



In Section 4 we discuss the econometric specification of the model. Given limited employment and marital histories in the VAWS data, we estimate a simplified, reduced form version of the model. However, our estimation procedure does preserve the sequential nature of marital status decisions and the dependence of current employment on the entire marital history. It also controls for unobserved heterogeneity to allow for correlated preferences over work and marriage and to address the issue of sample selection in the remarriage market.

The results of our analysis, presented in Section 5, may be summarized as follows. First, domestic abuse inflicted by current and previous spouses has a significantly negative effect on employment, indicating long-term health effects of abuse on market wages. However, remarried women abused in their second, but not their first, marriage tend to increase employment in response to domestic abuse, suggesting the effects of abuse on leisure outweigh the health effects for these women. Second, domestic abuse is a dominant factor in the choice of marital status, where violence in a first marriage increases the utility from divorce and remarriage. Considering the significance of the divorce indicator in the employment equation, this finding indicates that the indirect effect of domestic abuse on employment is also important. Finally, readily observed characteristics of women play only a minor role in the divorce decision relative to abuse-related information. That is, initially unobserved information is central to future marital status decisions.

2. The Violence Against Women Survey

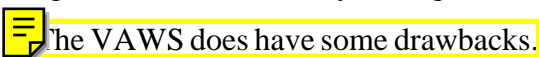


The VAWS was conducted between February and June of 1993 and involved telephone interviews of 12,300 women aged 18 and above in all provinces of Canada.¹¹ The survey dealt with the respondents' experiences of violence since the age of 16 as well as their perceptions of personal safety. The VAWS is particularly valuable in three respects. First, it contains a random sample of Canadian women.¹² This is in direct contrast to other surveys

¹¹ A total of 19,309 eligible respondents were contacted, resulting in a response rate of 63.7% (Statistics Canada, 1994a). Summary statistics and a description of the data set are available from Statistics Canada (1993a, 1993b).

¹² We have compared the VAWS with the 1993 Canadian Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF). The average characteristics of women are the same with the exception of the proportion of women living in urban areas and in terms of educational attainments. See the Appendix for further details.

involving abuse-related subject matter, where samples are limited to abused women seeking services (Tauchen, Witte and Long, 1991) or low income families in a restricted geographical area (Lloyd, 1997a, 1997b). Second, survey responses were not restricted to reported incidents alone: all activities considered an offense under the Canadian Criminal code, reported or not, were recorded. As a result, the problem of underestimating the prevalence of violence by restricting responses to reported incidents is mitigated to some extent. Third, the data set contains detailed information about the types and duration of abuse, data on previous marriages and personal background information on respondents and their spouses, including violence in the family of origin.¹³

 The VAWS does have some drawbacks. Although rich in abuse-related information, relevant economic information is sparse. The data only contain information on the current employment status of the respondents, personal income and household income are grouped into 11 categories, and no data are directly available on wage rates, hours worked and spousal income.¹⁴ Data are available on the education and labor force status of current but not past spouses. In addition, the sample statistics may not provide an accurate depiction of domestic abuse. Considering the highly sensitive nature of the survey questions, the data may be subject to some degree of under-reporting. It is likely that all women do not fully disclose their experiences regarding domestic abuse to the interviewer out of fear, shame or denial (Okun, 1986; Weis, 1989; Straus and Gelles, 1992; Dutton, 1995). Furthermore, women may be more likely to report abuse in a past marriage than abuse in a current marriage.^{15 16}

¹³ Violence in the family of origin information is available as pertains to the respondent, her current spouse and her previous spouse if applicable. In this context, violence in the family of origin refers to incidents of domestic abuse inflicted on the mother by the father.

¹⁴ Kingston-Riechers (1997) attempts to deal with the problem of missing spousal income data by predicting income using the SCF. We adopt a reduced form approach instead for two reasons. First, as illustrated by Kingston-Riechers (1997) and the current paper, the average characteristics of the individuals in the VAWS and SCF samples are quite different with respect to education, an important predictor of wages. The source of this difference in education is unknown and may be due to differences in coding across the data sets. Second, no distinction can be made between spouses from first or second marriages in the SCF and it is likely that there is non-random selection into marital histories. That is, the spousal income distribution may differ across first and remarriage markets.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, recognizing the sensitive nature of the survey, consulted a wide range of experts while constructing the questionnaire. Interviewers were trained to recognize and respond to signals that the respondent was concerned about being overheard, and telephone numbers of local support services were offered to women reporting current cases of abuse and to women in distress (Statistics Canada, 1994b). In