



Domestic Violence amongst Spouses of Alcohol Dependent Males.

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ABSTRACT: Introduction: Violence against women is a major human rights violation and an important public health problem. Various studies have found that alcohol abuse in partner was associated with an increased risk of Intimate Partner Violence in women. This study was conducted with the primary objective of assessing the occurrence of DV in spouses of alcohol-dependent males attending the de-addiction center of a tertiary care hospital.

Materials and methods: Total 60 participants were included. Using a pretested proforma, socio demographic variables of the participants were assessed. DV was defined as any act of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse by a husband toward his spouse over the past 12 months; measured by a cutoff score of 5 or more using the Domestic Violence Questionnaire (DVQ). This is a 20-item questionnaire.

Results: The mean score of DVQ of the sample was 18.8. DV was reported by 42 cases (70%).

I. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a major human rights violation and an important public health problem. Intimate partner violence (IPV), as the most prevalent form of violence against women. A multisite household survey conducted in India found that about 26% of women reported physical violence in the past 12 months.[1] Various studies have found that alcohol abuse in partner was associated with an increased risk of IPV in women.[2-4] Spousal domestic violence (DV) against women has mental health effects in the victims. Depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, self-harm, and sleep disorders are well documented to be mental health consequences of IPV.[5,6] The mechanism through which alcohol use, especially hazardous drinking, can trigger violent behavior is via its role in reducing self-control and increasing proneness to aggression. This study was conducted with the primary objective of assessing the occurrence of DV in spouses of alcohol-dependent males attending the de-addiction center of a tertiary care hospital.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted in the de-addiction center of a tertiary care hospital. Approval was obtained from the Human Ethics

Committee of the institution. Inclusion criteria were spouses of alcohol-dependent males attending the de-addiction center and belonging to the age group of 18–55 years. Exclusion criteria those with psychotic disorders, as diagnosed with ICD-10 and those who refused or were unable to give informed consent.

Total 60 participants were included. Using a pretested proforma, sociodemographic variables of the participants were assessed. DV was defined as any act of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse by a husband toward his spouse over the past 12 months; measured by a cutoff score of 5 or more using the Domestic Violence Questionnaire (DVQ). This is a 20-item questionnaire. It has 12 items to assess psychological violence (including social and economic restriction, insulting in public, neglecting, expressing suspicions regarding fidelity, and being unfaithful toward spouse); six items to assess physical violence (threatening to harm physically, slapping, beating, twisting arm or pulling hair, kicking or dragging, and choking or inflicting burns); and two items to assess sexual violence (ignoring by not having sexual intercourse and having forcible sexual intercourse). Scoring is done from 0 to 4 based on the frequency of exposure to the act over the past 12 months (0 – never, 1 – once/twice, 2 – three to five times, 3 – six to ten times, and 4 – 11 times or more). Other variables such as the number of years after marriage, duration of onset of AD in husband, duration of treatment for AD, period of abstinence, family history of psychiatric illness in spouses were also noted.

III. RESULTS

The mean age of the study sample was 37.5 years. Majority of the participants belonged to the age group of 36–45 years (25 of 60, 41.6%), were Hindus (45 of 60, 75.0%), had studied up to high school (26 of 60, 43.3%), and were homemakers (40 of 60, 66.6%). The average number of years after marriage was 15.4 years, while the average duration of alcohol use in husbands was 14.1 years. The mean duration of treatment for AD was 22.4 days. The mean score of DVQ of the sample was 18.8. DV was reported by 42 cases (70%).



IV. DISCUSSION

This study assessed the occurrence of DV in spouses of alcohol-dependent males, belonging to reproductive age group, attending the de-addiction center of a tertiary care center. It was found that more than two-thirds of the sample (70%) had experienced DV over the past 1 year. The India-SAFE study had reported such high rates of DV from Thiruvananthapuram.[1,2] A hospital-based study done in Palakkad, Kerala, had reported similar rates of DV in spouses of alcohol-dependent males.[7,9]

V. CONCLUSIONS

More than two-thirds of the spouses of alcohol-dependent males, belonging to the reproductive age group, had experienced DV over the past 1 year. This study highlights the need for assessing the exposure to DV and the mental health of spouses of alcohol-dependent males.

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