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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Features and consequences of gender violence: Study of cases confirmed by a conviction[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Intimate partner
violence;
Abused woman;
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Abstract

Introduction: Gender violence is a major public health problem with a significant socio-family and economic impact. The aim of this study was to analyse the characteristics and circumstances of abuse, including the subjects involved (victim and aggressor), their intimate relationship, as well as the peculiarities of abuse and its harmful consequences.

Material and methods: Retrospective and descriptive study of cases classified as gender violence from the prosecutor's office of Santiago de Compostela between 2005 and 2012. A total of 398 cases of gender violence with a final conviction were analysed.

Results: Victims were mainly young women (mean age 36.6 years), of Spanish nationality (82.91%), married (39.70%), with children (69.85%), employed (40.45%) and with low socioeconomic status (53.52%). Aggressors had an average age of 39.5 years, were predominantly Spanish (85.93%) and of low socioeconomic status (37.44%). At the time of abuse, 56.03% of the couples lived together and 62.22% shared the house with children. The maltreatment, mainly a combination of physical and psychological abuse (43.72%), occurred most often at home (65.08%) and was witnessed by others (64.57%). As a result of the aggression, 53.02% of women suffered physical injuries, generally bruises or haematomas (41.21%) located mainly on the upper limbs (26.88%) and face (24.37%).

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Violencia de pareja;
Mujer maltratada;
Agresor;
Lesiones

Conclusions: The information obtained on the characteristics and circumstances of abuse is an essential step in order to formulate evidence-based intervention and treatment strategies.

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Características y consecuencias de la violencia de género: estudio de casos confirmados por sentencia judicial

Resumen

Introducción: La violencia de género constituye un importante problema de salud pública con un gran impacto sociofamiliar y económico. El objetivo de este estudio ha sido analizar las características y circunstancias del maltrato, incluyendo a los sujetos implicados (víctima y agresor) y su relación de pareja, así como las peculiaridades del abuso y sus consecuencias lesivas.

Material y métodos: Estudio retrospectivo, de tipo descriptivo, de los casos clasificados como violencia de género por la Fiscalía de Área de Santiago de Compostela, durante el período 2005-2012. Se analizaron 398 casos de violencia de género con sentencia firme condenatoria.

Resultados: Las víctimas eran, sobre todo, mujeres jóvenes (media 36,6 años), de nacionalidad española (82,91%), casadas (39,70%), con hijos (69,85%), empleo remunerado (40,45%) y nivel socioeconómico bajo (53,52%). Los agresores tenían una edad media de 39,5 años, con predominio de españoles (85,93%), de nivel socioeconómico bajo (37,44%). En el momento de la agresión, el 56,03% de las parejas convivían y un 62,22% compartía la vivienda con los hijos. El maltrato, fundamentalmente combinación de abuso físico y psicológico (43,72%), se produjo sobre todo en el domicilio (65,08%) y fue presenciado por terceras personas (64,57%). Como consecuencia de la agresión, el 53,02% de las mujeres sufrieron lesiones físicas, básicamente contusiones o hematomas (41,21%), localizadas principalmente en los miembros superiores (26,88%) y en la cara (24,37%).

Conclusiones: La información obtenida sobre las características y circunstancias del maltrato es fundamental para adaptar, en base a la evidencia, las medidas de intervención y tratamiento de este problema.

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Introduction

Gender violence is a major public health problem that is a serious violation of human rights, with repercussions in the socio-family, economic and legal spheres.¹ Although its incidence is difficult to determine, the World Health Organisation estimates that it will affect one-third of women at some point in their lives.² Moreover, the macro-survey on violence against women carried out in our country, estimates that 12.5% of Spanish women have at some time been abused by their partner.³

It is a universal and complex problem that must be analysed from a multidimensional perspective since there is no single causal agent but is determined by various individual, relational, community and social factors that interact by favouring violence or protecting against it.⁴ The individual factors which increase the probability of being a victim or aggressor include younger age, low level of education and unemployment.⁵ Regarding the environment and the relationship, risk factors include cohabitation and being a large family.^{6,7} Finally, it is worth emphasising

sociocultural factors such as low economic status⁵ or immigration,⁸ which increase the vulnerability of women, since they involve the accumulation of various factors, such as more precarious work or difficulties accessing support resources. On the other hand, it is considered that if the woman has social support or has a high educational level, these are protective factors against this type of violence.⁹

Abuse has been shown to have negative health consequences, both in the short and long term. The most visible and direct effects are physical injuries, which affect half the victims¹⁰ and for which about 30% require medical care.¹¹ They may suffer superficial injuries, such as bruises or abrasions, or injuries from various types of weapons, burns or intoxications with criminal purposes.¹² It has been described that the most common locations are the head, neck and face.¹³ The injuries associated with abuse are important both from a health and criminological perspective. A thorough evaluation and documentation of these are essential since they can play a fundamental role in different moments of the judicial process.

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