Amount of Violence against Women in Married Women of District 4 in Tehran

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Abstract

Today, the world encounters evidence indicating disorders in family relations and resulted violence in families. The aim of this study was investigating dimensions of men's violence against women as well as studying frequency of them and presenting effective solutions to reduce it. Research method in this study is descriptive survey. Seventy married women of District 4 in Tehran were selected using accessible sampling. Required data were collected using scale of violence against women by Asayesh and Golpasha (2016). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and correlation. Results showed that of dimensions of violence, the highest frequency is observed in verbal abuse (M=8.80), mental abuse (M=6.28), economic abuse (M=5.85), enmity (M=4.05), relational aggression (M=3.54), physical violence (M=2.65) and sexual violence (M=2.24). In addition, there was a significant positive relation between dimensions of violence which shows that all of dimensions of violence against women in this scale measure one variable and this shows the reliability of tools. Mean score of dimensions of violence against women being lower than its standard deviation in each dimension shows low amount of violence against women in this sample under study. Although, violence against women may be lower in some societies, it is still required to be studied. This information can be useful for counselors and therapists for better evaluations, effective interventions and family trainings. In addition, it is worth to present life skills, assertiveness skills and self-care in general training programs (especially for girls) in various educational levels.

Keywords: Violence; Aggression; Verbal Abuse; Sexual Violence; Violence against Women.
Introduction

The family is the smallest social unit of society and the most important and effective supportive and educational unit. Couples' relations require special attention as a force that determines direction of movement and method of families in life cycle. The most important thing in a marriage is adjustment and marital satisfaction. For many couples, the most important source of satisfaction is to obtain marital happiness and satisfaction that becomes important along with other sources including career, friends and even descendants (Ebrahimi and Jan Bozorgi, 2010). Peoples' demand of peace and rest requires forming an emotion and wisdom-based relation in families to provide a sense of security, confidence, health, support and satisfaction for both parties. Therefore, a family is recognized as a multidimensional reality in such a way that its themes can be investigated from various dimensions. One of the family phenomena noticed by authors, sociologists and psychologists is violence in families (violence against women in families). Women experience gender-related violence during their whole life in various forms and the most prominent one is related to domestic violence. However, violence against women consists of various dimensions that are covered in following sections(Klunick, 2004:24).

Violence is defined as anger, asperity, harshness, and as the opposite of calmness. Some regard violence as an action contrary to the norms. Others consider is a personal and collective behavior that emerges under specific conditions. According to some people, violence is any harsh behavior emerged with previous intention to injure the other party. In addition, some believe that violence is a range of harsh and damaging behaviors that entail negative reactions such as inattentiveness and indifference (Mohebbi, 2002).

Violence can be regarded as an emotional and damaging action that a person commits to advance their own purposes. Violence is not only physical; rather it may include mental (including abusiveness, despising, excluding a person, shouting, sexual abuse, aggression) and economic (like breaking homeware) dimensions (Kar, 2009). Considering these definitions, violence against women can be divided into physical, mental, sexual, and economic abuse. Physical violence is used for physical damage and injury like beating, torture, meyhem, punching, biting, slapping, suffocating, stabbing, shooting, live burial and murder. Mental abuse includes any violent behavior and speech that endangers the other's mental health including unjust cavil, insulting and despising, humiliation, divorce threat and limiting others' freedom (Henson & Wallace & Capretta, 2004).

Sexual violence includes any violent behavior that results in sexual abuse and damage like bothering by phone calls or in person, fornication, forced to abnormal intercourse during pregnancy or menstrual period (Nelson, Peggy, Yasmin, Janatan, 2004).

Economic abuse accounts for any violent behavior committed to put others under financial pressure, abuse and discrimination including not satisfying financial needs of the family and selling homeware. Examples of economic abuse include: not paying alimony, meanness, whimsical control of household expenses, taking women's salary by force, not supplying essential needs of wife and descendants, abuse or stealing spouse's assets and properties (Mohebbi, 2002).

Many authors have pointed out the problem of violence and investigated its causes and roots. Many Iranian authors have mentioned the following causes as main factors of violence against
women: interference of associates (Bag Rezayi, 2004), patriarchal attitudes (Lahsayi Zadeh and Madani, 2011), experiencing and observing violence (Alivardi Nia et al., 2012), couples' age difference (Tavassoli and Moniri Far, 2010), socio-economic base (Heydari Charoodeh, 2011), alcohol and drug abuse (Khani et al., 2011). Furthermore, a significant amount of non-Iranian studies have investigated the relation of violence with factors such as socio-economic base (Xiaho, et al., 2011), social resources available for women (Dehan and Zipi, 2011), alcohol abuse (Galvani, 2006) etc. (Alivardi Nia, Razi and Ayini, 2014).

Until three decades ago, sociologists considered violence against women in families as an exceptional issue and attributed it to special families with financial problems and low cultural status as well as critical conditions. However, results of studies proved contrary to common image that violence exists in all families and women and children are its typical victims (E'zazi, 2002). The most frustrating issue is that as they are subjected to violence in the society as a special group, they are being exploited in families as well by their husbands. These people are the victims of various types of physical and mental abuses. These types of violence bring about adverse effects and consequences (World Health Organization, 2008).

Prevalence of violence is different across the world and it is estimated that it exists in over half of the families. According to some reports, one out of every four women is subjected to violence (Schmidt and Nice, 2002) and relatively one third of women all across the world have experienced violence at least for one time (Nayak, Byme, Martin and George, 2003). Manju and Bonu (2009) investigated domestic violence in seven Asian countries (Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal and Turkey). Results of their study suggest that husbands' aggression has been fluctuating from 29% in Nepal to 57% in India and 26% in Kazakhstan to 56% in turkey.

In addition, prevalence of misbehavior relative to wives is 39 to 60% in England (Richardson, Coid, Petrokevitch, Chury, Moorey and Feder, 2002), 81% in Nigeria (Odujinrin, 1993) and 69% in South Africa (Kim, Motesei, 2002). Therefore, this issue should be considered as a major research, therapeutic and legal priority. Considering sexual violence in accordance with obtained reports and maintaining women's safety is so important that relief organizations have ordered presenting specialized medical and mental services in various organizations to keep victims and their families safe (Jenkins, 2010).

According to what mentioned, domestic violence is the most common form of violence against women with the highest social, mental and economic consequences. Violence against women is universal and occurs in all societies and cultures. Women of every race, ethnicity, social origin, wealth, and social class are exposed to violence (Asayesh and Golpasha, 2016).

Although, domestic violence typically occurs in the privacy of family, it affects women's lives in all (physical, mental and social) aspects. Of its effects are suffering from sexually transmitted diseases (AIDS, Hepatitis B, etc.), drug addiction, sleep disorders, abortion, preterm delivery, children with low birth weight, stillbirth etc. (Valdez et al., 2006).

It appears from studies that violence against women is an obstacle on the way of obtaining objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence denies and violates women's enjoyment of human rights and basic freedoms and their long-lasting frustration in maintaining and promoting these rights and freedom has worried many countries. Considering available statistics on status of violence across the world, unfortunately, there is no specified report on this issue in
Iran, since one of the main features of violence against women is its being concealed from families and governments. Women do not talk about their violent life until they are at the end of their rope (Kar, 2009). With regard to what mentioned, the necessity to address violence against women is confirmed. Considering the importance of this issue in national and international levels, the aim of this study was to investigate dimensions of men's violence against women and to compare amount of various types of violence in Tehran. The main question we are supposed to answer in this study is that what type of violence is observed more in various dimensions of violence against women.

**Method**

This is a descriptive survey study. Statistical population is all married women of District 4 in Tehran. The study sample consisted of 100 married women from 20 to 60 years of age and mean age of 35 years. Accessible sampling was used as sampling method in this study. In this study, questionnaire of violence against women was given to married women who attended cultural meetings in residential complexes of District 4 in Tehran. Of 100 participants, 30 subjects were excluded because of deficiencies in filling questionnaire.

The questionnaire of violence against women by Asayesh-Golpasha (2016) was used in this study. The aim of designing this questionnaire was to recognize dimensions of violence against women that consists of 60 questions on Likert scale as very high, relatively high, medium, relatively low and never. This questionnaire studies seven dimensions: 1- physical violence that includes 10 questions (questions 1-10); 2- economic abuse that includes 10 questions (questions 11-20); 3- sexual violence that includes 10 questions (questions 21-30); 4- verbal abuse that includes 10 questions (31-40); 5- mental abuse that includes 10 questions (41-50); 6- enmity that includes 5 questions (51-55); 7- relational aggression that includes 5 questions (56-60). Scoring system for each dimension is as a sum of raw scores of questions in each subscale and they are scored as (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) respectively for very high, relatively high, medium, relatively low and never. Total score of violence against women is obtained from sum of raw scores for each subscale which is between zero and 240. The higher the score is, the more violence exists in the family. It is obvious that the highest score each subject can obtain in all subscales is 40 (except enmity and relational aggression where the higher score is 20).

Formal and conceptual validity of this questionnaire was evaluated according to the views of relevant specialists. In addition, correlation between each subscale of violence against women and with total score of violence was significant and over 0.60. This correlation is shown in Table 1. In this table, each dimension of this scale measures one single variable (violence) (Asayesh and Golpasha, 2016).
There was a significant and high correlation between all dimensions of violence and total violence. This shows high validity of research tool (Asayesh and Golpasha, 2016).

Reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha which shows that this questionnaire is of good internal consistency (Asayesh and Golpasha, 2016). Cronbach's alpha of 0.98 was obtained in this study.

**Findings**

Table 2 shows descriptive information related to dimensions of violence including physical violence, economic abuse, sexual violence, verbal abuse, mental abuse, enmity and relational aggression. In this table, mean and standard deviation of these dimensions and other variables of this study are shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>2.6571</td>
<td>6.45359</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic abuse</td>
<td>5.8571</td>
<td>6.82978</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>2.2429</td>
<td>4.86465</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental abuse</td>
<td>6.2857</td>
<td>8.31646</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enmity</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td>.869</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational aggression</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse</td>
<td>.946</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General violence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to descriptive findings of this study, verbal abuse (with average 8.8) was of highest value in violence against women; then, mental abuse (average 6.28), economic abuse (average of 5.85), enmity (average of 4.05), relational aggression (average of 3.54), physical violence (average of 2.65) and sexual violence (average of 2.24) respectively accounted for highest average in terms of violence. These values suggest that verbal abuse is of highest value in violence against women. Lower mean values of violence against women, relative to standard deviation in each dimension shows lower violence against women in samples under study.

Regarding that the highest obtainable score in all subscales in maximum 40 (except for enmity and relational aggression that is 20), violence in this sample is relatively low.

**Discussion**

Violence against women is one of the major sociological and psychological issues and an important social challenge that widely encounters lack of correct and timely identification in such a way that only a few cases of violence against women are recognized by specialists. Therefore, it should be noted that dimensions of violence may be highly wider than what we imagine. Former studies have shown that domestic violence against women in Iran and other countries is variable from 18.6% to 92%. In this study, dimension of violence including physical, economic, sexual, verbal and mental abuse, enmity and relational aggression were investigated. Based on descriptive findings of this study, verbal abuse is of highest value among dimensions of violence against women and then mental and economic abuse, enmity and relational, physical and sexual violence were respectively higher. This finding does not comply with results of study by Amini et al. (2014, cited from Asayesh and Golpasha, 2016). In their study, they showed that physical violence was higher in domestic violence and this difference can be the result of difference in population under study. Their study was conducted on women who had referred to Medical Jurisprudence; however, this study is conducted on married women of District 4 in Tehran who had not referred to Medical Jurisprudence and they did not have severe conflicts that have led to take action for separation.

In this study, lower mean score of dimensions of violence against women compared to its standard deviation in each dimension, shows low violence against women in this sample under study. To determine abnormal violence in population under study, scores of each dimension should be at least one standard deviation higher than mean. In this study interval between scores of samples was less than one standard deviation from mean.

Amount of women's cooperation in this study was low because of the specific nature of the subject and type of questions asked in terms of violence and sexual problems. In addition,
limited sample was used and it was not possible to access husbands of women who attended this study. These are some limitations of this study. It is suggested that in later studies, the study to be conducted in various cultural societies to provide the possibility of cross-cultural comparisons along with increasing sample size and using other reliable sampling methods.

In addition, it is recommended to conduct a study to determine the relation of structural determinants of health by violence committed by spouses. On the other hand, considering the importance of violence against women, it is suggested to develop suitable educational, interventional and advisory programs and furthermore, national media as well as newspapers and journals can attempt to train families more than ever. Meanwhile, studies conducted and measures used in other countries can also be considered as a model. For example, as radio of India reported on January 2013, the government suggested to appoint authorities to compensate losses resulted from violence against women. This law points to commitment of these authorities that provide services against domestic violence complaints. In this regard, it is suggested to conduct a similar study in other cities of Iran with different cultures as well as other countries with a culture close to Iranian culture.

In addition, it is required to teach life skills in curriculum of various educational levels. Furthermore, assertiveness skills and effective relation and self-care skills should be taught to women. In addition to teaching life skills, it is suggested to inform couples of women and men's rights and to value human rights of women in the society for families especially couples.
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