



The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence
An Oifig Náisiúnta um Fhoréigean Baile, Gnéasach agus Inscnebhunaithe a Chosc

Attitudes to Domestic Abuse in Ireland

*Report of a survey on perceptions and beliefs of
domestic abuse among the general population of Ireland*

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Attitudes to Domestic Abuse in Ireland

Presenting: Justine Horgan



Cosc

The National Office for the Prevention of
Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence

Study Research Team

- Dr Justine Horgan, Philip McCormack (Cosc)
- Dr. Dorothy Watson (ESRI)
- Dr Peter Mühlau, Antje Röder (TCD)
- CM Surveys

Background

- General population survey
 - Representative sample
 - Telephone interviewing
 - No. respondents = 2,008

Topics Covered

- What is domestic abuse?
- Perceptions of the extent of the problem?
- Does it impact women and men differently?
- What would you do if you witnessed domestic abuse?

What is Domestic Abuse

What constitutes
domestic abuse?
Criminal Offence?

What is domestic abuse?

	Slapping	Punching	Forced Sexual Intercourse	Calling names
Injured	98.8	99.7	99.6	-
Hurt (pain but no injury)	96.9	99.0	99.2	-
Distressed	98.8	99.9	99.8	91.4
Frequently happens	99.4	99.8	99.8	96.8
Under all circumstances	87.1	97.5	97.8	67.3

Domestic abuse is a criminal offence?

Agree	97.0%
Disagree	2.2%
Don't know	<u>0.7%</u>
Total	100.0%

Conclusions

- Sample apply a very wide definition of domestic abuse
- Domestic abuse is considered to be a criminal offence by the majority of respondents

Perceptions of the extent of domestic abuse in Ireland

How common?

Increasing?

Who does it impact more?

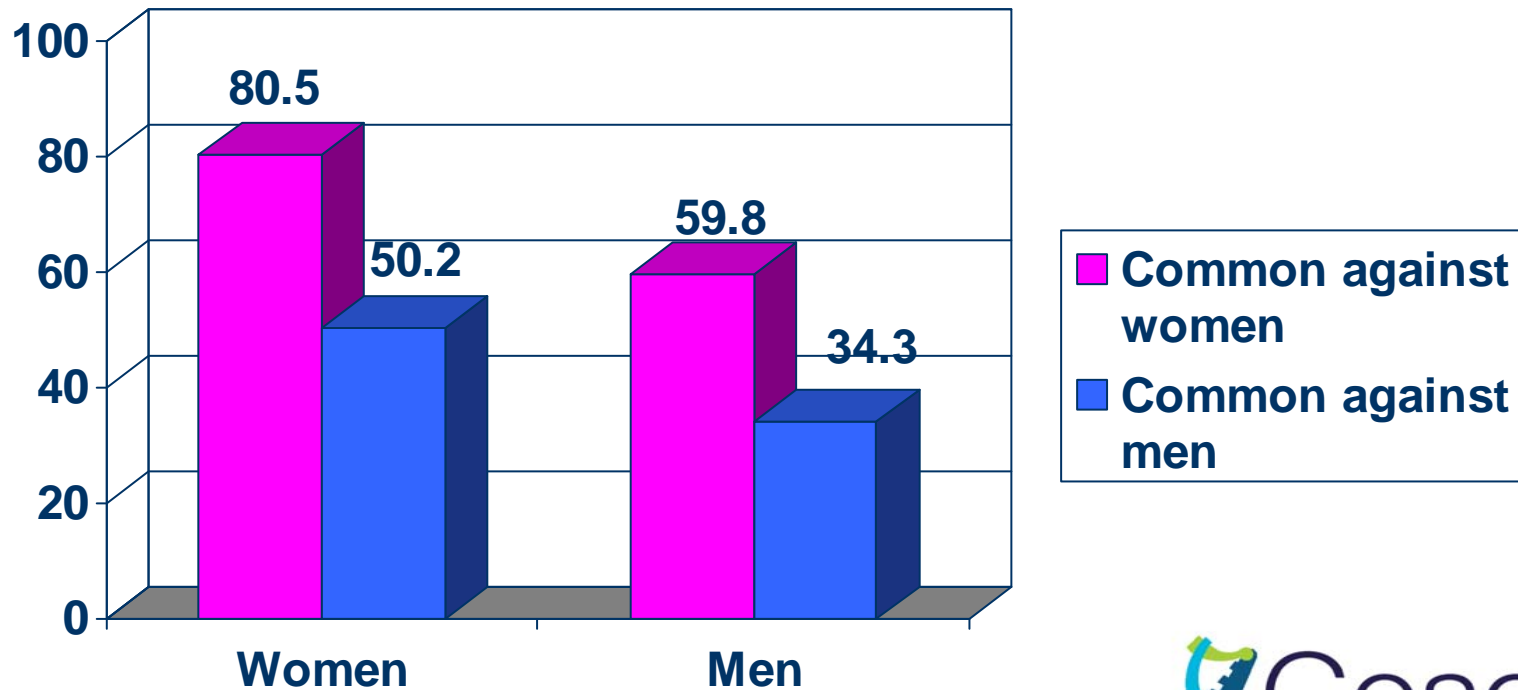
Do you know someone?

Worried it could happen to you?

How common is the problem of domestic abuse against women? Domestic abuse against men?

	Against women %	Against men %
Common	70.3	42.3
Not Common	26.4	53.6
Don't Know	3.3	4.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Gender and perceptions of how common domestic abuse is



Do you think domestic abuse has increased, decreased or remained the same over last 3 years?

	Against women %	Against men %
Increasing	45.8	41.9
Remained the same	40.3	44.4
Decreasing	5.6	3.3

Who do people think would suffer more as a result of domestic abuse?

	Physical	Emotional	Fear
Women more	82.6	52.3	53.1
Men more	2.1	10.7	1.3
Equal impact	14.5	36.4	44.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Do you know someone who has experienced domestic abuse?

	Yes%
Know a woman	39.8
Know a man	20.5
Know any person	44.2

Do you worry that domestic abuse could happen to you or someone close to you (family/friend)?

	%
No	70.0
Yes	30.0
Total	100.0

Conclusions

Domestic abuse is a problem that is perceived as...

- Common, particularly against women but also against men
- An increasing problem against both women and men. Minority think of problem as decreasing
- Women are thought to suffer more harm from physical abuse, also emotional abuse and fear
- Nearly half of sample said they know somebody
- Majority not concerned, but substantial minority are worried

Whether and how people might respond to witnessing domestic abuse

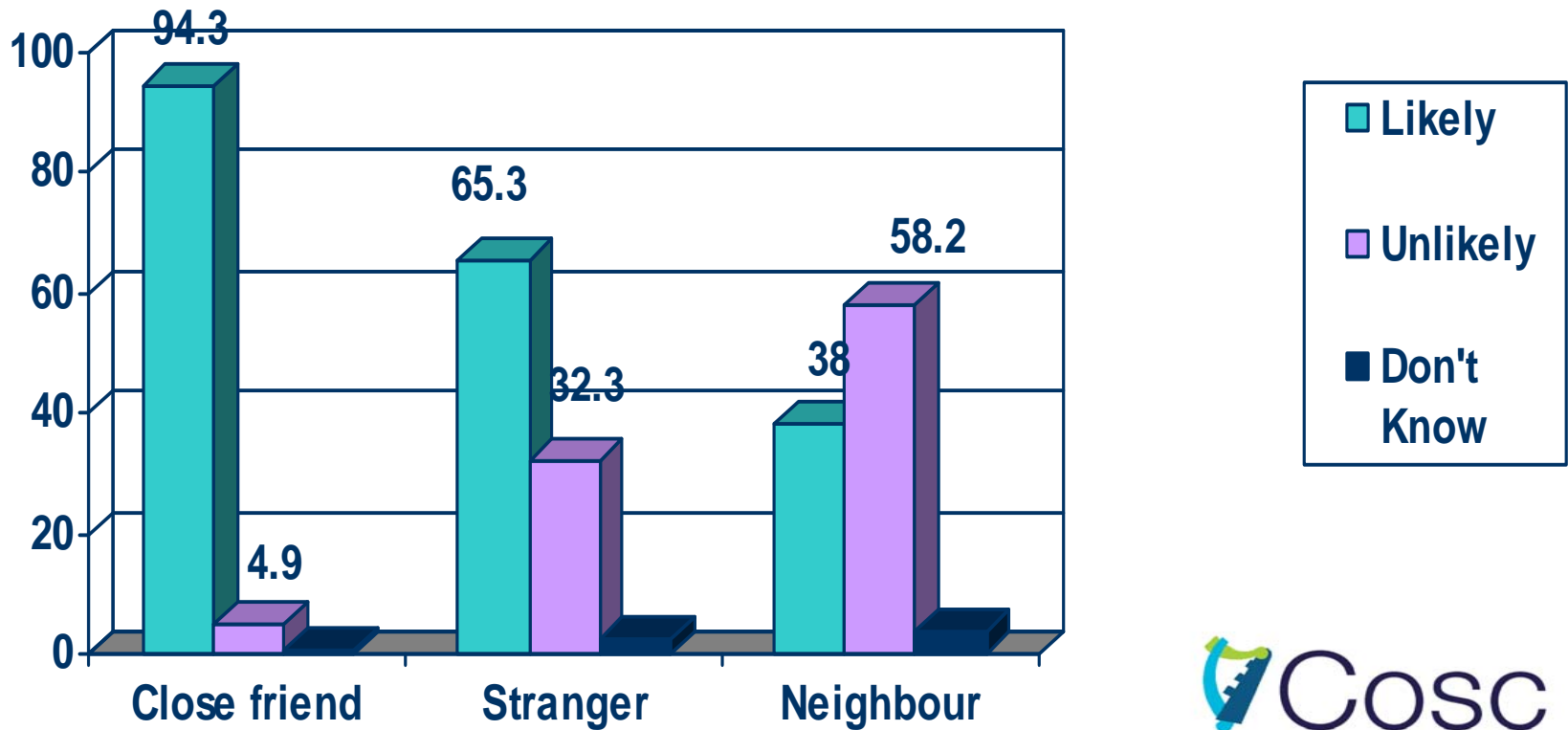
Responding to domestic abuse

Willingness to intervene?
When to intervene?
How people might intervene?

Domestic abuse is a private matter and should be handled within the family?

	%
Agree	13.9
Disagree	83.5
Don't know	2.5
Total	100.0

Helping depends on the relationship



How people would help a close friend

	Very/Fairly Likely
Ask if alright but not mention abuse	94.6
Encourage use of helpline	92.5
Encourage to contact Gardaí	86.6
Encourage to contact social worker	85.0
Ask directly about suspected abuse	76.8
Talk to circle of friends	73.8
Report to Gardaí on own initiative	42.6
Talk to perpetrator	35.0
Not do anything	4.9

Type of help victim of domestic abuse is likely to get if they visit a GP?

	%
GP would give advice about where to get further help	96
GP would understand the nature of the problem	93
GP would record evidence of injuries	92

Will others who witness domestic abuse report to the Gardaí?

	%
Likely	22.9
Unlikely	74.2
Don't know	2.8
Total	100.0

Reasons why others would not report to the Gardaí?

	%
Feeling they should not get involved	87.9
Fear they may make things worse	75.2
Fear children may be removed	73.4
Fear it would not improve safety	69.5
Fear AnGS would not treat it seriously	52.1

Conclusions

Conclusions and final thoughts

- High levels of awareness
- Impact seen as more serious for women
- Willingness to intervene if close to home
 - Will people intervene if they think others won't? (neighbours)
- Implications for future research
 - Repeat survey
 - Are people informed/confident about how best to respond?