

International Journal of Basic and Clinical Studies (IJBCS) 2014;3(2): 23-33 Gumus F et al.

Domestic Violence Against Women: Sample of a Different Ethnic Group

Funda Gumus¹ Nuran Elmaci²

Meliksah Ertem³

³ Prof. Dr. İzmir Public Health Institution, Dept of Education, İzmir, Turkey

Abstract

Objective: This study was planned in an attempt to determine the types of domestic violence experienced by married women from different ethnic groups and their views about violence

Method: The study was planned in a descriptive way (controlled cross-sectional). The study sample consisted of 360 women from 3 different ethnic groups, who were living in Hatay, were married, could be reached and accepted to participate in the study in 2007. Being prepared by researchers according to literature, the interview form was used as the data collection tool. We used the percentage, mean and chi-square test during the analyses. The data were evaluated in the confidence interval of 95%.

Findings: It was determined that 50.0% of women who participated in the study were in the age range of 30-49, they had similar educational and working status, women of Nusayri lived in nuclear families on a more significant level compared to other groups (p<0,001), 60.0% of the Turkish-Sunni women married at a young age and they had a statistically significant difference from other groups (p=0.026). Majority of women stated that they had been exposed to physical violence (65.1%), emotional/verbal violence (84.4%), economic violence (37.0%) and sexual violence (35.2%) for at least once throughout their life.

While majority of women who participated in the study specified the reason for violence as "Women's opposition" (41.1%), 61.9% of them stated that women had deserved a whacking in some cases.

Conclusion: Violence against women is a universal problem that is commonly encountered in all cultures and societies. Both the domestic violence against women and the types of violence are common in all three groups that were included in the study.

Keywords: Ethnic, woman, violence

Correspond A: fcamuz@hotmail.com 04122488037/3376

Introduction

Actions of violence against women are encountered mostly in the family. The person who realizes the action of violence is generally the man, who is

closest to woman (1). United Nations define the violence against women as the arbitrary obstruction of all kinds of behaviors, threats, pressures or freedoms that are conducted based on gender, cause physical, sexual and psychological damages and

¹ PhD. Dicle University, Ataturk School of Health, Diyarbakir, Turkey

² Prof.Dr. PhD. Dicle University, Medical Faculty, Dept of Public Health Diyarbakir, Turkey





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worries in women and could be encountered in both private and social life (2). In short, violence is defined as physical, sexual, psychological violence or a combination of all these (1).

Domestic violence is known to be an important health problem in the world and in Turkey⁽¹⁾. Domestic violence causes not only physical and mental problems in also individuals. but the loss productivity, reduce of life quality in individuals and families, disintegration of family, increase of treatment expenditures and impairment of family and social health^(3,4). Violence causes common and serious health problems for an important part of female population and it has direct and negative effects upon a number of important reproductive health problems regarding safe motherhood, family planning, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (5,6).

According to the data of WHO; the frequency for women to be exposed to physical violence throughout their life varies between 13–61% (7). According to the results of the study that was conducted in 48 countries including Turkey; the frequency for women to be exposed to physical violence by their husbands varies between 10–69% (8). On the other hand, limited studies in Turkey indicate the frequency of domestic violence as 34–97% (9-12).

Violence against women is a universal problem that is commonly encountered in all cultures and societies (7,13,14). Continuing for a lifetime, violence against women is basically caused by cultural models and especially the detrimental effects of certain traditional applications, and all intemperate movements associated with race, gender, language or religion make the low status, which is ascribed to women in family,

workplace, community and society, continuous (15,16).

Ethnicity signifies a social/cultural and sometimes a political formation, which separates itself from others and is considered "different" by others in terms of certain religious, spatial and/or cultural traits, possesses a complete identity and a distinctive process of acculturation, protects its identity as a group by performing an endogamy, and provides the sustainability of the group. In short, it involves the feeling of belonging to a cultural group and being aware of limits (17).

Ethnic group is a social group that has a common cultural tradition and history and life in a larger society. Members of an ethnic group differ from other members of their society in terms of some typical cultural traits. They may have a specific language, religion or other distinctive cultural traditions. And most importantly, members of an ethnic group regard themselves as a traditionally different social group and identity (18,19).

Biological, psychological, social and cultural factors play a determinative role in the origin of domestic violence at varying rates (20). The studies being conducted indicate that there is an increased violence to women in teenagers aged 18-30 due to a number of factors such as the lower socioeconomic level, violence witnessed during childhood, living in a city, the fact that women earn a greater income than men and they perceive violence only as physically, as well as unemployment, lack insurance, unintended health pregnancy, high number of children, watching violent films and TV series, living together with the family of the partner, having divorced or living separated from the husband, alcohol and substance abuse, stress and social isolation (11,21-31).



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The studies also suggest that ethnic origin, belief systems and spirituality affect the domestic violence and belief systems legitimize the violence, and different studies suggest that they are effective upon coping with and decreasing the domestic violence (32-36).

Violence against women is a universal problem that is commonly encountered in all cultures and societies in the world. Due to the limitation of studies investigating the relationship between the domestic violence and ethnic groups, this study was planned in an attempt to determine the types of domestic violence experienced by married women from different ethnic groups and their views about violence.

Method

This descriptive study was planned in an attempt to determine the types of domestic violence experienced by married women from different ethnic groups and their views about violence.

Target Population and Sample

Target population of the study consisted of married women living in Samandağ and Yayladağı districts of the province of Hatay between April-May 2007. The most important factors in determining these districts include the ability of the researcher to reach the sample easily, easy access to districts and homogeneous life of ethnic groups. Even though the largest population groups in Hatay are not known precisely, they are estimated as 400 thousand Nusayris, 86 thousand Turkish-Sunnis and 4 thousand Arabian Christians (17). Total population of Samandağ is 106.754 (district center 34.641, town and village population 72.113) (37). According to the municipality records, there are 140 Turkish-Sunni

married women in the Town of Yayladağı Kışlak. The researcher went from house to house and interviewed with women who accepted to participate in the study without using any sampling methods. 90 of the Turkish-Sunni women participated in the study voluntarily. Thus, an equal number of women from other groups was included in the sample by using the same method and totally 270 women (Nusayri=90, Turkish-Sunni=90, Arabian Orthodox=90) comprised the study sample.

Data Collection Forms

In the study, we used the interview form that was prepared by researchers according to literature. The form consisted of totally 53 questions as 15 questions involving the introductory information of women (such as age, educational status, occupation, marriage age, family type), 12 questions about the physical violence, 11 questions about the emotional/verbal violence, 3 questions about the economic violence, 4 questions about the sexual violence and 8 open-ended questions aimed at determining the perceptions of women regarding violence.

The researcher conducted a face-toface profound interview with women. Each woman was interviewed for 45-60 minutes.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using a package software (SPSS 10.0). We used the percentage, mean and chi-square test during the analyses. The data were evaluated in the confidence interval of 95%.

Ethical Aspects

Before starting the study, we obtained a written permission from the District Governorship. Public Health Advisory Committee of Dicle University Medical Faculty decided that no ethical



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permission was required. Before the personal interviews, each woman was explained about the mutual expectations and the objective of the study. Women were told that they were free to decide to participate or not to participate in the study as from the first stage and to leave the study at any point, which signified a clear commitment to the principle of autonomy.

Results

It was determined that 50.0% of women who participated in the study were

in the age range of 30-49, they had similar educational and working status, women of Nusayri lived in nuclear families on a more significant level compared to other groups (p<0.001), 60.0% of the Turkish-Sunni women married at a young age and they had a statistically significant difference from other groups (p=0.026). Investigating the domestic violence among women from different ethnic groups, this study presents some of the demographic features of women as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics

-	Nusayri	Turkish	Arabic	Tototal	p value
	(n=90)	Sunni (n=90)	Christian (n=90)	(n=270)	•
Age					
29 and under	21 (23.4)	19 (21.1)	17 (18.9)	57 (21.1)	
30-49	47 (52.2)	44 (48.9)	44 (48.9)	135 (50.0)	p=0.817
50 and over	22 (24.4)	27 (30.0)	29 (32.2)	78 (28.9)	
Education status					
Not literate	21 (23.4)	20 (22.2)	24 (26.7)	65 (24.1)	
Primary school graduate	45 (50.0)	52 (57.8)	38 (42.2)	135 (50.0)	
Secondary school graduate	8 (8.9)	6 (6.7)	9 (10.0)	23 (8.5)	p=0.406
High school graduate	13 (14.4)	8 (8.9)	10 (11.1)	31 (11.5)	
University / college graduate	3 (3.3)	4 (4.4)	9 (10.0)	16 (5.9)	
Age at first marriage					
18 and under	43 (47.8)	54 (60.0)	36 (40.0)	133 (49.3)	p=0.026
19 and over	47 (52.2)	36 (40.0)	54 (60.0)	137 (50.7)	-
Family Type					
Nuclear family	87 (96.7)	68 (75.6)	67 (74.4)	222 (82.5)	p<0.001
Extended family	3 (3.3)	22 (24.4)	23 (25.6)	48 (17.5)	•
Employment status					
Not working	80 (88.9)	81 (90.0)	76 (84.4)	237 (87.8)	
Working	10 (11.1)	9 (10.0)	14 (15.6)	33 (12.2)	p=0.484
Relationship with spouse status					
Have	24 (26.7)	27 (30.0)	21 (23.3)	72 (26.7)	p=0.600
Have not	66 (73.3)	63 (70.0)	69 (76.7)	198 (73.3)	•



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Majority of women stated that they had been exposed to physical violence (65.1%), emotional/verbal violence (84.4%), economic violence (37.0%) and sexual violence (35.2%) for at least once throughout their life (Table 2).

While majority of women who participated in the study specified the

reason for violence as "Women's opposition" (41.1%) (Table 3), 61.9% of them stated that women had deserved a whacking in some cases (Table 4). In addition to this, they also stated that banging women up was a "Very bad" thing (58.9%) (Table 5).

Tablo 2 Types of violence experienced women who exposed to violence

		Nusayri (n=90)	Turkish Sunni (n=90)	Arabic Christian (n=90)	Tototal (n=270)	p value
Physical violence						
•	Yes	60 (66.7)	59 (65.6)	57 (63.3)	176 (65.1)	p=0.892
	No	30 (33.3)	31 (34.4)	33 (37.7)	94 (34.9)	•
Emotional / verbal vi	olence					
	Var	77 (85.6)	75 (83.3)	76 (84.4)	228 (84.4)	p=0.919
	Yok	13 (14.4)	15 (16.7)	14 (15.6)	42 (15.6)	-
Economic violence						
	Yes	31 (34.4)	27 (30.0)	34 (37.8)	92 (37.1)	p=0.543
	No	59 (65.6)	63 (70.0)	56 (62.2)	178 (62.9)	•
Sexual violence		. ,	,	,	, ,	
	Yes	40 (44.4)	20 (22.2)	35 (38.9)	95 (35.2)	p<0.004
	No	50 (55.6)	70 (77.8)	55 (61.1)	175 (64.8)	•

Table 3 Causes of violence exposure by women

	Nusayri (n=90)	Turkish Sunni (n=90)	Arabic Christian (n=90)	Tototal (n=270)	p value
Spouses can not agree	9 (10)	7 (7.8)	2 (2.2)	18 (6.7)	p=0.09
Women to be poor	8 (8.9)	6 (6.7)	14 (15.6)	28 (10.4)	p=0.12
Women to be stubborn	49 (54.5)	52 (57.8)	10 (11.1)	111 (41.1)	p<0.001
Financial difficulties in the family is	8 (8.9)	4 (4.4)	15 (16.7)	27 (10.0)	p=0.02
The woman's husband was cheating on	3 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	22 (24.4)	25 (9.3)	p<0.001
If your husband's infidelity request	2 (2.2)	11 (12.2)	26 (28.9)	39 (14.4)	p<0.001
Woman's right to defend	3 (3.3)	5 (5.6)	0 (0.0)	8 (3.0)	p=0.08
I do not know	8 (8.9)	3 (3.3)	1 (1.1)	12 (4.4)	p=0.06
Unanswered	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)	p=0.09



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Tablo 4 Conditions that could be beaten by women

	Nusayri (n=90)	Turkish Sunni (n=90)	Arabic Christian (n=90)	Tototal (n=270)	p value
Does not deserve	34 (37.7)	31 (34.5)	38 (42.2)	103 (38.1)	p=0.559
When home neglect	6 (6.7)	4 (4.4)	5 (5.6)	15 (5.6)	p=0.809
If there against her husband *	32 (35.6)	48 (53.4)	33 (36.7)	113 (41.8)	p=0.026
If the woman cheated on her husband	12 (13.3)	2 (2.2)	10 (11.1)	24 (8.9)	p=0.214
Women debate is unfair or					
lying in the discussion	6 (6.7)	2 (2.2)	3 (3.3)	11 (4.1)	p=0.291
Unanswered	0 (0.0)	3 (3.3)	1 (1.1)	4 (1.5)	p=0.309

^{*(} refuse sex. interviews with people who did not want his wife)

Tablo 5 Views on violence who women exposed to violence

	Nusayri (n=90)	Turkish Sunni (n=90)	Arabic Christian (n=90)	Tototal (n=270)	p value
Terrible	38 (42.2)	67 (74.5)	54 (60.0)	159 (58.9)	p=0.0006
Shame and sin	9 (10.0)	2 (2.2)	4 (4.4)	15 (5.6)	p=0.637
Injustice	11 (12.2)	3 (3.3)	7 (7.8)	21 (7.8)	p=0.838
When women's rights required	16 (17.8)	8 (8.9)	14 (15.6)	38 (14.1)	p=0.203
Men's weakness	16 (17.8)	9 (10.0)	10 (11.1)	35 (12.9)	p=0.243
Unanswered	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	2 (0.7)	p=0.309

Discussion

A number of studies have determined that domestic violence is higher in African-Americans and Latinos than Non-Hispanic Whites. For instance, a well-known study whose data were collected in 1975 suggested that African-American women were exposed to violence by their husbands 4 times greater than White women⁽³⁶⁾.

In a study being performed on couples in the USA in 1999, it was suggested that women and men realizing their beliefs had experienced less domestic

violence, compared to women and men seldomly or never realizing their beliefs⁽³⁸⁾.

Another study suggested that belief systems were effective upon decreasing the psychosocial problems and alcohol or substance abuse, increasing the social support systems and social coherence, which indirectly contributed to the decrease of domestic violence. It is also suggested that it is very difficult for these belief systems to measure the effect of spirituality and culture upon violence due to the effect of social prejudices or social expectations, which makes it difficult to predict the accuracy of study results (39).



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Domestic violence is known to be a common problem in all communities of the world and while the implementers are generally men, victims are generally women. World Health Organization has accepted the domestic violence against women as a serious and primary health problem due to the serious damages brought in women's health.

In this study, it was determined that women were similar in terms of their introductory traits such as age, educational status, working condition, affinity with their husbands; however, the groups showed a difference in terms of marriage age and family type. It was also determined that the large part of women had married at a young age (younger than 18) and the Turkish-Sunni women had married at a younger age than other groups. The rate of early marriages in all three groups shows a similarity with the data of underdeveloped countries (2,40,41). Early marriage in women is thought to cause women to have a bad social condition, abstain from their husbands and be exposed to violence by them. Because the studies being conducted suggest that early marriages increase the domestic violence (21,22). While the extended family type was common among Turkish-Sunnis and Arabian-Christians, the nuclear family type was common among This difference Nusavris. could associated with the fact that Nusayris regard the nuclear family as a prerequisite of marriage.

As a result of the study, it was determined that 93% of women experienced any type of domestic violence, 65.1% were exposed to physical violence, 84.4% emotional/verbal violence, 37.1% economic violence and 35.2% sexual violence. Studies being conducted in Turkey notify the frequency of domestic violence as 34–97% (9-12). In the study of

Güler and colleagues 40.7% of women stated that they had been exposed to domestic violence (11) and in the study of Hotun and colleagues (2008) this rate was 28.8% for medical staff (6). Domestic violence against women was determined as 20.3-71,6% for physical violence and 53-89% for verbal violence (6-8,11,26). Similarly, as a result of a study on domestic violence that was conducted with 1178 women in the province of Ankara, 77.9% of women stated that they were exposed to any violence type in their lifetime. The most common violence type among participants in the economic violence at a rate of 60.4%. This respectively followed psychological violence (39.7%), sexual violence (31.3%) and finally the physical violence (29.9%) (42). According to the study conducted in the name of the Directorate General on the Status of Women (2009), the rate of women who have been exposed to domestic physical violence in any period of their life is 39.3% (42). As a result of their study, Altınay and Arat (2007) determined that one out of every three women was exposed to domestic violence against women. As a result of a recent field study being conducted in Turkey, it was determined that women who had been exposed to physical violence by their husbands for at least once "throughout their life" had a rate of 35% in the sample of Turkey and 40% in the sample of East (24). On the other hand, as a result of a cross-sectional study being conducted in Bolu, the explained prevalence of physical violence among houswives was 41.4%, emotional violence 25.9%, sexual violence 8.6%, any controlling behavior 77.6% and exposure to a physical violence in any period of their life 50.9% (9).

There are differences between the findings of studies regarding the prevalence of domestic violence. This is related with



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not only the violence level in the place where the study is conducted, but also with the definition of violence, method of study, technic of sampling, education and competence of interviewer and cultural factors (43). The results obtained from our study are a little higher than the results of literature, which is thought to be caused by personal and profound interviews in the study.

In our study, we determined no difference between groups in terms of emotional/verbal physical violence, violence and economic violence, and we observed that sexual violence significantly lower in the Turkish-Sunnis. Behaviors displaying the presence of sexual violence include extreme jealousy and suspiciousness, treating the other individual like a sexual object, using sexuality as a punishment method, deceiving, and forcing the other individual into sexual intercourse without her will. When the victim has no right of selection during violence (primarily physical violence) and shows a resistance especially in case of being forced into sexuality, this increases the dimensions of violence. Being forced into a sexual intercourse without will is experienced between couples and those who know one another at a higher rate. It is accepted that many women are exposed to sexual pressure in a period of their life. The society commonly believes that men have some needs, women are supposed to meet these needs and personal wills and thoughts of women are or should be of secondary importance, which is accepted to be the basis of sexual violence against women (44).

While majority of women who participated in the study specified the reason for violence as "Women's opposition", 61.9% of them stated that women had deserved a whacking in some

cases and they also stated that banging women up was a "Very bad" thing. Women's opposition actually signifies the limitation of personal rights to speak. Rather than opposing, women want to dwell upon their thoughts; however, this is considered an opposition in the maledominant society. The painful part is that women have accepted this judgement.

In the study of Senol and Yıldız (2013), 3.7% of women stated that men would occasionally commit violence against their wives, 15.4% stated that some behaviors of women led to violence, and 14% stated that violence against women could be acceptable in case of an incitement from women (45). According to the Turkish Population Health Study, 39% of women think that men will have the right to beat their wives when women burn the food, answerback their husbands, spend excessive amount of money, ignore the care of their children and reject to have a sexual intercourse. It could be asserted that study findigs show a parallelism with literature (46).

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of the study is that only volunteers participated in the study. The results can not be generalized as the number of samples is limited.

Conclusion

Violence against women is a universal problem that is commonly encountered in all cultures and societies. Domestic violence against women and the violence types are common in all three groups that were included in the study. It is suggested to repeat this study in larger samples and develop programs for the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of the domestic violence against women.



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