

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG FEMALE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS: A META-ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: To estimate the prevalence of domestic violence among married female healthcare providers within the Pakistani context.

DESIGN: A systematic review has been done.

PLACE AND DURATION: From January 1992 to December 2011 the international and national published literature on domestic violence analyzed and scrutinized.

METHODOLOGY: Used different electronic databases search engines (CINAHL, Medline, Pub Med, PsycInfo, and Global health), Ancestral, hand searching, and citation tracking. The searched result based on 250 published quantitative articles in English language published in scientific journals; finally 54 articles were selected to review.

RESULTS: Of the total 54 researched articles revealed that worldwide domestic violence prevalence is ranged of 10% - 69% however, in Pakistan it is 30% to 79%. Verbal violence is the most common type which further leads to other form of domestic violence such as emotional, physical, and sexual violence. Internationally, very limited literatures were available on domestic violence among female healthcare providers but, no literature was found in the Pakistani context.

CONCLUSION: Our literature review reveals that globally female are significantly experiencing in a large proportion with domestic violence and verbal violence in more common. Further research is also need in this regard especially on the ground of domestic violence among healthcare providers.

KEY WORDS: Domestic Violence, Female, Intimate Partner Violence, Married Female, Healthcare Providers

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence has been a global public health problem. Women across all ages, racial, ethnic, socio-economic, educational and religious groups are at risk of domestic violence.¹ The World Report on violence and health released by the WHO declared domestic violence as a major public health issue.² WHO defined domestic violence as an act of gender-related abuse likely to result in physical, sexual or mental suffering of women including threats of violence, coercive activities and deprivation of liberty either in public or private life. Many studies have shown that domestic violence is a pattern of verbal, physical and psychological abuse by a person with whom the victim has had an intimate relationship.³ Domestic violence is also known as "gender violence, interpersonal violence, and domestic abuse".⁵ The underlying cause for domestic violence is violence or inequality in the sharing of power between men and women.

In this article, the researchers aim to provide a critical theoretical, and empirical review of the relevant literature to establish the prevalence of domestic violence among married female healthcare providers including nurses and doctors and discusses different types of abuse, including verbal, physical, emotional/ psychological, and sexual.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design: A comprehensive review of relevant literature was carried out, the search was conducted using online research databases such as Pub Med, Science Direct, JSTOR, CINAHL, Medline, Global health, Mosby's Nursing Consult, Ancestral and hand searching. Online articles were searched by using specific keywords example domestic violence, female, intimate partner violence, married female, healthcare providers. Some material was manually search in related journals.

Literature reviewed done on domestic violence from Jan 1992 to Dec 2011 for the international and national published literature. The objective of the study was to estimate the prevalence of domestic violence among married female healthcare providers within the Pakistani context. The articles were selected according to an inclusion criteria that they should be firstly in English, they should be quantitative research published from Jan 1992 to Dec 2011. Those studies that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded.

In total 250 published articles on quantitative research were selected of these; 60 were duplicates, 80 did not meet the inclusion criteria in terms of relevancy to the topic, 56 were removed being part of previously published results, of the remaining 19 articles were critically analyzed these being weak methodologically were put aside. Finally 35 quantitative research based articles selected to use for this study.

RESULTS

The 35 published quantitative research articles demonstrated that globally the prevalence of all forms of abuse ranged from 10% to 40.1%, however in Pakistan it was higher ranging from 30% to 79%. Of all types of violence verbal violence was the most common type (22% to 40.1%) this is a precursor to other

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forms of violence, eventually leading to physical (16% to 70%), emotional (33.8% to 83.6%) and sexual violence (46.9% to 76%). In developed countries among female healthcare providers

domestic violence was reported to be ranging from 18% to 31% and around 39% in developing countries.

TABLE – I: PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

Study Author	City	Study Design	Sample	Results
Shaikh, M. A. H. (2003). ⁵	Rawalpindi and Islamabad	Cross sectional survey	216 Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Out of 193 pregnant women 24.9% reported increased abuse during pregnancy ❑ 46.9% engaged in nonconsensual sex
Shaikh, M. A., Shaikh, I. A., Kamal, A., & Masood, S. (2008). ²¹	Rawalpindi and Islamabad	Cross-sectional survey	209 Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ n=67 (13.6%) physically abused during the current pregnancy ❑ n=67, 32 (47.7%) most severe incidents of threats of abuse, including use of weapon ❑ 21 (31.3%) reported slapping, pushing with no injuries/lasting pain, 3 (4.5%) reported punching
Fikree, F. F. & Bhatti, L. I. (1999). ²²	Karachi	Cross-Sectional study	150 Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 34% physically abused ❑ 15% physically abused during pregnancy
Ali, T. S., Asad, N., Mogren, I., & Krantz, G. (2011). ²³	Karachi	Cross-Sectional community-based study	759 Married Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Prevalence of physical abuse past year (56.3%) and lifetime (57.6%) ❑ 53.4% Sexual abuse ❑ 54.5% Psychological abuse ❑ Violent incidents occurred on more than three occasions during the lifetime
Karmaliani, R., Irfan, F., Bann, C. M., McClure, E. M., Moss, N., Pasha, O., et al. (2008). ²⁴	Hyderabad	Population-based cohort study	1324 Pregnant Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 51% verbal, physical or sexual abuse ❑ 20% physical or sexual abuse ❑ 16% considered suicide as a response to the abuse
Fikree, F. F., Jafarey, S. N., Korejo, R., Khan, A., & Durocher, J. M. (2004). ²⁵	Karachi	Cross-Sectional survey based	100 Obstetricians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 70% of obstetricians reported that more than 30% of Pakistani women are victims of domestic violence ❑ n=62 obstetricians identified physically abused woman within the past year
Fikree, F. F., Razzak, J. A., & Durocher, J. (2005). ²⁶	Karachi	Cross-Sectional survey based	176 Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 49.4% physical abuse was slapping, 47.7% hitting or punching ❑ 46.0% of the subjects thought that husbands have a right to hit their wives

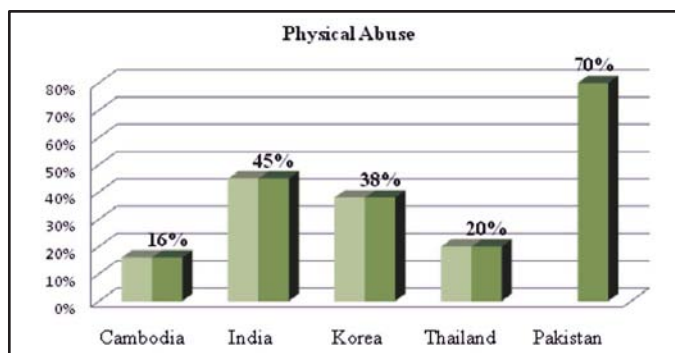


FIGURE-1: PHYSICAL ABUSE IN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

DISCUSSION

Internationally Prevalence of Domestic Violence

WHO (2002) reported violence against women to be a very common phenomena. Domestic violence has been seen to be one of the leading causes of injury to women in the form of domestic violence; attackers are likely to be someone they know rather than a stranger, it has been observed that around 2 in 3 female victims of violence knew the perpetrator domestic violence.²

The WHO study conducted on 48 population-based surveys 10%

to 69% of women from around the world have reported to have experienced physical abuse by their male partners.⁷ Numerous studies conducted in different countries have reported experiencing domestic violence, including Bangladesh (42%), Canada (17%), Egypt (34%), and Haiti (16.4%).⁸⁻¹¹ A research conducted in order to evaluate the prevalence, impact and the correlation of health with marital aggression and married discordant in couples in need of psychological treatment.¹² The study findings showed that 71% of the couples reported at least one act of marital discord during the past year. Although 86% of the aggression reported was exchanged between husbands and wives, the effects and injuries sustained due to this aggression differed between husbands and wives; however, the wives got more severe injuries as compared to husbands (e.g broken bones, broken teeth, or injury to sensory organs).¹²

Literature on domestic violence with respect to the two selected populations (nurses and doctors) was very limited. In USA 31% of the nurses reported experiencing domestic violence personally or their family members had experienced it.¹³ In another cross sectional study conducted on 1150 registered nurses and nurses 'aides at 11 urban hospitals in Mexico City it was reported that 18% of nurses and 13% of nurses' aides had at some point in their life experienced physical or sexual abuse or both at the hands of their partners.¹⁴ Another study conducted in South Africa by Christofides and Silo 212 nurses were interviewed to determine whether nurses' personal experiences of domestic violence affect their patient management of domestic violence victims and rape cases. This study revealed that around 39% nurses' experienced physical or emotional and 40.6% nurses reported that their family and friends were victims of abuse.¹⁵ A study conducted by Frank and Dingle on 2500 female physicians in USA which revealed that 8.8% of the female physicians ended up with depression or attempted suicide due to domestic violence.¹⁶

Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Pakistan

Domestic violence is endemic to Pakistan, this can be observed in the findings of the New York based Human Rights watch report (2006), one of the most detailed reports on domestic violence, which found that up to 90 percent of women in Pakistan were subjected to verbal/emotional, physical, or sexual abuse within their own homes.¹⁷

In Pakistan, domestic violence is reported to be in the range of 30% to 79%.^{18, 19} The annual Report of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) (2004) found the incidence of physical, verbal and sexual abuse against women in the home to be amongst the highest in the world. According to HRCP's figures, up to 80% of women in Pakistan experienced such abuse. Furthermore the HRCP (2004) identified that in the first half of 2004, around 5464 cases of domestic violence were pending in the civil courts of Lahore, this would be those cases that actually made it to court the number of unreported cases is substantial.²⁰ It has been observed that there are many female victims of domestic violence who are unable to take their case of court or inform their parents about their partner's behavior.²¹ In Pakistan as a Muslim society, people usually consider that Islam allow man to abuse his wife and have sexual intercourse

with her without consent. Studies on different forms of abuse faced by married women indicate a high incidence in Pakistan of domestic violence (Table-I).^{5,22-26}

Types of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is divided into three basic types, including verbal, physical, emotional/psychological and sexual abuse^{1,10,22,23,27} unfortunately, all of these forms of violence exist in Pakistan.

Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse is the most common type of domestic violence; it includes yelling, name calling, blaming, and humiliation.¹⁸ A study revealed that 22% of cases of verbal abuse were preconditions to more severe form of abuse such as physical and sexual.²⁸

Physical Abuse

Studies have reported that physical abuse is the most common type of abuse, physical abuse includes physical assault, beating, burning, acid throwing, honor killing, murder, rape, and kidnapping for the purpose of prostitution. Commonly observed injuries include: internal organ haemorrhage, third degree burns, head trauma, vaginal trauma, permanent disability, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, sore muscles, sprains, bruises, lacerations and fractures.^{22,23,25,29} The statistical data provided by the WHO (2002) and UNICEF (2000) from the Asian and Pacific countries identifies that in Cambodia 16% of the women (a nationally representative sample of women) reported being physically abused by a spouse; while 8% reported being injured.^{3,27} According to a survey conducted in India 1996 of 6902 men in the state of Uttar Pradesh, nearly 45% of married men acknowledged physically abusing their wife.³⁰ In Korea, 38% of the wives reported being physically abused by their spouse, based on a survey of a random sample of women; and in Thailand 20% of husbands (n= 619 husbands) acknowledged physically abusing their wives at least once in their marriage³¹ whereas in Pakistan 25% to 70% of women experiencing physical abuse at the hand of their intimate partners (Fig-1)²²

In the Pakistani context, a cross sectional study was conducted with the sample of 400 married women from a mixed ethnic group of five low socio economic communities it was found that the prevalence of verbal abuse by the husband was at 97.5% and by the in-laws was at 97% while in the case of physical abuse by the husband it was 80% and the in-laws 57.5%.²⁹

In the context of physical abuse in Pakistan, a study was conducted on the attitude of Pakistani men towards domestic violence it was reported that 49% of the men admitted to physically abusing their wives. This abuse included slapping, punching, and hitting. Also the researchers identified that 55% of men had gone through physical abuse in their childhood, 65% reported that they saw their mothers being abused by their fathers and 46% believed that being a man they had a right to beat women.²⁶ Physical abuse was the most common form of domestic violence observed and its resultant effects were grave in nature especially in the family. In Pakistan there are different types of physical abuse, such as burning, acid throwing and

honor killing.

Burning a woman is one of the most severe forms of physical abuse in Pakistan; after getting married many women get burnt in the kitchen. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) (2008), reports that the Islamabad-based Progressive Women's Association (PWA) believes that approximately 4,000 women are burnt every year, mostly the perpetrator is husbands or in-laws, and often the reason for burning are; punishment for minor offences or for failure to bring in a sufficient dowry. The PWA said it had collected details of nearly 8,000 such victims from March 1994 to March 2007, from only three hospitals in Rawalpindi.³²

For throwing Sulphuric acid is most commonly used as it is easily available and cheap, also it easily disfigures a woman face causing third degree burns and irreversible damage. HRCP 2010 reported that total 373 domestic violence cases were reported and out of them 16 incidents of acid attack.³³ The IRIN (2005) reported that more than 15 attacks were reported in the Bahawalpur district alone between January and June, 2004.³⁴ Similarly, UNICEF (2000) reported that in Bangladesh, there are an estimated more than 200 acid attacks each year.²⁷ Honor killings are another form of inter-family abuse and the victims are mostly women. In many countries in the world, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey, women are killed in the name of "honor" of the family.²⁷ The UNICEF, (2000) defines honor killing as an ancient practice in which men kill female relatives in the name of family "honor" for forced or suspected sexual activity outside marriage, alleged adultery, falling in love with a person of whom the family disapproves, or even when they have been victims of rape.²⁷ In Pakistan, due to under reporting, the exact figures for honor killings are hard to compile; however, according to IRIN (2005) the HRCP and the Nongovernmental organization (NGO) Madadgar stated that in 2001 at least 758 women were killed in the name of honor in Pakistan. In the provinces of Sindh and Punjab, the rate of honor killing was very high; 638 and 463 respectively. Women's rights groups have documented 410 incidents of killing for honor from January to September 2004.³⁴ UNICEF (2000) reported that in 1997; more than 300 women were victims of these "honor" crimes in just one province of Pakistan.²⁷

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Another type of domestic violence is emotional or psychological abuse; it gets etched in the mind of the victim which has long term effects in comparison to physical abuse isolating, intimidating and controlling behavior fall under emotional abuse. Abusers who utilize psychological abuse often use threats of physical violence.¹⁸ UNICEF (2000) reported that "emotional torture and living under terror is often more unbearable than physical brutality, with mental stress leading to high incidence of suicide and suicidal attempts" (p. 4).²⁷ Studies indicate that women who are emotionally/psychologically abused may suffer from mental health issues later on such as depression, fear, anxiety, low self-esteem, sexual dysfunction, stress disorder with dissociation, eating disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, classic post traumatic

syndrome disorder, flashbacks, self-harm, and even development of multiple personality disorders, eventually fatal instances of suicide or homicide are possible.³

Psychological abuse requires anxiety and depressive behavior to ensue to further the conflict with an intimate partner and or in-laws. A study conducted in three South African provinces it was revealed that 51.4% of women experienced emotional abuse.³⁵ However, in Pakistan 83.6% study participants reported having suffered from emotional abuse at some point of time in their life.²³

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as the unwilling participation of a woman in a degrading sexual act even when committed by a spouse or intimate partner. The UNICEF (2000) points out that in most countries sexual abuse and rape by an intimate partner are not considered as a crime.²⁷ Women in men societies do not consider nonconsensual sex as rape if they are married to, or cohabiting with, the perpetrator. Despite such women who's partner has attacked them physically or sexually being at a higher risk of serious injury or possible death. Some of the common results of abuse are gynaecological problems, post traumatic syndromes, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, unplanned pregnancy, miscarriage, maternal mortality and chronic pelvic pain. A study revealed that sexual abuse was found to at around 54.5%.²³ Other studies in the Pakistani context revealed that 46.9% to 79% of Pakistani men are involved in nonconsensual sex.^{5,22}

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is a global problem, it manifests itself irrespective of region, country, religion and customs, and sometimes it is socially accepted and therefore under reported. Domestic violence exists universally in the form of verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. An analysis of the literature revealed that domestic violence is common in Pakistan. Extensive literature review showed that very few studies have been done on working women however; literature is not available specifically on domestic violence among married female healthcare providers.

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