ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Public policies against violence towards women and the services of the Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the relationship between public policies against gender violence and the services of the Instituto de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses (IML, by its Spanish initials) in South Lima. Using a descriptive-explanatory, quantitative, non-experimental, and cross-sectional methodological design, 334 users of the IML's forensic and psychological services were evaluated. Data, collected through surveys, were analyzed using SPSS V.27, applying descriptive and inferential techniques. A moderate and direct correlation was revealed (Spearman's Rho = 0.347; p < 0.001), confirming a statistically significant association between policies and services, which will reject the null hypothesis. This evidence shows that state measures strengthen the IML's capacity to provide specialized assistance, positively impacting the judicial system. The analysis suggests that strengthening these policies with increased funding, staff training, and inter-institutional coordination would improve the effectiveness of services. Thus, the need to consolidate comprehensive policies that expand coverage and adapt services to the specific demands of users is highlighted. In conclusion, optimizing public policies is key to ensuring efficient forensic and legal responses, promoting real protection and access to justice for victims of violence.

Keywords: violence; femicide; public policy; public services; psychological care.

Fabiola Kelly Sanchez Huanca ⓘD

Kellysanchez19@gmail.com

Universidad Nacional Tecnológica de Lima Sur, Facultad de Ingeniería y Gestión, Lima, Peru

INTRODUCTION

Aggression against women has tragic and indelible consequences for those who suffer it. Throughout history, it has transcended eras, nations, and territorial borders, permeating diverse cultures regardless of social class, race, ethnicity, or religion, acquiring pandemic proportions and universal characteristics (Soares *et al.*, 2017).

In this context, although countries have implemented various policies and regulations to reduce this problem, as of July 2021, globally, 245 million women and girls over the age of 15 (10 % of the total) had suffered sexual or physical assault by their partners (Junta Ejecutiva de la Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres, 2021). However, in the Americas these figures are even more alarming: one in four women over the age of 15 in the region has experienced this type of violence throughout her life, and almost one in eight (12 %) has suffered sexual violence (World Health Organization, 2021).

From an economic perspective, this phenomenon represents a social burden that affects the material performance of countries. In America, for example, it generates economic losses ranging from 1.6 % and 4.2 % of the Gross Domestic Product (Inter-American Development Bank, 2017). Faced with this reality, around 155 countries have adopted laws on domestic violence, and 140 have enacted specific legislation against sexual harassment in the workplace (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and The World Bank, 2020). However, these standards are not fully implemented, which limits women's access to protection and justice, perpetuating impunity in many cases.

In Latin America, most nations have developed national policies and plans to regulate and implement laws against violence towards women. However, significant challenges remain in ensuring women's integrity and equality. Therefore, since 2016, these measures have been addressed from the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals, within the framework of a new gender vision for the development of Latin American countries (United Nations, 2016). Nations Development Programme, 2017).

In Peru, this problem reflects one of the greatest social challenges the country faces. During 2021, 240,875 reports of domestic violence were recorded (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2022). In Metropolitan Lima, 56.0 % of women have suffered some type of aggression from their partner at some point in their lives; 52.8% have experienced psychological or verbal violence, 23.8 % have suffered physical violence, and 5.0% have been victims of sexual violence (Municipalidad de Lima, 2022). Additionally, in that same year, 141 cases of femicide were reported, of which 32 occurred in Metropolitan Lima and 8 in the districts under the jurisdiction of the Institute of Legal Medicine in South Lima (Comité Estadístico Interinstitucional de la Criminalidad, 2022).

On the other hand, according to a report by the Programa Nacional para la Prevención y Erradicación de la Violencia Contra las Mujeres e Integrantes del Grupo Familiar - AURORA (2023), there is an increasing trend in the total number of visits to Centros de Emergencia Mujer (CEM) from 2002 to 2023. In the last three years (2021, 2022 and 2023), this increase has been significant, reaching a maximum of 166,313 cases in 2023. This increase is reflected in all categories of violence, with a notable emphasis on sexual and corporal violence. During 2023, for example, 30,837 cases of sexual violence and 63,726 cases of corporal violence were recorded, which represents a considerable increase compared to previous years.

Faced with this problem, the Instituto de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses, together with the Ministerio Público and the Fiscalía de la Nación, have developed a series of strategies, guidelines, and manuals aligned with public policies to address this situation. A notable example is the 2016 publication of the *Guía de Evaluación Psicológica Forense en casos de violencia contra las mujeres y los integrantes del grupo familiar y otros casos de violencia* ((Ministerio Público - Fiscalía de la Nación, 2016), the purpose of which is to establish appropriate working methodologies for psychological expertise in the investigation of these incidents.

These strategies derive from various guidelines. In 2018, Decreto Legislativo N.° 1368 established the Sistema Nacional Especializado

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de Justicia para la Protección y Sanción de la Violencia contra las Mujeres e Integrantes del Grupo Familiar (SNEJ). Its objective is to guarantee comprehensive care for victims, provide them with security, and ensure their effective access to justice. This system is made up of state institutions such as the Judiciary, the Poder Judicial, the Ministerio Público, la Policía Nacional del Perú, el Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables, and el Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos.

In 2019, the SNEJ implementation schedule was approved through Decreto Supremo N.° 003-2019-MIMP. Subsequently, in 2020 and 2021, Resoluciones Administrativas 000172-2020-CE-PJ and 000109-2021-CE-PJ were issued, respectively, which provided for the creation of specialized modules in various judicial districts. In 2021, the National Implementation Strategy of the SNEJ 2021-2026 was approved through Decreto Supremo N.° 011-2021-MIMP. During 2022, it was determined that the implementation of the SNEJ would be the responsibility of the Executive Council of the Judiciary, according to Notified Resolution 000584-2022-CE-PJ. This policy requires greater coordination and collaboration between institutions such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judiciary, and the Peruvian National Police to comprehensively provide victims with care. This requires adapting the protocols and procedures of the Institute of Legal Medicine to ensure an effective and coordinated response within the framework of the SNEJ.

In this context, the SNEJ has established itself as a public policy aimed at caring for and restoring the well-being of victims, offering free services to any entity affiliated with the health sector (Articulación Regional Feminista por los Derechos Humanos y la Justicia de Género - ARF & Demus - Estudio para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer, 2022). Based on this, actions have been formulated to address this issue.

On the other hand, forensic medicine acts as a bridge between the biological and legal sciences, facilitating the exchange of knowledge between both disciplines to achieve greater effectiveness. Currently, there is a close collaboration between law and medicine, with the incorporation of subjects such as forensic medicine and criminal law in both areas. Forensic physicians must delve into the legal field to understand the relationship between laws and life in society. This collaboration extends from birth to death, working together to effectively guarantee individual and social rights in various contexts and unforeseen situations (Guzmán, 2017).

The forensic study of victims must rigorously follow internationally recognized clinical evaluation standards, which implies being thorough, methodical, and systematic in every aspect of the examination and functional assessment. This study must adhere to the *lex artis.* expert report, ensuring that relevant data is included, such as the institution where it was performed, the name and ID of the victim, the exact date and, in the case of imaging studies, that the data is incorporated into the plate. Furthermore, it is essential that the results are signed and sealed by the professionals responsible for the report (Kvitko, 2012).

In this regard, Forensic Medicine is defined as a multidisciplinary discipline that studies the legal aspects related to healthcare and medical practice. Its objective is to apply legislation to the field of medicine, providing tools to effectively address legal proceedings. This science also encompasses the formulation of laws and regulations to ensure the correct application of ethical and legal concepts in the practice of medicine, being fundamental for both healthcare experts and the legal system as a whole (García, 2020).

Public policies against violence towards women

These strategies are aimed at addressing the needs of women in situations of violence, focusing on networks that integrate health services, social assistance, public safety and justice (Cordeiro *et al.,* 2022).

Regarding public policy itself, Lahera (2002) highlights the difference between the concepts of politics and public policy, noting that although they are often used synonymously, they are in fact distinct terms. While politics encompasses the exercise of power in society as a whole, public policy refers to specific solutions designed to address specific problems.

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According to Espín-Miniguano *et al.* (2024), public policies are expressions of the initiative of an actor with authority within their legal jurisdiction, who, through legal processes, seeks to create norms or actions that are binding on individuals. From this perspective, they are defined as a set of actions undertaken by political leaders with the aim of addressing collective problems and finding solutions, or at least managing them effectively.

Guidelines for comprehensive care for victims of violence

Recognizing violence as a violation of human rights, demanding immediate measures to eradicate it, and promoting care for victims constitutes the basis for comprehensive care that avoids favoring conciliatory agreements or protecting traditions that tolerate violence (Programa Nacional Contra la Violencia Familiar y Sexual, 2012).

In this regard, comprehensive care involves the collaboration of various interconnected disciplines that provide an interdisciplinary service to victims. This service is offered by professionals specialized in a gender perspective, with the purpose of addressing the underlying causes of violence and facilitating the emotional recovery of those affected (Díaz & Flores, 2009). Comprehensive care requires the implementation of coordinated actions by experts with experience in victim management, whose main objective is to provide emotional support in the face of the situations of violence suffered. This seeks to promote the improvement and comprehensive well-being of victims at all stages of their lives (Rodríguez, 2010).

Implementation of the National Specialized Justice System

The Sistema Nacional Especializado de Justicia (SNEJ) integrates legal and social services to protect and punish victims of violence against women and family members. This system guarantees comprehensive care for victims in all areas and ensures timely, impartial, and thorough investigations into acts of violence (Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables, 2024). It is governed by the principles of gender and intersectionality, offering comprehensive care to victims in compliance with the

due diligence and impartial conduct requirements established in Law 30364, which aims to prevent, punish, and eradicate violence against women and family members (2015).

The SNEJ is comprised of the Poder Judicial, the Ministerio Público, the Policía Nacional del Perú, and the ministerios de Justicia y Derechos Humanos y de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables. Its implementation is progressive, prioritizing judicial jurisdictions with the highest reporting rates (Decreto Legislativo que crea el Sistema Nacional Especializado de Justicia para la Protección & Sanción de la Violencia contra las Mujeres e Integrantes del Grupo Familiar, 2018). The specific actions of each entity are as follows:

- Judiciary: Create specialized courts and chambers according to the caseload.

- Public Prosecutor's Office: Establish specialized prosecutor's offices and forensic units.

- National Police of Peru: Appoint specialized personnel to police stations and specialized divisions.

- Ministry of Justice and Human Rights: Train and certify specialized public defenders.

- Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations: Coordinate the Women's Emergency Centers (CEM) and shelters, in addition to training staff and prioritizing implementation in police stations with a high incidence of complaints.

Allocation of resources to reduce gender-based violence

The budget allocated to addressing this issue has experienced a steady and targeted increase since 2012, through Budget Program 0080 "Fight against Domestic Violence," which supports initiatives promoted by the Programa Aurora del Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables (MIMP) and various regions. Since 2018, budgets have been transferred to different sectors to specifically address this issue, with allocations directed toward the Joint Action Plans for 2018, 2019, and 2020. These plans set

a precedent for the creation and implementation of the Programa Presupuestal orientado a Resultados (PPoR) to Reduce Violence against Women (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2020).

Services provided by the Institute of Legal Medicine

The Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences carries out a series of administrative, technical, and scientific processes aligned with its forensic diagnostic function on living individuals, cadavers, human remains, and various samples. Through these processes, it issues expert reports that are required in both fiscal investigations and judicial proceedings in the country (Ministerio Público - Fiscalía de la Nación, 2019).

Assessment of alleged victims of crimes against sexual freedom

In accordance with the provisions of the manual for the bodily test of sexual integrity in alleged victims of crimes against sexual freedom, prepared by the Instituto de Medicina Legal, the entity carries out the evaluation process following the following guidelines (Ministerio Público - Fiscalía de la Nación, 2021):

- User registration, identification and admission.

- Interview with the alleged victim and detailed explanation of the procedure to be performed.

- Medical-legal evaluation of the body, including treatment of injuries, prevention of unwanted pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

- Collection and preservation of physical and biological evidence.

- Preparation of the expert report (Legal Medical Examination (RML) or Legal Medical Certificate (CML)).

- Referral to other medical specialties and forensic psychology, if necessary.

- Orientation on medical centers and provision of accurate information about procedures and their potential risks.

- Processing and custody of the findings obtained through complementary tests.

- Registration, filing and delivery of reports to the competent authority that requests them.

- Obtaining written informed consent.

- Prioritizing medical and legal care for alleged victims of sexual crimes, available 24 hours a day.

- Guarantee of the chain of custody of the evidence collected during the legal medical examination.

Psychological evaluation

Within the framework of public policies aimed at addressing violence against women, the work of the Instituto de Medicina Legal (IML) plays a fundamental role. Forensic clinical diagnosis not only identify psychological or other disorders in the person being evaluated, but also the violent event that caused said condition. This process also facilitates the assessment of the individual's personality, behavioral characteristics, degree of vulnerability or risk, as well as their response to the demands of justice administrators.

Finally, the assessment of psychological harm is essential in this context, allowing experts to make relevant recommendations or suggestions based on the identified needs ((Ministerio Público - Fiscalía de la Nación, 2016). This comprehensive approach helps ensure adequate and specialized care for victims, aligned with the principles of justice and protection.

Comprehensive Assessment of Bodily Injuries

The legal medical evaluation of bruises in suspected victims of violence involves a detailed record of characteristics such as the size, shape, color, and anatomical location of the injuries, as well as their direction, sense, and trajectory. This analysis determines the cause, severity, and forensic etiology of the injuries. The evaluation is performed only with the informed consent of the affected person and is exhaustive, with the results documented

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in an orderly manner. When necessary, specialized instruments and complementary examinations are used, while the preservation of injuries is carried out through photographic or video recordings, following medical criteria and complying with specific documentation requirements (Ministerio Público - Fiscalía de la Nación, 2016).

The context of South Lima is particularly relevant to this study due to the high incidence of gender-based violence in this area. In 2023, the courts of South Lima registered 21,157 complaints of domestic violence, while the Centros de Emergencia Mujer (CEM) handled 38,370 cases in Metropolitan Lima, which includes South Lima. In districts such as Villa El Salvador, Villa María del Triunfo, San Juan de Miraflores, and Chorrillos, gender-based violence remains an alarming problem. In Metropolitan Lima, 53.8% of women who have been in a relationship have suffered some type of violence from their partner, 49.3% have experienced psychological or verbal violence, 27.2% physical violence, and 6.5% sexual violence. Furthermore, in Villa María del Triunfo and Villa El Salvador, gender-based violence seriously affects girls and adolescents, who demand urgent measures for their protection. The choice of this area is justified by the need to understand how public policies and the forensic services of the Instituto de Medicina Legal (IML) are addressing this issue. South Lima, with its demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, represents an ideal setting for analyzing the effectiveness of state interventions in protecting and assisting victims of violence.

This study seeks to fill a significant gap in knowledge and practice by examining the relationship between public policies and IML services. Investigating this connection is critical to identifying strengths and weaknesses in policy implementation and their impact on the quality of forensic services. The research aims to answer key questions about the effectiveness of public policies in improving IML services and, ultimately, in protecting and assisting victims of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, the high prevalence of gender-based violence and the challenges in implementing public policies make a detailed analysis of how these policies impact forensic services essential. This approach will allow for the formulation of specific recommendations to strengthen public policies and optimize the institutional response to gender-based violence, thus contributing to more effective and equitable care for victims.

METHODS

This research was conducted using a non-experimental design, with a descriptive and explanatory quantitative approach. The sample consisted of 334 users of the forensic and forensic psychology services of the Unidades Médico Legales (UML) in South Lima, selected through simple random sampling. Data collection was carried out using a survey technique, using a structured questionnaire. This instrument was administered virtually through Google Forms and consisted of a total of 36 items.

Regarding the instrument's validity, it was endorsed by three professionals with doctoral and master's degrees, who independently and virtually evaluated the items. The average score exceeded 86%, and the experts concluded that the questionnaire was applicable. Furthermore, before its implementation, a pilot test was conducted to ensure its effectiveness. It is important to note that confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation of participants, and scientific integrity were guaranteed throughout the process.

The questionnaire was administered to patients who had previously been evaluated for cases of violence (physical or sexual assault) at the Medical-Legal Unit of South Lima and who, after receiving care, expressed their willingness and availability to respond anonymously. This approach allowed for the collection of reliable and representative data, while respecting the participants' ethical and privacy principles.

RESULTS

The research results will be presented in two sections: descriptive and inferential. The descriptive section will include variables such as the participants' education level, age, and level of experience, which will allow for a profile of the study sample. Inferential results will be obtained after evaluating the reliability of the

variables "Políticas Públicas contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres" and "Servicios que brinda el Instituto de Medicina Legal".

The distribution of participants' educational levels shows that 101 have secondary education, 78 have technical or vocational training, 62 have earned a university degree, and 92 have a postgraduate degree (master's or doctorate). This diversity in academic preparation is essential for understanding how different groups perceive and benefit from public policies and services offered by the Institute of Legal Medicine, offering a broad and diverse perspective on the effectiveness of these policies and services and where they can be improved (see Figure 1).

The age distribution of participants indicates that the majority were between 18 and 25 years old (161 people), followed by the 26 to 35 and 36 to 45 age groups, each with 67 individuals. The 46 to 60 age group was the smallest, with 38 people. This demographic composition suggests that the sample was predominantly made up of young adults, which could influence their perceptions and experiences regarding public policies and the services provided by the Institute of Legal Medicine (see Figure 2).

The distribution of experience among participants reveals that the majority have between 0 and 2 years of experience (152 people), followed by those with 3 to 5 years of experience (89 people). On the other hand, the group with more than 11 years of experience is made up of 66 individuals, while the segment with 6 to 10 years of experience is the smallest, with 26 people. This variety in experience levels indicates that the sample is primarily composed of individuals with limited professional experience (see Figure 3).

Table 1 shows the reliability of the variables evaluated in the study, calculated using Cronbach's alpha. In this regard, the variable "Políticas Públicas contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres" registers a Cronbach's alpha of 0.929, which reflects excellent internal consistency in the scale used. This implies that the items that make up this variable show a high degree of coherence with each other. For its part, the variable "Services provided by the Institute of Legal Medicine" reaches a Cronbach's alpha of 0.912, which also denotes outstanding internal consistency. These high values suggest that the scales used to measure both variables are reliable and that the results obtained are consistent.
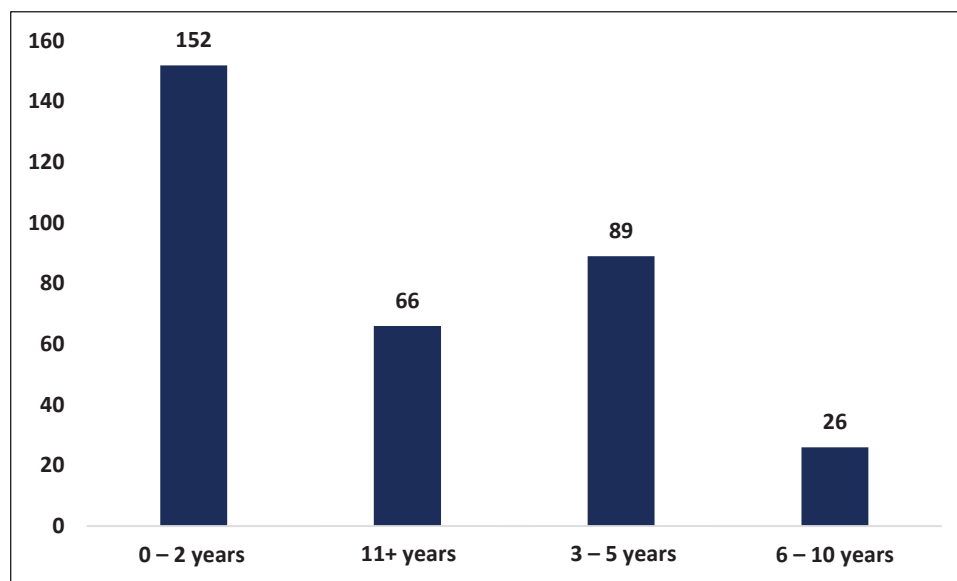
Figure 1
Level of education
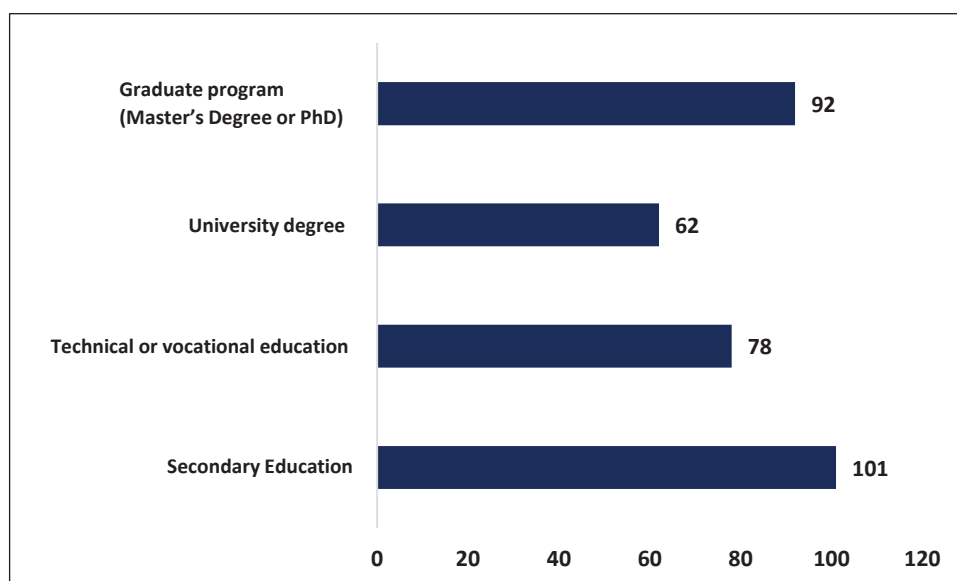
Note. Prepared by the authors.

Figure 2
Age
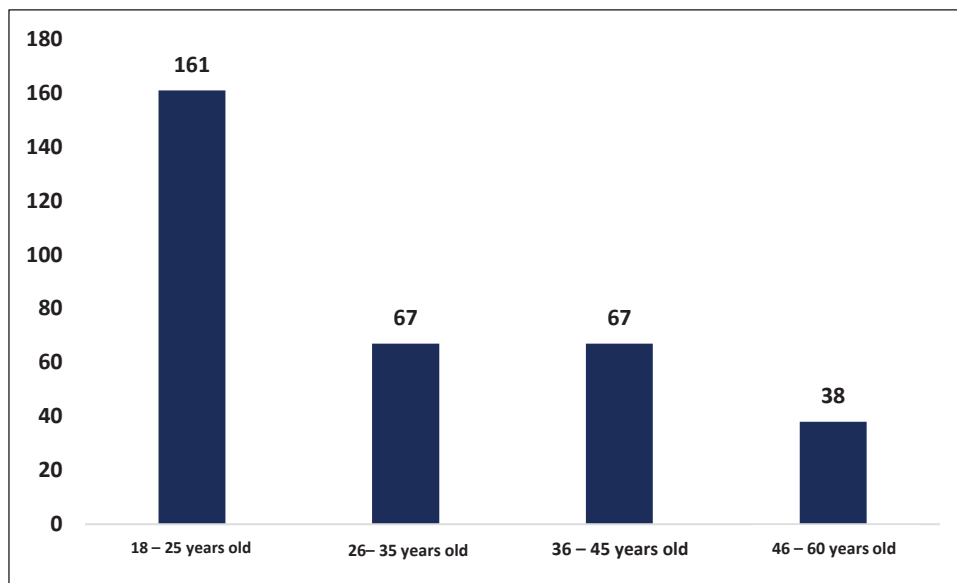
Note. Prepared by the authors.

Figure 3
Degree of experience

Note. Prepared by the authors.

Table 2 shows a moderate correlation between public policies against violence towards women and the services offered by the Instituto de Medicina Legal (IML), with a Spearman's Rho coefficient of 0.347 and a p-value less than 0.001.

A coefficient of 0.347 indicates a direct and moderate relationship between public policies and IML services. In practical terms, this suggests that as these policies are strengthened, the institute's services tend to improve. This moderate correlation implies that, although public policies have a positive impact, other factors also influence the quality of IML services. Therefore, it is essential not only to implement policies, but also to consider aspects such as staff training and resource allocation.

Table 1
Reliability of the variables "Políticas Públicas contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres" and "Servicios que brinda el Instituto de Medicina Legal"

Variables		Average	DE	Cronbach's alpha
Políticas Públicas contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres	scale	2.55	0.46	0.929
Servicios que brinda el Instituto de Medicina Legal		3.56	0.43	0.912

Note. Prepared by the authors.

Table 2
Relationship between Públicas contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres and los Servicios que brinda el Instituto de Medicina Legal

		Políticas Públicas contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres	Servicios que brinda el Instituto de Medicina Legal
Políticas Públicas contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres	Spearman's Rho	—	
	gl	—	
	p-value	—	
	N	—	
Servicios que brinda el Instituto de Medicina Legal	Spearman's Rho	0.347	—
	gl	332	—
	p-value	< .001	—
	N	334	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. Prepared by the authors.

On the other hand, the relationship between the guidelines for comprehensive care for victims of violence and the services provided by the Institute of Legal Medicine shows a Spearman's Rho coefficient of 0.116 and a p-value of 0.034.

Regarding these results, a coefficient of 0.116 indicates a direct but weak relationship between the comprehensive care guidelines and IML services. Although the correlation is weak, the p-value of 0.034 suggests that this relationship is statistically significant. In practical terms, this implies that the guidelines have some impact on the institute's services, although not very strong. Therefore, it is important to consider other factors that could be influencing the quality of services.

Likewise, the relationship between the implementation of the Sistema Nacional Especializado de Justicia and the services offered by the Instituto de Medicina Legal has a Spearman's Rho coefficient of 0.255 and a p-value less than 0.001.

A coefficient of 0.255 indicates a direct and moderate relationship between the implementation of the Sistema Nacional Especializado de Justicia and the IML's services. A p-value of less than 0.001 suggests that this relationship is statistically significant. In practical terms, this implies that the system's implementation has a positive impact on the institute's services. However, the moderate correlation indicates that other factors also influence the quality of services.

Additionally, the relationship between the allocation of resources for the reduction of gender violence and the services provided by the Instituto de Medicina Legal presents a Spearman's Rho coefficient of 0.308 and a p-value less than 0.001.

A coefficient of 0.308 indicates a direct and moderate relationship between resource allocation for gender-based violence reduction and IML services. A p-value of less than 0.001 suggests that this relationship is statistically significant. In practical terms, this implies that greater resource allocation is associated with improved services at the institute. However, the moderate correlation suggests that other factors also influence the quality of services, making it crucial to consider a comprehensive strategy that includes resource allocation,

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staff training, and the implementation of effective public policies.

DISCUSSION

In the overall analysis, a significant correlation was found between perceptions, with a Spearman's rho of 0.347 and a p-value less than 0.001. This indicates a positive relationship between perceptions of public policies and their perceived effectiveness.

Calsin's studies *et al.* (2022), Leal *et al.* (2022), and Delgado (2022) agree that, despite government efforts, violence rates have not decreased as expected. This aligns with the low percentage of approval of public policies found by Córdoba (2022) and Delgado (2022), with 8.6% and 56%, respectively. Vásquez (2022) supports the relationship found with a correlation coefficient of 0.231, highlighting a significant link. On the other hand, Rengifo *et al.* (2019) and Hamitouche (2020) emphasize the complexity of understanding and studying domestic and gender-based violence, which hinders effective interventions. Espejo (2022) and Cuevas (2022) show a direct and significant relationship, underlining the importance of effective policy implementation.

Regarding the first specific objective, the results show a Spearman's Rho of 0.116 and a p-value of 0.034, indicating a direct but weak link. Calsin's studies *et al.* (2022), Leal *et al.* (2022) and Delgado (2022) point out the inadequacy of government policies. Vásquez (2022) finds a significant relationship, while Cuevas (2022) shows a very strong correlation, with a Spearman's Rho of 0.728.

Regarding the second specific objective, the results indicate a Spearman's Rho of 0.255 and a p-value less than 0.001, suggesting a direct and moderate link. Calsin *et al.* (2022) and Leal *et al.* (2022) point out that policies have not been sufficient. Hamitouche (2020) and Espejo (2022) underline the relevance of national strategies and the positive impact of government policies.

For the third specific objective, the results show a Spearman's Rho of 0.308 and a p-value less than 0.001, indicating a positive relationship between investment in resources and the level of legal benefits. Calsin *et al.* (2022) and Leal *et al.* (2022) highlight deficiencies in existing policies. Cuevas (2022) and Espejo (2022) support the direct relationship between resource allocation and service quality.

These results can influence public policymaking by highlighting the need to improve the implementation and effectiveness of existing policies. It is suggested to strengthen the specialized justice system, increase the allocation of resources to improve the quality of services, and implement new prevention mechanisms.

The study's limitations include the cross-sectional nature of the design, the reliance on self-reported surveys, and limitations on generalizing the findings to other regions. Future studies recommend investigating the effectiveness of specific policy-based interventions and conducting longitudinal studies to assess changes over time.

To improve the effectiveness of the specialized judicial system, it is crucial to strengthen the coherence between the objectives and goals established in management instruments. This requires a continuous review of indicators and goals, ensuring that they are realistic and aligned with the various policies and strategies implemented. In practice, coordination workshops and periodic meetings between the various actors in the system, such as judges, prosecutors, police officers, and staff of the Instituto de Medicina Legal (IML), are needed to unify efforts and ensure that everyone is working toward common and achievable goals. Furthermore, it is essential to improve the perception and acceptance of public policies among both the public and the professionals involved, through awareness-raising campaigns and training programs that underscore the importance of these policies in protecting and supporting victims.

On the other hand, it is essential to increase investment and allocate resources to optimize the quality and accessibility of IML services. This includes not only increasing the budget to acquire modern equipment and hire more staff, but also improving working conditions and providing ongoing training for staff in gender-sensitive techniques. Furthermore, a regular evaluation and monitoring system

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must be implemented to measure the impact of IML policies and services, making necessary adjustments to ensure efficient and adaptive management. These coordinated efforts will ensure that the specialized justice system is capable of providing effective solutions that are sensitive to the needs of victims.

CONCLUSIONS

A direct and moderate relationship was found between perceptions of government policies and services provided by the Instituto de Medicina Legal (IML) in South Lima in 2021, with a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient of 0.347 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This statistically significant association supports the importance of public policies in the quality of legal services to affected users. This demonstrates that these policies have a tangible impact on the institute's ability to provide effective and specialized assistance, thus strengthening the justice system as a whole.

Although the relationship between the guidelines for comprehensive care for victims of violence and IML services is weak, with a Spearman's rho of 0.116, the p-value of 0.034 indicates a significant connection. This underscores the need for a specialized structure to improve the quality of legal services. Even in cases with less consistent relationships, proper implementation of the guidelines can positively influence the effectiveness of the services offered, directly benefiting those affected.

A Spearman's rho of 0.255 with a p-value less than 0.001 supports the hypothesis that the implementation of the specialized justice system is directly and moderately related to the services provided by the IML. This confirms the importance of adequate resource allocation to ensure quality services for affected individuals. The evidence suggests that an appropriate distribution of financial and human resources is essential to ensure that the IML can offer quality care, ensuring that victims receive the support and attention they need for their recovery and access to justice.

Finally, a direct and moderate relationship was found, with a Spearman's Rho of 0.308 and a p-value less than 0.001, confirming that adequate financial and human resources are essential to ensuring that victims receive quality services, thereby strengthening judicial effectiveness in responding to gender-based violence. Ensuring the availability of the necessary resources fosters a more effective judicial response, which not only addresses victims' immediate needs but also promotes a safer and more accessible environment for those seeking justice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthening public policies: Increase the allocation of resources, raise awareness among professional staff, and coordinate with all the institutions involved to improve the effectiveness of IML services.

- Specialized structure: Develop a specialized structure that will improve the quality of legal services, ensuring more sensitive and effective care for victims.

- Resource allocation: Prioritize investment in the specialized justice system, ensuring adequate distribution of financial and human resources to provide quality services.

- Training and protocols: Strengthen staff training and establish clear care protocols that transform the victims' experience, ensuring more sensitive and effective care.

- Continuous evaluation: Promote a culture of continuous evaluation that allows for adjustments to policies and practices, responding to the changing realities of users and promoting a more accessible and equitable justice system.

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Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

Author Contributions

Fabiola Kelly Sanchez Huanca (lead author): research, methodology, resources, software, writing (original draft, review, and editing).