



VICTIMIZATION OF MEN AND THE VERACITY OF WIFE-TO-HUSBAND ABUSE IN RESEARCH REPORTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELLING

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ABSTRACT

Spousal abuse in marital relationships has a long history in human society, but it is skewed as men's maladjustment behaviour while manifestation of similar behaviour in women is ignored or underreported. The consequence of genderisation of spousal abuse is that husbands will continue to suffer in silence while suffering abuse diverse types of abuse from their wives without any intervention from significant others in the society. This paper is an attempt to demonstrate the reality of husband's abuse by their wives and point out that this is sparsely or underreported in researches focusing on spousal abuse. It was suggested that spousal abuse in marital relationship can be mitigated through domestic violence counselling intervention.

Keywords: Victimization, men, spousal abuse, implications, domestic violence counselling

INTRODUCTION

Quite several universal social institutions are in existence, but marriage institution occupies a central position and exists in virtually all cultures. The institution of marriage is widely acknowledged to be ordained by the creator of the universe-God for the benefits of men and women. Consequent upon the fact that it is divinely ordained it is sacred. It relates to God and it deserves respect. The sacredness of marriage, according to Thomas (2015), is more than a sacred covenant with another person but a spiritual discipline designed to help an individual to know God better, trust him more fully, and love him more deeply. Even though marriage is sacred, unfolding events in the world today have justified the existence of several marital challenges or family violence in many homes. Researchers and media reports have proved beyond reasonable doubt that all is not maritally healthy for most men and women. The Office for National Statistics (2018) in United Kingdom estimated that 2.0 million of adults between the ages of 16 to 59 years have experienced domestic violence in the last one year. Out of this figure, 1.3 million are women while 695,000 are men. Considerable attempts have been made all over the world in time past and even nowadays to reduce or eradicate incidents of family violence generally and violence against women specifically. Burczycka (2014) observes that as the understanding of the magnitude of the impact of spousal violence continues to grow, so does the scope and programs designed to address the problem and provide remedies.

The involvement of men in this campaign is acknowledged by all and sundry. Flood (2010), for instance, opines that efforts to reduce and prevent violence against women will fail when men are not involved to play a positive role. The involvement of men is also well respected and commended in this write-up. However, a missing link in the efforts to eradicate family violence or violence against women is the thrust of this paper. It is not a hidden truth that virtually all efforts aimed at eradicating violence in family perceived men as perpetrators and not as victims. Men involvement as victims is overlooked or downplayed. The overwhelming recognition of females as victims has made the society to overlook the basic fact that men also suffer from domestic abuse (Jennings, 2012). Indeed Rhymes (2014) rightly assert that "there is something very important that we are not talking about when we talk about domestic violence". Adebayo (2014) affirms that domestic violence against men is a reality in varying degrees despite the so much hues and cries about domestic violence against women. Campbell (2010) quoted Mark to have said that: "It's a scandal that in 2010 all domestic violence victims are still not being treated equally. We reject the gendered analysis that so many in the domestic violence establishment

still pursue, that the primary focus should be female victims. Each victim should be seen as an individual and helped accordingly."

For many years now domestic abuse of women has been in the general public knowledge but the extent of the comparable issue of domestic abuse of men is not as well-known and understood (Lupri, Eugene; Grandin, Elaine, 2004). Similarly, Dempsey (2013) posits that in recent years there are research publications, policy documents and publicity materials on the "voice" of the people affected by domestic abuse but a review of the literature quickly reveals an absence of the voices men. It appears from these reports and stories that male victim/female perpetrator problem does not exist anywhere in the world and if they do at all such is not an issue. Women and girls are also portrayed from these reports and stories as the only gender facing the regime of terror in the family. The reality of the matter, however, is that both sexes are culpable as far as spousal violence is concerned. When lopsided report is presented in favour of wives then husbands are victimized or ill-treated. A lopsided effort which portrays men as perpetrators and women and children as victims or survivors will not reduce or eradicate violence in the family. It is just victimization of manhood. In this write up, attention will be focused specifically on spousal abuse with reference to the conceptual description of the term, typologies, pragmatism of wives abusing husbands and implications of husband battered syndrome on domestic violence counselling.

The Concept of Spousal Abuse

In marital relationship, a spouse is either the wife or husband. Dictionary such as Vocabulary.com (n.d) describes the term spouse as a verb, that is "to marry" in the olden days but is now being used as a noun. Abuse "abusus" is a Latin word which is interpreted to mean "misuse". Therefore, spousal abuse counts as the wrong use of a marital partner. The main motive for abuse is purely to dominate and exert power or maintain control of a partner (Alberta, Government, 2008). In doing so, the relationship, often deteriorates and may become violent. It is imperative at this juncture to make certain clarifications on synonyms that have been used interchangeably with spousal abuse. These include but not limited to intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, family violence, domestic violence among others. Out of all these, domestic violence is the mostly employed in lieu of spousal violence. In the context of this paper, marital violence is conceptualized as spousal abuse. This is simply because domestic violence or family violence is perceived to be a broader term than spousal abuse. In fact, spousal abuse is recognized as a kind of domestic violence just like maternal/ paternal abuse of children or elder abuse. Similarly, the word "abuse" is interchangeably used with violence in this paper because it is glaringly evident that most manifestations of abusive behaviours are non-violent. The intent of most of the abuses perpetrated by partners in marital relations is not only aimed at causing physical injury but also psychological pains.

Typologies of Spousal Abuse

Spousal abuse is of different types. These include physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, spiritual, economic, and destruction of property. A brief on each of these is given below:

- a) **Spousal Physical Abuse:** This is the physical or bodily contact with the spouse with intention of inflicting injury on any part of the body. Injury types include bruises, bone fracture, cut, burns, etc. The bodily attack could involve kicking, slapping, beating, strangling pinching, punching, pushing, biting, dragging, hitting, and throwing of objects among others. Spousal physical abuse could result into disfigurement of body. Spousal physical abuse is recognized as the most obvious form of domestic violence (Southern African AIDS Training, 2001).
- b) **Spousal Emotional Abuse:** This is otherwise known as psychological abuse. It is behavior deliberately designed to humiliate or impair the self-worth of the spouse. It is the use of manipulative to make someone feel a certain way and gain control.

(Counseling Directory, 2019). It is the least discernable and most dangerous of all other abuses. Spousal abuse, in virtually all cases, always accompanies manifestation of other abuses. Gesinde (2011) listed seven dimensions of psychological abuse to include degrading, exploiting, corrupting, isolating, ignoring, rejecting, and terrorizing. Emotional spousal abuse is expressed in derogatory names calling, yelling, hissing, lying against, abandonment or suicide, insults, blames, undue criticism, blackmail, nagging, threat of suicide, and so on. These expressions by the spouse will not leave physical injury on the spouse but their negative impacts on self-worth, esteem, control have been documented in diverse studies. Spousal emotional abuse tends to be the aftermath of other abuses.

c) Spousal Sexual Abuse: This is non-consensual sexual contact with the spouse. This is the process of subjecting the spouse to sexual contact by forcible or violent compulsion. It is a sexualized act that may inflict physical pain or sexual wound on the spouse. Sexualized acts in this category would include unwanted bodily contact or touching, unsolicited kissing, coercion to watch pornographic films or pictures, rape, coercion to engage in oral or anal sex, ridicules sexual performance, sex while spouse is asleep, and drugged for sex. Spousal sexual abuse could also be in form of withholding of sex, love and affection or preventing spouse to use condom or using pills to prevent pregnancy without the knowledge of the spouse.

d) Spousal Spiritual Abuse: This is otherwise known as spousal religious abuse. It is also one of the non-violent spousal abuses. Johnson and Vonderen (1991) state that: "Spiritual abuse can occur when a leader uses his or her spiritual position to control or dominate another person. It often involves overriding the feelings and opinions of another, without regard to what will result in the other persons state of living, emotions or spiritual well-being." In the context of spousal abuse, it is translated to mean that one spouse uses the spiritual power or position to manipulate the other spouse. It could also be cases whereby one spouse even without spiritual power ridicules the religiosity of the other spouse or prevents him/her from performing religious activities. The manipulation of religion doctrines to coerce partner into total submission is also recognized as an act of spiritual abuse.

e) Spousal Economic Abuse: This non-violent abuse occurs when a partner makes unquestionable final decision on family finances. The other partner financial spending therefore depends solely on the directives given. In cases whereby the other partner makes money he/she is still expected to retire the proceeds to the financial controller of the house. Economic abuse is noticeable in instances whereby the financial controller refuses to pay bills, provide basic amenities or spend funds on prostitutes, hard drugs, etc. In extreme cases, partner may be forced to do odd jobs or prevented from gainful employment or coerced to commit adultery or sell precious belongings for money.

f) Destruction of Property: This type of spousal abuse is closely related to physical abuse. It is not classified under physical abuse because the intent to destroy or injure is not directed to the partner but other visible objects in the environment which are properties and favorites of the partner. In extreme cases, the abuser could also destroy personal belonging as a result of uncontrollable anger. The destruction of properties such as television, radio, computer sets, mobile phone, cars, clock, wears and so on may be in the presence or absence of the other partner. At the peak of annoyance, the abuser throws, kicks, tears, burns, beats, hits, and drags objects selectively or at random.

Unsymmetrical Reports of Spousal Abuse

The subject matter of spousal abuse is not relatively new. A thorough search through the literature will reveal that partners in marital relationships worldwide have suffered one form of spousal abuse or the other. Many studies such as Migliaccio (2002); Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan, and Snow (2008); Hines and Douglas (2010) have documented the extent of wives abuses from their husbands. Available data on wife abuse have metamorphosed into campaigns against wife abuse by their husbands and the development of regulating laws and policies in many countries of the world. Organizations such as the World Health Organizations ((1996, 1999, 2005, 2010, 2013), United Nations (1989, 1993) and UNICEF (2000) have documents, studies and reports that are targeted at eradicating mens violence against women and children. In all of these reports, wives were painted “saints” and husbands are “sinners”. In other words, wives were portrayed as victims and husbands were reported perpetrators. Unfortunately, despite the wealth and diversity and diversity of the sociological research extensive legal literature on domestic violence, there are sparse materials, papers and research findings on wives who abuse their husbands. The pattern of spousal abuse is rarely documented. According to Kelly (2003), no wonder female violence is unrecognized, denied, defended and minimized.

Judge (2016) laments that:

“Its well-documented when men inflict it (abuse) on female victims. Less well known is when women do it to men. While the emotional abuse of women is discussed on Oprah, in bestsellers, and everywhere in pop culture and in academia, there are virtually no resources for men who have been emotionally abused. Google searches turn up very few resources. Books on the subject are mostly broadsides that have not been properly researched... And yet every person I know—and Im betting everyone reading these words—knows a man who has been victimized by emotional abuse. All you have to do is ask around. I did just that recently when I was researching the epidemic of men and suicide, and what I found was disturbing”.

Similarly, Fiffer (2014) retorts thus:

*“Last night I was searching the Internet for a video on “women abusing men” to run here on **The Good Men Project**. Not only were there just a few actual hits, most of which Id already seen, but I also found that most of the results that did come up were of men abusing women. Even though I typed “men” first, Google found more results for the reversed phrase, indicating the huge imbalance of available online material. And yet, recent statistics confirm that men represent approximately 40% of the victims in cases of abuse.*

These reports are testimonies to the fact that wives do abuse or batter their husbands. The problem is that domestic abuse against men goes unrecognized and under-reported. The term “battered husband” was believed to have been coined by Suzanne Steinmetz in 1978 (Tutty 1999; Minaker & Snider, 2006). Battering refers to a severe and escalating form of partner violence characterized by multiple forms of abuse, terrorization and threats, and increasingly possessive and controlling behaviour on the part of the abuser (Heise, Ellsberg, Gottemoeller, 1999; World Health Organization, 2012). Oregon Counselling (2014) identifies the following as some of the reasons for the inability to recognize abuse against men to include hardness in getting reliable estimates because the occurrence of domestic violence against men seems to be so low; men have not been encourage to report abuse; unthinkable to most people that men could be victims and very little investment in resources to violence against men.

There are empirical findings that have supported the fact that law enforcement agents even snubbed calls on husband abuse or violence perpetrated against men by women. One example is the U.S. National Family Violence Survey carried out in 1988 by Straus and Gelles on 6,002 couples. It was reported that:



When a woman called the police to report Intimate Partner Violence, the man was ordered out of the house in 41.4% of cases. However, when a man called, the woman was ordered out of the house in 0% of cases.

When a woman called, the man was threatened with immediate arrest in 28.2% of cases; when a man called, the woman was threatened with arrest in 0% of cases.

When a woman called, the man was threatened with arrest at a later date in 10.7% of cases; when a man called, the woman was threatened with arrest at a later date in 0% of cases.

When a woman called, the man was arrested in 15.2% of cases; when a man called, the woman was arrested in 0% of cases.

In 12.1% of cases when the man called, the man himself was arrested.

There may be cultural and social factors that are responsible for under-reporting, under-acknowledging, and under-recognizing of violence perpetrated against husbands by their wives. Culturally, men are believed to be stronger than women and as such they are expected to control their women. Being stronger in this context means the supposed physical agility of men over women. However, this does not translate to men being stronger than women economically, emotionally, and spiritually. Religiously, men are also expected to be the family head. It is therefore odd and awkward for men to report husband abuse by their women. In some African settings, particularly among the Yorubas in Nigeria, there is a derogatory song for husbands that are defeated by their wives in any physical combat- It goes- "*Yokolu yokolu ko wa tan bi iyawo gbe oko sanle oko yo ike*" meaning "shameful, shameful, it is finished, the wife falls down the husband and hunchback comes out of him". Report of episode like this will call for labelling and shameful comments on the husband from the community members. Social stigma that would follow such report would make such men to suffer in silence. Unfortunately, news media shy away from reporting such incidents as a result of the societal perception or men as second-class victims when they are bashed by women.

The Veracity of Wife-to-Husband Abuse in Studies

The above notwithstanding, there are studies that have indicted wives or women generally for violence against husbands or other men. Steinmetz (1978) posits that husband abuse is a phenomenon that is not uncommon although many tend to ignore it, dismiss it, or treat it with "selective inattention." There is a revolutionary change in history of family violence in recent times. The tide is changing against women. The reality of women abusing men is attracting deserved attention in some countries of the world. Counselling Directory (2016) confirms this change of status when it acknowledges that in the past it was typical for people to associate violence to men's act because it is statistically more common. Nonetheless, it is crucial to understand that women can be violent towards men too.

It has even been reported that some researchers believe that statistics provided by law enforcement is likely to be lower than the actual number of male victims of abuse (Watsons and Parsons, 2005). Interestingly, Rhymes (2014) observes that findings on male-as-victim intimate partner violence came from studies and surveys originally meant to understand domestic violence against women and not from anti-women groups. He further observes such studies to have originated from Psychology of Women Quarterly Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health among others. Apart from these, such groups like Mankind Initiative (which was registered in 2001 and recognized to be the first charity to support male victims of domestic abuse) (<http://new.mankind.org.uk/about-us/>); One in three men (1IN3) in Australia (<http://www.oneinthree.com.au/>); Canadian Association for Equality

(<http://equalitycanada.com/cause/violenceagainstmen/>); and White Ribbon Campaign (http://whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/violence_againstmen) are in the forefront of campaign against men abuse in whatever form. It has, however, been observed that activities of groups like these are anti-feminist and are directed towards undermining violence of women which is much more serious than women violence on men (Worcester, 2000).

One major trait of abuse or violence act is anger. Incidentally, there are studies that have established physical aggression in women. For instance, Fiebert (2012) summarizes a bibliography which examined 286 scholars' findings and reviews on physical aggression. In all, 221 empirical studies and 65 reviews demonstrated that women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men in their relationships with their spouses or other male partners. Unpredictable temper could lead to outburst beyond control resulting into unwarranted spousal abuse. The National Family Violence Survey of 1975 which involved sixty-minute face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of 2,143 American families clearly confirmed that women are as violent as men (Staus & Gelles, 1990). Worcester (2002) while admitting that violence against female must be taken seriously and perpetrator must give account, she also acknowledged the fact that there are women who are violent. Her conviction to this assertion was strengthened when she read MacDonalds book entitled "Shoot the Women First". This is the first book to tell why women are the most feared terrorists in the world. What is written on the back cover, according to her, exclaimed that:

Shoot the women first" is the advice given to German police teams handling terrorist incidents but is recognized as valid by anti-terrorist groups the world over. Armed men may hesitate before they shoot, women rarely do. They are more ruthless, more determined and consequently more feared than their male comrades and make the most deadly adversaries".

It has also been posited by Ramos (2014) that women favoured emotional abuse which could hardly be detected. Straus (2005) also acknowledges the fact that one can hurt a partner deeply-even drive them to suicide-without ever lifting a finger. In addition to being driven to suicide, Mnisi in Matsha (2011) submits that there is no man in this world that can say he has never been abused by a woman.

Ramos (2005), specifically, identifies some of the ways women inflict emotional pains on men. These include extreme mood swings, constant anger or displeasure, withholding sex, name calling and public humiliation. On the other hand, physical abuse is perpetrated through such act as harming pets, destroying possessions, biting, spitting, striking out with fists or feet, and using weapons, such as guns or knives. Tylegal (2015) has also accused some women of being too possessive of their men leading to all sorts of domestic abuses such as not allowing their men hang out with friends or watch a football match, seizing his car keys or erecting herself by the doorway and daring the man to pass through her, and constant accusations of infidelity. Others are putting him down or insulting him, seizing his medications as a form of threat, forcing him to have sexual acts against his will, trying to control what he wears, eats or how he spends his money, verbally abusing him, be it in the presence of friends, colleagues or even within closed doors and blaming the man for her violent actions or making him feel that he deserves such treatment.

In the United States of America, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011, 2015) released the outcome of a national survey on Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence. Breakdown of the analysis on gender basis revealed that 12 months preceding the survey about 5,365,000 men had been victims of intimate partner physical violence as against 4,741,000 women. Interestingly, when a repeated survey was conducted almost identical figures were found with the percentage of male severe physical violence victims slightly rising.

The Mankind Initiative (2016), in the United Kingdom, released 30 key facts of male victims of domestic and partners abuse. From the facts supplied 600,000 male victims suffered from domestic abuse in 2014/15 alone and non-sexual partner abuse was the most frequently experienced type of intimate violence by the two sexes. In 2014/15 a greater proportion of men (37%) than women (29%) claimed to have suffered from force while both men and women suffered 3 or more incidents of partner abuse in 2012/2013. Also, in 2012/13 alone, 29% and 23% of men and women respectively suffered a physical injury while a higher proportion of men (4%) suffering severe bruising or bleeding (6%) and internal injuries or broken bones/teeth (2%) than women (1%). The total number of women convicted of perpetrating domestic abuse has more than quadrupled in the past ten years from 806 (2004/05) to 4,866(2014 /15). On why men do not leave abusive relationships participants for the study gave reasons such as the concern about the children (89%); marriage for life (81%); love (71%); the fear of never seeing their children again (68%) and thinking that she'll change (56%). Others are not enough money (53%); nowhere to go (52%); embarrassed (52%); doesn't want to take kids away from her (46%); she threatened to kill herself (28%) and fears shell kill him (24%).

In Nigeria comprehensive data on women abusing men is rare or virtually non-existing but there are few studies that have been conducted. For example, a retrospective study of medical records of 220,000 patients over a period of 5 years was carried out by Dienye and Gbeneol (2009) in Nigeria. Of this number only 48 (22 per 100,000) were victims of domestic violence. Five of the 48 patients gave a prevalent level of 0.0023% and injury observed include scratches, bruises, welts, and scalds (see summaries of the case reports of the five men abused by their wives as presented by Adebayo, 2015). In addition to this, there are celebrated cases of wives murdering their husbands. In 2014, a 14year old girl, Tasiu Wasila, poisoned her 40year old husband, Umar Sani, and three of his friends just after 14days of marriage (<http://projects.aljazeera.com/2014/child-marriage/>). In 2016, a lawyer Yewande Fatoki-Oyediran was arraigned for stabbing her husband Oyelowo Oyediran to death (<http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2016/02/inside-story-how-yewande-ibadan-lawyer-killed-her-husband/>). A compilation of stories of husbands that have been physically battered and emotionally shattered has been beautifully packaged together by Audu (2015) to justify the existence of numerous cases of battered men by wives in Nigeria (see <http://thenationonlineng.net/husband-battery-on-the-rise-as-women-fight-back/>).

In Kenya, Gathogo (2015) exclaims that bizarre cases of men being battered by their wives have recently caught the national psyche. According to him some regions or counties such as Central Region of Kenya, Western Kenya, Taita District, in Taita-Taveta County are notoriously known as zones where husbands receive the beating or battering of their lives from their wives. Central Kenya is on worst hit and Njagi (2012) referred to the place as top-husband beaters while the chairman of an organization- Maendeleo ya Wanaume- fighting for the rights of male victims of domestic violence against men Nderity Njoka went to give women "red card". Similarly, in Kenya, a study carried out by Maendeleo ya Wanaume Organisation, according to Kanrogo (2012) revealed that at least 460,000 men are battered in Central Kenya and Nairobi. This is 160,000 above previous year-2019.

In an attempt to establish how men battering manifest itself, Gathogo (2015) conducted a study among 200 participants at Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus from June to July 2012. From the findings it was established that domestic violence manifests in various ways. At times, it starts with the wife first picking a fore-planned or calculated quarrel with her spouse or insulting the man in front of the children who have been directed to insult or physically attack their father. Besides this, men battering manifest in form of: slapping; pouring hot water when

asleep or pouring hot water over a gullible man; biting areas mostly hidden by clothes; chopping mans genitals; verbal insults; insults before children; slashing; pouring petrol over him and setting him on fire; whips; throwing chairs, benches, stools, utensils and other objects in the house at the man, especially after serious disagreements in the house.

In Morocco, Bangre (2009) reports that battered men choose not to report their agony in order not to be rejected by the society. He summed up the attitude of Moroccans to men who are abused by their wives with an incident that occurred in a court in the early 80s. In the story, a wife accused her husband of battering her and the judge wanted to know the reason behind the action from the husband. When the husband replied that the wife had previously hit him several times, the dumbfounded judge retorted that "You a man have been beaten by a woman!?" and sentenced the man. In Zimbabwe, Chronicle (2015) reports that 2, 414 men in 2014 swallowed their pride by suing their wives for domestic violence against them. In South Africa, Centre for African Justice, Peace and Human Rights (2019) observes that there has been a rapid increase in domestic violence against men without bail out programmes but government and non-profit organizations spend with millions every year to fight domestic violence against women and children.

It is interesting to note that data on wife-abusing-husband is not limited to information obtained from battered husbands. There are self-reported confessional outbursts from wives who have abused their husbands. For instance, Straus and Gelles (1990) study among 6002 participants 11.6% of husbands and 12.4% of wives confessed to the use of violence against spouse while 3.4% (husbands) and 4.8% (wives) reported using severe violence against spouse. In another study conducted by Straus and Sweet (1992) among 5382 Americans 74% of men and 75% of wives in this survey reported that they committed at least one psychologically aggressive behaviour against their partners in the previous year.

From the foregoing it is evident that there are wives, across the globe that have unleashed and still unleashing all short of abuses on their husbands. It is, therefore, unfair treatment to ascribe domestic violence among couples to the handiwork of the husbands alone. What a man can do a woman can even do better when the subject matter is on domestic violence at home.

Implications for Domestic Violence Counselling

The American Counselling Association (2010) defines counselling as "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals". Professional counselling has the capacity to liberate humankind (Gesinde, 2008). Diverse types of counsellors are involved in this liberation obligation. For domestic violence, a domestic violence counsellor is the most appropriate because they are specially trained to handle family violence which may be multidimensional in nature. Accordingly, domestic violence is a type of counselling directed towards liberating victims of abuse from the controlling and manipulative power of the perpetrators. In this paper, men are victims of domestic abuse and issues arising from this revelation of this paper have a lot of implications for domestic violence counselling:

Intimate relationship with client is crucial in counselling practice. It facilitates self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is the divulging of intimate and secretive information about self to others. Individual's disclosure is recognized as the first principal determinant of a relationship that will be intimate (Psychology, n.d). The second is the partner's response to the disclosure while the last is the individual's interpretation of and reaction to the partner's behaviour. Client's self-disclosure will in turn contribute to the determination and implementations of counselling intervention techniques that will make clients become a full functioning individual or manage abusive relationship. From available statistics so far, men generally tend to keep their wives abuse to themselves (Steinmetz, 1978; Lupri, Eugene; Grandin, Elaine (2004); Minaker & Snider, 2006). A domestic violence counsellor will necessarily need to employ counselling

techniques that will make men self-disclose. This becomes more important, especially, when the abused man is to be counseled by a married woman. It has even been said that self-disclosure is reciprocal and as such a domestic violence counsellor will sometimes need to disclose personal information or experiences that are related to domestic violence.

It is undoubtedly clear from the content of this paper that domestic violence counsellors need to counsel or work with men. Men and women are dissimilar when it gets to seeking professional counselling help (Gesinde & Sanu, 2015). Men are more reluctant than women in seeking help for mental health services (Mackenzie, Gekoski, & Knox (2006); Lynch, Long, & Moorhead (2018); Kelly-Anne, 2018) and when they come they often adopt an approach that delays the help-seeking process (Kelly-Anne, 2018). Quite a number of reasons have been adduced by men for their inability to report or seek help for abuse by women. The National Domestic Violence Hotline (2014) reports such reasons given by men to include **men are socialized not to express their feelings or see themselves as victims; pervading beliefs or stereotypes about men being abusers, women being victims. Other reasons include the fact that abuse of men is often treated as less serious, or a “joke.” While many believe there are no resources or support available for male victims.** Englar-Carlson in *Counselling Today* (2019) submits that counselling is stigmatizing for men and it violates masculine norms about how men should live their lives. He went further to say that to men seeking help means “relying on others, admitting the need for help, recognizing the influence of emotional problems” If men are like this it implies that domestic violence counsellor will need to develop packages that will address cultural stigmatization associated with counselling men as well as their misconceptions about help-seeking. Help-seeking is not a sign of weakness but wisdom, particularly, when it affects psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is as significant as medical well-being.

Closely related to help-seeking behaviour of male victims of abuse is the gender of domestic counselor. It is natural for men to want to self-disclose to men. Unfortunately, Bray (2014) reports that seventy percent of counselors are female, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor, and roughly 75 percent of American Counselling Association members are female. The statistics in USA may be similar in most countries of the world. This implies that domestic violence counsellor should be gender-sensitive in their professional responsibilities to male victims of abuse.

From the discourse of this paper it is evident that prevalence studies on wives-abusing-husbands are scarcely available not because they are not usual occurrence but because of under-reporting and inadequate research attention. Baseline data is very paramount in counseling intervention. Lack of data or researches implies that counsellors would be unable to have comprehensive knowledge of men abused by their women. Meaningful contributions in terms of diagnosis, prevention, and treatment could therefore be hindered.

It has also been revealed, from this paper, that some men will not report when abused by their wives. By so doing vital information will be missing during marital upheaval resolution by the counsellor. Someone that fails to report will continue to suffer in silence and may be dying progressively. It is, therefore, imperative for domestic violence counsellor to seek from men information on previous abuse by their wives. It might even turn out to be that the behavioural challenge of the husband is a reaction to wife’s psychological/economical/sexual/spiritual abuse. Similarly, battered intervention programme should be mounted for them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper was set to present the veracity of women abuse or violence on men with a view to balancing reports on spousal abuse and discuss the implication on domestic violence counselling. From the above-mentioned discourse and revelation, it is apparent that husbands, in general, have received unfair treatment in spousal violence reports and campaign against violence in the family. Husbands are, therefore, primary and secondary victims. Primary victims in the sense that they suffer all types of abuses/violence from their wives and cultural and other factors will not allow them or others to report the incidents. When it is reported, they face rejection and stigmatization from the society. Secondary victims because there are policies, campaigns, documentaries, and treatment packages in favour of wives and children, but these exclude husbands even though they are bonafide members of the family and more importantly, the head and the first citizen in the family. However, it is instructive to note that husbands cannot be totally exonerated from contributing to this ill-treatment. One such contribution is the inability to report the abuse from their wives. No wonder that Mitchel (2018) encourage men to speak out:

*“Everyone’s experience is so unique, but I would encourage all boys and men to talk more. A lot of males think they have to “man up”, but I have a saying: man up means shut up; shut up means bottle up; bottle up means put up (or put em up); and then eventually you f*ck up. Dont man up — speak up”.*

Premised on the fact that abuse, in whatever form, cannot provide the much-needed family harmony it is imperative that there should be fair treatment to both men and women in the report, diagnosis, and treatment of spousal abuse. It should be no to abuse or violence to all irrespective of gender. As rightly pointed out by Dempsey (2013) recognizing men who experience domestic abuse does not take away anything from women who also experience abuse, but rather would contribute to building a fairer, healthier, safer and wealthier society for all.

From the compilation above, it is unmistakably clear and flawless submission that wives are as guilty as husbands in spousal abuse. Spousal abuse or violence is, therefore, symmetrical. Conjoint battering rather than selective battering in the family, especially among couples, should be acknowledged and treated. Similarly, too, the feminist’s argument that the phenomenon of husband abuse or battering is backlash against women’s safety (Straton 1994) or anti-feminist backlash (Minaker & Snider, 2006) should be discontinued. Premarital counselling should cover discourse on the abuses that men could suffer from women. Campaign against violence on women by government and non-government organizations has yielded appreciative result. But the campaign against women violence on men is yet to commence in most countries of the world. Organization of campaigns against undesirable behaviour is both preventive and curative in counselling. Consequently, domestic violence counsellors should facilitate these campaigns. It has also been reported that few studies demonstrated the types of violence performed by women against their husbands (Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Thureau, Le Blanc-Louvry, Thureau, Gricourt, & Proust, 2015). Domestic violence counsellors should therefore embark on studies that will improve public knowledge on types of violence women perpetrate against men.

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