

SPOUSAL VIOLENCE IN NORTH EAST PART OF BANGLADESH**Dr. Kanta Deb¹, Dr. Misbahul Hoq Chowdhury², Dr. Siddhartha Shankar Dutta³, Dr. Md. Tabibul Islam*³ and Dr. Iffath Farooqui⁴**¹Assistant Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine, Sylhet Women's Medical College, Sylhet, Bangladesh.²Associate Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine, Park View Medical College, Sylhet, Bangladesh.³Assistant Professor, Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, Sylhet, Bangladesh.⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine, Sylhet Women's Medical College, Sylhet, Bangladesh.***Corresponding Author: Dr. Md. Tabibul Islam**

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ABSTRACT

This is a hospital based cross sectional study carried out between July 2010 and June 2012 to find out the spousal violence. A total 105 women of violence by spouse (husband), who underwent treatment at One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, Sylhet were included. The mean age of the women was 29.80 ± 7.63 years and maximum women were between 25-34 years (50.5%). House wife constituted 83.8% of cases and lower class socioeconomic status was 61.0% cases. Educational qualification was primary (37.7%) followed by illiterate (26.7%). Most of the patients were from rural areas (60.0%) and family type was nuclear (74.3%). Number of child was 1-2 in 58.1% of cases. The common types of spousal violence were slapping or twisting (86.7%), followed by pushing or shaking (57.4%) and punching or shoving (46.7%). The common causes of spousal violence were dowry (38.1%), followed by poverty (20.0%) and establishment of domination (16.2%). In conclusion the common types of spousal violence is slapping or twisting, pushing or shaking and punching or shoving. The common reasons for this violence are dowry, poverty and establishment of domination.

KEYWORDS: Spousal violence, wives, husband, Bangladesh.**INTRODUCTION**

Over the years, the growing body of research on violence against women has brought the issue from a position of near-invisibility to being recognized as having far-reaching health and economic impacts for women and societies.^[1] There are several forms of violence against women of which one of the most common forms is perpetrated by husband.^[2] Domestic violence, particularly violence perpetrated by husbands, is the most common violence against women in Bangladesh.^[3]

Several studies have reported on domestic violence against women in Bangladesh. For instance, physical abuse were reported by 42–51% of women in Bangladesh, respectively.^[4,5] In 1992, Schuler et al.^[6] found that 47% of women of lower socioeconomic status in six villages in three districts of Bangladesh ever having experienced physical domestic violence at the hands of their spouse; and 19% of women reported having been beaten in the past year. In a study in 1999 reported having been slapped and beaten.^[7] In 2000, spousal violence was reported in 51% of households of a rural area of Bangladesh.⁴ In 2002, 67% of women in the same six villages as reported in the 1992 having ever been beaten by their spouse, and 35% in the past year.^[8]

Bates et al.^[8] looked at violence among lower socioeconomic groups, which tend to have higher rates of violence. The national rate of lifetime spousal physical violence was 49 % in 2007 as reported by ever-married women.^[9] In urban non-slum areas of Bangladesh, the rate of lifetime physical violence was 46% in 2006 with an even higher rate in the slums (62 %).^[10]

Hitting with the hand (85.4%), with a stick (63.5%) and kicking (51.0%) were also common in Bangladesh. Nearly half (47.9%) of the women who were subject to physical hitting by husbands were injured. Several reasons, such as questioning husband (29.9%), failure to perform household work satisfactorily (18.8%), economic problems (9.4%), poor childcare (5.1%), stealing (3.4%) and refusal to bring a dowry from the natal home (2.6%), are cited for violence.^[4]

Violence against women by husbands is found to be associated with many adverse outcomes.^[11] It is an important risk factor for women's ill health, with far reaching consequences for both their physical and mental health.^[12] It is an important cause of death, accounting for 40–60% of female homicides in many countries.^[13]

In addition, violence perpetrated by husband appears to be an important cause of maternal mortality in Bangladesh. Surveillance data suggest that nearly 10% of deaths of women of reproductive age in Matlab from 1982 to 1998 were directly attributable to violence from husbands and in-laws.^[14]

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study was to find out the status of victims of violence by husband against women.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This is a hospital based cross sectional study carried out from July 2010 to June 2012. A total 105 women of violence by spouse (husband), who underwent treatment at One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, Sylhet were included. Those who were refused to take part in this study were excluded.

Firstly, informed consent was taken from each participant after explaining all procedures. The consent form will be clearly describing the purpose and method of the study, confidentiality of the interview, risk and benefits of participating in this study, their right to participate voluntarily and refuse at any point of time.

Victims of violence against women were interviewed using the semi structured questionnaire containing socio-demographic and other relevant information about violence. The demographic characters included age, socioeconomic status, occupation, education, religion, family type, place of residence, and number of children. Type and causes of physical violence by husband were recorded.

The interview was held in a peaceful, non-threatening environment.

Statistical Analysis: Data were analysed with the help of SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) 16 version. Quantitative data were presented as mean and standard deviation; whereas qualitative data were expressed as frequency and percentage.

RESULTS

The age of the patients ranged from 18 years to 50 years with the mean age of 29.80 ± 7.63 years and maximum patients were in the age group of 25-34 years (50.5%). Islam was the predominant religion (86.7%) and house wife was the most common occupation (83.8%).

Socioeconomic status was lower class in most of the cases (61.0%) and educational qualification was primary (37.7%) followed by illiterate (26.7%). Most of the patients were from rural areas (60.0%) and family type was nuclear (74.3%). Number of child in the family was 1-2 in 58.1% of cases (table-I).

The most common types of violence against wife was slapping or twisting (86.7%), followed by pushing or shaking (57.4%) and punching or shoving (46.7%) (Table-II).

Dowry was the most common causes of violence against wife (38.1%), followed by poverty (20.0%), establishment of domination (16.2%) (Table-III).

Table-I Socio-demographic characteristics of the patients (n=105).

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-24 years	31	29.5
25-34 years	53	50.5
35-44 years	16	15.2
45-50 years	5	4.8
Religion		
Islam	91	86.7
Hindu	14	13.3
Occupation		
Manual workers	17	16.2
House wife	88	83.8
Socioeconomic status		
Middle class	41	39.0
Lower class	62	61.0
Educational status		
Illiterate	28	26.7
Primary	39	37.1
Secondary	27	25.7
SSC or above	11	10.5
Residence		
Rural	63	60.0
Urban	42	40.0
Family Types		
Nuclear	78	74.3
Joint	27	25.7
No of child		
None	11	10.5
1-2	61	58.1
3 or more	34	32.4

Table-II Distribution of respondents by types of violence against wife (n=105).

Types of violence	Frequency	Percentage
Pushing or shaking	62	57.4
Slapping or twisting	91	86.7
Punching or shoving	49	46.7
Kicking or dragging	39	37.1
Trying to strangle, kill or burn	8	7.6

Table III. Distribution of respondents by causes of violence against wife (n=105).

Causes of violence	Frequency	Percentage
Difference in opinion	7	6.7
Establishment of domination	17	16.2
Dowry	40	38.1
Patriarchy	5	4.8
Poverty	21	20.0
Not having a son	4	
Quarrels with in-laws	6	5.7
Alleging husband as unfaithful	3	
Asking husband not to drink	2	1.9

DISCUSSION

The majority of women in Bangladesh have experienced spousal violence in their lifetimes. The consequences of such violence can be severe and include immediate injury and homicide, depression, poor health, and suicide. Young women, women with no education, and women just beginning income-generating activities have a higher risk of spousal violence than other women.^[15] This study was an attempt to disclose the violence against women by husband in a tertiary care hospital in North-East part of Bangladesh.

In this study the age of the patients ranged from 18 years to 50 years with the mean age of 29.80 ± 7.63 years and maximum patients were in the age group of 25-34 years (50.5%). Nearly similar age distribution was reported in several studies.^[4,16,17]

In this study Islam was the predominant religion (86.7%) and rest were Hindu (13.3%). Domestic violence against women, especially beating wives by husbands, has been common in all culture perhaps in all times.^[4] Islam was the predominant religion may be due to this study was conducted in a Muslim dominating country.

The most common types of spousal violence were slapping or twisting (86.7%), followed by pushing or shaking (57.4%) and punching or shoving (46.7%). This result correlated with Aklimunessa et al.^[16] where they found similar types of domestic violence against wives by husbands but in lower frequency. Difference is due to their study was a community survey where the prevalence of different types of injuries were determined. But this study was conducted in a tertiary care hospital where the victims come to seek treatment and other supportive action. Parvin et al.^[17] found the most commonly reported act of physical violence against women by husband was slapping (56 %). Around 29 % of the abused women were abused frequently (many times in the last 12 months). About 46 % of the abused women reported ever physical violence. As a result of physical violence, 26 % women had sustained injuries in the last 12 months and 73% of the injured women needed health care. High rates of violence against wife in Bangladesh have been reported by different studies. Bates et al.^[8] found that 67% of economically disadvantaged reproductive-age rural women experienced physical violence perpetrated by their

husbands. According to Naved et al.^[18] 42% of reproductive-age women in a rural and 40% in an urban area in Bangladesh had ever experienced physical violence by husband. About 16% of the rural and 19% of the urban ever-married reproductive-age women in Bangladesh reported physical violence by their husbands during the past 12 months.^[19]

In this study dowry was the most common causes of spousal violence (38.1%), followed by poverty (20.0%), establishment of domination (16.2%). In this regards Bhuiya et al.^[4] reported that the most frequently mentioned reasons for verbal abuse included wife's questioning of the husband on day to day affairs (29.1%) followed by failure of the wife to perform household work satisfactorily (17.6%), economic hardship of the family (11.5%), failure of the wife to take proper care of the children (10%), not wearing the veil or conforming to other expected behaviour (5.5%), inability to bring money from the natal home (3%), not taking good care of in-laws and relatives (2%). The rest of the reasons included supporting the natal home, failure to have children, having too many children, dark complexion of children, family feud between the husband's family and natal family and suspected relation with others. Similarly, the most frequently mentioned reasons for physical abuse included questioning of the husband (29.9%), failure to perform household work satisfactorily (18.8%), economic problems (9.4%), failure to take care of children properly (5.1%), stealing (3.4%), refusal to bring dowry from natal home (2.6%). Jahan,^[20] reported that family quarrel was the reason given by most of the women as the cause of violence. Family quarrel was referred to as a value term that included many specific reasons such as husband's dissatisfaction over wife's management of expenses, housekeeping and child care, jealousy and suspicious nature, exaggerated sense of superiority over a wife as reflected in household decision making, sexual maladjustment and such. The reasons for discord were found to be exacerbated by stress resulting from prolonged illness in the family, sudden financial loss, loss of job and aggravation by in-laws. Non-payment of dowry was the next most important cause mentioned for violence. The difference may be due to mythological difference. Parvin et al.^[16] found the main reason for being physically abused by husband was verbal dispute (53 %) and perceived disobedience of the woman (29 %). Roughly 12% of the women were abused

without any particular reason. The above mentioned two studies were community based but the present study was a hospital based study.

The limitations of the study were (1) This was a cross-sectional hospital based study in a tertiary hospital (2) Sample size was small.

CONCLUSION

The most common types of spousal violence was slapping or twisting followed by pushing or shaking and punching or shoving. Dowry was the most common reason for spousal violence followed by poverty and establishment of domination. Therefore spousal violence deserves immediate attention and intervention in Bangladesh. Lifestyle-related factors must be taken into consideration to reduce of spousal violence in this region.

Author Contributions

Dr. Kanta Deb designed the study and collected the data, Dr. Misbahul Hoq Chowdhury designed the study and revised the article; Siddhartha Shankar Dutta designed the study and drafted the article; Dr. Md. Tabibul Islam performed the statistical analysis and helped drafting the manuscript; Dr. Iffath Farooqui critically revised the article. All of the authors reviewed and approved the final version to be published.

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