



Outmigration of fathers and child discipline – Prevalence of and risk factors for physical punishment

UNICEF Nepal
Discussion document
August 2015

Executive summary

Migration patterns

- Roughly **30% of children live with at least one parent not present** in the household; international migration accounts for 61% of parental absence
- **Fathers account for 97% of international migration of parents**; 18% of children have fathers who live in a different country

Prevalence of physical punishment

- On average, **more than half (55%) of children** in Nepal have been exposed to some sort of **physical punishment** over the previous month; 14% have been exposed to severe physical punishment
- Only 13% of children have experienced exclusively non-violent disciplining methods

Risk factors of physical punishment

- The most important risk factor is parents' believe in the necessity of physical punishment
- Boys tend to experience more physical punishment than girls
- Children in rural settings experience more physical punishment
- Single parent households tend to apply more physical punishment than households with both parents
- Physical punishment practices tend to decrease with wealth, mother's education, household head's education, as well as the age of the caretaker

Migration and risk factors

- **Migration** of fathers, on average, is associated with an **8 percentage point increase in physical punishment** at home
- However, this risk applies in particular to **households without any male adults** present
- Further, highly educated mothers without father's support tend to apply more physical punishment

Policy implications

- **Further research** on physical punishment and migration should ideally include
 - Information on who is administering which form of violence (understanding gender differences)
 - Employment information for mothers to further investigate the puzzle of highly educated mothers
- From a **policy perspective**, the difference in physical punishment in families with international migration vs. families without has **little practical significance** in light of the very **high levels of physical punishment overall**
 - Instead, policies focused on driving down overall punishment rates should be a priority
 - The most predictive variable is changing beliefs, i.e., large-scale programs to change overall beliefs are likely to have the largest impact (e.g., information programs, education via TV shows)

Agenda

Parental absence in Nepal

Child discipline in Nepal

The interplay of international migration and physical punishment

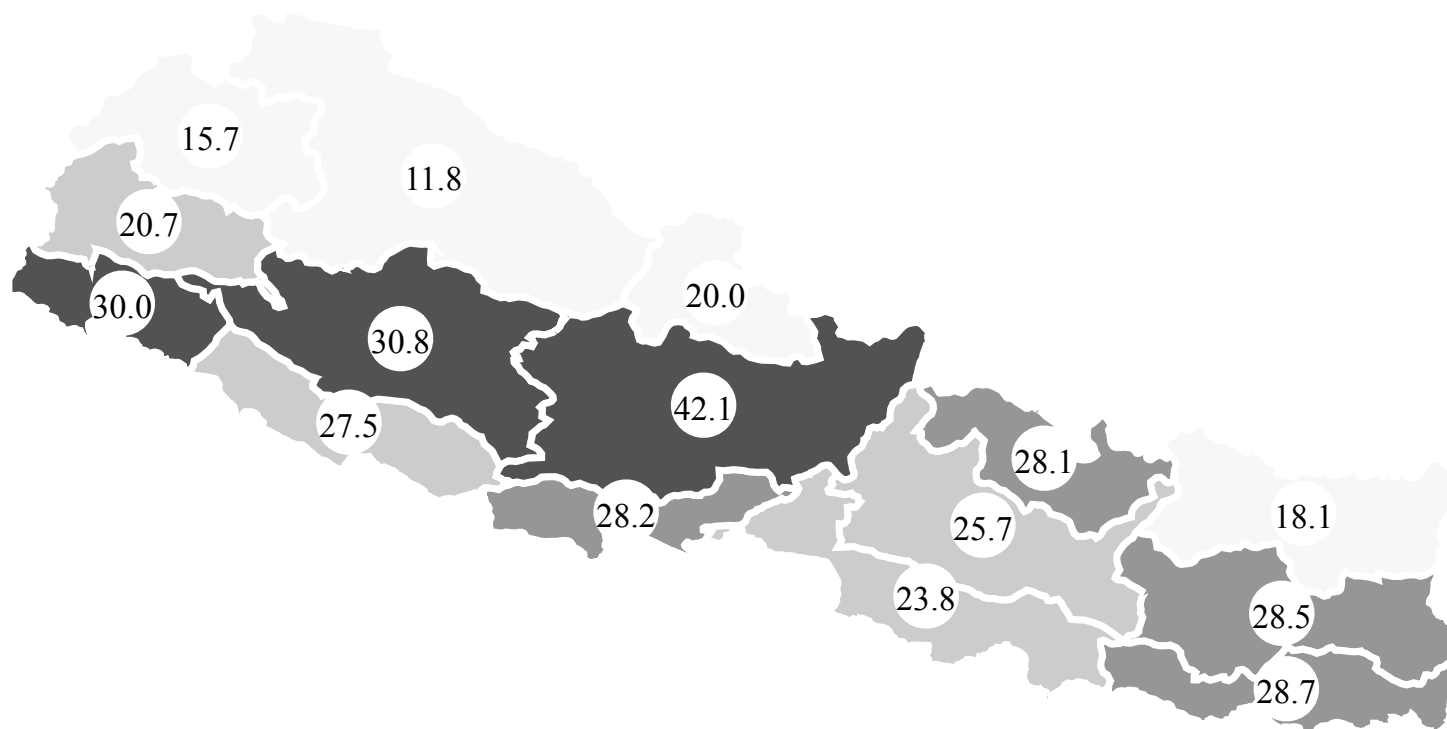
Outmigration and physical punishment: Possible channels

Conclusion

In Nepal, 28% of children (age 0-17) do not live in the same household as their fathers

Absence of fathers by region

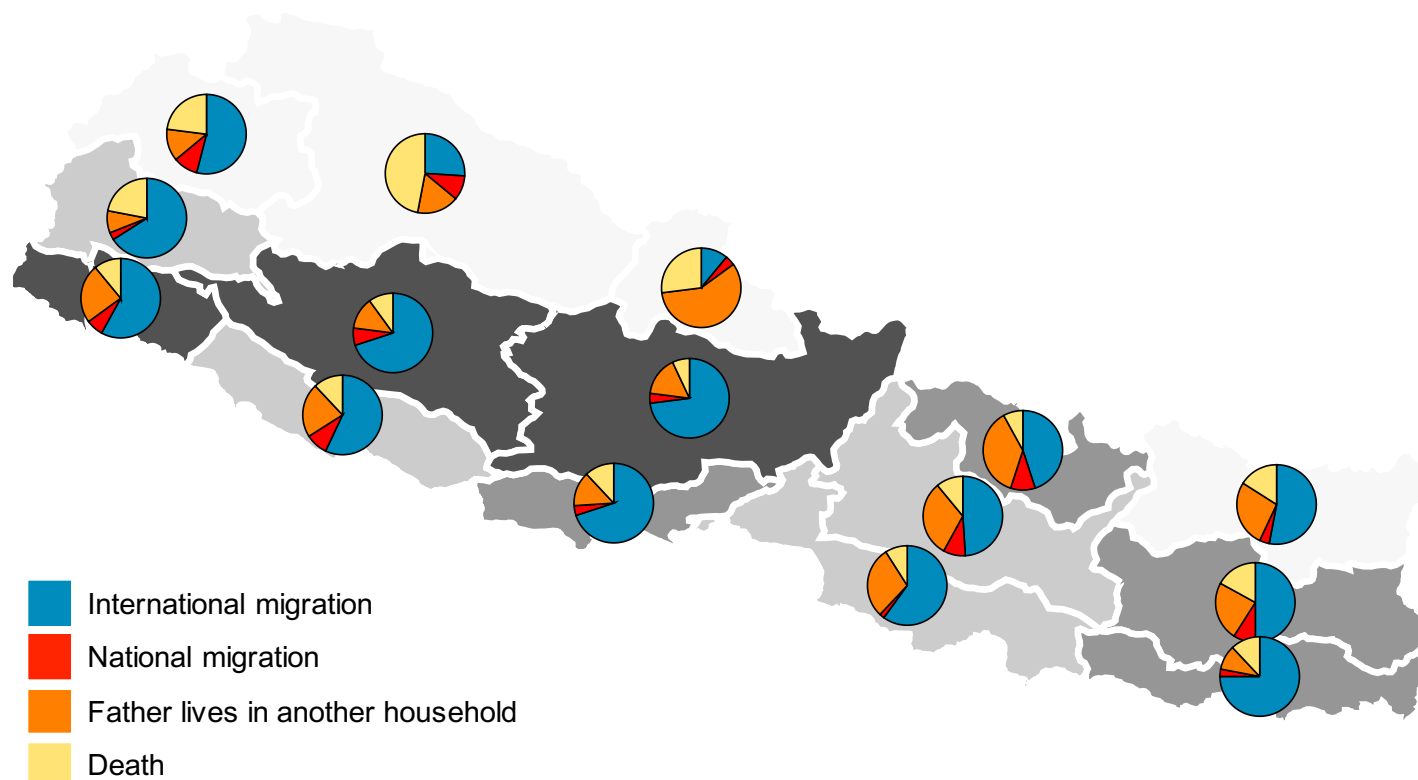
Percentage share of children who live without their father



- In Nepal, 28% of children (age 0-17) do not live in the same household as their fathers
 - Part of this is driven by older children (>15 years) who have **already moved out**
 - Other reasons are **international migration, national migration, or death**
- Paternal absence is highest in Western and Mid-Western Hills as well as in Far-Western Terai regions

On average, international migration accounts for 62% of paternal absence in Nepal

Reasons for living without a father
Percent of total number of children without father

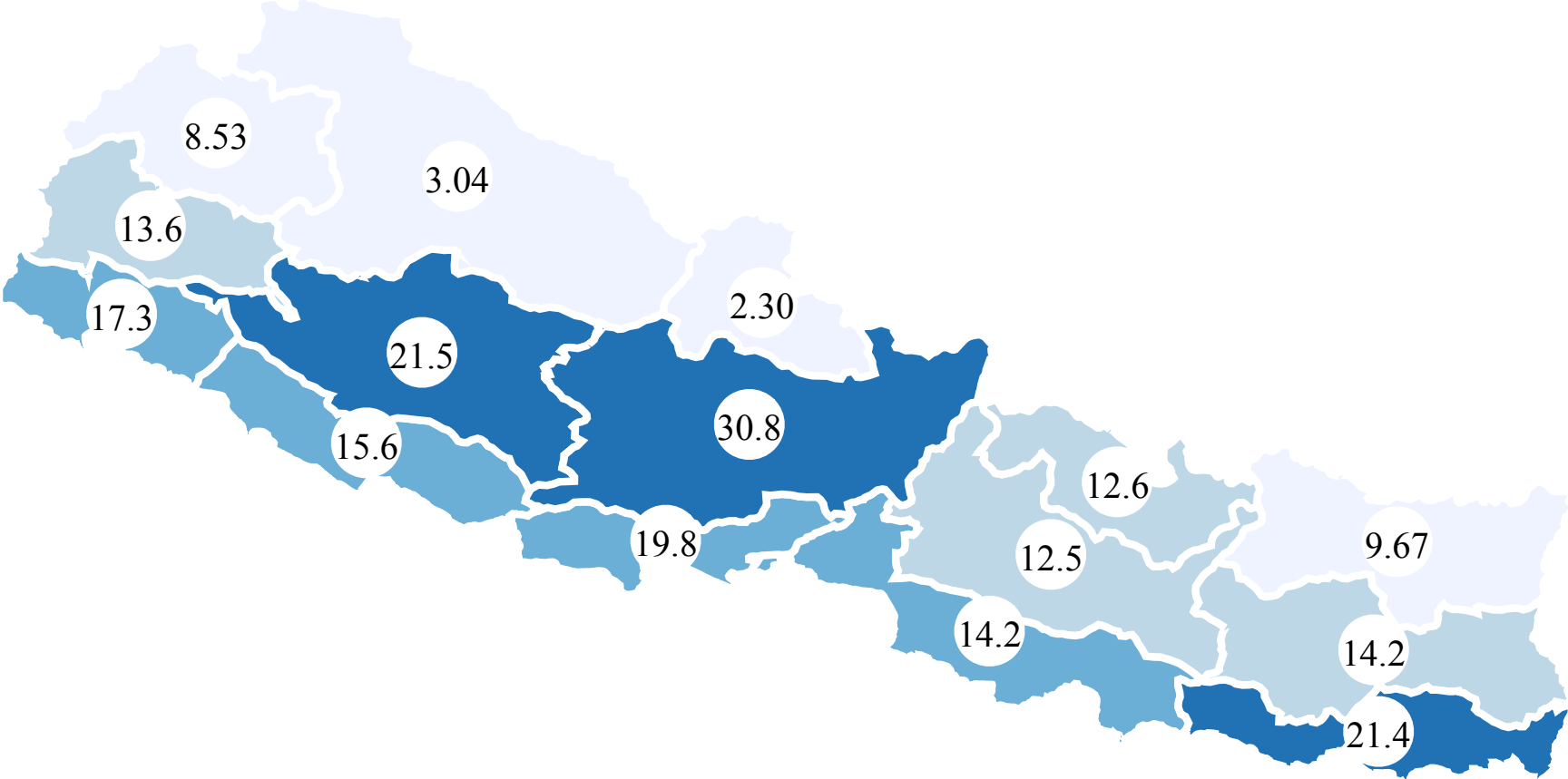


- International migration accounts for **more than 50% of paternal absence in 12 out of 15 regions**
- In Western and Mid-Western Mountain regions, the primary cause of father absence is death or living in other households – however, their overall rate of paternal absence is lower (12% in Mid-Western Mountain and 20% in Western Mountain, compared to 42% in Western Hills)

18% of children live without their fathers due to international migration

Outmigration is highest in the Western and Mid-Western Hills and Eastern Terai, where more than 20% of children live without their fathers

Percentage share of children whose father lives abroad



SOURCE: MICS5 Nepal, own illustration

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Parental absence in Nepal

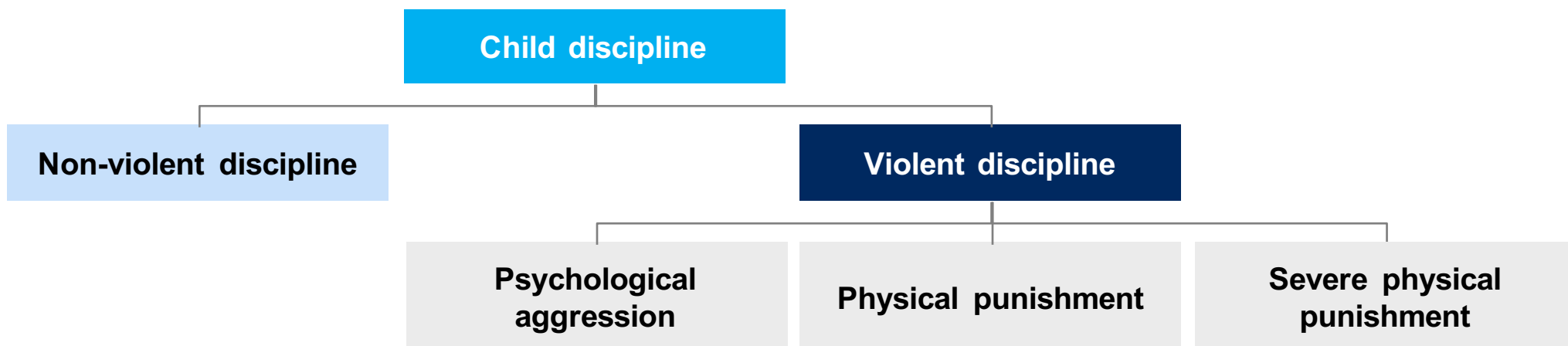
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Measuring child discipline: The Child Discipline Module



1. Explaining why a behavior is wrong
2. Taking away privileges / not allowing the child to leave the house
3. Giving the child something else to do

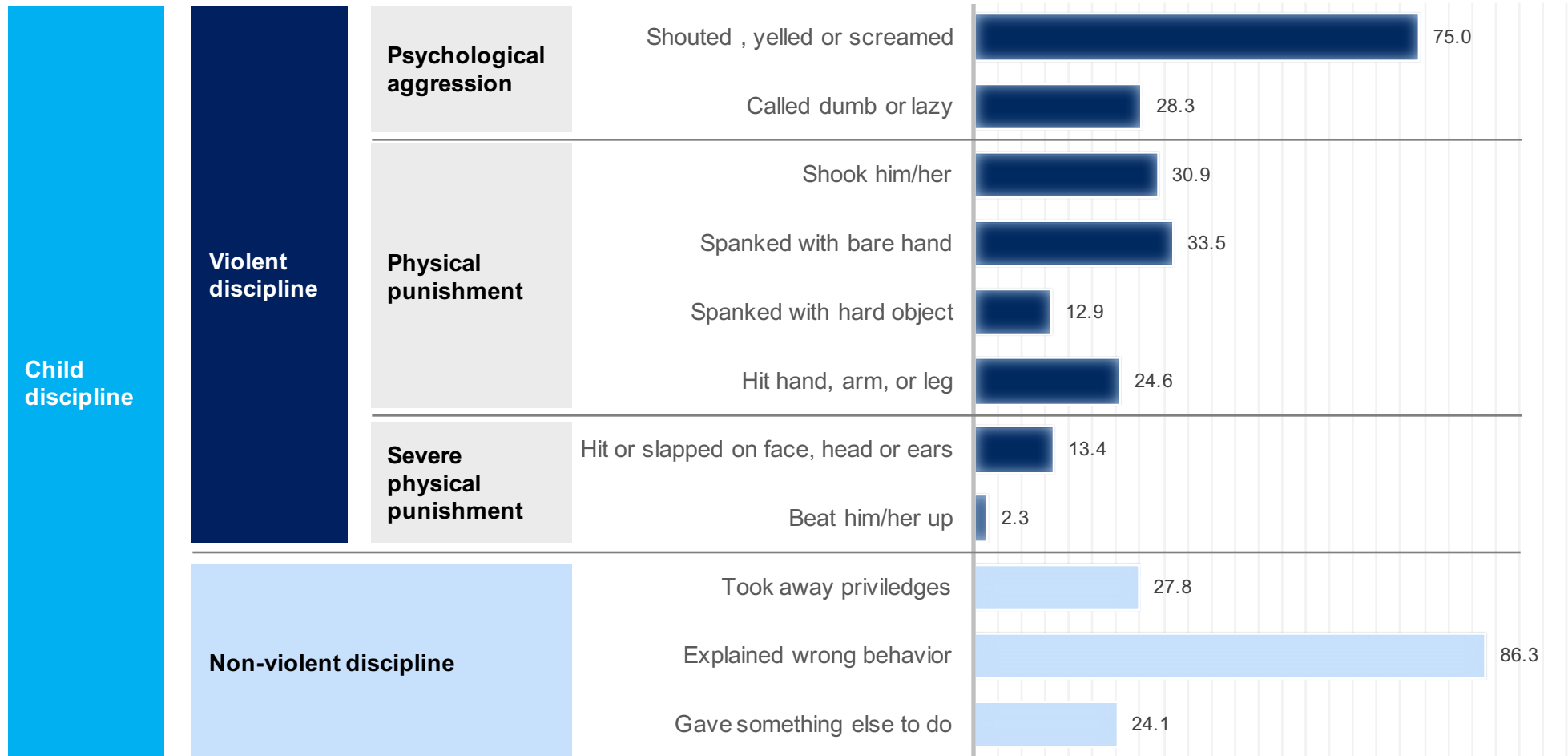
4. Shouting, yelling, and screaming at a child
5. Calling a child offensive names such as dumb and lazy

6. Shaking the child
7. Spanking the child or hitting it on bottom with the bare hand
8. Slapping the child on the hand, arm or leg
9. Hitting the child on the bottom with a hard object

10. Hitting the child on the face, head or ears
11. Beating the child with an implement over and over as hard as one can

Prevalence of disciplining methods in Nepal

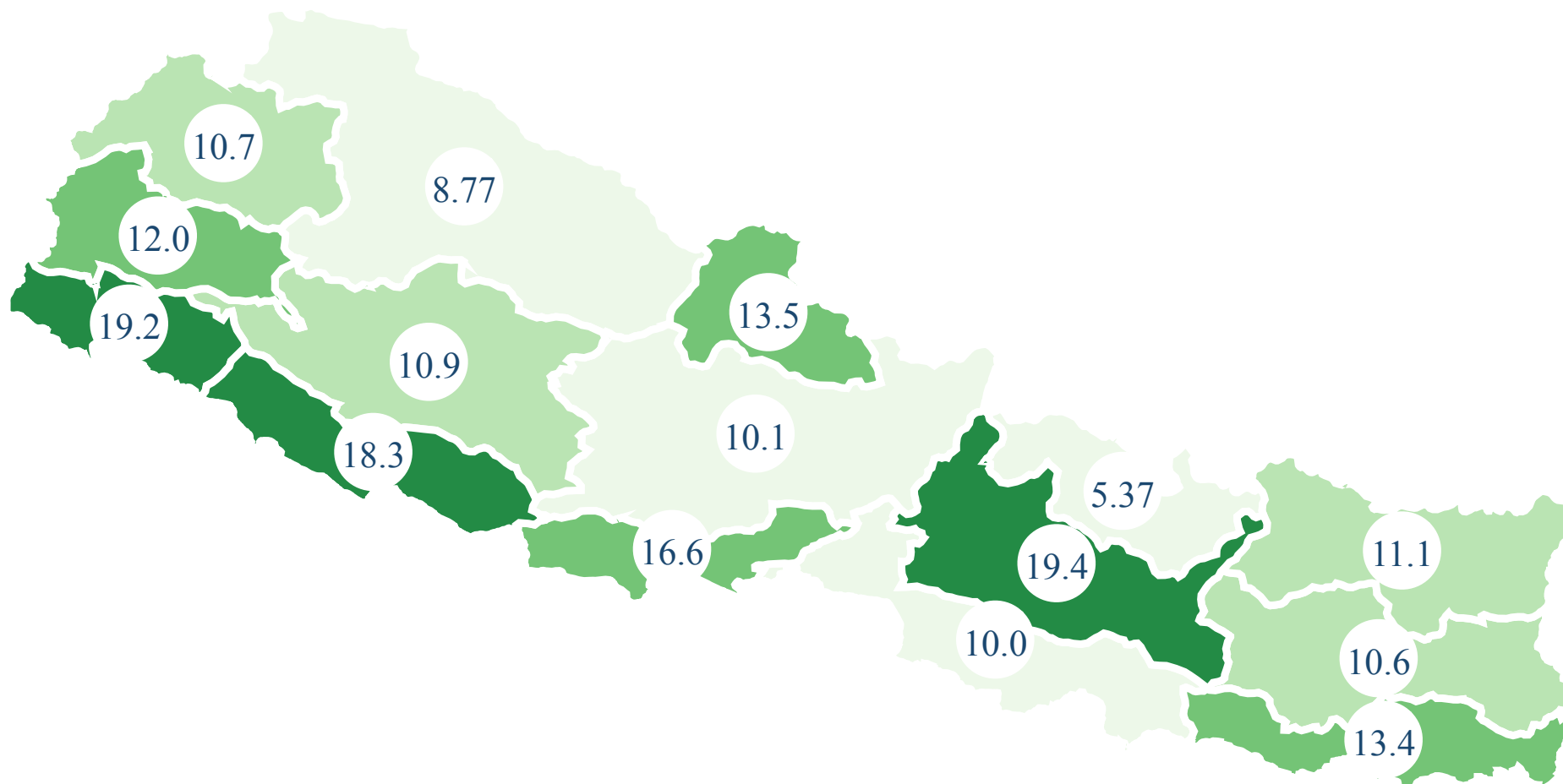
Percentage share of children between 1 and 14 years who have experienced one or more of the following disciplining methods in the past month



Only 13% of the children in Nepal have experienced only non-violent discipline in the past month

Nonviolent discipline prevalence

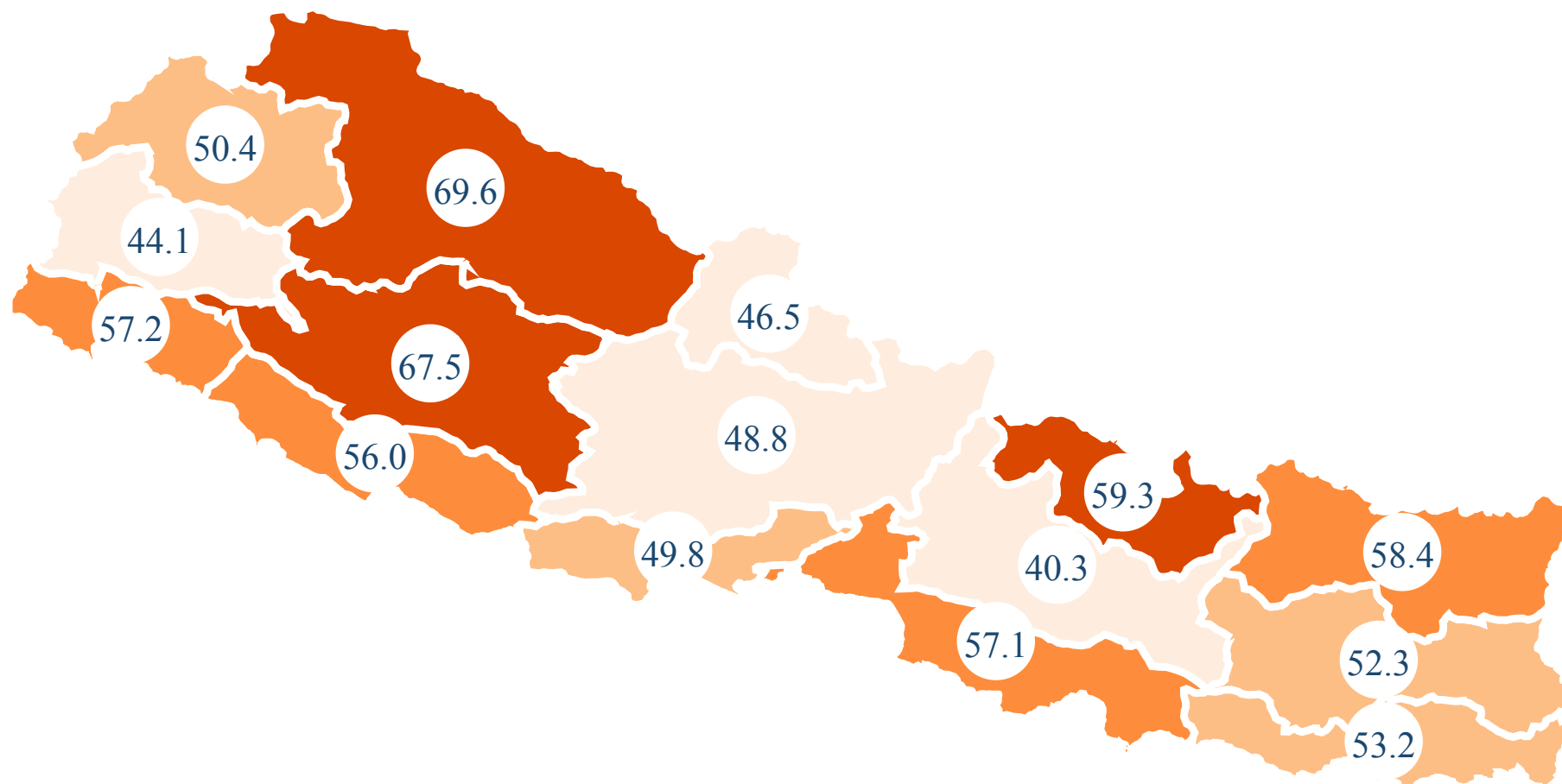
Percentage share of children who experienced only nonviolent discipline in the past month



More than half of the children in Nepal have been exposed to some sort of physical punishment during the previous month

Physical punishment prevalence

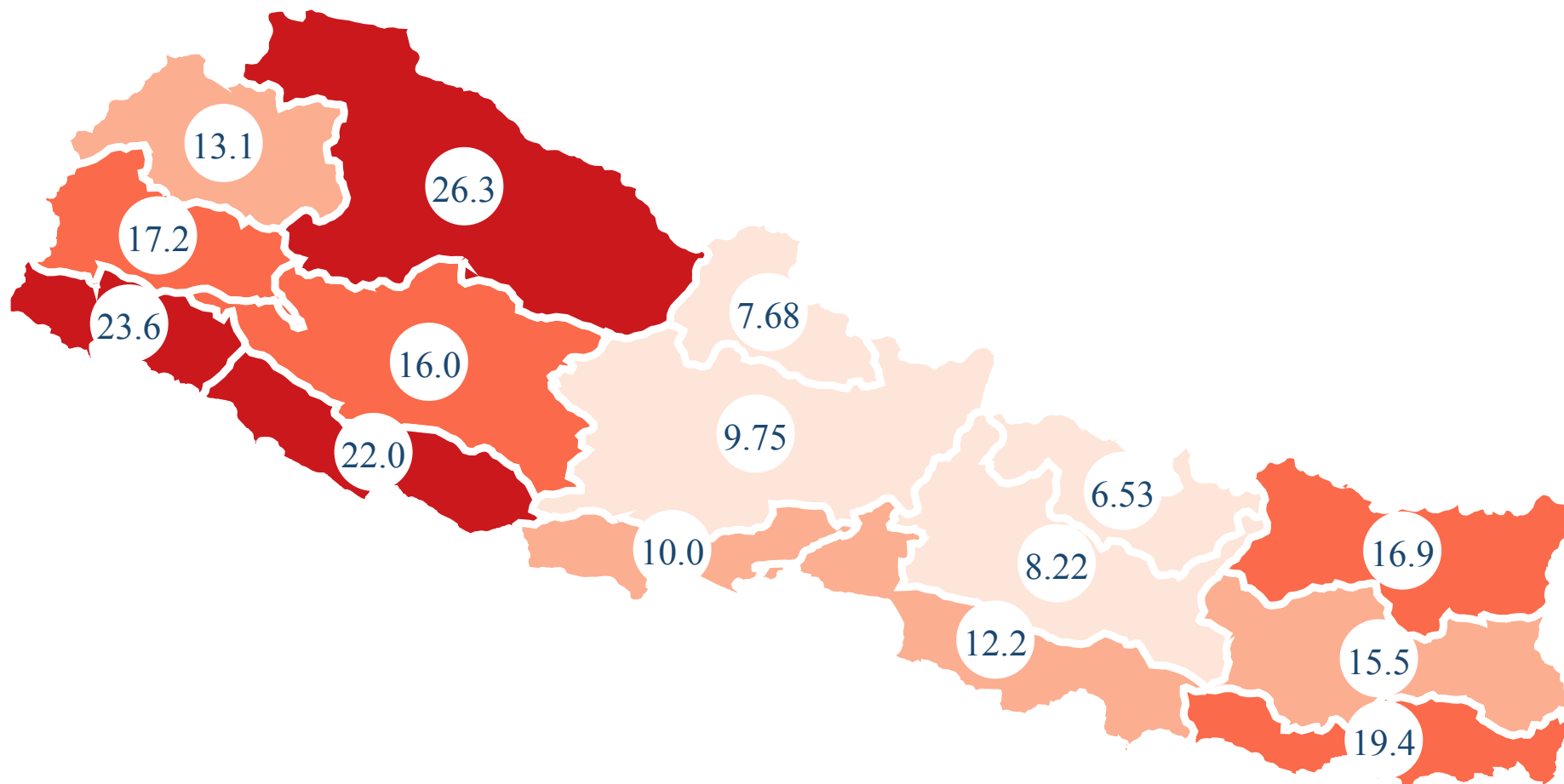
Percentage share of children who experienced physical punishment in the past month



14% of the children in Nepal have been exposed to severe physical punishment during the previous month

Severe physical punishment prevalence

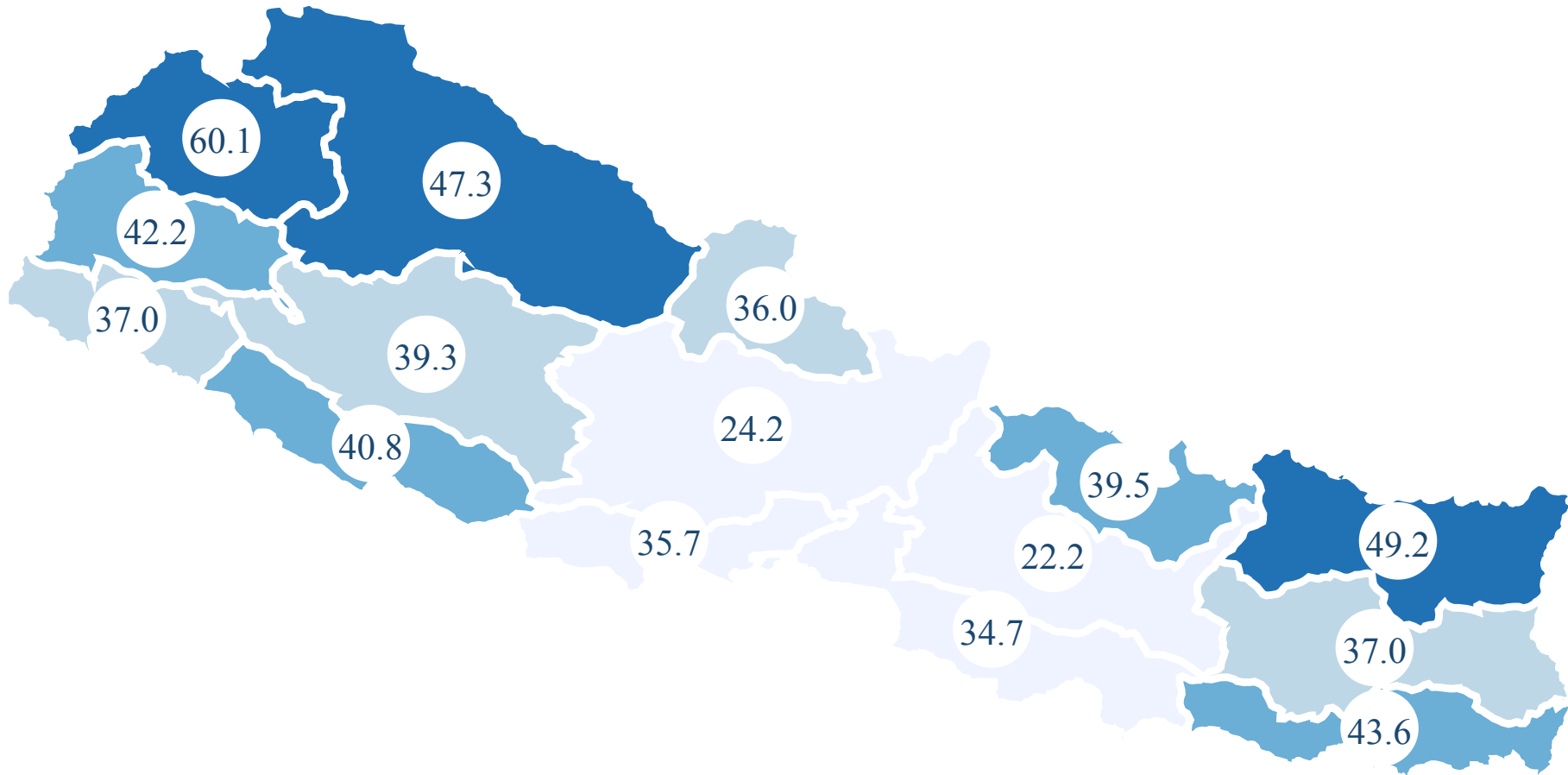
Percentage share of children who experienced severe physical punishment in the past month



Beliefs on physical punishment

Beliefs on physical punishment

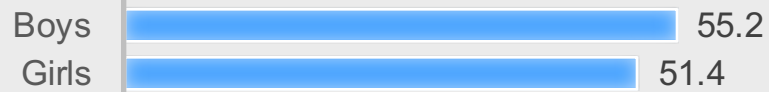
Percentage share of children whose parents believe physical punishment is sometimes necessary



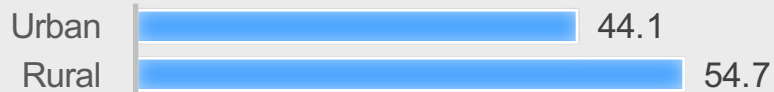
Physical punishment: Risk factors

Percentage share of children between 1 and 14 years who have experienced one or more of the following disciplining methods in the past month

Gender



Rural / Urban



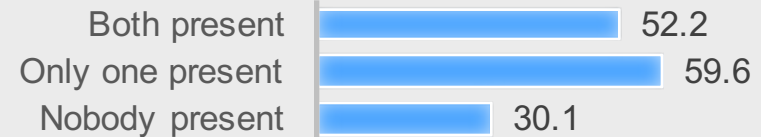
Age Group



Wealth quintile



Parental presence



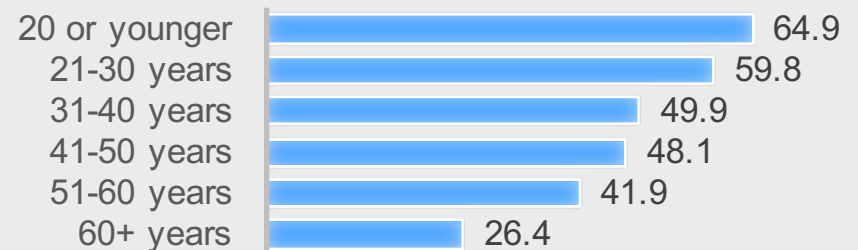
Household size



Mother's education



Age of caretaker



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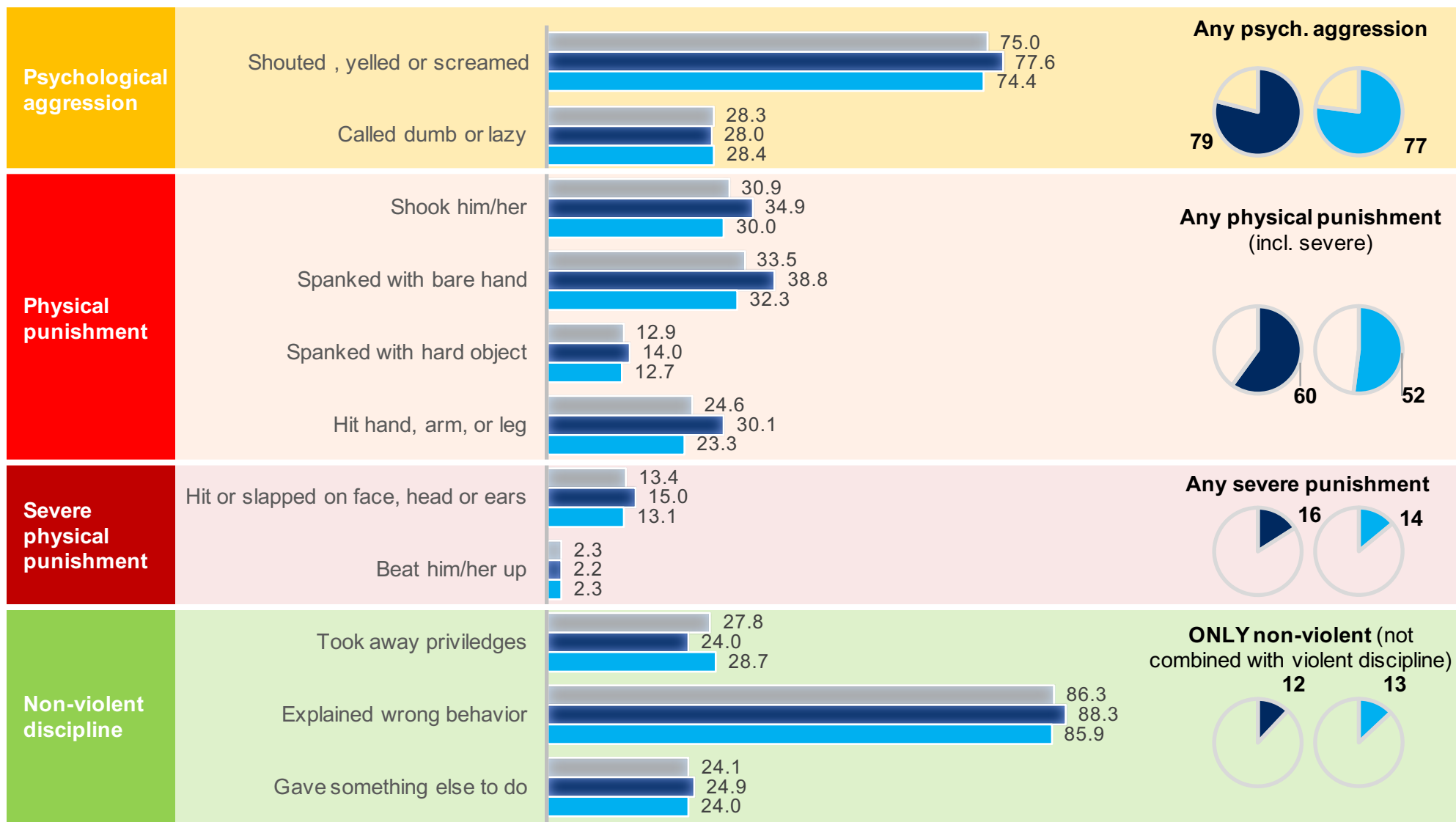
Outmigration and physical punishment: Possible channels

Conclusion

When father has migrated abroad – children are more likely to be exposed to violent discipline, in particular physical punishment

Percentage share of children between 1 and 14 years who have experienced one or more of the following disciplining methods in the past month

■ Grand mean ■ Father Abroad ■ Father in Country



Physical punishment: Which groups are at more risk when the father is abroad?

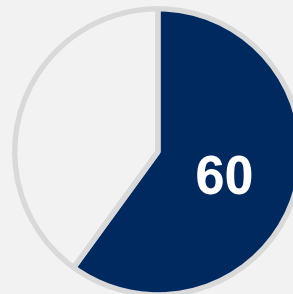
Percentage share of children between 1 and 14 years who have experienced any form of physical punishment over the past month



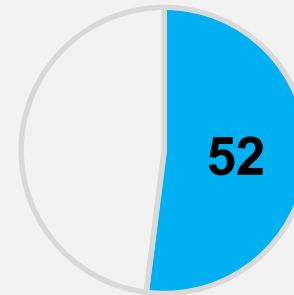
Any physical punishment (incl. severe)

- Father lives abroad
- Father in country / dead

Father abroad



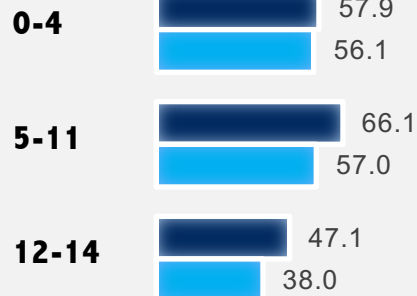
Father in country / dead



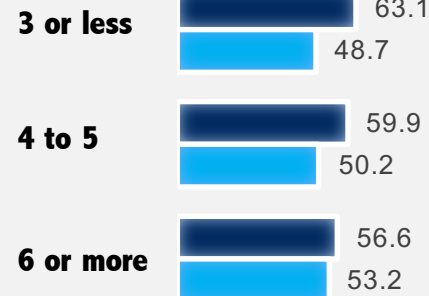
Gender



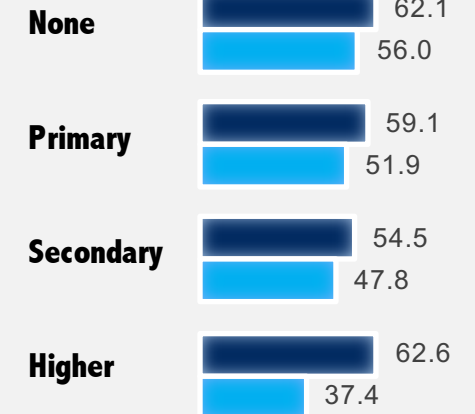
Age group



Household size



Mothers education



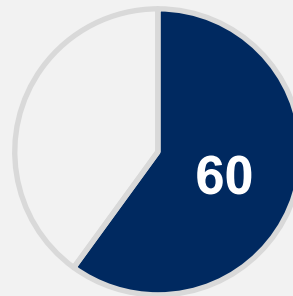
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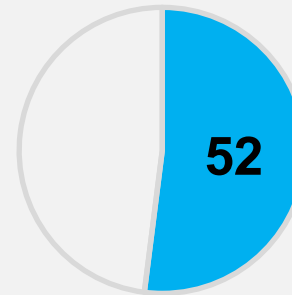
Any physical punishment (incl. severe)

- Father lives abroad
- Father in country / dead

Father abroad



Father in country / dead



+8



Statistical significance

- x p<0.01
- x p<0.05
- x p<0.10
- x p>0.10

Gender

Age group

Household size

Mothers education



Agenda

Parental absence in Nepal

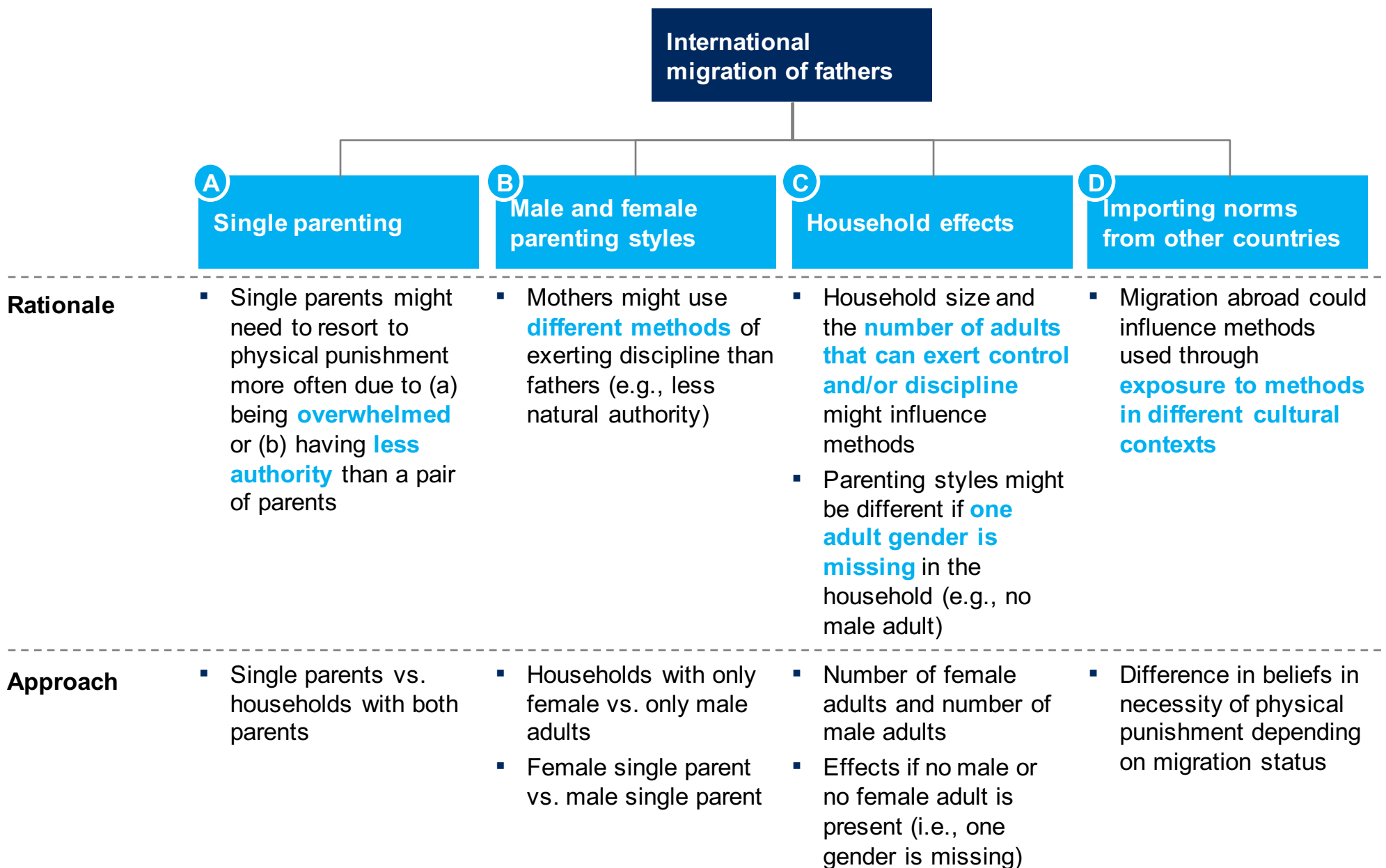
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The role of paternal migration: What could be submission channels?



Transmission channels for physical punishment

Regression results

Statistical significance	x p<0.01	x p<0.10
	x p<0.05	x p>0.10

Difference in prevalence of physical punishment

Difference in means

Simple difference in means test with unequal variances

Simple linear regression

Simple linear regression **controlling for social, demographic, and geographic factors**¹

Category	Sub-category	Difference in means	Simple linear regression
International migration	Father Abroad (vs. father in country or dead)	7.9	5.2
A Single parenting	Single parent (vs. both parents or no parents)	6.8	5.0
B Parenting styles	Single mom (vs. both parents)	7.0	5.4
	Single dad (vs. both parents)	-16.4	-7.9
	Only female adults (vs. mixed adult households)	8.7	5.4
	Only male adults (vs. mixed adult households)	-7.3	0.3
C Household effects	No male in the household (vs. at least one male)	5.3	5.0
	No female in the household (vs. at least one female)	-12.1	-3.8

¹ Beliefs in punishment, gender and age of child, education of mother, urban vs. rural, region, caste and wealth quintile dummies)

D: Norms imported from other countries – the role of beliefs

Beliefs punishment	(1)	(2)	(4)	2SLS
fatherAbroad	-0.00781 [0.0201]	-0.00671 [0.0202]	0.0104 [0.0219]	-0.0237 [0.0659]
male		-0.00119 [0.0163]	0.000285 [0.0168]	0.000260 [0.0168]
age		0.0310*** [0.00863]	0.0213** [0.00904]	0.0209** [0.00907]
agesq		-0.00197*** [0.000547]	-0.00134** [0.000574]	-0.00132** [0.000574]
ageCaretaker		0.000517 [0.00105]	-0.00213* [0.00113]	-0.00224** [0.00114]
mschool			-0.0141*** [0.00242]	-0.0140*** [0.00241]
hhAdults			-0.000452 [0.00696]	-0.00193 [0.00745]
urban2			-0.0386* [0.0219]	-0.0404* [0.0221]
Caste dummies	no	no	yes	yes
Wealth index dummies	no	no	yes	yes
Region dummies	no	no	yes	yes
Constant	0.378*** [0.00916]	0.278*** [0.0308]	0.405*** [0.0554]	0.417*** [0.0594]
Observations	7,558	7,489	6,490	6,490
R-squared	0.000	0.004	0.085	0.085

Robust standard errors in brackets

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

- **Beliefs** on the necessity of using physical punishment as a disciplining method **seem not change when the father migrates internationally**
- More relevant for the beliefs in physical punishment are the age of the child, age of the caretaker as well as maternal education

Transmission channels - Overview

Single parenting

- Single parenting seems to be **associated with higher levels of physical punishment**, however, it does not seem to be the main driver, given the difference for single mothers compared to single fathers (see below)

Male and female parenting styles

- Children growing up in **single mother households are more likely to experience physical punishment than children in households in which both parents are present**
- Reasons for this difference could be manifold
 - Mothers with less authority than fathers – therefore exerting more physical power (in particular vs. boys)
 - Mothers might be more easily distressed and overwhelmed by single parenting
- **This does not mean that women are necessarily more violent than men – the perceived authority of fathers might stem from previous disciplining incidents that are not captured in the MICS data (occurrence in past month)**

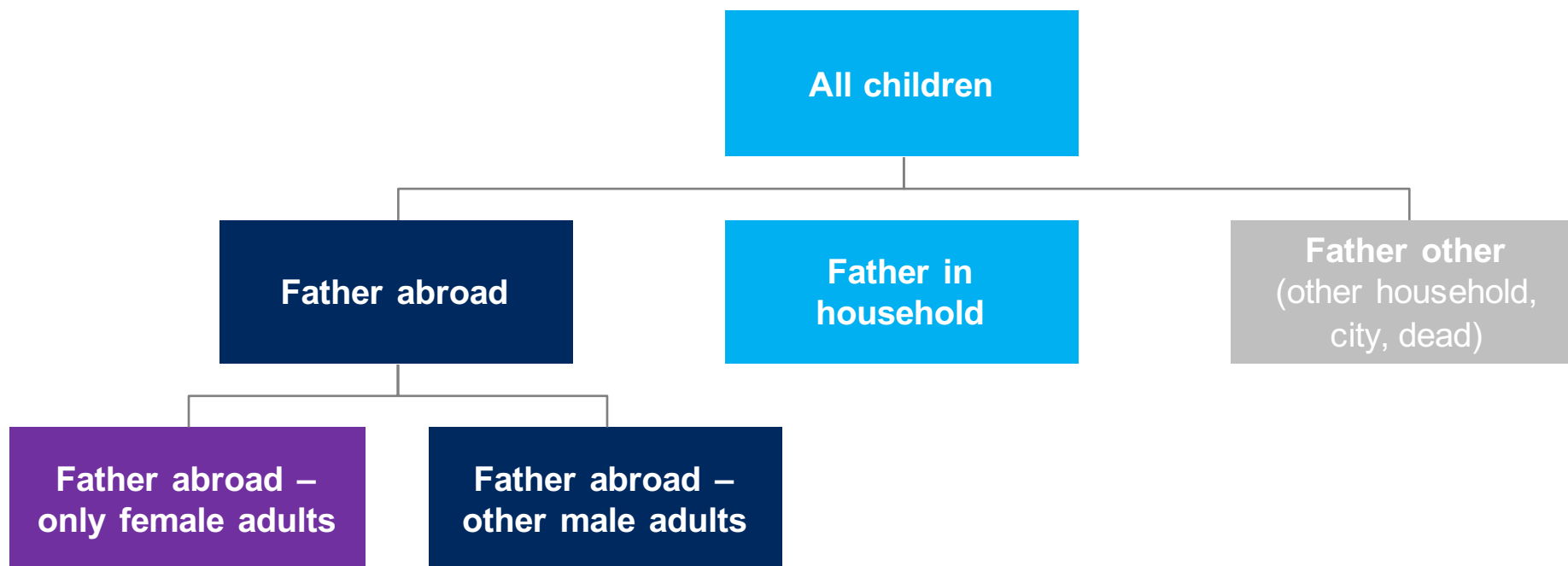
Household effects

- Physical punishment has been **negatively associated with the number of adult household members** in most regression specifications
- The **presence of at least one male adult** was associated with a 5 percentage points decrease in physical punishments compared to households with no male adults

Norms imported from other countries

- **Importing norms from other countries does not seem to be of too much relevance**
 - Destination of countries tend to have similar child disciplining practices than Nepal
 - Paternal migration does not have any significant association with beliefs about the necessity of physical punishment

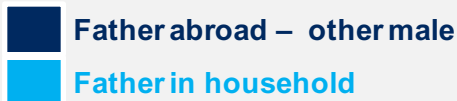
To better understand the situation, we need to look at risk groups dividing paternal migration into two sub-groups



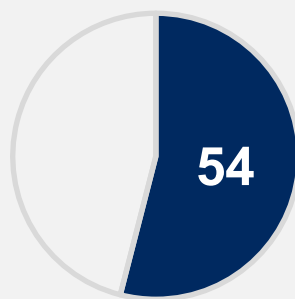
Paternal migration while other male adults are in the household is not associated with significant differences in physical punishment

Percentage share of children between 1 and 14 years who have experienced any form of physical punishment over the past month

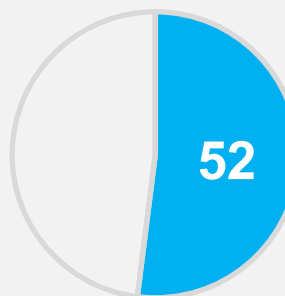
Any physical punishment (incl. severe)



Father abroad – other male



Father in household



+2

Father abroad but with other male adults in the household

Statistical significance of difference

- x p<0.01
- x p<0.05
- x p<0.10
- x p>0.10

Gender

Age group

Household size

Mothers education



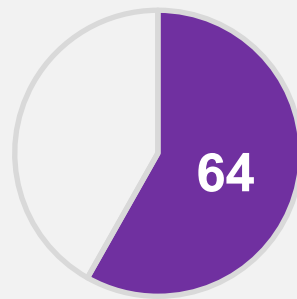
Paternal migration, when there is no other male adult in the household, however, is associated with higher prevalence of physical punishment

Percentage share of children between 1 and 14 years who have experienced any form of physical punishment over the past month

Any physical punishment (incl. severe)

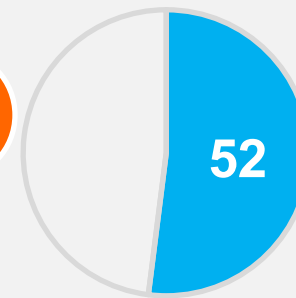
- Father abroad – only female adults
- Father in household

Father abroad – only female adults



+11.4

Father in household



Father abroad but with no other male adult in the household

Statistical significance of difference

- x p<0.01
- x p<0.05
- x p<0.10
- x p>0.10

Gender

Age group

Household size

Mothers education



Controlling for other factors, paternal migration is only associated with higher violence if there is no other male adult in the household

Physical punishment	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
fatherAbroadOnlyFemale	11.42*** [2.390]	10.34*** [2.254]	9.653*** [2.484]	7.603*** [2.712]
fatherAbroadOtherMale	1.890 [3.319]	1.565 [3.218]	1.899 [3.410]	2.302 [3.393]
believePunishment		31.27*** [1.666]	29.49*** [1.883]	29.47*** [1.888]
male		4.079** [1.633]	3.422* [1.765]	2.998* [1.724]
age		5.253*** [0.861]	5.461*** [0.930]	5.359*** [0.920]
agesq		-0.447*** [0.0549]	-0.435*** [0.0585]	-0.425*** [0.0578]
ageCaretaker			-0.571*** [0.122]	-0.543*** [0.121]
mschool			-0.903*** [0.212]	-0.360 [0.260]
urban			-0.192 [2.202]	0.835 [2.572]
hhAdults				-1.553** [0.687]
Caste dummies	no	no	no	yes
Wealth index dummies	no	no	no	yes
Regional dummies	no	no	no	yes
Constant	52.18*** [0.995]	31.97*** [3.026]	44.09*** [3.728]	37.88*** [5.703]
Observations	6,732	6,732	5,807	5,807
R-squared	0.006	0.138	0.144	0.166

Robust standard errors in brackets

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

- Migration while there are **other male adults** in the household is **not significantly different from a situation where the father lives in the household**
- However, if there are **only female adults** in the household, **physical punishment seems to occur more often**
 - Controlling for sociological, demographic, and geographic factors, international migration of fathers is associated with an almost **8 percentage point higher** prevalence of physical punishment IF there is only female adults in the household

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Summary and conclusion

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Prevalence of physical punishment

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Risk factors of physical punishment

- The most important risk factor is parents' believe in the necessity of physical punishment
- Boys tend to experience more physical punishment than girls
- Children in rural settings experience more physical punishment
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Migration and risk factors

- **Migration** of fathers, on average, is associated with an **8 percentage point increase in physical punishment** at home
- However, this risk applies in particular to **households without any male adults** present
- Further, highly educated mothers without father's support tend to apply more physical punishment

Policy implications

- **Further research** on physical punishment and migration should ideally include
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 - Employment information for mothers to further investigate the puzzle of highly educated mothers
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 - Instead, policies focused on driving down overall punishment rates should be a priority
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