



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Criminology

Statistical Bulletin 28

ISSN 2206-7302 (Online)

ISBN 978 1 925304 71 8 (Online)

July 2020

The prevalence of domestic violence among women during the COVID-19 pandemic: Technical appendix

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Revised August 2020

This appendix describes the survey methodology, sampling strategy, safety protocols and limitations of a survey of 15,000 Australian women aged 18 years and over about their experience of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this survey was to estimate the prevalence, characteristics and drivers of reported and unreported violence among a large sample of women.

Key definitions

The definitions used for the survey are similar to those used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in the Personal Safety Survey (ABS 2017a).

Coercive control

Coercive controlling behaviours are a form of liberty crime, involving the micro-regulation of women's lives (Stark 2007). This can involve a range of behaviours used as a means of controlling a partner, including frequent belittling and derogatory comments, monitoring of their whereabouts, interfering with their relationships and financial abuse. For the purpose of this survey, coercive control was defined as three or more emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviours.

Domestic violence

For the purpose of this research, domestic violence is defined as physical violence, sexual violence or emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviour that occurs between current or former intimate partners. This includes attempted behaviours and face-to-face threats.

Emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviour

Emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviour refers to a broad range of behaviours or actions that are aimed at controlling a current or former intimate partner's behaviour or causing them emotional harm or fear. This includes:

- threatening or abusing them online or using technology (eg over the phone or on social media);
- stalking them online or in person (see *Stalking* definition below);
- constantly insulting them to make them feel ashamed, belittled or humiliated, or shouting, yelling or verbally abusing them to intimidate them;
- damaging, destroying or stealing their property;
- threatening to hurt their family, friends, children and/or pets;
- the perpetrator threatening to hurt themselves;
- monitoring their time and making them account for their whereabouts;
- using their money or shared money or making important financial decisions without talking to them;
- being jealous or suspicious of their friends;
- accusing them of having an affair;
- interfering with their relationship with other family members;
- preventing them from doing things to help themselves (eg going to medical appointments, taking medication); and
- restricting their use of their phone, the internet or the family car.

These 13 items were drawn from several sources, including the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory–Short Form's Dominance–Isolation subscale (Tolman 1999). Other items relating to emotional abuse and stalking were based on the Personal Safety Survey (PSS; ABS 2017a), with the addition of a question about technology-facilitated abuse.

Partner

A partner is defined as a person with whom the respondent lives, or lived with at some point in a married or de facto relationship during the last 12 months. This includes current and former partners. This may also be described as a cohabiting partner.

Partner violence

Partner violence is defined as physical or sexual violence and emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviour within current or former cohabiting relationships.

Physical violence

Physical violence is the occurrence, attempt or face-to-face threat of physical assault by an intimate partner, including:

- choking, strangling or grabbing them around the neck;
- hitting them with something that could hurt them, beating them, stabbing them with a knife or shooting them with a gun;
- throwing anything at them that could hurt them, slapping, biting, kicking or hitting them with a fist (ie punching them);
- pushing, grabbing or shoving them; and
- physically assaulting them in any other way.

Questions about physical violence were taken from the PSS (ABS 2017a).

Sexual violence

Sexual violence is the occurrence, attempt or face-to-face threat of sexual assault by a current or former intimate partner—specifically, a situation in which a person’s intimate partner forced them, tried to force them or threatened to force them to take part in sexual activity against their will. The question about sexual assault was also taken from the PSS (ABS 2017a).

Stalking

Stalking was included within the definition of emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviours. Stalking behaviours include:

- hacking into a partner’s email or social media accounts;
- loitering or hanging around outside a place where their partner spends time (eg home, gym, family member’s house);
- following or watching a partner (in person or using technology such as GPS tracking);
- impersonating a partner online; and
- sharing or threatening to share intimate images of a partner online without their consent.

Stalking can occur in person or online using the internet. This definition was adapted from the PSS (ABS 2017a), with some amendments to make it easier to respond in a short questionnaire.

Survey method

An online survey was developed by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's experiences of domestic violence. The survey included questions about respondents':

- sociodemographic characteristics and relationship status;
- experience of physical and sexual violence in the three months prior to the survey, their experience of physical and sexual violence before February 2020, and any changes in the frequency and severity of violence experienced before and after February 2020;
- experience of emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviour in the three months prior to the survey, their experience of this behaviour before February 2020, and any changes in the frequency and severity of abuse before and after February 2020;
- help-seeking behaviour, including reporting to police, government or non-government services, and informal sources of support, and barriers to help-seeking;
- experience of financial stress, and whether their financial situation had recently changed; and
- time spent at home with their partner, and contact with others in their social network.

Following internal user testing, the survey was piloted with a sample of approximately 200 respondents, which allowed design issues to be identified and addressed. All steps were taken to ensure the data collected were as accurate as possible.

The survey was conducted between 6 May and 1 June 2020 by i-Link Research Solutions, an Australian social and market research company with extensive experience administering online surveys for research purposes. The survey was sent to female members of their online panel aged 18 years and over, in accordance with the sampling method described below. Panel members were sent a link to the survey and invited to participate (opt-in process), and those who completed it were provided with a small reward. The survey took respondents approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Safety protocols

The safety of women participating in the survey was of paramount concern. Given the sensitive nature of the information being collected, a range of safety measures were employed. Safety measures used as part of the survey included:

- potential respondents were approached by a social research company with an established online panel rather than by the AIC because it would be less likely to raise the suspicion of an abusive partner;
- the survey was designed with multiple landing pages and eligibility questions (including a 'safety trap') to screen out ineligible participants (eg men) from accessing the survey;
- the content of the survey, and its explicit focus on women, was revealed to respondents only after they had gone through multiple landing pages, stated they met the eligibility criteria and confirmed that they were in a safe place where they were not being observed;

- women were advised in the information page that, if they felt that answering questions about their relationship experiences would cause them distress or make them unsafe, they should not complete the survey;
- women who closed the survey at any point were not approached again;
- the survey was kept as short as possible and piloted to ensure that women would spend no more than 10 minutes completing all the questions; and
- participants were provided with information about a range of support services, including services that could be contacted online or over the phone.

Finally, all of the survey questions were closed-response, meaning that respondents did not have to write any responses. This limited the potential for abusive partners to use keyloggers to access information their partners provided in the survey.

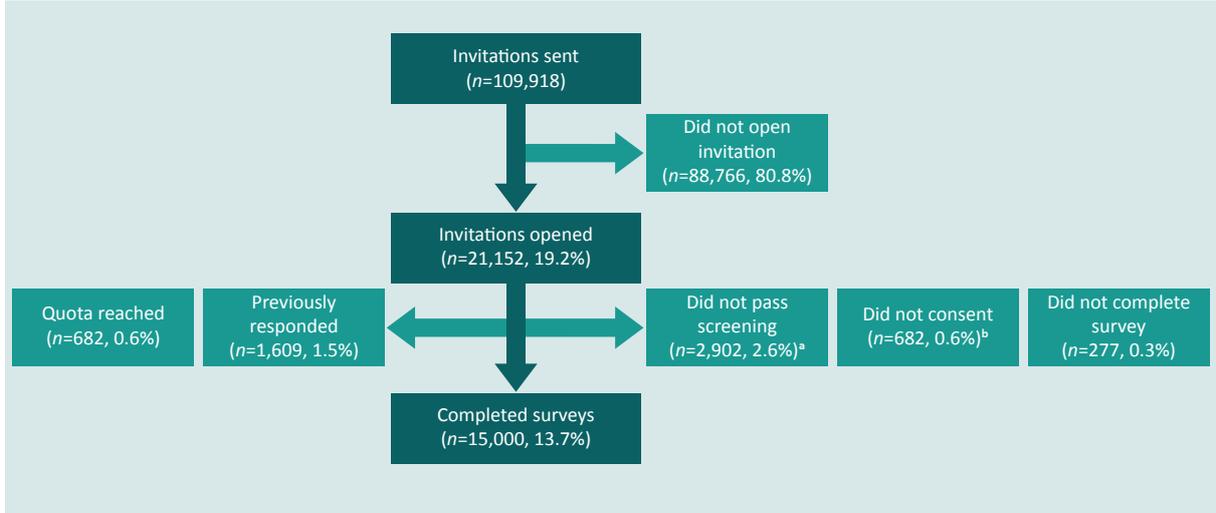
The survey and administration methods and protocols were approved by the Australian Institute of Criminology's Human Research Ethics Committee in April 2020 (Protocol no. P0305A).

Sampling and weighting

Proportional quota sampling was used. This is the non-probability version of stratified random sampling. In short, this involves setting quotas based on known population characteristics—in this case, age and usual place of residence—and then inviting participants who fall within these categories. Prospective participants were invited to participate until these quotas were reached, within an agreed margin of error. The aim was to ensure the final sample was representative of the spread of the Australian female population.

Female members of the research panel were randomly selected and sent an invitation to participate in the survey. Overall, 109,918 female panel respondents were invited to participate and 21,152 invitations were opened (19.2%). Importantly, respondents were not aware of the survey topic until they had passed through an initial screening process. The largest proportion of women who opened the invitation but did not complete it were excluded on the basis of the screening questions (47.2%; ensuring they were female, aged 18 years or over, and in a private location) or because they did not consent to participate in the research (11.1%). A further 4.5 percent of women started but did not complete the questionnaire. One in four (26.2%) respondents who opened the invitation had already completed the survey and were excluded, while a smaller group (11.1%) were excluded on the basis that they responded after the quota had been reached.

Figure A1: Invitation, response and completion rates



a: Includes respondents who did not complete screening questions

b: Includes respondents who read but did not complete consent questions

Note: Percentages based on total invitations sent. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: i-Link Research Solutions [computer file]

Keeping in mind that, for safety reasons, respondents were not told about the content of the survey until they had confirmed their eligibility, this means that 94.0 percent of women who opened the invitation and read the consent form went on to complete the survey, and 95.5 percent of respondents who consented to the research completed the questionnaire. The overall completion rate for the survey—which takes into account the total number of invitations sent—was 13.7 percent (13.9% when duplicate or excess invitations are excluded), which compares favourably to online panels generally (Pennay et al. 2018), and to other recent online surveys about family and domestic violence (10.7%; Miller et al. 2016).

The distribution of the usual place of residence of survey respondents and ABS (2019a) demographic data for females were closely aligned (see Table A1). Queensland residents were slightly over-represented in the survey data (20.1 vs 19.9%), as were residents of South Australia (8.1% vs 7.1%), Tasmania (2.6% vs 2.2%) and Victoria (26.8% vs 26.2%). Meanwhile, residents of New South Wales (30.8% vs 32.0%), the Northern Territory (0.6% vs 0.9%) and Western Australia (9.4% vs 10.1%) were slightly under-represented compared with ABS demographic statistics.

Table A1: Respondents by usual place of residence (unweighted data) (n=15,000)

	ABS demographic statistics (June 2019) ^a		Survey respondents	
		%	n	%
NSW		32.0	4,615	30.8
Vic		26.2	4,023	26.8
Qld		19.9	3,011	20.1
WA		10.1	1,410	9.4
SA		7.1	1,208	8.1
Tas		2.2	386	2.6
ACT		1.7	255	1.7
NT		0.9	92	0.6

a: Population breakdowns limited to female residents

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: ABS (2019a); Impact of COVID-19 on domestic violence survey, AIC [computer file]

The ages of respondents were also closely aligned with those of the estimated resident population (Table A2). The largest difference was for women aged 65 years and over, who were under-represented in the survey (17.8% vs 23.5%). This is unsurprising, given older people are less likely to have internet access and to regularly use computers (ABS 2018a), and more likely to encounter barriers to using technology (Vaportzis, Clausen & Gow 2017). All other age groups were within two percentage points of the estimated resident population.

Table A2: Respondents by age (unweighted data) (n=15,000)

	ABS demographic statistics (June 2019) ^a		Survey respondents	
		%	n	%
18–24		11.3	1,655	11.0
25–34		18.5	2,863	19.1
35–44		16.4	2,736	18.2
45–54		15.9	2,641	17.6
55–64		14.5	2,437	16.3
65+		23.5	2,668	17.8

a: Population breakdowns limited to female residents

Source: ABS 2019a; Impact of COVID-19 on domestic violence survey, AIC [computer file]

As is common practice with samples using proportional quota sampling, data were subsequently weighted to reflect the spread of the population. This was undertaken using data from the ABS (2019a) on the estimated resident population of women in Australia as at June 2019.

Weights were calculated by first determining the proportion of the female population in each age group in each state and territory using ABS data and then dividing this by the percentage of survey respondents in each category of age and usual place of residence. These weights are presented in Table A3. Under-represented categories were assigned a multiplier larger than one, and over-represented categories were assigned a multiplier smaller than one.

	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
NSW	0.88	0.92	0.95	0.99	1.02	1.45
Vic	0.94	0.91	0.82	0.83	0.99	1.48
Qld	1.30	1.00	1.02	0.93	0.79	1.06
WA	1.27	1.19	0.99	0.85	0.97	1.31
SA	1.09	0.98	0.70	0.77	0.63	1.27
Tas	1.11	1.08	0.68	0.76	0.57	1.13
ACT	1.10	0.96	0.80	1.19	0.79	1.25
NT	1.71	1.96	1.02	1.42	1.61	1.13

Note: Multipliers are rounded. Exact numbers used in weighting calculations

Source: ABS 2019a; Impact of COVID-19 on domestic violence survey, AIC [computer file]

The age and usual place of residence of the final weighted sample of respondents is presented in Table A4. The weighted population distribution of survey respondents was the same as the ABS demographic data in Table A1 and A2 for each age group and each state and territory.

	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+	Total
NSW	3.6	5.9	5.2	5.0	4.7	7.7	32.0
Vic	3.1	5.1	4.3	4.1	3.6	6.0	26.2
Qld	2.3	3.6	3.3	3.3	2.9	4.6	19.9
WA	1.1	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.5	2.2	10.1
SA	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.9	7.1
Tas	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.6	2.2
ACT	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.7
NT	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.9
Total	11.3	18.5	16.4	15.9	14.5	23.5	100.0

Source: Impact of COVID-19 on domestic violence survey, AIC [computer file]

One of the concerns about using non-probability sampling methods, particularly those that employ some form of quota sampling and post-hoc weighting, is the potential for sampling bias in relation to secondary demographics—characteristics of the population being surveyed that are not used in either the sampling or weighting strategy. To assess whether this was a significant problem in the current survey, we compared data collected as part of the survey with benchmarks based on ABS data. It is difficult to make direct comparisons due to differences between ABS data and this survey in the age groups and definitions used. Nevertheless, it was possible to compare the characteristics of survey respondents with characteristics of the general female population (Table A5).

Results from this comparison demonstrate a relatively high degree of concordance between survey respondent characteristics and ABS demographic data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, non-English-speaking backgrounds, non-school qualifications and usual place of residence (remoteness). The most significant differences emerged in relation to the presence of current health conditions and the proportion of respondents with a non-school qualification as the highest level of education completed. Results suggest survey respondents had a higher level of education than the general population. Importantly, ABS data on health conditions adopts a broader definition than the current survey, potentially amplifying any differences. However, it is likely that certain long-term conditions prevent individuals from participating in online panels and in the current survey. These differences should be considered when interpreting the results of the survey (see also the *Limitations* section below).

Table A5: Selected sociodemographic characteristics of respondents (weighted data) (%)		
	ABS statistics	Survey respondents (unweighted)
Current, cohabiting relationship ^a	60.3	55.2 (56.3)
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ^b	2.6	3.8 (3.9)
Non-English-speaking background ^c	21.0	18.7 (19.2)
Health condition lasting six months or longer ^d	56.6	40.5 (39.6)
Non-school qualification (20–64 years only) ^e	67.9	75.2 (75.1)
Usual place of residence^f		
Major cities	72.2	75.4 (75.8)
Regional	25.8	22.2 (21.8)
Remote	1.9	2.4 (2.4)

a: Proportion of women aged 18 years and over in a current, cohabiting relationship with an intimate partner (ABS 2017a)

b: Projected resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, women aged 18 years and over as at June 2019 (ABS 2019b, 2018b)

c: Proportion of Australians who speak a language other than English at home (ABS 2017b)

d: Proportion of females aged 15 years and over who self-reported at least one current medical condition which has lasted, or is expected to last, for six months or more. ABS estimate includes some conditions (diabetes, heart disease etc) that are not current or long-term (ABS 2018c)

e: Estimated proportion of females aged 20–64 years with a non-school qualification (ABS 2019c)

f: Estimated resident population, by remoteness areas (ABS 2020)

Source: ABS (various); Impact of COVID-19 on domestic violence survey, AIC [computer file]

Interpreting survey items

The physical and sexual violence survey items were taken from the PSS (ABS 2017a). There were six items in total. Respondents were asked whether they had experienced each type of violent behaviour by a current or former partner in the three months prior to the survey. Survey questions were randomised for each respondent to eliminate order bias. Respondents were recorded as having experienced physical violence in the last three months if they answered yes to at least one of the five physical violence items, and recorded as having experienced sexual violence in the last three months if they answered yes to the sexual violence question. Respondents were also asked whether their current or former partner had ever been physically or sexually violent before February 2020 (lifetime estimate limited to the most recent relationship). For this question they did not have to identify specific behaviours.

Thirteen questions measured emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviours. The questions were also randomly ordered, with dichotomous response options (yes/no) instead of questions about the frequency of behaviour. This was necessary for pragmatic reasons—we wanted to capture as wide a range of abusive behaviours as possible within the strict time limit imposed (for safety reasons). This, we believe, better reflects a contemporary understanding of the emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviours that characterise non-physical forms of domestic violence (Dragiewicz et al. 2018; Monckton Smith 2019; Woodlock et al 2019).

Respondents were recorded as having experienced emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviour if they answered yes to at least one of the 13 questions. We were unable to apply existing thresholds based on the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory—Short Form (eg Começanha & Maia 2018) to assess the presence of coercive controlling behaviour because we used a modified set of questions. For the purpose of this study (and related research outputs), the presence of coercive control is based on a respondent reporting three or more of the 13 emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviours described in the survey. This indicates a pattern of controlling behaviour. Because we rely on the prevalence of different types of behaviours rather than the frequency of each behaviour, our estimate of coercive controlling behaviour is likely conservative. For this reason, where appropriate, the prevalence of fewer than three emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviours is also reported. That our measure of coercive control is not entirely consistent with validated measures of behaviour should be considered when interpreting the results.

Consistent with the question about prior physical and sexual violence, respondents were also asked whether their partner had ever engaged in emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviour towards them prior to February 2020.

For both physical and sexual violence and emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviour, changes in the frequency and severity of violence were based on a comparison between the three-month period prior to the survey and the six-month period prior to February 2020. Help-seeking questions used collapsed categories of sources of support from the PSS (ABS 2017a), and asked respondents whether they had sought help or support in the three-month period since February 2020, first for emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviour, and then for physical or sexual violence. Respondents were also asked whether they, or someone else, had contacted police about the most recent incident of physical or sexual violence.

Limitations

This survey provides, to our knowledge, the most accurate self-reported estimate available of the prevalence of domestic violence among a large sample of Australian women during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also provides data on the onset and escalation of violence, help-seeking behaviour and factors thought to have increased the risk of domestic violence during the pandemic. It is not limited to violence reported to the police or domestic violence services, and it captures information about non-physical forms of violence.

That said, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the accuracy of the results is limited by women's willingness or ability to report, even anonymously, their experiences of domestic violence. Women who could not safely complete the survey were discouraged from participating for safety reasons. Given the sensitive nature of the questions, some women who completed the survey may have chosen to not disclose violence or abuse they had experienced. It is possible, therefore, that the true level of violence is under-reported. We were also reliant upon women being able to accurately recall not just whether violence occurred but when. Some women reported, for example, that they were unsure whether they had experienced violence in the six months before February 2020. This may affect the accuracy of estimated rates of violence occurring before and after February 2020. We also acknowledge that survey questions with dichotomous response items may not be able to accurately capture the complex forms of violence and abuse experienced by victims of domestic violence.

Similarly, the design of the questionnaire (which was necessarily brief) prevents us from determining with certainty whether the violence was committed by a current or a former partner. Responses indicate only that the respondent experienced violence by a current or former partner in the last three months (and by the same partner prior to February 2020). For example, it is possible that a respondent in a current cohabiting relationship who reported having experienced violence in the last three months was reporting violence perpetrated by a former partner. For this reason, we do not report details of the perpetrator, and only report the current relationship status of the respondent.

Although the survey was only administered in English, it is notable that a large proportion of respondents were from non-English-speaking backgrounds (19.2% of respondents, prior to weighting) and that reflects the general population (see Table A5). It is possible that women who speak or understand limited English were unable to participate and may be under-represented in the sample. Certain health conditions and disabilities may have also excluded some potential participants; the proportion of women in our sample with chronic health conditions was lower than in the general population (see Table A5).

The research panel from which the sample was drawn was designed to ensure a cross-section of the community was represented. However, the survey was only available to women who had access to email and who had signed up to be a member of the research company's panel. This clearly biases the sample towards women who have internet access, which according to the ABS (2018a) is around 86 percent of women. Women who have limited internet access or who do not have a usual place of residence may be under-represented. This is especially relevant given the links between domestic violence and homelessness (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019).

The survey used a non-probability sampling method—namely, proportional quota sampling from an opt-in online research panel. Although this is a common approach to surveys, its limitations need to be acknowledged. Because the survey is based on non-probability sampling, meaning not everyone has an equal likelihood of being selected to participate in the research, results cannot be generalised to the wider (female) population. This is because it is not possible to determine the extent of non-coverage bias, or the extent to which the opt-in panel from which the sample was selected represents the wider population. In addition, like all surveys, not everyone who was invited to participate in the research went on to complete the survey. It is notable that the clear majority of women (95.5%) who responded to the invitation, and reached the point of confirming their eligibility and finding out that the survey was about their experience of violence, went on to complete the survey in full. The overall completion rate of 13.7 percent was high given the sampling method and subject matter (Miller et al. 2016; Pennay et al. 2018).

Surveys using non-probability sampling methods have been shown to be less accurate than surveys using probability sampling on substantive measures of interest (Pennay et al. 2018; Yeager et al. 2011). This error has been shown to be small to modest in size. While self-selection may lead to increased bias due to women who have experienced violence being more likely to want to complete the survey, the opposite is also true, and there is evidence that self-selection is associated with reduced reporting of health-related harms (Cheung et al. 2017; Kypri et al. 2011). The approach used in this study is likely to produce more robust results, and less likely to result in over-reporting, than an open invitation for women to report their experiences of violence (as well as being much more able to address safety concerns).

Further, there is a risk that post-hoc weighting can increase the level of measurement error. There is some debate regarding the application of post-stratification weighting to non-probability surveys to ensure the sample is representative of the population based on certain known characteristics (Pennay et al. 2018). This is because an important assumption underpinning weighting is that responses given by respondents from the under-represented groups are consistent with those of other people from those groups, had they been surveyed. Post-hoc weighting of demographic variables for non-probability online samples has been found to reduce the accuracy of substantive measures (Chang & Krosnick 2009; Yeager et al. 2011), although recent evidence indicates that this impact is slight and varies between surveys (Pennay et al. 2018; Yeager et al. 2011), and likely depends on the strength of the association between these demographic factors and the outcome of interest. We were limited in the variables that could be used for weighting, as panel members are only required to provide their gender, age and location. (Other information, such as education and income, is not mandatory.) Nevertheless, there is evidence that more sophisticated methods than the calibration method used here do not substantially improve the accuracy of survey results (Mercer, Lau & Kennedy 2018).

In the interest of representativeness, and to account for the under-sampling of older women (who are at lower risk of violence), post-hoc weighting to population-level characteristics was deemed appropriate. This did not significantly impact concordance of the sample with secondary demographic characteristics (see Table A5). Because larger weights were applied to older women in the sample, rates of recorded violence among respondents based on the weighted data are consistently—but marginally—lower than results based on unweighted data.

The survey was designed using the same, or similar, questions as the ABS (2017a) PSS. However, we caution against making direct comparisons between the prevalence estimates generated by the two surveys. First, the administration methods for the surveys are different: the PSS is administered by a data collector who interviews the respondent at their home, while this survey was completed anonymously online. Our online survey took less than a third of the average time in contact with households required for the PSS (ABS 2017a). Regardless of consistency in the wording of questions, research has shown that survey administration methods can elicit different results from respondents about their experiences of domestic violence, although these differences can be minimal (Hamby, Sugarman & Boney-McCoy 2006). For example, some individuals may be more likely to disclose sensitive information when the information is collected anonymously in an online survey. Further, the observation periods for the two surveys are different; the PSS included questions about women's experience of violence and abuse in the last 12 months, while the current survey included questions about violence and abuse in the last three months.

More importantly, the PSS is administered to a random sample of respondents, while this survey was conducted using non-probability sampling methods. The limitations of this approach have already been acknowledged. Unlike the PSS, where it is possible to draw conclusions about the prevalence of violence among the wider population, we are cautious to not generalise beyond the sample of respondents in our survey.

Acknowledgements

The survey was developed in consultation with representatives from the Department of Home Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Attorney-General's Department, Department of Social Services, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. We are grateful for their support and assistance in developing the survey and providing feedback on research outputs.

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Attachment A: Survey questionnaire

SURVEY LANDING PAGE 1

Thank you for taking the time to learn a bit more about this survey. First, we would like you to answer some questions so that we can get to know you better.

Q no.	Question text	Response categories	Skips
SC1	Do you identify as female?	Yes or No	If 'No', survey terminated
SC2	How old are you currently?	n	If less than 18 years, survey terminated
SC3	Please type your postcode into the following box and select the suburb you live in.	n	
SC4	How many adults (18 years and older) live in your household? This includes you.		If no females 18+ in household, survey terminated

SURVEY LANDING PAGE 2

This study asks questions of a sensitive nature.

Q no.	Question text	Response categories	Skips
SC5	Please confirm you are in a private location where you will not be observed by others while you complete the survey?	Yes, I'm ready to complete the survey No, I don't wish to complete the survey Ask me again later	If 'No', survey terminated If 'Ask me again later', survey terminated and invitation sent at a later date

SURVEY LANDING PAGE 3

The impact of COVID-19 on Australian women study

Please read the following information carefully.

What are you asking me to do?

You are being invited to take part in a survey that aims to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals and their relationships. In particular, if you choose to participate you will be asked to answer questions about yourself, your relationships over the past 12 months, as well as feelings of financial stress and social isolation since February 2020.

This survey also includes sensitive questions about your experience of violent, abusive, or controlling behaviours in the past 12 months. It is important to us that people only complete the survey **if it is safe to do so**. If you do not feel safe participating in this research, please close the survey window now. You will not be asked to participate in this research again.

How long will it take?

The survey will take 10 minutes to complete. You are encouraged to complete the survey by yourself and in a private location where you will not be disturbed or observed by others.

Do I have to participate?

Your participation in the research is voluntary. This means that you do not have to take part unless you want to. If you feel uncomfortable about answering any questions you can choose not to reply.

If you choose to participate, in recognition of the time and effort taken to complete the survey and you will be offered a selection of rewards to choose from at the end.

How will you use my information?

The information you provide will be provided to and analysed by researchers at the Australian Institute of Criminology to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on violence and abuse within relationships. This information is vital for planning systems and services that best meet the needs of women experiencing domestic violence, and their families.

How will you protect my information?

We are very grateful for your contribution. To protect your identity, at no time will your name, address, birth date, or any other information that may identify you be made available to the Australian Institute of Criminology. We have no way of identifying you or your partner from the survey responses. All of your responses to the survey will be completely confidential.

Can I withdraw from the research?

You can also pull out of the research any time up to the survey completion date. Your comments will be deleted from all materials and your information will be destroyed. To pull out, contact i-Link Research Solutions Pty Ltd. i-Link can remove your data without seeing your responses to the questions.

Nothing bad will happen if you choose not to take part in the research or choose to take part and then change your mind.

What if I need help?

Talking about experiences of violence, abuse or controlling behaviours can be upsetting or distressing. If you think that participating in this survey could make you very distressed, please think carefully before choosing to participate.

If you feel upset about anything (now or while completing the survey), the details of someone you can talk to will be made available to you. We have also provided the contact details for services that can support women who are experiencing violence. If you need any kind of help or support, it is available.

Q no.	Question text	Response categories	Skips
Consent1	I have read all the information provided above	Yes	If 'No', survey terminated
		No	
Consent2	I consent to participate in the survey	Yes	If 'No', survey terminated
		No	

SURVEY ITEMS

Thank you for choosing to participate in this survey. We would like you to answer a few basic questions about yourself and your relationship status.

Q no.	Question text	Response categories	Skips
A1	What is the highest level of education you have completed to date?	Year 9 or below Year 10 or equivalent Year 11 or equivalent Year 12 or equivalent Vocational qualification (eg TAFE) University (Undergraduate) University (Postgraduate)	
A2	Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?	Yes – Aboriginal Yes – Torres Strait Islander Yes - Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander No Would prefer not to say	
A3	Is a language other than English most often spoken at your home?	Yes No	
A4	Do you have any health condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, 6 months or longer?	Yes No	If 'No' skip to A6
A5	Because of this condition, are you restricted in your everyday activities/need help or supervision with everyday activities?	Yes No	
A6	Have you been in a relationship with another person at some point over the past 12 months? This includes boyfriend/girlfriend and dating relationships	Yes No	If 'No' skip to D1
A7	Are you in relationship with someone right now?	Yes No	If 'No' skip to A9
A8	Are you currently living with your PARTNER?	Yes No	If 'Yes' skip to A10
A9	In the past 12 months, did you live with your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER at least some of the time?	Yes No	
A10	What is the gender of your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER?	Male Female Indeterminate/ Intersex/ Unspecified I'd rather not say	

Q no.	Question text	Response categories	Skips
A11	How many children do you have with your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER? <i>If no children enter 0</i>	n	
A12	How many children currently live with you on a full or part-time basis?	n	
A13	Are you currently pregnant?	Yes No Not sure	

You will now be asked about your experiences of violence, abuse and controlling behaviours within your relationship over the past 12 months. If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer, please feel free to skip them. If you decide not to complete the survey, you can withdraw by simply closing the survey window – your responses will not be submitted to the Australian Institute of Criminology.

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic first started to impact Australia in significant ways in February 2020. The next set of questions are about your experiences in the last 3 months, since February 2020.

Q no.	Question text	Response categories	Skips
B1	In the last 3 months has your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER done any of the following?		
B1i	Threatened or abused you online or using technology (eg over the phone or on social media)?	Yes No	
B1ii	Stalked you online or in person? <i>Stalking behaviours include:</i>	Yes No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hacking into your email and social media accounts</i> • <i>Loitering or hanging around outside a place that you spend time (eg home, gym, family member's house)</i> • <i>Following or watching you (in-person or using technology like GPS tracking)</i> • <i>Impersonating you online</i> • <i>Sharing or threatening to share intimate images of you online without your consent</i> 		
B1iii	Constantly insulted you to make you feel ashamed, belittled or humiliated, or shouted, yelled or verbally abused you to intimidate you?	Yes No	
B1iv	Damaged, destroyed or stole any of your property?	Yes No	
B1v	Threatened to hurt your family, your friends, the children and/or pets?	Yes No	
B1vi	Threatened to hurt themselves?	Yes No	
B1vii	Monitored your time and made you account for your whereabouts	Yes No	

Q no.	Question text	Response categories	Skips
B1viii	Used your own or shared money, or made important financial decisions, without talking to you?	Yes No	
B1ix	Was jealous or suspicious of your friends?	Yes No	
B1x	Accused you of having an affair with another person?	Yes No	
B1xi	Interfered with your relationship with other family members?	Yes No	
B1xii	Tried to keep you from doing things to help yourself (eg go to doctor appointments, take medication)?	Yes No	
B1xiii	Restricted your use of your phone, the Internet or the family car?	Yes No	
B2	The questions you just answered were about emotionally abusive or controlling behaviour Was your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER ever emotionally abusive or controlling of you before February 2020?	Yes No Unsure	If 'No' skip to B4
B3	Compared with the 6-month period before February 2020, do you think your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER'S emotionally abusive and controlling behaviour has increased, decreased or stayed the same?	Increased About the same Decreased	
B4	In the last 3 months, has your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER done any of the following with the intent to harm or frighten you? This includes attempts and face-to-face threats to do these things.		
B4i	Choked/strangled you or grabbed you around the neck?	Yes No	
B4ii	Hit you with something that could hurt you, beaten you, stabbed you with a knife or shot you with a gun?	Yes No	
B4iii	Threw anything at you that could hurt you, slapped, bitten, kicked or hit you with their fist?	Yes No	
B4iii	Pushed, grabbed or shoved you?	Yes No	
B4iv	Physically assaulted you or hurt you in any other way?	Yes No	
B4v	Forced you/tried to force you or threatened to force you to take part in sexual activity against your will?	Yes No	
B5	The questions you just answered were about physical and sexual violence. Was your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER ever physically or sexually violent towards you before February 2020?	Yes No Unsure	If 'No' skip to B7

Q no.	Question text	Response categories	Skips
B6	Compared with the 6-month period before February 2020, do you think your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER'S violent behaviour has increased, decreased or stayed the same?	Increased About the same Decreased	
B7	Think about the most recent incident of physical or sexual violence by your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER, were police contacted about the incident?	Yes – I contacted them Yes – Someone else contacted them No Unsure	Limited to respondents who answered 'Yes' to any of B4i–B4v

The next questions ask about whether you have sought advice or support because of your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER'S behaviour.

Limited to respondents who answered 'Yes' to any of B1i–B1xiii or B4i–B4v. Other respondents skip to D1.

Q no.	Question text	Response categories
C1	In the last 3 months, have you sought advice or support from the police because of your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER'S behaviour?	Yes No Unsure
C2	In the last 3 months, have you sought advice or support from a government or non-government support service (telephone, online or in person) because of your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER'S behaviour? <i>Services can include Lifeline, Relationships Australia, 1800RESPECT, the Salvation Army and domestic violence services and refuges.</i>	Yes No Unsure
C3	In the last 3 months, have you sought advice or support from anywhere else because of your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER'S behaviour? <i>Other sources of support and advice include family members, friends, spiritual advisers, health professionals and work colleagues.</i>	Yes No Unsure
C4	In the last 3 months, has there been a time where you wanted to seek advice or support because of your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER'S behaviour, but haven't been able to do so safely?	Yes No Unsure

Thank you for answering these questions, we appreciate that it may have been upsetting to do so. If you are feeling upset, we encourage you to contact one of the services that are listed at the end of this survey.

Now we would like to ask some questions about the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on your financial situation.

Q no.	Question text	
D1	In the last 3 months:	
D1i	Have you or your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER been laid off or lost their job, or had to take a pay cut?	Yes No NA
D1ii	Have you or your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER applied for any government financial assistance (eg Jobkeeper payments)?	Yes No NA
D2	On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1=none and 5=extreme), how much financial stress have you experienced over the past 3 months?	n
D3	Using the same scale, how much financial stress did you experience during the 6-month period before February 2020?	n

Finally, we would like to ask you about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your social networks.

Q no	Question text	Response categories
E1	In the last 3 months, how often have you had contact with friends or family who you do not live with? <i>Contact means in person, on the phone, email, online, via messenger apps and social media</i>	None Once a month A couple of times a month Once a week More than once a week
E2	In the last 3 months, how many days per week (on average) did you and your EX-PARTNER/PARTNER spend the entire day at home together in person?	0–7
E3	How does this compare with the 6-month period before February 2020? How many days per week (on average) did you and your PARTNER use to spend the entire day at home together in person?	0–7

SURVEY END PAGE

Thank you for your time – we appreciate your input into this survey. If you feel distressed or upset about anything, please contact one of the services below.

Emergency services (available 24/7)

- Police/ambulance/fire: 000
- Lifeline Australia anytime: 13 11 14, or visit the website: <https://www.lifeline.org.au>.

Other services (available 24/7)

- Domestic Violence Crisis Service: 02 6280 0900
- Relationships Australia: 1300 364 277
- National Sexual Assault and Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service (1800RESPECT): 1800 737 732 or go to the website <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>
- Family Relationship Advice Line: 1800 050 321
- Family Drug Support Australia: 1300 368 186
- SANE Australia: 1800 187 263
- ACT Access Mental Health: 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065

Online services

- Several safety apps are available for download from 1800RESPECT: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/help-and-support/safety-apps-for-mobile-phones/>
- The Daisy app provides information about local services and includes safety features that protect your privacy
- The Sunny app is for women with a disability who have experienced violence and abuse

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For a complete list and the full text of the papers in the *Statistical Bulletin series*, visit the AIC website at: aic.gov.au

ISSN 2206-7302 (Online)

ISBN 978 1 925304 71 8 (Online)

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