

■ CONCLUSION

The percentage of women who reported experiencing violence in the 1,913 surveys was substantially higher than a previous survey on the occurrence of domestic violence conducted by MCN. In 1994, MCN initiated the Practice Based Research Network, through which clinicians surveyed migrant farmworker women in migrant health centers. 1,001 surveys were collected, revealing that approximately 20% of the women surveyed reported experiencing either physical or sexual abuse within a year of being interviewed. Several factors may have affected the reporting of domestic violence. The advocates were from the same communities as the women they surveyed and had established themselves as leaders on the topic of domestic violence. Consequently, women came to the advocates for support and help. It is possible that women who were abused self-selected to be surveyed because they trusted the advocates and knew they could help. The advocates had more time to spend with the women they interviewed than the clinicians who were in a professional setting with limited time. Thus, it is possible that more women disclosed violence to the advocates than to clinicians because substantial trust had been developed.

Through a focus group, advocates were asked what qualities are necessary to make a good advocate. The following skills were emphasized by the advocates:

- The ability to connect with the farmworker women
- The ability to establish a level of trust with the farmworker women
- The ability to provide support and comfort as necessary, and
- The ability to provide clear explanations and information to the women

It is important to note that because the MCN surveys used convenience sampling (i.e. a methodology based on the availability of the participant), the results cannot be translated to the entire farmworker population. The findings of the *No hay mal que por bien no venga* project do, however, indicate that domestic violence is a substantial issue in the lives of many of the women surveyed. An equally important outcome of the project has been the feasibility of working with local farmworker women to become advocates and leaders in their communities to help end domestic violence.

■ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report is the culmination of three years of work by many dedicated individuals and agencies. Migrant Clinicians Network would like to thank the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Family and Intimate Violence Prevention Team for the support and ongoing guidance that made this program possible. In addition, MCN would like to acknowledge Drs. Nikki Van Hightower and Alicia Dorsey of the Texas A & M School of Rural Public Health for their work in the evaluation of the program. Our sincerest thanks to the Migrant Health Branch of the Bureau of Primary Health Care and the MCN Board of Directors for lending their expertise throughout the program. MCN wishes to thank Migrant Health Promotion, Inc., Texas Migrant Council, Inc. and the Texas Department of Health for their assistance with the initial domestic violence trainings. Finally, MCN would like to thank the farmworker women who participated as domestic violence advocates in the program and continue to fight to end domestic violence in the farmworker community.



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¹Portions extracted from: Van Hightower, Nikki and Dorsey, Alicia. "No hay mal que por bien no venga: Program summary and evaluation report", Texas A & M University System Health Science Center, School of Rural Public Health, Department of Social and Behavioral Health, May 31, 2001.

MONOGRAPH

Domestic Violence in the Farmworker Population¹

CLINICAL SUPPLEMENT



■ SUMMARY

In 1998, the Migrant Clinicians Network (MCN) began a three-year research initiative funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Family and Intimate Violence Prevention Team. The project was entitled *No hay mal que por bien no venga* (Every Cloud has a Silver Lining). MCN provided training workshops on domestic violence issues to over seventy migrant farmworker women in three Texas communities along the U.S./Mexico border. Women self-selected from the workshops to survey other migrant farmworker women on the occurrence of physical or sexual abuse in the last year. In a two-year period, twenty-one migrant farmworker women (advocates) successfully surveyed 1,913 of their peers. The results of the survey indicated that 53% of the migrant women interviewed reported experiencing abuse in the year prior to the survey. The percentage of women who reported experiencing domestic violence was more than double that of a previous MCN survey. It was hypothesized that the increased reports of violence were a factor of different survey methods. An important outcome of the project was the expansion of the advocates' leadership roles as they provided domestic violence information and resource referral to migrant women in need.

■ SURVEY METHOD

The survey instrument used by the advocates was an ICON form modeled after the Evaluation for Physical Abuse Form developed by Judith McFarlane, Texas Women's University. The ICON form uses images to survey women on past abuse, making the form easy to use for individuals of varying literacy levels in English or Spanish. The form asks respondents about physical and sexual abuse in the last year, fear of their partner, safety planning, and use of alcohol and drugs by their partner.

■ SAMPLE ICON FORM QUESTION

Note: If you wish to receive a free copy of the ICON form or would like to order other domestic violence resources, please call MCN at 512/327-2017 or check our website: www.migrantclinician.org

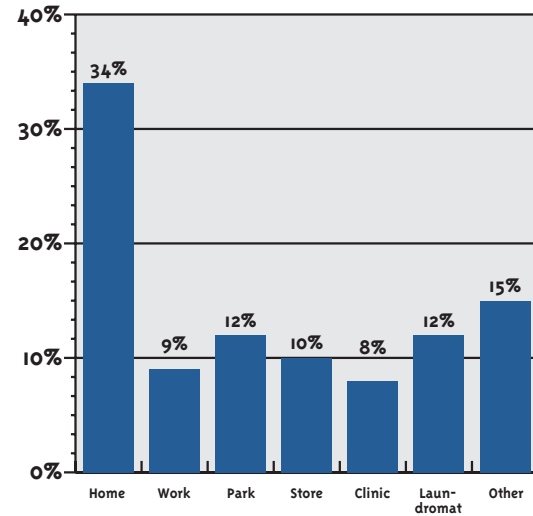
3. During the last year were you physically abused (hit, kicked, slapped) by another person?

Yes _____ No _____

Who mistreats you?

Husband	Ex-husband	Boyfriend
Partner	Relative	Stranger
		Boss

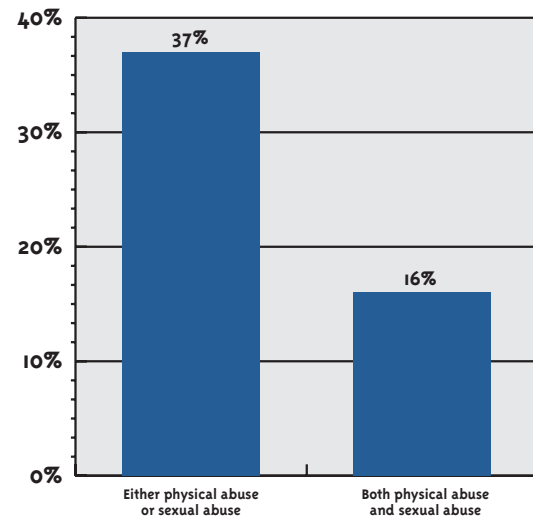
SITE OF CONTACT



The advocates conducted surveys in whatever location most served the comfort and safety of the respondents. The most common sites of contact were the home of the advocate or the home of the woman being surveyed. Other locations where substantial numbers of surveys were collected included stores, laundromats, parks, and work sites. A small number of women were surveyed at the following locations: beauty salons (2.8%), buses (.8%), shelters (1.9%), churches (1.0%), schools (5.3%) and any other potential sites (3.8%). These locations were combined into the category “other”. The advocates interviewed migrant farmworker women while based in their homes in Texas. Some women continued to collect surveys as they migrated to Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, California, Illinois and Minnesota. Several advocates utilized group settings to conduct surveys, while other advocates conducted surveys one-on-one.

■ SURVEY RESULTS

REPORTED ABUSE

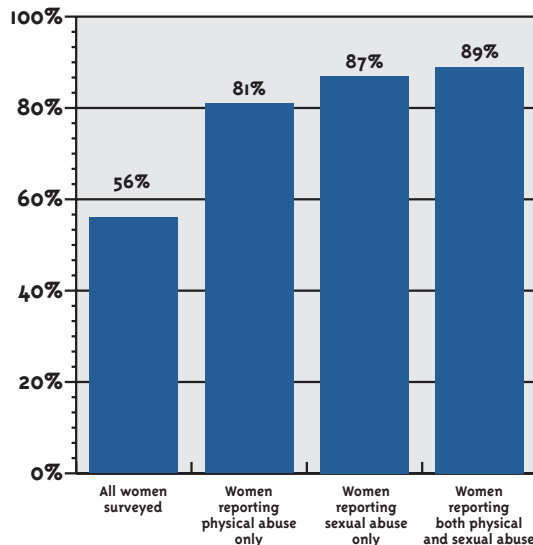


■ Prevalence of abuse (physical and sexual)

Of the 1,913 women interviewed, 703 (37%) reported either being physically or sexually abused during the previous year. An additional 299 (16%) of the women reported experiencing *both* physical and sexual abuse over the previous year. Thus, out of 1,913 women responding to the survey, 1,002 (53%) reported being physically and/or sexually abused by intimate partners or family members over the course of the previous year.

Age was not a significant factor with regard to overall abuse. However, women under the age of 20 predominantly experienced abuse at the hands of a boyfriend and women over the age of 50 experienced slightly more abuse perpetrated by spouses or other family members.

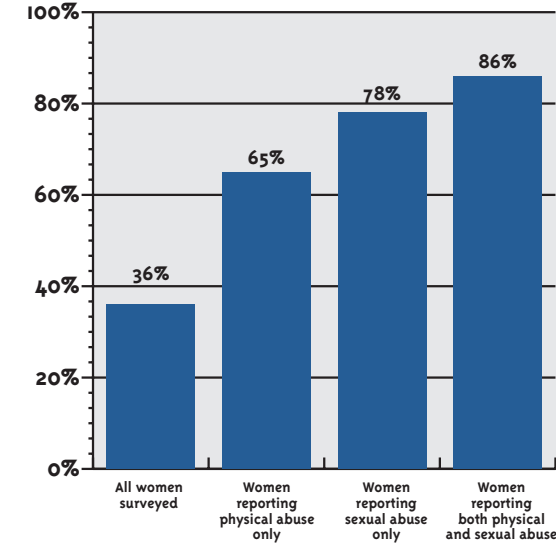
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN REPORTING THAT THEIR PARTNER USES ALCOHOL OR DRUGS



■ Prevalence and role of controlled substances (alcohol and drugs)

Of all the women surveyed, 56% reported that their partners used alcohol or other drugs. There was a significant relationship between physical abuse and alcohol or drug use. Specifically, of the 945 women reporting physical abuse, 764 of them (81%) also reported their partner using alcohol or drugs. Of the 958 women who did not report being physically abused, only 288 (30%) reported that their partner used alcohol or drugs. There was a significant relationship between alcohol or drug use and reported forced sexual contact. Of the 355 women reporting forced sexual contact, 310 (87%) reported their partners used drugs or consumed alcohol. Finally, for those 299 women reporting *both* physical and sexual abuse, 267 (89%) reported their partners used alcohol or drugs.

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN REPORTING FEAR OF THEIR PARTNER



■ Prevalence and role of fear of partner

Emotional abuse, often expressed as fear, is a common property of domestic violence. Of the 1,856 women who responded to the question regarding fear, 659 (36%) expressed fear of their partners. There was a significant relationship between expressed fear of partner and reported abuse. Specifically, of the 926 women reporting physical abuse, 603 (65%) also report being fearful of their partners. Of the 343 women reporting sexual abuse, 269 (78%) also expressed fear. Finally, of the 285 women reporting both sexual and physical abuse, 245 (86%) expressed fear of their partner.

■ DEVELOPMENT OF SAFETY PLANS

The advocates not only interviewed women on the issues of physical and sexual abuse in their lives, but also discussed creating safety plans. Only 2% of women surveyed reported that they had already created an escape plan, although over 50% of women interviewed had considered at least one component of a safety plan. Components of a safety plan included: considering packing clothing, money, one’s passport and documents, keys to the car, locating other transportation and a safe place to stay, important telephone numbers, as well as considering the needs of their children and other family members. Through a focus group, advocates reiterated that the majority of the women they surveyed had not created a safety plan. One advocate described why she believed this to be the case:

“In our culture it is very rare that you will find a person that is going through domestic violence and that they are prepared to leave the home, because we always think, and I include myself in this, we think in the family, we wonder what my children will do if I leave, how do I take them with me, so it is very difficult to accept what we are going through with domestic violence and to say this is the day and I am going to be prepared. So when the people do it, they do it in a moment of desperation.”

Surveying women using the ICON form gave advocates an excellent opportunity to help women begin to think about how to create a safety plan for their future safety.

■ LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The *No hay mal que por bien no venga* project allowed the advocates to further expand their leadership roles in their communities. Farmworker women often sought out the advocates for information and support, and many of the advocates began educating other women through presentations. One advocate created support groups at her work place. The advocates responded to their communities’ needs by working with the local shelters and by listening to the migrant farmworker women’s stories. Advocates creatively sought out new services for women in need, including some services that were not included on national lists for domestic violence survivors.

Advocates often defined leadership as listening well to others “from the heart”. Most of the advocates did not see themselves as leaders even though their definition of leadership included terms that clearly applied to them, such as, “dependable”, “fearless”, “available 24-hours a day”, “good communicator”, and “compassionate”.

MCN facilitated a two-day conference in January of 2001 for the advocates from the three Texas sites to come together in San Antonio and share their stories and ideas. Several of the advocates participated in the planning process of the conference. The conference was a powerful experience because it allowed the advocates the opportunity to connect with one another and learn more about community building through the conference workshops. An emphasis was placed on organizing and leadership skills. Nikki Van Hightower, Ph.D., co-principal investigator of the project, presented the results of data collection from the ICON form.