

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN A BLACK RURAL  
COMMUNITY.**

**GUIDELINES FOR A SOCIAL WORK  
PREVENTION PROGRAMME**

**K S LENTSWE**

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Supervisor: Dr C C Wessels  
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## OPSOMMING

### **Sleutelterme: Gesinsgeweld, swart landelike gemeenskap, voorkoming**

In Suid-Afrika, veral in die swart gemeenskappe, begin gesinsgeweld 'n al hoe probleem te word. Die persone wat die swaarste getref word is vroue en kinders. In die plattelandse gemeenskappe word gesinsgeweld dikwels geïgnoreer en ontken. Hierdie vroue word meer blootgestel aangesien hulle geografies en sosiaal geïsoleer is en daar nie regtig hulpbronne tot hulle beskikking is nie. Verskillende faktore gee aanleiding tot gesinsgeweld. Soos onder andere armoede, werkloosheid, gesinsstrukture, ongeletterdheid, kulturele oortuigings, godsdiens, swak identifikasie figure en 'n tekort aan huweliksbegeleiding.

Die ondersoek is onderneem met swart vroue in 'n plattelandse gemeenskap. Die doel van die ondersoek was om vas te stel wat die oorsake en gevolge van gesinsgeweld in 'n plattelandse gemeenskap is en daarvolgens riglyne saam te stel vir 'n maatskaplikewerk voorkomingsprogram. In die empiriese ondersoek is van 'n vraelys gebruik gemaak en daar is gefokus op die oorsake van gesinsgeweld in 'n plattelandse gemeenskap waar daar geen hulpbronne en maatskaplike dienste beskikbaar is nie. Die navorsing was van 'n kwalitatiewe sowel as 'n kwantitatiewe aard.

Die hoof bevinding wat gemaak is is dat gesinsgeweld die daaglikse lewe van talle vroue affekteer en dat dit gewoonlik die mans is wat saam met hierdie vroue woon wat gewelddadig teenoor hulle optree. Daar is ook bevind dat alhoewel die geweld nie teenoor die kinders gemik is nie is hulle dikwels toeskouers daarvan. Die vroue het aangedui dat hulle graag in die verhouding sou wou aanbly. Om dit te kan doen het hulle egter die ondersteuning van hulle familie en die netwerke in die gemeenskap nodig.

Vanuit die bevindinge is riglyne vir 'n maatskaplikewerk voorkomingsprogram ontwikkel.

## **SUMMARY**

### **Key concepts: Domestic violence, Black rural community, Prevention**

Domestic violence in South Africa, especially in the black community, is an alarming problem. The main victims of violence are women and children. In rural communities the risk of domestic violence is a reality that is easily hidden and forgotten. These women are more vulnerable because of the geographic and social isolation, concerns about confidentiality in small communities, and limited service options. There are different causes of domestic violence, like poverty, unemployment, societal trends on family structure, illiteracy, cultural beliefs, religion, lack of correct facts, poor examples of marital life and a lack of marital guidance.

This research was conducted among black women. The aim was to investigate the causes, incidence and consequences of domestic violence in a rural community and to formulate guidelines for a social work preventative program for domestic violence in a rural community. An empirical study using a questionnaire that focused on the causes of domestic violence in a rural community where there are no resources and social work services available has been done. The research was of a quantitative and qualitative nature.

The gist of the findings is that domestic violence is a cross cutting issue that affects the daily life of many women and is usually directed at women by the men with whom they live. The findings show that even if the abuse is not directed to the children they witness the abuse on their mothers. Women want to maintain their relationship but they need support from families and support systems from the community.

Guidelines for a social work prevention programme are developed from the findings.

## **FOREWORD**

This manuscript is submitted in article format in accordance with Regulation A.11.2.5 for the degree MA (SW). The article will comply with the requirements of one of the journals for Social Work, entitled *Die Maatskaplike Werk Navorsers-Praktisyn / The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher*.

Guidelines for authors, as set by this journal, follow.



## INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

*The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher* is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to the publication of research concerning the methods and practice of helping individuals, families, small groups, organisations and communities. The practice of professional helping is broadly interpreted to refer to the application of intentionally designed intervention programmes and processes to problems of societal and/or interpersonal importance, inclusive of the implementation and evaluation of social policies.

The journal serves as an outlet for the publication of original reports of quantitatively orientated evaluation studies: Reports on the development of validation of new methods of assessment for use in practice: empirically based reviews of the practice literature that provide direct application to practice; theoretical or conceptual papers that have direct relevance to practice; qualitative inquiries that inform practice and new developments in the field of organised research. All empirical research articles must conform to accepted standards of scientific inquiry and meet relevant expectations related to validity or credibility, reliability or dependability and objectivity or confirmability.

All reviews will be conducted using blind peer-review procedures. Authors can expect an editorial decision within three months of submission. Manuscripts and an abstract should be submitted in triplicate to **The Editor, The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher**, PO Box 524, Auckland Park, 2006. Articles should be typewritten and double-spaced, with tables and figures on separate pages. Manuscripts should follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 4th edition. Abstracts are compulsory.

A copy of the final revised manuscript saved on an IBM-compatible disk and formatted in MS Word format should be included with the final revised hard copy, or e-mailed to [wam@w.rau.ac.za](mailto:wam@w.rau.ac.za). Authors submitting manuscripts to the journal should not simultaneously submit them to another journal, nor should manuscripts have been published elsewhere in substantially similar form or with substantially similar content. A publication fee is payable by authors before publication.

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**KS Lentswe and CC Wessels  
School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences  
North-West University  
(Potchefstroom Campus)  
Potchefstroom 2520**

**Correspondence to:  
Dr CC Wessels  
School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences  
Subject group Social Work  
North-West University  
Private Bag X6011  
Potchefstroom  
2520**

E-mail address: [mwkccw@puknet.puk.ac.za](mailto:mwkccw@puknet.puk.ac.za)

## CHAPTER 1

### ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Domestic violence in South-Africa, especially in the black community, is an alarming problem. According to Padayachee and Singh (1998a:5), the main victims of violence and human rights violation in South Africa are women and children. Over the past 25 years increasing numbers of health and social care professionals had to deal with victims of family violence and abuse, victims of all ages across the life-course (Kinston & Penhale, 1995:1).

According to Buzawa and Buzawa (1990:17), Levingson (1989:41–42), Padayachee and Singh (1998a:31), there are different causes of domestic violence. Some of the reasons being poverty and/or unemployment, societal trends on family structure, illiteracy, cultural beliefs, religion, lack of correct facts, poor examples of marital life and lack of marital guidance. The consequences of these violations are increasingly being recognized in the international community as a pervasive social illness with significant costs. While domestic violence imposes costs on the millions of women who are the victims of abuse, it is also a drain on societal resources such as employers, victims' children, the health care system, insurance companies and the juridical system (Park *et al.*, 2000:178-179).

Domestic violence causes major physical, emotional as well as practical upheaval in any victim's life. Lamphear (1985:6) has shown that children with backgrounds of family violence have a significantly higher incidence of behavioural problems and diminished social competency skills when compared to those with no history of family violence problems. In many instances victims of

violence do not report the crime to the police or other agencies. One survey suggests that three out of every ten women have been injured by their partners during their lifetime, while only one in five of those women reported those assaults to the police (Mooney, 1993:122).

It is important that something should be done to prevent the incidences of domestic violence. Presently in the black community, it seems that little is done with regard to prevention of domestic violence. It is vital for the multi-disciplinary team, social workers, police and justice personnel to come together and formulate preventative programmes. In this regard the social workers can play an important role through both group work and community work.

The specific research questions therefore were:

- What are the causes, incidence and consequences of domestic violence in a rural community?
- Which guidelines can be formulated for a social work preventative programme, with regard to domestic violence in a rural community?

## **1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The aims of the research were:

- To investigate the causes, incidence and consequences of domestic violence in a rural community through a literature study and an empirical research.
- To formulate guidelines for a social work preventative programme for domestic violence in a rural community.

### **1.3 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT**

An investigation of the causes, incidence and consequences of domestic violence in a rural community will give social workers an understanding of domestic violence in a black rural community. It would also make it possible for social workers to develop guidelines for prevention programmes.

### **1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The method of investigation was a literature study and an empirical research.

#### **1.4.1 LITERATURE STUDY**

A literature study or review was conducted with a view to all aspects of the study. South African literature was important to be used in this research because of the nature and causes of domestic violence in the rural communities in South Africa. Furthermore, international books and articles were used for accurate information and findings. The topics that were covered include domestic violence, poverty, psychosocial skills and communication skills.

Data-bases consulted: South African journals, Social sciences index, ERIC, EBSCO Host Web.

#### **1.4.2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

##### **Design**

The exploratory design (Grinnell, 1983:118; Strydom, 2000:77) was used to investigate the problem and causes of domestic violence in a rural community.

## **Procedure**

The survey procedure was used. According to Netting, Kettner and McMurty (1993:263) "surveys can be used to collect data on facts about individuals separately and in organizations and communities, as well as data on their behaviours and unobservable variables such as attitudes, beliefs, feelings and ethical standards". The questionnaire focused on the causes of domestic violence in a rural community where no resources and facilities or social work services are available. The research was of a quantitative and qualitative nature.

## **Participants**

Women from a rural community in Ganyesa village between the ages of thirty and forty years were used as a sample for the research purpose. A non-probability sampling technique was used and specifically the convenience sample (Grinnell, 1993:162; Strydom, 2000:69). Eventually, 20 women participated. All were already registered at the Department of Social Development.

## **Data Collection**

In accordance with Neuman's method (1997:30), the gathering of data for the research is divided into two categories, namely qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative questions in this research were mostly open-ended. This was done to allow respondents to express their views on the issues being investigated. For the purpose of the research a self-formulated questionnaire was used. The questionnaire included both qualitative and quantitative questions. The questionnaire was pre-tested to eliminate potential problems. The questionnaire focused on the causes, incidence and consequences of domestic violence in a rural community where no resources and facilities are available.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical aspects were adhered to means of the following (De Vos *et al.* (1998:23-25):

- The participants were invited to participate, the general aim and procedures of the study were explained and participants' voluntary consent was sought.
- To ensure ethical aspects, the completion of the questionnaire was done anonymously and the individual was not disclosed. Information was dealt with in a confidential manner.
- Participants were afforded the opportunity to debrief by venting their problems.

## **Data Analysis**

The quantitative data were analysed by the researcher. The qualitative data were analysed in terms of categories.

### **1.5 DESCRIPTION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

**Domestic violence:** According to the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, (Padayachee and Singh, 1998b:2) domestic violence is defined as: "physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional, verbal and psychological abuse; economic abuse; intimidation; harassment; stalking; damage to property; entry into the complainant's residence without consent where the parties do not share the residence; or any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards a complainant, where such conduct harms, or may cause imminent harm to the safety, health or well-being of the complainant".

**Black rural community:** According to the researcher, a black rural community in South Africa is a dark skinned race of people who find themselves in an

environmentally, socially, and economically more vulnerable position than their white counterparts and have to compete for scarce resources.

**Prevention:** According to the New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:46) prevention is a process aimed at minimising and eliminating the impact of conditions that may lead to social malfunctioning.

## **1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT**

The research comprises of the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1: Orientation to the study.

CHAPTER 2: The consequences and incidences of domestic violence in a rural community.

CHAPTER 3: Guidelines for a social work preventative programme for domestic violence in a rural community.

CHAPTER 4: Conclusions and recommendations.

Chapters 2 and 3 are written in article format. The author guidelines of *The Social work Practitioner-Researcher* were adhered to, except for the following deviations for purposes of this research report:

- Headings are numbered.
- The report is typed in 1½ spacing.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE CONSEQUENCES AND INCIDENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN A BLACK RURAL COMMUNITY

KS Lentswe is an MA(SW) student at the School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences (Social Work) at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

CC Wessels is a senior lecturer at the same university.

#### ABSTRACT

*This article reports on the consequences and incidences of domestic violence in a black rural community. The design of the study was of an exploratory nature and was conducted with 20 Black women. The questionnaire was used because anonymity could be maintained and the respondents could be more open in their responses. The results of the research indicated that violence against women is a major social problem that requires well-informed, empirically grounded policy and practice responses. It is also important that effort should be made by civil servant to speedily resolve domestic violence cases, otherwise victims of domestic violence will lose confidence in the system that is currently in place to help them.*

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence in South Africa, especially in the black community, is not only an alarming but also huge problem behind closed doors. Violence towards women by an intimate partner is a social problem of enormous proportions (Vincent & Jouriles, 2000:7). "In South Africa, violence against women and children is widespread and on the increase" (Van der Hoven, 2001:13).

According to Padayachee and Singh (1998a:5), the main victims of violence and human rights violation in South Africa are women and children. Over the past 25 years increasing numbers of health and social care professionals have had to deal with victims of family violence and abuse, victims from all ages across the life-course (Kinston & Penhale, 1995:1).

Various manifestations of violence in this country have been influenced by its social, cultural and political history, by colonization and apartheid, and by resultant race, class and gender divisions. Due to effects of urbanisation and codification of customary laws, men's traditional authority and patriarchy have been challenged. According to upsets in traditional gender, norms can result in violence as some men attempt to hold on to their male identities and to their power. Violence is seen as a legitimate means of conflict resolution (Park *et al.*, 2000:56).

According to Van der Waal in Park, *et al.* (2000:13), social hierarchies that privilege traditional authorities of men over women still remain fairly intact in rural areas. Within this context, violence is used to keep the patriarchal social hierarchy in place as well as to compete for scarce resources.

According to Bent-Goodley (2004:307), domestic violence undermines healthy African American families and communities. Several studies have found that, although domestic violence cuts across race, socioeconomic status, education, and income distinctions, it "...has been estimated that African Americans experience a disproportionate amount of domestic violence compared to white Americans." (Hampton & Gelles, 1994:116.) However, though violence against both black and white women have been persistent problems throughout South African history, black women have found themselves in environmentally, socially and economically more vulnerable positions than their white counterparts.



















































































































































