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PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS IN BATTERED WOMEN BY THEIR PARTNERS

ASPECTOS PSICOSSOCIAIS E SINTOMAS DEPRESSIVOS EM MULHERES VIOLENTADAS POR SEUS PARCEIROS

ASPECTOS PSICOSOCIALES Y LOS SÍNTOMAS DEPRESIVOS EN LAS MUJERES MALTRATADAS SUS SOCIOS

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to characterize the violence suffered by women victims of partner. **Method:** exploratory, descriptive with qualitative approach, performed with 10 women attending the Women in Campina Grande/Paraíba/Northeast of Brazil. For data collection we used a semistructured interview guide. Data were analyzed by the technique of Content Analysis Categorical Theme. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee under protocol nº 4026.0.000.405-09. **Results:** violence and its consequences are not restricted to physical field, with the use of alcohol or other drug substances associated with such attacks in most cases. In addition, health care was the most sought aid and fear feeling more experienced. **Conclusion:** it became evident just how wide is the violence suffered by these women, having consequences that can last for a lifetime. **Descriptors:** Domestic Violence; Battered Women; Depression.

RESUMO

Objetivo: caracterizar a violência sofrida por mulheres vítimas dos parceiros. **Método:** pesquisa exploratória, descritiva com abordagem qualitativa, realizada com 10 mulheres que procuraram a Delegacia da Mulher no município de Campina Grande/Paraíba/Nordeste do Brasil. Para a coleta de dados utilizou-se de um roteiro de entrevista semiestruturado. Os dados foram analisados pela Técnica de Análise de Conteúdo tipo Categorical Temática. O estudo foi aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa, protocolo nº 4026.0.000.405-09. **Resultados:** a violência e suas consequências não se restringem ao campo físico, estando o álcool ou a utilização de outras substâncias entorpecentes associados a tais agressões na maioria dos casos. Além disso, os serviços de saúde foi o auxílio mais buscado e o medo o sentimento mais vivenciado. **Conclusão:** tornou-se evidente o quão ampla é a violência sofrida por estas mulheres, possuindo consequências que podem perdurar por toda vida. **Descritores:** Violência Doméstica; Mulheres Maltratadas; Depressão.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: caracterizar la violencia que sufren las mujeres víctimas de la pareja. **Método:** investigación exploratoria, descriptiva con abordaje cualitativo, realizada con 10 mujeres que buscaran a la Comisaría de Policía de la Mujer en Campina Grande/Paraíba/Noreste de Brasil. Para la recolección de datos se utilizó una guía de entrevista semi-estructurada. Los datos fueron analizados mediante la técnica de análisis de contenido temático categórico. El estudio fue aprobado por el Comité Ético de Investigación bajo protocolo nº 4026.0.000.405-09. **Resultados:** la violencia y sus consecuencias no se limitan al campo físico, estando el uso de alcohol u otras sustancias farmacológicas asociadas con este tipo de ataques en la mayoría de los casos. Además, la atención de salud fue la ayuda más solicitada y el miedo a sentirse con más experiencia. **Conclusión:** se hizo evidente cuán amplia es la violencia sufrida por estas mujeres, con consecuencias que pueden durar toda la vida. **Descriptores:** Violencia Doméstica; Mujeres Maltratadas; Depresión.

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INTRODUCTION

A physical or psychological aggression is considered one of the major health problems worldwide, this figure is due to the large and growing number of deaths in people aged between 15 and 45 who suffer some kind of violence.¹

Violence appears differently when it comes to men and women. Men suffer violence more commonly in urban spaces, and aggression in general given by other men, while women are battered, mostly in domestic spaces, reflecting the patriarchal family organization, with male dominance seen as something natural.¹⁻²

Gender violence is characterized as violence against women, including not only the physical, but also sexual, economic and emotional, having repercussions that may remain even after the cessation of violence. Such violence expresses the inequality of power in gender relations, is considered a public health problem.³

In Brazil, in the period that preceded the republic, the assault or murder of women was allowed on the grounds of adultery, and consented that her husband would kill both the woman as his possible extramarital partner. However, in cases of adultery by her husband the situation was characterized as concubinage. Only in the Civil Code of 1916 these provisions were changed, considering both adultery as the reason for separation.⁴

Studies and research on violence against women in Brazil emerged around the 1980s, becoming a permanent object of study related to women's health and psychosocial well-being of the population of this sphere.⁵ It was in this period that the Women was introduced as legal space expert, able to receive complaints arise safety and legal support to battered women.⁶

Thus, in response to the need for public policies that defend women's rights and which guarantees their protection in case of denunciation of violence, promoting punishment for those who commit aggression against women, will take on August 7, 2006 the emergence of Law No. 11.340/06, known as the Maria da Penha Law.⁷

The sanction of the Maria da Penha Law, Law No. 11.340/06 provided solving the fate of many women victims of domestic violence in our country. The Act was named in honor of a female victim of assault arising from his companion, who begat permanent marks in soul and body.¹

Domestic violence, also known as family violence happens in different places with people of various ages and social classes. Such acts tend to worsen in frequency and intensity through disqualification humiliation recurrent physical and sexual assault, and may even get death threats. 8 This domestic violence is inserted in a broader field, the gender violence.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to physical violence, there is the practice of psychological or emotional, presenting mostly serious sequelae, such as mental disorders such as depression, phobia, post-traumatic stress, among others.⁹

At this juncture, some national and international studies promote direct relationship between violent experiences and onset of problems related to mental health deficits during the cycle of violence. 10 Making such women more likely to develop depressive symptoms and use of narcotics.

Depression affects the individual emotionally, creating a state characterized by feelings of sadness, melancholy or fear over the world. Depressive symptoms ranging from depressed mood, a loss of energy or interest related to feelings of low self-esteem and disability associated with bodily discomforts such as constipation, headaches and digestive difficulties, and cardiovascular system.¹¹

Thus, this study set out to build up the following questions: how to characterize the violence suffered by these women? What are the possible causes of such attacks? What are the types of aid sought? What are the feelings experienced and actions taken by these women victims of violence?

Thus, this study aimed to characterize the violence suffered by women victims of partners as well as to investigate the possible causes of such attacks, the types of aid sought, the sentiments experienced and actions taken by women.

METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory, descriptive qualitative approach, performed in the Women's Police Station in the city of Campina Grande - Paraíba, in the period December 2009 to January 2010.

The population consisted of women physically abused by their partners, and the sample was composed of 10 women that suited the proposed inclusion criteria for the study and agreed to participate voluntarily in the study.

Were chosen as inclusion criteria the following parameters: 1) be at least 18 years

2) Have completed complaint against your partner and/or spouse about physical aggression during collection of the empirical material, 3) Accept participate voluntarily in the study by signing Term of Consent.

The collection of empirical material was through a semistructured interview guide with personive questions pertaining to the proposed objectives.

The empirical material was discussed and analyzed according to Bardin proposal which seeks homogeneity and exhaustion to better understand the speech of persons and thereby promoting the extraction of the most important, with the formation of the themes that gave rise to the corpus job.¹²

This study was person to the approval of the Ethics Committee in Research of the Center for Higher Education and Development - CEP/CESED under Protocol nº 4026.0.000.405-09 obeying the ethical principles of Resolution 196/96 of the National Health Ministry of Health Brazil, which deals with research involving humans.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Given the analysis of interviews with women who have suffered assaults by their partners and resorted to Women Police Station, it was possible to identify complaints and depressive signs through the testimony that they had about the selected theme and what behaviors they took on in such a situation.

When asked about the theme of research and the impact that domestic violence gives his life, were recorded the following categories:

• Violence against women

Violence against women occurs in their entirety by means of coercion or physical assaults and manifest themselves through physical attacks, sexual abuse or psychological violence. These acts are mostly practiced within the home environment by action of parents and / or step-fathers, husbands and / or partners. Regarding physical aggression, the results appear in severe forms, by punching, slapping, burning, strangulation or the use of white weapons.¹³ Women interviews fit into most violent in the tables previously described, which can be found in lines described below:

He always hit me, and I always put up my children. (Person 4)

He wants to make me do things I do not want, I do not and he hit me, he is very violent, I fear him. (person 7)

This is the third time I assaults, and only now come to seek help, the three times he

hit me, were for the same reason, because he does not accept me to work. (person 9)

The category above exposes some of the different types of violence that women may suffer and the frequency of this type of offense.

In addition to frequent violence against these women is severe. Damage to physical and psychological health may be irreversible, taking into account the contact post-injury, knowing that violent acts depart mainly from husbands or partners. Becoming even more severe when there are threats to use weapons of intimidation and death.¹⁴

Damage and physical consequences caused women to suffer some kind of violence ranging from minor bruises to severe injuries that can lead to death or become forced conviviality of women with chronic pain and infections. Moreover, the violence of a sexual kind express permanent marks such as contraction of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and / or contamination by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), as well as unwanted pregnancies.¹⁵

In Brazil, a study conducted in the metropolitan region of São Paulo conducted with women between 15 and 49 years, who were categorized into the clients in treatment for their positive serology for HIV, who had suspected this infection and that search services of the Unified Health System (SUS) for any other reason, revealed that about 60% of these women have suffered some form of violence by their partner, especially serious and repeated violence.¹⁶

Physical damage can also be associated with psychological concerns, commonly called psychological trauma, which is made up of marks caused by psychological, ie, those that affect the way you act and behave, in addition to causing sexual disorders, stress disorder post-traumatic stress disorder and its most severe form, develop a depressive, which, in turn, directly and negatively affects self-esteem, social and professional life of the woman.¹⁵

From this thematic category, did emerge a subcategory described below:

• Violence against women/Causes of violence

Men who have in their personality profiles and violent in their daily aggressive practices against women, carry some characteristics that "justify" these violent attitudes, may be to list: the abuse of narcotic substances such as alcohol and other drugs, jealousy, low self-esteem, insecurity and possessiveness, as well

as personality disorders, anxiety and history of violence in childhood.¹⁷

Every time he came home drunk, he beat me and beat my kids too. (person 1)

I live with my boyfriend a year and a half, he uses drugs and every time he uses it, he becomes aggressive and comes to beat me. (person 3)

Can be seen on these lines that the abuse of alcohol and other drugs culminate in some kind of violence, whether carried out against other men and against women within their own homes or in public places, exposing to the risk medieval couple's children. When these difficulties are associated with stressors such family conflict, unemployment and, consequently, financial difficulties may trigger the development of aggressive behavior.¹⁷

Violence situations are usually related to the indiscriminate use of narcotics, making necessary the execution of public policies and actions aimed at prevention in relation to domestic violence, in view of the possible consequences that these acts can bring to life the members of the family institution.¹⁸

Given the psychological effects that violence because the abused woman and taking into account the permanent marks that this act can cause arose the following thematic category related to the types of aid that the abused woman seeking:

• Help for signs of depression

In the context that involves aspects of depression and psychological damage, the violence of a psychological or emotional women are considered as those that cause the most pain and suffering is worse than physical abuse in many cases. This type of violence can leave marks that last for a lifetime.⁹

Therefore, to help women who have suffered this type of domestic violence for many years, were made some milestones that reflected the struggle for the right to security, such as the creation of the WPS and the enactment of Law 11,340 known as the Law of Maria Penha.¹⁹

Once I tried the Tour Health (person 8)

Looking at the Health Center nearest you. (person 5)

Always seek the Tour Health (person 2)

Through the speeches above, one can see that there is still a resistance of women in search of legal bodies to defend their rights and punishment of offenders, and highlighted just search for clinics.

The demand for health services also produces an aggravating to detect offenders, the call, underreporting. Notification of cases of violence have been heavily neglected what actually prevents the action of the police and

government legal agencies in making decisions regarding the identification and punishment of offenders, thus the victim remains uncovered.²⁰

The problem becomes worrisome from the moment that many people do not know exactly the consequences that these crimes can cause a woman's life attacked, resulting in the absence of reporting crimes and consequent impunity of aggressors.¹⁵

In this perspective, it is visualized that various feelings such as fear and anxiety can be part of day-to-day battered woman, it gave up the creation of the following category:

• Feelings after assaults

Moral or psychological aggression suffered by the woman have a big impact with negative meaning about their lives. The humiliation consist of accusations and insults, judgments and impediments to work and / or study. All of these situations cause discomfort psychological consequences such as fear, insecurity, anxiety, helplessness and despair associated with the feeling of abandonment and devaluation, keeping these women in a constant state of falling self-esteem adjunct to the onset of depressive symptoms.²¹

It's not like before, now afraid of him, I've thought about separation, most gave up on behalf of my children and not having anywhere to go. (person 1)

Terrible, most always end up forgiving. (person 2)

I love him very much, and forgiven, and I hope it changes and go back to like me. (person 3)

Women victims of domestic violence mostly suffer from low self-esteem and strong emotional dependence and / or financial, due to these unfavorable belong to social classes, preventing them to sustain themselves and their children. On the other hand, women from higher social classes also suffer violence and can't report, despite having financial independence, when it comes to other types of addiction, emotional.²¹

Accordingly, another researcher states that this form of violence has dimensions greater than those that appear in the statistics for still being a considerable number of women who do not denounce companion, despite the increase in the number of complaints after the creation of the Women's Police Stations.⁸

This author states that women of higher social classes and with a satisfactory level of education are still the least make complaints regarding aggression / domestic violence.⁸

• **Feeling after the attacks/Measures taken**

During long years of domestic violence and received frightening numbers has become a public health problem in much of the world, its occurrence may be related to the unpreparedness of some family members regarding the management of crisis situations or everyday conflicts.⁵

Law 11.340/06, known as the Maria da Penha Law, was created in order to provide suitable tools for coping with this problem, gender violence.

I no longer want him as a man, since time does not have anything else. (person 4)
Could not stand it anymore, so I separated. (person 10)

Interviewees reveal some examples of overcoming fears and threats suffered, plus inner strengthening of these women.

Women in the contemporary context are strengthened under the logic of difference. This strengthening a positive way forward to overcome domestic violence, providing these women to redefine his career, extinguishing the relationship of abuse and power.²³

Working in the emancipation of these women, seeking their recognition in the social field, the work of establishing mediation implies investing in individual and collective projects of the same, that bring the re-articulation of the assets, interests and references, in order to release the situations exclusion and violence in which they find themselves.²⁴

CONCLUSION

The practice of violence and physical assaults against women is something that has occurred since antiquity, and, for long periods, not classified as a crime under the law, not considered punishable, favoring the occurrence of physical and psychological abuse.

Faced with the need to reduce the number of attacks, the creation of the Women's Police Station served as support for the realization of complaints and providing security whistleblowers women, since the threat of recurrence of violence are frequent. To fully support the actions of the police stations scattered throughout the country, the Maria da Penha Law, crime makes any kind of aggression, whether physical, verbal or psychological violence against women, punishable in the form of detention.

With this research it became evident just how wide is the violence suffered by these women is not restricted to physical dimension.

Furthermore, one can realize the relationship between aggression and the use of narcotics or alcohol, these women promoting moments of terror and marks that can last throughout life.

Fear is a feeling often mentioned in the reports, is the fear of the abuser or fear of losing it due to a financial dependence or affective. But the will to overcome such adversity also stands out, showing a great inner strength of these women.

Even with the legal joints in search of reducing these crimes, it becomes noticeable very often with them still occur, causing physical and psychological, that interferes in personal and social life of the woman who was harmed.

Moreover, it is remarkable how many cases of violence are still underreported, which prevents strict performance by the competent authorities relating to the punishment of offenders.

Assuming that no research generates absolute truths, it is expected that this study will enable new production on the person, which will contribute both to a better understanding of this reality, and for the development of actions for these women.

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