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Violence against women and its relationship with self-esteem of married women in Tehran

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine Relationship between violence against women and self-esteem in women of Tehran. The research method was descriptive. The study population consisted of all married women in Tehran, and the sample consisted of 70 women who were selected by convenience sampling. The questionnaire was consisted of Asayesh & Golpasha Questionnaire on Dimensions of Violence against Women (2016) (AGDVS, 2016), which were completed by subjects. Findings show there is a significant negative relationship between dimensions of violence (economic ($p<0/01$), hostility ($p<0/01$), communication ($p<0/01$), verbal ($p<0/05$) and total ($p<0/01$)) and self-esteem. These findings show that dimensions of violence (economic violence, communication, hostility and verbal abuse) are probably more relevant in decreasing of women's self-esteem. This information can be used to interventions and training of family for counselors and therapists in order to promote women's self-esteem.

Keywords: violence; dimensions of violence; violence against women; self-esteem;

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1. Introduction

Unhealthy relations between the partners threaten the health of family. Nowadays, there are many evidences pointing to malfunctioned family relations and its associated violence in a family. However, despite mutual relationship between public (society) and private (family) domains, the essence and scale of violence in families are different. Family violence is a tool for consolidation of power and domination which tarnishes not only peace and security in a family, but human dignity and esteem (Zadeh & Fard, 2006).

Some consider violence as an act contrary to norms and nature. Some others regard it an individual or collective behavior which emerges in some specific situations. A third group defines it as any rough action intended to hurt someone. According to some others, violence is a spectrum of harsh and damaging behaviors which elicits negative reactions such as inattention and inadvertence (Mohebi, 2001).

Violence may be considered as an emotional and damaging act that a person commit in pursuance of his/her objectives; besides physical dimensions, it may also include psychological (obscenity, contempt, isolation, screaming, sexual abuse, assault) as well as economic dimensions (breaking home appliances) (Car, 2008).

Given to existing definitions, violence against women may be segmented into physical, psychological, sexual and economic dimensions. Physical violence is employed for physical abuse and harm and includes beating, torture, punching, biting, slapping, suffocating, snickersnee, shooting, burying alive and murder. Psychological violence is any rough act or word that may endanger mental health of another person and includes undue cavil, humiliation, obscenity, threatening to divorce and restriction of freedoms (Hanson & Wallace-Capretta, 2004).

Sexual violence is any rough behavior leading to sexual abuse and harm including physical harassment, phone harassment, prostitution and forced intercourse during pregnancy or menstruation (Nelson et al. 2004). Economic violence is any rough behavior aiming financial discrimination and pressure against another person inclusive of nonfeasance to meet financial needs of family and sale of home appliances. Non-payment of alimony, niggardliness, forced seizure of wife's salary, nonfeasance to meet basic needs of family members and misuse or confiscation of wife's properties are some examples of economic violence (Mohebi, 2001).

According to American Medical Association (AMA), nearly 5% of women experience different dimensions of violence during their life. According to findings, in 13.8% of marriages the wife experiences severe violence (Daton, 1988; cited in Khosravi, et al. 2010). Such statistics and other global statistics indicate that some women are abused by other members of family and suffer different dimensions of physical and psychological violence which bring about adverse consequences for women as well as their family (WHO, 2008; cited in Khosravi & Khaqani Fard, 2010). Therefore, this issue should be among research, medical and legal priorities.

An important psychological construct affecting personal and inter-personal functioning is self-esteem. Self-esteem is the person's feeling of worthiness and acceptance (Tajvidi, & Ziqami Mohamadi, 2012). People with low self-esteem are potentially prone to violence and aggression. Along these lines, studies have suggested that there is a significant negative relation between self-esteem and aggression. Moreover, low self-esteem plays the most influential role in predicting aggression among adolescents (Shafie & Safarina, 2011). Qeshlaqi (2011) reported that there is a correlation between self-esteem and aggression in adolescents. Shahedifar, et al. (2009) reported a significant difference in family self-esteem of two groups of subjects, namely with and without experiencing violence between the parents, in that the former exhibits higher self-esteem.

The studies show that violence against women is an obstacle in the way of equality, development and peace. Violence violates women's human rights or deprives them of their fundamental rights, so

as long-standing failure in maintenance and improvement of these rights as well as prevalence of violence against women have concerned many countries. A main specification of violence against women is its hidden nature, both for families and governments (Car, 2008). Given to aforementioned, dealing with the issue of violence against women is seemingly critical. The present study aims to explore different dimensions of violence in married women of Tehran and analyze its relation with their self-esteem. The main hypothesis of the study is “there is a relation between violence against women and their self-esteem in the society.”

2. Method

The current study is a correlational descriptive research. The population is all married women of 4th municipal district of Tehran. The sample contains 100 married women aged 20-60 with an average age of 35, of which 30 subjects were omitted due to incomplete questionnaires. Convenience sampling was employed for the study.

2.1. Tools

2.1.1. Asayesh & Golpasha Questionnaire on Dimensions of Violence against Women (2016)

As a 60-item questionnaire in the form of Likert spectrum (high, relatively high, medium, relatively low, low), it has been made by Asayesh and Golpasha (2016) to identify different dimensions of violence against women. The questionnaire explores 7 dimensions: 1) physical violence (items 1-10); 2) economic violence (items 11-20); 3) sexual violence (items 21-30); 4) verbal violence (items 31-40); 5) psychological violence (items 41-50); 6) hostility (items 51-55); 7) communication violence (items 56-60).

Validity: Formal and content validity of the questionnaire was approved by experts. Moreover, the subscales have high correlation with each other as well as with the total score of violence against women. It shows any subscale deals with a specific variable (Asayesh & Golpasha, 2016).

Reliability: Based on Cronbach’s alpha, the reliability of the questionnaire turned out to be 0.98%, pointing to appropriate internal consistency of it (Asayesh & Golpasha, 2016).

2.1.2. Eysenck self-esteem questionnaire (1976)

Eysenck self-esteem questionnaire (1976) has 30 items to which subjects should reply with mere “yes” or “no” as much as possible. If not possible, the middle choice, the question mark (?), should be selected.

Reliability: Hormozi Nejad (2001) in a research on students of Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz, Iran, computed reliability coefficients of self-esteem questionnaire using three methods of split-half, Cronbach’s alpha and Guttman. Reliability coefficients of self-esteem questionnaire were desirable and satisfying. Using Cronbach’s alpha, Basak Nejad (2006) also reported reliability of 0.87%, 0.88% and 0.84% for all subjects, female subjects and male subjects, respectively. By the same token, the present study calculated a reliability of 0.89% for this scale using Cronbach’s alpha method.

Validity: Hormozi Nejad (2001) employed construct validity method to evaluate reliability of the questionnaire. He reported validity coefficient of 0.74% and 0.79% for female and male students, respectively. He also performed Izenk self-esteem test and Ahvaz self-esteem scale simultaneously on two female and male samples of students of Shahid Chamran University and reported validity coefficients of 0.79% and 0.74% for female sample and male sample, respectively. Both are significant

at the level of $p < 0.001$. Findings of his study suggest that this test enjoys desirable and satisfying psychometric properties.

3. Findings

3.1. Descriptive findings

Table 1 shows different dimensions of violence against women and its descriptive information.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Dimensions of Violence and Other Variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample population
Physical violence	2.6571	6.45359	70
Economic violence	5.8571	6.82978	70
Sexual violence	2.2429	4.86465	70
Psychological violence	6.2857	8.31646	70
Hostility	4.0571	4.62158	70
Communication violence	3.5429	4.45813	70
Verbal violence	8.8000	10.93803	70
Total score of violence	33.4429	42.03609	70
Self-esteem	21.4000	5.35250	70

As mentioned, the present study considers 7 dimensions for violence: physical, economic, sexual, verbal, psychological, communication and hostility.

3.2. Inferential findings

Table 2 shows inferential findings inclusive of correlation between research variables (violence and its dimensions and self-esteem).

Table 2. Correlation Between Research Variables (violence and its dimensions and self-esteem).

Variables	Total violence	Verbal violence	Communication violence	Hostility	Psychological violence	Sexual violence	Economic violence	Physical violence
Self-esteem	-.254*	-.31**	-.276*	-.251*	-.164	-.166	-.237*	-.167

* $p < 0/05$

** $p < 0/01$

Findings of Table 2 show there is a significant negative relationship between dimensions of violence (economic, hostility, communication, verbal and total) and self-esteem.

4. Discussion

Violence against women is an important topic in sociological and psychological studies. Considering significance of this topic in both national and international levels, the present study aimed to study different dimensions of violence against women exercised by men.

Main hypothesis: there exists a relation between violence against women and their self-esteem.

Findings of present study point to a significant negative relation between dimensions of violence (economic, hostility, communication, verbal and total) and self-esteem, which are in line with findings of previous studies. One of the most important psychological constructs affecting personal and inter-

personal functioning is self-esteem. Self-esteem is the person's feeling of worthiness and acceptance (Tajvidi & Ziqami Mohamadi, 2012). People with low self-esteem are potentially prone to violence and aggression. Along these lines, studies have suggested that there is a significant negative relation between self-esteem and aggression. Moreover, low self-esteem plays the most influential role in predicting aggression among adolescents (Shafie & Safarinia, 2011). Qeshlaqi (2011) reported that there is a correlation between self-esteem and aggression in adolescents. Shahedifar, et al. (2009) reported a significant difference in family self-esteem of two groups of subjects, namely with and without experiencing violence between the parents, in that the former exhibits higher self-esteem.

We can conclude from this study that family is a refuge and shelter for all its members and lack of domestic peace considerably disturbs its functioning. According to findings of this study, with increased violence against women their mental health and self-esteem decrease which would consequently emerge in the form of physical problems, depression, anxiety and insomnia. Furthermore, it decreases women's self-esteem in the family and society. Hence, given to women's indisputable role in the family, it can be predicted that marital satisfaction and peace in the family would be decreased, negatively influencing the quality of communication between family members and development of children.

So, it's necessary to arrange multiple educational, advisory and intervention programs at different levels and demand national and local media to play a more active role in training life skills to families, especially women.

5. Limitations

1. Due to special nature of the study and its items on violence and sexual issues, female subjects' cooperation with the researcher was low.
2. The small size of sample population decreases its generalizability.
3. We could not reach husbands of our subjects to review their personality dimensions and mental health. Moreover, we couldn't verify replies made by the subjects.

6. Further Studies

1. To achieve more precise data, we propose further studies with wider samples and use of stratified cluster sampling.
2. It is proposed to perform the study within different cultural groups and then consider inter-cultural comparison.
3. It is proposed to perform a study on relation between structural determinants of health and violent actions in men.

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