

Conclusions: The Republic of Moldova has committed to ensuring the development of knowledge and skills in preventing and appropriately responding to violence against women and domestic violence in all professionals involved in addressing this social phenomenon, including medical staff. *Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy developed a course for medical students and doctors aiming at increasing their awareness, professional knowledge and skills in identifying victims of domestic and gender-based violence and addressing such cases.

Keywords: domestic violence, gender-based violence, medical professionals

Andrei Pădure, chairman of the Forensic Medicine Chair, associate professor, Dr. med. habil., *Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, e-mail: andrei.padure@usmf.md, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4249-9172.



RATE AND STRUCTURE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

*Alina Nicorici¹, Andrei Pădure¹, Natalia Toporeț¹, Anatolii Bondarev¹,
Petru Glavan¹, Vasile Șarpe^{1,2}*

¹*Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Republic of Moldova

²Center of Forensic Medicine, Republic of Moldova

Introduction: Nowadays, sexual violence is a severe violation of human rights and a major social problem faced by all countries all over the world. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and combating violence against Women and domestic violence (2011), known as the Istanbul Convention, requires state parties to criminalize sexual violence, rape, and sexual harassment and to set up sexual violence referral centers for victims to provide them integrated services. The Republic of Moldova ratified the Istanbul Convention on 14.11.2021 and, by doing so, committed itself to protecting women against all forms of violence, including by adjusting its legal framework to the Convention provisions and adequately assisting victims and survivors. The health system and medico-legal investigation play a crucial role in the response provided by the state institutions.

Purpose of the research: To present the rate and structure of sexual violence in the Republic of Moldova during 2023.

Materials and Methods: The Centre of Forensic Medicine's annual report for 2023 was analysed and 4 criteria (victims' gender, age, residence, their relationship with perpetrator) related to sexual violence cases were studied.

Results: In 2023, 526 people were subjected to forensic medical examinations concerning cases of sexual violence within the Centre of Forensic Medicine regional units. This number included 426 victims and 100 perpetrators. Mostly, sexual violence occurred in Chișinău city (29.5%), followed by the northern region of the country (Eдинeț (9.7%) and Soroca (6.1%)). Both adults (53.8%) and minors (46.2%) were victims of sexual violence. Mainly, victims of sexual violence were women, especially minors (95.8%). In most cases (69.4%), the perpetrators were unknown to the victims.

Discussion: After ratifying the Istanbul Convention, the Republic of Moldova undertook real steps to meet its provisions. Thus, several centres for victims of sexual and domestic violence, such as Barnahus Centre (for children), Regional service for sexual violence victims in Ungheni district and Police Family Justice Centre were open in the last years (2022-2023). National legislation asks forensic medical experts to conduct medico-legal examinations of sexual violence victims together with gynaecologists and other relevant medical professionals. Nowadays, the Moldovan Criminal Code criminalises rape (art. 171), non-consensual sexual actions (art. 172), sexual harassment (art. 173), sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 16 (art. 174), sexual actions with a person under the age of 16 (art. 175) and luring a minor for sexual purposes (art. 175¹). Nevertheless, it has recently (09.01.2023) been adjusted to the requirements of the Istanbul Convention by including a new article (132²) that explains the meaning of non-consensual sexual acts or actions. Moreover, the definition of sexual acts was enlarged to include not only vaginal penetration but anal and oral ones with any body part or object.

Conclusions: Sexual violence continues to be a global challenge, and forensic medical institutions play a key role in the state's response. National legislation requires professionals from different fields to act

in a coordinated way and provide the comprehensive services needed by victims of violence. According to the Centre of Forensic Medicine data, during 2023, mostly adult female victims were subjected to forensic medical examinations. The Republic of Moldova adjusted its national legislation to the Istanbul Convention in recent years and this is still an ongoing process.

Keywords: sexual violence, rape, medico-legal examination

Alina Nicorici, medical resident, *Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, e-mail: alina0301n@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0009-0004-8450-3066.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA FROM MEDICO-LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Felicia Damaschin¹, Natalia Toporeț¹, Andrei Pădure¹, Petru Glavan¹, Anatolii Bondarev¹, Vasile Șarpe^{1,2}

¹*Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Republic of Moldova

²Centre of Forensic Medicine, Republic of Moldova

Introduction: Domestic violence is one of the most widespread violations of human rights, having significant consequences on physical, mental, and reproductive health. In recent years, the Republic of Moldova has undertaken several initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of domestic violence and violence against women, such as ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2011), known as the Istanbul Convention. State institutions are expected to adjust their tools to meet the requirements of Article 11 of the Convention.

Additionally, in the sixth report, CEDAW noticed that in terms of gender-based violence, the Republic of Moldova statistical data only cover certain forms of gender-based violence and are not disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, geographical location, disability, and the relationship between perpetrator and victim. In its first Baseline Evaluation Report for the Republic of Moldova GREVIO noted the Centre of Forensic Medicine annually collects and reports general statistical data on cases of domestic and sexual violence which are not disaggregated by the relationship between victim and perpetrator.

Methods: The statistical analysis of domestic violence cases registered in the Republic of Moldova was conducted. Annual report 2023 of the Centre of Forensic Medicine was studied, and data were systemized and mathematically processed for each criterion and every district of the Republic of Moldova.

Results: To comply with the requirements, in 2023, the Centre of Forensic Medicine adjusted its statistical form to the Convention's requirements, CEDAW, and GREVIO's Evaluation Report recommendations. During 2023, 3,857 victims of domestic violence were medico-legally examined in the Republic of Moldova, 76.02% of them were women and girls. The correlation between victims' age and gender shows that children of both genders are equally victimized, while among adult victims women constitute 78.41%. Mostly, intimate partners (77.37%) acted as perpetrators, followed by other family members (14.22%) and parents (8.41%). As a residency, 54.88% of victims came from urban areas and 45.12% - from rural areas. Only 2.2% of victims were people with special needs, mainly (75.29%) adults.

Conclusion: The Centre of Forensic Medicine in the Republic of Moldova is the only institution within the healthcare field that collects statistical data on domestic violence disaggregated according to the Istanbul Convention requirements. The adjustment of statistical form allowed the collection of statistical data on domestic violence disaggregated on victims' gender, age, geographical location, disability, and relationship with the perpetrator for the first time. This information will contribute to the creation of a systemic sectoral and interdepartmental response aimed at ensuring the safety, prevention, and comprehensive examination of domestic violence cases based on a gender-based approach.

Keywords: domestic violence, women, gender-based violence

Felicia Damaschin, forensic medicine resident, MD, Chair of Forensic Medicine, *Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, the Republic of Moldova, e-mail: felicia.damaschin03@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0009-0007-3383-2566.