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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS AMONG WOMEN SEEKING ABORTION SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is a very sensitive issue. It is prevalent worldwide in various forms like physical, emotional and sexual violence. The lack of women's autonomy and financial dependence towards family members and spouse can lead a woman towards being the survivor of violence. This can lead to forced sex also called marital rape and which causes the rise of unwanted pregnancies and seeking for the abortion services. This study aims to assess the prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors among women seeking abortion services. A descriptive cross-sectional study was done among 81 women who were seeking abortion services at Paropakar Maternity and Women Hospital. Purposive sampling technique was conducted from Dec 4 2022 to 31 Dec 2022. Structured tool from Nepal Demographic Health Survey, domestic violence questionnaire 2016 was adopted to assess the prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors in terms of physical, emotional and sexual violence using face to face interview. Descriptive and inferential statistics were performed using Easy R (EZR) version 1.36. The prevalence of domestic violence was 23.5%. Among the respondent who faced domestic violence, emotional violence was faced by all the respondents while physical and sexual violence both accounted for 94.73%. Domestic violence was significantly associated with age of respondent, duration of marriage and number of times abortion done with $p<0.05$. The risks of having domestic violence were higher among respondents with repeated abortion of 2 and more times.

KEYWORDS: Abortion, Associated factors, Domestic Violence, Prevalence.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic Violence means any form of physical, mental, sexual and economic harm perpetrated by person to a person with whom he/she has a family relationship and this word also includes any acts of reprimand or emotional harm.[1]

Domestic violence is the burning issue both globally and nationally.[2] Domestic violence against women is a global public health issue affecting them physically, sexually or psychologically by the family members including the intimate partner. Domestic violence is one of the vital causes of morbidity and mortality for women in every country and every culture. It is rooted in social and cultural attitudes and norms that privilege men over women and boys over girls.[3–5]

Globally about 1 in 3 (30%) women worldwide have faced either physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. The global prevalence is estimated to be 30-71%. Similarly, the prevalence of intimate partner violence range from 20% in the Western Pacific, 22% in high-income countries and Europe and 25% in the Americas to 33% in African, 31% in the Eastern Mediterranean region, and 33% in the South-East Asia region.[6]

The prevalence of domestic violence accounts for 56.7% in India with 51.3% reporting of psychological, 40% reporting physical and 13.5% reporting of sexual violence.[7] In Nepal too, violence against women is common. The prevalence of physical and sexual violence is 22% and 7% respectively. Similarly, the most common type of spousal violence is physical 23%, followed by emotional 12% and sexual 7%.[8] The prevalence of

domestic violence is open secret. As Nepal is a patriarchal society gender –based discrimination is perpetrated by males who are, or who have been, in positions of trust and intimacy and power – husbands, boyfriends, fathers, fathers-in-law, stepfathers, brothers, uncles, sons, or other relatives. Men have higher control over women's decision making and control over the resources.[9] Around 44% of men viewed that women are liable to be beaten and 21% of men and 23% of women believed that husband beating spouses is justified if wives refuse to have sex on demands.[10,11]

Abortion is one of the public health importance among women facing violence.[12] Between 6% and 22% of women terminate their pregnancies because they are in abusive relationship. Spousal violence is significantly related to pregnancy termination.[13] Women reproductive rights are intrinsically tied to intimate partner domestic violence.[14] The rise in unsafe abortion may be attributed to the violence. The pathway toward gender justice includes ending domestic and sexual violence. Prevention of intimate partner violence that is associated with pregnancy termination has been identified to reduce the high incidence of termination of pregnancies.[15] Thus the aim of the study is to assess the prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors among women seeking abortion services.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was used. The study was conducted at abortion clinic of Paropakar Maternity and women's hospital Kathmandu where in an average 150 women seek for abortion services per month.

The sample size of 81 was calculated using Cochran formula for finite population using the confidence interval of 95%. Sample size was calculated by using. All the married women attending abortion clinic for abortion was the study population.

Structured tool from Nepal Demographic Health Survey, domestic violence questionnaire 2016 was adopted to assess the prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors in terms of physical, emotional and sexual violence. Data was collected using face-to-face interview schedule maintaining privacy and confidentiality and ethical consideration including IRB clearance.

The whole instrument was divided into three parts.

Part I contained the socio-demographic information of respondents and spouse. Part II contained reproductive-specific characteristics of respondent. Part III contained the questionnaire related to domestic violence including emotional, physical and sexual violence. A single question was asked to assess the domestic violence in terms of yes or no.

Obtained data was checked for completeness and accuracy. Data was edited, coded and analyzed using Easy R (EZR) version 1.36. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, median and standard deviation) was calculated to describe the quantitative study variables. The inferential statistics test was used to assess the association of domestic violence and selected variables. Odds ratio was calculated to measure the strength of association. A p value of <0.05 and 95% confidence interval was used.

RESULTS

There were 81 respondents with the mean age of 29.80±6.01years. The mean age of spouse of respondents was 33.84±8.34 years, respondents' mean age at marriage was 19.28±3.52 years, and the median duration of marriage was 10 years (Q1:5, Q3:16.5).

Among all the respondents majority were less than or equal to 30 years of age. 56.8% had education above secondary level. Likewise among the respondents' spouse 59.3% had education above secondary level. Regarding the occupation status, 60.5% were home maker and 42.0% spouse were involved in service. Regarding the ethnicity of respondents and spouses, Brahmin/Chhetri accounted equal percentage of 38.3% for both. More than half (60.5%) of the respondents lived in a nuclear family and half had arranged marriages (50.6%). Half of the respondent's husbands had a habit of drinking alcohol. **(Table 1)**

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondent and spouse.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age of respondent		
Upto 30 years	46	56.8
More than 30 years	35	43.2
Education of respondent		
Upto Elementary	35	43.2
Secondary and above	46	56.8
Education of spouse		
Upto Elementary	33	40.74
Secondary and above	48	59.3
Occupation of respondent		
Homemaker	49	60.5
Others	32	39.5

Occupation of the spouse		
Service	34	42.0
Others	47	58.0
Ethnicity of respondent		
Brahmin/Chhetri	31	38.3
Others	50	61.7
Ethnicity of spouse		
Brahmin/Chhetri	31	38.3
Others	50	61.7
Type of family		
Nuclear	49	60.5
Joint	32	39.5
Habit of alcohol drinking by spouse		
Yes	40	49.4
No	41	50.6
Type of marriage		
Love	40	49.4
Arrange	41	50.6

Regarding to the reproductive characteristics of respondents, 72.8% were married up to the age 20 years. The duration of marriage shows that 50.6% had marriage duration up-to 10 years. 70.4% of the respondents have son while 55.6% of the respondents have daughters. 58.0% had done abortion one time. **(Table 2)**

Table 2: Reproductive characteristics of respondent.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age at marriage (in years)		
Upto 20	59	72.8
More than 20	22	27.2
Duration of marriage (in years)		
Upto 10	41	50.6
More than 10	40	49.4
Having son		
No	24	29.6
Yes	57	70.4
Having daughter		
No	36	44.4
Yes	45	55.6
Number of times abortion done		
1 time	47	58.0
2 and more times	34	42.0

The prevalence of domestic violence was 23.5% (19/81). Among the respondent who faced domestic violence, emotional violence was faced by all the respondents while physical and sexual violence both accounted for 94.73% (18/19). In 78.9% of emotional violence and all physical and sexual violence perpetrator was husband.

There was significant association of domestic violence with age of respondent, duration of marriage and number of times abortion done with $p<0.05$. The odds of having domestic violence were significantly higher among respondents with age more than 30 years (OR:3.87, 95% CI:1.17-14.27), duration of marriage more than 10 years (OR 3.81, 95% CI: 1.12-15.28), and abortion of two or more times (OR: 4.15, 95% CI: 1.26-15.36). **(Table 3)**

Table 3: Association of domestic violence with independent variables.

Variable	Domestic violence		p-value	OR (95% CI)
	Yes (N, %)	No (N, %)		
Age of respondent				
More than 30 years	13(68.4)	22(35.5)	0.02*	3.87(1.17-14.27)
Upto 30 years	6(31.6)	40(64.5)		
Age of spouse				

Upto 40 years	14(73.7)	53(85.5)	0.30	0.48 (0.12-2.12)
More than 40 years	5(26.3)	9(14.5)		
Education of respondent				
Upto Elementary	10(52.6)	25(40.3)	0.43	1.63(0.51-5.28)
Secondary and above	9(47.4)	37(59.7)		
Education of spouse				
Upto Elementary	10(47.4)	23(37.1)	0.29	1.87(0.59-6.07)
Secondary and above	9(52.6)	39(62.9)		
Occupation of respondent				
Homemaker	14(73.7)	35(56.5)	0.28	2.14(0.63-8.56)
Others	5(26.3)	27(43.5)		
Occupation of the spouse				
Service	7(36.8)	27(43.5)	0.79	0.76(0.22-2.4)
Others	12(63.2)	35(56.5)		
Ethnicity of respondent				
Brahmin/Chhetri	7(36.8)	24(38.7)	1.00	0.92(0.27-2.98)
Others	12(63.2)	38(61.3)		
Ethnicity of spouse				
Brahmin/Chhetri	7(36.8)	24(38.7)	1.00	0.92(0.27-2.98)
Others	12(63.2)	38(61.3)		
Type of family				
Nuclear	12(63.2)	37(59.7)	1.00	1.16(0.36-3.98)
Joint	7(36.8)	25(40.3)		
Habit of alcohol drinking by spouse				
Yes	13(68.4)	27(43.5)	0.07	2.77(0.85-10.13)
No	6(31.6)	35(56.5)		
Type of marriage				
Love	9(47.4)	31(50)	1.00	0.90(0.28-2.86)
Arrange	10(52.6)	31(50)		
Age at Marriage (in years)				
Up to 20	12(63.2)	47(45.8)	0.38	0.55(0.16-1.97)
More than 20	7(36.8)	15(24.2)		
Duration of marriage (in years)				
More than 10	14(73.7)	26(41.9)	0.02*	3.81(1.12-15.28)
Up to 10	5(26.3)	36(58.1)		
Having son				
No	8(42.1)	16(25.8)	0.25	2.07(0.61-6.89)
Yes	11(57.9)	46(74.2)		
Having daughter				
No	6(31.6)	30(48.4)	0.29	0.50(0.14-1.62)
Yes	13(68.4)	32(51.6)		
Number of times abortion done				
2 and more time	13(68.4)	21(33.9)	0.02*	4.15(1.26-15.36)
1 time	6(31.6)	41(66.1)		

* significant at p-value≤0.05

DISCUSSION

The study found that the prevalence of domestic violence among women seeking abortion services was 23.5% in the last 12 months. It was similar to the study from Bangladesh where the prevalence was 24.2%.[16] The findings are also supported by another study conducted in Italy (22.3%).[17] A meta-analysis showed the prevalence of domestic violence to be 24.9%.[3] The prevalence was found much higher in Uganda (71.3%).[18] These differences may be due to cultural and geographical diversities in the study population and setting and the different data collection tools.

Regarding the different types of domestic violence, the present study showed that among the respondents who faced domestic violence, all (100%) faced the emotional violence. Contradicting this finding, the prevalence of emotional violence was 49.9% in Nepal among those seeking abortion services.[19] This finding is further supported by a study in Nigeria where women who had ever experienced emotional violence were 33% more likely to experience pregnancy termination.[20] A study conducted in India also support this finding that emotional violence is a more prevalent among those women seeking abortion services.[21]

The percentage of women experiencing physical violence was 94.73% among those facing domestic violence in the form of pushing, shaking and slapping. A similar finding was seen in the study conducted in Nepal where the prevalence of physical violence was 78.9% and a study in Bangladesh (82.1%).[15,19]

This study further found the prevalence of sexual violence as 94.73% among those facing violence in the form of forceful sexual intercourse or threatening to perform sexual acts. In contrast to this finding, the prevalence of sexual violence was much lower in a study conducted in Nepal (39.8%).[19] The variation in the time between the studies and the change in society being open to discussing about sexual issues may be the reason for the contradiction.

The present study showed that most perpetrators were husbands, followed by family members. The majority of the violence (63.2%) was found in a nuclear family, which may be why the husband was the major perpetrator. Among them emotional violence was done by both husband and family members while physical and sexual violence was done by the husband only. A study conducted in Nepal also showed that the primary perpetrator of domestic violence was the husband.[10] Similar finding was found in the study at Bangladesh where the primary perpetrator of sexual violence was the husband.[15]

This study showed that domestic violence was significantly associated with the wife's age where women aged more than 30 years had the higher odds of facing domestic violence. This finding was further supported by the study conducted in Bangladesh where the average age of women who faced violence was 31.6 years.[16] Another multi-country study in Latin America showed that the women aged 30-34 had the highest prevalence of domestic violence.[22] Similarly more than ten years of marriage were found statistically significant with domestic violence.

This study showed the significant association of domestic violence with the frequency of abortion done with higher odds of having domestic violence among respondents having two and more times abortion than one-time abortion. A study in Bangladesh suggested that the odds of having one or more abortions were 35% higher for women who were victims of intimate partner violence.[16] Similar finding was found in Italy, where domestic violence was reported by 22.3% of women with repeat induced abortion and 14.8% of those undergoing their first time abortion.[17] This finding is also supported by the study done in Armenia which concludes that any form of domestic violence is associated with abortion and a study in Latin America showed that women who reported violence had 1.4 times the odds of experiencing pregnancy termination.[12,22] A Systematic Review also showed a significant association between domestic violence and the termination of pregnancy.[3]

The study findings may not be generalized to general public because the data suggests the prevalence among women seeking abortion services. But the findings can be used for further similar explanatory studies.

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is associated with the age of the women, duration of the marriage and frequency of abortion done. The study suggests screening of all the women seeking abortion services to identify the violence and refer them to OCMC for further interventions. Awareness regarding the domestic violence can be done through various programs that may subsequently reduce the rate of abortion.

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