

A Study of Domestic Violence in Working Women

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Abstract

Background: Violence against women is a major public health problem and a violation of human rights. It affects the life span from sex selective abortion of female fetuses to forced suicide and abuse and is evident, to some degree, in every society in the world.

Objective: To study domestic violence against working women.

Material and methods: An Institutional based cross sectional observational study was carried out in Chalmeda Anand Rao Institute of Medical Sciences and hospital for a period of one year. All professionals and working class women including doctors, nurses, administrative staff sweepers were included. Three hundred working women in Chalmeda Anand Rao institute of medical sciences, Karimnagar were taken as sample. The data was collected in a predesigned and pretested proforma.

Results: The prevalence of domestic violence was 15%. Psychological form of domestic violence was more common (44.44%), and most (55.6%) of women had domestic violence occasionally, in 82.2% women husband was perpetrator for violence and in 57.77% women's husband were intoxicated during the act of violence. Among the reasons for violence most common reason was not obeying or arguing back (35.55%) and least (8.88%) had this for refusing the sex. Domestic violence was more among sweepers 26.33% followed by administrative staff (10.66%), the difference was statistically significant. As socioeconomic status decreases domestic violence increases but it was not statistically significant.

Conclusion: Working women too suffers from domestic violence. Domestic violence was significantly associated with type of work but relation was not statistically with socioeconomic status.

Key words: Domestic violence, Physical, Psychological, Working women.

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between 29% and 62%^[4]. Other problems such as attitude of the society members, prejudice and non-recognition which the working women encounter with regard to their social status and role in the economic life adversely affect the utilization of their talents and work capabilities^[5]. This study was undertaken with the objective to assess the prevalence of domestic violence among the working women.

Introduction

Violence against women is a major public health problem and a violation of human rights. Violence by an intimate partner is one of the most common forms violence against women. A wide range of physical, mental and reproductive health problems can result from violence against women^[1]. It affects the life span from sex selective abortion of female fetuses to forced suicide and abuse and is evident, to some degree, in every society in the world.^[2]

World Health Organization has defined domestic violence as range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent woman by the current or former male partners.^[3] From the WHO multi country study on women's health and domestic violence reported life time prevalence of physical or sexual partner violence or both varied from 15% to 71%, with the majority

Materials and Methods

The present study, an institutional based cross sectional study was carried out in Chalmeda Anand Rao institute of medical sciences and hospital, A list of all working women in Chalmeda Anand Rao institute of medical sciences and hospital was obtained from the administrative department, total working women were 318. Eighteen women not responded/ cooperated for the study so excluded. Response rate was 94.34% hence sample size was taken as 300. Out of 300, 30 were doctors, 140 were nurses, 28 were from administrative staff (clerk, receptionist, computer operator) and 102 were sweepers. A predesigned, pretested and structured questionnaire was used for Interview.

Institutional Ethics committee permission was obtained. After taking informed verbal consent, Study subjects were interviewed alone with interviewer. The anonymity of the response was guaranteed. The operational definition of domestic violence adopted for

this study was maltreatment of the female by husband, parents or other family members including minor and major harassment. The females were asked about their demographic characteristics and reasons of the violence.

Statistical analysis: Collected data was analyzed using Open- EPI software. Percentages, chi- square test were applied wherever applicable.

Results

Out of three hundred study subjects 45(15%) of women had domestic violence in last six months. It was observed that most of the women 20(44.4%) had violence in psychological form (hurting the feelings of spouse through use of foul languages and abuses, humiliating them in all possible ways) followed by physical in 13(28.8%), out of 13 subjects most 8(61.54%) of the women reported slapping as the specific act of physical assault followed by fist blow 3(23.08%) and beating with a stick 2(15.8%). [Table 1]

It was observed that among 45 women, 25(55.6%) of women reported that they were exposed to domestic violence few times in the last year and 20(44.4%) women face frequently. In 37 (82.2%) women husband acted as perpetrator of violence and 26 women

(57.77%) reported that husband was intoxicated during the act of violence.[Table 2]

Table 3 shows reasons for domestic violence reported by the study subjects. Out of 45 study subjects most of the women 16(35.56%) had violence for not obeying/ arguing back to their husband/ elder, 11 (24.44%) of women had violence due to unemployment of their husband leading to frustration and then violence, 8(17.78%) women had violence because of insufficient dowry given by the parents at the time of marriage, not having a male child is also one of the reason for violence in 6 (13.3%) of women. Only 4(8.88%) women reported that violence was for refusing the sex.

Table 4 shows association of type work and domestic violence among study subjects. Domestic violence was more among sweepers 26.33% followed by administrative staff 10.66%. Domestic violence was lowest in doctors 2(6.66%). The difference was found to be statistically significant ($X^2 = 16.15$, d. f = 3, $p = 0.001$).

Domestic violence was more 27(24.54%) in the lower class and low in the upper class 2(6.66%). As socioeconomic status decreases domestic violence increases but the difference was not found to be statistically significant ($X^2 = 5.17$, d.f = 2, $p = 0.07$). [table 5]

Table 1: Distribution of study subjects as per type of domestic violence

Type of domestic violence	Number(n=45)	Percentage
Psychological	20	28.8
Physical	13	44.4
Both	12	26.6
Total	45	100

Table 2: Distribution of study subjects as per frequency of domestic violence

Domestic violence	Number	Percentage
Frequency of domestic violence		
Frequently	20	44.4
Occasionally	25	55.6
Perpetrator of the violence		
Husband	37	82.2
Mother in law	08	17.8
Husband intoxicated during act of violence		
Yes	26	57.77
No	19	42.23

Table 3: Distribution of study subjects as per reason of domestic violence

Reason for violence	Number	Percentage
Not obeying/arguing back	16	35.56%
Unemployment of perpetrator	11	24.44%
Insufficient dowry	08	17.78%
Not having a male child	6	13.33%
Refusing sex	4	8.88%

Table 4: Association of domestic violence and type of work of study subjects

Type of work	Domestic violence		Total
	Yes	No	
Doctor	2 (6.66%)	28 (93.33%)	30
Nurse	13(9.33%)	127(90.66%)	140
Administrative staff	03(10.66%)	25(89.33%)	28
Sweeper	27(26.33%)	75(73.66%)	102
Total	45	255	300

($X^2=16.15$, d.f=3,p=0.001 significant)

Table 5: Association of socioeconomic status and domestic violence

Socioeconomic class	Domestic violence		Total
	Yes	No	
Upper class	2(6.66%)	28(93.33%)	30
Middle class	16(10%)	144(90%)	160
Lower class	27(24.54%)	83(75.46%)	110
Total	45	255	300

($X^2=5.17$, d.f=2, p=0.07 not significant)

Upper class- upper (class I); Middle- Upper middle, Lower middle (class II and III); Lower- Upper lower and lower (class IV and V)

Discussion

In this study 15% of women had domestic violence in last six months. This was lower than the prevalence of 26% reported by Jeyaseelan L et al.^[9] who carried out a study in urban and urban slums of seven cities of India. Rocca H et al^[6] from Bangalore found 27% of study subjects reported domestic violence in last six months, Cocker et al^[7] from Texas found 24% of women were currently in a violent relationship with their partner. In this study most of the women 20(44.4%) had violence in psychological form (hurting the feelings of spouse through use of foul languages and abuses, humiliating them in all possible ways) followed by physical in 13(28.8%), out of 13 subjects most 8(61.54%) of the women reported slapping as the specific act of physical assault followed by fist blow in 3(23.08%) and beating with a stick in 2 (15.8%). Jain D et al^[10] in their study found that almost half the women had been slapped, hit, kicked or beaten by their husband at some time^[10].

In this study out of 45 women who had domestic violence, 25(55.6%) of women reported that they were exposed to domestic violence few times in the last year and 20(44.4%) women face the violence frequently. In 37 (82.2%) women husband acted as perpetrator of violence and 26 women (57.77%) reported that husband was intoxicated during the act of violence. Madhutandara S et al.^[3] from rural west Bengal found 72.73% women had physical assault by their husband, 63.64% reported perpetrators were not intoxicated during violence.

The reasons for violence found in this study were Not obeying/ arguing back to their husband/ elder, Unemployment of their husband, Insufficient dowry, not having a male child and for Refusing the sex, similar reason for violence was found in a study by

Madhutandara S et al^[3], Rocca H et al^[6] from Bangalore found women whose husband had more stable work situation were at decreased risk of domestic violence, and women whose families were asked to pay additional dowry after marriage had higher level of domestic violence.

In this study there was statistically significant difference of the association between type of work and domestic violence. Domestic violence was more among sweepers 26.33% followed by administrative staff 10.66%. It was lowest 2(6.6%) in doctors, reason for this might be their higher education and job. This indicates that higher education of women may play an important role in prevention of domestic violence. Chin Y M^[8] et al. found 27% of working women experienced physical violence whereas corresponding figure was 17 for non-working women.

In this study Domestic violence was more 24.54% in the lower class and low in the upper class 6.66%. As socioeconomic status decreases domestic violence increases but the difference was not found to be statistically significant. Madhutandara S et al.^[3] found higher domestic violence among females with per capita income >500 than female with per capita income < 500 .

Conclusion and Recommendations

The prevalence of domestic violence was 15%. Domestic violence was significantly associated with type of work but relation was not statistically significant with socioeconomic status. The authors felt that the domestic violence can be prevented by creating awareness about gender equality, Women's right, counseling of the couple and proper enforcement of the existing laws related to women's right is of the utmost important.

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