

Topic: Violence Against Men

Title: Experiences of Physical and Psychological Violence Against Male Victims in Canada: A Qualitative Study

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Article Summary:

The article conducted a study with men who had experienced IPV committed by a former female partner. The physical and psychological violence these men endured was studied. This study sought to reveal some of the experiences of physical and psychological IPV and document some of the narratives that male victims experience.

Some forms of psychological IPV experienced by the male victims of this study included being controlled, threatened, insulted, humiliated, demeaned, called derogatory names, made to feel bad, and limited contact with children. Some forms of physical IPV abuse included being assaulted, broken bones, and bruises. Some participants were hospitalized after assaults.

One aspect of the study was the exploration of how the concept of “hegemonic masculinity” impacted the victims in conceptualizing their abuse. From the findings of the study, the concept of hegemonic masculinity “informs the difficulty some male victims had in explaining why their abuse happened. One of the features of masculinity is the inability to express complex emotions and, for some of the male victims, finding assistance to address their abusive experience was a challenge, given that they could not fully understand what they were experiencing.” The concept of masculinity and how it plays into victimhood is an important attribute to understanding the experiences of these men. This concept affected their realization that they were in fact being abused, and affected them asking for help .

Another aspect that played into the participants of the study experience was administrative abuse. “Administrative or legal abuse occurs when a person uses legal services in a way that abuses the rights of others.” In regards to this study, some of the men had fears of being arrested if their female partner called the police, and told the police it was the man being the aggressor. One respondent reported that his female partner had made this exact threat, that she was going to hurt herself, call the police, and tell the police it was the man who committed the injury. “Therefore, administrative or legal abuse is another means through which male victims have been silenced; even if they call the police themselves in the event of ongoing abuse, they fear the female aggressor may accuse them of being aggressive and trigger their arrest instead.” This suggests that abuse of men may not be believed, or may be viewed with suspicion, which causes male victims to not seek police intervention for their abuse.

The results of the study showed that male victims of IPV experienced humiliation, emasculation, and disempowerment, which informs the effects of IPV on some of the victims’ conception of their masculinity. Their experiences of abuse were also made more complex, given the fear of being arrested, which is similar to previous findings.

Bullet Points:

- Some forms of psychological IPV experienced by the male victims of this study included being controlled, threatened, insulted, humiliated, demeaned, called derogatory names, made to feel bad, and limited contact with children.

- Some forms of physical IPV abuse included being assaulted, broken bones, and bruises. Some participants were hospitalized after assaults.
- The concept of masculinity and how it plays into victimhood is an important attribute to understanding the experiences of these men. This concept, or perception of masculinity, affected their realization that they were in fact being abused, and affected them asking for help .
- “Therefore, administrative or legal abuse is another means through which male victims have been silenced; even if they call the police themselves in the event of ongoing abuse, they fear the female aggressor may accuse them of being aggressive and trigger their arrest instead.”
- Fear of administrative or legal abuse affects men seeking help from police. This suggests that abuse of men may not be believed, or may be viewed with suspicion, which causes male victims to not seek police intervention for their abuse.

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Abstract

The concept of intimate partner violence (IPV) implies gender-neutrality in the experiences of violence. Gender symmetry in IPV implies similar numbers of men and women victims. Data from the 2014 Canadian General Social Survey (Victimization) indicate that 262,267 men and 159,829 women were victims of self-reported spousal violence over the past 5 years. Despite the prevailing notion that IPV predominantly affects female victims, these data suggest that men too are victims of IPV, especially in heterosexual relationships. However, very few qualitative studies have shed light on heterosexual male victims' experiences of IPV. This article describes some of these experiences and also seeks to understand the effects of IPV on male victims. Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with 16 male victims of IPV were used to explore their experience of physical IPV and psychological IPV, as well as the consequences of such abuse. Results revealed common themes pertaining to the type of abuses (i.e., physical, controlling and threatening behaviours, and verbal abuse) male victims experienced and the subsequent physical and psychological impacts. This study identifies the need to distinguish between physically and psychologically abused male victims of IPV.

Keywords

IPV against men, physical IPV, psychological IPV, marital violence

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to acts of violence perpetrated against intimate partners, spouses, and dating partners, either in current or former relationships (Sinha,

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2013). Since a 1975 study (published in 1980) by Murray Straus and his colleagues, which revealed men were just as likely as women to report getting hit by their opposite-sex intimate partners, there has been significant debate about the gendered nature and our understanding of IPV (Dutton & White, 2012; Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Leone, 2005; Kimmel, 2002; LaRoche, 2005; Straus, 2007a, 2010; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). IPV against men as a concept has also been contested as a term that reflects women's expression of self-defense (Babcock et al., 2003; Swan & Snow, 2003), a minimal form of IPV (Johnson, 2006; Johnson & Leone, 2005; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), or another concept within the broader context of the dynamics of family and spousal conflict (Caldwell et al., 2009; Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Straus, 2007b). Others have expressed concern that the focus on IPV against men reflects disingenuous political motives (Kimmel, 2002; Richardson, 2004) and the possibility of diverting victimization services for women to male victims (i.e., a zero-sum approach to addressing IPV). Regardless of the contentious nature of the debate of IPV, it is now possible to conceive men as potential victims of IPV.

Several studies have aimed to understand the nature and prevalence of IPV victimization based on gender. Archer (2000) conducted one of the first meta-analytical studies to point to the existence of gender symmetry in IPV. Fiebert (2014) also documented 221 empirical studies that aligned with the gender symmetry perspective. Kimmel (2002) argued that studies revealing gender symmetry tend to have methodological flaws and lack context on the motivations of IPV; he also stated that studies revealing gender symmetry tend to ignore the possibility that male perpetrators have more impactful attacks on their victims than female perpetrators. Studies by Johnson (2006) and Johnson and Leone (2005) align with Kimmel's argument. However, studies that have investigated who struck first in partner assault incidents reveal that women are just as likely as men to start the assault or violence (Gondolf, 2000; Stets & Straus, 1990). Also, Whitaker et al.'s (2007) study revealed that women were the perpetrators in 70% of the cases of nonreciprocal violent, heterosexual relationships. A recent meta-analytical study on the motivation of IPV among men and women revealed that women's motives for IPV were often similar to those of men and ranged from anger to coercive control (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012). Other meta-analytical studies also point to gender symmetry (Capaldi et al., 2012; Desmarais et al., 2012). Data from the 2014 Canadian General Social Survey (Victimization) align with the gender symmetry perspective. About 2.9% of men and 1.8% of women in Canada were victims of self-reported spousal violence in their current relationships within the past 5 years (Ibrahim & Burczykca, 2016). In addition, men were slightly more likely than women to report emotional or financial abuse (Ibrahim & Burczykca, 2016).

Johnson (1995) conducted research that shed light on the various contexts in which men and women perpetrate IPV. Using the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) data, Johnson and Leone (2005) suggested a framework concerning the typology of violence and the recognition of intimate terrorism (IT), as different from situational couple violence (SCV; Johnson & Leone, 2005). They described IT as forms of violence that are rooted in coercive behaviour and have a higher likelihood of injuries, whereas SCV referred to ordinary conflicts that occasionally escalate to

violent behaviour and resulted in relatively lesser physical injuries (Johnson, 1995). However, their study notably only considered female victims of IPV. Jasinski et al. (2014) used the same NVAWS data to show gender symmetry in the experience of severe violence when they studied both men and women. There has been an increase in female arrests as IPV perpetrators in the United States, which signifies a shift away from the traditional definitions of IPV as a predominantly male perpetrated offense (Hirschel et al., 2007; Shuler, 2010).

There has been a paucity of studies on the experiences of physical and psychological abuse among men, including its subsequent effects. Psychological IPV is uniquely different from physical IPV (Dim & Elabor-Idemudia, 2018), especially with regard to its unique impacts on victims (Doherty & Berglund, 2008). Various studies show psychological IPV can have mental and physical health consequences for its victims (Coker et al., 2000; Hines & Douglas, 2015; Witte et al., 2015), but there have been very few qualitative studies on how psychological IPV plays out for the victim, especially for men. Nevertheless, the occurrence of physical and psychological violence tends to overlap, that is, victims of physical IPV tend to also experience psychological abuse (Greenfield & Marks, 2010; Hines & Saudino, 2007). A study by Hines and Saudino (2007) showed that physical and psychological intimate partner aggression share similar underlying genetic etiology. This study seeks to explore the narrative experiences of physical and psychological IPV among male victims.

Masculinity and Male Victims of IPV

The concept of masculinity has been employed when attempting to understand the gendered experiences of men in society. The concept is crystallized in the nature of gender, which is an ever-changing fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviours, and thus calls for speaking about masculinities (Kimmel, 2004). Connell (2005) further argued that the concept of masculinities is mainly described in relational terms; for example, masculinity does not exist except in contrast with femininity. Masculinity varies in different institutional contexts as different institutional contexts demand and produce different forms of masculinity (Kimmel, 2004).

Hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender practice that embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Connell, 2005). However, hegemonic masculinities are not a fixed character type but a configuration of practices generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity tends to involve a high degree of ruthless competition, an inability to express emotions other than anger, an unwillingness to admit weakness or dependency, devaluation of women and all feminine attributes in men, and homophobia, among other features (Brooks et al., 2020; Kupers, 2005). Thus, it is possible to argue that hegemonic masculinity is socially constructed in a manner that orients men's perception of feeling vulnerable towards denying or suppressing their feelings. The construction of masculinity may also mold men not to have the skills to deal with emotional pains.

Hegemonic masculinity has been used as a concept by feminist scholars to explore and understand male victims' experiences of IPV. Stern et al. (2015) reported how peer pressure influences young men to conceptualize their experience of sexual assault from women. The study showed how the male participants, despite being unwilling and uncomfortable with the experiences, expressed their perception that to be a "real man," one must ignore one's personal response to meet the sexual expectations of their peers and society. Brooks et al. (2020) also revealed how some male victims of IPV tend to resist disclosing their victimhood status and that men reframe their status as a "victim" in a way that enables them to retain their own power and control. Corbally (2015) also employed hegemonic masculinity to explain various narrative strategies (i.e., the fatherhood narrative, the good husband narrative, and the abuse narrative) with which abused men grapple with their experience of IPV. The abused men tend to employ the abuse narrative to dissociate their identities as men from that of an abused person (Corbally, 2015). Eckstein (2010) also used the concept of masculinity to explain how men construct their victimization as precipitated internally through self-blame and externally through societal blame. Durfee (2011) also described the process through which male victims grapple with and affirm their power and control while being victimized. The study also explored their active resistance to the abuse, while being careful to note that their defense to their spouses' assault was not abusive and that they were not victims even though they defined their spouses' actions as abusive. Other studies have employed the concept of masculinity to understand how men make sense of IPV (Allen-Collinson, 2008, 2009; Morgan & Wells, 2016). These studies point to the notion that the concept of masculinity shapes the realities and perceptions of IPV for male victims. As such, the present study seeks to explore the extent to which the concept of masculinity relates to the experience of male victims of IPV.

Research Questions

Various qualitative studies on male victims of IPV have investigated aspects of male victimization. Some of these studies include the spectrum of their emotional experience (Alifanoviene et al., 2013), the role of hegemonic masculinities in IPV experiences (Brooks et al., 2020; Durfee, 2011; Eckstein, 2010; Stern et al., 2015), life stories of IPV (Corbally, 2015), identity construction and abuse conceptualizations (Morgan & Wells, 2016; Zverina et al., 2011), and narratives of marginalization (Migliaccio, 2001, 2002). However, there is a paucity of studies on how male victims of IPV are affected by IPV as well as their reactions to being victimized. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: How do men interpret their experiences of physical and psychological IPV?

Research Question 2: What are the effects of physical and psychological IPV against male victims?

This article drew from the findings of a recently concluded study on IPV titled “Recent Trends in Intimate Partner Violence Against Men in Canada” (Dim, 2017). The main objective of that study was to explore the prevalence, predictors, and coping strategies of male victims of IPV. During the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with male victims of IPV for the qualitative analysis. This article is a secondary analysis that draws on the interviews conducted with the male victims of IPV to understand their experiences of physical and psychological IPV and the physical and psychological impact of the abusive experiences.

Method

This study examined male victims of IPV in Canada. With the assistance of a nongovernmental organization (NGO), male victims of IPV were recruited. An in-depth interview guide was used to collect information from 16 male participants following the requisite ethical approvals. The study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Committee before any interview took place (BEH No. 16–277). Participant consent was obtained either orally or in writing before any interviews commenced. All the respondents got the consent form through email for them to read and understand the context of the study. Most of them provided oral consent, whereas other respondents provided written consent. Nevertheless, consent was provided before the interview commenced. Respondent anonymity was assured, and pseudonyms are used in the findings presented. During the interviews, participants were asked, among other questions, about their experiences of IPV from their female partners, when such events of IPV started, and the effects the IPV experiences had on them (see the appendix for the questionnaire for the study). The interviews were conducted in a way to minimize any form of harm or injury to the respondents.

At their convenience, participants were interviewed through telephone, with the interviews recorded with their permission. The interviews also enabled the researcher to extensively probe the subject and utilize the flexible and iterative nature of the interviews to explore the subject matter in greater depth. For the validity of the interview guide, probing questions were used to ensure the collection of rich data. The qualitative data collected included in-depth and nongeneralizable information. Interviews were conducted to the point where newer data became similar to what was expressed in previous data (Saunders et al., 2018). Also, the researcher used 3 months to conduct the interviews as the data for this study were a small portion of a graduate thesis. The inclusion criteria for the study were mainly adult men above the age of 18 years and who had experienced any form of IPV in current or past intimate relationships. The intimate relationships considered for this study included married, common-law, and dating relationships. Men who were interested in participating in this study called the first author to arrange the time and date for the interview.

Thematic analysis was used to capture the emerging themes and subthemes of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis allowed for the contextualizing of the experiences male victims had during their encounters with their ex-partners (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data were analyzed using NVivo 11 version software in

which in-depth information analysis, verbatim reporting, and inferential analysis were undertaken to identify the various narratives that referred to the experiences and impact of IPV for the male participants. Various thematic outlines were generated through the NVivo analysis of the interviews and various quotes were generated for use in supporting or providing thematic dimensions to the results.

To ensure that the researcher was reliable, triangulation was used to collaborate with another researcher, who served as the supervisor for the main project, for possible interpretations of the transcripts. The researcher read 50% of the interview transcripts and arrived at similar interpretations, which enable the development of the themes for this study. To ensure validity, I analyzed the transcripts through NVivo and several codes were generated. I examined all the generated codes and discussed the similarities and differences of the codes with the other researcher. Afterward, both of us analyzed the codes for different themes and agreement was reached on 90% of all the themes developed.

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic information of the male participants who participated in the interviews. Most were from Ontario, with occupations such as government official, management consultant, business analyst, accountant, psychologist, and self-employed. The majority were above the age of 45 years and three were aged above 70 years ($M = 56.88$). The length of relationships for most of the participants ranged from 3 to 17 years (Min. = 1, Max. = 27, $M = 10.07$). None of the male participants still lived with their abusive partner or spouse and very few (three) were engaged in a new relationship or married.

Findings

Most of the male participants experienced both physical and psychological violence from their female spouses or partners. The participants were asked whether and when they had experienced physical and/or psychological IPV. Most of the respondents experienced both physical and psychological violence from their partners. It is important to note that all the experiences the male participants shared for this study were about a past relationship.

Experience of Physical and Psychological IPV

In the context of this study, physical IPV refers to forms of assault that inflict or attempt to inflict physical injuries on the victim, whereas psychological IPV refers to the use of verbal or nonverbal communication and controlling behaviours intended to harm a partner (Sinha, 2013). Physical IPV ranges from minor to severe attacks, which have different consequences regarding injuries and negative health outcomes (LaRoche, 2005).

Physical IPV. Some of the male participants described their experiences of physical IPV from their female partners, including forms of physical assaults they could not have anticipated. With regard to the reconceptualization of physical violence as minor or

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Male Participants.

Name	Age	Occupation	IPV type	Partner's age	Partner's occupation	Current marital status	Province/area	Period of event	Years living together
A	48	Musician	PA and PsYA	49	Government worker	Single	Halifax	2011–2012	1
B	56	Self-employed	PA	30	Unemployed	Single	British Columbia	2011–2015	4
C	70+	Self-employed	PA	70+	—	Single	—	1990–1997	7
D	47	Business analyst	PA and PsYA	42	Administrative assistant	Single (dating)	Ontario	2009–2015	6
E	73	Retired psychologist	PA and PsYA	68	—	Married (now)	Toronto	1969–1991	22
F	41	Government worker	PA and PsYA	41	Unemployed	Single	Newfoundland	2006–2014	8
G	49	Accountant	PA and PsYA	35	Control engineer	Single	Edmonton	2003–2008	5
H	34	Student	PA and PsYA	31	—	Single	Ontario	—	—
I	50	Management consultant	PA and PsYA	53	Development psychologist	Single	Ontario	2012–2015	3
J	58	Aircraft technician (RCAF)	PA and PsYA	Mid 30s	Aircraft technician (RCAF)	Married	Newfoundland	2006–2007	1
K	60+	Consultant	PsYA	—	—	Single	Ontario	1983–2007	25
L	57	Writer	PA and PsYA	43	Dental hygienist	Single	Newfoundland	2008–2011	—
M	73	Retired	PA and PsYA	71	Retired	Single	British Columbia	1985–2008 and 2012–2015	27
N	59	Government worker	PA and PsYA	58	Social worker	Dating	Manitoba	1985–1996	11
O	75	Criminal lawyer	PA and PsYA	—	Teacher and legal secretary	Single	Ontario	1969–1985 and 1989–1999	16 10
P	59	School bus driver	PsYA	57	Real estate agent	Single	Toronto	2005–2013	8 (two women)

Source: Fieldwork, 2016.

Note. Name—pseudonyms. IPV = intimate partner violence; PA = physical abuse; PsYA = psychological abuse. — = respondent did not share information.

severe (Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Leone, 2005), some victims recounted experiences of severe physical abuse from partners that led to injuries, fractures, and bruises:

She exploded like a cat you are trying to bathe, and she beat me up really badly, so badly that there was nothing left of my skin tone from my neck, all the way down to my hips. She didn't touch my face and I don't know why till this day she knew not to touch my face but at this point she only hit me from my neck down and she attacked me so viciously I was covered in cuts and bruises. (Respondent A)

I also had lots of physical violence. I keep journals when things get difficult or interesting in my life and so the first six months of our child's life. I have over 140 documented cases of violence that happened to me and that was within the first six months of my son's life and they all happened at night time in bed and it was all around his feeding schedule . . . (after the baby had grown past the midnight waking up stage) . . . the assault started simply with her taking a slap at me, you know, it started with open hands slinging at me and then it graduated to increase in becoming a hammerhead, a hammer fist to actually knuckles pointed at me to going for my eyes, going for my throat. (Respondent B)

I would hold up a large piece of plywood as a shield, so she never landed a solid blow, but I still got bruised in the shoving. She threatened me with firearms, (though the spouse did reveal the weapon) and eventually forced me out by just making adequate sleep impossible. (Respondent C)

The experience of sudden attacks took some by surprise and they could not provide a direct explanation for their abusive experience nor protect themselves from the impending attacks. An interesting aspect of the abusive experience of most male participants is that they indicated their partners were hardly aggressive before their intimate relationship began. One, in particular, felt the assaults were triggered by the stress of rearing a newborn baby; he recounted that most assaults against him occurred when the baby woke up at midnight to be breastfed but continued after this developmental stage as well.

Some of the male victims experienced severe violence that they noted could not be remedied through institutional solutions:

In December 2012, I started having some problems with my legs and that was actually when it started, December 23rd I think 2011, we had a bad argument about the house and moving and she didn't want to move now. She wanted to stay there. Consequently, one night I was going downstairs and as I went out the door, I was pushed, I hit the ground because I wasn't walking well. I ended up in the hospital, when I was on the ground, she started kicking me in the chest, I broke or cracked two ribs, I was taken to the hospital and I stayed there for two (to) three days and I was released, I went back. She was charged at that time for assault with a weapon and the charges were dropped and I had no idea why they were dropped. (Respondent M)

Respondent M still experienced four subsequently similar events. He described how the police would intervene after an abusive event, but with no fruitful outcome as the

charges laid against the female partner were always dropped. For other male victims, the abusive partners attacked them at vulnerable times of their lives; such attacks tend to reduce the chances of seeking remedies or solutions to the victimization experiences among the male victims. For example, some participants experienced assaults at times they felt fear of the loss of the children after a breakup with the partner, felt they could not react, or were suffering from serious illness:

I was absolutely (and) completely shocked that this woman who just two weeks ago thought I was the center of her world was now this crazy rage-aholic who was throwing things at me and pushing me and trying to get me to physically fight her and I was honestly more scared that I would lose her and the kids than I was about getting hit. . . once almost pushed down a flight of stairs when I wasn't expecting it but that was it, it didn't turn into a big fight. (Respondent D)

The violence first began during sex. The first time was when I could not satisfy her, so she slapped me hard across the face and reverted to name calling throughout the week. This type of violence jumped to a punch in the face during sex if I could not satisfy her. . . Angry, yelling, and physically abusive. I would constantly reply, "Please don't hit me. I never hit you so stop hitting me." She would always laugh in response. One or two times I stood up and yelled back in anger for her not to hit me, her response always turned worse where she would charge me . . . Eventually, I would just stay down and let her hit me. (Respondent F)

She would try to entice a verbal argument and I will respond and say "I am not arguing with you" and I will refuse to argue with her and that frustration for her escalated to the point of punching me and hitting me and throwing things. . . You become septic, if you ruptured in your intestines, all you have is 20 minutes to live when you rupture and she knew this and she was (still) attacking me physically knowing that I was a seriously ill man, so was abusing not just a healthy man, she was abusing someone who had a serious illness. (Respondent L)

When it came to physical, it would be kind of slapping me around and spitting on me, that kind of stuff and punching me, punching me in the groin when she knew that I was in a position where I couldn't move or react. (Respondent N)

Generally, the first one, with the first wife, it was when I would not do what she wanted. And she had a very short trigger and she will get angry very quickly and start to hit and the one I would recall the most is when I was driving and she was hitting me and it was a terrible situation to be in because you can't take your hand off the wheel to do anything. (Respondent O)

To clarify the quote above, Respondent L had a colostomy and noted that his female partner had good knowledge of his illness but did not seem to mind assaulting him in his vulnerable physical state. Notably, the resistance from the male participants noted in these sample quotes was directed towards averting or preventing an abusive situation, which often led to an escalation of the abuse. The experience of physical violence

for some of the respondents occurred in positions of vulnerability, especially Respondents N and O, which limited their response or ability to seek remedies for their victimization. Especially for Respondent D, the experience of violent behaviour also gave the victim the perception that their spouse was acting out of her normal character.

Psychological IPV. Male participants recognized the physical abuse they experienced; however, they also acknowledged the psychological dimension of IPV. That is, all participants experienced some form of psychological IPV (Table 1), which had several negative impacts on their lives. Various forms of psychological IPV were highlighted during the interviews, with abusive behaviours including cases where the victim was threatened, verbally abused, or coerced. Some of the male victims acknowledged they did not notice when the abuse started, given its subtle nature or slow escalation:

I think domestic violence is about coercion and control and it took me a long time to see this. The coercion started early, I thought the abuse started when she hit me the first time, but actually now that I understand it better, the abuse started earlier. (Respondent A)

Well, the first one happened three or four years in, to be honest, I mean looking back, it was sort of a quiet escalation and it wasn't until we had a house together. (Respondent D)

I probably cannot tell you that I remember but what I can tell you is I married someone who became a very severe alcoholic and I probably married an alcoholic, as a matter of fact, I knew that I married an alcoholic and I was in denial of the whole thing. So alcohol(ism) is a progressive disease and so over the course of our marriage, it would have gotten worse. Most of the violence from her would have been emotional. (Respondent N)

As shown in the above responses, some of the men acknowledged that they could only recognize their abuse long after it had commenced. This implies the subtle nature of psychological violence (Cahill et al., 1999; Stosny, 2010), which is an experience that tends to be similar for female victims (Arriaga & Schkeryantz, 2015; Lancer, 2017). The lack of evidence for the occurrence of psychological violence and the realization that the perpetrators themselves may be oblivious to their psychological aggressive behaviour may cause the victims to be less affirmative when attempting to identifying their victimization.

Walking on eggshells. Some female partners exhibited unpredictable behaviours that threatened or scared the male victims. According to the participants,

She threatened me with firearms . . . and eventually forced me out by just making adequate sleep impossible, a form of torture listed by the UN. Being woken up by a chainsaw or other 2-stroke engine still puts my amygdala in full control, leading to desperate behaviour . . . have often been in a support group or counseling, but never recovered my abilities to sleep well and focus on technical work. (Respondent C)

So I even washed the dishes twice because I don't want to set her, she is in one of her moods and she actually grabbed a plate, she sort of thanking me for the dishes, she walked up and looked at the plate and she said she found a little grease on one end and she literally just hurled the plate at me, we had a heavy china, and she just literally hurled the plate at me and I stepped out of the way and it shattered on the wall, the kids were really scared so they went to their rooms.

So I lived in fear that she would always go worse, there were times I slept downstairs in the basement instead of the bed beside her because I knew she was that angry and I didn't want to wake up with my throat cut . . . I think I am a kickboxer, I don't see getting hit as something that scarred me for life, what scarred me for life is the psychological abuse. (Respondent D)

Level three is what I would call rage and when she was raging, it was often a blind rage, her body would literally be shaking, her jaw clenched and her eyes were just hatred and contempt and she gets all kinds of unpredictable things, often throwing things and it started out throwing small things or light things; like she would throw a small pad of paper like a posted notepad at me, or something and then it graduated to pens and pencils and then it graduated to cups and glasses and then bowls and then frying pans and then over time it just got bigger and more dangerous things that she would throw at me, she didn't hit me too often but this was when she was in a rage and she was very unpredictable. (Respondent I)

Respondent D, in particular, recognized the negative impact that psychological IPV caused him relative to effects of physical IPV. Specifically, he mentioned that he would not mind getting hit as he felt that he could deal with a physically abusive partner, but his admission to being "scarred" by the psychological IPV points to his inability to deal with or address such behaviour from his female partner. Respondent I described his abusive experience at three levels, from mild forms of control to higher forms of aggression and psychological abuse. He did not recognize the abusive nature of his partner at the first two levels, given the mild nature of the abuse (i.e., haranguing, criticizing, devaluing, and demeaning the victim), whereas the last level in the manifestation of his partner's aggressive behaviour (described in the quote above) was unpredictable and incorporated physically aggressive behaviour.

Verbally abusive behaviour. Some male participants also mentioned being subject to verbal abuse from their partners, including the experience of being devalued, harangued, screamed at, yelled at, and devalued or dismissed by their female partner:

Her violence was verbal. She screamed and cursed me. Everything I did was wrong. Her violence was psychological. (Respondent E)

There were verbal assaults anytime she would get angry about anything, she would use very vulgar language, whenever she was angry probably the most common thing she would call me was a f**king d*ck s**ker, and it didn't matter if the kids were around or not. (Respondent J)

Verbal abuse in public, sort of like demeaning behaviour, she was drinking all the time and getting in trouble, I didn't realize it then but she was an alcoholic . . . It was not physical, it was just yelling and screaming, you know, it was just swearing and cursing, putting me down constantly, saying "I was useless, [I was] no good, [I was] a loser," you know, all those kind of stuff' and we'd go on for hours, you know, hours and hours and she won't even stop, day in and day out and then my blood pressure got really high, really high blood pressure and I just lost my confidence, right. (Respondent P)

Some of the participants reported being verbally abused, "i.e. being yelled at or called names that hurt them." Several of the victims mentioned that they were psychologically impacted from the verbal abuse, and this impact made it difficult for them to cope with or find solutions for their victimization experiences. For Respondent J, the verbally abusive nature of his female partner involved the presence of the children. These examples of verbal abuse carry extra weight when children are involved because an arrest for being physically abusive can affect child custody proceedings in which the male victim might be denied access.

Disruptive behaviour. Some respondents mentioned the disruptive behaviour they experienced from their female partners. According to some of them,

She started to do controlling things like unplugging the lights when I wanted to read. She started taking away my towel, blankets, she started taking away my ability to watch the television by unplugging it and taking away the cord and the computer cord. She took away the phone, she took away my phone, she became really hard to get along with and it was a really rough, so that's sort of it, in a nutshell. (Respondent A)

It was the destruction of any bond between my children and me, an active ongoing directly successful attempt to destroy that relationship through power, control, and isolation. (Respondent K)

Most of the violence from her would have been emotional, so if she would go drinking and I would go to bed, she would yell and scream at me for hours and hours and hours. . . . So she would scream for hours and hours and hours and she would bang and it got to a point (where) I wasn't afraid of her when I was awake, I was afraid of her when I was asleep because I knew when I was awake I could protect myself (from her) but I knew when I was asleep I couldn't (protect myself), so I developed this thing where sometimes in the morning I would wake up and I would have my clothes on, so somewhere during the night when I was sleeping I would get dressed and put my clothes on, I have no idea why (I did this) but I know why (be)cause I used to set up my clothes by the bed in case I had to get out of the house quick(ly) and take my son with me. (Respondent N)

The nature of disruptive behaviour against some of the respondents involved denying the male victims access to the children, thereby disrupting the bonding process between the victims and their children, making their lives miserable, or forcing them to come up with an adaptive behavioural response, for instance, Respondent N's unconsciously developed adaptive behavioural response of dressing in the middle of the night in case

he needed to leave the house quickly. These forms of disruptive behaviour caused fear among the male victims, especially for Respondent N who admitted being afraid of his female partner when he was asleep.

Administrative/legal abuse. Administrative abuse is when an abusive female partner threatens to inform or lie to the police that the male victim is physically abusive, so that he can be falsely charged with assaulting her (Tillbrook et al., 2010). This concept is based on the belief that the criminal justice system tends to see IPV as a female-victim and male-aggressor phenomenon, and some abusive female partners tend to take advantage of such conceptions. In this study, some of the participants mentioned threats of being falsely reported to the police, especially in the case of Respondent G. Some of the victims had stated their fears of being arrested by the police if their victimization experiences escalated to the point of police intervention. For some of the respondents,

I really was walking on eggshells, one minute she would be talking, the next her face will contort into this rage like I've never seen before. It was frightening, to say the least, and I just never felt I could never hit her back, I could never really defend myself. I mean she was tiny, I was big, if I hit her once I never know what I would do and then I'd get in trouble and my world will be gone. (Respondent H)

Lots of yelling and screaming, and threats. Lots of threatening, particularly threatening to deny me access to my children, that kind of thing, or lying to the police about violence. That she'd hurt herself and she'll then tell the police that I hurt her. (Respondent G)

The possibility of administrative abuse was also explicitly noted by Respondent H, who feared he could not defend himself without being arrested for abuse and by Respondent G, who explicitly noted that his female partner would threaten to harm herself and then call the police and blame it on him. Respondent H also mentioned the possibility of losing the children if his retaliation ever led to a child custody case, referring to the dilemma he faced: defend himself and face getting charged with being abusive or continue to be abused by his female partner. Respondent H did not think anyone would believe him if he were to defend himself, given the physical disparities between him and his female partner.

The Effects of IPV on Male Victims

Physical impact. The impact of IPV on the participants varied for/between physical and psychological dimensions. The participants mentioned some of the physical injuries they experienced at the hands of their abusive female partners:

I think she broke my toe with a door, she broke my tooth, she scratched my face, she started to change her violence to a different place, like she used to hit me from my neck down, later she started going for my face, she strangled me, she squashed my glass, she used to rip my clothes off. (Respondent A)

Yeah, nothing more than bruising. I was covered with bruises at one point, but that's the worst. (Respondent G)

I started getting depressed and, I would say, just shutting down, I was less interested in anything. I wasn't playing as much sport, I got depressed and in the last one, I started getting anxiety attacks and so I started having from very severe physical symptoms. I couldn't breathe, my heart rate was up to 120 on a regular basis and it is normal at about 70 and my heart was racing, and I was light-headed and nauseous all the time, anyway. I went to the doctor and got all kind of test done at the end nothing came back that was physically wrong, so my doctor asked me what was going on and then I told her about the abuse and that's when things started to change, she said "You've got to get out of that relationship, it's dangerous for you" and so that's when I started making plans to leave and I did about three weeks later leave the relationship. (Respondent I)

I actually ended up with a broken finger which is permanently deformed now, and I had headaches as a result of being punched in the head by her and even though I wasn't knocked unconscious, with the new emphasis on how serious head injuries can be. I sometimes still wonder if I had spillover from any head injuries I would have had but I would say that those would be the only two times that I got hurt; the broken finger and having been hit so hard in the head that I was seeing stars and having headaches afterwards probably for a week. (Respondent J)

Overall, the male participants described several different physical impacts of IPV, including bruises, broken toes, a broken tooth, a broken finger, headaches, head injuries, and poor health outcomes. Another case involved Respondent I's discussion of his abuse with his doctor. Specifically, Respondent I had originally sought counselling assistance on how to become a better partner rather than supports on how to deal with an abusive partner:

So, when I went to the therapist for the first time, I remember this clearly, I went to the therapist and said "I am here because I need to develop more empathy. My partner is angry a lot and I am not doing a good job of dealing with her anger, I am making her angrier, so I need to learn how to deal with her anger." (Respondent I)

However, his later meeting with a doctor, who pointed out to him that he was being abused, was what encouraged him to leave the relationship. According to Respondent I,

Therapists are not usually direct, they just sort of say "Well, maybe you should consider taking a couple of weeks getting away" and things like that whereas the doctor just looked at me and said "You've got to get out of there." The therapist's words were not direct enough for me at that point in time, I needed someone to say "You have to leave," she actually said "You have to leave." (Respondent I)

The inability to recognize the occurrence and consequences of psychological abuse implies that male victims may end up seeking treatment that does not relate to or

properly address their current abusive experience. Another possibility is that even if there is an awareness of psychological abuse, counselling and psychotherapeutic treatments may be too expensive to access (Walker & Eastwood, 2013).

Psychological impact. For most participants, the physical impact of their abusive experience did not bother them as much as the psychological impact. Some admitted that they did not mind their partner's physical aggression because they felt their female partners could not impart much physical harm. However, the psychological impacts were the major concern for most of the participants as they perceived themselves as having very little knowledge on how to recognize their spouse's psychological abuse and how to deal with it effectively. The male victims mentioned a range of issues and psychological outcomes they experienced, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, humiliation, anxiety, fear, distrust of women, and inability to form meaningful relationships.

PTSD, depression, and humiliation. Some of the male participants spoke about the depressed state their abusive relationships left them in. Some also had to deal with PTSD after the relationships, whereas others engaged in dysfunctional behaviours that were attached to their past abusive relationships:

Afterwards, I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress, extreme anxiety and depression and I was also diagnosed with complicated grief which was a real shocker to everybody because nobody could understand what I was grieving for. (Respondent A)

All my self-esteem, somebody that you loved or wanted to love and the mother of your [child] would be saying derogatory things and attacking your self-esteem or your personality or your integrity or your intentions or she would be disrespectful and that's hurting emotionally. I think it just hurts who you are, for a man, the ability to provide for and support your family. I think that's a male thing we all have and want to do and where I wasn't in a position to do that. She had all the money, she made all the decisions, she didn't include me in anything, and she called all the shots and she had total power and control, so I think being in a relationship with somebody who has that power over you is very humiliating and disempowering and dehumanizing. (Respondent L)

I had my own issues. . . It had that the first person I started dating after I was divorced, which is two years after I was divorced (and) I am still with her. But I had issues, so I had to go and see a counsellor because I was doing dysfunctional things that was tied to how I was affected by the relationship that I was in. And so, the counsellor (i.e. a female) I went to see was fabulous and she said, "You know you have post-traumatic stress disorder" and I did and I worked at it and she worked with me and I was able to deal with it. (Respondent N)

It was depressing, it was demeaning. Hmmm, I can tell you one very funny story: My first wife attacked me and scratched my face, and you have to keep in mind (that) I am a criminal lawyer, the next morning I came to the office with scratches on my face and my first client of that day was an extraordinary violent guy who had spend many years in

prison, he took one look at my face and he said to me “just tell me who did it, just give me the name, I’ll take care of him” [and] of course I never told him, I didn’t want to be part of anything like that. (Respondent O)

Respondent N noted that he was still engaged in dysfunctional behaviours that were tied to his abusive ex-partner who usually became abusive whenever she was drunk; this made him cautious whenever his current partner was having an alcoholic drink even though she did not have any concerns with substance use. The abusive experiences were also depressing for the male victims, which informs the conception of their masculinity. Respondent L expressed feelings of emasculation, disempowerment, and dehumanization, given that his abusive female partner was also the sole provider for the family. His inability to assert himself as the provider of the family, coupled with his abusive experiences from his female partner, complicated the manner in which he handled the experiences of emotional abuse. Respondent O felt that his experience as a criminal lawyer exposed him to domestic violence (DV) court cases that tended to place the male partner at a disadvantage.

Anxiety and fear. Some male victims expressed fear and anxiety as a result of the unpredictable nature of their partner’s abusive behaviour:

I was so anxious and lacking confidence and I got to a place (it affected) my mental abilities, I couldn’t string a sentence together, I couldn’t think, I couldn’t remember things that just happened, I couldn’t find words, I was at a loss for words often, I couldn’t even put a sentence together some day. (Respondent I)

When it came to physical abuse, for me, there was a lot of fear involved, there was a lot of fear that either I would be injured, serious or not serious, or if a full-scale confrontation broke out, she might be severely or not severely injured, so there was definitely a factor of fear when my ex-partner who being abusive, it was absolutely frightening and so a lot of that fear came up when she would start swinging at me because I would try not to respond physically, and then the one time I responded physically I got arrested for it, so a lot of fear. (Respondent J)

I was always on guard 24/7 all the time, always aware (because) I never knew what was going to happen next and I had high blood pressure, I had hypertension blood pressure very serious. I had to go to the doctor because that’s how bad it was. (Respondent P)

For some participants, their experiences of fear from the abuse were accompanied by other health issues, such as high blood pressure for Respondent P, and temporal speech and language impairment for Respondent I. For Respondent J, the only time he sought to defend himself while being physically abused by his female partner led to a physical response and his subsequent arrest. The aggressive response from Respondent J shows that not every male victim of violence may be able to withstand being abused without retaliating. However, most male participants had a fear of being arrested if they were

to retaliate or engage in the form of self-defense that led to a physical response against their aggressive female partner.

Distrust of women and intimate relationships. Some male participants also reported having lost the emotional capacity to be in open intimate relationships with women. All of the experiences the male participants shared for this study were about a past relationship. At the time of the study, some of the male participants admitted that their experience of past abuse incapacitated them from emotionally connecting to another woman:

Like I said, I have a hard time trusting. Sometimes I feel like I should just be alone, I am just damaged. I sort of feel like I can't love the same way I used to love a woman. I feel like I am always going to hold something back now. (Respondent C)

I experienced two dissociative episodes which were very scary. After our separation, the boys asked to stay with me. I believed that in general, all women hated men. I did not trust women. (Respondent E)

I am afraid of commitment. It's very clear. I am afraid of moving in with someone to have the same thing happen all over again. I cannot trust women. (Respondent F)

It made me extremely cautious. I guess you might use the term "gun-shy." I don't know if that makes sense, but I don't really date, and I don't really have a lot of the desire to be involved in another relationship largely because of this . . . We split up when my son was only three-years-old and my daughter was 18-months-old. My son stepped between us once and he yelled, "Mommy, stop hitting and yelling at daddy!" and at that point was when I left her. (Respondent G)

I can tell you what effect it has had on me, I can't explain how it happened because I don't fully know. I know I can't connect with people the same, especially on the romantic level, I am completely done with any sort of romantic relationship, it's like that part of me has been torn from me, I don't care that I am alone, I'll rather be alone than stuck in a bad situation. (Respondent H)

As illustrated by Respondent G, some male victims have difficulty properly describing the emotions they feel after the abusive relationship or the actual effect the abuse had on them. The inability to form intimate relationships with women was also accompanied by a general distrust of women and loss of affection. This inability was also informed by the caution and fear that similar abusive experiences might occur in a new relationship. An important aspect of this fear was the fact that some male participants did not anticipate abusive behaviour during the early stages of their intimate relationships; rather, the abuse started when the partner moved into the house or when conflicts began to arise. Thus, the inability of the male victims to form new intimate relationships may also be informed by the idea that they cannot trust themselves to choose a new nonabusive female partner because they chose the previous abusive partner.

Discussion

This study sought to reveal some of the experiences of physical and psychological IPV and document some of the narratives that male victim experience. The study also aimed to explore the means through which the ideas of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, 2004) applies to the male victims of IPV. From the findings of the study, the concept of hegemonic masculinity informs the difficulty some male victims had in explaining why their abuse happened. One of the features of masculinity is the inability to express complex emotions (Kupers, 2005) and, for some of the male victims, finding assistance to address their abusive experience was a challenge, given that they could not fully understand what they were experiencing. Some participants expressed emotions of humiliation, emasculation, and disempowerment, which informs the effects of IPV on some of the victims' conception of their masculinity. Their experiences of abuse were also made more complex, given the fear of being arrested, which is similar to previous findings (Brooks et al., 2020; Corbally, 2015). However, the nature of the experiences of the male victims of this study does not fit the gendered pattern of the concept of masculinity. The present study showed how some of the male victims conceptualized their experiences of victimization, even though such conceptualization occurred long after the abuse had taken place. Furthermore, this study supports the argument made by Brooks et al. (2020) that "the diverse ways the participants define their experiences and masculinities demonstrate a problem with boxing men's experiences within a framework of masculinities" (p. 18).

This study also highlighted the nature of psychological IPV that is experienced by male victims. The men's experiences of psychological IPV also highlight the range of coercive and expressive forms of abuse (Black et al., 2011). Some forms of psychological IPV experienced by the male victims of this study included being controlled, threatened, insulted, humiliated, demeaned, called derogatory names, made to feel bad, and limited contact with children. Besides, the stories of some of the male victim's alluded to their experiences of being controlled and dominated by their female partners, especially with Respondents A, G, H, L, M, N, O, and P. These experiences have also been cited as some of the core motivations for male perpetrators of psychological violence (Houry et al., 2008; Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Ferrero, 2000; Schwartz, 2000).

This study also reveals that male victims find it difficult to recognize the occurrence of the abuse they are experiencing and may not recognize the harms caused by psychological abuse. This has been found in other studies, especially among female victims (Doherty & Berglund, 2008; Goldsmith & Freyd, 2005). Some male participants could only refer to the abuse in retrospect, indicating that they would have sought more professional help if they had recognized that what they were experiencing was abuse or IPV at the time. This emphasis on psychological abuse is not intended to diminish the occurrence of physical impacts of IPV, but to suggest the importance of examining the consequences of psychological abuse for male victims. Physical injuries can be addressed by a visit to the hospital and health insurance in Canada tends to provide coverage for such services. However, the cost of private counselling or therapy can range from \$50 to \$220 for a 1-hr session, depending on the province (Walker &

Eastwood, 2013). Some employers or family insurance schemes cover psychological or therapeutic services (Walker & Eastwood, 2013), but paying for counselling or therapy sessions when such coverage is not available could be a barrier towards recovery for many men from the psychological effects of their IPV experiences.

The findings of this study show that the experience of psychological violence tends to be associated with administrative abuse. Unfortunately, this is a form of abuse that has received little attention (Tillbrook et al., 2010). Administrative or legal abuse occurs when a person uses legal services in a way that abuses the rights of others (Hines et al., 2015; Tillbrook et al., 2010). Here, some participants had fears of being arrested if their female partner called the police and told them that the male victim was the aggressor; one respondent mentioned that his female partner even threatened to hurt herself and then call the police and lie about who had caused the injury. Therefore, administrative or legal abuse is another means through which male victims have been silenced; even if they call the police themselves in the event of ongoing abuse, they fear the female aggressor may accuse them of being aggressive and trigger their arrest instead. The fears reported by male victims in this study also tie into the forbidden narrative adopted by Allen-Collinson (2008, 2009), which suggests that the abuse of men may not be believed or may be viewed with suspicion because of the narrative that victimhood is linked to femininity. This possibility of legal or administrative abuse has been shown in various studies through male victims being revictimized by police (Cook, 1997; Douglas & Hines, 2011; Grady, 2002) or treated with suspicion (Rodney & Randall, 2007) and this tends to be associated with male victim's resistance or hesitation towards seeking police intervention for their abuse (Burczycka, 2016).

Limitations

A major limitation of this study is the limit to generalization. Specifically, this study was intended to provide in-depth knowledge of the experiences and narratives of IPV from the perspective of male victims. The recruitment of participants via support groups may introduce interest-based bias, which was addressed by interviewing the participants through a separate arrangement between the researcher and participants other than the platform of the support group. The findings here suggest that future studies should specifically address legal or administrative abuse to understand the context in which victims of IPV may be threatened with police arrest and consequently silenced about their abusive experiences. This study did not use the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a lens for investigating the experiences of the male victims. Further studies can be undertaken by applying various theoretical lenses to critically examine the experiences and effects of IPV on male victims. The study did not point to some of the motivating factors that underlie the abusive experiences against men. The study could only allude to these motivations based on the manner in which the participants expressed what they experienced while they were abused. Further studies can be undertaken on the possible motivations for male victimization and such analyses can examine the extent to which the motivations for male IPV are similar and different for female victims.

Conclusion

IPV against men is one of the most contentious aspects in the area of DV. Research effort should be devoted to understanding IPV against men because studies have clearly shown the complexities and dynamics that exist. No part of this study implies that female victims of IPV do not exist or require the attention they truly deserve, and no part intends to deny the fact that female victims of IPV experience fear, trauma, and the associated consequences of their abusive experiences; indeed, female victims of IPV tend to experience more injuries than male victims (Burczycka, 2016). The purpose of this study was to reveal another aspect of the IPV narrative and specifically show that male victims of IPV exist and have not been heard.

Further studies should examine the extent of administrative or legal abuse among male victims of IPV. More studies should be taken on men's help-seeking behaviour from a qualitative perspective, especially their reporting of their victimization experience to the police. A non-zero-sum approach can be employed to advance proper strategies from which both male and female victims of IPV can be better understood, reached, and supported. This study indicates the need to recognize, reach out to, and assist male victims of IPV. Assisting male victims of IPV can be achieved without depriving services to female victims. One victim of IPV, either male or female, is still one too many for society to bear.

Appendix

Interview Schedule of Respondents

You are free to skip any question you do not want to answer. Information from this interview will be used for ONLY research purposes.

Thematic questions will focus on

1. Introduction (a simple description of you and your ex-wife/partner): What is your and your ex-wife's age, current marital status, religion, occupation, country of birth, number of children you have together (and before the marriage), and so on. (Please, none of these answers should include your name, address, Post Office Box or any form of identifier that can lead to you).
2. Respondents perception and assessment of male support center:
 - Do you know of any male support center?
 - If yes, is the support from the male support center adequate?
 - What are your perceived suggestions for making the male support center more efficient (ask later)?
3. IPV between you and your ex-wife:
 - How and when did the violence or violent episodes from your ex-wife start?

- What forms of intimate partner violence did you experience?
 - Was she violent or abusive while you were dating?
 - Did she ever threaten to report you to the police for an assault you did not commit?
 - Could you describe your ex-wife's behaviour whenever she was violent?
 - Could you describe the context in which you experienced the violence from your ex-wife? (could there have been any reason why she was abusive or violent towards you)
 - Was your ex-wife under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or any substance while she was violent or during her violent episodes? Did you retaliate at any time?
 - Was she violent in front of the children, in public, or only at home?
 - Have you ever witnessed any form of abusive behaviour from past relationships?
 - Was your ex-spouse/partner in an abusive relationship?
4. Coping strategies of the victims in situations of abuse:
- What were your coping strategies while experiencing violence from your ex-wife/partner?
 - Why did you adopt the aforementioned coping strategy/strategies?
 - Did you speak to your family members about her abusive behaviour?
 - What were the coping strategies you adopted after you left the relationship (i.e., if you are no longer in the relationship)?
5. Reporting of abuse incidents to the police:
- Did you report to the police?
 - What were your reasons for reporting or not reporting to the police?
 - Have you heard of any case where male victims reported to the police and what was the outcome of the report?
6. Experience of the childhood victimization or abuse (also the form[s] experienced);
- Did you witness (either as a victim or observer) abusive behaviours as a child?
 - If you were abused as a child, who abused you?
 - If you witnessed any form of abusive behaviour as a child, which forms were predominant?
7. The effects of abuse on the victims:
- What were the effects of your ex-wife's/partner's abuse on you? (Any post-traumatic events; physical, emotional, psychological effects or consequences?)
8. Did your ex-wife/partner show any remorse for her abusive behaviour towards you?

➤ If yes to Question 9, how?

9. What help do you think would have been most appropriate for the abusive situation you were in? (What forms of assistance do you think would have addressed your abusive experience)
 - (You are free to suggest informal and formal structures or process that would have best addressed what you were going through). Thanks for your cooperation.

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