

# Tough sanctions needed to curb beatings: OU prof

Wife beating is omnipresent, under reported, and won't be curbed unless society establishes tough sanctions against the husbands, an Oakland University anthropologist claims.

## ■ SPOUSE ABUSE

Wife beating is a practice that is accepted in some cultures and disapproved in others, but one which occurs with alarming frequency in almost all societies, including our own, Brown says.

Among the other findings: older women in many societies have much to say about how the younger women (the most likely subjects for beating) are treated.

The findings tie in with another Brown book "In Her Prime." The book is in its second printing and was the first of its kind to look at middle aged women in societies. Other than in America, a woman tends to gain power and prestige as she ages and her sons and family grow, Brown says. How she regards the young women or young wives of the household can have a great bearing on how they are treated.

In non Euro-American societies, living patterns can make a difference, Brown says. If a wife's hostility near the husband may realize that he will get beaten up if he abuses her. The wife also knows she has a place to escape if she is beaten.

In our society, there are too few shelters, and living patterns result in both husband and wife living apart from relatives. This isolation

from a support group increases the danger to the women, Brown feels.

Brown looks at the problem as an anthropologist and says a multi-disciplinary approach is needed to explain psychological and other causes apart from societal customs. One item that stands out, she claims, is the tendency for "apathy" women to get beaten, women who talk back.

### Warning signs

The anthropologist says young women should be alert to dangers they can get into. "There are warning signs that can be learned," Brown claims.

What should a young woman note as danger signs in her date or prospective husband? According to Brown:

If he displays extreme jealousy with uncontrolled temper outbursts alternating with remorse.

Or, he manipulates the relationship so as to isolate his partner and undermine her relationship to family and friends.

Or, he shows a need to demean his partner, to undermine her self-confidence.

Those are tell-tale signs, but Brown isn't sure that a young woman in love would really notice.

"In Her Prime" is published by the University of Illinois Press. Joining Brown as editor is Virginia Kerns, anthropologist, New Delhi, India.

### Wife beating frequent

Anthropologists who have studied other societies contributed to the book. The general findings: wife



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