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A cross sectional study to find the magnitude of physical violence among married females

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Abstract

Background: The United Nations Declaration on the elimination of 'Violence Against Women (VAW)', General Assembly in 1993 defined VAW as-"Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women including threat of such act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life". Physical abuse such as slapping, beating, arm twisting, stabbing, strangling, burning, choking, kicking, threats with an object or weapon, and murder & also the traditional practices like female genital mutilation etc.

Aim and Objective: To find the magnitude of physical violence among the married females.

Methodology: A cross sectional study was carried out in field practice area under PHC. Thus total 776 married females were selected by systematic random sampling. Written informed consent was taken from the participants. A pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire was used and all the confidentiality was maintained. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS 21 software.

Results: Majority of respondents (79.12%) were threatened to hurt by their family members. That 64.94% of the respondents had history of slapping or things thrown at them in past. Rest of the respondents did not give such history.

Discussion: A study by Marine Chitashvili (Georgia-2010) *et al.* Showed that 3.8% of women said that their partners threatened to hurt her or someone she cares about. A study by Chakwana (Malawi 2004) showed that the most common forms of spousal violence are slapping and arm twisting (16 percent).

Conclusion: Physical violence ranged from moderate to severe violence; slapping, thrown something and Kicking/hit/bit was the most common type of physical violence encountered among women by their male partner. There is a need to create awareness about the adverse consequences of partner abuse through gender advocacy and formal and/or informal education, employing information education and communication was crucial.

Keywords: Physical violence, married females, hitting, kicking

Introduction

The United Nations Declaration on the elimination of 'Violence Against Women (VAW)', General Assembly in 1993 defined VAW as-"Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women including threat of such act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life" [1].

Physical abuse such as slapping, beating, arm twisting, stabbing, strangling, burning, choking, kicking, threats with an object or weapon, and murder & also the traditional practices like female genital mutilation etc. [2].

In all, 34 per cent of ever married women in Maharashtra experienced physical or sexual violence [3]. A few studies reveal high physical abuse of Indian women ranging from 18 to 70% [4]. However, the magnitude, extent & burden of the problem in the country have not been accounted well, as the reporting of the problem is still inadequate.

Aim and Objective

To find the magnitude of physical violence among the married females.

Methodology

A cross sectional study was carried out in field practice area under PHC. Thus total 776 married females were selected by systematic random sampling.

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House to house visit was done for interview. Houses were selected by systematic random sampling and if in a house there was more than one married female then study case was selected by simple random sampling. Written informed consent was taken from the participants. A predesigned and pretested questionnaire was used and all the confidentiality was maintained. Face to face personal interview was carried out. Women who reported that their husbands/partners have ever perpetrated at least one of these acts were reported to have experienced physical violence. Data was collected and compiled in Microsoft excel and Statistical analysis was done using SPSS 21 software.

Results

Average age of the respondents was 28.13 ±11.68 years, range 18 to 56 years. Overall 96% respondents were literate, whereas literacy rate in rural population in parent district was 67.8%. Majority number of respondents were housewives i.e. 58.37%.

Table 1: Respondents Receiving Threats to Hurt

Threatened to hurt	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	614	79.12%
No	162	20.87%
Total	776	100%

Majority of respondents (79.12%) were threatened to hurt by their family members.

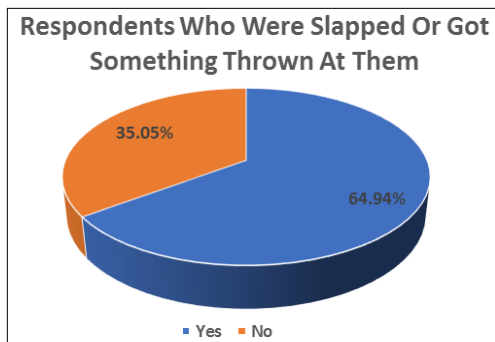


Fig 1: Respondents Who Were Slapped or Got Something Thrown at Them

Table 2: Respondents Who Were Pushed, Shoved or Whose Hairs were pulled

Pushed, shoved or pulled hair	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	382	49.22%
No	394	50.77%
Total	776	100%

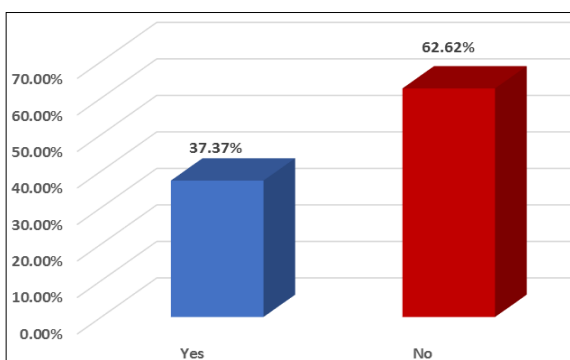


Fig 2: Respondents Who Were Hit with Fist or Something Else

Table 3: Respondents Getting Kicked or Dragged or Beaten

Kicked or dragged or beaten	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	277	35.69%
No	499	64.30%
Total	776	100%

Majority respondents 64.30% were not kicked or dragged or beaten by the family members while 35.69% of the respondents faced such violence.

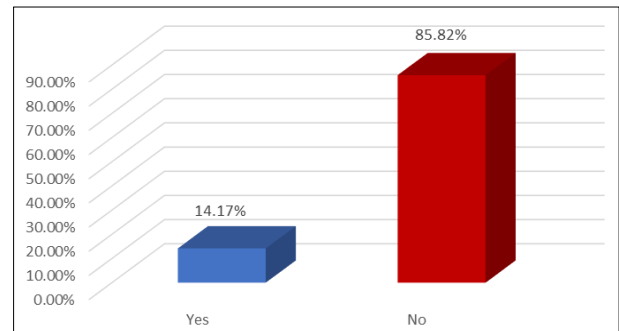


Fig 3: Respondents Who Got Slapped or Hit While Pregnant

Out of total majority i.e. 85.82% (666) did not have history of such physical violence during compromised state of pregnancy; 14.17% had such history.

Table 4: Respondents Who Got Kicked or Punched In Abdomen during Pregnancy

Kicked or punched in pregnancy	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	11.46%
No	687	88.53%
Total	776	100%

All respondents 100% sustained one or the other type of injury due to domestic violence.

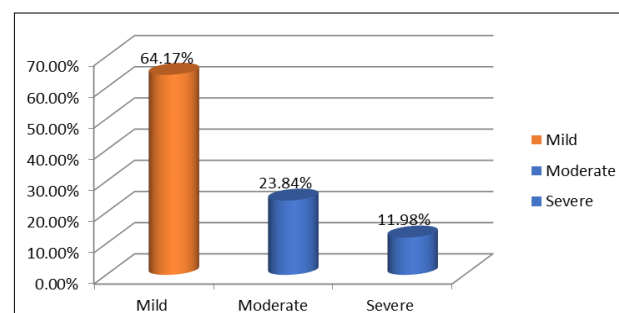


Fig 4: Type of Injury Sustained Due To Domestic Violence

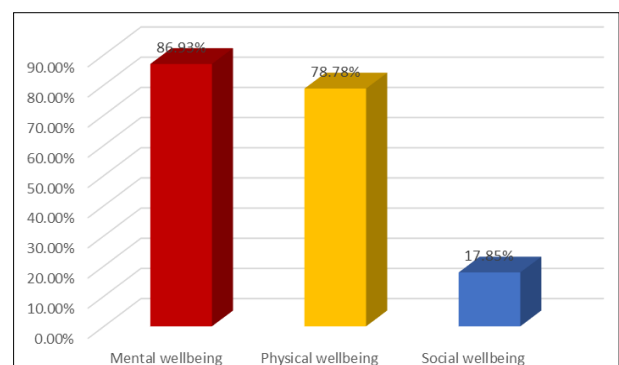


Fig 5: Respondents According to Type of Wellbeing Affected (Multiple Response)

Table 5: Education of Respondents and Physical Violence

Education / physical violence	Violence present	Violence absent	Total
Illiterate	16 (53.33%)	14 (46.66%)	30 (100%)
Primary	76 (60.8%)	49 (39.2%)	125 (100%)
Secondary	147 (62.82%)	87 (37.18%)	234 (100%)
Higher secondary	92 (69.17%)	41 (30.83%)	133 (100%)
Graduate	173 (68.11%)	81 (31.89%)	254 (100%)
Total	504	272	776

($X^2= 5.346$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$) Not Significant

Discussion

A study by Marine Chitashvili *et al.* [5] showed that 3.8% of women said that their partners threatened to hurt her or someone she cares about and 6.8% had reported slapping or hurt by having something thrown at her whereas present study showed 79.12% of physical violence and 64.94% had history of slapping or things thrown at them. A study by Chakwana *et al.* [6] showed that the most common forms of spousal violence are slapping and arm twisting (16 percent). 49.22% respondents were Pushed, Shoved or Whose Hairs were Pulled, Chakwana *et al.* [6] showed that 37% had same experience. In present study 37.37% had history of getting hit by fist or something else and a study by Yugantar *et al.* [7] showed that among 1250 respondents 14% experienced violence the form of throwing objects or beating with cane or burning with rod. Semahegn *et al.* [10] showed 58.4% of physical violence and 375(55.0%) reported being pushed, shaved, thrown something at her, 320(46.9%) reported being punched, hit with fist, twist her arm that could hurt her, 202(29.6%) reported being slapped, kick, dragged or beaten, 38(5.6%) reported being attacked with knife, gun and 31(4.5%) reported being ever scalded or burnt purposefully by their husband.

35.69% of study respondents were kicked or dragged or beaten. Reports from the states indicated that about 58 per cent respondents from Maharashtra, 52 per cent from Gujrat, 62 per cent each from Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh and 59 per cent from Chhattisgarh were victims of these forms of physical violence. Comparison of urban-rural areas disclosed that the extent of beating, slapping, pushing and kicking was more in rural areas as compared with urban areas [7]. 14.17% got slapped or hit during pregnancy. Marine Chitashvili *et al.* [5] showed that 2.7% women experienced the same. In present study 11.46% were punched or kicked in abdomen. Marine Chitashvili *et al.* [5] study showed 71.1% of respondents who have experienced physical violence while they were pregnant. Present study shows that majority of respondents (64.17%) have sustained mild type of injury while 23.84% had moderate and only 11.98% said to have severe type of injury. WHO [8] report stated that 44% reported injuries to the eyes and ears, 19% suffered fractures, and 9% suffered broken teeth as a result of physical violence by a partner. In both sites in Bangladesh and in Peru province, at least 50% of ever-injured women reported that they had "lost consciousness" because of a violent incident.

Almost all respondents (99.61%) had reported to have affected their wellbeing by domestic violence. The commonest effect was on mental health followed by physical and least by emotional in 86.93%, 78.78%, and 17.85% percent respondents respectively. The results of the WHO [8] Study strongly support other research which has found strong associations between violence and both physical and mental symptoms of ill-health.

Association between education of respondent and physical violence had no significant association ($p>0.005$), same result was seen by Marine Chitashvili *et al.* [5] study by Fehese *et al.* [9] showed that increase in education decreased risk of violence. Study by Khadilkar H *et al.* [11] also showed that 57.71% experienced physical violence. Also the study revealed that education and occupation of couple plays an important role in domestic violence.

Conclusion

Encouraging the victims of physical violence for reporting to legal bodies and specification of the areas in which majority cases of violence occurs (abusive environment) and provide security and implementing the existing legal punishment by raising the awareness about the prevalence and consequent intimate partner violence on the women and their children. Further analytic studies are needed to explore the relationship between violence and different religions, health-seeking behavior of victims of violence, attitude of men on violence of female partner and other types of violence against women.

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