VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN EGYPT

Quantitative Survey and Qualitative Study in Cairo, Alexandria and Assiut

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Cairo, Alexandria and Assiut

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Foreword

This study provides evidence on the magnitude and pattern of physical, emotional and gender based violence affecting Egyptian children in Cairo, Alexandria and Assiut. It also provides useful inputs on the perceptions of children and adults on this issue.

In the year preceding the study around two thirds of the children in the areas covered in the study were victims of physical violence, and 78% were victims of emotional violence. The study also highlights the very high number of victims of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (65% in Cairo, 39% in Alexandria, and 94% in Assiut), as well as the fact that children and adults largely consider violence against children as an acceptable means of discipline.

This situation is not unique to Egypt. Indeed Violence against Children is happening in every country, every community, and every day. The 2014 UNICEF *statistical analysis of violence against children* revealed that almost one billion children in the world, between the ages of 2 and 14, suffer regular physical punishment, and almost 1 in 4 girls between the age of 15 and 19 experience physical violence. The repercussions of violence are many, and maybe difficult to reverse, detrimentally affecting the growth of children in all aspects; physically, psychologically and socially.

However violence against children is preventable. Experience from many countries in the world have proven that good policies and systematic approaches, mainstreamed in all related government agencies with the help of civil society, can make a difference. In this respect the study calls for Egypt to uphold a zero tolerance policy on violence against children, and provide the means and tools to help parents, care givers and schools' staff to use positive discipline methods with children.

The Egyptian Constitution of 2014, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Egyptian Child Law urge for children to live free from violence at home, at school and among their peers. By documenting the nature and extend of the problem, this study is an important step forward to address the challenge of violence against children in Egypt.

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Acronyms

NCCM	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
CDS	Center for Development Services
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GSHS	Global School-based Student Health Survey
CPC	Child Protection Committees
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
PSUs	Primary Sampling Units
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
IDIs	In-depth Interviews
IDSC	Information and Decision Support Center
MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
MoH	Ministry of Health
NCHR	National Council for Human Rights
NPC	National Population Council

Executive summary

Many children in Egypt are being subjected to violence at the hands of those who are supposed to protect and nurture them, according to a detailed study carried out in 2013 by the Center for Development Studies for the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and UNICEF. What's more, this violence – some of it extreme – is too often condoned and normalized by the adult perpetrators and even by the children themselves.

Violence against children is unacceptable in any form, no matter what the circumstances. Violence threatens their very survival and undermines their development (see Box 1). It erodes family structures, affects communities' cohesion, jeopardizes education and consumes precious national resources. Freedom from such violence is a fundamental right – a right that leaders in Egypt, as in other countries, have promised to safeguard for all children, everywhere and at all times. This study reveals that violence continues to be a fact of life for many Egyptian children. It finds that children are often at greatest risk in the very places where they should be safest: in their homes and in their schools.

However, violence is often condoned – or at least tolerated – as a way to instil discipline, to 'teach' children appropriate behaviour, to exploit them or to reinforce power relations. Violence against children is often hidden from view – a source of shame that neither the perpetrator nor the victim are willing to reveal. The reality for most girls and boys who are exposed to violence is one of isolation, loneliness and fear. Many children do not know where to turn for help, particularly when the perpetrator is a parent, teacher or anyone else who should be protecting them.

While violence against Children takes place in different settings, this study focuses its research on violence against children aged 13 to 17 in their home and school settings. It investigates different forms of physical and emotional violence in those settings, excluding homicide and torture. This study is based on qualitative research as well as a survey carried out in the governorates of Alexandria, Assiut and Cairo from March to May 2013 (see Box 2). The survey covered a total of 2,400 households and 110 schools to assess the experience, attitudes and knowledge of children aged 13 to 17, parents, teachers and religious/community leaders on this often sensitive subject. The research examined the four key areas covered in this report:

1. physical violence against children;
2. emotional violence and neglect;
3. sexual violence and harmful traditional practices (including Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting -FGM/C and child marriage); and
4. support services and alternative forms of discipline.

Box 1[1] The impact of violence on children

Violence has a devastating impact upon children, threatening both their survival and development. Its toll has been captured by the Committee on the Rights of the Child:

- Fatal or non-fatal injury (possibly leading to disability).
- Health problems (including failure to thrive, and lung, heart and liver disease and sexually-transmitted infections in later life).
- Cognitive impairment (including impaired school and work performance).
- Psychological and emotional consequences (feelings of rejection, impaired attachment, trauma, fear, anxiety, insecurity and shattered self-esteem).
- Mental health problems (anxiety and depression, hallucinations, memory disturbances and suicide attempts).
- Risky behaviours (substance abuse and early initiation of sexual activity).
- Developmental and behavioural consequences, such as non-attendance at school, and antisocial and destructive behaviour, leading to poor relationships, school exclusion and conflict with the law.

1. Physical violence

Alarmingly, the study found that most of the children aged 13-17 interviewed -61 per cent in Cairo, 65 per cent in Alexandria and 67 per cent in Assiut- reported that they had been exposed to some physical violence in the past year, with boys more likely to be exposed to physical violence than girls.

The qualitative research confirmed that physical punishment is still seen as a totally legitimate form of discipline by many parents, teachers, religious leaders and even by children themselves. Many of the girls surveyed, for example, believed that all older family members had the right to beat them as a form of punishment; that their parents beat them because they 'care' and that such treatment makes children obedient and respectful. They also felt that teachers had the right to beat them, saying that it motivates them to study. Boys did not mind physical violence if they had done something wrong. Indeed, one boy claimed that humiliating and beating a boy will make him a more humble person.

Such violence was more likely to take place in the home than in school or on the street, with parents admitting that stress and frustration often play a part in their use of violence to discipline their children. While teachers tended to deny using violence to discipline their pupils, the pupils themselves – particularly boys – painted a very different picture of being slapped, hit with sticks or being whipped in school. Indeed, the study found that girls were more likely to be hit with a hard object at home, while boys were more likely to experience such violence at school. Physical violence among children (mainly friends) was commonplace, with 29 per cent to 47 per cent of children reporting such violence. This is largely consistent with global research by UNICEF, which has found that more than one in three students aged 13 to 15 experience bullying on a regular basis[2].

Children reported that they were left feeling sad, miserable, weak, irritated, offended and/or embarrassed after experiencing physical violence. Some children in the focus group discussions reported that they had become depressed and even suicidal. While beating sometimes results in greater obedience (as one way to prevent future beatings), in other cases children become

[1] UN (2011)
[2] UNICEF (2014 a).

desensitized to violence, more stubborn and less able to focus on what they are doing. Some parents said that they sometimes regret beating their children.

In the case of violence within schools, the majority of abuse is never addressed. Some complaints of violence had been filed to school principals, and in other cases the children concerned had dropped out of school altogether – an obvious risk to their future prospects.

2. Emotional violence and neglect

Emotional violence is the most common form of violence experienced by children, affecting 72 per cent in Alexandria, 76 per cent in Cairo and 86 per cent in Assiut during the year preceding the survey. Neglect is another concern, affecting almost one quarter of the children surveyed in Alexandria and Cairo. Many children had witnessed domestic violence (violence occurring among any members of the household) with obvious implications for their own emotional well-being: 66 per cent in Assiut and around 40 per cent in both Alexandria and Cairo. Overall, most children had been yelled at, insulted, cursed or called names in the month period preceding the survey.

The qualitative research revealed that most boys from the three governorates reported having been verbally abused in various ways, including by their teachers. Some found it hard to cope with such humiliation in front of their classmates, saying that they would rather be beaten than endure this type of treatment. In general, boys were particularly sensitive to humiliation in front of other people, whether at home or at school. Girls faced similar abuse, with girls in Assiut, in particular, reporting that their male schoolmates annoy and harass them and that they would feel safer in a school for girls only. Most girls accept being shouted at, both at school and at home, if they have done something wrong. Like the boys, however, they resent being shouted at in front of others because it insults and humiliates them.

While most parents admitted resorting to using emotional violence against their children at some point, some felt that it was counter-productive, making children themselves more aggressive and violent. A significant number of parents preferred other techniques, such as grounding children who misbehave. Most teachers claimed to be opposed to cursing at or insulting children, feeling that this may turn their students against schooling. Once again, however, this contrasts very sharply with the reports of the children surveyed for this study: they maintained that teachers insult, shout, and curse at them all the time. One religious leader interviewed for this study stressed that children should be praised for their accomplishments, rather than chided for their failures.

3. Sexual violence and harmful traditional practices (FGM/C and child marriage)

Sexual violence is an intensely sensitive issue that affects both boys and girls. Its sensitive nature has affected responses to the survey, with 2 – 6 per cent of children aged 13-17 surveyed – mainly girls – reporting sexual touching. However, most girls reported that they had experienced sexual harassment – two-thirds of those surveyed in Cairo. The study reveals a fairly widespread belief among parents and boys that girls who are sexually harassed invite such treatment through their behaviour or clothing, and that those who respond must be enjoying the abuse and 'deserve what they get'. In most cases, girls face a twin challenge: they are seen as being responsible for provoking sexual harassment and, at the same time, as responsible for averting it by staying away from males, dressing modestly, and ignoring such abuse when it happens. In reality, the study found that girls had been harassed whatever they are wearing, veiled or not. Clearly, there is a large gap in attitudes and beliefs on this

issue. Few boys in any of the communities surveyed cited any examples about sexual violence against themselves or other boys.

The most common forms of sexual violence reported by the girls and boys surveyed were verbal harassment followed by sexual touching. There were no reported incidents of children being forced or coerced into sexual intercourse, but that does not mean that it never happens, given the secrecy and shame around this issue and the great reluctance to speak out about it.

Many parents blamed such abuse on the Internet, while boys and girls blamed the decline in security and law enforcement since the Revolution in 2011 and teachers blamed mobile phones, the Internet, television and cinemas. Religious leaders, meanwhile, blamed the influence of Western culture, the Internet, overpopulation and a deteriorating economic situation (with more people sharing smaller spaces).

The qualitative research confirms that FGM/C is a critical and sensitive issue, as it is perceived as being linked closely to a girl's virtue and an important form of 'purification'. FGM/C is illegal in Egypt and most people see it as a rights violation. Yet its practice continues, often in secrecy because of the fear of legal repercussions, and it remains almost universal in some governorates in Upper Egypt. The practice is rooted in myths about girls' sexuality and the need for purity, and is mostly 'medicalised', with doctors often conducting the procedure.

Egypt has the highest number of females between the ages of 15-49 who have undergone FGM/C: 27 million out of 125 million worldwide[3]. For this survey, all girls were asked if they had experienced FGM/C. The vast majority of girls in Assiut (94 per cent) had been cut, followed by Cairo (65 per cent) and Alexandria (39 per cent), despite the penal code criminalising the practice. About 40 per cent of girls surveyed in Cairo and 48 per cent of those in Alexandria thought that FGM/C had harmful effects, compared to only 7 per cent in Assiut.

Education seems to be an important factor in awareness on this issue: more than half of the girls with complete/partial secondary education in Cairo (52 per cent) and those with complete/partial preparatory education in Alexandria (53 per cent) thought of FGM/C as being harmful.

Boys aged 13-17 had little awareness of the issues surrounding FGM/C and were unsure whether it is right or wrong. Boys in Assiut – a governorate where the practice remains almost universal – were the most likely to know that FGM/C is illegal, but they also said that it is normal, that it makes girls decent and respectful and that they want it for their daughters. Just under half of all the children interviewed in Assiut intend to have their daughters undergo FGM/C in the future, compared to just 5 per cent of children in Cairo and Alexandria.

While a significant proportion of parents were opposed to FGM/C, the majority of parents and teachers believe that FGM/C is for the girl's benefit – safeguarding her chastity and reputation – despite the clear threats to her health and well-being.

Across the board, the boys and girls surveyed tended to agree that child marriage is a harmful tradition and that they would only contemplate marriage once their education was completed.

[3] UNICEF (2013 a).

Child marriage is also illegal in Egypt but, like FGM/C, it continues to be used as a way to control girls (in particular) and a means to elevate the families from the economic responsibility of caring for their daughters.

About 75 per cent of the parents surveyed in each of the three governorates believed that child marriage has harmful effects, and their practices were consistent with their attitudes: less than 10 per cent of the parents in Cairo, Assiut, and Alexandria, have children who were married before the age 18. The qualitative research, however, revealed more diverse opinions, with some parents suggesting that 14 is an appropriate age for girls to get married, and that a girl who is still unmarried at 20 will be seen as 'infertile'.

4. Support services and alternative forms of discipline

Children who are abused tend to keep quiet, rather than reporting it. Under half of all the children surveyed knew what to do when abused and fewer than 10 per cent knew of any services that could help them. Of those who did report abuse, most – fortunately – received some help from somebody. However, few parents, children or school staff are aware of Egypt's Child Helpline or know its easy-to-remember telephone number: **16000**.

Most of the parents surveyed were aware of child rights, and most were in favour of the 1998 Ministerial Directive banning corporal punishment in schools (which has since been revised in 2014). Fewer than 20 per cent, however, knew about Egypt's 2008 amended Child Law and only a fraction could list any of the issues, with the partial exception of their recall of 18 as the minimum legal age of marriage.

Almost half of the school staff surveyed felt that the ban on corporal punishment in schools should be applied only in some cases, and almost one fifth believed that it leads to indiscipline and disrespect.

While parents and school workers may not know the terminology for alternative forms of discipline, such as discussion, praise and encouragement, the study found that they actually use these approaches a great deal with the children. For example, only 12 per cent of school staff (and none of those surveyed in urban areas) knew about alternative forms of discipline. One surprising finding, however, was that school staff with no university degrees were among those most likely to use discussion and praise to motivate children.

Next steps

The high prevalence of violence against children in Egypt, and the continued beliefs on its value as a form of discipline require a concerted national response. Clear national measures are needed to prevent violence, to protect children and to reach families with the required services and follow-up mechanisms. This should be accompanied by strenuous efforts to promote social behavioural change among adults and children, as well as positive alternative discipline. Programmes for prevention, protection and awareness need to be mainstreamed within the current structures of child welfare and child advocacy organizations.

Eight main recommendations have emerged from the study:

- **The Government of Egypt to strengthen its efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children.** A first step would be to define and communicate a policy of zero tolerance for violence against children, with the explicit prohibition of any form of violence – physical, emotional or

sexual – against them. The Government should establish roles and responsibilities for key actors on this issue, and children should be associated in the formulation of policies to prevent and respond to violence.

- **Parents and families should have the support they need to raise children without violence.** The Government, civil society and religious leaders should develop interventions to prevent violence by reducing the vulnerability of families and children, with community-based development organizations and other local networks playing a pivotal role. Specific interventions could include a well-established parent education programme that is implemented by health and social workers targeting the most vulnerable families, and referrals to child protection and social protection services where appropriate.

- **A long-term national media campaign is needed to promote non-violent child discipline and raise awareness of the impact of violence on children.** It is vital to overturn the attitudes and social norms that condone or encourage violence against children. State supported and private media campaigns could challenge the belief that violence is a valid form of discipline, address the norms that legitimize such violence and promote alternative approaches.

- **Programmes should be initiated for children and adolescents on non-violence, including programmes to address bullying.** Different approaches include developing the skills of peer educators and creating school-based programmes, as well as supporting sports and recreational activities and measures to address online bullying[4].

- **A national child protection policy in schools.** Improved school facilities, school protection policies and working conditions for school staff are prerequisites for a non-violent environment in schools and should be backed by child protection policies based on zero tolerance for violence in any form.

- **Specialized support services are needed for children experiencing extreme abuse and violence.** Breaking the cycle of violence in children's lives and helping them cope with its consequences requires specialized child-focused services such as safe counselling, complaint and reporting mechanisms.[5] These include child help lines and quality referral services that are run by child friendly-police officers, skilled doctors, social workers and psychologists.

- **Perpetrators of violence against children must be prosecuted**. Effective prosecution of the perpetrators of violence can help to change public attitudes and behaviours. However, implementation of Egypt's existing legislation on this issue remains quite weak: few perpetrators have been prosecuted and only the gravest incidents have been reported to the police.

- **Develop a centralized system of monitoring and data collection, based on clear national indicators, to monitor the situation over time**. Data are essential to establish the true gravity of the violent abuse experienced by children in Egypt, particularly data related to homicide, sexual exploitation and the prevalence of harmful practices. Such data can guide policies, priorities and coordination. Next steps could include the strengthening of existing injury surveillance systems, ensuring the compulsory and annual reporting of violence against children and reinforcement of existing data collection systems.

[4] UNICEF (2014 b).
[5] UN (2010 a).

Box 2 Methodology

The research on violence against children in the governorates of Alexandria, Assiut and Cairo was carried out from March to May 2013. It used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gather information that is mutually reinforcing

The **quantitative research** focused on two groups: households and school staff working directly with children. The household sampling targeted children aged 13-17 and one of their caregivers while the school-staff sampling targeted five respondents from each school: four teachers and a school principal and/or school social worker.

A multi-stage stratified sampling approach was used to identify a survey sample of 2,400 households and 110 schools, with four to five schools (primary, preparatory or secondary) selected from each primary sampling unit (PSU). About 80 per cent of the schools were public or government-run, and 20 per cent were either private or affiliated to the Islamic institution of Al Azhar. Reflecting the proportional size of populations in the three governorates, 1,000 households were interviewed in Cairo, 700 in Alexandria, and 700 in Assiut. For Alexandria and Cairo governorates, 70 per cent of the sampled PSUs were informal settlements and 30 per cent were formal settlements. For Assiut, 43 per cent were towns in urban areas and the remainder were villages in rural areas.

Three questionnaires were used. The first assessed the proportion of children who had experienced or witnessed any form of violence, their reactions to such violence and their knowledge of any relevant laws or reporting/support mechanisms. The second was for parents, aiming to gather information about their attitudes, knowledge and practices about various forms of violence and their reporting behaviours. The third captured the knowledge, attitudes and practices of school staff in relation to violence against children. All three questionnaires were designed to include such variables as gender, age group, place of residence, place of victimization, marital status of parents, parent's education and perpetrators. The questionnaires were pre-tested with parents, children and teachers in Cairo on February 2013 and were subsequently revised to ensure clarity.

The qualitative research covered four groups: boys and girls aged 13-17; parents (but not necessarily those of the children interviewed); school staff; and community and religious leaders. A total of 48 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 12 in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted. In each of the three governorates, eight FGDs were conducted with boys and eight with girls, four were conducted with parents and four with teachers and social workers. Two IDIs were conducted in each governorate with school principals and two with community and religious leaders.

The research prioritized **cultural and ethical considerations** to ensure the privacy and safety of every child respondent. Participation in the survey, for example, required the full consent of the child concerned, as well as their parent or caregiver. All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the affiliation of the researchers, and the possible benefits and risks of participation (including potential emotional distress). Participants were also guaranteed that they could choose not to answer any particular question and that they were free to terminate their participation at any time. All participants were provided with information on referral services to ensure that no single participant was marked out as having experienced violence. All survey forms and notes from the focus group discussions were held securely, with the principal investigators having sole access.

1. Introduction

All children should be protected from violence, abuse and neglect; this being a fundamental right guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and existing Egyptian conventions and treaties. UNICEF maintains that violence against children is preventable. Yet the reality remains very far from ideal, as the latest publication by UNICEF on violence against children states:[6] "*…violence remains an all too real part of life for children around the globe – regardless of their economic and social circumstances, culture, religion or ethnicity – with both immediate and long-term consequences."*

UNICEF's global statistical analysis has revealed staggering results:

- on average, every year, about 6 in 10 children worldwide (almost 1 billion) between the ages of 2 and 14 are subjected to physical punishment by their caregivers.
- 3 in 20 adults believe that physical punishment is an acceptable form of discipline; a figure in line with the results of this study in selected governorates in Egypt.
- bullying and violence among children is commonplace worldwide, with an average of 1 in 3 students ages 13-15 experiencing bullying on a regular basis.
- more than 125 million girls in 29 countries have undergone Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting FGM/C, with Egypt having the highest number of girls and women (ages 15-49) who have undergone FGM/C worldwide; the main result being the high population size and also the high prevalence. Without urgent action, as many as 30 million more girls maybe cut in the next decade alone.[7]

This report provides an insight on the magnitude and pattern of physical, emotional and gender-based violence against children in selected governorates across Egypt, as well as the perceptions of children and adults on this issue. We note, however, that violence against children will always be underestimated because of the sensitive nature of this issue, with children often reluctant to speak out. To find solutions to the problems documented, the study emphasizes the need to change public perceptions on both violence against children and, linked to this, the value of girls.

This report presents the findings of the study conducted by Center for Development Services for the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and UNICEF between March and May 2013 and covers physical and emotional violence in the home and school and, to a lesser extent, in the community. It also covers sexual violence, FGM/C and child marriage and investigates the current support system and perceptions on alternatives to discipline. The study covers children aged 13 to 17, their parents, school teachers, school principals, social workers and community leaders. A survey sample of 2,379 households and 100 schools were included. In each household, one child (aged 13 to 17) was selected and interviewed (50% boys and 50% girls) in addition to their parent or caretaker. In each of the 100 schools, four teachers were selected and interviewed in addition to the school principal or a social worker. In addition, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews provided qualitative information that allowed a more in-depth appraisal of viewpoints and experiences.

[6] UNICEF (2014 a)
[7] UNICEF (2013 a - 2014 d).

2. Physical violence against children

Highlights

- Most of the children aged 13-17 interviewed; 61 to 67 per cent in Cairo, Alexandria and Assiut reported that they had been exposed to physical violence, in the year preceding the survey.
- Physical punishment is widely seen as a legitimate disciplinary method by children, parents and teachers and is used mainly for disciplinary purposes.
- In some cases, parents, teachers and children participating in the study recognised that stress may be a key contributing factor that leads to the use of physical violence.
- Boys were more likely to be exposed to physical violence: 78 per cent compared to 53 per cent of girls in the year preceding the survey.
- Most teachers denied using physical violence at school, but this contradicted the experiences reported by children.

2.1 Definition

Physical violence or abuse in relation to children is the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical harm to that child's survival, development or dignity. Corporal punishment is one form of physical violence defined by the Committee on the Convention of the Rights of the Child in the General Comment No. 8 as "*any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light."* Most involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children, either with hands or with an implement. In the view of the Committee, corporal punishment is invariably degrading.

Four main types of physical violence are considered in this research:

- **Type 1:** being pushed, having hair or ears pulled, being pinched, being grabbed by clothing or being shaken (Figure 2.3)
- **Type 2:** being kicked or beaten (Figure 2.4)
- **Type 3:** being beaten with a stick, belt, wooden cane or whip (Figure 2.5)
- **Type 4 (severe):** being scalded with hot water or burned with metal, being fed something extremely spicy, being locked up in a confined space, being tied up with a rope, being drowned, suffocated or being threatened with a gun, knife or a sharp tool (Figure 2.6).

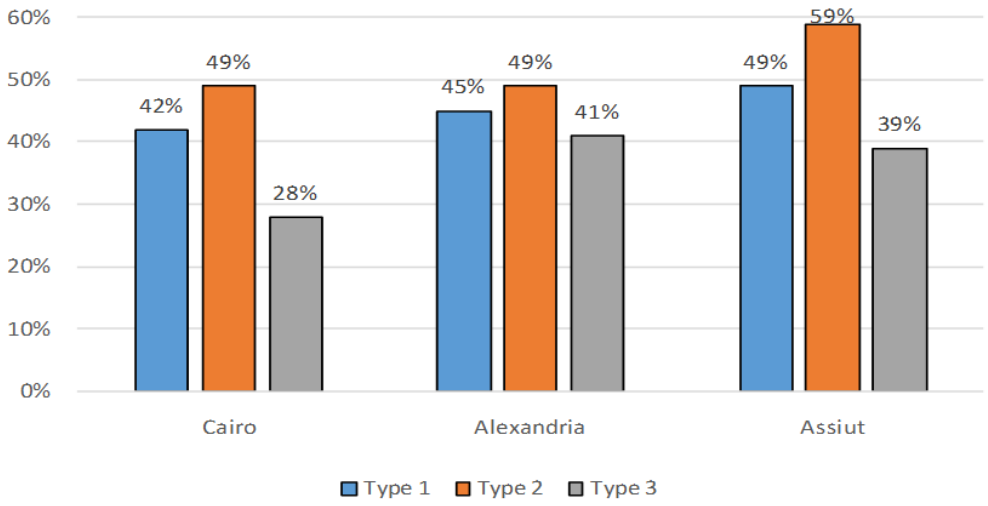
2.2 Experience of physical violence as reported by children

The quantitative study reveals that most children surveyed were exposed to physical violence, and that most of these had experienced such violence in the year preceding the survey: 61 per cent in Cairo, 65 per cent in Alexandria and 67 per cent in Assiut

Figure 2.1 presents the percentage of exposure for each type of physical violence children had experienced during the year preceding the survey (including those who were exposed during the past week, past month, or past 12 months). It shows that Type 2 violence (being kicked or beaten) is the most frequent form of physical violence children had been exposed to, followed by type 1 (being pushed, having hair or ears pulled, being pinched, being grabbed by clothing or being shaken); and type 3:being beaten with a stick, belt, wooden cane or whip. Results also revealed that 11 per cent of the children surveyed in Cairo, 15 per cent in Alexandria and 21 per cent in Assiut had been exposed

to all of the first three types of physical violence – but about 5 per cent had been exposed to all four types of violence, including the most severe. Overall, within the year preceding the survey, boys had been more exposed to physical violence than girls, with 75 per cent of those surveyed exposed to at least one type of physical violence, compared with 53 per cent of the girls.

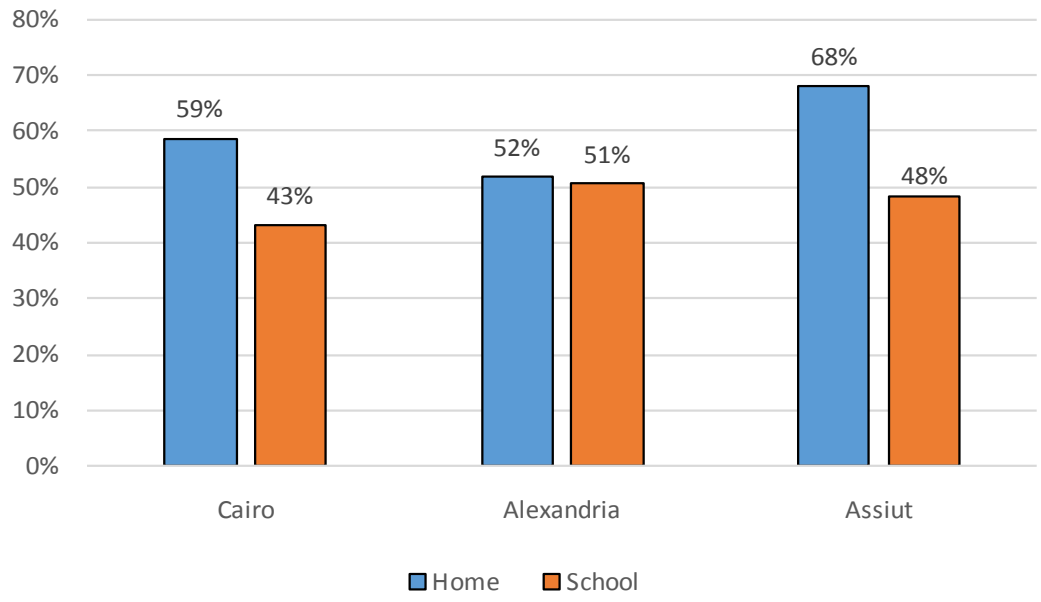
Figure 2.1: Percentage of children aged 13-17 who experienced type 1, type 2, and type 3 of physical violence during the year preceding the survey (by governorate)



Where physical violence takes place

During the year preceding the survey, the levels of exposure to physical violence at home were found to be far higher than those at school in Cairo and Assiut (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Places where children aged 13-17 experienced physical violence, types 1, 2, and 3 during the year preceding the survey (by governorate)



The high prevalence of physical violence against children at home and in schools was confirmed by children, teachers, parents and community/religious leaders during the qualitative research. Boys said that they are treated worse and beaten more than girls because girls are seen as delicate and not able to endure such treatment. Teachers reinforced this view, admitting that they differentiate between boys and girls in their use of corporal punishment, imposing harsher physical punishment on boys than girls. They claim that boys are beaten with tools such as a thick stick (*kharazana*), slippers, hoses, belts or knives, or that they even receive electric shocks/exposure to bare wires, while girls are beaten only on their hands with a ruler, and only softly. The girls, however, painted a different picture, and reported being slapped in the face, hit on the hands or other parts of the body with various tools or even kicked. Girls are sometimes also beaten by boys at school. One community leader in Alexandria maintained that, in general, children of all ages are beaten, but that girls are beaten more often than boys because they make more frequent mistakes. In addition, children are sometimes punished collectively by teachers when they cannot find out who the troublemaker is.

As shown in Table 2.1, cases of Type 1 and Type 2 violence during the year preceding the survey were more common at home (40-60 per cent of cases), while Type 3 violence occurred more frequently at school.

Table 2.1: Where physical violence takes place (%) in the year preceding the survey

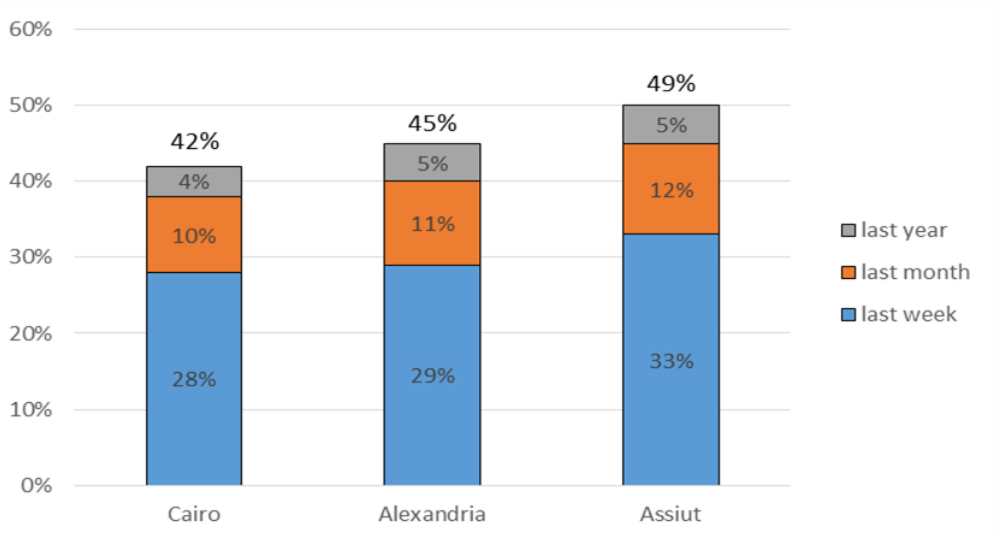
Type of violence	*Governorate*	*Home*	*School*	*Street*
Type 1: Being pushed, hair/ears pulled, being pinched, being grabbed by clothing, or shaken	Cairo	45	26	28
	Alexandria	41	11	44
	Assiut	61	5	33
Type 2: Being kicked or beaten	Cairo	53	22	25
	Alexandria	46	10	42
	Assiut	58	11	30
Type 3: Being beaten with a stick, belt, wooden cane or whip	Cairo	41	50	3
	Alexandria	27	62	3
	Assiut	17	70	11

For each geographical domain, the categories don't add-up to 100% because of the "Other" category

Children's experience of four types of physical violence during the previous year

Type 1 violence tends to happen more often at home (40-60 per cent of cases), followed by abuse in the street, neighbourhood (28-44 per cent) and finally at school in 5 to 25 per cent of cases. Another key characteristic is that the perpetrators of this type of violence tend to be other children; for example children such as neighbours, bullies and others who constitute 37-56 per cent of cases, followed by siblings 13-26 per cent, with parents coming lower down on the list (11-20 per cent for mothers and 3-10 per cent for fathers).

Figure 2.3: Type 1 violence: percentage of children aged 13-17 who have experienced being pushed, having hair/ears pulled, having clothing grabbed or being shaken (by governorate)



Note: Children are classified according to the most recent occurrence of the type of violence. 'Last week' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the week preceding the survey. 'Last month' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the month preceding the survey, but not in the week preceding the survey. 'Last year' category includes episodes of violence which occurred in the year preceding the survey, but not in the most recent month. The figures outside the bar chart represent the overall percentages of children who experienced the type of violence during the last year, overall.

The main perpetrators of **Type 2** violence (being kicked or hit) were fathers for 19-23 per cent of children and mothers for 14-20 per cent. Other children, including mainly friends beside some strangers and neighbours were reported as perpetrators in 29-47 per cent of cases. This may indicate high levels of bullying and is consistent with the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) of 2011, which found that 61 per cent of male students and 28 per cent of female students aged 13 to 15 reported being in a physical fight one or more times during the year preceding that particular survey.[8] Some regional differences could be observed: in Alexandria the main perpetrators were other children, while in Assiut the main perpetrators were parents and other relatives. Over the previous year, children had experienced Type 2 violence 16 times in Cairo, 24 times in Alexandria, and 31 times in Assiut, on average.[9]

One girl in Assiut stated "I prefer that my mother be the one who beats me, because she regrets it and talks to me afterwards; I don't like when my dad beats me, sometimes he forces me to go down and clean the street. When I don't do that perfectly he shouts at me in front of the boys who are in the street, and I feel hurt."

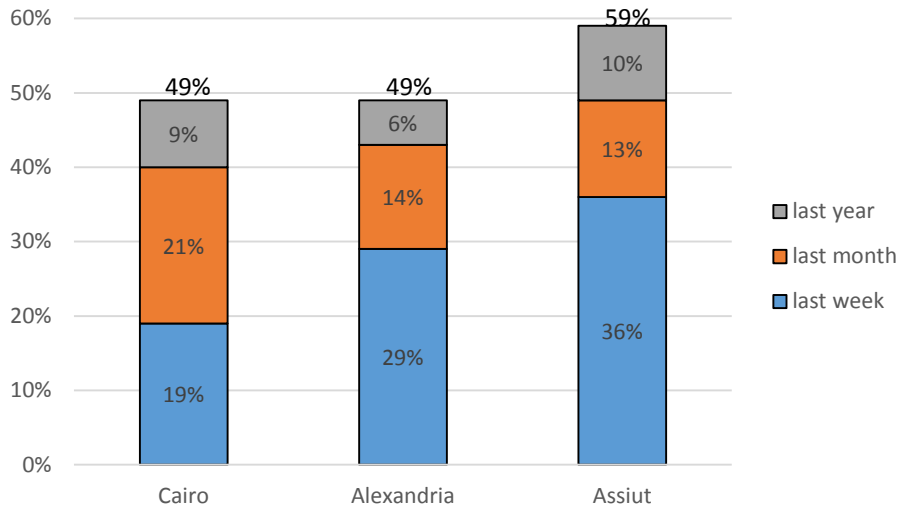
Levels of exposure varied in the three governorates according to children's demographic characteristics; mainly their geographical area, gender, and age. Children in Cairo's formal areas were exposed less frequently to Type 2 violence than those in informal areas. In Alexandria and Assiut, girls were more likely to state that no one had kicked or hit them during the 12 months preceding the

[8] *WHO (*2011)

[9] Children in each of the three governorates who confirmed being hit or kicked had experienced Type 2 violence twice, on average , during the past month

survey. Only in Alexandria were younger children (13-15) more likely to be exposed to kicking and hitting than older children (16-17).

Figure 2.4: Type 2 violence: percentage of children aged 13-17 who have been kicked or hit (by governorate)



Note: Children are classified according to the most recent occurrence of the type of violence. 'Last week' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the week preceding the survey. 'Last month' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the month preceding the survey, but not in the week preceding the survey. 'Last year' category includes episodes of violence which occurred in the year preceding the survey, but not in the most recent month. The figures outside the bar chart represent the overall percentages of children who experienced the type of violence during the last year, overall.

Type 3 violence (being hit with a stick, belt, wooden cane or whip) was inflicted by teachers and school staff according to 58-72 per cent of children, followed by parents in 17-35 per cent of cases. However, in Alexandria and Cairo, boys and girls reported significant disparities in the levels of type 3 violence they experience from their parents and their teachers/ school workers. Overall, girls experience it more from their parents while boys from their teachers/ school workers. For example, 30 per cent of the girls versus 2 per cent of the boys in Cairo and 31 per cent of the girls versus 5 per cent of the boys in Alexandria mentioned their mothers as the main perpetrator of Type 3 violence. Also girls in Cairo were more likely than boys to mention their fathers (30 per cent versus 10 per cent) as a main perpetrator. On the other hand, 83 per cent of the boys versus 32 per cent of the girls in Cairo and 82 per cent of the boys versus 41 per cent of the girls in Alexandria mentioned their teachers/ school workers as main perpetrators. In Assiut, only 5 per cent of mothers are reported to perpetrate Type 3 violence, compared to 12 per cent of fathers.

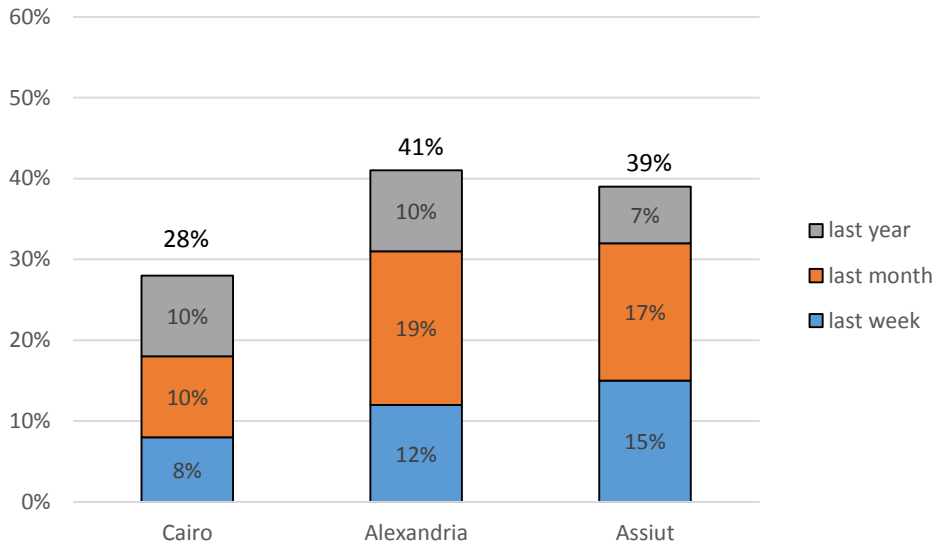
Two boys in Cairo told of incidents where the teacher at school beat them with sticks. One boy said it was because he was passing a bottle of water in class and drank from it. The other boy said that whenever they wanted to go to the toilet, the teacher would beat them and then give them permission to leave.

On average, children who confirmed being hit with stick, belt, wooden cane, or whip had experienced these actions twice in Alexandria and Assiut and once in Cairo during the past month. During the previous year, children had experienced this type of violence about 5 times in Cairo, 22 times in

Alexandria, and 23 times in Assiut on average. Children who said that they had skipped class or dropped out of school in the previous year as the result of such abuse had been exposed to Type 3 violence twice for Cairo, three times in Alexandria and ten times in Assiut on average.

No major differences were observed in Cairo in relation to age, gender, or geographical area. However, girls in both Alexandria (75 per cent) and Assiut (77 per cent) were more likely than boys (44 per cent and 48 per cent respectively) to say that nobody had hit them with something. In addition, children aged 16-17 in Alexandria and Assiut, were less likely to be hit with stick, belt, wooden cane, or whip than those ages 13-15; 29 versus 48 per cent in Alexandria and 31 versus 43 per cent in Assiut. No considerable differences were noticed in terms of geographical area in these two governorates.

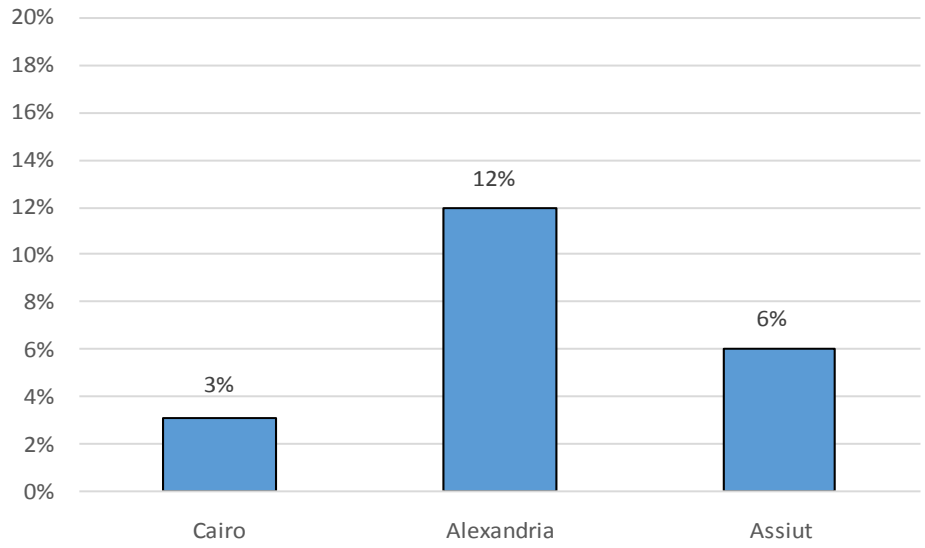
Figure 2.5: Type 3 violence: percentage of children aged 13-17 who have been hit with a stick, belt, wooden cane or whip (by governorate)



Note: Children are classified according to the most recent occurrence of the type of violence. 'Last week' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the week preceding the survey. 'Last month' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the month preceding the survey, but not in the week preceding the survey. 'Last year' category includes episodes of violence which occurred in the year preceding the survey, but not in the most recent month. The figures outside the bar chart represent the overall percentages of children who experienced the type of violence during the last year, overall.

Type 4 violence includes being threatened by a gun, knife or a sharp tool, being scalded with hot water or burned with metal, being fed something extremely spicy, being locked in a confined space, or being tied with a rope, drowned or suffocated. The survey found that 5 per cent of the children in Cairo and Assiut and about 12 per cent of those in Alexandria had a gun, knife, or a sharp tool pointed at them during the past 12 months. Boys in Alexandria were the most likely to have had such an experience: the violence usually took place in the street and was perpetrated by an individual (e.g. friend, neighbour or bully). Figure 2.6 presents the percentage of children surveyed who had been exposed to at least one of the severe forms of physical violence within the 12 months preceding the survey.

Figure 2.6: Type 4 violence: Percentage of children aged 13-17 who were exposed to severe physical violence within the year preceding the survey (by governorate)



On average, children in each of the three governorates who confirmed witnessing someone using a knife, gun or other tools to scare or hurt others had experienced such violence once during the past month. Over the course of the previous year, children had experienced such violence three times in Cairo, six times in Alexandria and four times in Assiut, on average.

'Hady'

Hady' was dragged to the roof top by his father, stripped naked and had his hands tied behind a bar. His father then spilled honey and sugar all over his body and left him for insects for several hours after he saw him smoking.

2.3 Attitudes to corporal punishment

Awareness, attitudes and beliefs

The qualitative study revealed that physical punishment is widely seen as a legitimate form of discipline. Girls believed that all older family members had the right to beat them as a form of punishment and that teachers also had the right to do so, saying that it motivates them to study and finish their homework. Boys did not mind physical violence if they had done something wrong. Indeed, one boy claimed that humiliating and beating a boy will make him a more humble person.

Some school regulations include a ban on beating children. However, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) carried out for the study showed that few teachers think that physical violence is wrong. Rather, they feel that it is up to the teacher to decide whether beating a certain student is appropriate in a specific situation or not. One teacher added that beating must add something to the educational purpose – to making children learn.

Religious leaders felt that beating is something that is required during childhood, but that parents should switch to advice and guidance as children grow older and approach adulthood.

Some parents approved of beatings in schools, but others preferred non-violent measures such as extra homework. Some parents said that using a wooden ruler to hit a child's hands is acceptable, but a slap in the face is not. One mother in Cairo asked a teacher to beat her son if he caused trouble. Another mother said that she did not want her child to be insulted by verbal abuse in school but did not mind her child being beaten if it was for educational purposes.

Some people in the FGDs did mention that understanding and talking are better forms of discipline, but they were in the minority. In general, mothers said that they would beat their child if talking had not been effective.

Many girls claim that their parents beat them because they 'care' and that it makes children obedient and respectful. They also said that it is better to be beaten inside the home than outside.

Alleged causes of physical violence

The belief that physical punishment is a valid and effective form of discipline is one prime reason for its perpetuation. The reasons cited in the study related to "misbehaviour" such as being disobedient, stubborn, rude or irritable; staying out late; not doing well in school; smoking; cursing; and uttering blasphemies. Parents also stated that their own state of mind could be another reason for violence, with stress, frustration or nervousness (sometimes caused by external factors such as financial problems) acting as triggers for violence, leading them to beat their children.

'Layla'
'Layla' was slapped on the face and dragged by the hair in front of her friends when her mother discovered that she had skipped her private tutoring lesson. When she arrived home, her mother kept beating her and cut her arm with a knife.

The level of punishment inflicted on children varies according to the child's age or sex. For example, many mothers in formal neighbourhoods of Cairo and urban Assiut refused to use physical violence with sons who were in their late adolescence, as they felt that their sons would overpower them.

Religious leaders said that the educational level of parents may well influence the method of discipline and that this is not related to religion per se.

Teachers claimed that they did not like to beat children, but that it often seemed to be the only way to get a result. Students, meanwhile, are alleged to have become more violent as a result of the violence they witness on the streets and in the media. Teachers also said that class sizes are too big to allow them to stay in control without using violence. If there were only 30 children per class, they maintained, they would not need to resort to violent discipline.

Parents' attitudes and practices

Parents' opinions on the effectiveness of physical punishment on children did not vary much across the three governorates. However, the extent to which hitting a child was seen as a good way to discipline children differed according to the levels of parents' education in all three governorates.

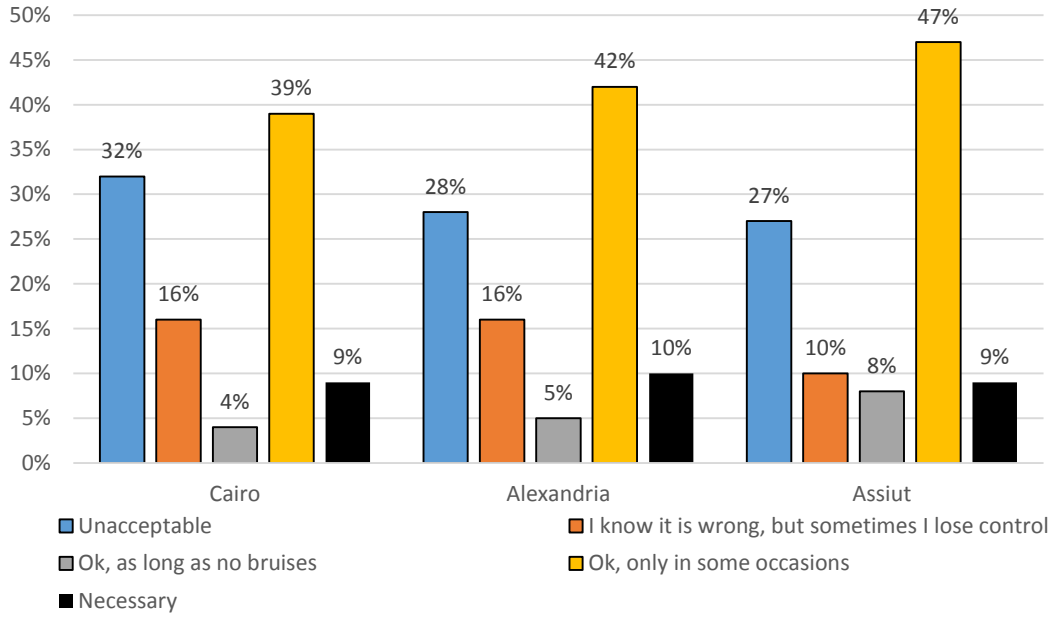
One unexpected finding of the research was that parents who had never attended school or who had dropped out in Cairo and Alexandria were among those who were least likely to see hitting as an effective way to discipline children. Such findings deserve more detailed and intensive research.

Opinions on the use of physical punishment were divided mainly between those parents who considered it acceptable to hit a child under certain circumstances, and those who considered it totally unacceptable, as shown in Figure 2.7. Parents were also asked about the kind of behaviour by children that would make it necessary to hit them, with skipping class at the top of the list, followed by not listening to their parents.

More than 55 per cent of parents in the three governorates disapproved of children being hit at school, followed by one third who think it is acceptable within certain limits. The vast majority of those who accepted the idea of children being hit in school preferred it to be with a stick on the child's palm (about 88 per cent in Cairo and Alexandria and 95 per cent in Assiut).

One boy who lives in a formal neighbourhood in Alexandria spent the whole night with his friends and came home at 6 am, so his father and uncle tied him to a chair and beat him with a belt.

Figure 2.7: Parents' opinions on the use of physical violence (by governorate)



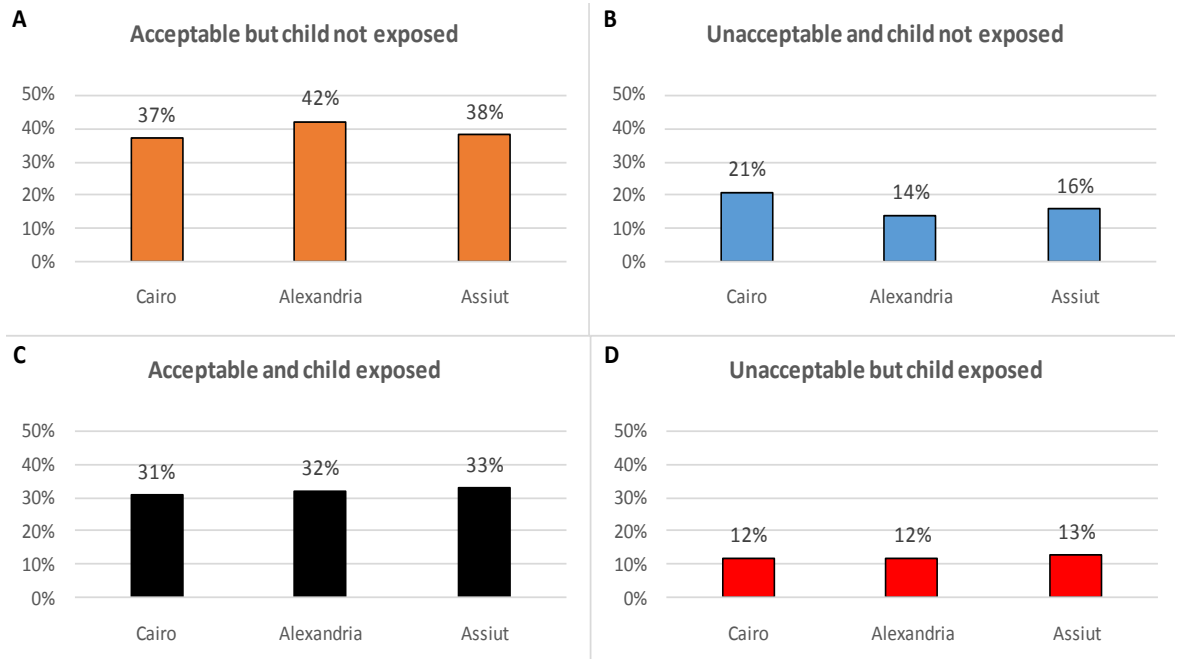
Parents were almost equally divided between those who had used physical punishment in the past and those who had not. Less than 5 per cent of the parents who hit their children in each of the three governorates reported that their children needed medical care after being hit as a result of at least one occurrence of such violence.

Another unexpected finding was that parents with lower education levels were less likely to use corporal punishment at home in Alexandria (there were no observed difference by education level in the other governorates).

Finally, those who used physical violence against their children were asked about the number of times they resorted to such violence each month. In each of the three governorates, methods such as spanking or smacking were used about three times each month, on average, while hitting with a tool, slapping, or pinching/pulling hair/ears was used on once or twice per month on average.

Figure 2.8 summarises parents' attitudes in comparison to their children's experiences of physical violence, showing a mismatch between parental acceptance of physical violence as a form of discipline and the actual exposure of children to its use. Around 70 per cent of parents of children surveyed accepted physical punishment as a valid method in the different governorates (Figure 2.8, **A** and **C** together). However only one third of parents both accepted physically violent discipline and exposed their children to it (**C**). At the same time around 1 out of 10 parents who declared that physical punishment was not acceptable exposed their children to such punishment, according to the children themselves (**D**). A percentage of parents ranging from 14 per cent in Alexandria and 21 per cent in Cairo considered this violence unacceptable and their children confirmed that they had not endured physical punishment at the hand of their parents **(B)**.

Figure 2.8: Percentage distribution of parents' attitudes and children's experiences of physical violence (by governorate)



Similar results were revealed in IDSC Family Health Survey of 2009[10] in which around 60% of Egyptian adults viewing that physical punishment is not necessary to raise/ educate children; however 91% of Egyptian children aged 2 to 14 years experienced some sort of violent discipline (psychological aggression and/or physical punishment) in the preceding month of the survey; with the majority experiencing both aggressions together.

Teachers and other school staff attitudes and practices

All school staff were asked for their opinions on physical punishment. Two main opinions emerged: those who find it totally unacceptable (40 per cent) and those that feel it is acceptable in certain situations (35 per cent).Those who think that hitting is necessary or acceptable under certain circumstances were asked for their views about acceptable methods of hitting. This revealed that the vast majority of teachers and other school staff (77 per cent) prefer hitting a child on the palm with a stick or a ruler. This method was the most preferred option among those who work in schools in Assiut (around 90 per cent), and least preferred by female staff members (69 per cent).

[10] UNICEF (2013 b)

Although the majority of school workers said that they had not spanked, smacked, pinched children, or hit children with tools or pulled their hair during the previous month, around one fifth of them admitted that they had spanked/smacked and pulled children's hairs or ears between one to four times during the past month. None of the school workers who confirmed using physical violence during the past month stated that any of the children required medical care after being hit.

The consequences of physical violence by children

Child participants in the qualitative research often reported that they were left feeling sad, miserable, weak, irritated, and offended and/or embarrassed after experiencing physical violence. In some cases, children had become depressed or even suicidal.

'Sahar'

'Sahar' is a 14 year-old-girl who has tried to commit suicide three times. She is regularly beaten up by both her parents.

While beating sometimes results in greater obedience to forestall future beatings, in other cases children become desensitized to violence, more stubborn and less able to focus on what they are doing.

In the long-term, violence can result in children themselves becoming more violent as well as suffering from psychological problems. Some parents said that they sometimes regret beating their children. In the case of schools, some complaints of violence had been filed to school principals, but in other cases the children concerned had dropped out of school altogether – an obvious risk to their future prospects.

One boy in an informal neighbourhood in Alexandria stated that he dropped out of school because when a teacher offended him he shouted back at him, so the teacher said he'd make sure the boy is expelled and also arranged with a group of boys to beat him up outside school.

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3. Emotional violence and neglect

Highlights

- Emotional violence was the most common form of violence experienced by children during the year preceding the survey, affecting 86 per cent of children in Assiut, 76 per cent in Cairo and 72 per cent in Alexandria.
- Neglect was another concern, with almost one quarter of the children surveyed in Alexandria and Cairo reporting that they had experienced in the preceding year to the survey neglect, falling markedly to 10 per cent in Assiut – in sharp contrast to the percentage of children in that governorate who reported that they had experienced emotional violence.
- Many children had witnessed domestic violence among members of the household during the year preceding the survey: 66 per cent in Assiut, 40 per cent in Alexandria and 41 per cent in Cairo.

3.1 Definitions

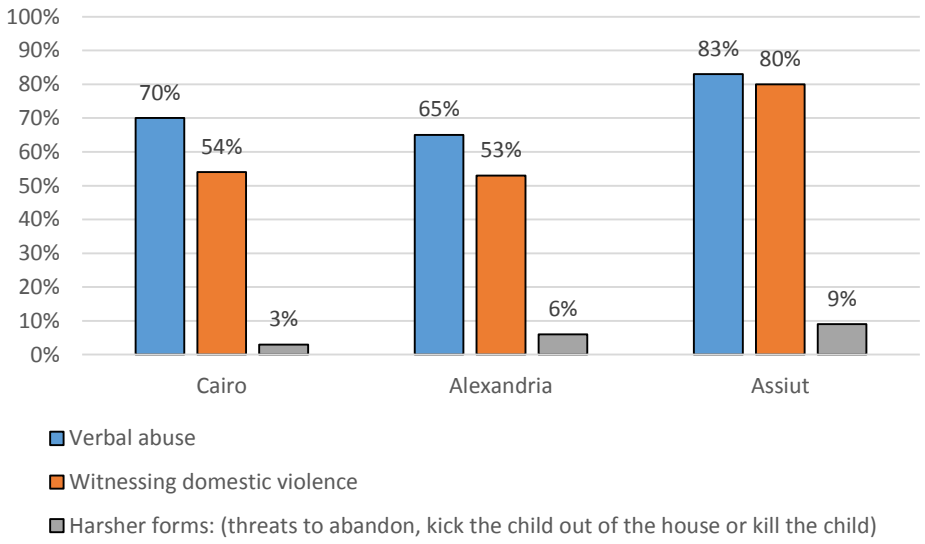
Emotional or psychological violence is an intentional behaviour that conveys a bleak message to a child: that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or valued only if they meet another's needs. Emotional violence can take the form of insults, name-calling, ignoring, isolation, rejection, threats, and emotional in difference. It can include blaming, belittling, degrading, intimidating, terrorizing and isolating. In other words, it is a behaviour that is harmful, potentially harmful, or insensitive to the child's developmental needs, and that could damage the child psychologically or emotionally. Witnessing domestic violence can also be classified as exposure to emotional violence.

Neglect means the failure of parents or caregivers to meet children's physical and emotional needs when they have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so; or their failure to protect children from exposure to danger.

3.2 Experience of emotional violence and neglect as reported by children

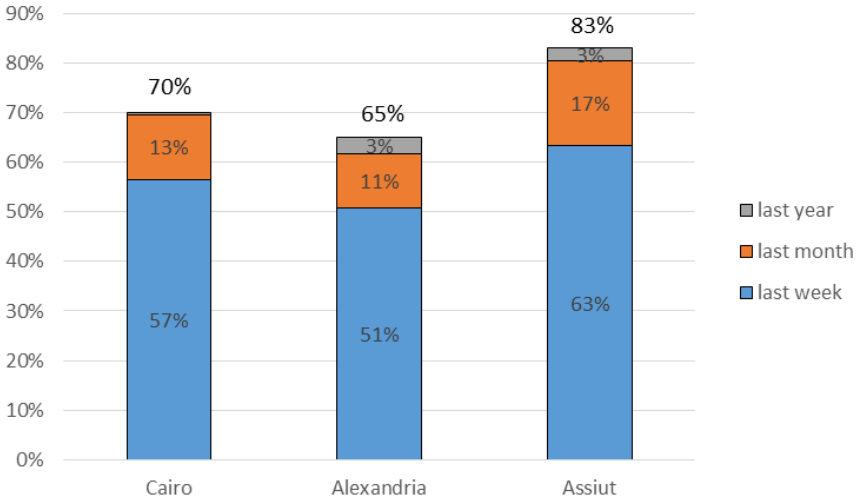
During the year preceding the survey, the vast majority of children – 72 to 86 per cent – reported experiencing emotional violence in all its forms and in all three governorates, with Assiut having the largest levels of exposure. Figure 3.1 presents the percentage of children exposed to each type of emotional violence during the year preceding the survey, with rates for experiencing verbal abuse, witnessing domestic violence and threats highest in Assiut. In Cairo and Alexandria, verbal abuse is the most frequent emotional violence to which children were exposed, followed by witnessing domestic violence.

Figure 3.1: Percentage of children aged 13-17 who experienced different forms of emotional violence during the year preceding the survey (by governorate)



Children were asked about the last time someone had yelled at them, insulted them, cursed them or called them names during the past 12 months. Figure 3.2 shows that the majority of children had endured such treatment during the previous month (including those exposed to such abuse in the previous week). Children were also asked about their exposure to harsher forms of emotional abuse such as threats that they would be abandoned, kicked out of the house or killed. In the year preceding the study, 10 per cent of children in Assiut reported being exposed to this form of abuse, 7 per cent in Alexandria and 3 per cent in Cairo.

Figure 3.2: Children aged 13-17 who had experienced emotional violence in the form of verbal abuse by governorate



Note: Children are classified according to the most recent occurrence of the type of violence. 'Last week' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the week preceding the survey. 'Last month' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the month preceding the survey, but in the week preceding the survey. 'Last year' category includes episodes of violence which occurred in the year preceding the survey, but not in the most recent month. The figures outside the bar chart represent the overall percentages of children who experienced the type of violence during the last year, overall.

According to Table 3.1, most children had been exposed to verbal abuse during the past 12 months at home (66-74 per cent), with girls (73-82 per cent) more likely to be verbally abused at home than boys (60-65 per cent). In the street, boys (20-29 per cent) were more likely to be verbally abused than girls (3-11 per cent). In Assiut, one fifth of the girls surveyed reported being verbally abused at school.

Figure 3.3 Places where children aged 13-17 experienced emotional violence in the form of verbal abuse, by governorate

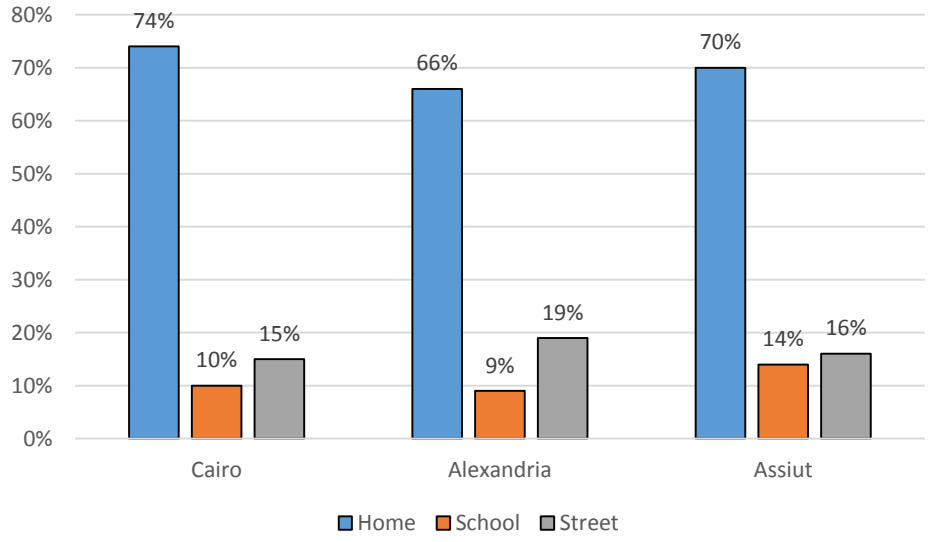


Table 3.1: Place where emotional violence in the form of verbal abuse takes place (by gender and governorate)

Place	Governorate								
	Cairo			Alexandria			Assiut		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Home (%)	65	82	74	60	73	66	62	77	70
Street (%)	20	11	15	26	11	19	29	3	16
School (%)	14	7	10	11	7	9	8	21	14

For each geographical domain, the categories do not total 100% because of the 'Other' category.

The perpetrators of this type of violence are fathers, mothers, siblings, and other children (e.g. friends, neighbours, and bullies).In all the three governorates, fathers were more likely to be names as perpetrators by boys (26-30 per cent) than girls (12-16 per cent), while mother and siblings were more likely to be stated by girls (31-46 per cent and 18-35 per cent, respectively) than boys (27-29 per cent and 6-16 per cent, respectively).

The qualitative research confirms that verbal abuse is widespread. Most boys face verbal violence from their teachers at school, with boys Alexandria and Cairo in particular saying that their teachers always curse at them, insult them and call them names. The reasons for such abuse vary, but include anger that children do not take private tutoring from teachers, do not understand something in class or do not know the answer to a question, or do not do their homework. Children said that they feel

this belittles and humiliates them in front of their classmates and some said that they would rather be beaten than treated like this.

Boys are also verbally abused at home by their parents but they see this differently: while most are offended by cursing from their teachers, they see it as a normal and acceptable part of parenting as long as it is not excessive. However, they resent being verbally abused by their parents for no reason or in front of their friends or strangers as this belittles them. Some of the boys, especially those living in informal neighbourhood in Alexandria and Cairo, think that cursing is sometimes effective, while the majority feel that the use of cursing and offensive words makes them more aggressive, stubborn and ill mannered.

The nature of and response to verbal violence varies according the geographical settings: Boys in Cairo and Alexandria are subjected to, and also witness, verbal abuse and insults in the streets. A boy from Cairo's formal neighbourhood stated that he would answer back and insult the person who verbally abused him, while a boy from the informal neighbourhood stated that bullies form gangs and use insulting words and curses against people. The boys in Alexandria's formal neighbourhood outlined reaction to verbal abuse by wanting to run away and feeling humiliated.

Boys from Assiut said that they do not like when their parents shout at them and will not use this method when they grow up; they also confirmed that their fathers always shout at their mothers. Some boys said that youth who are always in the streets, or in street gangs, curse and use offensive words all the time. When they are insulted by someone in the street, their response is to insult them back using the same (or even more offensive) language. The results were similar to those for Cairo in terms of answering back to bullies.

The verbal abuse faced by girls is similar to that faced by boys. At school, both female and male teachers insult girls, shout at them and call them names in certain situations – again, when they refuse to take private lessons or do not know the answer to a question asked in class. Girls in rural Assiut revealed that their male schoolmates annoy and harass them and that they would feel safer in a school for girls only.

Most girls accept shouting as a punishment or disciplinary tool both at school and at home when they know they did something wrong. However, all girls said they do not accept being shouted at in front of others – especially boys – because it insults and humiliates them. At home, their parents use the same techniques when they do something wrong, such as staying out late. Girls in Cairo and Assiut also stressed that they resent the fact that their parents always shout at them but do not treat their brothers in the same way when they do something wrong. They mentioned that if there is a fight between them and their brothers, parents usually shout at them, even if they were not responsible.

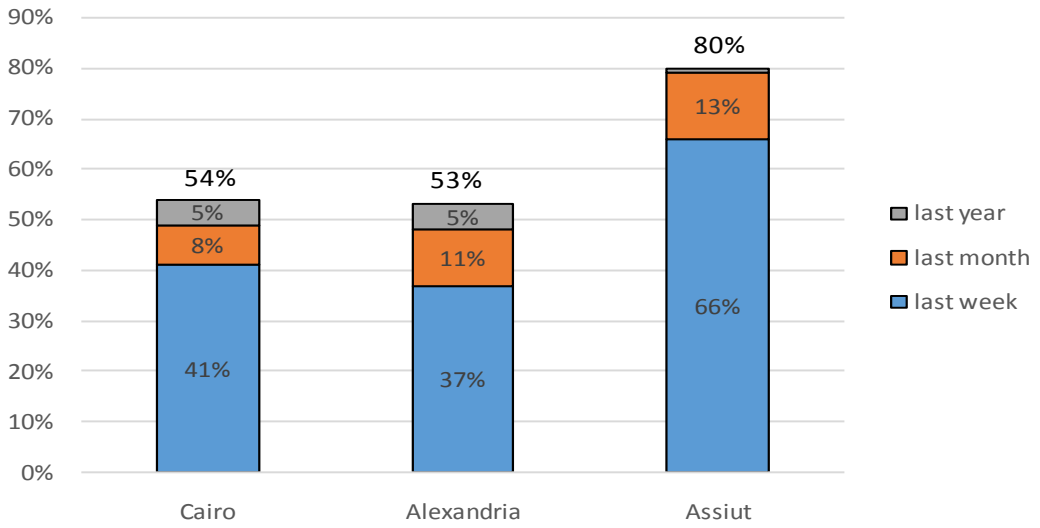
A few girls explained that they sometimes view a curse as a joke if it comes from their mother or close friends. However, a few girls were convinced that cursing and shouting makes children stupid; that the use of force and violence leads a person to be stressed and irresponsible; and that when someone is insulted, that person is obliged to respond with violence, insults or curses.

A girl who lives in a formal neighbourhood in Alexandria believes that "a tongue is a double-edged sword; a word can build or destroy anything in a second."

Witnessing violence at home

More than half of the children surveyed in Alexandria and Cairo had seen family members fighting at their home during the past year, rising to more than three-quarters in Assiut. Figure 3.4 shows that the percentage of children who had witnessed this type of violence during the past year was identical in Cairo and Alexandria.

Figure 3.4: Children aged 13-17 who had witnessed family members fighting at home (by governorate)



Note: Children are classified according to the most recent occurrence of the type of violence. 'Last week' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the week preceding the survey. 'Last month' includes episodes of violence, which occurred in the month preceding the survey, but not in the week preceding the survey. 'Last year' category includes episodes of violence which occurred in the year preceding the survey, but not in the most recent month. The figures outside the bar chart represent the overall percentages of children who experienced the type of violence during the last year, overall.

Table 3.2 shows some important differences in the perpetrators of domestic violence as witnessed by the children. While fathers were reported to be the main perpetrators of violence at home in Alexandria and Cairo, fights among siblings were seen as the main source of violence in Assiut. Overall, parents and siblings tended to share the responsibility for domestic violence in Cairo and Alexandria.

Table 3.2: Perpetrators of domestic violence as witnessed by children during the year preceding the survey (by governorate)

Governorate	Siblings	Mother	Father
Cairo (%)	35	22	37
Alexandria (%)	28	29	37
Assiut (%)	58	20	18

For each geographical domain, the categories do not total 100% because of the 'Other' category

Children who confirmed that they had witnessed domestic violence had seen it, on average, twice in the past month in Cairo and Alexandria and four times in Assiut. Looking back over the previous year, children had witnessed such violence 24 times in Cairo and Alexandria on average, and 46 times in Assiut.

Within their neighbourhood, around 70 per cent of children reported that they had witnessed the use of knives or had heard gunshots in Cairo and Alexandria, while this fell to around 50 per cent in Assiut. Almost all children who witnessed this type of violence in the streets stated that the perpetrator was a friend, neighbour or a bully.

In addition, around 80 per cent of children said that they had been exposed to violence by watching very violent scenes on the Internet or TV.

Children's experience of neglect

The children participating in the study were presented with a list of different types of neglect and were asked to state whether they had ever experienced them or not. Those who had experienced any form of neglect were then asked about the context in which it happened and how it affected them.

Almost one quarter of the children surveyed in Alexandria and Cairo reported that they had experienced neglect, falling markedly to 10 per cent in Assiut – in sharp contrast to the percentage who had experienced emotional violence.

"Deprivation makes me feel that they hate me", was how one boy from Alexandria's formal neighbourhoods described his experience and feelings.

Around 10 per cent of the children in each of the three governorates stated that they had:

- felt disregarded/neglected, could not find kindness or psychological care from anyone, or had not been listened to,
- felt unwanted or unimportant,
- felt alone and were not helped or supported by anyone,
- felt that the family favoured another sibling and treated him/her better because of their gender,
- felt pressured or sad because parents favoured their siblings.

Around 5 per cent of the children in each of the three governorates stated that they had:

- remained hungry and/or thirsty even though there was enough food and water for everyone,
- worn dirty, torn clothes that were unsuitable for the weather or tight shoes even though there was money to buy new shoes or clothes,
- been ill or physically hurt but were not taken to a doctor/ physician or given the treatment they needed,
- felt that their parents were not providing them with the basic needs (e.g. school fees) even though they could afford it,
- received less opportunities or services than their siblings because of their gender.

3.3 Attitudes and practices on emotional violence and neglect

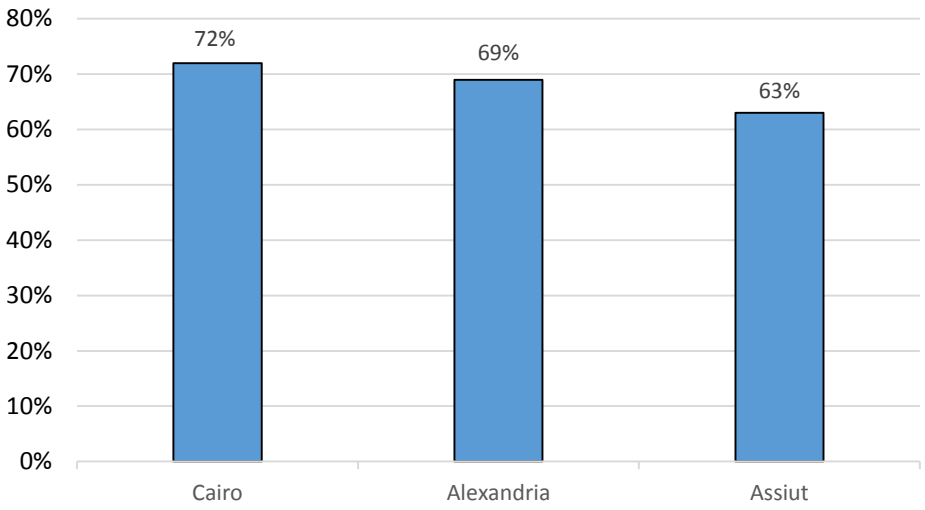
Parents

Parents were asked to select the best methods that should be used to raise children from all the different forms of discipline. 'Grounding'– keeping a child in the house or preventing from taking part in a certain leisure activity – was the preferred method in all three governorates. This method was more likely to be used by parents in the formal areas in Cairo and, very interestingly, those who had never attended schools in Alexandria. No observable variation among respondents was noticed in

Assiut. The silence method – where parents would stop talking to their children for a period of time – was more likely to be used with girls in Alexandria and Assiut than with boys.

Parents were also asked if they had used emotional violence against their children at any time in the past, with the majority confirming that they had done so (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Percentage distribution of parents who practiced emotional violence any time in the past (by governorate)

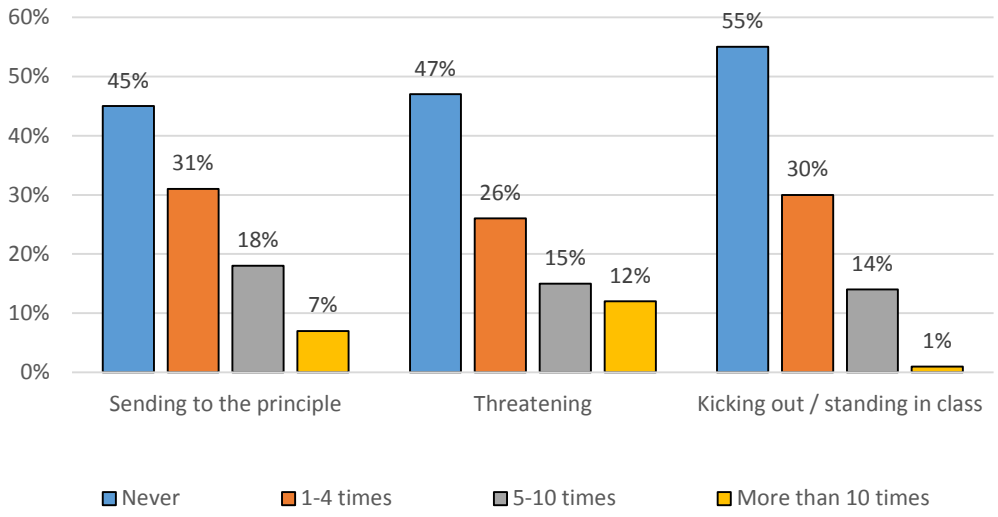


The qualitative research found that almost all parents shout at their children when they do something wrong and when they are nervous. While some parents said that their children obey them after they shout at them, others revealed that their children shout back even louder. Shouting and scolding are seen as the first reactions or steps taken by parents in the disciplining process. If these don't work, parents may resort to physical violence. One of the negative results of such verbal violence on children, according to some of the parents, is that it makes children themselves more aggressive and violent.

Teachers and other school staff

School staff members were asked for their opinions on the methods that should be used to raise a child. Slightly more than half of them mentioned grounding, with the greatest support for this method among school workers in rural areas (82 per cent) and informal areas (67 per cent). Other psychological methods were also mentioned such as threatening children (18 per cent) and not talking to them (11 per cent). School workers admitted that they had practiced different methods of abusive and non-abusive emotional discipline during the previous month, as shown in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6: Percentage distribution of school workers according to their practices on different forms of abusive and non-abusive emotional discipline during the month preceding the survey



The qualitative study showed that teachers in the three governorates had various views on verbal abuse. Teachers in Cairo said that they try to be firm to make students fear, respect and love them at the same time. Most of them claimed that they are opposed to cursing and insulting and consider these tools useless or even harmful, as they may lead students to hate school. The children had a different perspective on this issue, as those surveyed maintained that teachers insult, shout, and curse at them all the time, however, they may be reporting the actions of a small number of teachers.

Teachers in Alexandria admitted that they sometimes use shouting and scolding to discipline students when they are late for school or when they fight each other. However, some of them considered that shouting at students only makes their students shout louder and become more aggressive and violent.

Teachers and school principals in Assiut confirmed that students sometimes get on their nerves and make them lose their temper and resort to cursing. They claimed that they may even force students to take private lessons with them to reduce the need they feel to curse and insult them. Some male teachers said that they do not differentiate between male and female students in terms of cursing and their use of offensive words – an abuse that may lead girls, in particular, to hate school.

4. Sexual violence and harmful traditional practices (FGM/C and early marriage)

Highlights

- Sexual violence is an intensely sensitive issue and is shrouded in secrecy, with few of those surveyed citing any experience of this form of violence. Any experiences that were shared were emphasized as having heard it happened but not experiencing it. There was, however, a fairly widespread belief that girls who are sexually harassed invite such treatment through their behaviour or clothing, and that those who respond must be enjoying the abuse and "deserve what they get".
- Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is a crime in Egypt and those opposed to the practice see it as a rights violation. Yet it continues, often in secrecy, and remains almost universal in some governorates. The practice is rooted in myths about girls' sexuality, depended on her marriage ability and the need for purity, and is mostly 'medicalised', with doctors often conducting the procedure.
- Child marriage is also illegal in Egypt but, like FGM/C, it continues to be used as a way to control girls (in particular) and a means to elevate the families from the economic responsibility of caring for their daughters

4.1 Definitions

This section covers various forms of sexual violence and harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage.

Sexual violence is one of the most unsettling of children rights' violations. Acts of sexual violence range from direct physical contact in which a child is forced to perform a sexual act by usually a caregiver or a neighbour, pressed to have unwanted sexual intercourse by a dating partner, exposed to sexual comments or advances by a peer or an adult, impelled to engage in sex in exchange for cash, gifts or favours , coerced to expose her or his sexual body parts, including in person or online, subjected to viewing sexual activities or sexual body parts without his or her consent, or raped by a group of persons as part of a ritual, a form of punishment or cruelty.[11]

FGM/C refers to all procedures that involve the partial or total removal of the external genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs for cultural or other reasons that are not medical necessities. The practice is a major threat to girls' lives and well-being. Girls have been known to die while undergoing FGM/C and it can lead to continuing medical complications sever bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of new-born deaths. It also robs girls of a full and normal sexual life and can have other negative psychological and sexual consequences that are life-long.

Child marriage is defined as a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18, with a risk that it is non-consensual and that the younger partner will have little or no power within the relationship.

In addition, there are particular health concerns for young girls who are not physically or psychologically ready for the responsibilities of married life and the burden of early pregnancy. There have been girls who have committed suicide after being forced into a child marriage. Other

[11] UNICEF (2014 d).

consequences include the removal of girls from school for marriage, and also divorce, which, in some cases, leaves divorced girls both uneducated and homeless.

4.2 Experience of sexual violence as reported by children

The most common forms of sexual violence reported by the girls and boys aged 13-17 who were surveyed is verbal harassment followed by sexual touching (Figure 4.1). There were no reported incidents of children being forced into sexual intercourse or of any attempts to coerce them into sexual intercourse. However, this does not mean that there were no such incidents, given the secrecy and shame around this issue.

Figure 4.1: Children aged 13-17 who had experienced sexual harassment by type of violence experienced and governorate during the year preceding the survey

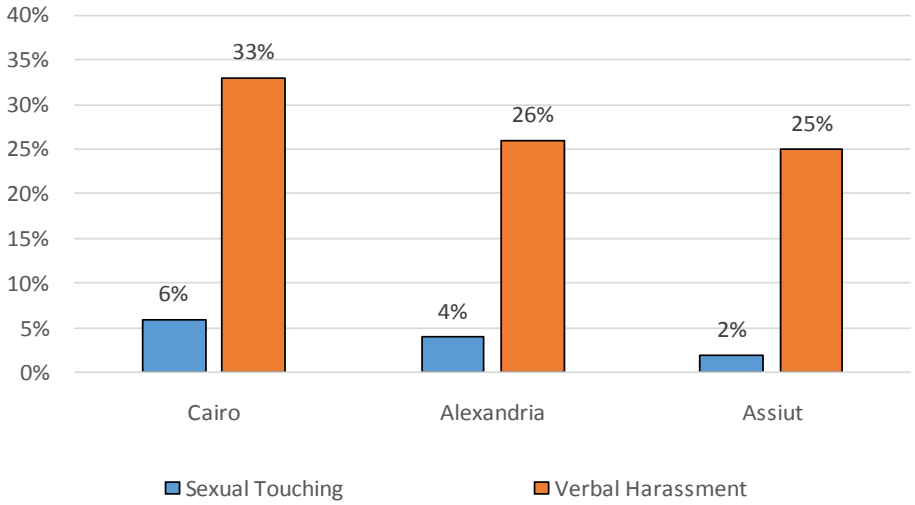
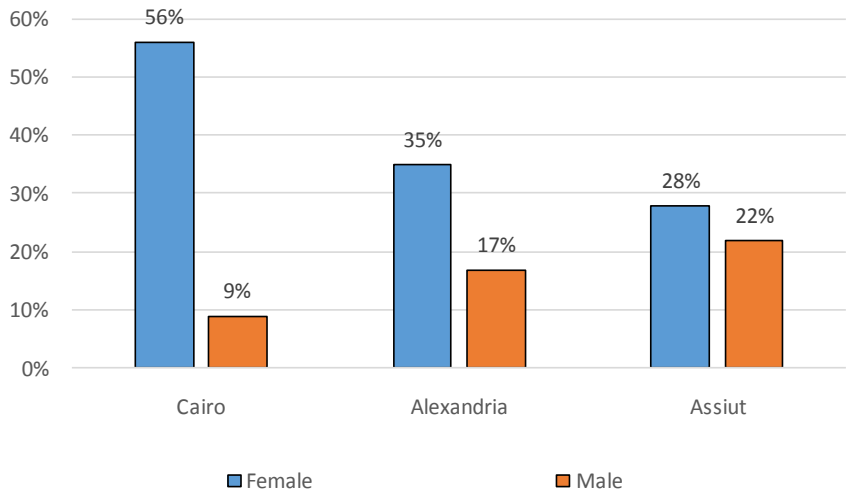


Figure 4.2 presents the contrast between the genders for those who are exposed to verbal harassment. Girls also did report that they had experienced sexual harassment, particularly in Cairo where two out of three girls had been affected by this form of violence. The qualitative research also confirmed that girls are affected more often by sexual harassment than boys and that they are often blamed for 'inviting and deserving' harassment. However, it is important to note that boys had also experienced sexual harassment, as Figure 4.2 confirms.

Figure 4.2: Children aged 13-17 who had experienced verbal harassment by gender and governorate during the year preceding the survey



The boys from all communities surveyed gave hardly any examples of sexual violence against themselves or other boys. The assumption is that if sexual violence and harassment against girls is difficult to report or talk about, it might be even more difficult to report sexual assault against boys.

Children were asked about the last time during the 12 months preceding the study someone had talked to them in a way that included sexual suggestions (e.g. describing their bodies/private areas or generally about sex) and in a way that was annoying or against their will. Almost all of those who had experienced such talk (97 to 99 per cent) said that the offender was usually an individual friend, neighbour or bully.

The qualitative research indicated that the perpetrators could be young or old, male or female. They could be strangers, acquaintances or even family members. *Tuk-tuk* drivers and teachers were mentioned in particular – a view confirmed by teachers themselves who mentioned that other teachers sometimes harass young children.

Boys in the three governorates did not believe that looking at a girl's body or making verbal remarks was harassment. They also believed that some cases of sexual harassment should not be seen as 'violence' because girls may have invited this abuse by wearing the wrong type of clothes or by displaying inappropriate attitudes. Some boys think that if they pick on a girl, it is up to the girl to deal with it – accepting or rejecting the abuse. A girl who is decent and respectful will simply avoid the boys and/or pretend she did not hear anything abusive. If she interacts with her harasser in any way, she is seen as encouraging them to continue. What's more, she is considered to deserve whatever she gets.

Some parents argued that girls themselves may attract harassers by the way they talk and dress, particularly if this is considered to be provocative. They said that any female who is wearing a niqab should not be harassed, but that any female who is not dressed appropriately – again – deserves what she gets. In reality, girls are harassed whether they are veiled or not, whether they wear a niqab or not, etc. Girls mentioned that even those who wear loose and modest clothing are verbally harassed and that this harassment also happens at school. Clearly, there is a serious and marked difference in attitudes and beliefs on this issue.

On average, children ages 13-17 who confirmed being talked to in a way that included sexual suggestions had experienced such abuse three times in Cairo and twice in Alexandria and Assiut during the past month. Over the previous year children had experienced such abuse 20 times in Cairo, 10 times in Alexandria, and 24 times in Assiut, on average. Surprisingly, and unlike boys in Cairo and Alexandria, boys in Assiut were found to have been exposed more frequently to sexual talk during the past year than girls (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Median number of times children were talked to in a way that included sexual suggestions (by gender and governorate)

Governorate	Timeframe			
	During past month		During past year	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Cairo	1	4	1	36
Alexandria	1	2	1	15
Assiut	2	2	24	20

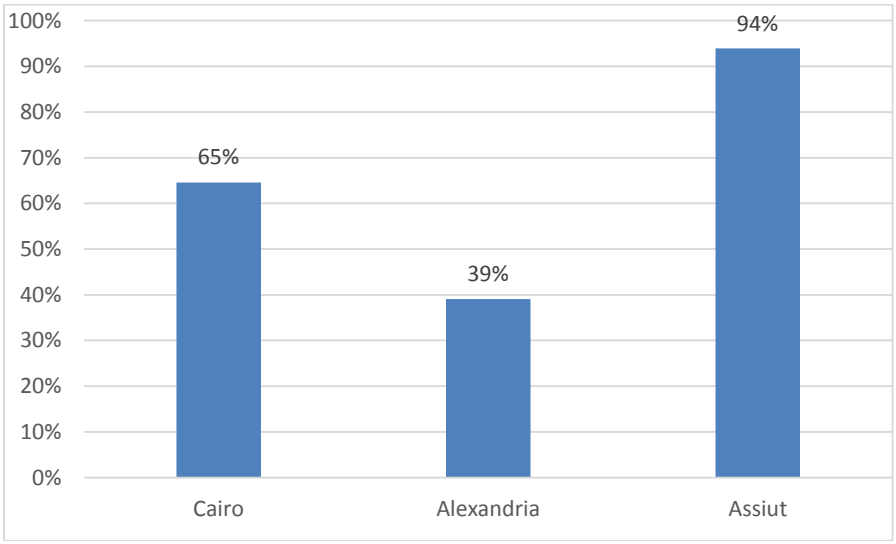
4.3 Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

Worldwide, as many as 30 million girls alive today may endure FGM/C in the next decade alone, according to UNICEF statistics.[12] Out of 29 countries in which FGM/C is practiced and for which data are available, Egypt ranks the highest country in terms of number of girls and women aged 15-49 who have undergone FGM/C; 27 million out of a global total of 125 million.[13]

The practice of FGM/C has its roots in old habits and ancient traditions. Cultural and religious beliefs perpetuate its practice, despite the fact it has been criminalised under modern Egyptian law. The lack of awareness about its risks is a continuing problem as people consult each other (particularly neighbours and relatives) and, increasingly, seek a doctor's approval for reassurance. Parents invite doctors to perform FGM/C on their daughters at home, as doctors can be arrested if they operate on girls at clinics or hospitals – a clear sign that both parents and doctors are well aware that FGM/C is an unlawful practice.

All surveyed girls aged 13-17 were asked if they had experienced FGM/C. As shown in Figure 4.3, there are important regional disparities, with the vast majority of girls in Assiut (94 per cent) having experienced it, followed by Cairo (65 per cent) and Alexandria (39 per cent), despite national legislation criminalising the practice.

Figure 4.3: Girls aged 13-17 who have experienced FGM/C by governorate according to their reporting



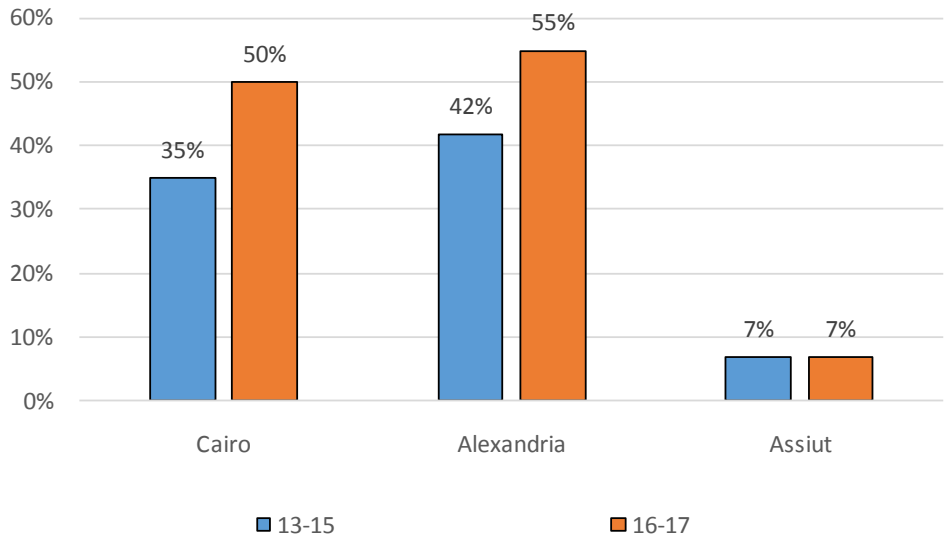
Children's knowledge about female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

About 40 per cent of girls in Cairo and 48 per cent of those in Alexandria think that FGM/C has harmful effects, compared to only 7 per cent in Assiut. One important factor related to awareness about the risks of FGM/C among the girls surveyed appears to be their age. In Cairo and Alexandria girls aged 13-15 were less likely than those aged 16-17 to consider circumcision as a harmful procedure (Figure 4.4). Additionally, in Alexandria, girls in formal areas were more likely than those in informal areas to

[12] UNICEF (2014 c).
[13] UNICEF (2013 a).

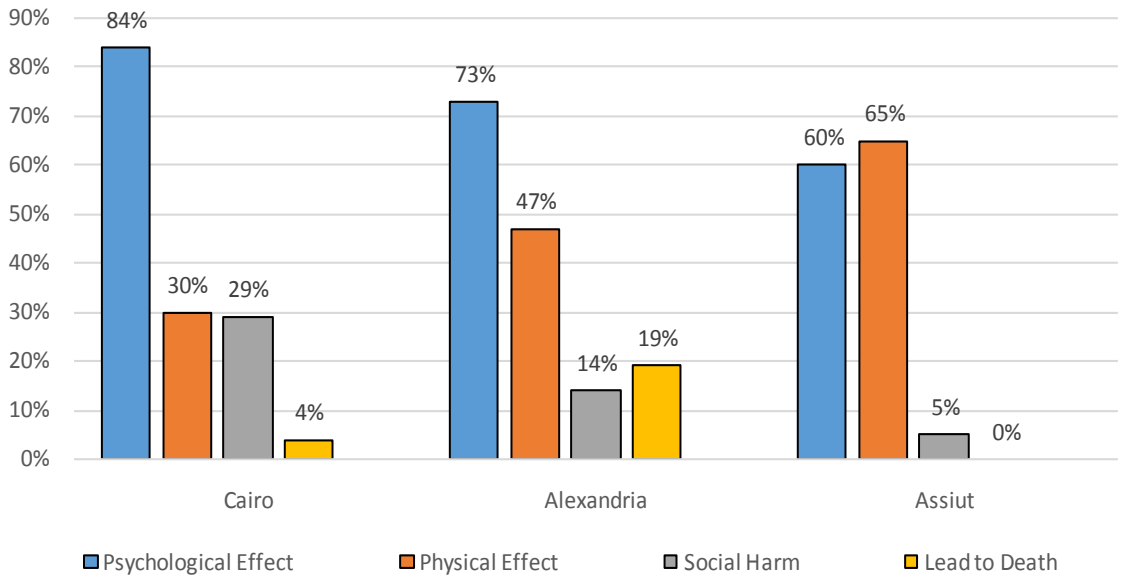
think it is harmful (54 per cent versus 44 per cent); which is largely consistent with the proportion of girls experiencing FGM/C in these areas.

Figure 4.4: Percentage distribution of girls who thinks FGM/C is harmful (by age and governorate)



Girls who considered FGM/C harmful were asked to list its effects. As shown in Figure 4.5, most agreed that FGM/C has psychological effects (e.g. fear, shock), followed by those who agreed on its physical effects, such as scars and bleeding. Girls in Cairo were also aware of its social impacts, including the problems FGM/C causes in marriage/sexual relationships. Overall, however, the girls had only limited awareness about the law in place in Egypt that prohibit FGM/C: 13 per cent in Alexandria, 14 per cent in Assiut and 22 per cent in Cairo.

Figure 4.5: Knowledge of girls aged 13-17 about the harmful effects of FGM/C (by governorate)



The qualitative research showed that most boys in all areas, and particularly in Alexandria and Cairo, were not highly aware of FGM/C and did not know whether it was right or wrong. Boys who had heard about FGM/C had heard about it mostly from friends or through the media. Some had heard that it is

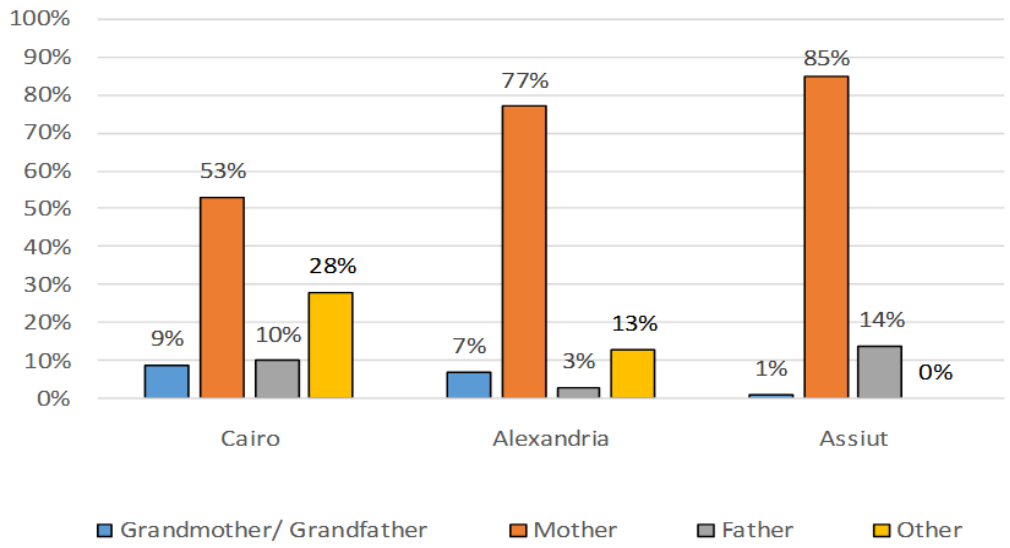
illegal, immoral and harmful, that it is widespread in Upper Egypt and that some girls have died while undergoing FGM/C, with the greatest awareness shown among the boys in Assiut, where the practice is almost universal. However, while boys in Assiut are the most likely to know that FGM/C is illegal, they also said that it is normal, that it makes girls decent and respectful and that they would want it for their daughters.

Some boys said that FGM/C is a violation that is not allowed by law and religion and only happens because of a lack of awareness. Some, however, believed that uncircumcised girls would face problems after marriage.

'Heba' has at least two other sisters, but she was the only one who went through FGM/C. She says "I was circumcised while we were living in El Minya and when we came to Cairo, my parents heard that circumcision was bad for girls and forbidden by the religion and that girls bleed, so they decided not to circumcise my sisters".

In Cairo, a group of girls said that they were confused by people saying, on the one hand, that FGM/C is wrong and those affirming, on the other hand, that it is a must. One girl in Assiut said that her mother was not willing to circumcise her but her grandmother convinced her father to do it because a girls' honour is rooted in circumcision. Girls were also asked to identify the person who they think makes the decisions on FGM/C, with most girls thinking that this is the responsibility of mothers (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Percentage distribution of girls according to whom they think made the decision on FGM/C (by governorate)



Children were asked if one of their sisters or another female relative had undergone FGM/C, and whether or not they intend to have their daughters undergo FGM/C in the future. As expected, given that almost all girls in Assiut had been through FGM/C, most boys and girls there (68 per cent) confirmed that they had sisters or other female relatives who had been cut, with much smaller percentages in Cairo (29 per cent) and Alexandria (21 per cent).Again, a higher level of awareness was observed among children in Cairo and Alexandria than in Assiut. Slightly less than half of Assiut's

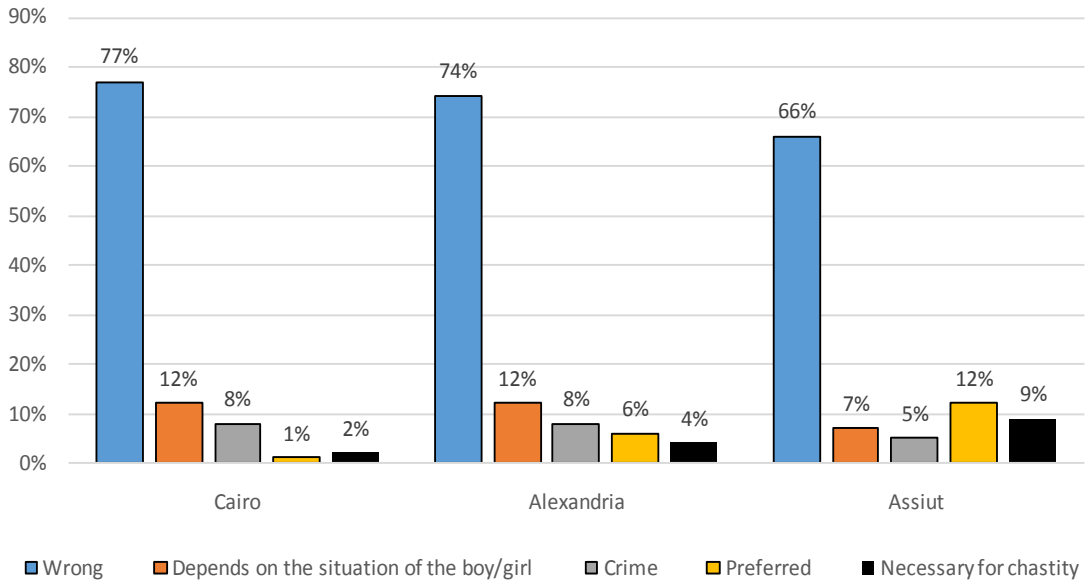
children intended to have their daughters undergo FGM/C in the future, compared to just 5 per cent of children in Cairo and Alexandria. Girls in Assiut (52 per cent) were more likely to say that they intended to circumcise their daughters in the future than the boys (42 per cent).

One girl in Alexandria, 'Amina', said that FGM/C was performed on her not so long ago. Her father forced her to have it when she went to visit him in Upper Egypt. She recalls "I was mostly mad at him because he forced me, and also because FGM/C is wrong and I bled a lot."

4.4 Children's knowledge and attitudes on child marriage

Less than 5 per cent of the children surveyed in Cairo and Alexandria have someone in their nuclear family (him/herself, siblings, other) who was married before the age of 18 at any time before the survey (the question does not ask for a specific timeframe). This percentage increased to 10 per cent in Assiut. Across the board, those children surveyed tended to agree that child marriage is wrong, as shown in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: Children's opinions on child marriage (percentage by governorate)



Some child participants in the qualitative study believed that a male can get married at any age as long as he has completed his education and has the finances to support his family. Of the boys who were asked what age they deemed appropriate for marriage, all said 19 or above and after completion of their education. While their views varied on the appropriate age of marriage for a girl, none said an age younger than 19 (except in rural Assiut) and they all agreed that girls should complete their education. Some boys mentioned that forced marriage is a rights violation and that marriage should only happen with the full consent of the girl concerned. According to one boy from Alexandria, however, child marriage is fine if the girl loves the boy and she has no parents to take care of her.

The girls mentioned various ages they deemed appropriate for marriage, with the vast majority suggesting between 18 and 26. Nearly all agreed that a girl should complete her education first and that child and forced marriages are rights violations. In reality, however, girls from the different

communities where the research was conducted stated that child marriage was a reality for friends or family members in their community (except in formal areas in Alexandria).

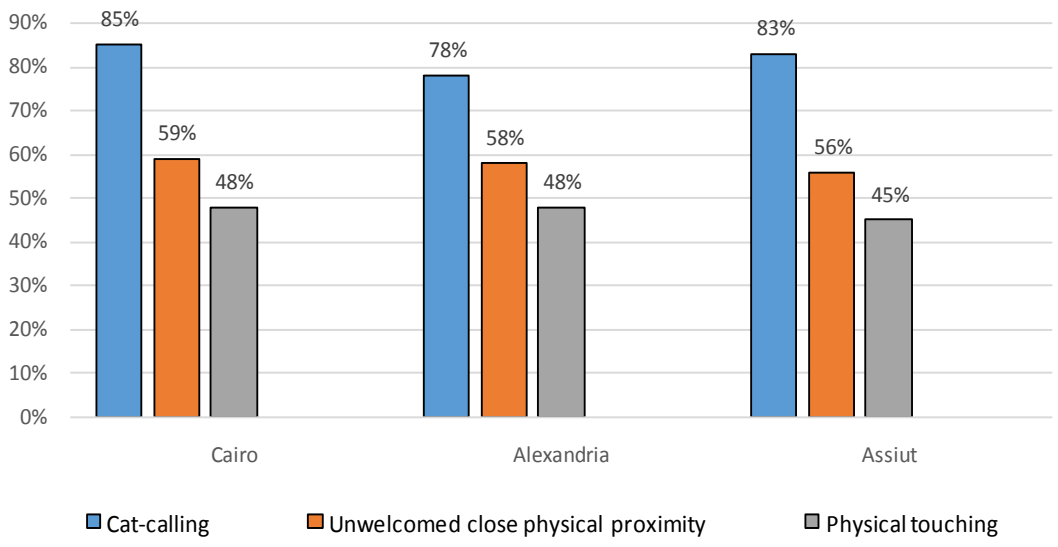
Most girls stated that they will not get married before the age of 18, a decision motivated by health, education and career reasons. Some girls, however, thought it is fine to marry by the age of 16 or 17 if the girl makes a responsible choice and if her husband is mature and supportive.

4.5 Attitudes and practices of parents, teachers and community/religious leaders

Sexual harassment

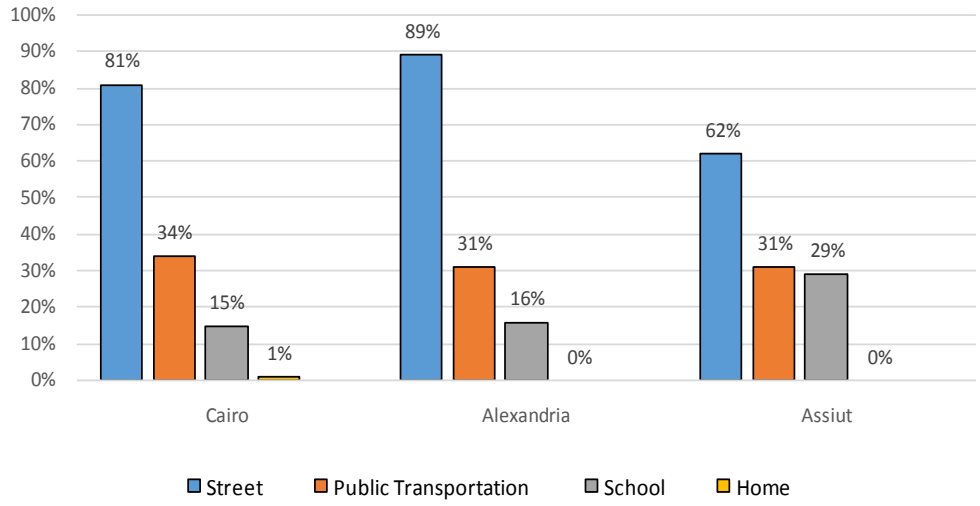
In general, parents have a high level of awareness on the different forms of sexual harassment (Figure 4.8). Remarkable differences were revealed in their levels of knowledge, especially for such sexual violence as cat-calling and physical touching, according to their geographical area. In Cairo and Alexandria, parents in formal areas were more likely to know of these two types of harassment than those in informal areas. In Assiut, parents in rural areas were more likely to know about cat-calling, while those in urban areas are more likely to know about physical touching.

Figure 4.8: Percentage distribution of parents' knowledge of forms of sexual harassment by governorate



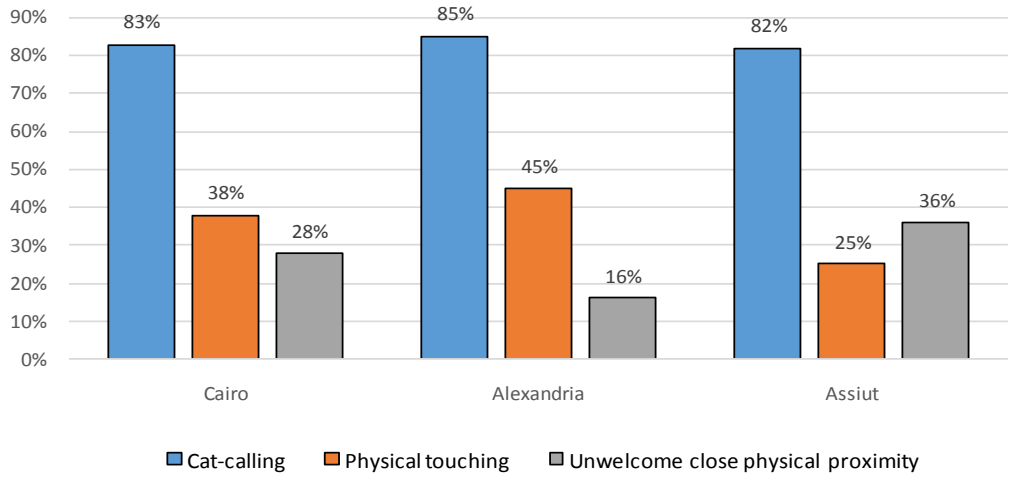
Parents were asked if they had ever heard that their children or any of their friends had been harassed in the past. About 13 per cent of parents in Cairo and Assiut and 10 per cent in Alexandria had heard about such incidents. Of those parents who had heard about this happening, the vast majority said it happened most often on the streets and on public transportation (Figure 4.9).In contrast, almost none said that it happened at home. Figure 4.9 also shows that sexual harassment at school appears to be more frequent in Assiut than in Cairo and Alexandria.

Figure 4.9: Places where forms of sexual harassment took place, according to parents (by governorate)



The vast majority (more than 80 per cent) of parents who were aware of such incidents in the three governorates said that their most common form was cat-calling (Figure 4.10). About one fifth of parents in Cairo and Assiut and around 12 per cent in Alexandria mentioned that sexual harassment incidents happened where their children or their children's colleagues were put under pressure by the perpetrators or expected compensation from them.

Figure 4.10: Forms of sexual harassment as reported by parents, in the incidents they had heard of (by governorate)



Attitudes

The qualitative research showed that parents in Alexandria were not willing to talk openly about sexual violence and harassment. Some mentioned that the stories were just hearsay while others said that no such problems existed in their area. In Cairo and Assiut, parents were more open on this issue, with parents in Cairo showing the greatest level of awareness about the different forms of harassment and sexual violence, their prevalence and the risks they present to both girls and boys.

Many parents blamed sexual abuse on the Internet, which is, according to them, full of explicit and violent content. Boys and girls, however, attributed sexual abuse to the decline in security and law

enforcement since the Revolution in 2011. Teachers, meanwhile, blamed mobile phones, the Internet, television and cinemas. And religious leaders blamed the influence of Western culture, the Internet, overpopulation and a deteriorating economic situation (with more people sharing smaller spaces). Religious leaders also mentioned the transfer of teachers as a result of sexual abuse instead of firing them, which only spreads the problem. They suggested that tighter security, better education and more civil society engagement in raising awareness would help to combat sexual violence.

Practices

As a result of the current prevalence of sexual violence, attitudes and beliefs, some girls are taught to protect and defend themselves. Some even carry knives and penknives for self-defence. In general, however, parents advise their daughters to stay away from boys and men, including male family members. Girls are told that, when they are in public, they should not chat or joke with boys, including family members, as it could be perceived as an invitation to harassment. As mentioned in section 4.2, the same goes for the way a girl talks and/or dresses, particularly whether she is veiled or not, and girls are advised to ignore harassment because it is thought that any response will imply that they welcome such behaviour –beliefs shared among boys and girls across the three governorates.

Girls added that they do not react to harassment because they feel ashamed and are scared that it will escalate if they respond. In schools, boys said that they protect girls against sexual abuse. School principals mentioned that school policies do not have provisions to address sexual abuse, although they exist for physical and verbal abuses.

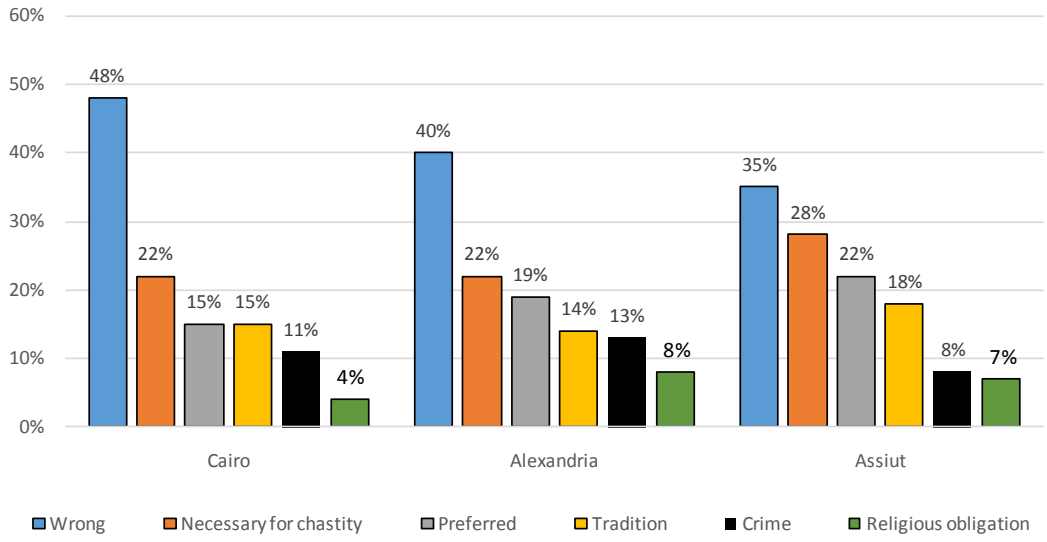
When family members find out about sexual harassment or violence, including rape, many choose to conceal the incident and pretend that nothing has happened in order to protect a girl's reputation. Some of the girls interviewed in Cairo mentioned the potential for psychological problems later in their lives as a result of sexual abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

Parents were asked about their opinion on FGM/C. As shown in Figure 4.11, the largest group classified FGM/C as wrong (35-48 per cent), followed by those who classified it as necessary in order to ensure that a girl remains chaste (22-28 per cent). Only a small proportion of parents in each governorate considered it to be a religious obligation.

Parents were also asked what, exactly, they know about the FGM/C process. Parents in the three governorates agreed, for the most part, on three aspects: removal of an 'additional' body part; surgery that helps to reduce women's sexual desire; and cutting off a body organ or part of it. Parents said that the family is the main source of information about the procedure.

Figure 4.11: Percentage distribution of parental opinion on FGM/C (by governorate)



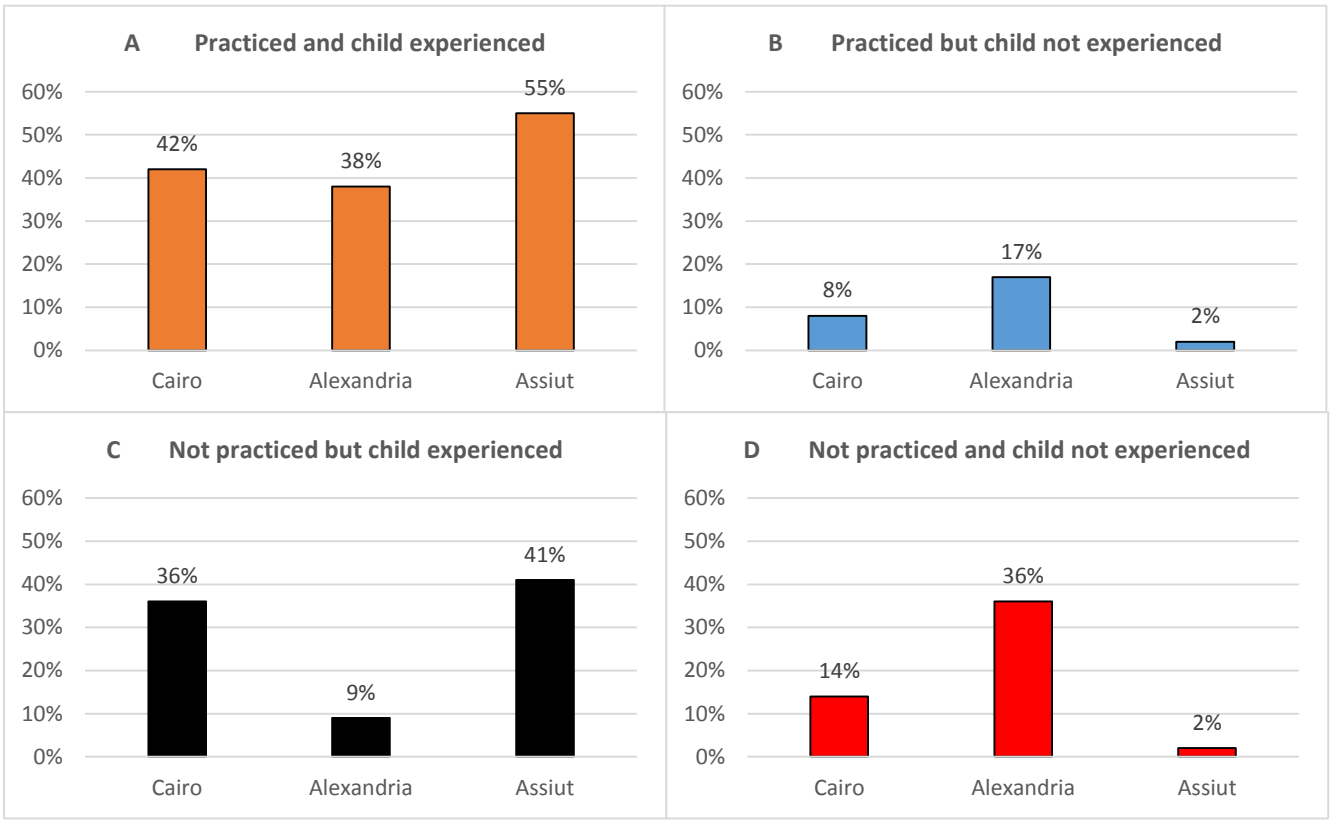
FGM/C practice according to parents and daughters

Parents were asked if their daughters had undergone FGM/C. Those in Cairo and Alexandria were divided almost equally between those whose daughters had been through FGM/C (all of their daughters or some) and those whose daughters had not been through it with more than 40 per cent confirming that their daughters did not undergo FGM/C. In Assiut, however, about two thirds confirmed that all or some of their daughters had undergone FGM/C.

The research revealed some important discrepancies between the FGM/C practices reported by parents and the experiences reported by their daughters (Figure 4.12). Graphs *4.12 A* and *D* show the unilateral claims of parents and daughters regarding experiencing FGM/C. However, according to 4.12 *C*, in Assiut, 41 per cent of parents and in Cairo 36 per cent of parents stated that their daughters had not been through FGM/C; their daughters, however, confirmed that FGM/C was practiced on them. This denial by parents could be because they know they are contravening the law or not convinced of practice but pressurised to inflict their daughters to it. Daughters may have claimed that they underwent the practice while they did not to avoid the stigma of deviating from the social norm. On the other hand graph 4.12 *B* shows that 17 per cent of parents in Alexandria said that their daughters underwent FGM/C while their daughters negated it. An explanation of this could be the fear of parents that their daughters will be stigmatised for not undergoing FGM/C and so they are not in a position to publically announce it. The other side of the story is that daughters do not want to admit that FGM/C was afflicted on them because they disapprove of it. Such different views are important to understand the dynamics of social change in which the rule of behaviour that members of a community follow is based on the expectation that others are following suit, and that not doing it will lead to stigmatisation. Compliance with a social convention is in an individual's best interest.[14] Understanding these dynamics is key to deciding on the appropriate key approaches for the prevention of FGM/C.

[14] UNICEF (2010)

Figure 4.12: Percentage distribution of parents' practices and daughters' experiences of FGM/C (by governorate)

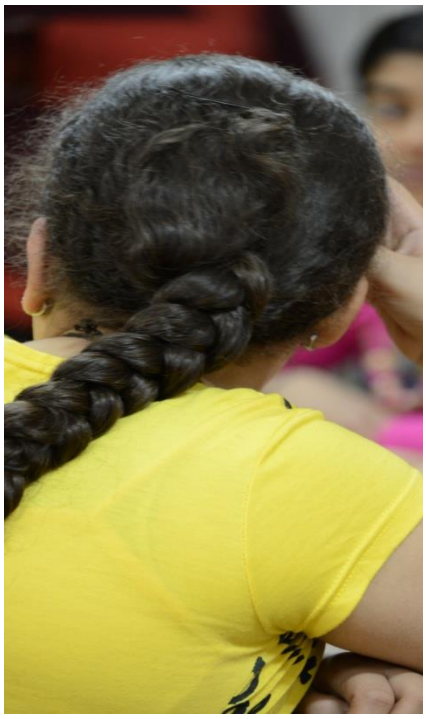


Parents were also asked if they were planning to have their younger daughters undergo FGM/C. About one quarter or slightly less in Cairo's and Alexandria said that they intend to do this, a percentage that increases to 39 per cent in Assiut.

The qualitative research revealed that FGM/C is seen by parents as a critical and sensitive issue, as that they link it very closely to a girl's virtue, seeing it as an important form of 'purification'.

Despite the potential complications and dangers, most parents believed that FGM/C is for the girl's benefit. A girl who has not undergone FGM/C, they believed, will have a bad temperament, be easily aroused sexually and will be hyperactive – all seen as character defects that could affect her life and reputation. The qualitative study showed that some parents thought that FGM/C limits a girl's lust and desire and that it makes her mature, calm and polite, boosting her chances of marriage. However, few parents in Alexandria's informal neighbourhood thought the opposite: that girls who have not undergone FGM/C "better" and they advise other parents not to circumcise their girls. Overall, parents assumed that a groom does not have the right to ask whether his new bride has undergone FGM/C or not, although there were isolated reports of mothers-in-law taking newly married girls for FGM/C. In addition, some parents believed that girls who have not undergone FGM/C not able to get pregnant.

'Soad'



'Soad' passed out when she saw her elder sister held down to undergo FGM/C. She woke up to find that she had also been victim of the same and in a lot of pain.

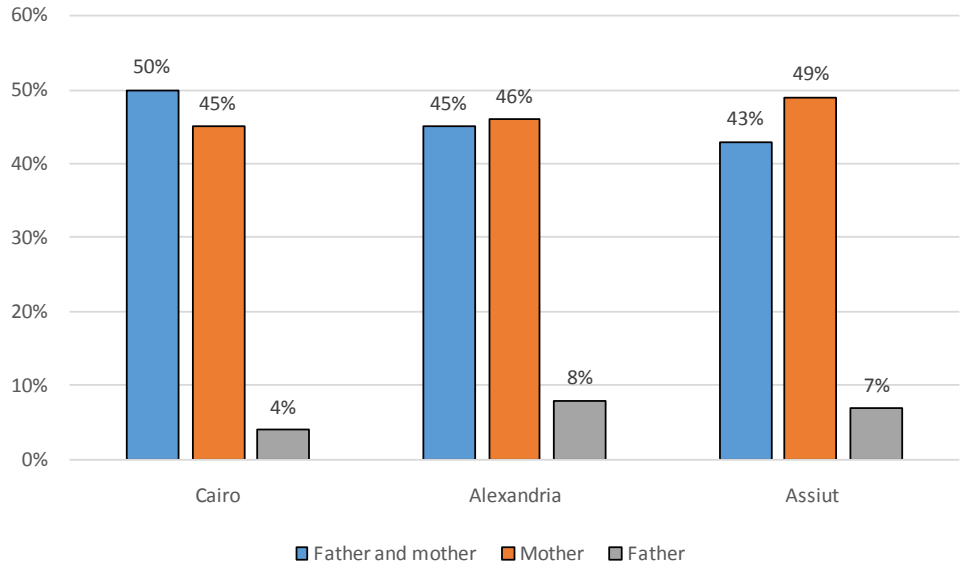
A number of parents felt that FGM/C is not harmful, as long as it is approved by a doctor. Many argued for partial FGM/C, cutting only a part of the clitoris. Other parents believed it is better not to perform FGM/C at all and regarded the treatment as immoral and painful. They added that some doctors are not qualified to perform FGM/C and that it is – in any event – illegal. One mother felt that circumcision is only for boys, not girls, and that the clitoris has anatomical benefits for the girl. One father said that he would not have his daughter go through FGM/C unless a doctor determines that it is absolutely necessary. Some parents had changed their minds about FGM/C after seeing its negative impacts on their first daughter and decided, as a result, not to harm their younger daughters.

According to the qualitative study, the teachers in Cairo, Alexandria and Assiut who were interviewed tended to be in favour of FGM/C. They believed that it protects a girl's chastity and some believed that mothers and daughters should find another doctor if the first doctor refuses to carry it out. Some claimed that the doctor(s) who carry out FGM/C should be female "to prevent any abuse". One male teacher in Assiut claimed that FGM/C is one way to prevent prostitution.

Those whose daughters had undergone FGM/C were asked about who took the decision and who carried out the procedure. The qualitative research showed that while parents had differing perspectives on the issue, decisions on FGM/C are made, for the most part, after a girl is examined by a doctor. Religious leaders also advise families to consult doctors regarding the need for it. The procedure varies from one girl to the other depending on the size of her clitoris, and doctors sometimes decide against it, depending on the girl's health. Midwives also carry out examinations and advise parents on whether or not to carry out FGM/C – advice that is often driven by monetary incentives. When it comes to family decisions on whether a girl is to undergo FGM/C, grandmothers often have the biggest say as the most senior women in the family. Where parents make the decision, the responsibility tends to lie with the mothers. However, the quantitative survey showed that in reality the decision lies either with the mother and father or with the mother alone (Figure 4.13). The

vast majority of FGM/C procedures (more than two-thirds in each governorate) were carried out by a doctor. Some parents also said that FGM/C was carried out by nurses (about one fifth to one quarter in each governorate).

Figure 4.13: Percentage distribution of those who took the decision about FGM/C (by governorate)



The qualitative research revealed that, because people know FGM/C is illegal, they will have the procedure carried out in secrecy at home or at a specific time of the day (early in the morning) because people opposed to FGM/C might call the police if they are aware it is happening.

Teachers mentioned that awareness campaigns do not work unless parents see for themselves that girls bleed and/or may die as a result of the operation. A general awareness campaign focusing on the physical, psychological and/or sexual consequences has not seemed to influence parental decisions on FGM/C when parents are already strongly convinced that it is the right thing to do.

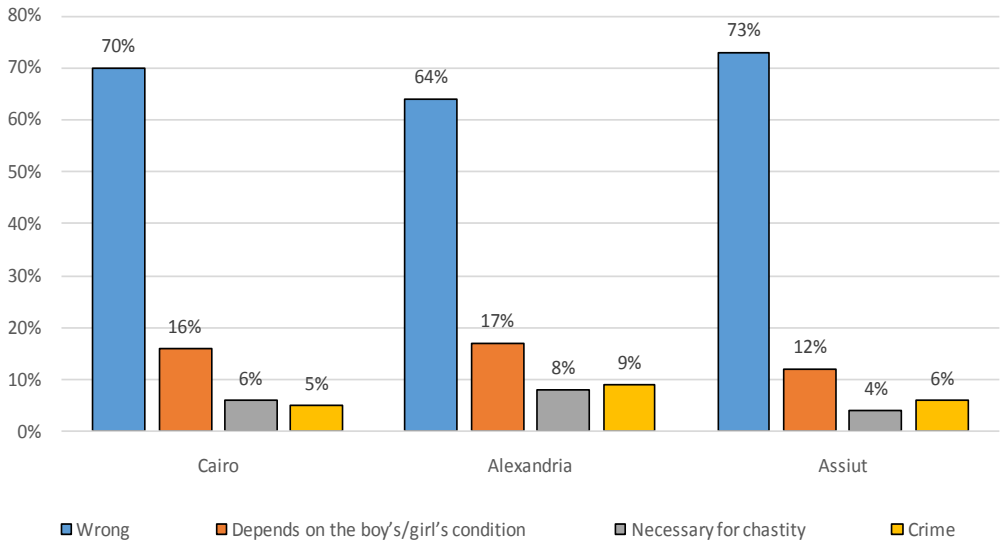
Child marriage

Similarly to FGM/C, child marriage also has its roots in old habits and ancient traditions. Certain beliefs and lack of awareness add to its continued practice, despite its illegality under Egyptian law. The beliefs that underpin the practice is that child marriage protects a girl's reputation (not getting married early may mean she is doing something 'wrong') and that the girl will not work after marriage, so her education is less important. Some families also want to marry off their daughters young so that they get rid of the responsibility for their care.

While child marriage is illegal, some sheikhs process such marriages by taking a promissory note from the groom announcing the marriage, waiting for the girl to reach 18, and then registering the marriage officially and informing the authorities in order to have the marriage recorded by the government.

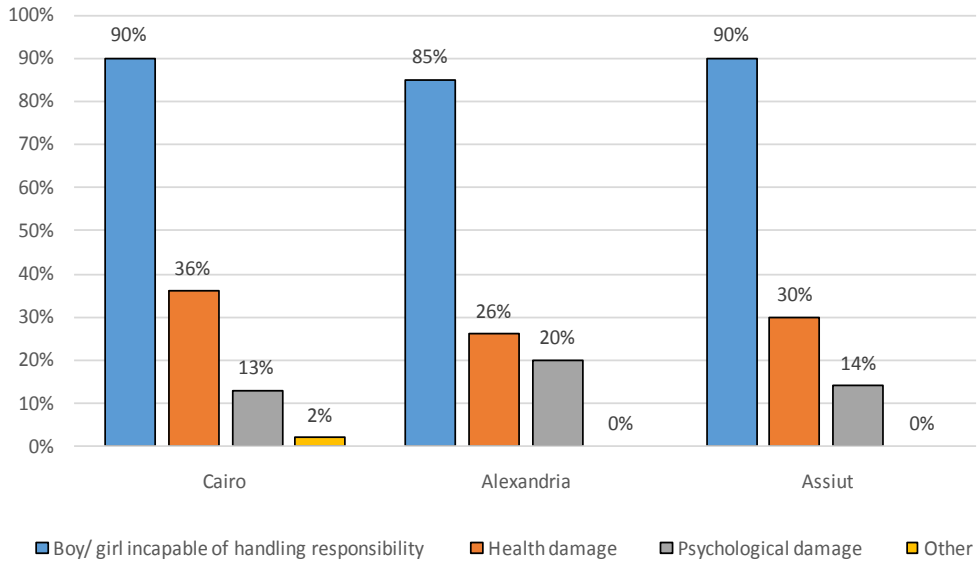
Parents were asked about their opinion on child marriage, with most of those in all three governorates feeling that it is completely wrong to get married before the age of 18. A significant minority, however, believed that child marriage depends on the situation of the boy or girl (Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.14: Percentage distribution of parental' opinion on child marriage (by governorate)



About 75 per cent of the parents in each of the three governorates believed that child marriage has harmful effects. Asked to list these, they were most likely to say that children are not capable of handling the responsibilities of the home and/or the family. This was followed by those who agreed that child marriage is damaging for health (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15: Percentage distribution of parental' opinion on the harmful effects of child marriage (by governorate)



The qualitative research revealed diverse opinions, with some parents suggesting that 14 is an appropriate age for girls to get married, with girls certainly physically mature and fit enough for marriage by the age of 17. For these parents, uneducated girls were considered to have nothing better to do or look forward to than to get married and some claimed that they should be married early. If a girl is over 20 and not married, parents said that there would be a fear that people would think her infertile.

Other parents, however, emphasised the importance of education, saying that 20 or above is a better age for marriage as a girl will have completed her studies and be responsible enough to take care of a household. Some said that girls must complete their education before marriage while other parents were happy for their girls be become 'engaged' while still in primary school, waiting until they are older to proceed with the marriage.

Most people who attended the focus group discussions were aware of the Egyptian law prohibiting marriage before the age of 18. Fathers in Assiut mentioned that the choice about when to get married should be left up to the girl, but that, in reality, girls are married off by the age of 16 because according to the girls, families "hate girls and want to get rid of them". One parent claimed that girls who marry young remain young their whole life, following traditional beliefs. In general, parents felt that the appropriate age for the marriage of boys was much higher: in the early 20s and even rising to 30 or above.

Most teachers argued that the appropriate age for marriage was 18 and above, but a minority (especially in rural Assiut) said that it was best to marry a girl as young as possible, starting at 12 (depending on the girl's social, financial and health status) to prevent temptations and obscenity. Religious leaders added, however, that the current economic situation has pushed the age of marriage upwards. Religious leaders claim that they abide by the law and do not marry children under 18. However, one admitted that there are exceptions and that it is acceptable for a girl to marry early when she is psychologically, spiritually and physically mature. Religious leaders consider the best age for marriage to be between 18 and 22, with a girl of 24 considered very old for marriage.

5. Support services and alternative forms of discipline

Highlights

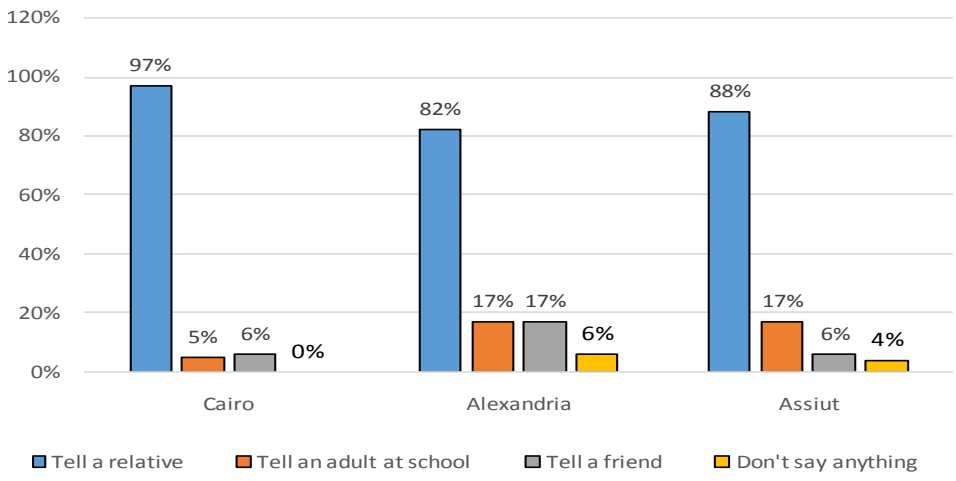
- Most parents surveyed were aware of child rights, and most were in favour of the 1998/591 Ministerial Decree banning corporal punishment in schools (which has been replaced in 2014 by Decree 234). Fewer than 20 per cent, however, knew about Egypt's 2008 Child Law and only a fraction could list any of the issues it covers.
- Parents may not have known the terminology for alternative forms of discipline, but they used them a great deal in reality, including discussion, praise and encouragement.
- Children who are abused tend to keep quiet, rather than reporting it. Under half of all the children surveyed knew what to do when abused and fewer than 10 per cent knew of any services that could help them.
- Less than 10 per cent of parents and children, and about one fifth of school staff surveyed were aware of Egypt's Child Helpline or know its easy-to-remember telephone number: **16000**
- Almost half of the school staff surveyed felt that the ban on corporal punishment in schools should be applied only in some cases, and almost 40 per cent of those in urban areas believed that it leads to indiscipline and disrespect.
- Only 12 per cent of school staff (and none of those surveyed in urban areas) knew about alternative forms of discipline.

5.1. Children's knowledge and practices on their rights

Seventy per cent of children (aged 13-17) in Cairo had the highest level of knowledge on their basic rights, being aware of, for example, the rights to health, education and other basics for survival and development, followed by those in Alexandria (57 per cent) and Assiut (27 per cent).

Less than half of the children surveyed (49 per cent in Cairo, 44 per cent in Alexandria, and 39 per cent in Assiut) knew exactly what to do when abused or exposed to violence. Most children in all three governorates agreed, however, that it is better to tell a relative. Figure 5.1 presents the actions the children were most likely to take if they were abused. Only in Assiut were girls more likely than boys to tell a trusted relative (99 per cent versus 84 per cent).

Figure 5.1: Actions suggested by children in the event of abuse (by governorate)

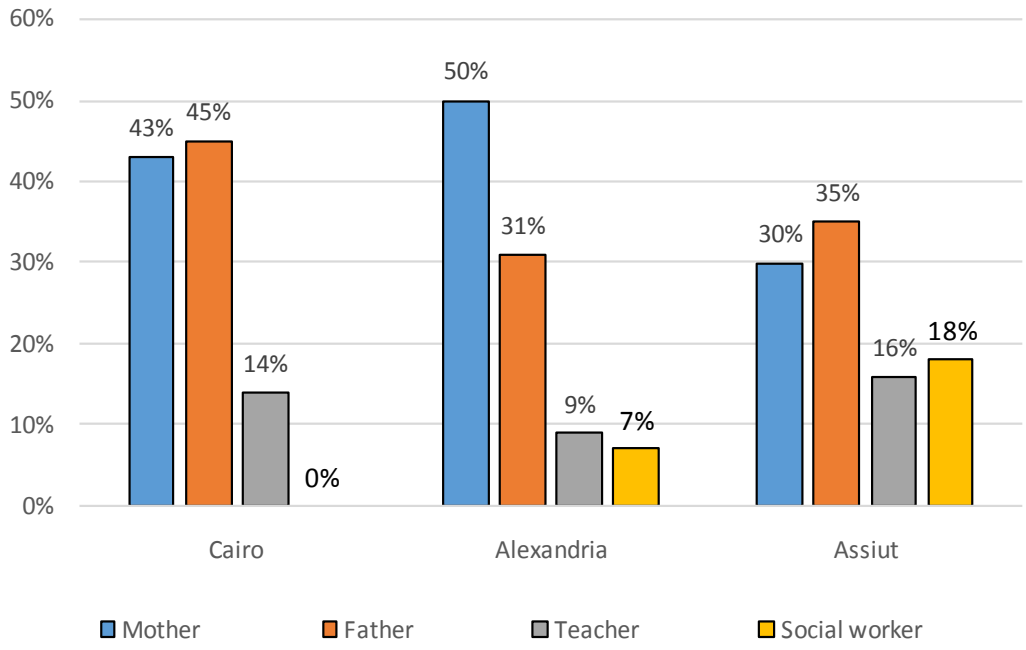


Children's knowledge about support services

Abused children may seek help by complaining to someone they know, rather than using specialized child-protection services. Only 15 per cent of children who had been abused or exposed to violence in Cairo, 22 per cent in Alexandria, and 29 per cent in Assiut had complained to someone about this. This confirms that most abused children tend to keep quiet rather than reporting it to anybody.

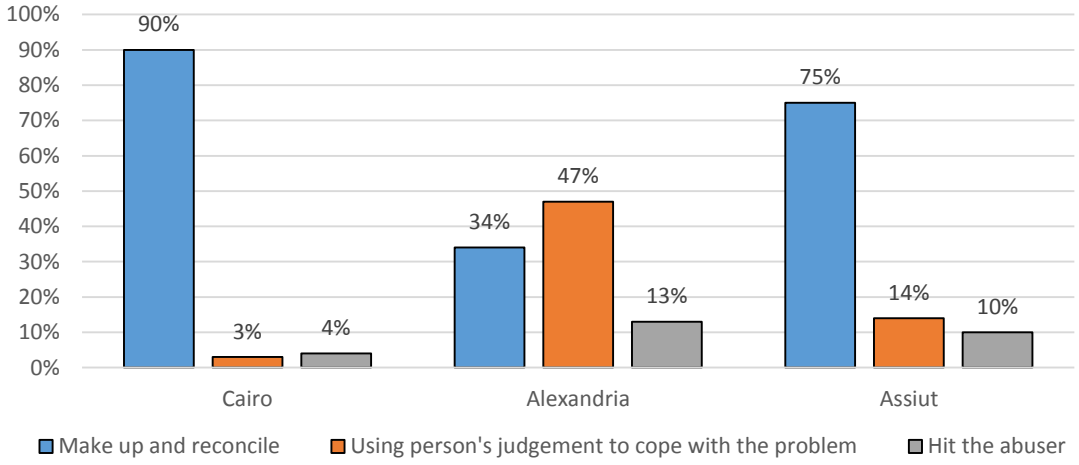
Figure 5.2 shows who the reporting children complained to in each of the three governorates, with most children complaining to their parents. In Alexandria and Assiut, boys were more likely to go to their fathers (34 per cent in Alexandria and 37 per cent in Assiut), while girls were more likely to go to their mothers (65 per cent in Alexandria and 48 per cent in Assiut). In contrast, boys in Cairo were more likely to go to their mothers (62 per cent), while girls were more likely to go to their fathers (74 per cent).

Figure 5.2: Person to whom the child had complained (by governorate)



The majority of the children who had reported their abuse had received help from someone; 81 per cent in Cairo, 63 per cent in Alexandria, and 87 per cent in Assiut. In Cairo, mothers were more likely to intervene on behalf of their sons (49 per cent), and fathers were more likely to intervene on behalf of their daughters (76 per cent). These findings were reversed in Alexandria. Figure 5.3 shows the actions that were usually taken when parents or others intervened on behalf of children.

Figure 5.3: Actions taken by the person intervening on behalf of a child (by governorate)



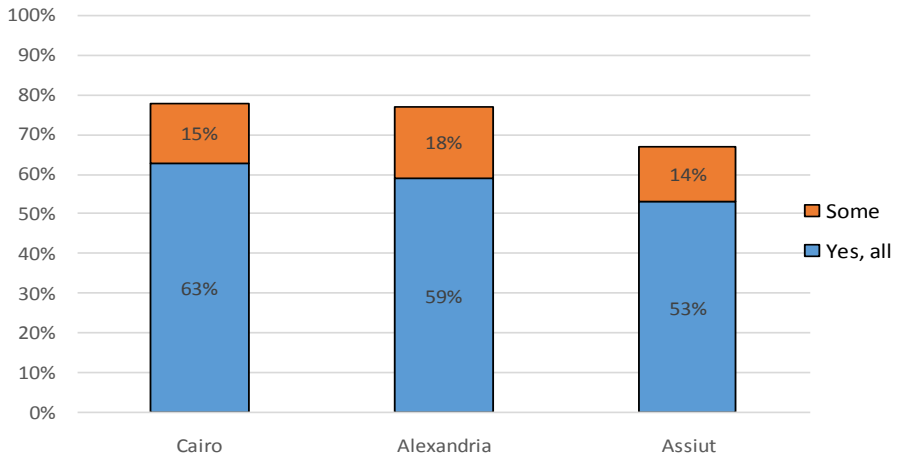
Children were asked to suggest the most appropriate intervention to help protect them against violence. About 41 per cent of children in Cairo, 27 per cent in Alexandria, and 44 per cent in Assiut did not know of any appropriate form of intervention, while the remainder suggested the following:

1. calling the police, punish the abuser, and use the helpline 16000 (about 20 per cent in each governorate),
2. seek parent's protection and raise awareness against violence and corporal abuse (15 per cent in Cairo, 16 per cent in Alexandria, and 5 per cent in Assiut),
3. hit the abuser (10% in Cairo, 11% in Alexandria, and 6% in Assiut).

5.2. Parents' knowledge and practices on child rights

Questions were directed to the parents to measure the extent of their knowledge of children's rights and laws. The results found that the majority of the parents surveyed in the three governorates knew what child rights are, with the lowest level of knowledge found in Assiut (Figure 5.4). Those in Assiut who had only primary-level education (complete or partial) had the lowest knowledge on child rights.

Figure 5.4: Percentage distribution of parents who know about children's rights (by governorate)

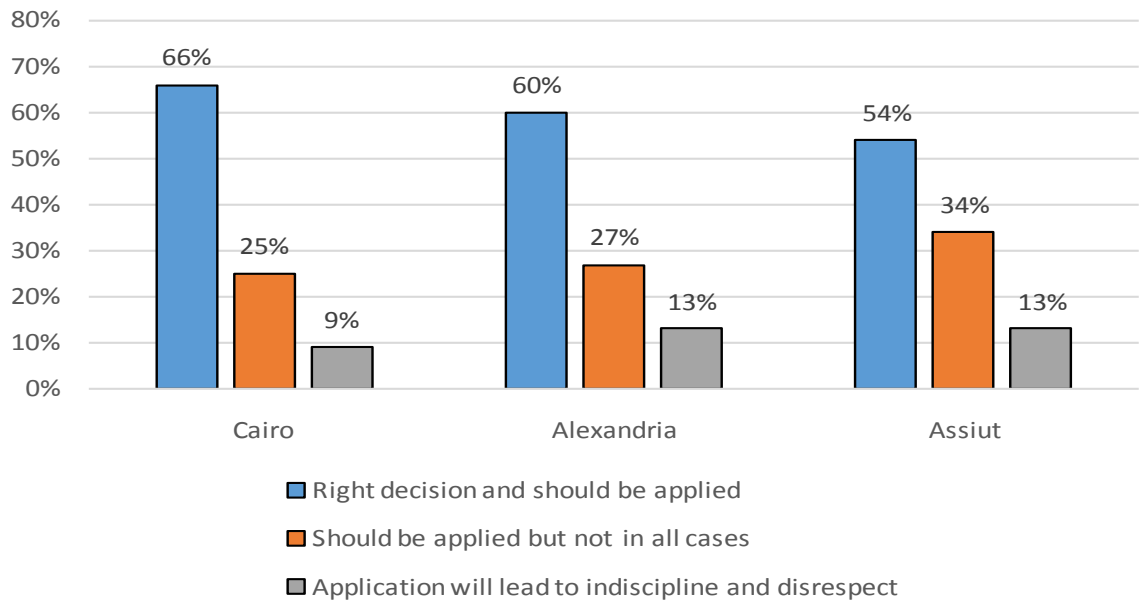


Those who confirmed their knowledge of these rights were further asked to state what those rights are. Two main groups of rights were mentioned. First, the rights concerning children's basic needs, such as the rights to nutrition, education, health care, as well as the right to play (82 per cent in Cairo, 80 per cent in Alexandria, and 87 per cent in Assiut). Second: the rights to live in a safe (violence-free) environment and to express their thoughts freely (19 per cent in Cairo, 16 per cent in Alexandria, and 12 per cent in Assiut).

Regarding the level of knowledge of Egypt's 2008 Child Law, less than one-fifth of the parents in each of the three governorates (19 per cent in Cairo, 14 per cent in Alexandria, and 17 per cent in Assiut) were aware of it. However, most of those who were aware of the Law had only the most general knowledge about it (82 per cent in Cairo, 66 per cent in Alexandria, and 70 per cent in Assiut), with only a small minority able to mention any of its specific topics (5-12 per cent).

Parents were also asked for their views on the 1998 Ministerial Decree (591) that bans corporal punishment in schools (which has been replaced in 2014 by decree 234). Figure 5.5 confirms that most parents agreed that this was the right decision and that the ban should be applied in practice.

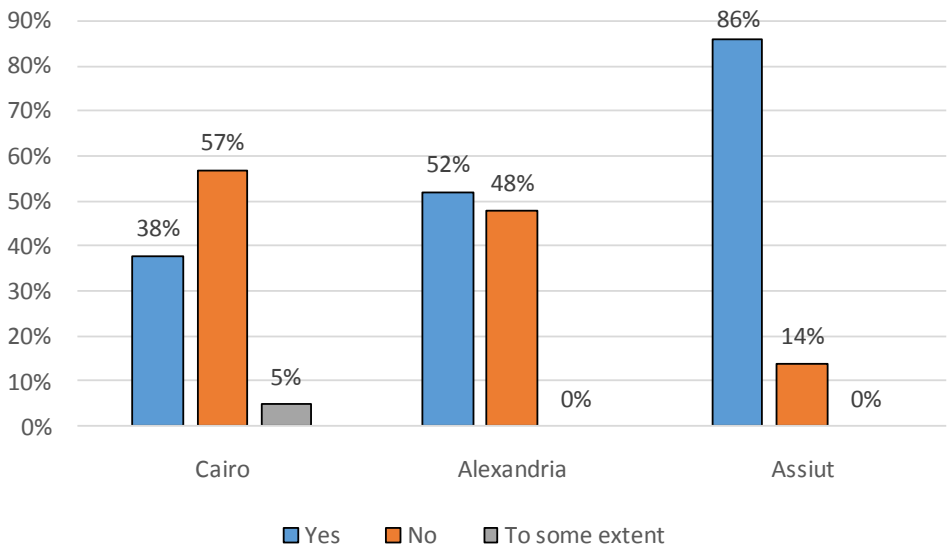
Figure 5.5: Parents' opinions about the decree banning corporal punishment in schools (by governorate)



5.3. School staff knowledge and practices on child rights

School workers were asked if they knew about the laws related to the child protection, such as Egypt's 2008 Child Law. Slightly more than half of them confirmed their knowledge. However, their level of knowledge was markedly lowest in the informal areas that were surveyed and highest in urban and rural areas, as shown in Figure 5.6. Around 84 per cent of those who were aware of the Child Law knew only about its general ideas, rather than its specific content.

Figure 5.6: Percentage distribution of school workers according to their knowledge about laws related to child protection (by governorate)



When asked about Ministerial Decree (591) banning corporal punishment in schools (which has been replaced in 2014 by decree 234), slightly less than half of the school staff surveyed (46 per cent) thought that it should be applied only in some cases. Slightly below one third (32 percent) thought that it is absolutely right and should be applied, and 22 percent thought that it leads to indiscipline and disrespect.

Female staff, staff in informal areas and graduates of the Faculty of Education were most likely to agree with the decree and its application (38 per cent, 40 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively).

School staff in urban areas were the most likely to believe that the ban would lead to indiscipline and disrespect (38 per cent), while those in rural areas were the most likely to support its application but not in all cases (78 per cent).

5.4 Knowledge and use of Egypt's Child Helpline: parents, children and school staff

Only 3 per cent of parents in Cairo were aware of Egypt's Child Helpline, run by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, rising to just 4 per cent in Assiut and 7 per cent in Alexandria. None of the parents surveyed had ever used the Helpline (with its short and easy-to-remember number: **16000**).

Among the children surveyed, less than 10 per cent in all three governorates knew about any services or places that could provide them with protection against violence, such as the Child Helpline. Only a very small minority in Alexandria and Assiut had ever used these available services.

In contrast with parents, school staff had a far higher level of awareness of the Child Helpline (20 per cent). Closer analysis, however, reveals some surprising disparities by school workers' education level. Those with education below a university degree were the most likely to know about the Child Helpline (31 per cent), while those who graduated from the Faculty of Education were the least likely to know about it (13 per cent).Around 21 per cent of those who had heard of the line knew about its telephone number: of those, 95 per cent cited it correctly (**16000**). Only 5 per cent had ever tried to use it.

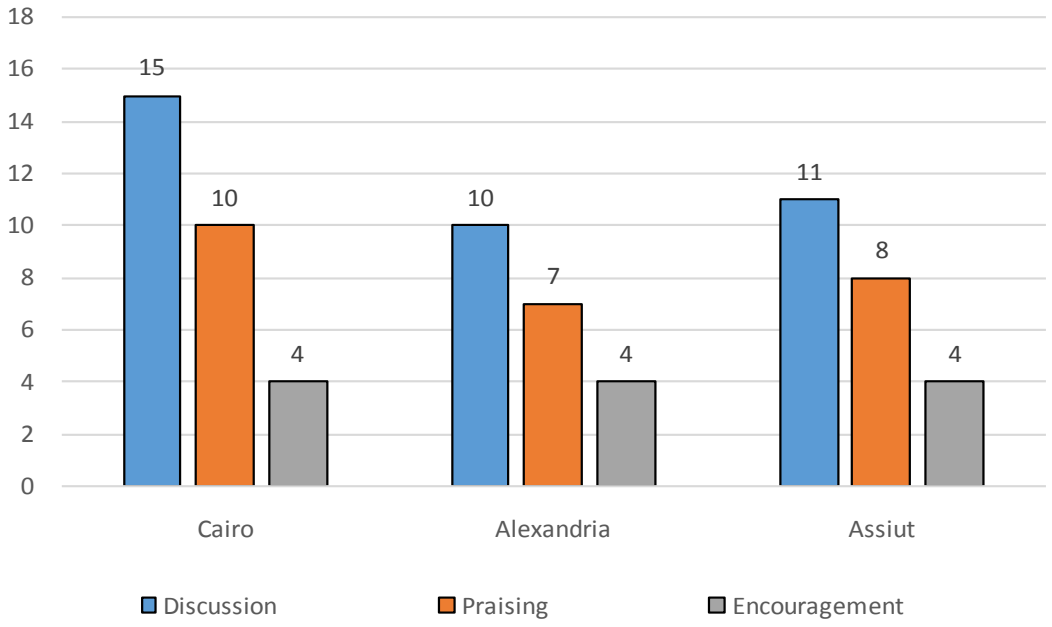
5.5 Parents' knowledge about, and practice of, alternative forms of discipline

Only 10 per cent of the parents surveyed in each of the three governorates confirmed the use of alternative forms of discipline at their children's school, such as discussion, praise and encouragement, rather than hitting, shouting at or insulting their children.

However, the majority of parents confirmed the use of alternative forms of discipline at home; 82 per cent in Cairo, 76 per cent in Alexandria, and 75 per cent in Assiut. It was interesting to find that although parents did not know the precise terminology of alternative methods of discipline, they used them a lot in practice to discipline their children. The parents stated that they were not educated on how to be good parents; they were parenting innately, or imitating what other parents were doing around them or what their own parents did with them, or just by experience. Mothers in specific showed great eagerness to learn how to properly deal with their children in different situations.

The alternative methods used were primarily discussions, praise and encouragement. Figure 5.7 gives the average number of times parents used such an approach each month.

Figure 5.7: Average number of times parents use alternative forms of discipline per month (by governorate)



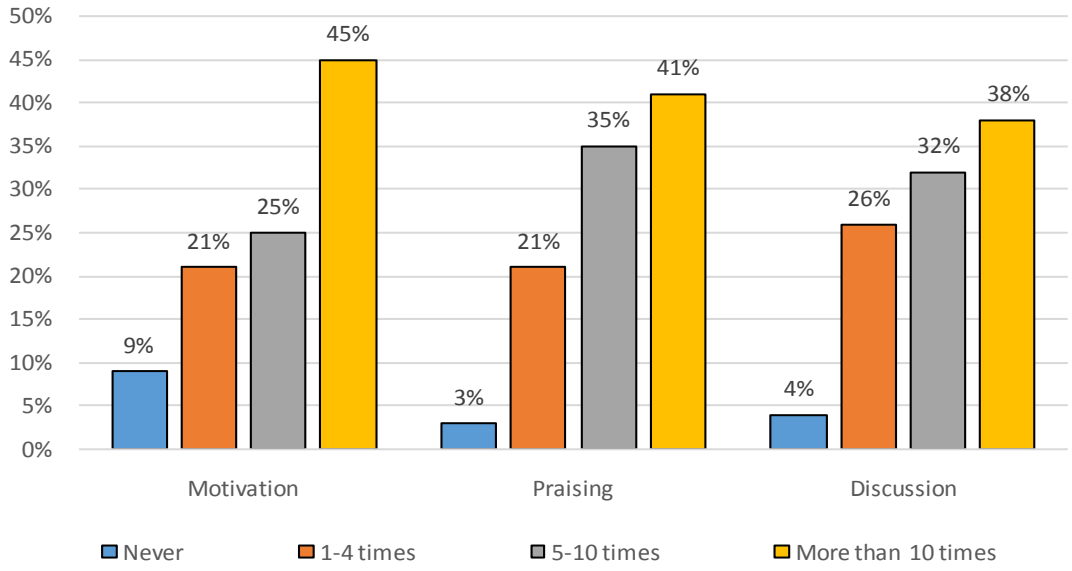
5.6 Knowledge about, and practice of, alternative forms of discipline among school staff

Only 12 per cent of school staff had heard or read about alternative forms of discipline other than those they normally use. Of those who were aware of such approaches, however, the majority (around 84 per cent) had applied them.

None of the school staff in the urban areas of Assiut surveyed had heard or read about any alternative forms of discipline. And overall, only 3 per cent of school staff had received any training on alternative forms of discipline that could be applied in the classroom.

All school workers were asked about the precise extent of their use of discussion, praising, and motivation with children at school. The research finds that at least 90 per cent of school staff had used some of these forms of discipline at least once with children during the previous month. Figure 5.8 presents the percentages of school staff who had used discussions, praise and motivation. As shown, motivating the child to participate in activities was the method used most frequently, followed by praise and discussion. Remarkably, school staff in informal areas were the least likely to make frequent use of praise (29 per cent) and motivation (32 per cent). Those in formal areas (52 per cent), those with education lower than a university degree (54 per cent) and female school workers (56 per cent) were the most likely to make frequent use of discussion, praise, and motivation.

Figure 5.8: Frequency of school workers' use of alternative forms of discipline at school during the past month



The contradiction between the low percentage of school workers who confirmed their knowledge or hearing about alternative discipline approach and the high percentage who actually used these methods highlights the fact that school workers, like parents, did not know the precise terminology for alternative methods of discipline.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This study has confirmed that many children in Egypt are being subjected to different kinds of violence at the hands of those who are supposed to protect and nurture them. Furthermore, this violence – sometimes in its extreme forms – is too often condoned and normalized by the adult perpetrators and even by the children themselves.

This research study conducted in Alexandria, Assiut and Cairo revealed the high prevalence of violence against children (aged 13-17) in its many forms (physical, emotional and sexual, and through harmful traditional practices). Almost half of the children surveyed had, for example, been beaten in the year preceding the survey in Alexandria and Cairo, rising to almost two thirds in Assiut. Physical punishment takes place at home and school. Many children had been beaten by friends and other children, suggesting that bullying is commonplace. When asked if they had been hit with an object such a stick or belt, 70 per cent of the children surveyed in Assiut confirmed that they were hit on their palm with a stick by their teachers.

Emotional violence had been the most common form of violence experienced by the children during the year preceding the survey, affecting 86 per cent of children in Assiut, 76 per cent in Cairo and 72 per cent of children in Alexandria. Emotional violence had taken place predominately at home; on average 70% compared to 14% in schools; and many children had witnessed domestic violence among members of their household.

Many of the adults surveyed, including more than half of the parents, had no problem with the exposure of a child to violence as long as it was considered to be in the child's best interest. Accordingly, mothers, fathers and school teachers felt entitled to use different kinds of violence with children in a 'proportionate' manner, depending on what the child had done wrong. Children also adapted to this violence, internalizing it, accepting it and most of the time, even defending and excusing their parents.

There are many contradictions between what parents perceive as violence and what they practice. Some parents clearly showed understanding of the importance of communication and kindness but still thought they had the right to use harsh punishment if their children did something they disapproved of. Parents claimed that the violence they use is related to children's disobedience, children's poor achievements in school or because they themselves are stressed.

Parents reported that they have never been taught how to raise their children; it just comes from experience, what they see around them and their own upbringing, which may or may not have included physical and emotional violence. Around two thirds of the parents had used positive disciplinary methods with their children at one point or another, such as discussion, praise and encouragement. They also acknowledged that discussions with their children tend to have positive results. Parents on the whole – and mothers in particular – showed real eagerness to learn some positive child rearing practices.

Most parents surveyed were aware of child rights, and most were in favour of the 591/1998 Ministerial Decree banning corporal punishment in schools (which has been replaced in 2014 by Decree 234).

Fewer than 20 per cent, however, knew about Egypt's 2008 Child Law and only a fraction could list any of the issues it covers; while less than 10% of parents, children and teachers were aware of the Child helpline 16000. Children said they would seek help from a relation if abused.

The data collected in the survey confirm that the practice of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is widespread, but with marked geographical disparities. According to self-reported data, 94 per cent of girls in Assiut underwent FGM/C, compared with 65 per cent in Cairo and 39 per cent in Alexandria. The survey also shows a discrepancy between girls' self-reporting and parents' reporting about the practice, especially in Assiut and Cairo. In these two governorates, around 40 per cent of parents of the girls aged 13-17 included in the survey, affirmed that FGM/C was not practiced in their household, in contradiction to what was reported by their daughters. This discrepancy may be a consequence of the sensitivity of the FGM/C issue and reflects a possible combination of misreporting from girls (to reject the stigma of deviating from a social norm) and from parents (who can be aware that FGM/C is a crime, or that it has negative implications for their girls and do not want to admit that it was practiced).

Similarly to FGM/C, child marriage also has its roots in old habits and ancient traditions. Certain beliefs and lack of awareness add to its continued practice, despite its illegality under Egyptian law. Less than 5 per cent of the children surveyed in Cairo and Alexandria have claimed that someone in their nuclear family was married before the age of 18 at any time before the survey; this percentage increased to 10 per cent in Assiut. Across the board, those children surveyed tended to agree that child marriage is wrong. However parents expressed the age suitability of girls being married to be 14 – 17, and over 20 for boys.

The most common forms of sexual violence reported by the girls and boys aged 13-17 who were surveyed is verbal harassment followed by sexual touching. There were no reported incidents of children being forced into sexual intercourse or of any attempts to coerce them into sexual intercourse. However, this does not mean that there were no such incidents, given the secrecy and shame around this issue. The reported experience of verbal sexual harassment differed by gender, particularly in Cairo where two out of three girls had been affected by this form of violence. Some parents and children alike believed that girls are responsible for such harassment, which is sparked by the way in which they dress and behave, and boys even did not believe that looking at a girl's body or making verbal remarks was harassment.

6.2 Recommendations

This study has confirmed the need for urgent action to address the high prevalence of violence against children in Egypt and the attitudes that allow such violence to prevail.

It is clear that robust national preventive and protective measures are needed to reach families with the required services and follow-up mechanisms, as well as to support a shift in social behaviour away from violence and towards positive discipline and the abandonment of harmful practices and violence.

Eight key recommendations emerge from the study, emphasizing the need for various policies and interventions. These range from government leadership on a policy of zero tolerance for violence against children to support for families and awareness raising, and from the prosecution of offenders

to the effective monitoring of violence. The study has also confirmed the need to strengthen child protection systems and to mainstream prevention, protection and awareness-raising programmes within the existing government related services. .

- **The Government of Egypt to strengthen its efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children.** A first step would be to define and communicate a policy of zero tolerance for violence against children, with the explicit prohibition of any form of violence – physical, emotional or sexual. At the same time, the Government should clarify the roles and responsibilities of ministries, government agencies and local authorities on this issue, developing enforceable mechanisms for cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination at every level. The government is best placed to drive such a policy, given its mandate and structure, while children themselves should have a say in policy development. Children's views should be sought and respected on all aspects of prevention, response and monitoring of violence against them.

- **Parents and families should have the support they need to raise children without violence.** Specific interventions need to include a well-established parent education programme that is implemented by health and social workers targeting the most vulnerable families, and referrals to child protection and social protection services where appropriate. The Government, civil society and religious leaders should come together to develop such interventions to prevent violence and abuse by reducing the vulnerability of families and children, with community-based development organizations and other local networks playing a pivotal role. Community interventions can be pooled at the governorate level where bodies such as Child Protection Committees can coordinate initiatives. At central level, state councils such as the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) and the National Population Council (NPC) could support such interventions in coordination with line ministries and non-governmental entities.

- **A long-term national media campaign is needed to promote non-violent child discipline and raise awareness of the impact of violence on children.** It is vital to overturn the attitudes and social norms that condone or encourage violence against children. State-supported and private media campaigns could challenge the belief that using violence to educate children makes them better individuals, address social norms that legitimize such violence and promote alternative approaches to discipline. It should take the message to the audience, using, for example, the social media that engage adolescents and youth and to satellite TV and radio stations. Such a campaign should be guided by media professionals, based on a thorough analysis of the needs and interests of the target audiences and rigorously monitored to assess its impact.

- **Programmes should be initiated for children and adolescents on non-violence, including programmes to address bullying.** Children and adolescents need to know how to manage and challenge violence.[15] Different approaches are needed to help children and adolescents question and challenge violence, including developing the skills of peer educators, school-

[15] UN (2013).

based programmes, sports and recreational activities and measures to address online bullying.[16] The Ministry of Education has a key role to play in building programmes that build skills in conflict resolution, creative thinking and the ability to conceptualize views on violence.

- **A national child protection policy in schools.** Improved school facilities, school protection policies and working conditions for school staff are prerequisites for a non-violent environment in schools and should be backed by child protection policies based on zero tolerance for violence in any form. Such policies should encompass mandatory reporting of serious cases of violence as well as procedures for investigation and referrals backed by a self-audit system, a code of conduct for staff and a school committee that addresses cases of abuse. The Ministry of Education should promote such approaches by establishing a national child protection policy for schools with standardized implementation procedures, ensuring that school processes conform to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and building the capacity of teachers to use non-violent discipline.

- **Specialized support services are needed for children experiencing extreme abuse and violence.** Breaking the cycle of violence in children's lives and helping them cope with its consequences requires specialized child-focused services such as safe counselling, complaint and reporting mechanisms.[17] For those services to work well, the World Report on Violence[18] *recommends government supported safe, child sensitive, well publicised, confidential and accessible mechanisms staffed by specially trained providers to who children can report incidences of violence.* This includes child help lines and quality referral services that are run by child friendly-police officers, skilled doctors, social workers and psychologists. The NCCM, in coordination with the MoSS, Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Interior and the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) could develop an efficient and well-resourced detection and referral mechanism. MoSS could provide child-friendly counselling services and equip social workers and psychologists accordingly. The Police require child-protection sensitive officers, while an injury surveillance system under the MoH is needed to detect and report cases of abuse. The NCHR's complaint mechanism can complement the work of the child helpline to detect and refer more cases.

- **Perpetrators of serious violence cases against children and harmful practices must be prosecuted.** Effective prosecution of the perpetrators of violence can help to change public attitudes and behaviours. Although Egypt has laws to protect children from violence in schools and institutions, has criminalised FGM/C and prohibits marriage before the age of 18, implementation of such legislation remains quite weak. Although the Child Law outlaws violence against children there is some vagueness around caregivers being allowed to exert discipline if not "deliberate" (Article 7) which needs to be reviewed. To date, very few perpetrators have been prosecuted and only the gravest incidents have been reported to the Police.

[16] UNICEF (2014 b).
[17] UN (2010).
[18] UN (2006).

- **Develop a centralized system of monitoring and data collection.** Data are essential to establish the true gravity of the violent abuse experienced by children in Egypt, particularly data related to homicide, sexual exploitation and the prevalence of harmful practices. Such data need to be based on clear indicators that are used nationally to monitor the situation over time. Such data can help to articulate policies for children and guide priorities in terms of services and coordination through line ministries and Child Protection Committees. Next steps for consideration include strengthening existing injury surveillance systems, ensuring the compulsory reporting of violence against children (and annual reporting of incidence of cases of severe violence), and reinforcing the data collection systems of national protection mechanisms such as the Child Helpline and Child Protection Committees.

Annex 1: Methodology

The research on violence against children in the governorates of Alexandria, Assiut and Cairo used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, with the information collected mutually complementary.

1.1 The quantitative research

The quantitative sample had two main components: households and school staff working directly with children. The household sampling targeted children aged 13-17 and one of their parents; the school staff sampling targeted teachers, school principals, and/or school social workers.

The formula used to determine the sample size of the household survey corresponding to an estimation error of no more 100E% with a confidence level of 100 (1-α)% is:

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 P(1-P)D^2}{E^2},$$

where $Z_{\alpha/2}$ is the value corresponding to the 100 (1- α)% confidence level from the standard normal table and *P* is an important proportion of an attribute that is present in the population of households, for example, the percentage of households with children subject to physical violence. In general, *P* is selected as 0.5 prior to applying a survey, unless prior information is given from a pilot study. *D* is the design effect, which is a comprehensive summary measure of the effect on sampling error of the sampling design used. It is the ratio of actual to simple random sample standard error. In general, prior to the actual sample design, *D* is usually chosen as 1.5. Finally, *E* is the survey error and *n* is the sample size. Thus, using a 95% confidence level and an estimation error of 3%, the sample size of households is calculated as

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5) \times 1.5^2}{0.03^2} \approx 2400.$$

This means that with a level of confidence of 95%, the sampling error does not exceed 3% above or below the study estimates if we use a sample of 2,400 households – a level of sampling error that is scientifically acceptable. The number of households to be selected from each governorate is proportionate to the population size in these governorates, subject to the sample size also reflecting the kind of disaggregation needed in the survey (formal/informal in Alexandria and Cairo and urban/rural in Assiut).

A target sample of around 500 school staff working directly with children and families was also interviewed from 100 schools selected at random. Taking into account a 10% non-response rate, the sample size was increased to 110 schools. From each selected primary sampling units (PSU) in the household sample, four to five schools were selected at random (primary, preparatory, or secondary). Five workers from each school were selected and interviewed (4 teachers and a principal or social worker).

The sample of households was a multi-stage stratified sample with the following stages:

Stage 1: Determination of the sample size for each governorate

This stage determined the number of households to be selected from each governorate in proportion to the population size, with at least 300 cases selected from each sub-category of relevance to the study, such as the place of residence.

According to the latest estimates of population sizes in the Egyptian governorates released by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), Cairo represents about 50% of the target population, Alexandria around 27% and Assiut around 23%. Based on these statistics and taking into consideration the appropriate representation of rural/urban areas in Assiut, we selected 1,000 households from Cairo, 700 households from Alexandria, and 700 households from Assiut.

Stage 2: Determination of the primary sampling units (PSU)

For Cairo and Alexandria governorates, the primary sampling units (PSUs) were informal and formal settlements. For Assiut governorate, the PSUs were towns in urban areas and villages in rural areas. A stratified sample of these units was selected.

Formal and informal settlements usually overlap geographically and no concrete statistics are available for the population size in each distinct area. However, some formal statistics assume that around 60% to 70% of the urban population in Cairo and Alexandria lives in informal settlements and another 30% to 40% live in formal ones. Accordingly, 70% of the PSUs were from informal settlements and 30% from formal settlements in Alexandria and Cairo. For Assiut, CAPMAS statistics show that around 70% of its population lives in rural areas and 30% in urban areas. However, to allow for a better representation of urban residents in the sample we decided to assign 43% of the Assiut sample to urban areas.

Table A1: Number of households per sector in the different governorates

Governorate	Total	Informal	Formal	Urban	Rural
Cairo	1000	700	300	-----	-----
Alexandria	700	490	210	-----	-----
Assiut	700	-----	-----	300	400
Total	**2400**	**1190**	**510**	**300**	**400**

The sampling error has two components, one corresponding to the variation among PSUs and the other to the variation within PSUs. Thus, a balance between the number of PSUs and the number of cases within each PSU is necessary. To minimize the sampling error within each PSU, we selected 100 households from each PSU, so a total of 24 PSUs were chosen from the list of available PSUs to produce a sample of 2,400 households. Accordingly, 10 areas were selected from Cairo, 7 from Alexandria, and 7 from Assiut. In Cairo, 7 informal settlements and 3 formal settlements were selected. In Alexandria, 2 formal and 5 informal settlements were selected. Finally, in Assiut, 3 urban areas (1 formal and 2 informal) and 4 rural areas were selected.

Lists of formal settlements and informal settlements were used to frame the selection of PSUs in Cairo and Alexandria. In addition, lists of urban and rural areas in Assiut were used to select the PSUs in this governorate. These lists were acquired through CAPMAS. A random systematic sample of PSUs is selected from each frame.

Table A2: Number of PSUs and their segregation in the three governorates

	Total PSUs	Informal	Formal	Urban	Rural
Cairo	10	7	3	-----	-----
Alexandria	7	5	2	-----	-----
Assiut	7	-----	-----	3	4
Total	**24**	**12**	**5**	**3**	**4**

Stage 3: Selection of the households

The third stage in the selection of the survey sample involved several steps. First, maps were obtained for each of the PSUs and divided into a number of segments of roughly equal size (assuming approximately 1,000 households per part). Then two segments were selected randomly and a sample of 50 households with an eligible female child were interviewed in one segment and another sample of 50 households with an eligible male child were interviewed in the other segment. In each selected household, one parent and one eligible child were selected to be asked questions about violence.

Researchers identified households in each segment through the following systematic random sampling process:

- Go to the centre of the sample area or village (the point in the community where the population is roughly equally distributed on all sides).
- Select a smooth, level spot to place a bottle (or a ballpoint pen).
- Spin the bottle. When the bottle stops spinning, follow the direction in which the top of the bottle is pointing, walking in a straight line (this step provides a random direction to follow).
- Choose a random number from 1 to 10 to select a household in that direction.
- Go to that household, determine whether it has an appropriate respondent and, if so, interview him or her.
- To move to the next survey household, skip 5 households and determine whether or not eligible respondents are present in the newly selected household.
- If two survey teams are conducting interviews in the same area, one team should go in the direction of the top of the bottle and the other in the opposite direction.

This process produced a sample of 2,400 children, taking into consideration a 10% non-response rate. Also from each PSU, we selected an average of 5 schools (110 schools in total) at random. About 80% were public or government-run, and 20% were either private or affiliated to the Islamic institution of Al Azhar. We included primary, preparatory, and secondary schools in our sample. From each school, 4 teachers and a principal or social worker were interviewed.

Stage 4: Developing the questionnaire

Three types of questionnaires were developed. The first aimed to assess the proportion of children who had experienced or witnessed any form of violence, their reactions to such violence as well as their knowledge of the respective laws and the help mechanisms. The second questionnaire was designed for parents, aiming to gather information about their attitudes, knowledge and practices regarding various forms of violence and reporting behaviours. The third questionnaire was designed to capture school staff knowledge, attitudes and practices with regard to violence against children. All three questionnaires were designed in reference to the variables stated in the terms of reference (gender, age group, and place of residence, place of victimization, marital status of parents, parent's education and perpetrators).

The tools were tested with parents and children (in an informal area in Cairo) and with teachers (in a formal area in Cairo) over a two-day pilot study in February 2013. They were then revised to improve the clarity of questions deemed difficult to ask in the original phrasing or hard to understand by the respondent. The tools were then finalized in terms of their phrasing and categories of answers were agreed upon by the research team, UNICEF and an advisory committee. The forms were coded and identifier cover pages were added before the printing stage.

The final coded tools were then used to train the survey-data collectors and their field supervisors. The training was held less than one week before the fieldwork began to guarantee that the information was not forgotten. The field data collection was conducted from March to May 2013. A limited manual for coding the identification and open-ended questions was developed and used. The questionnaires were reviewed and then coded for consistency and completeness by office editors.

Data entry officers supervised the entry of quantitative data onto the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the review of its accuracy. The quantitative data collected from the household survey and school surveys were organized and statistically analysed. The mean and standard deviation were used for quantitative data and appropriate parametric tests for statistical analysis of differences between means were used. For categorical data the number and percentage distribution were calculated and Chi square and other non-parametric tests used for analysis according to their appropriateness to the data analysed.

The field data collection was conducted from March to May 2013.

1.2 The qualitative research

The respondents in the qualitative assessment are divided into four categories: (i) Boys and girls aged 13-17; (ii) Parents (though not necessarily those of the children interviewed); (iii) School staff; (iv) Community and religious leaders.

A total of 48 focus group discussions (FGD) and 12 in-depth interviews were conducted. Table A3 shows their distribution according to settlement type and respondent profile. In each governorate, 8 FGDs were conducted with boys and 8 with girls. Similarly, four FGDs were conducted with parents and four with teachers and social workers in each governorate. As for the in-depth interviews (IDIs), 2 were conducted with school principals per governorate, in addition to 2 with community and religious leaders.

Table A3: Distribution of focus groups discussions and in-depth interviews.

		Cairo		**Alexandria**		**Assiut**		**Total**
Focus group discussions		Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Urban	Rural	
Children	Boys	2	2	2	2	2	2	24
	Girls	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Parents and Care givers		2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Teachers and Social workers		2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Total		**16**		**16**		**16**		**48**
		Cairo		Alexandria		Assiut		
In-depth interviews		Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Urban	Rural	
Headmasters		1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Community or religious leaders		1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Total		**4**		**4**		**4**		**12**

The research team tailored a number of participatory tools for the qualitative assessment that complemented each other in order to reach a better understanding of the topics to be investigated. Different tools were used in the same FGD for triangulation. These tools were developed and further refined after the conduct of the qualitative pilot study.

A coding scheme was developed to capture and process data, and transcripts from the FGDs were translated and turned into a narrative form to capture what participants have shared. Quotes from the interviewees were used to clarify and support the themes. The handwritten field notes from each IDI and FGD and then translated into English and typed onto the computer in one-step.

1.3 Ethical considerations

The surveys were designed on the basis of justice, respect for the individual and beneficence. First of all, the parent or caregiver would have to give consent that he or she was ready to have their

household surveyed. In addition, they had to approve the participation of their child in the survey. After the parent/caregiver had provided both consents, the child would be required to give their own verbal consent in the presence of a witness. The children were assured that their consent was not compulsory, even if the parent had given permission for the child to be interviewed. The interview could only begin after both the parent/carer and the child had given their consent.

Prior informed consent was also obtained from participants in the focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual in-depth interviews (IDIs), with documented voluntary approval a prerequisite for their participation. This documentation consisted of was either the signature of the participant or the signature of a third party (witness) if the participant was illiterate. Care was taken to ensure that consent was not seen as any indication that a particular child was subjected to violence, to avoid scaring away potential participants and to ensure that they did not feel confronted for any actions they may or may not have taken.

The form to be signed by participants included information about the purpose of the research and about the methods of child rearing and discipline used in Egyptian society. Respondents were also informed about the affiliation of the researchers, as well as the direct and indirect benefits and risks of participation, with the latter including potential emotional distress. UNICEF has shared with Center for Development Services a referral list of professionals and organizations that provide counselling and support for children and family members who are subject to abuse, especially physical and sexual. This was given to all participants prior to the interview or focus group, to ensure that no individual child in any group was singled out as being subjected to abuse. The aim was to create a setting with more equality.

Participants were also assured that they were free to refuse to answer any question that made them feel uncomfortable, and to pause or end the interview at any time. All the surveys for the quantitative survey and the notes from focus group discussion were saved securely, with the principal investigators having sole access.

1.4 Definitions of Violence used

Below are definitions for the terms used to refer to the different forms of violence throughout the report:

Physical violence or abuse is the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical harm to that child's survival, development or dignity.

Four main types of physical violence are considered in this research:

- **Type 1:** being pushed, having hair or ears pulled, being pinched, being grabbed by clothing or being shaken
- **Type 2:** being kicked or beaten
- **Type 3:** being beaten with a stick, belt, wooden cane or whip
- **Type 4 (severe):** being scalded with hot water or burned with metal, being fed something extremely spicy, being locked up in a confined space, being tied up with a rope, being drowned, suffocated or being threatened with a gun, knife or a sharp tool

Corporal punishment is one form of physical violence defined by the Committee on Rights in the General Comment No. 8 as "*any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light."* Mostly that involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children, either with hands or with an implement.

Emotional or psychological violence is an intentional behaviour that conveys a bleak message to a child: that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or valued only if they meet

another's needs. Emotional violence can take the form of insults, name-calling, ignoring, isolation, rejection, threats, and emotional indifference. It can include blaming, belittling, degrading, intimidating, terrorizing and isolating. In other words, it is a behaviour that is harmful, potentially harmful, or insensitive to the child's developmental needs, and that could damage the child psychologically or emotionally. Witnessing domestic violence can also be classified as exposure to emotional violence.

Neglect means the failure of parents or caregivers to meet children's physical and emotional needs when they have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so; or their failure to protect children from exposure to danger.

Sexual violence is any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will. It encompasses a range of offences, including a completed non-consensual sex act (e.g., rape), an attempted non-consensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (e.g., sexual touching), and non-contact sexual abuse (e.g., the threat of sexual violence, exhibitionism or verbal sexual harassment). All types of sexual violence involve victims who do not consent, who are unable to consent or who refuse to allow the act.[19]

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) refers to all procedures that involve the partial or total removal of the external genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs for cultural or other reasons that are not medical necessities. The practice is a major threat to girls' lives and well-being. Girls have been known to die while undergoing FGM/C and it can lead to continuing medical complications such as infections. It also robs girls of a full and normal sexual life and can have other negative psychological and sexual consequences that are life-long.

Early marriage or child marriage is defined as a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18, with a risk that it is non-consensual and that the younger partner will have little or no power within the relationship.

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