

A bibliometric study on gender violence

Um estudo bibliométrico sobre a violência de gênero

Aline Veras Morais Brilhante

Universidade de Fortaleza. Centro de Ciências da Saúde. Curso de Medicina. Fortaleza, CE, Brasil.
E-mail: draalinebrilhante@gmail.com

Gracyelle Alves Remigio Moreira

Universidade de Fortaleza. Centro de Ciências da Saúde. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Saúde Coletiva. Fortaleza, CE, Brasil.
E-mail: gracyremigio@gmail.com

Luiza Jane Eyre de Souza Vieira

Universidade de Fortaleza. Centro de Ciências da Saúde. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Saúde Coletiva. Fortaleza, CE, Brasil.
E-mail: janeeyre@unifor.br

Ana Maria Fontenelle Catrib

Universidade de Fortaleza. Centro de Ciências da Saúde. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Saúde Coletiva. Fortaleza, CE, Brasil.
E-mail: catrib@unifor.br

Abstract

Gender violence, though global, is socially invisible, making it urgent for scientific production to stay ahead of this theme. A bibliometric study increases the demand for debates, by demonstrating that research is restricted to a few countries, ignoring the consequences of the damage and, despite expansion, still incipient. This article has the objective to describe the panorama of the scientific literature on gender violence, seeking to make a critical analysis on the magnitude of the demand. We sought articles in English, using the descriptors *gender* and *violence*, in the Web of Science database, from 1982-2012, excluding texts from specific areas, dealing with general violence or adopting “gender” instead of sex, resulting in 450 remaining articles. Bibliometry confirmed that women were more frequently in situations of violence, despite pointing to references of children and adolescents, as well as homosexuals and men. Research productivity in various areas of knowledge is growing, revealing its multidisciplinary nature. Only 26 countries hosted studies, a reduced number considering the scale of the problem. Most studies failed to address the consequences of gender violence, highlighting an important gap in scientific production. This research showed some points little explored by scientific production, and could serve as guidance for future studies.

Keywords: Gender; Gender Violence; Domestic violence; Bibliometrics.

Correspondence

Aline Veras Morais Brilhante
Rua Bento Albuquerque, 895, ap. 1302. Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil. CEP 60192-055.

Resumo

A violência de gênero, apesar de global, é socialmente invisível, sendo urgente o avanço de produção científica sobre esse tema. Um estudo bibliométrico majora a demanda de debates ao demonstrar que as pesquisas abrangeram poucos países, ignoraram as consequências dos danos e ainda são, apesar de sua ampliação, incipientes. Este artigo objetivou descrever o panorama da produção científica sobre violência de gênero, procurando tecer uma análise crítica diante da magnitude da demanda. Buscaram-se artigos em inglês, pelos descritores *gender e violence*, na base de dados Web of Science, de 1982 a 2012, excluindo-se os textos de áreas específicas, que tratavam da violência geral ou adotaram “gênero” em substituição a sexo, restando 450 artigos. A bibliometria ratificou que as mulheres encontram-se em mais situações de violências, apesar da referência a crianças e adolescentes, homossexuais e homens. A produtividade das pesquisas em diversas áreas do conhecimento é crescente, revelando sua natureza multidisciplinar. Apenas 26 países sediaram estudos, número reduzido diante da amplitude do problema. A maioria dos estudos não abordou as consequências da violência de gênero, demonstrando uma importante lacuna na produção científica. Esta pesquisa evidenciou pontos pouco explorados pela produção científica, servindo de orientação para futuros estudos.

Palavras-chave: Gênero; Violência de Gênero; Violência Doméstica; Bibliometria.

Introduction

Violence has greatly grown in recent times and affected the population as a whole - men and women, young and old, black and white, rich and poor -, thus becoming a serious public health problem. In this context, gender violence has significant characteristics, being a worldwide phenomenon on the rise that hurts human dignity and goes against people equality, with fatal outcomes occurring in all social classes, especially in the home environment. We are talking about hate crimes (Russell; Harmes, 2006) that originated from cultural values and were socially constructed, linked to the male population and their exercise of dominating force, physical and psychological, to subdue (Blay, 2008).

Despite its severity, however, gender violence in the domestic environment is a socially invisible problem (Cavalcanti, 2003) due to the authority given to males and crystallized in the family structure, which established it as man's right to punish his wife and children, culturally considered male property (Lerner, 1990; Saffioti, 2004). Similarly, violence manifests itself in the face of alternative masculinity and femininity (Borillo, 2001), ignoring the different nuances that make up the broad spectrum of genders and their performativities (Butler, 1992, 1993, 1998, 2003).

Academic research plays a key role in bringing this issue to light, and the production of knowledge on the subject is urgent. A bibliometric study on gender violence, therefore, takes on an important role in the academic world and contributes to the urgent debate on the role of women in productive areas, to the extent that it increases the demand for discussions on the subject in society and demonstrates that research are conducted only in few countries - despite the scale of the problem - ignoring the extent of the damage, and that the discursive practice, though rising, is still incipient.

Bibliometric studies are a relevant strategy for researchers to use in a given area of knowledge to guide the delineation of complex study objects, quantifying and describing, to favor prognosis regarding investigation and written communication processes of a particular theme. Such studies

contribute to the management of information and knowledge, as well as providing references for the evaluation of scientific communication (Guedes; Borschiver, 2005).

In the scope of these observations, the article chooses as its objective, the description of the scientific literature panorama on gender violence, seeking to weave a critical analysis of this profile regarding the magnitude of the demand.

Methods

Aiming to gather a representative number of scientific publications associated with the issues of gender violence, we performed an electronic search in the Web of Science, a multidisciplinary base that houses journals of greatest impact in each area of knowledge. The selected documents were articles - scientific communication modality that usually presents the latest research results - published in English, taking into account the globalization and the universal tendency of scientific production. Since we sought to characterize the historical development of the studies on the theme, we did not set a time for research; on the contrary, we searched all the articles of this theme published in the database.

We obtained the articles by pairing between the descriptors in health sciences *gender* and *violence*. We excluded articles linked to specific areas: pediatrics, literature, geography, neuroscience and neurology, geriatrics, agriculture, immunology, music, pharmacology, sports science, surgery, theater, urology, nephrology, veterinary science and infectious diseases. The first works citing these descriptors date back to 1982, and for this study the research extended from this period until 2012, i.e. three decades of publications.

The references of each article were included in the EndNote Web program, a bibliographic reference management tool for identifying duplicate articles. Subsequently, we proceeded with the reading of the summaries for data collection. At this stage, we identified documents that did not fit with the theme of "gender violence". Thus, we excluded publications that were about general violence and those that adopted the vernacular "gender" simply to replace

the biological sex. After applying this filter, we were left with a total number of 450 publications, thus composing the sample of this study.

The data collected were organized, coded, tabulated and submitted to descriptive statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16.0 for Windows. For purposes of analysis, we elected the following variables: year of publication, journals, original country of publication and of the research, journal, area of knowledge, groups vulnerable to gender violence, perpetrators, expressions and manifestations, and consequences of gender violence.

Results and discussion

Productivity according to year of publication

These articles (450) were distributed during a period between 1982 and 2012. In the 1980s, we only had an incipient production on the theme, which grew continuously in the following decades. The period between 2005 and 2009 stands out as for the highest number of publications (162, 36%) (Table 1).

Although gender issues and expressions of violence derived from such complex relationships permeate the history of mankind, the journey for women to achieve recognition for their human rights was long.

Since the publication of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, we have the affirmation of the need to respect the equality of human beings. However, when the UN Charter was drafted in 1945, women were entitled to vote in 31 countries and were treated as "second class" citizens in almost all countries of the world. The fact is that, during the initial draft of human rights, the gender differences remained invisible, whether in the social construction sphere, or in the biological one, until the mid-1960s, when they were finally denounced by the feminist movements (Azambuja; Nogueira, 2008).

The Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1967) paved the way for the so-called "decade of women", a period between 1976 and 1985, in which occurred the First Conference on Women in Mexico City (1975), and the Convention

on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). Since the end of the decade of women until 1995, the UN held three world conferences on women: Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). As a result of the Conference on Human Rights (1993), held in Vienna (Austria), we were presented with the Vienna Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Azambuja; Nogueira, 2008).

Parallel to the recognition of women's rights on the so-called Human Rights, we had the inclusion of the perspective of violence against women as a public health problem. After an international conference with the health ministers of the Americas, held by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in 1994, the World Health Organization (WHO) started to develop and encourage international research on the subject of violence in its most various areas, including violence against women (Azambuja; Nogueira, 2008).

Thus, although the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women dates back to 1967, it was only with the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993, and its recognition as a public health problem, that the subject gained force in the academic world (WHO, 2001), and therefore, the research on the subject marked an upward curve, as evidenced by this research data.

According to PAHO (PAHO; WHO, 1998), however, gender violence was not, even back then, a new problem. Recent was the understanding of this expression of violence as a violation of human rights.

Productivity by country of publication and research country of origin

Viewing the production of gender violence articles according to the country of publication, we observed a significant amount of articles from the United States (262, 58.3%), followed by England (45, 10%), Australia (28, 6.2%) and Canada (28, 6.2%). The United States were also the country of origin for most of the research (120, 26.7%), though this number is lower when we refer to publication. This fact is probably due to the great impact publications

in English have in the academia, particularly in US journals (Table 1).

South Africa and the United Kingdom follow the United States as countries that produce research, though with a much lower amount (27, 6%; 14, 3.1%, respectively). Other countries also host research (160, 35.5%), though individually none of them showed a significant production (more than eight articles).

In guiding the social order and the legal system to ensure human rights, several countries have been committed to the creation of policies, plans and programs for addressing gender-based violence against women, which undermines interpersonal relationships and, above all, the ability to exercise citizenship in a dignified manner.

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, in 1994, known as the Belém do Pará Convention, 34 countries participated (AGO-EA, 1994). However, research on gender violence in the study base are present in 26 countries, a reduced amount when one considers there are 191 countries in the world and the 179 signatories to the 1979 convention, especially considering the magnitude of the problem and its operating range in the world.

Although the number of signatories to the 1979 convention suggests a broad participation of the States, it is worth noting that it faced the contradiction of being the instrument that among the international human rights treaties, received the largest number of reservations, especially regarding the clause on equality between men and women within the family unit. Such reservations were based on religious, cultural and legal orders, with countries such as Bangladesh and Egypt, accusing the Committee regarding the Elimination on Discrimination against Women of practicing "cultural imperialism and religious intolerance", when they tried to instill the idea of equality between men women and even within the family unit.

The small number of countries hosting research, as opposed to the number of signatories contrary to gender violence against women suggests that, despite the expansion of research on the theme, it is still incipient. There is still a lot of ground to cover

to match the consequences and repercussions of the multiple manifestations of gender, beginning with the understanding of the elements that support the

cultural factors and that are used as an argument to perpetuate this violence. Once understood, they can be fought.

Table 1 – Article distribution according to period, country of study publication and country of origin between 1982 and 2012 (N = 450)

Variables	N	%
Period		
1982-1987	7	1,6
1990-1999	54	12
2000-2004	83	18,4
2005-2009	162	36
2010-2012	144	32
Country of publication		
United States	262	58,3
England	45	10
Australia	28	6,2
Canada	28	6,2
South Africa	24	5,3
Spain	14	3,1
Finland	8	1,8
Scotland	8	1,8
Others*	33	7,3
Country of research origin		
United States	120	26,7
South Africa	27	6
United Kingdom	14	3,1
Others*	160	35,5
Note referred	129	28,7

Source: Web of Science, March, 2013

*Countries with the number of publications inferior to eight articles.

Productivity by journal and by area of knowledge

The distribution of the number of articles per journal showed that few of them had more than eight articles published. The *Violence Against Women* magazine stands out for the largest number of articles published on the subject over time (24, 5.3%). Following that, we have the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* with 23 publications (5.1%) and the *Sex Roles*, with 20 articles (4.4%) (Table 2). These three journals are specialized in the violence and gender thematic. In total, we identified 254 journals, from different areas, containing publications on the

subject, suggesting the relevance that the issue acquired in the academia.

Considering the classification of the articles according to the areas of knowledge, psychology gathered the largest number of publications (142, 23%), followed by women's studies (90, 14.6%) and criminology (70, 11.4%) (Table 2). The diversity of publications linked to different areas of knowledge reveals that gender violence is a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary object of study.

Although we cannot say for certain that there are no studies reporting on the repercussions on health,

when we identify a higher production in the area of human sciences, we then assume that the transposition of this empirical knowledge, in the reconfiguration of integral healthcare to women, emerges as

a complex challenge to society. It is inconceivable to care for a human being by fragmenting mind and body regarding the biological, psychological and social dimensions that complete them.

Table 2 – Distribution of articles according to journal of publication and the area of knowledge between 1982-2012 (N=450)

Variables	N	%
Journal		
<i>Violence Against Women</i>	24	5,3
<i>Journal of Interpersonal Violence</i>	23	5,1
<i>Sex Roles</i>	20	4,4
<i>Journal of Family Violence</i>	14	3,1
<i>Social Science Medicine</i>	11	2,4
<i>Violence and Victims</i>	8	1,8
Others*	350	77,9
Areas of knowledge** (n=616)		
Psychology	142	23
Women's study	90	14,6
Criminology	70	11,4
Family study	59	9,6
Occupational and environmental health	50	8,1
Governing law	31	5
Sociology	24	3,9
Psychiatry	18	2,9
Biomedical social Science	17	2,8
General Medicine	17	2,8
General Social Sciences	17	2,8
Social work	17	2,8
Anthropology	13	2,1
Economy	11	1,8
Communication	10	1,6
Area study	10	1,6
Arts and humanities	10	1,6
International relations	10	1,6

Source: Web of Science, March, 2013

* Journals with less than eight articles published.

** Articles may have more than one area of knowledge.

Groups in situations of gender violence

A total of 194 articles (43.1%) cite women in situations of gender violence. This violence against women, prevalent in studies that make up the sample, partly reflects the presence of cultural, key issues for the emergence of this phenomenon, conciliating

with numerous studies that show that women are the individuals who most often experience situations of gender violence.

Many people minimize the impact of violence against women, claiming that recent female achievements balance the scales, eradicating differences related to gender in the western world (Russell;

Harmes, 2006). Despite the socio-cultural changes that have occurred in recent decades, gender violence against women still presents significant magnitude.

According to the report “Progress of the world’s women 2011-2012: in pursuit of justice”, released in 2011, despite the major changes in the legal rights of women that occurred in the last century, for most women the laws exist only on paper and do not translate into equality and justice. It is also pointed out that, although 139 countries and territories ensure gender equality in their constitutions, many women continue to go through situations of injustice, violence and inequality in their homes and their workplaces. While violence against women is condemned in 125 countries, 603 million women live in countries where aggressions against them are not considered crimes (UN Women, 2011).

Unlike the eradication preached by some, data show us that the increase in gender violence against women in the world cannot simply be explained by the general increase in violence. In El Salvador, between 2000 and 2006, there was an increase of 40% in men homicide, whereas in women homicide, the increase was almost triple: 111%. In Guatemala, between 1995 and 2004, the men homicides increased 68%, while for women, the increase was of 144%. In Honduras, the distance between values is even higher; between 2003 and 2007, the increased in the victimization of men was 40%, and for women, it was 166%, which amounts to more than four times the total amount of male victims (Carcedo, 2010).

According to recent European reports regarding the types of domestic violence against women, one in five women in Europe experiences a situation of violence (Badinter, 2005). In France, six women die each month as a result of domestic violence. In Spain, one woman is killed almost every week by her husband or partner. A study shows the prevalence of 41% of domestic violence against women, detected through London’s primary care services (Richardson et al., 2002). In addition, the rapacity of the female does not occur only as physical violence. We face today forms of exploitation, such as women trafficking, selling everything those bodies can offer, to their limit (Fregoso; Bejarano, 2010).

According to the report “Femicide: a global problem” (Nowak, 2012), published by the *Small Arms Survey* organization, fourteen countries in Latin America (including Brazil) and the Caribbean are among the 25 States with the highest femicide rate. According to the report, approximately 66,000 women are murdered each year, and 17% of them are victims of intentional homicide. In El Salvador, for every 100 thousand female inhabitants, 12 women or girls are murdered; in Jamaica, 10.9; in Guatemala, 9.7; in South Africa, 9.6. The city of Juárez, in Mexico, has the highest rate per city (19.1 women killed per 100 thousand women). Among the countries that boast very high femicide rates, relate also to 100 thousand female: in Honduras, 7 women are murdered; in Colombia and Bolivia, about 6; in Brazil and Venezuela, about 4.3; in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic, 3.

In Brazil, research on the subject shows that femicide predominates among young women, who have primary level education and unskilled work professions, while the perpetrators are young people, usually less educated than the women, married, with criminal priors, repeat involvement in fights and a history of threats and violence against women (Blay, 2003 2008). The research “Brazilian women in public and private spaces” (“*A mulher brasileira no espaço público e privado*”) found that 43% of women have experienced some form of sexual violence, with more than 50% not reporting the assault and, in 53% of cases, husbands and partners were the aggressors; the research also shows that one in five Brazilian women spontaneously shares having already suffered some type of violence by a man and that, every 15 seconds, a woman is beaten up by a man (Venturi et al., 2004).

According to an IPEA study, in the period between 2001-2011, there were more than 50,000 estimated femicides -, which equates to, approximately, 5,000 deaths per year. Many of these deaths are believed to be due to domestic and family violence against women, with about a third of them occurring at home (Garcia et al., 2013). In the period between 2009 and 2011, the Mortality Information System (SIM), recorded 13,071 deaths of women, which amounts to a crude death rate of 4.48 deaths per 100,000

women. After correction, it is estimated that there were 16,993 deaths, resulting in an adjusted annual mortality rate of 5.82 deaths per 100,000 women. Faced with this alarming picture of gender violence in Brazil, the government sanctioned the Law No. 11.340, August 7, 2006, popularly known as the Maria da Penha Law, a Brazilian legal provision that “creates mechanisms to inhibit domestic and family violence against woman under § 8 of the Article 226 of the Federal Constitution, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women; it provides information for the creation of Domestic and Family Violence against Women; also altering the Criminal Procedure Code, the Penal Code; and other provisions” (Brasil, 2006).

The aforementioned IPEA study (Garcia et al., 2013), however, found that the new law had no impact, i.e., there was no reduction in the annual mortality rates, when compared with periods before and after the term of the law. Mortality rates per 100,000 women, were of 5.28 in the period 2001-2006 (before) and 5.22 in the period 2007-2011 (after). A subtle decrease of the rate was observed in 2007, immediately following the new law, and, in recent years, the return of these values to previous known levels.

In this study, we found that 80 articles (17.8%) addressed the sum of the women and men categories. This finding is paradoxical, since gender violence is built and sustained by speeches from different social technologies (Lauretis, 1994) that operate in a continuous process of building cultural identities (Scott, 1995) and gender performativities (Butler, 1992, 1993, 1998, 2003). This organizes the hierarchical relationships of domination, in which the man is culturally - especially the white, heterosexual man -, the one who has the hegemonic command.

The bibliometric study shows us also that, besides women, children and adolescents, men and homosexuals are also referred to as individuals in situations of gender violence.

From the perspective of gender studies, violence against children and adolescents is promoted by the basic principles governing patriarchy:

women are subordinate to men and young people are under the influence of older men (Millet, 2000). This draws attention, however, to the small number of studies that address violence against homosexuals (0.6%), lower than those dealing with violence against men (1.1%), despite the high levels of violence that affect this population. According to the Annual Report on Homosexual Murders, published by the Grupo Gay da Bahia (2014), 312 murders of gays, transvestites and lesbians were documented in Brazil, which corresponds to a murder every 28 hours.

Although there are several models of masculinity, constructed in accordance with the insertion of man in the social, political, economic and cultural structure (Brilhante, 2015), the existence of a hegemonic model is based, using speeches, on the perpetuation and legitimation of some forms of violence and the failure to recognize them as such (Foucault, 2004). Although the demands of today's world and women's achievements in the last few decades have provoked adjustments in the patriarchal structure and in the behavior of men and women, the traditional correlation between masculinity and violence, as well as the intolerance to the marginal models of manhood, has remained the same (Saffioti 2004; Soihet, 2002, 2006). Taking into account the principle that the matrix that structures homophobia is the same that socially defines masculinities, we have the symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2002) that places women in a condition of vulnerability, the same that seeks to annul the neutral, the ambiguous, the borderline or the moveable (Butler, 1993, 2003) and that brings gender hierarchy into homosexual relationships, with the more masculine performances subjugating the more feminine ones (Carrara; Heilborn, 2006).

It is a fact, however, that violent acts are subject to mutual occurrence, in other words, there is the possibility that the person on the receiving end is also the author of violence. Furthermore, there are cases of violence perpetrated by women against men. These, however, cannot be classified, by definition, along with the gender violence statistics, since it is a woman and not a man who is culturally relegated to a position of submission.

For Foucault (2004), when faced with oppressive violence, people create different coping strategies. Intentionally or not, resistance arises, which also constitutes an exercise of power and domination, which in turn leads to resisting resistance. The power occurs in the relationship, and for all those who transgress the norm, there are serious effects: renormatizing, exclusion and elimination processes. Hence the violence.

Perpetrators of gender violence

Publications mostly deal with the intimate partner playing the role of aggressor - 68 of them (15.1%) only bring the current intimate partner or former male as aggressor, and 58 (12.9%) bring men and women in this condition. 11 articles (2.4%) bring known men as the aggressors, without specifying their relationship with the person in a situation of violence. A large number of articles (275, 61.2%), however, did not specify the perpetrator.

We cannot be naive enough to forget that violence is inherent to the human being, and not a characteristic limited to one sex. Thus, it would be a childish innocence to ignore that there is also violence perpetrated by women against men and against women, both in public and in private. Neglecting this fact creates a philosophical malaise, and intensifies the Manichean opposition between the "bad man" and the "good woman". Both women and men are affected in relationships, however, due to gender specificity, this occurs differently (Lamoglia; Minayo, 2009). In the family stronghold, female violence manifests through apparently non-violent means, like using the power of reproduction - when a woman makes use of the male sperm to impose paternity to someone who refuses, or when exercising explicit control over the children. Realizing and recognizing women violence, however, does not diminish the impact of male violence, nor its high prevalence and its drastic consequences (Badinter, 2005).

The research "Statistics of civil registration" (IBGE, 2012) reveals that, for every 3.9 men killed by violent causes (homicides, suicides and road accidents), one woman dies for the same reasons. It is

true that male mortality by violence has increased in several regions of Central America and South America; however, unlike women homicides, both victims and perpetrators are men. The fact is that male homicides do not occur due to gender inequality, but due to conflicts occurring in the street - fighting, territory control, gang related, drug traffickers and death squads (Prieto-Carrón; Thomson; Macdonald, 2007) -, while the women's deaths are due to private violence that permeates the interpersonal relationships between men and women. In several countries, about a third of the women were trying for separation when they were killed, especially in the three months leading up to the crime, and had repeated history of violence and aggression (Dobash et al., 2004). The pattern of gender violence with fatal outcome, which repeats in most countries, indicates that women have a much higher risk than men of being killed by their intimate partners, and that risk increases when there are disagreements between the couple (Campbell et al., 2007).

Moreover, we cannot ignore that gender relations can also be established in homosexual relationships in which one or the other in the relationship steps into the role of male domination, even though partners have the same biological sex, by subordinating the other.

Types of violence and their repercussions

Regarding the type of violence, sexual violence was more often addressed (36, 8%), followed by physical (31, 6.9%). A total of 58 articles (12.9%) addressed more than one type of violence. Most of the articles, however, did not mention the type of violence, assessing the subject in general (318, 70.7%).

Regarding repercussions, the damages to mental health are the most common (37, 8.2%), followed by a combination of physical, mental and social damages (27, 6%). Most studies (372, 82.7%), however, fail to address the consequences of gender violence for those who experience it, which demonstrates a blind spot of great importance to the development of public policies seeking attention to these subjects.

Thus, gender-based violence includes physical, psychological, sexual and property aggressions,

either resulting in death due to suicide or homicide (Krug et al., 2003). This is a polysemic phenomenon that affects all social classes (Blay, 2003, 2008), and is, above all, a matter of hierar-

chical cultural gender values socially produced, corresponding to the male population and its exercise of domination by use of physical and psychological force.

Table 3 – Distribution of articles according to groups vulnerable to violence, perpetrators, types and consequences of gender violence between 1982-2012 (N=450)

Variables	N	%
Groups vulnerable to gender violence		
Women	194	43.1
Men	5	1.1
Women and men	80	17.8
Children and adolescents	57	12.7
Homosexuals	3	0.6
Not referred	111	24.7
Author of gender violence		
Men (ex-)intimate partner	68	15.1
Known men	11	2.4
Women and men (ex-)intimate partner	58	12.9
Others*	38	8.4
Not referred	275	61.2
Types of violence		
Sexual	36	8
Physical	31	6.9
Psychological	4	0.9
Self-inflicted	2	0.4
Human trafficking	1	0.2
More than one type of violence	58	12.9
Not referred	318	70.7
Consequences of gender violence		
Damages to mental health	37	8.2
Damages to physical health	13	2.9
Damages to sexual health	1	0.2
Physical, mental and sexual damages	27	6
Not referred	372	82.7

Conclusion

A bibliometric research, using the international database Web of Science, indicated that locating the articles on “gender violence” meant changes in search procedures, according to the organization of data for each base (words title, keywords, subject, and limits), which required a flexible researcher. In this study, bibliometrics ratified cultural and

constitutional issues to the emergence of gender violence, pointing women as those more targeted by this kind of violence, and their intimate partners as the main aggressors.

As for productivity, research on gender violence are on an upward curve over the years and in journals from different areas of knowledge, which refers to the importance that the subject has acquired in the academia, also as a multidisciplinary or interdis-

ciplinary subject of study. In total, we identified 254 journals from different areas, containing gender violence publications, suggesting the relevance the subject has acquired in the academic world.

Although bibliometrics has highlighted women as the main recipients of violence, children, adolescents and homosexuals are also mentioned in this context. Violence against homosexuals, however, has proved to be scarcely explored by the selected articles, unveiling a point to be explored in future studies. Even in small parts, we were drawn to the category “men as a group vulnerable to gender violence”, since this expression of violence is predominantly marked by the hierarchy that places white, heterosexual men in a position of command.

Moreover, few were the countries that hosted these studies - only 26 of the 179 signatories to the 1979 Convention -, especially if we consider the size of the problem, its breadth and scope, as well as the number of nations committed before the United Nations with addressing gender-based violence against women, which demonstrates that this number is still incipient, despite the growing research on the subject.

Bibliometry has also shown that most of the studies did not address the consequences of gender violence, highlighting an important gap in the scientific production and serving as a guiding light for future studies.

The analysis performed herein does not exhaust the research possibilities of the subject and does not have the purpose of doing it. We recognize the limitations of the study and that the quality of research cannot be assessed exclusively by bibliometric indicators, since it uses keywords for indexing, and may not faithfully reflect the theme and the content of the articles. It is well known, however, that despite public policies, gender-based violence is a serious health problem, a demand that renews and reiterates, dictating the social, lawful, legal order and undermining the interpersonal relationships, and that a of the factors contributing to the perpetuation of this violence is exactly the invisibility of the problem and its underreporting. Drawing a profile of the gender violence publications, with critical analysis, this study showed points that were little explored by the scientific production.

Future studies, therefore, may be devoted to understanding what causes the perpetuation of gender violence in spite of public policies, as well as identifying how people who experience it, feel the consequences of the violence and the difficulties that will arise during confrontation. These measures are urgent to guide public policies that are effective in fighting gender violence.

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Authors' contribution

Bright and Moreira participated in the study design, survey and data analysis, preparation and final drafting of the article. Vieira and Catrib participated in the data analysis and contributed to the final review of the article.

Received: 04/24/2015

Resubmitted: 02/04/2016

Approved: 03/16/2016