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| Institution: University of Cumbria | | |
| Unit of Assessment: UOA20: Social Work and Social Policy | | |
| Title of case study: Men's experiences of domestic violence: working with victims, service users, and service providers | | |
| Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014-2020 | | |
| Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit: | | |
| Name(s): Elizabeth A. Bates | Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer in Psychology | Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2011-present |
| Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017 - 2020 | | |
| Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N | | |
| 1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>This research on male victims of domestic violence has raised awareness and improved understanding of men's experiences. It has challenged accepted practice and public perceptions that women are primarily victims; elevating the experience of male victims to inform legislation, governmental policies, and service provision. Furthermore, the research has impacted directly on male victims, leading to an increased number of men seeking support, stimulating new recognition of the issue and empowering individual efforts to raise awareness. National and international media recognition linked to the research evidences the ways in which male victims are entering the public discourse around domestic violence. This has an inevitable impact of raising the profile of men's experiences, and therefore, the support provided.</p> | | |
| 2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>This research challenges preconceptions and established theoretical frameworks of domestic abuse, providing a systematic and rigorous evidence base to underpin new understanding. The current theory influencing policy and practice around intimate partner violence (IPV) is gendered and posits that it is a problem of men's violence towards women; this occurs as a function of their patriarchal power and control in society. From this theory, women are primarily the victims of IPV and their violence is usually self-defensive in nature. Despite a growing body of evidence that this approach is not effective, it is still influential within practice and the research in this case study supports a need for practice to change. A review of the available domestic violence perpetrator programmes within the UK found that this model was still underpinning a significant amount of the work being done with perpetrators (R4).</p> <p>Bates' research has explored men's experience of domestic violence in depth (R1, R2, R3) and has revealed their significant experience as victims of violence and control, and the way it changed and continued post-separation. The research revealed the detailed experience of violence (physical and sexual) as well as the many ways their partners exerted coercive control. This was seen through the manipulation of friends and family relationships, finances, relationships with children, gaslighting and threats of false allegations. Whilst there has been research exploring men's issues previously, this was mainly outside the UK and utilising methods that may have created barriers for men's disclosure (e.g., use of interview, requirement to identify as a victim, or use of help-seeking samples). Bates' research is innovative and significant in methodology, utilising an anonymous, online survey to broaden the scope of experience captured. Indeed, within the sample of 161 men who took part, 25% said they had never told anyone else about their experience. In a follow up study, men described how this violence and control continued, and changed, post-separation. They described their ex-partners utilising legal and administrative systems to manipulate them, engaging in parental alienation, harassment and using false allegations. This was the first study of its kind to explore men's post-separation experiences explicitly and has provided an insight in how their abuse continues. The work in this area also led to Bates being approached to co-edit a book on IPV that was published in April, 2019 (R5).</p> | | |

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1. Bates, E. A. (2020a). "Walking on egg shells": A qualitative examination of men's experiences of intimate partner violence. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*. 21(1), 13–24. doi.org/10.1037/men0000203.
- R2. Bates, E. A. (2020b). "No one would ever believe me": An exploration of the impact of intimate partner violence victimization on men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*. 21(4), 497–507. doi.org/10.1037/men0000206.
- R3. Bates, E. A. (2019). "I am still afraid of her": Men's experiences of post-separation abuse. *Partner Abuse*, 10(3), 3336-358. doi.org/10.1891/1946-6560.10.3.336.
- R4. Bates, E. A., Graham-Kevan, N., Bolam, L. T., & Thornton, A. J. V. (2017). A review of domestic violence perpetrator programs in the UK. *Partner Abuse*, 8, 3-46. doi.org/10.1891/1946-6560.8.1.3.
- R5. Bates, E. A. & Taylor, J. C. (2019) *Intimate Partner Violence: New Perspectives in Research and Practice*. Oxon: Taylor & Francis, Routledge. ISBN 9781138049000

The research journal outputs above are all published in peer reviewed journals and have reached a wide audience as seen through the range of national and international academics that have referred to it. The work represents novel research that has worked to demonstrate the extent of and impact of men's experiences of IPV. R1-3 in particular have provided a more in-depth exploration of the issue. R1 and R2 represent the first qualitative exploration of men's experiences with a non-help-seeking and anonymous sample. R3 is the first ever exploration of men's experience of post-separation domestic abuse.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Bates' research and general work in this field has created an evidence base for men's experience of domestic violence, using an inclusive, non-gendered framework. Her work has been widely recognised, influencing policy at national and regional level, informing practice within a range of service providers and directly with male victims.

Impact 1: Informing and influencing national policy and legislation

On 17 February 2017 the Prime Minister announced a programme of work leading towards the introduction of a Domestic Abuse Bill, including enshrining of a definition of domestic abuse in law and establishment of a Domestic Abuse Commission. This was followed in March 2018, by a Government consultation document ("Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse," [S1i]) inviting responses. This consultation document cited Bates' research (p.12, 43.) as part of a proposal to update the statutory definition of domestic abuse, which would "*not be limited to women and girls and recognise abuse that happens in all relationships... this will ensure all victims and all types of domestic abuse are sufficiently captured and no victim is inadvertently excluded from protection or access to services.*"

Bates also contributed directly to the consultation, and the resultant publication and proposed domestic abuse strategy was released in October 2018 ("Home Office Affairs Select Committee, Domestic Abuse, Ninth Report of Session 2017-2019 [S1ii]). The report cited Bates' statement supporting the use of a gender-neutral statutory definition of domestic violence, directly quoting her evidence about how a gendered approach "*marginalises men, women in same-sex relationships, and other groups on the gender and sexuality spectrums...*" (p.10). The report's recommendations state that "*the Bill should provide measures which will help all victims of domestic abuse including women and men, and victims within LGBT and wider family relationships.*" (p.43.)

These recommendations have been carried forward into the Domestic Abuse Bill, which in its current form includes a gender neutral definition of domestic violence. It is expected to retain this definition, and the Bill has successfully passed through the commons and is now being scrutinised by the House of Lords (2nd reading 5th January, 2021).

Public and practitioner perceptions of domestic violence have centred, predominantly, around a model of female victims and male perpetrators. Research challenging this entrenched view, and exploring men's experiences of abuse as victims (as well as individuals identifying as LGBTQ+) is relatively new compared to the wider domestic abuse literature base (which is 50+ years old). This impact case study's underpinning research is part of a wider body of work only emerging in the past decade, with those covering the UK context being even more recent. In a relatively short amount of time, this research (including R1-6) has both contributed to, and shifted, the discourse around male and other victims, and contributed to government forums and policy initiatives as well as the wider public for the benefit of practitioners and the victims themselves (see Impact 2 and 3). The impacts described therefore demonstrate significance in the context of this emerging field.

Impact 2: Informing and influencing practitioners working with user groups and victims

Bates' research has been used to inform a range of practitioners, service providers, victims and survivors through a number of channels. The ManKind Initiative is the leading UK national charity supporting male victims of domestic violence. Bates has acted in an advisory role, providing guidance on use of statistics and research and has had a critical role in supporting their lobbying of Government. This role, and engagement with ManKind more generally, has enabled Bates' research to reach a network of practitioners working in social services, domestic abuse services, victim support, IDVAs and ISVAs, those in the legal system, housing services and those concerned with community and public safety. Specifically, these practitioners have been engaged with via ManKind's National Annual Conference on Male Victims of Domestic Abuse, a CPD accredited conference aimed at professionals and practitioners who work with domestic abuse victims/survivors. Bates has delivered sessions each year since 2017. For the 2019 conference, of the 100 delegates, 98% of them were practitioners. Her talks received positive feedback through their conference evaluations. At the 2017 conferences there were 91 delegates (45 feedback forms returned) and 10 mentioned her work directly, in 2018, there were 109 delegates (51 feedback forms received) and 12 mentioned directly (S10).

Bates' work has also been helpful for other family organisations in lobbying Government, for example the National Manager of Families Need Fathers (S3) who meets with the Welsh Government to discuss domestic abuse issues said in December 2019 *"I have referenced Dr. Bates work when recorded for a training module for Cafcass Cymru practitioners as part of their CPD on understanding male victims of abuse"*. This was a video recording made by Cafcass Cymru (a division of the Welsh Government that provides expert and child-focused advice and support to safeguard children) as part of their training for their front-line staff to improve understanding of the experience of male victims.

Bates' work has directly influenced practice within a number of police forces. Cumbria Constabulary invited her to present at their Domestic Abuse development day. Rob Ewin, a Detective Sergeant for Cumbria Constabulary (S4) said *"Dr Bates' work has been an influencing factor within the building of Cumbria Constabularies domestic abuse policy... Dr Bates' work is well recognised within the Constabulary... Anecdotally, there is a feeling of increased reporting by men...the findings of her work have also been used to create training case studies by another detective who trains police recruits in Cumbria which is a hugely significant step in terms of changing how male victims are discussed in this type of training."*

Greater Manchester Police have also indicated this was impactful with their Domestic Abuse Coordinator and Public Protection Training Coordinator (S5) saying in 2019 *"Within my own organisation it has opened up a whole conversation around typology. Our training school are now touching on this topic. It's a very new area for the police!"* In January 2020, Bates' work was cited in a presentation given at a male victims' event by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in London, indicating the reach of her work into the main governmental offices that work with domestic violence policy (S2). These examples demonstrate the significance of this work and its importance in changing how services operate in practice.

Further evidence of how Bates' research has impacted practice comes from personal testimonials from people working with male victims. Specifically, they have said the work has helped them evidence men's experiences in a way that allows them to apply for funding, lobby for policy change, and support the work they do with men as victims. Her research has been used internationally, as well as within UK, demonstrating the boundary crossing nature of the work. For example, the Chair of a men's and boy's organisation in Canada (S6) has stated that the research has increased public awareness of male victims. Furthermore, it has been used to reassure funders of the ongoing need for service provision, for acquiring funding for programmes, and for developing public policy in Canada.

Similarly, in Australia, Bates' work was cited in a submission to an Australian Government Select Committee (S7) by the organisation One in Three who raise public awareness of the existence and needs of male victims of family violence and abuse in Australia, recommending to the committee to *"consider that perpetrators who might be seeking to extend their coercive controlling behaviour by declaring themselves as victims, may be either male or female."*

Impact 3: Direct benefit to male victims of domestic abuse through direct engagement with individuals and media presence

The ultimate goal of the research is to encourage more men to report their experiences and ensure there is better support available for survivors. Media and public engagement work has been a useful pathway to achieve this. The ManKind Initiative Chairman (E10), said *"ultimately [this] is the impact of her work - more men (and any children they have) escaping domestic abuse because of the better support there is for them"*. In November 2020, Bates was awarded The National Men and Boys Award for Public Understanding, for making an outstanding contribution to the understanding of men and boys and their needs with her research (S10).

In support of victims, the research has improved public awareness and understanding by featuring in mainstream television media including Channel 4 News (S8i), Channel 5 News (S8ii), and has been further cited in feature media pieces about male victims such as in the Daily Mail which has been shared over 8800 times (S8iii). Bates' research was used by ManKind Initiative to create a video entitled "20 Stories" (S9i) which has been viewed over 2500 times on YouTube and has been shared through male victims organisations internationally. Her research was recognised in the top 100 breakthroughs by the Made at Uni campaign in 2018 (S9ii).

Bates has also been contacted directly by men who have felt personally affected by her research. They describe feeling alone in their experience of abuse and reassured and hopeful to see someone researching this topic. Some described having found the research online, but others had seen it through media engagement. She has been contacted over the past five years by approximately 25 men who have been grateful for her work and have referred to specific examples they had read in the media (such as those included above). One specific example (S11) includes one man who is both a survivor but also working now as an advocate for male victims. He described the ways in which the work has helped in his own recovery through better understanding his experience, in his advocacy work he frequently references my work including reference to the media examples (S8) he gave a number of local examples of organisations he had engaged with through this. In a later communication he referred to the "20 Stories" video (S9i) which was useful in communicating with local police in a "domestic abuse surgery". He reported that information from the police constabulary indicates there was a fivefold increase in male MARAC cases (from one to five) in the first two weeks following the first surgery addressing male victims.

Other evidence of public engagement can be seen through both invited talks and blog posts. For example, Bates was invited to write a blog post (co-written with Dr Julie Taylor) for a popular online psychology blog (PsychReg) that has been now been read 2780 times (S9iv). Bates was also an invited keynote speaker at the annual Male Psychology conference, the talk which was shared on YouTube (S9iii) has been viewed over 2800 times. This talk has been referred to directly by male victims who have personally got in touch with Bates to thank her for raising awareness about the issue. This engagement with the media and more public engagement mediums has provided a useful pathway for impacting on individual's lives.

Where there has been publicity about the research, it enters, and impacts on, the public narratives about domestic abuse and will continue to raise awareness around male victims. Discussing this area at a national level demonstrates the reach of this work and has increased help-seeking by victims, but also contribute to changing attitudes that are currently significant barriers for men in their attempts to leave or seek help.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- S1. i) HM Government's domestic abuse consultation document "Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse" cites Bates' research (p.12, 43.) <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/homeoffice-moj/domestic-abuse-consultation>; and ii) the consultation findings, with conclusions and recommendations "House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Ninth Report of Session" cites Bates' responses (p.10) and proposes a gender neutral definition of domestic violence (p.43) <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/1015/1015.pdf>
- S2. Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). (2020). *Male victims of domestic abuse: A brief overview of the evidence*. Presentation given by MOPAC Evidence & Insight team as part of a male victim's roundtable event citing Bates' research. Available as PDF.
- S3. Testimonial letter from the National Manager at Families Need Fathers on using the research in training and CPD.
- S4. Testimonial letter from Detective Sergeant, Cumbria Constabulary on research influencing practice and reporting of incidences. [Corroborator 1].
- S5. Testimonial correspondence from Domestic Abuse Coordinator, Greater Manchester Police on the research impacting training in the Police. [Corroborator 2].
- S6. Claims on the research increasing awareness and influencing policy can be corroborated by the Chair of Canadian Association for Equality. [Corroborator 3]
- S7. One in Three Campaign. (2019). *Submission 383 to the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System*, citing Bates' research (p.15). Available as PDF.
- S8. Media television coverage including: i) Channel 4 News (2018, December 21) *Inside a refuge for male victims of domestic violence*. At 4 minutes 19 seconds. <https://www.channel4.com/news/inside-a-refuge-for-male-victims-of-domestic-violence>. ii) Channel 5 News (2019, August 9) *5 News Investigation*. Interview with Bates. https://twitter.com/5_News/status/1159520404500647936. iii) Daily Mail (2020, January 29) *A kitchen knife to the throat, punched in the teeth... it's the domestic violence scandal rarely talked about*. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-7943987/Hidden-shame-men-abused-women-love.html>.
- S9. Public recognition, dissemination and outreach including i): ManKind Initiative. (25 Nov 2017). "20 Stories". [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=ZSyT3UV0D9I&t=1s>. ii) Made at Uni Campaign. *Understanding male domestic violence*. <https://madeatuni.org.uk/university-cumbria/understanding-male-domestic-violence>. iii) Male Psychology Network. (10 July 2019). *Men's Experience of Domestic Violence*. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=WmWQye77F70>. iv) Bates, L. Taylor, J. (6 October 2019). How Do Men Who Have Experienced Abuse Talk About Intimate Partner Violence? *PsychReg*. <https://www.psychreg.org/men-experience-intimate-partner-violence/>.
- S10. Testimonial letter from ManKind Initiative Chairman on benefit to practitioners, event feedback and on Bates' award. [Corroborator 4].
- S11. Testimonial correspondence from a Male Survivor of domestic violence on how the research has benefitted male victims. [Corroborator 5].