



To conduct our analysis, the following restrictions are placed on the sample. First, to reduce the number of women currently receiving schooling and women not participating in the labor force for retirement reasons, the age range of the sample is restricted to women aged 25-55 who are not enrolled in school, eliminating 5620 women.¹⁷ Widows are excluded from the sample (87) as our interest lies with endogenous marital dissolutions. Any women with more than two marriages (432) and any currently single women with more than one marriage (259) are removed, for the data only contain information on the current spouse and one past spouse.¹⁸ Any women reporting that they are currently married but not living with their spouse are eliminated from the sample (112).¹⁹ Since this paper deals with domestic abuse, women who report never being married are excluded from the sample (352).²⁰ Finally, all respondents with missing covariate information are eliminated (367). The sample size is thus reduced to 5070 women, of which 77% remain in their first marriage, 8% are divorced and currently single and 15% are remarried.



To account for differences in labor force behavior due to the effects of domestic abuse, we first examine the average individual characteristics of currently married women who are abused by their spouses as compared to those who are not abused. This is the relevant sample if the role of abuse in the divorce decision is ignored. To allow for the possibility that severe abuse has a larger effect on labor market behavior than mild abuse, we divide the information on abuse into two categories according to severity. Women are recorded as experiencing low severity abuse if the highest level of reported abuse involves threatening to hit, pushing, grabbing, shoving or slapping; high severity abuse involves kicking, biting, beating, choking, threatening to use or using a gun or knife, or sexual assault.

addition, sensitive questions on the survey were prefaced with statements designed to make the respondent more comfortable answering the question.

¹⁶ It is also possible that non-response to the survey as a whole may be correlated with abuse. We are not able to address this issue. However, we note that the VAWS sample, at least in terms of standard characteristics, is representative of Canadian women (see footnote 12).

¹⁷ Respondents are eliminated if they reported attending school at any time in the survey year.

¹⁸ For the purpose of this paper, women are recorded as married if they report being married and living with their spouse or if they report living common-law. The VAWS classifies a relationship as common-law if the woman was living with a man as husband and wife without being legally married (Statistics Canada, 1993c). Note that 8% of all currently married women are reported as living common-law.

¹⁹ One respondent was also eliminated because she did not fall into any of the marital categories.

²⁰ We do not use single women as our control group because the VAWS does not provide enough information to estimate the initial decision to marry.