

Justification for Requested Changes

Background

The current project utilizes an OMB approved (0920-0796) survey to learn more about sexual violence (SV) prevalence, characteristics, circumstances, and help-seeking behavior in a sample of minority women. Despite the vast literature on sexual violence, violence against women, and intimate partner violence that has developed in the past 25 years, important gaps remain in our understanding of victimization of minority women. These gaps result, largely from the very low representation of minority groups within most studies. Thus, this study builds on previous work by focusing the analysis on SV experiences in minority women only. As outlined in the original OMB package, this study will collect detailed data regarding the nature of the relationship between perpetrator and victim, as well as factors surrounding the incidents of sexual violence, including the use of drugs and various means of force. The more clearly defined and specific data that will result from this study will help fill gaps and provide a richer, more complete understanding of the SV experiences of minority women.

Modifications to the OMB approved (0920-0796) generally fall into one of three categories: (1) format changes that streamline and simplify survey administration; (2) wording changes; and (3) changes that were made as a result of consultation with our American Indian and Alaska Native partner organization. All proposed modifications are consistent with the original scope, intent, analysis, and direction of this study.

Format Changes: Throughout the survey, changes were made to the format of many questions (e.g., HOW the question is asked) in order to streamline and simplify administration of the survey. For example, in the original version of the survey, questions about the prevalence of sexual violence were asked using two questions (e.g., “has this ever happened” and, if yes, “How many times?”). In the changed survey, these two questions are combined throughout Sections 2 – 4 into a single question that asks “How many times” and includes “never” as a response option. Additionally, preliminary assessment of cognitive testing data from the original survey indicated that respondents were confused with many of the survey questions. For example, in the original survey, Section 4 inquires about tactics that people use to obtain sex from an unwilling partner. Questions about the prevalence of using these tactics to get unwanted vaginal sex are asked, then the same questions are asked about unwanted oral sex, and then about unwanted anal sex. In the modified survey, a single tactic question is asked, and then experiences with that tactic for vaginal, oral, or anal sex are assessed. This greatly reduces the repetitive and confusing nature of the survey.

Wording Changes: Some questions have undergone minor wording changes to be consistent with the language used in the recently approved National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Surveillance System (NISVSS) questionnaire (OMB # 0920-0822). This process largely involved changing the specific wording of survey questions (not question content) or adding introductory information to clarify the purpose of survey questions. For example, on the original survey, question 4.13 asks, “Has anyone ever bothered you or pressured you to have or try to have unwanted ... sex.” In the modified survey, wording changes from NISVSS (thus, the same language is used in both surveys) were made so the question now reads, “...how many times has someone ever tried to wear you down by repeatedly asking for sex or showing you they were unhappy...” The wording change makes the intent of the question clearer.

Changes for Cultural Competency: In August 2009, CDC entered into a contractual relationship with an American Indian / Alaska Native (AI/AN) organization to, among other tasks, help assess the cultural sensitivity of the approved survey instrument. CDC consulted extensively with this organization, and as a result of this consultation, modifications were made to the wording of existing questions and additional questions were included to either (a) assess concepts that are particularly relevant to AI/AN communities (e.g., availability and access to services, issues of support, vulnerability, and mobility) and (b) provide clarification and/or additional, richer detail to respondent answers. All the proposed modifications that resulted from consultation with the AI/AN partner organization were made upon their recommendation to increase the cultural appropriateness and palatability of the survey (see table for a list of added questions).

It is our belief that the proposed changes do not represent a change in the scope or intent of the survey. The public was made aware of the intent and scope of this project during the initial OMB review process. The format and wording changes, along with the additional questions provide clarification and richer detail to the questions already vetted to the public.