

Myths about family violence

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Criminology and victimology have in recent years considerably contributed to knowledge about domestic violence; special theories have been formed and new forms have been "discovered", such as violence against older family members, violence against males, and violence in homosexual partnership communities. Although most of these findings are supported by empirical research as well as by theoretical arguments, they impinge on the public (i.e. in social consciousness) very slowly. A few decades present a relatively short period of time for the modification of attitudes to family violence, transmitted from a generation to generation. For this reason, some social representations of domestic violence stay deeply rooted, in spite of their unfounded basis. These are the so-called myths - attitudes which are unreal, unfounded and not verified, and in addition, their basic characteristic is that they are resistant to changes or that changing them takes a long time. They begin to collapse after long intensive public debates which have an impact on changes of social consciousness about a particular phenomenon. In this way, the myth of acceptability of domestic violence and social tolerance towards brutality against family members has begun to collapse in Slovenia, too. This paper presents some of the myths which are deeply rooted in our social environment in spite of new knowledge in the area of criminology, psychology and sociology.

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