

## A Comparative Study Of Gender-Based Violence Among Women In Prison

Amaia Yurrebaso Macho<sup>1</sup>, Eva María Picado Valverde\*<sup>2</sup>, Raquel Guzmán Ordaz<sup>3</sup>, and Ester García Valverde<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

*The Bangkok Rules call for programs and interventions aimed at care and rehabilitation with a focus on individual needs and in particular on gender and trauma management and the specific needs of women in prison need to be identified. This research aims to carry out a comparative study in prison of the situation of women who have suffered violence in their intimate partner relationships versus those who have not suffered this type of violence and specifically a) to analyze the differences between these women taking into account the intersectional model, b) to identify the different types of violence experienced and c) their relationship with the use of medication as a strategy for coping with the trauma suffered. Seventy-six interviews were carried out with women, 56% of whom had suffered situations of abuse. Among the results obtained, it stands out that the violence suffered is not related to their country of origin, the types of violence suffered are characterized by economic, psychological and sexual violence, these women have suffered bidirectional and situational violence and the use of medication is prevalent among women who have suffered abuse.*

**Keywords:** Women in prison; violence against women; polyvictimisation; social intervention.

### Introduction

When we refer to women victims of mistreatment, we very rarely refer to women who are in a situation of deprivation of liberty. The social ideology of the ideal victim does not include the possibility that the victim may have committed a crime. This explains the reason why there are few studies in which the situation of "victim" is analysed in women who have committed a crime, and it seems that the delinquent woman cannot be a woman victim at the same time.

The study by Picado et al. (2018), which analyses the victimisation factors present in women in prison, concludes that 57% of the women had been victims of violence by their partners, with this violence starting at the beginning of the relationship and the main reason being jealousy on the part of the partner towards them. The same study confirms, in relation to victimisation suffered in childhood and adolescence, 76% of the women have been victims in these vital stages, 13% of which were perpetrated by a family member and 42% by a partner in the case of adolescence and young adulthood. It is a common pattern that these women who find themselves in prison have survived a difficult, marginalised childhood with a great lack of opportunities and affection (Yagüe, 2007). Some studies point out that the prevalence of abuse received by the partners of women deprived of their liberty is four times higher than in the general population (Fontanil et al., 2013) and even in the case of women prisoners, polyvictimisation (Radatz

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<sup>1</sup>Social Psychology, University of Salamanca, Spain

<sup>2</sup>Social Work and Social Services, University of Salamanca, Spain

<sup>3</sup>Sociology, University of Salamanca, Spain

victimization processes are higher than in the general population (Lynch et al., 2012).

The importance of knowledge of victimization of women prisoners is necessary for the design of interventions and treatment by sentencing institutions. The United Nations General Assembly resolution of 16 March 2011 approved the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, better known as the Bangkok Rules.

Of great importance in the present study is rule 12, which calls for the implementation of programs and interventions aimed at care and rehabilitation, taking into account gender-sensitive and gender-sensitive cases and the treatment of trauma.

This UN appeal is addressed to all the governments of the world as these are common circumstances that are repeated in all countries.

In Spain, the percentage of women deprived of their liberty is 8% of the population according to official sources from penitentiary institutions (2022). This figure represents the fact that women are a minority group, which is why the treatment programs designed are aimed at generic programs for women without distinguishing between their specific characteristics. "The invisibility of women in the penitentiary sphere means that a penal and penitentiary policy is planned based on their absence or denial" (Azaola, 2005). As we said, the percentage of women in prison is very low, but what kind of treatment is being carried out?

In 1996 they started the first programs aimed at women in prison. Specifically, the contents they worked on dealt with psychosocial skills such as tools to increase self-esteem, or issues related to health, etc. Over the years, others have been added that are more oriented towards women's empowerment, the assumption of roles and the treatment of structures between men and women. Many and with very different approaches, as some studies have shown. But most of them highlight the difference in work opportunities and training content offered in the prison, the vast majority of which is directed at issues related to cleaning or laundry (Yagüe, 2007).

At present, women in prison come from a history of social exclusion and major victimization. Within these victimization's, it is necessary to carry out a comparative profile that explains these differentiated characteristics in order to make a specific and individual approach that covers the needs of these women without including them in a homogeneous group of "female offenders".

This research aims to carry out a comparative study of the situation of women who have suffered violence in their intimate partner relationships versus those who have not suffered this type of violence, and specifically a) to analyze the differences between these women taking into account the intersectional model, b) to identify the different types of violence experienced and c) their relationship with the use of medication as a coping strategy for dealing with the trauma suffered.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Instruments**

The women inmates in the prison answered an ad hoc questionnaire to assess differences between women with previous experiences of intimate partner violence and non-victimized women. The structure of the questionnaire is distinguished in:

- a) Sociodemographic variables: nationality, age, marital status, number of dependent children and education.
- b) Variables related to their intimate partner relationships: number of partners, perception of the type of relationship established, perception of breakups and current relationship.
- c) Variables related to economic and psychological abuse, psychological violence, sexual violence.
- d) Consumption of medication.

The questionnaire consisted of a list of closed questions that responded to the structure

explained above. Some of them were answered YES/NO or DK/NA in order to allow the women interviewed to answer freely. Other answers were closed and categorised according to different answers.

### Participants

A total of 76 women in prison were available, being at that time all the women in the only specific module for women who were serving a sentence in the prison where the study was carried out. The nationality of one of them is unknown, so the maximum N for this part of the statistical analysis is 75 cases. In the distribution of this factor, almost half (36 women, 48%) are South American immigrants. They are followed by 22 (29.3%) Spaniards and the rest are distributed in small groups of between 4 and 8 subjects.

With the aim of comparing the profile of abused women in prison, the Prison Centre was asked to select a group of abused women as opposed to others who did not recognize the situation. The center's professionals made this distinction by identifying 42 women who have been victims of abuse because they attend a treatment programme for victims of gender violence and a second group of 33 women who are in prison but who do not participate in this programme because violence is not recognized in their life history.

### Procedure

The interviews were carried out through contacts made with the professionals of an association that works in the women's module on a continuous basis in the prison and with the prison technical teams; these professionals are not identified in order to preserve their anonymity. In this way we ensured that the women interviewed had the guarantee and confidence that the information provided would be treated with rigor, respect and anonymity by the team of researchers. The interviews were conducted in an office of the women's unit, guaranteeing a climate of trust and confidentiality. The interviews were included in anonymized form in a database constructed for this research. The research process has been approved by the bioethics committee of the Penitentiary Institutions with its corresponding approval.

### Results

#### Impact of Nationality on the Abuse Situation

Firstly, nationality is crossed with the variable Abuse (56%; 42 out of 75 women have suffered abuse). The results (table 1) indicate that despite the clear difference we observed, according to which maltreatment occurs less among African immigrants (25%) above all, as well as among European immigrants (40%) compared with the rest of the women's nationalities (between 56% and 64%), it was not possible to prove the existence of a statistically significant relationship ( $p > .05$ ) which would allow us to attribute significance to the differences cited. Nor does the size of the effect (3.6%; slight) lead us to suspect the existence of a strong relationship that could be tested in studies with a higher N. In our case, we conclude that there is no relationship between the maltreatment suffered and its origin.

**Table 1:** Associative Analysis. Relationship between women's nationality and the presence of abuse (N=75)

	Nationality					Chi-squared test		Size of the effect
	European migrant	African migrant	South American migrant	Spanish Gipsy	Spanish No Gipsy	Value	P-Sig	
<b>Abuse</b>	40.0 % (2)	25.0 % (1)	55.6 % (20)	62.5 % (5)	63.6 % (14)	2.74	0.602	0.037
<b>No Abuse</b>	60.0 % (3)	75.0 % (3)	44.4 % (16)	37.5 % (3)	36.4 % (8)			

Note. Own elaboration (NS = Not significant at 5% ( $p > .05$ )).

#### Comparison between Groups According to Presence/Absence of Abuse

In this second part of the statistical analysis, two groups are established. One formed by the previous 42 women who have been victims of mistreatment and the second by the remaining 33 who have not been subjected to mistreatment.

The objective is to compare both groups in all the variables resulting from the questions that make up the questionnaire. These variables have been grouped into 9 categories by proximity in their content. The statistical procedure used is Chi-square and the estimation of the effect size with the R2 value of Cramer's coefficient.

The results are presented according to the 7 categories established with the variables under study: sociodemographic variables, economic violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, bidirectional violence, specific violence against women and medication use. Some of these variables have been recoded, by linking their values by logical-theoretical proximity, in order to try to find meanings that are pointed out with the original values (for example: number of children, level of studies, etc.).

The results we have obtained are summarized in table 2 below. For one woman in the sample, we do not have this information.

As can be seen in the aforementioned table, in the variables age and nationality, there is no statistical significance ( $p > .05$ ) that could justify the existence of differences between the two groups. However, in terms of age, there is a slight trend according to which it seems that in the group of battered women there are more women over 33 years of age (percentages  $>30\%$ ) while among the non-abused women the ages are more equal.

Even if age is recoded in this way, significance is not reached ( $p > .05$ ; effect 1.75) nor can the data be taken to support this apparent trend. The crossover with nationality is the same as in the previous section, the % appear different because now the factor is group and the response variable is nationality, but the p-sig and the effect is the same.

With respect to the difference in marital status, the differences that can be observed between groups are not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ), although it is true that there are more married women in the non-abused group and more divorced/separated women among the abused. But this may be precisely a consequence of the maltreatment and not a group configuration.

As for the other two variables, it was decided to recategorise them according to a sense of logical proximity. And after this, in the case of the number of children, although significance is not reached ( $p > .05$ ), it is by a small margin and we can speak of quasi-significance ( $p < .10$ ) with a moderate-high effect (10%). The direction of the observed association leads us to the conclusion that in the group of non-abused women the number of children is lower (57.6% with 0-1 child) while among the abused women it is higher (2-3 children: 45.2%, plus 19% with 4-5 children).

In the case of the level of education, the recoding carried out does manage to demonstrate the existence of a statistically significant relationship ( $p < .05$ ; moderate effect: 6.6%) which clearly indicates that abuse is more frequent in women with a lower level of education (76.2% have no or little education).

**Table 2:** Associative Analysis. Relationship between abuse and sociodemographic variables (N=75)

Variables (categories)	GROUP		Chi-squared test	Size of the effect	
	Abuse	No Abuse	Value	P-Sig	
<b>AGE</b>					
18-25	11.9 % (5)	21.2 % (7)	1.69 <sup>NS</sup>	0.638	0.022
26-33	23.8 % (10)	27.3 % (9)			
34-41	33.3 % (14)	24.2 % (8)			
>41	31.0 % (13)	27.3 % (9)			

<b>NATIONALITY</b>	4.8 %	9.1 %			
European migrant	(2)	(3)	2.74 <sup>NS</sup>	0.602	0.037
African migrant	2.4 %	9.1 %			
	(1)	(3)			
South American migrant	47.6 %	48.5 %			
	(20)	(16)			
Spanish Gipsy	11.9 %	9.1 %			
	(5)	(3)			
Spanish No Gipsy	33.3 %	24.2 %			
	(14)	(8)			
<b>CIVIL STATUS</b>	47.6 %	54.5 %	4.62 <sup>NS</sup>	0.202	0.062
Single	(20)	(18)			
Married	16.7 %	30.3 %			
	(7)	(10)			
Divorced/Separated	28.6 %	12.1 %			
	(12)	(4)			
Widow	7.1 %	3.0 %			
	(3)	(1)			
<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</b>	31.0 %	57.6 %	7.52 $\square$	0.057	0.1
0-1	(13)	(19)			
2-3	45.2 %	27.3 %			
	(19)	(9)			
4-5	19.0 %	6.1 %			
	(8)	(2)			
>5	4.8 %	9.1 %			
	(2)	(3)			
<b>STUDIES</b> None / Basic	76.2 %	51.5 %	4.97*	0.026	0.066
	(32)	(17)			
Bachelor / Module / Diploma/ Degree.	23.8 %	48.5 %			
	(10)	(16)			

**Note.** Own elaboration (NS = Not significant at 10% ( $p > .10$ ); ... = Nearly significant between 5% and 10% ( $p < .10$ ); \* = Significant at 5% ( $p < .05$ ); in bold, the categories where significance is found (residual=>2)).

Regarding the variables: a) Type of relationships and b) Breakups, highly significant associations were found ( $p < .001$ ) with very large effect sizes (37.3% and 28.8% respectively) that justify the differences between the groups. Among battered women, there are clearly more cases with bad/conflictual relationships (79.1% vs. 21.1%); and more with negative breakups (44.2% vs. 12.1%) and even those who do not want to answer this question (27.9% vs. 6.1%). Obviously, in the group of not badly treated, we have more women with good relationships (75.8%) and without breakups (33.3%) or when they occur, these are good (48.5%).

With regard to the current partner, although we are unable to prove statistical significance ( $p > .05$ ; medium effect: 6.2%) our data point to the fact that among the abused women we have more cases with a partner inside the prison (62.8% vs. 42.4%) while in the non-abused group there is a tendency to have a partner outside (36.4% vs. 20.9%).

Finally, in spite of the maltreatment, the data we have tell us that in the great majority of the women the current relationship is good, regardless of the group ( $p > .05$ ).

### Characterization of Economic Violence

The cross-checking of the variables generated by the questions designed to assess domestic violence derived from money: "who manages the money at home, the man must control the money, I have difficulty controlling the money, I have difficulty asking my partner for money and asking for money triggers situations of violence" (table 3) shows us that there is no significant association on which to base possible differences between groups ( $p > .05$ ) in three of them: "Control of money:" it must be done by the man", "Women's inability to manage the money in the house" and Women's difficulty in asking for money from their partners/men. However, the data we have seems to indicate a higher frequency among

abused women of the difficulty to ask for money

(53.5% vs. 42.4%); at the same time a lower frequency in the belief that it should be the man who controls the money (90.7% vs. 100%), this difference in thinking and behaviour is a consequence of the situation of violence suffered in the couple relationship. What this means is that women in a situation of abuse actually think that the man should not be the one to control the money at home but they have difficulties with their partners to control the family economy. As, for who managed the money in the relationship, although it does not reach significance ( $p>.05$ ), we could speak of a quasi-significance ( $p<.10$ ) with a moderate effect (9.1%). The tendency of our data indicates that the possible association would be because among the abused women there are more women who affirm that it was him (25.6% vs. 6.1%), while in the non-abused group there are more cases where the administration was common to both, or they did not share money.

To conclude this group, in the analysis of the variable Asking for money provoked outbursts of violence, a highly significant relationship was found ( $p<.01$ ) with a high effect (14.8%) which is clearly due to the affirmative response of more abused women (32.6% vs. 3%), relating economic management with violence towards them.

**Table 3:** Associative Analysis. Relationship between Abuse and Economic Violence variables (N=76)

Variables (categories)	GROUP		Chi-squared test		Size of the effect
	Abuse	No Abuse	Value	P-Sig	
<b>MONEY MANAGEMENT</b>					
She	25.6 % (11)	30.3 % (10)	6.50 $\square$	0.089	0.091
He	<b>25.6 % (11)</b>	6.1 % (2)			
Both	34.9 % (15)	<b>42.4 % (14)</b>			
They do not share money	7.0 % (3)	<b>18.2 % (6)</b>			
DK / NA	7.0 % (3)	3.0 % (1)			
<b>MAN MUST CONTROL MONEY</b> Yes	4.7 % (2)	--	1.65 <sup>NS</sup>	0.198	0.022
No	90.7 % (39)	100 % (33)			
DK / NA	4.7 % (2)	--			
<b>INABILITY TO MANAGE HOUSEHOLD MONEY</b> Yes	18.6 % (8)	12.1 % (4)	0.74 <sup>NS</sup>	0.391	0.01
No	76.7 % (33)	87.9 % (29)			
DK / NA	4.7 % (2)	--			
<b>DIFFICULT TO ASK FOR MONEY</b> Yes	53.5 % (23)	42.4 % (14)	1.37 <sup>NS</sup>	0.242	0.018
No	41.9 % (18)	57.6 % (19)			
DK / NA	4.7 % (2)	--			
<b>ASKING FOR MONEY, PRODUCES VIOLENCE</b> Yes	<b>32.6 % (14)</b>	3.0 % (1)	10.95**	0.001	0.148
No	62.8 % (27)	<b>97.0 % (32)</b>			
DK / NA	4.7 % (2)	--			

**Note.** Own elaboration (NS = Not significant at 10% ( $p>.10$ ); ... = Nearly significant between 5% and 10% ( $p<.10$ ); \*\* = Highly significant at 1% ( $p<.01$ ); in bold, the categories where significance is found (residual=>2)).

### Characterization of Sexual Violence

In this section we have tried to assess the relationship of the groups abuse and non-abuse with the sexual violence experienced. The questions posed in this section are related to who should take the sexual initiative in a couple's relationship and to what extent women should satisfy their partner's sexual desires and then ask about experiences related to sexual violence.

Table 4 summarizes the crosstabs of these variables with abuse. One of the first issues to comment on is that this is the section where most cases of NS/NC responses have been collected. This could be normal, due to the content of the question related to the sexual experiences lived by them, which can generate a certain embarrassment to answer; but it is striking that all (except 1 in one variable) the women who have not answered are in the group of abused women (even reaching 14% in some of them), which could be indicating some relation between the abuse and the reluctance to talk about sexual issues.

That said, no significant association ( $p > .05$ ) was found for the opinion on who should take the initiative in sexual relations. Nor was significance reached in the opinion on whether the partner's sexual desires should be satisfied ( $p > .05$ ), but the moderate effect (4.2%) alerts us to a possible association that would be linked to a greater presence of the answer that it should be agreed by both partners among non-abused women (78.8% vs. 60.5%).

We did find a high statistical significance ( $p < .01$ ) and a large effect (16.3%) which is explained by the fact that there are more battered women who have been forced to have unwanted sex (65.1% vs. 33.3%). Along the same lines, significance ( $p < .001$ ) appears with a slightly higher effect (18.5%) in the presence of physical violence to have sex in the group of battered women (41.9% vs. 9.1%). And it is completed, with a new significance ( $p < .01$ ; notable effect: 12.7%) in the obligation to have sexual relations, which is obviously higher in the group of battered women (39.5% vs. 12.1%).

Finally, although there are more women in the non-abused group who did not refuse sex when it was proposed to them (30.3% vs. 14%), no significant effect ( $p > .05$ ) was found, since almost the same majority (over 70%) did refuse.

**Table 4:** Associative Analysis. Relationship between abuse and sexual relations variables (N=76)

Variables (categories)	GROUP		Chi-squared test		Size of the effect
	Abuse	No Abuse	Value	P-Sig	
<b>TAKING THE INITIATIVE IN SEX</b>					
She	2.3 % (1)	3.0 % (1)	0.37 <sup>NS</sup>	0.831	0.005
He	14.0 % (6)	21.2 % (7)			
Both	72.1 % (31)	75.8 % (25)			
DK / NA	11.6 % (5)	--			
<b>MUST SATISFY THE WISHES OF THE PARTNER</b>					
Always	18.6 % (8)	18.2 % (6)	2.93 <sup>NS</sup>	0.23	0.042
We both agree	60.5 % (26)	78.8 % (26)			
Depends on the circumstances.	7.0 % (3)	--			
DK / NA	14.0 % (6)	3.0 % (1)			

<b>HAVING UNWANTED SEX</b>	<b>65.1 %</b>	33.3 %			
Yes	<b>(28)</b>	(11)	11.62**	0.001	0.163
No	23.3 %	<b>66.7 %</b>			
	(10)	<b>(22)</b>			
DK / NA	<b>11.6 %</b>	--			
	<b>(5)</b>				
<b>PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN ORDER TO HAVE SEX</b>	<b>41.9 %</b>	9.1 %			
Yes	<b>(18)</b>	(3)	12.42**	0	0.175
No	46.5 %	<b>90.9 %</b>			
	(20)	<b>(30)</b>			
DK / NA	<b>11.6 %</b>	--			
	<b>(5)</b>				
<b>OBLIGATION TO HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>39.5 %</b>	12.1 %			
Yes	<b>(17)</b>	(4)	9.02**	0.003	0.127
No	48.8 %	<b>87.9 %</b>			
	(21)	<b>(29)</b>			
DK / NA	<b>11.6 %</b>	--			
	<b>(5)</b>				
<b>REFUSING SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS</b>	72.1 %	69.7 %			
Yes	(31)	(23)	1.96 <sup>NS</sup>	0.161	0.028
No	14.0 %	30.3 %			
	(6)	(10)			
DK / NA	14.0 %	--			
	(6)				

**Note.** Own elaboration (NS = Not significant at 10% ( $p > .10$ ); \*\* = Highly significant at 1% ( $p < .01$ ); in bold, the categories where significance is found (residual  $\geq 2$ )).

### Characterization of Psychological Violence

In relation to psychological violence, four categories have been distinguished: the partner has given her a feeling of worthlessness, inferiority and has caused her to become a woman with fears. And the consequences of the partner's relationship are nervousness and restlessness in her life to the extent that she finds herself unable to go on in her daily life.

A highly significant relationship ( $p < .001$ ) with a large effect (26.8%) was found with the perception of having been insulted and therefore considered useless and inferior more frequent in the abused group (72.1% vs. 30.3%).

Significance is not tested, but the association with women being fearful (moderate effect: 5%), which is more common among battered women (67.4% vs. 57.6%), can be classified as almost significant ( $p < .10$ ).

Where there is no significance ( $p > .05$ ) and therefore there are no differences between groups in the variables: feeling restless, nervous, and feeling overwhelmed to carry on day to day; although it is true that in this last one there could be more cases that respond that they feel this way often among the battered women (30.2% vs 18.2%), complementarily there are more women who say that they have never felt this way in the non-abused group (table 5).

**Table 5:** Associative Analysis. Relationship between Abuse and Psychological Characteristics variables (N=76)

Variables (categories)	GROUP	Chi-squared test
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	Abuse	No Abuse	Value	P-Sig	Size of the effect
<b>INSULTED / USELESS / INFERIOR</b> Yes	<b>72.1 % (31)</b>	30.3 % (10)	19.03**	0	0.268
No	16.3 % (7)	<b>69.7 % (23)</b>			
DK / NA	<b>11.6 % (5)</b>	--			
<b>IS A PERSON WITH FEARS</b> Yes	67.4 % (29)	57.6 % (19)	3.50 □	0.061	0.05
No	18.6 % (8)	42.4 % (14)			
DK / NA	14.0 % (6)	--			
<b>RESTLESS / NERVOUS / OVERCOME</b> Yes	65.1 % (28)	78.8 % (26)	0.25 <sup>NS</sup>	0.615	0.004
No	23.3 % (10)	21.2 % (7)			
DK / NA	11.6 % (5)	--			
<b>UNABLE TO CONTINUE ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS</b> Often	30.2 % (13)	18.2 % (6)	2.49 <sup>NS</sup>	0.288	0.035
Sometimes	16.3 % (7)	27.3 % (9)			
Never	41.9 % (18)	54.5 % (18)			
DK / NA	11.6 % (5)	--			

**Note.** Own elaboration (NS = Not significant at 10% ( $p > .10$ ); † = Nearly significant between 5% and 10% ( $p < .10$ ); \*\* = Highly significant at 1% ( $p < .01$ ); in bold, the categories where significance is found (residual  $\geq 2$ )).

### Characterization of Bidirectional Violence

Regarding the study of these three variables: a) the arguments come to blows on the part of both partners b) some of the ways of resolving the couple's arguments is by slapping and pushing and c) other conflict resolution strategies between the couple are: talking, the woman keeping quiet, using verbal violence, using physical violence and/or leaving the situation to avoid conflict (table 6), the results obtained show clear relationships, above all in the first two variables.

With regard to whether the arguments come to blows, practically all the non-abused women (97%, 32 out of 33) said no, while 56.8% of the abused women said yes. In the same line, the same 97% of the non-abused women also said that there was neither pushing nor slapping, compared to 45.9% of the abused women who said yes. Both ratios are highly significant ( $p < .001$ ) and with very large effects, 33.4% and 24% respectively.

Finally, regarding the way of resolving arguments, the relationship is significant ( $p < .05$ ) with a large effect, although smaller than the previous ones (18.5%) due to the fact that resolving arguments by talking is more common in the group without abuse (67.9%) as well as avoidance behaviour (14.3%, one of the two left), while verbal and above all physical violence (26.5% vs 0%) is more present among the abused women.

**Table 6:** Associative Analysis. Relationship between abuse and bi-directional physical violence variables (N=76)

Variables (categories)	GROUP		Chi-squared test		Size of the effect
	Abuse	No Abuse	Value	P-Sig	
<b>ARGUMENTS COME TO BLOWS</b> Yes	<b>56.8</b> % <b>(21)</b>	3.0 % <b>(1)</b>	23.36**	0	0.334
No	43.2 % <b>(16)</b>	<b>97.0</b> % <b>(32)</b>			
<b>SHOVING / SLAPPING</b> Yes	<b>45.9</b> % <b>(17)</b>	3.0 % <b>(1)</b>	16.82**	0	0.24
No	54.1 % <b>(20)</b>	<b>97.0</b> % <b>(32)</b>			
<b>HOW TO RESOLVE DISCUSSIONS</b> Talking	47.1 % <b>(16)</b>	<b>67.9</b> % <b>(19)</b>	11.45 *	0.022	0.185
She is silent	14.7 % <b>(5)</b>	17.9 % <b>(5)</b>			
Verbal violence	5.9 % <b>(2)</b>	--			
Physical violence	<b>26.5</b> % <b>(9)</b>	--			
One of us was leaving	5.9 % <b>(2)</b>	<b>14.3</b> % <b>(4)</b>			

**Note.** Own elaboration (NS = Not significant at 10% ( $p > .10$ ); \*\* = Highly significant at 1% ( $p < .01$ ); in bold, the categories where significance is found (residual  $\geq 2$ )).

### Partner Violence against Women

This block of variables classifies dimensions related to violence against women, specifying: episodes of violence, who perpetrates the violence to determine the type, the degree of suffering caused to the woman by these situations, and the perception of insecurity and risk of homicide. As shown in table 7, the relationships and with them the differences observed between the groups are all highly significant ( $p < .001$ ) and with very large effects ( $>40\%$ ).

Thus, the fact that these women "have had their hands raised" is much more frequent in the group of abused women (46.5% vs. 6.1%) and even more frequent sporadically (44.2%) although it is worth noting that 30.3% of non-abused women affirm that this has happened to them sporadically, plus the previous 6.1% that it has happened to them regularly (and they have not perceived it as abuse). The effect reaches a very high 50.8%.

With regard to who the aggressor was, among the battered women it is usually the partner (67.4%) and even the option of several (16.3%), while in the group of non-abused women it is other family members (21.2%). The size of this effect is no less than 74.1%.

As for the degree of suffering, with an effect of 56.2%, the relationship is obvious and is manifested in the 81.8% of non-abused women who say that they have no suffering at all, compared with 58.1% of abused women who say that they have a lot.

To complete this section, "they have feared for their life" almost 70% of the battered women while 81.8% of the non-battered women have not feared (effect of 40.4%).

**Table 7:** Associative Analysis. Relationship between Abuse and the variables of Violent behaviour towards her (N=76).

Variables (categories)	GROUP		Chi-squared test		Size of the effect
	Abuse	No Abuse	Value	P-Sig	
<b>HAVE TRIED TO ASSAULT HER</b> Occasionally	<b>44.2 % (19)</b>	30.3 % (10)	38.67**	0	0.508
Usually	<b>46.5 % (20)</b>	6.1 % (2)			
Never	--	<b>60.6 % (20)</b>			
DK / NA	9.3 % (4)	3.0 % (1)			
<b>WHO TRIED TO ATTACK HER?</b> Partner	<b>67.4 % (29)</b>	9.1 % (3)	56.39**	0	0.741
Family member	7.0 % (3)	<b>21.2 % (7)</b>			
Others	--	6.1 % (2)			
Various	<b>16.3 % (7)</b>	--			
No one has ever	--	<b>63.6 % (21)</b>			
DK / NA	9.3 % (4)	--			
<b>DEGREE OF SUFFERING VIOLENT SITUATION</b> Nothing	9.3 % (4)	<b>81.8 % (27)</b>	42.78**	0	0.562
Very little	2.3 % (1)	3.0 % (1)			
Little	7.0 % (3)	--			
Quite	9.3 % (4)	--			
A lot	<b>58.1 % (25)</b>	9.1 % (3)			
DK / NA	14.0 % (6)	6.1 % (2)			
<b>FEAR FOR HER LIFE</b> Yes	<b>69.8 % (30)</b>	12.1 % (4)	30.70**	0	0.404
No	18.6 % (8)	<b>81.8 % (27)</b>			
DK / NA	11.6 % (5)	6.1 % (2)			

**Note.** Own elaboration (NS = Not significant at 10% ( $p > .10$ ); † = Nearly significant between 5% and 10% ( $p < .10$ ); \*\* = Highly significant at 1% ( $p < .01$ ); in bold, the categories where significance is found (residual  $\geq 2$ )).

### Medication Consumption of Women Who Have Suffered Abuse

The results of crossing these variables related to the consumption of drugs and the violence suffered (table 8) lead us to be unable to admit the existence of a significant correlation ( $p > .05$ ) between the consumption of tranquillisers and antidepressants and the time of onset of the same. Nor do the effect sizes allow us to think that the differences observed in some of these variables could be confirmed in a study with larger sample sizes.

Where significance does appear is in the consumption of these substances after an argument or fight with a partner ( $p < .05$ ; moderate effect: 8%). According to our data, this

consumption is higher in the group of battered women (20.9% vs. 6.1%); in which there are also more women who choose not to answer this question, but could be users.

Significance already reaches high power ( $p < .01$ ) and a remarkable effect of almost 13%, in the case where the partner consumes. According to our results, as expected, this is considerably higher in the partners of abused women (62.8% vs. 30.3%). Along the same lines, we found a high significance ( $p < .001$ ) with a very large effect (almost 30%) in the consumption of both (the partner) after a fight or argument, which is much higher in the group of battered women (55.8% vs. 9.1%).

**Table 8:** Associative Analysis. Relationship between abuse and the variables of medication consumption (N=76)

Variables (categories)	GRUPO		Chi-squared test		Size of the effect	
	Abuse	No Abuse	Value	P-Sig		
<b>USE OF TRANQUILLISERS</b>	Yes	30.2 % (13)	21.2 % (7)	1.30 <sup>NS</sup>	0.255	0.018
	No	58.1 % (25)	75.8 % (25)			
	DK / NA	11.6 % (5)	3.0 % (1)			
<b>AGE OF INITIATION IN THE USE OF TRANQUILLISERS</b>	Before 18	27.9 % (12)	18.2 % (6)	2.22 <sup>NS</sup>	0.33	0.029
	After 18	46.5 % (20)	63.6 % (21)			
	In prison	25.6 % (11)	18.2 % (6)			
<b>CONSUMPTION OF ANTIDEPRESSANTS</b>	Yes	46.5 % (20)	36.4 % (12)	0.79 <sup>NS</sup>	0.374	0.01
	No	53.5 % (23)	63.6 % (21)			
<b>AGE OF INITIATION IN THE USE OF ANTIDEPRESSANTS</b>	Before 18	2.3 % (1)	3.0 % (1)	1.41 <sup>NS</sup>	0.703	0.018
	After 18	76.7 % (33)	75.8 % (25)			
	In prison	20.9 % (9)	18.2 % (6)			
	Does not consume	--	3.0 % (1)			
<b>CONSUMPTION AFTER FIGHTS</b>	Yes	<b>20.9 %</b> <b>(9)</b>	6.1 % (2)	6.09 *	0.048	0.08
	No	62.8 % (27)	<b>87.9 %</b> <b>(29)</b>			
	DK / NA	<b>16.3 %</b> <b>(7)</b>	6.1 % (2)			
<b>CONSUMES THE PARTNER</b>	Yes	<b>62.8 %</b> <b>(27)</b>	30.3 % (10)	9.78**	0.008	0.129

No	25.6 % (11)	<b>60.6</b> %			
DK / NA	11.6 % (5)	9.1 % (3)			
<b>CONSUMPTION PARTNER IN FIGHTS</b>	<b>55.8 %</b> <b>(24)</b>	9.1 % (3)	22.78**	0	0.299
Yes		<b>81.8</b> %			
No	27.9 % (12)	9.1 % (3)			
DK / NA	16.3 % (7)	9.1 % (3)			

Note. Own elaboration (NS = Not significant at 10% ( $p > .10$ ); \* = Significant at 5% ( $p < .05$ ); \*\* = Highly significant at 1% ( $p < .01$ ); in bold, the categories where significance is found (residual=>2)).

### Profiles of Abused Women

We intend to draw a differential portrait of the main characteristics of battered women based on this set of significant variables (at least  $p < .05$ ) which appeared in the results explained above. In other words, what we are trying to do is to carry out a multivariate analysis of different profiles of battered women.

For this purpose, we have used the method called CHAID segmentation. With this method we obtain groups of subjects who are very different in terms of their behaviour on a given response variable, so that the sample is divided (segmented) into groups or subsamples which are internally very homogeneous (intraroup) in terms of the factors, but which maintain significant differences between them (intergroup).

It is a technique of dependence between variables, so it aims to explain the responses of the subjects in a categorical dependent variable from a series of predictors or independent variables, also categorical, by virtue of which these groups or subsamples will be formed.

In order to be able to apply it to our data, we have to consider that the variable Group (maltreatment/not) is the outcome (response) variable and that the rest of the characteristics collected are the potentially differential factors (the VI); which is the inverse view to the one we have brought in the previous univariate analysis, which does not change the relationships with significance that we have found.

The segmentation is done in steps or levels. The first cut-off is according to the predictor variable with the highest predictive power. For each segment formed in this first phase, the second level performs the necessary cuts caused by the next predictor variable with the highest predictive power. And so on, until the process stops when no more groups or segments (technically called "nodes") are found that are significantly different (significance filter) from those already detected in the previous steps.

For our analysis we have set the maximum automatic segmentation depth (4) from the best predictor and the classical significance level of 5% ( $p < .05$ ). The CHAID method uses Pearson's Chi-Square as the difference analysis statistic (exhaustive CHAID). The result is presented graphically as a tree with different branches hence this procedure is also referred to as a "classification tree".

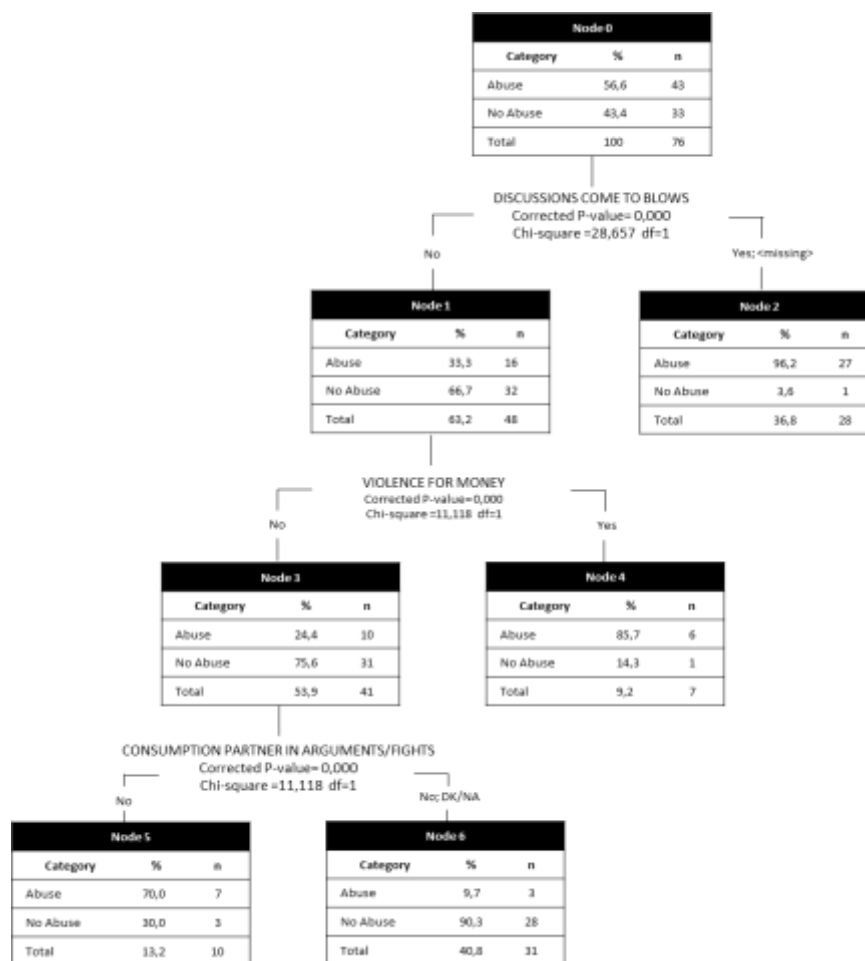
From the initial node (N=76; 56.6% with abuse) to configure the profile of women in a situation of abuse (figure 1), the first significant differential characteristic ( $p < .001$ ) is the factor that discussions come to blows, which classifies the sample into two branches: those who do not, where we have 48 women, 33.3% of whom are abused, and those who do (n=28), where abuse is present in no less than 96.4% of them, and which is therefore the terminal node (node 2).

Next, the group of women where the arguments do not come to blows is subdivided at the second level of segmentation according to the existence of money-related violence ( $p < .001$ ), generating two new groups. The first contains 41 women out of the 48 in which the arguments do not come to blows and in which there is no argument over money, where

the battered women account for only 24.4%. In the second (node 4) we have the other 7 women who, although the arguments do not come to blows, there is violence over money, and 85.7% of them belong to the group of battered women. This is also a terminal node.

And finally, the group of women whose arguments do not come to blows and do not have violence for money, is segmented at the third level by the factor of consumption of medication by the partner when there are fights/ arguments ( $p < .001$ ), generating two new differential subgroups, both of which are already terminal. The first contains 10 women whose partners do take medication, 70% of whom are abused, and the second contains the remaining 31 women whose partners do not take medication and where abuse is present in only 9.7% of them.

**Figure 1:** Differentiated profiles according to different characteristics (factors) in the prediction of group of abused women



**Note.** Own elaboration

**Discussion and Conclusions**

The results obtained in this research show that, despite the most widespread social belief, the relationship of women victims with nationality is not representative in our case, but is explained from an intersectional perspective, meaning that the variable foreign or not in itself does not determine the degree of violence received, but that other intersecting variables operate in a specific way in each case. Intersectionality provides the analytical study to identify the differences of women taking into account the context, the place and the implications that the inequalities of these women manifest in relation to the suffering of victims of gender-based violence (Guzmán & Jiménez, 2015). In fact, in our research, there are no significant differences between abused and non-abused women in relation to their nationality or even age, and we also have to take into account that the situation of

exclusion is actually the most influential in the situation of these women. In this research it has been confirmed that the group of battered women suffer from this situation in all its manifestations.

Economic violence (Córdova, 2017) describes the behaviour of the aggressor towards the victim in which he uses strategies to persuade the victim to control the household income, manipulation in terms of spending and money management, as well as the disposal of community property. The results of this research indicate that situations of violence are related to the woman's request for money from her perpetrator. Coinciding with the results of Santana (2021) and Saunders (2021) in particular economic insecurity and economic vulnerability and their conditioning with the breakup with the partner.

In relation to sexual violence, our research shows that women find it difficult to recount their experiences of suffering. There has been a generalised response of not wanting to answer when asked about their experiences in the manifestations of sexual violence being one of the most invisible manifestations (Hernández & González, 2009) since sexual activity is one of the scenarios where gender violence begins being this violence before physical violence (Harner, 2002). This silence can be explained by the difficulty of recognising their own situation of sexual violence or by identifying this behaviour as part of the relationship when they are experiencing abuse by their partner, yet another form of violence (Martínez et al., 2016).

These women have reported in this research the use of coercive methods by their partners to obtain sexual intercourse from the perpetrator without the women's free consent (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004) or/and verbal persuasion, insistence, physical persuasion and gaining access (Livingston et al., 2004). Represented in Labrador et al. (2008, p.26) definition of sexual abuse: "any forced sexual intimacy by a partner, whether by threats, intimidation, coercion, or by being carried out in a state of unconsciousness or helplessness of the woman, includes all types of sexual conduct, not just vaginal or anal penetration".

Psychological violence is a common manifestation of violence among women who have suffered gender-based violence. The results of our research confirm that the group of abused women present a series of characteristics "feeling unworthy or useless as well as having experienced insults, another predominant characteristic is the fear of losing their life and physical violence coupled with psychological violence. This characterisation represents Johnson (2008) intimate terrorism, also called violent coercive control (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). This type of violence is exercised much more regularly by men towards women and is accompanied by other types of behaviour such as Pence & Paymar (1993) wheel of power and control. This type of violence has a high risk of lethality and can be associated to a greater extent with suicide by the perpetrator after the murder of the victim, but it also presents very high levels of anxiety and fear (Johnson, 2008), depression (Golding, 1999) and post-traumatic stress in the victim (Johnson, 2008). This type of violence is characterised by the use of physical and especially psychological force to control the behaviour and thoughts of the victim, generating an intimidating climate of devaluation, hostility and fear, even terror in women in their relationship (Ramos & Saltijeral, 2008).

In the case of our research, it is to be expected that these women with experiences of this type of mistreatment suffer consequences of the anxiety and depression type, but in this study these symptoms are present in the group of non-abused women. This is due to the fact that there is a variable that mediates in both groups such as the penitentiary context.

Research related to people serving prison sentences has shown a relationship between the emotional consequences and the process of prisons or, in other words, adaptation to the prison environment. Among the variables that influence this process are penal and penitentiary factors and others more related to personal and social factors. The latter include family and work situation, age, marital status, state of health, character and personality (Manzanos, 1992). In turn, studies that have included the gender perspective to identify the needs of men and women in prison reveal that women have more physical and psychological symptomatology and perceive less social support than men (Ruiz et al., 2000). In our study it was found that there are no differences between the group of abused and non-abused women in relation to the psychopathology present or symptomatology,

which leads us to reflect on the relationship between these consequences and the impact of prioritisation, an issue that needs to be investigated in future research.

In both groups, polyvictimisation is defined as the set of accumulated traumatic situations present in those who have suffered multiple forms of violence throughout their lives (Finkelhor et al., 2007). Polyvictimisation is a process of continuous exposure to violence experienced by the person in different settings such as the family and/or school. The study carried out by Yurrebaso et al. (2022) in a prison context shows that 40% of the women interviewed had suffered child abuse and 23.3% had suffered sexual abuse; however, another study carried out by the authors shows that only 26% of the women have not had previous experiences of victimisation in childhood and adolescence (Picado et al., 2018), which demonstrates the need to study and analyse polyvictimisation processes in a rigorous and specific manner, as it has been shown that this process has more serious consequences than recurrent victimisation of one type of victimisation (Pereda 2019).

A relevant issue in our research is the situation of addiction and gender violence among the women analysed, in our case related to psychotropic drugs, both antidepressants and anxiolytics, whose consumption began after the age of 18 and was linked to situations of marital conflict. This reality is demonstrated by similar studies that highlight the reality of the risk of victimisation in women with addictions and especially in the case of gender violence (Arostegui & Urbano, 2004; Barreda et al., 2005; Roselló-Peñazola et al., 2019). In our research, the prevalent use is that of medication to reduce psychopathological symptoms as a way of coping with conflicts; in fact, they do not recognise the time of onset of this use, but they do recognise a habitual use after couple arguments. This is an important issue to explore since, as Romo (2005) and Romo & Gil (2006) warn, there is a different health care behaviour between men and women when faced with psychological problems such as sleep disorders, to the extent that more medication of this type is prescribed to women than to men.

Less addressed in the scientific field is situational violence related to intimate partner conflicts that can trigger violent acts, identified as bidirectional (Johnson, 2008). In these cases, it is not related to the gender issue but in an interaction between both lacking a clear situation of asymmetry (Fernández & Flórez, 2018; García et al., 2018; Licovich, 2015, Hernández, 2015; Cuenca, 2013; Rosales, 2009) but also in some cases it can be confused with violence resistance (Johnson, 2008) in which the woman reacts in a violent way as a way of defending herself against violent coercive control. In our study, the results refer to the latter typology of violence, although a more exhaustive study should be carried out to identify the differences between these two violent manifestations and propose the most appropriate intervention (Muñoz & Rodríguez, 2020).

As a final result of this study, the aim was to develop a profile of battered women in prison, not to categorise women prisoners, as this would lead to their stigmatisation, but to analyse the specific needs of these women, as their situation of vulnerability increases the risk of victimisation. In the portrait obtained, we can conclude that there are two necessary manifestations to take into account, victimisation due to economic violence and secondly, victimisation related to the couple's arguments, taking into account the addiction to the partner's substances.

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