

RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE AGAINST OLDER WOMEN

Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)
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AUTHORS: MILUTIN VRACEVIC, NATASA TODOROVIC, PATRICIA BROWNELL, MARIJA BABOVIC

PRESENTER: IVAN CASTELLANOS



About survey

“Exploring violence against older women in the Western Balkans, Moldova and Ukraine” is a good example of synergy between different stakeholders at different levels: European Union, OSCE, UNFPA, Austrian Development Agency, INPEA, the Red Cross of Serbia and experts from Serbia and the United States.

OSCE-led survey on wellbeing and safety of women in SEE and EE used as basis

Survey covered: Western Balkans region plus Moldova and Ukraine

Over 15000 women interviewed, 1963 women old 65-74

[1] All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Sample size of women 65-74 by country



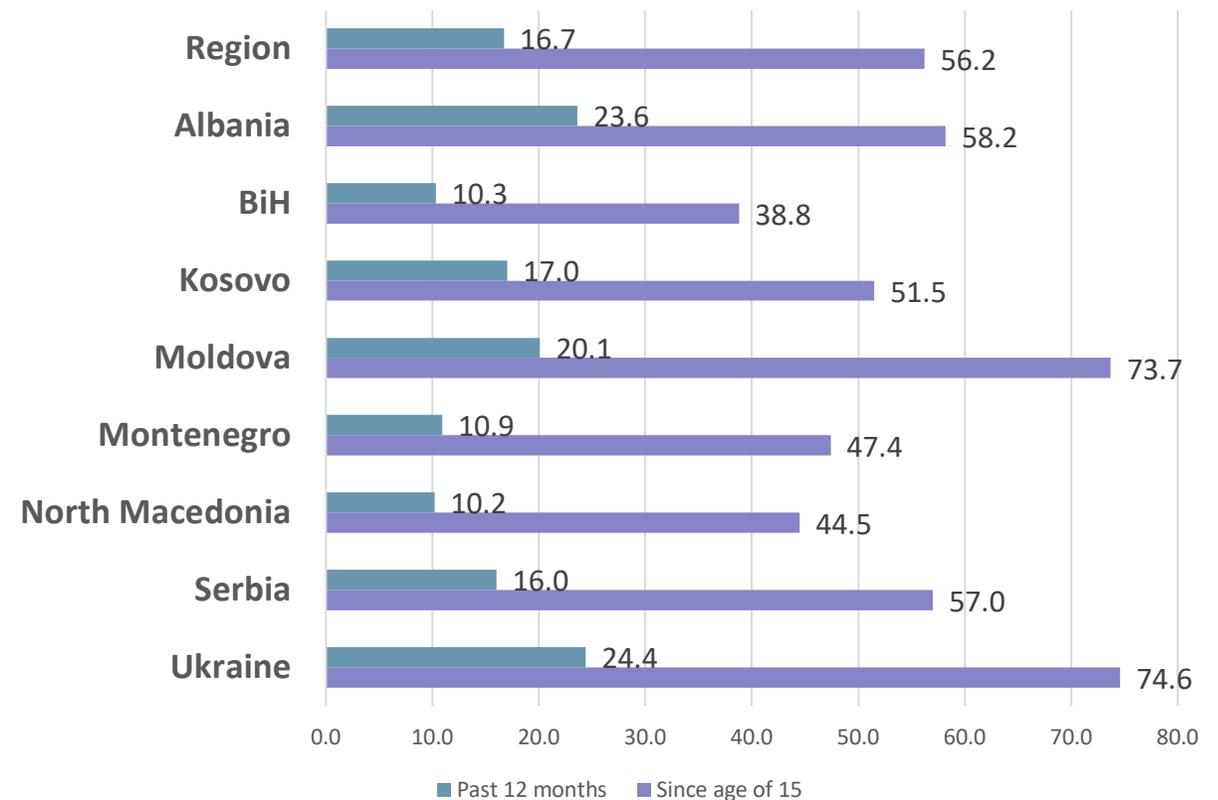
Any gender-based violence

Over half of older women in the region have experienced some form of GBV during the lifetime (since age of 15)

Lifetime prevalence rates of any GBV are lower among older women than middle aged and young women (caution due to the lack of indicators specific for violence against older women)

Cross-country differences are significant

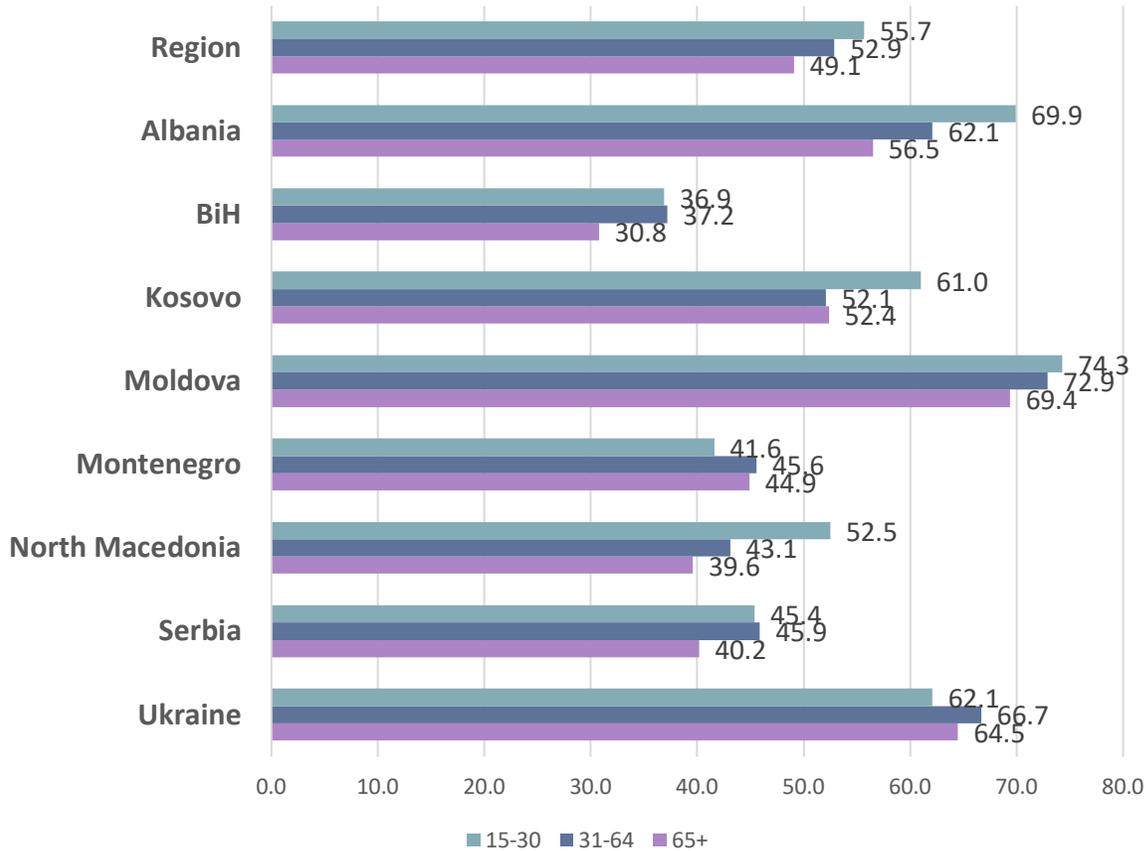
Percentage of women aged 65-74 who experienced any form of abuse since age of 15, and during 12 months preceding the survey, by country, %



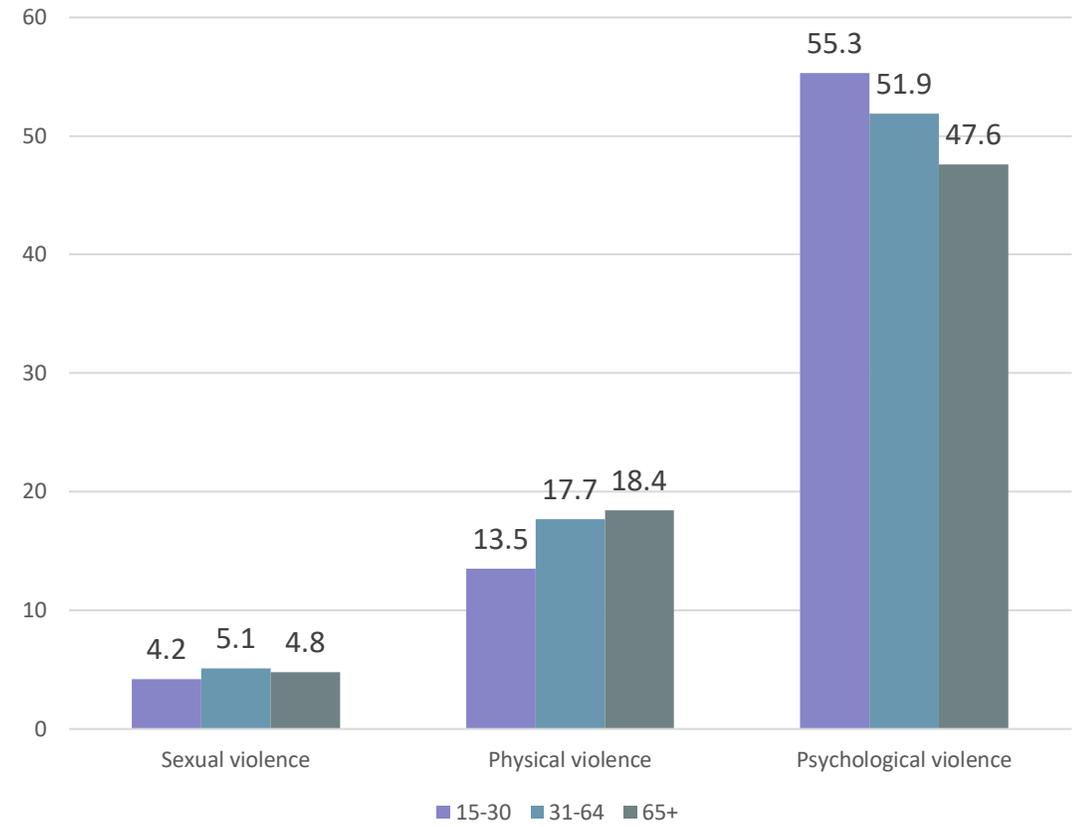
Source: OSCE-led survey

Intimate partner violence

Percentage of women who experienced any form of intimate partner (current or previous) violence (including physical, sexual or psychological) since age 15, by age and country, %

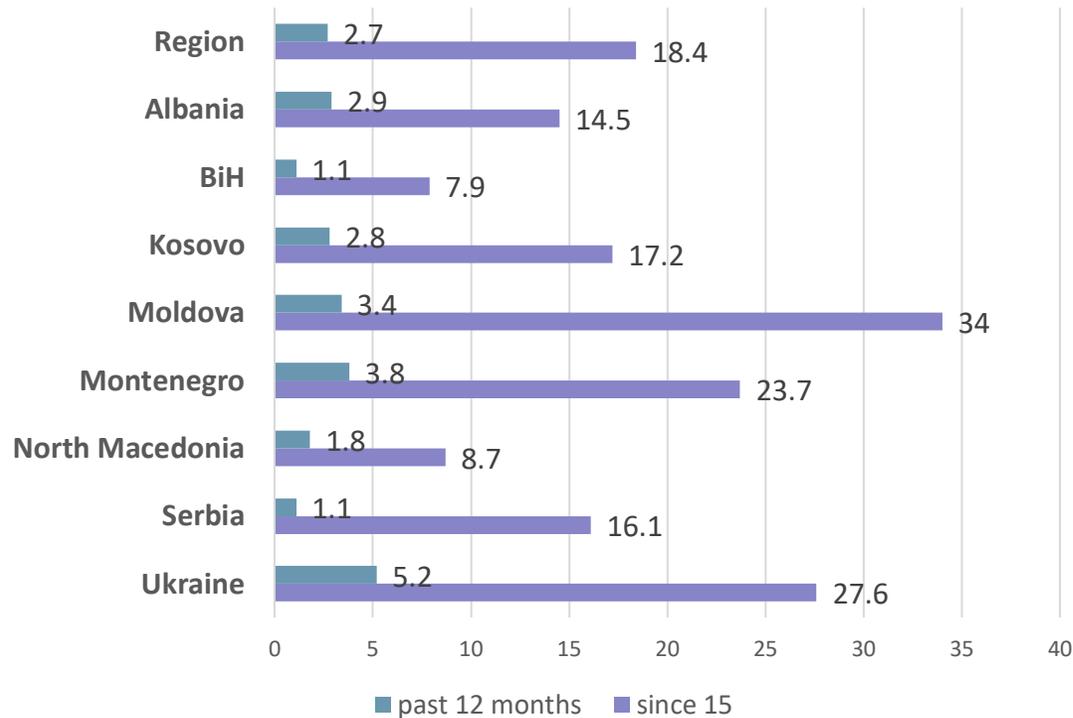


Percentage of women who experienced different forms of intimate partner violence since age of 15, %

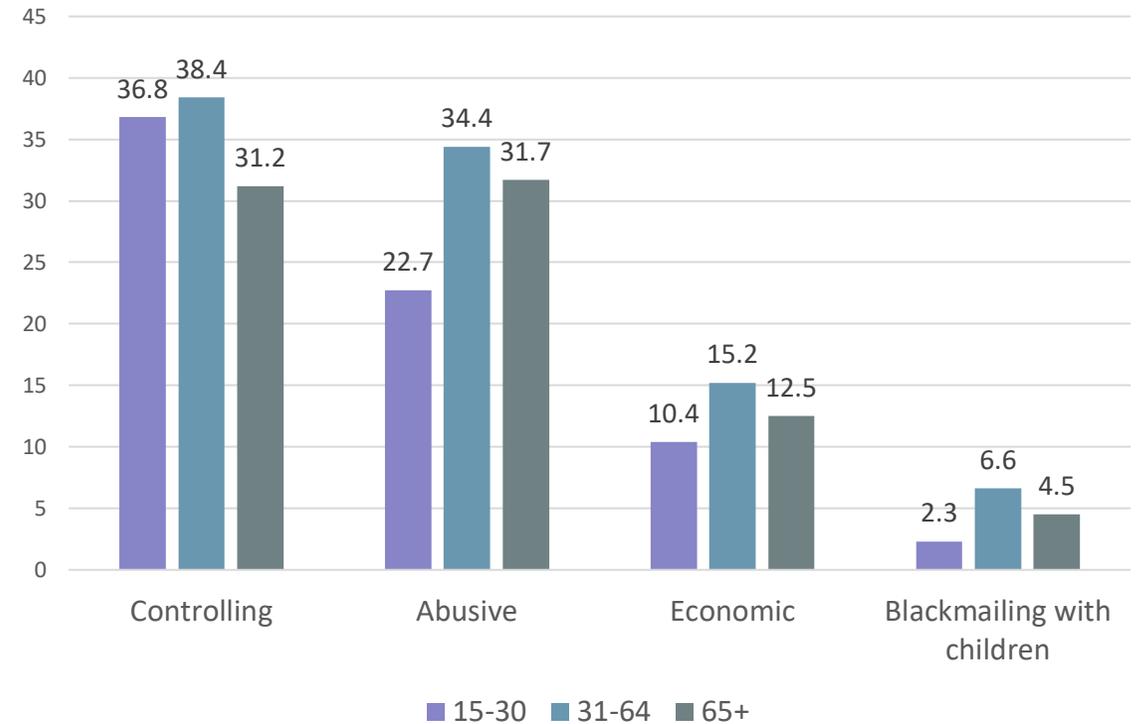


Intimate partner physical and psychological violence

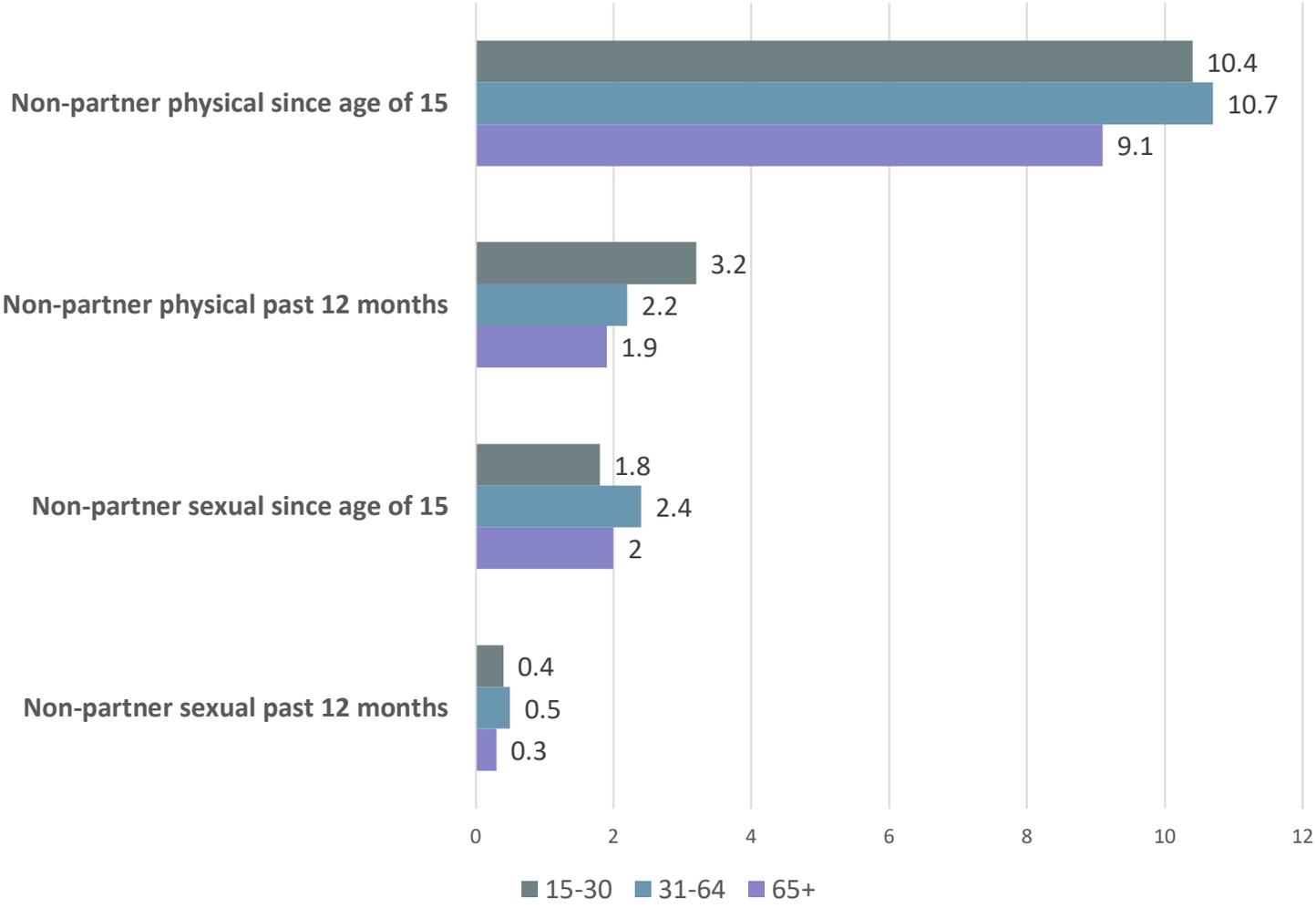
Percentage of women 65-74 who experienced intimate partner (current or previous) physical violence since age of 15, and during last 12 months preceding the survey, by country, %



Prevalence (since age of 15) of different forms of psychological violence by age, %



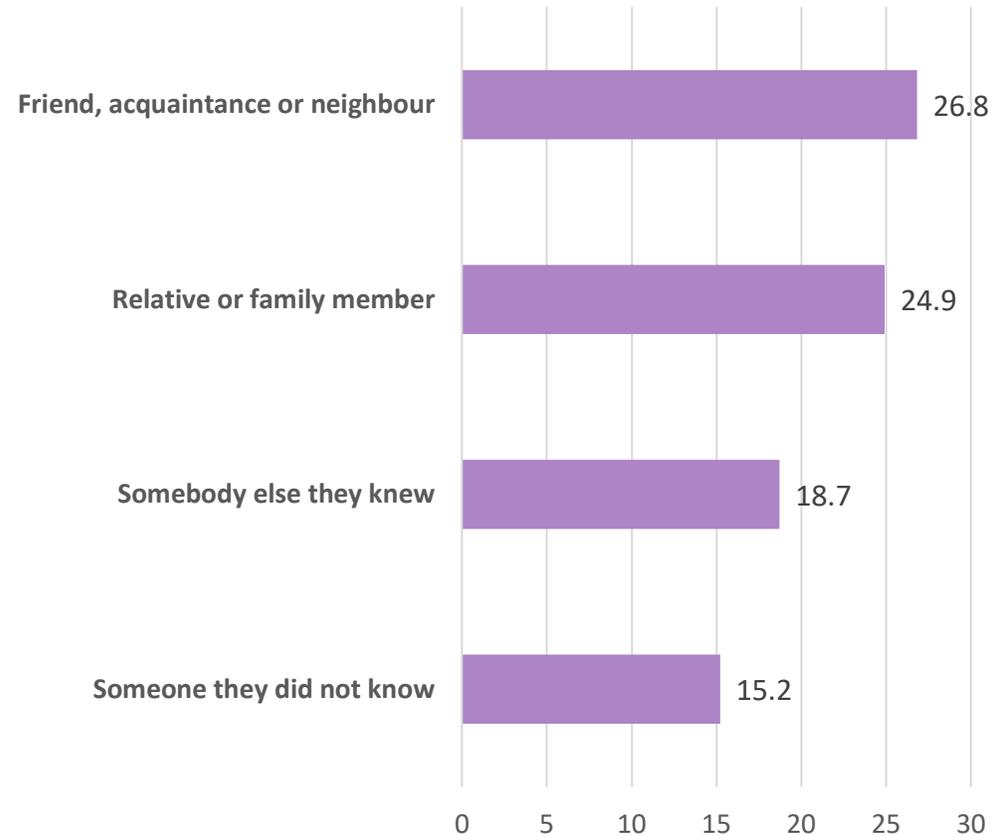
Non-partner violence



Perpetrators

- The risks of intimate partner violence are higher among women who live with partners with alcohol drinking habits, or who show aggressive behaviour outside the family.
- The perpetrators of non-partner violence are more often persons close to women, such as friends, acquaintances, neighbours or relatives and members of the family, rather than unknown persons.
- Perpetrators of sexual harassment are predominantly men, although women also reportedly participated in some incidents of sexual harassment, alone or together with men. These cases are mainly related to offensive questions about private life or offensive comments regarding the women's appearance.

The most common perpetrators of the most serious incident of non-partner physical or sexual violence against women 65-74, %

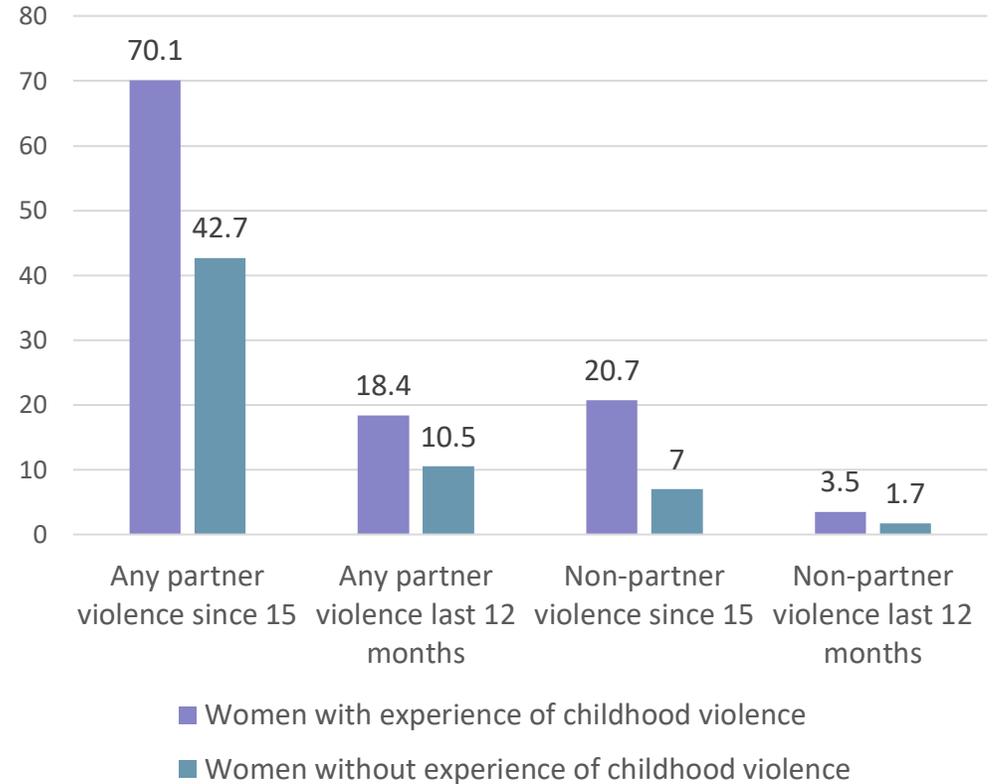


Childhood violence

The strongest predictor of violence against all women, including older women, is childhood violence.

The prevalence rates of partner and non-partner violence are much higher among women who experienced some form of violence during the childhood.

Women old 65-74 years by experiences of childhood violence and prevalence rates of partner and non-partner violence, %



Risk factors

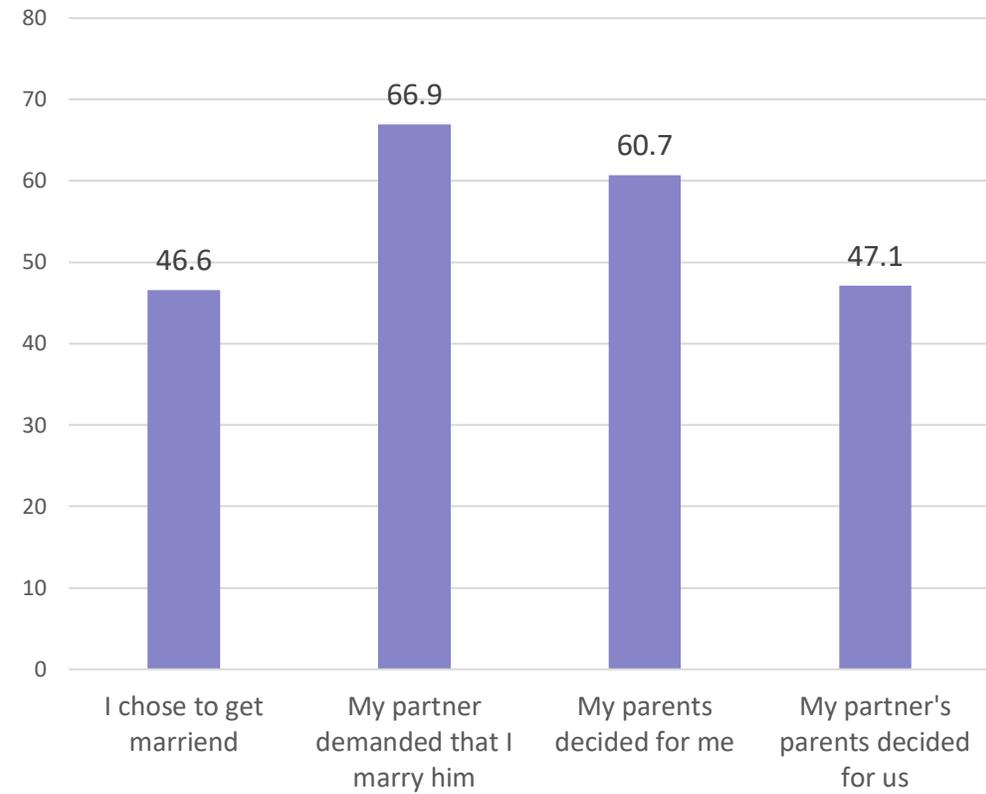
Forced and early marriage significantly increase the risks of intimate partner violence

Financial and material deprivation, as well as economic dependence and lower contribution to the household income

Among older women disability increases the risks of intimate partner violence but not non-partner violence like in younger women with disabilities

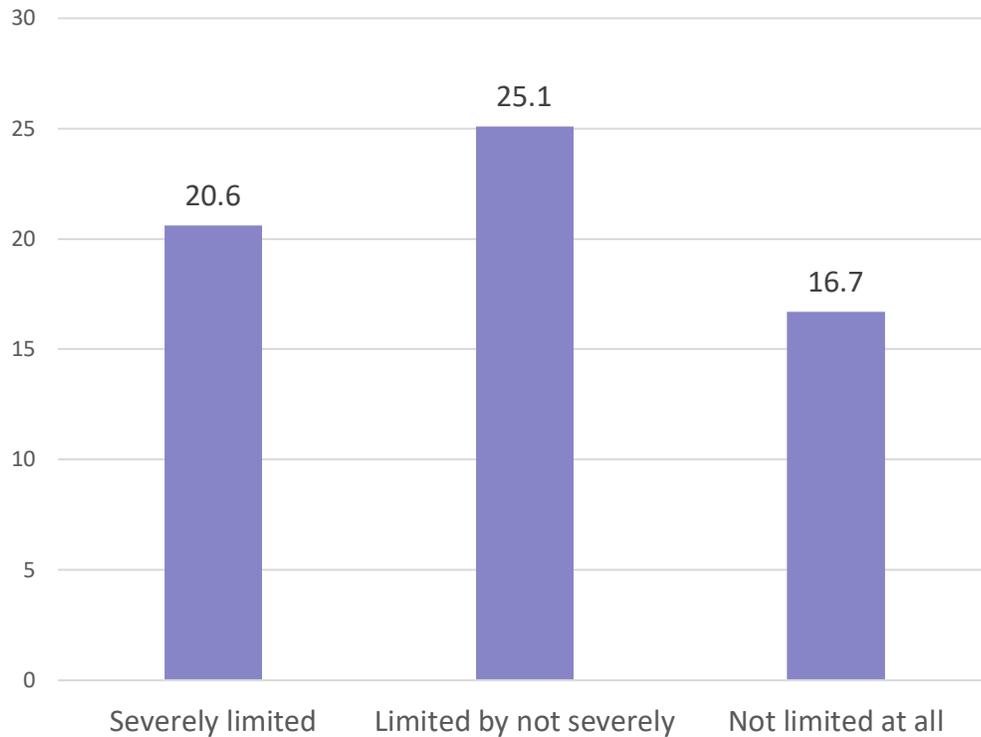
Patriarchal norms and values

Women 65-74 who experienced current partner violence since age of 15, by the way of getting married, %



Disability and patriarchal attitudes as risk factors

Prevalence rates of current partner violence during last 12 months, among women 65-74 with different disability status, %

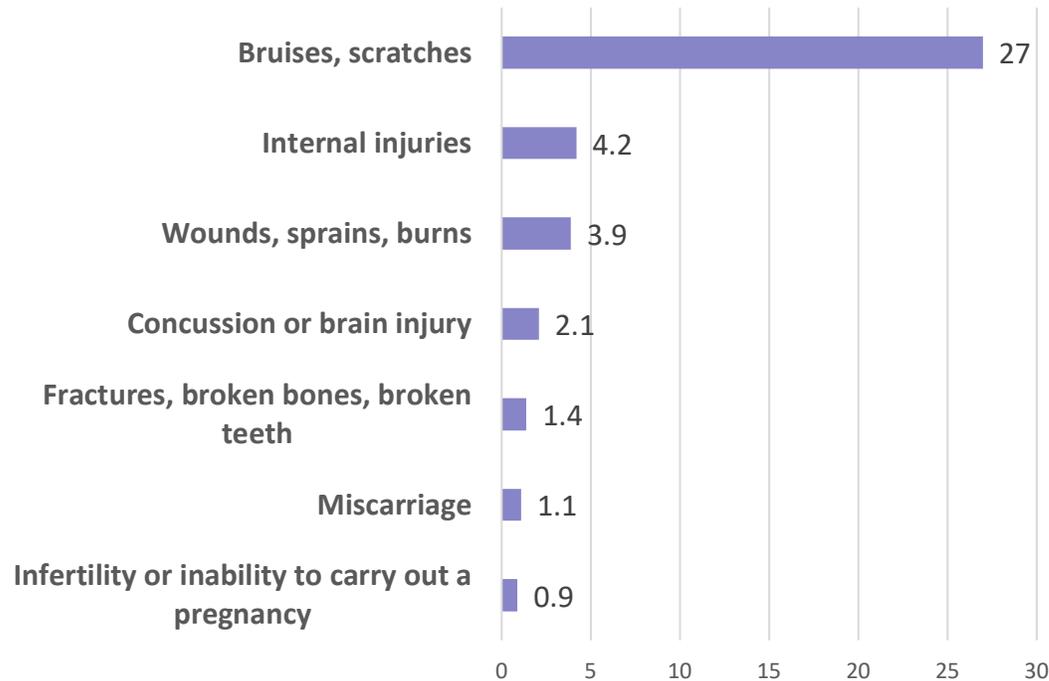


Percentage of women who experienced intimate partner violence among women who agree or disagree with statement

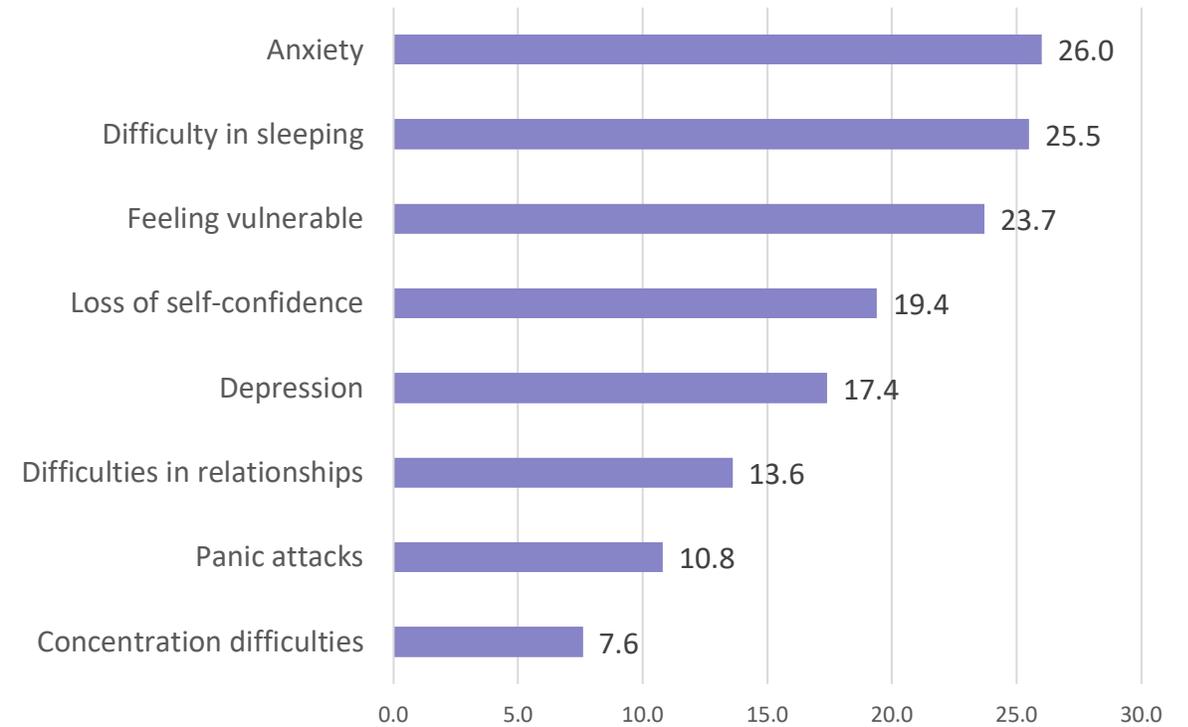
Statements	% of women with experience of intimate partner violence among women who			
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree
It is important for a man to show his wife/partner who is the boss	54.2	51.4	50.3	41.4
It is the wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn't feel like it	59.0	56.4	50.0	43.2
Sex without the consent could be justified in a marriage or among partners who live together	56.9	62.1	49.38	43.0
Sex without the consent could be justified when women are wearing revealing, provocative or sexy clothing	66.3	59.2	51.1	44.7
Sex without the consent could be justified when woman is drunk or using drugs	70.5	56.0	47.5	46.3
Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family	50.0	53.7	52.1	42.1
Women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know	49.4	52.7	50.2	39.9

Consequences of the most serious incident of intimate partner violence

Physical consequences – women 65-74



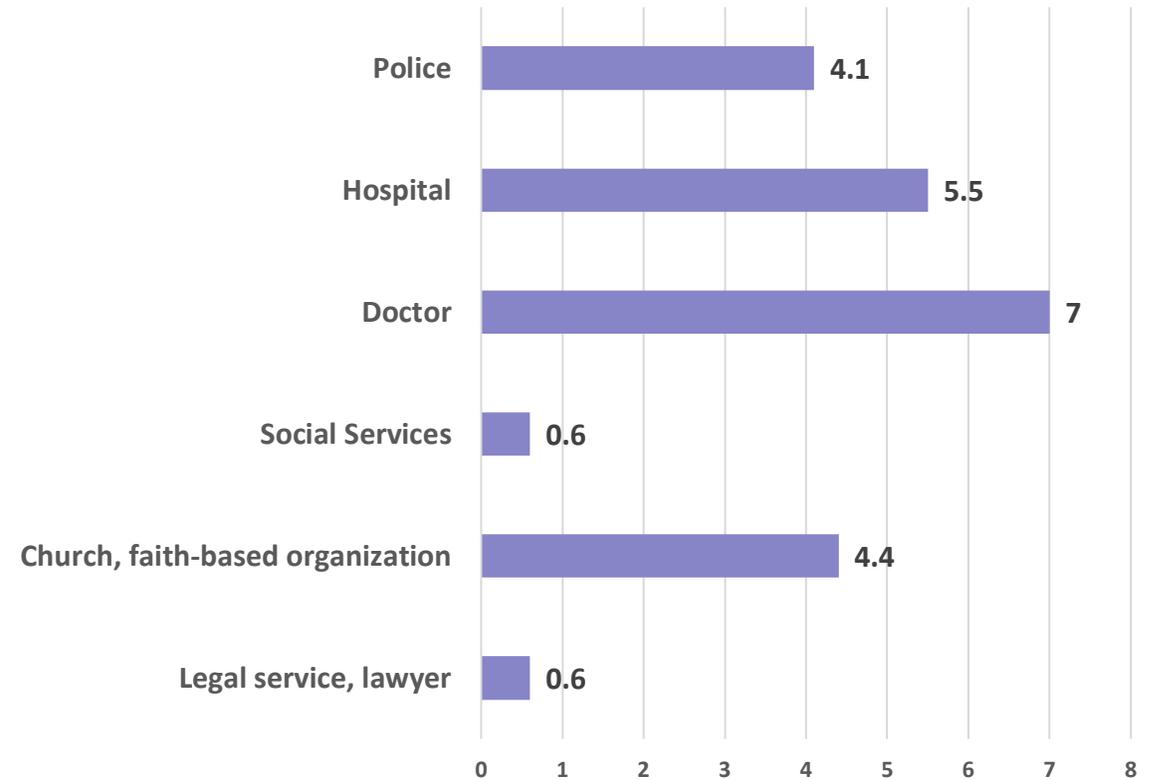
Psychological consequences – women 65-74



Reporting

- Women report their most severe experiences of violence to the police or other institutions and organizations in extremely small proportion.
- There is tendency to report in slightly higher proportion the most severe incidents of non-partner than partner violence.

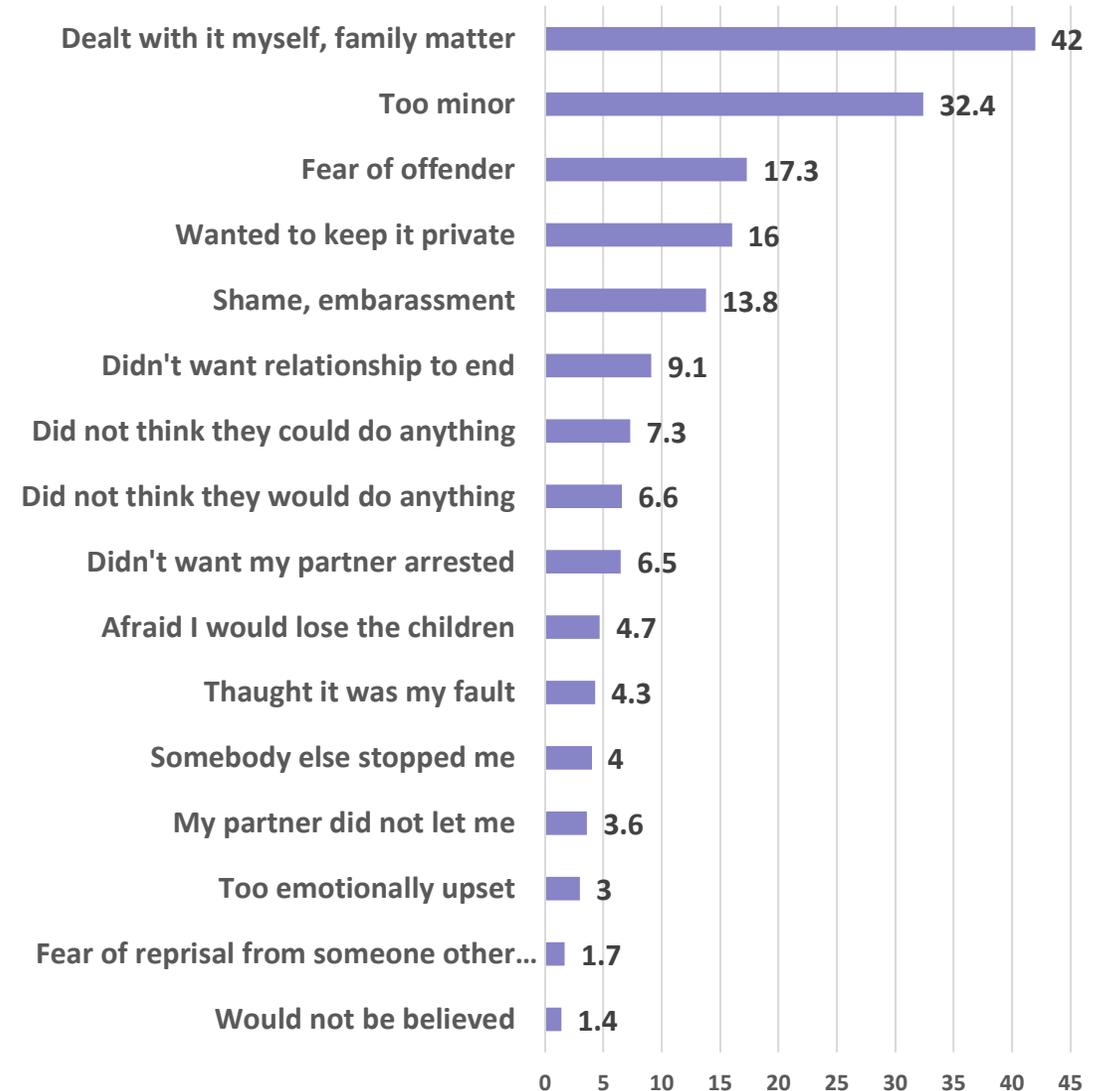
Share of women 65-74 who experienced current partner violence and reported seeking help from different institutions and organization, (N=121 women), %



Reasons for not reporting

- The main reasons given for not reporting violence were the belief that violence should stay in the family and women should deal with it alone, or incidents were assessed as too minor.
- In both cases of partner and non-partner violence, women approached in higher proportion medical facilities and assistance than police or any other support service.
- The coping strategies do not show any systematic action to resolve or leave situation of violence, leaving women without exit strategies, creating pressure to adjust to the situation of violence.

Women 65-74 who disclosed in the survey the most severe incident of current partner violence, and who did not report it to police by the reasons for not reporting it, %



Recommendations

- Cut off age for data collection must be abandoned.
- Studies on gender-based violence in the general female population need to include older women by reflecting the whole population of women regardless of age, as well as by asking questions about specific forms of abuse that affect older women in particular.
- Data collected within different protection systems must be age-disaggregated into five-year cohorts as well as gender categories.

Recommendations

- Regulations relevant to domestic violence should recognize older women as **an at-risk group**.
- **Access to information on prevention and protection services**
- **Free legal aid services, SOS telephone numbers, safe houses.**
- **Long-term care service providers** should build their capacities to be able to screen for risks of violence
- **Support services to informal caregivers** in order to reduce the burden of care, thus reducing the risk of violence.
- **Mental health and psychosocial support services** should be trauma-focused so they can provide adequate support to older women survivors of violence.

Recommendations

- Professionals working in institutions and services should have **continuous intersectional training** on the prevention of violence against older women.
- **Continuing information sessions with older women** at community level Promote a **positive image of the contributions** of older women.
- Plan long-term, continuous work on the **fight against stereotypes** about older women.
- Invest in **preventive measures during the life cycle**.
- Promote and encourage **intergenerational solidarity**.
- Promote the adoption of the **United Nations New Convention on the Rights of Older Persons**.

Thank you!

Contact Information:

Nataša Todorović or Milutin Vračević

Red Cross of Serbia

natasa@redcross.org.rs or
milutin@redcross.org.rs