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# INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES IN CASTILLA-LA MANCHA (SPAIN)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES

## IN CASTILLA-LA MANCHA (SPAIN)

Intimate partner and family violence is a widespread social problem affecting all countries. European data show that 22% of women have suffered physical or sexual violence during their lifetime. In Spain, after the implementation of the Organic Law 1/2004 of Integral Protection Measures against Gender Violence, significant progress has been made to improve victims' social and health care and their protection. Nevertheless, there are still several high-risk cases of violence where victims have been killed by their current or former partners. Recently, the Ministry of Interior has created a National Team for reviewing and studying each femicide case committed in Spain. This project aims to reach a deeper understanding of the intimate partner homicides in order to give policy recommendations to reduce the femicide rate.

The present study is included in this national project conducted by the Ministry of Interior and has been funded by the Instituto de la Mujer de Castilla-La Mancha, to provide a revision of completed and non-completed homicides of women perpetrated by their current and ex-partners in the region of Castilla-La Mancha, between 2010 and 2017.

### KEY FINDINGS

First of all, Castilla-La Mancha has a similar intimate partner homicide prevalence to the rest of the country.

#### 1. Profile of the victims:

- The majority of the victims (N=18) are Spanish (67%), with a mean age of 37 years.
- With a few exceptions, they have not completed any education level or they have only completed Primary School.
- 4 out of 10 were employed at the moment of the homicide and half of them had sufficient income to live. The other half depended on a public subsidy or their partner's income.
- More than half of them had children with the current perpetrator or another partner.
- 30% have already initiated a divorce in spite of their partner's opposition.
- 22% of the victims suffered violence from a previous partner. This means that they have not yet recovered from a previous violent situation, upon entering themselves into another one.

## 2. Profile of the offenders:

- 78% of the murderers were Spanish, with a mean age of 44 years.
- With a few exceptions, they have not completed any education level or they have only completed Primary School.
- Only 2 out of 10 were unemployed at the time of the homicide.
- In 28% of the cases a mental illness was present. This should be furthered studied with relation to the end of the relationship and the suicide of perpetrators after the crime (44% of cases).
- The economic situation of the perpetrator is better than that of the victim, with a higher level of employment and personal income.

## 3. Partner relationship and previous violence

- Psychological and economic violence was conducted in 60% of cases and physical violence was present in 30% of cases (information from police reports).
- In spite of the existing violence, just 20% of the cases had a police report made by the victim and in just one case a restriction order was imposed on the perpetrator.
- Even if in some cases the family and relatives were perfectly aware of the violent situation, no police report was initiated against the perpetrators.
- Regarding the risk factors facilitating the lethal aggression, in 30% of the cases a divorce was initiated and in 16% of the cases alcohol abuse was also present.

## 4. Recommendations

- It is highly recommended to encourage victims to report cases of physical violence to the police. All cases of homicide have been preceded by violent episodes.
- The most prevalent service where victims are assisted is in the primary health care setting. Nevertheless, after the first assistance no derivation was conducted to the police. It is highly recommended to increase medical staff awareness in order to increase early detection of cases.
- Coordination should be promoted among health services, police and social services in order to create a common database where all services can access and share pertinent information (shelter houses, police, etc).
- Regarding victims of non-completed homicide, after experiencing such trauma, mental care services should be provided to increase victims' assistance and protection as well as to ensure a better recovery.
- The protection and care of children experiencing homicide or extreme violence in their families should be a priority for our authorities and institutions. Measures should be applied to ensure psychological, familiar and economic protection after these traumatic experiences.



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