Violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A comparative analysis of population-based data from 12 countries

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Summary of presentation

1. Background and objectives of the comparative study

2. Challenges in comparability

3. Comparative findings:
   • Prevalence of violence against women (VAW)
   • Acceptability of VAW
   • Health consequences of VAW
   • Intergenerational effects of VAW

4. Methodological considerations

5. Conclusions
Collaborators

- **Sarah Bott**
  Independent Consultant

- **Mary Goodwin**
  Epidemiologist, Division of Reproductive Health, CDC

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- Thanks: **Sunita Kishor**, IFC Macro (DHS) and staff
Population-based Health Surveys in LAC

- Over 75 surveys in 19 countries in LAC over the past 35 years
  - Demographic Health Surveys (DHS)
    - TA from Macro International
  - Reproductive Health Surveys (RHS)
    - TA from the CDC
- Most supported by USAID in collaboration with UNFPA, UNICEF, PAHO; IDB, World Bank, others
- Since 1998, more than 20 surveys in LAC have addressed violence against women
- No regional comparative analysis of these data has been done (though some surveys have appeared in comparative reports or articles)
Objectives of PAHO/CDC’s comparative analysis

- Make regional comparative data easier to access and disseminate
- Increase knowledge about prevalence, risk factors, consequences, and attitudes
- Raise awareness of violence against women in the region
- Catalyze change by motivating policy makers and programmers to design and implement evidence-based strategies
## Surveys in the comparative study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>9,576</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>14,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>9,717</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>14,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>16,582</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>37,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>8,259</td>
<td>Dom. Rep.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>14,165</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>2005/6</td>
<td>3,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6,526</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>2005/6</td>
<td>19,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2007/8</td>
<td>16,648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of obstacles to comparability in country reports

Timeframes:
- Some countries asked about IPV in the past year, but not ‘ever’ (Bolivia 2008, Honduras 2005/6)

Denominators:
- Surveys used diverse denominators for presenting data on help-seeking and consequences, attitudes about wife beating, etc.

Operational definitions:
- Colombia 2005 and Peru 2007/8 classified forced sex as a form of physical IPV
How did we go about carrying out the comparative analysis

For each indicator:
- Compared original questionnaires
- Developed operational definitions
- Constructed comparable variables
- Developed tables and charts
- Made detailed notes about comparability
Physical partner violence against women, ever and past 12 months (DHS: current /most recent partner only)

Source: Preliminary results, PAHO/CDC (forthcoming) “Violence against women in LAC”
Lifetime sexual violence by a partner and by any perpetrator:

- Haiti 2005 DHS: 11% by a partner, 27% by any perpetrator
- Bolivia 2003 DHS: 15% by a partner, 18% by any perpetrator
- Colombia 2005 DHS: 12% by a partner, 17% by any perpetrator
- Nicaragua 2006 RHS: 15% by a partner, 15% by any perpetrator
- Guatemala 2008/9 RHS: 12% by a partner, 15% by any perpetrator
- Ecuador 2004 RHS: 12% by a partner, 15% by any perpetrator
- El Salvador 2008 RHS: 12% by a partner, 15% by any perpetrator
- Jamaica 2008-9 RHS: 8% by a partner, 12% by any perpetrator
- Dominican Republic 2007 DHS: 5% by a partner, 12% by any perpetrator
- Honduras 2005 DHS: 12% by a partner, 12% by any perpetrator
- Paraguay 2008 RHS: 9% by a partner, 10% by any perpetrator

Source: Preliminary results, PAHO/CDC (forthcoming) “Violence against women in LAC”
Acceptability of wife-beating
% of women who said that wife-beating is justified for at least one reason

- Ecuador 2004: 38.2%
- Haiti 2005/6: 28.5%
- Paraguay 2008: 22.9%
- Bolivia 2008: 16.5%
- Honduras 2005/6: 15.6%
- Nicaragua 2006/7: 13.8%
- Peru 2007/8: 5.3%
- Dominican Republic 2007: 4.3%
- Jamaica 2008/9: 2.9%
Violence against women leads to physical injury:
% of women who reported a physical injury by a partner, among women who reported partner violence, past year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country and Year</th>
<th>Any severe injury</th>
<th>Minor but not severe injury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay 2008 RHS</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador 2008 RHS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua 2006 RHS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala 2008/9 RHS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador 2004 RHS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru 2007-8 DHS</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic 2007 DHS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras 2005 DHS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Preliminary results, PAHO/CDC (forthcoming) “Violence against women in LAC”
Comparison of rates of unwanted pregnancy among women, according to report of violence

% of women who reported at least 1 unwanted pregnancy in the past 5 years, by experience of partner violence ever

Source: Preliminary results, PAHO/CDC (forthcoming) “Violence against women in LAC”
## Intergenerational effects: Prevalence of partner violence, by history of abuse against mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Year, Source</th>
<th>Percent Among Women Whose Mother Was Beaten</th>
<th>Percent Among Women Whose Mother Was NOT Beaten</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia 2003, DHS</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru 2007-8, DHS</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia 2005, DHS</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador 2004, RHS</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua 2006, RHS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador 2008, RHS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala 2008/9, RHS</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay 2008, RHS</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti 2005, DHS</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica 2008-9, RHS</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic 2007, DHS</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Preliminary results, PAHO/CDC (forthcoming) "Violence against women in LAC"
Intergenerational effects:
Children in respondents’ current home punished with hitting, beating or slapping:

- Colombia 2005: 69.2% among women who reported partner violence, 57.6% among women who reported NO partner violence
- Bolivia 2003: 66.0% among women who reported partner violence, 50.9% among women who reported NO partner violence
- Jamaica 2008/9: 64.5% among women who reported partner violence, 52.1% among women who reported NO partner violence
- Guatemala 2008/9: 56.0% among women who reported partner violence, 38.8% among women who reported NO partner violence
- Nicaragua 2006/7: 41.2% among women who reported partner violence, 32.3% among women who reported NO partner violence
- Paraguay 2008: 34.8% among women who reported partner violence, 23.3% among women who reported NO partner violence
Intergenerational effects: Prevalence of partner violence, by history of being beaten in childhood

Source: Preliminary results, PAHO/CDC (forthcoming) “Violence against women in LAC”
Methodological considerations

- Measuring violence perpetrated by the most recent of current partner underestimates prevalence of IPV ever, and is not lifetime prevalence

- General questions about lifetime experiences of physical or sexual violence by any perpetrator fail to capture much partner violence

- Underreporting of violence is always a possibility for these surveys for reasons that include:
  - Small modules in large surveys may have limitations
  - Partner violence items in most DHS don’t measure lifetime prevalence of IPV
  - Willingness to report may vary from setting to setting

- National estimates are important for cross-country and regional comparisons, but hides large variations within countries
‘Take home’ points

- Violence against women:
  - is widespread
  - has serious consequences to women’s health
  - affects children and families

- Future surveys of violence must build on lessons learned

- Future surveys should strive towards comparability

- Research findings must be disseminated and used for policy and programming

- Violence against women can and must be prevented by addressing gender inequalities
Thank you...

For more information:

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