



Regional Study on Violence and Women living with HIV in Latin America: Summary Findings

ICW Latina and Hivos carried out this landmark study with, by and for women living with HIV from seven countries in the region, with technical support from Development Connections and Salamander Trust. A particular focus was on including young women, and Indigenous, Afrodescendent and Garifuna women. National research teams surveyed **955 women** and held focus groups with **64 women** from 19 locations and a range of sociodemographic, economic and cultural backgrounds in **Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru and Dominican Republic**. Summary findings:

Levels of violence by intimate partners are high

- 75% of the women reported that their partners exhibited controlling behaviours, including controlling their money (30%). The risk of violence tended to be highest for indigenous women and young women.
- In Bolivia, 73% of women reported physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Violence during childhood and forced first sexual experiences are common

- Between 26% (Honduras) and 59% (Bolivia) of women reported having been sexually abused before their 15th birthday.

Violence or coercion occurs frequently in health-care settings

- More than 20% of women said they had felt coerced to undergo sterilization and/or an abortion, and 48% said they had been denied cervical cancer or breast cancer services due to their HIV status.

Institutional violence

- An average of 13% of women were forced to move or were unable to rent housing because of their HIV status, and between 4% (Guatemala and Honduras) and 18% (Bolivia) of women said they had lost their jobs or other income sources for the same reason.

Health and well-being

- One in four women reported having suicidal thoughts in the previous month.
- Among women who had been pregnant and had been assaulted during pregnancy, up to 28% (Bolivia) had undergone a miscarriage as a result.

Formal support

- Most women survivors of violence have never gone to formal services or people in positions of authority for help. Only 15% sought help from the police, 9% from the prosecutor's office, 5% from child protection agencies and 5% from health services.
- Less than half of survivors said a health-care provider had ever asked them about their experiences of violence.

References:

Luciano, D., Negrete, M., Vázquez, M.J., Hale, F., Salas, J., Álvarez-Rudín, M., Arends, M., Cano, A., Iacono, M., Sánchez, M., Cabezas, M., Chete, B., Flores, G., García, F., Herreira, ML., López, L., Ramírez, B., Soto, EM. (2020). [Estudio Regional sobre Violencia y Mujeres con VIH en América Latina](#). ICW Latina, Hivos, Development Connections y Salamander Trust. Nicaragua.

UNAIDS. [We've got the power. Women, adolescent girls and the HIV Response. March 2020](#) p. 36.

For more in English and Spanish see:

<https://salamandertrust.net/project/estudioregional/>

<https://www.dvcn.org/>