

Severe versus less severe intimate partner violence: Aggressors and victims

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Abstract

In order to study the differences between severe intimate partner violence (S-IPV) and less severe intimate partner violence (LS-IPV), reports by 16,385 women who had suffered some type of abuse in 2016 and 2017 were analysed by means of the Police Risk Assessment Questionnaire. Chi-square tests indicate that S-IPV aggressors present criminological features to a significantly greater extent and are more likely to perpetrate various types of violence against their partners (for example, sexual aggression, death threats, degrading treatment, and controlling behaviour). Their behaviours seem to depend more on their beliefs and attitudes than on any possible psychopathological disturbance. Likewise, the victims of S-IPV are significantly more likely to report substance abuse, isolation from their environment, and vulnerability due to a mental disorder or disability; furthermore, they are less likely to report their abusers and continue with the judicial process. Therefore, efforts must be focused on fighting isolation, guaranteeing access to assistance and support services, and protecting victims during the processing of the criminal investigation. Professionals must also be alert to conflicts between partners linked to emotional breakdown and apply the relevant risk-management strategies, especially in cases with a history of mistreatment of women and an increase in violence severity.

Keywords

Battered women, femicide, intimate partner violence, male aggressors

Violence in intimate relationships is considered one of the major public health problems of our time. Although it is not exclusively perpetrated by men against women, it has been observed that men carry out significantly more homicides of intimate partners than do women (Stöckl et al., 2013). Thus, without neglecting the need to combat any

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