

Prevalence of Physical Violence and Associated Factors among Married Women in Rural part of Northern Ethiopia

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Abstract:

Background: Domestic violence against women is the most pervasive yet underestimated social and health problem that occur in pandemic proportions. Globally, six out of ten women experience domestic violence. The problem is not well studied in the developing country, thus the objective of this study was to determine the magnitude and factors associated with physical violence among women in the rural part of Northern Ethiopia. **Methods:** A cross sectional study was conducted in rural Hawzen District from March 1- 14, 2013 to collect data from 660 ever married women using a systematic random sampling technique. Descriptive and multiple logistic regression analyses were performed using STATA version 11 to estimate indicators and effect sizes of the violence among ever married women. Multiple logistic regression analysis was used to identify independent predictors of physical violence. **Result:** In the current study the magnitude of physical violence in the last 12 month was 38.6%. Among the different type of physical violence slapping account for 410(65.2%), burnt 87(13.8%), hit with fist or kick 173(27.5%) and threaten with weapon 55(8.7%). Being old age of women and husband educational status were the main predictors of physical violence in the last 12 month. **Conclusion:** The prevalence of physical violence was high. Age of women and husband educational status are the main influencing factors of physical violence among married women. Creating community awareness about gender based violence through education and communication activities, pre-marital counseling and conflict resolution strategy are important interventions to reduce the problems.

Keywords: Prevalence, Physical violence, Rural Married Women, Northern Ethiopia

1. Introduction

Domestic violence against women is the most pervasive yet underestimated social and health problem that occur in pandemic proportions [1-3]. Globally, six out of every ten women experiences physical and/or sexual violence. More than 1.5 million women are raped and/or physically assaulted and 85% of perpetrator's are husband or other intimate partners [4-6]. In recent years, the international community has increasingly recognized violence against women as a significant human rights and global health issue as a result many studies was done in all geographic regions, countries, cultures and socioeconomic classes, with some surveys showing that women in developing countries experience higher rates of violence than those in developed countries [7].

A study conducted by WHO multi-country on physical violence against women report that the lifetime experience ranges from 42-62% and in the past 12 months it ranges from 16-25 [8]. Besides, a study done in Ethiopia place Butajira, the lifetime prevalence of physical was found to be 49% and 29% for the past 12 months [9, 10]. Even though, the contributing factor for physical violence differs from place to place, family history of violence but the problem continues to increasing in developing country [11]. Especially in rural area of the Sub-Saharan Africa in which many illiterate women live in; violence is poorly assessed.

Therefore, this study aimed to assess the predictors of physical violence among ever married in rural Hawzien District, Northern Ethiopia.

2. Methods

A. Study setting

The study was conducted in rural Hawzien district from March 1- 14, 2013. The total population of the area is 121,965, with 64,212 married women. In study area, there are 5 health centers, 25 health post and one private clinic. There are a total of 24 villages in the rural district of Hawzen. All married or co-habitated women in rural Hawzien district were considered as source population.

B. Study design and sample

A community based cross-sectional study was conducted. Sample of 660 married women were included in the study. To determine the sample, a single population proportion formula with a proportion of physical violence (49%) [13], a confidence level of 95%, 4% degree of precision and 10% for non response rate were consider as assumption. Systematic random sampling technique was used to select the study subjects. Five rural districts were selected by lottery methods. The total sample size was shared to the selected rural district based on their number of household in each village using proportion to size allocation. Since the villages have different household number different kth interval was calculated. Based on the sample fraction, women were selected using systematic random sampling. Women who refused to participate were excluded from the study without replacement.

C. Data collection

Interviewer guided structured and pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was first prepared in English and then translated into the local language (Tigrigna) and then translated back to English to check for consistency of the questions. The questionnaire includes information on socio-demographic, socio-economic information, partners' characteristic and history of physical violence. The questionnaire was adapted from WHO multi-country study [8] and considering the local situation of the study subjects. Five diploma female high school completed data collectors, who can speak the local language, were recruited. Training was given to the data collectors for two consecutive days.

D. Data analysis

The data was entered and analyzed using STATA software version 11. Exploratory data was run to check for missing values, outliers and expected values of the categories for regression. Physical violence among married women was estimated if the women face at least one of the following: slapped, burnt, hit with fist or kick, threaten with weapon and arm twist. Descriptive and multiple logistic regressions were used to estimate the factors with physical violence. Collinearity among independent factors was checked using Variance inflation factor (VIF). The sample effect size was estimated using OR and the parameters were estimated using 95% confidence interval of the OR. For all the analysis, P-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

E. Ethical consideration

Ethical approval and ethical clearance letter were obtained from Mekelle University ethical review board. Official letter was taken from Hawzen Woreda health bureau and letter of cooperation also wrote to the selected districts. Written consent was obtained from each participant to ensure their voluntariness to participate in the study and they were told that all have a right to withdraw at any time. Privacy and confidentiality was assured.

3. Result

3.1 Socio demographic characteristics

A total of 629 respondents were participated in the study with response rate of 95.3%. Majorities of the respondents, 495(78.7%) were illiterate, farmer 582 (92.53%) and have four up to six children 329(52.3%). Regarding the husband characteristics; majority respondents 466(74.1%) were illiterate, farmers in occupation 537(85.37%) and 297(47.2%) found in age group of 54 and above years (Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics respondents and their husbands/partners Hawzien District, Northern Ethiopia, 2013

| Characteristics(variables) n=629 | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Age of respondents | | |
| 20-30 | 99 | 15.7 |
| 31-41 | 233 | 37.1 |
| >41 | 297 | 47.2 |
| Educational status of wife | | |
| Illiterate | 495 | 78.7 |
| Literate | 134 | 21.3 |
| Current occupation | | |
| Daily laborer | 24 | 3.82 |
| Farmer | 582 | 92.53 |
| Others | 23 | 3.66 |
| Age at first marriage | | |
| 9-14 | 110 | 17.49 |
| 15-29 | 403 | 64.07 |
| 20-24 | 105 | 16.69 |
| >=25 | 11 | 1.75 |
| Number of children | | |
| 1-3 | 167 | 26.6 |
| 4-6 | 329 | 52.3 |
| >6 | 133 | 21.1 |
| Partner's current age | | |
| 24-33 | 53 | 8.43 |
| 34-43 | 125 | 19.87 |
| 44-53 | 154 | 24.48 |
| >=54 | 297 | 47.22 |
| Partner's educational status | | |
| Illiterate | 466 | 74.1 |
| Literate | 163 | 25.9 |
| Partner's current occupation status | | |
| Daily laborer | 67 | 10.65 |
| Farmer | 537 | 85.37 |
| Others | 25 | 3.97 |

3.2 Decision making and behavioral characteristics of married women and their partners

Joint decision between wife and husband in the household was made by 419(66.6%) respondent's and 520(82.7%) of their husbands had history of alcohol consumption. Seven out of ten the respondents stayed 16 and more years with their husband. Two out of ten of the respondents had history of quarreled with their partner in the past 12 months (Table 2).

Table: 2. Decision making and behavioral characteristics of respondents husband, Hawzien District, Northern Ethiopia, 2013

| Characteristics(variables) | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Decision making power (n=629) | | |
| Husband only | 27 | 4.29 |
| Together | 419 | 66.61 |
| Wife only | 183 | 29.09 |
| Husband alcohol consumption (n=629) | | |
| No | 109 | 17.3 |
| Yes | 520 | 82.7 |
| Duration of relationship in year (n=629) | | |
| < 15 | 189 | 30 |
| 16-30 | 295 | 46.9 |
| >30 | 145 | 23.1 |
| Quarreled in the past 12 months(n=343) | | |
| No | 200 | 77.27 |
| Yes | 143 | 22.73 |

3.3 Prevalence of physical violence

The prevalence of physical violence in the last 12 month's among married women was 38.6%. Among the type of physical violence slapping account for 410(65.2%), burnt 87(13.8%), hit with fist or kick 173(27.5%) threaten with weapon 55(8.7%) and 53(8.4%) arm twisted.

3.4 Factor associated with experiencing of physical violence in the last 12 months

Current age of respondents and husband educational status were statistically significant associated with experience of physical violence in the last 12 months. Respondents with the age group of 31-41 (AOR=2.6, 95% of CI: (1.5, 4.5) and greater than 41 years (AOR= 4.2 95% of CI: (2.36 -7.58) were more likely to experience physical violence as compared to respondents with the age group of 20-30 years. Educational status of husband also has an effect whether a women will experience physical violence (AOR= 1.93, 95%CI: (1.97, 3.19) (Table 3).

Table 3: Predictor of physical violence among married women in Hawzen district, Northern Ethiopia, 2013

| Characteristics | Physical violence | | AOR |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Yes No (%) | No No (%) | |
| Husband drinking Alcohol | | | |
| Yes | 406(78.1) | 114(21.9) | 0.8(0.5,1.29) |
| No | 78(71.6) | 31(28.4) | 1 |
| Previous History of marriage | | | |
| Yes | 112(76.2) | 35(23.8) | 1.3(0.8,2.1) |
| No | 372(77.2) | 110(22.8) | 1 |
| Age category of women | | | |
| 20-30 | 61(61.6) | 38(38.4) | 1 |
| 31-41 | 178(76.4) | 55(23.6) | 2.6(1.5,4.5)* |
| >41 | 245(82.5) | 52(17.5) | 4.2(2.36,7.58)* |
| Husband Education | | | |
| Illiterate | 356(76.4) | 110(23.6) | 1 |
| Literate | 128(78.5) | 35(21.5) | 1.93(1.17,3.19)* |

4. Discussion

In the current study the magnitude of physical violence in the past 12 month was 38.6%. Being old age of women and husband educational status were the main predictors of physical violence in the past 12 month.

In our study, the prevalence experiencing physical violence in the last 12 months was 38.6%. This is lower compared to a report of WHO in Ethiopia (48.7%) and Tanzania provinces (46.7%) [13]. However, our finding is higher compared to studies done in South African (25%) and Rwandan (20%) [14, 15] and Peru and Tanzania indicated that the prevalence of physical violence ranges from 19-29% [8]. The discrepancies might be due to difference the study population. Differences in the study area in which this study is done in rural area of Ethiopia in which majority of the study participants were illiterate and an area where physical violence looks like as normal could be also a reason.

Slapping was the most common type of physical violence in the past 12 months (47.6%) based on the report of Shi Melba refugee camp [16]. This was consistent with our finding in which four in ten women face slapped by their husband or partner.

In this study, respondents with the age group of 31 to 41 years old were three times more likely to experience physical violence as compared 20-30 years old respondents. This shows that as women age increasing the experience of physical violence is increased. Women live with literate husband had also statistically significant with experiencing physical violence (AOR= 1.93, 95%CI: (1.97, 3.19) than their counterparts. The study faces the following limitation; since, physical violence is sensitive issue, there may be social desirable and recall biases. In addition, since the women were from rural origin in which deep cultural practice is takes place so women may not report and don't worry of physical violence so this may make under or over reporting the findings. So, it better to consider this limitation in interpreting of this finding.

5. Conclusions

This study indicates prevalence of physical violence in the last 12 months was very high. Slapped was the common type of physical violence. Age of women and husband's education were the causes associated with physical violence in the past 12 months. This needs attention at all levels of societal organization, stakeholders, professionals and other concerned bodies to implement strategies among partners on physical violence. In addition, education and communication activities, pre-marital counseling and conflict resolution strategy centers especially among couples should be strongly intensified to ameliorate the situation.

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