

Gender-Based Violence as a Social Problem of Science

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Abstract

Gender-based violence refers to harmful acts directed against a person or a group of people based on their gender. Despite the notable advances achieved by Cuba in terms of gender, there are still gaps between men and women. The goal is to define the scope and nature of the existing scientific literature on gender-based violence as a social problem of science. A bibliographic review was carried out. The following keywords were used: gender-based violence, intrafamily violence, mistreatment of women and girls, actions against gender-based violence and action protocol against gender-based violence. Articles in Spanish, English and Portuguese were used for the search. The articles consulted indicate that it is a structural factor of inequality in societies and one of the most serious effects on health. It is an endemic and epidemic evil of patriarchal culture globally. Most of the time it is not addressed with the clarity it requires and they generally remain anonymous. It is necessary to be more proactive, that it be recognized as a health problem, with its statistical heading and therefore that it be the protagonist of research lines.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence; Intrafamily Violence; Mistreatment of Women; Actions; Protocol

Abbreviations

SST: Social Studies of Science and Technology; GbV: Gender-Based Violence; UN: United Nations Organization; NPSEH: National Program for Sexual Education and Health; DeCS: Descriptors in Health Sciences; PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses

Introduction

The interaction of science as a social phenomenon and human activity with society and its institutions is addressed by the Social Studies of Science and Technology (SST), also known as Social Problems of Science and Technology. These studies consider the relationship between factors: economic, political, legal, cultural, ideological and social in general, as well as what has to do with their social and environmental consequences [1].

Gender-based violence (GbV) refers to harmful acts directed against a person or a group of people based on their gender, originating from gender inequality, abuse of power and the existence of unfavorable norms [2]. The United Nations Organization (UN) defines GbV as any act of violence based on belonging to the female sex that has or may result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering for women, as well as threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether they occur in public life or in private life [3].

In this complex problem is added the interaction of the affected subject with his family or social environment, including the staff of the institution in which he is. It is necessary to promote equitable models in relationships from an early age as the best way to move towards a peaceful, collaborative and full coexistence, where there is no room for stereotypes and violence, mainly that which is exercised for gender reasons [4].

The Cuban social system consistently works on the formation of a fully developed human being. Therefore, they have the obligation to know how, when and in what way GbV manifests itself in their institutions; denying the existence of this scourge would be counterproductive. It is necessary to prepare the professionals of the different productive, educational and health sectors so that they can recognize any of the manifestations related to GBV and face it.

Since 2015, the National Program for Sexual Education and Health (NPSEH) [5], raises the need for Comprehensive Sexuality Education strategies from the national level to the community with a gender and rights approach. The Health Law Project was recently released [6], where the issue of violence is treated in the same way to protect people, as to establish mechanisms for the prevention and control of violence, as obligations of the State.

Despite the notable advances achieved by Cuba in terms of gender, there are still gaps between men and women, associated with the traditional roles entrusted to them and the prevailing patriarchal culture [7]. In February 2021, the National Program for the Advancement of Women was approved, [8] which served as support for the Comprehensive Strategy for Prevention and Care of gender-based violence and in the family setting [9,10]. The program and strategy make up one brought together with the Family Code [11], treat discrimination and GBV, with palpable legal effects in each circumstance in which it occurs and the possibility of its complaint by anyone who has knowledge of those facts [12]. These three documents have been taken into account by the Cuban Ministry of Health as a health interest that is implicit in the Health Bill.

It is considered that it is not possible to address a problem of such magnitude, isolated from the sociopolitical and economic context in which it develops. It is worth noting that the political will of the Cuban state has always been present together with the social sectors in the search for the best solutions. To this end, the authors set out as an objective to define the scope and nature of the existing scientific literature on GBV as a social problem of science.

Materials and Methods

A systematic review was carried out in bibliographic sources on issues related to GBV where its analysis can be considered as a social problem of science. To develop this reflective critical analysis of the content of documents, theses, original articles, review articles, protocols that deal with the subject, among others, were considered.

The search strategy adopted was the use of keywords or descriptors, connected through the Boolean operator OR and AND. The following keywords were used: "gender-based violence",

“intrafamily violence”, “mistreatment of women and girls”, “actions against gender-based violence”, “action protocol against gender-based violence”. To delimit the keywords, the thesaurus of Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS) was used.

The search was carried out in the SciELO, PubMed and Google Scholar databases from October 21, 2022 to January 1, 2023. The search strategy used in the database considered for research purposes was met by accepting descriptors. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flowchart was used to contribute to its formulation [13]. The search terms included the keywords detailed in table one.

Database	Dwriters	Search strategy
SciELO PubMed Academic google	Violence, Protocol, Actions Gender, Abuse.	((((Violence AND (gender) OR (woman or girl) AND (Protocol AND prevention OR actions.))))))

Table 1: Search strategy according to database.

Source: self made.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The following steps were completed: identification of the guiding question, data search with determination of inclusion and exclusion criteria, categorization of the studies, critical evaluation of the included studies, discussion and interpretation of results, and presentation of the review or synthesis of knowledge [13].

The question was elaborated through the CPC (Concept, Population and Context) format [14], considering C (Gender-based violence), P (women or girls) and C (in society). Guiding Research Question: What is the scope and nature of the existing scientific literature on GBV, detection, prevention and treatment?

Inclusion criteria

- Articles published mainly in the last five years (2018-2022) as they are the most current on the subject.
- Articles that clearly present the selected theoretical reference, even if they were published more than five years ago.
- Be published in Spanish, English or Portuguese.
- Articles of free publication or that can be accessed through the Telematic Health Network of Cuba INFOMED.
- Documents that provide relevant information on GbV.

Exclusion criteria

- Articles to which the full text could not be accessed, where only the abstract of the work appeared.

- Editorial articles and clinical cases.

After the identification of the articles, the titles of the publications, abstracts and keywords were read, checking the relevance to the study, and must adhere to the topic addressed.

To describe the methodological approach of the results, the flowchart is shown (Figure 1).

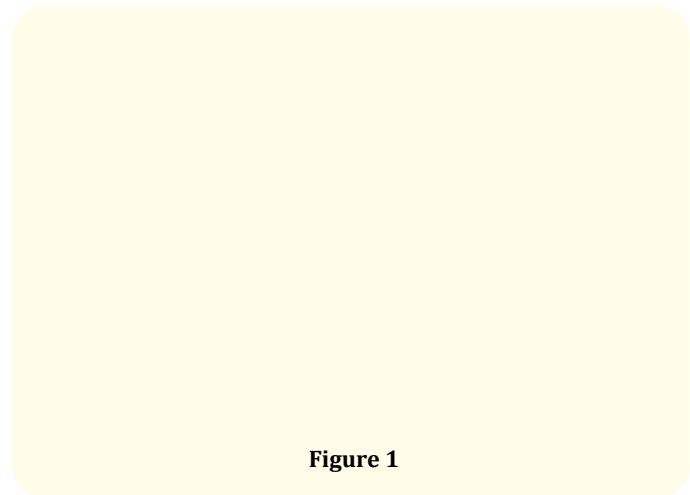


Figure 1

Results and Discussion

Most of the articles consulted point out that the incidence of GBV is a structural factor of inequality in a good part of societies and one

of the most serious effects on the health of women and girls [15-17]. Likewise, a consensus could be found on the conceptualization of GBV as violence against women for any action or conduct that, based on their gender condition, causes death, damage or physical, sexual and psychological suffering to women, both in the public and private spheres [18,19].

The authors agree with Proveyer [20], when considering the scourge of GBV as an endemic and epidemic disease of patriarchal culture at a global level that affects all regions of the world, social classes, and poor or rich countries. It is a universal challenge that must be faced with concrete and effective actions. Since the United Nations (UN) officially established November 25 to condemn gender violence in 1999, more than 140 countries around the world have passed laws on domestic assault and 144 on sexual harassment. (twenty-one).

GbV towards the woman by her partner is most of the time not addressed with the clarity it requires. In these cases, physical force is not always present, other forms are justified by cultural guidelines such as control and coercion (forced sexual relations, humiliation) and generally remain anonymous [21]. Until recently, GBV was part of personal life, for which reason it was considered a matter of family privacy that should not transcend into the public arena, which caused the victims, usually women, not to dare to report out of fear, shame or guilt [22].

Failing to recognize that GbV is still present in Cuban society would be a serious mistake. Its manifestations acquire the same nuances that all countries suffer, from complicit silence to death. The patriarchal social structure, although less evident given the social changes, continues to support male domination, although Cuban women are increasingly assuming intergender relations with an unquestionable co-protagonism in all spheres of social activity. Two distinctive axes in the construction of masculinity and femininity are clearly identified by gender approaches: the role of care and maternity for women and the role of economic provider for men.

A current health situation in the Cuban context, with a multifactorial influence including the social one, is the increase in adolescent pregnancy as a problem that generates vulnerabilities

in the family context and the couple relationship, which in most cases can increase the risk of risk of violence. Although adolescent pregnancy is not a direct cause of violence, it is the conditions in which this event occurs and the family factors associated with it, such as family structure, family crises and educational management, marked by a patriarchal family paradigm [23].

Currently, suicide is the second cause of death among young people in the world, and although the rates are 2.6 times higher in men than in women, it is today the most common cause of death among adolescent girls among 15-19 years. For its part, depression is the leading cause of disease burden in women aged 15 and over. All of this may have its genesis in the effect of violence on women's lives [24].

Health personnel who attend hospital emergencies or primary care centers are trained to treat the immediate (contusion, fracture, bleeding, panic) and to diagnose and proceed correctly in the face of different types of diseases; however, it has notable weaknesses in its ability to detect and address cases of gender violence. Many act by intuition, likewise many attend to these cases repeatedly, heal the injuries but fail to identify them, hence it is imperative that this reality change [25].

In addressing violence against women, the health sector is a key element in the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of women after having suffered an experience of abuse. It is one of the main institutionalized avenues used by women to seek help [26].

The economic crisis of recent years and the reemergence of social problems associated with it, have generated that one of the phenomena that most accounts for these has been GbV [27]. The relationship between economic dependence and physical violence is raised, highlighting the position of subordination and vulnerability of women, regardless of their socioeconomic situation [28].

Returning to the situation in Cuba related to GBV, there are violent demonstrations in regions of the country related to the idiosyncrasy of the areas. Acts of punishment through public beatings or within homes, incestuous sexual relations, with a so-called pact of social silence, are frequent in eastern parts of the country [29].

The phenomenon of GbV against girls, boys and adolescents is not considered a social problem in Cuba due to its low quantitative reports, but qualitatively it is a situation that is frequently revealed underhandedly. Many times the victims report that they do not have the support of the mass organizations in a more active way, only the Police provide them with the necessary protection. It is pertinent to point out that what these women request the most as their true need is a place to go live with their children, something that is not in the hands of the aforementioned organizations.

There are ways that provide guidance to victims from a legal point of view that can be from Line 103 [30], which since 2020 included the possibility of care for victims of GbV, passing through the Women's and Family [31,32], to the work carried out by the Attorney General of the Republic [33], among others. But the truth is that much remains to be done in the country.

There are several meetings that are held where the central themes revolve around Cuba's prevention and response to a phenomenon as harmful as human trafficking, the inclusion of femininities in the media agendas, sexist violence and its views from the communication, sexual and reproductive rights, women's social movements, masculinity studies and public good messages [34,35]. There is also a regulatory framework that gives protection to women victims of GbV [36], only the People's Supreme Court of the Republic of Cuba has implemented a protocol for the treatment of these cases [37].

From the perspective of science, numerous and significant contributions have been made, together with social and political organizations, academic institutions, international organizations and health areas, which has allowed isolated proposals to become actions. Interdisciplinary work involving different actors and structures is essential to offer more comprehensive guidance and advice on issues of gender violence in both rural and urban communities in the country.

The violence that is exercised against women is a social problem that no one can ignore, it constitutes an unavoidable necessity, so its prevention and attention will have to become a basic objective of the work of the whole society. GbV is a public health problem of the first order, which requires political will to establish effective

objectives and strategies based on prevention, with constant monitoring of its implementation, as it has been developing in Cuba.

Conclusion

In the opinion of the authors, GBV has been treated in different investigations and leading to publicity in different media, but it is necessary to be more proactive in this regard. It is pertinent that it be recognized as a health problem, with its statistical heading and therefore that it be the protagonist of research lines.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest between them.

Summary

Gender-based violence refers to harmful acts directed against a person or group of persons on the basis of their gender. Despite Cuba's remarkable progress in the area of gender, gaps still exist between men and women. The objective was to define the scope and nature of the existing scientific literature on gender-based violence as a social problem of science and conducted a literature review. The following keywords were used: gender-based violence, domestic violence, mistreatment of women and girls, actions against gender-based violence and action protocol against gender-based violence. Articles in Spanish, English and Portuguese were used for the search. The articles consulted indicate that it is a structural factor of inequality in societies and one of the most serious effects on health. It is an endemic and epidemic evil of patriarchal culture at the global level. Most of the time it is not addressed with the clarity it requires and usually remain anonymous. It is necessary to be more proactive, to be recognized as a health problem, with its statistical section and therefore to be the protagonist of research lines.

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