

'Broken Men Break the Silence'

**Male Domestic Violence Victims and their Struggle to be
Heard.**

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Abstract

The research question explores the amount of help and support available for male victims of female perpetrated domestic violence with the focus on understanding the surrounding issues of society, government and masculinity. From the in depth qualitative interviews conducted the findings conclude that the help and support available for male victims is virtually non existent and that which does exist is of poor quality. The findings and literature in this area suggest the underlying reason for this lack of support is due to society and government not actively recognising domestic violence to be a male issue as well as a female issue, their only focus is towards female victims. Therefore male victims remain invisible. This societal repression has created stereotypes that impact upon the way authorities deal with domestic violence cases, in that they tend to discriminate against male victims. These stereotypes and discrimination cause male victims to feel reluctant to seek help. So, in turn, it seems domestic violence towards men is not a widespread problem hence there is no pressure for change. However this is not the case. This research piece develops these arguments fully to provide insight into the taboo subject of domestic violence against males.

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Male Domestic Violence Victims and their Struggle to be Heard.

Introduction

Domestic violence is a recent issue that has appeared at the forefront of government policy in England and Wales; it was first recorded as a crime in the British Crime Survey (BCS) in 1996. Prior to its inclusion, domestic violence was viewed as a taboo subject kept between the family unit. However, with the recognition of domestic violence constituting a violent crime, the issue has become widely public. The Home Office definition of domestic violence is

‘Any incident or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or are family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.’

The main emphasis and focus, by academics and society, is one of male perpetrated violence against women studying the impact on the victims' lives and the help available to support them in retreating from the violent environment. There is little discussion surrounding male victims of female perpetrated domestic violence and domestic abuse between gay and lesbian couples. I acknowledge that domestic violence occurs within all situations however the focus of this research piece is on abused men by their female partners. The issue is very complex and complicated due to the circumstances surrounding domestic violence, therefore this topic has gone widely under researched. Other literature has investigated similar issues mainly considering how prevalent male victims are deemed to be.

The research question I will explore considers the amount of help and support available for male victims of female perpetrated domestic violence, with the focus on understanding the surrounding issues of society, government and masculinity. The main aim is to gain an understanding into the thoughts and feelings of abused men and the help available to them by organisations, society and government.

To provide insight into the research question other academic literature has been consulted to understand the main arguments surrounding the issue of male victims. The literature suggests that there is a lack of help available for abused men. Some academics believe this is because there is a gender issue whereas others argue it is due to a societal issue. The review acknowledges the lack of recognition by government and the role of masculinity. In order to test these views qualitative interviews were conducted with organisations and individuals campaigning for male victims to discuss the surrounding issues. The methodology considers the type of interview chosen and the ethical issues involved. The research piece then discusses the effectiveness of the findings in relation to the literature whilst considering any limitations and possible improvements.

Throughout the research piece the main arguments that have materialised are that there is a lack of help and support available for male victims of domestic violence mainly due to social constructions and the government's lack of recognition. Throughout history society has repressed male victims creating an anti man culture surrounding domestic violence. Government have further elevated this culture with their female victim focused policy and disregard for male victims which has impacted upon the authorities, especially the police, in the way abused males are dealt with. The effect of this culture on male victims is that they remain invisible as they are reluctant to get help because of the

humiliation and ridicule they may experience. Domestic violence towards men should be seen as a human issue not one of society or in some cases gender.

Literature Review

Domestic violence towards men perpetrated by their female partners is a widely under researched area of violence which is currently coming to the forefront of societal debates. We know and can not deny that male violence towards women in a domestic setting does occur, along with domestic violence among gay and lesbian couples (British Crime Survey 1996). However, the Government and the majority of society focus only on men as perpetrators of violence towards women and do not believe or want to recognise that men can suffer from domestic violence in the same way as women. Steinmatz (1977) discussed the 'battered husband syndrome' back in the late 1970's and still today it is a taboo subject amongst society. This lack of recognition for male victims of domestic violence means they have to cope without any help, support and guidance. Pagelow (1985) recognises that women can be violent and create a fearful environment for their husbands but argues there is no sufficient evidence that this is a large syndrome as it is with women. Gadd et al (2003) supports Pagelow (1985) as they conducted research into male victims of domestic violence in Scotland and concluded that male victims do not amount to a sizeable population so do not need services available to them like female victims do. However, the sample in this survey is too small to draw any meaningful information from it and it is not representative (Gadd et al 2002: 4). Therefore suggesting domestic abuse towards men by their female partners has not yet been defined as a problem in order to receive help (Straus and Gelles 1986: 472). In

researching the topic, I have noted there is a sufficient lack of academic literature and research surrounding the issue of male victims with most of the information written in journal or media articles, there are few published books available. It should be noted that some of the sources discussed are American based (Migliacco 2002, Pagelow 1985, Kimbrell 1995) therefore are not directly involved with domestic violence in the UK, however the issues raised are relevant to our society and of importance in determining what male victimisation and domestic violence is essentially about. This research piece hopes to improve the awareness of society to recognise that men can be victims of domestic violence and deserve help, the same as women, by discovering what help is available for male victims which seems to be very little.

One of the main debates associated with domestic violence is whether there is 'gender asymmetry' where men are more frequently perpetrators of the violence than women (Dobash and Dobash 2004: 324) or whether there is 'gender symmetry' where both partners, male and female, instigate the violence equally (Malloy et al 2003: 40). The Home Office (2007) claims that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men suffer from domestic violence at some point in their lives. The British Crime Survey (2005/06) estimated that 5.7% of women and 4.0% of men suffered domestic violence that was non sexual in the last year prior to the survey. Therefore statistics seem to suggest that men are the perpetrators of violence more than women, supporting the theory of 'gender asymmetry'. A minority of women victims may have been abused by their female partner in lesbian relationships which would be reflected in the statistics, therefore one must take this into account when analysing the figures. One should also consider that male victims tend not to report domestic abuse for a variety of reasons, therefore the British Crime Surveys and

Home Office statistics are likely to significantly under estimate the actual extent of domestic violence towards men (British Crime Survey estimates 1995-2006/2007: 1).

However, family violence researchers believe in 'gender symmetry' with regards to domestic violence (Dobash and Dobash 2004, 327, Malloy et al 2003: 40). The British Crime Survey (1996) states the 4.2% of men and 4.2% of women had been physically assaulted by a current or former partner in the last year prior to the survey. Therefore suggesting violence is equally demonstrated by both partners. However, one should note these figures are over 10 years old and could be considered out of date. Family violence researchers focus on the mutual importance between genders claiming that both men and women who perpetrate domestic violence possess similar characteristics, motivations and experiences (Dobash and Dobash 2004: 327). However, Migliacco (2002) argues that experiences of abused men and women will never be equal as their experiences are not identical.

The Dobash and Dobash article (2004), mentioned above, is supposed to focus on male victims as the title suggests 'Women's violence to Men in intimate relationships'. However, the article actually focuses on women victims; therefore the emphasis is taken away from male victims thus failing to understand their experiences. If we are not truly striving to understand their experiences then how can we acknowledge how prevalent domestic violence towards men is and provide adequate support.

The belief that men are viewed as perpetrators rather than women creates a gender issue based on stereotypes. The feminist philosophy is that men are primarily the offender and their female partner is the victim (Miller et al 2005: 341). Feminists do not believe that women have the potential to be perpetrators of domestic violence. Miller et al (2005:

347) does acknowledge that some women are violent, 'only 5 of the 95 women engaged in truly violent behaviour', but disregarded these findings promptly as their research is deeply rooted in feminism therefore does not recognise male victims of female perpetrated domestic abuse. In ignoring these figures they are moving away from domestic violence being a human issue (Kimbrell 1995: 165) and generating a gender issue. However, Erin Prizzey, a well known feminist who founded the first refuge for abused women, believes that violence is not a gender issue because in her point of view violence is due to a dysfunctional background which both men and women can experience in their youth (The Guardian 26/11/01), thus implying domestic violence is a family/societal issue. Prizzey later wrote that out of the 'first 100 women who came to the refuge, 61 were as violent as the men they had left' (www.parity-uk.org 2007) thus suggesting gender symmetry between men and women.

The Home Office supports the view that domestic violence is a gender issue as the initiatives government have implemented are only to promote the needs of female victims. The Supporting People initiative for Women at Risk of Domestic Violence provides funding to female victims but not male victims (Mankind Initiative 2008: 29), therefore surrounding domestic abuse with bias. Some organisations that help female victims can be viewed to take advantage of this female orientated bias. Sandra Harley, director of a family refuge stated 'refuges for women are struggling to survive, and if we put across this idea that abuse of men is as great as the abuse of women, then it could seriously affect funding' (The Spectator 1992 cited in Palin-Davis 2005: 23). These institutions and agencies should be promoting domestic abuse as a 'human issue' where all victims,

regardless of gender, are entitled to help and support. They should not be discriminating between genders.

MacInnes (1998) cited in Edwards (2006: 20) argues that gender is ‘an ideology people use in modern societies to imagine the existence of differences between men and women on the basis of their sex where in fact there are none.’ In other words gender is only a concept constructed by society and if this is the case then the arguments for a gendered issue are ultimately linked back to society. Society has a major influence on male victims of domestic abuse in that traditionally men were privileged at the expense of women (Eirik 1998: 77, Palin-Davis 2005: 25). Men were viewed as the breadwinner who would enforce and maintain control in the household, whereas women took the role of nurturer. These stereotypical views are instilled in society and reflected repeatedly by the media so people are reluctant to believe women could perpetrate violence as men are the dominant sex. Gender roles were defined before the public notion of patriarchy came to the forefront of beliefs using the ‘Skimington’ and the idea of ‘riding the donkey backwards’ (George 1994: 137). Men who were found to be beaten by their wives were publicly humiliated to conform to societies roles that they are the dominant sex and women are subordinate (George 2002 :118). This had the effect of repressing male victims therefore it is these views that keep male victims invisible. Jackie Richardson, a practitioner at Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre, states that ‘society has a very anti-man attitude as far as domestic violence is concerned’ (The Observer 7/12/2003) suggesting that all men are acknowledged as perpetrators due to the hurt and pain a minority has inflicted on women. I am not justifying these men’s actions but ‘our anger towards men as victimisers blinds us to men who are victims’ (Farrell 2001: 221).

Kimbrell (1995: 48) argues that domestic violence whether male or female should not be about society or gender but should be seen as a 'human issue' where all victims can get the help they need to rebuild their lives (Richardson in *The Observer* 7/12/2003). George (1994) argues that battered men deserve help along with Dobash and Dobash (2004) who acknowledge that responding to the needs of male victims should be identical to responding to the needs of female victims, therefore equal services, refuges and funding should be available for men as well as women. At this moment in time this is not the case; men have significantly less help available to them. Hines et al (2007) concluded that after research into the characteristics of callers to a male helpline, domestic violence is a 'human issue' rather than that of a gender issue, which they originally believed, as victims, regardless of their gender, they experience similar feelings, emotions and behaviours. They pleaded that 'violence by women should be taken seriously so that the goal of ending all violence can be achieved' (Hines et al 2007: 69).

Masculinity influences why men are viewed as perpetrators of domestic violence as it involves men asserting their authority over women but masculinity also influences why male victims of domestic violence find it difficult to seek help and support. Male victims seem reluctant to get help as their self esteem and confidence has deteriorated due to the violence but, regardless, they still want to remain 'manly' to the outside world (Battered Men: Hidden Lives 2006). Stereotypical views have been instilled in society about how gender roles are adopted. Palin-Davis (2005) and Eirik (1998) both discuss the traditional gender roles embedded in society in terms of patriarchy, where men are privileged at the expense of women. Connell (1987: 183) terms this as 'hegemonic masculinity' where women are subordinate to men in society. Connell (1987: 185)

claims that it is ‘hegemonic masculinity... what sustains their [men’s] power and what a large number of men are motivated to support.’ If men are not able to sustain their power a threat of inferiority materialises creating uncertainty amongst the gender roles (Eirik 1998: 77) where women can take superior control, leaving men feeling inferior and unworthy. Eirik (1998: 79) similarly states that if a man fails at patriarchy then ‘he will no longer have that which makes him a man.’ When these gender constructions are challenged by women it disrupts the traditional ideology of the dominant male therefore male victims of domestic violence perpetrated by women feel ashamed. The violence they experience has a feminising effect causing them to feel less manly (Alder 1978: 15, Edwards 2006: 61). It is very much an issue of pride.

Many men deny that they are victims of domestic violence in order to still feel masculine. Others feel to embarrassed to seek help and advice and those victims that do try and seek help from the police or social services are sometimes ridiculed (Mankind Initiative 2007, 3/4) as such agencies do not believe men can be victims of domestic violence due to social constructions. Geis (1993) argued that we disregard information that is inconsistent with societal stereotypes. The Dispatches: ‘Battered Men’ Survey (1998) concluded that 49% of men never sought help from the police because they felt the police would be unsympathetic or disbelieve them. Hence, there is a culture of silence amongst male victims of domestic violence (The Evening Chronicle 28/09/04).

The Government openly support and help female victims of domestic abuse however there is no evidence they attempt in any way to help male victims. Baroness Scotland (10/6/2005), a Home Office minister, stated ‘the Government recognise that the majority of issues and services are focused on women and make no apology for that.’

Actively, claiming the government will not help male victims. The government is very contradictory on its beliefs concerning domestic violence. Tony Blair (12/09/2006) termed domestic violence as a 'cowardly crime that no one should have to suffer' and Baroness Scotland (05/03/2007) stated 'no one should have to live with fear of violence and abuse in their own homes.' Therefore suggesting every victim of domestic abuse should be entitled to help and support regardless of their gender. However, male victims have no refuge dedicated specifically to men and receive no funding (Mankind Initiative 2008: 29). It would seem that government are just using lip service to appear gender neutral and comply with equal opportunity policies (Dewar Research 2004: 44). The Home Office and British Crime Surveys have produced research proving that domestic violence towards men does occur but still no help is available, thus suggesting the government are turning a blind eye to male victims. Therefore it seems men have become 'the forgotten victim' of domestic violence (Mankind Initiative 2007: 3).

The Mankind Initiative, a charity that strives to help male victims of domestic violence, believes the lack of support by government is amounting to 'institutionalised discrimination' (Mankind Initiative 2007: 7). As every aspect of government policy is centred towards female victims this influences society, police and other agencies involved thus heightening the stereotypical views already present. If government holds these attitudes then we can expect police, social services, health care workers and courts do as well (Seelau and Seelau 2005: 364). Therefore, an inherent bias is created which fundamentally jeopardises help and support available for male victims. Geis (1993: 75) states that 'stereotypical beliefs of men and women can cause biased perceptions and discriminatory treatment of them.'

A final debate that has developed from the literature is a very controversial belief that women will use the pro-female stance within society to claim self defence under false pretences. George (2007) claims that the prejudice and discrimination against male victims allows abusive women to manipulate the agencies such as the police to further victimise their male partners. Abusive women could wrongly claim self defence as they know society will believe them rather than their male partner (Battered Men: Hidden Lives 2006). The Dispatches: 'Battered Men' Survey (1998: 5) found that the police normally removed the man from the situation even when they were the obvious victim and in 25% of cases the man was arrested even though it was them that contacted the police. However, feminists strongly believe that women who are violent towards their male partners is an act of self defence because they believe men are primarily perpetrators of violence, therefore if women retaliate it is in self defence (Miller et al 2005: 349). This is a very sensitive claim that can only amount to speculation as no one knows what happens behind closed doors.

Methodology

From other research studies into the area of male victims of domestic violence perpetrated by female partners, it is known that the issue is very complex and complicated due to the circumstances surrounding domestic violence, therefore this topic has gone widely under researched (Dewar Research 2004: 2). Thus, the aim of my research is to gain an understanding into the thoughts and feelings of male victims of domestic violence perpetrated by their female partners and the help available to them by organisations, society and government.

To obtain this understanding, primary qualitative empirical research will be conducted in the form of an interview with organisations campaigning for male victims of domestic violence. In contacting the organisations information was provided into the help available for male victims from people with knowledge who engage with male victims on a regular basis. Due to domestic violence being a vulnerable and sensitive area I felt it was inappropriate to conduct in depth interviews with the victims themselves as I do not possess any training and skills in this area (Walby and Myhill 2001: 509). It would not have been ethically correct for me to do so. Therefore communicating with those that work closely with victims provided the best insight, as they acted as advocates on behalf of the victims. The time scale for this research was a month to 2 months allowing for the organisations to be identified, contacted, given time to respond and the interviews set up and conducted. The organisations were hand picked as it is difficult to locate a range of agencies that help male victims due to the secretive nature of the topic. They were contacted via email as it is a quick, specific and direct method of informing the organisation of the research and the response rate is also quick and direct (Bryman 2004: 485). When chasing up organisations I knew they would have received the email, unlike a letter. The limitation of this method of contacting agencies is that it alienates those who do not have an email account or it is not in use any longer (Walby and Myhill 2001: 511). In these instances I contacted the organisations via telephone if these details were provided.

The interviews took a semi structured form to enable pre determined questions to be used to help guide the interview through certain areas of discussion. If the interview was rigidly structured it would not allow for flexibility to interact with the organisations

comments. However, if an unstructured approach was adopted there would be no consistency between each interview. Therefore a semi structured approach was beneficial to gain an understanding of the issues discussed, as certain points can be prompted depending on the reactions or contribution of the participant and there is still consistency between interviews in terms of the words used and questions asked (Bryman 2004: 321). I felt it was beneficial for me to have a structure so no vital question was missed out thus meaning valuable issues did not go undiscussed. Four of the questions involve a rating scale from poor to excellent to help gage the participants answer. The advantage of including a scale is that it helps measure a concept and makes the data analysis easier when combining all the interviews together as the initial answer is stated then one can go on to consider the reasons why (Bryman 2004: 67/68). The areas of discussion centre on the organisations thoughts and feelings about the help and support available for male victims of domestic violence perpetrated by female partners. A copy of the interview script can be found in appendix 3. The interview questions were approved to ensure they were ethically correct, along with the pre and post interview scripts (appendix 1 and 4).

Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes with each organisation, three in total, to obtain a range of data which produced rich information on a number of issues surrounding male victims of domestic violence. The interviews were conducted via telephone and recorded using a dictaphone, except for one of the interviews which took place on a face to face basis. Originally, I would have preferred all the interviews to be in person as it is easier to engage with each other and build a rapport with the participant to discuss this complex issue (Migliacco 2002: 32) but due to geographical reasons this

was not possible. It would have been too costly to travel to each organisation. Therefore, the option of phone interviews with the organisations I could not reach was perfect as the research was still able to be conducted regardless of geographical complications. To overcome the initial difficulty of creating a rapport with the participant a friendly nature was adopted over the phone with every detail of the interview being explained to help the participant feel at ease and establish a relationship so they felt they wanted to discuss the questions raised. As I was unable to observe the participants reaction, I paid close attention to the participants tone to determine whether they were confused and needed clarification or hesitant and needed an explanation (Bryman 2004: 115). A disadvantage with phone interviews is that the participant may become disengaged; therefore I tried to exchange ideas with the participant to keep them interested (Noakes and Wincup 2004: 79). I felt a mixture of both a face to face interview and a phone interview was beneficial as I was able to gain the experience of conducting an interview in person, but also the knowledge from the phone interviews in minimum time, in terms of travel, as time was precious.

Originally, each interview was to last 45 minutes to an hour but the organisations may have been put off by this time scale and realistically the interview would probably not have lasted this long therefore the duration of the interview was changed to 30 minutes. I had to remember that the organisations and I have busy schedules so an hour interview was not appropriate. Frey (2004) proposed that telephone interviews were unlikely to be sustainable beyond 20-25 minutes, so a 30 minute interview is even stretching that however was a suitable time scale for me to complete each interview. Also in terms of transcribing the data collected, Bryman (2004: 331) notes it takes

approximately 6 hours to transcribe per hour of speech. Hence a time consuming task, so it was beneficial for a 30 minute interview to be conducted rather than an hour interview. If the interview exceeded 30 minutes and the participant was willing to continue then it did as meaningful data was collected. If the interview produced any irrelevant data not concerning the issues being discussed then it was not transcribed to save time and resources (Noakes and Wincup 2004: 130).

Another variation from my original plan is that I have interviewed 3 organisations whereas I originally intended to speak to 4 or 5 organisations. The main reason for interviewing only 3 is that some of the organisations contacted were unable to participate whereas others contact details were not in use therefore unreachable. Due to the nature of male victims of domestic violence being a taboo subject the information regarding agencies and the help available is not easily accessible. In addition the time constraints on this research meant I could not have kept contacting agencies forever therefore I felt 3 organisations would be sufficient. I would have preferred to include more than 3 organisations because more data could have been collected and contrasted which may have produced different information. Nevertheless, I feel the information collected is sufficient to develop an understanding and answer the research question with insight.

Primary quantitative forms of empirical research were considered to collect data on this issue. A questionnaire could have been distributed to male refuges to obtain information on similar issues as discussed in the interview. This method would have produced a lot of data effectively (Bryman 2004: 133) but domestic violence, in any form, is an extremely sensitive issue so questionnaires would not be an appropriate method as they are very 'cold' in appearance which may raise concerns regarding ethical issues.

Additionally, a questionnaire would not produce the insight and understanding into male victims of domestic violence needed to answer the research question. It would only scratch the surface. Therefore, a qualitative interview was the most appropriate method as rich, in depth and meaningful data was collected to help develop our understanding and knowledge (Noakes and Wincup 2004: 122). An interview enables you to hear the views of others rather than just a tick in the box or sentence explaining why as with questionnaires.

Data analysis involved critically analysing the transcribed data collected from the interviews by placing the information into themes or areas of new knowledge, and then relating the findings back to secondary sources of literature, research and theories to enable the research question to be answered. The views and practices of the participants were not discredited at any point nor were any other literary pieces. They have been compared and contrasted to create a creditworthy discussion (Noakes and Wincup 2004: 134). The secondary sources were collected from accredited literature, journals, newspapers and media sources, all were obtained using the internet and library facilities. If access to organisations did prove unfruitful then my alternative was to form library based secondary research analysing other academic work that has discussed similar issues and undergone similar research in order to answer the research question.

In conducting this research the British Society of Criminology (BSC) Code of Ethics for Researchers needed to be complied with to ensure each interview was carried out in an ethical manner. The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to 'offer some guidance to researchers in the field in keeping with the aims of the Society to value and promote the highest ethical criminological research.' (BSC 2006) The Code of Ethics does not

provide resolutions but adopts principles to assist with decisions (BSC 2006). Domestic violence is a sensitive area of study hence extra care must be taken not to cause harm to others. The interviews were not conducted with male victims themselves but organisations that help male victims of domestic abuse. Nevertheless, ethical considerations were present. The pre interview script discussed the nature and purpose of the interview fully, in order not to deceive the participants and enable them to give their informed consent. The pre interview script explained to the participant they had the right to withdraw from the interview at anytime and to withhold information for full confidentiality (BSC 2006 s4 (iii)). If any information was disclosed, such as a name, then this information remains private and confidential unless the participant consents otherwise. Debriefing of the participants occurred after the interview had finished where confidentiality was reiterated and assistance and support offered if any questions arose from the interview.

After finishing my fieldwork, I feel the response from the organisations involved was positive and informative. They clarified my beliefs on the issue that male victims suffer from a lack of help and support but also provided new insight and understanding into certain areas such as governmental influence and their lack of support towards male victims of domestic abuse. It was a difficult task to contact agencies as their contact information is not easily accessible and in some cases the details given were no longer correct, the aggravation I felt must be how male victims feel when they try to seek help. In a few instances, agencies were unwilling to participate for their own valid reasons; however through inactive participation issues surrounding male victims go undiscussed. Therefore the current help and support available will not be improved as there is no

pressure for male victims to be recognised and heard within society. Nevertheless, the experience of conducting my own interviews and the process of forming an interview script has been very beneficial as it is a new skill I have learnt and I would feel confident using if I were to conduct further research in the future. The face to face interview was a positive experience with both the participant and myself feeling at ease to discuss the issues. The face to face structure made it easier to engage in a conversation with the participant, whereas in the phone interviews when I contributed to the participant's views it felt like I was interrupting rather than aiding the conversation, however I did improve this with the second phone interview. I would aim to improve my technique with phone interviews in future research however, initially, I would strive to conduct interviews in person and only use phone interviews when necessary. One thing I did not account for was interference when recording a phone interview as I was using a mobile phone. It made it hard to transcribe the data but not impossible because it was mainly my voice that could not be heard rather than the participants.

Findings

After completing the interviews the general consensus amongst the participants is that there is a lack of help and support available to male victims of female perpetrated domestic violence, particularly because of the inherent social structures and attitudes within society and the lack of recognition of male victims amongst government and authorities. This conclusion supports the research question that male victims of domestic violence struggle to be heard therefore providing validity to the supporting literature and research into this area.

The sample size for the research was only small, amounting to three participants, due to the difficulty obtaining informed, willing participants. The nature of this taboo subject created obstacles in terms of locating and contacting organisations which therefore had implications on the research plan. The original proposal was interviews with five organisations which had to be decreased to only three. Nevertheless, the data collected is a significant and valid contribution to the present literature on male victims of domestic violence.

What Help is currently Available?

The participants and the organisations try to help male victims in different ways with different services, however all three believe the amount of help available for male victims is poor, as it was the lowest on the scale, but one participant even stretched to 'very poor' exceeding the scale of responses. Therefore there is very little help available for male victims. The position that male victims are at now has been described as the position women victims of male perpetrated domestic violence were in, in the 1970's when Erin Prizzey opened the first female refuge, only just being recognised!

'we believe that services for male victims are 35 years behind those services for female victims and the reason I say that is because the first refuge was opened in the early 70's...and that's when women refuge or if you like women as domestic violence victims movement started and...there's nothing for men so its 35 years behind.' (P 1)

'its getting better its been absolutely non existent...so anything's better than nothing.' (P 2)

The effectiveness of the help that is available was also rated at poor, some did not wish to explicitly state this but their additional comments imply the help is of a poor quality and could be improved,

‘I think their well meaning...I don’t know how effective they are...just it is people who are not in anyway trained it is just people doing it out of the goodness of their heart etc...but as far as the quality I don’t think their necessarily...as well qualified and as skilled in doing what their doing as they should be.’ (P 3)

When comparing the services available for male victims to those available for female victims the response was, again, poor. Female victims have access to certain privileges over men such as refuges. There is no refuge specifically for male victims in England, only 11 rooms and they are only available if they are not occupied by women. The reason for this inequality is that domestic violence is not seen as a male issue, there is an anti-man, male hate culture surrounding domestic abuse as men are seen to be the perpetrators not the victim. The media have fuelled this anti man culture by conforming to the ‘wife beater’ headlines which increase the public sympathy for female victims. However, one participant did acknowledge that the media was due some credit as debates and documentaries have appeared recently on Channel 4 ‘Battered Men Hidden Lives’, GMTV and Radio 5 to raise awareness for male victims and there are more male centred articles present in the newspapers. Therefore suggesting the ‘media are changing their tune’ (P 1) which will help others to recognise that men do suffer some from domestic violence and hopefully impact upon society as a whole to change their stereotypical views.

Furthermore one participant does not solely blame society; they argue that male victims have not been coming forward to stand up for themselves in order for society to recognise there to be a problem. This is similar to other men’s rights movements such as father’s rights. They believe pressure should be placed upon society to acknowledge male victims, which is what women campaigners did in the 1970’s. However it is not as

easy as that. Women have the public sympathy whereas man has to overcome the anti man culture and associated societal stigma to repress male victims. Therefore it is difficult for abused males to apply pressure to entuse change. Other proposals for improving the services available to male victims varied between the participants, one participant promoted advertising to increase awareness among society and another claimed there to be a need to train those helping male victims as most are just volunteers, another agency supports the notion of training to be crucial as they had recently appointed project manager to train those involved and local authorities on how to help and deal with male victims. Most importantly though was the need for government to recognise male victims of domestic violence and pro actively support their needs.

Government Provisions

Every participant was passionate in declaring that government did not do enough for male victims, stating that government ‘deny’ and turn a ‘blind eye’ to the abused male. Participant C believes that government is ‘at the heart of the morals to punish men for [being] victims’ therefore government disapprove and discriminate against men who are victims of domestic violence. Participant A described it as institutional sexism with government ignoring the Home Office figures that explicitly show men to be victims. Another term used by a participant to describe government actions was ‘lip service’ as they listen and sympathise but never actually aid male victims through funding or awareness.

‘they would say there all terribly sympathetic...in actual fact when it came to doing anything as the politician no they would not’ (P3)

The consensus that government is not recognising male victims is reflected by Baroness Scotland (2005), a Home Office minister, who openly admitted all issues and services

were focused on female victims of domestic violence, not male victims. It is all part of the politics of government, they know in supporting women victims they will receive votes but if they support male victims they will be less popular as it goes against societal norms which people find unfavourable. Society can accept men to be violent to women but have trouble believing women can abuse men and even more difficulty with accepting that women can be violent. Therefore society denies and does not want to accept women to be violent, even though, today, women's violence is becoming more visible with the formation of girl gangs. The underlying response from the interviews was that the significant change needed to come from government, arguing there needed to be official recognition on their part and pro active practical support. If government actively supported male victims then society's preconceptions and stereotypes would fade, allowing abused men to be visible and the concept to be socially acceptable. Thus, abused men and violent women would get the help they needed.

Police Attitudes and Actions

The beliefs that government hold impact upon the authorities attitudes and actions towards male victims in particular the police. The police try to be fair and equal when addressing domestic disputes but, regardless, they tend to discriminate against men due to innate societal stereotypes. The findings suggest that the police, for instance, feel comfortable in delivering a service they know which is a female centred service so in reality no matter how hard authorities try they will always tend to favour the female victim.

'still what happens is that in the way the system works...they tend to discriminate against males even though there trying hard not to.' (P 3)

Therefore suggesting the only way to stop this discrimination is to change or rectify the present system in place for helping victims of domestic violence. One participant argues that there is a need to change, vary or create a new system to deal specifically with male victims as at present it is a female focused policy to deal with female victims.

‘even with the best will in the world and the best training in the world...even for a professional...because of the system and the stigma there is in the systems that your dealing with can not get as good a service to a male victim as he can, we can to a female...the whole system is set up to female victims’ (P 3).

Even though male and female victims share similar experiences, men have the added stigma of society to overcome so do not always feel comfortable with female focused policies to deal with their experience of domestic violence. Therefore the participant concludes that the system does not work because there is not a system for it to work.

‘sometimes the system tries to deal with them and treat them the same as female victims and I know some men have been very put off by that.’ (P 3)

Male Victims Attitudes and Actions

All participants agreed that men are extremely reluctant to ask for help for various reasons but most centre on masculinity and male pride. Male victims do not want to be seen as weak and unmanly. Throughout history men were ridiculed for being beaten by their wife and were publicly humiliated through acts such as riding a donkey backwards whilst holding its tail. These actions and beliefs that men are not victims have been instilled in society therefore societal stereotypes have developed to only view men as abusers, not the abused. The oppression of male victims makes it hard for them to speak out and get help. Some male victims find it hard to comprehend that they are a victim so choose to deny they are being beaten and abused. They make excuses for the violence

because they claim they still love her, in this respect 'sometimes men are their own worst enemy' (P 3). Others are worried that if they seek help they may be charged as the perpetrator rather than victim.

'when they do go and seek help they do find...people are unprofessional and don't give them the help they deserve.' (P 3)

The lack of sympathy for male victims of domestic violence makes it difficult for them to talk to anyone, even their friends, because people feel uncomfortable with the situation as it goes against the stereotypes they are used to. This reluctance by male victims and the surrounding issues can help explain why pressure has not been used by men to gain awareness of male victims of domestic violence. Women can use pressure as they know society, authorities and government will sympathise.

Female Violence or Self Defence

In response to whether women claim self defence when actually they are the sole perpetrators of the violence the participants all acknowledged that it does occur. The participants were reluctant to place a percentage on the occurrence of this but they stated whether they believed it to be a minority or a majority. Two of the participants claimed it to be a minority of women; however one of those participants seemed pressured to say it was a minority because of the repercussions there maybe if it was said to be otherwise.

'I would presume they were in a minority...if I didn't say that I have [name removed] burning a bra outside my door...I wouldn't want to say its common...I have no evidence to say its common but it does happen' (P 1)

The third participant stated it was a majority of women who claimed self defence and manipulated the system to further victimise their husbands or partner. The participant argued it was women who frequently abused their husbands that tended to use this tactic to control.

‘what they will do is use the system...make out there the victim not the man concoct stories etc to try and get the system to harass...the man...know that all to well.’ (P 3)

The female perpetrators know they can take advantage of the system due the social constructions that portray women to be the only victim of domestic abuse therefore authorities tend help and believe the female. It must be noted that some police focuses try not to discriminate but in reality it is difficult not to. There is a lack of research and evidence in this area due to the complex nature. It is hard to examine such an issue because it is one word against the other therefore we will probably never know how prevalent this issue is.

Summary

The findings clarify and support the debates and beliefs surrounding male domestic abuse and provided insight and knowledge which was needed to gain an understanding of the issues discussed. Society is the main influencing factor as the construction maintains that man is not abused therefore concluding the lack of recognition of male victims of domestic violence is a societal issue. In order to overcome these stereotypes and provide the help male victims require these social constructions need to be changed mainly through government.

A new concept that has materialised from the research which relates back to societal influence is the argument that men beat their female partners through fear of being dominated by them. History has taught men not be dominated by their wives through the notion of patriarchy and the fact it will be frowned upon by society. If men are dominated then they would have been publicly humiliated. Therefore it is this denial and repression of male victims amongst society that causes men to fear being dominated so

thus dominate their wives or partners in order not to experience society's disapproval and humiliation.

'I believe that the denial and trivialisation of male victims underlies why men beat up women...in some men it is that fear of being seen as being dominated by woman being subjected which...will lead them to then...to be violent against a girlfriend or wife or something just to make sure their never in that position where...they feel there surrogated, dominated, henpecked' (P 3).

Evaluation

I feel the findings of the research have enabled me to answer the research question and confirm the preconceptions that there is lack of help and support available for male victims of female perpetrated domestic violence. The findings demonstrate that the help available is poor due to the lack of governmental recognition and societal repression of male victims, this is what needs to be addressed for change to occur.

I feel I have achieved what I wanted as I have managed to collect and analyse data on a sensitive issue to provide insight and understanding into the issues surrounding male domestic violence. However, I feel the research would have been stronger if I had been able to interview more than three participants. I found it difficult to find participants who were willing to take part in the research partly due to their busy schedules and partly because the contact information available was no longer in use. If more than three participants were involved then the data collected may have provided a better insight and possibly revealed new areas of discussion. The lack of willing participants confirms the findings that men or male help organisations are not pressuring society to recognise male victims of domestic abuse do exist and need help and attention. The system for dealing

with male victims can not change unless there is an increase in awareness and recognition amongst society to challenge the norms and break inherent social stereotypes. It is difficult for male activists to apply pressure due to the anti man atmosphere surrounding domestic violence but in order to help themselves abused males need to rise above societies repression and speak out. On the other hand society and government need to be open to change. Even though their beliefs are deeply rooted in patriarchy, society and government can not keep ignoring or paying 'lip service' to the mounting evidence that males do suffer from domestic violence. The media and British Crime Surveys have provided explicit evidence of abused males but still there is a lack of recognition, biased and discriminatory treatment of male victims by the authorities.

I would have liked to continue searching for participants but the time constraints of this piece meant I could not. I feel I left the contacting a little too late to achieve my desired result of five organisations as I did not account for the difficulties I encountered. Nevertheless, the participants I did interview were very helpful, informative and provided meaningful data therefore I feel the research question has been answered sufficiently with the contribution relevant literature. With hindsight if I were to conduct research involving interviews in future I would allocate a significant time period to the contacting and conducting of such interviews and I would advise others to do the same.

Therefore, overall, the research question has been answered to the best extent in the circumstances. Every contributing factor, such as government, society, masculinity, has been discussed to provide insight into the research question to understand why there is a lack of help and support for male victims. The findings have also revealed a new concept to help understand why men beat women. The repression and humiliation of

men as victims throughout history has caused men to act in a dominant way and take control to ensure they are never in a situation where they are the victim. Therefore men's violence to their female partners is ultimately out of fear of repression and humiliation by society.

Discussion

The research findings support the literature relating to this area of discussion. The findings show that the services available for male victims of domestic violence to be poor mainly due to the underlying theme, present throughout the findings, that domestic violence towards men is a social issue as innate stereotypes prevent others from realising this violence is a problem. Also contributing to this view is the fact there is little evidence to raise awareness that male domestic abuse occurs as Gadd et al (2003) and Pagelow (1985) concluded, the latter stated '...there is no sufficient evidence this is a large scale syndrome...' (Pagelow 1985: 186). Therefore not realising there is a problem because 'it has not been defined as a problem' (Straus and Gelles 1986: 472). The main three reasons for the current lack of recognition and help derive from the influence of society, government and the authorities.

Societal Influence

Society is the main issue that governs the amount of help available for the abused male. Some feminists believe gender to be an issue (Miller et al 2005: 341) but as MacInnes (1998) rightly points out, gender is just a social construction that is used to make differences between men and women when in fact there is none. Therefore the concept of domestic violence being a gender issue relates back to society. Society,

throughout history, has instilled beliefs into the citizens through patriarchy that men are privileged at the expense of women (Palin-Davis 2005: 22 and Eirik 1998: 74). The traditional societal roles reflect men to be dominant and women to be subordinate as the men were viewed as the breadwinner who would enforce and maintain control in the household, whereas women took the role of nurturer. Connell (1987: 183) supports this notion with his belief in 'hegemonic masculinity'. He believes that men are motivated to support their dominant role and power because this defines them as a man. If they fail patriarchy then they lose what makes them a man (Eirik 1998: 79). This reasoning can explain why men live in denial or they suffer for years in silence before they speak out; they do not want to appear less manly to the outside world (Alder 1978: 15) or inferior to others (Eirik 1998: 77). For men who experience violence it can have a feminising effect (Alder 1978: 15, Edwards 2006: 61) as they feel subordinate to the female partner in the same way patriarchy makes women subordinate to men. In other terms they feel they have adopted the female gender role.

Even before patriarchy was a popular notion within society male roles were being defined. If men were found to be dominated by their wives then they would be publicly ridiculed using the Skimmington, whereby the abused husband would be socially humiliated for being beaten by his wife (George 2002: 118). The male victim would have been paraded around the town strapped to a cart for people's disapproval or in extreme circumstances he would have to ride a donkey backwards while holding its tail (George 1994: 137). These acts were to enforce social conformity and instil discipline to the gender roles of patriarchy (George 2002: 118). Therefore male victims were repressed within society and men were only allowed to be seen as dominant. The

stereotypes derived from the past now present obstacles for male victims as society believes men do not suffer domestic violence; they can only be the perpetrators of violence because they are the dominant sex. The new concept that the denial and repression of male victims causes men to abuse their wives through fear of being dominated by them and experiencing humiliation is a logical thought process that relates to the theories above. If this concept is true for some men then one could argue that if the stigma surrounding male victims was removed and the abused male was socially accepted then the violence experienced by some women would cease. Therefore suggesting in order to help female victims of domestic abuse society must embrace male victims. However, there are many factors that are rooted in domestic abuse so the violence may not cease, nevertheless the notion should be considered.

The feminist philosophy conforms to the ideals of society as they believe that only men can be perpetrators of domestic violence and that women are victims of their aggression (Miller et al 2005: 341). Any violence retaliated by the female is in self defence as feminists do not believe women have the potential to be perpetrators (Miller et al 2005: 341). However, some women have openly admitted they are the instigators of violence against their male partners. In the *Battered Men: Hidden Lives* (23/10/2006) documentary on Channel 5 two ladies admitted to beating their partners, 'I used to go absolutely mental on him' and 'I hit my husband...damaged his nose with a shoe.' Feminists and others in society find it too difficult to accept female aggression as it is inconsistent with patriarchy and the subsequent stereotypes so they tend to reject or ignore the truth (Geis 1993: 12). This ignorance is not productive as men as victims and women as aggressors are not receiving the help and support they need.

The anti male culture surrounding domestic violence has been further elevated by the interference of the media. The media have been criticised for conforming to the ‘wife beater’ headlines and portraying man to be the only perpetrators of domestic abuse (Dispatches: ‘Battered Men’ Survey 1998: 1). The hyperbole surrounding the media causes increased public sympathy for females and increased male hate as Jackie Richardson points out ‘society has a very anti man attitude as far as domestic violence is concerned’ (The Observer 7/12/2003). This hatred blinds society to men who are actually suffering from domestic abuse themselves (Farrell 2001: 221). However the media recently have begun to run articles, documentaries and interviews relating to the issue of the abused male. For instance, GMTV had a series of speakers talking about male victims and Radio 5 held a phone in with victims who wanted to speak out and discuss certain issues. This recognition by media will promote awareness of the abused male and hopefully impact on society to realise that both men and women can suffer domestic abuse from either their male or female partners.

Government Provisions

It is believed that government are at the heart of repressing male victims of domestic violence. The policies implemented by government seem neutral in appearance, ‘a cowardly crime that no one should have to suffer’ (Blair 12/09/06), but in reality government’s main focus is on female victims of domestic abuse (Baroness Scotland 10/06/04). This suggests that government are just providing ‘lip service’ to male victims with no intent of actually helping them (Dewar Research 2004: 44). One participant termed government’s behaviour as ‘institutional sexism’ as every aspect of policy is centred towards the female victims needs. For instance the Supporting People initiative

for Women at Risk of Domestic Violence provides funding to female victims (Mankind Initiative 2008: 29). The fact that government does not provide funding for help or refuges for male victims demonstrates their unsympathetic attitude. The research findings support that government turn a 'blind eye' to male victims. The statistics in the British Crime Surveys, that government produce, show that men do suffer from domestic violence. The British Crime Survey in 2006/07 estimated that 23% of the incidents reported were male sufferers. Nevertheless even though government obtain this data they do not actively recognise nor help male victims of abuse. The above evidence suggests that government are trying to be seen to promote equal opportunities but in reality they are doing as they please to uphold conformity to societal beliefs and instil discipline.

The consensus between the participants is that in order to combat the repression felt by male victims action needs to be implemented by government. They need to lead by example to change the inherent bias amongst society and the authorities. This is a difficult challenge because government's beliefs are deeply rooted in patriarchy. It is proposed this can be achieved through pressurising government to recognise male abuse to be a problem and then through pro active practical support for male victims (Mankind Initiative 2008: 3). This seems an unachievable task but if male victims, male help organisations, the media and anybody else who believes in equal rights pushes and pressurises government then sooner or later they will have to stop turning a 'blind eye' and actively recognise and implement help. Domestic violence needs to be seen as a human issue (Kimbrell 1995: 165, George 1994: 147), not a societal one where inherent biased stereotypes and stigma repress individuals and cause discrimination.

Police Attitudes and Actions

The police and other authorities that deal with domestic violence also have gender neutral policies and guidelines which are suppose to apply to all victims (Dewar Research 2004: 44). Nevertheless the repression of male victims through society and government can influence the police and the application of these policies as the view held by one tends to be held by all (Seelau and Seelau 2005: 364). Some police forces do try to deal with domestic violence cases in a non biased manner but in reality discrimination against male victims is inevitable due to social constructions therefore treatment of abused males is not equal to that of abused females (Geis 1993: 11). The findings suggest that the police feel discomfort when helping male victims as it disrupts social beliefs therefore an approach favourable to female victims is adopted to conform to societal norms. Research has demonstrated that the police will arrest the man even when they are the obvious victim, 25% of men were arrested when they were the ones that contacted the police (Dispatches: 'Battered Men' Survey 1998: 5). Therefore supporting a female centred approach and condemning male victims.

This suggests that the system in place is not appropriate to deal with male victims of domestic violence. Dobash and Dobash (2004) believe that responding to the needs of male victims should be identical to responding to the needs of female victims because they experience similar situations. Therefore implying an appropriate system would be one where both genders are treated the same. This is true but at present male victims have the 'status of second class citizens' (Dewar Research 2004: 10) compared to female victims due to the fact they have no funding or refuges. Even though both genders should be equal in terms of quality of care they receive, it has been suggested that the systems that deal with victims should be slightly different for males and females. The

findings report that men do feel uncomfortable being dealt with in a female focused system because they are not female they are male.

‘sometimes the system tries to deal with them and treat them the same as female victims and I know some men have been very put off by that.’ (P 3)

Migliacco (2002) argues that this is because experiences of abused men and women will never be equal because men have the added stigma of society to overcome therefore it may encourage male victims to come forward if they knew they would be dealt with separately.

The lack of sympathy by police has a detrimental impact on male victims as they feel reluctant to seek help. In the Dispatches: ‘Battered Men’ Survey (1998) they found that 49% of men never sought help from the police as they felt the police would be unsympathetic or disbelieve them. Alternatively, men are also reluctant to get help in case they are ridiculed. Participant 2 discussed how a housing officer laughed when presented with a male victim. This is visible bias which reinforces the oppression of male victims and makes it difficult for the abused male to stand up for their rights. It was suggested within the research findings that abused men and male help organisations have not been pressuring government or society to realise that domestic abuse towards men is a problem. Therefore arguing male victims are not helping themselves. Female victims of male perpetrated domestic violence campaigned for recognition over 35 years ago and instilled pressure to get the help they needed. However, the above reasons of oppression and societal stigma make it extremely difficult for men to apply pressure. Society has made it easier for females to instil pressure as they hold public sympathy, whereas male

victims have 'unsympathetic publicity' (Dewar Research 2004: 46) and societies instilled stigma to overcome.

Female Violence or Self Defence?

The findings and literature support the notion that female perpetrators do claim self defence under false pretences, however there is no conclusive evidence on the frequency of these claims. It is acknowledged that in certain cases women do retaliate with violence in self defence (Miller et al 2005: 341) but in other instances the female partner is the instigator of the violence (Battered Men: Hidden Lives 2006). When circumstances like this are publicly broadcasted it is difficult for society to accept as it invalidates everything they believe therefore they repress the male victims. Society can not keep ignoring male victims when there is evidence that abuse towards men is a problem. The Battered Men: Hidden Lives (2006) documentary on Channel 5 included interviews with violent females who abused their husbands. This clearly demonstrates that women can be violent and the men who do suffer need help just as female victims do.

The female perpetrators know they can manipulate the system because societal constructions have created public sympathy for women in relation to domestic violence. Violent women know that 'the police are more likely to believe any 'story' she tells' (Dispatches: 'Battered Men' Survey 1998: 4). In the Dispatches: 'Battered Men' Survey (1998) only in 7% of the cases the female aggressor was arrested and in none of these instances were they charged. In most cases the police removed the man from the violent household even when he is the obvious victim (Dispatches: 'Battered Men' Survey 1998: 5). It can be argued that women's organisations also manipulate the system but in a

different sense. Sandra Harley, a director of family refuge, stated that if they put across the view that male victims were as great as female victims then it would affect their funding (The Spectator 1992 cited in Palin-Davis 2005: 23) therefore playing on societies views that male victims are non existent and that men are dominant. Women's organisations should want to help male victims as they know from helping females the trauma and emotional hurt domestic abuse can cause. One would think they would see domestic violence as a human issue not a societal one which they can use to their advantage.

Conclusion

The research piece has explored the nature and extent of help available to male victims, concluding that the help is minimal and of a poor quality. I feel the research question has been answered with insight confirming the preconceptions that the lack of recognition is instilled in societal constructions and governmental beliefs. The aim of gaining an understanding was achieved and has provided information that confirms the thoughts of other literature in this area and added discussion to this under researched debate. The information gained from the research generally supports the notion that society and government are the underlying repressors of the abused male, even relating to the concept that the repression of male victims can cause men to abuse their female partners out of fear of being dominated themselves. If this concept is true to some male perpetrators of violence then in order to reduce their abuse it would seem male victims need to be embraced by society and not repressed.

In order to encourage abused men to break their silence and appear visible it would seem government are the authority to take a stand. They can not keep ignoring the evidence apparent to them. They need to officially recognise male victims do suffer from domestic violence and aid them with support, funding, refuges. There needs to be equality between female and male victims in terms of equal support even if the methods are dissimilar in administering the help. If the government were acknowledged to be recognising and supporting male victims then the societal repression would change gradually to accept men can be abused and have sympathy for them. Thus men would willingly come forward to receive help as they would know they would not be ridiculed and humiliated. I would urge abused men to come forward and pressurise government so they can not turn a 'blind eye' any longer.

The research provokes the debate concerning whether male victims should be treated within the same system as female victims. It is suggested that abused men should receive the same quality of care but the methods may be different to that of the female victim. At present the system is supposed to provide equal treatment but realistically it is centred towards the female victim, so men feel reluctant to seek help. It would be beneficial for male victims to have a separate system as it would encourage them to seek help and contact authorities as then know they will be treated as men, not women. However, this does go hand in hand with recognition and pro active support from government.

Nevertheless, one should note, the findings are subject to limitations within the research. The main limitation of this research is the use of only three participants. I found it difficult to find participants willing to take part due to their busy schedules and

the fact that for some their contact information was no longer in use. I did not account for these difficulties within my time scale therefore I was restricted to the three participants instead of my originally favoured five participants or more. If I were to re-conduct this research or others were to conduct similar research then I would encourage possible difficulties to be accounted for and the time scale to be adapted appropriately. The use of a small scale jeopardises the validity of this research but, also, reflects the secretive and repressive nature of the area discussed. The lack of willing participants confirms that men and male help organisations are not pressurising society or government to recognise male victims. The system can not change unless we challenge societal norms and encourage others to realise domestic abuse towards men is a problem which needs attention.

Future research needs to further explore the area of abused men as there is little research available. This links back to the taboo nature of the subject where men do not want to be identified as victims of domestic violence because of the atmosphere of repression. Possible research could focus on how government could administer change and help male victims. Relating to the area of male victims is the issue of female domestic aggression. This too is a widely under researched area (Dispatches: 'Battered Men' Survey 1998: 5) therefore future research could investigate what motivates females to become perpetrators of violence and the subsequent help available for them. If female domestic aggression can be understood then this may help explain the experiences of abused men and provide information for them to help avoid a violent encounter. It may also provide insight into the notion of female perpetrators manipulating the system.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Invitation via email

Appendix 2 – Pre Interview Script

Appendix 3 – Interview Questions

Appendix 4 – Debriefing Script

Appendix 1

Invitation via email.

Hello,

My name is Katie Lambert and I am a student at Sheffield Hallam University in my final year. For my dissertation I am interested in researching the impact of domestic violence on male victims. I am looking for organisations such as yourselves to participate in an approximately 30 minute (phone) interview to discuss issues surrounding domestic violence towards men by their female partners. The aim of my research is to gain an understanding into the victims thoughts and feelings and the help available to them. Additionally looking to how the attitudes of society and government impact on the male victims options. The research will be conducted in full confidence. It would be very beneficial to hear your expert view on these matters. I would be extremely grateful for your assistance in this research. If you are interested in taking part then please contact me via email on k.l.lambert@student.shu.ac.uk. Please respond before the (various dates used) in order to allow for arrangements to take place. Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Appendix 2

Pre interview script.

Thank you for your participation in this research. As I am sure you are aware the issue concerning male victims of domestic violence is a widely under researched area, therefore the purpose of my research is to provide an understanding into the issues surrounding male victims. The nature of the interview focuses on the help your organisation (Name) offers and your thoughts and feelings concerning the help available for male victims. At this point I must mention this interview is conducted in full confidentiality. I will not disclose any information you do not want to be disclosed. At any time throughout the interview if you feel uncomfortable or unable to carry on then you have the right to discontinue the interview.

Appendix 3

Interview Questions.

To clarify, it has been established that there are male victims of male perpetrated domestic violence but the focus of this research is on male victims of domestic violence perpetrated by female partners.

- 1) How does (organisations name) help male victims of female perpetrated domestic violence?

Services/ Advice

- 2) Do you know of any other help for male victims of domestic violence?

Refuges

- 3) What do you think about the amount of help available for male victims of domestic violence?

Would you say it was

- a) Poor
- b) Inadequate
- c) Adequate
- d) Good
- e) Excellent

Please give reasons for your answer.

- 4) What do you think about the effectiveness of help available for male victims of domestic violence?

Would you say it was

- a) Poor
- b) Inadequate
- c) Adequate
- d) Good
- e) Excellent

Please give reasons for your answer.

Is there any way help could be improved?

In comparison to the help and support available for female victims of domestic violence, how effective would you rate the help and support for male victims? a) Poor

- b) Inadequate
- c) Adequate
- d) Good
- e) Excellent

Please give reasons for your answer.

5) It has been widely thought that male victims are reluctant to get help, in your opinion is this true?

Yes/No

Please give reasons for your answer.

6) What role do you think society plays in this issue of male victims of domestic violence?

Stereotypes

7) Is the Government doing enough to tackle this issue?

Police and Social Services - Stereotypes influencing their judgment.

Legislation - Domestic Violence (Crime and Victims) Act 2004

8) In your opinion, do females who perpetrate domestic violence on their male partners pretend it is in self defence?

Yes/No

If so, how many females would estimate do this a) 0-25%

b) 25-50%

c) 50-75%

d) 75-100%

9) Do you believe it is appropriate to improve awareness that female perpetrated violence towards males does occur?

If so, who should improve awareness and what should be done?

Note: Is it ok to use your organisations name in this research piece?

Do you have any relevant literature that could further help me?

Appendix 4

Debriefing statement after interview

We have now come to the end of our interview. I would like to thank you for your participation; it is greatly valued in helping me with my research. I would like you to know again that the research is for the purpose of gaining an understanding into the issue of male victims of domestic violence and why they are not publicly visible. Hopefully this research will aid improvements in awareness, support and help for male victims. The information that you have disclosed will remain confidential. If you have any further questions concerning the research conducted please do not hesitate to ask me now or contact me at a later date. Thank you once again.

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