

**The silence of male victims in relation to domestic violence in heterosexual relationships in Makhado Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa: An Exploratory study**

by

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts (Psychology)**

**in the**

**Department of Psychology**

**at the**

**University of Venda**

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**2016**

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Domestic violence is one of the most serious and widespread problems in society today. There is a widespread belief that women are the only victims and survivors of domestic violence and that men are the sole perpetrators. For that reason, male victims of domestic violence remain silent and invisible.

**Aim of the study:** The aim of the study was to explore and describe the silence of male victims in relation to domestic violence in heterosexual relationships in Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

**Methodology:** The study was qualitative in nature and an exploratory design was adopted. A purposive sample of males between 28 and 55 years old in heterosexual relationships was selected from records of domestic violence in particular the domestic violence register 508b which records female or male complainants of domestic related issues from different police stations within the Makhado cluster. Data were collected by the researcher through semi-structured interviews. This method was used in collaboration with supportive literature to assist the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the issue under study. Data collected were analysed and transcribed using the thematic content analysis method.

**Results:** It was found that the current law discriminates against male victims and favours women. For example, the awareness campaign of 16 Days of Activism speaks only for women and children and is quiet about the male victims. Male victims are silent about the abuse against them because of shame and embarrassment. Some feel that the police will not believe them.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion drawn is that the experiences of male victims of domestic violence are insufficiently acknowledged by society and the authorities. There is need to encourage men either as victims or abusers to contact service providers, in order to get help.

**Keywords:** Abuse, Domestic violence, Heterosexual relationship, Male victim, Silence