



ORIGINAL PAPER

Women victims of intimate partner violence perceptions, causes and types

Veronica Gheorghită¹⁾

Abstract:

Violence against women is considered one of the biggest problems in today's society, being a widespread social phenomenon at international and national levels. According to the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 women worldwide has experienced, at least once in their lives, physical and/or sexual violence in an intimate relationship. Therefore, the first part of the article follows to understand the theoretical aspects of violence, as well as the evolution of the phenomenon of intimate partner violence in Romania. The second part of the article presents a sociological study that aims to present the perceptions of women victims of violence and the impact on the couple's relationship. It also tries to identify the forms, factors and consequences of violence, as well as the reactions of victims.

Keywords: *couple violence, women, perceptions, causes, forms, Romania.*

¹⁾ Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Romania, Phone: 0040740458527, Email: veronica.gheorghita@edu.ucv.ro

Introduction

Violence against women is a social problem faced by all countries in the world, and current research is trying to identify the specific aspects (types and forms of manifestation), the conditions that favor violent behavior, including the social, economic, cultural and legal context that determines the spread of this phenomenon. In today's society, violence is constantly changing and evolving, with new forms of violence being identified that have led to profound changes in people's values, mentalities and attitudes.

Therefore, there is a need to raise awareness of the issues involved in violence and the impact on the physical, mental and spiritual health of women victims, but also on their families, the community and society in general.

Conceptual framework of violence

The term violence is widely discussed in the literature and has different connotations depending on its use or the terms associated with it. According to the Dictionary of Sociology, the term violence means: „the use of force and coercion by an individual, group or social class for the purpose of imposing violence on others”(Zamfir & Vlășceanu, 1998: 658–659).

The term implies a violation of social laws and norms, based on an abusive relationship between two parties in which power is unequally distributed. Thus, according to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian language, violence is "the production of an act with violence, which is produced and acted with force, with intensity, which is done with force, lack of restraint in words or deeds, the fact of using brutal force, violation of the legal order"(Dexonline, n.d.).

In its understanding of the term violence, the United Nations emphasizes both the types and consequences of violence against women, describing it as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life"(United Nations, 1993).

In the Istanbul Convention, domestic violence is defined as a particular aspect of family violence, representing “all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same domicile with the victim” (art. 3, b) (Council of Europe, 2011).

The World Health Organization (2024) uses the term "intimate partner violence" which refers to "behavior by an intimate partner or former partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical assault, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors".

In Romania, Law 212/22 May 2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence defines violence as "any intentional action or inaction, except in self-defense or defense, manifested physically or verbally, committed by a family member against another member of the same family, which may cause mental, sexual, emotional or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, arbitrary deprivation of liberty or coercion".

Therefore, in approaching and understanding the phenomenon of violence against women, several specific elements are used which are interconnected:

- ✓ use of physical force or any other kind of coercion to intimidate the victim;

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- ✓ the perpetrator's purpose is to harm or cause suffering to the victim;
- ✓ the victim is feeling the abuse;
- ✓ a legal authority recognizing the acts committed as abusive.

Theoretical framework for understanding violence against women

The study of violence against women has three interrelated components: direct, structural and cultural violence (Turliuc, Turliuc, & Huțuleac, 2009: 12). Direct violence is visible through its results, e.g. beatings, injuries, deprivation of livelihoods (food, clothing) or denial of financial support to the family. Structural violence is found in the socio-economic and political norms of a society, rooted in gender inequalities that support and maintain the superior role of men over women, particularly within the family. Cultural violence, on the other hand, is the specific aspects that legitimize violence in a society, normalized through beliefs.

Violence in couples takes many forms, some visible, some harder to identify, but each having a major impact on their quality of life and mental health: physical violence (hurting or attempting to hurt a person); verbal violence (involves provoking fear through intimidation, threats, coercion); psychological violence (doing emotional harm to a person through coercion or threats); sexual violence (any sexual behavior committed against a person's will); social violence (isolating a person from family, friends, society); economic violence (enforcing financial dependence); spiritual violence (using a person's religious beliefs to intimidate or manipulate).

The UN General Assembly states that violence against women "includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the family, including battering, sexual abuse of children within the marital home, violence related to the violation of women's property rights, genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, violence perpetrated by other family members, and violence related to exploitation" (United Nations, 1993b).

Consequently, the factors that may influence the onset of conflict or acts of domestic violence, according to Strauss are (Straus, 1989):

- ✓ intra-family conflicts generated by the diversity of activities and interests of family members; gender and age differences; common identity of family members and intensity of involvement; involuntary membership; confidentiality of family behaviors; high level of conflict increases the risk of violence;
- ✓ gender inequality;
- ✓ rules that allow domestic violence;
- ✓ family socialization in violence;
- ✓ the level of violence in society;

Depending on the intensity and frequency of the violent behavior, violence is divided into: the mild and tolerant form, which is common in couple relationships, and the extreme form, where there is abuse with a strong impact on physical, emotional and mental health (Straus, 1989: 33).

Characteristics and profile of the woman victim of violence and the perpetrator

There are two categories of victims of traumatic events¹: primary victims, who suffer directly from the event, and secondary victims, who witness traumatic events, whether they are family members, friends, persons or even strangers.

In most cases of domestic violence, the woman is a primary victim, the portrait of the victim is made up of several characteristics, most of which are common to women who experience violence in the couple relationship (Bonea, 2012: 144):

- ✓ low self-esteem because they seek validation from their partner, putting their own needs ahead of their partner's needs, and taking responsibility for their abusive behavior;
- ✓ a constant and strong feeling of guilt, which amplifies vulnerability, makes her repress feelings of helplessness, anger, sadness and upset and can lead to self-harm;
- ✓ emotional dependency for self-validation and to compensate for lack of affection and security;
- ✓ previous experience of violence or neglect of both the perpetrator and the victim, which can lead to the perpetuation of violent behavior;
- ✓ strong attachment to the abuser due to lack of self-love;
- ✓ loss of a sense of self-worth through a distorted perception of oneself, others and the world around them;
- ✓ poor general health: pain, insomnia and violent nightmares, including frequent visits to the doctor;
- ✓ engaging in deviant behaviors (abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances) as a form of escape from the reality of abuse and as a release of stress and fear;
- ✓ negative emotional states such as constant nervousness, anxiety, agitation;
- ✓ Psychological overload manifested by lack of concentration and reduced ability to solve tasks; difficulty processing information or making decisions.
- ✓ perpetuation of abuse as an effect of internalizing aggressive behaviors and reproducing them later (e.g. mother using abuse as a disciplinary method)

There are three typologies that portray the family abuser, according to Donald Dutton (Bonea, 2012: 33).

- ✓ Violent or antisocial (type 1): includes individuals with violent and manipulative behavior who are prone to use alcohol and other substances;
- ✓ Borderline personalities (type 2): includes individuals who have difficulty forming attachments, are impulsive, antisocial, and who quickly go from one state to another;
- ✓ Emotionally unstable (type 3): includes emotionally aggressive people.

Depending on the risks to which the victim may be exposed, perpetrators can also be divided into the following categories (Bonea, 2012: 33).

- ✓ Low-risk abuser is the one who is at the first manifestation of violence in the relationship, has not had abusive and dysfunctional behaviors, self-control during the period of separation;
- ✓ A medium-risk abuser is one who exhibits several risk factors, including: violent behavior towards children, difficulty maintaining intimate relationships, inability to form stable attachments due to multiple relationships, lack of friends, history and complaints from previous victims, and a history of offending;

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- ✓ A high-risk abuser is an abuser who exhibits at least one of the following risk factors: violent behavior before and after separation, medical problems, arrests for intimate partner violence, admission of violent behavior during arrest, suicidal behavior or attempted homicide, no history of substance abuse, and refusal to admit to violence.

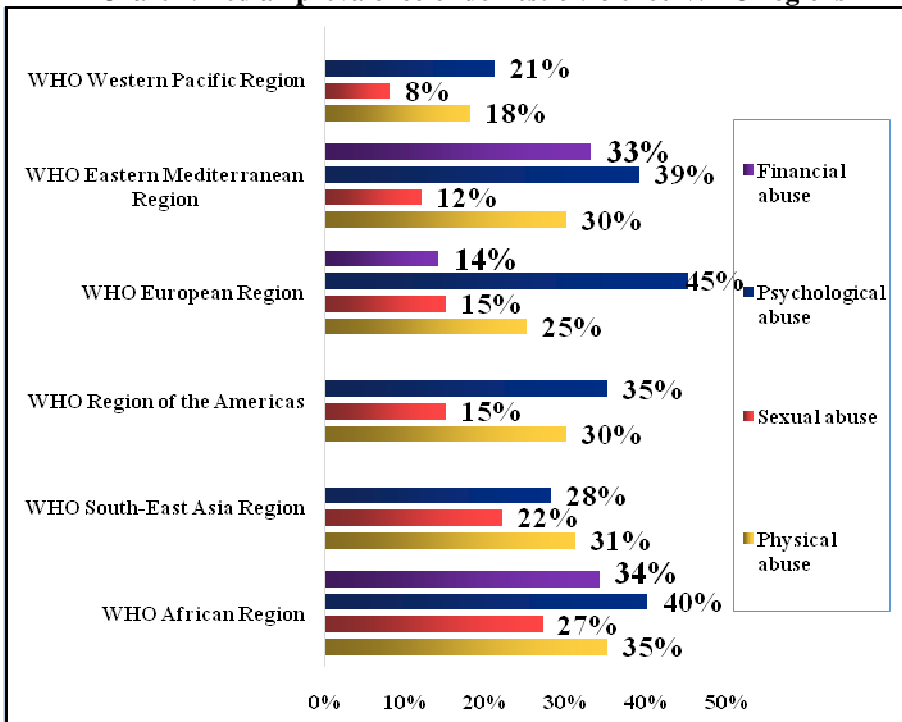
Domestic violence statistics at international and national levels

According to global estimates by the World Health Organization, in 2018, 1 in 3 women were physically and/or sexually abused at least once since the age of 15, meaning between 736 million and 852 million women aged 15 and over.

Regarding intimate partner violence, it is estimated that approximately 26% of women worldwide have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former partner at least once in their lives. Intimate partner violence begins at an early age, with 1 in 4 girls aged 15–19 being assaulted by their partner at least once in their lives (WHO, 2021).

Analysing the median prevalence of types of intimate partner violence, it is observed that the WHO African Region is the most affected area, as this area has the highest values for physical, sexual and financial abuse. Psychological abuse is most common in the WHO European Region, as can be seen in the graph below:

Chart 1. Median prevalence of domestic violence-WHO regions



Source: According to World Health Organization (WHO, 2022)

At European level, data provided by the European Union (EU) highlights that one in three women has been a victim of physical or sexual violence at least once in their

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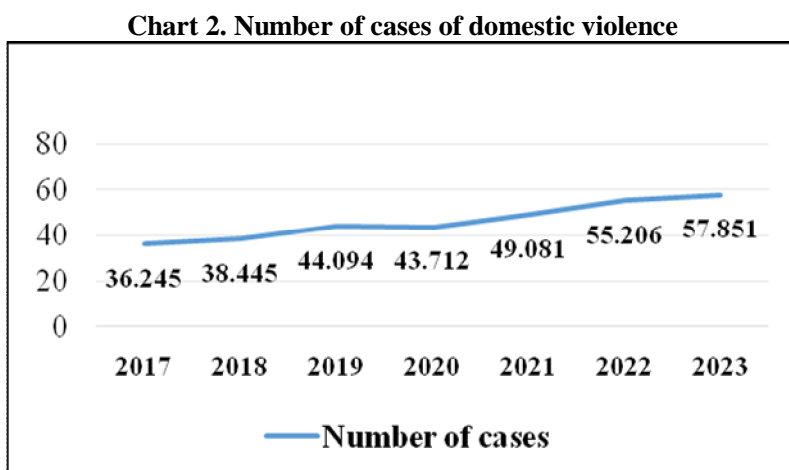
lives and approximately two women are killed every week by a partner or another family member (European Commission, 2023).

In Europe, an online opinion poll was conducted between 21 December 2018 and 4 January 2019, with 8,500 respondents aged 16-64. According to Statista (2024), the ranking of countries that reported domestic violence as the main problem women are facing is: Serbia (41%), Hungary (30%), France (29%), Poland (24%), Italy (23%), Belgium (21%), Russia (21%), United Kingdom (20%), Sweden (17%), Spain (12%), Netherlands (10%), Germany (10%)

The study “Violence against women: an EU-wide survey” conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2014, which is based on over 42,000 interviews conducted in the 28 member states of the European Union (EU), presents the following statistical data on domestic violence:

- ✓ 22% of women who are or have been in a relationship with a man have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence;
- ✓ 31% of women claim to have suffered six or more incidents of rape by their current or former partner;
- ✓ 43% of women or two in five women say they have suffered some form of psychological violence from their current or former partner.

In Romania, according to data provided by the Romanian Police, between 2017 and 2022, the number of domestic violence crimes increased by 37.3%, a situation presented in the graph below:



In 2023, according to Romanian Police data, 108,831 domestic violence situations were intervened in, 47.5% of the cases being in urban areas and 52.5% in rural areas. Over 62% of the registered criminal acts (i.e. 35,897) were beatings or other forms of violence. It is noted that, since the beginning of 2024, 99,837 cases of domestic violence have been registered, an increase of 5%, compared to the same period in 2023.

The rising number of registered crimes regarding domestic violence reflects both the scale of the phenomenon and a change in the attitude of victims who are aware of their rights and demand the application of legal measures, as well as increased trust in the justice system.

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Sociological research on domestic violence in Romania

Sociological research on domestic violence in Romania had as objectives the identification of the perception of domestic violence, the knowledge of the types and forms of domestic violence, as well as the identification of the causes and effects of domestic violence. The questionnaire-based opinion poll technique was used and had a sample of 311 people, of whom 203 women and 108 men, in a relationship (married/cohabiting/single), living together with the partner, in the same household, for at least 12 months. The period of application, download and processing of the results was October-December 2023.

From the research results, there is an awareness of domestic violence as a major social problem, with over 92.8% of respondents emphasizing the negative impact of this phenomenon and the need for intervention to reduce cases of domestic violence and protect victims and other affected people.

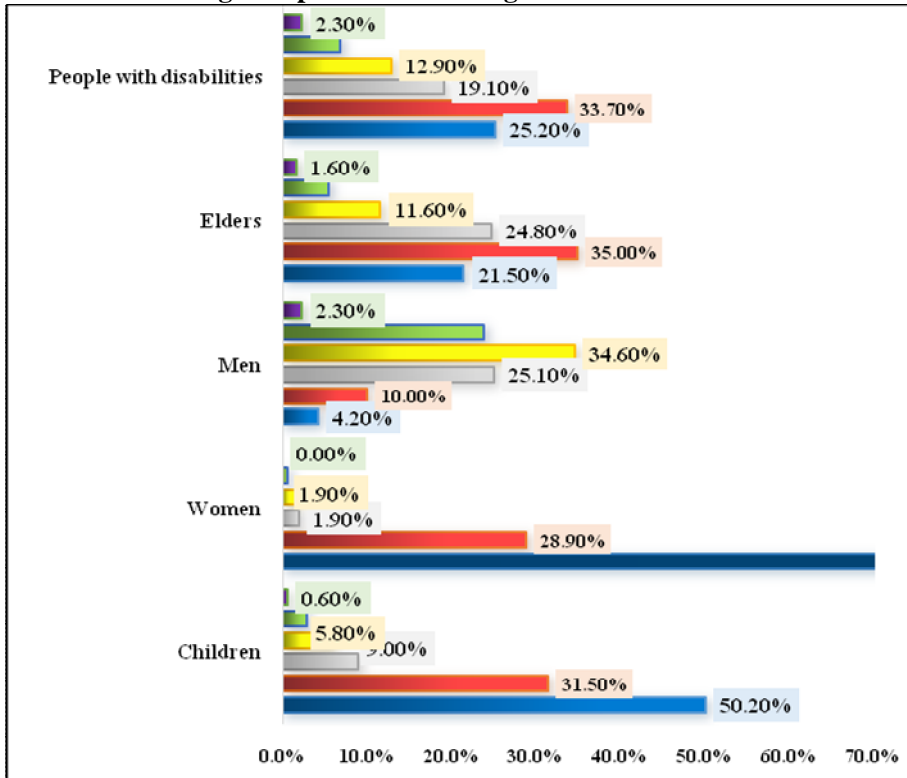
Table. 1 To what extent do you consider domestic violence to be a problem in Romania?

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Very large measure	53.8%
Large measure	37.6%
Small measure	4.8%
Very small measure	2.6%
Not at all	0.6%
I don't know/I don't answer	0.6%
Total	100%

The respondents' perception of the categories prone to becoming victims of domestic violence indicates that of the five categories included in the analysis, women are perceived as the most vulnerable group, 95.5% of those surveyed consider themselves most exposed to domestic violence.

Due to the lack of financial resources, wage inequalities and limited access to professional opportunities, the lack of access to basic services (health, education and social assistance), as well as family obligations create a state of vulnerability among women. For 81.6% of respondents, children are seen as potential victims of violence, followed by people with disabilities and the elderly, according to 58.9% and 56.5% of those surveyed, respectively. Men, on the other hand, are slightly or not at all prone to becoming victims for approximately 59% of respondents.

Chart 3. Categories prone to becoming victims of domestic violence



The main cause of domestic violence, identified by 26% of respondents, concerns alcohol/drug use, which highlights how abusive behaviours are triggered by the use of various substances that amplify the risk of domestic violence by affecting self-control and decreasing the ability to make balanced decisions.

In addition, consumption can be a refuge or a coping mechanism, as a consequence of abusive behaviour that already exists in the couple. Poverty (12%) and low education level (10.3%) are mentioned as secondary causes, as both amplify the state of helplessness and limit the individual's ability to manage tense situations and, implicitly, violent behaviours in the family.

Jealousy or infidelity are factors mentioned by 9.9% of respondents, and childhood experiences of violence by 9.6%. Normalization of violent behaviours can occur within the entourage (8.6% of respondents mentioning this cause), and lack of communication between partners by 7.7% of respondents. Also, abusive behaviours are legitimized by:

- ✓ social environment tolerant of violence (*collective mentality regarding domestic violence*) for 6.2% of respondents;
- ✓ gender inequalities (2.9%) which are based on discrimination and male superiority; power relations are often tilted in favour of the aggressor, who considers himself superior;
- ✓ antisocial behaviour and delinquency outside the couple (2.3%), because people who are delinquent or antisocial have a higher chance of exhibiting violent behaviours in the couple relationship;

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- ✓ imitating violent behaviours through exposure to violence through audio-visual media (2.3%);
- ✓ stress (2.3%) which affects physical and mental health and the ability to self-regulate emotions.

Table 2. Causes of domestic violence

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Alcohol/drug use	26.0%
Poverty	12.0%
Low level of education	10.3%
Jealousy/infidelity	9.9%
Childhood experiences of violence	9.6%
Entourage	8.6%
Lack of communication	7.7%
Social environment tolerant of violence (collective mentality)	6.2%
Inequalities between women and men in different fields	2.9%
Antisocial behaviour and delinquency outside the couple	2.3%
Stress	2.3%
Violence in the audio-visual field (TV, internet)	2.1%
Don't know/ /Don't answer	0.1%
Total	100%

A complex understanding of domestic violence is highlighted, including both physical (38.8%), verbal (23.9%), psychological (16.8%), sexual (10.9%), social (4.3%), economic (2.1%) and religious (1.8%) abuse. According to the data in the following table, perceptions of domestic violence vary; 80% of the responses highlight physical, verbal and psychological forms of abuse.

Physical violence (beating, hitting, pushing, etc.) is mentioned as the main form of violence by approximately 39%. Verbal violence (insults, threats, degrading words) is reported by 24% of respondents, while psychological violence, which includes terrorizing, threatening, intimidation and emotional blackmail, deprivation of essential personal needs, is specified by 16.8%. Sexual violence as a form of domestic abuse (degrading comments, marital rape, etc.) is identified by 10.9%, social violence (prohibition of contact with family or friends) and economic violence (prohibition of access to a job, confiscation of finances) are mentioned by 4.3% and 2.1% respectively, indicating the abuse of power and control over personal freedom.

Table 3. Basically, what do you understand by domestic violence?

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Hitting, kicking, pushing, slapping, hair pulling, smacking, banging against walls and furniture	38.8%
Insults, threats, intimidation, using degrading words	23.9%
Offences, terrorization, threats, intimidation and emotional blackmail, deprivation of meeting essential personal needs	16.8%
Degrading comments, unpleasant touching, various insults during or in connection with sexual intercourse, marital rape	10.9%
Prohibition of relationships/contact with family, friends, work colleagues	4.3%
Prohibition of the partner from obtaining a job, confiscation of finances	2.1%
Prohibition or ridiculing the victim's religious, cultural, and ethnic norms	1.8%
Don't know/Don't answer	1.2%
Another answer	0.2%
Total	100%

When asked why victims of domestic violence do not seek help, out of the 311 respondents, they mentioned as their main answers:

- ✓ fear of the aggressor: for 36.6% of respondents, it is the main reason because it is generated by the aggressor's reactions which are often based on injuring, threatening, intimidating, manipulating, isolating and blackmailing the victim, putting her in a vulnerable situation and making her feel dependent and unsupported;
- ✓ lack of financial resources - 14% of those surveyed recognize how the lack of money creates an economic dependence of the victim on the aggressor and discourages them from leaving the abusive relationship because they are afraid that they cannot afford the costs of daily life;
- ✓ low support from family/friends (10.9%);
- ✓ weak involvement of state institutions (10.9%).

Table 4. Why don't victims of domestic violence seek help?

- female and male respondents' answers -

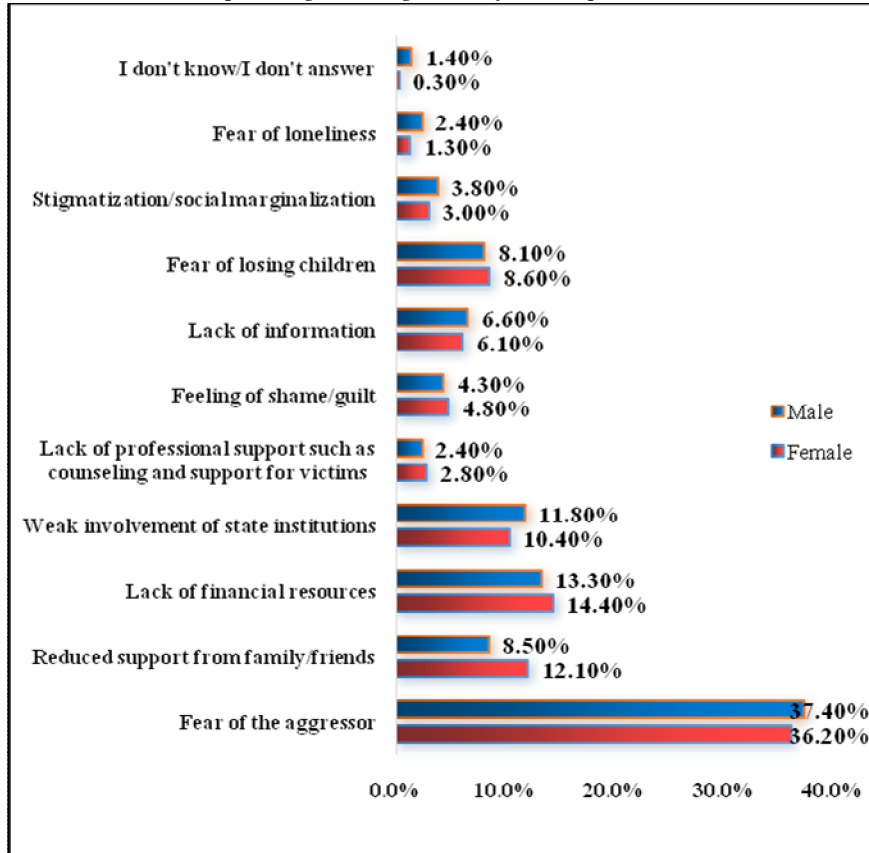
<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Fear of the aggressor	36.6%
Lack of financial resources	14.0%
Low support from family/friends	10.9%
Weak involvement of state institutions	10.9%
Fear of losing children	8.4%
Lack of information	6.3%
Feelings of shame/guilt	4.6%
Stigmatization/social marginalization	3.3%
Lack of professional support such as counselling and victim support	2.6%

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Fear of loneliness	1.7%
Don't know/No answer	0.7%

The distribution of reasons why victims do not seek help in cases of domestic violence may vary by gender, as both men and women face specific barriers. The top two answers mentioned by both female and male respondents are: “fear of the aggressor” and “lack of financial resources”.

Chart 4. Distribution of the main reasons why the victim does not seek help
- depending on the gender of the respondents-



From the correlation of the questions “why do victims of domestic violence not seek help?” and “is there domestic violence in your current relationship with your partner?”, it is found that women who identify as victims of domestic violence in their current relationship mention fear of the aggressor and “low support from family/friends” as the main reasons why they do not leave the abusive relationship. The importance of the support network, such as family/friends, for the female victim of domestic violence is revealed, as it provides the necessary support to overcome the trauma and access resources to help her get out of the abusive situation.

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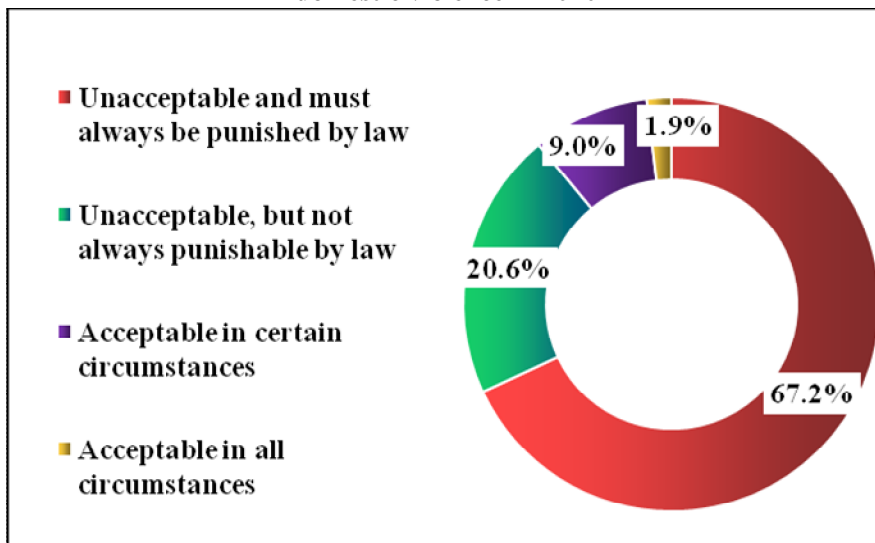
Low support from family and friends can amplify feelings of isolation, helplessness, and uncertainty, which prevent the victim from seeking professional help and leaving the abusive relationship.

This situation is amplified in the case of women with children, as research shows, because the abuser often intimidates his victims with threats against the children, and if he controls the family's income (whether by being the sole financial provider or by confiscating all of the victim's earnings) he ensures that the partner does not have stability and sufficient resources to leave.

There is a majority consensus in favour of legal interventions and sanctioning domestic violence; 66.3% of respondents consider domestic violence unacceptable and that it should always be punished by law, and 20.6% consider it unacceptable, but does not always require legal sanctions.

The fact that approximately 11% consider domestic violence acceptable in some or all circumstances suggests a high degree of tolerance that the population has regarding domestic violence and underlines both the need for educational measures to change the perception regarding the acceptability of intimate partner violence, as well as the need for clear public policies to raise awareness of the negative effects of violence and to support victims. These data confirm statistical data at European level, which confirm that Romanians' tolerance towards domestic violence is above the EU average.

Chart 5. Number of social services for domestic violence in 2020

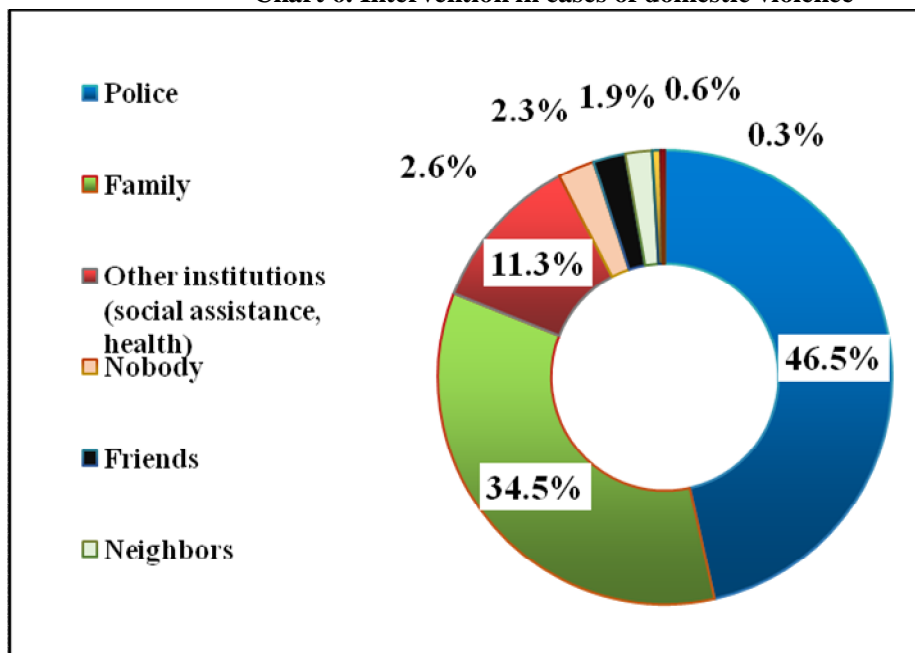


Regarding the risk of intimate partner violence, to the question “Who do you think should intervene in cases of domestic violence?”, 46.5% consider the intervention of the authorities, especially the police, as the main response measure in cases of domestic violence, and the family (34.5%) is described as the second factor of intervention and support. These data correlate with data provided by UN Women, which states that only 1 in 10 women victims of domestic violence would seek help from the police and that they often do not seek help from outside, preferring the help of their family (UN Women, 2021).

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In the intervention process, 11.3% identify other institutions, such as social assistance and health care, with lower values being identified for friends (2.3%), neighbours (1.9%) or other people (0.6%).

Chart 6. Intervention in cases of domestic violence



Regarding the level of information on prevention and protection against domestic violence, there is partial awareness of the legal and support resources available to victims:

Table 5. Legal and support resources available to victims

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know/No answer</i>
a law(s) relating to domestic violence between partners	51.5%	45.0%	3.5%
the existence of a free single number telephone line for victims of domestic violence	55.8%	42.3%	1.9%
institution(s) assisting victims of domestic violence	61.7%	35.4%	2.9%
what is the protection order	65.5%	31.6%	2.9%

Among women who declare themselves victims of domestic violence, there is poor information regarding the means of legal protection and available support resources:

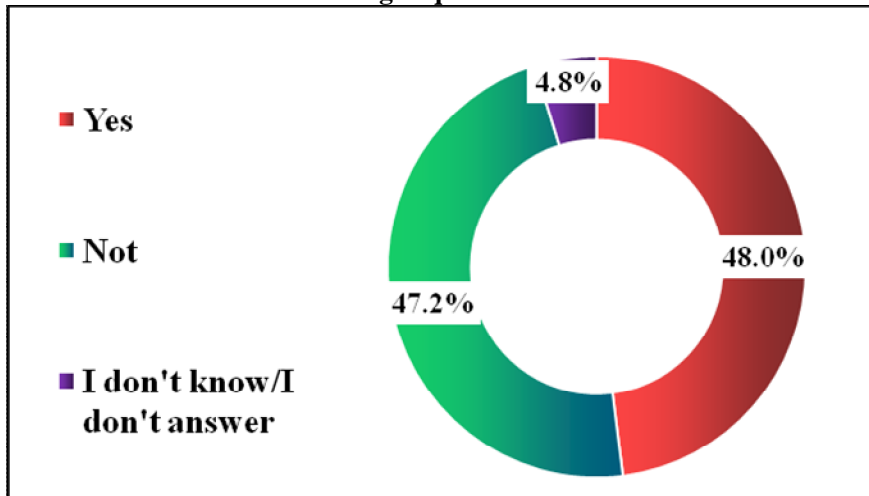
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- ✓ 58.2% are not informed about laws regarding domestic violence between intimate partners;
- ✓ 50.9% are unaware of the existence of a free telephone line for victims of domestic violence;
- ✓ 41.8% are not aware of the existence of institutions that support victims of domestic violence;
- ✓ 38.2% do not know what a protection order entails.

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the vulnerability of certain social groups, such as women, and increased the risk of domestic violence and abusive behaviour. Family tensions have been intensified by factors such as the health crisis, home isolation, working from home, financial instability, social isolation, and limited recreational opportunities.

According to the research data, the majority of respondents (48%) mention that, in the last year, they have heard of cases of domestic violence among acquaintances, which suggests that this phenomenon is on the rise.

Chart 7. Number of cases of domestic violence among acquaintances

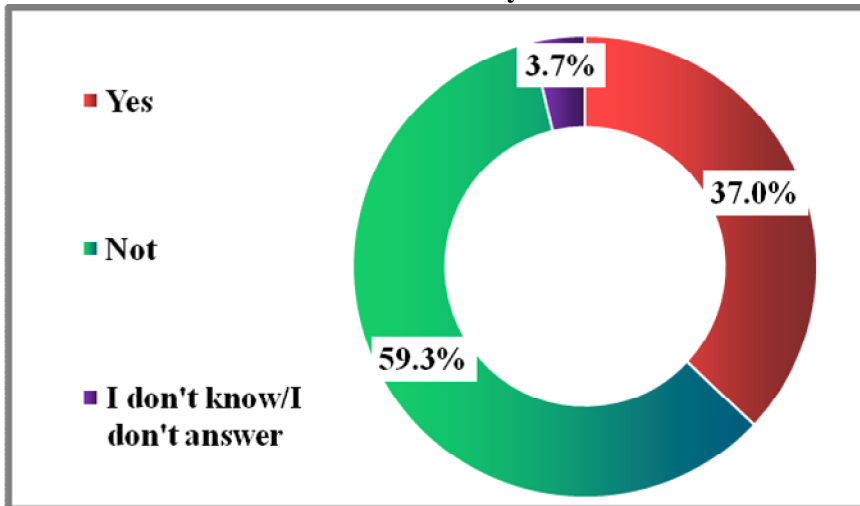


Of the women in the survey who declare that they are victims of violence by their life partner, over a third (37.0%) state that, in the last 12 months, the abuse has increased in intensity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a vulnerable climate and intensified women's experiences of violence by creating conditions conducive to the intensification of abusive behaviours: home isolation and limited contacts, financial insecurity through decreased income and job loss, emotional tensions due to stress and anxiety generated by constant concerns about one's own health and that of those close to them, as well as low access to support services.

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Chart 8. The increase in intensity of abuse in the last 12 months



About 40% of participants indicate occasional conflicts, stating that they argue at least once a month, up to 2-3 times a month. Over 6% mention daily tensions and arguments, while 9% say they never argue.

Table 6. How often do you argue with your partner?

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Less often	40.8%
2-3 times a month	13.2%
Once a month	10.6%
Once a week	10.0%
2-3 times a week	9.0%
Never	9.0%
Daily	6.1%
Don't know/No answer	1.3%

In terms of the last incident with their partner, the majority of respondents, i.e. 60%, mentioned that they had been at least victims of violence in the last month, about 28% of respondents mentioned an incident 2-12 months ago, and 10.5% said that it had been more than a year since the last incident of partner abuse.

Table 7. Thinking about your current partner, when was the last incident?

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Last month	26.3%
Last week	24.4%
2-4 months ago	15.8%

More than 1 year	10.5%
In the last two weeks	8.8%
6-8 months ago	5.3%
10-12 months ago	3.5%
4-6 months ago	1.8%
8-10 months ago	1.8%
Don't know/No answer	1.8

The most common types of injuries resulting from the incident are bruises and scratches (39.2%), followed by wounds, sprains and burns (19.2%). Internal injuries and fractures, including broken bones or teeth, are less common (5.8% and 0.8% respectively). A significant 20% of those surveyed say that they were not left with any injuries following the incident, indicating that the incidents were without physical consequences or were not very visible.

Table 8. If so, did the incident result?

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Bruises, scratches	39.2%
None of the above	20.0%
Injuries, sprains, burns	19.2%
Other	10.0%
Internal injuries	5.8%
Fractures, broken bones, broken teeth	0.8%
Miscarriage	0.8%
Don't know/No answer	4.2%

More than 59% of respondents denied that abuse increased in intensity in 2022, while 37.0% said that it did, which may be a consequence of socio-economic and cultural changes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 9. In the last 12 months, has the intensity of abuse increased?

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
No	59.3%
Yes	37.0%
Don't know/No answer	3.7%

In terms of possible separation or break-up attempts in the last 12 months, 57.4% of respondents say that they have not broken up or tried to do so, while 42.6% have tried to or have actually broken up with their partner in the last 12 months.

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Tabel 10. Have you broken up or tried to break up with your partner in the last year?

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
No	57.4%
Yes	42.6%

Conclusions

Domestic violence is the most common form of violence faced by women globally, being one of the most widespread human rights violations that affects relationships between family members and has a significant impact on their health (physical, psychological, sexual and reproductive) and on the society as a whole.

Domestic violence is a problem that needs to be criminalised and regulated by improving victim protection and preventing future acts of violence, such as protection orders, counselling services, and emergency shelters, as well as through public information campaigns and legislative changes that have increased protection against domestic violence. Easier access to legal aid and psychological support allows victims to see more clearly that resources are available and that reporting can lead to improvements in their situation.

In recent years, the scale of the phenomenon of domestic violence at national and international levels requires attention from social policies in this area. The increased visibility of this phenomenon contributes to raising awareness at the community level and to support and prevention actions for victims.

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