

## Stalking in the Spanish Universities

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** Stalking has not been studied in the university community of Spain, using a representative and stratified sample.

**Aims.** To assess the prevalence of stalking, the characteristics of the victims and the stalkers, and the damages inflicted on victims in the university community of Andalusia (UCA), the southern region of Spain.

**Methods.** A validated questionnaire on stalking prevalence and characteristics was e-mailed to a representative sample of the UCA (15,000 persons/questionnaires), stratified by center, age, sex and duties (students, professors and researchers, and other staff employees). The survey was carried out during the first semester of 2021.

**Results.** The UCA represents the 18% of the Spanish university community. 11,778 members of the UCA fulfilled the questionnaire (78,5%), mostly young students, median age 21,6 +/- 1.5 years. A 6.6% prevalence of stalking (778 persons) was observed, mostly among persons between 18 and 25 years (27.5%), and women (42.5%). Women were mainly stalked by men (84.7%), acting alone (62%), using anonymous telematic resources (cellular telephone, WhatsApps, short messages, E-mail, ...) (16%).

**Conclusions.** Stalking is highly prevalent in the Spanish university community, particularly among young women. The stalker is mostly a man, acting alone, and using anonymous telematic resources.

**Keywords:** Stalking. Harassment. Bullying. Cyberstalking.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The bullying and murder of Rebecca Schaeffer in 1989 by a fan, aroused interest in stalking, not only in the news but among US legislators. So that, by the end of the 1990s, stalking was criminalized in the fifty states and the District of Columbia. Since then, numerous studies have assessed the prevalence of stalking, the characteristics of the victims and the stalkers, the damages inflicted on victims and the measures to prevent, detect and correct them. Next, stalking was criminalized in Canada in 1993, Australia (between 1993 and 1995) and New Zealand in 1997. In Europe, the first country to criminalize stalking was the United Kingdom that, in 1997 approved the Protection from Harassment Act, followed by other countries like Belgium (1998), Netherland (2000), Austria (2006)<sup>2</sup>, Germany (2007)<sup>3</sup>, Italy (2009)<sup>4</sup> and Sweden (2011)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See on this issue: VAN DER Aa, S., *Stalking in the Netherlands: Nature and prevalence of the problem and the effectiveness of anti-stalking measures*, 2010. Tesis doctoral. Disponible en <https://research.tilburguniversity.edu/en/publications/stalking-in-the-netherlands-nature-and-prevalence-of-the-problem->

<sup>3</sup> See on this issue: STEINBERG, G., "Nachstellen – Ein Nachruf? En, *Juristenzeitung*", 2006, 1 (6), pp. 30 -33; UTSCH, M., *Strafrechtliche Probleme des Stalking*, Berlin, Lit Verlag, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> See on this issue: DE FABIO, L., "Criminalization of stalking in Italy: One of the last among the current European member state's anti – stalking laws, en *Behavioral Sciences & Law*, 2011, 29 (2), pp.317 -323.

<sup>5</sup> Vid. MODENA GROUP ON STALKING, *Protecting women from the new crime of stalking: a comparison of legislative approaches within the European Union*, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, 2007, p. 122. Accessible in: [http://www.europeanrights.eu/public/commenti/stalking\\_testo.pdf](http://www.europeanrights.eu/public/commenti/stalking_testo.pdf).

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in 2011, known as the Istanbul Convention, was an important step forward in the generalization of the legal-criminal approach to stalking in Europe. This change was established by the Article 34, which provides for the possibility for the signatory States to classify as a crime those repeatedly intentional threatening behaviors that cause the victim fear for their safety. Although article 78.3 allows the signatories to reserve the right not to impose criminal sanctions in this regard. The commitment of this instrument is both, the creation of new criminal offenses aimed at specifically combating these conducts (as in the case of Spain and Portugal in 2015), and the modification of criminal figures that existed previously to adapt them to their content (as the United Kingdom and Italy in 2012 and 2013, respectively). This promoted the inclusion of stalking in article 172. ter of the Spanish Penal Code in 2015<sup>6</sup>.

However, the criminalization of stalking has not always been based on studies, which would undoubtedly give more meaning to the incriminating regulation<sup>7</sup>. Other countries used on the rate of victimization produced by stalking, like that of the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAW), a telephonic survey carried out by the US National Institute of Justice between 1995 and 1996<sup>8</sup>. The results warned that stalking was a much more prevalent than had been thought, thus new guidelines were set, both legally and criminologically<sup>9</sup>. Additional studies were performed in other anglo-saxon countries. The Women's Safety Survey<sup>10</sup> in 1996 produced the first data on the prevalence of stalking in Australia. In Canada, the incidence of stalking was determined in 2009 in the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and the Adult Criminal Court Survey<sup>11</sup>.

In Europe, the United Kingdom was the pioneer in this type of research, measuring the rate of victimization in 1998 through the British Crime Survey<sup>12</sup>. Subsequently, similar studies were carried out in Germany<sup>13</sup>, Italy<sup>14</sup>, Austria<sup>15</sup>, Netherland<sup>16</sup>, Sweden<sup>17</sup>, Norway<sup>18</sup>, Portugal<sup>19</sup> and Czech Republic<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> This article has been updated by final provision 4.4 of Organic Law 10/2022, of September 6, 2022. It entered into force on 10/07/2022, therefore section 1 is modified and section 5 is added.

<sup>7</sup> VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C./PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., "Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria", en *Revista Española de Investigación Criminológica*, 2017, 4, n° 15, pp. 1 -3.

<sup>8</sup> *Vid.* About this issue: TJADEN, P./ THOENNES, N., "Full report of the prevalence, incidence and consequences of violence against women. Findings from the National Against Women Survey", US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2000, pp. 3 – ss. Accesible en <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> *Full report of the prevalence, incidence and consequences of violence against women. Findings from the National Against Women Survey, cit.*, pp. 13- 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Vid.*MCLENNAM, W., "Women's safety Australia", en *Australian Bureau of Statistics*, 1996, accesible en: [www.ausstats.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/Lookup/F16680629C465E03CA256980007C4A81/\\$File/41280\\_1996.pdf](http://www.ausstats.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/Lookup/F16680629C465E03CA256980007C4A81/$File/41280_1996.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> *Vid.* MILLIGAN, S., "Criminal harassment in Canada, 2009", en *Juristat Bulletin*, Catalogue n° 65-005-X, 2011, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> *Vid.* BUDD, T., / MATTINSON, J., "The extent and nature of Stalking: findings from the 1998 British Crime Survey", en Home Office Research Study 210, Development and Statistics Directorate, 2000, p. 5. Accesible in: <http://www.harassmentlaw.co.uk/pdf/stalkrep.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> In Germany, a survey was carried out to determine the incidence of stalking victimization in the city of Mannheim. VOSS. H.G., /HOFFMANN, J., "Zur Phänomenologie und Psychologie des Stalking: eine Einführung", en *Polizei und Wissenschaft*, n° 4, 2004, pp.4- 14.

<sup>14</sup> Italy was a pioneer in carrying out studies on the prevalence of victimization. In 2006, issues related to stalking were incorporated into these analyzes in the first study focused on physical and sexual violence against women. This was due to the agreement between the Istituto Nazionales di Statistica and the Ministero per i Diritti e le Pari Opportunità. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, *La violenza e i maltrattamenti contro le donne dentro e fuori la familia, anni 2006 – 2007*, pp. 1 – 3 . Accesible in: [http://www.3.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non\\_calendario/20070221\\_00/testointegrale.pdf](http://www.3.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non_calendario/20070221_00/testointegrale.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> FREIDL, W., / NEUBERGER, I., / SCHÖNBERGER, W., / RAML, R., "Stalking and Health – An Austrian Prevalence Study", en *Gesundheitswesen*, n° 73, 2011, pp.e74-e77.

<sup>16</sup> VAN DER AA, S., / KUNST, M., "The prevalence of Stalking in the Netherlands ", en *International Review of Victimology*, vol. 16, 2009, pp. 35-50.

<sup>17</sup> In 2005 the National Council performed a study to determine the prevalence and characteristics of stalking victimization in Sweden. DOVELIUS, A., / ÖBERG, J., / HOLMBERG, S., *Stalking in Sweden – Prevalence and prevention*, Norstedts, 2006,.

Up to now, there were no data on stalking in Spain, except for the Violence against women in the European Union-wide survey. None of the editions of the Macro-survey on violence against women, carried out every 4 years since 1999, included results on stalking<sup>21</sup>, until the last survey carried out in 2019<sup>22</sup>. However, the largest study on stalking to date was carried out in Europe in 2014, the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) that, for the first time, presented data on the prevalence and characteristics of this phenomenon in the 28 European Union countries<sup>23</sup>. All the studies carried out to date observed that, the population most victimized by this type of behaviors are women under 30 years of age<sup>24</sup>.

In Europe, the most recognized study on stalking was performed within the framework of the project "Gender-based Violence, Stalking and Fear of Crime" (2009 - 2011) in university women of the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Poland<sup>25</sup>. This study observed a higher incidence of stalking among university women than that reflected by previous studies in the general population. Additional scientific evidence has shown that certain forms of harassment, such as stalking, are especially prevalent among young university students<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> NARUD, K., / FRIESTAD, C.,/ DAHL, A., "Stalking experiences and associated factors: a controlled population based study from Norway, en *Nord Journal of Psychiatry*, 68 (5), 2014, pp.347-354.

<sup>19</sup> In Portugal, the study with the greatest impact on this phenomenon was carried out thanks to the project: Stalking in Portugal: Prevalence, impact and intervention (2009- 2011). MATOS, M.,/ GRANGEIA, H.,/ FERREIRA,C.,/ AZEVEDO, V., *Inquérito de Vitimação por Stalking. Relatório de Investigação*, Grupo de Investigação sobre Stalking em Portugal, Minho, Universidade do Minho, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> A study performed in the Czech Republic during the years 2012 and 2013 entitled: International Violence Against Women Survey que examinaba la prevalencia y las características del *stalking* en dicho país. PODANÁ, Z., / IMRISKOVÁ, R., "Victims Responses to Stalking: An Examination of Fear Levels and Coping Strategies", en *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 31, nº 5, 2016, pp.776 -799.

<sup>21</sup> *Vid.*, Government Delegation for Gender Violence, Macro-survey of violence against women. Accessible in: [http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/violenciaGenero/publicaciones/estudiosinvestigaciones/pdfs/avance\\_macroencuesta\\_violencia\\_contra\\_la\\_mujer\\_2015\\_con\\_formato.pdf](http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/violenciaGenero/publicaciones/estudiosinvestigaciones/pdfs/avance_macroencuesta_violencia_contra_la_mujer_2015_con_formato.pdf) y Delegación del Gobierno para la Violencia de Género, Macroencuesta de violencia sobre la mujer 2015, Centro de publicaciones del Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2015. Accessible in: [http://www.violenciagenero.igualdad.mpr.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/estudios/coleccion/es/pdf/Libro\\_22\\_Macroencuesta2015.pdf](http://www.violenciagenero.igualdad.mpr.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/estudios/coleccion/es/pdf/Libro_22_Macroencuesta2015.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> *Vid.*, Government Delegation for Gender Violence, Macro-survey of violence against women. Accessible in: [https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/macroencuesta2015/pdf/Macroencuesta\\_2019\\_estudio\\_investigacion.pdf](https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/macroencuesta2015/pdf/Macroencuesta_2019_estudio_investigacion.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> *Vid.*, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, violence against women: an EU- wide survey . Main results. Accesible en: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> See the works of: BAUM, K., /CATALANO, S.,/ RAND, M.,/ ROSE, K., *Stalking victimization in the United States. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*, Washington, 2009; TJADEN,P.,/THOENNES, N., *Stalking in America: findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, Washington, 1998; FRA *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey.Main Results*. Luxemburgo Publications Office of the European Union, 2014; DOUGLAS, K,S., / DUTTON, D,G., "Assessing the link between stalking and domestic violence", en *Aggression and violent behavior*,2001 6(6), pp. 519-546; FELTES. T.,/ BALLONI. A.,/ CZAPASKA, J., /BODELÓN, E.,/ STENNING,P., *Gender –based violence, stalking and fear of crime. Research Project 2009- 2011*, Bochum Ruhr – Universität Bochum, 2012; FISHER, B.S.,/CULLEN, F,T.,/ TURNER, M.G., *The sexual victimization of college women*, Washington, 2000; McNAMARA, C,L.,/ MARSIL, D, F., "The prevalence of stalking among college students: the disparity between researcher and self identified victimization" , en *Journal of American College Health*, 60 (2),2012, pp. 168-174. Y en España véanse los trabajos de IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N., / BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., "Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe", en *Revista Española de Investigación Criminológica*, 12 (1), 2014, pp. 1 -27; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C., *Stalking y derecho penal: relevancia jurídico – penal de una nueva forma de acoso*, Iustel, 2009.

<sup>25</sup> FELTES. T.,/ BALLONI. A.,/ CZAPASKA, J., /BODELÓN, E.,/ STENNING,P., *Gender –based violence, stalking and fear of crime. Research Project 2009- 2011*, Bochum Ruhr – Universität Bochum, 2012 y en los resultados de España IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N., / BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., "Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe", en *Revista Española de Investigación Criminológica*, 12 (1), 2014, pp. 1 -27.

<sup>26</sup> See the studies: BUHI, E.R./ CLAYTON, H./ SURRENCY, H., "Stalking victimization among college women and subsequent help-seeking behaviors", en *Journal of American College Health*, 57 (4), 2009, pp. 419-426; JORDAN, C./ WILCOX, P./ PRITCHARD, A., "Stalking acknowledgement and reporting among college

In Spain, several studies have analyzed specific phenomena such as bullying, sexual harassment and stalking in the university community<sup>27</sup>. These are small studies, not representative of the Spanish university community as a whole. The variability in the rates found in the existing literature<sup>28</sup>, as indicated by LEÓN and AIZPURUA GONZALEZ, could be due to the breadth of behaviors that make up this phenomenon and the different legal definitions to qualify harassment. Nevertheless, the international and national studies carried out to date confirm that the university population most victimized by stalking are women under 30 years of age<sup>29, 30</sup>. Therefore, the university constitutes one of the main places of interest when undertaking research on the characteristics and nature of this type of behaviors.

We designed this observational study within the framework of the research project “Criminal and criminological legal analysis of workplace harassment generated in the university:

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women experiencing intrusive behaviors: Implications for the emergence of a “classic stalking case””, en *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 35 (5), 2007, pp.556-569; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉRES, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, en *Revista Española de Investigación Criminológica: REIC*, 15, 2007 a, pp. 1 -27; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Stalking: efectos en las víctimas, estrategias de afrontamiento y propuestas legislativas derivadas”, en *Indret: Revista para el Análisis del Derecho*, 2, 2017b, pp. 1-33.

<sup>27</sup> See the studies: IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N./ BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., “Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: Cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe”, en *Revista Española de Investigación Criminológica REIC*, 12, 2014, pp. 1-27; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉRES, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., pp. 1 -27; CARAVACA SÁNCHEZ, F./ NAVARRO-ZARAGOZA, J./ LUNA, MALDONADO, A. /FALCÓN ROMERO, M., “Asociación entre victimización por bullying y consumo de sustancias entre la población universitaria de España”, en *Adicciones*, 29 (1), 2017, pp. 22-32; DOBARRO GONZÁLEZ, A./ TUERO HERRERO, E. / BERNARDO GUTIÉRREZ, A.B./ HERRERO DÍEZ, F. J./ ÁLVAREZ, GARCÍA, D., “Un estudio innovador sobre acoso on-line en estudiantes universitarios”, en *Revista d’Innovació Docent Universitària*, 10, 2018, pp. 131-142; VIÑAS RACIONERO, R /RAGHAVAN, CH. / SORIA VERDE, M.A. / PRAT SANTAOLARIA, R., “The association between stalking and violence in a sample of Spanish partner violence cases”, en *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 2015, pp. 1-21; SIPSMA, E./ JOSÉ ANTONIO CARROBLES, I./ MONTORIO CERRATO, I./ EVERAERD, W., “Sexual aggression against women by men acquaintances: Attitudes and experiences among spanish university students”, en *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 3 (1), 2000, pp. 14-27.

<sup>28</sup> Certain studies only included women in their samples, and none of them evaluated a stratified sample. Some studies assessed the prevalence of harassing behaviors throughout life, while others limited the time frame to the last year or, analyzed a broad set of violence, while others studies analyzed specific phenomena such as bullying, cyberbullying or stalking. However, as in the international scene, these studies highlighted the high prevalence of victims of bullying behavior among young Spanish university students. *Vid.*, on this issue: LEÓN, C.M./ AIZPURUA GONZÁLEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, en *Revista para el análisis del Derecho*, nº 1, 2019, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> See the works of: BAUM, K. /CATALANO, S. / RAND, M. / ROSE, K., *Stalking victimization in the United States. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*, Washington, 2009; TJADEN, P. /THOENNES, N., *Stalking in America: findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, Washington, 1998; FRA *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey.Main Results*. Luxemburgo Publications Office of the European Union, 2014; DOUGLAS, K,S./ DUTTON, D,G., “Assessing the link between stalking and domestic violence”, en *Aggression and violent behavior*,2001 6(6), pp. 519-546; FELTES. T./ BALLONI. A./ CZAPASKA, J. /BODELÓN, E./ STENNING,P., *Gender –based violence, stalking and fear of crime. Research Project 2009- 2011*, Bochum Ruhr – Universität Bochum, 2012; FISHER, B.S./CULLEN, F,T./ TURNER, M,G., *The sexual victimization of college women*, Washington, 2000; McNAMARA, C,L./ MARSIL, D, F., “The prevalence of stalking among college students: the disparity between researcher and self identified victimization” , en *Journal of American College Health*, 60 (2),2012, pp. 168-174. Y en España véanse los trabajos de IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N., / BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., “Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe”, cit. pp. 1 -27.

<sup>30</sup> FELTES. T. / BALLONI. A./ CZAPASKA, J./BODELÓN, E./ STENNING,P., *Gender –based violence, stalking and fear of crime*, cit., y en los resultados de España IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N./ BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., “Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe”, cit., pp. 1 -27.

Compliance programs as a preventive mechanism”<sup>31</sup>, with the following objectives. First, to measure the prevalence of stalking in the Andalusian university community, as well as to determine the characteristics of the victim, the profile of the perpetrator and the dynamics of this type of behaviors. Second, to specify the way in which the victim reacts to such behaviors and the resources used by her (him) to put an end to this bullying process. Third, to provide an overview of the perception that the university community has both of the phenomenon itself and of the most appropriate response to deal with it. The study has been developed from a gender perspective, disaggregating the results for men and women, since women are more exposed to experiences of harassment and, are more likely than men to report these behaviors<sup>32</sup>.

It is expected to observe a high prevalence of stalking among university students, particularly women. However, the rates of formal and informal reporting are expected to be low, especially the formal reporting of events<sup>33</sup>. Finally, it is also expected to find differences between men and women in the denunciation of harassing behaviors, as women have been more likely than men to report their victimization.

So that the surveyed subjects could clearly identify the different forms of harassment at the beginning of the survey, a definition of the concept of stalking was provided<sup>34</sup>.

## 2. METHODS

A cross-sectional observational study of the Andalusian university community using a validated victimization questionnaire to assess the prevalence and the characteristics of the victim and the offender in the university context (Appendix)<sup>35</sup>. To increase the response rate, the questionnaire was sent up to three times, within a period not exceeding 6 months. The survey was carried out during the first semester of 2021 (January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>).

### 2.1. SAMPLE

Official data from the Spanish government show that in the year 2022, the population of Andalusia (8,500,000 inhabitants) represents 18% of the total population of Spain (47,600,000 inhabitants). This same year, the Andalusian university community had 292,001 members, which represents 18.3% of the entire Spanish university community (1,600,000 members).

To have a representative sample, assuming a non-response rate of up to 20%, surveys were sent to a sample of a 5% (15,000 questionnaires) of the Andalusian university community (292,001 members), stratified by center, age, sex and university status (three groups: students, professors and researchers, and other staff employees). 78.5% of those surveyed completed the questionnaire (11,778 responses), which represents a 4% of the members of the Andalusian university community. This sample size is representative of the Andalusian university community with a confidence of 95% and a margin of error of +/- 4%. Nevertheless, the sample is not representative of each university center at the individual level.

The instrument applied in the study was an online victimization questionnaire provided by the respondents' own universities, who were able to view it individually and voluntarily through any electronic device connected to the Internet at any time.

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<sup>31</sup> A survey on a representative simple of the Andalusian university community stratified by centre, age, sex and university status.

<sup>32</sup> JORDAN, C./ WILCOX, P./ PRITCHARD, A., “Stalking acknowledgement and reporting among college women experiencing intrusive behaviors: Implications for the emergence of a “classic stalking case””, cit., pp.556-569; REYNS, W. B./ ENGLEBRECHT, C.M, “The stalking victim’s decision to contact the police: A test of Gottfredson and Gottfredson’s Theory of Criminal Justice Decision Making”, en *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38 (5), 2010, pp. 998-1005.

<sup>33</sup> A formal complaint is the one carried out in the police or the duty court.

<sup>34</sup> Definition adapted from the document GREVIO’s (Baseline) Evaluation Reporto on legislative and other measures giving effect to be provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), Spain, p. 56.

<sup>35</sup> As we have mentioned, the study is part of a larger project. The questionnaire evaluated various aspects of harassment at the University: sexual harassment, sexist harassment, workplace harassment, harassment between students, stalking, harassment based on sexual orientation, and harassment based on gender identity and expression. For this study of the 11,778 completed questionnaires, we limited our analysis to those questions related to stalking as detailed in methods.

The first questions were related to socio-demographics, the various forms of bullying that can take place in the university setting, and knowledge of the existence of action protocols against bullying at the University. The first block of the survey was made up of questions related to the person's age<sup>36</sup>, sex, the University to which they are affiliated<sup>37</sup>, the sector to which they belong<sup>38</sup>, type of connection<sup>39</sup> and branch of knowledge<sup>40</sup>. The second block includes questions referring to whether the respondents were aware of the protocol against bullying at the University.

**Descriptive characteristics of the sample.** The sample consisted of 11,778 members of the university community of Andalusia, of them 3769 men (32%) and 8009 women (68%), with an age between 18 and 70 years, mostly between 18 and 25 years (median median age 20.6 +/- 1.5 years). The response rate was > 80% among the students of the Degrees in Social and Legal Sciences, Humanities and Sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics).

## 2.2. INSTRUMENT AND MEASUREMENTS

The questionnaire used to determine the prevalence of stalking behaviors, as well as the profile of the victim and the perpetrator, included 24 questions:

- To determine the victim's profile, respondents were asked to indicate their sex, age, sector and/or position they occupied at the university, and the household net annual income .
- To assess the type of behavior, participants were asked which of the following seven behaviors they had experienced. Multiple answers could be chosen.
- To establish the profile of the stalker, the interviewees were asked the sex and age of the stalker, and his (her) link with the university<sup>41</sup>.
- They were also asked to answer about the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.
- They were also questioned to know the number of people involved in the commission of the facts.
- To assess the dynamics of victimization, participants were asked to measure the frequency and duration of the bullying among 4 possible answers.
- They were also asked if they had witnessed this type of behavior and, if so, if they had reported the facts.
- Regarding coping measures, the participants were asked if they had carried out an informal communication or a formal complaint. In addition, they were asked to indicate the reasons why they did not communicate the facts, with 10 possible answers. Several answers could be chosen simultaneously.
- The victims were asked if they had told anyone about the bullying, with 5 possible responses. Multiple answers were allowed.
- They were also asked to briefly explain the reasons that prompted them to file a formal complaint. This was an open question.
- The victims were asked about the instance in which they have filed the formal complaint, with 3 possible answers. In addition, they were asked to which University instance they had file the formal complaint, with 5 possible answers. Multiple answers were allowed.
- Finally, the adverse effects on the health of the victims were evaluated by asking the victims if, as a consequence of the bullying, they had suffered any of 15 scenarios. They were also asked if they had required or are receiving health care for any of these reasons.

<sup>36</sup> The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 70 years

<sup>37</sup> The participating Andalusian Universities were: Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga, Seville, University Pablo de Olavide in Sevilla, International University of Seville and the Loyola University of Andalusia.

<sup>38</sup> The university community was stratified in one of three groups: students, staff profesors and researchers, and other staff employees.

<sup>39</sup> Student (Degree, Master, PhD) vs. Staff (Full time, part time).

<sup>40</sup> Sciences, Health Sciences, Social and Legal Sciences, Humanities, Engineering and Architecture.

<sup>41</sup> If the perpetrator's link with the university was: 1. Student. 2. Administration or services staff. 3. Teaching or research staff. 4. Staff in training and staff hired in research projects linked to the University not included in 2 or 3. 5. Experts and professionals from outside the University invited to participate in seminars, congresses, to give a class, etc., 6. External personnel who provide their services at the University, whatever the nature or legal nature of your relationship with it (copy shop, cafeteria, cleaning, etc.).

All statistical analyses were done with SPSS v 17.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL). We used chi-square tests and independent sample *t* tests, as appropriate, for descriptive analysis to compare characteristics between groups of respondents.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We will first present the results on the prevalence of stalking in the university community of Andalusia, going on to the characteristics of the stalker and the victim, the reactions of the victims, and the adverse effects on the victims of these bullying behaviors.

#### 3.1. PREVALENCE OF VICTIMIZATION BY STALKING: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIMS

A definition of stalking was provided to the participants prior to the completion of the questionnaire. Specifically, the concept chosen was that of the document GREVIO's (Baseline) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to be provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Stalking is defined as "repeated and insistent behaviors such as watching, chasing a person or seeking their physical proximity, communicating with her (him) using any available means, misuse her (his) personal data, acquire products or merchandise, or contract services or have third parties contact her (him), threaten her (his) freedom or her (his) property, or against the freedom or property of another person close to her (him) or carry out any similar activity". These behaviors cause adverse effects on the victims, such as fears or restlessness<sup>42</sup>.

To determine the prevalence of stalking, the participants were asked if they had ever been harassed in these terms. Of the 11,778 respondents, 778 (6.6%) answered this question in the affirmative, identifying themselves as victims of stalking, 609 of them were women (78.4%). As in previous studies<sup>43</sup>, the vast majority of victims who identify themselves as such turned out to be women. Indeed, not only are they 4 times more likely to suffer this type of behavior, but they are also more capable of detecting it compared to their male counterparts<sup>44</sup>. A minority of people surveyed admit to having suffered stalking often or habitually (15.7%) vs. occasionally or rarely (35.1%) or only once (39.2%). 11,001 participants (93.4%) denied having experienced a victimization of this type. This could be because they did not identify the behavior as bullying, or because the event itself would not have produced any significant sequel to allow them to recognize it as such, or perhaps because the event occurred in isolation (a single episode). Therefore, there are many reasons not to self-identify as a victim.

<sup>42</sup> VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C., *Stalking y derecho penal. Relevancia jurídico-penal de una nueva forma de acoso*, Iustel, Madrid, 2009, pp. 41-42; CAMARA ARROYO, S., "Primera condena en España por acecho o stalking", en *Cuadernos de Criminología: revista de criminología y ciencias forenses*, n° 35, 2016, pp. 38-43; ALONSO DE ESCAMILLA, A. "El delito de Stalking como nueva forma de acoso", en la *Ley penal: revista de derecho penal, procesal y penitenciario*, 2013, n° 105, p. 6; DE LA CUESTA ARZAMENDI, J.L./ MAYORDOMO RODRIGO, V., "Acoso y Derecho penal", en *Eguzkilore: Cuaderno del Instituto Vasco de Criminología*, 2011, n°25, p. 45.

<sup>43</sup> Previous refernces has been made to the works of: BAUM, K., /CATALANO, S.,/ RAND, M.,/ ROSE, K., *Stalking victimization in the United States. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*, cit.,; TJADEN,P.,/THOENNES, N., *Stalking in America: findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, cit.,; FRA *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey.Main Results*. Luxemburgo Publications Office of the European Union, 2014; DOUGLAS, K,S., / DUTTON, D,G., "Assessing the link between stalking and domestic violence", cit., pp. 519-546; FELTES. T.,/ BALLONI. A.,/ CZAPASKA, J., /BODELÓN, E.,/ STENNING,P., *Gender –based violence, stalking and fear of crime*, cit.,; FISHER, B.S.,/CULLEN, F,T.,/ TURNER, M.G., *The sexual victimization of college women*,cit.,; McNAMARA, C,L.,/ MARSIL, D, F., "The prevalence of stalking among college students: the disparity between researcher and self identified victimization" , cit., pp. 168-174. Y en España véanse los trabajos de IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N., / BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., "Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe", cit., pp. 1 -27; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C., *Stalking y derecho penal: relevancia jurídico – penal de una nueva forma de acoso*, cit.,

<sup>44</sup> BJERREGAARD, B., "An empirical study of stalking victimization", en *Violence and Victims*, vol. 15, n° 4, 2000, p.39; CHAPMAN, D.E. / SPITZBERG, B. H., "Are you following me? A study of Unwanted Relationship Pursuit and Stalking in Japan: What Behaviors are Prevalent?", en *Bulletin of Hijiya University*, n°10, 2003, p. 97; LOGAN, T. K. / LEUKEFELD, C. / WALKER, B., "Stalking as a variant of intimate violence: Implications from a young adult sample", en DAVIS, K. E. / FRIEZE, I. H. / MAIURO, R. D. (Eds.), *Stalking: Perspectives on victims and perpetrators*, Springer, 2002, p. 99.

The median age of the respondents was 21.6 +/- 1.5. The age range in which stalking predominated was from 18 to 25 years (27.5%). The victims were mainly female students (42.5% vs. 10% among male students) mostly belonging to degrees in both, Social and Legal Sciences and, in Humanities<sup>45</sup>. This variable has not been previously assessed in other studies. It can be ventured that, the higher identification in these branches of knowledge could be due to the greater training that students of the aforementioned degrees receive on these types of phenomena.

Thus, the typical profile of the stalking victim is that of a young woman between 18 and 25 years<sup>46</sup>, who is studying a degree in one of the schools of the Andalusian university community. Our results match those of previous studies<sup>47</sup>, indicating that the prevalence of stalking victimization in the university community is higher in women than in men<sup>48</sup>. They are particularly in tune with the results of the Spanish sample that participated in the study Violence Against Women: an EU –wide survey<sup>49</sup>. There is still a reduced awareness of this type of victimization, as suggested by the low number of people who identify themselves as victims. Nevertheless, international and national studies have been highlighting for years that, a significant proportion of women have been suffering this type of bullying<sup>50</sup>.

### 3.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STALKERS

These data were obtained from the victims, since it would make no sense to ask a person who is unaware of her (his) victimization.

#### 3.2.1. Sex, age and previous relationship with the victim.

Most of the victims declared that their harasser was a man (54.1%) compared to those who admitted that it was a woman (35.2%). Women were mainly harassed by men (84.7%). Men are victimized at the hands of women but, to a lesser extent (30%).

This data are similar to those of previous studies, women are usually harassed by men, whereas men are usually harassed by persons of both sexes<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> 54.5% of those surveyed belong to the branch of knowledge of Social and Legal Sciences, followed by Sciences with 15.95% and Humanities with 14% compared to Health Sciences with 10.2% and Engineering and Architecture with 5.2%.

<sup>46</sup> The rate of students victimization was 35.3%.

<sup>47</sup> See the studies of: LEÓN, C.M., / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, cit., pp.8 -9; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉRES, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., pp. 9 -10.

<sup>48</sup> See the studies: BJERREGAARD, B., “An empirical study of stalking victimization”, cit., pp. 389-406; BAUM, K./ CATALANO,S./ RAND, M./ ROSE, K., “Stalking victimization in the United States, cit.,”; MATOS, M. / GRANGEIA, H./ FERREIRA,C./ AZEVEDO, V., *Inquérito de Vitimação por Stalking. Relatório de Investigação*, Grupo de Investigação sobre Stalking em Portugal, Minho, Universidade do Minho, 2011; TJADEN, P. / THOENNES, N., “Full report of the prevalence, incidence and consequences of violence against women. Findings from the National Against Women Survey”, cit., y VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C./ PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit, pp. 12-13.

<sup>49</sup> This study shows that the rate of victimization of the Spanish population is higher in women than in men, particularly among young women.

<sup>50</sup> Similar results to those of the studies performed by: FINKELHOR, D. / ORMROD, R.K. / TURNER, H.A., “Polyvictimization and trauma in a national longitudinal cohort”, en *Development and psychopathology*, 19 (1), 2007, pp. 149-166; MCNAMARA, C. / MARSIL, D., “The prevalence of stalking among college students: The disparity between researcher- and self-identified victimization”, cit., pp. 168-174; WALBY, S. / ALLEN, J., *Domestic violence sexual assault and staking: findings from the British Crime Survey*, Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, London, 2004; FREMOUW, W.J. / WESTRUP, D. / PENNYPACKER, J., “Stalking on Campus: The Prevalence and Strategies for Coping with Stalking”, en *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, nº 42, vol. 4, 1997, 282-284. LEÓN, C.M., / AIZPURÚA GONZALEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, cit., pp.8 -9; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉRES, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., pp. 9 -10.

<sup>51</sup> BJERREGAARD, B., “An empirical study of stalking victimization”, cit., p.395; BJÖRKLUND, K. / HÄKKÄNEN-NYHOLM, H. / SHERIDAN, L. / ROBERTS, K., “The prevalence of stalking among Finnish university students”, en *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, nº 25, 2010, p. 689; MATOS, M./ GRANGEIA, H./ FERREIRA,C./ AZEVEDO, V., *Inquérito de Vitimação por Stalking. Relatório de Investigação*,cit.



Nevertheless, in our study 63.3% of the women surveyed acknowledged having been victims of stalking by other women<sup>52</sup>. Other studies have observed similar results, but a notably higher proportion of male stalkers<sup>53</sup>. This finding could be due to different factors: the difference in hierarchy in the case of co-workers, the day-to-day coexistence when spaces are shared (work or study), or those events in the life of the harasser that could lead her to commit stalking, or the spirit of domination, aggressiveness and/or the will to exercise power, or the simple curiosity of the victim's life caused by passion and/or rivalry, or the desire to adopt a submissive role on the part of the female victim<sup>54</sup>. Strikingly, these types of behaviors match with several of the values that patriarchy assigns to men<sup>55</sup>.

Although, the high rate of women who stalk could be surprising, there is a significant difference in crime incidence, being notably higher in men<sup>56</sup>. This is probably due to the preconceived idea that people have about the existing male monopoly associated with crime. As well as to the traditional consideration of the female gender, as dependent, docile and accommodating<sup>57</sup>. Nevertheless, certain stereotypes have been losing their strength, being increasingly disused. One of the reasons for this change is the increasing presence of women in environments that over time have been linked to masculinity. Traits belonging to traditional masculine roles, such as working outside the home or holding managerial positions, are still linked to men, but women are gradually acquiring a greater role in these areas<sup>58</sup>, including the university environment. The number of female students and teachers has grown progressively over the years<sup>59</sup>. Although, women's positions are not yet equated with the positions held by men, women are gradually taking on leadership positions. Therefore, it would be important to carry out a study to assess the reasons why these women commit stalking behaviors.

The stalker in the university community of Andalusia can be both, a young person between 18 and 29 years (27.8%) or an older person between 45 and 64 years old (21.6%), usually matching with the age range of the victim (84%), and sharing spaces and having contact on a daily basis (81%). It would be important to study whether the harassment has been carried out vertically or horizontally.

<sup>52</sup> Matching the results of the study carried out by PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., *El delito de stalking: análisis jurídico y fenomenológico*, Tesis doctoral disponible en: [https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/estudios/Tesis/pdfs/Tesis\\_9\\_Stalking.pdf](https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/estudios/Tesis/pdfs/Tesis_9_Stalking.pdf). p. 209.

<sup>53</sup> VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.15; LEÓN, C.M. / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, cit., pp. 8- 9; IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N. / BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., “Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe”, cit., pp.1-27.

<sup>54</sup> DE MIGUEL CALVO, E. / ZULOAGA LOJO, L., “Relaciones amorosas de las mujeres encarceladas”, en *Revista Injurnak: Soziologia eta zientzia politikoaren euskal aldizkaria = Revista vasca de sociología y ciencia política*, nº 61, 2016, pp. 167 -172.

<sup>55</sup> *Vid.*, on this issue: ACALE SÁNCHEZ, M., “Mujéres, crímenes y castigos”, en *Revista de educación y comunicación hachetetépe*, nº 2:13-32 Mayo 2011, pp.13- 14. ALMEDA SAMARANCH, E., “Pasado y presente de las cárceles femeninas en España”, en *Revista de pensamiento social* nº 6, 2005, pp. 75-106. IGAREDA GONZALEZ, N., “Mujeres en prisión”, en, Cerezo Domínguez. A.I. /García España, E., (coords.), *La prisión en España. Una perspectiva criminológica*, Comares, Granada, 2007, pp. 80 -81. BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E./ BERGALLI, R., “La cuestión de las mujeres y el derecho penal simbólico” en *Anuario de filosofía del derecho*, nº 9, 1992, pp. 56-58. ZAFFARRONI, E.R., *En busca de las penas perdidas. Deslegitimación y dogmática jurídico – penal*. Buenos Aires, EDIAR, 2009, p.25.

<sup>56</sup> LÓPEZ –ACEVEDO FERNÁNDEZ, M., “Perfilación criminal de mujeres violentas y psicópatas”, en *Revista de Criminología, Psicología y Ley*, nº 4,2020, p. 183. 177-212.

<sup>57</sup> CASTILLO MAYÉN, R. / MONTES BERGES., B., “Análisis de los estereotipos de género actuales”, en *Anales de psicología*, 30, nº 3,2014, pp. 1052-1054.

<sup>58</sup> CASTILLO MAYÉN, R. / MONTES BERGES., B., “Análisis de los estereotipos de género actuales”, en *Anales de psicología*, 30, nº 3,2014, p. 1054.

<sup>59</sup> The press release presented by elDiario.es online acknowledges that since the year 2000 women have taken over the university schools. Paradoxically, only 16% of the tenured teaching staff and 7% of the chairs are women, according to a study of the Collegiate Medical Organization of Spain. In the last decade in Andalusia, the proportion of women full professors has increased a 6.5%, but today they still do not represent one out of four full professors. Publication date: 01/06/2023. Consultation date: 01/26/2023.

As in previous studies<sup>60</sup>, we have observed a relationship between the harasser's sex and the number of people involved in the harassing process. Men stalkers prefer to act alone (58.8% alone vs. 41.2% with at least one other person, 2 subjects 17.7% and 3 or more subjects 25.5%). Women mostly chose to act in a group (43.3% alone vs. 56.7% with at least one other person, 2 subject 23.3% and 3 or more subjects 33.6%). Thus, men prefer to act alone while women are inclined to operate in a group (at least 3 persons).

In regard to the previous relationship between victim and perpetrator, our data shows that most of the people who have suffered this type of harassment knew the stalker before. The participants acknowledged that, the harassers were mostly fellow students (25.8%), colleagues of a similar job rank (24.7%) or a superior or boss (21.1%)<sup>61</sup>. Our findings match with those of previous studies observing that stalking is generally carried out by people close to the victim<sup>62</sup>. Previous studies<sup>63</sup> have observed a strong association between the stalker's sex and the victim-offender relationship, so that in harassment produced by people very close to the victim, men are mostly the ones who harass. Nevertheless, we have not observed such an association.

### 3.2.2. Number of offenders.

Stalking is mostly carried out by a single person, although there may also be situations in which the harassment has been perpetrated by several subjects. Our survey shows that, the stalker acted alone in 58.8% of the harassments, while 25.5% of the cases the stalking was carried out by 3 or more people. Previous studies reported similar findings on the stalker, mostly as a subject acting alone and socially close to the victim<sup>64</sup>. In addition, the cases in which the victim did not know their stalker have remarkably decreased overtime<sup>65</sup>. Nevertheless, we observed a rate of group bullies higher than in other publications<sup>66</sup>. This could be due to the smaller sample size used in similar analyses.

In short, the characteristics of the stalker in the work presented can be summarized as follows: a man who generally acts alone, with an age between 18 to 29 or 45 to 64 years old, who has a previous relationship with the victim (study or work partner).

### 3.3. DYNAMICS OF VICTIMIZATION: TYPES OF BEHAVIORS, SEQUELAE AND REACTION

In this section we analyze the questionnaires completed by the victims.

#### 3.3.1. Types of behaviors.

<sup>60</sup> VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, en cit., pp.14-15.

<sup>61</sup> With a lower prevalence the stalker is a person with a lower labor rank (9.4%).

<sup>62</sup> See the studies of: BJÖRKLUND, K. / HÄKKÄNEN-NYHOLM, H. / Sheridan, L., / Roberts, K., *The Prevalence of Stalking Among Finnish University Students*, en cit., pp.684-698; FISHER, B.S./CULLEN, F.T./ TURNER, M.G., *The sexual victimization of college women*, cit.; MATOS, M./ GRANGEIA, H./ FERREIRA,C./ AZEVEDO, V., *Inquérito de Vitimação por Stalking. Relatório de Investigação*, cit., p.201; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.16; IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N. / BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., “Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe”, cit., pp. 1 -27; LEÓN, C.M. / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, cit., p.4.

<sup>63</sup> VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.16.

<sup>64</sup> VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.16; IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N. / BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., “Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe”, cit., 1 -27; LEÓN, C.M. / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, cit., p.4.

<sup>65</sup> VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.17.

<sup>66</sup> VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.16; IGAREDA GONZÁLEZ, N., / BODELÓN GONZÁLEZ, E., “Las violencias sexuales en las universidades: cuando lo que no se denuncia no existe”, cit., pp. 1 -27; LEÓN, C.M. / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, cit., p.4.

The behaviors most frequently suffered by the victims were calls (threatening, annoying or mocking) from someone from the university community (35.6%), as well as receiving emails, voice or text messages through the internet and letters or unwanted gifts from someone of the university community that caused discomfort (24.5%). These behaviors are followed in frequency by others also carried out by someone from the University, such as loitering outside the home, the University or in places of leisure, or the simple fact of appearing without being invited by the person and/or trying to contact the victim or their relatives, friends, study/work colleagues or neighbors in order to have news of the harassed person (15.7%). With a lower prevalence, behaviors of publishing or sharing photos, videos or personal information in the workplace/study, on the internet or through messaging such as whatsapp by someone from the university community (9.8%). Following, spying or tracking and monitoring the location of the victim through the phone or computer (6.9%). And lastly, threatening to damage or have done so intentionally both, to objects belonging to the victim's property or to the property of someone close to her (5.9%).

The high rate of stalking by receiving phone calls or emails may be due to the ease with which the stalker acts without being able to be seen, while ensuring anonymity as this hinders his (her) identification. Either for carrying out the bullying using a hidden identity, or because they have access to create and modify any profile within the virtual platforms in which this type of harassment is mainly carried out (facebook, instagram, telegram, twitter, among others). Definitely, this type of behavior is the most widespread form of stalking regardless of the age group. In addition, this type of behavior can be identified as cyberstalking since it necessarily has to be perpetrated through electronic devices that are connected to the Internet, such as sending emails or instant text messages through any platform<sup>67</sup>.

We observed a high rate of behaviors aimed at initiating communication and rapprochement with the victim. In this sense, our data match with those of previous studies that, place in the background those behaviors aimed at seeking proximity to the victim<sup>68</sup>. This could be due to the aforementioned ease of executing and anonymity of those behaviors.

### 3.3.2.

#### Sequelae.

One of the main conclusions reached after analyzing the results of our study is that, stalking has a negative impact on the health status of the victims. Our survey shows that, the main adverse effects that these behaviors produce in the victims are: Psychological sequelae (23.5%). Decreased academic and/or work performance (15.2%). Physical sequelae (12.9%). Deterioration of social relations (11.4%). In need of health care (36.7%). In need of medication (33.6%).

It would have been interesting to ask the participants what their worst fears were regarding the bullying situation. Previous works show how the victims generally acknowledged having felt fear that their lives were in danger, having felt annoyed or irritated as a result of the incident, and having felt great anguish or disturbance<sup>69</sup>. A Portuguese study observed that the victims suffered a great impact on their psychological health or lifestyle as a result of stalking, greatly affecting their intimate relationships, their relationships with others, or their physical health<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> This authors argue that this behaviors can also be considered as a form of cyber-harassment: VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.19.

<sup>68</sup> BLACK, M.C. / BASILE, K. C./ BREIDING, M. J./ SMITH, S. G./ WALTERS, M.L /MERRICK, M. T./ CHEN, J./ STEVENS, M. R., *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; MCNAMARA, C.L / MARSIL, D. F., “The Prevalence of Stalking Among College Students: The Disparity Between Researcher-and Self-identified Victimization”, cit., pp. 168-174; FRA, *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main Results*. Luxemburgo: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. / PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.19.

<sup>69</sup> PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., *El delito de stalking: análisis jurídico y fenomenológico*, cit., p. 82; MCNAMARA, C. L. / MARSIL, D.F., “The Prevalence of Stalking Among College Students: The Disparity Between Researcher-and Self-identified Victimization”, cit., pp. 168-174.

<sup>70</sup> MATOS, M. / GRANGEIA, H. / FERREIRA, C. / AZEVEDO, V., *Inquérito de Vitimação por Stalking. Relatório de Investigação*, cit., pp. 50-52.

The EU-wide survey indicates that stalking victims had suffered one or more long-term psychological consequences: anxiety, vulnerability, difficulties in falling asleep, loss of self-confidence, depression, difficulties concentrating, panic attacks and difficulties in relationships<sup>71</sup>.

Data on the impact of stalking on the professional and academic performance of the victims are scarce. Our results, and those of the aforementioned Portuguese study indicate that the victims suffered some kind of deterioration of their professional and academic performance by this type of harassment<sup>72</sup>.

In short, many stalking victims have adverse effects in their health (physical and mental) and social performance. However, studies would be necessary that focus their attention on determining the psychological consequences caused in the victims by the type of behavior, the sex of the stalker, the frequency of the behaviors, and the relationship between victim and victimizer.

### 3.3.3 Reaction.

Our results, as well as those of previous studies<sup>73</sup>, indicate that the victims of bullying resort more frequently to informal support than to the formal reporting of the facts. While the rate of informal complaints was 74.5%, that of a formal communication (filing a complaint at the University, the police or the duty court) was remarkably low (15.6%). Almost all of the victims interviewed acknowledged having told someone what happened informally: friends, acquaintances or someone they trusted in the university community (29.7%), relatives or partner (19.8%) or people outside the University (18.8%).

Given the low rate of formal communication of the facts, it was necessary to analyze the reasons why these behaviors were not formally communicated and/or denounced. Our data show that the participants did not file a formal complaint with the University, the police or the duty court for the following reasons: they did not consider that they were being harassed (29.4%), for shame (23.5%), fear because their testimony would not be believed (17.6%), or simply because they did not trust that what was denounced would obtain a solution (25%), or, for fear of suffering reprisals or negative consequences in the university environment (20.3 %). In addition, 66.4% of the surveyed were not sure if they were aware of the existence of the anti-harassment protocol at the University. In general, the students are unaware of the availability of this resource (77.9%). These results are in accordance with those of previous studies that acknowledge these arguments as the main causes for which this phenomenon remains hidden and is not formally prosecuted<sup>74</sup>.

Previous studies have observed that the informal and formal denunciation of the facts is reciprocally related<sup>75</sup>. Nevertheless, we observed that most of the people who denounced formally also did so informally. This does not mean that the informal complaint guarantees that the formal complaint will also be carried out.

<sup>71</sup> FRA - EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Survey methodology, sample and fieldwork*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2014, pp. 89- 90.

<sup>72</sup> MATOS, M. / GRANGEIA, H. / FERREIRA, C. / AZEVEDO, V., *Inquérito de Vitimação por Stalking. Relatório de Investigação*, cit., pp. 50-52.

<sup>73</sup> This findings have been observed in other studies including the general population or the university community. *Vid.*, BAUM, K. / CATALANO, S. / RAND, M. / ROSE, K., "Stalking victimization in the United States", cit., p. 13; BUDD, T. / MATTINSON, J., "The extent and nature of stalking: findings from the 1998 British Crime Survey", en *Home Office Research Study 210, Home Office Research*, Development and Statistics Directorate, 2000, p.19; FRA - EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Survey methodology, sample and fieldwork*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2014, p. 89; PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., *El delito de stalking: análisis jurídico y fenomenológico*, cit., pp.251-254; LEÓN, C.M. / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., "Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios", cit., p.9; FISHER, B.S./ DAIGLE, L, D. / CULLEN, F, T. / TURNER, M, G., "Reporting sexual victimization to the police and others: Results from a national level study of college women", en *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 30 (1), 2003, pp. 6-38; SABINA, C. / CUEVAS, C. / SCHALLY, J., "Help-seeking in a national sample of victimized Latino women: The influence of victimization types", en *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 27(1), 2012, pp. 40-61.

<sup>74</sup> *Vid.*, BUHI, E. R. / CLAYTON, H. / SURRENCY, H. H., "Stalking Victimization Among College Women and Subsequent Help-Seeking Behaviors", cit., n° 4, 2008, p. 420; CZAPSKA, J. / KLOSA, M. / LESINSKA, E. / OKRASA, A., *Gender-based Violence, Stalking and Fear of Crime. Country Report Poland. EU-project 2009-2011*, 2012, p.43; PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., *El delito de stalking: análisis jurídico y fenomenológico*, cit., p.251.

<sup>75</sup> See on this issue the Works of: BUHI, E.R. / CLAYTON, H. / SURRENCY, H., "Stalking victimization among college women and subsequent help-seeking behaviors",cit., pp. 419-426 y LEÓN, C.M. / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., "Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios", cit., p.14.

In any case, a relatively low rate of victims acknowledge turning first to the authorities (15.6%). Within the category of persons who acknowledged having filed a formal complaint, they did so at the University (77.7%)<sup>76</sup>, leaving the courts or State security forces as a last resort (22.2%).

The fact that women report stalking (both formally and informally) more frequently is probably related with the greater propensity of women to be victimized by this phenomenon. Several studies have analyzed the reasons for the low rate of reporting by men, and attributed them to differences in socialization between women and men<sup>77</sup>. The inhibition of certain feelings or ways of relating conditions men and dissuade them from denouncing, thus recognizing that they have been victims of harassment<sup>78</sup>.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of our results yields the following conclusions about stalking in the university community of Andalusia, Spain. First, there is high prevalence of harassing behaviors, mainly among women. Both male and female harassers have women as their main victims. Second, the stalkers are generally young men (20-30 years old). Third, most bullying is between peers, between fellow students and between teaching and research staff and adults who are peers with each other. Fourth, it is generally a behavior whose actor operates alone. Fifth, a minority of people surveyed admit to having suffered stalking often or habitually compared to occasionally, or rarely or only once. Sixth, the rate of formal complaints is very low, thus campaigns aimed at the university community to raise awareness and encourage the reporting of these events are needed. Seventh, the most common instruments for stalking consists of phone calls or receiving emails, text messages, or instant messages, thus new technologies are giving way to a form of telematic harassment (cyberstalking), characterized by its opacity and anonymity, thus allowing a broad spectrum of surreptitious victimization. Finally, it is necessary to design prevention campaigns for the university community of Andalusia (Southern region of Spain) that offer and facilitate the necessary information and support services to know how to identify, proceed and formally report these harassing events.

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<sup>76</sup> The main Complaint Body resorted to denounce the facts was the University Ombudsman's Office (40%) followed by the General Inspectorate of Services (20%), and the Equality Delegation (20%). It is striking that the University's Anti-harassment Commission was rarely used to report bullying. Most of the university community is not aware of the existence of an anti-harassment protocol (66.4%).

<sup>77</sup> LEÓN, C.M. / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, cit., pp.15-16. KAUKINEN, C., “The help-seeking decisions of violent crime victims: An examination of the direct and conditional effects of gender and the victim-offender relationship”, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2002, nº 17 (4), pp. 442-443.

<sup>78</sup> *Íbid.*, LEÓN, C.M. / AIZPURÚA GONZÁLEZ, E., “Prevalencia y denuncia de conductas de acoso en estudiantes universitarios”, cit., pp.14 – 15; KAUKINEN, C., “The help-seeking decisions of violent crime victims: An examination of the direct and conditional effects of gender and the victim-offender relationship”, cit., pp. 432-456; VILLACAMPA ESTIARTE, C. /PUJOLS PÉREZ, A., “Prevalencia y dinámica de la victimización por stalking en población universitaria”, cit., p.24.

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