



Field-study results: Risk -assessment tools and case documentation used by frontline responders

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June 9th, 2021, online

Examining risk assessment and case documentation processes in 8 European countries

-296 interviews addressing risk assessment procedures and tools in respect to case documentation and their use by frontline responders (FLR) of high impact domestic violence (HIDV): the police, the medical sector and the social sector.

Areas of the examination

- We examined if risk assessment and case documentation procedures exist when FLR-s are handling HIDV?
- What kind of risk assessment instruments and related case-documentation mechanisms are used? Especially concerning the level of standardization and spread of use
- What are the critical shortcomings of these tools?
- What are the main suggestions to improve risk assessment and case documentation processes?

Key problems identified

- **One third of the participating countries lack formal, standardised risk assessment tools and protocols or their protocols only cover certain parts/areas of the risk or are used only in certain types of crimes**
- **In some other countries (e.g.: in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Finland) there are effective instruments, but they are not generally used, only discretionally in**
 - ❖ certain sectors
 - ❖ certain regions/ police units, or other frontline agencies
- **Good practices face obstacles to spread in the countries and across the different sectors**
- **Many countries lack cooperation and information sharing among FLR-s regarding risk assessment and risk-related case documentation procedures**

Typical shortcomings of risk assessment tools mentioned by the interviewees from partner countries

- the rigidity of existing formal risk assessment tools
- the lack of case-based sensitivity
- lack of multidisciplinary cooperation across the sectors in risk assessment and case documentation
- risk of ‚false assessment‘ and negligence of certain risk situations

Typical shortcomings of case documentation

- Documentation of DV incidents is often not unified, standardised and formalised
- In countries where there are no unified case documentation systems, regulations and practices often ensure a lot of discretion of what and how to document
- Discretionary and informal processes and the lack of standards for DV case documentation hinder inter-sectorial cooperations between FLR agencies

Suggestions how to improve risk assessment and case documentation tools and protocols

- Need for unified risk assessment and case documentation protocols across the FLR sectors and country-wide
- Using risk assessment tools have to be accompanied by comprehensive and regular professional training
- Timing of the risk assessment process is crucial: the **dynamic approach** of risk assessment was preferred, meaning a continuous re-evaluation of risks during the course of a case management
- It is important to acknowledge country-specific differences; models have to be tailor-made to the unique conditions of each countries

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 787054.

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