

Domestic Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Relationships



Medical Science

KEYWORDS : Domestic Violence, lesbian, gay, bisexual , transgender .

Dr. Srimannarayan Mishra

P.G. Student, Department of FMT, IMS & SUM Hospital, Siksha ‘O’ Anusandhan University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

*** Dr. Tapaswini Mishra**

Assistant Professor, Department of Physiology, IMS & SUM Hospital, Siksha ‘O’ Anusandhan University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.* Corresponding Author

Dr. Niranjana Sahoo

Assistant Professor, Department of FMT, IMS & SUM Hospital, Siksha ‘O’ Anusandhan University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.

Dr. Priyambada Panda

Tutor, Department of Physiology, IMS & SUM Hospital, Siksha ‘O’ Anusandhan University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

ABSTRACT

: Domestic violence occurs in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community with the same amount of frequency and severity as in the heterosexual community. Society’s long history of entrenched racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia prevents LGBT victims of domestic violence from seeking help from the police, legal and court systems for fear of discrimination or bias. Aim and objectives: The aim and objective of the study is to find existence of domestic violence in LGBT community. Material and method: The study was done in LGBT community in Bharatpur Kinnar colony and gay men from different parts of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar.50 cases were taken. Statistical data was taken by asking the questionnaire. Conclusion: The result shows that domestic violence exists among LGBT community which was statistically significant, but is rarely reported to law keeping authorities.

Introduction

Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of behaviors utilized by one partner (the batterer or abuser) to exert and maintain control over another person (the survivor or victim) where there exists an intimate and/or dependent relationship¹. LGBT domestic violence is vastly underreported, unacknowledged, and often reported as something other than domestic violence¹. Delaware, Montana and South Carolina explicitly exclude same-sex survivors of domestic violence from protection under criminal laws. Eighteen states in United States have domestic violence laws that are gender neutral but apply to household members only². In 2004, gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals reported experiencing higher rates of violent victimization (sexual assault, robbery, and physical assault) than heterosexual individuals . Gay and lesbian individuals experience victimization at a rate 2.5 times higher than heterosexual individuals. Gay and bisexual men experience abuse in intimate partner relationships at a rate of 2 in 5, which is comparable to the amount of domestic violence experienced by heterosexual women³. Approximately 50% of the lesbian population has experienced or will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes¹.” In the UK there has been a small number of local or national surveys and other research regarding same sex domestic abuse. The Sigma surveys of gay men and lesbians (Henderson 2003)⁴found that one in four individuals in same sex relationships probably experience domestic abuse at some time – similar to figures for heterosexual domestic abuse against women. According to the CDC’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), which helps to establish the prevalence of these types of violence in the general population, 32.9% of women and 28.1% of men in the United States have reported experiencing some form of physical violence at the hands of intimate partners at least once in their lifetimes (Brieding et al, 2014)⁵. This includes various experiences of physical violence, such as being slapped, kicked, burned, or harmed with a knife or gun.

Aim and objectives: The aim and objective of the study is to find existence of domestic violence in LGBT community.

Materials and method: The cross sectional study was done in LGBT community in Bharatpur Kinnar colony and gay men from different parts of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. 50 cases were taken.

Statistical data was taken by asking the questionnaire. Questionnaires are as follows:- 1. Does your partner threaten you of bodily harm or property destruction ever in your relationship?(a)Yes (b)No 2. Forced, Coerced sexual act that shames you or make you feel vulnerable with respect to body, sexual performance, sexuality (a)Often, Regularly (b)Sometimes (c)Rarely (d)Never 3. Does your partner use or misuse financial assets including blackmailing or cheating - (a)Yes (b)No 4. Does your partner ever applies -Using personal characteristics, sexism, threats to “out” victim tactics to make you submissive: (a) Regularly (b)Rarely (c)Never 5. What was your age when you were first affected by domestic violence (physical, emotional, financial). (a) <18 yrs (b)>18 yrs (c)>30 yrs. 6. Have you ever reported domestic violence on you to law keeping authorities. (a) Yes (b)No 7. Have you ever presented your domestic violence issues at your community meetings/gatherings. (a)Yes (b)No.

Results

The study shows that age at which domestic violence (physical , emotional and financial) was first reported were maximum between 18 to 30 years and least above 30 years.

Chart No. 1: Age distribution at which domestic violence was first detected

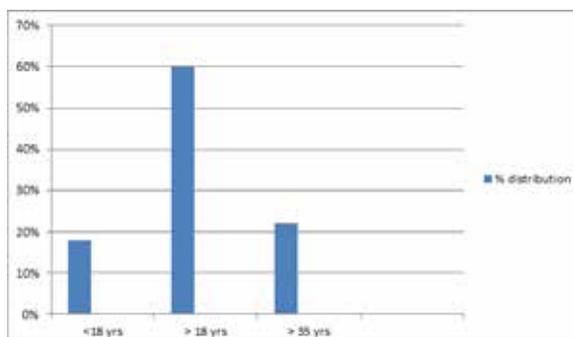


Table No. 1: Percentage of individuals experiencing different types of abusive behaviours

Type of abuse behaviour	Often , regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Emotional	12%	64%	18%	6%
Physical	20%	54%	22%	4%
Sexual	10%	56%	30%	6%

The above table shows that the most of the individuals reported emotionally (64%), physically(54%) and sexually(56%) abused sometimes in their relationship which was statistically significant.(p- value < 0.05)

This study shows that 30(60%) of the LGBT community were financially abused and 36 (72%) of them were abused for identity.

Table No. 2: Percentage of individuals seeking help and support.

Help sought from	Self-defined domestic abuse – all %
Your friends	58%
Counsellor/therapist	22%
Your relatives	06%
Lesbian or gay helpline/ organisation	10%
Police	04%

Of those individuals who said they had experienced domestic abuse, about one in five did not seek help from anyone (20%). 58% sought help from their friends, 22% sought help from the counsellor or therapist, 6% from the relatives, 10% from the lesbian or gay helpline/ organization and only 4% approached the police/law keepers for help.

Discussion

Domestic violence in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community is a serious issue. The problem, however, remains underreported. . In one year, 44% of victims in LGBT domestic violence cases identified as men, while 36% identified as women¹. 78% of lesbians report that they have either defended themselves or fought back against an abusive partner. 18% of this group described their behavior as self-defense or “trading blow for blow or insult for insult⁶.”

Goldberg et al (2013)⁷ found a lifetime prevalence of 31.9% and a past year prevalence of 10.2% among lesbians asking whether an intimate partner, a “husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, or someone [the participant] lived with or dated,” had “hit, slapped, pushed, kicked, or physically hurt” the survey participant. Messenger (2011)⁸ found a lifetime prevalence of 25% among lesbians, and Walters et al (2013)⁹ found a lifetime prevalence of 40.4% among lesbians.

This study shows that the most of the individuals reported emotionally (64%), physically(54%) and sexually(56%) abused sometimes in their relationship which was statistically significant.(p- value < 0.05)

This study shows that 30(60%) of the LGBT community were financially abused and 36 (72%) of them were abused for identity

Walters et al (2013)⁹ estimated that 33.5% of lesbians and

57.4% of bisexual women, compared to 28.2% of heterosexual women, have suffered lasting negative effects from IPV. The study found that 27.5% of bisexual women reported physical injury due to incidents of IPV, and 46.2% reported experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Some challenges come in the form of limited resources. Scherzer (1998)¹⁰ found that the single most frequently identified barrier to accessing assistance among lesbian women was money. It is not clear in what way money serves as a barrier for the lesbian women who reported that barrier. While money may be a barrier for both non-LGBT and LGBT people who are seeking such assistance, LGBT people have the added risk of rejection and isolation from family, friends, and society, and dependence on social networks that provide support and stability (including relationships with intimate partners) may make efforts to separate from abusers and seek help more costly (Ard et al, (2011)¹¹ ,Goodmark, 2013)¹². Some studies indicate that LGBT survivors find friends to be helpful (Renzetti, (1988)¹³; Turrell, (2000a)¹⁴; Merrill et al, (2000)¹⁵; McClennen et al, (2002)¹⁶; not surprisingly, one study found that individuals who are friends, mutual friends, or family members of survivors’ abusive partners do not provide assistance to gay and bisexual male survivors that is ultimately helpful (Merrill et al, 2000)¹⁵. McClennan et al (2002)¹⁶ drew upon a sample of gay men who had experienced IPV and found that 80.0% reported their relatives were either “not helpful at all” or “a little helpful.” Alternatively, Turrell (2000a)¹⁴, with a sample of 269 LGBT individuals, found that 74.0% reported that their family members provided helpful assistance.

In this study of those individuals who said they had experienced domestic abuse, about one in five did not seek help from anyone (20%). 58% sought help from their friends, 22% sought help from the counsellor or therapist, 6% from the relatives, 10% from the lesbian or gay helpline/ organization and only 4% approached the police/law keepers for help.

Conclusion

The result shows that domestic violence exists among LGBT community which is statistically significant, but is rarely reported to law keeping authorities. Important for general public to be aware of their language usage and respect for the individual’s identity. Increasing recognition of same sex couples is also required in the community. Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.

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