

# THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT – PREVALENCE AND ATTITUDINAL RESEARCH IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Global Initiative to  
**End All Corporal Punishment  
of Children**

Summaries prepared by the Global Initiative to End  
All Corporal Punishment of Children  
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*Note: No prevalence research identified for Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan*

## ALBANIA

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 46% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (6%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 30% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

Research in 2000 by the Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania, involving interviews with 35 children in detention centres, found that the use of torture by police officers during arrest and investigation was widespread.

(Hazizaj, A. & Thornton Barkley, S., 2000, *Awaiting Trial: A report on the situation of children in Albanian police stations and pre-trial detention centres*, Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania)

Interview research with juveniles in prisons by the Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania found that corporal punishment was commonly used as a punishment when internal prison rules were broken.

(Coku, B. & Kotorri, V., 2000, *Juveniles in Albanian Prisons: A report on the situation of juveniles in Albanian prisons*, Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania)

## ARMENIA

A 2002 survey by the Armenian Relief Society of 550 parents and 550 children aged 7-18 years, together with interviews among 100 teachers, 100 neighbours, and 50 specialists from social, educational, health and legal spheres, found a high prevalence of physical abuse in families. A third of parents (33.3%), particularly young mothers, were in favour of slapping and beating in disciplining children. Preliminary analysis revealed that beating and slapping were also common in schools.

(Urumova, I., Galvastian, M. & Tevosyan, A., 2003, "Violence against children and women in Armenia", Armenian Relief Society/UNICEF)

## **AUSTRIA**

A survey in 1991-2 commissioned by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Youth and the Family, found that 28.5% of mothers and 26% of fathers occasionally resorted to violence in bringing up their children, while 4% of mothers and 5.2% of fathers frequently used “stronger” forms of violent discipline. Corporal punishment was more common for boys than for girls. More than two thirds of mothers (67.5% ) and fathers (68.8% ) rejected beatings as a means of education.

(Federal Ministry of the Environment, Youth and the Family, “Causes and consequences of violence against women and children”. Cited in initial state report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1996, CRC/C/11/Add.14, para.258)

## **BELARUS**

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 49% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (15%) believed that children need to be physically punished.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

## **BELGIUM**

Telephone interviews with 1,070 adults aged 15 years and over in April 2004, revealed that 77% believe it is acceptable for parents to smack their children, including 17% who believe it is always acceptable and 60% who believe there are some circumstances in which it is acceptable. Just under a fifth (19%) believe it is unacceptable in any circumstances.

(Market & Opinion Research International, 2004, “Attitudes towards smacking children: Belgium”, Research conducted for the Association for the Protection of All Children)

A government commissioned study in 1988 into women’s experiences of violence found that of the 58% who had experienced violence in their lives, 65% of it was at the hands of their parents. Over a third of the total sample (35% ) had experienced violence before the age of 16 years. Typically, the violence was experienced at a young age (41% in infancy, 21% between the ages of 6 and 12 years).

(Bruynooghe, R. et al., 1988, *Ervaringen van vrouwen met fysiek en seksueel geweld: prevalentie en gevolgen*, Diepenbeek: Centre Universitaire Limbourgeois)

## **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 21% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (6%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 5% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

## CROATIA

In research into the prevalence of various forms of family violence experienced by 1146 university students, published in 2003, 93.4% reported experiencing physical abuse (from slapping to heavy beating) before the age of 18 years, with 27.2% reporting physical injury (from bruises to fractures). The same questionnaire given to 698 primary and secondary school pupils found that up to 86% reported experiencing physical abuse with injuries in up to 32% of cases.

(Pecnik, N., 2003, *Intergenerational transmission of child abuse* (in Croatian), Slap: Jastrebarsko)

Research into the experiences of 310 high school students in 10 schools, carried out in 2001, found that 59% had experienced occasional slapping or hitting before the age of 14, and 16% had occasionally been spanked or beaten. For 5% of respondents, slapping or hitting was experienced frequently, and 3% experienced frequent spanking and beating.

(Fabijanić, S., Flander, G. B. & Karlović, A., 2002, *Epidemiological study on the prevalence of the child abuse experience among high school students of Sisačko-Moslavačka Županija*, Zagreb: Centre for Child Protection)

A survey of 505 university students reported in 2001 revealed that up to 25% had experienced physical abuse, including corporal punishment.

(Karlović, A., Gabelica, D. & Vranić, A., 2001, "Validacija upitnika o zlostavljanju u djetinjstvu I procjena incidencije zlostavljanja u djetinjstvu na uzorku zagrebačkih studenata", XV, Dani Ramira Bujasa, Zagreb, Odsjek za psihologiju. Filozofski fakultet)

## CYPRUS

An attitudinal survey in 2000 by the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family found that of 1,000 interviewees, 15% believed smacking to be a socially acceptable method of child discipline.

(Cited in Boyson, R., 2002, *Equal Protection for Children: An overview of the experience of countries that accord children full protection from physical punishment*, London: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)

## CZECH REPUBLIC

A 2006 public opinion poll by Median agency for the daily *Mladá fronta Dnes* found that 25% of the 636 respondents supported the use of corporal punishment in schools, more commonly among respondents aged 45-50 years than among those with school aged children.

(Reported in *The Prague Post*, 20 June 2007)

A 1994 study of 886 children aged 10-11 years revealed that only one in ten had not experienced corporal punishment, and one in three had experienced severe corporal punishment.

(Vanickova, E., 1994, *Physical punishment or physical violence?*, Prague: Czech Society for Child Protection)

## DENMARK

A survey in 2000 by the National Institute of Social Research found that 12% of 3 year-olds were spanked "sometimes" or "seldom", contrasting with a survey by the same Institute in 1968 which found that 40.2% of children aged 9-12 years were hit "sometimes". Milder physical violence such as slaps on the fingers and hard gripping of the arms was more prevalent.

(Cited in Boyson, R., 2002, *Equal Protection for Children: An overview of the experience of countries that accord children full legal protection from physical punishment*, London: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)

Attitudinal research in 1997 found that 57% of parents were against the use of corporal punishment.

(Invargesen, B., 1999, "Denmark: Backing a clear ban on physical punishment with promotion of positive discipline", *Journal of Child Centred Practice*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp.79-85)

A survey of 1,000 adults in 1988 revealed over 50% opposing corporal punishment.

(Varming, O., 1988, "Attitudes to Children", doctoral dissertation, Copenhagen: Royal Danish School of Educational Studies)

A Gallup poll in 1984 found 25% of public opinion in favour of prohibition of corporal punishment.

(Cited in Newell, P., 1989, *Children Are People Too: The Case Against Physical Punishment*, London: Bedford Square Press)

## ESTONIA

Surveys were conducted following "Stop Child Spanking" media campaigns in 1995, 1997 and 2000, which aimed to change public opinion on spanking children. In 2000, the research company EMOR questioned 505 adults and found that the campaign was noticed by 79% of respondents (compared with 67% in 1995). In 1995 and 2000, just over four out of ten respondents continued to support the use of corporal punishment (42% and 41% respectively); the percentage of those opposing corporal punishment appeared to fall, from 58% in 1995 to 55% in 2000.

(Reported in Government response to UN Study on Violence Against Children Questionnaire, 2005)

Research carried out in 2000 into child abuse in the family surveyed 874 children aged 14-16 years and found that one third had experienced slight physical abuse (pinching, poking), and 16% severe abuse (biting, beating with hand or instrument).

(Soo, K. & Soo, I., 2001, "Epidemiological Survey for Preventing Child Abuse Estonia", Tartu: Support Centre for Abused Children)

## FINLAND

A nationwide survey of 1,000 people aged 15 to 79, commissioned by the Central Union of Child Welfare and conducted by the research company Taloustutkimus, found that one in four considers physical discipline of children to be acceptable at least in exceptional situations, representing an improvement from approval of corporal punishment by one in three in 2004. But the study found a high prevalence of corporal punishment, with 73% of women and 68% of men reporting that they had sometimes used physical punishment.

(Reported in *Helsingin Sanomat*, International Edition, 28 September 2007)

A 1992 questionnaire survey of 7,400 students aged 15-16 years found that 72% had occasionally experienced mild corporal punishment (pushing and shoving, hair-pulling, slapping, beating with a switch) by their parents. More severe corporal punishment (using other implements, hitting with fist or kicking, threats with weapons) was reported by 8%.

(Sariola, H. & Uutela, A., 1992, "The Prevalence and Context of Family Violence Against Children in Finland", *Child Abuse and Neglect*, vol. 16, pp. 823-832)

## FRANCE

A survey by the Union of Families in Europe (UFE) of 2,000 grandparents, parents and children found that 95% of adults and 96% of children have been smacked. 84% of grandparents and 87% of parents have administered corporal punishment. One in ten parents admitted to punishing their children with a “martinet” (a small whip); 30% of children said they had been punished with a martinet. When asked the reason for smacking their children, parents said it was part of “bringing up” their children (77%), it was to “relieve their feelings” (7%) or both of these things. When asked how they planned to discipline their own children when they become parents, 64 per cent of French children responded “the same”. 61% of grandparents and 53% of parents said that they oppose a ban on corporal punishment of children.

(Reported in *The Scotsman*, 8 December 2007)

A survey of 1,000 people, carried out in 1999 by SOFRES for the organisation “Eduquer sans frapper”, found that over half (51%) of respondents who had children hit them often, a third hit them rarely, and only 16% had never hit them. Mothers were more likely to report hitting their children than fathers. Almost a half of those questioned (45%) believed that corporal punishment has a negative effect on children’s development.

(Reported in correspondence with the Global Initiative, January 2004)

A questionnaire survey by Olivier Maurel completed by 130 secondary school pupils in Toulon in 2001 found that fewer than one in ten had never been hit; 72 pupils reported having been hit moderately, 19 violently.

(Reported in correspondence with the Global Initiative, January 2004)

A 1985 study of parents found that 59% used physical force as an “educational” method, though 72% believed that this should be only in exceptional circumstances. The most common form was smacking on the bottom (34%), but almost a third (29.5%) had shaken their children, a quarter had used slaps, and just over one in ten (11.3%) had used other physical methods.

(Legal, J., 1999, “Corporal punishment or physical intervention”, *Journal of Youth Law*, no. 185)

## GEORGIA

A study in 2000 by the Red Cross Committee of Georgia on child abuse and physical and psychological violence against children in the family, institutions (schools, study groups, sport groups) and neighbourhoods involved structured interviews with 4,382 children aged 6-17 years. Almost two in five (39.2%) reported being subject to corporal punishment within the family, mostly by the mother. Almost a third (31.8%) reported experiencing physical punishment in schools, predominantly (in 96% of cases) by school teachers.

(Red Cross Committee of Georgia, 2000, “Child Abuse and Neglect”, Red Cross/UNICEF)

## GERMANY

Government research was undertaken in 2001 and published in 2003 into the reception and initial impact of the prohibition of corporal punishment in childrearing in November 2000. Interviews were held nationwide with 3,000 parents of children below 18 years and 2,000 young people aged 12-18 years. Surveys were also administered to 1,074 government and nongovernmental institutions, with 30

representatives of relevant institutions interviewed in depth. The research found that around 28% of parents rarely resorted to disciplinary sanctions and “as far as possible” did not use corporal punishment; 54% frequently used “minor” but never “serious” corporal punishment (such as beatings and spankings); 17% frequently used “serious” corporal punishment, including beatings and spankings, as well as psychological punishments. Boys were more commonly hit than girls, and more commonly experienced “serious” corporal punishment. Based on parents’ reports, in comparison with previous studies the report notes a substantial decrease in corporal punishment at all degrees of severity. For example, in 1996 a third of parents (33.2%) reported they had hit their child’s bottom, compared with just over a quarter (26.4%) in 2001.

(Federal Ministry of Justice & Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 2003, *Violence in upbringing: An assessment after the introduction of the right to a non-violent upbringing*)

Research published in 1999 involved interviews with 16,190 children aged 14-15 years about their experiences of corporal punishment. Over two fifths (43%) reported that they had never been hit; 47% reported being smacked occasionally; 10% reported more severe corporal punishment.

(Pfeiffer, C. & Wetzels, P., 1999, “Use of physical punishment within families against children and the consequences”, unofficial translation by Goodall, K. & Taverner, K. at National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, UK)

## GREECE

As part of a large scale study initiated by researchers from the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives (NCSCPA), a questionnaire was administered to 546 university students in Athens and Thessaloniki, of which 73% recalled receiving corporal punishment at home. The most common types of corporal punishment were recalled as spanking on the buttocks with an open hand (54%), smacking or slapping on the hand, arm or leg (45%) and smacking or slapping on the face, head or ears (31%). Other types included hair pulling (17%), hitting with an object (17%), pinching (9%), shaking (9%), arm twisting (6%) and whipping (3%).

(Halkias, D. et al., 2001, “Conducting a cross cultural study of corporal punishment: The Greek researcher’s perspective”, paper presented at the National Convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA, August 2001)

In 1998, a nationwide survey looked in part at the frequency and types of corporal punishment in families. Of the 417 parents with at least one child enrolled in daycare answering the question on parenting practices, 85.36% reported using corporal punishment “when necessary” but not daily.

(Damianaki et al., 1998. Cited in Halkias, D. et al., 2001, “Conducting a cross cultural study of corporal punishment: The Greek researcher’s perspective”, paper presented at the National Convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA, August 2001)

Research carried out between 1994 and 1997 at the Department of Family Relations in the Institute of Child Health in Athens, involving 591 structured interviews with mothers of 6 year-old and 12 year-old schoolchildren, revealed that 65.5% of mothers used physical punishment to discipline their children, with mothers of 6 year-olds three times more likely to use such punishment than mothers of 12 year-olds. 62% of mothers believed that physical punishment is used by most parents, and 82% believed that at least half of all parents hit their children. Of those children physically punished, 4% suffered minor injuries and 1.2% suffered injuries needing stitches and/or hospitalisation.

(Fereti, I. & Stavrianki, M., 1997, “The use of physical punishment in the Greek family: selected socio-demographic aspects”, *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare*, vol. 3, pp.206-216; Fereti, I., 2002, “Initiatives to reduce and prevent corporal punishment of children within the family in Greece”, Athens: Institute of Child Health)

In 1996, interviews with 423 police officers (including 208 who were parents) about their childhood experiences, attitudes and parental practices regarding corporal punishment, found that one in two reported receiving corporal punishment as children. Two in three believed that “sometimes hitting is needed” to discipline a child, and 64% reported using corporal punishment to discipline their own children.

(Maragos, Agathonos-Georgakopoulou & Nova, 1997. Cited in Halkias, D. et al., 2001, “Conducting a cross cultural study of corporal punishment: The Greek researcher’s perspective”, paper presented at the National Convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA, August 2001)

A 1993 study found that of 8,158 children aged 7 years, one in three (37.7%) was spanked at least once a week and one in six daily (18%).

(Agathonos-Georgopoulou, H., 1997, “Child Maltreatment in Greece: A Review of Research”, *Child Abuse Review*, vol. 6, pp.257-271)

A study in 1979 found that 82.4% of mothers admitted punishing their children, with many using more than one method of punishment, including 49.3% who used physical punishment and other forms of violence.

(Zarnari, 1979. Cited in Halkias, D. et al., 2001, “Conducting a cross cultural study of corporal punishment: The Greek researcher’s perspective”, paper presented at the National Convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA, August 2001)

## **IRELAND**

In attitudinal research carried out in 1999, 45% of the 1,400 respondents, aged over 15 years, agreed with the statement “I see nothing wrong with slapping a child who misbehaves”; 27% supported legal prohibition.

(Irish Marketing Surveys, 1999, survey carried out for the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)

In a survey for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Northern Ireland and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children of 1,100 children aged 8-15 years, almost a tenth reported that teachers threatened to slap them, and 4% said that they actually did, even though corporal punishment is banned. One fifth said their parents smacked them, though relationships with parents were positive.

(McGill, P., 1996, “Pupils in Ireland fear test failure”, *Times Educational Supplement*, 23 August 1996)

In 1993, research was carried out by the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children into children’s attitudes to and experiences of physical punishment and sexual abuse. In personal interviews with more than 1,000 adults aged 18 to 54 years in their homes, 64% stated that they had been physically punished in the home occasionally/rarely, 24% constantly/frequently. Almost one third (30%) reported being punished with a rigid implement occasionally/rarely, 7% constantly/frequently; 18% had been punished with a flexible instrument occasionally/rarely, 5% constantly/frequently. One in ten reported being hit with a closed fist (8% occasionally/rarely, 2% constantly/frequently). Three quarters of the respondents either endorsed (32%) or accepted (43%) the use of physical punishment.

(Irish Marketing Surveys, 1993, *Childhood Experiences and Attitudes*, research carried out for the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and RTE’s “Tuesday File” series)

## ITALY

Telephone interviews with 1,009 adults aged 14 and over in April 2004, revealed that 69% believe it is acceptable for parents to smack their children, including 7% who believe it is always acceptable and 62% who believe there are some circumstances in which it is acceptable. A quarter believe it is unacceptable in any circumstances.

(Market & Opinion Research International, 2004, "Attitudes towards smacking children: Italy", Research conducted for the Association for the Protection of All Children)

An inspection by the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the penal institution for minors in Naples found that staff believed in and administered slaps to the child detainees, for their "educational function".

(Cecchetti, R. & Boffi, A., 2002, *Rights of the Child in Italy: Report on the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child*, Switzerland: World Organisation against Torture)

Data analysis of calls to Telefono Azzurro (a children's helpline) between January 2000 and June 2002 indicated that over 40% of abuse was physical and 78.6% of all child abuse takes place in the home, with children up to 10 years of age being most at risk.

(Analysis presented in the alternative report by Telefono Azzurro to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, February 2003)

A questionnaire survey in 1999-2000 of the families of 6,250 pupils aged 3-12 years from kindergartens and primary schools investigated resolution of family conflicts through parental self-reporting using the Conflict Tactics Scales. From the 2,388 responses suitable for analysis, three out of four (77%) of caretakers declared that they had thrown something at the child, pushed, grabbed or shoved the child, or slapped/spanked the child during the survey year. One child in 11 (8%) was found to have experienced more severe forms of physical punishment during the same period.

(Bardi, M. & Borgognini-Tarli, S. A., 2001, "A survey of parent-child conflict resolution: intrafamily violence in Italy", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol. 25, pp.839-853)

Official statistics show that, for crimes for which the judicial authority initiated criminal action between 1986 and 1996, there was an increase in the prevalence of maltreatment within the family (for both adults and children) and of abuse of children by means of punishment. There was also a general increase between 1997 and 2001.

(ISTAT Criminal Judicial Statistics. Cited in Italy's Second Report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2000, CRC/C/70/Add.13; ISTAT Criminal Judicial Statistics, Years 1997-2001)

## KAZAKHSTAN

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 23% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (7%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 10% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

A nationwide survey on violence against children was conducted in 2002 by the Association of Social Scientists and Politologists with the support of UNICEF, using anonymous questionnaires for parents

and for children and in-depth interviews with education, health and childcare specialists. 1,100 children aged 7-18 years living with their parents, in institutions and on the street, 1,100 parents of children aged 5-18 years, and 220 specialists were included in the research. Specialists estimated that 60-80% of children are subject to violence by parents, adults and children, and the number is increasing. Health workers reported an increase in the number of children coming to their facilities as a result of beating and torture in families. Interviews showed that most often the victims were from “troublesome” families (49.5%) and families with a low level of education (28.7%), and children of all ages were susceptible. “Educational” measures reported by parents on their children included explanations (32%), reprimands (29.1%), moral punishment or bans (17.6%), scolding (16.4%) and physical punishment (2.3%). Scolding and physical punishment were most common for low-income families. One third (33%) of children reported encountering violence – on average 3.3% constantly suffer from brutal treatment, 16.3% frequently, 66.6% sometimes and 13.8% never. The perpetrators of the violence were reported as older children (44.5%), parents/relatives (23.9%), policemen (9.6%), teachers and educators (9.6%), youth groups (8.2%), and hooligans and bandits (4.2%). In all settings (at home, with relatives, boarding school, orphanage, remand centre, and special school), violence was most commonly carried out by older children followed by parents and relatives.

(Association of Social Scientists and Politologists/UNICEF, 2002, *Violence against Children in the Republic of Kazakhstan February – March 2002*, Almaty: ASSAP/UNICEF)

## **KYRGYZSTAN**

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 36% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (8%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 38% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

## **LATVIA**

A survey by the Department of Clinical Psychology at the University of Latvia and the Centre Against Abuse: Support for Families and Children found that 23% of adolescent respondents reported experiencing less severe physical abuse (hitting, slapping, kicking, throwing something), and around 13% more severe physical abuse (beating, burning, using a knife or gun).

(Cited by Child Abuse Network: [www.canee.net](http://www.canee.net))

## **LIECHTENSTEIN**

In a 1999 study, 689 young people aged 12-20 years were asked about domestic violence. More than two fifths (41%) reported having experienced slaps and 3% thrashing, although whether this was done by siblings or parents was not specified.

(Amt für Soziale Dienste, 1999, *Liechtensteinische Jugendstudie 1999. Ergebnisse, Analysen und Kommentare*, Schaan: Amt für Soziale Dienste)

## **LITHUANIA**

With a view to furthering the implementation of the National Programme against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children, a Survey of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse against Children was conducted in 2000-2001 to analyse the situation of violence and sexual coercion against children in Lithuania. For the survey 4,034 respondents were interviewed, of

which 1,002 were parents and guardians, 1,002 children of different age groups, 1,002 specialists, 20 experts and 1,008 other adults. Of the children aged 14-18 years, 80% reported that their parents do not use physical punishment on them now, 12.5% reported that it is used rarely, 4.5% reported its use sometimes, and 2.2% reported its use often. For children aged less than 14 years, 70.2% reported that it is not used at all, 24.6% that it is used on rare occasions, 4.5% sometimes, and 0.8% quite often.

(Reported in the first state party report on the implementation of the Revised European Social Charter, 2003)

## **LUXEMBOURG**

A public opinion survey in 1993 found that of 508 parents questioned, 49% considered that corporal punishment was a useful way of disciplining children, 29% felt that it was not very useful but that it didn't do any harm, and 22% believed that it should be forbidden.

(Poll carried out by Fondation Kannerschlass and Institut Luxembourgeois de Recherches Statistiques, 1993)

## **MONTENEGRO**

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 42% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (5%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 11% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

Interviews with young offenders, carried out as part of a UNICEF assessment of the juvenile justice system, revealed that many had experienced physical punishment during custody in penal institutions.

(Conragan, C., 2002, *Children in conflict with the law: Victims of the transition – An assessment of the juvenile justice systems in the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro*, UNICEF)

## **NETHERLANDS**

A survey in 1999 by a popular parenting magazine of 2,000 mothers revealed 8% slapped or shook their 2 month-old babies to try to stop them crying.

(*Our Baby*, April 1999)

Research for the Ministry of Justice in 1997 revealed that nearly 47% of the Dutch population had experienced recurrent intra-familial violence, especially between the ages of 10 and 25 years.

(Institute Dienst Preventie, Jeugdbescherming en Reclasseur, 1997, *Huiselijk geweld, Aard, omvang en hulpverlening*, Institute Dienst Preventie, Jeugdbescherming en Reclasseur)

## **POLAND**

A nationwide survey of adults published in 2001 found that 80% reported experiencing beatings in the home as children, by parents or guardians, more commonly for men than for women. The higher the level of education of respondents, the less often they had experienced physical punishment and the less frequently they used corporal punishment on their own children. Corporal punishment was most often reported as being used on children aged 7-14 years. Almost half of respondents (48%) believed that corporal punishment by parents should be banned. One fifth (20%) had also experienced corporal punishment by teachers.

In 2001, the State Agency for Prevention of Alcohol Related Problems (PARPA) commissioned attitudinal research on childrearing. The survey of 1,116 people aged above 15 years found that more than half (54%) considered beating children with a belt acceptable, and 77% felt it was acceptable to shout at and threaten children. Just under a half (44%) agreed that children are the property of their parents; 24% agreed with the statement "a child should be afraid of his/her parents, and there is no upbringing without beating"; 30% agreed with "the severe upbringing makes a child stronger and is beneficial for the child"; 27% agreed with "children deserve corporal punishments".

(Reported in Government Response to UN Study on Violence Against Children Questionnaire, May 2005)

## **PORTUGAL**

Telephone interviews with 809 adults aged 18 years and over in April 2004, revealed that 83% believe it is acceptable for parents to smack their children, including one in six (16%) who believe it is always acceptable and a further two thirds (67%) who believe there are some circumstances in which it is acceptable. Just over one in ten (13%) believe it is unacceptable in any circumstances.

(Market & Opinion Research International, 2004, "Attitudes towards smacking children: Portugal", Research conducted for the Association for the Protection of All Children)

## **REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

In 2004, the Working Group on Development of Policies and Strategies in the Field of Small Children Care and Development, supported by UNICEF, carried out a national study on children's health, education and experience of violence and abuse. Of the 4-7 year old children questioned, 58.4% reported being beaten at home.

(Reported in Government Response to UN Study on Violence Against Children Questionnaire, September 2005)

The "Youth Voices" Study carried out by UNICEF across 35 countries in May 2001 involved interviews with 400 children aged 9-17 years in each country. Almost half (47%) of those interviewed in Moldova reported having been subjected to violent or aggressive behaviour at home. In 43% of cases the reason given for this behaviour was children's disobedience and bad behaviour; in 4% it was attributed to poor performance at school or not doing homework.

(Reported in Government Response to UN Study on Violence Against Children Questionnaire, September 2005)

In 2000-2001, the National Study on Early Child Development studied the methods used in disciplining children and the convictions of parents regarding abusive methods of child discipline. When asked what they do when children do not obey, two out of five parents (39.6%) admitted to beating them with their hands, with 52.4% threatening a beating or other punishment. In two-parent families, children were more frequently beaten by mothers than fathers (47.9% compared with 27.8%). Over half of parents (56.4%) acknowledged that beatings do not solve anything, and only 15.5% reported considering that what they do is right.

(*Protection, Neglect, Abuse and Violence*, reported in Government Response to UN Study on Violence Against Children Questionnaire, September 2005)

A study of 298 schoolchildren aged 9-16 years from six regions, carried out by the National Centre of Abuse Against Children (NCAAC) in 1999-2000 found that 53.3% had been exposed to physical abuse, and that abused and non-abused children typically witnessed violence.

(Reported in Government Response to UN Study on Violence Against Children Questionnaire, September 2005)

## ROMANIA

Research in 2000 by Save the Children Romania found that of a sample of 423 children aged 11-13 years, 75% reported experiencing physical abuse, including corporal punishment, with 5% reporting the need for medical treatment.

(Alexandrescu, G. et al., 2000, *Child abuse and neglect*, Save the Children Romania)

In a national survey in 2000 of 1,556 households with children, 1,295 school children aged 13-14 years, and 110 professionals, 47% of parents admitted using corporal punishment while 84% of children reported experiencing corporal punishment from their parents, including 20% who were beaten with objects and 15% who were afraid to go home because of the beatings. 16% of parents admitted to beating their children with an object, and 48% to threatening their children with beatings and other forms of punishment.

(Browne, K. et al., 2002, *Child abuse and neglect in Romanian Families: A National Prevalence Study 2000*, Bucharest: Romanian Government National Authority for Child Protection)

An opinion poll of 1,200 children aged 8-13 years, carried out by Save the Children Romania during the 2002 national campaign "Beating is not from Heaven", found that 81% considered beating to be an inefficient method of education, 70% believed that child protection against violence was inadequate, 76% believed that adults should be punished by the state for beating children, and 83% felt that corporal punishment should be prohibited by law.

(Reported by Save the Children Romania in correspondence with the Global Initiative)

## RUSSIAN FEDERATION

According to the Child Abuse Network, statistics from police, court, medical and other sources show that between 1995 and 1998 the number of offences in which young people were the victims has remained constant (over 17,000) but the main weight of the offences has shifted into the sphere of family and domestic relations. Between 1992 and 1996 there was a substantial increase in the number of successful actions for deprivation of parental rights (6,724 compared with 24,359). Between 1993 and 1996 there was a large increase in the number of children removed from their parents without deprivation of parental rights in cases of threat of violence or cruelty and also of improper care (3,401 compared with 6,724).

(See [www.canee.net](http://www.canee.net))

A survey of 412 children in an Eastern Siberian city found that corporal punishment was a pervasive method of discipline, and a high incidence of children (28.9%) reported experiencing physical abuse.

(Berrien, F. B. et al., 1995, "Child abuse prevalence in Russian urban population: A preliminary report", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol. 19, pp.261-264. Cited in Shor, R., 1999, "Inappropriate child rearing practices as perceived by Jewish immigrant parents from the Former Society Union", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol. 23, no. 5, p.488)

A 1989 survey of 7,000 school children in 15 cities revealed the use of corporal punishment to be widespread. More than half the children indicated that their parents relied on physical violence when they were disciplined. Two thirds of parents (66% ) were teachers by occupation.

(DCI Newsletter, 1990, "Close-up: Corporal Punishment in the USSR", vol. 7, pp.1-2)

## **SERBIA**

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 51% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (6%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 6% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

Interviews with young offenders, carried out as part of a UNICEF assessment of the juvenile justice system, revealed that many had experienced physical punishment during custody in penal institutions.

(Conragan, C., 2002, *Children in conflict with the law: Victims of the transition – An assessment of the juvenile justice systems in the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro*, UNICEF)

## **SLOVAKIA**

Preliminary analysis of attitudinal research in 2002, undertaken by the Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies and involving 856 adults, found that 98.6% believed that parents should be allowed to use a "smack on the buttock from time to time", 75.3% believed that parents should be allowed to use "occasional slaps", 41.7% felt that occasional beating with an implement was acceptable, and 22.9% felt that repeated beating was acceptable.

(International Centre for Family Studies, 2003, "The prevalence of violence in Slovakia", Bratislava: International Centre for Family Studies)

Research in 2000 on the prevalence of corporal punishment within the family by the Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies, involving 2,433 children aged 13-17 years, found that corporal punishment was common for 2.2% of the children. It was experienced occasionally by 38%, and never by 59.2%.

(International Centre for Family Studies, 2002, "The children's rights applying in the praxis. Preliminary survey report", Bratislava: International Centre for Family Studies)

## **SLOVENIA**

Official Government analyses of the work of social work centres from 1997 to 2000 show that physical violence against children accounted for about one in ten cases, and over half of these concerned children aged 7-14 years.

(Figures from the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs)

## SPAIN

Research in 2004 by the National Social Research Centre found that 25.6% of adults believed it necessary to smack children to impose discipline, with 74.4% believing it unnecessary. However, 58.9% stated that it may be sometimes necessary to smack a child.

(Reported in International Save the Children Alliance, 2005, *Ending Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children – Making it Happen: Global Submission to the UN Study on Violence against Children*, Save the Children Sweden)

According to a consultation carried out by Save the Children Spain in the years following the campaign “Educate, do not punish”, public support for physical and psychological punishment fell from 47% to 27%.

(Reported by Save the Children Spain in correspondence with the Global Initiative, March 2005)

A study in Madrid in 1998 found that 27.7% of parents had hit their children in the month before the research, with an average of three times per month; 2.7% of parents admitted having severely hit their children.

(Reported in International Save the Children Alliance, 2005, *Ending Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children – Making it Happen: Global Submission to the UN Study on Violence against Children*, Save the Children Sweden)

A nationwide survey in 1997 on attitudes towards maltreatment in the home found that 2% of parents believed it was essential to use corporal punishment often, 47.2% believed it was necessary sometimes, and 53.2% felt it was not a necessary part of childrearing, although this did not mean that they never used it. Women were more likely to use corporal punishment, especially on small children.

(Ministerio de Trabajo y asuntos sociales, 1997, *Spaniards’ Attitudes Towards Physical Punishment in Children*, Ministerio de Trabajo y asuntos sociales)

In a study reported in 1995 comprising interviews with 426 undergraduate students, 57% reported experiencing physical punishment before the age of 13 years, with 7.8% reporting severe physical abuse.

(de Paul, Milner & Mugica, 1995, “Childhood maltreatment, childhood social support, and child abuse potential in a Basque sample”, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol. 19, no. 8)

## SWEDEN

Studies carried out in 2000 on behalf of the Parliamentary Committee on Child Abuse and Related Issues involved interviews with parents of 1,609 children, a nationwide classroom questionnaire completed by 1,764 children aged 11-13 years, and a nationwide postal survey completed by 1,576 20 year-olds. Compared with earlier studies, fewer children (20%) reported experiencing corporal punishment, and less frequently than before; 4% of children aged 11-13 years and 7% of young adults aged 20 years reported experiencing severe corporal punishment with some sort of instrument. Interviews with parents revealed a marked change in attitudinal support for corporal punishment, from 53% in 1965 to 10% in 1999. The proportion of children accepting parental corporal punishment similarly decreased, from 50% in 1995 to 25% in 2000.

(Janson, S., 2000, *Children and abuse – corporal punishment and other forms of child abuse in Sweden at the end of the second millennium: A scientific report prepared for the Committee on Child Abuse and Related Issues*, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden)

A review of research published in 2000 found a significant decline in public support for corporal punishment between 1965, when 53% of the population supported its use, and 1997, when 11% (6% under the age of 35 years) found it acceptable.

(Durrant, J. E., 2000, *A Generation Without Smacking: The impact of Sweden's ban on physical punishment*, London: Save the Children UK)

Surveys by the Swedish Department of Social Welfare in the 1990s found that 78% of adults considered corporal punishment unacceptable. They also showed a significant reduction in the use of corporal punishment since the legislative prohibition, with 30% of middle school aged students reporting experience of corporal punishment, contrasting with a 1979 finding of 50%.

(Statistics Sweden, 1996, *Demography, the family and children, spanking and other forms of physical punishment: a study of adults' and middle school students' opinions, experience, and knowledge*, Stockholm: Statistics Sweden)

## **SWITZERLAND**

Research in 2004 by Fribourg University commissioned by the Federal Social Insurance Office involved interviews with 1,240 parents with children under the age of 16 years and found that the use of corporal punishment by parents is in decline but smaller children are more often subjected to beatings than older ones. Based on the findings, the study estimates that 13,000 children under the age of 30 months have been slapped, nearly 18,000 have been pulled by the hair and about 1,700 hit with objects.

(Schöbi, D. & Perrez, M., 2004, *Bestrafungsverhalten von Erziehungsberechtigten in der Schweiz: Eine vergleichende Analyse des Bestrafungsverhaltens von Erziehungsberechtigten 1990 und 2004*, Universität Fribourg (in German); English information from "Small children target of parental beatings", *swissinfo*, 24 January 2005)

## **TAJKISTAN**

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 55% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (15%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 74% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

## **THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 53% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (7%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 21% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

## **TURKEY**

Research involving 1,800 children and young people aged 10-18 years in Istanbul found that 23% reported experiencing physical punishment by their parents, and this was more common for children below the age of 14 years than for older children.

(Erkman, F., 2003, paper presented at the Society for Cross Cultural Research Conference, South Carolina, February 2003)

Research in 1999 by UNICEF Turkey concerning children living and working on the streets, found that one third of children living on the streets reported leaving home because of the violence they had to face there.

(UNICEF Turkey, 1999, "Participatory Action Research on the Children Living and Working on the Streets", UNICEF Activity Report)

## **UKRAINE**

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 36% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (16%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 5% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

In April 2007, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) published the results of a survey of 1,000 adults in which 77% believed smacking is becoming less acceptable. The survey was part of the NSPCC's campaign to stop children being smacked in shops. It revealed that a child being smacked in public had been witnessed by 41% of respondents within the previous six months. The majority of adults (86%) would be happy to shop in a smack-free shop, while 40% would actively prefer to shop where smacking was prohibited; almost all (93%) said they would like shops to take action to help parents losing their tempers with their children. When asked how they felt on seeing a child being smacked, 65% of respondents said they felt concerned for the child; 51% felt upset; 51% said they would like to stop the child being smacked, with 42% of those wanting to comfort the child and 47% wanting to help the parent.

(Reported by the NSPCC, 10 April 2007)

In a survey of 1,250 people by the organisation Parenting Across Scotland, 90% of respondents said they choose to discuss problems. While 7% said it was acceptable to smack a child, 20% admitted having done so in the last year, with a further 36% saying they had threatened physical punishment.

(Reported in *BBC News*, 27 February 2007)

Between November 2005 and October 2006, there were a total of 3,036 incidents of restraint in the four secure training centres (STCs); 41% of these (1,245 incidents) were perpetrated on girls who represent 34% of the STC population.

(Reply to Parliamentary question, reported in The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2007, *Briefing for House of Lords Debate on the use of restraint in secure training centres*)

In a 2004 poll of 2,004 adults in England and Wales, 56% agreed that "it is wrong for someone to hit a child in their family", compared with 31% who disagreed. Over half of the respondents (57%) thought that children and adults should have the same protection in law from being hit while nearly a third (29%) thought children should have more protection; only 7% thought that adults should have greater

protection from assault. Nearly three quarters (71%) said they would support changing the law to give children the same protection from being hit as adult family members.

(MORI, 2004, *Attitudes to hitting family members: Research study conducted for the Children Are Unbeatable! Alliance*)

Research by Save the Children in Scotland, carried out in 2000, looked at the opinions of 1,319 children and young people aged 6-18 years, using focus groups and questionnaires. Of the 1,249 children who completed the questionnaires, 93% said there were other ways that parents could discipline their children, without hitting them. 76% believed that it is wrong for a parent or other adult to hit a child. Most believed that hitting was the result of a parent's feelings of anger, stress and frustration, rather than a reasonable act, and most described feeling distressed when they were hit.

(Cutting, E., 2001, *"It doesn't sort anything": A report on the views of children and young people about the use of physical punishment*, Edinburgh: Save the Children)

Research by Save the Children in Northern Ireland, published in 2002, involved questionnaires and interviews with 189 children aged 4-11 years. Two thirds believed that children were hit because they are "bad, bold, cheeky, doing things wrong or doing wrong things"; one in four believed that children are hit because of how the adult is feeling. More than 80% of children used words like "hurt, sad, sore, upset, unhappy, unloved, heartbroken, awful" to describe how they felt when they were hit. 94% said they would not smack their children when they themselves became parents. Fewer than three in 20 thought it was acceptable for an adult to hit a child.

(Horgan, G., 2002, *It's a hit, not a "smack": A booklet about what children think about being hit or smacked by adults*, Belfast: Save the Children)

Comparable findings were revealed in similar research by Save the Children in England and in Wales.

(Crowley, A. & Vulliamy, C., *Listen Up! Children Talk: About Smacking*, Cardiff: Save the Children; Willow, C. & Hyder, T., 1998, *It hurts you inside – children talking about smacking*, National Children's Bureau and Save the Children)

In a MORI poll in 1999, 73% of respondents thought children should have the same legal protection against assault as adults if they could be sure parents would not be prosecuted for trivial smacks. Nearly all (93%) felt that parents should not be allowed to hit children with belts, sticks or other implements, and most (89%) thought parents should not be allowed to smack children under one year old.

(MORI, 1999, *Attitudes towards smacking children: UK research study conducted by MORI for "Children Are Unbeatable!", January 1999*)

The UK Department of Health commissioned a large-scale Community Study of Physical Violence to Children in the Home and Associated Variables in the 1990s. It found very high frequency of physical punishments, including severe punishment. The large majority (91%) of children had been hit. Frequency of hitting declined with age. Only 25% of the babies aged up to one year in the study had never been smacked by their mothers; 14% of these one-year-olds had been smacked with "moderate" severity, and 38% had been smacked more than once a week. The study included interviews with both parents in 99 two-parent families. It found that one fifth of children in these families had been hit with an implement and over one third (35%) had at some time experienced a punishment that was rated as "severe" (defined as punishments "that were intended to, had the potential to, or actually did cause physical and/or psychological injury or harm to the child").

(Nobes, G. et al., 1997, "Physical punishment of children in two-parent families", *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp.271-281; also summary presented as a poster by Dr Marjorie Smith at the Fifth European Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Oslo, May 1995)

In a survey for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Northern Ireland and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Child of 1,100 children aged 8-15 years, almost a tenth of children reported that teachers threatened to slap them, and 4% said that they actually did, even though corporal punishment is banned. One fifth said their parents smacked them, though relationships with parents were positive.

(McGill, P., 1996, "Pupils in Ireland fear test failure", *Times Educational Supplement*, 23 August 1996)