



**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS IN NORTHERN  
IRELAND**

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK  
Protect the Human**

SEPTEMBER 2008



## CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Question 1: Hitting a girlfriend</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Pushing him too far.....	4
Nagging.....	4
Doesn't stop arguing with him.....	4
Doesn't treat him with respect.....	5
Flirts with other men in front of him.....	5
Refuses to have sex with him.....	5
<b>Question 2: Hit or coerced into sex</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Women or girls who have been hit.....	6
Women or girls who are students who have been hit.....	6
Women or girls coerced or pressurised into sex by boyfriends / partners.....	7
Women or girls coerced or pressurised into sex by another person.....	7
<b>Question 3: Advice for women who have been hit</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Confident about giving advice.....	8
Encouraging her to tell a counsellor or tutor.....	8
Encouraging her to report it to the police.....	8
Challenging him.....	8
Information and support for students.....	8
Services on campus.....	8
<b>Question 4: Sexual assault and rape</b> .....	<b>9</b>
If a woman is drunk.....	9
If a woman has behaved in a flirtatious manner.....	9
If a woman has failed to say 'no' clearly.....	10
If a woman is wearing sexy or revealing clothes.....	10
If a woman has had many sexual partners.....	10
If a woman is alone and walking in a dangerous or deserted area.....	10
<b>Question 5: Awareness of Service Provisions</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Comparable Studies</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Question 1: Hitting a Girlfriend.....	11
Question 2: Hit or coerced into sex.....	11
Question 3: Advice for women who have been hit.....	12
Question 5: Sexual Assault and rape.....	12



## **Introduction**

On behalf of Amnesty International and working through the Science Shop, a group of University of Ulster students undertook a survey of 715 students at the four University of Ulster campuses across Northern Ireland.

The survey questions were similar to two comparable studies undertaken in the UK by ICM for Amnesty International and the End Violence Against Women campaign. This report also includes a description, where relevant, of the variance between the results obtained amongst students in Northern Ireland with the other surveyed cohorts.

Amnesty International would like to thank the students for their work on this project and the Science Shop for their support.



## Question 1: Hitting a girlfriend

Q1: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

It is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she:

- Pushes them too far?
- Nags?
- Doesn't stop arguing with them?
- Doesn't treat them with respect?
- Flirts with other people in front of them?
- Refuses to have sex with them?

Answer options: Strongly agree; Agree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; and Don't know.

### Pushing him too far

- 84% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she pushes them too far.
- 8% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she pushes them too far.
- 8% of respondents did not know whether it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she pushes them too far.

### Nagging

- 86% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she nags.
- 9% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she nags.
- 3% of respondents did not know whether it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she nags

### Doesn't stop arguing with him

- 80% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she doesn't stop arguing with him.
- 8% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she doesn't stop arguing with him.
- 11% of respondents did not know whether it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she doesn't stop arguing with him.



### **Doesn't treat him with respect**

- 82% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she doesn't treat him with respect.
- 8% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she doesn't treat him with respect.
- 10% of respondents did not know whether it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she doesn't treat him with respect.

### **Flirts with other men in front of him**

- 84% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she flirts with other men in front of him;
- 11% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she flirts with other men in front of him;
- 5% of respondents did not know whether it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she flirts with other men in front of him.

### **Refuses to have sex with him**

*Is it acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she refuses to have sex with him?*

- 86% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she refuses to have sex with him;
- 9% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she refuses to have sex with him;
- 3% did not know whether it is acceptable for a boyfriend/partner to hit a girlfriend if she refuses to have sex with him;



## **Question 2: Hit or coerced into sex**

Q2: Do you know any women or girls who:

- Have been hit by a boyfriend/partner?
- Are students who have been hit by a boyfriend/partner?
- Have been coerced or pressurised to have sex by a boyfriend/partner?
- Have been coerced or pressurised to have sex by another person?

Answer options: No women; At least one; A few women; and A lot of women.

### **Women or girls who have been hit**

- 40% of respondents did not know any women or girls who had been hit by a boyfriend/partner;
- 44% of respondents knew at least one woman or girl who had been hit by a boyfriend or partner;
- 15% of respondents knew either a few or a lot of women or girls who had been hit by a boyfriend or partner;

### **Women or girls who are students who have been hit**

- 60% of respondents did not know any women or girls who are students who had been hit by a boyfriend/partner
- 31% of respondents knew at least one woman or girl who is a student who had been hit by a boyfriend/partner;
- 9% of respondents knew a few or a lot of women or girls who were students who had been hit by a boyfriend/partner



### **Women or girls coerced or pressurised into sex by boyfriends / partners**

- 56% of respondents did not know any women or girls who had been coerced or pressurised to have sex by a boyfriend/partner;
- 32% of respondents knew at least one woman or girl who had been coerced or pressurised to have sex by a boyfriend/partner;
- 11% respondents knew a few or a lot of women or girls who had been coerced or pressurised to have sex by a boyfriend/partner;

### **Women or girls coerced or pressurised into sex by another person**

- 59% of respondents did not know any women or girls who had been coerced or pressurised to have sex by another person;
- 32% respondents knew at least one woman or girl who had been coerced or pressurised to have sex by another person;
- 9% of respondents knew a few or a lot of women or girls who had been coerced or pressurised to have sex by another person;



### **Question 3: Advice for women who have been hit**

Question 3:

- Did you feel confident about what advice to give her?
- Did you encourage her to tell someone like a counsellor or tutor?
- Did you encourage her to report it to the police?
- Did you challenge him?
- Do you think that students and young people have enough information and support to take the actions outlined in the previous questions?
- Do you think that services should be available on campus to help students who have suffered from violence?

Answer options: Yes; No; Not sure.

#### **Confident about giving advice**

- 36% of respondents felt confident about what advice to give, while 24% answered no and 36% answered that they were not sure.

#### **Encouraging her to tell a counsellor or tutor**

- 57% of respondents answered yes to this question, that they encouraged her to tell someone like a counsellor or tutor, while 19% answered no and 16% were not sure.

#### **Encouraging her to report it to the police**

- 46% of respondents encouraged her to report it to the police, while 25% answered no and 23% were not sure.

#### **Challenging him**

- 23% of respondents answered yes to this question, while 59% answered no and 12% were not sure.

#### **Information and support for students**

- 17% of respondents answered yes to this question, that students and young people have enough information and support to take the actions outlined in the previous questions, while 49% answered no and 28% were not sure.

#### **Services on campus**

- 77% respondents answered yes to this question, that services should be available on campus to help students who have suffered from violence, while 7% answered no and 11% were not sure.



#### **Question 4: Sexual assault and rape**

Q5. Is a woman totally responsible, partially responsible or not at all responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted:

- if she is drunk?
- If she has behaved in a flirtatious manner?
- If she has failed to say 'no' clearly to the man?
- If she is wearing sexy or revealing clothes?
- If it is known that she has had many sexual partners?
- If she is walking alone in a dangerous or deserted area?

Answer options: Totally responsible; Partly Responsible; Not at all responsible.

#### **If a woman is drunk**

Is a woman totally responsible, partially responsible or not at all responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is drunk?

- 44% of respondents answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is drunk;
- 56% of respondents answered that a woman is not at all responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is drunk;

#### **If a woman has behaved in a flirtatious manner**

- 46% of respondents answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she has acted in a flirtatious manner;
- 54% respondents answered that a woman is not at all responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she has acted in a flirtatious manner;



#### **If a woman has failed to say 'no' clearly**

- 48% of respondents answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she has failed to say no clearly to the man;
- 52% of respondents answered that a woman is not at all responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she has failed to say no clearly to the man;

#### **If a woman is wearing sexy or revealing clothes**

- 30% of respondents answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is wearing sexy or revealing clothes;
- 70% of respondents answered that a woman is not at all responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is wearing sexy or revealing clothes;

#### **If a woman has had many sexual partners**

- 33% of respondents answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if it is known that she has had many sexual partners
- 67% of respondents answered that a woman is not at all responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if it is known that she has had many sexual partners;

#### **If a woman is alone and walking in a dangerous or deserted area**

- 47% of respondents answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is alone and walking in a dangerous or deserted area
- 53% of respondents answered that a woman is not at all responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is alone and walking in a dangerous or deserted area

#### **Question 5**

##### **Are you aware of any services available for students on campus to help you if you were a victim of domestic violence?**

82% of respondents were not aware of any such services; 18% of respondents were aware of services.



## Comparable Studies

Our survey questionnaire was based on previous studies undertaken by ICM in an attempt to compare the results amongst students in Northern Ireland with previous cohorts.

The first study is a 2005 telephone survey of 1000 adults in the UK general population, carried out for Amnesty International UK, which focused on sexual assault and includes comparable responses for Question 4.

The second study is a 2006 online poll of 524 16-18 year olds in the UK, on behalf of the End Violence Against Women Coalition, and provides comparison with Questions 1-3.

### Question 1: Hitting a Girlfriend

- 5% of 16-18 year olds agreed or strongly agreed that it was acceptable for a boyfriend to hit a girlfriend if she pushed him too far, compared with 8% of the student respondents.
- 2% of 16-18 year olds agreed or strongly agreed that it was acceptable for a boyfriend to hit a girlfriend if she nags him, compared with 9% of the student respondents.
- 2% of 16-18 year olds agreed or strongly agreed that it was acceptable for a boyfriend to hit a girlfriend if doesn't stop arguing with him, compared with 8% of the student respondents.
- 3% of 16-18 year olds agreed or strongly agreed that it was acceptable for a boyfriend to hit a girlfriend if she doesn't treat him with respect, compared with 10% of the student respondents.
- 3% of 16-18 year olds agreed or strongly agreed that it was acceptable for a boyfriend to hit a girlfriend if she flirts with other men in front of him, compared with 11% of the student respondents.
- 2% of 16-18 year olds agreed or strongly agreed that it was acceptable for a boyfriend to hit a girlfriend if she refuses to have sex with him, compared with 9% of the student respondents.

### Question 2: Hit or coerced into sex

- 26% of 16-18 year olds knew one girl that had been hit by her boyfriend, compared with 44% of student respondents who knew at least one woman or girl who had been hit by a boyfriend or partner.
- 16% of 16-18 year olds knew a few or a lot of girls that had been hit by their boyfriend, compared with 15% of student respondents who knew a few or a lot of women or girls who had been hit by a boyfriend or partner.
- 40% of 16-18 year olds knew at least one girl that had been pressurised to have sex with her boyfriend, compared with 32% of student respondents.
- 18% of 16-18 year olds knew at least one girl who been pressurised to have sex by another person, compared with 32% of student respondents.



### **Question 3: Advice for women who have been hit**

- Of those 16-18 years olds who knew someone that had been hit by her boyfriend, 60% felt confident about what advice to give her, compared with 36% of student respondents.
- 37% of 16-18 year olds encouraged her to tell the police, compared with 46% of student respondents.
- 24% of 16-18 year olds challenged the person concerned, compared with 23% of student respondents.
- 23% of 16-18 year olds felt that they had sufficient information and support to take the actions outlined in the previous questions, compared to 17% amongst student respondents.

### **Question 4: Sexual Assault and rape**

- 30% of the adult sample answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is drunk, compared with 44% of student respondents.
- 34% of the adult sample answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she behaved in a flirtatious manner, compared with 46% of student respondents.
- 37% of the adult sample answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she failed to say 'no' clearly to the man, compared with 48% of student respondents.
- 26% of the adult sample answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if she is wearing sexy or revealing clothes, compared with 30% of student respondents.
- 22% of the adult sample answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if it is known the women has had many sexual partners, compared with 33% of student respondents.
- 22% of the adult sample answered that a woman is totally responsible or partially responsible for being raped or sexually assaulted if the woman is alone and walking in a dangerous or deserted area, compared with 47% of student respondents.

