RESUMO

A violência contra a mulher se configura como um dos principais problemas relacionados à violação dos direitos humanos, responsável por danos pessoais, sociais, econômicos, políticos e familiares. Objetivou-se conhecer o perfil das mulheres vítimas de violência. Pesquisa documental de abordagem quantitativa realizada em abril de 2015 a partir dos registros fornecidos pela Delegacia de Defesa da Mulher do município de Crato, Ceará, que apontaram um quantitativo de 49 mulheres que realizaram denúncias de violência. Utilizou-se gráficos de colunas verticais no programa Microsoft Excel 2013. Respeitaram-se os aspectos éticos relacionados às pesquisas com seres humanos. As denunciantes apresentavam faixa etária entre 30 a 40 anos, residiam no município de Crato e predominantemente possuíam filho único, eram solteiras, exerciam atividades domésticas e possuíam o ensino fundamental. De acordo com a análise realizada, a violência se inicia de forma psicológica e posteriormente se torna física, e que os achados apresentam consonância com o perfil do restante do país. Para tanto, evidenciou-se a necessidade de um maior envolvimento social na redução da magnitude deste problema que atinge mulheres independentemente do contexto, porém, no município investigado, há bastante relação com o baixo índice de educação e a falta de renda, demonstrando que o machismo ainda impera na sociedade contemporânea.


ABSTRACT

Violence against women is one of the main problems related to human rights violations, responsible for personal, social, economic, political and family damage. The objective was to know the profile of women victims of violence. Documental research with quantitative approach conducted in April 2015 from the records provided by the Women's Defense Police Station of the city of Crato, Ceará, which indicated a number of 49 women who reported violence denunciations. Vertical column charts were used in the Microsoft Excel 2013 program. The ethical aspects related to human researches were respected. The complainants were between 30 and 40 years old, lived in the city of Crato and predominantly had only one child, were single, exercised domestic activities and had primary education. According to the analysis, the violence begins psychologically and, later, becomes physical, and that the findings are in line with the profile of the rest of the country. Therefore, there is need for a greater social involvement to reduce the magnitude of this problem that affects women regardless of context, however, in the investigated municipality, there is a relation with the low level of education and the lack of income, demonstrating that chauvinism still prevail in contemporary society.

Key words: Violence against women. Gender violence. Profile of women.

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INTRODUCTION

The violence has been presented in recent times as an important public health problem for all variables and nuances that involve it, and particularly for affecting men and women, children, young people, adults and elders and all social classes. More than 1.6 million people die around the world due to acts of violence and many suffer non-fatal injuries that cause a range of other ailments, whether physical, psychological, sexual, reproductive, social and even of development.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that violence accompanies the history of mankind, having reached epidemic proportions in the early 21st century, with emphasis on health care.

In the legal framework, violence is considered a type of coercion, a form of constraint, overcoming the other’s resistance, leading him/her to perform it, even against his/her will, being an act of force exercised against things, in order to rape them, devastate them, or hold them.

Historically, women have been placed in subordinated positions in society, despite the many achievements and prominent positions in the labor market, but still there is a disparity that is nourished by the sexual division of labor intertwined in different placements between men and women, and also the exploitation of ‘male’ activities.

Violence against women is characterized, in turn, as the act of gender-based violence that results in or can result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, including threats, coercion and deprivation of freedom in the public or private sphere. The issue is complex and multifaceted, requiring interdisciplinary actions for the impact caused in the quality of life of the woman and her child, when this is the case, and even of the society as a whole.

In this sense, gender violence against women is a social phenomenon that has received greater visibility resulting from its frequency, recurrence and ailment of cases, with relation expressed by inequalities between men and women, with benefits for men by their physical strength, a situation accepted and legitimised for a long time by constructed and naturalised inequalities in our society.

The complexity of the concept of gender goes beyond the ideological justification and symbolic reproduction, in the construction of masculine and feminine, for being part of the struggles of the feminist organization, seeking the recognition that inequalities between women and men have cultural roots, and that, despite policies directed to this context, there is need for even more commitments, active participation and control of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

This violence is a social and political problem, due to the large number of murders of women occurring in the country, practiced mostly by men with whom women maintain family or affective relationships, in addition to humiliation, threats and every intention to cause physical or emotional damage.

The prevalence of violence committed by a known person in the adult population in Brazil in 2013 was 2.5%, significantly higher among women - 3.1% when compared to men - 1.8%.

According to the map of violence of 2015, there was a greater incidence of violence against women in the black population, representing an increase of 54.2% when compared to white women, and the country currently occupies the fifth position in the incidence of female homicides, in a world ranking of 83 countries considering the period between 1980 and 2013, when 106,093 women were killed.

In the Cariri region of Ceará, more specifically in Crato, data provided by the Municipal Council of Cratos for Women’s Rights (CMDMC - Conselho Municipal dos Direitos da Mulher Cratense) over the past ten years point to the violation of a fundamental right – women’s right to life, providing fear in the population as a whole and women’s fear to walk the streets.

However, even in the face of this problem, the profile of women who complained against violence and its characterization is unknown, which is, thus, the object of this study. To this end, the research aimed to know the profile of women victims of violence who seek the DDM in the municipality of Crato, Ceará.

METHODS

This is a documental, retrospective, exploratory research, with quantitative approach, performed from secondary sources – data from the Women’s Defense Police Station - DDM (Delegacia de Defesa da Mulher), in the municipality of Crato, Ceará, in April 2015, with the records of the months of January, February and March 2015, which represents the period chosen for the survey due to the completion of the police investigations by local authorities.

The municipality is located in the metropolitan region of Cariri, in the extreme south of the state of Ceará, 560 km from the state capital, Fortaleza, being the second most important city of Cariri in economic terms, with an estimated population of 129,662 inhabitants in 2016.

The data collection instrument was a check-list contemplating the information available in the police investigations and necessary to reach the research goal. The inclusion criteria of the analyzed documents were: Complaints of women with formal record of complaint of gender violence practiced by the spouse (husband, partner or companion) during the first quarter of 2015; complaint records with the necessary data to trace the woman’s profile; complaints made by women aged 18 years or more. Duplicate complaints were disregarded. Thus, 49 of the 62 complainants met the inclusion criteria. The data were tabulated in the program Microsoft Excel 2013 and presented in graphs with absolute frequencies and percentages and analyzed based on the literature concerning the theme.

Regarding ethical aspects, the guidelines contained in Resolutions 466/12 and 500/16 of the National Health Council on researches involving human beings were respected, with preparation of the faithful custodian term for the DDM ensuring confidentiality, anonymity and the non-use of information at the expense of others, with the commitment of the absence of risk for women involved in the research and the employment of data only for the purposes specified in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Federal Constitution of 1988 meant a milestone in relation to women’s human rights and the establishment of their full citizenship, because, as a legal and political document of Brazilian citizens, sought to break with a highly discriminatory
legal system, in relation to the female gender, foreseeing equality of women and men in rights and obligations as a constitutional right \(^\text{16}\).

At the level of international protection of human rights, there are two international treaties ratified by Brazil which relate specifically to women’s rights: the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the Inter-American Convention to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women, pointing out theoretical and ideological support of legal regulations for this reality \(^\text{17}\).

In 2006, Law 11,340 was sanctioned in the country, which punishes domestic and family violence against women, receiving the name of “Lei Maria da Penha” as a way to honor the person-symbol of the fight against female violence, amending the Criminal Code and ending with amercements, in which the defendant is sentenced to pay basic food baskets or fines \(^\text{18}\).

Considered a Brazilian legal framework in the context of the rights and protection of the integrity of women, the Maria da Penha Law also represents procedural innovations which recognize the complexity of domestic violence, proposing effective changes to imprint not only legal, but political and cultural development, overcoming the long social and legal tradition that denied women’s rights \(^\text{17}\).

Data regarding the female complainants were listed by age, origin, marital status, number of children, schooling, occupation and types of violence.

The predominant age group was of women between 30 and 40 years, accounting for 38.77%.

The findings show a greater occurrence of cases in women aged from 30 to 44 years, which corroborates the research of Romagnoli \(^\text{18}\), in which this age group was predominant in 37.3% of cases; however, gender violence against women is present in all age groups.

Although the studied police station serves women from Cariri-Oeste, composed by more than 40 municipalities of Ceará, most of them still come from Crato, totaling 63.26%.

In relation to marital status, 40.81% of these women had no legalized union, self-reporting as single. A point to be analyzed are the cases of gender violence that often occur with women who do not have formalized union with the partner, when the relationship comes to an end for various reasons.

For the World Health Organization \(^\text{3}\) “... there is not a single factor that explains why some people behave in a violent manner in relation to the other, or why violence occurs more in some communities than in others”. Zaleski et al. \(^\text{19}\) add that one of the main causes of violence against women is the abusive consumption of alcohol by men.

The belief that alcohol is responsible for the phenomenon in the male universe is perpetuated, which seems to diminish the responsibility of the offender and increase the victim’s tolerance \(^\text{18}\).

Violence results from the complex interaction of individual, relationship, social, cultural and environmental factors. Understanding how these factors are related to violence is one of the important steps in the public health approach to prevent violence \(^\text{19}\).

Regarding occupation, there was predominance of employed (40.81%) and housewives (48.97%). The degree of schooling was predominantly between primary level (44.89%) and secondary level (42.85%).
The aspect to be considered concerns the high percentage of women victims of domestic violence in this study, working outside the home environment, receiving remuneration, and, therefore, having the possibility of financial independence, total or partial.

Another important fact is the level of education of women, which is between the primary and secondary level. According to the World Health Organization, there is no conclusive evidence of an association between socioeconomic conditions or schooling, pointing investigations that feature this association, and some others that do not. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a greater risk of physical violence in the presence of poverty or inequality.

Violence, in its various manifestations (physical, sexual, symbolic, psychological and linked to negligence), is an unacceptable human action, especially if practiced against defenseless beings, present in the Brazilian society and other contemporary societies.

Some forms of expression of violence highlighted in this study are the physical and the psychological ones. The first consists of the intentional and not accidental use of force, by means of aggression, slapping, punching, mistreatment and beatings, and the second is characterized by disrespect, verbalization inappropriate, humiliation, insults, intimidation, betrayals, threats of death and emotional and material abandonment, resulting in mental distress.

Thus, this datum questions the maintenance of a violent relationship, this fact was due to financial dependence that justified the absence of choice and that continued with the partner not to be helpless or even in absolute poverty.

Related to aggression, figure 1 shows that part of women suffered more than one type of violence. There were no complaints of sexual violence, thus, the highlighted types of violence were distributed according to the settings of the Ministry of Health:

1. Physical violence: when someone causes or tries to cause damage by means of physical force, some kind of weapon or instrument that can cause internal or external injuries such as hemorrhage, fractures, cuts, bruises, wounds...
2. Psychological violence: any action or omission that causes damage to self-esteem, identity, or to the development of the person (threats, humiliations, blackmail, discrimination, criticism, etc.).

Another fact to be considered is the association between psychological and physical violence, potentially practiced with the association between the consumption of alcoholic beverages, in which the woman resists to perform the complaint by believing that her partner will change his behavior. In view of the situation, when becoming constant and continuous, the woman decides to perform the complaint. Many times, for the woman’s self-image, they would rather stay with the companion, even if he is violent, than staying alone and face difficulty to find a new companion that respects her.

In these relations of violence, the victimized women often try to understand the violent behavior of their companions, creating justifications for the attacks. It is important to associate to it the fact that many women create a desire and a feeling of hope that their partners will change their behavior, staying in the relationship.

To Brilhante et al., the danger lies precisely in the woman’s illusion of a possible change of her companion, which often does not happen, since these women, generally, are unaware of the violence as something deeper, with roots in the asymmetrical relations of gender prevailing in society.

Women commonly blame themselves for causing the violence in the relationship, because they believe that they should try harder to please the abuser. The physical and moral pain, as well as the loneliness, shame and the mixture between power and guilt contribute to women victims of violence to feel sad, discouraged, which result in feelings that affect their behavior.

According to Duarte et al., domestic and gender violence is a complex problem, which has deep roots in the social organization, in economic and power structures in society. Facing them requires developing public policies in various areas and the mobilization and awareness of society. The commitment of governments and wider social sectors is crucial to rise foundations for the construction of a deep commitment to respect and equality in gender relations.

It is important to increasingly strength the discussion about violence against women in all sectors of society so that we can glimpse, in a near future, the reduction of inequality between men and women and the end of violence against women which is rooted in our culture.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Currently, with the means of communication generating space for discussions about the theme of violence against women, these issues are being expanded, increasing the number of statistical surveys, providing greater visibility to the problem.

The analysis of the present results shows that the profile of women who denounce is the age 30 and 40 years old, residing in the city of Crato, with one child, unmarried, performing domestic activities and primary education. Violence usually starts in the psychological form, subsequently becoming physical.

The data show that the profile of women who seek the DDM is similar to profiles from different regions of the country. Violence against women can reach all women of different socioeconomic levels, races, education or religions.

However, the verified facts showed that, although the theme has been increasingly discussed, there is still a long path to reduce the magnitude of gender violence and make the problem increasingly mobilize society as a whole, preventing violent practices from hindering the process of a satisfactory social civilization.

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**Figure 1 Distribution of type of violence**

![Distribution of type of violence](Image)

1. Psychological violence: 16
2. Physical violence: 8
3. Psychological and physical violence: 25

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**References**

1. Duarte et al., 2022.
2. Brilhante et al., 2022.

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The present study also points to the importance of further investigations on this subject, examining in depth the issue, in its most varied angles. Once, contrary to what many think, violence is not an anomaly of the human being. It is a socially constituted phenomenon, which has been historically present.

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