

Study proposes to elaborate the term 'parental abuse by children'

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Credit: Author: Louise A

Mothers are the main victims of parental abuse by children, so this kind of abuse should legally be considered as violence against women. That is

the conclusion of a research paper written by Sandra Jiménez Arroyo as a result of her doctoral thesis, co-directed by UGR professors María José Jiménez Díaz from the Department of Criminal Law and Francisco Javier Garrido Carrillo from the Department of Procedural Law. The researchers propose alternative terms for this phenomenon, such as "maternal abuse by children" instead of the accepted "parental abuse by children," which obscures the primary victim.

The goal of her research is to address the lack of a common definition. There are very few scientific studies about this issue, especially in a legal framework. In fact, parental abuse by children is the least studied among the different kinds of abuse within the family. Many definitions are ambiguous as a result of those determining factors.

The current definition is even worse considering that parental abuse by children is currently the fourth most common crime committed by minors. Jiménez Arroyo notes that victims are not sufficiently encouraged to report aggressions committed by their [underage children](#).

Parental abuse by children is not a new problem. Despite the lack of a theoretical framework and protocols of action against this type of [violence](#), 'battered parent syndrome' was described as early as 1957. Since then, despite being essential for reducing violence, insufficient attention has been paid to such abuse. In order to adopt mitigating measures, further research is necessary, especially from a legal perspective, according to Jiménez Arroyo.

The first step is identifying the victim. The researcher analyzes almost all of the studies carried out in Spain and other countries, and she concludes that the mother is the victim in most of these case. Fathers are also victims sometimes, but rarely the only victims—in most such cases, fathers are victims along with mothers.

While trying to establish the origin of violence against mothers, the study has shown that even though minors think that men and women should be equal, in practice, they tend to discriminate against their [mothers](#).

Therefore, gender roles imply that this kind of violence is more pronounced against women. Abusive minors show that tendency by adopting a patriarchal stance. Thus, from the results of several Spanish and international studies, Jiménez Arroyo says that the most common abuser profile is that of the male son and the victim profile is that of the mother; therefore, she refers to parental [abuse](#) by [children](#) as a type of violence against women.

"It is essential," Jiménez Arroyo says, "to carry out more research analyzing this violence from a gender perspective, including gender-segregated studies and going into detail about the influence that this violent phenomenology could have on other [women](#) present in the household."

More information: JIMÉNEZ ARROYO, S. "Madres victimizadas. Análisis jurídico de la violencia filio parental como un tipo de violencia hacia la mujer". Anales de Derecho, vol. 35, núm. 1, 2017. , [revistas.um.es/analesderecho/a ... e/view/289231/216471](https://revistas.um.es/analesderecho/article/view/289231/216471)

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