



## Personality and Social Psychology

# Stressful life events: Typology of aggression and mistreatment in male perpetrators of gender-based violence

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The objective of this study was to analyze groups based on the stressful life events suffered and to know the relationship of these profiles with the type of abuse exercised against women in the couple. A sample of 118 heterosexual men who perpetrated gender-based violence was used, with a mean age of 40.46 years ( $SD = 11.14$ ). The results show that those who suffered a greater number of adverse experiences abused their partners more frequently and with a more aggravated character. In addition, knowing typologies based on previous stressful life events could favor specific interventions in the elimination of the normalization of violence as a maladaptive relational strategy. It is necessary to continue investigating the characteristics of men who exercise gender-based violence, as well as to analyze previous exposure to violence in the family of origin due to the influence it exerts on subsequent abuse.

**Key words:** aggressors, gender-based violence, stressful life events, cluster, social learning.

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### INTRODUCTION

Empirical evidence shows that worldwide, approximately 27% of women who have been married or in a relationship have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence by their partner or ex-partner at some point in their lives, with a 95% confidence interval (CI) ranging between 23% and 31% (World Health Organization, 2021). One of the most common forms of violence is that exercised within couple relationships. This can include behaviors that are characterized by physical, psychological, and/or sexual harm, aggression, sexual coercion, and controlling behaviors, where one member of the couple exercises power over the other (Both, Favaretto, Machado, Pereira, & Crempien, 2020). Although both sexes can exercise and be victims of violence, men are more likely than women to act violently and exercise dominance and controlling behaviors (Ubillos-Landa, Puente-Martínez, González-Castro, & Nieto-González, 2020). Gender-based violence (GBV) occurs in most societies and contexts and constitutes a serious global public health problem (McCarthy, Mehta, & Haberland, 2018; Rivas-Rivero & Bonilla-Algovia, 2021). In Spain, the latest Macro-Survey on Violence Against Women, carried out in 2019 by the Government Delegation for GBV, indicated that the prevalence of GBV was 11.4% in the case of physical abuse, whereas 8.9% had suffered violence by a current or former partner (Delegación del Gobierno contra la Violencia de Género, 2020). Law 1/2004 defines gender violence as violence against women by someone who is or has been their partner, even without living together. This fact means that, in Spain, the social representation of the term *gender violence* is usually associated with violence perpetrated against women in the sphere of the couple (Bonilla-Algovia & Rivas-Rivero, 2020).

Little research has been conducted on the characteristics of men who commit GBV (Torres, Lemos-Giráldez, & Herrero, 2013). Some studies have attempted to categorize aggressors according to certain attributes. Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's (1994) typology is based on psychopathological traits and criminal history. It classifies aggressors as follows: (1) violent only in the family, low severity, little psychopathology, no personality disorder (though with obsessive traits), excessive alcohol consumption, low levels of depression, moderate levels of anger, and no criminal history; (2) dysphoric, resort to violence more frequently both in the family context and in other environments, criminal record, higher scores in borderline personality disorder, dependent, a tendency toward cyclical violence with phases of regret, moderate alcohol consumption, and high levels of anger and depression; (3) generally violent/antisocial, more severe and recurrent violence, a longer criminal record than the other categories, low levels of empathy and depression, and moderate levels of alcohol consumption. More recent studies have also reported three types based on criminal recidivism, being categorized as high, medium, and low profile, although with similarities to the antisocial, dysphoric, and violent profile only with the family, respectively (Llor-Esteban, García-Jiménez, Ruiz-Hernández, & Godoy-Fernández, 2016).

In addition, violent behavior in men who have committed GBV has been associated with sociodemographic characteristics, rigid thought structures regarding gender roles, personality traits, possessive attitudes, and jealousy (Dixon & Browne, 2003). Kyriacou *et al.* (1999) describe a series of common traits in male abusers: experience of violence in the family of origin, alcohol consumption, unemployment or intermittent employment, poverty, economic problems, low self-esteem, rigid and stereotyped conceptions of the roles of men and women, social isolation, and exclusive focus on the family. They also blame others for their loss of control and possible psychopathological disorders.

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Gálvez (2011) depicts male aggressors as being incapable of tolerating frustration or accepting responsibility for their actions, jealous, fearful of being abandoned, emotionally dependent, and having substance abuse issues as well as low self-esteem. They will have learned to attack others and/or will have been attacked themselves.

Factors such as hostile attitudes, the emotional state of anger, personality disorders, the victim's perception of vulnerability, and the reinforcement of previous violent behaviors that could be related to violence seem to intervene in the behavior of men who commit GBV, expressive violence (characterized by impulsivity and extreme violence, arising from emotional responses of anger against a specific person), and instrumental violence (less emotional, but more intentional, used as a control strategy and could come from social learning) (Velasco, 2013). Other authors have noted the presence of learning difficulties and behavioral problems in childhood (23.5%); anger and emotional instability (79.4%); a history of aggression against other partners and/or a criminal history (44.1%); and minimum violence but increasing in frequency and intensity (78.4%) among men who commit GBV (Andrés-Pueyo, López, & Álvarez, 2008; Andrés-Pueyo & Redondo, 2007). Therefore, there is a multiplicity of variables associated with the man who exercises gender violence.

A significant and widely documented risk factor for GBV is violence in the family of origin. This can increase the probability of occurrence by 2 to 4 times (Orozco-Vargas, Venebra-Muñoz, Aguilera-Reyes, & García-López, 2021). Such adverse experiences are sometimes referred to as stressful life events (SLEs). These can result in significant changes in the lives of sufferers and have a strong impact on their subsequent life trajectories (Grant *et al.*, 2003; Hughes *et al.*, 2017). When minors are exposed either directly or indirectly to SLEs, particularly violent ones, the consequences can be very serious, for instance, intergenerational transmission of violence (Orozco-Vargas *et al.*, 2021). Recent studies have shown that a couple relationship is a dynamic system in which behaviors are the result of the developmental characteristics of either party and the factors that have influenced their behavior (Hammett, Karney, & Bradbury, 2020). The history of perpetration could come from the intergenerational transmission of violence, so that minors who are exposed and/or suffer situations of abuse could have learned to normalize it, developing a dysfunctional interpretation of the situations that would lead them to make greater use of aggression (Greene, Chan, McCarthy, Wakschlag, & Briggs-Gowan, 2018). Hence, violence and adversity may be related, and experience of either may influence the chronicity of the former (Hughes *et al.*, 2017). Evidence has shown that experience of multiple SLEs in the family environment puts the individual at increased risk of becoming a perpetrator or victim of GBV (Forster *et al.*, 2021). It can lead to repetitive patterns of behavior, thus maintaining the cycle of violence or increasing the likelihood of its occurrence (Both *et al.*, 2020).

According to Social Learning Theory, exposure to SLEs, and violence in particular, can predict future aggression (Brown, Fite, DiPierro, & Bortolato, 2017; Rivas, Bonilla, & Vázquez, 2020). Furthermore, SLEs can lead to health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety (Lowe *et al.*, 2017). When multiple SLEs occur over a short period, they

can trigger adverse consequences if protective factors (e.g., social support or coping strategies such as emotional self-regulation) are not present (Steinhoff, Bechtiger, Ribeaud, Eisner, & Shanahan, 2020). It has been suggested that experiencing more than four SLEs increases the risk of developing aggressive behaviors (Steinhoff *et al.*, 2020).

All in all, we believe that examining male GBV perpetrators based on their experience would help toward an understanding of GBV and contribute to its prevention (e.g., through reeducation). The objective of the present study was to classify aggressors and analyze the relationship between different groups and the type of violence they commit. This might reduce the risk of recidivism and help in the design of effective treatment programs (Llor-Esteban *et al.*, 2016) that recognize the link between the type and severity of the aggression and certain SLEs.

## METHOD

### Participants

The sample comprised 118 heterosexual men who had committed GBV (Table 1) and who had been given suspended sentences, wherein they were declared guilty but not deprived of their liberty, leaving them subject to surveillance due to the absence of a criminal record or family, or for other reasons (art. 80–87 of the Penal Code). The men participated in an intervention program at the Navalcarnero Penitentiary Centre in Madrid (Spain). The criteria for inclusion were a history of GBV, a beginner in the treatment program carried out by the CUPIF association (With One Foot Outside), and having sufficient knowledge of the language to understand the items in the measurement instrument. The study excluded those who were of a different sexual orientation; who were in the process and not at the beginning of the reintegration program; who did not have sufficient knowledge of the language to answer the structured questionnaire; and who, in the view of the professionals in charge of the intervention, may have manifested negative or disruptive behavior had they participated. None of the participants had a criminal record involving GBV.

Regarding violence against a partner, the first episode of abuse took place during courtship in 22.3% of cases, after the birth of the first child in 17.4% of cases, and throughout the first year of cohabitation in 12.4% of cases. More than a year had passed since the last episode of violence in 57.9% of cases. Finally, the complaint was processed by the couple in 69.4% and by the police in 11.6% of the cases, respectively.

The mean age of the sample was 40.46 years, with an age range of 22 to 71 years. Among the sample, 69.5% had Spanish nationality. Approximately one in four participants was divorced and 40.7% were single. The majority (78.8%) had children, the mean number of children being 1.60 ( $SD = 1.23$ ). The educational level for 24.6% of the participants was of higher education, and 39% had received a secondary education. A smaller percentage had a basic level of education (26.3%) or had never studied (7.6%). More than 60% worked full-time with an employment contract.

### Measuring instruments

**Sociodemographic characteristics.** Ad hoc questions were created to find out the age, number of sons and daughters, educational level, employment status, and income level of the participants.

**List of stressful life events.** The study employed the abbreviated version of the List of Stressful Life Events (SLE-L) (Rivas, Bonilla, & Vázquez, 2020; Roca, Panadero, Rodríguez-Moreno, Martín, & Vázquez, 2019; Vázquez & Panadero, 2016; Vázquez, Panadero, & Rivas, 2015), created from the revision of the instrument by Brugha and Cragg (1990). This consists of 26 items (10 relating to pre-18 and 16

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%	Mean ( <i>SD</i> )
Mean age (years) ( <i>SD</i> )			40.46 years (11.14)
Number of children ( <i>SD</i> )			1.60 children (1.23)
Nationality			
Spanish	82	69.5	
Other nationalities	36	30.5	
Civil status			
Single	48	40.7	
Married	15	12.7	
De facto union	11	9.3	
Separated	11	9.3	
Divorced	28	23.7	
Widower	1	0.8	
Education level			
No studies	9	7.6	
Basic education	31	26.3	
Middle education	46	39.0	
Higher education	29	24.6	
Without homologation	3	2.5	
Employment situation			
Inactive	9	7.6	
Full-time with contract	71	60.2	
Full-time without contract	9	7.6	
Part-time with contract	7	5.9	
Part-time without contract	1	0.8	
Unemployed	19	16.1	
Income level			
Less than €538/month	27	22.9	
Up to €1,076/month	45	38.1	
Up to €1,614/month	26	22.0	
Up to €2,152/month	13	11.0	
More than €2,152/month	5	4.2	

post-18). For the present study, these related to violence before the age of 18 (i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, abuse at school, and exposure to violence experienced by the interviewee's mother as well as other negative events in the family environment) and experiences after the interviewee's 18th birthday (i.e., economic and/or unemployment and substance abuse issues). The different items had a dichotomous response (No = 0; Yes = 1) regarding the occurrence or nonoccurrence of such events.

**Conflict tactics scale (Straus, 1979).** The study adopted the Spanish version (Larraín, 1994) of this scale, which is used worldwide to evaluate aggression in couple and family relationships. It measures different forms of violence in couple relationships (i.e., physical, psychological, and sexual). The questions were adapted to facilitate understanding. The response format used was a five-point Likert-type scale (0 = *never*; 1 = *once*; 2 = *sometimes*; 3 = *often*; and 4 = *very often*). Items relating to violence against sons or daughters were added. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ) indicated an adequate level of internal consistency.

### Procedure

The present study was conducted in collaboration with CUPIF, an organization that works through social integration centers attended by people in Madrid who have committed GBV. First, the director of the association was contacted and the objective of the investigation explained. We were then referred to the Ministry of the Interior of the Government of Spain to obtain permits from penitentiary institutions so that we could access potential participants. The research was approved by the ethics committee of the University of Alcalá (CEI/HU/2019/21). Once both permits were obtained, the participants were contacted, informed consent forms were distributed, and the surveys were given to those who agreed to take part. To limit external influence, the questionnaires were given to the

participants by the professionals involved in the Centre for Social Insertion.

### Analysis of data

In this quantitative, cross-sectional study with an ex post facto design, the relationship between the stressful life events suffered and the type of violence perpetrated against the partner was analyzed. The database was developed and processed with SPSS (version 25.0 for Windows, IBM, Armonk, NY). Following the procedure of Muñoz, Panadero, Pérez, and Quiroga (2005) for the study of stressful life events, the analyses were carried out in two successive steps. In the first place, a cluster analysis was carried out using the K-means test to classify the aggressors with respect to the stressful life events suffered and to test the structure of three groups found in studies with groups in a situation of social risk (Rodríguez-Moreno, Panadero, & Vázquez, 2020). The different stressful life events were used as analysis variables. Three criteria were used to check whether the correct number of groups had been drawn: (1) achievement of stability between clusters before 10 interactions, (2) classification of a sufficient number of participants in each group, and (3) performance of an ANOVA using the cluster membership variable to analyze the agreement between clusters for each stressful life event in the model. Second, a discriminant analysis was performed to estimate the probability of belonging to a cluster based on stressful life events as predictor variables. Discriminant analysis was carried out on those stressful life events that were significant in the previous cluster analysis.

On the other hand, ANOVA analysis of one factor was used to discover differences between groups based on the stressful life events suffered and the type of violence perpetrated, as well as to study differences according to the age of the participants. Likewise, the chi-square test was used to analyze differences based on nationality, with a confidence level of 95%. Finally, a multiple regression analysis was carried out in order to know the relationship between stressful life events and the types of abuse perpetrated against the partner.

## RESULTS

Table 2 shows the list of variables used in the ANOVA analysis. A cluster analysis was performed for these variables using the K-means procedure. Three clusters were obtained due to the structural characteristics of the groups.

A discriminant analysis was performed (Table 3), and three groups emerged: Group A comprised 17 men (14.4% of the

Table 2. ANOVA of the clusters

	<i>F</i>
One of the respondent's parents had problems with alcohol or drugs	34.13***
Suffered physical abuse before the age of 18	44.91***
Suffered psychological abuse before the age of 18	76.67***
Suffered sexual abuse before the age of 18	4.67*
Suffered bullying before the age of 18	24.95***
Had to leave home due to family conflicts before the age of 18	22.25***
Mother was abused by the father or another partner before the age of 18	27.57***
Parents separated/divorced	4.34*
Had major financial problems	29.28***
Had significant unemployment problems	19.73***
Drank excessively	36.68***
Have used drugs excessively	43.15***

Note: *F* = ANOVA statistic.

\* $p < 0.05$ ;

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

sample) and was characterized by the presence of SLEs relating to childhood abuse, conflict in the family of origin, and vicarious violence experienced before the age of 18. The men also consumed excessive amounts of alcohol. Group B comprised 38 men (32.2% of the sample). The men had significant economic and unemployment problems and consumed excessive amounts of alcohol and drugs. Finally, Group C comprised 63 men (53.4%) and was characterized by the absence of SLEs, not having had significant economic and/or unemployment problems, and not having suffered direct or indirect violence.

Figure 1 represents the canonical discriminant functions and shows the three groups based on their SLEs. An average of 98.3% of the grouped cases were correctly classified with the help of two functions using Wilk's lambda (Table 4). Group A comprised 100% of the cases, group B 97.4%, and group C 98.4%.

No statistically significant differences were found between the different groups based on Spanish nationality (Group A = 76.5%, Group B = 71.1%, Group C = 66.7%) or other nationalities (Group A = 23.5%, Group B = 28.9%, Group C = 33.3%) ( $\chi^2 = 0.67$ ;  $p > 0.715$ ). There were no statistically significant differences in the three profiles regarding age ( $M$  Group A = 40.23,  $SD = 13.22$ ;  $M$  Group B = 40.52,  $SD = 9.26$ ;  $M$  Group C = 40.49,  $SD = 11.75$ ;  $F = 0.00$ ;  $p > 0.996$ ). Participants who were part of Group A suffered a greater number of SLEs than the other groups ( $M$  Group A = 7.52,  $SD = 2.00$ ;  $M$

Group B = 5.26,  $SD = 1.44$ ;  $M$  Group C = 1.33,  $SD = 1.17$ ;  $F = 174.28$ ;  $p > 0.000$ ).

A one-factor ANOVA analysis was performed to ascertain the differences between the three profiles. Table 5 shows the differences in means between the three profiles for each of the violent behaviors toward the partner.

Post hoc comparisons were made to contrast the aggressions and the type of violence exerted against the partner in each of the profiles. The homogeneity of variance test reported that the assumption of homoscedasticity is met ( $p > 0.05$ ), so the Bonferroni method was used when performing multiple post hoc comparisons (Table 6).

Table 6 shows that differences were observed between Group A (those who suffered SLEs relating to direct and indirect violence in childhood) and Group C (the profile that was characterized by the lowest occurrence of SLEs in general) with regard to having inflicted a beating and threatened the partner with a weapon. Group A also differed in terms of having forced the partner to have sex and threatening to harm their children. There were differences between Groups B and C in terms of having attacked their sons and daughters; Group B, who were characterized as having suffered SLEs in adulthood, were more guilty of this.

A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to study the influence of stressful life events on types of violence (Table 7). The dependent variables were (1) the sum of the SLEs that took place in childhood (some of their parents had problems with alcohol consumption, they suffered physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, as well as abuse at school, they had to leave home as a result of family conflict, their mother suffered abuse, or their parents separated/divorced); and (2) the sum of the SLEs in adulthood (they had significant financial and unemployment issues and consumed excessive amounts of alcohol and/or drugs). The independent variables were manifestations of violence, which were categorized as psychological, physical, and sexual violence and violence toward children. The results showed that SLEs in childhood were related to sexual violence ( $r^2 = 0.16$ ;  $F = 4.91$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ). Stressful life events suffered in adulthood explained violence against the partner's children ( $r^2 = 0.11$ ;  $F = 3.35$ ;  $p < 0.013$ ).

## DISCUSSION

Generally, aggressors have been studied in relation to sociodemographic factors, and this has generated inconsistent results (Vergés-Báez *et al.*, 2021). In the present study, the profiling of the aggressors has been more detailed and could be used to design more targeted and therefore more effective interventions. Variables relating to SLEs and socialization processes have been shown to play a significant role in determining the type and severity of GBV. Given that GBV has multicausal origins and there are multiple associated risk factors (Heise, 2011), those of situational origin such as SLEs must be taken into consideration. It is important to note that the present study investigated men who had been given suspended prison sentences and who had no previous criminal record; other studies have involved aggressors who were serving jail time (Echeburúa & Fernández-Montalvo, 2009). Likewise, it is important to know

Table 3. Final clusters by discriminant analysis

	Cluster A (SLEs in childhood)	Cluster B (SLEs in adulthood)	Cluster C (Minor occurrence of SLEs)
One of the respondent's parents had problems with alcohol or drugs	0.76	0.26	0.03
Suffered physical abuse before the age of 18	0.88	0.26	0.04
Suffered psychological abuse before the age of 18	0.94	0.31	0.00
Suffered sexual abuse before the age of 18	0.17	0.02	0.01
Suffered bullying before the age of 18	0.52	0.05	0.03
Had to leave home due to family conflicts before the age of 18	0.52	0.31	0.00
Mother was abused by the father or another partner before the age of 18	0.70	0.18	0.04
Parents separated/divorced	0.52	0.34	0.19
Had major financial problems	0.58	0.97	0.33
Had significant unemployment problems	0.58	0.78	0.23
Drank excessively	0.88	0.89	0.26
Have used drugs excessively	0.41	0.84	0.12

Note: 0 = No; 1 = Yes.



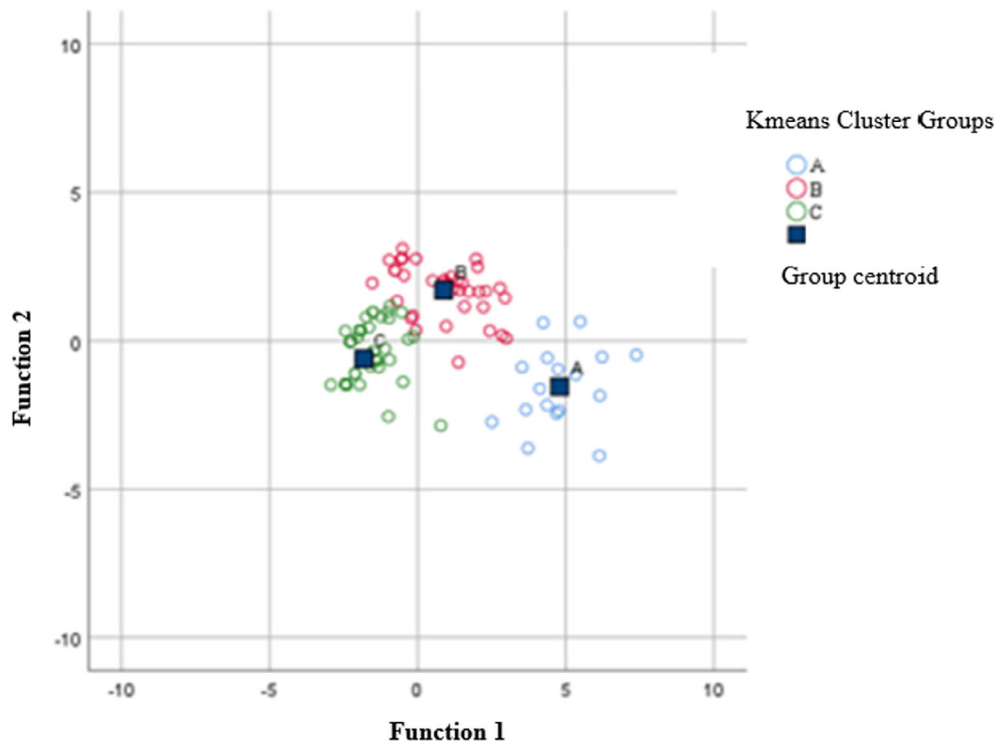


Fig. 1. Canonical discriminant functions.

Table 4. Summary of canonical discriminant functions

Function	Wilk's lambda	Eigenvalue	R	Groups of centroids of each function		
				Cluster A	Cluster B	Cluster C
Function 1	.06***	5.45	.91	4.78	.87	-1.81
Function 2	.39***	1.51	.77	-1.55	1.70	-.60

Note: R = Coefficient of canonical *r*; Cluster A = SLE in childhood; B = SLE in adulthood; C = lower occurrence of EVS. \*\*\**p* < 0.001.

the influence of SLEs on the abuse perpetrated against the partner according to profiles, as determined by SLEs suffered throughout the life cycle. It must also be taken into account that violence-related SLEs, especially if they occur in the early stages of development, can lead to the normalization of aggression in the individual through the process of social learning (Brown *et al.*, 2017; Orozco-Vargas *et al.*, 2021; Rivas, Bonilla, & Vázquez, 2020). The present study has identified profiles based on SLEs with the aim of establishing the relationship of these profiles with the type and severity of violence perpetrated against women.

As has been noted, cluster analysis generated three distinct groups. Group A (14.4% of participants) was characterized by mistreatment in childhood, mistreatment of the mother by the father or another partner, and exposure to substance abuse. Such a profile has been widely reported in the literature (Kyriacou *et al.*, 1999). Group B (32.2%) was characterized by economic

difficulties and unemployment and substance abuse throughout the life cycle. Traits linked to substance abuse, poverty, economic problems, and unemployment feature in the typology of men who commit GBV (Gálvez, 2011; Kyriacou *et al.*, 1999) and that transfer the clinical approach that has deepened in the presence of psychopathology to a more ecological approach to the phenomenon of violence (Di Napoli, Procentese, Carnevale, Esposito, & Arcidiano, 2019). Finally, Group C (53.4%) was characterized by the lowest occurrence of SLEs throughout the life cycle. The three profiles accord with previous studies that have used the chronicity of SLEs and social exclusion to explain the behavior of men who commit GBV (Muñoz *et al.*, 2005; Rodríguez-Moreno *et al.*, 2020).

Group A suffered an average of eight SLEs and Group B approximately five. There were statistically significant differences between these two groups and Group C (around 1.33 SLEs). Regarding other sociodemographic variables, there were no differences between the three groups based on age or Spanish or foreign nationality. However, depending on the stressful life events, they constitute a heterogeneous group in which the origin of the abuse could have had multiple causes, making evident the importance of expanding the studies around the aggressors (Torres *et al.*, 2013). More precisely targeted intervention programs could then be put in place and the public health problem of GBV eradicated (McCarthy *et al.*, 2018).

The most frequent behaviors reported by the participants were shouting, insults, and disqualifications, though differences were found between the three groups regarding physical violence (beatings and assaults with weapons), sexual violence (forcing the partner to have sex), and violence against other members of the family unit (e.g., sons and daughters, in the form of threats and/or actual aggression). Group A (the group who suffered from SLEs

Table 5. One-way ANOVA; relationship between the profiles and aggression toward the partner

Assaults	Groups	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Root mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
You screamed	A	17	2.25	1.18	1.65	1.37	0.258	0.02	0.00
	B	38	2.13	1.08					
	C	63	1.83	1.08					
You abused	A	17	2.18	1.37	1.40	0.90	0.409	0.01	0.00
	B	38	1.86	1.31					
	C	63	1.72	1.17					
You disqualified	A	17	1.68	1.62	2.32	1.46	0.236	0.02	0.00
	B	38	1.21	1.25					
	C	63	1.08	1.15					
You forbade her to go out	A	17	1.12	1.14	1.38	1.03	0.360	0.01	0.00
	B	38	1.13	1.31					
	C	63	0.81	1.05					
You only allowed her to go out with certain people	A	17	1.43	1.67	1.31	0.78	0.461	0.01	0.00
	B	38	1.05	1.24					
	C	63	0.98	1.21					
You ridiculed her in front of family/friends	A	17	1.06	1.38	1.72	1.76	0.176	0.03	0.01
	B	38	0.64	0.88					
	C	63	0.54	0.92					
You made her feel guilty	A	17	1.43	1.26	0.25	0.18	0.835	0.00	0.01
	B	38	1.54	1.26					
	C	63	1.39	1.09					
You threatened to hit her	A	17	1.12	1.45	1.45	1.15	0.319	0.02	0.00
	B	38	0.91	1.06					
	C	63	0.66	1.05					
You broke her personal belongings	A	17	1.37	1.50	1.70	1.09	0.338	0.01	0.00
	B	38	1.05	1.24					
	C	63	0.86	1.17					
You controlled her finances	A	17	0.93	1.28	1.19	0.88	0.417	0.01	0.00
	B	38	1.05	1.26					
	C	63	0.73	1.06					
You controlled the way she dressed	A	17	1.37	1.50	2.73	1.82	1.660	0.03	0.01
	B	38	0.75	1.14					
	C	63	0.73	1.19					
You forbade her access to the economy	A	17	0.68	1.25	3.04	3.12*	0.048	0.05	0.03
	B	38	0.78	1.15					
	C	63	0.29	0.78					
You pushed her	A	17	1.50	1.71	2.80	1.94	0.149	0.03	0.01
	B	38	1.00	1.05					
	C	63	0.83	1.12					
You slapped her	A	17	0.75	1.06	0.25	0.27	0.762	0.00	0.01
	B	38	0.67	0.85					
	C	63	0.57	0.99					
You kicked her	A	17	0.31	0.70	0.01	0.02	0.977	0.00	0.01
	B	38	0.36	0.79					
	C	63	0.34	0.72					
You attacked her with an object	A	17	0.75	1.39	1.62	1.95	0.146	0.03	0.01
	B	38	0.45	0.96					
	C	63	0.26	0.70					
You beat her	A	17	0.68	1.40	2.58	5.22**	0.007	0.08	00.07
	B	38	0.29	0.74					
	C	63	0.06	0.30					
You forced her to have sex	A	17	0.93	1.43	4.90	10.96***	0.000	0.16	0.15
	B	38	0.16	0.60					
	C	63	0.06	0.30					
You threatened her with a gun	A	17	0.31	0.87	0.26	0.73	0.480	0.01	0.00
	B	38	0.18	0.51					
	C	63	0.11	0.55					
You attacked her with a weapon	A	17	0.56	1.26	1.53	3.85*	0.024	0.06	0.04
	B	38	0.10	0.45					
	C	63	0.08	0.64					
You threatened to harm your children	A	17	0.56	1.15	1.82	7.08***	0.001	0.11	0.09
	B	38	0.08	0.36					
	C	63	0.03	0.25					

(continued)

Table 5. (continued)

Assaults	Groups	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Root mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
You yelled at your children	A	17	0.62	1.14	2.22	3.26*	0.042	0.05	0.03
	B	38	0.64	0.94					
	C	63	0.24	0.62					
You assaulted your children	A	17	0.25	0.68	1.23	5.00**	0.008	0.08	0.06
	B	38	0.35	0.71					
	C	63	0.03	0.17					

Note: Group A = stressful life event (SLE) in childhood; B = SLE in adulthood; C = Less occurrence of SLE; *F* = ANOVA statistic; *p* = significance level.

\**p* < 0.05;

\*\**p* < 0.01;

\*\*\**p* < 0.001.

Table 6. Post hoc test through Bonferroni; differences between profiles

	Group (I)	Group (J <sub>1</sub> )	Mean difference	Group (J <sub>2</sub> )	Mean difference
You beat her up	A	B	0.39	C	0.62*
	B	A	-0.39	C	0.23
	C	A	-0.62*	B	-0.23
You forced her to have sex	A	B	0.77*	C	0.87*
	B	A	-0.77*	C	0.09
	C	A	-0.87	B	-0.09
You threatened her with a gun	A	B	0.45	C	0.48*
	B	A	-0.45	C	0.02
	C	A	-0.48*	B	-0.02
You threatened to harm your children	A	B	0.48*	C	0.52*
	B	A	-0.48*	C	0.04
	C	A	-0.52*	B	-0.04
You attacked your children	A	B	-0.10	C	0.21
	B	A	0.10	C	0.31*
	C	A	-0.21	B	-0.31*

Note: Group A = stressful life event (SLE) in childhood; B = SLE in adulthood; C = lower occurrence of SLE.

\**p* < 0.05.

relating to direct and indirect violence in childhood) and Group C (who experienced the least number of SLEs) differed in terms of more serious behaviors (e.g., beatings and threats to use a weapon). Group A also differed from the other groups in terms of forcing the partner to have sex and threatening to harm their children. Differences were also reported between Groups B and C regarding attacks on sons or daughters, with the former exercising such behavior to a greater extent. As Hines and Douglas (2018) state, between the three groups it would be possible to differentiate between those who suffered stressful life events in childhood (Group A) and those who suffered them in adulthood not associated with violence (Group B) within the perpetrators, who could exercise intimate terrorism, characterized by more severe forms of violence and that could be explained from patriarchal theories, for having internalized this social structure based on male domination and the acceptance of violence, which would place women in a subordinate status (Alangea *et al.*, 2018). Those who experienced fewer SLEs seem to have engaged in so-called situational partner violence, in which less serious forms of abuse are committed.

Table 7. Multiple regression analysis for types of violence and SLEs

SLE	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>VIF</i>
			standardized					
SLEs in childhood								
Constant	1.13	0.29			3.856	0.000		
Psychological violence	0.01	0.02	0.08		0.71	0.480	1.81	
Physical violence	-0.05	0.07	-0.10		-0.70	0.483	2.87	
Sexual violence	1.04	0.32	0.40		3.19	0.002	1.97	
Violence toward children	0.07	0.13	0.06		0.57	0.570	1.38	
SLEs in adulthood								
Constant	1.64	0.22			7.43	0.000		
Psychological violence	0.01	0.01	0.09		0.75	0.455	1.81	
Physical violence	-0.01	0.05	-0.03		-0.19	0.846	2.87	
Sexual violence	0.06	0.24	0.03		0.23	0.815	1.97	
Violence toward children	0.27	0.10	0.28		2.69	0.008	1.38	

Note: *B* = non-standardized coefficient; *SE* = standard error; standardized *B* = standardized coefficient; *t* = Student's *t*; *p* = significance; *VIF* = variance inflation factor.

The results of the present study reveal that SLEs relating to violence seem to have influenced the type and severity of subsequent mistreatment (Brown *et al.*, 2017; Rivas, Bonilla, & Vázquez, 2020). The intrapersonal model might explain the association between SLEs and GBV, since social learning and violence perpetrated in the family of origin could be internalized in the aggressor, thus increasing the probability they will commit violence subsequently (Brown, Perera, Masho, Mezuk, & Cohen, 2015). Therefore, SLEs in childhood seem to be predictors of GBV in men (Vergés-Báez *et al.*, 2021). Likewise, conflict in the family of origin may imply that the individual who experiences it lacks social support and sufficient coping skills (Steinhoff *et al.*, 2020). As a result, violence becomes normalized as a way to resolve later conflict (Rivas-Rivero & Bonilla-Algovia, 2021). Failure to intervene could lead to an increase in the frequency and intensity of GBV (Both *et al.*, 2020), with inevitable serious consequences not only for the female partner but also for the child/children who is/are exposed either directly or indirectly to it (Rivas, Bonilla, & Vázquez, 2020), and who

may go on to replicate such behavior when they grow up (Choi *et al.*, 2019).

Indeed, previous studies have shown that minors who are exposed to abuse or GBV are more likely to commit GBV in adulthood. Thirty percent of the men in the present case had experienced violent SLEs. Regression analyses revealed that SLEs in childhood were related to sexual violence in 16% of cases in the present study. Adult SLEs were associated with violence toward the partner's children in 11% of cases. Psychosocial factors such as economic and employment problems and substance abuse may therefore have mediated hostile attitudes toward other members of the family (Hammett *et al.*, 2020; Rivas, Bonilla, & Vázquez, 2020; Rivas-Rivero & Bonilla-Algovia, 2021).

A number of limitations should be noted in this work. In the first place, the sample is not large enough, and probabilistic sampling was not used. Second, while some authors have demonstrated the validity of the Conflict Resolution Tactics Scale in various contexts (Paixao, Reichenheim, Moraes, Coutinho, & Veras, 2007), including studies of GBV (Bonilla-Algovia & Rivas-Rivero, 2020; Rivas, Bonilla, Redondo, Panadero, & Vázquez, 2020), it has been subject to criticism because it does not include variables relating to the history of violence and the consequences of this history for the victims, as well as the tendency of aggressors to minimize their responsibility for their actions and the women who attribute blame (Ferrer & Bosch, 2005). Nor does it acknowledge the bidirectionality of violence. It should be noted that the List of Stressful Life Events has not been validated, and, although it measures the occurrence of such events, it does not analyze the frequency with which they have been suffered, so it does not delve into such events, although it has been used in various investigations offering relevant findings that show the importance of studying its influence on the subsequent life trajectory (Guillén, Panadero, Rivas, & Vázquez, 2015; Rivas-Rivero & Bonilla-Algovia, 2021; Roca *et al.*, 2019). Third, the participants may have underplayed the extent of their behavior as a consequence of social desirability; failed to recognize their responsibility for the erroneous attribution of aggression; or neglected to identify certain of their behaviors as violent. Other studies have pointed out that these aspects are part of the profile of aggressors (Andrés-Pueyo *et al.*, 2008; Andrés-Pueyo & Redondo, 2007). Social desirability, in particular, should be investigated further because there is a danger that it may be used to exonerate or minimize violence.

Likewise, future researchers might study larger sample sizes and incorporate other variables to deepen our knowledge and understanding of those who commit GBV. This will assist in developing reeducation and treatment programs and innovative policies with the aim of eliminating any form of GBV and its reproduction. It is important to note here that, although the participants in Group C had experienced fewer SLEs than those in the other groups – and the GBV they committed was less frequent and intense – their offspring were nonetheless exposed to it. Therefore, a longitudinal approach should be adopted to investigate the extent to which minors who are exposed to any degree of violence in the family of origin replicate it through social learning, and interventions planned accordingly. Risk and community protection factors that promote resilience must also be

identified so that GBV can be prevented. In sum, coordinated efforts must be made to help overcome the adverse effects of SLEs on children and adults (Forster *et al.*, 2021).

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The signing authors of this work have and own the data on which the study is based. They also declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Data subject to third party restrictions.

#### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article:

### Appendix S1 Supplementary Information

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