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THE HIDDEN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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« Second place winner of the WSW
student paper competition »

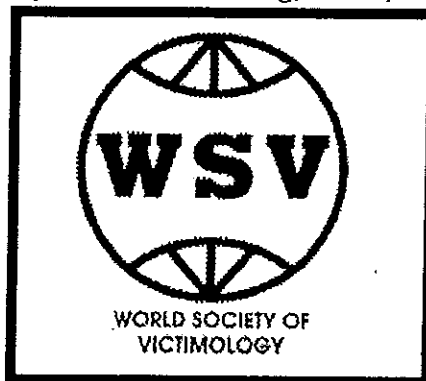
Domestic violence is an abuse of power perpetrated mainly (but not only) by men against women both in relationship and after separation. It occurs when one partner attempts physically or psychologically to dominate and control the other. Domestic violence takes a number of forms [including]...physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional and social abuse and economic deprivation.

Over the past three decades, males have remained the hidden victims of domestic violence while female victims have been the subject of extensive research and have received commendable responses from the media, support services and the criminal justice system. This paper will acknowledge heterosexual male victims of domestic violence and female perpetrators, by addressing the myths about male victims; research indicating the existence of battered men; media portrayal of male abuse; support services and

criminal justice system responses to abused men; and recommendations based on the needs of battered males.

Myths About Male Victims

Three myths exist in relation to male victims of domestic violence. First, domestic violence is equated with female abuse, that is, all perpetrators are males while all victims are females. The second myth is victim blaming, that is, the



male victim facilitated, precipitated or provoked the female perpetrator to act violently. Finally, male victims only exist when female victims respond to male perpetrated violence in self-defence.

Research Indicating the Existence of Battered Men

Several Australian authoritative

(continued on page 2)

Tribute to Dame Ann Ballin

Marlene Young

The worldwide victims' movement lost a great champion when Dame Ann Ballin died in Christchurch, New Zealand on September 2, 2003.

Ever since the adoption of the International Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1985, Dame Ann worked tirelessly to see that those principles were implemented in New Zealand – and thus she made good on the hopes of supporters that the Declaration would lead to concrete action by U.N. member states.

She successfully promoted the 1987 Victims of Offences Act, which not only echoed the Declaration's principles but also mandated creation of a Victims' Task Force to further promote the statute's goals.

As chair of the Task Force, Dame Ann helped to set up victim support schemes throughout the country. She was determined that crisis intervention services be available to all crime victims and that the government should bear the cost of such programs. She was also determined that victim support volunteers and staff receive the best training possible. She was intent upon seeing that victims would have equal access to a justice system that included them as well as the accused and offenders.

(Continued on page 8)

In this issue...

Letter from the president
Members wanted

...3

...9

sources indicate that male victims of domestic violence are fact and not fiction.

In 1994, the Crime Research Centre of the University of Western Australia revealed that 8.6% of police domestic violence cases involved male victims, while 91.4% involved female victims.

The South Australian Health Goals and Targets: Violence and Abuse Priority Areas (1998) reported that 66% and 34% of domestic violence victims were women and men, respectively.

Two hospital emergency department studies conducted by Hegarty in 1998, found that 2.7% and 2.9% of men and 7.4% and 7.1% percent of women had been abused within the previous year, while 8.8% and 8.5% of men and 23.6% and 19.3 % of women had lifetime prevalence for domestic violence.

American statistics have rebutted the before mentioned three myths. Two conflict tactics scales surveys revealed that some women do not hit in self-defence. The First National Family Violence Survey (1976) reported that 49% of both members of the couple, 27% of males only and 24% of females only, perpetrated the violence, while the Second National Family Violence survey (1985) found that violence was used by 49% of both members of the couple, 23% of men only and 28% of women only.

Furthermore, some studies have shown that women are more likely than men to strike the first blow. When husbands were asked who struck first in States and Straus's study, they responded that men hit first in 44% of assaults, women also hit first in 44% of assaults while 12% could not remember. Conversely, when wives were asked who struck first, they remarked that men hit first in 43% of assaults, women hit first in 53% of assaults and 5% could not remember.

However, the percentages vary and the actual incidence and prevalence of male victims is still unknown due to several reasons:

There are a range of research methodologies, sampling sizes and definitions that are used for collecting and collating the data.

Male-to-female violence is extensively focused on.

Grants for research have been rejected due to the presumed low incidence of male abuse not warranting attention or prioritisation, as well as the misconception that male victims only exist when female victims defend themselves.

Opposition from feminists, who are concerned that funding for battered women will be decreased and that their battered women movement will be questioned.

Political agendas of anti-feminist men who claim that the occurrence of male battering is equivalent to or higher than that of female battering, with the intention being to trivialise male-to-female violence and to allege that females falsely use domestic violence to gain custody and to deny access to fathers.

Some prominent American researchers and South Australian social workers have experienced shootings, character assassinations, and bomb, death and career threats as a result of discussing female-to-male violence.

Male victims being reluctant to report female perpetrated violence as:

Society's concept of manliness, the dominant, aggressive, violent gender, would be challenged; abused males fear embarrassment, loss of respect and loss of contact with their children; support services for male victims are scarce; the legal system is overwhelming and disillusioning to battered men; it is a man's responsibility to provide and protect.

Media Portrayal of Male Abuse

In the past, male victims of domestic violence were mocked by the media with "...cartoon images of women slapping men's faces, or wives chasing husbands with rolling pins or throwing dishes at them."

Nowadays, the media is more willing to discuss female perpetrators. Several films and books on violent women have been released over the past decade while major Australian, Hong Kong, Canadian, American, British and Irish newspapers have published more articles acknowledging husband abuse in 2002 than other years.

As well, recent journal articles have been strongly criticised for implying that all perpetrators of domestic violence are male. For example, British, American and

(Continued on page 4)

Letter from the president...

Dear World Society of Victimology Members,

I want to thank the World Society for the opportunity to serve as President until 2006 and I look forward to working for our membership. The new Executive Committee has already been hard at work on strategies that will improve our services and our Society. There are at least four that I would like to see accomplished during my tenure in office.

The first is to finalize our procedures and terms of reference for our standing committees ensuring that our commitment to promoting victimology and victim assistance is consistent throughout and reflects the international nature of our organization. Once this is completed, we will post these descriptions on our website, they will also be available in print upon request.

The second is to increase our membership base. While our Society has grown a great deal in recent years, we still do not attract the vast majority of victimologists or victim support personnel that are in the field. To do this we have developed several initiatives. We are updating our website and plan to post membership information, symposium information, items of interest in the field, and other materials in a timely manner. We have established a Regional De-

velopment Committee that is designed to help coordinate activities in various regions of the world including International Institutes and regional meetings. We believe that all of our materials will be designed so that they are immediately identifiable as WSV products. We have delegated that task to the Public Relations and Communications Committee. And, we are determined to provide opportunities to the general membership to become more involved in the everyday activities of the Society through the committee structure as well through regional and national affiliations.

The third is to maximize our ability to function well into the future. This entails developing a long-range strategic plan for the Society. In so doing, I encourage you to communicate to me any thoughts or concerns you might have about your vision of the Society over the next five or ten years. I will convey them to the Executive Committee so that they can receive careful communication. It also involves maximizing our resources. We are currently a volunteer organization with a small budget. While we have no grand plans to do large scale fundraising, there is some feeling that it would be useful to be able to have a budget that might support scholarships for selected members to attend Institutes or the triennial Symposia. Seeking additional

funds for such a purpose would help us expand our membership as well as to spread the concepts of victimology and victim assistance to areas of the world that are underserved.

The fourth is to hold a successful XII International Symposium in Fresno, California, June 6-10, 2006. The Symposium has long been the most universally recognized activity of the Society. The XII Symposium promises to be as exciting as ever and, because of its location, may give us an opportunity to attract many more participants from Latin America. The planning processes have already begun. Solicitations for workshops and presentations will soon be distributed. I urge you to mark the dates on your calendar and begin to think of how you might be involved.

The WSV is an extraordinary organization. Its diversity is its strength. Because of you, our membership, all of us have the opportunity to become enriched in knowledge and spirit.

I look forward to working with you over the next few years. And, I thank you for your support.

Marlene A. Young
President
e-mail: marlene@try-nova.org

French medical practitioners have criticised three *British Medical Journal* articles for gender bias in failing to recognise female-to-male domestic violence.

Support Services and Criminal Justice System Responses to Abused Men

Over the last three decades in Australia there have been significant reforms in domestic violence, law and policy. However, these long awaited and justified reforms have focused on female victims and male perpetrators, thus resulting in "feminisation of domestic violence," "an invisibility of male abuse," reverse discrimination and an ignorance of male victims' needs.

Support services and the criminal justice system have received criticism for secondary victimisation.

In the Australian cases of *Shew v Domestic Violence Resource Centre Inc* [1996] and *Kowalski v Domestic Violence Crisis Service Inc and Another* [2003] the male victim lodged a complaint against a domestic violence support service for unlawful discrimination on the ground that assistance was denied because the service was restricted to female victims. Both cases were dismissed. In *Shew's* case the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Commission did not have the jurisdiction to investigate the complaint pursuant to s 22 of the *Sex Discrimination Act* 1984 (Cth), because the support service was a body incorporated under State and not Commonwealth legislation. In *Kowalski's* case there was no breach of s 22 of the *Sex Discrimination Act* 1984 (Cth), as

the support service's Constitution and funding agreement with the ACT Government expressly stated that it provided support to victims, perpetrators and others affected by domestic violence regardless of gender, and that the lack of support was due to inadequate communication between the male victim, police and the support service.

An example of male victims fighting back against secondary victimisation is where the Men's Confraternity lodged a complaint with the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commissioner against the Women's Policy Office 'Freedom from Fear Campaign', claiming that the campaign was discriminatory as it portrayed white Anglo-Celtic and Anglo-Saxon men as the sole perpetrators of domestic violence. This complaint was dismissed under s 89 of the *Equal Opportunity Act* 1984 (WA), on the ground that s 31 of the Act "...was invoked to make the 'Freedom from Fear' campaign lawfully discriminatory."

Health and medical services have been criticised for failing to identify domestic violence and failing to provide victims with referrals to support services.

As a consequence of the limited availability of support services for abused men, they are predisposed to workaholicism, suicide, nervous breakdowns, alcoholism, drug abuse and a perpetuating cycle of violence where abused men will become perpetrators and female perpetrators will become victims. Police officers have been criticised for: Disbelieving and arresting male

victims rather than female perpetrators; failing to initiate Apprehended Violence Orders for male victims; being reluctant to respond to domestic violence calls due to the low prosecution rates and their perception that domestic violence is a private matter rather than a crime; providing battered men with Domestic Violence Victim Packages that contain literature referring to male perpetrators and female services.

Likewise, the courts have been criticised as:

Female victims appear to have a lower standard of proof than male victims when obtaining an Apprehended Violence Order; female perpetrators are more likely to receive the "female discount", that is, they are less likely to be found guilty and more likely to receive favourable plea bargains than male perpetrators; battered men's experiences have been delegitimised by equating their experiences with battered woman syndrome.

Some judges have trivialised the criminality of domestic violence.

Other judges have failed to consider all forms of domestic violence, thus refusing to grant orders when there are no signs of physical violence; financial costs of legal representation are unaffordable and legal aid access is limited; victims' needs and fears have been ignored by the adversarial win at all costs nature of the legal system.

Though, more positively, the courts have been willing to apply battered woman syndrome to male victims of domestic violence. In the Court of Florida (USA), Eddie King was acquitted of murder after the court had accepted evidence that Mr King

was a battered husband. The court held that Mr King shot his wife in self-defence after being covered in acid, beaten, slashed, stabbed and shot during his four year marriage.

In Australia, battered woman syndrome has been successfully applied to a homosexual man in *The Queen v Robert Vaughan McEwen* (1996). Mr McEwen was depicted as a battered wife after suffering emotional and social abuse, threats and intimidation and economic deprivation for fourteen years. Also Mr McEwen suffered physical and sexual violence for the last three years of the fourteen year relationship. Hence, battered woman syndrome enabled Mr McEwen to plead guilty to manslaughter rather than murder on the basis of provocation, and have his sentence mitigated.

Recommendations Based on the Needs of Battered Males

The following recommendations are suggested:

Conduct research on male victims and female perpetrators.

Based on the research findings; funding and resources should be provided for the establishment of battered men's support services; including: counselling services, men's refuges, Men's Information and Referral Service, Men's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program, Men's Legal Resources Centre and men's self help groups. Services should be modelled on a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates both legal and non-legal agencies. Set up anti-violence programs for female perpetrators and general life skill programs that incorporate communication skills, relationship

skills and conflict management skills. Legal advice and representation needs to be more accessible and affordable. Health and medical services, domestic violence support services and the criminal justice system requires ongoing education and training about female-to male violence since the focus still remains on male-to-female violence. Domestic violence terminology requires revising as "perpetrator" connotes male, while "victim" connotes female. Some alternative terms for "perpetrator" include "men or women who use violence," "person who is being abusive" or "person who is struggling with being abusive." While terms such as "men or women who experience violence," "person who is being abused" or "person who is struggling with being abused" is preferred to "victim."

Australian legislation needs to be amended so that it is gender neutral, rather than implying that all perpetrators are males and all victims are females. Implement media campaigns, community education programs and information brochures on female-to-male violence. Create Federal and State Offices for the Status of Men, a Men's Policy Office and an International Men's Day.

Also, two innovations that were put into practice for battered women are recommended for battered men. The first innovation is the Specialised Domestic Violence Court that originated in the United States of America. The Court is recommended as it "promotes a comprehensive community response to domestic violence by integrating multiple legal and social

services into a single court based system." This integration addresses the complex legal, social and psychological effects of domestic violence. The Court ensures judicial activism in the community, perpetrator programs, victim services and defendant accountability. Furthermore, the incidence of domestic violence has decreased as a result of the Court, since legal sanctions and deterrents are more effective when combined with social services.

In Australia, Queensland Health introduced the second innovation. Several additional questions relating to domestic violence have been incorporated into the history taking procedure in medical and health facilities. This innovation has shown an improvement in diagnosing domestic violence and more effective provisions of health services and information to domestic violence victims.

While both innovations have shown improvements in their infancy, long-term research is required before an accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of Domestic Violence Courts and screening of domestic violence in health and medical services can be determined.

All of the before mentioned recommendations would assist in meeting the following needs of male victims:

Reveal the actual incidence and prevalence of abused men; recognise the existence of male victims and female perpetrators of domestic violence; acknowledge the differences between male and female experiences of domestic violence; enable policy

development; identify the needs of battered males; discover what services are or are not available for abused males; dispel the myths about male victims; change the negative community attitudes towards abused men; inform male victims of the availability of services; alleviate males' feelings of isolation; allow males to be listened to and believed; enable men to talk about their experiences of domestic violence; encourage males to access health and medical services, domestic violence support services and the criminal justice system; minimise secondary victimisation; prevent predisposition of battered males to workaholism, suicide, nervous breakdowns, alcoholism, drug abuse and a perpetuating cycle of violence where male victims will become perpetrators and female perpetrators will become victims; eliminate discrimination; reverse feminisation of domestic violence; promote a safer life that is free from violence.

Conclusion

Male victims of domestic violence are fact and not fiction. While the media, support services and the criminal justice system can be commended for responding positively to female victims, they can be criticised for prejudicing and ignoring male victims. Until (1) research focuses on male victims and female perpetrators; (2) male victims are recognised; (3) negative media, professional and community attitudes are changed and (4) support services for male victims are established and integrated within the criminal justice system, male victims will continue to be discriminated against, remain hidden, suffer in silence and be denied the human right to a safe

life free from violence.

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Tribute to Dame Ann Ballin
(Continued From Page 1)

Dame Ann's was among the most honored of all our colleagues in the victims' community. Chair or member of commissions on disability and on social policy, among others, president of the New Zealand Psychological Society, she was made Dame Commander of the British Empire in 1992 and in 2002 she was appointed to the Order of New Zealand, "the highest of the Queen's Birthday honours."

Dame Ann's achievements are underscored by the fact that a neurological condition affected her spinal column when she was a teenager and she had to use a wheelchair thereafter. This contributed to her obscurity in the international victimology arena, since by the time she took up our cause, her travels abroad had ended.

Recalled a friend, Mike Crean, in *The (Christchurch) Express*: "Dame Ann once said she never set out to be a role model for the disabled, and never regarded herself as a feminist. 'I just went on and did what feminists do.'"

Most of her career was spent as a clinical psychologist, notably at Canterbury University. There she was exposed to the horrors of victimization in trying to help the rape victims who came to her.

Her final years were spent in bed. She talked to friends through the godsend of email, which she took to with relish. Upon her death, an old classmate sent a message to all on her email list, which read in part, "As the walls of her world gradually shrank, first to two rooms and then to alternate views to the left and right sides of her bed, she ceased using the laptop. I was willingly deputed to act as her scribe, reading the email and writing replies to her dictation. A rare experience to share the mind of such a woman. One subject only was proscribed. 'And how are you today Ann?' was first answered with a 'Don't ask' and then eliminated entirely from our discourse."

He recalled the frequent joy of this work: "At ... times we were both gasping for breath, laughter leading to tears as we shared the humour in

jokes or the possibilities of jokes that her lively mind suggested."

A lively mind, indeed, right up to the end. One of her correspondents, who, like her, had a bird feeder outside her window, shared with the others this prototypical passage from one of Dame Ann's letters:

"I also notice that adolescent birds stay up longer than their parents and hang out with some of the other kids on my feeder tray. I know they are adolescent because they are still fat from being fed by their poor harassed folks. I feel a bit guilty that old muffins and easily got-at-millet are a bit like McDonalds. Never mind."

There was always wisdom with her wit. She was extraordinarily well read and a wonderful conversationalist. And, right until the end, she sustained an outrage about what she saw as injustices throughout the world - always and forever, she detested injustice.

She was a pioneer in victim services and social services in New Zealand and the world. We will miss her.

Conferences and Workshops

French Society of Criminology
June 2004, Agen, Dordogne, France
www.afc-assoc.org/

Third Annual Crime Victim Law & Litigation Conference

June 18-19, 2004, Portland, Oregon
www.lclark.edu/org/ncvli/2004conference.html

Victimization of Children and Youth: An International Research Conference
July 11-14, Portsmouth, New Hampshire
www.unh.edu/fri Tel: 603-862-0767

British Society of Criminology
July 2004, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, UK
www.britisoccrim.org/

Call for Papers for the Fourteenth World Congress of Criminology

August 6-12, 2005, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
* call for papers: tony.peters@law.kuleuven.ac.be

ISRCL (International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law)

August 8-12, 2004, Montreal, Canada
www.isrcl.org

National Organization for Victim Assistance Conference

August 22-27, 2004, Sacramento, California
www.try-nova.org/

4th Annual Conference of European Society of Criminology

August 25-28, 2004, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
www.eurocrim2004.com

NAVAA's Joint VOCA Administrators Conference

August 29-September 1st, 2004, Boston, USA
www.navaa.org

9th International Conference on Family Violence

September 19-22, 2004, San Diego, California
www.fvsai.org

MEMBERS WANTED

In an effort to open up the World Society of Victimology and increase the participation of WSV members in the Society's activities, the Executive Committee wishes to recruit members for a number of important committees. The following is an overview of the committees for which new members are presently being sought. If you wish to join one of these committees, please contact the committee's Chair.

Membership Committee

Objective: To attract and retain into membership all key academics, service providers and policy makers who are currently involved in Victimology.

Chair: Sarah Ben-David, Ph.D.

Address: Department of Criminology, Bar-Ian University, 52900 Ramat-Gan, Israel

Phone: +972-3-5318221

Fax: +972-3-5352114

E-mail: bendas@mail.biu.ac.il

Victim Services Committee

Objective: To facilitate networking between service providers around the world and to develop a knowledge base for training and technical assistance.

Chair: Maria de la Luz Lima

E-mail:

Public Relations and Communication Committee

Objective: To develop and implement a PR strategy for the WSV

Chair: Linda Davis, Ph.D.

E-mail:

International Courses on Victimology and Victim Assistance Committee

Objective: To develop and promulgate guidelines and standards for WSV courses on victimology and victim assistance.

Chair: John Dussich, Ph.D.

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Post graduate studies in Victimology

The International Centre for Comparative Criminology at the Université de Montréal (Canada) offers 2 scholarships for post doctorate positions. Each scholarship is for one year and is worth \$25,000 CAD.

Candidates are required to have completed their Ph.D. in criminology or a related area. Positions are now available in Victimology.

The Université de Montréal is a French university and candidates are expected to have a good knowledge of French or English. Research can be conducted in either language. The research does not have to include a comparative component and it is not required that the project include Canadian data.

For Information, contact Jo-Anne Wemmers

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or visit these websites:

www.cicc.umontreal.ca

www.umontreal.ca

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