

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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*The research pointed out the general opinion of normal people concerning the problem of domestic violence.*

*The causes of the phenomenon were chosen in similar percentage, which means that there can't be a specific cause of the abuse, but an accumulation of several causes. The alcohol, the poor income status, disagreements inside the family and the education were here the main causes, but the conclusion is that there are others as well, such as children, lack of communication, jealousy and others.*

*The research also underlined the importance of the economical and social environment in which we live. This environment could generate problems for the families and lead to domestic violence in all its forms.*

*The aggressor in the most cases is the man, in the opinion of the sample's subjects, and the victim is the woman.*

*Also, the research pointed out the trust of people in the authorities and law. Romania hasn't adopted a specific law criminalizing domestic violence yet. The cases of violence in the family fall under the incidence of the legislation for the administrative contraventions or the Criminal Code. Despite this, the interviewed individuals proved to trust in the system, by agreeing in a high percentage to asking help from authorities.*

*This result leads to the conclusion that the alcohol, the poor income status, the disagreements in the family and the education are the main causes of abuse in the family.*

*"The right to life, as well as the right to physical and mental integrity of person is guaranteed"*

### Introduction

In Romania, domestic violence was initially placed on the political agenda as a social problem, due to existing international pressures. The incidence of gender-based violence and domestic violence, in particular, has increased during the past years in Romania, though it is extremely difficult to document. The chapter on domestic violence of the 1999 Romanian Reproductive Health Survey shows that one in every three women is aggressed.

The basic problem is that this kind of abuse takes place behind the closed doors, doors closed by carelessness and by a traditionalist, deficient mentality. At the social level there are circulated a series of myths related to abuse, myths that are being transmitted from generation to generation and which make nothing else but propagate and exaggerate the phenomenon. On the other side there are some characteristics of a man that allow us to say that he is going to become an abuser.

In recent years, states have broadened their attention from child abuse to the larger category of "domestic violence". Domestic violence is usually defined as conduct between spouses, family members or those residing in the same household that causes or threatens injury. Where the violence is between adults, the state may generally intervene only if the conduct becomes criminal in nature.

Most states have a list of criminal statutes that, if violated, qualify as domestic violence if the victim is a family member or cohabitant of the person violating the statute.

The right to be free from violence is a fundamental human right. Violence against women is gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women. Gender-motivated violence is an abuse of women's human rights and is a primary cause and symptom of women's unequal status in society.

While violence against women was prevalent in former communist states, it has risen during the ongoing period of transition in many countries. In the post-communist era, women's participation in the public sphere has deteriorated as evidenced by rising unemployment, decreased participation in politics and increased poverty. This decrease in women's status has also led to an increase in violence against women. The hidden nature of the problem makes the exact incidents of violence difficult to ascertain.

Working with media, negotiating media partnerships, and promoting socially responsible methods/ethics among the media are part of finding a solution to the problem. Media play a critical role in uncovering myths about, and the causes and consequences of, domestic violence. Given the enormous potential of media to reach millions, media advocacy serves to stimulate debate and form opinions among those most likely to influence positive change.

In many countries where we documented domestic violence, people who provide services to women victims identified police and military officers as perpetrators of the problem. Many pointed out that when perpetrators have a connection to the police, the police are even less likely to respond to a call for intervention.

With limited exceptions, police training does not include instruction on proper intervention in cases of domestic violence. Police are not trained about the unique issues domestic violence victims face or the human rights implications of failing to respond to a call.

Domestic violence represents one of the widest forms of violence exerted against women and families. Women of different ages, cultural and social status are often exposed to all kinds of violence. Endangering women's life, domestic violence is a symptomatic phenomenon for women's discrimination, being, at the same time, a very dangerous barrier for women's equal participation in family and public life.

In Romania, many women are victims of physical, sexual or psychological violence exerted by their intimate partners, within their own

families. Given the lack of adequate judicial protection, women have often been incapable of defending themselves against the violent attitude. Their right to life, physical and mental integrity is, thus, infringed. Most often, physical violence and mental torture have long-lasting dangerous consequences on women's health.

## Statistical Research

### Methodology

Our sample reunites 200 subjects, persons over 18 years, chosen randomly from the population of Bucharest.

The objective of the research is to determine the causes of the phenomenon which could lead to suitable solutions for the problem of domestic violence. Also, the research is trying to establish the existence of a relationship between these causes and the environment in which we co-exist.

The research should reflect in which way the economical situation, the education, the social environment in general contributes to the development of domestic violence.

According to the variable age, the calculated coefficient of variation (0.34) proves that the sample has a medium level of homogeneity and also that the mean is moderately representative.

### *The portrait of the interviewed person*

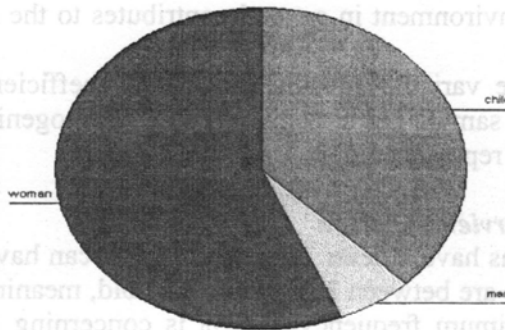
The interviewed persons have at least 18 years and also can have over 55 years old. Most of the people are between 36 and 45 years old, meaning 34 % and the category with the minimum frequency, 7.5 % is concerning people over 55 years. Both women and men expressed their opinion concerning the phenomenon in question. The table for the variable „sex” shows that the majority of the interviewed persons, 59.5 % are women, and the rest of 40.5 % is represented by men. The average income for a typical person is 7.84 mills. The most occurring value for recorded income is 5.44 mill, representing the mode. The majority of the people interviewed, 73.5 %, have children. 20.5 % have only 1 child, 33.5 % have 2 children, 11.5 % have 3 children and 8 % have more than 3 children. 26.5 % have no children.

The following graph illustrates the answers concerning the persons' general opinion about domestic violence. Most people responded with a total disagreement (td) – 59 %, 32 % responded with disagreement (d), 8.5 % said that they agree with the family abuse and a small percentage of 0.5 % totally agree with it.

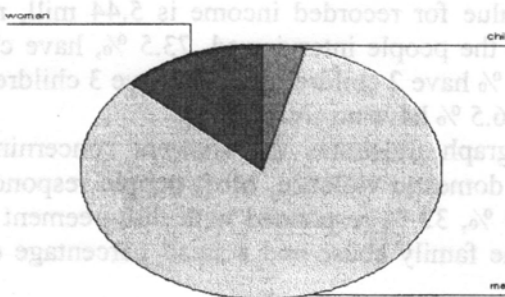
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	child	75	37,5	37,5
	man	12	6,0	6,0
	woman	113	56,5	56,5
	Total	200	100,0	100,0
Total		200	100,0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	child	8	4,0	4,0
	man	166	83,0	83,0
	woman	26	13,0	13,0
	Total	200	100,0	100,0
Total		200	100,0	

The blue color represents the woman as the most frequent victim of domestic violence, the red color, the child and the green color the man. As expected, 56.5 % consider that the woman is the one most frequently abused, 37.5 % see the child in the same position and a small percentage of 6 % consider that the man is the one abused.



**Figure 1.** Sample structure according to the abused subject



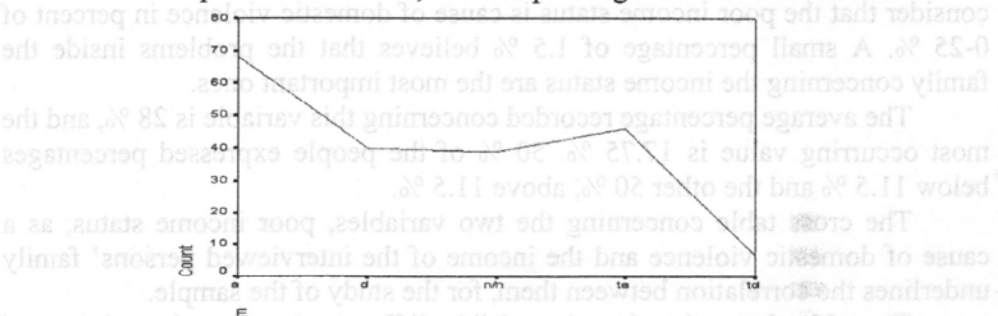
**Figure 2.** Structure of the sample according to who is considered to be the aggressor

The pie chart shows that the man (green) is seen as the aggressor, with a percentage of 83 %. The woman (blue) has a percentage of 13 % and the child (red), 4 %.

As a conclusion, the majority of the interviewed persons see the woman as the main victim and the man as the main abuser.

### Domestic violence in Romania

The Romanian Constitution passed on December 8, 1991, envisages that under its Art. 4, paragraph 2 that “Romania is the common and indivisible land of all its citizens, without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political adherence, property or social origin”, while Article 16 stipulates the principle of equality of all citizens before the law and the public authorities, without privileges and discrimination.



**Figure 3.** Answers distribution according to the agreement with the Statement: *Do you consider that the domestic violence is larger in Romania compared to other countries?*

The graph shows that for our sample the general opinion is that in Romania a higher rate of domestic violence is recorded in comparison with other countries. Few totally disagreed with the statement.

### Causes of Domestic Violence

Most of the people, 44.5 % consider that alcohol is the cause of domestic violence in percentage between 0 and 25 %. Only 3.5 % see the alcohol as being the main cause integrating it in the category 75-100 %.

The average percentage expressed by the people interviewed is represented by the calculated mean, 31.75 %. The most frequent value recorded is 21.5 %. Half of the persons answered that the alcohol represents less than 26.75 % and the other half, more than 26.75 % out of the total 100 % representing the cumulated causes of domestic violence.

POOR INCOME STATUS					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-25	108	54,0	54,0	54,0
	25-50	63	31,5	31,5	85,5
	50-75	26	13,0	13,0	98,5
	75-100	3	1,5	1,5	100,0
	Total	200	100,0	100,0	
Total		200	100,0		

As in the case for the alcohol, the majority of the people interviewed consider that the poor income status is cause of domestic violence in percent of 0-25 %. A small percentage of 1.5 % believes that the problems inside the family concerning the income status are the most important ones.

The average percentage recorded concerning this variable is 28 %, and the most occurring value is 17.75 %. 50 % of the people expressed percentages below 11.5 % and the other 50 %, above 11.5 %.

The cross table concerning the two variables, poor income status, as a cause of domestic violence and the income of the interviewed persons' family underlines the correlation between them, for the study of the sample.

The table shows that there is a visible difference between the opinions of the people with small incomes and those with a greater income. 38 and respectively 64 persons from the first two categories see the poor income status as the cause of the domestic violence, in different percentages. Only 28 and respectively 34 out of the last two categories of income consider the poorness as being a cause of the abuse. It is noticed, though, that, similarly to the previous recordings concerning the causes, the majority, even with a small income chooses the first category (0-25 %).

In the case of the variable "disagreements inside the family", the results show that the majority, as in the previous cases, here in percent of 82 %, places this cause in the first category (0-25 %). Few believe that disagreements inside the family leads to domestic violence in a bigger percentage, between 50 and 75 %, and no records have been made for the last category of 75-100 %.

The average percentage expressed is 18.63 % and the most occurring value recorded is 13.50 %. Half of the interviewed persons answered in percentages above 7.50 % and half over 7.50 %. Concerning the variable "education", 80.5 % integrated this cause in the category of 0-25 % and the superior category was chosen only by 6.5 % of the ones who responded to the questionnaire.

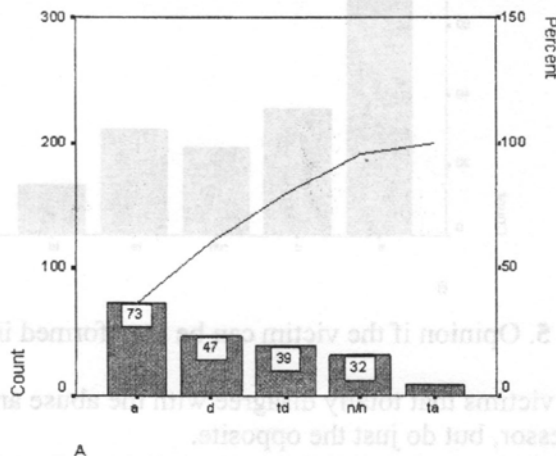
The mean is 19 % representing the fact that the average percentage for education is 19 %. The mode is 13.5 %, the value that appeared the most. ½ out of the total sample have chosen more than 7.75 % and ½ less than 7.75 %. Most of the persons from the first category (students) gave a small importance to education as a cause of domestic violence. Also this happens for the ones in the second category of occupation and also for the 4-th and 5-th.

As a conclusion, the persons with occupations that generally require higher education see this variable as an important cause of domestic violence in a higher manner than the others. Almost every person interviewed expressed low percentages for other causes, meaning 97.5 %.

### Abuser behavior

At the social level there are circulated a series of myths related to abuse, myths that are being transmitted from generation to generation and which make nothing else but propagate and exaggerate the phenomenon. On the other side there are some characteristics of a man that allow us to say that he is going to become an abuser.

A very important issue for the victim is the question whether or not their aggressor can change his/her behavior. Many of the victims, determined by social causes like material dependency or children, by the abuser or simply by their fear of change, choose to continue in the same situation, hoping that their aggressor will stop. The saddest thing is that, in most of the cases, this never happens.



**Figure 4.** Hierarchy of the agreement level with the statement “Can the abuser change his/her aggressive behaviour”

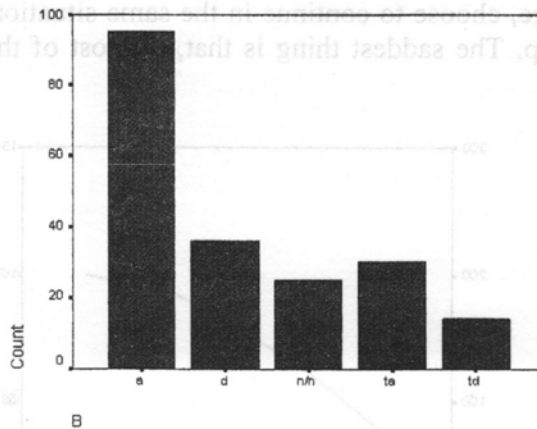
The number of persons who agree with the statement that the abuser can change his/her behavior, totally or not, is less than the number of persons who disagree, totally or not.

Also there is a great difference between the numbers for the ones who totally agree and those who totally disagree. Although, in general, by summing up the total agreements with agreements and total disagreement with disagreements we'll find appropriate numbers.

### Victim, future abuser?

Many times, the aggressor turns out to be a former victim of an abuse, often in childhood.

Asked if they believe that the victim of an abuse in the family can easily turn into an abuser in the future, most of the people responded affirmative. Although it can be said that a victim can easily become an abuser, there is a contra-effect of the abuse.

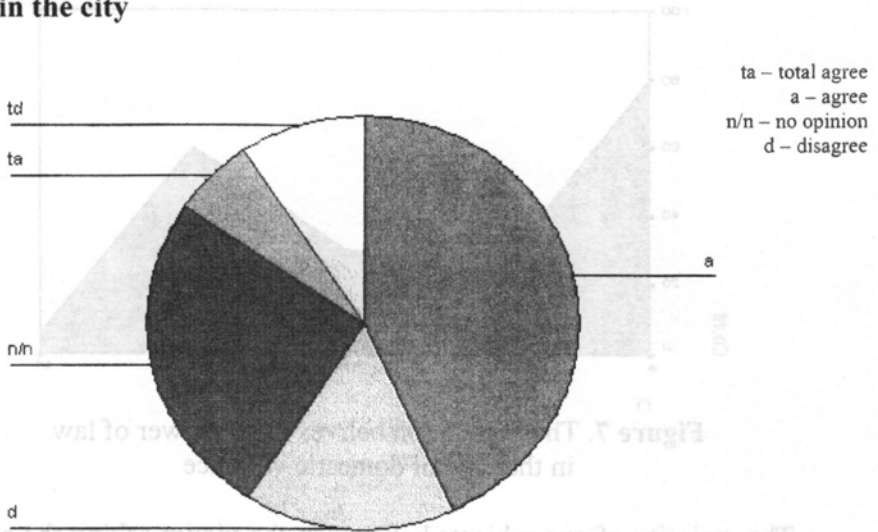


**Figure 5.** Opinion if the victim can be transformed into an aggressor

There are victims that totally disagree with the abuse and will never become an aggressor, but do just the opposite.



## Violence in the city



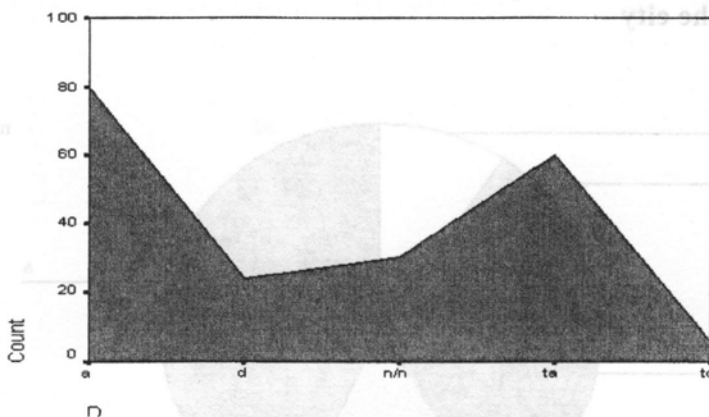
**Figure 6.** Sample structure according to agreement on the city violence

Most of the people interviewed agree to the statement that in the city we can record a lower rate of domestic violence than in the other areas of the country. A high percentage has no opinion about this issue, and a relative small, but significant part disagrees with the statement.

### Possible solution seen by the interviewees

The legal systems in many countries allow a crime victim to pursue a private criminal prosecution if the state does not prosecute. In the case of domestic violence, a woman may face added burdens because of her fear of the abuser and the expense of prosecuting someone upon whom she may be economically dependent.

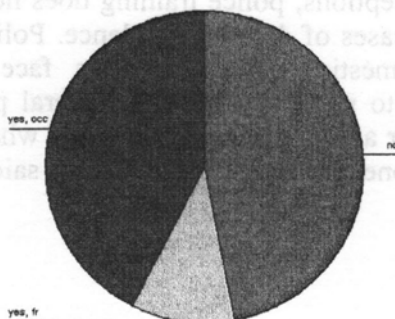
With limited exceptions, police training does not include instruction on proper intervention in cases of domestic violence. Police are not trained about the unique issues domestic violence victims face or the human rights implications of failing to respond to a call. Several police officers described riding the bus to answer a police call. When asked what he did when a serious crime was in progress, one police officer in Ukraine said, "I run."



**Figure 7.** The population believes in the power of law in the case of domestic violence

The majority of our subjects believes in the victim asking the authorities for help and pressing charges against their aggressor. This may prove the confidence of people in the power of the law and human rights concerning this matter. Romania hasn't adopted a specific law criminalizing domestic violence yet. The cases of violence in the family fall under the incidence of the legislation for the administrative contraventions or the Criminal Code. The process of European integration and also the reaction of NGOs against physical, sexual or psychological violence within the family, and all the considerable efforts of civil society, determined the modification of the internal legislation regarding the protection of the victims of domestic violence and the adoption of a strategy for preventive measures to be taken to eliminate violence in the family and to fight against this phenomenon and effectively implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

#### Particular cases of domestic violence



**Figure 8.** The sample structure according to domestic violence encountered in the interviewed persons' family

In the end, the people were asked if there were cases of domestic violence in their families. The majority of them responded negatively (red colour), but a higher part responded affirmative.

FAMILY					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	94	47,0	47,0	47,0
	yes, fr	21	10,5	10,5	57,5
	yes, occ	85	42,5	42,5	100,0
	Total	200	100,0	100,0	
Total		200	100,0		

Yes, occ – yes, occasionally  
Yes, fr - yes, frequently

Almost half, 47 % out of the total sample denied having cases of abuse in their family. A high percentage of 42.5 % agreed having occasionally abuses in the family. 10.5 % said that the abuse takes place frequently in their families.

Those who responded affirmative to this question were also asked to point out the aggressor.

AGRESSOR *ABUSER Crosstabulation						
		AGRESS				Total
			child	man	woman	
AGRESSOR	child	2	5	1		8
	man	86	2	71	7	166
	woman	7		4	15	26
Total		95	7	76	22	200

The cross table shows the relation between the aggressor that people see in general and the abuser in their families (if it is the case). It is visible that the man is the main abuser in both cases, and the child is less frequently seen as one.

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	Valid Percent	Frequency	Total
100,0	100,0	200	Total
100,0	100,0	200	Total

Almost half (47%) out of the total sample denied having cases of abuse in their family. A high percentage of 42.5% agreed having occasionally abuses in the family. 10.5% said that the abuse takes place frequently in their families. Those who responded affirmative to this question were also asked to point out the aggressor.

Total	AGRESSOR			Total
	woman	man	child	
8		1	7	child
166	7	71	88	man
20	12	4	7	woman
200	22	76	92	Total

The cross table shows the relation between the aggressor that people see in general and the abuser in their families (if it is the case). It is visible that the man is the main abuser in both cases, and the child is less frequently seen as one.

## References

Blanchet, A., Singly, F., Goman, A., Kaufmann, J.-C. (1998). *Anchetă și metode de interviu, interviu comparativ, chestionarul*, Iași: Editura Polirom.

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