

Association between domestic violence against women and self-esteem

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is the most common type of violence against women with the most social, psychological and economic consequences. Domestic violence leads to the collapse of marital life. On the other hand, women's self-esteem is one of the most important factors in the sustainability of marital life. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between domestic violence, its related factors and women's self-esteem. The present study was a cross-sectional descriptive-analytic study that was conducted among 473 women using married women living in the city based on Cochran's formula and using a simple sampling method. The data collection tool was a self-esteem and domestic violence questionnaire whose validity and reliability were calculated. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient by SPSS software. Findings showed that the highest prevalence was related to psychological violence. There were economic, sexual and physical violence in the next category. There was a significant relationship between mental violence and self-esteem. There was no significant relationship between other types of violence and self-esteem. Also, there was a significant relationship between the factors affecting domestic violence and self-esteem. The present study confirms the relationship between domestic violence against women and self-esteem and points to ways to address violence, especially psychological violence.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Self-esteem, Psychological violence

Introduction

Violence against women is a public health problem for women. Which, is a serious threat to the health and rights of women in the world ^[1, 2]. Violence against women has been considered from various views including social, political, cultural and health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been reported the prevalence of sexual violence by partner in the various countries was from 15 to 71% per year ^[2].

According to the national study in the United States, about 25%

of women have experienced domestic violence during their lives. Also, in Iran 60% of women have experienced at least one type of domestic violence during their lifetime ^[3, 4].

The worst adverse effect of domestic violence against women is death and the first consequence of violence against women is physical harm ^[5]. This situation leading to abortions, physical, psychological and social activities problems ^[6].

The experience of domestic violence with the psychological health of the family have inverse association. The adverse effect of violence on a psychological health of woman is greater than that's effect on her body, and finally destroys both her health and self-esteem. Self-esteem is an important dimension of mental health and personality balance. Also, it is a psychological phenomenon that has a definite effect on human emotional and cognitive functions ^[7].

Self-esteem acts as a key factor in the emotional and social adjustment of individuals, and acts like an immune system that provides the necessary strength and capacity for one's life. Low self-esteem lowers individual flexibility versus problems. Self-esteem is one of the most important psychosocial moderators,

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which is determined based on the fields of family relationships, social interactions, and general self-esteem, and is important in these items, due to individual growth. Low self-esteem disturbs individual's balance and dynamism, and affects negatively on the efficiency of learning and creativity. The need for self-esteem is one of the psychological and natural needs of man [7, 8].

Women do not feel good about themselves and their social and family roles with domestic violence, as well as low self-esteem. so, their self-esteem, decision-making power, initiative, mental health and mental health decrease [9].

Therefore, considering that self-esteem is one of the most important factors affecting mental health, it seems that research on this subject is a necessary fundamental for promoting mental health in society. Due to several reasons health care providers including midwives should address all related women's issue including reproductive, physical and psychological well-being. Therefore, the high prevalence of domestic violence against women caused to disturbance on mental health and self-esteem. However, previous studies indicated that the relationship between these two variables, domestic violence and self-esteem in women in reproductive age, had not been observed and the current study aimed to investigate the relationship between the self-esteem of women in reproductive age and domestic violence occurred.

Methods

The present study was an interventional pre-post-test study with two intervention and control groups. The participants included women aged 15-45 years with domestic violence and low self-esteem referring to comprehensive health centers in Gachsaran city. The current study was approved at the Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences in Ahwaz. Written consent was obtained from all participants. Women who scored 54 and higher in this questionnaire were selected and given a Rosenberg self-esteem questionnaire. Forty women with the less than 15 score were enrolled in the study.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is designed to measure self-esteem, which is one of the most usage tools in this field with high reliability and validity, and consists of 10 terms, that are five positive ones (items 1 to 5) and five others are negative (items 6 to 10).

The method of scoring this scale is as follows: questions 1 to 5, completely oppose = zero, oppose = 1, agree = 2, and totally agree with a score of 3. Also, in questions 6 to 10, completely agree = zero, agree = one, oppose = 2, and I completely disagree with a score of 3.

Scores of this scale are arranged from 0 to 30 and the score of 30 is the highest possible score. Scores above 25 means high self-esteem. Scores ranging from 15 to 25 are representing moderate self-esteem and scores below 15 are indicating lower self-esteem.

Rajabi and Bahlol (2007) reported that the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were 0.84 and 72.0, respectively. And, explained that the reliability and validity of

the questionnaire scale can be used for clinical activities and other researches.

Women's Domestic Violence Questionnaire was developed by Agakhani et al. (2013). The questionnaire contains 30 questions about the items related to violence, 27 questions with a Likert spectrum including completely agree (score 5) to completely disagree (score 1). Also, contain 5 dimensions of psychological, sexual, economic, physical violence. And, 6 questions is related to threats.

A score of over 54 is the indices of domestic violence. Types of domestic violence and the division of questions include:

Psychological-Verbal Violence: Questions 1-9;

Sexual Violence: Questions 10 to 15;

Economic Violence: Questions 16 to 21;

Violence: Physical: Questions 22 to 27.

The scientific credibility of the questionnaire was determined using formal and content validity. To evaluate the content, 10 members of the faculty members of Urmia University of Medical Sciences were given and after receiving comments, necessary corrections were made and its reliability was determined by calculating the coefficient of internal consistency, which was reported as 0.72 Cronbach alpha.

Aghakhani et al. reported the reliability of this tool about 0.88.

Data analysis was performed with using SPSS software and statistical analysis including descriptive statistics

In the descriptive part, the mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage of frequency, and in the statistics section that were used to compare the level of self-esteem in the pre/post intervention group. If the data was normal, a paired t-test and repeated measures variance analysis test were used. The significance level is considered to be less than 0.05.

Results

Table 1 shows the general characteristics of participants. In total, 473 women were enrolled in the study during the study duration. The mean age of the subjects was 32.11 ± 6.36 years and the mean of their marriage age was 23.21 ± 4.25 years.

In terms of education's level, the percent of women in levels of middle school was higher than other levels. Their husband's education levels was almost diploma. The additional information are present in table 1.

Table 2 shows Frequency of respondents' answers to items of self-esteem questionnaire.

According to the type of domestic violence and the reluctance of individuals to report it, it can be estimated that low estimation of violence indicate actual violence at a moderate level, as well as a moderate estimate of domestic violence, indicating a high level of violence. The sequential rates of violence was psychological violence, economic violence, sexual violence and physical violence. The results of Pearson correlation showed a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and psychological violence as well as between self-esteem and total violence, but there was no significant

relationship between self-esteem and sexual, physical and economic violence. (Table 3-5)

Discussion

Although the issue of violence against women has widespread dimensions in all countries of the world, the exact figures are not available. Women themselves are also involved in this statistical problem because they are willing to put up with such a problem for years, but do not dare to talk to anyone about it. Therefore, the actual rate of violence seems to be higher than the figures reported in this study. In this research, the most common violence against women in the target group was related to psychological violence and the lowest level of physical violence.

In the present study, there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological violence. Also, among the factors influencing domestic violence, the high age differences between husband and wife, husband's income, forced marriage, experience of male violence, and the husband's addiction to drugs was related to women's self-esteem. Self-esteem leads to the promotion of the status of women in society and self-esteem in them. Hence, the analysis of factors that can affect women's self-esteem is one of the important strategies in identifying and resolving issues affecting it.

The findings of this study were consistent with the study of Derakhshanfar et al., Narimani et al. and Sinha et al.^[10-12]. In these studies, the most common type of violence was psychological violence. In fact, women are more exposed to mental stress in different areas. Women are more likely to be subject to verbal violence because of being involved in all aspects of life, which is the worst act of violence on their self-esteem. In the research of Maleki et al., The smallest experience of domestic violence was in the field of direct physical violence and most cases in the field of physical violence^[13]. This indirect and emotional factor indicates a decrease in direct physical damage and a kind of change in the subculture of violence and it reduces self-esteem in women.

In the study of Zink et al., The most common type of violence was psychological violence that is consistent with the findings of this research^[14].

Also, the findings of the study by Razzaghi et al and Keyvan Ara et al showed the lowest level of physical violence among all types of violence, which is consistent with the results of this research^[15, 16].

Physical violence is the most prominent type of violence against women in the world. It can be said that this kind of behavior is more abusive than other forms of violence, and physical harassment is more apparent in judicial authorities, and judicial rules are clear in this regard. Most men regard physical harassment against women as inappropriate, and women are less likely to express physical violence. Most men appear to be emotionally and psychologically violent, wanted or unwittingly. Previous studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between the age difference between husband and

wife and domestic violence. These results were consistent with the findings of Mohseni et al^[17]. The researchers also argued that age differences between husband and wife would increase domestic violence against women if they had more than 15 years old difference of age with each other. In justifying the role of age difference in domestic violence, the increase in age differences between husband and wife leads to a lack of mutual understanding, inconsistency and behavioral changes that overcomes the stability of marital life and results in the loss of self-esteem in women.

The results of our study showed that there is a significant relationship between husband's income and domestic violence against women.

Klumegah et al also showed that the higher income of men is associated with the more violence of them with their women^[18], while Ahmadi et al, in their study, concluded that there was no relationship between increased husband's income and violence against women^[19].

The reason for the difference in the results is different samples of the studies. In societies that the husband is responsible for spending the family, the tensions among the members of the family increase as the violence against women increases as a result of the husband's income reduction.

The results of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between compulsion in marriage and violence against women. Klumegah et al have achieved the same result. One of the reasons for such an association is the emergence of forced marital psychiatric disorders. There is also a significant relationship between drug addiction and domestic violence against women. Haskell et al also confirmed this finding. Drug and alcohol addiction lead to undermining the control of behavior and speech and leading to psychological violence against women^[20].

In the present study, there was a significant relationship between male violence and domestic violence against women. Previous studies also found this finding. In justifying this, it can be said that the experience of violence leads to the learning of violence and provides backgrounds for psychological problems.

Conclusion

The present study confirms the relationship between domestic violence against women and self-esteem, especially psychological violence. Implement the interventions are essential to improve the psychological health of women and achieve their maximum efficiency.

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Table 1. General characteristics of participants

Variable	Number	Percent	X ²	
Occupation	Not employed	36	7.60	
	Labor	136	28.80	
	Teacher	18	3.80	
	Farmer	9	1.90	
	Employee	95	20.10	52.83**
	Retired	6	1.30	
	Self-employment	172	36.40	
	Physician	1	0.20	
	Primary school	33	7.00	
	Middle school	104	22.00	
Education of womn	Diploma	173	36.60	89.63**
	Associated degree	46	9.70	
	License and above	117	24.70	
	Primary school	16	3.40	
Education of men	Middle school	68	14.40	24.89**
	Diploma	181	38.30	
	Associated degree	75	15.90	
	License and above	133	28.10	
Number of boy child	None	144	30.40	59.68**
	One	233	49.30	
	Two	75	15.90	
	Three	18	3.80	
	Four	1	0.20	
Number of girl child	Five	2	0.40	36.78**
	None	166	35.10	
	One	224	47.40	
	Two	67	14.20	
	Three	13	2.70	
Type of housing	Four	3	0.60	59.37***
	Five	0	0.00	
	Proprietary	206	43.60	
	Leased	224	47.40	
Wife has own income	Living with parents	41	8.70	45.65**
	Organizational	2	0.40	
Husband has own income	Yes	50	10.60	96.45*
	No	423	89.40	
Marriage number of wife	Yes	207	43.80	41.28*
	No	266	56.20	
	First	454	96.00	
Marriage number of Husband	Second	18	3.80	12.98*
	Third	1	0.20	
	First	440	93.00	
Drug addiction of husband	Second	30	6.30	36.89**
	Third	2	0.40	
Drug addiction of wife	Yes	37	7.80	96.35*
	No	436	92.20	
Violence in early dating	Yes	3	0.60	45.78*
	No	470	99.40	

Forced marriage with husband	Yes	31	6.60	56.96*
	No	442	93.40	
Hate of husband	Yes	44	9.30	56.82**
	No	429	90.70	
Smoking of husband	Yes	119	25.20	27.63*
	No	353	74.60	
Existence of violence by others	Yes	49	10.40	35.56*
	No	424	89.60	

Table 2. Frequency of respondents' answers to items of self-esteem questionnaire

Questions	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean ±SD
	Number	percent	Number	percent	Number	percent	Number	Percent	
1 On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	58	12.3	256	54.1	147	31.1	12	2.5	1.76±0.69
2 At times I think I am no good at all.	85	18.0	214	45.2	130	27.5	44	9.3	1.28±0.86
3 I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	68	14.4	310	65.5	95	20.0	0	00.0	1.94±0.58
4 I am able to do things as well as most other people.	70	14.8	281	59.4	117	24.7	5	1.1	1.87±0.65
5 I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	44	9.3	252	53.3	164	34.7	13	2.7	1.30±0.67
6 I certainly feel useless at times.	26	5.5	154	32.6	240	50.7	53	11.2	1.67±0.74
7 I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	62	13.1	286	60.5	118	24.9	7	1.5	1.85±0.64
8 I wish I could have more respect for myself.	13	2.7	163	34.5	262	55.4	35	7.4	1.67±0.65
9 All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	112	23.7	203	42.9	122	25.8	36	7.6	1.17±0.67
10 I take a positive attitude toward myself.	49	10.4	275	58.1	143	30.2	6	1.3	1.77±0.63

Table 3. The frequency of domestic violence against women

Variable	Never		Sometimes		Often		Usually		Always		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Psychological violence	90	19	295	62.3	54	11.41	16	11.4	18	3.8		
Physical violence	344	72.72	81	17.12	32	6.76	10	2.11	16	3.38	473	100
Sexual violence	333	70.40	64	13.53	30	6.34	19	4.01	19	4.01		
Economical violence	329	69.55	92	19.45	28	5.91	12	2.53	12	2.53		

Table 4. The coefficients of the regression model of factors related to domestic violence against women

Variable	B	SE	β	t	P-value
Age gap	0.176	0.128	0.091	0.302	0.023
Educational level of husband	0.039	0.074	0.039	0.0623	0.196
Occupation of husband	0.098	0.365	0.043	0.631	0.391
Income of husband	0.085	0.039	0.074	2.956	0.003
Marriage by force	0.623	0.326	0.206	1.865	0.005
Addiction to drug of husband	1.985	0.532	0.365	2.897	0.004
Husband's history of violence	0.667	0.554	0.822	2.587	0.001

Table 5. Pearson correlation coefficient between violence against women and factors associated with self-esteem

Variable	Self esteem	
	r	P
Psychological violence	0.123	0.037
Physical violence	0.38	0.231
Sexual violence	0.057	0.635
Economical violence	0.089	0.269
Total violence	0.197	0.024
Age gap	0.153	0.049
Educational level of husband	0.063	0.365
Occupation of husband	0.085	0.754
Income of husband	0.167	0.041
Marriage by force	0.139	0.028
Addiction to drug of husband	0.175	0.035
Husband's history of violence	0.124	0.014