

## Domestic Violence against Men: Myth or Reality in the Nigerian Setting?

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### Abstract

*In many developed countries and some developing countries, incidences of domestic violence perpetrated by their partners have been reported by men. However, the position of authority and superiority accorded the male gender in the African culture tend to give credence to the believe by many people that domestic violence perpetrated by women on men is non-existent in this environment. Even though there is paucity of available empirical data on violence against men in Nigeria, is this to say that it does not exist? In a descriptive cross-sectional study, questionnaires were administered to 483 respondents selected through multi-stage sampling technique. Furthermore, selected Nigerian newspapers were analyzed for the reportage of violence against men and Focus Group Discussions were conducted. Quantitative data was analyzed by Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 20 while qualitative data was analyzed by detailed content analysis. Mean age of respondents was 29.7 + 9.2 years, 55.1% were males and 47.8% were ever-married. Higher awareness of domestic violence against women (DVAW) than against men (DVAM) was found among respondents (89.9% vs 86.1%) while 42.0% considered DVAM a new development in Nigeria. Wives (48.0%) and in-laws (17.2%) were the most commonly cited perpetrators. A quarter (25.7%) of respondents has ever been victims of DVAM, of these three-quarters sought for help. Perceived barriers to seeking for help include pride and embarrassment. Male gender and secondary education or higher were found to be the predictors of good perception of DVAM types. The study showed that DVAM is a reality in Nigeria in spite of cultural underpinning. Both the newspaper audit and the Focus Group Discussion affirmed the growing menace.*

**Keywords:** Domestic, Violence, Men, Nigeria.

### Introduction

Gender based violence (GBV) has been described along the UN General Assembly declaration as any act of violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women and in the context of wife battering, rape, commercial sexual exploitation, intimidation at work places, social exclusion, domestic abuse and violence, female genital mutilation or anything done by men to establish his authority over women socially, intellectually or economically (1). However, women and children are not the only one subjected to domestic violence. Men are victims of domestic violence as well. Although domestic abuse is often talked about in relation to women, it is important to recognize that men also experience domestic abuse as victims too. Men's experiences are likely to be significantly different from that of women though. The research that is available suggests that women are more likely than men to experience domestic abuse in their lives and to suffer repeated victimization. They are also more likely to be injured, or have to seek medical help. There is no question that domestic violence directed against women is a serious and bigger problem, but the problem of domestic violence against men is also increasing gradually in Nigeria (2,3). The position of authority and superiority accorded men against women in the African society makes many people believe that men are not vulnerable to domestic violence. Battering of men by their spouses and

family members has become an issue of public health concern and is another form of domestic violence under the purview of the judiciary (4).

In many developed countries and some developing countries, males have reported incidences of assault against them like pushing, shoving, slapping, grabbing, hitting which are intended to harm them and also take their lives on many occasions. In a 1995 to 1996 study conducted by the U. S. Department of Justice (as published in 2000), out of 8,000 women interviewed or surveyed, almost 25% were subjected to domestic violence. In the same study, out of the 8,000 men interviewed, almost 7.5% were also victims of domestic violence. The same 1995 – 1996 study estimated that, annually, in the U. S., about 1.5 million women and around 830,000 men are victims of domestic violence. This is almost a 2:1 ratio of women versus men who were subjected to domestic violence (5).

Reasons proffered for domestic violence against men include not abiding by the instructions of the wives, inadequate earning of men, infidelity towards wives, not helping the partner in household activities, not taking proper care of children, abusing the spouse's family, infertility of men, spying the activities of partner, doubting the partner all the time and not trusting her, revolt by the wife when asked to look after in-laws etc. On many occasions the spat between men and women becomes public thereby influencing the society around especially in the villages. In urban areas such forms of violence may go unreported because of greater privacy. Also, the families find their reputation at stake in urban areas.

Domestic violence against men is not easily recognized because the image that is often in our minds is that of a battered woman or wife. Seldom do we think about a battered man or husband. To some people, the concept of domestic violence against men is so unthinkable that men often end up choosing to stay quiet if they become victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, a woman who was subjected to domestic violence (domestic abuse) will show more physical effects than a man who was also domestically abused. Physical abuse on women is more readily observable than physical abuse against men and even if men report that they were victims of domestic violence, people often find it hard to believe that the man's black eye or bruise on the face was caused by domestic violence (more likely, they will think that the bruises were the results of fights against other men). As a result, the man will think that nobody will actually believe him and, thus, will just prefer to keep his silence.

Many men who experience domestic abuse from a current or former partner find it difficult to get support; not least because it can be hard for men to acknowledge and discuss their experiences. This can be due to any number of reasons, including love for a partner, embarrassment or shame and concern for any children, or simply not knowing where to go. Men may also attempt different techniques to cope. Coping strategies including adopting an 'I can handle this' attitude and/or adapting their behavior to appease the abuser. Coping strategies like this may make life temporarily safer and easier but they are unlikely to stop the abuse.

This study therefore aimed to assess the perception of respondents about the reality of domestic violence against men (DVAM) in Nigeria against the backdrop of the African culture, to assess their knowledge of and attitude towards DVAM and to describe respondents' experiences of DVAM.

## **Materials and methods**

### **Description of study area**

The study area was Osun State, which is one of the thirty-six states in Nigeria. It is situated in the south-western part of the country and lies in the rainforest belt with altitudes of between 121.92m and 298.70m above the sea level. Osun State was carved out of the old Oyo state in 1991 and covers an area of approximately 14,875 square kilometres. Some of the major towns are Osogbo, which is the State capital, Ile-Ife, Ilesa, Ikirun, Iwo, Ede, Ila-Orangun and Ikire. Others include Ipetumodu, Ejigbo, Ilobu, Gbongan, Okuku, Inisa, Ijebu-Ijesa, Ipetu-Ijesha, Ifon- Osun etc. The official population figure for the State is 3,416,959,6 with a percentage of male is 49.4% for male and 50.6% for female. It has three senatorial districts namely Osun central, Osun west and Osun east, comprising of ten local government areas (LGAs) each, thus making a total of thirty (30) local government areas. There is one area office, located in Osun east senatorial district. The State has numerous natural resources, a vast growing ecosystem, a growing economy and diverse culture.

## **Study design**

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study with the aid of both quantitative and qualitative data collections.

## **Study population**

The study population consisted of both adult male and female population of Osun State.

## **Calculation of sample size**

This was determined by the Leslie Fischer's formula for single proportion in a population > 10,000. The desired minimum sample size was estimated at 384; 20% of the estimated sample size was added to make up for possible non-response which brings the minimum sample size to 406. However, 500 respondents were surveyed.

## **Sampling technique/method**

The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents into the study.

In stage 1, one third of the senatorial district was selected (1 of 3) by simple random sampling method. Osun Central Senatorial district was the one selected. In stage 2, one third of the LGAs in the selected senatorial district (3 of 10) was chosen into the study by simple random sampling. In stage 3, one enumeration unit (EU) in each chosen LGA was selected by simple random sampling method. In stage 4, alternate streets in the enumeration areas were chosen and alternate houses on the streets chosen were selected. In stage 5, all consenting adults in the houses selected were recruited into the study as respondents until the total sample size was reached.

## **Instrument of study and method of data collection**

The main instrument used for the study was a pre-tested structured interviewer administered questionnaire for the quantitative data. The questionnaire sought information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, their knowledge, perception and attitudes about the occurrence and causes of domestic violence against men in Nigeria. For the quantitative data, research assistants that helped to administer the questionnaire were Community Health Extension Workers. For the qualitative data, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted utilizing FGD guides. Two FGDs were conducted in each enumeration area making a total of six FGDs consisting of three male groups and three female groups. The FGD consisted of about six to eight persons per group, each session lasted for 30-45 minutes. The researchers and research assistants were involved in leading the discussion, taking notes and recording the sessions for transcribing later.

## **Measurement of outcome variables**

For the outcome variable perception on DVAM type, there were 15 questions; each correct answer was scored 1 while the wrong answer was scored 0. Median score calculated for the respondents was 11. Respondents were then categorized as either having good or poor perception of DVAM types based on whether they scored above or equal to/less than the median score. For perception of causes of DVAM, there were a total of 14 questions which were scored as done above; each correct answer was scored 1 while the wrong answer was scored 0. Calculated median score was 12. Classification into good and poor perception of cause of DVAM was then done based on scores above the median or equal/below the median. Similarly, for attitude, there were 7 questions, each correct answer was scored 1 while the wrong answer was scored 0. Calculated median score was 5, classification into positive and negative attitude was then done based on scores above the median or equal/below the median.

## **Data analysis**

The quantitative data collected was edited manually and then entered into a computer. The Statistical Product for Service Solutions [SPSS] version 20 was used for analysis of data. Socio-demographic variables and respondent responses were summarized and presented using frequency tables and Bar charts. Attitude to domestic violence against men was measured on a 3point Likert-

scale. Bivariate analysis was done utilizing Chi-Square test statistics to explore the association between two categorical variables. Confidence limit was set at 95% and p value of  $\leq 0.05$  as the significant level. Binary logistic regression was conducted on the outcome variables and types of DVAM and its possible predictors. The qualitative data was analyzed utilizing detailed content analysis method along the theme identified from the responses in the Focus Group Discussions.

### **Ethical considerations**

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from Research Ethics Committee of the College of Health Sciences, Osun State University, Osogbo. Permission was also obtained from the heads of communities selected to take part in the study, as well as informed consent from each subject.

### **Limitation of the study**

The responses of the study participant could be affected by recall bias. However, since the respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, this we believe would be limited to the barest minimum.

### **Results**

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed in the survey. Four hundred and eighty-three were retrieved and completely filled giving a response rate of 96.6%. Table 1 showed socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Mean age of respondents was  $29.7 \pm 9.2$  years, with 276 (57.1%) belonging to the 20-30 years' age group. Two hundred and sixty-six (55.1%) were male, 231 (47.8%) were ever-married, 13 (2.7%) had no formal education while 324 (67.1%) had up to tertiary level education. One hundred and seventy-nine (37.1%) were unemployed and 135 (28.0%) professional by occupational status.

Table 2 showed that four hundred and thirty-four (89.9%) were aware of violence against women, 416 (86.1%) were aware of violence against men, 381 (78.9%) said it meant men as victims while 203 (42.0%) said violence against men is a new development in Nigeria. Types of violence against men known to respondents include physical 332 (79.8%), sexual 313 (75.2%), emotional 301 (72.4%), verbal 300 (72.1%), psychological 257 (61.8%). Perpetrators of violence include wives 232 (55.8%), in-laws 83 (20.0%), partners/girlfriends 51 (12.3%), children 28 (6.7%). Respondents opined that VAM could occur among the Illiterate 150 (36.1%), Poor 112 (26.9%), Literate 73 (17.5%), Rich 69 (16.6%), everybody 69 (16.6%) and 10 (2.4%) do not know. Two hundred and three (48.8%) said they are aware of the provision by law to get help. Respondents' perceived consequences of DVAM included family breakdown 307 (73.8%), emotional problems 256 (61.5%), adverse effect on children 252 (60.6%), psychological problems 241 (57.9%) and suicides 162 (38.9%).

In Table 3, common types of treatment that constitute DVAM mentioned include the woman threatens to leave the man and to take their children with her if he will attempt to go against her or to fight back (89.7%), the woman threatens the man with violence and harm (84.4%), tries to put him down every chance she has (83.2%), the woman actually hits or hurts the man by kicking, punching, slapping, shoving or choking him (83.2%), calling the man bad names, insults him (publicly or privately) and trying to stop the man from going to work or to public places (72.6%), and forces the man to have sex or engage in sexual acts against his will (67.8%). Possible causes of DVGM included infidelity towards the wife (99.0%), psychological problems (98.6%), infertility of men (98.1%), abusing the spouse's family (97.8%), inadequate/insufficient earning of men (97.4%), personal frustrations (96.6%), and alcoholism in the partner (96.2%).

Figure 1 showed the sources of information on DVAM which included Radio/TV 311 (74.8%), friends 115 (27.6%), print media 202 (48.6%) and individual experience 41 (9.9%). Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents according to their attitude towards DVAM. Respondents agreed that DVAM is on the rise in Nigeria 280 (67.3%), DVAM has always been present in Nigeria since olden days 245 (58.9%), and that when woman tries to stop the man from going to work or to public places (70.7%) or woman tries to prevent him from seeing his family members and friends (69.7%); these constitutes DVAM.

Table 5 showed that 124 (46.6%) of the 266 male respondents has ever been a victim of DVGM, out of which 94 (75.8%) sought for help. Of the 30 male respondents that did not seek for help,

reasons given for not seeking help include shame (90.0%), not wanting publicity (80.0%), being afraid of embarrassment (66.7%) and a feeling that it was a personal battle (60.0%) among others. Perceived barriers to seeking for help include pride 204(49.0%), avoiding embarrassment 199(47.8%) cultural 164(39.4%), lack of awareness 133(32.0%), and lack of law in place 130(31.3%). Furthermore, distribution of respondents according to categories of their perception of types, causes and attitude towards DVAM are shown. Forty-seven-point six percent (47.6%) and 44.9% of respondents had good perception of DVAM types and causes respectively while only 25.0% had good attitude towards DVAM.

At the bivariate analysis level, gender was statistically significantly associated with awareness of DVAM in Nigeria (89.1% vs 82.5%;  $\chi^2 = 4.4$ ;  $p = 0.03$ ) and knowledge of men as victims in DVAM (87.2% vs 68.7%;  $\chi^2 = 24.7$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) with male being more aware and knowledgeable respectively. Marital status (30.1% vs 37.8%;  $\chi^2 = 2.77$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ) and age group (29.6% vs 42.3%;  $\chi^2 = 7.2$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ) were statistically significantly associated with knowledge of where to get help against DVAM with ever-married respondents and those 31 years and older being more knowledgeable. Furthermore, older age was found to be statistically significantly associated with positive attitude towards DVAM (22.4% vs 30.6%;  $\chi^2 = 3.8$ ;  $p = 0.03$ ).

Multiple logistic regression analysis using binary logistic regression shows that for the variable sex, using female gender as reference, statistical significance was 0.042 and odd's ratio 1.494 with confidence interval 1.014 to 2.200. Male respondents were about one and a half times more likely to have a good perception of types of DVGM than their female counterparts. Similarly, for the variable, educational status, using post-secondary/ tertiary as reference, statistical significance was  $<0.001$  for respondents with secondary school education or more and odd's more are three and a half times more likely to have a good perception on types of DVGM than those who had less than secondary education.

**Results from audit of daily newspapers in Southwestern Nigeria in the past five year:** The five leading daily newspapers in Southwestern Nigeria namely the Punch, Tribune, Guardian, Sun and Vanguard were reviewed over a period of January 2013 to 2017 December. Only eleven (11) articles were found, which is less than 10% of the frequency of reporting and discussions on violence against women within the same period. As observed by all the daily newspapers, most stories on domestic violence center on women as the victims. Domestic violence was described as assuming epidemic proportions. The rate of DVAM continues to rise in Nigeria despite legislations to curb it and many cases remain unreported. The official figures underestimated the true number of male victims while such events occur more often than many think.

The Vanguard referred to a 2010 National Survey by the Centre for Disease Control and U.S Department of Justice that in the last 12 months, more men have been victims of intimate-partner physical violence and psychological aggression than women. Reports showed that about two in five of all victims of domestic violence are men, contradicting the widespread impression that it is almost always women who are left battered and bruised. In Nigeria, IPV is a menace that continues to thrive based on so many factors. The daily Sun newspaper opined that both male and female perpetrators of domestic violence should be dealt with equally harshly by the courts and more should be done to help victims of domestic violence whether they are men or women." However, all the newspapers reported that sensitization, orientation and punishment of offenders are the ways to go to curb the growing trend.

### **Results from the focus group discussion**

When discussants were asked if it is possible that domestic violence against men exist in the African setting and Nigeria, all respondents said that violence against men exist, although majority said it's a recent development. Some said it is more common than in the past. A discussant said: *"It occurs now but it could have been worse, if not because men are patient when they know the type of wife they have and that women are now productive and have money of their own. Although you see that some men cannot handle the anger of their partners and so they get insulted by their wives. In the past we women were taught to respect and be friends to our husbands but westernization has changed*

*a lot of women in the name of equal right, we now work and at times we are the bread winner at home, this was not the case in the past where women take whatever the husband give them”.*

Another discussant said: *“It is common especially in stubborn women; they usually do the exact opposite of what the husband says and eventually leads to strife between them. Not listening to your husband is a form of ‘violence’. There is a lot of gain for women that respect their husband. Also, a woman who is stubborn will meet her reward in future. A woman before marriage that does not listen to her parents will also not listen to her husband because it is in their blood already and so will bear the consequence”.*

When discussants were asked about the possible causes of violence against men or a woman abusive against her husband or partner, majority of the respondents said the background of the wife can be a cause. She may bring such behavior to her husband’s house if she was not properly trained by her parents. Many of the discussants said some women have stubbornness inherent in them and so will just not listen to their partners, some attributed it to sexual and material non-satisfaction that make women look down on men. However, all discussants mentioned ‘Financial insecurity’ on the part of the men, or women being bread winner in the house as causes. Some discussants also mentioned men who are not been patient with their wife leading to conflict. Other causes mentioned included pride in a woman which will not let respect her husband, wicked men using their partner as slaves, irresponsible and selfish men who intentionally do not provide for their family and men trying to take a second wife.

A discussant said: *“There are a lot of factors responsible for this, It is a matter of background when a woman is not satisfied financially or sexually. In some instances, women will abuse men who don’t spend money at home, but prefer spending on other women or friends. You know it’s no longer a man’s world; what a man can do women can do better. Gone are the days of polygamy”* Another discussant said: *“Just like the others have said, pride is a major factor especially when a woman does all husband is meant to do in a home. She will not listen to such a man; especially obeying instructions from him. Also, a man that has girl friends outside the home without paying attention to his wife such a woman will abuse the husband. But importantly, the background of the woman matters a lot if she comes from a dysfunctional home where the mother abuses and insults her father she is not likely to respect the husband. The majority of cases that result in physical assault has to do with philandering of the man, that’s what we hear”.*

When asked about their opinion on how the community view such women (abusers) and men (the abused) viewed against the African setting, majority of the respondent said such women cannot earn respect in the community, some said that the opinion of such men and women are not respected in community matters, some said the community believe that curse is on such woman and her children, others regard them as irresponsible, excessive and impatient and raising irresponsible children since their children would emulate them. A discussant said: *“Well the community will not respect such a woman, and she cannot get the support of her husband in anything she does eventually it will become a cycle because she will continue to be disrespectful and the partner won’t support her; eventually the public will get fed up of their case and won’t interfere any longer”.* Another discussant said: *“From my own point of view a woman should not insult or abuse the husband, the man is the crown of a woman, no matter what a man does it should not lead to insult. It also goes both ways; a man should not assault his wife. A thing like this happened to a younger sister of mine who slapped her husband following a little misunderstanding between them, it was a big deal eventually, her family had to come in to appease him before the husband allowed the wife back in to the house. Fine, you know a man can go in to marriage many times but for a woman even doing a second introduction let alone a third, she is seen as a disgraceful and irresponsible woman. Men cheat women but still no matter what a man does the community look at such women as impatient and excessive”.*

When asked about possible effect of such violence on children and family, all respondents said such children will not have good behavior and so will be viewed with contempt and so are not favored by others. All responded that such children are ill-mannered and usually not allowed to play with other people’s children, while few of them said such children are usually violent and fight in school. Some discussants however said the community view such children as trouble makers and stubborn. This is because a disrespectful woman cannot allow her prayers on her children to work hence the

child cannot receive favor from others. A discussant said: *"The children are viewed as cursed and will not be successful; they will even be known in school because of their behavior of always fighting and will lack manners. They are usually hated by their peers. A child called me recently praying for me because I brought him into my family when his parents had misunderstandings, he is working now; he is a son to me also. It is because I took care of him and didn't let him go astray during difficult times"*. Another discussant responded: *"As our elders have rightly said, the children are not favored in the community, they are often talked about especially in their schools, usually seen as children who cause trouble in school and even used as scape-goats when one is needed. These children will eventually grow up and repeat the same thing so such children are usually prevented from playing with other children and we all know that bad behavior corrupts good manners"*.

When asked if there is a legal backing for men who are being abused, about half of discussants who responded said there is legal backing, making mention of customary court to address such violence against men, while some referred to the church and the mosque as avenues for addressing such issues, and probably the hospital being a place where education and knowledge is shared. Some (about a third) of respondents who responded said there is no legal backing and calling the police to resolve such issue can go either way. However, all the respondents agreed that the police cannot intercede in domestic affairs or matters like this most especially when there are no physical harm or injury, but they all agreed that the parents (or guardians or confidants of the woman) are the most important to call such abusive women to order. A discussant said: *"Yes, there are a number of places where people can go to address such issues such as churches, mosque, the government such as social welfare, marriage registry in the local government. They can talk to the couple, also the hospitals. You see, all these are where education can take place. Don't forget the police can provide restraining orders against partners that want to take the life of the other"*. Another discussant said: *"There are now available legal backing from what we hear in the radio that there are special courts which the government has put in place to handle such cases without legal fees. The parties are called and a compromise is reached. When the police cannot handle cases like this, they eventually tell them to settle it amongst themselves. But the parents are more experienced in settling cases like this because they have faced or heard cases similar to it and know the end result if allowed will not be pleasing. You know the saying that you can have a bad spouse but having bad in-laws is not allowed because the family has a way of calling the couples to order"*.

## Discussions

Awareness of DVAM among respondents in this study was high, though almost half of the respondents agreed that it is a new and upcoming development in Nigeria. This high figure is corroborated by another Nigerian study (2). In contrast, a Nigerian rural community-based study (3) found that as low as 7.6% of their respondents were aware of DVAM. This low figure may not be unconnected with the traditional Nigerian belief that men are stronger than women, and such experiences could not happen to a real man. As supported by the FGD findings, the supremacy of men in the society makes many believe that they are not vulnerable to domestic violence while battering of men by their spouses and family members are being viewed as unexpected circumstances.

The various types or forms of DVAM and where they take place were known by majority of respondents. This supports another Nigerian study, though verbal abuse was the commonest form known to majority of the respondents (3). In yet another study that corroborates our findings, places where DVAM take place included home, workplace, streets, prisons, police custody, schools (7). About half of our respondents said that the wives perpetrated the violence in most cases thus corroborating an American study (5), in which perpetrators were said to include someone living close to the man such as current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, or date in their lifetime.

Possible contents and causes of DVAM was known to majority of respondents in our study. This finding is supported by several other studies (3,8,9). Alcohol intake was prominent among risk factors known for DVAM as reported by other previous studies (10,11). Alcohol as a stimulant can trigger a number of irrational behaviors among drinkers, while some people use them as a coping strategy; an escape route when faced with stress and a way of vexing one's anger when frustrated.



The media, followed by friends were the common sources of information on DVAM. This also agreed with findings from another study (3). An average home in Southwestern Nigeria have readymade access to the Radio and Television and is the most accessible means of getting health education, shows the importance of the mass media as an agent of creating awareness and educating the populace on the issue of DVAM. However, the result of the audit of the print media shows that this great avenue is not being optimally utilized for sensitizing the populace about DVAM.

About a quarter of respondents alleged that they had been victims of DVAM, three quarters of these sought for help for various reasons. In a similar and corroborating Nigerian study (3), a third had experienced DVAM, and about two-thirds of them had reported or sought for help. However, a much lower prevalence rate of 7.4% was reported in an American study (5). Other prevalence figures reported include 5-10% in developed countries, 3.6% in Namibia and 13.4% in Tanzania, and 20% in Peru (7). The true prevalence of DVAM is likely to be greater than formal law enforcement related reporting statistics show, thus these prevalence figures may not depict the true prevalence rates and magnitude of the problem. Globally, at least one in six men had experienced some form of gender-based abuse during his lifetime (8). Another survey indicated that 10-15% of men had experienced some form of gender-based physical abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetime (12). Preliminary results from a World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country study on men's health and domestic violence indicated that in some parts of the world, as many as 20% of men had experienced domestic violence (13).

Obviously, many cases of DVAM were not reported by those respondents who experienced it. To some people, the concept of domestic violence against men is so unthinkable that men often end up choosing to stay quiet if they become victims of domestic violence. In this study, perceived barriers to seeking help included pride, avoiding embarrassment, culture, lack of awareness, and psychological depression. In support of this, male domestic violence victims may be reluctant to get help for a number of reasons (14), or just not willing to complain. Because the society perceives the man as the stronger sex, there is tendency for law enforcement and the criminal justice system to perceive female intimate violence perpetrators as victims rather than the actual offenders of violence against men, or believe that the man was just aggressive. When and if men do report, the men were often treated as the aggressor in the situation, and often even placed under arrest (15). In addition, the African patriarchal system often influences how men feel and furthermore, the fear of being ridiculed or judged negatively by the rest of society and this could make men not to complain. Many men that reported their abuse to the authorities often face social stigma. Thus, a need to move away from stigmatization and discrimination towards reporting of experience, encouraging men towards improvement of awareness are some of the ways of reducing the menace of domestic violence against men in this environment.

This study therefore concluded that domestic violence against men is not uncommon in Nigeria and that general awareness is coming up. Several types, causes and consequences of DVGM were identified. Many cases were not reported while the law enforcement agencies are not helping situation by not taking those who experienced such seriously. Future research could look to further understand the contextual, power and impact differences between men's experiences and women's experiences of intimate partner violence. We recommend an education intervention program for journalists in the print media so as to engender effective utilization of this media for general population enlightenment.

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**Table 1.** Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency
Age group in years	
<20	50 (10.4)
20-30	276 (57.1)
31-40	100 (20.7)
41-50	32 (6.6)
51-60	23 (4.8)
>60	2 (0.4)
Age Range	16 – 70 years
Mean age	29.7 ± 9.2 years
Gender	
Male	266 (55.1)
Female	217 (47.9)
Religion	
Christianity	317 (65.6)
Islam	161 (33.3)
Others (e.g traditional)	5 (1.1)
Marital Status	
Single	252 (52.2)
Ever-married	231 (47.8)
Educational Status	
No Formal Education	13 (2.7)
Primary	21 (4.3)

Secondary	85 (17.6)
Post-secondary	39 (8.1)
Tertiary	324 (67.1)
No response	1 (0.2)
Occupational Status	
Unemployed (e.g. housewives, students)	179 (37.1)
Unskilled labor (e.g. farmers, traders)	69 (14.3)
Skilled labor (e.g. drivers, artisans, tailor, hairdressers)	60 (12.4)
Professionals (e.g. teachers, nurses, doctors)	135 (28.0)
Ethnicity	
Yoruba	448 (92.8)
Others (e.g Ibo, Hausa,)	35 (7.2)

n=483

**Table 2.** Awareness, perception and knowledge of respondents about Domestic violence against Men

Variables	Frequency (%)
<b>AWARENESS (n=483)</b>	
Violence against women	434 (89.9)
Violence against men	416 (86.1)
Men as victims	381 (78.9)
Violence against men is a new development in Nigeria	203 (42.0)
<b>TYPES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN (n=416)*</b>	
Physical	332 (79.8)
Sexual	313 (75.2)
Emotional	301 (72.4)
Verbal	300 (72.1)
Psychological	257 (61.8)
All of the above	202 (48.6)
<b>PERPETRATORS (n=416)*</b>	
Wives	232 (55.8)
In-laws	83 (20.0)
Partners (girlfriends)	51 (12.3)
Children	28 (6.7)
Others (e.g. Relatives, friends)	89 (21.4)
<b>GROUPS WHERE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN OCCUR (n=416)*</b>	
Illiterate	150 (36.1)
Poor	112 (26.9)
Literate	73 (17.5)
Rich	69 (16.6)
Everybody	69 (16.6)
Don't know	10 (2.4)
<b>KNOWLEDGE OF PROVISION BY LAW TO GET HELP (n=416)</b>	
Yes	203 (48.8)
	91 (21.9)
	122 (29.3)

No Don't Know	
<b>PERCEIVED CONSEQUENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN (n=416)*</b>	
Family breakdown	307 (73.8)
Emotional problem	256 (61.5)
Effect on children	252 (60.6)
Psychological problem	241 (57.9)
Suicides	162 (38.9)
Others	65 (15.6)

Multiple choices

**Table 3.** Respondents' perception on what constitutes Domestic Violence against Men and its causes

n=416

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
<b>Types of treatment that constitutes Domestic Violence against Men</b>	
The woman threatens to leave the man and to take their children with her if he will attempt to go against her or to fight back.	373 (89.7)
Blames the man for her violent behavior or tells him that he deserves it	363 (87.3)
The woman threatens the man with violence and harm, particularly when she is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.	351 (84.4)
The woman blames the man for her behavior	350 (84.1)
The woman actually hits or hurts the man by kicking, punching, slapping, shoving or choking him or the woman may do the same thing to their children or pets.	346 (83.2)
Calling the man bad names, insults him (publicly or privately) and tries to put him down every chance she has.	346 (83.2)
The woman takes advantage of the man sleeping or resting and assaults him when he is in no position to defend himself	344 (82.7)
Portrays the violence as mutual and consensual	334 (80.3)
Partner is possessive and / or jealous and constantly accuses you of being unfaithful	322 (77.4)
The woman controls the money the man spends	316 (76.0)
Trying to prevent him from seeing his family members and friends.	315 (75.7)
She tries to control her man in terms of the clothes he will wear	310 (74.5)
The woman dictates where the man can go to and when	305 (73.3)
Trying to stop the man from going to work or to public places	302 (72.6)
Forces the man to have sex or engage in sexual acts against his will	282 (67.8)
<b>Possible causes of DVAM</b>	
Not taking a proper care of children	413 (99.3)
Infidelity towards the wife	412 (99.0)
Doubting the partner all the time and not trusting her	410 (98.6)
Psychological problems (Personality disorders, Depression)	410 (98.6)
Infertility of men	408 (98.1)
Abusing the spouse's family	407 (97.8)
Inadequate earning of men (e.g. low salary, lack of money)	405 (97.4)

Having unrealistic expectations or unrealistic demands on partner.	405 (97.4)
Personal frustrations	402 (96.6)
Alcoholism in the partner	400 (96.2)
Revolt by the wife when asked to look after in-laws	369 (88.7)
Spying on the activities of partner	344 (82.7)
Not abiding by the instructions of the wife	334 (80.3)
Not helping the partner in household activities	294 (70.7)

**Table 4.** Respondents' attitude towards domestic violence against men

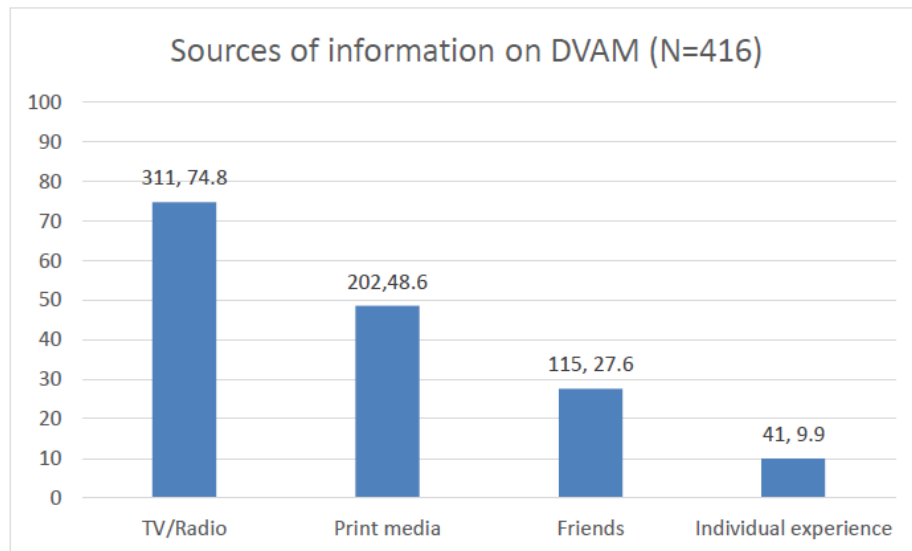
n=416

<b>Attitudinal statements</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>
DVAM does not happen in Nigeria	70(16.8)	323(77.6)	23(5.6)
DVAM occur only among the illiterates	60(14.4)	323(77.6)	33 (7.9)
DVAM occur only among the poor	70(16.8)	325(78.1)	21(5.1)
DVAM has always been present in Nigeria since olden days	245(58.9)	135(32.5)	36(8.6)
DVAM is a new phenomenon brought in by civilization	195(46.9)	189(45.4)	32(7.7)
DVAM is on the rise in Nigeria	280(67.3)	84(20.2)	52(12.5)
<b>The following constitute domestic violence against men:</b>	294(70.7)	97(23.3)	25(6.0)
The woman tries to stop the man from going to work or to public places			
The woman tries to prevent him from seeing his family members and friends.	290(69.7)	107(25.7)	19(4.6)
Partner is possessive and / or jealous and she tries to control her man in terms of the clothes he will wear, money he will spend and the places he can go to.	300(72.1)	88 (21.2)	28(6.7)
The woman threatens the man with violence and harm, particularly when she is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.	323(77.6)	74(18.0)	19(4.6)
The woman actually hits or hurts the man by kicking, punching, slapping, shoving or choking him. Or the woman may do the same thing to their children or pets.	295(70.9)	105(25.3)	16(3.8)
The woman takes advantage of the man sleeping or resting and assaults him when he is in no position to defend himself.	287(69.0)	100(24.0)	29(7.0)
The woman threatens to leave the man and to take their children with her if he will attempt to go against her or to fight back.	319(76.7)	75(18.0)	22(5.3)
The woman blames the man for her behavior	314(75.5)	81(19.5)	21(5.0)
Regardless of the reasoning; it is important to report all acts of domestic violence	271(65.1)	114(27.4)	31(7.5)

**Table 5.** Respondents' experience of domestic violence against men

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
<b>Ever been victim of any form of DVAM (n=266; male respondents)</b>	124 (46.6)
Yes	140 (52.6)
No	2 (0.8)
No response	
<b>What respondent did (n=124)</b>	94 (75.8)
Sought for help	30 (24.2)
Nothing	
<b>Type of help sought (n=94)*</b>	60 (63.8)
Appeal to partners' parents	29 (30.9)
Appealed to partners' friends	34 (36.2)
Appealed to religious leaders	10 (10.6)
Involved Police	15 (16.0)
Appealed to court	
<b>Reasons for not seeking help (n=30)*</b>	27 (90.0)
Shame	24 (80.0)
Do not want publicity	20 (66.7)
Afraid of embarrassment	18 (60.0)
Felt it was a personal battle	10 (33.3)
Felt no proper help/law in place	
<b>Perceived Barriers to seeking for help (n=416)*</b>	204 (49.0)
Pride	199 (47.8)
Embarrassment	164 (39.4)
Cultural	150 (36.1)
Psychological	133 (32.0)
Lack of awareness	130 (31.3)
Lack of law in place	113 (27.2)
Love of partner	84 (20.2)
Concerns for the children	
<b>Respondents' perception of DVAM Type (n=416)</b>	
Poor perception of DVAM type	218 (52.4)
Good perception of DVAM type	198 (47.6)
<b>Respondents' perception of causes of DVGM (n=416)</b>	
Poor perception on DVAM cause	229 (55.1)
Good perception on DVAM cause	187 (44.9)
<b>Respondents' attitudinal categories (n=416)</b>	
Negative attitude	312 (75.0)
Positive attitude	104 (25.0)

\*Multiple responses



**Figure 1.** Respondents' sources of information on DVAM (n= 416)

\*Multiple responses