

# Intimate Partner Violence in Iowa

## Results from the 2005 Iowa BRFSS survey<sup>1</sup>

### Background

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (BRFSS) is state-specific surveillance system that surveys adults 18 and older. The survey is a random sample consisting of structured telephone interviews asking questions about self-reported health behaviors and risk factors. Nationally, there is a required set of questions so that comparisons can be made between states, and national trends can be acquired. In addition, each state may add optional modules with additional health risk questions. During Iowa's 2005 BRFSS, a module including seven questions on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) was added. These questions are listed below.

- Q1. Has an intimate partner ever threatened you with physical violence? This includes threatening to hit, slap, push, kick, or physically hurt you in any way.
- Q2. Has an intimate partner ever hit, slapped, pushed, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way?
- Q3. Other than what you have already told me about, has an intimate partner ever attempted physical violence against you? This includes times when they tried to hit, slap, push, kick, or otherwise physically hurt you, but they were not able to.
- Q4. Have you ever experienced any unwanted sex by a current or former intimate partner?

If either question 2 or question 4 was answered "Yes," then the following three questions were also asked.

- Q5. In the past 12 months, have you experienced any physical violence or had unwanted sex with an intimate partner?
- Q6. In the past 12 months, have you had any injuries, such as bruises, cuts, scrapes, black eyes, vaginal or anal tears, or broken bones, as a result of this physical violence or unwanted sex?
- Q7. At the time of the most recent incident, what was your relationship to the intimate partner who was physically violent or had unwanted sex with you?

Options for response to questions 1-6 included:

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Not Sure
4. Refused

Options for response to question 7 included:

1. Boyfriend
2. Girlfriend
3. Former boyfriend
4. Former girlfriend
5. Male you were dating
6. Female you were dating
7. Husband or male live-in partner
8. Former husband or former male live-in partner
9. Wife or female live-in partner
10. Former wife or former female live-in partner
11. Other
12. Don't know/Not sure
13. Refused

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<sup>1</sup> Data analyzed and report prepared by Anna Hassebroek, IDPH Intern, April 2006

There were a total of 5,051 participants in the 2005 Iowa BRFSS. The first four questions were analyzed by gender, race, age, education, income, marital status, and employment status. The non-response rate for these questions ranged from 10.9% for Question 1, to 11.6% for Question 4. (The top three non-response rates for other sensitive questions, for comparison, were 12.4% for income, 29.5% for HIV testing, and 28.8% for HIV risk exposures). The following graphs give the percentage of persons reporting intimate partner violence in each category. For example, in Figure 1, 15.4% of women age 18-24 reported that they had been threatened with violence. The last three questions did not have a high enough response rate to provide useful results. This non-response may be due to the sensitivity of the questions, and the fact that there was a smaller pool of participants who were asked the questions.

A Pearson chi-square test was used to analyze differences in demographic variables between those who reported IPV and those who did not. For example, age is significant across all four questions. This means that the age of those participants who reported IPV is statistically different than the age of those who did not. All of the trends listed for the specific questions below are statistically significant. This test does not indicate where the differences exist, however, so that all of the points below are observations of high and low rates. The overall trends are observations only.

## **Findings**

### **Overall trends observed on all questions:**

- Women report higher rates of IPV than men:
  - Women reported being threatened or hurt by an intimate partner two times as often as men.
  - Women reported experiencing unwanted sex by an intimate partner ten times as often as men.
- Iowans aged 35-44 reported the highest rates of IPV.
- Divorced and separated individuals report much higher rates of IPV than their counterparts.
- College graduates report lower rates of IPV than their counterparts.
- Those who are out of work or unable to work report the highest rates of IPV, as compared to individuals who are employed, students, homemakers, or retired.
- Respondents who make less than \$15,000 annually report the highest rates of IPV; those who make more than \$75,000 report the lowest.

### **Threatened Violence**

#### **12.1% of adult Iowans, or approximately 245,977 individuals, have been threatened with physical violence.**

- Women (16.9%) are more than twice as likely to be threatened with physical violence as Men (7.0%).
- Individuals between the ages of 35-44 reported the highest rates of threatened violence, at 16.9%.
- Those participants who reported an annual income of less than \$15,000 reported the highest rate (17.9%), and those with an income greater than \$75,000 reported the lowest rate of threatened violence (6.8%).
- Divorced individuals reported the highest rate of threatened violence (34.6%), and widowed individuals reported the lowest (7.26%).
- College graduates report the lowest rate of threatened physical violence (8.7%). Those who have less than a college degree have rates around 13%.
- Individuals who have unsteady employment report higher rates of threatened violence.

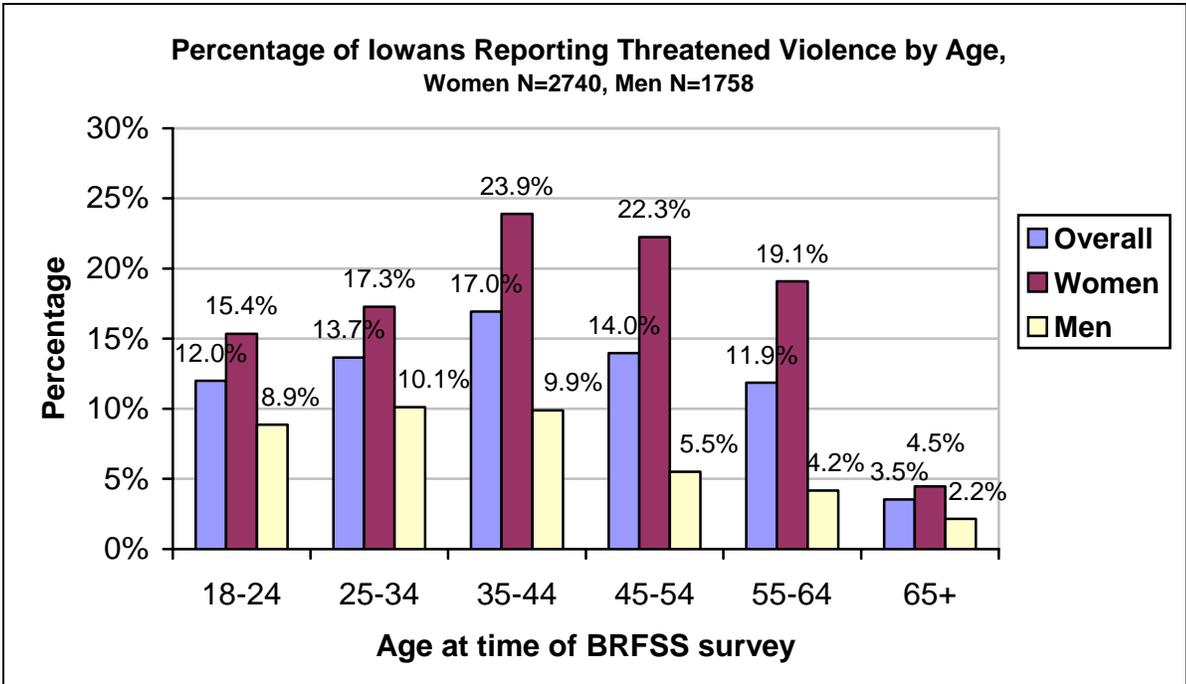


Figure 1

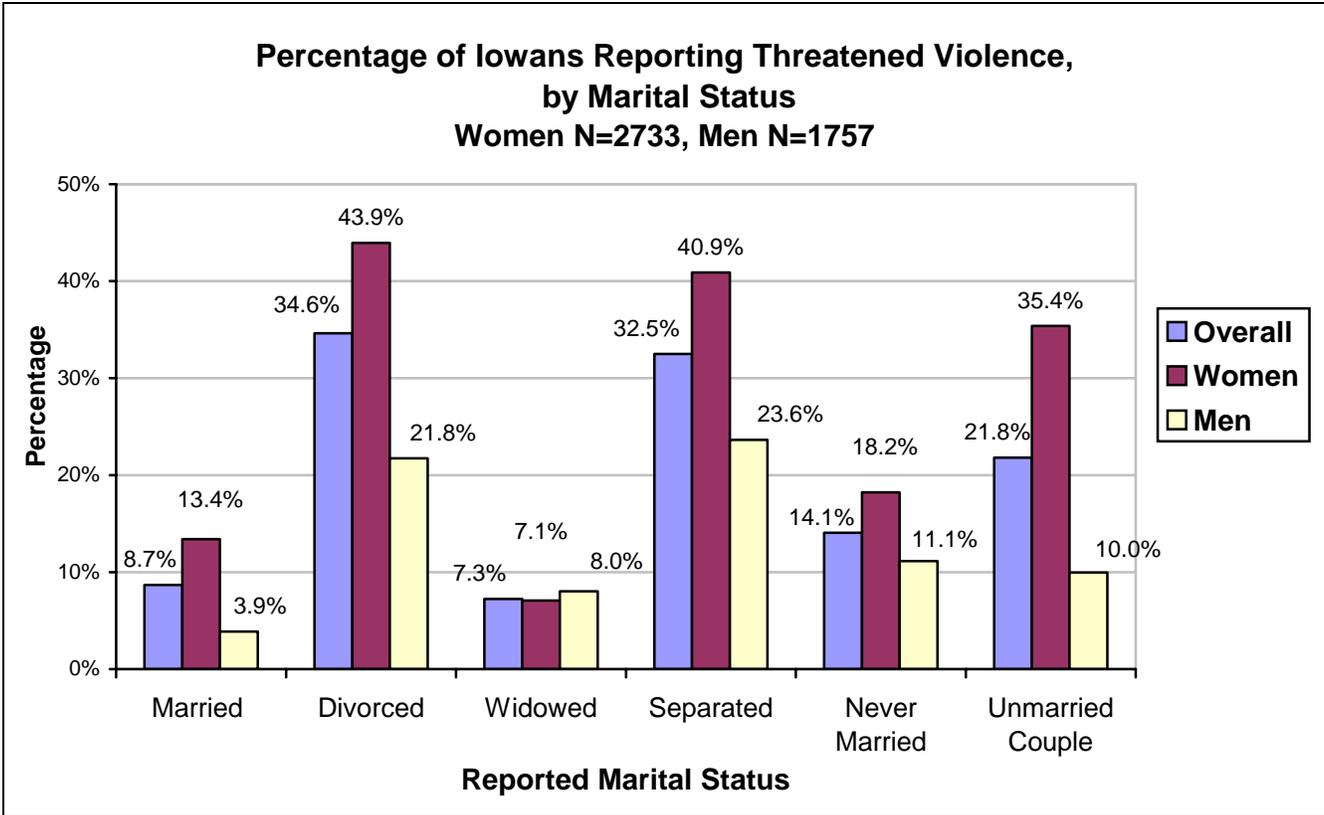


Figure 2

## Physical Violence

**14.5% of Iowans, or an estimated 293,725 individuals, have been hit, slapped, pushed, kicked, or physically hurt in some way.**

- Women (18.5%) are almost twice as likely to report physical harm as Men (10.2%).
- Individuals age 35-44 report the highest rates of being harmed by an intimate partner, at 18.9%.
- Divorced, Separated, and Unmarried couples reported the highest rates of physical harm.
- 18.3% of those in the category “Some post-High School” reported being physically harmed by their partner.
- 21.1% of individuals reporting an annual income of less than \$15,000 reported being physically harmed by their partner.
- Participants who were out of work or unable to work reported higher rates of experiencing physical harm than those who reported being employed.

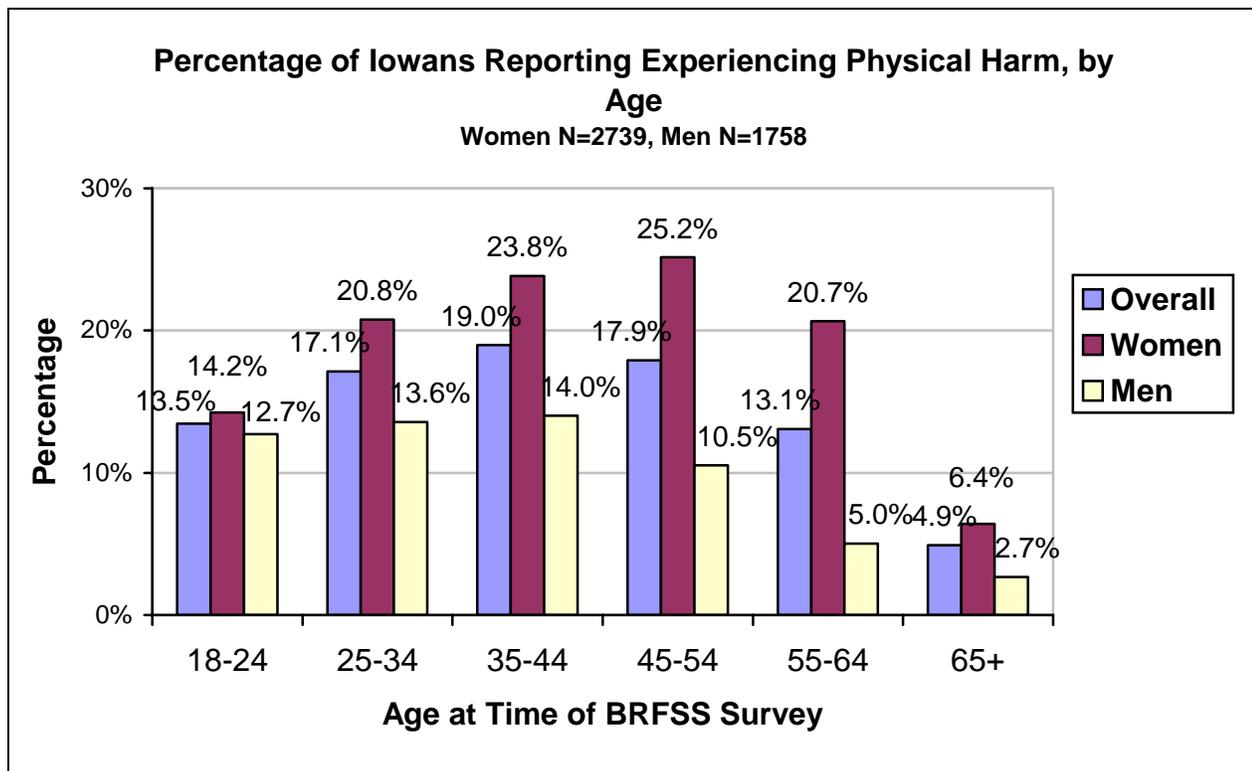


Figure 3

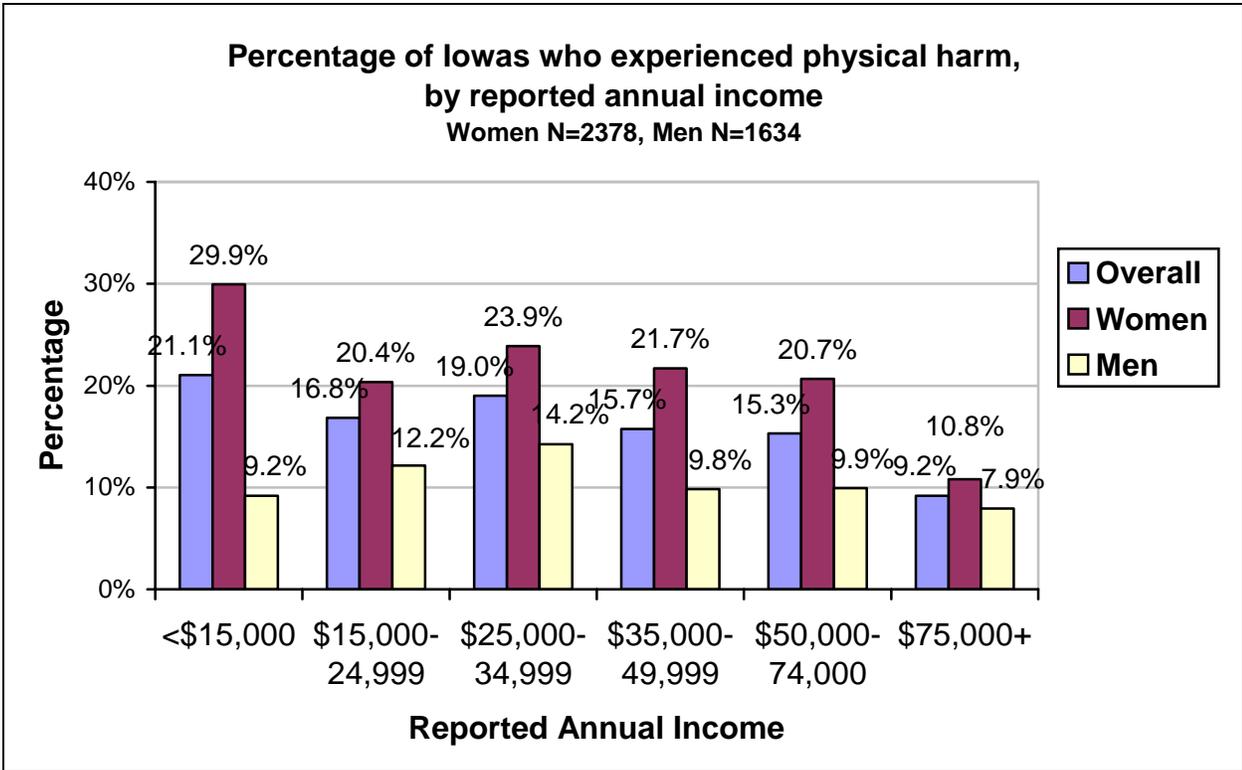


Figure 4

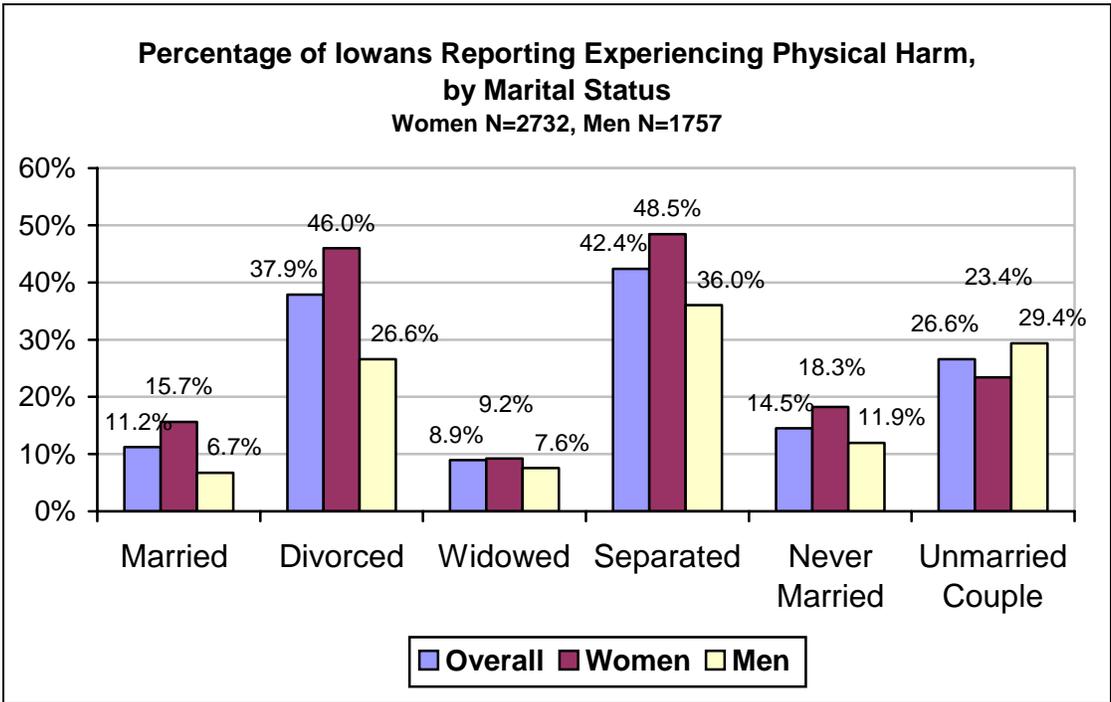


Figure 5

## Attempted Physical Violence

**10.5% of Iowans, or an estimated 213,086 individuals, have had an intimate partner attempt physical violence.**

- Women (12.9%) experience more attempted physical violence than Men (7.9%).
- Participants ages 35-44 report the highest rate of attempted violence at 14.7%.
- Divorced, Separated, and members of an Unmarried couple, report the highest rates of attempted violence.
- Individuals reporting an annual income of less than \$15,000 experience the highest rate of attempted violence (16.7%).
- Those who are out of work (30.1%) or unable to work (26.3%) are more likely to report experiencing attempted violence than those that are employed.
- Women who have less than a High School education report higher rates of attempted violence (20.6%) than those with higher levels of education.

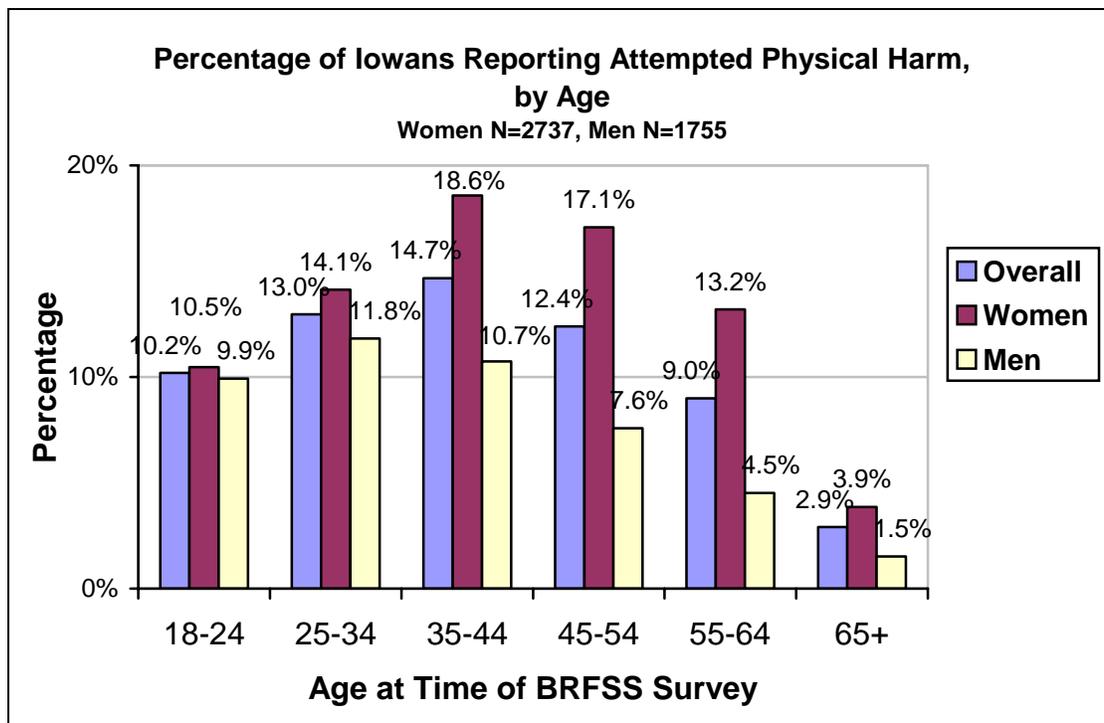


Figure 6

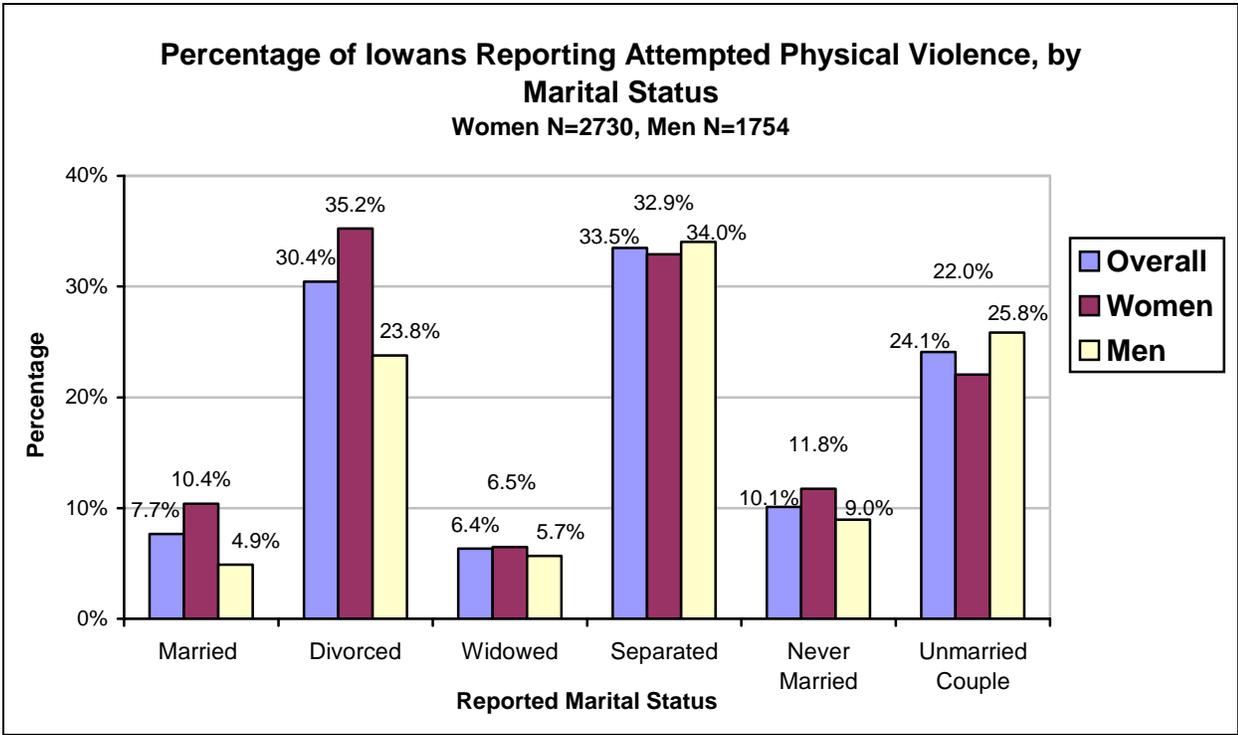


Figure 7

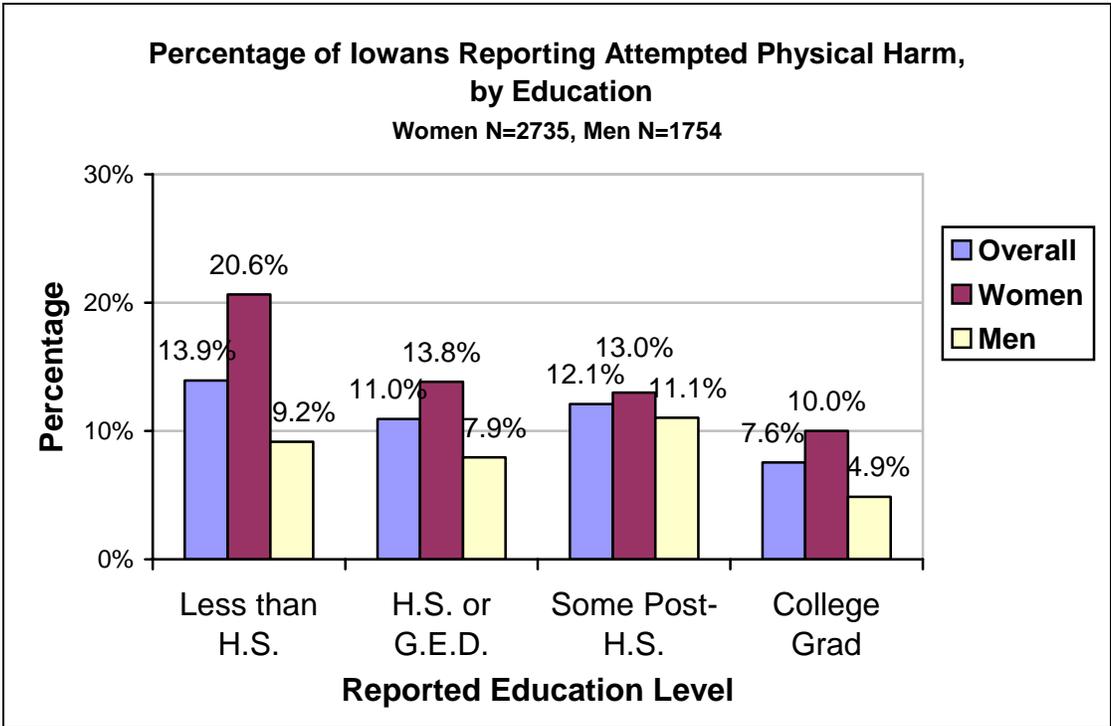


Figure 8

## Forced Sexual Experiences

**5.1% of Iowans, or an estimated 103,117 individuals, experienced forced sex by a current or former intimate partner in their lifetime.**

- Women (9.1%) report rates of forced sex ten times higher than those reported by Men (.9%).
- Participants aged 25-34 report the highest rates of forced sex (6.4%).
- 8.9% of participants with an annual income less than \$15,000 report the largest rates of forced sex.
- Divorced, Separated, and Unmarried couples report the highest rates of forced sex.
- Those out of work (10.9%) and unable to work (15.9%) report the highest rates of experiencing forced sex as compared to those who are employed.

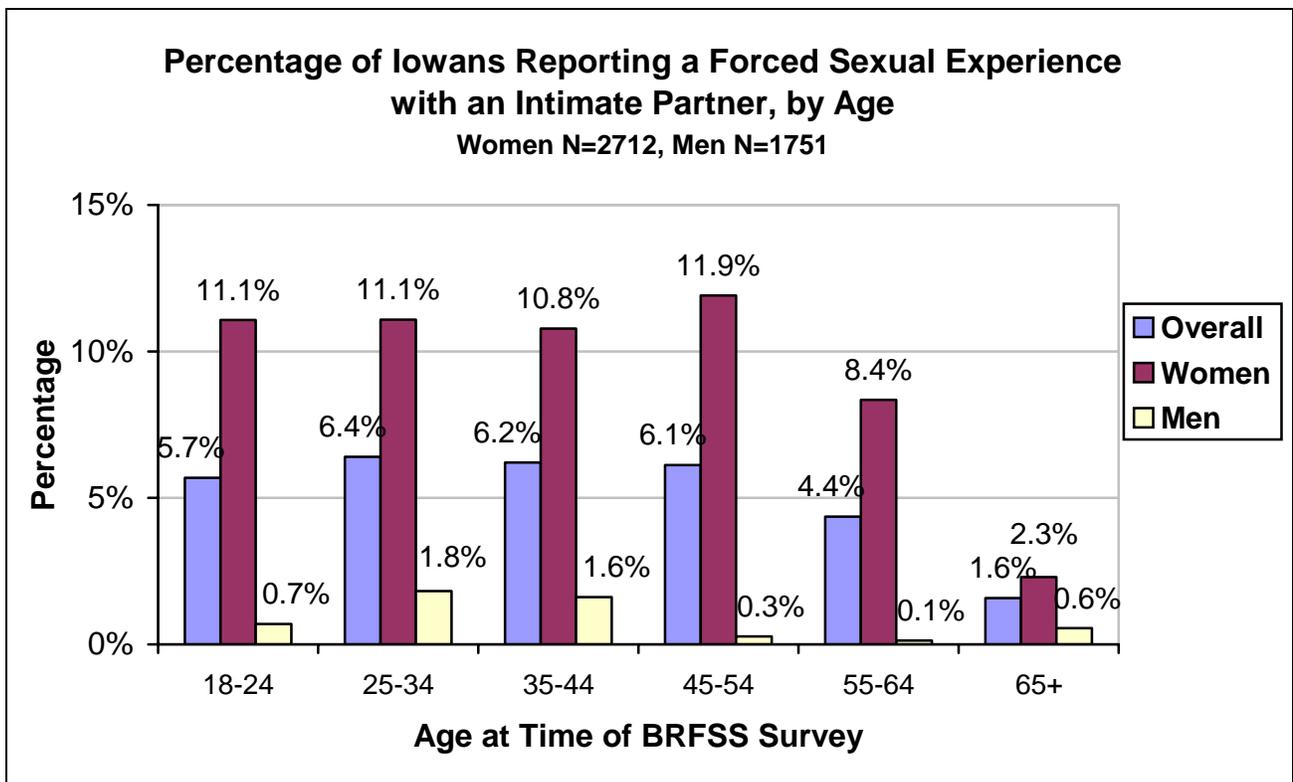


Figure 9

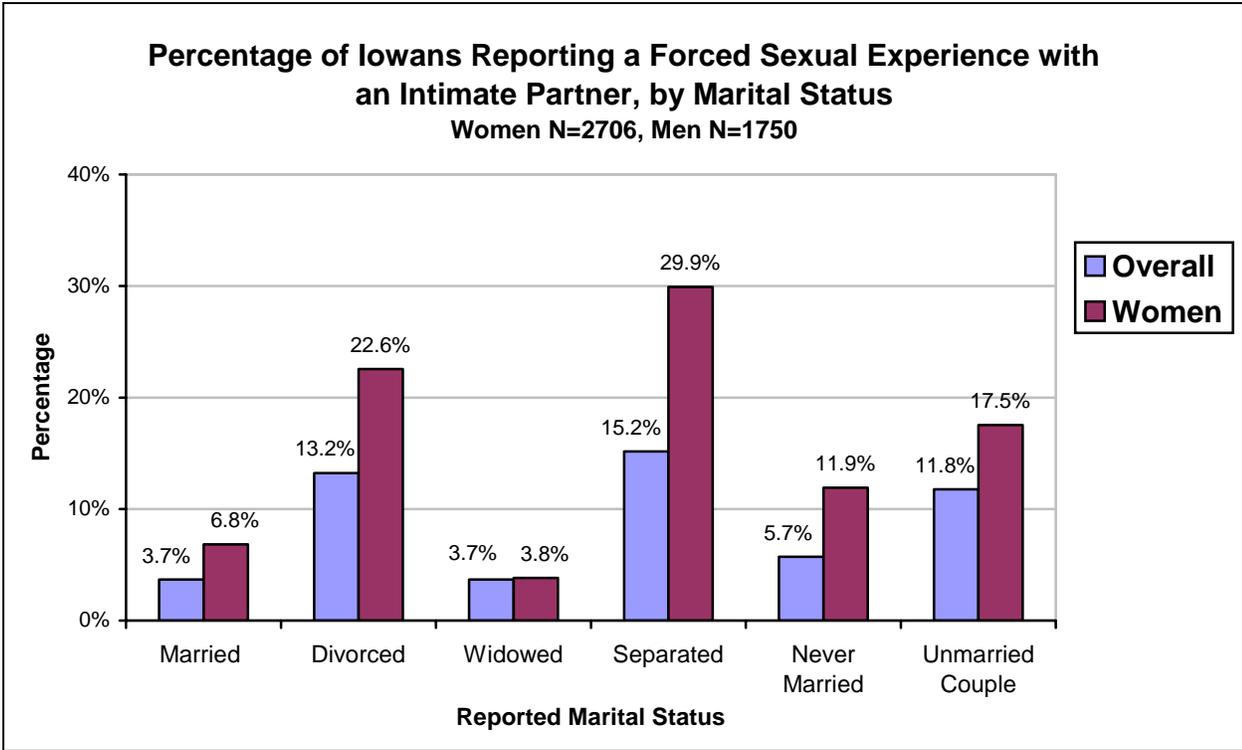


Figure 10- Due to small response rates in some categories for men, only the overall trend and the trend in women are shown here.

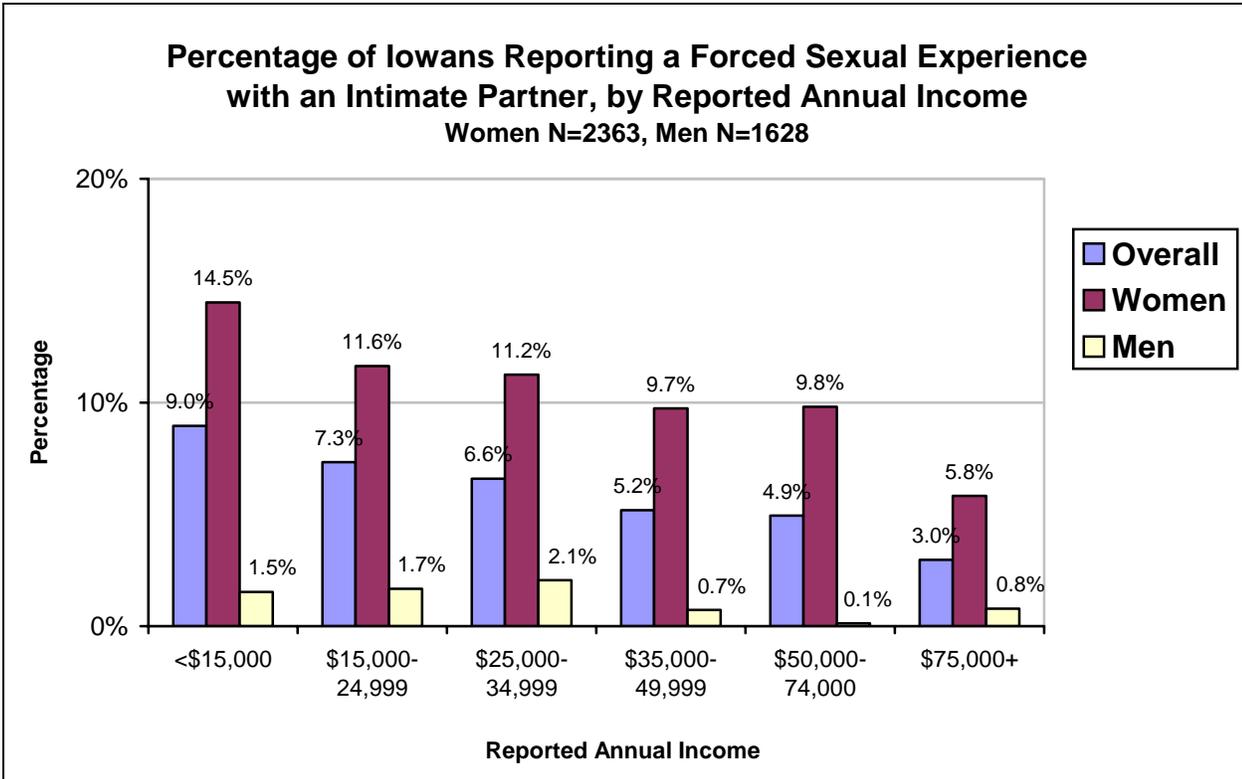


Figure 11