

Original Research

Assessment of domestic violence and its determinants among women- A questionnaire study

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ABSTRACT

Background: The present study was conducted to assess cases of domestic violence and its determinants in known population. **Materials & Methods:** The present study was conducted among 180 females. An interviewer-based semi structured questionnaire was prepared based on the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women. **Results:** Age difference between women and husband was 0-4 years in 68, 5-9 years in 92, >10 years in 20. Dowry was asked and given in 94, asked and not given in 40, not asked but given in 34 and neither asked not given in 12. Choice of husband by self in 36, parents in 84 and relatives in 60. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$). Physical violence was seen in 110. Emotional abuse in 34 and sexual abuse in 36 cases. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** Authors concluded that there was high number of domestic violence among women, hence effective steps should be taken to avoid such incidence.

Key words: Domestic violence, Dowry, Physical violence.

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence has been recognized since 1983 as a criminal offence under Indian Penal Code 498-A.¹ India passed Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 which defined "Domestic violence" as one which includes any act, omission or commission or conduct of actual abuse or the threat of abuse that is physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic. Harassment by way of unlawful dowry demands to the woman or her relatives would also be covered under this definition.² Physical abuse is the use of physical force against a person or the deprivation of a person of access to adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, rest, or subjecting a person to inhuman treatment. Sexual abuse refers to the forceful engagement of a person in a sexual contact or a sexual contact by a person aware of having sexually

transmitted disease with another person without given the person prior information of the infection.³ Economic abuse, involves threatened deprivation of financial resources or hindering the use of property in which a person has material interest or is entitled to by law. Emotional, verbal or psychological abuse is any conduct that makes another person feel constantly unhappy, miserable, humiliated, afraid, jittery or worthless.⁴ There are numerous health consequences of domestic violence particularly against women and children. Some are psychological or emotional in nature and may sometimes result in ill-health. For women, physical violence during pregnancy is associated with maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity.⁵ The present study was conducted to assess cases of domestic violence and its determinants in known population.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The present study was conducted in the department of Community medicine. It comprised of 180 females. The study was explained to all and their written consent was obtained. Ethical approval was taken. Demographic profile was recorded. An interviewer-based semi structured questionnaire was

prepared based on the WHO multi-country study on women’s health and domestic violence against women. The response was recorded. Result thus obtained were tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis. P value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

RESULTS

Table I Family related variables

Parameters	Number	P value
Age difference between women and husband		
0-4 years	68	0.02
5-9 years	92	
>10 years	20	
Dowry		
Asked and given	94	0.05
Asked and not given	40	
Not asked but given	34	
Neither asked nor given	12	
Choice of husband		
Self	36	0.05
Parents	84	
Relatives	60	

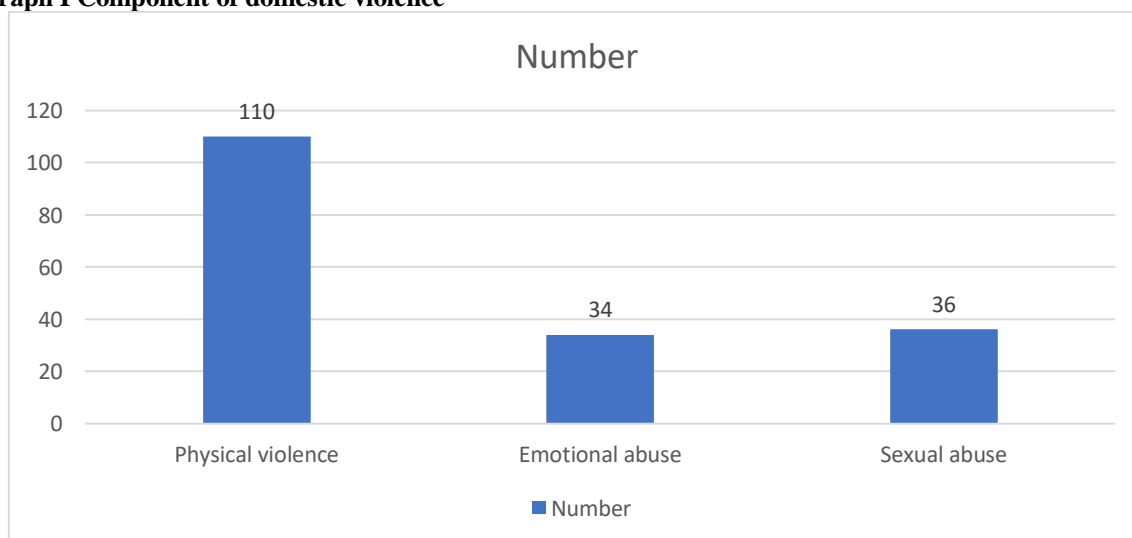
Table I shows that age difference between women and husband was 0-4 years in 68, 5-9 years in 92, >10 years in 20. Dowry was asked and given in 94, asked and not given in 40, not asked but given in 34 and neither asked not given in 12. Choice of husband by self in 36, parents in 84 and relatives in 60. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

Table II Component of domestic violence

Components	Number	P value
Physical violence	110	0.01
Emotional abuse	34	
Sexual abuse	36	

Table I, graph I shows that physical violence was seen in 110. Emotional abuse in 34 and sexual abuse in 36 cases. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

Graph I Component of domestic violence



DISCUSSION

Physical abuse is the use of physical force against a person or the deprivation of a person of access to adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, rest, or subjecting a person to inhuman treatment.⁶ Sexual abuse refers to the forceful engagement of a person in a sexual contact or a sexual contact by a person aware of having sexually transmitted disease with another person without given the person prior information of the infection.⁷ Economic abuse, involves threatened deprivation of financial resources or hindering the use of property in which a person has material interest or is entitled to by law.⁸ Emotional, verbal or psychological abuse is any conduct that makes another person feel constantly unhappy, miserable, humiliated, afraid, jittery or worthless.⁹ The present study was conducted to assess cases of domestic violence and its determinants in known population.

In present study, age difference between women and husband was 0-4 years in 68, 5-9 years in 92, >10 years in 20. Dowry was asked and given in 94, asked and not given in 40, not asked but given in 34 and neither asked not given in 12. Choice of husband by self in 36, parents in 84 and relatives in 60. Adjah et al¹⁰ found that of the 1524 ever married women in this study, 33.6 % had ever experienced domestic violence. The risk of ever experiencing domestic violence was 35 % for women who reside in urban areas. Risk of domestic violence was 41 % higher for women whose husbands ever experienced their father beating their mother. Women whose mother ever beat their father were three times more likely to experience domestic violence as compared to women whose mother did not beat their father. The risk of ever experiencing domestic violence was 48 % less likely for women whose husbands had higher than secondary education as compared to women whose husbands never had any formal education. Women whose husbands drink alcohol were 2.5 times more likely to experience domestic violence as compared to women whose husbands do not drink alcohol.

We found that physical violence was seen in 110. Emotional abuse in 34 and sexual abuse in 36 cases. Ram et al¹¹ estimated the prevalence of domestic violence and 3 of its components – emotional abuse, physical violence, and sexual violence among women in the age group of 15–49 years. Prevalence of all forms of domestic violence among women was 77.5%, and forty percent women were classified as having ever been subjected to severe domestic violence. Prevalence of physical violence was 65.8%, sexual abuse was 17.5%, and emotional abuse was 54.2%. Alcohol consumption by husband (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] 4.37; 1.35, 14.18), controlling behavior by family member (AOR 8.07; 2.47, 26.37), and woman's employment (AOR 4.33; 1.27, 14.77) were statistically significant determinants of domestic

violence. Three-fourth (73.1%) of the women felt that being subjected to domestic violence has affected their physical and mental health.

In a study by Kamat et al¹² women who were employed had experienced IPV significantly higher than homemakers. This evolves from the women's subordinate social status, and any transgression from the expected behavior in the form of excessive social involvement or any situation which endangers the male supremacy in the family is likely to invite violence.

CONCLUSION

Authors concluded that there was high number of domestic violence among women, hence effective steps should be taken to avoid such incidence.

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