

Violence today is one of the most serious health concerns for the Brazilian population as a whole and the health sector in particular. It is the second most common cause of death in the overall population and the most frequent cause in the 5-to-39-year age bracket. Violence causes both physical injury and emotional trauma, leaving a multitude of problems in its wake, some of which have specific diagnoses, others of which are diffuse, but all with huge repercussions, affecting individuals, families, groups, and society as a whole.

The phenomenon is known to be one of the most severe manifestations of the so-called “social issue”, exacerbating relations and problems involved as factors in conflicts, disorders, and various forms of domination and oppression.

In this thematic issue we have accepted the difficult challenge of demarcating the knowledge accumulated by the health sector with proposals for action, following the field’s tradition of linking science and technology to the search to understand and help solve society’s concrete problems. We have thus chosen to approach the issue with a challenging question for socio-political thought and praxis: **Is it possible to prevent violence?** Researchers, scholars, and health professionals have tackled this fundamental question here.

As a theme so dear to the public health field, **prevention** cannot be conceptualized here in the terms traditionally used to approach diseases, for which both the etiology and necessary procedures are much more straightforward, whether it be to control, eliminate, or eradicate the disease. Social violence is primarily multi-causal, a synthesis of problems, rooted in consciences, with macrosocial and structural tentacles. It thus requires collaboration by the health sector with other fields and a partnership with society as a whole.

The journal has covered several fundamental issues: prevention, social policy intervention efforts, structural violence, the domestic environment, primary and emergency health care services, sectorial, intersectorial, and integrated proposals, public security and law enforcement activities, and integrated government measures.

This special thematic issue thus provides readers with the current state of knowledge on social violence in Brazil as a contribution by Abrasco to the national debate.

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