



## Assess the comparison of marital satisfaction between the abused and non-abused women

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### ABSTRACT

Given the high prevalence of domestic violence and its impact on the different aspects of women's lives, this study was conducted with the aim of determining the prevalence of domestic violence and its correlation with the marital satisfaction in women of Bandar Abbas in 2014. The present study was an analytical cross-sectional study based on the purposive and non-random sampling method which was carried out on 300 women referred to health centers in Bandar Abbas, Iran. The data of the study was collected by the questionnaires of demographic and obstetrics information, domestic violence, and Enrich marital satisfaction scale through interviews and was analyzed using SPSS version 22. The total amount of domestic violence was reported to be 54%. The psychological violence was the most prevalent one (45%). There was a significant negative correlation between the overall score of domestic violence and all forms of violence (physical, sexual & psychological) and the marital satisfaction score ( $P < 0.001$ ). Psychological violence was the most frequent type of violence against women in Bandar Abbas and there was a significant correlation between the domestic violence and marital satisfaction. Therefore, screening is recommended for women to improve their health condition.

**Key words:** Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, Marital Satisfaction

### INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is considered as an important public health problem worldwide which destroys the configuration of families and communities and threatens the health of people and affects various aspects of physical, psychological, and social dimensions of an individual[1]. Domestic violence is regarded as one of the causes of disability and death among women[2]. According to the World Health Organization, violence against women refers to any gender-related violence against women that causes physical, sexual, and emotional injuries in women. Such behavior can be associated with threatening, absolute deprivation of the authority or freedom and can be done in public or private[3]. According to a statement by the World Health Organization, domestic violence has been presented as one of the most important health priorities[4]. Almost one-third of women worldwide have experienced violence at least once in their lives[5]. According to a national program which was conducted in 28 provinces in Iran, it was noted that in 66 % of the studied households, the women have mentioned the experience of violence at least

once since the beginning of their married life; in 30 % of the cases, the violence was severe and serious and in 10 % of the cases, it caused to a temporary or permanent damage in women[6].

Among the main causes of domestic violence are: low-occupation and low-income levels of families, low education level[7], addiction and criminal conviction of the partner[8],lack of adequate support to women from their families, lack of providing suitable dowry to the bride[9], women's smoking, lack of independent source of income in women[10], marital dissatisfaction of women, lack of consanguineous marriage[11], the age of marriage and being away from family, unwanted pregnancy[12], pregnancy more than 6 times, having 4 or more female children and putting pressure on women for giving birth to a son[13], sexual dysfunction, history of psychiatric disorders, experiencing violence in childhood[14],and dissatisfaction with the marital life[15]. Among the consequences of domestic violence are the increased level of physical and mental disorders[16-18], increase in the spread of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases[19], menstrual disorders, sexual dysfunction and infertility[20], and the increased prevalence of depression and suicide[21]. Violence also causes a feeling of inadequacy in the management of family and a turmoil in the relations between husband and wife; and consequently, dissatisfaction in their relationships reduces the mental health and marital satisfaction[22].

Sexual satisfaction of the couples is one of the important and complex aspect of marriage and it is considered as the most important and fundamental factor for the stability and durability of a married life[23].Schoma et al. noted that the compliance and compatibility between the couples is the most important factor in marital satisfaction[24]. In general, researchers classify factors influencing the marital satisfaction into the cognitive factors, emotional factors, physiological factors, behavioral patterns, social support, violence, having children, stress, communication skills, sexual relationship, etc [25]. Due to the lack of research in this field in Iran, this study aimed to determine the prevalence of domestic violence and its relation to the marital satisfaction of women.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Study design

This study is an analytical cross-sectional research. The statistical population of the study included all of the women who referred to health centers of Bandar Abbas City.

### 2.2. Setting and participants

Finally 300 women were selected from the four health centers that had the most clients with regard to the covered population to participate in the study. It was tried to select the married women who had the ability to understand the questions and were from Bandar Abbas. Non-random and purposive sampling method was applied in this study. Thus, the researcher went to the selected health centers and completed the questionnaires for the qualified individuals who were willing to take part in the study. The sampling was conducted from September 2014up to the end of January 2014.

### 2.3. Data Collection

The data collection tools included the demographic and midwifery characteristics, the Domestic Violence Questionnaire, and the short form of Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire. In this study, violence means any kind of violent act committed by a husband that was measured in the three forms of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. The women who gave at least one positive response to the questions of the Domestic Violence Questionnaire are regarded as the abused women.

A questionnaire prepared by the Iranian researchers was used in order to collect information on violence; it was developed according to the social and cultural conditions of Iran's society and its validity and reliability was assessed previously[25-27]. The questions were adjusted according to the specific conditions and requirements of the target group in this study, so, its validity and reliability were tested again. The content validity of the questionnaire was evaluated using the opinions of professors in this field and its face validity was assessed by conducting a pilot study on 15 women and its validity was confirmed. The internal reliability of the questionnaire was also calculated using Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.85. The questionnaire included 26 items (the first 10 items on physical violence, 5 items on sexual violence, and 11 items on psychological violence) based on the 5-point Likert Scale (never, one time, 2 times, 3-5 times, more than 5 times).

The original version of ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire includes 115 questions which has 12 subscales. In this study, the short form of ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale was used which contains 35 items and 4 subscales (idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, communication, and conflict resolution). This tool was developed by Asoudeh et al. in 2010 and its validity and reliability were evaluated. David Olson and Amy Olson (2000) conducted a study on 25501 married couples; the alpha coefficient for the subscales of marital satisfaction, communication, conflict resolution, and idealistic distortion were obtained 0.86, 0.80, 0.84, and 0.83 respectively[28]. In a study carried out by Asoudeh et al. (2010) on 365 couples (730 individuals), the Alpha coefficient of the subscales of the questionnaire were obtained equal to 0.68, 0.78, 0.62, and 0.77 respectively. This questionnaire is based on the 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) which is scored from 1 to 5[29].

#### 2.4. Data Analysis

The significant level of  $p < 0.05$  and the test power of 0.80 were set as the default. Mean and standard deviation is used for quantitative data and the relative frequency and the absolute frequency are used for qualitative data. The data were analyzed by SPSS software version 22 using Chi-square test and Pearson correlation coefficient.

#### 2.6. Ethical considerations

The Ethics Committee at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences approved the study. The participants were informed that they could discontinue the interviews at any time for any reason. The interviews were stopped based on participants' willingness and emotional situation and continued when they felt it appropriate to do so. All of the interviews were performed in a private room ensure the confidentiality of the information that was provided.

## RESULTS

The amount of different types of violence have been reported in Table 1 and among the applied violence, psychological violence was the most prevalent one.

**Table 1. The frequency of applied violence against the investigated women**

Variables	N (%)
Domestic violence	
Abused	162 (54 %)
Non-abused	138 (46 %)
Physical violence	99 (33 %)
The most common violence (slapping)	67 (22.3 %)
The less common violence (burning or heating the body)	2 (0.7 %)
Sexual violence	84 (28 %)
The most common sexual violence (sexual intercourse without your consent)	71 (23.7 %)
The less common sexual violence (abstinence of intercourse for punishing you)	15 (5 %)
Psychological violence	135 (45 %)
The most common psychological violence (shouting and swearing)	102 (34 %)
The less common psychological violence (doubt the loyalty and slander)	21 (7 %)

Finally, based on the analysis of data, the total prevalence of domestic violence was reported 54% and majority of samples were subjected to violence by their husbands over the past year and 46% of them were not abused. Demographic characteristics of the investigated women are showed in Table 2. According to Table 2, there was a statistically significant relationship between the abused and non-abused women in terms of the variables of age, husbands' age, the duration of marriage, the women's level of education, the husbands' level of education, the occupation of women and their husbands, and the amount of their monthly income ( $P < 0.001$ ).

The results showed that as the age of husband and wife and their marriage duration was shorter, the prevalence of violence was more; and the violence was more among housewives with low educational level. However, there wasn't any statistically significant relationship between the investigated abused and non-abused women in terms of the relativity with their husbands ( $P = 0.329$ ).

Table 3 shows that non-abused women gained high scores in terms of sexual satisfaction except for the scale of relationships.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the abused and non-abused women

Characteristics		Domestic Violence		P-Value
		Abused women <i>M (SD) or No (%)</i>	Non-abused women <i>M (SD) or No (%)</i>	
Age (years)		33.28±9.86	32.08±6.52	P<0.001
Husband's age (years)		36.70±10.82	35.69±6.96	P<0.001
Duration of marriage (years)		12.12±11.50	9.17±7.25	P<0.001
Relationship with spouse	Relative	40 (24.7 %)	41 (29.7 %)	P= 0.329
	Strange	97 (75.3 %)	122 (70.3 %)	
Status of education	Primary school	57 (35.3 %)	8 (5.8 %)	P<0.001
	High school	55 (33.9 %)	29 (21 %)	
	Graduate	50 (30.8 %)	101 (73.2 %)	
Status of husband's education	Primary school	53 (32.7 %)	15 (10.8 %)	P<0.001
	High school	60 (37.1 %)	39 (28.3 %)	
	Graduate	49 (30.2 %)	84 (60.9 %)	
Job	housewife	87 (53.7 %)	47 (34.1 %)	P<0.001
	Employed	75 (46.3 %)	91 (65.9 %)	
Husband's job	Worker	22 (13.6 %)	1 (0.7 %)	P<0.001
	Employee	56 (34.6 %)	98 (71 %)	
	Self-employee	84 (51.8 %)	39 (28.3 %)	
Monthly income	Less than 5000000 Rial	30 (18.5 %)	3 (2.2 %)	P<0.001
	5000000 Rial to 1 million	56 (34.6 %)	37 (26.8 %)	
	More than 1 million	76 (46.9 %)	98 (71 %)	

\*Values in parenthesis are percents. The two groups were not significantly different ( $P>0.05$ ).

Table 3. Distribution of subscales of marital satisfaction among the abused and non-abused women

Subscale of marital satisfaction	Domestic Violence		P-Value
	Abused women <i>M (SD)</i>	Non-abused women <i>M (SD)</i>	
Marital satisfaction	28.11±5.36	47.06±4.91	P<0.001
Relationships	27.93±5.45	30.04±5.36	P= 0.053
Conflict resolving	16.84±4.57	29.07±4.29	P<0.001
Idealistic distortion	11.70±4.65	23.59±3.33	P<0.001

\*Values in parenthesis are percents. The two groups were not significantly different ( $P>0.05$ ).

Finally, the results of Table 4 showed that sexual satisfaction decreased in the investigated women by increasing the prevalence of domestic violence.

Table 4. The correlation between violence type and marital satisfaction score

Variables	Marital satisfaction score (Pearson correlation coefficient) P-Value
Domestic violence	- 0.178 P<0.001
Physical violence	- 0.292 P<0.001
Sexual violence	- 0.244 P<0.001
Psychological violence	- 0.391 P<0.001

\*Values in parenthesis are percents. The two groups were not significantly different ( $P>0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the women of Bandar Abbas with the aim of analysis the prevalence of domestic violence and its relationship with marital satisfaction. In this study, the prevalence of applied domestic violence against women was determined 54% which was different from the result of the study was carried out by Derakhshanpour et al.[30]. This study was conducted on 460 women who referred to the Shahid Mohammadi Hospital of Bandar Abbas with the aim of investigating the domestic violence spread against women. The results showed that the prevalence of domestic violence on women in this study was 92% which was much higher than the global statistics[5, 9, 12]. Maybe this conflict is because of the sampling environment; because the sampling

environment of this study is a training hospital which visitors are almost from the nearby cities of Bandar Abbas. The results of the conducted studies show that there is widespread violence against women in different countries. In Iran, many studies have been conducted about this problem. The results show that the prevalence of violence against women varies between 27% to 83% [31-35]. This prevalence was reported 36% in Babol[36], 83.3% in Tonekabon[37], 47.3% in Khouzestan[25], 46% in Kerman[27].

In the present study, the most frequency of the applied violence on women of Bandar Abbas City was the psychological violence which the results is in line with the findings of the study conducted by Derakhshanpour *et al.*[30] with a similar statistical population. Nearly 54% of women had been experienced the psychological violence. As well as in the studies carried out by Malek Afzali *et al.* in Isfahan[37], Narimani and Aghamohammadian in Ardebil[38], and Salehi and Mehralian on pregnant women in Shahre Kord the most reported kind of violence was psychological one[8]. In the study conducted by Hesami *et al.* the most common violence before pregnancy was the sexual and psychological (emotional) violence[39].

In the study which carried out by Arefi on women in Oroumieh, the most reported one was the physical violence. The most prevalent psychological violence was shouting and swearing which can result in more problems including family breakdown and different physical violence[40]. This result is in line with the findings of other studies, too[5, 25, 30]. It seems that in line with the cultural and social changes, the physical violence has decreased, but the prevalence of psychological violence is increasing[37]. However, it is difficult to separate the different types of violence because almost all types happen at the same time, and for example, physical and sexual violence set the scene for psychological violence, or vice versa [36].

In this study there was a statistically significant relationship between the abused and non-abused women in terms of the variables of age, husbands' age, the duration of marriage, the women's level of education, the husbands' level of education, the occupation of women and their husbands, and the amount of their monthly income. Based on the results of a study conducted by Balali Meybodi and Hassani, most of the violence from the viewpoint of the violence-affected women was inappropriate economic condition and their husbands' job[27]. Kamat *et al.* argued the rate of husband's physical violence against women in Goa is reported as 26.6% which has a meaningful relation with women's level of education, lower age of marriage, and their husband, using alcohol. In this study Unemployment, having a populated family and marriage age are among predisposing factors of violence[41]. Khani *et al.* believed those husbands who have less access to power sources such as income, education, and employment or take the lower positions than their wives use violence as an instrument to gain power and position[31]. Based on the results of a study by Aghakhani and *et al.*, There was a significant relationship between physical violence and husband's employment; that is, those husbands who did not have a permanent job showed more physical violence[33].

The results showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the domestic violence and marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction of abused women is less than non-abused ones and showed that the average of satisfaction of non-abused women was 1.5 times more than abused women. The results of the present study are in line with the studies of Raeisi Sartashnizi and Hemmati[42, 43], so that the results of this study showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between marital satisfaction and domestic violence. Furthermore, in the study of Khanjani and Zafar Gholizadeh which was conducted on married employees of state banks of the city of Oroumieh with the aim of finding the relationship between violence and marital satisfaction, there was a significant negative correlation between aggression and marital satisfaction and there was a significant negative correlation between components of aggression (verbal aggression, physical aggression, anger and hostility feelings) and marital satisfaction[14]. The study of Amin Jafari and Ghajavand showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the husbands' aggression and the degree of marital satisfaction of couples[44].

The results of Laurence and Broad boy was also in line with our results as 70% of aggressive couples reported marital dissatisfaction although just 28% of non-aggressive couples reported marital dissatisfaction[45]. Moreover, in the study carried out by Nyack *et al.* the degree of satisfaction in abused women was less[5]. We can conclude that the aim of aggressive husband is depriving women of their rights and privileges and domination over them. On the other hand, abused wife always feels insecurity, unhappiness, and humility and her marital satisfaction decreases gradually. Another study had divided the effective factors on applying domestic violence into the effective factors related to the individual characteristics, the effective factors related to the family factors, and the effective factors related to environment and social classes. With regard to the family characteristics, the above mentioned study has

noted the difference between the husband's and wife's interests, marital dissatisfaction, and husband's authority at home[46].

### **Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study was the women's lack of cooperation due to their embarrassment and fear of disclosure the completed questionnaire. The findings of the present study with providing suitable strategies for prevention, screening, and increasing awareness among health personnel to identify at risk women and preventing its outcomes will help us to deal with applying violence against women, especially in pregnant ones and promoting their mental and physical health during pregnancy and empowering them by informing them of their rights.

### **CONCLUSION**

The psychological violence was the most common one in Bandar Abbas and there was a significant relationship between domestic violence and marital satisfaction. So that with increasing of marital satisfaction, the prevalence of domestic violence decreased. In general, it can be said that widespread violence against women is a global challenge whose prevention seems to be vital. The best time of prevention refers to the school time when children are trained to respect each other's rights. In other words, passing comprehensive laws can prove helpful in decreasing the consequences of violence occurrences through standing against domestic violence, betterment of socio-economic condition and preaching public education through media, especially the internet and the presence of medical-psychological centers. Training the needed skills for prevention and stopping violence is vital for women. In other words, the need to increase knowledge concerning violence seem to be necessary to lessen physical, sexual, mental, emotional and economic injuries associated with this issue.

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### **Conflict of Interest:**

There is no conflict of interest to be declared.

### **Authors' contributions:**

All authors contributed to this project and article equally. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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