

The Societal Costs of Domestic Violence – a Vector with Devastating Effects on Women

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Abstract

Like any social phenomenon of great magnitude, domestic violence has devastating effects on women, involving significant costs for society: direct costs (the value of services needed to treat victims of violence), social costs and economic costs. Societal dissolutions generated by domestic violence also manifest in the family structure and functions, with strong repercussions on its stability. The present study, through in-depth research into the social costs of domestic violence, aims at raising awareness of the effects of domestic violence to improve the situations that lead to a degradation of the quality of life of the human being, to a violation of the rights of women affected by any form of abuse. This study includes a comprehensive data-based analysis of services to treat victims of violence, health, quality of life, work productivity, etc. The purpose of the investigative approach was to highlight the indicators taken into account, especially the non-material ones that led to the social reaction in the immediate environment, as a necessary condition for reaching adaptation / inadequacy. The qualitative applicative research was represented by an intervention project, applied to 100 women from Caraş-Severin County. The specific techniques used were documentation, semi-structured interviews and individual counseling. Like any social phenomenon of great magnitude, domestic violence against women involves significant costs for society, physical health is impaired, mental health is endangered, self-confidence is diminished, and long-term effects are circumscribed to post-traumatic stress disorder.

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Key words: domestic violence, intervention project, crisis situation, assistance counseling.

Resume

Comme tout phénomène social de grande ampleur, la violence domestique a des effets dévastateurs sur les femmes, entraînant des coûts importants pour la société: coûts directs (valeur des services de prise en charge des victimes de la violence), coûts sociaux et coûts économiques. Les dissolutions de la société engendrées par la violence domestique se manifestent également dans la structure et les fonctions de la famille, avec de fortes répercussions sur sa stabilité. La présente étude, par le biais d'une recherche approfondie sur les coûts sociaux de la violence domestique, vise à sensibiliser l'opinion publique aux conséquences de la violence domestique pour améliorer les situations qui entraînent une dégradation de la qualité de la vie de la personne humaine, et la violation des droits des femmes victimes de toute forme d'abus. Cette étude comprend une analyse complète basée sur les données des services de traitement des victimes de la violence, de santé, de qualité de vie, de productivité, etc. Le but de la démarche d'investigation a été de mettre en évidence les indicateurs pris en compte, en particulier les indicateurs non-matériels ayant conduit à la réaction sociale dans l'environnement immédiat, condition nécessaire au déclenchement de l'adaptation / de l'inadaptation. La recherche applicative qualitative a été représentée par un projet d'intervention appliqué à 100 femmes du département de Caraș-Severin. Les techniques spécifiques utilisées ont été la documentation, les entretiens semi-structurés et les conseils individuels. Comme tout phénomène social de grande ampleur, la violence domestique à l'égard des femmes entraîne des coûts importants pour la société, la santé physique est altérée, la santé mentale est menacée, la confiance en soi est diminuée et les effets à long terme sont circonscrits aux troubles de stress post-traumatique.

Mots-clés: violence domestique, projet d'intervention, situation de crise, conseils d'assistance.

Rezumat

Ca orice fenomen social de mare amploare, violența domestică are efecte devastatoare asupra femeii, implicând costuri importante pentru societate: costuri directe (valoarea serviciilor destinate tratării victimelor violenței), costuri sociale, costuri economice. Disoluțiile societale generate de violența domestică se manifestă și la nivelul structurii și funcțiilor familiei, cu puternice repercusiuni asupra stabilității acesteia. Prezentul studiu, prin cercetări aprofundate referitoare la costurile societale ale violenței domestice, își propune conștientizarea efectelor violenței domestice pentru îmbunătățirea situațiilor care generează degradarea calității vieții ființei umane, violarea drepturilor femeilor afectate de orice formă de abuz. Acest studiu include o analiză cuprinzătoare bazată pe date referitoare la serviciile destinate tratării victimelor violenței, nivelul de sănătate, calitatea vieții, productivitatea muncii etc. Scopul demersului investigativ a constat în evidențierea indicatorilor luați în calcul, în special cei non-materiali care au condus la reacția socială din mediul proximal, ca o condiție necesară producerii adaptării/inadaptării. Cercetarea aplicativă calitativă a fost reprezentată de un proiect de intervenție,

aplicat unui număr de 100 de femei din județul Caraș-Severin. Tehnicile specifice utilizate au fost reprezentate de documentare, interviul semistrukturat și consilierea individuală. Ca orice fenomen social de mare amploare, violența domestică asupra femeii implică costuri importante pentru societate, este afectată sănătatea fizică, periclitată sănătatea mentală, scade încrederea în sine și în ceilalți, iar efectele pe termen lung se circumscriu tulburărilor post-traumatice de stres.

Cuvinte cheie: violența domestică, proiect de intervenție, situație de criză, consiliere asistențială.

1. Introduction

The society we live in is full of crisis-generating events, on social, family and individual levels. Evolutionary theory concludes that the transition from one level to the other of the evolution of a phenomenon takes place through a crisis, which is meant to decant the adaptive constant. People are confronted daily with a multitude of events, even very often with personal crises, which they cannot overcome with their own capabilities. Domestic violence is defined in legislative terms as “any physical or verbal action intentionally committed by a family member against another member of the same family that causes or can cause physical, psychological, sexual, emotional or psychological harm or suffering”, according to Law no. 217/2003. Domestic violence is an extremely broad term that covers a number of abuses: physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial, committed by a person against the current or former life partner (Rațiu, Hizo-Miloș, 2016, p. 6).

2. Societal costs generated by domestic violence

In Romania, domestic violence is today a topical social issue, a worrying concern, although before 1989 there was no official statistics or scientific research on domestic violence. Although the cases of domestic violence were quite widespread, the phenomenon was ignored for purely ideological reasons. After 1990, small studies have been conducted, but they do not provide an overview of this type of violence. In the report of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights called “Lifting the Last Curtain” (1995), it is found that domestic violence is a frequent problem in Romania; the Romanian State appears to be failing to meet its obligations to protect women against domestic violence or to punish violent husbands appropriately and to develop legal, political, administrative and cultural programs in order to prevent violence against women. Domestic violence was explicitly addressed by law for the first time in 2000 (before that date it could be sanctioned by general provisions that criminalize acts of violence, but no specific reference was made to family members). In 2000, Law no. 197/2000 amended the Criminal Code, providing for the aggravation of certain offenses when committed against family members (www.legex.ro/Legea-197-2000-21714.aspx), thus marking the beginning of legislative changes in this area. Also in 2003, the first extra-

criminal law against domestic violence was adopted, which was later amended in 2012 (when the protection orders were introduced), as well as in 2014 (www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/legea_prevenirii_violentei_familie.php).

Violence is not a problem recently raised in family relationships, the novelty element is given by the transfer of the problem of violence from the private stage of family life to the stage of social problem with societal consequences and costs (Rădulescu, 2005, p. 157). Society as a whole is an institution that influences the degree of domestic violence, and this is due to its ethnic, cultural, religious references. Society determines certain values that generate the structure of a family and the role of women within it. Due to their vulnerable position, women may be the victims of domestic violence, in the group of friends, at work, and violence of any kind has immediate repercussions on women leading to isolation, loss of self-esteem, anxiety, depression (Brundson, 1996, pp. 276-286).

2.1. Manifestations and repercussions of domestic violence

Each case of domestic violence takes place under specific circumstances and has particular causes, but there are common factors that define the existence and trends of this phenomenon on the level of society as a whole. These factors primarily address social attitudes and stereotypes about the “dominant” role of women and their subordinate role, gender inequalities, what can be succinctly called the “patriarchal organisation” of family and society, depending on the “authority position of man” (Rădulescu, 2001 in Sînzianu, 2006).

In the vision of Del Martin (1981) and Roy (1982), the factors that generate intra-family violence are: *conflicts related to family budget management*, even if there are many exceptions, responsibility for managing the budget lies with the husband or male concubine who decides the nature of household spending (Sînzianu, 2006, p. 20); *alcohol consumption*. (www.revistadesociologie.ro). Alcohol can lead to acts of violence, especially when the male or female alcoholic subjects are placed in situations of conflict, provocative or threatening, or considered as such by the subjects (Sînzianu, 2006, p. 20); *sexual problems of the couple*, husband's excessive jealousy and, implicitly, aggressive behaviour are due to sexual problems such as impotence or wife's frigidity. Sexual misunderstandings, due to dysfunctions, determine the majority of the violence cases (Roy, 1982); *quarrels about children born from their cohabitation*, or from a prior relation; *women's desire to become financially independent*; acts of violence can also occur in the families where the man considers himself an “instrumental leader”, refusing to let his wife get professionally fulfilled, or work outside the home. Such short-circuiting can threaten the traditional system of family authority, decision-making, and common interactions between members (Stroup, 1996, Segelan, 1981).

2.2. Consequences of domestic violence

In contemporary three-dimensional society domestic violence is one of the biggest problems. The number of abused women has exhibited alarming growths

in recent years, and this has prompted the press and audiovisual media to constantly inform about the manifestations and consequences of this social phenomenon. From the most aggressive forms: rapes, beatings, murders, the least shocking, but no less guilty, such as: psychic or verbal violence (Sinzianu, 2006, p. 9). Domestic violence originates from physical and mental illness, due to the high number of days of hospitalisation and temporary work incapacity, high medication consumption and other medical services. The consequences of domestic violence have repercussions not only on the victim, but they affect the whole family, especially the children, and are perceived as a loss and suffering of society in general with consequences on: *physical health*, manifested by excessive alcohol consumption, unprotected sexual intercourse, irritable bowel disorders, narcotics (drugs, ethnobotanical plants), bodily injuries, temporary and permanent disabilities, or even death; *mental health*, depression, anxiety, sexual dysfunction, low self-esteem, nutrition and sleep disorders, fear, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide; *reproductive health*, reflected by gynaecological problems, premature births, chronic pelvic pain, mortality and maternal morbidity; *mortal* (mortality can be caused by HIV / AIDS infection, maternal mortality, homicide, suicide) (The WHO World Report on Violence and Health, 2002).

The trauma syndrome – the “Stockholm Syndrome” describes the behaviour of a person who, after several episodes of violence and captivity, reaches the stage where he or she identifies himself or herself with the aggressor. The few signs of kindness coming from the kidnapper are amplified because the person in a captive situation, the lack of perspectives is by definition impossible. The victim's attempts to escape are perceived as a threat because in the context of an escape there is a risk that the abducted person may be affected and injured (www.wikipedia.ro).

The victims of domestic violence often develop post-traumatic stress syndrome. This syndrome was first analysed in the DSM-III manual, 1980, and occurs when the victim feels unable to resist tense family situations, and withdrawal is not possible. The woman loses the feeling of control over the situation, a feeling triggering her adaptation to the situation. People who did not live these experiences believe they could easily overcome these situations and find that the development of this syndrome is due to the fact that the person in question does not have enough courage and force. This is also the case for abused women. The outsiders, especially women, think that they would find a solution to overcome the problematic situations, and find the necessary resources to resist. All these aspects are actually naive mental constructions in the absence of concrete situations. The post-traumatic stress syndrome is characterised by the following characteristics: reliving of the traumatic events, loss of self-esteem, stress, inability to relax, feelings of isolation and helplessness. All these features of the people involved in violence-dominated relationships have repercussions throughout society: the number of crimes and suicides increases; the quality of life decreases;

the cycle of violence is perpetuated; women need hosting or psychosocial assistance (Muntean, 2011, p. 694).

2.3. Portraits of the actors involved

There are some features in the literature that define the personality of the aggressor, important in the rehabilitation treatments. Among the fundamental characteristics we may list (Darlene Thomas, on domestic violence, MSSV, USA, 2000): consumption of alcohol or banned substances, low self-esteem, attitudinal changes (bipolarity), depressive states, anxiety, inability to express feelings, self-irony, emotional immaturity. In the case of women victims, the signs of violence appear in several more or less durable features, depending on the duration of the relationship, but also on the psychological fragility of women: personal neglect of nutrition and hygiene, stress, fear, chronic diseases such as bronchial asthma, gastric diseases can worsen. A behavioural directed to the revenge on the children may trigger violence towards children (Muntean, 2011, pp. 695-696).

Various forms of violence or abuse are exerted over a life cycle, having devastating effects on the victims' lives. Lori L. Heise, following the examination of the long-term consequences of violence, underlines the idea that "a life-cycle approach of a woman victim demonstrates that the violence experienced at a certain stage in life can have long-term repercussions and predispose the victim to increased risks in terms of physical or mental health or the acquisition of deviant behaviour". Depression, prostitution, use of prohibited substances, suicide may be side effects of sexual abuse, mistreatment or any aggression experienced at an early age. So, the earlier violence, especially sexual violence, occurs in a woman's life, turning her into a victim, the deeper and more traumatic the effects of this violence will be (Rădulescu, Pătrioară, 2003, p. 23).

In everyday life, a woman plays an important role in the aggression equation of her life partner, due to her physical inferiority and psycho-behavioural characteristics. Domestic violence is a particularly complex phenomenon, involving multiple family members. Various forms of action are known about the victimised person or forms of abuse: verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, social, economic. Very often the victimisation process is combined with other forms of abuse. Each case of domestic violence is different, but there are a number of common factors that have generated the phenomenon of the whole society. Among these factors we may highlight social attitudes and stereotypes about man's dominant role and woman's subdominant gender, gender inequality. Such an organisation is based on the idea that "man must exercise power and authority on the partner." Over time this idea of man's authority has been reinforced by the rules of sexuality in the laws of the ancient peoples. In the opinion of Bulgaru-Iliescu (2002), the factors that determine the occurrence of violence are: alcohol or drug abuse, excessive jealousy, financial problems, conflicts over their own children or the children born from previous marriages, conjugopathy, woman's

desire to be economically independent. The author believes that the emancipation of women in contemporary society, although acting especially on their social status, has further disturbed their moral and affective status. Conjugal violence is a form of “discrimination that is based on a bias, that is, the inferior social state of the woman compared to that of the man”. The author points out that “the victimisation of her husband may be due to the hostile and aggressive behaviour of her husband, but there may be a contribution in the sense that she can promote her husband's victimised episodes”. To date, all aspects of female victimisation have been widely investigated, but unfortunately there have been no extensive research into all aspects of this phenomenon (Bulgaru-Iliescu, 2002, pp. 133-134). In the vision of the author Munteanu (2002) the strategy of tackling the phenomenon of domestic violence needs to be strengthened on the basis of the following criteria: **the interview** focuses on particular questions about family violence, how to resolve family conflicts, physical abuse, verbal, emotional discharge; **the assessment of the risk degree** identify conflicts, alcohol, drugs, previous violent episodes, death threats, sexual abuse, suicide attempts; **the responsibility in reporting the victim** refers to the attitude towards the victim's confession, the story to be believed or not, to be guilty of abusive behaviours, confidentiality of the information given; **the safety plan** involves the identification of resources (material, social, psychological, logical, etc.) and of the community (assistance services, emergency telephones, support, shelter-if the situation requires emergency intervention and protection); **the monitoring** aims at reviewing the individualised intervention plan, monitoring the results, cognitive reconstruction of the victim's attitude towards violence and its capacity in the event of bottlenecks or cognitive problems that impede the recovery and security process; **the documentation**, necessary stage because of the high risk of homicide and suicide. The documented information provides evidence in the actions she can take. Strict professional documentation ensures the validity of information and credit for the victim (Munteanu, 2002, pp. 44-47).

The evolutionary change of abused women (Zabadkina, 2007, pp. 32-35) is done due to methods with which the social worker and the counsellor endeavour: *a psychological emergency relief in acute trauma of violence and post-traumatic stress*, which is provided on the hotline, where the beneficiaries receive telephone assistance, individual counselling, the main emergency tasks and the short-term support of victims of violence are to assess the victim's safety, take measures to ensure physical and psychological security, normalise the mental state of the victim, and if necessary it is advisable to refer the medical officers and the police; *long-term psychological support in the individual and group counselling process*, a process that should determine the depth of the devastating impact of violence on the victim; *the psychodynamic method*; (Muntean, 2011, p. 172), there are a lot of therapists and counsellors who use this short-term method, which is not sufficiently scientifically validated, and the modalities of administration are in

group or individually. Regarding the rate of healing, the literature concludes: 1/3 of the victims totally heal and 1/3 partially heal. There are also privileged cases when women, although having experienced some virulent traumas, have returned, thanks to family support and friends; *the change of the female victim*, the social worker checks the case of the abused woman, why she and her accompanying children need her physical and psychological status, if she has identity papers, if she needs a certain amount of money, if she has where to stay for a certain period, someone who supports her, then the social worker contacts support organisations or agencies to help the person become independent and able to provide everything she needs but also to help the victim to make realistic decisions and to find concrete solutions.

3. Methodology of researching the domestic violence phenomenon

3.1. Research methodological approach

Qualitative applicative research was represented by an intervention project applied to 100 women in Caraş-Severin County, starting from the idea that the extent of research on the effectiveness of social and psycho-medical intervention programs can be approximated by investigating the studies and research in the field.

Concerns about domestic violence and the interdependence of internal, external, psychological, social or environmental factors on women subjected to this phenomenon, evaluation of prevention and intervention programs are noted in specialised researches. This study includes a comprehensive data-based analysis of services to treat victims of violence, health, quality of life, work productivity, etc.

The purpose of the investigative approach was to highlight the indicators taken into account, especially the non-material ones that led to the social reaction in the immediate environment, as a necessary condition for the adaptation / inadequacy. The specific techniques used were documentation, semi-structured interviewing and individual counselling.

This study started from two hypotheses, namely that the influence of unfavourable family, social, economic factors has drastic repercussions on the project beneficiaries, emphasising the risk of depression, on the one hand, and on the other hand, it involves important costs for society: direct costs (value of services dedicated to treat the victims of violence), social costs, economic costs.

Like all the other social phenomena of great magnitude, domestic violence against women involves significant costs for society, physical health is impaired, mental health is endangered, self-confidence is diminished, and long-term effects are circumscribed to post-traumatic stress disorder.

Two qualitative research methods were selected for this survey: the semi-structured interview (held in June-August 2018) and individual counselling (conducted for three months between September and November 2018 at the Charity Association "Saints Cosma and Damian").

3.2. Presentation and analysis of the project design

In this analysis we started from the following *research questions*: How is the intervention design drawn up in an empirically comprehensive project? Which are the multimodal forms of intervention of the social project?

3.3. The design intervention of the project

Analytical dimension: identification of the social project intervention objectives.

In our approach we started from the *premise* that *the goals of a project are to reduce or eliminate certain difficulties or problems*. The overall objective of the project was to develop integrated measures with a systemic approach to raising awareness of all relevant social actors, including at community level, about the costs of domestic violence: direct costs (the value of services to treat victims of violence), social costs, cost savings.

Developing effective, integrated and systemic mechanisms and measures to prevent, combat, intervene and monitor domestic violence. Raising information and awareness degree on equal opportunities, strengthening community capacity to develop and support the functioning of social and legal services for women subjected to domestic violence.

3.4. Specialised intervention in the case of domestic violence - The role of social workers

The specialised intervention in the case of domestic violence is, on the one hand, very delicate given the nature of the problem and on the other hand it is extremely complex because the consequences of this phenomenon are multiple, affecting the victim on different levels of his life. Specialists working with the victims of domestic violence need to know and understand the importance of teamwork and collaboration with a number of institutions and courts to address the issue from a holistic perspective. It is obvious that the victims of domestic violence may have a number of needs such as the need for a source of income, the need for housing, and if there are children, the need for education and child protection. From the perspective of the social assistance practice, it is much more important and more enlightening to present the main tasks and responsibilities of the social worker in the case of domestic violence cases. **Identifying cases of domestic violence**, acc. to Government Decision HG 49/2011 “the identification of cases of violence is carried out by the professionals who first come into contact with the adult victim in the following fields of activity: health, police, gendarmerie, social assistance and units for preventing and combating domestic or private family violence”. The social workers identify the cases of domestic violence as reported by the representatives of the institutions: the school principals, the heads of the units of the territorial structures of the Romanian Police, the medical-sanitary staff (family doctor, community health nurse, health mediator, priests, etc.). **Signalling / reporting domestic violence situations**, after identifying cases of domestic

violence, the social workers together with the other specialists refer to DGASPC. **Assessment of cases of violence**, due to the complexity of violence, a multidisciplinary and inter-institutional team is needed to have a complete, unitary image of the physical, psychic and social elements of the victim and the aggressor. Even if the legislation in force does not provide for a standard membership, there are several categories of professionals, which are part of the compulsory minimum composition: the social worker, the psychologist, the physician, the policeman, the lawyer.

The social worker has the obligation to undertake the social assessment of the victims of domestic violence taking into account the following aspects provided in the Government Decision HG 49/2011 IV, 2.4 letter C): „*The will of the person to use the support of professionals to improve their situation or eliminate forms of domestic violence; the degree of integration of the person into the community*(the feeling of belonging to social groups, the responsibilities assumed within a community, the use of community resources to meet personal or family needs); *aspects of intellectual nature* (the manner of using information to understand one's own problems and the problems of others, how to use information and knowledge to make decisions); *aspects of economic nature* (the availability of resources and the ability to manage and allocate the money needed to pay for goods and services, etc.)”; **the preparation of rehabilitation and / or social reintegration plan**, for adult victims of domestic violence, whether or not they are in the family, is another responsibility of the social worker, the case manager. The social worker, if he or she fulfils the requirements imposed by the legislation, can assume the role of case manager. “The case management in social work and assistance is a method of delivering services where professional social workers assess the client’s needs and the needs of the client’s family, and in collaboration with them, coordinate, assess, monitor and support the customer to access social services that meet these needs” (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, 2008; p. 28); **the supply of services** – the social worker has the role of facilitating the adult victim of domestic violence access to services through permanent support to both the victim and his / her family, including accompaniment when necessary, communication with team members and the rest of network professionals, conflict mediation etc.; **the monitoring** is “observing a process, action, and sequence of activities to ensure that the established rules are respected, refers to the continuous recording of what happens during the course of the action”. (Anghel, 2008, p. 29); **the closure of the case** after the completion of the 6-month post-service period, and the victim of the violence is socially and professionally reintegrated. At this stage, the social worker may assume the responsibility of post-service monitoring to track to what extent the results of the service delivery are maintained; **the supervision** is not a stage in itself in the management process, but rather an activity that should be carried out throughout the intervention (Dima, Beldianu, 2015, pp. 169-174).

Counselling in cases of domestic violence

The authors (Burks, Steffle, 1979) consider that the main characteristic of counselling is that of “facilitating the understanding, change, acceptance of new situations, overcome of dramatic moments, integration and personal development” (Şoitu, 2011, p. 584). Counselling for abused women is extremely useful and important. Due to the physical and psychical verbal violence episodes they are subjected to, self-esteem decreases, they become introverted, depressed, anxious, isolated, and think that no one can help them overcome problematic situations. Counselling can help solve specific problems, make decisions, overcome crisis situations, confront their own emotions, sentiments, inner feelings. The role of the counsellor, social worker or psychologist is to facilitate the effort made by the client, respecting the principles, values, personal resources, and her ability to self-determination. The relationship between the counsellor and the woman, victim of domestic violence, is essential. The author C. Rogers believes that “the main components of such a relationship are consent, empathy and unconditional positive attitude”. The social worker and the psychologist must help the woman in difficulty to open her soul, communicate and cooperate to find solutions to the problems she faces (Dumitraşcu, 2012, p. 94).

Results

The analysis of the project results highlights the fact that the project objectives have been reached. In the present research, the data analysis reveals that domestic violence is perpetuated by a number of factors, such as those of economic nature (economic dependence of women on their partners, limited access to financial resources, limited access to jobs and education); cultural (gender socialisation, which involves the assignment of precise roles to women and men); legal (lack of adequate legislative regulations sanctioning domestic violence and women's discrimination in society, non-involvement of police in cases of domestic violence). From the quoted sources and the information presented in the analysed documents, as well as based on the semi-structured interviews conducted in the applied research, it is evident that domestic violence, as any social phenomenon of great magnitude in the contemporary society, implies major costs for society, and we may underline the direct ones represented by the value of services to treat victims of violence (hospitalisation, counselling, legal processes); social (lower health, lower quality of life) as well as economic (falling labour productivity, decreasing the number of active adults on the labour market, increasing the number of medical leave etc.).

Domestic violence has devastating effects on women. It affects their physical health, endangers their mental health, lowers their confidence in themselves and others. The long-term effects are related to post-traumatic stress disorder.

In contemporary society, domestic violence is perceived as normal, the number of domestic violence victims is steadily increasing, and this is due to the

lack of sufficient involvement of the authorities. The restraining order, even if issued and the aggressor cannot approach more than 200 meters from his victim, does not protect women, who are still not safe, the aggressors attack them without taking into account the legislation in force. The episodes of domestic violence in the family environment have repercussions on children's development, they face major difficulties in adapting to the school environment, have communication problems, refuse to participate in various school and extra-curricular activities. Domestic violence has also repercussions on adulthood, many of the children who have witnessed domestic violence scenes in childhood have difficulty in adult life, become quite insecure when it comes to establishing a family. Female victims of domestic violence call for help from a social worker or psychologist only when they are in high-risk situations and need specialised help to overcome problematic situations.

Counselling is important for domestic violence victims, but not enough, and in order to have the courage to end the relationship with the aggressive partner, it is necessary for the multidisciplinary team to get a personalised intervention plan in order for the woman to overcome fear and end the toxic relationship.

In the last few decades, domestic violence has been receiving special attention from specialists. Even though it is an extremely widespread phenomenon in the family environment, domestic violence has been recognised as a social problem only for a short while, despite its negative consequences both at the level of couple partners and among children witnessing domestic violence. Measures of national intervention plans for combating domestic violence: ***Informing, educating and training key actors with a role in preventing and excluding domestic violence***. This type of intervention aims to increase awareness among social actors about the extension of this phenomenon, as well as their training to intervene effectively in cases of domestic violence; ***Preventing and correcting violent behaviours*** refers to the reduction of aggressive behaviours (prevention) and focuses mainly on activities of educating young people and changing those who have domestic violence tendencies; ***Support for victims of domestic violence***, most national plans aim to develop support plans for victims of domestic violence, including child support services for domestic violence victims or witnesses (www.femintegra.ro) did not generate spectacular results in the opinion of the authors of this study.

In lieu of conclusions ...

In recent years, the phenomenon of domestic violence has taken on an unexpected scale, the number of victims increases from day to day, and this is due to feelings of fear, panic and helplessness experienced by the majority of women who are in a relationship an aggressive man. The victims of violence choose to remain with the aggressor, hoping the situation will improve, women tend to believe in men's promises, believing the aggressor will change his behaviour for

the sake of his family. There are units put in place to prevent and combat domestic violence in which victims can be housed and benefit from medical, social, counselling and legal advice, namely: Emergency Centres; Recovery Centres for women victims of domestic violence; Assistance Centres for aggressors, centres for preventing and combating domestic violence; Service Centres and population awareness (www.provitabucuresti.ro Law no. 217/2003, art. 15, art. 22), but the lack of information on abused women and the distrust of these services make them refrain from seeking specialised help to overcome the difficult situation which most often risks to lead to suicide attempts and even murder. The intervention of a multidisciplinary team is essential, because with it, abused women can understand the gravity of the situation and the repercussions of violence. For women, violence has the following effects: social isolation, apathy, depressive states, anxiety, suicidal thoughts. In the case of abused children and witnesses of violence scenes between parents, they have problems of integration in the school environment, communication problems, isolation, often adopting traits from parents' behaviour. Therefore, the phenomenon of domestic violence is generated by a multitude of factors: financial, social, psychological, emotional factors. In order to prevent this phenomenon, authorities need to intervene by passing more effective legislation that genuinely protects the woman and her family. Authorities should develop a protection strategy for victims of domestic violence that genuinely can come to their support, to feel safe and to live in full security.

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*** www.criminologie.org.ro;

*** www.insp.gov.ro;

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*** <https://www.google.ro/search?tbm=bks&hl=ro&q=Legea+nr.+292%2F2011%2C+Art.47+alin.2>

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