



Flook House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1BT

chairman@mankind.org.uk : www.mankind.org.uk : 01823 334244

Honorary Patrons – Lord Cotter, Liz Lynne MEP, Ian McNicholl, John Penrose MP and Erin Pizzey

Dr David Gadd (Criminology)
Keele University,
Keele,
Staffordshire,
ST5 5BG.

CC:

Dr Claire Fox (Psychology)
Dr John Hegarty (Psychology)
Mr Kevin Hogan (Psychology)

27th July 2010

Dear Dr David Gadd

Ref: From Boys to Men: New Research Study on Domestic Violence

As Chairman of the ManKind Initiative (www.mankind.org.uk), a charity that supports male victims of domestic violence, I am writing to express our dismay and disappointment that the major research you are reported as undertaking relates exclusively to domestic violence involving a male perpetrator. It would have been invaluable and equitable at all levels to have also included domestic violence involving a female perpetrator, thereby ensuring the research was gender neutral.

With figures from the British Crime Survey repeatedly showing that one in three victims of domestic abuse are male (1 in 6 women and 1 in 4 men will be a victim in their lifetimes), and a similar proportion suffering chronic domestic abuse, the charity is concerned that the academic community continues to research only male perpetrators of domestic abuse and not perpetrators from both genders. This not only is inequitable to male victims but also to the children of violent or abusive mothers.

While rightly there has been an abundance of studies into male perpetrators, there remains a curious lack of studies into female perpetrators, which is inexplicable considering the overall amount of academic research into domestic violence, and the increasing official and public acceptance that women can also be abusive or violent in intimate relationships.

As a charity, whilst providing direct support to male victims, we also want to educate society that domestic violence victims can be female and male. Regrettably, when your research is published, it will reinforce the myth that many statutory agencies and society itself holds that only women are victims of domestic abuse.

Some of the biggest problems that many of the men that call the charity face are that many statutory agencies do not accept/believe them, that there is a lack of recognition within society so they feel they cannot tell anyone, and that there is a widespread lack of meaningful support services for them (ARCH is one of the few organisations providing an excellent service for male victims). The published research will reinforce these problems.

In addition, it will also reinforce this inequality in the minds of those children being questioned because the questionnaire will not tackle the issue that it is equally wrong for a woman to commit domestic abuse against a man.

For example, one of the areas for questioning that has been quoted¹ includes:

"One of the situations could involve a woman embarrassing her partner, and asking the children whether they feel it would be acceptable for the man to hit her."

Why cannot the same situation exist within the research where the "One of the situations could involve a man embarrassing his partner, and asking the children whether they feel it would be acceptable for the woman to hit him."

In conclusion, the charity is disappointed that the research will not ask teenagers about domestic violence from the perspective of perpetrators from both genders. Its findings will reinforce society's stereotypes and prejudices.

Yours sincerely

Mark Brooks

Mark Brooks

Chairman

The ManKind Initiative

¹ <http://www.thisisstaffordshire.co.uk/news/Pupils-play-role-violence-study/article-2235024-detail/article.html>