



PHYSICAL VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN FAMILY MEMBERS

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ABSTRACT

Violence is all kinds of attitudes and behaviors including possible movements resulting in sexual, physical, psychological or economic harm, threat or pressure or limitation of freedom. On the other hand, violence against women means all kinds of attitudes and behaviors mentioned above, discrimination of women just because of gender or discrimination based on the only gender which affects only women and causes the violation of women's human rights. Within the scope of our study; female cases, suffered from physical abuse by their spouse and applied to Çukurova University Faculty of Medicine Department of Forensic Medicine with the purpose of forensic report regulation, were included and domestic violence questionnaire, consisting of 27 main, 11 sub-questions, was applied prospectively. 120 cases participated in the questionnaire were evaluated and among these cases; 53 cases (44.2%) were in the age range of 20-30 years, 40 cases (33.3%) were primary school graduates. 84 cases (70.0%) did not have a job. 97 cases (80.8%) had children and children of 90 cases also witnessed (92.7%) physical violence, partners of 35 cases (29.1%) were primary school graduates, 44 cases (36.6%) had an income in the range of 0 - 750 TL. 108 cases had an increased physical violence frequency (90.0%), partners of 62 cases were using alcohol or drugs (%51.6) and 50 of them (80.6%) had increased frequency of violence after taking alcohol or drugs. 48 cases (40.0%) had sexual violence after physical violence, 16 cases were taking psychological treatment (13.3%), and 51 cases (42.5%) were thinking to commit suicide due to physical violence.

The fact that two of the five females in Turkey are experiencing physical violence led us to do this work. Our aim in this study is to show sociodemographic characteristics of violent-victim women, abuser and reveal women's point of view to violence.

Key words: violence, domestic, woman, physical.

Introduction

Violence is all kinds of attitudes and behaviors including possible movements resulting in sexual, physical, psychological or economic harm, threat or pressure or limitation of freedom. On the other hand, violence against women means all kinds of attitudes and behaviors mentioned above, discrimination of women just because of gender or discrimination based on the only gender which affects only women and causes the violation of women's human rights.¹ Violence means to pursue superiority. Powerfulness in the power struggle is the face of the power relationship in the background. People are crushed with exposure to violence via movements like pushing, slapping what we call simple and using various tools and ways. Breaking the identity consciousness of the victim is possible by transforming the violence into the form of supervision. Sometimes it can happen by torture, sometimes by polluting, by behaving like goods, by destroying the other.² The fact that this concept, which is as old as the history of humankind, was not studied until today and the fact that it is very new to be in the media; increase the importance of the situation.

A physically strong man appears to have the intention of resorting to violence against a weaker woman and controlling, punishing, intimidating, showing power and putting pressure at the same time. Types of domestic violence against women can be listed as follows:

1. Neglect (Insufficient physical and emotional interest),
2. Emotional - psychological and verbal violence (not understanding, not seeing love, humiliation, contempt, threat, name calling, insulting, blaming the partner for everything, extreme jealousy, intimidation, shaming, isolation, controlling what the partner does and where the partner goes, stalking ...),
3. Physical violence (hitting, punching, kicking, burning, strangulation, pushing, slapping, bruising, use of weapons, coercing partner into substance abuse, refusing medical care and/or controlling medication...),
4. Economic violence (taking the money of the working woman, using her economically, inflicting physical harm or injury that would prevent the person from attending work, harassing partner at their workplace, controlling financial assets and effectively putting partner on an allowance, damaging a partner's credit score ...)
5. Sexual violence (incest, force rape, prostitution, forcing a partner to have sex with other people (human trafficking), pursuing sexual activity when the victim is not fully conscious or is afraid to say no, hurting partner physically during sex, coercing partner to have sex without protection / sabotaging birth control ...)
6. Technological violence (Hacking into a partner's email and personal accounts, using tracking devices in a partner's cell phone to monitor their location, phone calls and messages, monitoring interactions via social media, demanding to know partner's passwords...)
7. Violence by immigration status (Destroying immigration papers, restricting partner from learning English, threatening to hurt partner's family in their home country, threatening to have partner deported...)³⁻⁶

It is known that domestic violence has been transferred from generation to generation and not only violence victims, but also witnesses of violence, especially children, have been adversely affected in every way. Studies showed that exposure/ witnessing domestic violence in childhood caused more violence in the future in their own family.^{7,8} Violence exposure/ witnessing in childhood has been reported to cause psychiatric and physical morbidity.^{9,10}

For centuries, the violence of women in the world, especially in our country, has been regarded as normal and perceived because of the idea that women should be regarded as the property of marriage within the family of marriage institutions. Despite the legislative arrangements nowadays, the rate of women's violence is still very high. The percentage of physical violence against women in our country is 38% in the urban area and 43% in the rural area.¹¹ The fact that two of the five females in Turkey have experienced physical violence and the idea among the population that this topic should stay within the

family led us to do this work. Our aim in this study is to show sociodemographic characteristics of violent-victim women and violence practitioner and reveal women's point of view to violence. According to the TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) results of 2016; 75.3% of males and 66.2% of females reacted by raising their voices to their mates when there was a disagreement between the spouses. 55.1% of males and 64.2% of females were silent in case of conflict with their wives. In the case of disagreement with the spouse, 3.6% of the men and 2.4% of the women practiced physical violence against their spouses.¹²

Material/Method and Results

Within the scope of our study; female cases, suffered from physical abuse by their spouse and applied to Çukurova University Department of Forensic Medicine between the March 2015 and August 2016 with the purpose of forensic report regulation, were included and domestic violence questionnaire, consisting of 27 leading and 11 sub-questions, was applied prospectively. 120 cases participated in the survey were evaluated, the following findings were obtained.

When the age distributions of 120 patients who applied due to domestic violence were examined; 53 cases (44.2%) were in the age range of 21-30 years (Table 1). The youngest patient who applied was 17 years old, the oldest case was 64 years old.

Table 1. Age Distribution of Violence Victims

Age	n	%
0 – 20	12	10.0
21 – 30	53	44.2
31 – 40	40	33.3
Older than 40	15	12.5

40 cases (33.3%) were primary school graduates, partners of 35 cases (29.1%) were also primary school graduates (Table 2).

Table 2. Violence Victims and Abusers' Education Status

Education Status	Violence victim (n/%)	Abuser (n/%)
Illiterate	4 (%3.3)	3 (%2.5)
Primary education	40 (%33.3)	35 (%29.2)
Secondary education	24 (%20.0)	26 (%21.7)
High school	35 (%29.2)	34 (%28.3)
University and higher	17 (%14.2)	22 (%18.3)

44 cases (36.6%) were in the range of 0 - 750 TL (total family income) (Table 3).

Table 3. Economic Status of Violence Victims

Income	n	%
0 – 750 TL	44	36.7
750 – 1500 TL	31	25.8
1500 – 2000 TL	17	14.2
Over 2000 TL	28	23.3

While more of the violence victims were found to be more married; there was common marriage, post-divorce spousal violence or violence by the father only in seven cases.

84 cases (70.0%) did not work in an income-earning job and partner of 36 cases (30.0%) did not work in an income-earning job. When occupations are evaluated; although victims of violence are more likely to be housewives, women from every profession group can suffer abuse. It was also observed that violence practitioner could even belong to different professions and even at higher levels in academic life.

48 cases (40.0%) were married under the age of 20, 61 cases (50.8%) were married by their families without knowing their partners. 91 cases (75.8%) were exposed to violence during the first year after marriage and 108 cases (90.0%) reported that violence increased even more during their marriage. It has been observed that violence in the form of insults, swearing, slapping, pushing in the first years of marriage, which is reported to increase the violence, even more, then returned to massive forms such as punches and kicks and also injuring with penetrating instruments and firearms.

97 cases (80.8%) had children and children of 90 (92.7%) cases were physical witnesses of violence. All of the examples indicated that they did not apply abuse to their children.

Of the 84 cases (70.0%), none of them asked for help from any person or institution before. 19 cases (15.8%) were applied to the police, and 17 cases (14.2%) were applied to the court previously. The family of 98 cases (81.7%) also knew about this domestic violence, and even family member of 90 cases (75.0%) were found to be at the side of the victim during the application.

In response to how the family reacted, the number of cases indicating that they were receiving reactions such as ‘‘You can come only from the house as a dead person’’, ‘‘Do not destroy your family’’, ‘‘Patience for your children’’ was 72 (%60.0). All cases indicate that you do not deserve physical violence in any way and it was seen that spouses received answers such as ‘nothing, jealousy, alcohol/drug substance, material distress, Bride-to-mother relations’.

Of the 62 cases (51.6%) the spouse used alcohol or drugs, and 50 of them (80.6%) increased the frequency of violence after taking alcohol or drugs; 48 cases (40%) had sexual violence after physical violence. 16 cases (13.3%) reported that they were receiving psychological treatment, spouse of 11 cases were receiving psychological treatment (%9.2), and 51 cases (42.5%) reported that they were thinking of suicide due to physical violence.

For questions about severity and frequency of physical violence; it was seen that these were answers such as violent - very violent and once a week (Table 4).

Table 4. Severity and frequency of physical violence

Severity of violence	n/%	Frequency of violence	n/%
Mild	7 (%5.8)	Everyday	15 (%12.5)
Moderate	10 (%8.3)	Once a week	44 (%36.7)
Violent	53 (%44.2)	Once a month / once a year	39 (%32.5)
Severe violence	50 (%41.7)	First time	22 (%18.3)

Discussion

It is known that domestic violence is usually applied to women and children. Disproportionate power balance, continuing male-dominated lifestyle is thought to be the reasons for this violence.¹³ Although it is known that the present data of domestic violence is the visible part of the iceberg, it has been thought possible to reach the nearest results by the questionnaire application method. However, it has been

noted that interviews conducted within a confidentiality environment in an appropriate and supportive environment are the most successful method of obtaining stories of domestic violence.¹⁴

While there are many studies on the cause of violence and many etiological factors such as adverse living conditions, lack of possibilities, biological and psychological features are considered as reasons; the topic which is the most discussed and consensus on is 'violence is a learned behavior like all behaviors'.

In our study; although it is seen that women who are subjected to violence are mostly in the range of 21-30 years, violence victim and abuser are mostly primary school graduates, economic incomes are low, and intermittent violence is exposed in a chronic process as once a week or once a month, every age group, every education and economic level, every frequency and severity of cases can be seen. Our findings were consistent with the literature.¹⁵⁻¹⁷ Women with lower levels of education all over the world are reported to be more exposed to violence. It is stated in the literature that violence-victim women have the low level education and socioeconomic level, that they do not work in any income-generating groups and similarly spouses with low level of education, socioeconomic status, and low income also apply more violence.¹⁸ Findings in our study were found to be consistent with the literature. For this reason; education, socioeconomic level, and income level are directly related to self-confidence and self-esteem, rational decision-making and awareness of new options. But at the same time, the fact that women with every level of education and income are subjected to violence is a critical point that should not be missed. In recent years, domestic violence has been practiced against men in practice. However, this is usually the case in which a violent man is injured in the event of an incident, which is considered to be an application for use in a case against him. Domestic violence against male family members is usually encountered in the geriatric age group and care patients.

It is also stated that alcohol and drug use can cause violence and increase the severity of this violence. Kyriacou et al., noted that the most common reason for domestic violence is alcohol use.^{19,20} In our study, 62 examples (51.6%) were using alcohol or drugs, and 50 cases (80.6%) were found to have increased frequency of violence after taking alcohol or drugs. This was also thought to be related to alcohol and drug use indirectly affecting the level of income, substance abuse and other disturbances associated with an increased level of consciousness after substance abuse. When the other negative conditions are ignored; In the case of physical abuse after alcohol intake, the dose relation is undoubtedly essential. This also needs to be questioned in studies.

Although violence victims are usually given analgesic or anxiolytic drugs, these medications also reduce wakefulness, making it more difficult for a person to protect himself or to become more vulnerable to violence.²¹ Violence victims should be treated more seriously and meticulously by the physicians; necessary psychiatric referrals and examinations should be provided, not only because of physical injuries but also because of the high rates of suicide, drug and alcohol addiction in these cases. It is a known fact by everyone that violence is a chain and it will grow-up unless torn apart and reaching severe consequences at last to the death. In our study, it was seen that 40% of physical violence was followed by sexual violence immediately; it was seen that physical abuse, which was less frequent or less severe after marriage, increased and caused psychological treatment and also could cause suicide because of not being enough. The fact that children also witness physical violence in 92.7% of our cases with children; also showed us that violence practitioner did not know that they also applied violence against their children and caused double-violence.

Although our knowledge about violence against women in our country is increasing day by day, the preventability of this situation is still a very serious question. It is obvious that violence can reach very serious dimensions if measures are not taken when it is generally irreversible and is thought to be applied from the strong side against weak one. Introducing sociodemographic criteria and risk groups is expected to shed light on the prevention of violence.

In all countries, violence against women creates long-term effects not only on women, but on their families and societies. The house is often the most dangerous place for women, and most of them live in everyday violence. Domestic violence is now banned in 125 countries, but 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not a crime. The systematic use of sexual violence is now a deliberate tactic that defines war. Violent women are three times more likely to live with HIV. It is estimated that more than 130 million girls and women alive today have undergone the Female Genital Mutilation, which is two million girls each year, under the risk of mutilation. Women and girls are subjected to force marriage and sexual abuse by relatives. Violence against women controls women over their bodies, sexuality and their lives. Violence against women is not only an important cause of death, illness and disability but also an obstacle to progress towards broad development goals by limiting women's choices and access to education, monetization, or participation in political and public life.^{22,23}

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