

# Understanding violence against women irregular migrants who arrive in Spain in small boats

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## Abstract

African irregular migrants risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea in small boats hoping to reach Europe. Women irregular migrants (WIMs) are an especially vulnerable group that suffer from violence and sexual aggression, but little is known about their actual experiences. The objective of our study is to describe and understand the violence against WIMs who arrive in Spain in small boats. A qualitative study based on Gadamer's phenomenology was used. The data collection included twenty-six in-depth interviews with WIMs. Three main themes arose: "Poverty and discrimination push WIMs into migrating"; "WIMs as a paradigm of extreme vulnerability", and "WIMs in small boats should raise the alarm". WIMs who arrive to Europe in small boats have a history of violence, rape, prostitution, forced pregnancy, and human trafficking. Emergency care must include gynecological examinations and must make detecting sexual violence and human trafficking of WIMs part of their care protocols.

## Author keywords

Abuse

Public health

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