

Gender in Nigeria

Data from the 2013 Nigeria
Demographic and Health Survey
(NDHS)





This report summarizes the gender-related findings of the 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), implemented by the National Population Commission (NPC). ICF International provided financial and technical assistance for the survey through USAID-funded MEASURE DHS program, which is designed to assist developing countries to collect data on fertility, family planning, and maternal and child health. Financial support for the survey was provided by USAID, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) through PATHS2, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Additional information about the 2013 NDHS may be obtained from the National Population Commission (NPC), Plot 2031, Olusegun Obasanjo Way, Zone 7 Wuse, PMB 0281, Abuja, Nigeria (telephone: 234-09-523-9173; fax: 234-09-523-1024; email: info@population.gov.ng; internet: www.population.gov.ng).

Additional information about The DHS Program may be obtained from ICF International, 530 Gaither Road, Suite 500, Rockville, MD 20850 USA (telephone: 301-407-6500; fax: 301-407-6501; e-mail: info@dhsprogram.com; internet: www.DHSprogram.com).

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About the Survey

The 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) is designed to provide data for monitoring the population and health situation in Nigeria. The 2013 NDHS is the fifth Demographic and Health Survey conducted in Nigeria since 1990. The objective of the survey was to provide up-to-date information on fertility levels, marriage, fertility preferences, awareness and use of family planning methods, child feeding practices, nutritional status of women and children, adult and childhood mortality, awareness and attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS, and domestic violence. This information is intended to assist policymakers and programme managers in evaluating and designing programmes and strategies for improving health and family planning services in the country.

Who participated in the survey?

A nationally representative sample of 38,948 women in all selected households and 17,359 men age 15–49 in half of the selected households were interviewed. This represents a response rate of 98% of women and 95% of men. The sample design for the 2013 NDHS provides estimates at the national level, urban-rural areas, for each of the six zones, for each of the 36 states, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

This booklet focuses on gender in Nigeria – most data come from questions that were asked of all women and men. The 2013 NDHS also included questions about domestic violence and female genital cutting for women. Only one eligible woman per household was asked about her experiences with violence; data on domestic violence is based on a sample of 27,634 women.

Introduction

Promoting gender equality and empowering women is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs explicitly recognize that gender equality and women's empowerment are not only human rights, but also play a powerful role in promoting development and reducing poverty. When women have the same opportunities, access to resources, and life choices as men, the benefits extend far beyond women themselves. As women work to strengthen their families and communities, they foster the education and health of the next generation, hasten economic growth, and strengthen public and private institutions.

While the focus is on women, this booklet presents men's data when available. Comparing women's and men's experiences identifies gender disparities in Nigeria. Examining women's earnings, fertility, and participation in decisionmaking provides a picture of the extent to women's empowerment. Finally, considering data on domestic violence and female genital cutting helps to assess women's status throughout Nigeria.

Overview: Women in Nigeria

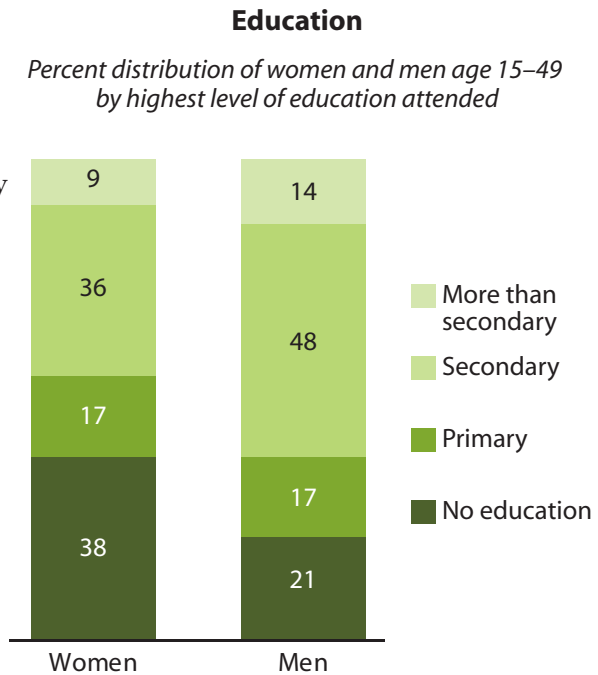
- **In Nigeria, women are disadvantaged compared to men in terms of both education and earnings, factors that greatly influence the health of women and children.** Overall, 38% of women age 15-49 have received no formal education compared to 21% of men age 15-49. Likewise, the majority of women that were employed in the 12 months before the survey earn less than their husbands.
- **Women marry much younger than men, which limits women's educational and earning potential.** Nigerian women get married at about 18 years of age, nine years earlier than Nigerian men. However, age at first marriage is higher among more educated women.
- **Men are more likely to engage in higher-risk sexual activity.** On average, Nigerian men have many more sexual partners over their lifetime than women—4.1 compared to 1.5. More than 10% of men report having two or more sexual partners in the past 12 months compared to just 1% of women.
- **Men are less likely than women to get tested for HIV.** Twenty-five percent of women have ever been tested for HIV and received their results compared with 20% of men.
- **Overall, married women have less control over their own lives than married men do.** Nearly half of married women do not participate in decisionmaking regarding their own health care, major household purchase, or visits to family or relatives. More than one-third of ever-married women report that their husband/partner insists on knowing where she is at all times.
- **Violence against women is a common practice in Nigeria.** Among Nigerian women, nearly three in ten women have ever experienced physical violence since age 15, and 7% have ever experienced sexual violence. Spousal violence is also high, with one in four ever-married women reporting that they have ever experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husband/partner. A higher proportion of women (35%) believe that wife beating is justified for any of the specified reasons compared to 25% of men.

Education

Education is fundamental to women’s empowerment because it forms the foundation for many other opportunities such as better health outcomes for women and their children. Nearly half of women (45%) and 62% of men age 15-49 have a secondary or higher level of education. However, more than one-third of Nigerian women (38%) and 21% of men have no education. The percentage of women with no education increases with age, from 28% among women age 15-19 to 54% among women age 45-49. More than half of rural women have no education compared with 16% of urban women.

Younger women and men are more likely than their older counterparts to have secondary or higher education. Six in ten women and 70% of men age 15-19 have secondary or higher education versus 24% of women and 45% of men age 45-49.

The 2013 NDHS defined literacy as being able to read all or part of a sentence. Those who had attended secondary school or higher were assumed to be literate. Men are more likely to be literate than women; 53% of Nigerian women age 15-49 are literate, compared with 75% of men. The disparity in literacy rates between younger women and men is smaller than the disparity between their older counterparts. At age 15-19, 63% of women and 80% of men are literate compared with 36% of women and 65% of men age 45-49.



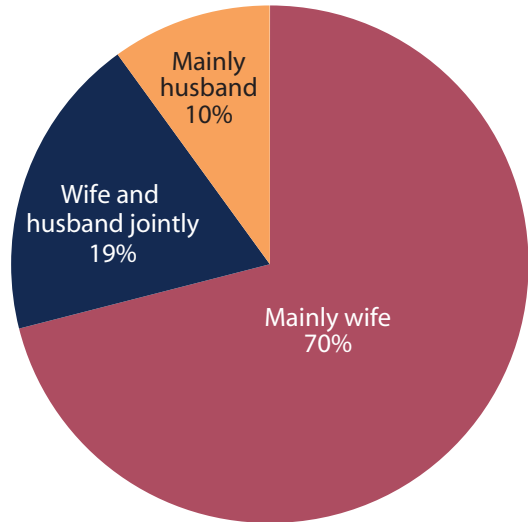
Employment and Earnings

Access to economic opportunities is not only important for women's empowerment, it also benefits their children and their households. The 2013 NDHS found that more than seven in ten currently married women age 15-49 were employed in the past year compared to almost all married men. These women and men were asked about the earnings they receive from their employment.

Among those who are employed, women are more likely to earn cash, while men are more likely than women to be paid in cash and in-kind. Seven in ten women who are employed and earning cash made independent decisions on how to spend their earnings. One in five married working women made joint decisions with their husbands on spending cash earnings while 10% report that their husbands make the decision alone.

Control over Women's Earnings

Among currently married women age 15-49 who received cash earnings, percent distribution by who decides how woman's earnings are used

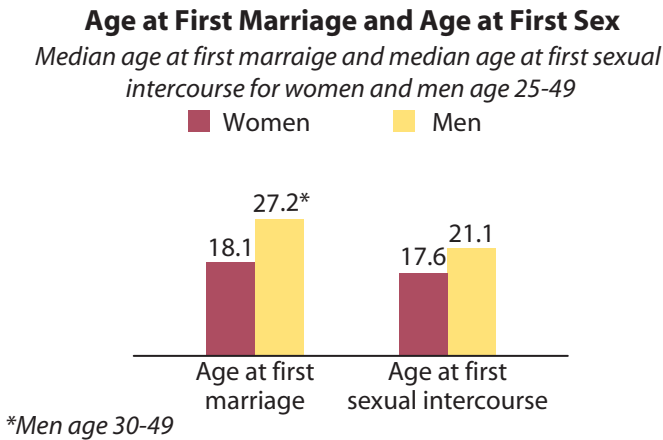


The majority of married women who receive cash payment earn less than their husbands. Only 4% of women earn more cash than their husbands. Women in urban areas are more likely than women in rural areas to earn more than their husbands (6% versus 4%, respectively).

Marriage and Sexual Activity

Nigerian women age 25-49 get married at about 18 years of age, nine years earlier than men age 30-49. Almost half of women age 25-49 were married by age 18. Age at first marriage has been increasing over time among women. The median age at first marriage among women age 20-24 is 19 versus 17.3 years among women age 45-49. Among women, age at first marriage increases with education level. Women with no education get married, on average, at age 15.5 years compared to 21.5 years for women with secondary education.

Women and men in Nigeria initiate sexual activity before marriage. On average, women age 25-49 begin to have sex at age 17.6, while men start having sex at age 21.1. One-quarter of women age 25-49 had sex by age 15 and 54% by age 18. Comparatively, only 3% of Nigerian men age 25-49 had sex by age 15 and 19% by age 18. Women with more than secondary education begin having sexual intercourse, on average, more than five years later than women with no education. Conversely, men with more than secondary education have sex nearly three years earlier than men with no education.



Ownership of Assets

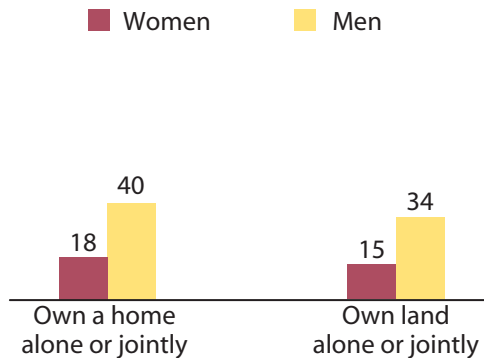
Ownership of valuable assets, such as a house or land, provides multiple avenues for empowerment. Lack of assets is associated with greater poverty and economic vulnerability. Although the Nigerian constitution gives equal property rights to women, tradition and women's low social and economic status limit their ownership of assets.

Only 18% of women own a house, either alone or jointly, and only 15% own land. Eight in ten women do not own a house (82%) or land (85%).

In comparison, men are more than twice as likely to own a home alone or jointly (40%). Men are also more than twice as likely to own land alone or jointly (34%). Six in ten Nigerian men do not own a house and nearly two-thirds do not own land.

Ownership of House and Land

Percent of women and men age 15-49 who:

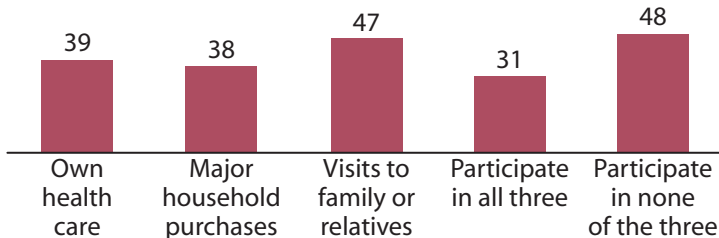


Participation in Decisionmaking

The ability of women to make decisions that affect their personal circumstances is an essential aspect of their empowerment. The 2013 NDHS asked currently married women about their participation in three types of household decisions: her own health care, making major household purchases, and visits to family or relatives. Nearly half of women have sole or joint decisionmaking power about visiting family or relatives, while only 38% participate in decisions about major household purchases. Nearly four in ten married women participate in decisions about their own health care. Half do not participate in any of the three decisions; less than one-third report that they participate in all three decisions.

Women's Participation in Decisionmaking

Percent of currently married women age 15-49 who usually making specific decisions by themselves or jointly with their husbands



Comparatively, the 2013 NDHS also asked currently married men about their participation in two types of household decisions: their own health care and making major household purchases. Most men participate in decisionmaking about their own health care (87%) as well as in making major household purchases (76%). Overall, nearly three-quarters of men participate in both decisions.

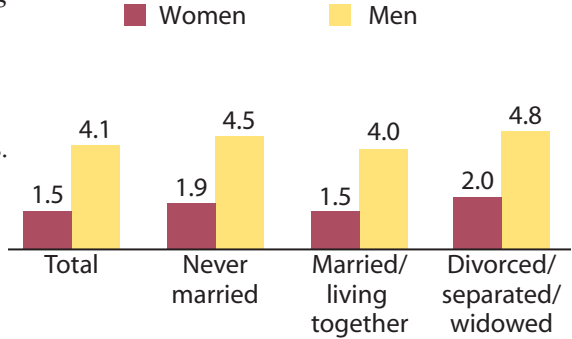
Although decisionmaking indicators for married women and men are not directly comparable (men reported on two and women on three decisions) the data nevertheless suggest that a gender gap exists with three-quarters of men participating in both decisions and 31% of women participating in all three decisions.

Higher-Risk Sex

Having multiple sexual partners increases the risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A small percentage of women (1%) and 13% of men had two or more sexual partners in the past 12 months. For women, multiple sexual partners was higher among never married and divorced, separated, or widowed women (2% each). Older men age 40-49 (23%) and married men (19%) were most likely have multiple sexual partners in the past year.

Lifetime Sexual Partners by Marital Status

Mean number of sexual partners in lifetime for women and men age 15-49



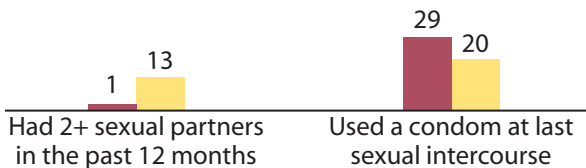
Women have an average of 1.5 lifetime sexual partners compared to 4.1 partners for men. Women and men living in South South Zone have more sexual partners than women and men living in other Zones. Divorced, separated, or widowed women and men report the highest number of sexual partners.

Multiple Sexual Partners and Condom Use

■ Women ■ Men

Percent of women and men age 15-49 who:

Among women and men age 15-49 who had 2+ sexual partners in past 12 months, percentage who:



Women and men who reported having two or more sexual partners in the past 12 months were asked about condom use during their last sexual intercourse; 29% of women and 20% of men reported using a condom at last sexual intercourse.

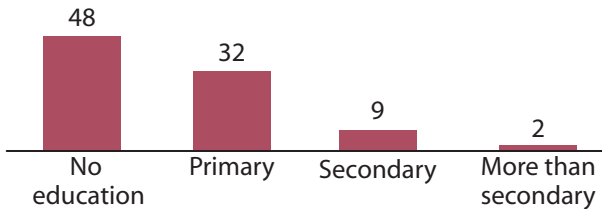
Fertility

Adolescent childbearing has many negative health, social, and demographic consequences. Women who start having children at a young age often do not complete secondary school, limiting their future employment possibilities and other life choices. Additionally, early childbearing often results in larger families and reduced economic circumstances.

Nationwide, 23% of girls age 15-19 have either already had a live birth or are pregnant with their first child. Women in this age group with secondary or higher education are least likely to have begun childbearing.

Teenage Motherhood by Education Level

Percent of young women age 15-19 who are pregnant or already mothers



Currently married women's ideal family size is about seven children. Men want two more children than women. More women than men want to limit childbearing. Nearly two in ten currently married women say that want no more children versus 12% of currently married men.

Despite this desire to limit childbearing, just 15% of currently married women use any method of contraception. Moreover, 16% of married women have an unmet need for family planning, which means either they do not want any more children or want to wait at least two years for their next birth, but they are not currently using contraception.

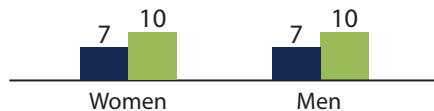
HIV Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviours

Men are more knowledgeable about preventing HIV than women. More than half of women (54%) and 70% of men know that using condoms and limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner can reduce the risk of contracting HIV. More than one-quarter of women (26%) and 37% of men have comprehensive knowledge of HIV, which means knowing both HIV prevention methods mentioned above, knowing that a healthy looking person can have HIV, and rejecting the two most common local misconceptions about HIV/AIDS.

HIV testing is more common among women than men; 25% of women have ever been tested for HIV and received their results, compared with 20% of men. One in ten women and men have been tested for HIV and received their results in the past 12 months. This is a slight increase from 7% for both women and men in the 2008 NDHS.

Trends in HIV Testing
*Percent of women and men age 15-49
who were tested for HIV and received results
in the 12 months before the survey*

■ 2008 NDHS ■ 2013 NDHS



HIV screening is a tool in the prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child. More than one-third of women who gave birth during the two years before the survey received HIV counselling during antenatal care (ANC). Twenty-three percent of women were tested and counselled for HIV during ANC and received their results.

Negotiating Sex with Husbands

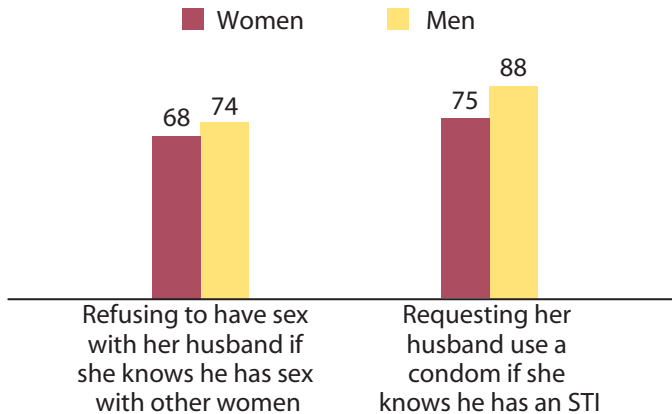
A woman's ability to negotiate when and with whom she has sex is vital for her sexual and reproductive health. Every person has a right to refuse sex or request the use of a condom at any time and with any partner, including a spouse. Acceptance of women's right to refuse sex or request use of a condom is an indicator of gender equality.

More than two-thirds of women and three-quarters of men in Nigeria believe that a woman is justified in refusing to have sexual intercourse with her husband if she knows that he has sexual intercourse with other women.

Three-quarters of women and 88% of men believe that a woman is justified in asking their husband to use a condom if they know that he has an STI. This attitude is highest among women and men with secondary or higher education and increases with household wealth.

Attitudes toward Negotiating Sex with Husbands

Percent of women and men age 15-49 who believe that a wife is justified in:

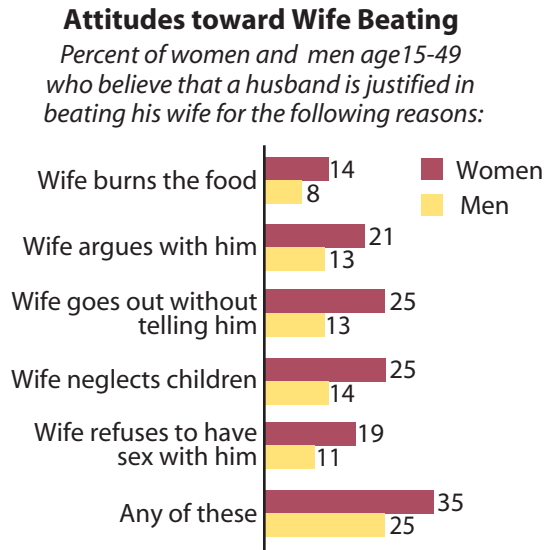


Attitudes toward Wife Beating

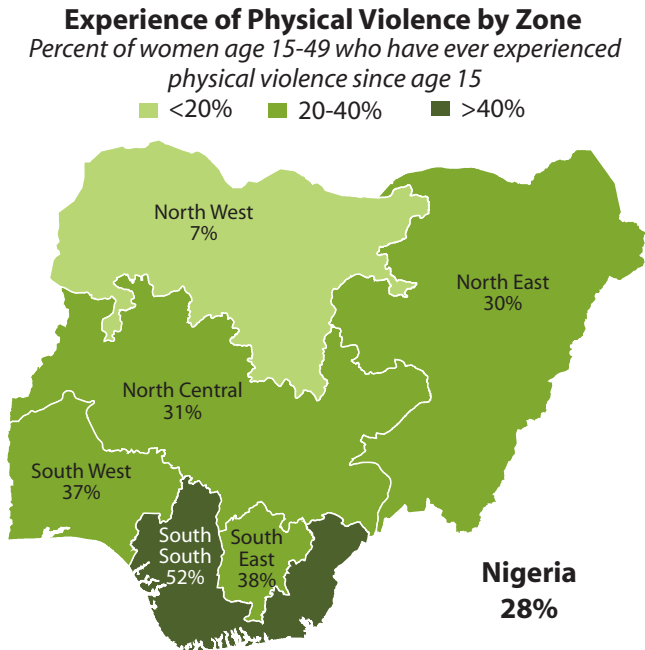
Attitudes toward wife beating provide insight into women's and men's views on women's status. Whether or not wife beating is considered acceptable is an indicator of gender equality.

The 2013 NDHS asked female and male respondents if they think a husband is justified in beating his wife under a series of circumstances: wife burns the food, wife argues with him, wife goes out without telling him, wife neglects the children, and wife refuses to have sex with him.

Overall, men are less likely than women to agree that wife beating is justified for one specified reason. More than one-third of women (35%) and one-quarter of men agree that a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one of these reasons: if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses to have sex with him. Women are most likely to agree that wife beating is justified if a wife goes out without telling her husband (25%) and neglects the children (25%). Men are more likely to agree that wife beating is justified if the wife neglects the children (14%).



Experience of Physical Violence



In Nigeria, domestic violence cuts across all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Nearly three in ten Nigerian women have ever experienced physical violence since age 15, while 11% experienced any physical violence in the past 12 months. In this context, physical violence means any type of physical violence, whether it is experienced at home or in another location, such as the workplace or school.

Women's experience of physical violence since age 15 is most common in South South Zone (52%) and lowest in North West Zone (7%). The same pattern is seen for experiences of physical violence in the past 12 months; 19% in South South Zone compared to 3% in North West Zone.

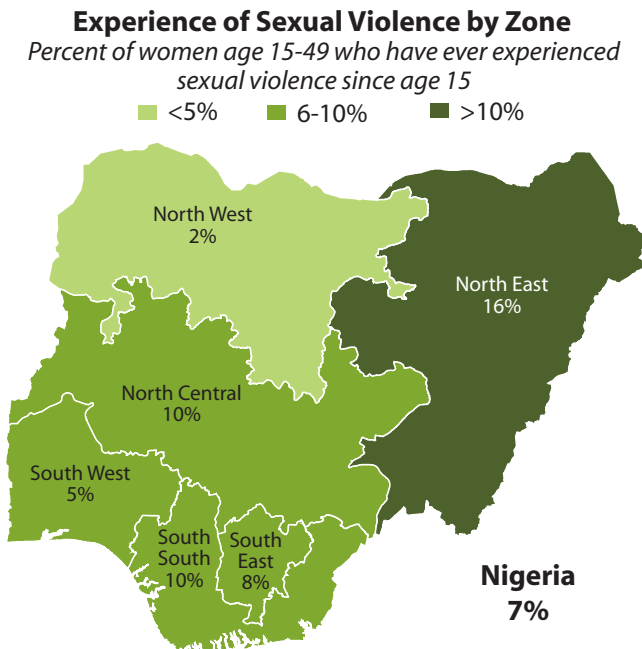
Divorced, separated, or widowed women are most likely to have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 and to have experienced physical violence in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Experience of Sexual Violence

Seven percent of Nigerian women age 15-49 have ever experienced sexual violence of which 3% have experienced sexual violence in the past 12 months. Women who are divorced, separated, or widowed are more likely to have ever experienced sexual violence (15%) than women who have never been married (8%) or are currently married (7%). Experience of sexual violence varies by zone, from 16% in North East Zone to 2% in North West Zone.

Women who are employed but not paid in cash are most likely to have experienced sexual violence (17%), while unemployed women are least likely (6%). Women with no education are less likely to have experienced sexual violence (5%) than women who have been to school (8-10%). There is no clear pattern between experience of sexual violence and household wealth.

In the majority of cases, sexual violence is perpetrated by individuals with close personal relations to the woman, either their current husband or partner, former husband or partner, or current or former boyfriend. Women who have never been married report that the main perpetrators of sexual violence are strangers.



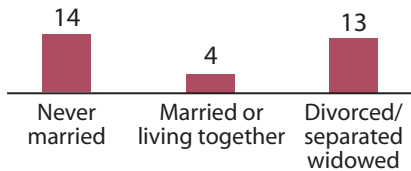
Violence during Pregnancy

Violence during pregnancy can have serious effects on women's physical and mental health as well as serious consequences for her unborn child. The 2013 NDHS asked women who have ever been pregnant if they had ever experienced physical violence during any of their pregnancies. Overall, 5% of women said that they had been subjected to physical violence while pregnant.

Violence during pregnancy is highest among women age 15-24 and 30-39 (both 6%) and lowest among women age 40-49 (4%). Women who have never been married are more likely than other women to have experienced violence during pregnancy (14%). Women with no education (3%) are less likely to experience violence during pregnancy than women with any education (4-8%). Additionally, women in the poorest households are less likely than other women to experience violence during pregnancy.

Physical Violence during Pregnancy by Marital Status

Percent of women age 15-49 who experienced violence during pregnancy



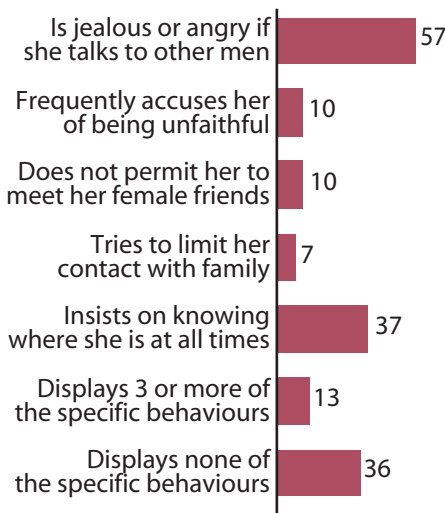
Degree of Marital Control

Attempts by husbands/partners to closely control and monitor their wives' behaviours have been found to be important early warning signs of violence in a relationship. The 2013 NDHS asked ever-married women if their husband or partner ever demonstrates specific types of controlling behaviours. Controlling behaviours most often manifest themselves in forms of extreme possessiveness, jealousy, and attempts to isolate the woman from her family and friends.

More than half of ever-married women report that their husband/partner is jealous or angry if they talk to other men. More than one-third of ever-married women report that their husband/partner insists on knowing where she is at all times. Only 13% of ever-married women say that their husband/partner displays three or more of the specific behaviours. More than one-third of ever-married women report that their husband/partner displays none of the specific behaviours.

Degree of Marital Control Exercised by Husbands

Percent of ever-married women age 15-49 whose husband/partner demonstrates specific types of controlling behaviours

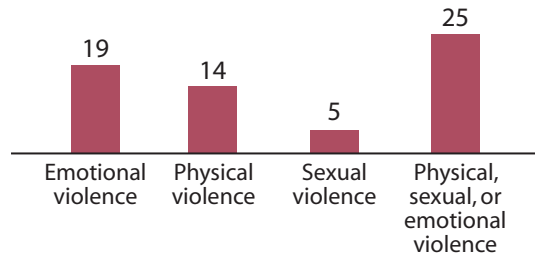


Spousal Violence

Spousal violence is physical, sexual, or emotional abuse committed by a husband or intimate partner. One in four ever-married women report that they have ever experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husband/partner. The most common form of spousal violence is emotional violence.

Spousal Violence

Percent of ever-married women age 15-49 who have ever experienced various forms of violence committed by their husband/partner



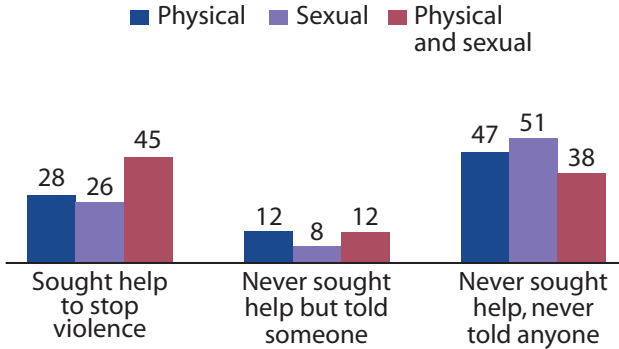
Spousal violence is most common in South South Zone, where 28% of ever-married women report having experienced physical or sexual violence by their husband/partner. Women who are divorced, separated, or widowed are twice as likely to have experienced physical or sexual spousal violence than women who are married or living together (32% versus 15%, respectively). Women who report that their father beat their mother are three times as likely to have experienced physical or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner (40%) than women who report that their father did not beat their mother (13%). Women whose husbands/partners gets drunk very often have the highest level of spousal physical or sexual violence (57%) compared to women whose husbands/partners do not drink (11%).

Among ever-married women who report ever experiencing spousal violence, 11% experienced violence in the past 12 months. Fifteen percent of divorced, separated, or widowed women experienced recent spousal violence compared to 11% of married women. One-third of ever-married women who experienced recent spousal physical violence report experiencing physical injuries. The most commonly cited injuries are cuts, bruises, or aches (29%).

Help Seeking

Help Seeking to Stop Violence by Type of Violence

Percent of women age 15-49 who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by their help-seeking behaviour



Women who seek help after being abused are trying to regain control of their lives; as such, help seeking is an important step towards and an indicator of empowerment.

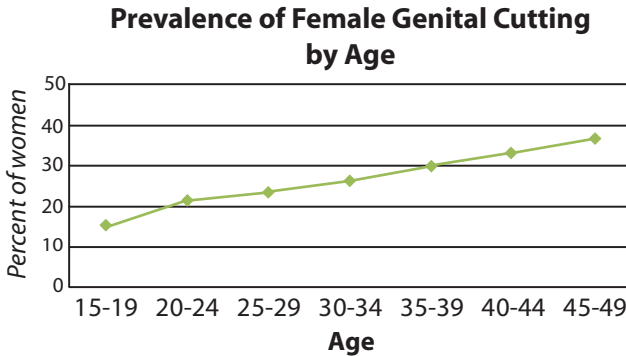
Most Nigerian women who experience physical or sexual violence do not seek help from anyone. Less than one-third of women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence have sought help to stop violence. Nearly half of Nigerian women (45%) who experienced violence never sought help or never told anyone about the violence.

More than 70% of women who sought help did so from their own family. Nearly 30% of women sought help from their husband/partner's family. Notably, few women sought help from the police (2%).

Female Genital Cutting

In many Nigerian societies, girls face female genital cutting (FGC). FGC involves cutting or removing the external female genitalia for non-therapeutic reasons. The practice contributes to many negative health outcomes.

Two-thirds of women and 62% of men have heard of FGC. Overall, one-quarter of Nigerian women age 15-49 are circumcised. Older women age 45-49 are more than twice as likely to be circumcised than younger women age 15-49 (36% and 15%, respectively). FGC is most common in South East and South West Zones, where nearly half of women are circumcised. FGC is most commonly performed by a traditional circumciser (72%) followed by a nurse/midwife (10%).



The 2013 NDHS asked mothers on whether their daughters had been circumcised. Seventeen percent of girls age 0-14 are cut. Less than 20% of girls are circumcised before their first birthday. FGC among girls is most common in North West Zone (27%) and among girls whose mothers are also circumcised (47%). FGC among girls is most commonly performed by a traditional circumciser (84%).

Fifteen percent of women and nearly one-quarter of men age 15-49 believe that their religion requires FGC. Six in ten women and men believe that the practice should be stopped.

