

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

The 2004 survey represents the first time the Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS) collected information on domestic violence. The inclusion of the domestic violence module in the 2004 MDHS is in recognition of the presence of gender-based violence as an economic, human right, and health issue in Malawi. Gender-based violence is defined as any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, where occurring in public or private life (United Nations, 1993 and 1995). Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or economic abuse committed by a person against a spouse, child, and any other person who is a member of the household, dependent or parent of a child of that household. Domestic violence has negative health consequences on the victims and more especially on the reproductive health of women. It contributes to the maternal mortality rates as it results in health-related problems like gynaecological problems.

In traditional Malawian culture, wife battering is regarded as normal. In Malawi, domestic violence occurs across all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. This type of violence has been treated as a private issue until recently when the government and its stakeholders, in response to the international and regional instruments on women's rights, started to implement various initiatives aimed at creating awareness of the dangers of gender-based violence and changing the social order in which a woman is assumed to be of lesser status and her husband leads in all family aspects.

Having ratified a number of international and regional documents on women's rights and gender equality, Malawi has developed a National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence (2000-2006). Furthermore, a draft Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill is in place awaiting Cabinet approval. This bill emphasises Section 24 in the 1994 Constitution of Malawi which guarantees equality between women and men as well as women's right to property, and invalidates any law that discriminates against women, in particular, practices such as sexual abuse, harassment and violence.

The collection of data on domestic violence is challenging because women may not disclose issues of domestic violence as it is regarded as bringing shame to their family. The society discourages women from talking about their experiences of domestic violence to maintain respect from the community. In a household survey such as the 2004 MDHS, the collection of sensitive information such as violence in the house, requires the establishment of rapport between the interviewer and the respondent. This is the main reason this module is placed toward the end of the woman's questionnaire. If there is more than one eligible for individual interview woman in a household, the interviewer selected one woman randomly to be interviewed with the domestic violence module using the Kish-grid technique.

Informed consent of the respondents was obtained for the survey at the onset of individual interview. A statement was read to the 2004 MDHS respondents informing them of the survey

objectives and that they were going to be asked questions that may be personal in nature. The statement highlights the importance of the information to be obtained in understanding the situation of women in Malawi. To prepare the 2004 MDHS field staff in collecting data on domestic violence, they received a special presentation on gender-based violence, focusing on domestic violence. Interviewers were instructed that interviews can only proceed when maximum privacy had been ensured. If privacy was not assured, the domestic violence module was not to be asked.

15.2 PHYSICAL VIOLENCE SINCE AGE 15

Table 15.1 shows the percent distribution of all women who report experiencing physical violence since age 15 and in the 12 months prior to the survey. In the survey, respondents to the domestic violence module have multiple opportunities to disclose their experiences. Women are considered as having experienced violence if they report ever experiencing one or more types of violence. All women who experienced any form of violence were also asked how often this happened in the 12-month period before the survey. Women who reported violence during pregnancy only were not asked the frequency of violence over the past 12 months.

The data show that one in three women (28 percent) experienced physical violence since age 15 and 15 percent experienced it in the 12 months preceding the survey. Women age 20-39 are more likely to have experienced violence since they were 15 than younger and older women (28-30 percent compared with 26 percent or less).

The 2004 MDHS data show that a woman's marital status is associated with her experience of domestic violence; while 42 of women who are divorced or separated from their spouse report having experienced physical violence since the age of 15, the proportions for currently married and widowed women are 28 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Physical violence is also experienced by a high proportion of women who have never been married (23 percent).

There are no significant differentials in the experience of physical violence since age 15 by residence. However, rural women are more likely than urban women to have experienced physical violence in the 12 months prior to the survey (15 percent compared with 11 percent).

The social and economic background of a woman has a bearing on her chances of experiencing physical violence. This experience does not vary consistently with their education; women with no education are less likely than women with some primary education to experience violence. Among educated women, education is negatively associated with the likelihood of experiencing violence. Women who have at least some secondary education are slightly less likely to have experienced domestic physical violence than less educated women. Small variations are found in the experience of physical violence by women's employment.

Women's experience with physical violence since age 15 does not vary much by wealth index. However, women's recent experience in violence is negatively associated with their wealth status; women in the lowest wealth quintile are slightly more likely to experience physical violence than the women in higher wealth categories.

Table 15.1 Experience of physical violence since age 15			
Percentage of women who have ever experienced violence since age 15 and percentage who experienced violence during the 12 months preceding the survey, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004			
Background characteristic	Percent who have experienced physical violence since the age of 15		Number of women
	Ever	In past 12 months ¹	
Age			
15-19	25.7	15.1	1,970
20-29	30.3	16.0	4,192
30-39	28.3	14.5	2,130
40-49	24.4	9.5	1,409
Marital status			
Currently married	28.3	15.9	6,856
Divorced/separated	42.2	16.5	832
Widowed	14.5	2.1	365
Never married	23.1	10.8	1,647
Residence			
Urban	28.0	10.6	1,740
Rural	28.1	15.4	7,961
Region			
Northern	28.1	14.5	9,701
Central	29.6	15.2	3,919
Southern	27.6	14.0	4,500
Education			
No education	24.6	12.0	2,266
Primary 1-4	31.5	17.9	2,513
Primary 5-8	28.4	15.2	3,386
Secondary+	26.9	11.4	1,534
Employment status			
Employed for cash	30.1	16.4	1,723
Employed, but not for cash	29.6	15.0	3,635
Not employed	26.0	13.4	4,341
Wealth quintile			
Lowest	29.4	15.7	1,705
Second	29.3	17.0	1,880
Middle	27.4	14.6	1,966
Fourth	27.7	14.3	1,943
Highest	26.9	11.7	2,206
Total	28.1	14.5	9,701

¹Excludes women who have been beaten only during pregnancy

15.3 PERPETRATORS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Table 15.2 shows the percent distribution of women reporting any physical violence by the person or persons who subject them to physical violence according to their marital status. Overall, the data show that husbands are the main perpetrators of violence. Among currently married women who have experienced physical violence, 77 percent reported either a current or previous husband as

being the perpetrator. The 2004 MDHS also indicates that 85 percent of divorced and separated women who ever reported experiencing physical violence say a husband was involved.

Table 15.2 Perpetrators of physical violence

Percent distribution of women reporting any physical violence by perpetrator of the violence, according to current marital status, Malawi 2004

Current marital status	Perpetrator				Total	Number
	Current husband ¹	Last/previous husband only	Any husband and other persons	Persons other than husband		
Currently married	60.7	2.5	14.2	22.5	100.0	1,940
Divorced/separated	na	71.3	13.3	15.3	100.0	351
Widowed	na	18.7	7.0	74.3	100.0	53
Never married	na	na	na	100.0	100.0	380
Total	43.2	11.4	12.0	33.4	100.0	2,724

¹ Includes women who were also beaten by a previous husband
na = Not applicable

15.4 VIOLENCE DURING PREGNANCY

Women experience violence in all stages of their life cycle. In the 2004 MDHS, women who had a pregnancy (whether it resulted in a live birth or not) and those who are currently pregnant at the time of the survey were asked whether they experienced any type of physical violence during any of their pregnancies and who administered that violence. Table 15.3 shows the findings. The data show that 5 percent of women experienced violence when they were pregnant.

Violence during pregnancy takes place at all ages of the woman. There are small variations in the prevalence by age. The prevalence of physical violence during pregnancy varies by the woman's marital status. Divorced or separated women are the most likely to report they experienced physical violence during pregnancy, suggesting that the violence may have contributed to the marriage breakdown (11 percent compared with 5 percent or less for currently married women, widowed women, and never married women).

Pregnant women in the rural areas are at a slightly higher risk of facing physical violence than their counterparts in the urban areas (6 percent compared with 4 percent). There is little regional variation in the experience of violence during pregnancy. Women's experience with domestic violence also does not vary much according to their employment status.

Most women who experience physical violence during pregnancy do so at the hands of a husband (70 percent). Almost one in three women who experienced violence during pregnancy did so at the hand of someone other than a husband (data not shown).

Table 15.3 Violence during pregnancy		
Percentage of ever-pregnant women who were physically violated during pregnancy, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004		
Background characteristic	Percent experiencing violence during pregnancy	Number of women ever pregnant
Age		
15-19	3.6	689
20-29	5.7	3,839
30-39	5.4	2,091
40-49	4.6	1,389
Marital status		
Currently married	4.7	6,642
Divorced/separated	10.7	798
Widowed	3.5	363
Never married	4.0	205
Residence		
Urban	3.8	1,286
Rural	5.5	6,722
Region		
Northern	5.5	1,039
Central	5.7	3,110
Southern	4.9	3,859
Employment status		
Employed for cash	6.0	1,522
Employed not for cash	5.8	3,249
Not employed	4.4	3,235
Total	5.3	8,008

15.5 MARITAL CONTROL BY HUSBAND

Marital violence refers to violence perpetuated by partners in a marital union. A series of questions were included in the 2004 MDHS to elicit the degree of marital control exercised by the spouse or partner over the respondent. Attempts by male spouses/partners to closely control and monitor their female counterparts have been found to be among the most important early warning signs, as well as correlates of violence in a relationship. Controlling behaviours most often manifest themselves in terms of extreme possessiveness, jealousy, and attempts to isolate the woman from her family and friends. Since the accumulation of such behaviours is more significant than the display of any single behaviour, the proportion of women whose husbands display at least three of the specified behaviours is highlighted.

In order to determine the degree of marital control by husbands on their wives, women were asked whether they experienced any of a list of specific acts of controlling behaviours by their husbands, such as the husband is jealous or gets angry if she talks to other men, accuses her of being unfaithful, does not permit meetings with girl friends, tries to limit contact with family, insists on knowing where she is at all times, and does not trust her with any money. Table 15.4 shows the

percentage of ever-married women whose husbands or partners display each of the listed behaviours by the background characteristics of the respondent.

Table 15.4 Degree of marital control by husband

Percentage of ever-married women by whether the current/last husband demonstrates(d) different types of controlling behaviour, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Percentage of women whose husband:								Number of women
	Is jealous/ angry if she talks to other men	Frequently accuses her of being unfaithful	Does not permit meetings with girl friends	Tries to limit contact with family	Insists on knowing where she is at all times	Doesn't trust her with any money	Does at least 3 of these acts	Does none of these acts	
Age									
15-19	46.1	16.5	19.4	19.3	60.2	19.3	29.9	20.0	708
20-29	50.5	17.1	19.6	21.2	59.3	19.0	30.5	20.7	3,833
30-39	53.0	17.9	19.5	19.6	55.9	18.6	31.3	18.0	2,110
40-49	45.8	16.9	16.6	16.8	52.1	14.5	26.7	21.8	1,402
Marital status									
Married	50.8	16.6	19.1	19.8	59.4	18.5	29.7	21.7	6,856
Married once	49.6	16.1	18.7	19.6	58.4	17.8	28.7	22.4	5,403
Married more than once	55.1	18.4	20.6	20.7	63.0	21.2	33.2	19.2	1,453
Previously married	45.2	20.9	18.5	20.1	44.8	15.9	32.0	10.8	1,197
Number of living children									
0	49.2	17.9	21.9	23.2	61.2	19.3	32.9	18.6	723
1-2	49.1	16.3	18.8	20.2	57.9	18.1	29.6	20.3	3,228
3-4	52.1	19.0	19.5	19.7	57.5	18.9	30.6	19.0	2,262
5 or more	49.1	16.5	17.7	18.0	54.2	16.8	28.9	21.7	1,840
Education									
No education	49.5	19.3	20.3	21.0	57.3	18.9	32.4	20.0	2,217
Primary 1-4	49.6	19.2	19.6	19.8	58.9	18.8	30.6	18.5	2,216
Primary 5-8	50.9	16.0	18.7	19.1	56.0	18.3	29.5	20.7	2,695
Secondary+	48.8	11.1	15.6	19.3	56.7	13.9	24.6	22.6	925
Employment status									
Employed									
For cash	47.7	18.0	18.8	18.4	54.2	17.2	28.9	20.4	1,520
Not for cash	50.7	17.2	19.4	20.4	61.6	16.8	30.0	17.2	3,300
Not employed	50.2	16.9	18.7	20.0	54.2	19.9	30.5	23.0	3,232
Husband's education									
No education	52.6	23.2	22.2	23.8	60.3	21.6	35.8	18.1	1,199
Primary 1-4	50.3	19.3	18.4	19.0	60.0	18.8	31.4	20.4	1,493
Primary 5-8	49.8	16.4	19.2	19.3	56.7	18.2	29.2	19.6	3,294
Secondary+	48.0	13.3	17.0	18.9	54.5	14.9	26.3	22.3	1,951

Continued...

Table 15.4 Degree of marital control by husband (continued)

Percentage of ever-married women by whether the current/last husband demonstrates(d) different types of controlling behaviour, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Percentage of women whose husband:								Number of women
	Is jealous/angry if she talks to other men	Frequently accuses her of being unfaithful	Does not permit meetings with girl friends	Tries to limit contact with family	Insists on knowing where she is at all times	Doesn't trust her with money	Does at least 3 of these acts	Does none of these acts	
Difference in age between husband and wife									
Wife 3+ years older than husband	54.7	14.6	13.9	14.6	56.0	11.3	23.9	21.6	104
Same age or 1-2 years different	47.5	15.7	20.9	20.2	58.3	19.1	29.7	22.6	1,299
Wife 3-4 years younger	51.3	14.6	18.8	19.9	59.1	17.0	28.2	21.2	1,700
Wife 5-9 years younger	51.0	17.5	18.3	18.8	59.4	18.3	29.1	22.0	2,489
Wife 10+ years younger	52.8	18.4	19.7	21.3	61.1	20.7	32.7	20.6	1,214
Formerly married	45.2	20.9	18.5	20.1	44.8	15.9	32.0	10.8	1,197
Wealth quintile									
Lowest	52.1	21.9	20.6	20.6	61.2	21.3	34.7	15.0	1,473
Second	51.5	19.8	21.1	22.8	59.1	19.7	32.8	18.5	1,698
Middle	47.4	18.0	19.8	20.3	54.8	19.4	30.1	22.1	1,706
Fourth	49.0	15.1	17.2	17.1	57.8	16.6	28.2	21.2	1,605
Highest	49.9	11.5	16.3	18.3	53.6	13.6	24.4	23.4	1,572
Total	49.9	17.2	19.0	19.9	57.2	18.1	30.0	20.1	8,054

Note: Total includes some women for whom husband's education and age difference is missing.

The 2004 MDHS results show that insistence on knowing where they are at all times and being jealous or angry if they talk to other men are the main controlling behaviours that women experience from their husbands (57 percent and 50 percent, respectively). Just under 20 percent of ever-married women say that their husbands try to limit their contact with their families (20 percent), do not permit them to meet with their female friends (19 percent), do not trust them with any money (18 percent), or frequently accuse them of being unfaithful (17 percent).

Overall, there are few significant differences in the experience of marital control by the woman's other background characteristics; domestic violence cuts across socioeconomic status of women. Women experience domestic violence irrespective of their education levels, employment status, economic status, number of children and their husbands' educational levels. Women age 20-39 are more likely than women in other age groups to face their husband's jealousy or anger if they talk to other men (51-53 percent compared with 46 percent). Women in younger age groups are more likely than older women to report that their husbands insist on knowing where they are at all times.

Considering the summary measures, 30 percent of women indicate that they experience their husbands' controlling behaviours through three of the listed behaviours and 20 percent of women indicate that their husbands do not exercise marital control of any kind. The controlling behaviours lessen somewhat as the woman's education and the wealth status increases. Husbands with secondary

or higher education and those in the highest wealth quintile are the least likely to show control over their wives.

15.6 FORMS OF MARITAL VIOLENCE

Table 15.5 shows the percentage of ever-married women by their experience of emotional, physical or sexual spousal violence by selected background characteristics. It should be noted that different types of violence are not mutually exclusive and women may report multiple forms of violence. Research suggests that physical violence in intimate relationships is often accompanied by psychological abuse and in one-third to over one half of cases, by sexual abuse (Krug et al., 2002).

Table 15.5 Marital violence

Percentage of ever-married women who have ever suffered emotional, physical or sexual violence at the hands of their current/last husbands, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Type of violence								Number of women
	Emotional violence	Physical violence			Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence ¹	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence ¹	Emotional, physical, and sexual violence ¹	
		Less severe ¹	Severe ¹	Total ²					
Age									
15-19	10.3	14.6	2.3	16.9	14.0	25.0	27.2	3.1	708
20-29	12.3	18.6	2.8	21.4	13.6	28.2	31.5	3.4	3,833
30-39	14.6	16.5	3.5	20.0	14.6	26.4	30.5	4.9	2,110
40-49	12.1	15.8	2.0	17.8	10.7	23.2	27.2	2.6	1,402
Marital status									
Married	12.0	17.1	2.4	19.5	13.2	26.3	29.7	3.4	6,856
Married once	11.6	17.5	2.2	19.7	13.1	26.7	29.9	3.2	5,403
Married more than once	13.3	15.6	3.1	18.7	13.8	25.0	29.1	4.0	1,453
Formerly married	16.7	18.0	5.2	23.2	14.1	27.9	32.1	5.1	1,197
Residence									
Urban	10.8	17.9	2.3	20.2	10.3	25.7	29.1	2.3	1,278
Rural	13.0	17.1	2.9	20.0	13.9	26.7	30.3	3.9	6,776
Region									
Northern	12.7	17.2	2.8	20.0	13.4	26.6	30.1	3.6	8,054
Central	16.1	18.2	3.5	21.7	17.6	31.1	36.0	4.7	3,136
Southern	10.3	16.8	2.4	19.1	9.0	22.6	25.5	2.8	3,895
Number of living children									
0	11.7	13.4	2.7	16.1	15.5	24.7	28.7	3.4	723
1-2	11.8	17.1	2.3	19.4	12.1	25.7	29.0	3.1	3,228
3-4	14.0	18.3	3.5	21.8	14.8	28.9	32.7	3.9	2,262
5 +	13.0	17.5	2.9	20.4	12.9	26.1	29.4	4.3	1,840
Education									
No education	11.3	16.0	2.5	18.5	10.5	23.8	27.2	2.5	2,217
Primary 1-4	14.6	19.1	4.1	23.2	14.8	29.1	32.9	5.0	2,216
Primary 5-8	12.6	17.8	2.3	20.1	15.2	28.3	31.6	3.6	2,695
Secondary+	11.7	14.0	2.1	16.1	11.1	22.1	25.9	3.2	925
Employment status									
Employed for cash	14.8	18.6	3.1	21.7	16.2	29.6	33.6	5.4	1,520
Employed, but not for cash	12.8	17.9	3.4	21.4	13.0	27.3	30.4	3.5	3,300
Not employed	11.6	15.8	2.0	17.9	12.4	24.5	28.2	3.0	3,232
Total	12.7	17.2	2.8	20.0	13.4	26.6	30.1	3.6	8,054

Note: Total includes two women with missing information on employment
¹ Less severe violence includes pushing, shaking, slapping, punching and kicking, while severe violence includes trying to strangle or burn, threats with a weapon, and attacks with a weapon.
² Excludes women who experienced physical violence only during pregnancy due to lack of information on degree of severity.

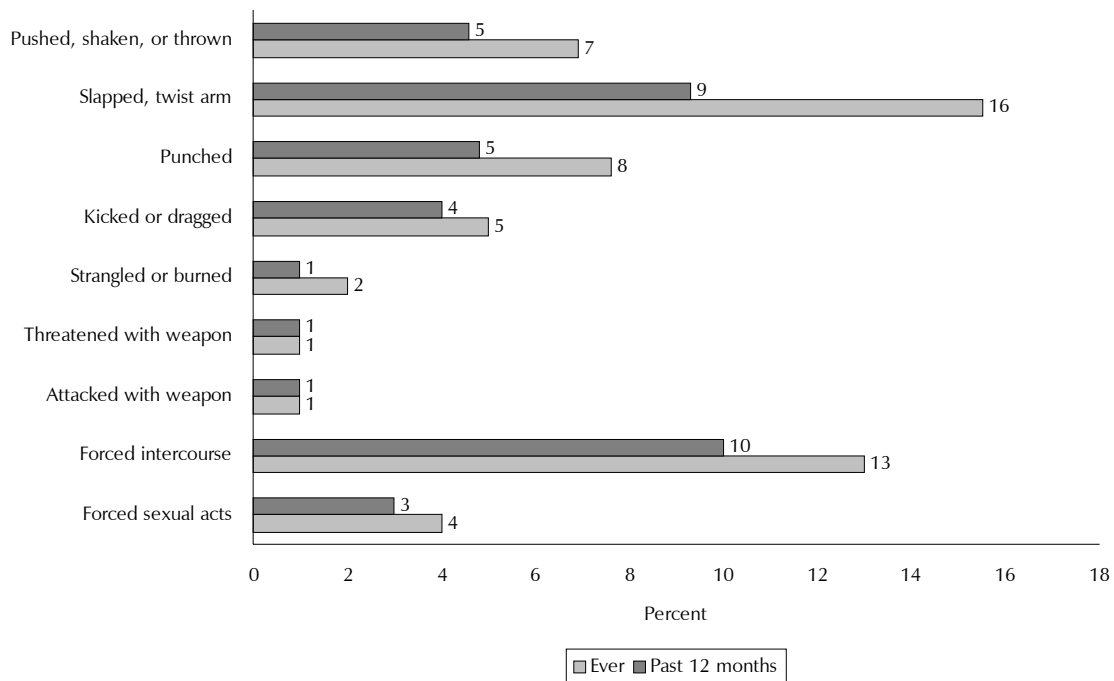
The data show that 13 percent of ever-married women reported to having ever experienced emotional violence, 20 percent experienced physical violence, and 13 percent experienced sexual

violence. About one-third of ever-married women (30 percent) experience at least one of the three forms of violence, while 4 percent experience all three forms of violence. Among women who have experienced physical violence, most report forms of violence considered “less severe.”

Women age 20-39, women who are previously married, women with 3-4 living children, women who have incomplete primary education, and women who are employed for cash are more likely than other women to report emotional, physical, or sexual violence by their husbands. Nonetheless, the survey results show that all women irrespective of age, marital status, number of children, educational levels and employment status are at risk of all forms of violence by their husbands.

Figure 15.1 shows the proportion of ever-married women (those currently married, divorced or separated) who have ever experienced different forms of violence by their current or last husbands and experienced violence during the 12 months preceding the survey.

Figure 15.1 Percentage of Ever-married Women Who have Experienced Violence by Their Current or Last Husband (ever, and in past 12 months)



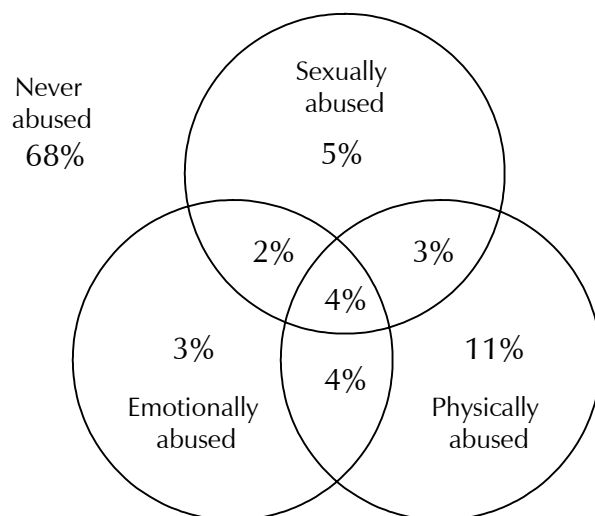
MDHS 2004

The most common forms of spousal violence are slapping and arm twisting (16 percent) and forced intercourse or marital rape (13 percent). Other forms of violence frequently reported include punching (8 percent), pushing, shaking or having something thrown (7 percent), being kicked or dragged (5 percent), and being forced into sexual acts (4 percent).

Marital rape appears to be common, with 10 percent of women reporting forced sexual intercourse in the 12 months preceding the survey. It should be noted that due to cultural norms in Malawi, which discourage the discussion of sexual or conjugal issues, marital violence in the survey may have been underreported.

Figure 15.2 summarises the information on various types of marital violence. Sixty-eight percent of women have never experienced marital violence. Of those who did, one in five women experienced physical abuse and 4 percent are abused sexually, emotionally, and physically.

Figure 15.2 Percentage of Women Who Ever Experienced Sexual, Physical, and/or Emotional Violence



Note: Includes non-marital violence

MDHS 2004

15.7 FREQUENCY OF SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

The frequency of spousal violence is an indicator of the prevalence of domestic violence. Table 15.6 shows the percent distribution of ever-married women reporting any kind of physical or sexual spousal violence by how often it occurred in the 12 months prior to the survey according to their background characteristics. The 2004 MDHS results show that only 30 percent of women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by their husband did not experience such violence in the past 12 months, 39 percent of women experienced physical or sexual violence once or twice, 21 percent experienced the same forms of violence three to five times, and 10 percent experienced the violence more than five times in the last 12 months.

The data also show that marital violence varies by the woman's background characteristics. Frequency of violence decreases with age; while 10 percent of ever-abused women age 15-19 did not experience violence from their spouse in the last 12 months, almost half (45 percent) of women 40-49 did not experience spousal violence during this time. Formerly married women are the least likely while currently married women are the most likely to report physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months.

The frequency of physical or sexual violence decreases with increasing number of children. Ever-abused women who are not employed are the most likely to have experienced physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months.

One would expect that women with no education would be more likely to experience physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months than educated women. The survey results, however, show that among women who experienced violence by their current or last husband, the frequency of violence does not vary much by the woman's education.

Table 15.6 Frequency of spousal violence

Percent distribution of ever-married women reporting physical or sexual violence by current or last husband by frequency of any form of such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, according to selected background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Frequency of any type of physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months ¹					Total	Number of women
	0	1-2	3-5	5 +	Don't know		
Woman's age							
15-19	10.1	56.2	20.1	13.3	0.3	100.0	177
20-29	25.7	41.1	22.4	10.9	0.0	100.0	1,082
30-39	35.5	30.6	23.2	10.3	0.5	100.0	556
40-49	44.9	36.2	11.7	6.7	0.5	100.0	325
Marital status							
Married once	26.9	42.2	21.1	9.8	0.1	100.0	1,442
Married more than once	20.1	42.4	23.0	13.5	1.0	100.0	364
Formerly married	53.4	20.6	16.9	9.0	0.0	100.0	334
Number of living children							
0	42.0	32.8	16.3	8.9	0.0	100.0	179
1-2	27.7	39.9	21.6	10.5	0.3	100.0	828
3-4	35.0	35.8	19.0	9.8	0.4	100.0	653
5 +	38.6	36.3	17.1	7.6	0.4	100.0	479
Education							
No education	34.2	39.0	16.8	9.7	0.3	100.0	527
Primary 1-4	24.6	41.4	22.8	11.3	0.0	100.0	646
Primary 5-8	30.8	36.7	22.1	9.9	0.4	100.0	763
Secondary+	32.0	38.4	19.6	10.0	0.0	100.0	204
Employment status							
Employed for cash	31.8	33.9	19.9	14.2	0.2	100.0	449
Employed not for cash	33.6	37.5	20.1	8.5	0.2	100.0	900
Not employed	24.5	43.1	22.0	10.0	0.3	100.0	791
Total	29.9	38.8	20.8	10.3	0.2	100.0	2,140

¹ Excludes women who experienced physical violence during pregnancy only.

15.8 ONSET OF SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

To study the timing of the onset of marital violence, the 2004 MDHS asked ever-married women who experienced physical or sexual spousal violence when the first episode of violence took place after marriage. Table 15.7 shows the interval between marriage and the first episode of spousal physical or sexual violence.

Table 15.7 Onset of spousal violence

Percent distribution of ever-married women who have experienced physical or sexual violence by current or last husband by time between marriage and first experience of violence, according to marital status and duration since first marriage, Malawi 2004

Marital status/duration since first marriage	Years between union and first experience of violence ¹								Total	Number of women
	Before marriage	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-9 years	10 or more years	After divorce	Don't know/missing		
Currently married										
Married once	2.3	19.5	36.3	21.6	10.8	7.6	na	2.0	100.0	1,442
< 6 years	3.5	32.7	49.9	11.2	na	na	na	2.7	100.0	510
6-9 years	1.7	17.5	35.7	27.4	16.4	na	na	1.3	100.0	307
10 or more years	1.5	9.7	25.5	27.1	16.8	17.5	na	1.8	100.0	625
Married more than once	1.2	25.7	30.3	22.5	8.8	7.0	0.5	4.1	100.0	364
Divorced/separated										
	1.2	27.3	34.7	22.5	4.4	3.5	3.7	2.8	100.0	334
Total	1.9	21.8	35.0	21.9	9.5	6.8	0.8	2.3	100.0	2,140

¹ Excludes women who experienced physical violence during pregnancy only.
na = Not applicable

Table 15.7 shows that spousal violence can be initiated throughout a woman’s married life. It may begin before marriage, although it is more likely to start during the first five years of marriage. One in five women who have experienced physical or sexual spousal violence report that violence began during the first year of marriage. Initiation of violence is most prevalent 1-2 years after marriage (35 percent) and drops below 10 percent after the first five years. A small percentage of women who experienced violence say it began before marriage or after being divorced from their spouse (2 percent and 1 percent, respectively).

15.9 PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES OF SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

The severity of violence can be judged from the severity of the act itself or from its consequences. Table 15.8 provides insight into the physical consequences of violence, including the type and severity of the violence. The consequences of spousal violence range from bruises and aches to injury or broken bones, which may require medical attention. Table 15.8 shows that 7 percent of all ever-married women report ever having been beaten to the point of sustaining bruises and aches, while 2 percent had an injury or broken bone, and 2 percent had to get medical help. Most of these women sustained such injuries in the year before the survey.

All three consequences (bruises and aches, injuries and medical treatment) are most often reported by women who ever experienced severe physical violence. Ever-married women who report having experienced emotional violence, less severe physical violence, or sexual violence from a husband are about equally likely to report ever having bruises and aches (23-29 percent), injuries or broken bones (5-7 percent), or medical treatment (5-8 percent).

Table 15.8 Physical consequences of spousal violence

Percentage of ever-married women reporting different types of physical consequences resulting from something the husband/partner did to them, by type of violence reported, Malawi 2004

Type of violence	Had bruises and aches		Had injury or broken bone		Went to a doctor or health centre		Total
	Ever	Past year ¹	Ever	Past year ¹	Ever	Past year ¹	
Emotional violence							
Ever	29.0	21.6	7.1	4.2	7.6	5.3	1,015
At least once in past year	30.1	26.6	6.5	5.2	7.9	6.6	776
Less severe physical violence^{1, 2}							
Ever	23.3	16.8	5.7	3.6	5.2	4.0	1,386
At least once in past year	28.5	27.1	6.7	5.9	7.3	6.6	838
Severe physical violence^{1, 2}							
Ever	62.0	47.0	18.5	11.0	21.2	15.0	226
At least once in past year	66.0	62.7	16.2	13.8	21.4	20.0	161
Sexual violence							
Ever	24.2	18.7	5.0	3.2	6.4	4.6	1,076
At least once in past year	24.7	22.1	4.6	3.7	6.4	5.5	872
Physical or sexual violence¹							
Ever	22.9	16.9	5.7	3.5	5.7	4.2	2,140
At least once in past year	22.9	16.9	5.7	3.5	5.7	4.2	2,140
No violence reported	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	5,914
Total	6.5	4.8	1.6	1.0	1.6	1.2	8,054

¹ Excludes women who experienced physical violence during pregnancy only, due to lack of information on degree of severity and/or timing of violence.

² Less severe violence includes pushing, shaking, slapping, punching and kicking, while severe violence includes trying to strangle or burn, threats with a weapon, and attacks with a weapon.

15.10 VIOLENCE BY SPOUSAL CHARACTERISTICS AND WOMEN'S INDICATORS

Since the most frequent perpetrator of spousal violence is the woman's husband, it is important to observe the characteristics of the husbands to help understand their relationship with the violence. Table 15.9 shows that women who are married to men with secondary or higher education are the least likely to experience violence of any kind. Seventy-two percent of women with husbands who have secondary or higher education have never experienced violence compared to only 66 to 68 percent of women whose husbands have a lower level of education. It is interesting to note that women who have more education than their husbands are the most likely to experience all forms of spousal violence.

Table 15.9 Spousal violence by spousal characteristics

Percentage of ever-married women who experienced different types of violence by the current or most recent husband ever and in the past year, and percentage of women who have been violent to their husbands, by spousal characteristics and selected women's status variables, Malawi 2004

Spousal characteristic	Emotional violence		Physical violence		Sexual violence		Physical or sexual violence		Never experienced violence	Violence against husband by respondent		Number of women
	Ever	Past year ¹	Ever	Past year ¹	Ever	Past year ¹	Ever	Past year ¹		Ever	Past year	
Husband's education												
No education	14.8	11.2	24.2	13.1	12.4	10.1	28.9	17.8	66.3	2.9	1.2	1,199
Primary 1-4	12.9	10.0	22.7	13.6	13.7	11.2	28.9	19.5	67.9	3.3	2.4	1,493
Primary 5-8	13.2	10.2	22.4	12.7	14.6	12.2	29.8	20.2	67.0	1.9	1.4	3,294
Secondary+	10.4	7.4	20.2	11.1	11.7	8.8	25.5	15.7	71.6	2.6	1.5	1,951
Husband's age minus wife's age												
Wife older than husband												
3+ years	10.3	6.6	11.4	6.3	6.6	6.6	15.4	10.3	81.9	3.2	0.6	104
Same age or 1,2 years different	13.0	11.0	22.1	14.0	14.2	12.3	29.6	21.4	67.3	3.2	2.2	1,299
3-4 years	10.6	8.8	20.9	12.5	13.4	11.7	27.3	19.0	69.8	2.6	1.9	1,700
5-9 years	10.9	8.9	20.9	12.8	13.1	11.2	27.4	19.3	69.2	3.0	1.7	2,489
10+ years	14.6	11.4	22.6	12.1	12.4	10.8	28.8	19.0	67.2	1.6	1.3	1,214
Not currently married	16.7	8.3	26.3	10.5	14.1	7.2	30.9	13.0	65.2	1.5	0.5	1,197
Educational differences												
Husband has more education	12.2	9.1	22.1	12.2	13.3	10.8	28.6	18.5	68.2	2.4	1.6	4,948
Wife has more education	14.8	11.9	23.8	14.3	14.8	11.7	30.5	20.5	65.8	2.6	2.0	1,514
Both have equal education	12.0	9.4	19.8	12.0	13.1	11.0	25.6	18.0	71.1	1.7	1.2	801
Neither educated	12.6	8.8	21.3	10.8	10.7	9.2	25.8	15.2	69.9	4.0	1.1	665
Husband's alcohol consumption												
Does not drink	10.2	8.1	17.6	9.5	11.4	9.3	23.8	15.3	73.0	1.4	0.7	4,843
Drinks/never gets drunk	11.5	7.6	26.9	9.3	14.3	11.4	33.2	17.1	62.1	1.9	1.5	202
Gets drunk sometimes	14.6	10.3	26.5	15.9	16.3	13.2	34.3	23.7	62.6	3.2	2.3	1,764
Gets drunk very often	28.0	20.4	45.2	27.6	23.7	18.8	51.0	34.2	43.2	8.9	5.8	870
Total	12.7	9.6	22.1	12.4	13.4	10.8	28.4	18.5	68.3	2.5	1.6	8,054

Note: Total includes women for whom husband's education, spousal age difference, spousal education difference and husband's alcohol consumption are missing.

¹ Excludes women who experienced physical violence during pregnancy only

The age difference between husband and wife also has some bearing on the likelihood that a woman experiences violence. Women who are three or more years older than their husbands are the least likely to have experienced all types of violence. Women who are about the same age as their husbands are slightly more likely than women who are three to nine years younger than their spouses to experience physical or sexual violence. Women who are ten or more years younger than their husbands are most likely to experience emotional and physical violence.

Women's experience with violence is strongly associated with the extent of their husbands' or partners' alcohol consumption. Women whose husbands do not drink are the least likely to report violence, while women whose husbands frequently get drunk are the most likely to report violence.

It is useful to examine whether spousal violence varies with indicators of women's status. Women's empowerment status is measured by their attitudes towards a wife's ability to refuse sex with their husband and the number of household decisions in which the women participate. Table 15.10 shows that there is no strong relationship between women's empowerment status and their

experience in spousal violence, nor is there any clear pattern in the relationship between marital harmony and spousal violence. While women in the least harmonious relationships are expected to report more violence than women with more harmonious marriages, it is women with a score of one or two on the marital harmony index who are the most likely to report any kind of spousal violence.

Table 15.10 Spousal violence by women's status

Percentage of ever-married women by the type of spousal violence by the current or most recent husband, by time of violence, by selected indicators of women's status, Malawi 2004

Women's status indicator	Emotional violence		Physical violence		Sexual violence		Physical or sexual violence		Never experienced violence	Number of women
	Ever	Past year ¹	Ever	Past year ²	Ever	Past year ²	Ever	Past year ²		
Woman can refuse sex to husband										
Yes to all reasons	11.8	8.6	22.2	11.6	13.0	10.6	28.4	17.9	68.2	4,271
No to one or more reasons	13.7	10.7	22.0	13.3	13.8	11.1	28.2	19.2	68.3	3,783
Number of decisions in which woman has final say										
0	11.5	8.8	19.7	11.1	10.6	7.8	25.4	15.3	71.6	1,435
1-2	12.2	9.8	21.7	12.9	15.0	12.9	29.1	20.8	67.5	3,734
3-4	13.9	9.7	23.8	12.4	12.7	9.7	28.8	17.1	67.6	2,885
Index of marital harmony³										
Least harmonious	16.2	12.1	25.5	15.4	14.7	12.1	29.6	19.3	67.4	1,169
1-2 positive	21.0	15.6	31.4	19.2	19.8	15.2	38.8	26.3	56.7	1,259
3-4 positive	10.1	7.7	19.3	10.3	11.6	9.6	25.8	16.6	71.0	5,625
Family structure⁴										
Nuclear	12.6	10.0	22.8	13.3	13.1	11.0	28.6	19.2	68.0	5,357
Non-nuclear	12.9	8.7	20.7	10.7	13.9	10.5	27.8	17.0	68.8	2,697
Total	12.7	9.6	22.1	12.4	13.4	10.8	28.4	18.5	68.3	8,054

¹Excludes women who have been married more than once and say they have been beaten only by a previous husband only during pregnancy.

²Excludes currently married women who have experienced physical violence only during pregnancy by their current husband and formerly married women who have been beaten only during pregnancy by their last husband from experienced physical violence.

³The index of marital harmony is the sum of responses to questions about spending his free time with the respondent, consulting her on various household matters, being affectionate to the respondent, and respecting the respondent's wishes, for which the respondent says that her husband acted frequently.

⁴A woman is considered to be in a nuclear family if the woman lives alone, lives with her husband, or lives with her husband and children.

15.11 HELP SEEKING FOR WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE

Data in previous tables show that women experience violence mainly from husbands. Table 15.11 shows that some women who experience violence from their partners seek help from relatives such as their own families, in-laws, and other relatives or friends. Less than half of women who experienced violence sought help (42 percent). Forty-four percent of women sought help from other relatives or friends, one in three went to their own family, and 11 percent went to their in-laws.

While women who are abused by their husbands tend to go to other relatives or friends for help, women whose perpetrator is not her husband tend to seek help from their own family.

The likelihood that a woman seeks help in domestic violence depends on the perpetrator. Women who were abused by their previous husbands are the most likely to have sought help (52 percent). These data suggest that domestic violence may be a contributing cause for divorce or separation. Women whose perpetrators are not their spouse are the least likely to seek help. The probability of seeking help increases with the frequency of violence. While 49 percent of women who experienced physical or sexual violence four or more times in the past year sought help, the corresponding proportion for women with one experience of violence in the last year is 40 percent.

Table 15.11 Help seeking for women who experience violence									
Among women who reported ever experiencing physical or sexual violence, percentage who tried to get any help, and among those who sought help, persons from whom help was sought, by person who perpetrated the violence, Malawi 2004									
Aspects of violence	Percentage who sought help	Number of women who experienced violence	Persons from whom help was sought						Number of women who sought help
			Own family	In-laws	Other relatives/friends	Medical personnel	Other officials	Other	
Persons perpetrating violence									
Husband only	41.3	1,545	24.2	14.7	56.7	1.6	3.2	17.2	638
Earlier husband only	52.3	361	21.0	18.3	56.8	3.1	6.4	14.5	189
Husband and others	47.1	348	20.1	9.0	45.4	5.5	9.3	24.6	164
Others only	37.1	908	59.0	1.4	10.9	3.8	5.3	29.3	337
Frequency of beatings in past year									
0 times	39.9	1,465	35.3	11.2	36.2	3.1	2.7	23.4	584
1 time	40.1	610	35.3	10.6	44.7	2.3	3.3	19.5	245
2-3 times	44.3	608	28.8	10.4	52.8	1.8	7.1	17.0	270
4+ times	49.0	364	21.0	13.4	57.7	3.2	7.2	19.7	179
DK frequency ¹	42.9	116	33.8	8.1	27.7	6.7	19.2	20.4	50
Total	41.9	3,164	32.0	11.1	43.7	2.8	4.9	20.8	1,327

¹ Includes four women for whom data on frequency of beatings is missing. The remaining cases are women beaten only during pregnancy for which data on frequency of beating in the past year was not collected.