

A world map with a light blue background and green and brown landmasses. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean, showing North and South America on the left and Europe and Africa on the right.

International Variations in Child Discipline: Harsh Discipline in the Developing World

**Desmond K. Runyan, MD, DrPH
The Kempe Center**

Culture and child abuse

- ⌘ society's shared fund of ideas, beliefs & behaviors about social conduct
- ⌘ "Culture is the negotiable template for daily life ... that directs parents in their parenting tasks & helps define unacceptable acts"
- ⌘ Culture includes the shared understandings among a group of people about how parents should raise their children.

Measurement issues

- ⌘ **Child abuse definitions & recognition vary by culture / country**
- ⌘ **Few countries collect official child abuse data**
- ⌘ **US has reputation for high homicide rate**
- ⌘ **Largest literature on child abuse is in US**
- ⌘ **Widespread perception that child abuse is US problem!**

Child discipline by parent report in the US (NC & SC 2003)

⌘ Spanking	45%
⌘ Spanking (object)	25%
⌘ Slapping face	6%
⌘ Pinching	6%
⌘ Yelling	75%
⌘ Taking privil.	85%
⌘ Time-out	79%



Harsh discipline in past year

⌘ Overall	4.3%
☑ Shaking<2	2.6%
☑ Beating	0.3%
☑ Burning	0.2%
☑ Kicking	0.3%
☑ Hitting with object (not on buttocks)	3.4%



North & South Carolina harsh discipline rates by selected demographics 2003

⌘ Age:

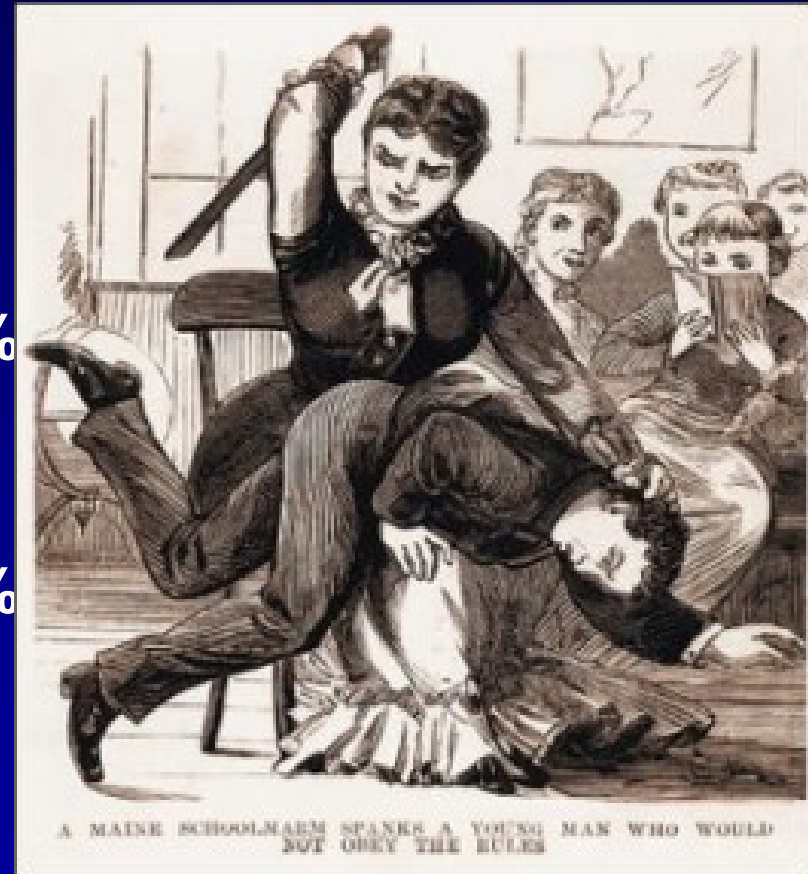
⌘ 0-4 yrs	2.8%
⌘ 5-8 yrs	5.3%
⌘ 9-12 yrs	5.9%
⌘ >12 yrs	3.8%

⌘ Gender

⌘ Male	3.4%
⌘ Female	5.3%

⌘ Perpetrator

⌘ Mother	3.6%
⌘ Father	2.2%



Western modes of child rearing

- ☒ **Antiquity - Infanticidal mode**
- ☒ **5th to 14th century -abandonment mode**
- ☒ **14th to 17th century - ambivalent mode**
- ☒ **18th century - intrusive mode**
- ☒ **19th century - socializing mode**
- ☒ **20th century - helping mode**

Infanticide in antiquity

- ⌘ **Supported by Plato and Aristotle**
- ⌘ **Ancient Greece - Infants examined by Council of elders- if weak or deformed thrown from mountaintop**
- ⌘ **Roman Law of Twelve Tables - forbade raising of deformed children**
- ⌘ **“Slaughter of the Innocents”**





20. *Theani Sidicini infans natus est ma-
que totidem, capite & ventre vno, binoq;*

uenni, cuiusdam puella, quodam sine hu-

Abandonment

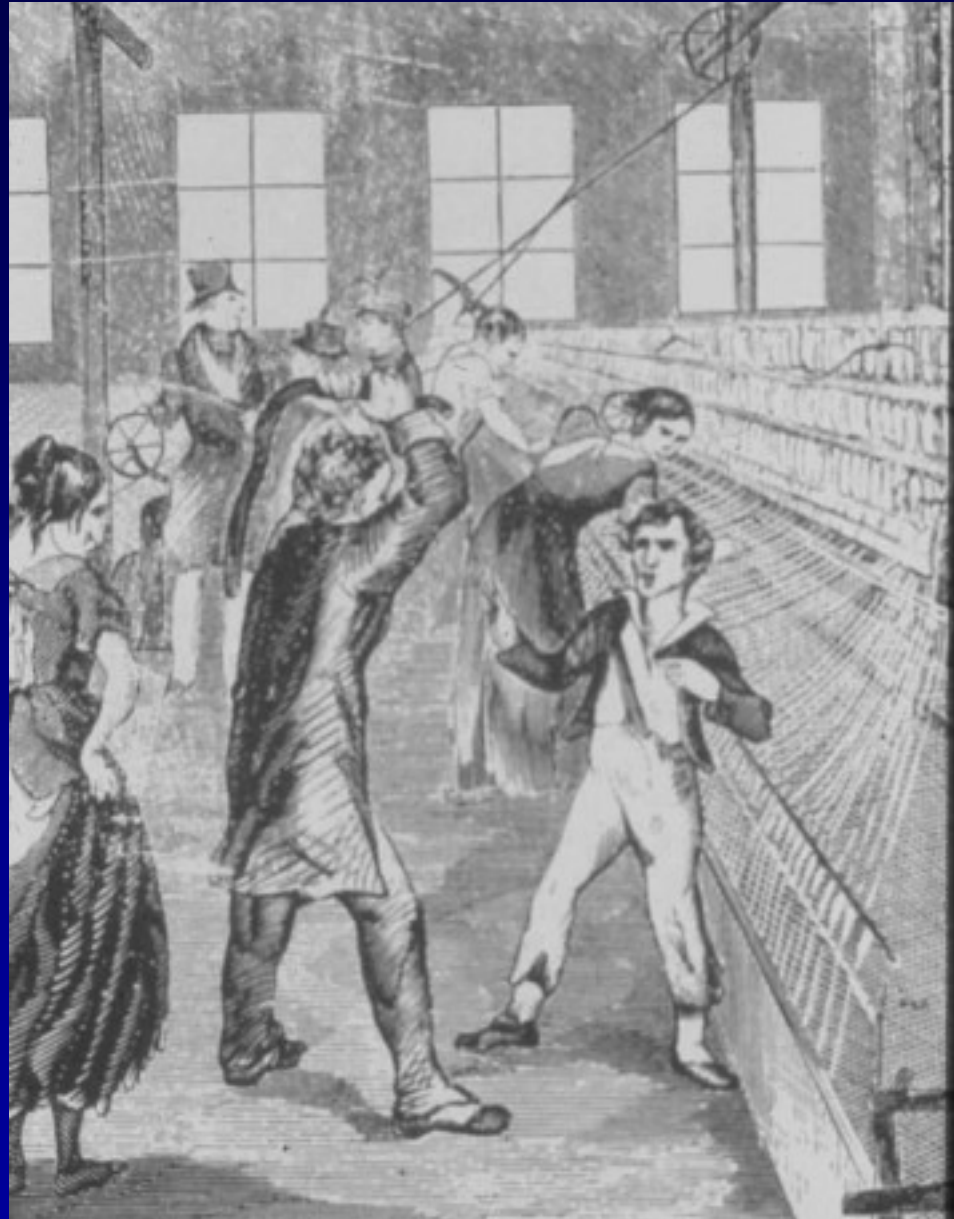
- ⌘ Founding of Rome
- ⌘ Abandonment of Moses
- ⌘ Development of Foundling Hospitals
- ⌘ Wet nurses & apprenticing
- ⌘ “Street Arabs” & “Guttersnipes”



Ambivalent mode



Intrusive mode



⌘ **“Withhold not correction from a child:
for if thou strike him with a rod, he
shall not die. Thou shalt beat him
with a rod and deliver his soul from
hell.”**

— **Proverbs 23: 13-14**

Socializing mode



HOME "FINISHERS": A CONSUMPTIVE MOTHER AND HER TWO CHILDREN

Helping Mode - 20th century



- ⌘ 1904 National Child Labor Committee
- ⌘ 1937 Fair Labor Practices Act
- ⌘ Development of kindergartens
- ⌘ 1962 Recognition of child abuse

International data on physical abuse

⌘ Egypt : a cross-sectional survey of children in 4th grade

☒ **37% were beaten or tied-up** & 26% reported physical injuries

⌘ South Korea:

☒ **69/1000 4th & 5th grade children report severe violence:** (defined as kicking, beating, biting, throwing, or threatening with a knife or a gun *more than 2 times a month*)

☒ **Parent : 67% whipped & 45% hit, kicked or beat children**

International data on physical abuse

⌘ Romania:

- ▣ 4.6% of children report severe & frequent abuse such as hit with object, burning, or being deprived of food
- ▣ 47% of parents admit to beating their children “regularly” & 16% report beating with objects.

WorldSAFE:

World Studies of Abuse & the Family Environment

- ⌘ An international project investigating violence toward women & children.**
- ⌘ *WorldSAFE* seeks to examine factors related to violent behavior, & see how these factors vary across cultures.**
- ⌘ Every *WorldSAFE* site has ties to community agencies or NGOs involved in violence against women or children**

Fielded *core survey questionnaires* for women, aged 15-49 with \geq one dependent child

***Sampling* conducted in similar ways**

- A defined population is selected.**
- Random sample of households**
- Within homes, a woman is randomly selected**
- An Index Child is randomly chosen**

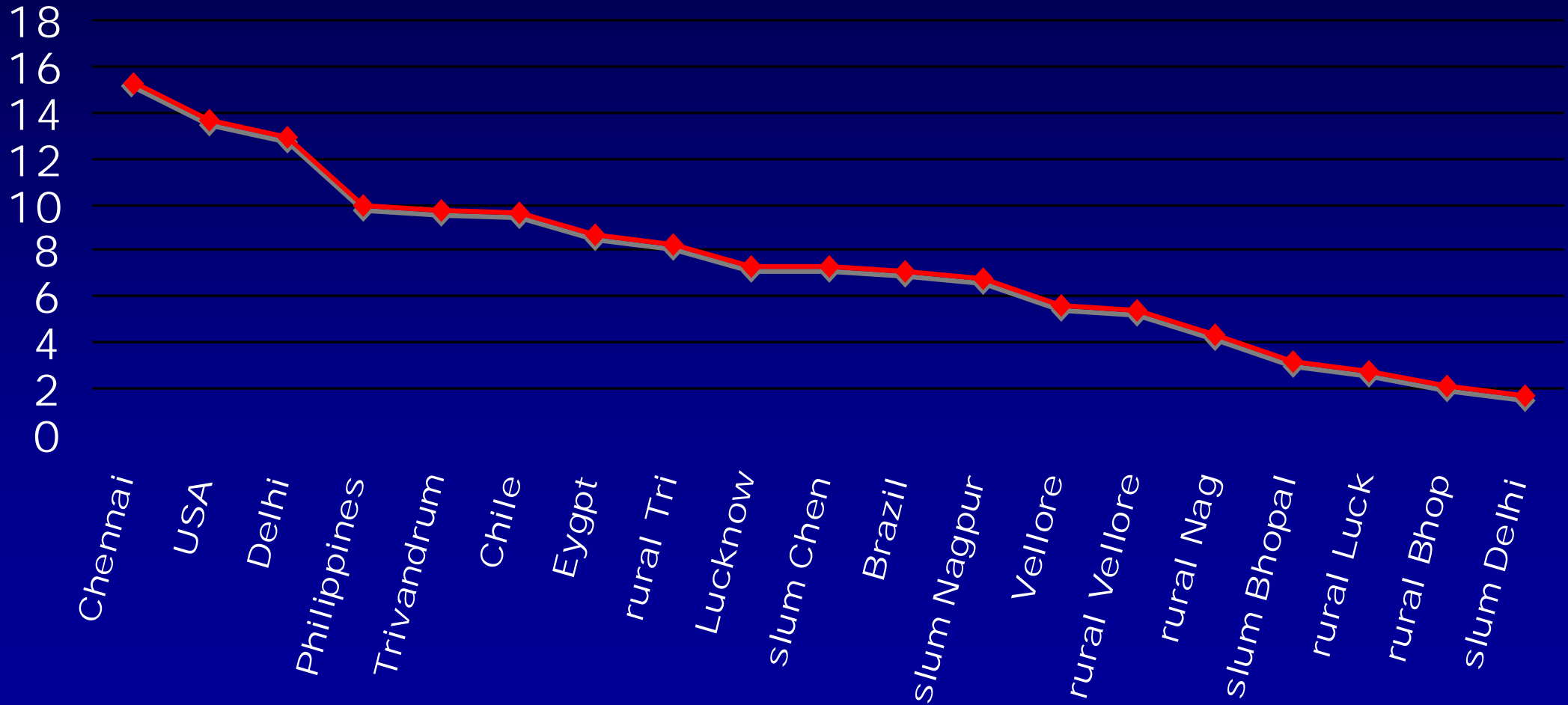
Interviews of 1/2 hour in the home

19 samples in 6 countries (14 in India)

- ⌘ Chennai non-slum
- ⌘ NC & SC in USA
- ⌘ Delhi Non-slum
- ⌘ Manila, Philippines
- ⌘ Trivandrum, India
- ⌘ Temuco, Chile
- ⌘ Ismailia, Egypt
- ⌘ Trivandrum-rural
- ⌘ Lucknow Non-slum
- ⌘ Chennai slum

- ⌘ Brazil slum
- ⌘ Nagpur slum
- ⌘ Vellore Non-slum
- ⌘ Vellore Rural
- ⌘ Nagpur rural
- ⌘ Bhopal slum
- ⌘ Lucknow rural
- ⌘ Bhopal rural
- ⌘ Delhi slum

Average years of maternal education



Measurement of poverty in WorldSAFE



⌘ Asked about possessions

- ☑ 0-13 items including radio, TV, heater, bicycle, etc.
- ☑ Summary measure: number of appliances

Parent-child conflict tactics scale

⌘ All adults use certain methods to teach children the right behavior or to address a problem.

I will read various methods that might be used & I want you to tell me how often you have used this with (*child's name*) in the last year.

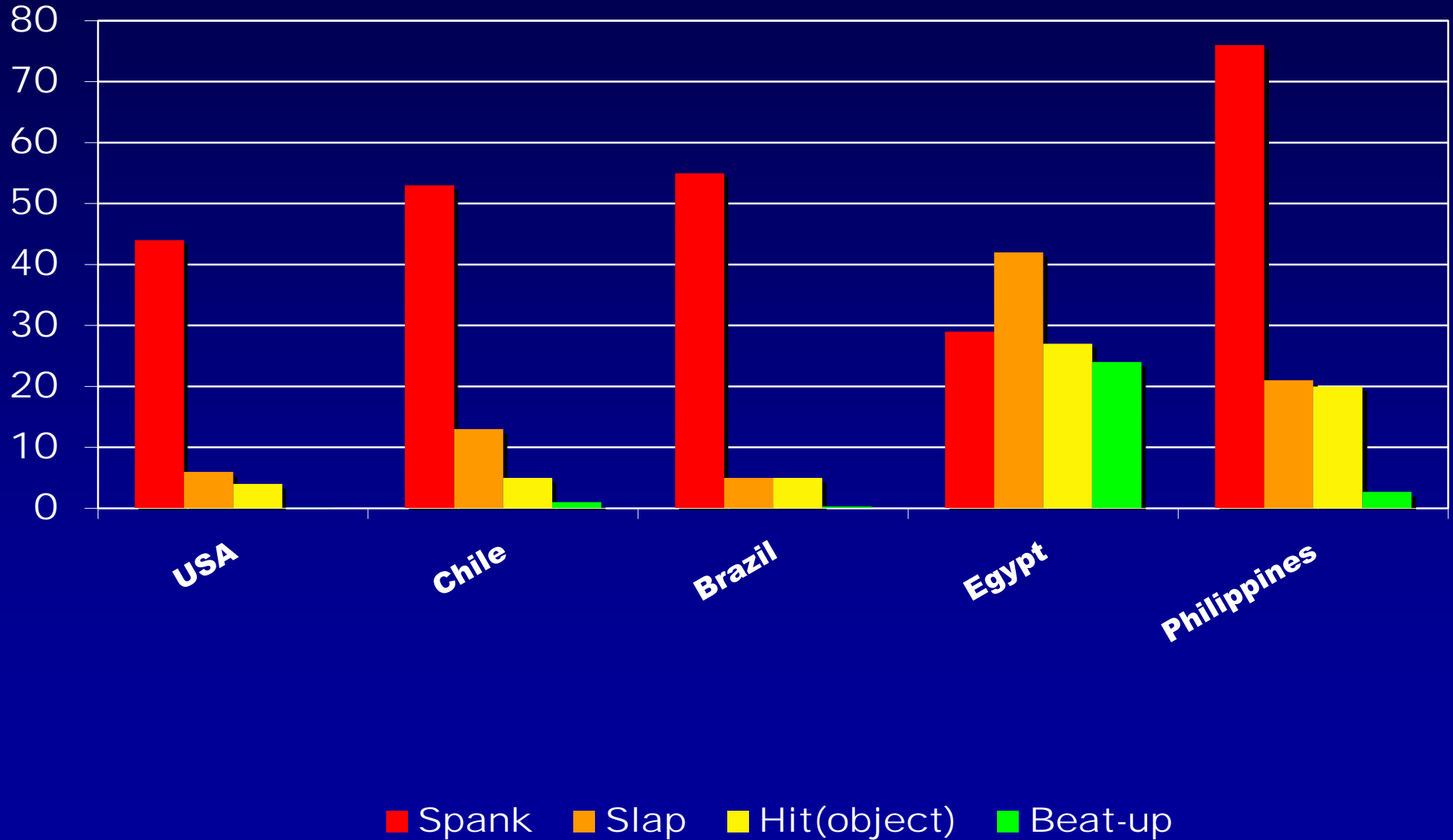
⌘ Tell me if you have done this to (*child's name*): never, once or twice, or three or more times in the last year.

36 items about discipline

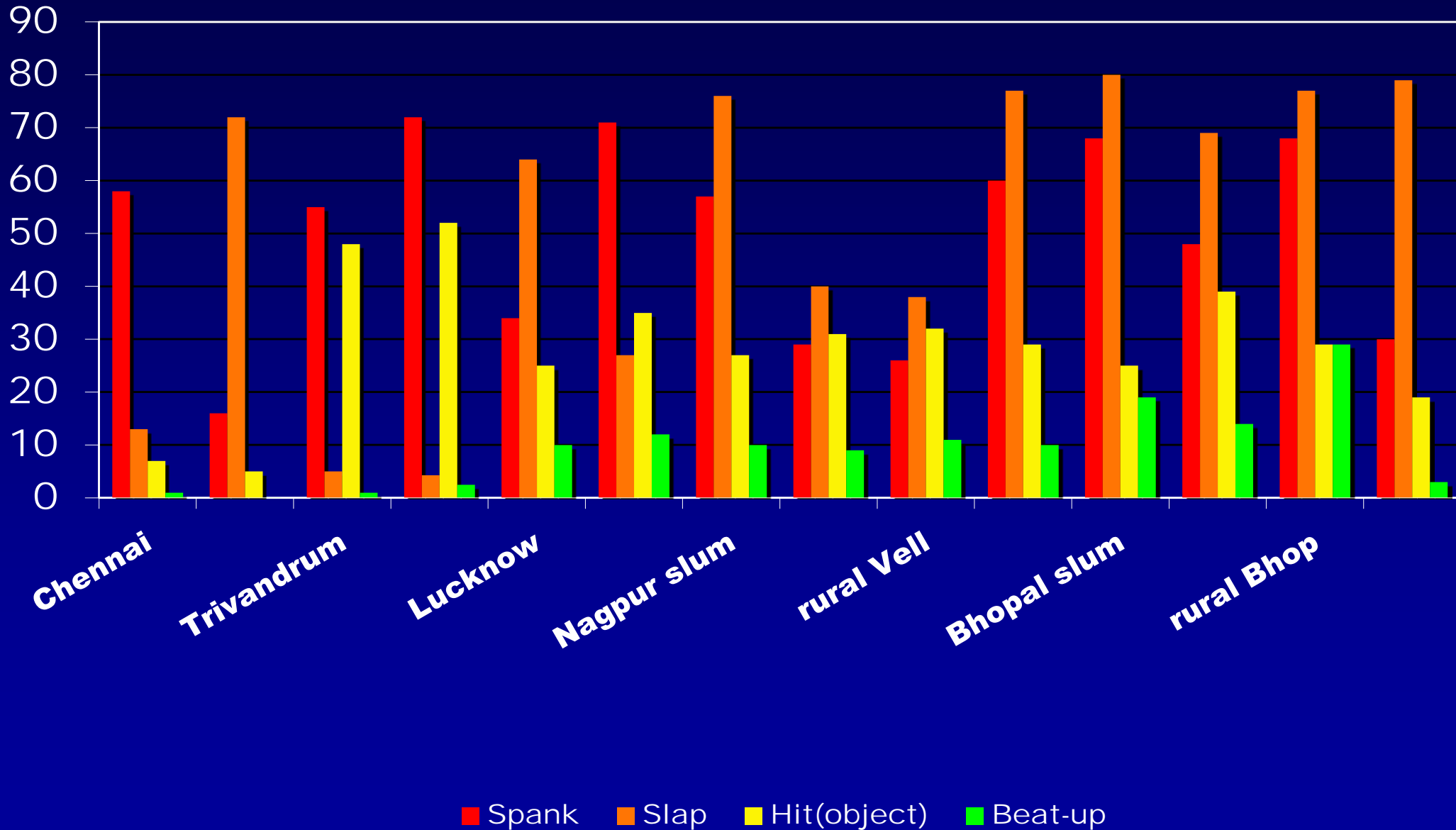
- ⌘ Explained why something was wrong
- ⌘ Told child to start or stop doing something
- ⌘ Slapped face or head
- ⌘ Made him/her stay in one place (time-out)
- ⌘ Shook him/her
- ⌘ Hit on buttocks with an object



Physical discipline in 5 countries



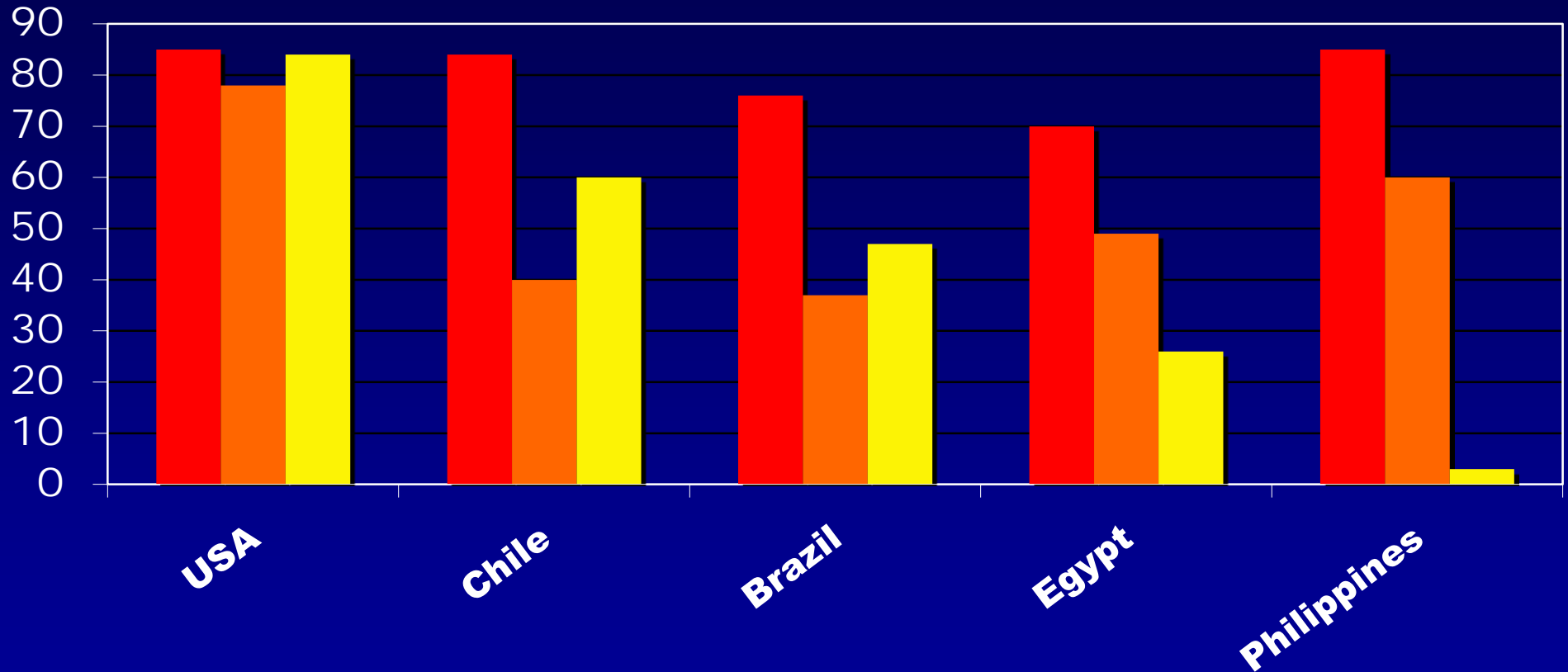
Physical discipline in India



Notes on physical discipline

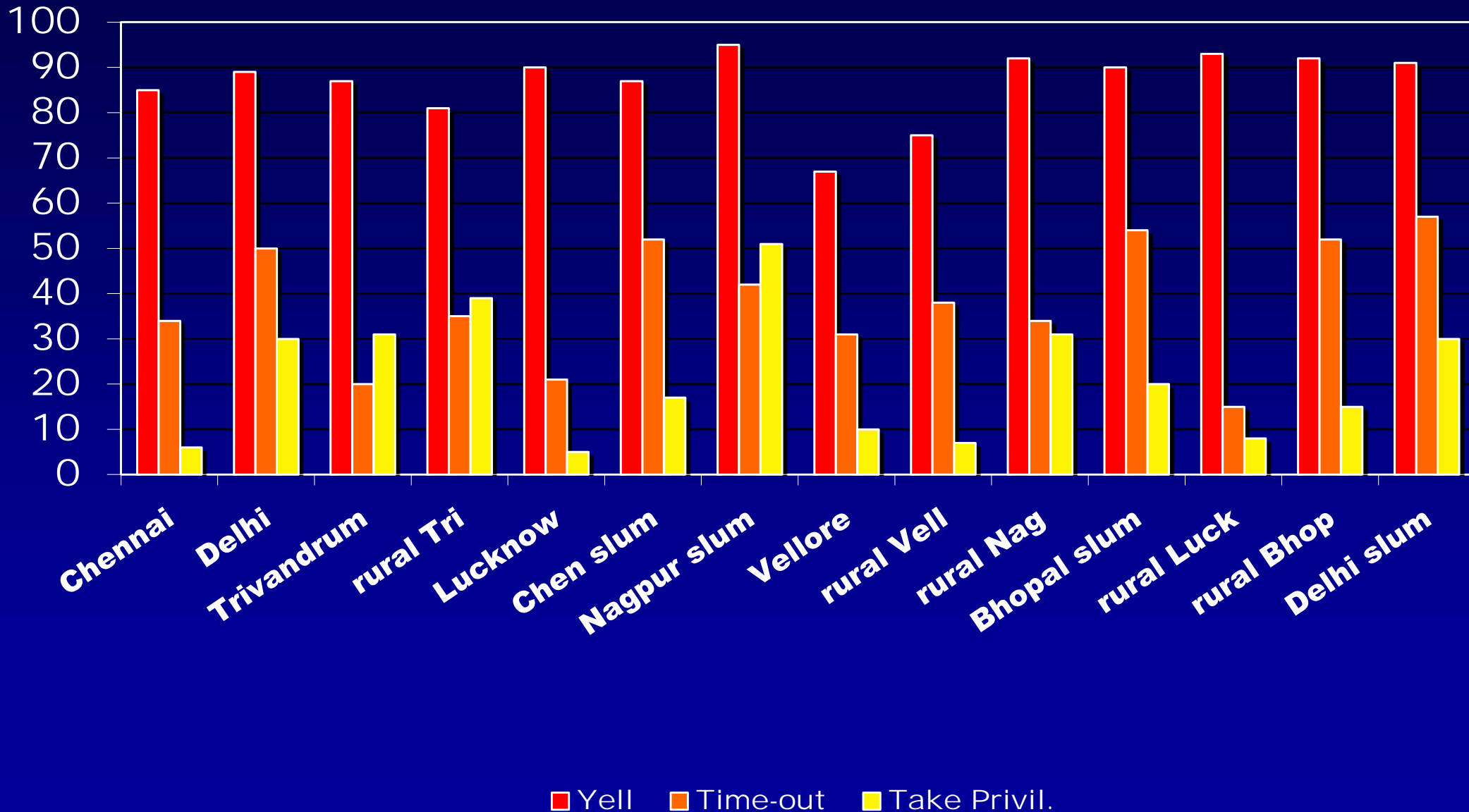
- ⌘ **In 11 of 14 Indian communities slapping face more common than spanking**
- ⌘ **In Chile, Brazil & Philippines, spanking more common**
- ⌘ **Beating-up reported in Egypt & in less educated communities of India**

Non-physical discipline in 5 countries



■ Yell ■ Time Out ■ take Privil.

Non-physical discipline in India



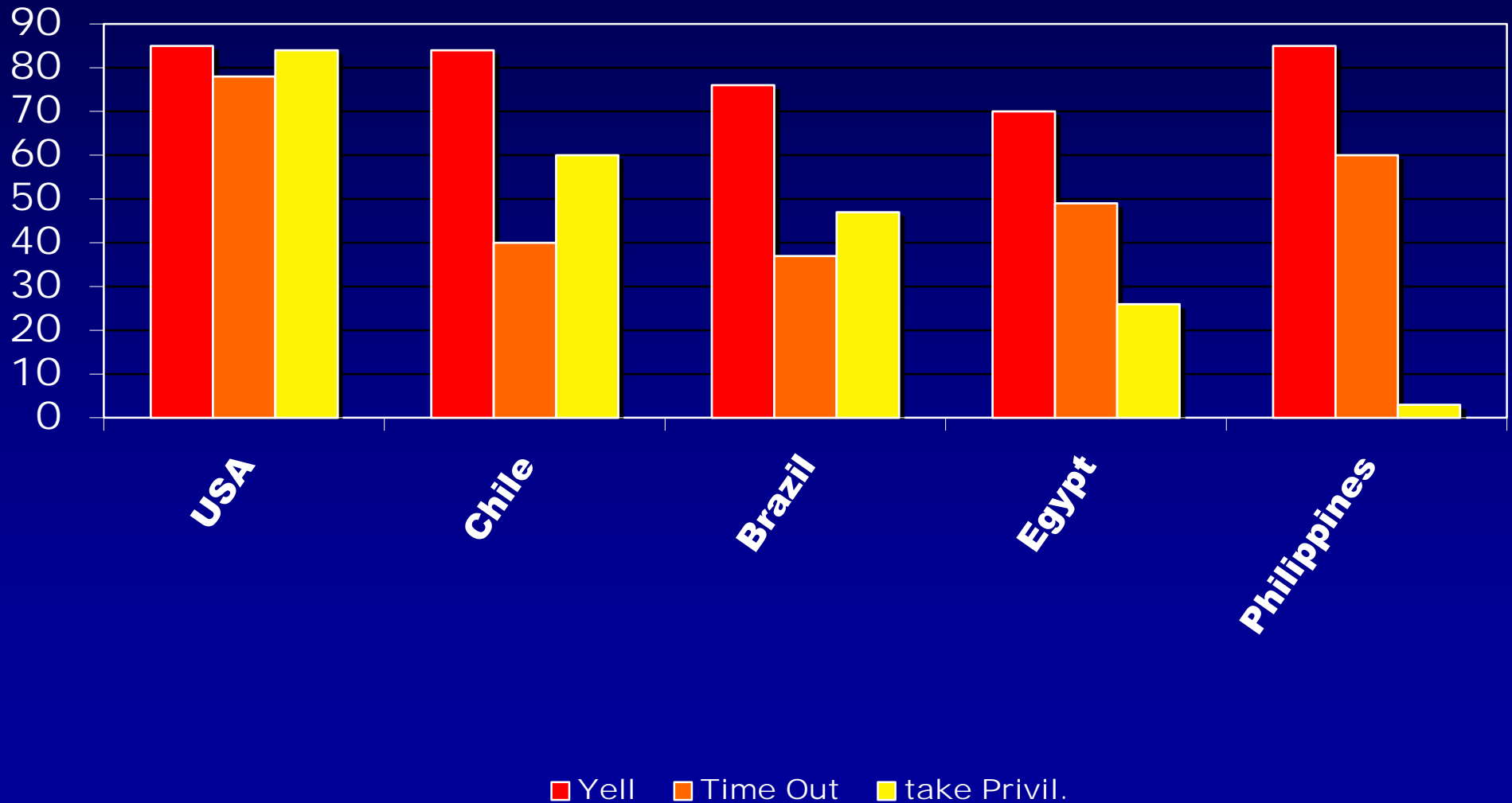
Notes on non-physical discipline

⌘ Yelling is frequent

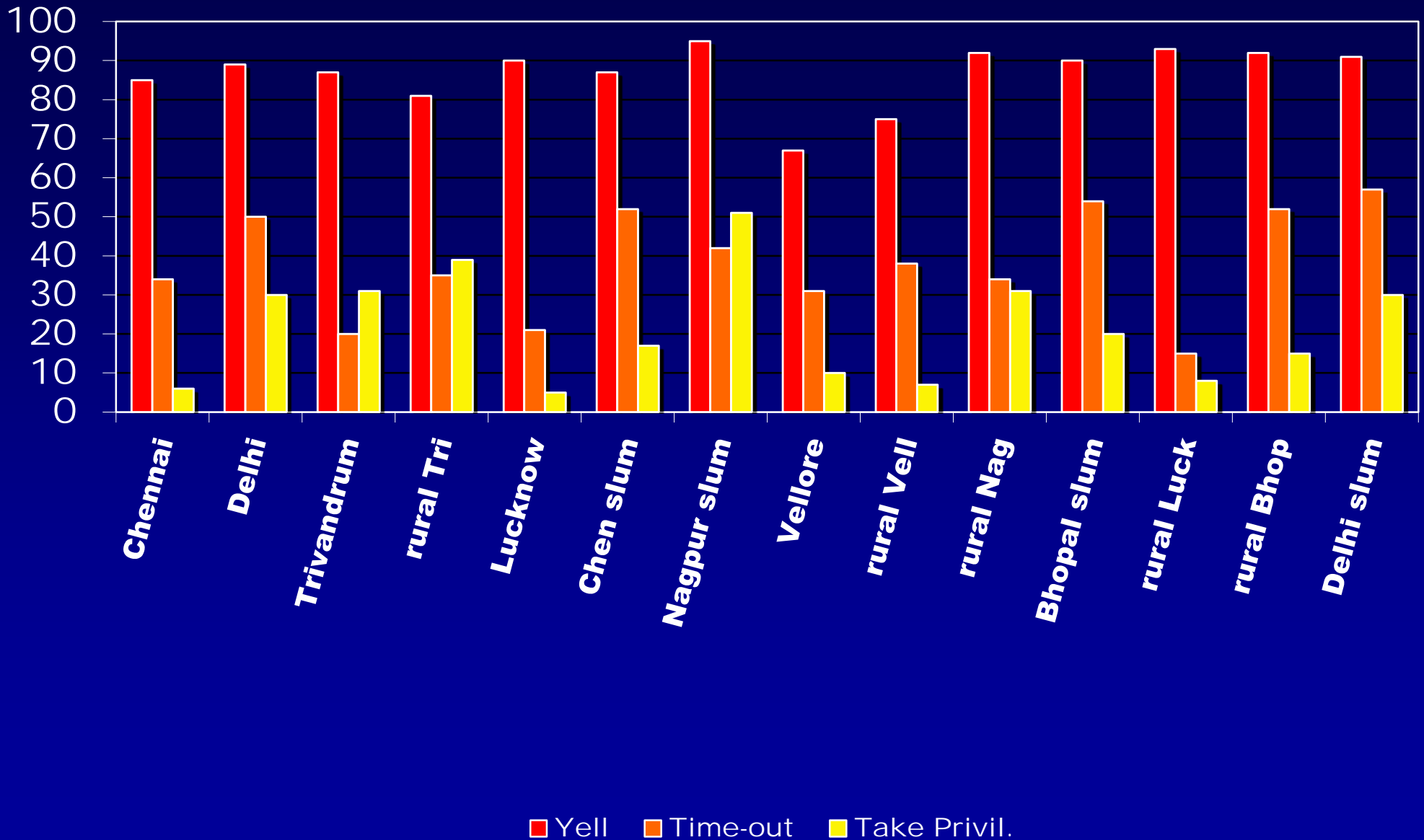
⌘ Time-out less common in developing countries

⌘ Taking privileges away frequent in US, Chile and one Indian slum

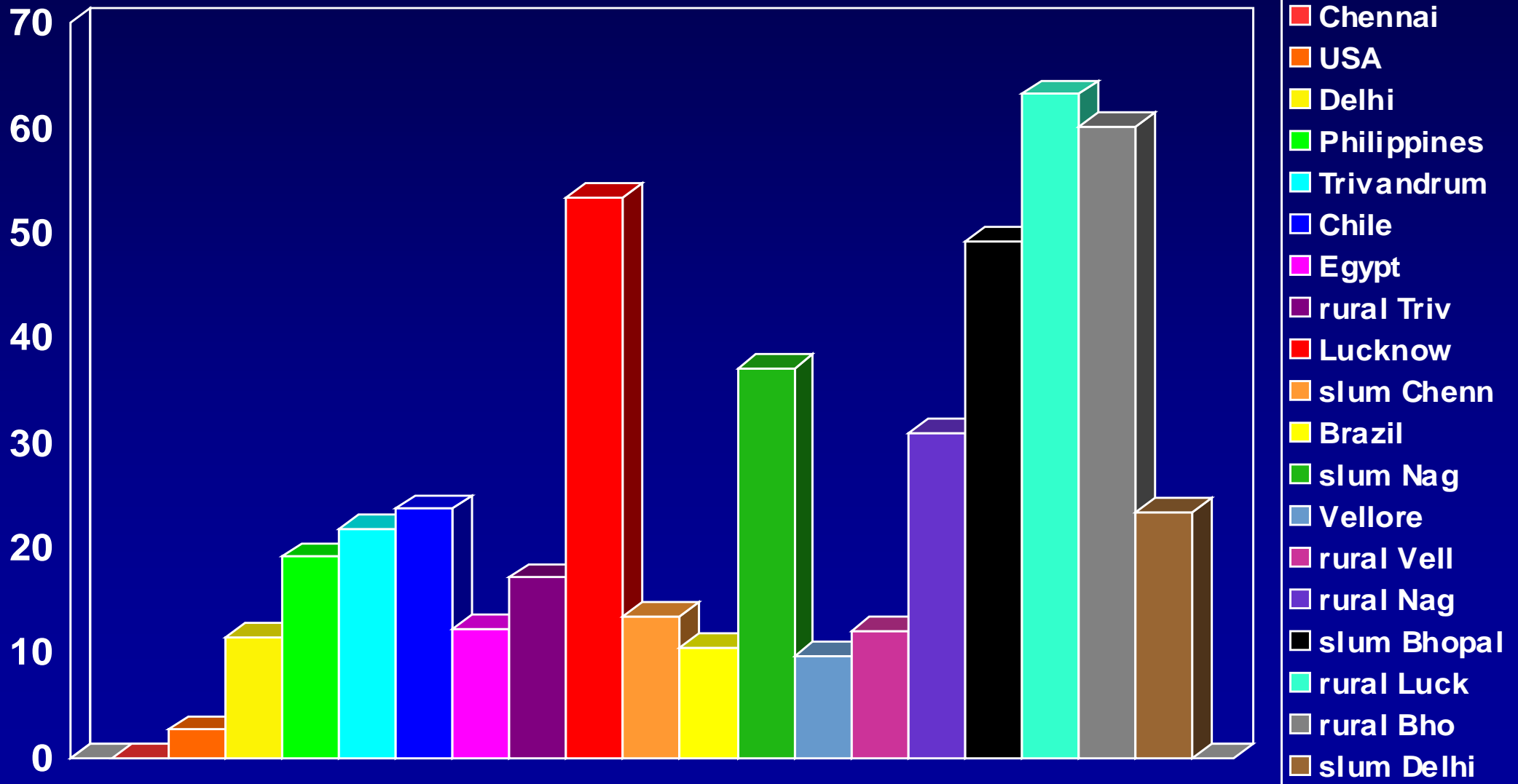
Emotional/ Psych discipline in 5 countries



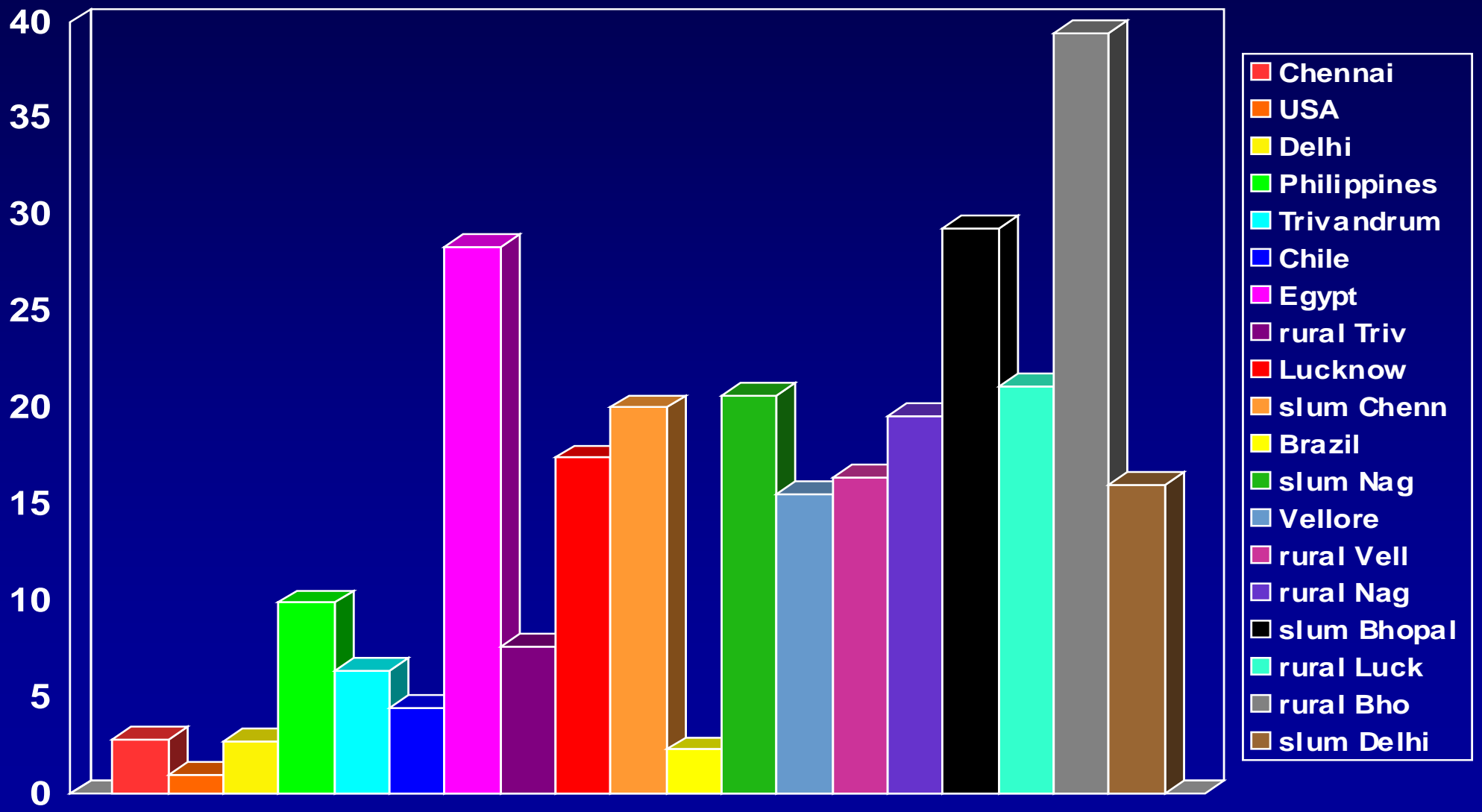
Emotional/ psych discipline in India



Percent parental self-report of shaking children under 2 years of age



Percent parental self-report of harsh punishment (abuse?)

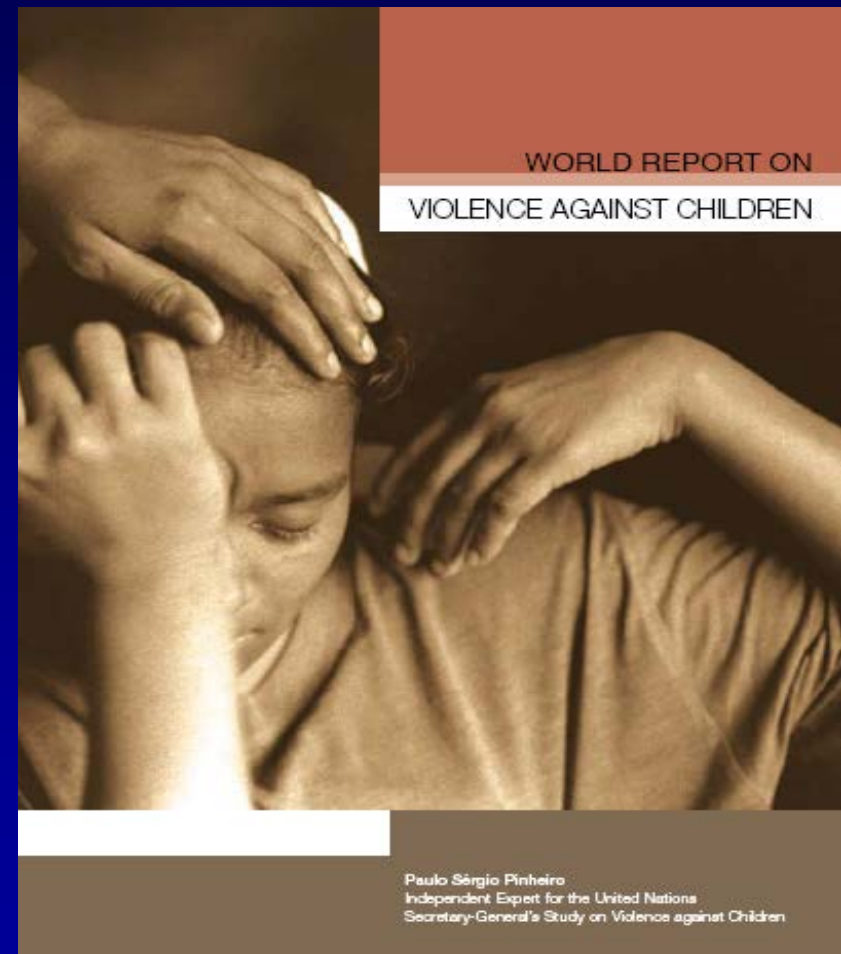


Notes on harsh punishment & shaking

- ⌘ **More than 10% of infants are shaken in every community but the US & Chennai**
- ⌘ **Median rate of harsh punishment in low & middle income communities is 4 times the US**
- ⌘ **In Bhopal the rate of harsh punishment is >30%**
- ⌘ **India alone contains the lowest & highest rates**
- ⌘ **Strong relationship to years of maternal education**

World Report on Violence Against Children

- ⌘ **Paucity of population-based data in most countries.**
- ⌘ **Most instruments developed in Western countries and translated (JVQ, PC CTS)**
- ⌘ **Recommended scientists and policymakers develop a shared set of definitions and research tools**



Three Tools (ICAST)

- ⌘ **Complementary research instruments developed in multi-national, multi-lingual, multi-cultural context.**
- ⌘ **Instrument for children, young adults, and parents.**
- ⌘ **Intended to drive research, policy, advocacy, and evaluation.**
- ⌘ **A tool kit—instruments, field guides, ethical considerations, data entry templates.**

Development

- ⌘ **Step 1 Initial consultation: Three day meeting with approx 50 child protection researchers and clinicians, after the ISPCAN World Congress in Brisbane.**
- ⌘ **Working groups discussed their experiences measuring child abuse and drafted preliminary questionnaires**
- ⌘ **Leaders of the working groups refined the draft tools through email exchanges**

Development (cont)

- ⌘ **Step 2 Delphi (expert review) studies.**
Approx 120 experts around the world were asked by ISPCAN to participate.
- ⌘ They were divided randomly into two groups: ICAST R and ICAST P.
- ⌘ Limited review of ICAST C (roughly 10 participating scientists)

Pilot testing

⌘ ICAST R

- ☑ Colombia:
- ☑ DR Congo:
- ☑ Egypt:
- ☑ India:
- ☑ Kyrgyzstan:
- ☑ Lebanon:
- ☑ Malaysia:
- ☑ Russia:

⌘ ICAST C

- ☑ Russia
- ☑ Iceland
- ☑ India
- ☑ Columbia

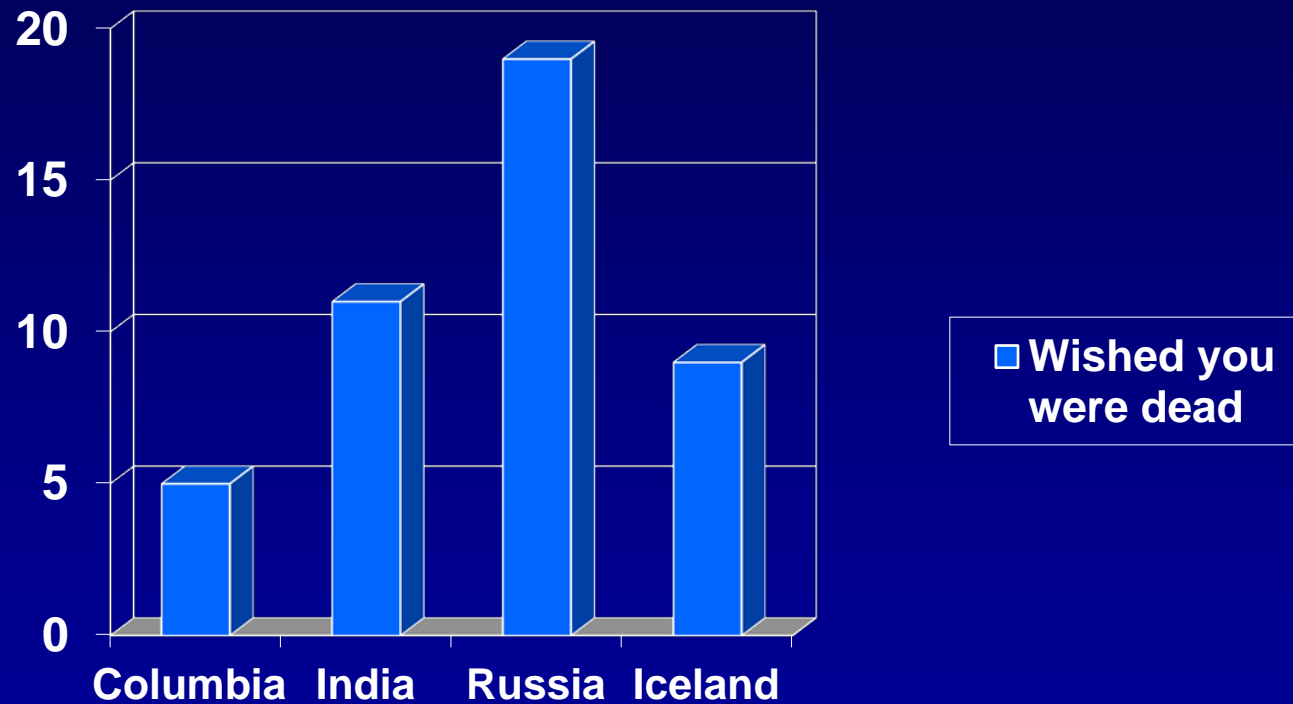
⌘ ICAST P

- ☑ Columbia
- ☑ Egypt
- ☑ India
- ☑ Lebanon
- ☑ Malaysia
- ☑ Russia
- ☑ DR Congo

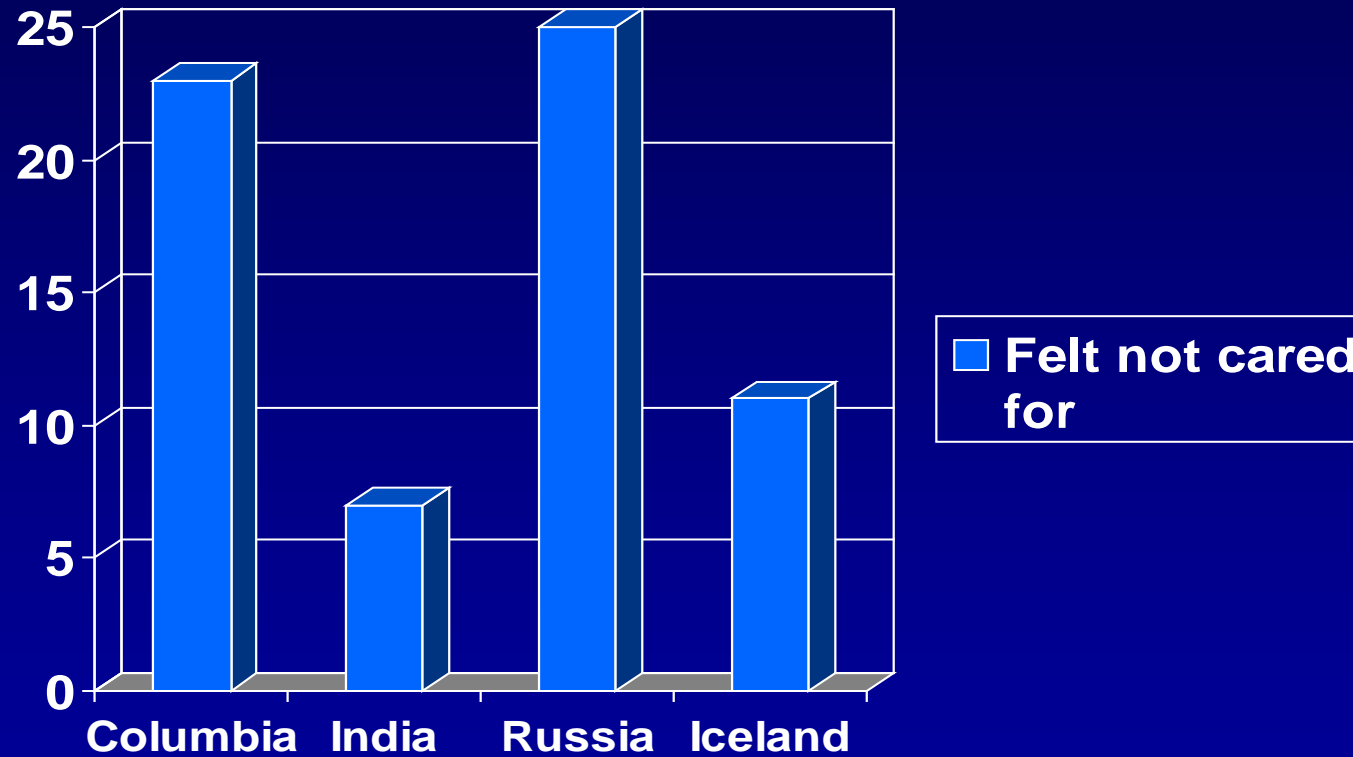
Field testing

- ⌘ **Convenience sample of approximately 120 subjects per instrument per sight.**
- ⌘ **Translation, back translation.**
- ⌘ **Local ethical review where possible.
ISPCAN ethical review for all sights.**
- ⌘ **Focus groups**
- ⌘ **Local data entry**
- ⌘ **Central data cleaning and analysis**

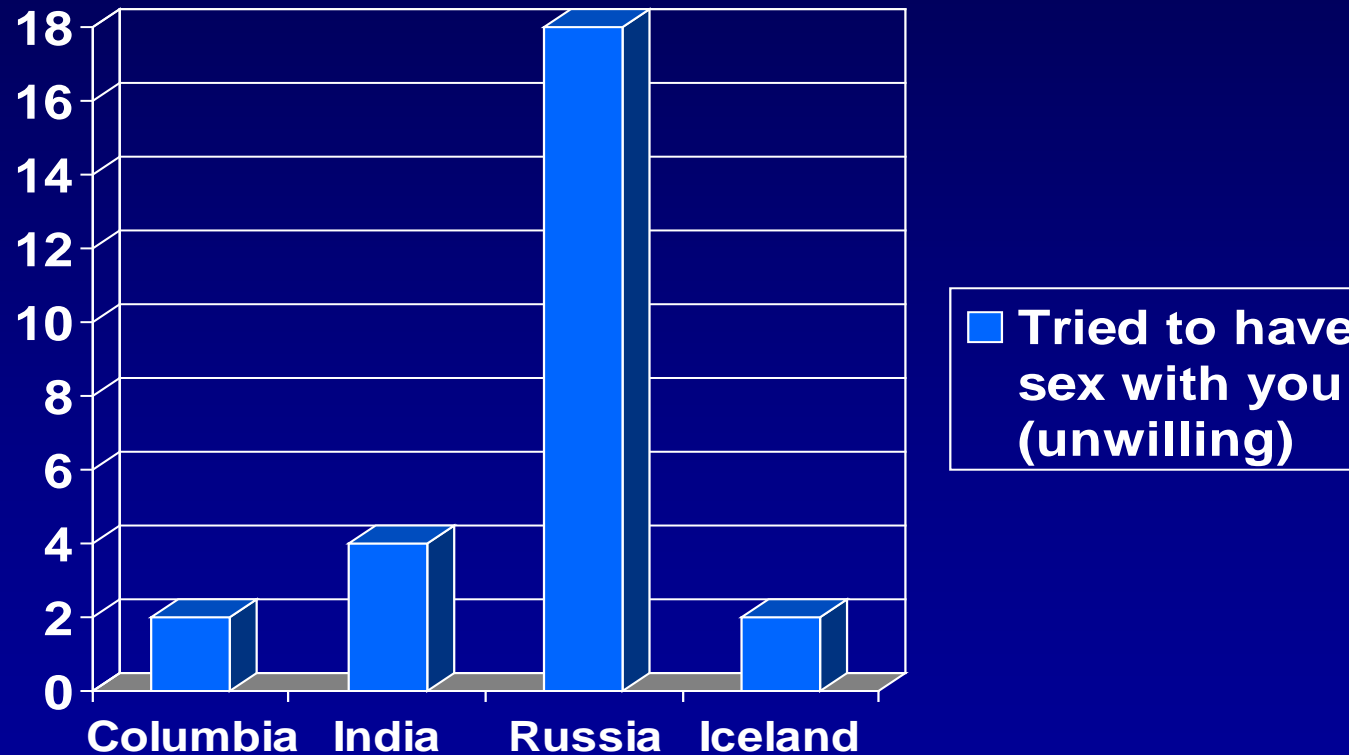
Psychological victimization example (ICAST CH)



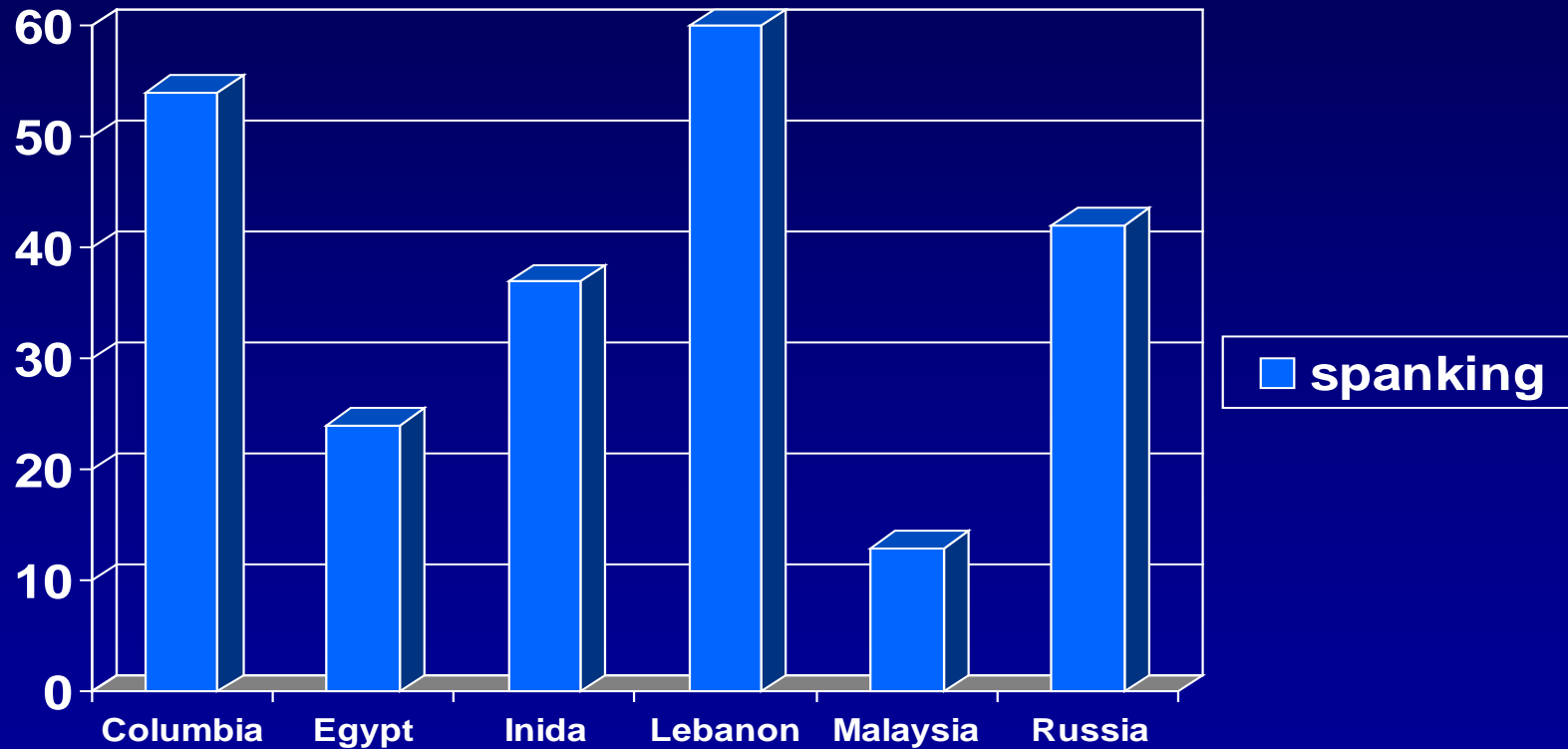
Neglect example (ICAST CH)



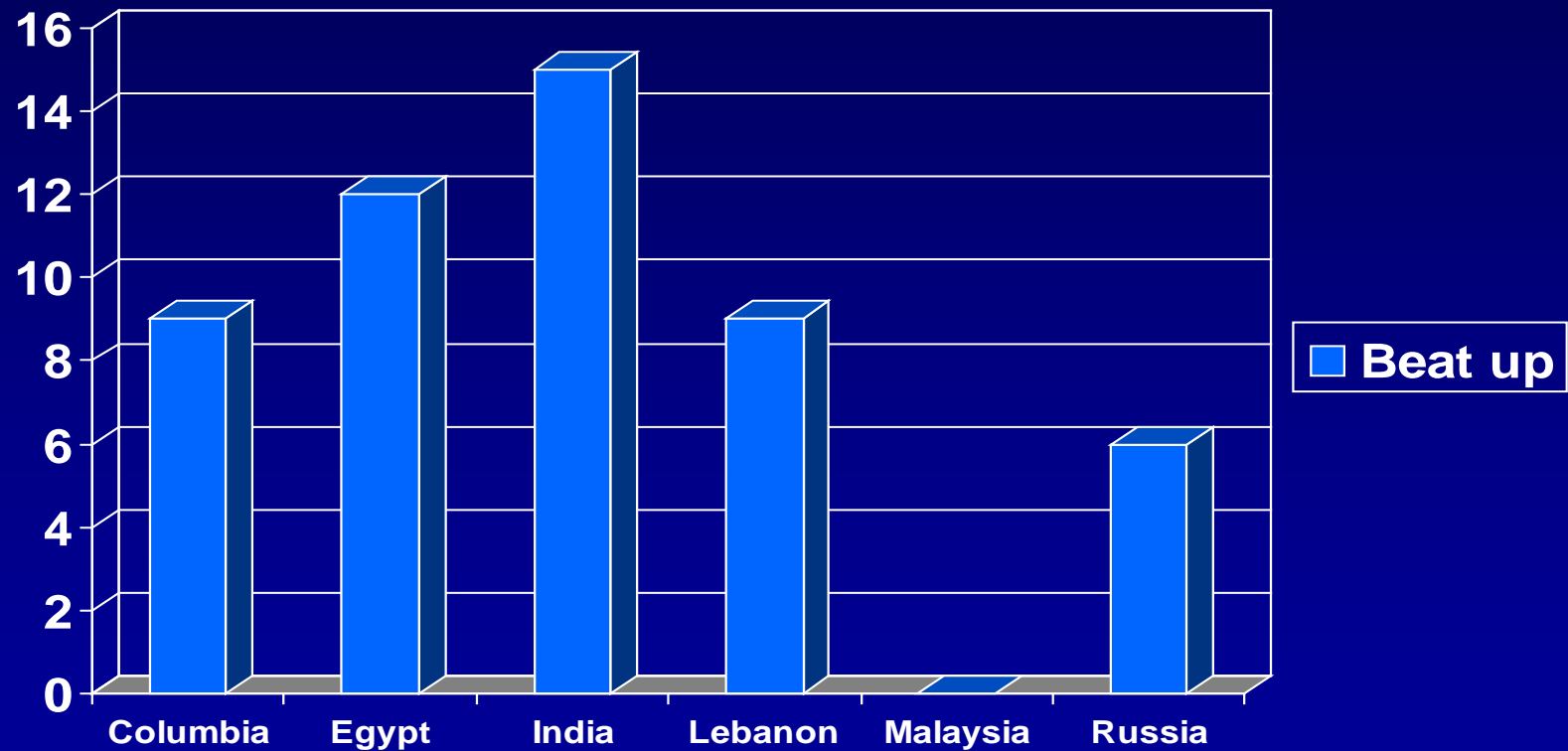
Sexual victimization example



Physical victimization example



Severe physical victimization example



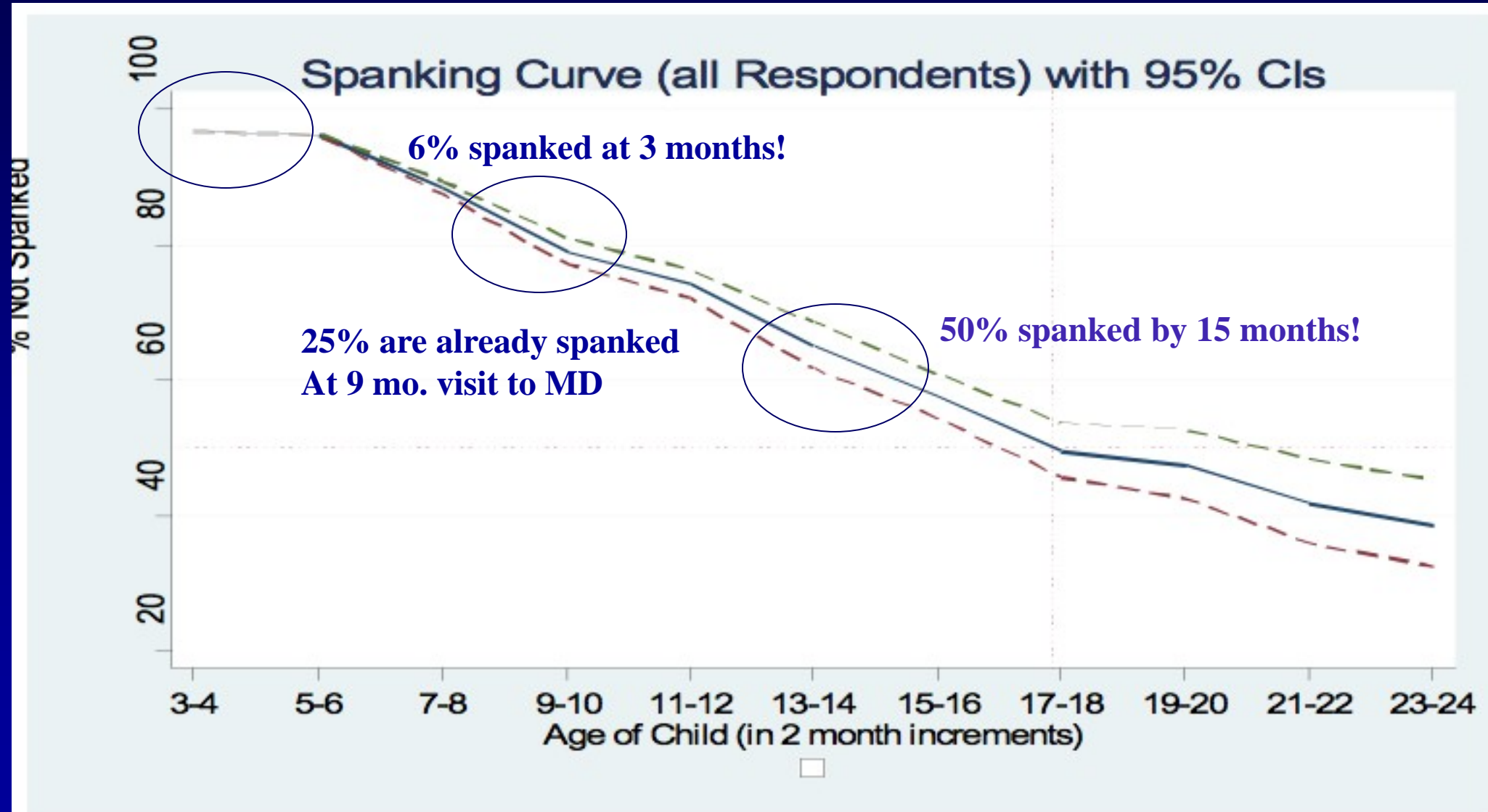
Application

- ⌘ **Studies in various stages of development in Georgia, Italy, Belarus, Greece, Ecuador, China, Thailand, Switzerland, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Saudi Arabia**
- ⌘ **The Georgia study was commissioned by UNICEF Georgia coordinating with the Ministry of Education to inform the development of a Safe Child and Safe Schools policy**

Recent NC spanking data

- ⌘ **Survey of nearly 3000 parents of NC children less than 2 sampled by birth certificates**
- ⌘ **Anonymous telephone survey**
- ⌘ **Used PC-CTS**
- ⌘ **52% response rate**

Percent of children unspanked by age in months



Summary and discussion

- ⌘ **World perception that US has biggest problem of child abuse**
- ⌘ **Evolution of less violent approaches to discipline over time**
- ⌘ **Survey data reveal that nearly all parents yell**
- ⌘ **Spanking is common in the countries we studied**
- ⌘ **22 countries have outlawed corporal punishment**
- ⌘ **4.3% of US children are harshly physically punished**

Summary II

- ⌘ **Low & middle income countries have a higher rate of harsh punishment, psychological punishment, & shaking**
- ⌘ **15% of low & middle income children appear to be physically abused**
- ⌘ **With the addition of neglect & sexual abuse, large portions of the world's children are in harms way**
- ⌘ **We didn't include spanking of children at 3 months of age as abuse but AAP anticipatory guidance recommendations may be too late**