

THE INCIDENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, THE CAUSATIVE FACTORS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE FAMILY

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The research was conducted among low socio-economic level families to determine the incidence of domestic violence and affecting factors.

Methodology: It is a descriptive study. The population of the research consisted of 1455 students at a primary school.

Results: According to the statements of the children, 22.6% of the fathers and 6.2% of the mothers used violence against their partners. About 46.3% of the children were exposed to violence from fathers and 51% from mothers. Father's being unemployed, father's use of alcohol and smoking, presence of a handicapped family member low economic status and being a young child-mother were the factors that affected domestic violence.

Conclusions: We may conclude that domestic violence in the neighborhood was high. Most of the children were exposed to violence from both fathers and mothers.

KEY WORDS: Domestic Violence, Woman, Child.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence is an important public health problem that may be seen in every part of the life and has been increasing in the world. The World Health Organization describes violence as "Any real or threatening abuse exerted intentionally by physical power or governing power that results in or is likely to result in death, injury or psychological damage in the person subjected".¹⁻³ The most common form of violence is the one exerted by men against women and children.

Most of the violence that women are exposed to happens at home and is exerted by men. Children too are exposed to violence.⁴ In comprehensive research conducted in different countries, it was found that 16-52% of the women were exposed to physical violence.⁵ Research has shown that domestic violence is seen more than

other crimes in the USA where domestic violence happens every 15 seconds, 2-4 million women are beaten by their husbands, 2000-4000 of them die due to injuries.⁶ A study by The Institute for Family Research of Turkey discovered that one third of men exerted physical violence against their wives.³ Another study found that 34% of the families experienced physical violence and 53% experienced oral violence.⁵

Acceptance and recognition of domestic violence is always based on the cultural values of a society and its individuals. Therefore, it becomes difficult to determine whether it is true violent behavior or violence that is considered rightful and true by the society.⁷ In many societies, violence against women and children is perceived as an acceptable behavior. The lack of reliable and serious support systems for women and children who were exposed to violence and the lack of legal regulations against domestic violence help it to increase.¹ One of the basic roles of health personnel is to identify violence, to care for victims of violence and provide the appropriate services.⁸ For these reasons, research was conducted among families with a low socio-economic level, to determine the incidence of domestic violence causative factors and its effects.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study conducted by Health, Education and Research Area of Erciyes University between May 2008 and June 2008. The study population consisted of 1600 students of a primary school from a Kayseri neighborhood where there was increasing immigration from the eastern provinces and a low socio-economic level. The whole population was intended to be reached. A total of 1455 students were included in the study. On hundred forty five students who were absent at the time of study or who did not have family's permission or who did not give their permission were not included.

A written approval from the National Education Directorate of the province, from the school management and an oral approval from the

families was obtained. Before the questionnaire forms were distributed, a written informed consent was obtained from the students after they had been informed about the research.

The data were collected by researchers using a questionnaire form containing 49 questions. After the necessary investigations were made, the questionnaire forms were distributed to the students and collected during the same session at their free study times and guidance and psychological counseling lesson.

The percentage distribution, arithmetic mean and double logistic regression with enter method were used for the data evaluation, and each dependant variable was compared one by one. Later, all the independent variables were modeled with the forward logistic regression method. An alpha level of p less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant for all analyses.

RESULTS

The mean age of the children was 10.88 ± 2.20 , the mean age of the fathers 39.80 ± 5.78 and mothers 35.41 ± 5.23 . About 50.2% of the children were boys. Nearly all mothers (83.7%) and more than half of the fathers (64 %) had a primary school diploma; another group was literate and another was illiterate. It was found that 95.9% of the mothers were housewives and 10.4% of the fathers were unemployed. According to the statements of the children, 40.7% of families had higher expenses than income.

In this study 22.6% of the fathers and 6.2% of the mothers used violence against their partners. About 46.3% of the children were exposed to violence from fathers whereas 51% from mothers and 28.9% from an elder brother or sister once. Most of the children stated that the parents (79.6% said mothers and 29.3% said fathers) were right about the use of violence by parents and that the violent behavior was necessary for discipline.

An increase of one year in the father's age increased use of violence 1.033 times. A father's use of violence in a family with low economic status was 1.832 times higher than a family with good economic status. A father's use of alcohol

Table-I: Distribution of father's beating wife according to socio-demographic features

Features	State of father's beating wife		
	Beating (%)	OR 95% CI	P value
Age		1.033 (1.011-1.055)	0.003
<i>Economic status</i>			
A higher income than expense	18.4	1	
An equal income and expense	24.1	1.354 (1.031-1.779)	0.029
A higher expense than income	33.6	1.832 (1.190-2.821)	0.006
<i>Use of alcohol</i>			
No	22.2	1	
Yes	35.2	1.859 (1.033-3.343)	0.038
<i>Smoking</i>			
Yes	19.0	1	
No	26.2	1.470 (1.141-1.896)	0.003
<i>Presence of a handicapped family member</i>			
Yes	21.7	1	
No	42.0	2.289 (1.371-3.824)	0.002
<i>Working</i>			
YesNo	33.621.4	10.619 (0.424-0.904)	0.013

increased violence 1.859 times more whereas smoking increased violence 1.47 times more. The presence of a handicapped member at home increased violence 2.289 times more. A father's being employed decreased the violence against the wife 1.62 (1/0.619) times more (Table-I).

A father's use of violence against a child in a family with low economic status was 3.038 times higher than a family with good economic status. A father's use of alcohol increased violence against a child 1.87 times more (Table-II). An increase of one year in child's age decreased use of violence 1.44 (1/0.694) times. A husband's smoking increased violence from mothers 1.60 times more. A husband's being employed decreased the risk of violence by 2.15 times (1/0.466).

A mother's use of violence against a child in a family with low economic status is 2.14 times higher than a family with good economic status. A husband's smoking increased a mother's use of violence against child by 1.44 times. A husband's being employed decreased a mother's use of violence against a child by 1.54 times (Table-III).

DISCUSSION

Studies reveal that domestic violence has been increasing rapidly even though some studies claim that this increase is because of increased

reporting of violent acts.⁶The findings were interesting; the research demonstrated that most of the children were exposed to violence both from fathers and mothers. Moreover, the children said that they considered it normal and thought that parents were right to use violence. Domestic violence is a common and global problem. The rate of domestic violence is 21-30% in the USA⁵ whereas it is 17.8% in South Australia⁹ and 24.6% in South Africa.¹⁰ According to research conducted in EU, one fourth of the women stated that they were exposed to domestic violence once during their lifetime. According to the findings of the research done in Turkey, domestic violence was shown to be 52.0%. According to the findings of a research study conducted by the Directorate of Institute for Family Research, 34% of the families surveyed were exposed to physical violence and 53% to oral violence. In another study carried out in Turkey, 54% of the children were exposed to violent behavior from mothers while 46% were exposed to violent behavior from fathers.¹¹⁻¹³ Our finding are almost similar to other studies.

Some studies^{5,14-16} demonstrate a correlation between violence and educational status, profession, low economic income whereas some^{17,18} do not. In the present research, it was found that the age of the parents, type of father's occupation, low economic status and father's use of

Table-II: The Effect of Economical Situation, Justification of Beating and Alcohol Use on Father's Beating Child

Features	State of father's beating child		
	Beating (%)	OR 95% CI	P value
<i>Economic status</i>			
A higher income than expense	39.9	1	
An equal income and expense	47.9	1.404 (1.125-1.753)	0.003
A higher expense than income	66.4	3.038 (2.039-4.526)	<0.001
<i>Justification of the parent</i>			
Right	33.7	1	
Wrong	49.6	1.933 (1.475-2.533)	<0.001
<i>Use of alcohol</i>			
No	45.8	1	
Yes	61.1	1.874 (1.063-3.301)	<0.030

alcohol seemed to increase domestic violence. A more upgraded theory of Bourdeu (1996) emphasizes a mechanism that causes domestic violence was due to the "successful" man model; he feeds the household, is insulted by poverty and unemployment, thus his capabilities are limited. The insult creates violence against woman because men cannot be employed in the patriarchal economical structure, and this situation is normalized by women, too.^{10,19} It is similar to the behavior of normalization of violence in our study group.

The fact that men exerted physical violence against women due to unemployment is important in this sense. Normalization of violence justifies violence during child-raising. Accord-

ing to our findings, the mother beating the child is a common method of discipline. A study from Canada showed the rate of beating the child as a punishment as 60%. The same rate was higher in our study. This kind of punishment is related to a parent's justification of the punishment and a parent's past in which punishment with physical violence occurred. These are preparatory factors. The breaking of an oral promise between mother and child and the emotional situation of the mother were factors that caused mother's instantly beating the child.

When children misbehave and they are beaten, their growth is negatively affected. Problem solving behavior should take the place of a parent's angry behavior. It is a critical protec-

Table-III: The Effect of Economical Situation, Justification of Beating, Husband's Employment and Husband's Smoking on Mother's Beating Child

Features	State of mother's beating child		
	Beating (%)	OR 95 % CI	P value
<i>Economic status</i>			
A higher income than expense	44.9	1	
An equal income and expense	53.5	1.338(1.070-1.673)	<0.001
A higher expense than income	64.2	2.140(1.429-3.203)	
<i>Justification of the parent</i>			
Right	39.1	1	
Wrong	54.1	1.794(1.377-2.335)	<0.001
<i>Husband's smoking</i>			
No	45.6	1	
Yes	56.2	1.439(1.166-1.777)	<0.001
<i>Husband's employment</i>			
Unemployed	43.4	1	
Employed	51.9	1.536(1.080-2.183)	<0.017

tion strategy that can help to prevent beating behavior and child abuse among the generations.^{20,21} In our study, as in that of many others, use of alcohol increased violence exertion directly and proportionally. It is known that aggressive and sadistic behaviors increase with alcohol use. As a result, violent behaviors are predictable in people who use alcohol.^{4,22}

Most of the children stated that the parents were right about the use of violence, and that the violent behavior was necessary for discipline. Aggression and violence is a known behavior and may create irretrievable wounds in the society if due precautions are not taken or we do not interfere in time. The future of today's children is improved if they do not encounter any potentially aggressive or violent – even criminal – behavior from adults. It means we can have a generation with individuals whose behaviors are consistent and healthy if we have socially, economically and legally supported / protected families, and if we prevent violence as a justified behavior and reduce its cultural acceptance. In other words we have to change social values that normalize violence.^{4,22} As such the way to reduce violent tendencies in Turkey is to avoid violence as a method of child-raising.

CONCLUSIONS

We may conclude that domestic violence among families of the neighborhood school children was high. Most of the children were exposed to violence both from fathers and mothers. We also found that the age of the parents, type of father's occupation, low economic status and father's use of alcohol seemed to increase domestic violence.

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