

Physical Abuse During Pregnancy : An Experience of 139 cases

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Abstract

Objective : To assess pattern and proportion of physical abuse during pregnancy in relation to socio demographic characteristics of abused women.

Material & Methods : A descriptive type of cross sectional study was conducted in RADDA-MCH-FP Center, Mirpur-10, Dhaka during January to July 2011. A total of 139 pregnant women of reproductive age group (15-45) year's who visited for antenatal check up were selected purposely. Data were collected through face to face interview using pretested structured questionnaire.

Results : Socio demographic characteristics of respondents revealed that mean age 22.20 ± 39 years and husbands mean age 28.57 ± 5.39 years. Highest number of respondents education upto SSC level (49.6%). 74.8% were housewife; socio economic status was lower middle class, 18.7% had history of dowry. The proportion of physical abuse during pregnancy was 31.6%. Among them 15.83% had mixed type of abuse. Highly significant association was found with dowry ($p < 0.00$) and planed pregnancy ($p < 0.006$). A statistically significant association was found between respondent's education level and physical abused ($p < 0.05$) indicating respondents had low level of education increase physical abuse. A statistically significant association also found with residence (urban/slum) ($p < 0.05$) and who had history of dowry ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion : Physical abuse during pregnancy was mostly seen in the respondent who belongs to slum area and had low educational level.

Therefore necessary step should be taken by health system as well as government to prevent physical abuse during pregnancy.

Introduction

Physical abuse towards pregnant women cuts across societies, classes, education, income, ethnicity and age in developed and developing countries of the world. It is a gross violation of human rights and has many far reaching consequences for a woman and her fetus including serious social and health problems. It is clear from the research that abuse towards woman during pregnancy is an issue that cuts across countries, however prevalence varies from country to country and even within countries¹.

In Bangladesh abuse has been recognized one of the leading causes of injury related death among pregnant woman. Intimate partner violence is not a new phenomenon and usually results in serious health problem in woman. It is estimated that 14 percent of maternal deaths are associated with violence. Inclusion of this indicator when monitoring the MDGs will help raise awareness of this national problem². Sometimes domestic violence begins or increases during pregnancy remain unseen. Most of the Physical abuse and ill treatment by in-laws during and after pregnancy is a common occurrence in India³.

Most of the research on violence during pregnancy focuses on abuse by past or current intimate partners. Multiple social, economic, cultural, biological and

environmental factors contribute to violence toward women during pregnancy. Low socioeconomic status has consistently been identified as a risk factor for violence during pregnancy. Women's low level of education is important contributing factor. Finally, young pregnant women are more likely than those who are older to be abused. In Bangladesh and elsewhere, violence has been recognized as one of the leading causes of injury-related deaths among pregnant women. About one in 10 women had ever been abused during pregnancy⁴.

The majority of abused women remained silent about their experience because of the high acceptance of violence within society, fear of repercussion, tarnishing family honor and own reputation, jeopardizing children's future, and lack of an alternative place to stay. Violent behaviors such as beating, pushing, slapping or throwing things by family members are considered domestic violence⁵.

Physical abuse of woman during pregnancy is commonly recognized as an important public health problem because of its morbidity, mortality and long term impact of woman's & child health. In many countries a substantial proportion of women that experience physical abuse during pregnancy by their husband and other family members⁶.

Considering the impact of physical abuse during pregnancy, this study was undertaken to find out the proportion of physical abuse during pregnancy, pattern of physical abuse and also socio demographic characteristics of abused woman.

Materials & Methods

A descriptive type of cross sectional study was conducted among the pregnant women. The study was conducted from January 2011 – July 2011. For collecting data formal permission was obtained from the concern authority of RADDA-MCH-FP center, Mirpur-10. A total of 139 pregnant women of reproductive age group (15 - 45 years) who visited ANC center where selected by purposive sampling. After taking proper confidentiality and privacy, data were collected from the respondents though face to face interview and observation by using a pretested questionnaire. All data forms were checked on regular basis for accuracy, consistency and completeness. Statistical analysis was done with the help of the computer using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), Version-16 program.

Result

A Cross Sectional study conducted Mirpur – 10 in Dhaka city among 139 with a view to find out proportion of physical abuse during pregnancy.

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Table I : Socio-demographic profile of the respondents (n=139)

Respondent's age in years	Frequency	Percentage
15-20	63	45.3
21-25	71	51.1
≥26	5	3.6
Mean ± SD = 22.20 ± 3.9		
Husband age in years		
15-20	4	2.9
21-25	102	73.4
≥26	33	23.7
Mean ± SD = 28.57 ± 3.9		
Respondent's level of education		
Illiterate	2	1.4
Primary	25	18.0
SSC	69	49.6
Hon. and above	10	7.2
Others	14	10.1
Occupation of the respondent		
Housewife	104	74.8
Non gov. service	4	2.9
Business	4	2.9
Others	27	19.4
Religion of Respondent		
Muslim	138	99.28%
Hindu	1	0.72%
Total	139	100.0
Monthly family income		
<5000	19	13.7
5001-10000	71	51.1
≥10001	49	35.3
Mean ± SD = 13577.70 ± 12569.07		
Residence		
Town	110	79.1
Village	1	0.7
Slum	22	15.8
Sub Urban	5	3.6
Others	1	0.7
History of dowry		
No	113	81.3
Yes	26	18.7
Worry about expenditure		
No	79	56.8
Yes	60	43.2

The study revealed that among 139 respondents, the mean age of respondent was 22.20 ± 3.9 years ranging from 16 to 37 years. Highest percentage (51.1%) where in the range of 21-25 years. The mean age of the respondent's husband was 28.57 ± 5.39 years ranging from 19 to 46 years. The highest percentage (73.4%) where in the range of 21-25 years. Among educated respondent higher percentage 49.6% had secondary level followed by 18.0% had primary level of education. It was evident the highest percentage (74.8%) were house wife. About 99.3% respondents were Muslim. The mean monthly family income was Tk. 13577.70 ranging from 3,000–10,000. Highest percentage 51.1 of family has monthly income ranging from 5001-10,000 Most of the respondent 79.1 percentages lived in town, 15.8 percentages lived in slum Most of the respondent had 81.3% had no history of dowry, 18.7 % had history of dowry during marriage. It shows, 56.8% had no worry about expenditure rest of 43.2% was worried about expenditure (Table-1).

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by history of abuse during pregnancy

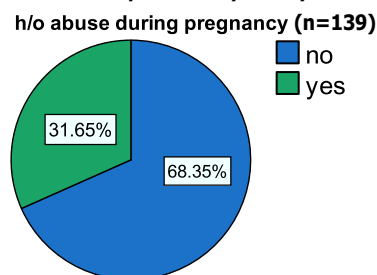


Figure 1 shows 31.65 % had history of abuse during pregnancy and rest 68.35% had no history of abuse during pregnancy.

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by pattern of abuse type of abuse (n=139)

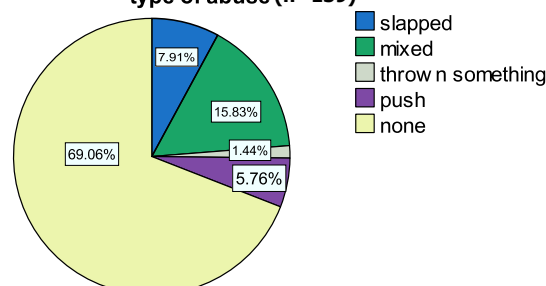


Figure 2 shows 15.83% had mixed type of abuse during pregnancy, 7.91% had slapped, 5.76% had pushed, 1.44% had thrown something on her rest of 69.06% had no history of abuse.

Figure 3: Distribution of abused according to Abuser

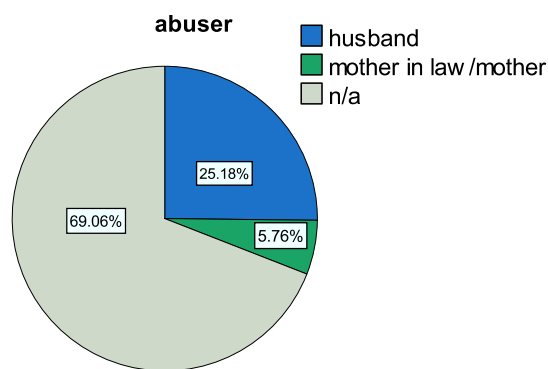


Figure 3 shows Among the respondents 25.18% had physical abused by husband during pregnancy, 5.7% had abused by mother in laws and rest of 69.06% had no history of physical abuse.

Table II: Association of physical abuse during pregnancy with residence and level of education

Category	Physical abuse		χ ²	P value
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)		
Residence				
Urban	32 (27.8)	83 (72.2)	4.513	0.034
Slum	12 (50.0)	12 (50.0)		
Level of education				
Up to primary	24 (41.4)	34 (58.6)	4.351	0.037
Above primary	20 (24.7)	61 (75.3)		

* percentage in parenthesis

Among the slum 50% had history of physical abuse. Whereas among the urban group 27.8% had history of physical abuse. The result showed statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). The physical abuse differs with relation with education level. Lower the educational level, higher the rate of physical abuse. There was significant association between education and physical abuse ($p < 0.05$).

Table III: Association of physical abuse during pregnancy with planned pregnancy and history of dowry

Category	Physical abuse		χ^2	P value
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)		
Planned Pregnancy				
No	30 (42.3)	41 (57.7)	7.539	0.006
Yes	14 (20.6)	54 (79.4)		
History of Dowry				
No	25 (22.1)	88 (77.9)	25.365	0.000
Yes	19 (73.1)	7 (26.9)		

*percentage in parenthesis

The respondents who had unplanned pregnancy also had physical abuse. The unplanned pregnancy showed significant association with physical abuse ($p < 0.05$). Among the respondents who had history of dowry 73.1% had history of physical abuse. Whereas the respondent who had no history of dowry 22.1% had history of physical abuse. The history of dowry of respondent showed statistically highly significant ($p < 0.05$).

Discussion

In this study mean age of respondents was 22.20 ± 3.9 years (Range 15-49 years) and 49.6% had secondary level of education. 44 (31%) of 139 women had experience physical abuse during pregnancy. This result is mostly similar to the study of The Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women, sponsored by the World Health Organization, between 2000 and 2003^{7, 8}.

Study shows that among the pregnant women interviewed 99.3% were belong to Muslim and 0.7% was Hinduism. That had similarity with Ruchira Tabassum Naved et-al in her study finding that rural Muslim women were more likely than rural women of other religions to be abused during pregnancy⁴.

Among the recently pregnant women interviewed, negligible (1.4%) were illiterate, among educated higher percentage 49.6% had secondary level of education. Female literacy rate in Bangladesh is 58% (according to Bangladesh MDG progress report 2009). In the present study this rate was 98.6%. Dissimilarity was due to there were education for female, compulsory primary education, food for education program and decreased dropout rate from school. In this study the primary level of education significantly associated with physical abuse during pregnancy. It was mostly similar to the study of Dian K. Bohn, Julie G. Teben et-al⁹.

Among the recently pregnant women interviewed, higher number 74.8% were housewife and 25.2% were engaged in service. This result was due to the fact that social and cultural melio does not allow women as well as pregnant women to work out side the home. In the present study mean monthly family income was Tk. 13577.70. It was due to maximum respondents husband were doing business and other jobs. In this study income not statistically significant with physical abuse during pregnancy but in study of Dian K. Bohn showed that decrease income significantly related to abuse during pregnancy⁹.

About 81.3% respondent had no history of taking dowry during marriage and 18.7% had history of taking dowry during marriage. It showed age at marriage dowry demand had significant ($p < 0.05$) relationship with physical abuse during pregnancy. It similar to study of Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria shows that, dowry demand involvement, age at marriage, past history of abuse and spousal communication are the most important predictors of

physical spousal abuse of women during pregnancy¹.

In recent study about 15.83% had history of mixed type of abuse. It similar with according to CDC pattern of violence¹⁰. Study of Bertha Alicia Guaderrama de Moseson shows the pattern of abuse similar with the recent study¹¹. Hitting was mostly done with the use of hand (85.4%), followed by stick (63.5%), and kicking (51%) alone or in combination. The study reported that 20% of women were physically abused by their husbands during pregnancy and 2.6% by other family members as well. About, 13.7% were throttled by their husbands and 2.1% by other family members¹².

In this study 21.58% respondents had simple type of injury. Only 8.60% had severe type of injury. GUO Su-fang, WU Jiu-ling et-al in china study shows that, 20% of physical abuse involved punching or beating leading to head/internal injury or involved wounding by means of a weapon. These results indicated that most cases of physical abuse were not severe¹³.

In recent study shows 25.18% husband was abuser. It was similar with the study In Alaska showed, 78% of abuse women identified their husband of partner as the main physical abuse perpetrator⁸. Study of Bertha Alicia Guaderrama de Moseson shows the prevalence of intimate partner violence in pregnancy (IPVP) in the United States was estimated as between 4% and 8% of all pregnancies¹¹.

Conclusion

Physical abuse during pregnancy is a serious and harmful problem. Pregnant mother and their babies stand the risk of injury from physical abuse. Abuse during pregnancy can affect women irrespective of their socio economic and demography background.

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