



**The impact of disability and violence
by household members on
psychological distress
in Cambodian women**

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Bias and scope of research on violence against women with disabilities

- Most research on domestic violence has been conducted in high income countries such as the US, UK, Canada and Australia
- Focussed primarily on intimate partner violence (IPV), reflecting the nuclear family formation most common in these settings
- Underrepresented women with disabilities, despite the fact that almost 20% of women globally are estimated to have a disability (World Report on Disability, 2011).
- A Medline search conducted towards the end of 2012 revealed that only 0.17% (58/33,361) of papers on domestic violence concerned women with disabilities (WWDs).

Study setting

Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in South East Asia.

Women occupy a subordinate position within society and Cambodia ranks in the bottom third of all countries (99/145) on the Gender Inequality Index

Women earn 66% of average male earnings (\$US 1532 vs \$US 2315)

No change in high maternal mortality rate since 2000 (540/100,000 live births)

National surveys indicate Intimate Partner Violence affects more than 1-5 women

Women with disabilities are severely marginalised and vulnerable to triple jeopardy as a result of the interplay of their gender, disability and the violence against them

'The triple jeopardy' study

A mixed methods study Involving a cross sectional survey, in depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

It examined:

Strength of relationships between disability, gender based violence and other Rights violations

Impact of these on the mental health of Cambodian women, especially WWDS, and their access to health and other services.

Today, I am going to focus on findings from the cross sectional survey component of the study

Methods

- Survey undertaken at the household level by bi lingual Cambodian interviewers working in pairs and using a shortened version of WHO multi country survey on women's health and domestic violence
- Geographically representative sampling. Field sites included two urban (Phnom Penh and urban Siem Reap) and three rural settings (Battambang, rural Siem Reap and Kampong Speu).
- Face to face interviews conducted with 354 women (177 WWDs and 177 non disabled women)
- Psychological distress measured by the WHO Self Report Questionnaire (SRQ)
- Disability measured by Washington short set of questions that ascertains the degree of functional impairment (WHO survey did not include questions on disability)

★ Location of Cambodian Survey



Intimate partner violence against WWDs in Cambodia

- A previous analysis of data from the Triple Jeopardy project found no significant difference in rates of intimate partner violence between WWDs and non disabled women.
- BUT, the majority of WWDs never marry/
partner and $\frac{3}{4}$ were unmarried/partnered
at time of the survey as the next pp shows

Sociodemographic differences between WWDs and those without

WWDs Without p

177 177

Age Years 32.1 31.4 ns

No school 28.2% 19.2% 0.046

Never married 57.6% 19.2% 0.000

Unmarried now 75.1% 28.8% 0.000

Lives with birth 71.1% 44.6% 0.000

Family

Earns money 70.6% 81.4% 0.018

Mean financial 3.2 (2.5) 5.2(2.4) 0.000

autonomy

Disability by household violence/coercive control

WWDs Without OR 95%CI
177 176

Household violence

Physical 25.4% 11.4% 2.6 1.4-4.7****

Emotional 52.5% 35.2% 2.0 1.3-3.1****

Sexual 5.7% 1.1% 5.2 1.1-24.2**

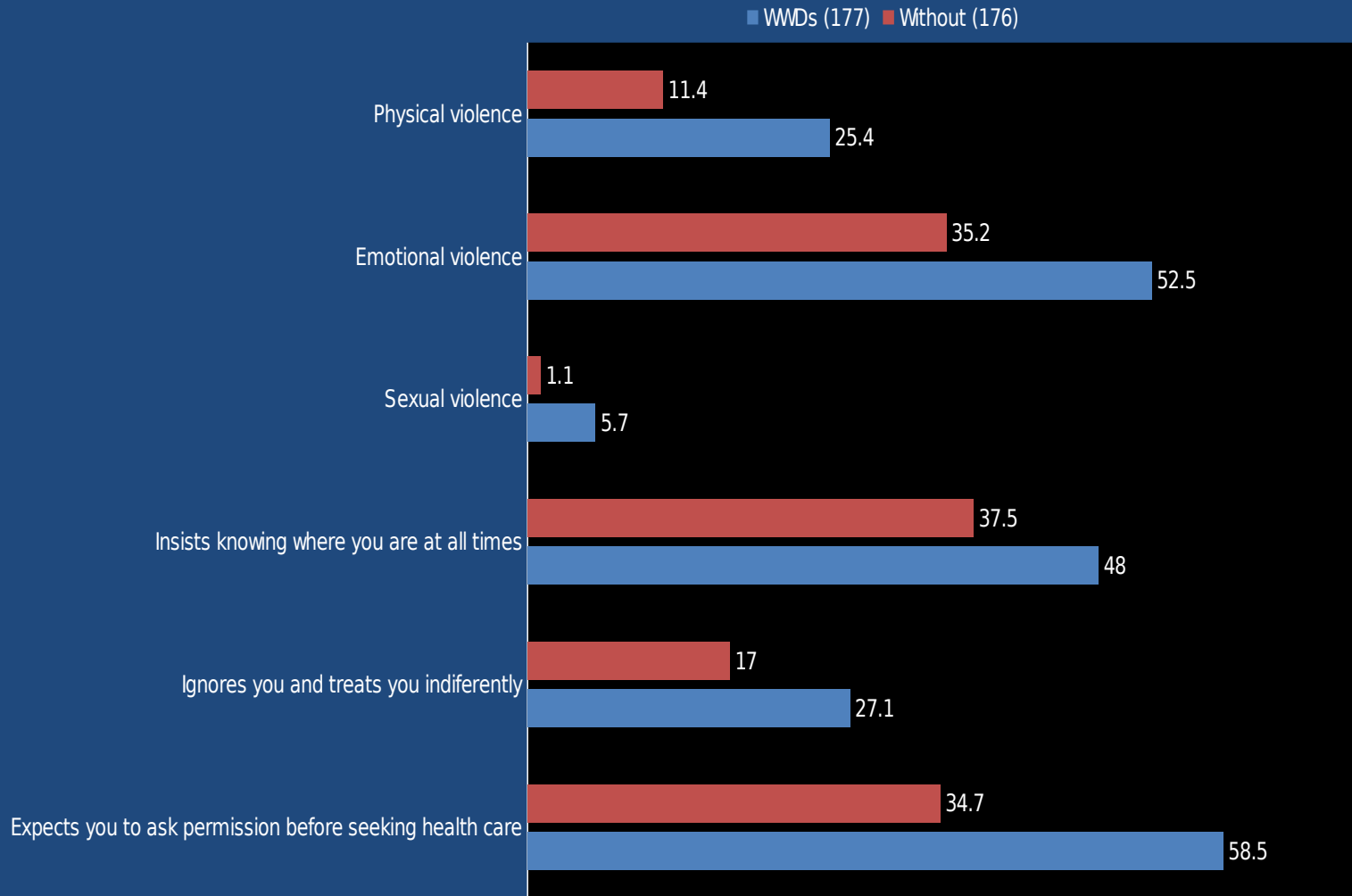
Insists knowing 48.0% 37.5% 1.5 1.0-2.3*
where you are
at all times

Ignores you and treats 27.1% 17.0% 1.8 1.1-3.0**
you indifferently

Expects you to ask 58.5% 34.7% 1.8 1.1-2.7***
permission before
seeking health care

*p=0.05, **p=0.02, ***p=0.008, ****p=0.001,

Disability by household violence/coercive control (%)



Psychological distress

SRQ is a 20 item measure of common mental disorders ie depression, anxiety and somatic complaints (minimum score=0,maximum=20).

Household violence (n = 353)

Mean score for total sample 12.8sd=4.6

Neither disability or HV 11.3sd=4.9**

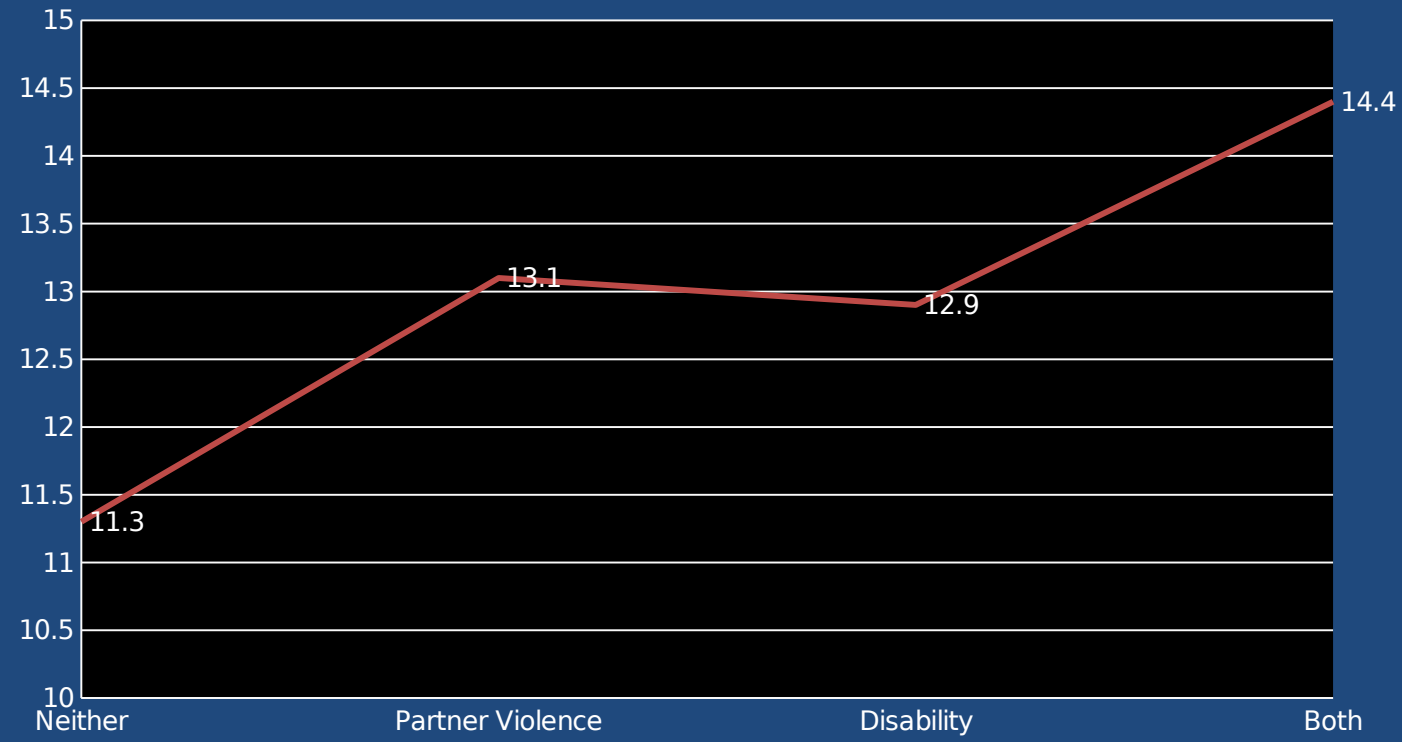
Household violence only 13.1sd=3.8***

Disability only 12.9sd=5.2***

Both 14.4sd=3.8***

p=0.01, *p <=0.005

Mean SRQ by Household Violence and Disability Status



Most common perpetrators of household violence

Mother/Father 49.0%

Other male family member 31.3%

Other female family member 27.1%

Stepfather/stepmother 6.3%

No one mentioned : a teacher, police, soldier, male family friend, female family friend, boyfriend, stranger, someone at work, priest or religious leader

“My mother hit me many times and I don't know why”

‘I don't know the reason at all. But I do remember she wasn't happy that I couldn't do things like other people. She didn't understand that I couldn't see like other people, but I really tried my best. I felt really suffering and couldn't stay with my parents any longer. I ran away to Caritas in Phnom Penh where my eyes were operated on. My aunt knew about this and sent me back home even though I didn't want to go.’

Summary and recommendations

- WWDs = almost 1 in 5 of the world's population but are largely missing from DV research
- Cambodian WWDs have significantly higher rates of household violence and coercive control than non disabled women
- Exposure to such violence is likely to be protracted as more than 70% of WWDs continue to live with their birth families

Household violence and disability are linked to very high levels of psychological distress

- Clinicians, program and policy makers need to recognise household violence (not focus solely on IPV) and respond to the very high rates of psychological distress that accompany it
- **But increased services are not sufficient!**
- Increased mobilization of informal support within local communities is needed
- WWDs may need to gain permission to seek health care from their perpetrators and few access care despite having more violence related injuries than non disabled women