



Review Article

Unveiling research gaps on male intimate partner violence (IPV) victims: A 25-Year bibliometric analysis

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ABSTRACT

Male victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) remain comparatively underrepresented within the scholarly literature on IPV. While international frameworks and research agendas have primarily focused on violence against women, less scholarly attention has been directed toward male victimization. This study presents a bibliometric analysis of global research on male IPV victimization published between 2000 and 2025. Following the PRISMA 2020 protocol, 219 Scopus-indexed peer-reviewed articles met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed using Bibliometrix and VOSviewer. These tools were used to examine publication trends, co-authorship networks, citation patterns, and thematic research clusters. The results indicate a gradual increase in publications after 2015, with the most pronounced growth occurring between 2020 and 2025. >70% of studies were published within criminology, psychology, and social work, while public health, legal, and medical subject areas were comparatively less represented. Over 80% of publications originated from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, with limited contributions from developing regions. Only 14.6% of the literature consisted of review articles, indicating limited synthesis of existing evidence. Reported funding information also suggests a stronger emphasis on female-focused IPV research. Overall, the findings highlight disciplinary and geographic imbalances in scholarly attention to male IPV victimization and provide a structured evidence base to inform future empirical, theoretical, and bibliometric research.

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is widely recognized as a major public health and human rights concern, and scholarly research and policy interventions have historically focused on female victims of intimate partner violence (IPV). This emphasis has been reinforced by global agreements and policy frameworks, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which prioritize women's empowerment, gender equality, and the prevention of violence against women [1–3]. These initiatives have contributed to important legal protections, awareness campaigns, and support services for women. At the same time, the concentration of research and policy attention in this area has coincided with comparatively limited scholarly attention to male victims of IPV [4,5].

Much of the existing literature on domestic violence has been informed by feminist theoretical perspectives that emphasize gendered

power relations and the structural vulnerability of women within intimate relationships [6]. These perspectives have played a central role in shaping legal frameworks, funding priorities, and research agendas addressing IPV [7]. Alongside this body of work, however, an expanding empirical literature demonstrates that men can also experience physical, emotional, and psychological abuse within intimate partnerships [8,9]. Despite this evidence, studies consistently note that male victims face distinct challenges related to social stigma, help-seeking barriers, and limited institutional recognition [10].

In response to these observations, a growing number of scholars have called for a more comprehensive and evidence-based examination of IPV that accounts for diverse victim experiences while maintaining sensitivity to gendered contexts [11]. Bibliometric analysis provides a systematic approach for examining how scholarly attention to a given topic evolves over time, across disciplines, and across geographic regions [12]. Such analyses are particularly useful for identifying patterns in research production, collaboration, and thematic emphasis. To date,

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however, no comprehensive bibliometric study has examined the global research landscape on male victims of domestic violence, limiting understanding of how this topic has been conceptualized, prioritized, and investigated within the academic literature.

While no bibliometric analyses focusing specifically on male IPV victimization have been published to date, a growing body of narrative, scoping, and systematic reviews has synthesized empirical evidence on men's experiences of IPV, including health impacts, help-seeking behaviors, and service responses [13–17]. These reviews provide important syntheses of substantive findings and lived experiences but do not examine the structure, growth, disciplinary organization, or geographic distribution of the research field itself. The present study complements this body of work by applying bibliometric methods to map patterns of scholarly attention, collaboration, and knowledge production related to male IPV victimization.

The significance of examining male IPV victimization lies not in assuming equivalence with other forms of intimate partner violence but in understanding how research attention is distributed, how knowledge accumulates, and where systematic gaps persist within the scholarly literature. Bibliometric analysis provides a structured means of evaluating whether particular populations, contexts, or disciplinary perspectives remain underrepresented in ways that may constrain theoretical development, comparative analysis, and empirical generalization.

The present study addresses this gap by conducting a bibliometric analysis of research on domestic violence against men published between 2000 and 2025 using data retrieved from the Scopus database. Specifically, the study examines publication trends over time, disciplinary distribution, geographic patterns of authorship, institutional affiliations, and reported funding sources. The objective is not to assess prevalence, causation, or policy effectiveness, but rather to map the structure and evolution of scholarly attention to male IPV victimization.

Attention is given to the geographic and disciplinary distribution of research output, including the extent to which studies originate from non-Western contexts and rural settings, as well as the relative contribution of disciplines such as criminology, psychology, public health, and law. By documenting these patterns, the analysis identifies areas of concentration alongside areas where empirical research remains limited. While bibliometric methods cannot establish causal explanations for observed patterns, they provide an empirical foundation for situating subsequent theoretical, qualitative, and policy-oriented research.

This study contributes to the literature in three main ways. First, it offers the first long-term bibliometric mapping of research on male victims of IPV, providing a quantitative overview of publication trends and scholarly engagement. Second, it identifies disciplinary and geographic imbalances that may shape how male victimization is conceptualized and investigated within the literature. Third, by clarifying the scope and limits of existing research, the study provides a structured evidence base to inform future empirical, theoretical, and policy-oriented inquiries. In doing so, the analysis situates male IPV victimization within the broader field of IPV research without presuming causal explanations beyond what bibliometric data can support.

2. Material and methods

This study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 protocol for conducting a bibliometric analysis, ensuring a transparent, replicable, and systematic approach to data collection and processing [18]. The analysis focuses on identifying publication trends, research focus areas, geographic distribution, key contributors, and funding sources related to domestic violence against men. The Scopus database was selected as the primary data source because of its extensive indexing coverage of peer-reviewed journals across various disciplines, including social sciences,

psychology, criminology, public health, and law.

2.1. Search strategy

A systematic search was conducted in the Scopus database using a structured query to retrieve publications on domestic violence against men. The initial search string TITLE-ABS-KEY (domestic AND violence AND against AND men) retrieved 1277 documents. To focus on relevant literature within a 25-year timeframe, the search was refined to include publications published between 2000 and 2025, reducing the number of documents to 1174.

Further refinements were applied by excluding non-research document types, such as book chapters (ch), books (bk), conference papers (cp), notes (no), editorials (ed), short surveys (sh), and errata (er), resulting in 955 documents. Additional filtering was performed by removing studies that primarily focused on female victimization, general human studies, statistical models, qualitative research, and medical or psychological topics not directly related to male victimization. This step reduced the dataset to 261 documents. To ensure language consistency and comparability, the search was restricted to English-language publications, resulting in a final dataset of 219 documents. These documents were subsequently extracted for bibliometric analysis, including assessments of publication trends, research themes, co-authorship networks, citation patterns, and geographic distribution.

2.2. Screening process

The screening process was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 protocol, ensuring rigorous selection criteria to maintain the relevance and quality of the dataset. The initial search in the Scopus database retrieved 1277 documents, which were subsequently refined based on publication year, document type, and research focus. The first filtering step excluded documents published before 2000, reducing the dataset to 1174 studies. Further refinement was performed by removing non-research document types, such as book chapters, books, conference papers, notes, editorials, short surveys, and errata, resulting in 955 documents.

A title and abstract screening was conducted to eliminate studies that focused exclusively on female victims without discussing male victimization, as well as those categorized as review articles, editorials, or statistical reports that lacked primary empirical data. Studies addressing broader socio-economic, psychological, criminological, or public health topics without direct relevance to male IPV victimization were also excluded. Additionally, publications containing generalized discussions of domestic violence without a gender-specific analysis of male victimization were removed from the dataset.

Following the title and abstract screening, a full-text review was conducted on the remaining studies to ensure alignment with the research objectives. Any discrepancies in study selection were resolved through discussion among the research team. After completing the screening process, a final set of 219 documents was selected for bibliometric mapping and analysis. The PRISMA 2020 flow diagram provides a visual representation of the study selection process, ensuring methodological transparency and reproducibility.

2.3. Bibliometric analysis using VOSViewer

The bibliometric dataset retrieved from the Scopus database was analyzed using descriptive and network-based techniques to identify trends, patterns, and relationships within the research landscape on male victims of intimate partner violence (IPV). Descriptive statistics were used to examine the distribution of publications over time and across countries, institutions, authors, and subject areas, while citation analysis identified the most highly cited publications and influential authors.

The interdisciplinary scope of the field was assessed through the

distribution of documents across subject areas, and keyword co-occurrence analysis was conducted using VOSviewer (version 1.6.16) to map the main research themes and their interconnections, following established bibliometric mapping procedures [19] and methodological applications similar to those reported in Mdoe et al. [20]. Author-level analysis included publication counts, citation totals, and total link strength to identify leading contributors and assess their impact, as well as institutional affiliations to highlight prominent organizations contributing to research on male IPV victims.

Network visualizations were generated using VOSviewer based on co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation networks. These visualizations enabled a clearer understanding of the intellectual structure, thematic clusters, and collaborative patterns within the field. In the co-authorship networks, link strength represented the number of shared publications between two entities (e.g., authors or countries), with higher values indicating stronger collaboration. The resulting visual maps illustrated global research distribution, key thematic clusters, collaboration networks, and research hotspots, providing insights into the evolution and current state of scholarship on male IPV victimization.

2.4. Theoretical framework

This study is underpinned by the Social Ecological Framework (SEF), which conceptualizes intimate partner violence as a multifaceted

phenomenon influenced by factors operating at the individual, relational, community, and societal levels. The framework has been widely applied in IPV research to examine the interaction between individual experiences, interpersonal relationships, community contexts, and broader socio-cultural norms that perpetuate or mitigate violence [21].

Within the context of male victimization, the framework is particularly relevant because it facilitates examination of how underreporting, gender norms, legal systems, and service provision intersect to shape the lived experiences of male survivors. At the individual level, the framework considers personal attributes such as age, socioeconomic status, health, and previous exposure to violence. At the relationship level, it examines dynamics within intimate partnerships, including power imbalances, dependency, and conflict patterns. At the community level, it evaluates the influence of local institutions, peer networks, and community attitudes toward male victimhood. At the societal level, it addresses structural determinants such as legislation, cultural beliefs, gender ideologies, and media representations that shape recognition and responses to male IPV Fig. 1, 5, 8.

By employing the SEF, this study situates bibliometric findings within a comprehensive analytical lens that highlights both the proximal and distal factors contributing to the persistent underrepresentation of male IPV victims in global research, thereby linking quantitative publication trends to broader socio-structural contexts, as illustrated in Fig. 2.

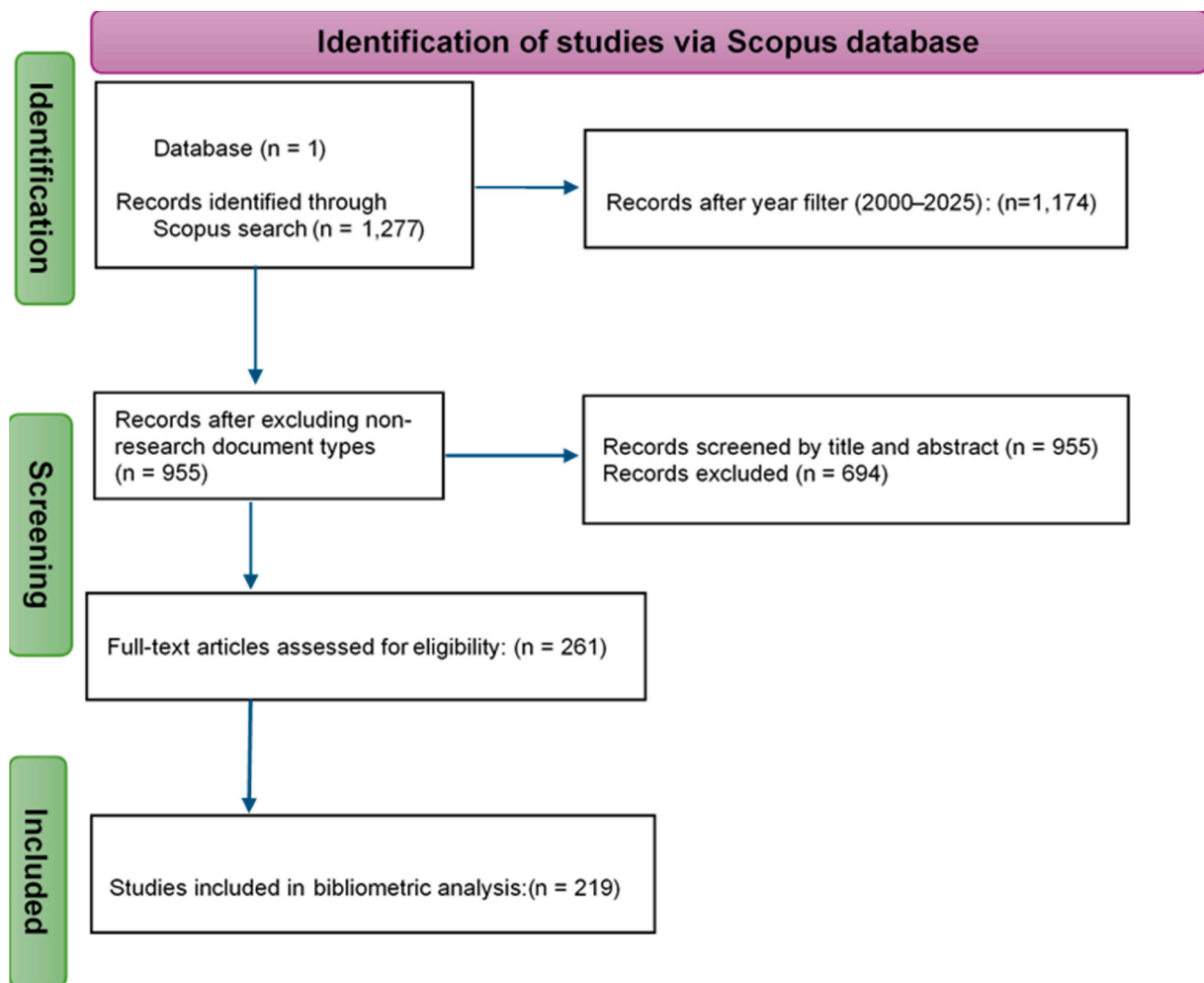


Fig. 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram illustrating the study selection process for the bibliometric dataset retrieved from the Scopus database. Adapted from [18]. Source: Adapted from Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*. 2021;372:n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>.



Fig. 2. Conceptual framework for Male IPV Research.

3. Results and discussion

This section presents the bibliometric findings on domestic violence against men while interpreting their implications within the broader research landscape. The analysis covers publication trends, key contributors, geographic distribution, institutional affiliations, and research focus areas, highlighting the gaps and challenges associated with this topic.

3.1. Publication trends over time

The analysis presents the annual distribution of publications on domestic violence against men, revealing a notable shift in research interest over time, as illustrated in Fig. 3. In the early 2000s, scholarly work on this topic was sparse, with only a few publications per year. This limited research output coincides with a period in which domestic violence research and policy discussions predominantly emphasized female victimization [22]. While bibliometric data cannot establish causal explanations, this pattern is consistent with prior scholarship noting limited institutional and scholarly attention to male victims during this period [23].

A notable rise in publications is observed after 2015, reflecting a shift toward a more gender-inclusive approach to intimate partner violence (IPV). Several factors may explain this increase, including growing media coverage of male victimization cases, greater advocacy efforts, and the expansion of gender studies to include diverse victim experiences [9]. Additionally, the increasing use of bibliometric analyses in IPV research has likely contributed to the greater documentation of male

victimization [24].

The most significant growth in publications occurs between 2020 and 2025, possibly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies indicate that pandemic-related lockdowns, social isolation, and economic stress heightened the risk of domestic violence and intensified vulnerabilities among victims [25,26]. However, much of the emerging research on domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic has focused primarily on women’s experiences, while male victimization has received comparatively limited scholarly attention [27,28]. Consequently, although scholarly output on the topic has expanded during this period, the volume of research specifically addressing male victims remains substantially lower than that focusing on female victimization. This imbalance has been described in prior literature as contributing to the relative invisibility of male victimization within academic and policy discourse [7], rather than providing direct evidence regarding prevalence or incidence.

3.2. Key journals, authors, and institutional contributions

An analysis of the top academic journals publishing on domestic violence against men reveals a lack of specialized outlets dedicated to this issue. Most studies appear in criminology, psychology, and social science journals, with fewer contributions in public health and legal studies (Fig. 4). The concentration of publications within criminology, psychology, and social science journals indicates that male IPV victimization has primarily been examined through behavioral and social lenses. This pattern reflects disciplinary publication trends rather than the inherent capacity of other fields to address health or legal dimensions of IPV.

The leading authors contributing to this field come from diverse backgrounds, including criminology, forensic psychology, and gender studies. However, there is no dominant research cluster, indicating that work on male victims of domestic violence remains fragmented and lacks a unified theoretical framework [29]. Furthermore, citation patterns within the analyzed dataset indicate that highly cited IPV publications more frequently focus on female victimization [30], whereas comparatively few high-impact studies explicitly examine male victims.

Institutional affiliations show that research on domestic violence against men is concentrated in a few Western countries, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. Universities with strong gender studies, criminology, and psychology departments contribute substantially to this discourse. However, there is a striking lack of research output from developing regions, particularly in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, where social stigma, institutional constraints, and legal barriers may discourage male victims from reporting abuse [31]. This geographic imbalance in the literature further supports the argument that male victimization remains underrecognized in global discourse.

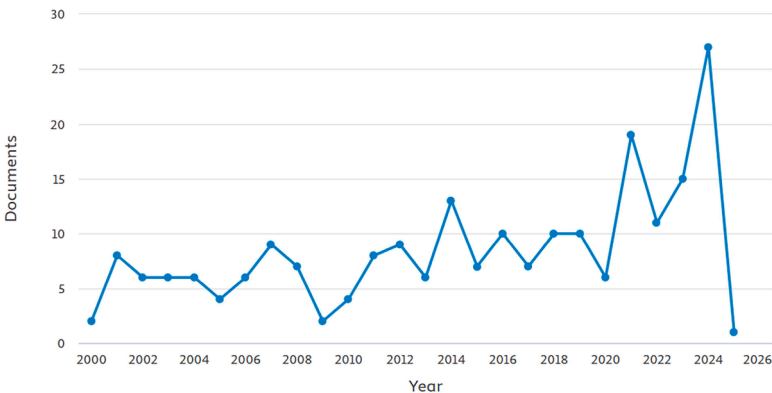


Fig. 3. Annual distribution of research publications on domestic violence against men.

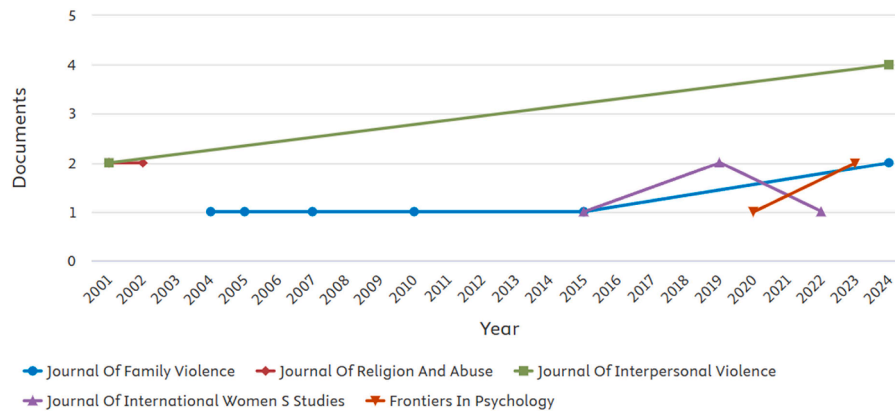


Fig. 4. Top sources publishing research on domestic violence against men.

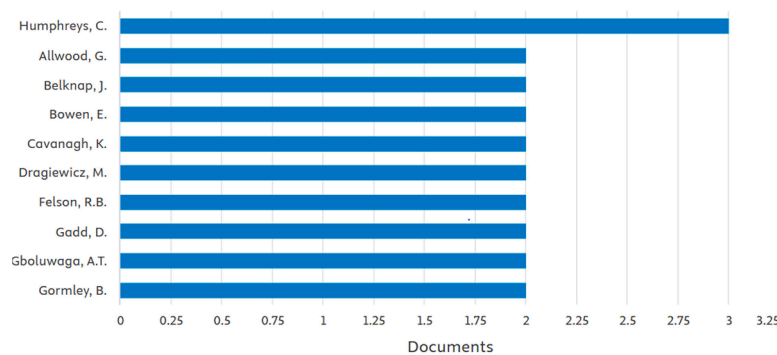


Fig. 5. Key authors contributing to research on male victimization.

3.3. Research focus areas and subject categories

The bibliometric analysis reveals that studies on domestic violence against men are primarily concentrated in the fields of criminology, psychology, and social work, with limited representation in public health, medicine, and law. This disciplinary focus suggests that male victimization is predominantly studied as a social or behavioral issue rather than as a legal or medical concern [8]. The uneven disciplinary distribution observed in the literature highlights areas where empirical research on male IPV victimization remains comparatively limited. While bibliometric analysis cannot directly assess healthcare policies or legal frameworks, these publication patterns may help contextualize why certain dimensions of male victimization receive less sustained scholarly attention.

Fig. 7 illustrates the subject distribution of research on domestic violence against men. The dominance of criminology and psychology indicates that much of the existing research is framed around behavioral dynamics, reporting patterns, and social contexts of victimization. The relatively small proportion of publications indexed within public health and medical subject categories suggests that fewer studies on male IPV victimization are explicitly framed within clinical or health-system perspectives [32]. This does not imply an absence of relevant knowledge but rather reflects differences in disciplinary framing and publication venues.

Similarly, the bibliometric distribution indicates that comparatively fewer publications on male IPV victimization are indexed within legal subject categories relative to the broader IPV literature [33]. This pattern has been discussed in prior literature as coinciding with ongoing debates about the inclusivity of legal frameworks and access to support services for male victims [34,35]. Prior qualitative and review studies have documented challenges related to recognition of male victims within law enforcement and judicial contexts, which may influence

reporting behaviors [36]. These findings indicate areas where additional empirical research may enhance the breadth and comparability of evidence on male IPV victimization across contexts.

In addition to disciplinary gaps, there is also a geographic disparity in research output. As shown in Fig. 6, most studies originate from Western countries, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. Research from developing countries and rural contexts remains significantly underrepresented, despite evidence that cultural norms, legal barriers, and economic dependence may further suppress male victimization in these settings [37].

Rural male victims face challenges that remain comparatively underrepresented in the scholarly literature. Prior research on intimate partner violence in rural contexts indicates that geographic isolation, limited availability of specialized services, and reduced anonymity in close-knit communities can constrain help-seeking behaviors among victims [17,38]. Studies further document that social stigma and dominant masculinity norms may discourage men from acknowledging victimization or engaging with formal support systems, particularly in rural and semi-rural settings [9]. In addition, qualitative and review-based research has highlighted variability in institutional responses, including gaps in training and preparedness among law enforcement and healthcare professionals in recognizing and responding to male IPV victimization [7,17]. While the present bibliometric analysis cannot directly assess service availability or institutional capacity, these contextual dynamics remain less visible within the research literature.

Overall, the findings indicate that research on domestic violence against men is fragmented across disciplines, with critical gaps in healthcare, law, and rural studies. Expanding research in these underrepresented areas is essential for developing comprehensive interventions that recognize and support all victims of domestic violence, regardless of gender or geographic location.

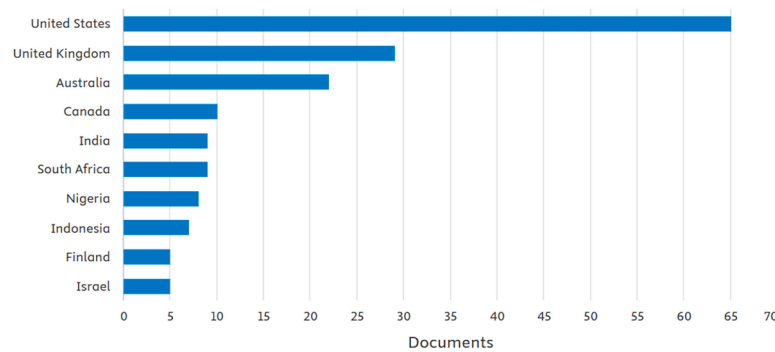


Fig. 6. Geographic distribution of research publications on domestic violence against men.

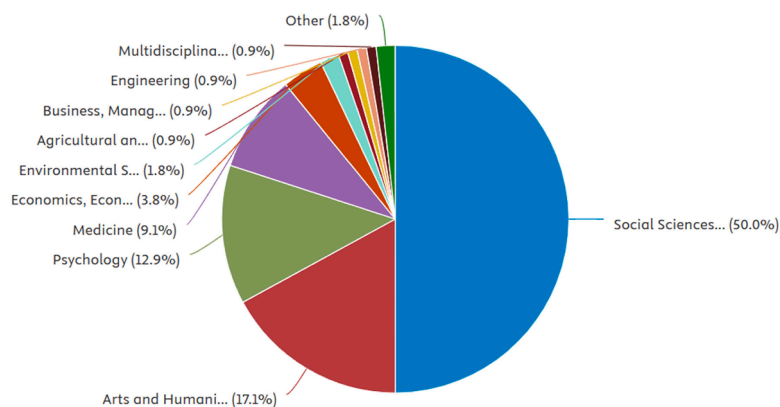


Fig. 7. Research focus areas and subject distribution.

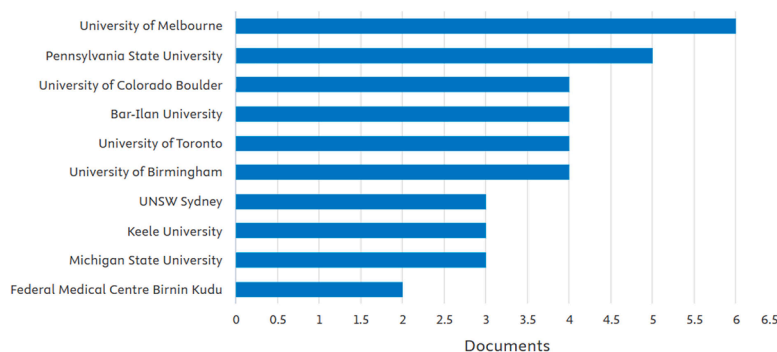


Fig. 8. Institutional affiliations contributing to research on male victimization.

Additionally, the bibliometric analysis of document types (Fig. 9) reveals that the majority of research on domestic violence against men consists of original research articles (85.4 %), while review papers account for only 14.6 %. This suggests that most studies focus on empirical investigations, typically examining specific cases, survey data, or experimental findings related to male victimization. The dominance of research articles indicates that the field is largely driven by primary data collection rather than comprehensive theoretical synthesis or meta-analyses.

The limited number of review papers suggests a lack of systematic efforts to consolidate existing knowledge on male victimization. Review studies play a crucial role in identifying research gaps, trends, and theoretical advancements; however, their scarcity in this field indicates that findings remain dispersed and fragmented. Without sufficient review studies, policymakers and scholars may face challenges in developing evidence-based interventions and frameworks to address the issue effectively.

Furthermore, the absence of extensive reviews may contribute to disciplinary fragmentation, as studies on male victims are scattered across criminology, psychology, and social work, with minimal integration across fields. Increasing the number of systematic reviews and meta-analyses could help establish a clearer theoretical foundation and guide future research directions. Encouraging more comprehensive reviews would also aid in identifying patterns in male victimization, such as legal challenges, mental health consequences, and underreporting, ultimately fostering a more holistic approach to studying and addressing domestic violence against men.

From a scientific perspective, such imbalances have implications for theory development, comparability of findings, and cumulative knowledge building. When research is concentrated within a limited set of disciplines and geographic contexts, the resulting evidence base may insufficiently capture contextual variability in IPV dynamics, reporting practices, and institutional responses. These limitations are analytically relevant irrespective of normative or policy considerations. Importantly,

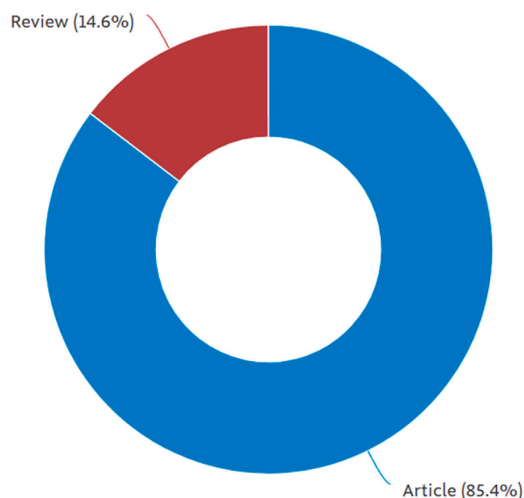


Fig. 9. Distribution of research documents by type on domestic violence against men.

bibliometric classifications capture how studies are categorized and framed within publication systems rather than the substantive limits of what individual disciplines are capable of investigating.

3.4. Interpreting patterns of scholarly attention: barriers and research gaps

The bibliometric patterns identified in this study indicate that research on male victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) remains unevenly distributed across disciplines, geographic regions, and publication venues. In prior scholarship, limited visibility of male victimization within academic and policy discourse has been discussed in relation to broader social norms, institutional frameworks, and research priorities [13,17]. Importantly, bibliometric data reflect patterns of scholarly attention rather than prevalence or service accessibility, and interpretations of these patterns must therefore remain cautious.

3.4.1. Social and legal barriers

Prior qualitative and review-based research has discussed the limited visibility of male IPV victimization in relation to social stigma and prevailing gender norms. Traditional constructions of masculinity often emphasize strength, self-reliance, and emotional restraint, which may discourage men from disclosing abuse or seeking formal support due to fear of judgment or disbelief [8,10]. These dynamics have been widely documented in studies examining male help-seeking behavior and are frequently cited as contextual barriers influencing reporting practices.

Legal scholarship has also noted that many domestic violence frameworks were historically developed with a primary focus on female victimization, which may shape how male IPV cases are recognized and processed within legal systems [7,33]. Prior reviews and qualitative studies have described challenges related to male victims' access to legal remedies, including variability in institutional recognition and procedural responses within law enforcement and judicial contexts [7,17]. These observations inform ongoing scholarly discussions regarding the inclusivity and gender neutrality of IPV-related legal frameworks rather than representing outcomes assessed in the present study.

Some studies further suggest that shifts in gender roles and relationship dynamics may influence patterns of conflict within intimate partnerships, including forms of reciprocal or bidirectional violence [39]. However, existing empirical evidence remains mixed, and bibliometric analysis cannot assess how such dynamics translate into policy effectiveness or service provision. These debates nonetheless provide important context for understanding why male victimization has been conceptualized and studied unevenly across legal and social domains.

In rural contexts, additional social and structural barriers have been documented in the literature. Geographic isolation, limited availability of specialized services, and reduced anonymity in small communities may constrain help-seeking options for male victims [17,38]. Research also indicates that dominant masculinity norms may be particularly salient in rural settings, further discouraging disclosure and engagement with support systems [9,17]. Qualitative studies have additionally highlighted variability in training and preparedness among law enforcement and healthcare professionals in responding to male IPV cases in non-urban areas [17]. While the present bibliometric analysis cannot evaluate institutional capacity or service effectiveness, the limited volume of rural-focused publications suggests that these contextual issues remain less visible within the research literature.

3.4.2. Research and funding gaps

The bibliometric findings indicate that research on male IPV victimization is less frequently associated with dedicated funding sources compared with the broader IPV literature. Prior scholarship has noted that funding priorities within IPV research have historically emphasized female victimization, which may influence the thematic focus and visibility of certain research areas [30]. From a bibliometric perspective, this pattern is reflected in the relatively small number of publications that explicitly acknowledge funding support for studies centered on male victims.

Fig. 10 illustrates the distribution of reported funding sources within the analyzed literature, showing that comparatively few funding agencies are associated with research focusing specifically on male IPV victimization. This pattern suggests that studies involving male victims are often embedded within broader IPV research agendas rather than framed as a distinct focus. Such observations do not imply causal relationships between funding allocation and research outcomes but rather highlight structural features of the research landscape that may influence patterns of scholarly attention.

Greater diversification of research funding has been discussed in prior literature as one factor that could support a wider range of empirical and theoretical investigations, including work addressing underrepresented populations, contexts, and methodological approaches. From a bibliometric standpoint, increased visibility of funded research may contribute to broader geographic coverage, greater interdisciplinary engagement, and expanded synthesis efforts, particularly in regions and settings that remain sparsely represented in the current literature.

Previous qualitative and review studies have also noted that funding priorities may intersect with how IPV-related services and research agendas are structured, especially in contexts where domestic violence frameworks have historically focused on female victims. Consistent with the scope of the present study, however, these observations are drawn from existing literature rather than from outcomes measured through bibliometric analysis. Accordingly, the present study does not assess service availability, policy effectiveness, or the prevalence of male IPV victimization but instead examines patterns of research visibility, funding acknowledgment, and scholarly representation within the published literature.

3.5. Situating bibliometric findings in relation to existing reviews

Several narrative, scoping, systematic, and critical reviews have synthesized empirical research on male victims of intimate partner violence (IPV), with particular attention to health impacts, help-seeking behaviors, disclosure barriers, and interactions with support services [13,15–17,40]. Collectively, these reviews highlight recurring themes such as stigma, limited-service accessibility, and challenges in the institutional recognition of male victimization. The present bibliometric findings are broadly consistent with these synthesized insights insofar as they reveal a concentration of research within specific disciplines and regions, alongside comparatively limited visibility of male IPV

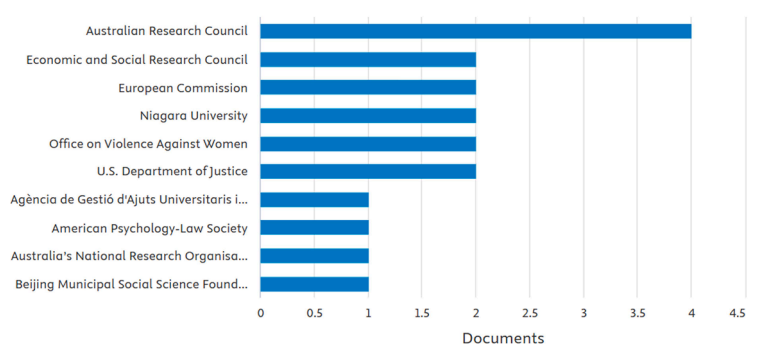


Fig. 10. Funding sources supporting research on male victimization.

victimization within the wider IPV research landscape.

While existing review studies consolidate substantive findings from selected bodies of literature, the current bibliometric analysis addresses a complementary set of questions concerning the structure and evolution of the research field itself. Rather than examining study outcomes or thematic conclusions, the bibliometric approach focuses on mapping patterns of scholarly attention, including publication growth over time, disciplinary distribution, geographic concentration, institutional contributions, and funding patterns. This field-level perspective helps contextualize why certain themes and populations such as male IPV victims may receive uneven attention across disciplines or regions, even when empirical evidence documenting their experiences exists.

Importantly, bibliometric analysis offers insights into dimensions of knowledge production that are not captured by traditional review designs. By examining how research is organized, categorized, and disseminated, bibliometric methods reveal structural characteristics of the literature, including disciplinary silos, regional dominance, and gaps in synthesis efforts. In this way, the present study complements existing reviews by situating their findings within a broader map of scholarly activity, highlighting how patterns of research visibility and concentration may shape the accumulation and integration of knowledge on male IPV victimization. Taken together, these approaches contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of both the substantive evidence and the research landscape in which that evidence is produced.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

This study provides a bibliometric overview of scholarly research on male victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) published between 2000 and 2025. The findings demonstrate that, although research output has increased over time particularly after 2015 scholarly attention to male IPV victimization remains unevenly distributed across disciplines, geographic regions, and publication types. The existing literature is concentrated primarily within criminology, psychology, and social work, while comparatively fewer studies are indexed in public health, medical, and legal subject areas. From a geographic perspective, research output is dominated by Western countries, with relatively limited contributions from developing regions and rural contexts.

The analysis further shows that most publications consist of empirical research articles, with relatively few review studies, suggesting limited consolidation and synthesis of existing knowledge. Funding patterns within the analyzed literature indicate a stronger emphasis on female-focused IPV research, which may shape research agendas and thematic priorities. Importantly, these findings reflect patterns of scholarly attention and publication framing rather than the prevalence, causes, or consequences of IPV against men.

By systematically mapping the structure and evolution of the literature, this study contributes to the field by clarifying where research has

been concentrated and where gaps persist. These gaps have implications for theory development, comparative analysis, and cumulative knowledge building within IPV research. Overall, the findings underscore the need for cautious interpretation and highlight opportunities for future empirical, theoretical, and bibliometric work that can broaden the evidence base and improve understanding of male IPV victimization across diverse contexts.

4.2. Limitation of the study

While this bibliometric analysis provides a structured overview of scholarly attention to male IPV victimization, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the analysis is based exclusively on publications indexed in the Scopus database. Although Scopus offers broad coverage of peer-reviewed literature, it does not capture all relevant research outputs. Studies published in regional journals, books, policy reports, or databases such as Web of Science, PubMed, or Google Scholar may not be included, which could affect the completeness of the mapped literature. In addition, the use of English-language indexing criteria may limit representation of research published in other languages, particularly from non-Western regions.

Second, the study relies on quantitative bibliometric indicators rather than qualitative content analysis. As a result, the findings describe patterns of publication, citation, disciplinary classification, and geographic distribution but do not assess how male IPV victimization is conceptually framed, theorized, or interpreted within individual studies. Bibliometric methods capture the structure and distribution of scholarly output rather than the substantive content or quality of the research. Future studies combining bibliometric mapping with systematic reviews or qualitative analyses could provide deeper insight into theoretical perspectives and thematic emphases within the literature.

Finally, bibliometric analyses are influenced by broader publication and indexing practices that shape what becomes visible within academic databases. Differences in reporting practices, disciplinary norms, and funding priorities may affect the volume and categorization of published research, thereby influencing observed patterns of scholarly attention. These considerations underscore the need to interpret bibliometric findings as indicators of research visibility and representation rather than as measures of prevalence, burden, or societal impact. Addressing these limitations through multi-database searches, interdisciplinary approaches, and complementary qualitative methods would strengthen future investigations of male IPV victimization.

4.3. Future research directions informed by bibliometric evidence

Drawing on the bibliometric patterns identified in this study, several priorities for future research on male victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) can be articulated. As the present analysis maps patterns of scholarly attention rather than prevalence, causation, or policy effectiveness, the following directions are intended to guide future

empirical, theoretical, and synthesis-oriented research.

First, expanding research beyond high-income Western contexts represents a critical priority. The dominance of publications originating from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia indicates that male IPV victimization remains comparatively under-examined in many low- and middle-income countries and rural settings. Studies conducted in diverse socio-cultural, legal, and economic contexts would enhance the comparability and broader applicability of existing findings and help address current geographic imbalances in the literature.

Second, greater interdisciplinary engagement may strengthen the conceptual and analytical foundations of research on male IPV victimization. The concentration of publications within criminology, psychology, and social work suggests that legal, public health, and medical perspectives remain underrepresented in the published literature. Greater integration across disciplines may facilitate more comprehensive frameworks capable of examining social, behavioral, institutional, legal, and health-system dimensions of victimization in a coordinated manner.

Third, the limited proportion of review and synthesis studies highlights the need for additional systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and integrative evidence syntheses. Such efforts could consolidate fragmented findings, clarify theoretical orientations, and improve cumulative knowledge building across disciplines. Methodological diversification, including mixed-methods and longitudinal designs, may also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how male IPV victimization is framed, measured, and studied across different research contexts.

Finally, bibliometric patterns related to funding sources suggest that future research agendas may benefit from greater transparency and diversity in funding priorities. While the present study does not evaluate funding decisions or service provision, broader support for research addressing currently underrepresented populations, contexts, and disciplinary approaches may help expand the scope and balance of the evidence base.

Taken together, these directions highlight how bibliometric analysis can inform future research by identifying concentrations and gaps in scholarly attention. Addressing these gaps through geographically diverse, interdisciplinary, and methodologically robust studies may strengthen theory development, enhance comparability of findings, and support a more comprehensive understanding of male IPV victimization within the broader IPV research landscape.

Consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent to publish

All authors have read and approved the final version of this manuscript and consent to its publication.

Ethical approval

Not applicable, as this study does not involve human participants, animals, or sensitive data requiring ethical clearance.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used [ChatGPT] in order to [improve grammar and readability]. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Data availability

The data used in this study were obtained from the Scopus database. Due to database access restrictions, the data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Christopher N. Mdoe: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Software, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **John N. Jeckoniah:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Resources, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Edwin E. Ngowi:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Supervision, Software, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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