Statistics on work-related violence

Introduction

• Importance
  • Effects on employees
    • Reduced well-being
    • Reduced capacity to work
  • Effects on employers
    • Higher costs due to absenteeism, lower productivity, higher turnover, etc.

• Existing statistics
  • Are scarce
  • Are not comparable
  • No common methodology
  • No internationally agreed statistical definition on work-related violence
**Types of violence**

- **Physical violence**
  - Assault
  - Physical abuse
  - Murder

- **Psychological violence**
  - Threat and verbal abuse
  - Psychological abuse
  - Bullying
  - Mobbing
  - Harassment

- **Sexual violence**
  - Sexual harassment
  - Unwanted sexual attention
  - Stalking
  - Rape

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**Violence concepts**

- Different perceptions of violence in different cultures
  - Borderline of acceptable behaviour vague
  - Focus of all definitions on “threatening or causing physical harm”

**Related violence concepts**

- Violence as public health issue – WHO
- Gender-based violence
- Violence against women – UN Declaration
- Domestic violence – UNICEF
- Occupational injuries – ILO
Defining work-related violence

- Useful definition to produce statistics must include
  - Types of actions that constitute violence
  - Types of violent actions that are work-related

- Common definition: An **act of violence** that occurs at the **place of work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act of violence</th>
<th>Place of work</th>
<th>Worker coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any incidence of forms or power inflicted by one or more persons (perpetrator) over another person (victim)</td>
<td>Any location, whether within fixed premises or in an open space, where workers need to be or to go to by reason of their work</td>
<td>Generally employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Challenges with definition**

- Worker coverage
  - Extend to self employed workers
  - Extend also to non-employed persons

- Coverage of acts of violence
  - Extend to self inflicted violence?

- Acts of violence can occur outside the place of work
  - As direct effect of one’s work
  - As direct consequence of interaction with people specific to type of work

- Not all acts of violence at work are work-related
  - Caused by personal relationships
  - Random occurrences

Relationship with the perpetrator becomes important!

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Challenges with definition II

- Using workplace as only criterion to classify violent acts as work-related is not sufficient
- Include violent acts that are direct result of

  - Relationship fostered at work
  - Occupation one has
  - Interactions taking place at work

Relationship with perpetrator

- **Supervisor**
  - Person who is or was in a direct superior position in the hierarchy
- **Co-worker**
  - Person who directly or indirectly works or worked with victim (may be superior or subordinate in hierarchy)
- **Customer**
  - Current or past recipient of goods or services from victim (i.e. client, student, patient)
- **Acquaintances and family**
  - Persons who know and are known to the victim, but who are not supervisors, co-workers or customers
- **Strangers**
  - Persons unknown to the victim
Proposed definition

• Work-related violence includes all acts of violence that are
  • Carried out at the place of work by supervisors, co-workers, customers or strangers
  • Carried out while commuting to work or any other location by supervisors, co-workers or customers
• An act of violence
  • Relates to incidents of force or power inflicted by humans upon each other either physical, psychological or sexual in nature
  • May cover incidences of self-inflicted harm, if directly related to work
• “Workplace” violence includes all acts of violence that occur at the workplace irrespective of the type of perpetrator
• Work-related violence should distinguish violence perpetrated by customers, co-workers, supervisors or strangers

Data items

• Number of persons affected by work-related violent acts during a specified reference period
  • By demographic and work characteristics of the victim
  • By demographic and work characteristics of the perpetrator
  • By characteristics of the violent act
• Frequency of violent acts during the specified reference period
• Impact of violent acts on the work and life of the victim
### Measurement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Administrative registers</th>
<th>Establishment surveys</th>
<th>Household surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Kept by the police, insurance companies, courts, hospital</td>
<td>- Surveys directed at managers will refer to reported cases of violence</td>
<td>- As part of general violence/working conditions surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Limited coverage of events – compensated events, reported events</td>
<td>- Surveys directed at workers may cover all work-related violence, even those that do not lead to days lost</td>
<td>- Rarely specific to work-related violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- May have limited coverage of workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Issues for discussion

- Is this topic important in your country
- Do you collect statistics on work-related /workplace violence? If yes, do they ...
  - Include all /some violent acts at the place of work
  - Include all/some violent acts during commuting
  - Include some violent acts outside of the workplace
  - Distinguish violent acts by type of perpetrator
- Should this topic be further developed?

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