

Getting the Facts to Make the Change: The International Violence Against Women Survey

Holly Johnson, PhD

Natalia Ollus, MA

Sami Nevala, MA

February 28, 2008

Presented by Holly Johnson, PhD*

** The views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.*

Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university



uOttawa.ca

Evolution of internationally comparative surveys on violence against women

- Crime victimization surveys (1960s)
- Family Violence surveys (1970s)
- Sexual violence surveys (1980s)
- International Crime Victim Survey (1980s) – 60 countries
- Dedicated VAW surveys – Statistics Canada 1993
 - Now 60-70 countries
- Multi-country surveys:
 - Demographic and Health Surveys
 - WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and DV
 - International Violence Against Women Survey

Internationally comparative surveys

1. Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)
 - Optional module on DV
 - 11 countries
2. WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence
 - Detailed questionnaire
 - 10 countries
3. International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS)
 - Detailed questionnaire
 - 11 countries

Why conduct internationally comparative studies?

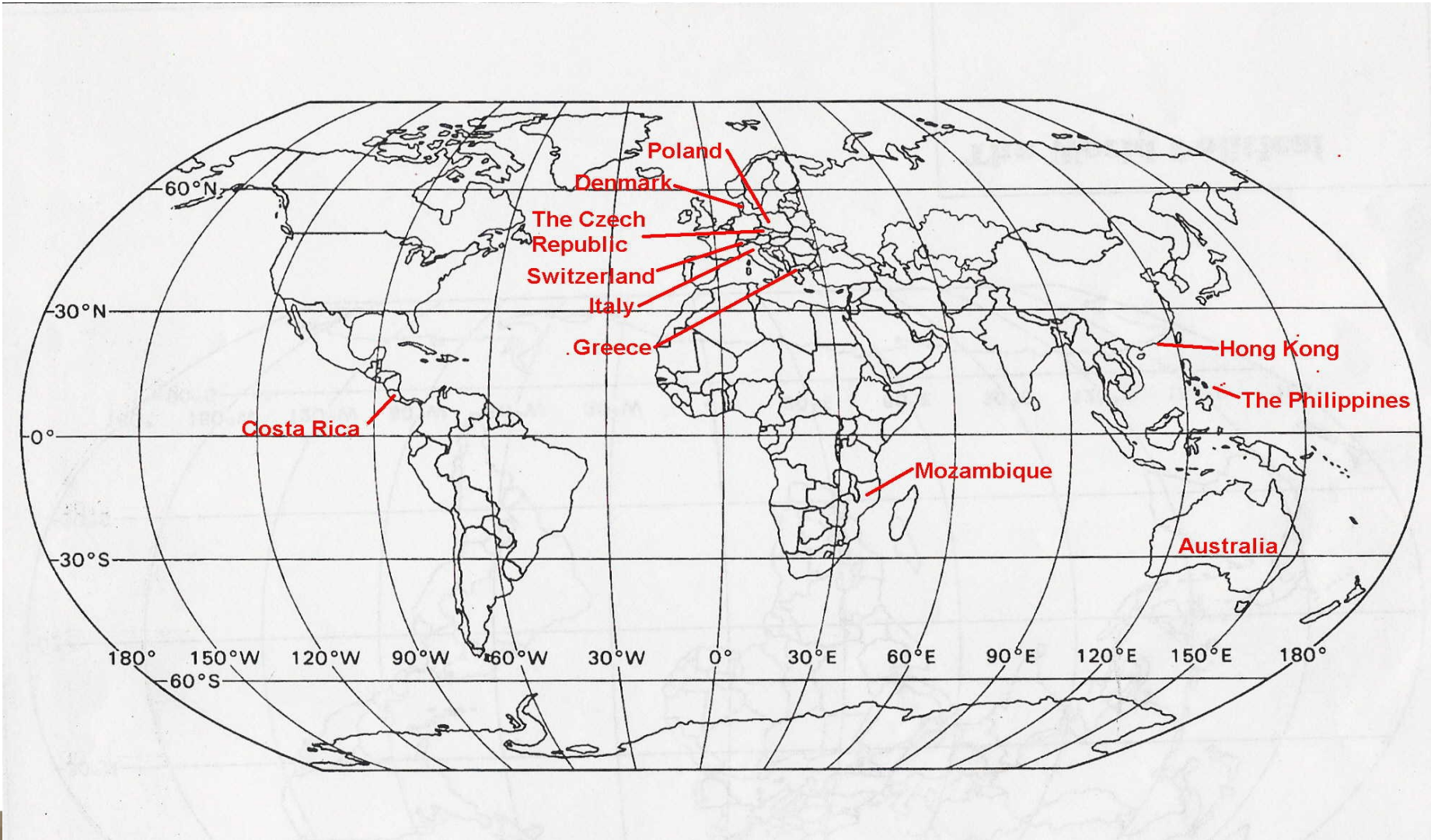
- Test for universal or cross-cultural traits or factors associated with VAW
- Assist with implementation of international agreements and norms
- Lead to social change and awareness on a broader scale
- Help development partners better understand the dimensions and context of VAW -> better targeting of assistance
- May be the only source of information about VAW
- Technical exchange at the local level
- Plan interventions & services, public education, legislation
- Develop training for police and other officials

Purpose of the IVAWS

To promote and implement research on violence against women in countries around the world, in particular developing countries and countries in transition, as an important research and policy tool.

The survey may be considered a tool for developing and strengthening democracy by increasing public participation in the process of formulating criminal justice policies and other policies to strengthen the response against violence against women.

Countries participating in the IVAWS



Country	Sample size	Method of interviewing
Australia	6,677	Telephone
Costa Rica	908	Face-to-face
Czech Republic	1,980	Face-to-face
Denmark	3,589	Telephone
Greece	Continuing	Face-to-face
Hong Kong	1,297	Telephone
Italy	25,000	Telephone
Mozambique	2,015	Face-to-face
Philippines	2,602	Face-to-face
Poland	2,009	Face-to-face
Switzerland	1,973	Telephone

Ethical issues

- Safety of respondents
- Responding to emotional distress
- Ensuring confidentiality
- Specialized training and support for interviewers
- Gaining trust -> minimize under-reporting
- Valid definitions of violence
- Accurate interpretation of results
- Follow-up on survey and its results

Issues related to multi-country research

- Culture
 - Differences in societal attitudes toward victims
 - Taboos against discussing/naming violence
 - Tradition and norms protecting family privacy
 - Ideals and practices of masculinity
- Political context – war, displacement, culture of violence
- Subjectivity
 - Variation in the subjective meaning of violence depending on past experience, social location
- Translation
- Differences in modes of interviewing
- Response rates

Other challenges

In resource-poor settings:

- Expertise and capacity
 - Funding
 - Technology
-
- Government resistance to using results for change

*The prevalence of intimate
partner violence*

IVAWS questions re physical violence

- **Threatened** to hurt you physically in a way that frightened you
- **Threw something** at you or **hit you with something** that hurt or frightened you
- **Pushed** or **grabbed** you or **twisted your arm**, **pulled your hair** in a way that hurt or frightened you
- **Slapped, kicked, bit** or **hit with a fist**
- Tried to **strangle** or **suffocate**, **burn** or **scald**
- Used or threatened to use a **knife** or **gun**
- Physically violent in any other way

IVAWS questions re sexual violence

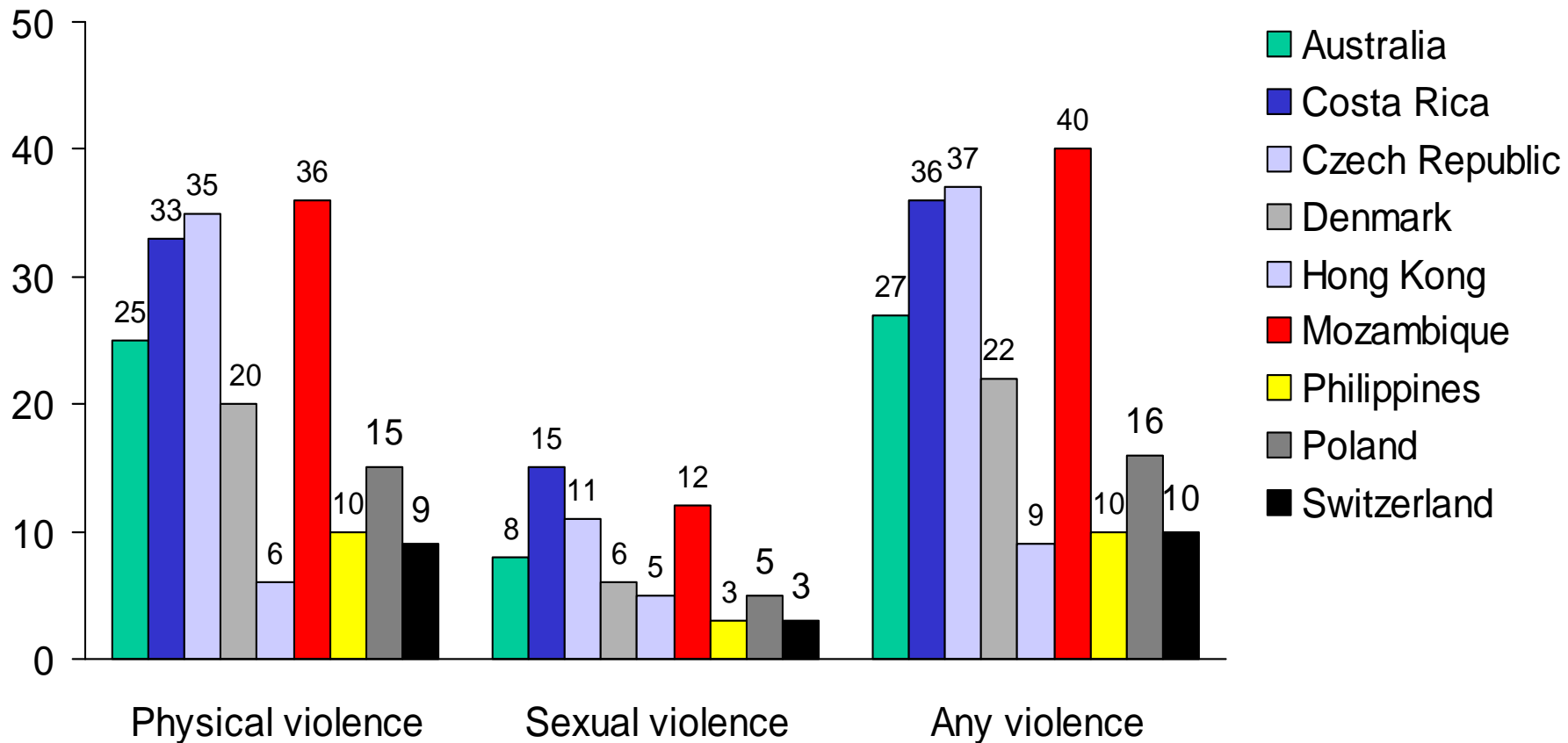
- **Forced you into sexual intercourse** by threatening, holding you down or hurting you
- **Attempted to force you into sexual intercourse** by threatening, holding you down or hurting you
- **Touched you sexually** in a way that was distressing
- Forced or attempted to force you into sexual activity **with someone else**, including being forced to have sex for money or in exchange for goods
- Sexually violent towards you in a way that I have not already mentioned

Prevalence of violence - overview

- In the majority of countries:
 - 35% to 60% of women experienced physical or sexual violence by any man since age 16
 - 22% to 40% of women have been physically or sexually assaulted by an intimate partner
 - 10% to 31% of women have been sexually assaulted by a man other than an intimate partner

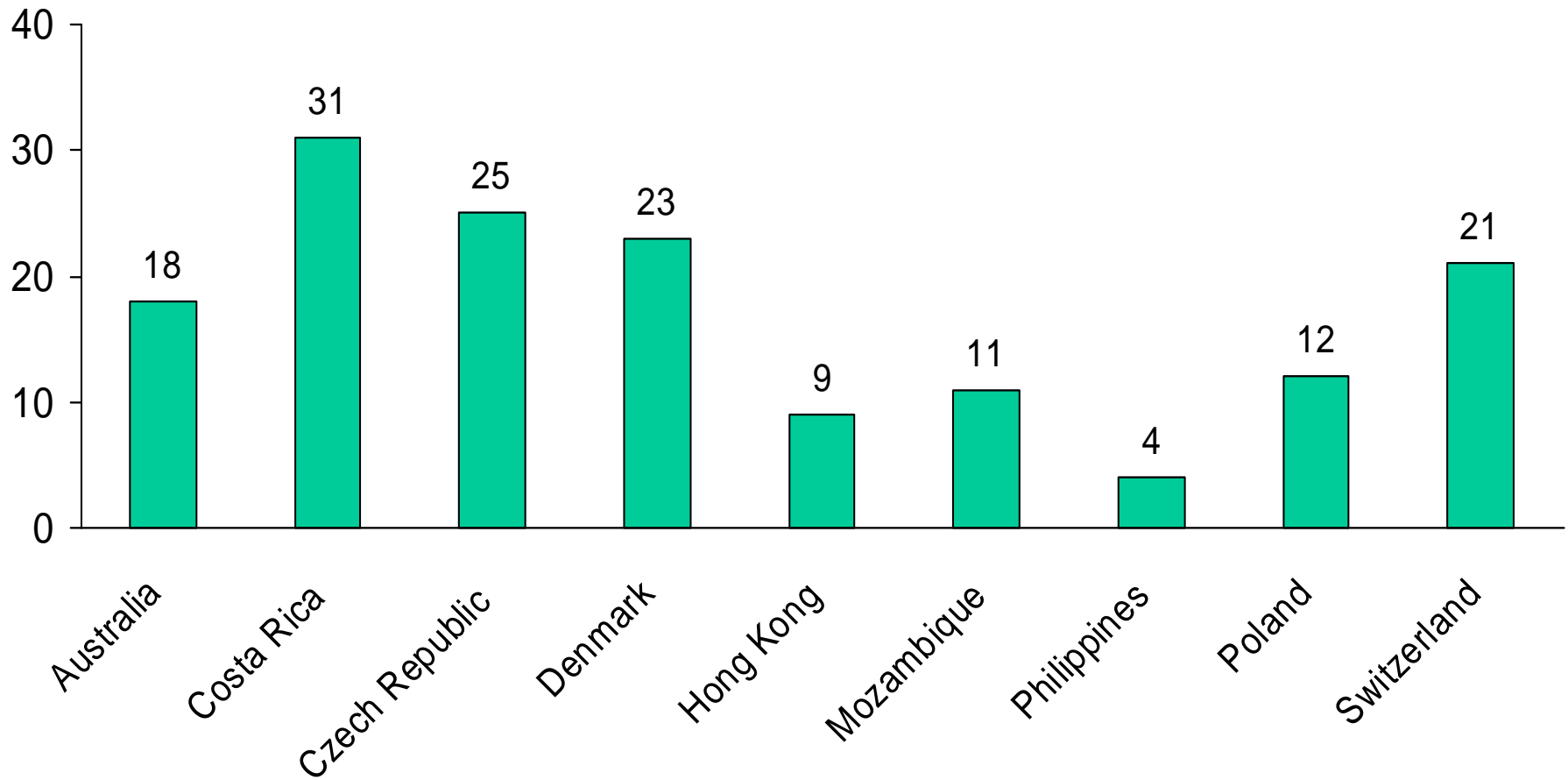
Rates of intimate partner violence

Percent



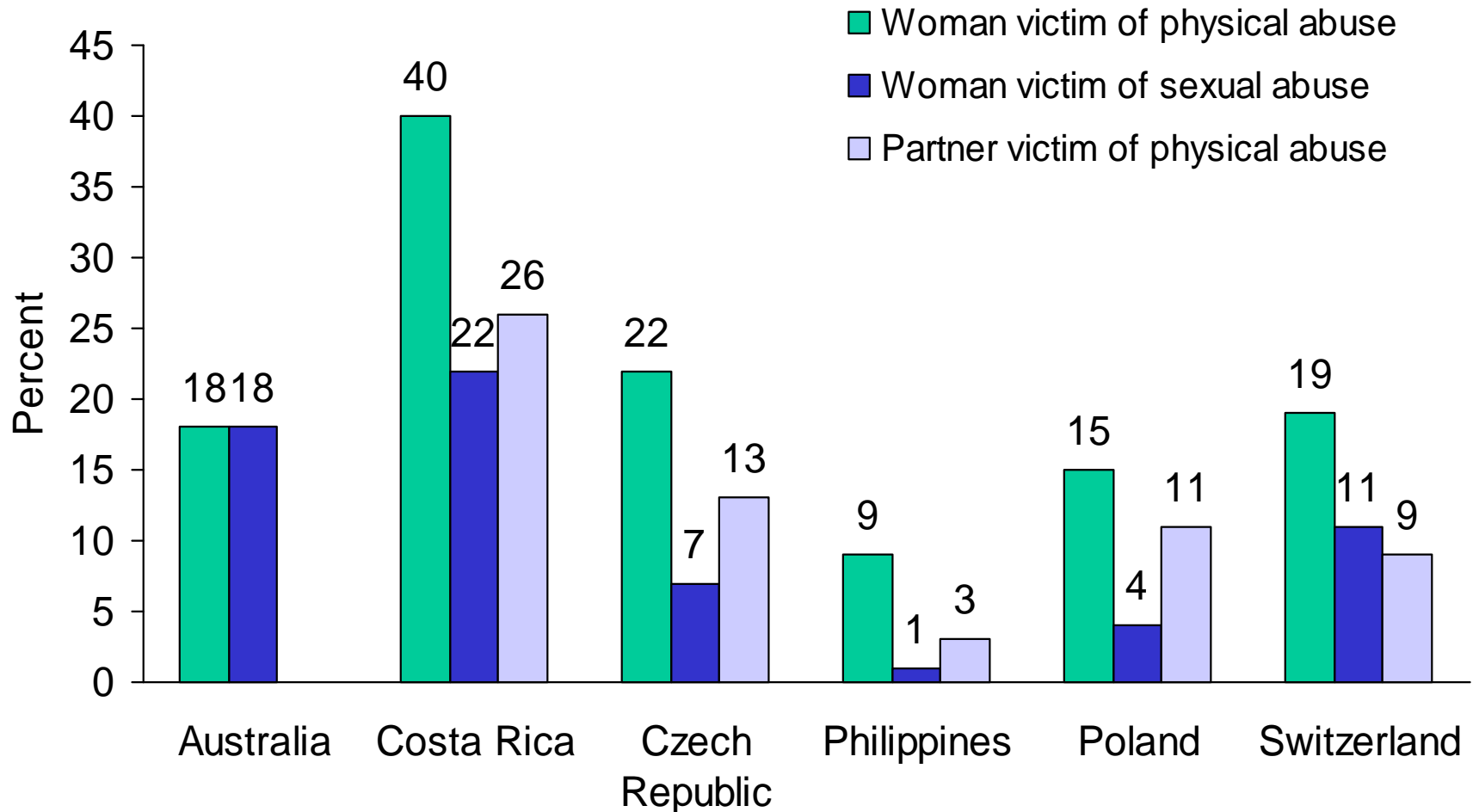
Rates of sexual violence by other men

Percent

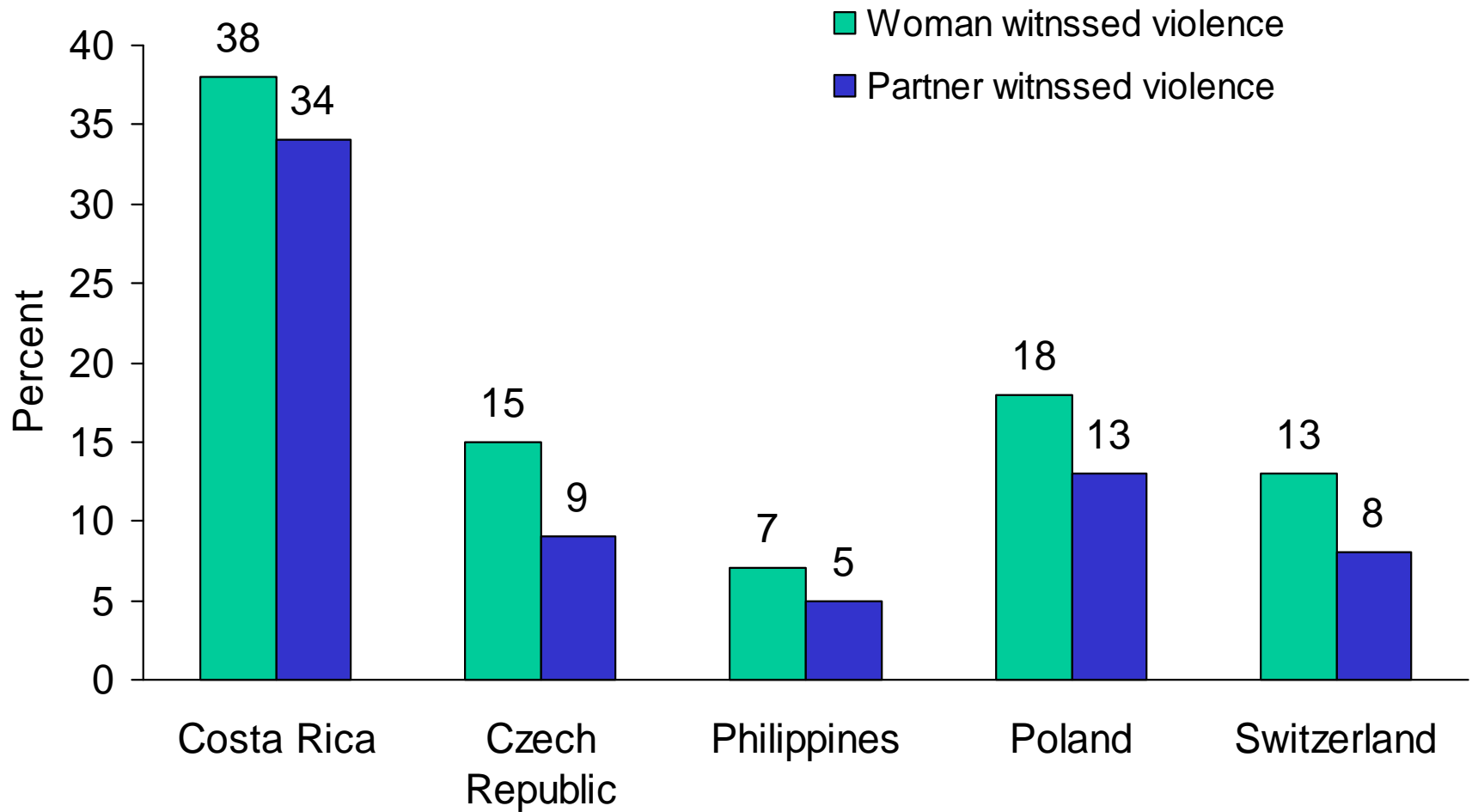


Source: International Violence Against Women Survey

Rates of child abuse by women and partners

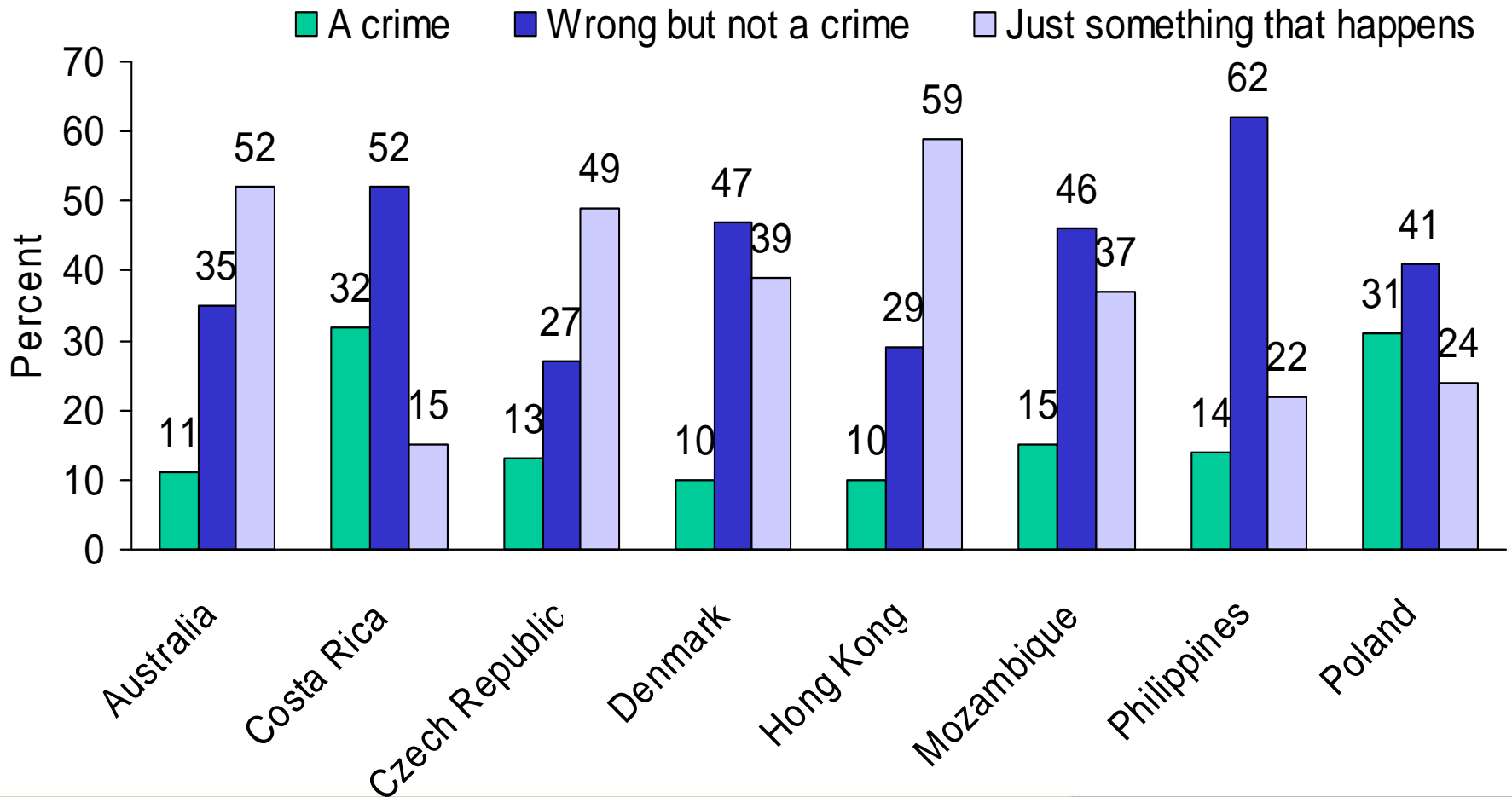


Percentage who witnessed marital violence

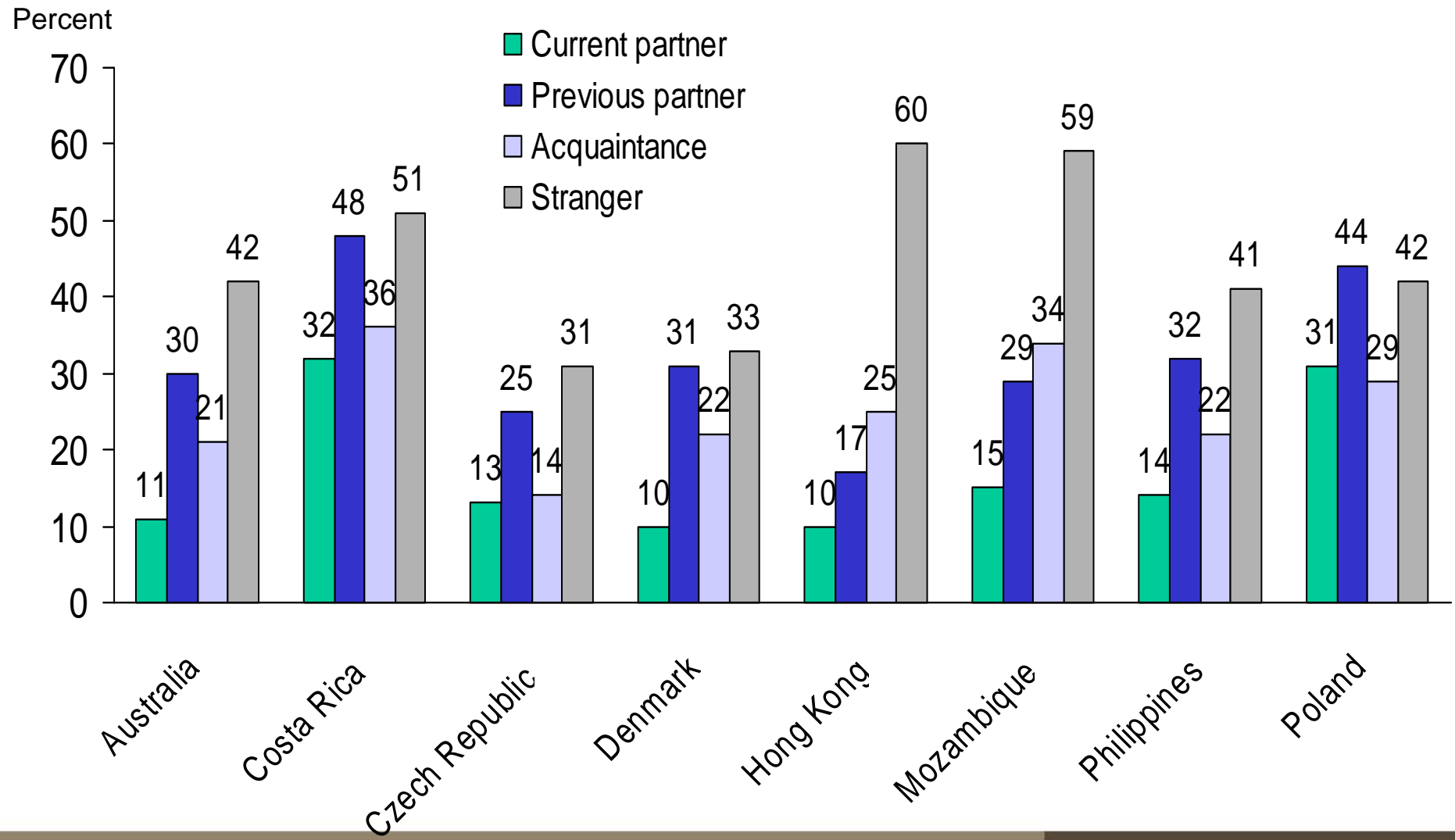


*Victims' perceptions of
intimate partner violence*

IPV is a crime (current partners)



Violence is considered a crime



*Risk factors for intimate
partner violence*

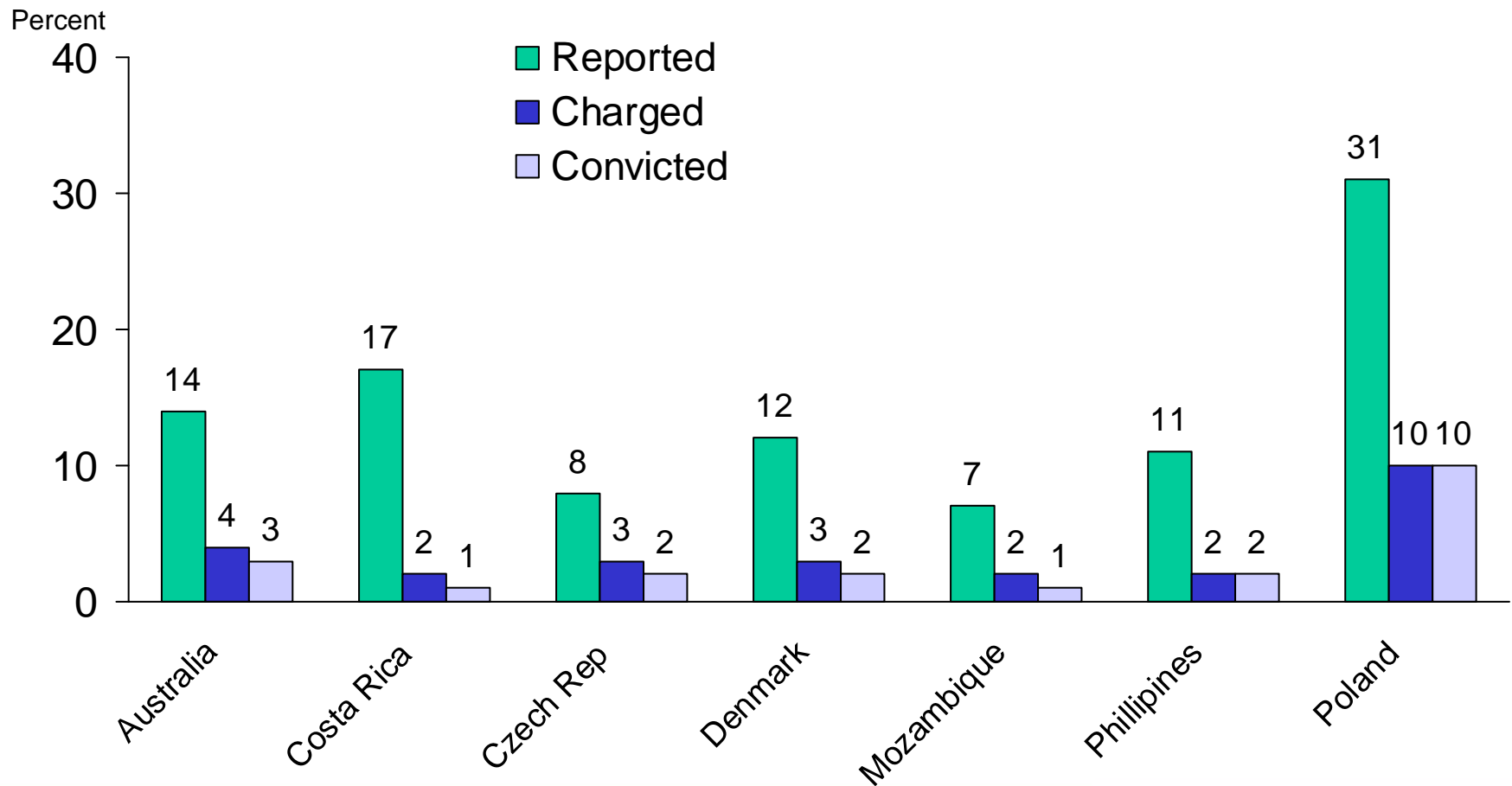


Risk factors and correlates of IPV

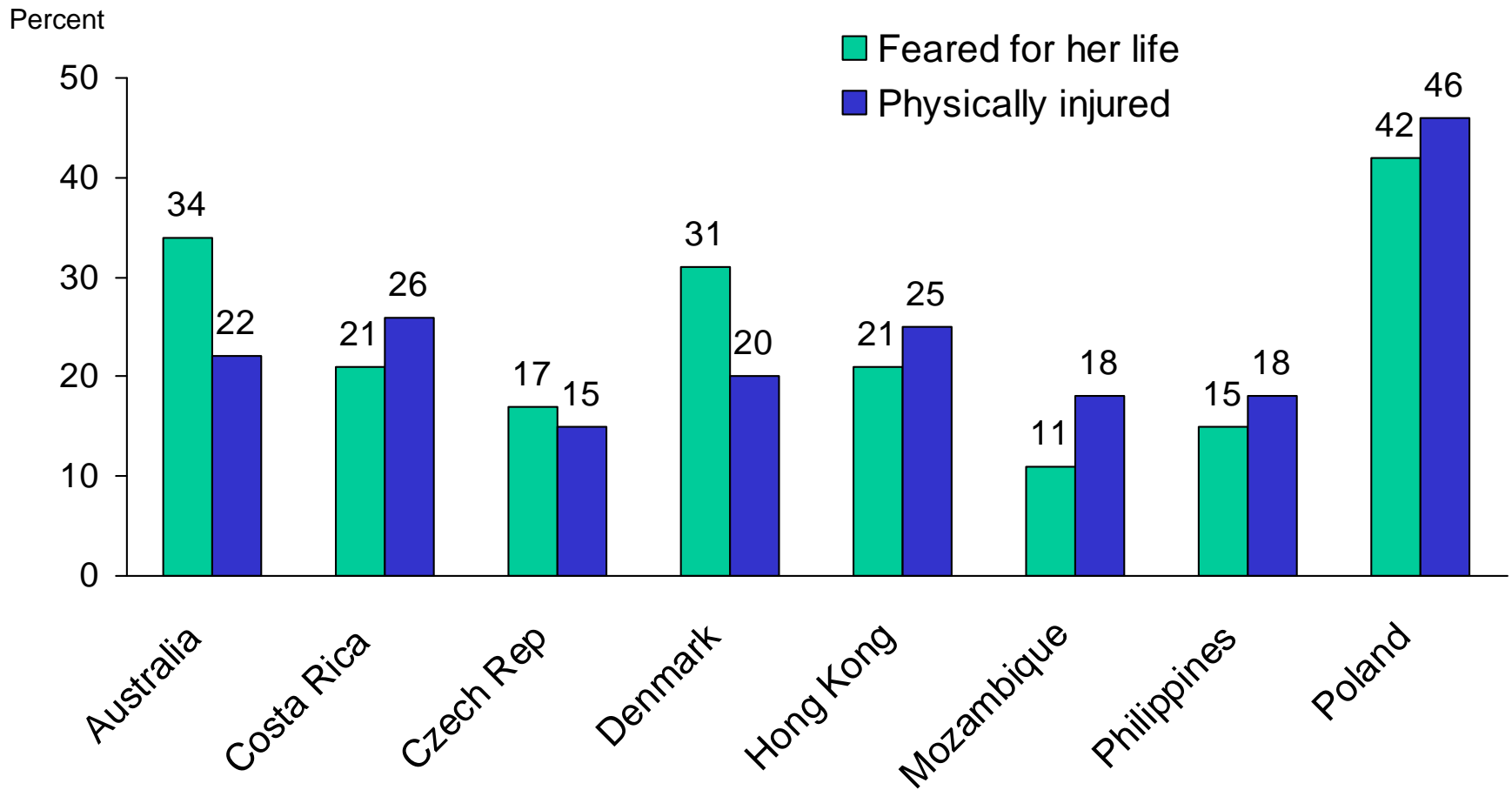
- Controlling and emotionally abusive behaviours
 - Sexual jealousy
 - Social isolation
 - Put downs and name calling
- Violence toward others outside the home
- Alcohol abuse
- Witnessing parental violence (women and partners)
- Experiencing physical violence in childhood (partners)

*Response of the criminal
justice system*

Attrition of partner violence through the justice system



Percentage of serious partner assaults reported to police

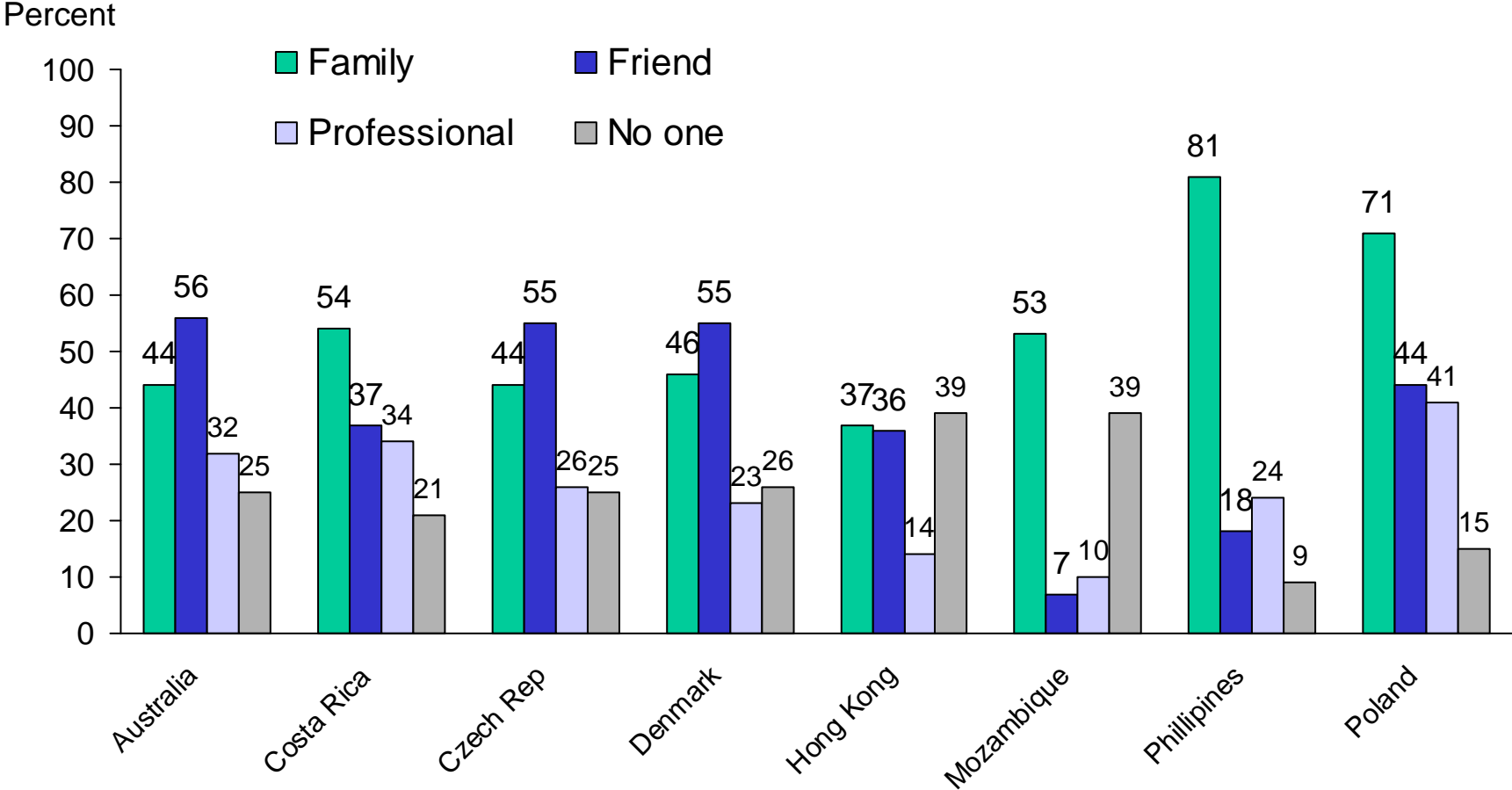




Reasons for not reporting to police

- Not serious enough for the police
- Police wouldn't be able to do anything, wouldn't be believed
- Dealt with it herself
- Shame, didn't want anyone to know
- Fear of the offender

Percentage of women who told others about partner violence



Source: International Violence Against Women Survey

Policy implications

- Violence cannot be solved by the health sector, justice sector or community groups working alone
- Interventions must focus on men: addressing controlling behaviours, emotional abuse, subordination of women
- Culture of violence is linked to partner violence
- Evidence of a generational cycle of violence: implications for child witnesses
- Importance of improving the response of the criminal justice system to understand the needs of victims
- Importance of sensitizing family & friends

What can be done to end VAW?

1. Promote gender equality
2. Improve service delivery
3. Hold offenders accountable
4. Prevention
5. Monitoring and evaluation

Secure partnership, leadership and political will to end violence



1. Promote gender equality through:

- Promoting women's right to live free of violence
- Ensuring that women are not discriminated against in property rights, inheritance rights, marriage and divorce laws, access to education, employment and health care
- Reviewing legislation and policy for its impact on gender equality and victims of violence
- Ratifying and enforce international conventions regarding equality rights
- Promoting involvement of men in prevention activities



2. Improve service delivery to victims through:

- Training for police and other service providers who come into contact with victims of sexual and IPV
- Ensuring that screening protocols are followed up by appropriate action and referral
- Hiring female police officers, judges and physicians
- Improving coordination among sectors





3. **Hold offenders accountable** by:

- Enacting legislation that VAW including rape in marriage is a crime
- Ensuring that laws are effectively implemented
- Supporting victims throughout the CJ process
- Harmonising family and criminal law
- Implementing treatment programs for violent men that are not dependent on women reporting to police





4. **Preventing** violence by:

- Promoting gender equality and the development of gender norms that do not promote control and abuse of women
- Widespread public education campaigns
- Programs targeted at children and youth to promote equitable relationships
- Greater awareness of rape myths
- Greater awareness of warning signs for violence



5. **Monitoring and evaluation** through:

- Developing a national action plan and assigning responsibility to senior officials + women's orgs through:
 - promoting gender equality, improving service delivery, holding offenders accountable, and prevention programs
- Ongoing evaluation to ensure objectives are met
- Data collection for monitoring and evaluation