Our culture assumes domestic violence is exclusively committed against women. But the data reveals a surprisingly high number of men are also abused.

BETINA ARND

There was a funny discussion recently on the ABC's radio show The News Hour about how we respond to domestic violence. A woman was being chased by her husband and called the police. The police went to the house and found the woman sitting in a side room while her husband was outside. They asked her if she had been hurt and she said she had. The police asked why she didn't leave and she said she couldn't because her husband had locked her out.

The host of the show, Malu Okos, responded that men were also victims of domestic violence and that it is often undetected because it is so common. It is estimated that one in five women and one in ten men experiences domestic violence in a lifetime.

Researchers are trying to improve the accuracy of data on domestic violence by using new methods to gather information. The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council shows a "screwing up" of the evidence on gender, saying that domestic violence research databases have not been comprehensive enough to capture all cases.

Recent studies have shown that domestic violence is not just a problem for women. In 2012, the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey found that one in three women and one in two men experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner.

There is a need for more research to understand why so many men experience domestic violence and what can be done to prevent it. We need to acknowledge this is a problem for all genders and work together to address it.