

Domestic Violence in the News, 2019-2026: Attention, Geography and Tone of Global Coverage, and How It Compares with Research

Fliar BI · Prism Research Layer · Working paper, October 2026 · Dataset and code: github.com/fliarbi/prism-news-api · Licence CC BY-NC 4.0

Abstract

We measure how domestic violence was covered in a global news index from January 2019 to July 2026, using 86,045 de-duplicated articles about domestic, intimate-partner, family and dowry-related violence, and set that coverage beside 23,163 research papers published on the topic between 2015 and 2025. All results are coverage measures. They describe attention, not the prevalence of abuse. Six results stand out:

1. **Falling share.** Domestic violence took 7.32 of every 10,000 news articles in 2019 and 4.6 in 2025, a 37.2% fall in share, although raw counts rose as the index grew.
2. **The month of the lockdowns.** The largest monthly share between 2019 and 2025 came in April 2020, a month of COVID-19 lockdowns in many countries, at 11.87 articles per 10,000. British coverage more than doubled as a share of British news from 2019 to 2020 (4.3 to 9.79 per 10,000).
3. **Weak seasonality.** Coverage is spread fairly evenly across the year. No month holds more than 9.12% of a typical year's articles, against 8.33% for an even spread.
4. **Geography.** Australia's share of located coverage is 4.21 times its share of all news, the highest of any country with at least 100 located articles. The United States holds 57.32% of located articles (lift 1.18). India is under-represented (0.61). Within India, Kerala (1.64), Uttar Pradesh (1.53) and Madhya Pradesh (1.47) lead; within the United States, Maine (2.77), West Virginia (2.57) and Alabama (2.53).
5. **Tone and urgency.** 79.2% of articles are negative in tone (all news: 33.6%), and 83.9% are rated critical priority (all news: 42.6%).
6. **Research.** Papers on the topic rose from 2.79 to 3.58 per 10,000 papers between 2015 and 2025, a 1.28-fold increase in share. Patenting is negligible: 5 patent families in ten years.

If you or someone you know is struggling, contact local emergency services or a crisis line.

Findings stated for citation

- **F1.** Domestic violence's share of news fell 37.2% from 2019 to 2025 (7.32 to 4.6 per 10,000 articles).
- **F2.** April 2020 was the peak month of 2019-2025, at 11.87 articles per 10,000.
- **F3.** British coverage rose from 4.3 to 9.79 per 10,000 British articles between 2019 and 2020, then fell back to 6.48 in 2021.
- **F4.** Seasonality was weak: no month held more than 9.12% of a typical year's coverage (even spread: 8.33%).
- **F5.** Australia's share of located coverage was 4.21 times its share of all news.

- **F6.** The United States held 57.32% of located coverage (lift 1.18); India 8.11% (lift 0.61).
- **F7.** 79.2% of articles were negative in tone, 2.36 times the all-news share.
- **F8.** 83.9% of articles were rated critical priority, 1.97 times the all-news share.
- **F9.** Shelters and support were the most topic-specific theme (lift 901.69).
- **F10.** Coercive control appeared in 9.7% of themed articles (lift 124.47).
- **F11.** 2,163 articles used "dowry harassment" in their opening text and 706 used "dowry death".
- **F12.** Research papers on the topic rose 1.28-fold as a share of all papers, 2015–2025.
- **F13.** Within India, Kerala (1.64), Uttar Pradesh (1.53) and Madhya Pradesh (1.47) had the most over-represented coverage.
- **F14.** Within the United States, Maine (2.77), West Virginia (2.57) and Alabama (2.53) had the most over-represented coverage.
- **F15.** From 2023 to 2025, attention rose in Spain, New Zealand (1.56 times), India (1.48 times) and Germany, and fell most in Ireland and France.

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is abuse by a partner, former partner or family member. Much of it is never reported to the police, so official counts and surveys give only a partial picture. News coverage is a different record. It does not measure how often abuse happens. It measures how much public attention abuse receives, when, where and in what tone. That attention shapes policy debate, funding for services and whether people who experience abuse know that help exists.

This paper and its dataset measure that attention. They combine a global news index with the research literature on the same topic. Each comparison uses a denominator, so that growth in the index or in publishing is not mistaken for growth in interest. The companion dataset publishes an article-level sample (21,522 rows) and full coverage tables, so every figure here can be re-derived. The [Prism News API](#) serves the full history.

The paper follows safe-reporting practice. It gives no names and no detail of individual cases, and it states every result as a measure of coverage.

2. Data and methods

News. The Prism news index holds articles from outlets worldwide; non-English articles are indexed in English translation. Each article carries its opening text (the first few sentences), a primary location, a graded tone label, a machine-assigned priority rating (1–9), themes, keywords and named organisations. We count unique article identifiers; repeated rows for the same article are removed. When this release was built, 92.88% of the index was readable, so all counts are lower bounds.

Matching. An article is about domestic violence when its opening text contains one of eight phrases as whole words: *domestic violence*, *domestic abuse*, *intimate partner violence*, *family violence*, *spousal abuse*, *domestic assault*, *dowry harassment* or *dowry death*. Broad or ambiguous phrases tested during term review (*coercive control*, *wife beating*) were dropped. Three families of matches are excluded:

- templated jail rosters and police-log digests ("mugshots", "police log", "arrest log");

- dated blotter entries that list many unrelated incidents;
- television plot spoilers and soap-opera storylines.

These patterns removed 551 of 86,596 raw matches (0.64%). The phrase *domestic violence* carries most of the match (61,893 articles), followed by *domestic abuse* (9,637), *intimate partner violence* (5,848) and *family violence* (5,323).

Precision. One reviewer read 40 randomly drawn matched openings. 37 referred to domestic violence as a real-world subject, covering cases, policy, services or research (precision 92.5%). In 26 (65%) domestic violence was the main subject. The three false positives were a jail roster, a police-report digest and a website navigation listing. Five of the 40 openings were research-paper abstracts carried in the index; they were counted as relevant, so a small part of the matched record is research rather than news reporting.

Measures. Coverage over time is expressed per 10,000 articles in the index that month or year, because the index grew from 11,807,177 articles in 2019 to 26,990,006 in 2025. Seasonality uses each year's within-year month shares, averaged over the complete years 2019–2025. Geography, tone, priority and themes use January 2023 – July 2026. Geography is expressed as lift: a country's share of matched articles divided by its share of all located articles. The same rule applies to states within India and the United States. Place tags derived from ordinary words ("Congress", "Earth", "Winter", "Cloud", "Mobile", "Hurricane"; 714 words in all) were treated as unlocated in every location field, which removed 15.3% of city-tagged articles.

Research and patents. Research papers are de-duplicated articles and reviews (2000–2025) with a topic term in the title (the eight phrases above, plus *partner violence* and *dowry*). Repository deposits are excluded. Patent families (2005–2024) use the same title rule; only 5 families were found for 2015–2024, so no patent analysis is reported.

3. Results

3.1 How much and when

The index holds 86,045 domestic violence articles from January 2019 to July 2026. Raw counts rose from 8,640 in 2019 to 12,426 in 2025, but the share of all news fell in almost every year: from 7.32 per 10,000 in 2019 to 4.6 in 2025, a fall of 37.2% (Table 1). In 2020 the share was 13.7% lower than in 2019 for the year as a whole, even though April 2020 was the peak month of the period at 11.87 per 10,000 (Figure 1).

Year	Articles	All articles in index	Per 10,000
2019	8,640	11,807,177	7.32
2020	10,250	16,230,014	6.32
2021	10,631	17,281,220	6.15
2022	11,995	19,115,515	6.28
2023	11,820	20,484,506	5.77
2024	11,893	23,311,896	5.1
2025	12,426	26,990,006	4.6

Table 1. Domestic violence articles per year and as a share of the index. 2026 (January–July) is partial and omitted.

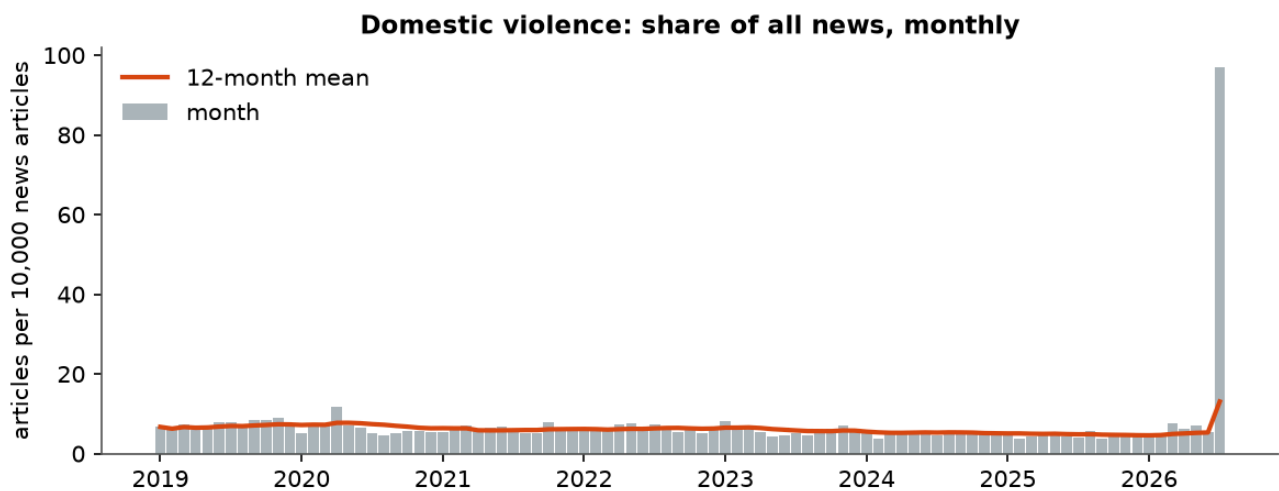


Figure 1. Domestic violence coverage as articles per 10,000 news articles, monthly, January 2019 – July 2026. Bars are months; the line is the 12-month mean. The final bar (July 2026) rests on only 48,500 articles in the whole index and is not a real peak.

The monthly series has one artefact. July 2026 shows 97.11 articles per 10,000, but the index held only 48,500 articles that month, against 2,158,783 in May 2026. The value is therefore not a peak and is excluded from every comparison.

Unlike seasonal hazards, domestic violence coverage is spread fairly evenly across the year (Figure 2). January (9.12%) and October (9.1%) are the busiest months of a typical year, and February (7.22%) the quietest. An even distribution would give 8.33% per month; February's low share partly reflects its fewer days.

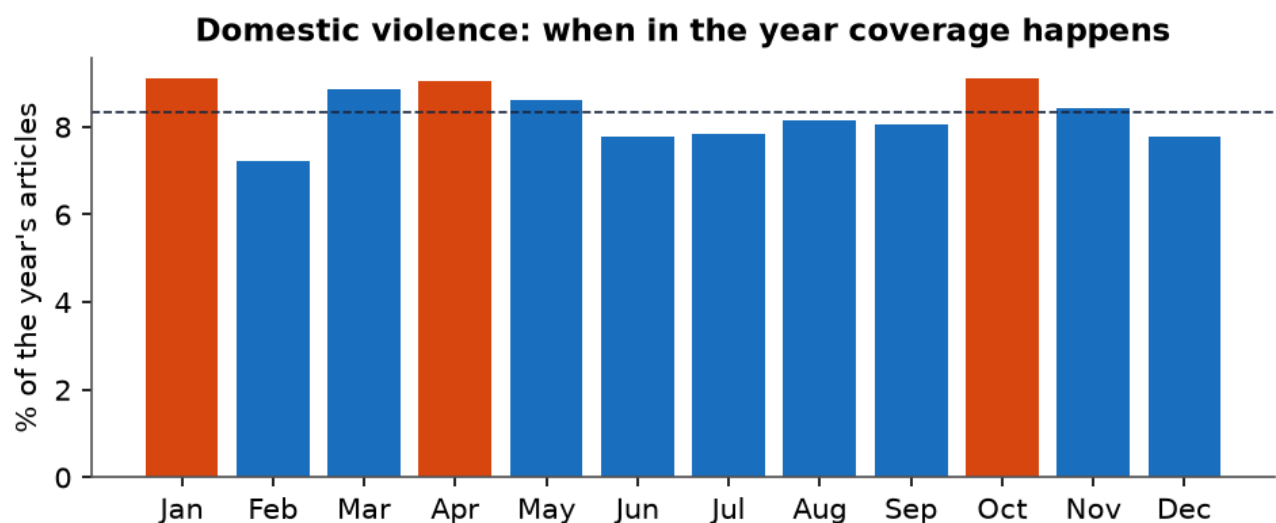


Figure 2. Share of each year's domestic violence articles published in each month, averaged over 2019–2025. Dashed line = an even spread (8.3% per month).

3.2 Where

Between January 2023 and July 2026, 20,494 matched articles carried a primary location. The United States holds the largest raw share (57.32%) with a lift of 1.18: domestic violence takes a slightly larger share of American news than of news overall. Australia (lift 4.21) and New Zealand (1.65) are the most over-represented countries. India holds 8.11% of located articles but its lift is 0.61. France (0.71), Italy (0.65), Spain (0.5) and Germany (0.48) are also under-represented (Table 2, Figure 3).

Country	Located articles	Share %	Lift vs all news
United States	11,747	57.32	1.18
Australia	1,849	9.02	4.21
India	1,663	8.11	0.61
United Kingdom	1,349	6.58	1.13
Canada	441	2.15	1.0
Nigeria	326	1.59	1.16
France	289	1.41	0.71
New Zealand	219	1.07	1.65
Brazil	197	0.96	1.11
Ireland	154	0.75	1.04
Italy	128	0.62	0.65
Germany	116	0.57	0.48
Spain	101	0.49	0.5

Table 2. Leading countries in located domestic violence news, January 2023 – July 2026, with lift against all located news.

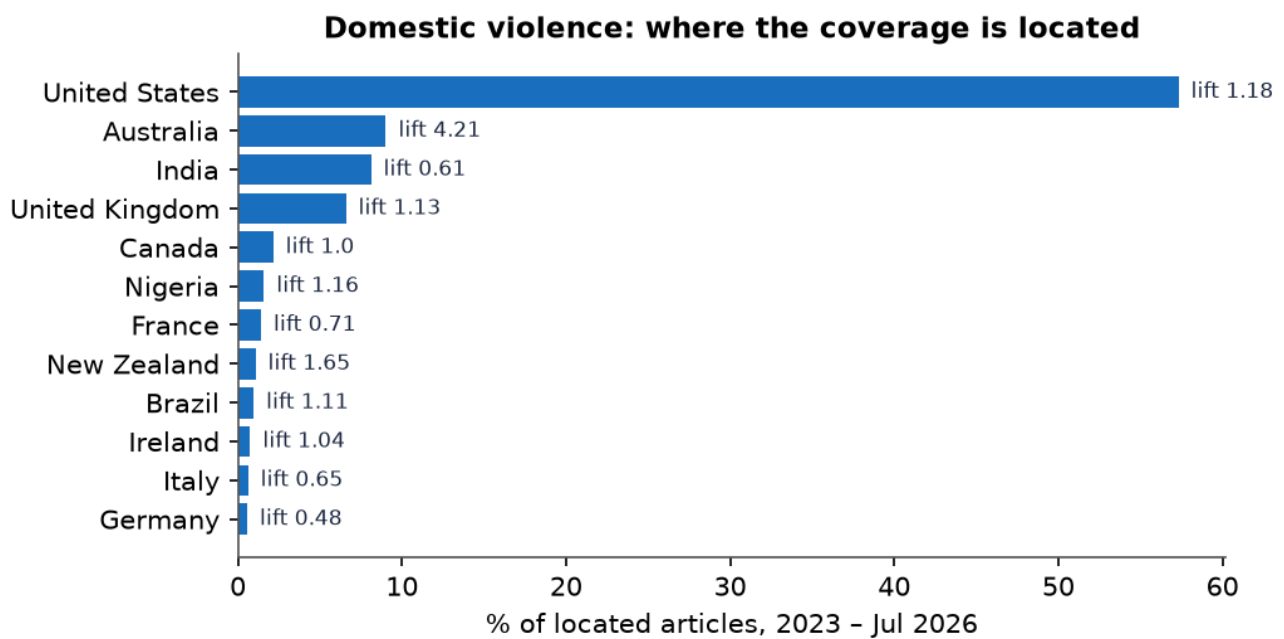


Figure 3. Leading countries by share of located domestic violence articles, 2023 – Jul 2026, labelled with lift against all located news.

3.3 Geo intelligence: continents, states and shifting attention

The world map (Figure 4) shows the pattern at a glance. Domestic violence is over-represented in the news of Australia, New Zealand and the United States, and under-represented in most of continental Europe and in India. By continent, Oceania (3.86) and North America (1.25) are over-represented, while South America (0.82), Africa (0.75), Europe (0.73) and Asia (0.46) are not (Figure 7, left). The most over-represented countries are English-speaking, which may partly reflect the outlet mix of the index.

Domestic violence: which countries over- and under-cover the topic

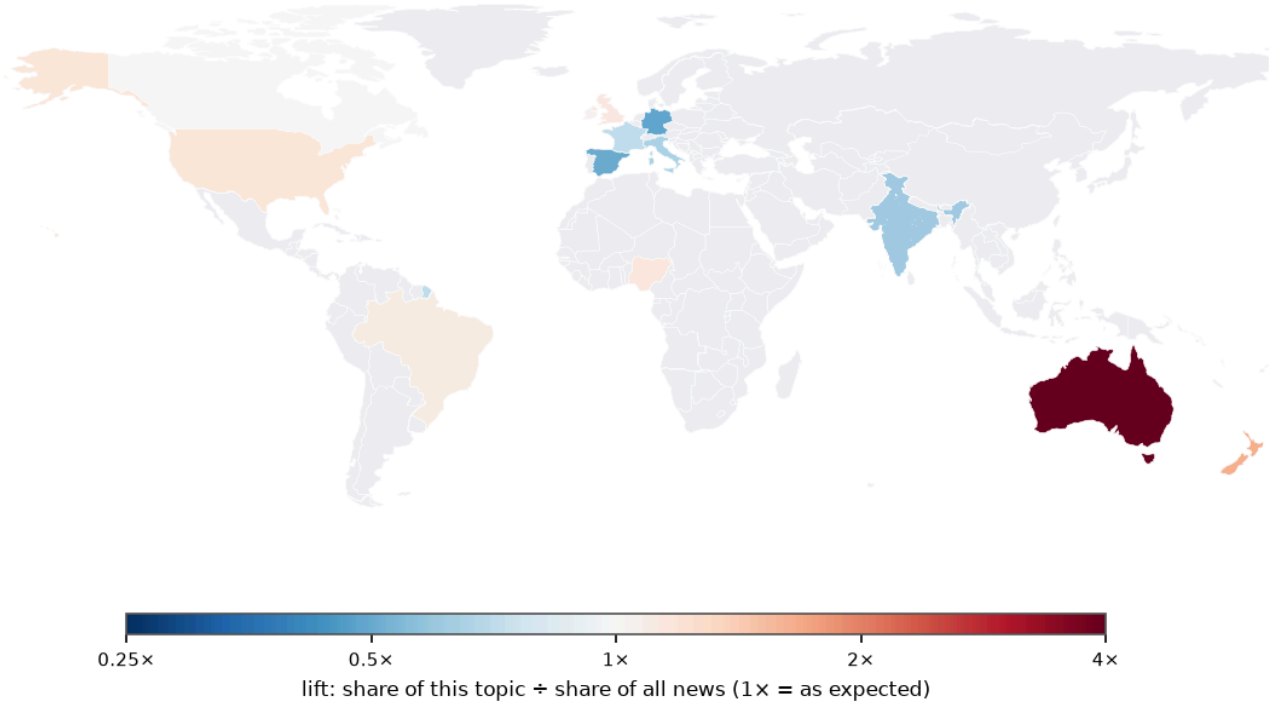


Figure 4. Lift of each country's share of located domestic violence articles, January 2023 – July 2026 (red = over-represented, blue = under-represented, grey = fewer than 100 articles). India is drawn with its official outline.

Within India the differences are smaller than between countries, but they are clear (Table 3). In India, 1,499 located articles were tagged with a state. Measured against each state's share of Indian news, Kerala (1.64), Uttar Pradesh (1.53), Madhya Pradesh (1.47), Telangana (1.32) and Karnataka (1.28) are the most over-represented. Bihar (0.71) and Delhi (0.9) are under-represented (Figure 5). Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra together hold more than a third of located Indian articles. In the United States, 10,913 located articles were tagged with a state, and the spread is wider. Maine (2.77), West Virginia (2.57), Alabama (2.53), Louisiana (2.34) and Mississippi (2.25) lead by lift. New Jersey (0.09), Pennsylvania (0.33) and Washington (0.7) are far below their weight in American news (Figure 6). States with fewer than 50 articles are left out of the text. An earlier build placed Rhode Island and Hawaii near the top of the US list; both leads rested partly on place tags derived from ordinary words, and with those treated as unlocated each state falls below 50 articles. Utah has the highest computed lift (3.51, 340 articles) but is left out: in the article sample, 40 of its 87 rows from 2023 on come from one celebrity case located through the personal names "Taylor" and "Dakota" read as places, and 9 more from the names "Morgan" and "Logan" in stories unrelated to Utah.

India: state	Articles	Lift	United States: state	Articles	Lift
Kerala	60	1.64	Maine	130	2.77
Uttar Pradesh	292	1.53	West Virginia	116	2.57
Madhya Pradesh	65	1.47	Alabama	315	2.53
Telangana	69	1.32	Louisiana	114	2.34
Karnataka	106	1.28	Mississippi	160	2.25
Maharashtra	273	1.15			
<i>lowest: Delhi</i>	176	0.9	<i>lowest: Washington</i>	200	0.7
Bihar	51	0.71	Pennsylvania	219	0.33
			New Jersey	191	0.09

Table 3. States with the highest and lowest lift in domestic violence coverage (at least 50 articles), January 2023 – July 2026. Utah (lift 3.51) is excluded because most of its sampled rows are located through personal names. Lift = the state's share of the country's located matched articles ÷ its share of all located news from that country.

Domestic violence: states of India by lift

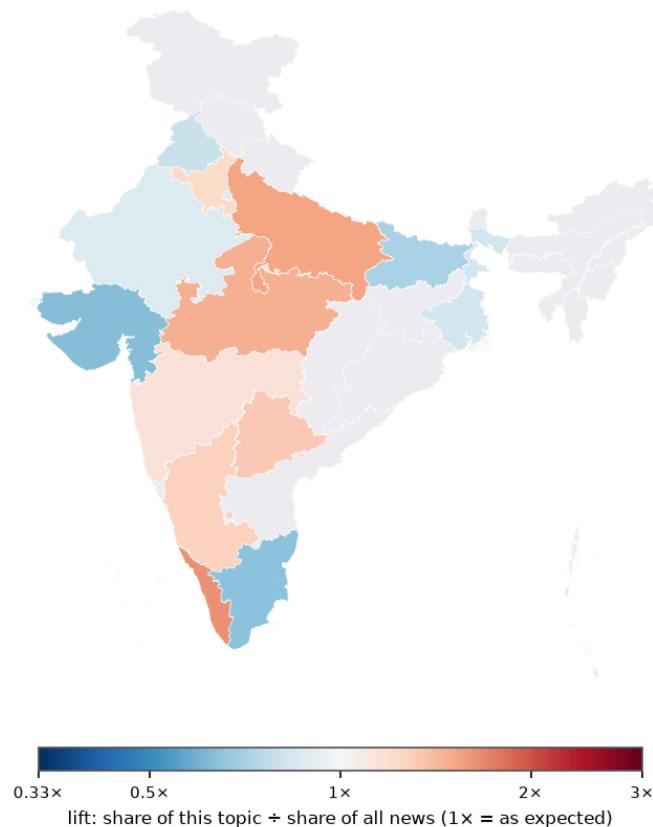


Figure 5. Lift of each Indian state's share of located domestic violence articles against its share of all located Indian news, January 2023 – July 2026. Official outline; Ladakh is drawn within Jammu and Kashmir in the boundary file used.

Domestic violence: states of United States by lift

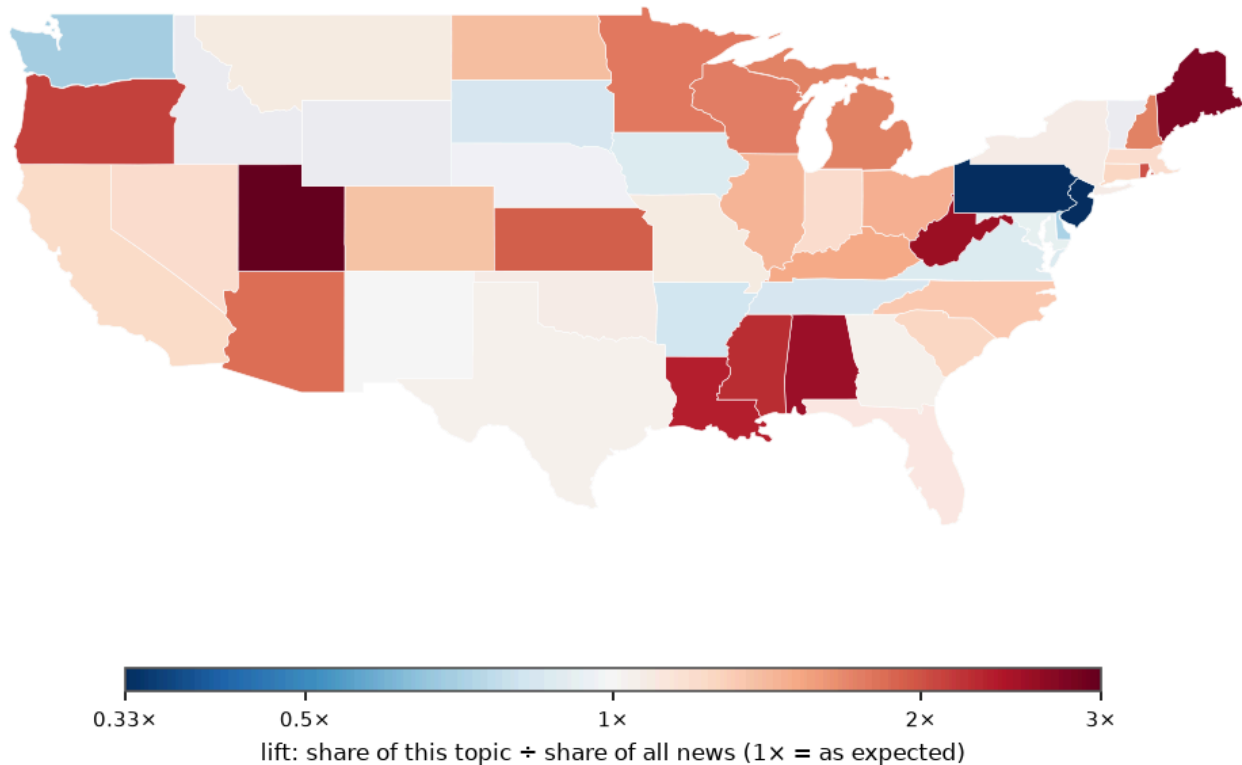


Figure 6. Lift of each US state's share of located domestic violence articles against its share of all located US news, January 2023 – July 2026.

State counts in India are small, so a handful of widely reported cases can move a state's lift. The same caution applies to smaller US states. These lifts describe where coverage concentrates; they do not rank states by the prevalence of abuse.

Attention also moves between countries from year to year (Figure 7, right; Table 4). Measured as matched articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, four of the 13 countries with at least 100 located articles rose between 2023 and 2025: Spain from 2.12 to 4.28, New Zealand from 7.16 to 11.17 (1.56 times), India from 2.95 to 4.38 (1.48 times) and Germany from 1.78 to 2.33. The largest falls were in Ireland (9.99 to 2.25) and France (4.95 to 2.12). The United Kingdom fell from 7.03 to 4.73 (0.67 times), Nigeria from 7.58 to 5.32, the United States from 7.24 to 5.11 (0.71 times), Italy from 3.14 to 2.25, Canada from 6.08 to 4.54 (0.75 times), Brazil from 7.24 to 5.89 and Australia from 22.92 to 18.49 (0.81 times). Spain, Germany and Ireland have small located baselines, so their swings are the least stable. Australia keeps by far the highest level throughout, peaking at 27.65 per 10,000 in 2024. In 2020, British coverage rose from 4.3 to 9.79 per 10,000 British articles and Australian coverage from 12.91 to 21.49.

Country	2019	2020	2023	2025	Change 2023→2025
Spain	3.68	5.42	2.12	4.28	rise
New Zealand	9.76	10.31	7.16	11.17	1.56×
India	2.57	4.49	2.95	4.38	1.48×
Germany	1.84	3.69	1.78	2.33	rise
Australia	12.91	21.49	22.92	18.49	0.81×
Canada	6.27	5.73	6.08	4.54	0.75×
United States	7.88	6.0	7.24	5.11	0.71×
United Kingdom	4.3	9.79	7.03	4.73	0.67×
France	10.02	14.41	4.95	2.12	fall
Ireland	7.84	11.8	9.99	2.25	fall

Table 4. Domestic violence articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, selected years.

Coverage is negative in tone in every country, and more negative than each country's news overall (Table 5). Relative to the country's own baseline, Canadian coverage is the most negative (73.0% against 27.1%, 2.69 times), followed by the United States (80.7% against 33.1%). Indian coverage is 87.5% negative against 41.2% for Indian news (2.12 times). New Zealand's is the least distant from its baseline (79.9% against 45.7%, 1.75 times), with France close behind.

Country	Labelled articles	Negative % (topic)	Negative % (country's news)
United States	11,717	80.7	33.1
Australia	1,846	85.4	38.4
India	1,662	87.5	41.2
United Kingdom	1,343	74.2	36.9
Canada	437	73.0	27.1
Nigeria	326	89.0	44.4
France	288	84.7	47.6
New Zealand	219	79.9	45.7

Table 5. Negative share of domestic violence articles by country against the negative share of all located news from that country, January 2023 – July 2026.

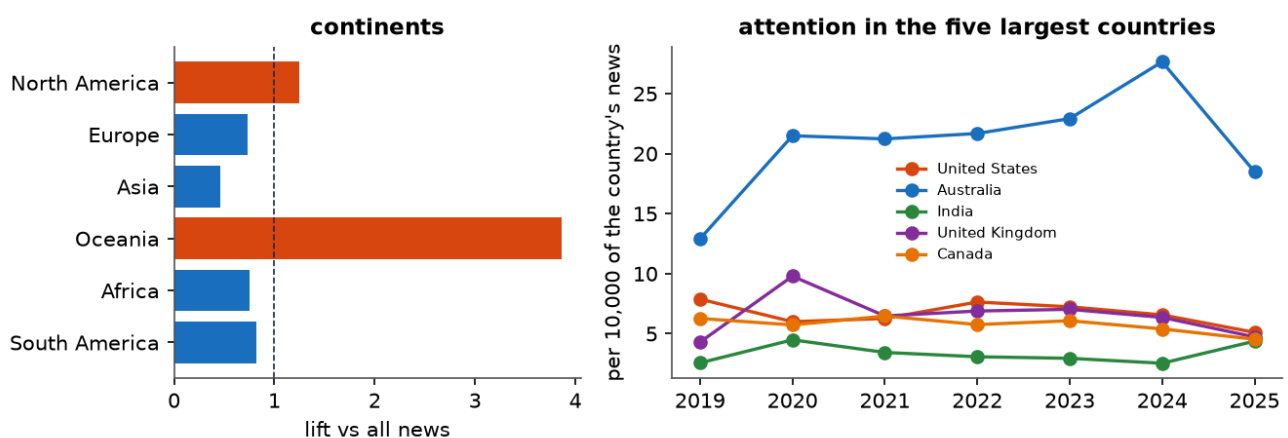


Figure 7. Left: lift by continent, January 2023 – July 2026. Right: domestic violence articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, 2019–2025, for the five countries with the most articles.

3.4 Tone, urgency and themes

Domestic violence coverage is far more negative and more urgent than news in general (Figure 8). Among articles with a tone label, 79.2% are negative, against 33.6% across the index (2.36 times). Machine-assigned priority puts 83.9% of articles at critical level (7 or higher), against 42.6% of all news (1.97 times).

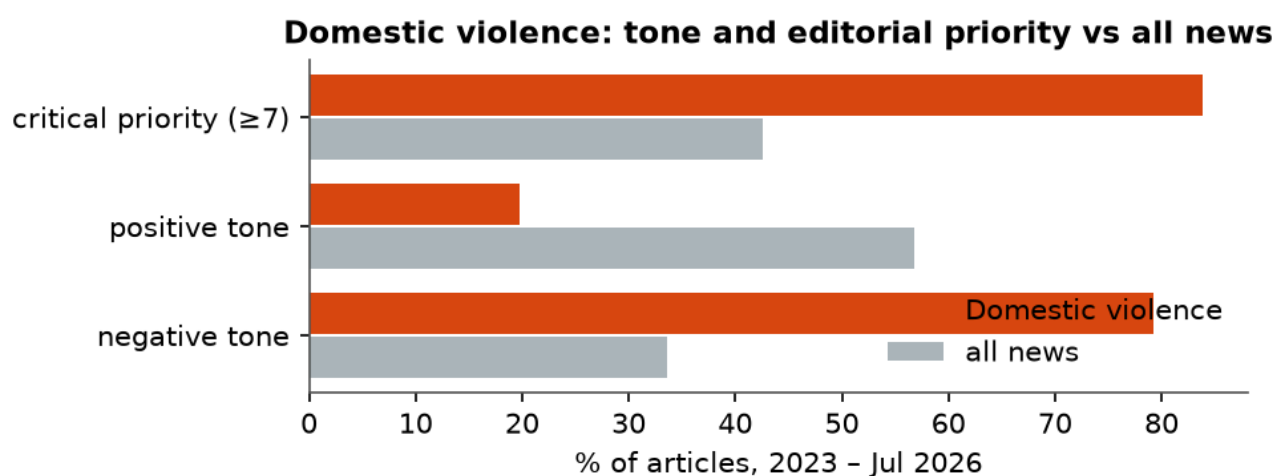


Figure 8. Tone and the share rated critical priority, domestic violence articles vs all news, 2023 – Jul 2026.

Themes show what the stories are about (Table 6). The general theme of domestic violence and intimate partner abuse is the most common (43.51% of themed articles). Gender-based violence and femicide appears in 10.45%, and coercive control in relationships in 9.7%, 124.47 times its rate in all news. The most topic-specific themes concern help and protection: shelters and support, protective orders, crisis hotlines and restraining orders. Their lifts are very high because these themes are rare in other news.

Theme	Articles	Share %	Lift
domestic violence shelters and support	578	2.04	901.69
protective orders and family court injunctions	376	1.33	864.08
crisis hotlines and emergency counseling	352	1.24	817.72
domestic violence restraining orders	463	1.64	692.67
gender-based violence and femicide	2,957	10.45	166.54
coercive control in relationships	2,745	9.7	124.47
domestic violence and intimate partner abuse	12,316	43.51	120.26
emotional/psychological abuse	2,964	10.47	103.04

Table 6. Themes most specific to domestic violence coverage (lift against all themed news), January 2023 – July 2026.

Dowry-related abuse forms a distinct strand of coverage. Between January 2019 and July 2026, 2,163 articles used "dowry harassment" in their opening text and 706 used "dowry death". The organisations named most often are social platforms, wire services and sports leagues, which reflects how celebrity and athlete cases are reported rather than the work of services; the list is not analysed further.

3.5 Research attention

Research on domestic and intimate-partner violence grew faster than the scientific literature. Papers with a topic term in the title rose from 2.79 per 10,000 papers in 2015 to 3.58 in 2025, a 1.28-fold increase in share. The number of such papers rose 1.29-fold, while the total literature in the corpus grew by a factor of 1.0 over the same years. Between 2015

and 2025, 23,163 such papers were published. The share rose from 2.88 in 2019 to 3.32 in 2020 and peaked at 3.75 in 2023. The most-cited work includes global prevalence estimates, reviews of risk factors and multi-country studies of women's health [1-4], and studies of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic [5, 6].

News attention does not track research attention (Figure 9). Research share rose in most years, while the news share fell almost every year after 2019.

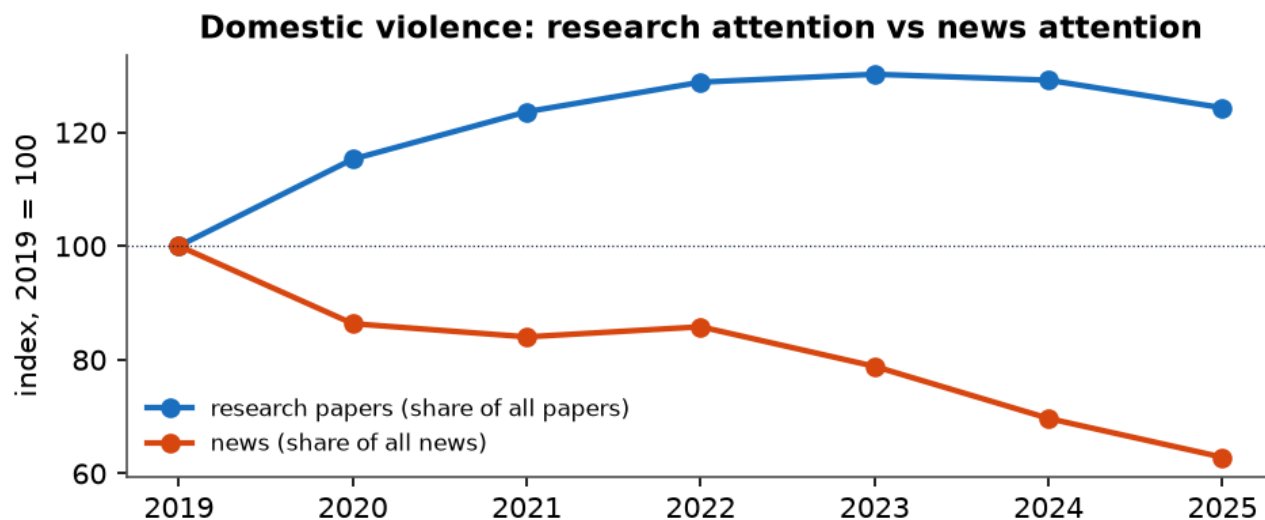


Figure 9. Research papers with the topic in the title (share of all papers) and domestic violence news (share of all news), each indexed to 2019 = 100.

Patents are not a meaningful record for this topic. Only 5 patent families with domestic violence terms in the title were published between 2015 and 2024, so no patent figure is shown.

4. Discussion

Three points matter for anyone who uses news as a record of domestic violence. First, coverage measures attention. The share of news given to the topic fell by more than a third between 2019 and 2025, which says nothing about whether abuse became rarer. The peak in April 2020 falls in a month of pandemic lockdowns in many countries; the data show the attention, not the cause.

Second, geography in coverage follows news systems as much as events. Australia and New Zealand give the topic a much larger share of their news than other countries do, the United States a slightly larger one, while India gives it a smaller share than its weight in the index. Inside India, state lifts are modest and sensitive to single widely reported cases; inside the United States they are wider, led by Maine, West Virginia and Alabama. Two apparent US leads from an earlier build disappeared once place tags derived from ordinary words were removed, and the computed Utah lead rests mostly on personal names read as places, which shows how sensitive state lifts are to the location tagging.

Third, part of the coverage concerns help. The most topic-specific themes are shelters, protective orders and hotlines, although each appears in only about 1 to 2% of themed articles. Coverage that carries information about services is one reason safe-reporting guidance asks writers to include where to find help.

Research and news run on different clocks. Research share grows steadily; news share drifts down and reacts to moments of public concern. The dataset lets researchers link the two, for

example to test whether policy debates with heavy coverage are followed by research activity in the same country.

5. Limitations

- **Index availability.** 92.88% of the index was readable at build time, so counts are lower bounds. Shares and lifts are less affected, because the missing part is spread across topics.
- **Coverage after May 2026.** The index thins after May 2026, so 2026 is partial and is excluded from year comparisons. The July 2026 monthly share rests on a very small denominator.
- **Matching.** Matching uses the article opening. Articles that mention domestic violence only later are missed, as are reports that describe abuse without the matched phrases. In the 40-article check, 7.5% of matches were not about domestic violence.
- **Machine labels.** Location, tone, priority and themes are machine-labelled. The city field is noisy and is not analysed.
- **Place tags from ordinary words.** Place tags derived from ordinary words were treated as unlocated (15.3% of city-tagged articles), so located counts are lower bounds and a few genuine places that share a name with a common word are lost.
- **Outlet mix.** The index over-represents English-language outlets. This shapes the country comparison.
- **Coverage, not prevalence.** No result in this paper estimates how often domestic violence occurs.

Data availability

The dataset (article sample, monthly and country tables, research tables, all metrics) is released under CC BY-NC 4.0 with this paper. The sample holds 21,522 of 86,011 matched articles to 31 July 2026. Full article text, headlines, publishers, later articles and other topics are served by the Prism News API: <https://github.com/fliarbi/prism-news-api> (base URL <https://radar-api.fliarbi.com/news>). A worked query: `prism-news trends "domestic violence" --since 2019-01-01 --until 2026-07-31 --granularity monthly`.

If you or someone you know is struggling, contact local emergency services or a crisis line.

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