

CHAPTER 10

CRIME PROFILE: ASSAULT

Key points

- 16% of people in Dar es Salaam said they were assaulted over the five-year period.
- The risk of assault was much higher for young people (15-25 years) and the unemployed.
- Assault was most common at the end of the week with high levels occurring on Fridays, Saturdays and, in particular, on Sundays.
- Most assault victims said the crime was committed between 12h00 and 06h00.
- Most assaults happened in the home (58%) and in places of entertainment (18%).
- In the majority of cases (67%), victims knew the offenders by sight or by name.
- Typically, known offenders were either neighbours (36%) or partners (33%).
- Violence as opposed to just threats was used in over three-quarters of all assault cases, with injuries being sustained in 81% of these cases.
- The use of physical strength – for example, hitting or punching – was the most common form of violence accounting for 87% of incidents.
- When injuries were sustained, 87% of the victims visited a hospital.

Assault was defined in the survey as an attack on the victim's person, where physical force or aggressive and threatening behaviour is used. As such, it may have included a wide spectrum of incidents. The overall levels of assault recorded by the survey in Dar es Salaam, at 16%, were similar to or higher than those recorded in South African cities. The Johannesburg victim survey recorded an assault rate of 16% and in Durban, the level was 12%. Assault should be viewed as one of the most serious crimes in Dar es Salaam.

Victim profile

The broad definition used for assault in the survey means that it may have included a range of violent acts that differ considerably in nature, cause and impact. As the

data for assault is presented, it becomes clear that there were two broad categories of incidents taking place in the city: those relating to domestic violence and those linked to lifestyle patterns, entertainment activities and, in all likelihood, the consumption of alcohol. Table 11 below, which details the risk profile for victims of assault, illustrates this point.

The risk of assault was much higher for younger people and the unemployed and to a lesser extent for people with secondary education and those who are resident in established suburbs. These latter two indicators are unusual and suggest patterns of assault that are peculiar to Dar es Salaam. The risk of assault was not significantly different for men and women. It is difficult to tell, however, whether this reflects the true picture, since rates of reporting for crimes like assault (domestic violence) to victim surveys is low among women.⁷

Table 11: Victim profile of assault

Victim characteristics	Highest risk (% people in each category that were victimised)	Lowest risk (% people in each category that were victimised)
Age	15-25 (27%)	Over 40 (9%)
Employment status	Unemployed (33%)	Formal employment (9%)
Educational status	Secondary (20%)	Post-secondary (12%)
Area of residence	Established suburb (21%)	Inner city (10%)

When assault occurred

The victim survey sought to determine the month, day of the week and time of day when assault occurred. The monthly breakdown for assault (figure 35) suggests a fairly constant level throughout the year with two peaks around June and December. These peaks could relate to the impact of holiday seasons (with the increased consumption of alcohol and people not being at work). However, this trend could also be a distortion caused when respondents who cannot remember the exact date of the incident simply indicate the midpoint and year end.



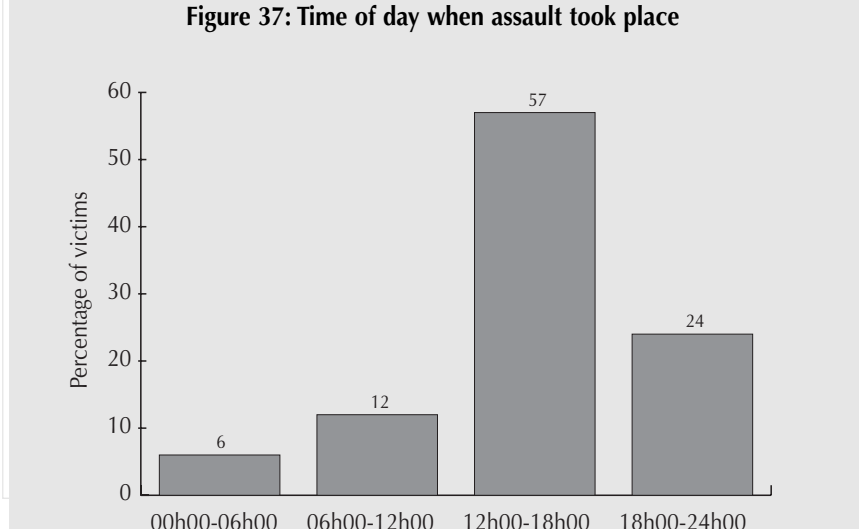
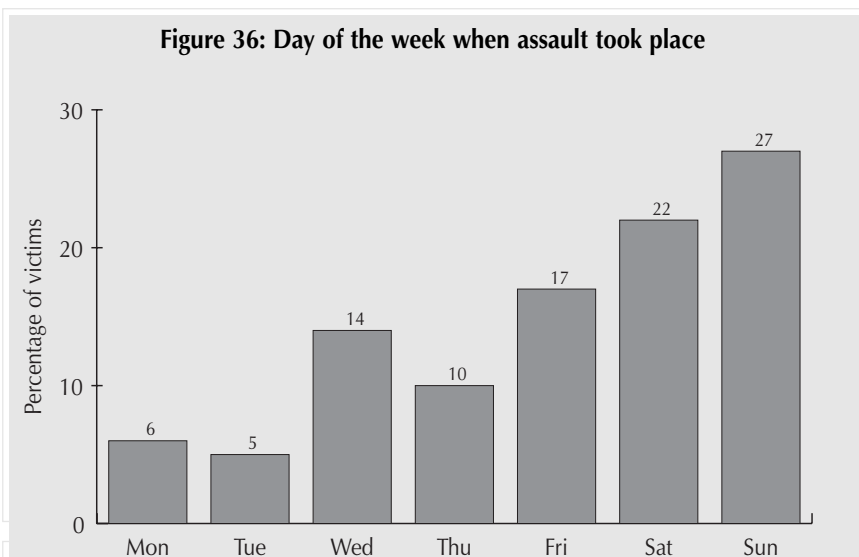
The weekly spread of assault cases also followed a similar pattern to some of the other crimes considered in the survey. The early part of the week from Monday to Thursday was characterised by comparatively few incidents of assault (figure 36). From the start of the weekend (Friday), assaults increased, peaking on Sunday, which alone accounted for more than a quarter of all incidents.

The survey data shows that the majority of assaults were committed between 12h00 and 18h00 (figure 37). Indeed, relatively few victims said they were assaulted during other periods of the day.

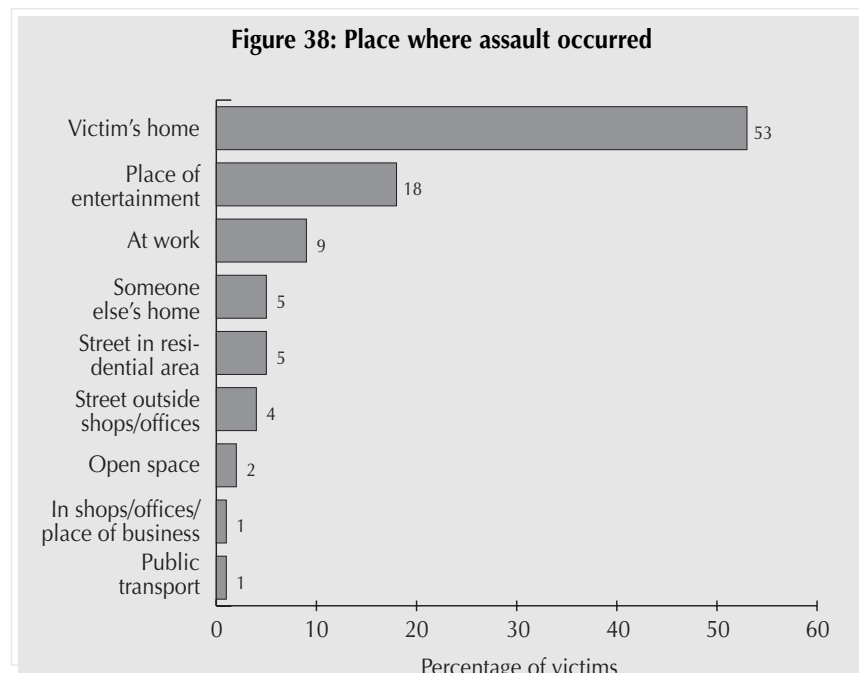
Where did the assault occur

Respondents identified both a generic place where the assault occurred – for example, in the workplace – as well as the specific location.

The most common place where assaults took place was in the respondent's home (53%) (figure 38). A further 5% of victims said they were assaulted in someone else's home. This total of 58% of assaults occurring in the domestic environment can safely be equated with family violence or partner violence. Given that family or partner violence is not always considered to be a crime such as assault, it can be assumed that the actual figures are even higher. These findings contrasted with those gathered in South African cities. In Durban, for example, higher levels of assault



were recorded in the street or in places of entertainment than in the home. The second most common place for assault to occur in Dar es Salaam was in places of entertainment (18%). Almost one in ten victims (9%) said they were assaulted in the workplace. Relatively few people were assaulted in an open space or in public areas such as in the street.



Victims were also asked to describe what they were doing at the time of the assault. This serves as a useful check on the findings above as to the generic location where assault occurred. The majority of victims (52%) were at home when the incident happened. A further 20% were engaged in recreational activity or entertainment (figure 39). These trends thus correspond with those in figure 38 above.

Use of violence and degree of injury

The victim survey ascertained whether violence was used during the assault and in what form. Information was also gathered on injuries sustained and their seriousness.

Not surprisingly, violence was used in the vast majority (81%) of assaults. In the remainder of cases, victims claimed only to have been threatened. When violence was used, it mostly involved the use of physical strength as opposed to the use of a weapon. If a weapon was used, it was most likely to be a knife (figure 40).

Victims of assault claimed to have been injured in 40% of the incidents and most

Figure 39: What victims were doing at the time of the assault

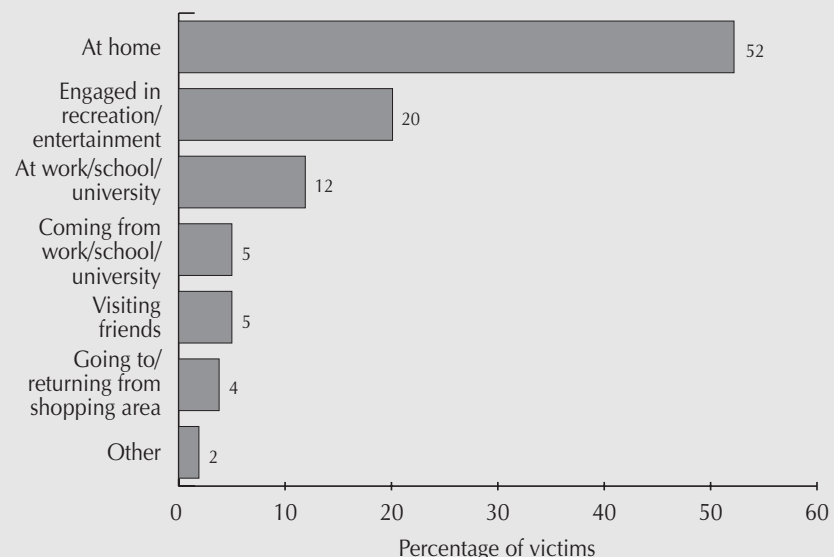
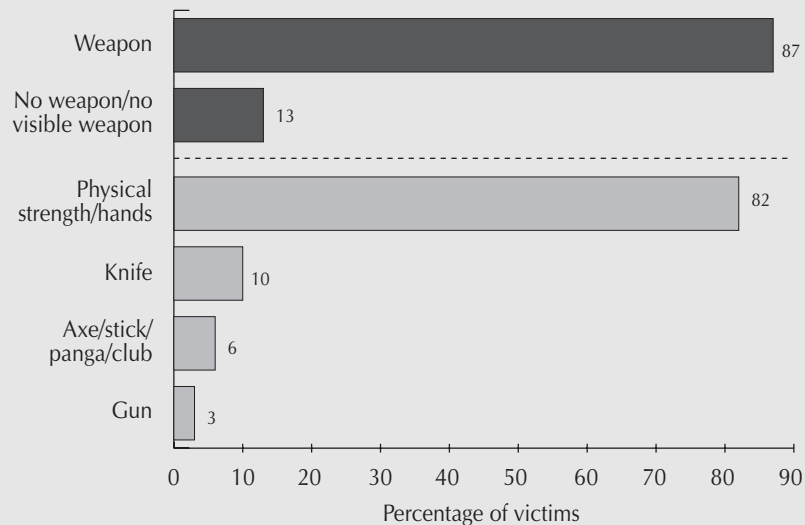


Figure 40: Use of weapons (black) and type of weapons (grey) used during assaults



(62%) said the injuries were serious enough to warrant hospital treatment. As in the case of burglary, this implies a significant burden on the public health system.

Was the offender known to the victim

The victim survey sought to determine whether or not the victim was known in some way to the offender. The vast majority of victims were acquainted with the offenders. Two-thirds knew the offender by name and 19% knew the offender by sight (figure 41). In Durban, by contrast, a majority of victims (56%) said they did *not* know the offenders.

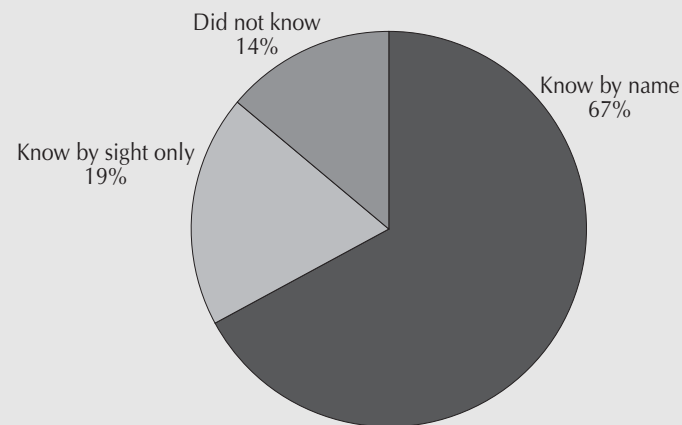
Of those victims who knew the offenders, 36% said it was a neighbour and 33% identified their spouse, partner or lover. Many victims were also assaulted by their friends (figure 42).

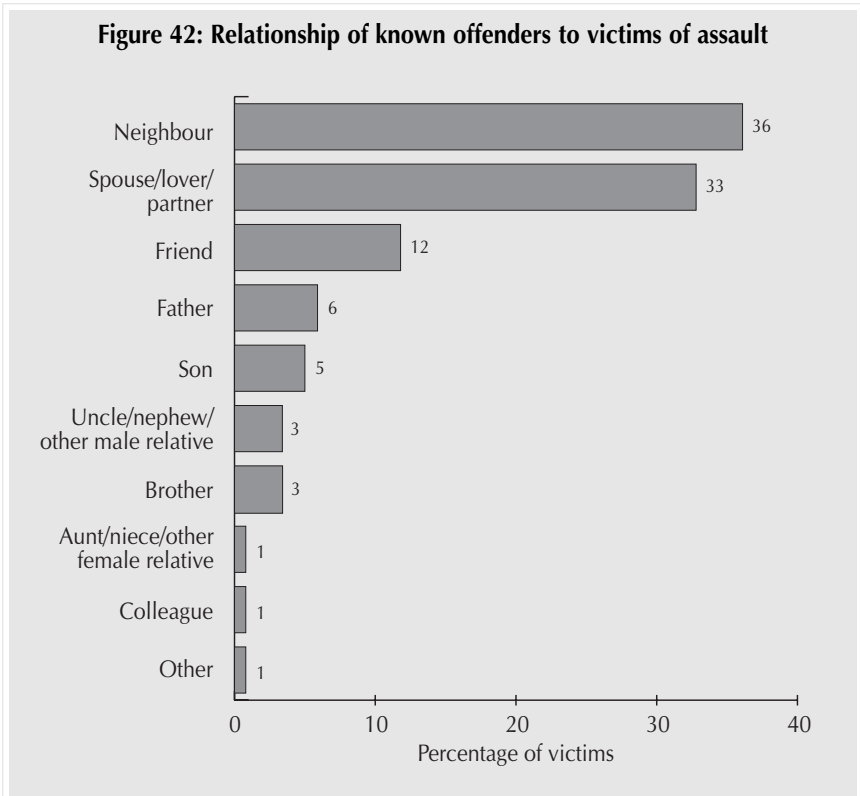
Number of offenders

Assault can take the form of one or more people attacking a single victim, or a number of offenders attacking a number of victims. With regard to the latter, the line between victims and offenders may become blurred with some individuals being both victims and offenders. The survey asked respondents how many offenders had assaulted them.

In the majority of cases (70%), the victim was assaulted by only one offender. Of

Figure 41: Extent to which victims of assault knew the offenders





the remaining cases, almost as many victims said they were assaulted by three or more offenders (16%), as those who were attacked by two offenders (14%).