

Researchers analyze link between employment status and domestic violence

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Researchers from the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) have carried out a study that analyzes sociodemographic characteristics related to gender-based violence. The study reveals that there is a lower incidence of domestic violence in families whose employment status is more equal.

The research is based on the results of macro-surveys on gender-based [violence](#) from the Instituto de la Mujer (Women's Institute). This data provides information about the employment status and other socioeconomic characteristics of the both members of the couple, such as their age, level of education, place of residence and household income level. The researchers used econometric techniques that allow them to isolate the causal effect of the [employment status](#) of the two members of the couple on domestic [abuse](#).

The lowest incidence of [domestic violence](#) occurs in families in which both members of the couple work. One percent of these families experience domestic abuse. "It is more likely that these more egalitarian couples share values that question the more traditional roles of gender, particularly those associated with the dominant role of the male and his attitude regarding violence," said César Alonso, one of the study's authors, from the UC3M Department of Economics. "When the male doesn't work, the risk of violence can increase to the extent that his traditional role of family provider is questioned," said another of the authors, Raquel Carrasco, also from the UC3M Department of Economics.

There are other demographic characteristics that also affect abuse: Having a higher level of education tends to reduce the risk of [domestic abuse](#); and the older the woman is, the more likely she is to suffer gender-based violence. According to the researchers, inasmuch as there are different risks of abuse for each type of couple, the policies designed to alleviate this problem would have to be different.

These results could be used to propose policies against this social scourge. In the short term, prevention policies for the most vulnerable groups (in particular, couples with the highest risk of social exclusion), including the legal compliance of preventive measures to curb violence and the extension of shelter and aid procedures for victims and their children; and in the long term, educational policies that promote effective gender equality by transmitting the values of gender equality from infancy, and policies that guarantee the autonomy and empowerment of women through employment.

More information: Employment and the risk of domestic violence: does the breadwinner's gender matter? César Alonso-Borrego and Raquel Carrasco. Applied Economics Vol. 0 , Iss. 0,0. Pages 1-18 | Published online: 09 Mar 2017, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0036846.2017.1299103

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