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HIDDEN HURT – UNTOLD STORY OF A WOMB. A STUDY ON PREVELANCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN PREGNANCY IN A RURAL MEDICAL COLLEGE, KARNATAKA.

Obstetrics & Gynaecology

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between adults who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. Such abuse may take various forms, including physical violence, sexual violence, emotionally abusive behaviours, economic restrictions, and other controlling behaviours. Domestic violence is a common worldwide phenomenon. We conducted this study with the aims

1. To know the prevalence of domestic violence in pregnancy.
2. To know the type of domestic violence in pregnancy.
3. To know the perpetrator of domestic violence in pregnancy.

This is a cross-sectional, questionnaire based study conducted in the setting of a medical college and hospital predominantly catering the health needs of the rural population. Pregnant women attending antenatal clinic, who were willing to participate were included in the study. Confidentiality and modesty of participants were maintained throughout the study. Data was collected from the participants in a private counseling room. Data thus obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics. This study had 200 participants, Out of which 12 (6%) participants reported to have experienced violence. 10 (5%) participants experienced physical violence, 9 (4.5%) participants experiences psychological violence, 1 (0.5%) experienced sexual violence. 9 (4.5%) of our participants experienced violence from husband and 3 (1.5%) experience violence from mother in law. We concluded that domestic violence in pregnancy is still prevalent in the modern era. Any type of violence in pregnancy should alert clinician and stake holders to take necessary action in prevention of the same. Psychological counselling should be a part of antenatal care.

KEYWORDS

Domestic violence, Pregnancy, Abuse.

INTRODUCTION.

Domestic violence is threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between adults who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. Such abuse may take various forms, including physical violence (slaps, punches, kicks, assaults with a weapon, choking, homicide), sexual violence (rape or forced participation in sexual acts), emotionally abusive behaviours (stalking, surveillance, threats, preventing contact with family and friends, ongoing belittlement or humiliation, intimidation), economic restrictions (preventing outside working, confiscating earnings, restricting access to funds), and other controlling behaviours.[1] Domestic violence is a common worldwide phenomenon.[2] Both women and men experience domestic violence but the prevalence and impact, particularly of sexual and severe physical violence, is higher among women.[3] The prevalence of domestic violence among women seeking health care is higher than in the general population.[4,5] The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that more than 90 % of the abused pregnant women are abused by the biological father of the child the woman was carrying.[6]

The prevalence of domestic violence varies widely, with approximately 15-71% of women worldwide experiencing some form of violence at the hands of their husbands or male partners.[7] South Asian countries report some of the highest rates of physical domestic violence.[8-12] The most recent Indian National Family Health Survey (NFHS 5, conducted in 2019/2021), a nationally-representative survey of women of reproductive age, estimated that 29.3% of ever-married women had experienced physical violence perpetrated by their spouses.[13] In comparison, reported rates of domestic violence, including physical and sexual violence, are consistently lower in countries, such as the USA (1.5%), the UK (4%), and Canada (4%).[7]

Women may experience violence at any point in their lives. Although there is no conclusive evidence that the risk of domestic violence escalates during pregnancy,[14-16] it is clear that a significant subgroup of women are exposed to violence at this vulnerable time.[17]

The overall prevalence of DV during pregnancy in developed countries was reported as 13.3 % in comparison to 27.7 % in the less developed countries.[18] The prevalence of violence during pregnancy among Indian women has been estimated at 18%.[19]

METHODOLOGY.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To know the prevalence of domestic violence in pregnancy.
2. To know the type of domestic violence in pregnancy.
3. To know the perpetrator of domestic violence in pregnancy.

Source Of Data:

Study Place	Study was conducted in rural teaching hospital Adichunchanagiri institute of medical sciences, Mandya district, Karnataka.
Study Duration	6 months
Study Subjects	Pregnant women attending antenatal clinic
Study Design	Cross-sectional, questionnaire based study in the setting of medical college and hospital predominantly catering the health needs of the rural population.
Study Sample	200

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION:

All the pregnant women attending ANC clinic at Adichunchanagiri institute of medical sciences, Mandya district, Karnataka, who were willing to participate were included in the study. All the study participants were given predesigned questionnaire to answer. Confidentiality and modesty of participating women was maintained throughout the study process.

Statistical Analysis:

Data thus obtained was compiled and entered in MS Excel spread sheet; descriptive statistics was applied, cross tables were constructed, data was expressed in terms of frequency and percentage.

RESULTS:

We had total 200 participants in our study, among them majority of the participants age at marriage was between 26-30 years 33%. 45% of participants married life was between 2-4 years. Majority 59% were primis, 74.5% participants were in third trimester. 96.5% of participants had booked ANC attendance, 99.5% encouraged the use of ANC services,100% of the participants had concordant pregnancy intentions.(Table 1)

Table 1: The socio-demographic and obstetrics characteristics of the participants (n= 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age at marriage	18-21	44	22.0
	22-25	61	30.5
	26-30	66	33.0
	>30	29	14.5
Duration of married life	<2	80	40.0
	2—4	90	45.0
	4—6	20	10.0
	6—8	10	5.0
Obstetric Score	Primi	118	59.0
	Multi	82	41.0
Period of Gestation	Second trimester	51	25.5
	Third trimester	149	74.5
ANC attendance	Booked	193	96.5
	Unbooked	7	3.5
Type of family	Nuclear	175	87.5
	Joint	25	12.5
Education	Primary	18	9.0
	Secondary	120	60.0
	Intermediate	34	17.0
	Degree	25	12.5
	Post graduation and above	3	1.5
Occupation	Housewife	187	93.5
	Employee	9	4.5
	Kooli	4	2.0
Husbands Education	Primary	9	4.5
	Secondary	81	40.5
	Inter	41	20.5
	Degree	59	29.5
	PG or above	10	5.0
Husbands Occupation	Unskilled	16	8.0
	Semi skilled	61	30.5
	Skilled	23	11.5
	Professional	5	2.5
	Business	50	25.0
	Farmer	45	22.5
Socio Economic status	Lower	1	0.5
	Lower Middle	71	35.5
	Middle	74	37.0
	Upper Middle	50	25.0
	Upper	4	2.0
Partners stance on ANC use	Encouraged	199	99.5
	Not Encouraged	1	0.5
Couples pregnancy intentions	Concordant	200	100.0
Previous Infant death	Yes	9	4.5
	No	191	95.5
Previous abortion	Yes	41	20.5
	No	159	79.5
Number of children	0	156	78.0
	1	41	20.5
	2	3	1.5
Number of female children	0	168	84.0
	1	31	15.5
	2	1	0.5

Out of which 12 (6%) participants reported to have experienced violence. Prevalence of domestic violence in our study is 6%. 10 (5%) participants experienced physical violence, 9 (4.5%) participants experiences psychological violence, 1 (0.5%) experienced sexual violence. (Table 2)

Table 2: Types to violence

Violence	Frequency	Percent
Physical violence	10	5.0
Psychological violence	9	4.5
Sexual violence	1	0.5

Among the participants who experienced physical violence was in the form of being pushed, being slapped, being punched, being kicked, being threatened. (Table 3)

Table 3: Types of physical violence

Physical Violence	Frequency	Percent
Being pushed	8	4.0
Being slapped	8	4.0
Being punched	7	3.5
Being kicked or dragged	4	2.0
Being choked or burnt intentionally	0	0.0
Being threatened or actually attacked with weapon/knife	3	1.5

Among participants who experienced physical violence was in the form of being insulted, being belittled/humiliated. (Table 4)

Table 4 – Types of Psychological Violence

Psychological Violence	Frequency	Percent
Being insulted	9	4.5
Being belittled/humiliated	6	3.0
Being scared/intimidated on purpose	0	0.0
Being threatened to hurt her or someone she cares about	0	0.0

Among participants who experienced sexual violence was in the form of being physically forced to have sex. (Table 5)

Table 5 – Types of Sexual Violence

Sexual Violence	Frequency	Percent
Being physically forced to have sex	1	0.5
Had sex when not wanting to because of fear	0	0.0
Forced to do something sexual which is humiliating	0	0.0

9 (4.5%) of our participants experienced violence from husband and 3 (1.5%) experience violence from mother in law. (Table 6)
Table 6 – Distribution of perpetuators.

DISCUSSION.

The prevalence of violence during pregnancy among Indian women has been estimated at 18%.[19] According to NFHS-5[13], 2019-2021, 29.3% of the married women experienced spousal violence between 18 to 49 years. NFHS-5[13], 2019-2021 gives data that 3.1% of women have experienced physical violence during pregnancy, but there is no data psychological and sexual violence during pregnancy.

The results of the study indicated that 6% of participants were exposed to domestic violence. The most common type of violence experienced was physical violence, 5% which was followed by emotional violence and sexual violence.

Similar studies are done across various parts of the world. One such study was done in Tabriz city, Iran by Naghizadeh et al[20], they did a study on domestic violence in pregnancy during COVID 19 disease outbreak, they included 250 pregnant women in their study they found that more than one-third of pregnant women (35.2%) had experienced domestic violence. The most common type of violence experienced was emotional violence (32.8%), followed by sexual violence (12.4%), and physical violence (4.8%).

Another study done by Musa et al[21] reported prevalence domestic violence in pregnancy to be 67%, where the most common type of violence was physical violence (25.93%) followed by emotional violence (25.62%) and sexual violence (3.7%). Other studies done by Hesami et al[22] reported domestic violence of 68.7%, Tavoli et al[23] reported domestic violence of 64.8%, Sarayloo et al[24] reported domestic violence of 46%. Emotional violence was higher and physical violence was lower in the study done by Hesami et al[22], Tavoli et al[23], Sarayloo et al[24].

Compared to other studies and the national report our study had lower prevalence of domestic violence i.e., 6%. Physical violence was higher in our study while other types of violence like emotional and sexual was higher in other studies. This difference in our findings could be lower level of reporting of the events due to hesitance among the study subject to report the violence.

CONCLUSION:

Domestic violence in pregnancy is still prevalent in the modern era. Prevalence found in the study could be just a tip of ice berg as the study questionnaire was posed with utmost confidentiality and privacy many pregnant ladies might not have revealed the truth. Any type of violence

in pregnancy should alert clinician and stake holders to take necessary action in prevention of the same.

Psychological counselling should be a part of antenatal care.

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