

# Violence against women. HUILA, 2013 - 2018

## Summary

**Objective:** Violence Against Women (sociodemographic variables of the victim, type of violence and characteristics of the aggressor), reported to the public health surveillance system (SIVIGILA) in the department of Huila, during the period 2013-2018.

**Methodology:** an observational, descriptive study was carried out, taking the data collected through the XLS files for notification of the "Gender Violence" event, reported to SIVIGILA. During the period under investigation.

**Results:** Non-sexual violence is the form of violence to which women are most exposed, with 76.81% of cases, being more than 3 times greater than the form of sexual violence. Women are more likely to endure physical violence, 8,432 cases and psychological violence, 4,006 cases. In 80.26% of cases of gender violence against women, the aggressor is a man, and it is probable that the victim has some kind of family relationship with the aggressor; possibly being his partner, 7,137 cases or ex-partner, 3,264 cases.

**Conclusion:** in the department of Huila, women between 10 to 39 years old are more likely to suffer physical, sexual and psychological violence; men being the main aggressors and in most cases the sentimental partners of the victims. The most used mechanisms to inflict damage by the aggressors are short-blunt and sharp objects.

**Keywords:** gender violence, woman

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## Introduction

Gender-based violence refers to systematic and massive violations of human rights that affect the life, physical, mental and social health, integrity, freedom and equality of the entire population;<sup>1</sup> according to the United Nations (UN), Violence Against Women (VAW) is defined as "any act of gender-based violence that results, or may result in physical, sexual or psychological harm to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether they occur in public or private life".<sup>2</sup> Observing the behavior of Violence Against Women, and understanding the importance of recognizing and addressing its implications for the physical and mental health of women, who due to this are at greater risk of experiencing: "trauma, depression or disorders of anxiety, sexually transmitted infections, self-harm or suicide, unwanted pregnancies and problems related to the consumption of alcohol or tobacco";<sup>3</sup> Governmental figures worldwide have recognized their responsibility in developing actions towards the reduction and elimination of these types of violence, thus contributing to the restoration of the quality of life for women.<sup>4</sup>

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women can be a victim of mental and physical assaults at least once in their lives. Globally, 30% of women will experience some type of physical or sexual violence from their romantic partner, resulting in trauma (42%) and even death (38%).<sup>5</sup> In Colombia, figures from the National Institute of Health (INS) reveal that 87,699 suspected cases of VAW were reported in 2018, 14.64% more events than those reported to the Public Health Surveillance System (SIVIGILA) in 2017. (76,502 cases) and 21.9% more than those reported in 2016 (71,932 cases).<sup>6</sup> Having a similar panorama, the department of Huila, observing an upward trend of the affectation, with a percentage variation of 13.6% between the reports of the years 2016 (3,463 cases) and 2018 (3,934 cases).<sup>7</sup> The interest in developing this investigative work was based on the fact that surveillance of gender-based violence began less than ten years ago, which has made it possible to demonstrate the increase in cases of violence that affect the female population, year after year.

On the other hand, "Gender violence: evolution, impact and keys to its approach".<sup>8</sup> developed in Spain in 2014, it is a bibliographic review research on the most relevant aspects of gender violence, analyzing the current situation and current regulations as well as the consequences suffered by affected women, the main implications at the social and health level and the difficulties existing in its approach, where it is concluded that health professionals play a fundamental role in prevention, detection and treatment, being necessary to promote specific training in this field and articulate coordination mechanisms and protocols between the different socio-health services that guarantee comprehensive and integrated care for affected women.<sup>9</sup>

Gender violence is systematic and massive violations of human rights that affect the life, physical, mental and social health, integrity, freedom and equality of girls, boys, adolescents, youth, women, men and people with different orientations. the heterosexual, particularly those from the LGBT community (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender); It is important to highlight that the GV is given by asymmetric relationships that are generated by the overvaluation of the masculine and the undervaluation of the feminine; discriminating the different forms of sexual orientation and non-heteronormative gender identities.

In Colombia, according to the figures handled by the INS, gender-based violence has experienced an increasing behavior in recent years, such that during the first half of 2018, a total of 47,049 cases were reported to SIVIGILA.<sup>10</sup> In the department of Huila it is estimated that every day the events associated with gender violence increase, turning this situation into a public health problem, which merits the development of prevention, promotion and protection actions, to be carried out with the entire population, therefore, it is required to deepen research that reveals pertinent information on the epidemiological behavior of this problem. The Epidemiological Surveillance System of the Departmental Health Secretary of Huila reports that during 2018 a total of 5,327 events were reported to this system associated with behaviors of violence and mistreatment, of which 73% correspond to events that affected the women.<sup>10</sup>

## Methodological design

An observational, descriptive study was developed to describe the sociodemographic characteristics, data on the nature of violence, characteristics of the victim, the aggressor, the fact, and data on comprehensive health care in Violence Against Women events, reported to the public health surveillance system, in the department of Huila, during the period 2013 - 2018. The information collected through the XLS files for notification of the Gender Violence event, reported to SIVIGILA, during the period of investigation, by the Primary Data Generating Units (UPGD) of the department, was taken as input of its use by this entity. The study was carried out with the Public Health Surveillance reports, notified by the UPGD, of the 37 municipalities of the department of Huila. For the development of this investigation, 100% of the notification records of the database of events of Gender Violence, code SIVIGILA 875, which present in the variable "SEX" value "F" (female), were used notified to SIVIGILA, in the 2013-2018 periods, in the department of Huila.

**Inclusion criteria:** Databases that had the records of the variables object of this investigation, correctly filled out. Registries whose population object of the event were women, residents in the municipalities of the department of Huila.

**Exclusion criteria:** Duplicate data records. Data records that had discard adjustments due to typing error.

For the development of this investigation, the notification form of the event on Gender Violence, code 875, of the INS, was taken as an instrument, which is mandatory for all UPGDs in the country, and the information obtained from it is recognized as an officer. This information was managed through the Excel database, XLS file, and information related to names and identification documents was excluded from the reported events, respecting the principles of confidentiality and information protection, according to current regulations for the country.<sup>11</sup> The database was tabulated, taking into account the notification sheet of basic and complementary data for the

reporting of events of gender violence, and the values that were used were those stipulated in the SIVIGILA 2018 Software User Manual, from the INS, for the Gender Violence event. Taking into account that the protocols and notification sheets are updated every year, a variable value control matrix was developed, which allowed for uniformity in the data. For the analysis of statistical data, the STATA IC V14 software (Serial Number 301406325697-133) and the Excel software will be used. The analysis of the variables was carried out through descriptive statistics, where measures of central tendency and dispersion were estimated for the ratio variables; and for the nominal or ordinal variables, relative proportions and frequency measurements were calculated.

## Ethical considerations

According to resolution 08430 of 1993 (35), article 11, the investigation was classified "without risk", because it uses retrospective documentary investigation techniques and methods, which do not require any intervention or intentional modification of biological, physiological variables, psychological or social of individuals.

## Results

During the study period, a total of N: 24,707 events associated with Gender Violence were reported in the department of Huila, of which 77.12% (n: 19,050 cases) directly affected female persons, population that was the object of this research, meeting the inclusion criteria. As evidenced in Table 1, the behavior of the events associated with Violence Against Women, during the study period, according to the life course, it is observed that the highest percentage representation occurs in adult women (32.45%: 6,183 cases), that is, in women between the ages of 29 and 59. It is important to recognize the impact on the behavior of VAW, the Early Childhood life course (0 to 5 years), where 2,141 girls victims of any type of violence are registered. Table 2 shows that women are more likely to be victims of physical violence (44.26%: 8,432 cases) and psychological (21.03%: 4,006 cases).

**Table 1** Sociodemographic characteristics Violence Against Women. According to Life Course. Huila, 2013-2018

Variable / Ali°	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		Total	
<b>Age</b>														
<b>No. Observations / Life courses</b>	<b>n:2702</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n:2239</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n:2698</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n:3463</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n:3999</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n:3952</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n:19053</b>	<b>%</b>
Early childhood	168	6,22	253	11,30	327	12,12	359	10,37	520	13,00	514	13,01	2141	11,24
Childhood	180	6,66	188	8,40	253	9,38	253	7,31	329	8,23	407	10,30	1610	8,45
Adolescence	516	19,10	518	23,14	524	19,42	600	17,33	698	17,45	706	17,86	3562	18,70
Youth	748	27,68	542	24,21	684	25,35	928	26,80	1012	25,31	1050	26,57	4964	26,05
Adulthood	1008	37,31	677	30,24	843	31,25	1190	34,36	1316	32,91	1149	29,07	6183	32,45
Aldo Mayor	82	3,03	61	2,72	67	2,48	133	3,84	124	3,10	126	3,19	593	3,11

Source: SIVIGILA database. Department of Huila 2013 - 2018

It is important to point out that in the women who reported having been victims of Sexual Violence (23.19%: 4,418 cases), the highest proportion of affectation is given in the Sexual Abuse violence modality, with a percentage representation of 18.95% (3,611 cases), modality that, according to the operational definition established in the

Protocol of Notification of the event, of the INS, refers to sexual acts without penetration of the penis or other part of the body or element, with or without direct contact, performed by force, cheating, bribery, threats, seduction, manipulation. It includes handling, masturbating, exhibitionist practices and others (38). In this category it is also

important to observe the behavior of the Violation modality, which records 528 events (2.77%) during the study period. According to the information of events reported by Violence Against Women, in the department of Huila during the years 2013 to 2018, it can be seen that in 83% of cases (15,824) there was an identifiable relationship of familiarity between the victim and the aggressor, being the conjugal figures, current and past, those who in a greater proportion are seen as aggressors (54.59%: 10,401 cases), as evidenced in Table 3. It can

also be seen that in 13.55% (2,581 cases) of the records, the victims reported not having any family relationship with their aggressor, agreeing with the data of the variable “Non-Family Relationship”, where it is identified that they are acquaintances without any treatment (2.45%: 466 cases), neighbors (2.42%: 461 cases), strangers (2.34%: 445 cases) and friends (1.83%: 348 cases), are the aggressor figures with higher percentage representation.<sup>12,13</sup>

**Table 2** Categories Violence Against Women. Modality of Violence. Huila, 2013-2018

Variable / Ail°	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		Total	
	n:	%	n:	%	n:	%	n:	%	n:	%	n:	%	n:	%
<b>No. 0 reservations</b>	<b>2702</b>		<b>2239</b>		<b>2698</b>		<b>3463</b>	'A	<b>3999</b>		<b>3952</b>		<b>19053</b>	
Violence														
Physical violence	1246	46,11	986	44,04	1177	43,62	1404	40,54	1743	43,59	1876	47,47	8432	44,26
Psychological violence	706	26,13	374	16,70	497	18,42	955	27,58	874	21,86	600	15,18	4006	21,03
Non-sexual														
Neglect / abandon	179	6,62	219	9,78	339	12,56	375	10,83	519	12,98	566	14,32	2197	11,53
Sexual abuse sexual harassment rape														
Commercial sexual exploitation of boys, Girls and adolescents	503	18,62	594	26,53	549	20,35	593	17,12	652	16,30	720	18,22	3611	18,95
trafficking in persons For the purpose of sexual exploitation Sexual	22	0,81	28	1,25	35	1,30	33	0,95	31	0,78	26	0,66	175	0,92
violence in the armed conflict Sexual acts with the use of force Other	45	1,67	38	1,70	68	2,52	86	2,48	152	3,80	139	3,52	528	2,77
Sexual acts (nudity, sterilization / forced planning, mutilation)	1	0,04	0	0,00	3	0,11	2	0,06	0	0,00	0	0,00	6	0,03
	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	1	0,03	0	0,00	1	0,01
	0	0,00	0	0,00	1	0,04	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	1	0,01
	0	0,00	0	0,00	29	1,07	15	4,43	19	0,48	17	0,43	80	0,42
	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	8	0,20	8	0,20	16	0,08

Source: SIVIGILA database. Department of Huila 2013 - 2018

**Table 3** Characteristics of the aggressor in Violence Against Women. Relationship with the Victim. Huila, 2013-2018

Variable/Relación con la víctima	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		Total	
No. Observations	n:2702	%	n:2239	%	n:2698	%	n:3463	%	n:3999	%	n:3952	%	n:19053	%
<b>Relación con la víctima</b>														
Family Relationship with the Victim														
Father	22	0,81	95	4,24	130	4,82	93	2,69	159	3,98	184	4,65	683	3,58
Mother	138	5,11	219	9,78	299	11,08	376	10,86	521	13,03	531	13,43	2084	10,94
Couple	1373	50,81	984	43,95	981	36,36	1338	38,64	1300	32,51	1161	29,37	7137	37,46
Ex partner	356	13,18	311	13,89	465	17,23	697	20,13	774	19,35	661	16,72	3264	17,13
Family	451	16,69	334	14,92	413	15,31	442	12,76	481	12,03	535	13,53	2656	13,94
None	8	0,30	104	4,64	359	13,31	483	13,95	755	18,88	872	22,06	2581	13,55
No information	354	13,10	192	8,58	51	1,89	34	0,98	9	0,23	8	0,20	648	3,40
Total	2702	100,00	2239	100,00	2698	100	3463	100	3999	100	3952	100	19053	100
Unfamiliar Relationship with Victim														
Workmate	0	0,00	5	0,22	12	0,44	18	0,52	23	0,58	22	0,56	80	0,42
Study Companion	2	0,07	24	1,07	48	1,78	59	1,70	110	2,75	105	2,66	348	1,83
Custodian	0	0,00	0	0,00	6	0,22	3	0,09	9	0,23	13	0,33	31	0,16
Unknown	1	0,04	4	0,18	11	0,41	11	0,32	16	0,40	29	0,73	72	0,38

Table Continued

Variable	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		Total	
Relacion con la NActima														
No. Observations	n:2702	%	n:2239	%	n:2698	%	n:3463	%	n:3999	%	n:3952	%	n:19053	%
Neighbour	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00
Known without any deal	2	0,07	10	0,45	83	3,08	78	2,25	122	3,05	150	3,80	445	2,34
Without Information	2	0,07	21	0,94	61	2,26	74	2,14	139	3,48	164	4,15	461	2,42
Others	0	0,00	17	0,76	73	2,71	91	2,63	140	3,50	145	3,67	466	2,45
Boss	1	0,04	7	0,31	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	8	0,04
Priest / Shepherd	0	0,00	16	0,71	50	1,85	131	3,78	157	3,93	223	5,64	577	3,03
Public server	0	0,00	0	0,00	12	0,44	18	0,52	29	0,73	8	0,20	67	0,35
Workmate	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00	2	0,05	2	0,01
Study Companion	0	0,00	0	0,00	3	0,11	0	0,00	10	0,25	11	0,28	24	0,13
Total	8	0,30	104	4,64	359	13,31	483	13,95	755	18,88	872	22,06	2581	13,546

Source: SIVIGILA database. Department of Huila 2013 – 2018

## Discussion

The panorama of Violence Against Women shows that the most vulnerable population in the department is between 10 and 39 years old (56.40% = 12,834 cases), with age groups between 10 and 14 years old and 20 to 24 years the most affected, a situation consistent with the latest National figures reported by the National Institute of Health (INS)<sup>11</sup> and international.<sup>12</sup> It is pertinent to mention that the behavior of the event in Huilense women varies according to the type of violence, observing that for physical violence the age range most affected is that of 20 to 24 years (20.10% =1,695 cases), for psychological violence is between 30 and 34 years (14.43% =578 cases), for cases of negligence that of children under 5 years (61.13% =1,343 cases) and for sexual violence events, the group of 10 to 14 years (49.95% =2,207 cases).

The study found that non-sexual violence, which includes physical violence (44.26%: 8,432 cases) and psychological violence (21.03%: 4006 cases), is the most reported form of violence by women in the However, the department of Huila, sexual violence, registered an important percentage behavior (23.19%: 4,418 cases); results comparable to those found by Alsaleh, A., in their study “Violence against Kuwaiti women”, which indicated that physical, psychological and sexual abuse are the main patterns of violence<sup>13</sup> and the findings described in the document on “Prevention of sexual violence and intimate partner violence against women”, carried out by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), highlighting these types of violence as the main ones caused by a couple.<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that, in the department of Huila, the reports of Psychological Violence reach a significant representation, which shows that through the actions and strategies that have been advanced from the different sectors, it has been possible to make visible what would be considered the invisible violence, which is necessarily immersed in the other types of violence.

Likewise, the departmental administration intends to support the ethnic groups established in the territory, through the implementation of a program that “provides support, care and accompaniment to the

indigenous and Afro-descendant population settled in the department of Huila”,<sup>15</sup> a program that can serve so that the 68 cases of indigenous women and 30 of women belonging to the Afro-Colombian community, affected by Gender Violence, can find alternatives for their personal development and for the attention of their priority needs. According to the records of this investigation, 82 women reported belonging to the ROM-Gitano, Raizal and Palenquero groups, groups that do not have representation in the department, according to the recognition of the Huila Government and the Ministry of the Interior and Justice,<sup>15</sup> which shows possible errors in the quality of the data, at the time of registering the notification form. In the observations of this investigation it is related that the main aggressor of women affected by Gender Violence are men in 80.26% of cases, that the victim lived with the aggressor in 53% of cases and that possibly it was his sentimental partner (37.46%). The foregoing is consistent with the fact that the main scenario for the attack is the house (78.88%: 15,029 cases). Similar data was found by Sanz-Barbero, where 39.9% of the women were married and 52.2% lived with their spouse.<sup>16</sup>

These findings could be better explained, understanding that although today there is talk of gender equality and the empowerment of women, men still struggle to play a dominant role in their home and over their romantic partner, regardless of whether or not they should use violence, including physical and sexual violence.<sup>17,18</sup> However, it is possible that this percentage is even higher, as a result of the woman hiding this problem, due to her submission, low self-esteem or due to being faithful to her home, marriage and / or her children. , financial dependence, fear or shame to report and seek help or lack of protection measures.<sup>19,20</sup> In addition to this, we have several groups that are producers of gender stereotypes, such as institutions, the media and patriarchy in Huilense society, which generates the naturalization of VAW, even reaching the point of the victim thinking of the same way: “... my husband beats me, forces me to have sex with him and I have to accept it ... Before this interview I had not even reflected on it ... I thought it was natural, that it was the normal behavior of a husband...”<sup>18</sup>

It is notable that, both in Colombia, and in the department of Huila,

there are advances in terms of notification systems for the event and the recognition of women's rights, however, inequalities still persist in different areas of daily life (labor, economic, and political). Therefore, women are in a constant fight for their recognition, which makes it necessary to apply policies and give legal guarantees to those who are victims of Gender Violence, in such a way that the restoration of their rights and confidence is achieved. The department of Huila has a Gender Equality Policy for Huila women, therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the applicability and fulfillment of the proposed objectives towards mainstreaming actions into plans, programs and projects to eradicate all kinds of discrimination and violence.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the main limitation of the study is the quality of the data, as a consequence of the underreporting and the inadequate recording of the data in the SIVIGILA, evidenced in the incomplete data in some of the variables studied.

## Conclusion

During the period 2013-2018, in the department of Huila, the public health surveillance system (SIVIGILA) was notified of 19,050 events associated with Gender Violence Against Women, highlighting an increasing trend each year, registering a percentage variation of 46,26% between the events reported during 2013 and those reported in 2018.

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None.

## Contributions

Each author actively participated in the planning, execution, and conduct of this study. The authors wrote the None of the authors has a financial or any other conflict of interest.

## Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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