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ABSTRACT

Law No. 11,340/2006, known as the Lei Maria da Penha [Maria da Penha Law], is Brazil's primary legal framework for protecting women subjected to gender-based violence. Article 8 establishes the need for studies and research that contribute to understanding the causes, frequency, and consequences of these forms of violence. However, the underreporting of domestic violence against women and the difficulties public agencies face in organizing and analyzing these data limit the production of research capable of informing public policies and the work of women's rights advocacy organizations. To address this gap, this study used descriptive analysis and logistic regression to examine the number of reported cases and the characteristics of women subjected to violence and their perpetrators in Varginha, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Data from the Secretaria de Estado de Saúde de Minas Gerais [Minas Gerais State Department of Health (SES-MG)], available through the Portal Brasileiro de Dados Abertos [Brazilian Open Data Portal], were used. The results showed that, during the period analyzed, the victims had a mean age of 31 years, were predominantly Black, and self-identified as heterosexual. Violence was recurrent in 50.5% of the cases. The victim's residence was the most frequently reported location of occurrence, and most perpetrators were male. Finally, based on these findings, measures are proposed for implementation by the Ministério Público [Public Prosecutor's Office], in partnership with the Conselho Municipal dos Direitos da Mulher de Varginha [Varginha Municipal Council for Women's Rights (CMDM)], to prevent and address violence against women in Varginha.

Keywords: Domestic violence. Gender violence. Reproductive work. Regression.

RESUMO

A Lei nº 11.340/2006, conhecida como “Lei Maria da Penha", é o principal marco legal de proteção às mulheres vítimas de violência de gênero no Brasil. Em seu Artigo 8º, prevê-se a necessidade de estudos e pesquisas que contribuam para a compreensão das causas, a frequência e as consequências dessas violências. No entanto, a subnotificação de casos de violência doméstica contra mulheres e as dificuldades enfrentadas pelos órgãos públicos em organizar e analisar esses dados limitam a produção de estudos capazes de subsidiar políticas públicas e ações de organizações de defesa dos direitos femininos. A fim de preencher essa lacuna, objetivou-se analisar, por meio de análise descritiva e de regressão logística, o número de registros e as características das mulheres vítimas de violência e de seus agressores em Varginha-MG. Para isso, foram utilizados dados da Secretaria de Saúde de Minas Gerais (SES), disponíveis no Portal Brasileiro de Dados Abertos. Através dos resultados, no período analisado, as vítimas tinham idade média de 31 anos, eram majoritariamente negras e se declaravam heterossexuais. Em 50,5% dos casos, a ocorrência foi de repetição. A residência da vítima foi o local com maior incidência de ocorrências, e a maioria dos agressores era do sexo masculino. Finalmente, com base nesses achados, são propostas ações que podem ser adotadas pelo Ministério Público, em parceria com o CMDM, para prevenir e combater a violência contra as mulheres em Varginha-MG.

Palavras-chave: Violência doméstica. Violências de gênero. Trabalho reprodutivo. Regressão.

1 INTRODUCTION

Violence against women remains persistent in Brazil. Even after legal advances such as the Maria da Penha Law (2006), there is a need for local prevention and response measures due to underreporting and difficulties in accessing and analyzing data. Existing legislation focuses on punishment, but limitations remain regarding prevention and mediation.

The primary law protecting women subjected to domestic and family violence in Brazil is Ordinary Law No. 11,340, known as the Lei Maria da Penha [Maria da Penha Law], enacted on August 7, 2006. The law honors Maria da Penha, a Brazilian biopharmacist who, in 1983, in Fortaleza, Ceará, was the target of two attempted femicides committed by her then-partner (Tavares and Campos, 2018). Resulting from Maria da Penha’s history of struggle, the law bearing her name is considered Brazil’s main legal framework for protecting victims of domestic violence and has produced positive results in the country in terms of raising awareness and addressing violence against women (Tavares and Campos, 2018; Amaral, Amaral, and Amaral, 2013; Magalhães Júnior *et al*., 2025).

Despite the existence of legislation on the subject, 47,463 cases of femicide were recorded in Brazil between 2013 and 2023, according to data from the National Health System. In 2023 alone, 3,903 cases were recorded, corresponding to 3.5 women fatally victimized by gender-based violence per 100,000 inhabitants in the country, or approximately 13 women killed per day (Instituto de

Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada [Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA)], 2025). According to IPEA (2025), while the overall homicide rate decreased by 2.3% between 2022 and 2023, the femicide rate remained unchanged. This finding highlights the challenges involved in addressing lethal crimes against women resulting from gender dynamics, which intersect with other structural issues in Brazilian society, such as racism. These conditions lead to a disproportionate incidence of femicide among Black women compared with White women, considering that Black women accounted for 68.2% of all femicide victims in the country in 2023 (IPEA, 2025).

This context highlights the need for measures specifically aimed at preventing and addressing domestic violence crimes. Furthermore, although quantitative records of violence against women are available, scientific research on the subject faces obstacles due to the historical underreporting of domestic violence cases (IPEA, 2025) and difficulties in making more comprehensive data available. Because these records contain sensitive information, these limitations also hinder qualitative analyses (Romagnoli, 2015).

In examining this methodological challenge, Romagnoli (2015) sought to analyze data on violence against women in Montes Claros, Minas Gerais. However, the study was limited to a discussion of quantitative data because of the difficulty in finding women willing to report their experiences of violence. According to the author, this situation illustrates a common perception among public officials that the Maria da Penha Law would, by itself, be sufficient to address violence against women. The legislation, however, would not adequately reach cases considered less severe, in which the woman subjected to violence does not wish to pursue the criminal prosecution of her abusive partner and instead seeks conflict mediation.

The author further argues that the legislation emphasizes referring complaints to the courts and initiating investigations, thereby reinforcing the conservative and punitive legal culture that predominates in Brazil. This culture generally places limited value on preventive or mediation measures in cases of violence against women (Romagnoli, 2015). These considerations give rise to the research question guiding this study: despite the advances brought about by the Maria da Penha Law and other legislation addressing gender-based violence, what measures can contribute more effectively to preventing and addressing the different forms of violence against women in the city of Varginha, Minas Gerais? In this context, the Maria da Penha Law itself emphasizes the need for studies that consider the specific characteristics of local settings when developing strategies to prevent and address these

forms of violence.

It should be emphasized that the Maria da Penha Law seeks to curb different forms of violence perpetrated against women, including moral, psychological, patrimonial, physical, and sexual violence, which are generally committed by men close to the victim, such as current or former partners (Amaral, Amaral, and Amaral, 2013). Among the integrated measures for preventing and addressing violence against women, Article 8 of the law provides for studies and research that offer information contributing to an understanding of the causes, frequency, and consequences of violence against women (Amaral, Amaral, and Amaral, 2013), which further supports the present study.

Mapping the profiles of survivors and perpetrators in cases of domestic and family violence is also supported by the analysis conducted by Sousa, Nogueira, and Gradim (2013). According to the authors, identifying the extent of this type of violence in a city may contribute to the more effective implementation of municipal public policies and indicate pathways for integrating measures across municipal government sectors, thereby expanding intersectoral policies. In this regard, the relevance and rationale of this study are further supported by its origin in a request submitted by the Ministério Público de Varginha-MG [Varginha Public Prosecutor's Office (MP)] and the Conselho Municipal de Direitos da Mulher de Varginha-MG [Varginha Municipal Council for Women's Rights (CMDM)] to researchers from the Grupo de Pesquisa Gênero pela Não Intolerância [Gender Against Intolerance Research Group (GENI)] at the Instituto de Ciências Sociais Aplicadas [Institute of Applied Social Sciences (ICSA)] of the Universidade Federal de Alfenas-MG [Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL-MG)].

Within this context, this study aims to analyze the number of records and the characteristics of women subjected to violence and, when possible, their perpetrators in Varginha, a city located in the interior of Minas Gerais that had 136,467 inhabitants in 2022 (IBGE, 2022). More specifically, the study seeks to: (i) identify official databases for collecting data on cases of violence against women in Varginha; (ii) statistically process these data to provide more detailed information on case profiles and other characteristics relevant to planning measures to prevent and address violence against women in the municipality; and (iii) analyze the information obtained from the perspective of concepts and theories concerning violence against women in order to identify scientific discussions capable of informing measures implemented by the MP and CMDM. This, in turn, may support the

work of these institutions in safeguarding women's rights in Varginha and thereby contribute to achieving Objetivo de Desenvolvimento Sustentável 5 [Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5)], namely, achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

To fulfill these purposes, the remainder of this study is organized as follows. After this introduction, concepts from the academic literature that are relevant to understanding the plural and complex nature of violence against women are discussed. The methodological procedures and data collected are then presented. Subsequently, the results are presented and discussed, culminating in considerations regarding data on violence against women in Varginha and in recommendations and proposed measures.

2 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: CAUSES AND IMPACTS

Violence against women is a structural phenomenon linked to unequal gender relations, racism, and social inequality, conditions that are aggravated by capitalism and neoliberalism. Its effects compromise women's health, well-being, and autonomy, requiring intersectoral responses. Social reproduction theory (Federici, Saffioti, and Fraser) contributes to understanding how care work and female subordination sustain these inequalities. Non-White women, women living in peripheral areas, and transsexual women face even greater risks, while victim blaming constitutes an obstacle to overcoming this problem.

Because different clinical diagnoses may be associated with cases of domestic and intrafamilial violence, public health professionals must work in networks with professionals from other fields, providing interdisciplinary and intersectoral services to girls and women subjected to violence. These efforts should involve public security officers, psychologists, legal professionals, and social workers, as well as partnerships with public institutions and nongovernmental organizations capable of providing support, responsible listening, and appropriate and effective referrals (Schraiber; D'Oliveira, 1999).

It should also be emphasized that health data may serve as indicators to support the work of public officials in addressing domestic and intrafamilial violence, particularly violence against women. Rafael and Moura (2017) found that women assaulted at home or by family members tend to miss scheduled examinations and/or medical appointments for themselves or their dependents, such

as children, older adults, persons with disabilities, and ill persons under their care. This occurs because caring for dependents' health is socially regarded as a responsibility exclusively or predominantly assigned to women.

In this regard, studies have sought to identify risk factors that may contribute to preventing and addressing these forms of violence. Risk assessment is understood as "a technical and scientific process intended to estimate the future probability that an offender will reoffend by committing serious or fatal violence within a defined period, based on an analysis of the risk and protective factors present in a case" (Vicente et al., 2022, p. 12). These factors are assessed through probabilistic judgments and, therefore, do not make it possible to state with certainty whether a particular person will or will not commit a crime. No isolated factors can predict future criminal conduct with certainty, because "the aim is to identify a previously defined combination, supported by scientific studies indicating that, under those conditions, the probability of violence occurring is higher or lower" (Vicente et al., 2022, p. 12).

As Vasconcelos, Holanda, and Albuquerque (2016) point out, studies intended to identify a perpetrator profile in cases of violence against women have primarily described the characteristics of men in heterosexual marital relationships while considering the specific features of each locality. Given the plurality of characterizations of perpetrators of violence against women, the authors emphasize the importance of recognizing the dynamics of gender-based violence (Vasconcelos, Holanda, and Albuquerque, 2016). In this study, these forms of violence are examined through the lens of social reproduction theory (SRT), which makes it possible to understand that they do not result from individual or cultural characteristics or deviations in conduct, but rather from a fundamental component of the capitalist and patriarchal logic that organizes social life (Federici, 2019).

Federici (2019) argues that violence against women must be understood as part of the social structures sustained by capitalism, as it is directly linked to how this system organizes social reproduction. From this perspective, capitalism relies on the sexual division of labor and gender hierarchies to organize society in a manner functional to capital accumulation. Women are socially assigned to care, affection, and the reproduction of life, whereas men are associated with the spheres of production, power, and authority. This unequal structure normalizes women's economic, emotional, and symbolic dependence on men, creating conditions that favor the reproduction of violence.

Oppression against women, however, does not occur uniformly. Black, Indigenous, transsexual, and disabled women, as well as those living in peripheral areas, face different forms of violence and exclusion that accumulate and mutually reinforce one another. Saffioti (2001) emphasizes that patriarchy and racism operate in conjunction with class domination and that disregarding these issues perpetuates a form of feminism that benefits only some women. The capitalist system imposes structural violence that subjects women to hunger, poverty, and the continuous exploitation of their labor and bodies (Federici, 2019).

Neoliberalism intensifies this context by promoting the dismantling of public policies and the deterioration of the population's living conditions. Neoliberal logic, based on reducing the role of the State and holding individuals responsible for social problems, transforms rights into commodities and confines care to the sphere of "female entrepreneurship." Fraser (2019) argues that this model transfers responsibility for care to the private sphere, overburdening women and weakening public social protection systems. This dynamic demonstrates the relationship between economic inequality and violence because, in the absence of the State, women become vulnerable not only to direct forms of violence but also to structural violence, manifested through hunger, unemployment, the burden of care work, and lack of access to justice. The individual responsibility characteristic of neoliberal discourse falls upon women, who are blamed for remaining in abusive relationships or for not reporting their perpetrators, while the material, emotional, institutional, and historical aspects underlying these decisions are disregarded.

Federici (2017) reinforces this criticism by examining how social reproduction, when transferred entirely to the private and individual sphere, transforms women into "solitary guardians of domestic stability" while simultaneously denying them social support, protection networks, and public recognition. This subjective and material burden reinforces the normalization of violence while producing feelings of powerlessness and failure among women who attempt to break the cycle. Patriarchy is continuously renewed within civil and family relationships, granting men, particularly husbands or partners, control over women's bodies and desires. This control is not only physical or economic but also symbolic, perpetuated by social and legal institutions that often normalize violence within family dynamics. This normalization can be understood through the concept of "symbolic violence," developed by Bourdieu (2014), which refers to subtle forms of domination that are internalized as legitimate by the victims themselves.

The internalization of domination represents one of the most cruel forms of violence because it directly affects the victim's subjectivity, leading her to accept, conceal, or justify her oppressed condition. Saffioti (1984) warns against interpreting the reproduction of oppressive patterns as an indication of women's complicity or guilt. As she states, "it is extremely dangerous [...] to blame someone for conduct whose ideological meanings remain beyond that person's awareness" (Saffioti, 1984, pp. 63–64). This criticism is essential to rejecting moralistic interpretations that individualize oppression and hold victims responsible. It is also fundamental to understand that the behaviors in question are socially constructed by institutions such as the family, religion, culture, and the State. Following the presentation of these theoretical foundations, the next section describes the methodological procedures adopted in the study, the results of which are subsequently discussed.

3 METHODOLOGY AND DATABASE

Having Varginha, Minas Gerais, as the territorial scope, data on violence against women made available by the Secretaria de Estado de Saúde de Minas Gerais [Minas Gerais State Department of Health (SES-MG)] through the Portal de Dados Abertos do Estado de Minas Gerais [Minas Gerais State Open Data Portal] were used. The database covers the period from 2010 to October 2025 and was filtered for the municipality. The data were subjected to descriptive and logistic regression analyses. This database contains suspected or confirmed cases from the Sistema Integrado de Informação de Agravos de Notificação [Integrated Information System for Notifiable Diseases (SINAN)], is constructed based on information provided by the health care units responsible for submitting the notifications (BRASIL, 2025), and includes cases of physical, psychological, sexual, and self-inflicted violence against women. Thus, the study seeks to identify factors associated with the violence experienced by women, considering variables such as age, race, type of violence, location of occurrence, and sex of the perpetrator.

Through a computerized network, SINAN also allows information to be entered from notifications submitted by other institutions, including educational institutions, social assistance units, women's support centers, and Indigenous health care units, whenever these institutions identify cases of violence. Once the violence has been identified and reported, the notification forms are forwarded to the health care units responsible for the corresponding coverage area (BRASIL, 2025).

The definition of violence used for notification purposes follows specific criteria. Therefore, suspected or confirmed cases of domestic or family violence, sexual violence, suicide attempts, human trafficking, slave or child labor, torture, legal intervention, and assaults motivated by homophobia are reported, regardless of the victim's age or sex. However, in cases of community or extrafamilial violence, reporting is mandatory only when the case involves children, adolescents, women, older adults, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, or LGBTQIAPN+ persons (BRASIL, 2025).

The data collected were organized and analyzed using Excel and Stata. To assess the associations between the reported forms of violence, the characteristics of the victims, and the characteristics of the probable perpetrators, three logistic regression models were estimated, adopting a significance level of 5%. This method was selected because it is appropriate for situations in which the dependent variable is dichotomous, allowing the probability of occurrence of the event under analysis to be estimated as a function of a set of explanatory variables. Each model used a specific type of violence as its dependent variable; therefore, the estimation was performed separately for physical, psychological, and sexual violence. Accordingly, the study sought to identify the factors associated with the probability of occurrence of each form of violence while maintaining the same specification for the set of explanatory variables.

In the first estimated model, the variable of interest was defined as follows, according to Equation (1):

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1, if\ the\ woman\ experienced\ physical\ violence \\ 0, if\ the\ woman\ did\ not\ experience\ physical\ violence \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

In the second model, the variable of interest was defined according to Equation (2):

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1, if\ the\ woman\ experienced\ psychological\ violence \\ 0, if\ the\ woman\ did\ not\ experience\ psychological\ violence \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

In turn, in the third model, the variable of interest was defined according to Equation (3):

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1, if\ the\ woman\ experienced\ sexual\ violence \\ 0, if\ the\ woman\ did\ not\ experience\ sexual\ violence \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

Given that $\pi_i = P(y_i = 1)$, with $0 < \pi_i < 1$, represents the probability of a woman experiencing violence, the conditional distribution of the dependent variable in a dichotomous model is described by a Bernoulli distribution, represented by $y_i \sim Ber(\pi_i)$ $y_i \sim Ber(\pi_i)$.Thus, the probability π_i that the woman (i) will experience some type of violence is associated with the explanatory variables $x_{ki}, \cdots, x_{ki}$, through the logistic model described in Equation (4):

$$log_e \frac{\pi_i}{1-\pi_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1i} + \cdots + \beta_k x_{ki} \quad (4)$$

where $\beta_0, \beta_1, \ldots, \beta_k \beta_0, \beta_1, \ldots, \beta_k$, are parameters to be estimated using the maximum likelihood method.

The models used can be specified as follows:

$$Model\ 1: P(Physical\ Violence_i = 1) = f(x_{1i}, \ldots, + x_{ki}) \quad (5)$$

$$Model\ 2: P(Psychological\ Violence_i = 1) = f(x_{1i}, \ldots, + x_{ki}) \quad (6)$$

$$Model\ 3: P(Sexual\ Violence_i = 1) = f(x_{1i}, \ldots, + x_{ki}) \quad (7)$$

The main explanatory variables used in this study were limited to those available in the database and were selected according to their potential association with the occurrence of violence. These variables included the types of violence emphasized in the study—physical, psychological, and/or sexual violence—self-inflicted injury, race, age, location of the occurrence, sex of the perpetrator, number of persons involved, and year of occurrence. Other variables, including the victims' sexual orientation and gender identity, were also tested; however, they did not present significant associations, probably because of the low number of responses available in the database for each of these variables. The models are summarized in the chart 1.

Chart 1 | Details of the Logistic Regression Models

Model	Dependent Variable		Explanatory Variable	
Model 1	Physical violence	The woman experienced physical violence; the woman did not experience physical violence	Psychological violence	Yes; No
			Sexual violence	Yes; No
			Self-inflicted injury	Yes; No
			Race	White; Black; Yellow; Brown; Indigenous.
			Age	Under 14 years; 15–29 years; 30–49 years; 50–59 years; 60 years or older
			Location of occurrence	Victim's residence; Public thoroughfare; Bar or similar establishment; School; Commercial/service establishment; Industry/construction site
			Sex of the perpetrator	Female; Male; Both sexes.
			Number of persons involved	Numerical Variable
			Year	2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025
Model 2	Psychological violence	The woman experienced psychological violence; the woman did not experience psychological violence	Physical violence	Yes; No
			Sexual violence	Yes; No
			Self-inflicted injury	Yes; No
			Race	White; Black; Yellow; Brown; Indigenous
			Age	Under 14 years; 15–29 years; 30–49 years; 50–59 years; 60 years or older
			Location of occurrence	Victim's residence; Public thoroughfare; Bar or similar establishment; School; Commercial/service establishment; Industry/construction site
			Sex of the perpetrator	Female; Male; Both sexes
			Number of persons involved	Numerical variable
			Year	2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025

Model 3	Sexual violence	The woman experienced sexual violence; the woman did not experience sexual violence	Physical violence	Yes; No
			Psychological violence	Yes; No
			Self-inflicted injury	Yes; No
			Race	White; Black; Yellow; Brown; Indigenous
			Age	Menor de 14 anos; Entre 15 e 29 anos; Entre 30 e 49 anos; Entre 50 e 59 anos; 60 anos ou mais
			Location of occurrence	Victim's residence; Public thoroughfare; Bar or similar establishment; school; Commercial/service establishment; Industry/construction site
			Sex of the perpetrator	Female; Male; Both sexes.
			Number of persons involved	Numerical Variable.
			Year	2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from SINAN/SES-MG.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the models can be converted into multiplicative models to obtain odds ratios, as described in Equation (8):

$$\frac{\pi_i}{1-\pi_i} = e^{\beta_0}(e^{\beta_1})^{x_{1i}} \dots (e^{\beta_k})^{x_{ki}} \quad 8)$$

These odds ratios are interpreted such that values greater than one indicate an increase in the odds of women experiencing violence. Conversely, values lower than one indicate a decrease in these odds.

The odds ratios for the categorical variables are interpreted in relation to their respective reference categories. Thus, each odds ratio expresses the variation in the odds of occurrence of the event compared with the reference category of the corresponding variable. In Stata, when no other category is specified, the reference category corresponds, by default, to the first category of each variable. In this study, the reference categories adopted are presented in the last column of Chart 1 and are as follows: White race, age under 14 years, the victim's residence as the location of the violence, female sex of the perpetrator, and the year 2010.

The area under the ROC curve was also estimated to assess the models' ability to classify individuals correctly. When the area under the ROC curve ranges from 0.7 to 0.8, the model is considered acceptable.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As will be further explained in this section, the findings indicated that 4,697 cases of violence against women were recorded in Varginha between 2010 and 2025. Compared with other municipalities in Minas Gerais, Varginha ranks among those with the highest rates in the state. Most victims were between 15 and 49 years old, were Black and heterosexual, lived in urban areas, and most commonly experienced violence in their own residences (76.6%). The perpetrators were predominantly men close to the victims. For girls up to 14 years old, schools stood out as risk locations in cases of sexual violence. Regarding the type of violence experienced, physical violence represented 74.3% of cases, psychological violence accounted for 20.2%, and sexual violence accounted for 4.8%. Overall, the recurrence rate of the violence experienced was 50.5%. As detailed below, the regression models adopted showed an association between psychological violence and an increased risk of physical and sexual violence.

According to data from the Secretaria de Estado de Saúde de Minas Gerais [Minas Gerais State Department of Health (SES)], 469,275 cases of physical, sexual, and/or psychological violence against women were reported in the state of Minas Gerais, including 4,697 cases in the municipality of Varginha, from 2010 to October 2025. Considering only the 320,602 records containing complete information, 302,468 cases of physical violence, 127,551 cases of psychological violence, and 50,619 cases of sexual violence were reported. Over the period, 126,423 women in the state simultaneously experienced more than one type of violence.

To provide a better understanding of the profile of women subjected to violence in Varginha, Table 1 presents selected characteristics collected when the violence was recorded. Table 1 shows that, among the victims who reported their race, most self-identified as White (49.5%) during the 2010–2025 period, followed by Brown (35.35%), Black (14.4%), Yellow (0.55%), and Indigenous women (0.1%).

Table 1 | Proportion of women subjected to violence, by type of violence and according to the victim's race, age, location of occurrence, gender identity, and sexual orientation, Varginha, Minas Gerais, 2010 and 2025

Race	Proportion of women who experienced violence (%)	Proportion of women who experienced physical violence (%)	Proportion of women who experienced psychological violence (%)	Proportion of women who experienced sexual violence (%)
White	49,5	47,1	47,1	37,1
Black	14,5	15,3	17,6	16,1
Yellow	0,55	0,46	0,47	1,46
Brown	35,35	37,2	34,8	44,9
Indigenous	0,1	0,04	0,00	0,49
Age				
Under 14 years	7,88	6,61	8,35	45,58
15-29 years	42,07	40,90	38,24	30,70
30-49 years	39,36	42,10	42,09	19,07
50-59 years	6,41	6,20	5,93	1,86
60 years or older	4,28	4,22	5,39	2,79
Local of occurrence				
Victim's residence	76,64	70,22	76,65	66,67
Public thoroughfare	14,84	19,99	14,28	12,70
Bar or similar	1,73	2,40	0,81	2,65
School	1,22	1,47	1,16	2,65
Commercial/service establishments	1,14	1,43	2,21	0,53
Industry/ construction sites	4,49	4,72	4,88	14,81
Victim's gender identity				
Woman	77,42	74,07	84,61	50
Transgender woman	22,58	25,93	15,38	50
Victim's sexual orientation				
Heterossexual	95,57	95,57	96,39	95,54
Homossexual	3,49	3,49	2,78	3,57
Bissexual	0,94	0,94	0,82	0,89

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from SINAN/SES-MG.[1]

1 Data extracted using Stata on September 9, 2025. The total number of observations comprises 469,275 cases of physical, sexual, and/or psychological violence against women in the state of Minas Gerais and 4,697 cases in the municipality of Varginha, from 2010 to October 2025.

Regarding the age of women subjected to violence in Varginha, the statistics presented in Table 1 show that 42.07% were between 15 and 29 years old in the records produced between 2010 and 2025, followed by women between 30 and 49 years old, who represented 39.36% of the victims. Girls and adolescents under 14 years of age represented 7.88% of the victims in the municipality during the period analyzed (Table 1). Because violence affects women of different ages, women between 50 and 59 years old were also identified among the victims in Varginha, representing 6.41% of the total, while older women over 60 years old accounted for 4.28% of all victims in the municipality (Table 1).

Regarding age, the SES-MG data analyzed also show that the mean age of women subjected to violence in Varginha between 2010 and 2025 was 31 years. In more than half of the records—50.5% of cases—the occurrence involved repeated violence, meaning that it was not the first time the complainant had experienced an episode of violence. Given this recurrence rate, risk assessments and policies aimed at preventing violence and protecting victims are necessary, as noted by Vicente et al. (2022).

The data in Table 1 indicate that, between 2010 and 2025, the victim's residence accounted for the largest proportion of occurrences of violence against women in Varginha (76.64%). This result is consistent with the findings of IPEA (2025), which identify the domestic environment as the primary location of these occurrences. After residences, public thoroughfares accounted for 14.84% of reported occurrences. The remaining records were distributed among industry or construction sites (4.49%), bars or similar establishments (1.73%), schools (1.22%), and commercial or service establishments (1.14%) (Table 1).

Regarding the victims' gender identity, most women subjected to violence in Varginha between 2010 and 2025 self-identified as heterosexual (95.57%), followed by homosexual and bisexual women, who represented 3.49% and 0.94% of all victims, respectively. Regarding gender identity, 22.58% of the victims were transsexual women, as shown in Table 1.

Regarding the type of violence experienced, the SINAN/SES-MG data analyzed show that 20.19% of women subjected to violence in Varginha between 2010 and 2025 reported psychological violence, 74.29% experienced physical violence, and 4.79% experienced sexual violence. These

results are consistent with Federici (2019), who emphasizes that the unequal social structure of society normalizes the various forms of dependence to which women may be subjected in relation to men, namely economic, emotional, and symbolic dependence. This, in turn, enables the reproduction of violence in its various forms.

Regarding the perpetrators of violence against women in Varginha between 2010 and 2025, despite the lack of information in the records, Table 2 shows that most were male in cases of physical violence (66.35% of victims), psychological violence (78.76%), and sexual violence (95.15%). This finding, combined with the fact that most cases occurred in the victim's residence (76.64%, according to Table 1), may corroborate the study by Amaral, Amaral, and Amaral (2013), which observes that these perpetrators may generally be men close to the victims, such as current or former partners and/or other men within the same social circle.

Table 2 | Proportion of perpetrators by sex among women subjected to physical, psychological, and sexual violence, Varginha, Minas Gerais, 2010 and 2025

Sexo of the perpetrator	Proportion of perpetrators who committed physical violence	Proportion of perpetrators who committed psychological violence	Proportion of perpetrators who committed sexual violence
Male	66,35	78,76	95,15
Female	31,05	18,02	3,40
Both sexes	2,77	3,27	1,46

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from SINAN/SES-MG.[2]

2 Data extracted using Stata on September 9, 2025. The total number of observations comprises 4,697 cases of violence against women in the municipality of Varginha from 2010 to October 2025.

To account for population differences and enable comparisons among cities, rates of reported violence against women per 100,000 women were calculated for cities representing the intermediate regions of Minas Gerais, using Varginha as the reference. Using data from the 2022 Census projected to 2024, the comparison with Divinópolis, Barbacena, Patos de Minas, Pouso Alegre, Teófilo Otoni, Governador Valadares, Belo Horizonte, Uberlândia, Montes Claros, Juiz de Fora, Ipatinga, and Uberaba shows that, in 2014, Varginha stood out in the number of physical violence cases, with 418.06 cases per 100,000 women. It was followed by Ipatinga (256.4), Teófilo Otoni (184.27), and Patos de Minas (174.45). In 2024, the highest number of reported cases per 100,000 women was recorded in Pouso Alegre (774.05), followed by Patos de Minas, with 434.49 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. Among the 13 cities highlighted in the most recent year, Varginha ranked fifth, with 353.86 cases per 100,000 women. Psychological violence against women in Varginha reached 113.00 notifications per 100,000 women in 2014, making it the city with the highest number of cases among those selected. In 2024, this figure increased to 117.43 notifications per 100,000 women. The highest rates of women subjected to psychological violence per 100,000 women in 2024 were recorded in Pouso Alegre (422.35) and Uberaba (222.9).

Both cities also stood out in reported cases of sexual violence in the most recent year. In Pouso Alegre, the figure reached 263.03 cases per 100,000 women, while Uberaba recorded 258.85 cases per 100,000 women. In Varginha, reports of sexual violence totaled 54.8 per 100,000 women in 2024, compared with 12.71 per 100,000 women in 2014.

When the three types of violence are combined, the cities in Minas Gerais with the highest numbers of cases of violence against women in 2014 recorded between 4,727.3 and 534.09 cases per 100,000 women. The highest figures were recorded in Cedro do Abaeté (4,727.3), followed by Doresópolis (2,825.4), Paineiras (2,194.8), Pedra Dourada (2,063.4), Augusto de Lima (1,899.8), Monjolos (1,853.5), Caparaó (1,818.9), Corinto (1,803.9), and Dom Bosco (1,740.6).

The other cities representing immediate regions presented the following records per 100,000 women in 2014: Varginha (429.4), Ipatinga (294.2), Teófilo Otoni (265.6), Uberaba (203.6), Patos de Minas (184.2), Juiz de Fora (170.4), Uberlândia (129.6), Barbacena (128.0), Belo Horizonte (84.6), Pouso Alegre (73.8), Governador Valadares (77.3), Montes Claros (70.7), and Divinópolis (15.6). Among the selected municipalities, Varginha stood out as having the highest number of cases per 100,000 women in 2014.

In 2024, most municipalities with the highest rates of reported violence against women were the same as those observed in 2014. Their rates ranged from 2,240.9 to 562.5 reported cases of violence. These municipalities were Pedra Dourada (2,240.9), São Geraldo do Baixio (2,186.4), Doresópolis (2,152.1), São Francisco Sales (1,798.9), Serra do Salitre (1,616.7), Ingaí (1,529.8), Várzea da Palma (1,480.2), Comendador Gomes (1,443), Santana de Cataguases (1,429.4), and Pouso Alegre (1,381.3). The other municipalities in the immediate regions can be ranked as follows for 2024: Uberaba (858.9), Varginha (629.4), Governador Valadares (508.3), Patos de Minas (492.9), Teófilo Otoni (441.2), Uberlândia (385.5), Montes Claros (369.7), Ipatinga (366.5), Belo Horizonte (327.6), Divinópolis (272.5), Barbacena (264.9), and Juiz de Fora (257.9).

Furthermore, the logistic regression models used to analyze records of women subjected to violence in Varginha, Minas Gerais, between 2010 and 2025 show, based on Table 4, an association between the types of violence at the 5% significance level. This indicates that, once women experience one of the types of violence identified, they may be susceptible to experiencing other types. Psychological violence, for example, increases the probability that women will experience physical and sexual violence. The odds ratio for women who experienced psychological violence was 104% higher than that of women who did not experience it in its association with physical violence. In its association with sexual violence, the odds ratio for women who experienced psychological violence was 86.1% higher than that of women who did not. This factor indicates that more effective public policies targeting psychological violence may prevent the other types of violence to which women are subjected.

Table 4 | Association between the type of violence experienced and the characteristics of victims and perpetrators: results of the logistic regression models, Varginha, Minas Gerais, 2010–2025

	Physical Violence[1]		Psychological Violence[2]		Sexual Violence[3]	
	Odds ratio	Standard error	Odds ratio	Standard error	Odds ratio	Standard error
Physical Violence			2,425*	0,414	0,108*	0,029
Psychological Violence	2,040*	0,353			1,861*	0,416
Sexual Violence	0,059*	0,015	1,870*	0,402		
Self-inflicted injury	0,078*	0,012	0,235*	0,050	0,009*	0,010
Race						
White						
Black	1,026	0,165	1,063	0,141	1,146	0,365
Yellow	0,240**	0,198	1,071	0,942	6,224*	4,897
Brown	1,278*	0,146	0,945	0,097	1,722*	0,412
Indigenous	0,058*	0,041			1,467	1,160
Age						
0-14 years						
15-29 years	0,647*	0,133	1,185	0,265	0,073*	0,022
30-49 years	0,675**	0,141	1,077	0,243	0,054*	0,016
50-59 years	0,696	0,191	0,971	0,282	0,029*	0,021
60 years or older	0,345*	0,115	1,244	0,371	0,040*	0,022
Local of occurrence						
Residence						
Public thoroughfare	3,025*	0,651	0,628*	0,084	1,518	0,430
Bar or similar	6,651*	3,963	0,238*	0,106	2,868**	1,639
Collective Housing	1,861	1,209	0,783	0,372	1,737	1,151
Sports facility	2,327	1,589	2,236*	0,805	0,391	0,331
Other location	1,204	0,368	0,941	0,213	4,715*	2,103
Sex of the perpetrator						
Male						
Female	0,678*	0,099	0,436*	0,059	0,050*	0,025
Both sexes	0,435**	0,186	0,792	0,217	0,095*	0,069
Number of individuals involved	0,704**	0,131	0,783*	0,094	0,852	0,216

Year						
2010						
2011						
2012	2,264	2,185	0,23	0,382		
2013	27,347*	20,856	0,301	0,429	0,006*	0,011
2014	39,114*	23,855	0,201	0,284	0,005*	0,009
2015	22,641*	10,681	0,111	0,158	0,005*	0,009
2016	18,480*	12,163	0,208	0,295	0,002*	0,003
2017	6,497*	2,322	0,312	0,442	0,010*	0,018
2018	2,530*	0,749	0,212	0,300	0,010*	0,017
2019	3,097*	0,880	0,197	0,279	0,024*	0,042
2020	3,701*	1,111	0,174	0,246	0,008*	0,014
2021	2,102*	0,579	0,198	0,28	0,011*	0,019
2022	2,939*	0,864	0,267	0,378	0,009*	0,016
2023	2,389*	0,681	0,339	0,479	0,027*	0,046
2024	1,895*	0,527	0,279	0,396	0,036*	0,06
2025			0,567	0,804	0,008*	0,013

* (p<0.05); ** (p<0.10).
[1] Pseudo-(R^2): 0.425; Number of observations: 3,224; Area under the ROC curve: 0.903.
[2] Pseudo-(R^2): 0.176; Number of observations: 3,225; Area under the ROC curve: 0.778.
[3] Pseudo-(R^2): 0.481; Number of observations: 3,219; Area under the ROC curve: 0.937.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from SINAN/SES-MG.

These results reinforce studies describing a cycle of violence that generally begins with psychological and moral abuse and progresses to more severe forms, such as physical and sexual abuse. Within this cycle, there are periods in which perpetrators apologize and promise to change but continue to assault women. This pattern may lead to femicide, defined as the homicide of women for gender-related reasons and associated with power dynamics influenced by social and historical constructions of masculine and feminine symbols in society (Oliveira; Santana, 2024). The relationship between sexual and physical violence was negative, indicating that women who experienced one of these forms of violence generally did not experience the other. The same pattern was observed for self-inflicted injuries in relation to all types of violence, including physical (0.078), psychological (0.235), and sexual violence (0.009) (Table 4).

Regarding race, at a significance level of 5%, the probability of experiencing physical violence was 27.8% higher among Brown women and 94.2% lower among Indigenous women than among White women. Furthermore, the odds of experiencing sexual violence were 72.2% higher among Brown women and even higher among Yellow women, with odds of 6.224 compared with White women, according to the data in Table 4. These findings reinforce analyses emphasizing the intrinsic inseparability of gender and racial oppression in capitalist societies. They indicate that, in Varginha society, non-White women, such as Brown and Yellow women, are even more likely to be subjected to sexual violence than White women (Federici, 2017; Saffioti, 2001). Brazilian racism, which is markedly phenotypic and rooted in Eurocentric coloniality, socially inferiorizes non-White people to justify economic, cultural, and social injustices (Castro, 2020).

As Castro (2020) suggests, the exercise of economic power by the core nations of capitalism, namely Western European nations and the United States of America (USA), depends on their capacity for violence and intimidation, as well as on the symbolic power produced by racism. Racism contributes to the control of bodies, which are regarded as "production machines" under capitalism and, in the case of some women, valued for their reproductive capacity, thereby replenishing the workforce.

In this regard, as Federici (2023) points out, control over bodies—which reached its peak under slavery, particularly over Black and Indigenous women—also remains essential to the organization of labor in capitalist societies. Sexual violence persists in contemporary capitalist societies as an instrument for exercising power, producing profound physical and emotional effects that deprive victims of a sense of ownership over their own bodies (Oliveira; Santana, 2024). It is therefore no coincidence that, as Rita Segato (2022) observes, sexual violence, including rape, continues to be used as an instrument of war and subjugation in both prison settings and armed conflicts between nations.

Regarding age, the odds of experiencing violence decreased as age increased, indicating that the group aged 0–14 years is more susceptible to physical and sexual violence. No significant association was found between this variable and psychological violence. The odds of experiencing physical and sexual violence decreased with age, although the odds ratio for sexual violence among women over 60 years of age was higher (0.040) than that of women aged 50–59 years (0.029), which had the lowest odds ratio among the age groups (Table 4).

Among the significant variables related to the location of occurrence, the odds of experiencing physical violence were higher in public thoroughfares (3.025) and bars or similar establishments (6.651) than in residences. Psychological violence was more evident in sports facilities (2.236), with a lower probability of occurrence in public thoroughfares (0.628) and bars (0.238) than in residences. In turn, the odds of experiencing sexual violence increased considerably in other locations (4.715), including schools, commercial and service establishments, industrial and construction sites, among others (Table 4).

According to Silva, Tiellet, and Dan (2021), pursuant to Article 56 of the Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente [Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA)], schools should be spaces in which children and adolescents feel safe reporting violence, as they should constitute places of protection, learning, and the safeguarding of their rights and duties. However, the study data indicate that schools in Varginha are the primary locations of sexual violence, with the highest prevalence among those aged 0–14 years.

In general, the perpetrators of violence were male, and a negative association was found with the types of violence perpetrated by female individuals and by individuals of both sexes. Regarding the perpetrators, no significant associations at the 5% level could be established between the number of persons involved and physical or sexual violence. However, the odds of experiencing psychological violence were 21.70% lower when only one person was involved (Table 4).

Finally, regarding the years analyzed, the results presented in Table 4 indicate that the periods with the highest risk of physical violence were 2014, 2013, and 2015. It is also important to note an increase in the probability of experiencing physical violence over time. No statistically significant difference was found in the incidence of psychological violence. Regarding sexual violence, a decrease in the probability of occurrence was observed over the years analyzed.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In general terms, according to information obtained from SINAN/SES-MG, the number of records of violence against women in both the municipality of Varginha and the state of Minas Gerais as a whole showed an upward trend from 2010 to October 28, 2025, as well as greater vulnerability among Black, young, and transsexual women. More specifically, regarding the characteristics of women subjected to violence in Varginha, the findings showed that their mean age during the period analyzed was 31 years and that 42.07% were between 15 and 29 years old. Most were Black—35.35% were Brown and 14.4% were Black—and 95.57% self-identified as heterosexual. In 50.5% of cases, the violence was recurrent; that is, it was not the first time the complainant had experienced an episode of violence.

Unlike other crimes, in cases of violence against women, the victim's residence was the location with the highest incidence of occurrences (76.64%), as indicated by IPEA (2025). Among the forms of violence experienced, 20.19% of the victims reported psychological violence, 74.29% reported physical violence, and 4.79% reported sexual violence. Most perpetrators were male: 66.35% of those responsible for cases of physical violence, 78.76% of those responsible for psychological violence, and 95.15% of those responsible for sexual violence.

The study also revealed an association between different forms of violence against women in Varginha from 2010 to October 28, 2025. For example, the odds of women subjected to psychological violence also experiencing physical violence were 104% higher, while their odds of also experiencing sexual violence were 86.1% higher than those of women who did not experience psychological violence. This factor suggests that more effective public policies targeting psychological violence may prevent the other types of violence to which women are subjected.

Regarding ethnic and racial identity, at a significance level of 5%, the probability of experiencing physical violence was 27.8% higher among Brown women and 94.2% lower among Indigenous women than among White women. Furthermore, the odds of experiencing sexual violence were 72.2% higher among Brown women and even higher among Yellow women, whose odds were 6.224 compared with White women. This information reinforces the intersectionality between gender-based violence and racism against women, as demonstrated by the data from Varginha.

Related to age, the probability of experiencing violence decreases as age increases, indicating that children aged 0–14 years are more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence. No significant relationship was found between this variable and psychological violence. A decrease in the probability of physical and sexual violence was observed as age increased, although the probability of sexual violence was higher in the group aged 60 years or older (0.040) than in the group aged 50–59 years (0.029).

Given these results, the following measures, among others, are recommended to public authorities in order to support institutions in safeguarding women's rights and contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which concerns gender equality: 1) Assess the capacity of the protection network serving women subjected to domestic violence. 2) Expand services for children aged 0–11 years, as they represented most of those who witnessed violence against women within the domestic environment. 3) Expand educational measures aimed at preventing violence against women and addressing racism, since the data indicate an intersection between gender-based and racial violence in the municipality in 2022. 4) Given the low educational attainment of most women who survived violence, strengthen municipal education policies designed to keep girls and women in school, thereby providing them with better educational and employment opportunities, which may contribute to preventing violence against them. 5) Collect more information about perpetrators, as such data remain scarce and, consequently, undermine the planning of preventive measures. 6) Conduct campaigns that work directly with men, who, according to the study data, constitute most perpetrators of violence against women. This recommendation also considers that most assaults occur in residences, a setting to which public security forces do not have the same access they generally have when implementing public safety policies. 7) Because 50.5% of the cases of violence against women in Varginha involved recurrence, strengthen public policies directed at perpetrators to prevent the repetition of cases in the municipality. 8) Conduct specific campaigns to prevent and address violence against transsexual women, who represented 22.58% of the victims of violence against women in Varginha from 2010 to October 28, 2025. 9) Raise public awareness, particularly among men, of other forms of violence that are often considered less harmful but may lead to even more serious violations, given the associations between different forms of violence against women observed in the study. 10) Intensify educational campaigns in schools because, according to the study, girls aged 0–14 years were at greater risk of experiencing physical and sexual violence in Varginha, considering that schools were the primary locations where sexual violence occurred.

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