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# Profile of men who commit violence against women who are arrested in delicto flagrante: contributions to confronting the phenomenon

*Perfil de homens autores de violência contra mulheres detidos em flagrante: contribuições para o enfrentamento*

*Perfil de hombres autores de violencia contra mujeres detenidos en el acto: contribución para el enfrentamiento*

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To outline the profile of aggressors arrested in delicto flagrante, and of the violence against women during the period of the implantation and consolidation of the Maria da Penha Law\* in a municipality in the central region of the state of Paraná. **Methods:** Retrospective documental research undertaken through considering 130 Warrants of Imprisonment, analyzed by descriptive statistics. **Results:** The men were young adult males, married, with low educational levels and undertaking paid work. 89.3% were released on bail. Most were husbands, who committed violence under the influence of alcohol. A significant number already had other records of domestic violence. **Conclusion:** The denunciation, as an action in isolation, was shown to be insufficient to break the cycle of violence. It is therefore necessary to direct actions beyond denunciation, through implanting actions for confrontation of this phenomenon, articulated between the health, education, security, justice and social work sectors, geared towards gender equality and a culture of peace.

**Keywords:** Men; Violence against women; Domestic Violence.

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Delinear o perfil de agressores detidos em flagrante delito e da violência que perpetraram contra mulheres no período de implantação e consolidação da lei Maria da Penha, em um município da região central do estado do Paraná. **Métodos:** Pesquisa retrospectiva documental, realizada mediante apreciação de 130 Autos de Prisão, analisados pela estatística descritiva. **Resultados:** Eram adultos jovens, casados, com baixa escolaridade e trabalho remunerado. 89,3% foram libertados sob pagamento de fiança. Eram, majoritariamente, cônjuges, que sob efeito de álcool, praticaram violência. Um número significativo já possuía outros registros de violência doméstica. **Conclusão:** A denúncia, como ação isolada, revelou-se insuficiente para interromper o ciclo da violência. É necessário voltar-se para além da denúncia, pela implantação de ações de enfrentamento articuladas entre os setores de saúde, educação, segurança, justiça e assistência social, voltadas à igualdade de gênero e a cultura de paz.

**Palavras-chave:** Homens; Violência contra a mulher; Violência doméstica.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Definir el perfil de agresores detenidos en flagrante delito y la violencia contra las mujeres durante la implantación y consolidación de la Ley Maria da Penha, en un municipio de la región central del estado de Paraná. **Métodos:** Investigación retrospectiva documental, realizada mediante observación de 130 Autos de Prisión analizados mediante estadística descriptiva. **Resultados:** Eran adultos jóvenes, casados, con bajo nivel de educación y trabajo remunerado. El 89,3% fueron libertados bajo fianza. Eran mayoritariamente cónyuges que, bajo la influencia de alcohol, practicaban violencia. Un número significativo ya han tenido otros registros de violencia doméstica. **Conclusión:** La queja, como acción por sí sola, no fue suficiente para detener el ciclo de violencia. Es necesario volver más allá de la denuncia, mediante implementación de acciones de enfrentamiento articuladas entre los sectores de salud, educación, seguridad, justicia, asistencia social, dirigidos a igualdad y cultura de paz.

**Palabras-clave:** Hombres; Violencia contra la mujer; Violencia Doméstica.

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## INTRODUCTION

Violence against women covers the acts practiced in both the public and private environments, and in various contexts of the everyday; however, it is in the domestic environment that it fundamentally occurs. It is nearly always practiced by men of the family, who exercise relationships of power over the victims, and who - protected by affective bonds - can take the relationships of domination, which originate in the patriarchal culture which is still perpetuated, to extremes<sup>1</sup>. The magnitude of the problem was evidenced in a study undertaken by the World Health Organization in 2005, with 25,000 women in various countries, which estimated that one in every six women in the world has suffered domestic violence<sup>2</sup>.

In Brazil, this situation is shown to be even more severe, as, according to a study undertaken by the Perseu Abramo Foundation, with a sample of 2365 women, one in every five women was considered to have already suffered some form of violence on the part of a man. The main aggressors, ranging from 50% to 70%, were the husbands, who - in a relationship of power - take advantage of that the victims' vulnerability to commit violence<sup>3</sup>.

A study undertaken with 789 men present in health centers in the city of São Paulo showed that more than half of the interviewees (52.1%) had already practiced some type of violence against their intimate partner, with 40% having perpetrated psychological violence, 31.9% physical violence, and 3.9% sexual violence<sup>4</sup>. The occurrence of violence against women in family relationships tends to repeat throughout the coexistence with the aggressor and, when not restrained, can progress and become more harmful to the victim.

The severity of the violence practiced against women is evidenced in the records of women's deaths around the world. In Brazil, in the last decade alone, 43,500 women were murdered, as a result of which the country occupies the seventh position in the world for the number of homicides of women, with a rate of 4.5 per 100,000 women. With a rate of 6.3 per 100,000, the state of Paraná presents a rate above the Brazilian national rate, and is third in the Brazilian ranking<sup>5</sup>, a fact which evidences the severity of the violence against this population in the state of Paraná.

In spite of the high rates presented, female mortality from external causes - including violence - is not among the main rates of death within this population. Nevertheless, the consequences of the violence suffered by the women are serious, due to the significant costs and the high incidence of the victims seeking treatment from the health services, not only for the physical trauma, but for treatment of all the changes provoked in their health-illness profile<sup>6</sup>. Even taking into account the severity evidenced, a large proportion of women who experience violence choose to continue to live with the aggressor and, as a result<sup>1</sup>, the attention and prevention must include not only the victims, but also the men who commit this violence, with a view to acting in favor of the prevention of their revictimization.

Violence against women is a phenomenon which occurs at the relational and societal level. Thus, it cannot be understood without taking into account the social, political and cultural construction of the relationships established between men and

women; for this reason, its confrontation requires cultural, educational and social changes<sup>1</sup>. In the light of the above, Brazilian legislation, through Law N° 11.340/2006, known as the Maria da Penha Law, while including protective measures geared towards the victims and emphasizing the punishment of aggressors, establishes that the public authorities should promote centers for the education and rehabilitation of aggressors, with a view to influencing the construction of their violent behavior. As a result, the approval of the above-mentioned law promoted the construction of a new place for debates and attention to violence, in which the men who commit the violence come to be included<sup>7</sup>.

In the current context, the implantation of services aimed at attending men who commit violence is a challenge for the field of care, prevention and confrontation of violence against women. However, it is important to emphasize that such actions, when coupled with others regarding the women, can be shown to be a tool for promoting gender equality and the reduction of violence<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, Brazilian scientific production focussed on the men who commit violence against women remains scarce and academic research has contributed little to the consideration of the man who commits violence as a person, with health and care needs<sup>7</sup>.

It is relevant to include the aggressors as a study object, as this makes it possible to investigate not only the profile and discourse of the women who are the victims, but, above all, the profile and discourse of those who practice the violence. This fact would cease to attribute to the woman alone the role of spokesperson for the violence which is established in a couple's relationship<sup>9</sup>.

The studies focusing on the men who commit the aggression provide new elements to the studies with pre-existing victims, and could contribute to the development of prevention strategies and healthcare policies to be implemented in the Networks for Attendance and Confrontation of Violence. In this way<sup>10</sup>, the visibility of the violence's profile, as well as that of aggressors and victims, is a starting point for confronting this health issue which affects the female population of Brazil.

In the light of the above, this study aimed to outline the profile of aggressors arrested in *delicto flagrante* and of the violence which they perpetrated against women in the period of the implantation and consolidation of the Maria da Penha Law, in a municipality in the central region of the state of Paraná.

## METHOD

This is retrospective descriptive documental research, undertaken in a Women's Police Station (DEM, in Portuguese) in a municipality in the central region of the state of Paraná. The source for the data was the Warrant for Imprisonment in *Flagrante* (APF, in Portuguese), recorded in the period of the implantation and consolidation of Law N° 11.340/2006, termed the Maria da Penha Law (2006-2007), and which had been filed and made available for consultation. In defining the limits for the time period, the researchers considered the period in which the highest number of records of violence against women were filled out in the above-mentioned police station, using the Warrants for Imprisonment recorded in that place, in the period 2005-2010 as a basis for the calculations.

This study included all of the Warrants for Imprisonment in Flagrante (APF) for men who committed violence, issued by the Guarapuava Women's Police Station, in the period 2006-2007. As a result, 133 APF were analyzed, of which three were excluded as they contained repeated information on the same occurrence of violence. As a result, this study's universe was made up of 130 APF.

Data collection occurred in the period June 2011 - May 2012, in the Women's Police Station, through the administration of a closed instrument which was elaborated for a specific purpose; this considered the items found in the Warrants for Imprisonment in Flagrante. The instrument was tested beforehand, being applied with the Warrants for Imprisonment for the year of 2005.

The data was included in an electronic spreadsheet through double keying, which resulted in an electronic database. The descriptive analyses, for the calculation of the absolute frequencies and percentages which characterize the profile of the aggressors and of the violence committed were undertaken using the statistical package 'Epi Info', version 3.5.1.1. The results were expressed as frequencies and simple percentages, followed by descriptive analysis, based in the Brazilian and international concepts of epidemiology of violence against women, as well as in similar studies undertaken in other regions.

Following consideration of the ethical aspects, the research was authorized by the Assistant Captain of the municipality's Women's Police Station, and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Health Sciences Department of the State University of the Center West (UNICENTRO) (CAAE - 4265.0.000.300-10, and Opinion 110/2011 CEP/UNICENTRO).

## RESULTS

The analysis of the profile of the aggressors arrested made it possible to evidence that the age of the same varied between 18 and 66 years old, although the young adult age range predominated, the highest representation being in the range of 20 to 29 years old (45.4%), followed by 40 to 49 years old (22.3%), adolescents (3.8%), and older adults (0.8%). The majority (76.1%) were married or living in a stable relationship, 18.5% were single, and 5.4% were separated.

In relation to the educational level of the aggressors arrested, it was evidenced that although 90% were literate, low educational level predominated, as 80% had been educated to junior high school level, 7.7% to senior high school level, and only 2.3% had attended higher education. Illiteracy was observed in 10% of the cases.

In 82.4% of cases, the aggressors exercise some form of paid work, with the following predominating: civil construction (27.7%), industry and commerce (15.4%), agricultural (13.8%) and general services assistant (13.1%). A further 3.8% were retired, 12.3% were unemployed, and 1.5% were students and did not have a job or their own income.

It was observed that 70.8% of the aggressors arrested did not have previous criminal records; on the other hand, 29.2% already had files or reports of other occasions when they were

arrested by the Police. Of this total, 60.5% were as a result of domestic violence; 10.5% for theft; 7.9% for homicide; 7.9% for selling drugs; 5.3% for the illegal possession of weapons; 5.3% for drunkenness and threatening behavior, and 2.6% for receipt of stolen property.

The study evidenced that for the concession of release on bail, 89.3% of the aggressors paid bail; 6.9% did not pay it, and in 3.8% of the cases the information was not included in the documentation. The value paid varied between R\$ 50.00 and R\$ 600.00.

The women who were victims of the violence were aged between nine and 77 years old, although the greatest incidence occurred among the young adults aged between 20 and 59 years old. 93.1% of them were literate, with low levels of education predominating. 65.4% were financially dependent upon the aggressor. In 60% of the cases, it was the victim herself who called the Police during or immediately after the act of violence.

It is observed that the residence was the place where the men most perpetrated violence (84.6%). In 97.7% of the cases the violence practiced was characterized as intrafamilial, as it was directed against women with whom the aggressors had a family link. 70% of the aggressors committed a single type of violence, while 30% undertook from two to three types concomitantly. Physical violence was perpetrated by 61.6% of the aggressors arrested, being practiced in isolation in 36.2% of cases, and in association with other types in 25.4%. The type committed second-most in isolation was psychological violence, with 27.7% (Table 1).

The analysis of the aggressor's relationship with the victim denotes that it was the husband/partner, in isolation, who committed the most assaults (61.5%). In second place there is the ex-husband/partner (15.4%), followed by the sons (8.5%).

The husbands/partners and ex-husbands/partners commit most physical (40%) and psychological (27.5%) violence; the sons perpetrate psychological violence (45.4%), as well as associated physical and psychological violence (36.4%). Brothers undertake a greater quantity of associated physical and psychological violence (40%). Fathers committed more physical violence (50%), followed by sexual violence (25%). Stepfathers committed physical violence (50%), followed by psychological violence (50%). Among the aggressors who were not related to the victims, it was observed that those who were known to the victims committed exclusively sexual violence (100%), while those who were not known to the victims committed physical (50%) and sexual (50%) violence (Table 2).

It was observed in the results that 70.8% of the aggressors made use of one or more licit and illicit substances. Alcohol consumption was found in 60% of the cases, and associated with the other drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and crack in 7.7%. The use of drugs in isolation was observed in 3.1% of cases.

The relationship between substance consumption and the type of violence evidenced that the aggressors who consumed only alcohol committed more physical violence (39.7%); those who ingested alcohol and drugs in association perpetrated more psychological violence (30%); and users of drugs in isolation committed more psychological violence (75%) (Table 3).

**Table 1.** Characterization of the violence committed by the aggressors who were arrested, by place where it occurred, classification and type of aggression. Guarapuava, PR, 2013

Place of occurrence	N	%	% accumulated
Residence	110	84.6	84.6
Work	1	0.8	85.4
Public highway	15	11.5	96.9
Others	4	3.1	100
Classification of the violence			
Domestic/family violence	127	97.7	97.7
Violence in the community	3	2.3	100
Type of aggression			
Physical	47	36.2	36.2
Psychological	36	27.7	63.9
Sexual	6	4.6	68.5
Patrimonial	2	1.5	70
Physical + psychological	28	21.5	91.5
Psychological + patrimonial	6	4.6	96.1
Physical + psychological + patrimonial	5	3.9	100
Total	130	100	100

**Table 2.** Relationship between the aggressor and the victim, by type of violence committed. Guarapuava, PR, 2013

Relationship between the aggressor and the victim	Type of violence committed							
	Phys n (%)	Psy* n (%)	Sex'l n (%)	Pat** n (%)	Phys and Psy* n (%)	Psy* Pat** n (%)	Phys Psy* Pat** n (%)	Total n (%)
Husband/Partner	32 (40)	22 (27.5)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.2)	17 (21.3)	4 (5)	3 (3.8)	80 (61.5)
Ex-husband/Partner	8 (40)	6 (30)	0 (0.0)	1 (5)	4 (20)	0 (0.0)	1 (5)	20 (15.4)
Son	1 (9.1)	5 (45.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (36.4)	1 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	11 (8.5)
Brother	1 (20)	1 (20)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (40)	1 (20)	0 (0.0)	5 (3.8)
Father	2 (50)	0 (0.0)	1 (25)	0 (0.0)	1 (25)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (3.1)
Stepfather	1 (50)	1 (50)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.5)
Other family members	1 (25)	1 (25)	1 (25)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (25)	4 (3.1)
Acquaintances	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.5)
Strangers	1 (50)	0 (0.0)	1 (50)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.5)
Total	47 (100)	36 (100)	6 (100)	2 (100)	28 (100)	6 (100)	5 (100)	130 (100)

\* Psychological; \*\* Patrimonial.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the results obtained, it was possible to confirm that the aggressors arrested were exclusively male, with a predominance of young married adults with low educational level and who undertook paid work. This context was also evidenced in the study which presented the profile of aggressors in a Women's Protection Police Station in Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, where these had a mean age of 40 years old, varying

between 23 and 78 years old; 40% had not finished junior high, and 86.6% were working<sup>9</sup>.

A significant number of aggressors already had criminal records prior to their imprisonment on the occasion in question, above all in relation to committing violence against women. The recurrence of denunciations of violence was also evidenced in the study undertaken in Florianópolis, which identified that 70% of the women had provided notification of previous occurrences<sup>9</sup>, denoting that this practice is common in the routine of



**Table 3.** Substance use by the aggressor arrested, by type of violence he committed. Guarapuava, PR, 2013

Substance use by the aggressor	Type of violence committed							Total n (%)
	Phys n (%)	Psy* n (%)	Sexual n (%)	Pat** n (%)	Phys Psy n (%)	Psy* Pat** n (%)	Phys - Psy* Pat** n (%)	
Alcohol	31 (39.7)	22 (28.2)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)	15 (19.2)	4 (5.1)	4 (5.1)	78 (60)
Alcohol and drugs	2 (20)	3 (30)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (20)	2 (20)	1 (10)	10 (7.7)
Drugs	0 (0.0)	3 (75)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (25)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (3.1)
Did not use	14 (36.8)	8 (21.1)	5 (13.2)	1 (2.6)	10 (26.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	38 (29.2)
Total	47 (100)	36 (100)	6 (100)	2 (100)	28 (100)	6 (100)	5 (100)	130 (100)

\* Psychological; \*\* Patrimonial.

those involved, and that even in cases of repeated episodes of violence and denunciation, the victims and aggressors continue to live together.

The denunciation or imprisonment of the aggressor, as an isolated action, is revealed to be insufficient to interrupt the committing of violence against women, as a significant proportion of the women, even having made denunciations, returned to live with the aggressor with the aim of maintaining the family link. This evidence was also observed in the study undertaken with women who suffered violence and needed protection in a women's shelter, in which 18.3% of the women manifested the wish to return to live with the aggressor. This fact evidences that, often, in denouncing the aggressor, the victim does not seek punishment, but wishes to be supported in recovering her family relationship in a coexistence without violence<sup>10</sup>. When the victim succeeds in freeing herself from her aggressor, the latter tends to form new affective bonds with other women and, frequently, spreads the violence in these new relationships.

In the light of the context indicated here, the need is evidenced to broaden the attention to violence beyond attendance to the victim and punishment of the aggressor. It is imperative to bring together intersectorial and interdisciplinary actions directed towards attention for men who commit violence. In this regard<sup>11</sup>, under the terms stipulated by article 35, item V of Law 11.340 (the Maria da Penha Law), it is necessary for the Union, States, and Municipalities to set up and promote centers for education and rehabilitation of aggressors, with the aim of altering their violent behavior and promoting gender equality. Thus, the articulation between different sectors can promote change in the 'macho' and sexist behaviors which remain ingrained in Brazilian society, and which culminate in the resolution of conflicts through violence. The articulation of actions between these sectors could also lead to the empowerment of women for their financial, emotional and social emancipation<sup>1</sup>.

This study evidenced that the majority of the aggressors paid bail in order to be released on bail, and that the values were not equal, and that a certain percentage of them did not make payment to be released. These findings lead to the need to reference that, in accordance with Human Rights and current Brazilian legislation<sup>12</sup>, aggressors are guaranteed the possibility of release on bail with or without payment of a bond.

The specification of different values for each aggressor was also established, considering that in order to define the value of the bail, the authority must consider the type of infraction committed by the aggressor, his personal conditions and previous life, and the circumstances which indicate his dangerousness, as well as the probable importance of the costs of the court case. In those cases in which the judge confirms the impossibility of payment due to poverty, the defendant may be released on bail without having to pay<sup>12</sup>.

Considering what is established in legislation and the socio-economic profile of the aggressors depicted in this study, variation in the values collected and, even, the nonpayment of a bail bond in order to be released on bail is explained. This concession does not exempt the defendant from responding to the juridical process, which - if the man's guilt is proven - could result in a sentence of imprisonment. It is noteworthy that since 2006<sup>11</sup>, when the Maria da Penha Law came into statute, Article 17 has established that the application of sentences whereby the man pays for basic foodstuffs or makes other payments, or is fined, are prohibited as a form of substituting a prison sentence. This type of sanction was permitted prior to the promulgation of Law 11,340, a fact which culminated in aggressors feeling that they were above the law.

This study made it possible to confirm that the place where the aggressors arrested most committed violence against women was the family home; thus, the violence was classified as intrafamilial. This evidence corroborates a study undertaken based on records of occurrences in Police Stations Specialized in Attending Women in the metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro, in which the researchers ascertained that the home continues to be the locus where violence is committed against women, corresponding to 71.4% of the total of 38,009 cases analyzed, emphasizing the loss of security in the private space where the women live<sup>13</sup>. In this way, the data from the studies indicate the environment of the home and family as a conflictual space, in which feelings of illness and aggression coexist; and, in the context of women victimized by violence, this environment takes on a meaning of insecurity.

It was observed in this study that the imprisonment of the aggressors occurred on the majority of occasions due to their having committed physical violence against the woman, corroborating a study undertaken in a women's shelter in Curitiba, in which physical violence was also that committed most by the aggressors<sup>10</sup>. This

fact denotes that faced with the risk of the loss of their physical integrity, the victims not only report the occurrence to the Police, but also seek more effective measures such as the imprisonment of the aggressor and protection in a women's shelter.

In analyzing the relationship of the arrested aggressor with the victim, it was possible to perceive that the majority of them were related to them; and that the husbands were the principal aggressors. This context is similar to that presented in a study undertaken with aggressors who were not arrested, but who also had conjugal relationships with their victims, in which in 70.1% of the cases, the aggressors were the partners<sup>14</sup>.

In accordance with the literature, the analysis of the relationship of the arrested aggressor with the victim according to the type of violence made it possible to infer that family members, in particular the spouses or ex-spouses, commit more physical and psychological violence against the women. These data reiterate what was presented in a study undertaken in a psychology service in Porto Alegre, which indicated a predominance of the partner as the aggressor in cases of physical and psychological violence<sup>14</sup>. In this regard, it is relevant to emphasize that while men tend to be the victims of violence committed in public spaces, it is women who routinely suffer violence inside their own homes, on most occasions committed by their partners and ex-partners. This fact evidences that the home is the principal scenario where this phenomenon is manifested, thus making it the most unsafe place for the women to live<sup>1</sup>.

In relation to substance use, the analysis of the results of this study made it possible to observe that by far the majority of the aggressors who were arrested made use of alcohol or drugs, either in isolation or in conjunction with others. The risk of a situation of violence occurring associated with the use of alcohol or any other drug by the aggressor is greater when compared with that of nonuse. One study indicates that the risk of a woman suffering violence increased by 59% in cases in which the partner made frequent use of alcohol. This risk was raised by almost 6 times in cases in which the aggressor consumed other drugs<sup>15</sup>. The consumption of alcohol or other drugs can disinhibit behavior and influence the dynamic of family conflict resolution, and offer the risk of violence to the family's members, through facilitating the violence.

One study undertaken with female victims of domestic violence attended in a governmental women's shelter in the city of Curitiba in the state of Paraná evidenced that the use of alcohol by the partner provoked situations of loss of limits and aggression which culminated in physical, psychological and patrimonial violence against women within their homes<sup>16</sup>. However, it is noteworthy that alcohol is a factor which tends to anticipate and worsen violence, although it must not be considered its primary cause<sup>17</sup>: men who commit violence against women cannot justify their acts solely through their use of alcohol and/or drugs.

Violence against women is a multifaceted phenomenon, with historical-cultural roots, permeated by ethnic-racial, class and generational issues, and which occurs at a relational and

societal level<sup>1</sup>. It is considered to be a health issue which provokes physical and psychological trauma, with devastating consequences which affect health and go beyond the biological aspect, compromising the affective, social and professional dimensions not only of those who suffer, but of the family as a whole<sup>18</sup>. Its confrontation therefore must not be restricted only to combating it, but must also cover the dimensions of prevention and assistance, and the guaranteeing of women's rights. For this reason, it requires of the State and of the professionals an intersectorial and multidimensional approach, capable of provoking cultural, educational and social changes<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, it is fundamental for the services to direct their attention to actions with a broad and more integralized approach, in which the men who commit violence may be perceived as integral elements of the context where the violence occurs, and, therefore, need to be included in the approaches for the phenomenon's confrontation.

## CONCLUSION

The undertaking of this study made it possible to conclude that the aggressors arrested in *delicto flagrante* for committing violence against women were exclusively male, with a predominance of young married adults, with low educational levels, and undertaking paid work. The right to be released on bail, in the majority of cases, occurred through the paying of a bail bond. The majority of the aggressors arrested were husbands or partners, who mainly committed physical violence against their female partners in the domestic space. A significant proportion of these men had already been denounced previously, in particular for violence against women. In this way, the denunciations effected against these men, as actions in isolation, were shown to be insufficient for breaking the cycle of violence against women, as, even having been denounced, they continued with their violent behavior, for which reason there were successive denunciations of the violence they committed.

In the light of the complexity which permeates the violence against women, evidenced in this profile, it is emphasized that the professionals who work in care for this population need to broaden their view of the problem, going beyond the treatment of the physical trauma and the denunciation of the aggressors. It is imperative to develop and implant articulated, intersectorial and interdisciplinary actions. In this way, besides the denunciation and the treatment of the physical harm, it is possible to act in changing the aggressors' violent behavior and in promoting gender equality, principally relating to economic, emotional and social emancipation.

Based in the results, one can observe that this study is limited by being restricted to a single region of one Brazilian state. However, in view of the gap in scientific production specifically on men who commit violence against women, the context evidenced here could encourage the development of further studies with a view to deepening the knowledge and affording greater visibility to this important variable of the phenomenon.

The need is evidenced to undertake studies directed towards the understanding of the subjective aspects which permeate situations of domestic violence from the perspective of the men who commit violence, with a view to including them as protagonists in the process of confronting the violence. These studies could provide fundamental elements to be used in developing policies and preventive strategies, to be undertaken in the local networks for attendance and care, through the implementation of educational actions with groups of men who commit violence, in which discussion may be promoted on domestic violence, conflict resolution, a culture of peace and gender equality, thus allowing them to remain in coexistence with their families - but free of violence.

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\* This law increased the penalties for domestic violence, prohibits alternative sentences, and provides for measures which include removing the offender from the residence and banning him from approaching the victim. Translator's note.