The present study explored the impact of wife abuse on the general and psychological well-being of Chinese women and their children in Hong Kong. Results indicated that both verbal and physical wife abuse were related to negative effects of the women and their children. Husbands' abusive behavior toward their wives and children was associated with children's aggressive behavior. Comparisons among the shelter, discordant, and intact groups showed that women of the shelter group experienced the most abuse by their husbands and were the most depressed and anxious. Women of the shelter and discordant groups experienced higher levels of general distress than did the intact group. Compared to children of the discordant and intact groups, children of the shelter group witnessed more interparental violence and experienced more abuse by their fathers. Limitations and research implications of the study also are discussed.

Psychological Impact of Wife Abuse
Experiences of Chinese Women and Their Children

CATHERINE SO-KUM TANG
Chinese University of Hong Kong

Cross-cultural studies have shown that although wife abuse is common around the world, it is not a universal problem and varies across different cultural contexts (Campbell, 1992; Levinson, 1989). These studies, in general, support the patriarchal theory that argues that wife abuse is caused and maintained by a patriarchal social structure and its associated beliefs. A patriarchal social structure reinforces women's subordinate status and sanctions men's use of violence to maintain their control of women (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Yllo & Straus, 1992).

Chinese culture has been heavily influenced by the Confucian philosophy that advocates patriarchal beliefs and values (Anderson, 1992; Gallin, 1992; Goodwin & Tang, 1996). Under many rigid gender norms and values, exploitation of women has been a problem in Chinese societies for many centuries (Chin, 1994; Gilmartin, 1990; Honig & Hershatter, 1988; Okamura,

Author's Note: The author thanks all the women and their children who participated in the study for sharing their experiences; various agencies for referring their clients; and the research assistants, Theresa Chen, Connie Wong, Michelle Yik, and Yu Sau Chu, for their hard work in data collection. The project was supported by a direct grant from the Social Science and Education Panel of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

JOURNAL OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE, Vol. 12 No.3, June 1997 466-478
© 1997 Sage Publications, Inc.