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## Campaigns Against Intimate Partner Violence Toward Women in Portugal: Types of Prevention and Target Audiences

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### ABSTRACT

Understanding the objectives and groups targeted by previous campaigns to prevent intimate partner violence will prove useful in developing future such efforts. This study examines the types of prevention and audiences of Portuguese poster campaigns against Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) toward women, comparing governmental and nongovernmental organizations and observing how objectives evolved between 2000 and 2011. These comparisons were made through inductive and deductive content analysis of 74 posters – received after contacting 1,097 institutions – using standardized residual analysis from the chi-square test. Results indicated tertiary prevention as the main aim and the general population as the main target audience. Differences in these regards were found between public and private organizations, and campaigns were found to have changed over the years, mainly concerning target audiences. This study provides an overview of the directions of the campaigns against IPV over 11 years; these emphasized the urgency of informing abused or at-risk women about resources available in the community and strategies for getting help, and they sought to alert the general population that IPV is a public crime that everyone has a responsibility to combat.

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For the last 20 years, research on violence against women has focused on the dynamics, its underlying causes and risk factors, and interventions in diverse settings such as in healthcare and the justice system (Ellsberg et al., 2015; World Health Organization [WHO]/London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2010). Appeals have been made to increase research on the prevention of intimate partner violence (IPV) and on analysis and evaluation (Campbell & Manganello, 2006), shifting the focus from victims and perpetrators towards the community as a whole, with all community members sharing this responsibility

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(Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). Social campaigns have been one of the most used vehicles for such community-wide efforts.

Media and public education campaigns are used to raise awareness of IPV as a societal problem and as a crime with a view toward changing public attitudes and norms in order to contribute to its prevention. By providing information about actions individuals could take to intervene on behalf of the victims, these campaigns also intend to modify witnesses' behaviors from silence and tolerance to intervention and condemnation, (Cismaru, Jensen, & Lavack, 2014). Above all, they aim to inform abused or at-risk women about institutional or community resources, provide strategies for getting help, and encourage the victims to feel that they are supported (e.g., Wray & Wray, 2006). Prevention through media campaigns therefore includes certain interventions directed at the general population, other campaigns are aimed at those who may be at risk for IPV, and others are aimed at women currently suffering IPV and in need of help.

To date, there is little evidence that simple awareness campaigns have an impact on the prevalence or incidence of violence. This is partly because existing evaluations have not measured violence as an outcome and because it is difficult to attribute changes to media campaigns (Fulu, Kerr-Wilson, & Lang, 2014). The campaigns do, in themselves, help "break the silence" and provide an important platform for local advocacy initiatives, but they are seldom intensive enough or sufficiently theory-driven to transform norms or change actual behaviors (Heise, 2011).

When the effects of public campaigns to reduce the legitimacy of IPV have been evaluated, for example by United Nations Women (UNW, 2015, p. 36) or Oxfam's "We Can" campaign in Asia (Raab, 2011), there has been no specific distinction made among those that are aimed at populations who do not live in a situation of abuse, those who do but are unaware of it, and those that live in an ongoing situation of maltreatment. Despite the importance of considering these different types of prevention, there is little information regarding which type has been given most prominence in recent years. Moreover, determining the target audience is a fundamental principle of campaign design (Noar, 2006), helping to define its preventive purposes.

Since the beginning of the 21st century the institutions in Portugal with political and social responsibility for gender violence prevention and treatment – both governmental, and, to a greater extent, nongovernmental – have consistently employed media and education campaigns to combat violence against women. This follows legislation in the year 2000, definitively classifying abuse – maltreatment or overburdening of minors/subordinates, or between spouses – as a crime of public concern. In 2007, it was further recognized as a distinct category of crime against a person in order to cover more types of relationships, such as same-sex couples or casual relationships, and to facilitate support for victims.

Knowing at which preventive level the previous campaigns were oriented and which sectors of the population were targeted is helpful when trying to evaluate

efficacy claims among the different promoters of media campaigns in Portugal. This is important for developing new campaigns since the scope of the problem may be evolving – sometimes due to the effects of those campaigns themselves. If the characteristics of previous preventive efforts aren't taken into account, the new messaging risks overlooking neglected audiences or presenting messages that don't fit the socio-political situation of the recipients.

In the present study we sought to carry out descriptions and analyses of meaning on poster campaigns to prevent violence against women in intimate relationships developed by governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Portugal between 2000 and 2011. The intention was to learn which type of preventive message (primary, secondary, or tertiary) has predominated in the efforts to eliminate IPV (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). We also aimed to infer which groups the media campaigns were geared towards (victims, aggressors, witnesses, or others). Inferences were made according to the time in which the campaigns were launched and the institutions responsible for them.

### **Intimate partner violence, gender violence and prevention**

Intimate partner violence is usually understood as abuse from a husband or boyfriend, whether physically, psychologically, or through controlling behaviors. It is clearly asymmetric and perpetrated mainly by men (Johnson, 2001; RASI, 2018), and this focus is reflected in Portuguese domestic violence legislation. Because of its extraordinary severity and prevalence, IPV is the central concern of the majority of domestic-violence prevention initiatives, focusing on gender relations rather than on the domestic environment in which it arises. Inspired by a number of studies and by preceding feminist struggles (see Radford & Russell, 1992), the United Nations has issued a formal declaration positioning violence against women as “a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men” (United Nations [UN], 1993, p. 1). This declaration broadened the focus of preventive efforts to include any violence committed against women because they are women, such as female genital mutilation, sexual harassment outside marriage, and human trafficking, among others (UNW, 2015, p. 13). We should therefore understand IPV as a form of gender violence, not simply as a manifestation of interpersonal strife within couples (Moreno, 1999).

To understand the ways in which efforts have been made to prevent violence against women, it is useful to consider the well-known public health approach that recognises three preventive levels (Dahlberg & Butchart, 2005; United Nations [UN], 2006; WHO, 2010). These levels are defined according to the intention of the health professional, depending on how far a disease has developed. At the level of primary prevention, the intention is to prevent the

occurrence of illness before it starts. Secondary prevention aims to detect any early symptom that may allow action to be taken before the illness develops further. Tertiary prevention aims to stop an existing illness from worsening or developing complications.

Applying this medical approach to campaigns against gender violence, it could be inferred that the primary level attempts to foster behavior, attitudes, and norms to tackle the etiology of maltreatment. But whereas a medical affliction may stem from a factor that can be avoided, such as tobacco or alcohol, when it comes to gender violence such factors to avoid are not as easily identifiable, or result from a patriarchal culture that may be identifiable but hard to change, particularly in the short term; this complicates the process of developing and articulating preventive messages.

The greatest difficulty in adapting the three-level model to analyze campaigns against gender violence is however found at the secondary prevention level. Unlike in the world of healthcare, where diagnosis of illness is based on objective criteria with thresholds above which a disease can be said to be present, in the case of IPV there is not always agreement as to when a relationship can be considered abusive. One model from the healthcare domain (Kuehlein, Sghedoni, Visentin, Gervas, & Jamoule, 2010) sees the discrepancy between the viewpoint of the professional versus that of the user as the key to understanding the nature of secondary prevention: In preventive medicine, the doctor's determination of whether a symptom represents a risk of illness or already-present illness is based on the appearance of an event (symptom) that marks the onset of the illness. This indicator is then treated as the starting point for intervention. For the patient, however, the path from the absence of illness to its arrival is a continuum that might not be perceptible until the symptoms become severe. This is how Kuehlein et al. (2010) characterize the two perspectives: That of the doctor who diagnoses the "illness" at a certain moment, vs that of the patient who "falls ill" without being aware of it. This is the key to describing campaigns of secondary prevention. It is the promoter that informs those who are the targets of the campaign what is, and what is not, IPV. This takes two typical forms: Showing examples of behaviors or attitudes that could qualify as symptoms of IPV, or taking certain relationship patterns that many might consider normal and reframing them as actual expressions of this violence.

Campaigns of tertiary prevention presuppose the existence of an unequivocal situation of abuse within the couple; they are not geared toward preventing the occurrence of violence but toward the possibility of escaping from it. However, the distinction between secondary and tertiary prevention is not always clear-cut. In both cases, the promoter shows the existence of gender violence in the relationship, speaking from the position of an expert, but in the case of secondary prevention it should be assumed that one or both of the partners in the relationship might not be aware of the maltreatment and need this clarified (e.g., "if this or that happens, then there is a problem"), or even when there is

awareness, it is not recognized in its full importance, in which case they benefit from an exhortation to act (e.g., “the first time this happens, do XYZ”, “don’t permit any such situation”).

## **Public mass media campaigns and attitude change: Aims and recipients**

Public mass media and education campaigns are compelling intervention tools that address broad cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors designed to attain desirable behavioral changes for various problems and audiences (e.g., Campbell & Manganello, 2006; Noar, 2006).

Prevailing attitudes toward violence against women influence the perpetration of this violence (Anderson & Umberson, 2001), women’s response to the violence experienced (e.g., Harris, Firestone, & Vega, 2005), and community responses (Heise, 1998). Anti-abuse campaigns are commonly based on theories or models of individual behavioral change and theories of attitude change through mass media. Behavioral theories that most often inform communication campaigns on domestic violence come from social, health, and clinical psychology (Wray & Wray, 2006). In these theories, cognitive influences such as outcome expectancies, self-efficacy, and attitudes are emphasized and expected to exert their influence indirectly on behavior through behavioral intentions. In theories where attitudes are considered, other constructs contribute to behavioral intentions such as subjective norms (perception of what others expect the individual to do), injunctive norms (perceptions about which behaviors are approved or disapproved of), and perceived behavioral control. The campaigns, embodiments of these models, can significantly influence such perceptions. Since the seminal Yale studies (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953), theories of attitude change have agreed that for a message of change to be effective, it must be focused on a specific receiver whose behavior it is intended to modify. It follows that in IPV the persuasive messages should focus on the two protagonists of the action: The aggressor and the victim. However, if women are killed because they are women, due to the existence of patriarchy, then influencing the overall social climate should decrease rates of femicides and of violence against women more generally. In fact, societal attitudes shape the informal responses of acquaintances, friends, and family, as well as the formal responses of professionals – and these are of paramount importance as women’s ability to escape abuse and increase wellbeing is associated with the support they receive from others, both materially and emotionally (see Flood & Pease, 2006).

### **Aim of the study**

The central aim of the study was to infer and describe the communicational purposes of the messages presented on posters from campaigns against intimate

partner violence toward women carried out in Portugal between 2000 and 2011, complemented by identification of their intended audiences. We sought to analyze how campaigns have evolved in these respects over time and between the public and private institutions they originate from. We intend to answer the following questions: What type of prevention do the posters promote? Do they seek to stop abuse from being initiated in the first place, to point it out in its early stages, to help victims to confront and overcome it, or do they seek some other aim? To whom do the violence-prevention campaigns primarily direct their messages – to the aggressor, to the victim, to those in the nearby environment, to other populations, or to society in general? Can different communication aims and audiences be found between the public or private institutions who produce these campaigns? Have significant changes arisen in these characteristics over the 11 years analyzed?

## **Materials and methods**

### ***Study universe and sampling frame***

The study universe consisted of gender violence prevention campaigns carried out in Portugal between the years 2000 and 2011. A campaign was defined as any activity of fixed duration that has included any material with a view to preventing intimate gender violence, that is, the prevention of violence perpetrated by men against women in an intimate relationship. These campaigns may have been run at the national, district, or local levels.

In the absence of inventories, the sampling frame was constructed from three different sources of campaign promotion: (1) Public institutions, responsible for carrying out tasks imposed by Portuguese law and international agreements; (2) political organizations and unions, whose principles are likely to inform campaigns of a more ideological nature, and; (3) organisations which advocate most directly for the interests of women – non-governmental women's organizations, other NGOs, public institutions of social solidarity (IPSS), and religious and teaching/parent associations.

## ***Procedures***

### ***Data collection and corpus***

Contact information was gathered online for the main bodies responsible for the campaigns. For those with incomplete contact information, this information was requested via registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt, sent to the supervising bodies of the agencies under review.

A complete list of 344 governmental institutions/ministries, autonomous communities, municipalities, and counties was found through the Internet, 183 entities were found after contacting institutional bodies responsible for

political parties and unions, and numerous other institutions were contacted in order to compile a list of 2,527 organizations comprising women's associations, other NGOs, IPSS, and teaching/parent and religious associations. In order to collect the campaigns, we contacted all the women's associations and NGOs, plus a random selection of 30% of the social solidarity institutions and 10% of parent associations. After an initial lack of response, a new email was sent to each institution. From a total of 1,097 entities contacted by email, 995 messages were delivered and 169 responses were received, a 17.0% response rate, of which 19 institutions sent material (by post or by referring us to material available on the Internet).

Three channels were represented in the material received: Fixed images (posters, brochures), audio (e.g., radio or Internet ads), and video (TV or Internet ads and short films). Only posters were considered in the present study as they were the most commonly used channel in the time period under analysis. We received 98 posters, 24 of which were discarded because they did not comply with the selection criteria as they were produced before the year 2000, their contents were not directly related to gender violence, or they were not produced for campaigns.

### *Categories of analysis*

To identify their communicational purposes, the campaigns were placed in one of five categories: Three according to the type of prevention they signal, and two other categories created for those that did not fit according to prevention type.

Campaigns of primary prevention: Those that promoted attitudes and values that discourage abusive behavior in romantic relationships. The objective of these campaigns was expressed in messages intended to eliminate what the promoters considered to be the causes of abuse or to promote values and relationships that are incompatible with violence. For this category no forms of abuse could be presented in any textual or graphic expression, not even incipiently.

Campaigns of secondary prevention: Wherein some action is proposed in response to the first symptoms of abuse in the relationship. The key element was that the advertiser took the opportunity to explain what IPV is. This may have taken one of two typical forms: Showing examples of behavior or attitudes that can be described as symptoms of IPV (more similar to the idea of medical analyses in preventive medicine) or reframing aspects of relationships considered "normal" by certain groups as effective expressions of IPV.

Campaigns of tertiary prevention: Those that assumed the existence of abuse in an unequivocal form. Typical forms included images of effective mistreatment or phrases that clearly described this type of relationship (e.g., "when you hit a woman ...", "if you suffer violence ...", "if you know women who are being mistreated ...").



Campaigns aimed at promoting general solidarity: These were campaigns that could not be placed in any of the three previous categories. They promoted gestures of solidarity and support to victims of violence in a general way. Since abuse is taken for granted, this could be understood as a form of tertiary prevention, but this group exclusively contained posters whose message did not include an allusion to behaviors to avoid mistreatment or to remove the battered from their situation, but to manifest general, non-specific rejection of IPV (e.g., “domestic violence has no place in our society”).

Campaigns of general awareness-raising: This category was created to include posters oriented toward what the specialized literature calls “general sensitization”. The objective attributed to these campaigns was to make the problem visible, reminding the audience that it is a serious matter. Unlike primary prevention campaigns, they do not advance incompatible values so that violence does not appear, nor do they promote actions of solidarity with the victims. Also included here were the posters with a purely functional purpose: Those that advertised another activity such as a talk or artistic event related to IPV.

To identify which population or populations each poster addressed, the victim and the aggressor were taken as the default reference, with further categories of audiences created as they were found on the posters: Neighbors, relatives, friends, professional groups, and the general population not directly linked to the protagonists. Referring to the text (within the context in which it was framed), we identified syntactic constructions that imperatively or desideratively addressed one of these audiences. We similarly analyzed the images that could be understood as messages addressed to one of the protagonists of the abuse (e.g., a poster with an electronic security bracelet, aimed at the aggressor; a dead woman in a morgue with a message about reconciliations, directed to the victim).

### ***Analysis procedures***

For each of the objectives, the researchers separately assigned every poster to one of the categories, basing their choice on the semantic aspects of the message and the combination of text and image. Inspired by the guidelines of systematic design by Corbin and Strauss (2007), the categories described above originated from a hybrid process; the main categories were constructed from the initial open codification, and others originated inductively via axial codification. When disagreements arose in the classification, the judges (the first two authors) argued their positions, discussed, and reached consensus. Considering the polysemic nature of most of the posters, the inclusion of the same poster in several categories was allowed, with the main category being the most obvious and relevant and the others ordered according to importance.

For a given poster, the main category was determined and completed with the secondary ones. For the nature of the promoting institutions (public or nongovernmental) and the time period in which the posters appeared, we

compared the frequency distribution using the Chi-Square Test and an analysis of the standardized residuals. We chose three periods of equal length; one of the cut-off points was the year 2007, the year in which the Portuguese penal code first recognised domestic violence as a distinct crime. Whenever the Chi-Square test assumption of having less than 20% of cells with an expected frequency under five was not met, the Fisher Exact Test was conducted to check the significance of the results.

## Results

The final sample consisted of 74 posters belonging to 49 campaigns: 25 originating in public institutions, two from political parties, and 47 from civil society, namely NGOs. Eight of the campaigns were launched between 2000 and 2003, 12 between 2004 and 2007, and 54 between 2008 and 2011.

### *Communicational purposes*

#### *Descriptive data*

The communicational purposes of the campaigns are presented based on the main aim identified in the campaign and on all the aims presented within a single poster (Table 1). The majority of campaigns were geared towards tertiary prevention (43.2%) as their main aim. Taking into account all the aims identified within a single poster it can be noted that, though tertiary prevention remained the most relevant purpose (34.7%), advertisers also integrated secondary aims, especially those of promoting the idea of IPV as a crime (secondary prevention), solidarity, and general awareness-raising messages.

*Primary prevention.* Of the nine posters whose main message was primary prevention, the majority focused on transmitting specific rather than general messages. Messages were associated with the idea of equality as a value and the promotion of positive relationships in the context of dating as a safeguard for a future relationship without abuse. In two other posters, messages of primary prevention also appeared but as secondary aims, while equality continued to be the main message. Equality was presented as a positive affirmation, and as a value: “nenhum homem é mais do que eu (“no man is more than me”), “ser igual é ser mais” (“to be equal is to be more”). However, in none of the eight messages was the slogan of equality directly associated with gender violence, although additional text was included in all these posters to lead the viewer to such an interpretation.

*Secondary prevention.* Thirty-one posters included messages of secondary prevention, although they were only included as the main communicational purpose in 13 of these. The dissociation of love from abuse was the idea most emphasized

**Table 1.** Frequency of communicational aims – main and all – in the posters.

Objectives	Main n (%)	All n (%)
<i>Primary prevention: Promoting values incompatible with IPV</i>		
Valuing equality	6 (8.1)	8 (5.6)
Promoting healthy relationships during dating	3 (4.1)	3 (2.1)
<b>Partial total</b>	<b>9 (12.2)</b>	<b>11 (7.6)</b>
<i>Secondary prevention: Early detection and delegitimization of IPV</i>		
Viewing low-intensity violence as a warning sign for future maltreatment (e.g., shouting)	3 (4.1)	3 (2.1)
Condemning violence legitimized in certain cultural contexts (e.g., FGM)	2 (2.7)	9 (6.3)
Separating ideas of love and abuse	7 (9.5)	8 (5.6)
Framing abuse as crime	1 (1.4)	11 (7.6)
<b>Partial total</b>	<b>13 (17.6)</b>	<b>31 (21.5)</b>
<i>Tertiary prevention: Approaching, reporting abuse, and recovery</i>		
Describing support resources	3 (4.1)	8 (5.6)
Exhorting the victim to take action (in general)	12 (16.2)	17 (11.8)
Exhorting the victim to take action for her children's sake	3 (4.1)	4 (2.8)
Exhorting the victim to speak, ask for help, inform herself, etc.	10 (13.5)	14 (9.7)
Exhorting the victim to report the abuse	3 (4.1)	6 (4.2)
Threatening the abuser	1 (1.4)	1 (0.7)
<b>Partial total</b>	<b>32 (43.2)</b>	<b>50 (34.7)</b>
<i>General solidarity with the victims</i>		
Promoting actions to condemn abuse (in general)	2 (2.7)	13 (9.0)
Invitations to courses, talks, training, etc.	8 (10.8)	14 (9.7)
Messages targeting health, social, and education professionals	1 (1.4)	1 (0.7)
<b>Partial total</b>	<b>11 (14.9)</b>	<b>28 (19.4)</b>
<i>General awareness-raising</i>		
Generic messages against violence	1 (1.4)	4 (2.8)
Description of specific data about violence (as deaths)	1 (1.4)	13 (9.0)
Promotion of empathy towards the victims (without proposing action)	7 (9.5)	7 (4.9)
<b>Partial total</b>	<b>9 (12.2)</b>	<b>24 (16.7)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>74 (100.0)</b>	<b>144 (100.0)</b>

in the posters. The opposition of love and abuse was presented in some posters by juxtaposing of hearts with aggressive fists (sometimes tattooed with the letters L O V E like Robert Mitchum's in *The Night of the Hunter* or with female eyes superimposed on a striking fist). Two posters were especially relevant for their originality and the strength of their message. In one, a close-up photograph of a young woman with her mouth covered with adhesive tape was accompanied by the words "Não há pancadinhas de amor" ("There's no such thing as a love tap"), a powerful message combining the idea that not even the smallest aggressive gesture fits in a love relationship, with the muteness imposed on the young woman apparently indicating that communication is also inhibited and silenced by these violent gestures. The second poster was more forceful: At the front door of a house, a sign over the doorbell reads "Cuidado com o Marido" ("Beware of Husband") (Figure 1). This metaphor, which frames the husband as a dangerous animal, like a dog, could be considered an extreme example of primary prevention (the only way to avoid intimate violence would be never to marry), however the text that accompanies the image "Cinco mulheres morrem todos os meses em Portugal; Denunciar é um dever de todos" ("Five women die every month in



**Figure 1.** Cuidado com o Marido (“Beware of Husband”). APAV Campaign “International Day for the Eradication of Violence against Women” (JWT, 2003).

Portugal; Reporting is everyone’s duty”), reveals the message as secondary prevention – a warning that marriage might lead to abuse.

Although not always the central message of the poster, the idea that abuse is a crime was very present as a secondary aim, shown in 11 posters. The list of cultural expressions that legitimize abuse was also shown in nine posters. For example, a poster from 2000 says “Quem Cala Consente” (“Silence Gives Consent”), representing the cultural legitimization of abuse, and “Não se cale. Falar pode ajudá-la. A si e aos Outros” (“Don’t be silent. Speaking out can help you. You as well as others.”), represented an action-oriented main message.

**Tertiary prevention.** This was the most common aim presented in the campaigns: Action when abuse is already established. Practically all the messages focused on encouraging victims to take action (32 posters). The ways in which the messages were presented may be ordered according to the intensity with which the advertiser suggested the action: The most anodyne messages were the three limited to describing the services available to battered women. Then there were 12 posters with generic recommendations for action (e.g., step out of the shadows, do something) and 10 in which the call to take specific actions (e.g., call, inform yourself, etc.) was accompanied by a justification (e.g., it is necessary to give up anonymity, stop pretending that everything is fine). Of these, two campaigns used popular analogies, one a reality show in which people are embarrassed to tell their problems, but it is necessary to externalize them in order to address them. The other campaign subverted the typical imagery of glamour magazines, showing an appealing

antithesis: Instead of accompanying the photographs of famous and beautiful people with insignificant ads, it incorporated phrases such as “ANA LUÍSA ABRE-NOS AS PORTAS DA CASA ONDE É VIOLADA” (“ANA LUÍSA SHOWS US INSIDE THE HOUSE WHERE SHE IS RAPED”). A higher level of action proposal is one in which the victim is explicitly asked to report the abuse. Of the three posters that encouraged reporting, one was especially disturbing: A photograph of a naked woman, apparently dead, with open wounds on her torso and face, with a message that warns: “NOS ÚLTIMOS 5 ANOS 176 RECONCILIAÇÕES ACABARAM ASSIM. NÃO TENHAS ESPERANÇA.” (“IN THE LAST 5 YEARS 176 RECONCILIATIONS HAVE ENDED IN THIS WAY. DON’T HOPE FOR BETTER.”) (Figure 2). Three posters indirectly encouraged acting for the sake of the children. The appeal was not explicit in the text, but figures of children were depicted in an attitude of appeal to the victim. The only tertiary prevention poster that clearly deviated from this was one in which a man is shown with an electronic control bracelet, a different strategy of tertiary prevention: To deter the aggressor by showing the consequences of his possible action. The relative importance of each category was maintained when secondary aims were considered.

**General solidarity.** Eleven posters were found whose main purpose was to encourage solidarity with the victims of abuse, to provoke involvement by putting the audience in the victim’s shoes. Eight of these were posters calling for specific training events or days of protest. Two others encouraged open involvement without calling for any specific action; when secondary aims were considered they appeared to be of equal importance to the call for specific events. Lastly, one poster appealed to health professionals to be sensitive to the issue.

**General awareness-raising.** The bulk of this category (nine posters) originated from two campaigns. The first of these showed different parts of a house (the bathroom, the living room, stairs, etc.) photographed from the viewpoint of someone who has been knocked to the floor, inviting the viewer to contemplate the victim’s perspective as a way to generate empathy with the battered. The other campaign displayed a boxing glove, a pistol, and a brain formed by words of different colours accompanied by the motto “Porque há crimes que deixam marcas” (“Because there are crimes that leave marks”).

#### **Prevention by type of institution**

Regarding the main preventive aims, there were marginally significant differences in the type of prevention promoted by the different types of institutions,  $\chi^2(4) = 9.25, p = .054$ , Fisher = 8.79,  $p = .06$ . Tertiary prevention was



**Figure 2.** Nos últimos 5 anos (“In the last 5 years 176 reconciliations have ended in this way”). Create by Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género (CIG), 2011.

the most frequent communicational purpose for NGOs and for the state, but the latter had a significantly greater focus on secondary prevention than NGOs did (Table 2).

### *Prevention paths over time*

There were significant differences among the three periods of time considered in the main type of prevention addressed in the campaigns,  $\chi^2(8) = 15.77$ ,  $p = .046$ . However, the Fisher test revealed no significance, Fisher = 11.68,  $p = .089$ . It is only possible to refer to a tendency for tertiary prevention aims found before

**Table 2.** Frequency, percentage, and adjusted residuals of the main prevention aims and of the main audience for the posters by type of institution and poster year.

Prevention aims	Type of institution n (%) residuals		Poster year n (%) residuals		
	Governmental	Non-governmental	2000–2003	2004–2007	2008–2011
Primary prevention	5 (20) 1.4	4 (8.5) -1.4	0 (0) -1.1	0 (0) -1.4	9 (16.7) 1.9
Secondary prevention	8 (32) 2.2	5 (10.6) -2.2	1 (12.5) -4	3 (25) .7	9 (16.7) -3
Tertiary prevention	8 (32) -1.4	23 (48.9) 1.4	7 (87.5) 2.7	4 (33.3) -8	21 (38.9) -1.2
General solidarity	3 (12) -.3	7 (14.9) .3	0 (0) -1.3	1 (8.3) -.7	10 (18.5) 1.5
General awareness-raising	1 (4) -1.6	8 (17) 1.6	0 (0) -1.1	4 (33.3) 2.5	5 (9.3) -1.3
Audience					
Victim	3 (12) -2.5	19 (40.4) 2.5	7 (87.5) 3.7	4 (33.3) .2	12 (22.2) -2.7
Aggressor	5 (20) 2.6	1 (2.1) -2.6	1 (12.5) .5	1 (8.3) .0	4 (7.4) -4
People in proximity	0 (0) -1.7	5 (10.6) 1.7	0 (0) -8	1 (8.3) .2	4 (7.4) .4
General population	17 (68) 2.1	20 (42.6) -2.1	0 (0) -3.1	5 (41.7) -.7	33 (61.1) 2.8
Other (professionals)	0 (0) -1.0	2 (4.3) 1.0	0 (0) -5	1 (8.3) 1.3	1 (1.9) -.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>54</b>

Due to the very low representation of posters created by political parties and unions, comparative analysis between promoting institutions was limited to governmental and non-governmental organizations.

2003, to general awareness-raising aims between 2003 and 2007, and to an increase of primary prevention communicational aims from 2008 onwards. It was starting in 2007, when the law was enacted, that campaigns of primary prevention and general awareness began to appear (Table 2).

### **Target audiences**

#### **Descriptive data**

The target audiences for the poster messages are presented according to the main audience and all audiences intended in each poster (Table 3).

For both the main audience and all audiences detected in each poster, the majority were aimed at the general population, followed by victims, and a comparatively small quantity of posters was directed at aggressors.

#### **Audience by type of institution**

For the main audience presented in the posters, significant differences were found according to the type of promoting institution,  $\chi^2(4) = 16.35$ ,  $p = .003$ , Fisher = 15.17,  $p = .001$ . The NGOs aimed their messages at the victims significantly more often, while the state targeted the general population and the aggressors more frequently (Table 2).

**Table 3.** Frequency of audience – main and all – in the posters.

Audiences	Main n (%)	All n (%)
Victims	23 (31.0)	31 (32.6)
Aggressors	6 (8.1)	7 (7.4)
People in proximity	5 (6.8)	10 (10.5)
General population	38 (51.4)	45 (47.4)
Other (professionals)	2 (2.7)	2 (2.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>95</b>

### *Audience paths over time*

Significant differences were found among the different periods of time by target audience,  $\chi^2(8) = 17.52$ ,  $p = .025$ , Fisher = 17.44,  $p = .008$ . In the first years, the campaigns were directed more toward the victims and less to the general population, while from 2008 onwards these results were reversed, there being more campaigns directed to the general population and fewer to the victims (Table 2).

### **Discussion**

The analysis encompassed posters of campaigns carried out in Portugal over an extended period of time, giving an overview of the objectives that campaign promoters have pursued to prevent intimate partner violence and of which groups they targeted with their messages. Campaigns have changed over the years, mainly in their target audiences, and differences have been found between public and private institutions both in the type of prevention and in the audiences of their messages.

The majority of the posters had tertiary prevention as their main objective – that is, rescue of victims from ongoing situations of IPV. Messages separating love from abuse and promoting the idea that abuse is a crime were present as secondary objectives. A considerable number of campaigns focused on promoting solidarity and raising awareness without an explicit orientation towards prevention. We suppose that the emphasis on tertiary prevention is related to the urgency to inform abused or at-risk women about institutional and community resources and strategies for getting help, contributing to the social support needed to recover, to feel safe and empowered, as was typical of the first campaigns against IPV (Ellsberg et al., 2015). In addition, the disentanglement of love and abuse has been an aim for campaigns since 2007, the year in which domestic violence was recognised as a distinct category of crime, culminating six years later with the inclusion of abuse during dating as a crime of domestic violence. Campaigns' broadening focus may have resulted from the need to reframe public perception of IPV as a problem within society, a public crime, with consequent changes in public attitudes and norms about it. Therefore, it is not surprising that most



of the campaigns have taken place since 2007, after what might be seen as an increased sensitivity to this type of violence. However, the possibility can not be discarded that more recent campaigns were more available in the institutions and therefore more easily recovered. Nearly half of all the messages from the NGOs promoted tertiary prevention, while the messages promoted by the state institutions were more diversified among the three types of prevention.

Half of the campaigns (51.4%) analysed were not aimed at those directly involved in IPV, but at the general population, and in the case of the public institutions this proportion reached 68%. The relevance of the general population may stem from awareness of the prevalence of this crime (between 1990 and the year 2000, 8429 crimes of domestic violence were registered (Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima [APAV], 2000) and from its definitive recognition as a public crime in the year 2000, the time chosen as the starting point for the campaigns under analysis. There is a clear difference between the state and NGOs in terms of messages aimed directly at victims (a greater weight for NGOs) and aggressors (more so for the state). This concentration of the messages of the NGOs towards the protagonists, mainly the victims, shows how civil society has organized itself to help victims by attempting to fill the gaps that existed in public services, as has happened in other countries (United Nations Women [UNW], 2017).

The most striking change over time was in the intended audience of the messages: Initially aimed at victims, after 2007 they targeted the general population. These results coincide with those of Ellsberg et al. (2015), which note the orientation of the first generation of anti-IPV campaigns toward the most urgent need: That abused women are aware of existing support services (tertiary prevention), whereas the second generation campaigns were intended to modify attitudes within the general public so as not to legitimize cultural beliefs about maltreatment, emphasizing primary prevention. For our part, we note that there are signs that the shift has not been aimed toward primary prevention, but rather toward promoting a more general message against IPV for the broader audience. Although the change did not reach a significant level, we may note a tendency wherein the first campaigns were devoted toward tertiary prevention, while from 2007 onwards the messages diversified among various types of prevention and those of general awareness.

The small proportion of primary prevention campaigns may be explained by the lack of agreement regarding the etiology of the problem. The different explanatory approaches toward IPV determine the orientation of the preventive messages and there is abundant literature that advocates multicausality supported by the public health approach (Krug et al., 2002; UNW, 2015; WHO, 2010). The fact that the main international organizations adopt this model may condition the approach of

campaign promoters, making it difficult to associate primary prevention to some of the specific causes advanced by various authors, but for which there is no consensus – challenging patriarchal relations, modifying gender reference values in schools, or emphasizing deterrence models based on fear of punishment in the criminal justice system (WHO, 2010). The complexity of such a multi-causal perspective seems to make it difficult to apply to primary prevention campaigns.

Secondary prevention is also underrepresented in all the campaigns (17.6%); we propose this may be explained by the difficulty of condensing the idea that protagonists may already be living in an unacknowledged situation of abuse into a concise message. Whereas in the medical model this is relatively easy to detect through biological tests (Kuehlein et al., 2010), in the case of IPV the influence of cultural factors makes it difficult to reach populations at risk, as suggested in the results of comparative studies such as those of Counts, Brown, and Campbell (1992).

The notably small proportion of campaigns aimed at males, abusers or otherwise, offer different possible interpretations. Recent empirical studies point to the need for campaigns that target men specifically; since the way in which the usual preventive campaigns are directed is ineffective in changing perceptions in males who do not recognize themselves in the gender stereotype as depicted, it is exclusively women's awareness that is raised (Keller & Honea, 2016; Keller, Wilkinson, & Otjen, 2010). However, it is likely that campaign promoters are conditioned by the idea that focusing messages on males effectively diverts scarce prevention resources away from victims and towards offenders (Bullock, 2014).

The changes detected in the purposes of the campaigns show a shift in both the preventive aims and in the target audiences, which may be an expression of the different needs and motivations underpinning the direction of these campaigns. Furthermore, although we have analyzed only the posters, these campaigns were carried out in various media: In writing, video, and audio, through the press, TV, radio, and Internet, in accordance with best practices in communication campaigns (UNW, 2015). However, we are unaware of the existence of evaluations of the efficacy and the effects of these interventions, which prevents us from making any conclusions that these changes have occurred in a positive direction or about their specific effects. The objective data shows we still have a formidable task ahead of us: 28 femicides and 26,432 incidents of domestic violence (80% against women) in 2018 (OMA, 2018; RASI, 2018).

A thorough and systematic search procedure was followed, but it is likely that some local initiatives were not included in our inventory. Furthermore, although the results reflect a rich diversity of public promoters and non-governmental organizations, there are two institutions with significant weight in the results: Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima, contributing

26 posters, and Comissão para a Cidadania and Igualdade de Género, with 15 posters. In addition, we did not verify the objectives and audiences of the campaigns with the promoters, so we should note that we are referring to preventive objectives and audiences as we attributed them in the course of our analysis.

We acknowledge that it is not easy to establish a causal relationship between preventive campaigns and changes in attitudes, but we nevertheless believe that this study may provide a comprehensive view of the direction in which campaigns against IPV in Portugal have been headed. This may be useful in guiding promoters in the decisions suggested by classical studies of persuasive communication: What to change in what sectors, what to do so that the message is perceived and accepted (UN, 2006, p. 128). Campaigns can be much more effective if they are linked to more ambitious action plans that include legal dimensions – protective, punitive, and educational measures taking place in Portugal. However, let us reaffirm that none of these efforts will be enough until the stain of intimate partner violence has been expunged from society.

## Declaration of interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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