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Review

Violence Against Men and Its Effects Within the Workplace: A Literature Review

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Abstract: Over the years, there has been increasing interest in violence against women and its significant effects on victims. However, there has been comparatively little interest regarding violence against men and its effects within the workplace. This is despite the fact that scholarly research has highlighted the frequency of this phenomenon, further exacerbated by the poor functioning of support services, which intensifies distress among male victims. The present review focused on examining publications indexed in bibliographic databases (Scopus, PubMed, and Web of Science) from the years 2012–2023 to comprehend the contemporary landscape of academic literature concerning violence against men, along with its implications within the workplace. A total of 20 studies met inclusion criteria, and all selected papers focused on male victims of violence were included in this review. The results highlight the significant presence of male victims within the context of gender-based violence and harassment, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence. This literature review additionally highlights that social representation and gender stereotypes seem to contribute to the low demand for intervention by victims and the imbalance in their effects on the public and practitioners. Moreover, the results underscore the intricate and profound repercussions of violence against men within the workplace. This review, offering an overview of existing research in this field, emphasizes the necessity for future research to enhance understanding of quantitative methodologies and to facilitate specialized training for practitioners. Hence, it becomes imperative to actively identify interventions tailored to safeguarding the well-being of male victims of violence.

Keywords: female perpetrators; male victims; domestic violence; gender-based violence; intimate partner violence; support services; workplace

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Citation: Garro, Maria, Rubinia Celeste Bonfanti, Adriana Argento, and Stefano Ruggieri. 2024. Violence Against Men and Its Effects Within the Workplace: A Literature Review. *Social Sciences* 13: 636. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13120636

Academic Editor: Barbara Fawcett

Received: 21 August 2024
Revised: 19 November 2024
Accepted: 22 November 2024
Published: 26 November 2024

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1. Introduction

Violence refers to behaviors or actions that cause harm, injury, or distress to others, whether expressed physically, verbally, or psychologically, and regardless of intent (DeWall et al. 2011; Hamby 2017). Definitions often encompass physical injury, psychological harm, coercion through force, verbal abuse or threats, and unwanted sexual behavior (Avegno et al. 2009; National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (UK) (2015)).

The multiplicity of concepts associated with violence stems from the challenge of recognizing and defining its existence. The focus here is on gender-based violence (GBV), which refers to harm, or threat of harm, committed against an individual (or individuals) on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other sex/gender-related characteristics (Global Protection Cluster Working Group 2010; Office of National Statistics 2021). GBV is an overarching category under which domestic violence and intimate partner violence can fall when they involve gender-based harm. While GBV is often equated with violence against women, it is important to note that men and gender-diverse individuals can also be victims (Council of Europe 2011; Rapinyana and Baratedi 2023). Studies in this field conceptualize violence as encompassing various forms

of aggression. As is widely recognized, these forms include acts that cause physical harm or suffering (physical violence), mental harm (emotional and psychological violence), and sexual harm (sexual violence, a form of gender-based violence, which may lead to serious sexual and reproductive health consequences, including unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections—such as HIV—and traumatic fistula; United Nations Population Fund 2023). Violence also encompasses economic harm (socioeconomic violence) and includes threats, coercion, and other restrictions on freedom, all of which have enduring emotional impacts (O'Leary 1999). Thus, it is preferable to adopt the comprehensive term Gender-Based Violence and Harassment (GBVH), which encompasses a spectrum of behaviors, including sexual, physical, psychological, and economic abuse (Cox 2024; Dasgupta 2020).

Generally, violence is under-reported across all genders and ages (Alaggia et al. 2019; Pijlman et al. 2023), and men encounter specific obstacles to disclosing and seeking help, including a lack of validation from peers, family, and service providers (Perryman and Appleton 2016; Richardson and Kloess 2022; Walker et al. 2020). Among those seeking post-violence services, males represent a disproportionately low percentage relative to the estimated prevalence (Avegno et al. 2009). Additionally, fears of encountering invalidating attitudes and homophobic bias present unique, gender-specific barriers for male victims of violence (Taylor et al. 2022).

As previously mentioned, one form of GBVH occurs in daily life or the private sphere. It is defined as "domestic violence" (DV), also known as domestic abuse, which typically occurs within family contexts and involves various relationships, including those between romantic partners, children, parents, siblings, and other relatives living in the same household. In this sense, the Istanbul Convention identifies it as "all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence occurring within the family or household or between current or former spouses or partners, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim" (Convenzione del Consiglio d'Europa sulla prevenzione e la lotta contro la violenza nei confronti delle donne e la violenza domestica (dell'11 maggio 2011), art. 3/b (n.d.)). DV is a destructive behavior that tends to increase over time in frequency and severity. Its dynamics involve one person attempting to dominate and control another (primary victim), to whom he/she causes physical, psychological or sexual harm through physical aggression (slaps, blows, kicks, or beatings), intimidation, constant devaluation, and humiliation, or, again, the imposition of sexual relations or any other controlling behavior such as isolating the person from family and friends, monitoring his/her movements, and restricting access to primary and secondary networks (Dokkedahl et al. 2022; Krug et al. 2002). Therefore, this type of violence can also occur between people who do not share a relationship, but are part of the same household. DV is a form of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which has the peculiarity of occurring between two people who share, or have shared, an intimate relationship. It can also have repercussions on the physical health of primary victims that are often disabling (due to trauma, burns, poisoning, sexual or reproductive disorders, gynecological problems, pregnancy termination, sexually transmitted infections including HIV) and/or have a significant psychological toll, leading to broader ramifications on overall health status (post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, addiction, self-lesionary or suicidal behavior, eating and/or sexual disorders), family dynamics, social interactions, economic stability, and ultimately, femicide (Plichta 2004). These foundational premises are essential for a clear understanding of the terms GBVH, DV, and IPV, as they are often mistakenly used interchangeably. However, each form of violence possesses distinct characteristics that warrant careful differentiation (National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (UK) (2015)). For example, regarding domestic violence, ambiguity is also evident in the varying terminology employed across different countries. While legal definitions and frameworks may differ, the terminology often reflects diverse cultural and policy approaches to addressing domestic violence. For instance, the UK and Ireland have specific legislation that addresses domestic abuse, violence, and coercive control. In contrast, other countries, such as the United States and Canada, commonly

use terms like domestic violence or family violence. Additionally, in Australia and New Zealand, the term "family violence" is predominantly used, encompassing a wide array of abusive behaviors within familial and domestic contexts (Vogels 2023).

GBVH, DV, and IPV can be acted upon by or against women and men, even within same-sex couples (male-male; female-female). However, the phenomenon, which is present in various countries, cultures, and societies, tends to be publicized in the media and news when the direct victim is a woman and men as aggressors or perpetrators 4. These risks reinforce the entrenched discriminatory and patriarchal cultural norms and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality (Siemieniuk et al. 2010). This is even though family theory emphasizes that women can also perpetrate violence against their partners or against men with whom they have kinship or work relationships25 (Capaldi et al. 2012), not only in self-defense (Dardis et al. 2015; Johnson 2006; Meloy et al. 2011; Saunders 1988).

For example, in England during 2021/22, 8.7% of men (equivalent to 2.3 million men) and 21% of women (6.1 million women) reported experiencing nonsexual partner abuse. This data indicates that for every three victims, two were female and one was male (Mark Brooks OBE, ManKind Initiative 2023). During 2021/22, 18 men lost their lives at the hands of their partners or ex-partners (ManKind Initiative n.d.). Despite widespread recognition that men can also be victims of IPV (Hines and Douglas 2018; Perryman and Appleton 2016), previous studies have only minimally explored IPV directed towards men (Arnocky and Vaillancourt 2014; Perryman and Appleton 2016). The Report on Intimate Partner Violence relating to the years 2016/2017 reports that in the United States, more than 40% (44.2% or 52.1 million) of men reported violence (sexual, physical, and/or stalking) from an intimate partner (Bonfanti et al. 2023; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2022). Furthermore, there was a notable rise in occurrences within Africa during the year 2012 as opposed to 2009, with figures escalating from 160,000 to 460,000 (Thobejane and Luthada 2019). In this context, disheartening findings are also underscored in the inaugural Italian study addressing instances of domestic and sexual violence implicating male victims (Salerno and Giuliano 2012).

It is important to highlight that the forms of violence against women are different from those experienced by men, which is why it is not possible to compare them. In fact, the causes and consequences of a series of complex and interconnected reasons include historical, social, cultural, and biological factors (Perryman and Appleton 2016). An example is the different types of violence: women tend to be more often victims of sexual violence and domestic violence, while men are more frequently exposed to physical violence in public contexts, even by strangers. Furthermore, gender roles and social expectations can assign female subordinate positions compared to those of men, influencing power dynamics in relationships. Men can use violence to maintain control and power over women, whereas violence against men, although serious, does not always imply the same structural power dynamics. Another difference can be found in gender norms and social expectations that influence perceptions of violence: women may face greater stigma and blame, while men may be reluctant to report due to social expectations of masculinity and fear of being seen as weak (Arnocky and Vaillancourt 2014). Men frequently hesitate to disclose abuse to family, friends, or caregivers, which limits their ability to assess victimization risk and understand female-perpetrated abuse. They may encounter unique barriers to disclosure and help-seeking, including a lack of validation of their experiences as victims by peers, family members, and service providers. Among those who seek post-sexual violence services, males constitute a disproportionately low percentage relative to the estimated prevalence (Avegno et al. 2009). Recent literature has documented negative and homophobic attitudes from providers and community members toward male victims (Davies and Rogers 2006; Davies et al. 2009). Fears of encountering invalidating attitudes and homophobic bias represent uniquely gendered barriers faced by male victims of violence (Taylor et al. 2022). In this regard, it should be emphasized that while domestic violence remains a deeply entrenched social issue predominantly affecting women and perpetrated by men, it reflects broader patterns of

gender inequality and systemic power imbalances (Perryman and Appleton 2016). The exercise of men's power and control over women constitutes a pervasive and structural problem on a global scale, with far-reaching implications and severe consequences for women. These include threats to their physical safety, psychological well-being, and overall autonomy. Nevertheless, an exclusive focus on women's experiences, although crucial, may inadvertently neglect the challenges encountered by male survivors of domestic violence. Dominant social norms surrounding masculinity often discourage men from speaking about their experiences, leading to feelings of isolation, shame, and fear of judgment (Davies et al. 2009). Furthermore, the stigma attached to male victimhood may prevent men from seeking help, as acknowledging vulnerability is frequently perceived as incompatible with traditional constructions of masculinity. Addressing these barriers requires a more inclusive approach that recognizes and supports all survivors of domestic violence while maintaining a priority on dismantling the structural and cultural forces that perpetuate violence against women on a larger scale.

Violence is frequently regarded as a private matter; however, it profoundly influences numerous facets of a victim's life, including their professional environment. This is evident, for instance, when abusive partners track victims to their workplaces, exploit work-related communication technologies to intimidate, harass, or exert control, or obstruct them from leaving home to attend work (Tenkorang et al. 2023). For example, GBVH manifests in various forms across nearly all domains of life, including political, economic, spiritual, familial, and occupational spheres.

Violence can detrimentally affect a survivor's employment participation, financial autonomy, workplace productivity, career advancement, and safety at work. In these situations, the workplace often becomes one of the few settings where individuals feel they can seek assistance, and colleagues may become the sole allies of the victim. At the same time, the financial independence associated with employment can make it a potential target for abuse. In a recent survey, a notable number of male respondents reported experiencing domestic violence. Among them, over a third indicated that DV impacted their ability to attend work, while more than half reported that the abuse persisted at or near their workplace (Wathen et al. 2015). DV can significantly affect a victim's capacity to attend work, for instance, through physical restraint, and may result in absenteeism and, ultimately, job loss for an estimated 5–27% of victims. Additionally, many DV victims report that perpetrators may harass or even threaten or harm their coworkers. Most research in this area has focused on female victims, with comparatively limited data on the impact of abuse on male victims. This disparity is largely attributable to the stigma surrounding male experiences of domestic violence, as discussed in the preceding sections (Cox 2024). Notably, in the workplace context, the ILO's Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) (hereafter referred to as C190; Cox 2024) mandates the prevention of GBVH, thereby catalyzing widespread interest in diverse approaches to addressing this form of violence. C190 provides the first internationally recognized definition of work-related violence and harassment, explicitly encompassing gender-based violence and harassment. Convention No. 190 (C190; Cox 2024) defines violence and harassment as encompassing "a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual, or economic harm" (Article 1.1(a)). Notably, it includes gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH), described as "violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately" (Article 1.1(b); Cox 2024). C190 establishes a comprehensive framework for personal protection (Article 2) and seeks to address violence and harassment occurring "in the context of employment, whether in the private or public sector" (Article 3). Furthermore, the Convention acknowledges that specific groups of workers and individuals in certain sectors, occupations, or work arrangements face heightened vulnerability to violence and harassment (Articles 6 and 8; Cox 2024).

Thus, the focus of this literature review is on male victims of all types of violence, and the consequences in the workplace, which is seldom explored, are therefore also a reality that involves gender issues, but results in silence, fear, and shame, and, for the most part, goes unreported. This is also because, despite discomfort, masculinity involves denial of pain, not seeking help, and dominance over women. As is the case with female victims of violence, the repercussions can once more be identified across various tiers (Margherita et al. 2021), encompassing psychological (post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, addiction), physical (injurious behavior), and workplace-related domains (Flinck and Paavilainen 2010; Kolbe and Büttner 2020). Specifically, when domestic or IPV occurs in the workplace, its ramifications extend far beyond the immediate victims. Individuals who are subjected to such violence often find themselves grappling with isolation, as they may feel hesitant or ashamed to disclose their situation due to concerns about how it may affect their employment (Alifanovienė et al. 2013; Hines and Douglas 2018; Taylor et al. 2022). Men who are victims of violence may have difficulty showing up to work because of physical injuries, emotional stress, or the need to attend legal or support proceedings (absenteeism). Even when physically present, they may have difficulty concentrating and being productive due to the trauma and stress they have suffered (presenteeism). Added to this are decreased productivity (due to reduced concentration), mistakes caused by excessive worry, and conflicts with colleagues caused by excessive irritability (Adetoro and Adetoro 2021). Finally, the risk of stagnation due to lack of motivation and emotional difficulties can prevent them from taking on new careers or advancement opportunities and, in extreme cases, demotion or dismissal, with consequent loss of income.

In this regard, the World Health Organization WHO (World Health Organization 2002) is specifically inspired by an ecosystem model that views the onset of interpersonal violence as a complex interaction of influencing factors at four levels—individual, relational, community, and social—that evolve over the course of a lifetime.

2. Research Objectives

Acknowledging the debates and constraints surrounding the visibility of violence perpetrated by women against men, this study endeavors to assess the present status of academic literature in this domain. The aim was to deepen the knowledge of the phenomenon to better identify its specificity and, consequently, to provide professional skills to be involved in providing adequate support and social referral networks.

Hence, this review was undertaken to address the following questions: What insights can be drawn from indexed publications on violence perpetrated by women against men? Do male victims seek assistance by reaching out to specialized professionals available in the area? What are the repercussions within the workplace context?

These interrogative statements indicate the intention to explore the insights provided by scholarly dissemination concerning violence against men, the repercussions within the workplace context, and to ascertain the nature and extent of interventions sought by the victims.

3. Method

This review has been carried out in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of publications on violence perpetrated by women against men. The review follows the components of the Statement of Preferred Reporting Elements of the PRISMA structured methodology (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses; Moher et al. 2009; Page et al. 2021; Shamseer et al. 2015).

To this purpose, we examined the relevant literature by searching in the following databases: PubMed/Medline, ISI Web of Science, and SCOPUS. We applied the following inclusion criteria for the selection of the studies: (1) published between 2012 and 2022; (2) written in English; (3) qualitative-quantitative studies on men 19–44 years old; (4) presence of violence (gender-based violence, domestic violence, and/or intimate partner violence) acted by women on men.

The year 2012 was identified as the inclusion criterion because it was closer to 2011, the year of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul, 11 May 2011). The latter recognizes that men also experience some forms of violence (e.g., Article 4—Fundamental rights, equality and nondiscrimination; Council of Europe 2011), but leave signatory states free to choose whether to apply measures aimed at combating violence against this type of victim. Again, the choice of decade is intended to ensure that the review concentrates on recent studies, incorporating the most current and relevant research on the topic. The criterion regarding the language of the publications analyzed (English) was chosen because it is the primary language in which a significant portion of high-quality international scientific research is published and widely accessible. Scientific research published in English is generally more accessible, as many databases and repositories, such as PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, and JSTOR, primarily collect articles in this language. This enhances the ability to gather relevant studies and increases the likelihood of identifying recent and pertinent research. This choice also has the effect of narrowing the search to a well-established body of studies, minimizing potential issues related to translation or interpretation that could impact the reliability of the results.

Finally, the victim age range of 19–44 was identified as more representative of the sample of men experiencing violence and seeking services (Maccarone 2019). Men aged 19–44 are in key stages of their life cycle, during which they are more likely to be engaged in long-term, intimate, or marital relationships. These are critical phases when individuals form partnerships, navigate the dynamics of cohabitation, and potentially start families. During these years, they are also dealing with career development, evolving social roles, and the formation of personal identity—all of which can impact how they experience and perceive violence in their relationships. Focusing on this age group allows researchers to examine the specific forms of violence and control that may manifest in these contexts, which are often distinct from the patterns seen in younger or older age groups. Moreover, focusing on this age group enables an in-depth exploration of the unique emotional and social pressures that influence reporting behaviors, as well as the identification of ways to create safe spaces where men can report abuse without fear of judgment. A major challenge in this area is the underreporting of violence. For younger men, in particular, there may be added pressures related to gender norms and stereotypes (Cislaghi and Heise 2020). Society often expects men to be strong, stoic, and in control, and the fear of being perceived as weak or emasculated—or the belief that male victims will not be taken seriously—presents a significant barrier.

The exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) reviews, books and book chapters, letters to the Editor, publications from disciplines such as pharmacology and medicine in stricto sensu, and grey literature; (2) studies that also included violence against women in intimate relationships; and (3) analyses comparing male and female offenders and victims. Specifically, gray literature was not considered, although recent publications highlight its potential contribution (Hartling et al. 2017; Mering 2018; Pappas and Williams 2011). However, in this case, we considered his contribution as a complement to published research, and only after carefully assessing the quality and relevance of each document.

To obtain the most relevant literature in the databases, the choice of keywords was oriented on “men”, “women”, “victims”, “perpetrators”, “violence”, “gender-based violence”, “domestic violence”, and “intimate partner violence” interrelated with the Boolean operators “AND” and “OR”. After entering the search strings, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were set to obtain relevant literature from the two databases.

Of the potentially eligible publications, abstracts were read, and the full text was retrieved.

During the study, academic ethical guidelines were not followed to ensure the acquisition of consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and data management, as no participants were involved and the data used could be traced in databases.

4. Results

A total of 680 records were identified through databases and manual search. After removing 121 duplicates, 559 remaining titles and abstracts were screened, and 158 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. A total of 20 articles met the inclusion criteria and were considered more suitable for the purpose of the review (see Figure 1).

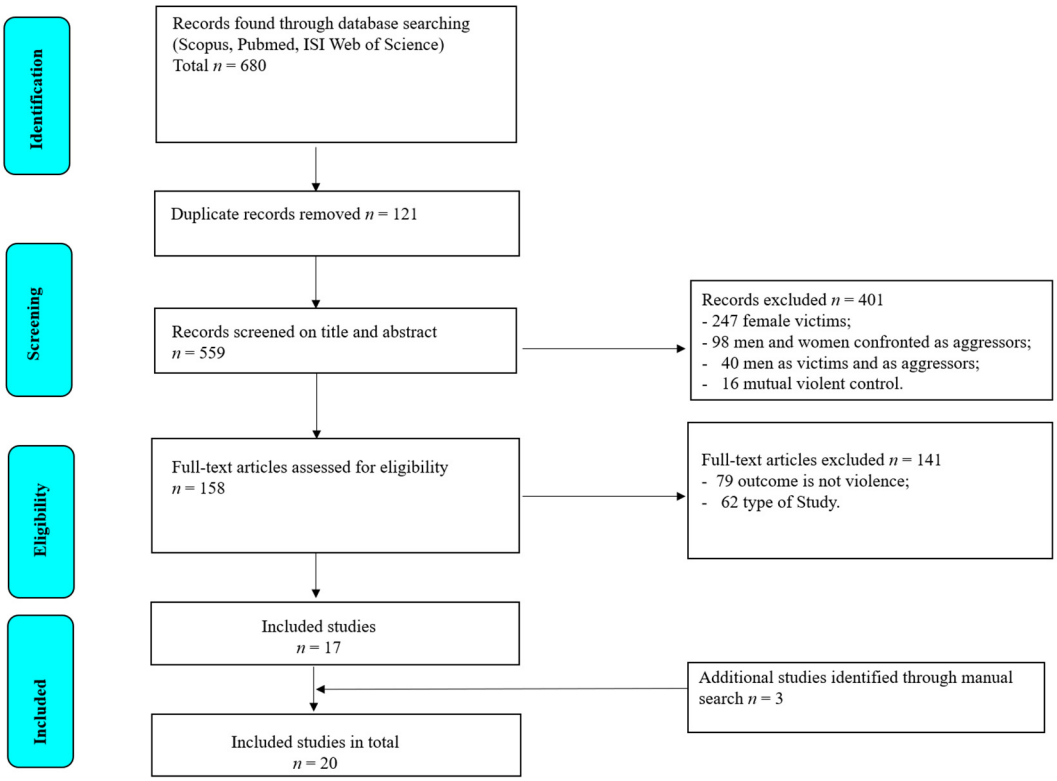

Figure 1. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) flowchart of study selection.

Data extraction was conducted independently by M.G., R.B.C., A.A., and S.R. The authors read the full text, analyzed the characteristics of the studies, and discussed the possibility of including them in the review.

The following information was extracted from each article included in the review: first author, year of publication, participants, purpose, instruments, general results, and implication of violence against men within the workplace (see Table 1).

In the subsequent sections, we discuss the findings derived from the analysis of articles pertaining to the areas of interest, organized in accordance with the three research questions of the review.

Table 1. Articles focusing on violence women against men included in the review.

Authors	Participants	Country	Purpose	Instruments	Results	Workplace Consequences
Alifanovienė et al. (2013)	Case report	Lithuania	To disclose emotional experiences of the man who has experienced domestic violence	Semi-standardized interview	Confirmation of the stigma associated with men who have been victims of abuse by women.	Men who have experienced domestic violence express concerns regarding the discussions held by their coworkers about them
Alsawalqa (2023)	33 Married men	Jordan	To comprehend the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse perpetrated by females	Semi-structured interviews	The primary factors contributing to abuse against husbands included neglect from their wives in areas such as household duties, childcare, personal appearance, and hygiene, financial mismanagement, intrusion by the wife's relatives into the couple's private matters, and infidelity.	NA
Aragbuwa (2021)	101 Readers' comments.	Nigeria	To examine dialogic threaded developments of online readers' comments on some selected cases of domestic violence against men	Threaded Categorization	Ideological position that domestic violence against men is unjustifiable.	NA
Bates (2020)	161 Men	United Kingdom	To explore men's experience of intimate partner violence from their female partners	Online questionnaire	Men encountered various forms of aggression, often severe and injurious, but their most significant experiences stemmed from the control exerted by their female partners.	Men who have experienced domestic violence express that they feel limited in their personal freedom in the workplace.
Bell et al. (2022)	119 Female undergraduate students	Usa	To investigate the association between relationship dependency and female-perpetrated dating aggression and determine if emotion dysregulation moderated this hypothesized relationship	Online screening assessment	The ability to regulate emotions may play an important role in the association between relationship dependency and female-perpetrated dating aggression.	NA

Table 1. *Cont.*

Authors	Participants	Country	Purpose	Instruments	Results	Workplace Consequences
Brooks et al. (2020)	9 Men	Canada	To understand men's perceptions of intimate partner violence	In-depth interviews	Some men openly acknowledge their victimization and experience similar levels of fear as female victims, while others reinterpret their victim status to maintain power and control.	Men who have experienced domestic violence encounter the division between their public and private identities.
Corbally (2015)	14 Men	Mixed	To unearth the social processes that influence how men experiencing intimate partner violence account for their experiences	Biographical narrative interpretive method	The abuse narrative exhibited a distinct form, reflecting respondents' dissociation between their identities as men and their experiences as abuse victims.	The personal accounts of men who have been subjected to abuse within the domestic sphere delineated the division between public and private identities.
Drijber et al. (2013)	372 Adult male victims of domestic violence	Netherlands	To explore the nature of domestic violence experienced by men, including both physical and psychological aspects	Online questionnaire	Male victims of domestic violence often endure both physical and psychological abuse inflicted by their female partners. They frequently refrain from reporting the abuse due to the perception that law enforcement would not intervene.	One of the conditions that predisposes victims to domestic violence is job loss.
Dim and Lysova (2022)	16 Men	Canada	To examine help-seeking behavior of men who had experienced intimate partner abuse	Interview	The severity of the violence experienced was associated with greater use of formal services. Unemployment and minor children, represent barriers to contacting formal agencies for help.	NA
Hine et al. (2022a)	4 Female call handlers employed by a UK based organization	United Kingdom	To provide detailed information regarding the nature and context of abuse toward, and help-seeking experiences of, male victims; (2) to explore the practitioners' experiences of supporting abused men	Semi-structured interview	Male victims experience severe physical violence, coercive and controlling behavior, financial and sexual abuse, as well as manipulation of the parental relationship. Practitioners also report the impact of gender stereotypes within the criminal justice system.	NA

Table 1. *Cont.*

Authors	Participants	Country	Purpose	Instruments	Results	Workplace Consequences
Hine et al. (2022b)	719 Individuals contacted a domestic abuse helpline for men in the UK	United Kingdom	To analyze case data provided by a UK domestic abuse helpline for men	Call Information and outcomes	The overwhelming majority of callers reported they were abused by female perpetrators, most of whom were still their current partner, and that many of the men were fathers.	NA
Hines and Douglas (2018)	611 Male victims; 1601 Men belong to general population	Mixed	To test if physical and physical forms of partner violence (PV) will be more severe and frequent among male IT victims than among male situational couple violence (SCV) victims; to test if male intimate terrorism (IT) victims will have worse physical and mental health in comparison with male SCV victims; to test if men involved in mutual violent control (MVC) will have worse mental and physical health problems than either male perpetrators or male victims of IT, and relationships characterized by MVC will be characterized by more severe PV.	Questionnaire	Men who were victims of intimate terrorism had significantly worse mental health than men who experienced situational couple violence, and intimate terrorism victims experienced more severe and frequent partner violence, including physical, sexual, and nonphysical forms of violence.	Men who have experienced domestic violence express that they feel worried about their personal reputation at work.
Hogan et al. (2021)	26 Men who self-identified as having experienced female-perpetrated IPV.	United Kingdom	To explore men's help-seeking experiences and/or their perceptions of utilizing support services/support networks following intimate partner violence victimization.	Semi-structured interviews	Male victims experience fear of stigma and the need for training of service providers.	Typically, men who have experienced violence seek informal support within the workplace.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Authors	Participants	Country	Purpose	Instruments	Results	Workplace Consequences
Joseph-Edwards and Wallace (2021)	10 Male victims	Caribbean	Understand (1) how do the men experience domestic violence (DV) victimization?; (b) how do the men cope with their DV victimization?; and (c) how do the men disclose their experiences of DV victimization?	Semi-structured interviews	Male victims use wide-ranging coping strategies to deal with spousal abuse.	NA
Malik and Nadda (2019)	1000 Married men in the age group of 21–49 years	India	To find the prevalence, characteristics, and sociodemographic correlates of gender-based violence against men.	Interview	Men are also the victims of violence at the hands of women. Hence, necessary amendments in favor of men experiencing domestic violence should also be incorporated.	NA
Taylor et al. (2022)	147 men	Australia, United Kingdom	To explore the barriers to help seeking reported by men who have experienced intimate partner violence in opposite-sex relationships	Online qualitative questionnaire	The burden of stigma invites the promotion of education and training to support policy change.	Men were concerned that seeking help would lead to events that would impact negatively on their roles within their workplaces.
Tenkorang et al. (2023)	1458 man	Kenya	To investigate the help-seeking behaviors of male survivors of IPV in Kenya or sub-Saharan Africa	Questionnaire	Most male victims did not seek help, and those who did preferred informal sources over formal ones. The severity of physical violence was the strongest predictor of help-seeking.	NA
Tsiko (2016)	88,066 Cases of domestic violence	Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	To examine the prevalence of domestic violence and correlates of intimate partner violence against men	In-depth interviews	Female perpetrated abuse was significantly associated with education, alcohol consumption, intergenerational cycle of violence, polygamy, wealth, and type of union.	NA

Table 1. *Cont.*

Authors	Participants	Country	Purpose	Instruments	Results	Workplace Consequences
Wallace et al. (2019)	20 managers and practitioners of domestic abuse services supporting men	Wales	To explore the needs of men experiencing domestic abuse from the perspective of the professionals supporting them	Semi-structured interviews	It is essential to acknowledge and accept domestic abuse, enhance awareness of available support services, address the low number of male victims seeking help, allocate adequate resources (both time and funding), and focus on rebuilding individuals' lives.	NA
Wörmann et al. (2021)	167 cases of men victims of IPV (age 18 years and older)	Germany	To analyze the frequency and characteristics of cases of physical violence on male victims of intimate partner violence examined in a clinical-forensic examination center for victims of violence in Germany over 11 years.	File reports of male cases	It is essential to establish or strengthen specialized support services for men with intimate partner violence and emphasize the importance of clinical forensic services in documenting and assessing violence-related injuries.	NA

Note: NA = not applicable.

4.1. Selected Articles

The articles included in this review primarily relate to three strands of research: (a) qualitative studies focused on women's violence against men; (b) services and interventions to support the well-being of men who are victims of domestic violence, such as GBV, DV, and IPV; and (c) implications of domestic violence against men in the men's workplace.

4.2. Violence Against Men

Upon reviewing the publications analyzed across various global regions (including Germany, Lithuania, the United Kingdom, Africa, Arabia, India, the USA, and Canada), it becomes evident that men can be subjected to aggressive behavior that manifests as violence, akin to women. Additionally, it is clear that men often internalize societal attitudes towards the violence they face, feeling pressured to remain silent due to the fear of stigma, devaluation of their values, and social isolation. This pressure is particularly acute in male-dominated societies, where disclosing their suffering may be viewed as shameful (Kumar 2012).

Significant data pertains to the visibility of the phenomenon, highlighted not only by authors who scrutinize it in European nations (such as the United Kingdom) but also by those originating from regions where masculinity is staunchly upheld (like Africa, India, and Bangladesh; (Kumar 2012; Malik and Nadda 2019; Thobejane and Luthada 2019). This serves as a noteworthy point that should prompt contemplation, particularly in countries where instances of violence perpetrated by women (such as female partners or relatives) against men are either obscured or underestimated. For instance, in Italy, research predominantly focuses on violence against women, influenced by the influential role of the media in addressing challenging, thought-provoking topics and shaping public perception (Rollè et al. 2014).

Finally, male victims of domestic violence and/or IPV, such as female victims, tend to initially present to a family doctor or visit an emergency department (hospital). However, the lack of recognition of this violence and a relative understanding of the phenomenon within society are sources of concern for most men. In this regard, what emerges from studies is that most male survivors did not seek help, and those who did preferred informal sources over formal ones. On the other hand, with regard to the predictors of help-seeking, what emerged from the research is that the severity of physical violence was the strongest predictor of help-seeking. Male survivors of severe physical abuse were more likely to seek help from informal support networks than not seek help. Additionally, highly educated men were significantly more likely than uneducated men to seek help from formal support networks (Tenkorang et al. 2023). Another notable finding from the studies included in this review is that, despite the parallels in victimization narratives among men and women, the impact of their gendered contexts manifests in unique ways. While some men are open to sharing their experiences as victims and express fears comparable to those of female victims, others reinterpret their victimhood in a manner that reinforces their own authority and control (Corbally 2015). The latter behavior is not usual in women. Moreover, men usually draw attention to the contextual circumstances surrounding instances of abuse, including scenarios where women, themselves victims of violence, resort to acts of aggression, alongside the enduring ramifications of colonial legacies within affected communities (Brooks et al. 2020). These findings emphasize the imperative for meticulous qualitative inquiries directed at elucidating the contextual underpinnings of violence, comprehending the implications of fear, victimization, and power dynamics on the mental well-being of men, and evaluating the effectiveness of legal and support services, or their absence therein.

4.3. Interventions to Support the Wellbeing of Male Victims of Violence

Current knowledge in this field remains constrained, primarily relying on narrow, qualitative methodologies focused on uncovering the emotional ordeals of men subjected to violence. However, obstacles persist in providing support to male victims of violence

perpetrated by women, potentially impeding the effectiveness of services and practitioners dedicated to assisting them (Maria et al. 2016).

In this regard, the articles analyzed note the importance of recognition and awareness of this phenomenon, as well as more human and material resources allocated to services that consider the specific needs of men. Men manifest strong difficulties in accepting their status as victims, which is incompatible with their perception of masculinity (Brooks et al. 2020; Corbally 2015). The resistance manifested toward the request for support (legal or health) is also dictated by the reaction of the operators of some services who, at times, mock the reported experiences, do not believe the testimonies of the users, or ridicule this type of victim (credibility, discredit, exclusion/isolation). The coping and help-seeking strategies to be considered are different; for example, many men ask to be shown concretely how to act, for example, at the legal level and not psychological support (Wörmann et al. 2021). Understanding the consequences of violence in the workplace is crucial for raising awareness about the role workplaces can play in assisting individuals experiencing violence of any kind in accessing necessary help.

However, male victims continue to represent an under-supported segment of the population owing to excessive challenges regarding access to services (Dim and Lysova 2022; Hogan et al. 2021; Wallace et al. 2019). By contrast, positive help-seeking experiences made it easier for men to recognize their relationship as abusive, which, for some of them, was instrumental in their decision to leave the relationship.

4.4. Effect of Violence on the Workplace

Violence is frequently perceived as a private matter; however, it profoundly affects nearly every aspect of a victim's life, including their professional environment. For instance, abusive partners may follow victims to their workplaces, exploit work-related communication technologies to intimidate, harass, or control them, or obstruct them from leaving their homes to go to work. Such violence can adversely affect a survivor's employment participation, financial autonomy, workplace productivity, career advancement, and safety at work (Tenkorang et al. 2023). Studies of domestic violence in the workplace observed how it is a multifaceted construct. The findings underscore several workplace implications, including the restriction of personal freedom and encroachment upon workspace (Bates 2020); apprehension concerning coworkers' opinion (Alifanovienė et al. 2013; Hines and Douglas 2018; Taylor et al. 2022); a dichotomy between public and private identities (Alifanovienė et al. 2013; Hines and Douglas 2018; Taylor et al. 2022); and the utilization of workplaces as a proactive means to seek support from colleagues (Hogan et al. 2021). Furthermore, studies indicate that loss of work can be also a precursor to domestic violence (Drijber et al. 2013).

Particularly, a significant aspect of violence is its impact on personal freedom and the intrusion into the workspace. Bates (2020) highlights how workplace violence and harassment, occurring within the context of an individual's employment, are indicative of larger societal issues. Therefore, when instances of family violence spill over into the workplace, they transform into workplace issues, posing risks not only to the direct target but also to others within the workspace. This underscores the interconnectedness of personal and professional spheres and emphasizes the urgent need for workplaces to address and mitigate the effects of domestic violence (Bates 2020).

Regarding concerns related to coworkers' perceptions, existing literature indicates that male victims often act under the influence of apprehension stemming from the potential judgments of their colleagues (Alifanovienė et al. 2013). Consequently, victims of abuse navigate their work environment under a constant cloud of apprehension, fearing that their colleagues may uncover their family circumstances, which could potentially damage their reputation, particularly in terms of societal expectations of masculinity (Hines and Douglas 2018; Taylor et al. 2022).

The literature review brings to light another crucial aspect concerning the division between the public and private identities of men who have experienced violence (Brooks

et al. 2020; Corbally 2015). This division can be attributed to the pervasive influence of hegemonic masculinity, which illustrates how societal norms infiltrate men's daily lives, prompting them to conform to culturally defined standards of masculinity in various domains, including marriage, family, work, competitive sports, success, corporate profitability, and competitiveness (Corbally 2015). This influence of cultural values proves to be significant, particularly in instances of gender-based violence against men, inadvertently reinforcing the dichotomy between their public and private identities.

5. Discussion

This review has reviewed articles focused on violence perpetrated by women against men to address the existing multiple research gaps, including: (1) the phenomenon to better identify its specificity; (2) understanding if male victims seek assistance by reaching out to specialized professionals available in the area; and (3) what are the repercussions within the workplace context.

In terms of the overarching findings of the review, the analysis suggests that considering the geographical regions covered in the included studies, violence against men by women can be viewed as an integral component of the global comprehension of GBVH, DV, and IPV.

Conflicts may arise within different types of relationships, typically stemming from unresolved personal issues. Failure to address these issues constructively may result in occurrences of violence. While violence in heterosexual relationships is predominantly perceived as a social problem of violence against women, a growing body of evidence suggests that men can also be victims of physical and psychological assault perpetrated by their partners or relatives (Alifanovienė et al. 2013; Hine et al. 2022b; Wörmann et al. 2021). Indeed, whether it pertains to GBVH, DV within a broader spectrum of familial connections within a domestic setting, or IPV occurring between romantic partners, individuals of both genders can be victims. Furthermore, violence against women is often thought to be reactive, but evidence supporting this claim is limited (Fanslow et al. 2015). Hence, the absence of widespread acknowledgment of this phenomenon might significantly influence decisions concerning the reporting and safeguarding of the well-being of male victims. Consequently, it is imperative to advocate for gender equality, enhance assistance for victims, and deter future instances of violence across all contexts (Bates and Douglas 2020). Certainly, due to entrenched gender stereotypes, this form of violence may persist as a result of the historical subordination of women to men and its perpetuation over time.

Thus, despite the consensus on the evidence of widespread violence against husbands and boyfriends, or male relatives, victims face numerous inequalities in well-being and, continue to suffer in silence because their experience is often in danger of being pushed aside, trivialized, and/or ignored by the media and political representatives.

Regarding the assistance by specialized professionals available in the area, the analysis reveals that men's specific experiences and needs appear to be neglected in academic research and service delivery. As an illustration, there is currently a lack of large-scale quantitative data describing the profile, needs, and outcomes of abused men, both at the time of reporting and at the time-of-service utilization, which is almost absent in many countries. This is the case in Italy and the United Kingdom, where assistance is largely delivered through dedicated telephone lines (Robinson and Rowlands 2009).

Again, poor training of practitioners in this area, who are often strongly urged to support women and their children, enacts a form of benevolent sexism (Gracia et al. 2014). Thus, the impact of gender stereotypes on practitioners (law enforcement and social workers) can hinder both an effective understanding of the reality of men who are victims of violence (in intimate and domestic relationships) and, consequently, a suitable intervention in favor of their individual well-being.

Regarding the implications within the workplace setting, this review underscores the multifaceted and profound effects of GBVH, DV, and/or IPV. Beyond curtailing personal freedom and engendering an atmosphere of insecurity hindering full work engagement,

domestic violence permeates both the physical and emotional workspace, fostering pervasive fear and apprehension (Alifanovienė et al. 2013; Hines and Douglas 2018; Taylor et al. 2022). When GBVH, DV, and/or IPV have implications within the workplace context, their repercussions extend beyond the direct victims. Affected individuals often contend with feelings of isolation, reluctance to disclose their situation due to employment-related concerns, and practical challenges such as commuting difficulties and diminished productivity, collectively amplifying the impact on individuals and the workplace milieu (Bates 2020). GBVH, DV, and/or IPV exert a substantial impact on workplaces, manifesting in reduced productivity, heightened absenteeism, and potential safety risks, while victims often experience mental health challenges and threats to their job security. To address these issues, employers can adopt supportive measures, including the provision of paid leave, flexible working arrangements, access to legal and psychosocial support services, and the development of workplace safety plans. Equipping managers with training to respond sensitively, safeguarding confidentiality, and offering Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are crucial steps (Baskar et al. 2021). Additionally, organizations can engage in systemic advocacy by promoting legal reforms and raising awareness to combat stigma, thereby fostering a workplace culture that empowers survivors and aligns with broader societal efforts to address domestic violence. However, the findings remain insufficient in fully addressing the impact of workplace environments and the role of employers in providing support, as outlined in ILO Convention No. 190 and its associated Recommendation No. 206. Although a growing number of companies are implementing policies that recognize the experiences of DV among men, women, and individuals of diverse gender identities, including LGBTI+ workers, significant gaps persist in understanding the comprehensive nature of the issue. Notably, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the specific ways in which men experience domestic violence within the context of their professional lives (Baskar et al. 2021). This includes the impact of DV on work performance, job retention, access to workplace support systems, and the effectiveness of managerial interventions. In the absence of such data, organizations face significant challenges in developing inclusive policies and programs that effectively address the diverse needs of all employees affected by DV. These gaps underscore the necessity for focused research and expanded dialogue on the intersection of domestic violence and workplace dynamics, particularly to ensure that male and nonbinary victims are adequately considered in prevention and support strategies.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This review has some limitations. Firstly, due to the extensive scope of the phenomenon, certain pertinent publications may have been inadvertently excluded on this occasion, either due to temporal constraints or the nature of the articles (e.g., case reports and reviews). Consequently, there is a necessity to expand the study to enrich the understanding of the phenomenon, incorporating the perspectives of men who have encountered violence. Secondly, the authors established inclusion criteria regarding the relevance of the subject matter, which were not restricted to specific geographic regions and contextual dimensions. A more comprehensive literature review can also pinpoint areas warranting further investigation, as this form of violence exhibits considerable variation across geographical and contextual dimensions. Social, cultural, legal, economic, and religious factors may sometimes fail to garner adequate attention. Thirdly, it is crucial to acknowledge that data is subject to change over time, and the insights presented herein pertain to the period under investigation (December 2023). Broadening the scope, it would be advantageous to explore additional sources, including political and bureaucratic, for a more comprehensive understanding. Particularly in regions where accessing data poses challenges due to cultural norms impacting reporting, such as African countries, or where economic constraints hinder data collection efforts, it is imperative to recognize these limitations. Finally, another limitation of this review is that most selected studies fail to consistently differentiate between various forms of violence, such as GBV, DV, or IPV. Future research

should either precisely define the type of violence under investigation or consider all forms collectively. Notwithstanding this limitation, the review notably underscores the importance of advocating for initiatives, such as research endeavors, tailored training programs, and comprehensive interventions against male victimization. These measures are pivotal in fostering a deeper comprehension of violence against men.

7. Conclusions

This review is the first to produce stronger evidence on the effects of violence perpetrated by women against men in different settings, focusing on assistance by specialized professionals and the repercussions within the workplace context. The findings of this study underscore the necessity for sensitizing professionals in the field through targeted training initiatives and for urging service providers to develop guidelines aimed at enhancing the support offered to male victims (Hine et al. 2022a; Hine et al. 2022b). In this sense, it would be appropriate to make an economic investment in the training of professionals in the field—not only social and health workers—necessary to overcome gender stereotypes, and thus aimed at moving from "gendered" violence to "gender-based" violence and, therefore, to produce effective interventions for the protection of victims by counteracting all forms of gender-based discrimination.

Finally, the absence of reports of violence against men points to a current lack of support for female perpetrators of violence, for whom there is also a need to examine the effectiveness of treatment programs and, if necessary, to what extent they should be adapted for men with similar experiences.

Thus, change needs to be made consistently by counteracting prejudice or stereotypes even in the training paths of practitioners, ensuring adequate care for victims beyond gender and type of violence, including milder violence, and following shared guidelines for the implementation of effective interventions to counter violence "in" gender. A shared commitment is necessary to promote actions, such as research, specific training, and inclusive intervention, which would allow a more complete understanding of violence against men. It is a significant global public health concern. Reflecting on the gravity of violence against men can encourage us to address the phenomenon of violence against women with the same urgency or specificity.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M.G., A.A. and S.R.; methodology, M.G. and R.C.B.; resources, A.A., M.G. and R.C.B.; data curation, M.G. and R.C.B.; writing—original draft preparation, A.A. and M.G.; writing—review and editing, M.G., R.C.B. and S.R.; funding acquisition, M.G. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: The datasets generated during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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