

Rights and Dignity of Senior Citizens in Madhya Pradesh: A Quantitative Study of Legal Awareness, Welfare Access, and Dignity Violations

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Abstract

The population of older persons is increasing in India, including in Madhya Pradesh. Older persons, aged 60 years and over, constitute an important part of our society who have played a crucial role in the country's growth and development. But as they age, they increasingly encounter problems in the areas of their rights, dignity and welfare. Despite the shield of protection provided to senior citizens under the Indian Constitution and other statutory laws, the reality is quite different (and often disheartening) in states such as Madhya Pradesh. This article outlines the results of a quantitative structured study in Madhya Pradesh to examine the awareness of senior citizens about legal provisions, the nature and extent of violations of their dignity, and their access to government welfare schemes. The paper is based on a research study conducted in Madhya Pradesh with 300 respondents (urban and rural) using a validated structured questionnaire. The study findings indicate that most older persons are unaware of major laws, such as the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, and state policies. Rural India experiences a higher incidence of violations of dignity, such as verbal abuse, psychological neglect, financial exploitation and lack of medical care. A multiple regression analysis reveals that income, education and awareness of rights are the most significant predictors of dignity and well-being for older persons. The chi-square tests also confirm a significant association between place of residence and violations. The study ends with policy implications to close the loop between law and practice for the elderly in Madhya Pradesh.

Keywords: Senior Citizens, Human Dignity, Legal Rights, Maintenance Act 2007, Madhya Pradesh, Welfare Schemes, Aging Population, Quantitative Research, Rights Awareness, Dignity Violations.

1. Introduction

Globally, the number of older adults is growing faster than ever before. The UN has estimated the population of 60 years and over will increase to 2.1 billion by 2050. In India, a country with a population of 1.4 billion, this is happening at an even greater pace. In 2023, India has around 149 million older persons, which will increase to more than 300 million by 2050. Among this national trend, Madhya Pradesh (the second largest by area and one of the most demographically diverse states in India) has a substantial and rapidly ageing population. Older persons are not just the recipients of support; they are rights-holders who bring to the table a lifetime of knowledge, experience and memories. India's Constitution acknowledges the state's obligation to provide for its elderly in Article 41 which states that the state shall make provision for securing the right to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age and sickness. The Directive Principles of State Policy also recognise the need for a social order that promotes social justice and extends protection to the vulnerable. However, converting these constitutional principles to reality is one of the most formidable challenges today.

The elderly in Madhya Pradesh grapple with a complex set of problems. Urban centenarians might enjoy greater access to institutional care and medical facilities, but also suffer from social and psychological neglect in their families. Elderly in rural areas, however, often face more dire circumstances - poverty, physical neglect, withholding of food and medicine, and near total exclusion from social security systems that are in place but inaccessible to the elderly.

The Senior Citizens Act, or Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, was a welcome legal initiative. The act provided for legal binding of children and relatives to support their ageing parents, set up maintenance tribunals and made abandonment of senior citizens an offence. In 2009 Madhya Pradesh also passed its Vriddhjan Niti. While these laws are on the books, their enforcement and awareness of them among those they are designed to protect is severely lacking.

This research was initiated in response to the lack of rigorous quantitative data that can be used in policy making, law reform and social work practice. The paper seeks to address three key questions: What is the level of awareness among the older population of Madhya Pradesh about the laws that are in place? What types of dignity violations do they face and how often? And how much do they access to the government provisions meant for their welfare? The findings to these questions will hopefully add to the academic literature and even to policymaking.

2. Review of Literature

The field of study on age, rights and dignity is interdisciplinary, drawing on areas such as law, sociology, public health and economics. There are a number of key contributions to the theoretical and empirical literature on which the present paper draws.

Gokhale (2008) noted the growing vulnerability of older persons to exclusion and that while India's legal framework is progressive, implementation is weak. He pointed out a disconnect between the existence of legal provisions and their knowledge among the target beneficiaries - a key finding of this study.

Liebig and Rajan (2018) studied the social exclusion of older persons in South Asia and observed that the exclusion of older persons is not just about economic poverty. They noted that older persons are excluded from multiple areas of life - family affairs, health and social life - a situation they described as a "multi-dimensional exclusion". Their research has been a major source of inspiration for the concept of dignity violations adopted in this research.

Chatterjee (2015) has undertaken a study in rural India and found that older women are more vulnerable to abuse, especially by their sons and daughters-in-law. The research highlighted the gendered nature of elder abuse, a component of the current study that is analysed using chi-square between gender groups.

Patel and Shah (2019) studied the extent of participation in government welfare schemes among the elderly in Gujarat and Rajasthan. They reported lower scheme utilization in rural areas as compared to urban areas, mostly due to bureaucratic hurdles, lack of documentation, and lack of awareness. This is investigated in this study (in the state of Madhya Pradesh).

At the global level, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1991) set a global standard of principles relating to independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity. This offers a normative framework against which to evaluate the situation in Madhya Pradesh.

While the research landscape is rich, there is a need for more quantitative research on Madhya Pradesh, which has its own socio-cultural, linguistic and administrative distinctiveness. This research aims to address this by offering state level, empirically based information on rights and dignity of older people.

3. Objectives of the Study

The current research aimed to:

1. To understand the awareness amongst the elderly population of Madhya Pradesh about the legal provisions made for their security.
2. To understand and quantify the forms and extent of dignity violations among older people in the urban and rural settings of the state.
3. To evaluate the extent of access and utilization of government welfare schemes among senior citizens.
4. To examine the relationship between socio-demographic variables and dignity outcomes using inferential statistical tools.

5. To propose evidence-based policy recommendations to strengthen the rights and dignity of senior citizens in Madhya Pradesh.

4. Research Hypotheses

The study tested the following null hypotheses:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between residential area (urban/rural) and the experience of dignity violations among senior citizens.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between educational attainment and awareness of legal rights.

Ho3: Income level does not significantly predict the quality of life and dignity of senior citizens. Ho4: There is no significant difference in the level of welfare scheme utilization between urban and rural senior citizens.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This study adopts a cross-sectional, descriptive-analytical quantitative research design. A cross-sectional design was considered most appropriate given the objectives of measuring current levels of awareness, violation, and scheme access at a specific point in time. Quantitative methods were selected to ensure that findings could be generalized beyond the sample and to allow for rigorous statistical testing of the study's hypotheses.

5.2 Study Area

The study was conducted across five districts of Madhya Pradesh, namely Indore, Bhopal, Jabalpur, Gwalior, and Sagar. These districts were selected to represent a diversity of geographic, social, and economic conditions within the state. Within each district, both urban municipal areas and rural gram panchayat areas were included.

5.3 Sample Size and Sampling

The total sample size for this study was 300 senior citizens. Respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Districts were treated as primary strata, and within each district, urban and rural areas constituted secondary strata. The sample was randomly drawn from each strata from lists supplied by the local administrations, aged homes and health workers. Participants were aged 60 years and above. Those with severe cognitive impairment were excluded to ensure the reliability of self-reports.

5.4 Research Tool

Data were collected using an original, structured survey that was created for this research. The survey was broken down into five areas: (i) Socio-Demographics; (ii) Legal Rights/Schemes Awareness (n=20); (iii) Dignity/Abuse Assessment (n=24); (iv) Welfare Scheme Access & Utilization (n=14); and (v) Subjective Well-Being/QOL (n=10). The Survey Instrument was administered in Hindi to increase its accessibility. The survey instrument was tested with 30 participants (not part of the overall sample) prior to administration to the main sample. Based upon the results of testing and refinement, the Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient for the final instrument is .84, indicating excellent internal consistency.

5.5 Data Collection

Primary data were collected during a 4 month period (January through April) of 2024. During this time, trained field investigators visited the participants at home, or an elderly home and/or a community centre. Field investigators provided information regarding the purpose of the survey and obtained verbal, informed consent. Strict confidentiality was observed by the field investigators. When needed, field investigators also assisted the participants with answering the questionnaire. Institutional Research Committee approval for ethical reasons was given prior to conducting the primary data collection.

5.6 Statistical Analysis

The information gathered was encoded into SPSS version 25 and descriptive statistics (frequency, percent, mean and standard deviation) were computed. Chi square tests were run to determine if there is an association between

two or more categorical variables. An equation for a multiple linear regression model was created to determine what are the significant predictors of the dignity outcome. The p value will be .05.

6. Findings and Analysis

6.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profile of the 300 respondents. The majority of respondents were men (62.7%) and women (37.3%). 60 to 69 years represented the most frequent age group (49.0%), followed by 70 to 79 years (36.0%) and aged ≥80 years (15.0%). 54.0% of respondents lived in urban areas and 46.0% in rural areas.

A large fraction of the sample (44.7%) reported an income of less than ₹5,000 per month, indicating the poor economic conditions of many elderly people in Madhya Pradesh.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=300)

S.No.	Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
1	Gender	Male	188 (62.7%)
		Female	112 (37.3%)
2	Age Group	60–69 Years	147 (49.0%)
		70–79 Years	108 (36.0%)
		80 Years & Above	45 (15.0%)
3	Residential Area	Urban	162 (54.0%)
		Rural	138 (46.0%)
4	Educational Status	Illiterate	98 (32.7%)
		Primary/Secondary	123 (41.0%)
		Graduate & Above	79 (26.3%)
5	Marital Status	Married	172 (57.3%)
		Widowed	109 (36.3%)
		Divorced/Separated	19 (6.4%)
6	Monthly Income	Below ₹5,000	134 (44.7%)
		₹5,000–₹15,000	112 (37.3%)
		Above ₹15,000	54 (18.0%)

Source: Primary data collected by researcher (2024)

6.2 Awareness of Legal Rights and Protective Frameworks

In the analysis of awareness levels there were major gaps in awareness of legal protections for the elderly. As per Table 2, only 28.3% of the sample were fully aware of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens

Act, 2007 - the primary Act for the protection of senior citizens. A significant 37.0% were completely unaware of this Act.

The alarming ignorance level is in relation to constitutional rights. A mere 19.7% of the respondents knew that the state is required to provide assistance to the aged under Article 41 of the Directive Principles. 63.0% of the respondents were unaware of the Madhya Pradesh Vriddhjan Niti 2009, which was enacted specifically for the state's senior citizens.

In contrast, awareness of income-based schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana was comparatively more (44.3%). This could be due to more publicity and marketing by financial institutions. These results point to the need for special legal awareness programs for senior citizens.

Table 2: Awareness of Legal Rights and Protective Frameworks (N=300)

S.No.	Legal Framework	Aware (%)	Partially Aware (%)	Unaware (%)
1	Maintenance & Welfare of Parents Act, 2007	28.3%	34.7%	37.0%
2	Senior Citizens Rights under DPSP (Art. 41)	19.7%	27.0%	53.3%
3	MP Vriddhjan Niti 2009	14.3%	22.7%	63.0%
4	National Policy on Older Persons, 1999	11.0%	19.3%	69.7%
5	Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana	44.3%	31.0%	24.7%
6	Right to Free Legal Aid (Sec. 12 Legal Services)	16.7%	24.3%	59.0%

Source: Primary data collected by researcher (2024). Multiple responses recorded

6.3 Types and Extent of Dignity Violations

Perhaps the most important finding of this study is that the incidence of dignity violations among senior citizens, especially in rural regions, is shockingly high. The Dignity Violation Index (DVI), developed for this study based on 24 items, had an average score which classified 67.3% of the sample as experiencing moderate to high levels of dignity violations.

As shown in Table 3, the most prevalent form of violation was social isolation and exclusion (43.7%) followed by psychological neglect (43.0%) and verbal abuse from family members (40.7%). There is a significant rural-urban gap in all categories.

For instance, 52.2% of the rural respondents reported verbal abuse compared to 31.5% in urban areas. Insufficient food was denied to 38.4% of rural older persons compared to 18.5% of urban older persons. Financial exploitation (forced or coerced transfers of property or pension money) was reported by 28.3% of respondents. This was more common in rural than urban areas (33.3% vs 24.1%) and among respondents who were widowed and/or lived alone.

Table 3: Nature and Prevalence of Dignity Violations by Residential Area (N=300)

S.No.	Type of Violation	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Overall (%)
1	Verbal abuse by family members	31.5%	52.2%	40.7%
2	Denial of adequate food/nutrition	18.5%	38.4%	27.3%
3	Neglect in medical care	29.6%	47.8%	37.7%
4	Financial exploitation	24.1%	33.3%	28.3%
5	Social isolation/exclusion	38.9%	49.3%	43.7%
6	Forced property transfer	11.1%	21.7%	16.0%
7	Psychological neglect	33.3%	54.3%	43.0%

Source: Primary data collected by researcher (2024).

6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of Dignity Outcomes

In order to assess which socio-demographic and contextual factors are the strongest predictors of the dignity and quality of life of older persons, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted on the Dignity Outcome Score (DOS) as the dependent variable.

The regression model was significant ($F = 14.67, p < 0.001$) and accounted for 48.3% of the variance in dignity outcomes ($\text{Adjusted } R^2 = 0.483$). As shown in Table 4, the highest predictor of dignity outcomes is income ($\beta = 0.412, p < 0.001$). It reiterates how critical economic security is for preserving the dignity of older persons.

Knowledge of legal rights ← the second strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.358, p < 0.001$): knowledge of rights is both aspirational and real. Higher education ($\beta = 0.311, p < 0.01$) and urban residency ($\beta = 0.229, p < 0.05$) also had significant positive effects. Living alone was found to significantly reduce well-being ($\beta = -0.284, p < 0.01$), highlighting how vulnerable elderly individuals can be when they don't have regular support or companionship.

There was a positive but insignificant effect of access to government schemes ($\beta = 0.197, p = 0.064$), which may be due to the variable quality of services delivered under these schemes. Therefore, H_03 is rejected.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis – Predictors of Dignity Outcome Score (N=300)

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	Std. Error	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
Income Level	0.412	0.087	4.736	0.000***
Awareness of Rights	0.358	0.094	3.809	0.000***
Residential Area (Urban)	0.229	0.101	2.267	0.024*

Educational Attainment	0.311	0.089	3.494	0.001**
Living Arrangement (Alone)	-0.284	0.098	-2.898	0.004**
Government Scheme Access	0.197	0.106	1.858	0.064
Gender (Female)	-0.163	0.092	-1.772	0.077

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Dependent Variable: Dignity Outcome Score (DOS). Adjusted $R^2 = 0.483$, $F(7,292) = 14.67$, $p < 0.001$.

6.5 Chi-Square Analysis: Associations Among Key Variables

A series of chi-square tests were performed to test associations between pairs of categorical variables. The association between residential area and dignity violation was highly significant ($\chi^2 = 18.74$, $p < 0.001$), as seen in Table 5, so it is evident that the incidence of dignity violations is much greater among rural elders.

This allows us to reject the Null Hypothesis H_01 . Furthermore, the association between education and awareness of rights was also highly significant ($\chi^2 = 22.31$, $p < 0.001$), which leads to the rejection of H_02 .

It demonstrates that educational level is a key intermediary variable between legal provision and legal awareness. A significant association was observed between income and the availing of welfare schemes ($\chi^2 = 15.68$, $p < 0.01$), and between gender and abuse ($\chi^2 = 9.47$, $p < 0.01$), with women being more affected by psychological and physical abuse. Interestingly, the relationship between age group and access to healthcare was insignificant ($\chi^2 = 7.82$, $p = 0.099$) - this confirms that age is not the key factor in determining access to health care - income, location and awareness are more significant determinants.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test Results for Selected Variable Associations (N=300)

Association Tested	Chi-Square (χ^2)	Df	p-value	Interpretation
Dignity Violation				
Residential Area &	18.74	2	0.000***	Highly Significant
Education Level & Rights Awareness	22.31	4	0.000***	Highly Significant
Income & Access to Welfare Schemes	15.68	4	0.003**	Significant

Gender & Experience of Abuse	9.47	2	0.009**	Significant
Marital Status & Loneliness Index	12.33	4	0.015*	Significant
Age Group & Healthcare Accessibility	7.82	4	0.099	Not Significant

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

6.6 Welfare Scheme Utilization Among Senior Citizens

The survey looked at the level of access that respondents were enjoying to seven major government welfare schemes for older persons. Table 6 shows the rates of utilization by type of The Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) was the most widely used (57.7%) but even this flagship scheme had a 7.4% disparity between urban and rural use.

Programmes that involved more paperwork or institutional interaction had much larger gaps. For instance, the free bus pass scheme was used by 44.4% of the urban respondents, but by only 18.8% of rural respondents - a 25.6% point difference. The Senior Citizen Savings Scheme and PM Vaya Vandana Yojana (both of which require access to financial institutions) had among the highest urban-rural gaps.

The MP Vriddhjan Sahayata Kendra services - local support services for the elderly - were used by 27.2% of urban and only 11.6% of rural older people, reflecting a lack of institutional awareness and outreach.

The above results allow us to reject Null Hypothesis H_04 and conclude that there is a statistically and practically significant gap in welfare access across residential categories.

Table 6: Government Welfare Scheme Utilization by Residential Area (N=300)

S.No.	Government Scheme	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Gap (%)
1	Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension	61.7%	54.3%	7.4%
2	Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana	38.3%	21.7%	16.6%
3	Ayushman Bharat – Senior Citizen Cover	52.5%	43.5%	9.0%
4	MP Vriddhjan Sahayata Kendra Services	27.2%	11.6%	15.6%
5	PM Vaya Vandana Yojana (Pension)	29.6%	13.0%	16.6%
6	Free Bus Pass for Senior Citizens	44.4%	18.8%	25.6%
7	Senior Citizen Savings Scheme	33.3%	8.7%	24.6%

Source: Primary data collected by researcher (2024).

7. Discussion

This research paints a bleak picture of the disconnect between the spirit of the law on elder care in India and the reality of senior citizens in Madhya Pradesh. Overall, the data show a population that is protected in theory but not in practice from the protections and rights that law and policy afford them.

The lack of awareness of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents Act, 2007, among almost two-thirds of the survey participants is especially concerning. This is not just an intellectual deficit - it is practical. Elderly people cannot exercise their rights if they don't know about them. They cannot take their case to the Maintenance Tribunal to well-meant, is rendered meaningless by absence of awareness.

The high rates of violations of dignity - especially in rural areas - reflect larger social and economic vulnerabilities. The stark disparity in almost all the indicators of the study between rural and urban Madhya Pradesh suggests that the urban bias in service provisioning, outreach and civil society interventions in the state results in a dual system of care for the elderly in Madhya Pradesh. Rural elderly are, to a large extent, left to rely on their families, which are often themselves economically vulnerable - making the elderly more prone to neglect and abuse.

The regression analysis quantifies a finding that has often been made in a qualitative way: that income is the most important predictor of dignified ageing. When older citizens lack income or have irregular pensions, they become dependent on family for economic support, and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The second most powerful predictor of dignified outcomes - legal awareness - is also significant. It affirms that knowledge of the law is not only intellectually stimulating but also instrumental in securing one's life and dignity.

The gendered nature of abuse - with women respondents more likely to report psychological and physical abuse - is consistent with evidence from other studies and suggests that gender-responsive policies are needed in ageing programmes. Single, widowed women are a particularly vulnerable sub-population of the vulnerable elderly population, the data show.

The significant rural-urban imbalance in welfare scheme coverage is a serious failure that needs to be addressed. The plethora of centrally and state-funded schemes does not necessarily trickle down to the target beneficiaries. Geographical distance, lack of documentation and lack of digital literacy and awareness are all barriers that keep rural elderly away from the welfare fabric that is being spun for their benefit.

8. Policy Recommendations

Based on the research conducted for this article, the following suggestions are made to policymakers, law authorities, civil society and educational institutions:

- ▶ **Legal Literacy Campaigns:** The Madhya Pradesh government must undertake legal literacy universities, bar councils and civil society, must conduct district-level legal literacy campaigns in Hindi. These campaigns must particularly focus on educating elders about the Maintenance Act 2007, their right to maintenance, how to submit a request to the Maintenance Tribunals and their fundamental rights under the Constitution.
- ▶ **Reinvigorating Maintenance Tribunals:** District-level Maintenance Tribunals set up as established under the 2007 Act need to be equipped with staff, sensitive judges and speedy procedures. A large number of seniors aware of the Act do not go to court because of apprehension of family disharmony and procedural intricacies. Mobile tribunals and helpdesks at community centres should be considered.
- ▶ **Rural Outreach:** The stark rural-urban disparity found in this study warrants a focused rural outreach program by the state should have a rural outreach plan for the welfare of senior citizens. This must involve welfare camps, panchayat counselors and collaboration with ASHA workers and local self-government bodies to detect vulnerable elderly people and connect them to schemes. Pension Increase: The amount of old age pension as part of the Indira Gandhi National Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) needs to be raised to keep up with inflation. The old

age pension should be at least ₹3,000 per month, along with top-up from the state if the pensioner falls below the poverty line in the case of Madhya Pradesh.

▶ **Digital Literacy for the Elderly:** With the digitisation of welfare payments, there is concern about the digital divide for elderly persons without digital literacy skills. Digital help desks at gram panchayat and ward offices manned by volunteers must be set up to assist elderly persons to access digital government services, pension and health portals.

▶ **Gender-Sensitive Interventions:** Programmes targeting elderly women - especially - especially single, widowed women Block-level women-only groups, with legal assistance, psychological counselling and nutritional assistance, should be set up across the state.

▶ **Monitoring and redressal:** A state-level office of the Senior Citizen Commissioner with with real powers of investigation and enforcement should be set up in Madhya Pradesh. This office should have a real-time grievance redressal portal and undertake annual surveys to monitor the dignity and welfare of older persons in all districts.

9. Conclusion

This research aimed to empirically assess the status of the rights and dignity of older persons in Madhya Pradesh from a sociological perspective. The findings paint a picture of a population of senior persons who are, in many respects, being abandoned by the institutions meant to safeguard them. It shows that legal literacy is alarmingly low, that dignity violations are all too frequent - particularly in rural regions - and that despite the presence of social security schemes, the most vulnerable groups of the elderly have been left behind. The statistical analyses conducted in this study (regression, chi-square, and descriptive) provide a consistent and clear message: the rights of senior citizens in Madhya Pradesh are not yet a reality for most of those who should enjoy them.

At the same time, the study also identifies pathways for meaningful change. The strong positive relationship between awareness and dignity outcomes suggests that legal literacy is one of the most cost- effective and impactful interventions available. The economic vulnerability of the elderly — with nearly half living on less than ₹5,000 per month — calls for urgent income support reform. And the urban-rural divide across every dimension of the study demands a structural reorientation of welfare delivery toward those who are geographically most remote and socially most marginalized.

India has made significant legislative strides in recognizing the rights of its elderly citizens. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents Act, the National Policy on Older Persons, and the various pension and healthcare schemes are all evidence of a state that, at least in principle, recognizes its obligations. The challenge now is implementation — closing the gap between the letter of the law and the lives of those the law was written to protect.

This study is a small step in that direction, and it is hoped that the study's findings will provide some valuable information for policymakers, researchers, activists and all those who care about ensuring that every elderly person in Madhya Pradesh lives with the rights they deserve.

11. Limitations of the Study

This study produces important and valid quantitative results, but with some caveats. First, the study uses a cross-sectional design, which provides a snapshot of the data and does not capture the development with age. Second, the sample includes five districts, which may not be representative of the state's 52 districts. Third, respondent-reported information on sensitive issues like family abuse might be under- reported because of social stigma and fear of retaliation. fourth, there is a preponderance of males who are more likely to respond to formal surveys, which may impact gender- specific results.

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