

# A Descriptive Study to Assess the Prevalence of Domestic Violence and its Effect among Women whose Spouses Indulge in Substance Abuse

Aditi Lalotra<sup>1</sup>, Akanksha Verma<sup>2</sup>, Akriti Devi<sup>3</sup>, Akshita Anand<sup>4</sup>,  
Anjali Billowria<sup>5</sup>, Shailla Cannie<sup>6</sup>, Neha Bharti<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>Students, <sup>6</sup>Dean & Principal at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi College of Nursing, Kakryal (J&K),  
<sup>7</sup>Nursing Tutor at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi College of Nursing, Kakryal (J&K)

**How to cite this article:** Aditi Lalotra, Akanksha Verma, Akriti Devi et. al. A Descriptive Study to Assess the Prevalence of Domestic Violence and its Effect among Women whose Spouses Indulge in Substance Abuse. Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development / Vol. 16 No. 1, January-March 2025.

## Abstract

Domestic violence, characterized by a pattern of assault and coercive behavior, poses a significant threat to the safety and well-being of intimate partners, with women being disproportionately affected. In recent times, the issue of domestic violence has become more pronounced among women whose spouses engage in substance abuse. The main aim of the study was to assess the prevalence of domestic violence and its effects among women whose spouses indulge in substance abuse, with the intention of providing an informational booklet. A non-experimental approach with convenient sampling was employed, and data were collected using the WHO (World Health Organization) questionnaire module including 46 questions. The study was conducted in Narwal, Jammu, and descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The results revealed a concerning prevalence of domestic violence, with 61% of subjects experiencing moderate violence, additionally, it was noted that a massive number of subjects were not seeking proper help, with only 40% seeking legal help and 20% each seeking help from the police or resorting to physical retaliation against domestic violence. Furthermore, the study found no significant association between women's education levels and autonomy, as shown by p-values of 0.276 and 0.095 for social support and property ownership, respectively. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions and support services to address the complex dynamics of domestic violence among women affected by substance abuse within marital relationships.

**Key Words:** Domestic Violence, Women, Spouses indulge in Substance abuse, Substance Abuse.

## Background

Domestic violence remains a pervasive issue affecting millions of individuals worldwide. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 1 in 3 (35%) of

women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> A study found that 71% of women experienced physical or sexual

**Corresponding Author:** Neha Bharti, Nursing Tutor, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi College of Nursing, Kakryal (J&K).

**E-mail:** nehabhartismvdcon@gmail.com

**Submission date:** Jun 3, 2024

**Revision date:** July 17, 2024

**Published date:** December 28, 2024:

This is an Open Access journal, and articles are distributed under a Creative Commons license- CC BY-NC 4.0 DEED. This license permits the use, distribution, and reproduction of the work in any medium, provided that proper citation is given to the original work and its source. It allows for attribution, non-commercial use, and the creation of derivative work.

violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime in Ethiopia which indicates a highest prevalence of Domestic Violence,<sup>2</sup> whereas, a study reported that about 9% of women have experienced intimate partner violence in Singapore which indicates lowest prevalence of Domestic Violence.<sup>3</sup> In India, the prevalence of domestic violence is alarmingly high, with around 31% of ever-married women aged 15-49 having experienced spousal violence.<sup>4</sup> According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) conducted in 2019-2020, approximately 8.4% of ever-married women aged 18-49 years in Jammu and Kashmir reported experiencing physical violence by their spouse at some point in their lives.<sup>5</sup> This statistic highlights the on-going issue of domestic violence in the region and underscores the need for targeted interventions and support services for victims. Domestic violence has profound and far-reaching impacts on the health and well-being of victims. These effects can be physical, psychological, and emotional. Physically, victims may suffer from injuries ranging from bruises and fractures to more severe consequences such as chronic pain, gastrointestinal disorders, and even death. Psychologically, domestic violence can lead to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal tendencies.<sup>6</sup> Emotionally, victims often experience feelings of shame, guilt, and low self-esteem, which can further exacerbate their mental health issues. Health professionals play a crucial role in identifying, addressing, and preventing domestic violence. They are often the first point of contact for victims and thus have a unique opportunity to provide support and intervention. The role of health professionals includes: Screening and Identification, Providing Medical Care and Documentation, Offering Psychological Support, Referring to Support Services, and Advocacy and Education.<sup>7</sup> According to World Health Organization (WHO), domestic violence is a major public health issue and a violation of women's rights. The WHO emphasizes the need for a coordinated, multi-sectoral response to address this problem, including the health, legal, and social sectors. The WHO's latest declaration calls for countries to strengthen their health systems to better support victims of domestic violence, ensure access to comprehensive services, and implement prevention programs that address the root causes of violence.<sup>8</sup>

The research conducted by the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse elucidated the alarming prevalence of child abuse cases linked to parental substance abuse, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions. The symbiotic relationship between child abuse and domestic violence further underscores the systemic nature of these interrelated crises, needing comprehensive strategies to break the cycle of trauma.<sup>9</sup>

### **Need of the Study**

Family, revered as a bastion of stability and support, is increasingly besieged by the scourge of substance abuse, which serves as a potent destabilizing force.<sup>10</sup> Substance abuse exacts a profound toll on marital relationships, introducing strains that permeate the fabric of familial bonds.<sup>11</sup> The repercussions extend beyond mere marital discord, casting shadows upon financial and socioeconomic stability.<sup>12</sup> While substance abuse engenders overt marital problems, its insidious effects extend far beyond, ensnaring women in a web of domestic violence, anxiety, depression, and stress.<sup>13</sup> Women, grappling with feelings of inadequacy and self-blame, confront the specter of spousal substance abuse, contending with the harrowing reality of intimate partner violence.<sup>14</sup> Domestic violence, a pervasive manifestation of power and control, inflicts grievous harm upon women, precipitating a cascade of ill health and psychological distress, including reproductive and sexual health issues, injuries, and suicidal ideations.<sup>15</sup>

The prevalence of domestic violence has appeared as a pressing societal concern, underscored by national surveys documenting alarmingly high rates of spousal violence.<sup>16</sup> Considering the escalating prevalence of substance abuse and domestic violence within contemporary society, there is an urgent imperative to conduct a community-based study to assess the prevalence of domestic violence among women ensnared in relationships marred by spousal substance abuse.<sup>17</sup> By elucidating the complex interplay between addiction, violence, and familial dynamics, this study looks to inform evidence-based interventions aimed at mitigating the pervasive harms inflicted upon vulnerable individuals and families.<sup>18</sup>

**Material and Methods**

This descriptive study utilized a quantitative non-experimental approach conducted in Narwal, Jammu. Participants were approached through local community Pradhan to gather data on the prevalence and impact of domestic violence among women affected by spousal substance abuse. Women who were married, whose spouses indulges in substance abuse, women who suffered from domestic violence and also willing to participated in the study were included, whereas women who suffered from domestic violence but other than substance abuse and given incomplete responses to modified structured questionnaire were excluded. Informed consent was taken from the participants. Quantitative data were collected through structured surveys administered to a representative sample of 50 women in the target population.

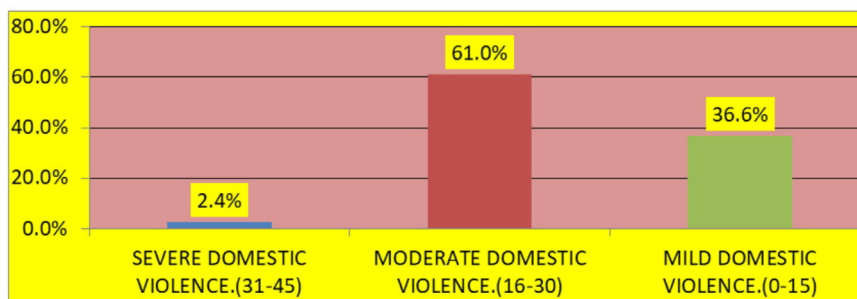
**Results**

The study encompassed a diverse sample, with most participants falling within the age group of 20-30 years. An outsize proportion of the subjects identified as belonging to the Hindu religion (100%). Regarding educational attainment, many participants were illiterate (92.7). Analysis of the educational status of spouses revealed a similar trend, with the majority being illiterate (80.5%). Marriage duration varied among the participants, with majority of notable percentages reporting 6-10 years (17.1%) and 11-14 years (17.1%). In terms of employment status, a considerable proportion of women identified as self-employed (63.4%). Conversely, most spouses were self-employed (85.5%). Income distribution among the participants showed that 82.8% earned less than 10,000 per month. Family structure varied, with 58.5% of participants existing in joint families. Regarding the number of children, 58.5% had more than two children. Substance abuse was prevalent

among spouses, with 85.4% consuming alcohol and 14.6% smoking cigarettes or beedis. Analysis of domestic violence duration revealed that most of participants i.e. 48.8% experienced abuse for less than a year. Additionally, majority of participants i.e. 63.4% reported no thoughts of self-harm. Property ownership was limited among participants, with 53.7% lacking private property, and 46.3% owning assets. Most participants (73.2%) lacked social support, while 26.8% reported having a support system in place.

According to effects of domestic violence among the women whose spouse indulge in substance abuse, the majority of subjects experience headache (85.3%), poor appetite (82.9%), insomnia (70.7%),easily frightened (78.04%) nervousness, tension(90.2%). Also subjects feel unhappy (87.7%), trouble to think clearly (82.9%), cry more than usual (63.4%), difficulty to enjoy daily activities (82.9%). Result also showed that subjects are suffering from their daily work i.e. 82.9, 70.7% subjects also unable to play a useful part in life. Most of subjects feel that they are worthless person i.e. 56.09%, 63.4% subjects feel tired and uncomfortable all time and majority of subjects seen their spouse to take substance in past 12 months i.e. 80.4%, 30% of subjects experienced problem related to money and family. Result also revealed that 65.8% subjects spouse insulted them or made them feel bad, 51.2% subjects humiliated by their spouses in front of other people.

The results of the study also showed that most subjects experiencing moderate levels of domestic violence i.e.61.0%. This finding underscores the nuanced nature of abuse within marital relationships, highlighting the diverse spectrum of behaviors and dynamics that contribute to the overall experience of violence. **(Figure 1)**



**Figure 1: This figure depicts prevalence of domestic violence among women whose spouses indulges in substance abuses.**

The findings of the study reveal a diverse range of responses among subjects when faced with domestic violence. Among the participants, 40% opted to seek legal help, showing a proactive approach towards addressing the abuse through legal channels. (Table No. 1)

ACTIONS	%
Fighting back physically	20%
Police help	20%
Legal help	40%

**Table 1. Percentage distribution of subjects, whether they able to take appropriate action against their partners when they are domestically abused.**

The findings of the study suggest that women's education level was not significantly associated with measures of autonomy, including social support and ownership of property. This conclusion is supported by the calculated p-values of 0.276 and 0.095 for social support and property ownership, respectively.

### Discussion

The prevalence of domestic violence seen in this study aligns with findings from similar investigations conducted by Shah SH et al.<sup>19</sup> and Appiah Seth Christopher yaw et al.<sup>20</sup> reported a prevalence rate of 32.3% for any form of violence among their study participants, corroborating the notion of pervasive violence within intimate relationships. Interestingly, the present study reveals a nuanced understanding of the nature and severity of domestic violence experienced by participants. The majority of subjects were categorized as experiencing moderate domestic violence i.e., 61.0%, underscoring the nuanced spectrum of abuse within marital relationships.

The findings from the study conducted by Appiah Seth Christopher Yaw et al.<sup>20</sup> resonate with the results of the present study, shedding light on the multifaceted challenges faced by women in responding to domestic abuse within the context of marital relationships. The aimed to examine women's ability to take proper action, whether legal or otherwise, when confronted with domestic abuse. Appiah Seth Christopher Yaw et al. emphasize the challenges faced by women in reporting cases of domestic abuse, citing fears of marital or relationship

dissolution as a significant barrier to seeking help. In terms of response mechanisms to domestic abuse, the present study echoes the diverse range of actions taken by women in response to violence. While some women opt for legal or police help, others may resort to physical self-defense or choose not to seek help at all. This diversity in response underscores the complex and individualized nature of coping strategies employed by survivors of domestic abuse.

These findings echo the observations made by Thiago Ranganathan et al.<sup>21</sup>, who explored the association between women's autonomy and educational attainment. While the present study did not find a significant association between women's education and social support or property ownership, it elucidated the disparities in economic and social autonomy between urban and rural women.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the study shed light on the complex dynamics surrounding domestic violence within marital relationships. The prevalence of moderate levels of domestic violence among most subjects underscores the nuanced nature of abuse, emphasizing the diverse spectrum of behaviors and dynamics that contribute to the overall experience of violence. Furthermore, the study's exploration of the association between women's education level and measures of autonomy yielded noteworthy insights. Contrary to expectations, women's education level was not found to be significantly associated with social support or ownership of property. These findings underscore the need for a deeper understanding of the complex factors that influence women's autonomy beyond educational attainment. Overall, the study underscores the importance of comprehensive approaches to addressing domestic violence, including support services, legal interventions, and efforts to promote gender equality and empowerment.

**Ethical clearance:** Taken from ethical committee of institution. The study Ref. No. is SMVDCoN/PEC/2022/143 Dated: 28/09/2022

**Source of funding:** Self

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

## References

- World Health Organization. Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>.
- Central Statistical Agency, ICF International. Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Central Statistical Agency and ICF International; 2016.
- Ministry of Social and Family Development. Statistics on Domestic Violence. Singapore: Ministry of Social and Family Development; 2017.
- National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), India, 2015-16. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. Available from: <http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-4Reports/India.pdf>
- International Institute for Population Sciences. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-20: India Fact Sheet. Mumbai, India: International Institute for Population Sciences; 2020
- Garcia-Moreno C, Jansen HA, Ellsberg M, Heise L, Watts CH. WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2005.
- Feder GS, Hutson M, Ramsay J, Taket AR. Women exposed to intimate partner violence: expectations and experiences when they encounter health care professionals: a meta-analysis of qualitative studies. *Arch Intern Med*. 2006;166(1):22-37.
- World Health Organization. Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. Geneva: WHO; 2013. Available from: [<https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/>]
- McCurdy K, Daro D. Current trends in child abuse reporting and fatalities: The results of the 1992 annual fifty state survey. Chicago: National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research. 1993 Apr.
- Gilchrist G, Radcliffe P, Noto AR, d'Oliveira AF. The interplay between intimate partner violence, substance misuse and mental health in male and female perpetrators: A systematic review of the literature. *Aggress Violent Behav*. 2019;47:18-31.
- Murphy CM, Ting LA. The effects of treatment for substance use problems on intimate partner violence: A review of empirical data. *Aggress Violent Behav*. 2010;15(5):325-333.
- Testa M, Leonard KE. The impact of marital aggression on women's psychological and marital functioning in a newlywed sample. *J Fam Violence*. 2001;16(2):115-130.
- Kaysen D, Dillworth TM, Simpson T, Waldrop A, Larimer ME, Resick PA. Domestic violence and alcohol use: Trauma-related symptoms and motives for drinking. *Addict Behav*. 2007;32(6):1272-1283.
- Devries KM, Mak JY, García-Moreno C, Petzold M, Child JC, Falder G, et al. The global prevalence of intimate partner violence against women. *Science*. 2013;340(6140):1527-1528.
- Campbell JC. Health consequences of intimate partner violence. *Lancet*. 2002;359(9314):1331-1336.
- National Crime Records Bureau. Crime in India 2019: Statistics. New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs; 2020.
- Jewkes R. Intimate partner violence: causes and prevention. *Lancet*. 2002;359(9315):1423-1429.
- Babcock JC, Green CE, Robie C. Does batterers' treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment. *Clin Psychol Rev*. 2004;23(8):1023-1053.
- Shah SH, Abbas A, Hassan SR, et al. Prevalence of Domestic Violence and Its Correlation with Depression Among Women in Karachi, Pakistan. *J Pak Med Assoc*. 2010;60(2):136-139.
- Appiah SCY, Boamah EA, Adu-Gyamfi AB. Prevalence and Predictors of Intimate Partner Violence in Ghana. *BMC Public Health*. 2020;20(1):239.
- Ranganathan T, Heise L, MacPherson EE, Muvhango L, MacPhail C, Stöckl H. Exploring the association between women's autonomy and educational attainment: Implications for social support and property ownership.