

Violence Against Men in Heterosexual Couples in the Latin American Context: A Review of the Main Findings and Methodological Aspects (La Violencia hacia el Hombre en la pareja heterosexual en el contexto latinoamericano: Una revisión de principales hallazgos y aspectos metodológicos).

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Violence Against Men in Heterosexual Couples in the Latin American Context: A Review of the Main Findings and Methodological Aspects

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Violence Against Men in Heterosexual Couples in the Latin American Context: A Review of the Main Findings and Methodological Aspects

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Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a phenomenon that has been analyzed from various perspectives, among them is intimate partner violence against men. An object of study that has been given little social and academic relevance in various regions. This study aims to identify the methodological aspects and most relevant findings of IPV against men in the studies carried out in the last two decades in Latin America. Following the guidelines of the PRISMA Model, a systematic review was carried out through a search in this subject area in six databases. The total of the initial references was 426, which were subjected to analysis through a purification process where, finally, 16 articles were obtained that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The main results highlight that, recently, the scientific community in Latin America has focused mainly on male victims and made contributions that allow for questioning of the social, academic, and scientific minimization of this phenomenon. The results are discussed highlighting that social stigma is what continues to hinder the recognition of male victims as a legitimate and valid object of research.

Keywords: violence against men, intimate partner violence, male victim

La Violencia hacia el Hombre en la Pareja Heterosexual en el Contexto Latinoamericano: Una Revisión de Principales Hallazgos y Aspectos Metodológicos

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Resumen

La violencia hacia la pareja es un fenómeno que se ha analizado desde diversas perspectivas, entre ellas se encuentra la Violencia hacia el Hombre (VhH) en la pareja, objeto de estudio al que se le ha otorgado poca relevancia social y académica en diversas regiones. El presente estudio tiene como propósito identificar los aspectos metodológicos y hallazgos más relevantes de la VhH en los estudios realizados en las últimas dos décadas en Latinoamérica. Siguiendo las directrices del Modelo PRISMA, se llevó a cabo una revisión sistemática a través de una búsqueda de trabajos en seis bases de datos. Las referencias iniciales fueron 426, las cuales se sometieron a un análisis por medio de un proceso de depuración donde, finalmente, se obtuvieron 16 artículos que cumplieron con los criterios de inclusión y exclusión. Los principales resultados destacan que, recientemente, la comunidad científica en América Latina ha prestado más atención a las víctimas masculinas realizado aportes que permiten cuestionar la minimización social, académica y científica del fenómeno. Se discuten los resultados destacando que el estigma social es lo que sigue dificultando el reconocimiento de las víctimas masculinas como un objeto legítimo y válido de investigación.

Palabras clave: violencia hacia el hombre, violencia hacia la pareja, hombre víctima

The phenomenon of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and its complexity. IPV occurs between to people involved in a relationship, who cohabit or not, causing physical, sexual, or psychological harm through physical assault, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, or controlling behavior (Azam et al., 2016; Joseph-Edwards & Wallace, 2021). Most of the research carried out usually focuses on women as victims (Sánchez et al., 2021) due to the great global prevalence of their victimization (Ruiz-Pérez & Pastor-Moreno, 2021). Thus, it is necessary to include the cultural background for the analysis of its genesis (Reed et al., 2010) and specific particularities (Ferrer & Bosch, 2019).

Without detriment to the above, the belief that violence is perpetrated solely by men against women has been questioned, suggesting that both partners may be victims and perpetrators (Simon & Tsang, 2017) and, therefore, prone to suffer and commit violent behavior, where the magnitude and frequency could be similar for both members (Costa et al., 2015; Lövestad & Krantz, 2012; Muller et al., 2009); implying a bidirectionality of violence in heterosexual couples (Graña & Cuenca, 2014) and homosexuals (Frankland & Brown, 2014).

Intimate Partner Violence against Men: A Still Incipient Study in Latin America?

The study of IPV against men probably began in the mid-70s of the last century (Hines & Douglas, 2010). In that sense, current findings suggest the existence of male victims of physical violence (Allen & Bradley, 2018; Khan & Arendse, 2022) or even sexual assaults at the hands of their female partners (Hines & Douglas, 2016; Weare, 2018).

However, in Latin America the scientific production on this topic is scarce, perhaps because culture in this region is related to notorious social roles assigned to both sexes (Cevallos & Jerves, 2017).

Thus, currently the recognition and visibility of IPV against men could imply a social taboo (Allen & Bradley, 2018; Simon & Wallace, 2018). Therefore, it's not surprising recently there has been some reluctance to investigate IPV against men in heterosexual couples, perhaps due to the little social and academic relevance (Brooks et al., 2017) attributed to this phenomenon in the Latin American context.

Therefore, this study aims to review synthesizing the available information on IPV against Latin American men through two specific objectives: 1) To determine which are the most relevant methodological aspects in the study of IPV against men in heterosexual couples in the Latin American context and 2) to analyze the main findings on IPV against men derived from these studies.

Methodology

A systematic review that evaluates and synthesizes the available information from various primary investigations (Beltrán, 2005) with an exploratory scope (Manchado et al., 2009). It is pertinent to note that the lack of homogeneity in the nature and design of the included studies made it impossible to strictly follow what was suggested by the PRISMA Model (Moher et al., 2009). Particularly concerning the PICOS questions (*Participants, Interventions, Comparisons, Outcomes, and Study design*). However, the most important aspects of the model have been incorporated into this review to ensure an objective, rigorous, and systematized assessment of the evidence on IPV against men. Therefore, a search and collection of articles was carried out in six databases, using keywords and search strings related to the topic in question (see Table 1).

Table 1.
Search strategy

Data base	Search string	Field	Filter
Clarivate (WoS)	<i>Intimate partner violence AND male victim</i>	Title	Year: 2000-2021
SCOPUS	<i>Intimate partner violence AND male victims</i>	Title	None
	<i>Intimate partner violence AND male victims</i>	Complete text	Complete text
EBSCO	<i>Violence Against men AND Male victims</i>	Title/ Complete text	Complete Text, Spanish language, Year: 2000-2021
	<i>Violence against men AND male victims</i>	Title/ Complete text	Complete Text, Year: 2000-2021
	<i>Domestic violence, Domestic abuse, Intimate partner violence AND Male victims</i>	Title	Complete text, Year: 2000-2021
LA Referencia	Violencia AND hombres víctimas Hombres receptores de violencia	All	Article, Year: 2000-2021
Redalyc	Violencia hacia el hombre <i>Violence against men</i>	General search	None
Dialnet	Violencia hacia el hombre en la pareja <i>Domestic violence against men</i>	General search	Journal article

Procedure

The search was carried out in February 2021, considering some inclusion and exclusion criteria that allowed for a more rigorous selection of the studies (see Table 2).

Table 2.
Eligibility criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Type of publication	Scientific articles empirical, arbitrated and indexed	Grey literature* Theoretical and instrumental articles
Period of publication	2000-2021	Studies outside the stated period
Origen of sample	Latin American countries	Other languages
Characteristic of the sample	Latin American men and residents in the region	Studies with homosexual couples, women victims or research with more diverse objectives
Language	Spanish, English, or Portuguese	Other languages
Access to text	Complete text	Closed access and/or cost per view

Note. *= memories of conferences, theses, dissertations, scientific posters, papers, books, or book chapters, etc.

In addition, when selecting the articles, four phases were considered:

Phase 1. Collection of research in IPV in men through specific search strategies in each database.

Phase 2. Elimination of duplicated studies.

Phase 3. Application of inclusion criteria, question based.

Phase 4. Registration of 16 studies for their analysis.

Results

Of the 426 studies, only 16 were analyzed (see Figure 1) from which relevant information was extracted and reported below.

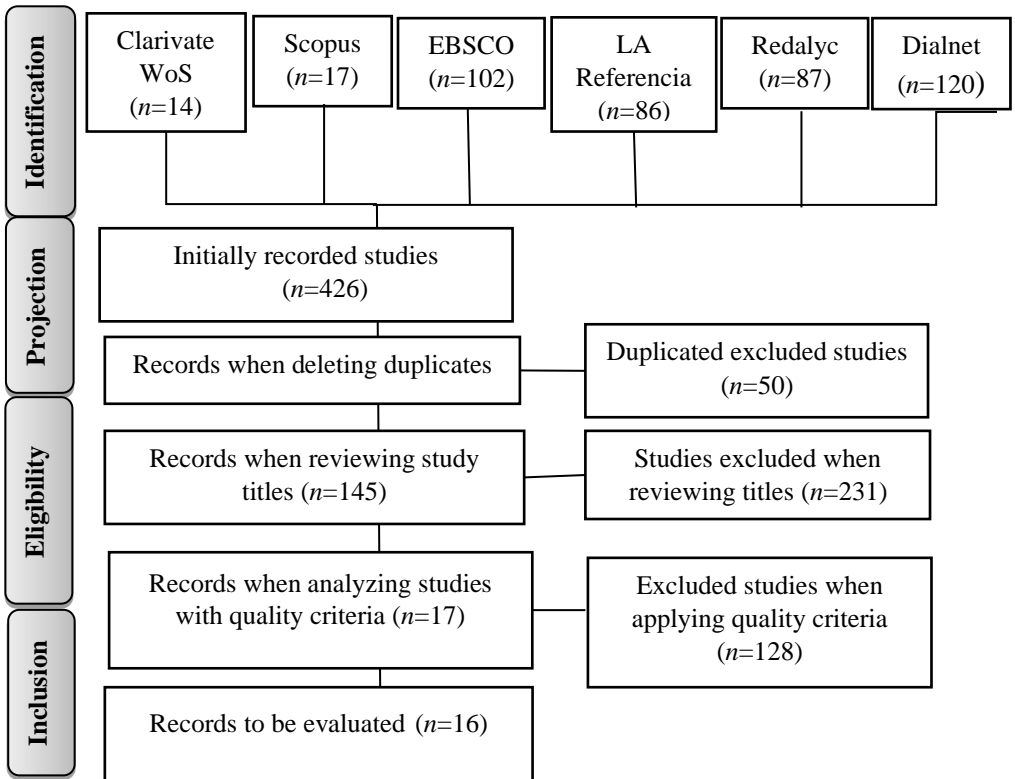


Figure 1. Flowchart according to the PRISMA model, elaborated based on Moher et al. (2009).

Design and Sample Characteristics of the Studies

Study characteristics. The most used approach was quantitative, while the design was non-experimental and cross-sectional. Therefore, the scope of most research was exploratory and descriptive.

Main sample characteristics. The research presented a greater inclusion of Mexican and Brazilian, found in ten of the sixteen papers reviewed. Moreover, it was found that the sample with the most use was community and

not representative, except for one case (see Table 3). In addition, the number of participants included in the studies ranged from 3 to 57,893 individuals, with men constituting the majority. However, three publications included samples of both sexes (Fernández & Florez, 2018; Fiestas et al., 2012; Razera et al., 2016).

Table 3.
Design and sample characteristics of the studies

Author and year	Characteristics of the studies (focus, design, and scope)	Sample characteristics	
		Origen, Type, Representativity	Elements: n, Sex, Age
Becerra et al. (2009)	Quantitative Non- Experimental <i>Ex post facto</i> Exploratory and Descriptive	Peru Community NP	n: 385 Sex: M Age: 21-40
Trujano et al. (2010)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Exploratory	Mexico Community NP	n: 100 Sex: M Age: 18-40
Fiestas et al. (2012)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Descriptive and Correlational	Peru Community Yes	n: 6399 Sex: F= 3807, M= 2592 Age: 15-70
Moral y López (2013)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Descriptive and Correlational and Causal	Mexico Community NP	n: 400 Sex: F= 223, M= 117 Age: 18-64
Pacheco y Castañeda (2013)	Qualitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Exploratory and Descriptive	Mexico Community NP	n: 8 Sex: M Age: 20-25
Rojas-Andrade et al. (2013)	Qualitative Hermeneutic Exploratory and Descriptive	Chile Clinical NP	n: 6 Sex: M Age: 24-39
González y Fernández (2014)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Exploratory	Mexico Community NP	SD
Celis-Sauce y Rojas-Solís (2015)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Descriptive and Correlational	Mexico Students NP	n: 149 Sex: M Age: 15-22
Ferreira et al. (2015)	Qualitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Exploratory	Brazil Clinical NP	n: 8 Sex: M Age: Older than 18
Razera et al. (2016)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal	Brazil Community	n: 186 couples (372 persons)

	Exploratory, Descriptive and Correlational	NP	Sex: F= 186, M= 186 Age: 19-81
Leiva y Lay-Lisboa (2017)	Qualitative Grounded Theory Exploratory and Descriptive	Chile Community NP	n: 17 Sex: F=12, M=5 Age: 20-40
Díaz <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Qualitative Hermeneutic Exploratory and Descriptive	Colombia Students NP	n: 6 Sex: M Age: 20-40
Fernández y Florez (2018)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Exploratory and Descriptive	RD-Mexico Students NP	n: 597 Sex: F=416, M=181 Age: 20-63
Rodrigues <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Descriptive and Retrospective	Brazil Clinical NP	n: 57893 Sex: M Age: 0-90
Navarro <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Qualitative Phenomenological Exploratory and Descriptive	Mexico Community NP	n: 3 Sex: M Age: 29
Rodríguez <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Quantitative Non-Experimental and Transversal Exploratory and Descriptive	Ecuador Community NP	n: 70 Sex: M Age: 18-64

Note. n=Total sample, NP=Not Present, M=Male, F=Female, ND=No Data, DR= Dominican Republic.

Instruments and Data Analysis

Evaluation of the phenomenon. It is highlighted that a large part of the studies used interviews and *ad hoc* questionnaires (See Table 4). While four studies considered non-specific instruments to evaluate IPV in men, such as *The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale* (CTS2), the Modified version of *The Conflicts Tactics Scale* (M-CTS), the Historical-Sociocultural Premises questionnaire, or the Self-Esteem Test, as well as *The Golombok Rust Inventory of Marital State* (GRIMS).

Data collection. It was observed that most of the studies carried out data collection *offline* (face-to-face) through in-person surveys or interviews, while only one study used the *online* (virtual) modality. Most data were primary and only three papers used secondary data from organizations.

Table 4.
Instruments and data collection.

Author	Instrument / Authorship	Data collection	
		Type/ Source	Type of data
Becerra <i>et al.</i> (2009)	Questionnaire / Becerra <i>et al.</i> , 2009	Offline / ND	Primary
Trujano <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Domestic violence: Frequency and perception (VIDOFyP) / Trujano y Mendoza, 2003	Offline / PS	Primary
Fiestas <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Questionnaire ACTIVA / Fournier <i>et al.</i> , 1999	Offline / PS	Secondary
Moral y López (2013)	Historical-Sociocultural Premises Questionnaire / Díaz-Guerrero, 2003 Questionnaire of Intimate Partner Violence / Vargas, 2008	Offline / PS	Primary
Pacheco y Castañeda (2013)	Systematic observation, semi-structured interview Self-esteem test / Rosenberg, 1965	Offline / PS	Primary
Rojas-Andrade <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Visual technique and an interview	Offline / ND	Primary
González y Fernández (2014)	The Adolescent Reproductive Health Survey, 2006	Offline / DB	Secondary
Celis-Sauce y Rojas-Solís (2015)	<i>Conflicts Tactics Scale</i> (M-CTS) / Muñoz-Rivas <i>et al.</i> , 2007 4 items-sexual assault / Fuertes, 2005 4 items-cyber-violence	Online / OS	Primary
Ferreira <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Structured questionnaire and individual interview	Offline / PS	Primary
Razera <i>et al.</i> (2016)	<i>Golombok Rust Inventory of Marital State - GRIMS</i> / Rust <i>et al.</i> , 1986 <i>Revised Conflict Tactics Scales - CTS2</i> / Straus <i>et al.</i> , 1996	Offline / PS	Primary
Leiva y Lay-Lisboa (2017)	Semi-structured individual interview	Offline / ND	Primary
Díaz <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Semi-structured interview	Offline / PI	Primary
Fernández y Florez (2018)	Questionnaire / Fernández de Juan <i>et al.</i> , 2016	Offline / PS	Primary
Rodrigues <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Data from the Health Department's information system for surveillance of violence and accidents (SIVVA), 2008-2015	Offline / DB	Secondary
Navarro <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Semi-structured interview	Offline / PI	Primary
Rodríguez <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Report of complaints Department of Violence	Offline / DB	Secondary

Note. ND=No Data, PS=Paper Survey, OS=Online Survey, PI= Paper Interview, DB=Database.

Ethical Aspects

The indispensable. Confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and informed consent are among the ethical aspects considered indispensable in psychological research. Furthermore, most evaluated articles included half of them. However, the studies of Trujano et al. (2010), Leiva y Lay-Lisboa (2017), and Moral et al. (2013) stand out for fulfilling all four aspects.

The Ethics Committee and Ethical/Legal Framework. Only two papers have reported both aspects (Razera et al., 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2018). While two more only included the approval of an ethics committee in their report (Ferreira et al., 2015; Leiva & Lay-Lisboa, 2017), and only three indicated ethical/legal framework (Celis-Sauce & Rojas-Solís, 2015; Fiestas et al., 2012; Moral & López, 2013).

Psychological support. Surprisingly, psychological support for participants was found to be the least reported element of the research.

Brief explanatory. It is possible that several of the papers reviewed are not so much about non-compliance with ethical criteria, but rather about the absence of their mention. Their implications are analyzed in their discussion (see Table 5).

Main Findings

Prevalence. The frequency of perpetration or victimization of intimate partner violence is usually similar between men and women, suggesting its possible bidirectional character (Hernández, 2015). Furthermore, the results present that not only does violence against men exist, but it seems to have shown a slight increase in recent years, thus implying the relevance of its study.

Social stigma. The common findings converge on two points:

1) The invisibility of IPV against men influenced by traditional gender roles and cultural patterns, which in turn contribute themselves to minimizing and concealing violent episodes (Díaz et al., 2018; Leiva & Lay-Lisboa, 2017; Navarro et al., 2019; Trujano et al., 2010).

2) Since it is a socially ignored phenomenon, it is ridiculed and perhaps deemed unimportant.

Table 5.

Main Ethical aspects of the procedure

Authorship and year	Ethical aspects						
	CON	AN	VP	IC	AEC	E/LF	PSIC
Becerra <i>et al.</i> (2009)	ND	ND	ND	ND	-	-	-
Trujano <i>et al.</i> (2010)	√	√	√	√	ND	ND	-
Fiestas <i>et al.</i> (2012)	ND	ND	√	√	ND	√	-
Moral y López (2013)	√	√	√	√	-	√	-
Pacheco y Castañeda (2013)	ND	ND	ND	ND	-	-	-
Rojas-Andrade <i>et al.</i> (2013)	√	ND	ND	√	-	-	-
González y Fernández (2014)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Celis-Sauce y Rojas-Solís (2015)	√	√	√	-	-	√	-
Ferreira <i>et al.</i> (2015)	ND	ND	√	√	√	ND	√
Razera <i>et al.</i> (2016)	√	√	ND	√	√	√	-
Leiva y Lay-Lisboa (2017)	√	√	√	√	√	-	-
Díaz <i>et al.</i> (2018)	ND	ND	√	ND	-	-	-
Fernández y Florez (2018)	√	√	√	ND	-	-	-
Rodrigues <i>et al.</i> (2018)	-	-	-	-	√	√	-
Navarro <i>et al.</i> (2019)	ND	ND	ND	√	-	-	-
Rodríguez <i>et al.</i> (2019)	√	-	√	-	-	-	-

Note. √=Yes, -=No, ND= No Data, CON=Confidentiality, AN=Anonymity, VP=Voluntary participation, IC=Informed consent, AEC= Approval of the Ethics Committee, E/LF= Ethical/Legal Framework, PSIC=Psychological support.

It is still considered a taboo subject and because of the minimization of violence perpetrated by women (Moral & López, 2013; Rodrigues et al., 2018; Rodríguez et al., 2019; Rojas-Andrade et al., 2013).

The man as a victim. Three situations can arise: 1) The difficulty of admitting vulnerability to violence even justifying it as normal behavior when in disagreement with your partner (Becerra et al. 2009; Celis-Sauce & Rojas-Solís, 2015; Ferreira et al., 2015; Pacheco & Castañeda, 2013; Trujano et al., 2010). 2) The social aspects that permeate in the male victims to hide the situation and not bring their masculinity to be questioned (Navarro et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2018), generating guilt for experiencing violence or the feeling of undervaluation for not being able to assume the role of the provider (Fernández & Florez; 2018; Rojas-Andrade et al., 2013). 3) Feelings of loneliness, suffering, shame, and low self-esteem are among the main consequences of suffering violence (Leiva & Lay-Lisboa, 2017; Rodríguez et al., 2019).

The lack of complaints. There are few or no support networks or public policies for the inclusion of the needs of male victims of violence (Fiestas et al., 2012; Rojas-Andrade et al., 2013). Furthermore, there are individual and social factors that hinder the complaint process. The aforementioned refers to men not valuing violent acts as such for fear of ridicule from authorities or that their children will suffer the consequences, as well as fear of shame and being alone (Becerra et al., 2009; Moral & López, 2013; Leiva & Lay-Lisboa, 2017). The latter implicate ideological and cultural barriers in the male role (Díaz et al., 2018; González & Fernández, 2014).

Support services. Men do not usually look for formal sources of support (Navarro et al., 2019), but those who do dare to rely on trusted friends and family (Ferreira et al., 2015; Navarro et al., 2019). As for support services, these do not usually have trained personnel (Rodríguez et al., 2019), perhaps due to the lack of development of a gender perspective. There is yet to be consolidation in the development of gender perspective, where both members of the couple are included in the face of violence in a more complete and inclusive way.

Table 6.
Main findings of the studies

Authorship	Prevalence/ Presence	Main finding		
		The social stigma	The male victim	Complaints and services
Becerra <i>et al.</i> (2009)	71% of men have suffered some form of violence	-	Perceives violent behaviors as normal	It is not reported out of shame, fear that children will suffer the consequences, fear of being left alone
Trujano <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Infrequent violent episodes and a low perception of these	Minimizes violent episodes	Violence as a personal conflict or a simple disagreement	More and more men dare to speak out, but continue they are denied support services
Fiestas <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Men and women are similarly likely to be victims of violence	-	-	Studying both roles will help understand the problem and improve cost-effective actions
Moral y López (2013)	Violence exerted: similar score in both sexes. Violence received: high averages in men	Society appears to be sensitive to male violence, but tolerates, ignores, and devalues female violence	-	Victims underestimate violent acts, so they do not report them
Pacheco y Castañeda (2013)	Qualitative studies where men present greater psychological violence	Violence is justified as part of the relationship dynamic	Difficulty identifying the violence received; does not recognize himself as a victim	NS
Rojas-Andrade <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Qualitative study where violence is used as a corrective form that women use to mold men according to their expectations	IPV against men is not considered as such, it is ridiculed and therefore not a public priority	He tries to hide the situation of violence, blames himself, and his questions his masculinity	Little or no support network, or public policies that integrate or promote the participation of men
González y Fernández (2014)	47.6% of men admit to having been a victim of some type	-	-	Ideological and cultural barriers limit complaints, institutions that

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	of intimate partner violence			consider the needs of male victims are needed
Celis-Sauce y Rojas-Solís (2015)	The frequencies of perpetration and experience were low	-	Difficulty recognizing and accepting domestic violence by your partner	NS
Ferreira <i>et al.</i> , 2015	Qualitative study indicating that there is intimate partner violence directed against men	-	Social and individual difficulty accepting oneself as a victim and agreeing to talk about it	The authorities often mock men, so they resort to the help of friends
Razera <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Psychological aggression: exerted by 25.9% of women and 16.1% of men. Mild physicality: 25.8% of men and 21.8% of women	-	-	NS
Leiva y Lay-Lisboa (2017)	Qualitative Study that points to the need to address IPV against men as an existing social problem	or	Feelings of loneliness, suffering, shame, poor self-esteem, inhibition, propensity for humiliation or fear when making decisions, becomes silent and suffers in silence	They do not report because of the fear of the psychological damage that authorities can cause
Díaz <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Qualitative study, men cannot manifest themselves as victims of violence		The non-visibility of IPV against men has a high relationship with cultural patterns	Clings to an idea of an ideal couple and ends up involved in violent couple situations
Fernández y Florez (2018)	There is a high degree of intimate partner violence and there are no significant differences between sexes	-		Feelings of being undervalued by your female partner, specifically when you are not taking on the role of provider
Rodrigues <i>et al.</i> (2018)	The number of notifications of IPV against men ignored		Minimizes their socially abuse and tries to avoid social stigma	They do not seek help due to social obstacles, lack of

	increased significantly from 2008 to 2014		support, and precariousness of support services
Navarro <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Qualitative study, IPV in all forms affects both members	Victims remain hidden and lonely due to traditional gender roles	Keeps silent to avoid being singled out or exposing their manhood Few support services, so they turn to family and friends as safe spaces for help
Rodriguez <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Between 2018-2019 reports of physical violence decreased to 17% and psychological violence increased to 15%	IPV against men is still a taboo subject	Low self-esteem, blames himself for what happens in the relationship and feels he deserves what happens to him, plus out of love he is willing to sacrifice himself for his female partner There are no specialized places with trained personnel to offer them help; when reporting abuse, they are mocked

Note. —= Absence of information, NS=Not specified

Discussion

Regarding the first objective of this research on methodological aspects, the use of the quantitative research approach stands out, something similar to that reported by Perryman and Appleton (2016), in this study 17 of the 19 papers included in their review used this type of approach contrasting with Herculano et al. (2020) who found studies with a mostly qualitative approach.

Concerning the research designs, the non-experimental research should be noted because no article reported causality between variables. A situation to be expected since in the study of violence the manipulation of variables can be difficult a factor for ethical reasons. Likewise, these are transversal studies with exploratory and descriptive scopes, congruent with the incipient character of the empirical corpus on this problem.

The results of the sample indicated greater use of community samples, meaning the absence of clinical samples could be explained by the lack of help services aimed at men. The evidence suggests that a large part of them focus their attention on female victims or even direct themselves to men in their role as the perpetrator, making it difficult to obtain information on male victims from this field (Barkhuizen, 2015; Cheung et al., 2009). Another notable

aspect is the non-representativeness of the samples added to the use of non-probabilistic samples that compromise the external validity of the results. Therefore, they're impacting their reproducibility although, it is necessary to note that complying with these sampling characteristics is difficult even in female victims of intimate partner violence.

Regarding the instruments, frequent use of questionnaires and ad hoc interviews was reported. These were elaborated to adapt to the situation and context of the studies (Anguera-Argilaga et al., 2007). It should be noted that the interpretation of the data obtained by these means should be carried out with caution in the absence of data and psychometric properties (López-Cepero et al., 2014). This situation has been highlighted in Latin American research (Domínguez-Lara & Soto-Merino, 2015). As for the scales reported by some studies, CTS2 and the modified version of M-CTS stand out as tools commonly used in research on intimate partner violence, something that coincides with previous studies (Perryman & Appleton, 2016).

In data collection, most of the studies analyzed opted for the offline (face-to-face) modality, perhaps because of the advantage of doing research with populations that do not have internet access (Abundis, 2016). However, online (virtual) collection reduces costs and probably has access to a larger population spectrum. In addition, recent studies suggest that the use of electronic tools for research is here to stay (Álvarez et al., 2017) even more so if one considers the recent confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the ethical aspects, the anonymity or confidentiality of the data provided by the participants was not mentioned in all studies this may be because in many of the studies the former is confused with confidentiality; interrelated concepts that are not the same (Meo, 2010). Furthermore, the inclusion of informed consent in studies was infrequently pointed out, something that could be considered worrying since it is a requirement specified in several codes of ethics (Richaud, 2007). There is also the mention of the absence of approval of the ethics committee for a large part of the investigations. This is not trivial since it is a regulatory entity in charge of the observation of laws that protect the dignity and integrity of the participants (Chávez et al., 2014; Gutiérrez & Contreras, 2016). Another important aspect, also due to its absence, is Psychological Support which is highlighted in documents such as the Declaration of Helsinki (AMM, 2000).

As for the second objective, it is highlighted that IPV against men exists so, although the prevalence seems not yet to be very clear or cogent in figures, this phenomenon is more common than it seems. Thus, it has been possible to identify some elements of incidents, context, and even consequences in male victims of violence (Bates et al., 2019; Big-Alabo & Itelimo, 2022; Hines & Douglas, 2016; Joseph-Edwards & Wallace, 2021; Kumar, 2012; Mills et al., 2006; Nybergh et al., 2016).

Social stigma contributes to the fact that the cases of male victims do not come to light in the public or academic sphere. Paradoxically for these men, traditional gender roles and hegemonic masculinity would hinder their acceptance as victims (González, 2016; Tsiko, 2016). In addition to the recognition of IPV against men as a taboo subject (Rodríguez et al., 2019; Tsui et al., 2010) contributes to the minimization or concealment of violence and the consequent defenselessness of men immersed in a situation of violence.

The continuation of thinking of men as perpetrators and women as victims contributes to the displacement of male victims and the questioning of their masculinity (Eckstein, 2010; Oluwole, 2017). Perhaps this is the reason the male victim himself does not usually recognize himself as such, minimizing and normalizing the situation they are living (Muller et al., 2009). While also coming to justify each violent act of his partner as a symbol of love and affection towards them. In this way traditional gender roles would influence the recognition of their situation, they would first question their masculinity before recognizing it as violence (Schongut, 2012). The man victim of violence usually presents feelings of loneliness, suffering, shame, and low self-esteem (Dienye & Gbeneol, 2009; Flinck et al., 2008; Rodríguez et al., 2019).

A particularly controversial issue is that of the reporting of violence since they are usually minimal since men doubt, are hostile, or reluctant to denounce their situation, mainly because their masculinity is compromised according to the internal and external social barriers of each man (Hoff, 2012; Kumar, 2012; Rusell et al., 2017). Secondly, it highlights the response of authorities to the cases of male victims where, for example, the police do not take the cases seriously and often mock men, thus contributing to their revictimization (Drijber et al., 2013; Lysova et al., 2020).

On the other hand, support services are mainly aimed at women and consequently support for men is almost zero (Godfrey, 2016; Lysova et al., 2022). Given this panorama they would not seek professional help but rather would go to their close support networks, that is, family and friends (Navarro et al., 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2019). Headlining the importance of the development of services that are accessible and adapted to the physical and emotional needs of men (McCarrick et al., 2016).

Conclusions

Limitations found in the study that are important to consider:

- 1) Heterogeneity in the nature and design of the studies included in this review made it difficult to strictly follow the PRISMA Model 2009.
- 2) The use of only six databases, which probably excluded other equally interesting studies
- 3) The rigor of the inclusion criteria that did not consider grey literature or studies in other languages that have addressed the subject.
- 4) The exclusion of closed access articles results that would undoubtedly have been important to review.
- 5) Lastly, the use of various keywords and search strings in Spanish in the search strategy, which is a limitation for the replication of the study. Though it is an interesting finding if it considers that the lack of homogeneity in the name of the phenomenon contributes to hindering its recognition as a valid object of study and therefore obscures its understanding.

Despite the above, it is necessary to emphasize the strength in the study that this Systematic Review presents as this study aims to synthesize the state of knowledge of IPV against men a phenomenon that despite the efforts made, so far continues to lack social relevance (Floyd-Aristizábal et al., 2016). There are still many edges to be addressed so future research or reviews could include gray literature where perhaps interesting data that allows the visualization of the state of IPV against men is found. In addition to this, there are lines of research in the process of strengthening such as, women in their role as perpetrators (Aguilera et al., 2015; Galindo et al., 2021). Something very enriching from the perspective of the bidirectionality of intimate partner violence that would pave the way for IPV against men as a valid object of study.

On a methodological level, the studies analyzed aim to explore and describe the phenomenon. However, it is necessary to address IPV against men from approaches with explanatory scopes (Díaz-Narváez & Calzadilla, 2016). Headlining the importance of using and designing scales adapted and duly validated for the population of male victims of violence (Marshall, 1992), which would lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon even more so when it comes to preventing and intervening in this still invisible problem.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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