

VÄGIVALL PAARISUHTES — MÜÜDID JA TEGELIKKUS

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15–74-aastastest paarisuhte kogemusega inimestest 74% arvab, et paarisuhtes esinev vägivald on nii levinud, et see on Eesti ühiskonnas probleem. Pooled selles vanuses paarisuhtes olnutest on elu jooksul vähemalt korra kokku puutunud vägivallaga paarisuhtes ja aastas kogeb üks paar kümnest oma suhtes vägivalda.

Sissejuhatus

2009. aastal korraldas Statistikaamet turvalisuse uuringu, mille raames uuriti vägivalla esinemist paarisuhtes. Paarisuhtevägivalla kogemuse tunnistamine on Eesti ühiskonnas endiseid suur tabu ja kuulub inimeste eraelusse, mida ei soovita avalikustada. Seetõttu jõuavad paarisuhtes esinenud vägivallajuhtumid harva politsei või kohtu vaatevälja ja kajastuvad ametkondlikus statistikas. Peale selle ei toeta paarisuhtevägivalla statistika kogumist Eesti seadused: paarisuhtevägivald ei ole eraldi isikuvastaste kuritegude liik, vaid karistusseadustiku järgi käib ähvarduste, füüsilise väärkohtlemise ja piinamise ning muu sellise alla. Sellepärast ei kajastu paarisuhtevägivald ka registreeritud kuritegude statistikas. 2008. aastal pöördus kodus aset leidnud vägivalla töltu politsei poole 65 meest ja 475 naist. Jättes kõrvale vaimse vägivalla paarisuhtes, koges 2009. aasta turvalisuse uuringu järgi viimase aasta jooksul füüslist vägivalda paarisuhtes 46 800 inimest, sealjuures raskemat füüslist vägivalda 18 000 naist ja 5000 meest.

Kolmveerandi paarisuhte kogemusega 15–74-aastaste arvates on paarisuhtes esinev vägivald nii levinud, et see on Eesti ühiskonnas probleem. Samal ajal ei pea mitte kõik paarisuhtevägivalla tagajärjel füüsilisi vigastusi saanud paarisuhtevägivalda Eesti ühiskonnas probleemiks. Samuti ei pea kõik viimast endaga aset leidnud juhtumit paarisuhtevägivallaks või kuriteoks. Ka rahvusvahelised uuringud on näidanud, et sageli peavad hoopis vägivallatsejad ise end ohvriks ja ohvrid süüdistavad vägivalla põhjustamises ennast. Ekspertide hinnangul ei otsi vägivallaprobleemidega partnerid piisavalt professionaalset abi. Suure tõenäosusega aitab sellele kaasa just teadmatus ja oskus mõtestada paarisuhtevägivalda probleemina, mille puhul peaks abi otsima.

Vägivald on probleem, mida on võimalik lahendada. Kui suudame seda probleemi käsitleda era-pooltult, teame selle levikut ja põhjuseid, siis saame aidata sellega kokkupuutuvaid inimesi. Kuid paarisuhtevägivallast rääkimisega kaasneb mitmeid müüte, mis raskendavad paarisuhtevägivalla kui probleemi erapoletut teadvustamist ja analüüsni. Siinne artikkel keskendub paarisuhtevägivalla leviku analüüsile Eestis ja annab ülevaate selle teemaga kaasnevatest levinumatest müütidest ning tegelikkusest. Samuti antakse lühiliitvaade vägivalla uurimise teoreetilistest lähtepunktidest ja tutvustatakse tehtud turvalisuse uuringu metoodikat.

Vägivalla esinemine paarisuhtes

Paarisuhtevägivalla levikut on üsna keeruline hinnata, sest ohvrit süüdistavate hoiakute ja vägivalla ilmsikstuleku tagajärgede hirmus ei tunnista paljud ohvriks langenud avalikult oma kogemusi. Ka ei teadvustata alati, et partneri käitumine on vägivaldne, eriti vaimse vägivalla puhul. 2009. aastal korraldatud uuringus tunnistas pool paarisuhte kogemusega 15–74-aastastest, et on elu jooksul vähemalt korra kokku puutunud paarisuhtevägivallaga, 39% on kokku puutunud vaimse vägivallaga, kolmandik füüsilise vägivallaga ja 4% on kokku puutunud seksuaalse vägivallaga paarisuhtes alates 15. eluaastast. Enam kui pooled on paarisuhtes vägivallaga kokku puutunud mitu korda, peagu viidendik (18%) rohkem kui viiel korral.

Aastas kogeb üks paar kümnest oma suhtes vägivalda ja vaid pooled neist puutuvad kokku ainult vaimse vägivallaga paarisuhtes. Paarisuhtevägivald on ühtmoodi levinud nii linnas kui ka maal,



nii maakonnakeskustes kui ka väikestes külades. Paarisuhtevägivalla puhul ei ilmne erinevusi ka kokkupuutel vägivalla eri liikidega. Samamoodi on paarisuhtevägivallaga kokku puutunud nii eestlased kui ka mitte-eestlased, kuigi mitte-eestlased tunnistavad sagedasemat kokkupuudet vaimse vägivallaga paarisuhtes viimase aasta jooksul.

Samuti puutuvad paarisuhtevägivallaga kokku nii koos elavad paarid kui ka need, kes on küll paarisuhtes, aga partneriga koos ei ela. Iga kahekümnes viimase viie aasta jooksul paarisuhtevägivalda kogenutest oli viimase vägivallajuhtumi ajal oma partnerist juba lahku läinud, peagu kolmandik (29%) ei elanud enam koos, kuigi suhe veel kestis. Ülejäänud olid kooselus: 37% vabaabielus ja 28% abielus. Viimase juhtumi ajaks oli neljandikul kooselu kestnud juba kauem kui viis ja kolmandikul aasta kuni viis aastat.

Laste olemasolu ei vähenda paarisuhtevägivalla riski. Pigem on lastega leibkondades partnerite seas enam neid, kes on kokku puutunud paarisuhtevägivallaga: iga kümnes 15–74-aastane, kes elab lastega leibkonnas, on kokku puutunud vaimse vägivallaga paarisuhtes ja peagu sama paljud (7%) ka füüsilise vägivallaga, lasteta leibkonnas on sellise kogemusega inimeste osatähtsus peagu kaks korda väiksem (vastavalt 5% ja 4%).

Füüslist vägivalda paarisuhtes koges viimase aasta jooksul 46 800 inimest, neist pooled kogesid kergemat füüslist vägivalda — partner viskas neid millegagi, lükkas või lõi lahtise käega. 16% paarisuhte kogemusega 15–74-aastastest on viimase viie aasta jooksul kogenud ühte füüsilise vägivalla liiki, iga kümnes aga juba vähemalt kahte, iga kahekümnes vähemalt kolme ja 3% vähemalt nelja füüsilise vägivalla liiki paarisuhtes.

Müüdid ja paarisuhtevägivald

Müüt: vägivaldsed on naised ja mehed võrdsest, naised lihtsalt räägivad sellest.

Aastaid vägivallatsejate teraapiaga tegelenud L. Bancroft (2002) on välja toonud ühe sagedasema vägivallaga kaasneva müüdi: vägivaldsid naisi ja mehi on sama palju. Tösi on, et suurem osa paarisuhtevägivalla teooriatest on keskendunud naiste vastu suunatud vägivalla käsitlemisele. Ent eelkõige on selle põhjus naiste sagedasem langemine vägivalla ohvriks ja seda ka paarisuhtes: nii ametkondlik statistika kui ka uuringud Eestis ja mujal maailmas on näidanud, et 8–9 korral kümnest on paarisuhtevägivalla ohver naine.

Sotsioloog M. Johnson (2008) on aastaid uurinud paarisuhtevägivalda ja toonud välja selle tüübide ja leviku soo järgi. Enamasti esineb paarisuhtes situatsioonivägivalda, mille on põhjustanud ootamatud konfliktid ning sellist vägivalda kasutavad naised ja mehed võrdsest. Kuid mehed kasutavad paarisuhtes enamasti terrorist, st vägivallatseja püüab saavutada kontrolli, kasutades nii vaimset kui ka füüslist vägivalda. Naised kasutavad enamasti vägivaldset vastuhakku, st kasutavad vägivalda enesekaitseks või kättemaksuks. Lähtuvalt Johnsonist üritab suur osa naisi varem või hiljem mehe kontrollivale vägivallale vastu hakata.

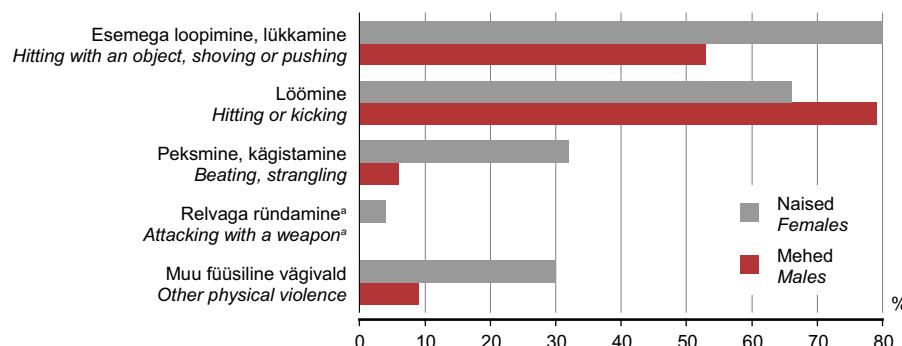
2009. aasta uuringu järgi on mehed ja naised vägivallaga paarisuhtes võrdsest kokku puutunud. Kuivõrd paarisuhtes on kaks poolt, siis vägivalla esinemise puhul on loomulikult mõlemad pooled sellega ka kokku puutunud. Vaimset vägivalda on viimase aasta jooksul kogenud 8% meestest ja 7% naistest, kuid seda on mitu korda kogenud 72% naistest ja vaid pool meestest. Kolmandikule mitu korda vaimset vägivalda kogenud naistest on partner ähvordanud ka füüsilselt haiget teha.

Viimase aasta jooksul on paarisuhtes olevatest inimestest füüsilise vägivallaga kokku puutunud 5% meestest ja 4% naistest, sealjuures koges suurem osa meestest ja väiksem osa naistest kergemat füüslist vägivalda.

Kui vägivald paarisuhtes juba aset leiab, siis mehed kogevad enamasti esemega loopimist või löömist, naised seevastu raskemat vägivalda: peksmist, kägistamist, relvaga ründamist, seksuaalset vägivalda vms. Kogu elu jooksul füüslist vägivalda kogenud meestest sai vaid 6% tunda peksmist või kägistamist, kuid naiste hulgas on seda kogenuid mitu korda rohkem: 32% (joonis 1). Seega on töenäoliselt suur osa meeste kogetud füüsilisest vägivallast paarisuhtes naispoolne enesekaitse või ka kättemaks — ehk lähtudes Johnsoni väljatoodud määratlusest, vägivaldne vastuhakk.

Joonis 1. Kogetud füüsilise vägivalla liik vägivaldses paarisuhetes alates 15. eluaastast, 2008–2009

Figure 1. Type of physical violence experienced in intimate partner abuse since the age of 15, 2008–2009



^a Esinemissageduse tõttu on meeste andmed avaldamiseks mitteusaldusväärised.

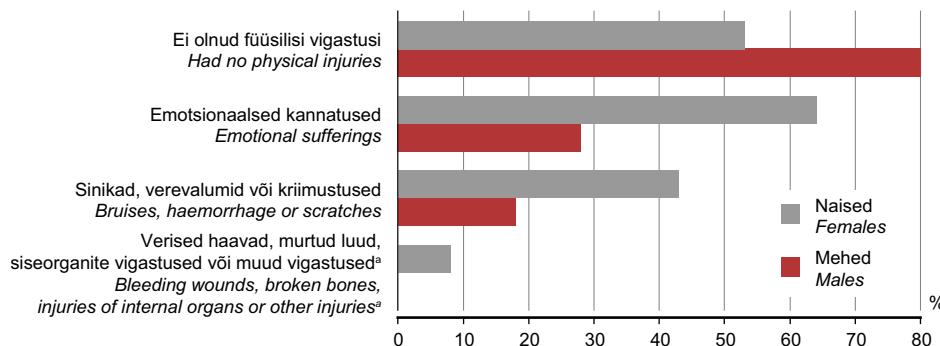
^a Data on males are unreliable for publication due to low frequency.

Paarisuhes vägivalda kogenud naiste hulgas on enam neid, kes on paarisuhes kokku puutunud erinevate füüsilise vägivalla liikidega: kolmandik naistest on elu jooksul kokku puutunud vähemalt kolme vägivallaliigiga, 92% meestest on kokku puutunud vaid 1–2 füüsilise vägivalla liigiga, enamasti on partner neid loopinud mingi esemega, lükkanud või löönud.

Seega langeb meestele paarisuhes osaks pigem kergem ja naistele raskem vägivall. Seetõttu on ka füüsilise vägivalla tagajärjel saadud vigastused meestel ja naistel erinevad. Nendest meestest, kes viimase viie aasta jooksul on kogenud füüslist vägivalda paarisuhes, ei saanud viimase juhtumi ajal 80% mingeid füüsilisi vigastusi (joonis 2). Seevastu vaid pool naistest pääses vigastusteta.

Joonis 2. Saadud vigastused viimase paarisuhtevägivalla juhtumi ajal, 2008–2009

Figure 2. Injuries suffered during the last episode of intimate partner abuse, 2008–2009



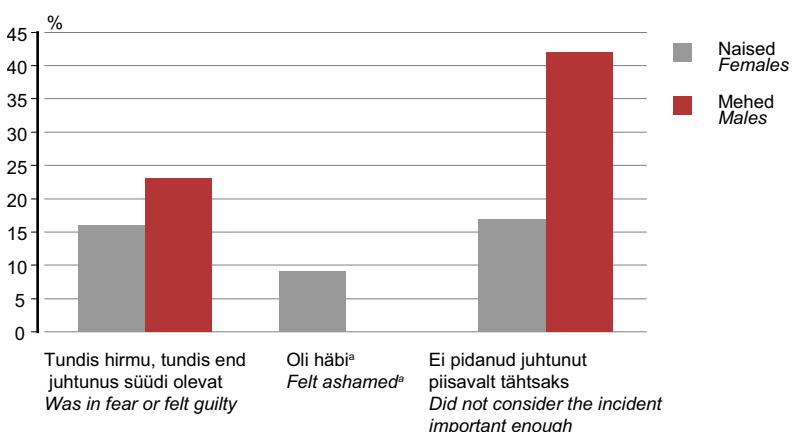
^a Esinemissageduse tõttu on meeste andmed avaldamiseks mitteusaldusväärised.

^a Data on males are unreliable for publication due to low frequency.

Sageli tuuakse põhjuseks, et naiste vägivall meeste vastu jäab märkamata, sest mehed häbenevad ohvriks langemisest rääkida. Palin-Davies (2006) on välja toonud, et paarisuhtevägivalda põhjustavad nii mehed kui ka naised, kuid mehed annavad nende vastu suunatud vägivallast harvemini teada ja ei määratle end sagedasti ohvitena. Tuginedes oma pikaajalisele kogemusele töös vägivallatsejatega, juhib L. Bancroft (2002) tähelepanu asjaolule, et ka naine tunneb end alandatuna, rääkides teda tabanud vägivallast, ja soovib säilitada oma eneseväärikust samamoodi nagu mees.

2009. aasta uuringu andmetel on naiste seas enam paarisuhtevägivallaga kokkupuutunuid ja viimasesest sellisest juhtumist kellelegi rääkinuid: viimati toimunust rääkis 77% naistest ja 37% meestest. Pool naistest koges viimase juhtumi ajal raskemat füüsilist vägivalda (peksmist, kägistamist, relvaga rünnakut vms) ja neljandik neist ei rääkinud sellest juhtumist kellelegi. Meeste puuhul oli viimase juhtumi ajal raske füüsilise vägivallaga kokkupuutunute hulk nii väike, et need tulemusi ei ole võimalik valikuuringuga analüüsida. Kui analüüsida mitterääkimise põhjuseid üldiselt, siis viimasesest vägivallajuhtumist ei rääkinud peagu pool meestest (42%) ja vähem kui viiendik naistest (17%), sest ei pidanud juhtunut oluliseks ning peagu iga kümnes naine (9%), sest tundis juhtunu pärrast häbi (joonis 3). Meeste hulgas oli häbi pärrast mitterääkinuid nii vähe, et need andmed on avaldamiseks mitteusaldusväärised.

Joonis 3. Viimasesest paarisuhtevägivalla juhtumist mitterääkimise põhjused, 2008–2009
Figure 3. Causes for not having disclosed the last experienced episode of intimate partner abuse, 2008–2009



^a Esinemissageduse tõttu on meeste andmed avaldamiseks mitteusaldusväärised.

^a Data on males are unreliable for publication due to low frequency.

Naised ja mehed tunnistavad võrdselt kokkupuudet paarisuhtevägivallaga, kuid naistele osaks saanud vägivald on sageli raskem ja tagajärjed rängemad. Tegelikult ei saa suur osa meestest paarisuhtevägivalla tagajärvel üldse füüsilisi vigastusi. On tösi, et naised on meestest altimad vägivallakogemust kellegagi jagama, kuid mitte alati. Kui mees ei räägi kogetud vägivallast paarisuhtes, sest ta ei pea juhtunut piisavalt oluliseks, siis naistel on samavörd oluline põhjus hirm ja süütunne. Seega toetavad uuringu tulemused L. Bancrofti (2002) järeldust: kui häbi takistaks inimesi rääkimast, siis ei räägiks oma ohvriksolemisest keegi.

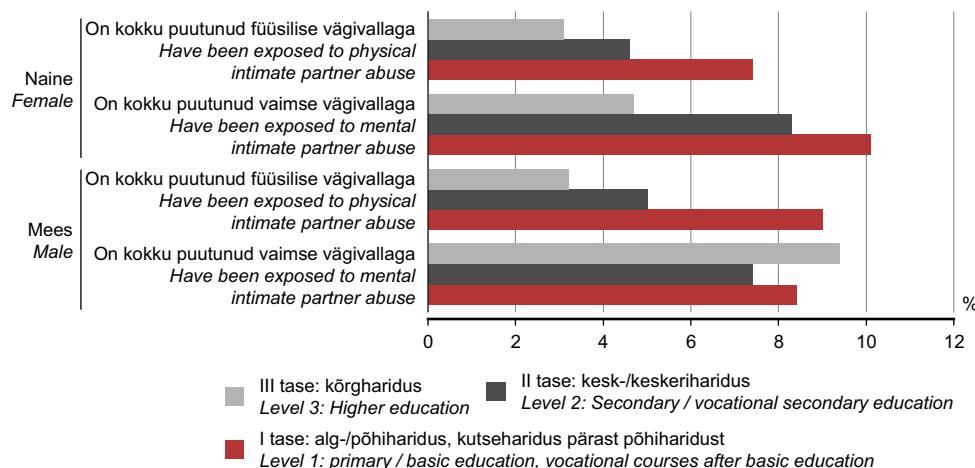
Müüt: vägivaldsus paarisuhtes on peamiselt kehvemal järjel olevate inimeste probleem.

Struktuurilisi tegureid aluseks võttes on sageli väidetud, et vaesus, tööpuudus või madala palgaga ja madala staatusega töö ning madal haridustase on tegurid, mis suurendavad vägivaldset käitumist. Vägivallatsejad ise on välja toonud, et vägivalla kaudu paarisuhtes elatakse välja masendust, mida toob kaasa igapäevaelu (Allaste ja Võõbus 2008). Samal ajal on eksperdid märkinud (Bancroft 2002), et vägivallatsejal jääb puudu mitte oskustest lahendada konflikte mittevägivaldsest, vaid tahtmisest seda teha.

Vägivald on levinud köigis ühiskonnagruppides, sõltumata inimeste haridustasemest, sotsiaalmajanduslikust staatusest või edukusest. Analüüsides küsitleshetke haridustaset ja vägivalla kogemist paarisuhtes alates 15. eluaastast, ei saa öelda, et vägivalla kogemus sõltuks väga palju haridustasemest. Küll aga ilmnevad erinevused, lähtudes vägivalla tüübist. Kõrgema haridustasemega meeste hulgas on enam neid, kes on elu jooksul kogenud vaimset vägivalda paarisuhtes, kõrgharidusega naiste hulgas on vähem neid, kes on kogenud vaimset ja füüsilist vägivalda.

Haridustase elu jooksul tõenäoliselt muutub, kuid vägivalla kogemus võib pärineda varasemast ajast, seetõttu on oluline analüüsida haridustaset vastamise ajal ja vägivalla kogemust viimase aasta jooksul. Kõrgharidusega inimeste hulgas on viimase aasta jooksul paarisuhtes füüsilise vägivallaga kokku puutunuid vähem kui madalama haridustasemega inimeste hulgas.

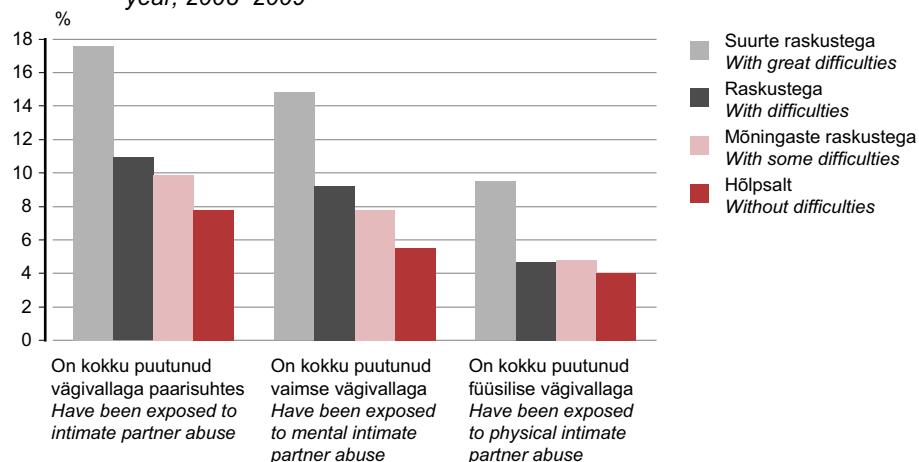
Joonis 4. Haridustase ja vägivallakogemus paarisuhtes viimase aasta jooksul, 2008–2009
Figure 4. Educational level and exposure to intimate partner abuse during the last year, 2008–2009



Paarisuhetevägivalda on kogenud nii töötavad kui ka mittetöötavad inimesed. Kuid enam on viimase aasta jooksul kogenud vägivalda paarisuhtes töötud, seda nii naiste kui ka meeste hulgas. Samuti on vägivallaga paarisuhtes kokku puutunud kehvemas majanduslikus olukorras olevad inimesed: kui pere majanduslik toimetulek on halb, siis on viimase aasta jooksul olnud enam kokkupuuteid vägivallaga paarisuhtes.

Joonis 5. Pere majanduslik toimetulek ja vägivallakogemus paarisuhtes viimase aasta jooksul, 2008–2009

Figure 5. Economic coping of families and exposure to intimate partner abuse during the last year, 2008–2009



Niisiis esineb paarisuhtevägivalda nii paremini kui ka halvemini toimetulevates peredes ja vägivalda on kogenud nii kõrgemalt kui ka madalamalt haritud. Kuid üks põhjusi, miks edukust ja vägivalda seostatakse, võib olla ekspertide hinnangul selles, et vaestel on rikkamatega vörreledes märgatavalalt väiksemad võimalused koduvägivalda varjata.

Müüt: vägivalsuses on süüdi alkohol.

2005. aastal Lääne-Eesti politsei vaatevälja jöudnud perevägivalla analüüsist selgus, et oluline vägivalla riskitegur oli alkohol, mis võib viidata ka sellele, et kained vägivallatsejad satuvad politsei vaatevälja harvemini. Eespool nimetatud analüüsist selgus, et enam kui 80%-l juhtudest kutsuti politsei kohale siis, kui perevägivallatseja oli alkoholijoobes, sealjuures pooltel juhtudel oli tegemist raske joobasteemaga (Pettai ja Kase 2005). Vägivallatsejatega töötavad eksperdid on välja toonud, et vägivallatsejad vabandavad oma käitumist alkoholijoobega. Ohvrid kalduvad samuti vägivallatseja käitumist alkoholi tarbimisega põhjendama.

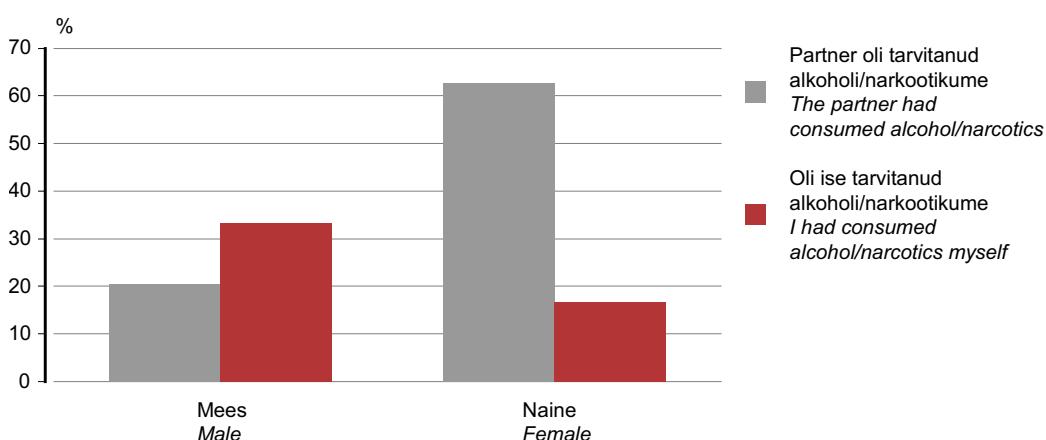
Viimase viie aasta jooksul paarisuhte vägivalda kogenud nentisid, et pooltel kordadel ei olnud viimase füüsilise vägivalla juhtumi ajal kumbki partneritest tarvitanud alkoholi või narkootikume. Mõlemad partnerid olid viimase vägivallajuhtumi ajal tarvitanud alkoholi enam kui iga kümnenda juhtumi ajal.

Viimase viie aasta jooksul paarisuhtes vägivalda kogenud naistest märkis 63%, et viimase vägivallajuhtumi ajal oli partner tarvitanud alkoholi või narkootikume. 17% tunnistas, et nad olid ise viimase vägivallajuhtumi ajal tarvitanud alkoholi või narkootikume (joonis 6).

Meeste kogemustes oli tendents täpselt vastupidine: viiendik viimase viie aasta jooksul paarisuhtes vägivalda kogenud meestest märkis, et viimase vägivallajuhtumi ajal oli partner tarvitanud alkoholi või narkootikume ja kolmandik tunnistas, et nad olid ise viimase vägivallajuhtumi ajal tarvitanud alkoholi või narkootikume.

Joonis 6. Viimase viie aasta jooksul paarisuhtes vägivalda kogenud alkoholi või narkootikumide tarvitamise ja soo järgi, 2008–2009

Figure 6. Persons exposed to intimate partner abuse during the last five years by consumption of alcohol or narcotics and by sex, 2008–2009



Kuigi alkohol on riskitegur, mis võib soodustada vägivalla esinemist paarisuhtes, on eksperdid rõhutanud, et ainus viis vägivalsusest võitu saada on tegeleda vägivalsuse probleemiga. Vägivaldne isik vastutab ise täielikult oma tegude eest ja ohver ei ole see, kes „sunnib“ oma partnerit end väärkohtlema.

Kokkuvõte paarisuhtevägivalla levikust ja müütidest

2009. aastal korraldas Statistikaamet turvalisuse uuringu, mille raames uuriti ka vägivalla esinemise kohta paarisuhtes. Paarisuhtevägivalla andmeid koguti ainult nendelt, kellel oli paarisuhte kogemus: kes olid uuringu korraldamise ajal paarisuhtes või olid paarisuhtes olnud varem.

Vägivald ei ole kindlasti see, mis paarisuhtega kaasnema peaks, kuid siiski kogeb aastas üks paar kümnest oma suhtes vägivalda ja vaid pooleid neist puutuvad kokku ainult vaimse vägivallaga. Kuivõrd paarisuhtes on kaks poolt, siis vägivalla esinemise puhul on loomulikult mõlemad pooled sellega võrdsest kokku puutunud. Kuid mehed puutuvad enamasti kokku kergema ja naised raskema ning korduva vägivallaga: näiteks füüsilise vägivallaga kokku puutunud naistest oli enam kui poolte puhul tegemist raskema füüsilise vägivallaga — partner oli neid rusikaga löönud, peksnud, kägistanud, lämmatanud, pöletanud, relvaga rünnanud või sundinud seksuaalvahekorda. Seetõttu on ka füüsilise vägivalla tagajärvel saadud vigastused meestel ja naistel erinevad. 80% meestest, kes on viimase viie aasta jooksul paarisuhtes kogenud füüslist vägivalda, ei saanud viimase juhtumi ajal mingeid füüsilisi vigastusi. Niisiis on paarisuhtevägivald levinud nii naiste kui ka meeste hulgas, samuti on vägivallatsejaid mõlema soo esindajate hulgas, kuid vägivalla all kannatavaid naisi on märksa rohkem.

Paarisuhtevägivalda esineb nii linna- kui ka maapiirkondades, samuti eri ühiskonnakihtides ja nii paremini kui ka halvemini toimetulevates peredes. Vägivalda on kogenud nii kõrgemalt kui ka madalamalt haritud. Paarisuhtevägivalda on kogenud nii töötavad kui ka mittetöötavad inimesed, kuid enam on viimase aasta jooksul kogenud paarisuhtevägivalda töötud.

Alkohol on riskitegur, mis võib põhjustada vägivalda paarisuhtes. Paarisuhtes vägivallaga kokku puutunud naised on sagedamini kannatanud alkoholi- või narkojoobes partneri vägivalla all. Mehed on sagedamini tarvitانud ise vägivallajuhtumi ajal alkoholi või narkootikume. Siiski ei saa paarisuhtevägivallas näha süüd ümbritseval keskkonnal või muudel teguritel. Vägivaldne isik on täielikult oma tegude eest ise vastutav ja ainus viis vägivaldsusest võitu saada on tegelemine vägivaldsuse probleemiga.

15–74-aastastest paarisuhte kogemusega inimestest arvab kolmveerand, et paarisuhtevägivald on nii levinud, et see on Eesti ühiskonnas probleem. Paarisuhtevägivallaga kokkupuutunud naiste hulgas oli sellisel arvamusel olijate osatähtsus suurem. Samal ajal ei pea mitte kõik paarisuhtevägivalla tagajärvel füüsilisi vigastusi saanud paarisuhtevägivalda probleemiks Eesti ühiskonnas.

Eeldus praeguse olukorra muutmiseks on, et suureneb teadlikkus paarisuhtevägivallast kui probleemist ning tagatud on sotsiaal- ja juriidilise abi süsteem. Süvaintervjuude tulemused näitavad, et ka vägivallakogemustega inimeste arvates vägivallast rohkem rääkida, et probleemi laiemalt teadvustada ja sealjuures tuleb sellest rääkida erapooleltult. Ühelt poolt annab see ennetavaid teadmisi, teisalt suunab olukorra üle mõtlema ja ehk ka abi otsima.

Paarisuhtevägivalla uurimise teooriad

Vägivalla ennetamiseks paarisuhtes ning selleleviku piiramiseks on oluline koguda ja analüüsida selle nähtusega seotud teavet. Rahvusvaheline kogemus näitab, et paarisuhtevägivalla leviku hindamine on teema delikaatsuse tõttu väga keeruline ja olemasolevat administratiivset statistikat kasutades on suur oht seda alahinnata. Ka Eestis varem tehtud uuringud on näidanud, et perevägivallaga tegelik tase on tunduvalt kõrgem kui seda peegeldab politsei statistika.

Lähisuhhtevägivald on aastakümneid olnud omaette uurimisteema, millele saab läheneda väga erinevatest teoreetilistest vaatepunktidest. Suurem osa teoriatest on keskendunud naiste vastu suunatud vägivalla käsitlemisele ja uuringute eesmärk on mõõta naistevastase vägivallalaevikut ning tagajärgi.

Järjest enam korraldatakse uuringuid, mille eesmärk on mõõta vägivalla levikut ühiskonnas, elanikkonda küsitletakse sõltumata soost. Vägivalla leviku mõõtmiseks on kasutatud Strausi konfliktitaktika skaala küsimusi, mis võimaldavad mõõta vägivalla liikide sagedust ja levikut. Selle skaala küsimused on faktilised (näiteks: kas löödi või mitte) ja jätab vähem võimalusi tunnetuslikuks vastamiseks (näiteks: kas olete kannatanud?). Kuid nagu selle skaala kritiseerijad on ka välja toonud, ei võimalda niisugune uuring analüüsida vägivalla olemust, sest keskendub juhtumite sagedusele (Brush 1990).

Kui keskenduda intervjuu küsimustes vägivalla olemusele, põhjustele ja tagajärgedele, siis jätab see vastajatele suurema võimaluse vägivalda tõlgendada ning kokkupuudet vägivallaga ise määratleda (Schwartz 2000). Sellisel juhul võib jäädä vastaja määratleda, kas temaga juhtunu oli vägivald või mitte ja kas ta peab end vägivalla ohvriks.

Igal juhul tuleb olla küsimuste formulierimisel äärmiselt hoolikas ja täiesti kindel selles, milliste sõnade kasutamine aitab formulierida küsimuse, mis mõõdab nähtusi eesmärgipäraselt. Sõnastuse töttu võib esineda nii ala- kui ka ülehindamist, sest inimesed saavad sõnadest aru erinevalt. Seetõttu on oluline mitmekordne mõõtmine: samu küsimusi tuleb esitada eri sõnastuses. Sellise meetodiga on võimalik elimineerida erinevusi sõnastuse mõistmisel.

Küsitusmeetoditest on kõrgemalt hinnatud silmast silma küsitolust, sest see võimaldab küsitlejastava vahelist suhtlust — on võimalik üle küsida, selgitada ja täpsustada. Teiselt poolt on aga vägivallateema niivõrd sensitiivne, et silmast silma intervjuu võib ise tuua kaasa mittetõesed vastused.

Telefoniküsitus on viimastel aastatel muutunud aina populaarsemaks ja hinnatumaks: see meetod ei ole nii kulkas kui silmast silma intervjuu ja samal ajal säilib küsitleja ning vastaja kontakt. Vägivallateemalise küsitoluse tegemiseks sobib telefoniintervjuu paremini, sest see tagab vastajale suurema privaatsuse, kuid teisalt ei ole küsitlejal ülevaadet, mis toimub vastaja pool peal: näiteks võib keegi kõrvaline isik intervjuu juures viibida ja vastaja ei saa töeselt vastata.

Postiküsitusi on hinnatud kõige madalamalt eelkõige selle töttu, et siis peab ankeet olema äärmiselt lihtne ja selgete juhistega, et eri haritustasemega vastajad suudaksid selle täita. Kui ankeet ei ole piisavalt lihtne, võib vastaja vastuste andmisel hänta jäädä ja osale küsimustele üldse vastamata jätta.

Küsitlejate kasutamine vägivallauuringutes eeldab tavapärasest põhjalikumat küsitlejate koolitamist ja ka kriitiliste situatsioonide läbimõtlemist, mis tavaliselt küsitolustega ei kaasne. Ühelt poolt tuleb tagada vastaja turvalisus, teisalt ei tohi unustada ka küsitleja turvalisust.

Ülevaade turvalisuse uuringu paarisuhtevägivalla osa metodikast

2008. aasta lõpus ja 2009. aasta alguses korraldas Statistikaamet turvalisuse uuringu (OVU), mille eesmärk oli koguda andmeid kuritegevuse tegeliku ulatuse, Eesti elanike turvatunde ja paarisuhtevägivalla kohta. Tinglikult jagunes uuring kaheks: esimene osa kästites kuritegevuse ohvriks langemist ja turvatunnet ning teine osa keskendus paarisuhtevägivalla uurimisele.

Uuringu üldkogumis olid kõik 15–74-aastased Eesti alalised elanikud. Paarisuhtevägivalla andmeid koguti ainult nendelt, kellel oli paarisuhte kogemus: kes olid uuringu korraldamise ajal paarisuhetes või olid paarisuhetes olnud varem. Paarisuhtevägivalla kohta koguti andmeid ankeediiga, mille küsitletav täitis iseseisvalt eelistatult sülearvutis või soovi korral paberil peal ja silmast silma intervjuu tehti vaid vastaja soovil. Uuringus lähtuti põhimõttest, et vastaja ega küsitleja ei tohi uuringu töttu kannatada. Turvalisuse tagamiseks oli küsitus võimaluse korral privaatne, paarisuhte vägivalda puudutavat teemat ei tutvustatud respondendile koju saadetavas kontaktkirjas ega Statistikaameti infomaterjalides.

Vastajatele anti nende endi jaoks või edasitoimetamiseks eesti- või venekeelseid infovoldikuid, kus julgustati vägivalla ohvriks sattunuid abi küsimata. Voldikus olid kirjas abiorganisatsioonide,

varjupaikade, tugigruppide jms kontaktandmed. Infovoidik anti kõigile uuringus osalenutele olenevate nende vastustest.

Vägivalla kohta käivad küsimused on sarnased Strausi konfliktitaktika skaalaga (*Conflict Tactics Scale* ehk CTS), mille järgi on meeste ja naiste ohvriks langemise sagekus tihti võrdne. See on tingitud asjaolust, et küsimused ei arvesta vägivalla põhjusi ja tagajärgi. Naiste vägivald meeste vastu on sageli enesekaitse ja ka selle tagajärjed on kergemad, mistöttu erinevad meeste ning naiste vägivallakogemused kvalitatiivselt. Statistikaameti uuring ei anna infot paarisuhtevägivalla põhjuste kohta, küll aga selle leviku ja tagajärgede kohta. Uuringu eesmärk ei ole võrrelda naiste ja meeste vastu suunatud vägivalda paarisuhtes, vaid mõõta paarisuhtevägivalla levikut Eesti ühiskonnas.

Kokkuvõte

Paarisuhtevägivald on nagu tsüklon, mis tekitab nii täiskasvanute kui ka laste elust läbi tuhisedes kaose ja hävingu: häübub enesekindlus ja vabadus, kaasnevad hirm ja kibestumine, alandus ja südamevalu, saladused ja valed ning sageli ka füüsilised vigastused. Mitte keegi ei peaks elama sellist elu.

Paarisuhtevägivald ei ole Eestis tundmatu probleem. Olukorra lahendamise teel on üks esimesi samme probleemi erapooletu tunnistamine. Et luua soodus pinnas vägivaldsete inimeste muutumiseks, peavad ümbritsevad möistma, kuidas vägivald toimib ja kust see pärit on. Vägivallast vabanemiseks on vaja pöörata tähelepanu probleemi juurtele. Seega on oluline tegeleda paarisuhtevägivalla analüüsimisega ja tulemustest erapooletult rääkida.

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INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE — MYTHS AND THE REALITY

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74% of the persons with intimate relationship experience are of the opinion that intimate partner abuse is so wide-spread that it can be regarded a problem of the whole Estonian society. A half of the persons with intimate relationship experience have at least once in their life had contact with intimate partner abuse. Besides that, over a year, one couple out of ten experiences intimate partner abuse in their relationship.

Introduction

In 2009, Statistics Estonia conducted the Safety Survey one of the goals of which was to study occurrence of violence in intimate partner relationships. Acknowledgement of the the experience of violence in partner relationships is continuously considered a great taboo in Estonian society and it is a part of spouses' private life which they do not want to disclose to others. Therefore, intimate partner abuse cases seldom reach the police or court rooms or are reflected in administrative statistics. In addition, the legislation of Estonia does not support collection of statistics on intimate partner abuse: intimate partner abuse is not a separate type of offence against the person, but according to the Penal Code it is grouped under threatening, physical abuse, torture, etc. Because of that, data on intimate partner abuse are not reflected in the statistics about recorded offences. In 2008, 65 men and 475 women turned to the police reporting on an act of violence having taken place at home. Leaving aside mental intimate partner abuse, the 2009 Safety Survey revealed that physical intimate partner abuse was experienced by 46,800 persons over the past year, thereby 18,000 women and 5,000 men were exposed to more severe physical partner abuse.

Three fourths of the 15–74-year-olds with intimate relationship experience are of the opinion that intimate partner abuse is so wide-spread that it can be regarded a problem of the whole Estonian society. However, not all persons on whom physical injuries have been inflicted as a result of intimate partner abuse look upon intimate partner abuse as a problem of Estonian society. Also, not all persons consider the last similar incident experienced by them as a case of intimate partner abuse or offence. International surveys have also suggested that often enough persons having committed an act of violence consider themselves victims and victims accuse themselves of having provoked the violence directed against them. According to the estimations of experts, couples with violence problems do not seek professional help often enough. It is more than obvious that ignorance and inability to look upon intimate partner abuse as a problem, in case of which the persons involved should seek help, facilitate the occurrence of it.

Violence is a problem which is possible to solve. If we can handle this problem without taking sides, if we are aware of the extent and causes thereof, then we are also able to help the persons who experience such problems. But talks about intimate partner abuse are associated with several myths which make impartial acknowledgement of intimate partner abuse as a problem and the analysis thereof more difficult. This article analyses the extent of intimate partner abuse in Estonia and provides an overview of the most well-known myths associated with this topic and of the reality. In addition, a brief overview is given about the theoretical foundations which the research of violence is based on, and the methodology of the conducted Safety Survey is described.

Occurrence of violence in intimate partner relationship

It is rather complicated to estimate the extent of intimate partner abuse, because accusing attitudes towards the victim and the fear of consequences which the disclosure of the act of violence may lead to causes a situation where a lot of victims do not testify in public their experiences of violence. The victims also do not always acknowledge their partner's violent behaviour, this is especially so in case of mental violence. According to the Survey conducted in 2009, a half of the 15–74-year-olds stated that they had at least once in their life been exposed to intimate partner abuse, 39% had been exposed to mental abuse, a third to physical abuse and 4% to sexual intimate partner abuse since the age of 15. More than a half have repeatedly been exposed to intimate partner abuse, almost a fifth (18%) — for more than five times.

In a year, one couple out of ten experiences violence in their relationship and as little as a half of them experience mental intimate partner abuse only. The extent of intimate partner abuse is similar in cities and in rural areas, in county centres and small villages. No discrepancies can be detected in exposure to different types of intimate partner abuse either. Similarly, both Estonians and non-Estonians have been exposed to intimate partner abuse, although non-Estonians have asserted an escalating exposure to mental intimate partner abuse in the recent year.

Intimate partner abuse has been experienced by spouses who live in a common-law relationship as well as by those who are in intimate relationship but do not cohabit. Every twentieth of the persons with the intimate partner abuse experience during the past five years had already broken up with their partner when the last incident of violence took place; about a third (29%) did not cohabit with their partner any longer although their relationship had not broken up. The rest were in cohabitation: 37% in a common-law marriage and 28% married. By the time when the last incident occurred, a fourth of respondents reported that they had been living together their partner for more than five years, and a third — from one to five years.

Having children in the family does not reduce the risk of falling victim to intimate partner abuse. Partners who have suffered intimate partner abuse rather belong to households with children: every tenth 15–74-year-old person living in a household with children has been exposed to mental intimate partner abuse and about the same number of persons (7%) have also fallen victim to physical intimate partner abuse. In households without children, the share of persons with such an experience is almost twice as small (5% and 4%, respectively).

Over the last year, physical intimate partner abuse was experienced by 46,800 persons. A half of them had episodes of minor physical violence — the partner threw something at them that could hurt them, pushed or shoved or slapped them. Over the last five years, 16% of the 15–74-year-olds with intimate relationship experience had experienced one type of physical violence, but every tenth had already experienced at least two types, every twentieth — at least three types, and 3% at least four types of physical violence in their intimate relationship.

Myths and intimate partner abuse

Myth: women and men are equally violent. Women are simply the ones who talk about it.

L. Bancrofti (2002), who has for years practised therapy on violent persons, points out one of the most frequently believed violence-related myths: there are as many violent women as there are violent men. Surely, most of the intimate partner abuse theories have focused on the treatment of violence against women. However, the primary cause thereof lies in the fact that women fall victim to acts of violence more frequently and this also applies to intimate relationships: administrative statistics as well as the research carried out in Estonia and elsewhere in the world have shown that women appear to have been victims of intimate partner abuse in eight to nine cases out of ten.

Sociologist M. Johnson (2008) has studied intimate partner abuse for years and has described the typology and extent of violence by sex. Situational couple violence is the most common type of violence which occurs in intimate partner relationships. Unexpected conflicts lead to such type of violence and it is enacted equally by women and men. Intimate terrorism, in contrast, is mostly perpetrated by men in partner relationships, i.e. a violent male partner attempts to gain control over their partner by using mental as well as physical aggression. Violent resistance is perpetrated mostly by women, i.e. a female partner uses violence for self-defence or revenge. According to Johnson, a large number of female partners sooner or later try to resist their male partner's controlling violence.

The 2009 Survey reveals that equal numbers of men and women have experienced violence in their intimate partner relationships. As there are two partners in an intimate relationship, thus in case of an act of violence both partners have naturally been involved. Over the last year, mental intimate partner abuse was experienced by 8% of men and 7% of women. But this type of abuse has repeatedly been experienced by 72% of women and only a half of men. In case of a third of the women who have repeatedly suffered mental abuse, their male partner has threatened to physically hurt them.

Over the last year, physical intimate partner abuse was experienced by 5% of men and 4% of women. Thereby, the majority of men and a smaller share of women experienced minor physical violence.

During an intimate partner abuse episode, male partners are mostly hit with an object that hurts or are hit. Female partners, on the contrary, suffer more severe violence: beating, strangling, attack with a gun, sexual violence, etc. Only 6% of men who had suffered physical violence in their lifetime reported having experienced beating or strangling. Among women, there are several times more of such victims: 32% (Figure 1, p. 76). Consequently, a large share of physical intimate partner abuse suffered by men is evidently a manifestation of self-defence or revenge taken on the part of woman i.e. violent resistance according to the definition used by Johnson.

A large share of the women who have experienced intimate partner abuse have suffered different types of physical violence: a third of women have experience with at least three different types of violence in their lifetime, 92% of men have experience with only one to two types of physical violence: their partner had thrown an object at them, had pushed, shoved or hit them.

Thus, in intimate partner relationships, men rather face minor violence, and women — more severe violence. Because of that, injuries resulting from physical violence are different by men and women. 80% of men, who had experienced physical intimate partner abuse during the last five years, did not get any bodily harm during the last such episode (Figure 2, p. 76). In contrast, only a half of women escaped without injuries.

Often, the above statements have been grounded on the reason that women's violence against men remains unnoticed, because men are ashamed of disclosing their victimisation. Palin-Davies (2006) has stated that intimate partner abuse is triggered by both men and women, but men report the violence directed against them less frequently and do not often define themselves as a victim. L. Bancroft (2002), being supported by his long-term experience in working with persons having perpetrated violent acts, draws our attention to the fact that a woman, too, feels humiliated while talking about the violent act directed against her and wants to maintain her self-respect similarly to men.

On the basis of the 2009 Survey data, a larger number of women, compared to men, have experienced intimate partner abuse and disclosed the information to someone: 77% of women and 37% of men disclosed details of the last such episode experienced. A half of the women concerned had fallen victim to more severe physical violence during the last episode of violence: beating, strangling, attack with a weapon, etc., and a fourth of them kept it in secret. Among men, the number of those who had suffered severe physical violence was so small that the results cannot be analysed by sample survey. While analysing, in general lines, the causes for not



having disclosed the incident of violence, it should be admitted that almost a half of men (42%) and less than a fifth of women (17%) did not disclose to anybody the last episode of violence experienced by them because they did not consider the incident important, and almost every tenth woman (9%) did not disclose such information because they felt ashamed of what had happened (Figure 3, p. 77). The number of men who had not disclosed such information because of feeling ashamed was so small that the data obtained are unreliable.

Women and men equally testify their exposure to intimate partner abuse, but the violence directed against women is often more serious and the consequences more severe. In fact, a large share of men does not get any physical injury in intimate partner abuse. It is true that women are more apt than men to share their violence-related experience with someone, but not always. A male partner does not talk about the violence experienced by him in intimate partner relationship, because he does not consider it important enough, but women also point out fear and a feeling of guilt as equally relevant reasons. Thus, the findings of the Survey confirm the conclusion reached by L. Bancroft (2002): if shame prevented people from disclosing the experienced acts of violence, nobody would talk about their victimisation.

Myth: violence in intimate relationship is a problem of people of poorer living standard mainly.

Based on structural factors, it has often been claimed that poverty, unemployment or low-paid and low-status jobs as well as a low level of education are the factors escalating the probability of violent behaviour. Violent partners themselves have pointed out that the gloom and despondency inflicted on people in their everyday life is being lived out through violence in intimate partner relationships (Allaste and Võõbus 2008). At the same time, experts (Bancroft 2002) have noted that violent persons do not so much lack the skill of resolving conflicts without resort to violence but they rather do not want to solve them in a non-violent manner.

Violence is enacted in all groups of society irrespective of a person's level of education, social-economic status or successfulness. By analysing, at the moment of the interview, a respondent's educational level and experience in intimate partner abuse since the age of 15, it was found that the experience in violence does not very much depend on educational level. Differences, however, were detected by types of violence. Among men with higher educational level there are more of those who have suffered mental intimate partner abuse during their lifetime and, among women with higher educational level there are fewer of those who have experienced mental and physical violence.

Educational level probably changes in the course of life, but the experience of violence may originate from an earlier time, therefore it is important to analyse educational level at the moment of the interview as well as the experience of violence during the past year. The number of persons who have been exposed to physical intimate partner abuse within the recent year is smaller among persons with higher educational level than among persons with lower educational level (Figure 4, p. 78).

Intimate partner abuse has been experienced by employed as well as unemployed persons. But during the recent year, the unemployed have more frequently been exposed to intimate partner abuse, and this concerns both women and men. Besides, people living in poorer economic conditions have also been exposed to intimate partner abuse: in families which do not cope well, there have been more incidents of intimate partner abuse during the recent year (Figure 5, p. 78).

Consequently, intimate partner abuse can be traced in better or worse coping families and violence has been experienced by persons with higher as well as lower level of education. But one of the reasons why successfulness is associated with violence, may, according to experts' assessments, lie in the fact that the poor, in comparison with the rich, have considerably smaller possibilities to hide domestic violence.

Myth: alcohol is to be blamed for violence.

The analysis of family violence which reached the West Prefecture of Estonia in 2005 revealed that alcohol is an important risk factor which can also refer to the fact that violent but sober persons less frequently have to do with the police. As a result of the above analysis it came out that in more than 80% of cases the police was called when the violent person in the family was drunk, whereas in half of such cases the degree of intoxication was ascertained as severe (Pettai and Kase 2005). Experts studying the behaviour of violent persons have pointed out that violent persons themselves tend to justify their violent acts by their state of intoxication. Victims also tend to consider consumption of alcohol as the cause of violent person's behaviour.

Persons having been exposed to intimate partner abuse during the past five years admitted that in half of the cases none of the partners had consumed alcohol or narcotics during the last episode of physical violence. More frequently than in every tenth incident of violence, both partners had consumed alcohol during the last episode of violence.

63% of women who had suffered intimate partner abuse over the past five-year period noted that during the last episode of violence their partner had consumed alcohol or narcotics. 17% admitted that they themselves had consumed alcohol or narcotics when the last act of violence happened (Figure 6, p. 79).

Tracking of the experience of men indicates an absolutely contrary trend: a fifth of the men who had been exposed to intimate partner abuse over the last five years marked that their partner had consumed alcohol or narcotics when the last act of violence was perpetrated, and a third confessed that they themselves had consumed alcohol or narcotics when the last act of violence took place (Figure 6, p. 79).

Although alcohol is a risk factor which may facilitate in intimate partner abuse, experts have stressed that the only way to prevent violence is to tackle the problem of violence. A violent person bears full responsibility for the acts perpetrated by him/her and the partner cannot be blamed as the one who has provoked an abusive act.

Summary about the extent and myths of intimate partner abuse

In 2009 Statistics Estonia conducted the Safety Survey, one of the goals of which was to study occurrence of violence in intimate relationships. Data on intimate partner abuse were collected only from persons with intimate relationship experience i.e. from persons who were in intimate relationship during the conduct of the Survey or had been in intimate relationship before.

Violence should not be an inherent part of intimate relationship. However, over a year, one couple out of ten experiences intimate partner abuse and only a half of them are exposed to only mental intimate partner abuse. Inasmuch as intimate relationship involves two partners, it is natural that both partners have equally experienced it. Nevertheless, men mostly suffer minor violence, and women — more severe and repeated violence: for example, over a half of the women who had been exposed to physical intimate partner abuse had suffered more severe physical abuse — their partner had hit them with a fist, beaten, strangled, choked or burned them, attacked with a weapon or forced them into a sexual intercourse. Therefore, physical injuries resulting from physical violence are different by men and women and 80% of men who have suffered physical violence in intimate relationship over the last five years got no physical injuries during the last such episode. Thus, intimate partner abuse is spread among women as well as men. Similarly, violent acts have been perpetrated by both men and women, but considerably more women suffer violence.

Intimate partner abuse can be encountered in urban as well as rural regions, in different social layers and in both better and worse coping families. Violence has been experienced by higher and lower educated people. Intimate partner abuse has been suffered by employed and

unemployed persons, although the unemployed have to a larger extent been exposed to intimate partner abuse during the recent year.

Alcohol functions as a risk factor triggering intimate partner abuse. Women who have been exposed to intimate partner abuse have more frequently fallen victim to the violent act perpetrated by their partner who has been intoxicated by alcohol or narcotics. Men themselves have more frequently consumed alcohol or narcotics during the incident of violence. Nevertheless, the surrounding environment or other factors cannot be blamed for intimate partner abuse. A violent person bears full responsibility for the acts perpetrated by him/her and the only way to prevent violence is to tackle the problem of violence.

Three fourths of the 15–74-year-olds with intimate relationship experience is of the opinion that intimate partner abuse is so wide-spread that it can be regarded a problem of the whole Estonian society. The share of persons who held the given opinion was larger among the women who had been exposed to intimate partner abuse. But not all persons who have suffered physical injuries as a result of intimate partner abuse regard intimate partner abuse a problem of Estonian society.

Enhancement of the awareness of intimate partner abuse as a problem and a warranted system of social and legal assistance serve as prerequisites for changing the current situation. Results derived from the conducted in-depth interviews suggest that persons who have been exposed to violence think that violence is a topic which should be discussed more widely in order to facilitate a larger-scale acknowledgement of this problem, thereby one should remain impartial when talking about this problem. On the one hand, preventive knowledge can be gained this way; on the other hand, it makes people think about such a situation and, furthermore, seek assistance perhaps.

Theories on the research of intimate partner abuse

Collection and further analysis of the violence-related knowledge serve as essential preconditions for preventing violence between partners and for restricting the spread of this phenomenon. International experience indicates that assessment of the extent of intimate partner abuse is a very complicated task because the topic is of delicate nature and using of currently available administrative statistics for that purpose involves a great risk of underestimating the problem. Earlier surveys conducted in Estonia also reveal that the actual level of family violence is substantially higher than the police statistics reflect.

For decades, intimate partner abuse has been a separate topic of research which can be approached from totally different theoretical standpoints. The majority of theories focus on the treatment of violence against women and the goal of relevant surveys is to measure the extent and consequences of violence against women.

Ever more surveys are conducted with a view to measuring the extent of violence in the society and the population is interviewed in connection with that irrespective of the gender. The questions of Straus' Conflict Statistics Scale have been used to measure the extent of violence. These questions enable to measure the frequency and spread of different types of violence. The questions of this Scale are of factual nature (for example: were you beaten or hit or not?) and leave less space for perceptual replies (for example: have you suffered?). But, as the critics of this Scale have pointed out, the essence of violence cannot be analysed on the basis of such a survey due to its focus on the frequency of incidents (Brush 1990).

As the questions asked during the interview concentrate on the essence, causes and consequences of violence, respondents have more freedom to interpret violence and self-specify the exposure to violence (Schwartz 2000). In this case, it may be up to the respondent to define the incident which happened to him/her as an act of violence or not and whether he/she considers him/herself as a victim of violence or not.

In any case, questions should be formulated with extreme carefulness and one should be absolutely sure that the words used in formulating the question are targeted at purposeful measuring of the phenomenon concerned. Wording may lead to under- or overestimation, because people understand words in a different way. Therefore, multiple measurements prove to be relevant: one and the same question should be asked in different formulations. This method helps to eliminate variations in understanding the wording.

With respect to the range of interview methods, a face-to-face interview is more highly evaluated as it involves communication between the interviewer and the respondent i.e. it is possible to ask things over again, to explain and specify matters. On the other hand, violence is such a sensitive topic that a face-to-face interview may lead to untrue answers.

Telephone interviewing has become more and more popular and valued during recent years: this method is not as expensive as the face-to-face interview and a contact between the interviewer and the respondent is maintained. Telephone interviewing suits better for conducting interviews on the theme of violence as it ensures more privacy for the respondent, but on the other hand, the interviewer is not aware of the circumstances in which the respondent gives answers to questions: for example, the interviewee may be overheard by a third party and cannot therefore give true answers.

Filling in the questionnaires sent by post have been granted the lowest evaluation level first and foremost due to the fact that the questionnaire used must be extremely simple and include clear instructions so that respondents with different levels of general knowledge were able to fill it out. If the questionnaire proves not to be simple enough, the respondent may have trouble with replying and may leave some of the questions unanswered altogether.

Using of interviewers in conducting the violence-themed surveys requires prior trainings, more thorough than usual, for the interviewers involved. Furthermore, possible critical situations, usually not encountered during interviews, should be thought over. On the one hand, the safety of respondents should be ensured; and on the other hand, the safety of interviewers should also not be ignored.

Overview of the methodology applied to the section about intimate partner abuse in the Safety Survey

At the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009, Statistics Estonia conducted the Safety Survey with a goal to collect data about the actual extent of crime, sense of security of the Estonian population and abuse in partner relationships. Provisionally, the Survey was divided into two parts: the 1st part was concerned with falling victim to crime and personal sense of security, and the 2nd part focused on studying intimate partner abuse.

All permanent residents of Estonia between the ages of 15 and 74 comprised the population of the Survey. Data on intimate partner abuse were collected only from respondents with intimate relationship experience: either they were in intimate relationship during the conduct of the Survey or had been in intimate relationship earlier. Information about intimate partner abuse was collected by using the self-completed questionnaire which the respondent filled out independently preferably on the laptop computer or on paper if the respondent wished so, and a face-to-face interview was carried out only when the respondent asked for it. The conduct of the Survey followed the principle that neither the interviewer nor the interviewee should come to harm as a result of participation in the Survey. In order to ensure safety, interviews were, whenever possible, conducted in private, the theme of intimate partner abuse was not introduced in the contact letter sent to the prospective respondent's home nor in the information materials used by Statistics Estonia.

Respondents were given information booklets in Estonian or Russian which they could either keep for themselves or pass on. These booklets encouraged the victims of intimate partner abuse



to seek help and were equipped with contact details of help organisations, shelters, support groups, etc. The information booklet was given to all respondents irrespective of their answers.

The Survey questions concerning violence are similar to those of the Straus' Conflict Tactics Scale (or CTS), the use of which often results in equal frequencies of victimisation for men and women. The reason for this is that the questions do not take into consideration the causes and consequences of abuse. Women's violence against men is often a manifestation of self-defence and its consequences are also milder, therefore the experiences of men and women are different in terms of quality. This Survey by Statistics Estonia does not provide information on the causes of intimate partner abuse, but concentrates on the extent and consequences of it. The aim of the Survey is not to compare the abuse against men with that against women in intimate relationships, but to measure the extent of intimate partner abuse in Estonian society.

Summary

Intimate partner abuse is like a cyclone which sweeps through the lives of adults and children bringing along chaos and destruction: self-confidence and freedom fade away and are replaced by the feelings of fear and bitterness, humiliation and heartache, secrets and lies and often also physical injuries. Nobody should lead such a life.

Intimate partner abuse is not an unfamiliar problem in Estonian society. One of the first steps towards solving this problem is the impartial acknowledgement of it. In order to create favourable conditions for altering violent persons, the surrounding people should understand in which way violence manifests itself and where it originates from. To get rid of violence, attention should be paid to the roots of the problem. Thus, it is important to analyse intimate partner abuse and talk about the gained results in impartial terms.