

# Domestic violence disproportionately affects remarried women

October 6 2017, by Amy White

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Facing social and financial pressures, remarried women in Cambodia are at increased risk for domestic violence compared to first-time married, divorced or single women, Sothy Eng, Lehigh University professor of practice in comparative international education, found in research published in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. The findings have ramifications for women and social workers worldwide.

"Remarried [women](#)," those who engage in subsequent marriage following divorce, tend to enter new relationships with compromise because divorce is usually stigmatized and they face significant pressure from their families to remarry, Eng observed. "Second marriages can include added stressors such as children, financial problems and complicated relationships with a previous spouse," Eng said. "This creates an economic and social dependency for women, making them more likely to tolerate [domestic violence](#)."

Remarried women with two to three children younger than age 5 and whose partners had low education were found to be at the highest risk.

While the study did not look at domestic violence in other countries, Eng argues that the issues facing remarried women in Cambodia are not country or culturally specific, but manifest in different ways globally based on cultural and societal norms. This is particularly the case in a culture or context where men exercise presumed male dominance—including in the United States—and women in a second marriage are seen as second-class or less valuable, putting them at risk of

emotional or physical abuse.

"This is an understanding of why remarried women are a marginalized group, and more often are subject to domestic violence," Eng said. "This is something to acknowledge and understand as a possible contributor to domestic violence, not necessarily a cause of domestic violence."

While each woman's experience is unique, equipping professionals who address domestic violence with statistical information that remarried women are more at risk "is an important piece to a very complex situation," Eng added. It also brings awareness of the signs and risks of domestic violence in Cambodia and beyond. "The more knowledge and understanding women have of marital, social and cultural issues surrounding domestic violence, the more informed their choices can be for the future," Eng said.

Eng's graduate students Whitney Szmodis and Kelly Grace are co-authors with him on the article, "Cambodian Remarried Women Are at Risk for Domestic Violence" in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. The journal is devoted to the study and treatment of victims and perpetrators of [interpersonal violence](#), addressing the causes, effects, treatment and prevention of all types of violence. It serves as a discussion forum for professionals and researchers working in domestic violence, [child sexual abuse](#), rape and sexual assault, physical child abuse and violent crime.

**More information:** Sothy Eng et al. Cambodian Remarried Women Are at Risk for Domestic Violence, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2017). [DOI: 10.1177/0886260517691520](https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517691520)

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