

Domestic Violence with male as the victim: A Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper brings into focus the ironic situation where men who are termed as the abusers are themselves the victim. With the main stress on women as the theme for domestic violence, this article of mine tries to bring forth another face of the society where women leave no stones unturned in doing the injustice towards the men.

INTRODUCTION

Men can be victims of abuse too. Our culture still clings to narrow definitions of gender. Young boys are taught not to express their emotions, to “suck it up” and “be a man. This can be extremely detrimental to boys as they age, especially if they find themselves in an abusive relationship. Men may feel discouraged to talk about what’s going on in their personal lives, or they feel like no one will believe them. About two in five of all victims of domestic violence are men, contradicting the widespread impression that it is almost always women who are left battered and bruised, a new report claims. The charity's analysis of statistics on domestic violence shows the number of men attacked by wives or girlfriends is much higher than thought. Its report, *Domestic Violence: The Male Perspective*, states: "Domestic violence is often seen as a female victim/male perpetrator problem, but the evidence demonstrates that this is a false picture.

The majority of domestic violence stories covered by the media are about male perpetrators and female victims who are typically in heterosexual relationships. While we certainly don’t want to minimize this violence, focusing on only one type of situation renders invisible the many scenarios that do not fit this definition, including abusive relationships among homosexual, bisexual, and trans* men. This might make many victims feel like they don’t have the space or the support to speak out about their own experiences and seek help. The majority of domestic violence stories covered by the media are about male perpetrators and female victims who are typically in heterosexual relationships.

Domestic violence against men deals with domestic violence experienced by men or boys in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating, or within a family. As with domestic violence against women violence against men may constitute a crime, but laws vary between jurisdictions. Socio-cultural norms regarding the treatment of men by women, and women by men, differ depending on the geographic region, and physically abusive behavior by one partner towards another is regarded varyingly as a serious crime to a more personal matter. The prevalence and frequency of IPV against men is highly disputed, with different studies coming to different conclusions for different nations, and many countries having no data at all. Some researchers believe the actual number of male victims is likely to be greater than law enforcement statistics suggest, due to the high number of men who do not report their abuse.¹

Intimate physical violence against men is a controversial area of research

Other reason men are often reluctant to report victimization concerns socio-cultural stereotypes of masculinity; negatively by others, and/or having their masculinity questioned. For some men, this evasive behaviour is based upon the fear of being ridiculed by friends or co-workers, by shyness in dealing with peers and/or with (non-violent) women, and by fear of people saying that the woman is the real victim, and must have been acting in self-defense. For a man to admit he is the victim of female perpetrated IPV necessitates the abandonment of the veneer of machismo which

society expects from men, and to admit being submissive to a female partner. For some men, this is an admission they are unwilling, or unable, to make. Some researchers have also demonstrated a degree of socio-cultural acceptance of aggression by women against men, whereas there is a general condemnation of aggression by men against women. This can lead to men not considering themselves victims, and/or not realizing the IPV they are experiencing is a crime.

CONCLUSION

In effect, a "paradigm" has developed in the domestic violence literature in which perpetrators are viewed as exclusively or disproportionately male. Any and all data inconsistent with this view are dismissed, ignored, or attempts are made to explain them away. A dangerous "in-group-outgroup" form of siege mentality has enveloped feminist activists and those researchers who share their dogma. It is based on a perceived threat that somehow, services for women will disappear if male victimization is recognized or that those who raise issues about female violence or intervention are somehow against progressive goals for women's equality.

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