

Title

Voices of Young Women Exposed to Honor-based violence: On Vulnerability and Support from Social Services

Introduction

Swedish social services play a pivotal role in preventing men's violence against women. Men's violence against women includes honor-based violence (HBV). This type of family-based violence consists of norms that disregard human rights. Individuals that grow up in an honor culture have limited possibilities to choose their own paths. Family members who challenge prevailing norms risk being subject to psychological and physical violence. The aim of this study is twofold. First, this study examines the circumstances that lead victims of HBV to seek help from social services. Second, the study examines victims of HBV's experiences of support and relief offered by social services. This study consists of young women between the age of 18-25 who look back on their vulnerability and the circumstances that resulted in that they sought help from social services. They also share their experiences of the support that they received from social services.

Methods

Semi-structured interviews with ten women about their experiences of HBV. A qualitative content analysis was conducted to analyze the data.

Results and conclusions

The interview persons do not constitute a homogenous group; circumstances, needs and exposure varied considerably between participants. The women showed a great need to share their experiences about the violence and their exposure. Honor norms affect entire families and extended families. Interview persons' access to long-term relations based on trust benefitted their break-up processes from families. Social services' measures should not be limited and undermined by the prevalence of honor norms in public spaces and municipal activities. Joint efforts from the local community are therefore necessary to identify and prevent honor-based oppression. The findings of the study are discussed in light of previous research and Axel Honneth's recognition theory.

Key Words

Victims of honor-based violence, User perspective, Escape from honor-based violence, Break-up processes, Social work, Forced marriage, Qualitative research