THE SELF PERPETRATED CYCLE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND ADDICTION

A.Miguel¹; P. Horta¹; L. Lopes¹; E. Mendes¹; M. Rosário²

1- Centro Hospitalar Vila Nova de Gaia, Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal.

2- Centro de Resposta Integrada Porto Oriental, Equipa de Tratamento Porto Oriental, Porto, Portugal.

OBJECTIVES:

To understand the association between addictive behaviour on perpetrators and victims of intimate partner violence.

BACKGROUND:

Intimate partner violence is associated with a number of medical conditions. It encompasses physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence against an intimate partner.¹ Alcohol and illicit drug use are risk factors for nonfatal injury from intimate partner violence and are specifically relevant when targeting prevention.

Which factors may influence the balance between substance use/abuse and intimate partner violence?

Adapted from: Breakthroughs in understanding addiction and close relationships. Rodríguez, L e Derrick, J. 2017, Current Opinion in Psychology, Vol. 13, pp. 115-119.

CONCLUSIONS

Intimate partner violence has physical and psychological consequences for the victims as well as the witnesses of violent behaviour. There is a high prevalence of intergenerational transmission of violent behaviour. There is also a high prevalence of alcohol and tobacco abuse that can be attributed to an environment of constant violence. Without a proper intervention on the causative factor of these addictions, there is a limited solution to this problem. On the other hand, since alcohol and substance abuse are a causative factor for the perpetration of violence, intimate partner violence should be taken into account in addiction intervention programmes.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Non-systematic review using keywords “Intimate partner violence”, “domestic violence”, “addiction”, “drug use”, “addictive behaviour”, “alcohol use”, “illicit drug use”.

RESULTS:

Each year, about 20-40% of women have experienced sexual violence and 90% of them have suffered psychological violence.³

Alcohol use can impede communication between partners and cause deviance disavowal and aid in the perpetration of violence.³

Concerning the use of illicit drugs, methamphetamine has also been shown to increase psychological violence⁴, and perpetration seems to be related to cannabis and cocaine. Some personality traits that may predispose to addiction are also associated with violent behaviour.⁶ Cannabis use alone was shown to be a protective factor in intimate partner violence.⁵

Moreover, at risk women have also reported heavier drinking patterns and more drinks per week as well as higher tobacco consumption than the general female population.⁷

More recent reports find a change in the intimate partner violence paradigm. 50-75% of violent relationships present with bidirectional violent behaviour.⁸