

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Occurrence of Domestic Violence among Women and its Impact on Oral Health in Jodhpur City

¹Preksha Pawa, ²Susan Thomas, ³Rushabh Dagli, ⁴Jitendra Solanki, ⁵Geetika Arora, ⁶Bharath Garla

ABSTRACT

Background: This study had a two objectives to determine the prevalence of domestic violence and to know the impact of the same on the oral health.

Materials and methods: An observational cross-sectional study was done in Jodhpur, Rajasthan; among 150 married women of 18 to 60 years of age using a predesigned pretested proforma from 18th January 2014 to 27th February 2014. Pretested semistructured open-ended questionnaire used for collecting the data from the study subjects. Pearson's Chi-square test and p-value were used to calculated the occurrence and impact of domestic violence on oral health among women.

Results: The most common form of domestic violence found was physical abuse (54.7%) followed by emotional abuse (20.0%) and financial abuse (14.0%). The most important risk factor was alcoholism followed by literacy status and having a girl child. Study shows that physical abuse is more in graduate than lower level of educational females. Females living in urban area show highest frequency of physical abuse than those living in rural area. Injury to the face were highly reported (38.7%) followed by injury to lip (13.3%) and nose fracture/bleeding nose (9.3%).

Conclusion: Government has to take stringent action to prevent domestic violence by making women more self-reliant especially by making women more literate and more financially independent.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Emotional abuse, Physical abuse.

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is defined as:

'Any incident of threatening behavior, violence or abuse between adults who are, or who have been, in a

relationship, or between family members. It can affect anyone regardless of his or her gender or sexuality. The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual, or emotional' (Home Office 2008).

Domestic violence occurs across society, regardless of age, race, sexuality, gender identity, religion, wealth and geography.

The number of women who experience domestic violence over their life time was estimated to be one in four. In Europe, 6 to 10% of women suffer from domestic violence in 2002 (Council of Europe, 2002).

The relationship between the effects of domestic violence, physical and mental well-being is well documented. Psychological and physical effects of abuse can be felt for many years often with the continuation of psychological/mental health issues, chronic physical health problems as well familial and socioeconomic impacts.¹

Domestic violence among women in India is considered to be endemic and widespread.² According to the department for women and child development approximately 70% of women in India are victims of domestic violence.³

This all occurs despite the fact that women in India are legally protected from domestic abuse under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.⁴

Domestic violence often happens in India as a result of dowry demands.⁵ A research was carried out by Srinivasan (2005), who had pointed out that there is a negative correlation between dowry amount and inter-spousal violence which indicates dangers of a wife falling short on dowry payments or expectations.⁶

It was found that in 2010 there was a steep rise of 1396 deaths due to dowry as compared to 1997 report (Indian dowry death on rise).⁷ In Indian culture, acceptance of dowry and craving for a male child in the family is very common. If not satisfied could lead to abuses.

Seventy-five percent of physical injuries in domestic violence incidents are to the head, neck, and/or mouth. Dental professionals routinely assess the head, neck and mouth areas of their patients and are in a perfect position to identify and treat injuries caused by domestic violence. Violence, abuse, or neglect can present in the oral cavity or perioral areas in a variety of ways. Any oral lesion, tooth

¹⁻⁶Department of Public Health Dentistry, Vyas Dental College and Hospital, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India

Corresponding Author: Preksha Pawa, Postgraduate Student, Department of Public Health Dentistry, C-7 Shiv Om Shakti, Pawa Nagar, Near Subham Farm House, Pal Road Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India, Phone: 09950837778, e-mail: ppewa1988@gmail.com

or soft-tissue injury could be caused by violence. Dental neglect may be an indicator of domestic violence. Patients experiencing domestic violence may be restricted by their abuser from seeking help or contact with friends and family members or from seeking dental or medical care.⁸

The effects of violence on a victim’s health are severe. Battered women may suffer from psychosomatic symptoms, and eating problems, chronic pain, gastrointestinal disorders. According to a US study, gynecological problems is more noticed in women who experience intimate partner abuse than non-abused women.⁹

Aims and Objective

A study was carried out aiming at assessment of the prevalence of domestic violence in Jodhpur. This study had a twin objective of determining:

- The prevalence of domestic violence and to know the impact of the same on the oral health.
- To identify the various risk factor for domestic violence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design and Study Period

A cohort cross-sectional study was carried out in high court of Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India among registered victims of domestic violence/family planning for a period of 1 month from 18th January 2014 to 27th February 2014.

Study-Universe

The study subjects includes all the married women who were registered in the family court and also who were under the counseling of domestic violence organisations —Meera Sansthan

Sample Size and Sampling

Prevalence rate of domestic violence among women was found to be 51% according to the Mal Sibsankar, Bhattacharya Prabhat.¹⁰

$$n = p \cdot q / (SE)^2$$

The sample was calculated to be n = 148.75. The total sample for the study was taken to be 150 to avoid error.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was carried out using semi-structured open ended questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted on 40 victims to cheque the validity of questionnaire and according to the findings the questionnaire was modified for final study.

Inclusion criteria includes study subjects who were legally married and of age 18 years and above and

subjects living with her husband for more than 1 year and have registered case against domestic violence.

Inclusion criteria: Females who had registered in the high court and who gave consent for the participation in study were considered as the study subject. Ethical clearance was obtained from Institutional authority.

All the information gathered was transferred into excel sheet. Suitable statistical software (SPSS version —20) was used. Pearson’s Chi-square test and p-value were used to calculated the occurrence and impact of domestic violence on oral health among women.

RESULTS

The study consisted of 150 domestic violence victims who were registered in the family court and also who were under the counseling of domestic violence organisations.

Out of 150 victims, 81.3% of study population had some level of education and 18.7% were uneducated. Sixty-six percent of the study subject resided in the urban area. Among the victims of domestic violence who reported to the family court, 39.3% of the study population were in the age group 40 years and above, followed by 31.3% who were in the age group 31 to 40 years (Table 1).

Sixty percent of study population reported that they experienced domestic violence soon after marriage. Among the study subjects 54.7% reported being abused physically and among them 38.7% experienced continuous physical assault as compare to 1.8% who reported to have less of physical assault. 5.3% reported to be sexually abused. 20.7% were targeted on head during the violence while 49.3% of the study population were assaulted badly that they were not able to describe their targeted body part (Table 2).

It was noted that 35.3% of study population produced a female sibling and 5.3% delivered a male. 71.3% of the

Table 1: Demography of the study population

	n	%
<i>Age statistics</i>		
18-30	44	29.3
31-40	47	31.3
41 and above	59	39.3
Total	150	100.0
	Mean = 2.10	SD = 0.825
<i>Where do you live</i>		
Urban	99	66.0
Rural	51	34.0
Total	150	100.0
<i>Education</i>		
Some level of education	122	81.3
Uneducated	28	18.7
Total	150	100.0

n: number of study subjects



Table 2: Distribution of questionnaire according to physical abuse

<i>When did the physical abuse start?</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
When we got engaged	3	2.0
When I got pregnant	29	19.3
When my partner was unemployed	2	1.3
When we got married	90	60.0
When the first child was born	21	14.0
None of the above	3	2.0
No physical assault	2	1.3
Total	148	98.7
<i>What type of abuse have you/do you suffer?</i>		
Physical abuse	82	54.7
Sexual abuse	8	5.3
Emotional/ psychological abuse	30	20.0
Verbal abuse	9	6.0
Financial abuse	21	14.0
Total	150	100.0
<i>What sorts of physical assault have you experienced?</i>		
No abuse	50	33.3
Pushing or shoving causing no injury	4	2.7
Pushing or shoving causing injury, e.g. bruising	13	8.7
Hitting, slapping or punching causing no injury	9	6.0
Hitting, slapping or punching causing injury	27	18.0
Kicking	3	2.0
Pulling your hairs	6	4.0
Attempted strangulation	1	0.7
Using an object to harm or hit you	6	4.0
Burning you (e.g. stubbing out cigarette on you)	1	0.7
Hot water to scald you, trying to set light to you	2	1.3
Hitting your head or body against wall	4	2.7
All of the above	24	16.0
Total	150	100.0
<i>Has the physical assaults increased, stayed the same or decreased during your relationship?</i>		
Increased	58	38.7
Stayed the same	45	30.0
Not sure	43	28.7
Decreased	2	1.3
No physical assault	2	1.3
Total	148	98.7
	150	100.0
<i>What part of your body was targeted during the physical assault?</i>		
Head	31	20.7
Arms and hands	22	14.7
Genitalia (e.g. breast and crotch area for women)	1	0.7
Torso	1	0.7
Legs and feet	21	14.0
Not sure	74	49.3
Total	150	100.0
<i>Have you ever tried defending yourself from a physical assault?</i>		
Yes	142	94.7
No	8	5.3
Total	150	100.0

n: Number of study subjects

victims children have witnessed their mothers being abused. 25.3% of the siblings suffered physical abuse out of which 11.3% required medical intervention and 14.0% of children were abused verbally (Table 3).

The victims reported that 54% of their abusers have the habit of taking alcohol and 24.7% of the victims claim that they are physically assaulted when their abusers are under the influence of alcohol. The study showed that

Table 3: Distribution of questionnaire according to child abuse

<i>Is your child a girl or a boy?</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Girl	53	35.3
Boy	8	5.3
Both	51	34.0
No child	38	25.3
Total	112	74.7
	150	100.0
<i>Did the children witness (heard or saw) any abuse on you from your partner?</i>		
Yes	107	71.3
No	5	3.3
No child	38	25.3
Total	112	74.7
	150	100.0
<i>Did your partner abuse the children?</i>		
Yes	38	25.3
No	74	49.3
No child	38	25.3
Total	112	74.7
	150	100
<i>If so, what sort of abuse did your children suffer?</i>		
Verbal abuse	21	14.0
Emotional abuse	1	0.7
Physical abuse requiring medical treatment	17	11.3
Physical abuse not requiring medical treatment	2	1.3
Not abused	71	47.3
No child	38	25.3
Total	112	74.7
	150	100.0

n: Number of study subjects

Table 4: Distribution of questionnaire according to factors influencing violence

<i>Was your abuser an alcoholic?</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	81	54.0
No	69	46.0
Total	150	100.0
<i>While the time of violence was your abuser</i>		
Drunk	37	24.7
Influenced by mother in law	64	42.7
Influenced by some other factor	49	32.7
Total	150	100.0
<i>Is your partner is an employed or not?</i>		
Employed	106	70.7
Unemployed	44	29.3
Total	150	100.0

n: Number of study subject

mother in law influenced her abuser son to initiate the act of violence as reported by 42.7% of the victims. 29.3% of the abusers are unemployed (Table 4).

The study shows that 85.3% of the victims never came forward to report their sufferings at the initial stages of their married life. The various reasons stated by the

Table 5: Distribution of questionnaire according to filling complain against abuse

<i>Did you immediately report after being abused?</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	22	14.7
No	128	85.3
Total	150	100.0
<i>If no, what is the reason after it?</i>		
Society	69	46.0
Waiting patiently	49	32.7
Unable to bear legal expenses	7	4.7
Unable to meet home expense with family support	3	2.0
Said yes	22	14.7
Total	128	85.3
	150	100.0
<i>Where did you get the support?</i>		
Family	127	84.7
Friend	3	2.0
Police	19	12.7
DV organization	1	0.7
Total	150	100.0

n: Number of study subjects

Table 6: Distribution of questionnaire according to occurrence of trauma/injury

<i>Have you ever sustained an injury to the head, neck, or mouth as a result of abuse?</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	124	82.7
No	26	17.3
Total	150	100.0
<i>Yes, what sort of injury did this involve?</i>		
Facial injury	124	82.7
No facial injury	26	17.3
Total	150	100.0

n: Number of study subjects

victims in the delay in expressing their sufferings were to maintain status in the society according to 46.0%, while 32.7% preferred to wait patiently in silence fearing social stigma for the victim and her family. The study showed that 84.7% of the present study population got support from their family (Table 5).

It was noted that 82.7% of the victims sustained injury to the head of which 17.3% reported facial injury. However, none of them approached a dental surgeon (Table 6).

Thirty-three percent of victims had girl child and of which 18% of girls were abused by the abuser. Ten percent of the girl sibling experienced physical assault by the abuser and required medical intervention. The result was not statistically significant (Table 7).

67.8% of the uneducated victims were abused physically. 77.3% of victims who obtained some level of education delayed in reporting to the domestic violence organization as compared to 1% of illiterate and the results were found to be statistically significant ($p = 0.054$). In order to



Table 7: Association between physical abuse and gender discrimination

		Is your child a girl or a boy?			Total	p-value			
		Girl	Boy	Both					
What type of abuse have you/ do you suffer?	Physical abuse	33 (50.7)	3 (4.6)	29 (44.6)	65	0.406			
	No physical abuse	20 (42.5)	5 (10.6)	22 (46.8)			47	Chi-square value 1.803	
Total		53	8	51	112				
		Did the children abuse by your partner?			Total	p-value			
		Yes	No						
Is your child a girl or a boy?	Girl	18 (34)	35 (66)		53 (100)	0.849			
	Boy	2 (25)	6 (75)				8 (100)	Chi-square value 0.327	
	Both	18 (35.3)	33 (64.7)				51 (100)		
Total		38	74		112				
		If so, what sort of abuse did your children suffer							
		Verbal abuse	Emotional abuse	Physical abuse requiring medical treatment	Physical abuse not requiring medical treatment	Not abused	p-value		
				Physical abuse requiring medical treatment	Physical abuse not requiring medical treatment				
Is your child a girl or a boy?	Girl	6 (11.3)	1 (1.9)	10 (18.9)	2 (3.8)	34 (64.1)	53 (100)	0.360	
	Boy	3 (37.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (62.5)	8 (100)		Chi-square value 8.791
	Both	12 (23.6)	0 (0)	7 (13.7)	0 (0)	32 (62.7)	51 (100)		
Total		21	1	17	2	71	112		

Table 8: Association between education and report against abuse

		What type of abuse have you/do you suffer?			Total	p-value		
		Physical abuse	No physical abuse					
Education	Educated	63 (51.6)	59 (48.3)	122 (100)	122 (100)	0.120		
	Uneducated	19 (67.8)	9 (32.1)	28 (100)			28 (100)	Chi-square value
Total		82	68	150	150	2.417 ^a		
		Did you immediately report after abuse?			Total	p-value		
		Yes	No					
Education	Primary	1 (3.4)	28 (96.6)		29 (100)	0.054		
	Secondary	5 (19.2)	21 (80.8)				26 (100)	Chi-square value
	S. Sec.	5 (21.7)	18 (78.3)				23 (100)	9.306
	Graduation	10 (22.7)	34 (77.3)				44 (100)	
	Uneducated	1 (3.6)	27 (96.4)				28 (100)	
Total		22	128		150			
		If no, what is the reason after it?						
		Society	Waiting patiently	Unable to bear legal expenses	Unable to meet home expense with family support	Total	p-value = 0.000	
		Society	Waiting patiently	Unable to bear legal expenses	Unable to meet home expense with family support			
Did you immediately report after abuse?	No	69 (53.9)	49 (38.3)	7 (5.5)	3 (2.3)	128 (100)	Chi-square value	
Total		69	49	7	3	128		

^ap ≥ 0.05, significant, CI-95%

maintain the victims status in the society* 52.9% of study victims delayed in complaining their sufferings (Table 8).

Sixty-one percent of victims were physically abused by their alcoholic abuser. In the influence of alcohol, 30.4% of study victims is abused physically whereas 47.6% of victims is abused physically under the influence of mother-in-law and it is found not to be statistically significant (p - 0.007), influenced by some other factor like greed for the money from the victim side and the burden of existing girl child are least responsible for physical abuse (21.9%) among study victims (Table 9).

DISCUSSION

The study subjects included 150 victims of domestic violence who attended the Jodhpur High court; in the state of Rajasthan, North West of India. The victims who were willing to take part in this cross-sectional study during the period from mid of January to the end of February 2014 were included in the study. A pilot study was completed to know the validity and reliability of the study. Based on the pre-tested pilot study, the questionnaire was modified to include the type and extend of different types of domestic violence and to

Table 9: Association between physical abuse and various influencing factors

		Was your abuser an alcoholic?			Total	p-value
		Yes	No			
What type of abuse have you/do you suffer?	Physical abuse	50 (60.9)	32 (39.0)	82 (100)	0.060 Chi-square value 3.543 ^a	
	No physical abuse	31 (45.5)	37 (54.4)	68 (100)		
Total	81	69	150			
		While the time of violence was your abuser is			Total	p-value
		Drunk	Influenced by mother in law	Influenced by some other factor		
What type of abuse have you/do you suffer?	Physical abuse	25 (30.4)	39 (47.5)	18 (21.9)	82 (100)	0.007 Chi-square value 9.858 ^a
	No physical abuse	12 (17.6)	25 (36.7)	31 (45.5)	68 (100)	
Total		37	64	49	150	

^ap ≥ 0.05; significant, CI-95%

identify probable reasons for domestic violence against married women who had registered in the court.

It was observed from the present study that the most common age group for abused women was 40 years and above followed by 30 to 40 years. Similar finding was also shown by Mishra et al¹¹ and K Yoshikawa et al.¹² But contradictory finding was revealed by M Mahapatro et al.¹³

In the present study, the most common type of violence was physical violence followed by emotional violence. The study results showed similarity to a study carried by Mishra et al.¹¹ However in a multicentered study by WHO reported that physical violence followed by sexual violence was common.¹⁴ In the pretested questionnaire of the present pilot study, the study participants were shy to respond to questions related to sexual abuse.

According to the level of education was it was found that the prevalence of domestic violence is least among graduates. A study carried out by Mishra et al and Kimuna et al^{11,15} in India reported similar findings. The level of education of the victim could be a beneficial factor against domestic violence. The present study also showed a strong association between alcohol intake and physical violence (p-value 0.007). The results also show that the victim's mother-in-law initiated the act of physical violence. Research carried out by Babu and Kar observed that women reported involvement of husband's parents in most of the physical violence cases.¹⁶ The odds of experiencing physical and sexual violence among the victims were observed by studies done by Kimuna to be higher among husbands who were drunkard. Studies carried out nationally as well as internationally showed the same trend.¹⁷⁻²¹

In the present study, 71.5% of children witnessed violence on their mother and similar observation was also recorded by Kupper LL et al.²²

Eighteen percent reported the most common form of physical violence was hitting on the head, slapping

or punching on the face causing injury. Pushing or shoving causing bruises were reported by 8.7 and 4% suffered object throwing which were reported by similar studies.²³ According to NFHS III the most common physical violence was slapping seen among 34% of the study subjects followed by twisting of arms or pulling of hairs (15.4%), throwing hard objects (14%), kicking (12%) and choking seen among 2%.²⁴

82.7% of the study victims reported the facial injury which is almost similar to the finding of the study done by Bach T Le et al in which majority (81%) of victims presented with maxillofacial injuries.

Abused women most often seek help from their own families. In our study 84.7% women sought help from their parents, followed by 12.7% reported to police while only 2.0% sought help from their relative which represented the tip of the iceberg. A similar study at North Bengal²⁵ revealed that 74.9% never sought for any help; 13.9% sought for first aid, 4.9% sought for professional help, 3.6% reported to police and the NFHS III data also corroborated with the above finding. Notably few women experiencing domestic violence seek help from any institutional sources, such as the police, medical personnel or social service organizations.²⁴

In the five state study, among the respondents who sought help, 26.3% abused women had approached their parents, 15.6% to relatives and 57.9% to friends.²³ Goa study revealed that 31.1% talked to relatives or close friends and only 4.4% took legal help.²⁶ In the Bangalore study, nobody informed the police.²⁷ This was because women were socialized to accept, tolerate and even rationalize domestic violence, and to remain silent about such experiences who wait patiently in silence fearing social stigma for her and her family. Often, they had the idea that it belonged to their husbands' right to beat their wives. Many victims witnessed in their childhood their parents being abused and felt the notion that it is the right of their husbands to beat their wives. This could



be one of the reasons that some of them suffered silently. However in the present study many victims suffered abuses silently due to social stigma and after a point of intolerance have finally approached the court.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, prevalence of abuse was noticed more in the educated group inspite of belief that education is an important beneficial factor to prevent violence thus it contradicts the statement. Whereas, study done by Kimuna et al,¹⁵ Mishra et al¹¹ observed that there was a strong association between the literacy status and vulnerability towards abuse. Thus we can not state that education is one of the protective factors from domestic violence.

In the present study, the reason for not reporting about abuse or delay in expressing their sufferings were to maintain status in the society and preferred to wait patiently in silence fearing social stigma for the victim and her family, there is no other studies who have identified these factors.

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