



Media Coverage

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RE: Wives 'endure abuse to protect kids'
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Wives 'endure abuse to protect kids'

Hilary Wong

Nearly half of victims of domestic violence tolerate abusive husbands for five to 10 years before seeking refuge, the **Christian Family Service Centre** claims.

Program director **Sally Pang Shuk-ling** said victims are willing to put up with both physical and mental abuse to protect their children and families.

Pang said the Social Welfare Department handled 1,600 cases of family violence in the first six months — a jump of 10 percent over the same period a year ago.

But the center's **Serene Court senior service manager Yeung Oi-shan** said the increase may be due to the fact women are now more aware of their rights and willing to file police complaints.

"For instance, in the past five years, we have seen more and more reports of mental abuse as against physical abuse in the past," Yeung said.

Pang said between April 2012 and March this year, 140 women were admitted to the refuge center.

About 40 percent were aged 36 to 45, while 30 percent were between 26 and 35.

Pang said 31 percent said they suffered domestic violence for one to five years, 23 percent were abused for five to 10 years, and 19 percent kept quiet for more than 10 years before seeking refuge.

Many suffered multiple forms of abuse, both physical and mental. "The number of multiple abuse cases reached 70 percent over the past year, against around 30 percent 10 years ago," Pang said.

Mental abuse cases have doubled, from about 8 percent 10 years ago to 16 percent over the past two years. Some husbands direct profanity toward their wives and threaten to kill them.

Pang said about 30 percent of the abused women only decide to seek help after five years.

"The delay in seeking help is due to the fear of losing their families," Pang said.

A 35-year-old mainland migrant, surnamed Sze, said she withstood domestic violence for more than 10 years.

"My husband gambled a lot and he battered me whenever he was in bad mood," she said.

Sze said she did not dare leave home because of financial and housing problems when she first moved to Hong Kong.

She said she sought help from the police about six months ago and was referred to the refuge center.

"I feel good living here. I decided to divorce my husband and live with my children."

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Sally Pang says abused women fear losing their families. SZETO WAH-KOON



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Member Agency of The Community Chest

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