a certain stage in their lives their wives just keep at them all the time and they've just totally stressed out about it. They don't know how to deal with it. They can't talk to their wives. I think it's part of the culture, be it with the men or the women who get abused or harassed. Oh, the woman's most likely to get hit by the husband. If she gets hit by anyone else it'll be another woman, and it'll be based on relationships of jealousy. Then it's all out war. And that's part of Samoa. If a woman fools around with somebody else's husband, then she's got to face the consequences. The same with a man. There are times when it's so ugly that the woman's family can all come together to beat up this woman that is having an affair with the husband. They'll come in car loads and go to

that woman's house and beat her up. I mean physically beat her up.

Service provider: The problem in Samoa is, say there's a problem between my husband and I, and my husband's family doesn't like me, that's another problem. They hit me, or they tell my husband and he'll bash me. It's a problem, especially if you live with the man's family. When you don't do some work or tidy the house they go "Nehhhh nehhh nehhh" to my husband and they always come by my house and look. Sometimes his mother or his sisters will hit me too. The mother-in-law? Ah, she's a tiger. They always interfere between couples. It's not decreasing. It's increasing here in Samoa. It's getting worse because of the lack of education. They don't have much education and have little knowledge in life.

Service provider: If she is married into the husband's family she would most likely be hit by his sisters. This is because of the importance of the sister to the brother. If you are married into the family it appears that the sister is respected more than the brother. For example, if I am the married woman in the family, in everything I do I would pay more respect to the sister and the parents than to my husband. It is all right if my husband found out that I have been hit by his sister, because a good relationship should develop between the sister and me due to the fact that the sister is an important person to her brother. It happens and it is still happening with mother-in-laws, sister-in-laws or other relatives hitting on women, but more so the mother and sisters-in-law.

Service provider: When girls get pregnant outside of marriage it is the father who punishes them. It's the father they're frightened of. Always the father. There's a special relationship between father and daughter, too. Mother is somehow in the distance. "Can't you talk to your mother?" "Well yes, I guess I'll have to." If they're going to approach their father they have to go through their mother. It's the mother who is the go-between that tries to protect the daughter from an irate father. I don't think I've come across a mother who is the abuser.

Service provider: I've known of one or two cases, when the family found out that she was pregnant she was beaten, but I think usually the mother would try and stop the incident. I haven't known of any severe cases that have resulted in injuries to the young woman. In that case, more out of shock and anger, the father would just stand up and lay a physical blow against her. But the mother would rush in quickly and

try to get her away from it for fear that it would injure both the young mother and the unborn child. There's a concern for the unborn child. But usually the beating or any sign of physical violence toward the young girl would be out of shock. The parent is shocked to find out that she is pregnant. So we advise young girls, when they find out that they are pregnant without having told their parents, to go to somebody that she's close to, like an aunt or the pastor, to help her break the news to her parents for the first time. So an intermediary would be there to try and calm them down. After that first shock is past, they would not beat her. They would usually be accepted back into the family, but it would take awhile for the father to settle down and think straight, and then eventually it would be all right. Maybe the daughter could go and stay with an aunt or another person in the extended family and give them time to get over it.

Service provider: For some women the beatings are not so much by her husband but by the husband's father. It's her father-in-law. Apparently he's so controlling and demanding, and he wants everything done HIS way. And if the wife does something that he doesn't agree with, he would take it out on the children or threaten the mother.

Q ARE WOMEN HIT BY THEIR BROTHERS AND THEIR FATHERS TOO?

A: Oh yeah. Their cousins, too. They all hit women. But only a small number of them come here to the office and file complaints. Because they're ashamed. You know, it's hard here in Samoa for people – especially women – to speak up. I think it's because of the pride.

Police report - Assault/Insulting Words: The offender, a single unemployed man age 28, attacked his 52-year-old mother. She said that her son came home in the evening drunk and asking for food. She gave him food and he threw the plate of food down. Later on in the evening the same thing happened again. The son came home drunk and the mother told him off. The son got upset, swore at the victim, and said a lot of insulting words. Then he walked up to her and punched her in the shoulder. He was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment, 12 months probation.

Police report - Assault: The offender, who was the victim's brother-in-law, was drunk and drinking at the victim's home. She became afraid because he was drunk and becoming rowdy, so she turned off the lights. The offender slapped her because he was drinking with his friends. The victim's husband called and reported his brother's behaviour. When she went to the road to wait for the police the offender came up to her and punched on the side of the head. She suffered no serious injuries, but the police, who had



just arrived on the scene, observed the attack. He received a sentence of 1 month imprisonment and a \$100.00 fine.

Police report - Assault: The offender is the victim's uncle. The victim and her mother went to his home to buy Samoan cocoa. The offender was angry about a village quarrel and chased them out of his house. The victim returned to get her young son who was still crying in the house and he hit her in the face knocking her down. Then, while she was on the ground, he punched her in the jaw. When she tried to get up he hit her in the mouth. The mother of the victim tried to stop her brother and he hit her in the eye. The women ran for home and he chased them with a stick. Another brother, who is a matai, stopped the offender. The charge was cancelled and discharged.

Police report - Actual Bodily Harm: While he was sleeping, the offender stabbed her husband in the chest with a bush knife, cut him behind his neck, stabbed him again hitting his chin in the process, and then struck him another blow in the head. He managed to grab the bush knife and cry out for help. The reason for the attack was that she got upset when he proposed a legal separation. He claims that their marriage of 10 years had rough times and a lot of tension from the beginning. He said that it had reached the point where they could hardly control their tempers. He felt that the only way that things would ever be resolved peacefully was through a legal separation. He wanted his wife to know and agree with him about this. The night he told her about his proposal he slept in the living room while the offender slept in the bedroom. Later on in the night he felt a sharp pain in his chest and woke up to find his wife on top of him stabbing him in the chest. He also claimed that earlier in the week she had shot at his car, causing damage to it. The victim had initially requested for lenient charges pressed against his wife, but later on claimed that she should be charged with attempted murder.

13 Causes of abuse – the woman’s behaviour

Abused woman: When I try to point out that something he’s saying is not making me happy, when something he’s doing is not right he jumps up and says, “When I tell you, when I say this, that is IT.” So that kind of thing is opposition to his authority. I think that’s what makes him angry. And it’s spontaneous. He’ll get mad, but when he gets mad he doesn’t throw things around like I do when I get mad. When I get mad I throw things around, slam the door. But his way of getting mad, he wants to verbally fire at me. But when I respond to that by throwing things and verbally responding back, then that’s when we start fighting physically. I realise that the way I handle a conflict between us is probably not right at that time, when he’s angry or when I’m angry, because both of us are like sharp knives pointing at each other at that moment. So what happens is that we get a fire.

Abused woman: In the early years of our marriage, when the children are very young, and you’ve probably got a baby and you’re breast feeding, they expect you to stay home with the children. That’s your place. And they get to go out with their friends. Now you get really angry staying home with your children because you get suspicious. If ever you confront him when he’s been drinking, then you’re asking for violence at that time. But if I confront him when he’s sober, then he’ll talk. He won’t resort to physical violence.

Woman from focus group: My husband has been beating me ever since we lived together. He used to beat me about once every three months. He does not do this as often nowadays. He beats me when he is angry with his relations or when I do not listen to him. The last beating was sometime last month. Once when his mother scolded him about something, he picked up a stick and hit me on the head. I was taken to hospital and I left him. I went back to my parents.

Service provider: Now in a marriage the man beating the wife is not acceptable, but because it’s common everybody’s used to it. They say, ‘Ah, he beat his wife up because she came home late or something.’ Very seldom do you hear of a wife beating her husband, but it’s ok for a man to beat his wife. Now if a woman does certain behaviours and a man beats her up, then that’s ok because she went out with her friends to the night-clubs. She shouldn’t be going to the night clubs. She’s a married woman. Or, she came home drunk. She’d been drinking so her husband beat her up. Well she deserved that because she was drinking. There are certain behaviours that are expected of a married woman, and if you don’t do them and your husband beats you up, then it’s ok. It’s like a parent disciplines a child.

16 Causes of abuse – alcohol

Service provider: Well, alcohol is some of the problem, but not a lot. But alcohol can be a problem. Because if a man goes out and is a moderate drinker, and then comes home and there’s something he doesn’t like, then the alcohol comes out. The drunkenness. When he’s intoxicated the anger comes out.

Service provider: So he’s frustrated and he goes out and has a drink, or three or six and he comes home and hits her. And they say that the cause is alcohol. But it is not alcohol. Politicians use alcohol as a good scapegoat. Ninety-nine percent of the cases here it’s NOT alcohol. We’ve had alcohol here since kava came out of the ground, that’s alcohol, and our men have been drinking kava for years, and it never caused them to be any more violent than. It’s the changes in the structure of society and the changes in culture. This culture is going through massive changes. That’s a shock in itself.

Service provider: I once treated a woman who had a big abscess on her leg which was a result of a hit from a piece of metal by her husband. This husband

had come home drunk late at night, about 1:00 in the morning, and wanted to have sex with the wife. She rejected him because of the condition he was in, and he grabbed a piece of metal and hit her.

Service provider: I think that one of the major causes of this kind of thing in Samoa is the use of liquor. I think a lot of marital problems occur because the man loves drinking, and while he is ok when he is sober, he doesn’t do normal things when he is drunk. Not everybody. Some people get drunk but they are peaceful and they don’t go so far as to be cruel to their wife. But I fear that a lot of our troubles now are caused by our tolerance for drinking liquor. In the clubs you can go and drink these days, while in the past you did not have this kind of thing. In the past drinking liquor was not tolerated. Then permits were issued to those who were reliable and could drink and knew how to control themselves. They had a license from the government to buy liquor. But they were allowed a limited consumption, only so much a month, and they counted points that limited the quantity of liquor they could consume. Now you still have the permit, but the way it is screened and

considered today is much different from the way it was done in the past. Now people make a very good business from selling liquor and they are the people who try to persuade the permit-issuing authorities to grant permits to the drinkers.

Abusive man: If I drink beer I don't get angry with my wife. I feel love for her and I get feelings for her at these times. I want to talk to my wife, but she doesn't like to see me drunk. When I drink alcohol I do not feel like hitting my wife. I don't beat my wife. When I drink alcohol I just like my alcohol. I only show happy feelings. But my wife doesn't like it when I drink my alcohol. I tease her, but I do not hit her."

Abusive man: Sometimes I hit my wife when I am under the influence of alcohol, other times I am not under the influence of alcohol. But I can't hold back the anger, when the woman brings in the devil between us. The wife knows very well that most of the times I hit her, it is done when I am not under the in-

fluence of alcohol. Sometimes when I am drunk I can control my temper with the woman. Other times if she makes me angry while I am drunk, I can hit her.

Abusive man: What really makes me angry is when I keep having to advise her about drinking alcohol, but she keeps wanting it. Another thing is that I am largely jealous about things that she does when I do not approve of those things. A lot of times I hit her when I am under the influence of alcohol, but I also hit her a lot of times when I am not under the influence of alcohol. I beat her and am well aware of what I am doing.

Abusive man: The reason why men beat their wives is because of the beer. They are too strong on alcohol. It appears that they cannot control the alcohol. For people like me who do not beat their wives up because of alcohol, it is because she keeps acting inappropriately with the Samoan way, or she practises behaviours that are not of a good standard.

15 Causes of abuse – economic problems

Service provider: Money is another problem. Sometimes it's because they don't have any, and sometimes they don't have enough. They cannot cope. Maybe some mothers go over the limit. They know they can't afford it, but they buy, buy, and buy all these luxuries, all this food. It's not right. Big families need lots of things. I think that's another problem, having big families that they can't afford to look after. Because they haven't got a job, both mama and papa, not enough education. It's all right to have big families if they have enough education and a way to make money, like a big plantation. Then they can feed their family. Those who can cope, they are the good ones. But others breed and breed and breed, and can't look after their kids.

Service provider: Well, with what we're doing in the office when we talk to these people who've been violated, the main problem is that they have been abused because of misunderstanding between them and the husbands. Sometimes through pressure, financial pressure, when they're not able to look after their family, and most of the time it's because of what they intend to do for their own future, but they're not allowed to, you see. The husband is mainly the one who can't look after the family because he's the main breadwinner. He gets frustrated and takes it out on his wife. Economic problems cause all this violence.

Service provider: It's mostly that there's no money. There's no money out there. They have lots of land

and they can grow food, but they are still living in a subsistence way and there's no money. And also they depend on money from overseas from their families to help them with economic problems. But there's no money. If mom is at home trying to find the money, trying to make ends meet and if dad is out at the plantation planting – mind you it takes 6 to 9 months to wait for things to grow and see a harvest for selling and for consumption. But the problem is mainly that there's no money out in the village.



16 Causes of abuse – problems with partner’s family

Service provider: How she [a young wife] is treated depends on where they’re staying. Because if they’re staying with the husband’s family, then the matai belongs to the husband’s family. It’s a bigger problem, a much bigger problem for the woman if she’s living with her husband’s family, because if they are living with the wife’s family then the husband would have obligations toward his wife, and they would impose those. They can chase him away if he beats her. All the brothers would be around and they’d just chase him away. If a woman is aware that her status is much higher when they live with her family, when the matai is from her family, then she’d never agree to live with her husband’s family. It depends on what she chooses to do. You see a Samoan has higher status as a married woman and as a daughter of the house. If you are living with your family then your status is much higher than if you’re living with your husband’s family, and if violence happens when a woman is living with her own family then people will intervene. If it happens again and again, and you are living with your own family, then they will chase your husband away. They can just come and say, “OK, you go! You are not going to beat our daughter.” And it’s final. But they also tell the woman, “We’ll protect you as long as you are here, but should you ever make contact with him again, then you know that you’ll have to leave.” She has to know that she has to make a choice too. And that’s the thing about Samoan women. We do have alternative statuses. Our status as a married woman is a lot less than our husband’s status when we’re with our husband’s family. But if you’re there in your own home, then your status is high.

Another suggests that women disagree about the acceptability of hitting young wives, and that the lines are drawn according to age and family membership.

Service provider: I think probably 50 percent of those people [who say, “Well if she doesn’t obey her husband he is within his rights to hit her”] are the females, the older females -- the older neighbours and the grandmothers and the aunties. Especially if it’s the older women of the man’s family. I think they’re supposed to know more about the women that’s married into the family. That’s the thing here in Samoa. If a woman marries into the family, both men and women – the older ones especially – they’re supposed to bully you around and tell you “Bring this. Do this. Cook this.” It’s like a servant kind of thing. That’s not my experience, but I think it’s very common in extended families. When you have a number of families living together in one space, the new wife is kind of like a servant.

Service provider: I think that the in-laws are another problem because most of them [young wives] will be living with their husband’s parents and sisters and brothers. I think that’s also another problem. Not only does the wife have to be responsible to the husband, but she also has to be responsible to the husband’s parents, to the husband’s brothers and sisters and do everything for them. And the husband tends to be on his family’s side without considering the wife’s feelings and where the woman stands. And that’s another problem – this extended family sort of thing. Although it’s good in that you get support, you get a good support system, family are family, there are disadvantages to having to live in an extended family situation. I think that’s another cause of violence.

Service provider: If, in the Samoan community, a woman leaves her family and goes and lives with her husband’s family, her role changes. She is an in-law. But I wouldn’t say that a woman, living with her parents and beaten by her husband, the family would just let her be beaten. No way. That’s where her relatives, her parents her brothers, would step in and hit the husband if he’s done it, like a habit, beating her up. No way can he do that if he’s living with her family. But I think what’s happening here is the women who are leaving their homes, their parents and living with their husband’s parents. That’s where this abuse continues and continues and no-one interferes. Unless it gets worse and worse, the husband’s family will just say “Oh, that’s their problem. Let her face it. That’s why she came to this family. She was prepared to be beaten.” I think it really makes a difference where they live.

Abused woman: All they do is they say that the woman deserves it. If my husband beats me up and I go to them for help they say, “Ah, it’s your fault, you deserve it.” The family tells me I deserve that.

Summary of a police report on Actual Body Harm. The offender, who is sister-in-law to the victim and lives with her, attacked the victim because she refused to give a cup of cocoa to the offender’s son. The offender then proceeded to grab a piece of brick and hit the victim on the head causing it to bleed. The brother of the offender (victim’s husband) attempted to stop the fight but the victim grabbed a wooden spear and hit the offender with it. The offender took off, and the victim’s husband threw the wooden spear at his wife but missed her.

17 Causes of abuse – the woman’s sexual jealousy

Service provider: I have a friend who called me yesterday. She lives here, and yesterday she met her husband with the woman whom she suspected. She told me that she’s going to go back to the restaurant and cut off her ear with a knife. I advised her to please take a little time to sit down and think. She said she’d known about this for a long time, and she called the woman many swear words. So I told her that this is a big problem. There are many women with problems like hers, and this causes many separations and many divorces. This is especially true of men with children. I asked how many children they have and she said they have four. This is her first husband and the children are grown up. I think the woman is over 40. I guess the man is the same age. I told her to please wait a few days, and when the husband comes home to talk to him. I strongly advised her not to use her knife, not to cut off the woman’s ear. She was talking about assaulting the other woman, killing the woman. So I told her to wait a few days and let this problem be only between her and her husband. I told her that if she wanted me, I could come

and talk with them, share ideas, and all that. She told me she couldn’t wait, she was so angry. I could tell she was angry because she was yelling on the phone. She was so jealous and hurt.

Service provider: The infidelity, the dishonesty by the husband, his telling lies, and the woman questioning him. That results in beating.

Abusive man: What usually happens in my family, between me and my wife when she does not feel happy with me, happens if I work overtime, or work three nights in a row overtime. This means I work overtime starting at 8:00 a.m. and knocking off at 9:00 p.m. or 12:00 a.m. These are the times when my wife gets very unhappy with me. She feels suspicious as well as feeling that I am abandoning her and the children. She feels I neglect them. This is behaviour that I don’t like.

18 Causes of abuse – the man’s sexual jealousy

Abusive man: I hit her because she spent such a long time out when she went to buy something, I became suspicious because she took such a long time. I think I hit her because I was suspicious because she took such a long time.

Abused woman: One of our friends came from England and wanted me to contact an old friend of ours, somebody I used to work with. And my husband was so mad. He got so mad. “I don’t like that guy you’re calling up.” “I’m only calling him up to get help for my friend.” Anyway, he started accusing me. “Did you have an affair with this man? Did you have an affair with this man? How come you know him? How come these other people say you know him?”

19 Causes of abuse – lack of communication between the couple

Abused woman: It’s Friday night, everybody’s out. He’s out, and you’re home with the kids. So they come home a little bit intoxicated and you start asking questions and you start nagging. And that nagging, they can’t stand the nagging. That’s when they throw out a blow to shut you up. There’s a communication breakdown. And you start to feel distant, because you’ve had a long day and it will lead to fights. There’s argument and then fights. If ever you confront him when he’s been drinking, then you’re asking for violence at that time. But if I confront him when he’s sober, then he’ll talk, he won’t resort to physical violence.

Abusive man: When I struck her over the disagreement we had, that was due, again, to miscommunication with regards to (her) overtime at work. She came home a bit too late, and my son was crying and my wife hadn’t fed him. This was when I hit her, but she did not sustain any wounds. Only the normal beating: just a slap and then it’s finished.

Service provider: The second major cause of violence is miscommunication. The wife doesn’t understand, really, what the husband wants and the husband thinks his wife knows that he wants. And when they come together, not understanding each other, that’s where violence starts.



Service provider who works with women university students: A lot of the problems I've had with students coming in to see me are the result of a cultural gap, a generation gap here in Samoa. Not only is there a generation gap but they've also got the cultural gap that is growing between them and their parents. And the frequent cry is "My parents don't understand me." It's heart-breaking. "They don't understand me." And I think they [the parents] tend to lash out physically because of their frustration. Unfortunately there's a tendency in Samoan culture to lash out before you stop to think. That's an expression of their frustration and their inability to cope with the situation. They lash out and belt the kid over any minor little thing. That's their way of coping with their uncertainty, their inadequacies. And I say to the kids, "Well, have you tried to talk to your parents." And they say, "Yes, but

they just won't listen. They just won't sit down and talk to me." It's not so much the mothers. I've asked them, "What do you think your parents' reaction would be if you tried to sit them down and said 'I've something that I want to discuss with you that's very important to me.' They say, "Ah, Dad would probably hit me or abuse me verbally," or something of that nature. It's usually the mothers who will stop and listen when they appeal. So I say, "Well, sit down and talk to your mother first." And then they say, "Ah, my mother might understand but my dad doesn't listen to her either. He'll just turn around and hit my mother for listening." So where does this leave the kid? Very frightened. Very frightened. But then they have to go home. "But I don't want to go home. I'll probably get beaten up if I go home."

20 Causes of abuse – Gender role expectations

Female service provider: I think they were frightened that they would be beaten [if they used family planning]. Some of the women actually said that. They would hide their pills from their husbands, and they were afraid if they should find out their husbands would become quite violent toward them because they didn't agree with birth control. I guess some saw it as an undermining of their masculinity, not procreating and reproducing. Producing is part of the macho image. The more children they have the more macho they are. They generally do not interfere with nature because, after all, it's the women who look after the children anyway. So it doesn't change the male role all that very much. There was a fear that they would be abused, physically abused, if their husbands found out that they were in family planning. The women did talk about it [unwanted sex in marriage], but they accepted it as part of their marital role. This was the man's right. They talk about it in a way that it was unwanted, but it was not something that they considered to be abuse or violence. Because it was a man's right to de-

mand sex in marriage. I think that the concept of marital rape is something very new in Samoa and I don't know that Samoan women would see unwanted sex as rape. But they did talk about it, and it concerned them a lot. It concerned some women because they knew that their husbands were playing around and having sex outside marriage, and it concerned them because of what the implications were for their relationships with their husbands. But I don't think they were prepared to make a complaint on the grounds of unwanted sex in marriage. They were concerned about the implications in terms of their health, but not as an act that violated their rights. But the programs about sexual transmitted disease have been effective with women because they made them aware of what might happen to them, if their husbands were playing around, when they came back to the marital bed. And I think that concerned them more than the unwanted sex. That's just something a wife does. You just accept that as part of your role in marriage. That wasn't a concern for them. When they took their marriage

vows that was a commitment on their part to abide by the rules of marriage. But they were concerned about their health; not just an unwanted pregnancy but an unwanted disease that might come out of the unwanted sex. The use of condoms has not caught on here, because they're regarded as anti-macho. They take some pleasure out of the sex act, and Samoan men don't like to use them. And they get very angry with the women when they try to use them. Even though they say, "look, this is as much for my safety as it is for yours." No way! That seems to me to be extremely irresponsible.

The following quotes illustrate Samoan expectations of women. These are the female gender roles:

Abused woman: Well, I work from early in the morning, from 8:00. I'd get up, get my kids ready for school, and that's part of the fighting, bringing them to school and who helps out in what area, and who should do this and who should do that. And then we get them to school, and at 12:00 on the dot I have to be out of the office. He'll be mad if I don't be out on time. Pick up the kids, drop them off at home, then I'm back to work, straight after work again at 4:30 when my daughter will be out, home, never rest just get up and cook. And you know, there's nobody to cook for my mom or the kids. OK, I will cook, and then get them ready for bed again, tidy up the house, wash the dishes, that's another day.

Male service provider: If the family is really well-ordered, its well-being is progressing, then people say that it's because of the mother. Or if a man is doing very well then people say there must be a good woman behind him. And when they see things all confused and the children misbehaving and the husband running to and fro, then they will always blame the mother. The mother's no good. That's why the family is divided. The mother is very important. A lot is expected of them, and they receive a lot of blame too. And also you will notice that most of the activities that are carried out in the villages are organised and carried out by the mothers, by the women's committees. The council of chiefs is mostly male, they make the decisions, but the mothers and the youths are the ones who carry those decisions out. But some women have become matais too. I believe that the way to transform the council is to have more women in it, but it's still rare because the matai position is bestowed on only one person in the family and it's usually the men are the ones who have the matai positions. So there has to be a transformation of the culture too.

Female service provider:

Q DO PEOPLE THINK THAT IF A WOMAN DOES CERTAIN KINDS OF THINGS AND HER HUSBAND BEATS HER, THEN SHE'S GOTTEN WHAT SHE DESERVES?

A: I think yeah. Yeah!

Q WHAT SORTS OF THINGS WOULD THOSE BE?

A: Not agreeing with him. Not doing her duties as a woman. Not doing the cleaning, not getting the children ready, have the children cleaned up, not getting the food ready on time. Simple things. Domestic duties, things that society has labelled as the duties of the woman. Woman's duties.

Abusive man describing a "good woman": Being pleasant and hospitable in front of people. They don't talk, they are respectful, give me the respect of being first to speak with regards to decisions that I make in front of people who can hear. These are areas that I can identify. That she is considerate to me and it is there that I saw that she must have a higher standard of behaviour if we were to live together and marry. She listens to me, especially when I have a lot of advice for her to shoulder so that she can see that I am worthy of consideration. A woman who does not drink alcohol. First, she does not smoke, does not go on outings, is respectful of people, does not sulk easily, does not verbally lash back, and those kind of things., but is respectful in front of people. It's like these are the visible characteristics because these are habitual characteristics.

Male service provider: There are some traditional beliefs right from the beginning that were handed down by mouth that are, to me, unacceptable in today's way of life. The life style that several years ago was taken to be normal, it's not acceptable, especially in the villages where the woman is responsible not only for caring for the children but she also does most of the work in the household as well as going up to the plantation. For example, the man may go up with her, but sometimes the men they meet in the village very often, and it's usually the women who have to take care of everything in the household. The men just sit around in the village probably making handy crafts. But it's not acceptable nowadays for the men to just sit around doing nothing while the poor woman is doing all the chores.

21 What makes a good wife?

Mature age woman: A wife has many roles which means that a good wife has to be many things. She needs to be outgoing and have all the good qualities. She should be able to create self-sufficiency, does not borrow from neighbours and is respectable. She does not start arguments, does not gossip or spread rumours. This is very important when you live in the extended family, because peace in the family depends very much on the wife. A good wife meets all the wife's duties within the village. We should also remember that it is easy to become a good wife when you have a good husband. A good wife should also treat all her children the same so that they feel that she loves everyone equally. A lot of the conflict in a family arises when the wife practices favouritism. Treat everybody the same

Mature age woman: I support what has been said already. A good wife should also keep the home clean all the time and not just when there is to be a women's committee inspection. I must say that my job becomes easier when my husband helps me. My husband helps me to carry out many tasks at home, for the church and in the village. A good wife creates a good home. She must be a good advisor to her husband and must treat all the children equally. She should not have any favourites. This is a very important question. I feel that all wives are the same in the eyes of God. I feel that a good wife must be patient and must give good counsel to her husband. I'll tell you my own story. My husband used to be a very rough man, who was always drinking and was quite rebellious against the church and our pastor. Our whole village knew about him. There was a time when he was openly aggressive against the pastor. So I said to him, «You have not been appointed by God to be a prosecutor or a judge of people including the pastor. You have no business to do that.» Over the years, he calmed down and now he has become the most respected man in this village. The whole village waits for his counsel and decision. That is why I say that a wife must be able to give good counsel.

Mature age woman: Yes, a good wife gives good advice and wise counsel. Be humble and look after the children and family well. Be patient with your husband. Be involved in church activities and keep peace at home.

Mature age woman: A good wife keeps peace in the home. She is one who gives good advice and keeps peace.

Mature age woman: One who gives good advice and maintains peace and harmony at home. Be humble and patient. A husband is peaceful if the wife is peaceful. A good wife must resolve conflicts and keep peace in the home.

Mature age woman: Samoan women also have expectations of men. The following is from focus group discussions in which women discuss the ideal man and father.

Man: She takes care of her husband and children and leads family prayer every evening.

Man: A good wife should be the last to sleep and first to wake up in the morning and make tea.

Man: She looks after her children and helps her husband.

Man: A good wife initiates good things concerning the home and the children. She is adviser to her husband.

Man: She takes care of her children and her husband.

Man: She wants to do good things. She is always active and her mind is sharp.

Man: A good wife takes care of everything in the house including, cooking, washing and ironing. She should be reliable.

22 What makes a good husband?

Working woman: A good husband is a man who tries to work together with his wife. He has a job to provide for his family, not just for himself. A lot of men here tend to spend on themselves, drinking etc. They get their pay and use it on drinking and don't budget. I think a good man is a man who budgets his money with his wife. They do things together.

Working woman: I agree with what she says a good man is. A good husband is one who works together with his wife, sharing financial decisions. Another thing that should be shared is the upbringing of the children. They should try to be there and try to work with the woman. A lot of men tend to go out on their own from Monday to Friday, expecting the woman to go home, and to stay home with the children, to do everything at home and to make sure his supper is ready when he comes home.

Working woman: A good husband is one who is faithful and does not drink. He does not look at other women. A good husband keeps all the Biblical rules and does not succumb to temptation.

Working woman: A good husband does not drink and is faithful and true to his wife. He works together with his wife in everything. He also keeps his marriage vows. He knows his family responsibilities and is faithful to his wife. Wherever he goes, he should think only of me. He keeps his vows and is faithful.

Working woman: He loves his wife and children and is faithful. He loves the whole extended family and the church.

Working woman: A good husband can do what the mother does. When the time comes, he should be able to keep his sex drive under control. For example, my husband and I do not have sex any more. He sleeps quite contentedly by himself while I sleep with my grandchildren.

Working woman: A good husband accepts his wife's advice. A good husband observes his duty in everything: home, church and the village. He respects his wife and does not belittle her. He should take pride in his wife.

Man: Someone who is reliable in village and church affairs. He gives constant advice to wife and children, should be able to discipline children.

Man: Someone who talks and gets things done in his home and in his village.

Man: A pleasant person who gives advice and also follows his words. Someone who is respected by others.

Man: Someone who constantly advises his children. He should discipline with beating if need be. He is respectable in his ways and must be respected by others.

Man: Respectable in all he does, active in church and village, advises family. Someone who is honest.

Man: A good husband should be active at home, should help to cook and do other work that is normally done by the mother.

Man: A reliable person who loves and disciplines his children and acts as a good role model.

23 Causes of Abuse – Modernisation



Service provider: I think that with our economic development and progress happening so quickly in the last 10 years, for example after the three hurricanes we progressed rapidly, I think that our problems have progressed rapidly too. Mothers and fathers are both working and the stress on the household is even more. Then they come home and deal with the children and with school and everything else and there's a lot of stress in the home. I think that our agencies here and our government haven't been able to keep up with the changes here, to be able to provide the services needed as a result of fast progress. We're into computers now, we're into more modern things in Samoa now. People are working in office conditions. In our work we are seeing a lot of women who are coming in with major health problems because they're in air-conditioned offices or air conditioned rooms, or they're doing more computer work and they're getting paralysis, they're getting stress and tension on their shoulders and necks. Tension! Then they go home after a day at work and deal with the kids and the culture and the religious obligations. All this stress is just building up. We're starting to identify that through our therapy, the kind of physical problems that our people are facing. It's changing. I think there's a lot of violence.

24 When is abuse justified?

Service provider: Generally it's [considered to be] OK for a man to beat his wife. There's that thinking that goes that you discipline a child by beating the child. That's a sign that the parent loves the child. You have to discipline a child so that the child will do right. So when you see a parent beating a child because the child did this or that, it's not so bad. He's trying to discipline the child. So that's why you look on beating as a whole as not a very serious thing. Now in a marriage it's not as acceptable, but because it's common, it's usually the man beating the wife, everybody's used to it. They say, "Ah, he beat his wife up because she came home late" or something. Very seldom do you hear of a wife beating her husband, but it's ok for a man to beat his wife. Now if a woman does certain behaviours and a man beats her up, then that's ok because she went out with her friends to the night clubs. She shouldn't be going to the night clubs. She's a married woman. Or, she came home drunk. She'd been drinking so her husband beat her up. Well she deserved that because she was drinking. There are certain behaviours that are expected of a married woman, and if you don't and your husband beats you up, then it's ok. It like a parent disciplines a child.

Man from focus group discussion: Wife, children beating is for discipline. Both work well in this village. It does not happen often.

Abusive man: Yes, there is a time to hit her or slap her, or for a hiding to teach her a lesson about a serious matter that she done. I honestly believe that she should be hit. It is like smacking the children, for whatever reason, but it will happen if something serious happens, such as the wife not knowing how to carry herself between her and her husband.

Service provider: You often hear in the village but also in the settlements here in town people talk about being gutu oso, on the part of the woman which is talking back to your husband, or answering back. It is something that you do not do, especially in public, because you are supposed to be obedient and respectful.

Service provider: I feel that one of the causes [of violence against women] may also be due to the living conditions here in Samoa where we live together as one big family or as extended families. When women marry into a family they are the hard labourers of that family. She carries out all the domestic work and everything that happens in the family. She looks after the children, husband and the matai of the family. If anything happens in the relationship between the husband and the wife, the man would always hit her be-

cause she is living with his family, and he expects her to respect him, the elders, and his family. He expects her to be a good woman and wife in his eyes as well as the eyes of his family. The causes to be hit could be physical, emotional out bursts, or relationship upsets perhaps involving the children. There are always causes for these things to happen in Samoan families.

Service provider:

Q WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOUR MIGHT LEAD TO A MAN HITTING HIS WIFE?

A: Embarrassing someone in public. Embarrassing her husband or a member of the family in public. Doing something really, totally off guard, that's not normal for a mother's behaviour. Ordinarily it's humiliating somebody or not obeying. Or not obeying the husband. That just agitates the situation more, because it's not common to have a woman who doesn't obey her husband. Usually they do whatever he says.

Abusive man: When I am in a bad mood due to being tired from work I go and have a rest, while the wife is still carrying out her chores: washing the kids, cooking the food, weeding the garden, doing various chores. But her opinion is that I have no spirit of helping, that I value my work at the office and do not want to help her with her difficult chores. I totally agree with this, but in my tired state I just have a rest while the mother [wife] is doing the chores. This is when she says very hurtful things. Even though she is right, our Samoan culture and common belief does insist that respect must be given to the head of the family, and so she must practice when counselling me.

Abusive man: A lot of other times I feel sad with the mother of the family, when she throws words at me, words that are not fit to reach the ears of living people. This is why my hand hits out to the mother of the family. Her words thrown at me were too harsh. It's as if she does not know how to keep the respect between her and me.

Service provider: There's also sexual frustration. The wifely duty. The guy goes out and has a good time and she stays home with the kids. He comes in late and wants her to get up and cook him a meal, and she's tired and doesn't want to. It's the extension of the wifely duty onto the bed sheet. A lot of women aren't honest enough to even say that. In fact it's as much "I wanted to go too and he made me stay home." There's that too, the sexual frustration, and I think that's why some of them [men] go out and start looking elsewhere and wind up with three or four families of children. And then she finds out, the wife does. And there you go.

25 Should the husband beat the wife if she refuses sex?

Abusive man: She should be beaten for refusing sex with her husband because the man likes to do it all the time, all the time, but asking for it and getting back. Other urges come forth, urges such as suspicion, and then the woman will be hit.

Woman: The husband shouldn't beat the wife.

Woman: The wife shouldn't refuse the husband because that was why she got married. She should be beaten if she refuses.

Woman: The wife shouldn't be beaten. There are other times.

Woman: The wife shouldn't be beaten because there are times when she does not want sex. The husband should understand.

Woman: The wife shouldn't be beaten. The wife shouldn't refuse and even though the wife does not feel like sex, she should let her husband do it to keep the peace.

Woman: Yes, the husband should beat the wife if she refuses.

Woman: Yes, he has the right to beat her if she refuses.

Woman: No, the husband should not beat her if she refuses. She probably needs a rest.

Woman: The husband should beat the wife if she refuses as she also enjoys it. The man rules over the woman.

Woman: If the wife refuses the husband would look for another wife. So she should be beaten.

Woman: The wife should not be beaten. The husband should just do it and go to sleep. You do not have to participate.

Woman: The wife should not be beaten. He will be unhappy but it does not matter.

Woman: The wife should not be beaten. The husband should apply skills to arouse the wife.

Woman: The wife should not be beaten. Women usually accommodate their husbands.

Man: She should not be beaten. She could be really tired from all her hard work. There are other days.

Man: If the woman refuses, then the man should force sex on her. I do not beat my wife.

Man: If the woman refuses, there are other nights.

Man: She should not refuse. If she does, the man can go ahead and have sex with her.

Man: A man can be suspicious if the woman refuses. There are ways to get her ready for sex

Man: No both should understand each other.

Man: Sex is an important part of a marriage. If she refuses, then she should be punished. She should explain why she is refusing to have sex.

Man: The only thing to do is to hit her if she refuses sex.

Man: A man must be patient if his wife refuses to have sex.

Man: Hitting will make things worse.

Man: Don't give up if the wife refuses. Persuade her well. She usually wants to have sex. (laughs)

Man: No, there are also times when the wife wants sex and the husband does not. It works both ways.

Man: No, she should not be beaten for such a trivial thing.

Man: No, not at all.

Man: No, she should not be beaten. There are other nights.

Man: No, because they can both wait. If the woman is tired, he should wait later perhaps in the early morning.

Man: She should be beaten. The reason why she has a husband is to have sex when the man wants it.

Man: She should not be beaten but she should not refuse either. A man needs to have sex to give him strength.

Man: She should be beaten. It is the man's right to have sex when he wants it.

Man: She should not refuse, as that is why she has a husband in the first place. But she should not be beaten.

Man: Sometimes, a woman does not feel like having sex, but she should help the husband by masturbating him to give him relief.

Man: A woman should be ready all the time to have sex with her husband.

26 Management of anger in families

Abusive man: I forgot to mention that my family has always had problems from the beginning. My father was an alcoholic and when he came home he would beat up my mother. My mother would sustain heavy injuries, to the head, or get a fracture from something thrown at her, or an injury to the eye. She would have welts all over her body from being beaten with the stick. It was a struggling family, and one that would suffer all day if the father were drunk. If I got home from school and heard that my father was drinking somewhere, I would be unsettled the whole day knowing what would happen if he came home. If he didn't beat us he'd beat our mother. He couldn't explain himself when he was drunk and wanted things we couldn't give him. He'd then smash things in the house and start beating my mother. Or beat us. My mother explained to me that there was a time when the priest actually saved the life of my older brother, my true brother. It happened one week after my older brother was born. My father was drunk. He said he didn't want any children so he took out the machete and tried to divide my brother on the table. This explains how we and our mother suffered. The priest was just on his usual visits in the evening. This is something that cannot be forgotten. I am the one person who was always getting beaten up in our family. I am the only kid in the family who was hung in front of our house. I was the most naughty. When I was nine years old, my father hung me in front of the house. He hung me not by my neck but by my ankles. My family laughed, but I screamed and cried. I did not take that lightly. That was true cruelty. It was terrible for me. I was beaten with a belt, a hose, a rope, hit with a hoe, with many things, many things.

Abusive man: [She had gone to a party held by her family, and while there drank alcohol. When she returned home he could tell that she'd been drinking and began to question her. She denied it. Then:] That night she neglected all that advice, and neglected the children and I was very angry. I asked her whether she had drunk alcohol. And she answered me about five times that she didn't. I told her that her behaviour had changed and she gave me different stories. As she kept denying I became very angry and I wanted her to know that I didn't take this lightly, and I put all my energy and I slapped her. I was so angry that night because firstly she disobeyed me, and she also lied to me. I told her that I was more hurt than what she felt. I wanted her to feel that hurt that I felt. I wanted to know whether she'd ask for forgiveness, or how she would answer me. After I had slapped her she turned and sat down, and said nothing to me. She did tell me afterwards that she was scared. I wanted her to know that I was hurt, and that if this was going to happen again I would also do this and increase it.



27 Individual strategies to end violence

Abused woman: In the first incident I didn't do anything. I was too ashamed to go anywhere. My face was swollen and I didn't want anybody to know. And the last people that I wanted to know were my family, my friends. The second time I went to the police. I went because two days after the first incident my mother called my house. I'd not been over to see her, and she knew there was something wrong. Then somebody saw me and told her. So she called me and she told me to come over. So I went over, and she said, "You stupid, stupid girl. If you let him go this time he will keep beating you up. You must do something. You have to teach him a lesson. If you don't it will happen again and again and again. And the man will use that as an excuse to beat you up so that you will be made exactly the way he wants you to be." And she said, "Never in your whole life did your father lay a hand on you, so how could you let this man beat you like this and not do a thing about it? We never, never beat you. We never beat our children, so how could you let a man, your husband – beat you like this? You know that your father loved you so much that he never hit you. He never beat his children. You must go to the police. Any man who would do this is not only an animal but a coward. And if you don't do that, you never come back here again." So I had to go up to the hospital and get a medical report. She said, "You go to the hospital. You should know better. You go to the hospital and get that document, get it written down, because the next time he beats you there'll be court a case and you'll have something to testify that he has done it before."

So I went up to the hospital and had a medical report, and got it all written down. But I didn't go to the cops. One child was four years old and the other was

two and I was breast-feeding. That's why you don't go to your family. You don't want your family to know. Anyway, I went to the hospital and got it documented. Two days, three days later he apologised. He said, "I was drunk. Don't confront me when I'm drunk." And then the second time it happened was two years later. And we had another fight. At that time I just ran out of the house, got into the car, and went straight to the cops and reported it. And the cops said I had to go up to the hospital and get a report. So I went up to the hospital and got a medical report, and then they went to arrest him. And when they got there they didn't arrest him because the kids were all hanging onto him, so the cops came back and told me to think about it. They were trying to encourage me to not press charges. I might not want to do it later because I was so emotional at the time, an hour or two hours after the incident. They came back and asked me to think about it. It was four o'clock in the morning, and there was no one to look after the children.

Woman whose husband abused her only once: What worked for me was that when I had been married for a year or two we had a little argument while he was intoxicated and he did hit me, probably accidental, but it got me really upset about it. I went to my lawyer and showed him the little bump that I received. So my lawyer spoke to my husband. I don't know what was said. I do know that it may have freaked him out because he has never touched me ever since then. I thought that it was the beginning of him hitting me, so I feel I did the right thing. It scared him because he has not touched me since except for the mouth: verbal abuse. I think I have been able to handle that.

28 Responses of health personnel and police

Q IF A DOCTOR KNOWS THAT THERE'S BEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WILL HE CALL THE POLICE AND REPORT IT?

A: Yes, he will call the police and report the stage of the wounds. Each of the wounds, of the injuries, and if she'll admit that she's been violated by the husband the doctor will file a report to the police and then the police will carry on. Then the police will question her, but it depends on whether she wants to press charges. She has to press charges for her [the police officer] to be able to do this. The police won't be able to because they'll look at it as a domestic problem and not as assault. So only when she presses charges, then the police will act accordingly.

Q DO YOU FIND THE POLICE TO BE SYMPATHETIC WITH WOMEN WHO HAVE SUFFERED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

A: Well, most of the time they are. But also they always try to have the couple reconcile, and if it doesn't work then it's up to the woman to say so. "I can't carry on like this any more, being like this for the rest of my life."

Police officer: Most of the women, when they first come, they want their husbands to be locked away in the cell, straight up. And the police officer will tell her to come down [to the police station]. She wanted to do that because she's angry and after that, because once the husband is locked up there's nothing else to do but he has to go to court, and she has to go and give evidence against her husband. But later in the day, she comes back and says that she loves her husband and she wants him to be released.

Q SO SHE DOESN'T PRESS CHARGES?
A: No. In the first place she just came in and locked him up because she's angry. But then she doesn't want to press charges, she doesn't want him to go to court.

Q HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?
A: Angry (laughs).

Q WITH THE WOMEN?
A: Yes, because the men should be locked up and learn their lesson.

Police officer: A lot of them bring the situation here to the CIB [Criminal Investigation Bureau] for police assistance. But once the police go and get the husband they always come back and yell, "Oh please, please bring back my husband. It's all over." But all night and all day she has bruises all over. It's so funny, what goes on between wives and husbands. It's not easy for us unless she has to seek civil help. It's so funny in Samoa. When the husband is drunk and has been damaging house property and hitting the children, hitting the wife, and they call for assistance the police come over to their place, and they bring the husband here because of drunkenness and wilful damage and all that. And then two or three hours later the woman comes here. "Oh please, let my husband come home. It's none of your business." It always happens. Last week we arrested a drunk man who was hitting the children and the lady. The wife called us and we went there

and got the man. He was so drunk he was pointing a gun at the kids. So we brought him here. And then four hours later the wife came here and "Oh would you please bring back my husband. He's all right. He's my children's father." You see? It's so hard. I think they love their husbands, but they shouldn't forgive them. If they were doing that to me I wouldn't forgive them. It's better for her to leave her husband. It's very common here, especially for men and women with a lot of children. They always do that. Very stupid.

Maintenance officer: There's a funny thing that happens when women come in and file a maintenance claim. They can't fight for custody of their children unless they file for maintenance first, because that's what our section is about. After a while the woman comes in and tells us about what's been happening in the family and between her and her husband. Then we issue her a letter for her husband to come in so we can interview him regarding the incident that the woman related. We issue her with a letter today, and tomorrow the man comes in and tells us that both parties have reconciled and that he has asked the woman to withdraw that claim. Then the woman comes in and says, "That's ok, I'll withdraw the claim." And then the following week she comes in again with the same problem. The thing just continues.

Q DOES THAT HAPPEN A LOT?
A: Yes.

29 Hiding the truth from health personnel and police

Q WHEN YOU SEE WOMEN WHOM YOU SUSPECT —OR YOU KNOW — HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE, HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THEM?

A: Well, the normal response is verbal retaliation back to her partner, but it totally shatters the woman. And it shatters the family. When it's all done, they never report it. They'll never go to report it because it's shameful to let the village know, or anybody higher than their family structure know that they've had any problems. So they let it all out in frustration, and then they hide it again. They go back to normal living again until something else erupts. They ask for advice. They come to us for advice, and I do my best to refer them to the agencies that I think will help, whether it's the police, or a lawyer if they want a divorce, what lawyers they can go to, or whether they need to talk to their religious leaders. I'm always open to giving advice, so I think that I must continually be aware of what resources are available in the community. Some of them do come to me, yes, but many times you look at them and know that even though you refer them you can see that they're really hesitant to go to anybody and discuss a problem.

Abused woman: No, she never went to a doctor. Oh, yes. I remember once when he beat her up and she had two or three teeth falling out and I took my mother to the hospital and I had to lie. The hospital contacted the police because there was an injured person there and I had to tell a lie to the police, that my father was assaulting my big brother and my mother was intervening and the punch landed on her. But it didn't happen that way. No.

Q HE MEANT TO HIT HER?
A: Yes. And she lost several teeth, two or three.

Q WERE YOU A POLICE OFFICER AT THAT TIME?
A: I was in the police force, my first year.

Service provider: A lot of these women feel that it [violence] is a part of living. They really don't come forward to say they have been hit by their husbands because they are very protective of their husbands. I have come across some of these people on my visits

and this is how I find them. I witness people walking around the village with a black eye or a cut on the arm, or a bruise on the back, and it is then that I would interview them asking them how they were injured. I say “I can see that you have a black eye. Did your husband hit you or something like that?” and they would say, “Oh no, I fell.” I don’t stop there. I continue to ask her more questions like “Where did you fall? Can you tell me about your fall?” until she comes up with the answer “I did not fall I was hit by a man.” This part of the work is difficult for me because I keep groping to find the right answers to what has happened to the

person. One other thing that I have found is that they seem to talk about it in a joking manner or a jovial way. They seem to joke about it saying “Oh yeah my husband hit me.” And such kinds of things, especially when women get together. At the women’s health committee meetings which I sometimes attend I on occasion present a talk on violence against women, and it is here where I would usually get all this kind of information. I can hear women talking about issues like sexual violence, physical violence, and verbal abuse in their families, and according to such information I would base my counselling work.

30 Negotiation and mediation

Abused woman: I tried to make him see that he had a problem, because that was the other thing. He kept saying that it was me. That I’m the cause of it. That’s the other thing that really ticked him off, when I’d tell him that he needed to get some help. He wouldn’t. When I came home and he stayed back to finish his studies, I’d thought he would change. And then I went back for my graduation and he did it again. So when I came back I thought, “This is it for me. I’m not going to wait for him until he’s ready to get help. You never know what else could happen. What is he going to do next?” I mean, he’s done everything that I could think of. He’s assaulted me in every physical way that I could think of.

Physician: I talk to them about their feelings, about their relationship with their husband or partner, and how they could possibly anticipate or prevent any further abuse, and what they should do if it did happen again. Many of them say “I’m going to leave him. I’m going to leave him. I want a divorce!” So I start talking about their rights and matrimonial properties and how to go about seeking a divorce and how to document all their injuries. “Go and see a lawyer so that

when it comes to facing a court you’ve got clear evidence.” So I take notes and record it, and I think “Well at least I’ve got something to back them up.” But they haven’t come back. Either they’ve left Samoa, because I haven’t seen some of them, or they just don’t come back. One girl actually came back when she was abused a second time, mainly because she needed a medical certificate to explain why she couldn’t go to work. She was in an abusive relationship, but I don’t think that she felt she could do much about it, and in some cases she blamed herself for it.

Abusive man: I beat her up hoping that she would feel scared of me and return to me and the children, but it appeared that the beating made her even more indifferent to me. A lot of the time she retaliates. A lot of the time it starts when I am telling her off and she keeps answering me back. I tell her to stop it otherwise I will come and hit her, and she’ll tell me to come and hit her. It is not as if she doesn’t have hands herself. In this situation I will stand up to slap her and she’ll lunge at me to scratch my face. Then I will get angry when I see my face and body scratched, and then I will really beat her.



31 Changing responses over time

Abusive man: When I beat up my wife I beat her with my hands and feet. As soon as she falls, my hands have a rest and I kick her with my feet. That kind of thing. There was a time when I used a shoe to hit her mouth. I have never used anything sharp. My wife came at me with a knife one time when I hit her. She came with the machete and smashed my camera, my new one that I was using during that time in Fiji. That describes my wife when she is angry. I would be cross with her, and she would be cross with me with a machete in her hand. Things changed since we married

and had two children. I would beat her and she would fight back. This year I cannot remember hitting her, but if I were to hit her now she would not hit back. I have noticed this change. I don't know whether it is age or what, or whether she respects me more now, or whatever. It is not like those days when I'd hit her and she would turn around and spar with me like David Tua standing there with a clenched fist. Now if I hit her or slap her she just sits and cries, not like before when my arms and face would be covered with her nail scratches.

32 Trying various strategies unsuccessfully

Q DID HE SAY HE WAS GOING TO KILL YOU?

A: Yes, that's what he said. If I stay around there, around the kids, then that's what I want: to die. He'll put me in the grave.

Q HE TOLD YOU THAT?

A: Yeah.

Q HOW LONG AGO WAS THIS?

A: Last week. That's when I left him. And I'm afraid to go and get my children.

Q HAVE YOU EVER GONE TO A DOCTOR TO SIGN A CERTIFICATE THAT YOU'VE BEEN BEATEN UP?

A: No, just to the police station.

Q WHEN HE STARTS TO HIT YOU, WHAT DO YOU DO?

A: I just try to protect myself. I look around and see where my kids are just in case they might get hurt. If I move around I try to move away from him, I try to get out. But I just couldn't.

Q DID YOU EVER TRY TO FIGHT BACK?

A: I try to fight back but if I fight back then the whole family jumps in and says that I'm not supposed to jump. I tried to jump, and I'm not supposed to jump.

I'm supposed to just let him beat me up and stay calm. Having my kids there, my husband beats me up and my kids are there seeing everything, makes me depressed.

Q DO YOU HAVE NIGHTMARES?

A: Yes, I have nightmares. It's sorta like I'm a prisoner in this family, living with my husband. Living with him is a kind of place like living in a dark room where nobody can help me. Nobody wants to know me.

Q DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE SLEEPING?

A: Yes, I have trouble sleeping. At first I didn't, but now like when we have an argument it's very hard for me to go to sleep. I'm just looking around because I'm scared he might just attack me.

Q DID YOU EVER THINK ABOUT SUICIDE?

A: Yeah. One time I just wanted to do something like that, and other times I'd just sit in the bathroom for a long time. I'd close the bathroom and just lock myself in the bathroom. I'd try to think of anything that would kill me just like that.

Q DID YOU EVER TRY?

A: If I'd found something, I don't know. If I'd had something that could do it just like that [long pause].



33 Women who lack economic resources

Service provider: The women that I know, friends and women I've seen who are caught in this sort of situation are very fearful because in Samoa they feel that there's nowhere to go where they can get financial support. Financial support is from your husband if he is working, and you if you are working you put your resources together to raise your children. If you divorce your husband, then maybe you can get a little bit of maintenance, but there's no social welfare system that can support you. You still need the support from him and from your family unless you have a very good job. But most women are not employed. They don't have any financial means. They're totally

dependent on their husbands. In that situation you have to think twice as to whether to leave your husband and go back to your family. Many feel like they're a real burden to their family, especially if they have children. If we had a social welfare system where they could claim mother's benefit and raise their children that way, I think it would be so easy for many women to leave the circumstances that they're caught in, and stand on their own two feet and raise their children. But many women don't want to be a burden to their family unless they're working and make a good salary and can put that into the family plate. They the family can look after the children while you are working.

34 Sources of help for village women

Abusive man: My parents first and children second, because if I am hitting her and the child really cries, then I will feel sorry for the child.

Q HOW WOULD THE PARENTS STOP YOU FROM HITTING HER?

A: They should call out for me to stop. My children should ask me to stop hitting mummy. It is enough for me to hear my children's voices telling me to stop beating my wife.

Abusive man: I don't know. All I can see is my mother and my sister who are living with us. Those are the only people who can stop me. I believe my parents can stop me, my wife's parents can stop me, also if there are neighbours who get involved, they too can stop me.

Abusive man: I believe my parents can stop me. My wife's parents can stop me. Also if there are neighbours who get involved, they too can stop me. My mother or my children if they intervene: these are the only people I can acknowledge during this time.

Service provider: When it comes to beating, people will step in and stop it. In fact, if he beats her they can take the matter to village court and the man can be punished.

Q HOW DO THEY PUNISH HIM?

A: He has to feed the village. They make him feed the entire village. If, for example, people hear a woman crying in the village, they will run to her. They will run to her. Everybody. Anybody in the community. They will go and stop it. They will go there and try to make peace, and they will try to find out why it is happen-

ing. The older people will then give that man a hard time. In the village the women's committees do not have a set mandate about responding to domestic violence. They do, however, in their work with the young women talk about this. They talk about domestic violence with the young women. I know they do some counselling. The older women talk with them about all kinds of things. But formally they don't have a mandate to respond to domestic violence. They don't regard themselves as organisations who take care of that. The police intervene. All they require is for someone to call them. Then they will intervene. That's what they do. They will intervene and ask the wife if she wants to press charges. Sometimes a woman may call the police but she won't press charges because she just wants to stop that one situation.

Q DO YOU THINK THAT THE FORMAL BODIES LIKE THE POLICE ARE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE VILLAGE COMMUNITIES?.

A: Well, the police presence is not evident. And the wife may not have a telephone. Often it's the village council that calls the police. But that would be after everything is over, because often the police are not close by. Like, it's a little village and the police post is way down the road, and they don't have a telephone. So they report it after it's over, if they report it at all. But the woman would have to report it and then go through the stage of actually laying a complaint before the police can do anything. But I imagine that would usually be very, very difficult. In the rural areas, because of the distance, and the police are not around. You usually have one police force for every three or four districts. So, you know, the police are not there. So the women have to go to the village council. That's the police for them, the village council. They are very effective. Usually what they do is they would talk to both of them, not just the woman. If the man is known to be quite a violent person, then they take that into

account. The matai would take care of it. If you have your own matai then he should be the one to pursue the whole thing.

Q IS IT THE ROLE OF A PASTOR, IF HE IS AWARE OF A FIGHT IN HIS VILLAGE, TO INTERVENE AND TRY TO STOP IT?

Pastor: Yes, it is surely so. I don't think there is anyone better than the pastor to counsel those in his congregation who are in disagreement. The pastor is usually looked at as the father of any congregation, so he looks at them as his children. So when he finds that a husband and wife are in very serious disagreement then he will appeal to them right away. Or he goes to the husband and sends for the husband to come and discuss the matter, and then he sends for the wife. He will try to bring out their views and then bring them to a stage where one can forebear the other's point of view. This is the normal situation in the rural villages, but sometimes pastors have different ways of dealing with problems. Sometimes he has to tell the husband and wife that they are being very childish and remind them, "Your children are watching you do this. What kind of children are you bringing up for the church if you do this kind of wicked thing yourselves in the presence of your children?" And that usually stops them right away. Other pastors ask them to come to the office and counsel them in the office. And sometimes he only tries to get each point of view and cool them down, and then meets with them later in the night. Maybe he goes to their home or he asks them to come to him and talks to them so that they see themselves as very stupid when they have this kind of disagreement about very small things that develops into a serious thing. The problem of violence, this is the responsibility of the church. If the church cannot do this, what is the church for?

Service provider: The complainants in most cases of domestic violence are the neighbours or others outside the family, and this happens rarely because Samoans do not involve the police in things that happen within the family unless the consequences are very serious. They do not bring strangers into that environment. Usually the intervention is less formal: family or village elders in rural areas, or church minister in either rural or urban communities. People try to sort it out themselves rather than involve strangers.

Service provider: Who does she go to? Who does she report it to? That's been discussed in one or two seminars. And no-one can quite agree. Some say she should go to her priest. Others say "No, I don't even trust my priest." Go to your mother? Maybe. But it's shame. The over-riding emotion is shame. So you don't want to go to anybody, so what do you do? We've tried

to encourage Mapusaga O Aiga, an independent NGO where you can get some counselling on what you can do next. And if you really are severely beaten up or hurt, or your children – there's always the police. I think the problem, the big problem is the shame. Every Samoan likes to be able to hold his head up. There was a case here, not too far back, where a father beat his daughter to death because he was ashamed that she'd not done well at school. People have to be able to hold their head up. No woman will talk to a younger woman about it. Women will talk to women their own age, somebody in their own age group. Someone like you is less likely to be judgmental.

Service provider: I think it's a silent thing. It's always kept silent. In the village when there's a big family fight or when ladies are being beaten up, some villagers will just sit there and let the family continue on because it's none of their business. It's not their right to go in and stop it. I've seen fights where they just let it go and go and go and go. It's not like the Western world where you go in and try to stop it. It goes until there's almost a death before somebody comes and steps in. So I really think that there's a false picture in so far as everything looks quiet and smooth and dandy here on this lovely Pacific island. But there are so many social problems. If a husband straightens out his woman, then it's his right to do that. And nobody steps in. It's sad, but I've seen it lots of times in the rural areas. People will just stand by and not interfere, however the people are running their household. It would have to be someone within the family, an extended family member that could stop it. But there's no way that if something were going on here and the neighbours were watching, that they'd run over and help, unless they were part of the extended family. Otherwise they'd just mind their own business.

Man: One guy in our family and his wife, almost every night he would come home and hit his wife. I would hear his wife screaming at night. Not a night will go by, the children would leave. I would usually go and watch, but it would be very difficult for me to intervene because I had no cause to intervene. I don't know who [could stop the violence]. The only people would be people who are related to him because they would be used to each other.

Abused woman: Everybody knows about it. All my friends. All the people at the office know. My mom knows. The neighbours know. Some of my neighbours try to help me and some of them think it's a private matter that needs no help. And that's a lot of rubbish. Sometimes when we're fighting they just stand outside and watch.

35 Shaming instead of abusing

Abusive man: [If he found his wife drinking alcohol] I would bring her back home, advise her and talk to her properly. If she does not respond then I will repeat the same the next morning, keep advising for a while, and then order her. If still she does not change, than she should be slapped. If I get home [and find the children alone and unsupervised] I can fix a proper meal for the children, wait for her to come home and then I will talk to her. Others will beat them if they do not obey their orders. I believe that it is best to keep trying to talk to them, but if they still don't obey, then a slap will be necessary”

Q **HOW ABOUT IF YOUR WIFE DID SOMETHING VERY SERIOUS TO YOUR FAMILY, LIKE SWEAR AT YOUR PARENTS?**

A: That happened with us. The only thing that was done, I chased her back to her family, to behave like that to her family, to see if she repents. Then she can come back if she has changed. But she should go to her family for 3 or 2 days, and then return. I will not hit her.

Q **THAT MEANS IF YOU HIT YOUR WIFE, IT IS A LESSON BEING TAUGHT, BUT IF SHE IS CHASED TO HER FAMILY THEN IT IS PUNISHMENT FOR A SEVERE MISCONDUCT?**

A: There are many reasons why I hit my wife. There are also situations when I will chase her back to her family, especially after I have tried so many times to advise her. However these are her behaviours, her thoughts, her mouth talking back to my mother. She does not do that with her family. That is when I tell her to go back to her family to do those sort of things, so that her family can give her advice because I have had enough, they [his family] have also had enough. But unless her family can advise her. Then as time goes by she will see that I am not coming to get her, and then she will return with some change. When she comes I can advise her again.

Q **DO YOU THINK IT IS BEST TO BEAT THE WOMAN OR CHASE HER BACK TO HER FAMILY?**

A: Those two things are equal. She will be shamed by me, she will be ashamed by the people who watch her pack up her bags and go. She will also be ashamed to pack up and then return, and also if I beat her. She will also be ashamed if I beat her.

36 Combined solutions suggested by service providers

Q **DO YOU THINK THAT THE VILLAGES AND THE SYSTEMS OF MATAIS AND COUNCILS ACT TO CONTAIN VIOLENCE?**

Counsellor: Oh absolutely. Absolutely. I think that one of the groups that is critical in all of this are the ministers, the pastors of the churches. As I have thought about this issue it occurs to me that the only people in this culture who have the authority to intervene in a situation where they're not part of the family are the ministers. They are the moral definers for this society. Therefore, if they were to get out front on this issue I think it would have a powerful effect.

Q **SO SOMEBODY'S WHO CONCERNED ABOUT IT NEEDS TO MOBILIZE THE CLERGY?**

A: I would think so. Mapusaga O Aiga offered training in domestic violence and basic counselling skills to the theological colleges here in Samoa. The Congregational Theological College at Malua and the Catholic Theological College at Moamoa that trains catechists both responded positively. Last year we did it at Malua. I think we did 10 weeks of one night a week for two and a half hours. Several of us from Mapusaga, including one other church minister, did training with the third and fourth year students in issues around domestic violence, and basic counselling skills. Another team did the same thing at Moamoa with an all-day

workshop as opposed to the weekly thing. I was part of the weekly one, and I found the young pastors in training to be very interested in this, to be very aware that they were about to go out into the field and this was one of the major issues they were going to have to deal with. I found the faculty at the college incredibly supportive and interested in all of this. There is a pastoral counselling course that they take, and it's taught by a very smart guy but he's got no clinical experience. So I think that that is a critical intervention because of the importance and respect for the clergy in the way that the culture's organized. You get more of that now, since Mapusaga's been around. You get more pastors speaking out about domestic violence in large workshops and public situations as well as from the pulpit. I think that's a critical intervention. I think that's it.

Service provider: If they can have that drive [for self-sufficiency] within them then I'm sure they can let their husbands see that they mean something to them. Then these men, I'm sure the women can change them. They should be capable of standing up for themselves, even if the husband is bad, even if he drinks alcohol. For instance, I would take my mother as an example. My mother is a teacher She is still teach-

ing. It was my mother, she made sure we had food, we had clothes, we had school fees, we had lunches to take to school. My father also donated some. He made sure that when we came home we had some food. That was his part. But I always take my mother as an example, because if she wasn't strong, if she wasn't working and earning that money, her children would not have gone to school because her husband wasn't working. So I think that's really what I want to see: self-sufficiency and strength. And likewise, if the father sees that his wife is strong and supporting and creates the family and contributes to the sufficiency of the family, I'm sure that would be a happy sharing family. And much of the violence would be gone.

Health care provider: I think it all comes down to economic resources. If a woman has those she can stand on her own feet. I think we need economic development programmes for women, to help them get good jobs so that they don't need the support from their husbands. One thing we can do now is to educate. We need more awareness to talk about problems, like Mapusaga is trying to do now. They're telling people "Don't stand back." There should be programs like this in the schools. And I'd like to encourage young women to know that they don't have to stand for violence. They don't have to put up with it. We have to do it in the schools because children see violence everywhere around them. They see it on the videos, they see it in the community, and they think it's ok. It's not. I'd like to see programs about that for both boys and girls because they'll both be parents some day, and they're going to teach it to their children. We really need to teach parents how to raise their children. Because I think that's the other cause. If children come from homes where there's violence then they'll be violent. But if they come from homes where the parents don't beat their children, then they won't do it to their kids.

About what I'd like to see done, there is a certain TV program. It comes on once a week and every week it focuses on a disease: diabetes, high blood pressure, and another day it'll be diseases of the throat, and another day it'll be the skin. It's a very good program and people really enjoy it because they're learning a lot that they didn't know before. Like they thought that diabetes might be catching instead of being a hereditary disease. It does help the public understand. And I'd like to see something like that on all these social problems, wife beating and such. There's more on sexual abuse, but it's like they're reporting that there was a conference on it somewhere or workshop done there. But I'd love to see more structured programs in this area to educate parents. There's already been a lot of research done on sexual abuse and like that and I'd like TV programs to say to the parents, "You can prevent sexual abuse. Don't trust your child to everybody's care and think nothing will happen because it's family." And also to educate parents that in the case of sexual abuse they should never blame the child. The child is never to blame, and she shouldn't be afraid to tell somebody what's happened. Let's say it's an ordinary family out in the village and the mother finds out that somebody in the family has been abusing her 10-year old daughter. So she goes to her and she asks, "Has this happened?" And the child says yes. Then she asks, "How many times did it happen?" And the child says 10 or 12 times, and the mother starts slapping the child, beating her for not telling her. We must make them understand the mind of the abused child. We must make them understand. Teach the parents how to teach their children to talk to them. Parents don't know how to explain and so they never do. They don't think about it while the child is growing, until she starts to develop breasts. Then they start to worry about it, but they still don't talk to her. And that's why it happens.

37 Special education to prevent domestic abuse

Service provider: There has to be a multi-level thing for education. I don't mean education just in the schools, I mean education within the society in terms of the attitudes. Men hit their wives, not because they don't feel anything for them but because they feel ashamed, because they feel the burden of the expectations they perceive their culture, their religion to be putting on them. That, too, has a lot to do with it. In terms of these fundamentalist churches, when the offering is read out in church every Sunday, that you only gave 200 tala while everybody else gave 500 or a thousand tala. The wife might be going on at the husband, aside from the husband feeling very small himself. And don't forget this thing that all men are happy that they've become fathers. Some men would

rather their wives only had 2 or 3 babies instead of 5 or 6. Sometimes it's the woman who wants to have the children, and the husband's thinking "Oh well." But he'll not voice his concerns because "What kind of a man are you that you don't want to have any more children?" There's a whole psychological thing. We need qualified people to deal with it, our own people, ones who can be objective, ones who can do it because it's worth doing. It needs to be addressed, but it's such a touchy issue. Education at different levels. If the churches would pick it up, especially the Protestant churches. They say "Treasure your wife", but only in a marriage ceremony when they're performing it. After that it's as though, "Oh well, you've got her now. You can do what you like with her."

Educator: That's the thing about Samoan women. We do have alternative statuses. Our status as a married woman is a lot less than our husband's status when we're with our husband's family. But if you're there in your own home, then your status is high. Often young girls don't understand that the couple has to talk this over, that they have choices. They don't learn this until they're older.

Q ARE SAMOAN GIRLS EDUCATED ABOUT THIS, ARE THEY AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR STATUSES SO THAT THEY'RE AWARE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHOICES THAT THEY MAKE?

A: Well, education used to be very informal. Girls would grow up and be socialised into the ways of their family. But these days when girls spend most of their time in school, from the time they're five until they're sixteen, then they miss out on all that. They aren't AWARE that they have choices.

Q DO YOU THINK THAT IS ONE THING THAT COULD BE DONE IN SAMOA TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

A: Oh, it HAS to be. It has to be part of what is taught to girls so they'll know what decisions they have to make. From the first, formal education tended to exclude everything that was indigenous, that was local. The move now is to bring our traditions into the schools. All that has to be taught in the schools. What young people should understand is that there are alternatives. Your status is high in a particular context, but if the next day you move back to your husband's family then you are in a different context. The status of your family is contextually based. When you're married you live with your husband's family, yes, but you don't live with them all the time. You live with your family too. And in your own family, you're the boss. You can do whatever you want to. And with regard to decision making, you're part and parcel of your own family's decision making. But when you go to your husband's family then you just sit down and don't talk, and he's part of the decision making. This is something that a lot of our younger women just don't understand. I tell you, I operate in that particular way. I'm a matai in my own family. So when I go to my family, I make the decision and he just sits. But when we go to his family, then he makes the decisions while I just sit. So, you see, it depends on the context. This is something that young people, young women HAVE to understand.

Counsellor: I would start, looking at Samoan structure, with the most influential men in the community. We're looking at the pastors in the community, the matais, the group that command the most respect. They're the ones. Then it would filter down through the system. Any issue that you want to get through to the community, you have to go through the hierarchy and those people who have the most influence and hope that you'll get the message through to enough of



them. That's the way we used to do our programme in family health. We'd target the leaders in any group. With the women you go through the women's committees and the wives of the pastors, because these are often very strong women who do have some influence over their husbands to be able to make a difference. That's the way to go about it. Go for the influential groups and then hope that it will filter down through the hierarchy. The pastors, the matais, and the pastors' wives.

Service provider: I'm sure parents will get mad if they know that we're giving this sort of information and service to young girls. Then I just talk to them and ask them "Which do you prefer? Her coming here to prevent pregnancy? Or do you want your daughter to get pregnant?" We talk to the parents if they're available.

Q DO YOU KNOW IF PARENTS ARE LIKELY TO BEAT THE GIRL IF THEY FIND OUT?

A: I think so. I think that for those parents who don't have the knowledge and don't understand, I think they might wind up doing that. But by the feedback from our presentations and workshops we find out that parents agree because most youth leaders tell their parents, and youth groups in Samoa are not just for young people. A lot of parents are there with their children, trying to learn. So if we go out and talk about these issues. You can see the father and mother sitting there with their children. So after this talk and this workshop, they say "Thank you very much for this information." We propose to our youth that this is something that they should encourage.

Q SO ONCE THEY UNDERSTAND, THE PARENTS ARE NOT AS LIKELY TO BE ANGRY AND BECOME VIOLENT?

A: Exactly. Exactly.

Q DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR OUTREACH APPROACH AND YOUR WORKSHOPS IN THE COMMUNITY ARE CHANGING ATTITUDES ABOUT VIOLENCE?

A: That is a very important question. Sometimes it is difficult to change these attitudes. Very difficult. And that is our main objective. That is our main goal. To change people's attitude regarding this sort of conflict and all this sort of violence.

Q THE ROLE THAT YOU PLAY THEN IS TO CHANGE THE ATTITUDE OF PEOPLE TOWARDS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING SO THAT WOMEN WON'T BE BEATEN IF THEY DECIDE TO COME TO YOU FOR HELP?

A: Yes, exactly. Once they understand. It is to promote information and understanding in both the rural communities and the town. We need to do more. We need to educate our mothers and the children. All members in our nation and our community should be involved in this. Even though we cover the whole nation and the whole society, it doesn't guarantee that

it's enough for them because you must keep going there. It's an ongoing problem. Not only that but we must find different ways of reaching them. Sometimes they can absorb the message by listening. Sometimes they can absorb the message once they see visual aids. Sometimes they get the message through pamphlets. Sometimes we not only give talks but we use a participatory kind of approach. We let them sing a song, let them come up with different poems and speeches. Let them dramatize this kind of thing. The effect is that the mother who has four children, she comes up with different approaches. So people come up with different ideas and we can use these different things to reach people.

Q IF YOU COULD CAUSE ONE CHANGE IN SOCIETY, WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN, TO CHANGE, TO PROTECT WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE?

A: All we need is more forms of communication. Communication is the key element for all of these things. If the husband communicates, if the wife shares her opinions with her husband, so sharing and communication should be encouraged with the wife, even the children. In the family communication should exist between the father, the mother, and the children. All members should be involved.

Q WHO WOULD BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE SPOKESPERSON FOR INCREASED COMMUNICATION? WHO IN SAMOA, IN THE COMMUNITY WOULD BE THE BEST TO DELIVER THAT MESSAGE? WHO WOULD PEOPLE LISTEN TO?

A: In Samoa I think once the chief talks, that's all. That's the typical Samoan way. Once the father talks, he's the head of the family. That's the way. Once he talks he doesn't want any interference. The mother has no voice. The children have no voice. Just listen to the chiefs and the orators and the head of the family, what he says. That's the end of it. You must convince the chiefs, but we must change this approach. Because if we remain in this sort of stereotypical thing, then there would be no communication, no communication at all, because it's one way and communication must be a two way process. A proper, well-established family comes up if they communicate. Because if you are a youth in your family – a 14 or 15 or 16-year-old – then what I think as the head is not quite applicable to the teenager's situation. So he listens when the chief and the head of the family talks, not to do this, not to do that, and he just says "Ok, ok, ok." But when he comes to school, when he comes to Apia he just forgets about all these things and goes his own way. So the father should dedicate some opportunity to talk to the teenager, for teenagers to raise things that they want to talk about. Even the mother [should be able to speak up], because she's the one who bears the children. She should tell the father, "I think we have enough children. I'm so tired, I'm weak. I'm anaemic. So maybe if we have another one that's the end of the world, of my life." People should have that sort of discussion.

