



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# Domestic Violence in Romania in the period 2020-2023

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### Abstract:

Regardless of the political, economic, and cultural organization of societies, domestic violence is found in every country, in a lot of forms and manifestations. The effectiveness of intervention measures is being established on the basis of culture, economic development, and the organization of the social assistance and justice systems. The first part of the paper aims to outline a current picture of domestic violence in Romania, highlighting the causes, effects and extent of domestic violence at the national level. The second part of the paper is based on sociological research that analyses Romanians' perceptions of domestic violence, as well as to identify the risk of intimate partner violence. It also analyses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the forms of manifestation and the degree of severity of domestic violence at the national level.

**Keywords:** *domestic violence, perceptions, causes, research, Romania.*

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## **Domestic Violence in Romania in the period 2020-2023**

### **Introduction**

Domestic violence is considered one of the biggest problems of today's society, being a widespread social phenomenon at international and national levels. Regardless of the political, economic and cultural organization of contemporary societies, domestic violence is found in every country, in a multitude of forms and manifestations, the effectiveness of intervention measures being established based on culture, perceptions and organization of the social assistance and justice system.

The study of domestic violence gains importance in terms of risk factors (poverty, mentality and social stereotypes regarding the superior role of the man in the family, low level of education of the victims, alcohol consumption, lack of social and legal support for victims, low political interest, violent behaviour promoted through the media, etc.), but also of the short and long-term effects, at the individual and social level (poor physical and mental health, emotional, behavioural and developmental disorders, social isolation, impact on the psychological and emotional well-being of children and society as a whole).

Domestic violence occurs between people in an intimate relationship and is perpetrated by both men and women. However, the violence is most often directed at women, with the vast majority of victims being females.

### **The conceptual framework of domestic violence**

Although there is no consensus in the specialized literature regarding the definition of the term domestic violence, the purpose of the definitions is to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon by incorporating common elements: the coercion or act of aggression used by the aggressor, the abuse felt by the person being assaulted, the aggressor's intention to commit aggression, the recognition and/or sanctioning of acts of violence by the competent authorities.

Domestic violence is often used interchangeably with the terms "domestic abuse" or "intimate partner violence" and describes any pattern of behaviour that is used to gain or maintain power and control over a partner. The difference between the terms domestic violence and family violence is emphasized, with the concept of domestic violence being included within the concept of family violence.

Thus, according to the Save the Children Organization (2013: 11) domestic violence includes violence between partners, whether spouses or concubines, while family violence includes any act of violence directed against any member of the family (children, women, elderly people and other family members).

The Council of Europe argues that domestic violence includes "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, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim" (Council of Europe, 2011: Article 3).

In terms of the national context, domestic violence was legally framed as a social problem, in the amendments made to the Criminal Code at the end of 2000. Subsequently, through Law no. 217/2003, with subsequent amendments and additions (art. 2), domestic violence refers to "any crime or intentional act of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, social, spiritual or cyber violence, which occurs in the family or domestic environment or between spouses or former spouses, as well as between

current or former partners, regardless of whether the aggressor lives or has lived with the victim” (Parliament of Romania, 2020).

### **Types, forms of manifestation of domestic violence**

In general, in the specialized literature, the following forms of domestic violence are encountered according to Shreeves and Prpic (2020): physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, harassment, as well as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and sterilization, harassment and “honour” crimes.

In Romania, Law 217/22 May 2003 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence, art. 4 and 5, distinguishes the following types of domestic violence:

- verbal violence which includes abusive or offensive language that uses words, expressions or phrases intended to hurt, intimidate or degrade a person or group of people, such as: threats, humiliating words and insulting expressions.
- psychological violence refers to intimidation and manipulation behaviours that intend to impose constraints through blackmail, verbal threats, demonstrative violence, invasion of privacy through surveillance, jealousy, control, neglect, isolation.
- physical violence includes bodily harm to health through direct methods (hitting, slamming, pushing, burning, strangling, etc.) and indirect methods (poisoning, intoxication or other actions with a similar effect), in any form and of any intensity, including hidden ones.
- sexual violence which includes forced actions to degrade through the imposition of sexual assault, sexual intimidation, forced sexual relations.
- economic violence involves the prohibition of professional activity, deprivation of economic resources such as medicine, food, intentional theft of goods and control over them, refusal to support the family, imposition of heavy and harmful activities for health.
- social violence aims at prohibiting or restricting contact with family, friends, community, prohibiting access to education, restricting access to certain areas of the shared home, withholding identity documents, restricted access to information (such as telephone, internet or other means of information).
- spiritual violence refers to limiting, prohibiting access to religious, cultural, linguistic and ethnic values, penalizing the use of the mother tongue, imposing the adoption of spiritual-religious practices that contradict a person’s values and beliefs.
- cyber violence refers to the use of technology to intimidate and control, such as online harassment and stalking, sending threatening or violent messages, non-consensual publication of intimate materials or information that violates a person’s privacy, unauthorized access to private communications and data, and abusive use of social networks and telecommunications.

### **Causes and effects of domestic violence**

Domestic violence acts can occur at any time and in any circumstance, being influenced by various factors, which differ depending on the situation and circumstances in which the violent acts occur. Domestic violence can also have negative and long-lasting effects for both victims and perpetrators.

In the specialized literature, the following are listed among the causes of domestic violence:

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- ✓ poverty or lack of financial resources that amplify tensions between partners, violent behaviour being a form of releasing tension and a reaction to the feeling of insecurity and lost control over one's own life;
- ✓ internal causes such as the presence of character or personality disorders, including brain dysfunctions;
- ✓ social stereotypes that emphasize the position of authority of men and the inferiority of women in society and in the private sphere, as well as gender roles that configure the role of protector and leader of men and the role of caregiver and supporter of women. Norms that establish the dominance of men over women legitimize various forms of violence (Băluță & Tufiş, 2022: 19-20);
- ✓ insufficient legal procedures or laws that limit the protection of victims, but also the low trust of victims in the legal system, which discourages them from seeking help;
- ✓ social permissiveness towards intimate partner violence, which illustrates indifference or even approval of violent behaviour in the couple relationship;
- ✓ the lack of training of specialists in public institutions – social workers, prosecutors, psychologists – is another factor that hinders the activity of preventing and combating the phenomenon;
- ✓ low support mechanisms, such as: insufficient services for victims (emergency shelters, medical, legal assistance, counselling and therapy) and human resources to help protect victims;
- ✓ major barriers for legal and social interventions;
- ✓ low level of education and lack of access to information for women;
- ✓ low access of women to paid jobs;
- ✓ violent behaviours in the family of origin;
- ✓ presence of harmful behaviours (*alcohol, gambling, drug use*).

The effects of violence on victims are described as traumatic events. The concept of trauma is defined as “the event in the subject’s life that is defined by its intensity, the subject’s inability to respond adequately, the disturbance and the lasting pathogenic effects it causes in the psychic organization” (Bonea, 2012, p. 144).

The characteristics of traumatic events are described by Dubrow as “traumatic events that are unexpected in onset and unpredictable in intensity, with a frightening character for most of those affected” (Bonea, 2012: 144).

The consequences of domestic abuse are traumatic because they involve the mental, emotional, physical, social and financial impact on the individual survivor, their family and children, as well as the wider societal costs, including the costs of police response, health and other social services. In general, violent behaviours in the family can have as results or consequences (World Health Organization, 2024):

- ✓ injury to the victim: 42% of people who experience intimate partner violence are injured as a result of this situation; homicide or suicide of the people involved;
- ✓ increase in risk behaviours (smoking, substance and alcohol consumption);
- ✓ gynaecological problems, such as sexually transmitted infections or HIV, unplanned pregnancies and induced abortions;
- ✓ infant mortality and morbidity;
- ✓ poor general health: reduced mobility, gastrointestinal disorders, headaches, pain such as back pain, abdominal pain, chronic pelvic pain;
- ✓ behavioural and emotional disorders of the victims: committing violent acts for men and being a victim of violence for women.

Women, victims of domestic violence, may face various problems such as: isolation, inability to work, limited ability to take care of themselves and their children, disorders (sleep, concentration, sexuality); memory loss or blockages; anxiety, crying spells, phobias; self-mutilating or obsessive-compulsive behaviour; low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence; emotional disorders, feelings of sadness, guilt.

Even the aggressor faces negative effects, such as being banned by the authorities from visiting certain places or being deprived of liberty due to serious acts committed with violence.

In addition, it places an economic burden on society in the form of healthcare, legal, social and productivity costs. According to an EPRS study, the total annual cost of violence against women in the EU amounted to over €28 billion in 2011 (Dimitrova-Stull, Prpic, & Shreeves, 2015).

### ***National and international statistics on violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic***

According to statistical data provided by UN Women, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the following data has been found for domestic violence (UN Women, 2021, p. 5):

- ✓ 1 in 2 women mention having experienced violence, directly or indirectly, since the beginning of the pandemic;
- ✓ the most frequently encountered form of abuse is verbal, mentioned by 50% of women, followed by sexual harassment (40%), physical abuse (36%), denial of basic needs (35%) and denial of means of communication (30%);
- ✓ 7 in 10 women believe that the phenomenon of domestic violence increased during the pandemic;
- ✓ 1 in 4 women (23%) feel less safe at home since the beginning of the pandemic due to household conflicts that have become more frequent;
- ✓ 52% of unemployed women and 43% of employed women mentioned episodes of domestic violence.

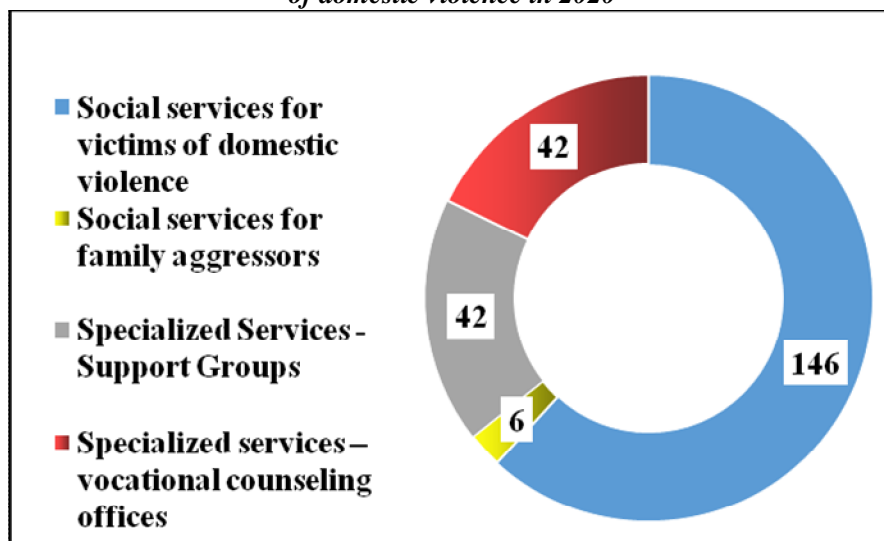
At national level, according to data provided by the Romanian Police, between 2020 and 2021, the number of domestic violence crimes increased by 11%, representing 5369 cases (from 43.712 cases in 2020 to 49.081 cases in 2021). In the period 2020-2023 there was an increase in cases of domestic violence, that is, from 49081 cases to 57851.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence expanded, impacting the entire family. Statistical data from the period 01.01.2020 – 30.04.2020 show that 955 calls were registered, of which 436 calls were during the beginning and maintenance of the state of emergency (16 March 2020 – 30 April 2020). An increase of 59% was noted compared to the same period in 2019 (National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, 2020).

Thus, in response to the spread of the phenomenon of domestic violence as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men – ANES increased, in 2020, the number of services intended for victims of domestic violence: 42 sheltered housing, 42 support groups, 42 vocational counselling offices, reaching a total of 236 services intended for victims of domestic violence.

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*Chart 1. Distribution of services for victims of domestic violence in 2020*



### *Sociological research on domestic violence in Romania*

Quantitative sociological research aimed to identify the perceptions of women victims of domestic violence on the causes, effects and impact of violence. It also aimed to identify the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mode of manifestation of violence, the effects on the woman victim and her family. The technique used is the opinion survey, questionnaire instrument, on a target group of 158 persons, of which 111 are female and 57 are male, in a relationship (married/ cohabiting/ unmarried), living with their partner in the same household for at least 12 months. The application, download and processing period was October-December 2022.

### *Socio-demographic profile of respondents*

Regarding the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, a number of data reflecting gender, marital status, education and ethnicity were taken into account, which are represented in the tables and graphs below. Respondents are 66.1% female and 33.9% male, and in terms of place of residence, 60.1% are urban and 39.9% rural.

**Table 1. Sex**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Female</b>	<b>66.1%</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>33.9%</b>

The age of the respondents was mostly in the 25-55 age range, with 34.5% of the respondents aged between 35-45 years, 23.8% aged between 46-55 years, 22.0% of the respondents aged 25-34 years, 14.3% aged between 18-25 years, 4.2% aged between 56-65 years, and 1.2% aged over 65 years.

**Table 2. Age**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>35-45</b>	<b>34.5%</b>
<b>46-55</b>	<b>23.8%</b>
<b>25-34</b>	<b>22.0%</b>
<b>18-25</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b>56-65</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
<b>Over 65</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

The analysis of the marital status of respondents indicates that the majority of respondents are married (58.9%), 19.0% are unmarried (19.0%), while 17.3% live in informal, cohabiting relationships, 7.8% of respondents said that they are not in a relationship, while 4.6% of respondents chose as their response option. Low percentages were recorded for the response options "divorced" (4.2%) and "widowed" (0.6%).

**Table 3. Marital status**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Married</b>	<b>58.9%</b>
<b>Single</b>	<b>19.0%</b>
<b>Cohabitation</b>	<b>17.3%</b>
<b>Divorced</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
<b>Widow</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

In terms of the educational profile of the respondents included in the research sample, about 41% have undergraduate and postgraduate education and 51% have secondary and post-secondary education.

**Table 4. Educational level**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>High school education</b>	<b>26.8%</b>
<b>Post-secondary</b>	<b>23.8%</b>
<b>University</b>	<b>22.6%</b>
<b>Postgraduate</b>	<b>17.9%</b>
<b>Primary education</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
<b>Not the case</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

The majority of the respondents (66.1%) consider that the COVID-19 pandemic has not caused any changes in the family. For 24.4% of the respondents, the pandemic made the situation worse, while for about 8.9% it changed the situation for the better. There are gender differences in perceptions of the effects of the pandemic on families.

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Women are more likely to think that the pandemic has made things worse (70.7%) or stayed the same (65%), the explanation being that they may have had to manage more additional responsibilities, such as, for example, working at home, caring for children or other family members or children's online schooling.

These data also confirm European data, where around 7 in 10 women believe that domestic violence increased during the pandemic. In contrast, for 35.0% of male respondents, the family situation "stayed the same", indicating that they were less affected by the pandemic in managing their daily activities and responsibilities. Over 80% of respondents said they felt safe in their home in the 2020-2022 period, while 13.7% felt insecure.

**Table 5. In the last 2.5 years, have you felt safe in your home?**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>81.0%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>13.7%</b>
<b>Don't know/No answer</b>	<b>5.4%</b>

Women were more likely to feel insecure than men, with around 74% of those who said 'no' being female. Women's perceptions of the feeling of safety in their own home may be influenced by factors that relate to both the infrastructural conditions of the home and socio-cultural factors such as domestic violence, lack of economic resources, social isolation or social insecurity. Domestic violence, in all its forms (physical, psychological, emotional abuse), is the phenomenon that creates the greatest vulnerability, as the environment in which they should feel safest becomes the one that creates the greatest sense of fear and instability. In addition, the social isolation and economic instability during the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to heightened feelings of fear and anxiety, as they have less capacity to ask for help, receive support or take protective measures.

**Table 6. In the last 2.5 years, have you felt safe in your home?  
(responses by gender)**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know/ No answer</i>
<b>Feminine</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>73.9%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>
<b>Masculine</b>	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>

Feelings of insecurity are triggered by causes such as violence: about 37% of respondents mention verbal and physical abuse, 16% claim substance abuse, e.g. alcohol or drugs in the household, and about 8% mention physical insecurity of the home, assessed by the lack of locks, padlocks and other systems to provide protection.

The fact that 36.8% of respondents did not answer the question suggests either a high level of sensitivity to the topic or a low level of awareness of why they feel unsafe in their own home.



**Table 7. Mainly, why do you feel unsafe in your home?**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>There is verbal abuse in my house</b>	<b>23.7%</b>
<b>There is substance abuse (e.g. alcohol or drugs) in the</b>	<b>15.8%</b>
<b>There is physical violence in my house</b>	<b>13.2%</b>
<b>My home is insecure (e.g. no locks)</b>	<b>7.9%</b>
<b>I live with people I don't trust</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>Don't know/ No answer</b>	<b>36.8%</b>

The correlation with gender shows that women feel unsafe due to substance abuse in the household (mentioned by 15.8% of women), but also verbal (13.2%) and physical (13.2%) abuse. On the other hand, the main insecurity factors for men are verbal abuse (10.5%) and living in a house that does not satisfy them as a safety infrastructure (5.3%).

The majority of respondents who are in a relationship, more than 45%, say that the frequency of quarrels is low, a few times a year, which indicates a low share of conflicts in the family. About 1 in 5 people (14.4%) quarrel once a month, with some quarrels being more frequent, weekly (16.8%) and daily (4.8%), but a significant 12.3% say they never quarrel.

**Table 8. How often have you argued with your partner in the last 2.5 years?**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Less often (two to three times a year)</b>	<b>45.4%</b>
<b>Weekly</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
<b>Once a month</b>	<b>14.4%</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>13.2%</b>
<b>Don't know/No answer</b>	<b>5.4%</b>
<b>Daily</b>	<b>4.8%</b>

Women report more frequent quarrels in the categories "daily" (75%) and "weekly" (78%), while men report a lower frequency of quarrels; the categories "less frequently" (32.9%) and "never" (45.5%) register the highest values out of all the answers.

For 57.2% of the respondents, the COVID-19 pandemic did not change the dynamics of quarrels with their partner; the frequency of quarrels remained the same as before the outbreak of the pandemic. For about 12%, quarrels became more frequent; the health, social and economic instability caused by the pandemic created tension in the couple relationship.

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**Table 9. Compared to the period before the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic, the quarrels with the partner were:**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Same</b>	<b>57.2%</b>
<b>This is not the case</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
<b>More</b>	<b>11.9%</b>
<b>Fewer</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
<b>Don't know/No answer</b>	<b>6.5%</b>

Compared to before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, around 57% of respondents report that the frequency of quarrels with their partner has remained the same and only 12% report more quarrels. Out of the total responses, according to the gender distribution, approximately 9% of women reported more quarrels in the post-pandemic period than men (3.0%). 17% of the respondents mention that they have a harmonious relationship because they do not quarrel with their partner. Women seem to have experienced more changes in the frequency of quarrels than men, with higher percentages than men in all response categories.

The first incident with a partner occurred for about 30% of the respondents more than 18 months ago, and for 15% of the respondents between 12 and 18 months. Referring the responses to the sex variable, 33.3% of women said that the first incident occurred more than 18 months ago, while there is a significant proportion of people (8.5%) reporting that the first incident occurred recently: 1 month ago (8.5%); between 2-6 months (8.5%); between 6-10 months (8.5%), between 10-14 months (14.9%) and between 14-18 months (12.8%).

**Table 10. Thinking about your current partner, when was the first incident?**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>More than 18 months ago</b>	<b>29.8%</b>
<b>12-14 months ago</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
<b>In the last month</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
<b>16-18 months ago</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
<b>2-4 months ago</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
<b>8-10 months ago</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
<b>10-12 months ago</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>14-16 months ago</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>4-6 months ago</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>6-8 months ago</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Don't know/No answer</b>	<b>17.0%</b>

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In terms of recent incidents, response injuries are distributed between the last week and more than 2 months. It is found that the majority of the incidents occurred in a relatively recent time interval: 45.7% in the last month, while 8.7% in the last 7 days. It is observed that about 20%, which may indicate a possibility of denial of the abusive situation or intention to avoid the subject.

**Table 11. Thinking about your current partner, when was the last incident?**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>more than 2 months</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
<b>3 weeks</b>	<b>17.4%</b>
<b>1 month</b>	<b>17.4%</b>
<b>2 weeks</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>in the last 7 days</b>	<b>8.7%</b>
<b>2 months</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>Don't know/No answer</b>	<b>19.6%</b>

Violence has a significant impact on the psychological wellbeing of victims, with frequently mentioned consequences being: loss of self-confidence (19.7%), depression (15.5%), difficulty sleeping (15.5%), panic attacks (9.9%) and vulnerability (8.5%). In general, women reported a variety of effects of abuse that target psychological distress, such as depression, loss of self-confidence and difficulty concentrating. For men, where some form of abuse was reported, loss of self-confidence and difficulties in relationships were mentioned as the main consequences.

**Table 12. The worst incident with your current partner that happened in the last 2.5 years. Did it result in any of the following:**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Loss of self-confidence</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
<b>Depression</b>	<b>15.5%</b>
<b>Difficulty sleeping</b>	<b>15.5%</b>
<b>Panic attacks</b>	<b>9.9%</b>
<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
<b>Difficulty concentrating</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
<b>Anxiety</b>	<b>5.6%</b>
<b>Relationship difficulties</b>	<b>5.6%</b>
<b>None of the above</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
<b>Don't know/No answer</b>	<b>9.9%</b>

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In terms of physical consequences of abuse, 53.3% of the respondents mentioned bruises and scratches as the most common types of injuries. The lack of wounds for 21.2% suggests that, although they did not suffer major physical injuries, the possibility of psychological or emotional abuse exists. Injuries such as fractures or sprains were less common; only 6.4% of participants mentioned them.

From an analysis of the types of injuries reported by gender, women largely reported bruises and scratches (69%), followed by wounds, sprains, burns (16%) and fractures (6.4%) as consequences of the incident. In addition, 18.8% of women reported no injuries following the incident.

**Table 13. Thinking of the worst incident you have suffered from any of the following**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Bruises, scratches</b>	<b>53.3%</b>
<b>No injuries</b>	<b>21.2%</b>
<b>Injuries, sprains, burns</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
<b>Fractures, broken bones, broken teeth</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Don't know/No answer</b>	<b>6.4%</b>

In terms of reacting to abusive behavior, as the most vulnerable group in cases of family violence or domestic violence, women state that:

- ✓ 93.8% did not seek police assistance because of the current partner's behavior
- ✓ 83.8% have never called the hotline to report domestic violence
- ✓ 84.7% have never asked for a protection order in connection with a domestic violence problem

The main reasons given by women for not calling the police following a violent incident are:

- ✓ fear of losing children (16%)
- ✓ fear of partner and retaliation (14.8%)
- ✓ keeping social appearances, not letting outsiders know what is going on (12.3%)
- ✓ shame, embarrassment (9.9%)
- ✓ family involvement or victim management (9.9%)
- ✓ lack of confidence that she can handle the situation on her own (8.6%)

**Table 14. Main reasons why women did not call the police after a violent incident**

<i>Response variants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>I'm afraid I'll lose the children</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
<b>Fear of partner, fear of reprisals</b>	<b>14.8%</b>
<b>I didn't want anyone to know</b>	<b>12.3%</b>

<b>I took care of it myself/involved family</b>	<b>9.9%</b>
<b>Shame, embarrassment</b>	<b>9.9%</b>
<b>I didn't think they could do anything</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
<b>Unimportant incident/not serious/never crossed my mind</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
<b>I was too emotionally affected to contact the police</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
<b>My partner or someone else stopped or discouraged me</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
<b>I thought it was my fault</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
<b>Don't know/ No answer</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>He didn't want his partner to get arrested or get in trouble with the police</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>I didn't want the relationship to end</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

### Conclusions

Dating violence takes many forms, some hard to identify, such as psychological abuse, and others visible, such as physical violence.

Since the beginning of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of cases of violence against women, although the number of official reports does not reflect the reality, because due to the constraints imposed by the pandemic, stigma, fear and shame surrounding the subject, many victims did not report their aggressor.

Violence against women tends to increase during social imbalances or social anomalies, such as the COVID-19 epidemic. These changes have affected women more, with more conflict in their relationship with their partner. On the other hand, research shows that men's married life is more stable, with less experience of quarrels with their partners.

Although most incidents of intimate partner violence first occurred at least 18 months ago, depending on how the relationship evolved, the actual time between incidents has shortened, with the majority of respondents mentioning a period of less than 2 months for this.

The effects of violence against women cause detrimental effects on women's lives, affecting aspects of women's physical, emotional and psychological well-being and may be associated with committing or experiencing violence later in life. Factors such as low self-esteem, shame or guilt, fear of retaliation and fear of losing children are factors that prevent reporting abuse to the police or leaving a violent partner.

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