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Over Thirty Million Adults Claim to be Victims of Domestic Violence

Part 2

ROCHESTER, N.Y., June 16 /PRNewswire/ – According to The Harris Poll[®], approximately 33 million¹ or 15% of all U.S. adults, admit that they were a victim of domestic violence. Furthermore, six in 10 adults claim that they know someone personally who has experienced domestic violence.

These are some of the results of a Harris Poll of 2,377 U.S. adults ages 18 and older surveyed online by Harris Interactive[®] between April 11 and 17, 2006. This survey was conceived by Harris Interactive and was not commissioned by any organization. However, we did seek and receive valuable input from the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Who Are the Victims of Domestic Violence?

This survey attempts to gauge the magnitude of domestic violence. The term “domestic violence” refers to “physical harm (pushed, shoved, choked, hit, etc.), sexual harm and/or emotional harm (made fun of, yelled at, ignored, isolated, etc.) regularly occurring between spouses or dating partners.”

Based on this definition, six in 10 (61%) adults claim that they know someone personally “who has ever experienced domestic violence.” A quarter (25%) of adults say that they didn’t know anyone, while the remaining 15% say that they aren’t sure or refuse to provide an answer.

* Two-thirds (67%) of women say they know someone who has ever experienced domestic violence, compared to 21% who say they do not know anyone who has experienced it. The respective figures for men are lower (55% who know someone, 28% who don’t know someone).

A quarter (24%) of those who say that they know someone personally who has experienced domestic violence say that the victim is themselves. This translates into 15% of the U.S. adult population, or approximately 33 million adults. Among women, this figure increases to 33% of women who know someone who has experienced domestic violence and 11% of men (22% of all women and 6% of all men).

* Among those who know someone personally who is a victim of domestic violence, 45% say that the victim was a family member or a friend, an acquaintance (28%), a co-worker (22%), or someone else (10%).

Separately, among all adults, 39% say that they have experienced at least one of the following, with 54% saying that they haven’t experienced any:

- * Called bad names (31%)
- * Pushing, slapping, choking or hitting (21%)
- * Public humiliation (19%)
- * Keeping away from friends or family (13%)
- * Threatening your family (10%)
- * Forcing you to have sexual intercourse without consent (9%)

Not surprisingly, these figures increase dramatically for the victims of domestic violence. Ninety-two percent of victims say that they have experienced one or more of these actions, with 95% of female victims and 81% of male victims saying this.

Actions Taken

- * In a hypothetical situation, majorities of those who do not know anyone who has experienced domestic violence say that they would take a number of steps if a friend or family member claimed they were a victim of domestic violence. This includes talking to a family member (73%), talking to a friend (67%), calling the police (65%) or calling a domestic violence hotline (62%).
- * However, for those who know a victim, overall seven in 10 (72%) took some sort of action, while fewer numbers talked to a friend (34%), talked to a family member (30%), called the police (22%) or called a domestic violence hotline (5%).

The Harris Poll findings help draw attention to the fact that many acknowledge the seriousness of domestic violence and feel that resources need to be directed at helping victims of domestic violence. At the same time, the survey highlights that many adults are willing to come forward and acknowledge that they have been a victim themselves.

¹ Based on July 2005 U.S. Census estimate released January 2006 (223,000,000 total U.S. adults aged 18 or over).

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States between April 11 and 17, 2006 among 2,377 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All surveys are subject to several sources of error. These include: sampling error (because only a sample of a population is interviewed); measurement error due to question wording and/or question order, deliberately or unintentionally inaccurate responses, nonresponse (including refusals), interviewer effects (when live interviewers are used) and weighting.

With one exception (sampling error) the magnitude of the errors that result cannot be estimated. There is, therefore, no way to calculate a finite "margin of error" for any survey and the use of these words should be avoided.

With pure probability samples, with 100% response rates, it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error (but not other sources of error) is not greater than some number. With a pure probability sample of 2,377 adults one could say with a 95% probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/-2 percentage points. However that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

The Harris Poll® #50, June 16, 2006 Harris Interactive Inc. 06/06

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<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/>. SOURCE Harris Interactive.

This is Part 2 of a two part Harris Poll column about Domestic Violence. Part 1 was released on June 15.

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