UN Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence Against Women

Francesca Grum
Chief, Social and Gender Statistics Section
United Nations Statistics Division
grum@un.org
UN Guidelines for Producing Statistics on VAW

- Provide methodological advice on:
  - What to measure
    - UN core\(^1\) and additional topics
  - How to measure
    - population-based surveys, steps required to plan/organize and execute, recommended tabulations, data analysis and dissemination of results
  - Special features of surveys on VAW
  - All other relevant issues for NSOs to undertake statistical surveys on VAW

\(^1\) FOC indicators on VAW – adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 2009
What to measure
What to measure (core)

- **Type of violence** = selected forms of violence only! (that can be measured through household sample surveys) - Any act of:
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Psychological
  violence perpetuated on women by intimate partners and other perpetrators

- **Frequency**
- **Severity of violence**
- **Relationship to perpetrator**
- **Age**
- **Marital/relationship status**

- **Reference time**
  - Last 12 months (12 months before the survey)
  - Lifetime experience (since age 15)

=> Calculate Prevalence
  - Percentage of women aged 15 and older, subject to “Type of” violence (among all women 15+ or ever-partnered 15+, depending on the indicator)
What to measure (additional characteristics)

- **For respondents**
  - Ethnicity
  - Labour force status
  - Religion
  - Language
  - Educational attainment and Literacy
  - Age at first marriage or co-habitation
  - Place of residence (U/R)

- **About violence**
  - Attitude towards violence against women
  - Reporting to authorities/seeking help

- **About perpetrator**
  - Age
  - Substance abuse
  - Labour force status
  - Educational attainment
  - Witnessing violence in childhood

- **About non-partner perpetrator**
  - Sex
  - Location of the violence
Types of Violence: Physical

• Questions should always be posed about occurrences of specific acts rather than just asking generally about violence, which will result in under-reporting

• A minimum list of acts of physical violence consists of the following:
  – Slapped
  – Thrown something at you that could hurt
  – Pushed, shoved, pulled hair
  – Hit with something
  – Hit with fists or other objects
  – Kicked, bit or dragged
  – Beat
  – Choked or burned
  – Threatened with knife, gun, or other weapon
  – Used a knife, gun, or other weapon against her
  – Other threats or acts of physical violence (leave open for the respondent to specify)

• Other acts may be appropriate depending on the context e.g. stoning or throwing acid
Types of Violence: Sexual

- Any sort of harmful or unwanted sexual behaviour that is imposed on someone.

Includes:
- **Rape** (any type of coerced and forced sexual acts)
- **Attempted rape**
  - Other sexual acts:
    - Intimate touching without consent
    - Sexual acts other than intercourse forced by money
    - Sexual acts other than intercourse obtained through threats of physical violence
    - Sexual acts other than intercourse obtained through threats to the wellbeing of family members
    - Use of force or coercion to obtain unwanted sexual acts or any sexual activity that the female partner finds degrading or humiliating
    - Other acts of sexual violence
Types of Violence: Psychological

... methodological research is ongoing

- Range of acts falling under 3 domains:
  - a) insults and humiliation;
    - Insults her or makes her feel bad about herself
    - Belittles or humiliates her in front of other people
  - b) threats and intimidation;
    - Deliberately scares or intimidates her
    - Threatens to hurt her or others she cares about
  - c) control and social isolation
    - Isolates her by preventing her from seeing family or friends
    - Monitors her whereabouts and social interactions
    - Ignores her or treats her indifferently
    - Gets angry if she speaks with other men
    - Makes unwarranted accusations of infidelity
    - Controls her access to health care
    - Controls her access to education or the labour market

What is the threshold? When does unkind behaviour become psychological violence?

Is it the type of act? Frequency of acts?
How to measure
How to measure

- Dedicated Surveys (preferred approach)
  - Measure phenomena in all its complexity through a detailed range of questions
  - Facilitate disclosure of sensitive topic through properly designed questionnaire
    - Introductory questions to prompt respondents to think of violence
    - Wording and sequence of questions
  - Ensure essential features of surveys on VAW
    - Importance of appropriate sampling design (not to systematically exclude important population sub-groups)
    - Special training of interviewers
    - Ethical considerations
      - Confidentiality
      - Safety of respondents and interviewers
      - Support to victims
How to measure

• Alternatively,
  
  – Use a Module in women’s health type of surveys
    • When dedicated survey is not feasible
    • Only as long as previous principles are followed
Annexes – Additional resources

• Proposed tabulations for core indicators
• Model questionnaire (DA inter-regional project)
• International instruments and conventions on VAW
• Countries that undertook VAW surveys
• Examples of questions for additional topics

To be updated
Summary: Guidelines

• Focus on producing statistics and indicators on VAW through a population-based survey – relevant for SDG VAW indicators!

• Provide steps by steps process NSOs should follow and highlight special features of VAW surveys

• Stress the importance of involving national mechanisms for the advancement of women, relevant ministries, other stakeholders to ensure:
  – Consistency of concepts
  – Relevance of statistics for policies and programme development
  – Use of information produced