

Review report

Final title: Patterns and predictors of intimate partner violence among married women living in urban informal settlements of Bangladesh: A cross-sectional survey

Title at submission: Patterns and predictors of intimate partner violence among married women living in urban informal settlements of Bangladesh: Cross-sectional survey

Submission date: 1 Sep 2025

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Reviewer A: Fariha Haseen, ORCID: [0009-0004-9040-1664](https://orcid.org/0009-0004-9040-1664)

Overview

The manuscript investigates intimate partner violence (IPV) among 607 ever-married women in the slums of Dhaka North City Corporations, Dhaka South City Corporations, and Gazipur City Corporations. The study was carried out within the areas where icddr,b was operating the Health and Demographic Surveillance System revealing High levels of physical (66%), economic (47%), sexual (44%), and emotional (38%) violence. Key predictors include low education, employment, and geographical location. Multivariate logistic regressions highlight significant associations, particularly with education level and working status. The research underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and evidence-based policies to mitigate IPV among vulnerable populations.

- 1. Comment** Does the abstract provide a complete and accurate description of the content of the article?
No Line Number 25-28: The title of the paper, is 'Patterns and Predictors of Intimate Partner Violence Among Married Women Living in Urban Informal Settlements of Bangladesh: A Cross-Sectional Survey,' accurately reflects the study's focus on intimate partner violence (IPV). However, the abstract begins with a discussion on gender-based violence (GBV), which, while related, encompasses a broader range of violence than IPV specifically. To enhance clarity and precision, the abstract should be revised to focus primarily on IPV, aligning closely with the study's objectives and scope.

Response We have updated the abstract introduction as per reviewer comments in Line Number 25-28
- 2. Comment** 1. Line Number 30-32: While the methods are summarized, the statistical methods (e.g., bivariate and multivariate analyses) are not mentioned. Including key aspects like logistic regression would make the abstract more comprehensive.
2. The mention of the specific characteristics of the population (e.g., slum-dwelling married women) could be emphasized further for clarity.

Response We have updated the abstract methodology including statistical analysis methods as per reviewer comments in Line Number 30-34
- 3. Comment** Line number 34-39: The results in the abstract could mention specific statistics, like the percentage of women experiencing different types of violence, which is presented in detail in the main body of the manuscript.

Response In the abstract the percentage of women experiencing different types of violence is mentioned in Line Number 36-38
- 4. Comment** Line number 41-45: The abstract should conclude with a sentence or two summarizing the key implications of the findings. It's important to convey the significance of the results and how they contribute to addressing IPV in slums.

Response We have updated the abstract conclusion by summarizing the key implications as per reviewer comments in Line Number 43-46
- 5. Comment** Are the study objective(s) clearly stated and logical?
No Line 98-101: A statement that ties the findings to potential policy or programmatic interventions could further enhance the objectives' logical flow, emphasizing the study's practical implications.

Response We have updated the study objective as per reviewer comments in Line Number 101-104
- 6. Comment** Are the methods described in sufficient detail so that the study could be reproduced?
No Line 134-156: Please mention the reference of different types of violence measurement.

Response We have added reference (ref#17) as per reviewer comments in Line Number 135.
- 7. Comment** Line 175-176: Ethical approval and informed consent procedures would provide additional clarity for reproducibility. Where and when the informed consent and data collection was done from the working women and the women of households, need to be clarified.

Response We have added Ethical consideration section as per reviewer comments in Line Number 163-166.
- 8. Comment** Line Number 177 -178: A brief mention of whether the data collectors were trained, and to what extent, could be useful to ensure consistent data quality.

Response We have added training information as per reviewer comments in Line Number 128.
- 9. Comment** Are statistics used appropriately and described fully?

No Line 186-187: Among working women only 18% are domestic workers, what are the other types of occupation among working women, could you please mention. It was mentioned in the result section that the working women from Gazipur site experienced more IPV, so it is important to know the type of occupation as women are predominantly factory workers in that site.

Response We have added women's working information in Line Number 198-200.

10. **Comment** Line number 240: It is not mentioned whether effect sizes (such as odds ratio of that are .s) and confidence intervals were reported alongside p-values in the regression models. Reporting these would give a clearer sense of the strength and precision of the associations. Confidence intervals, in particular, help in understanding the variability of estimates and the robustness of the findings.

Response We have added OR and 95% CI in Line Number 255.

11. **Comment** **Is the discussion section critical and comprehensive about the main message of the manuscript?**

No Line 254: The discussion must be more coherent with the results for instance.

It's unclear whether working women are more likely to experience violence because they work, or whether women who have experienced violence are more likely to work due to financial need.

Response Thank you for the comment. We have made our statement based on the available study data. In line number 309-314, for association between women's working status we mentioned that "it is not possible to determine the direction of causality, though it seems plausible, and other research has suggested, that working women are exposed to greater risk of violence from their husbands because their employment threatens the gendered hierarchy within the household.^[19-21]"

Therefore, based on findings from the study we can say that working women are more likely to experience violence because they work (since it disrupts the power structure within the household) rather than the fact that women who have experienced violence are more likely to work due to financial need.

12. **Comment** The discussion mentions that the models controlled for variables like education, marital status, working status, and wealth, but there could be other unmeasured factors (e.g., cultural norms, access to social services) that influence both the risk of violence and the predictors examined.

Response Thank you for the comment. As per your comment, we reviewed our dataset. But your mentioned variables were not collected in our study. However, we may consider these controlling factors in future research. We also mentioned this as our limitation in the line number 285-287

13. **Comment** The sample size for certain sub-groups (e.g., educational categories) is small, which reduces the statistical power to detect significant differences or associations.

Response We have made few changes in categories for age, years of schooling and parity. Small categories have been merged with adjacent categories in Table 1-3. This also mentioned as limitation in line number 279-284.

14. **Comment** Discussion could add a comparison of results of these women from slum areas with women from non slum areas. That would reflect the intersectionality concept.

Response We have mentioned slum area comparison with non slum comparison in line number 289-291.

15. **Comment** **Are the conclusions drawn supported by the results/ data?**

No Line 310-316: While the conclusion emphasizes "urgent action" to curb IPV, it could be strengthened by specifying what types of action are most needed. Are there specific policy interventions or workplace-based actions or community-level actions that should be mentioned based on the findings? The recommendation for urgent action could be more actionable if tied to the specific issues identified in the study, such as educational interventions or support services for working women. The conclusion could more explicitly reference the study's findings on wealth status, as the data showed some variation in violence rates based on wealth, particularly regarding sexual violence. While this is briefly mentioned in the discussion, incorporating it into the conclusion would provide a more comprehensive picture of the socioeconomic factors that interact with IPV risk.

Response Thank you for the comments. We have updated our conclusion as per reviewer suggestion in line number 335-338

16. **Comment** **Additional comment (if any).**

Line 57 to 75: The introduction of the manuscript provides a broad overview of gender-based violence (GBV) and its global implications, but it does not align well with the specific focus of the study, which is on intimate partner violence (IPV) among married women in urban informal settlements in Bangladesh. While IPV is a critical issue, the manuscript's introduction should be more deeply focused on IPV to match the title, "Patterns and Predictors of Intimate Partner Violence Among Married Women Living in Urban Informal Settlements of Bangladesh: A Cross-Sectional Survey."

Response Thank you for the comments. We have updated our introduction as per reviewer suggestion in line number 66-67, 75, 79, 86-88

Editor: M Mostafa Zaman, ORCID: [0000-0002-1736-1342](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1736-1342)

17. **Comment** 1. Key message: Please replace the highlights with a key message within 50-60 words. This is necessary because of the Journal's change in the style from January 2025.
- Response** We have added key messages as per suggestion in line number 50-55
18. **Comment** 2. Introduction: Please write the objective in a single descriptive sentence (no bullets) as the last sentence of this section.
- Response** We have updated objective as per suggestion in line number 101-104
- Comment** 3. Methods: Please add a subsection on ethical concerns. This should not have the ethical approval statement (which is given as a footnote after the Conclusion).
- Response** We have added "Ethical consideration" section as per suggestion in line number 163-166
19. **Comment** 4. Statistical analysis: Please describe how you have created the wealth indices for readers to understand. You have quantitative data on age, but I am unsure whether you have quantitative data on schooling years, and parity. If so, you could use quantitative data as quantitative for comparisons and logistic models. We all understand that quantitative data are more powerful than categorical data. If you do not have quantitative data, I suggest you reduce the number of categories for age, years of schooling and parity to have more meaningful results. Some of your cells have small numbers, such as Gajipur's data for <20 years of age and 10+ years of education. Similarly, the wealth quintiles have small number of subjects in many cells. I suggest converting the wealth indices to quartiles. All these changes will make the analysis more powerful and lead to better readability.
- Response** Thank you for the review. We have added description how wealth index has been calculated in line number 175-178. We have also reduced the number of categories for age, years of schooling (for both women and their husband) and parity.
20. **Comment** Tables 3-6: Please present results as aOR (95% CI). Remove P values; these are redundant because you have 95% CIs. These four tables compare the same variables four times (physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence). Please consider issues of adjustment for multiple comparisons in making your conclusions.
- Response** We have now omitted the P-values and presented the results as aOR (95% CI). The results from the four tables in the previous version of the manuscript (Table 3- Table 6), have now been merged into a single Table (Table 3).

Dated: 9 Feb 2025

1. **Comment** Thank you for the revised submission. Although you agreed in your response to reduce the categories of age and wealth indices, the results indicate otherwise.
- Response** For age, we have merged <20 and 20-24. However, the lowest age of women in our study was 17 years old. Therefore, we named this category as 17-24 years for better clarification. And for wealth indices, some categories its less in numbers, though the percentages are nearly 10%, which might low in power to detect differences. We have mentioned this as limitation in our manuscripts in line number 279-281