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**Male victims of domestic abuse seeking help: a case study of the
charity ManKind Initiative.**

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to explore the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse who are seeking help. To do this a case study was carried out of the charity *ManKind Initiative* which is dedicated to helping male victims of domestic abuse in the UK. In addition, literature exploring the impact of feminism on the shaping of the domestic abuse landscape in society and social services was examined. The main findings of this dissertation are that the influence of feminism on the landscape of domestic abuse has created stereotypes about this crime, namely that men predominantly commit this crime because of a culture of masculinity. Moreover, it has also influenced policymakers to focus on the protection of female victims to the exclusion of male victims. Furthermore, this has made domestic abuse services invisible to men and social services have often failed to identify male victims, leading in extreme cases to death. The culture of masculinity has also meant that men do not report domestic abuse because of shame. *The ManKind Initiative* takes action to challenge such stereotypes in society by giving a voice to male victims of domestic abuse, running various campaigns, and to recommend the creation of domestic abuse laws in the UK. Drawing on these findings, recommendations were made on how to improve the situation of male victims of domestic abuse.

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Introduction

Domestic abuse is one of the most disturbing crimes because it takes place in a domestic setting far from social awareness which makes victims often feel vulnerable and hopeless to leave such an environment due to the lack of witnesses (Entilli and Cipolletta, 2017). Therefore, the drawing of public attention to the problem of domestic abuse by researchers originating from the field of feminism in the 1960s was a ground-breaking event (Kelly, 2003). This has caused politicians around the world to take a closer look at domestic abuse and take steps to combat the phenomenon and help victims (Kelly, 2003). Currently in the UK the definition of domestic abuse that is mainly used is as follows:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse” (MOJ, 2015: 3).

Where controlling behaviour is understood to be a pattern of behaviour that aims to subordinate a person by isolating them from sources of support and depriving them of the opportunity to resist or escape and to control their everyday life (MOJ, 2015). Coercive behaviour, on the other hand, refers to a pattern of behaviour that is aimed at humiliating, and harming the victim (MOJ, 2015). In addition, domestic abuse victim support organisations such as *ManKind Initiative* are seeking to include a phenomenon such as parental alienation within the definition of domestic abuse (Bates, 2019). However, despite the definition of domestic abuse being considered gender neutral, the actions of legislators and social services often overlook men as victims of this crime (Bates, 2019). Consequently, domestic abuse has for several decades continued to be recognised as a crime mostly directed at only one gender (Bates et al, 2019). One of the main reasons for this phenomenon is the statistics that show that women are the majority of victims of domestic abuse (MOJ, 2019). Despite more than 700,000 men being victims of domestic abuse in 2019 they are still not the major focus of attention when creating laws to combat domestic abuse (Brooks, 2020). The UK government's main action in tackling domestic abuse is to undertake the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy (MOJ, 2019). Furthermore,

male victims of domestic abuse also fall under this plan (Hine, 2021). Such action is detrimental to men as it shows that they are not a priority among the government and undermines the fact that men can also be victims of domestic abuse (Hine, 2021). Furthermore, by bringing male victims under the umbrella of the VAWG strategy, it means that services that are dedicated to helping male victims of domestic abuse do not receive sufficient funding from the government to provide support to male victims (Hine, 2021). Wallace et al. (2019) state that such government action results in services focused on helping male victims often facing financial difficulties which often results in poor practice by such services. Moreover, it creates a phenomenon in which such services are invisible to men seeking help (Wallace et al. 2019). Furthermore, McCarrick et al. (2016) state that research on domestic abuse is often funded by the government for services that are focused on helping female victims and mainly conduct research through the lens of feminism. Therefore, despite the fact that an attempt to highlight male victims of domestic abuse has been made for several years this area of science is further under-researched (Huntley et al. 2019). The influence of literature based on feminist perspectives has resulted in domestic abuse being driven by a culture of patriarchy and masculinity and that domestic abuse occurs because men want to show their dominance and power over women (Hogan, 2020). This belief has led to stereotypes of domestic abuse in society and social services that men are the perpetrators and women the victims (Corvo and Johnson, 2003). This has resulted in men not reporting domestic violence because they believe that social services will not believe them, and they will be marginalised by the community due to not meeting social norms such as masculinity (Bates, 2019). Furthermore, as Brooks (2019) outlines over half of male victims do not report domestic abuse due to shame and the fact that they will not be taken seriously. Furthermore, Bates (2019) states that the literature used by policymakers is primarily based on cases seeking help and visible to services that help victims of domestic abuse. Therefore, the failure of male victims to report domestic abuse creates a vicious circle in which, by not being visible to society, it makes their situation worse. Therefore, this project aims to explore the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse who are seeking help. Furthermore, this project will explore how social norms such as masculinity influence male victims' help-seeking. Moreover, this paper aims to explore the actions of social services to identify male victims of domestic abuse.

To achieve this, this project will conduct a case study of the charity *ManKind Initiative*. The *ManKind Initiative* was the first charity in the UK to undertake the support of male victims of domestic abuse and works to highlight the situation of male victims of domestic abuse (ManKind, 2021). The *ManKind Initiative* is known for being active in the media and giving a voice to male victims and conducting a lot of research in this matter (ManKind, 2021).

Moreover, this project will be split into 4 chapters. The first chapter will be on methodology. This chapter will explain in more depth the choice of the case study as the method for this project and will introduce the reader to the charity *ManKind Initiative* in more detail. Furthermore, it will be presented how the materials used in this project were collected and finally the issue of ethics in this project will be discussed. The second chapter in this project will explore how feminism has affected the landscape of domestic abuse in society and in social services. Furthermore, it will be shown what stereotypes have been created over the years about domestic abuse through the influence of feminist research. In addition, it will explore how the impact of such stereotypes has affected domestic abuse legislations in the UK and how these stereotypes affect male victims of domestic abuse and women who perpetrate such abuse. Chapter three will analyse the actions of social services to identify male victims of domestic abuse. To do this, reviews of domestic homicides and the actions of services to prevent such tragedies will be analysed. Furthermore, this chapter will also analyse these services in terms of stereotypes of domestic abuse. Chapter four takes a deeper look at what work the charity *ManKind Initiative* is doing to improve the situation for male victims of domestic abuse in the community. The analysis will mainly focus on how *ManKind Initiative* is trying to combat stereotypes of domestic abuse among the community and social services. This project will end with a summary in which the main facts found through the analysis of the sources collected will be presented. Moreover, the summary will also include recommendations related to the improvement of the situation of male victims of domestic abuse and the limitations that occurred in this project.

Chapter I

Methodology

The approach

This chapter aims to justify the research methodology used in this dissertation. As Clough and Nutbrown (2012) states, research methodology shows how the researcher gathers information about the phenomenon under study and how they analyse it. Furthermore, Clough and Nutbrown (2012) argues that research methodology needs a rationale for its choice because it helps readers understand how the researcher perceives the phenomenon under study. In this dissertation the research methodology that has been used is case study. The case study involves the in-depth analysis of a single example to understand an aspect of social life that may be under-researched, thus raising awareness among the wider community (Chapman et al. 2005). The case under investigation may be an event, an individual or even an institution (Chapman et al. 2005; Stake, 2009). In this dissertation the case under study is the charity *ManKind Initiative*. The *ManKind Initiative* was founded in 2001 to help male victims of domestic abuse (ManKind, 2021). Although the organisation was primarily set up to help male victims of domestic abuse, it states that its main aim is to combat domestic abuse without regard to gender (ManKind, 2021). The *ManKind Initiative* was the first charity in the UK dedicated to helping male victims of domestic abuse (ManKind, 2021). Furthermore, the charity does not receive government or public money and relies on voluntary donations and sponsorship to secure its annual budget to help male victims of domestic abuse (ManKind, 2021). Moreover, the ManKind Initiative is based on the principles set out in the Small Charities Governance Code, namely accountability, inclusion, integrity, and confidence (ManKind, 2021). Following these principles enables an organisation to ensure that its management and activities are done for a legitimate purpose and meet the objectives outlined by the organisation.

The case study

One of the aims of this dissertation was to understand and analyse the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse. As domestic violence against men is

an under-researched phenomenon (Bates, 2019), the charity *ManKind Initiative* is an appropriate choice, as this institution is dedicated to helping male victims of domestic abuse. Moreover, a case study involves collecting information from many sources, which allows for a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (May, 2011). *The ManKind Initiative* website (see www.mankind.org.uk) is a valuable source of information on male victims of domestic abuse. Under the tab 'research and statistics' the research of academics who conduct their research in the field of male victims of domestic abuse can be found. Furthermore, on the *ManKind* website there are stories of victims and statistics on male victims and in particular information on how they seek help. Such sources provide information on the experiences of male victims of domestic violence and how they seek help and what obstacles they find in their way. Furthermore, given that the charity does not receive funding from the government it allows the findings and research carried out by the charity to be independent of political influence. On the other hand, the reliance on voluntary donations and sponsorships makes it necessary for the organisation to be transparent and to avoid bias in the presentation of its activities and research results.

Literature sampling

Furthermore, to better understand the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse, sources were collated by searching for relevant research in the DMU library database and Google Scholar. The literature was selected by entering key words such as male victims, domestic abuse into the research tool. The main geographical area of focus for this study is the UK. However, in order to get a broader picture of the impact of gender typologies such as masculinity on male victims of domestic abuse this paper also looked at research carried out in the US and other European countries. In addition, to better understand the factors that influence help-seeking among male victims, a literature exploring the impact of feminism on community perceptions of domestic violence and the emergence of stereotypes through such influence was also collected. In addition, the government's responses to ManKind's suggested changes to the domestic abuse bills were analysed.

Challenges

Donmoyer (2000) argues that the main problem of case study is generalisability i.e., establishing some theory for the general public based on a single

case. However, Hammersley and Foster (2009) state that a generalisation of the case under study supported by empirical evidence can show that such a phenomenon may be atypical in a previously assumed theory about the phenomenon. Therefore, the choice of the case study *ManKind Initiative*, which investigates domestic abuse against men, which is still considered by the community as a crime that rarely happens, is the right approach. Furthermore, Donmoyer (2000) states that a case study allows the researcher to show the case under investigation through the eyes of his or her researcher and shows how he or she understands the topic. Therefore, the transparency and lack of bias in the presentation of its activities by the *ManKind Initiative* enables researchers to analyse research conducted by charities through the prism of the approach taken to the issue under investigation and to freely apply theories with which the researcher is identifying. This project will explore the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse through the lens of how second wave feminism has affected perceptions of domestic abuse in society. Corvo and Johnson (2003) state that the beginning of second wave feminism was in the 1960s and that the main motive of this movement was to fight against patriarchy and the control of women by men and the social norms shaped by them. Second-wave feminism is an important factor in the fight against domestic abuse due to the fact that it has made domestic abuse a public issue and gained importance among politicians (Kelly, 2003). One of the main reasons for domestic abuse according to second-wave feminism is that men use violence against women to preserve their masculinity, which according to social norms is characterised by domination over femininity (Waling, 2019). This approach to domestic abuse has led to this crime being seen as a phenomenon in which men are the perpetrators and women the victims (Kelly, 2003). Moreover, cases of domestic abuse in which women were the perpetrators and men the victims were justified as an act of self-defence against the aggression which men used against women, even if this was not the case (Corvo and Johnson, 2003). This issue will be explored further in this study, in the chapter on masculinity and how social norms shape perceptions of gender in the community.

Ethics

Tarling (2006) states that when conducting a study, the main task of any researcher is to be an ethical researcher. Quinlan (2015) state that to be an ethical researcher is to follow the moral principles driving the conduct of an individual, group,

or institution. Moreover, when conducting research, the researcher often represents himself or the institution, so it is important to apply ethical standards in his activities (Quinlan, 2015). One of the most important principles in being ethical is not to cause harm with actions (Quinlan, 2015). Brooks et al. (2014) argue that before undertaking a study, the researcher should consider the negative as well as positive consequences that may arise while conducting the study and conduct their study in a way that maximises the benefits to the community. Brooks et al. (2014) state that harm can be physical, psychological, and social so it is important to always consider the potential harm that may be caused to the community, the research participants, or the researcher before starting a study. Therefore, in this study such an assessment was performed. This study was conducted in accordance with DMU Research Ethics guidelines and DMU Guidelines for Good Research Practices were followed throughout the conduct of this study. As this project mainly used secondary data the main ethical issue was plagiarism. Quinlan (2015) state that plagiarism is assuming someone else's work as your own, so it is important to reference others in an appropriate manner. Furthermore, as this project was based primarily on online data collection and spending most of the time in front of a computer screen, an appropriate time schedule was used to minimise the risks involved in spending time in front of a computer. Moreover, Tarling (2006) states that social research is vast and uses a variety of research methods therefore it is not possible to be an expert in all fields and to be up to date with all the changes occurring in the field. Therefore, every researcher should be aware of the limitations of the study and not assign themselves expertise in the field (Tarling, 2006). The limitations of this study are presented in the summary of this paper.

Summary

To conclude this chapter has justified the choice of methodology in this project which is the case study. As this project aims to explore the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse, the choice of case study as a methodology seems to be a valid choice as the case that will be investigated in this project is the charity *ManKind Initiative*. Furthermore, the case study allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation through the study of a single case. In this case the *ManKind Initiative* is an organisation that focuses on helping male victims of domestic abuse. In addition, the case study enables the collection of material from a variety of

sources, which in this case is of great benefit to the researcher as the ManKind Initiative website has a wealth of material relating to male victims of domestic abuse. Furthermore, this chapter shows how the literature will be collected, namely through search engines such as Google Scholar or DMU Library. Furthermore, the analysis of the *ManKind Initiative* will be conducted through the lens of feminist perspectives that have greatly shaped perceptions of domestic abuse among communities. Furthermore, this chapter presents the ethical conditions that have been fulfilled in order to carry out this project in accordance with ethical standards.

Chapter II

The impact of feminist theories on male victims of domestic abuse.

This chapter aims to explore the impact of feminism on perceptions of domestic abuse by the government and the wider community. To explore how feminism has shaped the landscape of domestic abuse this chapter will analyse the impact of the second wave of feminism which brought domestic abuse into the public consciousness (Kelly, 2003). In addition, it will examine how the perception of domestic abuse as a crime affecting mostly only one gender affects male victims. Steffensmeier and Allan (1996) state that a crime in which one gender is more often identified as the offender and at the same time the opposite gender is more often the victim of that crime is defined as gendered crime. Therefore, domestic abuse can certainly be considered a gendered crime as statistics reveal that 786,000 men and 1.6 million women were victims of domestic abuse in 2019 (Brooks, 2020). However, the perception of domestic abuse through the prism of gender creates many stereotypes in society that negatively affect the gender that experiences it (Bates, 2019). Moreover, Cannon and Buttell (2016) state that the feminist paradigm often influences a range of policies as well. One such policy is the UK government's plan to tackle domestic abuse against women and children (VAWG), which also includes male victims of domestic abuse (MOJ, 2019).

One of the main assumptions of the feminist paradigm is that men use women to prolong patriarchy in order to gain power and control over them (Cannon and Buttell, 2016). However, as Cannon et al. (2015) further argue, the assumption which is made that men commit domestic abuse is characteristic of the traditional feminist paradigm which is based on the Marxist model of power i.e., that the dominant group exploits the lower in the hierarchy. Furthermore, poststructuralist feminist theoretical approaches further demonstrate that although women can also use men to gain power, domestic abuse committed by women is often committed in self-defence (Cannon et al. 2015). Moreover, studies conducted under the influence of feminist approaches often present men in general through the lens of masculinity characterised by being dominant, strong, and showing their superiority over others in order to gain power (Cannon et al. 2015). However, it was the second wave of feminism that developed in the 1960s that was most influential in shaping community

perceptions of domestic abuse (Kelly, 2003). One of the reasons was that the movement was the first to draw public attention to the problem of domestic abuse (Kelly, 2003). The second wave of feminism, like the others, also mainly refers to social norms, which are characterised by masculinity and a culture of patriarchy, as the cause of the abuse (Corvo and Johnson, 2003). On the other hand, the second wave of feminism draws inspiration from hegemonic masculinity and toxic masculinity (Parent et al. 2019). Parent et al. (2019) state that hegemonic masculinity is characterised by the enforcement of gender-based behavioural constraints. Hall (2014) argues that hegemonic masculinity has shaped the role of the male and female sexes and certain behaviours are assigned by social norms to a specific gender. For example, professions such as nursing or secretarial work are mainly assigned to women, and when a man is in such a profession, he is perceived as less masculine (Hall, 2014). Furthermore, according to hegemonic masculinity, men should be muscular and be the breadwinners, while women should take care of housework and look after their physical appearance in order to be attractive to men (Hall, 2014). However, from hegemonic masculinity also derived the term toxic masculinity (Waling, 2019). Toxic masculinity is when the social norms assigned to masculinity are harmful to an individual or group of people (Waling, 2019). Waling (2019) states that toxic masculinity predominantly affects women, but it can also affect men for whom, according to social norms, masculinity is a gift through which they have greater privilege in the community. However, often men do not know how to deal with such privilege, which results in marginalisation through the community when they do not meet the norms of masculinity (Waling, 2019). Furthermore, Elliott (2018) states that decades of fighting gender inequality in society with regulations and programmes to support women and combat the culture of masculinity without fully analysing its impact in society leads to further inequality affecting men.

The impact of such theories on legislative bodies and organisations dealing with victims of domestic violence can have a negative impact on male victims in particular. Bates (2020) shows that men do not report domestic abuse because they feel that the police will not take their report seriously and no action will be taken. Furthermore, Machado et al. (2016) present in their study a situation in which a man reported a crime to the police and in response heard a series of jokes and was sent home. However, men not only have negative experiences with the police but also

with organisations designed to tackle domestic abuse (Bates, 2020). Bates (2020) states that one of the main problems with such organisations is that they are specifically oriented towards helping women and when the victim is male, they often take action in an inappropriate way. McCarrick et al. (2016) reported in their article the experience of one man who experienced negative emotions after a visit to a domestic abuse unit because the environment was predominantly directed at women namely a poster depicted a picture of a frightened woman over whom a man was standing with a bat.

Moreover, the government often draws its knowledge of a phenomenon from literature when dealing with it. Dempsey (2011) argues that the main problem with the literature on domestic abuse is that it is mainly based on domestic abuse occurring in heterosexual relationships and which is oriented by the man against the woman. Furthermore, the literature mainly focuses on cases that seek help and therefore men who face many obstacles when seeking help represent a gap in the literature (Bates, 2019). As Brooks (2020) shows, the majority of male victims of domestic abuse tell their friends and neighbours about their situation, while the least number of men use professional help and institutions in the criminal justice system. The community's perception of domestic abuse should also be considered here. Seelau et al. (2003) conducted a study that aimed to explore people's perceptions of domestic abuse. Seelau et al. (2003) showed participants in their study several scenarios illustrating domestic abuse in which the perpetrator was a man, and the victim was a woman and vice versa. Although the scenarios did not depict only one-sided violence, the results showed that women received more sympathy from the community than men. Furthermore, Bates et al. (2014) argue that women are more physically and verbally aggressive in domestic abuse than men. One of the reasons why men are not more aggressive towards women is because of the expectations imposed by culture, namely chivalry, self-preservation, and non-violence towards women (Espinoza and Warner, 2016). Moreover, Espinoza and Warner (2016) argue that injuries inflicted by women are less severe due to their biologically weaker physique, making domestic abuse against men less likely to attract the attention of the police and other institutions.

Given that society perceives domestic abuse as a crime that mainly affects women, it creates an ideal situation and environment for the manipulation for women

who are perpetrators. The phenomenon in which an abuser as a tactic to abuse a victim uses the manipulation of the victim's mind to create a surreal reality using gendered stereotypes is defined as gaslighting (Sweet, 2019). Furthermore, Knapp (2019) states that gaslighting aims to prevent the victim's access to feeling and expressing their true emotions. Morgan and Wells (2014) state that women predominantly use stereotypes of domestic abuse to prevent men from seeking help. Morgan and Wells (2014) provide an example where a woman as abuser said during a police intervention that she was the victim, which resulted in the arrest of the man who in this case was the victim. Furthermore, women often tell their friends and neighbours that the man is the perpetrator despite being the victim of a crime, blocking them from seeking help (Morgan and Wells, 2014). Douglas and Hines (2011) state that another way women use to control men is to isolate them from their families and children. A situation in which one child allies with one parent while rejecting and becoming hostile towards the other parent is defined as parental alienation (Sher, 2015). Furthermore, Morrison et al. (2020) argue that children often choose the side of the parent with whom they have spent more time in court in order to maintain loyalty to that parent and not to jeopardise the relationship. Sher (2015) states that parental alienation has devastating effects on men's mental health. Fathers who live a long separation from their child often have suicidal thoughts, psychiatric problems and are more likely to use alcohol, drugs, and benzodiazepines (Sher, 2015). Therefore, to outline the problem of parental alienation being used by one parent to gain control and manipulate the other parent, the Mankind Initiative recommends that this phenomenon be added to the definition of domestic abuse (Bates, 2019).

In conclusion this chapter aimed to analyse how the impact of feminism on domestic abuse affected male victims of domestic abuse and the community's perception of this crime. One of the main assumptions of the feminist approach to domestic abuse is that it occurs to prolong patriarchy and in this way men show their power over women. Furthermore, feminism, in addition to the culture of patriarchy, also identifies masculinity as a reason for domestic abuse. Masculinity mainly sets the norm by perceiving men as privileged individuals who are supposed to be dominant, breadwinners, while women are supposed to take care of the housework. Furthermore, feminist perspectives argue that domestic abuse is mainly perpetrated

by men towards women, while violence committed against men is mainly caused by self-protection. Furthermore, in order to reduce the impact of masculinity on gender inequality, programmes have been undertaken to improve the situation of women but at the same time ignoring the negative impact of masculinity on men as well. Which has contributed to stereotypes about domestic abuse among social services, such as that only women can be victims. Moreover, such stereotypes have a strong impact on male victims of domestic abuse who do not seek help because they are convinced that the police will not take their report seriously. Men also experience a lack of understanding and inappropriate methods used by organisations tasked with helping victims of domestic abuse. Further, the lack of help-seeking affects the lack of research in this area, as researchers gather their material through information from people seeking help. The lack of research in this area also influences the government's response, as it often gathers its information through a literature review in the fight against a phenomenon. Consequently, the lack of action taken in this direction and the greater sympathy given to female victims of domestic abuse by the community creates an ideal environment for women who abuse men. One of the main methods used by women to commit violence is gaslighting, which is the use of gender stereotypes. Furthermore, women take advantage of the father's isolation from the child and the threat of losing him by blocking men from seeking help. To raise awareness among communities and the government, *ManKind* recommends adding parental alienation to the definition of domestic abuse.

Chapter III

Activities of the services

This chapter aims to explore how social services deal with male victims of domestic abuse. To achieve this, this chapter will examine the domestic homicide reviews that can be found on the *ManKind Initiative* website under the *Homicide Domestic Review Library* tab. A domestic homicide review essentially involves a panel of people investigating how the murder happened and what steps were taken by agencies to prevent the murder. As Rowlands (2019) states in a report on domestic homicide such reviews are not intended to criticise the actions taken by agencies but to find the mistakes made and what lessons can be learned in the future to improve the practices of such agencies. This paper will use 5 reviews of domestic homicide namely the murders of Andrew, James, Mark, Adam, and David (Albiston, 2015; Stimpson, 2016; Noble and Doyle, 2018; Noble, 2019; Rowlands, 2019). Furthermore, the analysis of these reviews will be informed by the stereotypes present in domestic abuse services directed at male victims. Moreover, to show a broader picture of the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse this chapter will examine the literature that has explored the experiences of male victims seeking help.

The service to be analysed will be the police. Because if someone is in danger or needs urgent help, the first move will be to make an emergency call to the police in most cases. In all the domestic homicide cases analysed in this chapter, the police had knowledge of the violence occurring in the home. Walker et al. (2020) argue that men who are victims of domestic violence often find the police unhelpful. One of the main reasons is that the police often respond to reports of domestic abuse through the prism of masculinity and the fact that men are predominantly the offenders (Walker et al. 2020). Furthermore, Huntley et al. (2019) argue that men often clash with a wall of silence from domestic abuse victim support services. Such a phenomenon was experienced by Andrew (Rowlands, 2019). Despite that Andrew reported to the police that his partner had threatened him with a knife the police arrested Andrew instead of taking steps towards her (Rowlands, 2019). Furthermore, Andrew had disclosed the violence against him to services many times prior to the incident, however eventually his partner was treated as a victim of domestic abuse

(Rowlands, 2019). Such neglect as the exclusion of violence against Andrew by his partner was identified by the review panel as one of the main reasons for Andrew's death (Rowlands, 2019). In Mark's case it can be seen how stereotypes about domestic abuse, namely that most domestic abuse is committed by men, have been highlighted in the police (Albiston, 2015). In Mark's case, domestic abuse was a bi-directional issue. Furthermore, Mark had received a conviction for violence over his former partner in the past (Albiston, 2015). Therefore, despite being injured by his partner's violence and reporting domestic abuse to the police, he was never identified as a victim (Albiston, 2015). Noble and Doyle (2018) present the occurrence of gender stereotyping in the phenomenon of domestic abuse also in David's case. Despite a number of police interventions at David's and Alex's flat due to potential domestic abuse, David was never identified as a victim despite a number of visible injuries (Noble and Doyle, 2018). What is more, Alex called the police that she was locked in the bedroom by David, which eventually resulted in David being treated as a perpetrator and Alex as a victim from then on (Noble and Doyle, 2018). Furthermore, such actions by the police mean that instead of improving the identification of male victims, they only exacerbate the problem.

Huntley et al. (2019) find that male victims of domestic abuse do not trust domestic abuse services and therefore do not report incidents. The main reason is shame and fear that their testimony will be denied (Huntley et al. 2019). Furthermore, Hogan et al. (2012) state that social expectations of men such as independence and dealing with problems alone is a factor in why men do not report domestic abuse. Noble (2019) states that in James' case, despite the knife injury and the intervention of police and paramedics, he did not disclose that he was attacked by his partner but stated that this wound was caused by an accident. The fact that James never disclosed that he was a victim of domestic abuse meant that agencies were unable to classify him as a victim and provide him with appropriate support (Noble, 2019). In a similar situation, Mark suffered multiple injuries inflicted by his partner but each time he denied that these injuries were inflicted by her (Albiston, 2015). Adam who was taken to hospital with a serious head injury inflicted by his partner also denied that the injury was caused by his partner's aggression (Stimpson, 2016). However, the most visible example of how men are shamed and often distrusted in services is David's case (Noble and Doyle, 2018). In this case, his child witnessed an argument

between David and his partner and in fear for David's safety the child made a call to the police (Noble and Doyle, 2018). However, despite the intervention of the police and the visible signs of a fight on David's part, he chose not to disclose the violence and told police officers that he had fallen down the stairs (Noble and Doyle, 2018). Furthermore, when the child, in the presence of the police, stated that David was lying and that he was a victim of domestic abuse he continued to maintain the false statement (Noble and Doyle, 2018).

On the other hand, men do not always keep quiet and often talk about their problems to their family or friends. Noble and Doyle (2018) state that David told his ex-wife about his partner's violence, who decided to call the helpline however the case was treated as low risk and ultimately no action was taken. Furthermore, in Mark's case it is also possible to find out that he disclosed to his family about being a victim of domestic abuse and how he suffered injuries and despite such knowledge the family did not disclose the details of the case to any service (Albiston, 2015). Hogan et al. (2012) state that male victims of domestic abuse and their families often complain about the lack of visibility of services that work to help men. Furthermore, Huntley et al. (2020) state that male patients often feel a lack of trust and a lack of compassion and confidentiality with GPs. The result is that they do not turn to them for help (Huntley et al. 2020). Of the 5 domestic homicide cases investigated only David had contact with his GP however he never disclosed any details about the domestic abuse (Noble and Doyle, 2018).

One of the main problems for services in responding to domestic abuse towards men is the lack of awareness that men can be victims of domestic abuse and often due to social norms such as masculinity they often do not disclose any details. Therefore, the best solution would be to train professionals to raise their awareness about domestic abuse against men and the fact that domestic abuse can often have a bidirectional effect. Williamson et al. (2015) conducted a study in which they examined how appropriate training would improve the perceptions of victims of domestic abuse. As the results showed before training only 6 men were identified as victims of domestic abuse however after training this number of identifications increased up to 17 men (Williamson et al. 2015).

In summary this chapter aimed to analyse 5 domestic homicide reviews to see how social services respond to domestic abuse towards men. One of the most

highlighted institutions in these reviews was the police. As the analysis showed in all cases the police failed in identifying male victims of domestic abuse. One of the main reasons for this was the existence of stereotypes about domestic abuse, namely that men are predominantly the perpetrators. Furthermore, social norms such as masculinity were also a factor that had a significant impact on the identification of male victims due to the fact that despite multiple contacts, they did not disclose any details and often denied reports of domestic abuse. This leads to a vicious circle effect, as men's failure to disclose that they have been victimised often makes it difficult for services to provide appropriate help to these men and, on the other hand, inadequate service responses make men lose confidence in these services. Furthermore, male victims often share their problems with family and friends but the frequent lack of visibility of services that provide help to male victims leads to a lack of disclosure of details. The solution would be to provide professional training for such services to identify male victims of domestic abuse and to improve the transparency of services that assist such victims.

Chapter IV

The actions of the charity ManKind Initiative

This chapter presents the analysis of the activities and projects of the *ManKind Initiative*. In order to accomplish this task, the website *mankind.org.uk* was analysed, which clearly describes and presents the results of the work undertaken by the *ManKind Initiative* to help male victims of domestic abuse. One of the main criteria of the analysis was how the *ManKind Initiative* seeks to help men overcome stereotypes in the community about male victims of domestic abuse. Therefore, to get a broader picture of this phenomenon, this chapter will examine the stories of male survivors of domestic abuse. In addition, the impact of masculinity on help-seeking cases was considered. To achieve this, this chapter referred to Tolson's (1977) definition of masculinity. Tolson (1977) states that the culture of masculinity is that from childhood society teaches certain norms based on the ideology of patriarchy, in which the man is supposed to be a physically strong individual and to be powerful. Furthermore, Jordan and Chandler (2019) state that male victims in an environment within a culture of masculinity are often a taboo subject thus facing many obstacles in seeking help. In addition, the *ManKind Initiative's* recommendations to policymakers to improve conditions for male victims of domestic abuse were also examined. Lastly, the *ManKind Initiative's* support for professionals was explored in order to challenge gender stereotypes that affect the quality of their work with victims of domestic abuse.

One of the main activities is the operation of a confidential helpline. Although the *ManKind Initiative's* helpline for male victims of domestic abuse has been mentioned earlier in this work it is very important to mention its impact once again. Statistics show that if this helpline were not confidential 75% of male victims of domestic abuse would not use it (Brooks, 2020). Furthermore, the *ManKind Initiative* states on its website that they receive around 2,000 phone calls from male victims or the family or friends of these victims. In addition, this helpline is run by a well-trained team who can respond appropriately to the needs of the victim and provide emotional support in an appropriate manner. Furthermore, to overcome the feeling of shame of being a victim of domestic abuse because of their role in society, namely their profession, *ManKind* strongly emphasises that they receive calls from professions

such as builder to professions such as banker or doctor. Furthermore, *ManKind Initiative* to encourage men to seek help also provides stories of other male victims of domestic abuse.

At this point, this section will examine the stories of male victims of domestic violence that have been posted on the ManKind Initiative website under survivors' stories (see <https://www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims/survivors-stories/>). The survivors' stories were analysed through the lens of masculinity as defined by Tolson and stereotypes of domestic abuse prevalent in society. One story provided by the mother of a man who was a victim of domestic abuse was that his partner used stereotypes in society and spread false information such as that this man hits children and also sent messages from his phone to other women with hate content to show him in a bad light (ManKind, A). Thus, creating the image that this man is violent and creating an obstacle to seeking help because his opinion will not be taken as the truth. Another story depicting the occurrence of stereotypes not only among the community or also among the police is that of Matthew (ManKind, B). Matthew was attacked by his wife in his sleep and when he awoke he fled the house and called the police (ManKind, B). However, at the same time his wife also called giving a false version that she was the victim. Following the arrest of Matthew and his wife, despite visible bruising on the man's body, both were released without any consequences (ManKind, B). In this case, despite trying to seek help from men, he experienced negative reactions which in the future could only destroy his confidence to seek a way out of this situation. In the story presented by Terry, you can see how his partner blackmailed him through his children (ManKind, C). Terry says that when he finally decided to leave the abusive relationship his partner lied to a social worker claiming that Terry was the violent one (ManKind, C). Through this action he lost contact with his children. However, the story entitled '*Who was she?*' goes into the most detail about how masculinity culture and stereotypes affect male victims of domestic abuse (ManKind, D). In this story the victim was a man who fits into the culture of masculinity because he was well-built and had won the British judo championship (ManKind, D). Despite his martial arts training and good physical build, he was a victim of domestic abuse for six years (ManKind, D). At the culmination of his wife's violence, he could no longer bear it and called the police (ManKind, D). However, despite the intervention and a warning that the couple would be arrested,

no action was taken (ManKind, D). Furthermore, a few days later, the domestic violence unit was called and, despite describing the situation, the man's partner was identified as the victim and assistance was provided to her (ManKind, D). After this situation, the man broke down and the violence continued until his partner admitted to the infidelity and the divorce was finalised (ManKind, D).

In the stories above, one of the main problems was the inadequate response and assistance of social services and the police. One of the main reasons is that domestic abuse is still strongly influenced by gender. As reported on the *ManKind* website they take around 300 calls a year from the police or other social services about domestic abuse against men. Furthermore, one of the main objectives of the leading organisation is to create an image of domestic abuse as a gender-neutral crime. Therefore *ManKind* provides training and courses for professionals on how to support male victims of domestic abuse (see <https://www.mankind.org.uk/for-professionals/mankind-initiative-domestic-abuse-service/>). The training sessions, which are delivered to professionals, have been peer-reviewed and created with the help of UK experts in the field of domestic abuse such as Dr Elizabeth Bates, Dr Ben Hine, or Dr Siobhan Weare. In addition, in order to raise public awareness about male victims of domestic abuse, the organisation provides short presentations at numerous events and provides materials such as leaflets and posters.

However, it is not only people directly affected by violence who call the helpline. As mentioned above *ManKind* also receives calls from friends and family of victims. One of *ManKind's* main efforts in this direction is to support the Stand With Him campaign. This campaign aims to give a voice to mothers, grandmothers, sisters, or female friends who have first-hand experience of the pain and problems of men who have been victims of domestic abuse. The main goal of the women involved in this campaign is to show the pain and suffering that domestic violence causes not only to the victims but also to their families. Furthermore, in addition to supporting the women-led campaign, *ManKind* to achieve gender-neutral status in domestic abuse is critical of the government's current strategy to tackle domestic violence. The current government strategy to combat domestic violence is called Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and is mainly based on helping female victims, however male victims also belong to this strategy (ManKind, 2021). ManKind (2021) recommends the creation of a separate Intimate Violence Against Men and

Boys (IVAMB) strategy as a solution for male victims of domestic violence. One of the main reasons is that classifying men under VAWG as women is incorrect and raises many problems (ManKind, 2021). As ManKind (2021) states, this approach disregards the experiences of men and victims and contributes to their vulnerability. Moreover, it makes them increasingly invisible to society and some professionals (ManKind, 2021). As Bates (2021) states, this approach by the government shows the public that women are the visible victims of domestic violence and thus reinforces stereotypes that have existed in society for decades. Hine (2021) further argues that the use of VAWG strategy eliminates men as potential victims of domestic abuse. ManKind (2018) argues that working with male victims under the VAWG strategy is hampered by a lack of public funding for services addressing men. Furthermore, ManKind (2018) recommends that the government should not describe domestic abuse using statistics or a comparison between genders, but that such comparisons should be made within genders to avoid marginalisation or stereotyping of the crime. ManKind (2018) in its position statement on the VAWG strategy mainly criticises the use of the phrase 'disproportionate' in relation to the number of female victims of domestic abuse relative to male victims. This phrase in the main is an explanation of why the government has chosen to place emphasis on female victims in the strategy against domestic abuse in the UK. ManKind (2018) criticises this approach, which creates domestic abuse as a gendered crime due to the higher number of female victims, while this is not the case for phenomena such as suicide or homelessness in which more victims are men.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored what the charity *ManKind Initiative* is doing to help male victims of domestic abuse overcome the stereotypes of domestic abuse that exist in the community. These stereotypes are mainly created because of the existence of social norms that relate to masculinity as defined by Tolson (1977) which is that men are more aggressive than women because they want to show their dominance and being powerful in society. Because of this phenomenon, male victims of domestic violence do not come forward for services for fear of being shamed into not fulfilling their role in society. Therefore, *ManKind Initiative* to combat this feeling of shame runs an anonymous helpline run by trained staff. Moreover, this helpline is not only for men, but also for women who witness violence against men and seek help for them. Furthermore, gender stereotypes in domestic abuse, namely that it is

mainly men who are the perpetrators of domestic abuse, are also present among social services. This chapter highlights the stories of men who have experienced inappropriate responses from such services. Therefore, *ManKind Initiative* runs trainings for professionals to show them how to identify male victims of domestic abuse. Furthermore, as the *ManKind Initiative* receives calls from women in defence of male victims, the organisation supports campaigns led by women who want to publicise the issue of male victims of domestic abuse and influence policymakers to make the plan to tackle domestic abuse gender neutral. As male victims of domestic violence currently fall under the government's VAWG strategy, *ManKind Initiative* is calling for an end to this practice and a separate plan for male victims. The creation of a separate strategy for male victims of domestic abuse would enable services dedicated to male victims to work more effectively due to the increase in funding provided by the government to such organisations and would increase the visibility of male victims among the community.

Conclusion

This project aimed to explore the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse who are seeking help. To achieve this, this project carried out a case study and the case studied was the charity *ManKind Initiative*. Choosing this organisation was the best way to explore the experiences of male victims of domestic abuse because *ManKind Initiative* was the first charity to take on the task of helping male victims. In addition, the *ManKind Initiative* is a transparently run organisation and all of its research and activity is available on its website. As such the project has been able to draw on an extensive database of male victims of domestic abuse. Furthermore, this organisation gives a voice to male victims which enables the researcher to understand the phenomenon from the victims' perspective.

One of the key problems that influence the lack of help-seeking among men is the presence of stereotypes about masculinity in society and social services. Such stereotypes were mainly created through the influence of feminism on the domestic abuse landscape. On the one hand it was the second wave of feminism that brought the problem of domestic abuse to the public's attention then on the other hand it cited the culture of patriarchy as the main reason for the occurrences of domestic abuse (Kelly, 2003). Moreover, it has created the stereotype that it is mostly men who perpetrate domestic abuse on women to show their masculinity and dominance. In contrast, women's violence against men is usually explained as an act of self-defence (Waling, 2019). Such stereotypes were strongly reinforced in social services such as the police and caused reports from men to be disregarded (Machado et al. 2016). Furthermore, men do not report domestic abuse because of the shame of not fulfilling the social role of a man characterised by the fact that men should be the breadwinner and be able to show their power (Bates, 2019). Moreover, in order to reduce gender inequality in society, policymakers have begun to take steps to help women who are victims of domestic abuse, while on the other hand leaving male victims in the background (Elliott, 2018). Taking the VAWG strategy to tackle domestic abuse in the UK was one such step (MOJ, 2019). Furthermore, male victims were pinned under this plan which had a significant impact on them (Hine, 2021). One of the biggest problems was that services that deal with male victims of domestic abuse were not receiving enough funding to run (Hogan, 2020). Because of this, such services became invisible to men which gave men the feeling that they had

nowhere to go for help (Hogan, 2020). Furthermore, the government began to provide funding to carry out domestic abuse research for services that predominantly targeted female victims with the result that male victims were side-lined (McCarrick et al. 2016). Moreover, this phenomenon contributed to social services not having enough information on how to identify and help male victims of domestic abuse. In addition, the fact that men were not visible to social networks and the existence of stereotypes of domestic abuse are exploited by women. The main behaviour that female perpetrators of domestic abuse use is gaslighting. Moreover, they use stereotypes and often declare themselves victims during interventions, which leads to arrests of men. Another way in which women abuse is by using children and turning them against male victims and threatening them that if they report to the police their contact with them will be restricted. This would not be possible if it were not for the lack of training among police officers, who are often the first to be called to incidents of domestic abuse.

As demonstrated in this project through the analysis of reviews of domestic homicides in most cases the cause of death of male victims was the poor identification of the perpetrator and the victim of domestic abuse by police officers. The charity *ManKind Initiative* seeks to combat these stereotypes of domestic abuse through a range of activities. One of its main actions is to run a helpline by a trained team in dealing with male victims of domestic abuse. What is more, this helpline is run anonymously which helps to remove the shame from men who are seeking help. In addition, *ManKind* works with researchers who are studying the field of male victims and makes the results of such research available on its website. They also run a number of campaigns to support male victims and raise awareness of male victims in the community through events and posters. Furthermore, *ManKind* is actively trying to help policymakers in the field of domestic abuse to highlight the problems faced by male victims. In addition, *ManKind* gives a voice to male victims who have dared to speak out about their stories to show other men that they are not alone in such situations and to find the courage to overcome barriers to seek help. The *ManKind Initiative* also provides training for professionals on how to identify male victims of domestic abuse and how to provide them with professional help.

Recommendations

This project also has recommendations to help male victims of abuse. One of the key things to emphasise is the creation of a separate government strategy to tackle domestic abuse for men. This project supports Dr Ben Hine's (2021) position on the creation of an IVAMB strategy to tackle domestic abuse. This would ensure that male victims are recognised by policymakers and that their problems are a priority which could help them break down the barrier of shame. Furthermore, it would enable greater funding for services dedicated to helping male victims and would increase the quality of their services and make them more visible to male victims. Another recommendation is to create compulsory training for professionals to better identify male victims of domestic abuse and to provide appropriate support when such identification takes place. In some cases, such training and proper identification can be a matter of life or death. Furthermore, this project also recommends that the media also increase the coverage of stories of male victims of domestic abuse in order to raise community awareness of the phenomenon and to remove the taboo that domestic abuse towards men still is for some people.

Limitations

As Tarling (2006) states, every study in the social sciences should identify the limitations as it is impossible to cover all the information about the phenomenon under study. This project also has limitations. One of the main limitations is that only male victims of domestic abuse are studied in relation to heterosexual couples. Therefore, future research should also focus on same-sex couples. Moreover, this project did not take into account criteria such as race or age. However, this study is fully aware that help-seeking for male victims of domestic abuse can be influenced by race and age. Therefore, future research should pay attention to these aspects. In addition, the information on the *ManKind Initiative* website is regularly updated so that anyone undertaking future research can find new information that is not included in this project.

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