

CORRELATION PATTERN OF FACTORS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MARRIED WOMEN IN TEHRAN-IRAN

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the correlation pattern of factors related to domestic violence against married women in Tehran.

Methodology: This descriptive study was conducted on married women in Tehran City of Iran. Subjects were selected with convenience sampling. The data collection tool was a questionnaire. The sample consisted of 554 married women, aged 18 to 66 years. Description and analysis of the data were performed using SPSS 16. Pearson correlation test and regression analysis were performed. P value <0.05 was considered significant.

Results: Verbal violence (20.75%) was found to be the most common type of violence among married women followed by emotional violence (19.5%). Regarding the pattern of factors related to domestic violence, social characteristics had the highest direct effect on violence (0.288) and economic problems had the strongest overall effect (0.399) on violence.

Conclusion: Verbal violence was found to be the most common type of violence among married women and economic problems had the strongest overall effect on violence.

Key Words: Domestic Violence, Married women, Iran

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women or spouse abuse is a disturbing behavior that is carried out by a husband against a woman in a family environment, away from the eyes of the society, often secretly and leaves physical as well as psychological effects on the abused person and causes irreparable social consequences¹. Domestic violence against women doesn't belong to a specific geographic area or to a certain level of economics and well-being and can be detected in all societies and in all social classes². According to the statistics released by World Health Organization, out of every three women, one experiences sexual or physical violence by her partner. Violence is more common among regions in the South-east Asia³. Violence against women increases the possibility of depression in victims twice as much as other women, the possibility of getting injured as 42% and giving birth to underweight children as 16%. Violence

against women also has other effects including disability, suicide, murder, sexual abuse, pregnancy related side effects and chronic issues such as sexual dysfunction, headache, abdominal & pelvic pain, decreased self-esteem and decreased sense of health^{4,5}.

Previous studies showed a high rate of violence against women. Narimani et al⁶ reported the percentage of psychological violence, social violence and physical violence in families were 56, 30 and 29 respectively. The results of the study by Taher et al⁷ showed that the level of domestic violence was 88%, the level of physical violence was 25%, emotional violence was 89% and sexual violence was 39%. Domestic violence against women and reaction to it are according to the social and cultural norms and values of every society. Therefore, the type of interpretation and definition of domestic violence against women and its underlying factors can be different and dependent on the type of the culture

of the society. Since any type of planning to reduce violence and to enhance family health requires comprehensive information on the status of violence and its causes, we conducted this study to determine the correlation pattern of factors related to domestic violence against married women in Tehran-Iran.

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study was conducted on married women in Tehran. The sample size was estimated 554 using formula: $n = z^2 (1-a/2) \times pq/d^2$ formula, with a confidence level of 95%, $p = 0.1$ (domestic violence in married women)³ and $d = 0.025$.

Among the 22 districts of Tehran; 05 districts (north, south, center, east and west) were selected for study. After obtaining approval, patients were randomly recruited from those referred to Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences from from the selected 05 districts. Then, in each district's public places, married women over the age of 18 who were willing to participate in the study and with a marital life of at least a year were asked to fill the questionnaire. Data collection method was self-reporting and an interview was conducted with people who were illiterate or poorly educated or who could not fill in the questionnaire for any reason. In order to observe ethical considerations, individuals were assured of confidentiality.

Data questionnaire consisted of two sections; the first part included demographic characteristics (age, years of marital life, number of children, type of marriage, education, spouse's education, occupation, spouse's occupation and monthly income). The second part included a questionnaire for assessing types of and factors related to violence. It was having 112 questions (60 questions about related factors and 52 questions about violence) which was scored according to Likert scale ranging from very high =5, high =4, low =3, very low=2, and never =1. Validity and reliability of this tool

in the study by Mehri et al⁸ was confirmed with an alpha of 0.987 and ICC of 0.99 and the calculation of CVR =0.79, CVI =0.858. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe and analyze the data. Pearson correlation test and regression analysis were performed. $P < 0.05$ was considered significant.

RESULTS

In this research, 554 married women, aged 18 to 66 years were studied. Most of the participants in the study had 2 children (33.4%), had a diploma or higher education (43%) and were house wives (61.4%). The type of marriage was mostly with non-relative people and most people said that their families had a major role in the marriage. The education of the majority of participants' spouses was diploma and higher (42.3%) and most of them were self-employed (51.2%).

Results of this study indicated that the most common type of violence observed in women was verbal (20.75%) followed by emotional violence (19.5%) as shown in Table 1.

The results of investigation into the relationship between occupation and the level of violence showed that there was a significant difference between employed women and house wives regarding the experience of violence ($p = 0.0000$); the level of violence among employed women (10.43 ± 33.75) was higher than among unemployed women (7.99 ± 37.24). Also, in families with high incomes, the level of violence was lower and this difference was statistically significant ($p = 0.043$). The level of violence in families in which the education of the wife was higher than diploma was 29.05 ± 12.05 and in those in which the education of the wife was lower than diploma it was 32.39 ± 10.9 . This difference was statistically significant ($p = 0.027$). There was a significant difference between the level of violence in families in which the education of the husband was higher

Table 1: Frequency of domestic violence against Iranian women

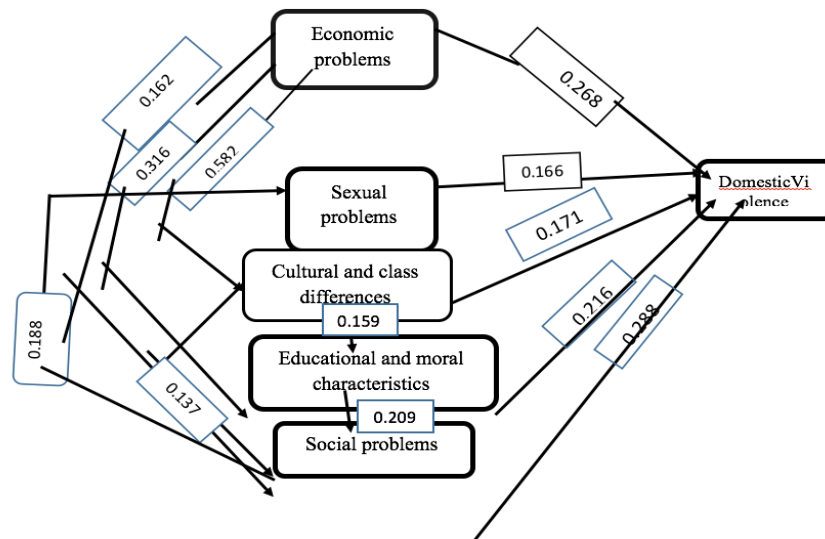
Type of Violence	Frequency	Percentage
Verbal	115	20.75
Physical	63	11.37
Sexual	88	15.88
Economic	101	18.24
Social	79	14.26
Emotional	108	19.50
Total	554	100

Table 2: Correlation matrix of violence components against Iranian women

Violence Components	Domestic Violence	Economic Problems	Sexual Problems	Cultural and Class Difference	Educational and Moral Characteristic	Social Problems
Domestic Violence	1					
Economic Problems	0.775**	1				
Sexual Problems	0.681**	0.589**	1			
Cultural and Class Differences	0.693**	0.582**	0.546**	1		
Educational and Moral Characteristics	0.870**	0.830**	0.668**	0.687**	1	
Social Problems	0.835**	0.752**	0.660**	0.615**	0.885**	1

Table 3: Effects of violence components and its related factors in violence against Iranian women

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects
Domestic Violence	Economic Problems	0.268	(0.2880×0.162) $(0.288 \times 0.209 \times 0.316)$ $(0.288 \times 0.209 \times 0.1590 \times 0.582)$	0.399
	Cultural and Class Differences	0.171	$(288/0 \times 137/0)$ $(0.288 \times 0.209 \times 0.159)$ $+ (0.216 \times 0.159)$	0.254
	Sexual Problems	0.166	-	0.166
	Educational and Moral Characteristics	0.216	0.288×0.209	0.276
	Social Problems	0.288	0.166×0.188	0.319

Figure 1: Relationship between violence components & its related factors in Iranian women

than diploma (29.33 ± 10.85) and in the those in which the husband's education was lower than diploma 33.89 ± 9.79 ($p = 0.017$). Regarding the relationship between the number of children and the degree of violence, the results of this study showed that the level of violence among those with 5 children and more was higher and the most type of violence among these people was emotional violence with a mean of 58.76 ± 3.88 .

The correlation pattern of factors related to domestic violence were identified in Table 2 and were found to be significantly correlated with violence. Regression analysis was used to investigate the violence and according to the results of regression analysis, all the relevant factors directly affected violence (Figure 1). Also, direct and indirect effects of constructs showed that the most direct effects were respectively related to social characteristics (0.288), economic problems (0.268), educational and moral characteristics (0.216), cultural and class differences (0.167) and sexual problems (0.166). Economic problems with a general effect of 0.399 had the strongest impact on violence (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that the most common type of violence against women in this research was verbal violence and the least type of violence was physical violence. These results were consistent with the results of the study done by Narimani et al⁹ in Ardebil and the study of Muthal-Rathore et al¹⁰ in India. However, our results were more than those obtained in previous studies in Nicaragua, Isfahan and Urmia¹¹⁻¹³. The reason behind statistical differences in various studies might be ethnic and cultural differences and also the methodology used to conduct the study. Derakhshanfar et al¹⁴ and Sinha et al¹⁵ reported that the most common types of domestic violence were verbal and psychological violence.

Regarding the relationship between the number of children and the level of violence, the results of this study showed that violence among those with 5 or more children was higher and the most common type of violence among these people was emotional violence. Generally, with an increase in the number of children violence also increases. This result was consistent with the study of Azamzadeh et al¹⁶. The lowest level of violence was also observed in women with fewer than two children, which could be due to the effect of family on economic welfare, particularly in today's societies, where children are consumers rather than producers and the increase in financial pressure on parents increases the probability of conflict between them.

There was a significant difference between employed women and housewives regarding the experience of violence. Emotional violence by women decreases with

the job security of the spouses. This reflects the direct effect of occupation on the economic condition of the family and also the fact that lack of financial stability leads to tension in the family. There was a significant relationship between the level of women's literacy and violence. In previous studies also, there was a significant and negative relationship between violence and the level of education in women^{9,11}. This shows the importance of education and literacy particularly in women. Also, there was a significant relationship between spouses' literacy level and violence. Therefore, an increase in spouses' level of literacy causes a reduction in violence, which may be due to the effective role of education in recognizing and respecting the wife's rights. This result is consistent with the results of other studies conducted in this regard^{9,12}. Similar findings were shown by Inanlou et al¹⁷ and Aghakhani et al¹⁸ that low education of each of the spouses, unemployment and economic problems have been accompanied by a higher percentage of abuse.

According to the results of this study, economic problems had the most indirect impact on violence, which is probably due to the effect of economic problems on other aspects of life. In previous studies conducted in Ardebil, Tehran, and Zanjan, a significant relationship was found between violence against women and family income level¹⁹⁻²¹. This finding was consistent with the study by Kelumgah et al²² and Bonzier et al²³. In their study, they showed that the higher income and wealth a man has, the less violence they use against their wives. However, this finding was inconsistent with the study of Ahmadi et al²⁴; they concluded that there is no relationship between the income of spouses and violence against women. This difference can be attributed to the lack of uniformity in the samples and the difference in women's state of employment. In fact, it can be claimed that providing the expenses and needs of life in the culture and society of Iran is the duty of men. Therefore, reducing individuals' income and its inefficiency in supplying family needs, will cause tensions among the members of the family, which will prepare the ground for violence.

Economic pressures and problems and not being able to provide basic needs of the family, employment, education, as well as the difficulty of personal responsibilities, make men lose their patience when facing the needs of women and children and of the people around them, thus getting angry, anxious, impatient and violent. Economic problems are not only an explanation for the phenomenon of violence, but they are also the answer to the occurrence of most of social injuries. In other words, economic problems, unemployment, low income and the economic crisis in the family; personal dissatisfaction and social stress caused by resource constraints create a sense of failure in the individual result-

ing in violence²⁵. According to the results, social issues (such as improper use of mobile phones, internet and satellite channels, spouse's addiction to the internet, usage of drug and alcohol, lack of interest in having a relationship with the spouse's family, etc.) have the most direct effect on the experience of violence by women. This cannot be denied, given the positive and pervasive role of the internet and virtual communications on improving economic, scientific, political, social and cultural affairs. However, an uncontrolled use of them can put the physical, social and psychological growth of human into danger and create feelings of desperation, alienation, loneliness, isolation from the family and many other mental and psychological issues in individuals²⁶.

LIMITATIONS

This study has some limitations including the refusal of some women to participate in the study, in most of cases it has been tried to get them to cooperate by providing explanations. This study was also conducted on women across the society; therefore, its results can be different from those studies done on women who were subjected to violence.

CONCLUSION

Verbal violence was found to be the most common type of violence among married women and economic problems had the strongest overall effect on violence. The level of education, age of married couples, the number of children and family income were the most important factors regarding domestic violence. Working on these factors can be effective in reducing violence against women and also in preventing its consequences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that a qualitative study be carried out on the husbands of those women who have been subjected to violence, in order to further investigate the causes and factors leading to domestic violence against women. Also, classes and meeting should be held for married men and those men who are about to get married, in order to inform them of the importance of this issue and of the consequences of domestic violence against women. People in the society and particularly health service authorities need to be informed of this issue which is a threat to the minds and bodies of individuals for improvement towards a healthier society.

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CONTRIBUTORS

MM conceived the idea, planned the study and drafted the manuscript. AR, AM, SK and NG helped acquisition of data, did statistical analysis, editing and final approval of manuscript. SM and MH did literature search, references correction, editing and critical revision of manuscript. All authors contributed significantly to the submitted manuscript.