Chapter 2
Methodology of the International Violence Against Women Survey

Background and Objectives of the IVAWS

The need for improved statistical tools and research on the prevalence and dimensions of violence against women that can be used for formulating policies, legislation and services for victims is now well-recognized. A number of international instruments and conventions call for the development of improved data collection instruments that are able to provide estimates of the nature, dimensions and causes of violence against women. This requires gathering and analysing data and information on a gender-disaggregated basis for decision making and policy making in the fields of health, social services, violence prevention and criminal justice.

The International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) project was developed in response to the need for improved data collection instruments that would provide reliable statistical data on the prevalence of various forms of violence against women and their interaction with the criminal justice system. The purpose of the IVAWS is:

> to promote and implement research on violence against women in countries around the world, in particular developing countries and countries in transition, as an important research and policy tool. The survey may be considered a tool for developing and strengthening democracy by increasing public participation in the process of formulating criminal justice policies.

The IVAWS is intended to promote the random sample survey method of data gathering for policy making. It provides the opportunity for any country to take advantage of a well-developed and well-tested methodology to improve and enhance the availability of data on violence against women at the country level and to make international comparisons. Population surveys, which go directly to samples of the population and interview individuals in depth about their experiences, provide an important means for citizens to be involved in the development of criminal justice and other social policies. If the data are published and made widely available to decision makers, researchers, activists and agencies providing services to abused women, this is one way in which the voices of victims can be heard.

The objectives of the IVAWS project are to:

- create a standardised tool suitable for collecting comparable data on the prevalence and incidence of violence against women across cultures
- conduct the survey in several countries across the world by drawing a representative national sample of female respondents in each country and using a standardised interviewing methodology
- develop expertise and technical knowledge at the local level on research methods, including survey design, techniques for interviewing on sensitive topics, analysis and interpretation of victimisation survey data
- build a central database of the data sets and conduct cross-national analysis of the results
- use the data to test hypotheses and theories on violence against women
- put the results to use by organising local seminars and awareness-raising campaigns, and providing information to the media
- provide data for policy making in order to combat violence against women through:
  - increasing knowledge among the general public and among authorities and decision-makers on the scope of the problem, its causes and consequences
  - contributing to the development and strengthening of criminal justice responses
  - improving police action by generating information on non-reported cases, and on the degree of satisfaction with police and their response
  - improving mechanisms for prevention through a better understanding of risk factors and correlates of violence
  - improving assistance to victims through data on women's use of services

The development of a draft questionnaire and methodology began in 1997 at the initiative of the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI), which is located in Helsinki. In 1999, an International Project Team was formed which consisted of HEUNI, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and Statistics Canada.[5] Initially, some testing of the draft questionnaire was carried out in Estonia in 2000. Following this pilot study, the questionnaire and methodology manual were drafted. At the time, UNICRI had been involved in the International Crime Victimisation Survey (ICVS), a general crime victim survey that has been conducted in over 60 countries since 1989. The IVAWS was conceived as a solution to the problem of under-reporting of sexual and domestic violence on the ICVS. The critique that the traditional methodology did not lend itself well to capturing women's experiences of sexual and domestic violence extended also to the ICVS. There was a perceived need

[5] At the time of writing, the International Project Team consisted of representatives from HEUNI and University of Ottawa, formerly Statistics Canada. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was also involved in the implementation of the project, in particular in overseeing the IVAWS in Mozambique.

for international comparative research on these special topics and so the IVAWS was conceived to fill the gap.

Participating Countries

Discussions about participation in the IVAWS were first initiated with the network of countries who were involved in the ICVS. Interest spread and any country that could secure funding and identify a national coordinator was invited to participate. The first meeting of national IVAWS coordinators was organised and pilot studies were conducted in 2001 and 2002 in 13 countries.[6] The IVAWS questionnaire was finalised in English in 2002. To date, the questionnaire has been translated into Chinese, Czech, Danish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish.

A number of countries commenced the full-fledged survey in 2003 and by the end of 2005, the IVAWS had been carried out or was underway in eleven countries. Victimisation-type surveys have been conducted internationally either by interviewing respondents over the telephone, personal face-to-face, or at times using a mail-out/mail-back questionnaire. As Table 2.1 shows, some of the IVAWS surveys were conducted by telephone and some face-to-face, a decision that was left up to project coordinators in each country.

Table 2.1 Countries participating in the IVAWS. sample sizes, response rates and methods of interviewing

Country	Sample size	Response rate*	Date of interviewing	Method of interviewing
Australia	6,677	39%	December 2002–June 2003	Telephone
Costa Rica	908	58%	July–August 2003	Face-to-face
Czech Republic	1,980	66%	May–June 2003	Face-to-face
Denmark	3,589	52%	October–November 2003	Telephone
Greece	479	Continuing		Face-to-face
Hong Kong	1,297	45%	May–June 2005	Telephone
Italy	25,000	72%	January–October 2006	Telephone
Mozambique	2,015	96%	June–August 2004	Face-to-face
Philippines	2,602	99%	June–July 2005	Face-to-face
Poland	2,009	87%	March–May 2004	Face-to-face
Switzerland	1,973	59%	April–August 2003	Telephone

*Response rates have been calculated as a percentage of completed interviews out of the number of households where initial contact was established and a woman selected to participate. The exceptionally high response rates in Mozambique and the Philippines may be due to the fact that approval was given by local community leaders prior to conducting the interviews and this was communicated to the selected respondents. This is in line with response rates obtained by the WHO in their research on violence against women in South-East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005).

[6] These countries included Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Poland, Philippines, Serbia, Switzerland and Ukraine.

The field work of the survey in Italy, conducted by the Italian national statistical agency, ISTAT, was commenced later than the other surveys and the data set was not available at the time of this analysis; in the meantime the results of the survey in Italy have been published by ISTAT (2007). Some countries, such as Australia and Italy, were able to contribute proportionately greater resources to the project compared to others which resulted in substantially larger samples. The target sample in each country was 2,000 aged 18 to 69 years. For most countries, sample sizes were about 2,000 women but were closer to 1,000 in Costa Rica and Hong Kong. In total, over 53,000 women were interviewed about their experiences of violence. The experiences of 23,050 women in nine countries will be presented in this text. As interviewing was also continuing in Greece at the time of writing, data from this country could not be included in this analysis.

Each participating country was responsible for carrying out their own fund-raising for participation in the IVAWS. In most countries the funding from the survey was obtained from government sources or some other national fund (in Mozambique, the survey was co-funded by three United Nations agencies: see Appendix I for a listing of national coordinators and funding agencies). The selection of countries participating was thus in large part determined by the success of their fundraising efforts.

Materials and Manuals for Implementing the Survey

National co-ordinators were required to attend a training session covering all aspects of undertaking the survey in their country and each was provided with a comprehensive survey methodology package. The International Project Team was available throughout the data collection period to respond to queries that arose in the field. A few countries, such as Greece and Hong Kong, joined the project at a later date and so national co-ordinators received training and instructions on conducting the survey via email and telephone. The methodology package includes the IVAWS questionnaire, a pre-programmed data capture program, and an extensive research Manual with detailed guidelines on how to implement the survey. The Manual first outlines the background and objectives of the survey and details the steps to follow to get started on the IVAWS, including:

- budgeting for the survey and what the composition of the research team should be in each country, including technical facilities for data capture and processing
- recruitment and training of interviewers, including selection criteria, a training program, and procedures for debriefing interviewers
- guidelines for sampling procedures to ensure random select of respondents
- the logistics of how to administer the questionnaire
- how to use the data capture system
- instructions on coding, data entry and logical validation
- interviewer guidelines and frequently asked questions
- a rough outline for outline of presentation of data for national IVAWS reports

The questionnaire together with the methodology manual form a survey package which can be used to conduct the survey in different countries while ensuring that a standard approach is followed. The availability of this package is intended to facilitate the participation of countries in a standardised survey on violence against women where funding or expertise might not otherwise be available for questionnaire design and other developmental aspects of a project of this nature. Hence, involvement in the project results in the transfer of technical expertise on survey taking where none might have existed previously. In countries where there is little or no information on the extent of men's violence against women, participation in the IVAWS can also serve as a basis for public awareness, debate and national action on the issue. In countries where there have been prior prevalence surveys on violence against women, the IVAWS offers the possibility of international comparisons. The importance of the results is that they can be used to launch a firmly grounded public debate in the media, in academia and in the political sphere about the causes and consequences of violence against women and the responses of victims. The IVAWS facilitates comparability and can fill the gap in finding international as well as local remedies and responses to violence against women.

Ethical Considerations in Studying Violence Against Women

The IVAWS followed recommendations from Statistics Canada regarding the ethical conduct of interviewing women about violence (Johnson 1996). Since development of the Statistics Canada survey in 1993, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified eight key principles to ensure ethical research on violence against women that were developed for the Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women (see Ellsberg & Heise 2005 for elaboration). These were followed in the IVAWS and include:

- the safety of respondents and the research team is paramount, and should guide all project decisions
- prevalence studies need to be methodologically sound and to build upon current research experience about how to minimize the under-reporting of violence
- protecting confidentiality is essential to ensure both women's safety and data quality
- all research team members should be carefully selected and receive specialised training and on-going support
- the study design must include actions aimed at reducing any possible distress caused to the participants by the research
- fieldworkers should be trained to refer women requesting assistance to available local services and sources of support. Where few resources exist, it may be necessary for the study to create short-term support mechanisms
- researchers and donors have an ethical obligation to help ensure that their findings are properly interpreted and used to advance policy and intervention development

The IVAWS only used female interviewers and closely adhered to those principles. In each participating country, each interviewer was required to possess:

- some level of knowledge and comfort discussing issues related to violence against women
- a non-judgmental and empathetic attitude toward victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
- good interviewing skills, preferably with interviewing experience
- a pleasant personality and ability to relate to people in all walks of life
- an absence of highly biased views related to the subject matter or characteristics of respondents (age, social status, ethnicity, religion)
- a willingness to adhere to instruction and time schedules
- a willingness to report problems and discuss them in an objective manner
- an acceptable level of literacy and ability to understand the questionnaire and issues being surveyed
- knowledge of and facility in local languages and dialects

In each participating country, interviewers were trained by the national coordinator using the training module of the IVAWS Manual. The aim of the training was to equip the interviewers with a clear understanding of:

- how violence against women is defined in the country and on the survey
- the effects of violence on female victims that might lead them to make certain decisions
- common societal myths concerning violence and victims and the importance of these myths for respondents and interviewers
- how to ensure safety for respondents and themselves
- how to respond to emotional trauma that might be raised by responding to this survey, for both respondents and interviewers
- how to encourage participation in the survey and honest disclosures of violence

In order to minimise initial refusals, the IVAWS was introduced not as a survey on violence, but as a survey on personal safety. Interviewers were trained to ensure that interviews would be conducted in private and to be flexible about letting respondents determine when and where interviews would take place. In some instances, interviews were rescheduled or relocated so as to ensure privacy.

Interviewers were trained to recognize that the interview setting might be the first time the respondent reveals her experiences of male violence to anybody. While this may be a relief for some respondents, for others disclosing the experiences and the details may cause distress and emotional trauma. Interviewers were trained to be empathetic towards respondents and to respond appropriately by not rushing and by taking the time to build rapport. Interviewers were instructed not to act as counsellors but instead, in order to respond effectively to respondents' emotional trauma, they were instructed to be prepared to provide information about sources of victim assistance in the local community. This included information about crisis centres, crisis lines, other counsellors and shelters for abused women, as well as

community-based support and women's groups. Interviewers for the IVAWS were also provided with support which including frequent debriefings and counselling, both individually and in a group, throughout the fieldwork. In addition, interviewers were trained to prepare for the possibility that the interview could be overheard by someone. As interviewers cannot know in advance if respondents may be living with violence, they were trained to deal with situations where the abuser or some other family member entered the scene of interview. Interviewer selection and training, and support for both respondents and interviewers, were seen as critical components to ensuring that the project was conducted in an ethical manner and that the data would have a high degree of reliability.

Limitations and Issues Related to Multi-country Research

Although every effort was made to adhere to sound methodological principles in designing, testing and implementing the IVAWS in these various countries, it is difficult to control for all aspects of the survey-taking process in each country. There are many potential influences on a survey at the country level and the individual level that may affect the percentage of women who respond (response rate) and the willingness of women to provide candid responses to questions about violent victimisation (rates of disclosure), all of which can affect the results of the survey in each country. Factors that have the potential to affect the outcome of the survey include the following:

1. *Culture*: There are bound to be differences in the degree to which women from different cultural milieux are familiar and at ease with responding to surveys and describing their personal experiences to a stranger in the context of an interview. There will be differences in societal attitudes toward victims of sexual and domestic violence and the degree of openness to acknowledging and discussing these experiences. Norms protecting family privacy that prevent women in many cultures from reporting to the police or other agencies may also inhibit women from disclosing to survey interviewers. If violence against women is not *de facto* considered an issue of concern for the criminal justice or health systems, women may be reluctant to name their experiences in the terms employed in the survey. Prevalence rates presented in the following analysis therefore likely under-estimate the true rates of violence in these countries. In the absence of qualitative interviews with women in each country it is unknown how this varies among countries.
2. *Subjectivity*: Although the survey questionnaire was thoroughly tested in all countries, as well as additional countries which have not yet taken up the IVAWS, it is difficult to control for and detect variation in the subjective meaning of violence to the women responding. This is an issue that exists to some extent within and between countries and survey researchers continue to grapple with it. The implication of this is that there may be variations in the meaning of a violent assault for individual women, depending on past experiences, their social

situation, cultural definitions of violence, societal attitudes towards violence and victims, and so on. This variation in the meaning of violence for the women responding is bound to exist in larger measure in cross-cultural comparative studies where societal-level differences are greater. While survey designers do their best to ensure that the questions are clear and unambiguous and that they are thoroughly tested among a diverse group of women, in the end respondents will perceive their experiences to fit into the survey categories or they won't. They will perceive some benefit in reporting their experiences and disclose them to interviewers, or they will perceive some risk and choose to keep them private. It is not known to what extent differences in the prevalence of sexual and intimate partner violence presented in this text can be attributed to variations in the subjective meaning of violence for the women responding. This is an important question for future research.

3. *Translation*: We cannot overlook the possibility that translations of the original questionnaire may have affected the results. The questionnaire was designed in English and translated into the relevant languages in the participating countries. Although great care was taken to ensure accuracy of the translations via back-translations (a technique where the document is translated into another language then back into English and the two English versions are compared), it is possible that certain concepts don't translate as well as others and the results may be biased as a result. Situations where questions may have been misinterpreted due to cultural differences or possible problems with the translation, including issues with dialects, are highlighted in the discussion of results wherever they are known.
4. *Differences in modes of interviewing*: The research literature on the effect of the mode of interviewing is inconclusive. Telephone interviewing tends to be the preferred mode of interviewing in countries where telephone ownership is high, due in part to the lower costs in comparison with face-to-face interviewing. Telephone interviews provide a degree of anonymity that is not possible in face-to-face interviews, which may result in higher levels of disclosure of experiences of violence. On the other hand, in the context of a face-to-face interview, interviewers may be in a better position to develop rapport and enhanced trust which then encourages honest disclosures of violence. Face-to-face interviewing also overcomes some problems with bias in sample selection that occurs when respondents without telephones are omitted. The rapidly growing use of mobile telephones in some countries, particularly among young people who often do not have landlines, means they are more likely to be excluded in telephone surveys. But bias may also creep into face-to-face surveys if the sample is restricted geographically due to logistical difficulties reaching some selected households. The decision to adopt one method or the other was left to each country coordinator and depended on a number of factors, including the technical expertise available to undertake the survey, cultural appropriateness, and the available budget.
5. *Memory and recall*: A common concern among victimisation survey researchers is the reliability of responses related to events that occurred some time ago.

Researchers in the field of violence against women typically wish to focus on the history of violence in women's lives, and not just very recent events. There are many reasons for this, including the importance of understanding the long-term emotional and social impacts of violent victimisation, and the importance of tracking actions taken by criminal justice officials, which tend to evolve over a lengthy period of time. Very traumatic experiences are unlikely to be forgotten, but may be difficult to place in time. An event that occurred around the age of 16 could be classified as child abuse or an adult experience depending on where the respondent places it in time. Less traumatic experiences may be forgotten completely and not reported during the interview, or the details may be misreported.

6. *Response rates*: Responses rates vary considerably among the IVAWS countries. The percentage of women who were selected for an interview and who agreed to take part ranged from 39% in Australia to 96% in Mozambique. The lower the response rate, the greater the concern that the survey responses will be biased. The results will be affected to the extent that the omitted groups differ from those who were interviewed on indicators such as victimisation rates. In order to adjust for non-response and coverage problems, the data were weighted by age group according to data from the United Nations Statistical Division. Age is the variable most commonly employed to improve the representativeness of a sample as it is associated with marital status, lifestyle and other socio-demographic characteristics of a population.

These limitations are important to consider throughout the remainder of this text in the interpretation of international comparisons of victimisation rates, the profile of types of violence, and the correlates of violence in each country.

Reliability of the Estimates

The IVAWS is comprised of sample surveys in each participating country where the objective was to select samples of women at random. Random samples are the ideal because they produce estimates that can be generalized to the population at large. Although this was the objective, it is rarely possible to obtain purely random samples in social science research due to such factors as refusals to participate, unequal telephone coverage in telephone surveys, and logistical problems in reaching remote areas in face-to-face surveys. In order to assess how well the samples represented all women in each country, the age profile of the sample was compared to the age profile obtained from the United Nations Statistical Division. Adjustments were made through a process of weighting so that each sample would be representative of the local population according to age. This helps ensure that the results are representative and can be generalized to the population of women in the participating countries (see Appendix I for details about the weighting procedure).

Because the data are based on a sample, the estimates presented in this analysis are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from those that would have been produced if all women in each country had been interviewed. One measure of the likely difference is the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of women were included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will vary by less than one standard error from the number that would have been obtained if all women had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

Another measure of the likely difference is the relative standard error (RSE) that is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate. The relative standard error provides an indication of the relative accuracy of the estimate. The larger the sample, the smaller the SE and the RSE. Therefore larger estimates and those based on larger samples are more reliable relative to smaller estimates and those based on smaller samples. Estimates with relative standard errors of less than 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. Estimates with relative standard errors between 25% and 50% are marked with an asterisk to indicate that they should be treated with caution. Estimates with relative standard errors 50% or greater are subject to sampling error too high for most purposes and so are not presented in this text. In addition, all estimates based on sample counts of less than 5 are suppressed, whether or not the relative standard error exceeds 50% (although typically it does).

Outline of the IVAWS Questionnaire

The IVAWS questionnaire can be divided roughly into three thematic parts: women's experiences of male violence, details and consequences of these experiences, and information about the background and current characteristics of respondents and their male partners.

As part of the Secretary General's report on violence against women, an expert group was convened by the United Nations in Geneva in 2005 to assess the challenges and gaps in data collection on violence against women and made a number of recommendations for improving population-based surveys (Report of the Expert Group Meeting 2005). Among others, these include:

- using multiple behaviourally-specific questions, rather than one single question directed at determining whether the woman has been "abused" or has been the victim of "violence"
- using multiple approaches and measures to determine the severity of violence, including the frequency of violent incidents, physical and emotional injuries, reproductive health problems, economic and social participation, costs and service utilization, consequences for children
- differentiating types of violence in the presentation of results

The IVAWS employs the approach of using multiple behaviourally-specific questions to measure violence and includes a broad range of indicators of severity, impacts for women and their children, and service utilization. The questionnaire consists of nine separate sections:

- **Section A: Control form** – the composition of the household that is used to select a respondent from among women in the household
- **Section B: Marital status** – current marital status, history of previous relationships, and respondent characteristics such as educational attainment, employment status and sources of income, and optional questions about ethnicity, religion and alcohol consumption
- **Section C: Experience of violence** – seven specific behavourial questions concerning physical violence and five concerning sexual violence. Each one is followed by questions about the relationship of the perpetrator(s), frequency of incidents since age 16, recency of incidents, and frequency within the previous 12 months.
- **Section D: Non-partner victimisation report** – details about incidents that involved men other than intimate partners (husbands, partners or boyfriends), including location, use of drugs or alcohol by perpetrators, injury, receiving medical care, fearing for her life, victim's use of alcohol or medication to cope with the effects, reporting to police and other agencies, perceptions of the seriousness of the incident. If more than one incident was reported, respondents are asked to report on the most recent. This approach was taken to reduce respondent burden.
- **Section E: Partner victimisation report** – follows a format similar to Section D.
- **Section F: Characteristics of violent previous intimate partner** – employment status and source of income, length of relationship, age, violent behaviour outside the family, emotionally abusive and controlling behaviours, alcohol use, and optional questions about ethnicity and religion, drug use, arranged marriages and dowry/bride-price payment.
- **Section G: Characteristics of current intimate partner** – employment status and source of income, length of relationship, age, educational attainment, violent behaviour outside the family, emotionally abusive and controlling behaviours, alcohol use, and optional questions about ethnicity and religion, drug use, arranged marriages and dowry/bride-price payment.
- **Optional section H: Mother abuse history and childhood victimisation** – this is an optional section that includes questions about violence in respondent's family of origin and male partner's family of origin, including witnessing violence by fathers against mothers, experiencing physical violence by fathers before the age of 16, respondent experienced physical violence by mothers, respondent experienced sexual violence by anyone prior to age 16.
- **Section I: Income & conclusion** – income of everyone in the household combined entered into quartiles (calculated in advance by national co-ordinators in the national currency, on the basis of information available locally).

The complete questionnaire is included in Appendix IV.

Box 2.1 Optional questions The questionnaire contains a number of optional questions. During the course of the development of the questionnaire, in consultation with a variety of countries, it was agreed that each participating country would use their discretion whether or not to include them. These optional questions include section H: Mother Abuse History and Childhood Victimisation, which deals with:

- respondent's current partner witnessed violence by his father towards his mother, or directly experienced violence by his father
- respondent's previous partner witnessed violence by his father towards his mother, or directly experienced violence by his father
- respondent witnessed violence by her father towards her mother
- respondent experienced violence by her father or mother, how often it happened and how serious she considered it to be
- respondent experienced sexual violence before the age of 16, relationship to the perpetrator, how many times it happened and how serious she considered it to be.

Other optional questions were:

- respondent's ethnic background/nationality, religious affiliation and whether she practices her religion, and her alcohol use
- how helpful the respondent found the services of shelters/transition houses/crisis centres in relation to the violence she experienced
- respondent chose her current or previous husband/partner/fiancé or if someone else did it, whether she had a say in marrying him, whether the marriage involved dowry/bride-price and details about the dowry/bride-price
- ethnic background/nationality, religious affiliation and practices, drug and alcohol use of current or previous partner

Additional questions In some countries, the research teams added extra questions related to the local context.

In Mozambique, the local research team added a section on women's health, family planning, HIV/AIDS and violence during pregnancy. The local World Health Organization (WHO) office was part of the research steering committee in Mozambique, and thus, the additional health-related questions were adapted from the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women (see Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005).

The victimisation screeners that are used to estimate the prevalence of violent victimisation (physical and sexual violence separately) are composed of seven questions pertaining to physical violence and five relating to sexual violence. Each category begins with lifetime victimisation (since age 16), followed by a detailed breakdown of perpetrator relationship. As detailed in Box 2.2, respondents were

first asked a series of six specific behavioural questions about physical violence ranging from threats of physical violence that were seriously enough to cause her fear, to being threatened by or injured with a weapon. A catch-all question about other types of physical violence not already mentioned was included. Sexual assault was measured by way of four specific questions ranging from attempted and forced intercourse to unwanted sexual touching and forced sex with other people (intending to capture forced prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation). A catch-all question about other types of sexual violence not already mentioned was also included.

Box 2.2 Measuring violence against women Research has shown that surveys that use specific behavioural measures of a range of types of violent acts will produce more reliable and valid estimates than surveys that use general all-encompassing terms such as "violence" or "assault". This is because individual respondents can hold different ideas of what constitutes violence or an assault and may be reluctant to include assaults by husbands if not specially questioned about them. The International Violence Against Women Survey measured physical violence through the following series of questions.

I would like to begin by asking you to think carefully about all men, including men you have known, such as friends and relatives, men you have met casually, your husband or partner, previous husbands or partners, as well as male strangers. Since you were 16 or older has a man ever . . .

- *threatened to hurt you physically in a way that frightened you?*
- *thrown something at you or hit you with something that hurt or frightened you?*
- *pushed or grabbed you or twisted your arm or pulled your hair in a way that hurt or frightened you?*
- *slapped, kicked, bit or hit you with a fist?*
- *tried to strangle or suffocate you, burn or scald you on purpose?*
- *used or threatened to use a knife or gun on you?*
- *been physically violent towards you in a way that I have not already mentioned?*

Sexual assault was measured through the following questions.

Since the age of 16, has a man ever . . .

- *forced you into sexual intercourse by threatening you, holding you down, or hurting you in some way?*
- *attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way?*
- *touched you sexually when you did not want him to in a way that was distressing to you?*

- *forced or attempted to force you into sexual activity with someone else, including being forced to have sex for money or in exchange for goods?*
- *been sexually violent towards you in a way that I have not already mentioned?*

After each item, respondents were asked to identify the relationship of the perpetrator which included current and previous husbands, partners and boyfriends, other relatives, other known men such as acquaintances, friends or work colleagues, and strangers. Respondents were also asked about the timing of the violence so that one-year and lifetime prevalence rates could be calculated.

Physical abuse by parents in childhood, sexual abuse and witnessing violence were measured as follows:

Thinking of your own biological father, any foster father or stepfather you might have had, or anyone your mother lived with, were any of these men physically violent towards your mother? Was your father (or any of these other men) ever physically violent towards you before the age of 16?
Thinking of your own biological mother, any foster mother or stepmother you might have had, or anyone your father lived with, were any of these physically violent towards you before the age of 16?
Finally, I would like to ask about any experiences of sexual violence you might have had before the age of 16. By sexual violent I mean any of the types of sexual violence I asked about earlier. Before you were aged 16, did anybody ever force or attempt to force you into any sexual activity? Who was it who did this?

These behavioural questions originated from the Statistics Canada national survey on violence against women and were modified in consultation with national coordinators (Johnson 1996). Following questions about adult lifetime experiences of various types of physical and sexual violence, respondents were then asked about the experiences in closer detail with separate sections dedicated to partner and non-partner violence. The focus of this detailed examination is the most recent incidents of partner violence and violence involving other men. This method was selected as a way to connect these responses to the types of violence discussed in the first part of the questionnaire while avoiding the difficulty of discussing numerous incidents and the consequences of each which could be quite time consuming and emotionally draining for women with multiple experiences of violence. An alternative method would be to select the most serious incident for detailed discussion but it was felt that this could bias the results. The ‘most recent incident’ method was considered to result in a more random selection of incidents, although for women who have separated from violent partners, the more recent incident which resulted in the separation may very well have been the most serious; however, this cannot be determined with certainty. It is a limitation of snapshot surveys such as the IVAWS that the progression and evolution of violence in relationships, and the complexity and nuances, cannot easily be assessed.

Summary

The International Violence Against Women Survey was implemented in 11 countries using a well-tested questionnaire and standard methodology in order to conduct analyses nationally and internationally about women's experiences of violence, the impacts on them, and the steps they take to obtain help. Behaviourally-specific questions were used to measure experiences of violence, a method that is now widely recognised as likely to produce the most valid and reliable estimates. However, many potential influences may affect the results that survey researchers cannot always control for, even when there is good communication among national coordinators and the soundest research design is used. Factors such as culture, subjectivity, translation, mode of interviewing, memory and recall can affect results. The quality of statistical approaches to interviewing women about their experiences of violence has improved considerably over the past two decades. However, researchers must continue to work to refine research methods and techniques through qualitative interviews to better understand women's perceptions of violence and experiences of responding to structured survey questionnaires. The following chapter will present the prevalence and severity of violence against women in nine countries.

Chapter 3
The Prevalence and Severity of Violence Against Women

Research has shown that violence against women is a serious social problem that exists in varying degrees in almost all societies. In independent studies, county estimates of the number of women affected by violence vary depending on a number of factors, including the geographic area studied (whether an urban area, rural area or the entire country), the age and marital status of the women selected to respond, the definition of violence used in the study, the specific questions used to measure violence, and selection and training of interviewers. Estimates may also be affected by the level of non-response of the women being interviewed, which may be due to shame, embarrassment, fear of her abuser, or confusion about the meaning of the questions. Independent studies around the world estimate the lifetime prevalence of violence by an intimate partner to lie between 10% and 60% (Ellsberg & Heise 2005). Using a standardised questionnaire designed to facilitate international comparisons, the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women estimates that between 15% and 71% of ever-partnered women aged 15 to 49 have been victims of intimate partner violence in the ten countries studied. Most countries fell between 29% and 62% (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005). The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) program, which interviewed representative samples of women aged 15 to 49 in nine countries about violence in the household, estimates that between 17% and 48% of ever-married women have been physically abused by a spouse (Kishor & Johnson 2004).

The focus of the IVAWS was to investigate physical and sexual violence against women, including violence committed by intimate partners, other known men and strangers. Violence was measured using a wide range of questions concerning acts of physical and sexual violence (see Box 2.2 *Measuring violence against women* in Chapter 2). The primary focus of this study is to derive estimates of the *prevalence* of violence, that is, the percentage of women in each country who reported that they had experienced one or more of these acts of violence by a male perpetrator since the age of 16. An alternative way of measuring violence is to study the *incidence* in the population, which is an estimate of the number of times an act of violence occurs over a given time period which is usually calculated as a rate per 1,000 or per 100,000 women in the population (*incidence rate*). Since one individual can experience violence more than once in any given time period, incidence rates are not equivalent to prevalence rates. The IVAWS counted how many women

experienced each act of violence once or more than once but it did not measure the incidence of violence.[7] The term *prevalence of violence* in the following analysis is used interchangeably with *rate of violence*. Rates are calculated on the basis of the number of women in the population which enables comparisons to be made among countries with differing population sizes. In victimisation studies, rates are typically calculated per 100, per 1,000 or per 100,000 individuals in the population. In this study, rates were calculated per 100 women aged 16 years or over in each country which equates to a percentage of all women. In the case of intimate partner violence, prevalence rates were based on women who had ever been at risk of partner violence, that is, women who had ever been in a dating, cohabiting or marital relationship with a male partner. In the case of violence perpetrated by men other than intimate partners, prevalence rates were based on all women age 16 and older. For each act of violence that respondents reported, they were asked when it occurred so that the prevalence of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey could also be calculated.

Countries participating in the IVAWS had the option of including a module of questions about experiences of violence in childhood, that is, before age 16 (see Box 2.2). These questions were not as detailed as questions concerning violence in adulthood and included physical assaults inflicted by parents as well as sexual violence perpetrated by parents and others. The prevalence of childhood victimisation was calculated as a percentage of all women in each country sample.

Total Lifetime Experiences of Violence

The definition of "violence" in this survey is determined through a series of behaviourally-specific questions and included violence since age 16 perpetrated by male partners and former partners, friends, acquaintances and other known men, and strangers. In addition, questions about violence perpetrated in childhood were optional and these included physical assaults by parents and sexual abuse by anyone, prior to age 16. Survey questions measuring childhood victimisation were included in all countries with the exception of Demark, Hong Kong and Mozambique. Other types of violence, such as childhood physical assaults by siblings or peers were excluded from the survey. The percentages of women who disclosed experiences of violence to survey interviewers ranged considerably among these countries. Among the seven IVAWS countries that addressed victimisation as an adult and a child, the proportion of women who reported experiencing any type of physical or sexual violence ranged from 24% in the Philippines to 73% in Costa Rica (Fig. 3.1). Although efforts were made to encourage women to report honestly on

[7] Countries had the option of recording actual number of incidents or recording frequency of violence within categories, such as 1–3 times per month, 1–3 times per week, everyday or almost everyday. Results are therefore not consistent and not comparable across countries.

their experiences, through sensitive question wording and building rapport between interviewers and respondents, the possibility remains that some women did not disclose their experiences due to embarrassment, shame, cultural taboos against talking about very personal experiences especially those involving family members, forgetting or misunderstanding the meaning of the questions. These figures therefore likely underestimate the true level of violence against women in these societies. It is not possible to know from survey responses how the reluctance to disclose violence might differ by country.

Experiences of Violence in Adulthood

Among the countries who participated in the IVAWS, the percentage of women who reported at least one incident of physical or sexual violence by any man in their adult lifetime (since age 16) ranged from about one-in-five in Hong Kong and the Philippines to more than one-third in Poland and Switzerland, and between

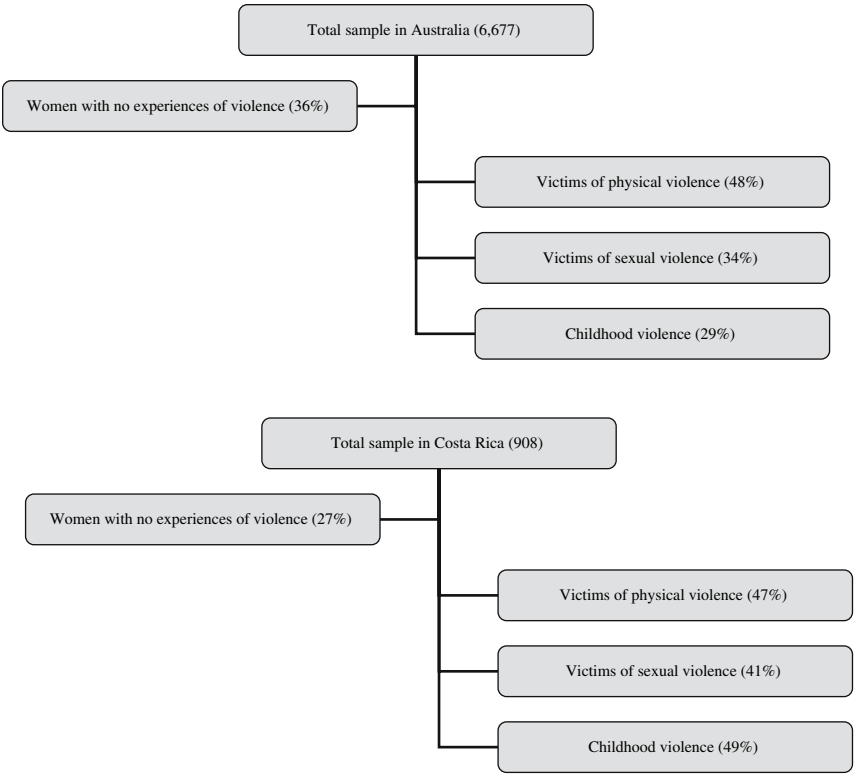
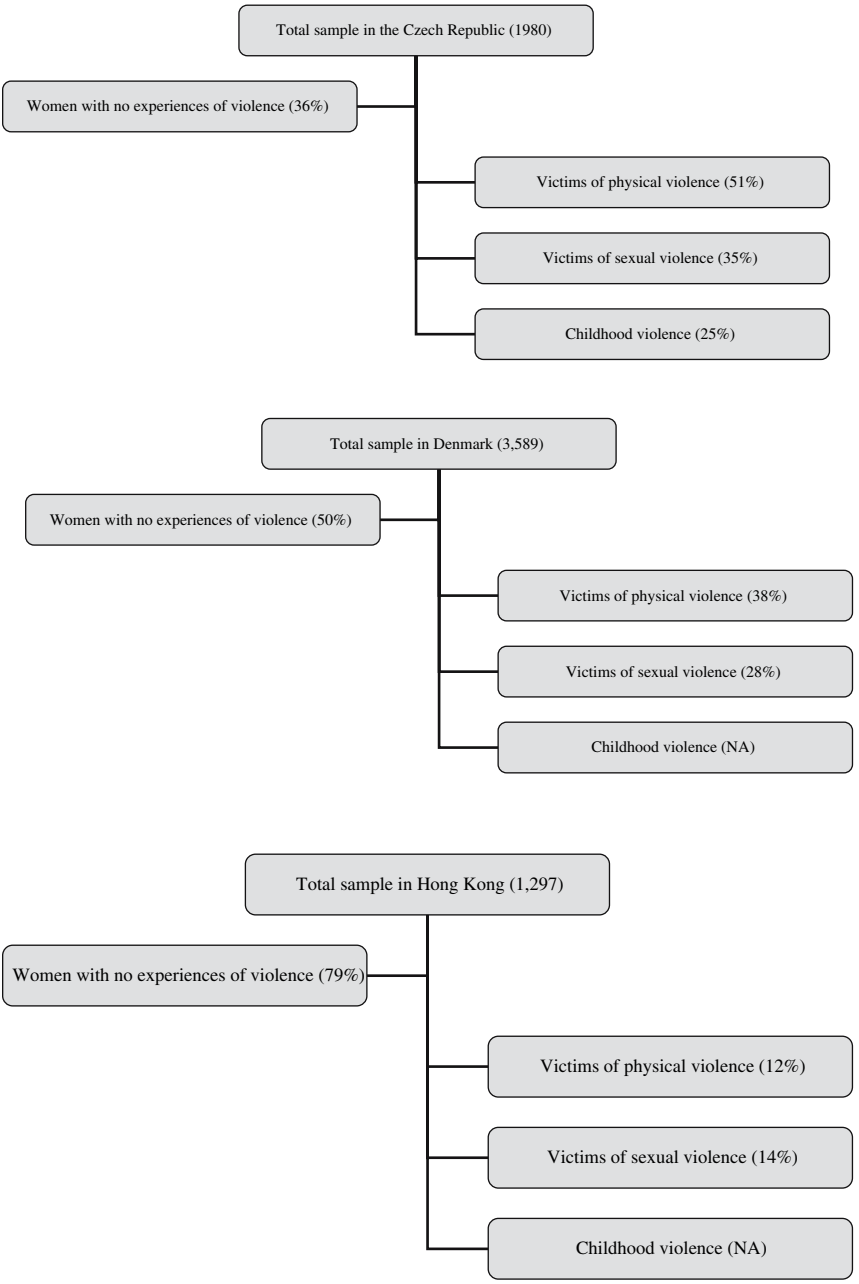


Fig. 3.1 Percentage of women who experienced violence as an adult or a child in each participating country



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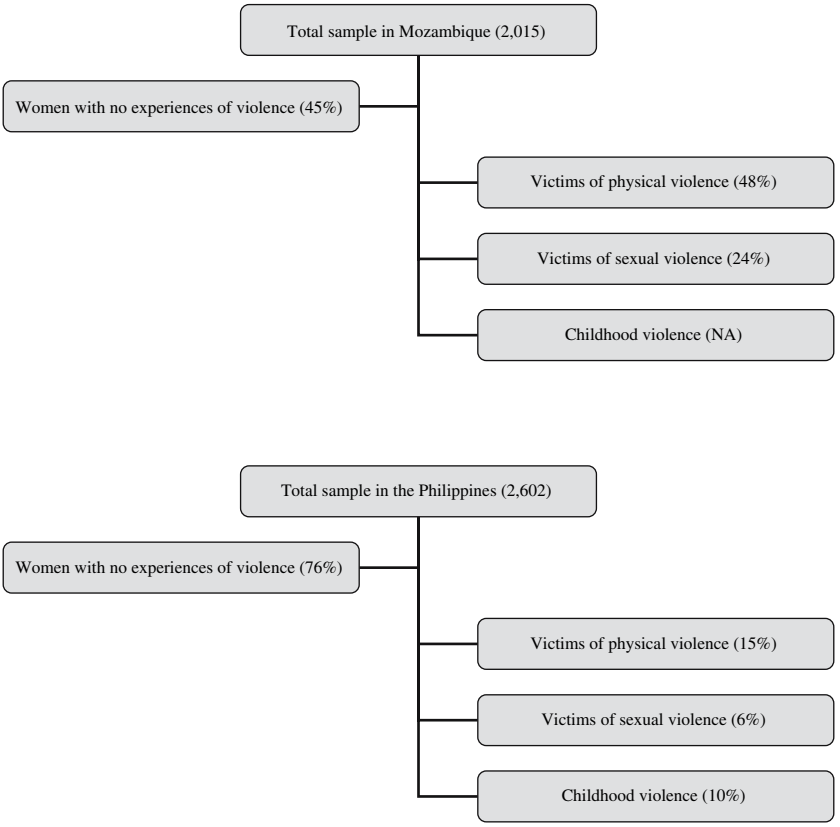

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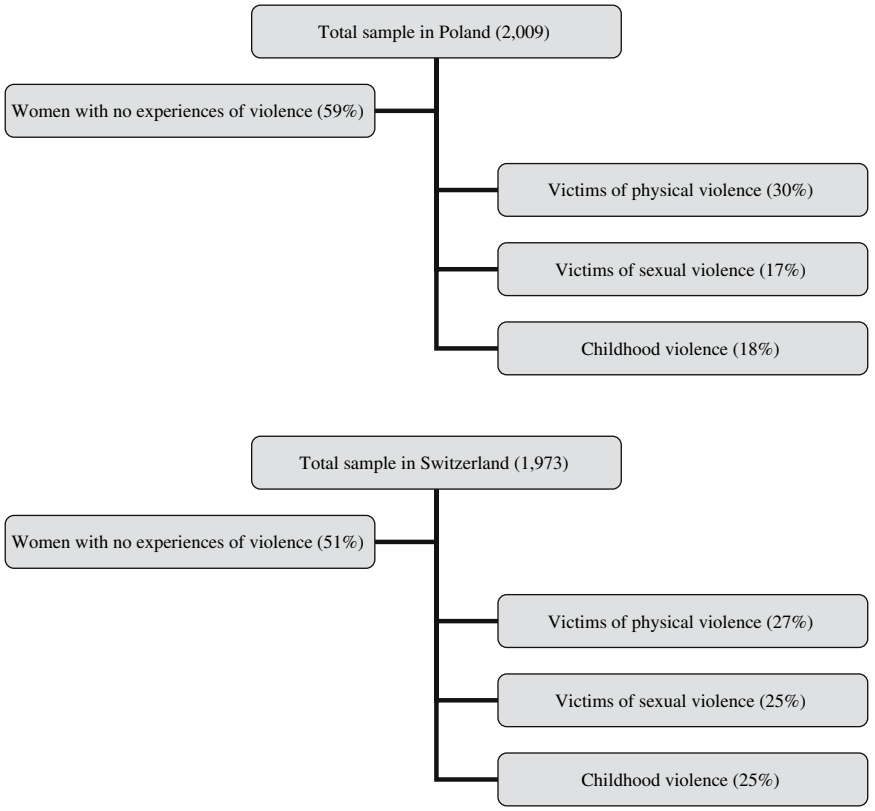
fifty and sixty percent in Australia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Mozambique. In most countries, victimisation rates were above 35% (Fig. 3.2).

The pattern was similar for physical violence. In the majority of countries, between 30% and 51% of women were victims of physical violence since age 16. With respect to sexual violence, Costa Rican women had the highest rates: 41% have been victims of sexual assault. Generally speaking, women tended to report physical violence more often than sexual violence. Exceptions were Hong Kong and Switzerland, where women were equally likely to report physical and sexual violence.

The IVAWS also provides a snapshot of current victims of violence—those who were victimised in the twelve-months prior to being interviewed. Among the countries participating in the IVAWS, one-year rates of violence by any man ranged from 6% or less in Denmark, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Poland and Switzerland, to 22% in Mozambique. Although women in Mozambique experienced adult lifetime violence at rates comparable to other countries, the one-year rate of violence in that



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country is twice as high as Australia, four times higher than Denmark, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Poland, and ten times higher than Switzerland (Fig. 3.3).

Intimate Partner Violence

Rates of intimate partner violence among women in these nine countries range from 9% to 40%. This represents the percentage of ever-partnered women who experienced violence by a male partner during their adult lifetime. These figures are based on all women who have ever been married, lived with a man in a cohabiting relationship, or had a dating relationship with a man. Four-in-ten women in Mozambique who have ever had an intimate partner, and close to that percentage in Costa Rica and the Czech Republic, report having been physically or sexually assaulted by a partner. About one-quarter of women in Australia and one-fifth of women in Denmark have experienced intimate partner violence. The lowest rates were reported by women in Hong Kong, the Philippines and Switzerland (10%). This pattern holds true for physical assaults as well. However, with respect to sexual violence, women in Costa Rica experienced sexual violence by intimate partners at a rate higher than other

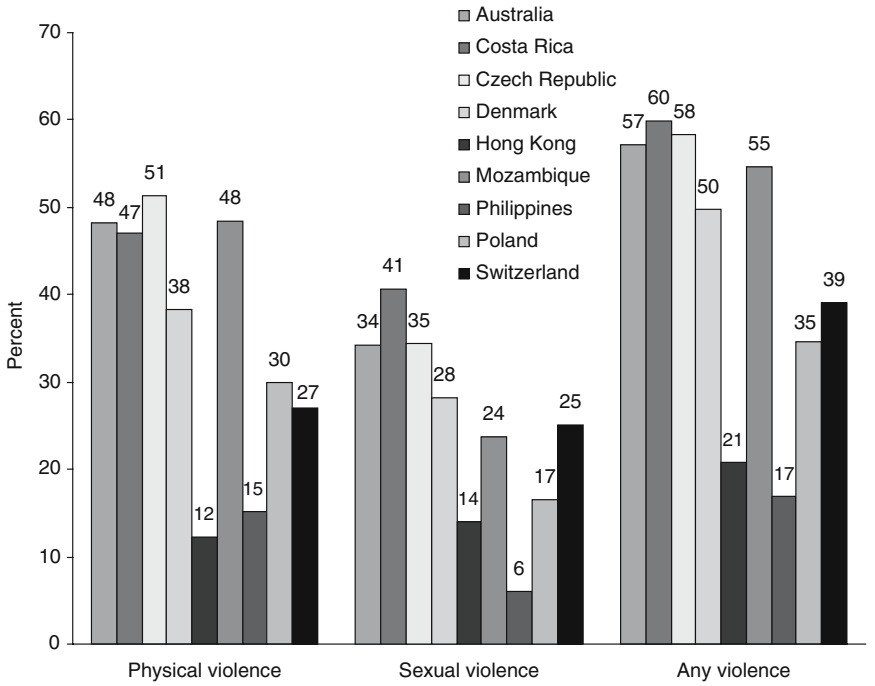

Fig. 3.2 Adult lifetime rates of violence against women by any man

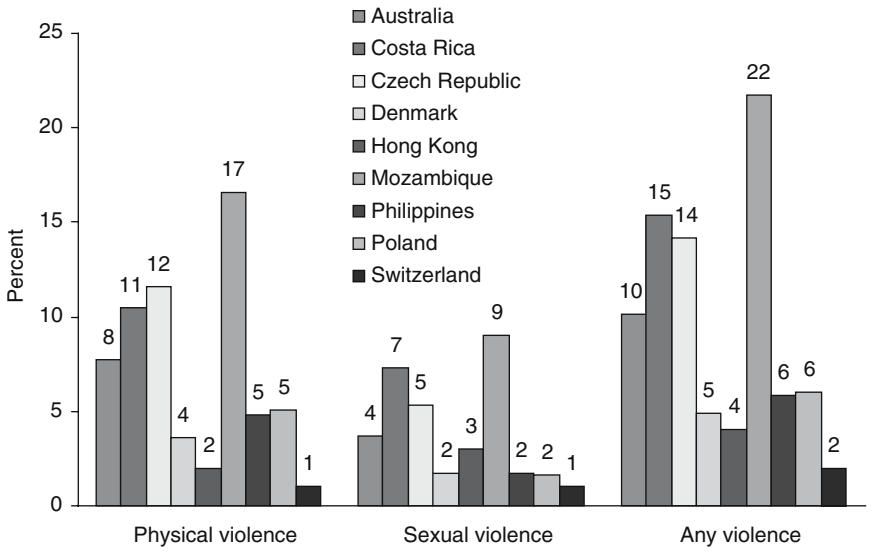

Fig. 3.3 One-year rates of violence against women by any man

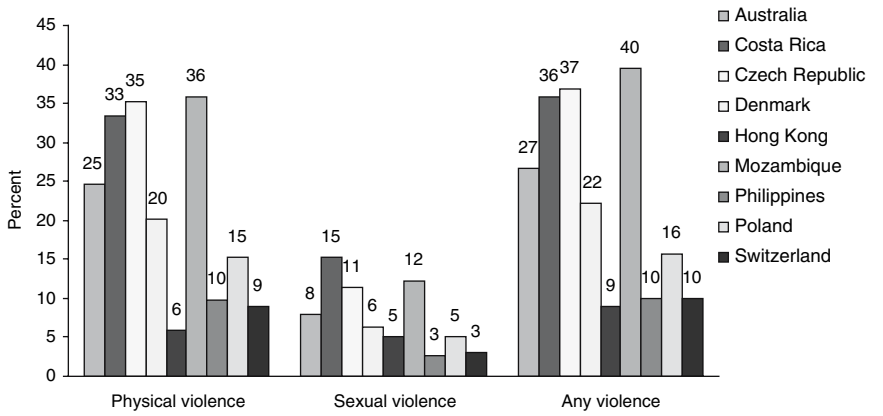

Fig. 3.4 Lifetime rates of intimate partner violence

countries (15%), twice the rate for women in Australia and Denmark, and five times the rate for women in the Philippines and Switzerland (Fig. 3.4).

Although lifetime rates of intimate partner violence in Mozambique are comparable to several other societies, this country stands out as having significantly higher one-year rates of violence by intimate partners: 18% of women in Mozambique were physically or sexually assaulted by a partner during the 12 months prior to the survey (Fig. 3.5). One-year rates of physical, sexual and total violence by intimate partners were many times higher in Mozambique than in any other country. This discrepancy in patterns of lifetime and one-year rates may indicate that in a country like Mozambique, which has very traditional gender roles and attitudes toward marriage and divorce, it is more difficult than in some other countries to

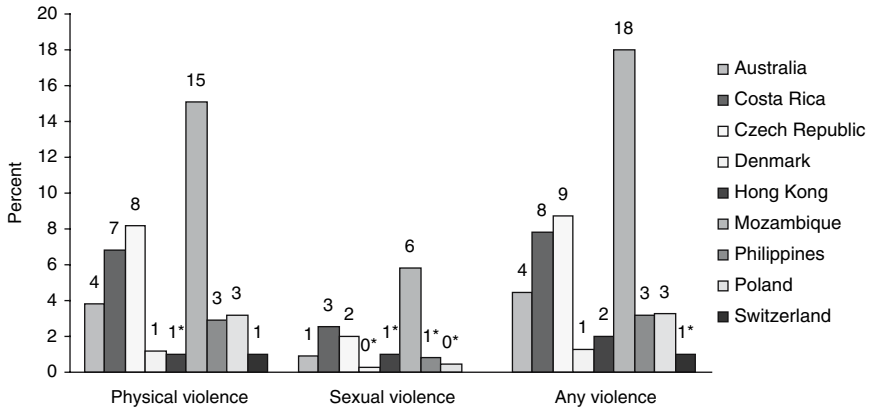

Fig. 3.5 One-year rates of intimate partner violence
*Relative standard error is between 25 and 50.
The RSE for sexual assault in Switzerland is greater than 50.

leave violent partners and seek divorce and therefore many women continue to endure ongoing abuse.[8]

Rates of intimate partner violence were calculated for women who were in a relationship with a man at the time of the interview, for those who had been previously in a relationship, and for all women combined who had ever been in a relationship, either at the time of the interview or in the past. Current relationships include women who fall into the following categories:

- currently married at the time of the interview and living with their husband at least some of the time
- co-habiting with a man without being formally married to him
- involved in a dating relationship with a man

Previous relationships include women who were:

- formerly married and currently separated
- formerly married and currently divorced
- formerly cohabitating with a man without being married to him
- formerly involved with a man in a dating relationship

As shown in Table 3.1, the status of women's current relationships varies somewhat in the countries studied. Women in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Poland and Switzerland were most likely to be married at the time of the interview and women in Denmark reported the highest levels of co-habitation. The percentage who were involved in dating relationships was about one-in-ten in all countries with the exception of the Philippines where only 1% of women were dating. The percentage who were not involved with a man in any type of relationship at the time of the interview ranged from a high of 29% in Costa Rica to a low of 18% in Switzerland.

Table 3.2 displays the status of relationships that have taken place in the past. Thirty percent of women in the Czech Republic had been previously married

Table 3.1 Current relationship status (percentage)

	Married	Co-habitating	Dating	No current relationship	Total
Australia	56	10	10	24	100
Costa Rica	47	15	9	29	100
Czech Republic	53	11	12	25	100
Denmark	49	21	9	21	100
Hong Kong	62	2	12	24	100
Mozambique	58	9	8	25	100
Philippines	65	9	1	25	100
Poland	64	4	11	21	100
Switzerland	62	11	9	18	100

[8] The *Family Act*, passed by Parliament in 2003 and signed by the President in 2005, recognises domestic violence as a reason for divorce and makes it easer for women to own property.

Table 3.2 Previous relationship status (percentage)

	Previously married	Previously cohabitating	Previously dating	No previous relationship
Australia	21	21	63	27
Costa Rica	17	13	36	43
Czech Republic	30	18	39	36
Denmark	24	33	58	21
Hong Kong	9	5	38	48
Mozambique	18	27	11	44
Philippines	10	4	3	84
Poland	18	4	17	67
Switzerland	18	19	45	36

Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses.

compared to just 9% in Hong Kong. This includes previous marriages that ended in death or divorce. Women in Denmark were most likely to have had a previous cohabitating relationship. Previous dating relationships were reported by 63% of women in Australia and just 3% of women in the Philippines and 11% in Mozambique. A total of 84% of women in the Philippines said they had had no previous relationships while this is true for only one-fifth of women in Denmark. Thus the number of women included in calculations of current or previous partner violence depends on the relationship history of the women interviewed, which is affected by social and cultural norms regarding marriage, divorce, pre-marital dating and cohabitation without legal marriage.

Women responding to the IVAWS were asked to report separately on violence that occurred in current and past relationships. Respondents had the opportunity to report separate experiences of violence by different intimate partners, including current spouses or live-in or dating partners, or husbands, live-in and dating partners they had had in the past. Added together, this accounts for all women who have ever been at risk of being physically or sexually assaulted by a male partner during their lifetime. This subset of women is referred to as *ever-partnered* women. Percentages of ever-partnered women range from 89% in Hong Kong to upwards of 94% in all other countries.

Research that has examined women's lifetime experiences of intimate partner violence, including both current and previous relationships, has typically identified former partners as more violent than current partners. For example, in Canada's national Violence Against Women Survey, 15% of women in current marital relationships reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by their current spouse or live-in partners while 48% of women with former partners had experienced violence by those former partners (Johnson, 1996). Figures for Finland were 20% for women in current relationships and 49% for women with previous relationships. (Piispa et al. 2006). One interpretation of the differences in rates in current and former relationships is that in societies such as Canada and Finland, where marital break-up is not uncommon and supports for abused women and single parents exist, women are more likely to leave violent partners and remain with partners who are not violent. It is also not uncommon for violence to occur after a couple

has separated. In many instances, violence escalates when the woman leaves or announces her intention to leave an abusive partner (Campbell et al. 2001). The prevalence of both lifetime and one-year partner violence therefore is expected to be lower in intact intimate relationships compared with relationships that have ended.

In the countries studied in the IVAWS, with the exception of Mozambique, women reported higher rates of violence in previous relationships than in current relationships. Intimate partner violence in Denmark was eight times higher in past relationships compared with current relationships, six times higher in Switzerland, four time higher in Poland, three times higher in Australia, and about twice as high in Costa Rica, the Czech Republic and the Philippines (Figs. 3.6 and 3.7). In contrast, women in Mozambique have higher rates of intimate partner violence in current relationships compared to previous relationships (31% compared to 25%). Almost one-third of women in Mozambique have been assaulted by a partner in a relationship that was current at the time of the interview, considerably higher than for any other country studied. Rates of violence in current relationships were ten times higher in Mozambique than in Denmark and four times higher than in Australia. Yet, with respect to previous relationships, rates were comparable in these three countries at about one-quarter of all women with previous relationships. Rates of violence in current relationships are based on women who were married or living with a man in a cohabiting relationship at the time of the interview, or were currently involved in a dating relationship. Figures describing violence in previous relationships are based on all women who have been married in the past, have lived with a man in a cohabiting relationship, or have had a dating relationship in the past. Women with both current and previous relationships will fall into both categories.

Mozambique is a traditional society where patriarchal values may prevail to a greater extent than the other IVAWS countries. One manifestation of patriarchal values is violence directed at intimate partners. In addition, divorce is uncommon in Mozambique; it is generally culturally and socially unacceptable for a man and

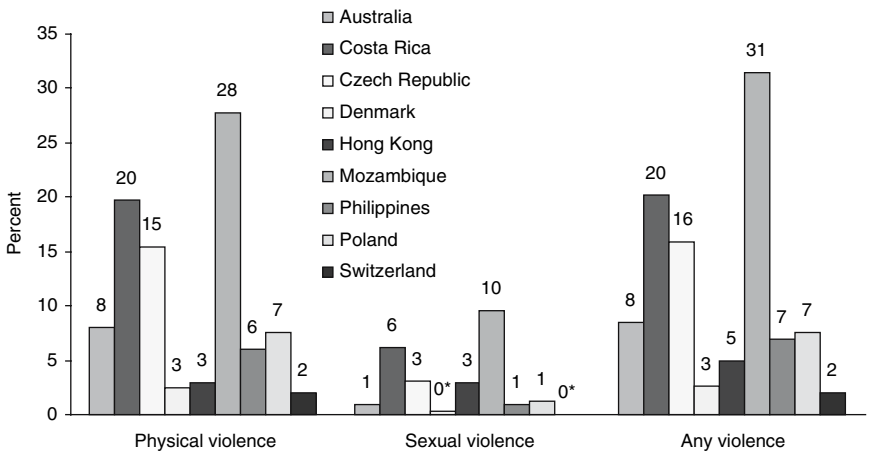

Fig. 3.6 Lifetime rates of violence by current partners
*Relative standard error is between 25 and 50.

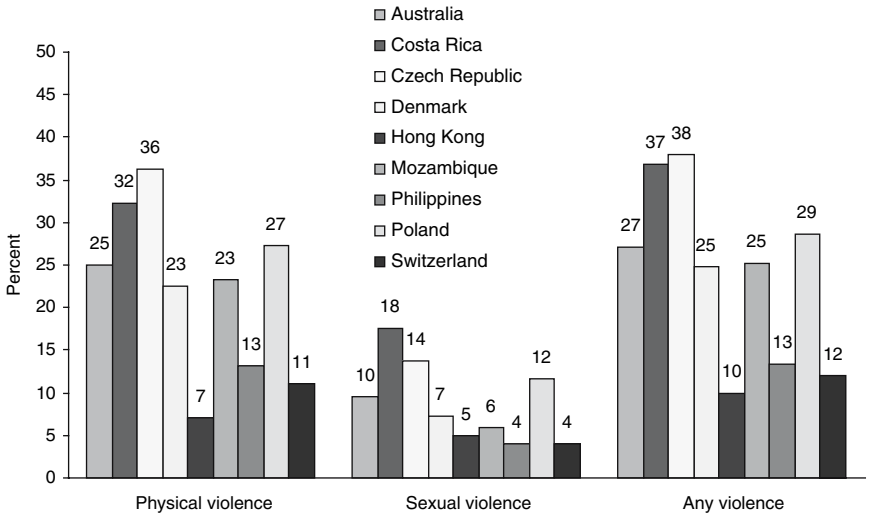

Fig. 3.7 Lifetime rates of violence by previous partners

women to divorce. Unlike some other countries, such as Denmark, Mozambique has very few services for victims of gender-based violence and very few that would advocate divorce as an appropriate response to intimate partner violence. It is therefore difficult for women to leave a violent partner. Currently partnered women tend to be younger in Mozambique and Costa Rica compared with other countries, and youth can be a risk factor for violence (see Chapter 5 for an in depth analysis of correlates of violence). Yet, similar proportions of currently partnered women in Australia and Poland are also relatively young and rates of current partner violence in these countries are lower by comparison. As shown in subsequent chapters, a multiplicity of factors contribute to women's risk of violence, of which age is just one.

Severity of Violence by Intimate Partners

Respondents to the IVAWS were asked six specific behavioural questions in order to determine the prevalence of physical violence committed by intimate partners (see Chapter 2 for details about question wording). Following each item, respondents were asked to indicate the relationship of the male who perpetrated that type of violence and more than one man could be identified. The responses of women who identified current or previous partners were combined to derive estimates of overall physical violence for ever-partnered women. Figure 3.8 illustrates the prevalence of these six types of violence, in addition to a category designed to capture anything that is missed by these six but that the woman considers to be physical violence. Percentages do not add to the total percentage of women victimised as shown in Fig. 3.4 because many women reported more than one type of physical violence.

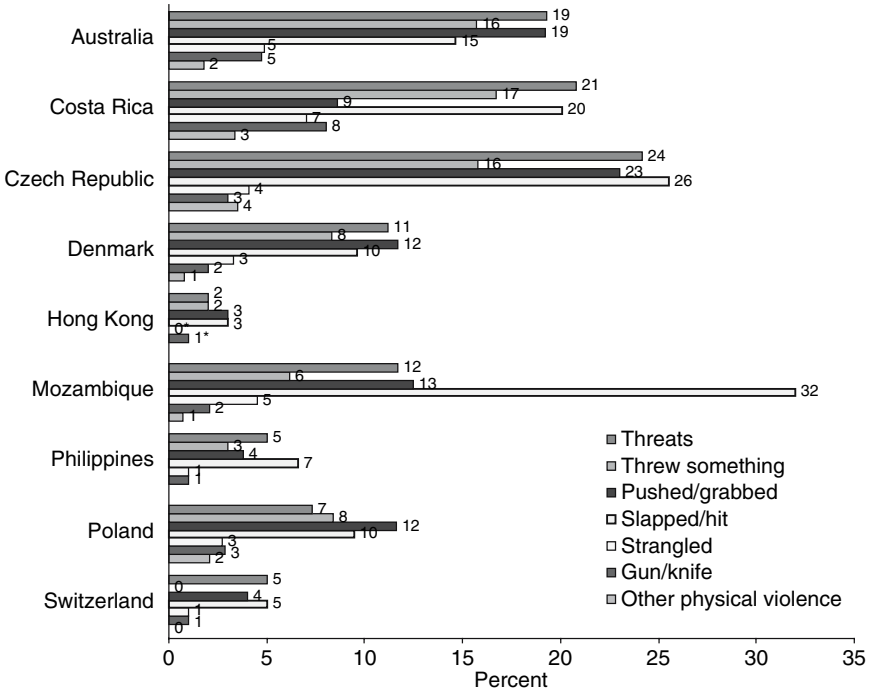

Fig. 3.8 Prevalence of types of physical violence by intimate partners, calculated as a percentage of ever-partnered women

In the Swiss survey the categories "Threw something" and "Slapped/hit" were combined. The result is shown here as the category "Slapped/hit" which therefore is not comparable with other countries. The survey in Switzerland did not include the category "Other physical violence".

Compared to other countries, Costa Rica had the highest proportions of victimised women to report the most serious, life-threatening forms of violence, such being strangled, suffocated, burned or scalded, or having a gun or knife used against them. Almost one-in-ten victims of intimate partner violence in Costa Rica reported partners who committed these two categories of violent acts. Mozambique stands out as the country where women are most likely to be slapped, kicked, bit or hit with a fist by an intimate partner. In most of the remaining countries, the most common acts of intimate partner violence were threats of physical violence that frightened them, or acts of pushing, grabbing, having an arm twisted or hair pulled. (See Appendix III for RSEs for these estimates).

Figure 3.9 illustrates the most serious type of physical violence ever inflicted against women by intimate partners for each country in the order that appears in Fig. 3.8. This order is somewhat arbitrary as consequences and outcomes are not taken into account and victims' perceptions of seriousness may not be consistent with this ranking. Each woman who reported physical violence by an intimate partner is counted once in this graph according to the most serious act of violence she experienced. Although threats are among the most frequently reported, threats typically occur in combination with other types of assaults. Among victims of physical

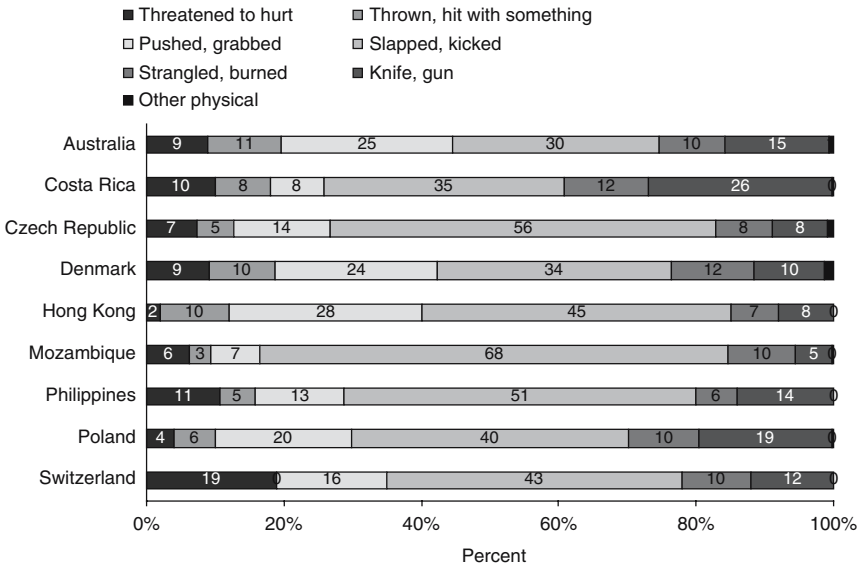

Fig. 3.9 Most serious type of physical violence by intimate partners, calculated as a percentage of victimised women

In the Swiss survey the categories "Threw something" and "Slapped/hit" were combined. The result is shown here as the category 'Slapped/hit' which therefore is not comparable with other countries. The survey in Switzerland did not include the category "Other physical violence".

violence by intimate partners, one-tenth or fewer reported being threatened with violence only and had no experiences of direct assault or threats with a weapon. At least ninety percent of women in each country reported actual physical violence that hurt or frightened them. One exception is Switzerland where one-fifth of women experienced threats of violence as the most serious act; however, this is a reflection of the difference in the way the IVAWS questionnaire was constructed in that country (see Box 3.1). For two-thirds of women in Mozambique, the most serious type of violence was being slapped, kicked, bit or hit with a fist. About one-third of victims in Australia, Costa Rica and Denmark and four-in-ten victims in Hong Kong, Poland and Switzerland reported this as the most serious type of violence ever inflicted by intimate partners. Victimised women in Costa Rica were more likely than women in other countries to have been threatened or assaulted with a gun or knife (26%) followed by women in Poland (19%). Victims of physical violence by intimate partners in Mozambique, Hong Kong and the Czech Republic were least likely to have had guns or knives used against them.

Box 3.1 Experimental component of IVAWS in Switzerland The IVAWS in Switzerland featured a methodological experiment which was aimed at determining whether different approaches in the initial victimisation questions (the screener questions) have an effect on disclosures of violence.

The experiment was based on the one hand on concerns over the length of interviews as a burden to the respondent, and on the other hand on the implications of the interview time to the project budget. The experiment, as well as other aspects of the Swiss survey, is covered in detail by Killias et al. (2004). The respondents in the Swiss sample were assigned to two groups along the lines of the language of the interview (1,352 interviews were conducted in German and 623 interviews in French; it was assumed that membership in a language group would not be correlated with the experience of violence).

The screeners in the IVAWS standard questionnaire ask the respondents whether, since the age of 16 years, they have experienced any of the seven types of physical violence or any of the five types of sexual violence. The German-language part of the Swiss sample used an approach which is more comparable to the standard set of screening questions. The Swiss questionnaire did not use the categories 'other physical violence', 'other sexual violence', and 'being forced into sexual activity with someone else', the last being deemed too rare an occurrence in the Swiss context to be reliably measured with a survey using a probability sample of approximately 2,000 respondents. The Swiss questionnaire also used two broad questions which group questions used in the standard IVAWS questionnaire: 1) having something thrown at you or hitting you with something that hurt or frightened you, and 2) being slapped, kicked, bit or hit with a fist.

The experimental questionnaire design, applied in the French-speaking part of the sample, involved an initial contact with the questions on violence using only three screener questions, two on physical violence and one on sexual violence. They were as follows:

Since you were 16 or older, has any man ever . . .

- threatened to hurt you physically, pushed you, grabbed you, twisted your arm or pulled your hair in a way that really hurt or frightened you? Or has any man ever slapped, kicked, bit or hit you with a fist or with an object?
- tried to strangle or suffocate you, burn or scald you on purpose? Or has any man ever attacked, threatened or injured you with a knife or a gun?
- kissed you or touched you sexually when you did not want him to, in a way that was distressing to you? Or has any man ever forced you or attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way?

Based on the responses to these three screeners, respondents who reported violence were then asked to specify the types of violence they had experienced using the same classification as with the German-speaking respondents. The purpose of the screener questions, in addition to providing a lifetime

prevalence of physical and sexual violence, is to select those respondents who have been victims of violence for a more detailed interview concerning their experiences. The research hypothesis in the use of the two different types of screening questions was that the selection of the respondents with victimisation experiences can be done as effectively with a shorter set of questions thereby using less time. This was to be determined by the rates of different types of violence obtained with the use of these two different approaches.

This table (adapted from Killias et al. 2004) shows the prevalence rates obtained by the two approaches. In total, the condensed version produced a lower prevalence for the total calculation of any violent behaviour. The same is true for two of eight types of victimisation: threats to hurt physically and rape. One item–slap, kick, bite or hit with a fist or an object–was significantly higher in the condensed version. In case of threats it could be argued that when the many different types of violence with varying degrees of severity are attached to the same question, the respondents in their replies would focus on more serious incidents and neglect to report the less serious. However, this clearly does not apply in the case of the sexual violence screener where the question includes both unwanted sexual touching and rape. In this case the prevalence of different types of sexual violence might be a factor; more women have experienced some type of physical violence besides threats, while rape is a fairly rare occurrence, at least in Switzerland. For most women there is no other type of sexual violence that they have experienced other than unwanted sexual touching, and so rape, while more serious, would not have quite as big a drowning out effect as some types of physical violence for threats of physical violence. On the other hand, when in the standard IVAWS questionnaire the types of violence are presented one by one starting with threats of physical violence, it might be that respondents who report having been threatened then do not report on the other aspects of the same incident. This might be one reason for the significantly greater number of respondents reporting having been slapped, kicked, bit or hit with a fist or an object, when this type of violence is coupled in the same screener question with threats. Despite the evidence that for some types of violence the different screening methods may have had an effect on the results, in comparisons with other countries the complete data set of Switzerland has been used in order for the results to reflect the whole country. It is necessary to note that, based on the results of the experiment, the rates counted for the whole of Switzerland may underestimate the true levels by a few percentage points.

The survey in Switzerland also used a different approach in collecting data on the most recent victimisation experience. In the standard IVAWS questionnaire the details of incident (where it happened, did it result in injuries, was it reported to the police, etc.) are collected for the most recent incident of intimate partner violence and the most recent incident of non-partner violence. These incidents may involve one or more types of physical and/or

sexual violence. In the Swiss approach this victimisation report was used separately for incidents involving a particular type of intimate partner violence and non-partner violence. Separate victimisation reports were collect for the most recent incident of 1) slapping, kicking, biting or hitting with a fist of an object, 2) trying to strangle or suffocate, burn or scald on purpose, 3) attacking, threatening or injuring with a knife or a gun, 4) rape, and 5) attempted rape by intimate partners and non-partners, a total of ten victimisation reports. Due to the different approach taken it was not possible to use these data in comparisons with other countries.

Prevalence rates of victimisation obtained with the full set of screeners and with three screeners (condensed version), Switzerland

Type of victimisation	Full version (N = 1009)*		Condensed version (N = 962)*		p-value for the difference
	% of victims	N	% of victims	N	
Threat to hurt physically	19.0%	192	8.6 %	83	< .001
To push, grab, twist the arm of pulled the hair	12.1%	122	10.5 %	101	not significant
To slap, kick, bite or hit with the fist or an object	9.5%	96	12.3 %	118	< .05
To try to strangle or suffocate, burn or scald on purpose	2.5%	25	2.7 %	26	not significant
To attack, threaten or injure with a knife or a gun	3.8%	38	2.9 %	28	not significant
Rape	7.4%	75	3.8 %	36	< .001
Rape attempt	6.2%	62	7.5 %	72	not significant
Unwanted kissing or sexual touching	18.9%	191	17.1 %	164	not significant
Any violent behaviour	42.1%	425	36.7 %	353	< .001

Adapted from Killias et al. 2004

*For some items the total number of cases may be one or two cases smaller due to item non-response

With respect to sexual violence by intimate partners, women in Costa Rica reported the highest rates of actual and attempted forced sexual intercourse and other sexual violence by intimate partners. Within countries, types of sexual violence perpetrated by intimate partners were most likely to be forced sexual intercourse, although the percentages are less than 10% in all countries. Fewer women reported having been forced by intimate partners to have sex with someone else (such as forced prostitution) or other acts of sexual violence that don't fall into these categories (Fig. 3.10).

Examining experiences of sexual violence by intimate partners according to the most serious type presents a somewhat different picture. In Fig. 3.11, severity

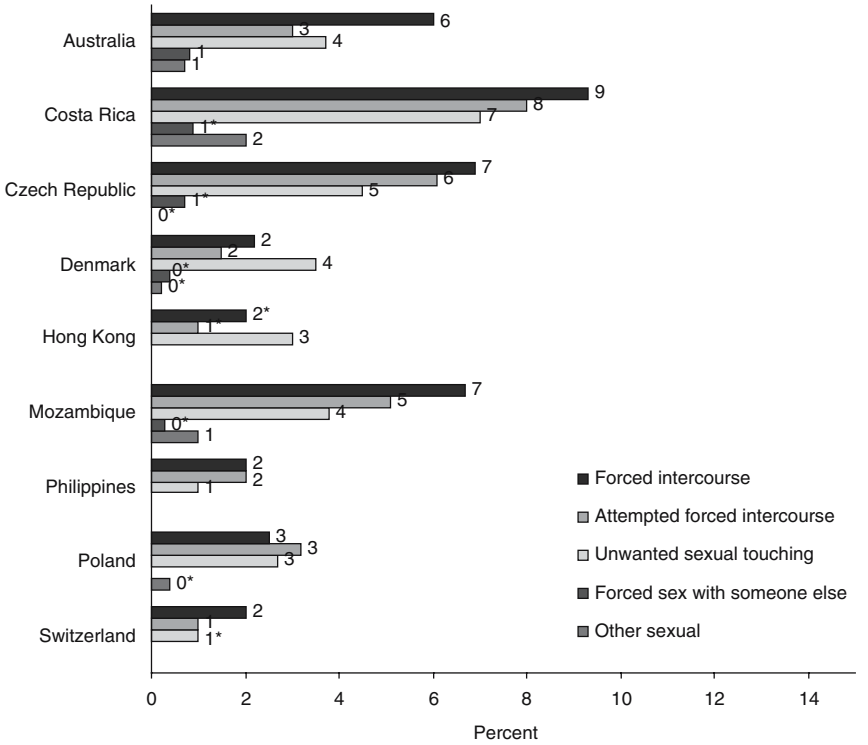

Fig. 3.10 Prevalence of types of sexual violence by intimate partners, calculated as a percentage of ever-partnered women

*Relative standard error is between 25 and 50.

The RSE for some categories of responses in some countries was greater than 50 or counts were less than 5 so percentages are suppressed. The survey in Switzerland did not include categories "Forced sex with someone else" and "Other sexual".

is arbitrarily determined in the following order: forced sexual intercourse (rape), attempted forced sexual intercourse (attempted rape), forced sexual activity with someone else, unwanted sexual touching and other sexual violence. Each woman who reported sexual violence is included once in this analysis according to the most serious type of violence she experienced. With the exception of Denmark and Hong Kong, between one-half and two-thirds of women who were sexually assaulted by intimate partners reported being raped (forced intercourse). Between one-quarter and one-third of victims experienced attempted rape. Danish women and those in Hong Kong who were sexually assaulted by partners were more likely than women in other countries to describe the most serious incident as unwanted sexual touching. These results may reflect, in part, cultural variations in the willingness of women to name sexually coercive or violent acts as falling within the categories used in this survey, particularly if they are committed by intimate partners.

The mean number of types of violence inflicted by intimate partners ranged from a low of 1.8 in Hong Kong to highs of 3.3 in Costa Rica and 3.4 in Poland. As shown

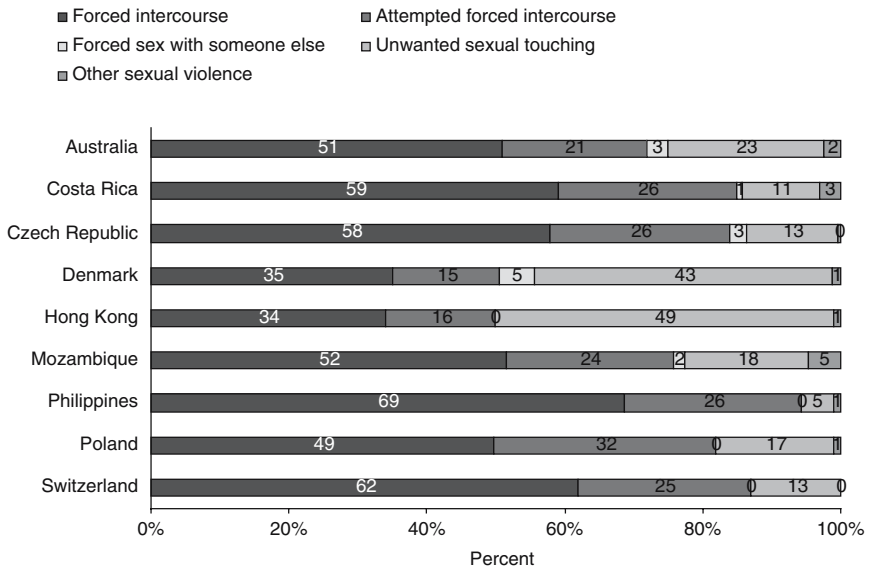

Fig. 3.11 Most serious type of sexual violence by intimate partners, calculated as a percentage of victimised women

The survey in Switzerland did not include categories "Forced sex with someone else" and "Other sexual".

in Fig. 3.12, the majority of victims of intimate partner violence in all countries, with the exception of Mozambique, Hong Kong and Switzerland, reported more than one type of violence measured in this survey. Half of women in Mozambique and Switzerland and fully 60% of women in Hong Kong reported one type while

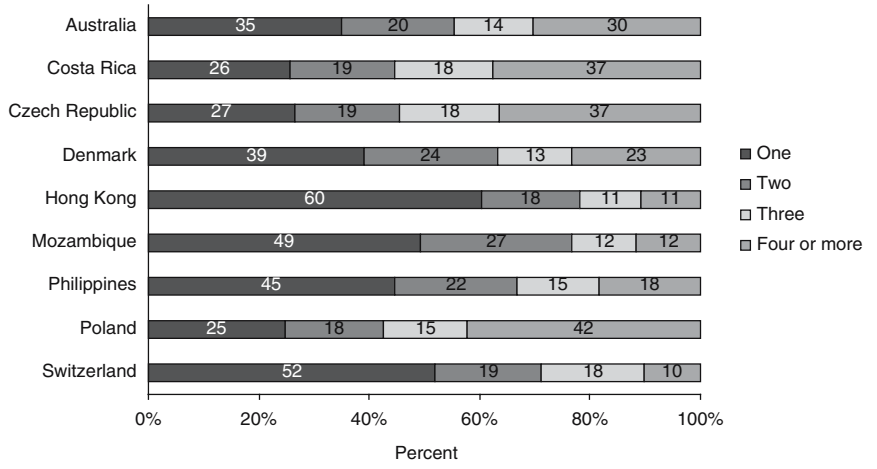

Fig. 3.12 Number of different types of violence by intimate partners, calculated as a percentage of victimised women

the percentage who reported four types or more was as high as 42% in Poland. The frequency of separate incidents of violence is an important indicator of severity, yet it is not easily calculated by IVAWS responses due to the format of the questionnaire. Countries had the option of recording actual number of incidents or recording frequency of violence within categories, such as 1–3 times per month, 1–3 times per week, everyday or almost everyday. Results are therefore not consistent and not comparable across countries.

Violence by Other Men

A different picture emerges in some countries when women are questioned about their experiences of violence by men other than intimate partners. Women in Costa Rica show the highest rates of violent victimisation by men other than intimate partners at 42% of all women. Rates of non-partner violence fall between 25% and 42% in the majority of countries (Fig. 3.13). The lowest rates are reported by women in Hong Kong and the Philippines where only about one in ten women report being physically or sexually assaulted by men other than intimate partners. While women in Switzerland reported among the lowest rates of intimate partner violence—about half the rate reported by women in Australia and Denmark—rates of non-partner violence reported by Swiss women were on par with these countries. Women in Mozambique, who reported a rate of intimate partner violence on par with Costa Rica and the Czech Republic, experienced violence by non-partners at a rate about half that of these other countries.

The relatively high rates of violence by non-partners in Costa Rica are reflected in sexual assault in particular. Costa Rica is the one country where women report noticeably higher rates of sexual than physical violence by non-partners. Sexual

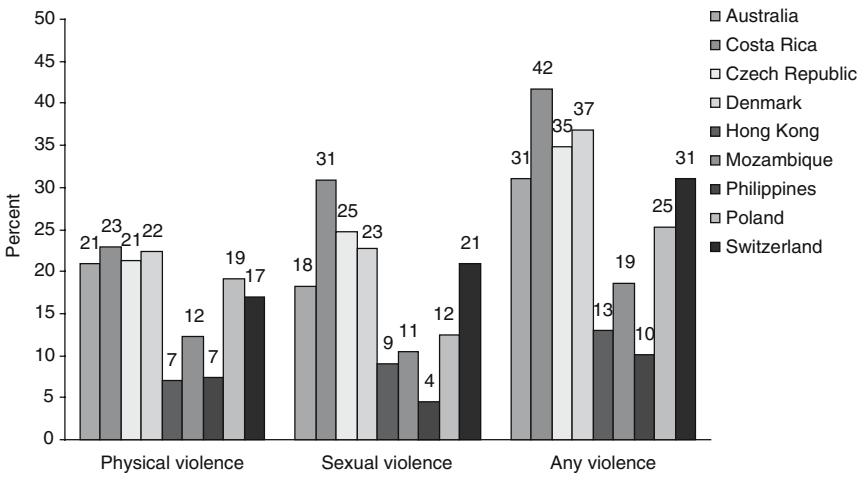

Fig. 3.13 Adult lifetime rates of violence by men other than intimate partners

assault is slightly more prevalent than physical assault among women in the Czech Republic and Switzerland. In other countries, physical violence was more prevalent or occurred at a rate comparable to sexual violence.

The profile of violence perpetrated by men other than intimate partners varies by country. Costa Rican women have the highest rates of violence by relatives, share the highest rates of stranger violence with women in Denmark, and together with women in Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Switzerland, report the highest rates of violence by male friends and acquaintances (Fig. 3.14). Women in the Philippines have the lowest rates of violence by strangers, and together with Hong Kong they have the lowest rates of violence by friends/acquaintances. Less than 10% of women in all countries with the exception of Costa Rica report experiencing violence by relatives. In Costa Rica the figure is 14%.

When considering the type of violence, that is physical or sexual assaults, other important differences come to light. For example, Danish women report the highest prevalence of physical assaults by strangers (15%) and among the lowest rates of violence by relatives (3%). Costa Rican women have the highest rates of physical assaults by relatives (11%) (Fig. 3.15). Sexual violence is reported by higher percentages of women in Costa Rica compared with other countries, especially concerning relatives and strangers (Fig. 3.16). One-fifth of Costa Rican women have been sexually assaulted by a stranger since the age of 16. Similar percentages of women in Australia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Switzerland reported experiencing sexual violence by friends and acquaintances–just over one-in-ten.

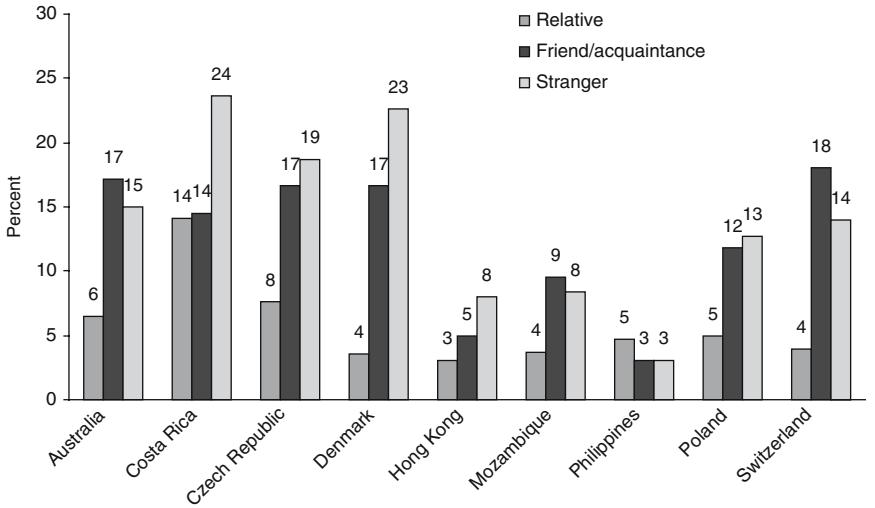

Fig. 3.14 Adult lifetime rates of violence by other men by relationship type

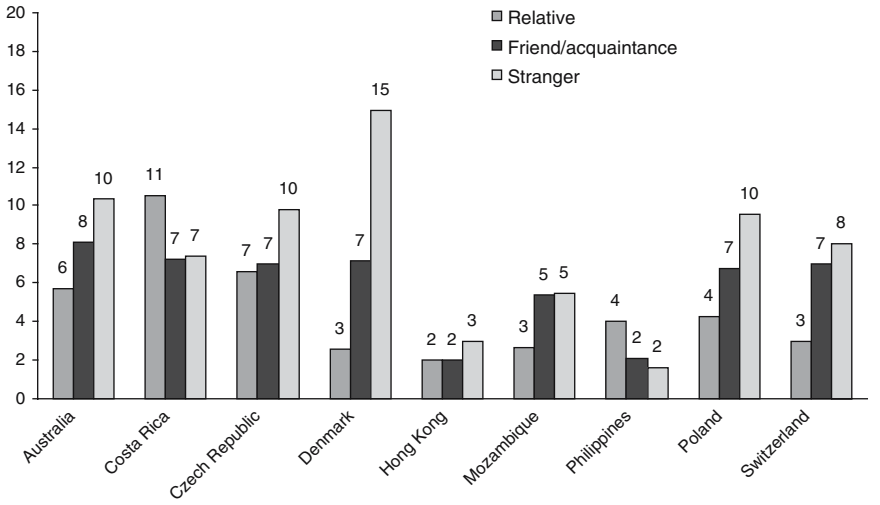

Fig. 3.15 Adult lifetime rates of physical violence by other men by relationship type

Severity of Violence by Other Men

Women who reported being victimized by other men were asked the same list of behavioural questions designed to assess the breadth and severity of the violence inflicted. The most prevalent forms of physical violence directed at women by men other than intimate partners in these countries were men threatening to hurt them physically in a way that frightened them. Next most common in most countries was being pushed, grabbed, having an arm twisted or hair pulled. Relatively high percentages of victims of non-partner violence in Costa Rica had objects thrown at them or were hit with something that hurt or frightened them (Fig. 3.17).

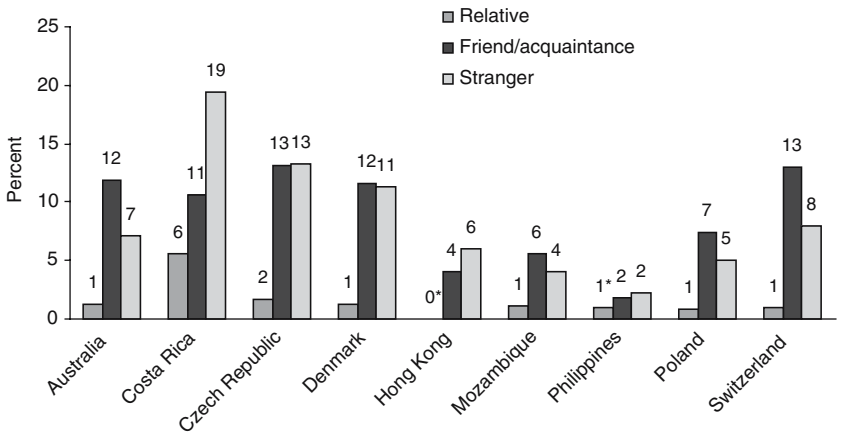

Fig. 3.16 Adult lifetime rates of sexual violence by other men by relationship type
*Relative standard error is between 25 and 50.

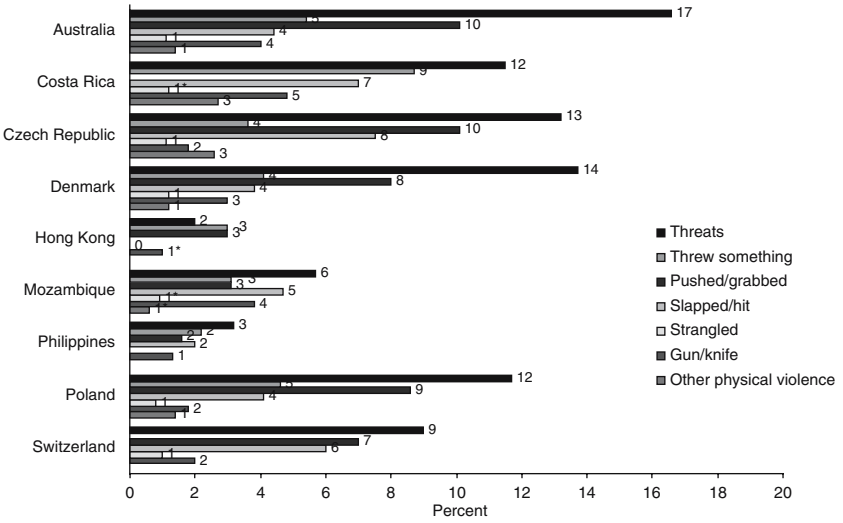

Fig. 3.17 Prevalence of types of physical violence by other men, calculated as a percentage of all women

*Relative standard error is between 25 and 50.

The RSE for some categories of responses in some countries was greater than 50 or counts were less than 5 so percentages are suppressed.

In the Swiss survey the categories "Threw something" and "Slapped/hit" were combined. The result is shown here as the category "Slapped/hit" which therefore is not comparable with other countries. The survey in Switzerland did not include the category "Other physical violence".

With respect to the most serious type of physical violence ever experienced by men other than intimate partners, women were more likely than in cases of partner violence to report threats that frightened them as the most serious. It is interesting that prevalence does not necessarily correlate with severity. For example, Costa Rica has the highest rate of violence by non-partners and about one-quarter of these women were threatened by or had a gun or knife used against them, which is a very serious form of violence (Fig. 3.18). On the other hand, Denmark also had relatively high rates of non-partner violence, but a higher percentage involved threats or being hit with an object and a lower percentage involved guns or knives. Mozambique is a country with a relatively low rate of non-partner violence but a percentage of victims similar to Costa Rica were threatened with or had guns or knives used against them.

Sexual violence is more commonly reported to occur outside of, as compared to within, intimate relationships. Types of sexual violence perpetrated by non-partners also differ compared with sexual violence occurring within intimate relationships. In contrast to intimate partner violence, where forced sexual intercourse (rape) was most prevalent, unwanted sexual touching was the most common type of sexual assault perpetrated by non-partners in all countries. Between 17% and 25% of women in Australia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Switzerland had had at least one experience of unwanted sexual touching in their adult lifetime (Fig. 3.19). Women in Mozambique differ from women in other countries as they

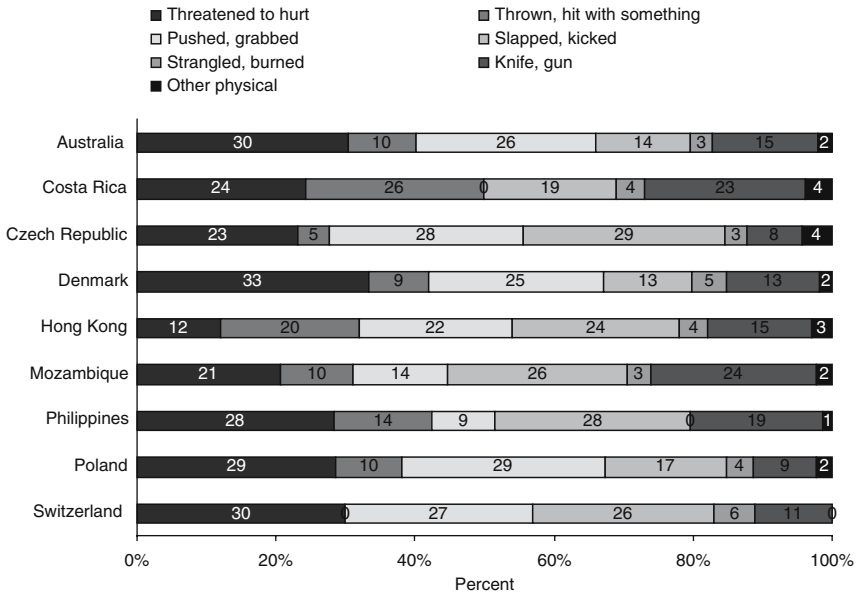

Fig. 3.18 Most serious type of physical violence by other men, calculated as a percentage of victimised women

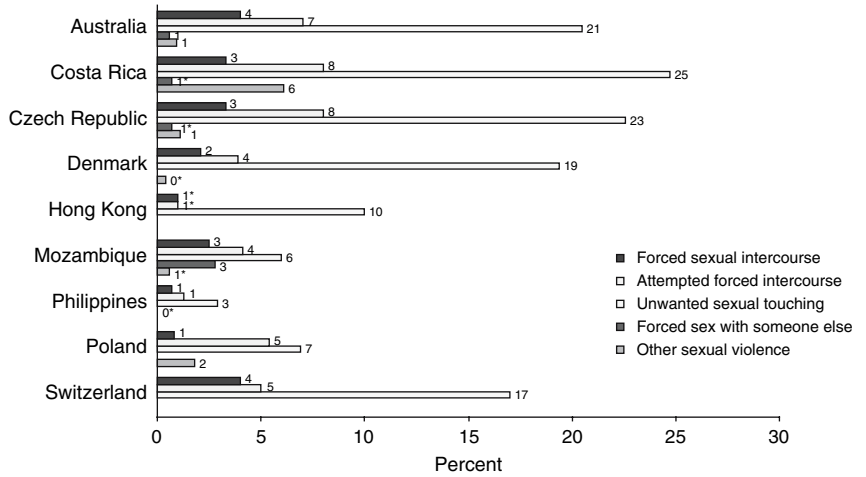

Fig. 3.19 Prevalence of types of sexual violence by other men, calculated as a percentage of all women

* Relative standard error is between 25 and 50.

The RSE for some categories of responses in some countries was greater than 50 or counts were less than 5 so percentages are suppressed.

The survey in Switzerland did not include categories 'Forced sex with someone else' and 'Other sexual'.

were as likely to be forced to have sex with someone else, such as in exchange for money or other needed goods, as they were to be raped. This pattern does not exist in other countries and is unique to Mozambique.

Counting victims of sexual violence just once according to the most serious form of violence they have experienced, Fig. 3.20 shows that rape was the most serious assault for less than one-in-ten victimised women in all countries. Poland was the country most likely to report attempted rape as most serious type of sexual violence women experienced by men other than intimate partners. Attempted rape was the most serious type of sexual assault experienced for 30% of victims in Poland followed by 21% of victims in Mozambique. Forced sexual activity with someone else (including forced prostitution) was negligible for women in all IVAWS countries with the exception of Mozambique and the Philippines where 16% and 8% of women, respectively, reported this as the most serious on this scale. Unwanted sexual touching, in the absence of rape, attempted rape or forced sex with someone else, was the most serious for the majority of women in all countries. The percentage of victims of sexual violence who reported unwanted sexual touching as the most serious ranged from about half in Mozambique and Poland to 97% in Hong Kong. Again, this may be a reflection of cultural differences in the way women in these varied countries interpreted the survey questions in light of their own experiences, and made the decision to report them to survey interviewers.

Women victimised by men other than intimate partners tended to experience fewer types and fewer incidents of violence in all countries. With the exception of the Czech Republic, between one-half and 70% of women who were victimised by men other than intimate partners reported experiencing one type of violence

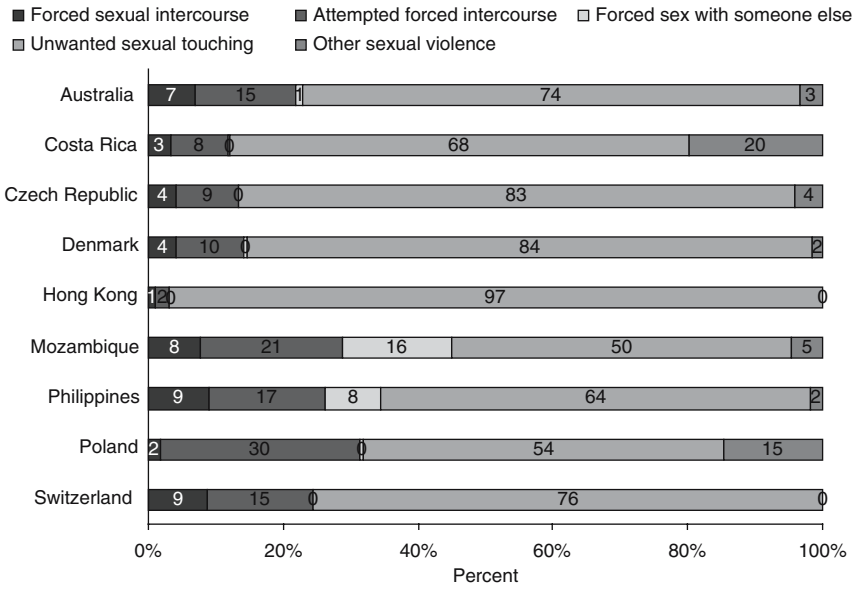

Fig. 3.20 Most serious type of sexual violence by other men, calculated as a percentage of victimised women

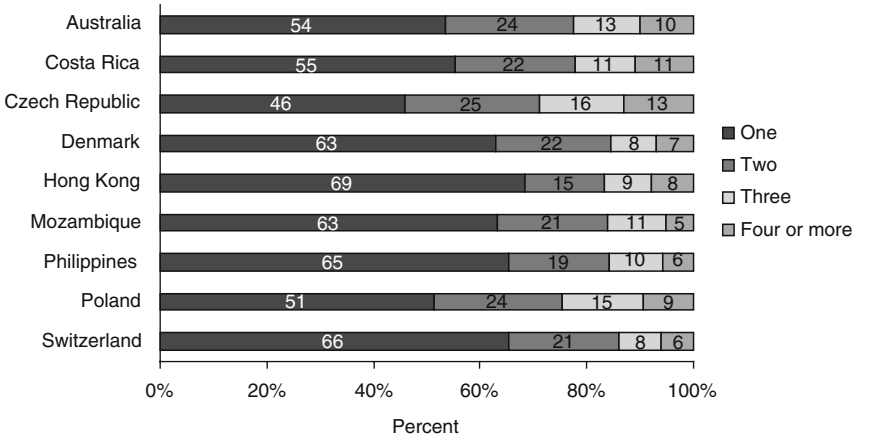

Fig. 3.21 Number of different types of violence by men other than intimate partners, calculated as a percentage of all victimised women

(Fig. 3.21). The mean number of non-partner incidents ranged from 1.6 in Denmark, Hong Kong, Mozambique and the Philippines to 1.9 in Australia, Costa Rica and Poland, and 2.1 in the Czech Republic. This includes only incidents that occurred while the women were at least 16 years of age and does not include childhood victimisation. This differs to patterns shown for intimate partner violence where the majority of victims reported more than one type of violence, and the percentage reporting four or more was as high as 42% in Poland. This reflects the different situation for women who are abused by intimate partners whereby they are connected to their abuser through family and social ties, share a household and often share children, and can become trapped in a cycle of repeated assaults without intervention by friends or neighbours, legal or social services. With the exception of women who are victimised by relatives, non-partner violence does not usually entail the same dynamics as exist in intimate partner abuse.

Respondents' Perceptions of the Severity of Violence Committed Against Them

Other indicators of the severity of the violence were based on respondents' perceptions of the seriousness of the most recent incident and whether they considered it to be a crime. Perceptions may not reflect actual severity from an objective standpoint as they are coloured by societal-level norms and attitudes about the acceptance of violence toward women. As shown in Fig. 3.22, the majority of women who were assaulted by intimate partners in previous relationships considered the violence to be serious, ranging from 63% in Hong Kong to 92% in Poland. However, in all countries, violence by current partners was less likely to be considered serious. Violence in current relationships was considered to be serious by about 40% of

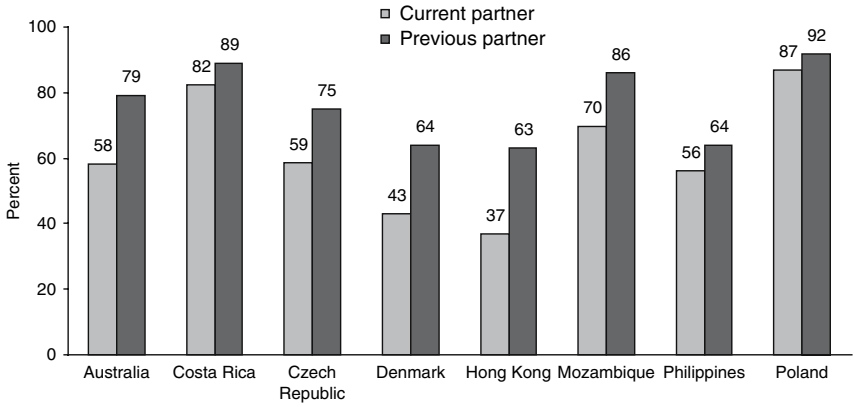

Fig. 3.22 Percentage of victims of intimate partner violence who considered it to be serious

women in Denmark and Hong Kong, compared with more than 80% of women in Costa Rica and Poland. The difference in the perceptions of violence by current and past partners may reflect the actual level of violence, which tends to be more severe in relationships that women have fled (Johnson 1996). It may also reflect an unwillingness to describe the violence as serious among women who must continue to tolerate it or are finding ways to live within a violent relationship. (See Appendix III for perceptions of seriousness for all partner violence, current and previous partners combined.)

Victims' perceptions of the seriousness of violence perpetrated by strangers and men known to them (other than intimate partners) is mixed (Fig. 3.23). In many countries perceptions of seriousness are similar for strangers compared with friends, acquaintances and relatives. In some countries, such as the Czech Republic, Hong

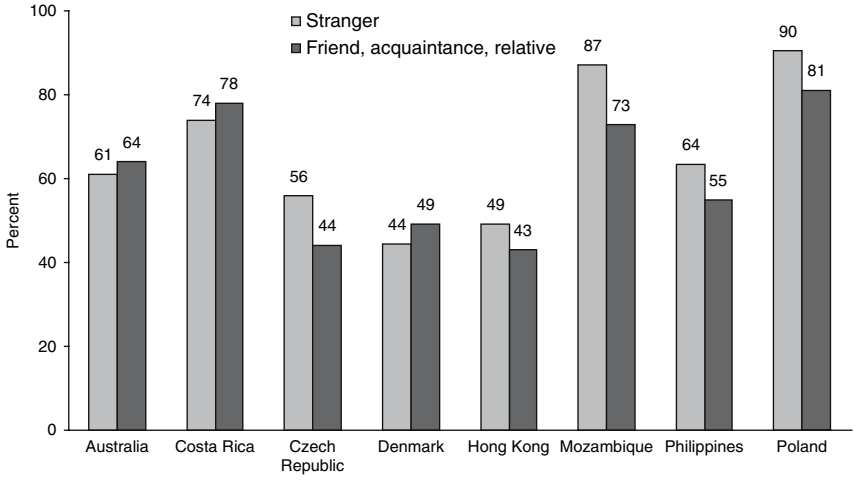

Fig. 3.23 Percentage of victims of non-partner violence who considered it to be serious

Kong, Mozambique, the Philippines and Poland, stranger violence is perceived to be more serious than violence committed by known men. This may reflect a difference in the actual types of violence committed by these two groups of offenders, or it may reflect differences in what is defined culturally as a serious incident that is met with public disapproval. Violence by strangers, particularly sexual assault, has been considered by the criminal justice system and society at large in many countries as fitting within the definition of "real rape" more so than sexual assaults involving known men. Sample counts in most IVAWS countries are too small to investigate perceptions of seriousness according to type of assault in addition to the relationship of offenders to victims. Overall, women in Denmark and Hong Kong were less likely to perceive non-partner violence to be serious compared with women in other countries, such as Costa Rica, Mozambique and Poland. (See Appendix III for perceptions of seriousness for all categories of non-partners combined.)

Legal definitions of sexual assault, marital rape and domestic violence in the survey countries are specified in Appendix II. In all IVAWS countries, rape is prohibited and in all countries except Mozambique other types of forced sexual activity are also prohibited. Rape in marriage is specified as a crime in all countries except Mozambique (Fig. 3.25). Violence by intimate partners is not specified in the legal codes of most countries, but it is considered a crime under general assault provisions. When respondents to the IVAWS were asked if they considered their experiences of violence to constitute a crime, some discrepancies were uncovered in the assaults women reported to the survey and their perceptions of whether the incident qualified as an assault under the legal code. Not all women who were assaulted by intimate partners considered the act to constitute a crime.

Perceptions of whether intimate partner violence was considered a crime varied according to whether the violence occurred in a current relationship or one that had ended (Fig. 3.24). For example, half of women in Australia and the Czech Republic and 59% of women in Hong Kong who were assaulted by current partners said that

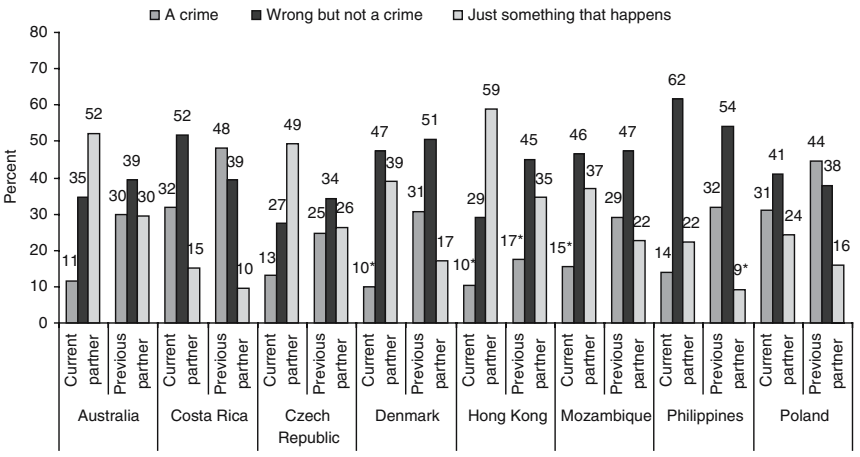

Fig. 3.24 Percentage of victims of intimate partner violence who considered it to be a crime
*Relative standard error is between 25 and 50.

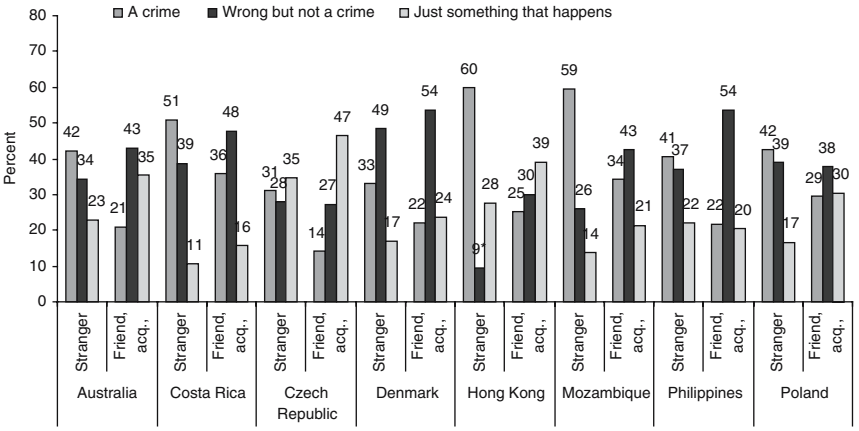

Fig. 3.25 Percentage of victims of non-partner violence who considered it to be a crime

what happened to them was "just something that happens". This compares to just 15% of women in Costa Rica. In all countries, violence by past partners was less likely than violence occurring in current relationships to be viewed as just something that happens and more likely to be considered a crime. Countries where violence by past partners was most likely to be considered a crime were Costa Rica (48%) and Poland (44%). Women in Denmark, Mozambique and the Philippines were more likely to consider violence by current and previous partners to be wrong but not a crime compared to women in other countries. (See Appendix III for perceptions of whether the incident was a crime for all partner violence, current and previous partners combined.)

Clearly legal codes are only one source of information, and perhaps not the most important, that influences victims' perceptions and how they categorise their experiences. Victims' perceptions of whether intimate partner violence should be considered a crime are affected by social norms and the attitudes and beliefs of other people in their immediate environment. These are more likely to shape victims' beliefs and responses to the violence than whether their experiences fit within an objective assessment of what would be considered a crime under the legal code.

With respect to violence committed by men other than intimate partners, in all countries, women were more likely to perceive violence by strangers to be a crime compared with violence involving known men such as friends, acquaintance and relatives. However, the percentage of women who considered stranger violence to be a crime varied from about 30% in the Czech Republic and Denmark to 60% in Hong Kong and Mozambique (Fig. 3.25). Violence by known men was considered a crime by 14% of women in the Czech Republic up to about one-third in Costa Rica and Mozambique. Czech women were most likely to consider violence by known men to be just something that happens which was also the most common response among women in Hong Kong. More common was the perception that violence by known men was wrong but not a crime, reported by at least half of victims in Costa Rica, Denmark and the Philippines and was the most common response in Australia,

Mozambique and Poland. (See Appendix III for perceptions of whether the incident was a crime for all categories of non-partners combined.)

Violence in Childhood

Questions on the IVAWS regarding experiences of violence in childhood were optional. Among the countries participating in the study, all but Denmark, Hong Kong and Mozambique included this module of questions. Violence in childhood encompassed the following:

- physical assaults by fathers and mothers
- sexual violence by fathers, step-fathers, mothers, step-mothers, siblings, other relatives and other known men

Rates of physical violence by parents in childhood ranged from a low of 9% in the Philippines to a high of 40% in Costa Rica (Fig. 3.26). Women in Costa Rica report physical violence by parents in childhood at rates twice as high as women in Australia, the Czech Republic and Switzerland and four times higher than women in the Philippines. Fathers outnumbered mothers as perpetrators of parental physical abuse in every country except Costa Rica where mothers were slightly more likely than fathers to inflict physical punishment on these female respondents when they were children.

Women who had been physically assaulted by parents were asked how serious they considered the assaults to be. Less than half of women in the Czech Republic and the Philippines who were physically abused by fathers and one-third of women in these countries who were abused by mothers considered the abuse to be serious. Those in other countries who considered the abuse to be serious were upwards of

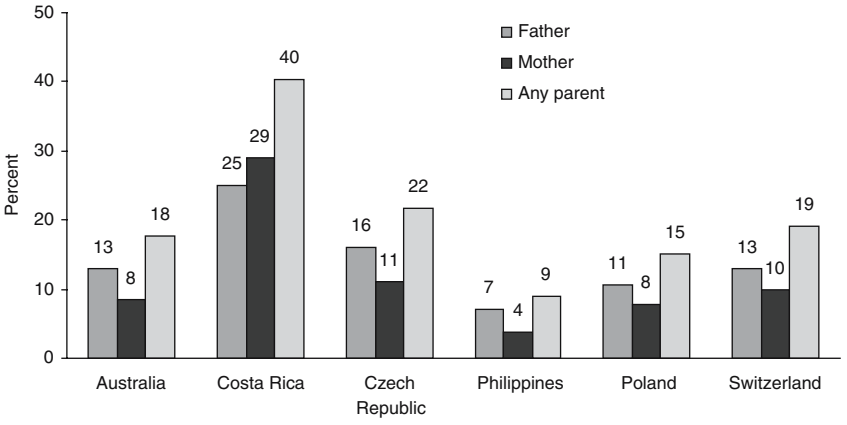

Fig. 3.26 Rates of physical violence in childhood by parents

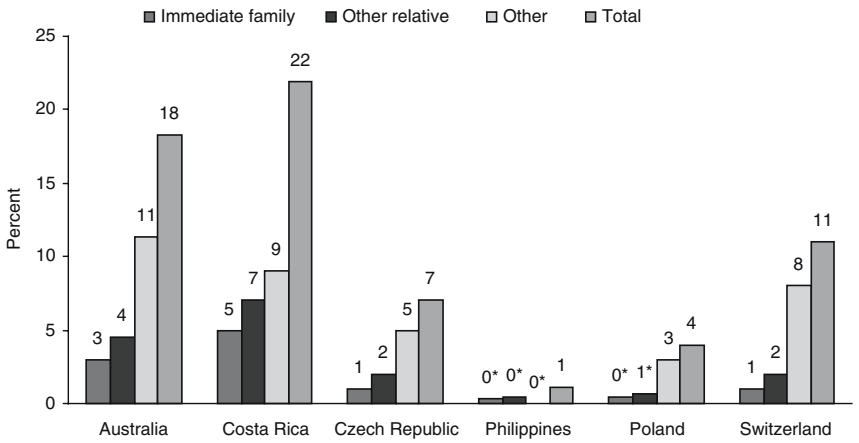

Fig. 3.27 Rates of sexual violence in childhood Immediate family includes father, mother, step-parents and siblings.
Other includes other known offenders and strangers.
* Relative standard error is between 25 and 50.

three-quarters in the case of abuse by fathers and at least two-thirds in the case of abuse by mothers. Without details about injury and other consequences of these assaults, severity is not an objective measure. Inter-country differences in perceptions of severity of parental assaults may be a reflection of actual differences in the degree of severity in the manner in which parents use physical means to discipline their children, or cultural variations in perceptions of the acceptability of physical discipline whereby parents can use violence with impunity in some countries and it may not be considered serious unless severe injury results.

The IVAWS also asked about experiences of forced sexual activity before age 16. Rates were highest in Costa Rica and Australia where about one in five women reported being sexually assaulted (Fig. 3.27). Australian women were unlike women in other countries in that they were equally likely to report physical abuse by parents and sexual abuse before age 16. It was typical for other countries to report higher rates of physical as compared with sexual violence in childhood. Childhood physical and sexual abuse can be traumatic experiences for victims and disclosures especially difficult in an interview situation, even where confidentiality is guaranteed. These figures therefore may undercount the true prevalence of childhood abuse in these countries.

Interconnections Among Lifetime Experiences of Violence

Results of the International Violence Against Women Survey indicate that violence is a common feature in the lives of large percentages of women. Significant proportions of women in the countries included in this study experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 16 and in childhood. Fig. 3.28 illustrates the extent

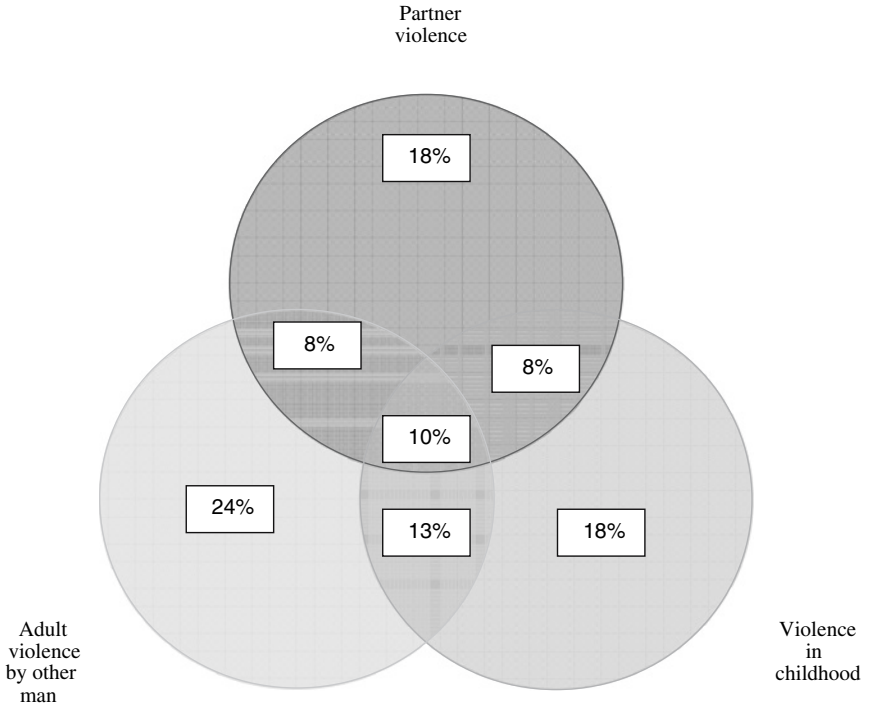

Fig. 3.28 Interconnections among experiences of violence

to which these experiences overlap. Including just the six countries that included both adult and childhood experiences of violence, victimised women experienced violence in the following ways:

- 10% of victimised women in the sample experienced violence in all three contexts: violence by an intimate partner, violence by another man since age 16, and physical or sexual abuse in childhood
- 44% experienced intimate partner violence
  - 18% reported partner violence and no other type of violence
  - 26% were victims of intimate partner violence and other types of violence
- 55% experienced violence by men other than intimate partners in their adult lifetime
  - 24% reported only non-partner violence as an adult
  - 31% were victims of non-partner violence and violence in other situations
- 49% experienced abuse as a child, either physical abuse by parents or unwanted sexual activity by anyone
  - 18% experienced childhood violence and no violence as an adult
  - 31% experienced childhood violence and violence as an adult

Overall, 40% of victimised women experienced violence in more than one context and 60% were victims of violence in one of these three situations only. The following chapter explores some of the factors that are associated with a heightened risk of violence, including the extent to which childhood experiences of violence represent a risk factor for adult victimisation.

Summary

Results of the IVAWS show that violence against women is widespread and affects substantial proportions of women in the countries studied. Rates of intimate partner violence are comparably high in Mozambique, Costa Rica and the Czech Republic. Mozambique stands out as having the highest rates of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey interview, and the unusual pattern of reporting higher rates of violence by current partners as compared with men in past relationships. This disparity between Mozambique and the other countries studied may be due to a more traditional culture that does not support separation and divorce as an appropriate response to intimate partner violence.

Violent victimisation by men other than intimate partners was most prevalent in Costa Rica, and in particular, women in that country were most susceptible to sexual assault by non-partners. Perceptions of the seriousness of the violence perpetrated against them, or whether victims consider the experience to be a crime, are likely coloured by social norms present in the women's immediate environment.

Physical violence by parents is most prevalent in the backgrounds of women in Costa Rica. Together with Australian women, they were more likely than women in other countries to report sexual abuse in childhood.

Cross-national comparative research has many benefits in terms of identifying levels of risk and the factors that contribute to or protect from violent victimisation. However, it also has its challenges with respect to standardisation of question meaning and interpretation by respondents. Even when care is taken to standardise the methodology used in participating countries, through use of a common questionnaire, interviewer selection and training, data capture and editing, the comparability of results may be affected by cultural differences regarding the willingness of women to identify their experiences as fitting within the objectives of the survey, and their willingness to disclose experiences to an interviewer. Notwithstanding this caveat and possible under-reporting of violence in these surveys, these results leave no doubt that violence against women is a broad and multi-faceted social problem. Chapter 4 will examine the impacts and consequences of violence for these women.