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## KNOWLEDGE AND VIOLENCE EXPERIENCE OF FEMALE PRISONERS IN THEIR PAST LIFE

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**Introduction:** Exposure to violence, particularly physical or sexual abuse, are frequently part of female prisoners' past personal history.

**Objective:** Verify female prisoners' knowledge on violence and contextualize the violence they experienced, suffered or witnessed before prison.

**Aims:** Get to know the perceptions and meanings the female prisoners attributed to violence.

**Method:** Exploratory and descriptive study, carried out at the Female Penitentiary of Ribeirão Preto (SP) - Brazil. A semistructured interview was applied to 15 prisoners. The results were submitted to thematic content analysis.

**Results:** Two categories were identified. "What violence is": they recognized interpersonal (intra-family and community) and self-inflicted violence. Regarding the nature, they mentioned physical aggressions, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and negligence. They assess that these practices occur for random and futile motives, with family connivance and complicity. They consider violence a social problem, resulting from inequalities, lack of access to education and employment opportunities. "Violence in past life": as victims and spectators - physical aggressions (body fight), sexual abuse and mistreatment in interpersonal relations (rejection, depreciation, discrimination, disrespect, intimidation, oppression, exaggerated charge or punishment). As perpetrators of physical aggression, homicides, assaults and drugs traffic, they appoint alcohol and drugs abuse as the main motivator for aggressions and crimes.

**Conclusion:** Based on this study, can be suggested the need to construct public policies against violence in primary care, mainly at home, where the violence cycle seems to start.