

Effect of Domestic Abuse on Women's Homelessness in Cork City: Professional Workers' Perspective

Kuye Ganiyat Abolaji*

Department of Applied Social Studies, Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland

*Corresponding author: ganiyat20@hotmail.com

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Abstract In Ireland, domestic abuse is a serious social and public health quagmire, which its menace is correspondingly growing with the homeless status of families especially those headed by women. However, studies conducted in this direction are mostly targeted at the victims of domestic abuse neglecting the opinions of professional workers who provide support services to these victims. This study therefore determined the impact of domestic abuse on women homelessness in Cork City as expressed by professional workers. The study adopted the mixed method research design. The convenience sampling technique was used for the selection 23 professional staff, which served as research subjects. Both quantitative (online survey self-designed questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) data collection methods were utilised for the study. Quantitative data were statistically treated with frequency counts and percentages, while qualitative data were content analysed. Findings from both the quantitative, and qualitative analysis revealed that, emotional/psychological abuse was the most common form of domestic abuse experienced by women. Result also shows that: personality trait (91.03%), as well as early childhood experience of and exposure to violence (95.66%) were major contributing factors to domestic abuse. The study also found that domestic abuse is a major factor of women becoming homeless (87.0%). In furtherance, the study discovered that majority of abused women always avoid confrontations with their partners (39.13%), remain silent with the hope that the situation will improve (17.39%, while few women always seek social support or report to the police (13.03% respectively). The study concluded that, although most victims/abused women exercise some self-management actions, it is not enough to prevent its consequential effect, as domestic abuse has a devastating effect on women becoming homeless. Thus, there is need for further research in order to develop approaches that will efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the women who are experiencing or have /experienced domestic abuse.

Keywords: *domestic abuse, professional workers, victims, abused women*

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1. Introduction

This research explores the social, psychological, physical, health and emotional impact of domestic abuse on women homelessness, which could be studied from a comprehensive perspective of professional workers (social care worker, social worker, supervisor, support worker, health care worker and managers of health organizations) working in the social work sector in Cork city.

2. Background

Domestic abuse is a violation of the fundamental rights of humans and often results in serious injury or death. The abuse can happen in different forms, for example, it could be physical: sexual; emotional; social or a combination of all. Physical abuse can include aggression actions, such as beatings; throwing stuff or slapping. However, in

emotional abuse, the abuser frequently embarrasses, and put down their victims. The perpetrators typically use threats; controlling of their victim's economic decision and their physical activities; social isolation; verbal insults, and baseless allegations of infidelity, just to hurt their partner/victims, and once the violence starts, it commonly persevere, and gets bad over time. The victims of domestic abuse experience continuous horror and stress; living in fright of the next incident ([1]: 158), thereby run, or abandon their homes. Recent research findings further observed that, domestic abuse is one of the major contributors to families, especially those headed by women, becoming homeless globally [2] including Ireland [3]. Specifically, 1,803 Irish women across all demographic groups and regions are currently experiencing homelessness nationwide which was largely occasioned by a host of multiplier effects like structural disadvantage, poverty, housing market failure, economic factors (rising rents and a severe contraction of affordable housing supply), and the rising menace of domestic abuse; with 1,363 of those abused women currently accessing support services, in the

Dublin region [4]. However, one of the major factor suffering from neglect, and dearth of research evidences, which is dealing the worst deathblow on homeless status of women, living within the Dublin region (a region which is inclusive of the study area -Cork City), is that, of domestic abuse. This background therefore informs the curiosity of the researchers to ascertain whether domestic abuse is a predictor of women homelessness, considering the rate of family homelessness in Cork City.

The Study Area (Cork City)

Cork City in Ireland is one of the oldest cities, in the country, and dates back to 915, when it was inhabited by the Vikings. It is located in south-west Ireland, in the province of Munster. The total population of Cork City, which currently stood at 417,211, with 206,953 males and 210,258 females [5], makes it the third largest city on the island of Ireland, after Dublin and Belfast, and the second largest in the Republic of Ireland [6]. However, from the population, 215,813 are single, 167,195 are married, 8,933 are separated, 9,006 are divorced, and 16,264 are widowed. In terms of housing, the total number of homes in Cork totals 146,442 structures. In recent time, reports by the Irish Times revealed that out of the 6,052 adults and 3,755 children including 1,739 families currently homelessness in Ireland ([7]: 1), a total of 91 families are living in homeless services in the South West region (Cork and Kerry), representing 128 adults and 222 children. The majority of these homeless people are living in Cork [8].

Problem Statement

Abuse against women by their partner is a social problem of huge percentage. Report from face-to-face interviews with 42,000 women by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in 2014 observed that 26% (10,920) of Irish women had experienced physical and/or sexual abuse by a partner or non-partner since the age 15 [9], which makes it a serious social-economic, political and health quagmire. While global statistics varies slightly Barbados 30%; Canada 29%; Egypt 34%; New Zealand 35%; Nigeria 31%; Switzerland 20%; Turkey 42%; United Kingdom 32%; and United States of America 33%, women are the major victims across the globe, Ireland inclusive [2]. This rising prevalence and incidences as revealed by research evidences [10,11] is echoed with rising issues over low prosecution and conviction rates of perpetrators, high withdrawal rates of complaints by victims, and the fact that among women, domestic abuse is often a hidden and personal issue, which centres on culture, norms, traditions, and religious beliefs. This is what the popular African music singer Late Fela Ransomkuti termed "Suffering and Smiling". This scenario of silence-culture along with victim's stigmatization allows the abuse to continue, inflicting physical and emotional damage on the victims as well as their family members. Surprisingly, some of these victims see it as 'family matters', as results emanating from the FRA [9] survey attested that about 57 per cent of Irish women said they had reasons for not contacting the Gardaí followings the most serious incidence of abuse and that they prefer to deal with the issue themselves or involved a friend or relative. More so, if this problem is combined with that of gaps in housing provisions, as homelessness policy does not adequately incorporate the housing needs of women (and children) where that need arises from domestic abuse

[12,13]; then there is a potential national disaster. The question at this juncture is: how are solutions to families becoming homeless to be found when one of the root causes of women and children becoming homeless is domestic abuse and it is rarely even acknowledged. These major challenges inspired the researchers towards conducting this study in order to explore the link between domestic abuse and homelessness among women living in Cork city.

Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of this research is to investigate the effect of domestic abuse on women homelessness in order to bring awareness to the issue and change society perspective about homeless women. Specifically, this study intends to:

- explore the forms of domestic abuse experienced among women living in Cork City as expressed by professional workers;
- ascertain the factors that contribute to the abuse experienced by majority of women living in Cork City as expressed by professional workers;
- determine the effects of domestic abuse on the psychological, physical, health and homelessness status of abused women as expressed by professional workers;
- find out the actions taken by abused-women in preventing or managing domestic abuse in their relationship as expressed by professional workers; and
- Highlight the measures that can be taken to address the problem of domestic abuse-caused homelessness among women living in Cork City as expressed by professional workers.

Research Questions

The following sub-questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the forms of domestic abuse experienced among women living in Cork City as expressed by professional workers?
2. What are the factors that contribute to the abuse, experienced by majority of women living in Cork City, as expressed by professional workers?
3. What effects dose domestic abuse has on psychological, physical, health and homelessness status of abuse women as expressed by professional workers?
4. What are the actions taken by the women in preventing or managing domestic abuse in their relationship as expressed by professional workers?
5. What measures can be taken to address the problem of domestic abuse-caused homelessness among women living in Cork City as expressed by professional workers?

3. Literature Review

There are numerous descriptions of domestic abuse espoused in Irish Research. The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Ireland defined domestic abuse as:

"the use of physical or emotional force or threat of physical force, including sexual violence in close adult

relationships. This includes violence perpetrated by a spouse, partner, son or daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim” ([14: 12]).

Rennison ([15]: 1) defined domestic abuse as a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Safe Ireland [16] described domestic abuse as the pattern of coercive or dominating behaviours used by one individual over another within an intimate relationship. From this definition two major ingredients can be espoused, namely; power and control and coercive control. By power and control Safe Ireland [16] noted that the tenets of domestic abuse roots in the desire of the abuser to dominate their partner by utilizing ranges of behaviours to gain authority, over the other individual, while coercive control explained the style of sustained psychological and emotional abuse of an intimate partner. In view of this definition, the Office for National Statistics [17] noted that definition of domestic abuse goes beyond power and mere coercing; it deeply affects the physical, emotional, social and financial wellbeing of individuals and families. It can also involve the isolation from friends and family; destruction of property; threats to others including children; stalking; and control over finance, personal items, food, and transportation. It can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender, and geographic boundaries [16].

In order to address this issue of domestic abuse, legal instruments at the international level were enacted; of which Ireland is a signatory to. Notably the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, which the Republic of Ireland acceded to in 1985, and Optional Protocol (the acceptance of the right to be monitored and to have enforcement actions instigated) in 2000; the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) which Ireland signed in 1968, but only ratified the Convention in 2000; the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which was signed by the Irish State in 2007 but the state has not yet ratified the convention; and the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe on Preventing and Combating Abuse against Women and Domestic Abuse which was signed by Ireland in 2015. More so at the national level, Ireland has also designed and enacted policies like the: First National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Abuse 2010 - 2014; Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Abuse 2016 - 2021; National Strategy for Women and Girls (NSWG) 2017-2020; Garda Síochána Domestic Abuse Intervention Policy (2017); and Health Services Executive (HSE) Policy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender based Abuse (2010) for implementation in order to reduce the menace of domestic abuse.

What is homelessness?

For the purpose of this study, homelessness has been defined in diverse way. Homelessness is a multifaceted issue with no one cause nor one solution, and becoming homeless is a traumatic experience. According to Mayock, Sheridan and Parker ([12]: 60), homelessness is the problem encounter by people who lack a supportive, safe, secure, affordable and decent place to live, not just get a

physical place to sleep but the wider definition of homeless is a person who are houseless; roofless or live in inadequate and insecure housing. Homelessness has increased dramatically in our society. Quoting the Housing Act, Walsh and Harvey ([13]: 20) defined homelessness as “*if a person may not reasonably continue to occupy their home or he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other institution*”. This implies that, a woman who is out of her home because of domestic abuse and in emergency accommodation is considered homelessness [13,18]. Studies in this direction showed that, Ireland is currently experiencing the highest level of homelessness from the time when administration records commenced [4]. In 2017, 8,270 people were homeless, while 46.5% of them were aged 24 or young [4]. The Irish Times revealed that 9807 were

Forms of domestic abuse women experienced

Women are subjected to different forms of domestic abuse by their intimate partner. These include physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, neglect, economic abuse, spiritual abuse and emotional abuse [10]. Findings from a multi-country study [19] indicated that domestic abuse was widespread in the studied countries. E.g., Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Montenegro and Thailand, with 13–61% of women have experienced physical violence by a partner, 6–59% reported sexual abuse by a partner at some point in their lives, and 20–75% reported experiencing one emotionally abusive act, or more, from a partner in their lifetime [19]. In Ireland, survey by Women’s Aid [20] revealed that, 16,946 disclosures of domestic abuse against women of which 11,078 disclosures were emotional abuse, 3,502 disclosures were physical abuse, 695 disclosures were sexual abuse while, 1,671 disclosures were financial abuse. Therefore, forms of abuse are multiple and overlapping, and used methodically by the perpetrators to ensure conformity. In another study carried out by Women Aid [21], it was reported that two third of the participants revealed that they experienced physical abuse at least on a weekly basis and one third revealed that psychological abuse was a daily characteristic of their relationship.

Factors responsible for domestic abuse

Many factors can contribute to domestic abuse; therefore, it is important to research the factors as it gives a complete understanding to why women find themselves in abusive relationship, why people are abuser and why they need to access domestic abuse services. Some of the factors in literature include upbringing, low self-esteem, and psychosocial stressor. Adebayo and Kolawole ([22]: 53) observed that cultural/societal beliefs, which means, ideology can become dangerous when taken to extreme level; dependence on the husband for sustainability, political imbalance, addiction to drug and alcohol, gender-insensitive criminal justice system, ethnicity and low level of education are factors influencing domestic abuse. From the psychological and sociological perspective, Walsh and Harvey [13] attributed domestic abuse among women to psychological (personality traits and mental characteristics of the spouse), jealousy, social stress, social learning, and power and control. Study carried out by Onyekalheako ([23]: 564) amongst women within 10 orthodox churches in the eastern town of Orlu, Nigeria showed that different contributing factors for domestic abuse included financial

demands/constraints which was responsible in 123 cases (32.2%) of abuse, incitement accounted for 53 (13.9%). Alcohol intoxication/ being drunk was the sole factor in 40 cases (10.5%), spurned sexual advances resulted in 29 women (7.6%) being abused by their husbands [23].

Effect of domestic abuse on women

Domestic abuse is a serious social matter, which can have a destructive and long-standing effect on the clients, their families and society as whole. According to Safe Ireland [16], domestic abuse is costing the state economy roughly €2.2 billion annually. In the study carried out by Basile, Jones and Smith [24], thirty-six percent of women experiencing abuse in their relationship have high rate of post-traumatic stress disorder and 50 percent experienced major depressive episode. Study conducted by the World Health Organization [2] summarized that, common health consequences of women who suffer domestic abuse include: post-traumatic stress disorder; depression; psychosomatic problems and phobias. Physically or emotionally, women who have experienced abuse are at higher risk for the excessive use of nicotine, alcohol, and medications for several mental disorder such as antipsychotics, antidepressants and stimulants. They also have attempted suicide five times more often. Recent report by Focus Ireland [4] on the pathways of families into homelessness further revealed that, five of the seventy-two surveyed respondents indicated that domestic abuse had negatively affected their housing stability in the past.

Actions taken by women in preventing and managing domestic abuse

Measures have been taken at the personal level to reduce specific and immediate risk of domestic abuse. Survey conducted by the Raeisi ([25]:87) highlighted a range of actions taken by abused women in response to violence incidents, for instance contacting domestic violence service providers such as the police, physicians, counsellors and clergy; seeking help from the crisis centres or disclosing the abuse to family and friends. Findings by Ashimolowo and Otufale ([26]:110) revealed that, the most striking coping strategies adopted by the women to ameliorate domestic abuse were not fighting back and defying the perpetrators or confrontation and not doing anything about it or remaining silent with the hope that the situation will improve. Apparently, preventing women from domestic abuse-caused homelessness is not an easy task as most women do not disclose it nor seek for help. In view of this, Fareo [27] suggested that, the response to domestic abuse is generally a collective effort between first responder (Gardaí), counselling services and health care provider.

In view of this empirical review, it is germane to note that, oceans of studies have been conducted on domestic abuse but little empirical studies show its effect on women becoming homelessness within the geographical spin of this research. Likewise most studies were carried out among the victims of domestic abuse neglecting professional workers view or perception. Thus, for neutrality, authenticity, and extension of frontiers of knowledge, the extent of this effect can be better appreciated when considered from the perspective of the professional workers. This is because victims of domestic abuse serve as their clients and they offer variety of supports services to these victims.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The research design for this dissertation is mixed methods approach which involved both quantitative (self-designed questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) methodology of data collection and analysis. Mixed methods research as noted by McNabb [28] focuses on collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a series of studies. The choice of this design was because of its usefulness in gathering data relating to peoples' opinion over a short period of time.

4.2. Population

The population of the study consists of all the professionals who are members of the social care Internet-user community group working with women who had experienced domestic abuse and homeless within Cork City. This population was chosen as they are easily accessible and met the inclusion criteria as they offered support for women who had experienced domestic abuse and there are also in good position to provide tangible information regarding this research. Exclusion criteria for questionnaire included those who are not on Facebook.

4.3. Sampling

Quantitative Research - Survey

Sampling is the selection of a larger population to survey. Thus, the researcher used convenience non-probability sampling techniques in order to choose the research population. Non-probability sampling can be defined as a technique that extracts samples in a process that does not give all the elements in the target population equal chances of participation ([29]: 54). It is specifically targeting specific groups of people. The choice of this sampling technique was based on the fact that it gave easy access to the targeted population, as the survey instrument was posted on the web.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative approach was carried out in form of semi-structured interviews with professionals including social worker and social care workers to give insight into how professionals perceive the impact of domestic abuse on homelessness among women. These individuals were chosen to be interviewed as their knowledge and opinions will prove valuable to the results. Purposive sampling was used in the process of selecting the interviewees. Purposive sampling can be defined as a "technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study" (Research-methodology.net).

Instruments

The tools used for the data collection for this study were self-designed, validated and pretested questionnaire (reliability index of 0.79) and semi-structured interview. The self-designed questionnaire which was administered on social workers consist of 25 questions which were both open and closed ended in nature which corresponded with the sub headings. Question 1-5 addressed the

demographics of the participants, covering basic personal information. Questions six to eleven came under Factors that contribute to domestic abuse. Questions twelve to fifteen came under common types of domestic abuse. Questions sixteen to twenty-one came under effect/impact of domestic abuse and Questions twenty-two to twenty-four came under action women take to prevent domestic abuse). In obtaining the qualitative data, Semi-structured interviews were conducted which consist of 13 open ended questions to gain an insight into relevant information. This consisted of five sub sections which as follows:

- a) Basic demographics of the participant - 2 items
- b) Forms of domestic abuse - 3 items
- c) Factors responsible for domestic abuse -3 items
- d) The effect of domestic abuse on women - 2 items
- e) Actions taken by abused women - 3 items

All interviews were recorded using the smart phone to gather information and all the recordings were deleted. Thematic analysis was used in assessing the data from the transcribed interviews.

Ethics

It is highly important to consider the ethical issues as part of the research. This research was conducted in line with the guiding conduct which is held by a profession, to maintain privacy and confidentiality in line with the

CORU Code of Professional Conduct; Research Ethic and Ethics for Social Care Professionals. In this regard, ethical issues would be addressed by getting informed consent of the individual participants, and respondents would be assured of both confidentiality and careful use of the information provided for the purpose of this study and not otherwise. Also, all the information and other identities of the subjects would be treated confidential and no information would be exposed to any other source without the consent of the respondents.

5. Results and Discussions

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the results from the research data. The analysis and interpretation reveals the findings from both qualitative and quantitative research.

5.1. Results from Quantitative Analysis

The surveys were created on www.surveymonkey.com and distributed via SCI social media sites for professionals working with women who had experienced domestic abuse. The survey was completed by 23 participants.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by their Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Statement	Study Sample		
	Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
GENDER	Female	19	82.6
	Male	04	17.4
	Total	23	100.0
AGE	18 – 25 yrs	2	8.7
	26 – 35 yrs	8	34.8
	36 – 45 yrs	9	39.1
	46 – 55 yrs	4	17.4
	55 yrs and above	0	0
	Total	23	100.0
LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION	Leaving Certificate	0	0
	FETAC	1	4.3
	Bachelor's degree	14	60.9
	Master's degree	6	26.1
	Doctorate	0	0
OCCUPATION/ROLE	Others	2	8.7
	Total	23	100.0
	Health care worker	1	4.4
	Support worker	3	13.0
	Social care worker	12	52.2
	Social worker	3	13.0
	Supervisor	3	13.0
Manager of health organization	1	4.4	
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN AREA OF DOMESTIC ABUSE	Total	23	100.0
	1 – 4 yrs	4	17.4
	5 – 10 yrs	13	56.5
	11 – 15 yrs	3	13.0
	16 – 20 yrs	2	8.7
	21 – 25 yrs	1	4.4
	26 – 30 yrs	0	0
	31 yrs and above	0	0
Total	23	100.0	

Source: Online Survey, 2019.

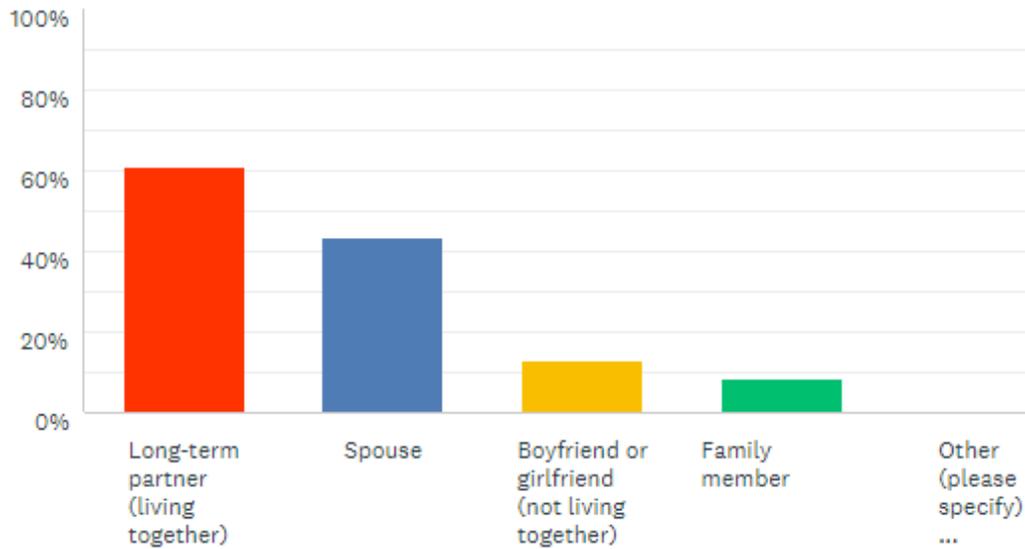


Figure 1. Relationship between abused women and their abuser at the time of the abuse (Answered: 23 Skipped: 0)

Table 1 shows that vast majority of the respondents were female, 82.61% (19) with only 17.39% (4) male. Of the 23 respondents, it was revealed that most of the respondents 40.91% (9) were between 36-45, 36.36% (8) were between 25-35, 13.64% (3) were aged between 46-55 and 9.09% (2) were age between 18-25. N=22 for one participant decline to answer this. The majority of respondents were educated to degree level. Bachelor's degree held by 60.87%, (14) Master's degree 26.09% (6), FETAC level 74.35% (1), and Others 8.70% (2). On the occupational role of the respondents, a total of five separate job titles were indicated, with the greatest number working as social care worker 52.17% (12), social worker 13.04% (3), Supervisor 13.04% (3), Support worker 13.04% (3), Health care worker 4.35% (1) and manager of health organisation 4.35% (1). Analysis from the table further indicates that 59.09% (13) of respondents had worked between 1-4years, 5-10 years 18.18% (4), 11-15 years 13.64% (3), 15-20 years 4.55% (1), and 21-25 4.55% (1).

Of the 23 respondent's, findings revealed that majority of the women 56.54% (13) were long-term partner with their abuser. 21.74% (5) were spouse. 13.04% (3) were boyfriend while 8.70% (2) are family member.

Research Question 1: What are the forms of domestic abuse experienced among women living in Cork City?

Unsurprisingly, 100% (23) respondents rated emotional and verbal abuse as common types of abuse, physical 95.66% (22), financial 78.26% (18), sexual 47.83% (11), spiritual 13.05% (3).

Research Question 2: What are the factors that contribute to the abuse experienced by majority of women living in Cork City?

Q8. To what extent did the following contribute to the development of abusive behaviour: (1) Psychological (personality traits); (2) Social Learning; (3) Cultural/societal beliefs; (4) Poverty; (5) Social Stress; and (6) Jealousy.

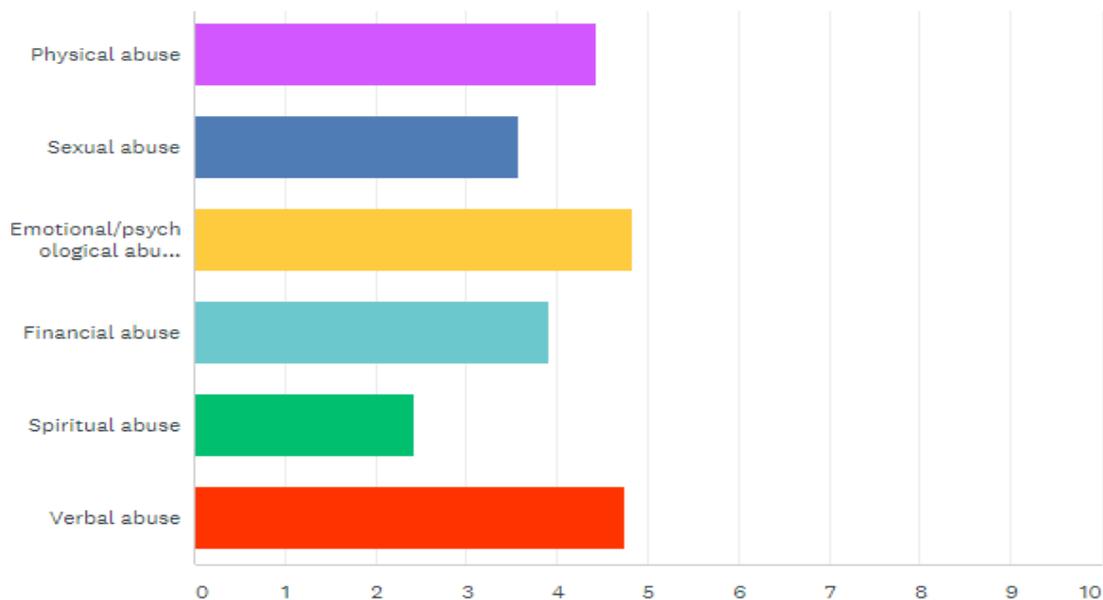


Figure 2. Forms of abuse common among women living in Cork City (Answered: 23 Skipped: 0)

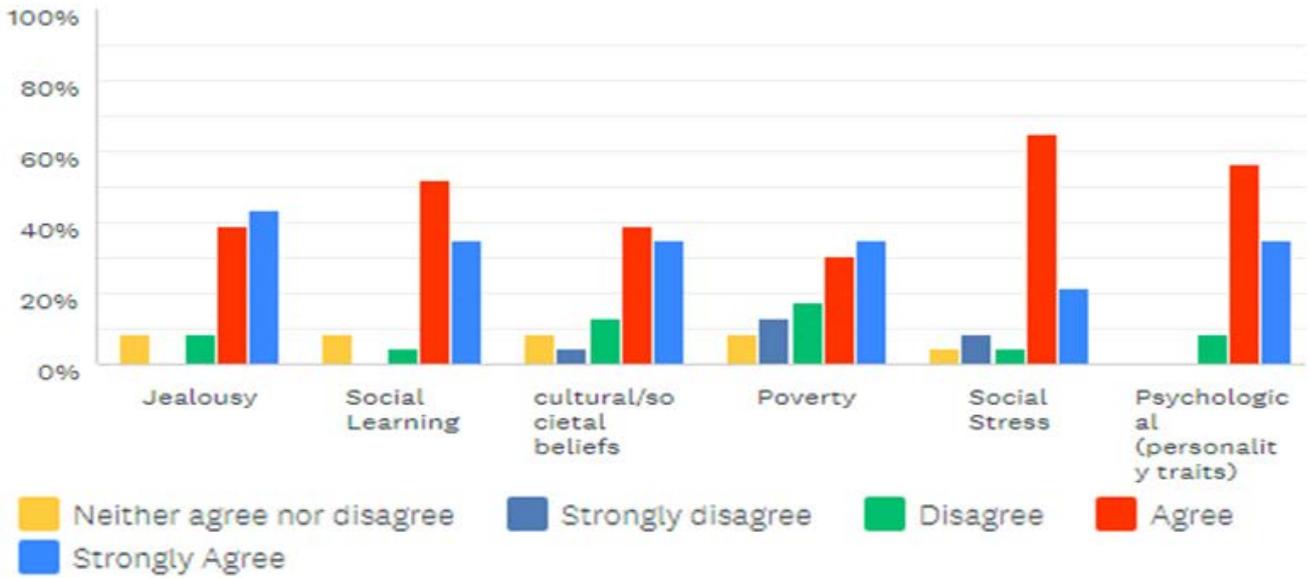


Figure 3. Specific factors responsible for domestic abuse (Answered: 23 Skipped 0)

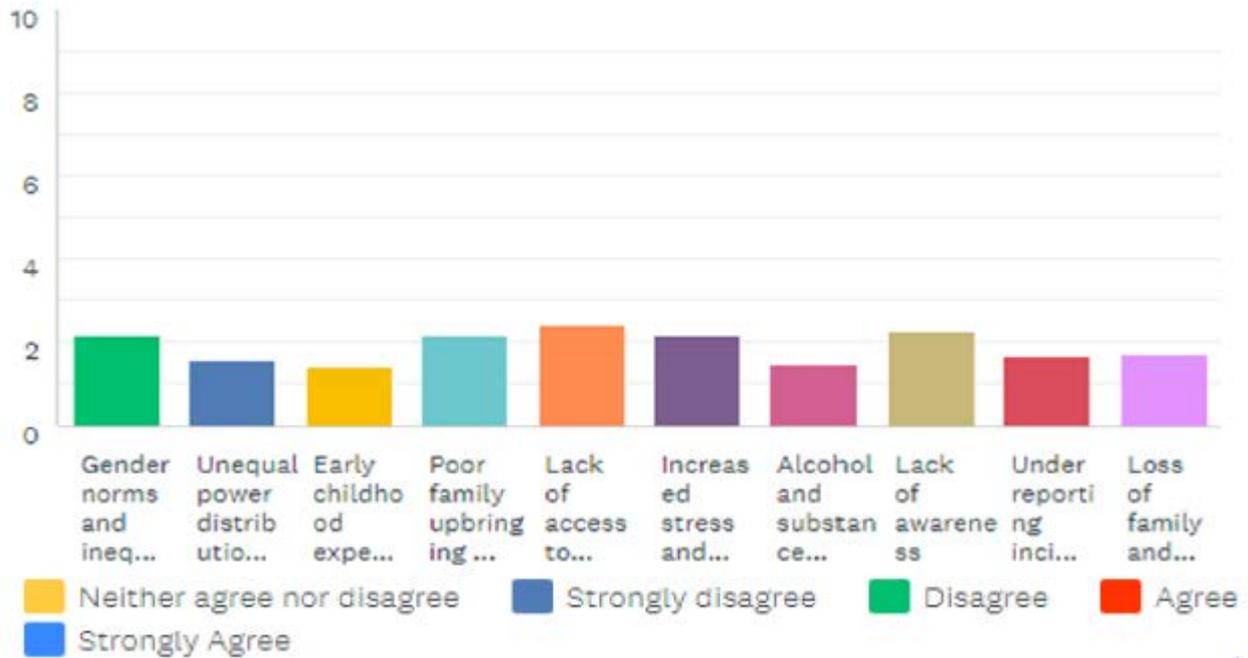


Figure 4. General factors responsible for domestic abuse (Answered: 23 Skipped: 0)

Of the above, personality traits and social stress was the main factors that contribute to the development of abusive behaviour while poverty is the least when ranged from:

- Psychological (personality traits) Agree 91.03% (21)
- Social Stress 86.96% (20)
- Social Learning 86.92% (20)
- Jealousy 82.61% (19)
- Cultural/societal beliefs 73.91% (17)
- Poverty 65.21% (15)

Substantial proportion of respondents agreed that early childhood experience and exposure to violence, and Alcohol and substance abuse are the main factors contribute to the abuse experienced by women, while Lack of awareness and knowledge of the law are the least. This ranged from:

- Early childhood experience and exposure to violence 95.66% (22).
- Alcohol and substance abuse 95.65% (22).

- Under reporting incidence of domestic abuse 95.66% (22).
- Unequal power distribution within household 95.66% (22).
- Loss of family and community support systems 91.31% (21).
- Gender norms and inequality 82.61% (19).
- Poor family upbringing and moral value 73.91% (17).
- Increase stress and conflicts about finances 65.22% (15).
- Lack of access to education and opportunity 65.21% (15).
- Lack of awareness and knowledge of the law 65.21% (15).

Research Question 3: What effects dose domestic abuse has on psychological, physical, health and homelessness status of abuse women?

Table 2. Psychological effects of domestic abuse on women

	UNLIKELY	SLIGHTLY	MODERATELY	LIKELY	EXTREMELY LIKELY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	56.52% 13	43.48% 10	23	4.43
Depression	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	17.39% 4	78.26% 18	23	4.74
Hypervigilance and panic attacks	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.70% 2	52.17% 12	39.13% 9	23	4.30
Self-destructive behaviour	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	13.04% 3	39.13% 9	47.83% 11	23	4.35
Emotional withdrawal	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	43.48% 10	56.52% 13	23	4.57
Fear and anxiety problem	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	13.04% 3	82.61% 19	23	4.78
Poor self-esteem	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	21.74% 5	78.26% 18	23	4.78
High amounts of stress	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.70% 2	26.09% 6	65.22% 15	23	4.57
Difficulty in trusting others	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	21.74% 5	73.91% 17	23	4.70
Lead to Psychiatric illnesses	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	47.83% 11	17.39% 4	30.43% 7	23	3.74
Increased risk of suicidality	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	30.43% 7	43.48% 10	21.74% 5	23	3.83

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0.

The above table when ranked shows that, post-traumatic stress disorder 100% (23), emotional withdraw 100% (23), poor self-esteem 100% (23), fear and anxiety problem 95.65% (22), depression 95.65% (22), difficulty in trusting 95.65% (22), high amounts of stress 91.31% (21), hypervigilance and panic attacks 91.31% (21) self-destructive behaviour 86.96% (20), increased risk of suicidality 65.22% (15) and psychiatric illnesses 47.82% (11).

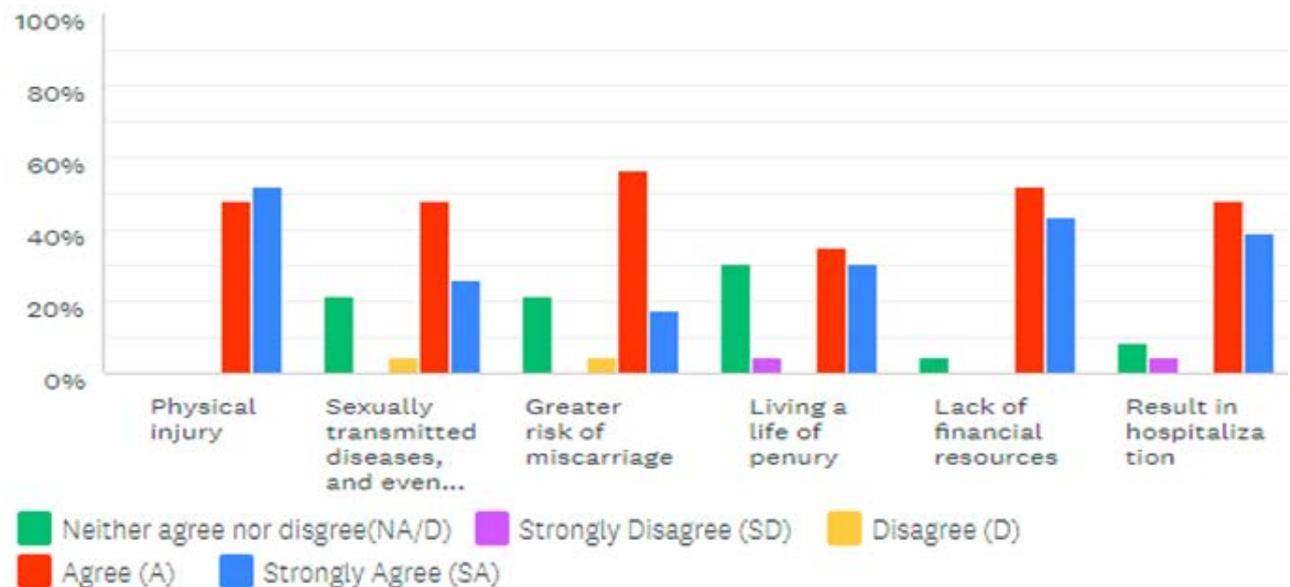


Figure 5. Physical and health impact of domestic abuse on women (Answered: 23 Skipped: 0)

The result from the above shows that physical injury 100% (23) and lack of financial resources 95.65% (22) had a high impact on abused women. Hospitalization 86.96% (20), sexually transmitted diseases 73.92% (17), risk of miscarriages 73.91% (17), and living a life of penury 65.21% (15) had a moderate impact on the physical and health status of abused women.

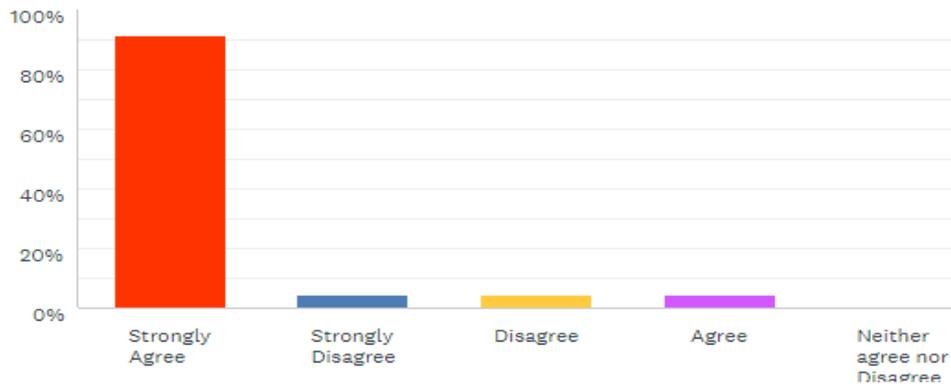


Figure 6. Significant effect of domestic abuse of abused women on their children (Answered: 23 Skipped: 0)

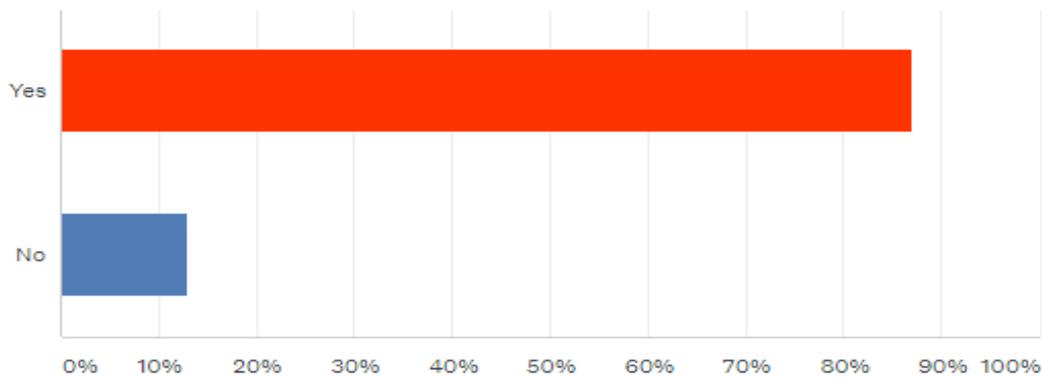


Figure 7. Effect of domestic abuse on women in becoming homeless (Answered: 23 Skipped 0)

Majority 95.66% (22) of respondents agreed that the abuse women experience has a significant effect on their children. Interesting to note that majority of the respondents 86.96% (20) agreed that domestic abuse is a contributing factor in becoming homeless.

Research Question 4: What are the actions taken by the women in preventing or managing domestic abuse in their relationship?

Four options ranging from Always = A, Often = O, Rarely = R and Never = N.

Table 3. Actions taken by the women in preventing or managing domestic abuse

	A	O	R	N	(NO LABEL)	TOTAL
Avoiding confrontations with spouse	39.13% 9	52.17% 12	4.35% 1	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	23
Doing nothing about it /remaining silent with the hope that the situation will improve	17.39% 4	65.22% 15	4.35% 1	13.04% 3	0.00% 0	23
Turn to alcohol or drugs to lessen the physical and emotional pain of the abuse	4.35% 1	69.57% 16	13.04% 3	13.04% 3	0.00% 0	23
Lying about perpetrators criminal activity	8.70% 2	73.91% 17	0.00% 0	13.04% 3	4.35% 1	23
Seek social support or help from family and friends.	13.04% 3	21.74% 5	60.87% 14	4.35% 1	0.00% 0	23
Acceptance/Remaining silent and not telling anyone about the abuse for fear of making the situation worse.	17.39% 4	69.57% 16	0.00% 0	13.04% 3	0.00% 0	23
Reporting to the police	13.04% 3	17.39% 4	56.52% 13	4.35% 1	8.70% 2	23

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0.

Majority of the respondents indicates that 39.13% (9) of women always use avoid confrontations to prevent or manage the abuse while 52.17% (12) often avoid confrontations. Similarly, 17.39% (4) and 69.57% (16) respectively of the respondents indicated always and often accept or remain silent and not tell anyone about the abuse for fear of making the situation worse. Further, 17.39%(4) and 65.22% (15) of the respondents indicated that women always and often do nothing when abused or remain silent with the hope that the situation

will improve, 69.57% (15) and 4.35% (1) respectively said women often and always turn to alcohol and drugs to lessen the physical and emotional pain of the abuse, while 8.7% (2) and 73.9% (17) lying about perpetrators criminal activity. 13.04% (3) of the respondents affirmed that women always and often 21.74% seek social support and report to the police.

Research Question 5: What measures can be taken to address the problem of domestic abuse-caused homelessness among women living in Cork City?

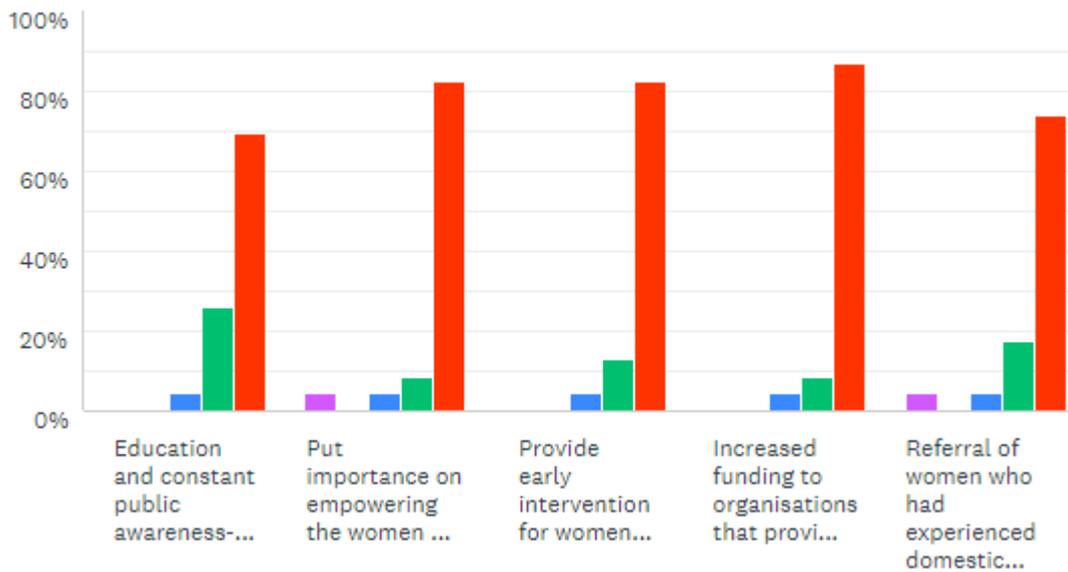


Figure 8. Measures that can be taken to address the problem of domestic abuse-caused homelessness (Answered: 23 Skipped: 0)

Of the above, over 95% (22) of the respondents agreed that all of the above can be done to address the issue of domestic abuse-caused homelessness among women.

5.2. Results from Qualitative Analysis

Table 4. Demographic Data

INTERVIEWEE	ROLE	GENDER	EXPIRIENCE
Interviewee One	Social-Worker (Child Protection) [SW]	Female	3 years
Interviewee Two	Social Care Worker [SCW1]	Female	1.5 years
Interviewee Three	Social Care Worker [SCW2]	Female	1. years

Table 5. Forms of Domestic Abuse

Interview Question	SW	SCW 1	SCW 2
How common is domestic abuse against women	“85% of victims of domestic abuse are woman, very significant, I would estimate, maybe 70% of my cases are domestic abuse”.	“It very common, I would say half of the people in the organisation may have experiences domestic violence. A lot of time there could be residents there who have experienced it but just not disclosed it with the staff”.	“I think it is very common, I don’t think we actually know the proper amount because there is a lot of undisclosed, people that don’t disclose their abuse but I think it is quite common”.
Most common types of abuse women experienced	“There is quite a lot of physical and financial abuse. In every single case there is emotional abuse so that is underlying abuse and on top of that you can have a layers of physical violence, have a layers of financial abuse.”	“Physical probably is what we see a lot, there is also be a psychological as well involves in emotional abuse but I suppose physical would have the most dramatically effect on them afterwards”.	“I think the one we see the most are probably physical and emotional, then we got sexual, financial those are kind of the top once but definite physical and emotional would probably be the most common types”.

Source: Field Survey (2019).

All the three participants stated that domestic abuse against women are very common, even though there are some women who doesn’t disclose their abuse. Additionally, they felt that emotional and physical abuse are quite common among women and this can lead to mental.

Table 6. Factors responsible for domestic abuse

Interview Question	SW	SCW1	SCW2
What do you think is contributing to domestic abuse?	“The perpetrator may have grown up in domestic abuse situation, it can be low self-esteem in himself, it can be combination of alcohol and drugs. it can be psychosocial stressor which are the stressor that they are environmental stressor.”	“In my opinion, I will say a lot of the time women get into these relationships quite innocently we say it could just be a bit psychological which knocks their confident and they slowly self-depreciate and self-esteem goes.”	“Oh God, there are so many things, you could look at it at angle of perpetrator background and you could say well he has come from a family where he witnesses abuse grown up. You could look at things like society and pressure in society, stress, financial and accommodation.”

Source: Field Survey (2019).

All of the participants are in agreement that grown up in domestic abuse situation, be low self-esteem, it could be combination of alcohol and drugs, narcissistic, psychosocial stressor whether it as to do with housing or working, anything can contribute really to somebody feeling stress which is why the housing situation is contributing to a high level of domestic abuse.

Table 7. Effect of domestic abuse

	SW	SCW 1	SCW 2
Most common effects of abuse on women experienced domestic abuse	“Depression, anxiety over-weight, underweight social-isolation, post-traumatic stress disorder.”	“I would say there is a lot of psychological effect, like depression would probably be the big thing, low self-esteem. There is constant like post-traumatic disorder going on.”	“Well you’ve got your physical effect, then you’ve got psychological impact, then you’ve got mental health problems like depression, anxiety, stress, it can even go as far as self-harm and suicide.”
Was domestic abuse a contributing factor in becoming homeless?	“Absolutely, it huge, very high rate in cork.”	“Oh yeah, and many women in there would be homeless because of domestic violent. I’m sure there are a lot of other contributing factors but the breaking point would have been domestic abuse.”	“Definitely, for good few of the women I have worked with, it is a contributing factor. If they have nowhere to go because of shame that hey are going to become homeless and again if they are financial dependant on their partner.”

Source: Field Survey (2019).

All interviewees’ beliefs that effect of domestic abuse are very traumatic for women experiencing it. There are a lot of psychological effect; mental health problems like depression, anxiety and stress, and there are a lot of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Table 8. Actions taken by women

Interview Questions	SW	SCW 1	SCW 2
What kind of action do you think these victims (especially women) of domestic abuse take in managing it.	“Victims who sought help rarely began with formal health or police services. They start by enduring... that all will be well.”	“Because of being ridiculed or treated with disdain most victims most times keep the issue of abuse to themselves for the sake that marriage or relationship is a private entity.”	“I think most of them live on drugs or alcohol just to ease off their problem.”

Source: Field Survey (2019).

All interviewees’ were of the opinion that most of the victims keep quite and endure the relationship because of likely stigmatization. Also it was observe from the respondents responses that most victims inform the designated authority as a last resort.

Table 9. Measures to address domestic abuse-based homelessness among women

Interview Questions	SW	SCW 1	SCW 2
Services in place for women experiencing homelessness due to domestic abuse?	“The first protocol is to ring the Gardaí. There is a service in North street called OSS, people can walk in or through referral. There is Tusla domestic violence social worker in literally every street in Cork where they can get advice.”	“We provide free counselling, we also have volunteer coming in and they do massages. There a lot of services there but I don’t know how effective they are.”	“I think that there are definite services, there is domestic violent refugee, there are support groups, there is domestic violent resource centres in cork and in Ireland. but I do think that maybe people who are experiencing it aren’t aware of them.”
What can be done to address the issue of domestic abuse-caused homelessness among women?	“I think better support for the women and most speedy responses, they need to be taken seriously from the very beginning.”	“I think it probable need to start at young age, it need to start like primary school, secondary school were education is on your own self-esteem”	“I do think that education from an early age so like in schools from first year, second year of school to start educating both boys and girls about be able to identify the behaviour or identify the symptoms of it.”

Source: Field Survey (2019).

Interviewees two and three stated that to reduce the menace of domestic abuse, education and better interventions for young people at earlier stage is important, perhaps in teenage years about what behaviors are acceptable and what are not should be provided. Also, workshops for building self-esteem. While interviewee one stated that speedy responses are needed in order to support and empower women. Make safety plans with women who decide to remain in a violent relationship and they should be provided with more emotional support, personal development and financial support to reconstruct their lives. They also indicate that there a lot of services that most women experiencing domestic abuse are not aware of. Victims who required help hardly ever began with health care provider or Gardaí services. In addition, they do not like to seek for support from other women, including female family members, neighbors, and health promoters. Because of being ridiculed or treated with indifference, instead, they keep it to themselves for the sake that relationship is a private matter and grieve in silence.

5.3. Discussion of Results

5.3.1. Forms of Abuse Experienced

Findings on the forms of abuse experienced among women living in Cork revealed that emotional/psychological was the most prevalent form of domestic abuse experienced with 100% (23) of experiencing this form of abuse. Other forms of abuse commonly experienced among women living in Cork are physical abuse 95.66% (22) and financial 78.26% (18). Further evidence highlighting this is the result from qualitative analysis where all the participants responded that *“emotional, psychological and physical abuse are the most common types of abuse they have seen.* SCW 1 also said *“physical abuse is quite common among women and has worsens over the years. The abuse will initially start small with bruises and then escalates to more severe injuries”.* This finding is consistent with a population-based study [2] which reported that, worldwide, 35% of women have experienced either intimate partner abuse (physical and/or psychological abuse by an intimate partner) or non-partner abuse or both in their lifetime. This is further corroborated by the observation of Domestic Violence Prevention Centre [30] who affirmed that verbal abuse and emotional abuse are the most common forms of abuse and are always present in majority of abusive relationships. This is because abusers start by use of words, insults and other behaviours to control, to intimidate and to cause fear in their victim, which often cause devastating effect on the women self-confidence and her self-esteem. In fact, the damage caused by verbal and emotional abuse often continues after the relationship has ended.

5.3.2. Factors Responsible for Domestic Abuse

Result showing that psychological (personality trait) 91% was a major contributor to abusive behaviour tallies with that Motevaliyan, Yaacob, Juhari, Mansor & Baratvand ([31]: 236) who reported that, type and level of negative personality traits such as bad temper, poor impulse control, poor self-esteem and aggressive behaviour has significant relationship with severity of

wife abuse in Tehran-Iran. Contrastingly, results from interviewing SW *“revealed perpetrator grown up in abusive situation, low self-esteem, combination of alcohol and drugs and psychosocial stressor can contribute to domestic abuse”*, SCW 2 highlighted *“pressure in the society and also look at it from perpetrator upbringing and form the victims point of view, maybe she has witness violent when grown up and think tolerating abuse is normal”*. This finding also tallies with Abdul-Ghani [10] which reported that many of the perpetrators have been exposed to abuse at some point in their live or they are once victims and they may falsely believe that abusing or mistreating others is the way to handle frustration, life challenges, anger or negative emotions.

The present study also found that, social stress 89.96%, social learning 89.92%, jealousy 82.61% and cultural/societal belief 73.91% were highly contributed to the development of abusive behaviour. The result is in agreement with that of Raeisi [25] who observed that patriarchal culture, incorrect methods of socialization, extreme jealousy, social pressure on women to tolerate violence, and men’s addictive behaviour contributed to abuse against Baluch Women of IranShahr. This finding is also similar to that of Alokani [32] who observed that many cases of domestic abuse occur due to jealousy when the spouse is either suspected of being unfaithful or is planning to leave the relationship. Walsh and Harvey [13] attributed domestic abuse of women to psychological (personality traits and mental characteristics of the spouse), jealousy, social stress, social learning, and power and control. All the data collected supports the relevant literature that all mentioned above contribute to abusive behaviour.

Furthermore, it was found out that early childhood experience of and exposure to violence 95.66%; unequal power distribution within the household 95.66%; under reporting incidence of domestic abuse 95.66%; alcohol and substance abuse 95.65%; and loss of family and community support systems 91.31% were the major factors contributing to domestic abuse experienced by majority of women in Cork. This finding is also supported by the outcome of a qualitative meta-synthesis study [1], which reported ignorance of each other’s mental and sexual needs, drugs and alcoholism, childhood abusive experience, lack of economic, social and legal support, and social norms that prescribe men and women’s roles in society as factors that aided the development of abusive behaviour exhibited by perpetrators of domestic abuse in Iran.

Other factors contributing to domestic abuse experienced by majority of women in their relationship(s) as revealed in study include: gender norms and inequality 82.61%; poor family upbringing and moral value 73.91%; lack of awareness and knowledge of the Irish law 65.21%; increased stress and conflicts about finances 65.22%; and lack of access to education and opportunities 65.21% respectively. This concur with a country-wide study conducted by World Health Organization which revealed that lack of moral value, inadequate knowledge on available laws covering domestic abuses, gender inequality and discrimination, as well as financial issues are tactical factors influencing the upsurge of intimate partner abuse suffered by women in their relationships [19].

5.3.3. Effect/impact Domestic Abuse on the Abused Women

From the analysis, it was observed that, post-traumatic stress disorder, emotional withdrawal and poor self-esteem with 100% respectively were the major psychological problems experienced by victims of domestic abuse and homelessness. Follow by fear and anxiety problem 95.65%, depression 95.65%, difficulty in trusting others 95.65% and high amount of stress 91.31%. The result gathered from interviewees SW, SCW1 and SCW 2 highlighted post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem as common effect of abuse, while SCW 2 also suggested that there is physical effect, which can even go as far as self-harm and suicide. This finding is in line with a qualitative study [10] conducted among 25 women who identified themselves as victims of domestic abuse perpetrated by their husbands/ex-husbands in Malaysia. The study found that most of the abused women in Malaysia that they have faced a great many stressful experiences, suffered depression and felt greatly traumatized by living in abusive kinds of relationships. This finding also concurs with another qualitative study [33] conducted in the United Kingdom among 23 recruited participants. The study revealed that, domestic abuse has psychological impacts (including anxiety, low mood, confusion, and anger) on the victims especially women. This finding is in line with Delara [34], Omorogiuwa [11] and Onyekalheako [23] who observed that an abused woman experiences psychological issues as they may feel confused, intimidated, guilty, fear, shame, stressed, anxious, depressed, very lonely, low self-worth and inadequacy and they might not be able to cope with life in general. This revealed the emotional problems women can live with during and after the abuse, which could be catastrophic for the women. Nevertheless, SCW 2 also suggested that there is physical effect, which can even go as far as self-harm and suicide.

Result also shows that, physical injury 100%, and lack of financial resources 95.65% had a high impact on the physical and health status of abused women in Cork. While hospitalization 86.96%, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV 73.92%, Great risk of miscarriage 73.91% and living a life of penury 65.21% had a moderate impact on the physical and health status of abused women. Accordingly, all (100%) the respondents, both qualitative and quantitative agreed that domestic abuse robs women of their fundamental right to maintain control over their lives. This finding is therefore consistent with that of Abdul-Ghani [10] who observed that, the impacts of domestic abuse on the 25 studied victims in Malaysia include physical injuries (migraines, abdominal pain and permanent body scars), social isolation, mental illnesses, adverse effects on the children and on the women's sense of self-worth. This finding equally attested the study by Gregory, et al. [33] who concluded that, domestic abuse has physical impact, health impacts, relationship impacts and financial impacts on abused women. This also corroborated a cross sectional study [23] conducted among 682 married women in Southeast Nigeria which reported that 66 (17%) of them suffering pregnancy loss while one hundred and thirty women (34%) experience different degrees of injuries as a result of the abuse.

The results gathered from both quantitative and all qualitative respondents revealed that domestic abuse women experienced has significant effect on their children. The finding concurs with the observation made by Basile, Jones and Smith [24] in their report that domestic abuse does not only affect the women, it has a great effect on the children, families, and the societies. In fact, children who grow up in such situation frequently have a range of emotional, developmental and physical difficulties [16], which might lead to severe anxiety, partial social skills, poor concentration, learning difficulties, antisocial or risky behaviour and depression [2,4].

In its grand style analysis from the survey revealed that almost (87.0%) all the respondents and all the interview participants agreed that domestic abuse is one of the major contributors to women becoming homeless, while only 13.0% disagreed with the statement. This finding corroborated with Walsh and Harvey [13] who approximated that 50% of all women who are homeless indicate that domestic abuse was the immediate cause of their homelessness. This however justifies the position of Domestic Shelters [18] that, absconding from domestic abuse means leaving the abusive relationship and occasionally, the victims were unable to find shelter through family, friends or from the state resources. Therefore, domestic abuse creates defencelessness to homelessness for the women and their children.

5.3.4. Actions Women Take to Manage Domestic Abuse and Prevent Homelessness

The study indicates that 39.13% of abused women always avoid confrontations with their spouse while, 52.17% often avoid confrontations with their spouse. Similarly, 17.39% and 69.57% respectively of the respondents indicated that abused women always and often accept or remain silent and not tell anyone about the abuse for fear of making the situation worse. Accordingly, 65.22% and 4.4% respectively said that abused women often and rarely do anything when abused or remain silent with the hope that the situation will improve. The findings are therefore similar to that of Ostadhashemi, et al. [1] who observed that, the most reported strategies for managing domestic abuse comprise inactive and inefficient approaches such as keeping quiet but preoccupied with the problem, avoiding argument and not being on speaking terms for a long-time.

The present study also revealed that 69.57% (15) of the respondents posited that abused women often turn to alcohol or drugs to lessen the physical and emotional pain of the abuse. This finding corresponded with that of Basile, et al. [24] who reported that many abused women cope with this trauma by using drugs, drinking alcohol, smoking, or overeating. This is therefore a poor coping strategy or action in preventing or managing domestic abuse as substance abuse may make the victim feel better in the moment, but it ends up making the victim feel worse in the long-term.

In furtherance, the present study found that 73.9% of the respondents indicated that abused women often lie about perpetrators criminal activity, while only 17.4% indicated that abused women never lie about perpetrators criminal activities. Surprisingly, 60.8% and 56.5% of the respondents respectively affirmed that abused women

rarely seek social support and report to the police. The findings might be attributed to: protecting their children and themselves from being homeless; shame and embarrassment; social stigma within society; lack of knowledge on needs and supports available; feelings of guilt and self-blame; being an obedient wife; fear of being hunted back by the violent partner; poor response from the criminal justice system (police and courts) and social service providers [1,10].

5.3.5. What can be Done to Address the Issue of Domestic Abuse-caused Homelessness?

This result shows that, provision of early intervention for women experiencing domestic abuse; increased funding to organisations that provide services for women experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse; education and constant public awareness-raising campaigns on domestic abuse; put importance on empowering the women and building their self-esteem; and Referral of women who had experienced domestic abuse to counsellors and psychotherapists are the possible ways of addressing the issue of domestic abuse-caused homelessness among women in Cork. This finding reiterates the position of Focus Ireland [4] who argued that there must be strategy that will acknowledge the role Domestic violence in homeless pathway and ensure women in refuges benefited from the commitments made in addressing the housing crisis.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study have given an empirical evidence to substantiate the ongoing debate among social care professionals and advocate on the need to look into the policies, and programmes that can be used to address the menace of domestic abuse-based homelessness among women in Cork and Ireland at large. From the results obtained from the analysed data, it can be concluded that although most victims/abused women exercise some self-management actions, it is not enough to prevent its consequential effect, as domestic abuse has a devastating effect on women becoming homeless. Apparently, domestic abuse caused-homelessness among women is an area that needs further research in order to develop approaches that will efficiently and effectively met the needs of the women who are experiencing domestic abuse.

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