AVON GLOBAL WOMEN’S SURVEY

Violence Against Women and Girls
Message from Avon CEO
JAN ZIJDERVELD

Since I joined Avon in 2018 I’ve been first hand witness to the power of women to change the world. I’ve seen the positive ripple effect women have on their families, communities and ultimately on wider society and the world.

The alarming findings of the Avon foundation for Women’s research show that violence against women and girls is a global epidemic. We need to end it. Our vision at Avon is a world where women and girls are free to lead safe and healthy lives, where they have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and build better lives and a better world.

Avon has been working to tackle violence against women and girls since 2004. We were one of the first to companies to step up and speak out against what was then widely seen as a taboo subject generally, and sadly still is in many of the countries where Avon operates. Our efforts have included raising money for organisations working with survivors of violence and improving the support given to those who suffer.

Today the landscape is different – violence against women and girls is a UN priority, governments around the world reference the need to prioritise it, and the #MeToo movement has sparked global awareness of the pervasiveness of the abuse of women.

Yet despite this, abusive behaviour is still normalised in many families and communities. We need to bring it out from the shadows of silence, to help both men and women recognise violence in all its forms. In answer to that need, this month we are launching Embrace the Change, a global campaign highlighting the different forms of abuse.

Critically, the campaign is not targeted at women. Men are a crucial part of the solution. I invite you to have a look at the videos and share with your network. Our intention is that Embrace the Change and this report will inspire the conversation and reflection needed to make change happen.

Change will require collective action – from corporations and government, individuals and society. This piece of research is just one of the ways in which we at Avon plan to contribute. We hope you will join us as we move forward in ending the abuse of women around the world – together.

I’ve met thousands of Avon Representatives around the world – 90% of whom are women. I’ve seen their passion, their entrepreneurial spirit, their ambition to achieve, desire to earn money to build a better life, agility to develop new skills. These are not gender specific traits. But all too often women encounter barriers that hold them back.

Through our network of 6 million Representatives across the world we see the interconnected nature of the numerous obstacles to women’s freedom. Financial independence, access to flexible work, lack of learning opportunities, imbalance of power; it’s a complex web of issues and gender-based violence is a recurring theme.

Foreword from Board Chairman
for The Avon Foundation for Women
SUSAN ORMISTON

I read this report with optimism for the future, but also with some sadness. I hope that the growing wave of women brave enough to stand up and share their stories of abuse will create real and lasting change for future generations. I hope the emerging acknowledgement of the different forms that abuse can take will become widespread. But at the same time, I realise how far we still must go to create this change. UN data tells us that one woman in three will be a victim of abuse during her lifetime, which this survey bears out.

We’ll continue the fight, and we hope that this research will inspire others to join us. Find us on social media, join the conversation, be part of the movement. Together we can ensure a world where women have the freedom to live free from the fear of violence.

The Avon Foundation for Women has been committed to improving the lives of women around the world and ensuring their rights to live safe and healthy lives for over sixty years. While donating over $60 million to fund frontline emergency services and other important initiatives, we’ve also funded 22 Justice Institutes in 13 countries. These bring together legislative, law enforcement and support services, encouraging the collaboration and conversation that is needed to prosecute and hold offenders accountable for their actions and to keep women and their families safe.

Our Promise to Help End Violence Against Women and Girls sets out our approach to this challenge, and where we’ll focus our efforts as we move forward. Partnerships are key and we’re grateful for the ongoing commitment and relentless effort of our many partners around the world in addressing this issue. In particular, I’d like to extend a huge thanks to the Human Rights team from Vital Voices Global Partnership, who we have worked with to deliver the Avon Justice Institutes on Gender-Based Violence and whose expertise and global insight was invaluable in the design of this research.

At the Avon Foundation for Women, we believe that effective solutions need to take account women’s attitudes, views and beliefs about violence and abuse. We need to understand how cultural differences impact women’s attitudes to violence, and to what extent this issue crosses cultural divides. It is to answer to these questions that the Avon Foundation commissioned this global survey.

We hope that by understanding more about how women’s expectations of relationships, understanding what they understand to be violent or abusive behaviour and their attitudes to and willingness to seek help, we can encourage more and better conversations about this issue.

Despite regional differences on many of these issues, one thing was consistent. When it comes to acceptance of violence and abuse in all its forms, the message was clear: It’s not ok. Enough is enough.

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Ending violence against women and girls

Avon and the Avon Foundation for Women are launching #embracethechange, a global campaign to raise awareness of the often-unspoken non-physical forms of violence that have a devastating impact on victims.

The campaign focuses on the most pervasive forms of violence against women and girls: street harassment, cyber bullying, coercive control and domestic abuse. These forms of abuse are at risk of being normalised, and it is vital to recognise them for what they are – gender-based violence.

Each November, the UN runs its global campaign, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. #embracethechange supports this campaign. Avon has developed four animations, each addressing a different type of violence, showing common situations where women are treated in a manner that is degrading, controlling and hostile – the kind of violence that harms a woman’s self-esteem, freedom and her rights.

The stories portrayed in each video call for perpetrators to reflect on their behaviour and to recognise attitudes and actions that are violent towards women. The campaign’s goal is to promote self-reflection and a change of mind, and to challenge the normalising or acceptance of violence against women and girls.

#embracethechange will be adopted by more than 50 Avon markets around the world as they raise awareness of this important issue, and deliver on the Avon Promise to Help End Violence Against Women and Girls.

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Violence against women and girls – the context

In 2015, a specific focus on addressing violence against women and girls was included in the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals. This began to focus the world’s attention on the issue, and started a drive to action across government, NGO and individual circles.

It has been a time of rapid change, with norms around certain attitudes and behaviours seeming to shift quickly around the globe. And this provides the context for this global study, which gives a voice to the perceptions and experiences of women in fifteen countries around the globe.

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Avon and the Avon Foundation for Women have been long-standing supporters of women and defenders of their rights. In 2004, Avon launched its ‘Speak Out Against Domestic Violence’ campaign and since then, Avon and the Avon Foundation have worked around the world to end violence against women and girls through messaging, campaigning, fundraising and Justice Institutes.

This year, we are renewing this commitment with the launch of our Promise to Help End Violence Against Women and Girls. This has been built on a full review of the issue as it plays out around the world, what needs to be done, and how we can best contribute to the fight to end this fundamental abuse of human rights.

We’ll commit our resources, our people and our energy to:

Encourage conversation:
Violence against women and girls hides in the shadows of silence. We’ll use our global voice to shed light on the many forms of violence against women and girls and discuss what needs to change in order to end it.

Provide information:
We’ll make sure that everyone we work with – our network of Representatives, employees, customers and partners – has the knowledge and information they need to recognize and respond to violence safely and on their own terms. We’ll ensure they know what support is available and how to access these resources so they can make informed choices.

Improve support:
People can only speak out and make change if they feel supported when they do. We’ll work with local organizations to ensure women and girls have access to the support they need. And we’ll convene global leaders and change makers to help make sure women and girls are understood, supported and fairly treated when they seek help or report abuse.

We know we can’t do this alone. Change can only happen when the issue of relationship violence is addressed at every level of society. That’s why Avon is working with global leaders, local partners and our network of Representatives around the world to ensure that women and girls, the men in their lives, and their communities as a whole, are aware, informed and supported in building a world where women and girls can live free from violence.

Join us.

Introducing this survey

As we developed the Avon Promise to Help End Violence Against Women and Girls, one of the key areas of need that our review uncovered was for better global data on the issue, particularly insight into the perspectives, values and attitudes of women as they relate to violence. As the conversation around violence against women and girls shifts, we wanted to speak to women around the world, and ask what they knew, thought and felt about this issue.

We commissioned a survey of 14,400 women in fifteen countries. This survey presents a rare insight into women’s attitudes to gender relations, their perceptions of violence and its different forms, and of their attitudes towards various forms of violence. We hope that this will provide not only much-needed data to inform the conversation, but also insight to inspire action as we work to end violence against women and girls around the world.
KEY FINDINGS

Expectations of relationships vary considerably around the world

There is significant variation in the extent to which women feel that a woman has a ‘duty’ to provide sex to her partner if he wants it – only 2% of women in Argentina feel women have this obligation while 38% of women in the Philippines say that they do.

While most women trust that abuse will be treated as a crime, levels of trust that it will be taken seriously are low...

Only 59% of women globally trust the justice system to take claims of physical abuse seriously, and 60% trust the system to take claims of sexual abuse seriously.

There is significant variation by country in relation to trust in the justice system – while 87% of women in the Philippines trust the system to treat psychological abuse as a crime, in Russia this drops to 27%.

But most women agree that violence is unacceptable in all but a few cases

The majority of women feel that violence can be justified in instances of self-defence (59%), or the defence of a child (55%).

‘Insisting on knowing where his partner is’ is considered acceptable behaviour from a male partner by 19% of women globally, and this rises to 31% in South Africa and 37% in the Philippines.

Whistling, shouting or commenting on women in a sexual way is perceived as abuse or harassment by 82% of women globally – and only 61% of women in Russia and 65% of women in Italy consider this abuse.

While the majority of women feel safe in public, it is by no means guaranteed

21% of women globally feel unsafe in public – and this rises to 47% in South Africa and 51% in Turkey.

Globally, 85% of women are likely to actively seek help if they or someone they know was a victim of abuse, though this varies significantly geographically – 94% of women in the Philippines are likely to seek help whereas only 65% of women in Peru are.

Only 62% of women globally say they would know where to go to seek help – and this falls to 40% in the UK and 32% in Russia.

Globally, 16% of women say there is something that would hold them back from seeking support. The most common barrier is fear of the abuse getting worse as a result, at 47%, closely followed by fear for any children involved.

... which all too many do

At a global level, the majority of women (58%) have some experience of abuse (either to themselves or someone they know). The most common form of abuse experienced is psychological abuse, followed by physical abuse.

... and many women do not know where to go for help if they do encounter abuse

Only 58% of women globally trust the justice system to take measures to protect victims of physical or sexual abuse.

Globally, 16% of women do not know where to go for help if they do encounter abuse.

Which all too many do
The survey was designed and delivered with support from a range of partners including Populus, Good Business and Vital Voices.

1000 women were surveyed in each of the 15 countries listed in Table 1, with the exception of Ecuador where difficulties in achieving a representative sample meant that the sample size was capped at 400. Only women over the age of 18 were surveyed.

The survey was conducted online using a dedicated platform which remained live until the sample quota was reached, a timeframe that varied from two to three weeks.

**Date of fieldwork:**
28th of September to 24th of October 2018

**Sample breakdown:** nationally representative by age and region across 15 countries (listed in table 1)

**Questionnaire design:**
43 questions, containing a mix of Likert scales, multiple choice and yes/no options.

Please see Appendix A for questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Countries surveyed and sample size

**RESULTS: 01**

Gender relations in the private space

We asked women about their expectations of relationships and what behaviours were seen as abusive.

We explore three key questions:

- What expectations do women have of relationships?
- Is violence ever acceptable?
- What behaviours are considered to be abuse?
Results – 01: Gender relations in the private space

What expectations do women have of relationships?

Globally, the majority of women value equality in a relationship and feel that violence is not acceptable. However there is a small number of women who feel that violence is something that women have to tolerate, and that a wife has a ‘duty’ to provide sex to her husband.

This question around the ‘duty’ to provide sex is the one with the greatest level of geographical variation – while 97% of women in Argentina disagree that women have a duty to provide sex, this number falls to 45% in the Philippines.

The global picture

When it comes to sex in relationships, most women agree that contraception is acceptable, and something that should be agreed by the couple. Violence from a partner is largely deemed unacceptable, and not something that should be kept behind closed doors. The majority also disagree with the idea that women have an obligation to provide sex to their partners.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Country comparison

For obligation to have sex

The highest degree of global variation on these statements is for the question looking at a women’s obligation to have sex with her husband. While 97% of women in Argentina disagreed with this statement, in the Philippines just 45% did, with 38% of women in this country feeling that it is a woman’s duty to have sex with her husband if he wants it.

“If her partner wants sex, it is a woman’s duty to give it to him”

One other data point stood out in this series of questions: in Brazil, 53% of women agree with the statement “a man and woman should decide together what type of contraceptive to use”, compared with the global mean of 83%.
Results – 01: Gender relations in the private space

Is violence ever acceptable?

The majority of women in all countries think violence against a partner cannot be justified when he/she does not do what is asked, flirts with someone else, breaks marriage or relationship vows, is unfaithful, or goes against societal values.

However, over half of women globally feel that violence can be justified to protect a child, or in self-defence.

Women in Argentina are the least likely to consider there being any justification for violence, while in the Philippines, Russia, and Turkey, higher numbers consider there to be some situations in which violence is justified.

The global picture

While a significant proportion of women feel that violence can be justified in instances of self-defence or the defence of a child, women around the world broadly agree that violence is unacceptable in other instances.

It is justified to use physical violence against a partner...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Global</th>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Peru</th>
<th>Chile</th>
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<tr>
<td>when he/she does not do what you ask of them</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<td>when he/she seems to flirt with another person</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>when he/she breaks the vows of marriage/your relationship</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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<td>when he/she is unfaithful</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>when he/she does something that goes against the values of our society</td>
<td>4%</td>
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Country comparison

For protecting a child

53% of women globally feel that violence is justified to protect a child. However, there is significant variation between different countries – 28% of women in Romania agree that violence is justified in this case, compared to 73% in the UK.

It is justified to use physical violence against a partner to protect a child

Country comparison

For self-defence

There is also some variation between countries when it comes to the justification of violence in instances of self-defence. Less than 40% of women in Romania and Turkey feel that it is justifiable, while in a number of countries, including the UK, Poland, Russia and South Africa, that number rises to over 70%.

It is justified to use physical violence against a partner in self-defence
Results – 01: Gender relations in the private space

What behaviours are considered to be abuse?

We explored women’s acceptance of a number of different behaviours, including various forms of physical, sexual, financial and psychological abuse. Around the world, the majority of women consider forms of physical, sexual, financial and psychological abuse unacceptable. However, there is a degree of variation in this. Notably only 68% think it is unacceptable to insist on knowing where a partner is at any time – a behaviour which is widely considered by experts to be a form of coercive control.

The global picture

The majority of women around the world consider all the forms of behaviour explored to be unacceptable, with particularly high numbers around violent behaviour. Women are less united on how they perceive a husband or male partner insisting on knowing where his partner is.

How acceptable or unacceptable do you think the following behaviours are from a husband or other male partner?

- Threatening to hurt his partner or someone close to her
- Slapping, pushing, kicking, pulling, or beating his partner
- Insulting his partner or deliberately making her feel bad about herself
- Forcing her to have sex when she does not want to
- Forbidding a partner to see friends or family
- Becoming angry with her or refusing if she asked him to use a condom
- Taking control of his partner’s money and how it is spent
- Insisting on knowing where his partner is

Country comparison

For perceptions of coercive control

Knowing where a partner – a behaviour considered by most to be a form of coercive control – is more commonly seen as acceptable than other behaviours by women worldwide. There is also a greater degree of variation in how this behaviour is perceived by women in different countries.

Insisting on knowing where his partner is

- Acceptable
- Neither acceptable nor unacceptable
- Unacceptable
- Prefer not to say
Gender relations in the public sphere

In this section, we explore the public (rather than the private) sphere, looking at harassment and abuse in public and from strangers. We explore how safe women feel, what is perceived as abuse, and also women’s trust in the authorities and measures to protect them.

- How safe do women feel in public?
- What is perceived as abuse/harassment in public?
- Do women trust the legal and law enforcement system to protect them?
How safe do women feel in public?

Around the world, 61% of respondents feel safe as a woman in public – leaving a significant minority who do not. And there are also some big differences across the globe.

Russia is the country with the highest numbers of women reporting that they feel safe in public – at 91%. In Turkey however, only 27% of women state that they feel safe, and 51% state they feel unsafe.

The global picture

While the majority of women around the world do feel safe in public, a significant proportion feel unsafe, or are unsure how they feel.

How safe or unsafe do you feel as a woman in your community?

Country comparison

While 91% of women in Russia and 82% of women in Poland feel safe in public, in other parts of the world the proportion is much lower. Only 32% of women in South Africa feel safe, and this drops to just 27% in Turkey.
What is perceived as abuse/harassment in public?

We explored whether a number of different public behaviours are considered to be abuse or harassment.

The majority of women around the world recognise all the behaviours we explored as abuse or harassment, but there is some variation in the extent of agreement. Threats of violence, pressuring a woman to have sex and hitting or slapping sit at one end of the spectrum – with 94% of women globally agreeing that these are abuse or harassment. Meanwhile, whistling, shouting or commenting on a woman in a sexual way is considered abuse by 82% of women. The greatest level of variation between countries is in relation to examples of psychological abuse – such as whistling, shouting or commenting in a sexual way (considered abuse by 92% of women in Peru but only by 61% in Russia) or humiliating a woman in front of others (considered abuse by 97% of women in Colombia but only by 72% in Turkey).

The global picture

A significant majority of women consider all the behaviours explored to be forms of abuse or harassment, though numbers are lowest in relation to whistling, shouting or commenting on women in a sexual way.

Which of the following do you think are forms of abuse or harassment?

Country comparison

For hitting or slapping

Hitting and slapping is seen by almost all women as abuse or harassment. However, in Turkey, Poland, and Russia, a significant proportion of women did not recognise such behaviour as a form of abuse.

Which of the following do you think are forms of abuse or harassment?

Hitting or slapping

Avon Global Women’s Survey

Violence Against Women and Girls
**Country comparison**

*For humiliation/degradation*

Humiliating or degrading a woman in front of others is seen as a form of abuse by the vast majority of women. However, the proportions of women agreeing that this is a form of abuse are lower than the global average in Turkey, Poland, and Russia, and higher in Latin American countries.

Which of the following do you think are forms of abuse or harassment?
Humiliating/degrading a woman in front of others

**Country comparison**

*For whistling, shouting or commenting in a sexual way*

There is a high degree of variation between different countries in terms of whether they think that whistling, shouting at or commenting on a woman in a sexual way is a form of abuse or harassment. There is a regional pattern here – a much higher proportion of women consider such behaviour to be a form of abuse than in many Latin American countries.

Which of the following do you think are forms of abuse or harassment?
Whistling, shouting or commenting on a woman in a sexual way
Results – 02: Gender relations in the public sphere

**Gender relations in the public sphere**

While a majority of women trust that the legal system in their country will treat abuse (of any form) as a crime, a significant proportion – almost a fifth – do not. And confidence that claims will be taken seriously or that measures will be taken to protect victims is lower still.

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### The global picture

While a majority of women trust that the legal system in their country will treat abuse (of any form) as a crime, a significant proportion – almost a fifth – do not. And confidence that claims will be taken seriously or that measures will be taken to protect victims is lower still.

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### Country comparison

**For physical abuse**

Globally, the majority of women (71%) trust that the legal system in their country will treat physical abuse as a crime. However, there is considerable variation between countries, with just 49% of women in Turkey trusting that their law enforcement system will treat physical abuse as a crime.

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### I trust the legal and law enforcement system in my country to...

- **Treat physical abuse as a crime**
  - **Agree:**
    - Global: 19%
    - UK: 22%
    - Peru: 19%
    - Brazil: 18%
    - Poland: 16%
    - Mexico: 15%
    - Romania: 11%
    - Turkey: 8%
  - **Neither agree nor disagree:**
    - Global: 71%
    - UK: 69%
    - Peru: 76%
    - Brazil: 68%
    - Poland: 76%
    - Mexico: 78%
    - Romania: 79%
    - Turkey: 79%
  - **Disagree:**
    - Global: 10%
    - UK: 10%
    - Peru: 15%
    - Brazil: 15%
    - Poland: 12%
    - Mexico: 12%
    - Romania: 23%
    - Turkey: 16%
  - **Prefer not to say:**
    - Global: 10%
    - UK: 10%
    - Peru: 15%
    - Brazil: 15%
    - Poland: 12%
    - Mexico: 12%
    - Romania: 23%
    - Turkey: 16%

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Avon Global Women’s Survey

Violence Against Women and Girls
Results – 02: Gender relations in the public sphere

Country comparison
For sexual abuse

Confidence that the legal system will treat sexual abuse as a crime is slightly higher globally than for physical abuse. 73% of women trust the legal and law enforcement system to do this. However, there is considerable variation between countries with 93% of women in the Philippines trusting the legal and law enforcement system to treat sexual abuse as a crime, compared to just 52% in Turkey.

I trust the legal and law enforcement system in my country to…
Treat sexual abuse as a crime

Country comparison
For psychological abuse

Women have less trust in the authorities to protect them against psychological abuse than they do for instances of physical and sexual abuse. There is also considerable variation across countries in women’s trust in authorities to treat psychological abuse as a crime. For example, in Russia 27% of women trust that psychological abuse will be treated as a crime, compared to 87% in the Philippines.

I trust the legal and law enforcement system in my country to…
Treat psychological abuse as a crime

Country comparison
For financial abuse

Financial abuse is the form of abuse for which women have least faith in the legal system. It is also the type of abuse where we see most variation across countries, with women in Turkey, South Africa and Russia again having the least trust in the authorities.

I trust the legal and law enforcement system in my country to…
Treat financial abuse as a crime
Seeking support

In this section, we explore women’s willingness and ability to get help in the case of abuse, either to themselves or to someone close to them.

We also explore which factors stop women from finding help to deal with abuse.

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How willing are women to look for help and do they know where to go?

Globally, 85% of women are likely to actively seek help if they or someone they know is a victim of abuse — though this does vary significantly geographically (94% of women in the Philippines are likely to seek help whereas only 65% of women in Peru are).

However only 62% of women globally say they would know where to go to seek help — and this falls to 40% in the UK and 32% in Russia.

In terms of where they would turn, the police is the group most commonly cited as a source of support, followed by family, health professionals and friends.

Country comparison

How willing are women to seek help?

85% of women globally are likely to seek help if they or someone they know was a victim of abuse. Women in the Philippines, Romania, Italy and South Africa are the most likely to seek help, and women in Peru the least likely.

If you or someone you know (i.e. a friend or other family member) was a victim of abuse, how likely or unlikely would you be to actively seek help?

Country comparison

Do they know where to go?

62% of women globally would know where to go or what to do if they or someone they know was a victim of abuse, leaving a significant minority who would not know where to go. This varies significantly by country while 80% of women in Brazil and the Philippines know where to go, this falls to 40% of women in the UK and 32% of women in Russia.

Would you know where to go or what to do to seek help if you or someone you know (i.e. a friend or other family member) was a victim of abuse?

The global picture

Significant sources of support

The police are most commonly cited as the source of support women would turn to, at 84%. This is followed by family at 38%. Health professionals come next, followed by friends.
Results – 03: Seeking support

What are the barriers to seeking help?

Globally, 16% of women say there is something that would hold them back from seeking support.

The most common barrier is fear of the abuse getting worse as a result, at 47%, closely followed by fear for any children involved.

Country comparison

16% of women globally say there is something holding them back from seeking support. Women in Russia are most likely to be held back at 35%, while women in Argentina, Italy, Peru and Poland are the least likely at 12%.

Would anything hold you back from seeking help if you or someone you know (i.e. a friend or family member) was a victim of abuse?

The global picture

Among the 16% of women globally who say something would hold them back from seeking support, the most commonly cited factor is that it might make the abuse worse, at 47%. The least commonly cited factor is that “it is not my business”.

What factors would hold you back from seeking help if you or someone you know (i.e. a friend or other family member) was a victim of any form of abuse?*

* This question was only asked to those identifying obstacles to seeking help in instances of abuse in the previous question.
Country comparison
The following graphs show the three countries where each barrier cited in the survey is most frequently identified.

- **It might make the abuse worse**
- **I would fear for any children involved**
- **It would be too emotional**
- **I would not know where to go**
- **I might get in trouble/I might be at fault**
- **It might not be serious enough**
- **It is not my business**
RESULTS: 04

Prevalence of abuse

This section explores women’s experience of abuse through either their own direct experience of abuse or that of someone close to them. This is broken down into physical, sexual, psychological, and financial abuse.

Have you or someone you know experienced abuse?

NB To ensure cross-country comprehension and comparability of data, we presented this question with an explanation of the types of behaviours would be included in each category. They were as follows:

a. Physical abuse (kicking, punching, hitting with an object, use of a weapon)
b. Sexual abuse (non-consensual sexual intercourse, consensual sexual intercourse due to fear of the consequences of what would happen otherwise, being forced to do something sexual that is degrading or humiliating)
c. Psychological abuse (being threatened with harm or harm onto a relative/friend, being belittled or humiliated in front of others, restricting freedom)
d. Financial abuse (having your personal finances taken away, being tricked into giving money, using credit cards without permission, putting contractual obligations in their partner’s name, gambling with family assets)
I Prevalence of abuse

At a global level, the majority of women (56%) have some experience of abuse (either themselves or someone they know).

The most common form of abuse experienced is psychological abuse, followed by physical abuse.

There is significant geographical variation in relation to experiences of abuse – with the highest reported levels in South Africa (73%), followed by the Latin American countries (ranging from 70% in Ecuador to 60% in Brazil), and the lowest levels in Europe (the lowest reported level is in Italy, at 36%).

The global picture

The majority of women have encountered abuse, either to themselves or someone they know. Psychological abuse is the most commonly experienced form of abuse, followed by physical abuse, and then sexual and financial abuse.

Have you or someone you know (i.e. a friend or other family member) been a victim of any of the following?

Country comparison

For all abuse

There is significant variation across countries in relation to stated levels of abuse. Though the majority of women have experience of abuse in nine out of the 15 countries surveyed, levels vary from 73% in South Africa to 36% in Italy.

Any abuse (physical, sexual, psychological, financial)
**Country comparison**

**For financial abuse**

21% of women globally have experienced financial abuse. The number of women stating they have experienced this form of abuse is highest in Argentina, at 31%, and lowest in Italy, at 9%.

**Country comparison**

**For physical abuse**

Physical abuse is the second most commonly experienced form of abuse globally, with particularly high levels in South America and South Africa. The number of women stating they have experienced this form of abuse is lower in Europe, and lowest in Italy, where 16% of women state that they have experienced physical abuse.

**Country comparison**

**For sexual abuse**

21% of women globally have experience of sexual abuse. The number of women stating they have experienced this form of abuse is highest in South Africa, at 35%, and lowest in Italy, at 6%.
For further information, please contact Natalie Deacon, Executive Director Communications
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