

## WAO STATISTICS FOR 1997

The following table provides detailed information about the various services based on WAO records from 1 January to 31 December 1997

SERVICE ETHNICITY	REFUGE	TELEPHONE COUNSELLING	FACE-TO-FACE COUNSELLING	TOTAL
MALAY	12	261	6	286
CHINESE	12	449	16	477
INDIAN	66	370	28	464
OTHERS	12	40	2	54
NOT AVAILABLE	7	16	0	23
TOTAL	109	1136	52	

In addition to the 1136 calls included in the statistics, WAO received another 14 calls from males seeking advice or information.

## SHELTER / REFUGE

There were 123 admissions of women in crisis, together with 135 children.

However, as 14 of the women had come twice or thrice in the same year i.e. 1997, in reality only 109 women were given shelter.

Out of the 109 women, 18 had been residents of WAO in previous years. Therefore, it must be recorded that there were really only 91 new cases.

It is also interesting to note that 2 of the women were accompanied by their maids. The maids are not included in the statistical breakdown.

Out of the 109 women who sought shelter:

- 99 were DV cases (including 2 incest cases and 8 unwed pregnancies)
- 10 were non-DV cases (7 were destitute, while 3 had family problems).

## GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE RESIDENTS

In the following tables, we will highlight some of the salient particulars about our residents.

### • *Source of Awareness*

As you can see from the table below, other NGOs, as well as friends provided the largest source of awareness of WAO, while 18 had been residents at WAO in the past.

It is interesting to note that we had only 1 referral from the One-stop centre which is intended to assist DV victims.

Source	No.	%
<b>Agencies</b>		
NGOs	29	26.6
Welfare	8	7.5
Hospitals	7	6.4
One-Stop Centre	1	0.9
Police	3	2.8
Media	13	11.9
<b>Other Sources</b>		
Self (ex-resident)	18	16.5
Other ex-residents	2	1.8
Relatives	6	5.5
Friends	20	18.3
Telephone Directory	1	0.9
Not Available	1	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

### • *Length of Stay*

WAO has a policy of allowing the women a period of three months to resolve their problems. However, about 34% left within a week, while about 70% left within a month. About 15.6 % or 17 women - half of whom were pregnant - stayed more than three months.

Length of Stay	No.	%
< 1 week	37	33.9
1 to 2 weeks	14	12.9
2 to 4 weeks	25	22.9
1 to 2 months	7	6.4
2 to 3 months	9	8.3
> 3 months	17	15.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

### • *Residence / Domicile*

Since WAO operates in the Klang Valley, the majority of the residents (about 87%) were from Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan. However, we also received women from other states, including Terengganu

State	No.	%
Selangor	60	55.1
Wilayah Persekutuan	35	32.1
Johore	4	3.7
Negeri Sembilan	3	2.8
Perak	2	1.8
Pahang	2	1.8
Melaka	1	0.9
Penang	1	0.9
Terengganu	1	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

## PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF RESIDENTS

In the following tables, we focus on specific information pertaining to the residents.

### • Age

About 45% of the residents were between 19 and 30 years of age, while another 43% were between the ages of 31 to 40 years. It is sad to note that the majority of the women were subjected to abuse while in their most productive years.

Age Group	No.	%
16 - 18	2	1.8
19 - 21	14	12.9
22 - 25	15	13.7
26 - 30	20	18.4
31 - 35	25	22.9
36 - 40	22	20.2
41 - 45	5	4.6
46 - 50	4	3.7
> 50	2	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

### • Marital Status

Almost 50% of the residents were legally married, while another 13.7% were married according to customary rites. A fairly high proportion of the women (about 20%) were single.

Marital Status	No.	%
Legally married	53	48.7
Married according to custom	15	13.7
Divorced	2	1.8
Widowed	5	4.6
Separated	6	5.5
Cohabiting	6	5.5
Single	22	20.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the 87 women who were married, widowed, separated or cohabiting, the length of marriage / cohabitation is as follows:

- less than 1 year      8
- 1 to 5 years          24
- 6 to 10 years        20
- 11 to 15 years       17
- 16 to 20 years       13
- 20 to 25 years       4
- more than 25 years   1

## • **Educational Level**

The majority of the women (about 36%) had only primary school education. However, about one quarter of the women (24.7%) had studied up to Form 3, while another 22% had SPM qualifications. About 10% of the women had higher qualifications.

Education	No.	%
None	8	7.4
Primary	39	35.8
SRP	27	24.7
SPM	24	22.0
Diploma/Form VI	6	5.5
Degree	5	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

## • **Occupation prior to coming to WAO**

About 1/3 of the women had been housewives or were unemployed, while the majority of the women who had held jobs outside the home had been in low-income jobs.

This is highly significant as it impacts greatly on their economic ability to start life afresh for themselves as well as their children.

Type	No.	%
Homemaker/Unemployed	36	33.1
Factory Worker	15	13.7
Domestic Help	13	11.9
Cleaner/General Workers	7	6.4
Clerical	21	19.3
Professionals	6	5.5
Self-employed	9	8.3
Others	2	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

## • Income

As mentioned earlier, about one-third were homemakers or unemployed and so were without their own source of income, while another one-third earned only between RM200 and RM600. Only about 20% of the women earned more than RM800.

Income	No.	%
None	38	35.0
< RM 200	1	0.9
RM 201 - 400	15	13.7
RM 401 - 600	18	16.5
RM 601 - 800	15	13.7
RM 801 - 1,000	3	2.8
> RM 1,001	18	16.5
Not available	1	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

## INFORMATION ON THE PERPETRATORS

Although WAO handled 109 cases in 1997, 10 of the cases were non-DV cases. The following tables contain information on the perpetrators in the 99 DV cases.

### • Relationship to Resident

In most of the cases (about 85%), the abuser was the husband or a person intimately associated with the woman. We also provided shelter to women who were abused by their employer.

Relationship	No.	%
Husband	72	72.7
Cohabitee/Boyfriend	12	12.1
Parents	4	4.0
Employer	6	6.1
Others (in laws, stepfather)	5	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>



## • Age

The majority of the abusers (over 50%) were in the 31 to 40 years of age category, with the next highest in the 41 to 50 years category (almost 25%).

Age	No.	%
18 - 21	3	3.0
22 - 25	6	6.1
26 - 30	8	8.1
31 - 35	22	22.2
36 - 40	31	31.3
41 - 45	14	14.2
46 - 50	10	10.1
>50 years	2	2.0
Not available	3	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

## • Education

About one-third of the abusers had none to primary level educational qualifications. On the other hand, however, about 13% had either a diploma or a degree.

Qualifications	No.	%
None	4	4.0
Primary	30	30.3
SRP	25	25.3
SPM	24	24.3
Diploma	4	4.0
Degree	9	9.1
Not available	3	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

## • Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity, there is a high match between the victims and the perpetrators. However, we did have a few cases of inter-racial marital abuse.

Ethnicity	No.	%
Malay	14	14.2
Chinese	14	14.2
Indian	65	65.6
Others	3	3.0
Not available	3	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

## • Occupation

While the majority of the perpetrators were manual workers, a sizable number were self-employed. This often has implications for the victim in seeking maintenance for herself as well as the children.

Occupation	No.	%
Unemployed	10	10.1
Manual worker	41	41.4
Clerical	7	7.1
Professional	6	6.1
Self-employed	22	22.2
Others	10	10.1
Not available	3	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

## • *Income*

A lot of the women often do not know the true earnings of their husbands. Therefore, the following figures must be interpreted with caution. It is obvious though that based on the educational qualifications and jobs held by the perpetrators, the average income of the perpetrators was often less than RM1000.

Income	No.	%
None	10	10.1
< RM 200	2	2.0
RM 200 - 399	5	5.1
RM 400 - 599	6	6.1
RM 600 - 799	10	10.1
RM 800 - 999	10	10.1
RM 1,000 and above	34	34.3
Not available	22	22.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

## • *Contributory Factors*

Research has indicated that the major factors related to abuse are substance abuse (alcohol and drugs), gambling and involvement in extra-marital affairs. Yet another indicator is a history of violence in the family.

Our findings based on information available from the above 99 cases are follows:  
(Note that in some cases, the information sought was not available.)

%	Factors
44.4%	drugs / alcohol
16.2%	gambling
28.3%	womanising
59.6%	history of violence in the family



## INFORMATION ON THE RESIDENTS' CHILDREN

Most of the women who seek shelter with WAO bring along all or some of their children with them. While WAO does not provide shelter to male children over 12 years of age, it usually tries to find alternative accommodation or shelter for them.

### • **No. of Children**

All in all, 54 of the 109 women brought along 121 children. Unfortunately, we are unable to report on the number of women who had left home without their children or the number of children they were unable to bring with them for a number of reasons.

No. of Children	No. of Mothers
None	55
One	23
Two	12
Three	8
Four	8
Five	1
Six	1
Seven	1
	109

Domestic Violence often extends to abuse of children, so it was no surprise when 22 of the women reported that their children had been abused. 18 had taken action:

- 9 had reported to the Police
- 9 had reported to the Welfare Department

Unfortunately, 14 reported that no action was taken after the reports were made, while 4 said that action by the police or welfare was pending.

**THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR THE USE OF VIOLENCE. VIOLENCE IS A CRIME.**

There were many reasons why the women sought shelter at WAO; the main reason being physical and/or psychological abuse.

• **Reasons for Shelter**

While the majority, i.e. over 80%, of the women had been subjected to domestic violence, 10 of the women (slightly over 9 %) sought shelter at WAO because they needed a place to stay - they were either destitute or jobless or had problems with their families.

Reasons	No.	%
Abuse	89	81.6
Unwed pregnancy	8	7.4
Incest	2	1.8
Destitution/joblessness	7	6.4
Family problems	3	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

• **Types of Abuse (multiple answers)**

The women suffered different forms of abuse. About 70% suffered physical abuse, while almost 80% reported having experienced psychological abuse. Nearly half of the women encountered financial problems due to the husband's joblessness or bad habits, such as drinking, drug-taking or gambling. Almost 30 % reported social isolation from their families and friends, with hardly any social life.

Type of Abuse	No.	%
Physical	76	69.7
Psychological	87	79.8
Financial	47	43.1
Sexual	18	16.5
Social	31	28.4

• **Length of time in abusive situation**

About 30 of the women had been in the abusive situation for less than one year, while 28 of the women had been subjected to abuse for periods ranging from 1 to 5 years.

However, in line with our experience in the past, many of the women had put up or been forced to endure abuse for even longer periods of time:

No. of women	Period of abuse
• 21	6 to 10 years
• 15	11 to 15 years
• 4	16 to 20 years.
• 1	> 30 years

• **No. of times left home (other than to WAO)**

Many of the women had attempted to leave the abusive situation by seeking help from others before turning to WAO, such as parents, siblings and friends.

While about 47% of the women had made no attempt to leave before, a high proportion of the women (over 20%) had left their homes and then gone back more than 6 times. Studies in other countries have shown that this is a common occurrence; the reasons for which are linked to the dynamics of DV.

No. of Times	No.	%
None	51	46.8
Once	11	10.0
Twice	8	7.4
Three times	11	10.0
Four times	3	2.8
Five times	0	0
Six times	0	0
More than 6 times	23	21.2
Not available	2	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

The following tables contain information related to the 76 women who had been subjected to physical abuse.

### • *Frequency of Physical Abuse*

As mentioned earlier, domestic violence is systemic abuse. Most of the women (over 30%) reported being abused on a daily basis, while another 35% were subjected to abuse 2 to 5 times a week. For about 5% of the women, the abuse was unpredictable.

Frequency	No.	%
Daily	24	31.6
4 – 5 times a week	4	5.3
2 – 3 times a week	23	30.3
Once a week	2	2.6
Once a fortnight	10	13.1
Once a month	9	11.8
Unpredictable	4	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

### • *Nature of Physical Abuse (multiple answers)*

In the following table, we present some of the common forms the physical abuse took. The most common method involved beating with an object such as a belt. However, the abuser often used more than one of the following categories to inflict pain and suffering.

Method	No.	%
Beating/slapping	58	76.3
Beating with objects	63	82.9
Scalding/burning	5	6.6
Throwing objects	20	26.3
Banging against wall/floor	22	28.9
Threatening with objects	23	31.6
Strangulation	8	10.5

### • *Triggering Factors Cited (multiple answers)*

The women were asked if they could identify any factors that triggered off the violence.

It is quite obvious that while excessive drinking often contributed to the abuse in over 40% of the cases, other factors such as the abuser's suspicious nature and jealousy, as well as his involvement with other women also played a major role in the abuse.

Some of the common triggering factors cited by the women are as follows:

• Substance Abuse		
• alcohol	31	41%
• drugs	13	17%
• Gambling	16	20%
• Suspicious nature of husband	28	37%
• Jealousy	20	26%
• Adultery with another woman	15	21%
• Womanising	28	37%
• Financial problems eg. debts, insufficient money, husbands demanding money	22	29%

Other reasons included husbands demanding sex (4) and in-law interference (9).

In a large number of cases (20 cases or 26%), there was often no apparent reason for the abuse.

## OUTCOME

As at 31 December 1997, the status of the residents is as follows

### • Status

Status	No.	%
Still at WAO	10	9.2
Went back to former situation	33	30.3
Living independently	55	50.4
Left for another centre	2	1.8
Other arrangements	4	3.7
NA	5	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the 33 women (slightly over 30%) who returned to their former homes, 31 were DV cases.

Among the reasons cited for returning home (based on multiple answers given) are:

• to give husband another chance	19
• husband promised to mend his ways	3
• under threat by husband	3
• financial reasons	10
• children's education	1
• illness in the family	1

Of the 55 women (over 50%) who went to live independently, 51 were DV cases. Out of the 51, 35 (over 68%) are still in hiding from their abusive partners.

The details provided in the tables below were obtained in order to formulate certain action plans with regard to housing, employment and training opportunities and protection for women in abusive situations who have chosen to lead independent lives :

#### • Housing

Type	No.	%
Renting a house	12	23.5
With family	13	25.5
With friends	12	23.5
In a registered children's home	4	7.9
Provided by employer	7	13.7
Not available	3	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

#### • Employment

Occupation	No.	%
Unemployed	13	25.5
Factory worker	10	19.6
Domestic help	11	21.6
Cleaner	2	3.9
Clerical	6	11.7
Self-employed	2	3.9
Others	4	7.9
Not available	3	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

#### • Conclusion

It is an undeniable fact that the lack of cheap but safe housing, employment that ensures self-sufficiency, and affordable child care facilities are great impediments to a woman's struggle, should she decide to lead an independent life. This, of course, greatly impacts on WAO's plans to assist women in crisis.

## FACE-TO-FACE COUNSELLING

This is a service available to women who opt to see a counsellor in person for various reasons, especially when it is not possible to resolve the problem over the telephone.

A total of 52 women came for face-to-face counselling; the majority of them being victims of DV.

Detailed information about the 52 women is given below:

### • *Ethnicity*

Slightly over 50% of the women who came for counselling were Indians, while about a third were Chinese.

Ethnicity	No.	%
Malays	6	11.5
Chinese	16	30.8
Indians	28	53.8
Others	2	3.9
Total	52	100

### • *Marital Status*

As with the other services, the majority of the women (over 80%) were married. Only about 14 % were single women.

Marital Status	No.	%
Married	33	63.4
Separated	10	19.2
Single	7	13.5
Cohabiting	2	3.9
Total	52	100

### • *Source of Awareness*

Out of the 52 clients, 7 were repeat cases, while 12 of them or about 23% got to know about WAO from former residents. Over 15% got the information through media coverage on the issue of DV.



Source	No.	%
<i>Agencies</i>		
Hospital	3	5.7
Welfare	2	3.9
Religious organisations	1	1.9
NGOs	2	3.9
Police	1	1.9
Legal Firm	2	3.9
Media	8	15.4
<i>Other sources</i>		
Ex- Clients	7	13.5
Ex- Residents	12	23.1
Friends/ Relatives	11	21.1
Not Available	3	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>

• **Nature of Abuse (Multiple responses)**

The majority of the clients (over 50%) had been psychologically abused, while about 46% had been subjected to physical abuse.

Type of Abuse	No.	%
Physical	24	46.2
Psychological	28	53.9
Sexual	3	5.7
Financial	3	7.7
Social	6	11.5

Among the specific problems cited by the women were

• husbands being irresponsible	13	• mental stress	6
• husbands being involved with another woman	5	• interference by in-laws	2
• jealous husbands	2	• problems with children	7
• alcoholic husbands	6	• request for shelter	3

Other problems were related to housing, financial assistance, immigration problems and divorce.

## TELEPHONE COUNSELLING

WAO received a total of 1150 calls, of which, 1136 were from females and 14 from males.

Detailed information about the callers and the nature of the calls are presented in the following tables:

### • *Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	No.	%
Malays	261	22.7
Chinese	449	39.0
Indians	380	33.0
Others	40	3.5
Not available	20	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>100</b>

### • *Area*

There were calls from all over Malaysia, including East Malaysia.

Most of the calls were from Kuala Lumpur (400) and Selangor (477). The next largest group of callers were from Johore (32) and Perak (30), followed by the neighbouring states of Melaka (14), Negeri Sembilan (11) and Pahang (12).

There were callers from up north in Penang (5) and Kedah (4), as well as from the east coast states of Kelantan (2) and Terengganu (3).

We would also like to highlight the fact that there were 4 calls from Sarawak and 2 from Sabah.

### • *Callers' Profession/Occupation*

The majority of the callers were homemakers (259), followed by clerks (189) and factory workers (68).

Among those in the professional category, 50 were managers, 28 teachers, 47 secretaries, 37 salespersons, and 14 nurses

There were 21 calls from maids and 28 from cleaners.

### ● *Client's Requests/Expectations (Multiple responses)*

Many of the callers had multiple expectations. However, as evident from the table below, the majority of the calls (almost 55%) were for counselling, while almost 50% of the callers sought legal information or general information. Slightly over 16% of the calls (185) were for shelter.

Type of Call	No.	%
Counselling	630	54.8
Legal Information (Civil/Syariah)	255	22.2
Information	307	26.7
Shelter	185	16.1
Counselling for husband	32	2.8
Financial assistance	12	1.1

### ● *Problems*

Many of the callers had more than one problem. A large number of the calls were DV related; either the callers faced physical (358) or psychological abuse (353).

Here we will highlight some of the main problems dealt with in the telephoning counselling sessions:

- Divorce (105)
- Maintenance (60)
- Child Maintenance (30)
- Child Custody (28)
- Marriage relationship problems (164)
- Husband on drugs/alcohol/gambling (71)
- Husband involved with another woman/other women (173)
- Mental stress (74)
- Unwed Pregnancy (41)